

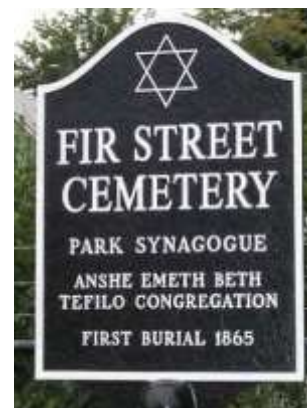
Fir Street Cemetery

6015 Fir Street

Cleveland, Ohio 44102

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The Fir Street cemetery was established in April of 1866 when the Hungarian Aid Society acquired two of eight parcels from John Hoyt that were less than a mile northwest of the Willet Street cemetery. The aid society acquired two additional parcels in July of 1877. The parcels were acquired by the Jewish Federation of Cleveland in August 1982



<p>The drawing to the right is page 12 of Volume 2 of G.M. Hopkins 1922 Plat Map of Cleveland, Ohio. Published in 1922 in Philadelphia PA.</p>								
<p>Hopkins and Sanborn were the leaders in providing maps to the insurance industries from the mid 1800's thru the 1950's.</p>								
<p>Sub lot number within original development of John Hoyt.</p>	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
<p>Permanent Parcel Number assigned by County Recorder</p>	002-29 079	002-29 080	002-029-081				002-29 083	002-29 084
<p>Documents recorded by the Cuyahoga County Records Office, now the Fiscal Office of the County Administrator, by date and the Book and Page number.</p>	<p>11/28/1877 Mary Lawell sells sub lot 113 and 114 to Anshe Emeth Book 287 page 86</p>		<p>7/2/1877 Ferdinand Seltz sells sub lots 115, 116 and the western half to the Hungarian Aid Society Book 280 page 151</p>		<p>4/5/1866 James Hoyt sells 118 and eastern half of sub lot 117 to the Hungarian Aid Society. Book 138 page 428</p>		<p>12/26/1866 James Hoyt sells sub lots 119 and 120 to Chebra Kadisha Cem. Assoc. book 114 page 540. 10/12/1879 Chebra Chadish sells to Bnai (Benee Abraham) Book 2304 page 17</p>	
<p>Current Owner</p>	Anshe Emeth		Jewish Federation of Cleveland				State of Ohio	

About Permanent Parcels Numbers

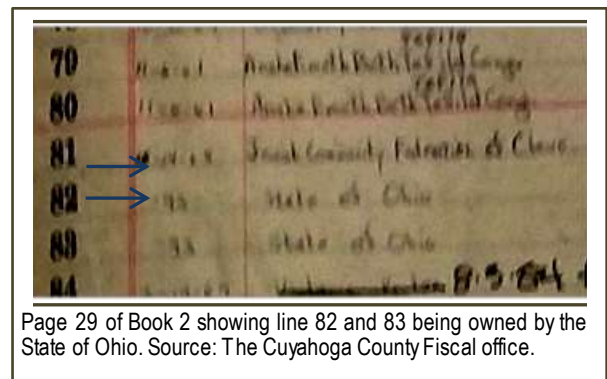
The first three digits are the book number that parcel is listed in; the larger the number, the farther from the center of the County. The second set is two digits that identify the page number within the book. The three last digits indicate the line of the page, the owner, and the date of the deed transfer. The former owner's name generally appears but is crossed out. Parcels numbers do not change; however they can be divided or consolidated. Do not confuse this number with a sub-lot number, provided by the developer of a site within a development.

In December 1866, the Chebra Kadisha organization acquired land on Fir Street. Their purchase included two parcels at the eastern end of the cemetery. According to county records, the property was sold in 1879 to B'nai Abraham. Today, the property is owned by the State of Ohio and maintained by Anshe Chesed - Park Synagogue with financial assistance from the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. The date the state acquired the parcel is unknown. The transfer most likely occurred in 1905 when a County Sheriff was ordered by the County Auditor to sell the land to the highest bidder as the taxes had gone unpaid for several years.

A Chevra Kadisha (Holy Society) consists of a community of members that prepare a body for burial to ensure that the appropriate orthodox rituals are followed. In some communities, the group provides land for a proper burial when a family has no funds to do so. It should be noted that while one can assume a Chevra Kadisha is strictly a burial society, a synagogue with a similar name, Bohemian Chevra Kaddischa, was formed in 1884 and maintained a very active congregation until circa 1912. In 1887, the congregation purchased two small parcels for a cemetery on Baxter Avenue just west of Broadway.

