

Salem Cemetery

fast facts

Located on the NW Corner of Brummitt Road & Ash Rd Granger, Indiana

There are approximately 738 gravesites

Spanning the years of 1841 to 2021

Maintained by the Harris Township

A Cemetery Before a Church How did Salem Cemetery begin?

The Evangelical Association began sending missionaries and ministers into Indiana about 1835. Consistent preaching in Harris Township by the Evangelical Association began in 1846. Although no church buildings would be erected until 1858, a class of approximately 28 members was organized in 1847. Members met in homes and in the Wahl Schoolhouse. The site where the church now stands once was land that belonged to George and Catherine Smith. George came to America from France in 1828. He married Catherine, from Germany, in Ohio in 1829. Their first daughter, Margaret, was born in Ohio in 1835, but their first son, John G., was the "second white child" born in Harris Township in 1837, according to his obituary. The George Smith family is listed among the first members of the Salem class in 1843. The class became known as "The Smiths" or "Smith's Church". It was also known around the area as, "The Dutch Church", because there were many Germans among the Evangelical Association community.

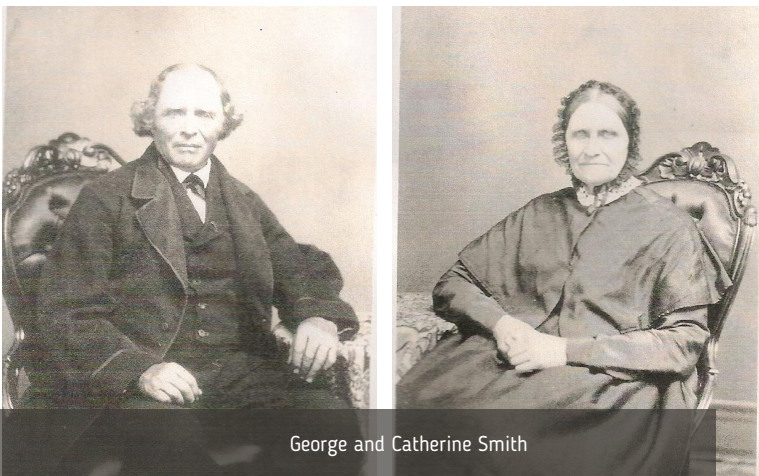
Who Is Buried Here? The first five people

The first to be buried in the Salem Cemetery was *Mary Lathrop Smith* in 1841. She gave birth to her daughter, Mary, at the age of 37 in New York and before the end of her 38th year, the family moved to Harris Township and Mary (Lathrop) Smith passed away. She was buried on George Smith's land, three years before the Evangelical Association class was organized. It's unclear what her relationship to George and Catherine Smith might have been. They do not appear to be blood related and they both travelled to Harris Township from different parts of the country- George and Catherine from Ohio, Milo and Mary from New York. Mary left behind her husband Milo and six children spanning the ages of 2-16.

The next burial for *Infant Cox* wasn't until 1848. The only clues we have for the family of infant Cox are the Initials "D. A. & E.", on the gravestone. No other Cox are buried in Salem and no one with the last name of Cox can be found on the membership roll.

Nine year old *Jessey Jackson* was buried in 1849. His sister, *Hetty*, died the next year at the age of 21. Their brother, Calvin, at 18 years old in 1852, and finally their mother passed away on 8 March 1853 at the age of 56. The family moved from Ohio to this area as early as 1840. Their father and husband, Giles Jackson, married Mary Stevenson on 8 May 1854 and they had a daughter, Rebecca, the following year in November.

Sarah Prior Miller was the wife of Rev. Adam Miller. Adam and Sarah were both born in Pennsylvania and made their way through Ohio, settling on the border of Michigan and Indiana in 1830. They had 13 children together. Sarah was buried in 1850 and Adam in 1854. More stories about Rev. Adam Miller can be found in the 1893 "Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs of Elkhart and St Joseph Counties, Indiana".



George and Catherine Smith

Over the Years

A Church, A School, and A Cemetery

George and Catherine Smith appear to be the first owners of the land where the church and cemetery now sit. Their son, John G. Smith, inherited the land, presumably when his father passed away in 1860. A school (known as the Dutch School) and a church were both built on the land, years after the first person was buried in the cemetery. The first church building was built in 1858. The date the school was built is currently unknown, but it does appear on the 1875 plat.

