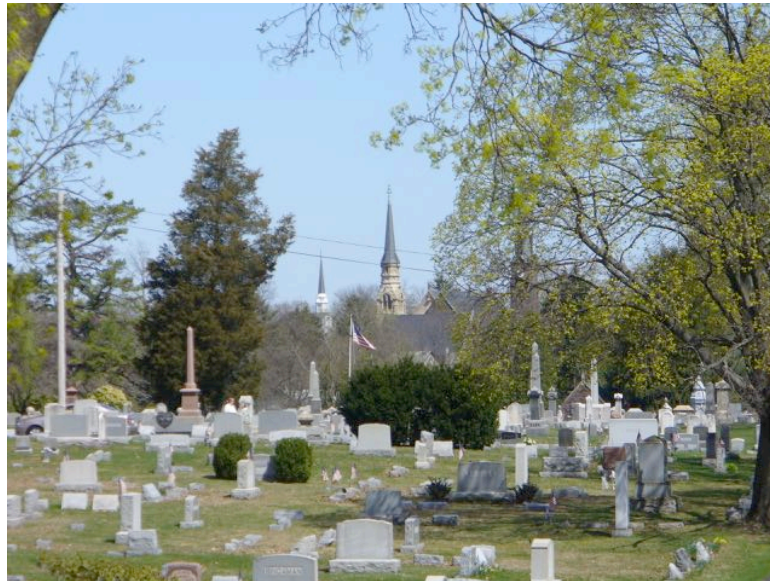


## Lewisburg Cemetery's Civil War Connections

By

**Robert M. Dunkerly**

Established in 1848, the Lewisburg Cemetery is one of the most important historic sites in the county. Founded in the antebellum era, it was part of the larger rural cemetery movement sweeping the nation at the time. These new cemeteries emphasized Victorian values with park-like landscaping, and statuary and headstone artwork. More prominent examples include Forest Lawn in Buffalo, Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston, Hollywood in Richmond, Green-Wood in Brooklyn, and Magnolia in Charleston.



Lewisburg Cemetery view

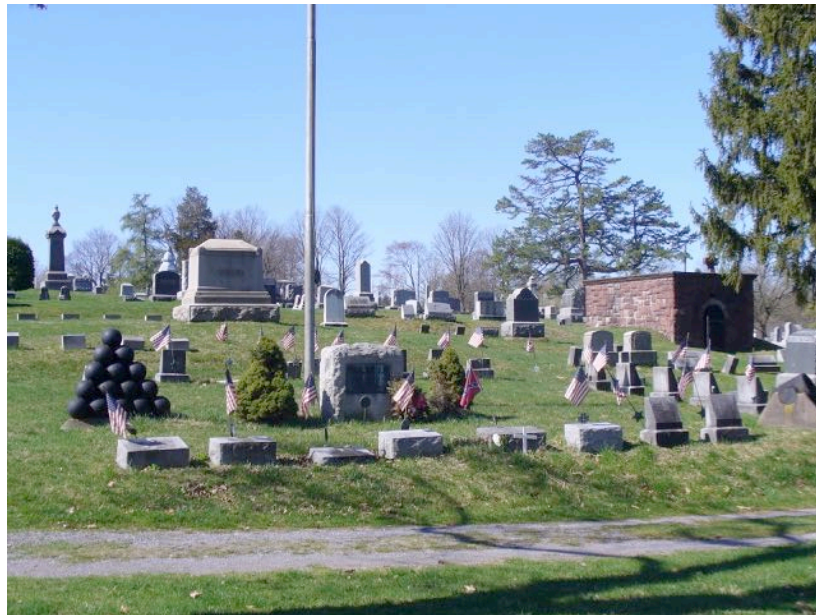
Author's photo

The Lewisburg cemetery was founded in time to coincide with the Civil War, and the newly founded University at Lewisburg (now Bucknell University, established just two years before the cemetery). A walk through the cemetery puts visitors into contact with some of the area's most important leaders, founders, and defenders. It is also a stunning place to observe cemetery artwork and design.

