University of Alberta

# The Old Edson Cemetery

Investigations into an Early 20th Century Western Alberta Cemetery

by

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**Abstract**

This thesis uses archaeological survey and historic documentary sources to reconstruct past mortality patterns and understand mortuary practices from the early 20th century Edson Cemetery in Edson, Alberta. Results show that the cemetery existed foremost as a place to enshrine the individual identity of the deceased, with pragmatic concerns about public health and municipal development guiding the establishment, management and eventual abandonment of the site. Mortality patterns show a high number of infant and young childhood fatalities compared to their representation in the living population. Deceased infants received the same level of memorialization as adults, reflecting both a domestic and public identity. Adult mortality patterns follow known occupational risks while a spike in adult deaths in late 1918 coincides with the spread of the "Spanish Flu" epidemic. These findings highlight the importance of historic context and the value of documentary evidence for analyzing past mortuary behaviours.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction

Mortuary archaeology provides an intersecting point for several fields of anthropology including archaeology, biological and cultural anthropology (Knudson and Stojanowski 2008; Rakita and Buikstra 2005). The cemetery is often the nucleus of study, existing both as a hygienic method of body disposal as well fulfilling a social role to allow the bereaved to mourn and come to terms with death (Francaviglia 1971; Strange 2003). For this dual nature, mortuary practices encompass all behaviors related to the treatment of the dead, both practical as well as social and spiritual concerns. These practices include the planning and arranging of cemeteries, the treatment of the body, funerary rituals and material evidence which the researcher can use to "…infer a great diversity of past cultural, behavioral, ecological and historic phenomena" (Carr 1995).

Research on historic cemeteries has the benefit of drawing upon a variety of documentary sources (Buckham 2003; Saunders *et al* 1995; Sirianni and Higgins 1995; Strange 2003; Watkins 2002). Without an adequate understanding of the social and historical context, cemeteries cannot be properly interpreted (Little *et al* 1992). Prior to the 19th century, the majority of cemeteries were under the control of religious authorities in England and France (Mytum 2004: 17; Watkins 2002) as well as Central Canada (Pfeiffer *et al* 1989; Watkins 2002). Changing paradigms and conceptualizations about death, particularly regarding availability of space and public health concerns, brought the cemetery within the jurisdiction of municipal governments and cemetery corporations. Within a single society, attitudes towards death are not static (Buckham 2003) nor are they monolithic. The availability of documentary sources is an opportunity to better understand these attitudes and determine how they were influenced by the lived realities of the era.

The purpose of this thesis is to use the available physical and documentary evidence of the Edson Cemetery to reconstruct past mortality patterns and understand mortuary practices in the community. This research highlights the role that individual agency played in the management of death and the practical considerations that motivated these behaviors. Rather than represent group affiliations, the purpose of the cemetery may be to enshrine the individual identity of the deceased (Buckham 2003). Infants in particular are often interpreted to occupy a marginal or separate space in the burial landscape (Garattini 2007; Norman 2002; Rawson 2003; Scott 1999: 26) owing to their supposed lack of personhood or identity. These themes will be explored in reference to the Edson Cemetery and the individuals interred within.

The Edson Cemetery is located north of the town of Edson, Alberta to the east of a dirt road. There are no signs indicating its presence and years of forest growth have made it undetectable to the casual passer-by. A dilapidated wire fence forms a perimeter around the nearly three acres worth of land. Within the cemetery grounds, most graves are denoted only by shallow rectangular depressions or mounds in the soil. Only a single headstone remains, with various base stones and the remnants of small fences found in association with several grave features. The cemetery is not unknown in the community: tokens are found scattered throughout while routine vandalism has chipped away at what few physical features indicate that this was once a place of burial. The Edson Cemetery is also referred to as the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail Cemetery and colloquially as the Baby Graves, owing to the local belief that there are a high proportion of infants buried on site. For the purposes of this study, the cemetery will be referred to as the Edson Cemetery.

The records held by the town, including burial registries, by-laws and town council minutes provide information on burials and the management of the cemetery. The burial registries contain biographical information that allows for the reconstruction of mortality patterns as well as data on the spatial and temporal uses of the site. Newspapers available at the archives provide additional information on the establishment of the cemetery, obituaries and attitudes towards death and dying in the community. Even with the wealth of documentary sources, some questions about the site and the people buried there remain unanswered.

Chapter Two provides a brief history of the town of Edson, Alberta from 1910 to late 1918. This period marked the beginning of the town and its gradual evolution from a post office to one of the economic and transportation hub of western Alberta. Conceived as a divisional point for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the town's first decade saw the development of local resource industries, the First World War and the outbreak of the 1918 "Spanish Flu" epidemic. These events would have an effect on the community's mortality patterns, while knowledge of its history provides the context to develop an understanding of its mortuary practices.

Chapter Three introduces the Edson Cemetery, combining physical and documentary evidence from the site to understand the attitudes and context that guided its use. Grave features were surveyed and compared with burial data in the cemetery registries to assess the compatibility of these two forms of evidence. One of the goals is to understand the factors at play in the establishment, use and abandonment of the cemetery, and how these compare to prevailing attitudes towards cemetery management at the time. This chapter also examines the role of individual agency in memorialization and commemoration of the deceased and what factors of frontier life may have contributed to these behaviors.

Chapter Four uses the documentary sources to table and analyze mortality patterns within the cemetery sample and what this says about life and death on the Canadian western frontier at the beginning of the 20th century. Comparisons are made with other frontier cemeteries and early 20th century communities to understand the role that the rural/small town environment may play in the health of its residents. These aspects include any endemic health stresses that may have been present, as well as occupational related risks and historical events that may have had an impact on local mortality. Given the cemetery's unofficial title of the Baby Graves, infant deaths will be compared to their representation in the 1916 census population to assess the validity of the title. Contemporaneous cemetery populations will be discussed to determine if infants in the Edson Cemetery sample conform to expectations for an early 20th century community.

Chapter Five uses the understanding of infant death established in the previous two chapters for a cross-cultural comparison of infants in the mortuary context. The aim is to deconstruct the idea of the marginalized deceased infant as a universal phenomenon through examples of the diverse forms of infant mortuary treatment motivated by context specific values. The chapter establishes a framework for understanding what motivates these behaviors which is used to analyze the treatment and attitude towards infant death from the Edson Cemetery. Taken into consideration are the pioneer character of the community and the availability of mass media and material goods in Western Alberta.

The study concludes with a brief summary of the use of documentary sources in reconstructing past mortality patterns and the importance of considering historical context and individual agency to understanding mortuary behaviors. Also highlighted are possible avenues for future research involving the Edson Cemetery.

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# Chapter 2 – A Brief History of Edson, Alberta, 1910-1918

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the town of Edson, Alberta from its origins in 1910 to the end of 1918, highlighting the major events and themes that shaped its character as a resource-based economy and community hub in western Canada. The town of Edson is located 192 km west of the provincial capital, Edmonton along Highway 16 (Figure 2.1). Its founding is the accidental result of land speculators seeking to cash in on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's westward expansion. In its early years, Edson was a gateway community, providing passageway to the north along the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail, to the south towards the bourgeoning Coal Branch and to the west, through the Rockies and the coast of British Colombia. Throughout its history, Edson has been a resource town and its dependency on its role as a transportation corridor led to several crises during its first decade. The town was not immune to the problems of the outside world; both the First World War and the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic had profound effects on the community. These events and the social fabric of the community come in to play when discussing life and death in Edson and the manner in which people coped with such inevitabilities.

## Westward Railway Expansion

Edson owes its existence to the ambitions of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway as well the land speculators who sought to cash in on its westward expansion. One of the country's largest railways, Grand Trunk decided to expand in the west to take advantage of growing settlement and agricultural expansion (Lovett 1924: 132) while providing the shortest and most direct route from

Winnipeg to the Pacific Coast (Regehr 1976: 157). The expansion brought the Grand Trunk into competition with the Canadian Pacific Railway (running through Calgary and Banff) and more directly with the Great Canadian Railway whose lines ran parallel to Grand Trunk's planned routes throughout western Alberta (Regehr 1976: 103). The Grand Trunk Railway (which established the subsidiary Grand Trunk Pacific for its western project) received the explicit support of Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier in the House of Commons (Laurier 1903, cited in Thomas 1979: 350).

Wolf Creek was chosen as the divisional point for the Grand Trunk Pacific but soon fell victim to land speculators (Alf 1986: 7). In 1909, the hamlet of Wolf Creek was growing with three restaurants, a drug store, bank, grocery store and other amenities. Anticipating high returns, speculators bought up the land around Wolf Creek with the goal of selling it at inflated prices. Rather than give in to the exorbitant prices, the Grand Trunk Pacific opted to move the divisional point eight miles west to Heatherwood and the future of Wolf Creek was shuttered (Alf 1986: 7). In 1910, the area known as Heatherwood consisted of little more than a post office (Ross 1974: 13). In an effort to combat speculators, The Grand Trunk Pacific required that land purchased on the town site would require a building be erected, valued at no less than $1,000 (Gilpin 1992). The first passenger train arrived in Heatherwood on August 10th, 1910 (Alf 1986: 9) and the population grew rapidly from 15 residents to 490 by January 1911 (Edson Leader 1912a). That same year, Heatherwood saw the establishment of a First National Bank, a tent store for Doherty and Burdett, a restaurant for J. Ware, bunkhouses for workers and an Immigration Hall (Alf 1986: 11). While officially known as Heatherwood, the community began to be referred to as Edson, in honor of Edson J. Chamberlin, vice-president and general manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (Aubrey 2006: 102). The community was officially incorporated as the town of Edson on September 21, 1911 (Alf 1986: 12).

**Northern Gateway & the Coal Branch**

To turn a profit, the Grand Trunk Pacific required passengers and so heavily promoted settlement in western Alberta with allusions to "…picturesque park country, rolling with clumps of trees…" (Grand Trunk Pacific Railway 1914: 7). Edson promoted itself as the "Gateway City of the North" providing passage to the fertile lands northward in the Grande Prairie region as well as promises of resource riches in the surrounding area (Edson Leader 1912b). Northbound settlers had to contend with cutting their own paths through to Grande Prairie and so residents petitioned the provincial government to provide a maintained route connecting both communities (MacGregor 1977: 205). The Edson-Grande Prairie Trail officially opened in March 1911 (Edson Leader 1911a).

To the coal rich mountains and hills southwest of Edson, prospectors were busy staking claims. In 1909, prospector John Gregg staked what would eventually become known as the community of Mountain Park (Ross 1974: 11). In the early 20$^{th}$ century, coal was a critical source of energy for home heating, thermal electricity, steel productions and railways (Friesen 1987: 295). Mountain Park would form the heart of what would become the Coal Branch, a cluster of communities located in the mountains and hills, made accessible by a spur on the Grand Trunk's railway. By 1916, there were three main communities in the branch, Mountain Park (population: 141) Lovett Branch (pop: 111) and Coalspur (pop: 32) (den Otter 1967). Cadomin mine opened in 1917 and it would eventually eclipse Mountain Park to become the largest community in the Alberta Coal Branch (Ross 1974: 56). In the early years, sanitation conditions in the mining communities were deplorable (Friesen 1987: 297) while occupational risks and deaths were a facet of life in the mines. The first death in Mountain Park was a 25 year old Austrian named Joseph Scarritch, who died on July 29, 1913 (Ross 1974: 38). On fatalities in the mines, it had been remarked that "At Mountain Park you could count on at least one a year" (Ross 1974: 124).

**Growth, War and Epidemic**

In the early 20th century, the majority of the province's population made their living farming. In 1914, 62% of Alberta's workforce were employed as farmers (MacGregor 1977: 206) while the 1916 Canadian Census identifies both farming and the railway as the two major industries in Edson. With its booming population, it did not take long for Edson to develop social and communal activities. Entertainment came in the form of moving picture shows (Edson Leader 1911b) a local band (Edson Leader 1912c) while Fall Fairs gave community members an opportunity to exhibit their wares, produce and crops (Edson Critic 1913). Healthcare in the early years was administered at a series of local hospitals. In June 1911 the town's hospital committee purchased lots on sixth avenue for the erection of a hospital (Edson Leader 1911c). A cemetery was located adjacent to the hospital grounds (Alf 1986: 20) while the January 26, 1912 obituary of Leland Nelson in the Edson Leader makes explicit that this site was intended as a temporary place of burial. At some point the hospital became indebted and after several years of fundraising, the Lady Minto Hospital was constructed at the temporary cemetery site to be operated and maintained by the Victorian Order of Nurses (Alf 1986: 21).

Edson's prosperity was dependent upon its status as a transportation corridor both to the Rockies in the west, the Coal Branch in the south and Grande Prairie in the north. The community's status as the northern gateway was diminished in 1916 when the railroad arrived in Grande Prairie via Athabasca (Moore 1982: 243). The Edson-Grande Prairie Trail fell into disuse without the regular maintenance to fight off the ever encroaching wilderness and marshlands along the route.

The outbreak of war in 1914 had a profound effect both on individual lives in the community as well as threatening its prospects as a transportation hub. The 1916 Census identified many young men as soldiers in the "*service of the King*", living at the time on the front in France, some of them never to return. The newspapers printed a routine running tally of war volunteers (Western Leader 1915a) while the November 13, 1915 issue of the Western Leader confirms that three Edsonites had died in combat thus far. The community physician and coroner, Dr. Proctor – who had been instrumental in petitioning for a hospital and cemetery - volunteered for the war in 1915 and was replaced by Dr. McGordie (Western Leader 1915b). The need for steel on the western front brought the Federal government to town in 1917, looking to tear up three hundred miles of the railroad (Ross 1974: 53). The town petitioned to have the Grand Trunk line preserved, with the debate making its way all the way to Parliament in Ottawa

(Alf 1986: 28). A compromise was reached in May 1917: steel would be taken from the Grand Trunk's line but would be replaced with track from the Canadian Northern Railway located a few miles south, running through Tollerton (Ross 1974: 54). The competition between the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern would eventually be rendered moot: both railways went bankrupt in 1919 and their debts acquired by the Canadian government (Lovett 1924: 234). The two railways – along with several others - were amalgamated into the Canadian National Railway (Ross 1974: 58) which continues to operate today, albeit as a publicly traded corporation (CN 2012).

With the war winding to a close in 1918, Canadian soldiers' return was marred by the new blight they brought home: the influenza pandemic. Known as the Spanish Flu, the influenza entered Alberta on October 2, 1918 from a Vancouver bound train carrying infected soldiers and quickly began spreading across the northern part of the province (McGinnis 1977). Unlike most flus which affected a greater proportion of the young and elderly, the primary victims of the Spanish Flu epidemic were individuals in the prime of their lives, most of them young men (Noymer and Garenne 2004). This was particularly damaging for workers in the transportation and mining fields. The constant flux of human traffic on the railways made them a prime location for the spread of the outbreak with 216 Canadian Pacific Railroad men reported sick in Calgary (McGinnis 1977). The crowded bunkhouses of the Coal Branch – already suffering from sanitation issues – permitted the rapid transmission of the flu (den Otter 1967). Edson did not escape the Spanish Flu, where the outbreak was more series among young adults and the newly constructed Lady Minto Hospital was put to good use (Alf 1986: 21) By early 1919, the influenza was ebbing in North America (Noymer and Garenne 2004). Though affected by war and the devastating flu, Edson continued to grow and develop throughout the 20$^{th}$ century.

**Edson Today**

Today, Edson's slogan is "The Heart of the Yellowhead" and it continues to promote itself as the urban hub for the area. As of 2011, Edson has a total population of 8,475 (Statistics Canada 2012) while the resource industry continues to form the backbone of the local economy. Trades, transportation and equipment operations are the single largest source of employment in Edson followed by the sales and service industry (Statistics Canada 2007a). The coal mining industry - after declining in the 1940s with the decrease in demand for coal (Ross 1974: 161) - was revitalized in the 1970s while the petroleum and forestry industries contribute to the community's wellbeing (Town of Edson 2011: 5). Agriculture and resource based industries are the single largest employers in the community today (Statistics Canada 2007b). Local health needs are addressed at the Edson Medical Centre. Located on the same grounds where the Lady Minto had been built, the Centre provides 20 acute care beds and eight to ten doctors (Town of Edson 2011: 16). Communal social events continue to play a role in Edson's vitality. Every year, the local Kinsmen host a summer slo-pitch tournament with 24 regulation-sized diamonds in one park allowing the town to promote itself as the slo-pitch capitol of Canada (Edson Kinsmen 2012). Through changing social, political and economic trends of the last one hundred years, much of the community's character as a resource-based community and gateway town remains intact.

**Conclusion**

Within the first decade of its existence, the town of Edson had to contend with multiple challenges, from existential crises brought on by the abandonment of the Edson-Grande Prairie Trail to the near loss of its lifeline, the railway. The First World War took a very profound personal toll on many residents while the daily risks on the railroad and nearby coal mines presented their own threats to health and safety. The community was not immune to the effects of the 1918 Spanish Flu, a global pandemic that spared none and had an effect on the health and lives of millions. Throughout the economic ups-and-downs, wars and outbreaks, Edson managed to come together as a community that continues to prosper well into the 21st century. As will be discussed in later chapters, the challenges, economic and social realities of life in the early 20th century affected the community's mortality patterns and its social responses to death.

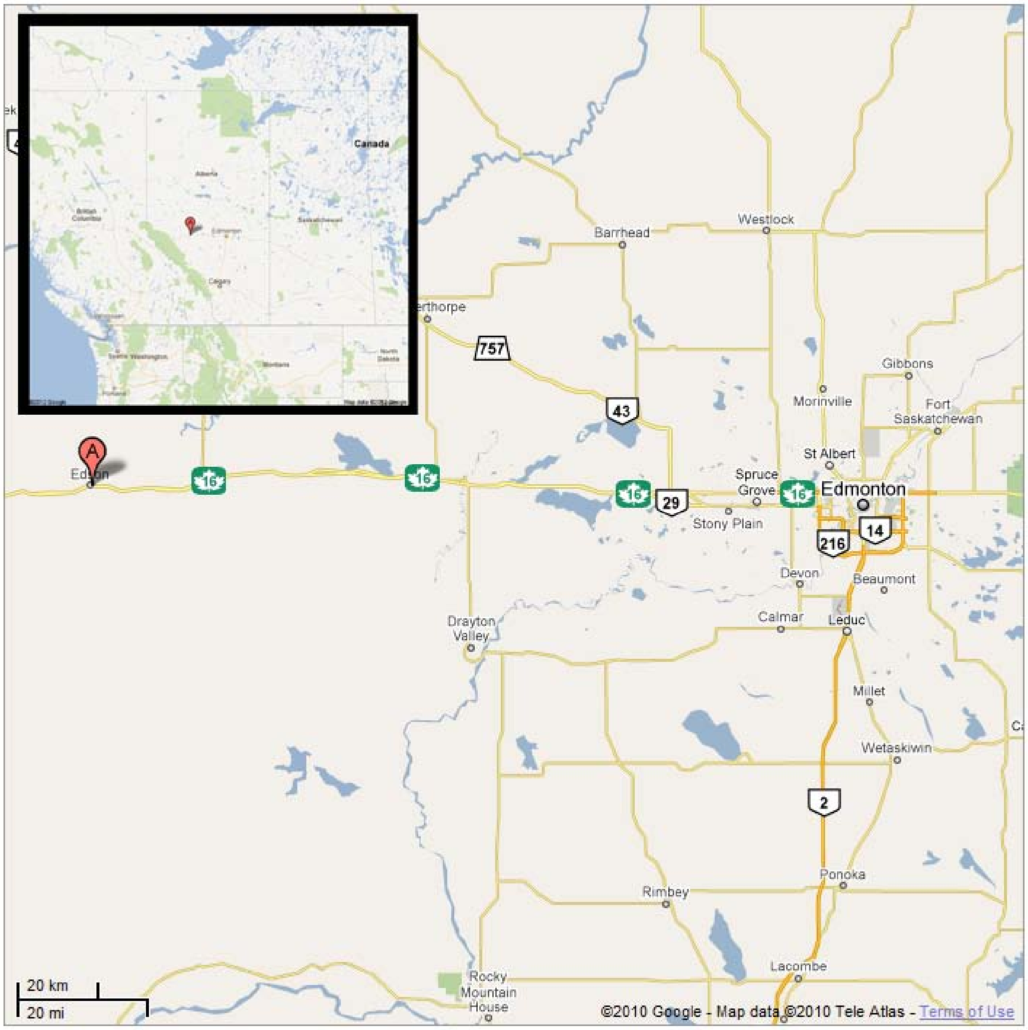


**Figure 2.1 – The location of Edson, Alberta.** The town (A) is located 192 km west of the provincial capital, Edmonton, along Highway 16.

