

CEMETERIES IN THE TOWN OF HILLSDALE

Progress Report – Updated as of October 10, 2016

- Cemetery Research Subcommittee -

Jamie Johnson, Jeanne Kiefer (report author). Lauren Letellier & Joan Wallstein



Scutt, Betsey, wife of Isaac Scutt,
died Sept. 17, 1884, aged 74 years,

Shephard, Fannie, wife of James Shephard,
died April 22, 1862 aged 96 years,

Smith, Christian Smith, (see Woodin,)

Steward,

Sweet,

Swift,

Tanner, Novish, wife of Nathan Tanner,
died July 6, 1822 aged 59 yrs.

Col. Wm. Tanner, d. Oct. 13 1822 aged 62 years,

Taylor, John Nelson son of Nathan & Leah Taylor,
died Sept. 29, 1848 aged 3 years 8 months,

Harlow, son of Nathaniel & Leah Taylor,

Report on Hillsdale's Cemeteries

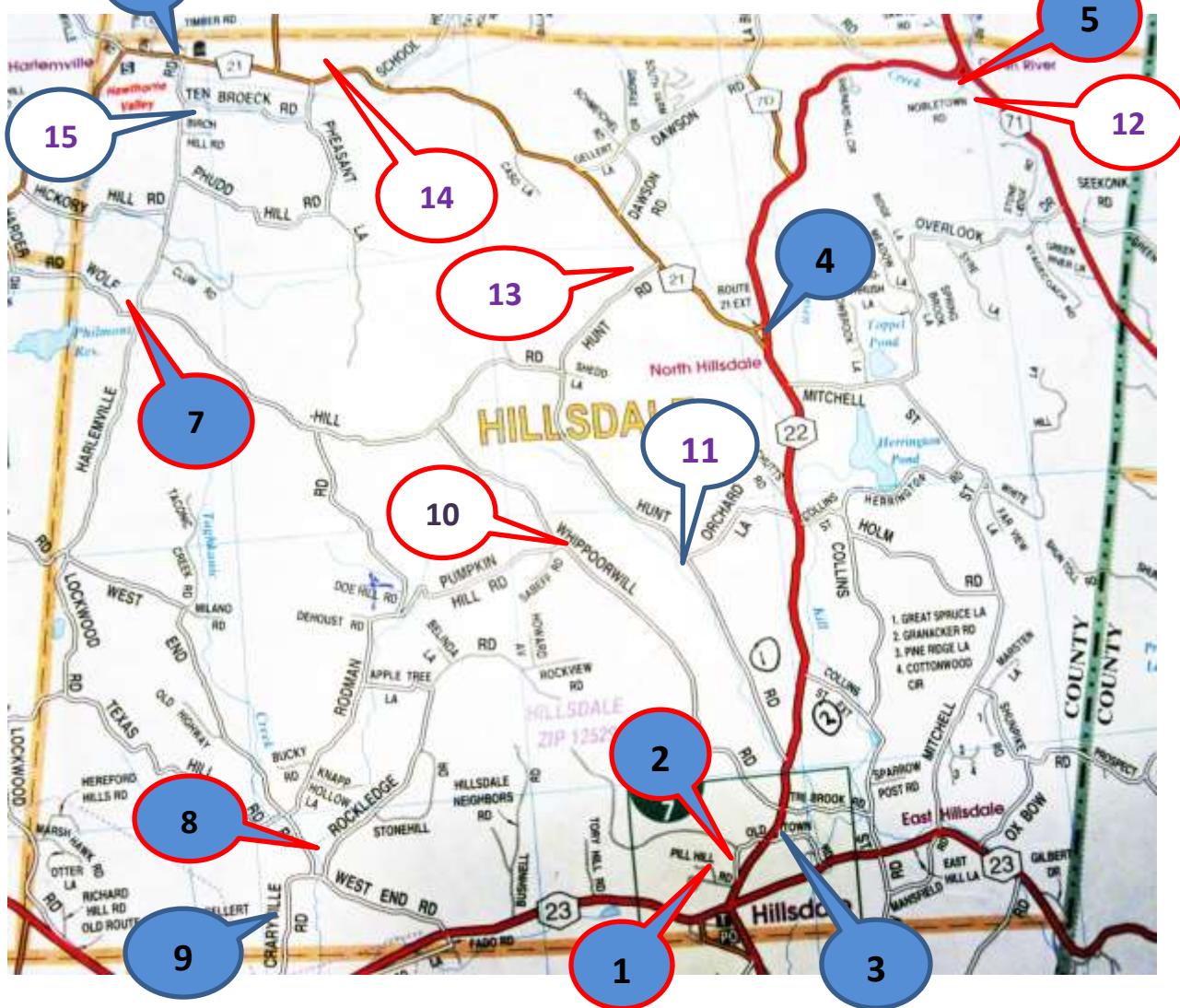
Research as of October 10, 2016

Background: Members of the Hillsdale cemetery committee began visiting town grave plots in August 2016. This report details findings to date.

