

**North Branch Cemetery, Wrightsville, Vermont
Relocation Records, 1934
MSA 616**

Introduction

This collection contains photocopies of old records and maps of the original North Branch Cemetery in the Wrightsville section of Middlesex, Vermont, in addition to copies of documents related to the relocation of the cemetery in 1934. Carolyn Stone, author of a book on the same subject, made a gift of this collection to the Vermont Historical Society in July 2011. Alan Williams is responsible for creating a CD of photos of old cemetery record books.

Institutional History

The North Branch Cemetery, first used as a burial ground in the early 1800s, was originally located between the North Branch of the Winooski River and Vermont Route 12, south of the bridge to the farm of E.J. Hill and south of the Shady Rill. The North Branch Cemetery Association was formed in 1863 and incorporated in 1906. The cemetery was active and well maintained up until the Flood of 1927. After the flood the association voted against moving the cemetery. However, it was clear by June 1933 that a planned flood control project would require its relocation.

The Flood of 1927 brought many changes to Vermont, including the construction of several flood control dams built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC. They built one such dam at Wrightsville, in the northern part of Montpelier, Vermont. The Great Depression provided the labor needed to do the job and some CCC workers became involved with the labor to move the cemetery. Construction on the Wrightsville Dam began in July 1933, and the Vermont Public Service Commission ruled the "remains of the dead...shall be removed by the Board of the Public Works...and interred in some suitable cemetery." Walter E. Cleveland (1895-1970) was chosen to supervise the transfer project. Active work began 4 October 1934 and the last of the 651 bodies was moved to the new site on 7 Nov 1934. The superintendent for the dam supplied CCC tools and labor but absolutely no project supervision for moving the cemetery, he insisted that be done by state workers from the State Board of Public Works. In his final report, Superintendent Walter E. Cleveland provided financial and materials data as well as information on what they found as the crew excavated the graves. He included several photos in the 1934 report.

Although legal complications remained, a warranty deed was eventually signed on 30 May 1939 transferring the new site to the North Branch Cemetery Association. The Town of Middlesex Cemetery Commission now maintains the cemetery.

Provenance

Carolyn K. Stone compiled this collection of photocopies in 2002 from selected records in record series EC-2558 at the Vermont Division of Public Records. The original documents in EC-2558 covered construction of the Wrightsville Dam and relocation of the North Branch Cemetery in 1934. The papers comprised approximately 2 cubic feet of material transferred in

June 1995 to Division of Public Records from Dam Safety Section Facilities Engineering Division, Department of Environmental Conservation, Agency of Natural Resources. This material included engineering reports, blue prints, and plans for the Wrightsville Dam. EC-2558 was microfilmed onto film F-2558 in 2003; the original records were destroyed. The report by Superintendent Walter E. Cleveland, *Transfer of North Branch Cemetery Wrightsville Town of Middlesex, Vermont*, 18 December 1934, was not included in EC-2558.

Scope and Content

This collection includes agreements, petitions, deeds, correspondence, records relating to the excavation and relocation of 651 graves in the North Branch Cemetery in the Wrightsville section of Middlesex, Vermont, to their present location in 1934.

Also included are warranty deeds, records of burial as taken from monuments by W.P. Kerwan and C.B. Keefe in 1933 and 1934, correspondence of L.W. Pease and C.B. Keefe, and a list of lot owners and heirs or relatives of lot owners. There is a copy of the Report & Order No. 1809, State of Vermont Public Service Commission, State Board of Public Works vs. North Branch Cemetery Association, Inc., re: land condemnation, 16 July 1934. In addition, there is material relating to the Civilian Conservation Corps, and correspondence from Fairchild Sons, Morticians, Brooklyn, New York 19 May 1941-17 June 1941.

Drawings from the Dam Safety Section Facilities Engineering Division that were not included in the original materials transferred to Public Records may also be found in this collection. Titles of these drawings include: "Winooski River Flood Control Wrightsville Project Lands Purchased by the State of Vermont Sept. 1933;" "North Branch Cemetery Association, Middlesex, Vermont, November 1933, C.B. Keefe Surveyor;" "North Branch Cemetery Wrightsville, Vermont, July 1934;" and "Proposed Plan North Branch Cemetery Wrightsville, Vermont, July 1934."

Also included in this collection is a photocopy of *Transfer of North Branch Cemetery Wrightsville Town of Middlesex, Vermont*, by Superintendent Walter E. Cleveland, 1934.

Inventory

- MSA 616:0 General Information
*Includes a description of the town, the cemetery as it is in 2011, and a description of the dam from the US Army Corps of Engineers.
Includes also one CD of photos of pages of cemetery and other pertinent records including an inventory by the DAR, records found in the Middlesex Town Clerk's office, and three volumes of the record books of the secretary of the North Branch Cemetery Association, and another CD with the "Cleveland Report" found in Folder 6).*
- :01 Old Cemetery Lotting Information.
Inventory of the existing lots and lot owners prior to moving the cemetery.
- :02 North Branch Plans.

Maps and plans for the relocated cemetery:

North Branch Cemetery, Wrightsville – VT. Typical Layout of Lots and Paths; Sept 1934 – Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

Winooski River Flood Control, Wrightsville Project; Lands purchased by the State of Vermont; Sept. 1933; Scale 1" = 200'-0" (No other identifying information on plan.)

North Branch Cemetery; Wrightsville – Vermont; July 1934 – Scale 1" = 10'-0" (No other identifying information on plan.) *Shows the lot configuration of the old cemetery prior to its removal to the new site.*

North Branch Cemetery Ass'n., Middlesex – VT.; November 1933 – Scale 1" = 40'-0", C. B. Keefe – Surveyor. *Shows the location and layout of the new cemetery in its current location.*

- :03 Applications for work.
List of possible employees for the project and a few letters of qualifications.
- :04 Davis Brothers-Riverton.
Invoices and correspondence from the contractor providing the concrete and monument work.
- :05 Leroy A. Flint.
Personal recollections and concerns about the old North Branch Cemetery, on his letterhead.
- :06 Cleveland Report.
Copies of the 1934 project report by the project superintendent including costs, findings, and photographs.
- :07 Fairchild Sons, Inc., Morticians.
Correspondence between the company and the State of Vermont concerning the project.
- :08 New Cemetery Lotting Information.
Lists of names and lot numbers for the relocation of remains from the old to the new cemetery.
- :09 New Cemetery Legal Issues.
Legal correspondence concerning the acquisition of land for the new cemetery location.
- :10 New Cemetery Deeds and Agreements.
Copies of the deeds and agreements as found in the Middlesex land records.
- :11 Miscellaneous.

*Newspaper articles and letters concerning the project to move the cemetery
and build the dam.*

:12 Allen Williams photos.
A few modern photos of some gravestones.

Dwight Harrington
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NorthBranchCem.doc