



Happy New Year !

Here we are, back again, thank to the lord for allowing us to remain on the green side of the grass for a little while longer..... Time to get into that favorite chair again, set your favorite beverage handy-by to you. Maybe sit near a window with the warm rays of the sun, or near the stove to feel a little more cozy. Ahead of us will be a letter from our president, Tom Giffin. Also some information about locating unmarked cemetery burials, some trivia, and a look in the vault.

Presidents Report ~ Winter 2008-2009

Winter has arrived once again in Vermont and the state has been hit with 3 snowstorms before Christmas. Many outdoor activities will have to be placed on hold until the snow banks recede. This is also the time when VOCA members should take stock of their own local cemeteries and ask themselves what projects can be initiated in the coming season. If that work requires general maintenance, then make it a community project, if there is monument repair to be done, VOCA has grants available to help. Remember, if a veteran's stone is damaged beyond repair or needs replacement, the Veteran's Administration will replace it at no cost provided that the appropriate documentation has been submitted. This information is available on the Veteran's Administration's web site.

It has been a very busy year for VOCA and the organization celebrated its 50th anniversary in October of 2008. VOCA Treasurer, Harry Fisher

did an outstanding job coordinating all the day's events in Barre for this special fall meeting. The chauffeured bus trips to the Rock of Ages Quarry and Hope Cemetery were well received by the participants. It was also gratifying to have VOCA founder, Prof Leon Dean's daughter, Lorna Dean Brown in attendance as well as granddaughter Dianne Leary.

Several VOCA members, including Secretary Charles Marchant, recently met in Townsend to discuss new legislation to protect Vermont's historic cemeteries. A local legislator was present and we are anticipating him sponsoring this needed bill for the 2009 legislative session. VOCA will have an update in a future newsletter.

I received a phone call regarding an abandoned cemetery on property in Clarendon, VT, that was not listed in the VOCA's "Burial Grounds of Vermont". With the permission of the land owner and VOCA member Jeff Taylor as my guide, (and my four wheel drive), I was taken to a wonderful old burial ground from the late 1700s located off East Street. The cemetery was overgrown and almost invisible except for one large marker. The one upright stone was in wonderful shape and could be clearly read; "In memory of D Carary, consort of Ezra Crary Esq. Who died October 9th AD 1784 in the 45 year of her age." There was also the fallen stone of "Abigail, Daughter of Jacob died June 1786." Jeff Taylor and the landowner believed that there were 12 or more additional burials at the site and they could be rediscovered with a little investigation. If anyone knows more about the history of this cemetery and/or would be interested in the restoration, please contact me. As I continued down East Street, Jeff pointed out another cemetery next to a large home, identified as the Cavanaugh Cemetery. The landowners not only maintain the site, but had a very ornate metal fence around the small cemetery (which was established in 1792 with 24 burials) to protect it. As we drove past this small historic part of Clarendon, it struck me; here were two landowners who owned large parcels of property with small cemeteries situated on their acreage, one owner wanted to protect and restore the small burial ground on his property and the other landowner already had

preserved it at his cost. What a contrast to the Aldrich Cemetery issue which we have covered in past newsletters where the landowner wishes to disinter and relocate an old burial ground. An interesting footnote on the Aldrich Cemetery saga: The Rutland Herald Newspaper listed the Aldrich Cemetery as one of their top stories of the year!

VOCA continues its successful association with the Vermont Department of Correction's work crew program. The DOC currently has work crews doing mowing, brush removal, stone replacement and straightening in several VT communities. The communities that have utilized the work crews their town cemeteries are astounded by the work accomplished by these individuals. VOCA Treasurer, Harry Fisher, has also utilized them for cemeteries in his town of Weston and he has first hand knowledge of the work that can be accomplished. I am sure he is more than willing to speak with anyone who has an interest in this program, or you can contact DOC Rutland District Manager, Mike O'Malley at 802-786-5808. I continue to travel around The state to promote VOCA's mission and I especially enjoyed my presentation for the October meeting of the VT Mayflower Society in Middlebury. This was a well attended meeting and I know that VOCA picked up several new members that day. It was an extra special surprise to see Mayflower Society & VOCA member Dianne Leary again. If you are aware of any groups; Rotary Clubs, Historical Societies etc. who would be interested in a VOCA program, please let me know.

The VT Secretary of State Office has an informational package on cemetery laws for layman. If interested, you can find it online and it is under the title "Digging Deep". It is a remarkable resource for anyone interested in what legal responsibilities municipalities have in maintaining their cemeteries. I look forward to seeing many members at our May 2nd meeting. If any member has contributions for the agenda or has questions regarding VOCA, please contact me at (802)-773-3253, or email at tgifvt@msn.com.

