



HISTORY OF THE MENTOR MUNICIPAL CEMETERY

• *Established 1854* •

6881 Hopkins Road, Mentor, OH 44060
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History of Mentor Cemetery

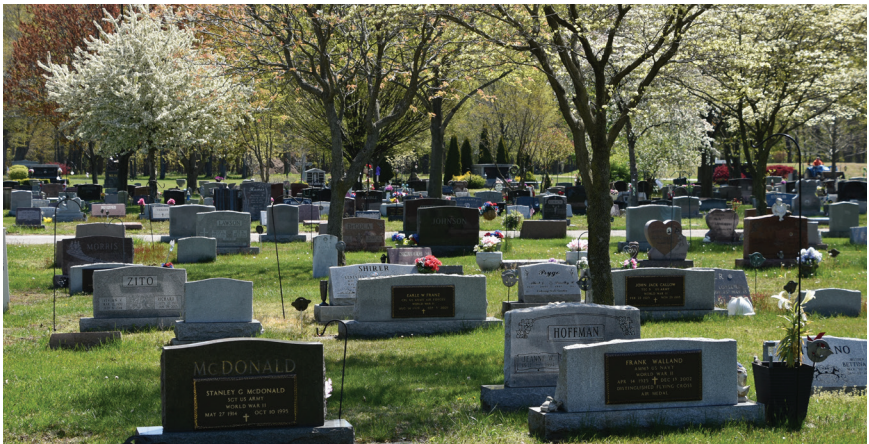
In 1854, a meeting was held at the Mentor Special District Schoolhouse on Hopkins Road to organize a Cemetery Association. Members included residents Thomas Clapp, James Dickey, Nathan Corning, Robert Murray II, Stephen Hart, Edward M. Ingersoll, Martin Sawyer, Sellick Warren, Schuyler S. Baker, David Hopkins and Erastus Parmelee. The Association purchased ten acres of land "situated in the Jackson lot and lying on the road from Amasa Cobb's corners to David Hopkins' corners for the consideration of \$400 to be paid in four equal annual installments from the 8th day of April 1854 with interest." The records were recorded on December 15, 1854.

Amasa Cobb, died on March 16, 1855, and was the first to be buried in Mentor Cemetery.

Mentor's original burial site was located on property deeded to the schools and located at the intersection of Mentor Avenue and Center Street. In 1858 and 1859, William S. Kerr, the Treasurer of the Village School Board, was instructed to pay residents for lots they owned on this property. The plan was to move the burying grounds to the new Mentor Cemetery, which allowed the School Board to build a two-story brick schoolhouse on the site of the former burying grounds.

In 1876, in a peach orchard just south of the cemetery a new Special District School was built. It operated until 1937 and later served as the first Mentor Police Station. After the building was removed, the property became part of the Mentor Cemetery.

Today, the Mentor Municipal Cemetery consists of 60 acres, with approximately 39 acres in use.



Self-Guided Tour

Since the Mentor Cemetery was founded in 1854 the names of Reynolds, Munson, Sawyer, Parker, and Garfield have all become familiar street names in Mentor. But these names also represent prominent residents whose lives had a profound impact on the formation of our town. Take this self-guided field trip of this historic cemetery. We begin with our most prominent family.

Section 15 - GARFIELD

President James A. Garfield became a resident of Mentor in 1876, when he bought an old farm just west of the center of town. Large additions were built around the 40-year-old, nine-room-house in order to accommodate the Congressman, his wife Lucretia, their five children and the President's mother. Garfield died in 1880 and is buried at Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, but a number of his ancestors, including his son, James R., are buried here.



James R. helped establish Mentor's first public library and served as the first president of the Mentor Village Library Board. His brother, Abram, was an architect and donated the plans and specifications for the first library, now located on the corner of Center Street and Nowlen Avenue. Abram also designed the John G. Oliver summer home on Little Mountain Road, known today as Wildwood Cultural Center.

The grand-daughter-in-law of the President, Eleanor Borton Garfield, became Mentor's first woman mayor in 1952. She is best remembered for helping to establish the first public park, later re-named in her honor. She is buried in Mentor Cemetery alongside her husband, Rudolph Hill and their infant daughter.

