

Amity Reformed Church Vischer Ferry Cemetery

Cemetery Tour

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Amity Reformed Church History

Amity Church grew out of the Niskayuna Reformed Church Congregation on the south side of the Mohawk River. In 1802 they started Amity on the north side of the river. Thomas Romeyn was first regular minister. He served Amity from 1806-1827

Christopher Miller (Revolutionary Soldier and Church Elder) and his wife Eve donated the initial property in 1802. In 1806, Evert VanVranken (Revolutionary Soldier and Church Deacon) donated additional land. This was followed by additional land donated by Nicholas VanVranken in 1819 and Floyd Patterson in 1955.

There have been three Church buildings. The first one 1802-1871 was taken down and the good wood was used to build the current Chapel Hall. The second building 1871-1886 burned down Christmas eve. The third and current church was built in 1888.

The Cemetery has five different sections: Section A and Transient section started in 1802. Section B in 1854, Section C in 1875, and Section D in 1955.

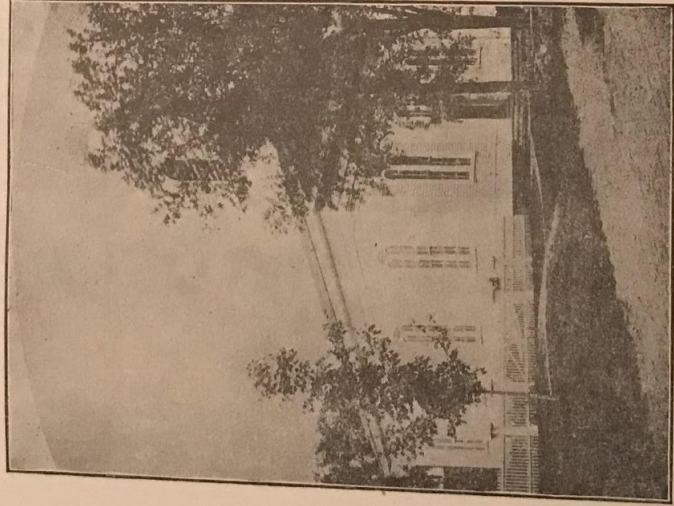
There are approximately 820 grave stones

AMITY REFORMED CHURCHES
Vischers Ferry
Saratoga County, N.Y.

