

2008-2009

## Haner Cemetery Reading

For Eaton County Genealogical Society

Cemetery Photo Project Committee

100 W. Lawrence Ave., P.O.B. 337

Charlotte, MI 48813

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The project to photograph headstones was undertaken in order to preserve what appears on the headstones. This is especially important in the older, smaller and uncared for cemeteries within the county. The deteriorating headstones in many cases will soon be unreadable due to age and erosion by the elements.

There have been earlier readings of Haner Cemetery but in preparing the headstones to be photographed, more clarification of numbers and letters became evident.

Farmland owners, Rufus and Sarah Haner, sold this parcel of land in section 13, for the purposes of a "burying ground", presumably thus its name, Haner Cemetery, in 1851 for \$25.00 to the Board of Health of Vermontville [Township], Eaton County. The deed (copy included) for this sale was not recorded within the county until 1853. The earliest burial found during readings was of a 20-year old woman named Juan Russell in 1852. The last burial located was of Benjamin Lake in 1914. It should be noted that at times this cemetery has erroneously been called Ames Cemetery.

Haner Cemetery sets on a hill, off the road in a clump of trees in the middle of a farm field at the corner of Gresham Highway and Shaytown Road, between Charlotte and Vermontville, and would not easily be recognized as a cemetery. Since previous readings the removal of the sheep that once helped to keep down some of the overgrowth, Haner is even more overgrown with myrtle, wild lilies and lilac bushes that have all gone wild. It is not likely that this small, nearly forgotten cemetery will any time soon be cleared of its overgrowth.

As is typical of old cemeteries many of the headstones are broken, separated and have fallen from their foundations, unfortunately many face down, and/or just plain sunk completely out of sight. Some of the headstones in this reading were actually dug up from under six to eight inches of overgrowth and soil and some were unmovable for reading. And some from previous reading were not found at all.

In 1981 my neighbor, S.D. Rogers, and I talked about Haner Cemetery as he had family there. This conversation prompted he and his wife, Iva, to trudge through the cemetery and do a reading of their own. I have included information from their adventure. Mr. Rogers, Dee as he was lovingly known, died at the age of 100 years and one month, he was our family's personal neighborhood and county historian and remembered much about many things...sharp as a tack.

In checking with the Vermontville Township Board secretary and president, the township sextant, Vermontville Library and the property owners it was found that there are no known burial records in existence for Haner Cemetery.

With the permission of the land owners a sign for the cemetery was made that will be placed some time in the summer of 2009.