

History of Lambrecht Cemetery Association of Pierce County, Nebraska

1938-1983

All of the early written history of the Lambrecht Cemetery and its predecessor in name has been lost except for the Articles of Incorporation of Pleasant View Cemetery which had been transcribed into the records of the Pierce County Clerk and maintained in a book called Association Records now in the office of the Pierce County, Nebraska Register of Deeds. The written history that we now possess of those early days and up to 1946 exists because of two interrelated events.

In 1937, the descendants of August and Louise Lambrecht, the donors of the acre of land upon which the Lambrecht Cemetery is located, determined to rename the official name of the cemetery from Pleasant View Cemetery Association of Pierce County, Nebraska to the Lambrecht Cemetery Association of Pierce County, Nebraska, to honor August and Louise Lambrecht, their sacrifice and their donation. Statutorily, this name change required a formal meeting of the members of the Association and the adoption of a motion by the members of the Association authorizing the name change. In compliance with that procedure, several documents and proceedings of the Association were required to be recorded with the Pierce County Register of Deeds. Those documents and proceedings, primarily the by-laws and various minutes of meetings of the members of the Association, were in the Secretary's Book of the Cemetery Association. Ernest A. Lambrecht, a son of August and Louise Lambrecht, was in possession of that Secretary's Book in 1938. From the mid-1920s through the 1930s, he had been the Pierce County Sheriff and then a Pierce County Commissioner.

With the assistance of an attorney, several portions of the Secretary's Book were transcribed from cursive to typewritten form and recorded in the office of the Pierce County Register of Deeds. He also permitted members of the Pierce County Historical Society to inspect and review the contents of the Secretary's Book. He also permitted the editor of the Pierce County Leader newspaper to inspect the Secretary's Book. Always in the hunt for a news article, the editor

published on May 27, 1937 an article briefly summarizing numerous details contained in the Secretary's Book.

TAWNEY CEMETERY HISTORY REVEALED IN EARLY RECORDS

An interesting old secretary's journal, which contains the by-laws and minutes of all the meetings of the Pleasant View cemetery association in Willow Creek precinct, from the time of its organization, April 21, 1883, until the present day was being studied this week by those making records for the Pierce County Historical Society. Although Pleasant View is the original name of this cemetery located 12 miles west of Pierce, it is most frequently referred to as the Tawney Cemetery.

The organization meeting was held at the August Lambrecht homestead, one acre in the northwest corner of his farm being exchanged for a lot in the newly formed association. The lots were eighteen feet square and until May 15, 1883, could be purchased for \$1.50 each. After that date they were \$2.50. Four lots in the southeast corner were set aside as a potters field. Originally the annual meetings were scheduled for the first Saturday in March, but in later years have been held on Memorial Day.

Three trustees were chosen to serve. Joseph Forsythe was selected as the first chairman; Rufus Tawney secretary and Herman Steinkraus as the third member. On March 8, 1884 at the annual meeting, August Lambrecht was named the first treasurer.

The charter members of this cemetery association who purchased lots for \$1.50 each were: August Lambrecht, in exchange for one acre of ground, Rufus Tawney, Joseph Forsythe, Fred Rautenberg, Julius Schultz, Chris Schram, R. H. Smith, Frank Birch, D. Kuether Sr., Carl Leisner, Herman Steinkraus, Albert Steinkraus, L. L. Poynter, Charles Ulrich, August Heyer, S. W. Kincaid, George W. Kincaid, I. C. Barnes and L. A. Barnes. The last two names were later cancelled. A revised list of lot owners in 1906 contains 66 names.

At the annual meeting at the Tawney school house on March 11, 1899, the by-laws were amended to raise the price of lots to \$4.50, the report of F. Birch, secretary shows. In May, 1923 they were raised to \$10. R. A. Tawney was secretary of the association for many years. In his report of the meeting at his home October 1, 1883, Mr. Forsythe was authorized to buy a two string barb wire fence for the grounds and August Lambrecht was to build it for \$3. At this meeting the deed to the ground was accepted as acknowledged by Aug. Lambrecht and wife and given to chairman Forsythe to record. The following March the trustees were instructed to meet in Pierce on April 1, to acknowledge deeds to all cemetery lots to date.

