

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ***Winter 2014***

Winter has a solid hold on Vermont, and the temperature does not plan to rise above 10 degrees until the 1st week in February. I am sure many of VOCA's snowbirds are watching the weather for the northeast and chortling at our New England weather, while they bask in the sun in a more temperate locale. The mailman has delivered the usual assortment of seed catalogs, so we can at least dream about the upcoming spring garden. Now is the time for you to look around your town and see what cemeteries need restoration. If you are aware of a neglected burial ground in your community, Town Meeting Day is an excellent opportunity to bring it to the attention of the voters. If you are not knowledgeable of legal responsibilities towns have regarding their cemeteries you can find the info at: http://www.sec.state.vt.us/municipal/Digging_Deep.pdf. There is still time to ask that cemetery issues be placed on the agenda. The cemetery commissioners should have a report and, if there are no elected/appointed commissioners, the report should be given by selectboard to the taxpayers.

As the Cemetery Commissioner for the City of Rutland, I always have some resources that I use and would like to share them in my report. The Rutland Middle School Social Studies class will once again provide me with two days of work in Rutland's West Street and Old Congregational Cemetery. This work will include brush/debris removal, stone straightening and other duties. Mount Saint Joseph Academy has also told me they would continue to provide help this spring upon request. I have recruited a volunteer who is willing to come with a chainsaw and cut down various nuisance trees/brush at the sites. I also continue to utilize the Department of Corrections work crews to do all the mowing for the city, which has been a great resource for many counties around the state.

The biggest issue that communities currently have is the lack funding for maintenance of Vermont's old burial grounds. Many communities have precious few (if any) funds for cemetery upkeep and no monies left in the "perpetual care" account. I would encourage you to reach out to schools and other civic minded groups to help you in your community cemeteries. Most Vermont schools have a community service requirement for their students for graduation and I have also been successful with asking local high school and college sports teams for help with cemetery projects.

VOCA's publication "Burial Grounds of VT" is now available on CD and can be purchased for \$20 by contacting Secretary, Charlie Marchant. This would be a unique gift to give to someone interested the state's genealogy/history. All proceeds go to help support the organization.

If you are interested in the availability of a Department of Corrections work crew to help with the upkeep of your cemetery for the 2014 season, please contact DOC Field Office Director, Keith Tallon, at (802) 786-5099.

Please check the expiration date on your newsletter and address. If you do not believe it is correct, please contact Assistant Grants Administrator, Robert Hooper so he can correct your information.

Our web site has been revamped and looks great! Please visit it at www.voca58.org . Special thanks to Barry Trudor for all his hard work on the site. Barry is looking for articles and pictures to post. Here is a great opportunity to highlight your cemetery project or post some of your prose. VOCA also has a Facebook page available and I encourage everyone to join and post what is going on in your area regarding cemetery issues and/or projects.

Please continue to recruit new VOCA members. Our \$10 membership fee is very reasonable and with an all unpaid volunteer board, all monies go to our mission of the restoration of Vermont's old burial grounds. If you are aware of an organization that is looking for a presenter for their monthly meeting, please have someone give me a call.

The spring meeting site has not been finalized and we should have the information in the next newsletter. If you have agenda items for our October 5th meeting, please give me a call at (802) 773-3253 or at tgift@msn.com.

Tom Giffin
VOCA President

From Ebay to the Colchester Village Cemetery
by Barry Trudor

For several months a real photo postcard had been offered on Ebay with the following description:

Mailed Oct. 10, 1910 at Philadelphia. THIS RPPC (real photo postcard) OF A STREET SCENE IN PHILADELPHIA IS VERY NICE BUT THE REALLY INTERESTING ASPECT OF THIS POSTCARD IS THE END OF THE MESSAGE: "SEND THE PAPER (PROBABLY THE BURLINGTON, VT FREE PRESS) THAT HAS THE BOSTON AMERICAN (AKA RED SOX) GAME AT BURL. (BURLINGTON, VT)." OBVIOUSLY, THE AMERICANS PLAYED A BASEBALL GAME IN BURLINGTON.

I collect antique postcards of Burlington. Although this one didn't have a Burlington picture, it piqued one of my other interests: The Boston Red Sox. I asked my son about it and he explained that in the early part of the century when Boston had two major league baseball teams, the Sox were often referred to in print as the Boston Americans, referencing their membership in the American League; the Braves, who represented Boston in the National League, were referred to as the Boston Nationals. He also speculated that the postcard was about a barnstorming game. After the season back then, players returned home and put together exhibition games to make some extra money.

