



conclude that the land was used as a cemetery long before it was deeded to the church.

Descendants have related that David Haight's wife was a staunch Methodist, which may have had some impact on the property being sold to the *Methodist Episcopal Church of Ellenville* (now the *United Methodist Church*).

Whether the seller was the older Eburn Haight or the younger Eburn is unknown. The senior Eburn died on September 30, 1838, twenty-seven days after the deed is dated. The younger Eburn was supposedly too young to enlist in the Civil War (he ran away from home and enlisted as a drummer boy), so one might assume that he was not born until the early 1840's, which would indicate that the older Eburn was the seller.

Ownership of what is called either the "**Leurenkill Cemetery**" or the "**Old Ellenville Cemetery**" remained with the *Methodist Episcopal Church* until August 15, 1934, when the Trustees sold the "public burial yard" to the *Ellenville Cemetery Association* for one dollar (\$1.00).

Twenty years later, H. Westlake Coons, Charles Goldsmith, Bert Goldsmith, Henry L. Schipp, Stanley Stickles, Max E. Lambert and Carl A. Hernberg, as Directors and Trustees of the *Ellenville Cemetery Association* sold the cemetery to the Town of Wawarsing, again for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00). The Cemetery Association also transferred the sum of \$2375, being the amount paid to the Association for perpetual care by fifteen individuals and families.

The **Old Ellenville Cemetery** is still owned by the Town of Wawarsing, and new burials occur occasionally, but not frequently. Sites are no longer available for purchase.

The cemetery has been vandalized several times, with stones broken or toppled, but even more damage has occurred from the elements, as windstorms and heavy snows have broken heavy limbs or toppled aging trees, which in turn have hit stones. Local history files at the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum* include several newspaper clippings from September 1905, when Mr. A. N. Rapp and Rev. Dr. Coons solicited volunteers from the community to clean up "The Old Cemetery." In relating some of their discoveries, mention was made of finding two bluestone monuments commemorating the Fairchild family, one to "Oliver Fairchild: died March 2, 1815, in the 97<sup>th</sup> year of his age;" and the other to "Sarah, wife of Oliver Fairchild, who died June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1811, in the 93<sup>rd</sup> year of her age."

It is important to remember that, until 1823, the area now known as Ellenville was called "Fairchild City," in honor of Alpheus Fairchild of Newtown, Connecticut, who purchased a large part of today's Ellenville from John DeWitt in 1798. Oliver and Sarah were the parents of Alpheus Fairchild.

The newspaper clipping reported that "This ground has for some years been suffered to grow up in briars, weeds and brambles with unsightly brush choking the

mounds and hiding the monuments. Really it had become a disgrace to the living and a reproach to the dead." Later in the same article, "Unsightly trees have been removed, others trimmed; weeds, briars and every form of tangled growth has been grubbed out, and a vast amount of work has been done...so that the place presents a wholly new and creditable appearance." Similar observations, both negative and positive, occur periodically through the years.

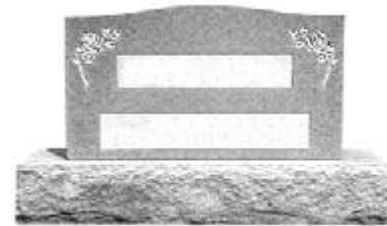
Most recently, the *Town Highway Department* and a crew from the Department of Corrections cooperated in clearing much of the accumulated debris so that access to most of the cemetery is more easily accomplished, but more work is still needed, and on a regular basis.

The *Village of Ellenville Historic Preservation Commission* is researching the history of the **Old Ellenville Cemetery** preparatory to nominating it to the Village Board as an historic site. Members of the *Commission* have discussed the need to have a comprehensive list of the names and locations of graves in not just the **Old Ellenville Cemetery**, but all the public, private, and family burial grounds in the Town of Wawarsing, and there are many.

Such an undertaking is not within the scope of the *Historic Preservation Commission* and would require many volunteers from throughout the township. If any readers of this column are interested in helping with such a project, please call Marion Dumond at 647-7621. The long-term result would be a publication similar to the list of graves prepared for the Town of Rochester.

Local cemeteries have been inventoried at least twice during the twentieth century: first as a WPA project; secondly as a CETA project in the late 1970's. Unfortunately, the CETA listing is sadly incomplete and occasionally inaccurate, certainly inadequate as an official resource. Genealogists, historians, and family members need better records for their searches. The **Fantinekill Cemetery** has an excellent inventory and is highly respected for the accuracy of their record keeping.

Memorial Day is a time to remember. Perhaps it is also the appropriate time to quote a line from the November 10, 2000 *Ellenville Press*: "Old Ellenville Cemetery: Who Will Care?" Will you? Do you? ☆



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