

AFTER 54 YEARS A WADENA RESIDENT, A PROGRESS REPORT BY HARALD E. BOEN as reported in the Pioneer Journal of May 26, 1966

A HISTORY OF THE WADENA CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

(From P.J., 1939)

Foresight of the early settlers combined with unselfishness of Wadena residents has given Wadena an unusually beautiful and well administered cemetery.

Made up of what was once known as Peake's cemetery in the southeast corner includes the Roman Catholic cemetery and the first and second Migge additions to the north. The Wadena cemetery forms a rectangle embracing nearly 20 acres.

At three different periods necessity in the form of an epidemic prompted acquisition of land for burial ground.

BURIAL SPOT NEEDED

During the smallpox epidemic of 1877 H. W. Fuller, C. H. Peake and others realized the bodies of those who died of smallpox could never be moved. Previously burials had been made on homesteads. Mr. Fuller cast his vote for the site of the original cemetery, on high ground because of the large spruce trees many of which are still standing. Land was bought from the Peake homestead.

The first grave in the cemetery is that of Emma Knight, sister of Dr. John Knight, who died of smallpox July 16 1877. Any head stones bearing earlier dates mark graves of those whose bodies have been moved from family burying grounds.

The diphtheria epidemic of 1883 precipitated the formation of the Roman Catholic cemetery. Catholics for many miles around Wadena attended church at Compton. The churchyard was the Catholic cemetery for this part of the country. The Catholic church was not moved to Wadena until about 1884 where it stood for one year adjacent to the cemetery.

When the Compton parishioners built their log church it was the custom to bury their dead on ground adjacent to the church. When the church moved to its next site adjacent to the present Wadena Cemetery, some of the bodies were exhumed and moved to the Catholic cemetery here. Not all the bodies were removed from the original cemetery located on the southeast corner of what is the former Alfred Johnson farm in Compton township. There were grave markers at one time, all but two have disappeared.

DONATED THE LAND