

GUIDE TO
OAK RIDGE CEMETERY
And Other Small Local Cemeteries
Buchanan, Michigan

Readings of Grave Stone Inscriptions
Supplemented by the Sexton's Records
For burials made through December 31, 2017

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THIS CEMETERY INDEX

The first book listing burials in Oak Ridge Cemetery was published in June 2005 by Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery. The records in that book were compiled by Russ and Mary Chadderdon, long-time residents of Buchanan and life-long residents of Berrien County. Grave stone inscriptions and the Sexton's records were the main sources of information. The Chadderdons transcribed every grave stone in the cemetery. They also consulted an earlier transcription made about 1975 by David Savage as well as records in the Buchanan District Library. The latest revision of the book, edited by Bob Brown and Donna Lace, has records of interments through December 31, 2017 and is the basis for this online edition.

In an earlier revision, a separate section was added to the introduction with a listing of about 175 names whose death certificates and/or obituaries indicate burial in Oak Ridge or Buchanan but for whom there are no grave stones and no indication of location of burial in the Sexton's records. Information on other (very small) cemeteries in Buchanan was added in the 2013 revision.

Names are generally in all capitals. However, names with an initial capital only are maiden or birth names though, in some cases we cannot be sure about maiden vs. middle names. Sometimes the maiden name is in the Notes column – e.g. “nee Jones.”

Where there is only a single year in the “Dates” column, this is usually the year of death or burial. When the single date was known to be a birth date, it was put on the left side of the column versus the right side for a known death date. In some cases, the single year could be due to the deceased being an infant who was born and died in the same year.

For location, the "Sec" column lists the Section letter or number, followed (in the next column) by the lot number within the Section. In Section E (Veterans Circle), the graves are arranged in concentric circles. The first grave in the outside circle is E-1 and the numbering continues to 71 in that circle. The first grave in the second circle is 201 and the numbering continues to 268. The third circle begins with number 301. Numbering starts at the northwest walkway for each circle.

While some additional information from the grave stones has been included in the "Notes and Readings" column, this was limited in the printed version to the extent that space allowed (one line per entry). Some stones have additional writing that is not noted here.

Every effort has been made to make this an accurate listing of persons buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery. In some cases, there were discrepancies among the sources used. Anyone who believe there are errors or omissions in this census are invited to contact Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery: RobtDBrown@aol.com.

Additional Comments:

While we have a good set of Sexton's records, they are not complete. Even for years where there are records, indications are that record keeping at times left something to be desired. Records from the beginning were organized by section and lot, including a plot diagram in most cases. Beginning in 1903, a chronological listing of burials was also kept. After 1917, this record is generally complete, listing Section and Lot and date of death as well as date of burial and, in many cases, age and residence.

However, from 1903 to 1917, while the list gives a date of burial in all cases, many of the names do not have a section and lot. Moreover, there are over 90 names on this list which have no section/lot and no grave stones. These names were not included in the early editions of this book, but have been included in the last several revisions in a separate section in the introduction. In addition, a number of other names have been included in this section based on research into obituaries and death certificates (most predating 1920). As of March 2018, there are a total of 176 names listed for which section and lot are not known.

Some death certificates say just 'Buchanan' cemetery while others say Oak Ridge. Oak Ridge Cemetery has been the only operating cemetery in or near the city since 1905, when the last known burial was made in the Sherwood Cemetery (a small cemetery with only about 17 burials). The only other cemeteries that might be labeled 'Buchanan' on a death certificate are the several very small family cemeteries in Buchanan Township listed below, plus Howe and Portage Prairie Cemeteries in Bertrand Township and Bakertown Cemetery.

