

Sugarcreek Baptist Church Cemetery Self-Guided Tour Notes

Introduction to Sugarcreek Baptist Church and Cemetery

- *Nov. 2, 1799 church organized
 - *meets in one parishioner's home
 - *9 members: 4 men, 5 women
- *1802 acquires 1.5 acres from Aaron Nutt, a Centerville co-founder
 - *enough land for church and cemetery
 - *commissioned Aaron to build log cabin church by July
 - *to be paid in produce and cattle if completed on time;
if not, payment will be 50 lbs. sterling
 - *church completed on July 3, 1803
- *July 4, 1807, Benjamin Robbins, another co-founder of Centerville, and Whitely Hatfield lay out cemetery in "proper manner"
 - *rows run north/south, parallel to Main St.
 - *graves face either east or west
 - *tall monuments mark family plots with individual stones nearby
- *until 1868, additional land added
- *until 1926, plots sold
- *1979 Michael Karowitz last burial
- *458 graves total
- *American Revolutionary War and other war veterans interred here
- *2 of 3 founding fathers of Centerville buried in this cemetery
 - *Aaron Nutt
 - *Benjamin Robbins
 - *Benjamin Archer, the third founding father, moved on to Washington Twp., Allen Co., Indiana, due to financial issues
 - *primary developer of Fort Wayne, Indiana

1. Ramsey Children Monument

- *3 children from Ramsey family buried in this spot
 - *Washington dies March 25, 1854 at 1 y, 9 m, 13 d
 - *Rebecca dies March 16, 1859 at 1 y, 2 m, 19 d
 - *John dies March 22, 1859 at 3 y, 1 m, 22 d
- *assumption is they died from illness, typical during the time period

2. Pease Family

- *Anne, wife of Horace, dies April 29, 1829 at 28 y
- *William, son of Anne, dies May 5, 1830 at 1 y, 1 m
- *assumption is Anne dies from childbirth complications and her son dies the following year, not uncommon during the time period

3. Dr. John Hole

- *born April 30, 1755 in New Jersey
 - *one of seven children; family struggles financially
 - *John allowed to go to school until age 11
- *family doctor fosters John and educates him in medical arts
- *serves in American Revolution as personal physician/surgeon to Brigadier General Richard Montgomery
 - *at Battle of Quebec on Dec. 31, 1775 when Montgomery is killed in military advance on fort in front of John
- *marries Mercy (Massee) Ludlow Hole in NJ after war
- *moves with family and other relatives to Northwest Territory (Ohio)
 - *settle on today's Hole's Creek, approximately where windmill house stands on the corner of Alex-Bell and Mad River Rd.
- *uses land warrants earned in war to purchase 1,089.35 acres
 - *builds two water-powered sawmills on creek
- *practices medicine
 - *first doctor in Miami Valley area
 - *travels as far as Sidney, Hamilton, Xenia, etc. on horseback, often takes several days, sleeps outside in all weather
 - *paid in produce, animals, goods
 - *becomes ill, weakened in Quebec and from exposure to elements
 - *dies Jan. 6, 1813 at almost 58 y
- *father to 10 children; 5 die before wife Massee who dies in 1842 at 83 y, 5 m
- *buried in this plot with John:
 - *Massee left of John
 - *Nancy, daughter, left of Massee, dies at 43 in 1840
 - *Jeremiah, oldest son, right of John, dies at 32 two yrs before John
- *Massee sells almost 400 acres to settle John's estate
 - *61 acres sold to investors for water-powered textile mill on creek
 - *beginning of Woodbourne, industrial mecca of Montgomery Co. in mid-1800's
- *Montgomery Co. named after General Montgomery on John's suggestion
- *1940, American Medical Association places new pink granite stone monument
 - *honors his career as first and only doctor in county for five years
 - *John Hole Elementary School built on Hole property in 1956
 - *AMA monument relocated to front of school in 1959
 - *New stone marker placed here

4. Three Little Tombstones

- *3 siblings buried here from same family
 - *first tombstone: child dies in 1866 at 5 m, 27 d
 - *third tombstone: child dies in 1867 at 3 y, 5 m, 11 d
 - *middle tombstone: child dies 1869 at 8 y, 1 m, 1 d
- *illness probable cause for early deaths
 - *epidemics of small pox, scarlet fever, flu, tuberculosis swept through area regularly
 - *living past childhood a privilege not all achieve
 - *children necessary for help with farm work, primary occupation of early settlers
 - *leaving strong legacy a priority
 - *each year, month, and day counted as important

