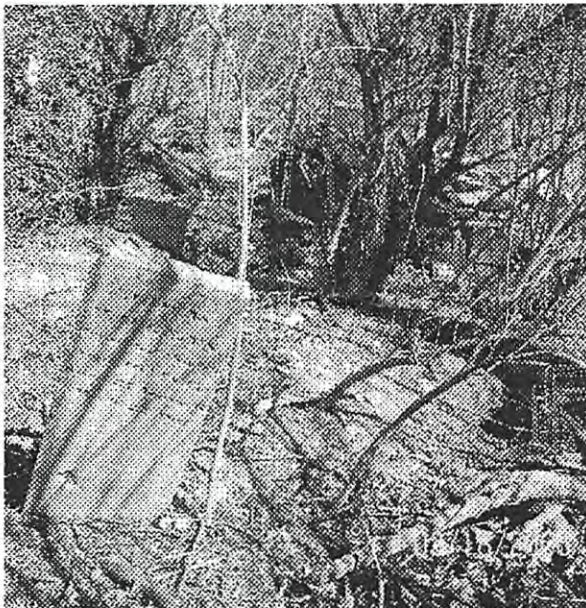


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RESTORATION OF THE
BLICKENSTAFF (KARNS) CEMETERY
MONROE TOWNSHIP, MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO

Blickenstaff Cemetery is an inactive pioneer cemetery situated in the southwest quarter of Section 27, Township 4, Range 6 East, in Monroe Township, the southern edge of Miami County, Ohio. It is located south of Evanston Road and east of County Road 25-A at the east edge of the property currently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Oliver McGraw and overlooks a small stream which runs north of the cemetery. It is a land-locked cemetery with no public access. Many people will know the location of the McGraw house which is a two story brick home because the iron dog which has stood for many years in the yard is something of a land mark in the area. It is interesting to note that the county engineer's office when contacted in the 1990's did not know where the cemetery was located and it was considered a "lost" cemetery.



Spring 2006 before clean up and restoration

Blickenstaff Cemetery is located on land that was part of a tract deeded to Michael Fair's heirs in 1812 by President James Madison. Land grants to Jacob Fair and Jacob Blickenstaff, brother-in-law of Michael Fair, were for adjoining lands. The cemetery is also known as the Karns Cemetery. Michael and Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark Fair's daughter, Catharine, married Abraham Karns and she and her husband were deeded the property in 1838 by the other heirs of Michael and Elizabeth. They built the brick house which still stands today with the year 1856 scratched into a brick on the south side of the house. They owned the property until Abraham's death 52 years later in 1890.

Michael Fair and his second wife, Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark (widow of Thomas Clark who laid out the town of Tippecanoe), came to Miami County about 1806 from Frederick County, Maryland. Michael died in 1809 and his is the first known burial in this cemetery although there is a possibility that Michael and his wife, Elizabeth, had an infant daughter who could in fact be the first burial. The last known burial in the cemetery was that of Christian Blickenstaff, brother of Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark Fair, who died in 1865.

History of the Blickensderfer Family in America by Jacob Blickensderfer (1816-1899) mentions specifically several of the individuals buried in this cemetery giving the exact wording from their marker inscriptions so it is evident that Mr. Blickensderfer either visited the cemetery himself or corresponded with someone who had been there. His book indicates that there is no monument marking Elizabeth Fair's grave so it is likely that if her grave was marked at all that it was with a field stone. Two earlier readings of the cemetery do not include Elizabeth or Michael.

On August 19, 1837, Elizabeth deeded to the descendants of Elizabeth Fair a parcel of land of 16 square poles to be used as a common burying place for the descendants of Michael and Elizabeth

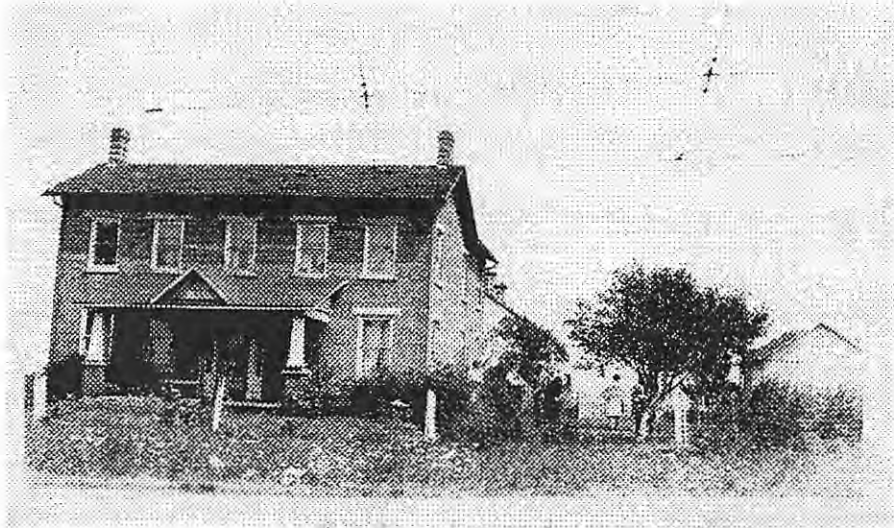
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Fair. The deed, which refers to graves already there, was filed at the courthouse on March 2, 1839 and Elizabeth died on June 6 of that same year.