In 1894 red cedar stakes were placed to mark lots at a cost of \$3.15. In February, 1895 one dollar was paid for a frame and glass for the plot of the cemetery drawn by hand by W. E. Bishop when he surveyed the land in 1883. The original frame and plat were recently brought to the court house by E. A. Lambrecht, a son of the homesteader on whose land the cemetery was laid out, who later owned the land and disposed of it only last fall. The records show Mr. Bishop received \$5 for making the survey.

In 1895 a fire line was plowed about the grounds and Frank Birch was paid \$4.50 for trees and planting them out. In 1898 a woven wire fence and posts were constructed about the grounds at a cost of \$156.81. The old wooden fence was sold to Robert Ruhlow for \$10.75. Thirty lot owners were assessed \$4.45 each to pay for the new fence. It was also decided to buy a half acre east of the cemetery for hitching posts. In 1910 it was voted to replace the red cedar marking stakes with bricks set one inch above the ground. Another item was \$1.25 for grass seed.

In 1917 the board of trustees elected were all women, Mrs. Mary Voecks, chairman; Mrs. Jane Birch, secretary, and Miss

Sophia Keller, treasurer. A dinner was served May 29 which netted the association \$3. In the succeeding year items for work and improvements at the cemetery show that it was given much care. By this time as much as \$4 and \$5 was paid for cutting the grass.

In 1924 Frank Voecks was instructed to mark all unmarked graves and clean the cemetery. Later he was named caretaker. In 1929 an assessment of one dollar on each lot was levied for upkeep. In 1928 a lawn mower was purchased. In 1933 the lot owners were instructed to take care of their lots. About that time Mr. and Mrs. Frank Voecks moved to Creston and since then the association has not been very active in looking after the cemetery. Mrs. Voecks was said to be the moving spirit in looking after the plot where her parents and many of the early Willow Creek residents were buried. In 1935 through the Pierce County Historical Society this old cemetery was restored.

The present officers are Ernest Lambrecht, chairman; Henry Kuhl, treasurer and Homer Birch secretary. Others who have served as officers not before named were: S. W. Kincaid, L. L. Poynter, M. E. King, Robert Ruhlow, Daniel Kerr, J. R. Smith, Q. H. Mundorf, I. C. Barnes, Theodore Synovec, Fred Synovec and Albert Buss.

The book in which this long time record has been kept is still in good shape and only partly used. It cost \$1.55 including some stationery for the use of the secretary. The foregoing account gives an idea of times and conditions in the early history of our county.

These summaries will be the basis for further narratives. Neither Ernest Lambrecht nor the Pierce County Historical Society retained possession of the

FARM HOME BURNED

A fire, possibly caused by a defective chimney, destroyed the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Birch living south of Foster Tuesday afternoon.

Mrs. Birch on hearing a noise as though something had fallen upstairs, opened the stair door and found the upper rooms all afire.

In no time at all, before help could be summoned the entire structure was burned to the ground. Only a few small pieces of furniture and some clothing was saved by Mrs. Birch, who was alone at the time.

Secretary's Book. It was given back to the Cemetery Association's secretary, Homer Birch. As there was no building dedicated for the storage of any of the written records of the Cemetery Association, those records were kept and maintained by the respective officers of the Cemetery Association at their residence. Unfortunately for him and his family and for the Lambrecht Cemetery Association, its members, and their descendants, a fire

occurred at the Homer Birch residence in January of 1943 as reported in the January 21, 1943 issue of the Pierce County Call newspaper. It was later reported to the members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association that the Secretary's Book of the Cemetery Association had been consumed in the fire and lost forever.

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 1940.

Markers to be Placed in Kahler and Lambrecht Cemeteries

Brass markers for two Pierce County pioneer cemeteries, made possible in the Pierce County Historical Society and the Pierce County Board of Commissioners, arrived and are on display at the Young South bank.

They will be placed on native stone boulders, taken from the Frank Koehler farm and donated by Mr. Koehler.

One which reads as follows is for the Lambrecht cemetery west of Pierce.

