

## Harvard Grove Cemetery

Newburgh's town cemetery was located on Axtell Street<sup>1</sup>, most probably a pastoral location when



established, but increasingly subject to deterioration brought on by the rapid industrialization which occurred in the area. The exact date of Newburgh's cemetery is uncertain, but it did predate Cleveland's.<sup>2</sup> The eight-acre grounds had been opened about a quarter of a mile north of Broadway as early as 1800, and here pioneer families were laid to rest.<sup>3</sup> Newburgh Township purchased lot No. 447 from Alonzo Carter on April 23, 1858 for a burial ground known as Axtell Street Cemetery.

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<sup>1</sup> This street, once called Cemetery Street, is East 78th Street, between Broadway and Aetna.

<sup>2</sup> This Cleveland of Ours, "Civic Growth," p. 392.

<sup>3</sup> Cleveland: The Making of a City, "Wheels Turn Faster."

In 1873 the City of Cleveland, growing in importance and confidence, annexed a portion of Newburgh Township containing the cemetery. The annexation became Cleveland's old 18th ward, the "iron ward," so named because of the concentration of steel mills there. The cemetery property was later sold to the Union Rolling Mill and a railroad which necessitated the removal of interments to a more suitable resting place nearby. In the winter of 1881-1882, the remains from more than three thousand burials were moved to this new location.<sup>4</sup>

The Connotton Valley Railroad opened a line to Canton in 1880 and Cleveland, instead of Fairport, was made the lake terminal of the Connotton Northern Railroad Company's narrow-gauge road from Canton. A new passenger depot was opened on the corner of Ontario and Huron in August 1883. The Connotton Northern and Valley lines merged as the Connotton Valley Railroad Company, soon went into receivership, and in 1885 reorganized as the Cleveland & Canton Railroad Company. It was sold in 1888 to the new Coshocton & Southern Railroads<sup>5</sup> and a line was projected south through the coal

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Later, Wheeling & Lake Erie.

fields to Zanesville.<sup>6</sup>

On July 1, 1881, the Board of Cemetery Trustees of the City of Cleveland called City Council's attention to move the 18th Ward Cemetery to a more appropriate locality. Its present location was in the midst of the iron factories of the rapidly growing ward.

The Cleveland & Pittsburgh Railroad paralleled the east side of the cemetery and the Connotton Valley Railroad proposed to run tracks on the west side or through the center of the cemetery.

No grounds were more unsuitable for a burial ground. The smoke rising from the iron furnaces was detrimental to the growth of plants, shrubs, and trees and tarnished the tombstones and monuments.

Several lot owners had bought lots in other cemeteries and removed their dead, and many others contemplated doing the same unless more suitable grounds were found for a cemetery. The Board of Cemetery Trustees requested City Council to take action to purchase an alternate burial ground and to sell the present cemetery, the proceeds from the sale to be used to purchase new grounds and remove all the bodies there.

The committee appointed by

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<sup>6</sup> Cleveland: the Making of a City, "Wheels Turn Faster," pp. 441-442.

Council resolution on July 1, 1881<sup>7</sup> to work with the Board of Cemetery Trustees to investigate the sale of the old 18th Ward Cemetery and the purchase of more suitable grounds for a new cemetery, made a report at the July 18 City Council meeting after consultation with a citizens' committee from the 18th ward.<sup>8</sup> They reported that 20 acres of land off the west side of Isaac Reid's farm, in lot No. 313 of Newburgh Township, could be purchased for \$500 an acre. The committee recommended the site as suitable for a cemetery, conveniently located, and reasonably priced.

The committee discovered that the old Axtell Street Cemetery, supposedly containing 8.25 acres could be sold at \$2,000 an acre if the city removed the bodies, at the following terms: \$10,000 cash or the title to the 20 acres of Isaac Reid's farm, plus \$6,500 to be paid to the Board of Cemetery Trustees for costs incurred in removing the bodies, monuments, and tombstones from the old cemetery and improving the grounds of the new cemetery.

