



MARBLE ORCHAR



Everyone has different feelings about cemeteries. Some folks may find them scary; some may find them sad. Some families make visits to loved ones; others use it as a quiet picnic spot. And it's not unusual to find school children on a field trip to a local cemetery — the stones provide an opportunity to talk about history (the lives of people who lived here), art (engravings or symbolism of the icons) and even architecture (mausoleums).

There are 240 members in the New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association (www.nhoga.org), but there are many more cemeteries than that in the Granite State. “A member is compiling a master list of every cemetery in the state, as well as every person in them,” says Beatrice Jillette, a 45-year Goshen resident. Although her husband is a cemetery commissioner in Goshen, Jillette, an accomplished artist, wasn't particularly interested in cemeteries until she was recruited for NHOGA's newsletter editor opening. “I became utterly fascinated with the stories of people buried there, the beauty of the stones and the understanding that they are a sacred place. Each is so different and has its own interesting, happy, sad and touching stories.”

Here are profiles of a few of our local cemeteries.



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ANDOVER

Number of cemeteries: 20

Oldest: Taunton Hill, Old College Road, 1782

Newest: Proctor Annex, Main Street, 1992

Biggest: Proctor and Proctor Annex, with 1,295 graves and growing

Interesting fact: “In 1986, when one of the older cemeteries was being recorded, it was noted that the stone of James Gale Jr. appeared to have more of an epitaph underground. In 2006 that stone was restored and a whole story was evident. The young man, age 22, was a brakeman on the railroad and died from a fall from the train. The events were written on his stone. The Gale family lived in West Andover and when railroad stations

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— Pat Cutter, president of the Andover Historical Society

Bradford

Number of cemeteries: 17
Oldest: Burial Hill, Center Road, 1797
Newest: Sunny Plain, Old Warner Road, 1922

Interesting fact: “Usually it makes sense that they put cemeteries where they did — in a field near a home, near the church, above the water table, and where there was easy digging. But some have ended up on a rise where one suspects a lot of gravel removal has changed the landscape over the last two centuries. A bit of sympathy for either the bearers or the horses going up some of the hills.”
— Millie Kittredge, president of the Bradford Historical Society

Best epitaph: “Born impatient, disdainful of the mediocre, scornful of the bogus, died happy”



Croydon

Number of cemeteries: 10 (plus one memorial)
Oldest: Pinnacle, Pinnacle Road, 1773
Newest: Winter Hill, Pine Hill Road, 1850
Largest: East Village, Cash Street, 550 burials

Interesting fact: The Baynes Memorial is located on the overlook on Croydon Mountain. A bronze plaque is imbedded in granite with a simple inscription:

“Here were scattered the ashes of Ernest Harold Baynes;
Lover of animals and men, and loved by them.”
May 1, 1868 – January 21, 1925

Famous residents: There are three famous residents buried in Croydon. Ruel Durkee, a political powerhouse in New Hampshire state politics for nearly 40 years, is buried in East Village. He is the subject of two books: *Coniston* by Winston



Churchill and *Ruel Durkee – Master of Men* by George Waldo Browne. The second is Abigail (Leland) Powers, grandmother of Abigail (Powers) Fillmore, wife of the 13th President Millard Fillmore. She is buried in Under the Mountain Cemetery. William Batterman Ruger Sr., world-renowned gun manufacturer, is buried in the Four Corners Cemetery on Croydon Turnpike.

Danbury

Number of cemeteries: 11
Oldest: Eastern, Bohannon Road, around 1803
Newest: Riverside, North Road, 1914
Interesting fact: Eastern Cemetery was renovated in 2005; a concrete wall was replaced with a rock retaining wall, which still has three horse rings in the original rock. The Taylor families are buried here, and they were some of the first settlers coming over from Alexandria. Andy Phelps (Danbury’s sexton) — with help from his uncle Reggie and cousin Noel — did the work on the renovation, taking out the concrete wall that their relatives built. Andy got the sexton’s job after he said at a town meeting that he “would rather be buried in the town dump than in our cemeteries.” He is the first to hold the position.

Interesting fact 2: Many of Danbury’s old records were destroyed by fire, and a public meeting was held in 2003 regarding all of the cemeteries (except Riverdale, Baptist and Jewett) so they would fall under town ownership and continue to receive maintenance. To help with the project, Tammie Coffman, the current town clerk, is compiling lists of older burials in some of the cemeteries.

Best epitaph: In the Riverdale Cemetery, Arthur Perry’s stone says on the front: “You always made us laugh.” On the back is an engraved can with the word “beer” inscribed on it and underneath the words: “This Bud’s for you my honey.”

Goshen

Number of cemeteries: 3

Oldest: North Goshen, Brook and Province Roads, 1804

Newest: Mill Village, Route 10, 1884

Interesting fact: Goshen's cemeteries have a total of seven zinc grave-markers. These distinctive blue-grey markers were manufactured by Monumental Bronze Co. from the 1870s to World War I. They were ordered from a catalog, shipped in sections and assembled on site. One could choose side panels for the markers from a variety of decorative motifs. The designs on these monuments are as sharp today as when they were cast, and the monuments themselves show no soil or wear.

Grantham

Number of cemeteries: 9

Oldest: Grantham Mountain/Four Corners at the intersection of Old Croydon Turnpike and Miller Pond Road, 1793

Newest: Memorial, Learning Drive, 1981

Biggest: Hilldale, Stoney Brook Road, 480 graves

Interesting fact: Grantham has lists of gravestones in all cemeteries, which can be used for genealogical research, as well as names of some veterans buried in each cemetery. (It is an ongoing project to list Grantham's veterans.)

Newport

Number of cemeteries: 6

Oldest: Pine Street West Cemetery, Pine Street, 1768

Newest: Pine Grove Cemetery, Sunapee Street, 1907

Interesting fact: "Pine Street West when created was on the original section of town, what would have been considered Main Street. The town center was redefined to its current location around 1810."
—Lawrence V. Cote, museum committee member

Famous residents: Billy B. Van

(1870-1950), successful vaudeville actor who held the title of "Newport's Honorary Mayor" and gave the town its nickname: The Sunshine Town. He is buried in Pine Grove Cemetery. Dexter Richards (1818-1898) was a successful manufacturer and Newport's most generous benefactor, giving the town its first free public library in 1888. He is buried in the Maple Street Cemetery. Benjamin Giles (1717-1787), one of Newport's earliest settlers, erected the first gristmill and sawmill in town. He is buried in the Pine Street West Cemetery.

Springfield

Number of cemeteries: 8

Oldest: Old Pleasant View, Cemetery Road, late 1700s

Newest: New Pleasant View, Cemetery Road, 1900

Largest: Old Pleasant View, 726 lots

Interesting fact: Old Pleasant View's survey is not complete — the Springfield Historical Society has completed 594 graves — but the oldest stone may be "Mrs Sarah Consort of Samuel Philbrick Esq. who died July 17th 1792".

Interesting fact 2: Just behind the Unknown Soldier Monument in Old Pleasant View Cemetery, there is a memorial plaque for George Mason Lovering, who received the Medal of Honor in the Civil War. His citation reads, "On 14th June 1863, during a momentary confusion in the ranks caused by other troops rushing upon the regiment, this soldier, with coolness and determination rendered efficient aide in preventing a panic among troops." He was born in Springfield on Jan. 10, 1832. The Medal of Honor was issued Nov. 19, 1891. 