Tom Giffin

Locating Unmarked Cemetery Burials:

Burials are often poorly marked in cemeteries, and many cemeteries suffer from poor or non-existent record keeping. Cemetery plots are typically treated as property, and conflicting claims on a plot can lead to legal headaches for everyone concerned. Likewise, the disturbance of an unmarked grave by a subsequent can be traumatic for all the families involved. For these reasons, it is important for the caretakers of a cemetery to do their best to verify that a plot is empty before someone is buried in it or before the plot is sold or traded. This information is relevant only for the identification of graves which can reasonably be considered less than 150 years old. Older graves, including Native American and pioneer graves, fall under the jurisdiction of the Office of the State Archaeologist. If you are dealing with a grave you suspect is more than 150 years old, cease work immediately, cover any exposed remains, secure the area, and call the Office of the State Archaeologist in your state. The most common ways of locating graves are discussed, as well as their advantages and disadvantages. It should be noted that no process is foolproof in finding unmarked graves. There are specific laws related to the disturbance of graves, (Mr Guite is finding this out). If you are unsure please contact the Vermont Old Cemetery Association.

As cemetery caretakers well know, what you see on the surface does not always reflect what is below. Grave markers can be at the head, foot, or center of a grave, or can be some distance from the grave. Burials can be orientated in any direction relative to a marker or nearby burials. The markings on the grave stone may face towards or away from the burial. Multiple individuals may be buried under one marker. Many burials lack markers, typically because the original marker was made of wood or because of vandalism. Markers may be situated over empty graves. Well maintained cemeteries typically do not have depressions over a grave, if there is a depression, it may be far larger or smaller than one would think necessary. Depressions are not always signifiers of graves, since grave diggers can borrow soil from nearby areas to fill in low spots, creating depressions that resemble graves.

In sum, you cannot assume that surface indications have anything to do with what is below the surface. If records are inadequate, some sort of remote sensing or surface testing is needed to locate burials. Described here are the most common technique is best for your situation.

~ Rod Probing: ~

Probably the most common way to search for graves is to probe the soil in the area with a 6 foot long rod with a blunt end and a T-shaped handle. These rods can be purchased commercially or be made by the user. The soil is probed in various spots looking for the resistance one would expect from a coffin or vault.

Advantages- Inexpensive, easy to use, generally accurate for recent burials in coffins or vaults.

Disadvantages- Cannot find burials that were not in coffins. Cannot find wooden coffins that have rotted, which is very common among graves from the 1800's and early 1900's. The coffin and remains decay and the coffin void fills in, leaving no resistance or voids to be found by the prob. Very difficult to find small coffins of infants or children. Rocks in the soil often give false readings, and it is very difficult to probe when the ground is hard or frozen.

~ Soil Coring: ~

A more-exact method of probing is soil coring, in which a 3/4-inch or 1 inch diameter hollow tube is inserted into the ground above a suspected grave. The core is pulled out, and the soil examined for evidence of disturbance through comparisons with nearby undisturbed areas. This work should be done by a trained archaeologist or soils scientist, since the differences between a disturbed and undisturbed soil can be very subtle, especially if the soil is homogenous or very complex.

Advantages: Better than rod probing, since it can detect burials even if the coffin is severely decayed. Cost is usually less than remote

sensing. There are numerous qualified archaeologist available who can help.

Disadvantages: Requires an archaeologist or soils scientist, so cost is greater than rod probing. Difficult or impossible in rocky soil. Often, soil differences can be so subtle that even a trained archaeologist cannot tell if a grave exists for certain or not, especially if the original soil matrix is very homogenous or if the upper soil layers are disturbed by non-grave activity such as earth moving or burrowing animals. It is very difficult to core when the ground is hard or frozen.

~Formal Excavation:~

Formal excavation is different than grave digging. Typically a grave digger will not notice if they are digging an occupied grave until it's too late and the coffin or burial is damaged or destroyed. Human remains are occasionally found in back dirt or borrow piles at cemeteries, since the grave digger cannot always tell if they have gone through an existing grave. Formal excavation is different than exhumation, in which a fairly-recent burial from a known grave is removed. Many funeral parlors or medical examiners can arrange for exhumation. In contrast, formal excavation is the systematic removal of soil in a controlled fashion to locate suspected graves while causing minimal damage to them. Formal excavation is best performed by a trained archaeologist who has an understanding of soils and excavation methods. While there are many ways to perform excavation, a common way is to use a wide, toothless backhoe to slowly strip away the soil in level layers a few inches at a time. This allows the archaeologist to check for evidence in the soil of a grave shaft (the filled-in grave hole) above the burial. Once evidence of a burial is encountered, archaeologist can map the burial and leave it in place. If a disinterment permit has been obtained from the Department of Public Health, an archaeologist can carefully excavate the remains for burial elsewhere, after a consultation with the person who obtained the permit. If the remains and effects are removed, they can be studied to help determine the identity of the individual.

