

Vermont Cemetery Association  
Wednesday, June 15th, 2016  
Peacham Cemetery


**Spring Meeting Minutes**

- I. Meeting called to order by Patrick Healy, President, at 9:25 am. – Introductions were made around the room – 41 in attendance from around the state.
- II. Minutes from the Fall '15 were handed out at registration. Members were asked to review and be ready to approve at the Fall' 16 meeting.
- III. Floor was opened for Member Questions:
  - a. Green Burials
    - i. State regulation that a green burial must be 250' from a drilled well.
    - ii. Cemeteries are not required to designate any portion for green burials
    - iii. Rules vary across the country.
    - iv. Green burials are without embalming process and or without concrete vaults. May be areas where grass isn't cut/no stones/in the woods.
    - v. State wanted legislation that allowed bodies to be wrapped in shrouds and buried 2' down. They wanted mandated areas that could be found with GPS only. The VCA stalled this legislation due to the following difficulties:
      1. How does body get lowered into grave? Family? Funeral Director? Cemetery staff?
      2. What if water gets in the grave?
      3. What if person has started to decompose prior to burial?
      4. What if shroud is soaked with blood?
      5. Who takes care of this?
      6. How do we actually mark the grave without a monument so when it is time to dig next grave beside it?
      7. It is advised to put 6 – 8" of sand on top of body, then gravel, then rock to have something to hit when probing.
  - b. Several cemeteries have people asking about whether they can be buried in family lots... what is the protocol for allowing this?
    - i. P.Healy requires a person to show the family tree, with everyone buried before them. Then need to get statements of approval from other family members and understanding that this person takes full responsibility of any family complaints and legal issues that may arise.
  - c. Membership would like to have another workshop on repairing monuments with a list of vendors
  - d. Membership inquired about published fees for lot sales
    - i. Green Mountain Cemetery charges \$800 - \$1100 for a single grave (66% goes to perpetual care)
    - ii. Stowe stated they recently increased their fees.
    - iii. Some municipalities add a surcharge, up to \$350, for non-resident, out-of-state families that want to purchase lots (15% of this charge goes to perpetual care)
    - iv. Suggestion for a survey to be sent to membership by e-mail inquiring about charges by each cemetery

- e. What is reasonably included in "perpetual care"?
  - i. Mowing/trimming/plant care
  - ii. Perpetual care does not always include structures – advised to check state statute
  - iii. Some cemeteries add an additional fee for caring for a monument and it depends on the size
  - iv. A stone that is 40 years or older can cost \$1000 - \$1500 to repair both the stone & foundation
  - v. For a stone 50 years or older, an attempt is made to contact the family about repairs... if no one can be reached, the cemetery takes responsibility
  - vi. P.Healy advises that 30% of the purchase price of a mausoleum should be funded for repairs (additional amount should be added to sale price)

- IV. Howard Coffin, a Civil War Historian, detailed stories of the lives of Civil War soldiers buried in various cemeteries across the state of Vermont.
  - a. Frayed flags have marked graves. Fresh new flags placed on Memorial Day help 10's of 1000's of people find civil war graves.
  - b. Over a six year period, he traveled 150,000 miles across the state to find civil war graves.
  - c. State records show 5224 soldier deaths, but Coffin states it is more likely that 6000 Vermont lives were lost.
  - d. 60 Vermonters are buried in the Gettysburg cemetery.
  - e. Town cemeteries that were mentioned in his lecture included St. Albans/Williamstown/Burlington/Shelburne Farms/Hinesburg/East Calais/Bennington/Monkton/Montpelier/Swanton/Groton/Berlin Corners/Stockbridge/Plymouth Notch/Chelsea/Mount Tabor/Westminster/Woodstock
- V. Ghost Walk Performance by the Peacham Historical Society
  - a. Fundraiser for the historical society that was started in 1997 – cost is \$4.00 per person
  - b. It is an opportunity for residents to learn more about Peacham's history as well as sharing it with visitors
  - c. Held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and during Fall Foliage with 2pm-4pm sessions. Break participants into 4 groups and visit 4 cemetery sites. Held outside at the cemetery if possible with a church stage as backup.
  - d. Lorraine Quimby, "Historian", comes up with the themes each year and identifies the characters and holds seminars for the persons portraying the deceased character. Some past themes were "Roaring 20's", "Civil War" and last year was "Temperance, attitudes around alcohol use". Each character dresses for the period while telling their life story.
  - e. On our Ghost Walk, we met General William Chamberlain (1812), a very interesting man of many talents. He was a farmer, land speculator, Lt Governor, legislator, Justice of the Peace, moderator and surveyor. He told us about his family and many careers and much about the whiskey business in Peacham.
- VI. Meeting adjourned at noon with a lasagna lunch at the Peacham Elementary School. Twenty door prizes were awarded as we waited for lunch to be served.
- VII. Next Meeting in October 2016 at Resurrection Park in South Burlington.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jane Paine  
Secretary