



OLD GRAVEYARD NEWS

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE OLD GRAVEYARD ASSOCIATION / SPRING 2016

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The New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association was organized on April 10, 1976. It was incorporated as a voluntary association with the New Hampshire Secretary of State on April 12, 1977.

The object of the association is to promote knowledge of New Hampshire history by bringing together people interested in old graveyards; to foster interest in the discovery, restoration and maintenance of these graveyards; and to preserve records and information which relate to them.

COVER: Poor Farm Cemetery, Boscawen NH

September 2015 Meeting

The Boscawen Historical Society and the Merrimack County Nursing Home in Boscawen hosted the September meeting at the nursing home. NHOGA board members Richard Maloon and Bea Jillette were present.

NHOGA Business Meeting

Treasurer: Richard Maloon reported a bank balance of \$6,486.67.

Newsletter: Bea Jillette reported that the majority of NHOGA newsletter recipients do not pay dues and asked if we should consider changing to a digital newsletter to save printing and mailing costs. Those in favor of a digital newsletter said it could be produced cheaply, in color, and whenever appropriate rather than several fixed times a year. Others commented that printed newsletters are important for archival records and for educational and charitable organizations. Several people suggested sending printed copies to dues payers only, giving people a choice on the members' form and asking for input through snail mail, email or web.

Database: Richard reported that NHOGA's Excel database of 4,000 burial sites needs to be updated and asked for a much-needed volunteer. New Hampshire towns are required by statute to maintain accurate records of their graveyards; this information can be sent to Richard Maloon at richard.maloon@att.net.

Workshops: Richard reported on two graveyard repair workshops that were conducted by NHOGA in Hillsborough and Raymond. The Raymond workshop involved graveyard damage by a logger who was unfamiliar with RSA: 289-3 which mandates a 25-foot buffer around graveyards. Anyone who thinks they see something wrong in or near a graveyard should call Richard at 603-424-5621 or the NH Attorney General.

MOCA: The Maine Old Cemetery Association gives two workshops each year and brings in a conservator for two additional four-day workshops if funds are available. A Cemetery Preservation workshop is planned for August 19-22, 2016 in Wilton, ME.

NHOGA: Richard gave a brief history of NHOGA and said that its emphasis is on the preservation of family graveyards.

Program

Elaine Clout of the Boscawen Historical Society opened the program. Mary Heath, Director of Administrative Services at the Boscawen County Home, presented a PowerPoint program on the Poor Farm Cemetery, which was used from 1866-1896 for people who died in the county jail, mental hospital or poor farm, housed at that location. The beautiful

cemetery, located by the Merrimack River, was flooded on multiple occasions. An intern recently digitized the cemetery records, which revealed a total of 470 graves. Of these 153 are numbered and 317 identified. A few are inscribed with names and date of death. Due to flooding, fires and lost records information on actual burials is incomplete and the numbering on graves puzzling.

Cemetery Tours

After lunch Mary Heath led a tour of the Poor Farm Cemetery which was followed by a tour of the NH State Veteran’s Cemetery in Boscawen which opened with its first burial in 1997; by 2015 it had approximately 776 interments. It is designed with both columbarium and in-ground sites. Individual stones were initially placed flat on the ground but later placed in an upright position. It has a total of 104 acres, with 14 acres currently developed and 54 available for the future. It contains a beautiful shaded walk with memorials to individuals and groups and represents all branches of the military.

Both the Poor Farm Cemetery and the NH State Veteran’s Cemetery are owned and operated by the state of New Hampshire. Each cemetery has a precise layout of identical stones unlike the random selection and placement of stones one sees in old family graveyards and municipal cemeteries.

Bea Jillette, Acting Secretary



LEFT: Many of the grave markers in the Poor Farm Cemetery were inscribed with numbers rather than names.

ABOVE: Columbariums, single grave markers and memorials in the NH State Veterans Cemetery.

