

Cemetery History



AT HISTORIC GROVE CEMETERY, WE CELEBRATE LIVES.

The first meeting to establish a cemetery in New Brighton was held on July 12, 1858. At a subsequent meeting it was decided to purchase an initial tract of land of about 32 acres adjoining Blockhouse Run, which the committee had recommended as the most desirable site on account of its great natural beauty and its accessibility. A charter was drawn up, and on March 19, 1859, Grove Cemetery was incorporated by an act of the Legislature of Pennsylvania.

It was a warm October 13th in 1859 when nearly 300 people attended the dedication of Grove Cemetery. On October 20, 1859, James Magaw of North Sewickley Twp. became the first interment at the new cemetery. Property between the current Allegheny Street and the entrance of the cemetery was purchased in 1860 for the purpose of creating a new road. For many years it was known as Cemetery Lane, but is now called Grove Avenue.

Reinterments from other local burial grounds mean that some of the individuals interred at Grove Cemetery passed away prior to 1859. In addition to reinterments from private plots, the 1890s saw the remains of 108 people from the Friends burial ground at the Quaker Meeting House (the site of Standard Horse Nail), as well as the remains of 403 bodies from the old Presbyterian cemetery at the intersection of 14th Street & Penn Avenue, moved to Grove Cemetery.

In addition to historic tombstones, the cemetery also contains memorials to New Brighton firemen and veterans of the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World War I. To us, all of Grove Cemetery is hallowed ground. Approximately 17,000 persons are interred in this peaceful final resting place.



Above: Dr. David Stanton
Left: James K. Peirsol
Below: James Howard Bruien



NEW BRIGHTON

GROVE CEMETERY

Walking Tour



Grove Cemetery Board

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Thank you to Mark Barnes and David Holoweiko.



Grove Cemetery



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Situated on a hill above the town of New Brighton, picturesque Grove Cemetery is the final resting place of nearly 17,000 individuals, including some of the most notable industrialists, artists, war heroes, activists, athletes, and musicians from the area.

Come take a stroll through Grove Cemetery. Enjoy the peacefulness and the beauty. Stay a while and you will discover that a walk through Grove Cemetery is a walk through history.

GROVE CEMETERY

Walking Tour

1 Frank “Rube” Rolland Dessau - MLB Pitcher
March 29, 1883 (New Galilee, PA) - May 6, 1952 (York, PA)

In 1907, at age 24, Dessau played his first game of Major League Baseball with the Boston Doves (Atlanta Braves). On September 27, 1907, Pittsburgh Pirates star Honus Wagner's season came to end when a pitch from Dessau struck him, fracturing a bone in his left hand. In 1910, Rube signed with the Brooklyn Superbas (Los Angeles Dodgers). After his baseball career, he served as a Second Lieutenant during World War I and managed minor league teams in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

2 Civil War Monument
Dedicated May 30, 1883

On October 24, 1861, this area was set aside to be used for burials, free of charge, for the volunteers from Beaver County who died during the Civil War. On Decoration Day, 1883, hundreds came for the unveiling and dedication of the Civil War Monument. The soldiers, whose names are engraved on the monument, are not buried in Grove Cemetery, even though they are local soldiers. These men didn't come home. The granite portion of the Civil War monument at Grove Cemetery was manufactured by R.F. Carter of South Ryegate, Vermont, and is made of Ryegate granite. The column is 21 feet tall, and weighs over 5 tons. The original soldier statue was 7 feet high and was manufactured by J.W. Fiske of New York. A new statue was placed on the column on August 15, 2015, after the original became unstable.

3 Sarah Jane Lippincott, aka “Grace Greenwood” - Author,
 Early female news correspondent
September 23, 1823 (Pompey, NY) - April 20, 1904 (New Rochelle, NY)

Lippincott, known by her pseudonym Grace Greenwood, was a noted author and journalist. She was a staunch abolitionist, consistently argued for women's rights, and was referred to as “Grace Greenwood the Patriot” by Abraham Lincoln because of her lectures during the Civil War. Her works about her travels to Europe made her the first female reporter on the payroll of the New York Times. Nathaniel Hawthorne called a children's book by Greenwood, *A History of my Pets*, one of the best he's ever seen.