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# Chapter 3 – The Edson Cemetery: Site, Memory and Commemoration

## Introduction

In studying past mortuary behaviours - the emotional expression of grief as well as physical manifestations of commemoration – the cemetery is the nucleus of study. Cemeteries fulfill dual purposes: they provide an organized and sanitary means for disposing of the dead as well as fulfilling a societal need to mourn and come to terms with death (Francaviglia 1971; Strange 2003). In analyzing the form and function of the cemetery, inferences are often made about past social organization and status (Mainfort 1985; Robb *et al* 2001; Young 1960) as well as group identities and affiliations (Buckham 2003; Reimers 1999; Sexton 1991). These inferences come from examining patterns in the spatial use within the site (Kruťová and Turek 2004; Mainfort 1985), the design of gravestones (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Francaviglia 1971; Mallios and Caterino 2007; Rainville 1999), who is deliberately commemorated or excluded (Garattini 2007; Murail *et al* 2004**;** Watkins 2002) and how all these patterns may change over time. Historic research has the benefit of drawing upon documentary sources that can provide greater context for analysis. There are numerous examples in which burial data and registries have been used to inform cemeteries studies (Buckham 2003; Saunders *et al* 1995; Sirianni 1995; Watkins 2002) along with personal correspondence and journals (Strange 2003) and an understanding of documented historic trends (Cannon 1989; Little *et al* 1992). These sources are useful as attitudes towards death are difficult to define for periods of the past (Cannon 1989) and can be especially difficult to observe in the material record alone.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the site of the Edson Cemetery, examine the history of its use and management, and determine what this may tell us about life and death on the western Canadian frontier in the early 20th century. The physical aspects alone aren't enough to base any conclusions on; it is only through including documentary sources such as burial registries, contemporary newspapers, and town records that we can formulate a deep understanding of mortuary behaviours in the early 20th century. The trend of secularization and municipal oversight of cemetery space in the early 20th century will be considered to understand the role of individual agency in commemoration. The community's historic context will be used to interpret the pragmatic influences on the management of the cemetery site.

**Location and Present State of the Cemetery**

The Edson Cemetery is located at N1/2, S.W. ¼, Sec 28, TP 53, RG 17W5M, near the town of Edson along Range Road 174 (63rd Street) and north of Township Road 534 (22nd Avenue) (Figure 3.1). It is located to the east of a dirt road, although the site is not marked by any signage and the casual passerby would be scarcely aware of its existence. The easiest way to access the cemetery is to enter through a small pathway between the trees (Figure 3.2), stepping over the remnants of a wire fence which forms a perimeter around the site. Multiple footpaths zigzag throughout the area, some ending at grave features while others meander into the forest. There are only a few markers remaining to indicate that this was once a place of burial. The remnants of dilapidated grave fences still dot the landscape, obscured by years of tree growth and neglect while the bases of some headstones are still found near shallow, rectangular depressions in the soil

(Figures 3.3). The only remaining intact headstone is located near the centre of the site (Figure 3.10a). The white, bolted-down fence enclosing the grave is of recent construction, while the headstone reads:

Our Darling
Volkmar Bellack
Born Mar 30, 1913
Died April 15, 1916

Despite its dilapidated state, the site receives semi-regular visitation. Commemorative tokens are found throughout the site, usually in association with graves. During the period of this study, there have been two major rounds of token placement. The first occurred before the study began, with plastic flowers found throughout the site. The second occurred sometime between Fall 2008 and Summer 2009, with teddy bears, marbles and crayons laid in association with the previous plastic flowers (Figure 3.4). Most recently, the cemetery site has been involved in geocaching, a hobby in which GPS enthusiasts leave a token in a public area and upload the coordinates to the internet for others to discover but otherwise leave undisturbed. The geocache is located in the NE quadrant of the site, apart from any grave features. In the summer 2010 field season, the remains of a small, decomposing cat were discovered in a slump in the earth near the entrance of the cemetery. Attached to a nearby tree with a piece of shoelace was a small piece of cardboard, upon which was written: *Here lies Isabela Kitty Cat*. By the next site visit in October 2011, the bones of the cat had been placed in a coffee tin, along with some coinage.

The nature of the site has also made it a destination for locals looking to scare one another with ghost sightings and supposed paranormal encounters. It is common for teenagers to come out in the middle of the night for a stroll through the Edson Cemetery. Unfortunately, this rite of passage coincides with the refuse of beer cans and cigarette butts found throughout the site, as well as periodic vandalism over the years. During the period of study, one of the few remaining intact graves was destroyed sometime in October 2011. Because the cemetery is no longer in use and lacks any formal historic designation, there are currently no resources dedicated to preserving or monitoring the site.

**Materials and Methods**

The investigations into the Edson Cemetery require a synthesis of traditional archaeological survey with documentary evidence. No individual data source provides enough information upon which conclusions can be drawn. Each form of evidence is hampered by its own unique insufficiencies and limitations. Historic records may be biased due to the observers' preconceptions or politics (Ubelaker 1995) while the material record is influenced by factors – intentions, strategies, attitudes and ideologies – that are unknown to the researcher (Hodder 1982). However, a combination of material and documentary evidence can highlight and clarify the insufficiencies inherent in each source (Cannon 1995). In this study, information is compared or cross-referenced, from which a more complete understanding of the cemetery emerges.

*Cemetery Survey*

Two non-invasive surface surveys were conducted to assess, catalogue, and map cemetery features. The first field survey was conducted in October 2008 using the line survey method to conduct an exclusive survey east of the Bellack grave (Figure 3.5). Transects were spaced 2 meters apart, as recommended by Schiffer *et al* (1978). A second survey was conducted in August 2009, again using the line survey method but with a non-exclusive search that covered the entire surface within the boundaries of the cemetery fence (Figure 3.5). Intermittent visits to the site were also made between September 2008 and October 2011 to qualitatively assess ongoing activities within the cemetery.

The surveys were conducted to assess the number of grave features as well as discover any mortuary artifacts and other relevant markers of human activity dating to the time when the cemetery was used. Due to the forest floor duff and the time elapsed since burials took place, the shape and distribution of cemetery plots were not consistent nor were they immediately visible. There is significant variability between graves features dependent upon the specifics of burial and taphonomic processes (Killiam 2004). Grave features were assumed to be semi-regular, rectangular depressions or elevations in the soil. The presence/absence of a rough box or coffin would influence the surface of the plot compared to the surrounding soil. Mortuary artifacts included any gravestones, or remnants thereof, that would indicate a grave. Other features surveyed included other signs of human activity that might distinguish a grave, such as the proximity to walking trails, on the logic that graves would have been visited more often along or near pathways. Taken together, these criteria were used to assess features and classify them as either Confirmed Graves (100% probability) Probable Graves (>50%

probability) or Possible Graves (<50% probability) based upon the qualitative criteria described above.

The south-eastern post of the Bellack plot fence was selected as the datum because of its central location and ease in which it can be located. The coordinates of the datum are N53 36.195 W116 27.443, recorded using an eTrek Vista Cx GPS unit. Given the dense forest canopy the margin of error of the GPS averaged between 9 and 10 meters making it unsuitable for mapping features is such close proximity. The latitude/longitude coordinates for the datum were converted to Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates and the easting and northing of each grave feature were recorded. Each feature detected on survey was described and measured, including the width, height and depth where applicable. When soil depths or measurements were uneven, an average was used. Gravestone features such as headstones, fences and other markers were measured, described and the orientation was noted. The information and a photograph for each feature is included in Appendix A.

*Cemetery Plan*

A plan of the Edson Cemetery was published in 1913, based upon a survey conducted by Benjamin F. Mitchell. The plan uses imperial measurements of feet scaled to inches, with the cemetery divided into six blocks numbered 1 through 6. In the south-western portion of the map is a 53 ft by 82 ft section listed as A. Similarly, in the north-central area is a large square area designated as B. There is no indication as to what these areas were to be designated for, whether it be a park area, common burial ground, or some other purpose.

The Cemetery Plan is used in conjunction with the Cemetery Register to understand the layout and organization of burials. The results can be overlaid with the survey results to determine the amount of crossover and correlation between the observed survey features and those recorded in documentary sources.

*Cemetery Registry*

Registry books were kept by the town to record information on individuals buried in both the Edson and Glenwood cemeteries. This portion of the research draws on the Cemetery Register currently maintained at the Edson town hall office. The Register contains fields to record biographical data on the deceased although the information is sometimes omitted, ambiguous, or illegible (Figure 3.6). For this portion of the study, the relevant information comes from the date of burial as well as the plot number for most deaths. This can be used with the Cemetery Plan to visualize the temporal and spatial dimensions of the site and assess any patterns for burials. Religion, sex and age are also listed for most entries, which can be used to account for any burial biases in the cemetery. The data from the Cemetery Register was transcribed and is listed in Appendix B.

*Newspapers*

A comprehensive review of newspapers from Edson dating between 1911 and 1918 was conducted at the Provincial Archives in Edmonton. With reference to research covered in this chapter, the newspapers provided information on the chronology of burials, including some deaths that predate or are omitted from the Cemetery Register. The newspapers also provided information on the activities of town council as they relate to the establishment and maintenance of the Edson

Cemetery. This is especially useful as the town council committee reports have not been preserved and the information gleaned from the minutes of council meetings is limited.

The community went through several periodicals in its first decade. Those that fall within the period of study, along with the number of issues preserved on microfilm, are summarized in Table 3.1. All local deaths were noted as well as deaths in surrounding communities in which interment took place in the Edson Cemetery. A list of deaths and interments recorded exclusively in the Edson newspapers (that is, deaths not also listed in the Cemetery Register) has been compiled using the same format as the Cemetery Register ledger and it is included in

Appendix C.

Renewed interest in the Edson Cemetery has been addressed periodically by the Edson Leader. Multiple articles have appeared since the 1980s including photographs and descriptions of features that demonstrate the changing state of the cemetery, such as several headstones that are no longer present (Figure 3.10c). The newspapers also provide anecdotal evidence on the reasons for the abandonment of the Edson Cemetery.

*Archival Material and Municipal Records*

The Provincial Archives of Alberta, Town of Edson Archives, and Edson Town Hall provided additional records, manuscripts and correspondence that relate to the Edson Cemetery.  The municipal archives contain an undated manuscript, *An Old Man Remembers* by Rod Gregg, a former resident of the town who is now deceased. The manuscript features a chapter entitled *Early burials, exhumations and something about the old Grande Prairie trail cemetery*, providing an anecdotal account of early burials, as well as the establishment and eventual abandonment of the cemetery. The archives also contain an undated image purportedly showing two men in a horse drawn cart transferring bodies from the temporary hospital site to the Edson Cemetery (Figure 3.7).

The Edson Town Hall maintains the minutes from town council meetings as well as by-laws that relate to burials and the cemetery. Committee reports, while referenced both in council minutes and newspaper articles, have not been preserved. The council minutes reviewed are for the years 1911, 1913 (the minute book for 1912 was absent) and 1917-1918. The minutes were reviewed for specific reference to the activities surrounding the establishment and abandonment of the Edson Cemetery. The relevant by-law, No 95 (passed June 2, 1914) outlines how the Edson Cemetery was to be managed. The subsequent by-law No. 1576 (passed July 5, 1983) mentions that the town recognizes the existence of the Edson Cemetery although it is no longer being used for interment. The town hall also maintains correspondence between residents and the town manager's office related to the cemetery site. This included correspondence between the town and provincial bureaucrats on preservation efforts for the Edson Cemetery in the mid-1980s. There is also a letter from a local resident written in response to the August 20, 1980 article about the cemetery in the Edson Leader. The letter explains that the headstone of William Herbert Pettigrew was moved from the Edson Cemetery to the Glenwood Cemetery so that it might reside next to William's mother. The physical remains were left in place at the Edson Cemetery. A visit to the Glenwood Cemetery confirms that the headstone was moved (Figure 3.10c).

**Results**

*Cemetery Management*

As with the establishment of any new municipality, the founding of Edson required that many challenges be addressed, among them the means and logistics for dealing with the deceased. By-Law No. 95 decrees that the management of the Edson Cemetery was under the control of the Edson town council. Town council was organized into multiple committees, with the management of the cemeteries designated to the Cemetery, Health and Relief (CHR) committee. The first reference to the CHR committee is in the January 21, 1913 minutes, which reads "That matters of *illegible* Cemetery be referred to Cemetery, Health and Relief Committee to report at next meeting. Carried." The committee was tasked with completing reports and coming up with recommendations on cemetery matters that were subsequently voted on by council as a whole. The February 4, 1913 minutes reference a report from the committee that was completed and adopted; the report itself has not been preserved. At times, as referenced in the October 14, 1913 minutes, the committee was authorized to take action "at once" to make arrangements for the cemetery survey. Community expense updates published in the December 5, 1914 issue of the Western Leader include routine maintenance and improvements made to the cemetery. In addition to its role in managing the local cemeteries, the CHR committee also looked after matters related to public health, including the disposal of night soil and the nuisance grounds, as referenced by the March 19, 1918 minutes. At some point, these responsibilities were divided between different committees and departments. At present, the care and maintenance of the local cemeteries falls to the Town Manager (Town of Edson 1983).

By-Law 95 which regulated the use of the Edson Cemetery, came into effect on June 2, 1914. The by-law states the price for cemetery plots, distinguishing between a price for adult and children's graves as well as the season of burial; burials between the months of December and April were subject to a higher price. The by-law further elaborates on the management of the cemetery, explaining that town council may employ surveyors, gardeners and caretakers to maintain and manage the grounds. With the approval of Council, grave proprietors could erect stones, monuments, trees, or shrubs on the plot, although Council reserved the right to remove trees and shrubs if they "…become detrimental to the adjacent lots" (Section 8). They could also remove monuments, fences, or inscriptions if they were deemed "…improper or injurious to the appearance of the lots or graves" (Section 9). By-law 95 was repealed by By-law 1576 (1983) which continued to recognize the site as a cemetery "albeit this cemetery is not presently being used for interments".

Section 18 of By-law 95 stipulated that burials were to be dug to a depth of six feet regardless of the age of the deceased. The only example of institutionalized segregation within the cemetery is in the form of paupers' graves. The by-laws stipulates that there would be an area for the "…poor and all persons unable to pay the necessary expenses". Whether this would have been a common grave area similar to other pauper graves (Strange 2003) or individual plots is unknown. At least one such interment was made: the December 31st, 1916 burial of Wolowski is listed as *Plot for pauper*. No other information, either biographical or burial location, is provided in the register.

During the operation of the GPT Cemetery, Edson was serviced by a local undertaker while the municipality appointed a coroner for the district. The June 9, 1911 issue of the Edson Leader contains the notice that local physician Doctor Proctor was appointed coroner for Edson and district. His name appears as the attending physician recorded in the Cemetery Register for several burials pre-1916. In the December 11, 1915 issue of the Western Leader, notice is given that Doctor Proctor resigned his position to serve on the frontlines of World War I and was replaced by Doctor McCordie, who is subsequently listed as the physician in the Register. Undertaking services were provided by William Jellis, who as early as September 1911 began outfitting his store room for such services (Edson Leader 1911a). The October 11, 1913 issue of the Edson Critic made mention that Jellis had recently attended an embalming course in Calgary.

The cemetery regulations did not specify within what period a body must be interred. However, the interval between death and burial was ascertained from fourteen listings in the Cemetery Register. Deaths reported in the newspapers were omitted due to the ambiguity of the dates. For example, in some cases a death was said to happen "last Tuesday" which could mean the immediately preceding Tuesday or the week before. The results for the interval between death and burial are summarized in Table 3.2. The time between death and burial was short, with the addition of embalming services in 1913 having no discernible impact.

*Period of Cemetery Use*

Multiple documentary sources help to establish a timeframe for the operation of the Edson Cemetery. These sources are less clear on the reasons for the chosen location of the cemetery and its eventual abandonment. Based upon the available evidence, the first interment occurred on February 10, 1912 while the last took place on September 27, 1918.

Establishing a permanent cemetery was a priority for the community. In the 1911 mayoral election, candidate Gilbert Lawrence made establishing a cemetery a campaign promise (Edson Leader, 1911b) and was subsequently elected mayor. Burials at the Edson Cemetery site predate both the official survey (dated December 4th, 1913) and the cemetery by-law (passed June 2, 1914). The first burial listed in the Cemetery Register is dated to January 17, 1913 (although no plot number is provided) while the newspapers indicate that the site was used as early as February 1912. The January 26, 1912 issue of the Edson Leader contains an obituary for Leland Nelson (Date of Death: January 20, 1912) explaining "The remains were interred in the temporary burying place near the hospital". The first reference to the Edson Cemetery occurred in the February 16, 1912 issue of the Edson Leader in the obituary for Mary McKeever (Date of death: February 10, 1912) "The remains were buried in the new cemetery near the Grande Prairie trail." In the 20 days between the death of Leland Nelson and Mary McKeever, the Edson Cemetery began operation. Between these two deaths there are no other obituaries nor is there an article referencing the opening of the cemetery; therefore, the February 10, 1912 death of Mary McKeever is considered to be the first interred at the site.

The reasons for locating the site at its particular location are not explicitly referenced in any sources. However, there is evidence that the community recognized a need to maintain an adequate and aesthetically appropriate resting place for the deceased. The burials at the hospital were deemed to be temporary (Edson Leader 1912a) and a decision was made to exhume them for relocation to the Edson Cemetery (Edson Leader 1912b) although specific reasons are not given. For some time after the Edson Cemetery began operation, it lacked the basic infrastructure such as a fence and suitable access road. These matters were referred to the Cemetery, Health and Relief committee at the January 21, 1913 council meeting and a report was submitted at the February 4th, 1913 meeting, while a motion for the secretary to obtain prices for a wire fence was carried. The newspaper provides additional details as to what was discussed at the council meeting. In addition to fencing the cemetery, the report called for a "…first class road from the Grande Prairie road to the cemetery…" and to have five acres cleared with the area surveyed at the earliest opportunity (Edson Leader 1913a). The lack of organization in the cemetery was a source of frustration for town council. Prior to the surveying, the conditions of the cemetery were described as "intolerable" with graves failing to be laid out systematically (Edson Critic 1913a). None of the sources provide an explanation for why the particular location, away from the community and near the Grande Prairie Trail, was chosen for the cemetery. Despite the distance for the town proper, the call for adequate road access to the site demonstrates that – at least for a time – the Edson Cemetery was considered a vital piece of community infrastructure.

The documentary sources are equally unclear as to when the final burial took place at the Edson Cemetery and why the site was abandoned. Considerations for a new cemetery – which would become the Glenwood Cemetery - were being made as early as October 16, 1917 where council minutes designate that the Cemetery, Health and Relief committee were directed to complete a report regarding the establishment of a new cemetery. The last burial listed in the Cemetery Register is the September 27, 1918 burial of W. Burdock. The next page in the register skips ahead to June 28th, 1921 with listings at the Glenwood site. A second cemetery register, the Register of Burials, is ambiguous with references to the "Edson", "Glenwood" or "New" cemetery. However, the last confirmed burial at the Edson Cemetery listed in the Register of Burials is also the September 28th, 1918 burial of W. Burdock. Other sources, such as the local newspapers and electronic cemetery database do not provide information on any later burials at the Edson Cemetery, therefore September 28th, 1918 may be considered the last interment in the Edson Cemetery.

