

The Sutton Historical Society Bulletin

Dedicated to preserving our historical inheritance for future generations.

Founded December 8, 1969

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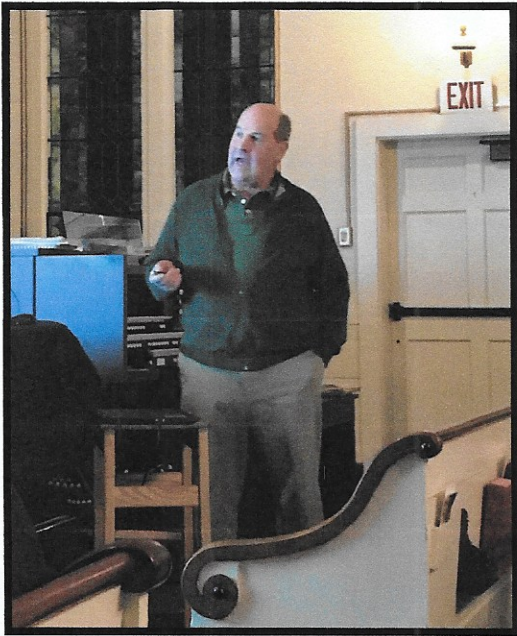
Cemetery Restoration Project Town Center Cemetery

By: Christine Watkins and Ross Weaver

In 2019, the Sutton Historical Society undertook an ambitious project to repair, reset, and clean grave markers in the Sutton Center Town Cemetery. A project of this type had been discussed at several meetings in prior years, but never got off the ground. On March 5, 2019, Ross Weaver presented "Sutton Cemeteries and Burial Records" to the Society. This presentation showcased Ross's tireless efforts to map the 30-plus cemeteries in town and their current state of disrepair. Ross then approached the Society at a general meeting with the goal of garnering support for a restoration project. His enthusiasm was infectious with the result being the creation of the Cemetery Restoration Committee on April 26, 2019. This committee consists of Ross, Brian Stevenson, Peter Michelson and Keith Downer.

The Town Cemetery Commission was approached and were enthusiastic. Through connections with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Ross and Brian attended a presentation by Betty and Carlo Mencucci, renowned Cemetery Conservators in Rhode Island. This initial contact resulted in a special presentation by Betty and Carlo to the Society on June 18, 2019 in Sutton. Video of this informative presentation is available at www.suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org under Cemetery Project - drop down to Cemetery Conservation Presentation. Subsequently, the Town Administrator and Town Selectmen were informed of the project and are enthusiastically supporting it as well.

continued



Ross Weaver, during his
March 5, 2019 presentation



Pictured above are volunteers Betty and Carlo Mencucci, professional gravestone conservators and members of the Association of Gravestone Studies and the Burrillville Historical & Preservation Society.

Betty and Carlo Mencucci
Cemetery Conservators, RI

Hands-on workshops were held on August 25 and September 14 in the Town Center Cemetery. Turnout was enthusiastic. Several grave markers were cleaned, some were reset, and the David Hall crypt was repaired as part of an Eagle Scout project. Reverend Hall was an icon in Colonial Sutton. He was the second pastor of the First Congregational Church serving 58 years from 1729 until his passing in 1787. So highly regarded was he, the community erected this memorial crypt in his honor.

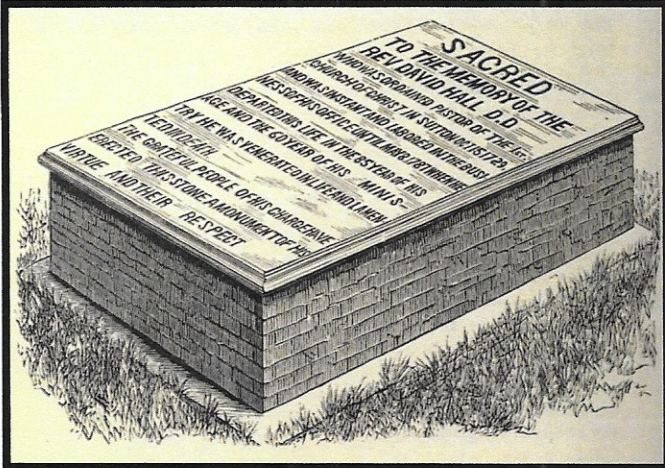


Emma Downer cleaning a gravestone



Repairing a broken gravestone

Eagle Scout, Derrick Eplite, stepped forward with an offer to rebuild the crypt. After doing some research, the physical work began. Together with his father, Domenic, Brian and Pat Stevenson and Dave Pizzi, the memorial capstone was safely removed, the decrepit brickwork dismantled, the base stone raised above surface (as it was originally placed) and the crypt reconstructed. The memory lives on.



