

Five Points Cemetery Notes

Revised 24 August 2012

Investigation of burial place of Patrick O'Brien [Sr.]

Patrick O'Brien, the Irish-immigrant ancestor of the O'Brien family, lived and died in Dearborn County, Indiana. Patrick moved to Jackson Township in 1837, where, according to probate records, he died in August 1851. While much was known of him, his burial place had not been located.

Burial places considered in the past included the land owned by Patrick and his sons, Solomon and Patrick [Jr.]. Cemeteries near Hubbells Corner were also investigated. cursory checks of three cemeteries (St. Johns Lutheran Church Cemetery, Five Points Cemetery, and the Cemetery on VanWedding Road) were made in September 1974. A headstone for Patrick O'Brien could not be located.

In April of 1982, a list of Dearborn County cemeteries at the Public Library at Lawrenceburg, Indiana, was checked. The brief list prepared for the Five Points Cemetery (Sec. 31, T7N R2W; North Dearborn Road, east of Hubbells Corner), included the following:

“P. O. B.”

“H. A. O.B.

“----- dau of Patrick and Phoebe O'Brien d 12 Dec 1851”

From these clues, it was theorized that the Five Points Cemetery was presumably a burial place used by the O'Brien family. The records noted: “This cemetery has been completely destroyed, although it is still fenced off. Only fragments of stones remain, mostly buried under the sod.” Apparently the researchers Chris McHenry and Adena Charlton “read” the cemetery on 12 April 1978.

A check of the cemetery on 8 April 1982, despite snow and cold weather, revealed the O'Brien related stones in the library list as well as other O'Brien stones. Photographs were made of the cemetery and the stones that were found.

On 26 May 1982, a more thorough investigation of the Five Points Cemetery was carried out. Photographs were made prior to any work. Vegetation, including daylilies and weeds, was cleared from the area of the O'Brien burials, located along the eastern edge of the cemetery. Measurements were made using the fence as a reference point. All stones, as found, were plotted on a grid map of the area. A total of 21 features (headstones, footstones, stone “holders”) were found and plotted. The grid map notes “Features as found.”

After a systematic probing (using a steel bar) of an area 20 feet wide by 50 feet long, no additional features were found. The stones found were then placed in their proper locations flush with the ground.

It appears that the O'Brien family used the Five Points Cemetery beginning in the summer of 1851 as Patrick O'Brien [Sr.] and his married children experienced a tragic series of deaths.

These may have been the result of one of the frequent outbreaks of cholera experienced in that part of Indiana in the mid-nineteenth century.

The chronological—and physical—order of the burials may have been as follows:

- A. Olive (daughter of Solomon and Samantha O'Brien)
Headstone: OLIVE, Daughter of Solomon & Samantha O'BRIEN,
died July 15, 1851, Aged 11 mo. & 4 days
Footstone: O O'B

- B. Hester Ann (daughter of Patrick and Phoebe O'Brien)
Headstone (in two pieces): HESTER ANN, Daughter of Patrick & Phebe
[O'BRIEN], DIED July 23, 1851 in the 25th year of her age.
Footstone: H A O'B

- C. Ledyard C. (son of Patrick [Jr.] and Eunice O'Brien)
Headstone (in six pieces): LEDYARD C., Son of Patrick & Eunice O'BRIEN,
Died Aug 2, 1851, Aged 10 mo.
Footstone: L C O'B

- D. Barzilla Miles O'Brien (married son of Patrick and Phoebe O'Brien) may have died in
August 1851 between the deaths of Ledyard C. and Patrick O'Brien [Sr.]
Headstone: None found.
Footstone: B M O'B

An unused burial space was left here, possibly reserved for Phoebe O'Brien.

- E. Patrick O'Brien [Sr.] (died August 1851)
Headstone: None found.
Footstone: P O'B

- F. Elizabeth (daughter of Patrick and Phoebe O'Brien)
Headstone: ELIZABETH, Daughter of Patrick & Phebe O'BRIEN
DIED Dec. 12, 1851, AGED 24 years 8 mo & 2 days.

- G. Unknown; this location had a 10½" holder, indicating an infant or young child was
buried there. This could be the burial place of Sirous Smith O'Brien, a child of Patrick
[Jr.] and Eunice O'Brien, who died 18 May 1855 at the age of 1 year, 28 days.

- H. Unknown; this location had a 12" holder, possibly indicating the burial of a young
child, not an infant (10½") and not an adult (16½"). This could be the burial place of
Hannah Sophia O'Brien, a child of Patrick [Jr.] and Eunice O'Brien, who died
8 September 1861 at the age of 1 year, 7 months, 7 days.

The burial place of Patrick O'Brien has not yet been conclusively proven, however circumstantial

evidence suggests that he is buried at position E (or possibly position D) near the east fence in the Five Points Cemetery, approximately 70 feet from the northeast corner of the cemetery.

Further investigation might possibly reveal headstones for Patrick O'Brien, Barzilla Miles O'Brien, or other O'Brien family members buried in this general area.

Note: The six pieces of the tombstone of Ledyard O'Brien were excavated from around the base of a fence post. It appeared that the tombstone had been deliberately broken into pieces and used to support the fence post. This may have been the fate of the headstone for Patrick O'Brien, Barzilla Miles O'Brien, and possibly two other O'Brien family headstones. Since these investigations, a newer chain-link fence has been constructed around the cemetery. The remains of the O'Brien headstones may be in the ground along the fence line.

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