



Photo by Barbara Baker Anderson

The Spring Hill cemetery, formerly known as Backesto burial ground is probably the most widely known cemetery of this county. It was named after Amos Backesto who was murdered in 1884. Annual Memorial Day services are held there in the cemetery which adjoins the church. It was originated immediately after the church was built and there are twenty-five soldiers buried in the cemetery. A man by the name of McDaniels is said to have been the first man buried there and a youth by the name of McNeal was buried there 100 years ago. The first person was buried in a hollow log coffin. The oldest marker shows 1851.

The Berne Witness, Adams County, IN; May 1, 1940

Oldest Adams County Cemetery Bore Murdered Farmer's Name

(Special to The New-Sentinel)

Berne, Ind., May 18 - The Spring Hill Cemetery, located four miles northeast of here, holds the distinction of being the oldest cemetery in Adams County and one of the oldest in this part of the state. More than a hundred years ago, pioneer residents hollowed out logs to form coffins in which the first bodies were buried in the cemetery.

About 50 years ago, the name, "Backesto," was given the cemetery after a farmer named Amos Backesto, living nearby, was murdered by a neighbor. According to old residents of the neighborhood, Backest and the neighbor got in a quarrel over a horse trade. After the quarrel had continued for some time, the neighbor crept to Backesto's bedside and, by the light of a match, settled the dispute by shooting him. Irate members of the community captured the neighbor and prepared to lynch him.

According to tradition, a noose had been placed about the murderer's neck when the sheriff appeared and halted the vigilantes. Afterwards the man was brought to trial, convicted and later died in the state penitentiary.

In 1898 farmers of the community, feeling the need of a church, organized the Spring Hill Church and constructed a building at the cemetery, which took the name of the church. On May 1, this year [1940], rededication services for the church were held after it had been completely remodeled.

Although the first marked grave in the cemetery bears the date 1851, records show that burials were made there as early as 1836.

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