



# Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum  
Town of Deerpark Historian, P. O. Box 621, Huguenot, New York 12746  
(845-856-2702)— website [www.1863schoolhouse.org](http://www.1863schoolhouse.org)

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## Cemetery Art and Traditions by Lynn Burns

People take interest in cemeteries for a number of reasons: the period artwork and symbolism displayed on the headstones; the pursuit of genealogical information and the peacefulness associated with a stroll through time. The Victorian era brought about the idea of a cemetery as a well-planned landscape, an outdoor park. As populations grew and moved away from traditional homesteads with their family plots, larger community cemeteries were located on the outskirts of towns. Each area had its potter's field, a final resting place for strangers, criminals, illegitimate children, the poor and insane. The name has a biblical origin from the Gospel of Matthew. The passage says that Judas was given thirty silver pieces for betraying Jesus. Tormented by guilt, he gave the silver to the Pharisees, who would not take "blood money". Instead, they purchased a field containing pottery clay to be

used as a burial ground for the poor. These graveyards usually contained simple wooden numbered markers or none at all.

Headstones from the 19th century often contained a variety of stone types decorated with simple symbols with deeper meanings to express a family's grief or to honor the life of the deceased. Artwork reflected the time of burial. Examples of this art can be found in the Van Etten and Skinner cemeteries.



*Snowdrops  
Birth of spring among winter snows*

## Van Etten Cemetery by Lynn Burns

Between present-day Route 209 in Huguenot, NY and a sharp rise above a section of the old D & H Canal bed, there lies a quiet fenced in, out-of-the-way corner called the Van Etten Cemetery. Stop sometime, take notice and walk among the headstones. Read the names and dates. Connections will develop and simple stories will reveal themselves. You will see how Deerpark families

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intermarried and passed their biblical sounding names down to new generations 150 years ago. Take notice as to whose headstones are large and ornate and whose are simple, crooked, slate stones with the deceased's initials carved in them and whose stones display symbolic art work.



*Broken bud or branch  
Someone who died an untimely death*

Read the mournful epitaphs for a small child or infant who was sorely missed. And note the pride with which a Civil War Veteran's marker displays his company and regiment below his name. A microcosm of a once living, breathing tight-knit community lies buried there beneath the Huguenot soil.

The Van Etten Cemetery is one of more than three hundred in Orange County. Found in the pages of "Portrait & Biographical Record of Orange County, New York 1895" is a brief genealogy of the Van Etten family and how it pertains to their ownership of the cemetery property. Jacob Jansen Van Etten came from Etten, N. Brabant, Holland. He married Anatje Adriaanse of Amsterdam in 1664 in Kingston, NY. Their son Anthony Van Etten wedded Hannah Decker and their son Levi was baptized in February of 1758. Levi

married Jan (Grannetje) Westbrook. They had a son, Solomon, who married Jemima Gumaer. They are both buried in the cemetery. Jemima's father was Peter Gumaer who owned the property when her son, Peter Gumaer Van Etten, was born.

The first settler to live on this property was Jacob Gumaer. Later it went to Jacob Dewitt Gumaer, who owned it at the time of Brant's raid. His son Peter (Jemima's father) then took possession. Solomon Van Etten lived on the farm from 1806 to the time of his death in 1870. In 1853, his son Peter Gumaer Van Etten married Sarah Ann Campbell. Eventually their son Alva took over the farm and became quite successful. The land was purchased by a prominent Port Jervis resident, Charles St. John, who was a merchant, president of the Barret Bridge Co. and a congressman elect.



*G. A. R.  
Grand Army of the Republic  
A fraternal order for men who served  
and were discharged honorably*

Census records from the 1800's, the indexed Tax Map of 1875 Deerpark and on-line military records flesh out some of the lives of those buried in the graveyard. The earliest dates of death still visible start around 1841. Familiar family names such as Van Etten, Van Inwegen, Price, Swartwout, Rosencrance, Bodle, Lambert, Ayers, Whited (Whitehead), Decker, Ackerman, Rauchenbach, Carpenter, Case, Cuddeback, Moore, Hornbeck, Canfield

and Schmitt lie next to each other. Time and again these names are listed nearby on the source pages indicating interaction on a frequent basis.

The 19th century men of Huguenot were farmers, canal boatmen and builders, stone cutters and storekeepers. They and their families would daily watch as boats and mules hauled goods along the D & H Canal and the trains that passed by on tracks that ran down present-day Route 209 on their way to Monticello and Westbrookville. Their children would have attended the 1863 Schoolhouse. And certainly a most powerful shared experience was that of the Civil War from the enlisted men to their families back home in Deerpark praying for their safe return.

The men of Deerpark who enlisted in the war were both single and married. Did they enlist for a grand adventure or out of a keen sense of keeping the Union together? That we will, no doubt, never know. But serve they did. The Van Etten Cemetery hold the remains of at least nine men who served and came back to their homes and community to live out their lives.

