

CHERRY HILL CEMETERY

FOUNDED 1820

A BRIEF HISTORY: Although it remained unnamed until 1820, the community of Sugar Grove was first settled in 1797 with the arrival of the Miles family. In 1820 James Elliott, business partner and brother-in-law of entrepreneur Robert Falconer and Quaker ship captain John I. Willson, died, leaving the community for the first time with the issue of the creation of a cemetery.

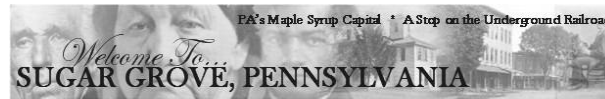


Elliott was placed at the foot of this hill, once called Mount Celestia, beginning a cemetery which has developed from a small plot to the final resting place of more than 1300 individuals including veterans from the Revolutionary War, congressmen, judges, and

leaders in the Underground Railroad. The first recorded act of defiance against slavery in Sugar Grove was the signing of the 1831 petition calling for an end to slavery in the District of Columbia. From there, the area around the cemetery grew into one of the country's most well-traveled Underground Railroad strongholds.

Within the cemetery rest the stories of families that helped to shape the area's past and form the country's future; individuals such as Dr. James Catlin, publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper True American, and Cynthia Catlin Miller, society matriarch and founder of both the Female Assisting Society and the Ladies Fugitive Aid Society which provided aid to escaping slaves.

In June of 1854 Sugar Grove was selected as the site of what Frederick Douglass would refer to as "the crowning convention of them all." The Sugar Grove Anti-Slavery Convention boasted keynote speakers Douglass, Rev. JW Loguen and Lewis G. Clarke, the real-life George Harris of Uncle Tom's Cabin. This event helped secure Sugar Grove its place in history as one of the leading communities in the fight against slavery.



This self-guided tour has been created by
THE SUGAR GROVE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Cherry Hill Cemetery is open to the public from dawn to dusk daily from April 1 through October 30. The self-guided tour will take approximately one hour to complete and does include walking which could be, at times, strenuous.

CHERRY HILL CEMETERY IS NOT HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE



For more information about Cherry Hill Cemetery including burial lists visit www.mysugargrove.com/cherryhill or visit the Sugar Grove Free Library to view a copy of MOUNT CELESTIA: A WORK ON CHERRY HILL.

THE SUGAR GROVE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
©2010 Gregory Wilson, Director
Based on the earlier brochure ©2004.

CHERRY HILL CEMETERY

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

SELF-GUIDED TOUR



Visit the final resting place of many of the area's most prominent anti-slavery leaders including Ladies Fugitive Aid Society leader Cynthia Catlin Miller, Dr. James Catlin, publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper True American, and Dr. Heman Woodard, the area's first African-American doctor.

CHERRY HILL CEMETERY
246 FOREST ST., SUGAR GROVE, PA 16350

1 Mortimer Payne

The diary of Mortimer Payne provides us with a glimpse at anti-slavery activity and sentiment in the area prior to the Civil War. On January 10, 1854, Payne wrote "Had a call this morning from a couple of colored boys on their way to Canada and freedom." Mortimer died the next year of Tuberculosis just seven months after marrying his wife Jane, a daughter of Cynthia Catlin Miller.

2 William Oren Blodget

Few in the area expressed their hatred for the institution of slavery as eloquently as W.O. Blodget. In an 1856 letter to a like-minded colleague W.O. wrote "The outrages of the pro-slavery Democratic party in Kansas are almost infinitely greater than Great Britain ever perpetuated on any of her colonies." In 1851 when fugitive slave Harrison Williams was captured just a mile north of the cemetery, Blodget helped to alert local residents before riding on to Jamestown in pursuit of the bounty hunters.

3 Robert Falconer

As the community's first postmaster, it was Falconer who chose the name "Sugar Grove" for the area. An immigrant from Scotland, Falconer made a vast fortune by controlling the trade of cotton between Charleston and Scotland. However, after moving to Sugar Grove Falconer instigated the first recorded anti-slavery act in the county when on December 20, 1831 a petition was signed calling for an end to slavery in the District of Columbia.

