

Society's Work Extended Beyond the Cemetery

During the early years of the Memorial Society besides caring for the cemetery grounds, members also paid a fitting tribute to all deceased persons prior to their burial in the cemetery. At that time, there were no funeral homes as we know today, but rather the body of the deceased was kept at the family's home until the day of the funeral. At that time, the body would be taken to a church where family and friends gathered for the funeral service. From there, the body was transported to the cemetery for burial.

In the early history of Wright City, there were three churches located within the city – the Evangelical Church, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church. On the morning of the funeral, members of the Memorial Society would go to the church where the services were to be held and place black cloths over the church's altar. This act, known as "draping" is but one example of how community members cared for the bereaved family and joined in the mourning process.

This practice was continued until December 1932. Minutes of the Society's Dec. 2, 1932, meeting report the society "voted to discontinue the old custom of draping in church for funerals and to donate draping material to the Home at Marthasville". (It is likely the "home" referred to in the minutes was the Emmaus Home.) There is no indication why the custom was ended but perhaps by that time funeral homes were providing all the funeral needs for families. There is little doubt, though, the Society's simple act of providing mourning cloths for the church altars comforted many grieving families.