



# We have arrived! It's 2011 and VOCA is entering it's 53<sup>rd</sup> year!!!!

With the close of 2010 another chapter in world history will come to a close, and like many others before it, it was filled with many unpredictable surprises. Some of these were good and others not so good. For those of you who had cemetery projects planned we would like to hear from you as to how these turned out. What obstacles did you have to overcome and how did you accomplish them? Do you have any photos you can send to the editor?

It's time to find that comfy spot in the sun, get your favorite beverage ready and see what we have for you in this issue. We will have a note from our President, Tom Giffin, some trivia, an update on the spring meeting, a preview of the 2011 fall meeting, some info on internet burial plot sales, a story about the affect of increased use of cremation and how cemeteries and monument companies offer their services, some history about some of the old cemeteries in the Vermont town of Athens, an item in memory of Marie Wright, welcome our new members, and be sure to take note of the editors new mailing address to be found in the vault!

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**Trivia:** The Muscogules Indians of the Carolinas bury their deceased in the earth, they dig a four foot square pit, lined the grave with cypress bark and placed the corpse in the sitting position along with his tomahawk, pipe, and other matter he/she had the greatest value for during life.

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT WINTER 2010

The robins have left my backyard and have been replaced with winter juncos and redpolls so winter should be arriving in the near future. It is hard for to believe that another year has passed. The older I become, the faster the months seem to fly by. Vermont has not had a snowstorm this December, but I have no doubt that old man winter will arrive in Rutland before Christmas Day. The long Vermont winter is the time to plan and reflect on what cemetery project you can tackle in 2011. Line up your volunteers, apply for grants, and see about work crews from the correction's department. I have received numerous inquiries lately on small burial grounds that people have recently re-discovered in their local communities. Many of these individuals have asked why no one is maintaining and mowing these small abandoned cemeteries. I usually explain the Vermont State Statutes on cemeteries, how to access the publication "Digging Deep," and the VOCA grant program. Often these same individuals ask me what I am going to do about the burial ground. I then ask them what are **YOU** going to do about your town's history? Hopefully, I do generate a spark of interest with these folks.

In addition to being VOCA's president I am also Rutland City's Cemetery Commissioner. As in most communities, municipal monies are very tight and little money is budgeted for the city's cemeteries. We needed to have many old monuments straightened and veteran replacement monuments replaced in two of the city's oldest cemeteries and with only two commissioners and no money, it was not looking promising to be completed this year. I contacted Castleton State College's Defensive Coach, Jeff Cassarino, to see if he could help with my project and he volunteered 14 members of his team to do the cemetery work. The team straightened dozens of stones, painted a cement retaining wall that was covered with graffiti, and put in the twelve Revolutionary War veteran replacement stones. The students did an outstanding job and I could not have asked for a better group of young men. It was so successful the team hopes to do another day working in Rutland's Cemeteries this spring with more of the team present and make this a yearly event. (They have 95 team members.) I am mentioning this in my report to urge our membership to think outside of the box when contemplating how they are going to tackle any daunting cemetery project. In addition to the CSC Football Team, I utilize a Vermont Department of Correction's work crew, volunteers to do the research/paperwork on veteran replacement monuments (which are provided free by the US Veteran's Administration), and I notify all the media outlets

when work is being done in the Rutland's Cemeteries to publicize the work being accomplished by these volunteers. There are resources available to you and sometimes all you have to do is ask for some help. I have found that local veteran groups, VFW, American Legion, and community organizations i.e. Elks, Moose, and Rotarians can often not only provide some much needed funding, but also provide volunteers for your cemetery projects.

The Aldrich Cemetery story continues to add new chapters to the 2+ year story. I was informed that the landowner who currently owns the surrounding property where the cemetery is located has chosen to appeal the 2010 Vermont Superior Court's decision, to the Vermont Supreme Court. It is anticipated it will be scheduled in December. The Vermont Superior Court had previously ruled that the 1800s-era Aldrich Cemetery could not be removed and the landowner was court-ordered to put the cemetery back to the original condition. I will report on any legal outcome in the spring newsletter.

