Civil War Veterans Resting At Old Village Cemetery (Part 12)

In 1833, before Michigan became a state, Kinsley Scott Bingham became a native of New York. He married Sarah in 1835. In 1836, they moved to Flint, Michigan, and then to Ingham County. They purchased a farm in Section 12 of Green Oak Township. Bingham and Warden (who emigrated from Scotland only a year earlier) were both law students.

Bingham married Margaret Warden and Warden married Caroline Ewing. The two couples, along with other family members, built a log house on Silver Lake Road. Stables and barns were built, fences erected, and virgin soil planted. Margaret died in 1834, only four years after giving birth to Kinsley Warden Bingham. About a year later, his wife became Kinsley's wife.

In 1840, James Warden Bingham was born. Although several other children were born to Mary, all died in infancy.

Kinsley Warden Bingham married Frances Woodruff, a nearby neighbor, and made the family a successful enterprise. His younger half brother, James, helped with chores in the often long absences of their father, Kinsley Scott Bingham, who served in township, state and national government positions.

James was educated to be a teacher, attending a Seminary in Ypsilanti. He had taught in Plymouth a short while. Evidence indicates he was also enrolled at Michigan Normal School (now known as Eastern Michigan University).

With the onset of the Civil War, James enlisted May 14, 1861, shortly before his father's death, October 5, 1861. James, a lieutenant in Co. H, 16th Infantry Regiment, was stationed in Peoria, Illinois, serving as a recruiter.

Letters between mother (Mary) and son, detail his movements, and her continual concerns about his well-being. In one letter she encourages him to get his coat 'wadded' for extra warmth. James's duties included defense against "despicable guerrilla parties" and "pursuit of the rebel Morgan". His unit would also be "present at county elections at Busby Mills and see that no violence was offered Union citizens exercising their right of free suffrage."

James's continual movements often delayed letters and caused much concern for each other's well-being. His mother Mary's grief over the death of her husband (Kinsley Scott Bingham) evokes much sympathy in today's reader. Considering her feelings, she also writes of Kinsley Warden Bingham selling wood and grain, and of a good potato and apple crop.

As often occurs when conditions are poor, lonely, tired and hungry, ragged troops may consider mutiny. While in Tennessee, James writes of the necessity of "keeping small mutinies down." The death toll from disease was astronomical.

On November 9, 1862, at 22, Lt. James W. Bingham died of typhoid dysentery at Bards Town, Kentucky. His mother brought him home to be buried with his father, his brother's twin baby boys, her own babies and her sister, in the family cemetery on a knoll south of the house.

At the time of Mary's death in 1872, and the sale of the farm, Kinsley Warden Bingham transferred all those interred in the family cemetery to the Old Village Cemetery.


Help Needed

Can you volunteer a few hours a month to serve in some capacity within the BHS? We are in need people with professional skills willing to pitch and do their part in order to shoulder to burden of running our organization. We currently are seeking a treasurer, web site administrator, and editor for this newsletter. Please contact us for more details.

Fourth Annual Old Village Cemetery Cleanup

Old Village Cemetery Clean-Up: Saturday, May 5: 9am-1pm

Headstones of Brighton's past residents sit quietly in the Old Village Cemetery, peering over their city observing change through the years. Please join us for a civic pride event as we work to preserve this historic site.

You will find the names of prominent and ordinary folks from Brighton's earliest days who endured hardships which can only be imagined as they settled these frontier villages.

One main goal for this clean up is to have Old Village Cemetery in respectful condition for Memorial Day, May 28 in honor of the veterans buried there. Veterans of the many US military conflicts are part of the rich Brighton history.

The BAHS recognizes the contributions that our service men and women have made to preserve the freedoms we enjoy. Please join us as we revitalize these grounds and provide a respectful setting due this cemetery. We are going to be raking, collecting fallen debris, pruning small trees and shrubs, and cleaning around the edges of tombstones so they can be easily read. Some tools will be provided. Bring your leaf rake, lopping shears, gloves and small garden tools.

This annual event always proves to be day of fellowship and community service for all while experiencing the beauty of Old Village Cemetery. Everyone will leave with a good feeling, knowing their donation of four hours is a small thank you to our veterans for serving our great nation! Please contact us to sign up so that work can be planned accordingly. Everyone is needed for this community event! Thank you in advance.

Jim Vichich, BAHS President

30 Year Anniversary of BAHS

In June 1998, the BAHS, in unity with the Green Oak Township Historical Society, the Great Lakes Living History Society, and the Michigan 5th Regimental Band conducted a two-day commemoration of the centennial of the Spanish-American War.

This event was held at Island Lake on the original site of the 1880s-90s National Guard Janning Camp. Hundreds enjoyed the reenactments. A new Michigan Historical Marker was dedicated, replacing the original, which was badly damaged.

Also in 1998, transcription of the Old Village Cemetery was begun with emphasis on identifying and properly marking veteran graves. The transcription of several other area cemeteries was also undertaken, providing valuable aids to archival research.

The City of Brighton supported these efforts by improving care, increasing security and installing a fence. In 2002, the Michigan Historical Marker was dedicated.

Rededication of the rural Lyon School, as an example of historic structure reuse, took place in August 2001. The day was celebrated with a formal program, dedication of the historical marker, music provided by local high school students, and dozens of alumni who sat in restored desks with all enjoying refreshments on a day of perfect weather!