

BURVEE

Block 36, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery

Generally accepted as one of the first settlers in Kingsbury County – Lewis Christensen and Andrew Johnson had settled in the northeast corner of the county near Lake Albert within weeks of each other in June 1877 – Henry Burvee settled on the south shore of Spirit Lake in August 1878. He and/or his wife were even said to have given Spirit Lake its name.

Laura Ingalls Wilder doesn't mention the Burvee family in her De Smet LITTLE HOUSE books; the name appears once, however, in the manuscript for *By the Shores of Silver Lake*:

Pa paused with the fiddle bow poised above the fiddle. "Do you realize, Caroline, that our nearest neighbor to the east is sixty miles away and our nearest west is forty miles? They say there is a bachelor living to the southeast, somewhere around Lake Thompson, and Burvee, the cattle man is nine miles northwest, but there are no roads and when winter shuts down, they might as well be farther off."

Mention of the people living near the Ingalls family during the winter of 1879-1880 was edited out prior to publication, but the paragraph would have appeared in Chapter 14, "The Surveyors' House."

The Burvee Shanty was moved to Ingalls Homestead, and can be seen there.



Burvee Shanty on Ingalls Homestead



Henry Jeremiah Burvee

HENRY JEREMIAH BURVEE

Block 36, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery

January 21, 1848 – October 27, 1895; died at age 47

Husband of Lille Ann (Foster) Burvee (1856 – 1921)

First settler at Spirit Lake, August 1878

Kingsbury County commissioner, 1880

Henry Burvee was born in McGraw (Cortland Co.) New York on January 21, 1847, to Elijah Burvee (1817-1867) and Melissa Cromwell (1828-1893). He was of French extraction and spoke fluent French, which enabled him to

communicate with the Indians passing through Kingsbury County or summering near Spirit Lake.

Henry was said to have lived in Dickinson County, Iowa, near its Spirit Lake. In the early 1870s, he lived in neighboring Kossuth County, Iowa, with his sister Elizabeth and her young daughter. In February 1874, he filed on a homestead in Minnehaha County, Dakota Territory, in Section 31-102-50. On the next section homesteaded Lilly and Robert Foster with some of their children; other Foster children had claims nearby.

Henry Burvee married Robert Foster's daughter, Lillian Ann Foster, on July 12, 1875, in Sioux Falls, and they lived in the region until moving north to Kingsbury County by way of Madison. Henry and Lillie had two daughters prior to moving to north: Cora Melissa, born September 10, 1876; and Cassie L., born February 20, 1878. Four more children were born in Dakota: Duane Scott (February 9, 1882 – September 13, 1913), Grace May (March 4, 1884 – January 3, 1973), Jewell Wallace (May 30, 1886 – May 17, 1935), Raymond James (July 18, 1890 – May ??, 1976), and Henry (April 5-8, 1896), who was born after his father's death.



Burvee Lot at De Smet Cemetery. From L-R (south-north): Cassie L., Henry, Jr., Lillie, Henry J.

Henry Burvee was indeed a cattleman. According to Romanzo Bunn (who wrote to Carter Sherwood in 1922), Burvee had a herd of cattle, which he brought north from Minnehaha County to range in the fringe of timber at Spirit Lake. Appointed one of the first county commissioners in Kingsbury County, Burvee was involved in the up-building of the area.

Although De Smet's Old Settlers' Day is said to have been started in Esmond on June 8, 1887, Henry J. Burvee also invited old settlers to a picnic celebration at his claim on June 17 of that year, in honor of the organization of the county. Burvee, like Charles Ingalls, had been present for the 1880 county organizational meeting held at Amos Whiting's farm north of De Smet, and residents who had been in De Smet in 1879 were invited as special guests. Dinner and boat rides were furnished by the Burvees. Henry Burvee continued the tradition for a number of years, also having celebrations on the Fourth of July when De Smet chose not to celebrate. An official old settlers' association was formed in



Father / Henry J. /
Jan. 21, 1848 / Oct. 27, 1895

June 1889 during an anniversary celebration honoring Ella and Robert Boast, with Charles Ingalls and family present. This was the beginning of De Smet's Old Settlers' Day, still celebrated each June.

Henry Burvee died at age 47, on October 27, 1895, and he was buried in Spirit Lake Cemetery. After the death of his wife, his body and that of daughter Cassie, who died at age 2 and was buried on the farm, were moved to the De Smet cemetery to lie beside the wife and mother.