When war erupted in April, 1861, Union County had a population of 15,000, and during the four year conflict, over 500 enlisted. Pennsylvania played a

crucial role in the war: it was second in population, would provide the second highest number of soldiers of any northern state, had tremendous industrial resources, and lastly, had a key location. Pennsylvania was the closest northern state to Washington, DC, and some of the first troops to arrive to defend the capital were from the Keystone State.

President Abraham Lincoln called for three-month volunteers in April, 1861, setting a quota for each state. Enthusiasm was so strong that Pennsylvania exceeded its quota, and formed a Reserve Corps with the extra men. Men who volunteered that spring were formed into the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment, a three-month regiment. Within that time little action occurred, and when the unit's enlistments expired, many Union County men re-enlisted in new units. Across the state, longer-term units were organized, such as the 54th Pennsylvania, with many men recruited in Union County.



The G.A.R. section.

Author's Photo

Upon entering the cemetery, one of the most prominent features is the Veteran's Section. It was established by the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), and has been maintained over the years with assistance from the local Veterans of Foreign Wars. The G.A.R. was a national organization of Union Veterans formed after the war. Throughout the cemetery, Civil War burials are marked with metal G.A.R. plaques that hold a flag. Each conflict, in fact, has its

own design, so a visitor to the cemetery will see a variety of them.

The central Pennsylvania community of Boalsburg claims the site of the origin of the Decoration Day holiday, now known as Memorial Day. Even while the conflict raged, civilians began to gather to lay flowers on graves and honor the dead.

In 1868 the Lewisburg Chronicle published orders from G.A.R. commander General John A. Logan, stating that “The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance, no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.”



Grave of John W. Jordan

Author's photo

When decorated with American flags every May, one grave stands out: a lone Confederate flag waves amid the rest. This is the grave of John Jordan, the only Confederate soldier in the cemetery. Originally from Staunton, Virginia, he was a hotel owner before the war. He enlisted at the start of the war in 1861, serving in the 5th Virginia. After the war he came to Lewisburg as an itinerant merchant, where he died on August 22, 1867. He was buried “with honors due a

fighting man, regardless of which flag he served under, by the Grand Army of the Republic.”

In the Veterans Section are the grave of two African Americans, George Price and Brady Thompson. The enlistment of African Americans was controversial at the time, even in the north. Price enlisted in the 24th United States Colored Troops in 1862. Thompson served in the 8th United States Colored Troops (the units were segregated). Both survived the war.

Nearby rests Rev. James Price, a white Corporal in the 25th USCT. The colored regiments had white officers. Price enlisted late in the war: January of 1864, and survived his year and a half of service. The unit was organized at Camp William Penn near Philadelphia, the largest training camp for African American soldiers in the war.

Passing the Columbarium and the Chapel, one soon encounters a row of small markers, a row of children’s markers. Eight-year-old Adaline died on June 29, 1862, and her sister, two-year-old Mary Elizabeth died the next day. Two other siblings also died young, after the war. These are the children of Thomas Church. While Thomas was away serving, his wife dealt with the tragedy of losing two children in rapid succession. Was this an outbreak of disease? We don’t know. Thomas Church was discharged in 1864 due to a severe wound to his head that remained open for the rest of his life. After his return, he served as Treasurer of Union County from 1864- 67.

The Church monument and small headstones are also not stone at all. In the late 1800s a new type of headstone appeared in American cemeteries, and quickly caught on as trendy. The material, known as white bronze, is actually pure zinc. From a distance it resembles stone, though closer examination reveals it is clearly metal. Hollow monuments and headstones, made of this new material, rose on cemeteries across the nation. They soon lost favor, however, as many continued to prefer traditional stone as the material for burials and monuments. Within about forty years, use of zinc were rarely used. The Lewisburg cemetery has several excellent examples of this type of material, many with intricate detail.

