

OUR NEIGHBORS--STRUTHERS

Captain John Struthers of Washington County, Pennsylvania, was so impressed with the land to the north of Yellow Creek, he purchased 400 acres from Turhand Kirtland (court transactions show that in February, 1800, the transfer of land from Kirtland to Struthers was made legal).

In October, 1799, Struthers returned with his wife Mary and unmarried sister, Agnes Struthers. He built a log cabin on a knoll overlooking the creek. Here in August, 1800, his son Ebenezer was born. He was the first male child born in the area.

Struthers built a gristmill, the first in Poland Township, and soon added a saw mill, both on the banks of the Yellow Creek. In 1803 Thomas Struthers was born. He played an important role in the development of Struthers for whom the City of Struthers was named.

The growth of Struthers was slow. Struthers was an unincorporated part of Poland Township until October 21, 1902, when the Struthers Villagers decided that incorporation was necessary for better government. After a heated election campaign, the seven democrats and the republicans voted for the first mayor of the incorporated village.

The original City occupied territory on both sides of the Mahoning River and covered an area of 776 acres. On March 16, 1921, 48 acres west of the City (in Poland Township) were annexed. Approximately four years later, Struthers nearly doubled its size by adding 689 acres west of the existing City (portions of both Poland and Coitsville Townships). This newly annexed area was bounded by Midlothian Boulevard on the north, Youngstown-Poland Road on the west, and Brandon Avenue on the South. In 1930, on May 24th, two separate areas were added to Struthers. On the north side of the City, 84 acres of Coitsville Township were annexed, along with 509 acres of Poland Township on the south side of Struthers. Six years later, on June 6th, 31 acres were annexed to the southwest side of the City. As the growing pains of the City continued, twenty-nine acres were added May 5, 1954, and another 49 acres were annexed on June 7, 1957. Again on October 7, 1960 there were 35 acres added. Annexation continues with the Hamilton Woods area around 1981. Currently, the City has over 2,250 acres with a total of 238 acres annexed from Coitsville Township and the remaining 1,300 acres from Poland Township. At the time of the writing of this book (May 1996), Struthers is again trying to annex 85 acres south of the city.

OUR NEIGHBORS--LOWELLVILLE

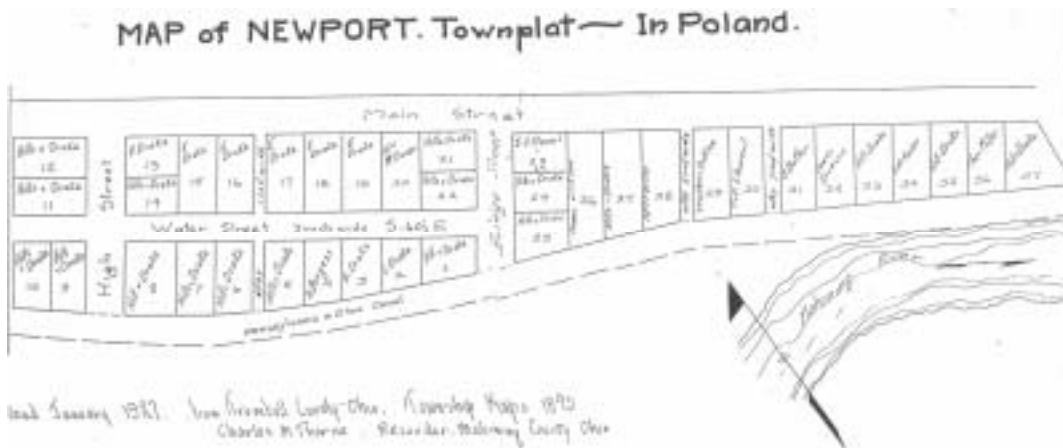
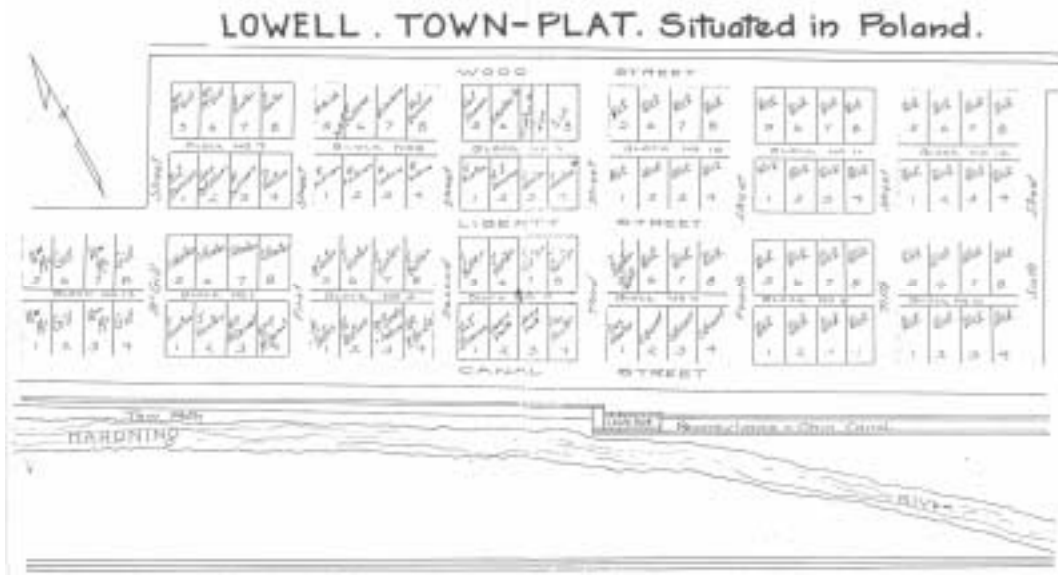
The village is located in the northeastern area of Poland Township, about a mile from the Pennsylvania State line. Here may be found the beginning of the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains, which tower above the village on either side.