All of the pioneers buried in Blickenstaff Cemetery except two are known to be either Blickenstaffs or married to Blickenstaffs. Catherine Blickenstaff Maugens, Christian Blickenstaff, Jacob Blickenstaff and Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark Fair were siblings and were the children of Yost Blickenstaff and his first wife, Elizabeth Ochs, of Frederick County, Maryland.

Letters written by Samuel S. Smith to local historian Grace Kinney in the 1930's indicate that cattle had been allowed to roam the cemetery and that at that time markers were down and broken. It was evident in 2006 when the cemetery restoration project began that the cemetery had been neglected for many years. Dorothy



Brick house built by Karn Family in 1856

Anderson Thompson who lived in the house in the 1940's and early 1950's, stated that her father attempted to keep the cemetery fenced in and the grass cut and that many stones were then lying flat. When the restoration project started, the cemetery was overgrown, filled with trees, and had a large amount of bricks and other debris in it. It was also infested with ground hogs that had burrowed under many of the downed markers and established an elaborate system of tunnels. Several wooden corner posts were still standing marking corners of an area approximately 35 feet square (although the cemetery deed appears to convey an area 66 feet square).

Two prior readings of the cemetery were found, one contained in Miami Valley Records Vol. 5 Miami County Cemetery Records by Lindsay M. Brien. It is believed this reading was done in the 1930's. The second reading was done in March of 1977 by Don Bowman who was in the area doing some survey work and came across the cemetery. The Brien reading is an alphabetical listing and does not mention any field stone markers. The 1977 reading by Bowman was a row-by-row reading which included references to field stones, loose bases and loose pieces of stone.

In April of 2006 with the gracious consent of the owners of the residence and barn adjacent to the cemetery, a group of descendants of the Fair and Blickenstaff pioneers buried in the cemetery spent several Saturday's cleaning the brush and debris from the cemetery. When this was cleared, the true sad state of the cemetery was revealed and a decision was made that a complete restoration and stone repair project should be undertaken.

Many hours on subsequent Saturdays were spent probing the ground for markers buried when the tunnels of groundhogs collapsed or which had been buried by their diggings. Piece by piece

missing stones and their fragments were pulled from the earth with the largest and last marker found being the five foot long fully intact marker of Mary Ann Blickenstaff McClure which was completely buried approximately two feet deep on the west slope of the cemetery. The markers of Jacob Fair, Mary Fair, Olive Maugens, Catherine Blickenstaff, and Mary Ann McClure were all totally buried. Foot markers for nearly every burial were found. The crispness of detail of the engravings of the buried stones in many cases was remarkable.

Professional stone restorationists Helen Wildermuth and Mark Davis from Indiana were employed and in August of 2007 began several days of work cleaning, repairing and resetting the markers. Using only water and special plastic brushes mounted on drills, they cleaned each marker revealing in most cases beautiful, white Italian marble.

In August of 2008 a blank, unusable bottom portion of one of the tablet stones was engraved "Blickenstaff Cemetery Est. 1809" and installed in the west row of the cemetery. A plaque placed on the back of this marker commemorates the restoration project and reads as follows:

Restored in 2007 by Lois Fair, Jo Ellen Fair Mason, Derick Mason, Ken Noffsinger, Mary Fair Renner and Randy Robinson, descendants of the pioneers buried here, and by Jim Gumbert, a friend.

Final resting place of:

Michael Fair and Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark Fair, his wife
 Christian Blickenstaff and Catharine Hauver Blickenstaff, his wife
 Susan Blickenstaff
 Jacob Blickenstaff and Mary Crull Blickenstaff, his wife
 David Blickenstaff
 Isaac Blickenstaff
 Mary Ann Blickenstaff McClure and infant daughter of Mary Ann McClure
 Jacob Fair and Mary Kemp Fair, his wife
 Catharine Blickenstaff Maugens
 John Maugens and Olive Jenkins Maugens, his wife
 Henry McGrew
 Robert Speer
 At least two more unknown individuals



New cemetery sign installed August 2008



Mary Renner, Lois Fair, Jim Gumbert, Jo Ellen Mason and Ken Noffsinger

A ceremony was conducted on August 29, 2008 to commemorate the completion of the restoration project and dedicate the plaque. Since it is believed that most of those buried in the cemetery were of the Old Order German Baptist faith, Rev. Ronald L. McAdams, a retired minister of the Church of the Brethren, was present in period costume to offer a prayer and rededicate the cemetery. An excerpt from his service follows:

"We gather here today in this place to re-dedicate this cemetery and our thoughts automatically go to the past. As we see urban sprawl grab up prime farm land, as we see hundreds of new people moving into this area who know nothing of the history of the land upon which they are making new lives, we recognize that time marches on and that those voices that rang out here in this area in the 1800's have been silenced. We realize therefore that it is an important thing that we do in gathering here today.