Farther to the north is the grave of nurse Eliza Houghton Green. Nursing

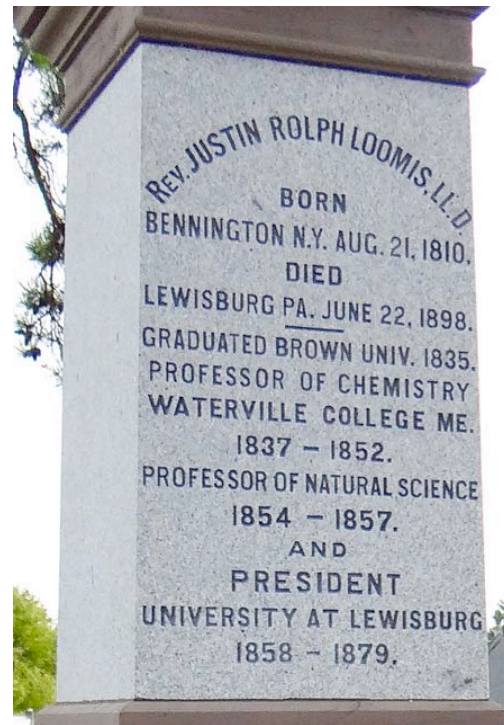


was a male occupation in Antebellum America, but the war's demand on manpower created new opportunities for women. Eliza Nevius Houghton, wife of Edward A. Green, and daughter of John Houghton, Esq., was born in Lewisburg, and educated at the University Female Institute at Bucknell. During the war, Lida, as she was known, volunteered in the United States Sanitary Commission with several classmates.

They treated sick and wounded soldiers in the Department of the Cumberland at Nashville, Tennessee. Much of Tennessee was occupied early in the war by the Union army, and Nashville was an important supply base and hospital center. She later was a teacher in the City Normal Schools of Nashville, previous to her marriage, and worked at Fisk University. After the war they returned to Pennsylvania, and Lida was active in the American Red Cross. She died in 1908 at age 73.



Monument to Justin Loomis and family



T Greaves photos

Turning to the west, on a prominent rise, is the recently restored marker for Justin Loomis. President of Bucknell for over twenty years (1858-79), his charismatic leadership guided the school through the difficult war years. Loomis

was known as a serious, no-nonsense leader who emphasized hard work and academic achievement. His tireless devotion is commemorated in a street named for him on the campus.

In the aftermath of the battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863, Loomis led a group of Lewisburg residents to assist local men who were wounded in the battle. The restoration of his monument in 2014, thanks to support from Bucknell University, was an important achievement for the Cemetery Association. Reaching the high ground farther up the lane, we enter an area clustered with prominent town residents.

Franklin Sterner, a Second Lieutenant in the 51st Pennsylvania, was killed in one of the largest and bloodiest battles of the war, at Spotsylvania Courthouse, on May 12, 1864. He was 22 years old.

Directly along the lane is the grave of one of the cemetery's most prominent Civil War casualties, Andrew G. Tucker, the first Bucknell student killed in the



Andrew C. Tucker Grave      Author's photo

Civil War. At the time Tucker was a Lieutenant in the 142nd Pennsylvania. He and his unit found themselves defending their home state on July 1, 1863 at Gettysburg. Tucker was mounted on a horse, leading his men. He was hit in the

right forearm, and his horse was disabled. Advised to go to the rear, he insisted on staying, one observer noting that he was “cheering and urging men by going into the thickest of the fight himself.” He was then hit in the middle of his upper back, and a third time in the lower back. Tucker reached the Lutheran Seminary which had been turned into a hospital. When told his wounds were fatal, he replied, “I am willing to die for my country.” Tucker lingered until July 5, long enough to learn of the Union army’s victory. He was buried in a makeshift cemetery on the Seminar grounds.

In the battle’s aftermath, his mother Margery, accompanied by Justin Loomis, went to Gettysburg to find his temporary grave. His remains were then moved to the Lewisburg Cemetery, and Lewisburg’s chapter of the G.A.R. was named in his honor.

There are several fascinating connections among the cemetery’s burials. Tucker’s sister Augusta was the third wife of Justin Loomis, and is buried here with the Tuckers.

Farther up we come to yet another nurse, Annabella Vorse Clark. The Mifflinburg resident entered the service at the age of twenty-eight and served as a nurse at General Hospital #3, Nashville, Tennessee. The city was occupied by Union forces and served as a hospital center for much of the war. Did she run across Lida Green, another Union County woman a thousand miles from home?

