

Early History of the Oconto Evergreen and Catholic Cemeteries (1850-1895)

Updated May 7, 2023

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The following is a timeline which includes information about the early history (1850-1895) of the Evergreen and Catholic cemeteries. It also includes some general information about early Oconto.

The information was gathered from several sources including:

- The Evergreen Cemetery Record Burials book;
- The Oconto County Genealogical Society's Cemetery search web page (http://www.wicemeteries.com/cem_search2.php);
- The Oconto County newspaper digitized historical collection (<http://ocnews.co.oconto.wi.us/jsp/RcWebSimpleSearch.jsp>);
- Newspapers.com+(<https://www.newspapers.com/>) *(note- you will probably need a paid subscription to view these); and,
- Others
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I have included a link to a few articles from the Oconto County newspaper digitized historical collection, (<http://ocnews.co.oconto.wi.us/jsp/RcWebSimpleSearch.jsp>). In each case, I copied the link to the articles and noted the page number on which the article can be found to make it easier to find.

PLEASE NOTE I entered this information as I was doing my research, thus a lot of it is in a note-taking type format and as a result is grammatically "rough". Some names may be recorded with no capital letters and abbreviations are used that might not make sense to everyone.**

HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT EARLY OCONTO COUNTY AND THE EARLY YEARS OF THE EVERGREEN AND CATHOLIC CEMETERIES; 1850-1895.			
1.	1850	1850 Census - Oconto	Edwin Hart takes census of Oconto County (area?); 415 inhabitants (wilderness dwellers); did not include Indians
2.	1850-12	Oldest grave? - Daniel Chesley	?? 12/9/1850; Daniel Chesley; OLDEST GRAVE?; S13R5 (Block 18); Not in book but has a stone; Chesley, Daniel; Dec. 09, 1850; Stone very worn;
3.	1851-11	Election new county	11/4/1851; election held to form and name a new county out of northern Brown county
4.	1855-06	Oldest entry in Book; Albert H Tourtillott	S13R4 (Block 18); Albert H Tourtillott, 6M 11D; oldest entry in cemetery book; S13R1; there is a George Tourtillott (same family?) on website, not in our book; June 14, 1861; Drowned; Age 8 yrs. 27 days; Son of H. & C. Tourtillott (Henry and Cominck)
5.	1855-06	1855 Wisconsin Census	6-1-1855; 1855 Wisconsin Census; Town of Oconto in Oconto county 541 males, 251 females, 1 "colored" female, total pop 793; town of Howard 293 total; Marinette 415 total; Oconto county total pop in 1855 – 1501; Henry Jones Household Oconto (US Postmaster Gen), - 3 males, 4 females, 1 "colored" female

6.	1855-12	First meeting of Oconto Cemetery Association	12-15-1855; First meeting of Oconto cemetery association; <i>"The first meeting was attended by Edwin Hart, Samuel Thomas, S. A. Turner, S. B. Gilkey, William Brumquest (sic), Henry Jones, U. M. Salterlee, A. R. Gale, A. Barrington, J. N. West, Benjamin Alcock and James Jackson. The first Trustees were S. A. Turner, Henry Jones, Edwin Hart and William Brumquest. The next meeting of which I have any record was on Dec. 28, 1859. The trustees were S. B. Gilkey, Edwin Hart, William Brumquest, S. A. Turner and S.A. Coleman. The last three were appointed a committee to draft by-laws. From that time, for nearly twenty years, I cannot find any record of any cemetery meeting. It appeared to run itself with the assistance of Benjamin Alcock as sexton."</i> – W.B. Mitchell, <i>Oconto County Reporter</i> article, 3/31/1899 http://ocnews.co.oconto.wi.us/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=6a53abdd-c4ba-4da3-8089-2ff47aa857c0/wiotdoc0/20161010/00000085 p.11
7.	1856	First Catholic Cemetery established	First Catholic Cemetery established on east portion of St Peter's church property
8.	1856-10	First burial in the original Catholic Cemetery – Charles Chosa	10/4/1856; Chosa, Charles, 39; 1817-Oct. 04, 1856; Sarah Juneau also on stone; First person buried at Catholic Cemetery at St Peter's; now buried in area B1 at New Catholic Cemetery
9.	1857	First church building at St Pete's	First St Peter's church building (log structure) finished; burials began there
10.	1858-03	Land deeded to OCA to set up a public cemetery	1858-03-24; Reuben and Elizabeth Norton deed 5 acres to Oconto Cemetery Association (16-18 leading citizens) for purpose of establishing a public burial grounds; Trustees are ground The original trustees were Edwin Hart, S. B. Gilkey, Wm. Bruunquest, Henry Jones, and S. A. Turner.
11.	1858-05	Oconto Cemetery established	Cemetery established They employed R.L.Hall to make a survey of the ground, lay it out into lots, and draft a plat. After the survey a plain fence was put around it and improvements such as clearing of trees, brush etc. made. The Town of Oconto donated a small sum \$50 or \$100, (maybe \$1600- \$3200 today) towards the improvement on consideration of a burial place for town paupers being set aside. Some \$300 (maybe \$10,000 today) was expended in its improvement, the amount being raised by private contributions.
12.	1859-10	OCA meeting	1859-10-11 OCA meet at office of E Hart; to dispose lots http://ocnews.co.oconto.wi.us/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=e7a98d0b-47e8-4e89-8db2-ddabd75063b3/wiotdoc0/20160317/00000002 p3
13.	1859-12	Second OCA meeting	1859-12-28; second meeting of OCA? <i>"The next meeting of which I have any record was on Dec. 28, 1859. The true tees were S. B. Gilkey, Edwin Hart, William Brumquest, S. A. Turner and S.A. Coleman. The last three were appointed a committee to draft by-laws. From that time, for nearly twenty years, I cannot find any record of any cemetery meeting. It appeared to run itself with the assistance of Benjamin Alcock as sexton"</i> . – W.B. Mitchell, <i>Oconto County Reporter</i> article, 3/31/1899 http://ocnews.co.oconto.wi.us/jsp/RcWebImageViewer.jsp?doc_id=6a53abdd-c4ba-4da3-8089-2ff47aa857c0/wiotdoc0/20161010/00000085 p.11
14.	1860-01	OCA stops meeting for 18 yrs.; 1860-1878	1860-1878; *association stops meeting; *1860-1878 cemetery condition worsens; no oversight; people buried wherever they wanted to; no organized records kept
15.	1860-07	1860 Census	Oconto had a population of 889 Caucasians
16.	1868-12	Scarlet Fever/Diphtheria Epidemic	12/18/1868-5/18/1869; 31 on this page died of scarlet fever or diphtheria; all children, ages 6 weeks to 11 years

