



NEWSLETTER 2021

June 2021

Interested in donating to our organization? Please send donations to:

**Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries, Inc.
P O Box 172
Middleborough, MA 02346**

WHO WE ARE

The Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization operated solely by Volunteers. No one is paid therefore we depend on donations to support the organization. You can donate by sending a check to Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries Inc, P.O. Box 172, Middleborough, MA 02346 or via PayPal.

Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to anyone you know who might be interested. We are always looking for new friends and volunteers. There are many opportunities available.

Check out our Websites

www.FriendsofMiddleboroughCemeteries.org

AND

www.FACEBOOK.COM/THEFoMC

WHAT WE DO

The purposes of the corporation are as follows:

1. To preserve, maintain and restore the cemeteries located in Middleborough, Massachusetts including the graves, burial grounds, and burial plots,
2. To promote and improve awareness of the history and care of Middleborough cemeteries
3. To preserve and promote the memory of those persons interred within Middleborough, Massachusetts.

If anyone is interested in checking us out, we have monthly volunteer meetings (currently held on ZOOM) on the third Thursday at 7:00 PM. Please send an email to clerk@friendsofmiddleboroughcemeteries.org if you would like to join us at the meetings and you will be sent a ZOOM invitation usually two days before the meeting..

Volunteer Opportunities

For those of you who like to get out in the Fresh Air or who have computer skills and are interested in Genealogy Research check, out the opportunities on the next page.

Cemetery Maintenance – Lawn Mowing & Cleaning up Debris After Storms

It is Important to our Organization that we keep the Cemeteries in Middleborough as presentable as possible.

We are looking for people to mow the lawns and weed wack around some of the individual gravesites in Middleborough. If you may have some free time and a lawn mower we could use your help. One of our Maintenance Team moved out of the State and another's business is taking up more of his time so he is unable to continue. If you are interested in helping, please email your name and contact information to Ginny Kraus, clerk@friendsofmiddleboroughcemeteries.org and she will put you in touch with the Landscaping leader.

The **Documentation and Cleaning Team** will begin work in the cemeteries sometime in May or June weather permitting.

Anyone interested can specify if they are interested in one or both. All volunteers will be trained on the proper way to do each. Documenting is easy with a specialized form for this purpose. All cleaners will be supplied with all the tools necessary. Anyone interested in learning one or both can contact Chris Hubble , cehubble@comcast.net or by phone 508-697-4763

The Veteran's Team will be starting their Field Research in July (weather permitting).

The Veterans Field Research consists of going into the cemeteries and walking up and down each aisle checking for any indication that the interred may have served in the US Military. We have a pre-existing list of names from 1982 and we know many of our loved ones have passed since then so we need to find them and add them to the list. We work in teams of two people each. One to Read the stones and One to Check the list and verify the information we have on the list against what is written on the stone. If the person is not already on the list, a form will be filled out so we can add them to the list. We generally

only work from around 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM but you can leave at any time if needed. If you can walk, read and write, you are qualified to help.

Genealogy Research

For those people who want to volunteer but have mobility issues but have computer skills and are interested in the Genealogy of our Veterans, you can help by researching the Veterans from the list. This information will be used to validate that the person did serve in the Military. You will be given a Flash Drive with a list of names from our list of Potential Veterans that were identified during the Field Research. You can use one or more of the Genealogy websites to look for records to add to the Veteran's Profile. This information may be used in a future exhibit to honor the Middleborough Veteran 's. In the past we did an Exhibit at the Middleborough Public Library on Civil War Veterans which was very successful. The information will also be entered into a searchable database that is in the process of being created for the Veterans interred in Middleborough, Massachusetts. We also hope to add all people interred in Middleborough Cemeteries to this database as well.

If any of this work to Honor Our Veterans sounds like something you would like to help with, please contact Ginny Kraus at

clerk@friendsofmiddleboroughcemeteries.org or Tel: 508-468-5925

FoMC List of Accomplishments in the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year

In the past Fiscal Year, the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries Inc went through a couple of changes in the Leadership of the organization. The first one was at the election of Officers at the first meeting of the Board of Directors in June after the Annual Meeting in 2020. The second change in leadership was due to the pressures put on some of the Officers due to their professional jobs and the Covid-19 Pandemic. Even with these changes, the FoMC has not only been able to survive, we made some great accomplishments in the organization.

1. We have added **5** new Volunteers to the organization who have been great contributors. Through follow-up with volunteers that filled out forms indicating an interest in the FoMC organization that had either changed their email or never provided one we have another 5 people

interested in following our progress and hopefully will become volunteers. Thank you, Anne Williams for following up with these people.

2. We were awarded a multi-year grant from the Community Preservation Act in the amount of \$3000 per year for a total of \$9,000.00.
3. The Preservation Team has organized the documentation sheets and photographs into Books and saved the same information electronically in the same organized format.
4. Volunteer Nathaniel White has built the FoMC a searchable database that will be able to be accessed by the general public for viewing only once we have loaded data from our research. Thank You Nathaniel for your contribution to the FoMC of your time and talent.
5. The Veteran's Team has added online document collecting to support the information obtained during the ongoing field research. Once the information found has been recorded on our Master Spreadsheet, we will be able to download the spreadsheet into the database created by Nathaniel.
6. Last year one of the trees that fell down in the Tack Factory Cemetery during a storm turned out to be hollow. There were 12 trees that were suspected to be in that same condition and could potentially cause damage to the stones or visitors to the cemetery. We are happy to report those 12 trees and two additional suspect trees were taken down on April 19th by Al's Tree Service. The Historical Commission had funds set aside for the maintenance of the Town-owned and Town-entrusted cemeteries and the FoMC has been re-imbursed for a portion of the cost of removing the trees from the Tack Factory Cemetery aka Taunton Street Cemetery.
7. We have produced 2 FoMC Newsletters in 2021 with another one coming out in June. We will be distributing them every other Month to over 138 organizations and people in the local area towns electronically and place printed copies in strategically placed locations around town, including the Town Clerks Office in the Town Hall Annex. The feedback we have received has all been positive. Each Newsletter we will be highlighting one of the Middleborough Cemeteries with "Stories in the Stones" and

also "Cemetery Trivia" which will profile a notable person buried in that cemetery.

