



INSIDE THE BELLEVUE CEMETERY

LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS



BELLEVUE ENTRANCE



The Bellevue was established in 1847, at 170 May Street in Lawrence, MA.

Styled after Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery, founded eleven years earlier, it remains one of few landscaped cemeteries in the area.

It was added to the list of National Historic Places in 2003.

Most of the people covered in this report died after 1865, but the major events in their lifetimes took place before.



THE HEARSE HOUSE

The Hearse House was where the hearse and horses were stored to carry a coffin to the gravesite.

Although officially named the “Hearse House”, the title is currently disputed; the building may have served simply as the Gatehouse; its current purpose is for housing of records and clerical work.



A LANDSCAPED CEMETERY

Stunning terraces and granite staircases are found throughout the grounds, a tribute to Victorian standards of nature and architecture.



(The winter season pays little justice to the cemetery's beauty- in just a few weeks when everything is green, it is easy to forget one is in the heart of a thriving city.)



From the top of the hill, the terraces drop away and the city can be seen on the horizon's edge.



This empty area in the middle of the cemetery is a filled-in pond. Victorian era landscaped cemeteries more resembled parks than the somber graveyards of previous times.



The cemetery is open to the public from dawn to dusk every day, and people coming to pay their respects are always welcome, as well as artists, historians and photographers.

Official tours and cleanups frequently take place on holidays like Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. Tours are also offered in the fall, surrounding Lawrence's participation in the Civil War.

SOME OF THE OLDEST GRAVES



Anne Miriam Barnes
(1837)

Both of these stones are slate.
Most of the stones in the
Bellevue are marble or granite,
which was traditional for the
post colonial and Victorian era.

Anne's grave is interesting- little
is known about her life, other
than she was previously buried
elsewhere and reinterred in the
Bellevue.



Phebe Merrill (1847)





A close up of the masonry on Merrill's stone shows an urn and willow, common headstone motifs.





Residents of the Bellevue are representative of common communities at the time. Many church founders, early politicians, and Civil War veterans are buried there, as well as teachers and those who established schools.

There are also many charitable communal plots, which served to give dignified burial grounds to veterans, mill workers, and the poor.

The Pauper's Lot, seen below, is one of the earliest in the area.



RELIGIOUS FOUNDERS

At one point in time, Lawrence was known as “the city of churches”. The Bellevue was founded as a Protestant cemetery, and many pastors, reverends, and church founders reside within its grounds.



George Littlefield (1901) was one of the
Lawrence Universalist Church
founders. He was also a Civil War
veteran.





The Reverend Packard founded the Grace Episcopal Church, the oldest church in Lawrence (built in 1851). The church is still used today, and stands on Jackson Street on the edge of the common.

Packard also founded the Rose and Thistle Society, a relief fund that aided in the burial of poor Episcopalians, specifically of English (rose) and Scottish (thistle) descent.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS



Above is the Rose and Thistle Monument. The smaller marker in the foreground was purchased by a member for a small fee.

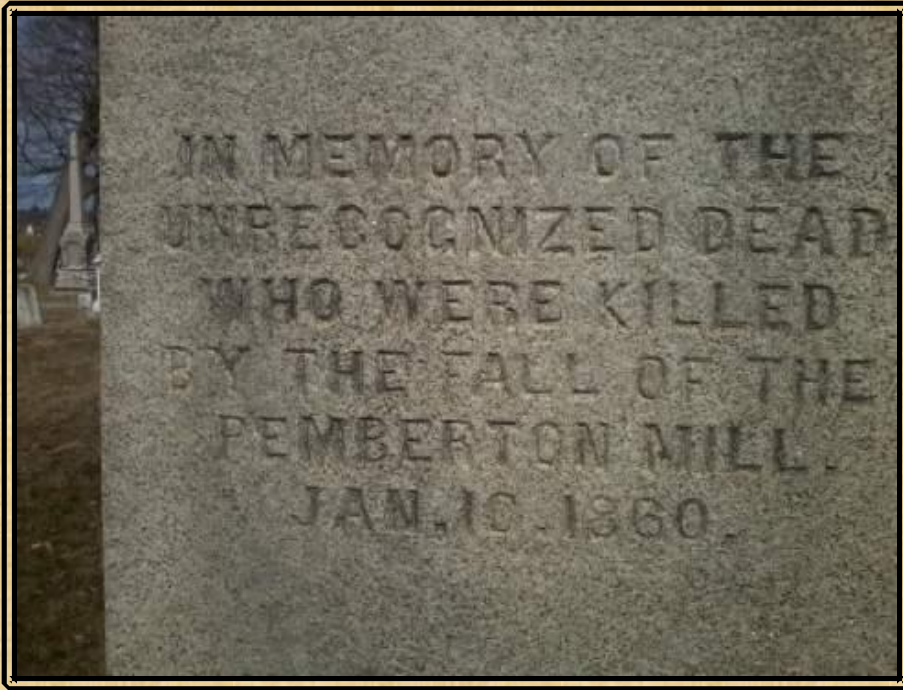
Organizations like this would generally ask for a few cents a week, on a sliding scale based on need, and provided an early form of burial insurance.