There are two published theories as to why the site was abandoned. In an October 10, 1995 article in the Edson Leader, town resident Barrie Freeman explains that the Edson Cemetery was built over springs that caused constant flooding in the graves. Another theory comes from Rod Gregg's *An Old Man Remembers* manuscript. He describes an incident related to him by Bill York, who briefly oversaw William Jellis' undertaking business. He recounts that sandstone slabs infested the grounds of the Edson Cemetery, making it difficult to dig graves. The major impetus for abandoning the site came with the Spanish Flu epidemic. It was necessary to have a site free of these obstacles. Neither of these theories can be taken at face value, owing to their anecdotal nature, as well as contradictory evidence. Barrie Freeman, the source of the flooding scenario, was born in 1909 and he would have been eight years old in 1917 when the last burial took place. It is highly unlikely that he would have firsthand knowledge of the cemetery or the reasons for its disuse. During the visits to the site undertaken as part of this study, there was no evidence of flooding. The sandstone slab scenario related by Gregg comes as a secondary source. His inclusion of the Spanish Flu as the motivator for abandoning the site doesn't match with historic chronology of the influenza outbreak. Minutes from the town council meeting on October 16, 1917 report that the Cemetery, Health and Relief committee "…be asked to report re a new cemetery". This predates the outbreak of Spanish Flu, which did not hit North America until Spring 1918 (Taubenberger & Morens 2006) and did not reach Alberta until October of that year (McGinnis 1977). Chronological issues aside, there is evidence at the site suggesting that Gregg's explanation of the sandstone slabs might be valid. Large, flat rocks were found near or in association with several grave features. Whether these rocks were uncovered during burial, how prevalent they were, and how exactly they might have contributed to the abandonment of the site is unknown.

A third possibility for the abandonment of the Edson Cemetery parallels the abandonment of the Grande Prairie Trail. The trail, which brought settlers north to the Grande Prairie area, began operation in 1911 (Edson Leader 1911c) and was fell into disuse beginning in 1916 with the arrival of the railway in the Peace River area (Moore 1982: 243). The access road to the cemetery was located off of the Grande Prairie trail, and without maintenance and upkeep on the trail, access to the cemetery would have been limited. During the exhumation of his great-great uncle G.F. Brine in the 1950s, local resident Alf Larose recalled that at the time, the cemetery was only accessible by horse and wagon (Alf Larose personal communication). With the abandonment of the Grande Prairie Trail in 1916, it's conceivable that the road would have gradually fallen into disuse, prompting the town to begin considerations for a new cemetery in October 1917. The Glenwood Cemetery is located within the town (Figure 3.1) which would have resolved the issues of transportation and visitation.

*Physical Evidence at the Cemetery*

The two surveys of the Edson Cemetery were successful in uncovering eighteen grave features at the site. Features were categorized as either Certain Grave (100% certainty, 4 Features), Probable Grave (>50% certainty, 9 Features) or Possible Grave (<50% certainty, 5 Features) and the coordinates of each grave were compiled and mapped out (Figure 3.8). For the sake of comparison between the survey and documentary sources, the burial plots listed in the Cemetery Register were marked on the 1913 cemetery plan (Figure 3.9). Due to legibility of some Cemetery Register entries and ambiguity on plot information, only 18 of the

21 burials listed in the register could be mapped out. Overlaying the survey results with the 1913 cemetery plan shows that multiple features detected on survey align loosely with documentary sources.

The present conditions of the site, including the tree density, presented a challenge for the survey. Particularly with the graves in the far western and eastern portion of the site, it was difficult to maintain sight with the datum point and ensure accurate measurements. This explains why Features G, N, and P align more loosely with registry burials than those features near the centre of the site. They survey also revealed several grave features (Features E, F, H, I, and Q) that did not align with any graves indicated by the map. As there were more burials at the site than were recorded in the cemetery register, it's expected that a number of survey features might exceed or not align with registered burials. The availability of documentary evidence was helpful in reassessing the categories of some grave features. The overlay showed that multiple survey features (Features L, K) initially classified as Possible Grave aligned with the location of burials provided by the register and map. In the event of any future exhumation work, it would be reasonable to excavate these two features with the expectation of uncovering human remains.

Both the survey results and the cemetery plan indicate that burials were uniform and arranged in a grid. Features B, C, and D are spaced evenly apart and even the vast distance between Features G and P show uniformity in their placement. The size of grave features also demonstrates uniformity, with an average East-West dimensions of 1.7 meters and North-South dimensions of 1.1

meters. This suggests an east-west orientation for most graves to account for the shape and placement of coffins. Headstones were oriented with the inscription facing the east, as demonstrated by the Bellack burial (Feature A) and Feature O where the remaining headstone base is to the west of the rectangular mound. The exception to this is Feature I, which is a semi-circular arrangement of rocks with scattered remnants of a wooden fence and Feature C, in which the headstone base is to the east of the rectangular depression.

The current state of the cemetery limited direct observation of gravestones and other markers. Two gravestones were moved from the Edson Cemetery to the Glenwood Cemetery while the newspaper provides photographs of another headstone. Considerations were made to categorize gravestones according to the classification system outlined by Francaviglia (1971) but due to the sample size and variability, gravestones were qualitatively assessed relative to one another. In total, four gravestones were recorded with variability in size, shape and motifs depicted on each (Figure 3.10). All gravestones commemorate a single individual and all are for persons who died in childhood. Measurements were possible for three of the four gravestones (the fourth observable only in photograph) and none exceeded 70 cm in height. Another two basestones were observed on site but there were no individualizing features. A wooden cross was found in association with Feature N and earlier photographs show that it was once affixed to the wooden fence enclosing the grave (Figure 3.11). At least four graves were at one point enclosed by small wooden fences with only one of these fences (Feature N) intact at the time of the survey. The white fence surrounding the Bellack grave (Feature

C) was not included in the tally, as a photograph of the grave from August 1980 shows that it is of recent origin (Figure 3.12).

The cemetery register, in conjunction with the cemetery plan, can be used to create a timeline for most burials at the site to understand the spatial and temporal dimensions of the cemetery. The timeline of burials are shown in Figure 3.13, with each known grave marked from 1 (earliest) to 18 (latest). The pattern shows a greater variability in the placement of graves in the earlier years of operation before greater concentration of burials in the centre of the site from April 1916 onward.

There is very limited evidence that burials were grouped according to religion, sex, or age. In the Cemetery Register, 9 of the 21 burials (43%) in the Edson Cemetery list the religion of the deceased (Table 3.3). The only outlier is the burial of M. Isaghi, whose religion is listed as "Oriental" and is located apart from the others in the south-eastern quadrant of the cemetery. The survey confirms that there is a grave feature in that location (Feature G). However, as a single burial and with only 43% of registry burials listing a religion, it is not sufficient enough to declare spatial bias based upon religion. As for age and sex categories, there is no pattern in the distribution of graves. As discussed earlier, the presence of a pauper plot indicates that some considerations were given for low-income individuals. The Cemetery Register indicates that families had purchased adjacent plots, such as the Pettigrew family purchasing the plot adjacent to their son, William Pettigrew, upon his death in February 1916.

## Discussion

*Pragmatic and emotional responses to death*

Cemeteries provide a "cultural text about society" (Reimers 1999) with the physical use of the space providing a window into how death was interpreted and dealt with in the past. It is important to look at the relationship between burial and settlement (Hodder 1982) in order to ask: Where do people choose to bury their dead and why? The design, location, and use of the Edson Cemetery reflect a pragmatic approach to the disposal of the dead, informed by the norms of cemetery design of the early 20$^{th}$ century while echoing the public health concerns of the 19$^{th}$ century. This pragmatism does not preclude a profound emotional response to death, for which there is ample evidence within contemporary documentary sources. The compatibility of both pragmatic and profound emotional responses to death has been documented by others (Strange 2003) as has the importance of understanding the historic context within which a cemetery is embedded (Little *et al* 1992).

The 19$^{th}$ and early 20$^{th}$ century was a transformative period that saw the emergence of the modern cemetery. In the 19$^{th}$ century, cemeteries went from the control of parishes to municipalities amidst growing health concerns and pressures of urbanization. In the mid-1800s, urban graveyards of Britain were crowded with "…very questionable disturbance and displacement of previous deposits" (Walker 1839: *iv*) while in New England, 17$^{th}$ century burial grounds were being encroached upon by growing urban centres (French 1974; Mytum 2004: 44). Limited space and pressure of growing urban populations required reopening of graves (Farrell 1980: 103) from which grew the concern that gasses being released from decomposing bodies were affecting the living (Loudon 1843: 4). Around this time, Parish-run cemeteries were used in urban centers across North America, such as the Methodist cemetery in Newmarket, Ontario (Pfeiffer *et al* 1989). Meanwhile, smaller communities and homesteaders frequently buried their dead on an ad hoc basis, such as on family owned land (Little *et al* 1992).

Motivated by health concerns brought about by urban expansion, cemetery design became an expression of Romantic ideals in the early 19th century followed by a rejection of such overt displays by the dawn of the 20th century, evolving into the lawn cemetery more common today. In response to population pressures and health concerns, the rural/garden cemetery began developing in the mid-1800s (Farrell 1980: 99) with the Mount Auburn cemetery of Boston serving as the design template (French 1974). The rural cemetery movement began to be expressed in Canada in the 1850s (Watkins 2002). With their winding paths, clusters of graves often located on picturesque hills, and garden aesthetic, the rural cemeteries were conceived as providing a place for meditation and reflection on death and mortality (French 1974; Loudon 1843: 11) which went hand-in-hand with Romantic ideals of the era (Little et al 1992). Grave monuments and mortuary behaviors were often elaborate displays, initiated first by the elites and upper-class to reflect their status (Cannon 1989). Mass production, and with this an increase in the expense and ritual associated with death (Little *et al* 1992), opened up the possibility of burying dead in a cemetery for lower classes, who began imitating elite mortuary displays. This kicked off a cycle of even more elaborate displays by the upper classes. Concerns were expressed about the gaudiness of this increased elaboration, which lead to a gradual shift towards the lawn cemetery, emphasizing uniformity, while the concept of the cemetery as a place for contemplation diminished (Farrell 1980: 120). The lawn cemetery was distinguishable by the uniformity in its design: graves were laid out along a stricter grid pattern and in many cases there were explicit rules governing commemorative displays. These cemeteries were also easier to maintain (Reimers 1999; Rugg 2006) and many were established by local governments or companies set up to explicitly manage the site (Mytum 2004: 89), although corporate management dates back to rural cemeteries, such as the Mount Royal Cemetery Corporation of Montreal (Watkins 2002) and the York Cemetery Corporation in the United Kingdom (Buckham 2003). The de-emphasis of death within the cemetery landscape has been taken to mean an increased cultural unease in discussing mortality in the 20th century (Aries 1974; Rugg 2006). However, analysis based solely on the physical manifestations within the cemetery fails to take into consideration the other avenues of expression. For instance, commemoration within the home or idea of intergenerational relationships - such as conceptualizing that people live on within their children - are equally valid ways of remembering the dead and acknowledging death that will not appear in the cemetery (Strange 2003).

The Edson Cemetery was established with pragmatism in mind, strongly influenced by public health concerns that mirrored the concerns of the 19th century. Prior to the establishment of the municipal cemetery the community's burial planning (or lack thereof) resembled that of other pioneer, frontier communities. The newspapers of the era confirm burials taking place on homesteads (Edson Leader 1911d) or in temporary graves (Edson Critic 1911). Even while the temporary hospital cemetery was in operation, some individuals continued to be buried elsewhere. There is no explanation as to why some people were buried in other locations. It may have been that the hospital cemetery was reserved for people who died there, or simply that the lack of burial regulations allowed people to bury according to their personal wishes.

The location of the cemetery, as well as its management within the municipal government, points to pervading concerns about the proper disposal of the deceased. While the town was expected to grow, the cemetery was located far enough away that it would not encroach upon urban development. Even well into the 21st century, today the Edson Cemetery still resides on the outskirts of the community. That its management should fall to the same town council committee that looked after health and waste disposal is also telling. The community saw the proper disposal of the dead as a matter of public health and prioritized it enough that the maintenance and care of the site was a regular concern at town council meetings. Graves were not to be re-opened without the expressed permission of town council, while the short period of time between death and burial demonstrates a concern that the deceased be interred quickly and left in place. Of the fourteen deaths surveyed, the majority of burials (71%, 10/14) took place on either the same day as the death (29%, 4/14) or the day after (43%, 6/14). There were no burials with an interval greater than three days. For the single death in which the interval was three days, the place of death is "on homestead" so the distance from the town or arrangement for transporting the body may have been a factor. The remarks section also reads *by order of coroner*, so the body may have undergone examination which delayed interment. Even with this outlier it is clear from the data that a prompt burial was preferred and necessary given the concerns about death and public health.

By the time of the cemetery's founding, the aesthetics of the lawn cemetery were in full swing, which is reflected in the cemetery layout. In the cemetery plan, all graves are laid out in a regimented grid, each accorded the same size. The results of the site survey - that many features align closely with registry and cemetery plan data – coupled with the observed uniformity in grave size confirms that the space was used as planned. The bylaws make no provisions for larger or unique plots, the only distinction being the costs for children versus adult graves. The few observed gravestones are all of modest design, conforming to the non-ostentatious displays characteristic of cemetery monument design of the era. There are no mausoleums, tombs or obelisks within the landscape. Such gratuitous displays would have been discouraged as the town's cemetery by-law reserved the right to remove any grave markings that were not in keeping with the general aesthetic of the site.

Finally, the various theories for the abandonment of the site conform to the pragmatic approached adopted throughout the period of the cemetery's usage. While this study was unable to ascertain a specific reason for the abandonment of the site, in each scenario the decision to abandon the cemetery is motivated by logistic concerns. Constant flooding at the site as well as the prevalence of sandstone slabs inhibiting digging are both explanations that would have called into question the integrity of the location for future burials. The third theory, that the loss of the Grande Prairie Trail would have made access to the site a challenge, demonstrates that the use of or abandonment of a particular space may be driven by events or developments unrelated to the space itself. The cemetery itself is but a single element in the cultural landscape (Francaviglia 1971) and so the historical context is essential in order to properly interpret burial data (Little *et al* 1992). While the Grande Prairie Trail is not part of the Edson Cemetery, its influence on the cemetery may be profound.

The pragmatism exhibited in the establishment, maintenance and abandonment of the Edson Cemetery does not diminish the emotional impact felt by those experiencing loss of a family member or friend. The initial need to properly survey and fence the site was more than a practical question of community infrastructure, it was a moral question. Headlines such as “Cemetery Receives Deserved Attention” (Edson Leader 1913a) while council committed to making “…the last resting place of Edsonites as practical and pleasing as possible.” (Edson Critic 1913a) demonstrate that emotional motivations were not incongruent to the practical needs. The dual purpose of the cemetery has been documented by other (Francaviglia 1971; Strange 2003) while the documentary evidence from Edson challenges the notion that 20$^{th}$ century society has a greater reluctance to speak about death (Aries 1974). The relative decline in elaborate mortuary displays has been taken to represent a growing cultural fear or reluctance to contemplate death (Rugg 2006). Such a focus on the material evidence fails to consider commemoration taking place beyond the borders of the cemetery. During the time of the cemetery's use, the newspaper served as a conduit for communicating about death. Throughout the periodicals reviewed, there are numerous death announcements, obituaries and commemorations. The lengthy obituary for Mary McKeever published on February 16, 1912 in the Edson Leader ends with the passage: "We shall miss her; but she is only gone before. The Public School and the Sabbath School will profoundly regret her departure; but they have the very comforting assurance that they may meet her again in Our Father's Mansions. So we sorrow not as those without hope." General condolences were also published on behalf of the deceased and their surviving kin, such as a poem dedicated to the death of the Shaw infant by Thos. A. Booth – relation to the child unknown (Edson Critic 1913b). The newspaper provides a cost effective medium for the expression of grief and condolence that is apart from the cemetery. It is a public acknowledgment of death and each reader is passively brought in to experience the pain and loss of a loved one. All commemoration need not take place at the actual gravesite (Strange 2003) and the findings of the Edson Cemetery calls into question the notion that the 20$^{th}$ century is marked by a growing unease with death. It is the historical records that afford us a window into the expressions and attitudes towards death that cannot be measured through the material remains of the cemetery, nor the physical remains of the dead.

*Reflecting Social and Political Norms*

Cemeteries are often understood to reflect social and political norms or alternatively, to express an idealized or fictive reality. The distribution of cemeteries may "…identify relationships with political, administrative or social boundaries" (Hodder 1982) while the same can be said for activities within the cemetery itself. The physical graves as well as the associated funerary rituals can assert cultural boundaries (Reimers 1999) such as social class, religious affiliation, or kinship ties. For example, parish and religious cemeteries enforce these boundaries by excluding those who do not subscribe to their faith from their burial grounds, while other strategies include the spatial arrangement of graves (Mainfort 1985) and the information communicated in gravestones (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Francaviglia 1971; Mallios and Caterino 2007; Rainville 1999). Cemeteries may also deliberately distort socio-economic realities (Rainville 1999; Watkins 2002) or reflect an idealized version of society (Francaviglia 1971). As discussed, the 19$^{th}$ century brought about a cycle of lower status individuals emulating the funerary expressions of the higher status to demonstrate a desired socio-economic position (Cannon 1989; Farrell 1980; Mytum 2004: 35). Cemeteries can also have burial biases, with some individuals excluded from material commemoration, correlating with their perceived status in life. In investigating a 19$^{th}$ century cemetery in Cambridgeshire, England, Cannon (1995) found that material commemoration was more common among older males while Watkins' (2002) investigations of 19$^{th}$ century Montreal cemeteries found that low-status, Catholic French Canadian women were more likely to be excluded from commemorative practices. It is imperative that material evidence not be taken at face value and that the historic context of the cemetery is taken into consideration when constructing the past. Cemeteries do not inherently reflect class or group affiliation (Buckham 2003) and there is a role for understanding the emotional and pragmatic motivations of mortuary behavior. Cemeteries may reflect sentimentality rather than status (Little *et al* 1992) although this may not be preserved in the physical record.

During its brief use, the Edson Cemetery was largely egalitarian, with no divisions between age, sex or religious affiliation. The only distinction is based on socio-economic standing, with the December 31, 1916 burial of Wolowski listed as "Plot for pauper" and reference in the by-laws on provisions for the burial of the poor. Pauper plots were common in many cemeteries of the era, reserved for those individuals who were unable to pay and often took the form of common burial areas (Strange 2003). The pauper plot does not deliberately reflect social hierarchy; its existence is a pragmatic response to the need to dispose of the dead in an environment where individual commemoration is the financial responsibility of the deceased and their family.

The level of individual agency granted in the commemoration of the dead reflects an individualistic and emotional response to death rather than a need to reinforce or subvert social and class distinctions. By-law 95 dictates that while certain aesthetics were expected to be followed, individuals were free to furnish grave plots as they saw fit. There are no areas of the site that appear to be reserved for any specific group, whether religious, age or sex. The site is multidenominational and there is no reference to a consecrated area such as is featured in other sites (Buckham 2003). While segregation based upon sex or occupation exists in some cemeteries (Robb *et al* 2001) there is no evidence of that in the Edson Cemetery. Similarly, age categories – especially for the young – have been identified as criteria for designating specific areas within a cemetery or altogether exclusion from communal cemeteries (Garattini 2007; Murail *et al* 2004; Norman 2003; Scott 1999). There is no such distinction for the young in the Edson Cemetery, a topic that will be explored further in Chapter Four. The spatial organization of burials over time appears to be random in the early years of the cemetery's use; individuals are not grouped according to a particular religious, sex or age categories. The only discernible criterion for grouping graves is the practice of reserving adjacent plots for family members. The concentration of graves towards the centre of the site in the later years (1916 onward) is likely for logistic reasons; by then the Grande Prairie Trail was abandoned and it would be easier to maintain the grounds if graves were grouped together.

