

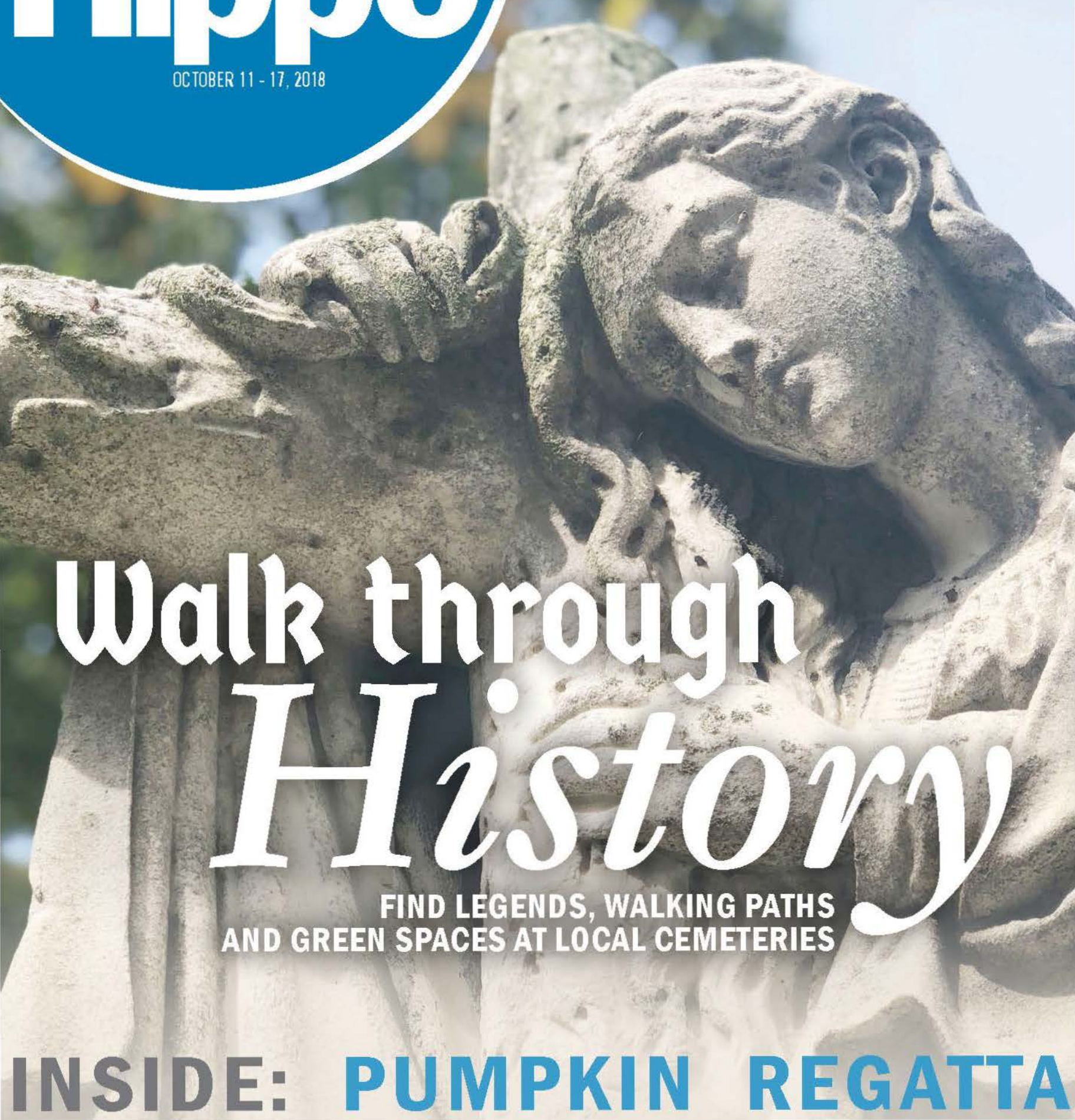


OCTOBER 11 - 17, 2018

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LOCAL NEWS, FOOD, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT **FREE**



Walk through *History*

FIND LEGENDS, WALKING PATHS
AND GREEN SPACES AT LOCAL CEMETERIES

INSIDE: PUMPKIN REGATTA

Walk through History

FIND LEGENDS, WALKING PATHS
AND GREEN SPACES AT LOCAL CEMETERIES

Valley Cemetery in Manchester. Photo by Scott Murphy.

