

PUTNAM COUNTY OHIO - Pioneer AKA United Brethren of Old Indian Cemetery

Parts taken from:

**Report on the Status of the Pioneer Cemetery, AKA
The United Brethren of Old Indian Cemetery,
Located at Ottawa, Ohio by Laura Wilson-Perry July 1998**

NOTE: All effort to compile with complete accuracy from many different sources was used.

Background on the Cemetery

When Ottawa was founded and populated by some of the first white men and women of this region, most of the area surrounding the town site was covered with dense vegetation and muck from the Great Black Swamp. Living here was hard work and took its toll on even the hardiest of the settlers to the region. Many died from fevers and ague, and many died from accidents trying to clear the area to become what is now rich farmland and the site of thriving industry. Of necessity, land had to be set aside for the burial of these casualties of time and hardship, and when, in the mid-1830's, John Huber died, it fell to Stansbury Sutton's father to select a site to receive the body. In the Pioneer Reminiscences, Book One, originally published in 1878, Stansbury Sutton writes, "The first death that occurred in Ottawa Township, was John Huber, an old gentleman who lived in the north part of the township. Judge Cox and myself made the coffin. My father requested to select the place of interment and he selected the place known as the old Grave Yard, north of the Tawa run" (*Putnam County Pioneer Reminiscences, Putnam County Historical Society, 1981 reproduction, p. 40*).

It is assumed that the property to which they are referring is the site of the Pioneer Cemetery, as no other cemeteries are known to have existed in Ottawa on the north side of Tawa.

It is interesting Sutton and Cox chose the site of an "old" graveyard for a new burial. Even though the Indians were being rapidly pushed from the area, the sacred nature of a burial ground of these people was recognized and these settlers did not choose to build upon this site, although they built immediately to its west, on the old Ottawa "Green". It is significant that the graveyard at the Pioneer Cemetery is the only one known in Putnam County that is not currently farmed or built upon.

Many burials followed and included some of the most prominent people amongst the early settlers, Ridenours, Adgates, Rows, and Galbreaths, among many others. At least two veterans of the War of 1812 are buried in this cemetery. It is not known at this time whether veterans of any other armed conflicts of the United States are buried at the Pioneer Cemetery. Burials continued to be performed at the Pioneer Cemetery up through at least the end of the 1800's.

At some earlier point, the date is not certain, the EUB Church in Ottawa began using the Pioneer Cemetery as ground for burials from their sect. The Pioneer Cemetery came to be known around this time by the third of its formal names, the United Brethren Cemetery, although it is not known if the cemetery was reserved solely for EUB members.

The WPA Cemetery Plat Book for Putnam County, Ohio, officially listed the cemetery as the United Brethren Cemetery (*Carroll, Audrey S., unpublished manuscript "United Brethren Cemetery or Pioneer Cemetery -- Ottawa, Ohio", 8 August 1983, p. 2).*

The site appears to have been abandoned, perhaps coincidentally, at roughly the same time the Evangelical United Brethren Church in Ottawa disbanded. It may be possible to trace some of this information through the Methodist Church, since, when the United Brethren disbanded, their church membership was incorporated into the Ottawa United Methodist Church.

According to Reverend Jim Miller of the Trinity United Methodist Church, normal church protocol would have demanded that the records of the EUB church should have been sent to the United Methodist Archives Center when the churches merged; it is not known whether this action was taken, however. *The current location (1998) of the United Methodist Archives Center is at Beezhly Library on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan University. Susan Cohen was the curator in 1998, and the hours of operation of this center are weekdays from 9:00 2:15 p.m. Phone: 614-368-3285, fax: 614-368-3222.*

As the cemetery became more crowded, the Pomeroy, or Ottawa, Cemetery was established in South Ottawa on June 12, 1857 under the name of "Ottawa Cemetery". According to a newspaper article from May 9, 1952, "The property was deeded to the association by C.T. and Julia Pomeroy, and was recorded the following year by William Alt, recorder of Putnam County." (*"Pomeroy Cemetery Association To Meet", Putnam County Sentinel, May 9, 1952.*)

The original church building for the EUB Church -- the first church built in Ottawa -- still stands on Route 65, also known as Elm Street. It is in commercial use but has no identifying marker and there has been no mention in Putnam County of the origin of the building. The building, built in 1848, located between 3rd and 4th Street on Elm, is home to the local offices of Time-Warner Cable. It has also been used as a needlework shop, the offices of Center Corp., and a private residence. In the 1899 photo the building was in an obvious state of decay. The Putnam County Pioneer Association Centennial History 1873-1973 indicates "The first church organized in Ottawa was the United Brethren in 1837. A frame church was erected in 1846 on Elm Street between Third and Fourth Streets. It was still in use in 1915 but the date of abandonment has not been determined." (*Putnam County Pioneer Association Centennial History 1873-1973, pp. 85-86*). However, in 1934, this building was not being used for services. (Sommers, Ed, Putnam County Centennial History 1834-1934, p. 23).