The Pacific Mills Relief Society lot nearby offered a similar service to indigent mill workers. That there are few burials in the lot show evidence that although these options were available, families with means preferred to purchase their own plots (no different than today).





The Pemberton Mill collapse in April of 1860 was probably the most devastating industrial disaster in the region. In the midst of a shift, the mill, overburdened with machinery, caved in on the workers and subsequently caught fire. Many workers were killed, a lot of them young women and children.



The Pemberton Monument
in the Bellevue provided
burial service for those who
were unclaimed after the
disaster.





SCHOOLS

Many Lawrence school founders are buried in the Bellevue.

John Rodman Rollins, a Newburyport native and Dartmouth graduate, founded the Rollins School.



The Wetherbee School is named for Emily Greene Wetherbee, who taught there for years. Like many teachers of her time, she died a spinster (in the 1800s, teachers were not usually allowed to marry), and the Clarkes added her to the family plot.

It was common for families to provide for people in situations like hers. The Clarkes also took care that the school be named for her.



CIVIL WAR HEROES



Reverend John W. Adams (1832-1915)
Adams served as chaplain in the Civil War for the 2nd NH Regiment from 1863-65. While he was a New Hampshire and later Methuen resident, he opted for burial in Lawrence. Some speculate this was because of the cemetery's prominence at the time.

George Bodwell aided in the capture of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy in the Civil War.





Arthur T. Shuyler (1866) was a member of the famous 54th regiment, the all black troops showcased in the movie “Glory”. His mother was an “Indian doctress from New York, his father an escaped slave from Virginia.” Shuyler was a Lawrence resident.





Moulton Batchelder served first as 2nd Lieutenant for the 40th Mass Volunteers and then as 1st Lieutenant for the 6th Mass. He later went on to be a detective in the sensational Lizzie Borden case.





Sumner H. Needham is a little known soldier from the Civil War. Although Luther Ladd of Lowell is widely known as the first casualty of the war, Needham was actually the first to fall. While not involved in a battle, he received mortal wounds in the Baltimore riots only a week after the war was declared.



Needham's Monument, commissioned by the city of Lawrence in 1862, is the oldest Civil War monument in the country.



By the City Government
of Lawrence, this Monument
is erected, to endear to
posterity the Memory of
SUMNER H. NEEDHAM.
of Co. I., 6th Regit. M. V. M.,
who fell a victim to the
passions of a Secession Mob,
during the passage of the
Regiment through the
streets of Baltimore, march-
ing in Defence of the Nation's
Capital, on the memorable
19th day of April A. D. 1861.

Aged 33.

A Loyal North, in common
with his widow and an only
child, mourn his loss.

A. D., 1862.



The Needham GAR Post (Post 39) is one of the oldest Civil War posts in the US. It provided burial services for indigent soldiers in good standing.

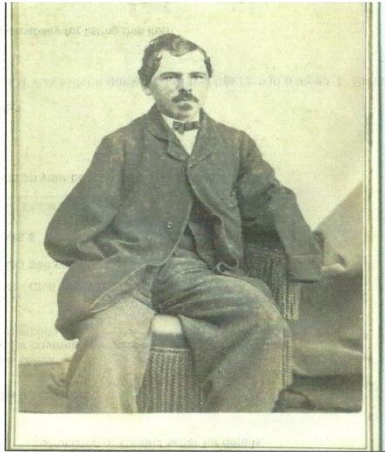
The term GAR stands for Grand Army of the Republic, and their flag-holding markers grace the graves of Civil War veterans.





Charles Hammond is another veteran buried in the Bellevue. He, his brother and father enlisted in the war as Confederates, but Hammond jumped sides and fought for the North. After the war he worked as a salesman for Cold Spring Breweries, but succumbed to what Victorians termed “nostalgia” (today post-traumatic- stress- disorder), and killed himself.

