THE
Pilcher
Cemetery
AND THE
ADJOINING
Winslow
Pilcher
Family
Cemetery
A Comprehensive History

by
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1974
Over ten years ago I compiled this booklet with three purposes in mind. First, I wished to record the grave records at these two cemeteries, where many of my maternal ancestors are buried. Many of the oldest tombstones were, in 1974, almost completely illegible. Since then they have become unreadable and other old stones are deteriorating. To save the record before the inscriptions became completely unreadable, I painstakingly copied verbatim all the inscriptions in both cemeteries and drew maps indicating the locations of the stones, as well as unmarked graves.

Secondly, in pursuing genealogical research, I was told by some older relatives where these unmarked graves were located. I recorded this information herein so that future generations can know where persons are buried but have no marker.

Thirdly, in researching my family history, I learned that there is a large network of inter-relationship, through marriage and kinship, among Otego township families buried in the two Pilcher cemeteries. To preserve this rather complex record, I compiled charts to demonstrate this inter-relationship among families.

All information on the family charts is from my personal research, the Williams family history by Helen Jacoby Dikes, and from the Pilcher family history by Blanche Schwarm Harstad. The records in this booklet, for the most part, are current up to about 1976, after which time university studies and a move from Illinois caused me to set aside this kind of research for the time being.

The smaller cemetery is almost completely representative of the Pilcher-Gatewood families. Winslow Pilcher, who had a cabin just west of the smaller cemetery, is said to have owned the land on which the graveyard now exists. Pilcher family lore states that the graveyard began when Octavia Pilcher, Winslow's daughter, asked to be buried in the shade of a bush; when she shortly died of tuberculosis, her family fulfilled her earlier wish. The fact that she was living in 1851, the year her second son was born, and the fact that there are graves in the cemetery predating 1851, mean that the graveyard probably began for different reasons, although the rest of the legend may be true.

The smaller cemetery is usually called the "older" cemetery because it is no longer in use; the last known burial there was in 1928. However, on the basis of known graves, the smaller cemetery is 12 years "newer" than the larger cemetery. There are two 1836 graves in the larger, and the earliest known grave in the smaller is 1848. However, Winslow Pilcher lost a child in 1834, one in 1837, and two in 1838, and no one knows where they are buried. It is quite possible that some of the fieldstones in the smaller graveyard mark the resting place of these children; but this can never be known for sure.

The cluster of crudely-inscribed fieldstones from the mid-1830s are the oldest known graves in the larger cemetery; the oldest inscribed tombstone is dated 1839. It is not known how this cemetery began. One older relative of mine believed that a band of "gypsies" needed a place to bury a child and Winslow Pilcher gave them permission to use his land; this story tends to lose credence due to the fact that a similar story explains the beginning of the Griffith Cemetery, also in Otego township. The name "Pilcher Cemetery" is very old.
When Comfort Williams died in 1847 one daughter wrote another that she was buried in "Mr. Pilcher's graveyard." In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, obituaries alternately referred to it as "Pilcher cemetery" and "Washburn cemetery." Some have suggested that "Williams cemetery" is a better name, since Josiah Williams' name is on the deed. There are more descendents of the Crawford, Williams, and Washburn families buried there than there are Pilcher descendents.

The Pilcher Cemetery is located in Fayette County, Illinois, Otego township (township 6 north, range 2 east) in section fifteen. It is a few miles north of Route 185, and a few miles southwest of Brownstown, Illinois. County roads leading from Route 185 to the cemeteries are not at present numbered. The smaller cemetery sits at the side of the road, the larger north of it in a wooded clearing. Hopefully, the results of my work in compiling these records will be of help to future researchers in Otego township families.

P.E.S.
Charlottesville, VA
March, 1985
The Deed to the Pilcher Cemetery (from Book 105, p. 279; Fayette County Clerk's office)

The Grantors Josiah Williams and Margaret A. his wife of Otego T.s. in the county of Fayette and State of Illinois for and in consideration of Fifty Dollars in hand paid, Convey and Warrant to The trustees of the Pilcher Graveyard and their Successors of the T.P. of Otego County of Fayette and State of Illinois the following described Real Estate. Situated on the South side of the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section fifteen (15) town six (6) N Range (2) two east and described as follows commencing at the South east corner of the old Graveyard which corner is (37) rods east of the west line of said tract and 12½ rods north of the South line of the tract and running thence north 450° E 2000 chains to NE corner of Graveyard. Thence South 52°10' E 12½ chains thence South 25½° west 400 chains thence west 52½° Chains thence North 42½ Chains to the Southwest corner of the old Graveyard thence S. E. along South fence to place of Beginning containing (125) one and Sixty one Hundredths of an acre. Situated in the County of Fayette in the State of Illinois, hereby releasing and waiving all rights under and by virtue of the Homestead Exemption Laws of this State. Dated this 17th day of May of May A. D. 1893.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of