It is tempting to see the egalitarian nature of the cemetery as correlative with the social organization of the community. Having been founded in 1911, the community would not yet have developed entrenched social or class divisions. The community's infrastructure was being built from the ground up, facilitated by a fluctuating population of migrants. The population of the town in 1912 was 1,223 before dropping down to 625 in 1916 and rising to 800 in 1917 (Edson Archives *n.d.*). Correlating cemetery usage and social organization would conclude that the egalitarian cemetery reflected the community's egalitarian nature. However, if such a simple relationship between burial and social complexity existed, over the years we would see changes happening in tandem, which is not the case. A cursory examination of the Glenwood Cemetery confirms that while some practices continue, others change when new behaviors are introduced – none of which coincide with a shift in social organization or complexity. The Glenwood site maintains the park cemetery aesthetic of the Edson Cemetery, with uniform rows of plots, all of equal size. The by-laws of the Glenwood Cemetery are more explicit as to what is deemed acceptable grave markers. Vertical monuments are only allowed in specific sections of the cemetery, while flat stones flush with the ground are allowed in all other areas (Town of Edson 1986: Section 8[6]). While the planting of shrubs and plants was allowed in the Edson Cemetery (Town of Edson 1914: Section 7) only those planted by the caretaker are permitted at the Glenwood site (Town of Edson 1986: Section 9[3]). The Glenwood Cemetery also provides distinct areas based on social and age groups, along with burial type. In 1985, the Town passed By-law 1642 making explicit provisions for the burial of cremains in designated blocks at the Glenwood Cemetery. There are also distinct areas for military veterans and a common grave area with minimalist gravestones flush with the ground. Many of these changes were introduced against the backdrop of shifting attitudes and fashions in mortuary behavior rather than changes in society as a whole.

There is no simple relationship between social complexity and mortuary behaviors. Cemeteries are enmeshed within their particular historic context and while they may reflect certain societal values, mortuary behaviors do not move in lock-step with other specific societal changes. The park cemetery aesthetic employed in the Edson Cemetery follows the trajectory of cemetery design from the 19th to 20th centuries. Many communities large and small, urban and rural adopted similar designs despite variation in their social organization. The park cemetery itself was not static and it continued to develop in the 20th century. The increased uniformity in grave marker design introduced in the Glenwood Cemetery by-laws follows a shift in 20th century gravestone design observed in other cemeteries (Francaviglia 1971). Similarly, the designation of cemetery blocks for cremains mirrors an increase in the practice observed in other western cemeteries throughout the 20th century (Rugg 2006). The evolution of mortuary behaviors did not coincide with shifts in social organization or underlying values. This reaffirms Kroeber's (1927) understanding of mortuary practices as affect-laden customs. While Kroeber's premise fell out of favour in the mid to late 20th century (Carr 1995) within the context of analyzing historic cemeteries, understanding that mortuary behaviors vary based on their own fashions can be useful in understanding change and persistence of certain practices.

If mortuary behaviors are to be understood as an element of fashion, how do we explain variation within a cemetery site? Rather than reflect social/cultural identities, memorials may express individual relationships (Buckham 2003) determined in part by the pragmatic and economic investments required. This perspective opens up the understanding of mortuary behaviors as a reflection of individual agency rather than a set of rituals and actions committed by passive actors to reinforce group identities or social hierarchies. Numerous examples of obituaries in the local newspapers, along with elaborate funerary processions, indicates that many of the mortuary behaviors will not be preserved archaeologically, and it is through these behaviors that we might infer a greater understanding of the individual's place and relationships in the community. Mortuary behaviors require a financial investment and therefore the absence of commemoration may demonstrate a financial pragmatism rather than a detachment or a lack of grief for the deceased (Strange 2003). Both pragmatic concerns as well as the expression of grief are not mutually exclusive and when combined, may have a greater influence on mortuary behaviors than the social dynamics of the societies in which the individuals live.

**Conclusion**

Investigations into the Edson Cemetery have relied upon a synthesis of non-invasive archaeological survey and historic documentary sources. As no exhumations took place, historical sources were necessary in order to answer questions about the management, use, and demographics of the cemetery. Multiple strands of evidence allow for the cross-referencing of data, such as comparing the survey results with burial locations listed in the cemetery register. The physical and historic sources are compatible and future research involving the exhumation of remains may further test their compatibility. Combined, these sources provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivations that guided the community in the brief period in which the Edson Cemetery was operational. The Edson Cemetery followed 20$^{th}$ century aesthetics of the lawn cemetery design while health concerns first expressed in the 19$^{th}$ century affected the way in which the cemetery was managed. Spatial organization of the cemetery was largely egalitarian, with no divisions based upon sex, age or religious affiliation. The cemetery has often been understood to play a role in the entrenchment – or subversion – of social/class distinctions of the living population. The Edson Cemetery demonstrates that the treatment of the deceased and the cemetery landscape can also be guided by individual feelings and a desire to enshrine the identity and memory of the deceased over any group affiliation.

Table 3.1 - Edson Newspapers preserved on Microfilm (1911-1918)

| **Newspaper** | **Year** | **No. of Issues Preserved** |
|---|---|---|
| Edson Leader | 1911 | 46 |
| | 1912 | 51 |
| | 1913 | 51 |
| Edson Critic | 1913 | 47 |
| Western Leader | 1914 | 45 |
| | 1915 | 46 |
| | 1916 | 44 |
| | 1917 | 23 |
| Edson News | 1918 | 3 |

Table 3.2 - Known intervals between death and burial in the Edson Cemetery

| **Days between Death and Burial** | **No. of Burials** |
|---|---|
| 0 | 4 |
| 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 1 |
| **TOTAL** | **14** |

Table 3.3- Religion of deceased interred in the Edson Cemetery

| **Religion** | **No.** |
|---|---|
| Protestant | 5 |
| Roman Catholic | 2 |
| Greek Orthodox | 1 |
| "Oriental" | 1 |
| Unknown | 12 |
| **TOTAL** | **21** |

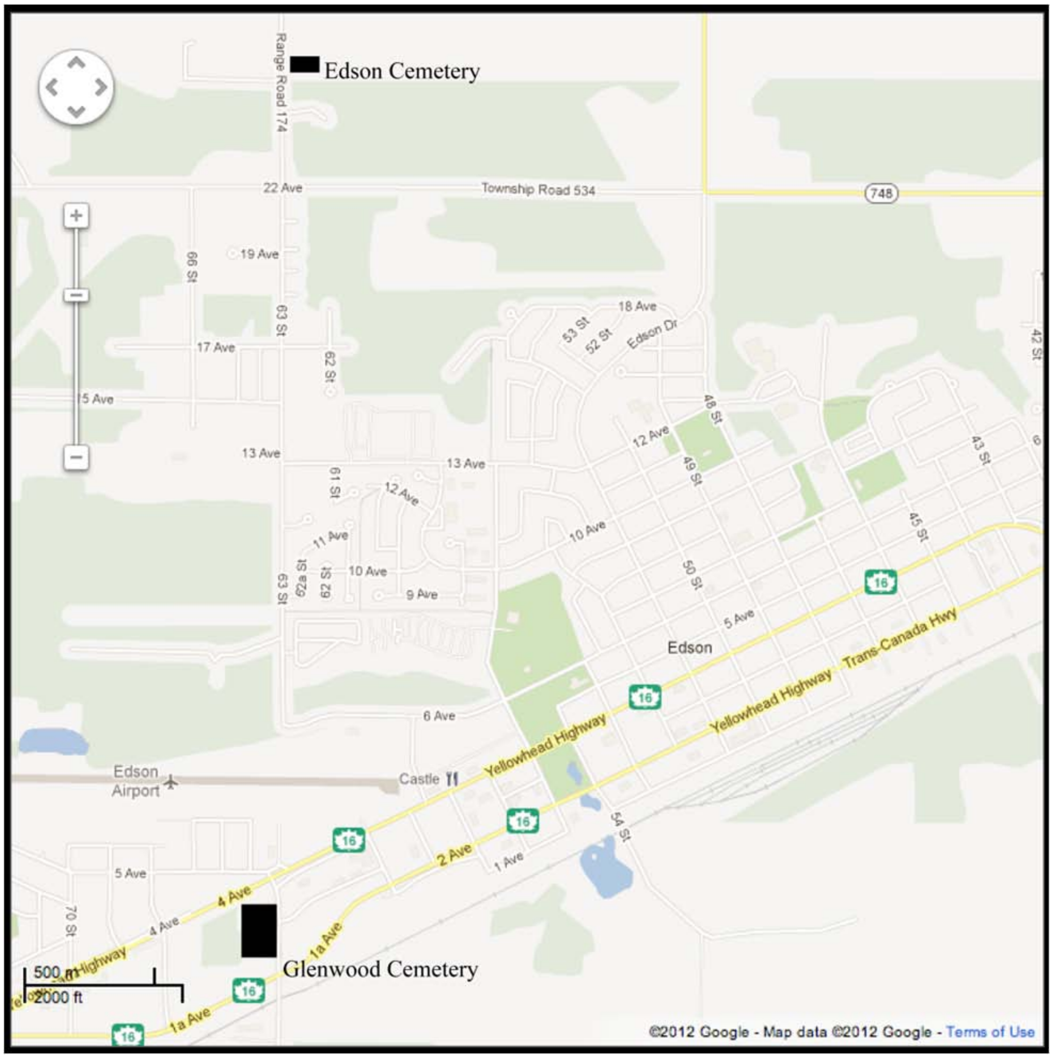


Figure 3.1 - The location of the Edson and Glenwood cemeteries in Edson, AB

Figure 3.2 - Entrance to the Edson Cemetery

Figure 3.3 - Example of a grave at the Edson Cemetery

**Figure 3.4 - Commemorative tokens placed on a grave.** This grave (Feature N) was destroyed sometime in October 2011 although the tokens remain in place.

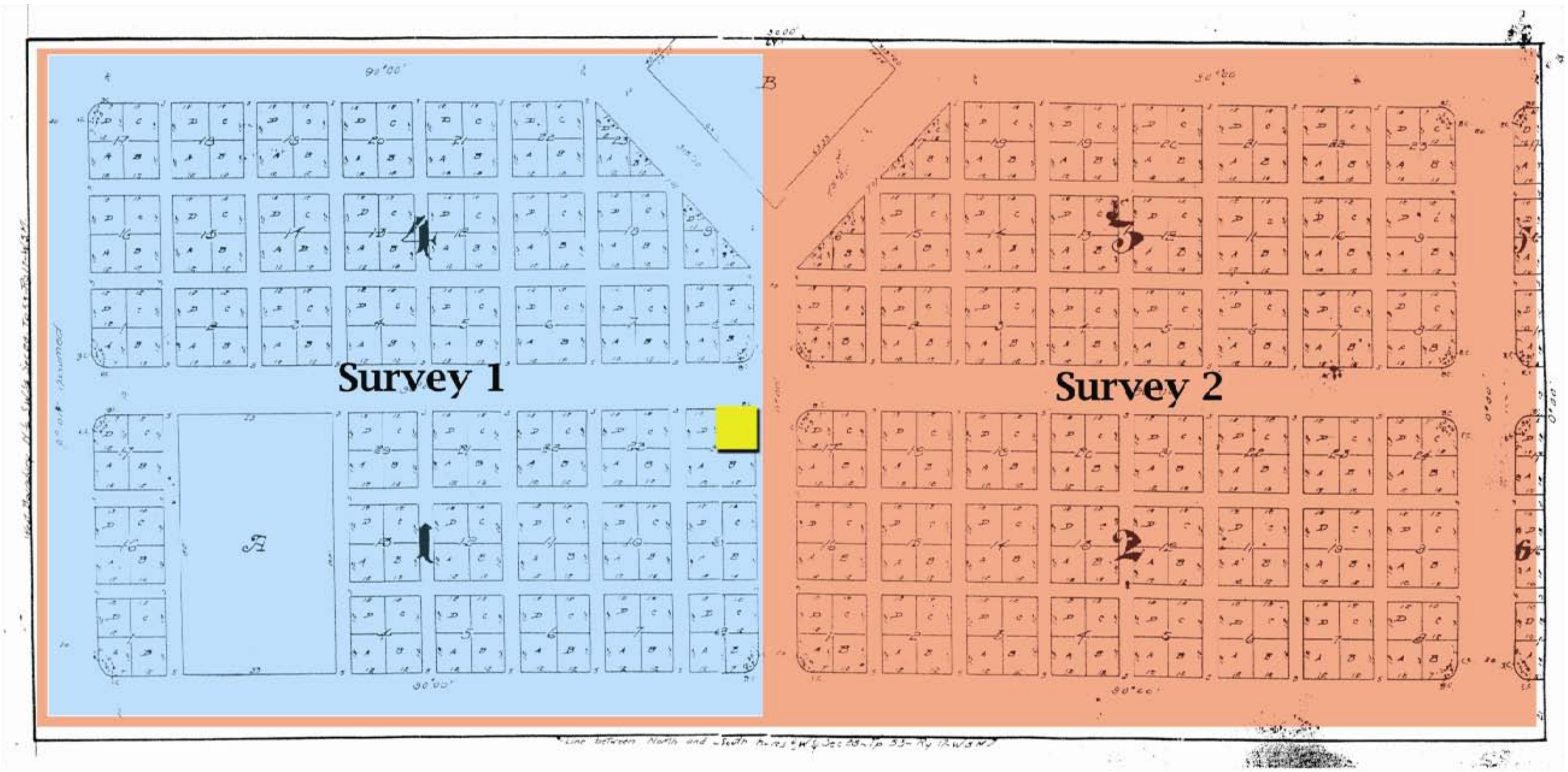


**Figure 3.5 - Non-invasive surveys of the Edson Cemetery.** The lighter area represents the area covered during the first survey, while the darker area (which includes the first survey area) shows the area covered during the second survey.

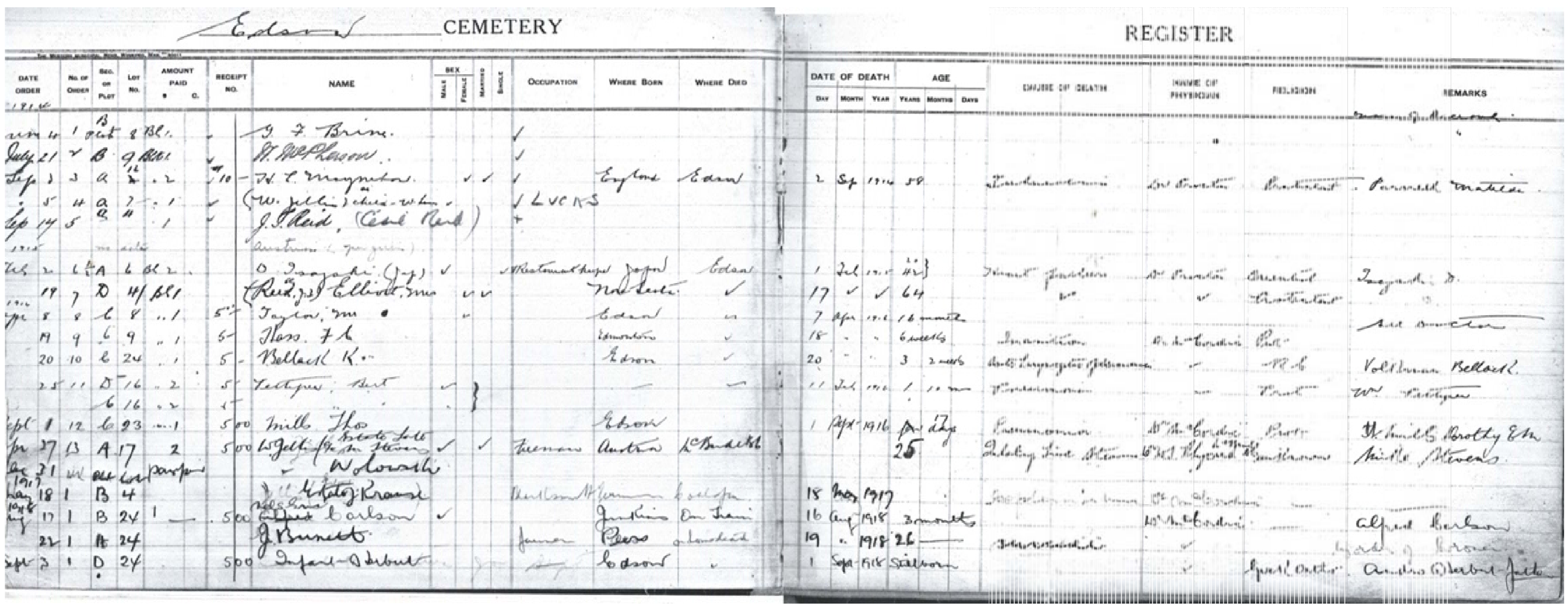


**Figure 3.6 - The Cemetery Register.** A sample page from the register in which most burials are recorded, including demographic information such as plot number, the name and of the deceased and cause of death. In many instances, the information is absent.

**Figure 3. 7 - Horse drawn cart purportedly transferring bodies to the Edson Cemetery** (Edson Archives – 76.10.079)

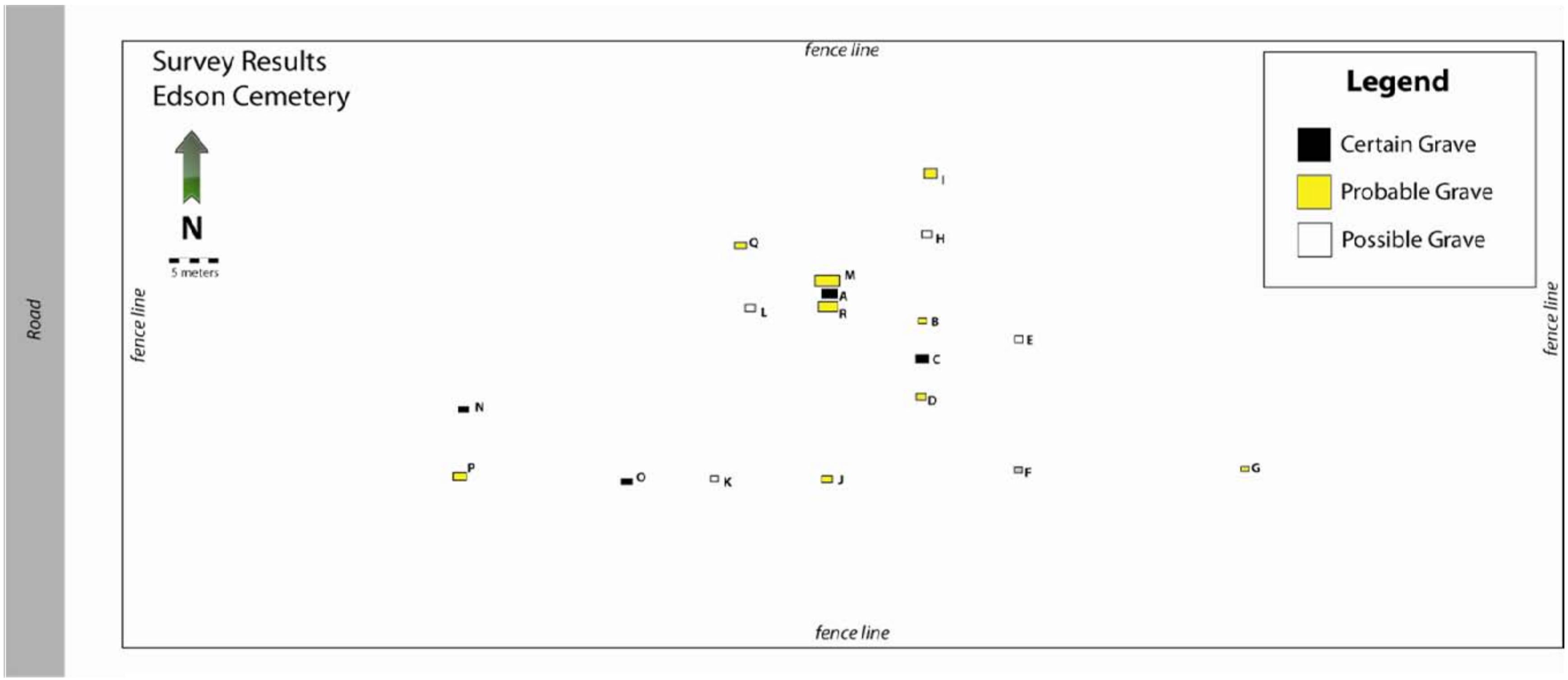


Figure 3.8 – Results from the survey of the Edson Cemetery. The majority of features detected on survey were concentrated at the centre of the site.

