

Seen and Heard in Our Neighborhood

GOOD MORNING!

On a sunny Tuesday afternoon in May, I explored an old burial ground not far from us over on Delaware County Road 200-E. It has been known as Fairview, Brick, Christian and Friends Cemetery, according to a booklet "A Directory to Cemeteries in Delaware County."

Compiled by Rosaella Cartwright and Elizabeth Modlin, the booklet was presented to the Delaware County Historical Alliance, Genealogy Division, on June 19, 1988. Jane Beekman was president then.

I do not remember buying this booklet. Neither do I remember anyone giving or lending it to me. Nevertheless, I'm glad to have it. A handy booklet, it is well arranged by township and is mapped and researched.

Since Monday was designated as Memorial Day, it seems an appropriate time to talk about an old cemetery.

The land was donated by the brothers Beeson, around the year 1833, according to the booklet.

From its four possible names, let's use Fairview. It's listed first, and the cemetery has a fair and pleasant view. Approximately 75 or 80 monuments are lined up in rows on about an acre of space. A natural hedge has grown up along the north and west boundaries, where wild grape vines intertwine through sumac saplings, wild cherry, dogwood and elm trees. Blackberry briars were abloom with white blossoms.

The east edge fronts on 200-E and the south boundary is fenced and someone lives nearby. Nobody was present that Tuesday, but two dogs barked ferociously and leaped against their pen fence, causing me to go to the farthest north side to do further exploring. The dogs were quietly satisfied.



Ruth Hillman

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Fairview was mowed neatly, the larger vacant areas more closely cropped than where the grave stones were close together. The mowing left rows of dried grass on the lush green, exuding a fresh, clean scent of hay. Redwing blackbirds twittered and lit here and there. Very few cars passed. The solitude and silence were ideal.

Large ancient clumps of peonies, some blooming pink and white, others with swelling buds showing a deep wine promise of blooms, had been spared by the mower. Pale yellow irises also grew close to several stones. Yuccas, however, had received no mercy, and their severed stems lay withering in the Sun.

As with other old cemeteries, Fairview contained too many memorials to young children, a silent testimony of inadequate medical supplies and/or a lack of knowledge about prenatal and early infant care.

My first jotting was of Johny H., Son of M. and V.B. Gibson, who died Sept. 5, 1887, aged 5 M and 25 D.

Beside this was a nearly identical gray monument, inscribed Infant Son of M. and V.B. Gibson, died Aug. 13, 1891, aged 1 M, 20 D. The gray print, although a bit gritty, was still easy to read.

A taller monument about 5 feet high was that of Sarah E. Gibson, who died in 1880. Other writing was too abraded by time and weather to read. Beside it was a similar stone of John Gibson, who died March 2, 1907, aged 67 Y, 10 D.

Both monuments had the four-gabled tops, as some houses have roofs with gables on all four sides. Other ornamentation, perhaps a sheaf of wheat, adorned the top of the stone.

Nettie Fuson died Sept. 10, 1879, aged 3 MOS. This stone was tipped badly but it's doubtful that vandals tipped it. The white monument on a cement footing looked to have sunk from natural causes.

John G. Fuson died Oct. 12, 1890, Aged 14 Y, 11 M, 3 d. His gray stone also had the house-like gables.

An ornate white stone with grey granite streakings was that of Patrick Carmichael, born Aug. 28, 1815, died Dec. 13, 1879. Atop his monument was a volleyball-size ornament, much like the capital of an ornate column.

On the west, north and south side of Carmichael's stone were listed William, born March 8, 1853, died Feb. 11, 1854; John W., born Oct. 30, 1854, died Sept. 27, 1855; Margaret, infant born Jan. 20, 1862, (no death date is given, denoting a stillbirth); and Goloston E., born April 24, 1864, died Oct. 8, 1865. These must have been the Carmichaels' children.

A gray granite monument had raised letters ANNABELLE, wife of Isaac Gibson, 1870-1910. The surname was in block letters 6 inches high.

Wm. A. Reynolds, Oct. 18, 1849-Mar. 10, 1916, CO. B, 69 IN, Ind. This marker had a rope, leaf and flower decoration.

Another veteran's marker was that of Corpl. Levi Beebe, CO. A, 74 Ohio INF. A third, who served in CO. G, 9 IND Cav., was James T. Johnson, whose name was arched around the top of his marker.

That's all the space for today. Go visit these old cemeteries round about. You'll relate to the names, appreciate the dates and know the dignity of remembering those fellow humans who've also walked this way.

Ruth Hillman is a contributing writer to Our Neighborhood.