

THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter

Vol. 10, No. 5



CRYPTS

May 2024

CEMETERY #3 CRYPT?

Folks who have lived in Francrestown for some time may well remember this crypt located in Cemetery #3.



In the case of Francrestown, the “crypt” in Cemetery #3 was not a true crypt. Read on to find out what it was. While definition specifics may vary somewhat, several general terms may be in order here:

CRYPT – is a burial structure usually underground, often below a church. Or a partially underground chamber of concrete or stone that is designed to hold more than one casket.

MAUSOLEUM – like a crypt, it is a burial structure but is above ground and usually ornate.

TOMB – a container which holds the deceased individual’s remains. This would include a casket, an urn, or a cinerary.

Back in earlier times the term crypt was also used to describe a place where the remains of deceased individuals could be stored pending future burial. And this was the purpose of the structure in Cemetery #3. This of course begs the question of why anyone would want to just store the remains vs. giving them a proper burial.

A primary answer to this question is weather.

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 4

WHAT’Z IT for May.



Two tools that look somewhat alike but were made for two entirely different trades involving two different, but very important, jobs in the time of our ancestors.

This tool measures:



While this tool measures:



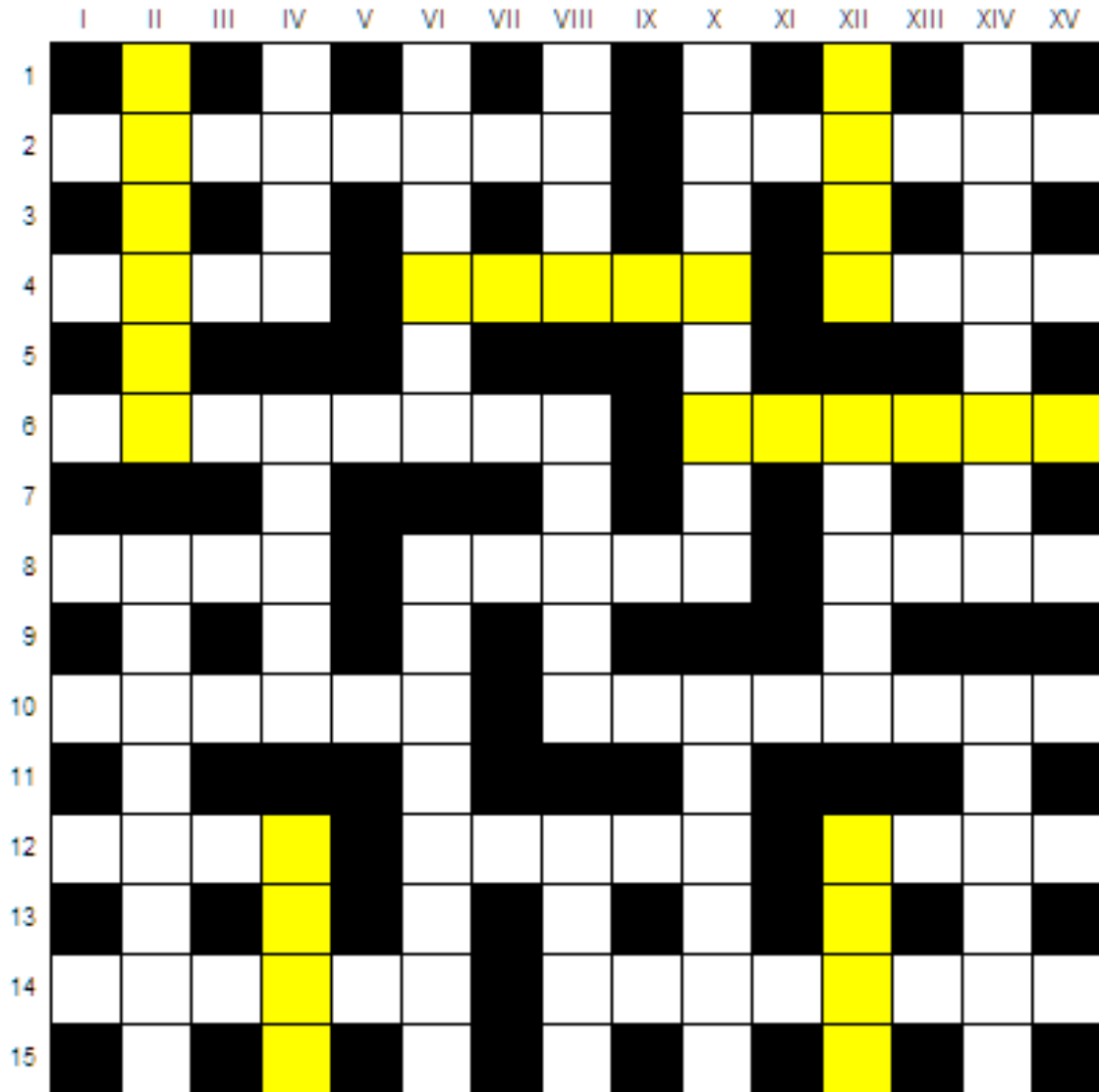
REMEMBRANCES

This month we will have another personal glimpse into the “Good Olde Days”. A resident recently related a story dating back many decades, circa 1930s. We hope you enjoy the story and that it will bring to mind incidents from your past that you would be willing to relate and allow us to reprint in this newsletter. After all, history is not just about “things” but also people. You can submit your story anonymously or attributed to you. Enjoy . .

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 4

MAY THEME CROSSWORD

The **yellow** blocks contain the theme words and all come from the text of this newsletter. Enjoy and Happy Memorial Day. This is a French Grid crossword. There are no numbers in the cubes but rather along the margins. Therefore any one line or column can have multiple words in it. For example Line 1 has no open adjoining spaces so there are no words going across in line 1. Line 2 has 8 adjoining open spaces and also has another 6 adjoining open spaces. This line has two words and in looking at the clues you see there are 2 clues for 2 across. The same procedure would be used for the Down words. For example, Column I has no adjoining spaces so there are no words going down in column I. Column II has 6 adjoining spaces and another 8 adjoining open spaces. So that column has two words and in looking at the clues you see that there are 2 clues for II Down. All clues for theme words are in capital letters with yellow highlights. The solution is on page six.



(3)



ACROSS

2. - Condition causing suffering
 - Heavy or Labored
4. - _____ gin fizz
 - **CHAMBER FOR MULTIPLE CASKETS**
 - Indicates a specific thing or situation
6. - Doing the dog paddle
