



Vermont Old Cemetery Association Founded by Prof Leon Dean (1899-1982) Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1958

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT SPRING 2013

According to the calendar, spring has arrived in Vermont. Hard to believe that is accurate with the several inches of snow on my deck and ice still on Lake Champlain. Hope, however, does spring eternal. Some crocuses have started to peek through the snow, and I have seen flocks of geese heading north. But, I have yet to see a single robin. I have been doing weekly work-related traveling that takes me on highways through Addison and Chittenden Counties. There are many old burial grounds on this trek, and I have noticed a great disparity on how communities treat their old burial grounds. Many small towns do a wonderful job maintaining their cemeteries. Some still have the original wrought iron fences; the stones are straight; and broken stones have been repaired. Unfortunately, others show years of neglect, and the monuments are flattened and broken with no apparent interest in restoring them. These burial grounds are not off the beaten path and hundreds, if not thousands, of motorists see them daily on their commute. If you live in a community that has burial grounds that are in need of restoration, please contact the local cemetery commissioners and/ or the select board and ask why the town is not maintaining these old burial grounds. If the cemetery is in a good state of repair, you should write a letter to the town's officials thanking them for preserving Vermont's heritage. If you need information on the laws governing the upkeep of Vermont's cemeteries you can find it in the VT Secretary of State's publication, "Digging Deep." Ask VOCA editor Bill Wiles to email you the PDF version or point your web browser to the web site [[http://www.sec.state.vt.us/municipal/Digging\\_Deep.pdf](http://www.sec.state.vt.us/municipal/Digging_Deep.pdf)].

A current plague hitting cemeteries nationwide is the theft of veteran grave markers/flag holders. Many of these markers are made of bronze, brass, or other metal and are often sold to unscrupulous metal dealers or on EBay. If you are interested in helping stop the sale of these items on EBay, you can check for the item under such listings as "brass grave marker or DAR marker" and "report the

item” to EBay and they will remove it. I have also seen a 1700s grave stone that someone had in their possession that they tried to sell on this site. There are dealers that do sell new and legitimate grave markers, but are relatively easy to identify from the ones that were once in a cemetery as the seller often lists the marker’s condition as “used.” It is a felony in to steal items from a VT cemetery.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who donated to VOCA to provide us with funding to continue with our grant program. Because of your generosity, we have funding for this year to help communities with their cemetery projects. We also continue to take contributions for the Leon Dean Fund. The interest on this restricted fund helps provides grant money for cemetery projects around Vermont.

VOCA is in need of an assistant treasurer. If you can help us in this area, please contact current treasurer Chris Book or myself. VOCA as a 100% volunteer organization would greatly appreciate your involvement.

I recently renewed the Department of Corrections work crew contract for the Rutland City Cemeteries. (VOCA Treasurer Chris Book and I are also the cemetery commissioners for the city.) We have utilized this resource for many years to mow and help with some maintenance of Rutland’s Cemeteries, and it has been a wonderful partnership between DOC and the City of Rutland. If you are interested in the availability of a DOC work crew program in your area, contact Rutland Field Office Director, Keith Tallon at 802-786-5099.

VOCA’s spring meeting will be in Hartland at the Congregational Church on May 4<sup>th</sup>. The details are in the newsletter. If you know of an organization that would be interested in a VOCA presentation, please let me know. If you have agenda items or concerns for the spring meeting, please contact me.

I hope see many of you at our May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

TOM GIFFIN  
VOCA President

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## **Vermont State Hospital Cemetery (thanks to Anne Donahue for this information)**

The Vermont State Hospital Cemetery was established less than a year after the institution opened its doors to its first patients on August 8, 1891. Almost all of the initial patients had been transferred from the Brattleboro Retreat, which had been seriously overcrowded with state patients. The pine grove was planted around the location in about 1909 by patients.

