

TOMBSTONE RESTORATION PROJECT

Lambrecht Cemetery

Pierce County, Nebraska

In September and October of 1858, John E. McMullan, a surveyor in the employ of the United States, conducted a survey of the subdivision lines of Township 26 North, Range 4 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian in the Territory of Nebraska as part of his survey of Pierce County. From the Field Notes of his survey, we know that the surveyor “drove charred stake and set post in mound as per instructions for corners of sections ...” and “drove charred stake and set post in mound as per instructions for quarter section corners” on each of the 36 sections of land in the aforementioned township surveying the township from the southeast corner of the township to the northwest corner of the township.

At the end of the surveyor’s survey of the aforementioned Township 26 North and Range 4, the surveyor gave his “General Description” of Township 26 North, Range 4 as follows:

“The quality of the land in this Township is of a very poor kind, consisting mostly of sand ridges. There is no timber and but very little water in the Township. It is unfit for cultivation or settlement.”



The quality of the soil in the acre of ground in Township 26 North and Range 4 upon which sits the Lambrecht Cemetery has not improved with the passage of time. It is considered “light” soil. That means it is composed of a relatively large concentration of sand versus clay. Consequently, any heavy object placed upon it, without proper footings, will eventually sink into the ground. Unfortunately, the sinking is not uniform causing the object to tilt or lean as it is slowly sinking. Most of the tombstones that were placed on gravesites in the Lambrecht Cemetery, by 2020, were tilted and leaning. Past attempts at straightening

them had been made and were mostly, in the long term, unsuccessful. The minutes of the annual meeting of the members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association in 1999 reflect that the issue of broken tombstones was discussed and at the annual meeting in 2004, leaning tombstones were again discussed and the decision made that the families of the person buried whose tombstone is leaning should be responsible for its repair. Evidently, that approach did not work. The 2013 and 2014 minutes indicate that there was again discussion regarding the repair and straightening of tombstones. A cost estimate had been obtained but the cost for the Lambrecht Cemetery Association to undertake this task was determined not to be financially feasible. In 2016, the members present at the annual meeting knew that leaning tombstones was an issue negatively reflecting on the overall appearance of the Lambrecht Cemetery. However, there was no easy answer to the problem.

Finally, during the winter season of 2021, the officers of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association, recognizing the overall general appearance of the Lambrecht Cemetery needed to be improved, the first step in that process being the restoration of leaning and tilting tombstones and the cleaning of any tombstone which had weathered over time, agreed that action needed to be undertaken to resolve these issues.

Prior to 2021, through attendance at several seminars, one of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association members had become aware of Dennis Allen and Cris Nagle of Des Moines, Iowa. Their passion was tombstone restoration and cleaning. They were asked to visit the Lambrecht Cemetery which they graciously did in May of 2018. They demonstrated to the Lambrecht Cemetery Association officers and members present the techniques that they had developed in restoring and cleaning of tombstones. Their visit and their discussions planted the seeds for the eventual tombstone restoration project to



be undertaken by the members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association. If only Dennis and Cris lived closer to the Lambrecht Cemetery.

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seeds had been planted. Would germinate? Fortunately for this project, there appeared in the May 2020 issue of the Norfolk Daily News newspaper an article telling the story of Jerry Nordeen of Norfolk, Nebraska and his company called Monument Solutions. The purpose Mr. Nordeen and his company was raise, re-level, and repair cemetery monuments. These were the services needed by the Lambrecht Cemetery and the person and company to do it were within a drivable distance of the Lambrecht Cemetery.

Contact with Mr. Nordeen was made by a member of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association reference its retention of his and his company's services to reset and clean up tombstones in the Lambrecht Cemetery. Mr. Nordeen, after a cursory inspection of the Lambrecht Cemetery, agreed to add the Lambrecht Cemetery to his company's project list. However, he would not be able to perform any work until 2021 or after. But before actually engaging Mr. Nordeen, the Lambrecht Cemetery Association needed to develop its course of action.



That course of action evolved into the need for Mr. Nordeen to compile an inventory of all tombstones in the Lambrecht Cemetery that were in need of repair, resetting, and cleaning. Once the inventory was completed, then Mr. Nordeen would estimate the costs to repair, reset, and clean those tombstones which cost estimate would be given to the officers of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association. Those costs would need to be covered by a fund-raising campaign by the Lambrecht Cemetery Association.