There are all kinds of fascinating stories buried in local cemeteries. Take a walk through history and see the graves of some of New Hampshire's most prominent residents, like President Franklin Pierce. Take a tour of the state's oldest colonial burial ground, spend time in an urban

cemetery that's being transformed into an inviting public green space, or visit the Humane Society for Greater Nashua's cemetery and pay homage to notable pets, including a German Shepherd from the WWII canine corps. Find out why these eight cemeteries are worth a visit.

Valley Cemetery

Bounded by Auburn, Pine, Valley and Willow streets in Manchester

Note: This is a follow-up to an article on Valley Cemetery in the July 12 issue of the Hippo. Visit hippypress.com and click on past issues; the story is on page 6.

Though there's still work to be done, a group of local volunteers is making progress with efforts to restore Valley Cemetery in Manchester. The 20-acre downtown area is moving closer to being the inviting public space it once was decades ago.

"Everything's a phase, and the first phase has been cleaning [the cemetery] up," said Mike Drelick, a regular volunteer at the cemetery. "Then we can focus on fundraising [for larger projects]."

Tanya Frazier, a solutions engineer at Benefit Strategies in Manchester, has been spearheading the restoration efforts at the cemetery. While she said the group's month-to-month improvements may be gradual, the cemetery looks greatly improved from when she first adopted it last summer.

Frazier and a core group of volunteers typically work at the cemetery every other Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. However, she admitted that this summer's weather has presented some challenges.

"We were hit with quite a few rainy Saturdays in a row," said Frazier. "We lost a little bit of traction, but we've still made a lot of great progress."

That primarily includes cutting back overgrown trees and bushes that had consumed several parts of the cemetery. Drelick



Valley Cemetery. Photo by Scott Murphy.

said their efforts have revealed several mausoleums and groups of gravestones that were either obscured or hidden by unkempt brush.

Additionally, these efforts have helped achieve Frazier's primary goal of making Valley Cemetery a more open, attractive place for the public. She said the tree and foliage coverage was often used by people as a place to hide for shelter, drug use and lewd activities.

Over the last year, the group has revealed more of these hiding spots as they cut more overgrowth, and Frazier said they've started to find fewer heroin needles and makeshift shelters and tarps peeking through the trees. As a result, she's also started to see more members of the public walking through the cemetery.

In the colder months, Frazier said, the

group's attention will turn to the onsite Gothic chapel. Built in 1932, the chapel was damaged by a fire and has been unused for decades. Frazier hasn't been able to find much history or photos of the chapel in its heyday, but she said the potential is there. Eventually, she envisions transforming the space into a volunteer hub and visitors center.

"The ceiling is stunning. It's made with beautiful, dark wood, and there's so much other beautiful work in there," said Frazier. "We want to take down some of the plywood and replace [the windows] with Plexiglas so there's some light coming [in]."

Future projects include marking the roughly one mile of paved walkways in the top part of the cemetery, as well as cleaning up another path in the lower basin. Eventually, Frazier would also like to fix and add to the cemetery's street lights. These major projects aside, both Frazier and Drelick said there is still clean-up work to be done, and they welcome as many volunteer hours as people are willing to commit.

"We don't expect people to spend three hours here like I do," said Drelick. "If you want to help, just come through and pick up a bag of trash."

Search for "Save Valley Cemetery, Manchester New Hampshire" on Facebook.

—Scott Murphy

Forest Hill Cemetery

Cemetery Road (behind First Parish Congregational Church, 47 E. Derry Road, Derry)

This 35-acre cemetery is part of the East Derry Historic District, an area of Derry that

includes several other buildings and houses that were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. One of the cemetery's biggest claims to fame is that it's the site of the family burial plot of Alan Shepard Jr., a Derry native who became the first American to ever fly in space, in 1961. Shepard himself is not buried here — his ashes were scattered at three separate locations, including at the site of his childhood home — but a memorial marker, or cenotaph, recognizing his notoriety can be found within his family's burial plot.

