

LIST OF PERSONS INTERRED IN HILLTOP CEMETERY

The Hilltop Cemetery in Mendham, New Jersey has been in existence since about 1745. The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church and the citizens of Mendham are fortunate to have a well-preserved and maintained cemetery in their community. However this was not always the case. For many years in its history the people of the community were busy with daily concerns and allowed the cemetery to be neglected. There was no effort to keep accurate records of the burials in the cemetery.

I became aware of the inadequate records because of my interest in genealogy. Alfred and Hattie (Sayre) Quimby, ancestors of our Willis family, are buried in Hilltop Cemetery along with many other relations. I started a family history for the Quimby family by going to the cemetery office and getting a copy of the record for the Alfred Quimby cemetery plot. My research was made more difficult by the fact that there were incorrect names and death dates on the record. I soon realized that other researchers had similar experiences because of the inaccuracies of the Hilltop records.

As a result of these problems I was inspired to start my own list of Hilltop burials. I found several sources of names of deceased persons buried in the cemetery. One was the 1926 Directory prepared by the Trustees of the Hill Top Church. This booklet covers the section around the church known as the "Old Yard". Another source was the book "The First Presbyterian Congregation – Mendham New Jersey" by Helen Wright. This book, published in 1939, includes many accurate death dates. I was also helped by an obituary collection of over 200 articles given to my family by a friend. Most of these persons were interred in Hilltop.

An indispensable source of names is the FindAGrave web site for Hilltop Cemetery. Unfortunately this site contains errors that are difficult to correct.

My list of about 4,850 burials covers the years from 1747 to 2020. According to the Find A Grave web site there are over 5,530 burials in Hilltop Cemetery. This figure is high since there are a number of duplicate memorials in the FindAGrave data base. I estimate the number of burials on my list is about eighty-five percent of those in the cemetery.

The columns of the list are organized as follows: Surname, Given Name, Year of Death, Date of Death, Age at Death, and Plot Location (if known). The report is divided into two sections. The first section is an alphabetical list of the deceased. The second section is the same information sorted by the year of death. I have not included any maiden names because of privacy concerns.

I have included on this list only the persons for whom I could find a complete m/d/y (Month, Day, Year) for a date of death. I have checked the dates for accuracy by using New Jersey state death records and/or by finding an obituary.

The New Jersey state death records available outside of the State Archives are generally organized into two different time periods. The earliest group extends from 1848 to 1900 and is being transcribed onto the Familysearch web site. The later group extends from 1901 to 2017 and is available on the computer at www.NewJerseydeathindex.com. This second resource, provided by an organization called "Reclaim the Records", has many gaps.

The obituaries are mainly from three newspapers: The Jerseyman; The Newark Evening News and The Morristown Daily Record. I found these papers and many other resources at the History and Genealogy Center located at the Morristown (NJ) Library.

I enjoyed researching the history of our ancestors buried at Hilltop and eventually developing this list. I hope the citizens of the community and visitors to Hilltop Church will find this list helpful in their family history quest.

Ruth Willis,
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