On April 30, 2021, Mr. Nordeen commenced his inventory of the tombstones in the Lambrecht Cemetery in need of his services. Based upon that inventory, Mr. Nordeen estimated the costs of his services for each tombstone in need of restoration, which totaled at least 77 tombstones. That cost estimate was approximately \$11,000.00. Now the officers of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association knew the scope of this project and its estimated costs. Unfortunately, the monetary assets of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association would not cover these estimated costs. The fund-raising campaign of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association needed to kick off.

This fund-raising campaign would consist of letters written and sent in July of 2021 to the members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association. Similar letters were

LAMBRECHT CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
OF PIERCE COUNTY, NEBRASKA
(A NEBRASKA CEMETERY ASSOCIATION)

Trustees
Betty Leisner – President
Clerk/Secretary – Vacant


July 2021

Trustees
Tom Kuether – Vice President
Dori Walton – Treasurer

RE: Tombstone Restoration

Dear Lambrecht Cemetery Association Member:

Please be advised that you are receiving this letter due to your ownership of one or more burial spaces in the Lambrecht Cemetery. As you can see from the photos, our cemetery is not presenting itself at its best. Numerous tombstones are leaning and some are to the point of falling over.



Monument Solutions, LLC, a cemetery preservation company located in Norfolk, Nebraska, has conducted, at the behest of the Trustees/Officers of the Association, an inventory of all of the tombstones located in the Lambrecht Cemetery. Monument Solutions, LLC indicates that there are at least 75 tombstones that are in need of attention/restoration. The cost to reset and restore those tombstones is estimated to be \$11,000.00.

The Lambrecht Cemetery Association receives no county or city funding. Its finances come from donations received from a few loyal Members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association. Those donations help to cover the annual cost of mowing the grass in the Lambrecht Cemetery. Unfortunately, there is not enough money in our treasury to cover the cost of the restoration. As Members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association, we need to come together to raise funds to cover the expense of the tombstone restoration so that we will have a cemetery/resting place we can be proud of.

The Lambrecht Cemetery Association Trustees/Officers have established a Lambrecht Cemetery Association Restoration account at Elkhorn Valley Bank in Pierce, Nebraska, for the express purpose of paying for the cost of restoring the headstones in the cemetery. Donations to that account are needed. Donations are welcome from individuals, families, companies, or in memory of a loved one. Let's all work together to make this happen. Donations may be sent to the following:



Dori Walton, Treasurer
54282 Highway 13
Foster, NE 68765
402.329.4247
walton@ptcnet.net

You may contact me at the above address, telephone number, or email address if you have any questions or concerns, or if you know of others having an interest in making a donation to this project. Rick and Dori Walton have jump started this fund with a donation of \$1,000.00 in honor of those who have been laid to rest and have no family to help cover the cost of their tombstone restoration.

Lambrecht Cemetery Association
Trustees/Officers

written and sent to known descendants of those buried in the Lambrecht Cemetery and to descendants of the Lambrecht and Wachholtz families, many of their ancestors being buried in the Lambrecht Cemetery.

An article appeared in the August 12, 2021 issue of the Norfolk Daily News newspaper of Norfolk, Nebraska whose coverage area included Pierce County, Nebraska. An article also in the September 30, 2021 issue of the Pierce County Leader newspaper published in Pierce, Nebraska. The campaign was successful.

Lambrecht Cemetery Needs Your Help



The Lambrecht Cemetery is located 10 miles west of Pierce on 854 Road, the Pierce/Neligh road. Many of the grave markers are either broken or leaning. The Lambrecht Cemetery Association has undertaken a restoration project and is currently raising funds to complete the project. Seventy-five markers need attention at an estimated cost of \$11,000.

Be it family or friends, nearly everyone in the Pierce area has a loved one interred at The Lambrecht Cemetery (also known as The Tawney Cemetery) located 10 miles west of Pierce on the Pierce/Neligh road.

Due to the passage of time and "Mother Nature", a majority of the cemetery headstones are leaning, to the point of falling, and in need of being reset. The estimated cost of the project would be between \$11,000.00 and \$12,000.00.