WILLIAM SHARROCK

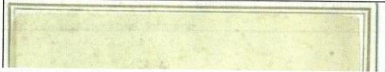


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Description

Man seated in chair without arms, presumably a casualty of the Civil War. He looks quite dignified. His name seems to appear in light pencil on the back at the bottom and we've provided a scan of this. Unfortunately, we can't read it. CDV (Carte de visite) by 'YEAH & CO. No. 100 Essex Street, Lawrence, Mass. A. YEAH, M.H. LUFKIN'.....Condition: Corners very good. Mount very clean. Image is mottled. Tones good.....We pay shipping anywhere. We pay U.S. insurance if over \$100. Support the shops and shows. Look up seller name 'genest' for other auctions. Thank you.

[Go back to see other pictures](#)



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William Sharrock's war story is particularly ironic. He enlisted in Mass Heavy Artillery, Company F, and survived many devastating battles including Cold Harbor and Gettysburg, sustaining only two injuries.

After returning from the war, he was participating in a Fourth of July celebration on the Lawrence Common in 1865 when a cannon misfired and he lost both arms.





Sharrock later went on to become an artist, painting watercolors, and was also the city messenger. His obituary states that he "accomplished more with no arms than with"!

DECEMBER 5, 1910

WAS VETERAN OF CIVIL WAR

Passing Away Today of Col.
William Sharrock.

Col. William Sharrock, another of the veterans of '61, has gone to his eternal rest. His life's work has been completed, and it was well done. He was devoted to the Stars and Stripes and was prompt to answer the call of his country when danger was at hand. Death came peacefully to this battle-scarred veteran early Monday morning at his home, 68 Milton street. The news of his death will cause sorrow in many circles, not only in Lawrence, but also in Boston, where he was employed for many years in the Custom house.



THE LATE WILLIAM SHARROCK

William Sharrock had a career and a record which any man should feel proud of and to his memory is due the greatest honor within their giving. He was born in 1844 at Blackburn, Eng., but when only six years of age came to this country. He came to Lawrence and since then this city had been

machine shop, which was then located on the present site of the Everett mill. In 1862, when it was apparent that the great civil strife was but hardly commenced he enlisted for a term of three years with Company F of the First Massachusetts Heavy Artillery. He served with his company and proved himself a brave soldier. He was twice wounded in battle, but survived.

Shortly after his return from the war he met with a most unfortunate accident on the Lawrence common. He was assisting in the firing of a salute on the common on July 4, 1865. He was ramming the cannon when a premature explosion occurred and when the smoke had cleared there lay William Sharrock with both arms blown off. He was courageous and brave and managed to survive the terrible injuries. He was not daunted however, by his great loss and at once began his uphill struggle to make a livelihood. He conducted a store for a number of years in the old transfer station of the Horse-car railway company on Essex street. He later entered the stove business on Jackson street and with the use of an artificial arm, with which he had become quite proficient, managed to keep his own books and look after his correspondence. Later he did considerable work in water colors and surprised all who knew him by his feats despite his big handicap.

In 1882 he was elected to the common council and served his city in a capable and efficient manner. He was later appointed to the position of messenger in the Boston custom house and he remained in that position for about 18 years. For the past five years he had lived a life of retirement and was in poor health for about two months previous to his death. He was a member of both Needham post, 39, G. A. R., and Gen. Lawton post, 146, G. A. R., and was a member of the staff of the commander-in-chief of the G. A. R. He was a member of Mayflower colony, I. O. O. F. Mr. Sharrock was a vestryman and senior warden for many years in what was formerly St. Thomas' church, but now All Saints' church of Methuen.

Besides his wife, Mary, he is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Mabel Sharrock Farr of this city and Mrs. J. Malcolm Smith of Baldwinville, N. Y., wife of Rev. J. Malcolm Smith, former pastor of All Saints' church. He is also survived by three grandchildren. The funeral will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock from Grace church and interment will be in Bellevue cemetery.

MY TOUR GUIDES

Local historian Joseph Bella of Methuen and Chairwoman of the Bellevue Cemetery Elizabeth Charlton provided me with a personal tour of the cemetery. While regular tours are not advertised, both Beth and Joe are more than happy to walk the grounds and provide animated local history to anyone expressing interest.



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My tour of the Bellevue covers only a small corner of the cemetery's grounds, and even then barely cameos the lives of those I researched. The cemetery is comprehensive of the community and the times, but much more professional research is still needed to document the stories of the grounds and the residents.

Unlike cemeteries such as Mount Auburn, historical information is not currently readily available to the public. However, historians like Mr. Bella and Mrs. Charlton enjoy offering intimate tours and information, and are very passionate.

If you do visit the grounds, wear sturdy shoes and bring a camera- the Bellevue welcomes you!



CREDITS

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