**Auburn Public Cemetery Register**

**Auburn Public Cemetery, Mill Street, Auburn, PA**

Welcome to a new, improved cemetery register for the Auburn Public Cemetery located west of Mill Street in Auburn, Pennsylvania. This directory is needed for three primary reasons. The first and most important reason is that a more accurate record of individual interments is needed than what is currently available. The second reason is to help individuals locate a particular cemetery plot easily on their own. The third reason is to assist the efforts of those individuals who are researching history or compiling genealogies. You may wonder why this directory is even necessary. Take for example the following scenarios:

Imagine you are researching your ancestry for your child’s school project. You know that your ancestor was supposed to have been interred in a cemetery, but none of the dates of birth (D.O.B.) or dates of death (D.O.D.) could possibly be those of your ancestor. What happened and why can’t you find your ancestor in the records?

Imagine another scenario where you would like to visit your great-grandmother’s grave while traveling through the area. You’re pressed for time so you call the cemetery groundskeeper in an attempt to pinpoint the specific location of her gravesite. The cemetery representative checks the records and tells you that they have no record of her having been interred there; yet your elderly relatives all recall attending her funeral and watching the casket get lowered into the grave. Where is she interred and why is there no record of her burial?

Here’s a third scenario. You are traveling cross country and decide to take a detour to pay tribute to the grave of your great-great-great grandfather who served in the Civil War. You arrive at your destination, a care-taker checks the records, confirms the exact location of your ancestor’s interment within the graveyard and then promptly leads you to the burial plot on record…only to discover someone else is buried there. After a frantic search, it’s apparent that they have no idea where your ancestor is interred. Who is the individual interred in your ancestor’s plot and, more importantly, how could they have possibly lost track of your ancestor’s body and burial site?

A fourth scenario – your loved one just passed and the funeral’s tomorrow. You receive a phone call informing you that they were in the process of digging the grave when they discovered an unidentified casket with remains already interred in that location so they won’t be able to conduct the burial on the plot you have already purchased.

As disturbing as these scenarios might be, they can and have occurred in cemeteries across the country. How is this even possible? First, we need to understand the historic nature of this process. Decades ago, *many* individuals were at least slightly illiterate. As a result, the records they kept weren’t always accurate. A record keeper might hear a name and simply try to spell it phonetically rather than correctly. As a result, a female named “Terri” may be recorded under a male’s name of “Terry”. Or the surname “Fahl” becomes “Fall”.

Or the record keeper simply assume since they know one variation of a spelling for a name, it must be the same spelling every time. For example, take for example the real life case of a woman named “Sarah” who died on April 26, 1910. Not only was her nickname “Sallie” used on her son’s tombstone rather than her own proper name, but her maiden name is spelled either “Rhein” or “Rhine” or “Rhyne” depending upon whether it’s her tombstone, her father’s tombstone or her mother’s tombstone, *and* her married surname is spelled “Petery” or “Petrey” or “Petry” depending upon whether it’s her tombstone, her husband’s tombstone or her children’s tombstones. Therefore, between conflicting church records and variations on tombstones, you might find her listed as some variation of “Sallie”/Sarah *Rhein/Rhine/Rhyne* Petery/Petrey/Petry. Additionally, there exists other potential variations of her first name (Sara or Sally) as well as of her maiden name (Rein, Rine and Ryne).

Or perhaps the record keeper’s handwriting was illegible and suddenly “Nease” is mis-interpreted as “Mease”. Or two letters become transposed and “Murdock” becomes “Mudrock”. Or a letter is missed and suddenly Moyer becomes Myer, Clauser becomes Clauer or Brensinger becomes Bensinger.

Or imagine the transcriber is hurried or tired and doesn’t watch his spacing carefully. Now you are unable to find your grandfather “Dan A. Mato” because it has been mis-recorded as “Dana Mato” or “Dan Amato”.

To further complicate matters, some of the earliest listings or charts record only the name of an individual who purchased the plot initially but failed to update the chart as changes occurred. As a result, the actual purchaser may have accidently been recorded as having been interred at that location when in fact they were buried elsewhere.

Or perhaps the individual purchased the plot early in their lives only to relocate. That person may then sell the plot to another individual who in turn changes his religious affiliation. He then sells it to yet another individual; however, none of the sales are updated in church records and therefore the records show only the original purchaser.

Or, the person purchased lot #74 but the recorder accidently marks the sale in the adjacent lot on the map/chart. Or the person transposes the lot number and shows the individual as being interred in lot #47 rather than lot #74.

The same can happen with dates of birth or dates of death. A simple transposing can cause your ancestor who was born in 1924 and who died in 1995 to appear as the wrong individual because the records show only someone with that name who was born in 1942 or who died in 1959. And these scenarios are only just a few of the possible causes for errors or contradictions.