The pioneer settler of the site now occupied by Lowellville was John McGill, who came to Poland Township from Pennsylvania in 1800 and bought 200 acres of valley and hillside land. Here he built a grist mill, usually the first industry in any Western Reserve settlement. Later Robert McGill built and operated a sawmill at the same place. This settlement was known as McGillsville. Across the Mahoning River was another settlement known as Lowell Town. Eventually both settlements joined together and

became Lowellville.

Its growth actually began with the movement for the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal. It was 1839-40 before the canal was completed and in operation, while the village plat was laid out in 1836. As early as 1828 coal had been mined at a bank near Lowellville that was later known as the Mount Nebo mine. The limestone industry around Lowellville flourished from the beginning and in its last days, the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal--or the short stretch of that waterway that remained--was used exclusively for hauling limestone from Lowellville to upper Mahoning Valley points. Some of the more extensively worked quarries were the Pence, Arrel, Moore, McComb, Johnson and Erskine. Even before this time, the railroads had been built in the valley and in 1872 the canal was definitely abandoned.

Lowellville incorporated in 1890 and, in 1985, Lowellville Village withdrew from Poland Township.



1840 Map before Lowellville was a Village Shows Lock no. 5 of the Penna.-Ohio Canal

OUR CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH

By June, 1956 the Catholic population in the Poland area had grown so much that the Bishop of the Diocese of Youngstown, Bishop Emmet Walsh, established a new parish under the patronage of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The official date of establishment is September 21, 1956. Father John P. Gallagher was named the first pastor. The first Mass was offered on Sunday, October 21, 1956 in the auditorium of Poland Union School. Plans were begun immediately to develop facilities for church services, school and social functions to serve the 325 Catholic families.

The construction of the school and church complex began on April 29, 1957. Mass was celebrated for the first time in the new church on Sunday, December 8, 1957. The formal dedication took place on March 23, 1958. The school opened in September, 1958 with eight class rooms. Sister Rita Dechello, O. S. U. was the first principal. The Truesdale residence was purchased to serve as a convent for the four Ursuline Nuns assigned to teach at Holy Family School.

The parish and school enrollments continued to grow. In response to that growth, the second floor was completed in the school. A new rectory and office was also built and was completed in 1964. The former rectory became an additional convent to accommodate the additional Ursuline Sisters serving the school.

Vatican II affected many changes in the style of Catholic worship. In response to these changes, Father Fredrick Slaven, then pastor, led the parishioners in renovating the Church. It was completed in March 1979.

