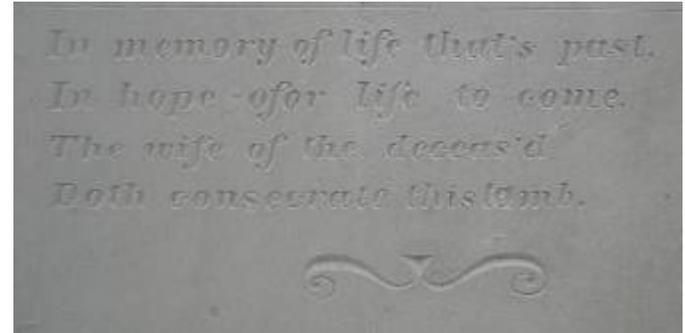


# Exploring the South Cortland Cemetery & Cortland County's other abandoned cemeteries



Presentation to:

Cortland County's historians

By:

John Hoeschele

Date:

November 5, 2010

[southcortlandcemetery.com](http://southcortlandcemetery.com)

- ❧ **Disclaimers & credits**
- ❧ **Bio & why interested?**
- ❧ **What's known about the South Cortland Cemetery**
- ❧ **Future plans & hopes**
  - for South Cortland Cemetery
  - for other such cemeteries across Cortland County  
(concept of CCCA)
- ❧ **Discussion / Q&A**

# Disclaimers & credits!



- ∞ **I do not claim to be a historian!**
- ∞ **What I am learning is founded on work done by others, including but not limited to:**
  - published historians, e.g.:
    - ...H.P. Smith: History of Cortland County 1885
    - ...D. Morris Kurtz: Past & Present, A Historic & Descriptive Sketch of CC (1883)
    - ...Edgar L. Welch: Grips Historical Souvenir of Cortland (1899)
    - ...JH French: Historical & Statistical Gazeteer of NYS (1860)
    - ...James Milne: History of Cortland NY (late 1800s) ???
    - ...Herbert G. Davis: "South Cortland" pgs of Cortlandville Sesquicentennial pamphlet (1979)
  - local historians past & present, e.g.: Jeannette Benton/DAR, Mary Ann Kane, Anita Wright, Ron Rocco, etc.
  - local cemetery & history buffs, e.g.: Mary L. Dexter, Christine Buck, others
  - genealogists
  - online resources (incl. digitizers of paper resources), e.g.: Tim Stowell at USgenweb project, Google, American Libraries, Interment.net, Tombstone Transcription Project, etc.
- ∞ **If I contribute anything new ~ neat!**
- ∞ **If I merely help compile and preserve others' data for future gen's ~ fine by me!**
- ∞ **Lastly: It's an ongoing process... Corrections, new information, leads, etc. welcome!**

# Bio & why interested?



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



JOHN  
STANBRO



# Bio & why interested?



## ∞ **Orig. from Rochester/Cortland resident since 1988**

- wife Lisa, son Max & daughter Margaret

## ∞ **Marketing professional (25 yrs)**

- English major .... ad agency copywriter

- VP-creative at area ad agencies, owned Drum Creative Corp., now marketing / gov't relations mgr. (Anaren)

- freelance writer: Conservationist, Disney's Family Fun, trade magazines

## ∞ **Involved in local non-profits**

- LHCEC board member since 2001 (ex-pres: 2006-2009)

- pro bono support: LHCEC, 1890 House, CRT, Rotary

- recently joined Foundation Board Cortland Rural Cemetery

## ∞ **A fan of "old stuff" / increasingly a history & biography buff**

## ∞ **Became interested in South Cortland Cemetery...**

- when writing/researching a speculative article on Garden Cemetery movement / cemeteries as green space

- personal project (research, website, etc.)



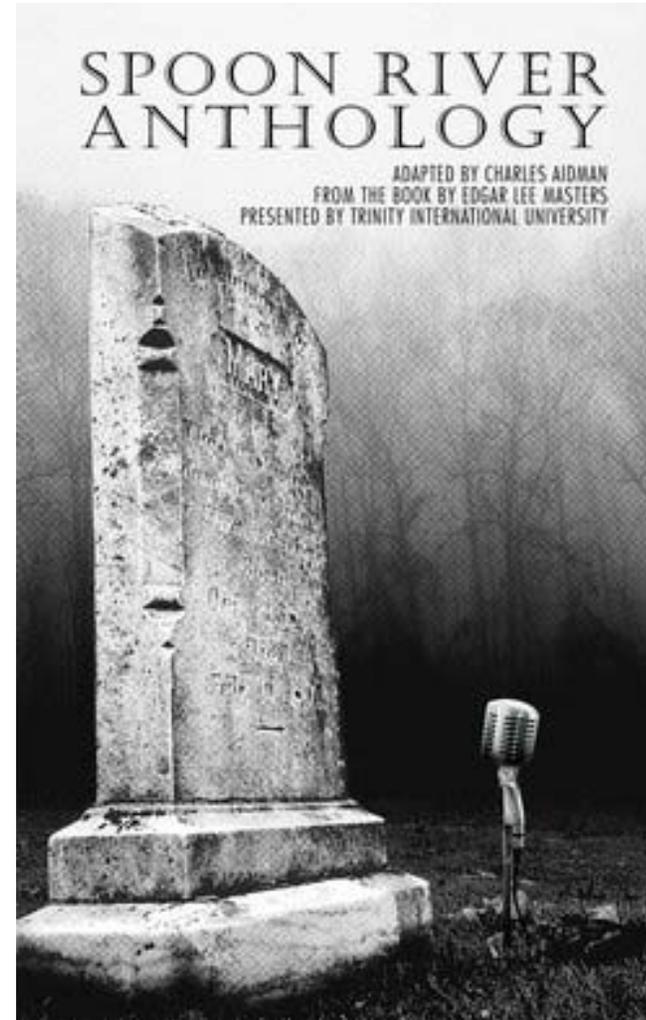
### Restored Victorians:

- > home at 53 Prospect Terrace (built 1888)
- > rental property at 4 Church Street (built 1879)

1.

***“Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them.”***

Henry David Thoreau



Edgar Lee Masters,  
Loosely based on Petersburg, IL

2.

Simply put, there is some urgency in the need to capture data while we can: Time, weather, neglect, vandalism, traffic & development are taking their toll



Siltstone  
(aka: schist  
or sandstone)



# What's known about the South Cortland Cemetery



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



JOHN  
STANBRO



# Early years

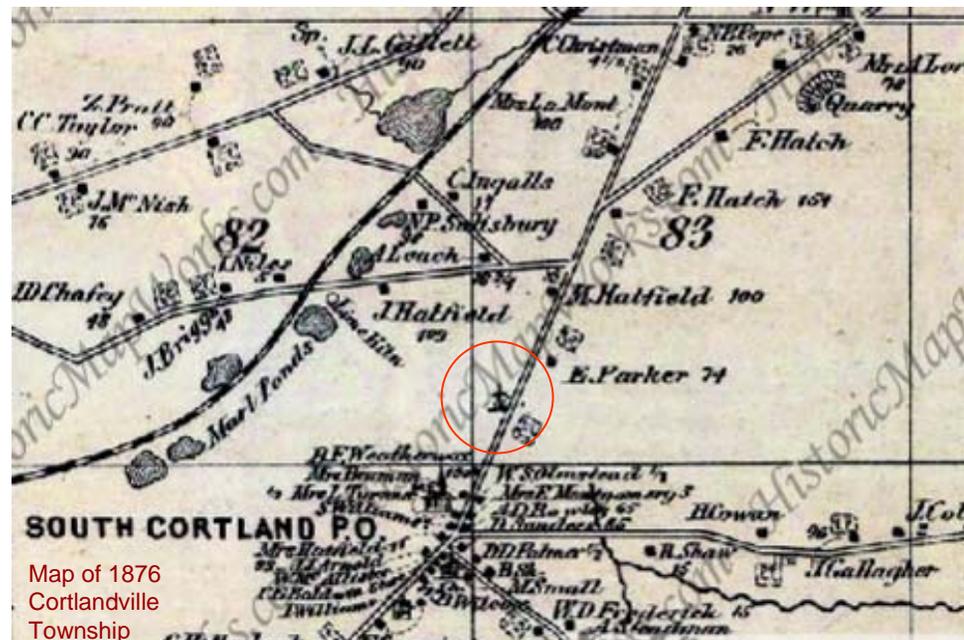


South  
Cortland  
Cemetery

∞ Lot 83: Portion of Philip Van Cortlandt's military tract (leg. act: 1786)

∞ Bio:

- grandson of Stephanus Van Cortlandt (1643-1700), NYC's 1st native Mayor
- son of Pierre Van Cortlandt (1721-1814), co-author 1st NYS constitution & 1st Lt. Gov.
- Lt. Colonel of 2nd NY Reg. in Continental Army; promoted to Brig. Gen. after Yorktown under Lafayette
- served Cortland town supervisor, school commissioner & road master
- delegate to NYS convention voting on Fed constitution (1788)
- NYS Assembly (1788-90) & NYS Senate (1791-93)
- NYS congressman to US House of Reps (1793-09)
- family name is source of Cortland County, Cortlandville, city of Cortland – as well as town of Cortlandt in Westchester Cty. (common in NYC)
- died at 81 at Van Cortlandt Manor, Croton on Hudson, in Westchester County on November 21, 1831: interred at Hillside Cemetery, Peekskill



