



NEWSLETTER 2021

September 2021

Please send donations to:

Note: Your Donations are 100% tax deductible

**Friends of Middleborough
Cemeteries, Inc**

P O Box 172

Middleborough, MA 02346

www.FriendsofMiddleboroughCemeteries.org

www.FACEBOOK.COM/THEFoMC

If you get a chance, drive by the Tack Factory Cemetery on Taunton Street and see the difference your donations make. Our Preservation Team has been working diligently this Summer documenting and cleaning the stones in this cemetery. We also had several trees removed that were deemed threatening to the gravestones. Your contributions are needed to continue our work in other cemeteries in Middleborough as well.

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.

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..

This Month's Newsletter is Dedicated to the "Men Who Lie Alone."

Throughout the Town of Middleborough are the known Gravesites of four men who are buried alone. The "Men Who Lie Alone" in Middleborough are Ephraim Cobb, Lemuel Lyon, Thomas Paddock and Samuel Sampson The reason these four men are buried in individual gravesites is because they all died of Smallpox and it was imperative they get buried before they were able spread the disease further. There are also three known women that lie alone and they will be highlighted in a future FoMC Newsletter next year.

Ephraim Cobb, the Lone Stone in the Woods

by Jeff Stevens for the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries



When you start looking into our historic cemeteries, you find many variations on how and where our ancestors buried their family members. Usually, those with enough money to afford a headstone buried their family

members in larger burial grounds, like the Green Cemetery or Nemasket Hill, or smaller family plots on the side of a field on the family farm if they lived out of town. Then there are the unusual burials, such as the single headstone for Ephraim Cobb; a single headstone with no sign of other burials, in an overgrown wooded area on the way from Middleborough to Halifax.

The stone tells parts of his story and may explain his solitary grave. The stone gives his name and death date in 1760. His parents, John and Mary Cobb, are listed. Then it tells the reader that he died of smallpox, which may explain why he is so alone in his death. A person with smallpox was isolated in a "pest house" when the pestilence (smallpox) hit him. About half the victims of smallpox died and when they were buried, the grave was always marked, stating the cause of death so no one would accidentally break into the grave and start a new epidemic. The History of Middleborough does not list 1760 as a major outbreak year for smallpox, so Ephraim may have been an isolated victim with no other deaths so no other graves were near him.

Ancestry.com helps fill in more about the Cobb (Cob) family. While not Mayflower passengers, Cobbs are early settlers in Plymouth and the surrounding towns. Ephraim's father John was born in Middleboro in 1689. He first married Joanna Gershorn and had 4 children. When Joanna died, he married Ephraim's mother, Mary Conant of Plymouth and had six more children. Ephraim was the youngest.

Ephraim's single headstone is a classic Middleboro stone. It was cut by William Cushman and includes a bible verse from Job, Chapter 4, verse 1 & 2, that tells the reader that "man born of a woman is of few days & full of trouble". The gravestone reminds you of your mortality and encourages you to lead an honorable life. The grave is sunken and the stone tipped over and partially buried. It had been in a wooded area that was being developed as a new area for "green" houses. Steve Bonfiglioli found the grave and has constructed a fence to protect it from further damage and to keep it from being lost as so many other historic stones have been lost over the centuries. The grave is on the side of Meadowbrooke Lane off of Rte. 105 on the way to Halifax.

Burial on Middleborough Conservation Land

Lemuel Lyon Gravesite

By Ginny Kraus



Lemuel Lyon was born February 6, 1761 to Jedediah and Mary (Cushman) Lyon. He married Lydia Ripley on December 24, 1786. He died February 1, 1788* just 5 days short of his 27th birthday of Smallpox. All these events took place in Middleborough, MA. Lemuel and Mary had one child Isaac Lyon who was born in 1788.

In an effort to identify a more exact locations of some of the single gravesites in Middleborough, our friend, Paul Provencher was asked to help. Paul drove out to Murdock Street to the Conservation Land owned by Middleborough and embarked on a search for the Lemuel Lyon Gravesite. His trek on his bicycle took him down a path into the conservation land as shown below.



The gravesite was approximately 4429 feet down the path. Paul indicated it is close to the railroad tracks but there is no distinct path to the gravesite from the railroad bed. He also indicated that the trek should be taken only after an extended dry period. Thank You Paul for your help in finding and identifying a more specific location of this gravesite.

According to Lydia (Ripley) Lyon's Widow Application File for Lemuel's Pension, Lemuel was a Private in the US Revolutionary War and served three months in Rhode Island in the year 1777 or 1778 to guard the Military Stores and keep the Butt's Hill Fort secure. Butt's Hill Fort is located in Portsmouth, RI and is listed as a historical landmark. For more information on Butt's Hill Fort, see <https://portsmouthhistorynotes.com/2020/05/25/portsmouth-places-butts-hill-fort/> Lemuel also served eight months in Rhode Island in the year 1778 in Captain Jacob Fuller Company and Colonel John Jacob's Regiment. In the last months of 1778 and into the Summer of 1779, he returned to Butt's Hill Fort in Captain Edward Sparrow's Company in Colonel Jacob's Regiment. Lydia also stated that Lemuel also served forty days in Rhode Island in Captain Job Pierce's Company. There are letters attesting that the information that Lydia Lyon provided on the Widow's Pension Application was true and accurate. The following men had served with Lemuel and sent in letters to the Pension Board.

