

Prologue

By Clarence Janke

I have found this undertaking, that of compiling a list of all of the Cemeteries in this vast area that I have set out to record, to have become the most challenging but yet perhaps the most rewarding of all the sections of the Research into the past of the Medicine Hat area that I have done. The reader will have to accept any errors, omissions, etc. that may have occurred as being accidental, I have tried to get the facts straight but in going through numerous different records from numerous different sources, we find variations in Land Locations, etc. so have taken what we could most closely associate as being the correct information and you must forgive any errors. Please, if any errors are found, contact myself at my E-Address and I will make every effort to check out and rectify the error(s). Also, in regards to directions to get to different and especially abandoned cemeteries, we would suggest contacting someone in the specific area before venturing out on your own as some directions may be hard to follow as a result of changes in roads over the years, some of these areas are quite desolate and are even difficult for someone like myself who has spent a lifetime in the area to navigate to some of the locations.

I have concerned myself basically with recording the Sites of the many Cemeteries in this vast area. There are listings of burials available for a good many though not all of these cemeteries. Space would never permit my listing of burials in this page. These are available from different locations in our Medicine Hat area and would refer you to the Local Resources Section at the end of this submission. That section will give you details of whom to contact for assistance with listings of burials. I have only included names of burials in the case of Isolated Graves of which again there are many in this area. I have also attempted to keep my listings secluded and pertaining to the areas set out in this submission. If you are searching for a certain Cemetery and do not find it listed herein, by all means contact the writer, I may be able to locate who and what you are looking for.

City of Medicine Hat Cemeteries:

History of Burials and Cemeteries in Medicine Hat

The original Hillside Cemetery is located adjacent to the Parks and Outdoor Recreation department Operations area in Kin Coulee Park. The cemetery is an eight-acre site incorporated by the Church of England as a cemetery in 1892. In 1945 the site was turned over to the City of Medicine Hat along with approximately \$500 in a trust fund. The last interment in the old Hillside Cemetery was in 1947. The cemetery is no longer active and is maintained as a passive green space by the City Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

St. John's Presbyterian Church, in Medicine Hat, owned a parcel of land described as SE quarter of Sec. 26, Township 12, Range 6, west of the 4th, comprising approximately 40 acres. In 1908 – 1909 the Presbyterian Church released 20 acres to the City of Medicine Hat for the purpose of establishing Hillside Cemetery. In April 1914 they released to the City the balance of the land which is now completely within the Hillside Cemetery. The new Hillside Cemetery is located at the intersection of Gershaw Drive and 10 Avenue SW.

The first burial, in what is now Hillside Cemetery, was a baby by the name of Cecil Hargrave on November 7, 1886. For more information on this history of our cemetery, contact the City Clerk department at City Hall or the Hillside Cemetery. Staff is on site.

More Information

Did you know that in the early days of the city an old burying ground straggled up from the back of the old church of St. Barnabas, along 6th Avenue to the brow of the hill? In 1891 the Vestry bought from a Mr. Cruickshanks, six acres of land in the Seven Person's Creek. Two acres of this they sold to the Roman Catholic Church at \$15.00 an acre. To this new site most of the bodies were removed but a few unmarked graves still exist, two, along the south wall of the present church near the organ transept.

In 1922 five acres of land was reserved for the exclusive use of the Church of England in the " Hillside Cemetery." This portion was consecrated by Bishop Harding. The Seven Person's Creek site was no longer used and fell into sad neglect. It's pathetic loneliness moved the Vestry in 1944 to approach the City about it. The Vestry agreed to hand over the property along with a trust fund of approximately \$500.00. In return the city promised that the site would be set apart as a park and the graves therein would receive perpetual care. Since then the City Parks Department has done a great deal to improve and beautify this old cemetery.

Source: St. Barnabas Church Parish Leaflet Feb. 29, 1948

The first cemetery was located near where Ogilvie Flour Mills now stands. Next cemetery was near St. Barnabas Church, moved further up the hill later. The first burial service was a surveyor who died of fever early in 1883. He does not mention any dates as to when the cemetery was in use at St. Barnabas Church, but in other references, Rev. Wellington Bridgman, (the first

Methodist Minister in Medicine Hat, in 1883) states that the fever, (probably a type of flu) struck the town and he performed eleven funerals that year, deaths caused by the fever. He does not, however, state where the burials were made, but we assume they were in the first cemetery located near Ogilvie Flour Mills in 1883. **Source:** Notes from Mr. Mort Fulton.

The Roman Catholic Church has secured sufficient land from Mr. W. Johnston for a cemetery. **Source:** Medicine Hat Times March 31, 1892

The congregation of the church of England have purchased eight acres of land situated in the Seven Persons from Mr. Cruikshanks for cemetery purposes. **Source:** Medicine Hat Times June 16, 1892.

In 1891, the St. Barnabas Vestry purchased 6 acres of land by Seven Persons Creek to use as an Anglican cemetery, replacing a small plot behind the Church, which had served as the town's first cemetery. Five acres of the Hillside Cemetery, located in the coulee to the south of town, were set aside for the use by the Church of England, the first Anglican burial taking place on March of 1884. (A Roman Catholic section was created for the parish of St. Patricks Church in March of 1892; their first burial occurring in January of 1889) Eventually the City of Medicine Hat assumed care for the "old" Hillside Cemetery, in 1945. A new cemetery, also called Hillside, was created on the west of town. **Source:** Medicine Hat library archives.