It's just one unique story that cements Forest Hill Cemetery in Derry's history, long before it was even incorporated as a U.S. town. In fact, the town was known as "Nutfield" dating back to the year 1719, when Irish settlers first came to the land.

"The cemetery is just oozing with history," said T.J. Cullinane, president of the Friends of the Forest Hill Cemetery, who regularly gives historic walking tours of some of the most notable gravesites.

The front gates bearing the cemetery's name were donated to the town by General George Thom, a Pinkerton Academy graduate and Civil War veteran, who is buried there along with his entire immediate family. Not far from the cemetery entrance is a collection of tombstones separated by a gate with a "First Settler" sign. This is where the Rev. James MacGregor is buried, who Cullinane said is credited with being the settlement's original founder, along with his family and other members of his group that first arrived there.

According to Cullinane, the oldest known



First Settler graves in Forest Hill Cemetery, Derry. Photo by Matt Ingersoll.

stone that can still be found at the cemetery is that of Peter Cochran, who died Christmas Day in 1722, the same year the cemetery was founded.

“At the age of 92, he decided to emigrate here from Northern Ireland,” he said. “We don’t know for sure the reason why he would decide to go overseas at the age of 92, but Northern Ireland at that time was beset by a number of wars and sieges.”

Cullinane often tells a couple of “ghost stories” to visitors during his tours, one of them involving the late Dorothy Goldman, founder of the Friends of the Forest Hill Cemetery.

“Dorothy said she was walking in the cemetery one day when she saw an orb, which is a ghostly apparition but not a full-body manifestation,” he said. “She saw the orb hover for a moment and disappear, so she approached it and saw that an old gravestone had tumbled over ... and as she looked closer, she saw that it had obscured two flat veterans’ stones.”

Those stones, it turned out, belonged to Sgt. William McKinney and his brother Pvt. Andrew McKinney, who both served in the Union Army during the Civil War. William died in 1864 and Andrew just a year later, in 1865.

“Their names were covered up by a fallen stone, so nobody could see and honor them,” Cullinane said. “So Dorothy worked with the town to get them back up and bring them in full view, and one wonders if she would have known to take that action had that orb not appeared where it did.”

— Matt Ingersoll

Old North Cemetery

North State Street, Concord

On the northern end of New Hampshire’s Capital City, less than a mile to the west of Kimball Jenkins Estate, lies Old North Cemetery, an L-shaped cemetery a little under six acres in size. It’s the city’s oldest cemetery – dating back to 1730 – and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008.



Old North Cemetery in Concord. Photo by Matt Ingersoll.

In a section surrounded by an iron fence in the southeastern corner of the cemetery is an area known as the Minot Enclosure. It is here where one of its most famous burial sites can be found: that of Franklin Pierce, the 14th president of the United States and to date the only president to hail from the Granite State.

Julie Cole of the Pierce Brigade, a volunteer organization that maintains and conducts tours of The Pierce Manse — Pierce’s home in Concord — said the president, his wife and two of his three sons are all buried in Old North Cemetery. Pierce had purchased a burial plot for the cemetery while he was still in office in 1855.

“His original stone marker ... was in such bad repair that it was used as the base of the new one,” Cole said. “So part of it is still there but in a different form.”

Today, a tall monument with Pierce’s name engraved in the middle, his wife’s name Jane on the left, and sons Frank and Benjamin on the right, can be found in the cemetery. Both sons had died at very young ages years before. Cole said they were originally buried in a separate part of the cemetery but were moved to the Minot Enclosure with their father following that section’s completion.

Other notable burial sites in the cemetery include those of the Walkers, one of the very first families who settled in the area of what is now Concord (first called the township of Pennycook, then later Rumford for a time before being changed to its present name) in the 1700s. Rev. Timothy Walker, known for being the city’s first minister and a leader of settlers who traveled north from the Woburn, Mass., area, is buried in Old North Cemetery along with several of his family members. The stone for his daughter Sarah, who died in 1736 at the age of 4, is the oldest known stone in the cemetery, according to Cemetery Administrator Jill McDaniel of the City of Concord.

