

SCHUMMERS' CEMETERY

On Fairport Road, west of Island Valley golf course, on the corner of Dell Road, set off by a split rail fence, is another of Perinton's pioneer burial grounds: Schummers' Cemetery. This is a one-acre tract of land that was given to the Town of Perinton by the Northrup family. According to sources, around 1810 Isaiah Northrup and his brother Andrew settled on a large tract of land west of Fairport, built a house and a sawmill on Thomas Creek, and opened for business. His land extended from Baird Road at Thomas Creek down to Fairport Road. Although Andrew married and moved further west, and another brother died soon after arriving in Fairport, other Northrups came and settled, including a Dr. E. Northrup who apparently served the community as a physician for twenty years. Six members of the Northrup family are buried in the cemetery: Isaiah (1819), Isaiah (1817), Lewis (1853), Mary (1817), Rebecca (1863), and Sally (1823). The burial plot was subsequently named Schummers after the Fred Schummers family who farmed an extensive area around the cemetery at the turn of the 20th century. Curiously, there are no Schummers buried in the cemetery.



Schummers' Cemetery records burials from 1817 to 1928. Over that period of time, and continuing to the present, burial practices have changed significantly. In early times, there were no funeral directors or undertakers. Often there was a local woman who would take charge of preparing the body while the family dug the grave. The body was washed, wrapped in a shroud, a linen sheet dipped in wax, and lowered into the grave, which was probably not more than two or three feet deep. With the advent of sawmills came the regular use of caskets or coffins. Local furniture makers would often served as undertakers, providing caskets, as did livery stable owners who could also furnish a hearse. In the 1868 Fairport directory, Jared Newman, Ed Kellogg and C. Howe are listed as manufacturers of furniture and also as undertakers. The widespread use of embalming, which developed after the Civil War, made possible the practice of having the body lie in state in the home or the church. The front parlor, often reserved for events like funerals and weddings, would have been decorated with much black crepe. With the increase in smaller homes without a convenient room to set aside for funerals, the need arose for funeral parlors. In the 1908 Fairport Old Home Week booklet, Henry Relyea advertised as undertaker, and George Esten and the Worden Brothers advertised their monument businesses. In 1929, Clinton Emery Sr. and Flor Malone purchased Henry Steiger's funeral business, which he had run from his home, and the Van Alst home on South Main Street, and established the first recognized funeral parlor in Fairport. David Doser runs the establishment today. In 1930, Dr. Fox sold his home next to the Town Hall to Victor J. Tischer and H.F. VanHorn for a funeral home. That business is continued today by Richard Keenan.

There are about 72 identifiable stones in Schummers' cemetery, but the site has many open spaces, most likely due to missing stones, as the last recorded burial, that of Sybil Hazen, was in 1928. According to one source there are at least ten stones that were there in the 1930's that are missing today. In some cases, the stones are decorated with symbols that were popular

during the mid to late 19th century and early 20th century or with a brief verse; however, in this cemetery, most have only the names and dates. Graves of the early settlers in the area, the Northrups, Turrells, and Rowells can be found in Schummers. The six Northrup graves are easily readable. One of the two Isaiahs, Mary, and Rebecca lived into their seventies and eighties, while Sally's grave serves as a reminder that people were often struck down in their youth. Mary Northrup is the earliest recorded burial in the cemetery. Her stone also refers to her as the "consort," or spouse, of Isaiah. Similarly a stone might refer to a woman as a "relict" which is an obsolete term for widow or one who has been left behind. Two of the four Turrell/Turrill graves are damaged or missing. The two Rowell graves are set together with the names and dates and the notation "Mother" and "Father."

The Treadwell family came from Connecticut and had several members who served in the Civil War. Delia's grave notes that she was born in Connecticut in 1805. David served with the Connecticut militia and Orson with the 8th New York Cavalry. G.E. Treadwell's grave merely states "War 1861-65" while Isaiah, David and Delia's son, "died at Chattanooga in the service of his country."

In a walk through the cemetery, one can see the stones of a number of Civil War veterans, often marked by a small bronze star with "G.A.R" on it. Veterans of all wars usually are marked with a small flag. Of note in most old cemeteries are the gravesites of children and young people. The stone of Nellie Louise Babcock who died at the age of 5 is engraved with "Sleep on sweet baby, And may thy rest...." Engraved on 11 month old Laura Aldrich's grave is "We miss thee" and a spray of flowers. Another grave says simply "Our Baby." On Josiah Ashley's grave is the phrase "Gone but not forgotten." He died at the age of 23. In family plots, there will often be a stone that says simply "Mother" or "Father," and in the case of the Bucher plot, "Ellen" and "Emily."

Imagine this cemetery, which is one of Perinton's designated landmarks, in an earlier time with no busy main road and just the big trees and the surrounding farmland. There are many silent stories there.