Summary:

- There are many burial sites in Hillsdale. Of the 15 noted in this report, 9 are primary and 6 secondary
- At least 9 of these sites have interments prior to 1800, earliest known date is 1767 (in 3 plots)
- **Location** of the 15 sites (see map on next page):
 - 3 in Hillsdale hamlet: Methodist (Pill Hill), Old Community and Hillsdale Rural cemeteries
 - 6 in central/NE Hillsdale: Methodist/Episcopal and Green River cemeteries, as well as the Collin, Hatch, Foley's Corners and McKinstry family plots
 - 4 in NW Hillsdale: Krum Church, Harlemville Rural and Harlemville German cemeteries, as well as the Knapp Farm plot
 - 2 in SW Hillsdale: Presbyterian and West Hillsdale Baptist
- **Condition** of sites:
 - The town currently mows three cemeteries: Methodist (Pill Hill), Old Community and Krum Church. All others may be on private land.
 - 6 are in relatively good condition: the Hillsdale Rural, Methodist/Episcopal, Harlemville Rural, Harlemville German, West Hillsdale Baptist cemeteries and the Collin plot. All are maintained by a church, association, family or individual, 4 are still accepting burials
 - 9 are in poor condition: 5 larger cemeteries (Methodist (Pill Hill), Old Community, Green River, Krum Church and Presbyterian) and 4 family plots (Hatch, McKinstry, Foley's Corners and Knapp Farm)
- **Fencing situation:** 6 sites have adequate fencing, 9 do not: the Methodist (Pill Hill), Old Community, Green River, Krum Church and Presbyterian cemeteries and the Hatch, McKinstry, Foley's Corners and Knapp Farm plots
- **Revolutionary War veterans:** We believe 60+ ARW veterans are buried in Hillsdale. Three cemeteries hold the majority -- Methodist/Episcopal (15), Krum (13) and Green River (10), with the 3 Hillsdale hamlet cemeteries adding another 14. There may be as-yet-unknown vets in the small family plots
- **Interments:** At least 2,750 people are buried in the 15 sites, with the largest numbers in the Hillsdale Rural (1,100+) and Methodist/Episcopal (450+) cemeteries
- **Inscription research:** Many older stones are now illegible but documentation exists from as far back as 1900 in the Columbia County Historical Society archives. Recent research is centralized online at findagrave.com. (Since very little is digitized, pulling all this information together in one place would be a huge task)
- There are additional graveyards in town that are not included in this report. Some are small family plots, some have only newer graves. Committee members are visiting and collecting information on these sites as they come to our attention

Map of Hillsdale Cemeteries



Primary cemeteries (blue)

- 1. Methodist (Pill Hill/Foster)
- 2. Old Community (Old Orchard)
- 3. Hillsdale Rural
- 4. Methodist Episcopal (N Hillsdale)
- 5. Green River
- 6. Harlemville Rural
- 7. Krum Church (Reformed Dutch)
- 8. Presbyterian
- 9. West Hillsdale Baptist

Secondary cemeteries (white)

- 10. Foley's Corners
- 11. Collin Family Plot (First Baptist)
- 12. Hatch Family Plot
- 13. McKinstry Family Plot
- 14. Knapp Farm (Minkler/Downing)
- 15. Harlemville German (Lutheran)

Cemetery Overview

9 Primary Cemeteries (see map for locations)

1. Methodist (aka Pill Hill, Foster) – Pill Hill Road, Hillsdale hamlet

- 190 interments, earliest stone – Isaac Foster 1798, 4 American Revolution vets
- Poor condition, no fence, maintained by town

2. Old Community (aka Old Orchard, Old Village) – Old Town Road, Hillsdale hamlet

- 118 interments, earliest -- Mercy Chase 1767, 6 AR vets
- Poor condition, partially fenced, maintained by town