VOCA runs on all unpaid volunteers and thanks to Diane Leary for volunteering to take over as VOCA's 1st Vice President. We will greatly miss former 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Betty Bell who has been a cheerleader for VOCA for the 20 years I have been associated with the organization. She was outstanding in recruiting new members and was a force to be reckoned with at the state and local levels. She will continue to be the VOCA County Representative for Addison. Thanks Betty for all you have done for VOCA. It is appreciated! We occasionally make mistakes in the newsletter. Some of our volunteers move and/or change phone numbers and the editor has not been made aware of the changes. If you have difficulty contacting a VOCA volunteer, please contact me via email or phone.

VOCA always needs new members, if you could sign up a neighbor or organization it would be greatly appreciated. We have been around 52 years and I am sure there will be a 100-year celebration of VOCA in 2058!

The Vermont Department of Corrections continues to provide work crews to assist communities in cemetery projects. If you are interested in the availability of a DOC work crew to help in your town's cemetery project, contact Field Office Director Mike O'Malley at 786-5099.

I continue to travel around the state doing presentations on VOCA. If you know of any group or organization that would be interested in VOCA let me know. Go to our web site [www.voca58.org](http://www.voca58.org) and check it out. If any member has questions or concerns regarding VOCA, please give me a call at (802) 773-3253 or email [tgifvt@msn.com](mailto:tgifvt@msn.com).

Tom Giffin  
President

**Internet search for a Plot!!!** *This item is from an article written by Joan Hellman.* Here's one way to trim burial costs. Instead of buying a plot directly from a cemetery, consider the internet to find a resale market where brokers buy and sell unused plots or bring together sellers and buyers who then make their own deals. (While on the surface this sounds like a good idea the VOCA editor would caution you to do some research to be certain that what you think you are getting is in fact what you are getting. I would recommend that you contact personally the governing authority that establishes the rules of the cemetery in question and request a copy of the cemetery rules, to assure yourself that plots can be sold in this manner. What if any restrictions does this cemetery have, what are the terms of perpetual care, monuments, how do you obtain a deed to the plot. Some cemeteries require that unused plots be sold back to the cemetery governing authority and then be available for resale.) Beware!

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**Trivia:** It was common practice with many American Indians tribes to tear down or burn down the dwelling that the death occurred in because it was believed that the devil comes to the place of death.

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**In Vermont more are choosing cremation over burial:**

*This item is from the 9/12/2010 issue of the Rutland Herald by Patrick McCardle.*

Some say that hasn't changed the way they do business, but others are finding new ways to respond. Jeff Martell, president of Granite Industries of Vermont in Barre, said the increase in cremation is having a dramatic impact on his industry because it means fewer granite memorials sold. "People who choose cremation generally don't go with the traditional memorialization. Instead, they tend to be the ashes-on-a-shelf somewhere or they end up choosing a special spot and spreading the ashes," he said. The city of Montpelier is actively responding to the change, according to its cemetery commissioner, Patrick Healy. "It's just a new way of doing business, it's not a

problem. "It's just what's happening so what we're doing here is offering many different types of operations that you can do with cremated remains," he said. Healy said Montpelier offers options from a traditional family plot to a single cremation marker. We also have other options such as what we call our woodland gardens, which is totally in the woods, there's no grass, just trees and bushes and some walkway. We've also done a section where we actually drilled into ledge and we've got a copper urn placed in the ledge so when we go to do the burial, all we do is dig down to the copper urn and open up the top and pour the cremated remains in and they can still have an upright monument. Healy said he does about 45 burials a year. In 1988 we did one cremation, now about 65% are cremations.

According to a report in October of 2010, the Cremation Association of North America, New England as a region had the third highest percentage of cremations in 2009. This places it almost 44% of the national average of 37%. The Mountain States, includes Nevada, the state with the highest percentage, was almost at 60%. In 2003 Vermont had about 40% cremations, by 2008 Vermont ranked ninth in cremations at about 59.5%. Maine at seventh and New Hampshire at tenth were also on the list. The report predicts that Vermont and Wyoming will reach a cremation rate of more than 85% by 2015.

Thomas Burrington, mausoleum and feature memorials director for Rock of Ages in Graniteville, Vermont, said that most of the products his company manufactures go outside Vermont, and the increase in cremations nationally is having an effect. We are modifying traditional memorial designs to accommodate cremations, making urns, and expanding our line of columbaria offerings, community and private. Just because a family chooses to be cremated or an individual within a family chooses to be cremated doesn't mean they don't want a traditional memorial in a cemetery setting.

