

Search for ancestors ends

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Marion cemetery a trip in time

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A trip to Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Marion Township was a journey into the past for William Peirsol as he saw for the first time the tombstone of his great-great-grandfather Sampson Peirsol, a Revolutionary War soldier in the 1700's.

Peirsol and his mother, Emma, came to the old graveyard on Petrie Road to see the memorials to their ancestor and to learn more about their heritage.

Sampson Peirsol was born in 1764, a time of political unrest in the Colonies as our founding fathers were gearing up for the Revolution in retaliation of the Stamp Act and other taxes imposed by King George III of England.

Peirsol's tombstone states that he was a soldier with Captain Joseph Sissney's company. Fortunately, he did not die in battle and lived to be 78.

The Mount Pleasant Cemetery, founded in 1800, is a step back in time with many grave markers dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. The tombstones are worn and weather-beaten with many name engravings erased completely after 200 years of wear.

Ten years ago, Ellwood City's American Legion helped the township restore the small graveyard which had been ravaged by time and vandalism. Markers had been broken, stolen or knocked down and needed to be re-erected.

Many young people from Marion Township's 4-H club also worked hard to clean up the cemetery and remove overgrown weeds and brush, said Norie Freshcorn, secretary of the township planning commission.

Since 1971, American Legion Post 157, has taken care of the graveyard by mowing the lawn and removing debris. Dan Stamm of Shadyrest Road in Franklin Township took a special interest in the project and the history of the cemetery.

Stamm says the Legion has plans to further restore the site by clearing a path behind it to show the cornerstones remaining from an old log-cabin church which Stamm believes was a Quaker meeting house.

Stamm noted that the large granite monument in front of the cemetery was donated by Steckman's Memorials of Ellwood City. David Steckman also donated the use of his crane to erect the monument and set up some of the other stones which had been knocked down.

Unfortunately, there is very little history recorded about the graveyard or the people buried there. Stamm said Sampson Peirsol is rumored to have been a drummer boy at the Boston Tea Party in 1774.

According to research done by William Peirsol, Sampson is believed to be a descendant of a Frenchman who came to America in colonial times and settled near Philadelphia. Sampson moved to the Beaver County area and built a mill on Brush Creek in Marion Township, not far from the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Several other Peirsols are buried at Mount Pleasant, including Sampson's son, Jacob, and his one-year-old son. Stones for Rachel, Tobias and Anna, age 8, are close by. A large granite stone for John Peirsol, born 1801, is in the back of the graveyard. His relation to Sampson is not known.

Two of Sampson's sons, Sampson and Samuel, lived in the Freedom area and are buried in an old cemetery there, not far from William Peirsol's home on Fezell Road. William has a very old Bible which belonged to his great-grandmother Nancy Allison, wife of Sampson.

Peirsol was proud to learn that he is a descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier and said he may join the Sons of the Revolution, a national club with a chapter in the Pittsburgh area.

Mount Pleasant, which has about 40 graves, has not been used as a cemetery since the turn of the century. Many of the markers are for young children.

About a quarter mile from the cemetery is a tombstone for Sherlock Stone, born 1806, who is said to be buried with his horse and dog. The stone sits in front of the Emerick home.

According to Bud Emerick, Stone was a riverboat captain during the Civil War who owned about 600 acres which were given to him for his service in the war. Emerick said Stone was once a member of the old log-cabin church but he had a falling out with the church in later years and didn't want to be buried in its cemetery.

Emerick said he had a difficult time when he bought his land in 1962 because Stone's descendants did not leave a clear deed. The deed was traced back to Stones living in the mid-west who had never cleared one heir, who once owned one-sixteenth of the land, Emerick said.

Little is known about the other people who are buried at Mount Pleasant. There are five family names, Elliott, Huges, Jones, Nye and Rowland. A small stone for Jane Anne Hughes, one year and five months, is carefully engraved "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."