— Matt Ingersoll

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Temple Beth Abraham Cemetery

428 W. Hollis St., Nashua
 There are 20 Jewish cemeteries in New Hampshire, a majority of which are congregated in the southern part of the state. One of the oldest is Temple Beth Abraham Cemetery in Nashua, which was founded in 1895. The cemetery is small, with only around 500 gravestones.

Former Nashua resident Rabbi Joshua Segal has written a book on all 20 of the Granite State's Jewish cemeteries and given tours on several of them. He said among the biggest factors of Jewish cemeteries that attract interest among taphophiles — people who have an interest in cemeteries — are the unique iconography and the mystery of the Hebrew language found on many of the gravestones.

"You'll see the most common icon in Jewish cemeteries, from about 1925 on, is the Jewish star. Prior to that, [the star] was about the only iconography that existed, because monuments were hand-carved and expensive," Segal said. "Starting in about 1951, or around post World War II, as sandblasting technology took over, there are now more than 60 different religious identity icons that you'll find."

You'll still see the Jewish star adorned across many gravestones at Jewish cemeteries, along with others like a pair of hands with outspread fingers on men's stones symbolizing a priestly blessing, or someone believed to have been a descendant of Moses's brother Aaron; a candelabra on women's stones symbolizing a woman's piety; and a pair of clasping hands on double gravestones symbolizing the union of a husband and wife.

Segal said another motif that was much more common in the earlier half of the 20th century involved a symbol or even a gravestone constructed to look like half a tree cut off, to symbolize someone dying young. Others, like lamps, which are depicted as a symbol for eternity, have been used in Jewish cemeteries for decades.

Indicators of some of the oldest stones found in Temple Beth Abraham Cemetery are stones made of marble, which bear a white color and much rougher texture than the granite stones, Segal said, or those written only in Hebrew.

Despite its small size and history that lasts more than 100 years, a large section along the back fence is still available for future burials.

"I'd say there is probably enough space ... to last another 75 years or so," Segal said.

— Matt Ingersoll



One of the oldest gravestones at Temple Beth Abraham Cemetery in Nashua. Photo by Matt Ingersoll.



Chester Village Cemetery. Photo by Scott Murphy.

Chester Village Cemetery

19 Raymond Road, Chester
 Many confident artists sign their work, and Abel and Stephen Webster of Hollis were no exception. The brothers were some of the earliest and most sought after headstone carvers in the region in colonial New Hampshire. Visitors of Chester Village Cemetery can easily spot their work among the aisles of grave markers, as each brother's signature mark will be staring right back at them.

Aaron Mansur, chair of the Chester Village Cemetery Trustees, said that Abel and Steven capped off their carvings with happy and sad faces, respectively.

"It was just a fun little thing they did to add their signature," said Mansur.

While there are numerous faces smiling and scowling around the cemetery, they're only found on a specific type of stone. The brothers became popular carvers around town in the mid-1750s, and at the time, Mansur said, slate gravestones were most common, due to its affordability and being relatively lightweight.

"Granite [headstones] didn't start to come around until the mid-1800s," said Mansur. "It was pretty expensive and hard to transport."

The Webster brothers were among the first carvers to work at the Chester Village Cemetery after it was purchased in 1751. The Chester Historical Society claims the graveyard is one of the oldest in the state, and it serves as the final home for noteworthy Granite Staters like William Richardson, chief justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court, and Governors John and Samuel Bell (also brothers).

Chester Village Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, though it's not the only remnant of colonial New Hampshire in town. Across the street is the Chester Congregational Church (4 Chester St.), established in 1730 and added to the National Register in 1986. The Chester Historical Society said the church is significant for being a "well-designed and well-preserved" example of the Greek Revival style.

The Chester Historical Society is housed in Stevens Memorial Hall (One Chester St.) farther up the street. The organization reports that the hall was built in 1910 and originally housed the town selectmen's office, library and a meeting space. Not to be outdone, the hall was also added to the National Register in 2004. The society's office and exhibits are open at the hall on the second Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to noon.

The Village Cemetery Trustees also lists 10 other cemeteries and family lots around town on its webpage. Visit chesternh.org/village-cemetery-trustees. — Scott Murphy

New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery

110 Daniel Webster Hwy., Boscawen
 Approaching its 21st birthday in November, the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen is an honorary resting place for Granite State service members and their dependents. Along with grave sites, the cemetery's 14 cleared acres include several monuments and features commemorating the state's military history.