Map of 1876  
Cortlandville  
Township



# Early years (cont.)

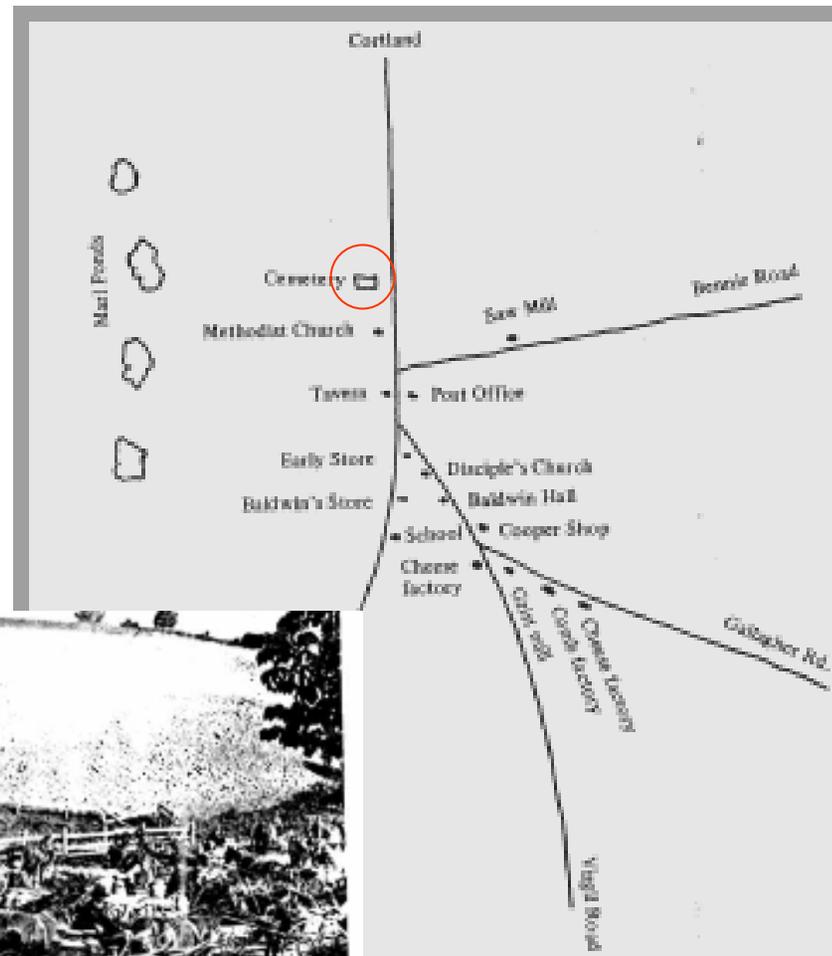


- ⌘ In deed records, conveyed thereafter with “exception for burying ground...” to Jones (‘08), Gardener (‘13), Barney (‘18), Catskill Bank, Rowley (‘21), Wilcox, Parker (‘67), Hatfield...
- ⌘ First known burial at the site: John Calvert (d. 1808)
- ⌘ Meanwhile:
  - Cortland County founded (1808, split from Onondaga County)
  - Town of Cortlandville founded (1829 split from Town of Homer)
  - Village of Cortland incorp. (1853); not chartered as City until 1900



# Mid- to late-1800s

- ∞ The hamlet of South Cortland...
  - early industry: Marl production (whitewash, fertilizer, bricks...)
  - 1860 census confirms population of 161
- ∞ Area boasted: “Christian” church (1839-1864), Methodist church (\_\_\_\_-1925), dry goods stores, tavern/inn, post office, newspaper (South Cortland Luminary), grist mill, saw mill, cheese factory & creamery, weaving shop, comb factory & 4-horse stage route (from Cortland to Owego)

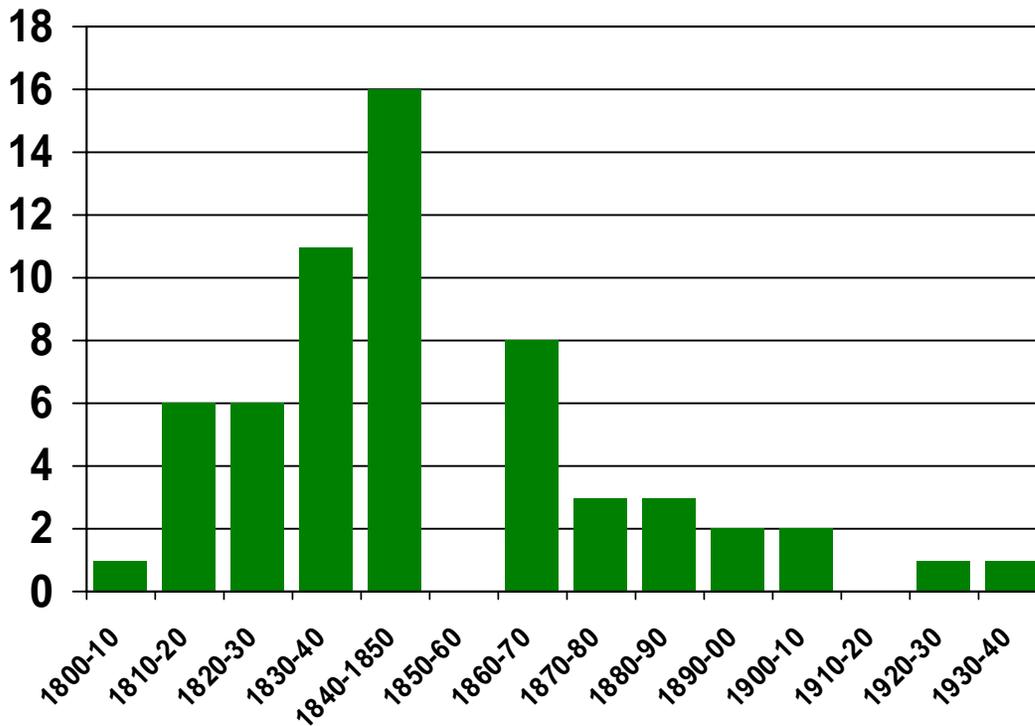


South Cortland Creamery – about 1900

Sketch representing S. Cortland  
1829 -- from Cortlandville  
Sesquientennial Celebration booklet  
(published 1979) – Herbert G. Davis

# 1900s

- ∞ Interments slow, then stop
- ∞ Last known burial: Daniel McAllister (d. 1932)
- ∞ Area remains rural, until onset of commercial development (circa 1966, Smith Corona, etc.)