By the 1960s, the wooden crosses marking the graves had long since rotted away, however historian Herbert Hunt reports that 19 grave indentations were still visible, and that he had compiled a list of 19 names from patient records. There are between two and eight others who may also be buried there.

The cemetery had been lost to memory until Gary De Carolis, the Deputy Commissioner for the [then] Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services from 1988 to 1993, found an old map and tracked the location of “the knoll” in 1990. State archeologist Giovanna Peebles surveyed it and, “by process of elimination,” determined the most likely boundary area. The four corner markers and the granite memorial stone (donated by the Barre Granite Association, with the inscription penned by De Carolis) were erected in a rededication ceremony in 1991. The Granite Association handled the installation of the memorial stone on the knoll. Since then, the site has been maintained by the Department of Parks, Forests and Recreation and is on its land management plan. De Carolis made the estimate of “20 or so” written on the stone based on a list of patient disposition records compiled similar to Hunt’s earlier one. He believes that there may also be body parts buried there from amputations.

Old archives of VSH patient records were destroyed in the 2011 flood. However, the list I have compiled is likely as complete as could have been reconstructed from those records, with the addition of information from Vermont vital records and U.S. census records. For three of the individuals, no information could be located in state vital records. This list of all patients who, based on the entries on their records, may have been buried there, totals 29, including one newborn not included separately in other lists. The first 16 on the list by year of death are identified as being buried in the “asylum cemetery” or the “state cemetery.” After the next two burials, there is a gap of seven years (1899 to 1906) before the next one suggestive of being in the hospital cemetery. Language for the location of burials then became less explicit, such as buried in “the upper meadow.” There are at least two patients who appear to have been buried in other locations on the grounds, and perhaps several others. It will probably never be able to be determined definitively which of burials 17 through 29 took place in the cemetery, on the grounds, or perhaps elsewhere.

Hunt tied the end of use of the cemetery to a change in state law under which towns of origin became responsible for burials of their indigent residents. That law, however, was enacted in 1915. He makes another reference in his writings to the cemetery reaching capacity, and to several burials that might have occurred elsewhere on the grounds.

### **List of Patients Buried on Hospital Grounds**

**Joseph Warren**, age 45, was the first burial listed in the “asylum cemetery.” Although his death is listed as January 1, 1892, other history states that the first patient was buried there on August 1, 1892. No information for him could be located in the town death records or state vital records and the hospital list gives no diagnosis or cause of death.

**Kate Shamore**, who died May 27, 1892, had been in the first group of 50 women who were transferred from the Retreat on September 4, 1891. She was 72, and her cause of death was listed as a cerebral embolism. There are also no town or state records on her, and the spelling of her last name is in question.

**James L. Collins** died on March 23, 1893 at age 76, according to his death certificate, which also provides the names of his parents, John and Betsey [Eddy] Collins. Information drawn from the hospital list identifies a John Collins, admitted on the prior August 8 and dying on March 23, and lists him as “buried in Waterbury cemetery.” The only Collins in any other Waterbury cemetery is in the village, a “John,” age 80, with no dates. There is no reason to assume other than that James was the actual patient and was buried in the hospital cemetery. His admission diagnosis was senile dementia, and cause of death, erysipelas and pneumonia.

**Pheoba Weller**, who died August 1 of that year, was 51 and had been admitted just a few months before, on April 10, with a diagnosis of “delusional mania, acute.” Her cause of death was “exhaustion, organic disease of the brain.” The hospital record indicates that a “son and his wife” were present for the burial. The vital records search turned up a husband, Edgar Weller, but only one child, a daughter, Mary Ann. Pheoba was born in Cambridge and Edgar was from Hineburg, and a farmer. Their daughter was born in 1877 in Starksboro, and she and her husband, Daniel Liberty, had their first child, Henry, the year before Pheoba’s death. Her last descendants traced were Geraldine Agnes Clark, who married Matthew Robert Thibault in 1947 in Burlington, and Barbara Ann Clark, who married Leo Louis Coutois in 1954.

