

THE VERGENNES
BURYING GROUND



1790

Hello,

I am writing to you as a representative of the newly formed Vergennes Cemetery Committee. For the past year, a group of dedicated volunteers started working to restore the old Vergennes Burying Ground and we are hoping your organization will help provide support for this continuing endeavor.

The Burying Ground is the oldest cemetery in Vergennes and was established in 1790. It is an inactive cemetery with the last burial in 1979. There are a total of 18 Veterans buried in the cemetery from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the Civil War. Some notable monuments include Major General Samuel Strong (businessman and leader of the Vermont Militia through the Battle of Plattsburgh), Captain Jazahiel Sherman (steamship captain & boat builder), Enoch Woodbridge (Chief Justice of the VT Supreme Court and first mayor of Vergennes), Asa Strong (first postmaster of Vergennes), and Harvey Freegrace Leavitt (minister of Congregational Church and abolitionist).

This summer, we will continue to clean gravestones and will begin making repairs to broken and leaning stones. We are also hoping to discover what burials may have occurred in the large open areas on the northern side of the burying ground. It could be that vandalized headstones are lying just under the surface or entire markers may have sunk gradually below the ground through the years. We will try probing the ground to locate headstones and are investigating who might be able to assist us with ground penetrating radar.

The first workday will be Saturday, May 18, from 8am to 12pm and we are fortunate to have secured the Vermont Old Cemetery Association (VOCA) to assist us. VOCA will be training volunteers how to repair broken stones and reset leaning stones. Our volunteers will teach the proper techniques of cleaning headstones. Bottled water, snacks, and sandwiches will be provided for volunteers through a generous donation. We have created a website to help share information about the restoration project as well: <https://bandhsimons.wixsite.com/vbgfirst>

If your organization or any of your volunteers would be willing and able to assist with this project, we would love to hear from you!. We need at least 15 volunteers capable of lifting 40+ lbs. for the work day in May but the more we have, the more we can accomplish! You can message me through the website, email me directly at bandhsimons@gmail.com, or call 802-343-6270. We will also be having an informational meeting at the Bixby Library on Thursday, April 25, at 5:30 pm.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and discussing this important work!.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,
Heather Simons