Leroy Washburn

Josiah Williams
Margaret A. Williams

(All permanship idiosyncracies and punctuation have been copied as found in the original)
1. The Pilcher Cemetery
2. The Winslow Pilcher Family Cemetery
3. The Griffith Cemetery
4. Site of the home of Grace Crawford, built by Albert Pilcher in 1907
5. Site of the Mahon Schoolhouse, where several members of the Crawford and other local families were educated in the early 1900's
6. Site of David and Sarah Washburn's home
7. Approximate vicinity of the first home of Susan Straub Crawford, when she settled here in the 1840's or 1850's
8. Approximate vicinity of Susan's home where she lived later in her life
9. Site of John and Alice Rush's house (a three-room log house; razed in the early 1970's)
10. the John Crawford (1864-1927) home, occupied at this writing by
11. Site of the Will and Dolly Crawford house: property now owned by the Bachelor family
12. Site of the "twin Pumps", a rest area on the old Cumberland Road. One pump and a log trough was for horses, the other served travellers.
13. Site of Leroy and Susan Washburn's house
14. Field where Andrew Crawford (1832-1880) was fatally injured by a wheat drill.
15. Site of the Cumberland Post Office, owned and operated by Ezra Griffith (1789-1860) from 1835 until his death, and continued by his sons for one more year
THE
WINSLow
PILCHER
FAMILY
CEMETERY
LOCATION OF
THE GRAVES
IN THE
WINSLOW PILCHER
FAMILY CEMETERY
1. Infant daughter of W.L. & H.M. Pilcher
   Died Mar. 24 1848

2. Margaret A., Dau. of T.A. & N. Gatewood
   Died Nov. 17 1849 Aged 2 yrs. 4 ms. & 12 ds.

   Died July 6 1852 Aged 6 Mo's 15 d's

4. Averilla, dau. of T.G. & S.A. Pilcher
   Died Jan. 16 1853 aged 5 Y's 8 M 5 d

5. Infant son of T.G. & S.A. Pilcher
   (no date)

6. W. Theodore, Son of T.G. & S.A. Pilcher
   Died Sept. 22 1855 Aged 10 Ys 5 Ms 26 D

7. Martimore T., Son of W.L. & H.M. Pilcher
   Died June 16 1856 Aged 8 Mos.

8. Thos. R. Gatewood Died Sep. 11 1856 Aged about 71 years

9. Mary Jane, Dau. of T.A. & N. Gatewood
   Died Mar. 11 1857 Aged 9 Ms & 28 Ds.

10. Margaret, Wife of T.R. Gatewood
    Died March 16 1857 Aged 71 Ys 6 Ms & DD.

11. Infant Son of W.L. & H.M. Pilcher
    Died Feb. 22 1860

12. William H., Son of W. & L. Pilcher
    Died Sep. 11 1860 Aged 5 Ms. 22 Ds.

13. Bettey Ward, Dau. of B.E. Mahon
    Born Jun. 13 1865 Died Aug. 22 1865 Aged 5 Y 2 M 9 D

    Isadora A. Dau. of B.E. Mahon

    M.J.Monro, Dau. of Benjamin & Elizabeth Mahon
    born June 27 1850 Died Oct. 29 1874 Aged 24 Y 4 M 2 D

    D.J., Wife of Edwin Kistler, Dau. of B. & E. Mahon
    born Nov. 23 1854 Died Feb. 16 1876 Aged 21 Y 2 M 23 D
    Also an infant

14. In Honor Of Service In the War of 1812
    NS USD 1812 Winslow Pilcher
    [this is a metal marker, erected in 1972]

    Died Nov. 26 1866 Aged 2 m 8 d
    Jesus said suffer little children and
    forbid them not for such is the
    Kingdom of Heaven        Mat. 19
16. Susanna, Wife of E.W. Thompson
   Died Sep. 9 1871 Aged 62 yrs 8 ms 8 ds
   Farewell dear husband my life is past
   My love to you whole life did last
   After me no sorrow make
   Father my children for my sake

17. Robert J., Son of W. & L. Pilcher
   Born Apr. 7 1870 Died Jan. 14 1873
   Suffer little children to come unto me
   and forbid them not for such is the
   Kingdom of Heaven

   Died Sep. 5 1875 Aged 2 yrs 7 m 24 d
   And he laid his hands on them and
   departed thence. Mat. 19:15

19. Ella I. Pilcher 1875

20. Mary A. Pilcher 1871-1876

21. Alphesius Pilcher 1881

22. Lucy Jane, Wife of C.C. Gatewood
    Born Aug. 8 1858 Died Apr. 21 1881

23. Elizabeth, Wife of Benj. Mahon
    Born Feb. 18 1830 Died Nov. 16 1881 Aged 51 yrs. 8 ms 26 ds
    Rev. Benj. Mahon
    Born Nov. 6 1822 Died Oct 27 1902 Aged 79 yrs 11 ms. 21 ds
    Blessed are they that die in the Lord

