

## Susanna Sherman Scott, Home Again by Dwight D. Harrington, Cemetery Commissioner

Members of the Barre Town, Vermont cemetery commission brought a long lost soul back to her parents in a ceremony held on September 9 at Wilson Cemetery. Susanna passed away in 1793 a few months after Susanna Sherman married Jacob Scott. Susanna, daughter of Asaph and Lucy Whitney Sherman joined Jacob Scott in marriage in April of 1793. A death record showed Susanna passed in June of the same year, the index card of the record gave no reason for her death.

Several years ago, the Booth family of Barre recovered a gravestone in their field that could not be matched to a grave site. Not wanting to abandon the stone on site, the family kept the stone in their basement. At the passing of Mr. Booth, a longtime selectman in Barre, Barre Town Manager Carl Rogers asked the family if they would turn custody of the stone over to the Barre Town Cemetery Commission.

Once in their custody, the commission debated what could ultimately be done with the old slate monument. One choice would place Susanna's stone in a private cemetery belonging to her nephew, Nathaniel Sherman. The small, family cemetery is located in Barre Town on the lands of the Benoit family, the landowner generously offered to take the slate. The commission also investigated the possibility of placing the slate in her parent's lot at Wilson Cemetery. The slate stone could still be easily read and Susanna identified as the daughter of Asaph and Lucy Sherman.

Asaph and Lucy's lot had room enough for the stone. Rather than place the stone in any existing line of graves, the commission decided to place the slate in a footstone position behind the slate monuments belonging to Susanna's parents. The commission also decided to host a public event to dedicate Susanna's memory and slate as a cenotaph to the young woman.

Susanna Sherman Scott belonged to a founding family of Barre, when her parents moved to this area from Massachusetts, Barre had the name, Wildersburgh. Many members of her family fought in the American Revolution to secure our freedom. An interesting legend concerning the changing of the town's name from Wildersburg to Barre involve Susanna's brother Jonathan Sherman, he is buried in a grave next to their parent's lot. Jonathan, from Barre, Massachusetts, won the right to name the town after a boxing match with Captain Joseph Thompson, from Holden, Massachusetts. The match took place in the barn belonging to Calvin Smith. After wearing Thompson down in a scuffle, Sherman regained his footing and proclaimed, "There, the name be Barre, by God!"



Slate gravestone recovered in a farm field in Barre Town, Vermont for Susanna Sherman Scott, 1770-1793.

An alternate story, but without evidence, had Ezekiel Wheeler purchasing the right to re-name the town through a generous donation to the church for the privilege. No record of the actual donations exist, though. Interestingly enough, Thompson, Wheeler, and Calvin Smith's son all lie in Wilson Cemetery within view of Jonathan Sherman's grave.

The commission, town officials, and members of the public held a ceremony beside the graves of Susanna's parents after the sexton placed the stone in their lot. Beneath a canopy erected to protect against the early September weather, Commissioner Merle Miller served as the host of the event. He delivered a message of welcome to the attendees and introduced the event's speaker, Harry Harrington, another cemetery commissioner.



Barre Town Cemetery  
Commissioner Harry Harrington gave a commemorative address concerning the Sherman family. Parents Asaph and Lucy's slate gravestones are to the left. (Elaine Wang photo)

Harrington delivered an address and introduced Susanna. As Susanna had such a short life, much of the talk concerned the members of her family buried at Wilson. In addition to her parents and her brother, several of her sisters are interred in the same row of graves as Asaph and Lucy. She has aunts, uncles, cousins and other extended family members in the same corner of the oldest section of Wilson Cemetery, there are 18 family gravestones nearby. At the end of his remarks, Harrington removed the black cloth covering the slate and revealed the stone to the assembled group.

Also a portion of the ceremony, the Reverend Dr. Earl Kooperkamp, pastor at Barre's Church of the Good Shepard, provided a re-dedication of Susanna's memory. As another student of Barre's history, he made several remarks concerning Barre, its granite industry, and Barre's original families, Reverend Kooperkamp committed Susanna's memory back into the care of her family. He included prayers that reflected days gone by to match in with the historical theme of the ceremony. He brought Susanna's memory home to her parents even though her physical remains are still in an unknown location.

Wilson Cemetery and its most historic section can be traced back to a deed in the Barre land records dated 16 March 1797. Jonas Nichols sold a one acre tract of land to the town, the transaction is recorded in Deed Book 1, Page 207. The town bought the land from Nichols for \$6.66 for the express purpose of creating a burial ground. Many of Barre's original settlers are interred there, but as there are no cemetery records surviving from the time period, there may be many burials in the old section that will forever remain unknown. In earlier town history, the cemetery carried the name Nichols Cemetery and at some unknown point in time became the Wilson Cemetery, named after the family that held title to the original farm at the time of the name change.

The Reverend Earl Kooperkamp inspects the slate gravestone of Susanna Scott. Reverend Kooperkamp dedicated her stone and her memory in her parents's lot at Wilson Cemetery. (Elaine Wang photo)