Another situation occurs when there is a name on a stone, but there is reason to believe the person is not buried there. One example is that a stone is placed with a name and birth date for a still living person. In a few cases where we know an individual was buried elsewhere, we have kept the entry and added a note. In a few other cases, the family has erected a stone and listed the names of the whole family, perhaps as a memorial.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS INDEX

The remains moved from Kathryn Park (the old cemetery) that were not buried in private lots are designated as 'KP' in the Section column (and 0 for the lot). This is not an official cemetery Section number but is only entered to show a listing of the persons from the old cemetery whose grave stones are now in the Kathryn Park Memorial Area – on the hillside in northwest part of the cemetery, west of Section 22. In just a few cases, the entry KP ? indicates we do not know where the person is buried (probably in a family plot but without a grave stone). KPK means remains and grave stone were not moved to Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The section name M (or 22-M) is also not an official cemetery designation, rather, it denotes the More Mausoleum, which is built into the side of the hill on the south side of Section 22 (including Lots 36-45 in that Section).

The columbarium (for cremains) is located just to the SW of the Knight Chapel. It is designated "Col.-1" in the list of burials. The two columbaria east of the Knight Chapel for veterans are designated "Col." with "veteran" in the Lot column.

Abbreviations used in Notes & Readings

CW	Civil War
Col	Columbarium
mo (or m)	month
née (or né)	maiden name (name at birth)
PG	Public Grounds (Potter's Field)

Russell and Mary Chadderdon
Buchanan, Michigan
June 30, 2005

Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery
Buchanan, Mich.
revised March 2018 and May 2019
– D. Lace & R. Brown

OAK RIDGE CEMETERY

Oak Ridge Cemetery is located on the west side of Buchanan, Michigan, between Terre Coupe and Front streets. It is owned and operated by the City of Buchanan.

The GPS coordinates for the cemetery are: N41° 49.622' and W86° 22.722'.

DIRECTIONS from US-31: Take the Niles-Buchanan Road exit, and go west on the Niles-Buchanan Road toward Buchanan. When this road enters Buchanan, it becomes Front Street. Continue going west and a little less than 2 miles from the eastern city limit you will see the cemetery on the left.

DIRECTIONS from US-12: Turn north toward Buchanan at the stoplight at the corner of US-12 and Redbud Trail. Go north about 1-1/2 miles to Front Street (the first stop light) and turn left (west). Continue west for about one mile until you see the cemetery on the left.

Oak Ridge Cemetery consists of approximately 45 acres. There are 5 entrances: two on Front St., two on Terre Coupe, and one on Polis. The first Terre Coupe entrance (coming from the east) and the Polis St. entrance lead to the Knight Chapel. The second Terre Coupe entrance leads to the Sexton's Office.

In 2008, a new entrance sign (arch) was erected over the original Front St. entrance. This project was coordinated by Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery and funded entirely through monetary and in-kind donations from the public.

For the purposes of this description, the cemetery is divided into three parts: the North Part (the original 10 acres), the South (southwest) Part, and the East (southeast) Part. See the three maps showing Sections and Lot numbers.

The North Part of the cemetery is divided into Sections 1-26, and 40, plus Section G. (The line dividing Section G from Section A was the southern border of the original 10 acres of the cemetery.) When you enter by the Front St. entrance (under the arch), Section 1 is on your right and Section 2 is on your left.

The South (southwest) Part is divided into Sections A-F and H. When you enter the main Terre Coupe entrance (with stone columns but no arch), Section A is on your right and Section F is on your left. The Sexton's Office is straight ahead, at the intersection of Sections A, C and D, and is visible from the Terre Coupe entrance.

The Sexton's Office telephone number is (269) 695-3971. The City Clerk's phone number is 269-695-3844. The mailing address for the cemetery is: Cemetery Supervisor, City Hall, 302 N. Redbud Trail, Buchanan, MI 49107. There is more information on the City of Buchanan's web site at <http://www.cityofbuchanan.com>.

The East part of the cemetery contains the Knight Chapel (and parking lot), the new veterans area, and the newest sections of the cemetery (I, J and K). New graves are currently being put into Section I, but Section J is not yet in use. Section K is designated for infants and young children. The public columbarium is on the north end of Section I. There is access from the back of the Knight Chapel parking lot to the main part of the cemetery through Section G.

The large map (of the North and South/southwest Parts) was drawn by Michael DePyl in 1990. We thank the City of Buchanan for permitting its use. Since this map was drawn, Sections I and K have come into use (both east of Section A) and the new lots 21-B and 22-29 have been added to south side of Section 8 (in the NW corner of the cemetery).

