Talk by Eleanor Strong Asher
10/28/77

Marking of cemeteries with graves of Revolutionary soldiers
Chancellor Livingston Chapter DAR
Thelma Wilkin, Regent

PINK'S CORNERS CEMETERY

Just by looking around, you can see that this cemetery is unique, a bit different from all the others. What we are marking today is the restoration--really a replica--of the oldest cemetery in Dutchess County.

The original cemetery, according to Miss Helen Reynolds and Dr. J. Wilson Poucher in-Old Gravestones of Dutchess County, was at the site of a former German Reformed Church. The sign at the road attests to that. I quote the authors:

"A church was erected on this site in 1716 which stood for nearly a century. It was the first church building in Dutchess County, ante-dating the Dutch church at Poughkeepsie by about seven years. The congregation that built the church was composed of German Lutherans and German Calvinists. In 1729, the Lutherans withdrew and organized St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Rhinebeck, what we commonly call Stone Church.

The Calvinists continued to use the original church building from 1729 to 1802. The congregation as a unit passed out of existence about 1802, individual members of it being absorbed in a new German church in the village of Red Hook.

The ground around the church at Pink's Corners was used for burials from early in the eighteenth century. It is now abandoned."

I have here the photostatic copy of a survey map showing the land sold by the Trustees of the German Reformed Church to George Pink in 1836 which shows the five-sided "Old Burying Ground" on Pink's land. The original cemetery comprised four acres, this replica 4/10's of an acre.

On Sunday, June 15, 1950, while Mrs. Walter Ackert was Regent of Chancellor Livingston Chapter DAR, the restored small cemetery was dedicated in the presence of 74 neighbors and DAR members.

Although the restoration was a project of the Chapter, the expenses were paid by The Very Rev. Edwin J. van Etten, then Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral in Boston, Mass. He was a cousin of mine and a Rhinebeck native who loved Rhinebeck and especially the old Dutch church very much. He did it as a memorial to his mother and his two aunts, who were former members of this Chapter.

Stone given by local men was built into a dry stone wall --2' underground, 3' wide, and 3' high above ground--by two elderly stone masons. The wrought-iron gates are framed by two granite posts. The bronze marker reads: In memory of Alice Hill, Sarah H. Van Etten, and Sophia H. Strong, Charter Members of Chancellor Livingston Chapter, D.A.R."

Dr. van Etten had the grave stones straightened. Some were field stone markers, crudely cut by surviving members of the family, some roughly ornamented. Slate, red sandstone, and marble were used for others.

Many of the stones of the 1760's and 1770's have German inscriptions, or part-German - part-English. The names reflect the changer to English: There are Eckert and Ackert, Koll and Cole, Maul and Moul.

Some of the nineteenth century stones have interesting epitaphs. In memory of John Barringer, who died in 1818 at 25:

"Death is sent alas how soon
His morning sun was set at noon."

For John Pottenburgh, who died in 1819 at 70, we read:

"Death is a debt to nature due,
Which I have paid and so must you."

When Poucher and Reynolds copied inscriptions here in 1913, the cemetery was "overgrown and deserted." They noted 24 inscriptions, three of which were Revolutionary soldiers. At the time of the restoration, more were found, so that now there are over 40 markers and eight flags for the veterans of the Revolutionary War. The 24 listed in Old Gravestones of Dutchess County are as follows:

Ann Ackert
John Barringer
Henry Barringer
Catherine Cole
*Johannes Eckert
Margaret Frederick
Abraham I. Kip
John A. Kip
Hannes Koll
Jacob Moul
Anna Moul) wives of
Dorothy Moul) Jacob
*Rev. soldier

Frederick Moul
Jacob Moul
Martin Moul
Mary Moul
John Pottenburgh
John Frederick Pottenburgh
*S_____, F. S. d. 1781
S_____, C. S.
Catherine Schultz
Ann Smithman
*Capt. Frederick Striet
Margaret Striet Uhl

In closing, I want to mention how beautifully the Town of Rhinebeck Highway Dept. takes care of this cemetery for us. I also want to thank Fr. Prutton, for this is the second cemetery he has helped us to mark.

Perhaps you'll want to look at some of the stones before you leave. Thank you