The First Church Of Amity
1802....1871



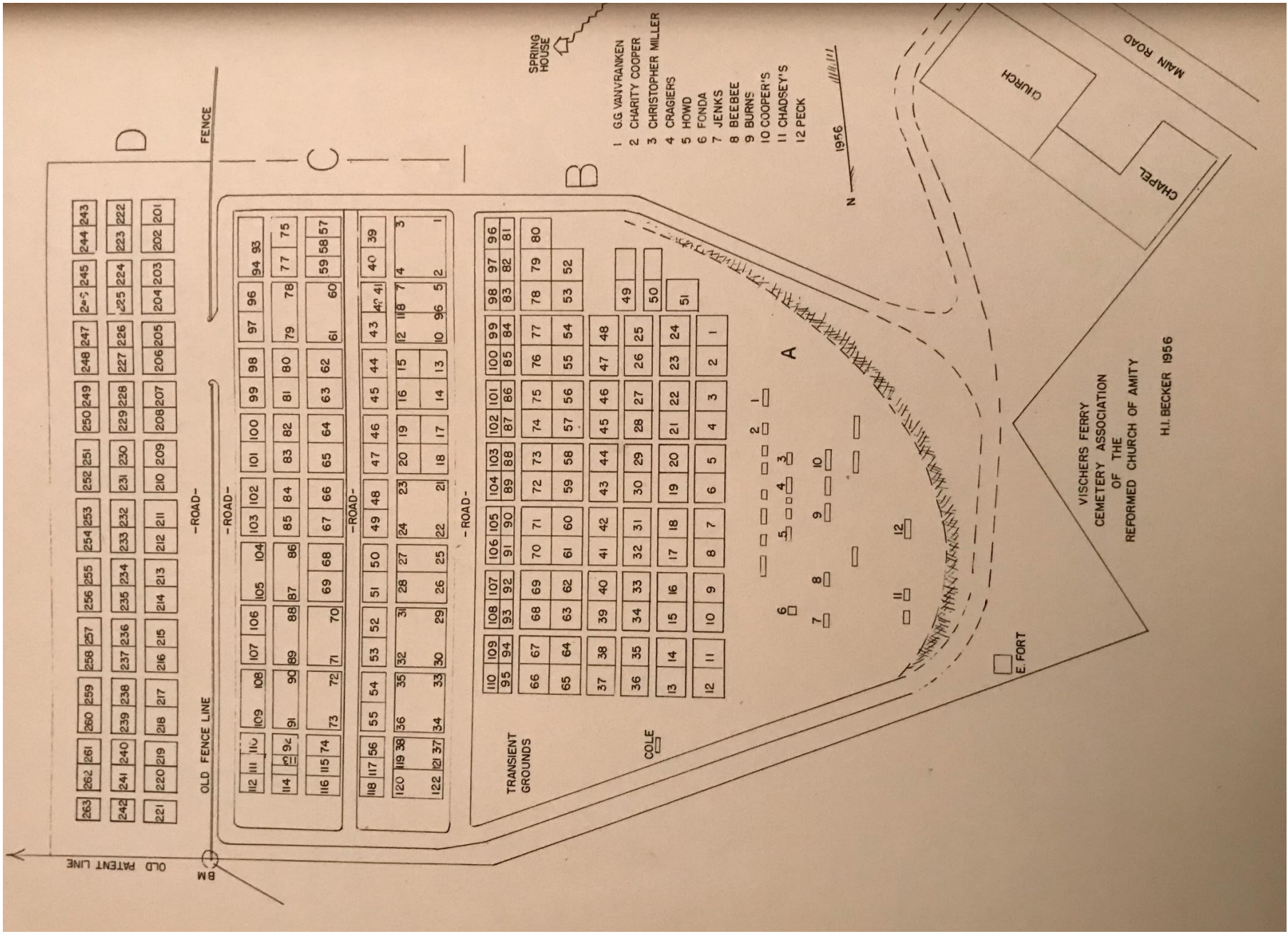
From A Sketch By
A.T. Van Vranken



Amity's Second Church 1871
Destroyed By Fire 1886



Amity's Present Church 1888
Seating Capacity 350



OLD PATENT LINE

BM

OLD FENCE LINE

ROAD

FENCE

D

C

B

A

SPRING HOUSE

- 1 G.G. VANVRANKEN
- 2 CHARITY COOPER
- 3 CHRISTOPHER MILLER
- 4 CRAGIERS
- 5 HOWD
- 6 FONDA
- 7 JENKS
- 8 BEEBEE
- 9 BURNS
- 10 COOPER'S
- 11 CHADSEY'S
- 12 PECK

1956

N

CHURCH

MAIN ROAD

CHAPEL

VISCHERS FERRY
 CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
 OF THE
 REFORMED CHURCH OF AMITY
 H.I. BECKER 1956

