

REMARKS ON SOME OLD CEMETERIES OF THE PITTSBURGH REGION

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I WISH to limit my talk tonight to a detailed discussion of the cemeteries of Trinity and the First Presbyterian Churches of Pittsburgh, and then deal briefly with several other cemeteries in this locality, including a few individual tombstones, markers and epitaphs.

It is a striking fact that in many volumes devoted to the histories of the churches themselves, little attention is given or even reference made to the cemeteries associated with them, yet in many cases they have existed longer than the church buildings. Surely the cemeteries offer a record of the founders, the supporters, and the families of the churches. Their markers connect the past with the present in memorials which create interest and respect for noted personages and reveal much of the early history of the community.

Prior to 1844, when Allegheny Cemetery became the first public cemetery in Western Pennsylvania, practically all burying-grounds were in private family plots, or were part of the churchyards surrounding or adjacent to the churches. There were few restrictions in these early cemeteries as to mode of burial, laws of sanitation, disinterment, reinterment, construction of markers, etc. It was not unusual to bury two or three members of a family in the same grave when lots became crowded. Markers of native stone often disintegrated and became undecipherable. On the other hand the fact that they were almost universally located on elevated or sloping ground tended to protect and preserve them. Where the cemeteries are isolated or the churches have been removed, it may be said that they generally take on an appearance of desertion. Lack of care and continued use soon become apparent though some even in current use are sadly neglected. Often large sums of money have been spent on erecting conspicuous tombstones which with their graves soon show shameful neglect. Surely, our ancestors, our immediate families and the pioneers of our communities deserve more respect than such lack of care of their last resting places would indicate.

On July 5, 1858 Neville B. Craig published, in the Pittsburgh Ga-

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zette, a translation of a copy of the "Register of Baptisms and Burials at Fort Duquesne" during the years 1753-1756. This translation was based on a copy of the register certified by the prothonotary of the Supreme Court of Lower Canada as preserved in the Archives of that Court at Montreal. The translation was admittedly not accurate, and so in 1885 the Rt. Rev. A. A. Lambing, a former president of the local historical society, published his translation of the Fort Duquesne Register of June 1754 to December 1756 as originally sketched at Fort Duquesne and recorded at Montreal.

The first burial recorded at Fort Duquesne took place in 1754 and was that of Toussaint Boyer. It is recorded thus, "His remains were interred in the place set apart for the cemetery at said fort" with the customary ceremony by the Recollect priest, Father Denys Baron, chaplain. In all, 33 persons were buried in the cemetery, including Thomas Jiroux, who was placed in the small-pox cemetery, December 5, 1756. Some baptisms and interments were of English infants and adults captured by the Indians and turned over to the French fort. The first birth and baptism in the fort was that of John Daniel Norment on September 18, 1755, with the burial six days later.

In his notes, the Reverend Lambing states that, "The precise location of this cemetery cannot be determined, nor will it ever be, from the fact that much of the Point has been filled 8-12 feet above its level at the time of the French."¹ He also states that when excavations were being made a few years ago (i.e. before 1885) the workmen unearthed two skeletons, one of a white man, the other of an Indian, the former buried in a coffin, the other without it. It is apparent that the Reverend Lambing was not certain of the location of this French and Indian cemetery but he intimated, as was logical, that it was in the neighborhood of the fort. Charles W. Dahlinger, a careful writer and former editor of the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*,² advanced two arguments against such location. Ft. Duquesne was set so low that, "The waters sometimes rise so high that the whole fort is surrounded by it . . ."³ "It is not probable," Dahlinger argues, "that the burying-ground would be on such low ground, about twelve feet lower than the present level." In addition it has been the custom of the French, the Indians,

1 Lambing, Rev. A. A., *The Baptismal Register of Fort Duquesne* (from June 1754 to Dec. 1756), Pittsburgh, Pa. 1885. 23 on p. 92.

