

**History**  
**of**  
**St. Clotilde**  
**Cemetery**  
**+**  
**1919 - 2009**

## **A History of St. Clotilde Cemetery 1919-1991**

**By Robert & Lucille Peters**

There is a plot of ground located off Highway 23 and one half mile east of Lyon County Road 8. This is the St. Clotilde Cemetery.

Two Acres of land had been purchased at the corner of highway23 and County Road 8. There was no one buried in the first land that was bought. These two acres were sold when four acres were purchased from Frank and Ettie Javens on August 20, 1919 for \$800.

The story of that purchase has been told by Lloyd Javens, a son of Frank and Ettie Javens. Father Schaefer, the priest of the St. Clotilde parish, came to Frank Javens to see if he would sell some land for a cemetery. When Lloyd came home, his father asked his opinion but before he could answer he told Lloyd he had already given his consent to sell the land. Frank and Ettie Javens were of a protestant faith. Lloyd later became a member of the St Clotilde parish. Lloyd and his wife Elsie are buried on what was a part of his parents farm.

The first burial was Donald Grandpre in 1925. He was the son of Mr and Mrs. Louis Grandpre who was less than a year old. Rame LaVoy carried his body to the grave. Rame LaVoy was the first adult to be buried in the cemetery, His death was in 1926.

Some people made their own grave markers, For some it was temporary until there was enough money to buy a stone. Today there are two cement crosses, one wooden cross and a cement marker that were homemade. The cement marker was made by Gus Bastoen for his eight year old son in 1938. This marker held a picture of the boy for many years.

The use of vaults came about in the early 1950's. Before this time a rough box was used to line the grave. A rough box was made of unfinished lumber.

Men were hired to dig the graves by hand. This was very difficult when the ground was frozen. Now the graves are dug by machine and if the ground is frozen it is thawed by using gas heaters. The present grave digger is Dale Buysse.

In the early years of the cemetery, each family with a loved one buried there, took care of their own graves. Some were taken care of and others would not be mowed at all. This gave an uneven appearance. A few graves would be plated with flowers over the whole grave. The idea of perpetual care was started.

When a grave is sold there is also a charge for this service. The cost to purchase a grave today is \$75 which includes perpetual care. The present care takers are Oscar VanOverbeke and Henry Versaevel.

The first records of grave sites purchased were put on a map. This map was placed on a door in the priests office in the rectory. Today, there are two maps and all records are on a computer. The computer work is done by Linda Louwagie. Dean and Linda Louwagie are in charge of selling and marking graves.

There are men buried throughout our cemetery who served our country during past wars. Two men from this parish lost their lives during World War II.

A tall gray white stone is on the left side of the center driveway. The Name Edward Henry Tholen is on the stone. However, his body is not buried there. Like so many young men, he volunteered for military duty during World War II. He was in the navy and assigned to the USS Pollux, a navy supply ship.

This ship was going along the jagged Canadian coast headed for Newfoundland. A storm came up of gale force winds and snow and the ship went aground on a reef. The ship broke up in the storm. Edward Tholen was one of ninety three men who died on February 18, 1942. His body was lost at sea. A mass was said at St. Clotilde Church and family and friends went to the cemetery and the plot was blessed.

Albert DeSleer also gave his life during World War II. He was a soldier in the army and was killed September 30, 1944 near Bain, France. He was buried in a United States Military cemetery fifteen miles northwest of Nancy, France. His body was returned and he was buried in the St. Clotilde Cemetery on December 18, 1948.

Each Memorial Day, the veteran's of Foreign Wars and American Legion organizations have a memorial service. There is always a large crowd that attends this service.

In 1959 it was decided some improvements were needed at the cemetery. There was no money in the cemetery fund at the time so pledges of money were accepted. Enough money was collected from the pledges to put up a new resurrection scene in 1960. However, there was not enough to purchase the two statues, so money was donated from the Hector Louwagie estate to make the scene complete. It was blessed on May 30, 1960. Later a metal arch and gates were put in place on the two brick posts of the center driveway. A chain link fence was put up on the north side bordering the road in 1963. Later honeysuckle was planted on the east and west sides. Henry Matthys was hired to do all the mowing.

There is one priest buried here. Father William Marks was priest at St. Clotilde church from 1962 – 1979. Father Marks died November 18, 1979. He is buried in front of the resurrection scene.

The first cremated burial was Leonard Caron in 1983.

A flag pole was put up on May 20, 1988. The flag is flown on some holidays and for any burial.

The drive ways were spread with new gravel in 1988.