At the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, I found these October 11, 1910 Free Press sports headlines: *Red Sox Day in the Queen City. Fully 3,000 Lovers of the National Game Flock to Centennial Field. Greatest*

Crowd On Record. Ray Collins and Larry Gardner the Particular Heros – Friends Present Them with Traveling Bags.

The lengthy article related how Collins and Gardner, both Vermonters and former UVM players, were feted before the game with speeches, gifts, and trophies. In the exhibition game, Collins captained a nine man team which included the regular Sox outfield plus their substitute infield. Gardner captained the opposition with the regular Boston infield and the Boston pitchers in the outfield. Batting leadoff in the bottom of the first, Gardner hit a single to right field, taking second on Clyde Engle's sacrifice, and scoring on Hugh Bradley's single to center. As a side note, Bradley went on to hit the first ever home run at Fenway Park two seasons later. The game featured double plays by both teams, multiple rundowns on the base line, a superb defensive play by pitcher Collins, and two hits by Hall of Famer Tris Speaker, who batted third on Collins' team. In the end, Gardner's team won 4-1 before a large crowd that included such dignitaries as Vermont Governor John Mead and Burlington Mayor James Burke.

I copied the article and brought it home to further absorb the details.

“Does Ray Collins or Larry Gardner ring a bell,” I asked my son.

“Yes,” he said, “they were old time Red Sox players, weren't they?”

I went to Wikipedia and found an article on each player. My son, who is familiar with these things, looked up articles on Collins and Gardner through an online archive and found them in *Sporting Life*, a weekly newspaper published from 1883 to 1924 which provided national coverage on sports.

Ray Collins was a starting Major League pitcher who played his entire career for the Boston Red Sox. A native of Colchester, Vermont, Collins played from 1909 to 1915. After his playing career, Collins returned to the University of Vermont as baseball coach, was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives, and served on the University's board of trustees.

William Lawrence "Larry" Gardner was a third baseman in Major League Baseball. From 1908 through 1924, Gardner played for the Red Sox, Athletics, and Indians. Gardner was born in Enosburg, Vermont, played baseball at the University of Vermont and became its first player to make the American League. In his 17-season career, Gardner posted a .289 batting average with 1931 hits and 934 RBI in 1922 games.

My third area of interest now took over and I wondered if they were buried in a Vermont cemetery. Gardner died in Saint George, Vermont, was cremated, and the location of his ashes are unknown. Collins was buried in the Colchester Village Cemetery. Last week we hopped in the car and drove over to Colchester. The cemetery is located behind the public library. I cruised down the lower section of stones and my son cruised the upper section. No stones with the name Collins. I went into the library and the folks had a listing. As I looked through the listing, my son leaned through the door, “Found it!” Ray and his wife Lillian Lovely Collins are resting in row 16, plot 1 with a beautiful gray granite rectangular marker. Noting the stone needed some lichen removal, we planned a return visit with the necessary materials to conserve the stone.

Coincidentally, Ray made his presence known to us later in the week. Last Saturday afternoon, we were traveling back from the Grand Isle Ferry on Rt. 2 south of Chimney Corners. My wife blurted out, “Roy Collins!”, as we passed a farm where we often buy our Christmas tree. She had heard us discussing Collins over the past few days and remembered the name when she spied it alongside the road.

“Ray Collins?” My son and I responded in unison.

“Yes, Ray Collins on that Vermont history marker.”

I caught sight of one those green Roadside Historical Markers in the rearview mirror.

The next morning we returned to the Ray Collins Roadside Historical Marker to find:

A descendant of one of Burlington's original settlers, Ray Williston Collins was born on this farm on February 11, 1887. After graduating from Burlington High School and the University of Vermont, Collins joined the Boston Red Sox in 1909 and soon established himself as one of the best left-handed pitchers in the American League. In 1913-14 he won a combined 39 games for the Red Sox, and his lifetime ERA is an impressive 2.51. When his career was cut short by an injury in 1915, Collins returned to this farm and for 35 years struggled to make a living as a dairy farmer. He was active in community affairs; among other things, he represented Colchester in the Vermont Legislature from 1941-43 and served as a University of Vermont trustee in the 1950s. Ray Collins still lived on this farm when he died on January 9, 1970.

Continuing on to the cemetery, we carefully removed several decades of moss and lichen from Ray and Lillian's resting place. As we washed down our work and stood back, we contemplated our new found connection with that autumn game one hundred years ago.

Plymouth Graves by Rebecca W. Tucker

This past summer, Barbara Griffith of Shrewsbury and I visited a couple of burial sites not previously mentioned in VOCA's *Burial Grounds of Vermont* in the town of Plymouth. While in town, we also visited Archer Cemetery, which is listed in *Burial Grounds* (page 461 – 462), that I had never been able to locate.