2 *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 4, Oct. 1910. 327-328, 329.

and the English to bury their dead in higher, elevated ground. Another argument against the burials near the fort is the fact that the total registered burials is given as thirty-three in the years 1753-1756 but only two graves were ever discovered in later excavations (about 1880). In the two remaining years of French occupation the registration of burials is not given but they must have increased the number of graves considerably. Another argument in defense of the burial grounds being located on Virgin Alley is a quotation taken from the *Pittsburgh Gazette* of August 26, 1786 which was copied into Hazard's Register of May 28, 1831, "In laying out the town of Pittsburgh, five lots have been assigned for Churches and burying grounds. These comprehend the former ground, which is adjoining to the ancient cemetery of the natives, being one of those mounds before mentioned, and which, judging from the height of the earth in this place, seems to have been a place of sepulture for ages. These lots are about the center of the town as it is layed out and an intermediate distance between the rivers. A church is on the way to be built"

Mr. Dahlinger advances the belief that the actual burying ground for the French and Indians was located at the site of the cemeteries of Trinity and the First Presbyterian Churches. This belief was based on a tradition that the French had a road from the fort which followed the approximate course of present day Liberty Avenue from which a by-path led. This was known to the French as the "Path to the Cemetery under the title of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin." This by-road, called Virgin Alley, now Oliver Avenue, was shown on Colonel George Woods' plan of Pittsburgh in 1784. It appeared as a narrow street twenty feet wide, in front of the old cemetery of his day.

William M. Darlington, a prominent local historian, stated that there not only existed an Indian tumulus on these grounds but that many of the dead of later Indians, the French of Fort Duquesne, and later the British and Americans of Fort Pitt were buried there.⁴

These burials were also affirmed by Isaac Craig, another prominent local historian.⁵

³ Quotation by John McKinney, prisoner from Braddock's army, in Craig, Neville B. *Olden Time Pittsburgh*, 1846, Vol. II, pp. 39-40.

⁴ See *Centenary Memorials of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania and Parts Adjacent*, Pittsburgh, 1876, p. 254.

⁵ See "Craig v. First Presbyterian Church" 88 Pa. p. 42; also W.P. H.M. Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 234-235.

The Rev. George Upfold, rector of Trinity Church from 1831-1849 wrote a letter in 1846 stating that the belief in a French cemetery at Virgin Alley, was current at that time.⁶

A writer in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* of August 26, 1786, states that the five lots were assigned to the two churches because they were already being used as cemeteries.

It seems unlikely that the English and Americans, predominantly Protestant would name a street for the Virgin but on the contrary it strongly suggests that in some way it was connected with the Catholics of Fort Duquesne but it does not prove that the original cemetery was on this alley.

According to Craig, the officer who commanded the French and Indians, and was killed at Braddock's defeat on July 9, 1755, Captain Beaujeau, was buried in this cemetery, as were Ensign de la Perde and Lt. de Carqueville. For three years more the French continued to bury their dead in this plot of ground. Most of the interments were of soldiers but there were some workmen, civilians, servants, visitors to the fort, English captives, and Indians. The British undoubtedly continued to use the cemetery for burial during their occupancy of Fort Pitt, thus transforming the consecrated ground of the French into "heretical" ground of the British. The records of pre-Revolutionary burials are scanty and even those of many years later are fragmentary. Many tombstones remain in Trinity churchyard; none of that early period is found in the Presbyterian group. So, although there are many references indicating a belief that these churches continued burials in the cemetery established by the French of Fort Duquesne, there are no positive records to substantiate that claim.

Let us trace the development of these two cemeteries. Colonel George Woods, in 1784, surveyed the land bounded by the present Wood Street, Sixth Avenue, Smithfield Street and Oliver Avenue in which were the eight lots bearing the numbers from 433 to 440, each about 60x240 feet. On December 24, 1787 the Penn heirs, John Penn, Jr., and John Penn, who owned all the land in the town of Pittsburgh, deeded five lots to these two churches; to Trinity were given 2½ lots extending from Sixth Avenue to Virgin Alley, and to the Presbyterians, 2½ lots adjacent on the west. Two lots lay further east and are today occupied by the Oliver Building, while below the Presbyterian lots or to

⁶ *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 1880 Vol. IV p. 123.

