

THE HEADSTONE

Vol. I

April 2023

Issue IV

I knew that the days were starting to go by much faster as I grew older, but it seems now that no sooner than I get one newsletter sent out, the next one is due! So much has been and is happening at the cemetery that I find it hard to keep up, but what a labor of love.

So where do I start? Maybe where we left off last month. Just days before the March newsletter went out, we were in the cemetery clearing the upper section. Two huge trees were down in that section which had to be removed but the briars and brambles had to be cleared first in order to even get to those down trees. The photo below shows a little of the progress after just getting started.



The upper section after just getting started on February 23rd . Several down trees and a lot of briars and Vines!

While the clearing was going on, I had asked my neighbor and his brother, Kenny and Gary Reed, if they would come with their metal detectors and check the cemetery for surface artifacts as we were clearing so we would not further damage something of potential importance. They agreed and on February 24th they showed up and went to work. Ken found what turned out once it was

cleaned to be a coffin handle! He returned on February 28th and in the same area, he found one of the hinges! The photos are below.



He also found an old piece of metal that was part of a sideboard top rail on a horse drawn wagon and a huge horseshoe that was worn by a workhorse and oh yes, one "Scout knife." And of course, there was also some refuse found that was disposed of in the process. Thank you, Kenny and Gary. Photos of the handle were sent to Dr Nash at JMU and she agreed that it was a coffin handle that dated to the very late 1800s or very early 1900s.

Work continued and after several more days, the downed trees were finally exposed.



This picture, taken in late evening, did not provide a lot of light for illustrating detail but the two downed trees can be seen exposed and ready for removal. They have since this photo was taken been cleared and all that is left to do is remove the root ball. What can also be seen are a few of the twenty-nine pink flags that mark the locations of potential graves as a result of the work done by the ever-noble canine, Seamus, and his owner, Dr. Connor.

The trees were successfully removed and without much disruption to the area where they fell. As an addendum to the coffin handle find, it was located just to the viewer's right of the tree closest to the forefront in the photograph, approximately 47 feet upslope from the nearest marked grave. This is a good indication that although void of visible markers at this point, the upper section of the graveyard does in fact contain graves.

On March 21, 2023, the marble cutter and co-owner of Frank Grim & Sons called and informed me that Catherine Wehrle Hanger's Headstone was ready and could be picked up in Harrisonburg at Heritage Memorials. Needless to say, the following morning I was enroute with my neighbor / genealogist extraordinaire and good friend Al to Harrisonburg. The stone turned out well and since it was already on my truck and the weatherman was predicting rain for Friday and Saturday, we went to the cemetery and set it. Catherine died March 26, 1826, which was a Sunday, just as March 26th was this year ironically. Only difference, 197 years!



The new stone, in the photo at right, is just about as close to an exact copy as one could hope for in my opinion, and that was the goal. It is of marble just like the original. I have included a photo of the old, unrepairable stone below. What do you think?

While at the monument company I asked the owner about small pieces of stone, in this case they would be granite, about 6x6x4 inches, marked with "UNKNOWN," to be placed at any unknown graves that may be revealed by the



anticipated work of Dr, Nash. The stones are reasonable, and that possibility will be explored further based on Dr. Nash's findings. I think this is important work, but I welcome input from you. Please email your thoughts on this.

I asked Robert Jolley, Virginia State Archaeologist, to come to the cemetery way back in January and he did. Since that time, he and I have on three occasions gotten together for the purpose of documenting some of the historical sites in and around Dutch Hollow. I have listed these below, and while some folks may not know where many of these places are, many will. The purpose is to document sites that have all but disappeared and make a record, to the extent possible, of their existence. These are not architectural studies like those done on old but still existing structures per se, but rather on old foundations or chimneys and the like where the known purpose or existence of a site is on the verge of slipping into oblivion. This has been a very rewarding and educational experience for me personally, and I anxiously await the next outing. More surveys are planned!

January 30, 2023

Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery

J. A. Wiseman House Site

February 7, 2023

McNutt/Robertson Mill, House, and Dam Site

Henry Swortzel House Site

Native American Camp Site Route 726

McNutt Chapel Site

James Callison House Site

Liberty Mill Site

March 16, 2023

Mrs. J. P. McClure House Site

Gilkeson Mill Site

Broadhead Schoolhouse Site

Buffalo Schoolhouse Site

Mt. Moriah Chapel Site

Hutchens Mill Dam & Mill Site

St. Paul German Reformed Church Site

I have photos of these sites as well as some of the Site Surveys completed by Mr. Jolley. I plan to put together a synopsis of these locations with a few photos at some point and make them available on the website and the newsletter. Maybe one or two in each newsletter as time permits.

After a successful review of the Preliminary Information Form on March 16th by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, I am currently preparing the Registration documentation for submission to them. This is the review that will determine if the cemetery gets listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register. It is the final submission for that process and if successful, the cemetery will be in nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination will be reviewed by the National Park Service and can take up to eighteen months for final determination for National Listing! SO, these are my marching orders for the near future.

Website Updates:

In The Library / Archives Section

Ship Passenger Lists 1732-1754 – 15 Total

Unpublished Documents: - 7 Total

Published Documents – 9 Total – **Great Addition: Augusta County Courthouse Portrait Information. A Biographical Sketch of each person that is displayed in portrait form at the courthouse**

Life in Dutch Hollow – 72 Total

Obituaries & Death Notices – 363 (Still several hundred to go)

NEW CATEGORY:

Lucas-Fix Private Collection 109 Total

Coming Soon:

Elijah Jacob Hanger Private Collection (Approximately 450 files to be uploaded as time permits)

In The Focused Research Section

18 Files (40+ more to be researched, formatted , and uploaded as time permits)

This is the paragraph where I write something like, “I hope you found this newsletter to be of the quality and quantity you anticipated.” The fact is, that is my hope. I am not sure how it has measured up in your eyes but feel free to let me know if there is a particular focus – the cemetery, history, or genealogy and the likes that I might be able to provide info on and I will do my best. And remember, if your research is making you feel like you are going in circles, maybe you are. After all, genealogy is about chasing your own tale.

Glenn Hanger

President, Dutch Hollow Hanger Cemetery