

## **'Lost' Burying Ground of Bridgeport**

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Just before crossing the Wading River Bridge on route No. 653 from the Garden State Parkway to Batsto is a "lost" burying ground. On a hill behind the house at the bridge is the well kept Adams-Leek-McKeen cemetery. About 125 feet before the house is a dirt drive to the right and in the adjacent wooded area are five marked graves. This was a Friends' Burying Ground in the early 1800's.

Most of the early settlers of this section of Burlington County were Quakers. A monthly meeting was established at Tuckerton in 1704 and a meeting house erected in 1709. Later a meeting was "built at Bass River Neck (New Gretna) on the road to Bridgeport (Wading River) near the old Methodist Church opposite Uriah Cranmer's place." The Bridgeport meeting was built about 1820. When the separation in the Quaker Society occurred, this meeting was assigned to the new sect, the Hicksites. Oddly enough most of the Egg Harbor (Tuckerton) Friends remained Orthodox, while the resident ministers subscribed to the new creed.

It has been told many times how Lucy Ann Evans, wife of Jesse Evans, owner and manager of Martha Furnace, would go to the Bridgeport meeting and worship alone. The devout Quaker lady was an active minister and when the Hicksite congregation at this location moved away she became both "minister and audience."

The meeting house has been gone for over a century and the nearby burying place neglected and lost in the woods. There were undoubtedly more interment than the five standing stones indicate, but Leah Blackman, writing in 1879 in "The History of Little Egg Harbor Township," refers to it as a "lonely graveyard" and "desolate burial place."

Lucy Ann Evan's stone reads: "In memory of Lucy Ann Evans, wife of Jesse Evans, who departed this life September the 18th 1834 in the 65th year of her age. Her spirit has ascended on high and now dwells with her God and Savior in the realms of bliss." There is small footstone inscribed L.A.E.

A nearby stone marks the grave of "Lydia, wife of John Halleck, who departed this life on the 20th day of the 8th month, 1830. Aged 53 years." John Halleck was a "public Friend who came from the state of New York to Tuckerton" about 1816. He purchased the so-called Nathan Bartlett farm which was part of Mordecai Andrews "great survey" of 929 acres on the west side of Tuckerton Creek.

Mr. Halleck set about raising castor beans and manufacturing them into castor oil — a profitable undertaking. He shared his knowledge with his neighbors, One of them was enough of a scoundrel to make for himself the largest fortune amassed in those parts and at the same time reduce Mr. Halleck to bankruptcy. Leah Blackman recalls that she often fed the impoverished Quaker when he came to visit her father.

John Halleck was a preacher in the Society of Friends but joined with Lucy Ann Evans in separating from the Orthodox beliefs. His wife's stone in this graveyard bears witness to their Hicksite connections.

A third stone is "in memory of Mary Catherine, daughter of Elisha and Rebecca Lippincott who was born October 31st 1833 and died May 31st 1834. Aged 7 months. Sleep on sweet babe and take thy rest God called the(e) home he thought it best." There is also a footstone at the small grave. This infant's grandfather was Joseph Lippincott, a weaver and farmer, descendant of Richard, progenitor of the Lippincott line. Joseph took up land near Tuckerton about 1744 when he married Esther Andrews, granddaughter of Edward Andrews, one of the founders of that place and the grantor of land for the Tuckerton Friends Meeting and Burial Ground. Joseph was a member of the Tuckerton Meeting. He and his wife and their son Samuel and wife, Hannah Snow, are buried there. Elisha was Samuel's son. Elisha and his wife, Rebecca Adams, daughter of Charles Adams, Sr. apparently joined the Hicksite group since they buried their infant girl at the Bridgeport grounds. Friends (Orthodox) minutes would read: "disowned; joined Hicksites."

The fourth stone was erected "in memory of Godfrey, son of Godfrey and Mary Louisa Jerew who died May 28th 1848 aged 9 years 9 months and 14 days. Death smote him a kind and only son who to his parents was their pride and joy." This family name was spelled in various ways. In the 1850 census of Burlington County the name is spelled Jeru. Godfrey and (Mary) Louise were born in Lower Canada. In addition to the boy who died there were four younger daughters. One of these, Louisa Gerue, later

married Carlisle Darby. In 1870 a J. Jerrew lived in New Gretna. Quite possibly he was the young man living with Godfrey and Louise Jeru in 1850.

The fifth stone is a crudely hand carved bog iron stone marked "F. Kimel 1825." There is no mention of this name in Leah Blackman's history. Nor is it listed in this form in the records of New Jersey marriages, 1665-1800, Craig's "Burlington County Marriages" or the 1850 census. No property owner in the marked maps in Scott's "Atlas of Burlington County" bears anything close to it. Since many of our ancestors were illiterate, — orthography suffers. It could possibly be Kimble, maybe even Campbell or Cammel or Kimmell. These names are all mentioned in the above records but none of them are located in the Little Egg and Bridgeport area. In 1850 the only Kimmell was a 21 year old Joseph living in Burlington with the Stackhouse family. There are two Cammell families: one in Mullica Township, Atlantic County and a single woman in Weymouth. Since the Hicksite separation did not take place until 1828 and the Kimel stone is dated 1825, we can assume that the individual was a member of the Bridgeport meeting when it was an Orthodox off shoot of the Tuckerton congregation. There is a broken stone, identical in kind and size to the Kimel one, lying on the ground in the cemetery. This is devoid of all marking.

All Friends were not interred in Quaker burying grounds. Some were buried on their farms, some in private (family) plots that later became public cemeteries. A visit to this "lost" graveyard with its few well preserved markers is a reminder of all those whose families were part of the iron, castor bean, charcoal burning and shipping industries which have disappeared along with the Bridgeport meeting.