



NEWSLETTER 2021

December 2021

**Friends of Middleborough
Cemeteries, Inc**

P O Box 172

Middleborough, MA 02346

Please send donations to:

**Note: Your Donations are 100% tax
deductible**

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..

In Memory of a Member:

Nanette Vickery who was a loyal member of the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries from 2016 – 2021. Nanette passed away September 15, 2021.
May You Rest in Peace Nanette

The American Legion Holds Veterans Day Memorial Service at the Veterans Memorial Park on the Town Hall Lawn

The American Legion had a very moving Memorial Service remembering the 13 Soldiers who lost their lives on August 26, 2021 in Kabul, Afghanistan during the evacuation of Americans. If you missed it, you can view it on MCCAM <https://vod.mccam02346.com/CablecastPublicSite/show/6786?channel=5>

Thank You for Your Service !! May You Rest in Peace !!

Thank You American Legion and Jason Cox, Veterans Service Officer for a beautiful and moving Memorial Service.

FoMC Participates in the Middleborough Christmas Parade

This year's theme was "Making Spirits Bright". We thought this was perfect for our organization. Every year we make the stones in Middleborough Cemeteries much brighter by cleaning them and bringing them back to their original splendor. A perfect example is the recently completed Tack Factory Cemetery which was depicted in photos on our float with Before and After photos. Although we didn't win any prize we still had fun putting together a float that shows exactly "Who We Are" and "What We Do". The people on the float were Lori Ashley, Jeri Thayer, Ginny Kraus and Honorary Mayor and President of the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries Inc, Jeff Stevens. Our float was graciously transported by Gerry Thayer. Thank You Gerry !



v

**This Month's Newsletter is Dedicated to the
Titicut Parish Cemetery**

Stories in the Stones

The Indian Monument

by Jeff Stevens for Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries



While there are hundreds of gravestones to mark the presence and the passing of our European colonists in early Middleboro, the thousands of native people who lived and died here were usually buried without markers to mark their passing. A monument in the Titicut Parish Cemetery in North Middleboro is one of the few markers to the Native American residents during colonial times. It marks the generosity of three men. It reads :

James Thomas, Stephen David, Job Ahanton

Indians who in 1750 gave 39 acres of
land to Titicut Precinct to encourage
the settlement of a Gospel Ministry

By 1750, the native population had barely lived through dramatic changes. Much of their land now belonged to the new settlers and their numbers had been decimated by new diseases and terrible wars. King Phillip's War took a terrible toll on the English but even greater losses were seen among the native people. Earlier wars (the Pequot Wars) saw women and children enslaved locally and (in King Philip's War) warriors sent to slavery in the Caribbean. Whole villages were reduced to a single family, and tribal groups were often only a handful of individuals.

Among the survivors, the three local men from the stone are identified as “praying Indians” in Thomas Weston’s History of Middleborough. He tells of their donation and that the land includes the present meeting house (North Middleborough Congregational Church) and parsonage, the public green, and the cemetery. Weston reports that James Thomas is buried in the cemetery. One unknown is how and when the present monument was put in place and by whom. The structure is clearly new. Bill Taylor, local historian, believes the North Middleboro church folks raised money in the late 1800’s to commemorate the donation by these men. The monument in place now appears to be much newer than that, so perhaps it is replacing an earlier marker.

So questions remain about even this single monument to our Native American predecessors. Their generosity was appreciated and their gift commemorated in the centuries that followed. Thousands of others lie buried in our community. Every stone ax, spear point, and arrowhead serves as the sign of Native Americans living and dying here. We may not have their names and the dates of their births and deaths, but we should learn of their role in our community’s history. Not everything started with the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620.

David G Pratt, Local Philanthropist, Politician and Very Accomplished Man

By Jeri Thayer



David G. Pratt has a beautiful angel that adorns the top of his headstone in the Titicut Cemetery located on Plymouth Street in North Middleboro. A once beautiful white stone, with the names of his parents (Isaac Jr. and Hannah (Thompson) Pratt) is now slightly covered in black moss but can be restored to its original state by experienced

people using the proper cleaning agent and proper tools. The Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries volunteers have been trained in the proper methods to clean stones like this without damaging the stone.

