

Cemetery Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, August 17, 2021 1:00 PM

Beal Cemetery and Lyme Historians' Museum office

Minutes

Present: Jay Cary, Michael Hinsley, Laurie Wadsworth, Trustees; a young guest (at Beal, only)

We met at the Beal Cemetery on Dorchester Road, with two purposes: to survey the work that gravestone restorer Jonathan Appel had done up there this summer, and to see where the graves of Cate and Prince might be.

Surveying the work: Jonathan Appel had worked here for a day and a half, and many of the gravestones are now straightened. He also completely redid the foundation for a few that had either fallen over, or were sinking (especially near where we had the tall pines removed a few years ago). As usual, we admired his expertise, and the results.

Results of radar identification work: White and red flags mark where the ground-penetrating radar technology by Bob Perry of TopoGraphics found sites of possible additional graves that have neither a head or foot stone. Of particular interest is the area to the right (north) of the Beal family's headstones, as records indicate that that is where their enslaved "property," Cate and Prince, were buried. This area is near the hillside that slopes down toward the Dorchester Road. There are three red flags there, as well as along the eastern edge of the cemetery, behind the Beal family. We can never know where exactly they are buried, but we debated about whether we should erect one or two markers to memorialize and honor them. We made no decisions, and all feel that, as white folks 220 years later, quite inadequate to find an appropriate memorial that neither makes the Beals into villains or further victimizes the African Americans, while still acknowledging the history here in Lyme.

Around 6:15, we moved down to the Historians' office to work some more on the revisions to the old cemetery regulations as well as a new price list. A good crowd had attended Lee Webster's presentation about "Green Burials" in July, and there was much positive interest and no objections. We worked on the wording of our provision for ***"unvaulted" burials***; we agreed that for many reasons we cannot allow for the many variables that are part of the Green Burial movement, but we will adopt some of their guidelines as we write our regulations. Highland Cemetery will be a "hybrid," with both vaulted and unvaulted burials. No final decisions are made. Laurie will send out tonight's revisions for further consideration among the Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,
Laurie Wadsworth, Chair and Secretary