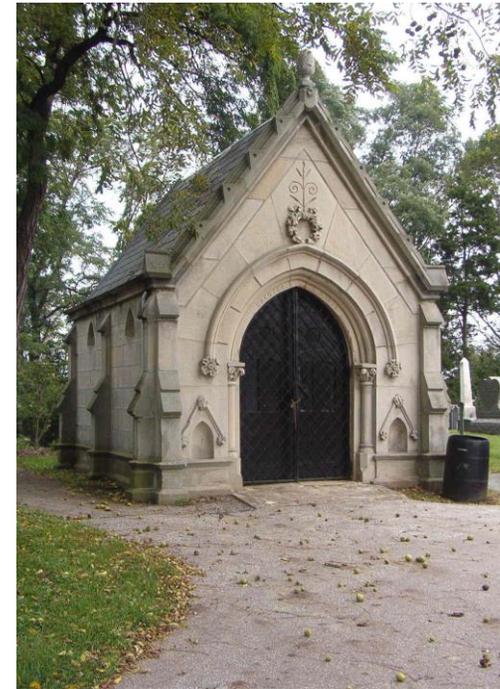




**A
Brecksville - Highland
Drive Cemetery Walk
The Brecksville Historical
Association
September 23, 2018**

We acknowledge the City of Brecksville, the Brecksville Center for the Arts, and the trustees of the Brecksville Historical Association for making this walk possible through their help and research. *Special thanks to Joe Maxx Coffee Company for their refreshments!*



The Vault, 1878



Welcome to the Brecksville-Highland Drive Cemetery. This cemetery is one of five cemeteries owned and maintained by the City of Brecksville. (The other cemeteries are: Riverview, Barr, Fitzwater, and the Waite gravesite).

This cemetery's original name, Brecksville Cemetery, is what you saw on the decorative arches as you entered. These arches, installed in 2001, are reproductions of the original arches from the 1800s. You may also have read or heard this cemetery referred to as the Highland Drive cemetery.

This cemetery walk was originally envisioned in 1985 by Ms. Kathy Wilmer, then the Branch Manager at the Brecksville Branch of the Cuyahoga County Library. The Brecksville Historical Association found her notes in their archives and used them as inspiration for walks conducted in 2015 and 2016..

You can learn a lot about local history in a cemetery! We're focusing on four Hs: Headstones, Heroes, History, and Horticulture. We hope you enjoy yourselves this afternoon as much as we enjoyed doing the research and planning.

We ask that you remember to treat this cemetery with care and consideration. There's not just history buried here, but our loved ones too. Finally, be careful walking through the grave rows. The ground, especially in the older sections, is uneven and there are slip and trip hazards like tree roots and black walnuts. Keep looking for the painted rocks...they are yours to keep once found. Enjoy!

Symbolism and Headstone Shapes

Tombstones tell a story...look around you. We expect tombstones to list the family name and first names of the people buried there with other information like birth and death dates.

But look a little closer. What else do you see?

Often tombstones tell more of the story. Many modern headstones give us an indication of what a person loved, their hobbies, or their occupations. Here in Brecksville Cemetery, you'll meet residents who loved to fish, had special places in their hearts for things like lighthouses, cartoon characters, and sports. Sometimes you'll see their images etched into stone.



Older tombstones, too, offer us a look at the lives of the people buried there. They'll often include carvings of flowers or the initials and symbols of fraternal organizations.

Like everything else, the styles of headstones go in and out of fashion. When you see a headstone that looks like a tree stump, it's probably from between 1880-1920 when funerary art was moving away from grand masoleums and obelisks and focusing on nature. There was even a time you could order a headstone from a Sears catalog!

We hope today's walk will help you be able to identify symbols and shapes and remember some of the stories we told.

Horticulture in a Cemetery

Prior to the mid-1800s burials occurred either in church graveyards or on privately held land (like the family cemeteries in Brecksville). Once large scale, public cemeteries became popular, so also did landscape design for cemeteries. Some cemeteries are even arboretums with extensive collections of woody plants and shrubs. At Brecksville-Highland, the initial landscape design focused primarily near the vault using the topography of the hill (black walnuts, black locusts, sugar maples). As time goes by, however, trees suffer disease, storms, and simply the end of their useful life. So the landscape in this cemetery is constantly changing.

While larger plantings help soften and enhance the hardscape of headstones, some may choose to add small plantings near the headstones as a way of remembering their deceased with a personal touch. Tending a grave with flowers and other garden elements can be a comfort during the grieving process. Did you see evidence of that as you walked through the cemetery today?