Carl Rogers, town manager for Barre Town said the town had recently purchased and installed two columbaria, a unit for storing cremated remains of many people, at the town cemetery. Each columbaria has

48 niches, which are about one square foot and can hold the remains of two people.

Thomas Burrington said the economy and American mobility may be factors in the increase in cremations. Vermonters may move out of state but want to be buried in their home state. Family members find it's easier to transport cremated remains back to the family plot.



**Trivia:** The Sioux, Ute and Navajo Indians made use of above ground burials on platforms, or in trees. It was felt that after death the souls of the dead lingered in the air and watched over the tribe until it was time for their soul to move on to the afterlife. This type of burial also protected the body from predators.



**Athens Vermont Cemeteries:** *This item is taken from "The History of Athens" and provided by VOCA member Dolly Stevens.*

We begin with a War Memorial in honor of veterans of W.W. II from Athens. The committee to plan the memorial was elected at a meeting in March of 1947. It was composed of the following: Dwight P Spencer, Frank L Abbott, Jeanette L Carney, Gladys F Perry, and Robert Berrie. One year later, 1948, the committee reported that a large fieldstone had been set up near the forks of route 35 and the Lower Road. On its face a bronze tablet had been set bearing an inscription as follows:

"The Town of Athens Has Erected this Memorial to Preserve the Memory of its Fellow Townsmen Who Served in World War II."

Followed by the names, alphabetically and without rank, of the 15 men. Six lilac bushes and three daphne plants were set out on either side. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1949 the dedication committee composed of Dwight P Spencer, Mrs Alfred M Kelton, Mrs Ned W Wyman, and Frank L Abbott performed a very impressive ceremony in the form of a parade from the White Church to the Memorial Stone. A photo of the event was the cover picture on the Town Report for that year.

The first death in the town of Athens was that of Isaac Perham in 1780. The East Athens Burying Ground Association as it was then called, came into being on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1863. By subscription the sum of \$15.50 was raised to enlarge the existing Valley Cemetery. An acre of land surrounding the cemetery on three sides was purchased from Samuel M Woods. The deed from Mr Woods dated March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1863 was recorded in Book 6, page 123. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1890, a constitution and by-laws of the association was adopted changing the name from East Athens Burying Ground Association to the Athens Valley Cemetery Association. In 1921 the association was legally incorporated under the laws of Vermont, and for the purpose of caring for the cemetery and receiving all trust funds that may be left for the benefit of said cemetery.

The incorporators were E S Kingsley, Holland J Hastings, Winfield A Wyman, Alonzo S Powers, Fred L Smith, and Percy R Clark. In 1927 additional land was purchased from Lewis Reed. A good stone wall was constructed to surround the entire cemetery. A detailed survey and map of the cemetery was made in 1958 by N W Wyman. Copies are kept with the sexton and secretary of the association. In 1953 the cemetery was improved by filling between the lots which enables the use of a power lawn mower, thus making the upkeep much easier.

One veteran of the Revolutionary War, Josiah Powers, who died in 1808, is known to have been buried in the Valley Cemetery, by a stone marking his grave. It is thought that others lie in unmarked graves, since several of the first settlers in town were veterans of the war. Early burial records have been lost. Known veterans living in Athens before 1800 were Jonathan Perham, his son Leonard. Also Ezekiel Perham, Nathaniel and Calvin Oak, James Shafter, and others.

Men who served in the war of 1812 from Athens were Samuel Bayley, Ephraim Bowen, Jarville Chaffee, Otis Chaffee, Oliver Davis, Abner Davis, Cyrus Dean, Jonas DePutron, Levi Field, Zera Green, Ebeneazer Oakes, Joseph Porter, Silas Powers, Jonathan Robbins, Alvan Thayer, Comfort Thrasher, Simon Thrasher, Rufus Whitney, and Warren Wells.

Buried in the Valley Cemetery from the War of 1812 are Charles Colton, Jonas DePutron, Sylvanus Mattoon, Silas Powers, and Maj Timothy Whitney.