Donations from Lambrecht Cemetery Association members have resulted in raising nearly 75 percent of the funds needed. The funds are being deposited in a Lambrecht Cemetery Restoration account at Elkhorn Valley Bank in Pierce.

The Cemetery Association is now reaching out to the community, extended family, and friends of loved ones, to raise the remaining funds to complete the restoration project.

Donations from families, friends, companies, or organizations are welcome, and can be made at: Elkhorn Valley Bank, 105 S. Second Street, Pierce, NE 68767; or mailed to, Dori Walton, Treasurer, 54282 Highway 13, Foster, NE 68765.



Many of the stone markers are in need of repair. Some are broken and many are leaning to the point of tipping over. The cemetery was established in 1883 when August and Louise Lambrecht donated an acre of land for use as the cemetery.

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KATHRYN HARRIS/DAILY NEWS

A GATE surrounds Lambrecht Cemetery in rural Pierce County. The older graves in the cemetery are the focus of a restoration project for which funds are being raised.

JACK HOLLIMAN

Tim & Lynn Spatz
Lois Theasmeyer
Lee Krehne

Dave & Raynee Price
Rod Price

Wayne & Teresa Hansen

Susan Ryan Memorials donated by Jeff Ryan

Merlin & Sharon Lindahl

Lori Thoutt

In memory of Janice Kuhl Carstens
(by her children Dean, Jeff, Kathi, Rhonda)

NORFOLK DAILY NEWS

THURSDAY August 12, 2021

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"We all want to be buried in a cemetery that looks nice."

GRAVE SITUATION



Loren Lindahl of Wahoo, formerly of Weausa, talks about areas of the Lambrecht Cemetery in rural Pierce County that are in most need of attention. Lindahl has ancestors buried in the cemetery and is helping with efforts to raise funds for the restoration and resetting of about 75 grave

Cemetery restoration project leads to search for descendants

By KATHRYN HARRIS
kharris@norfolkdailynews.com

Efforts are underway to improve a nearly 140-year-old cemetery in rural Pierce County.

The search is on for descendants of the early settlers who are buried at Lambrecht Cemetery — located about 10 miles west of Pierce along the Pierce-Neligh road — in hopes that they might be interested in helping with the project.

"Essentially there are numerous orphaned tombstones," said Loren Lindahl, whose great-grandparents donated land to the cemetery. "There is no family left to keep them up."

The cemetery was established in 1883, after early settlers August and Louise Lambrecht lost two small children to diphtheria. No cemetery existed in the area at that time, so the Lambrechts — as Lindahl has read — buried their children in a tree line on their homestead.

Talk among the neighbors began the following spring about organizing a cemetery. The Lambrechts donated an acre for such a use, and then neighbors formed what was then known as the Pleasant View Cemetery Association.

The Lambrechts' children were disinherited, and their remains were relocated to their new burial plots. Other early residents of that area who died before the establishment of Lambrecht Cemetery were disinterred from their temporary graves and relocated, as well, Lindahl said.

"Even though the Lambrecht children were the first buried here, there are graves of some who died before them here because of that reason," Lindahl said.

Over the years, the Lambrecht Cemetery also was referred to as the Tawney Cemetery to reflect its location to the nearby Tawney schoolhouse. In the late

1930s, some Lambrecht relatives and other members of the association changed its name to Lambrecht Cemetery to honor the original family buried there, Lindahl said.

The grounds include space for up to 800 burials, but only about 130 burials have occurred there, according to records Lindahl has found. It continues to be used today. One of its most recent interments occurred in 2019.

Lambrecht Cemetery Association members are those who have purchased burial spaces. Lindahl said upkeep at the cemetery has been done through assessments on lots that were purchased.

"I'd say within the last 40 years or so, there hasn't been any assessment, but they have asked for donations or certain people have donated to the cemetery association, and that money has been used for maintenance," Lindahl said. "That maintenance has just been applied toward mowing the grass, trimming the trees. The fence was money that was donated, and the labor was donated."

But now many of the gravemarkers and tombstones are in need of resetting and restoration. A total of 75 monuments are in need of attention. An estimate for the project by Monument Solutions of Norfolk put the cost at roughly \$11,000.