the west lay the lot now occupied by the Speer Store. The Presbyterians, anticipating the gift of these lots began construction of a log church facing Virgin Alley in 1786. On December 16, 1801, they purchased the lot where the Speer Store now stands and built a new brick church facing on Wood Street; but two churches built subsequently by the Presbyterians permitted them in modern times to rent this entire lot, first to the McCreery Store and later to the Speer Store. The land conveyed to Trinity was not built upon for many years. Their first church, known as the "Round Church," stood on land purchased from Isaac Craig, which is the triangular plot bounded by Sixth Avenue, Liberty Avenue and Wood Street, now occupied by Azens. The first of the Trinity churches to be built on the Penn grant was erected 1824-1827 but was consecrated in 1825. Subsequently, having purchased some land from Oliver Ormsby extending their property to Carpenter Way, they built additions to their buildings and in 1870 their third and present church was erected. Pending construction and consecration in 1872, a chapel which was built facing Virgin Way in 1869, was used. Carpenter Way, later Freiheit Alley, ran between lots 433 and 434. It is preserved today as a corridor in the Oliver Building. The third church of the Presbyterians was occupied in 1853 and the present structure in 1905; in the meantime (1890) Virgin Way or Alley had become Oliver Avenue. These building operations, extending over 170 years, have so narrowed "God's Acre" that less than 100 graves remain in the cemetery which was once reported to have had more than 400. These are all in Trinity yard, none in that of the First Presbyterian Church. The dust of many of these dead lies under these two churches and the nearby buildings.

Jane Swisshelm, writing in her autobiography which was published in 1880 describes the Episcopal cemetery in 1821 as "a thickly peopled graveyard" above the level of the street, protected by a worm fence that ran along the top of a green bank where the children played and gathered flowers. Sixth Street was unpaved and there were no street lights. When Trinity began to excavate for the new church in 1824 "there was a great desecration of graves."⁷

In the building of the various churches, often little care was taken to preserve the remains of the dead; many were thrown out during the excavating and their names and markers of identification lost. The third Presbyterian Church building of 1853 extended a considerable distance

⁷ Swisshelm, Jane Grey, *Half a Century*, Chicago, 1880.

over the burial lots and Isaac Craig stated that many headstones were used as curbstones on the adjacent streets.⁸

Let us glance at the names of some of the prominent citizens whose bones once reposed in these two adjoining cemeteries; for if it is true that the dead command the living, this multitude would possess a transcendent power for good in every sphere of human life, religion, government, society, education, science, art, literature, commerce and industry. In the following names one can piece together the early life of this community. Here in these two cemeteries many Revolutionary soldiers were buried, such as Colonel Stephen Bayard, founder of the town of Elizabeth, boatbuilder and industrialist; Captain John Wilkins, father of General John Wilkins (for whom Wilkinsburg was named) and of Judge William Wilkins; Major Isaac Craig, early glass maker with Colonel O'Hara; General Alexander Fowler, an incorporator of Pittsburgh Academy; Colonel John Gibson, one of the original trustees of the First Presbyterian Church; General Adamson Tannehill, who temporarily commanded Fort McIntosh; Captain George Wallace, son-in-law of General John Gibson and first President Judge of the first Court of Quarter Sessions of Allegheny County; Major Ebenezer Denny, first mayor of Pittsburgh, 1816; General James O'Hara, Chief Burgess of Pittsburgh in 1803, perhaps the most extensive land owner of the locality; Colonel William Butler, brother of the celebrated General Richard Butler, and operator of a ferry from Pittsburgh to old Allegheny (1783); Colonel James Johnston; Major William Alexander, aide to Lafayette; General Abraham Kirkpatrick, brother-in-law of General Neville, against whom feeling ran high, as he was accused of being responsible for the death of Captain James McFarlane in connection with the Whiskey Rebellion; Captain John Irwin; Dr. Felix Brunot, French friend of Lafayette; Captain Thomas Hutchins; Captain Devereaux Smith; Samuel Semple, general in the Indian campaign; General John Neville, Inspector of Revenue during the whiskey insurrection; Colonel Presley Neville, aide-de-camp of Lafayette and friend of Washington; Colonel Aeneas Mackey, companion of Washington into the Ohio Country and signer of the Articles of Capitulation when Washington surrendered to the French; and Captain Samuel Dawson, officer in both the British and Continental armies, who died in 1779. His stone is probably the oldest tombstone in Trinity churchyard; John Ormsby, styled

⁸ "Craig v. Presbyterian Church," 88 Pa.; also W.P.H.M. Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 234.

