

## LOWER MYSTIC CEMETERY

Summer Newsletter 2008

It's our annual custom to send out a newsletter each summer to up-date our friends about the affairs of Lower Mystic Cemetery, sometimes called Fishtown Cemetery. This burial ground on Route One in Mystic, established in 1849, is presently maintained by a Board of Directors organized in 1986, under the leadership of the late Warren B. Fish. At that time action was needed to rescue this historic landmark, which was badly overgrown with long grass and in need of mowing.

Through the years, with help from friends and the descendants of those buried there, plus generous grants from community organizations such as the Mystic Garden Club, the Charles B. Allyn Foundation and the Anderson-Pafford Foundation, we have managed to care for this Mystic landmark, keeping it mowed and making necessary repairs.

For your information, the present members of the Board of Directors, with expiration dates of their terms, are as follows:

Robert Banke! (2010)	Marilyn J. Comrie, President (2010)
William G. Fish, Jr., Vice president (2010)	Kathryn Gremley Hill (2011)
Carol W. Kimball, Secretary (2011)	Horace B. Lamb, Jr., Facilitator (2011)
Carolyn Norton (2009)	Emily Stoddard Perkins (2009)
Attorney Peter Viering (2009)	

### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This has been another productive year for Lower Mystic Cemetery Association. If you drive by the cemetery on Route 1, you will see that the association continues to work hard to keep the cemetery looking well kept.

We take pride in the cemetery and its prominent location in Mystic. Board members continue to seek out grants and donations to keep the cemetery grounds and stones well groomed and maintained.

In the past year, we used a \$3,000 grant from the Charles B. Allyn Foundation to fix a bulge in the wall along the western end of the cemetery. Water appears to have been the culprit in causing the bulge in the stones. Workers took down that portion of the wall, dug out behind it and backfilled it before putting the stones back in place. We thank board member Horace B. Lamb for his supervision in this project.

A previous project removed overhanging trees from the back of the cemetery property and another project has helped us put many gravestones upright again that had fallen over

as a result of age or other damage. However, it is an old cemetery and some gravestones are sinking and leaning just because of their age.

We thank the anonymous persons who put flags in memory of the veterans buried in Lower Mystic for Memorial Day, and also Len Sawyer for painting a new sign to be placed by the gate.

It now costs us \$300 per mowing for the cemetery. Contributions toward this expense would be welcome from all friends of the cemetery. The public likes to see the cemetery looking well kept, but I think few people realize it is a small group of history buffs and preservationists who continue to make that happen.

We thank the Mystic Garden Club for its continuing support of the cemetery and its \$1,000 donation this year. And to the Elm Grove Cemetery staff who has stepped in to help us when needed. It is greatly appreciated.

Thanks to all of you who made monetary donations to support the cemetery in the past. I hope you consider doing so again this year. Tending to this cemetery pays tribute to Mystic's past and to the many prominent citizens who are buried there.

Marilyn Comrie, President

## ABOUT OUR VETERANS

Lower Mystic Cemetery contains 140 numbered lots and approximately 450 gravestones. As we have noted before, this burial ground is the last resting place of a number of veterans who fought for our country in past wars. We have veterans from the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, World War I and World War II and the Korean War, a total of nearly 40

Among the veterans of the War of 1812 are Ezekiel Tufts and Samuel Welch, both members of Capt. Jonathan Wheeler's Company involved in building and manning of Fort Rachel to defend the village of Mystic against British raids along the Mystic River. Among our 24 Civil War veterans we have Capt. Jedediah Randall 2nd, of Company K, 26th Connecticut Regiment, who died June 9, 1863 at the age of 27 from wounds received on the Banks Expedition during the attack on Port Hudson on the Mississippi River. Lower Mystic is also the burial place of Amos Slack, Charles F. Reynolds and John Tufts who served in Capt. Randall's company. Amos Slack, who lived to the age of 95, died in 1921.

The cemetery is also honored to be the burial spot of a Medal of Honor recipient, Capt. John Bucklyn, who lies in a granite mausoleum near the northwest corner. Representing the 20th century, John F. Lucy and Stewart C Melvin served in the U.S. Navy during World War I while Leslie O. Allen was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War.

It's the custom on Memorial Day each year to place flags on the graves of all veterans who have served our country. These flags are provided by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW, while the actual placing is done by local boy scouts. This year there was a problem at Lower Mystic Cemetery. Something went wrong. When the scouts arrived to place the flags there was nothing to tell them which graves were veterans' graves. Their only choice was to place flags by the cemetery gates in recognition of the holiday.

We're working to remedy this situation. Your secretary has conferred with Bill Lewis of the VFW and at his suggestion I am in contact with the scoutmaster of a local Boy Scout troop, John Sidlinger, who will advise about the placing of flags. Using the careful survey record of gravestones in the cemetery made recently by former director Alan Bush and with a list of veterans from the Hale Collection of Cemetery Inscriptions, a WPA project done during the Great Depression, I am working to prepare a map of Lower Mystic Cemetery which will show where each veteran is buried.

An accurate map of the cemetery was included in the material which our director Robert Bankel inherited from his grandmother, Mrs. D. Palmer Brown, who served as secretary for the Association for many years. The map, presumably prepared when the cemetery was organized in the 19th century, accurately shows the cemetery layout and each lot is numbered. Alan's sketches and notations about the gravestones provide other needed information. Put it all together and we should have flags flying on each veteran's grave next Memorial Day.

#### TRADITIONAL APPEAL FOR FUNDS

Traditionally, since our first newsletter so long ago, we have closed with an appeal for funds. Because of the increased cost of gasoline, our mowing costs have also risen, and the income from our funds is far from adequate to pay these costs. We depend on the help from our friends to assist us. Your tax deductible contribution may be sent to the secretary, Carol Kimball, 28 Allyn Street, Mystic CT 06355. Any and all help will be appreciated.