

Brown County Journal

December 15, 2012

Events:

Brown County Historical
Society meeting
January 7

Brown County Genealogical
Society meeting
January 8

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Rhonda D.

The Burial Ground of our Founders

Living in Brown County one might come across these stories about a neglected cemetery called Southview Cemetery somewhere at the north edge of Nashville. Unless you know about the surrounding land around Nashville you might have driven by it and never knew it was there let alone know the location. If you look up the cemetery in the Brown County Cemetery Book you'll realize this little "forgotten" cemetery is a wealth of information about Nashville's early history. It has been nicknamed, "the city cemetery" because it contains so many of the historical graves of the founding fathers of Nashville. The cemetery contains over 90 known burials and most likely many more that have been lost in time.

It is unclear how to reach Southview Cemetery, but if you know which people to ask you can very well find it easily. The county surveyor has a map of it and he explained that it was really three cemeteries, but now the boundaries are no longer clear. The three names of the cemeteries are Southview, Oak Hill and Calvin Cemeteries. All three names fit the location. It's facing south, there



are many large Oak trees in the cemetery and one section contained several burials of the Calvin family. According to the County

Surveyor it is surrounded by private land so one would have to get permission from one of the landowners to cross their property to visit it unless you don't mind a good walk. The cemetery sits on the northwest corner of the junction of Jefferson and Mound Streets, but one cannot see it from there. It is a long climb up a hill.

So are you ready for an adventure, let's take a walk back in time. Grab your lunch sack and a walking stick. We're going to climb that hill and visit with some of our more prominent citizens. Probably the easiest route will be to go up at the gentlest part of the slope of the hill on the southwest side next to Jackson Creek. I think we'll climb that hill first all the way to the top, sit down, open our lunch sack and enjoy the view of Nashville. Then we're going to take a walk about the cemetery and visit with our fellow citizens.

Walking up the hill you notice many, many unmarked fieldstones lying scattered on the ground, some partially buried, some may be totally buried by now since it has been over 150 years since they were placed there. It is a rocky hill so sometimes it is hard to tell the fieldstones that mark a grave. The closer we get to the top the stones get more numerous and many more are well-carved monuments to someone's family member. Generally the three cemeteries are split in three uneven plots with the Calvin Cemetery being at the top. The Southview is like it is described in that it looks south down the hill more towards Nashville. The Oakhill portion is hard to tell where it starts and Southview ends and both are on the slope of the hill which ends at the bottom at Jackson Branch Creek.



World War 1 Veterans Returning Home - 1918

Calvin Cemetery

The first stone we come upon is **Joseph S. Schrock** and he has a military marker. Joseph was in World War 1, Indiana – PFC 154 Depot Brigade. Joe was born in Brown County in 1895 to Sylvanus and Emma Schrock. He was married to Rhoda P. Brown. Joe died in 1965. This seems to be a pretty recent burial in the over 150 year old cemetery.

Next we come to a low rock wall which seems to mark a family plot. There are several unmarked stones in a

row on the other side of the wall and one has a name, **Dennis J. Calvin**. Mr. Calvin's stone has the dates 1882-1944. That one is a little older than the last. It looks like we are in the Calvin Cemetery. Dennis John Calvin was the son of John B. and Sadie Calvin. He was married in 1905 to Clara Bay. Now here was an important citizen of Nashville. He was co-owner of Calvin Hardware with his brother, Duard, for many years and the store was known far and wide. Dennis Calvin was Sheriff from 1910 to 1914. Here are a few lines from his obituary. "He met all obstacles with a sunny trusting smile . . . qualities cherished in the heart of man; so long will Dennis Calvin be remembered by his many friends. . . While Sheriff he was instrumental in having maple trees planted on the courthouse lawn. He was a member of Nashville Lodge and his philanthropic acts were many." I remember those trees on the courthouse lawn. They're huge - they must be over 100 years old by now.