It has been nearly 200 years ago that the pioneer families stood on this spot for the burial of a loved one. They prayed to God for comfort. They mourned the loss of a dear one. We come to dedicate a plaque and dedicate this cemetery so that those who come after us to this place might catch a glimpse of the history that we share."

The new 2008 reading of the cemetery follows. The reading is from north to south beginning with the row furthest west and the exact wording of the marker is given:

Row One (west row)

1. Mary Ann McClure died 10 Jan 1850 age 29Y, 6M, 5D wife of Silas
Footstone: M.A. McC
2. Daughter of S & M.A. McClure died Jan 18th 1850, aged 18 days
3. Unknown individual – marker and footstone found but with no lettering
4. Susan, daughter of C. & C. Blickenstaff died Jan. 18, 1828, aged 17 YRS. & 9 D's.
Footstone: S.B.
5. Isaac, son of J. & M. Blickenstaff died Dec. 21, 1815 aged 1Y. 8M. 15D.
6. "New" cemetery sign made from broken off bottom of a marker engraved on front
"Blickenstaff Cemetery Est. 1809" with black and silver plaque on back

Row Two

7. Catharine, wife of David Maugens died March 19, 1838; in the 62D year of her age
Footstone: C.M.
8. John Maugens, departed this life Sept. 10th 1847; aged 37 years 6 Mo. & 22DA.
Footstone: J.M.
9. Olive Maugens, died April 4, 1857, aged 41 years 6 MO. & 20D's.
Footstone: O.M.

Row Three

10. Jacob Blickenstaff died April 13, 1852 aged 75Y'S 10M. 15D.
11. David Blickenstaff died March 6, 1859, aged 47 years 3MO. & 23DS.
Footstone: D.B.

12. Mary wife of Jacob Blickenstaff died Feb. 10, 1862 aged ?? YS. 11MO. & 4DS.
Footstone: M.B.
13. Catharine, wife of Christian Blickenstaff, died Apr. 4, 1859, aged 74 years.
Footstone: C.B.
14. Christian Blickenstaff died Dec. 1, 1865, aged 85 YRS. & 15 D's
Footstone: C.B.

Row Four

15. Jacob Fair died Feb. 10, 1854, aged 73 years, & 21 days
Footstone: J.F.
16. Mary wife of Jacob Fair died Sept. 1(?), 1849; aged 67 years 11 MO's & 26DS.
Footstone: M.F.
17. Empty foundation – no marker was found to fit this stone
18. Field stone with field stone foot marker
19. Henry McGrew died Dec. 6, 1852 aged 71 Y'S. 2M. 12D.
Footstone: H.M.
Note: The bottom portion of this stone had broken off and could not be reattached to the top portion because of extreme weathering. The bottom portion was engraved "Depart, dear friends dry up your tears, I must lye here, till Christ appears."
20. Robert Speer died Apr. 14, 1816 aged 42 years 10MO. 24Days
Footstone: R.S.



Blickenstaff Cemetery after restoration in August, 2008

Conspicuously absent from the above reading are Michael Fair and Elizabeth Blickenstaff Clark Fair. Elizabeth is mentioned in History of the Blickensderfer Family in America as being buried in this cemetery without a monument marking her grave. It is likely that #17 or #18 above may be the graves of Michael and Elizabeth. Also absent from the above list is Mary Favorite Fair,

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John Carpenter
Barbara Bollenbacher
Chuck Young

Some other tidbits attached to the Blickenstaff Cemetery Article

18th Century Pennsylvania German Naming Customs

If two given names were given to a child at baptism, the first given name was a spiritual saint's name (similar to Roman Catholic tradition). The second given name was the secular name which is the name the person is known by, within the family and to the rest of the world. The spiritual name often was given to all the children of that family of the same sex. Johann Michael, Johann George, Johann Adam. After baptism, these people were not be known as Johann but as Michael, George, or Adam in legal and secular records. If the child's secular name was really John, that at baptism he was named only John, usually Johannes, with no second given name.

A research could spend a lot of time hunting Johann when really the records list Michael. When reading county histories, keep in mind this Johann may be your Michael, George, or Adam that a 20th century writer not familiar with the custom lists as Johann.

It was common practice in some families to name the first born son after the child's paternal grandfather and the second son after the maternal grandfather. Further naming patterns sometimes used were the third son was named for the father and the fourth son was named for the father's oldest brother. The first daughter was named for the mother's mother. The second daughter named for the father's mother. A third daughter would be named for the mother with the fourth daughter named for the mother's oldest sister. This pattern is not always followed by may give a clue to the names of the grandparents.