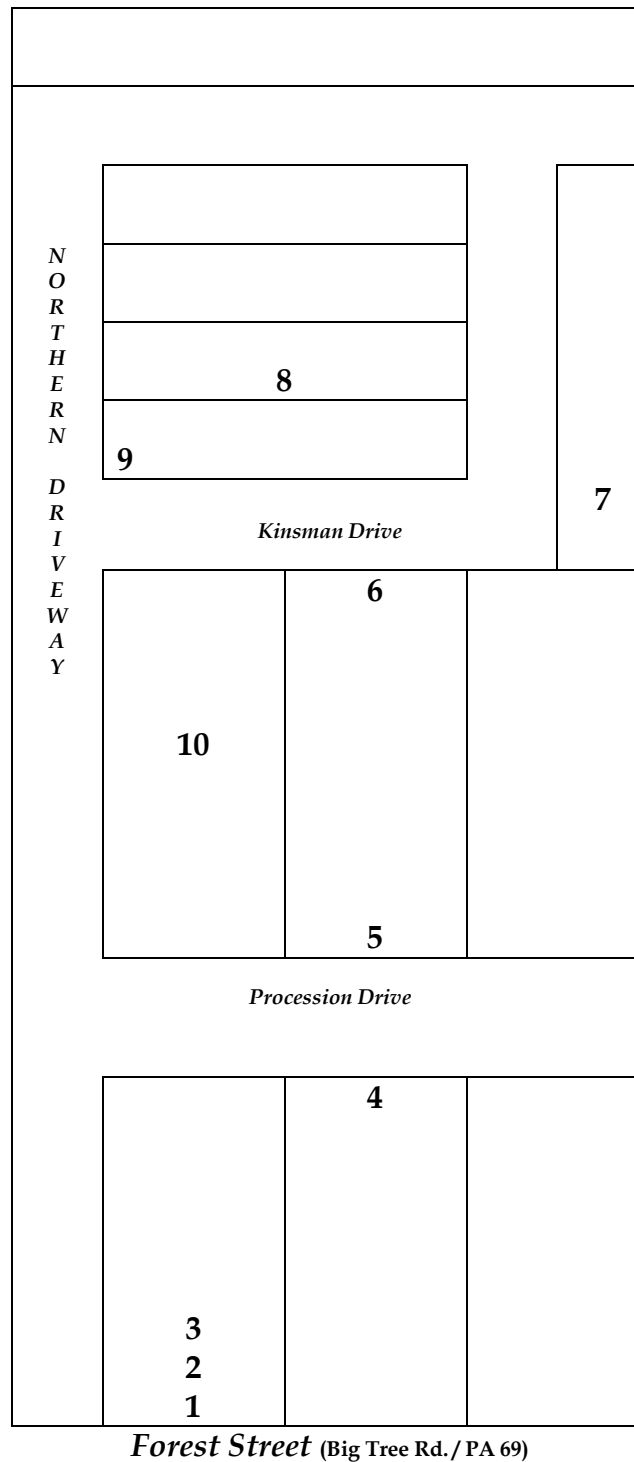
4 Linus Pratt

The home of Linus and Julia Pratt was one of the area's most well-known Underground Railroad stations. In fact before the capture of Harrison Williams at the Storum farm in 1851, the Sheriff first stopped at Pratt's to serve a warrant to search for escaped slaves. After Williams' capture the remaining slaves in the area were hidden on Lanning Hill in McDonald's barn and it was there that Julia Pratt took them a midnight supper before their departure to Canada.

5 James Younie

On June 17 and 18, 1854 Younie offered a grove of trees on his Main Street property as the suitable location for the famed Sugar Grove Anti-Slavery Convention featuring Frederick Douglass who called the event "the crowning convention of them all." Thousands flocked from the all around the area to hear the famed orator speak out against slavery. from Scotland in 1834 and becoming a citizen in 1844, he founded the first agricultural society in the county and its premier fair in 1856 boasted more than 6000 in attendance.

CHERRY HILL CEMETERY



6 Dr. Heman Woodard

Dr. Woodard was a resident of neighboring Busti, NY, whose practice was housed at the Sugar Grove Hotel that once stood on Main Street. Dr. Woodard graduated from Marine Hospital in Buffalo where he happened to be the day that Harrison Williams was taken to that city to stand trial and be returned to slavery under the Fugitive Slave Act. Woodard, himself a descendant of freed slaves, organized a mob to release Harrison, but was unsuccessful & Harrison was returned to slavery.

7 Hosea Harmon

At the July 26, 1856 Radical Abolition meeting in Sugar Grove Harmon nominated 5 Sugar Grove men to form a Vigilance Committee whose purpose it was to detect and stop slave-catchers in the area. A savvy businessman, Harmon oversaw the construction of most of the business on Main Street and in 1868, Harmon hosted Frederick Douglass at his Main Street home on Douglass' return visit to the community.

8 Dr. James Catlin

Catlin and his wife Martha, also a physician, began several hospitals including ones in Mercer and Dansville. A regular attendant of political conventions, he was at one time the Secretary of the Liberty Party, an anti-slavery political party. Catlin served on numerous committees with Frederick Douglass and was a frequent contributor to Douglass' paper in Rochester, Catlin also published his own abolitionist newspaper out of Erie, PA entitled *True American*.

9 John Batson

John Batson escaped from slavery in Maryland in the early days of the Civil War and immediately joined the Union Army where he secured his freedom. Following the war, Baston and his wife, a holistic healer, arrived in Sugar Grove through the invitation of local friends. Batson was present when Frederick Douglass returned to the community in 1868 and visited with the Harmon family, for whom Batson worked and lived in a house on their property. At his funeral, numerous local businessmen including Charles Shortt, son of the US Ambassador to Wales, carried Batson's casket.

10 Cynthia Catlin Miller

Hosting Frederick Douglass to tea at her home in 1851, Cynthia Catlin Miller's home had long been the capital of the Sugar Grove Underground Railroad. It was there that Catlin first organized the Female Assisting Society and the Ladies Fugitive Aid Society to help escaping slaves as early as 1836. On April 7, 1857, Cynthia opened her home to a fugitive slave who was 33 days into his third attempt of escape to Canada.