

# Cholera epidemic led to cemetery's 1st burials

David Litogot teaches history at Woodlawn Elementary in the Farmington Public Schools. He is a Farmington Historical Society member.

By David Litogot  
special writer

If you stroll through the oldest burial ground in Farmington, the Quaker Cemetery on Gill Road, you will see the resting spot of some of the earliest settlers of the village.

The first people buried there were Solinda Power and Phoebe Monerova Power. They were the 31-year-old wife and 5-year-old daughter of Nathan Power, son of village founder Arthur Power.

The cause of their deaths was one of the worst epidemic diseases of the 19th century: cholera. They contracted the disease on a visit to Detroit and died within hours of each other.

According to Lee Peel's book, "Farmington: A Pictorial History,"

## footprints in history

they got cholera from a local source: "A Farmington man by the name of Barnum who lived on the present 10 Mile Road had been visiting in Detroit. His illness and subsequent death and burial by Nathan Power (in Barnum's own yard, incidentally) spread the virus."

Life was tough enough for these early settlers of Farmington without disease. But the introduction of Asiatic cholera to the shores of Michigan affected the state's immigration and settlement rate.

CHOLERA CAME to Detroit in 1832 via a steam boat. The Henry Clay, loaded with several companies of soldiers under the command of General Winfield Scott, en route to meet the threat of Black Hawk and his warriors. Several cases of cho-

lera had broken out on ship; when the ship stopped at Detroit, the extremely contagious disease was spread to the townspeople.

By 1832, the great epidemic diseases of the previous two centuries, yellow fever and small pox, were no longer national problems. Cholera, on the other hand, appeared in Russia in 1831, spread to western Europe, and was brought to America by immigrants. It soon made its appearance in cities on the eastern seaboard, where many deaths were reported.

It would cross the country with the Forty-niners, hit the Wisconsin lead mines and strike Negro field hands in the South. It never killed as many people as malaria or tuberculosis, but it was, unlike them, a terrifying disease.

The symptoms are spectacular, very similar to those of arsenic poisoning. The onset of cholera is marked by diarrhea, acute spasmodic vomiting and painful cramps. The sufferer would acquire a bluish cast, his extremities would be cold and darkened, and the skin of his hands and feet drawn and puckered.

Death may intervene within a day or may permit the patient to suffer for five days before recovering. When people did die of cholera, it was quickly, sometimes within a few hours. A young man from Albany wrote in his diary in 1832: "To see individuals well in the morning and buried before night, retiring apparently well and dead in the morning is something which is appalling to the boldest heart."

PERHAPS THE portion of that childhood prayer, "and should I die before I wake . . ." originated back then.

At Detroit, there were 58 cases; 28

deaths took place within two weeks. The territorial capitol building in Detroit was utilized as a hospital for the victims, and, of course, the townspeople were in a state of panic. Outstate towns set up guards to prevent travelers from Detroit from using the public roads.

A stagecoach with passengers, attempting to elude the road block east of Ypsilanti, was fired upon and one of the horses killed. In spite of these precautions, the disease spread. Three died in Farmington, 11 in Marshall.

Doctors began to notice that filth and poor public health contributed to the spread of the disease. Americans were shocked. This was a land of good air, clean water and healthy people. Since it affected the poor more than the rich, many people associated cholera with ignorance and stinkiness.

But the doctors were right. Uncooked food, sewage-contaminated water and even unwashed hands were responsible for the transmission of the disease. The cities with their crowded, dirty streets, the pups running loose; the waste water thrown out the windows; and the drinking water bucketed from a river were areas of prime concern.

But Dr. William Beaumont explained that "the greater proportion of number of deaths in the cholera epidemics are, in my opinion, caused more by fright and presentment of death than from the fatal tendency of the disease."

Among those who died of the disease indirectly was Father Gabriel Richard. He did not succumb to cholera in 1832, but to exhaustion caused by nursing and comforting the sick in Detroit.