Section 14 - WYANT

Melvin E. Wyant, Sr. became an accredited rose judge and lecturer and for more than 50 years was a commercial grower. In 1925, hearing that Mentor was good for growing roses, he purchased 10 acres on a dirt road named Johnnycake Ridge (west of King Memorial Road). He held patents for more than 30 varieties and his display garden consisted of 2,000 roses on more than 50 acres. Visitors from around the world came to see the man known as "the rose specialist." He was best known for developing varieties of hybrid tea roses, including, Ardelle, Alabaster, Mentor, Gold Glow, Masked Ball and Mr. Tall.

Section 4 - SAWYER

Joseph Sawyer established the first grist mill in Mentor in 1810, using water power from Marsh Creek. He continued purchasing property, eventually owning over 1,100 acres. In 1820, he hired the prominent architect, Jonathan Goldsmith to build him a home on Mentor Avenue.



The Sawyers later became nurserymen and owned property along Mentor Avenue, from Old Johnnycake past Chillicothe Road. Daniel, Isaac and Almon Sawyer all owned homes in this area; some are still standing, including Daniel's home, built in 1843, which is perhaps one of the most notable. In 1923, it became the headquarters of Wayside Garden; today it is known as The Sawyer House Restaurant and Tavern.

Section 2 - CORNING

Colonel Warren Corning came to Mentor in 1810 and purchased as much as a square mile of real estate from Center Street west along Mentor Avenue. Corning donated land for the first school and the first church. When he retired in 1830, the remainder of his property went to his children and he and his wife Elizabeth moved in with their son, Nathan. (The Corning-White House.)

Nathan became famous in his own right, by organizing a petition to form a government separate from Mentor Township. He became the first Mayor of Mentor Village in 1855.

Warren Corning's youngest daughter, Harriet married James Dickey, but he died a short time later. Harriet then sold some of her property, then known as The Dickey Farm, to James A. Garfield in 1876. What was originally built as a two-room cabin, would later gain national prominence as Lawnfield, the home of the President.

Section 1 - MUNSON

Ashbel Munson came to Mentor from Connecticut in 1820, and bought 200 acres on Jackson Street for \$6 an acre. His c. 1865 house, still stands on the northwest corner of Jackson and Heisley. It was covered with stone in 1928.

H.N. (Horatio) Munson was a prominent resident who served as County Surveyor for 28 years. He and his wife, Elizabeth were close friends of President Garfield. Elizabeth was instrumental in the Township purchasing Hopkins Point at the turn of the century from Anna Hopkins. A pavilion and



bath houses were constructed and the popular property became known as Township Park.

Harry Munson was a farmer, a judge, a Representative to Congress, a justice of the peace, and a captain of the militia. Members of the Munson family lived in his house at 7050 Jackson Street from 1844 until 1963.

Sections 1 and 9 - PARKER

Mentor's first family

Clark was the younger brother of our first settler, Charles Parker, who came to the region with Moses Cleaveland's surveying team in 1796 and 1797. Both Charles and Clark had worked as surveyors and ran the first survey lines in the Western Reserve. Charles is credited with having built the first cabin in the Marsh in 1797; he was soon joined by his 16-year-old brother Clark.

While the adventurous Charles left in 1811 to continue developing wilderness areas (he helped settle Milan), Clark opted to remain in Mentor until his death in 1847. He was known as a Christian and a Patriot, served as one of three directors of the first school, helped to establish Mentor Methodist Church and donated land on which it was built, and later served as Mentor Postmaster.

During the War of 1812, Clark was a Captain in the Ohio Militia. In 1805, he married Margaret Jordan, a daughter of Concord's first settler and together they operated The Old Homestead, a 20 acre farm on the south side of Mentor Avenue (south of Burr ridge). The couple raised 13 children, many of whom remained in Mentor to raise their own families.

One son, Benjamin Franklin Parker, also led an active public life and served as Mentor Postmaster. By 1915, the Parker property had been reduced to six acres and Clark's grandson, named Colonel, resided there. Like his ancestors before him, he was extremely active in his community serving as a Mentor Township Trustee and a member of the Board of the Lake County Agricultural Society.

Colonel Parker was instrumental in developing the grounds and buildings constructed at the Lake County Fairgrounds. Parker Drive, located just southwest of Little Mountain Road, and encompassing part of the Old Homestead, is named for the Parker's.