Bethlehem man says destiny made him buy a cemetery

On the edge of a small Bethlehem cemetery, framed by mature maple trees and hollowed trunks, sit the graves of three little girls. Sadie. Mabel. Bertha. The Hilficker sisters, ages 4, 1, and 6 respectively, died in the mid-1890s. Marking their short lives are elegant gravestones, the granite etched with the same border that trims the stones of their parents, who lived into the next century and are buried nearby. Metal piping sticking out of the ground hints that the family plot was once gated.

The Hilficker headstones pull at the heartstrings of the Fairview Cemetery owner who has four grandchildren, one the same age as Bertha. As guardian of the graveyard, Roy Schreffler knows that stones for children at Fairview are not common in the modest, neighborhood cemetery. Many children's graves, he sighed, are unmarked.

Before Roy Schreffler bought Fairview Cemetery in 2007, he had been to many family funerals there, including that of his father.

Schreffler takes special care in keeping weeds from obscuring the girls' names and lets his grandchildren place orphaned flowers — blown from elsewhere in the cemetery — on those graves.

"Stick them on the Hilficker kids," Schreffler tells them. "Nobody can remember the Hilficker kids nowadays."

And yet Schreffler can't forget them. From his brick Cape Cod on Lenox Avenue, Schreffler keeps an eye on the girls and 4,000 others who have been buried there since 1894.

Schreffler bought the 7-acre cemetery at New and Fairview streets eight years ago on a whim. He had no experience in the business of the dead. He was not con-

nected to a funeral home, a grave-digging outfit or a church-related group overseeing the final resting spots.

He can't explain his \$15,000 purchase nor why he spends thousands of dollars a year to keep up a nearly full cemetery that will never produce a profit.

The best answer he can come up with is "destiny." He remembers coming to the cemetery as a 10-year-old in 1966 for his first funeral. His 21-year-old cousin died when he flipped his 1963 Impala convertible on Route 309. Schreffler came back in 1970 for the burial of a troubled uncle who committed suicide and just about every year after for more burials. Inevitably, he points out, large families have a lot of funerals.

He can remember his grandmother, who is now buried there, always asking his mom to take her down to the cemetery, but he never tagged along. The seminal moment came in 1994 when he went to the cemetery to choose a plot for his father, a hard-working man who

held down three jobs before shooting himself in the head when his wife was out of town. Schreffler had to make the funeral arrangements.

Still in shock over his father's suicide, Schreffler remembers discussing with the cemetery owner where his father would be buried, then suggesting the man call him should he ever decide to sell Fairview.

The call came in 2007 when Schreffler was on a job assignment in Wisconsin. And after signing a couple of documents, Roy and his son, Jeffrey Schreffler, became cemetery owners.

Jeffrey Schreffler, an auto mechanic, said his dad's second job might seem a little off-beat to some, but it is "an extremely noble cause."

"People take care of family members as they get older or ill," he said. "My dad is taking care of our relatives even after they have passed on."

Roy's wife, Debbie Schreffler, said she was stunned at the purchase.

"I didn't realize he was so serious," she said, noting her husband's affinity for genealogy. "I thought, 'Who buys a cemetery?'"

The Schrefflers hold one of 16 active cemetery registrations in Lehigh and Northampton counties, according to the Pennsylvania Department of State. Many are owned by churches, other nonprofits or businesses.

While once a more common livelihood, small, family-owned cemeteries in the Lehigh Valley have faded over the decades as the plots filled up.

Condensed from an article by Nicole Mertz, The Morning Call

Unexpected Connection

A cross from my house on a quiet street in West Franklin, NH lies the pine-shaded Shaw Corner Cemetery. Though I grew up nearby and have had a long interest in my family history (my late paternal grandmother was an avid genealogist and sparked my interest at the young age of 14), my parents are transplants to New Hampshire from Massachusetts and the Midwest. From research I have done over the years, I have discovered distant relationships to various friends, co-workers and acquaintances, but I have never found any family connections to this area.

We occasionally take a walk through the old cemetery and pick blueberries along the edges in the summer, but I've never paid too much attention to the stones other than to notice that most of them date to the late 1700's and early 1800's and are some of the earliest settlers of Salisbury (this part of Franklin used to be part of Salisbury).

