

Cemetery Restoration Project

Burge - Velie Cemetery

April, 2013

The Burge-Velie Cemetery is listed in the Schuyler County GenWeb page but without a location. This presented a bit of a challenge to Dave Beckhorn who is the Chairman of the BRHG Abandoned Cemetery Committee. Having been successful in locating the cemetery, Dave brought a group of volunteers into the woods off Picnic Area Road. The Photo #1 below, shows the group taking stock of the site to come up with a plan for clearing, cleaning and restoring.



PHOTO #1 - Names L to R: John "Doc" Dombroski, Ann Buddle, Dave Beckhorn, Dave Lacy, Colin Mc Naul, Peter Rice (Not pictured- Mary Burton). Dave Lacy, from the Green Mountains National Forest, has been our mentor and technical expert for years. Mary Burton from the Finger Lakes National Forest assisted.



PHOTO #2 - shows stones covered with moss being cleaned with a biocide especially formulated for the purpose so the stone can be read to the extent that it is legible and then documented.

Documentation from the Stones in the Burge - Velie Cemetery

April 26, 2013

Abial Gardner, died Jun.22, 1837, ag'd 77 y'rs. 11 mo's. & 6d's.

Polly, wife of Abial Gardner, died May 27. 1819, ag'd 41 y'rs, & 22 days.

In memory of **Zillah wife of Jared Post**, who died March 4, 1850, aged 70 yrs, & 8 mo.

If we consult this frame of clay,
We sure shall have no cause to mourn
Tis' God who gives & takes away,
If we are his & not our own.

In memory of **Jeremiah, son of Nicholas & Elizabeth Egbert** who died Feb 26, 1806, ag'd 19 y 6 m & 26 days
Frinds nor phy(sicians cou)ld not save My dying body from the grave. *Portion in parenthesis was not legible. Stone is damaged.*

Tyler, Polly, daughter of David & Sally Tyler died April 14, 1832 Ag'd 40 Yrs 8M & 6D *Stone difficult to read.*

Charles, son of Edward & Janil? Jewel died May 12, 1818 Ag'd 10m 7d *Small stone, difficult to read.*

Footstone: S-A J

An inspection of the Schuyler County GenWeb site may reveal some variation between actual observations recorded above and those listed on the GenWeb site.

Interestingly, in addition to the formal stones with carvings, one of which is shown below as Photo #3, there are at least a dozen field stones set on edge as head stones with accompanying foot stones six to eight feet away. Both are in straight lines across the cemetery, but with no inscriptions. Photo #4 shows one line of the head stones marked with red flags. Who are these souls? We hope the families of these folks know where they are buried. Did they predate the engraved stones or come after them and why only field stones for markers? Many questions that may never be answered, but surely cross your mind when working in the cemetery. From information obtained from the stones that could be read, we learned that the birth years ranged from 1759 to 1791 with the exception of one boy born in 1817 who died the following year.



PHOTO #3



PHOTO #4

On the evening following work on this cemetery, Peter Rice did some research and reported his findings and some questions in the e-mail message below.

Looking at the 1874 map of Hector, I found a J W Welie listed as living in house right by the cemetery, probably house just down road to the immediate west of where we were. So I pulled up FamilySearch.org and looked for that name. Nothing really, so I substituted Velie for Welie and there he was in the 1880 census.

Now John W. is 52, wife Lydia is 40, and their children as follows: Charles 14, Birge 12, Marion 9, George 6, and Ednia(sic) 1.

So I'm guessing "Burge-Velie" cemetery takes its name from Birge Velie. (That is if the listing for son Birge is a correct spelling.) Perhaps it got mixed up over the years and went from "the cemetery up at Birge Velies place" to Burge-Velie Cemetery. Just speculation, but a good possibility.

I will continue to search now for young master Birge. All for now.

Regards,

Peter

Review of the census data by others, for a number of decades finds Birge's name spelled either Birge or Burge. The 1940 Federal Census has him at age 72, living on the west side of Route 414 very near to the Hamlet of Hector.

In a discussion with the owner of the property where the cemetery is located, we learned that there is a foundation of an old house near the road and very near the cemetery which may have been John W. Velie's home.

Charlotte Bond also provided some information from old newspapers. According to an account in the Elmira Telegram, May 3, 1903, "The home of John W. Velie, father of Attorney George M. Velie of this village (Watkins Glen), located at Logan, about eight miles from here, was entirely destroyed by fire Thursday morning. The loss was about \$2,500, with only \$800 insurance."

The 1870 Agricultural Census lists John W. Velie as owning 48 ac. tilled- 4 acs. woodland & forest- 3 horses- farm, equipment & livestock valued \$3750.00.

The work on the Burge-Velie Cemetery is a great demonstration of teamwork and volunteerism. Without the detective work of Dave Beckhorn we may have never found this cemetery which is well hidden in the woods.

Submitted by Allan Buddle