She served in this hospital until the end of the war and until all of the men were healed or sent home. Annabella met her future husband, Dennis Clark, while serving in the hospital in Tennessee, and she married him in 1869 in Lewisburg. They moved to his home in Minisink, New York. In the 1870 Census he was a wealthy farmer. Annabella raised his two children to his first wife but had none of her own. Dennis Clark died Aug. 24, 1893, and she returned to Lewisburg and lived there until she died Sept. 13, 1916, at the age of 82. She was one of the few nurses who received a pension for her service during the Civil War of \$12 a month. The Grand Army of the Republic attended her funeral and played “Taps” which was a great honor for a Civil War nurse.

Across the road lies James Merrill Linn, part of a prominent area family who readers will no doubt recognize. Linn was a Latin and Greek instructor at

Franklin and Marshall University. He was also a Lewisburg attorney. When the war broke out, he immediately left his practice to help recruit the 4th Pennsylvania. He was known for his keen mind and sense of humor. After the war he wrote a local history, *History of the Susquehanna and Juniata Valleys*. [author's added note: I mis-attributed this book to J. Merrill Linn. The correct authors are Franklin Ellils and Austin N. Hungerford. My thanks to Isabella O'Neill of the Bucknell Librdqary for spotting my7 error. RD, June, 2017]



Grave of James Merrill Linn      Author's photo

His brother John Blair Linn was also a writer, authoring *Annals of the Buffalo Valley*. Both are invaluable for anyone doing local history research in the area.

Just a few yards away is the Slifer family section, with a prominent marker in the center. Here we find Eli Slifer, Secretary of the Commonwealth, described by on contemporary as one of the “great men of Pennsylvania.” He played a key role in running Pennsylvania’s war effort during the Civil War. Today his home is open to the public as Slifer House Museum.

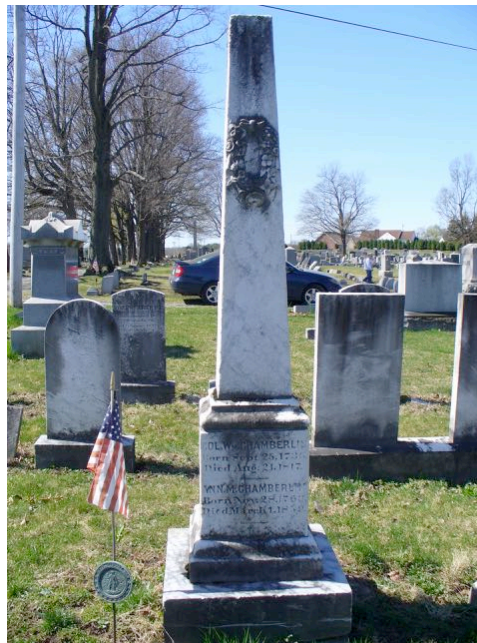
Slifer was the right hand man of Pennsylvania’s governor, Andrew Curtain, who in turn was a close confidant of President Lincoln. Pennsylvania was invaded three times during the war: a minor incursion in 1862, again in 1863 resulting in the battle of Gettysburg, and lastly in 1864, when Confederates burned Chambersburg. Slifer would have been instrumental in formulating the



state's response, and coordinating with Lincoln, Curtin, and other governors.

Nearby is the plot of the Chappell family, who named their sons after prominent Whigs, a dominant political party early in the Nineteenth Century. Zachary Taylor Chappell served in the 5th Pennsylvania Reserves, then in the 191st Regiment. His marker states that he died on parole while a prisoner at age 17. He was held at the prison in Salisbury, North Carolina, and must have been recently paroled (released). His brother Winfield Scott Chappell is buried there too but probably was too young to serve.

Around the corner is the large stone for the grave of Thomas Chamberlin, a corporal in the 150th Pennsylvania. He began study at the University of Lewisburg at only 14 years of age, graduating with high honors in 1858. After graduation he became the superintendent of an academy in Mifflin County for seven months before he traveled to Germany to study law and philosophy in the universities of Berlin and Heidelberg.