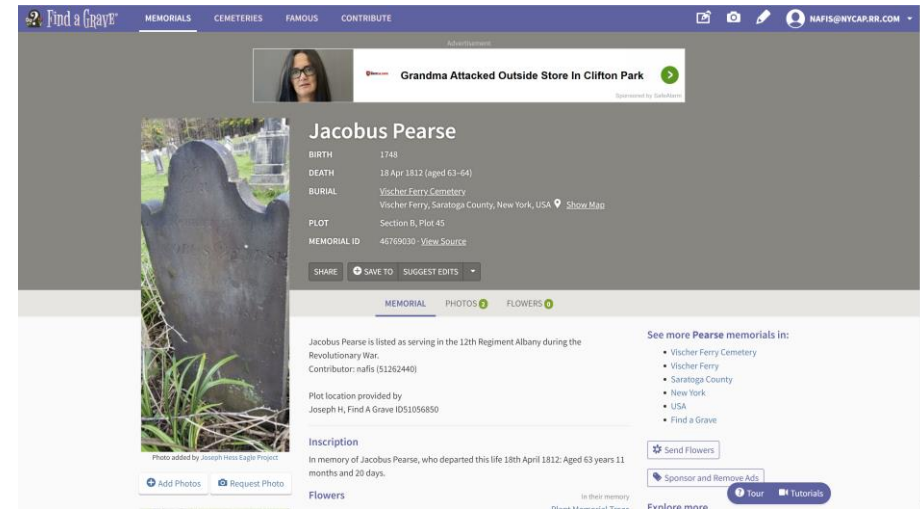
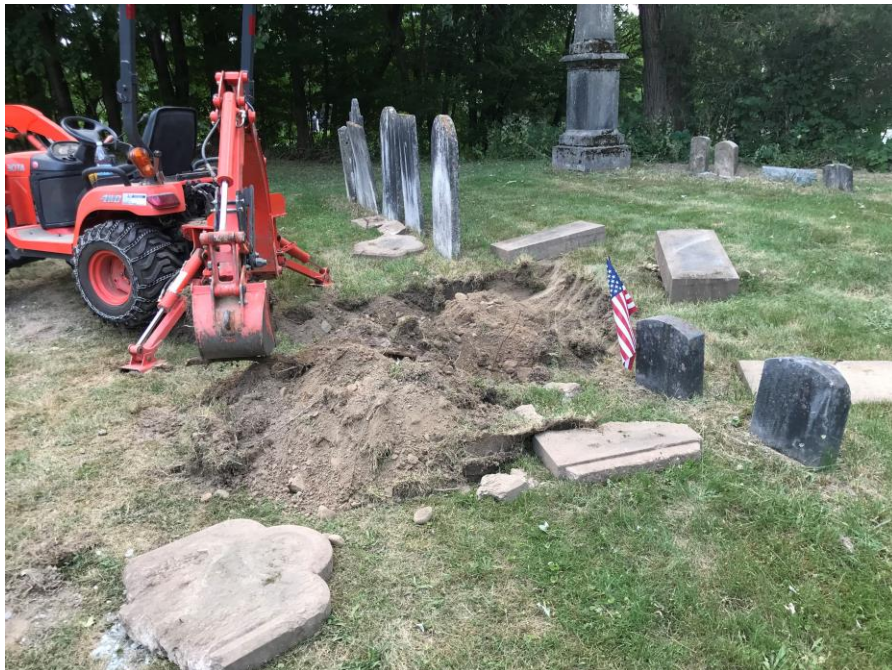
TRANSIENT GROUNDS

COLE

E. FORT

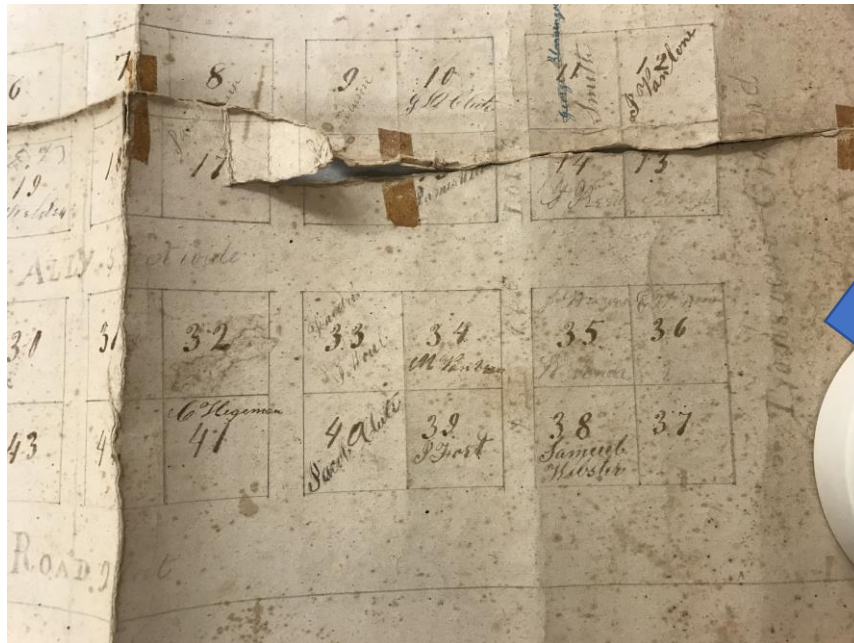
Cemetery Repairs and Improvements (2022)

- Reset over 85 Grave Stones
- Repaired 6 broken stones
- Uncovered 7 fallen Grave Stones
- Cast 6 replacement finials
- Scouts built staircase to old access road
- Grave Names, dates, and photos now available on-line for ancestry research

