

Cradle Graves at Prospect Hill Cemetery



A cradle grave consists of a gravestone, a footstone, and two low stone walls connecting them. This creates a rectangle designed to hold plantings to memorialize the person buried below. It resembles a bed, with a headboard and footboard. The flowers are used to mimic a blanket on the grave, filled with colors and textures.

Cradle graves were popular in the Victorian Era. They can be for any age, but many are for children. Originally, the families of the deceased would plant the flowers, but over the last several decades—they have been abandoned in many cemeteries.

At Prospect Hill Cemetery, The Garden Club of York maintains our Cradle Graves. Individually, they visit the cemetery and plant numerous plants on the graves and then maintain them throughout the months.

Thank you to The Garden Club of
York for their continued collaboration
with Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Revised June 2025



Cradle Grave 1

Location: Section A - by Van Baman Mausoleum
Size: 19" W x 53" L x 10" deep



Simon and Elizabeth Minich

Simon Minich (1756-January 27, 1819)
Elizabeth Minich (1766-May 19, 1837)

Simon and Elizabeth were married in 1784. They were members of Trinity United Church of Christ. Simon was born in Berks Co. to German immigrant parents. He owned land next to the Codorus. They were reinterred at Prospect Hill Cemetery, however, their original burial location is unknown.

Cradle Grave 2 & 3

Location: Section A - between Stewart Mausoleum and Soldier's Circle



Philip F. Fry 1833-1888

Philadelphia based wholesale grocer. He was buried beside his first wife, Elizabeth Dietz Fry, who he married in 1847. Berger, Audenreid and Co. wholesale grocers were his last partners in the grocery business.

Philip's second wife, Elizabeth Wanamaker Fry, was the sister of John Wanamaker, the department store tycoon. She is buried with her parents and other family members in Mount Vernon Cemetery.

Elizabeth Dietz Fry

Date of Death: January 18, 1865

First wife of Philadelphia-based wholesale grocer—Philip F. Fry. While Elizabeth was born in York and ultimately buried here with her husband, she lived most of her short life in Philadelphia.

Cradle Grave 4

Location: Section S - by Danner Circle (2nd Section Row)
Size: 6" W x 15" L x 6" deep



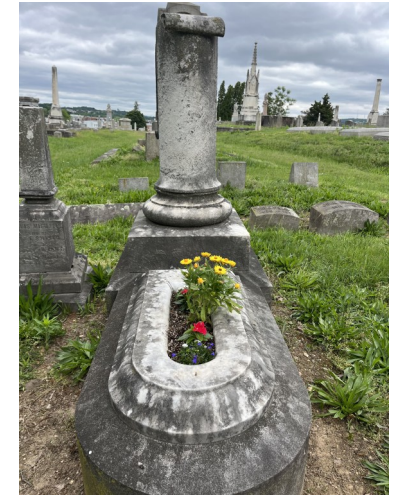
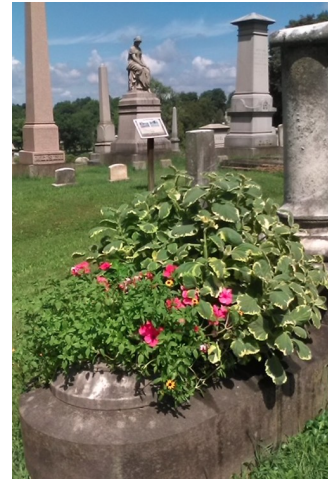
William Bender
"Our Willie"

Child of Martin and Emma Bender
Date of Death: approx. mid 1870's

Emma Bender died in 1881 at the age of 43. Her burial is the first on the large monument close to that of William Bender. William is not listed on the 1870 or 1880 census, though a sister is born in 1874. It is likely "Willie" was born and died sometime between 1870 and 1880 and was therefore never listed in the census. There is no mention of an infant's death coinciding with the passing of the mother in 1881. William's father, Martin, was a local merchant and had a tailoring business. Later, he had a dry goods shop. William's mother, Emma, was a Weiser, part of the banking family in York, PA.

Cradle Grave 5

Location: Section H - at the top in the triangle
Size: 6" W x 19" L x 15" deep



Wife of W. H. Smyser
Elmira Jane (Motter) Smyser
1840- January 14, 1868

1st wife of W.H. Smyser. Born in Hellam, near Kreutz Creek, Elmira was a member of Reformed Congregation at "Creutz Creek". (AKA Mira Jane Motter.)