Over the years since it was last used for burials, the Pioneer Cemetery has fallen into neglect. For many years, the title to the property was unclear, and until this technical matter was cleared no work could progress on the property, no matter how well intentioned or well-organized the efforts.

According a 1984 survey courtesy of the Village of Ottawa, Clerk-Treasurer's Office, Audrey Carroll, in her December 4, 1971 had incorrect information about the size of the cemetery. In actuality, the cemetery is approximately ¼ the size it appears to be at first glance. It is bordered on the north by Lexington Arms and an open field. However, the west side of the cemetery does not extend to the railroad tracks; the property line is actually 80 feet east of the right-of-way for the B & O Railroad. The south boundary basically follows the top of the ravine, which marks the flood plain of the Tawa. The east boundary is most quickly found at this time as being a few feet east of the east side of the Lexington Arms' dumpster enclosure.

Headstones Found in Cemetery

Probably the most disturbing example of neglect and vandalism is the United Bretheren (sic) Cemetery located almost in the heart of Ottawa. The oldest cemetery in Ottawa, it is the resting place of several of the community's first citizens. Only about four stones remain and most of them have been toppled. The following headstones and headstone fragments were found in the cemetery proper. Other fragments are likely to be located outside the bounded area. Many of these stones were found by Audrey S. Carroll in 1971.

This stone reads:

JAMES F. ADGATE

DIED AUG. 23, 1851

AGED 55 YRS 10 MOS 3 D

SARAH HIS WIFE

DIED JAN 26 1858

AGED 39 YRS 6 M

According to the 1880 Putnam County, Ohio Atlas, p. 193, "Ottawa Township, organized the first Monday of Marsh 1835. The first officers were: Trustees George Agner, William Galbreath, and James Adgate.

However, a second stone at the site appears to also be for Sarah, wife of James Adgate. Many people have erroneously assumed this stone to be for a daughter of James Adgate:

This stone reads:
SARAH
Wife of
J.F. ADGATE
DIED Jan 26, 185_
Aged 39 y 6 m 1 d

Galbreath, Chester, Ulysses, and Willie S.

This stone, made of heavy solid granite, is approximately 3 ½ feet tall. It is extremely difficult for two people to move; whether there are inscriptions on all sides has not been determined. The inscriptions which have been found are:

WILLIE S. ULYSSES CHESTER
SON OF GALBREATH GALBREATH
T. J. & S. DIED DIED
GALBREATH OCT. 29, 1867 NOV. 11, 1888
DIED AGED AGED
MAR 26, 1867 3 Y. 8 M. 6 D. 20 Y. 9 M. 20 D.
AGED 4 M. 19 D. We all fade as the leaf.

According to the 1880 Putnam County Atlas, p. 200, William B. Galbreath was born to Thomas J. and Sarah A. (Morris) Galbreath on November 6, 1866.

Ulysses was born on February 14, 1864. Chester, however, lived to become a young man, and on page 48 of the 1895 Putnam County Atlas is listed as having graduated from the Ottawa High School Class of 1887. His name is listed as Chester K. Galbreath, and he was born on January 23, 1868.

Galbreath, William and Mary

From left to right: left side -- William Galbreath; face -- Mother and Father; right side -- Mary Galbreath

This stone is severely damaged, however, most of the pertinent information is legible:

WILLIAM MARY
GALBREATH Wife of
DIED W. GALBREATH
SEPT 21, 1877 DIED
AGED OCT. 2, 1874
83 Y __ M AGED
78 YEARS

According to Audrey Stauffer Carroll, the Putnam County Pioneer Association's First Secretary's Book contains the following brief synopsis of William Galbreath's life: "William Galbreath, born 18 June 1794, in Westmoreland Co., Pennsylvania; came to Putnam County, Ohio (Ottawa) 16 November 1834; died 21 September 1877 and is interred in the Old Cemetery of Ottawa; he was a soldier (of the War of 1812) under General Harrison." (Carroll, Audrey S., United Brethren or the Pioneer Cemetery -- Ottawa, Ohio, p. 8). William Galbreath's story in the Pioneer Reminiscences is a long and fascinating one. He tells of leaving Fort Findlay and taking two days to reach Ottawa with a team of four horses and two oxen. William had to cut his way through dense brush and miring mud, and arrived in Ottawa to find that he had to make temporary lodgings in a "red man's house". Additional information on William Galbreath can be found in the 1880 Putnam County Atlas on page 20 under Thomas Galbreath's biography, and, in the 1895 Putnam County Atlas on pages 188 and 193. Mary Galbreath is listed under her son's biography as having the maiden name of Morris (1880 Putnam County Atlas, p. 20). No other mention could be found of her.