3. Hillsdale Rural – Old Town Road, Hillsdale hamlet

- 1,177 interments, earliest – Sarah Arnold Collin 1791 (moved here), 4 AR vets
- Good condition, fenced, maintained by association

4. Methodist Episcopal (aka North Hillsdale) – Rte. 22, NE Hillsdale

- 452 interments, earliest – Lt. Thomas Whitney 1767, 15 AR vets
- Good condition, fenced, maintained by association

5. Green River – Nobletown Road, NE Hillsdale

- 168 interments, earliest – Katherine Webster 1807, 10 AR vets
- Poor condition, minimal fence, on private land, maintained by individual

6. Harlemville Rural – Rte. 21, NW Hillsdale

- 138 interments, earliest – 1838, 3 AR vets
- Good condition, fenced, maintained by community?

7. Krum Church (aka Reformed Dutch) – Harlemville Road, NW Hillsdale

- 105 interments, earliest – Johann Gotfried Schumacher 1782 , 13 AR vets
- Poor condition, tumbled stone wall, maintained by town

8. Presbyterian – West End Road, SW Hillsdale

- 69 interments, earliest – Jesse Ambrose Bushnell 1805, no AR vets?
- Very poor condition, no fence, on private land, not maintained

9. West Hillsdale Baptist – Craryville Road, SW Hillsdale

- 174 interments, earliest – Elizabeth Gano 1788, 3 AR vets
- Good condition, fenced, on private land, maintained by individual

6 Secondary Cemeteries (see map for locations)

There are 5 small plots on private land, plus 1 site that does not appear to need town help

10. **Foley's Corners** – Whippoorwill Road, N central Hillsdale

- 9 interments, earliest 1813
- Very poor condition, no fence, on private land, not maintained

11. **Collin Plot** (aka First Baptist) – Hunt Road, N central Hillsdale

- 14 interments, earliest – Uriah Mallory 1773, 3 AR vets, old stones missing
- Good condition, fenced, on private land, maintained by owner

12. **Hatch Burying Ground** – Rte. 71, NE Hillsdale

- 7 interments, earliest – Isabel Hatch 1767, unknown # AR vets
- Condition poor, on private land, not maintained

13. **McKinstry Burying Ground** – Hunt Road, N Hillsdale

- 15 interments, earliest – (daughter) McKinstry 1778, 3 (?) AR vets
- Very poor condition, on private land, not maintained

14. **Knapp Farm Plot** (aka Minkler/Downing plot) – Rte. 21, NW Hillsdale

- 11 interments, earliest – William Minkler 1821,? AR vets
- Very poor condition, no fence, on private land, not maintained

15. **Harlemville German** (aka Lutheran) – Harlemville Road, NW Hillsdale

- 104 interments, earliest – 1877, no AR vets
- Very good condition, fenced, maintained by association

16. **Other small plots**

- There are a number of additional small family plots in Hillsdale – we are collecting information as it comes in

See following pages for more detailed information on individual sites.

1: THE METHODIST CEMETERY – aka PILL HILL, FOSTER



Location: On Pill Hill Road just west of Rte. 22, in Hillsdale hamlet

Condition: Poor -- many tilting, fallen and broken stones. The town mows this site

Fencing: None

Interments: 190, 96% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Isaac Foster 1798

Revolutionary veterans interred: 4

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1924, 1973

2. THE OLD COMMUNITY CEMETERY -- aka OLD ORCHARD, OLD VILLAGE



Location: Old Town Road west of Rte. 22 (behind the firehouse), in Hillsdale hamlet

Condition: Poor -- tilting, fallen and broken stones. The town mows this site

Fencing: Has partial wooden fence

Interments: 118, 20% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Mercy Chase 1767 (plus several other 18th c. stones)

Revolutionary veterans interred: 6

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1933, 1974

Notes: This cemetery seems to be the earliest in Hillsdale hamlet. It has several unusual stones that might mark the graves of Native Americans

3. THE HILSDALE RURAL CEMETERY



Location: East Old Town Road between Rte. 22 and Rte. 23, in Hillsdale hamlet

Condition: Good, some tilting stones. Maintained by cemetery association

Fencing: Has metal fencing

Interments: 1,177, 50% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known grave: Presumably Sarah Arnold Collin 1791, her remains having been moved to this cemetery at some point.

