

Report of the Trustees of Town Cemeteries

April 27 and 29, 2018

The Warner cemetery trustees met Friday morning, April 27, 2018 with Rebecca Courser, Executive Director of the Warner Historical Society, to visit the Poverty Plains Cemetery and the Poor Farm Cemetery. We were joined by Fred Hill, owner of the Poverty Plains property where the cemetery rests, Lynn Clark, a Hopkinton, N.H. cemetery trustee, who has worked with Rebecca on the study of early Black history in New Hampshire, and Robert Perry of Topographix, LLC., who showed us the ground penetrating radar “buggy” in his SUV. Our mission was to examine the two locations where it is believed the Black members of Warner’s early community were buried. Although there are no written records about the remains in these cemeteries, it is believed from oral history comments over past decades that members of local Black families are buried in these two locations. No headstones exist at the Poverty Plains Cemetery, but a few headstones (possibly erected at later times) exist at the Poor Farm Cemetery. The Historical Society and the Trustees of Town Cemeteries are joining efforts to determine (if possible) the numbers of remains buried in these two cemeteries by hiring Robert Perry of Topographix, LLC, Hudson, N.H., who specializes in the use of ground penetrating radar for such purposes.

After viewing the Poverty Plains Cemetery, Mr. Perry noted that a number of thin trees had to be removed, along with underbrush and broken limbs, and a pathway cleared to the cemetery, before he could use his radar machine on the site. Fred Hill gave us permission to clear the brush and place it on the edge of the cemetery, and he will allow us to determine a somewhat definitive boundary line to be marked by corner stones or small granite posts.

We then moved on to the Poor Farm Cemetery near Burnt Hill behind Allan Brown’s house and on Bob Koski’s property, behind the Coal Heart Cemetery. Both landowners who abut and own the land gave us permission to view the cemetery and to clear out underbrush and overgrown trees which would allow Mr. Perry to use the radar machine. Allan agreed to clear a pathway from his backyard to the cemetery for machine access.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Perry agreed to send us a written proposal for the costs of using the ground penetrating radar at each cemetery. He suggested that either early spring or late fall would be the ideal times for such a project.

On April 29, 2018 the cemetery trustees met at the Warner Town Hall to commence the annual tour of a number of Warner’s cemeteries. We began with a visit to the New Waterloo

Cemetery where Gerald Courser and Don Wheeler measured and marked two lots for spring burials. The back fence had been repaired and everything looked in good condition. We then moved onto the Old Waterloo Cemetery to discuss a couple of toppled headstones from the cold winter. From there we went to the Pine Grove Cemetery where more limbs littered the grounds and a few more toppled headstones separated from their bases during the winter. Gerald pointed out 2 or 3 tall dead or rotted tall pines near the brook that would have to be removed. He will contact Jeff Dearborn of Old Yankee Tree Service in Hopkinton, N.H. for their removal. From there it was on to the Lower Warner Cemetery in the median strip of I89. Once again, a couple of more tall, dead pine trees would need removal. Upon arrival at the Davisville Cemetery, we were pleased to find that cemetery in good condition. We then moved on to the Schoodac Cemetery where we found a huge rotted tree that missed 3-4 old headstones after it fell this past winter. Lane Monroe and Gary Young will clear away that mess. A few more broken headstones need to be repaired, but Gary and Lane have accomplished great feats in restoring, up-righting, and supporting numerous headstones last year. Our next stop was the Tory Hill Cemetery where we found a number of broken headstones that Gary and Lane will need to repair sometime. We also visited the Gore Cemetery and checked on the Marden Seavey Cemetery. Our final visit was to the Coal Hearth Cemetery where everything was in good condition.

Since that tour in April, the crazy wind storm of May 4th hit Warner. We will be checking cemeteries for tree damage, etc., as time permits.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Cogswell

Trustee of the Town Cemeteries