Those on the cemetery committee in 1988: Douglas Devereaux, Robert Peters, Arthur VanOverbeke, Jack Martin, Ernest Louwagie, Harold Dieken and Dean Louwagie.

The honeysuckle was removed in the spring of 1991 and evergreens were planted in their place on both the east and west sides.

A plaque was donated by the John C Boerboom family. This was placed on one of the brick posts by the center driveway in October 1991.

At the time of this writing, there are over two hundred people buried in the St. Clotilde cemetery.

The cemetery seems to be located in the right area of those in this community. Farming was the occupation for many buried here. A river flows just to the south. The noise of farm machinery can be heard all around during the busy seasons.

If you happen to be traveling on County Road 8, just stop and say a prayer. It is so peaceful there in the St. Clotilde Cemetery.

This history was written November 1991. Information for this history was obtained from documents and from visiting with people who have loved one buried there.

# History

## 1991-2009

By Linda Louwagie

In 1972 Art VanOverbeke asked Dean if he would help him mark out lots when needed. He lived close and thought they would work well together. Dean learned a lot from Art. The stories of the past who's family and extend family etc. Very interesting. Then in 1977 Art asked if Linda would be interested in learning how to take care of the Books.

When the cemetery was started records were kept on the door in the priests office in the rectory. I believe Harry Brewers was one, not sure who else started the boards. There were 3 copies at this time Art Van Overbeke and Jack Martin, and Hank Matthys had the same info. But when comparing the information not all boards were the same. Art asked Linda to make them all the same.

To start to update the records I walked through the cemetery and wrote down all the information I could find, like names, and dates where the lots started and stopped etc. Then went through all receipts Art had on file. Started to put the information on computer and then making a map, as records were only on a piece of board with only marks for each burial and no names. With the names listed on the other side of who the lots were sold to.(Boards are in the church office) Art also informed me that there were 9 burials that had no stones. We worked on that together and in a couple of years we had all the stones in place. This was one thing Art was very glad to have taken care of.

At this time we had a new receipt form printed to make it easier and to add a Perpetual Care Account for the future of the cemetery. Linda started attending the Cemetery meetings and soon was keeping Minutes of the meetings and Records for the Lots sold and burials.

Robert and Lucille Peters were a great help to us also. If we need to find a family for information for records etc.. Robert was also on the Board. When he felt it was time for new people, we asked him to stay on as Honorary Board member. He is irreplaceable and has tremendous knowledge on area families. In 1988 when we installed the flag pole, Robert volunteer to flying the Flag for burials and some Holidays.

In 2007 it was requested that all cemetery's get there records up to date. This was a big task.

With the Help of the **board member Robert Peters, David & Dean Louwagie, Gordy Boerboom**, and special thank you to Lorraine Lanners and the many families that lead me on the way to contacting the right person or persons.

We contacted 317 families to update the records and family history.

55 lots were returned, 25 new lots sold. Perpetual Care was paid to bring lots up to date.

Copies of this information is on the computer, at Linda's and in safety deposit box at bank.

In 4/2/09 we removed the chain link fence.

**On Memorial Day**, we always have a Mass at St. Clotilde and the Marshall American Legion Honor Guard march at the Cemetery after mass. With a ceremony to follow. We remember our 41 men and 1 women laid to rest at St. Clotilde and all who have fought for us & protected our nation. In WW II 1942 our parish lost \*Edward Tholen, Navy active duty. Also \*Albert DeSleer during WW II, Army active duty.. Our most recent fallen soldier, Army active duty was \* Jason Timmerman on Feb 21, 2005 in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Son of Gary & Pat Timmerman.

**Blue on the Maps indicates Veterans,\* indicated Active fallen Solider.**

In 2008 our present Pastor, Father Paul Wolf started a new tradition. Sunday afternoon before Memorial Day, he leads us in saying the Rosary in procession around the cemetery. After the Rosary, he blesses the water, and offers the holy water, to everyone present to go and bless the stone or plot of their loved ones. It is a very wonderful feeling and a touching event for most of the people that have joined in this event.

To date 9/09 we have 351 burials and 12 Cremations.

### **Our Cost is:**

**\$400** per lot includes Perpetual Care

**\$600** 1 burial & 1 cremation **or** 2 cremations

Perpetual care is 40% for cost of Lot

\$25.00 Staking fee, \$25.00 to transfer records

We have 2 grounds keepers, at this time Greg Louwagie and Dan Wambeke. We share the mower with the church. Manager/Chairman Dean Louwagie. Recording Secretary./Treasurer Linda Louwagie.