"the patriarch of the Western Ormsbys," and paymaster for the erection of Fort Pitt. He owned thousands of acres along the Monongahela and many of the streets on the South Side bear the names of his family as Jane, Mary, Sidney, Mount Oliver, while Bedford Avenue is named for his son-in-law Dr. Nathaniel Bedford; Captain Richard Mather, of the Royal American Regiment who was the first soldier under British rule to be buried in the Episcopal cemetery, March 16, 1762; Colonel William Clapham, builder of Forts Augusta and Halifax. He took the first census of the village for Colonel Bouquet, April 14, 1761, and was massacred with his family by Pontiac's savages in 1763; and Captain Nathaniel Irish, one of the first trustees of Trinity. Nor should we forget Commodore Joshua Barney, the United States Naval hero of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, who died while on a visit to Pittsburgh in 1818 and was buried in the Presbyterian churchyard and whose remains were later transferred to Allegheny Cemetery.

There were many, other than military persons, buried in these cemeteries, men who were prominent in the business, professional, and social life of Pittsburgh such as Tarleton Bates. He was prothonotary of Allegheny County and brilliant editor of the *Tree of Liberty*, as well as political associate of Henry Baldwin and Walter Forward. He was challenged to a duel in which he was killed on January 8, 1806. He had directed Baldwin to take care of his body or ashes but no stone marks his burial spot. Several ministers were buried in these lots: The Rev. Sanson K. Brunot, son of Dr. Felix Brunot, founder of several Episcopal parishes; the Rev. Robert Steele, second minister of the Presbyterian Church; the Rev. John Wrenshall, father of Methodism in Pittsburgh, and others. Among representatives of the legal profession were Judge Hugh Henry Brackenridge, chaplain of the Revolutionary War, brilliant lawyer, orator and writer (buried in 1832 but moved to Allegheny Cemetery in 1880); Alexander Addison, a former minister but Allegheny's first lawyer learned in the law and president judge of the Fifth Judicial District; Judge Samuel Roberts, who was Addison's successor, buried in 1820; and James Ross, one of the most prominent attorneys of his day, one of the first United States Senators from Pennsylvania, and one of the twenty-one incorporators of Pittsburgh Academy. He died at the age of 85 in 1847. He, too, was later buried in Allegheny Cemetery.

The medical profession was represented in the burials at Trinity by Dr. Nathaniel Bedford, the first practicing physician in Pittsburgh, a

surgeon in the British Army, surgeon at Fort Pitt, one of the first trustees of the Episcopal "Round Church," incorporator of Pittsburgh Academy, and a burgess of Pittsburgh. Once owner of a large part of Birmingham, South Side, which he laid out in lots, he was originally buried in a cemetery at the head of Twelfth Street and later transferred to Trinity, where he lies beside the grave of Red Pole, a friendly Indian whom he attended in his last illness. Other physicians were Dr. Thomas Parker, confrere of Dr. Bedford, another incorporator of Pittsburgh Academy and secretary of the Board of Trustees in 1791; Dr. Peter Mowry, who studied medicine under Dr. Bedford early in the 19th century and became the ancestor of a long line of physicians and dentists, two of whom were instrumental in founding the Allegheny General Hospital; and Dr. Breton Brunot, who died in 1815 at the early age of twenty-five but was described as "an ornament to his profession."