24. Dennis E. Pilcher 1865-1882

25. Richard C. Pilcher 1885-1891

26. Mother Winnie Lee Roberts
    Mar. 20 1866 Oct. 2 1893
    Not Forgotten
    George H. Roberts 1845-1924

27. Mother Rhodia A. Pilcher
    Dec. 23 1843 Nov. 9 1893
    Father J.K. Pilcher
    Jan. 25 1840 May. 12 1908

28. Walter E., Son of W.C. & Lavinia C. Rush
    Born Dec. 20 1893 Died Sept. 27 1895
    Our darling one hath gone before
    To greet us on the blissful shore

29. Loussannah, Wife of Abishai Smith
    Born Dec. 11 1835 Died Feb. 24 1897

30. Pilcher Hannah, Wife of W.L. Pilcher (no date)
    W.L. Pilcher Died Jan. 16 1899 Aged 77 yrs 2 ms 4 ds
    Father
GRAVES INADEQUATELY OR NOT MARKED

* Unknown

-1. Octava Pilcher Washburn (Feb. 16 1831- 1851/59)
   Location unknown

-2. Averilla Gatewood Pilcher (May 12 1804-Aug. 28 1879)
   Location unknown

-3. L P  [1874-1928]
   This is probably Leva Pilcher, daughter of Charles Pilcher, #31

-4. According to Grace Fink Satterthwaite, seven infants are buried beneath the northernmost tree. Six are her brothers and sisters, one is a child of her aunt's, America Litchenwalter.

-5. Concrete block that has barely-legible, crudely inscribed words: Son of J.K. & C.B.Pilcher

-6. Concrete block, same situation:
   C.B.Pilcher Wife of [illegible]

-7. According to Ella Pilcher Braun, a former nanny slave of the Gatewoods is buried somewhere in the cemetery.
Benjamin Mahon (23) was a hard-shell Baptist Minister. He was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, the son of Doctor and Dolly (Lansford) Mahon. Doctor brought his family to Wilberton Township of Fayette County in 1833, after a trip of 52 days. Ben was the sixth of eight children. He began preaching in December, 1849, and gave 100-150 sermons a year for much of his life. He married Elizabeth Thompson in August 31, 1848. They had nine children. The story has been told that he was originally buried somewhere else, then reinterred in the present location. When the men opened the casket just before reinterment, they found his body on its side, with his hand on his nose, as if scratching it.

Susannah Thompson, the mother of Elizabeth Mahon, was the daughter of Elijah and Susan Bayle. She married Benjamin Ward Thompson (May 17, 1806- ) on February 12, 1828. His parents settled near Vandalia during that town's founding in 1819. One of his sisters married John Wakefield, the first white settler in Otego Township, and another sister married Frederick G. Hollman, one of the leaders of the colony of Germans who settled at Vandalia in 1820, and the first man to build homes in Vandalia. Thompson was one of the last of the early settlers still alive when the 1878 county history was written, and his many recollections made an important place in that book. He and Susanna had seven children. He is buried in the west side of the Old State Cemetery at Vandalia. It is not known why he and Susanna were not buried together in the Pilcher Cemetery.

Winslow Pilcher (14) was born Oct. 1, 1794, and died May 8, 1866. He was one of eighteen children born to Lewis and Mary (Rogers) Pilcher. He married Averilla Gatewood (-2) On Dec. 18, 1820. They also had eighteen children. The Pilchers came to Cumberland (now Otego) Twp., in Nov. 1829, and built a two-story log house just west of what is now the smaller cemetery. They had planned to settle further north, but the Wincennes Road was too muddy for further travel. Winslow, a veteran of the War of 1812, was honored in 1972 with a commemorative marker over what is believed to be his grave.

Thomas R. Gatewood (8) came with the Pilchers to Fayette County in 1829. He married his first cousin (10), Margaret Kay, the daughter of John and Mary (Gatewood) Kay, on August 10, 1805 in Fayette Co., Ky. They had two children, Averilla and Thomas. Thomas and Margaret's great-great-grandfather, John Gatewood I ( ? -1706) came to Virginia about 1654 from England, and his uncle, Andrew Gatewood (c1740-1794) fought in the Revolution. Margaret's g-g-grandfather, James William Kay, came to America in 1658, and her father, John Kay (1755-1812) was a Revolutionary War soldier.
REFERENCES

2. This story was told to the author by Mrs. Grace Crawford about 1970. She heard the story presumably from witnesses or relatives of witnesses.
4. The Pilcher Family History by Blanche Harstad; research done by Mrs. Erma D. Chandler and Mrs. Helen Dickes.
5. Ibid.