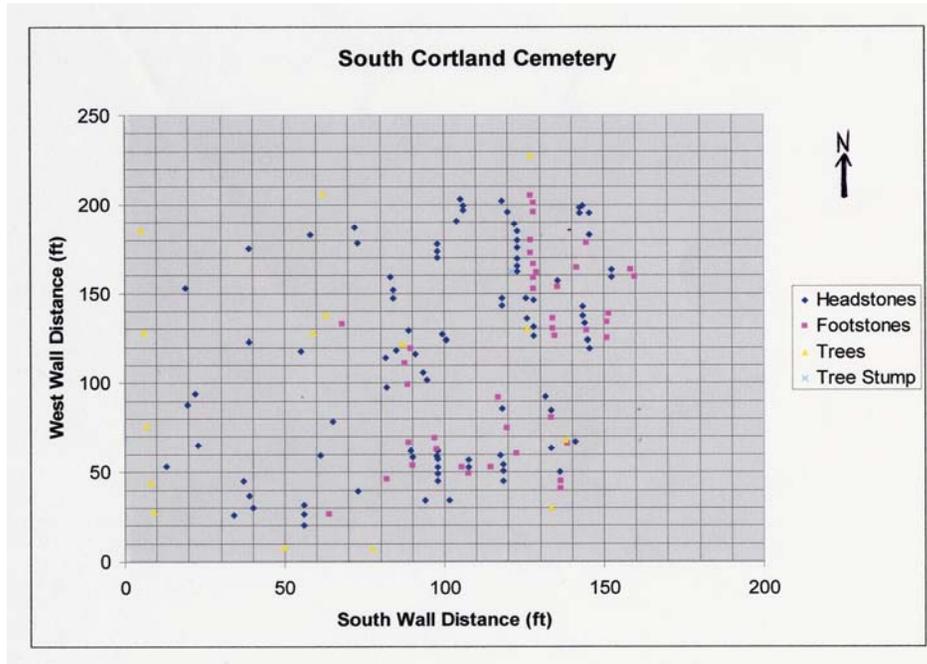


Cornell Institute for Resource Information Systems  
(IRIS) Aerial Photograph Collection  
(1955 series)



(1966 series)

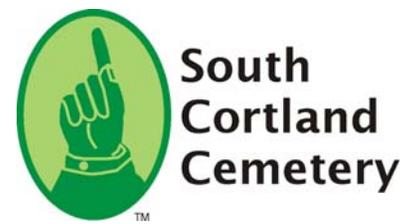
- ☚ Cemetery cared for by Town of Cortlandville (per Article 15, NYS Non-profit-corporation Law, relating to cemeteries)
- ☚ Also cared for by volunteers: Ed O'Donnell, Ron Rocco, etc.



Developed by SUNY Cortland students Natalie Fernandes and Jeremy Wright as part of their Final Project for anthropologist/professor Kristina Killgrove, [PhD candidate, UNC, Chapel Hill](#) (Spring, 2008).

Google Street view, 2009

# Today



South  
Cortland  
Cemetery

Recent MapQuest satellite image (sans Wal-mart)



Old Smith Corona  
Facility

“South Cortland  
Cemetery”

Location of  
new super  
Wal-mart

Walden Place  
Senior Living

South/western loop  
of Walden Oaks tract

Route 13

# Who is interred here?



- ☞ Earliest discernable interment: 1808, John Calvert
- ☞ Last discernable interment: 1932, David McAllister
- ☞ Family names include...

Aldrich  
Chapin  
Ford  
May  
Pierce  
Walsworth

Andreas  
Cole  
Hard  
McAllister  
Roberts  
Williams

Bradley  
Cummings  
Jarvas  
McNish  
Slauson

Brand  
Daboll  
Marshall  
Osborn  
Stanbro

Calvert  
Davis  
Marshall  
Paterson  
Walsworth

# Who is interred here

## Example 1: John Stanbro: 1759-1844



- ✪ From Washington Cty, Rhode Island (family emigrated from England in early 1600s)
- ✪ Along with father (John Sr.) and brother (James), fought in Rev. War (Private in Babcock's troop mustered from that county)
- ✪ Married Hannah Whittlesey in Stonington, CT in 1779 (across border from RI) – living there for 20 years
- ✪ Families of John Jr. & James moved to Otsego Cty. in 1801, among 1<sup>st</sup> there
- ✪ 1813, John Jr. purchased lot 81 in town of Homer (now Cortlandville)
- ✪ Family believed to be Quaker
- ✪ Raised 12 children, most of whom settled in Cortland area; grandchildren moving west in late 1800s...Iowa, Kansas, Oregon)
- ✪ In 1831, John Jr. received his Revolutionary War pension
- ✪ Listed as living in Virgil (1825 census), lived and worked as a farmer until his death in 1844
- ✪ John Jr. and Hannah are buried side by side in the South Cortland Cemetery (in the town of Cortlandville)
- ✪ John Jr.'s grave is listed in the Graves of Revolutionary Patriots