A drawing of the Rev. David Hall crypt



The crypt in state of disrepair

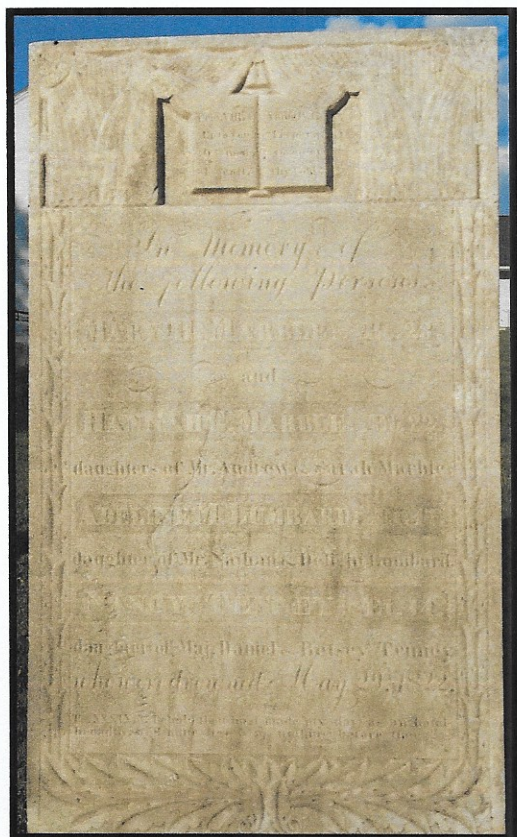


Rebuilding the crypt



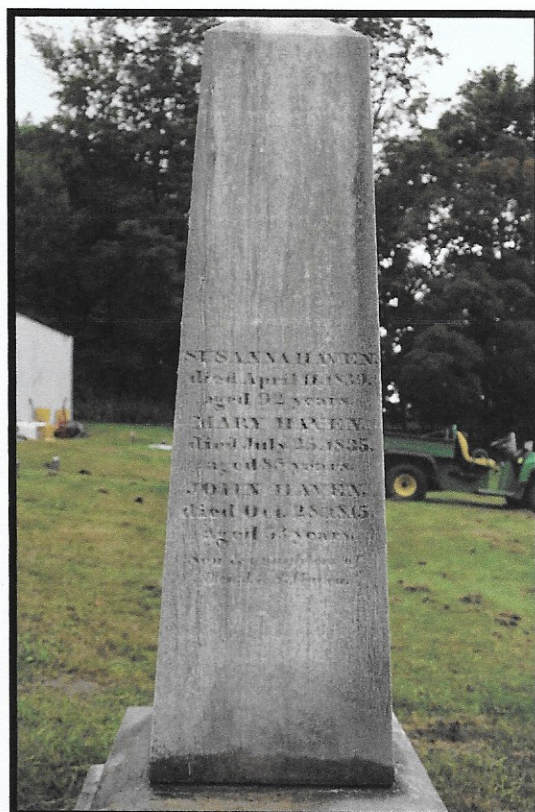
The finished restored crypt

Other notable grave markers and interesting discoveries in the Town Center Cemetery include:



The shared grave marker of four young ladies who drowned in Singletary Lake on Wednesday, May 29, 1822. Nancy Tenney, 14, daughter of Betsey (Waters) & Major Daniel Tenney; Adeline M. Lombard, 17, daughter of Delight (Allen) & Nathan Lombard; Hannah Greenwood Marble, 22, and Mary H. Marble, 23, both daughters of Sarah (Harback) and Andrew Marble. All drowned together when the boat they were in capsized. "Their untimely end caused great sorrow in town, for they were young ladies, well connected, and much beloved by all who knew them." Now approaching 300 years, how do we know of them? By the memorial that was erected for them in the middle of Sutton Center Cemetery and which we hope to preserve for the future residents of their and our town.

Discovery of a Revolutionary War Soldier: Previously it was believed there were 11 Revolutionary War veterans known to be buried in Center Cemetery. Now there are 12. Recent cleaning of a marble obelisk behind the Town Hall revealed the inscriptions identifying the Haven family members buried in the plot demarked by granite cornerstones. Curiously, the inscriptions are not found on the compilation published by Reuben Rawson Dodge in 1898, but are on the handwritten compilation by Henry Batcheller in 1905. While researching the family members, the following was found in the Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolution, Vol. 7, Pg. 542: "Haven, John. Private, Capt. Jonathan Woodbury's Co., Col. Jacob Davis's Regiment; marched July 30, 1780; discharged Aug. 7, 1780, 12 days, on an alarm at Rhode Island, including 4 days (72) travel home. Roll dated Sutton."



