

# Empress Cemetery Report, 2025-Nov-27

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This document contains links to pages on the [EmpressCemetery.ca](http://EmpressCemetery.ca) website.

Action items are in Red.

## 1. Brief history of the Empress Cemetery

1. 1914?: The Village of Empress requested a grant of 10 acres from the federal government for the purposes of establishing a cemetery.
2. 1915-Jul-08: The federal government granted to the Village of Empress, 10 acres, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Legal Subdivision 1 of 4-23-29-W3, in the Rural Municipality of Deer Forks #232, Saskatchewan.
  1. This is the far southeast 10 acre square in the section. 10 acres = 1/64 of a section, 1/8 of a mile (660 feet or 201 metres), to a side.
  2. Since the land was granted for cemetery purposes, no property taxes have ever been levied on the land.
  3. The R.M. of Deer Forks has never had anything to do with the Empress Cemetery. They did eventually start to maintain the road to the cemetery.
3. 1916-Mar-05: First recorded burial, [Vera Juinata Clark](#).
4. 1917-Jun-21: Cemetery survey completed.
  1. The survey designated each plot to be 10 feet square, which is space for two graves.
  2. In the beginning, no one recorded where in the plot people were buried.
  3. About 1958, they started saying whether a grave was on the north or south side of the plot in the Cemetery Register, and they went back in the Cemetery Register and tried to specify that for past burials if they could.
  4. A few years later someone decided to number these north & south sub-plots 1 & 2 in a systematic way. For plots increasing in number designation going north, the south sub-plot was 1 and the north sub-plot was 2. For plots increasing in number designation going south, it is reversed, with the south sub-plot being 2 and the north sub-plot being 1. See page 6 for example.
  5. When they first started using sub-plot numbers, they didn't put 1 or 2, but 1S, 1N, 2S, or 2N. Clearly they knew that there was potential for confusion.
  6. The confusion as been there ever since, as evidenced by the 2000 directory in which one third of the subplot numbers are wrong.
  7. My new map & directory uses the 1 & 2 sub-plot labelling, but corrected those errors as well as others.
5. [Potter's Field or "public" area](#) is in the southwest corner of the cemetery where some grave depressions can be seen. The Cemetery Register called it Block A.

## 2. Legal

Apparently it needs to be said that the cemetery is located in Saskatchewan and that Saskatchewan regulations apply to it. It does not matter who owns and operates a cemetery or where they are located.

## 3. Cemetery Registers. See page 4, *Saskatchewan Cemeteries Regulations, 2001*, Parts 24 & 25.

1. Two Registers are required:
  1. Register containing: the name and address of every buyer of plots, and a record of every transfer of plots. This has **not** been done, even though it is required by both the *Empress Cemetery Bylaw*, part 3 (2), and the *Saskatchewan Cemeteries Regulations*.
  2. Register containing:
    1. The deceased person's information: name, gender, date of death, plot, date of burial, and date of birth if known. This was done from 1916-2021.
    2. Details if the burial is not deeper than required. The Cemetery Register does not contain any information if this occurred or not.
    3. Particulars of disinterments. Some were indicated in the Cemetery Register, some were not, which caused confusion about who was actually buried in the cemetery.
  3. The information from these two registers is to be available to anyone on request.
2. **I recommend that both Registers be brought up-to-date and kept so, especially because it is required by law.**

#### 4. Empress Cemetery Bylaw 2018-08

1. **Empress Cemetery Bylaw Part 5(2) needs to be corrected.** It currently requires a burial permit that is issued specifically by the Province of Alberta. That is not only not necessary, but is in fact irrelevant because the cemetery is in Saskatchewan. As far as the cemetery is concerned what matters is that there is a valid burial permit issued by the registrar where the death occurred.
  1. See page 5, *Saskatchewan Vital Statistics Act, 2009*, Parts 42 & 56. Burial permits are issued by the jurisdiction where the person's death is registered.
  2. The *Saskatchewan Cemeteries Regulations* only specifies when burial permits are **not** required: When re-intering human remains that have been disinterred, and intering foetal remains if/when a burial permit is not issued. Only proof of permission to disinter human remains are required to reinter disinterred human remains.
2. **Cemetery Bylaw part 6 (1). Permit & fee for installing a headstone, marker, or monument. I recommend that this permit and fee be discontinued because it serves no purpose.**

The Village:

1. Does not install monuments,
2. Does no maintenance on monuments,
3. Does not accept any responsibility for monuments, and
4. Does not keep any record of monuments.