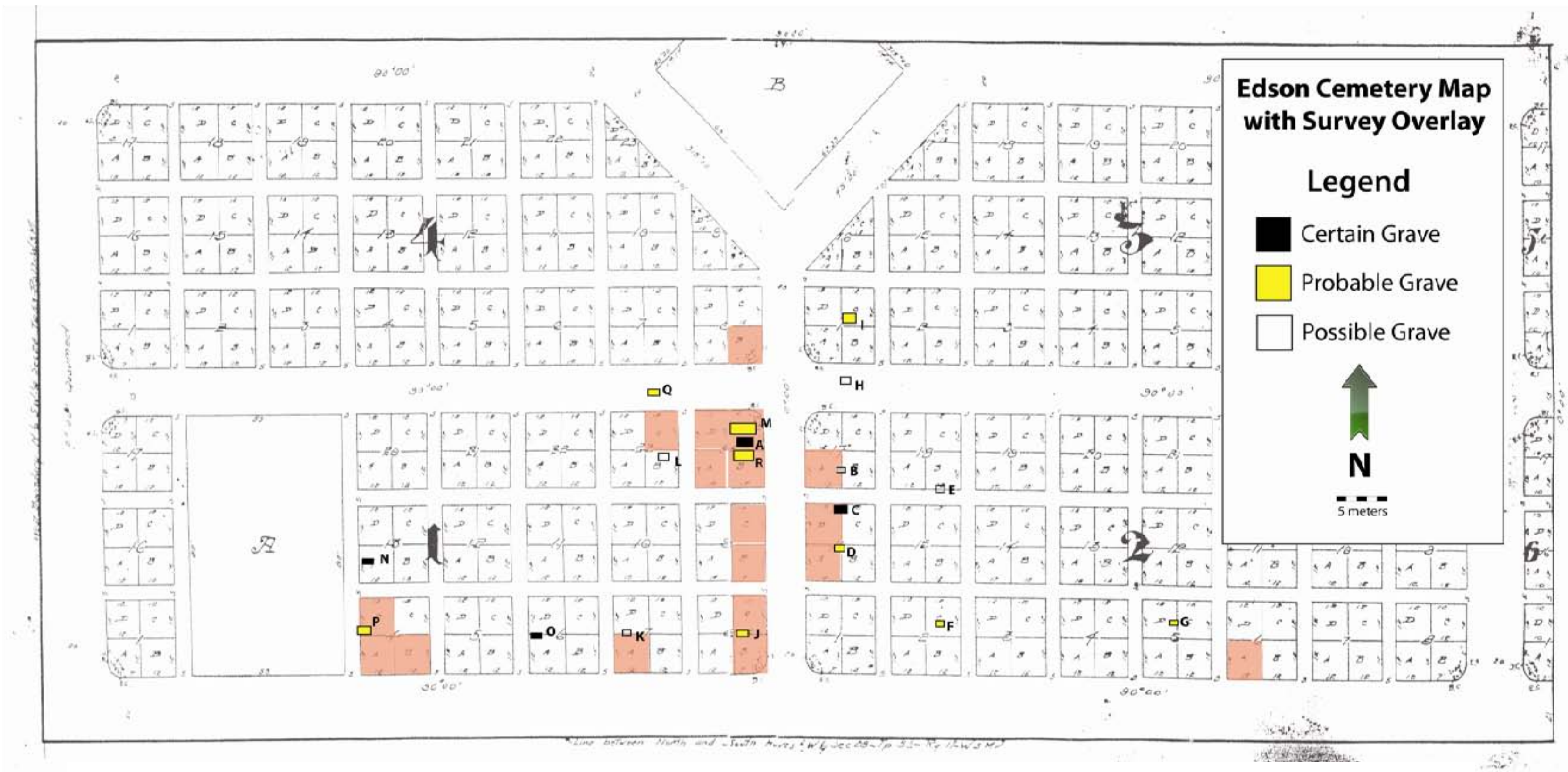


**Figure 3. 9 - Survey results overlain cemetery plan.** A total of 18 plot numbers were identified from the Cemetery Register, indicated by the darkened areas. The results show numerous survey features align with documented burial locations.


**Figure 3.10 - Gravestones associated with the Edson Cemetery.** (*a-d clockwise from top-left*) *a*) The Bellack headstone, the only remaining headstop at the Edson Cemetery *b*) G.F. Brine Jr. whose headstone and remains were relocated to the Glenwood Cemetery *c*) Clarence Thom headstone, featured in a 1980 photograph but absent from the site (Photo credit: Ursula Martin, Edson Leader) *d*) William Pettigrew, whose headstone was relocated to the Glenwood Cemetery but his remains left interred at the Edson Cemetery.

**Figure 3.11 - 1980 photograph of Feature N.** The wooden cross found in association with the grave was once affixed to the fence. (photo credit: Ursula Martin, Edson Leader)

**Figure 3.12 - 1980 photograph of Bellack grave (Feature A).** The white fence currently enclosing the grave is absent. (photo credit: Ursual Martin, Edson Leader)

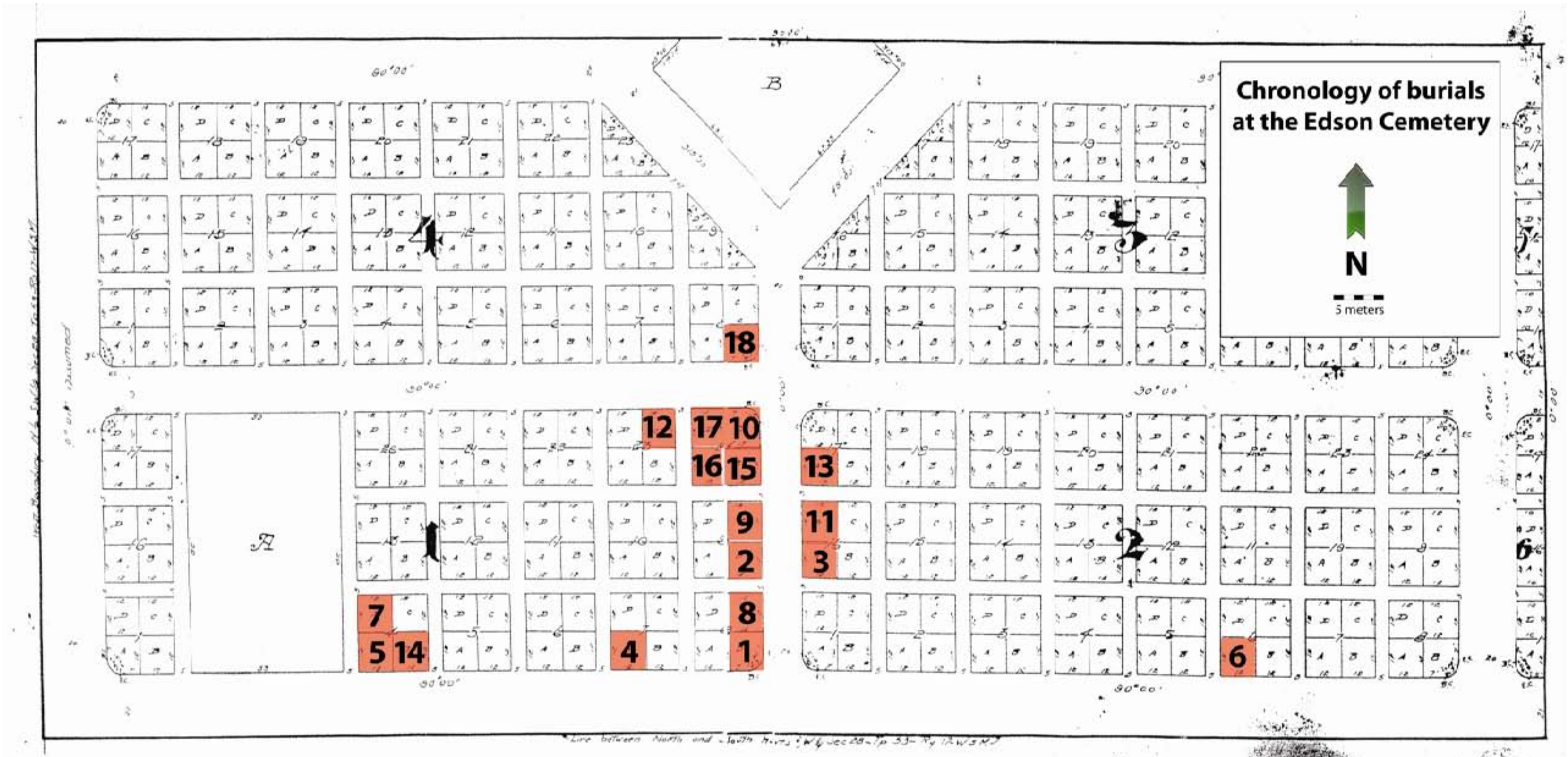


**Figure 3.13 - Timeline of burials at the Edson Cemetery**. Only 18 burials from the Cemetery Register had a plot listed and they are ordered from the earliest (1) to latest (18).

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Edson Leader. 1911b. Municipal Election. December 1.

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# Chapter 4 – Mortality Patterns in Edson, Alberta, 1911-1918

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to use the available documentary evidence to determine the size and demographics of the Edson Cemetery sample in order to make inferences about mortality in Edson from 1911-1918, the years of the cemetery's operation. The role that skeletal analysis plays in reconstructing past life-ways is well documented, while documentary sources are increasingly being used as a valuable source for mortality research (Buckham 2003; Saunders *et al* 1995; Sirianni and Higgins 1995; Strange 2003; Watkins 2002). With adequate documentary evidence, researchers can mitigate the problems of burial representativeness and the conflict between morbidity versus mortality, known as the "osteological paradox" (Wood *et al* 1992). Whereas skeletal samples are aggregated and provide little information on actual causes of death or temporal patterns, historic records may provide accurate information including date of death, precise age of the deceased and a cause of death. As discussed in Chapter 2, documentary sources are not without their own limitations and drawbacks. These errors include potential bias in reporting deaths, different classifications and understanding of disease, as well as the loss of records. These biases reflect the worldview, preconceptions and prejudices of the original author, while the interpretation of said evidence creates a dialogue between past and present (Cox 1995). As with other forms of data, documentary evidence should not be taken at face value (Cannon 1995).

In order to reconstruct past mortality patterns, this research relies exclusively on documentary sources, including cemetery registries, census data, and newspaper obituaries from Edson between 1911 and 1918. The history of Edson will be taken into consideration, including economic development and known epidemiological events that would have an effect on local mortality. Twentieth century Western mortality norms such as age at death patterns, seasonality and cause of death will be evaluated and compared with the results of the Edson sample. These results may broaden the literature on early 20$^{th}$ century rural/small town mortality patterns.

**Materials and Methods**

The analysis of mortality pattern uses many of the same materials outlined in Chapter 3. The Cemetery Register provides information including the date of death, age, sex, cause of death, and occupation of the deceased. The information is not complete: many entries lack information, or the information is ambiguous. Where possible, newspaper obituaries and death notices have been used to corroborate or supplement information in the register, however obituaries often omit the age of the deceased or the manner of death. New sources of data include the 1916 Census, 1921 Canadian Vital Statistics, and a second municipal burial registry, the Register of Burials.

The 1916 Census of the Prairie Provinces conducted by the Government of Canada provides a demographic overview of Edson at that time of the cemetery's use. The census provides information on the names, biological sex, age and occupation of all residents of the town. The 1916 census falls within the period that the Edson Cemetery was used and therefore provides a snapshot of the town's demographics at the time. While the 1911 census is available, it was excluded because of the ambiguities of the data, including whether or not people listed were residents of the town. Edson was not formally incorporated until September 1911 and in the 1911 census there are references both to Edson (often confused with Wolf Creek) as well as the Edson Trail. The 1916 Census data for Edson was transcribed in order to analyze community demographics and compare with the death records.

Canada began compiling the annual Vital Statistics volumes in 1921 which including information on mortality. This information is the most comprehensive and systematic available, providing a breakdown of the causes of death by both age and sex for each province. The records do not provide a break-down by individual towns, and so referenced to Vital Statistics data refers to data for the entire province of Alberta. Vital Statistics breaks down causes of death into thirteen categories, all of them divided into sub-categories. The age breakdowns were transcribed along with the broad categories of registered deaths.

A second register book, the Register of Burials, was included. While less detailed than the Burial Register, it provides a quarterly tally of all deaths beginning on June 30th, 1917 right through the 1920s. There is no indication as to why two registers were used concurrently. In addition to being less detailed than the Burial Register, the Register of Burials often omits data providing only the name of the deceased and date of burial. The Register of Burials contains information on the first burials recorded at the Glenwood Cemetery in November

1918. The Glenwood Cemetery was visited to locate the headstones of any deceased individuals from December 31, 1918 or earlier. The epitaphs were transcribed in order to supplement the limited information provided by the register.

As this portion of the study is concerned with mortality in Edson between 1911 and 1918, burial in the Edson Cemetery is not the sole criterion for inclusion. All deaths taking place in Edson or individuals buried in Edson (regardless of the cemetery) are included. To distinguish between burials at the Edson Cemetery with those of the community at large, information has been compiled into two samples: The first sample is the Edson Cemetery sample and includes only those buried in the Edson Cemetery. The second sample is the Whole Mortality Sample which includes all those buried at the Edson Cemetery as well as those buried elsewhere between 1911 and 1918. Age, sex, month/year of death, and cause of death were included in both samples, which all factor into identifying mortality patterns.

**Results**

*Establishing Sample Size*

In order to assess mortality patterns, it's necessary to determine the minimum number of individuals in the sample. With documentary sources, this is accomplished by cross-referencing deaths from a variety of sources (cemetery records, newspapers and material evidence) eliminating duplicate or ambiguous entries. Through this process, the study confirmed that there are at minimum 35 individuals buried at the Edson Cemetery. Records listed in the Register of Burials and newspapers include an additional 11 deaths, bringing the total mortality sample to 46. These sources do not provide information on individuals or groups who may have been systematically excluded from either registration or burial, affecting the results and identified mortality patterns. The list of sources along with the number of deaths listed for each sample is summarized in Table 4.1.

The Cemetery Register provides the most comprehensive, methodical account of deaths and burials at the Edson Cemetery. Some of the text is illegible, although the only entry to be completed excluded from the sample is the 1915 entry that reads “Austrian (*illegible*)”. No other information (including date of death, name of the deceased, or burial location) is provided so it is unclear if it even denotes that a burial took place. In some cases, the Cemetery Register records plots that were purchased, but not used. There are two instances of this, the first being M.M. Scott in the Name column and “Reserved for familys [sic]” in the Remarks column. The second is the entry underneath the February 12, 1916 death of William Pettigrew which has no name but instead reserves the adjacent plot. Excluding the illegible entry and the two entries that denote purchases and not burials, the Cemetery Register lists 21 individuals who were buried at the Edson Cemetery.

The survey of Edson newspapers for obituaries and death listings covers the period of February 17, 1911 to August 31, 1918, overlapping with the Cemetery Register. Not all deaths listed in the register were mentioned in the newspapers, although there are some deaths that are listed exclusively in the newspapers. Unless otherwise specified, deaths recorded February 1912 (the first recorded burial at the Edson Cemetery) were assumed to be buried at the temporary hospital site and therefore exhumed and relocated to the cemetery. Three of these deaths, Anna Brunner (October 1911), Charlie Sheppard (December 1911) and Leeland Nelson (January 1912) explicitly reference the temporary nature of the burials. Deaths of Edson residents occurring overseas (such as those who died on the frontlines of World War I) are not included in the tally of burials. In total, there were 14 local deaths and burials recorded exclusively in the Edson newspapers. One individual, whose remains were discovered in early 1911, was omitted due to the ambiguity of his identity. The December 1912 death of Jacob R. Doherty was excluded from the Edson Cemetery sample because his remains were taken to Edmonton. In total, the newspapers list 13 individuals included in the Edson Cemetery sample and 14 in the entire mortality sample**.**

The Register of Burials provides additional information on some burials listed in the Cemetery Register while listed those in the Glenwood Cemetery in late 1918. The Register of Burials confirms the December 21st listing for Wolowski as a burial, including the full name of the deceased and residence. The Register also contains the names of ten additional individuals, all of whom died between November and December 1918. Only the name, sex, residency, and date of interment are included. The age of the deceased is not provided. In the Register, all infant deaths are indicated by including “infant” in the name of the deceased. This is confirmed by cross-referencing with deaths listed in the Cemetery Register. A visual inspection of headstones at the Glenwood cemetery found three of the ten deaths had a marker, from which the age of the deceased could be determined. The 10 deaths were transcribed in Appendix D and included in the entire mortality sample, though they are excluded from the Edson Cemetery sample.

Additional sources were surveyed to identify any deaths and burials at the Edson Cemetery, as well as potentially providing information on known deaths. Gregg's *An Old Man Remembers* manuscript mentions several homestead burials during the early 20$^{th}$ century. Given the anecdotal nature of this account, and the failure to provide any discernible demographic data, these burials were not included in the sample. The 1980 photograph of the Clarence Thom headstone (Figure 3.10*c*) appearing in the Edson Leader confirms another death not listed in either the cemetery register or early newspapers. The headstone provides information on the name, sex and age of the deceased and it is included in the sample. This single burial was included in both the Edson Cemetery sample and the entire mortality sample.

*Demographics of the samples*

In addition to distinguishing between the Edson Cemetery sample and the whole mortality sample, individuals have been classified by age categories. Information for infants/children (14 years and younger) was compiled according to age at death (Table 4.2) year of death (Table 4.3) month of death (Table 4.4) and cause of death (Table 4.5). All infant and child deaths are found in the Edson Cemetery sample. Adults (fifteen years and older) are compiled in Tables 4.6 – 4.9, with the addition of distinguishing between males and females as well as the Edson Cemetery sample and the entire mortality sample.

The age at death for both children and adults in the Edson Cemetery sample are compared with the 1916 populations in Figure 4.1. Given that 78.9% (15/19) of adults (15+ yrs) in the cemetery sample do not provide an age, they were grouped together in a single age category. The 1916 Census data is represented by an age table with all adults collapsed into one age category for comparison with the mortality samples. The results show that the younger age categories' representation in the mortality sample far outpaced their representation of the 1916 population.

The 1916 census identifies a population of 515 individuals living in 187 households (some with extended family as well as lodgers). The community was young, with an average age of 23.2 years. The realities of frontier living and intense labour demands of local industries would have prevented the elderly from making the trek westward, which would impact both the demographics of the community and its mortality patterns. For the purposes of analyzing mortality patterns, Saunders (1992) distinguishes between neonates (0-27 days old) and infants (28 to 364 days old). In the census, children under one year of age are categorized by fractions of 12 (eg. 2/12 being two months old). Because it is impossible to determine how many were less than 27 days old, the infant category for the census data includes all children less than one year of age.

For the total population, there are a slightly higher proportion of men (51.8%) than women (48.2%). While there are several unattached men or those living as lodgers in a household, nearly all women are members of a household identified either as wives, children or in-laws. With only a few exceptions, all employed residents were male; the two largest employers were farming or the railway. Of those employed by the railway, their specific jobs were varied, from those working directly on the railroad as section men or conductors to those working as tradesmen (such as boilermakers) or office staff (book keepers and managers). Female professionals include a single nurse, a washerwoman employed at the laundry store, and a few servants attached to households. Several young men are identified as soldiers in the employ of the King and their municipality is often listed as *France* although they are included in the census.

**Discussion**

This discussion is divided into two broad age categories: Infants/Children (under the age of 14) and Adults (15 years and older). Based on the available data, there were unique health stresses affecting each group. While the sample size is small, some general observations can be made which can guide future research of the Edson Cemetery. The mortality patterns reflect a typical early 20$^{th}$ century rural community, lacking endemic health stresses but having to contend with high infant mortality and sex-specific occupational related fatalities. The dramatic increase in adult male deaths from November to December 1918 coincides with the arrival of Spanish Flu in Alberta and its known disposition to predominantly affect that age and sex category.

