

The Tonopah Cemetery
is located next to the Clown Motel
521 N Main Street
Tonopah, Nevada 89049



Town of Tonopah
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Tonopah, Nevada 89049

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Special thanks to:

Allen Metscher, President of the Central Nevada Historical Society, who has been working to preserve the Cemetery for almost 40 years.

Tonopah High School Youth Leadership Council, Dr. Tom Whelan, Shari Bombard, and Keli Fossett.

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The Marojevech Brothers

Frank and George Marojevech died on June 20th, 1907 due to a horrific accident at the Belmont Mine. That day, George went to visit his brother, Frank, at the mine. As they were talking, Frank noticed that a loaded ore cart had gotten away and was coming down the hill. Frank swung onto the cart and pulled the brake handle trying to stop it. Unfortunately, the brake handle had previously broken and been replaced with an old shovel handle. He fell underneath the ore cart, and it ran over him, killing him instantly. George tried to save him, but the ore cart ran over his ankles. He was taken to the hospital, where they amputated both his legs. George's injuries were too severe, and he died that night.

William "BIG Bill" Murphy

Big Bill is Tonopah's local hero, due to his courageous actions during the Belmont Mine Fire.

On February 23, 1911, seventeen miners were killed, Bill included, when workings at the 1100-foot level of the Belmont Mine caught fire. Bill went down in the mine cage a number of times to rescue stricken miners. On the last trip, from which he never returned, Big Bill said, "Well, boys, I have made two trips and I am nearly all in, but I will try again."

A statue honoring Big Bill can be found in front of the post office on Main Street. There is also a mural depicting the funeral procession, which took place during a blizzard.



George "Devil" Davis

George "Devil" Davis was the first African American in Tonopah. He was known for being a joker and a prankster, and was beloved by the entire community, regardless of race. George worked hard, becoming the political leader of the African American community and eventually came to own his own saloon,

which he named The Eureka. However, George had a dark side. Witnesses said that George was an abusive husband. On the night of June 22nd 1907, his wife, Ruth, came into the saloon and shot George in the back. She continued to fire as he went down. Ruth only served one year for his killing.

Sheriff Thomas Logan

Sheriff Tom Logan was serving his third term as Sheriff when he was shot to death by an unruly gambler in the Manhattan Red Light District on April 7, 1906.

According to his great granddaughter and author Jackie Boor, Logan was unarmed and dressed only in his nightshirt. His last act was to prevent the piano player from shooting his assailant, who was later acquitted of the murder. Logan was credited with making early Tonopah "the most peaceable mining camp in the world." His loss profoundly affected the community.



The Three Merten Brothers

The three Merten brothers all died between September of 1908 and July of 1910. First, Albert Merten died of typhoid fever. Next, Sam Merten was killed in an accident in the Montana Tonopah Mine. William Merten was the last brother to pass away. At only 17 years of age, he died of heart failure. Just as they do today, Tonopah residents came together to hold benefits and raise money for the boys' mother and Albert's widow.

Bina Verrault

Bina Verrault's story starts in New York City. There, she and her friend, Izella Browne, ran a "Love Syndicate". The women claimed to be wealthy widows. They would seduce rich men into giving them expensive gifts and money. One man fell in love with Bina. When she refused his attentions and did not return his

gifts, he went to the authorities. Bina was arrested. It was estimated that the two women collected about \$100,000 in fine clothing, jewelry, and money, which in today's dollars is about 2.5 million. During the trial, Bina pawned some diamond rings and fled. About a year later, she found herself in Tonopah. Her time on the run had taken its toll, and she died of alcoholism. Her death made headlines around the world.



Tonopah Cemetery Tour



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The Marojevech Brothers

History of the Old Tonopah Cemetery

About 300 people are buried in the old cemetery. Residents have died from injury, the Belmont Mine Fire, suicides, and even murder! One misconception promoted, was that a lot of the people buried in the cemetery died due to a "mysterious plague", also known as the "Tonopah plague", that occurred in 1902.

The "plague" created a huge number of deaths in 1905 due to pneumonia and assumed to be a result of a lack of sanitation, especially close to the slaughterhouses. 56 people died between January and April, according to the Secretary State Board of Health in his report to Governor John Sparks. After an article in the San Francisco *Call* about the pneumonia scourge

in Tonopah in 1901/1902, the Tonopah Daily Bonanza replied with a correction, arguing that they find the 27 deaths due to pneumonia between May 1901 and January 1902 in relation to a population of 1,500 not a heavy mortality rate. There is nothing mysterious about the pneumonia cases in 1901-1902 or 1905, as they were well documented in the local newspaper.

The causes of death on the gravestones were added in recent decades based on historic research conducted by historian Allen Metscher of the Central Nevada Historical Society. The cause of death was not listed on the original headstones. Only about 30% of headstones are original. Many headstones were rebuilt by the Tonopah Conservation Crew, under the guidance of Metscher, with old material, giving them an original look. Many of the graves were marked by Metscher

using dousing rods, an old technique employed to locate groundwater or other disturbances in the ground such as gravesites. The technique proved to be accurate when the plot map was found years later in an attic in Round Mountain in the late 1970s.

If you find a grave you are interested in learning more about, write down the name and date of death, then go to <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov> to search some of the old newspapers online. You can also visit the Central Nevada Museum in Tonopah and use their fantastic research library. Who knows what you might discover! Make sure to let us know if you find an interesting story of your own.

Please take your time and enjoy exploring our amazing Old Cemetery!

Take a video tour!

We also created an Old Tonopah Cemetery Walking Tour video as a project with our local Tonopah High School. Check it out!



<https://youtu.be/lxReOquhJ6g>



Tonopah Cemetery Tour