Calvin Hardware - south of the Courthouse



Walking on we come upon another couple of stones, one illegible from time. The next one looks to read **Jesse Brandon** Died May 9, 1866 and it has a Masonic emblem on it. Now we've finally found a much older stone, it must be about 146 years old. There is a short paragraph in Weston A. Goodspeed's book, "County of Brown." Jesse Brandon was publisher of a religious newspaper called the Evangelical Republican. After he bought out his partners he started publishing a more political newspaper in Brown County called the Nashville Union which started in 1861 and ran with fury during the Civil War. Wow, I almost passed over Mr. Brandon until I decided to see if there was any mention of him in our Brown County history. Mr Brandon used his newspaper to express his patriotism.

We haven't even left the small Calvin Cemetery on top of the hill and we've already found three amazing Brown County citizens. I see a line of several more much larger monuments. Let's climb the hill a bit more – behind the Calvin plot on the east side of the peak of the hill.

This must be the Mason family plot. I see **William M. Mason**, and what seems to be a row of smaller stones at his foot with family names. William M. Mason's stone is one of those that seem to be carved like a tree trunk; it's beautiful. This must have been a man of

means. There is an entire biography on him in Goodspeed's book. "William M. Mason was born in Madison County, Ky., May 19, 1815, and when quite young, accompanied his father, Edwin, to Indiana . . . William being the eldest of 13 children. He was raised as a farmer, studied medicine, and was in the grocery business. He came to Brown County in 1840 and practiced medicine as the second physician ever in Brown County. He was a Representative in the Indiana General Assembly, was Clerk of the Brown County Circuit Court 1848-59, and also served as County Recorder. At his retirement from county office he practiced law. At the time he settled in Brown County his was the fourth family to settle in Nashville and the country was still a vast wilderness." Now this was another one of Brown County's finer citizens and a pioneering family to this county.



Next to William M. Mason is a huge monument to Richard L. and Julia M. Coffey. Now carved here is a nice tribute. **Richard L.**

Coffey - May 7, 1835 to May 1, 1901 - Common Pleas Judge 1869-1873, State Senator 1878-1882 and also has a Masonic emblem on his stone. Another well-known citizen of Brown County in his time. His wife, Julia M. Coffey, is the daughter of William M. Mason. He also has a nice biography in Goodspeed's book. "Judge Richard L. Coffey was born in Monroe County, Ind. and is the eldest son born to Lewis and Harriet Coffey, natives of North Carolina. He was reared near Ellettsville and in 1850

attended Franklin College. He was a store clerk and taught school in Owen and Monroe County. He did a bit of farming and practiced law in Iowa and Missouri. Coming back to Indiana he served in the law office of Governor Paris C. Dunning. He moved to Brown County in 1864 where he taught school and practiced law. In 1865 he married Julia M. Coffey. Shortly thereafter he was appointed Common Pleas Judge by Governor Baker. He served as Senator in 1878 for four years. He served on numerous other committees for the Governor as well as in our County government. Judge Coffey was also a Freemason and a member of Odd Fellows."



Moving on down the hill we come upon some more Calvin family stones, it must be another family plot. Here is another one of those tree-shaped monuments for **Timothy Downing Calvin**. There are other



Notie Calvin

smaller stones at his feet. This gentleman was a Civil War veteran. His stone reads, Orderly Sargent, Co. D, 82nd Indiana also 1st Lieutenant, Co. I, 120th Reg. Indiana Volunteers. It also has a Masonic emblem on it. The Calvin family had many prominent Nashville citizens and were in the grocery and hardware business for many years. Timothy D. Calvin Sr. was married to Mary Susan Middleton whose inscription is on the same stone. There is a short mention of Mr. Calvin on his son, John's biography in Goodspeed's book. "Timothy D. and Mary (Middleton) Calvin, the former a native of Ohio, the latter of Indiana . . .



Timothy D. Calvin

Timothy D. Calvin moved hither in 1854 and followed the tanning business for a number of years." Look at these beautiful stones. I wonder who carved these?