It's understood that the original church was built further South, sitting more within the present day cemetery, while the school existed where the church sits now. The school can be seen on plats as late as 1895. By the 1911 plat, the school no longer appears on the map. It's unknown when the school was torn down, however, the Salem Evangelical Association Church built in 1904 was built in its place.

Just as vast as the grave markers worldwide are, so too are those found in Salem Cemetery.

Tablet Headstone - Taller than it is wide.

Monument Headstone - Wider than it is tall.

Statue Headstone - A sculpted memorial

Bevel Headstone - Short with a slanted face.

Tree Headstone - In the shape of a tree trunk.

Obelisks - A column that tapers toward the top.

Footstone - Marks the foot of an individual grave.

"... Salem began to talk about building a new church which led to the building of the present structure. This was dedicated Nov 20, 1904, by Rev. S. P. Spreng ..."

John E. Thornton, 1965

Harris Township Care

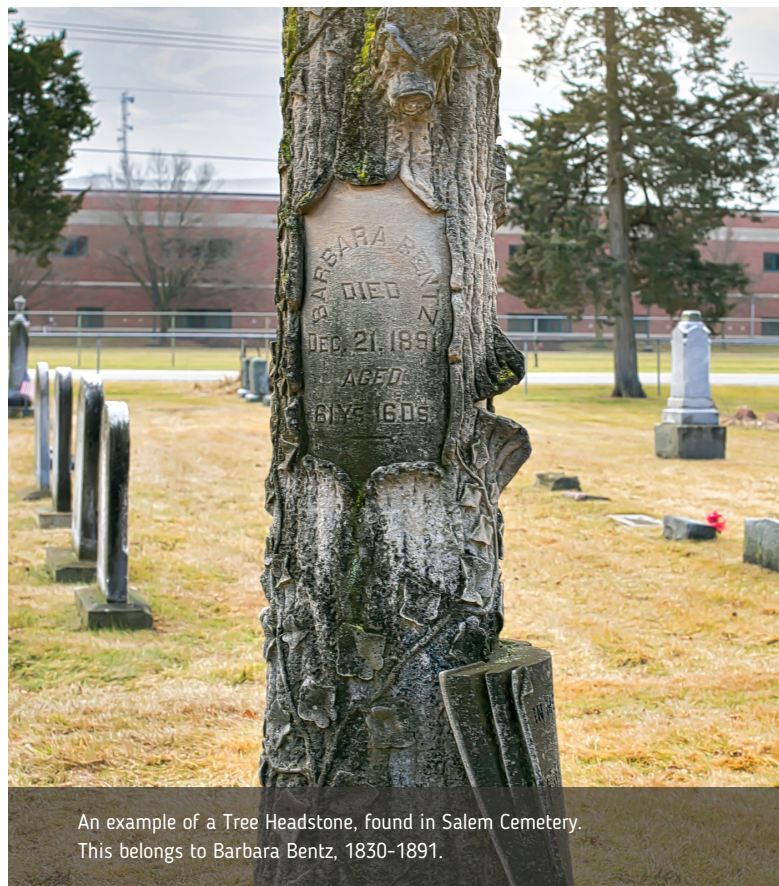
The Salem Cemetery Committee (with John E. Thornton serving as President) cared for the cemetery until 1963, when they petitioned Harris Township Trustee, Richard R. Dewey, to permanently provide perpetual care and maintenance of Salem Cemetery. The Salem Cemetery Committee gave the reason of insufficient assets and funds to do the job well.

Since that time, Harris Township has maintained and cared for the Salem Cemetery for sixty years. This includes cutting and trimming the grass, straightening monuments, leveling and seeding the ground, maintaining fences, and cleaning up expired plants, to name a few of the responsibilities.

The township coordinated the restoration of cemetery headstones in 2015-16 and again as recently as 2022, with plans to continue in 2023.

For more information on the Salem Cemetery, including news on current projects and pictures, please visit www.harristwp.com.

Burial plots are not available for sale at this time.



An example of a Tree Headstone, found in Salem Cemetery. This belongs to Barbara Bentz, 1830-1891.