#### 5. **Damage done to monuments, covers, and white crosses by mowers.**

1. Monuments and grave covers have been damaged by mowers running into and over them.  
See photo online.
  1. The blades "scalp" grave covers and otherwise damage headstones and foot stones.
  2. The weight of the mowers & tractors have broken both stone and fibreglass grave covers, especially when a grave is sunken under the cover.
2. **I recommend that no vehicle of any kind be allowed to drive over monuments, grave covers, and foot stones.**
3. Small white rebar crosses that were constructed and placed by a former Village of Empress employee around the year 2000:
  1. Many have been mowed over, breaking and mangling them.
  2. Others have been removed or moved to incorrect locations, probably by those mowing.
4. **I recommend that those mowing in the cemetery do not move or touch any grave marker of any kind, not even temporarily.**

#### 6. **Volunteer activities**

1. Past year
  1. New Map & Directory. Corrections and up-to-date compared to old map & directory.
  2. [EmpressCemetery.ca](http://EmpressCemetery.ca) website created to publish the new map & directory. The website has expanded from there to provide more cemetery information and genealogical research done on those buried in the cemetery.
  3. Facebook Page created to keep the public informed and to request assistance. It was useful in getting in touch with family members of some of the deceased.
  4. Cut back trees & bushes. Uncovered headstones & covers. Dug up and chopped off roots to prevent growth in unwanted areas.
  5. Picked up garbage, removed scattered white crosses and pieces of white crosses.
  6. Removed unsightly & broken decorations & flowers.
  7. Removed funeral home grave markers **if** there is a headstone, and **if** the marker is broken, unreadable, or causes a problem for trimming. If a headstone is present, such a marker is redundant.
  8. **Marking unmarked graves.** Gave up the idea of marking with large stones because of the labour involved and that they would not look good. I still want to find a low cost way to permanently mark graves with markers that cannot be easily damaged or moved.
  9. Made [Concrete Headstones](#): 10 so far in the cemetery. \$50 for small, \$80 for large, charging for materials & tools only. Will start again in Spring 2026 if there are any orders. I can only make them if they are paid for by someone.

10. Headstone Repair: Repaired three broken headstones. Remounted two headstones that fell over. Reattached 11 engraved stone plates to grave covers with bolts, because they had been repeatedly glued in the past, and still kept coming off.
11. Headstone cleaning, removing lichen. Using safe tools and detergent to not damage the stone. After cleaning, I spray on a biological solution that kills lichen and continue to protect against it. It costs a lot and can only be bought from one Canadian online retailer, who is in Ontario. \$110.20 for 1 gallon.
12. Footstones: Found an old photo during genealogical research that lead me to find a couple's individual stones that were now under the surface of the ground and I raised them. Levelled other footstones in the cemetery.
13. Repaired fences around graves.
14. Filled in sunken graves and low areas.
15. Trimmed grass around graves and cemetery fence.

2. Future plans

1. Continue maintenance and repair like above.
2. Continue digging up and chopping off roots to prevent growth in unwanted areas.
3. Organize a spring work bee for after the Village mows.
  1. Using push mowers & trimmers to cut grass around graves, so the Village doesn't have to.
  2. Former CAO Debbie Ross was concerned about safety with these work bees, but I don't know exactly what. What I will address:
    1. Rocks get thrown up by mowers & trimmers. Those using such power equipment should wear long pants, wear eye and/or face protection, and work well away from all others.
    2. Some monuments are not attached to their bases. Only one that I know of presents a safety hazard, and I will be fixing that.
    3. No picking up trash without wearing gloves, especially broken glass.
  3. **I request that the Village give me as much advanced notice as possible for when they plan to do their spring mow, so the work bee can be organized to occur the weekend right after.**
4. Righting 5 heavy headstones that fell over. Re-level their bases and put them back. I bought a chain hoist and constructed a tripod for it. Such a device has been successfully used by a cemetery volunteer in the northeastern USA, and he has videos on YouTube showing it. He provided instructions and advice to me for this tripod hoist.
5. Levelling headstones and covers.
6. Attach headstones to their bases.
7. Filling in sunken graves, including ones with covers.

## 7. Costs

1. So far I've spent a total of \$2019.21 on materials & tools.
2. I have received \$1100 in donations: \$880 for concrete headstones, \$220 for other purposes.
3. I don't like to solicit donations and have not done so.