Fannie Smyser
Date of Birth: November 1854

Born in Maryland, 2nd wife of W.H. Smyser. Fanny was a dressmaker. She and William were married in 1868 and she lived with her husband, William, until his death in Baltimore on February 19, 1902.

Cradle Grave 6

Location: Section H - Bottom of Hill before the bush along road
Size: 10" W x 24" L x 10" deep



Eliza Grisman

Date of Birth: December 7, 1818
Date of Death: December 16, 1880

The name Grisman does not appear in the 1856, 1877, 1880 or 1881 directories for York. An Eliza Grisman, married to Henry Grisman, appears in the 1860 census, but the birthdate of 1834 does not coincide with this Eliza Grisman. Eliza is located next to the Daron monument, but we were unable to find any connections.

Cradle Grave 7, 8, 9

Location: Section F, near to Section G
2 Larger Cradle Graves Size: 9" W x 39" L x 21" deep
Smaller Cradle Grave Size: 8" W x 25" L x 21" deep



Samuel Spangler Hersh

Date of Birth: April 24, 1826
Date of Death: May 2, 1876

Samuel Spangler Hersh was the Great -Great Grandson of Baltzer Spangler (1735-1798), making him a relation of many of the other cradle grave inhabitants. He owned a store on the corner of North George Street and Market Street with his brother during the 1850's. The Hersh family were early residents of the Springdale area of York. Samuel's wife, Margaret, inherited a tract of land and the Hersh family purchased an additional 65 acres adjoining present day South Queen Street, called Peacock Hill Farm. Samuel was the father of local banker Grier Hersh. Grier is credited as having brought golf to York and was central to the start of both the Country Club and the Lafayette Club. He also maintained an interest in the Scots-Irish side of his heritage.

Cradle Grave 7, 8, 9 Continued

Margaret Jane Lewis Hersh

Date of Death: May 1865

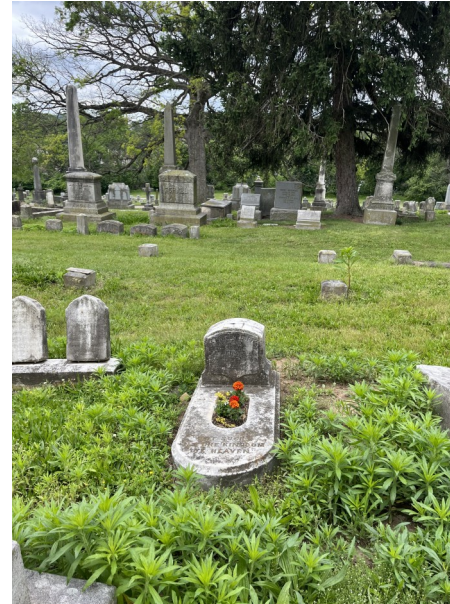
Granddaughter of Charles Barnitz (1787-1850), congressman and lawyer from York, PA. Margaret inherited property situated near present day York Hospital and the Unitarian Church. Findarave.com incorrectly uses her marriage date as her death date. She appears to have died shortly after the death of her infant daughter, in the Spring of 1865, presumably of a birth related infection.

Infant daughter Margaret J. L. Hersh

Date of Birth: March 18, 1865

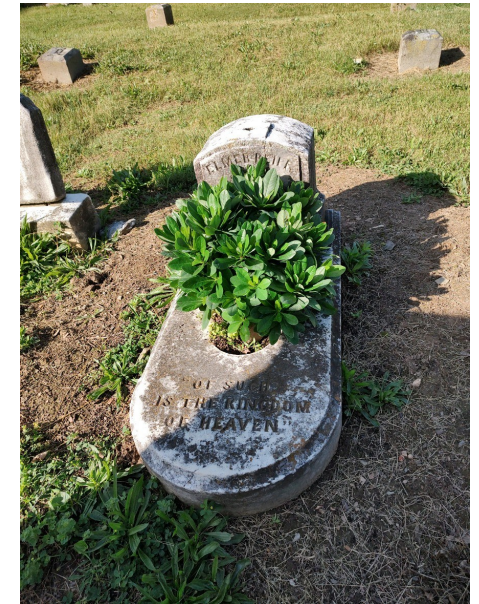
Date of Death: May 5, 1865

One month old baby of Samuel and Margaret Hersh, younger sister of Grier Hersh.