Holy Family Parish continues to grow. Presently, there are 1,600 families. The school has grades kindergarten to eight with 375 students with a full- and part-time faculty of twenty. The school complex is currently referred to as an Educational Center because of its use for adult education, meetings, retreats, social and community outreach. There are also a variety of religious education programs for high school, middle school and elementary school students attending area public schools. There are 500 students enrolled in these programs. One hundred volunteers assist in this ministry.

In 1991 plans for a new church were begun. In August, 1995, the rectory was moved to the southwest part of the property to allow for the new church, which would be built in the area where the rectory was located. The move was completed in April, 1996. Renovations were made in the rectory to meet the adult educational needs of parishioners. Ground-breaking for the new church was held on June 22, 1996, with a ceremony and blessing of the site by Fr. Philip Conley, Pastor, and Fr. Michael Swierz. All parishioners who were present had an opportunity to partake in the "first shovel of dirt for the new foundation." Blessing of the rectory and open house was held following the ground-breaking ceremony. The new conference room in the basement of the rectory is named the Angela Merici Hall, after the foundress of the Ursuline Sisters, who have been a vital part of Holy Family Parish since its beginning.

The church will seat 650 and can expand to seat 750. The present church will then be renovated to meet the physical education and the social needs of the school children and other parishioners.

Present long-range goals for the parish call for continual attention to the religious

education of the youth and increased outreach to families especially those undergoing unusual stress. These efforts are under the guidance of Parish Council, the Finance Committee, and the various advisory bodies of the parish.

The present staff members are: Fr. Philip Conley, pastor; Fr. Michael Swierz, parochial vicar; Sr. Charlotte Italiano, O.S.U., Principal; Mrs. Mary Ann Itts, Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Paula Ekis, Youth Director: and Mrs. Mary Ann Bilas Bush, Pastoral Musician. The parish is also served by Deacons Edward Hawkins and Ray Hatala. Mrs. Ronnie Sue Gregory is Director of the Youth Choir.



Holy Family Church ground-breaking ceremony on June 22, 1996
(Courtesy of The Catholic Exponent)

THE POLAND UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The history of Methodism in the Western Reserve begins around 1801, when Obediah Crosby, a local preacher, brought his family from Connecticut to his cabin in Vernon Township and organized a class, which included his family and those of his two neighbors. The Methodist Society in Poland was not organized until 1832, although Poland had been visited from time to time by Methodist circuit preachers since a much earlier date.

Initially, the congregation held its worship services in the log school house on the Village Green. Membership grew rapidly, and plans were formed within two years to erect a church building. The building site for the church was purchased for \$50 from Turhand and Polly Kirtland. After scrutinizing the minutes book of the Official Board, it seemed that extensive repairs to the current building may have played a significant part in the decision made at the board meeting of July 23, 1902, when the Rev. Willis S. Rowe was authorized to continue with the subscription drive for a new church building.

The new building was to occupy the same location as the current structure, which

needed to be removed. The building was soon razed, and for the next year the congregation worshipped in the old, unoccupied Davidson store building, which was rented from Mrs. Stoddard for \$4.00 per month after the counter had been removed. The cornerstone was laid on the building at 8 Main Street (Lot 26, part of Lot 5) on July 17, 1904. A metal box was placed in the cornerstone containing a bible, a church discipline, a few coins and several papers. This box was recovered during the razing of the structure in 1957, and is stored in the present church building. Moisture almost completely destroyed all of the paper articles placed in the box. The cornerstone is now nestled in the shrubbery at the southwest corner of the church.

The stone church building began to feel the constraints of its size in the late 1930s, and the building was remodeled and enlarged in 1949. Among the material gifts to the building was a stained glass window in memory of William McKinley, with a fine portrait of the president in its center. This window is on display in the meeting room.

In the May 19, 1905, edition of the Vindicator, an announcement was made that no services would be held in the Poland Presbyterian Church on Sunday morning because of the dedication services at the Memorial Methodist Church. On April 1, 1957, the Memorial Methodist Church sanctuary was destroyed by fire. An electrical short was the cause of the blaze. The building had to be razed, with very little left to be salvaged. The Main Street property was sold in 1958 and the land for the present church at 1940 Boardman-Poland Road was purchased. On August 31, 1958, the first worship service was held in the new sanctuary, and consecration ceremonies took place on April 1, 1962, the fifth anniversary of the fire. Finally, a "Day of Fulfillment and Dedication" was observed on Sunday, May 20, 1973.