**Saskatchewan**  
**The Cemeteries Regulations, 2001**  
being  
Chapter C-4.01 Reg 1 (effective November 1, 2001) as amended  
by Saskatchewan Regulations 15/2011 and 37/2015.  
<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/1014>

**PART IV**  
**Documents and Records**

**Register respecting interment rights**

**24(1)** An owner shall keep a register in which the owner shall enter:

- (a) the name and address of every buyer of interment rights in the cemetery; and
- (b) a record of every transfer of interment rights in a lot in the cemetery.

**(2)** Information from the register is to be available to any person on request.

**Register of interments**

**25(1)** An owner shall maintain a register, separate from the register described in section 24, and shall record in it:

- (a) with respect to every deceased person whose human remains are interred in the cemetery:
  - (i) the person's name;
  - (ii) the location of interment;
  - (iii) the date of interment;
  - (iv) the date of death and the gender of the deceased person; and
  - (v) the date of birth, if known;
- (b) if the coverage over the outer burial container is less than the coverage required pursuant to section 32, the depth of that coverage together with a brief statement setting out the reasons; and
- (c) the particulars of every disinterment or removal of any human remains interred in the cemetery.

**(2)** An owner shall maintain a register of cremated human remains interred or scattered in the cemetery, if the owner has been paid for or has authorized interment or scattering, and shall record in it:

- (a) with respect to every deceased person whose cremated human remains are interred or scattered in the cemetery:
  - (i) the person's name;
  - (ii) the location of interment, if applicable;
  - (iii) the date of interment or scattering;
  - (iv) the date of death and the gender of the deceased person; and
  - (v) the date of birth, if known; and
- (b) the particulars of every disinterment or removal of any cremated human remains interred in the cemetery.

**(3)** The records required pursuant to this section must be available to any person during reasonable business hours on request.

# **Saskatchewan**

## **The Vital Statistics Act, 2009**

being

Chapter V-7.21 of the Statutes of Saskatchewan, 2009 (portions effective August 31, 2009; and December 6, 2010) as amended by the Statutes of Saskatchewan, 2013, c.21; 2014, c.11; 2015, c.26; 2016, c.7; 2017, c.23; 2018, c.7 and c.49; 2020, c.2; 2021, c.16; and 2023, c.28.

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/28725>

### **PART V**

#### **Registration of Deaths**

##### **Issuance and handling of burial permits**

42(1) After receiving a statement and a medical certificate of death with respect to a death, the registrar may issue to the person who submitted the statement a burial permit that sets out the particulars of the death.

(2) After the particulars of a death and confirmation of receipt of the medical certificate of death made with respect to that death have been submitted to the electronic database, a funeral director may obtain a burial permit by printing out from the electronic database a burial permit that sets out the particulars of the death as they appear in the database.

(3) Subject to subsection (5), if a body is to be transported by a common carrier to the place of burial, cremation or other disposition:

- (a) the funeral director or other person to whom the body was released shall provide the common carrier with the prescribed copies of the burial permit; and
- (b) the common carrier shall not transport the body unless the common carrier is in possession of the prescribed copies of the burial permit.

(4) Subject to subsection (5), at the place of burial, cremation or other disposition, the funeral director or other person to whom the body was released shall provide a copy of the burial permit:

- (a) to the person conducting the funeral or religious service; and
- (b) to the cemetery owner or crematorium owner.

(5) No burial permit is required with respect to the reinterment of a body that has been disinterred.

### **PART VI**

#### **Registration of Stillbirths**

##### **Burial permits**

56 Section 42 applies, with any necessary modification, to stillbirths.

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Other regulation relevant:

Saskatchewan Funeral and Cremations Services Act. Applies to funeral homes.

- Section 90 says a burial permit is required to inter or cremate human remains, as per Vital Statistics Act.

<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/531>

# Farthest south of a column on the north side of the cemetery.

47	1	Lawrence Edward Arnold	4	2	
47	2		4	1	Alice Louise Rivers
48	1	John Habich	3	2	John Koller Habich
48	2	Katherine Habich	3	1	Harold Habich
49	1	Merril Thomas Munro	2	2	<u>Abner Louis Wagner</u> (White cross)
49	2	Lester "Scotty" Ferguson	2	1	
50	1	<u>Janice Yvonne Rhind</u>	1	2	John Campbell Ushko
50	2	Dwayne Lindskoog (White cross)	1	1	

Example of plot and sub-plot numbering.

Family block