A second epidemic broke out in Detroit in 1834; it was of relatively short duration, but more deaths occurred than in 1832. Seven percent of the city's population died in August of 1834.

Many widows and orphans were left without means of support and were sent to the poorhouse. Other epidemics would strike in 1849 and 1866, but none with the local significance that dreaded one of 1832.

## recreation news

Each week, the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services Recreation Division presents a synopsis of upcoming activities. For more information about programs, call the recreation office, 473-5570. For matters regarding city council agenda items, call our Newsline at 478-3938.

**GOLF LESSONS**  
Get back into the swing of things with some sound basic tips on golf. Six lessons will cover proper stance, grip and swing. Classes begin the week of May 1 at the Novi Oaks Golf and Sport Center and meet twice a week, Monday and Wednesday on Tuesday and Thursday. Each class is 30 minutes. Fee is \$22 for adults, teens and children and \$12 for specifically scheduled senior adult classes.

**TENNIS LESSONS**  
Develop tennis skills in forehand, backhand, serve, volley and get an overview of court rules. Four lessons will be held on Saturdays beginning May 6 at Farmington High School.

Fee is \$26 for adults, teens and children.

**BOATING SAFETY**  
This course, approved and certified by the Department of Natural Resources, will qualify all young people, 12-16 years old, to operate a motorboat of six horsepower or more without adult supervision. The class will meet May 22 and 24 at the Farmington Hills Library, 32737 12 Mile Road from 6-9 p.m. Fee is \$3 and you must pre-register prior to May 1.

**NATURE STUDY**  
Saturday, May 20 from 10 a.m. until noon at Heritage Park you will see the park in living color as you tour the hardwood forests, explore the trails and discover the abundance of wildflowers through the park's 211 acres. Fee is \$3 per person or \$10 per family. Pre-register at the recreation office.

**SPRING HAYRIDES**  
Bring the whole family and enjoy a hayride tour of Heritage Park. Tours will be 7-8 p.m. Friday, April

28, or May 5, 12 or 19. The tour will conclude with a campfire and a chance for children to roast marshmallows. A \$3 pre-registration fee per person is required.

**KITE FESTIVAL**  
Grab your kite and come to Heritage Park 1-4 p.m. Saturday, May 6 (rain date is May 7), for the first Heritage Park Kite Festival. You can fly your kite in contests or just for fun. Activities will include con-

tests, flying demonstrations and displays. There is no fee for this program.

**PARKEY'S MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON**  
Join Parkey in celebrating a special day for your mom Saturday, May 13, at Heritage Park from noon to 1:15 p.m. Activities will include lunch, crafts, games and songs. Fee is \$10 per couple, \$5 for each additional child.

**ATTENTION GOLFERS!**  
**SANSA-BELT SLACK SALE!**  
REG. PRICE \$47.50  
**SALE PRICE \$39.95**

30 Colors Available - FREE Alterations  
20295 Middlebelt, Livonia  
3 blocks S. of 8 Mile  
**ALLIE BROS. 477-4434** Hours: M-F 9-6:30; Th 9-5; Sat. 9-3

**BAR & GRILL**  
Serving Fresh and Hot Sandwiches, Steaks & Seafood  
**Seafood Raw Bar**  
Entertainment Friday & Saturday Night  
Live Jazz  
Dancing Entertainment

Tuesday is Ladies Night  
A great place to meet with friends.  
12450 Eight Mile, Farmington Hills - 477-1177

**Your Home.....What's It Worth Today?**

Every year your home becomes more valuable. An annual insurance review by your Farm Bureau Insurance agent will make sure that your insurance keeps up with your home's increase in value. We come to your home, at your convenience, to make a thorough analysis of your current insurance needs. We're making your future a little more predictable.