The list of others is long and varied but not lacking in interest. A few only are listed: Patrick Murphy, "a respectable citizen" owner of an inn, the "Sign of General Butler"; John Cameron, Scotch gardener, who died aged 107; Peter Eichbaum, superintendent of construction of the O'Hara-Craig glass works and founder of the first glass cutting establishment in the United States; John Johnston, watchmaker and silversmith; John Darragh, merchant, mayor, and president of the Bank of Pittsburgh; George Evans, constructor of the largest grist mill and plow factory, also steam engine builder; Christopher Cowan, who built the first rolling mill (1811-12); Thomas and Samuel Magee, who furnished the town with its first high beaver hats; and Charles Brewer, who established a fund for supplying coal to the poor of the district.

Most of the remains of the bodies buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery have been removed to Allegheny Cemetery. Some from Trinity Cemetery have also been reinterred in Allegheny or elsewhere but the fact remains that many, perhaps hundreds, were destroyed and will never be found. After the year 1844 it is probable that few interments took place in either cemetery though there may have been an occasional one like that of Charles P. Shiras in 1854.

We must now consider the oldest of all cemeteries in Pittsburgh, that of the German Evangelical Church on Smithfield Street between Sixth Avenue and Strawberry Way. This congregation held its first services in a small log structure at what is today Wood and Diamond Streets. That was in 1782 and was conducted by the Rev. John Wilhelm Weber. This church divided into two congregations known as the

Reformed and the Lutheran and in 1787 they received a grant of land from the Penns consisting of a lot which extended 240 feet along Smithfield Street and 110 feet on Sixth Avenue. At the time it lay one block beyond the city limits. Today it is occupied by a Five and Ten Cent store. A brick church with a cemetery adjacent to it was built here in 1791-1792. It was replaced by another brick church, set back a little further from Smithfield Street. A parsonage was pictured in 1819 on the corner of Smithfield Street and Strawberry Way and between them lay the cemetery. As this became crowded it interfered with the development of the church property back to Miltenberger Alley (now Montour Way) and in 1860 it was decided to remove the bodies and reinter them in a new cemetery on Troy Hill. In 1888 the Troy Hill Cemetery was abandoned and the bodies removed to the present Smithfield Cemetery at Forbes Street and Dallas Avenue. Meanwhile another church building had replaced the older one in 1875 and the last and present one was dedicated in 1926. Many of the prominent business and professional men of German extraction were buried in these cemeteries.

Two other cemeteries in the heart of the city which received the remains of many prominent German families are the little-known Minersville Lutheran graveyard just back of Herron Hill High School, which is reached through a gateway at the junction of Cherokee and Ossipee Streets; and the Oakland Cemetery back of the Pitt Stadium. The former is under the control of the Second St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Pride Street and the latter is associated with the First Trinity Lutheran Church on Neville Street.

There are about eleven cemeteries on Troy Hill, some of which may be observed from a distance. The old Voegtley Cemetery on Lowrie Street contains many German Lutherans. Travelling out Mt. Troy one finds a neat old Jewish cemetery and on Lonsdale Street one finds a small abandoned plot now used by a farmer who grows tomatoes between the tombstones.

Leaving Pittsburgh temporarily let us look to the south taking into account certain stirring events of the latter part of the eighteenth century and some grave yards associated with them.

The Federal Government in 1791 enacted an excise on spirits. While the tax amounted to only 7 cents on a gallon of whiskey it represented 25 per cent of the average selling price. Its opponents, terming it a "hateful tax" adopted a philosophy similar to that of the American

revolutionists, hoping that by making its enforcement seem obnoxious it would be repealed. An "association" in opposition, consisting of 500 members under the leadership of David Bradford, a prominent attorney of Washington, Pennsylvania, was organized in the Mingo Creek region, while on the Federal side General John Neville was appointed by President Washington as, "Inspector of Excise" to enforce it. A muster of several hundred men assembled at Mingo Church, under Captain James McFarlane, former lieutenant in the American army, marched westward in a movement on Neville's house, to demand that he surrender his commission as United States Inspector. Passing Couch's Fort, just west of Bethel Church, they were met by the Rev. John Clark, first pastor of that church, who warned them not to persist in their hostile purpose, nor to shed blood. In spite of these entreaties the "army" moved on toward the mansion which stood on the crest of a hill on old Bower Hill Road, facing westward toward Chartiers Creek and Woodville.⁹