Although this record does not identify which John Haven, father or son, it is believed to have been John, Jr. who would have been 17, approaching 18, at the time. Conversely, John, Sr. would have

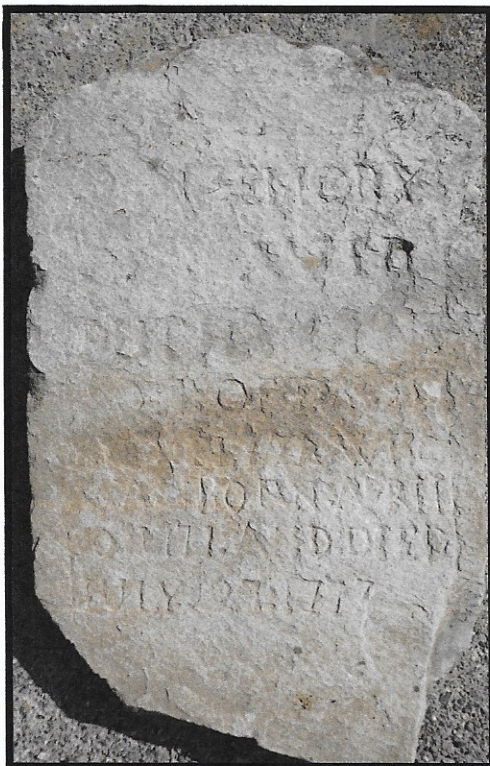
been 64. However, this record is referenced in the DAR Lineage Book, Vol. XLVIII, Pg. 76 and identifies John the elder as the veteran. No secondary record has been found to support that speculation.

Who is this?

Fieldstone Markers: Fieldstones were placed at several of the early burial sites in most colonial-era burial grounds, including Center Cemetery. Few were carved to shape and inscribed. When done, the inscription was usually shallow, resulting in it become virtually unreadable over time.

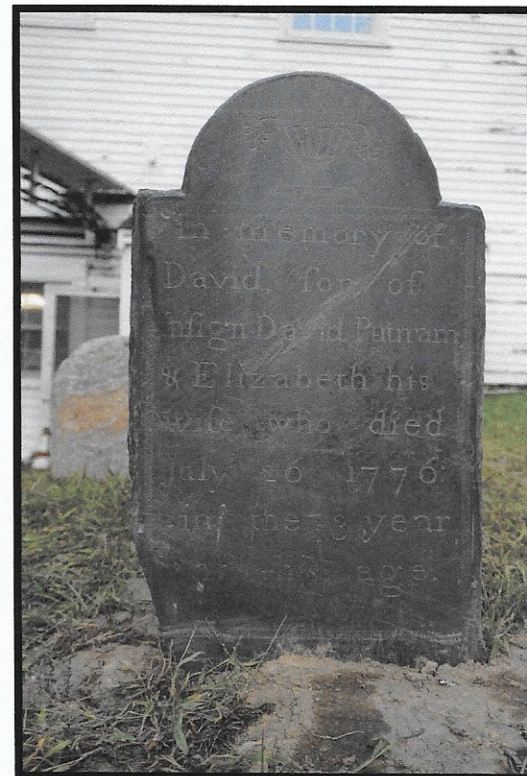
When Jim Renaud, Cemetery Commission, removed this gravestone to reset it, vital information was exposed. Date of death – July 27, 1773.

The death date and information coupled with the location of the grave and the compilations that Dodge and Batcheller have left us identified this to be:



"In Memory of David Putnam son of David & Elizabeth Born April 30, 1771 and Died July 27, 1773."

Equally sad, he is buried beside his brother, David, whose very visible slate gravestone reads: "In Memory of David son of Insign David Putnam & Elizabeth his wife who died July 26, 1776 in the 3 year of his age"