Cemetery director Michael Home said veterans and veteran service organizations converged in the 1990s to find "a place where veterans of all branches of services and conflicts could lay together and be honored and recognized for their sacrifices." At the time, Home said the closest veteran-specific burial option was over 100 miles south of the border at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, Mass., on Cape Cod.

On July 1, 1997, the New Hampshire legislature officially established the cemetery on 104 acres of state-owned forest in Boscawen, about 15 minutes north of Concord. A few months later, the cemetery buried its first veteran: chief warrant officer Ernest Holm, who served in the Navy during World War I and World War II.

According to Home, eligible veterans can be buried at the cemetery at no cost. Veterans' dependants, including spouses and children, can also be interred for \$350.



New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery. Courtesy photo.



Point of Graves in Portsmouth. Courtesy of Roxie Zwicker.

As of late September, he said there are 10,949 individuals buried at the cemetery. Between June 1, 2017, and July 30, 2018, the cemetery had 894 burials, part of a steady increase over the years, according to Horne.

Back in July, Sens. Maggie Hassan and Jeanne Shaheen announced the cemetery would receive \$2.5 million to expand and develop an additional 4.6 acres and conduct needed repairs. Additionally, the cemetery will be able to add to the burial options it offers veterans, including cement crypts.

The cemetery offers other ways for visitors to pay their respects. On site are a circle of flags, a memorial walkway and a "20 Points of New Hampshire Military Service" area with monuments bearing information of the history of the armed forces in the Granite State. The cemetery hosts annual ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. This year's Veterans Day ceremony will be held on Sunday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. Horne said a portion of the ceremony will commemorate the centennial anniversary of the end of World War I (Nov. 11, 1918).

The new Veteran Heritage Learning Center will also open its doors this Veterans Day. The center will feature audio and video displays, interactive kiosks and artifacts from New Hampshire veterans who served in different conflicts. Horne said the cemetery is "a little over halfway" to meeting its \$700,000 capital campaign goal and will continue adding to the center's educational offerings.

"Even though we're 21 years old, there's still a good percentage of the [state's] population that doesn't know that we have a New Hampshire veterans cemetery," said Horne. "The learning center [will have] a lot of historic and valuable information that needs to be communicated and passed on to future generations."

— Scott Murphy

Point of Graves

1-199 Mechanic St., Portsmouth

The graves of some of New Hampshire's earliest settlers can be found at Point of Graves in Portsmouth, located next to Prescott Park, across the street from the Strawberry Banke Museum and overlooking the Piscataqua River.

According to the walking tour brochure published by The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Cemetery Committee, Point of Graves, the state's oldest colonial burial ground, was formally established in 1671 by Captain John Pickering, who donated the land for burials under the condition that he be able to let his cattle graze there. For that reason, many of the earliest gravestones have been destroyed; the oldest gravestone is marked "1682."

Point of Graves spans about half an acre. It was filled to capacity and had its last burial in the 1880s. There are currently around 125 gravestones still standing.

Roxie Zwicker, owner of the touring event company New England Curiosities, which offers tours of Point of Graves, said one of the first things she covers on the tour is the carvings on the gravestones. Up until the early 1800s, many of the hand-carved gravestones were shipped up from Boston. They feature images of skulls and crossbones, winged skulls, empty hourglasses and eerie-looking cherubs.

"There are a lot of great epitaphs and superstitions in the carvings on the gravestones," Zwicker said. "The gravestones themselves are one of the first forms of American folk art. They are museum-worthy."

A little known fact about Point of Graves, Zwicker said, is that all of the people buried there were buried facing the east.

"So at the day of the Last Judgment, when the Holy Creator appeared at dawn in the east, everyone would just rise facing that direction," she said.

The walking tour brochure highlights some notable people buried in Point of

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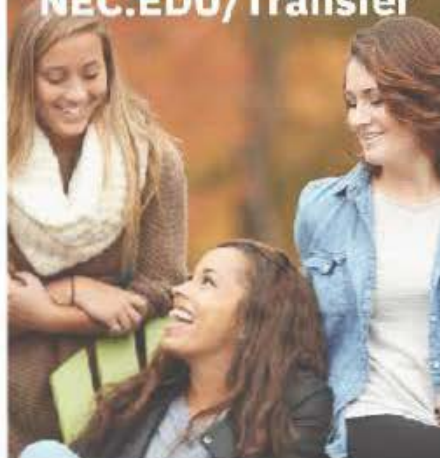
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Proctor Cemetery, a pet cemetery in Nashua. Courtesy photo.