 - **USED TO PACK ROAD SNOW**
8. - Wind in a spiral
 - Come into contact with
 - Careless speech
10. - Run of luck
 - Poet recanting an earlier poem
12. - Pack Down
 - A foolish person
 - Catch
14. - Oil source
 - Humorously indecent

DOWN

- II. - **WHERE RAFT WAS IN THE "REMEMBRANCE"**
 - Passé
- IV. - Sharp part of a knife
 - Donnybrook
 - **BOX SLEIGH**
- VI. - Frilly ornamentation, often in bad taste
 - "Pay attention"
- VIII. - Energetic
 - Constant complainer
 - Let fall
- X. - Greek historian who wrote "Parallel Lives"
 - Discharge of a worker
- XII. - **WHAT KIDS WERE ON IN II. DOWN**
 - Prepare to surf perhaps
 - **NEW ENGLAND WINTER ROAD PROBLEM**
- XIV. - Disease caused by a thiamine condition
 - Church official

CRYPT, con't.

Back before the 1900s, Spring, Summer and Fall burials took place in a very timely manner, the chief reason being the lack of knowledge in the art of embalming. The aroma of a decomposing corpse provides a great impetus for a speedy interment.

Why not in winter? Surely the cold weather if anything would tamp down the odor. Well it might but what it also did was turn the ground into frozen soil that thwarted the best efforts of a man with his lowly shovel from creating a proper hole 4'x10' and 6' deep. Digging these holes in the northern clime in winter was just not practical. What they needed was a place to store the body until the ground could be worked.

How did they know when the ground could best be worked? For the answer I would refer you to the September 2019 Heritage Museum Newsletter-

“ . . . the serviceberry shrub that is about to come into bloom rumored to have this name because it noted the time for the burials of bodies held while the ground was frozen. Also known as shad shrub for start of the shad run”.



SERVICEBERRY SHRUB

Other reasons for storing the bodies included:

- a period while decisions were made regarding a permanent place and the family could arrange for funds;

REMEMBRANCES, con't.

From our own Carol Russell we learn the perils of being a young girl doing what children often do, get in trouble.

“I’m not sure where to begin this story. But I suppose I’ll just mosey along the way the events happened.

Back in the day when this girl was a little girl, maybe 4 years old, mothers dressed up and went out to afternoon tea parties. Sometimes they also dressed up their little girls and paraded them to the tea parties with them and this is where the story really begins. It is also where I step into the story because I was that little girl, the one with the long yellow curls.”

“This must have been a very important party because I had a new dress for the occasion and I can picture that dress as clearly right now as I could that day. The dress was white organdy made of layers of ruffles from the waist to the hem and the sash was a wide pink ribbon with what seemed to me then, an enormous bow tied to the back. Of course there was a smaller ribbon holding up my curls. I also remember very clearly my white socks and white leather Mary Jane sandals. Now that we have me all “dolloed up” it is my mother’s time to prepare herself for the party. With specific instructions to play quietly and keep clean I was sent outside to wait for my mother.