Eleazer Wood, Samuel Sampson, Daniel Tucker, Eliab Ward, William Drake, all of Middleborough. Lydia originally received a pension of \$46 per annum but was later increased to \$80 per annum.

***NOTE:** It is interesting to note that the Middleborough Town Records show the Year of death as 1789, several of the pages of the US Revolutionary Pension Records Application filed by his widow, Lydia (Ripley) Lyon state his death date as 1788.

THE STORIES IN THE STONES

Thomas Paddock

By Jeff Stevens for the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries



Rte 495 goes very near a single gravesite on Vernon Street where it joins Old Centre Street. The site is easy to miss, even though it is marked by head and foot stones and a SAR marker with a new, small American flag, put there by the local veterans. Why is this stone so alone? It is also unusual in that it shows a man in a military uniform but gives no details of his service. Most colonial stones have "soul effigies" that are not directly related to the person, just images representing death and/or resurrection. Early effigies look like skulls. Over the years, they come "alive" with facial features and hair, and finally wings as they evolve into cherubs or angels.

The headstone tells us that Thomas Paddock is buried there and that he died of the smallpox in 1778. He was 45 years old and died on April 12. There is no other information and no other stones are present. We are fortunate to have a number of historic sources to help us fill in the blanks. Thomas Weston's "History of Middleborough, Mass, 1669-1905" tells of the epidemics that hit in 1777 and '78 and of a "pest house" located in the Leonard home on Vernon Street in the Titicut section of town. He reports that a number of

people died there. He also reports that this hospital was used to provide early inoculations. Clearly Thomas Paddock died in this outbreak. All burials from smallpox are marked on the headstone to prevent accidental outbreaks caused by opening a smallpox grave.

A visit to Middleborough's genealogy room at the library lets you check on Thomas's military record as listed in the Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution. There is a Thomas Paddock of Middleborough who was a private in Capt. Job Peirce's Company C, part of Col. Theophilus Cotton's Plymouth Regiment. He served for 30 days in Rhode Island and then nine months at Fishkill, New York. But he is described as being 56 years old, not 45, and his New York service happened after the death date listed on our stone. How could these dates and ages fit together ?

Ancestry.Com to the rescue. When the name Thomas Paddock is researched online, up come details on two men, both named Thomas Paddock, who lived in Middleborough during the Revolutionary War. One man was born in 1723 in Middleborough. He married Hannah Thomas in 1747 and had a number of children. He must be the soldier. The second Thomas clearly lived in Middleborough and had a number of children. He was born in Yarmouth in 1732, married Lydia Clark in 1758, and also had children born here. He must be the Thomas who died of smallpox, based on his age at his death. The older Thomas moved out of Middleborough and died in 1786 in Wisconsin.

More local reports tells of the sick Thomas Paddock asking to be buried separately from others in the pesthouse who were Tories, explaining why his headstone is separated from others. Other smallpox graves are said to be located across the street from his grave. No military records have been found on this Thomas Paddock. It may be a mistake to have the SAR marker and flag on his grave because it is the other Thomas who served in the Revolution. One part to this puzzle still is unsolved. Why is the man on the gravestone shown in uniform if he was not in the military? Maybe more research will find the answer to this puzzle that involves two Middleborough patriots, but just one Middleborough headstone.

A Direct Descendant of Mayflower Passenger George Soule

Samuel Sampson

By Jeri Thayer

The last of the four men who lie alone is Samuel Sampson born October 16, 1735 in Middleborough to Obadiah and Mary (Soule) Sampson. He died of Smallpox on August 31, 1757 and according to "Mayflower Births and Death's Vol.2", Page 245. The entry states "Grave in edge of woods off Wall St, Rocky Meadow Dist: "Samuel SAMPSON, son of Obadiah and Mary, d. 31 Aug. 1757, ae 21y10m, smallpox". This gravesite is also referenced to in the book "**Old Cemeteries of Southeastern Massachusetts**" by [Charles M Thatcher](#) as "Grave on Wall Street - Rocky Meadow - back from road in edge of woods, about 1/2 mile northeast of Shaw's Mill".

Note: No photo available. Need to locate the exact physical location of this gravesite.

This appears to be land that may have been his father (Obadiah's) homestead. According to the book "Mayflower Deeds and Probate 1600-1850 " on page 417 under the Soule Section the following entry was made. "Estate of Obadiah Samson, yeoman of Middleborough, MA <Plymouth Co. PR 17612> <17:157> Letter/Bond 3 Mar. 1766, John SAMSON appt'd admr. Sureties: John Shaw of Plimton and Joseph LUCAS of Plymouth. Witnesses: Edward WINSLOW, Penelope WINSLOW, <19:343> Inventory taken 4 Apr. 1766; incl. homestead, meadow at Rocky Meadow and cedar & spruce swamp at Mehan()ehet. <20:537>

The Mayflower Lineage to George Soule is as follows:

(Mary, John 3 & 2, George 1)

George Soule	married	Mary Buckett/Becket
John Soule	married	Rebecca Simmons
John Soule	married	Martha Tinkham
Obadiah Sampson	married	Mary Soule
Samuel Sampson		

This makes Samuel the 3X great Grandson of George Soule, Mayflower Passenger.

Note: The Lineage information was taken from the "Mayflower Families In Progress, Sixth Edition, published by the Mayflower Descendant Society.

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, Veteran's Team Leader at clerk@friendsofmiddleboroughcemeteries.org or Tel: 508-468-5925