

## Grave Sites Restored by Boy Scouts

(1979)



DISCOVER GRAVES— Tony Jensen and Victor Neves of Scout Troop 822 inspect lone grave marker in field in Highland. During restoration of the site original mounds of stones which covered the graves and a portion of another marker were discovered, giving the boys the first evidence of the location of four additional graves.

On a small knoll in the heart of Highland are the graves of five sons of John and Sarah Poole. One weather beaten wooden marker still stands in the afternoon shade of a lone lilac bush. Both are veterans of 100 years of grass fires and livestock and drought, forgotten and buried in the weeds and grass that cover the knoll. The grave site was located in the center of the 80 acre homestead filed by John Poole in 1875. They were the first family to settle in Highland, and lived in

a home 12 by 14 feet with a family of 13 children. One other child was born in 1882, after the deaths of their five sons.

The property was purchased in 1899 by Louis Henry Strasburg, who left the grave site undisturbed.

His son, Dave Strasburg, who was in the bishopric of the old Highland Ward, tells of being taken to the graves by his mother when he was a small child. “She had a great sympathy for these little ones,” he said. The knoll had originally been protected by a picket fence. “As a youngster, I remember walking across there,” Strasburg said, “The weathering had turned the fence black, and grass fires over the years eventually destroyed it.”

Encroaching subdivisions have eaten away the Strasburg farm; and in 1967 a five acre building lot, which included the Poole family graves, was purchased by Robert and Kathy Wray.

Victor Neves, senior patrol leader of scout troop 822, of Highland II Ward, approached Kathy Wray for permission to restore the grave site. Restoration is

underway with Tony Jensen supervising the troop as his Eagle project. The Wrays had already envisioned a restoration, and the finished project will include grass, a picket fence, a bench and shade trees, with the graves restored to their original condition. They were covered with cobblestones and marked by a 12-inch wooden plank rounded at the top.

While the area was being tilled by Clark Jensen, who is assisting his son Tony with the project, he discovered the original mounds of stones under several inches of soil. It was the first indication the scouts had of the location of four of the five graves. A portion of a grave marker was also unearthed.

A visit to the site by Strasburg, who made a great effort to reach the spot on his crutches, verified the correct location of the graves. "These large stones were put on the mounds to protect them from being washed away by the wind and rain." He explained. "They made quite a pretty effect, as they'd been whitened by the weather."

Grass seed and the picket fence have been donated by Clark Jensen, fertilizer by Coast to Coast Hardware, top soil by Jim McCune, and trees were furnished by Scholes Landscaping and Humphries Plant and Garden Supply. Grave markers were designed by Kathy Wray and built by Chip Hutchinson, with material donated by Barratt Builders. Barratt's also furnished wood and hardware for the bench, built by Danny Hutchinson.