Now to set the scene:

The season is mid-summer and it is a very hot day even for a 4-year-old child. We are living at the “summer place” which is located in farmland in Massachusetts. There are large meadows surrounding us and just over the hill is a real dairy farm with all the animals you would expect to see on a real farm. There were also the people you would expect to see running a large farm. There was ma-mere and pa-pere and their grown children and their grandchildren and it was the grandchildren who interested me. They were all older but lots of fun and even though a distance away, I could

CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 4

CRYPT, Con't.

- a period during which an elaborate mausoleum or underground crypt was being constructed;
- during epidemics disease-bearing corpses were held until such time as authorities believed it was safe to handle them.

These places of temporary storage for corpses were known as RECEIVING VAULTS which is what we had in Cemetery #3.

As to the question, “why all this background on burials”? The “Receiving Vault” in Cemetery #3 was razed in 2003. However, the very large and very heavy solid slate door was saved as a part of Francestown history and now resides in the Heritage Museum.



Another good reason to stop by the museum and see some of the new exhibits we have acquired over this past winter. Ω

CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 4

REMEMBRANCES, con't.

hear them squealing and calling each other, so of course I was curious and soon, being very careful to stay clean, I started on the path through the cow pasture to watch them – just to watch. And so I did.

Do you know what a pig wallow is? Picture a pig wallow with a raft in it with several children on it with long poles pushing the raft around and the raft tipping and almost sinking as they polled around. “Run to the other side. No go back – no. When the others saw me standing on the dry ground watching they did the right thing, they invited me to join them on the raft. I said I couldn’t because I had to – well, you know. What they suggested seemed quite reasonable, that I take off my shoes and socks so I did and they polled the raft over and I stepped aboard. I must mention the pigs were in the wallow, too.



When my mother saw me she picked up my shoes and socks. I can’t recall a word being spoken. No need to explain further. We walked home across the cow pasture in silence and stayed there. No, I never saw the organdy dress or the pink satin sash again.

Submitted in hope of a chuckle or two. CR Ω



WINTER TRAVEL IN NEW ENGLAND

Maintaining roads in New England during winter months was a challenge. Early advertisements for stage coach travel often included such statements as: “Performed if God Permits”. It has been said that departing on a 25-mile journey was a signal for making a will followed by a solemn farewell to family.

Harsh New England winters often limited options for travel. Our first colonial ancestors took to the frozen rivers with their horse-drawn sleds – precarious to say the least.



A better alternative, which came later, was to trample the snowfall with cattle. 8 to 20 yoke of cattle were teamed and driven along the roads packing the snow into a surface suitable for the use of sleighs, pungs (a one-horse sleigh consisting of a box on runners) and sledges. A sledge is little more than a large, heavy sled used for moving freight or massive objects.

Improved methods followed. One was an attempt to use a sled with a log fastened to one side (for weight) and a board to the other to push the snow to one side. It was not a great success.

Later in the 19th century the snow roller was devised. One or two large wooden cylinders or drums were hitched to horses. Reportedly they could cover 10-15 miles of road a day, packing the snow down to a surface suitable for sleighs, sledges, etc.



SNOW ROLLER IN PETERBORO

Fortunately, the town of Francestown also has a snow roller which was donated to the Heritage Museum and can be seen on your next trip to visit the museum.



The Francestown snow roller is much smaller than one depicted in Peterboro. Due in large part to our more rural character and narrow dirt roads. Also out of consideration for the horses – can you picture the poor beasts trying to haul anything larger than this up Bible Hill in deep snow.

The horses themselves had shoes that were equipped with heavy steel caulks, 3” wide at the toe and 1” at the heel. To remove snow that had balled up on the hoof inside the shoe, the driver carried a snow-ball hammer which he used to tap the rim of the shoe and break the snow loose.

We now return you to Spring 2024.

PUZZLE SOLUTION

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV
1	W	E	C	S					P	R	B				
2	H	A	R	S	H	I	P		L	E	A	D	E	N	
3	L	G		I	R				U	F	R				
4	S	L	O	E		C	R	Y	P	T		T	H	I	S
5	O					H			A		B				
6	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G		R	O	L	L	E	R
7			E				R		C		O	R			
8	C	O	I	L		T	O	U	C	H		G	L	I	B
9	U	E		A					M		O				
10	S	T	R	E	A	K			P	A	L	I	N	O	D
11	D					E			A					E	
12	T	A	M			N	O	D	D	Y		S	N	A	G
13	T	U				O			R	O		N		C	
14	P	E	A	N		U			O	F	C	O	L	O	R
15	D		G			E			P	F		W		N	