

COLLABORATION ACROSS GENERATIONS

Across Generations: a Treasure Preserved

Baby Olga Hope Krush died in 1941 of congenital heart disease. She was just one month 27 days old. Her infant remains rest beneath a mossy granite square in Meyers Cemetery, high in the hills of Herrick Center. Olga was Mary Krush Tourje's sister, and the first of many family members that make the Meyers Cemetery a precious place

for her. Over the last 84 years, generations of Mary's forebears and immediate family have been buried there. It is a place where massive pines overhang clusters of graves arranged like family gatherings in the shade of the trees. The cemetery is bordered by dry stone walls and ironwork fencing interrupted by antique gates that remain always unlocked. It is a beautiful, uncrowded, and peaceful place containing less than 200 graves, and is available to anyone who wishes to be buried there.

Stephen Krush, Mary's uncle, personally cared for it free of charge for over 50 years. Those included old days of push mowers, then hand powered gas mowers. "Uncle Steve loved it, even though it took a lot of time," Mary recalls. Later Charles Barnes took over from Uncle Steve and Jill Baron took over the secretarial work for Mary's husband Edward Earl (Ed) Tourje. Mary assisted Jill. In more recent years Ed organized everything online. The land is county property, but the Krush-Tourje families have assumed responsibility to maintain it.

The cemetery's name comes from some of its first "residents" John M. Meyers (1816-1886) and his son Israel Rouse Meyers (1841-1926). They are among the earliest settlers of Herrick and owned a saw mill on the outlet of Low Lake in the late 1800's. That family is no longer active in the community, but John and Israel's time-weathered graves remain.

This year, Mary decided she wanted the peace of mind that comes with having "put something in place" to provide perpetual care for the cemetery. The Tourje family have several family and business philanthropic funds at the Community Foundation. Mary's son, Steven Tourje is also on our Board of Directors. Steven is helping his mother formally establish a Meyers Cemetery Association with its own Board of Directors, as well as an endowment sufficient to ensure the perpetual preservation of their family history.

The community must be grateful to generations of Krush-Tourje family members who have preserved this local historic treasure. If you would like to make a respectful visit, it is on Quigley Road overlooking Herrick Center. The gate is always open.