The committee further recommended to City Council that the sale be pursued according to the terms set forth and that an ordinance be passed prohibiting

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<sup>7</sup> City Council Proceedings, July 1, 1881, p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> City Council Proceedings, July 18, 1881, p. 85.

further interments in the old cemetery, authorizing its sale and the purchase of the 20 acres. and directing the Board of Cemetery Trustees to remove the interments from the old cemetery to the new location.

At the August 1, 1881 City Council meeting, a citizens' petition was presented to Council objecting to the proposed sale of the old 18th Ward Cemetery and the relocation of the bodies of their relatives.<sup>9</sup>

On September 5, 1881, the Board of Cemetery Trustees presented to City Council the deed conveying 20 acres of land in the 18th ward, a part of original lot No. 313 of Newburgh Township, from Isaac Reid to the City of Cleveland.<sup>10</sup> They also submitted to Council a receipt for \$6,506 given to William A. Lynch of the Connotton Valley Railroad for part of its purchase price of the old Axtell Street Cemetery. A copy of the deed<sup>11</sup> conveying the

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<sup>9</sup> City Council Proceedings, August 1, 1881, p. 97.

<sup>10</sup> Warranty Deed from Isaac Reid to the City of Cleveland, new 18th Ward Cemetery on Fremont Street; transferred on September 8, 1881; \$10,000.00 approved by City Council on September 5, 1881.

<sup>11</sup> Warranty Deed from the City of Cleveland to William A. Lynch (Connotton Valley Railway Company) for old 18th Ward Cemetery on Axtell Street; transferred on September 10, 1881; \$16,506.00, \$10,000.00 of which consisted of 20 acres of Isaac Reid's land conveyed to the City of

Axtell Street Cemetery, a part of original Newburgh Township lot Nos. 447 and 455, to William A. Lynch was also presented to Council.<sup>12</sup>

On December 19, 1881, the Board of Cemetery Trustees presented a resolution to City Council that the new cemetery recently acquired in the 18th ward and situated at Harvard and Fremont Streets be hereafter known as "Harvard Grove Cemetery."<sup>13</sup> At the City Council meeting of February 13, 1882<sup>14</sup>, the Board of Cemetery Trustees asked Council to authorize funds for the purchase of an additional 30 acres of land adjoining the new Harvard Grove Cemetery from Isaac Reid at \$500 an acre as little burial ground remained in the city's Woodland, Erie Street, or Monroe Street Cemeteries. It was not until the February 27, 1882 City Council meeting that an ordinance was passed naming the new 18th ward cemetery "Harvard Grove Cemetery."<sup>15</sup>

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Cleveland; ordinance authorizing the sale was passed on July 18, 1881.

<sup>12</sup> City Council Proceedings, September 5, 1881, p. 127.

<sup>13</sup> City Council Proceedings, December 19, 1881, p. 214.

<sup>14</sup> City Council Proceedings, February 13, 1882, p. 254.

<sup>15</sup> City Council Proceedings, February 27, 1882, p. 273.

The opening of Harvard Grove Cemetery necessitated the removal of all the remains interred in the old cemetery to the new cemetery, as well as the monuments and headstones. It was a massive task that was successfully accomplished without any accident or hard feelings on the part of the friends of the departed whose remains were entrusted to the care of the Cemetery Board.



A building for the Cemetery Superintendent of Harvard Grove was nearly complete. This, along with the removal of the remains, monuments, and headstones, and laying out the new ground cost \$7,938.45.<sup>16</sup>

Near the main gate of Harvard Grove Cemetery at 6100 Lansing Avenue, shaded by a towering poplar tree, five headstones stand, each marked with a cross and the name of a New England soldier who fought in the Revolutionary War. They are:

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<sup>16</sup> City Documents, Report of Cemetery Trustees, 1882, pp. 606-607.