Revolutionary veterans interred: 4

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1872, 1933, 1974

Notes: This is by far the largest cemetery in Hillsdale. It is still in use, with a newer section separated by a field from the original cemetery. A formal association was formed in the 1860s to maintain it. The plot predates this association and some early burials were moved here. In 1872, it had 444 plots, with 76 filled and 72 in the “free ground,” leaving 300 yet to be taken. (With 1,000+ graves, it’s hard to research this site.)

4. THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CEMETERY-- aka NORTH HILLSDALE



Location: At the junction of Rte. 21 (south fork) and Rte. 22, northeast Hillsdale

Condition: Good, some tilting stones. Maintained by an association, not the church

Fencing: Has metal fencing

Interments: 452, 27% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Lt. Thomas Whitney 1767, plus several other 18th c. graves

Revolutionary veterans interred: 15 (the most of all town sites)

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1928

Notes: This is a large, well-maintained cemetery, still in use. It once served the hamlet of North Hillsdale. The older graves seem to be grouped at the southeast end, and some of these are tilting

5. THE GREEN RIVER CEMETERY



Location: On Nobletown Road just east of the junction of Rte. 22 and Rte. 71 (south fork). Right behind the Green River Inn, in NE Hillsdale

Condition: Poor, many tilting, fallen and broken stones. There is a damaged tree that is threatening to take out some gravestones. On private land, mowing done by an individual

Fencing: Minimal wire fencing

Interments: 168, 60% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Katherine Webster 1807

Revolutionary veterans interred: 10

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1931, 1973

Notes: This site opens to the B&B property. It served the once-thriving hamlet of Green River. The Noble Train of Artillery, hauling cannons from Ft. Ticonderoga to General Washington in Boston, passed by in 1776. The plot is mowed by Jim Kern (413-229-8207). Greg Daly, 454 Rt. 71, Hillsdale may have old photos of headstones, according to David Siegel, who lives next door to the inn (david.siegel.md@gmail.com; 917-848-0278)

6. THE HARLEMVILLE RURAL CEMETERY



Location: On Rte. 21, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of the Harlemville Farm Store, in northwest Hillsdale

Condition: Good, except for some broken stones at the top. Maintained by community?

Fencing: Has good wire fencing

Interments: 138, 46% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: 1838

Revolutionary veterans interred: None, appears to be too recent. There is said to be a stone for a Revolutionary War veteran nearby (Captain Philip Bartle), not yet located

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1928, 1939

Notes: This cemetery is still in use. The Noble Train of Artillery, which hauled cannons from Ft. Ticonderoga to General Washington in Boston, passed right by this location on January 9, 1776.

7. THE KRUM CHURCH CEMETERY – aka REFORMED DUTCH



Location: At the junction of Harlemville Road and Wolf Hill Road, in northwest Hillsdale

Condition: Poor, many tilting, fallen and broken stones, many buried or propped against wall. The town mows this plot

Fencing: Low stone wall in poor condition. This plot is mowed by the town

Interments: 105, 60% photographed

Earliest known grave: Johann Gotfried Schumacher 1782, one other 18th c. stone

Revolutionary veterans interred: 13 (2 with DAR signs)

Inscriptions: Stones were recorded in 1933

Notes: Findagrave notes 69 interments, but earlier documentation adds 36 more. Krum Hollow was a German/Dutch community, settled @ 1745. Population peaked in the 1790s, the community was dispersed by the 1840s. The church (long gone) began services in 1776 and as this was its cemetery, there were likely more 18th c. stones in the past. There are DAR plaques for Captain Phillip Smith and Eli Rood and a NY History sign about an early visiting clergyman to Krum Church.

8. THE PRESBYTERIAN CEMETERY



Location: On West End Road, just north of the Craryville Road junction, in southwest Hillsdale

Condition: Poor, many tilting, fallen and broken stones, overgrown with trees. On private land, not maintained

Fencing: Minimal wire fencing, mostly trampled down

Interments: 69, 97% photographed (findagrave.com). There appear to be many more gravestones than this number

Earliest known stone: Jesse Ambrose Bushnell 1805

Revolutionary veterans interred: None? (This seems doubtful, needs checking)

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1939

Notes: This is a relatively large, scattered cemetery on a low hill overlooking the road, must be entered from north end. There are many separate family plots. Very overgrown, with fallen trees, periwinkle groundcover rather than grass, difficult walking, scanty parking. No one has maintained this site in quite a while and it's the most neglected of the primary cemeteries

9. THE WEST HILSDALE BAPTIST CEMETERY



Location: North Craryville Road, between Rte. 23 and West End Road, in southwest Hilsdale

Condition: Good, some tilting stones. Maintained by an individual, on private land?