### Sources:

- > Smith's History of Virgil: Military
- > 1840 Census, Military Pensioners (Virgil)
- > [Jacquie Shattner \(wife of Fred Shattner, a descendent of James Stanbro, John's brother\)](#)

# Who is interred here

Example 2: Robert McAllister: 1816 - 1879



∞ Robert McAllister

> From Cortland County Democrat 1879:

*"7 Nov 1879. Suicide. Robert McALLISTER, of South Cortland, committed suicide by cutting his throat Wednesday morning, at about four o'clock. He went out of the house shortly before that hour, and when his family went to look for him, he was found just around the corner of the house dead. The instrument used was an ordinary pocket knife, with which he had made an incision on each side of the throat, severing the veins. He had shown some signs of insanity for some days past, and had been carefully watched by members of the family. Mr. McALLISTER was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, and was well posted on all subjects. He was between fifty and sixty years of age. The coroner held an inquest on Wednesday, and the jury found a verdict substantially in accordance with the above facts."*



## Why?

# Who is interred here

Example 3: Morgan McAllister: 1846 -1870



∞ Morgan L. McAllister (24 yrs old...son of Robert):

> Cortland County Standard (1870):

*"The deceased was formerly of South Cortland, but for the past three years had been in the employ of the Chicago, Alton and St. Louis R.R. Co. as brakeman. On the night of the 7th \_\_, while passing along the top of the train, and just on the point of stepping from one car to another, the coupling broke, and the cars separating, he was precipitated to the track, where four of the cars passed over him, injuring him so severely that he died in about five hours. His remains were accompanied home by Mr. Zera Tanner, who was in the employ of the same road. We consider that the kindness of Mr. Tanner is worthy of this mention. Morgan is spoken of as upright and honest, and always at his post. His death was painfully sudden."*

> Cortland Democrat, 1870:

*"...We learn that Mr. McAllister was a faithful employee, always at his post and doing his duty. His remains were brought home and services held in the Christian Church at South Cortland."*

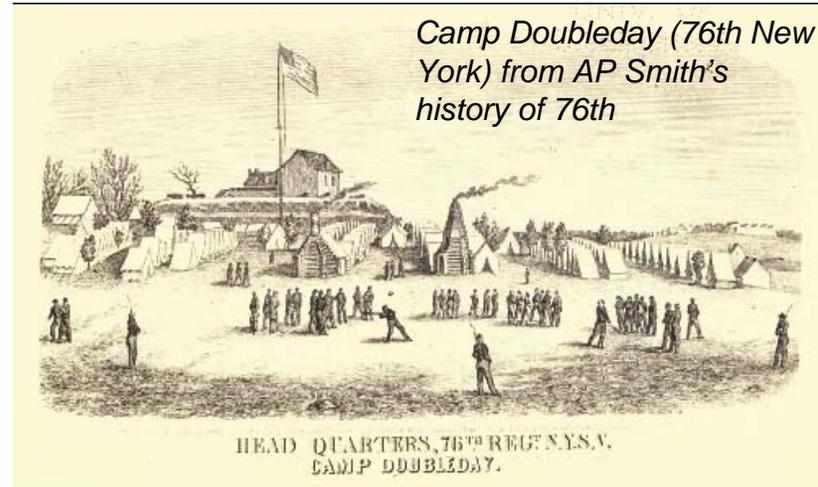


# Who is interred here

## Example 4: Wattsford McAllister: 1841 -1885



- Enlisted as a private in NY's 76<sup>th</sup> Infantry at 21 years old at South Cortland (Nov. 15, 1861); served three years; and discharged for disability at Portsmouth, RI
- 76<sup>th</sup> mustered in Albany, Jan 16, 1862...fighting thereafter in: Manassas (Aug '62), Antietam (Sept '62), Fredericksburg (Dec '62), Chancellorsville (May '63), Jun/July '63), The Wilderness (May/Jun '64), others
- Headstone: Died August 7, 1885 vs. family bible: Died November 5, 1885



Hazel E. McAllister (b. 1954), (L), shown w/ Barbara Jean Merihew McAllister (R), wife Hazel's brother, Robert

# Who is interred here



## Example 5:

∞ Revilo Ford:  
B. 1788, D. 1829 (41 yrs)

> Cortland Republican, 1820:

*“Died - In this town, on the 27<sup>th</sup>,  
Capt. Revilo FORD aged 40. His  
death was occasioned by the  
falling of a limb upon him, two  
days before, while chopping in  
the woods.”*

## Example 6:

∞ Zina Ford:  
B. 1785, D. 1862 (77 yrs)

