



Madison County Genealogical Society



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Best Cemetery is located at T 24 N, R 2 W Section 23. It is located 1/2 mile north of Hwy. 275 on 61st St., 1 mile west and 1/2 mile north. It is located on a hilltop and is quite visible with a new sign and flagpole.

History of "Best Cemetery" by Cleo Deuel

A brief history of the Best Cemetery, as told to me by my father Erwin Deuel and as I remember it during my life time which so far has been 87 years.

It was organized in 1891. There had been people buried there before that. My grandparents Frank and Cynthia Deuel lost 3 children before that and a 7 year old son in the 1890s. The story goes, I don't know the date, that a man traveling through the county on horseback stayed over night at someone's place and died during the night and I guess he must have been the first person to be buried there but I'm sure no one knows just where.

I think the name Best Cemetery came from the people owning the land at that time. There are quite of number of Bests buried there, some just recently.

Shortly after World War II my father and others purchased extra land on the east and south so there could be a road all the way around. The fence was moved and replaced and I think some grading done on the south side. There also was a tool shed and two outhouses in the south west corner. My grandpa Hunter and some other old fellows tore these buildings down as they were no longer needed like they were in the horse and buggy days. The tool shed had contained shovels, scythes and push lawn mowers, the reel type. For years no one bothered these things, then they started to come up missing. One sad thing happened when grandpa and the others were working on the buildings. One old fellow fell and was hurt. He later died from his injuries.

There had been cedar trees and pine trees planted about the cemetery. The cedars have been dying off. Bob Groninger and I planted a row of pines on the north and east side. All but a very few have survived.

Several years ago my late wife Lurene said we needed a sign with the name of the cemetery. We looked into and discarded the idea of a metal sign over the entry gate. We heard of a fellow who made white letters from cement and were mounted on a metal frame. We looked into it and it seemed to be what we needed. Several people donated to the cost. Dan Flanigan, my daughter's husband, built a frame and he and others poured a cement platform. I purchased a flag pole and flag. Bob Groninger and I installed it. We fly it during Memorial Day weekend and also during a funeral.

We have seven Civil War veterans, all Union vets, one Spanish American war veteran, two World War I, six World War II, one Korean War, and one Vietnam war veteran buried here.

We have an annual meeting in the Spring before Memorial Day. We have investments drawing interest and receive donations from time to time. We also have a cemetery board. It varies in number. I have been president for some time. Bob and Shirley Groninger take care of the finances and Bob also looks after the mowing. I have also been putting flags on Veteran's graves for Memorial Day weekend.

The half mile county road leading to the cemetery is now shared by two households and a bunch of trucks hauling clay from south of the cemetery.

I remember as a child we had annual meetings in the Born Schoolhouse on Decoration Day as it was known then. There was always a large crowd. If someone could make it up the hill to the cemetery without having to change gears from high they really bragged about their car. Al Ommerman usually ran the meeting, we sang songs and someone might give a talk. Also Clyde Best played the piano. At least one meeting I remember three Civil War soldiers were up on the stage. After World War II the meetings sort of petered out.

I was always a little surprised my grandpa Deuel was not one of the original board members, as he was one of the early school teachers in Madison County. They lived one half mile west of the north end of the cemetery. It is a section line but no road was ever opened. Also one half mile east of the cemetery a farm owned by Duane Sellin was homesteaded by Martin Brubaker. His wife was grandpa Deuel's sister.

There had been a lot of volunteer cedars growing in the fence around the cemetery. No one had taken the time to take them out. Someone came up to the cemetery and they were all gone. Ernest Sellin, Dwain's father and some of his grandsons had come up from their farm just east of the cemetery and had cut and removed them.

Cemetery Board, June 20, 1891: Robert McKibbon, John Ray, Joseph Foak, Alvin Low, John S. Craig, D. A. Ommerman, Marisee Best, David Best, Martin Brubaker.

Some of the Veterans buried here are: Bill Craig, WW II, Joann Craig, Legion Auxiliary, Francis Henderson 1861-1865, William Low, War of the Republic, William Moxley, WW I, John Wessel, WW II, Valma Light, Cuba-Spanish American, Joseph Light, Civil War 1861-1865, John Ray, WW II, Harold Groninger, WW II, Frank Best, WW I, Robert McKibbon 1861-1865, John Wollert, 1861-1865, Charles Fitch, 1861-1865, John Flennken, 1861-1865, Reuben Best, WW II, Jack E. Best, Korean War?, and Leonard Houfek, ?, and Floyd "Bud" Ray, WW II.

I have a list of the original board members and also a list of the names of all of the veterans. There are thirty people buried at the Best Cemetery that are of my blood relations. There are at least one or two burials a year.

Mortuary Records from Norfolk, Madison Co. Nebraska 1887 – 1904

Home for Funerals Records of Burials at Best Cemetery

Date	Deceased	Age	Resided	Ordered By
21 Feb 1887	Gertrude Ommerman	8 mo.		A. Ommerman
11 Jan 1888	Child	4 mo.		John Ray
3 Feb 1890	Wm. Craig	79		John R. Craig

7 Feb 1890	Saml. V. Lowe			Alvin Lowe
9 Apr 1891	Geo. Deuel	1 mo.		Frank Deuel
8 Dec 1891	James Buffington	25		L. J. Lowe
29 Dec 1891	Etta Wiltse	21		Joe Martin
12 Jul 1892	Infant Girl			Al Ommerman
3 Feb 1893	Jane Best	30	8 mi. East	Gene Best
9 Feb 1893	Lloyd Deuel	8	7 mi. West	Frank Deuel
13 Mar 1894	Surilda Carrabini		Norfolk	Owen Carrabini
28 Sept 1894	Mrs. Anna Craig	24		Adrian Craig
10 May 1895	Chas. Miller	88	6 mi. North	Robert McKibbon
20 Aug 1897	Frank Lulow	13	6 ½ mi. NW	Henry Lulow
22 Dec 1897	Mother of Mrs. Hattie Craig	91	Penn.	John Craig
28 Dec 1897	Otto Buffington			W. Lowe
22 Jan 1898	A. C. Buffington	69	St. Paul, Ne.	John Buffington
4 Jul 1898	Chas. Fitch	56		Wm. Fitch
17 Jul 1899	Hattie Best	25		Eugene Best
4 Mar 1901	Frank M. Holbrook	3 mo.	Ommerman farm	Al Holbrook
14 Apr 1901	John Best Sr.		Oklahoma	Madison Best
19 Sept 1901	Infant Girl	2 day	Valley Prec.	A. B. McKibbon