No records of enlistment or burials from the Mexican War of 1865.

Burials from those of the Civil War, (1861 to 1865), Noah Ball, Charles Cooper, George Eager, Prentice Edwards, William Fuller, Franklin Oakes, Silas D Powers, Eugene W Robbins, and George Waterhouse.

No records of enlistments or burials from the Spanish-American War 1898.

World War I, (1917), Guy W powers died January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1949, and Lewis A Reed died December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1957.

World War II, (1941 to 1945), Lt Everett J Carney who died in the Philippines in September of 1942.

The oldest burying ground in Athens is situated in the westerly part of town, about one-half mile from the Old Brick Church off route 35, and is called the West Cemetery. Four stone walls surround this three-quarter acre plot. The west wall borders an old abandoned county road once leading to the soapstone quarries. The oldest stone standing bears the name Bowles, dated 1791. There are two perpetual care lots, the Charles Colton and Stella Holden lots. Two veterans of the Revolutionary War are buried here, Capt Seth Oak and Capt Ezra Chaffee. Two soldiers of the War of 1812 are interred here, that of Capt Elijah Davis and Ebenezer Oakes. From those who served in the Civil War are the remains of Henry S Leland and Gideon Stiles.



**Trivia:** Above ground burials were common with the Plains Indians and to some extent, those of the Pacific Northwest. Burial mounds were more common with Indians along the Mississippi River drainage. In some areas of the Southeast and the Southwest, urn burials were common, using earthenware jars.





**Marie Wright,** It appears to be that in any organization there are a dozen or less members who are vital to the survival of its existence. VOCA is no different. Marie Wright was one of those people. Marie became a VOCA member on 9/1/1986. From the very beginning she was an active member. She played a major part in the research of VOCA's first book in 1990 and 1991. She also was very involved in the restoration of several of Westminster's cemeteries. Born in Brattleboro, on 4/20/1938, to Herman and Cecilia Lavender Longe. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1957 she married Norman E Wright. She had seven children and cared for several foster children. She was in her forties when she learned to ski and volunteered for many years with the Westminster School ski program. She served as Cemetery Sexton in Westminster West, was a Justice of the Peace, firefighter, EMT, active in the Westminster Historical Society, and the Vermont Old Cemetery Association. She was not the type of person to complain about things, she would get involved and work to make things better. Marie joined her lord on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Burial was in the Westminster West Cemetery.

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**Trivia:** In above ground American Indian burials, the body may be placed in a canoe, and then raised with poles to be placed on the platform. In some instances the body would be wrapped in watertight cloth, sewn, and lifted onto the platform. Logs were sometimes split in two and hollowed out to fit a body inside before it was raised to the platform.

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**A look in the Vault:**

**First** Spring meeting in Danville Vermont! Organized by Louise Lessard, with Keith Schaffer as our speaker, the topic will be American Indian burial methods and how they deal with death. Business meeting will start at 10:00 AM. Buffet style noon meal will be chicken divan, broccoli with hollandaise sauce, glazed carrots, and apple crisp served with ice cream, by *reservation only*. \$12.00 per person, contact Louise Lessard, P O Box 233 Danville, Vermont, 05828, or call

her at 802-525-3067. The meeting will be held at the Methodist Church, (next to the yellow bed & breakfast) on the village green in the center of town and has plenty of parking. Danville is a small village on route 2 about eight miles west of St Johnsbury Vermont. Coffee will be available prior to the business meeting

**Second** The new mailing address for items to be used in the newsletter and for VOCA membership is: *VOCA, P O Box 3282, Nampa Idaho, 83687.* Phone number remains the same, 800-675-8815.

**Third** We welcome our new members!!! Gregory Cook of Wilder VT, James & Barbara Walton of Waterbury VT, Peter Morris of Vergennes VT, Charles & Barbara Brewster of Manchester Ctr VT, Elizabeth Upton of Fairlee VT, and Gregory & Virginia Phelps of Essex Jct VT.. We now have 627 members.