Lambrecht Cemetery
1855
Dedicated by Pierce County Historical Society
1940.

The unveiling and dedication of this marker and inscription, sponsored at the cemetery on Sunday afternoon, May 10, August Brodsgaen, grandson of August Lambrecht, who gave the ground for this cemetery, will be the speaker.

Services at the Koehler cemetery will be conducted Sunday afternoon.

May 28, with County Attorney E. D. Beach giving the dedicatory address according to present plans.

The inscription on the Koehler cemetery marker reads:

Koehler Cemetery
1852
Dedicated by Pierce County Historical Society
1940.

The markers are of specially insensitizable bronze, inscriptions in the elements and are of fine granite on the part of the Historical Society to search the archives of the first pioneers, who were buried in the new and unexplored spaces of this section of Nebraska.

Mrs. E. W. Hanson, president of the Pierce County Historical Society, has been urging in her efforts to sponsor the marking of the cemetery in the early history of the county. Plans and arrangements for these dedicatory have been made by Mrs. Hanson.

The next historical milestone of the Lambrecht Cemetery was the placement of a large rock/boulder adjacent to the main entrance to the cemetery. The placement and dedication of this rock/boulder was under the auspices of the Pierce



County Historical Society. In the previous newspaper article of 1937, it is stated that the Lambrecht Cemetery was restored in 1935 under the leadership of the Pierce County Historical Society. At present, the implication of that statement is unknown. Had the Cemetery not been maintained? Had the efforts of the members of the Pierce County Historical Society prompted the descendants of the early settlers buried in the Cemetery to undertake its restoration? As we will see, history does repeat itself. The placement and dedication of the rock/boulder did receive proper attention in the

To Unveil Stone Sunday Afternoon

DEDICATORY SERVICES TO BE HELD SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT LAMBRECHT CEMETERY.

Services of a dedicatory nature will be held at the Lambrecht cemetery, west of Pierce, next Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

The unveiling of the stone which honors pioneer as a memorial to the pioneers who were laid to rest in the early days will take place at this time. A. E. Brodsgaen making the address. Mr. Brodsgaen, a native son, is the grandson of the late August Lambrecht, who gave "God's Acre" from his homestead to the Willow Creek community as a burial lot. This plot was called the "Lambrecht cemetery" in the early days but changed later to Lambrecht cemetery in honor of the donor.

Mrs. L. E. Wallon will have charge of the program which will be as follows:

Readings by Mrs. Art Leisner, Edna Wallon and Ella May Lester.
Duet by Elmer and Helen Busholt and Beverly and Ansel Heyer.
Song by the Cant Society.
Address—A. E. Brodsgaen.
Song—Gathered Males O'ercome.
Unveiling of the Stone.
Children of the community to march in review after the unveiling and place flowers at the base of the monument.

An invitation is extended to the public to join in these services.

Stone Unveiled Last Sunday

LARGE CROWD ATTEND DEDICATORY SERVICES AT LAMBRECHT CEMETERY.

The unveiling and dedication of the large granite stone and bronze plaque at the Lambrecht cemetery last Sunday afternoon was attended by a large gathering of people. Besides those living in the community where the cemetery is located, there were many relatives and friends who have their own of the pioneer days buried in the plot, from Plainville, Oriskany, Diamond, Tilden, Norfolk and Pierce.

