

## Ye Olde Robbins Burial Ground Notes

Here is some information I gathered (summarized) about the Robbins Burial Ground. Bottom line is that I still don't have solid documentation of a transfer of the cemetery to State of New Jersey. The Department of Environment for the State of New Jersey should have documentation of the land transfer in their records. I did contact them back in 2007, but never heard back whether they had documentation or not.

Path forward should include the following:

1. Establish contact with DEP again and see if they have any documentation.
2. Contact Allentown Historical Society and brain storm a plan for upkeep of cemetery - propose possible tie-in with Robbins House (State of NJ controls this).
3. Prepare a newspaper article that combines past history with current state of cemetery.
4. Possible book detailing history of Robbins Burial ground from the perspective of the burial ground as a constant contrasted with changes to surrounding area.

Deed chronology - At least six deeds related to Robbins holding this land have been documented. The following summary is from Todd Hogrefe's survey of the burial ground (A Genealogical/Historic Survey of Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place, Upper Freehold, and NJ - Copy at the Allentown Library, Allentown, NJ).

- Deborah Lincoln was buried May 15, 1720, the hill and the land around it was owned by her grandfather, Richard Salter.
- 1-Between this date and December 12, 1762, this land passed into the hands of Daniel Robbins Jr.
- 2-December 12, 1762, Daniel Robbins Jr. released his possession of the burial ground to Moses Robbins, Joseph Robbins. Daniel Robbins of Allentown, Nathan Robbins, Zebulon Robbins and Moses Robbins Jr
- In 1786, the property surrounding the burial ground was bought from Lewis Robbins by Captain Samuel Covell, but the cemetery remained in the possession of the Robbins family. Burial ground came to be referred to as the Covell Hill burying ground because it was situated atop the hill surrounded by the land of Samuel Covell.
- 3-Deed dated March 3, 1796, dismissed Zebulon Robbins of Upper Freehold Township. Monmouth County, and Nathan Robbins of Mansfield Township, Burlington County as trustees of Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place and granted the land to Davis Robbins, George Robbins, Antrim Robbins, Ephraim Robbins and Ezekiel Robbins of Allentown, Elijah Robbins and Isaac Robbins.
- 4-September 16, 1847 George Robbins and Ephraim Robbins released deed to Elisha Robbins, Jacob F. Robbins, Timothy Robbins of Monmouth County and Nathan Robbins of Mercer County.
- 5-Deed dated January 1, 1884, Nathan Robbins of Hamilton Township. Mercer County, being the only living trustee, forfeits his claim of the burying ground to Samuel M. Robbins of Hamilton Township and Barton B. Hutchinson of Trenton, Mercer County.
- 6-Deed dated May 17, 1923, grantors of the burying ground were Aaron H. Robbins of Hamilton Township, and Barton B. Hutchinson of Trenton, Mercer County. Grantees were George B. Robbins and Charles Perry Hutchinson - the great-great grandson of Joseph Robbins.
- The last funeral in the burying ground was that of Eliza Steward In 1914.
- 1960's, the Green Acres program acquired the area around the cemetery for Assunpink Creek State Park. The acre of land containing the cemetery was turned over to the state Division of Fish, Game, and Wildlife for development as a recreation area.

## West Brothers

- 1938 Sunday Times-Advertiser –Trenton, NJ – West brothers' caretakers for cemetery

- 1938 - Erected monument at roadside below burial ground. Erected by James West and C. Palmer West

Green Acres

1. Present Day Efforts

a. Assunipink Wildlife Management Area – called office at the site in search of deed and was directed to contact headquarters in Trenton.

b. Deed search with NJ

i. Contacted Monmouth County Historical Society

ii. Discussed deed with Ed Raser, author

c. Contact with Hutchinson Descendants

i. Email with Richard Hutchinson

ii. Letter and documentation to Carolyn Houck

iii. Letter and documentation to Charles Percy Hutchinson

d. Tax Map

i. Researched NJ tax maps – current map shows 1 acre area – no reference to it in tax listings however.

e. New Jersey Department of the Environment

i. Contacted Renee Jones at DEP back in 2007. She was looking for the deed. No response back from her.

ii. New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

iii. David Chanda, Director

N.J. Division of Fish and Wildlife

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I just got off the phone with Charles Percy Hutchinson, Jr. whose dad was the last deed holder. Bottom line: He never heard about the Robbins Burial Ground growing up and couldn't help. That doesn't rule out his dad turning over the deed to the state or NJ scooping up the cemetery with the other properties. I'll revisit this with NJ DEP in a few weeks when I have a day off. To be continued...