November 1, 1895. Kingsbury County INDEPENDENT.

H.J. Burvee of Spirit Lake township died last Saturday of pleurisy and heart failure. He was the first settler in this county, locating on his present place seventeen years ago. He came fifty miles from neighbors to settle by the lake and in the timber. The country soon filled up, however, and in a couple of years he had neighbors all around him. He was an honest, industrious man and a good citizen, one that will be missed in the town in which he lived. The funeral was held Tuesday and his remains were laid to rest in the Spirit Lake cemetery. He leaves a wife and children to mourn his loss. May they be comforted in their affliction.

LILLIE ANN (FOSTER) BURVEE

Block 36, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
October 17, 1856 – June 23, 1921; died at age 64

Wife of Henry J. Burvee (1848 – 1895).
Mother of Cora (1876-1959), Cassie (1878-1880),
Duane (1882-1913), Grace (1886-1935), Jewell
(1886-1935), Ray (1890-1976), and Henry (1896-
1896).

Lillie Ann Foster was born October 17, 1856, in Finch, Ontario, Canada, to Lillie Scott (1820 in Ireland – 1911) and Robert Foster (September 18, 1819 in England – October 18, 1886). The family lived in Scotland and Canada before coming to the United States in 1865.

The Fosters farmed in Grant County, Wisconsin, before moving to the Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, area. Lillie's father and several of her brothers filed on claims in Minnehaha County in the 1870s. Lillie met neighboring homesteader, Henry Burvee, and they were married July 12, 1875 in Sioux Falls. They moved to Kingsbury County to raise



Lillie Burvee and bear, 1909, Yellowstone Park

their family; descendants still live in the county. Lillie's father, Robert Foster, preempted land in Section 20-112-56.

Following her husband's death in 1914, Mrs. Burvee discovered that a 38-acre parcel of land at Spirit Lake had never been filed upon, so in February 1920, she filed on Lot 8, Section 30-112-56. It was proven up by her children after her death in June, 1921.

June 24, 1921. The De Smet NEWS.

Mrs. H.J. Burvee died yesterday morning. Mrs. Burvee is one of the very earliest settlers of this county, having located on the banks of Spirit Lake, where the home still is, as one of the first settlers in this whole vicinity.

July 1, 1921. The De Smet NEWS.

Mrs. L.A. Burvee.

The death of Mrs. Lillie A. Burvee at her home in Spirit Lake township occurred on Thursday morning last June 23, 1921.

She had been in poor health for some time. On a recent visit to Rochester hospital, it was found that she was suffering from an internal cancer and that there was no hope of prolonging her life for many weeks. Mrs. Burvee was born at Finch, Canada, October 17, 1856, and was married to Henry J. Burvee at Sioux Falls, S.D., July 12, 1875.



Mother / Lillie A. /
Oct. 17, 1856 / June 23, 1921



(Standing L-R): Cora, Jewell.
(Seated L-R): Duane, Ray, Lillie A. Burvee, Grace

To this union seven children were born. Two died in infancy, and Duane, who died at Baker, Montana, in 1913.

Two sons and two daughters survive her, all of whom were with her in the last days, and with whom she conversed up to within a few hours of the time when she passed away.

Funeral services were conducted by Rev. J.L. Norris at the M.E. church in De

Smet, Saturday, June 25th. The pall bearers were all old friends and neighbors of the deceased. At her request she was buried in the De Smet cemetery, where the remains of her husband, who died several years ago, will be placed.

A large throng of friends paid their last tribute to the departed. The floral offerings were many and beautiful.

The deceased was one of the very few settlers in Kingsbury County as early as 1878, when they located on the homestead on the south side of Spirit Lake, which place was her home from that time until death, and where she resided continuously until her death with the exception of two or three years spent in Montana with her children.

The following relatives from abroad were in attendance at the funeral: Mrs. Howard Corwin, of Rock Valley, Iowa, and Mrs. Wm. Bailey, of Ellis, S.D., both sisters of Mrs. Burvee, and two nieces, Mrs. Laura Dokken and Mrs. Edith Riley, of Sioux Falls.

June 6, 1930. The De Smet NEWS. Fiftieth Anniversary Edition.

Burvee Family Early Settlers In West Half County

Located On Lake Shore In August, 1878, With Sioux Falls Trading Center

In the vanguard of the settlers who flocked to the west part of Kingsbury County in 1879 and 1880 was H.J. Burvee, who drove into the county with his family in 1878, found a beautiful lake and the shelter of a grove and settled there, naming it Spirit Lake.