Fencing: Has metal fencing

Interments: 174, 100% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Elizabeth Gano 1788, plus several other 18th c. graves

Revolutionary veterans interred: 3

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1939

Notes: Very attractive cemetery, with sign – model for other plots?

10. FOLEY'S CORNERS



Location: At 416 Whippoorwill Road, just south of Pumpkin Hill Road junction, in north central Hillsdale

Condition: Very poor, fallen, broken and missing stones. On private land, not maintained

Fencing: None

Interments: 9, 85% photographed (findagrave)

Earliest known stone: Dorcas Benedict 1813

Revolutionary veterans interred: Unknown

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in TK

Notes: This is the first of six 'secondary' cemeteries in this report – five of these are smaller plots on private land. (The sixth does not appear to need town help.) Foley's Corners is a sad example of what can happen when an old family (Benedicts, Mekers, Nichelsons) plot is not maintained. There once were at least 9 standing headstones, only 1 remains upright. The ground is littered with smashed and buried stones, it may not be restorable. The plot stands within a grove of trees on private land, just visible from Whippoorwill Road

11. THE COLLIN FAMILY PLOT -- aka FIRST BAPTIST



Location: On Hunt Road at the junction with Orchard Street, north central Hillsdale

Condition: Good. On private land, maintained by owner

Fencing: Has metal fencing

Interments: 18, 62% photographed (findagrave)

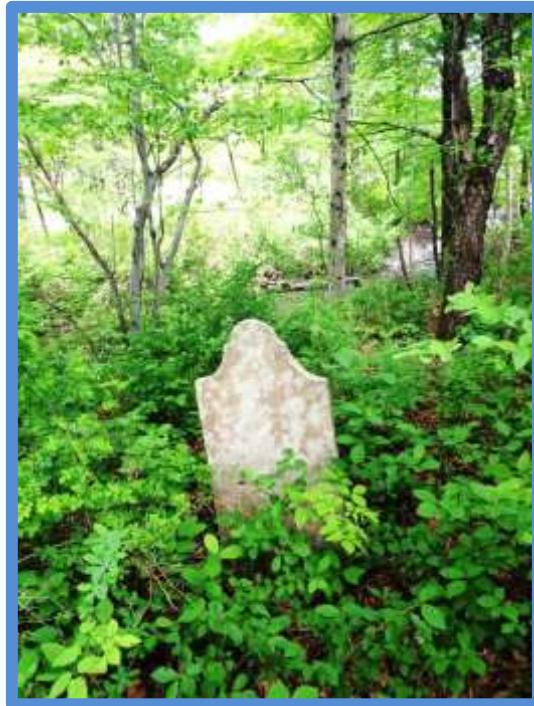
Earliest known stone: Uriah Mallory 1773, several photographed in findagrave

Revolutionary veterans interred: 3

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1933

Notes: This was the original plot for the First Baptist Church, which moved in 1840 to what is now known as the old Grange Hall on Rte. 22. It's one of the oldest plots in town, with eight 19th c. interments (none named Collin) and 3 Revolutionary War vets. The stones now include a large 19th c. Collin monument and one other modern stone, with a number of old gravestones propped against the fence and trees.

12. THE HATCH FAMILY BURYING GROUND



Location: About 1/4 mile south of the Green River cemetery, in northeast Hillsdale

Condition: Poor. On private land, not maintained

Fencing: None

Interments: 7, 40% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: Isabel Hatch 1767, plus 4 other 18 c. graves

Revolutionary veterans interred: Unknown, need to check

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1933

Notes: This is an abandoned family plot on private land. The owner of the property is Rocco Palumbo, a weekender (914-337-3565). To access it, one must ford Cranse Creek.

13. THE MCKINSTRY FAMILY BURYING GROUND



Location: On Hunt Road, near the Rte. 21 junction

Condition: Poor, all stones downed, some broken. On private land, not maintained

Fencing: None

Interments: 15?, several photographed in findagrave

Earliest known stone: (daughter) McKinstry 1778 (aged 3 months), plus 5 other 18th c. graves

Revolutionary veterans interred: 3 (?)