> From AP Smith’s history:

*“The Methodists never had a  
society in the place, but some  
of that denomination formed a  
class and called to their  
ministerial aid at various times.  
Ezra Rood, his son Reuben,  
Asher Wilcox, Zina Ford and  
others were prominent in this  
work. They never had a church  
building here.”*

# Future plans & hopes



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



JOHN  
STANBRO



# For South Cortland Cemetery



## ∞ Protection & maintenance:

- re-affirm ownership / responsibility for care (trace deeds, etc.)
- secure permanent protection / covenant (?)
- feasibility of & funding for archeological survey of markers, walls/fences, etc.\*

## ∞ Research:

- continue research of the interred & the cemetery itself
- collaborate with town & local historians
- collaborate with SUNY Cortland History Department, other entities (DAR, CCHS, etc.), volunteers

## ∞ Education & promotion:

- educate public officials, key influentials, public
- erect signage (cemetery name, informational & educational, etc.)
- public outreach (PR, website, public speaking, brochure, others)
- participate in / collaborate with newly formed "Cortland County Cemetery Association" (see next slide)

\* Any proposed restoration work would be in accordance with published guidelines of the American Association for State & Local History (AASLH)



South  
Cortland  
Cemetery

☞ How many  
similar cemeteries  
in Cortland County?

## Cemeteries like it, county-wide



- ✧ According to Mary Dexter's research, there are upwards of 150 such cemeteries throughout Cortland County...
  - RootsWeb lists 55 of these (37 of which have basic listing of headstones)...
- ✧ By comparison, NYGenWeb for Tompkins County lists 184 such cemeteries including nearly complete headstones listings and photos (70%+)

# Establish *Cortland County Cemetery Association* (?)



∞ New 501c3

∞ Mission:

*The mission of the Cortland County Cemetery Association is to aid in the protection, maintenance, and research of the numerous inactive and active rural cemeteries and graveyards located throughout Cortland County, NY. The Association will also seek to promote the historical significance, inherent cultural value, and green-space value of these “outdoor museums.”*

# Establish *Cortland County Cemetery Association* (?) (cont)

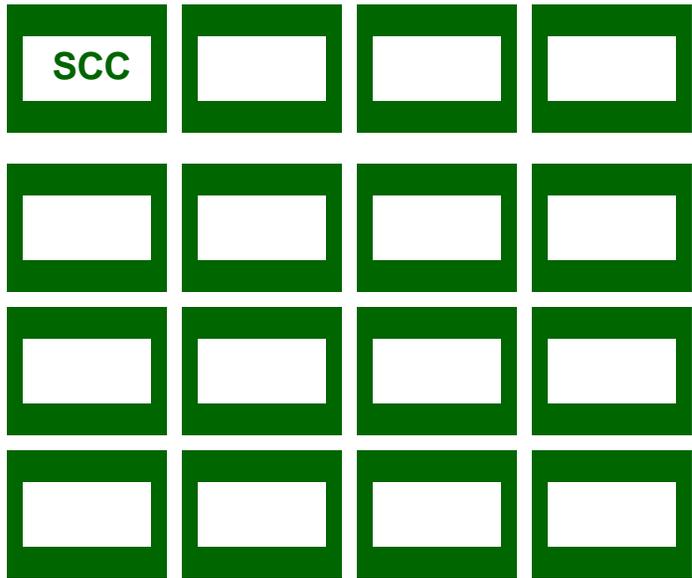
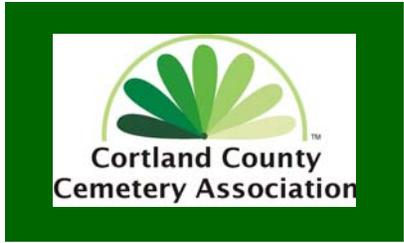


- ⌘ Status:
  - meet w/ local historians for input on concept (is assoc. prudent, needed, structure, etc.)
- ⌘ If “go,” establish near-term goals:
  - draft bylaws
  - recruit board members...strategic selection, minimal commitment, etc.
  - ID/recruit volunteers for data collection
  - establish key Association policies & best-practices for data collection, maintenance, signage, etc.
  - make personal founding gift ~ secure additional donations
- ⌘ Future plans might include:
  - collaboration with local-history experts & cemetery buffs / taphophiles to set goals
  - develop educational / tourist brochure
  - publish to web (incl. links to other sites)

# Establish Cortland County Cemetery Association (?) (cont)

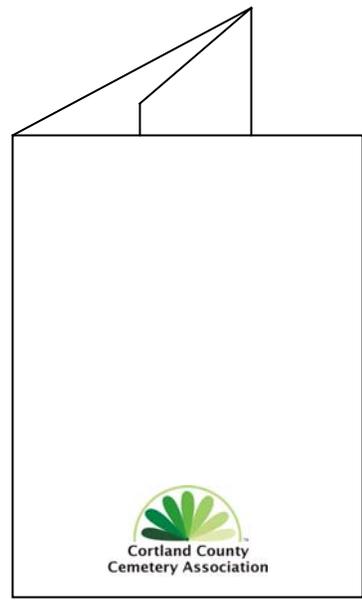


## Online

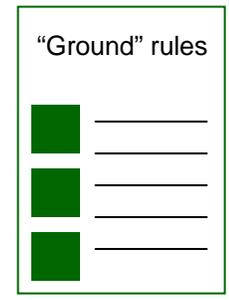
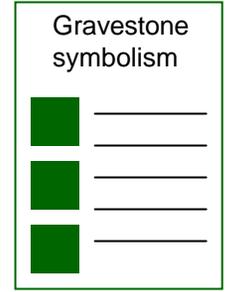
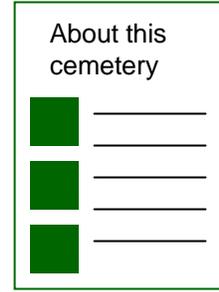


Etc.