According to a Middleboro Antiquarian, and by the History of the Town of Middleboro Massachusetts 1905-1965 by Mertie Romain, with the information therein both; David Pratt was born in Boston on November 7, 1848. After receiving his education from the Chauncey Hall School and Phillips Exeter Academy, he entered the workforce as a bookkeeper at the Weymouth Iron Co., later becoming a selling agent for the company. After leaving the iron company in Weymouth, he went to work for the Bridgewater Iron Company. Retiring from that company in 1866, he moved to North Middleboro, with his wife Marion, to his grandfather, Isaac Pratt Senior's beautiful mansion. That property is now the Chamberlain School.

It was after his retirement that he began his very successful political career. He was chosen to represent the Seventh Plymouth District, defeating the Rev. A. C. Littlefield and the Democratic Candidate. In 1901, he represented the Second Plymouth District in the senate for the next three terms. During this time, he served on the Governor's Council. David had several other elected positions such as the board of light commissioners, Trustee of the public library, President of the Montgomery Home Association, Trustee and Treasurer of the Pratt Free School of North Middleboro and for 12 years the President of the Middleboro Savings Bank. He represented the town of Middleboro at the dedication of the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown, August 5, 1910. when Middleboro contributed a stone to be used in the building of the monument, he was also the Vice President of the Cape Cod Pilgrim Memorial Association, who sponsored the monument.

Mr. Pratt and his brother Edmund, both married sisters. David married Marion Grace (Jefferson) and Edmund married Susanna K. (Jefferson). David and Marion never had children. Upon her death, she bequeathed the sum of \$150,000, to the St. Luke's Hospital in Middleboro, stipulating that it went toward the building of the structure, and the remainder of the money go towards the hospital. She also left an undisclosed amount to the Middleboro Congregational Church.

Mr. Pratt, however, was interested in the First Unitarian Society, and gave them the land that the church stands on today. In 1907 the church was moved from Pearl St. to So. Main St. The house and barn that had occupied the lot, formerly owned by Dr. Arad Thompson was moved in three sections to the Titicut area of North Middleboro. The church was then moved to where the house once stood. The first service was held there on November 3, 1907.



David Pratt was also the President of the newly formed Auto Club in Middleboro. Mr. Pratt was a great auto enthusiast and he was one of the first

in the town to own an automobile. By 1907, the town of Middleborough had about 50 automobiles in the town. Middleborough began to have problems with "reckless drivers", so Mr. Pratt and Mathew Cushing began politely handing out cards, requesting that the drivers observe the 15 mph thru town. Some drivers were actually going a reckless 30 mph!

A count of automobiles in an afternoon in May 1907, was 200! David Pratt kept his automobile in his barn on a turnstile, he would start out driving the car across his yard, through the wide gateway and across the village green. He maintained a road across what was then a small hayfield for this purpose, scaring many of the horses in town that still were in use.

In the 1800's gas was manufactured in a building on Pierce St. in the area of the Episcopal rectory. In 1868, Nahum D. Wilbur moved from Bridgewater to Middleboro, purchased the property on Pierce St. and moved the plant to it's present site on Vine St.

The electric plant was also privately owned before Middleboro voted to purchase it. After it's purchase it was known as the Middleboro Gas and Electric. The first municipal plant in the state. David Pratt was on the committee to investigate the advisability of purchasing the plant and on March 25, 1893, the town voted to buy it

David Pratt was also responsible for enlarging the Titicut Cemetery. The gift of land was given from Mr. Pratt. It is the "new" section of the cemetery. The "old" section was given to the town by three Indians of the area. There is a monument in the cemetery with the names of the three Indians who gave the land to the Titicut church. The Titicut Parish Cemetery is managed by the Titicut Parish Cemetery Association and is not affiliated with the Titicut Parish Church located next to the Cemetery

David Pratt was a very influential man in the town of Middleboro, until the time of his death at his Buzzards Bay home on July 22,1916.

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 below.

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 normally starts their Field Research May through October. Hours are usually 10 AM – 2 PM with a break for lunch. (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 in the future.

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