**FARM BUREAU INSURANCE GROUP**  
For more information call: **R.G. Gardner BS/MS 347-4100**

**G-TEC (G-T Energy Concepts, Inc.)**  
IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF OUR NEW WELDING & INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY SUPERMARKET.  
YOU WILL FIND SPECTACULAR SAVINGS THROUGHOUT THE STORE

**STANLEY** STAINLESS STEEL INDUSTRIAL TOOLS  
**PROTO** CHALLENGER

**STANLEY 33-312** 3/4" x 12" Powerlock Taps  
\$9.96

**STANLEY 33-425** 1" x 25" Powerlock Taps  
\$14.57

**FREE LEATHER HOLSTER!**  
Purchase a 12" or 25" Powerlock Tap and receive a free leather holster. Holster features Mylar coated blades for up to 10 times the wear of other brand blades.

33-312, 33-425  
While Supplies last

We offer a Complete Line of:  
• Wrenches  
• Hack Saws  
• Hammers  
• Tape Measures  
• Vise Grips  
• C-Clamps  
• Drill Sets  
• Sockets  
• Utility Knives & More!

Welding Supplies  
Welding Equipment  
Industrial Gases  
Hand Tools  
Safety Equipment

**G-TEC**  
G-T Energy Concepts, Inc.  
41208 Capital Canton, MI 48187 - 455-7800

HOURS  
M-F 8:00-5:30  
SAT. 8:30-12:30

**Need Hot Water Today?**  
Call **Bergstroms**  
and have **SAME DAY INSTALLATION**

**40 GALLON RESIDENTIAL. \$339.95**  
HOT WATER HEATER

CALL BETWEEN 7:30 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. AND HAVE SAME DAY INSTALLATION!  
CALL FOR DETAILS  
532-2160 or 532-5846

**We've Repackaged Family Health Care For You.**

**Introducing Family Doctors with Extended Hours and Expanded Services.**

Walking in or by Appointment  
Rochester Hills 656-3515  
1812 S. Rochester Rd.  
Hours: Open Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Sat. and Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Union Lake 360-1200  
2900 Union Lake Rd.  
(Across from K-Mart)  
Hours: Mon and Wed. 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Tue. and Thur. 9 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Fri. and Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Closed Sun.

Waterford 682-3500  
4000 Highland Rd.  
Hours: Open Mon-Fri. 9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Sat-Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Farmington Hills 855-6773  
28270 Orchard Lake Rd.  
Hours: Open Mon-Fri. 9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Sat-Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Birmingham 646-1995  
2075 E. 14 Mile Rd.  
(4 blocks east of Woodward Ave.)  
Hours: Open Mon-Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Closed Sat. and Sun.

**Mobile Mammography Available at the**  
Birmingham Center May 12 and 13,  
Rochester Hills Center May 19 and 20,  
Farmington Hills Center May 26 and 27

The Mobile Mammography Program, offered by Mercy Women's Care Center, provides complete breast education and mammography service right in your neighborhood.

**ST. JOSEPH MERCY HOSPITAL**  
Call 858-3780  
for your appointment now.

100 WOODWARD, PONTIAC, MI 48053

OCC SMITH THEATRE presents  
**"SEASCAPE"**  
By Edward Albee  
A WITTY & WARM PLAY  
Directed by Sandra Sutherland  
MAY 5, 6, 12, 13 - 8 P.M. • MAY 7 - 2 P.M.

**DINNER THEATRE**  
MAY 6 6:30 P.M.  
(Reservations by April 28th)

Oakland Community College  
Orchard Ridge Campus  
TICKETS & RESERVATIONS  
471-7700  
Orchard Lake Rd. & I-696

Coming...MAY 24 & 25  
"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

Men, if you're about to turn 18, it's time to register with Selective Service at any U.S. Post Office.

It's quick. It's easy. And it's the law.

**LIVER UP AT MCL - LIVER UP AT MCL - LIVER UP AT MCL**

**LIVER UP!**  
at MCL  
**Liver & Onions**  
only \$1.69!

From Sunday, April 23rd thru Sunday, April 30th, MCL's nutritious and delicious Liver & Onions is especially priced for only \$1.69. With a deal like this, why cook?

**MCL**  
family owned and operated  
TEL-TWELVE MALL