**Sally Town**, listed as 30, died in childbirth on November 6, and the newborn was buried with her in the asylum cemetery. She was admitted as a transfer from the Retreat in 1891. The hospital record listed no admission diagnosis, but said she was “deaf and dumb” and it was “discovered she was pregnant October 20, 1893.” Her death certificate lists paresis, a psychosis caused by destruction of brain tissue occurring in some cases of late syphilis. Sally was born in 1832 in Pawlet to William, a farm laborer, and Jillian Town. They had five more children after Sally. The last of her brother William’s descendants was traced to Richard James Bruce (1954-1975).

**Unnamed Town newborn**, 11/6/93-11/6/93, buried in asylum cemetery with mother.

**Sarah Townshend**, also admitted on September 4 of 1891, died Nov. 21, 1893 at age 61. She was born in Canada, and had been at the Retreat since at least the time of the 1880 census. The record listed “uterine trouble” as the cause of insanity, with cerebral pressure causing her death. Death records list the cause of death as “acute mania.”

**Patrick Waldrin** died the same day. Born in Ireland, he was 70 and was transferred from the Retreat in 1891 with “chronic dementia.” His cause of death on the hospital list was Bright’s Disease, an old term for undefined kidney diseases or chronic nephritis; in the death record, simply “insanity.”

**Catherine Davies**, born in Burlington in 1824, died from a blood clot on May 10, 1894 at age 70. She had been transferred from the Retreat in October of 1891. The death record lists “fatty degeneration of the heart” for cause of death.

**Rachel Boynton**, 65, another from the first group of women brought from Brattleboro, died on September 1 of 1894. Born in Wheelock in 1829, she had been at the Retreat since at least 1880. The hospital list stated that the cause of her insanity was “domestic trouble.” She died from ulceration of the stomach. Rachel was the wife of Leonard Boynton, a woodchopper; she is listed in the 1860 and 1870 census’ as “keeping house” in Pownal with their two children, Mason, born in 1849, and Mary, born in 1850.

**Christopher Kidder** died June 15, 1895. He had been admitted in 1893 for “mania, chronic delusional,” and died at 58 of valvular disease of the heart. Christopher and his wife, Emma S. Bassford had two children, Elmer H., born in 1875 and Millie, born in 1877.

**Maggie Paro**, 34, died of epilepsy on May 16, 1896. She had been admitted from the Retreat in 1891 with “childbirth” as the listed cause of insanity.

**Annie Fuller** died May 25, 1896 of organic disease of the brain after have been admitted in 1894 for “mania, chronic delusional.” Insanity was caused by “change of life which occurred last fall.” She was born Anna E. Potter in Bennington, daughter of Benajah and Lucinda Potter, and in 1863 married Lemuel Fuller. There is no record of children. Depending upon the source, she was born somewhere between 1837 and 1846, making her between 50 and 59.

**Martha Taylor** was identified as age 81 but with no information about her death on July 3, 1896. She had been admitted on Sept. 4, 1892, and was listed as being buried in the “state cemetery.”

**George Lyon** died of heart failure on August 11, 1896, just two months after his admission. He was 76 with “chronic dementia,” and was buried in the “state cemetery.” He was a laborer, born in Holland, Vt.

**John Harwood** was only at the hospital for nine days before his death from a “cerebral effusion” on Dec. 28, 1896. He was born in Bennington and a “laborer,” but age unknown. His was the last death for which the term “asylum cemetery” was used to indicate the place of burial. He would have only been the fifteenth grave, however, among the nineteen grave impressions that some have described as still visible in the 1960s.

**Amelia Platka** was another of the first women admitted in 1891, and died April 26, 1898 at age 63. She was born in Germany; insanity was caused by a “domestic affliction,” but she died after three months with a “malignant disease of the liver.” She was a widow, and was listed as “burial in Waterbury cemetery.” No other Waterbury cemetery includes her in their listings.