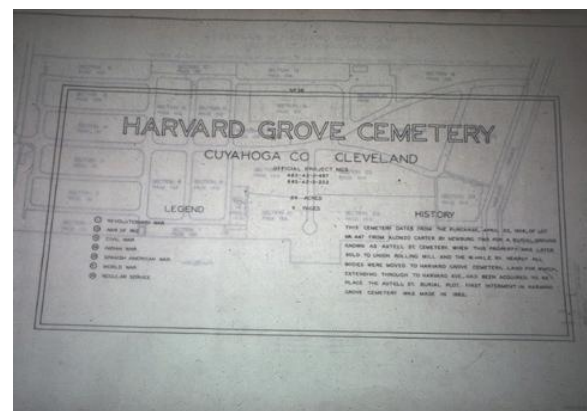
Joseph Upson, Skinner's Connecticut Militia, December 21, 1855.

Abner Cochran, private, Shepherd's Massachusetts Regiment, December 17, 1849.

Charles Miles, captain, Seventh Connecticut Regiment, 1813.

Nathan Broughton, private, Rossiter's Massachusetts Regiment, 1820.

Joshua Palmiter, private, Rhode Island State Troopers, 1839.



Along with the few thousand other reinterred souls, they found that even the grave affords no permanence.

No one knows of any records that might tell something about these men who fought the Redcoats and helped wrest the land from the crown.<sup>17</sup>

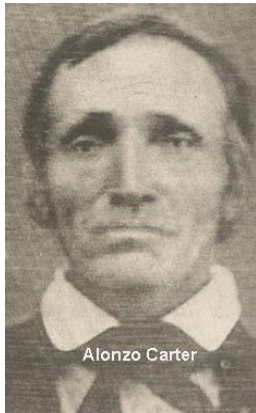
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<sup>17</sup> Cleveland Press, July 4, 1963, p. ?

## OTHER NOTED BURIALS

The first recorded burial at Harvard Grove Cemetery was Frederick Herrington, a white male, age 44, who lived on Haddock Street. He was born in Wales and buried on January 2, 1882. The transferred reinterments were not noted as burials in cemetery records.

Perhaps the second most famous burial at Harvard Grove is that of Alonzo Carter, son of Lorenzo Carter, Cleveland's first permanent



settler whose log cabin stood at the Cuyahoga River. Alonzo was born in Vermont in 1790. He moved to the Cuyahoga Town at the age of 17 and lived on land in the Flats where he farmed and, for a time, operated the

Red House Tavern. He moved to land in Newburgh near present-day East 93rd Street and married at the age of 25. They had 9 children. Henry, Edwin, and Charles all owned land near East 93rd Street. It was from Alonzo Carter that Newburgh eventually purchased the cemetery land on Axtell Street (Cemetery Street, now East 78th Street). Alonzo died in 1872 and was buried at the Newburgh cemetery, then moved in the reinterment to Harvard Grove in 1882. The family marker, a red granite obelisk, is to the left of the

Lansing Avenue gate, near the main drive. Family members' headstones surround the marker. The Masonic emblem adorns the marker as Alonzo did become a Mason.

Isaac Reid should probably be noted as Harvard Grove's most unique resident. It was his farm land that was sold to the City of Cleveland in 1881 to provide space for a new cemetery. He was born in 1798, two years after the founding of Cleveland. In addition to farming, he owned a building, the Reid Block, at Harvard and Broadway. The family homestead stood on the property of what is now Drug Mart on East 71st Street at Lansing Avenue. The family marker, a tall black obelisk, faces the main drive in section 8, lot 45.



When he died in 1886, he was buried on what was once his own farm. His wife was one of the 3,000 reinterred burials from the old cemetery. Immediately to the left of the

Reid plot lie the Dunbars and the Ruggles, kin of the Reids, who also owned property on present-day Lansing Avenue and from whom lots were purchased for the establishment of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church down the street from the cemetery. The familial relationship is not presently known.

In section 3, lots 50 and 65 lie the Marbles. Henry Marble, 1811-1886, owned several city lots near present-day Marble Avenue near Burke and South High School. Olive Meech, in section 4, lot 26, owned city lots near present-day Meech Avenue near East 93rd Street. Born in 1817, she died at the age of 73 in 1891.

One of the Skyrms' plots is in section 6, lot 14. It is not currently known whether this Skyrms lent his name to the present-day street near East 78th Street, off Broadway.

July 18, 1996 / Glenn Sobola