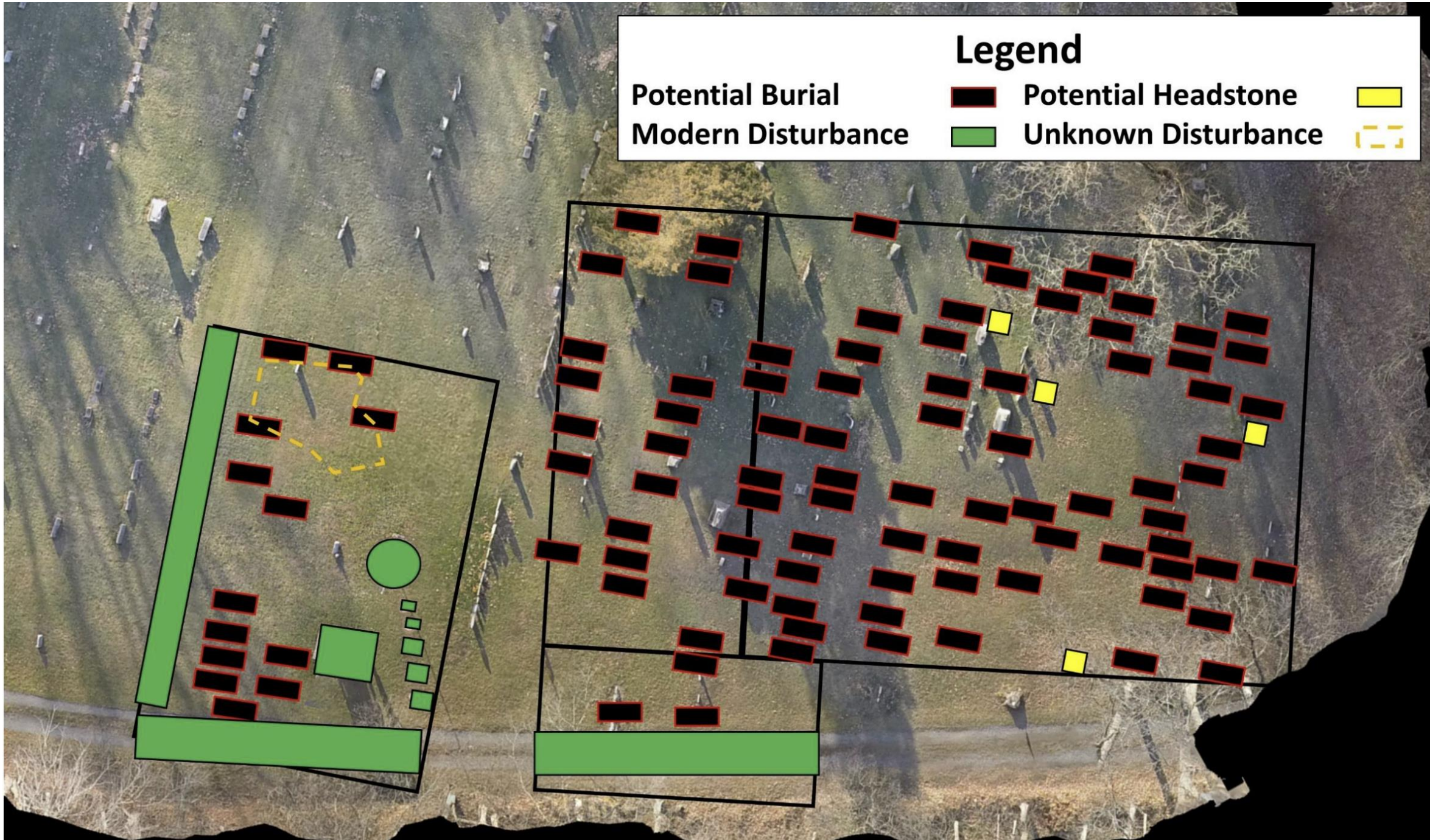


Unmarked Graves

In 2022 we had a company come in and use Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to look for fallen over gravestones and unmarked graves. We found an old cemetery map that showed the transient section was larger than originally thought. People that passed away on town roads or on the Erie Canal were buried in plots North of Section A and Section B. There are 95 potential graves located so far without headstones.