In August, 1965, the church acquired the house and property at 6664 Shawbutte, which has served as the minister's home ever since.



NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD

New Life Assembly of God was founded on January 23, 1984, with Duane L. Bull as its Pastor. The first services were held in the lower level of the American Legion Post directly behind the Village Hall. The first service had 130 people in attendance. This created quite a space problem as the Legion Post had only 85 chairs available. Those who could not find a place to sit, stood along the walls, in the kitchen and even in the restrooms. The following week, attendance grew to 140 and then to 150, and by the end of January, to 180. As the church continued to grow, a larger facility was needed. The people prayed for a site, and felt that the Lord opened the doors of Poland Middle School for them to continue their services.

Within a few weeks the church was nearing a membership of 200, and Pastor Bull began to search for property on which to build a new facility. In the Spring of 1985, 4 1/2 acres were purchased at the corner of Western Reserve and North Lima Roads in Poland Township. Construction of the initial building began in September, 1985, and the building was completed in May, 1986. The congregation moved into its new church building on May 25, 1986, following a week of fasting and prayer. The membership totaled 440.

Since then New Life has continued to grow. Additional property has been acquired giving the church over eleven acres; the building has been expanded three times, and a larger sanctuary is being planned for the future. The congregation has now grown to over 600 people and has powerful ministries to children and youth. A preschool/daycare was begun in 1994 along with weekly meetings for youth and a newly formed youth center for teens. A large senior citizens group meets regularly as well as women's ministries, boys and girls clubs, Evangelism outreach, and a highly organized prayer ministry. The Church also supports 50 full-time missionaries at home and overseas.

The purpose of this Church is to Preach the Gospel of Jesus and to see peoples lives changed in the image of the Lord.



POLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In 1802 the Presbyterian congregation in Poland was organized by the Rev. William Wick, pastor of the Congregation of Youngstown and Hopewell, and a member of the Presbytery of Erie. Six months later, a constitutional convention was gathering to create the state of Ohio. There are no records for the church's first 32 years. The earliest Session Book now in possession of the church is dated 1834. The earliest record of a congregational meeting is dated 1855, with evidence that there was an earlier book.

In 1804 a log meeting house was erected on the village green. That same year, the Rev. Nicholas Pittinger was installed as pastor. In 1828, the congregation built a frame church to replace the log meeting house. "It had three galleries and a high pulpit. It sat in the center of the green. In the bell tower was a bell newly purchased by subscription."

In December, 1854, one month after A.S. MacMaster was installed, the congregation resolved that a committee of five take into consideration and report on "location, materials, dimension, plan, style, and probable cost of a new church edifice."

Just one month later, they gathered to hear that the committee offered three plans differing in size and cost. The committee strongly urged that the plan calling for construction of a basement story to house heaters, rather than relying on the more common stoves on the main floor, be used. The cost of this building was estimated to be \$3,500. It was made of brick.

The congregation purchased the present church site because it faced on the "public square" and because the church had been offered the greater part of the lot in donation. The land, measuring 12 rods by 5 rods, belonged by lifetime lease to John Wishard. A portion of it was occupied by the district schoolhouse, a frame building erected next to the cemetery when the log structure on the green was abandoned. The frame schoolhouse had been built about the same time as the Frame Church, and it had to be moved to make room for the new church. Eventually, it was placed at what is now 406 Main Street.

When the final accounting for the church was made in 1858, it was found that the building cost \$4,850 and that not all of the proposed improvements had been made. Two subscriptions had left the congregation \$1,027 short of the cost. A loan of \$1,000 had been negotiated. The note was coming due in eight months, and a third subscription had to be arranged. It was resolved "that the trustees assess 25% on the present price of the pews (1858) and to collect it. This final semiannual collection for the purpose of paying arrearages to the pastor for 1856-1857." Pew assessments and pew rental became a regular obligation in the brick church. And it was not taken lightly; a letter of dismissal to another congregation was held up on one occasion until the family leaving town had paid its pew rental to date and left permission for the pew to be sold.

Probably only a few Presbyterians were aware of and helped operate the Poland branch of the Underground Railroad, which was located at what is now 211 Main Street, for the purpose of hiding fugitive slaves. The owner of that building, a dentist, was called to serve in the Union Army.

