



CRYSTAL LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

August 4, 2023

Dear S.O.S. (Save Our Stones) Contributor,

We are pleased to provide this update/report to you on the progress of our project to clean and repair headstones at the Crystal Lake (Lake Avenue) Cemetery.

To date, 50+ veteran and non-veteran headstones have been cleaned using approved methods and the product D/2, which is a biodegradable cleaner that is pH neutral and contains no salts, bleach or acids. The product has been tested and approved by the Department of Veteran Affairs and the National Park Service to safely remove environmental soils, stains, lichen and more from granite, limestone, marble and other masonry headstones. There are many more headstones at the Crystal Lake Cemetery that will be cleaned. Cleaning of headstones is being done by trained volunteers. Below is an example of “before and after” cleaning. This headstone is made of white marble and is a standard-issue Civil War Union soldier headstone.

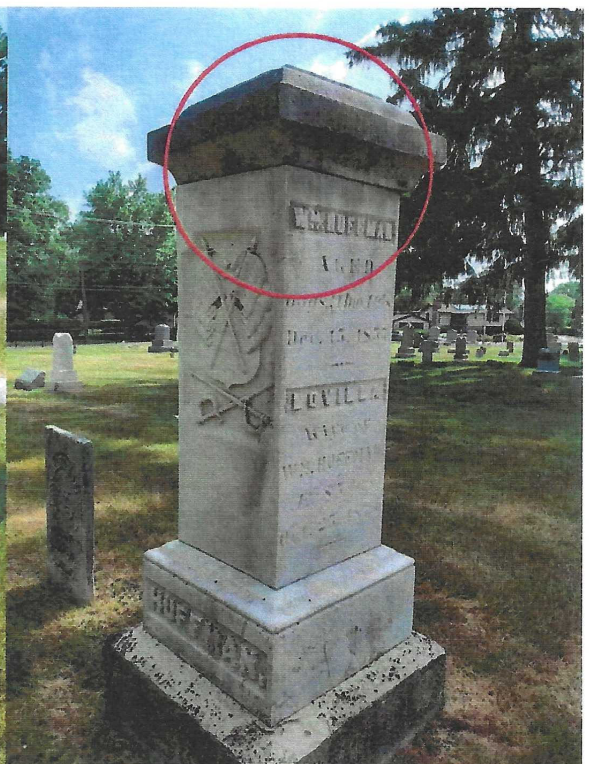
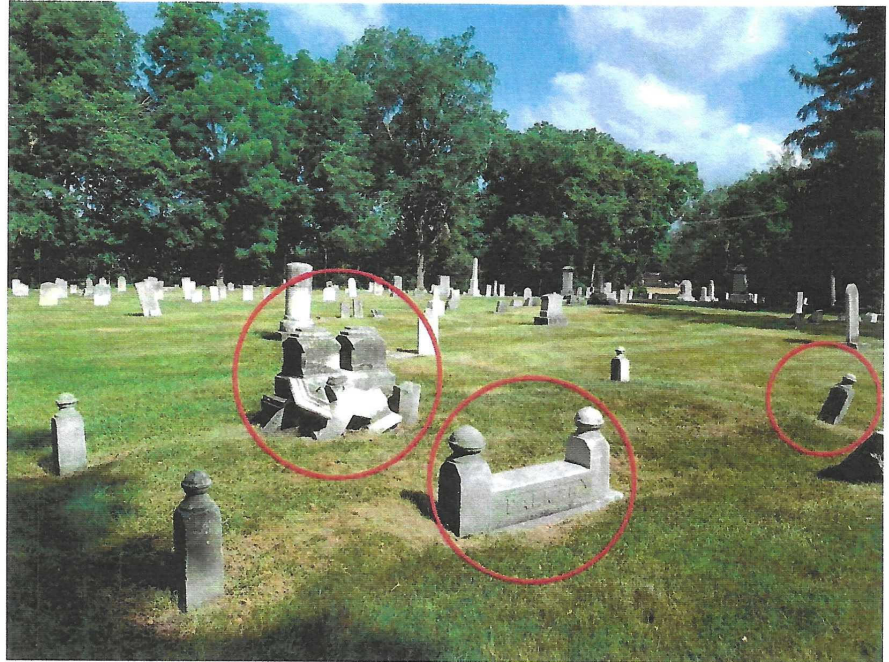


The City of Crystal Lake Historic Preservation Commission and Crystal Lake Historical Society have provided the funding for the purchase of D/2 as well as trained volunteers to clean the headstones. If you are interested in helping or just wish to observe the process, please feel free to contact us.

For the restoration and repair of headstones, we knew we needed to team up with experts in the field. We were very excited when Crystal Lake resident, Jason Solarz, Branch Manager at Warner & Troost Monument Co. in East Dundee, reached out to the Society after hearing about our **Save Our Stones** project. Under the direction and guidance of Warner & Troost, the Society has been able to complete Phase 1 of “**Save our Stones**” with the repair and restoration of three veteran headstones: Colonel Gustavus Palmer, Dr. James Graves and Colonel William Huffman (see “before” photos on next page)

**Crystal Lake
Cemetery
Proposed
Repairs**

**Photos of
current
condition:
Palmer
Graves
Huffman**



We hope the following narrative clearly describes the condition, repairs and significance of the Phase I headstone repair project. The total cost of Phase I was \$5,500.

