The Lewisburg Cemetery

The Lewisburg Cemetery, the largest cemetery in Union County, is located between Route 15 and S. Seventh Street in the borough of Lewisburg. The cemetery association was incorporated in April 1848, with George F. Miller serving as president, William Wilson as secretary, and Thomas Hayes as treasurer on a board of fifteen townsmen. Six acres of land was purchased that year and a sexton's house built the following year. George J. Roland was the first sexton. The cemetery was designed with parallel avenues and circular plots.

When the cemetery was ready, many who had been buried in older graveyards were re-interred in the Lewisburg Cemetery. There was an old (English) graveyard at the Presbyterian Church on Market Street, and a (German) cemetery next to the Lutheran Church on St. Louis and S. Third streets. About 350 graves were moved between 1849 and 1853. In some cases, only the tombstone was moved.

Those moved included Revolutionary War Col. William Chamberlin, George Derr (son of Lewisburg founder Ludwig Derr) and his wife Frances. The John Linn and Robert Vanvalzah families were moved from the Presbyterian Church graveyard at Buffalo Crossroads in about 1919.

The Gothic-style Chapel was built in 1899. Constructed of brownstone, the chapel is near the cemetery entrance off S. Seventh Street. Its stonemason Chauncey Foster and carpenter William Yoder are both buried in the cemetery.

The original gatehouse for the cemetery is now located across from the cemetery. It used to be on the other side of the street, and carriages could drive through the center opening (now closed off) to enter the cemetery.

A Witness Tree stands at the cemetery fence on South Seventh St. Its plaque reads: "This ancient oak is the only surviving witness tree among those that marked the survey of Feb. 28, 1769, which set apart the tract on which Lewisburg is situated and which was made for the proprietaries by Wm Maclay." The oak trees marked Maclay's survey line.

Tombstones

The Union County Historical Society has researched the cemetery's tombstones and compiled a listing of all readable stones, available for research. The society has published a transcription of this listing on CD with more than 12,000 entries. The transcription was prepared by Sam Alcorn of Lewisburg whose two year project was built on a reading completed in the 1960s by Mary Belle Lontz, and the work of Martha Africa Bartol in the early 1900's.

About 150 of the entries are linked to digital images of some of the most unique and older headstones, some of which are becoming increasingly hard to read due to deterioration related to age and weather.

Early settlers buried in Lewisburg include General Abbot Green, William Chamberlain, Henry Spyker, Christopher Weiser, Roan McClure and John Linn. Veterans graves include those of Andrew Gregg Tucker, killed at Gettysburg during the Civil War; Wilbur Blair, a survivor of the Civil War and

the Battle of Little Big Horn; and African-American Civil War veterans William Airey and Milton Airey.

Notables' graves include William Cameron (1795-1877; canal and railroad developer, and fire company donor), Edith Kelly Fetherston (1885-1972; collector and donator of Packwood House Museum), Eli Slifer (1818-1881; State Assemblyman, Treasurer and Secretary), Mary Moore Wolfe (1874-1962; noted psychiatrist and activist) and Christy Mathewson (1880-1925; Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher). Also at Lewisburg is George Henry Ramer (1927-1951 KIA), recipient of the Medal of Honor for bravery in the Korean conflict.

The cemetery is a place to contemplate the history of Lewisburg and the wider world, and reflect on the lives of our ancestors.

Resources

The historical society has the following available for research: Lewisburg Cemetery tombstone listings by Sam Alcorn, by Mary Belle Lontz and by Martha Africa Bartol; Lewisburg Cemetery Association Charter, and *A Beautiful Solemn Scene: The Lewisburg Cemetery* by Robert Dunkerly. Available for purchase are the listing of tombstones in the Lewisburg Cemetery ($20) and listing of stones in all other county cemeteries ($40).

Gatehouse to Lewisburg Cemetery, now located across the street from the entrance, at 304 S. 7th Street.

Lewisburg Cemetery Chapel with Grand Army of the Republic burial plot in foreground, including marker for Confederate soldier John W. Jordan who died after the war while traveling in Lewisburg in 1867