

## **A Brief History of Washington Street Cemetery**

Washington Street Cemetery is the third burying ground in Geneva. The earliest burial spot was on the site of Trinity Episcopal Church on South Main Street. The other early burying ground was on Pulteney Street, where FLCC now stands. The graves in this plot date from as early as the 1790s and were moved to a section of Glenwood Cemetery when the old Geneva High School was built in 1926. Further burials were discovered during the construction of FLCC and these were also moved in 2015.

The Board of the Village Trustees purchased the land for Washington Street Cemetery in 1832 because room in the Pulteney Street burial ground was running out. More land was added to the cemetery in 1844. The first person buried here was Mrs. Augusta Matilda Merrell, who died September 28, 1832. Stones with older death dates are present, likely reburials.

The last burial in Washington Street occurred in 2010 (Fordon), but only a few have occurred in the last 50 years. There are no plots available for purchase; only those that were purchased by families many years ago may still be used. Those areas that look empty may be graves of the poor who could not afford a marker, those with a stone that has deteriorated and disappeared, or areas where a family chose to rebury relatives in Glenwood cemetery or elsewhere.

The original cemetery was never enclosed and this has made it an easy target for vandals at times in the past. It had an ironwork entry gate, which was damaged several years ago by a truck. It was repaired and replaced in 2017. The cemetery is owned by the city, however, most attempts at repairs and restoration have been done by citizens concerned about its upkeep and historical importance to the community.