

Meech Island Cemetery: Sept. 30th, 2014 Visit Site and Condition Report

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Site:

The Meach Island Cemetery is located on Meach Island, in Meach Cove of Shelburne, Vermont. The coordinates for the cemetery are: 44 21' 37.2" N, 73 16' 27.5" W.

Meach Island is privately owned by the Waite Farm Associates LLC, according to the Shelburne Assessor's 2014 Grand List. The island is posted with two "No Trespassing" signs that are visible from the main land (290 Meach Island Road).

Access to the island is by two ways: by water or by a stone walkway (when water is not too high) from the main land at 290 Meach Island Road. The island is extremely steep on all sides, with the best route of access from the walkway from the main land.

The cemetery is located at the northern tip of the island. The island is covered with trees, such as cedars and oaks, and the cemetery is shaded and protected from the elements by the tree coverage.

Condition:

There were a total of ten features in and around the Meach Island Cemetery: nine within the fenced area and one upright stone fragment outside the fenced area. There is a possibility that there are other stone fragments underneath the dead leaves and other fallen debris from the surrounding trees.

- 1) Upright stone fragment outside of the fenced area of the cemetery. It appears to be the bottom left corner of a gravestone. The stone type unknown. Photo 1 depicts this feature. Poor condition.
- 2) Pile of pieces of broken gravestone (s?), the pile may contain fragments of two different stones. The stone type(s) are unknown. Photo 2 depicts this feature. Poor condition.
- 3) Small stone that probably was installed more recently and is not an original gravestone. The stone appears to be granite. The initials "E.M." are carved into the stone. The stone is about one foot long. Photo 3 depicts this feature. Good condition.
- 4) Small stone that probably was installed more recently and is not an original gravestone. The stone appears to be granite. The initials "W.M." are carved into the stone. The stone is about one foot long. Photo 4 depicts this feature. Good condition.
- 5) A fallen stone that has no writing on it, this suggests that the writing is face down. The stone is about 3 1/6 feet long and 1 11/12 feet wide. Photo 5 depicts this feature. Poor condition.
- 6) Small stone that probably was installed more recently and is not an original gravestone. The stone appears to be granite. The initials "J.M." are carved into the stone. The stone is about one foot long. Photo 6 depicts this feature. Good condition.
- 7) Small stone that probably was installed more recently and is not an original gravestone. The stone appears to be granite. The initials "M.M." are carved into the stone. The stone is about one foot long. Photo 7 depicts this feature. Good condition.

8) Small stone that probably was installed more recently and is not an original gravestone. The stone appears to be granite. The initials "J.A.W." are carved into the stone. The stone is about one foot long. Photo 8 depicts this feature. Good condition.

9) Broken stone that consists of two pieces (No. 1 and No. 2). The gravestone pieces appear to be sandstone. The gravestone piece No. 2 was initially buried under dead leaf debris. No. 1 is 2 7/12 long and 2 1/6 wide. It reads, "Hon. Ezra Meech, died 30 May 1842, aged 28 years". Image 9.a. depicts this stone. No. 2 is 2 1/2 long and 2 1/6 wide. It reads, "Jane Anne, wife of, Joseph Warner, and daughter of" Image 9.b. and 9.c. depict this stone. Image 9.d shows these two gravestone pieces in relation to feature 8. Poor condition.

10) Granite monument with inscriptions on all four sides. The monument is roughly 68 inches tall and the base is 3 feet wide on each side. The monument may have been installed more recently and is not original. Good condition. The inscriptions are as follows:

North Face: James, son of, Ezra and Mary, Meech, Died Feb 18, 1823, Aged 18 Years (Image 10.a)

East Face: William, Son of, Ezra and Mary Meech, Died August 3, 1822, Aged 7 Months

Ellen, Daughter of, Ezra and Mary, Meech, Died March 1(?) 1822, Aged 2 Yrs and 3 Mos (Image 10.b)

South Face: Jane Anne, Wife of, Joseph Warner, and Daughter of, Ezra and Mary, Meech, Died May 30, 1842, Aged 28 Years (Image 10.c)

West Face: Mary, Wife of, Ezra Meech, Died, Feb 14, 1826, Aged 45 Years (Image 10.d)

Historical Resources and Information:

1) From: "Year Book and Roster of the Vermont Society of Sons of the American Revolution" Proceedings of the Annual Meeting held at Burlington, Nov. 12, 1913. This section comes from a historical address given by Charles E. Allen of Burlington, and relates to a Dedication at the Moses Pierson Farm on Oct. 28, 1913. Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2014 and accessed 10/2/2014:

https://archive.org/stream/yearbookrosterof00sons/yearbookrosterof00sons_djvu.txt.

