

The Pioneer Spirit Remains

Fuller Cemetery, Gardner Township, Johnson County, Kansas

by Linda Lewis
photos by Linda Lewis

In 1854, the Nebraska-Kansas Act opened the Kansas Territory to settlers and granted the territory sovereignty to decide their Free or Slave status for eventual statehood. Trade routes, like the Santa Fe Trail, were already established, and railroad construction began in earnest at the opening of the territory.

As a result of these events, there was a great rush of settlers to homestead Kansas prairie land, advertised as *fast to get farming with no trees to clear*. These early pioneers often formed small secular communities, either pro- or anti-slavery, and they were often located in close proximity. This led to the friction known in history as Bloody Kansas, and the Border Wars with Missouri, a pro-slavery state. By January 29, 1861, Kansas joined the Union as a Free State. Later that year, Kansas troops marched to serve the Union in the Civil War.

The Santa Fe Trail departed from what is now Kansas City, Missouri, and entered the Kansas Territory in the northeast corner of Johnson County, Kansas. The Trail served not only as a trade route, but also as the start of the Trail to Oregon and California. It is in the south central portion of Johnson County, not too far from the Trail, where in 1854, Amos Fuller, his wife Amelia, and his 5 children were among the first settlers to stake their claim to 160-acres in Gardner Township. It is here they survived on their own wits and adaptability through this rugged time in Kansas history. And it is here where they rest forever, in a place where their mark on this prairie still remains visible today.



Johnson Co. KS and Fuller homestead.



Stone fence build by Amos Fuller and family

Federal Census and Johnson County Atlas research reveals that Amos Fuller was born in New York, and married Amelia Jennings of Vermont, in Medino in 1828. By 1840, Amos, Amelia, two daughters, and one son moved to LaGrange Township, Cass County, Michigan. There, in the subsequent decade, they bore two more sons before making their pilgrimage to the prairie land.

Amos Fuller’s new farmland, located southeast of Gardner, spans Cedar Niles Road at 191st Street, with 80 acres on either side. At this intersection one can see the remains of the

original stone fence that Amos, his children, and his even his grandchildren help to build. Where the land did not provide trees to fell for fencing, the fields and creek bed provided plenty of flat stones, and Amos adapted to use the resources at hand to provide for the needs of his family.

One-half mile south on Cedar Niles Road lies the southern border of the Fuller land, and on the west side, remains of the stone fence are again visible. Here stands the old barn and the grove of cedar trees that once protected the original homestead. Across the road from the old homestead, next to the property line, we find the Fuller family cemetery, and with it, another testament to pioneer life on the prairie.



Old Fuller homestead site

The Fuller family owned this land until the

early 1930s; however, the cemetery itself has been in the perpetual loving care of Amos Fuller and his descendents for the past 152 years. The cemetery is currently tended with care by Mr. Robert Fuller of Gardner, Kansas, great great grandson of Amos Fuller.



Hand-made barbed wire still protects Fuller cemetery

The cemetery is fenced on all sides, with a gate on the west side facing the road. On a recent tour of the cemetery, Mr. Fuller, pointed out the antique hand-made barbed wire fence that still remains on the north and south sides of the cemetery. Even this fence demonstrates the tireless determination required for everyday life in Kansas Territory.

The oldest dated stone in the cemetery is a marble marker inscribed *Fuller, Amelia; d. 20 Apr 1861, Age: 54 y 3 m 19 d, wife of Amos Fuller*. To the immediate right of Amelia's stone, we find a marble stone in pieces. The top portion of this stone bears the inscription *Fuller, Amos; d. 11 Feb 1878*. The marble piece remaining affixed to the base is inscribed *Sellers J Haldeman, Paola Kans.*



The base of Amos Fuller's original stone

An investigation into the 1880 Federal Census for Kansas uncovers the Dr. George Haldeman family as the only Haldemans living in or near Paola, Kansas. Dr. Haldeman's eldest son, Robert, aged 24, is listed as a marble cutter, and is possibly linked to the reference found on the stone.

To the right of the original marker is a second stone inscribed *Fuller, Amos; d. 11 Feb 1878, Age: 70 y 9 m 5 d*. According to Mr. Fuller, this second stone and Amelia's stone were purchase and installed by his father, Frank, who cared for this cemetery before him.