**Sheldon Pond**, who was admitted with “chronic dementia” in 1896, died on Feb. 25, 1899 at age 75 of “exhaustion of old age” with burial “by the state.” In 1850, he was a young farmer in Addison living with his parents, Samuel and Eleanor, but by 1870, at 42, census records show him in the Windsor prison. He was at the Brattleboro Retreat as of 1880.

**Josephine Paquette**, who died May 14 or 20, 1906 of “cerebral congestion,” was listed as being buried “here in cemetery in Waterbury, VT. Her sister from Rhode Island to see to it.” There are several discrepancies regarding her place of burial. Her death certificate identifies her as being buried in Duxbury. She does not show up, however, on any cemetery listings in either Waterbury or Duxbury. Josephine was admitted in 1902 and was 49. She was married to Charles H. Paquette, and her

parents were Soloman and Amelia (Mosher) Pepin. The death record lists cause of death as “general paralysis,” with a contributing cause of a former attack of syphilis.

**Thomas Nason**, 80, committed suicide on June 25, 1908. He had been admitted the year before. Records indicate that he eloped and was found the next day, “suicide by hanging at riverbank.” The record indicated that the body was decomposing and “could not be moved from this place.” Remains were “buried on hospital grounds.”

**Adeline Smith** was admitted in 1896 for “chronic dementia” and died March 13, 1909 of a fractured femur; she has a cause of insanity listed as “disappointment in love.” She was about 82. She is listed at “hospital burying grounds.”

**William Burbank** was a 17-year-old with an unknown diagnosis who died from a scalding accident on July 6, 1909, and was “buried in the upper meadow.” He was born in Burlington and admitted in 1908, but other information in the vital records, including the name of his parents, is listed as unknown. The description of the accident stated, “Was left standing near the tub while the attendant went to get a clean shirt. Attendant heard a scream, went in, and found Mr. Burbank half submerged and scalded. Shock of extensive scalding of body.”

**Fred J. Phillips**, who died of suicide on July 21, 1909 at 48, is also listed as “buried in upper meadow.” He was admitted in 1906. His death record lists a wife, Kate, and his father, Frank. The description of his death gruesome: “Absent when night watch did rounds. Body found in the weed on riverbank. Throat cut, knife on his abdomen.” His death certificate indicates “suicide by cutting his throat,” and identifies burial as being in Waterbury. The hospital record said his family was present for a funeral service, held in the lecture room. He had been a blacksmith, born in Underhill.

**Charles Tatro** was admitted in 1908 and died Nov. 10, 1910 at age 47 of “epilepsy, exhaustion, facial erysipelas (an infection)” and “since he died of a communicable disease the body was buried on the institution grounds this A.M.” He was a laborer from South Burlington, and the son of Elmer Taro, who was born in Canada. His death certificate identifies place of burial as “Waterbury Hospital Grounds.”

**Philip Pitkin** died of tuberculosis at age 18 on April 24, 1911; born in South Royalton, he was admitted when he was 14. A contributing cause of death of “insanity” was listed. His mother is recorded as Bertha Morian. He was “buried on the hospital grounds” after his body was refused by the overseer of the poor for his town. His death certificate also identifies “hospital grounds” as place of burial.

**Joseph McCormick**, 36, died Oct. 29, 1911 of diphtheria. He had been admitted in 1896 for “chronic recurrent mania,” with insanity caused by “heredity.” He was the son of Cary and Ann (Corbett) McCormick, and his body was interred at the “hospital burying grounds.”

**Frederick T. Sharp** of Hinesburg was struck by a falling tree while on firewood duty on Dec. 20, 1912, and bled to death. He was 42, and had been admitted in both 1902 and 1903, with cause of insanity listed as “over study and mental work.” He was a teacher, and the son of Alexander and Agnes (Marshall) Sharp, born in Connecticut. He was divorced from his wife, Katherine (Page) Sharp, and there is no record of children. One historical report lists the last burial in the hospital cemetery as being on Dec. 20, 1912, presumably referring to his, but the hospital listing says “remains were buried on hospital grounds” and oral history as recorded by Herbert Hunt indicated that he was buried near where the tree fell on him, “50 yards from the cellar hole of the old Johnson homestead, which was also demarcated at the time by a boundary of old lilac tress.” His death certificate gives place of burial as “State Farm, Waterbury,” (emphasis added), the only burial location stated in that way.