Transient Ground written faintly



Legend

Potential Burial

Potential Headstone



Modern Disturbance



Unknown Disturbance



Cemetery Facts

- Started in 1802
- 820+ Gravestones
- 95 potential unmarked graves
- Oldest Person buried was Jane Irwin Drommon 1732-1814, Section A Plot 22
- Earliest Person buried Elizabeth VanVranken, Oct, 22, 1789, Section B Plot 48 (likely moved from a family cemetery)
- Most Common Last Names: Vischer (68), VanVranken (68), Pearse (36), Fort (29), Clute (27), Irish (21), McIntosh (19), Hegerman (17), Fonda (14)
- Most Common First Names: John (42), Mary (26), James (25), Elizabeth (21), Margaret (21), William (21), Ann (18), Sarah (17), Catherine (17), Alida (17), Gertrude (15) Nicholas (13)

Veterans

- 5 Revolutionary War (mostly in Albany County Militia 12th Regiment)
- 2 War of 1812 (In Roger's Rock Regiment)
- 6 Civil War
- 1 Spanish American War
- 3 WWI
- 12 WWII
- 6 Korean Conflict
- 1 Vietnam

Slavery

- You think of slaves on Southern Cotton Plantations, but NYS had slaves too.
- Several of our Revolutionary War Soldiers were land owners, Elders & Deacons of the Church, AND Slave owners. Even the first Minister!
- Slaves, Free Blacks, and mixed race couples were members of the Church
- Children of a Black man who worked the Vischer Ferry are buried in the Cemetery. Their descendants were still living in Schenectady in the 1990's

Disease in the Early 1800's

- 1 in 5 children died before age 1
- In 1850, 13% of children who reached 1, died before age 5
- In 1830's Life Expectancy was 45 Years
- Tuberculosis, Typhoid Fever, Scarlet Fever, Cholera were common causes

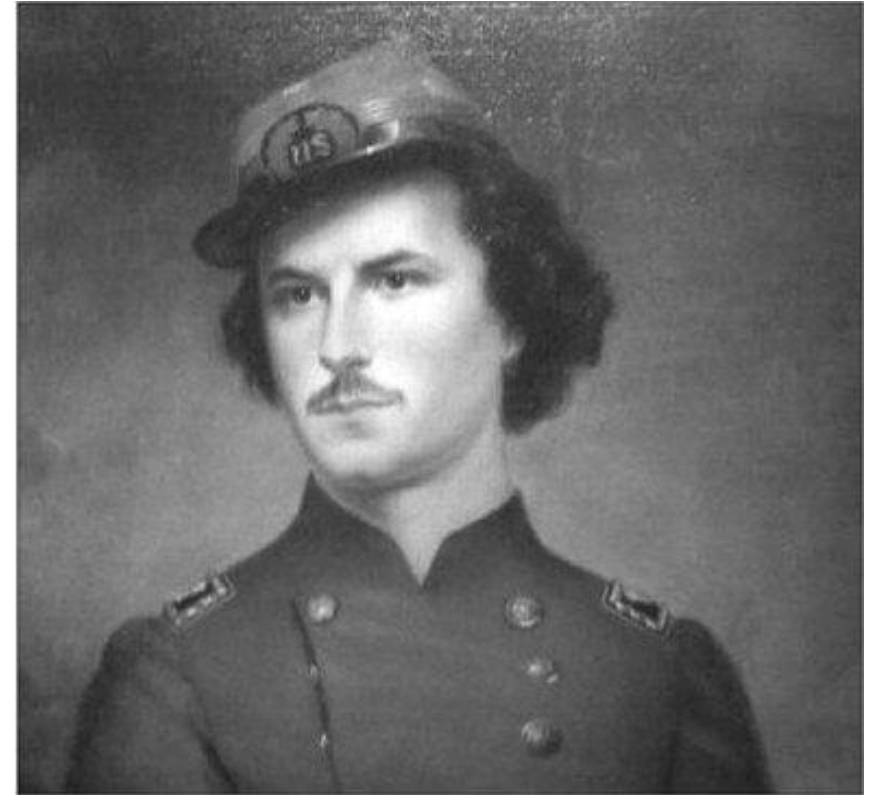
Markers

- Found Odd Fellows Society Marker under buried stone
- Found a partial GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) marker, under buried stone
- Invited metal detector club to look for missing piece. They found a DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) marker



Elmer Ellsworth Connection

- First Northern Officer Casualty of Civil War
- Friend of President Lincoln
- Buried in Mechanicville's Hudson View Cemetery
- GAR Post #619 named after him
- Replica Marker Model created



Murder in Vischer Ferry

Thirty-three year old Hattie Munckton of Clifton Park was an abused wife who had reached her limit.