In January of 1893, the trustees announced that the brick church must either

undergo extensive repairs or the congregation should build a new church. It was May , 1896, and after much dissuasion and many different architectural plans, the congregation decided to designate a firm to build the stone church. A contract between the church and the builder showed that it would cost \$8,515.40 to demolish the brick structure and build the new church. No further details of the building program are found in the congregational records. The church was dedicated on May 23, 1897.



BETHEL FRIENDS CHURCH

As a young man, George Fox was greatly troubled by the lack of reality in the services of the Church of England. He longed for an inner, personal experience with God and spent several years traveling country searching for deep relationship with the Lord. One day, as he cried to God in desperation, he heard a voice saying "There is one Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition." Fox was overjoyed with this first hand discovery that Christ was alive and could be personally present with him. He was very excited and began proclaiming to all, this message of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Although Fox had no intention of beginning a new church, it was inevitable that his followers would band together. The new faith spread rapidly until there were Societies of Friends all over England. All this began in 1649, almost 100 years before John Wesley's revival ministry.

Groups of friends were among the early immigrants to America. They settled in many of the colonies. In 1672 George Fox visited America and established the Maryland Yearly Meeting. In 1801 the first monthly meeting was established in Ohio. Their first sessions were held at Mt. Pleasant Yearly Meeting House which is still standing today and is maintained by the Ohio Historical Society. After 150 years, the Ohio Yearly meeting had members from 7 states and Canada. In order to identify themselves better the name was changed to Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region.

In 1958, a desire grew among certain Christians of Poland to establish a Friends Church in this area. The first building used was in East Lewistown. In July, David Myton was appointed as pastor of this extension point. Another group, organized in Struthers in 1922, known since 1952 as the Evangelistic Center Church, requested a

Friends pastor in 1959. In 1961, these meetings from East Lewistown and Struthers joined together, the members chose the name Bethel Friends, and they started building a church on lots they purchased on Spitler Road in Poland. They moved into their new building in 1965.



POLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEMETERY



This Marker is at the Cemetery

The Presbyterian Church Cemetery is located next to the Presbyterian Church, in Poland Township, (Range 1, Town 1) in the old Western Reserve, southeast of the center of Poland

Village, on South Main Street (Rt. 170). According to H. Z. Williams & Bros., History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, Ohio, 1882, (Vol. 2 p69-70), "The oldest graveyard in the township is that adjoining the Presbyterian Church of Poland. It was established in 1804, and in it repose the bodies of many of the first settlers and a large number of their descendants." The cemetery covers approximately 1 1/2 acres.

There are nine Revolutionary Soldiers here: James Adair, William Campbell, James Reed, James Russell, John McCombs, Robert Smith, James Scull, John Truesdale

and William Reed. The War of 1812 has three soldiers here: John Arrel, William Guthrie and Isaac Walker.

Many of the older headstones have eroded with time, making it impossible to read their inscriptions.

LOWELLVILLE CEMETERY

The first land acquired for the Lowellville Cemetery was 3 acres purchased from A. D. Houston & Wife on June 11, 1881.

The second purchase of 1.75 acres was made on June 1, 1885, from A. D. Houston and his wife. It wasn't until October 30, 1923, that the Poland Township Trustees purchased 9.175 acres of land from John Campbell, et. al.

William J. Maurice, Jr. was superintendent of the Lowellville Cemetery January 1, 1932, to October 30, 1971. Under his supervision, the drives were surfaced in June, 1932, with Interstate Amusite. It was not until 1938 that the first rubber tire lawn mowers were first used. The wheelbarrows also had rubber tires.

In the spring of 1939 the Lowellville Cemetery Annex was greatly improved by planting various trees and shrubs such as Junipers, Pinus Mughus, Chinese Elms, Arborvitaes, and Hemlock. In 1940, additional landscaping included Birch, hard Maple and Norway Spruce, which replaced the hemlocks that had died. The trees and specifications were made and furnished by the Damascus Nursery Co. April 23, 1941, an Eclipse mower was purchased for use in the cemeteries.

Past Superintendents of Lowellville Cemetery were: Red Wilkerson 1974 to 1975; Gene McCullough 1975; Fred Baun 1975 to 1980; Clyde Mohr 1980 to 1984; and Ed Beach 1984 to present.