During today's walk, we also pointed out several interesting tree species and shared stories about cemetery plantings. Try visiting again in the spring to see many of them in full bloom!

Horse Chestnut near the Flagpole (in bloom!)



The Walk

This year's walk begins with a stroll down the boxwood hedge to the flagpole. Notice the stone memorials at the base of the flagpole.

1. The Flagpole Veteran Memorials

These stone memorials commemorate those veterans who gave their lives in a conflict, or died from wounds received during a battle.

In addition, many more veterans who survived their military service are interred in this cemetery. Come back sometime earlier in the year – around Memorial Day – and you'll see many American flags marking each of their headstones. We'll tell some of those stories this afternoon.

2. An Overview of Headstone Shapes and Symbolism

As we walk east through the southeast part of the Cemetery (aka Section 1), we'll be pointing out different headstone shapes and many of the symbols we've found. See how many you can find when you're walking through the other sections.

The more you look around a cemetery, the more symbols you'll find. Look around, search for the painted rocks, and see if you can find:

Angels, crosses, roses, lilies, urns, obelisks, wreaths....

If you see any others, point them out to the group and we'll talk about their meaning.

Walk east until you are almost directly south of the vault. Look for the two overgrown spirea bushes, hiding the family headstone of the Colsons.

3. Bolter Colson

True, Bolter Colson was a veteran. He was a Captain in the Army for two weeks during the War of 1812! He is better known, however, for his contribution to the Brecksville religious community. He came to Brecksville in 1815 and was one of the founders of the Congregational Church in Brecksville.

Head further east toward the very tall *Arborvitae*, to a very ornate memorial.

4. William A. Knowlton, M.D

Dr. Knowlton captures all of our four Hs! He became a doctor because of his Civil War experience in hospitals, then returned to the Brecksville community and practiced medicine for over 50 years. He was also the town orator, giving a rousing welcoming address at the dedication of the Town Hall in 1874. How many symbols can you find in his headstone?

Walk NE toward a very tall monument, near a blooming hydrangea tree.

5. Captain John Dunbar

Captain John (aka James) was a soldier in the War of 1812 and three of his sons served in the Civil War. The family came to Brecksville from Massachusetts. His wife, Lucy, was a pioneer in the Congregational Church.

Go down the steps, across the road (up another set of stairs) and head slightly east.

6. William and Thankful Burt

This headstone is very unique – the only one of its kind we’ve found in this cemetery. Its uniqueness comes from its source: the Sears catalog. The Burt names will come up again later in this tour!

Walk west toward the Vault and the green water faucet to the Dillow family marker.

7. Dillow Family

The Dillows are another early pioneer family. Members of the family include veterans and businessmen. In our story research, we reviewed a 20-year record of burials noted in the Dillow Funeral Home registry. We have several stories to tell here.

20. Joseph M. Allen

We have two soldiers with the same name buried in this area: the Civil War soldier is listed on the flagpole memorial. We know his story, but are still researching the relationship between the Civil War and the War of 1812 veterans.

Walk one row west.

21. George Rudgers

This is our stop and our final veteran on the tour. Our research points to his family name as Rodgers. He was a Civil War veteran.

We know that George Rudgers (or Rodgers) died in April, 1865...very close to the end of the Civil War. He was discharged from the Army less than a year before. He was only 31 and living in Girard Ohio at the time of his death.

We invite you to join us over at the Brecksville Center for the Arts where there are refreshments donated by Joe Maxx Coffee Company.

You can also browse through several exhibits showing some details about the other cemeteries in Brecksville. We’ll be there to answer any questions.

Thank you for coming: *That’s all Folks!* (the epitaph on the tombstone of Mel Blanc, the voice of Looney Tunes characters).

17. Jessie Cole

Another hero from the War of 1812. He fought with Griffin's Co. in the New York Militia. We don't have any other information about the role he played either in the military or in the community.

Just south is a stone missing its corner.

18. The Wyatt Family

This is the grave of Major Ezra Wyatt, one of the founders of Newburgh Ohio. He is credited with building the first mill in the area. He did live in Brecksville and was a War of 1812 veteran. But it's his descendant, John, whose Civil War story is so poignant. Captain John Wyatt was living in Brecksville, trained the first volunteer company, and ended up as a prisoner of war. He did not return to Brecksville after the war and is buried in Nebraska. His grave inscription reads: 6 OH Cavalry Capt Co. K.

Walk south to the swale that marks the southern end of the old section and then west to a new-looking headstone on the end (approximately 6 rows).