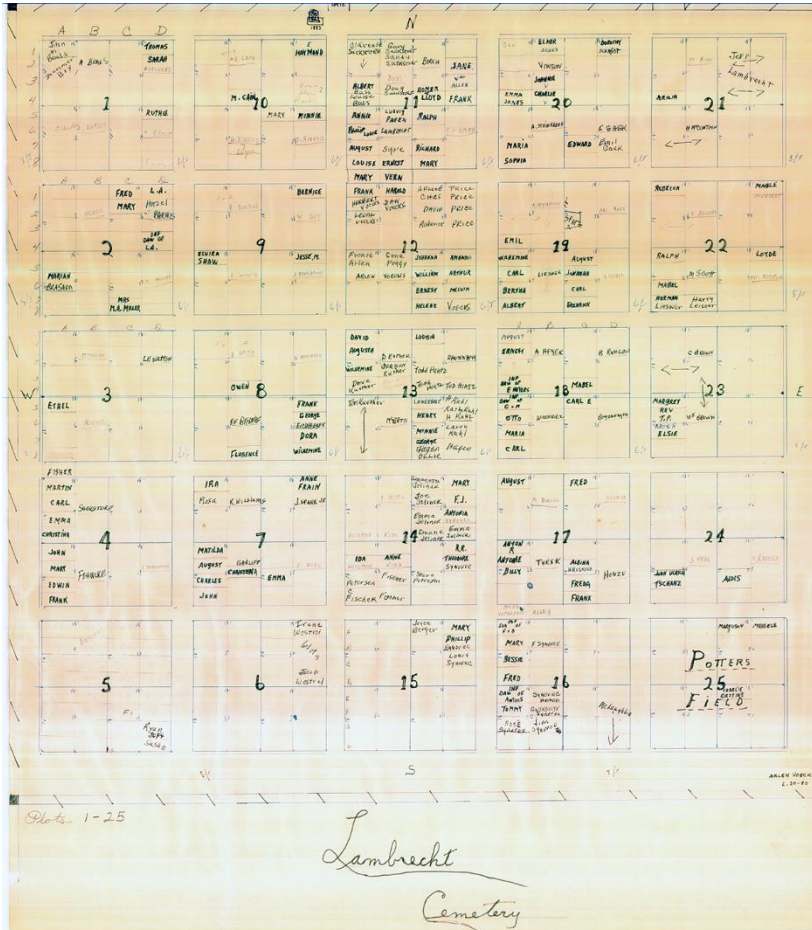
The program was under the direction of Mrs. L. E. Wallon. It was carried out in an admirable manner, as published in local papers last week. There was one addition, however, the reading of a very appropriate memorial poem by Mrs. E. H. Brodsgaen, which was inadvertently omitted in last week's printed program. The former plaque reads:

LAMBRECHT CEMETERY
1855
Dedicated by Pierce County Historical Society
1940.

The dedicatory address by A. E. Brodsgaen, grandson of the pioneer, August Lambrecht, who gave the burial plot to the Willow Creek community from his homestead, was highly spoken of and received many commendations from the large audience.

Pierce Leader newspaper published May 9, 1940 Pierce County and the Call newspapers published May 16 and May 23 of 1940.

The next milestone for the Lambrecht Cemetery was the creation of a mapping system for the burial spaces in the Cemetery by Arlen Voecks, a grandson of August and Louise Lambrecht. Prior to 1980, it appears that the only plat/map of the Lambrecht Cemetery was the original Bishop plat which had been created shortly after the formation of the Pleasant View Cemetery in 1883. Initially, the names of the original owners of the various Lots in the Cemetery were written into their respective Lots. Remember, each Lot consisted of eight burial spaces.



Each Block consisted of four Lots. Over time, the secretary, or another officer of the Cemetery, would draw burial spaces in the Lots and write, especially in Blocks 11 and 12, into the burial spaces, the names of the persons buried in those burial spaces. Also, initially, Lots were offered for sale. Again, Lots consisted of eight burial spaces. By 1980, the members of the Cemetery Association realized that the burial spaces should be offered for sale, not the Lots. The question then was how to identify the burial spaces. The solution was

to devise a "column" and "row" designation for each Block. Each Block would have four columns identified as A, B, C, and D across the top of each Block and each Block would have eight rows, identified as 1-8. The upper left burial space in each Block would be identified as burial space A-1 and the burial space in the lower right corner of the Block would be identified as D-8. Now the unoccupied and unsold burial spaces could be located and offered for sale. Also, the names of all burials and all burial spaces purchased up to that date were noted. Over time, this plat was updated with burials and burial space purchases.

The next eventful occurrence enhancing the appearance of the Cemetery was the erection in 1983, the centennial year of the Cemetery, of an entrance arch at the main entrance into the Cemetery and adjacent to the rock/boulder erected at that location in 1940. This entrance arch was given to the Lambrecht Cemetery Association by Herbert and Leona Voecks. Herbert was a grandson of August and Louise Lambrecht.