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1935

Notes: This site has just been cleared, is in a large open field next to the barn on the NW corner of that junction. Captain John McKinstry was a Revolutionary War hero, captured (and released) by the Mohawks. He was Hillsdale's town manager and judge in the 1790s. One historian describes them as "a military family from Massachusetts." The plot reportedly contains a general, colonel, major, captain and lieutenant, some of these serving in the Revolution forces

14. **KNAPP FARM** – aka MINKLER/DOWNING PLOT



Location: Off Rte. 21, about 1/2 mile east of the Lutheran Church/Pleasant Lane, northwest Hillsdale

Condition: Very poor, fallen, broken and missing stones. On private land, not maintained

Fencing: None

Interments: 11, 75% photographed (findagrave)

Earliest known stone: William Minkler 1821

Revolutionary veterans interred: Unknown

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1930s

Notes: This is the fourth abandoned family burying ground in this report, in this case for the Minkler and Downing families. Where once 11 stones were standing, only a few remain. It is not quite as bad as Foley's Corners (more stones are legible, if toppled), but it would be difficult to restore. It stands within a grove of trees, is not visible from Rte. 21

15. THE HARLEMVILLE GERMAN CEMETERY – aka LUTHERAN



Location: On Harlemville Road at the junction with Ten Broeck Road, in northwest Hillsdale

Condition: Very good, maintained by cemetery association

Fencing: Has chain-link fencing

Interments: 104, 100% photographed (findagrave.com)

Earliest known stone: 1877

Revolutionary veterans interred: None, too recent for AR vets

Inscriptions: Stones recorded in 1928

Notes: This cemetery is still in use and is currently very well maintained. It is a relatively new site by Hillsdale standards, has a small identifying sign

Potential Resources for the Cemetery Project

Online:

- The findagrave.com website, with an extensive listing of headstone inscriptions, searchable by cemetery and name of interred. In most cases, there is a photo of the headstone, and the person who posted the entry may be contacted via email
- The cindislist.com website, with links to online genealogy resources

People:

- Two researchers at the Columbia County Historical Society in Kinderhook will do projects for a modest fee -- Anna Thompson (curator) and Jim Benson (senior researcher)
- Fred and Elsie Saar, Austerlitz summer residents, have documented most of the local cemeteries, are experienced in researching interments
- Nancy Jane Kern, whose parents did old graveyard restoration/documentation work on all the old Austerlitz cemeteries, willing to speak to the group
- Arthur Kelly – publisher/editor of books on local vital documents, lives in Rhinebeck, not yet contacted

Books:

- [A Graveyard Preservation Primer](#) by L. Strangstad, the Association of Gravestone Studies. This organization is in Greenfield, MA and seems to be the primary resource for restoration of old graveyards – lots of good information on documentation, conservation, restoration, starting a “friends of the cemetery” organization, etc. (book given by Kiefer to LeTellier)
- Extensive collection of individual [cemetery books](#) (with inscriptions), as well as marriage and baptismal records in the archives of the Columbia County Historical Society, Kinderhook. There is also a small collection at the Roe Jan Library
- [Revolutionary War Veterans buried in Columbia County](#) (2 volumes, 1973 + 1978), E. French. Veterans are listed by name + graveyard, with details on military service
- [Gravestones of Columbia County](#), G. Divine (1991), interesting essay on local gravestones and graveyards, history and design
- [Cemeteries in the Town of Austerlitz](#), Marion Kern (1985). I haven’t seen this, but the author (now deceased) documented/restored/maintained the old Austerlitz graveyards

Restoration notes:

- Only a few sites have identifying signage, many do not have fences
- The trees in several sites require evaluation
- The Boy Scouts in Hillsdale once helped to restore local cemeteries
- Jim Miller (jrmillersheffieldhistory@gmail.com) of the Sheffield Historical Society is highly experienced in cemetery restoration and recommends a small team for the cleaning and basic work, supplemented by a tree worker and gravestone expert (Joe Ferrannini,

gravestonematter@aol.com) for complicated jobs. Jim and one strong young man restored 90 stones in this summer, working a few hours a week

- Old cemeteries in Queechy Lake, Kinderhook and Sheffield have been “brought back.” Presumably the people who oversaw these restorations can be identified and approached for advice