Section 15, near the Front St. entrance, includes the cemetery's Civil War Memorial, consisting of a soldier statue and cannon. The cannon is a "Parrott Rifle," and was used in the Civil War on the U.S.S. Ladona. In 2011-2012 the base of the cannon monument was repaired and refurbished by the American Legion and an informational plaque was added to the north side of the base by Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery.

At the other (south) end of the cemetery is the Veterans Circle (Section E), which consists entirely of veterans graves. There is also a designated 'Soldiers Area' in Section 2 (Lots 96-100) which has the graves of eight Civil War veterans. Another section for veterans' graves has been established on the east side of the Knight Chapel and will be put in use when there is no more room in Section E. Two columbaria for veteran's cremains are also on the east side of the Knight Chapel and are currently available for interments.

Some of the areas on the maps which appear to be driveways have been planted to grass. Please drive only on the paved or gravel roads in the cemetery.

The Polis Street entrance and the first (east) Terre Coupe entrance lead to the Knight Chapel and the parking lot. The chapel is named after James Herbert (Brockett) Knight (1892-1945). After his mother Mabel (Smith) Brockett died in 1894, his father brought him to Buchanan where he and his sister were raised by his mother's sister and her husband, Emma and Dr. Melvin Knight. James Knight is better known as Jack 'Sky' Knight, pioneer aviator. While he had a long career, he is perhaps best known for his extraordinary flight on the night of Feb. 22-23, 1921, which some people credit with saving the U.S. airmail system from termination.

OTHER SMALL CEMETERIES IN BUCHANAN

Oak Ridge Cemetery is the only active cemetery in Buchanan Township with the exception of Bakertown Cemetery, which is partly in this township and partly in Bertrand Township. Oak Ridge Cemetery is by far the largest cemetery in the township.

The other cemeteries in Buchanan (with number of known burials) are: Colvin Cemetery (6), Dragoo Cemetery (28), Mead Cemetery (17), Orchard Hills (actually in Niles Township, 2), Sherwood Cemetery (17), and Wagner-Crum (6).

Bakertown Cemetery is located approximately where Sections 34 and 35 of Buchanan Township meet Bertrand Township (NW corner of Section 4 of Bertrand Township). There is a list of burials for this cemetery in the book on Bertrand Township Cemeteries published by the Berrien County Genealogical Society. Bakertown Cemetery is an active cemetery -- burials are still being made. It contains over 250 burials.

Colvin Cemetery is located on private property in the NW corner of Section 3 of Buchanan Township on land that originally belonged to Wilkinson/Wilkerson Colvin.

Dragoo Cemetery is located in a back yard on Chippewa Avenue in the city of Buchanan. It has also been known as the Virginian's Burying Ground and the Reynolds' Burying Ground. It has also been referred to as the McCoy Cemetery, but this name actually referred to the old village cemetery in Buchanan. Both the Dragoo Cemetery and the old village cemetery [Kathryn Park] are in Section 26 of Buchanan Township. There is a book written by Nancy Heib in the Buchanan District Library's Local History Room, with a history of Dragoo Cemetery and biographies of those buried there.

Kathryn Park is located on the SW corner of Fourth Street and Moccasin Avenue in Buchanan. It was the site of "The Old Burying Ground" (Buchanan's original village cemetery, also known as McCoy Cemetery). Most headstones and remains were moved to Oak Ridge Cemetery in the last third of the 19th century. See past issues of *Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery Newsletter* (e.g. Oct. 2006) for more information. Kathryn Park is now a children's park.

Mead Cemetery is located on the other side of the St. Joseph River from Buchanan in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 25 of Buchanan Township, east of Mead Rd. and north of Old Walton Rd. The plot of land is only 2 rods by 3 rods and is heavily wooded. Although owned by Buchanan Township, it is surrounded by private property. Past transcriptions include Michigan State Library (1944), D. Baker (1965), D. Savage (1980), and R. Cooley (2012). See also the *Berrien County Record*, Oct. 5, 1933, page 7: "Graves over 100 Years Old Found in Bunker Cemetery." This cemetery has, at various times, been referred to as Benton Cemetery, Broadhurst Cemetery, Bunker Cemetery, and Mead Road Cemetery. At the time most of the burials were made, this cemetery was part of Niles Township, but the land on the east side of the river was transferred to Buchanan Township in the 1890's.

