

Lillibridge

ANCESTRAL CEMETERY UPDATE

JANUARY 2007

The Lillibridge ancestral cemetery is the burial ground for at least 22 of our 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation family members. It is located in Richmond, Rhode Island in an area that was once part of the 1000 acre tract of land purchased by Thomas Lillibridge for the family farm in the early 1700s. The farm and land remained in family hands until 1913, and has been subdivided since that time. The cemetery is currently located within the grounds of the Meadowburg Farm located on Carolina Nooseneck Road, approximately 1/3 mile west of the paved road, within a stonewalled area with large oak and evergreen trees. The site is recognized by Rhode Island as a historical burial ground, and access to the cemetery has been granted on request as a courtesy by the current owner of the property

In 1999 and early 2000, family members Trudy Grinnell and Dick Hutchins did an extensive cleanup of the cemetery and restored many of the headstones prior to the 2000 Lillibridge Family Reunion in July. One of the highlights of that reunion was a trip to the cemetery and the surrounding area where our family originally settled here in the United States.

At the 2006 Lillibridge Family Reunion in Carlisle, PA, Trudy Grinnell discussed the need for additional funds needed to go forward with the restoration of the nearly 300 year old stone wall that forms the perimeter of the cemetery. The south facing wall has all but collapsed and major areas of the other walls also need significant attention. Unfortunately, only the services of a qualified stone mason can restore the wall to its original historical appearance and strength needed for longevity.

A number of family members made donations to the cemetery restoration fund, and enough has been collected to begin part of the work that needs to be done. THANK YOU to all those who so generously gave us the funding to get started with this much needed activity.



In preparation for the south wall reconstruction, Trudy Grinnell and son Don, Dick and Glenda Hutchins, and Mike, Stephanie and Rachel Wagner spent time last Fall cleaning brush and debris from part of the site, including the removal of a 50' pine tree and moderate trimming to other trees that would complicate the restoration work. However, additional ground work and tree trimming will be needed in the Spring before restoration to the other three perimeter walls can be pursued.



**To forget one's ancestors
is to be a brook without a source,
a tree without a root.**

Chinese Proverb



In many places along the south wall, only the footstones remain in position. The stump (left) is from a 50' pine tree that needed to be removed because it was interfering with the magnificent oak tree in the center of the plot and would hinder the wall restoration.



The trees and debris recently removed from the cemetery area.



When restored, the stonewall should look like this all the way around the cemetery.



A family tree can wither if nobody tends to its roots.

unknown



The Path Forward

After the recent work trip in the cemetery, the Grinnells, Hutchins and Wagners have identified some term activities that need attention. They include the following, in priority order;

- a. restoration/rebuilding of the South wall, which is the wall needing the most attention. A new three foot wide entrance will be made in the center of the wall.
- b. restoration of the West wall, followed by work on the North and East walls, which are not as bad as the others, but still need help to prevent further deterioration
- c. extensive removal of all remaining debris, trimming of growth, and general landscaping
- d. removal of a large evergreen tree in the Southeast corner of the cemetery.
- e. general trimming of remaining trees to prevent overgrowth damage

The initial estimate to restore all four cemetery walls is \$7200 plus the cost of additional stones that may be needed (\$150 per load).

At previous reunions, including the 2006 Lillibridge family reunion, 37% of the estimated cost was raised through generous donations given by attendees. We now have sufficient funds to begin the restoration project, however additional funds will be needed to complete all that needs to be done.

Between now and April, the stone mason will restore the South wall and remove the large evergreen tree in the Southeast corner of the cemetery.

Once this is completed and the weather warms, we're planning another clean-up day and would welcome the help of all who can spend **Saturday, April 14th** with us to continue work on the grounds. So mark your calendars and let us know you will be coming so we can coordinate our efforts. Rhode Island is beautiful in the Spring, and makes for a great weekend get-away.



A significant amount of landscaping work, trimming etc. needs to be done in the Spring



It is indeed a desirable things to be well descended, but the glory belongs to our ancestors.

For the Record

The Lillibridge ancestral cemetery is located in the township of Richmond, Rhode Island and is #19 in the State's record of historic cemeteries.

According to records, family documentation or headstones (where legible), there are 20 Lillibridge individuals are buried or memorialized within the cemetery. There are also two headstones with the family name "Phillips". One is larger than the other, both made of slate and very ornate. One is Joseph, the other is a newer stone but hard to read. There are also some unmarked stones (or completely worn) that family records might lead us to believe are Ming and Ring, two slaves.

Generation #1		Generation #3	
Thomas Lillibridge	1724	Thomas Lillibridge	
Mary H. Lillibridge	1779	Mary H. Lillibridge (Wife #1)	1814
Mary Lillibridge	1728	John Lillibridge	1820
Sarah Lillibridge		Hannah Lillibridge (Wife #2)	1850
Generation #2		Deborah Lillibridge	1840
Thomas Lillibridge	1749	John Lillibridge	1848
Mary W. Lillibridge (Wife #1)		Sarah Lillibridge	1840
Sarah Lillibridge	1760	Nancy Lillibridge	1833
Mary Lillibridge	1843	Generation #4	
Thankful Lillibridge	1859	Thomas Lillibridge	
		Thomas Lillibridge	
		(Both were babies who only lived 1 month)	

One of the additional projects to be pursued after the Spring clean-up will be to draw a "plot plan" of the cemetery and indicate where all the known individuals lie. It is possible that others might be buried within the site, and this will be further notated with the next update.

We need your help.

The Lillibridge ancestral cemetery restoration can not be completed without the support of the family. No donation is too small, and every contribution is important. Even the amount you spend on a tank full of gasoline these days will go a long way toward helping restore an important piece of your family's heritage that most Americans don't have. How many people do you know are able to tell you where the first generations of their family settled, raised their family, and mourned their losses – much less visit such a location. In most cases, the stories and physical locations have been lost in the generations and to the ravages of time. Thus far, we've been fortunate and with your help, the Lillibridge ancestral cemetery will continue to be a place we can share with future generations. So, please consider a donation to continue this important work.

Send your donations, made payable to the Lillibridge Cemetery Restoration fund to:

Trudy Grinnell

629 Commonwealth Avenue

Warwick, RI 02886

For more information on the April 14th Clean-up Day at the Cemetery, call or email Dick Hutchins at (401) 322-9722 or dhutchins@riconnect.com There is a lot to do, but with sufficient help, we'll get the cemetery to a condition where only occasional attention will be needed going forward. It will be a fun day in a serene setting with family and friends, so plan to join us!

Why.

Michael Wagner

"While there are lots of reasons, mine are personal and perhaps even a little self serving. I'd like my daughter Rachel to stand in the cemetery 50 to 60 years from now with her children and grandchildren and tell them she remembers coming there with her Dad and that it was important to him. And maybe it will be during a Lillibridge Family reunion, and John Lee Lillibridge, Judy Lillibridge, Kendal Paul, Aaron Paul, Kyler Ward, Carolyn Ward, and Serena Ward will be there with their families along with other Lillibridge descendants of their generation, and they'll be appreciative that steps were taken when needed to honor their shared heritage and ensure this unique place was preserved for them to share. And then they'll do whatever may be needed so it is there for Lillibridge descendants who come after them. "

**Our children are living messages
we send to a time and place
we will never see.**

Neil Postman