As a result, in an effort to create and provide the most accurate and comprehensive detailed register, I have initially input all of the entries from the original charts, documents and registers to which I have had access, *even if* they contradicted each other. I then used actual engravings on the tombstones as a “definitive” entry as well as other research resources such as findagrave.com or death certificates. Finally, I went to each lot pictured on the chart/map to confirm or refute names of individuals who are recorded as having been possibly interred at that location. Any information which I had **confirmed** through at least two separate sources is imprinted in **BOLD** font. Any information which is yet unconfirmed by two or more *reliable* sources is in REGULAR font.

The registry starts with the **first column, Column “A”,** titled **“Last Name (Surname)”.** This columnis organized in alphabetical order. Within this column you will find surnames for all males if known, as well as both married *and/or* maiden surnames for all females if known. Any time a surname is suspected as having been a **maiden name *of a married individual***, that surname is listed in ***italicized*** *f*ont.

If the deceased was known to be that of an infant or juvenile child (under eighteen years of age), their first name/initial and surname will be highlighted. **Female children** will be **highlighted in pink**; **male children** will be **high-lighted in blue**. If the **child’s gender was not specified** (for example; “Baby” or “Infant”), that child’s entry will be **highlighted in purple**.

Any individual who was listed on either the cemetery maps/charts, within church records or in external sources (for example: findagrave.com) but who *does* *not* *appear* to be buried within the specific lot stated and/or even within the cemetery (indicating a ***possible* error in the records**), their name is **high-lighted in brown.** If no physical evidence exists to support that an individual is interred where indicated yet a ***probability* exists a tombstone was never erected, lost, stolen or destroyed**, their name is **highlighted in gray**.

The **second column, Column “B”,** is titled **“First Name/Initial(s)”**. This column lists first names or initials if known (in alphabetical order for that particular surname). This information reflects the information engraved or otherwise inscribed on the grave marker and may not always match the legal name of the individual interred there (for example, the tombstone for a “Kathryn” may be inscribed with her more common name of “Katie”).

The **third column, Column “C”,** is titled **“Middle Name(s)/Initial(s)”**. This column lists any middle names or initials of the individual if known. Since some individuals had more than one middle name or initial, you may find multiple entries in this column.

The **fourth column, Column “D”,** is titled **“Nickname(s)”**. This column lists any nicknames by which an individual was known, as well as *possible* nicknames of an individual possessing a certain given name.

The **fifth and sixth columns, Columns “E” and “F”,** are titled **“Maiden Surname”** and **“Married Surname(s)”** respectively.These columns apply to a **MARRIED** **woman’s maiden surname** (if known) and **her married surname** (if known). If a woman was not known to be married, she will not have an entry in the “Married Surname” column. Due to the fact that males normally do not have different surnames before and after marriage, these two columns are simply notated with “n/a” if it is a male’s entry. This feature can be an aid in genealogical research. For example, a married woman might be buried under her maiden name. Or an individual might be seeking a female ancestor by her original/maiden name and not have any knowledge of her married name. As a result, **any woman who was married *and* whose maiden name is also known is listed at least *twice*** in the registry for ease of research, **once under her maiden surname and once by her married surname(s)**. A woman may be listed more than twice (maiden and married surname) if she had married two or more times.

The **seventh column, Column “G”,** titled **“Similar Surnames”** provides *some* suggestions of similar surnames following the actual surname. This list contains names which are an accepted variation of the actual surname; similar in spelling to the actual surname; easily confused with the actual surname or possibly a misspelling of the actual surname. (For example: “Dewaldt - similar: Dewald or, Dewalt”).

The **eighth column, Column “H”,** titled **“Surname Translations (To other surnames)”** lists some translations of the surname from its original language to English, or from English back to a possible original foreign language. Occasionally names evolved as individuals tried to simplify or Americanize their name. So you may have a “Johan Fredrich Schmidt Sr.” in one generation, yet his son may be listed as “John Fred Smith Jr.” in the next generation.

The **ninth column, Column “I”**, titled “**Possible First Name Derivatives”**, lists possible derivatives of a person’s first name which might help in researching an individual’s interment. For example, someone researching an individual who was known to them only as “Peggy” may not realize that her proper name had been “Margaret”, or someone researching an individual named “Harold” might not realize his name had devolved to “Hank”.

The **tenth** **and eleventh columns, Columns “J” and “K”,** are titled **“D.O.B.”** and **“D.O.D.”**. These columns list the **“Date Of Birth”** (if known) and “**Date Of Death”** (if known). These are entered in a standard format of the month, day, then four digit year (ex. MM/DD/YYYY). This entry might be a mix of both “**bold**” and “regular” font due to conflicting or unconfirmed data. For example, it is common for the year to be known, but the month and date may not be known or confirmed so it’s entry might appear as MM/DD/**YYYY**.