While a nonprofit organization is often exempt from paying property tax, the organization must file an application for exemption. The lack of doing so and the lack of officially incorporating with the State was a common trend at that time. Clearly, there were no acceptable buyers for these parcels; therefore the land was deeded to the State of Ohio. While no primary sources could be found to confirm ownership, this section of the cemetery is according to the Projects Administration (WPA) survey was completed in the mid 1930s as belonging to Beth Hamidrosh Hagodol Beth Israel. This congregation was formed in 1890 by Lithuanian Jews. In 1941, the congregation merged with Ohave Emuno, formed in 1882 by Russian emigrants. In 1947 Beth Hamidrosh Hagodol Beth Israel Ohave Emuno, then located on East 105 and Tacoma merged with Heights Jewish Center. The only other document that makes mention of that portion of the Fir Street cemetery being a part of Heights Jewish Center is a notice published in the *Jewish Review and Observer* on January 19, 1953. It informs members with loved ones buried in "our section" of the Fir Ave cemetery of an upcoming meeting to address the repairs required from a recent storm.

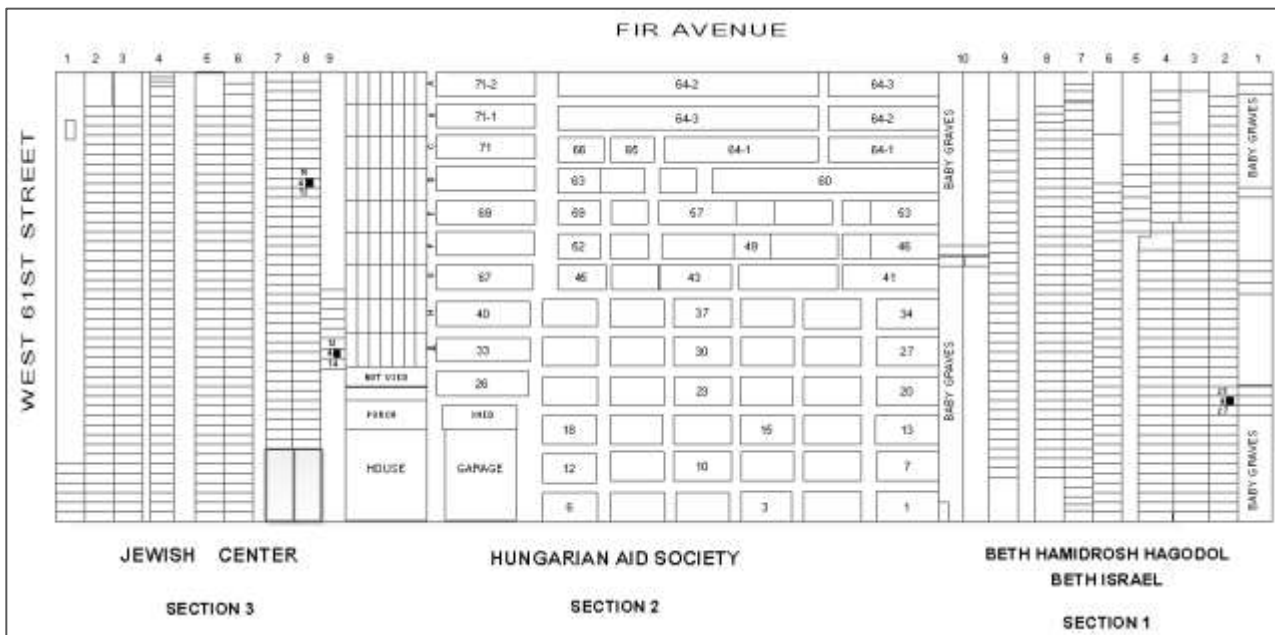
The remaining two parcels were acquired in November of 1877 by Anshe Emeth (deed reads Anshe Emes), now commonly known as Park Synagogue. This purchase is a prime example of non-profit organizations not filing their incorporation with the State until a later date. According to the Ohio Secretary of State, Anshe Emeth although not incorporated until August 21, 1883; however their first documented place of worship, located on east 9th, south of Carnegie, was purchased in January of 1880.