Recently, though, I noticed a group six headstones (three small and three big) in the corner closest to our house and went to check them out. They are a family – sadly three young children that died between 1818 and 1823 and their parents Samuel and Martha (Tucker) Huntoon who died in 1835 and 1850, respectively, and were buried next to the children they lost. The sixth stone is one of their adult children, Nathaniel Dearborn Huntoon, who died in 1861.

The youngest of the children, Samuel Newell Huntoon, particularly got my attention because he was just about my son's current age when he passed away in 1823. Of course it was more common to lose children back then, but for some reason I felt particularly upset thinking about this little one and the mama that lost him – I just couldn't stop thinking about this family and wanted to learn more about them.

That afternoon I looked up the family in Dearborn's 1890 History of Salisbury, NH and sure enough, found them. Samuel and Martha married in 1801 in Newburyport, MA and it seems they came north to the comparative wilderness of Salisbury shortly after that – it was just years after the town was officially founded in 1768. They had 8 children all together, the oldest four and the seventh lived to adulthood and presumably had families of their own. I thought, "OK - found them! End of story!" and put the book back on the shelf.

However, later in the day I was still nagged with thoughts about this family and decided to dig deeper. I looked online to see if I could find any of their genealogy.

After a bit of searching and comparing with my own family tree, I was stunned to discover that I am actually related to this little family! Martha (the mother) was

the great-great-great granddaughter of Thomas and Ann Stevens of Stamford, CT back in the 1600's through their son, Benjamin. Another of Thomas and Ann's sons, Obadiah, is my 10th great-grandfather, making me and Martha Tucker Huntoon 4th cousins 8 times removed. And there she is with her family, buried right across the street from my house!

The most interesting part of this story to me is that I would have expected the relationship to be through my paternal grandmother's family since both families trace back to Massachusetts in the 1600's, but no, it is through my maternal grandfather's family.

It seems that Martha's ancestor, Benjamin Stevens, went to Massachusetts, and his brother Obadiah's family stayed in Connecticut until his descendants eventually went West – as mentioned above, my mom's family is from Illinois.

I probably shouldn't be so surprised to find such a connection given how few people lived in New England that long ago, but I'm excited about it nonetheless for the many positive outcomes it has brought. I have enjoyed sharing this "small world" story with friends, my grandmother would have been thrilled, and it is a great feeling to find a family connection literally in my own backyard.

By Sarah W. Dunham-Miliotis



Volunteers tidy up, replace worn headstones at Capitol Hill cemetery

About a mile north of the busy Broadway business district is the final resting place of more than 220 Civil War veterans who settled here after the war, their stories largely forgotten by all but a few descendants, neighbors and history buffs.

Tucked away in the middle of a Capitol Hill neighborhood, the cemetery is easy to miss. A sign bearing its name — Grand Army of the Republic — is barely noticeable, the gravestones weathered by wind and rain and damaged by vandals.

Several years ago, the Seattle City Council proposed turning the surrounding park property into an off-leash area for dogs — a development that galvanized neighbors and others to save the old cemetery, spreading the word about its history, garnering grant money from the city and spending one Saturday a month raking, weeding, clipping and irrigating.

Yesterday the group — FGAR, for Friends of the Grand Army of the Republic — and their supporters came together to replace 20 headstones that had been worn away or stolen. They hope eventually to replace 100.

"Rather than having the memories of these soldiers wiped away completely, we wanted to replace the gravestones to honor what these men went through," said Lee Corbin of Graham, Pierce County, a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

The group, made up of direct descendants of Civil War veterans, and FGAR enlisted the help of a local genealogist to find out who is buried at the site so their headstones can be replaced.

"We've spent the last five years trying to restore the park and give it some dignity," said Tom Easthope, FGAR'S treasurer.

Among those buried at the GAR Cemetery is Michael LaDuke, who was a member of Company A of the 16th New York Volunteer Infantry and, according to his great-great granddaughter, Lynn Sharp of Granite Falls, a prisoner of war in Vicksburg, Miss.

"We're preserving our history," Sharp said, taking a break from pulling weeds.

