



## Kane Cemetery

# RESOURCE BRIEF

### Importance

The first recorded burial in what became known as Kane Cemetery took place in 1903, three years after the nearby Mormon community of Iona was settled. Named for rancher Riley Kane, the town of Kane, located south of the confluence of the Bighorn and Shoshone rivers, was the trading center and railroading depot for homesteaders in the Dryhead and Crooked Creek areas by 1910. Until a bridge was built in the 1930s, the Kane Ferry was the only way to cross the river between Greybull and the canyon. However, both the town and the cemetery, which is located north of the Shoshone River, were on the land purchased by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1965 to construct the Yellowtail Dam. The town was largely abandoned because it would be partially inundated when the reservoir reaches its highest level, but the cemetery lies above the flood zone. The inscriptions on the stones provide insights into the history of the area.



took place several months later for an infant in the same family. By providing a testament to the lives of people who chose this place to honor their dead, Kane Cemetery is one of the cultural resources of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area. To document its geographic extent, the historical events affecting its creation, and way in which the graves are marked, is to gain a better understanding of family ties to their ancestry and the land.

### Status

In Kane Cemetery are 141 known graves of former residents of Iona or Kane; the identity of 108 of the burials has been established. Some of the gravesites have cement or granite headstones, but many have dilapidated metal markers and others are marked only by white landscape rocks placed on them by local volunteers in the late 1990s. The sign that once hung over the entrance is gone. In 2000, National Park Service staff used three tests (ground conductivity, ground penetrating radar, and a resistivity sounding) to substantiate that all of the marked sites had interments and that there was no evidence of interments elsewhere in the cemetery, its boundary marked by a barbed wire fence. Most of the graves are on the east half of the cemetery (Figure 1). The remaining area has enough room for 73 more graves. These sites may be used by people who are directly related to those already buried in the cemetery. The most recent burial occurred in 2000.

### Discussion

Burial places on land that becomes part of a national park are generally preserved as manifestations of the culture and environment in which they were situated. Many of the people buried in Kane Cemetery were born in foreign countries and about 40% died before reaching the age of 20. The first burial was for a five-year-old boy; the second

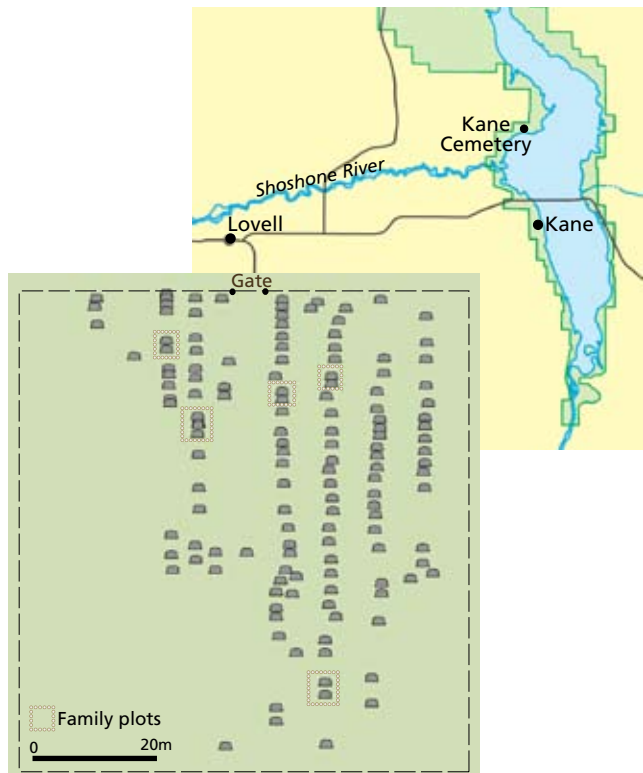


Figure 1. Location of gravesites in Kane Cemetery.