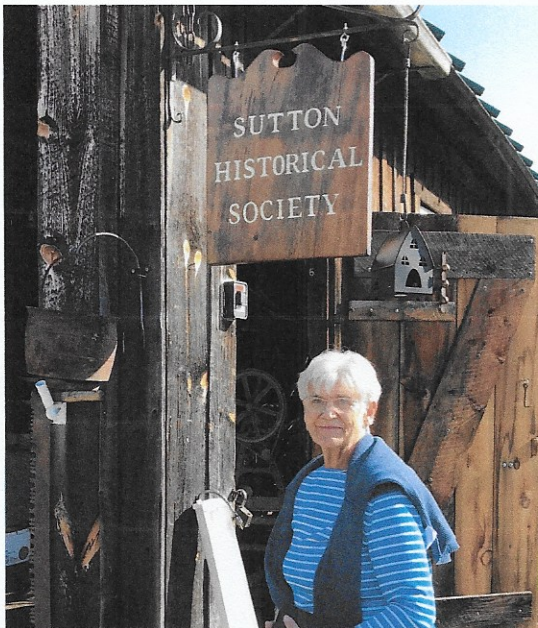
Enthusiasm for the project continues with a second Eagle Scout candidate considering undertaking cleaning the King Family Plot. Volunteers are always needed. Once trained, volunteers are encouraged to show up and clean stones on their own time schedule. Information about correct cleaning procedures and products can be found on our website, www.suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org under the Cemetery Project Tab. The website is a great first stop to learn about the correct way to

preserve these important markers.

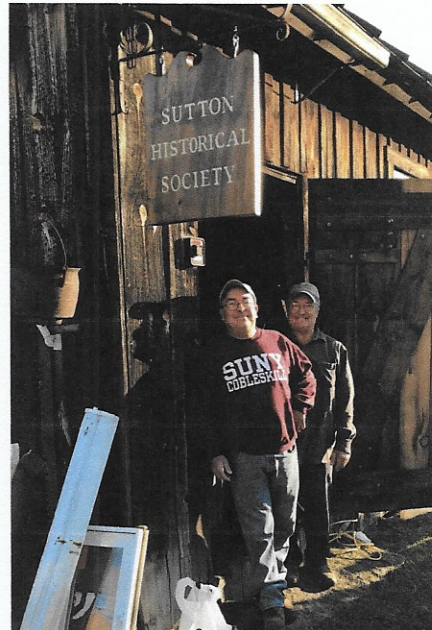
The Society wishes to acknowledge our sincere appreciation as we have received generous donations from the Dudley-Gendron American Legion Post, Sutton Town Hall/Cemetery Commission Fund and several citizens for this project.

New Blacksmith Shop Sign

The Sutton Historical Society wishes to thank Robert Shaw, Martin Shaw and Linda Sinacola for generously working together to replace the sign at the Blacksmith Shop. A great effort and much appreciated!!!



Linda Sinacola



Martin Shaw and Robert Shaw

New Historical Society Vice President

The Historical Society is pleased to announce the recent election of Pam Rocheleau as the new Vice President. Pam is a long-time local resident and very eager to assume her responsibilities. Pam replaces Dave Pizzi who served in the VP capacity for 6 years and decided to step down. We appreciate all of Dave's support and service as VP and his continued commitment and participation in the society.

2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dates and Times may be Subject to Change

February 5	7:00 PM	General Meeting	First Congregational Church
March 5	7:00 PM	Special Presentation Ross Weaver "Sutton Cemeteries and Burial Records"	First Congregational Church
April 2	7:00 PM	Special Presentation Robert Thorson UCONN, Professor of Geology Author of seven books "History of New England Fieldstone Walls"	First Congregational Church
May 7	7:00 PM	Special Presentation Peter Michelson "A Return to Collins Farm in Sutton, Discover how the 500-acre tract was Illegally sold in 1731"	First Congregational Church
June 14	6:30 PM	Annual Cookout/Potluck Supper	Manchaug Baptist Church 439 Putnam Hill Rd
June 22	12:30 PM	Museum and Town Hall Cemetery Tour in conjunction with Strawberry Festival on Town Common 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	Rufus Putnam Museum
June 30	5:30 PM	Museum and Town Hall Cemetery Tour after the 4 th of July Parade	Rufus Putnam Museum
August 9	6:30 PM	Annual Potluck Supper	Eight Lots School House
September 10	7:00 PM	General Meeting	First Congregational Church
September 21	9:00 AM	Town-Wide Yard Sale	Blacksmith Shop
October 1	7:00 PM	Annual Meeting	First Congregational Church
November 5	7:00 PM	General Meeting	First Congregational Church
December 3	6:30 PM	Annual Christmas Potluck Supper and a review of 2019	First Congregational Church
December 7	TBA	Sutton Chain of Lights Tours	Eight Lots Schoolhouse Rufus Putnam Museum Blacksmith Shop
December 31	Midnight	Last Night Cannon Firing Celebration	Blacksmith Shop

All events open to both Society members and the general public. Visit us at www.suttonhistoricalsocietyinc.org or Facebook for updated meeting information. Upcoming meetings/events are listed in the Millbury-Sutton Chronicle, The Uxbridge Times, and Yankee Xpress.

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