Martin Rosencrance was born in 1832. He enlisted with the 141st Regiment of the Penna. Volunteers. He is buried next to his wife Catherin. Isaac Ayers (1843-1926), is buried next to his wife Mary Lambert Ayers. He worked on the canal all of his adult life. He enlisted in Co. C 65th Reg. of the NY Volunteers. He was mustered out because he was seriously injured when run over by a wagon. James Van Stander Carpenter was born in 1821. He was a married farmer when he enlisted Dec. 5, 1861 in Co. B NY 70th Infantry Reg. He later transferred to Co. D 86th Reg. NYS. He was hit by a Minnie ball six inches below his knee and came back home an amputee. By 1870, he is listed as a widower. Peter Van Inwegen enlisted in Co. B 54th NY Inf. William Rauchenbach, an immi-

grant born in Altonburg, Germany, enlisted at age 22 in Co. B 68th Reg. Volunteers. Alfred Decker, a farmer, born in 1844, enlisted at age 20. He served in Co. M 15th Heavy Artillery Reg. Curtis Ackerman, 1831-1895, was born in Mt. Hope Orange County. He served in Co. E 124th Inf. August 1862. He mustered out June of 1865 having been switched between Army hospitals due to illness. He was a stonecutter. Jonathan and Diantha Rundle Bodle had two sons enlist in the same company the same day in Goshen, NY. Sons William 1843-1912 and his brother Samuel, 1832-1918, joined the 20th Battery NY Light Inf. William was a house painter and Samuel was a boatman on the canal. Both men are described in their service records as being of slight build, having blue eyes, light hair and florid complexions. These nine old soldiers certainly shared a bond through their experiences and stories which they brought back to their families and community. It is comforting to think they all rest in peace together.



*Swords crossed  
Ranking military person*

Today, we can remember and honor these men and their families, who are buried in the Van Etten Cemetery by sponsoring a veteran. Contact Floyd Babcock and his Veteran's Committee, who meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7pm at the Deerpark Town Hall. The Deerpark Town Historian has names of interest. A special thanks goes out to our local Boy Scouts who volunteer and maintain this wonderful site of 19th century Deerpark history.



*American flag  
Patriotism*

What other stories lie buried there?

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### Skinner Cemetery

*Show me your cemeteries and I will tell you what kind of people you have.* Benjamin Franklin

In recent years there has been an increased interest in old family cemeteries. Genealogists visit a family cemetery to learn of the origins of their families. Historians study the lives of people who were part of the community in the past. Family graveyards were created at a time when people thought the land would be in the same family for generations. The burying grounds were usually placed within family landholdings, along a wood road on the side of a hill or in a rocky area that was unfit for cultivation. A wooden fence or stone wall marked the boundary.

Deerpark has a number of these cemeteries. The Skinner Cemetery is a prime example of a family cemetery. Every existing grave stone is marked with the Skinner name or the name of a spouse. The oldest tombstone dates back to Mary Helms Skinner (1775-1843), widow of Cyrus Skinner (1775-1865), who, according to census records, was a farmer. Therefore we can surmise that the Skinner Cemetery was established in the mid-1800s.

Some tombstones tell tragic stories. The following information is

etched on the stone marked “Juliet” wife of Thomas H. Skinner--Born Feb. 26, 1812--Died Apr. 25, 1853”. In the same grave are their children: Henry J. aged 1 yr. 7 mos. & 18 days; Matthew aged 17 days; Thomas G. aged 5 yrs. 2 mos.



Thomas must have married Lucinda Clark within the year of Juliet’s death, because the New York 1855 Census records Lucinda (wife) and two year old Velmetta Skinner in the household. Thomas H. Skinner and Lucinda are buried in the family cemetery. Thomas died May 20, 1889 at the age of 77 and Lucinda died April 1891 at the age of 70.

Another stone relates the deaths of two infants—“Julien died July 10, 1861, aged 2 yrs. 2 mos. 7 days and Patience T. died July 23, 1864, aged 10 mos. & 16 days—Children of Festus & Ellen Skinner”. Their epitaph reads “How much we miss these infants dear”... Unfortunately we have no records stating the causes of these untimely deaths.



In the center of the cemetery there is a set of simple stones. One is marked “Father” and the other is

marked “Mother” — no additional information. They are field stones. Of interest is the fact that the Father stone is about the size of a brick, but the Mother stone is three times larger.



