



TRUSTEES OF CEMETERIES

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ANNUAL REPORT 2021

With great sadness we dedicate this annual report to Marion McIntyre who passed on May 15, 2021



In addition to the Memoriam for Marion McIntyre at the beginning of this Annual Report, the Cemetery Trustees wish to remember Marion first and foremost as the driving force who early on recognized the value of our burial grounds, the tragedy of their slow disappearance, and who chose to lead by example bringing the community solidly behind their preservation.

Marion was elected one of the first three Gilmanton Cemetery Trustees in 1989 serving for 23 years. She searched town-wide for known and "lost" burials. She documented every site located and gathered available history. She visited with town elders

learning more and returned to them again and again to share her discoveries and ask more questions; gravestones in the woods they remembered as children or came across while hunting; stories by their parents of lost graveyards; the "famous" and "infamous" buried here and there; and all the other stories that gave color and substance to her mission. She became the Town's unofficial "historian" and loved it!

A bumpy ride in the back of Don Kelley's old pickup truck, up through the woodlot to locate burials he remembered but, in that case, remained lost. A long trek to find the old Jeremiah Sanborn burial ground. Following up on a tip and peeking through binoculars to read the names on gravestones in the Sturbridge Village mock cemetery, several of which had been taken away many years' prior and were now returned to mark resting places in the Copp Cemetery. She responded to genealogy inquiries from across the country. She had no hesitation in suggesting to local craftsmen that they assist in her efforts; George McClary for early signs; JR Stockwell for a new fence and whirling gate at the Mary Butler Homestead; Union Marble to seal the Ayers Crypt; Steve Winchester, Ronnie Senior and Tom Sleeper for gates; Kevin Fife and Harold Murray for walls; and so many more. The work was often free or at "Marion's price".

Marion was curious, hard-working, caring, opinionated, sometimes outrageous, with an amazing memory. She was fierce in her commitment, loved the hunt, ecstatic over discoveries and happiest sharing the search. Union Marble & Granite, early supporters of Marion's efforts, made her hand-crafted "pokers" (pointed metal shafts with formed handles). She would lead her group of happy followers to an old graveyard where they would rake, clean, and look for signs of graves without evident stones. She would hand them pokers and they would take turns "poking" a few inches for signs of toppled gravestones. She would stand back and share in their excitement at their finds, and *SO MANY* were found! Gravestones that marked the burials of ancestors and townspeople long passed, evidence of the individuals and families that populated our Town; gravestones that had become covered with leaves, soil and debris and, but for Marion's efforts, would have remained lost.



Marion sadly left Gilmanton in 2012, but her interest remained. She left the Trustees with records gathered over more than two decades and the Trustees continued to consult her on their finds, projects and goals. In 2019, Marion achieved another of her goals by establishing a cemetery care fund as the seed for the future financial security of our burial grounds. As the Trustees continue their work to support Gilmanton's burial grounds, Marion's goal to "Find and Protect" these irreplaceable heritage sites is ever in their minds. The community will forever miss and be thankful for Marion's large heart and strong will.

2021 year:

- Located apparent burial ground for the last Town Farm
- Evaluated and made contacts for the rehabilitation of the Ayers Crypt
- Four-grave lot sold at Beech Grove
- Twenty-six diseased Ash Trees removed at Beech Grove driveway-thank you abutters for permissions
- Work with abutter to Hutchinson and Plummer sites – thank you for access
- Continued site sign replacement with new signs at Sawyer Lake, Lougee and Guinea Ridge
- Completed update of Cemetery pages on Town website
- Successfully transferred four "orphan" gravestones found in Gilmanton to rightful communities and completed inventory of remaining stones
- Completed the conversion to electronic form of all cemetery records
- Security cameras continue to be used at selected sites

Ayers Crypt**Town Farm Burial Ground****New Site Sign****Upcoming Projects:**

- Rehabilitate Ayers crypt
- Reclaim Sanborn
- Complete phase two of tree work at Beech Grove, Lougee and Guinea Ridge-warrant article proposed
- Adjust access gates as needed
- Set remaining "orphan" gravestones at Buzzell
- Gravestone repair and rehab at Tibbetts, and Merrill with Merrill descendant's generous donation
- Erection of additional site name signs where necessary

- Develop Trustee Handbook
- Work with Probate Court to simplify lot ownership

The Trustees Wish to Thank:

- Our wonderful staff, Sexton/Groundskeeper Paul Lines and Groundskeeper Karen Stockwell
- The Selectmen, Budget Committee and Voters of the Town of Gilmanton for their continued support
- The Gilmanton Historical Society for assisting in history and genealogy inquiries and hosting tours of community cemeteries encouraging appreciation of these unique heritage sites
- Neighbors of cemetery and historic sites who help keep them safe and cleared, allow us access over their property and keep watchful eyes on these important community sites
- The American Legion Auxiliary, Gilmanton Ellis-Geddes-Levitt Unit #102 for "Veterans at Rest in Gilmanton". This project attempts to locate and inventory the site of every Veteran buried in Gilmanton. The list is available at <https://www.gilmantonnhhistory.org/organizationsmilitary.asp> They request help to provide the name and location of any era Veteran buried in Gilmanton. Contact the Auxiliary at P.O. Box 119, Gilmanton, NH 03237-0119, or info to ALA102nh@gmail.com
- All our wonderful contractors who, by their careful work, acknowledge the importance of these community sites and honor the memory of the people buried within

The Primary Duty and Goal of the Trustees is to ensure the protection and maintenance of all sites now and in perpetuity by achieving financial security for our cemeteries. This will only happen in the form of private donations into cemetery care funds. Such donations are invested, and the annual income is available to the Cemetery Trustees only for the maintenance and protection of these sites. Currently the total annual income from funds covers an average of only 37% of the annual costs. The balance is generously paid by taxpayers.

However, in recent years, as awareness of this issue has spread, additional donations into the funds have begun. Such donations are the only reasonable method to reach financial independence and minimize or eliminate the need for taxpayer participation. For this reason, we encourage everyone to consider a donation, in any amount, which will be deposited with, and invested by the Gilmanton Trustees of Trust Funds. Donations can occur directly or through your estate planning process. Donations to the Town for the care of Cemeteries are deductible under IRS Codes section 170(a)(1) and 170(c)(1). See Cemetery Fund Donations (https://www.gilmantonnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf4451/f/uploads/donations_0.pdf). We thank you for your consideration of this option.

Please remember, if you plan future burials in a plot obtained prior to 1990, please confirm with us now that our records are correct as to who can be buried in your plot. The Trustees are strictly constrained by law as to who may be buried in a plot for which there are no records (sadly the situation for most of the sites as they became the responsibility of the Town after lots had been transferred). Do not wait until a burial is imminent to do this. Contact any of the Trustees below or e-mail directly to us at gilmantoncemeteries@gmail.com. Please also feel free to contact us at any time as we are happy to receive your information and comments and respond to your inquiries.

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Very Respectfully Submitted,
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