"As you can see — our cemetery is not presenting itself at its best," the association's treasurer, Dori Walton, said in a letter to association members. "Numerous tombstones are leaning, and some are to the point of falling over."

The letter sent out to members of the cemetery association to let them know about the efforts to raise the estimated funds to complete the project, as well as the establishment of the cemetery restoration fund at Elkhorn Valley Bank in Pierce.

►Please see CEMETERY, page 8

Cemetery

Continued from Page 1—

Lindahl said he knows Lambrecht Cemetery's situation is not unique. Many rural cemeteries are governed by an association that relies on assessments, donations and memorials for upkeep, and as those cemeteries fill up or spaces are no longer purchased, the funds for upkeep dry up.

Lindahl and members of the cemetery board also are hoping to find descendants of early settlers that might be willing to donate to the project. Lindahl said his cousin in Las Vegas has taken on the task to find some of the descendants through family searches using online genealogy resources.

"Those ancestors' tombstones most likely need restoration," he said.

With the efforts underway, the association already has raised roughly \$4,000, about a quarter of which came from Rick and Dori Walton in honor of those who have been laid to rest but have no family to help cover the cost of their tombstone restoration.

Lindahl — who does not intend to be buried in Lambrecht Cemetery one day — said he is passionate about seeing the project completed because he and others he knows have ancestors and loved ones laid to their eternal rest, and he wants to make sure their final resting place is well-kept.

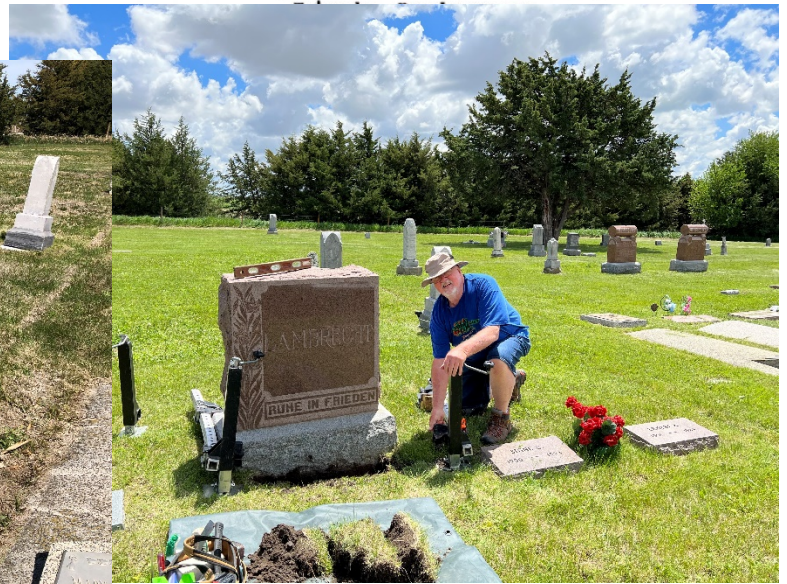
"We all want to be buried in a cemetery that looks nice," Lindahl said.

announced

Approximately \$18,000.00 was raised from these 43 individuals/groups of donors:

Doug Suckstorf
Bob & Joyce Dvorak
Warren & Vickie Peterson
Ron & Shari Riedel
Arnold (Bud) & Maxine Gutz
Gary & Sandy Suckstorf
Larry Wachholtz
Gaylen & Karen Koehn

In the Spring of 2022, Mr. Nordeen and his assistant began his work on the Lambrecht Cemetery Tombstone



Restoration Project. By the middle of the Summer of 2022, it was completed.



For now, after many years of talking about the issue of leaning and titling tombstones in the Lambrecht Cemetery, the Tombstone Restoration Project is complete. However, the members of the Lambrecht Cemetery Association know that there will be repairs and resetting of tombstones to be performed in the future. The donations received and not utilized to pay for the services of Mr. Nordeen and his company, Monument Solutions for this Project, have been set aside in a special account for future capital improvement projects for the Lambrecht Cemetery.

We who have ancestors buried in the Lambrecht Cemetery can again say that we are proud that they are buried in such a beautiful, well-kept cemetery.