

# Brookhaven/South Haven Cemeteries Fact Sheet

Brookhaven and South Haven Hamlets are blessed with many small family cemeteries and burying grounds, some of which predate the Revolutionary War. These cemeteries help provide a window to our community heritage. With study, they provide insight into lives of those who built these now unique hamlets. They are a valuable educational resource for our youth and adults, and future generations,

But they are a fragile resource. For them to survive, each generation needs to insure their protection and maintenance.

*“Show me your cemeteries, and I will tell you what kind of people you have.”*

Benjamin Franklin

(1706 - 1790)

## State Laws

In New York State law, there are two major types of cemeteries: those run by cemetery corporations, and those that are not. Cemeteries owned and operated by cemetery associations/not-for-profit cemetery corporations fall under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of State's Division of Cemeteries. Oaklawn Cemetery is the only cemetery in the hamlets that is in this category. It is not covered by this Fact Sheet.

## Town of Brookhaven Responsibilities

All other cemeteries are governed by **NYS Town Law<sup>1</sup>**. The Brookhaven Town board is under a duty to care for these cemeteries located in the town. The State law recognizes three classes of these cemeteries:

**1st class cemetery** – title to which has been vested to town by virtue of its use by town residents for 14 years.

- Requirements for fencing/mowing: maintained fence encircling cemetery required, mowing at least three times per year.

**2nd class cemetery** – by whatever ownership (other than private), control is not vested by a corporate body.

- Fencing/mowing: fence in front of cemetery required, mowing at least twice per year.

**3rd class cemetery** – any other than a private burial ground, which is abandoned or not controlled by any interest and no endowment or funds exist for its upkeep.

- Fencing/mowing: either front only or encircling fencing, depending on discretion of the board, no particular mowing requirements.

All of the cemeteries and burying grounds in the hamlets at least meet the definition of a 3<sup>rd</sup> class cemetery, and probably most meet the other classes, as they are recorded on the tax records as being Town property.

## Existing Town Care

In Brookhaven Town, the responsibility for the care of these cemeteries has been assigned to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The existing condition of our cemeteries and burying grounds is inconsistent, fair to poor. In some cases, spotty maintenance may be provided by our neighbors. It also appears that three cemeteries may be receiving some attention by the Town – the Rose Cemetery off Jared's Path, the Hulse Cemetery on Fire Place Neck Rd., and the

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<sup>1</sup> See Town Law § 291 handout.

old South Haven Church Cemetery. This attention, however, does not appear to be meeting the State's minimum standards. There does not appear to be any regular program of maintenance by the Department of Parks and Recreation. In many cases, the Department does not seem to be aware of the existence of a cemetery, even though these cemeteries have long been identified on Town tax maps and records, and a comprehensive inventory by the Town Historian (organizationally within the Department) has been in existence since 1939.

Except where the cemetery is close to a road, right-of-ways/easements are overgrown and may be becoming co-opted by adjacent properties – even where shown on tax maps. In some cases the cemetery itself is being encroached by adjacent properties – hence the intent of the State law-specified fencing.

## What You Can Do

- Sign up to become a **Cemetery Advocate**. Pick a particular cemetery near you or one that you are especially fond of. Keep an eye on it. Visit it occasionally. Let it become YOUR cemetery.
- Inform the Town of your concern when it is not being maintained in accordance with State law. Call the new Town “Constituent Response System<sup>2</sup>”

**451-TOWN (451-8696)**

should you see that your cemetery is not being maintained.

- Let Town officials know of your concern;  
Brian X. Foley, Town Supervisor  
One Independence Hill  
Farmingville, NY 11738

Jim LaCarrubba  
Commissioner of Parks and Recreation  
1130 Old Town Road  
Coram, NY 11727

Connie Kepert, Councilwoman  
District 4 (includes Brookhaven Hamlet and South Haven n/o railroad)  
One Independence Hill  
Farmingville, NY 11738

Barbara Russell, Town Historian  
Historian's Office  
3253 Route 112, Suite 1  
Medford, NY 11763-1411  
(631) 451-8038

- Report vandalism and misuse to the Suffolk County Police and the Brookhaven Town Parks & Recreation Department. Let us in the Fire Place History Club know – either Marty Van Lith (286-5897) or John Deitz (286-3178).