**Forth** VOCA would like to thank Sanborn Partridge for his gift to the Dean Fund!

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**Trivia:** Mississippian Indians in Middle Tennessee usually lined their burials with large limestone slabs and placed one on top as a cover to form a stone coffin, then covered with a layer of earth. (*from the Native Nashville Information Center web site*)

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**Trivia:** (*From the U.S. Dept. of Interior, National Parks Service*) During the American Revolution, soldiers were buried near the place of battle. One of the earliest types of organized American military cemetery was the post cemetery. Commanders at frontier forts of the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century buried their dead in cemetery plots marked off within the post reservation Post cemetery registers reveal a fairly uniform system of recording burials

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**2009-2010 Headstones**

Thomas Giffin, President, 61 East Washington St, Rutland VT, 05701 [tgiftv@msn.com](mailto:tgiftv@msn.com) .....802-773-3253  
 Diane Leary, 1st VP,..... 4670 Greenbush Rd, Charlotte, VT, 05445..... 802-881-1951  
 Vacant!!!!!!!!!!!!, Grants Administrator Assistant, .....This could be you!!!!!!!!!!!!.....Vacant!!!!!!!!!!!!  
 Arthur Hyde, 2nd VP&Grants Admin, 1991 Upper Plain, Bradford, Vt 05033 ..... 802-222-4088  
 Harry Fisher, Treas & Newsletter Ed, P O Box 3282, Nampa, Idaho, 83687 .....800-675-8815  
 Merci Fisher, Assistant Newsletter Ed., PO Box 3282, Nampa, Idaho, 83687.....800-675-8815  
 Justin Giffin, Asst Treas, 61 E Washington St, Rutland, VT [justingiff@hotmail.com](mailto:justingiff@hotmail.com)..... 802-779-1671  
 Charles E Marchant, Sec, P O Box 132, Townshend Vt, 05353 .....[cemassoc@svcable.net](mailto:cemassoc@svcable.net).....802-365-7937  
 Edmund Wilcox, Exe Board, 4996 Georgia Shore Rd., St Albans Vt, 05478 .....802-524-3318

**WEB MASTER**

**Darryl Harris** ..... [webmaster@voca58.org](mailto:webmaster@voca58.org)  
**VOCA Website** ..... [www.voca58.org](http://www.voca58.org)

**FOOTSTONES**

2012 **Wesly Mowry, P O Box 297, Hartland, VT, 05048** .....802-436-3383  
 2011 **Richard Howrigan, P O Box 16, Fairfield Vt, 05455** .....802-827-6513  
 2010 **Robert Hooper, 44 Charity St, Burlington Vt, 05401** [hooper9999@aol.com](mailto:hooper9999@aol.com) .....802-862-0708  
 2010 **Vacant** .....Are you the one we are looking for?.....  
 2010 **Ruth Barton, P O Box 309, Putney, Vt, 05301** .....802-254-1128  
 2011 **Chris Book, 44 N Main, Rutland, VT, 05701** .....802-773-6252

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 EO59-26)

**VOCA Books For Sale**

**The 3rd edition of “Burial Grounds of Vermont”, lay-flat binding \$35. Addendum to 1st & 2nd editions \$4.00, “Stones&Bones”, a teacher’s resource packet \$24.00. 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 \*\*\*\*\*

|                                                  |                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Addison- Betty R Bell 802-453-3947</b>        | <b>Grand Isle- vacant</b>                     |
| <b>Bennington – Jean Kosche – 802-447-2241</b>   | <b>Lamoille- Deanna French 802-888-4537</b>   |
| <b>Orange- Arthur Hyde 802-222-4088</b>          | <b>Orleans- Wanda Webster 802-525-3550</b>    |
| <b>Caledonia – Louise Lessard – 802-684-3404</b> | <b>Rutland- Cliff Giffin 802-773-3743</b>     |
| <b>Chittenden- Robert Hooper- 802-862-0708</b>   | <b>Washington- Vacant</b>                     |
| <b>Essex- Richard Colburn- 802-723-4833</b>      | <b>Windham- Charles Marchant 802-365-7937</b> |
| <b>Franklin- Edmund Wilcox- 802-524-3318</b>     |                                               |
| <b>Windsor- Ken Barrett- 802-875-2941</b>        |                                               |

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 3282  
Nampa, Idaho, 83687**

Vermont Old Cemetery Association  
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Nampa, Idaho, 83687