5. Kirby and Miller

- *James Kirby and William Miller fight on Union side in Civil War
 - *flag markers say "GAR" meaning Grand Army of the Republic
 - *very decorative, ornately carved flags and military symbols on tombstones

6. Kelseys

- *Jesse Kelsey is first murder victim in area in 1862
 - *tombstone reads:
 - My husband's grave. Died by the hand of an assassin.*
 - *killed in cold blood in front of wife Unity
 - *live on farm on South Main St. where old Kroger sits
 - *Jesse is prominent hog farmer, age 33
 - *Unity expecting couple's first baby
 - *Jesse comes home from hog market with a lot of money on Sept. 6
 - *the Kelseys are asleep when an intruder comes in through bedroom window and shoots at Jesse, misses
 - *Jesse ushers Unity out of room as the second shot kills him
 - *Unity runs to neighboring farm
 - *next morning she identifies intruder as Samuel Robbins, age 22, grandson of co-founder Samuel Robbins
 - *has been one of Jesse's farm hands before the Civil War
 - *AWOL from duty in war
 - *brings home pistol, acting bizarre
 - *hung for his crime
 - *Unity gives birth to baby boy about 12 days later
 - *names him Jesse Jr. (lives on farm entire life of 78 years)
 - *Unity never remarries
 - *Unity dies four years after Jesse at age 32, buried immediately in front
 - *tombstone reads:
 - My wife's grave. Unity wife of Jesse Kelsey...*
 - Rest mother in quiet sleep, while friends in sorrow weep,*
 - and hear their heartfelt offering, bring near thy grave, thy praises sing.*

7. Robbins Family

- *Centerville-Washington History provides granite plaque by tombstone of co-founder Benjamin Robbins
 - *born 1760 in New Jersey
 - *dies 1837 in Centerville at nearly 77 y
- *1796 family travels to Northwest Territory from NJ with Aaron Nutt, Benjamin Archer, and their families; related through wives
- *1797 Ben builds one-room log cabin with loft, the back of current day Routsong Funeral Home
- *1803 violent storm damages cabin; builds another
- *1809 replaces log cabin with stone home
- *buried in this plot with Benjamin:
 - *wife Bathsheba, sister of Aaron Nutt, to his right
 - *dies 1848 at almost 88 y
 - *William C., three year old son of Benjamin and Bathsheba's seventh child Samuel and his first wife Eliza
 - *buried next to Benjamin, tombstone missing
 - *dies in 1828
 - *Eliza dies ten years later at 32 y, 9 m, 23 d
 - *at right of Bathsheba
- *interesting facts about son Samuel:
 - *blacksmith by trade
 - *first mayor of Centerville in 1830
 - *remarries second wife Mary after Eliza dies
 - *has three more sons
 - *oldest son is named Samuel
 - *born in 1840
 - *Jesse Kelsey's killer in 1862

8. Nutt Family

- *Centerville-Washington History provides the granite plaque by the limestone tombstone of co-founder Aaron Nutt
 - *1776 medallion in ground in front of tombstone
 - *American Revolution flag holder by tombstone in honor of service
 - *born July 17, 1758 in New Jersey
- *Aaron born into poor family; mother dies when he is 5
 - *at age 14, mother apprentices him to tailor
 - *tailor releases Aaron from agreement for serving in his place in the American Revolution
 - *Quaker raised, believes in peaceful means and ways; serves primarily as scout and teamster
 - *does shoot at man once during a battle
 - *legend says he never pointed a gun at a person again the rest of his life
- *marries Quaker widow Mary Archer, sister of co-founder Benjamin Archer, in NJ after war
- *moves toward Northwest Territory with brothers-in-laws plus families
 - *meets John Symmes, Continental Congress member who has been granted land between Miami Rivers for loyalty to George Washington during war (funded Washington's retreat through NJ)
 - *John asks the men to survey his land, likes harmonious look of group
 - *agree to survey, proceed through PA, KY, into OH
 - *in KY, three of Mary and Aaron's children die of smallpox, one week after another for three consecutive weeks
- *in Ohio, founding fathers draw lots for plats of land
 - *Aaron draws last straw, ends up with 320 acre plat that ends up having the most springs
 - *from Franklin St. to Alex-Bell to Cemetery Dr. on east side
 - *west side borders Benjamin Robbins's plat which also has a lot of springs
 - *Benjamin Archer's plat is northeast of Centerville, adjacent to Alex-Bell and along Clys Rd.
- *Aaron is true entrepreneur and good friend to all
 - *tailor, tavern owner, auctioneer, merchant, building contractor, township official, investor, tanner
 - *people gravitate toward his jovial, kind, temperate nature
- *Aaron and Mary have six more children
- *Mary dies in 1817 at almost 61 y
 - *within four months, Aaron marries another Quaker widow, Martha Pedrick Craig, 38 years old with two children
 - *Aaron and Martha have two more sons
- *Aaron dies after long illness in 1842 at 83 y, 10 m, 16 d
- *buried in row with Aaron are Mary are several family members
 - *buried in row behind them are Martha and other family members

