

# **PINE TREE CEMETERY**

## **History & Historical Figures**

Pine Tree Cemetery is owned and maintained by the City of Corunna. The main section of the cemetery is located between Pine and Cherry Streets with an addition located to the north of Pine St. It is divided into six sections: Original Plat, Stowell's East, West Addition, New East, and New North East and West. The cemetery contains over 9,000 gravesites.

The first section of the cemetery was deeded to the Board of Health by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Purdy, on November 22, 1847, for one hundred and fifty dollars. Originally called Pine Grove Cemetery, the name changed in the early 1900's to Pine Tree Cemetery. Veterans dating back to the Civil War are buried there.

**Original Plat:** The oldest section of Pine Tree. An addition to the west of the Original Plat, but still considered part of the Original Plat, was platted in 1869. Earliest known burials date back to the early 1840's and many of the original founders of the Village and City of Corunna are buried here. There is also a section of this plat set aside for Civil War veterans.

Historical Figures Interred in Original Plat:

- (1) Andrew Parsons, former governor of the State of Michigan.
- (2) Alexander McArthur, first president of the Village of Corunna.
- (3) Alice Magaw Kessel, the "Mother of Anesthesia".

**Stowell's East:** The earliest known burial here dates back to 1859. The only mausoleum in Pine Tree Cemetery is located in Stowell's East. Built by Dr. & Mrs. Walter S. Jones of Corunna in the mid to late 1800's, it was used to lie to rest their 15 year old daughter, Flora May Jones (1878-1894) after her death from "bowel difficulty". Flora May was interred in the mausoleum until the 1960's when the family moved the body to another cemetery. The mausoleum was then deeded to the City of Corunna and remains empty to this day.

Historical Figures Interred in Stowell's East:

- (4) Hugh McCurdy, former Mayor of the City of Corunna.
- (5) John Ingersoll, former Senator and State Representative.

**West Addition:** The first section was platted in 1878. Judge Matthew Bush is interred here as well as Dr. William Weinkauf and Dr. Charles Crane.

Historical Figures Interred in West Addition:

**New East Addition:** The earliest known burial here is from 1866. Interred here is former Shiawassee County medical examiner, Dr. John G. Lyons. The "Garden of Memories" columbarium is located on the Cherry St. side of New East.

Historical Figures Interred in New East Addition:

**New North East and West:** Platted in 1938. This section is located to the north of the main cemetery, across Pine Street.

Historical Figures Interred in New East Addition:

**1. Andrew Parsons**, buried in Original Plat, Block 2, Lot 44, Grave 3, was born on July 22, 1817 in New York and came to Corunna in 1836. He became an attorney and served as State Senator from 1847 to 1848.

Andrew served as Governor of Michigan, March 8, 1853 to January 3, 1855, finishing the term of Robert McClelland who was named to President Franklin Pierce's cabinet. He died on June 6, 1855 at the age of 37 years. Parson's former home at 318 E. McNeil Street is on the Register of Historic Sites.

*From the Shiawassee County History website:*

[www.shiawasseehistory.com/andrewparsons.html](http://www.shiawasseehistory.com/andrewparsons.html)

**2. Alexander McArthur (1788-1881)** is buried in Original Plat Block 2, Lot 43, Grave 4. McArthur discovered coal in the area in 1839 and established Michigan's first coal mine. McArthur was President of the Village of Corunna when the trustees began talk about making Corunna a city.

**3. Alice Magaw Kessel (1860-1928)** is buried in Original Plat Block 2, Lot 43, Grave 4. The most famous nurse anesthetist of the nineteenth century, Alice Magaw, worked at St. Mary's Hospital (1889) in Rochester, Minnesota. That hospital, established by the Sisters of St. Francis and operated by Dr. William Worrell Mayo, later became internationally recognized as the Mayo Clinic.

*From City of Corunna webpage:*

[www.corm.us/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=375&Itemid=467](http://www.corm.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=375&Itemid=467)

**4. Hugh McCurdy (1829-1908)**, buried in Stowell's East Block 1, Lot 2 w ½, Grave 3, was born in Scotland and moved to Michigan at the age of eight. He settled in Corunna around 1850. In the fall of 1856, he was nominated for Prosecuting Attorney. In 1860, he was elected to Probate Judge. He was elected to the state senate in 1864.

McCurdy's Masonic life covers a period of over forty-two years, eventually being elected to the rank of M. E. Grand Master of the G. E. K. T. of the U. S. His Masonic legal opinions were highly regarded and recognized as law in the order.

In 1865, Judge McCurdy established the First National Bank of Corunna, of which he was president from its organization to 1873. The bank building still stands in downtown Corunna on the corner of N. Shiawassee and McArthur Streets. McCurdy was also a former mayor of the City of Corunna.

In 1899, McCurdy and his wife, Emma, deeded the land now known as McCurdy Park to the City of Corunna. It is the largest park in Shiawassee County.

*From the Shiawassee County History webpage:*

[www.shiawasseehistory.com/mccurdy.html](http://www.shiawasseehistory.com/mccurdy.html)

**5. John N. Ingersoll (1817-1881)** buried in Stowell's East, Block 1, Lot 7, Grave 6, was a Corunna Mayor (1871-1874 & 1870-1879), State Senator (1861-1862), and State Representative (1863). He owned and operated the Owosso American, the Shiawassee American, and the Shiawassee Journal newspapers. His former home at 570 W. Corunna Ave. is on the Register of Historic Sites.

*From the Shiawassee County History website:*

[www.shiawasseehistory.com/ingersoll.html](http://www.shiawasseehistory.com/ingersoll.html)

The Department of Public Works is in charge of the cemetery and is in the process of updating burial records. Records of burials and deeds are available for viewing at the D.P.W. office, 701 Pine St., Monday through Friday, 8-11:30 a.m. and 12-2:30 p.m., or by appointment. Burial records are also available at the Shiawassee County District Library, Corunna Branch.

The Department of Public Works is looking for the following information regarding Pine Tree Cemetery:

1. The location of any unmarked graves in the cemetery, especially burials in what are called the "Baby Lots" and in the older sections of the cemetery.
2. The "Coal Bed Lots" marked on an old map of the cemetery. These are located in the Original Plat, Lots 184, 185, 186, and 233. What are they?
3. Deeds from "Liber One", "Book One" or "Book Two" from Pine Grove or Pine Tree Cemetery. These deeds were lost many years ago and we are trying to reconstruct the information.
4. Veterans buried in Pine Tree that do not have a flag holder. We are currently working with the Corunna V.F.W. to update veteran burial records to make sure every veteran is honored on Memorial Day.

If you can help with any of the above information please call Shauna Bayless at the Corunna Department of Public Works, 989-743-5040, or e-mail her at [sbayless@corunna-mi.gov](mailto:sbayless@corunna-mi.gov).