It should be noted that Howard (Howdie) Dickson, an employee of Poland Township from the 1920's to the late 70's or early 80's, was a fixture in the cemetery. He remembered where everyone was buried because he knew all the people. He mowed the cemetery by hand: "NO TRACTOR" until his retirement. He never drove to work, he walked. He never got his driving license .

Ed Beach credits his knowledge of the cemetery to Howdie Dickson, who taught him everything he knew. Mr. Dickson didn't have a family, just his 'friends' in the cemetery. When he died in 1985, the Poland Township Road Department, along with Crane Monument Company, purchased a headstone for his grave. It read: Howdie Dickson, Caretaker Lowellville Cemetery. (The first tractor to mow Lowellville and Poland Cemetery was in 1980).



One of the early monuments was made to resemble a tree

POLAND CENTER CEMETERY

The Poland Center Cemetery is located on Struthers Road, just south of Center Road (Rt. 224). The 192 year old cemetery was unkempt for many years with high grass and brambles. Many headstones were broken and missing. Time and weather has washed away the markings, making them illegible to read. The Mahoning County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society has determined that more than 200 burials took place here. The earliest legible marker dates back to 1811. By the 1900's the cemetery wasn't being used too much and the last burial was in 1929.

In the old cemetery contains the graves of two Revolutionary War soldiers, one from the Civil War and one from W W I. The Revolutionary soldiers interred here are Robert Lowrey, born June 3, 1749, in Ireland, served as a ranger in the war and came to Poland Township in 1802, where he died May 18, 1814; and William Strain, who served with the Lancaster County Militia and died in Poland at the age of 87 on August 8, 1845.

In the early 1980's Edwin Beach and the Road Department cleared, trimmed, reset some markers as best they could, some broken pieces that couldn't be matched still lie piled under a tree. The cemetery is kept mowed and tidy.

Within the acre of this cemetery, the Presbyterian Church of Struthers was born. Even before the first log church was built in 1817, the pioneers were worshipping together in their homes. The first log building was replaced by still another, and then a brick church was completed in 1827. Yet another was built in 1849 and not until 1884 was that building dismantled and removed to Struthers.

The Rev. Mr. Douglass, who died Dec. 24, 1823 at the age of 32 is buried in this cemetery. In Volume I of the Trumbull County probated court records--Mahoning County was not created until 1846- his sole possessions at the time of his demises were

one saddle, one bridle and two barrels of whiskey.

In the Anderson Family plot, Arthur A. who died in 1852 at the age of 79 and his wife Mary who was 85 when she died in 1872, is Moses Sisco, a black man originally from Austintown who worked for them. He died April 19, 1870 at the age of 33.



Better known as the Struthers Road Cemetery

RIVERSIDE CEMETERY



Established in 1884

The Riverside Cemetery is .4 of a mile east of the center of Poland Village on E. McKinley Way and Riverside Drive. This Community cemetery was started in 1864 by the Kirtland Family. The Kirtland family plot has 30 graves in it and the last one laid to rest was in the Kirtland Family plot was George Kirtland Bishop.

A group of civic minded citizens organized a Cemetery Association on January 14, 1865, under an act of Legislation of the State of Ohio passed in 1848 creating

Cemetery Associations. Some of those present were: Walter Arrel, A. G. Botsford, C. F. Kirtland, Jacob Lee, Dr. Joseph Truesdale and John G. Leslie who was appointed Chairman.

On March 28, 1865, the first 3.3 Acres of land was purchased from Dr. Joseph Truesdale and his wife Elizabeth, for the sum of \$22.00. In 1899, 15.39 Acres were purchased from the John Sparrow Heirs.

On April 26, 1887, the following petition was drafted. "Whereas, Hawkins Post No. 416 Department of Ohio G. A. R. feeling that a monument should be erected in the cemetery of Poland to perpetuate the memory of the soldiers of Poland and vicinity who fell in the defense of their Country during the late war--and we the citizens of Poland and vicinity acquiescing, do hereby agree to pay the sums set opposite our names for erection of a suitable monument to be placed in Poland Cemetery." This became known as the soldiers circle. The last soldier buried there was Pvt. Pricate Leslie E. Werner who was killed in action on Sept. 12, 1918.

Note: When walking through the cemetery to track down missing history, it began to take on a new dimension. You hear and read about certain people but not much about their families. They are all there. Husbands, wives, sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters- in-law, babies, grandchildren and even nieces and nephews.