



## Plot Simple

By Henry Wolff Jr.

This family in our neighborhood used to bury their dead in the backyard.

I was just a kid at the time, remember when we passed their place someone would always mention that fact. All the neighbors viewed the family with some suspicion, kids walked cautiously past the house.

Home burials were once quite popular, and evidently this family had simply carried on the tradition longer than most, preferring to be buried in their own soil, something I can now sympathize with.

I'm told that during the early days of Victoria, when the first cemetery was located at present day Memorial Square, that many people continued to prefer home burials, that an ordinance in 1846 was adopted to prohibit the practice.

After Evergreen Cemetery was established in the 1850s, interest in home burials was further diminished, citizens having readily accepted the new cemetery.

A number of rules were adopted sometime after the Evergreen Cemetery Association was organized in 1876 to protect the grounds. Persons carrying firearms weren't admitted, nor were dogs. Children had to be accompanied by some responsible person.

Heavy teams were not allowed to enter the grounds during wet weather, or for six days before Decoration Day.

Prospective purchasers of

lots were advised if they didn't like trees to buy one on which there were none, since the trees belonged to the association and were not to be disturbed.

An area along the Main Avenue called "God's Acre" was set aside for "any of earth's weary ones not owning a resting place."

While on the subject of cemeteries, there is a small one out on the Reeves Ranch that I found quite interesting. It's pretty much like all ranch cemeteries, mostly limited to family, but there are 13 new graves in this one.

When the reservoir was being built on Coletto Creek, it was necessary to move the graves from the old Schob Cemetery, among them the grave of Victoria Steiner, who died in 1870 of yellow fever.

As the grave was being moved, it was noticed that Mrs. Steiner's bones, especially those of the arms and hands, were out of position, not by her side in the manner people are customarily buried.

She had evidently been

buried alive, had tried to push her way out of the box.

Those familiar with the history of that area will recognize the Steiner name, the community around Colettoville once having been known as Steiner Town, or Steiner-ville.

As for being buried alive, would guess that happened more times than we would like to think back there when doctors had only the simplest of methods for determining who was alive and who wasn't.

Think I want a second opinion when my time comes.