The **Orchard Hills** site is located about two miles east of downtown Buchanan. There are only two known burials: Isaac P. Hanover and Frances Walton Platt – although it is

known that there used to be more headstones. It has also been called the Platt Family Cemetery. This site is actually in Niles Township about a mile east of the Buchanan Township line, but since it is closer to the city of Buchanan than to Niles, we have included it here.

Sherwood Cemetery is located in Section 14 of Buchanan Township, on Redbud Trail, north of Miller Road. It has also been called Fuller Cemetery; Mrs. G. Sherwood owned the property in 1873 and George E. Fuller owned it in 1887.

Wagner-Crum Cemetery is located on private property in the NW corner of Section 20 of Buchanan Township near Wagner Road. At the time David Savage transcribed it (1973), it was part of Earl and Norma Stevens' farm (ref.: *The Pastfinder*, Winter 1980-81, vol. 10, No. 3, page 58).

HISTORY OF CEMETERIES IN BUCHANAN

The first known cemetery in Buchanan, "The Old Burying Ground," was located at the SW corner of Fourth and West (now Moccasin) streets. This one acre parcel was purchased from a Mr. Mitchell in 1844. Although John Hamilton platted the settlement as 'Buchanan' in 1842, its residents and most outsiders continued to refer to it by its original name, "McCoy's Creek." The designation of 'Buchanan' as a station on the railroad in 1849 and the election of Senator Buchanan as President of the United States in 1856 eventually led to general acceptance and use of the name "Buchanan". However, the small cemetery was apparently often referred to as the McCoy's Creek Cemetery, or just the McCoy Cemetery.

By the early 1860's it was decided that the one acre site would not meet future needs, and many felt the cemetery should be located further from the village center. In 1864, 10 acres (square in shape) for a new cemetery on the south side of what is now W. Front St. was purchased from Warner Hamilton for \$500. The first lot was sold in August 1868 and the first burials were made that same year. For more information on the acquisition of the land and design of the original 10 acres of Oak Ridge Cemetery, see the July 2012 issue of *Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery Newsletter* (available on www.preservebuchanan.org, the Buchanan Preservation Society web site, and in the Local History Room of the Buchanan District Library).

Apparently, no new burials were made in the Old Burying Ground after Oak Ridge opened in 1868. Families began moving remains and grave stones from the old cemetery to the new: we know of 48 graves that were moved to family plots in the new cemetery and there were probably many more. By 1881 the old cemetery was no longer used, and in 1894 the Common Council of the Village of Buchanan moved to vacate it. Records show that the last time remains were moved from the old cemetery to Oak Ridge was in 1898.

At that time (1898), 39 graves (39 grave stones with 40 names) were moved by the Village to the hillside in the northwest part of the cemetery. Friends of Oak Ridge Cemetery erected a memorial marker at this site in 2006. The plaque lists the names of 115 people who were identified as being buried in the old village cemetery, including 21 who cannot be accounted for and either were not moved or do not have a surviving headstone.

There are a total of 239 names of people with burial dates before 1868 in Oak Ridge Cemetery. Most of these 239 burials came from the Old Burying Ground (McCoy Cemetery/Kathryn Park), but at least a few were moved from other cemeteries or rural family plots. There are six names with burial dates between 1835 and 1843, which would have predated the establishment of the old village cemetery. Our only Revolutionary War veteran, Edward H. Otis (1766-1852), was moved to Oak Ridge from a cemetery in Indiana long ago.

The site of the old cemetery became overgrown and the subject of complaints in the local newspaper. In many cases the holes left when remains were removed to the new cemetery had not been filled in. About 1920, the area was cleaned up and turned into a children's park. Originally called Moccasin Park, it was renamed Kathryn Park after Katherine ('Kit') Kingery (1859-1947), the person who spearheaded the clean-up and transformation into a playground.