As far as known to them at the time, or learned later, the Burvees were the farthest west of any settlers in this part of the state. The nearest neighbors they knew of were at Lake Herman, although the Christensens were at Lake Albert at that time.

The first year of this family was spent with Indians as frequent visitors at the lake, and with Mrs. Burvee left alone with two children while her husband made eight-day journeys to Sioux Falls for supplies. Not a white woman did the mother see the first year.

Mr. and Mrs. Burvee, with Cora (Mrs. Bauer of Circle, Mont.) and Cassie, drove to Kingsbury County from Sioux Falls in August, 1878. The father was interested in a suitable place to run cattle and when he saw the lake with its abundance of timber to shelter his stock, he chose it at once. They settled on the south side, where the son Ray still operates the old homestead.

Indians camped frequently at the lake but never showed signs of unfriendliness. They did become a nuisance, however, and begged food and asked to borrow Mrs. Burvee's one gun during the absence of her husband. Antelope was common the first year but the winter of 1880-81 reduced them greatly and those that survived the winter apparently went on west as settlement became thicker.

It has been told many items that Mr. Burvee named the lake for Spirit Lake, Iowa, where he had lived, but Ray Burvee gives this as the story of the naming. The settler and his wife could think of no suitable name until one evening they walked to the top of the Indian burial mound and there it occurred to Mr. Burvee to name the lake for the departed Indians.

Mr. Burvee was a leader in the organization and development of Kingsbury County and in his home community, and his wife the "mother" of the vicinity, as other families came to settle near them.

The Burvees played at pioneering a few years ago. A small piece of land adjoining their farm was found never to have been proved up on and Mrs. Burvee took a claim to it, a shack was built on it and she made her residence there for the required length of time and got title. Both of the parents are dead now, but the farm is still in the family name.



Cassie L. Burvee born Fe 20, 1878 /
Died Ag 27, 1880

CASSIE L. BURVEE

Block 36, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
February 20, 1878 – August 27, 1880

Daughter of Lillie and Henry J. Burvee.

Cassie Burvee was born in Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, on February 20, 1878, and came to Kingsbury County with her parents and sister Cora that same year. She died at age 2 and was buried on the Burvee farm at Spirit Lake. Her body was moved to the De Smet Cemetery in August 1896 (after the death of her brother Henry), and the box and coffin were said to be just as sound as the day they were buried sixteen years earlier. Cassie's headstone was carved by Charles X. Johnson, the man who built the stone house on the north shore of Spirit Lake, and who did the stonework on the courthouse.

HENRY BURVEE, JR.

Block 36, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
April 5, 1896 – April 8, 1896

Son of Lillie and Henry Burvee.

Lillie Burvee was pregnant at the time of her husband's death in 1895, and she gave birth to a son on April 5, 1896. She named him after his father, but the child only lived a few days. Henry Burvee, Jr., was buried in the De Smet cemetery.



Infant Son of H.J. & L.A. Burvee /
Died Apr. 8, 1896 / Age 3 days

RAYMOND "RAY" JAMES BURVEE

Buried in De Smet Cemetery
June 18, 1890 – May 1976

Son of Lillie and Henry Burvee.

June 2, 1976. The De Smet NEWS.

Death from crash for Ray Burvee, native of vicinity

An automobile and truck collision near Cavour Friday forenoon proved fatal to Ray J. Burvee, 85, De Smet, who with Mrs. Burvee, were enroute to Huron.

He was taken to the Huron hospital, and died there. Mrs. Burvee, who was driving, is still hospitalized, but is in satisfactory condition.

Funeral services were held Tuesday at 11 a.m. at Ketelsen-Osthus Funeral Home, with Vicar Jim Hill, officiating. Mrs. James Penney was at the organ. Casket-bearers were Terry, Steve and Jeffrey Burvee, Dennis Peterson, Mike Miller and Dale Snyder.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Jim (Cleo) Miller, Huron, and Mrs. John (Leota) Ballard of Santa Ana, Cal.; two sons, Richard of Hastings, Minn., and Jim of Delano, Minn.; thirteen grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Born July 18, 1890, at the homestead near Spirit Lake, he grew to manhood there, and after spending some time in Montana, he returned to the home place, where he lived until a few years ago.

On March 31, 1927, he was married to Edna Spring, at Huron. The couple moved to De Smet a few years ago.

He was a 50 year member of Modern Woodman Lodge.