Private and Abandoned Cemeteries

Blish Road Cemetery

There was a cemetery on the east side of Blish Road (now King Memorial) that served residents around Little Mountain. When the farm was sold, burials of Little Mountain residents were made in Mentor Cemetery. John Reynolds, survivor of Valley Forge, is still buried there. The plat map for this cemetery is the first one in the Cemetery Book in the Lake County Archives, located in the basement of the Lake County Administration Building, Painesville. Records indicate the cemetery held Rosetta Norton, John Reynolds, Mary and Polly Reynolds, Matthew Green, H. Johnson, Jane Ann Johnson, Roswell Randolph Hubbard, Helen Clarina Hubbard, Tamma Fox, George Fox, O. Matthews, Louisa Demerill, William and Mary Hendryx, Mariah Ruth Foster, L. F. Gaylord and Rey (last name illegible).

Burrige Farm Cemetery

There is little evidence of this cemetery's existence. It is assumed it was located in the area of Burrige Road, but more likely it was located further east near Hopkins Road.

According to a newspaper article, the first white person buried in Old Mentor was in the Mentor Pioneer Cemetery in 1811 (at Center Street Village School). This was Jesse Phelps. However, in a manuscript about David Abbot by Simeon C. Hickok, written between 1878 and 1901 ((The Historical Society Quarterly, May 1962) a different story states that, "Jesse Phelps, then living in the Village of Painesville, subsequently owned, lived and died and was buried on the farm now owned by Eleazer Burrige in Mentor. Some years later it was called the Phelps lot."

According to the 1874 landowner map, Eleazer Burrige owned 281 acres on Mentor Avenue with Hopkins Road running through the center. Burrige also owned another 30+ acres further west, probably where Burrige Road is located. The Phelps Lot was owned by Amassa Cobb in 1840. Amassa and his wife built the house on the 100-acre property. His deed included a small block as burial ground and right of way for the heirs. The property later became the Burrige farm. (The Cobb Burrige house was moved around the corner to Hopkins Road and became the Mentor Schools Administration Building.)

The unanswered question is whether Jesse Phelps was buried in the Mentor Pioneer Cemetery or the Burrige Farm Cemetery.

Carpenter Farm Cemetery

The Carpenter Farm Cemetery appears on the 1857 and 1874 landowner maps, and was in the area of the Great Lakes Mall's east entranceway. According to the Village Council records of 1901, it was voted to remove the bodies from the burial ground of the L.H. Carpenter Cemetery. The bodies were to be moved by descendants of the dead, to other cemeteries. Notices were to be posted causing one to think this may have been more than just a

small family cemetery. Benjamin and L.H. were moved to Mentor Cemetery. Benjamin can be found in Section 8B, and L. H. is in Section 10.

Daniels Farm Cemetery

This cemetery appears on the 1874 landowner map as a long narrow strip on the northeast corner of the John Daniels property. It is said to be where the Mentor Mobile Green Estates stands today. Family members have tried to locate this cemetery to no avail. This is private property with no public access.

Those who were buried on the Daniels farm were: Aaron Daniels, Phoebe (Harmon) Daniels and Anna (Bassett) Daniels. Phoebe & Anna are thought to have been wives of Aaron. Geauga Co. marriages list Aaron married Anna 1-28-1817. These three remains were reinterred in November 1925 in Mentor Cemetery. Also buried on the farm were an Indian who worked on the farm, and Revolutionary War Soldier Christopher Colson. According to Soldiers and Widows of the American Revolution who lived in Lake County, Ohio by Mildred Steed, Christopher Colson "was buried on the Daniel's farm just east of Willoughby, later removed to the Willoughby Cemetery, Lot 358, Grave 5."

Mentor Pioneer Cemetery

This now extinct burying ground was at the present site of the original Center Street Village School at Center Street and Mentor Avenue. In 1832, the property was deeded to the Village of Mentor School District, No. 2 by Warren Corning and Moses Kerr.

According to Soldiers and Widows of the American Revolution who lived in Lake County, Ohio by Mildred Hoyes Steed, 1985 page 30 and 91, two Revolutionary War Veterans were buried in the Old Mentor Cemetery. The headstones of Garrit Brass (1837) and Israel Fox (1832) were moved to the Mentor Cemetery, section 8A, and have since been replaced. Fox is in Lot 63, Grave 2, right next to Brass, denoted as Row 13, stones 3 and 4.

Mentor Headlands Cemetery

This quaint and secluded little spot is behind the Jayne property in the Headlands, 300 yards from Headlands and Jordan Roads. From the *Painesville Telegraph*, Issue 20: "Mrs. Martha Hazeltone (sic) died May 1, 1863 in Mentor at the residence of Capt. R. H. Fountain. She was 80 yrs. old."