The general's house, either by accident or intention, was set on fire and during an effort to put it out Captain McFarlane was killed by a bullet from the house. The insurgents then retreated to their homes. The remains of Captain McFarlane were taken to his home near the ferry which bears his name near West Elizabeth and were then returned to Mingo Church for burial. Here on a grey stone you will find this inscription, "Here lies the body of Captain James McFarlane—He departed this life the 17th day of July, 1794, aged 43 years. He served through the war with undaunted courage in the defense of American independence, against lawless and despotic encroachments of Great Britain. He fell at last by the hands of an unprincipled villain, in support of what he supposed to be the rights of his country, much lamented by a numerous respectable circle of acquaintance." A rather tactful way of condoning the wrong-doing of a respected citizen. It is a question whether the "villain" may not refer to David Bradford, who dreamed of a Western Republic and persuaded McFarlane to accept leadership of the insurgents.

Near McFarlane's stone is one to Colonel John Hamilton (1713-1798) sheriff of Washington County, who led his regiment to a meeting of the insurgents at Braddock's Field two weeks after the death of McFarlane. He and the Rev. John Corbley were taken as prisoners to Phila-

⁹ The house of Col. Presley Neville, his son, stood directly across this creek.

delphia but were released. The grave of another, associated with the same insurrection, lies nearby. It is that of John Holcroft, eventually known as "Tom the Tinker," a designation used with owners of stills to imply that unless they joined the fighters, their stills would be tinkered with by being shot full of holes.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church and cemetery are near General Neville's home site. A tablet on the church states that it is dedicated "To the Glory of God and in Commemoration of the Life and Services of General John Neville, 1731-1803. Patriot and Churchman, Founder of this, the First Episcopal Church in Allegheny County." The original church suffered the same fate as that of the general's house because the young rector, Francis Reno, preached obedience to the newly established government. This cemetery contains the grave of Colonel William Lee, a Revolutionary soldier and others of his family.

Another picturesque figure, as mediator and advocate of adherence to the government during the Whiskey Rebellion was the Rev. John McMillan. At Chartiers (Hill) Church on Route 19 above Canonsburg there is a state marker crediting him with the founding of that church in 1776 and for 58 years in its service. In its yards is his tombstone, enumerating his virtues which—"have raised a monument to his fame far more imperishable than the stone which bears this inscription —" and stating that he died Nov. 16, A. D. 1833 in the 82nd year of his age.

Retracing our course from Chartiers Church past Fort Couch we come to Bethel Church and a grave with an interesting inscription which tells us, "Here lies the body of the Rev. John Clark, who departed this life July 13, A. D. 1797, in the 79th year of his age. In yonder church I spent my breath; and now lie slumbering here in death; these lips shall rise and then declare, Amen to truths they published there." Alas, these lines can no longer be read on the stone, due to disintegration.

Lebanon Church lies to the east of Bethel, near the airfield. Founded in 1776, it is noted for the unusual number of Revolutionary soldiers buried there; at the time of their interment it was part of Washington County.¹⁰ The record of Lebanon Church for Jan. 11, 1864, states "——the yard connected with this congregation is not a public burying ground. Those not in connection with Lebanon Congregation, or not contributing to the original fencing of the ground are reasonably

10 It became part of Mifflin Township, Allegheny County in 1788.

expected and required to pay the sum of two dollars for each burial—to be paid to the pastor or the treasurer before the ground is broke.” One of its most interesting markers is dedicated to “Thomas Armstrong, Blacksmith, who for a period of 60 years served this community faithfully and well as a shoer of horses and a worker of iron. This tablet is erected by those, who as barefoot boys rode horses of their farms to his shop, as an appreciation of the bigness of his heart in bequeathing to Lebanon and Mifflin Churches the whole of his estate, although he was not a member of either. Date of birth unknown, died May 6, 1925, age about 85 years.”

Peters Creek Baptist Church and cemetery are located in Library. This church was organized in 1773 and is the oldest Baptist church in Allegheny County. It is antedated by only two others in Western Pennsylvania, one at Big Whitely, Greene County, and one near Uniontown, both organized in 1770.