**Matilda Mineburg** died Feb. 21, 1913 at age 69 of “cardiac dilation – insanity.” She had been with the first women transferred from the Retreat in 1891, and is listed as having been “buried on hospital grounds.” If this indicates the hospital cemetery, it would contradict the historical report [Hunt] of the last burial being in 1912. She was born Matilda Becker, the daughter of Meyer Becker, in 1844 in Prussia and was married to David Mineburg, also of Prussia. It appears that they had seven children; the youngest was born in 1879 while they were living in Burke, and died a year later. The extended Mineburg family included his father Moses, who lived with his brother, Soloman, who was married to Rosa, all from Prussia. Her death certificate listed burial in Waterbury; she is not recorded at any other Waterbury cemetery.

List of terms used to identify places of burial:

- “asylum cemetery” (13 [+ infant])
- “state cemetery” (2)
- “institutional burying grounds” (1)
- “hospital burying grounds” (2)
- “upper meadow” (2)
- “hospital grounds” (3)
- “institutional grounds”/“Waterbury Hospital Grounds” (1)
- “State Farm, Waterbury” (1)
- “by the state” (1)
- “Waterbury cemetery” (1)



- “cemetery in Waterbury” [also references Duxbury] (1)

Total referenced as a hospital burial ground: 19

Other hospital grounds references: 7; Other: 3

The “upper meadow” and “state cemetery” are likely references to the cemetery, and Nason and Sharp were almost certainly elsewhere on the grounds but not in the cemetery. That would increase the most likely cemetery burials to 21 [including infant], with three additional unidentified “hospital grounds” burials: Tatro, Pitkin and Mineburg. The three other more generic site burials are Pond, Collins and Pacquette, and circumstances would place those three burial locations as possibly in the hospital cemetery as well (“by the state”)(“Waterbury cemetery” and not on other cemetery listings)(“cemetery in Waterbury” or, “burial place: Duxbury” but not on other Waterbury cemetery listings or any Duxbury cemetery listings).

This would place the best guess at between 24 to 27 actually in the VSH cemetery, and between two and five elsewhere on the hospital grounds.

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## Vermont State Hospital Cemetery UPDATE

(again, thanks to Anne Donahue)

Since the introduction of legislation to ensure the preservation of the historic Vermont State Hospital Cemetery, new information has come to light. Rather than a statutory solution, the best route to protection is to ensure three elements are in place:

1. The cemetery is in the management plan of the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. This already exists, and the Department has been providing regular care to the cemetery.
2. The cemetery should be listed in the Vermont Archeological Inventory. State Archeologist Giovanna Peebles has the existing authority to do this, and has the necessary documentation, having reviewed the site and determined its boundaries in 1991. She intends to proceed.
3. The cemetery should be listed in the State Registry of Historic Sites. This also falls under Giovanna Peebles jurisdiction in the Office of Historic Preservation, and she is also intending to take the necessary steps to follow up.
4. The Department of Buildings and General Services has also voluntary to assist with ongoing maintenance as a part of it oversight of the Waterbury complex.

A second, but related issue has come to the fore as my own research has progressed. It has become clearer that there may be at least some additional patient remains located on the state hospital grounds other than in the cemetery. None of the locations are known, however, there have been repeated oral history references to an area around the original Medical Building. This same location may include remains from limbs from amputations from surgeries. Two other known burials on the grounds took place in spots no longer able to be identified: one was by “the large tree near the river,” and the other was near the Johnson farmhouse cellar hole [this, probably in an area near where the current Waterbury ice rink is.]

