

Tax Deductible Donations

may be sent to:

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



October 2023

REPAIR AND RESTORATION PROJECT

Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries has had an exciting summer working on a new project!

The Reed and Gilbert Peirce Cemeteries were established in the corner of neighboring farms out on Marion Road near Rock Village. There are all types of grave markers here, ranging from field stones through slate and marble stones and up to granite stones. Almost half of the stones here have some sort of issue; there are many lying on the ground, some are broken, some are not secured to their foundations, some are against the stone wall. All of these issues are fixable.

In September, The Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries, with grants from the Middleborough Community Preservation and Middleborough Peirce Trustees, have had Colonial Stone from Kingston MA working to repair and restore many of the stones in these two cemeteries.

As work is drawing to a close Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries would like to thank the Middleborough Community Preservation Committee and the Peirce Trustees of Middleborough for their support in our project to repair and restore the headstones in the Reed/Gilbert Peirce cemetery. There is still a bit more to be done to complete the entire cemetery and hopefully we will raise the amount needed to complete this project.

Two of the burials there are Willard Clarke who fought in the Civil War and Abial Peirce who fought in the Revolutionary War. You can read about these brave Middleborough soldiers in the links below and see a before and after of Willard Clarke's cleaned and repaired headstone.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/77603502/abial-peirce>

<https://www.findagrave.com/.../9130.../willard-edrick-clarke>



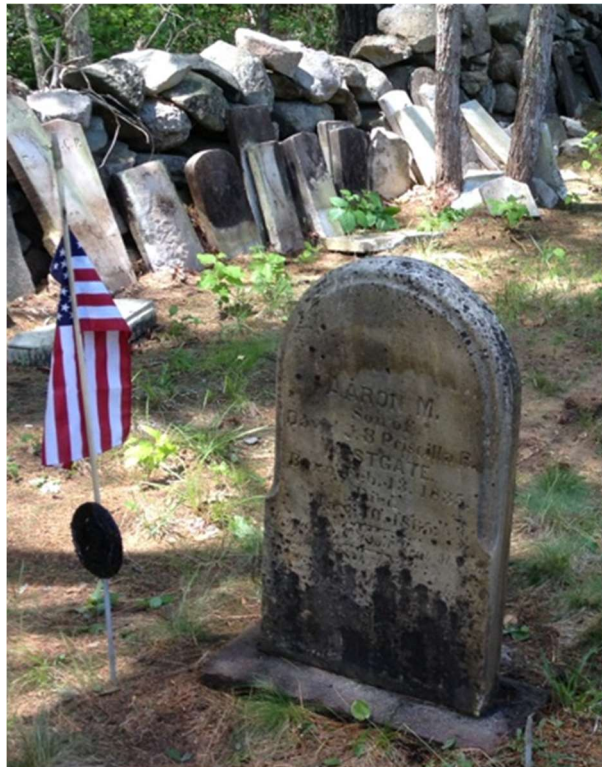
Willard Clarke Stone Before



Willard Clarke Stone After

Aaron Westgate - Civil War Veteran

**by Jeff Stevens for
the Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries**



On a beautiful June Saturday morning, a batch of volunteers and Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries met at the Reed Cemetery on Marion Road to clean a few of the hundreds of historic headstones in town, including many stones for veterans of the Civil War. The Friends of Middleborough Cemeteries received a grant to clean those stones from the Mass. Veterans' Affairs Department as part of the honoring of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

Among the stones at Reed is one marked with a flag in a GAR marker. The stone is made of what was white marble but was significantly stained brown and black by mold

and lichen that lived on the surface of the stone. The stone was barely readable but did show that it was the headstone for Aaron Westgate, son of David J. & Priscilla R. Westgate. He was born in 1835 and died 30 years later in 1865. It also said he was a member of the Mass. 32nd Infantry.

Cleaning involved first washing the stone with water and scrubbing the surfaces with nylon brushes. Anything firmer would damage the stones. A rinse helped remove lots of dirt but the staining remained. Closer inspection showed a three line "epitaph" that had not been visible at all before the washing. Careful cleaning and much effort revealed a note clearly from his wife, Susan, who is buried beside him.

It reads -

We parted here in pain

But shall meet and love again

Where the dead shall live again.

Off to the side of the cemetery are 20 or 30 white marble stones with initials on them. It was not unusual to pull up foot stones that got in the way of cutting the grass and setting them aside. One stone had the initials A W and probably was for Aaron Westgate. It was reset where it would have been originally.

A little research on Ancestry tells of Aaron's Civil War service. He volunteered in 1861 at the start of the war. Most expected a quick northern victory. Assigned to the Mass 32nd infantry, Aaron probably saw action south and west of Washington when the northern armies were dominated by early southern successes. He was mustered out in 1862. Early volunteers were committed for only 6 months. He returned to Middleboro and was a "nailer" till he died from pulmonary problems. His faithful wife lived as a widow for another 40 years, dying in 1905.

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.

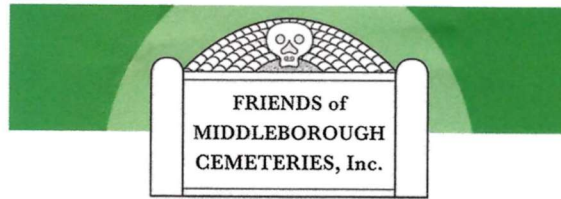
WHAT WE DO

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 you are 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.

Note: Your Donations are 100% tax deductible



FriendsofMiddleboroughCemeteries.org
www.Facebook.com/TheFoMC



WE NEED YOU!



WHO WE ARE:

The FoMC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Our purpose is to preserve, restore, and maintain the burial sites in Middleborough, Massachusetts. We aim to promote a greater awareness of the history and care of our local cemeteries, and preserve the memory of those interred within.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

JOIN the group by attending meetings.

VOLUNTEER to help clear an overgrown cemetery or maintain a cleared burial ground.

USE your technology skills to help document cemetery data or update our website.

PHOTOGRAPH gravestones to create a lasting visual documentation for our database.

LEARN how to properly clean and care for our gravestones.

HELP with outreach and fundraising through writing news releases or by organizing events.

MAKE a tax-deductible monetary donation.

WHO WE NEED:

ANYONE! We're looking for those *who would like to help us preserve our historic gravestones* before it's too late and they become unreadable! Graveyards are essentially outdoor museums, and must be managed as such.

We're looking for those *who like to do yardwork, wield a shovel, and get dirty!*

We're looking for those *who would like to honor our ancestors by doing research and preserving records.*

We're looking for those *who would like to get experience being on a board of directors.*

We're looking for younger folks *who would like to do community service.* It looks great on your resume!

IN OTHER WORDS—WE NEED YOU!