It is difficult to know exactly how many members of the Skinner family are buried here. Some graves may have no markers or some stones may be buried beneath the soil. About twenty grave stones exist at this time.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, promised riches lured many families westward. Families left their original homesteads leaving their cemeteries neglected and overgrown. Some have even been destroyed. Fortunately the Skinner Cemetery is located on land owned by Camp Deerpark, owned and operated by New York City Mennonite churches. A few years ago volunteers from the camp cleaned debris from the cemetery, repaired and reset the tombstones and rebuilt the surrounding stone wall. Since that time the cemetery has been maintained by the Camp for which the Town of Deerpark is grateful.



*The Way to Heaven*

## Epitaphs

Epitaphs often tell a story about the person who lies buried within the grave. Some are tragic and some are humorous.

### A fiddler's grave reads:

On the 22nd of June  
Johathon Fiddle  
Went out of tune.

### Beza Wood departed this life on Nov. 1837 age 45 years.

"Here lies one Wood  
Enclosed in wood,  
One Wood  
Within another  
The outer wood  
Is very good  
We cannot praise  
The other."

### From a Grave in England

Owen Moore  
Gone Away  
Owin' more  
Than he could pay.

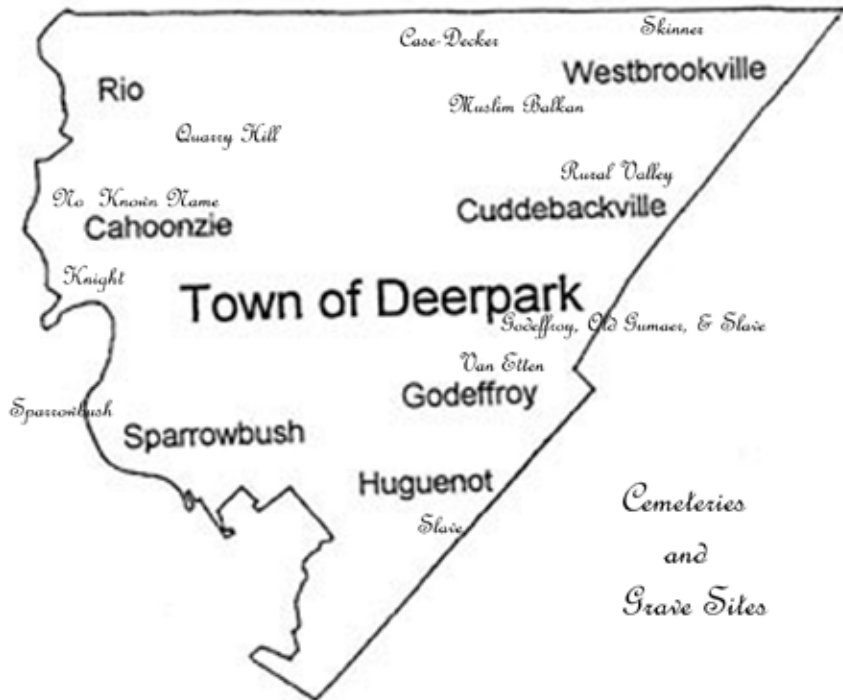
### John Penny--England

Reader if cash thou art  
In want of any  
Dig 4 feet deep  
And thou wilt find a Penny

### A woman buried in Colorado Springs

"I'd rather be here than in Texas."

Here Lies  
Johnny Yeast  
Pardon me  
For not rising.



## Brant Raid Bus Tour

On Saturday, July 19, 2014, the Deerpark Museum Committee will hold its fourth annual Brant Raid Bus Tour in the Town of Deerpark. Committee members, dressed in period costume, will guide a tour along the route Mohawk Indian and British Loyalist, Joseph Brant, and his Tories took when they attacked settlements in our valley on July 20, 1779. Frank Salvati provides extensive background information about Joseph Brant.

The tour, which takes about two hours, travels along Route 42, Peenpack Trail, and Neversink Drive in the Town of Deerpark. Decker's Stockade Fort, Solomon Davis Grist Mill, Black Rock School, Van Auken Fort, and Solomon Kuykendall Fort are among many of the locations attacked on this part of the route. The tour continues into Port Jervis where Brant had burned the Maghagamach

Church, Peter Kuykendall's Tavern and Fort Decker. There will be an opportunity to visit the old Maghagamach Cemetery where the church resided and where Revolutionary War soldiers, Martinus Decker and Simon Westfall, are buried. The tour ends with a colonial-period cooking demonstration at Fort Decker in West End prepared by members of the Minisink Valley Historical Society. The tour starts and ends at the Sparrowbush Fire House, Main Street, Sparrowbush, NY. All participants will meet at 7:45 a.m. There will be free coffee and snacks available before the bus leaves promptly at 8:00 a.m. The cost is \$6.00 for adults, \$5.00 for seniors, \$4.00 for children under 12. Reservations forms are available at Town Hall, at the Town Museum, or on the website [www.schoolhouse.org](http://www.schoolhouse.org). Tickets will be sent to registrants in the beginning of July. Tickets are necessary because space is limited. For additional information call 845-754-8070.