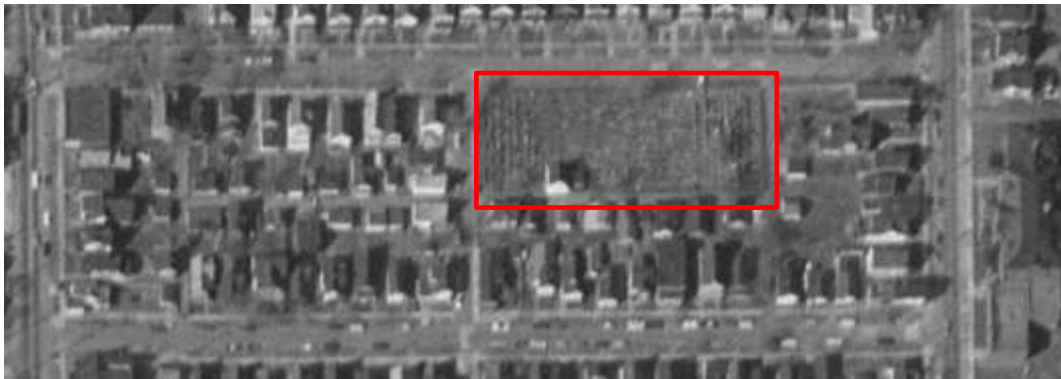
Page 29 of Book 2 showing line 82 and 83 being owned by the State of Ohio. Source: The Cuyahoga County Fiscal office.

According to a survey in June of 1936 by the *County Recorder*, there was a small dwelling 20' x 24' at the southern line of sub lot 115 with the only known address for the cemetery, 6015 Fir Ave. A one-car garage measuring 10' x 20' was located to the west of the dwelling. The survey listed the home as being built in 1885. The structure appeared on the 1922 Hopkins Plat. The structures also appear on the Department of the Interior's U.S. Genelogial Survey of 1970; however they do not appear on the next series, taken in 1980.





The above map is a re-creation of the WPA's map produced in the 1930 as part of a national survey of Cemeteries.



1970 Aerial photo shows the cemetery and Caretaker's home at the southern boundry. Source: <http://www.historicaerials.com/>

The survey card provides the following information:

- Property:** 6015 STREET, FIR AVE, TAKOVOS DISTRICT, CLEVELAND, OHIO.
- Owner:** HUNGARIAN AID SOCIETY.
- Assessment:** 1936 survey, assessed value of 790.
- Dimensions:** 40' x 76'.
- Structural Details:** 1 - GARAGE, 1 - HOUSE, 1 - PORCH.
- Construction:** BRICK, PLASTERED, FULL BOARD.
- Utilities:** WATER, SEWER, GAS, ELECTRIC.

About the Survey Card

The County Auditor completed a survey of all residential and special use properties such as cemeteries in both 1936 and the 1960's. This card is from the 1936 survey. The cards provide information including, dimensions, owner, rental income, estimated construction date and the assessed value.

About the Sexton's

An article in the August 28, 1911. *Plain Dealer* mentions of the wife of the Sexton, Mrs. Joseph Kalterjahn. An obituary in the *Plain Dealer* for Rudolf Schmidt, dated June 6, 1941, indicates that Schmidt had been the Sexton for the Fir Avenue Jewish cemetery for many years He lived at 6015 Fir Street. According to the U.S. Census, he and his family resided at the cemetery in both 1920 and 1930. His occupation is listed as cemetery caretaker.

The cemetery has for many years been managed by Anshe Emeth, now known as Park Synagogue. A portion of the cost is paid by the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. Over time the cemetery appeared all but forgotten. In 2007 with the help of former councilman and lifetime resident of the area, Cleveland Municipal Judge Raymond Pianka of blessed memory assisted the community in a total renovation of the cemetery.

With the assistance of Councilman Matt Zone, funds were obtained for the community block grant, the Cleveland Foundation and Safeguard Properties to cover a portion of the "hard costs," such as paint, plants, the new gate and a sign. Over the next two years, members of the Fir Street Block Club and of the Calvary reform church on West 65, along with others worked thousands of hours returning the cemetery to a respectable site. Their improvements work included removing debris, repairing and up righting of fallen stones, and the planting fourteen trees and over 1000 bulbs, with assistance from local landscape architect, James McKnight.

Those involved in the project took a keen interest in understanding both the cemetery and history of many of those buried. This became apparent at the rededication ceremonies on May 30, 2009 when organizers posted biographies on about a dozen tombstones.



Architect McKnight's planting plan for the Fir Street Block Club's renovation of the Cemetery 2009