



The Lakewood Historical Society

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WHERE ARE LAKEWOOD'S EARLY SETTLERS?

By Mazie M. Adams

As part of the major rejuvenation of the Oldest Stone House herb garden, the six tombstones have been moved to a new area in the garden. These stones came from the Wagar family cemetery (often called Rockport Cemetery) originally located on Detroit east of St. Charles Avenue. Mars Wagar settled in Rockport (now Lakewood) in 1820 and started the cemetery as a family burying ground. The first burial was Lucy D. Wagar in 1826. By 1828, Mars Wagar had extended the use of the cemetery to his friends and neighbors. The last burial was about 1891. Gradually the cemetery became neglected. In the 1920s, an effort was made to preserve it, but the City of Lakewood and the property owners (Wagar descendents) could not agree on a course of action. Family members had reinterred many of the bodies at other cemeteries. In 1957, the Wagar heirs sold the land to the City. By then, many of the stones had disappeared and the others were no longer in their original places.

The cemetery was moved in 1957, with 84 unidentified bodies reinterred to section 2, lot 301 grave 5 at Lakewood Park Cemetery, 22025 Detroit. The mass grave is marked with a memorial that reads "Early pioneers of Lakewood, originally buried 1830-1900, Wagar Cemetery, East Rockport, Ohio. Re-buried here, this 25th Oct. 1957" in other cemeteries. The stones were then placed in a city owned maintenance garage for many years. The stones were eventually moved to the herb garden of the Oldest Stone House.

These stones survive as examples of stone cutting art and are visual reminders of the hardship of pioneer life. Each stone has a story to tell. Joseph and Sarah Hall came to Rockport from England in 1837 and built a stone house like our museum on the SW corner of Marlowe and Detroit. Sarah's inscription reads "Born at Chatteris, Isle of Ely, County of Cambridge, England".

Joseph Howe, who emigrated from England in 1861, was the first postmaster in a general store just west of Belle. His wife, Ellen Calkins, was the daughter of Reverend

Charles Calkins, who brought his family to Rockport from Vermont in 1832. Reverend Calkins was one of the first ministers to come to the Western Reserve. Joseph and Ellen Calkins Howe lost a five-day-old baby girl.

John Farrow was musically inclined and played the organ and gave music lessons to children in the community. At one time he conducted services in the little Church of the Redeemer. John and Frances Olive Farrow lost two young children. Carrie Mabel lived less than a year and Sherwin Day lived to be just five years old.

Jonathan *1825-1880) and Hannah (1828-1884) Bates's stone includes the inscriptions "How desolate our home bereft of thee" and "Asleep in Jesus".

Mark Tegardine, also from England, brought his wife Jane Hale and their children to Rockport in 1843. One of their sons, Jacob Tegardine, became the fourth mayor of Lakewood Hamlet in 1900. Mark and Jane also lost young children, 2 year old Peter and one year old James. Charles Whitehead died in 1882 "Aged 43 Y, 7 M, 29 d" and his daughter Fannie died "Aged 3 &, 4 M, 10d".

Most of Lakewood's early settlers were not buried in Wagar Cemetery (or had been reinterred by descendents). These settlers were buried at the many cemeteries scattered throughout the area. Lakewood residents buried in Fairview Park Cemetery included Orvis Hotchkiss (husband of Isabella Honam), Henry Sook and Frances Tegardine. In addition to the mass grave, Lakewood Park Cemetery also included the graves of Paddock, French, Calkins, Howe, and Wagar families.

Lakeview Cemetery, near Little Italy on the east side of Cleveland, has by far the most Lakewood notable families, including Kirtland, Wagar, Hall, Nicholson, Andrews, and French. Other people include Alexander Winton, Marcus and Daniel Hanna, Hester Pease (daughter of Orvis Hotchkiss and Isabella Honam), Jared Potter Kirtland, Walter Baker, Francis Glidden, and many more.