For the unlisted locations, guided by Plymouth Cemetery Commissioner Robert Lambert and his wife Pat, and accompanied by Dan Keebler of Springfield, we drove to Frog City Road off Route 100, north of Hawk Mountain Resort buildings. With previous permission, we parked in the driveway of the Mahon/Mann house on the left, but one could easily pull off the road there to park.

We walked up the road less than a quarter of a mile and went right off Frog City Road, to follow an old trail up hill, parallel with the brook. This old road is shown as a dotted line on some maps of Plymouth. About a half mile up, we found the gravestone, and its newer replacement, on the left facing due east for "Jonas Coolidge b. 1773 – d. 1848; m. Aug 8, 1797 Lucy Temple."



The gravestone of Jonas Coolidge off Frog city Road in Plymouth.

Returning to Route 100, we drove south, then up Crimson Hawk Road and continued on along Crown Point Road which forms a five-corners junction with Dublin, Reggies, the upper end of Frog City Road (now not open), and “TH 22” (an unimproved trail considered the continuation of the 1759-60 Crown Point Road). We went up Reggie’s Road to the end. At one time one Reginald Snow had a “camp” in this location, but today there are few clues to its existence, except for the clearing. Here we found the gravestone marked “A. Nichols 1833.” Efforts to learn exactly who this fellow was were unsuccessful. Local lore says he died at the camp, and was buried here by his friends, according to Lambert.



“A. N. 1833” at end of Reggies Road in Plymouth.

The brook we followed off Frog City Road looking for Mr. Coolidge’s gravestone begins further up Saltash Mt. from Reggie’s location. We investigated the huge stones of a former mill dam a short walk downstream, and, according to Lambert, if one was to travel continue downhill from here, one could find the Jonas Coolidge burial place as well.

To locate the old Archer cemetery, described in VOCA’s *Burial Grounds* as being in an “old field west side of Patch Brook 2 mi. from Tyson. Need guide,” the best way to find this one is to measure the 2 miles from Tyson up Dublin Road, stop at the log home of Donald Simonds (1693 Dublin Road) and ask for directions. That not being possible, one might park left, off the road, just before Simonds cabin, walk into the woods a short way. The 4 or 5 gravestones are surrounded by a stone wall.



Archer Cemetery in Plymouth has a stone wall around it.

Rebecca W. Tucker

A note from Ron Heroux

As part of my work with the Hartford Historical Society and Hartford Genealogical Resource Center (which I have been directing for nearly 3 years), I have been working on photo-documentation of our local cemeteries starting with the older ones. Attached are some examples of those efforts, particularly on the Tucker (listed as 'Murphy' in the VOCA book) cemetery in West Hartford. There is a map of visible tombstones created by the DAR from their survey in 1977. An updated map that I made in 2009 after uncovering many additional stones is also included along with a couple pictures of the cemetery. The entire cemetery can be seen at our organization's website <http://www.hartfordhistory.org/54801.html>. To find missing tombstones, I probed the ground with a long rod—a grounding rod with a handle attached—and inserted in likely places (such as the space between two other stones) at an angle to locate the base first and then vertically in the area in front of and behind the located base. Any stones that had multiple breaks were photographed and re-covered since repair was not available at the time. After removing turf from areas where the probe found likely stones, I used a plastic scoop to avoid marring stones once I got close to them. (those scoops can be found at [this link to Discount School Supplies](#)). Several stones in the back row had been damaged or completely broken from their base by a heavy fallen branch and lay buried for many, many years.



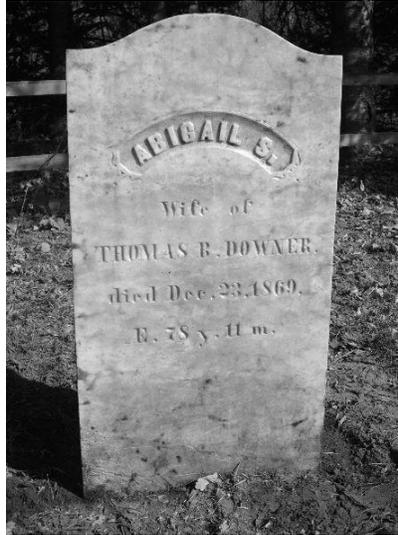
Tucker Cemetery before finding missing stones



Tucker Cemetery after finding missing stones



Abigail Downer uncovered stone



Abigail Downer stone set behind its base

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