

From the Pioneer Journal of May 27, 1898

## A GOOD SUGGESTION

### MR. JOHN STEWART WRITES AN INTERESTING COMMUNICATION

To the Editor: Wadena is a public spirited, progressive community, but there is one institution which they overlook, and that the cemetery. The trouble, I believe, has been the difficulty of getting united action. Inside the individual lots there are all the marks of loving care, but is there nothing that can be done so as to keep the place as a whole, outside the lots, in some sort of order?

A fire ran through it this spring, and when I went there some of the picket fences and name boards were lying burned and smouldering on the lots, leaving things in a ragged and dilapidated condition. What is needed is some one to attend to it as a whole. Can we not get up some sort of association so that we can have a man permanently at work and attending to it? I don't know the number of occupied lots, but it seems to me that some where about a dollar a year each would give a fair income. It is surprising what a man can do on a place constantly employed. He could keep the outside "drive" all clean and trim, so that no fires could get in from the outside, and in the spring he could gather all the dry trash and rubbish and burn it. Outside the lots he could attend to ornamental shrubbery, and if his house was near, as it ought to be, he could take some of the more tender sort inside in the fall. We are gradually getting rid of the more harsh and gloomy ideas of the grave. We are all driving in the same direction and take pleasure in keeping in remembrance those who have gone before, thinking that we will be kindly remembered by those that come after us. Our cemetery too, is now identified with patriotism and the love of our country. Decoration day is quite an institution now, and we all take pleasure in turning out with the Grand army veterans and keeping together the link between the living and the dead.

We would all like something done, the difficulty is in getting together. How would this do? Let us have it announced in the papers that there will be a meeting to form a "cemetery association" or whatever it may be called. The subject could be discussed at this meeting and a working committee appointed. Let it be a good, large committee, and see that some of the good women of the community are on it, who have some of their loved ones at rest there. This committee will find out the number of occupied lots there are and what assessment it would require each so as to keep a man permanently employed on the place. He could also be sexton and I think about a dollar a year would do it. The committee could then name the association, and draw up one or two simple rules with the amount of assessment required. They could then advertise the time and place when all the holders of the lots could come and attach their signatures. It's not the amount of money individually required, but what can be done with a trifle collectively. If some special work was to be done before the man had got the place in working order, see what a ten or fifteen assessment would do. I don't put this forward as a "cut and dried" plan, but only a suggestion to draw out what is best to be done. Signed: J. Stewart