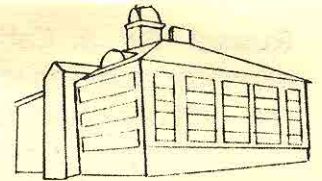




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ALWARD LAKE CEMETERY

Alward Lake Cemetery is located on corner of Alward and DeWitt Roads in the NE corner of section 20 of Olive Township. In earlier days it extended across DeWitt Road and to the west also.

Waunita (Rockwell) Hardman, secretary of the Alward Lake Cemetery Aid and who along with her husband, **Clare**, was sometimes caretaker of the cemetery, wrote the history which follows ca 1946.

The land for the cemetery, now called the Alward Lake, was given by **Nathan Smith** about 1750 [sic] when a member of the family passed away; and it was to be called the Smith Cemetery, the east side to be for the Smith relatives. Mr. Smith owned the land to the south of the cemetery and ran a halfway house, one part for the white people and a shed for their horses and one part for the Indians and corral for their ponies. Whiskey was the drink most sold. (Son, **John**, was killed while pulling a barrel of whiskey up to the floor; daughter, **Marie/Mary Lonnier** --both were young and buried here.)

As this was the only cemetery around this part of the county, other settlers used it to leave their relatives, and as they were markers made of wood, they soon were gone and graves became lost. The Smith family moved away to a place on US-27, later called the **Treadwell** farm, and the cemetery became a forgotten place. On the west side of the road back in the field was land given by **Mrs. Huot**

Russel for a Catholic Cemetery when her daughter and son passed away. Anyone who was Catholic could use it.

About 1900 the ladies of the neighborhood formed a reading circle and [they] would meet in the homes. Someone would read while the ladies sewed, usually carpet rags for the hostess. About 1902 the reading circle was changed to the "Cemetery Aid" and by bees the ladies, men, and horses cleaned the place up as the northern part was full of brush and wild rosebushes. The southern part was a swamp and on still nights the frogs hollered so loud people could not sleep. The people bought tile and drained the swamp and cleaned it up. Many graves were found here. Mr. **Peter Huot**, who owned the land around it, gave dirt from a hill near and it was used to fill the swamp up. The north part was cleaned, old sod taken off, and new seeding sowed. Many graves were found here. The Aid bought small, round markers with letter "G" on top and placed [them] on these graves.

About 1909, when DeWitt road was made wider, a white baby and an Indian baby were found on west side under the oak tree. These were moved across to the east side cemetery.

The people who had relatives buried there took no interest in the cemetery except **Mrs. Herblet** whose husband was buried there. She never missed an Aid meeting unless very ill and as long as possible saw that each of her daughters attended the Aid, and would entertain them, and was a hard worker there.

About 1908, when Peter Huot went north deer hunting, Mrs. **Flora Huot** notified all who had some relatives buried in the Catholic Cemetery to move all bodies. Mrs. Huot moved son and daughter to DeWitt (against Peter's will and he did not know it 'till spring when snow melted and he saw grave holes in the field); others from St. Johns including **Laura Lamp** (sic). Mrs. Herblet then moved her daughter across to the east side of road.

And as far as anyone knew, it did not have a name, so the name of Alward was given in 1900--as the land now known as Brown place. It was called for the Alward family and the lake named for them. They lived on farm on DeWitt

Road that borders the west side of lake. A son, **Lyman Alward**, later became night watchman of St. Johns.

The Aid would meet only in the summer. Ten cents was paid for dinner. The town[ship] gave \$10 a year to help with work each year. Spring and fall the men and ladies had bees and would clean up the place. There were many people around who had relatives there but would not help in any way but did not approve of the way it was done.

When the steam railroad (later electric car company) connecting Lansing and St. Johns was built, the Aid was active in getting the name of the crossing changed from "Bums' Corners" to Alward Lake and helped build the waiting rooms at that crossing and the corner north, which was called "Schwab's."

November 29, 1928, the first of the Smith family relatives were buried here:

- ◆ A **Mr. Falor** of Fowler
 - ◆ In 1950 a **Mr. and Mrs. Drumheller** who were killed in an accident were placed here; and then, when the relatives of Mrs. Drumheller came to my house to get someone to open the grave, I learned it should have been named "Smith" and that the family was very unhappy because of change of name!
 - ◆ In 1952 **Chester Varney Smith** from Petoskey
 - ◆ In 1955 Mrs. **Zada Smith Lyon**
- All are great, great, great, grandchildren of the Mr. Nathan Smith.

As there are not lots plotted out, people would just go in and bury where they wanted to. There are many unknown and unmarked graves, and in digging, [they] would find another buried there.

Waunita Hardman's essay also exists in a slightly different version at the archives and includes the following additional information:

Mrs. **Virginia Huot** and Mrs. **Flora Huot** left money to be used in caring for the cemetery. Some of the early presidents of the Aid were **Myra Brown, Flora Huot, Elsie Reynolds, Virginia Lapham, Millie Miller, Lydia Huot, Dill [Edilla] Rockwell, Ida Brink, Anna Nichols, Hattie Holley,**