Chamberlin monument Author's photo

As political tension grew, Chamberlin returned to Lewisburg early in 1861. When the Civil War broke out in April of 1861, Thomas recruited a company of men called the "Slifer Guards," commissioned by Eli Slifer, and officially known as Company D, 5th Pennsylvania Reserves. Chamberlin became its captain and quickly won the respect and obedience of his soldiers with his kind and affable

personality.

The “Slifer Guards” participated in the battles of Mechanicsville, Beaver Dam Creek, Gaines’ Mill, and Glendale, all near Richmond, Virginia. On June 30th, at Glendale, while picking up the regimental flag from a fallen color bearer, Chamberlin was shot in the left leg just below the knee. After the Union retreat, Chamberlin was left on the battlefield and captured. He was taken to Libby Prison in Richmond, but was exchanged by early September. He was sent to a hospital in Baltimore to recover and while there was offered the rank of major in the newly formed 150th Pennsylvania.

The 150th participated in the opening day of the battle at Gettysburg—July 1, 1863—holding the position near Edward McPherson’s farm. They were attacked from both sides and the regiment suffered heavy casualties. Chamberlin was among the seriously wounded, having suffered from a bullet in his right shoulder and back. He was hit not far from where Andrew Greg Tucker was mortally wounded.

Chamberlin was unable to return to active duty and resigned his commission on March 15, 1864, having received a promotion to lieutenant colonel only nine days earlier. He eventually settled in Philadelphia and worked in the insurance business. Published in 1905, his book, *History of the One Hundred and Fiftieth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers*, has been recognized as one of the best regimental histories written by a veteran. He often spoke at reunions. He gave an address on November 11, 1889 when a monument was erected for his regiment at Gettysburg. He also spoke at the 50th anniversary of the battle in 1913. Thomas Chamberlin died on February 22, 1917, in Philadelphia and was buried in the Lewisburg Cemetery with his wife, Frances.

Just behind Chamberlin’s grave is that of Charles Eccleston. Born in Delaware, he first served in the 3rd Delaware, and later was a Lieutenant in the 3rd Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery. His wife Sarah served as a nurse. After he died at 38, apparently of an illness from the war, she became a teacher—eventually she went to Argentina to teach and died there.

Yet another of the celebrities in this section, and perhaps the cemetery’s most significant Civil War burial, is that of James Cameron: the first

Pennsylvanian killed in the Civil War. He died leading his men at the battle of First Manassas on July 21, 1861. He was buried in a hasty battlefield grave, interred with several other soldiers. Since the Union army fled, the area was controlled by Confederate troops, and the family was unable to recover his body.

After being buried twice near Manassas, Colonel James Cameron's remains were finally recovered by Union troops and brought to Washington. On March 17, 1862, a military escort from the War Department brought the coffin to Lewisburg, stopping first at the state capital. Joining them in Harrisburg was



James Cameron monument Author's photo

Secretary of the Commonwealth Eli Slifer, along with several members from the state Legislature and House of Representatives. The party reached Lewisburg after midnight, and proceeded to the home of James's brother William Cameron. A detachment of soldiers from the 54th Pennsylvania stood guard over the remains through the night.

The next day the family had a private religious service, followed by a procession through the streets of Lewisburg to the cemetery. A large crowd gathered along the sidewalks to pay their respects. The funeral procession included the hearse drawn by four white horses, a military honor guard, A.L. Russell, the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania, Secretary of the Commonwealth

Eli Slifer, R.C. Hale, the state's Quartermaster General, and even a handful of War of 1812 veterans. Reverend P. Rizer of Sunbury gave the eulogy at the graveside and Bucknell President Justin Loomis gave an address.

The *Lewisburg Chronicle* noted that, "business generally was suspended, and the line of procession, the windows and some roofs, were thronged with spectators." It was possibly the most elaborate funeral in Lewisburg's history.

Tucked against the edge of the cemetery here are two military headstones for two brothers: William and Barton Airey. William, who went by "Milton," and his brother both served in the 43rd United States Colored Troops (USCT), stationed in Maryland and Virginia. The 43rd USCT was present at Appomattox; imagine their joy at hearing of Lee's surrender.