Formal excavation can also stop well above the grave if there is evidence of a shaft.

Advantages: Almost fool-proof and, if properly done, will provide a definitive answer. Can be performed in any soil type, rocks are not a problem. Excavation can provide information about not just if a burial is located there, but can also provide information needed to determine the identity of the buried person.

Disadvantages: Expensive, it requires an archaeologist and machinery, and possibly laboratory time. There is always a chance that a very ephemeral burial will be missed and destroyed by machinery, although this is unlikely.

~ Ground Penetrating Radar: (GPR) ~

With GPR, a radio or microwave signal is sent into the ground and the reflected signal is recorded. The time it takes for the signal to return reflects the depth of penetration, and the returning signal can be stronger or weaker depending on the type of material it is passing through and reflecting off. A GPR technician will walk an antenna over the area, recording data. This data is processed in a computer to create a two or three dimensional image of the subsurface. Under ideal conditions, the grave shaft and possibly the coffin or fault will be visible, but under normal conditions, only the upper part of the grave shaft is visible.

Advantages: GPR under ideal conditions, it can provide a highly detailed image of the subsurface. GPR can often see through surface disturbances. GPR is probably the best form of remote sensing if the clay content of the soil is low.

Disadvantages: GPR's effectiveness depends on soil conditions, it does not work well in clay-rich, rocky, or saturated soils, and can be expensive.

~Resistivity:~

Resistivity is based on the principle that soils have differing moisture retention properties and therefore will conduct electricity differently. A small electric charge is run between spikes placed in the ground, and the resistance is measured. When a soil is disturbed, as in a burial, different types of soil are brought near the surface which have very slight differences in electrical resistivity. The surveyor will probe at close intervals over a large area collecting data, which is then downloaded into a computer to show areas of disturbed soils. In a cemetery, these often correspond to marked and unmarked graves.

Advantages: The spikes only penetrate a few inches into the soil, so it is relatively non-invasive. Under ideal circumstances, resistivity is quite effective.

Disadvantages: Not effective if the upper level of soil is disturbed over a large area, or if the soil is very wet or very dry, or rocky. Can be expensive.

~Conductivity:~

Conductivity works by applying a magnetic field to the ground surface. This magnetic pulse causes the soil to generate a secondary magnetic field, which is recorded to make a map. When soil is disturbed, as in a burial, different types of soil are brought near the surface which have very slight differences in conductivity. The surveyor will walk an instrument over a large area collecting data, which is then downloaded into a computer to show areas of disturbed soils. In a cemetery, these often correspond to marked and unmarked graves.

Advantages: Can cover a large area in a fairly short period of time.

Disadvantages: Is ineffective if the upper level of soil is disturbed over a large area. Soil needs to have significant iron oxide content, or it will not work. Soil needs to be checked with a metal detector to be sure it is free of ferrous metals, nearby power lines can be a problem. Can be expensive.

~Magnetometry~

Magnetometers are devices that measure minute changes in the magnetic properties of soil. When a soil is disturbed, as in a burial, different types of soil are brought near the surface which have very slight differences in magnetism. The surveyor will walk over a large area collecting data and download it into a computer that will produce maps of the disturbed soils.

Advantages: Can cover a large area in a short time.

Disadvantages: Not effective if upper level of soil is disturbed over a large area, soil needs significant iron oxide content, metal markers, fences, or vases hinder the process.

~Dowsing~

A common way to search for graves is dowsing. The dowser walks over an area with a willow branch in the form of a "Y", or two copper wires or rods bent in an "L" shape, holding the short ends in each hand and pointing the long ends forward. Dowsers believe the wires will cross over a grave.

Some people believe in Dowsing, others do not. But you will make your own decision about it by attending the spring meeting as we will have American Society of Dowsers (ASD) member, Keith Schaffer (who has expertise in unmarked grave dowsing) arriving from his home in Pennsylvania to give a talk on dowsing for grave sites, as well as a demonstration. The editor was able to make these arrangements by contacting VOCA and ASD member Dan Churchill of Cavendish, thank you Dan!

Trivia: Cemetery comes from the Greek word meaning "sleeping place".

