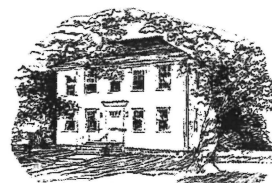


IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

The Armstrong Chapel Cemetery

Behind Old Armstrong Chapel at 5090 Drake Road is Indian Hill's oldest cemetery. It is a tangible link with the past, a place that is both significant and sacred. Nathaniel Armstrong, an early pioneer for whom the chapel, cemetery, and church are named, provided for this part of the Village landscape. When his wife Hannah died in 1827, she was interred on the 300 acre family farm. This was common practice in that era. A few years later, in 1830, Nathaniel deeded "127 poles strict measure" to establish a "burying ground and meeting house or other place of {Methodist} worship." Prior to this, circuit riders periodically conducted religious services in settlers' homes.

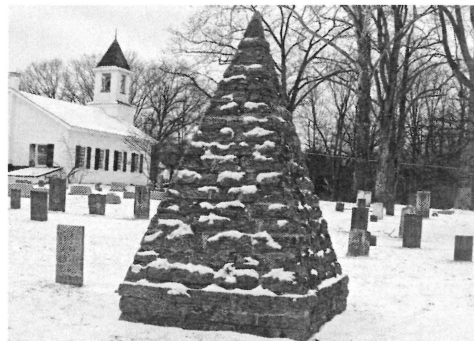
The cemetery has been in existence for almost 200 years. There are at least 23 Armstrongs interred in the graveyard; not surprising considering that patriarch Nathaniel had 6 sons and 3 daughters. Many Indian Hill families are buried here, and some are commemorated by local roads – DeMar, Kugler, Keller, and Muchmore.

The gravestones immortalize the people buried beneath them. Some have symbolic carvings, such as a weeping willow, an outstretched hand, or a delicate flower. These designs indicated attitudes towards death and the hereafter or reflected an individual's identity. The monuments differ in shape – from rectangular to obelisk to one tree trunk. They are composed of various materials, including limestone, marble, granite, and bronze.



In the nineteenth century, many people died young. The Howard family has 4 markers.

Phebe, age 2; Rhoda, 1 year, 9 months old; Sally, their 34 year old mother who died in 1833, and George, their father who died five years later at age 48. Many infants and children lie beneath smaller sized stones. An exception is the tall stone pyramid memorializing the Rothenhoefer son who died at 8 months old.



Messages and inscriptions on the markers provide biographical date and laments. Some infants' stones merely list the child's name. Adults' stones often contain birth/death dates, and describe a relationship (son, consort, or husband). Military service is noted for veterans. William Finch's stone states that he served in Private Webb's Connecticut Regiment during the Revolutionary War. Catherine Mann is "Ripe for Heaven" and 26 year old Alasanna Barnes has a lengthy poetic epitaph from her widower husband beginning "Since coldness wraps this mortal clay..."

The oldest portion of the cemetery is on the west side, closest to the Chapel. It contains a variety of monuments and headstones. On the east side of the parcel, the markers are flush with the ground. This is like a lawn cemetery with uncluttered commemorative plaques. On the south edge are 2 bronze columbarium walls with niches to accommodate cremains. Between the walls is a bench for reflection and recollection. A driveway separates the east and west sides of the cemetery. Adjacent to it is the newly constructed equipment building. A small stone structure with a cupola, it contains mowers and maintenance tools.

In the early 1900s Decoration Day (now named Memorial Day) was observed by the whole community. Led by the Indian Hill Band, village residents paraded from Jefferson School to the cemetery. Flowers were placed on graves by children, and veterans' graves received American flags. Nowadays that tradition continues with a Memorial Day Observance, including music, prayers, speeches, a roll call of deceased veterans.

A final resting place for the dead, Armstrong Chapel Cemetery is a tree shaded oasis for the living. Village history and quiet repose can be found in this hallowed place.