Barton was working for Elizabeth Chamberlin in 1860, and Milton was a barber. Barton would have known Sarah Chamberlin Eccleston, the nurse, and her brothers, who were serving the war, yet another fascinating connection. They were born in Lancaster County and moved later to Lewisburg. Pennsylvania had the largest free black population in the nation, and also raised the most number of USCT's during the war.

Not far away is a stone for Thomas Grier who served in the 51st Pennsylvania. His name is hard to see because it is listed under his sister's. The engraving says he died of yellow fever at Morehead City North Carolina, in 1864 when his unit was stationed there. This is a reminder that more men died of disease than battle in Civil War. Thomas is buried at the top of that same section heading toward Route 15.

Perhaps few families exemplify service to country more than that of the Klimes, who sent seven sons to the Union war effort. Five survived: one dying of illness, and one in combat. Reuben Kline is one of those seven, and is buried up the road to the west. He served in the 51st Pennsylvania with five of his brothers. Wounded in right leg at Cold Harbor resulting in amputation, his brother Joel was at his side and also wounded.

Reuben was the youngest of the seven brothers of the Kline family, who fought. Brother John, serving in the 142nd Pennsylvania, was killed in the Battle of the Wilderness. His body was not recovered, and may have been one of those



consumed by the forest fires that raged there after the battle. Brother Jacob died from illness at a hospital in Annapolis, Maryland.

Reuben Kline was an active man despite his use of a wooden leg. He held the office of Register and Recorder for Union County for fifteen years and Commissioners' Clerk for six years.

Farther back, in the very center of the cemetery, rests Charles Bell, who came to Lewisburg in a unique way. Bell had been a slave in Virginia and ran away to Canada on the Underground Railroad. He was making his way back to the south when he passed through Lewisburg. Bell met Justin Loomis, who hired him to work at the University. Bell spent over forty years as a laborer maintaining the grounds on campus.



Charles Bell on the Bucknell campus  
Photo courtesy of Bucknell University



Monument, Charles Bell  
T Greaves photo

Walking down the hill toward the main entrance, on the left is a marker for Wilbur Blair. A musician in the 45th Pennsylvania and later a private in the 201st, his service did not end with the war. Blair served in the 7th Cavalry on the western plains afterward. He survived the Battle of Little Bighorn in 1876, where General George Custer's command met defeat at the hands of the Sioux. At his grave is the only Indian War plaque in the cemetery. An article by Richard Sauers about Blair appeared in ACCOUNTS, Vol. 4, No. 2.

A bit farther down on the right are markers flat on the ground for sixteen-

year-old Joanna Brouse. Her sister was born and died the day after her father was killed at the battle of Camden, North Carolina, April 19, 1862. Their father was Benjamin H. Brouse, 51st Pennsylvania. He enlisted October 9, 1861 and was killed in action six months later. Joanna died at McAlisterville School for orphans. This serves to remind us of the terrible cost of the war, not only on the men but also their families. The state established several homes for orphans, another reminder of the ripple effect of the conflict.

Their mother, Susanna Brouse remarried Cyrus Fetter who was a veteran of the 202nd Pennsylvania. Their monument includes the names of her daughters.

The spring of 2015 marked the 150th anniversary of the war's ending: Lee surrendered at Appomattox on April 9th, 1865. The Airey brothers of Lewisburg were there. Other surrenders followed: Confederate troops in the Carolinas on April 26th, in Alabama on May 4th, and in Texas on June 2nd.

In Union County, some families would be reunited with fathers, sons, husbands, and brothers. Yet others were in mourning. When the news of Appomattox reached Lewisburg, bells rang, celebrations broke out, and bonfires light the night.

There are eighty-two Civil War burials here, including men from Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, Ohio, and Vermont. Some of the most prominent Civil War-era Pennsylvanians rest here, such as Slifer, Cameron, Linn, and Tucker.

The cemetery is maintained by the Lewisburg Cemetery Association, and the author urges readers to support their programs and preservation efforts.

### **Further Reading**

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