Detailed documentation on each cemetery may be found at web site:

<http://prometheusli.com/hamlet/cemeteries/cemeteries.asp>

Prepared by the Fire Place History Club  
October 2007

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<sup>2</sup> See Brookhaven Town CRS press release handout.

## Cemeteries and Burial Grounds in Brookhaven and South Haven Hamlets

Map Key		Address (approximate)	Town Historian ID	Lat.	Long.	Town Parks & Recreation ID	Tax Map
1	<b>South Haven Church</b>	South Haven, at former church site.	4	N40° 48.064'	W72° 53.170'	4361C21	200-849-03-5
2	<b>Carman/</b>	These two adjacent sites are landlocked within the former Robinson Duck farm, now owned by Suffolk Co. Sites are believed to be the property of the Town, with Town maintenance responsibility.	79	N40° 47.929'	W72° 53.245'		200-878-01
3	<b>Miller</b>			N40° 47.937'	W72° 53.245'		
4	<b>Homan *</b>	Site within Wertheim Wildlife Refuge. Monuments (and perhaps graves) moved elsewhere.	80				
5	<b>David Hawkins</b>	This site is within the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge, but is believed to be still the property of the Town of Brookhaven. Additional research required	16				200-878-01
6	<b>Nathaniel Hawkins</b>	This site is within the Wertheim Wildlife Refuge, but is believed to be still the property of the Town of Brookhaven. Additional research required	39			5195C39	200-933-03-1
7	<b>Barteau</b>	North of 2600 Montauk Hwy. Easement/right of way is to the east, and overgrown. Until access is cleared, better access is through backyard of residence.	29	N40° 47.527'	W72° 54.683'	4351C47	200-903-01-10
8	<b>Corwin</b>	Rear of 10 Beaverbrook Drive, Brookhaven, NY 11719	33	N40° 46.834'	W72° 54.738'	4381	200-963-01-8
9	<b>Miller</b>	Rear of 19 Fire Place Neck Road, Brookhaven, NY 11719	32	N40° 46.620'	W72° 54.845'	4349CC32	200-974.10-03-1.3
10	<b>Azel Hawkins</b>	Rear of 12 Stillwood Road, Brookhaven, NY 11719	81	N40° 46.516'	W72° 54.584'		200-974.20-01-23
11	<b>(Senator John) Rose Cemetery *</b>	Beaverdam Road at Library Lane. Graves moved to Oaklawn Cemetery.	52				200-976.30-01-3
12	<b>Conklin</b>	Rear of 179 Old Stump Rd., Brookhaven, NY 11719	S10			5195C39	200-933-03-1
13	<b>Ryder/Meadow Lane</b>	About 15 Meadow Lane, about 50 feet east along the property line (north of the barn).	S17	N40° 46.296'	W72° 54.048'		200-976.40-01-12
14	<b>Mott Burial Ground</b>	Site overgrown. Right-of-way uncertain.	S12				200-978.40-01-17.1
15	<b>Thomas Rose</b>	Off Jared's Path	30	N40° 46.040'	W72° 54.626'	4378	200-978.50-01-01.55
16	<b>David Hulse</b>	Off Fire Place Neck Rd.	19	N40° 46.484'	W72° 54.870'	4371	200-974.10-03-21
17	<b>"Sives Hedgerow"/ James Greenfield</b>	East of 338 South Country Rd. Current condition not investigated.	S01				200-974.10-02-13
18	<b>Rowland Burial Ground</b>	314 S. Country Rd., near Beaver Dam Creek (Tooker property)	S09	No signal	No signal		200-976.20-02-11.2
19	<b>Methodist Cemetery *</b>	Beaverdam Rd. on new South Haven Church property. Graves and stones mostly moved to Oaklawn Cemetery. Some to other locations.	51				200-976.20-02-01
21	<b>Oaklawn</b>	North Arthur Ave.	21	N40° 46.896'	W72° 55.680'		200-961-02-49
23	<b>Woodruff</b>	Northwest of 231 South Country Road, along private drive. (Might be considered Bellport, but it is outside the Village limits).	17			4368	
	<b>Ketcham Private Cemetery *</b>	Removed, and no evidence remains.	96				200-974.10-03-1

\* No longer a burial ground. The gravestones and likely the graves at these sites were relocated elsewhere.



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