Colonel Gustavus Palmer

As the Society's office and archives are located in the Colonel Palmer House, we felt it was most important to include Palmer's headstone in Phase I. Additionally, as you can see from the prior page, his unique headstone was a tumble of pieces that sorely needed put back together!

Colonel Palmer (the "Colonel" is a title of respect, not a military rank) served in a New York militia unit during the little known Patriot War (1838). The Palmer family travelled in 1840 from New York State to northern Illinois, settling at today's corner of Route 176 & Terra Cotta. By 1858, this successful farmer and leading citizen was able to hire local stonemason, Andrew Jackson Simons (also buried in the Crystal Lake Cemetery) to build a brick home with cobblestone foundation. This house is now used by the Crystal Lake Historical Society and Crystal Lake Park District.

The workorder for repair of the Palmer grave included 3 parts:

1. Add pins and epoxy and reset upright monument
2. Reset three front pieces on existing apron
3. Excavate soil around corner post, straighten, add concrete and backfill

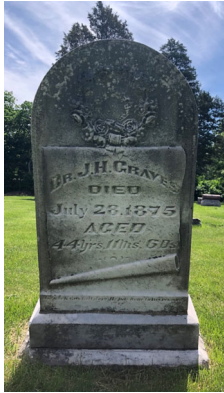
Once our stonemason was able to closely examine the upright pieces he discovered there were pin holes but no pins. It appears in a prior restoration attempt the pieces were just glued down. With the upright monument being so top heavy, when vandals went there (20 years ago) with the intention to push it over, they broke apart the glue as there was nothing else holding it together. It is now pinned and epoxied for extra stability and security. The stones are made of white marble and should clean up beautifully. Now that they're stabilized, the cleaning will begin!



Dr. James H. Graves

Dr. Graves served in the Civil War with Company G of the 46th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers. After the War, he moved west to McHenry County, Illinois. Here, he was a well-known and respected physician and surgeon.

The Graves headstone was leaning at a severe angle (see photo on page 2). Although it was leaning, the stone was stable enough for cleaning volunteers to work prior to its straightening.



Before, during and after cleaning. The process can take several applications of D/2, lots of elbow grease and patience. The results are quite satisfying!

The work order for repair/straightening of the Graves headstone included: Remove marker, remove existing foundation, pour proper foundation, reset marker.

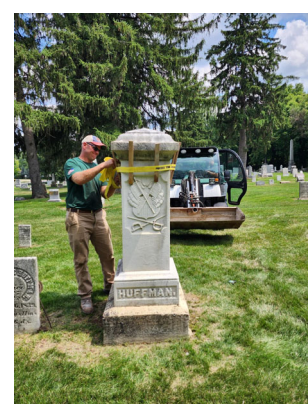
To do this, the area around the stone was dug out. Using a crowbar, ratchet straps were placed under and around the headstone. A Bobcat was used to lift the headstone and place it nearby so a new foundation hole could be dug. The existing hole was shallow (about 4-6 inches deep) and the headstone was simply sitting in the hole. The stonemasons discovered there was a pin in place between the upright stone and base. That pin is what held the stone from toppling forward. The pin did its job and was left in place. A new, appropriate foundation was poured and the headstone was lifted back into place.



Colonel William Huffman

It is unknown if the title “Colonel” is a military ranking or a title of respect (similar to Palmer). Numerous sources confirm Huffman served in a New York Militia unit during the War of 1812 and most likely also during the Patriot War. Huffman was a well-known and respected citizen of our community. He was the individual to suggest the name of “Nunda” after his hometown in New York.

His headstone is tall and very large around. Our resources call this a “Die, Base & Cap” type of monument. The cap portion on top was loose and not centered squarely. Our stonemason confirmed there was no adhesive holding the cap in place. It was determined that it was heavy and wide enough that gravity will keep it in place without the need for a pin. The cap was epoxied to the base and the seam where the cap meets the base was then sealed. The monument is now ready for our volunteer cleaning team to come in and remove the 175 years of grime!



So what’s next? We have about \$1,500 left in our S.O.S fund. Help us spread the word about the good work being done at Crystal Lake’s oldest cemetery. Our next focus for Phase 2 will be to repair some of the obelisk headstones (including that of veteran James Best) where the base is in place, but the obelisk on top is laying on the ground. Our stonemason indicates these are the most likely repairs to successfully stay in place for the next century. Getting the obelisks off the ground is helpful for the landscapers when cutting grass and also prolongs the life of the engravings.

Our website will soon be updated with more photos and videos of the cemetery transformation. But, we felt it was important to reach out to you first with this detailed message. This is a good time to thank you once again, our donors, for your generosity. THANK YOU! It is also a good time to acknowledge and thank Algonquin Township (owner of the cemetery) and the City of Crystal Lake’s Historic Preservation Commission. Both organizations have dedicated funds and manpower to the project. And thanks again for the Warner & Troost team for their expertise!

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us @ info@cl-hs.org
Donations are still being accepted through our website: www.cl-hs.org or by mail at
Crystal Lake Historical Society, P.O. Box 1151, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-1151

With gratitude for your support, Crystal Lake Historical Society