

Pioneer Journal of October 6, 1905: HERE IS A GOOD MAN

At a meeting of the ladies auxiliary of the cemetery association yesterday afternoon, it developed that an enterprising citizen suggested a plan by which a goodly portion of the money could be raised to carry on the work next season in the cemetery.

This citizen, whose name is known to only one lady, says he will be one of six citizens to give \$25 each to the ladies for this purpose, or one of ten who will give \$15 each.

It is figured that with \$150, taken in connection with the lot assessments, which a majority pay every year, the ladies would have enough to carry on the work next season to good advantage. The association is going to accept this generous offer and a committee will be appointed to call upon some of our well to do citizens, who are abundantly able to match the timely and generous offer of this unknown gentleman. It is thought that perhaps it would be easier to get ten citizens to donate \$15 each, than it would to secure six to give \$25 each.

The Pioneer Journal believes our leading and substantial citizens could perform no better service than by subscribing liberally to a fund to be used to improve and beautify the local cemetery. This fall the cemetery really looks beautiful, compared to its condition several years ago. It is evident that no money is fooled away, and that the ladies are thoroughly competent to take charge of this important work. We repeat that no citizen can enhance the good name of Wadena, or encourage to better advantage a more worthy organization than by assisting the ladies to raise the amount desired.

The meeting yesterday was called for the purpose of arranging for the rummage sale, which will be held in Germania hall on Oct. 18, next Bargain day. The ladies propose to make this sale a rouser, and ask the public to bear it in mind.

Pioneer Journal of June 7, 1906; ALL GRATITUDE TO THE WOMEN

Not only in Wadena and the immediate vicinity, but scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country are scores of people who are deeply interested in the Wadena cemetery and the grand labor of love being carried on year after year by the Ladies Auxiliary to the cemetery Association. To the women of Wadena is due the credit for the transformation of the cemetery from an unsightly wilderness into a positive beauty spot, and readers of the Pioneer Journal wherever they may be found will be interested in reading this article, giving a brief sketch of cemetery history, since the establishment of the town, but more particularly since the women took the initiative in the work of cemetery improvement.

This afternoon at the home of Mrs. L. L. Benedict, the Ladies Auxiliary to the cemetery association will assemble in special meeting for the purpose of compiling a history of what they have accomplished.

In the early period of the settlement of Wadena little attention was paid to the matter of beautifying the town and its surroundings. There were so many other things to demand the attention of the community that civic improvement was little thought of. For this reason the local cemetery was neglected and the hallowed spot was allowed to grow up to underbrush and weeds.

The condition existed for many years and the cemetery grew more and more unsightly. It was not until the women of Wadena commenced an agitation for cemetery improvement along in 1896 that anything was done in this direction and it took some little time to arouse the necessary interest and enthusiasm.

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On June 15, 1897, about thirty ladies of the town assembled at the Congregational church to consider the advisability of organizing a society to have for its object the improvement of the cemetery. After due consideration and a full discussion of the matter, they decided to organize. Previously a cemetery association had been formed, but no steps had been taken to better the condition of the cemetery.

Mrs. G. A. Whitney was chosen chairman of the meeting. Miss Hannah Swindlehurst and Miss Lou P. Barrett were appointed as a committee on resolutions and they were empowered to suggest a name for the new organization. their selection of "The Ladies Auxiliary to the Cemetery Association" was adopted and the organization was then perfected.

Work began immediately and most vigorously. Willing hands and heads set about to devise ways and means to raise money and expend it to the best advantage. Voluntary contributions were called for and the appeal met with generous response on every hand. The ladies raised money by giving suppers, ice cream socials quilting bees and rummage sales. Four rummage sales were held consecutively and a considerable sum was realized each time. Rally days were inaugurated, and the public was invited to gather at the cemetery for active work. Assistance was forth coming and a good deal of preliminary work was accomplished. The ladies of the association took hold of the manual labor, driving into the country for machinery which was loaned them and working side by side with the men, besides supplying dinners and refreshments to the workers.

Finally the association found itself in a position to engage a man to work at the cemetery during a part of the summer. John Henselin was first engaged, later, as funds became available, a second man was put on the regular force for three months each year.

The work went forward unimpeded. There was a great deal of grubbing to be done, the weeds had to be removed and the entire cemetery spaded up by hand. The streets were also placed in condition, several misplaced graves were removed and finally the entire plot of ground was sown to lawn grass.

In 1902 the village gave to the cemetery a windmill and pump, but unfortunately this has been found of little use and there is now talk of removing it. The windmill supplies no water and it is in a dilapidated condition, besides being unsightly.

The amount of funds placed in the hands of the women increased, and we are told that since the organization \$500 has been expended annually in cemetery improvement. An assessment of \$2 a lot was levied and in most instances has been paid willingly.

All of the unsold lots in the original cemetery were finally bought and the ladies paid \$100 toward the purchase of the new part of the cemetery. Besides this they have loaned money from time to time to the cemetery association proper, all of this money having been returned to them with the exception of the last loan made, something like \$150.

A resurvey of the cemetery was made by Mr. Merrill reestablishing the streets and alleys.

On Decoration Day just past the cemetery looked particularly beautiful and the many expressions of admiration and commendation of their effort heard on every hand, must have particularly gratifying to the women who have labored so long and faithfully to bring about the present condition. The ladies are not by any means relaxing their energies. Only last week they were quilting together, and at today's meeting plans will be made to carry forward the work in the future with even more vigor than in the past. Many people have been very generous and the public as a whole have taken an active interest in the project.

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