8. In 2019 a video was recorded on the restoration of the single Gravesite of Ephraim Cobb on Meadowbrook Lane by the Preservation Team consisting of Chris and Dennis Hubble, Sandy Silvester, Dottie Hood and Lori Ashley (Videographer). The abandoned Gravesite was cleared of debris, the stone was reset to an upright position and cleaned. The original video was without dialog. In 2021, the team that restored the website added the voice over to the video describing the step-by-step process. This video was put on the FoMC Facebook page for educational purposes.

This month's Focus is on the Tack Factory Cemetery located at 21 Taunton Street, Middleborough, MA

"The Stories In The Stones"

By Jeff Stevens

The Tack Factory Gets A New Look

Rhonda Roberts of West Bridgewater has a deep commitment and interest in the historic cemeteries of our area. In 2009, she happened upon the Tack Factory Cemetery that is on the Middleboro/Lakeville line near the Ocean Spray Headquarters. The area was completely overgrown with weeds and dead branches. Trees were growing among the old gravestones. There was no sign to identify the cemetery, and you ran the risk of ticks and other pests if you tried to walk around and read the stones.

Rhonda rounded up a few friends and relatives and started a clean up.

It did not take Rhonda long before she met up with some Middleboro locals who shared her interest in historic cemeteries. She met Paul Provencher, the local Veterans' Agent, while checking out info on veterans. Together they started the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries.

Now the Tack Factory Cemetery is much improved. Neighbors and local scouts help cut the grass regularly and do some work on stones, fences, and stone walls. All the information on the gravestones has been recorded and listed for

local historians and relatives researching for their ancestors. The Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries Inc applied to the Middleborough Community Preservation Committee to create signs for 14 historic Cemeteries, including the Tack Factory. The new sign was created by Jimmy Blanchard of Middleboro and has an "urn & willow" image that was used on gravestones when the cemetery was started in the 1800's. The new sign was just installed, another step in revitalizing this piece of Middleborough's rich history.

A Mystery Solved

Betsey Tinkham's Headstone Found at Tack Factory Cemetery





The FoMC has exciting information to report. The Gravestone of Betsey Tinkham has been found. In The book **"Tack Factory Cemetery And the People Buried at the Border of Middleboro and Lakeville, Massachusetts"** written by Jean A Douillette in 2013 she wrote "Tinkham, Betsey "B.T." is inscribed on this white marble footstone which faces the front of the cemetery. Although there is no headstone present, this is most likely the grave of Betsey (Elmes) Tinkham. Her footstone is in line with the footstones of Thomas P. Tinkham, her husband, and James W. Tinkham, her son."

The FoMC Preservation Team has been working on documenting and cleaning gravestones at the Tack Factory Cemetery this past month. While documenting the section where the "B. T." footstone resides, they came to the same conclusion that Jean Douillette did. There should have been a headstone there. The experienced team very carefully started probing as they have done many times in the past and before long felt something beneath the surface of the grass where a headstone may have fallen. Very carefully, using the proper tools for this type of excavation, they started to peel back the grass and Betsey Tinkham's Headstone lay there waiting to be found. The stone was documented, photographed and the team thought about placing the sod back over the stone to preserve the inscription from the elements. As you can see from the photos, her stone is in three pieces. After a team discussion, the decision was made to remove the three pieces, clean them and reset them in an upright position back-to-back until such time as the stone can be repaired properly. The team will eventually come back when they have the time and. tools to repair the stone. Until then, Betsey's stone will remain safe and sound for all to see.

Note: PLEASE, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DO THIS YOURSELF !! This is not something that should be done by your average person. This team has been trained to do this type of work. If not done properly, a stone can be irreparably damaged beyond salvation.

Permission has been given by Jean A Douillette to quote from her book

Middleborough Cemeteries Trivia

Did you know?

By Jeri Thayer

Betsey (Elmes) Tinkham

Also taken from Jean A Douillette's book **"Tack Factory Cemetery And the People Buried at the Border of Middleboro and Lakeville, Massachusetts"**

Betsey (Elmes) Tinkham was the daughter of Eliphalet and Chloe (Leonard) Elmes.

Betsey was born in Middleboro around 1782

Betsey married Thomas Paddock Tinkham in Middleboro on July 4, 1805

Betsey and Thomas had 10 children (Otis Leonard, James Warren, Sarah, Samantha, Lorenzo, Elizabeth, Almira, Lewis, Bradford and Leander

Betsey died of consumption in Middleboro on November 29, 1858 at the age of 76

Interested in receiving the FoMC Newsletter in your Inbox, send an email to: clerk@friendsofmiddleboroughcemeteries.org with your name, email address and phone number.

Look for our next Newsletter in August where we will be highlighting a different cemetery with another "Stories in the Stones" and "Middleborough Cemeteries Trivia" with interesting information you may not have known.