

History of Louden Cemetery

On June 24, 1853, Moses H. and Emeline Louden sold land for one dollar to James T. Pratt, Daniel Kint and William Shaul, trustees of the land that became known as Louden Cemetery situated in the southeast corner of the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 11 in Superior Township. The deed reserved a small section for the Louden family with the remainder to be used for a public burying ground, free for all persons whomsoever and to be under the control of the trustees and their successors. The cemetery was maintained by Superior Township for many years and eventually turned over to the Village of Montpelier where it is currently maintained by the park department.

Louden Cemetery was the first burial ground for Montpelier and was located about a quarter mile southeast of south Montpelier on the old angling road leading to Bryan. The burial dates range from 1844 to 1933. When the ground proved unfavorable for burials in the 1880's it was replaced by Riverside Cemetery, west of Montpelier. Many families had the remains of their deceased family members removed to Riverside Cemetery but there are no records of it except what can be found in old newspapers.

Local history and sketchy newspaper accounts record that during the Civil War Era the knolls, the swampy area surrounding the cemetery, were used as a station of the Underground Railroad.

By 1900 the angling road ceased to be and the cemetery was left with only a path running to it. It would be 90 years later until another road would pass by the cemetery.

The stones were read circa 1970 by Kermit Hillard and Marshall Robinett as a project of the Williams County Historical Society. The stones were rechecked and compared with the Hillard Robinett records in 1990 by Jacque Whetro. The stones were checked again and digital images taken of each in 2006 by Sandy Damschroder. There is no known record of original plots or ownership.

Louden Cemetery has suffered much over the years. The swampy ground left the ground uneven and eventually unsuitable for burials. A fire burned the fence down when it was still being used for burials. Vandalism, neglect, and pollution have been problems over the years. Many stones are broken, missing, or unreadable due to age. However this peaceful place still is home to a great deal of wildlife. Hickory, oak, cottonwood, elm, and sassafras trees dot the landscape. Each summer peonies, wild roses, honeysuckle, and daylilies add a sense of grace to this hallowed ground, and myrtle marks the place where many people laid their loved ones to rest.

Many of the early settlers from the Montpelier area are buried in Louden Cemetery, including George Bible, for whom George Bible Park is named. There are also several Civil War Veterans and veterans from other wars. Of the approximately 200 known burials at Louden Cemetery about 25-30% of these were children. Disease and lack of medical attention were especially hard on the young. There are many untold stories buried there. Much of the early history of Montpelier rests beneath the trees at Louden Cemetery.