During the stormy night of Aug. 13, 1905, she quietly entered her husband's bedroom and shot him through the chest with a shotgun as he lay sleeping. The gunshot woke James Munckton he thought he had been struck by lightning.

BALLSTON, N.Y., Dec. 17. -- Mrs. Hattie Munckton, who had been on trial for four days on the charge of murdering her husband, was acquitted at five o'clock this morning. The jury had been out since seven o'clock last night. The verdict of not guilty was followed immediately by the discharge of the prisoner.



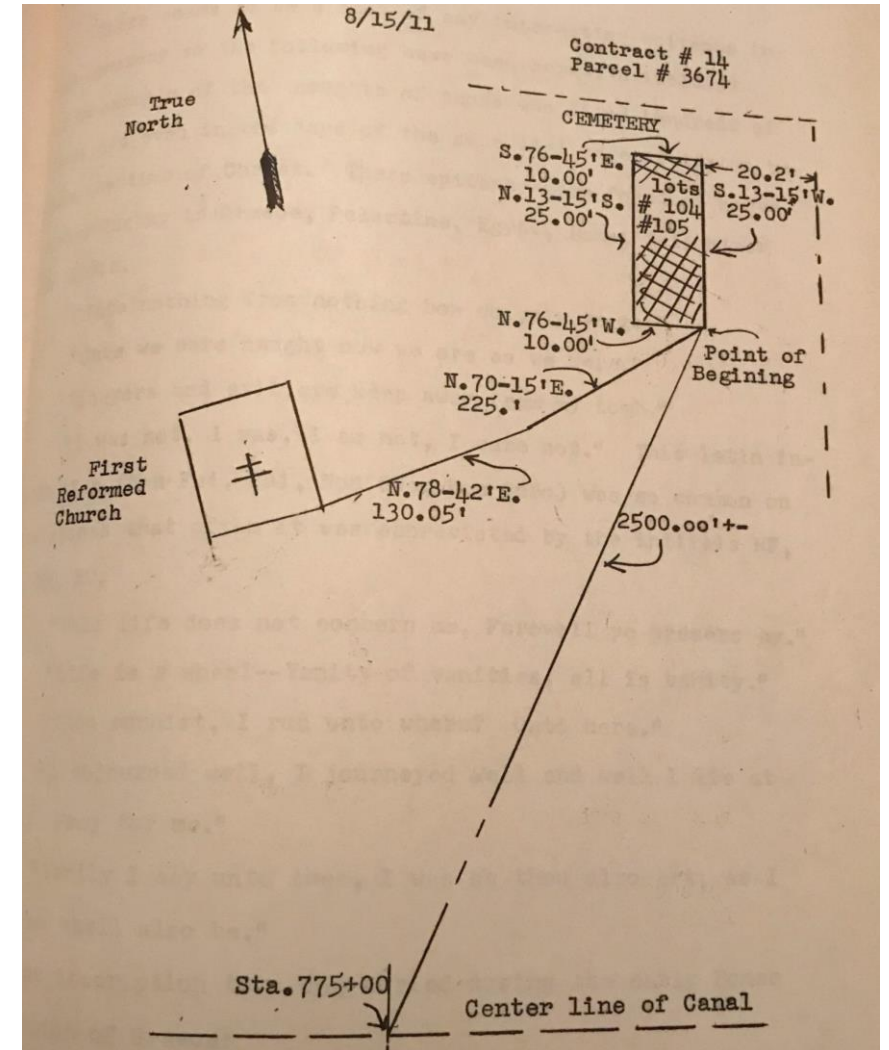
Saratoga County Panel So Reports In Clifton Park Murder Case—Prisoner Likely to Plead Guilty—Peter Cameron, Her Father, Indicted for Bigamy—Other Bills Reported.