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To the left of Amelia we find the next oldest marker, a marble stone, dedicated to *Fuller, Herman*; *d. 27 Sep 1863, Age: 27 yr, Died as a Union Soldier at Natchez Mississippi*. Farther back in the cemetery we find the granite stone of Herman’s youngest brother Frank, born in Michigan, inscribed *Fuller, F E*; *b. Nov 1847, d. 29 Feb 1896, Co 1 5 Kansas Cav*. From these stones we can realize the impact of the Civil War on this family who sent two sons to war and only one returned alive.



Fuller, Herman; d. 27 Sep 1863, Age: 27 yr, Died as a Union Soldier at Natchez Mississippi



Fuller, F E; b. Nov 1847, d. 29 Feb 1896, Co 1 5 Kansas Cav

There are a total of 19 markers in Fuller cemetery. Among the mixture of marble and granite monuments are nine hand-chiseled stones. These stones appear to be fieldstones of the same type found on the property and used to build the property fence. Though it is not known who created these headstones, we again see the resourcefulness exemplified by Amos and his family in times of need.

Based on physical location and the rustic simplicity, the stone to the right of Amos Fuller’s newer stone, inscribed simply *Jay Fuller*, may be one of the oldest fieldstones. This stone may be dedicated to Amos and Amelia’s middle son, William “Jay” Fuller, born in Wisconsin, or could be a child namesake. The 1874 Johnson County Atlas shows that Jay Fuller owned his own 160-acre tract of land nearby, and military research

reveals that he too, served as a private in Company B, 2nd Regiment, Kansas Cavalry.



Infant . Oliver, died 1880 - oldest dated fieldstone

The oldest dated fieldstone marker is found on the second row, inscribed to *Fuller, C Oliver*; *d. 1880, Infant*. Mr. Fuller explains that this stone marks the grave of a child of F. E. Fuller and his wife Lena Motzkus. Here the stone carver used the same rectangular shape but this time added a descriptor and the death date.

The next two oldest stones, also children of F. E. Fuller, are rounded on top and the carver provided still more information. Another interesting fieldstone found on this row is that of F. E. Fuller's father-in-law, Martin Motzkus. The carver used the rectangular stone shape like the first stones, but the surname is carved in a diagonal banner.



Minnie Ester, daughter of F E and L C Fuller, born 4-9-1887, at rest 7-2-1887



Motzkus, Martin; b. 1850, d. 1897, Peace

The best preserved fieldstone, found within the protection of a yucca plant, is that of Amos and Amelia Fuller's eldest daughter, Mary Louise Tuttle. The last dated fieldstone marks the grave of Grace Kelly, adopted daughter of Lena Fuller. These last two stones are of the same shape and approximate small size. These stones have more polished edges, and each displays more complex inscription styles, embellishments, and workmanship.



Tuttle, Mary Louise; d. 16 Mar 1896, Age: 61 yr, Dau of Amos and Amelia Fuller



Kelly, Grace; b. 1902, d. 1928

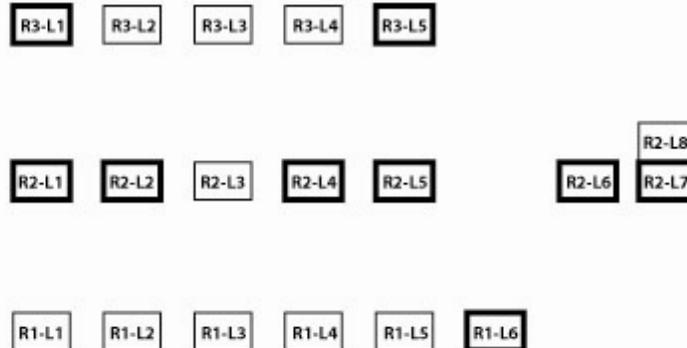
This beautiful cemetery, with its hand-carved fieldstones and hand-made fence, is a constant and lasting reminder of the fortitude and resourcefulness of our forefathers who survived the elements, celebrated Kansas statehood, and gave their sons to the Civil War, while eking out a living from this raw and untamed new land.

The following tables are views of the family relationships memorialized in this cemetery. These tables were compiled from the stones, and relationships confirmed through Census records and Mr. Robert Fuller.

