Grave News

"Workmen engaged in excavating.....the cellar for the new Lutheran parsonage were startled when they discovered the bones of human beings."

The *Lewisburg Journal* article of Friday, October 24, 1913 goes on to explain that the seven graves were in the old graveyard around the Lutheran Church. In 1785 Ludwig Derr had given land for burial grounds and churches to the Lutheran and Presbyterian congregations.

German Burying Ground

The Lutheran or "German" burying ground comprised lots 121, 123 and 125, at St. Louis and S. Third streets. In 1835 the Luther and Reformed congregations built the Union Church on the southeast portion of the site, while the German burial ground was on the northeast portion. The Lutherans rebuilt in 1853 and the current church was constructed in 1902. In 1913, the Lutheran congregation contracted to build a new parsonage.

The 1913 discovery reminded folks that when the church had been built in 1902, graves had also been found. In both cases, the bones were re-interred in the Lewisburg cemetery, although sometimes in unearthing early graves, the bones were so fragile they could not be safely removed.

English Burying Ground

The Presbyterian or "English" burial ground was in lots 44, 46 and 48 along Market Street. Here, too, subsequent construction necessitated moving graves or gravestones.

Mathius Joseph Ellenkhuysen, an early Lewisburg settler from Holland, was buried in the Presbyterian graveyard in July 1792. When the new Presbyterian Church was built on the site in 1857 James F. Linn saved Ellenkhuysen's tombstone and put it in the church cellar.

Thomas Wilson, businessman and son of immigrant Hugh Wilson, died 23 Feb 1799 and was buried in the Presbyterian site. His tombstone (and that of his son Francis) was removed to the Lewisburg Cemetery when the Presbyterian Church was built, but the grave remains under the steps of the building.

Flavel Roan, peripatetic diarist, politician and teacher, died 17 February 1817 and was buried in the Presbyterian graveyard where he remains.

Col. John Kelly was interred in the Presbyterian plot in 1832 and a monument was erected in 1835 to honor this early settler and Revolutionary War soldier. Col. Kelly had attended the Buffalo Crossroads Church. The Presbyterian in-town congregation worshipped at a meetinghouse at St. Louis and S. Front streets. Needing a larger building, the congregation chose the center lot of the burial ground, and some of the graves, and Col. John Kelly's monument, were removed to the Lewisburg cemetery. The present Presbyterian Church was dedicated June 14 1857. The adjoining Himmelreich Library was built in 1902 and the hall was built in 1995.

Cemeteries

While the Lewisburg Cemetery is the largest, there are a total of 83 cemeteries in Union County towns and townships including a number of small family plots on private land.

The Union County Historical Society has listings of all tombstones in the county, available for research, as well as a CD of the Lewisburg Cemetery for purchase. Tombstones often provide valuable information for genealogists and historians. Histories of county churches are also available at the Society.

The UCHS office is open for research Monday through Friday 8:30 to noon and 1 to 4:30. Visit, call 570-524-8666 or email hstoricl@ptd.net to find out more about our ancestors final resting places.

Colonel John Kelly's Gravestone

Sources:

Lewisburg Journal October 24, 1913

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