

THE REES CEMETERY  
Final Resting Place of Pioneer  
Families and Indian Jim

Located in a part of the county that attracted the earliest settlers, Rees Cemetery dates to 1831 or perhaps earlier and is one of the oldest in the county. It was established by pioneer Lewis Rees, who donated the land for it as a family cemetery.

Lewis and Mary Rees came to Perry Township in 1822 from Ohio and purchased land from the U. S. government. Lewis became a substantial landowner, as did several of his children. When Delaware County was organized in 1827, Lewis Rees was appointed the first associate judge of the circuit court.

The names Felton, Gibson, and Keesling also appear on many of the tombstones. Lee Gerhart wrote in the Press "Such cemeteries are considered by many as sacred places where rest the pioneers, who are the ancestors of the present generation."

It was 119 years ago that Indian Jim was buried in Reese Cemetery, and fact and legend have mixed to surround his story ever since. When the Delawares moved westward in 1820, Indian Jake and Indian Sally Musco and their son Jim did not accompany the tribe. Where Jake and Sally are buried is not known today.

The last of the Delawares known to live in this county, Indian Jim never married, and he lived with the Lewis Rees family until his death at age 69. History reports that he was a hard worker, a good carpenter, and was respected by his white neighbors.

During the 1960's the Boy Scouts maintained the grave and "Indian Jim" was added to Musco's tombstone, thanks to Paul Wearly.

Through the generosity of Clarence "Jack" Reese who died in 1972, a trust fund was provided for perpetual care, and the Reese Cemetery Association was formed in 1978 to take over the care of the cemetery.

The eleven-foot wooden statue of Indian Jim was fashioned in 1986 by Art Roberts, local chainsaw artist, and in 1992 a court order made Rees Cemetery Association the legal owner of the cemetery property.