

Harger Cemetery



Description

Harger Cemetery is located in the Southeast quarter of Section 23 of Marion Township, west of Pinckney Road, and one-half mile north of Coon Lake Road. The cemetery is approximately one acre in area and contains 540 platted grave sites. At this time there are 234 known burials. The cemetery is divided into six sections, each section with fifteen lots. The lot sizes are all nominally four feet in width and 24 feet in length; each lot containing six graves. There are also typically four-foot-wide walkways between lots, and ten foot wide alleys between Sections 2 and 3, and between Sections 4 and 5.

The headstones at the top of the hill and on the west side of the cemetery appear to be in straight rows, more or less. These are the older graves and were probably set at a time when some sort lot markers existed. However, the graves on the side of the hill farther east are more recent and appear to run in rows parallel to Pinckney Road. Thus, the headstones for these graves do not line up with the others on the west side of the cemetery. Lot 5, Section 1 in particular does not line up with the other lots in Section 1. The transcription of this cemetery has the graves listed in each lot from north to south.

History

The Marion Township Sexton, Tom Lloyd is in possession of a very old notebook that contains the history of the cemetery, as well as a record of all burials and lot ownership. This book has been used by several generations of sextons and is the greatest source of information for the township and for this publication.

There is a myth that a tornado went through some time in the past and either damaged the headstones or damaged the records of the cemetery (Rietch). No evidence has ever been found substantiating this claim; the headstones are in good condition and the records are arguably the best that could be had for a rural cemetery.

The oldest headstone is of Catherine Hunn, died Nov 19, 1847, at age 80. The next oldest is for Catherine's husband, Parson Hunn in 1850. There are a couple of additional headstones from the 1850's.

The following is the first entry from the sexton record book describing the early history of the cemetery:

The East Marion Burying Ground was the gift of Andrew C. Harger, who settled on lands on Sections 23 & 24 in 1846. No corporation being in existence to care for the ground, he made a deed running to the Board of Health of the Township of Marion, dated February 14th, AD 1848, and recorded in the Register's office in Liber 12 Pages 347 & 348. In this deed, the right to control the ground was reserved, which right was exercised until the formation of the East Marion Burying Ground Corporation. The ground was surveyed and platted by E. N. Fairchild County Surveyor March 15, 1849, and afterward every person applying was given a lot on which to bury their dead. It was only fenced in connection with the adjoining land, until the years 1870 when the ground was fenced by subscription those who had lots usually paying \$5.00. The first burial in the ground was that of Mrs. Catherine Hunn aged 80 years who died November 19th AD 1847 before any survey or plat of the ground was made (Harger 2).

The next entries in this record book relate how the private burial ground was transferred to a corporation of shareholders in 1878. At this time the cemetery was organized as the East Marion Burying Ground Corporation:

To C. H. Persons, a Justice of the Peace of the township of Howell, County of Livingston and state of Michigan, the undersigned would say that they, and certain other persons are interested in a burying ground situated on the north side of E 1/2 of SE 1/2 of Sec. 23 in the township of Marion, in said county, and that we wish to organize ourselves into a corporation, for the purpose of acquiring land for a burial ground, for the dead to dispose of rights of burial therein and to fence, improve, ornament, and keep the same in suitable condition, and hereby apply to you for a warrant that we may accomplish the same according to law.
Dated January 25th, 1878 James Harger

A. C. Switzer, G. B. Dickerson

To James Harger of the township of Marion in said county Whereas application in writing dated January 25th, 1878 has been made to me Cornelius H. Person a Justice of the Peace of the township of Howell in for said county by James Harger, A. C. Switzer, and G. B. Dickerson for a warrant to enable them and certain other persons interested in a Burying Ground situated on the north side (end) of the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 23 in the township of Marion in said county to organize themselves into a corporation for the purpose of acquiring land for a burial ground for the dead to dispose of burial rights therein and to fence, improve, ornament and keep the same in suitable condition; Therefore, in the name of the people of the state of Michigan you are hereby directed to call a meeting of the persons wishing to become incorporated for the above mentioned purposes at the school house in school District No. 4 in said township of Marion on the 9th day of February AD 1878 at ten o'clock in the forenoon of said day. Given under my hand at the township of Howell in said county this 28th day of January, AD 1878.

Cornelius H. Person
Justice of the Peace

Notice to all persons interested in the burial ground on the north end of the E 1/2 of SE 1/4 of Section 23 in the township of Marion, in accordance with a warrant bearing this date issued by Cornelius H. Person a Justice of the Peace for the township of Howell, county of Livingston and state of Michigan upon application of James Harger, Aaron C. Switzer and Goodel B. Dickerson stating that they and certain other persons are interested in this burying ground and wish to organize themselves into a corporation for the purpose of acquiring land for a burial ground for the dead, to dispose of the rights of burial therein, and to fence, improve, ornament, and keep the same in suitable condition, and applying for a warrant that they may accomplish the same according to law, I am directed to call a meeting of all persons desiring to form such corporation to meet for that purpose at the school house in District No. 4 in the township of Marion on Saturday February 9th at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of that day. Dated at Marion January 28th 1878.