We see ahead several small fenced-in family plots. Some have beautiful wrought iron fencing with massive monuments in them. The next one is the Arwine Family - here is **John S. Arwine**, another fine upstanding citizen with a long list of accomplishments. Next we pass a small area that is unfenced, but has a definite outline with four stone posts buried in the ground. The Manville family plot. Here is buried **Sylvanous Manville**, yet another fine Nashville citizen.

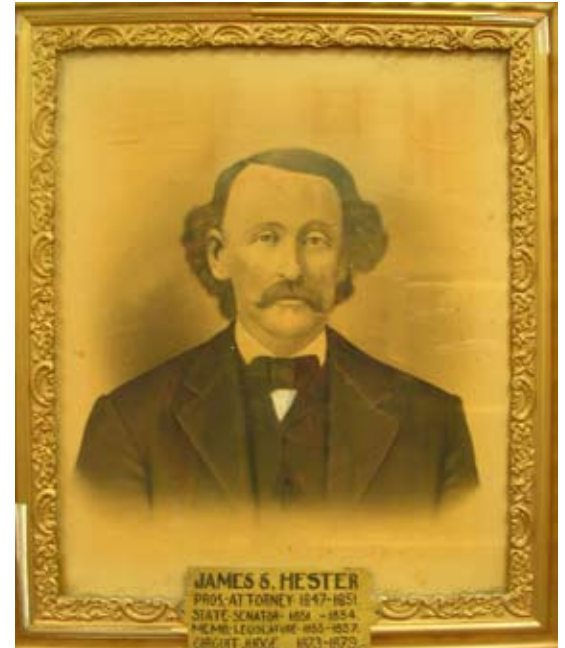
Southview or Oakhill Cemetery

Let's continue on our walk. Next we come upon a complex of three more fenced in family plots. I think that now we must be entering the Southview Cemetery area. Many have beautiful old wrought iron fencing such as the Duncan plot that comes up next. Here we find a doctor and his family, **Dr. John W. Duncan**. Some of the names are Hesters also, must be some of his family. This plot is so overgrown with those wild yucca plants you can barely walk around and read the stones.

Next, just past the Duncan plot is a lonely grave. A monument to **Reverend Samuel A. Feltner**. It says he was a member of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He died

in 1880 and was only 31 years old. We could go on and on about all these fine gentleman and their families. Suffice it to say they all contributed their lives to the betterment of Brown County's welfare.

The next one directly down the hill on the west side is another fenced family plot which has four steel posts with a draped chain as a fence. This is a Hester family plot. Now I have heard of this gentleman, **Judge James Scott Hester**. Judge Hester had been married to Mary C. Duncan. She is buried in the Duncan family plot, just a few feet away. Judge Hester's portrait is hanging in the courtroom of the Courthouse. He was a lawyer, a judge, a Senator and an Indiana Congressman. At one time he was editor of the second newspaper ever published in Brown County, the Hickory Withe. He ran this paper for with partners, J. S. Arwine (the Arwine family plot), Eugene Culley, and Sylvanus Manville (the Manville family plot). He also has a military stone at his foot so he was in the Civil War as well. It reads, Company C, 22nd Indiana Infantry. He signed up directly after the fall of



Fort Sumter in 1861 and was elected Captain of his company. There was also a Grand Army of the Republic (Civil War veterans) Post that was organized in Nashville in 1883 that was named for him, J. S. Hester Post No. 218. There is also a large stately house in Nashville that bears his name, the Hester House which has been listed as an Indiana Landmark.

After this group of family burial plots the stones of our Nashville neighbors start to thin out quite a bit. There are some small groups and then there are many lone, scattered stones all down the hillside. Many are broken or have missing pieces. There are several that only have left the base stone to mark a grave, but no way of telling who is buried there. This isn't just a collection of old tombstones



Hester House, 190 N. Jefferson

of some forgotten people. These are what is left of good neighbors and good citizens that left their mark on this town. There are many more well-deserving citizens that should have had a mention here, but there are so many on top of that lonely, deserted hill. Hopefully someday we will have better access so we can visit them more easily and pay tribute to them.