4 Edward Dempster Merrick - Industrialist, Artist
August 24, 1832 (Jordan, NY) - June 10, 1911 (New Brighton, PA)

Edward always wanted to be an artist, but was forced into business by his father, Silas. In 1885 he joined his brothers in founding the Standard Horse Nail Corporation in New Brighton, which is still in operation today. With his new-found wealth, Edward was able to dedicate himself to painting and created the Merrick Art Gallery museum, which remains free to the public, to house his collection. The Merrick family owned much of the land on which Grove Cemetery now sits, and according to Burke's Peerage (1887), they are descended from both Welsh and English royalty.



5 Townsend Family - Industrialists, Abolitionists
Late 1800s

Many members of the Quaker Townsend family, which was instrumental to the founding and development of New Brighton, are buried in this area. In 1828 Robert Townsend founded the Townsend Company, a wire and rivet mill that existed in Fallston for 155 years until 1983. Robert, alongside Evan, William, and Benjamin, were abolitionists that helped to house and transport runaway slaves. Charles Champlin served in the Union Army before being elected to Congress in 1889. Milo was the editor of the New Brighton Times, corresponded frequently with Frederick Douglass, and wrote to Lincoln asking him to emancipate the slaves.

6 Dr. David Stanton - Medical Doctor, Abolitionist, Politician
June 9, 1829 (Salem OH) - November 5, 1871 (New Brighton, PA)

Abolitionist David Stanton, son-in-law of Robert Townsend, practiced medicine in New Brighton and used his medical knowledge to treat runaway slaves in the area. In 1863 Abraham Lincoln named him Surgeon of United States Volunteers. He was elected Auditor General of Pennsylvania in 1871, but died less than a month later, before taking office. Dr. Stanton was a cousin of Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War under Presidents Lincoln and Johnson.



Edward Dempster Merrick



Sara Jane Lippincott



Frank “Rube” Rolland Dessau



Civil War Monument



The Jaggerz

7 William “Bill” Maybray - Jaggerz drummer/vocalist
May 14, 1944 (New Brighton, PA) - December 5, 2004 (Beaver Falls, PA)

Bill Maybray was a drummer, bassist, writer, and co-lead vocalist for the Jaggerz, a successful local band known for their 1970 hit "The Rapper." Bill appeared alongside Donnie Iris, Jimmie Ross, and the rest of the Jaggerz on Dick Clark's American Bandstand. Bill also played with the reunited Jaggerz during the 1990s.

8 James K. Peirsol - Medal of Honor, Civil War
September 21, 1844 (Beaver County, PA) - March 1, 1927 (Claremont, CA)

James enlisted in the Civil War and became a Sergeant in Co. F, 13th Ohio Cavalry. On April 5, 1865, he participated in the battle of Paines Crossroads, VA, and was involved in the capture of an Alabama regiment Confederate flag. On May 3, 1865, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his courageous efforts.

9 Nathaniel Coburn - Revolutionary War Veteran
1762 (Windham, CT) - 1844 (New Brighton PA)

Nathaniel Coburn, a descendant of settlers of the early Massachusetts Colony, was born around 1762 in Windham, Connecticut. Coburn's father, Zebediah, was listed as answering the alarm for the militia to march to Lexington in 1775. While still a young boy, Nathaniel served as a fifer during the Revolutionary War. He was married in New York City in 1781 before moving west to New Brighton. In 1835 he was employed as the first toll taker on the newly erected Brighton bridge with an annual salary of \$100. Coburn passed away in 1844 and was survived by eight children.

10 James Howard Bruen - Escaped Slave, Civil War Veteran
1826 (Kentucky) - 1916 (New Brighton, PA)

Born in 1826 as a slave in Kentucky, Bruen escaped and settled in Beaver County. He enlisted in Company H of the 45th United States Colored Troops and served as a sergeant during the Civil War. He returned to Beaver County after the war and was known for his inevitable participation in all holiday parades carrying his tattered battle flag. Bruen worked as a barber and married five times, his third marriage being a part of Beaver County's centennial celebration in 1900. He was living in New Brighton when he passed away at 90 years old in 1916.