James Harger (Harger 3) .

At a meeting held at the school house in District No. 4 in the township of Marion, county of Livingston and state of Michigan on the 9th day of February AD 1878 for the purpose of forming a corporation to take care of the burying ground in that neighborhood the meeting was called to order by James Harger who read the warrant and notice calling the meeting and which set forth its objects, the following was submitted and adopted by being signed by all present interested

We the undersigned interested in the burial ground situated in the north end of the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 23 in this town for the purpose of acquiring a title to the same and to improve and keep it in proper condition do associate ourselves in a corporation under the name of Eat Marion Burying Ground Corporation Signed. Joseph Brown, Wm. V. Barnhart, James Harger, Andrew H. Barnhart, J. L. Going, J. W. Dickerson, Alfred Wright.

The following officers were elected

President	Joseph Brown
Clerk	James Harger
Treasurer	Alfred Wright
Sexton	James W. Dickerson (Harger 4).

The following ByLaws were adopted

Article 1st The offices of this corporation shall be such as are provided by law to wit: President, Clerk, Treasurer, and Sexton and such other officers as may be determined by the corporation.

Article 2nd The duties of the several officers shall be such as usually pertain to such officers and as are provided by law, they shall each hold their office for one year and until their successors are elected and qualified.

Article 3rd There shall be an annual meeting of the corporation on the second Saturday of February of each year at the school house near the burial grounds of the corporation or at some other convenient place near said grounds of which meetings due notice shall be given by the clerk, and special meetings may be held upon the call of the President, Clerk, Sexton, or either of them.

Article 4th All officers of the Corporation except President, Clerk, Treasurer and Sexton shall be chosen by Viva Voce vote.

A paper was read signed by Andrew C. Harger in which he gave to the corporation all rights and privileges which he had reserved in the burying ground and naming those who had lots in the same.

The following resolutions were adopted

Resolved That all persons named by Andrew C. Harger as entitled to lots in our burying ground shall receive a certificate for the same from this corporation

Resolved That this corporation values its burial lots at the sum of \$5.00 each. That whoever has heretofore paid that sum for fencing and improving the Burying Ground is entitled to a certificate for a lot and whoever has paid a part of that sum shall have a certificate by paying a sum which with what they have paid for fencing and improvements shall equal \$5.00.

Upon application the Board of Health of the Township of Marion executed a Quit Claim Deed running to the East Marion Burial Ground Corporation bearing date March twenty sixth AD 1878 and recorded at the Registers office in Liber 70 pages 145 & 146.

James Harger
Clerk of E.M.B.G.C. (Harger 5).

According to this record book, annual meetings of the corporation were held until April 9, 1888 when it was determined that the East Marion Burying Ground Corporation was illegal. The following entry is recorded:

At a meeting of the Board of Health of Marion Township held at the Townhouse on the 27th day of April AD 1888 the following resolution was offered.

Resolved by the Board of Health of the Township of Marion at its meeting at the townhouse in said township April 27th 1888 that the burial ground known as the East Marion Burying Ground was conveyed by Deed dated March 26th 1878 illegally in this that no permit for the same was obtained from the Circuit Court as required by Sec. 1687 Howell Annotated Statutes and we hereby assume control of the same as a Township Burial Ground. On a motion by William Allison the Resolution was tabled and the meeting adjourned to meet at the Cemetery June 9th 1888.

At the adjournment meeting of the Board of Health held at the Cemetery and Harger Schoolhouse June 9th 88 the above resolution was called up by Mr. Allison and an amendment was offered to perfect title to the Corporation, the amendment was lost and the Resolution Adopted by the following vote.

Geo Coleman Chairman voted yes
James N. Sexton Justice voted yes
Wm. T. Allison Justice voted no
H. W. Norton Clerk voted yes

A resolution was offered to Legalize all Deeds given by the E.M.B.G. Corporation. The resolution was carried by a unanimous vote.

It was moved and supported that Alfred Wright be appointed Sexton. The motion prevailed.

The price of Lots was fixed as follows.

Lots on Sections 2-3-4 and 5 be held at Eight dollars per lot and the west (3) three tiers of Lots on Sec. 1 and 6 de sold at Five dollars per Lot and the East 2 tiers of Lots on Sec. 1 and 6 be set off as a potters field. Meeting adjourned.

Recorded by
H. W. Norton (Harger 9).

The end of the sexton record book contains a crude map drawn on the pages. This map shows the layout of the sections and lots, as well as lot owners. This data was used to determine the location of the lots, as well as describe the lot owners listed in this cemetery transcription.

Although the cemetery was originally known as the East Marion Burying Ground, today the cemetery is known as Harger Cemetery has remained under the ownership and maintenance of Marion Township since it was obtained in 1888.