Union soldiers created the Grand Army of the Republic as a national fraternal organization for Civil War veterans. When members here in Washington began to die, the group built the 2.5-acre cemetery and later gave surrounding land to the city.

The site is at 12th Avenue East and East Howe Street, across the street from Lakeview Cemetery.

Dewey Potter, a Seattle Parks and Recreation spokeswoman, said FGAR's dedication to the cemetery has kept the area from falling into disrepair, since the city doesn't actually own the cemetery, just the land around it.

"Because of the limitations of staff, we couldn't have kept the cemetery looking the way it does without volunteer groups, which contributed 80,000 hours last year," she said. "At \$15 an hour that adds up to \$1.2 million for area trails and parks like this one."

For Sharp it's especially comforting to know that one of the 100 headstones to be replaced will be that of LaDuke, who moved to Washington after the war, according to Sharp.

"We're doing this for the future generations," Sharp said. "So they know where they come from and they can look up information about their ancestors themselves."

*By Nguyen Huy Vu
Seattle Times staff reporter*



Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery Park, Capitol Hill, Seattle

Commission Established

NH Revised Statute § 227-C:12-a (2015) has established a commission on historic burial grounds and cemeteries. NHOGA uses the politically correct RSA-289 definition of burial ground: “Burial ground,” means a private family or religious institution’s cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium on private property and not available for use by the public.” For purposes of this paragraph, the term “family” shall mean members of the immediate family and any individuals related by blood or marriage or civil union to members of the immediate family. Although none of our members are now Puritan Calvinists, Old Graveyard was the traditional NH term used for what, now, we would call burial ground.

Richard Alperin asked me to attend the first Commission meeting held on February 12, 2016. Minutes are available at: richard.maloon@att.net

The NHOGA, DAR and the NH Division of Historical Resources gave presentations. The initial focus of the commission will be on preservation, not restoration. This would be a great opportunity for anyone who wants to see the inner workings of our state government and could end up making a real difference in the preservation of our NH historic burial grounds.

Contact richard.maloon@att.net to indicate interest. An interim report is due to the Governor by this November 2016. The final report is due in 2018.

by Richard Maloon



A sculpture in the NH State Veterans Cemetery.

IN MEMORY
 DAVID DIEHL
 FLORENCE MCLAUGHLIN
 PAUL CARLTON
 JOAN CASAROTTO
 (CALVIN WRIGHT IS IN HOSPICE
 CARE AT HIS HOME IN PITTSFIELD).



Dues are paid from May to May of each year, and are used to cover the cost of the newsletter and various NHOGA projects. If “2016” is on your mailing label you are up to date!!!

New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / DUES PAYMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Street or PO Box: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
 Telephone: _____ Email: _____

DUES \$10.00 / Order NHOGA’s GRAVEYARD RESTORATION HANDBOOK: \$5.00

Make checks payable to NHOGA and send to Treasurer:
 Richard Maloon, 117 Amherst Road, Merrimack NH 03054-3820



New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association
PO Box 1016
Goshen NH 03752

Visit our web page at www.nhoga.org

Next NHOGA Meeting – May 14, 2016 Union Congregational Church, 16 Church Lane, Hebron, NH

9:30: Registration, coffee and donuts.

10:00: NHOGA business meeting. Ron Collins, President of the Hebron Historical Society, will then give a talk about the Hebron Historical Society and cemeteries.

11:30: Bring a bag lunch and beverage.

12:30 Tour of church cemetery.

From I-93 north (about 30 minutes): Exit 23. At end of ramp, turn left onto NH Route 104 west, toward Bristol. At the traffic light in Bristol, go straight on Lake Street, a/k/a NH Route 3A north. In 8.7 miles, turn left onto North Shore Road. This brings you into the town of Hebron. Church will be on the right.

From I-93 south (about 25 minutes): Exit 26 to NH Route 25 west (Tenney Mountain Highway). At the traffic circle, take 2nd exit, toward Bristol. This is NH Route 3A south. In 5 miles, turn right onto North Shore Road. This brings you into the town of Hebron. Church will be on the right.

We have the function hall downstairs. Entrance is on the left side. Cemetery is right behind the church.