The headstones for Martha Hazeltone and her two children are broken and in poor condition. These are the inscriptions:

*Martha / wife of / Wm. Hazeltone / Died / May 1, 1863 /
In the 80th year / of her age /
Her pilgrimage is over without a sigh. /
Passed she over death's river to the sky.*

*Frances C. / Lorrain S. / Died Jan. 22, 1855 /
aged 1 yr. and 3 mo. / children of W. and Mary Hazeltone*



Mentor Lagoons Cemetery (Brooks Farm)

Located on the Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve property, this very small cemetery has been “discovered” several times in the past century. Most recently, after Mentor purchased the property, it installed a wrought iron fence around the stones to protect them. It is believed that the remains were removed to the Mentor Municipal Cemetery. The monument at Mentor Municipal Cemetery reads in part,

H. M. Brooks / died / April 11, 1883 / aged 74 years /

Mary his wife / died March 10, 1841 / aged 29 years / Mary his wife / born Jan. 5, 1820 / died Mar. 17, 1890 / Brooks

Although there is a small headstone for the second wife, Mary, there is none for the first Mary, leading some to believe her grave is still at the Lagoons.

North Mentor Cemetery

This small cemetery, laid out about 1854, is on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard, in front of the North Mentor Centenary United Methodist Church. It is not church related. This burying ground has four prominent marble stones. Thomas and Catherine (Megley) Lapham are buried here and are also mentioned on the family monument at the Mentor Municipal Cemetery. This cemetery was also open to neighbors with permission. Other burials include David P. Guthrie and Melissa J. Roff.

Wheeler Farm Cemetery

This extinct family cemetery is said to have been on the north side of Lake Shore Boulevard about 1/4 mile east of Rt. 306, but west of Eckley's Corners. According to Grace Lapham who was 97 when interviewed in 1999, her great grandparents, Mary and Seymour Wheeler were buried “on the plains” on an old farm. The head stones were buried. When it was developed, the stones were dug up and broken. They were moved to Mentor Municipal Cemetery. These old marble stones have recently been repaired and set in a granite frame. They are badly cracked, but lovely. They are in section 2B. Seymour died in 1844 and Mary in 1848. It is likely that their granddaughter Mary was also buried in this cemetery and her stone moved to Mentor Municipal Cemetery.

Our thanks to the Lake County Genealogical Society for providing historical information on Private and Abandoned Cemeteries and to Beth Santore of graveaddiction.com for information on carvings and symbolism.

Gravestone Symbolism

During the mid 19th century, carvings on headstones were used to convey themes that emphasized eternity, rebirth, and the experience of the deceased. As you wander through this, or any other old cemetery, pay particular attention to the designs carved on the gravestones, as each has a special meaning. Learning the meanings behind the myriad symbols will give you new insight into the lives led by those buried in a cemetery. Broken columns, inverted torches, and urns represented lives that ended too soon. An hourglass with wings represents the fleeting passage of time. The weeping willow tree was used in the Victorian era to mean mourning and the idea that man, like a tree, must reach for heaven. Included here is a short list of gravestone carvings and their symbolic meanings.

Column

Mortality. A draped or broken column represents the break in earthly to heavenly life. It can also mean the loss of the head of a family.

Drapery

Mourning. An urn that is completely covered with a drape symbolizes a full life.

A Rose in Full Bloom

In the prime of life.

Daisy

Symbolizes innocence; usually found on graves of young children.

Lamb

Represents innocence. Often seen on children's gravestones.

Lyre

A lyre with a broken string symbolizes the end of life. Often found on the graves of musicians.



Honoring Our Veterans

In 1872, a group began plans to erect a Soldiers Monument to honor those who had lost their lives in battle. That year on Decoration Day, the men and women of Mentor placed 27 floral bouquets on the graves of a Revolutionary War soldier, 14 soldiers from the War of 1812 and 12 Civil War soldiers. On September 4, the 28-foot Soldiers Monument, featuring the State Coat of Arms was dedicated in front of an immense crowd led by the 29th Regiment, Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry. This public monument cost \$2,000 to construct. An article in the *Painesville Telegraph* stated, "it is an enduring memento of the patriotism of the noble hearted men and women of Mentor, showing how truly they appreciate love of country, how gladly they honor the patriot and soldier. Mentor may well feel proud in being the pioneer town in Lake County, in honoring her soldiers by the erection of a monument."