## Brochure & self guided tour / map



## Signage system



# Discussion / Q&A



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



JOHN  
STANBRO



Thank you!



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



JOHN  
STANBRO



# Addendum



*In memory of life that's past.  
In hope -of- for life to come.  
The wife of the deceased  
Both consecrate this tomb.*



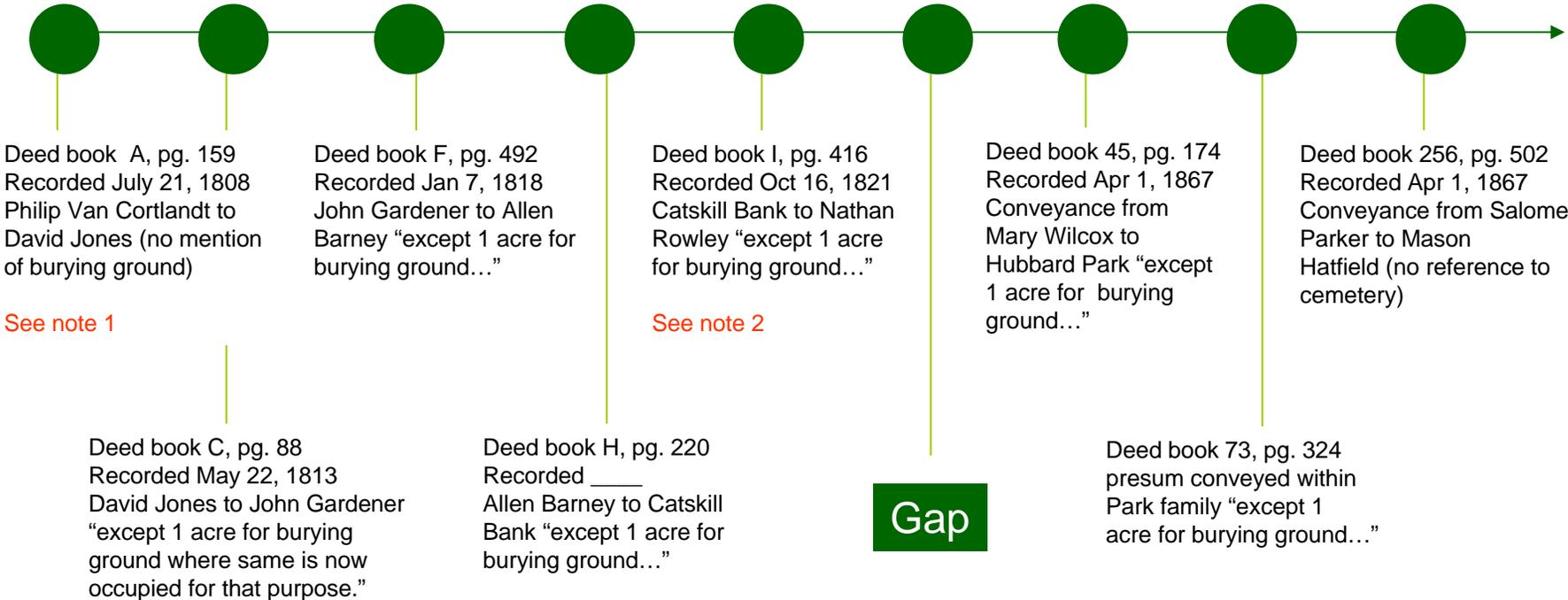
JOHN  
STANBRO



# LAND OWNERSHIP TRAIL

Lot 83 Deed research published at CCHS...believe work done by Shirley G. Heppell, Oct. 11, 1972

Her conclusion: "Burying ground pre-dates S. Cortland churches – that burying ground is that only & no church connection or ownership. No corporation or family name designation appeared on any of the deeds. NYS law relating to cemeteries (\_\_\_ 291 of town law) say that title of land used as cemetery for 14 years is vested with the town – hence Cortlandville."