James Chapel is reached over the Ridge Road and is near Finleyville. It was a Methodist church organized in 1810 and built in 1817. The walls of this church are of stone three feet thick for it was designed not only as a church but also as a fort.

Heading toward the Monongahela River on Route 837, one may find with careful search, an unusual little cemetery on Lobb's Run. Two tombstones, among the many neglected graves, attracted my attention. One was a fallen stone dedicated to Captain Thomas Walker of Albemarle County, Virginia, who died Jan. 16, 1795, aged twenty years. Close to this stone was another erected to Lieutenant Alexander Beall of Berkley County, Virginia, who died Jan. 11, 1795, aged twenty years. It seemed curious that two Virginia officers, buried in this little country churchyard should have died within five days of each other. The answer was soon forthcoming. Near the mouth of Lobb's Run is a state highway marker which states that on a hill opposite this spot Virginia asserted its claim to Western Pennsylvania by erecting a court house¹¹ which was to be the seat of government for their Yohogania County, (1777-1780) Washington had sent an army under General Henry Lee, to quell the Whiskey Insurrection. The left wing under General Morgan had crossed the river here at McFarlane's Ferry in the fall of 1794 and it had camped in the river bottom. According to Richard Wiley, historian of nearby Elizabeth, an epidemic of smallpox broke out among the Virginia troops and these officers died of that disease, as did several

11 The site of the courthouse is on Charles Withers farm.

enlisted men.

In Brownsville the old cemetery is on a hill next to the public square. There one will find the grave of the founder of the town, Thomas Brown. There also are the graves of John H. and Archibald Washington, who died in Brownsville during an epidemic, while on their way to Kentucky to take up land. On the Brownsville Road west one may visit the site of the St. Thomas Episcopal Church and graveyard in Washington County. Its log church built in 1770 was possibly the oldest west of the Mountains.

Returning to Pittsburgh and turning to the east, we find an old church beyond Wilkesburg, off Route 22. Beulah Church was organized in 1784 and thus antedates most Presbyterian churches in Pittsburgh. The church building now being used was erected 118 years ago (1837). With the possible exception of Lebanon, the Beulah cemetery has the largest number of Early War soldiers buried in the Pittsburgh area. Here is the grave of Colonel Dunning McNair (1762-1825) large landholder and planner of McNairstown, later known as Rippeyville but now Wilkesburg; as a member of the legislature he presented a bill to abolish slavery in Pennsylvania, a successful bill to divide Allegheny County in spite of opposition of Judge Wilkins and Mayor Denny. Here also are buried the Rev. James Graham, the Horners, the Chalfants, the McCreas, the Johnstons, and many other pioneer families.

Just beyond Delmont on Route 22 is Ye Olde Congruity. Its first church was built in 1785 and it has been followed by three brick churches. The cemetery has markers for two generals of the Revolutionary War, William Reed and Alexander Craig, and many other soldiers. Nearby is a marker to Eve Oury (1751-1848), resident of Salem Township who risked her life in defense of the garrison at Hannastown in 1778 and was cited for bravery at the burning of Hannastown four years later (July 13, 1782) when the Senecas, led by Guyasuta burned thirty log houses and ravaged the country.

The Poke Run Presbyterian Church found by retracing our steps via Route 66 was organized in 1785. Here is a stone to Charles Harkless (1761-1830), a Hessian soldier who deserted to the American Army. Unable to speak English he trampled his hat on the ground as a sign of dissatisfaction with the British.

Ebenezer Cemetery is to be found on Route 80. It is on the Puckety, a stream once known as Plum Creek. A church was erected there in 1791 and was later known as Laird's Church and Cemetery but

the building is now gone. Many prominent families of the Plum Creek and New Texas district still rest there.