This information has significance for any construction work which may take place in the future on the Waterbury complex grounds, in particular in the area around the Medical Building (more recently, the Public Safety building) and Agriculture Building.

Issues that need to be considered may be:

- Strategic notifications for appropriate precautionary measures related to any excavation in the complex, with special attention to the Medical Building. Giovanna Peebles appears to have some knowledge about this kind of notice, and might be of value for testimony in more detail on appropriate planning.

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## Visiting West Hill Cemetery in Williamstown in the Thirties

It was a warm Sunday morning in late June when my brother Robert and I took turns cranking the handle of our ice cream freezer. Mother had made the custard and mixed it with sweet cream. Dad had ponded a cake of ice from the ice house in a burlap bag to catch the pieces. These, plus some salt, surrounded the central container of liquid sweetness to be frozen into our delectable dessert. If we had not constantly turned the paddles inside, the result would have been a block of hard ice cream!

When we could no longer turn the paddles, it was time to remove and lick them. Then the whole freezer was packed and deposited in one of the two buggies we were taking. My brother and I drove the more sedate horse, and out parents had the livelier one.

Off we went in a westerly direction toward a cemetery lined with gigantic ancient maples. The horses were hitched in the shade and given bags of oats. Although out folks spread blankets on the cemetery grass, Robert and I wandered about with our chopped-beef-and-onion sandwiches, reading epitaphs, and admiring beautiful Sweet Williams. Next came bowls of the world’s best ice cream.

When Dad had eaten his fill, he led us over to a certain slate stone. With a tone of reverence in his voice, he said, “This man, Samuel Adams, was your great-great-great grandfather. He served with George Washington in the Revolution, and was with him when Cornwallis surrendered.”

Miriam Herwig, 90 in June  
Randolph Center

## VOCA's SPRING MEETING

WHEN? Saturday, May 4, 2013.

WHERE? Hartland Congregational Church  
10 Station Road  
Hartland, VT

close to exit 9 off I-91 and intersection of Routes 5 and 12.

(Route 5 is North-South. Route 12 is west to Woodstock that connects to Route 4 East-West to Rutland.)

WHAT? Coffee hour from 9 am to 10 am. The business portion of the meeting starts promptly at 10 am.

Daryl Calkins will present a demonstration of ground penetrating radar after lunch.

Lunch will be \$10 and will include a choice of three sandwiches:

- Ham salad
- Tuna fish
- Roast Turkey
- on WHITE or WHEAT bread.

Reservation slips NEED to have these choices selected when they send in their money. A salad will be part of lunch as well as chips, pickles, and dessert.

Make checks payable to me as "Whit Mowry". Send reservations to:

Whit Mowry-VOCA  
P O Box 297  
Hartland VT 05048

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**VOCA County Representatives** (These are people who will come help you with your VOCA grant application.)

ADDISON	Betty R. Bell 802-423-3947	LAMOILLE	Deanna French 802-522-2050
BENNINGTON	Jean Kosche 802-447-2241	ORANGE	Vacant
CALEDONIA	Vacant	ORLEANS	Wanda Webster 800-525-3550
CHITTENDEN	Robert Hooper 802-862-0708	RUTLAND	Cliff Giffin 802-773-3743
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FRANKLIN	Edmund Wilcox 802-524-3318	WINDHAM	Charles Marchant 802-365-7937
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Chris Book, Treasurer

Harry Fisher, Membership &Asst. Newsletter Editor

Justin Giffin, Asst. Treasurer

Charles E. Marchant, Secretary

Edmund Wilson, Executive Board

Bill Wiles, Newsletter Editor

Darryl Harris  
VOCA Website

**2011-2012 Headstones**

61 East Washington St.  
Rutland VT, 05701

4670 Greenbush Rd.  
Charlotte, VT 05445

44 Charity St.  
Burlington, VT 05401

44 North Main St.  
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61 East Washington St.  
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