*Infant and Early Childhood Mortality Patterns*

Compared to their representation in the general population, infants and young children are significantly more represented in the mortality sample. While children under the age of two make up 6.2% of the 1916 census population, they represent 32% (11/34) of the Edson Cemetery sample. The results are equally pronounced when considering infants (those under one year of age) which make up 21% (7/34) of all death but only 3.3% (17/515) of the total population. The Edson Cemetery is not unique in this respect as the proportion of deceased infants conforms to early 20$^{th}$ century age-at-death mortality patterns. A comparison with other studies show that the proportion of deceased infants in the cemetery sample falls within the range of other cemeteries and populations (Table 4.10). While several of these other studies were looking at late 19$^{th}$ century populations, they share the common theme of rural/small town living characteristic of Edson in the 1910s. Information from studies on other frontier communities in the early 20$^{th}$ century with similar demographics may provide more direct comparisons. Mortality patterns from 1921 Vital Statistics show a U-curve, with individuals under 1 years of age representing 28% of all deaths in Alberta. Other broad population studies found that high infant mortality continued to be a challenge throughout the Western world well into the 20$^{th}$ century. In the US, it's estimated that in 1900, 1 in 6 newborns (160 per 1,000 live births) died before their first birthday (Hoekman and Pless 1988). A survey of Derby, England found that an Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of 109 per 1,000 live births (Fildes 1998). The average IMR for Ontario in 1911 was 193 per 1,000 live births (Mercier and

Boone 2002) while in Quebec, its estimated that the IMR was 121.85 per 1,000 live births (Bourbeau et al 1997). Throughout the Western world infant mortality declined sharply during the first half of the 20$^{th}$ century (Arias 2007; Hoekelman and Pless 1990; Fildes 1998; Hicks and Allen 1999; Stockton 2003) generally attributed to better sanitation, access to medical care and improved socio-economic conditions (Luna *et al* 2008).

Studies of childhood mortality tend to distinguish between neonate (less than 28 days old) and infant (28 days to one year old) mortality (Budnik and Liczbinska 2006). Neonate deaths are primarily afflicted by endogenous health factors while post-neonate death tended to be caused by exogenous agents (Luna *et al* 2008) such as infectious disease and acute illness (Pfeiffer et al 1989). The Edson mortality sample only contains two (2) neonate deaths, and that includes one listed as stillbirth. In pre-1930s industrial nations post-neonate mortality exceeded neonate mortality (Saunders 1992; Saunders et al 1995). This is true for the Edson population, with 88% (14/16) of deaths occurring in post-neonate infants and children. The highest mortality was among infants between 28 days and two years 56% (9/16); the first year of life (post 28 days) has highest mortality out of any single year of childhood with 31% (5/16) of all childhood deaths. In the 1 to 2 year old age category, deaths in a 19$^{th}$ century Ontario population were primarily linked with dietary factors, including weaning stresses such as malnutrition and its ensuing effects (Saunders et al 1995). This is as true in the 19$^{th}$ century as it was in the early 20$^{th}$ century as breastfeeding offered a buffer against a variety of afflictions while artificial feeding increases susceptibility to respiratory disease (Reid 2002). There is no published data on weaning in Edson during the period of Cemetery use, but the high mortality of deaths among the 28 days to two years groups coincides with results from Saunders *et al* (1995) that found a correlation between infant death and weaning periods in which children would have been more susceptible to infectious diseases.

Previous studies have indicated a link between infant/child mortality and seasonality. Neonates tend to die randomly throughout the year (Luna *et al* 2008) although the Edson neonate sample is too small upon which to make any such inferences. Saunders *et al* (1995) observed that summer (between June and August) was the most difficult seasons on infants due to diarrheal deaths, contaminated water and poor weaning foods. Another study observed a peak of infant mortality during the summer quarter due to endemic diarrhea in England and Welsh towns during the late 19$^{th}$ century (Huck 1997). Excluding children under the age of two months (90% of which were being breastfed) the summer months continued to have the highest mortality for English infants in the early 20$^{th}$ century (Fildes 1998). All sixteen infant/child in the Edson mortality sample provide both the year and the month of death. The combined August-September period was the most dangerous with 44% (7/16) of deaths occurring in these two months, all were children under the age of four (the oldest being 3 years and 5 days). However, April also saw a high number of child deaths 4/16 (25%) all of them under the age of four. Understanding seasonal patterns of death would be enhanced by knowing the cause of death; however the records are less clear as

44% (7/16) infant/child deaths do not list a cause. Coupled with the small sample size, only the broadest inferences can be made from the data.

Studies have observed that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, infectious diseases were a leading cause of death among infants and children. During the 19th century, the leading causes of infant and childhood deaths in some Ontario communities were acute infections and diseases (Pfeiffer et al 1989; Saunders et al 1995). In England, from 1911 to 1915, 50% of children aged 5-9 died of infectious diseases (Hicks and Allen 1999). Between 1908 and 1919, bronchitis and pneumonia were the leading cause of infant mortality in Derby, England, followed by diarrhea (Fildes 1998). Population density and rural/urban distinctions influence mortality rates and causes of death. In the 19th and early 20th century, rural communities and small towns had lower mortality rates than urban centres (Budnik and Liczbinaska 2006; Woods et al 1989; Mercier and Boone 2002). However, Budnik and Liczbinaska (2006) observed that Polish rural communities had higher rates of perinatal death due to a lack of professional, quick-response healthcare. Higher population of urban centres density allowed for rapid transmission of communicable diseases and creates conditions for endemic health problems. Socio-economic factors – which were more pronounced in urban centres – influenced the health outcomes of individuals. In a study on the Monroe County Almshouse of Rochester, New York, consumption (tuberculosis) was found to affect 29% of low-status children (Sirianni, and Higgins 1995). The 1921 Vital Statistics confirm that excluding deaths due to diseases of early infancy, in Alberta those under five years of age died primarily from diseases of the digestive system (298 deaths), general diseases (280), or diseases of the respiratory system (286). The single most common cause of death identified in the Edson sample was pneumonia, affecting 19% (3/16) of infants and children, all of them under the age of four. Respiratory illnesses are known to occur more commonly in cold climates and in the winter (Luna *et al* 2008) and represent 14.6% of all Alberta deaths for children under 5 years in the 1921 statistics. There are no indications, either from the death records or writings of the time, of other endemic health challenges facing infants and children in Edson. The year 1916 saw the highest number of deaths, 5/16 (31.3%) with four of them occurring in April. Only two of the deaths list a common cause (pneumonia) but with such a small sample size, it is impossible to determine if these numbers are statistically significant.

The lack of overarching infant and childhood health challenges in Edson conforms to expectations for a rural/small town population for that era. The greatest threat to infant and survival appears to be acute conditions such as pneumonia as well as accidental death. The cold climate may have been a factor in the number of pneumonia related deaths, while the age-at-death has been observed in other populations, coinciding with nutritional and health challenges brought about by weaning. The rural nature of the community was not suited for the endemic health challenges found in larger urban centres at the time. Overall, the high proportion of infants and young children in the mortality sample fits with findings from other populations throughout the Western world in the early 20th century.

*Adult Mortality Patterns*

The cemetery sample does not indicate any seasonal or yearly patterns in adult mortality. Likewise, the lack of information on the cause of most deaths makes inferences about mortality difficult. What can be said is that males were more likely to die from accidental deaths as a result of occupational related hazards. The lack of endemic diseases is reflective of the community's rural/small town character. When considering the mortality sample as a whole, there is a spike in the number of deaths in the last two months of 1918, all of them male. This spike in mortality coincides with the arrival of the 1918 pandemic influenza (Spanish Flu) epidemic on the Prairies.

There are a greater proportion of men in the cemetery sample. Seventy-one per cent (11/16) of all adult deaths with known sex were male, a 2.2:1 male-female death ratio. Throughout the world, both the past and present, male mortality for all age categories exceeds female mortality (Johansson 1991). The 1921 Vital Statistics show an Alberta male-female death ratio of 1.5:1. In the 1910s, Edson was a recently founded community with the vast majority of women being either wives or children of male settlers, therefore the number of men in the community may skew the mortality ratio. Sex specific causes of death which target males would also explain the higher proportion of men over women in the cemetery population.

The leading cause of death among adults in Alberta reported in the 1921 Vital Statistics are General Diseases (30.7%), followed by diseases of the circulatory system (14.6%), and finally external causes (11.0%) which includes suicides, accidental deaths, and homicides. Information on the cause of death in the Edson Cemetery sample is limited, with only 44.4% (8/18) deaths reporting a cause. The single largest causes of deaths are accidents, which account for 4 of the 8 known causes of death. All accidental deaths affected men, three-quarters of which (3/4) occurred on the job. The 1916 Census identifies the majority of local men working on either farms or the railway, while the smaller communities to the west were mining towns. Throughout the 20th century, accidents on the Canadian railway were not infrequent (Benedict 2007) while the mines of the coal branch had their share of accidents often involving multiple casualties (den Otter 1967: 65). These occupational related deaths would exclusively affect men, which explain their higher proportion in the cemetery sample. There are no female specific mortality patterns identified in the Edson records. While maternal mortality in the developed world experienced a steady decline throughout the late 19th and early 20th century (Chamberlain 2006) the 1921 Vital Statistics indicate that for all women in Alberta ages 15-49, 20% of deaths were from puerperal causes, including abortions, compilations from pregnancy, ectopic gestations and puerperal hemorrhages.

The lack of distinct mortality patterns suggests a population free from endemic health problems. Other studies of pioneer communities found high morbidity in skeletal assemblages, such as long bone fractures and tooth decay in a 19th century cemetery from New Market, Ontario (Pfeiffer et al 1989) and endemic cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis in a mid-19th century homestead cemetery in Springfield, Illinois (Larsen et al 1995). However, morbidity may indicate survival rather than mortality and this would not be reflected in the Edson death records. As was the case with children, adults living in rural areas and small towns had lower mortality than their peers in urban centres (Budnik and Liczbinaska 2006; Mercier and Boone 2002). While we tend to associate the past with higher instances of mortality, distinct environmental factors can lead to very different health outcomes for individuals living a few hundred kilometers apart.

Looking at the mortality sample as a whole, which includes 1918 burials in the Glenwood cemetery, a pattern emerges which coincides with the 1918 outbreak of pandemic influenza (Spanish Flu). The influenza pandemic struck in three waves: the first in spring/summer 1918, the second, more severe wave in the fall and a milder third wave in early 1919 (Johnson & Mueller 2002). The flu began ravaging Canada during the most severe second wave (Zhang *et al* 2009) and arrived in Calgary on October 2, 1918 via a train carrying infected soldiers from Quebec to Vancouver (McGinnis 1977). By early November, the influenza had spread throughout the northern prairies. This pandemic was particularly fatal, overall Canadian death rates spiked from 12.7 deaths per 100,000 in 1917 to 15.9 per 100,000 in 1918 mainly attributed to the Spanish Flu (McGinnis 1977). The US saw a greater spike, with influenza deaths at 27.0 deaths per 100,000 in 1916, jumping to 301.8 in 1918 (Linder & Grove 1947). The flu affected a higher proportion of men than women with death rates highest in the 25-34 year old group (Noymer and Garenne 2004). In Alberta, railroad workers were particularly hit, with 216 CPR men reported sick in Calgary (McGinnis 1977) while the flu spread quickly in the crowded bunkhouses of the Coal Branch mines (den Otter 1967).

The Edson mortality sample shows a spike in the number of deaths during the last two months of 1918, when the influenza spread throughout the area. In the span of two months, ten individuals - all male - died, although no cause of death is listed. While the ages of only three could be ascertained (33, 37, and 32) the Register of Burials suggests that none of them were infants. By 1919, the influenza had waned in North America (Noymer and Garenne 2004) which is reflected in the Edson register. After the sudden increase in deaths in November-December 1918, the next reported death is an infant in May 5, 1919. The rapid increase in deaths over two month period targeting men in the prime of their lives conforms to our understanding of the pandemic influenza, whose presence was felt even in the small towns of Western Alberta.

**Conclusion**

Historic records, while lacking information on specific causes of death, have made it possible to make inferences about mortality in Edson during its early years. The high infant mortality of Edson is consistent with patterns for Alberta as well as other contemporaneous populations and several 19th century pioneer or small town communities. Amongst adults, the high proportion of accidental deaths over all other causes is indicative of the hazards that those working on the railway, in mines, and on the farm would have faced. The historic context for the surge in death during the last two months of 1918 coincides with the outbreak of the influenza pandemic. The historic records were invaluable in being able to link the Spanish Flu with the month and year of death indicated in the Register of

Burials. The historic records allowed for the ten individuals buried at the Glenwood Cemetery to be included in the mortality sample, who otherwise would not have been considered.

While the records provide some context for death during this era, what is left out may be of greater value and tell a very different story. The old adage “the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence” applies here, where the cause of death is not known for the majority of the deceased. While there is no evidence of endemic health problems leading to death, they may have existed but are not reflected in the written record. Future studies with the sample that incorporate skeletal data may provide additional information that would identify previously unknown patterns of morbidity. However, the lack of physical markers from many causes of death means that even potentially population defining mortality patterns would go unnoticed and that is an inescapable reality that researchers must contend with.

Table 4.1 - Source of Death Records

| Source | Cemetery Sample | Entire Mortality Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Cemetery Register | 21 | 21 |
| Newspapers | 13 | 14 |
| Register of Burials | 0 | 10 |
| Additional Sources | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **35** | **46** |

Table 4.2 – Age Distribution of Infant/Child Death

| Age Category | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| Neonates (<27 days) | 2 | 13% |
| Postneonates (28 days - 1 year) | 5 | 31% |
| 1 year - 2 year | 4 | 25% |
| 2 year - 3 year | | |
| 3 year - 4 year | 2 | 13% |
| 5 year - 14 year | 2 | 13% |
| unknown | 1 | 6% |
| **TOTAL** | **16** | **100%** |

Table 4.3 - Monthly Distribution of Infant/Child Deaths

| Month | No. | % |
|---|---|---|
| January | 1 | 6% |
| February | 2 | 13% |
| March | | |
| April | 4 | 25% |
| May | | |
| June | 1 | 6% |
| July | | |
| August | 3 | 19% |
| September | 4 | 25% |
| October | | |
| November | | |
| December | 1 | 6% |
| unsure | 0 | |
| **TOTAL** | **16** | **100%** |

Table 4.4 - Yearly Distribution of Infant/Child Deaths

| **Year** | **No.** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| 1911 | 1 | 6% |
| 1912 | 1 | 6% |
| 1913 | 3 | 19% |
| 1914 | 3 | 19% |
| 1915 | | |
| 1916 | 5 | 31% |
| 1917 | | |
| 1918 | 3 | 19% |
| **TOTAL** | **16** | **100%** |

Table 4.5 - Causes of Infant/Child Deaths

| **Causes** | **No.** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| Accident | 2 | 13% |
| Pneumonia | 3 | 19% |
| Croup | 1 | 6% |
| Stillborn | 1 | 6% |
| Other | 2 | 13% |
| Unknown | 7 | 44% |
| **TOTAL** | **16** | **100%** |

Table 4.6 - Age Distribution of Adult Deaths

| | All | | | | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age Category** | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | |
| 15-19 | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| 20-29 | 3 | 25% | 3 | 14% | 3 | 33% | 3 | 17% | | | | |
| 30-39 | | | 2 | 7% | | | 2 | 11% | | | | |
| 40-49 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 50-59 | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | | | | | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| 60+ | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | | | | | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| unknown | 12 | 67% | 21 | 72% | 9 | 69% | 18 | 75% | 3 | 60% | 3 | 60% |
| **TOTAL** | **18** | **100%** | **29** | **100%** | **13** | **100%** | **24** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** |

Table 4.7 - Yearly Distribution of Adult Deaths

| | All | | | | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Cemetery Sample | | Entire Adult Mortality Sample | | Cemetery Sample | | Entire Adult Mortality Sample | | Cemetery Sample | | Entire Adult Mortality Sample | |
| 1911 | 3 | 17% | 3 | 10% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| 1912 | 2 | 11% | 3 | 10% | 2 | 15% | 3 | 13% | | | | |
| 1913 | 3 | 17% | 3 | 10% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| 1914 | 3 | 17% | 3 | 10% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| 1915 | 3 | 17% | 3 | 10% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 2 | 40% | 2 | 40% |
| 1916 | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | | | | |
| 1917 | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| 1918 | 1 | 6% | 11 | 38% | 1 | 8% | 11 | 46% | | | | |
| **TOTAL** | **18** | **100%** | **29** | **100%** | **13** | **100%** | **24** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** |

Table 4.8 – Monthly Distribution of Adult Deaths

| | All | | | | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Month** | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | |
| January | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | | | | | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| February | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| March | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| April | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| May | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | | | | |
| June | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| July | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | | | | |
| August | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| September | 3 | 17% | 3 | 10% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| October | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| November | 1 | 6% | 9 | 31% | 1 | 8% | 9 | 38% | | | | |
| December | 1 | 6% | 4 | 14% | | 0% | 3 | 13% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| unsure | 2 | 11% | 2 | 7% | 2 | 15% | 2 | 8% | | | | |
| **TOTAL** | **18** | **100%** | **29** | **100%** | **13** | **100%** | **24** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** |

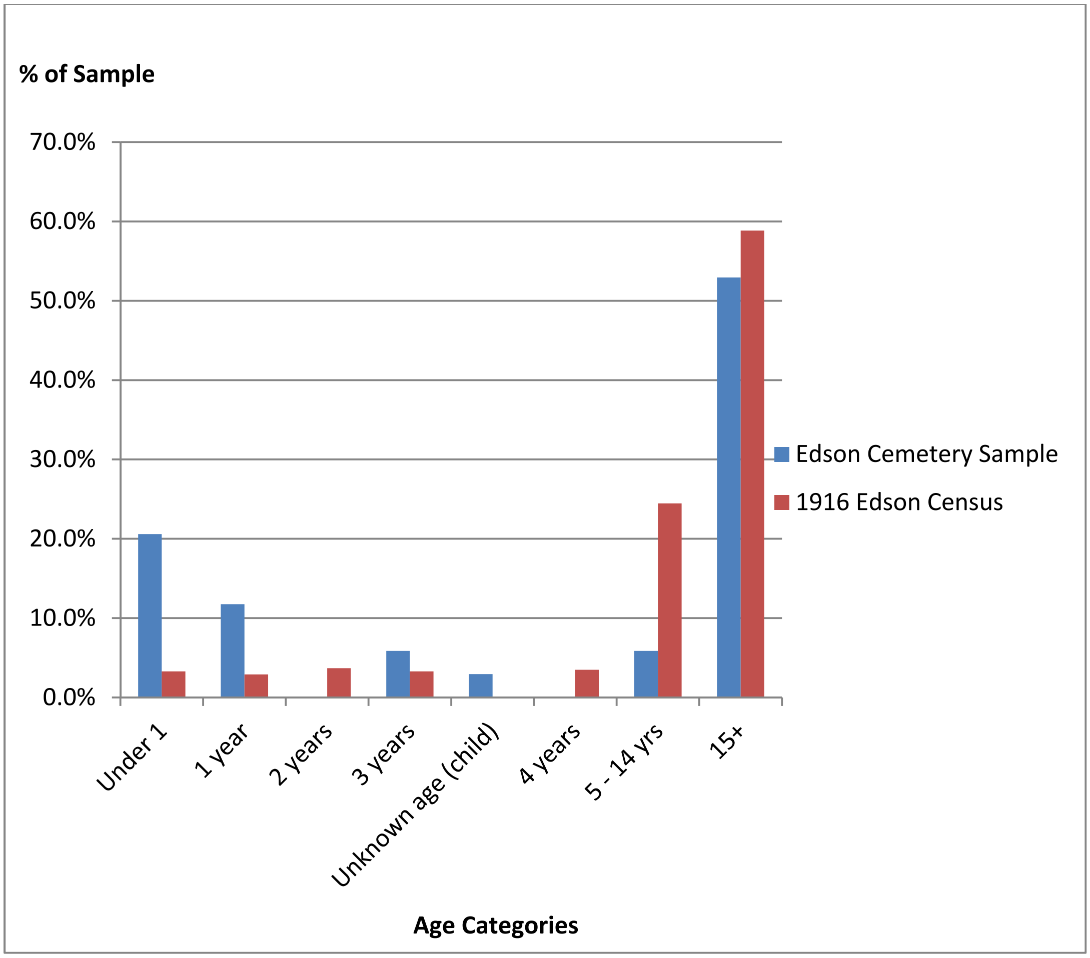
Table 4.9 - Causes of Adult Deaths

| | All | | | | Male | | | | Female | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cause** | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | | **Cemetery Sample** | | **Entire Adult Mortality Sample** | |
| Accident | 4 | 22% | 4 | 14% | 4 | 31% | 4 | 17% | | | | |
| Suicide | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| Tuberculosis | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | | | | | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% |
| Heart failure | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| Other | 1 | 6% | 1 | 3% | 1 | 8% | 1 | 4% | | | | |
| Unknown | 10 | 56% | 21 | 72% | 6 | 46% | 17 | 71% | 4 | 80% | 4 | 80% |
| **TOTAL** | **18** | **100%** | **29** | **100%** | **13** | **100%** | **24** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** | **5** | **100%** |

Table 4.10 - Comparison of Infants in Edson Cemetery Sample with Other Studies

| Study | Years in Use | Sample Size | Infants in Sample | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edson Cemetery; Edson, AB | 1912-1918 | 35 | 7 (20%) | Rural, village |
| Prospect Hill; Newmarket ,ON (Pfeiffer et al 1989) | 1824-1879 | 77 | 15 (19%) | Village-Town |
| St. Thomas'; Bellville, ON (Saunders et al 1995) | 1821-1874 | 559 | 149 (27%) | Village-Town |
| Highland Park; Rochester, NY (Sirianni & Higgins 1995) | 1826-1863 | 254 | 26 (10%) | Urban "poor house" |
| Weir Cemetery; Manassas, VI (Little et al 1992) | 1830s - 1907 | 24 | 6 (25%) | Wealthy Plantation Family |
| Cross Homestead; Springfield, Il (Larsen et al 1995) | 1820s - 1849 | 29 | 10 (34%) | Family homestead |

Figure 4.1 - Age at Death in Records Compared to Census Population Data



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# Chapter 5 – Infant Death in Early Edson History

## Introduction

While death is a socially disruptive phenomenon, the death of an infant or child tends to invoke unique emotional and social responses. Cross-culturally there is tremendous variation in how and where infants were buried and the values that were attached to the death. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the burials of infants in the Edson Cemetery in reference to common conceptions and theories on the treatment of deceased infants, both in historic and pre-historic times.