The **twelfth column**, **Column “L”**, is titled **“Age at D.O.D.”**. This column provides the estimated age of the individual at their date of death, if known. This figure is obtained by either simple mathematics (subtracting the date of death from the date of birth if known); or through tombstone inscription (“Aged two years”) or through physical records such as church burial records, obituaries, death certificates, etc.. If the age cannot be calculated with the information available, a question mark “?” was entered into the column.

The **thirteenth and fourteenth columns, Columns “M” and “N”,** are titled **“Quadrant”** and **“Section”**. These columns contain location identifiers for the burial plot. The **thirteenth column, Column “M”** is that of “**Quadrant**”. The “Quadrant” designator corresponds with a map or chart created exclusively for the Auburn Area Historical Society and this website. This map divides the cemetery into four sections or quadrants using an obvious physical marker within the cemetery as the focal point. The slab style monument plaque honoring veterans is situated approximately in the center of the cemetery, so by extending imaginary lines both horizontally and vertically from the monument the cemetery can be divided into these quadrants. The first quadrant is in the top left corner, or the approximate southwestern corner, of the cemetery and is appropriately assigned the numeral “1”. The second quadrant is located in the top right corner, or approximate northwestern corner, of the cemetery is and assigned the numeral “2”. The third quadrant is located in the lower left corner, or the approximate southeast corner of the cemetery and is assigned the numeral “3”. The final quadrant is located in the lower right corner, or approximate northeast corner of the cemetery and is assigned the numeral four. Therefore, the quadrant designator for any interment will be one of the numerals 1 through 4.

The **fourteenth column, Column “N”** is that of the “**Section**”. Since there are no markers within the cemetery denoting the specific lots or sub-divisions, these “sections” were created by dividing each quadrant into four basically equal parts, thus segmenting the cemetery into a total of sixteen approximately equal portions and reducing the physical search area to only approximately 6.25% of the total area. The sections were designated with the first sixteen letters of the alphabet, starting in the upper left, or approximately southwest corner of the cemetery and proceeding across its width before beginning the next row immediately below the prior. Therefore, the area in which you might find a grave would be designated with first a quadrant numeral and then a section alphabetical letter. For example, the tombstone of William Hay can be found in 4-P.

Finally, the entries in both the thirteenth and fourteenth columns might be highlighted. If the previously recorded interment has **no physical evidence of having *ever* occurred** at this cemetery, the entry is **highlighted in brown**. If the interment has **no physical evidence of having occurred at SJC *but* a probability exists that it might simply have never had a tombstone, or the tombstone was destroyed, damaged, or lost,** the entry is **highlighted in grey**.

The **fifteenth and sixteenth columns, Columns “O” and “P”**, are titled **“Picture” and “findagrave.com”**. These columns apply to those individuals who might access research via the Internet. If the column titled “findagrave.com” has a “Y” entered for an individual, that indicates that the individual’s interment is listed (and can be accessed) on the findagrave.com website. Perhaps more significantly, if the column titled “Picture” also has a “Y” entered for an individual interment, that indicates that at least one picture of the tombstone for this interment can be viewed on the findagrave.com website.

The **seventeenth column, Column “Q”,** is titled “**Military Service”**. This column lists any known military service for each individual, their rank, unit affiliations and medals, whether they were a Prisoner of War, Wounded in Action, or Killed in Action…*if* this information was discovered and recorded on this cemetery directory (not all military information will have been captured here). This information comes from not only tombstone engravings and church records, but from military records, obituaries, death certificates and other sources. Those individuals who honorably served their country deserve to be recognized for their patriotism and sacrifice.

The **eighteenth and final column, Column “R”,** is titled **“Genealogical or Historical Research Information”**. This column contains information pertaining to the individual’s genealogy, ancestors, spouses, relatives, or descendants, their civilian occupation(s) and other points of interest (if known). This column also indicates which records appear to be erroneous in nature when there is no validating information (for example: findagrave.com; death certificates; obituaries, etc) and no physical evidence of that individual being interred as stated within the records.

All of this information was placed onto the format of an Excel worksheet. The advantage of this is that the user/researcher can access the sheet and, with proper computer program compatibility, search individual columns for specific criteria. Additionally, the user can “collapse” or “hide” columns they don’t wish to view or utilize, keeping visible only the columns to which they want access.

This Excel worksheet will contain an “Updated” date near the heading which will also allow the user to determine when the most recent information has been entered. For example, if the updated date is 02/14/2015 but a burial occurred in May of 2015, that information will not have been captured on this Excel sheet.

NOTE: This cemetery is (or was) known as, or referred to by, numerous names to include: Auburn Public Cemetery; Church of God Cemetery; First Bethel Church Cemetery; Lower Cemetery; Mill Street Cemetery or Schoenersdale Road Cemetery.

Anyone who knows of any additions, corrections or deletions pertaining to this registry is encouraged to submit the information via the AAHS website’s contact page for future input into the registry as the primary purpose of this registry is to provide the most updated, accurate and comprehensive information available.