Seventy-eight years later, the names on the Civil War Monument were illegible. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Daniels climbed the monument to record the names which were later cast in two aluminum plaques and attached to the east and west sides of the monument. Around the same time, a bronze plaque was placed on the south side of the monument honoring those who lost their lives while serving in World War II.

In 1954, the American Legion Post 352 erected a 60-foot flagpole to honor veterans of all wars. The flagpole replaced a World War I Honor Roll that had become deteriorated.

In the 1980s, Richard "Doc" Leyden became the driving force behind a monument to honor those who died during the Vietnam War. The new monument was designed to complement the Flagpole. The American Legion Post 352 raised \$4,000 to erect a 10-foot high triangular memorial bearing the name of 14 Mentor residents who died during the Vietnam War. On the face of the memorial are the words, "To All Who Served." In 1985, Amvets Auxiliary Post No. 40 raised the funds to install permanent ground lighting for the monument and flagpole.

Over the years, there have been many ceremonies paying tribute to Mentor's war veterans. Declaration Day was renamed Memorial Day and is celebrated each year with a parade and a gathering at Mentor Cemetery.

The speakers and messages have varied, but the conclusion at each ceremony remains the same ... a salute by the firing squad and the playing of "Taps."





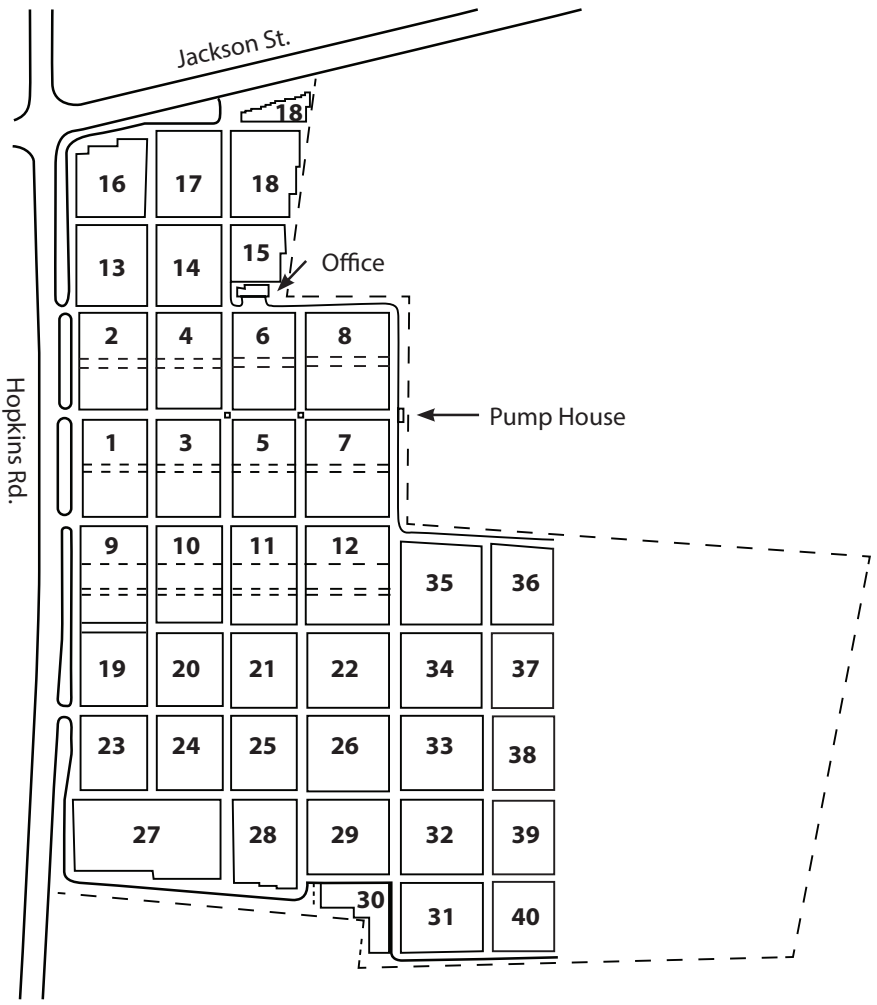
Memorial Day Observance

The City of Mentor conducts hosts an observance each Memorial Day.

A solemn procession leaves the Heinen's parking lot at 9:30 AM, heads east on Mentor Avenue, and north on Hopkins Road.

The Memorial Ceremony begins at 10:00 AM at the Vietnam War Memorial.





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