It is often taken for granted in archaeological writing that in the burial context, infants are treated differently from adults (Norman 2002; Rawson 2003: 280). Evidence shows that throughout time and across cultures, there are no universals on the burial treatment of infants. Although some of these practices may seem superficially similar, such as a tendency to bury infants apart from the general cemetery population (Garattini 2007; Scott 1999: 26; Murail et al 2004; Scott 1999: 26; Slim 1984; Soren and Soren 1999: 477) the underlying motivations can be quite different. These motivations can be classified into three major categories: spiritual beliefs, social norms and practical considerations. The way in which these factors influence one another creates the environment from which unique burial practices emerge.

Within the Edson Cemetery, the representation of infants greatly exceeded their numbers in the general population. They were buried within the general cemetery population and many received material and social commemoration equivalent to that of an adult. Using the framework mentioned above, this chapter will explain why infants in the Edson Cemetery were treated the way they were with reference to the management of the cemetery as well as the social implications of small town, “settler” life and the availability of commemorative displays.

**Infant Burial Practices**

Throughout history there are examples of infants being buried in their own cemeteries, designated sections of community cemeteries and intermingled within the general cemetery population. The motivation behind these practices varies both within a particular class of burial (such as exclusively infant cemeteries) and sometimes within sites themselves.

There is ample cross-cultural evidence of infants being afforded – or relegated to – their own cemeteries. Though more common in antiquity (Murail *et al* 2004; Slim 1984; Soren and Soren 1999: 477) the practice had persisted into areas of the 20th century Western world. In Christian Ireland, unbaptized infants were often buried in separate cemeteries called *cillíns* (Garattini 2007). These *cillíns* were established during the medieval period and continued well into the 20th century (Finlay 2000). In the modern era, separate infant burial grounds are less common. In contemporary Britain, miscarriages and stillbirths at hospitals are often cremated with ashes scattered in a garden of remembrance on the hospital grounds (Scott 1999: 26). More common in the modern era, infants may be buried in a designated location within a communal cemetery. From 1914 to 1971 at the Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver, stillbirths and neonate deaths were buried in common, anonymous graves (City of Vancouver 2012). In 2005, the City undertook a landscaping project allowing families to buy engraved stones with the names of the dead infants. In Milton Cemetery in Portsmouth (UK) stillborn babies are still located in a specific part of the cemetery, placed six to a grave with a communal headstone, inscribed with their names (Scott 1999: 26). The Archdiocese of Milwaukee provides burials in common graves at Catholic cemeteries for miscarriages (defined as "pre-born babies") under 20-weeks of gestation and/or less than 350 grams (Archdiocese of Milwaukee 2012). At the Milwaukee sites, larger and older infants have individual burials arranged by the family. Even when tasked with funerary arrangements and the opportunity to commemorate their deceased infant with an individual plot, some families opt to have their children buried in infant sections. In contemporary Ireland, some families choose to have their infants buried in designated sections (Garattini 2007) while Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery provides an infant section that allows for individualizing commemorations (City of Vancouver 2012). Although the above examples are all from Western, 20th century cemeteries, the practice of burying infants in designated sections of cemeteries has basis in historical times (Gillott 2009; Meskell 2000; Norman 2003).

In other cemeteries infants are not accorded a separate place, their graves interspersed with the general cemetery population. In the mid-19th century cemeteries of Illinois Cross Homestead (Larsen *et al* 1995) and St. Thomasin Belleville, Ontario (Saunder *et al* 1995) there is no spatial bias in infant burials. Similarly, in the early years of the 19th century York Cemetery, there was no spatial distinction in the placement of children's graves until 1903 (Buckham 2003).

Infant graves can also be also denoted by age-specific markers and other forms of commemorative communication. At the York Cemetery, infant and children graves were often denoted by unique tokens and gravestone motifs (Buckham 2003). Tokens of childhood play and miniaturized figures have often been left on infant and child graves (Scott 1999: 27) while the image of the lamb and angels became more prominent motifs on children's gravestone throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (Edgette 1999). As discussed in Chapter 2, the infants buried at the Edson Cemetery were intermingled with the general cemetery population. The grave tokens of teddy bears, crayons and marbles conformed to Scott's (1999) observations while the lamb atop the Pettigrew headstone demonstrates age-specific motifs present in the Edson Cemetery.

This brief summary illustrates the diverse way in which infant burials have been executed throughout history, particularly in the 20th century Western world. The treatment of infants in the burial context is not universal and can vary cross-culturally or even within a single population. Attitudes towards childhood deaths are not static (Buckham 2003) and while physiological age categories can serve as a template for differentiating burial practices, cultural factors can override these categories (Stoodley 2000).

**Cultural Factors Motivating Infant Mortuary Practices**

The cultural factors that can explain differentiating burial practices for infants can be summarized in three main categories. These are the religious, social and practical motivations, whose interplay dictates how infants are treated in the mortuary context. These motivations may change over time either independently or in relation to one another.

*Spiritual Factors*

Spiritual beliefs behind differential burial practices may involve prohibitions on infant burial practice or may otherwise elevate the deceased child to a revered or special status. In the Catholic faith, passage to Heaven was open only to those who were baptized while infant children were admitted to Limbo, an area apart from Heaven, Hell and Purgatory set aside for virtuous pagans (Tarlow 2011: 45). The Irish *cillíns* existed because of the Catholic prohibition of burying the unbaptized in consecrated ground (Garattini 2007). The cemetery acted as a geographic representation of the Catholic community to which the unbaptized did not belong. Exclusion of unbaptized infants was not limited to Catholic cemeteries as early Protestants also applied the same rules despite having done away with the concept of Limbo (Tarlow 2011: 48). Aside from affecting burial location, religious mores may also preclude an individual from receiving normal death rites. In rural Shropshire (1561-1810) unbaptized infants were still buried in the regular cemetery, but could not have the *Prayer Book Order for the Burial of the Dead* read over them (Jones 1976). Over the centuries, these attitudes have been flexible and certain prohibitions have been relaxed. By the 17th century unbaptized infants in England were buried alongside other children in parish cemeteries (Harding 1989: 122). Today, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee provides burial in Catholic cemeteries for miscarried infant with prayer of the Rite of Committal (Archdiocese of Milwaukee 2012).

Rather than deny the infant a place in the community, in some instances spiritual beliefs and practices may be intended to create a unique space for the infant, both geographically and in the spiritual realm. At the Mesolithic and early Neolithic site of Lepenski Vir in south-eastern Europe, the burial of infants within the home space has been interpreted as protecting their souls in the afterlife (Boris and Stefanovic 2000: 541). In contemporary society, burying children in age-specific locations can be seen as creating a community composed of their peers, mimicking that which was denied them by death (Garattini 2007). In this, the burial place of the infant is transformed from a marginal to a special place.

*Social Factors*

Because of the tremendous latitude of social behaviours exhibited cross-culturally, the influence that these factors have on infant mortuary practices can be extremely varied. Discussed here are some of the concepts that have relevance to the Edson Cemetery.

Cemeteries are an extension of the community and burial may be contingent upon the individual's place within that community. In the context of infants, the conceptualization of personhood becomes a factor in their mortuary treatment. Prior to being accepted into society, infants often lack a social persona, forming an ambiguous class of individuals (Finlay 2000). In the Christian context, while baptism was a pre-requisite for burial in parish cemeteries, it alone may not have been enough to warrant a Christian burial (Garattini 2007). In this case, the infant had yet to achieve the status of community member. The failure to commemorate or register a death renders the deceased anonymous and there are examples of this being applied disproportionately towards infants. From 1863-1983 in a Midwestern cemetery in Illinois, anonymity – the lack of a grave marker - was largest among infants (Foster and Hendrickson 2006) while unbaptized infant deaths in rural Shropshire (1561-1810) were less likely to be registered (Jones 1976). In 20th century Western context, common (often anonymous) graves are often reserved for stillbirths. The common grave represents an individual's lack of social identity. However, the lack of individualized burial location does not inherently negate an infant's personhood. In contemporary Britain, infants continue to be buried in distinct portions of cemetery grounds in common graves although there are often individualizing markers or tokens left on graves (Scott 1999: 27). While the commonality of the grave may suggest a lack of personhood, family members have adopted strategies to reinforce the deceased child's identity. Grave goods may also be used as a tool to reflect an individual's stage of social embodiment (Boris and Stefanovic 2000).

The death of an infant can be seen as a social taboo, a disruption of the natural order. Infants who die are seen are deviates from the normal life cycle just as those who commit suicide or suffer other "unnatural" deaths (Finlay 2000). In other cases infant deaths are treated within the matrix of the family and the desire to preserve that unit. In these cases, the decision to bury infants with or near related adults is an expression of maintaining familial bonds after death.

Historically, the head of the household had the greatest latitude in how and where children and spouses were to be buried (Harding 1989) with adults often requesting to be buried with the children that have preceded them in death (Dinn 1995). Even when the child is buried elsewhere, their names may be inscribed on a family epitaph (Watkins 2002). The concepts of the family, community and personhood are all at play in the treatment of infants in the Edson Cemetery.

*Practical Factors*

In addition to being a profound existential and emotional experience, death is also a logistical challenge, with practical and financial considerations. So profound and shocking can be the loss of an infant that it is understandable that in some cases, a third party may voluntarily handle the logistics of arranging burial (Archdiocese of Milwaukee 2012; Scott 1999: 26). Considering the practical factors in infant death can lead to the re-evaluation of conclusions based on social or religious motivations. The anonymity of infant graves can be reinterpreted as a product of their actual social standing rather than a deliberate attempt to deny the individual a place within society. Beyond the immediate family, infants lack the social networks that precipitate communal or large scale expressions of grief. Similarly, while the absence of grave goods has been taken to indicate that they were accorded a low status in society (Stoodley 2000), this may instead reflect that infants simply made no use of material possessions. The infant placed no value in material goods during their short life, therefore these are not represented – symbolically or otherwise – in death. The final point to consider here is the financial cost associated with death and burial. Urban burials grounds had a limited amount of space (Harding 1989) and given the high rates of infant mortality in the past, burial in a common grave can be seen as an economic use of limited cemetery space. Individual graves also require a financial investment on the part of the deceased or their family. The industrial revolution increased the availability of material goods allowing a greater portion of the population to participate in material commemoration (Mytum 2004: 35). However, among working class families, parents may be unable to make the financial investment to secure their infant an individual plot or marker. In the 20th century, lengthy childhood illness preceding death could mean the exhaustion of a family's financial resources rendering them unable to afford common funerary costs (Corden *et al* 2002). As mentioned in Chapter 3, this thriftiness is not an indicator of a lack of emotional investment as families may have adopted other grieving and memorial strategies (Strange 2003).

These three factors, religious, social, and practical, should be understood in relation to one another. Both religious and social norms are a product of their time and place and the interplay between the two is complex. Social and religious changes are often made in response to changing realities affecting the day-to-day lived experiences of individuals. Infant burial practices exist within a matrix of compounding factors tied to their unique historic realities. Understanding this relationship is critical in being able to decipher such practices in a given context.

**The Case for the Edson Cemetery**

The factors that influence the treatment of infants in the Edson Cemetery are tied to its place within the changing paradigm of cemetery management, the social experience of frontier living and the post-industrial availability of material goods.

Within the Edson Cemetery there is no spatial bias for infant burials, they are buried alongside other members of the community. The youngest individual is a stillbirth from a Greek Orthodox family, buried near the centre of the cemetery.

The cemetery by-laws distinguish between adult and child-sized plots, indicating that burial in the common cemetery was the rule, not the exception for all members of the community. Religious prohibitions still adhered to  in some contemporaneous communities do not appear to be a factor in the Edson Cemetery. For instance, in the early 20th century, the Catholic Church was a strong presence in Irish society which can explain the persistence of excluding unbaptized babies (Garattini 2007). From its inception, the Edson Cemetery was under the control of the municipal government. As a community of recently settled immigrants, no single religious denomination could impose its ideologies upon the population. Predominantly Protestant -whose unbaptized infant burial prohibitions were inherited from Catholicism - some of these sects were among the first to abandon the practice of excluding infants (Tarlow 2011: 50). The lack of religious influence is further demonstrated by the inclusive burial of an individual who committed suicide. As discussed in Chapter 3, the disposal of the dead was seen as first and foremost as a public health matter which required uniformity in burial. As for religious motivations that might provide a reason for *including* infants in the cemetery, there is no evidence that any were in play. The Edson Cemetery was established during a trend towards the secularization of burial with the level of religious investment in the burial left to/under the prerogative of the individual and not the cemetery managers.

Given the level of individual agency expressed in the Edson Cemetery, the infant emerges as an individual with both a social and domestic identity. All four headstones originating from the Edson Cemetery (Figure 3.10) are from children's graves, including infant Clarence Thom, deceased at six months and twenty days. All of these headstones are individualized; the children receive their own headstone rather than having their names inscribed on that of an older relative. The deceased infant/child is not anonymous in the Edson Cemetery, but is an individual deserving of full commemoration. Another factor known to create a shroud of anonymity is the exclusion from burial registration observed by Jones (1976) which does not appear to be a factor in the Edson Cemetery. Use of the burial registries began in January 1913; after this point two infant deaths were reported in the newspapers but omitted from the burial registries. However three adult obituaries were recorded but omitted from the registries, and therefore the omissions likely are the results of lax bookkeeping standards. The fact that the deaths were recorded in the newspaper, a form of mass communication, is evidence that the identity of the infant extended into the public sphere. The passing of the Shaw infant in the 1913 Edson Critic was noted by a poem published by a non-parent third party. While not an infant, the death of eleven year-old Mary McKeever was marked by a public procession noted in the Edson Leader. The shared expressions of grief harken to Finlay's (2000) discussion of infant and childhood death, which are seen as a break from the natural order. In the case of Edson, however, rather than seen as abhorrent, the death of an infant is an opportunity to reaffirm communal bonds. This may be in part to the pioneer character of early town life. With a young population of newly arrived migrants in an era with high infant mortality the deceased child becomes the focal point for collective anguish, of a future unfulfilled and the manifestation of social anxieties brought on by a new and unfamiliar place.

With many families consisting solely of the nuclear unit lacking the social benefits of extended kin, the desire to preserve that cohesion would be strong. This desire is demonstrated by the practice of burying family members in adjacent plots, and the Edson Cemetery Register contains two examples of multiple lots purchased by the same family. After the cemetery closed, both the remains and headstone of G.F. Brine were relocated to the Glenwood Cemetery and interred next to his mother. The William Pettigrew headstone was also relocated to a family plot in Glenwood although the body was not. As demonstrated by Watkins (2002) the relocation of physical remains is not always necessary to represent the family. The collection of headstones and engravings becomes the family's collective, public identity where the presence or absence of the individuals' physical remains is irrelevant.

Economic advances made the purchasing of multiple plots and gravestones a reality. In pre-industrial society the ability to pay for funerary expenses was limited to the wealthy (Harding 1989). Industrialization and mass production put the opportunity for material commemoration in the hands of the larger population (Little *et al* 1992). The economic benefits were not shared equally, with many working class families continuing to commemorate the deceased in non-mortuary contexts in lieu of purchasing individual gravestones (Strange 2003). The Edson Cemetery was developed as a lawn cemetery meaning that a family in Edson could provide socially appropriate commemoration without the excessive funerary expenses characteristic of the earlier garden cemetery (Mytum 2004: 35). Community members also had access to newspapers which provided an inexpensive outlet for public commemoration, which helped to create an identity for the deceased beyond the scope of the immediate family. As demonstrated by Strange (2003) the desire to commemorate was not dictated by the availability of memorial goods and services. The availability of material memorialization and mass media did not create a profound shift in how individuals experienced grief but provided an opportunity for the outward expression of pre-existing emotions.

**Conclusion**

The treatment of infants in the mortuary context has varied across cultures to a point where direct comparison is impossible due to the underlying motivations that drastically reshape interpretations of seemingly analogous practices. Even within Western societies in the 20th century there exist multiple rationales and strategies for coping with the loss of young children. The desire to commemorate the individual child appears in both North American and British contexts in opposition to the anonymity of the common infant graves. The desire to commemorate the dead infant motivated mortuary practices in Edson at the beginning of the 20th century. The evidence of the Edson Cemetery demonstrates that the level of memorialization of infants can be equivalent to that of adults, consisting of both a public and domestic identity. While death is usually socially disruptive phenomenon, the unexpected nature of infant death can make it all the more troubling. In a recently settled community like Edson, it can have an even greater effect when the nuclear family unit is the full extent of the family and infants represent the collective future of the town. The availability of mass-produced grave monuments and alternative avenues for commemoration such as the newspaper made memorialization more feasible, where once it would have been limited to a specific class, sex or age group within the community.

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## Chapter 6 - Conclusion

The planning and use of cemetery space is guided both by public health concerns as well as providing an emotional outlet to cope with loss. The Edson Cemetery was established with contemporary understanding of health in mind, the same motivations that lead to the development of the modern cemetery beginning in the mid-19$^{th}$ century. Management of the cemetery fell to the town council, who organized it within the Cemetery, Health and Relief committee demonstrating the prevailing attitudes that saw the cemetery as a sanitation and health issue. The establishment of the cemetery was also an ethical and aesthetic matter, the goal of which was to create a suitable resting place for the deceased. The intended layout of the cemetery conformed to early 20$^{th}$ century design standards of the park cemetery, with uniform rows of graves divided by pathways. The survey of the site confirmed that graves did align with the planned grid pattern while what little material evidence remained demonstrated a functional, non-ostentatious approach to gravestone design. The abandonment of the cemetery coincided with the disuse of the Grande-Prairie Trail which had been used as an access road to reach the cemetery. Research into the establishment, use and abandonment of the Edson Cemetery demonstrates how heavily practical considerations can dictate behaviors.