Generation	Name	Born	Died
1	Amos Fuller		11 Feb 1878
+	Amelia Fuller		20 Apr 1861
2	Mary Louise Fuller		16 Mar 1896
	3 Frank E Tuttle		2 May 1867
2	Herman Fuller		MS 22 Sep 1863
2	F E Fuller	Nov 1847	29 Feb 1896
+	Lena Fuller	1861	1932
	3 C Oliver Fuller		
	3 Amie Amelia Fuller	16 Mar 1882	11 May 1882
	3 Minnie Ester Fuller	09 Apr 1887	02 Jul 1887

Generation	Name	Born	Died
1	Martin Motzkus	1850	1897
+	Henrietta Motzkus	10 Jun 1821	13 Jul 1901
2	Lena Fuller	1861	1932
+	F E Fuller	Nov 1847	29 Feb 1896
	3 C Oliver Fuller		
	3 Amie Amelia Fuller	16 Mar 1882	11 May 1882
	3 Minnie Ester Fuller	09 Apr 1887	02 Jul 1887
+	Arthur C Hose		
	3 May Edridge (adopted)	1900	1998
	3 Grace Kelly (adopted)	1902	1928

Fuller Cemetery



Row 1

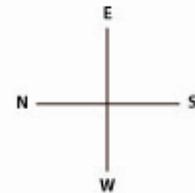
- Lot 1: Tuttle, Frank E; d. 02 May 1867, Age: 9 y 2 m 11 d, Only son of T G and M L Tuttle
- Lot 2: Fuller, Herman; d. 27 Sep 1863, Age: 27 yr; Died as a Union Soldier at Natchez Mississippi
- Lot 3: Fuller, Amelia; d. 20 Apr 1861, Age: 54 y 3 m 19 d, Wife of Amos Fuller
- Lot 4: Fuller, Amos; d. 11 Feb 1878, Sellers J Haldeman Paola, Kans; original stone (broken)
- Lot 5: Fuller, Amos; d. 11 Feb 1878, Age: 70 y 9 m 5 d; second stone installed in the 1950s
- Lot 6: Fuller, Jay; no dates

Row 2

- Lot 1: Motzkus, Martin; b. 1850, d. 1897
- Lot 2: Motzkus, Henrietta; b. 10 Jun 1821, d. 13 Jul 1901, Mother of Mrs F E Fuller
- Lot 3: Amelia; b. 16 Mar 1864, d. 20 Sep 1889, Our sister
- Lot 4: Fuller, Amie Amelia; b. 16 Mar 1882, d. 11 May 1882, Daughter of F E and L C Fuller
- Lot 5: Fuller, Minnie Ester; b. 09 Apr 1887, d. 02 Jul 1887, Daughter of F E and L C Fuller
- Lot 6: Fuller, C Oliver; d. 1880, Infant
- Lot 7: Kelly, Grace Magon; b. 1902, d. 1928, Stone and plaque
- Lot 8: Edridge, May; b. 1900, d. 1998

Row 3

- Lot 1: Tuttle, Mary Louise; d. 16 Mar 1896, Age: 61 yr, Dau of Amos and Amelia Fuller
- Lot 2: Hose, Arthur C; Metal Funeral Home marker
- Lot 3: Fuller, Lena; b. 1861, d. 1932, Wife of Frank E Fuller
- Lot 4: Fuller, F E; b. Nov 1847, d. 29 Feb 1896, Co 1 5 Kansas Cav
- Lot 5: Fuller, H A Jr; b. 1908, d. 1909, Son of H A and M A Fuller



Acknowledgements

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Mr. Robert Fuller, Gardner, Kansas, great grandson of F. E. Fuller and current caretaker of Fuller cemetery, for his family information and narrated tour of the cemetery 7 Jan 2005.

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Sources

1874 Atlas, Johnson Co, Kanas. Johnson County Archives, Olathe, Kansas.

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A. Fuller, History of Johnson County, Kansas, pg. 86.

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<http://www.kancoll.org/books/cutler/johnson/johnson-co-p13.html#GARDNER>

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<http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/kansas.htm>

US Federal Census

1850, MI, Cass Co, La Grange, page 314, lines 7-13.

1860, KS, Johnson Co, Gardner Twp, page 51, lines 14-19.

1870, KS, Johnson Co, Gardner Twp, page 30, lines 8-11.

1870, KS, Johnson Co, Gardner Twp, page 33, lines 14-19.

1880, KS, Miami Co, Paola, ED 142, page 38, lines 16-22.

Author

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<http://www.cottonhills.net>
webmaster@cottonhills.com