9. Munger Family Plot

- *Edmund Munger, esteemed general from War of 1812, buried here
 - *lives 1763-1850
 - *dies at age 86 by falling from a ladder in his barn
- *wife Eunice Weller Munger is buried to his right
 - *in all, they have ten children
 - *lives to 101 y
- *Edmund moves here from New England with nephew Benjamin Maltbie and families
 - *difficult journey; took 2 years
 - *soon after, the Kellogg and Tibbals families from New England join them
 - *settle in southwest region in township in area of Yankee St.
 - *street named after these early citizens
- *during lifetime, Edmund...
 - *is a blacksmith
 - *is a county commissioner 1804-1808
 - *serves in Ohio Seventh General Assembly
 - *is Washington Twp. clerk 1809-1826
 - *is credited with helping to start local library in 1810
 - *has a highly acclaimed military career in the War of 1812
 - *Ohio militia under his command
 - *attains rank of Brigadier General
 - *well respected among his men

10. Doolittle Family Plot

- *iron railing encloses the plot
- *Enos Doolittle ran Doolittle's Tavern where Town Hall sits now
 - *one of the finest inns west of the Alleghenies
 - *has large dining room and ballroom
 - *William Henry Harrison stays here once
- *buried in plot is his wife Bathsheba, daughter of co-founder Benjamin and Bathsheba Robbins
 - *dies Feb. 28, 1845
 - *some of Enos and Bathsheba's children are buried here
 - *Enos moves to Columbus after wife's death

11. Joseph Pease

- *Joseph's tiny tombstone is directly behind the Doolittle plot
- *born 1810
- *dies Sept. 11, 1860 at 50 y, 1 d
- *special feature on tombstone
 - *sleeping figure of young boy on top
 - *during 1800's, tombstone carvings of angels or children signify youth or innocence
 - *unusual to find on an adult's marker
 - *perhaps Joseph is developmentally delayed in some way
- *no other family members are buried near him

12. Watkins Family Plot

- *cement wall marks the boundaries of original plot
- *mid-late 1800's, John C. Watkins is tobacco farmer and businessman
 - *leads committee to buy land and build the first high school
 - *brick building constructed in 1884
 - *now Las Piramides Restaurant
 - *remains high school until the 1924 consolidation
 - *nine district school houses (grades 1-8) and high school into one building
 - *current Magsig Middle School
- *John's children, May and Allen, plus other family members in this plot

13. Thatcher Family Plot

- *impressive, granite family plot marker replaces the original
- *four corner stones border the plot
- *David Thatcher is buried here
 - *1832 invests quarter of the money needed to replace the Sugarcreek Baptist Church log cabin with a stone building
 - *dies in 1889 at 83 y, 3 m, 14 d
- *Mariam, David's wife, is to the left of the tall family monument
 - *1854 dies at 43 y, 8 m, 7 d

14. Reverend Wilson

- *tombstone is a cement tree that is missing branches
 - *cement poured into mold to create, writing carved on flat panels
 - *style used in the late 1880's
 - *tree is obviously dead, like Rev. J. H. Wilson
 - *however, symbols of life are present
 - *ferns and plants edge the bottom, growing up toward heaven, showing new life
 - *cross at top represents life after death
- *J. H. Wilson lives from 1840-1887
 - *dies at 47 y.
 - *expensive tombstone implies deep respect for him
 - *front panel announces "Meet me in heaven"
 - *back panel says "At rest"