Having briefly described some of the oldest burial grounds in the Pittsburgh area, we can now approach more modern times in Allegheny Cemetery. Prior to 1844 it had become apparent that the cemeteries within the city were becoming crowded and it is to Dr. James R. Speer that credit must be given for establishing this rural cemetery. At the time of development it was out in the country. After several meetings of prominent citizens, Governor David R. Porter signed an act of incorporation in 1844 and it became the first public cemetery in Western Pennsylvania and probably the fourth in the country. Located in Lawrenceville, the land had previously been the farm, including the home-
stead, of Colonel George Bayard to which additions were made from tracts owned by Dr. Mowry, John H. Shoenberger, and others. The list of the forty incorporators reads like "Who's Who" of Pittsburgh in the 1840's such as Dr. James R. Speer, Harmar Denny, John H. Schoenberger, General Thomas M. Howe, Harvey Childs, Wilson McCandless, Charles Brewer, Judge Robert C. Greer, Thomas Bakewell, and many other well known persons. Most of these and later corporators are buried there. It is the resting place of two prominent generals of the Civil War, General Alexander Hays and General James Scott Negley. General Hays, killed at the First Battle of the Wilderness, a West Point soldier and engineer who served in many battles, was a great friend of President Grant, who is said to have wept when he visited Hays' monument in 1868. In civil life he built bridges and gave Mexican names to streets of old Allegheny. Gen. Negley became a major-general for gallantry at Stone River, but his division was almost wrecked at Chickamauga. Here also Stephen Foster was buried with members of his family around him. One marker is dedicated to the victims of the Arsenal Explosion of September 17, 1862 in which seventy girls and three men were killed. Before being replaced the original stone read, "Tread softly; this is consecrated dust. Forty five victims lie here, a sacrifice to freedom and civil liberty; a horrid memento to a most wicked rebellion——." But time permits only this brief treatment of one of our most interesting cemeteries.

Turning to the tombstones themselves and an element which practically all share in common, namely the lettering, whether of inscription or epitaph, an interesting observation has been made by one of our own members, Mr. Charles Stotz. He states in his beautiful volume on the

architecture of Western Pennsylvania that, of all handiwork remaining from early days, the tombstone has changed the least, and he adds that in some cases the carving is comparable with the best lettering of ancient Roman inscriptions. On the other hand, he says it is difficult to reconcile the illiteracy and carelessness in spacing and arrangement with the excellence of the design and carving of the letters. Many of the inscriptions were made by common stone-masons on sandstone or slaterock that have disintegrated; others remain in perfect condition. An example is found on the stone of the consort of Andrew Mowry:

"Her languishing head is at rest,
Its thinking and aking is ore,
Her quiet amovable bret
Is heved by Aflichion no more."

Another from the same cemetery at Schellsburg, but widely used:

"Remember man, As you Pas by
As you are now
So wonst was i,
And as i am now,
So must you Be,
Prepared for deth, and
Follow me"

In Trinity Churchyard is a stone which attempts to give the life history of the individual:

"Beneath this stone repose the mortal remains of Wm. Edward Muller, who was cut off by the hand—of Providence—the week before his expected nuptials. His death was occasioned by a severe fracture of the leg, followed by a swift and fatal mortification; the efforts of medical skill and watchful assiduities of friends—were in vain—and the lapse of seven days—compelled him to resign the promised festivities of the bridal for the awful stillness of the tomb—Born 1799, Died 1822."

In Mingo Cemetery is this epitaph:

"Once you must die, and once for all the solemn purport
weigh,
For know that heaven and hell are hung on that important day."

Another

"Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial shell, erected high
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpting decked
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

From Dunlap Creek Presbyterian Churchyard, Fayette County, Mrs. Sara C. Gorley has copied the following epitaph from the grave of one John Mackey who died in 1797 at the age of forty-five:

"Here lies the body of John Mackey
This lot was got
To save the spot
Lest men should walk too near."

In closing, I should say that it must be apparent that I have not attempted to cover all the cemeteries in this area and it must be equally evident that the subject is a broad one which my remarks have touched but lightly though the hour is late enough to make the words of Shakespeare appropriate as you depart:

"'Tis now the very witching time of night,
when churchyards yawn and hell itself
breathes out contagion to this world."

Good night and safe journey home.