

Pittsford will rehabilitate Pioneer Burying Ground

Cemeteries are among a community's most valuable historic resources and often tell a story of the community and help define its character. Cemeteries can reveal vital information about a town's past such as historic events, religion, lifestyles and genealogy. The Town of Pittsford is the home to three local cemeteries – all containing a wealth of history about our first settlers. One of these cemeteries is the Pioneer Cemetery, one of the oldest in Monroe County, which is located at the intersection of Stone Road and Route 64. The original three-acre Pioneer Burying Ground, and Mile Post School (the first schoolhouse built in Monroe County) adjacent to it, was established by Simon and Israel Stone, the town's founders, in 1789 and purchased with \$250 of public funds.

Many of Pittsford's early settlers who were involved in community government and early farm families were buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. It is the final resting place of some of Pittsford's most historic figures including: Dr. John Ray, a renown physician who served as Pittsford's first town clerk; Glover Perrin, the founder of Perinton; Andrew Huntington, Sr., a physician who answered the alarm at Lexington; Alexander Dunn, a quartermaster in the Sullivan and Clinton expedition of 1779; and many members of the Lusk family, a historic Pittsford farming family (John Lusk was a Revolutionary war veteran and the first settler in Monroe County).

For those who have visited the cemetery recently, you may have noticed that it is in need of some repair and maintenance. Many of the headstones, which are hundreds of years old, have been worn down by the years as well as Rochester's inclement weather. In many cases, some tombstones are now illegible and are in need of some gentle rehabilitation (please note that tombstone inscriptions were copied in the twentieth century so names and burials are preserved).

In the coming months, the Town of Pittsford, working with historic preservation professionals, will begin to rehabilitate the cemetery. Some of the repairs will include replacing and painting the wooden fence that surrounds the grounds as well as assessing and repairing headstones. The town will also work to improve the overall landscaping of the area (e.g. removing unhealthy trees).

In October, Pittsford's Town Historian, Audrey Johnson, and local Civil War Veteran Genealogist Vicki Profitt, will take residents on a guided tour through the Pioneer Cemetery. This is a wonderful opportunity for residents to learn about the cemetery and the people who are buried there. For those who are interested, registration will be offered in our Fall Recreation Brochure.

Pittsford residents have always taken great pride in their history. By helping to preserve this historic cemetery, we are protecting Pittsford's roots. If you have any questions on this project, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at bcarpenter@townofpittsford.org.