The purpose of memorialization is to enshrine the identity and memory of the deceased rather than express group affiliation or boundaries. In the Edson Cemetery, this is true for all members of the community. The Edson Cemetery was non-denominational with individuals of various faiths, nationalities, ages and cause of death buried next to each other. Deceased infants and children were just as likely to receive commemoration, having both domestic and social identities. Such mortuary behaviors are formed by a combination of religious, social and practical factors. A young community without entrenched religious institutions and a small population of migrants, all deaths in the early years of Edson would not go unnoticed. The social and public expressions of grief and commemoration reflect the anxieties of small town, frontier life. These findings are specific to the Edson Cemetery, of its particular time and place. Cemeteries cannot be divorced from their historical context, critical to understanding the behaviors that motivated their use.

The mortality patterns from the Edson Cemetery sample conform to expectations for an early 20$^{th}$ century rural/small town population. The name "Baby Graves" certainly applies to the cemetery: Infants accounted for a significant proportion of the cemetery population (21%) relative to their representation in the living community (3%). Throughout the developed world, high infant mortality was a condition of life in the early 20$^{th}$ century and did not begin to ameliorate until the future decades. Edson also had a number of work related accidental deaths related to the high risk occupations of railway and mine work in the area. With the exception of the Spanish Flu, which causes a two-month spike in adult male deaths, there are no indications of endemic health challenges in the community. Reconstructing mortality patterns relied exclusively on documentary sources, however, this is problematic as the cause of death in most cases was unrecorded.

Overall, documentary sources were a useful and critical component in researching the Edson Cemetery. The lack of material evidence at the cemetery and the absence of skeletal data necessitated the use of the cemetery registers, newspaper obituaries and town records. The documentary information on burials was corroborated by the limited physical evidence of the site, with many grave features aligning with those listed in the registers. The cemetery registers also allowed for the analysis of specific mortality patterns such as the Spanish Flu deaths, which would not have been afforded by an aggregated skeletal sample.

Further study of mortality pattern from the Edson Cemetery may be aided by the inclusion of skeletal evidence. As the cause of death was not identified in most cases, certain endemic conditions or pathologies may have gone unrecorded. This information could also be used to evaluate the veracity of written records. A longitudinal study involving the Glenwood Cemetery would provide information on changing mortality patterns and memorialization. Changing gravestone motifs and designs as well as the organization of the cemetery may demonstrate gradual shifts in mortuary fashions or other motivators that government mortuary behavior.

## Appendix A – Grave Features Surveyed at the Edson Cemetery

The following is a list of grave features discovered during the two surveys conducted at the Edson Cemetery. Each feature was measured from the datum point to the centre of the feature. The dimensions, depth/height and associated features (such as fences and headstones) were noted. When describing the dimensions of headstones and bases, width refers to the north-south axis and depth to the east-west axis.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Feature A</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td>UTM Zone 11</td><td>535905.0 m E</td><td>5939517.0 m N</td></tr>
<tr><td>Depth/Elevation (average)</td><td colspan="2">0.1 m deep</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Dimensions</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.7 m EW</td><td colspan="2">1.4 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Remarks</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">- Headstone (Height: 0.7 m, Width: 0.6 m, Depth: 0.3- 0.1 m) Oriented with inscription facing east<br>- White fence (Height: 1.1 m)</td></tr>
</table>

| Feature B | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535913.6 m E | 5939514.6 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.1 m deep | |
| **Dimensions** | | |
| 1.9 m EW | 0.8 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Small, fragmented wooden marker found in association with grave | | |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Feature C</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td>UTM Zone 11</td><td>535913.6 m E</td><td>5939510.0 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th>Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="2">0.0 m</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Dimensions</th></tr>
<tr><td>2.0 m EW</td><td colspan="2">1.6 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">- Headstone base along eastern border of the feature (Height: 0.1 m, Width: 0.5 m, Depth: 0.3 m)<br>- Fence along western edge of the feature (Height: 0.7 m, Width: 1.65 m)</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Feature D</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">UTM Zone 11</td><td colspan="2">535913.6 m E</td><td colspan="2">5939505.3 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="3">0.1 m deep</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Dimensions (depression)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1.8 m EW</td><td colspan="3">1.0 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">- 0.2 m diameter animal borrow near eastern border of feature</td></tr>
</table>

| Feature E | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535923.4 m E | 5939512.4 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.1 m deep | |
| **Dimensions** | | |
| .7 m EW | .6 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Irregular shaped feature, no pronounced borders or commemorative marker/headstone | | |

| Feature F | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535923.4 m E | 5939496.7 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.3 m deep | |
| **Dimensions (depression)** | | |
| 2.3 m EW | 0.8 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Deep, rectangular depression | | |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Feature G</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td>UTM Zone 11</td><td colspan="2">535938.0 m E</td><td>5939471.3 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th>Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="3">0.2 m deep</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Dimensions</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">2.1 m EW</td><td colspan="2">0.8 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">- Stone found in association with the feature, half-buried in western portion of the depression</td></tr>
</table>

**Feature H**


| **Coordinates** | | |
|---|---|---|
| UTM Zone 11 | 535914.2 m E | 5939524.9 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.1 m deep | |
| **Dimensions (depression)** | | |
| 0.7 m EW | 1.1 m NS | |

**Remarks**

- Irregularly shaped, shallow depression; soil very loose

| Feature I | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535914.4 m E | 5939532.5 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.1 m high | |
| **Dimensions** | | |
| 1.1 m EW | 1.2 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Circular build-up of smooth rocks; remnants of wooden stakes/fence scattered around perimeter of feature | | |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Feature J</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td>UTM Zone 11</td><td colspan="2">535903.3 m E</td><td>5939495.6 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="2">0.4 m deep</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Dimensions (depression)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1.9 m EW</td><td colspan="2">1.3 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">- Uniformly rectangular depression; very pronounced depression</td></tr>
</table>

| Feature K | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535892.8 m E | 5939495.6 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.3 m deep | |
| **Dimensions** | | |
| 0.6 m EW | 0.5 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Very Pronounced, circular depression with well-defined edges | | |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Feature L</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">
</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">UTM Zone 11</td><td colspan="2">535895.8 m E</td><td colspan="2">5939515.7 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="3">0.2 m deep</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Dimensions (depression)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1.2 m EW</td><td colspan="3">0.8 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">- Roughly rectangular depression, piece of manufactured wood laying the depression</td></tr>
</table>

**Feature M**

| Coordinates | | |
|---|---|---|
| UTM Zone 11 | 535906.9 m E | 5939514.7 m N |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.0 m |

| Dimensions | |
|---|---|
| 3.8 m EW | 1.9 m NS |

**Remarks**

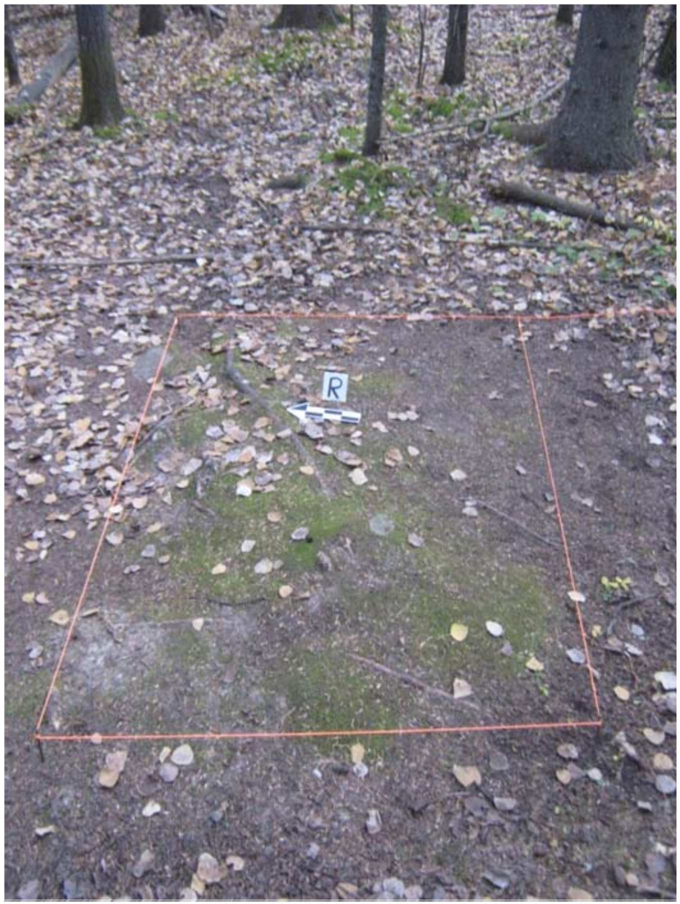
- Dimensions measured using fence (Height: 0.5 m)
- No southern border of the fence, adjacent to Feature A

| Feature N | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535866.7 m E | 5939503.6 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.2 m high | |
| **Dimensions (depression)** | | |
| 1.6 m EW | 1.1 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Mossy mound, formerly enclosed by a grave fence | | |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Feature O</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Coordinates</th></tr>
<tr><td>UTM Zone 11</td><td>535883.4 m E</td><td>5939495.0 m N</td></tr>
<tr><th>Depth/Elevation (average)</th><td colspan="2">0.2 m high</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Dimensions</th></tr>
<tr><td>2.6 m EW</td><td colspan="2">1.1 m NS</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Remarks</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">- Base stone located on western border of feature (Height: 0.2 m, Width: 0.4 m, Depth: 0.2 m)</td></tr>
</table>

| Feature P | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535944.9 m E | 5939494.8 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.1 m high | |
| **Dimensions (depression)** | | |
| 2.1 m EW | 1.0 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Natural stone slab found in association with feature | | |

| Feature Q | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535899.1 m E | 5939526.3 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.3 m deep | |
| **Dimensions** | | |
| 1.8 m EW | 1.1 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Semi-rectangular depression, irregular depth | | |

| Feature R | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | | |
| **Coordinates** | | |
| UTM Zone 11 | 535905.0 m E | 5939515.3 m N |
| **Depth/Elevation (average)** | 0.2 m high | |
| **Dimensions (depression)** | | |
| 2.1 m EW | 1.2 m NS | |
| **Remarks** | | |
| - Semi-rectangular mound, root activity on the surface | | |

## Appendix B – Transcription of the Cemetery Register

| Date Order | No. or Order | Sec. Or Plot | Lot No. | Amount Paid | Receipt No. | Name |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 | 2,3,4 | | | Mr M. Scott |
| **NEW PAGE** | | | | | | |
| 17-Jan-13 | | | 27 | | | Imogene Von Dumbace |
| **NEW PAGE** | | | | | | |
| 05-Dec-13 | 1 | D | 4 | *checked* | 1 | MacKenzie, Mrs Elliott |
| **NEW PAGE** | | | | | | |
| 04-Jun-14 | 1 | B | 8 | 1 | *checked* | G.F. Brine |
| 21-Jul | 2 | B | 9 | 1 | *checked* | W. McPherson |
| 3-Sep | 3 | A | 16 | 2 | $ 10.00 | H.L. Maynibar |
| 5 | 4 | A | 7 | 1 | *checked* | W. Jellis as child - W. Lucas |
| 14-Sep | 5 | A | 4 | 1 | *checked* | J. I. Reid (Cecil Reid) |
| 1915 | no doctor | | | | | Austrian *illegible* |
| 02-Feb-15 | 6 1/2 | A | 6 | 2 | | D. Isayahi (jap) |
| 19 | 7 | D | 4 | 1 | | (Reid J.I.) Elliott, Mrs |
| 08-Apr-16 | 8 | C | 8 | 1 | $ 5.00 | Taylor, M? |
| 19 | 9 | C | 9 | 1 | $ 5.00 | Hass, F C |
| 20 | 10 | C | 24 | 1 | $ 5.00 | Bellack K. |
| 25 | 11 | D | 16 | 2 | $ 5.00 | Pettigrew Bert |
| | | C | 16 | 2 | $ 5.00 | " |
| 1-Sep | 12 | C | 23 | 1 | $5.00 | Mills Thos |
| 27-Apr | 13 | A | 17 | 2 | $ 5.00 | W. Jellis estate forte To M Stevens |
| 21-Dec | *illegible* | plot for pauper | | | | Wolowski |
| 18-May-17 | 1 | B | 4 | | | Enatog Krause |
| 17-Aug-18 | 1 | B | 24 | 1 | $ 5.00 | Nels Eric Carlson |
| 22-Aug | 1 | A | 24 | | | J. Bernett |
| 3-Sep | 1 | D | 24 | | $5.00 | Infant Herbut |
| **NEW PAGE** | | | | | | |
| 27-Sep-18 | 4 | B | 8 | | $ 5.00 | W. Burdock |

## Appendix B – Transcription of the Cemetery Register (cont.)

| Sex | Married/Single | Occupation | Where Born | Where Died |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Female | | | | Edson |
| | | | | |
| Female | Married | *checked* | *checked* | *checked* |
| | | | | |
| | | *checked* | | |
| | | *checked* | | |
| Female | Married | *checked* | England | Edson |
| Male | | Lucas | | |
| Male | | *plus sign* | | |
| | | | | |
| Male | single | restaurant keeper | Japan | Edson |
| Female | married | | Nova Scotia | *checked* |
| Female | | | Edson | *checked* |
| | | | Edmonton | *checked* |
| male | | | Edson | *checked* |
| male | | | Edson | *checked* |
| ″ | | | | |
| | | | Edson | |
| male | married | fireman | Austrian | McSende? |
| | | | | |
| | | blacksmith | *illegible* | Coalspur |
| male | | | *illegible* | on train |
| | | *illegible* | Peers | on homestead |
| | | *line thru* | Edson | *checked* |
| | | | | |
| | | child | | |

## Appendix B – Transcription of the Cemetery Register (cont.)

| Date of Death | Age | Cause of Death | Name of Physician | Religion | Remarks (name of deceased) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Reserved for familys |
| | | | | | |
| 16-Jan-13 | 1 year 4 months | Croup | Dr. Proctor | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 2 Sept, 1914 | 58 | Tuberculosis | Dr. Proctor | Protestant | Parnell, Matilda |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| 1 February, 1915 | 20 42 | Heart Failure | Dr. Proctor | Oriental | Isajahi D. |
| 17 February, 1915 | 64 | *checked* | *checked* | Protestant | |
| 7 April, 1916 | 16 months | | | | See Section |
| 18 April, 1916 | 6 weeks | Inamition? | Dr. McGordie? | Prot | |
| 20 April, 1916 | 3 years 2 weeks | acute larynxgitis pneumonia | *checked* | R C | Volkmar Bellack |
| 11 Feb?, 1916 | 1 year 10 month | Pneumonia | *checked* | Prot | W. Pettigrew |
| | | | | | |
| 1 Sept, 1916 | few 17 days | Pneumonia | Dr. McGordie | Prot | Mills Dorothy EM |
| | 25 | inhaling live steam | Dr. W.S. Rhycard | unknown | Mike Stevens |
| | | | | | |
| 18 May, 1917 | | *illegible* | Dr. McGordie | *line thru* | *line thru* |
| 16-Aug-18 | 3 months | | Dr. McGordie | *line thru* | Alfred Carlson |
| 19-Aug-18 | 26 years | suicide | *checked* | | by order of coroner |
| 01-Sep-18 | stillborn | | *checked* | Greek Ortho | Andrew Herbut - *illegible* |
| | | | | | |
| 25-Sep-18 | 3 years 5 days | Poisoning | Dr. McGordie | R C | |

## Appendix C - Local Deaths and Interments Recorded Exclusively in Edson Newspapers, 1911 – 1918

| Year | Date | Name | Sex | Married/Single | Occupation | Where Born | Where Died | Date of Death | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1911 | 13-Jul | Edward Musk | Male | | Railyard worker | | G.T.P. yards | 13-Jul | Adult |
| | Unknown | P. Lozenski | Male | - | - | - | - | Unknown | Adult |
| | 03-Oct | Anna Brunner | Female | Married | - | - | Edson | 03-Oct | Adult |
| | 27-Nov | Sidney Jennings | Male | - | - | | Edson | 27-Nov | Adult |
| | 25-Dec | Charlie Sheppard | Male | - | - | - | Edson | 25-Dec | 14 yrs |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| 1912 | 26-Jan | Leland Nelson | Male | - | Feed stable & draying | - | Edson | 20-Jan | Adult |
| | 16-Feb | Mary McKeever[1] | Female | unmarried | | Maberley, Ont. | Edson | 10-Feb | 11 |
| | 24-Oct | Robert Elliot | Male | - | - | - | East of Town | 23-Oct | Adult |
| | 12-Dec | Jacob R. Doherty [2] | Male | Married | Partner in Firm | | Edson | 10-Dec | Adult |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| 1913 | 29-May | B.M. Hyrhorechuck | Male | - | railyard worker | - | Edson | 29-May | Adult |
| | 09-Aug | Infant Shaw | unknown | - | none | - | Edson | 09-Aug | 6 months |
| | 20-Aug | Infant (name unknown) | unknown | - | - | - | on train to Edmonton | Unknown (Aug) | 6 months |
| | 12-Sep | Chas A. Taylor [3] | Male | - | - | - | Tete Jaune | 12-Sep | 20 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| 1914 | 29-Jan | Mrs. Mabel Johnson | Female | Married | - | Belfast, Ireland | Edson | 27-Jan | 31 |

[1] First recorded burial in the Edson Cemetery

[2] Died in Edson, remains interred in Edmonton

[3] Died at Tête Jaune, remains interred in Edson

## Appendix C - Local Deaths and Interments Recorded Exclusively in Edson Newspapers, 1911 – 1918 (cont.)

| Cause of Death | Name of Physician | Religion | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Crushed by traincar | Dr. Proctor | - | Body taken to Edmonton and then brought back to Edson |
| suicide | Dr. Proctor | | Remains found south of Edson, date of death unknown, Dr. Proctor orders body to be buried |
| - | - | - | interred in a temporary grave, but no location given |
| Execessive drinking & kidney trouble | Dr. Proctor | - | No mention of burial location, of Irish descent |
| accidentally shot | - | - | Buried on homestead until there is a public cemetery |
| | | | |
| Illness (blood poisoning) | - | Methodist | Buried at temp site near hospital |
| - | | Methodist | First record of burial at GPT cemetery in the newspapers |
| Injury (blood poisoning) | - | Methodist | |
| illness (unspecified) | - | - | Not buried in Edson, remains taken to Edmonton |
| | | | |
| Accident (on the job) | - | - | |
| - | - | - | Article states died in morning, buried in afternoon |
| - | | | Not much information, could be remention of August 9th death |
| Accident (crushed) | | | Died at Tete Jaune, but body returned and buried in Edson |
| | | | |
| Illness (unspecified) | - | - | Buried in Edson cemetery |

## Appendix D - Burials in Glenwood Cemetery for Quarter ending December 31, 1918

| Year | Date | Name | Sex | Married/Single | Date of Death | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1918 | 09-Nov | Bert Nodd | M | | | |
| 1918 | 10-Nov | J. Ostipan | M | | | |
| 1918 | 10-Nov | Chas Langford | M | | | |
| 1918 | 11-Nov | Hilmar Lundquist | M | Married | 10/11/1918 | 37 |
| 1918 | 12-Nov | J. Edward Briggs | M | | 06/11/1918 | 33 |
| 1918 | 12-Nov | Joe Polinsky | M | | | |
| 1918 | 12-Nov | J. Krokiltz | M | | | |
| 1918 | 16-Nov | Muyzchiks | M | | 16/11/1918 | 22 |
| 1918 | 17-Dec | Larson | M | | | |
| 1918 | 31-Dec | Wilbur | M | | | |