◀17

Graves, including John Jackson (d. 1691), a mariner and owner of land on Little Harbor and Jackson Island in the Piscataqua River, James Lovett (d. 1718), a bookkeeper for provincial court president John Cutts, William Button (d. 1693), one of the wealthiest men in New Hampshire at the time, and Jane Meserve (d. 1747), wife of Colonel Nathaniel Meserve, a prominent shipbuilder and commander of a New Hampshire regiment during the French and Indian War.

"You see all these historical homes in Portsmouth, these are the people who built and lived in them. A lot of street names in Portsmouth are also named after the families buried there," Zwicker said. "For anyone looking to connect with the history of the area, it's worth spending an hour or two to look around and learn about the people who built our community."

Point of Graves is "not without its ghost stories," Zwicker said. One of the gravesites with the most reported supernatural activity is that of Elizabeth Peirce, a mother of nine children who died in 1717 at age 42 from tuberculosis.

"People say they've heard footsteps behind them, felt like they were being touched, sensed another presence or felt like they were being followed around, and have taken strange photographs," she said. "When it comes to the ghost stories, we leave it up to the people to decide whether they are true or imagined." — *Angie Sykeny*

Proctor Cemetery

Humane Society for Greater Nashua, 24 Ferry Road, Nashua

Around 3,000 pets have found their final resting place at Proctor Cemetery, a pet cemetery run by the Humane Society for Greater Nashua. The oldest pet cemetery in the state, the 2-acre plot is located on the Humane Society grounds in front of the main facility and is home to all kinds of pets.

"We have cats and dogs, a horse that was 44 years old, a goat who was a bit of a Facebook star around here, and we even have

some lizards and toads," Heather Coleman, cemetery coordinator, said.

According to Douglas Barry, president and CEO of the Humane Society, the property for the cemetery was donated in 1930 by Nashua businessman Roscoe Proctor after a huge fire on Allds Street in Nashua consumed hundreds of homes and claimed the lives of many pets. The first pet to be buried there was a cat named Creampot, who was killed in the fire.

Proctor Cemetery also holds several notable pets, Barry said, including the German Shepherd Patrick James, first lieutenant in the canine corps during WWII and a member of the American Legion; and the Siberian Husky Paugus, who went on three expeditions to the South Pole and whose grandfather was Chinook, the famous dog who accompanied Admiral Richard Byrd on his first expedition to the South Pole in the late 1920s.

There are all kinds of headstones in the cemetery, including flat and standing headstones and headstones with decorative statues. The grounds are regularly maintained with green grass, flowers, trees and benches, and many people visit their pets on a regular basis and put flowers on their graves, Coleman said.

"It's beautiful and very serene. It's a nice place to come and sit or to walk through. It's nice to read all of the engravings and see how passionate people are about their pets," she said.

Proctor Cemetery is currently open for new burials — the most recent burial was a month ago — and Barry said there is still space for 300 to 500 more plots.

"We're always looking at other options, too, because we know that one day, we will run out of space," he said, "but we have a total of six acres of property, so we have room to expand the cemetery in the future if we need to."

Coleman said the demand for pet burials has been steady, and that many people like to have something tangible to remember their pet by.

"That's why a lot of people bury their pets in their backyards. They want to keep them close," she said. "But if they want to be sure [the gravesite] will have perpetual care, they take advantage of our services."

To have a pet buried in the cemetery, the pet owner must decide whether they want a body burial or a cremation. If they want a body burial, they need to provide their own casket. The burial is usually done within a week of the pet's death. The pet owner can also request to have a small memorial service on the day of the burial, during which Coleman will read the pet loss poem "Pawprints Left By You."

"I think that poem really encompasses what a pet means to a person," Coleman said. "For many people, their pet is not just an animal; it's a family member."

— *Angie Sykeny*