"Among these settlers was Moses Pierson, a native of New Jersey. His father, an heir to property in England, came to this country in 1715, when only seventeen years of age. Upon his death in 1761, his son Moses, having assumed his father's pecuniary obligations, sold his New Jersey property and purchased -a tract of one thousand acres, in the town of Shelburne, later known as the "Meech farm", and removed there with his family about 1770. He at once erected a house and barn of hewn logs, and then commenced to clear and cultivate his land. Here he resided unmolested for six years, during which time some ten other families settled in the town. In the fall of 1777, having harvested his wheat, he deemed it unsafe to remain in Shelburne, and retired with his family to Orwell; but returned in the winter to thresh and secure it.

As this farm-house has been confused with the block-house, which Mr. Pierson also built, and as some have supposed that the "Fight" occurred at this block-house, I will say — that during my investigations I found a copy of some of the manuscripts of Mr. Oscar F. Sheldon, then of Willsboro, N. Y., which were printed in W. C. Watson's "History of the Champlain Valley", published in 1852, Mr. Watson refers to these manuscripts "as a rich treasury of anti-quarian wealth, the result of most careful and intelligent investigation". In one of them I found a reference to the Pierson block-house, as to which Mr. Sheldon says: "A bold promontory surrounded by perpendicular cliffs, and connected with the main-land by a low narrow strip of land, which was overflowed at high- water stood contiguous to the farm of Moses Pierson. On a plat of ground upon this promontory, hidden by a thick hedge of cedars, Pierson constructed a block-house, as a place of refuge, in case of attack, while gathering his harvests". It is noticeable how accurate this description is of what is now known as Meech island, about half a mile, west of this marker.

Logan's Point more familiarly known as Quaker Smith's Point is the only other place in that vicinity which could be suggested; but this when visited fails to correspond with the above description. Meech island is a high promontory, on three sides of which are cliffs rising perpendicularly from the water to a height of 40 feet on the south side, about 50 feet on the lake side and 75 feet on the north side. It is covered with a growth of cedars, and is connected with the main-land, on the east, by a narrow strip which would be now covered with water, had it not been, in late years, protected by a small filling of large stones. Just east of the Meech burial place, on this island is the grave of James, the eldest son of Moses Pierson, who died in Shelburne, Dec. 14, 1775, which would tend to show that his family were living in that vicinity at that time and that the island was included in the Pierson farm. The date of the building of this block-house is not known, whether it was at the beginning, or at the close, of Mr. Pierson's first stay in Shelburne, between 1770 and 1777. When hostilities ceased and settlements increased the old block-house no longer needed, was probably either torn down or allowed to decay. At the present time a general examination of the locality fails to reveal any indications of where it stood. " Pg 54-55

2) The Shelburne Village Cemetery also has a plot for the Meech family. A few photos of this stone monument were found through www.findagrave.com. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=22754918>

Ezra Meech (July 26, 1773 – September 23, 1856)

Married to Mary McNeil (August 30, 1772- Feb. 14, 1826)

They had ten children (four survived to adulthood):

Mary Meech Moody (1802-1830)

James Meech (1805-1823)

Jane Meech (1811-1812)

William Meech (1813-1814)

Jane Ann Meech Warner (1814-1842)

Henry B. Meech (1816-1854)

Ellen Meech (1819-1822)

William Meech (1822-1822)

Ezra Meech Jr.

Edgar Meech (June 20, 1818 –February 19, 1885) (www.nekg-vt.com/schools/school_UVM-orbit.htm)

After Mary McNeil Meech died in 1826. He married Lydia C. Clark

(pg 585 of Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont: A Record of the Achievements of her People in the making of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation, edited by Hon. Hiram Carleton, published 1903.)

3) Another interesting source available online is the “Clarke Papers. Mrs. Meech and her family. Home Letters, familiar incidents, and narrations linked for preservation”

By. Miss Hemenway 1875?

https://archive.org/stream/clarkepapersmrs00inheme/clarkepapersmrs00inheme_djvu.txt.

There is written records from Lydia Clarke Meech about being married Ezra Meech and his four surviving children. Mary was buried in Florida. Jane died at home. Information about the two surviving sons is limited.

4) Index to Know Cemetery Listings in Vermont, 5th edition. Compile by Joann H. Nichols, Patricia L. Haslam, and Robert M. Murphy , 2012

Lists DAR 3:72, LDS 850, 111; LDS 027, 742 as resources for stone inscriptions.

DAR- Daughters of the American Revolution

LDS- Latter Day Saints