

# WELCOME TO PHILMONT NEW YORK

April 29, 2021

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By *Charles R. Nichols*

Another of the very necessary businesses in early Philmont was that of Undertaker, a service we all require sooner or later.

Up until the turn of the century - the 20th century - this service was provided by various businesses in Hudson. One of the last burial services done for a Philmont resident before we had our own facility was done by M.E. Brennan, Undertaker, 410 Warren Street, Hudson in 1908.

The bill for this particular burial came to a whopping \$153.00. Considering that this included everything from soup to nuts - Oak Casket (\$100) to Rev. Macdonald's services (\$5), it is quite a contrast with today.



In 1909, Sherman L. Mead received diplomas certifying that he was qualified as an undertaker. He is shown here in his Knights of Pythias uniform. He immediately set up shop on Summit Street in the home shown. In addition to the rooms in the home for viewing, a barn in the back was used for preparing the deceased.



Transportation was provided by a team of matched horses to pull the hearse, and also, when harnessed to a 4 wheel buggy, for family transportation.

The horses were stabled in Whiteman's stable across the street.

Mead's day book for 1914 - 1916 shows how many other businesses profited from his operation. Two of the more active were the livery stable of Whiteman, and the flower provider Gifford J. Anderson of Mellenville.



Sherman Mead was in business over 40 years. The next Village undertaker was Clint Traver. He used this home on Church Street, and for extra parking, the Masonic Lodge lot across the street.

Clint was an avid sportsman, and hated to lose at anything. He was also known not to be averse to gambling. Rumor had it that he

had the dubious pleasure of being a victim of the only known instance of a poker game robbery in Philmont!!



The third, and last, Village undertaker was James Johnson, who opened his business in this home on Main Street 1 July 1981.

When the undertaking business is an owner/operator situation, the ideal setting seems to be an older, larger home in a residential section as this history shows. This allows room for living for the family, while some of the rooms can be used for viewing. A garage or barn is a plus,

and the very occasional use of the streets for parking is not a hardship on the neighbors.

A necessary adjunct to the Undertakers work, is a burial site. We have two cemeteries. One called the Union Cemetery is located in Mellenville. There were two different gates over time. The first a heavy one shown in the photo on the left, the later one shown in the photo on the right.



The association was organized in 1860 and probably the name was caused by the impending Civil War - quite a few things were named Union to show patriotism. The 'Rules and Regulations' were printed in 1861 where it was noted the site consisted of 10 acres enclosed. A Clum and a Philip were among the officers.

The second cemetery was the Sacred Heart Cemetery, on Martindale Road just outside of Philmont. Again, there were two gates at different times. The first in the photo on the left, the second in the photo on the right. I have no sure date for this cemetery, but the first Catholic Church was built in 1882, and the indication is that the cemetery was contemporary.



The last two photos show the entrances for Union Cemetery and Sacred Heart in 2007.



Since Philmont lacks a funeral parlor and undertaker now, perhaps one could be encouraged to come into the Village?

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