The Saratoga county grand jury reported to Justice Spencer in supreme court at Ballston Tuesday. They presented 21 indictments as the result of a week's work.

Mrs. Hattie Munckton was indicted for murder in the second degree for shooting her husband, James Munckton, Jr., in Clifton Park on August 13th. Her attorney, Charles B. Andrus, asked for two days in which to enter a plea and this was granted. It is generally believed that Mrs. Munckton will plead guilty and receive a sentence, the grand jury having saved her from all possibility of going to the

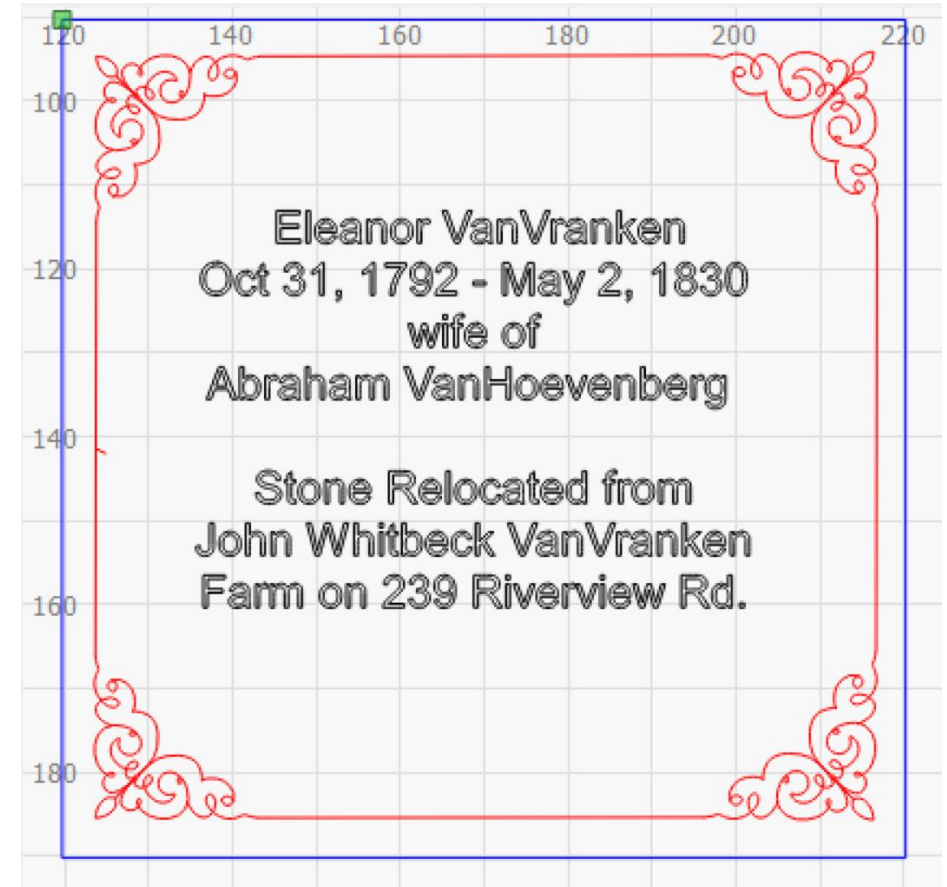
Barge Canal Construction

- Barge Canal Commission purchased plots C104-105 for remains
- When Barge Canal Commission purchased river land, family farm cemeteries were removed. Remains were placed in a common grave
- Five Skeletons exhumed at Fort's Ferry Sept. 1916
- Most stones were broken or damaged, Five good ones from the Fort family were relocated



VanVranken Farm Cemetery

- Graves stones were being used as a sidewalk
- In 2022 they were erected in the Vischer Ferry Cemetery Transient Section
- Stones were researched and Stainless Steel signs etched



Links to Additional Info

- Using Ground Penetrating RADAR (GPR) to uncover Unknown Graves and Gravestones in Historic Cemetery (<https://youtu.be/rysZbQe2XNk>)
- 3D Scanning, 3D Printing, and Casting Concrete Objects (https://youtu.be/JW_mWY_FUfl)
- Cleaning, Resetting, and Repairing Gravestones (<https://youtu.be/W0clFtMKNkg>)
- Findagrave (<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2225338/vischer-ferry-cemetery>)