17	1870	Catholic Cemetery Splits	St Joseph Parish established;
18	1870	New Catholic Cemetery land purchase	Land purchased by Fr, Mather Schweibach west of city for a new cemetery. \$140 (\$3200 today);
19	1870	Bodies moved to new Catholic Cemetery	Bodies buried at the old cemetery at St Peter's were exhumed and moved to the new cemetery; City Council donated \$200 (\$4500 today) toward the cost
20	1871-04	First lot in new Catholic Cemetery sold	4/21/1871; Francis Payette purchases first lot in new Catholic Cemetery
21	1871-10	Peshtigo Fire	<i>"On Sunday October 8th, 1871, a tornado of fire swept the village of Peshtigo out of existence, also Peshtigo Sugar Bush in which from 600 to 800 people perished by fire"</i> a direct quote from our Book
22	1875-07	C Cemetery Property sold to bishop	7/31/1875; July 31st 1875 New Catholic Cemetery property sold to Bishop Krautbauer for \$140. The bishop then grabbing a quick claim deed to St Joe's congregation at a cost of \$1.00 on July 21st 1884
23	1877	Cemetery History	*1877; Mr. L Gardner, private citizen raises funds to builds fence and digs drainage ditch; Gardner was Superintendent of Shipping in the Oconto Co, moved to Milwaukee (5/1878) then Chicago then Oshkosh (1881) then to Nashville (1888); was a very popular person in Oconto apparently
24	1879-06	Cemetery History	Surviving members of original association call for new election to be held on 6-9-1879; Wm Brunquest, Benj Alcock, Edwin hart, James Jackson; Cemetery association is resuscitated
25	1881-09	Cemetery History	9-17-1881; Public notice that a new survey is complete, plats are recorded, and ready for sale with funds to be used for upgrading Cemetery.
26	1885-09	Catholic Cemetery association formed	September 20th 1885; Bishop Krautbauer instructed that a Catholic Cemetery Association be formed; Some original rules of the Association were: only practicing Catholics could be buried in consecrated ground. A separate area of unconsecrated ground was set aside for the burial of protestant members' of Catholic family's; unbaptized children; and Catholics who publicly neglected their religious duties and who received the last sacraments only at the hour of death. All suicides (except in the case of insanity), infidels, or public sinners who died without signs of repentance were not to be buried in the cemetery. Most of those rules are now modified.
27	1888-08	Cemetery History	8-4-1888; minutes of meeting, interment book purchase, purchase of more land to west, lot owners that are in arrears must pay up or remains will be removed, other stuff also
28	1894-06	CEMETERY HISTORY	1894-6-23;; annual meeting minutes, decision to build house for caretaker on a 1/2 acre east of cemetery, \$70 to John Van Dyke for land, \$650 for house, and other stuff
29	1895-05	CEMETERY HISTORY	1895-5-17; annual meeting, add kitchen and shed to sexton's house, Joseph Sylvester sexton, petition council to build a new sidewalk on west side along N/S road to Main St. (Richard House on corner), old sidewalk was built in 1881, petition council to re-name that road to Cemetery St (now Cook Ave), also suggest that name be changed to Evergreen Cemetery; Joseph Sylvester b. 1852 England; son Joseph b. 1902 (5/14/1901?)-d.2/1995