Cradle Grave 10

Location: Section E, Lot 241



Elmer Reiff Dick

Date of Birth: July 1, 1867

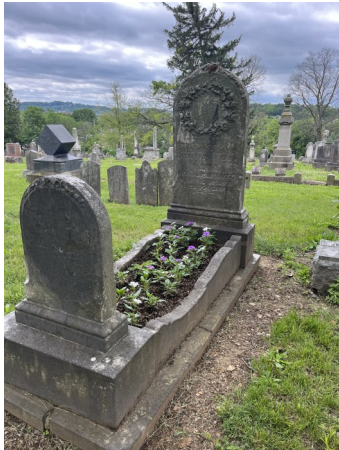
Date of Death: April 29, 1869

Infant son of Francis & Elizabeth Dick.

Siblings: George Brinton McClellan Dick and Francis Marion Dick.

Cradle Grave 11

Location: Section E - Headstone is for Jacob Dritt, located along the road between Sections E&F



Jacob Dritt
1783-1834



Son of Revolutionary War Hero, General Jacob Dritt, who was drowned trying to cross the Susquehanna River in the winter of 1817. His family owned the "Dritt Mansion" located on the Susquehanna River. This site is the present day Zimmerman Center for Heritage building. Many members of the Dritt family are buried in the cemetery located on the hill behind the mansion. Jacob Dritt owned the property directly across from the Trinity United Church of Christ on West Market Street, which may explain why he is buried at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Maria "Polly" Spangler Dritt
1783-1858

Married Jacob Dritt in 1813. Maria was the Granddaughter of (Johan) Balthasar Spangler, early York resident and owner of the Black Horse Tavern. Daughter of Baltzer Spangler, Revolutionary war veteran. Member of Trinity Reformed Church.

Cradle Grave 12

Location: Section E - located behind 2 mausoleums
Size: 10" W x 24" L x 5" deep

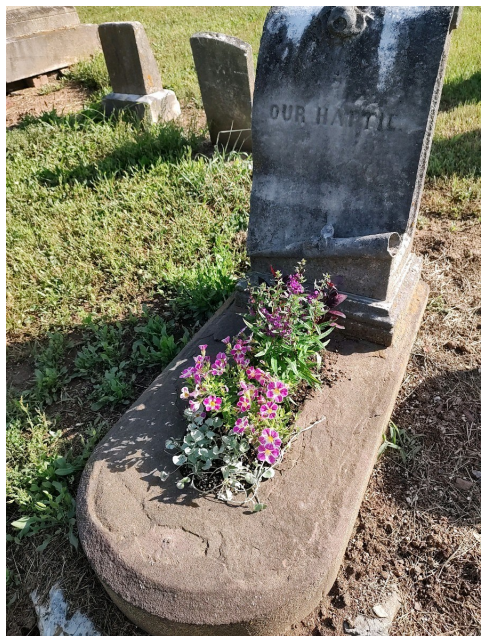


Hattie J. G.
Year of Death: 1882

Sadly, very little information can be found about Baby Hattie. A listing in the York Gazette in April of 1882, under "Prospect Hill Interments", makes mention of the burial of "child of Garzett".

Cradle Grave 13

Location: Section A - behind Daniel Eichelberger Monument
Size: 6" W x 15" L x 5" deep



Jacob A. and Catharine Wilt

Date of Birth: March 26, 1824

Date of Death: April 26, 1860

Jacob A. Wilt was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ and was a watchmaker and jeweler by trade.

Because of her proximity to the graves of the Wilt family, it is also possible that Hattie may have been the infant daughter of Jacob and Catharine, who was born and died in between the 1870 and 1880 census. On the family lot card, she is listed as Hattie Wilt in space one of the family lots.

Cradle Grave 14 and 15

Location: Section A - behind grave of Henry Welsh
Small Cradle Grave Size: 6" W x 14" L x 6" deep
Large Cradle Grave Size: 8" W x 21" L x 3" deep



Lt George P. Welsh

Date of Birth: March 26, 1824

Date of Death: April 26, 1860

George Welsh entered the Navy at the age of 16 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant before his death of "congestive fever" at the age of 36. (Congestive fever is an early term for malaria.) He was a veteran of the Mexican War. He died while aboard the US Frigate ship "Sabine", while stationed in Aspinwall Colon Panama. His remains were shipped to Prospect Hill Cemetery. He was buried June 1860 and was survived by a wife, son and daughter at that time. His journals are located at the Library of Congress.



Ellen Silvis Welsh

1834-1902

Ellen was born in Reading, PA. Ellen was widowed at a young age, after her husband, Lt George P. Welsh, died of "congestive fever" in 1860. Ellen never re-married. She died near Germantown, PA. As per her wishes, she was cremated and her ashes returned to York for burial next to her husband.