19. Rich Family

The new-looking stone is Charles Rich's. It's his home on Brecksville Road where the Brecksville Historical Association maintains their museum. Charles, called the "Squire", was a farmer and a Justice of the Peace. He and his wife Ann Jane came to Brecksville from Lebanon Springs NY in 1835. Charles was 76 years old when he died in 1883. Ann Jane died the year before.

The Brecksville Historical Association replaced the original, missing Squire Rich headstone in 2017. Be sure to look and see how closely we attempted to reproduce it. Does it look old enough to be original, or does it look like a replacement?

Walk approximately 5 rows west and locate a marker about five tombstones north.

Walk 3 rows west to the Breck obelisk.

8. Breck Family: Obelisks are Egyptian and are meant to represent a ray of sunlight. This family monument marks the graves of the family that gave Brecksville its name. A Breck lived in Brecksville until 1934.

Continue walking west to the vault. Look for the heart-shaped headstone of Chauncey Ellsworth. Facing the Ellsworth headstone (and noting the symbol on it) walk to the left downhill looking for 4 small, flat, red headstones.

9. Wiese Infant Graves

These four children are all from the same family. This is a reminder of how high infant mortality was in the late 1880s. Each stone has a flower carved on it representing innocence and purity.

If you've been to this hillside in our other walks, you may realize things look quite a bit different. Change happens even in a cemetery – the wind storm of November, 2017 has certainly changed this area!

Walk southwest to the vault.

10. The Vault

The vault was used to store the deceased during winter when burying was difficult. Folklore told when burials could begin again: when the serviceberry bloomed in the spring. There is, however, no serviceberry (*Amelanchier*) planted here in this cemetery!

Today the Vault is used for equipment and supply storage. This structure was built in 1878 and has lots of decoration and symbolism. This is a place in the cemetery where you need to look up. On the peak of the building is a symbol of immortality—the pineapple or pine cone.

Four rows west, near the road find the headstone of Jonah Stoner.

11. Jonah Stoner

This is the grave of a young child who died about 3 years old. His fairly long epitaph is hard to read now. It gives his dates of birth and death and says he died with rosey cheeks. The rest says:

"His little spirit is gone to God.

God gave it and took it.

Be ye also ready to meet your God in peace."

We often think that rosey cheeks are an indication of some type of fever, but tuberculosis might also have been the more specific diagnosis.

Walk 2 more rows west to find the Quartus Stebbins grave on the north end of the row near the sugar maple trees.

12. Quartus Stebbins

Stebbins was a veteran of the War of 1812. His stone indicates he died of the "prevailing fever". Notice the carver's spelling of Brecksville on the headstone as "Bricksville". Quartus was in the Massachusetts State Militia for about 40 days. We don't know when he arrived in Brecksville.

Walk another 2 rows west looking for the Newell family monument.

13. Thaddeus Newell

Thaddeus is a veteran of the Revolutionary War. There are only five veterans of this war buried in Brecksville. The marker says he served on the "Continental Line".

Walk 3 rows west, first grave on the north end of the row.

14. Eleanor Jenkins

This is one of the earliest graves on this walk. It is an unusual grave, possibly a portrait tomb. The Roman numerals on the grave tell us Eleanor was 55 when she died in 1819.

The use of Roman numerals is often seen on graves in New England cemeteries. Her epitaph reads:

"In peaceful slumber here I rest. (Now blest.)

Within this hollow tomb....

We part with you our dearest friend

In joyful hope when time shall end

That we with you shall join and sing

The lasting praise of Christ our King."

Notice how the stone carver needed to fix the word "dearest".

15. Chauncey Jenkins

In the same row of graves is the headstone for Chauncey (also spelled Chancy) Jenkins, Eleanor's great grandson. He is a Civil War veteran, as indicated by the military marker. The uniqueness of the Jenkins stones led us to doing some additional research. Chauncey was a private in the Union Army and died in 1865 in Wilmington NC. We are researching whether he died in battle or from his wounds or subsequent disease contracted after the hostile action.

Walk 3 rows west, about 8 stones north from the swale.

16. The Burt Children

The City has told us that this headstone marks the earliest burials in this cemetery: 1811 and 1812. However, the stone marks these children, John and Sarah, as the son and daughter of William and Thankful Burt. (Remember, we visited their Sears catalog headstone earlier). The parental years of birth don't seem to make this possible. Our subsequent genealogical research indicates that the correct years of death on this headstone are probably 1841 and 1842.

Look east and find a small, staked, but dead, evergreen. Then go 2 rows west