~What's in the Vault!~

- 1- We are short on space, new members will appear in the next issue.
- 2- More info about Pres Giffin's excursion with Jeff Taylor: Jeff advises that the 1st cemetery mentioned is believed to be the Haven Hill Orchard Cemetery. The oldest 18th century burials are of the Steward Family, Clarendon pioneers. The next one mentioned, the Cavanaugh Cemetery is on the property of Phil & Peg Alderman, now known as Salem Farm.
- 3- VOCA gives a big thanks to the work and care the Alderman family has given the Cavanaugh Cemetery!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- 4-Our spring meeting, May 2nd, 2009 will be at the Summit #104 Masonic Lodge located at 111 Brush Hill Rd in Williamstown, VT. Doors are open at 9am, meeting at 10am. Lunch will be prepared by the culinary expertise of the ladies of Charity Chapter #57 of the Order of the Eastern Star. Baked chicken breast with all the fixins that go with it. Send \$10.00 per person to Nadine Martin, 84 Washington St, Barre, VT 05641. Make payable to "Charity Chapter # 57".

Directions: From the north- I-89 to exit 5. Left on rte 64 about four miles to Brush Hill Rd. (this is a sharp left off rt 64)If you have gone to the junction of rts 64&14, you have missed the turn, turn around and go back just a little way) Once on Bush Hill Rd the lodge is on the left behind a white ranch house (this will be across the road from the Williamstown Elementary School) From the south take a right off exit #5 and proceed as above. Exit #5 is the Northfield exit, just south of Barre exit and just north of Randolph exit. Come and learn first hand about Dowsing!! Bring a friend or two!!!!

2008-2009 HEADSTONES

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 Charles E Marchant, Sec, P O Box 132, Townshend Vt, 05353802-365-7937
 Edmund Wilcox, Exe Board, 4996 Georgia Shore Rd., St Albans Vt, 05478802-524-3318

WEB MASTER

Henry K Woodbury, Webmaster, Contact VOCA on the web at www.sover.net/~hwdbry/voca/ or contact VOCA by going to your search engine and enter, Vermont Old Cemetery Association

FOOTSTONES

2009 Joy Fagan, P O Box 1507, Stowe Vt, 05672802-253-7776
 2012 Richard Howrigan, P O Box 16, Fairfield Vt, 05455802-827-6513
 2009 Robert Hooper, 44 Charity St, Burlington Vt, 05401 hooper9999@aol.com802-862-0708
 2009 Laura Griggs, P O Box 252, Reading Vt, 05162 802-484-5738
 2012 Ruth Barton, P O Box 309, Putney, Vt, 05301802-254-1128
 2012 Chris Book, 44 N Main, Rutland, 05701802-773-6252

Vermont Old Cemetery Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1958 to “encourage the restoration and preservation of neglected and abandoned cemeteries in the State of Vermont”. Meetings are held twice yearly on the 1st Saturday in May and October. The VOCA newsletter is published by the editor four times a year to coincide with the seasons. The IRS granted VOCA tax exempt status 3/21/1969 (Ref BUR E059-26)

VOCA Books For Sale

The 3rd edition of “Burial Grounds of Vermont” spiral \$32, lay-flat binding \$34. Addendum to 1st & 2nd editions\$4, “Stones&Bones”, a teacher’s resource packet \$10. These prices include shipping costs; we are not required to collect Vt sales tax. Send check made out to “VOCA” and a return address label, if possible, to “ Charles E Marchant, VOCA Secretary, P O Box 132, Townshend, Vermont, 05353”

VOCA County Representatives

***** These are people who will come help you with your VOCA grant application *****

Addison- Betty R Bell 802-453-3947 Grand Isle- vacant
 Bennington – Lynne Cassano 802-447-0491 Lamoille- Deanna French 802-888-4537
 Jean Kosche – 802-447-2241 Orange- Arthur Hyde 802-222-4088
 Caledonia – vacant Orleans- Wanda Webster 802-525-3550
 Chittenden- Robert Hooper- 802-862-0708 Rutland- Cliff Giffin 802-773-3743
 Essex- Richard Colburn- 802-723-4833 Washington- vacant
 Franklin- Edmund Wilcox- 802-524-3318 Windham- Charles Marchant 802-365-7937
 Windsor- Laura Griggs 802-484-5738

Circle One

Renewal + member number / Change of address / New member

Name _____ member # _____

Address _____

Town/City _____

State _____ zip _____

Telephone # _____

e-mail _____

Dues are for calendar year: 1 year \$10.00, 5 years \$40.00, and lifetime is \$140.00

**** A new member joining in Oct or Nov or Dec will have dues applied to the following year ****

**Make check payable to VOCA, mail to: Harry Fisher, VOCA Treasurer, P O Box 266
Weston, Vermont 05161**

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