Row, Hannah M.
(photo, p. 15)

In 1998, this severely damaged stone was found broken in three places and lying on the ground. It reads:

HANNAH
WIFE OF
MICHAEL ROW
DIED
JUNE 17, 1870
AGED
_2 Y 1 M 22 D

According to the 1880 Putnam County Atlas, p. 205, Michael and Hannah Row were the parents of Nelson Row. Hannah's maiden name here was listed as Galbreath. On page 193 of the same atlas, appears the following information: Ottawa Township, organized the first Monday of March, 1835, held the first election at Michael Row's, April 6, 1835. The first officers were: Treasurer: Michael Row; Supervisors: Michael Row and William Galbreath; Fence Viewer: Michael Row and Samuel Runyon.

The first hewed house in Ottawa was built by Michael Row and the first frame house by William Williams, the siding being made of clapboards neatly shaved and jointed...

The 1895 Putnam County Atlas adds the following information from page 33: Michael Row built the first house in which he opened the first tavern, (a hewed-log house) located on lot No. 57, in the fall of 1834, this was the center of the town plat. Mr. Row came to Ottawa with his family in the spring of 1834. From the time of their arrival until the time that they moved into their new house, they resided in the old Tawa Council House, located on what is known as Indian Green, north of Tawa creek. The first election was held at Michael Row's tavern. The Row House still stands today, on its original site. No other information could be found about Hannah Row, wife of Michael Row. However, Michael Row is mentioned in passing in Book One of the Pioneer Reminiscences.

Talbott, Orlando

This stone was newly-discovered on Wednesday, July 15, 1998 near the Artificially placed entrance to the Pioneer Cemetery. It was completely buried at the beginning of the clearing project. However, by the Wednesday a tiny portion of the top of the stone weathered out and tripped one of the workers. It is only newly discovered stone to be found intact. Little is known about the Talbott family to which this child belonged. The stone reads as follows: (photo p. 17)

(lamb carving)

ORLANDO

Son of

E. W. & S. TALBOTT

Died

Oct. 20, 1868

AGED

1 Yr 2 M 13 D

Williamson, Mary R.

(photo p. 18)

This stone fragment was located on Wednesday, July 15, 1998, when the electric leaf blower which was being used blew the loose dirt from the reverse side of the stone. It was near another grouping of stones which had been previously enumerated, just off one of the main paths. However, the undergrowth was quite thick in the area and obscured its position. It reads:

MARY

Daut of

T. & E. Williamson

DIED

(J)an 13 _____

This difficult-to-read was found in the middle of a grouping of other stones. However, it had not been turned over, and flipping it revealed the following information:

___PBELL
died
Feb 1 1851 (?)
Aged
78 Yrs 6 M 18 Days
Mary E and ___SEPH C.

These stone fragments were found side by side in deep leaves and underbrush on Thursday, July 9, 1998. The only information legible on them at this time is MARY E and ___SEPH C. Mary E. may be the daughter of Thomas and Sarah Galbreath. That Mary was born Nov 3, 1869.

Additional Fragments Found

May 16, 1860
Aged 6 Ms. (photo p. 20)
H & M
H.R
_3 Yrs 4 Ms. & 3 Ds.
SMR Ottawa, O
M. R. W.

Missing Stones

Many other stone fragments were found, as well as additional bases without stones. The following burials are known to have occurred at this cemetery, but no stones have been found for them at this time. Some of the following information is from previous enumerations:

Galbreath, Ezekial
Died Jul 27, 1858
Aged 27 Y 10 M 20 D

Galbreath, Thomas
(Hand pointing heavenward)
Huber, John

Listed as the first white man buried in this cemetery -- it is not known whether a stone existed for him.

Ridenour, Henry

The following information on Henry Ridenour was taken from Audrey Stauffer Carroll's handwritten notes in the possession of Laura Wilson-Perry:

Henry Ridenour, son of John and Christina Ridenour

U. B. Cemetery, Ottawa, O

Lot No 17

Grave No. 2

Marker upright in 1957, according to Ruth (Mrs. Russell)

Rumbaugh, 2775 Hadsell Road, Lima, O.

No trace of this stone 1971

Henry Ridenour, War of 1812

Enlisted: 7 May 1813

Discharged: 5 Sept 1813

Branch of Service -- Army

Rank -- Lieutenant in Captain Richard Hooker's Co.

b. 17 March 1788. Father -- Rev. War soldier

John Ridenour and family came to Putnam County (according to 1880 Atlas) in 1826. Henry Ridenour is buried in the U. B. Cemetery, Ottawa, O.

Henry Ridenour is a son of John Ridenour, b. 17 March 1788, d. 17 Sept. 1846, Putnam County, O. John Ridenour is Mrs. Russell Rumbaugh's great-grandfather. She has not been able to find where John Ridenour is buried. Mrs. Ruth Rumbaugh gave me [Audrey Stauffer Carroll] the above picture of Henry Ridenour's gravestone.

Row, Hannah M.

Dau of N & EA Row

Died Aug 2, 1862

Aged 2 y 2 m 6 d

Not to be confused with the Hannah Row stone mentioned earlier.

Simms, A J

Listed in the Soldiers' Burials list on microfilm at the Putnam County District Library Army, buried in Lot No 35