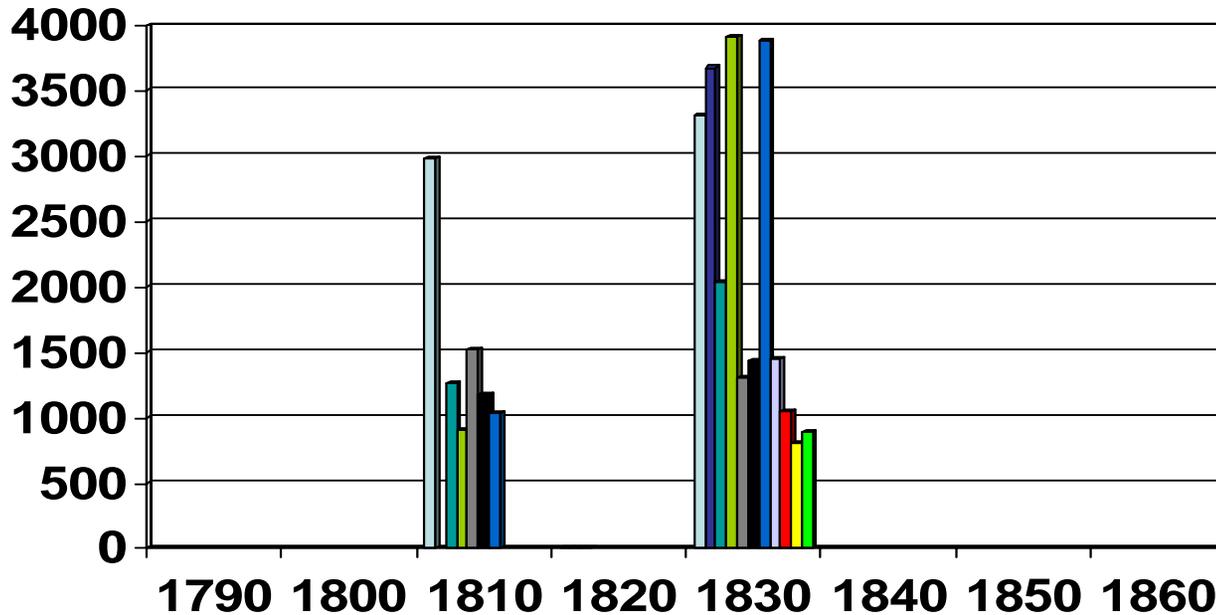
# Misc. population data



**South  
Cortland  
Cemetery**

Beginning to put population counts  
in place by town / village

Cortland County – Wikipedia,  
extracted from Fed Census



## Historical populations

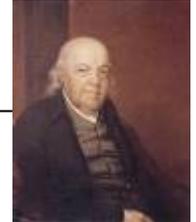
Census	Pop.	%±
1810	8,869	—
1820	16,507	86.1%
1830	23,791	44.1%
1840	24,607	3.4%
1850	25,140	2.2%
1860	26,294	4.6%
1870	25,173	-4.3%
1880	25,825	2.6%
1890	28,657	11.0%
1900	27,576	-3.8%
1910	29,249	6.1%
1920	29,625	1.3%
1930	31,709	7.0%
1940	33,668	6.2%
1950	37,158	10.4%
1960	41,113	10.6%
1970	45,894	11.6%
1980	48,820	6.4%
1990	48,963	0.3%
2000	48,599	-0.7%

- Homer
- Cortlandville
- Solon
- Virgil
- Cincinatus
- Preble
- Truxton
- Scott
- Freetown
- Willet
- Marathon

# Bio: Philip Van Cortlandt



- ⌘ grandson of Stephanus Van Cortlandt (1643-1700), NYC's 1st native Mayor
- ⌘ son of Pierre Van Cortlandt (1721-1814), co-author 1st NYS constitution & 1st Lt. Gov.
- ⌘ Lt. Colonel who commanded the 2nd NY Regiment in Continental Army
- ⌘ Promoted to Brig. General for conduct at the siege of Yorktown under Gen. Lafayette
- ⌘ served as Cortland town supervisor, school commis. & road master; also delegate to NYS convention voting on Fed constitution (1788); served in NYS Assembly (1788-90), NYS Senate (1791-93) & as NYS congressman to US House of Reps (1793-09)
- ⌘ family name is source of Cortland County, Cortandville, city of Cortland – as well as town of Cortlandt in Westchester Cty. (common in NYC)
- ⌘ died at 81 at Van Cortlandt Manor, Croton on Hudson, in Westchester County on November 21, 1831: interred at Hillside Cemetery, Peekskill



# Bio: John Stanbro



- ∞ From Jacquie Shattner (wife of Fred Shattner, a descendent of James Stanbro, John' brother):
  - > John (orig Jon) Stanbro is one of the sons of John Stanbro Sr. (approx 1730) and his wife Patience.
  - > He had a brother (James, 1760) and four sisters. All three men were Revolutionary War vets
  - > John Jr. served in 1776 as a private in Babcock's troop, mustered in Washington County, RI
  - > Born in Hopkinton, Washington County, RI...married Hannah Whittlesey, daughter of Isaac Whittlesey (June 29, 1779) in Stonington, Connecticut where the family lived for 20 years
  - > In 1801, John's and James' families moved to Plainfield, Otsego Cty NY – placing them among the first families there
  - > In 1810, John Jr. lived in Brookfield, Madison Cty and in 1813, he purchased land in Cortland County, lot 81 (at the time in the town of Homer (now Cortlandville))
  - > In the 1825 census, John Jr. is listed as living in Virgil, where he lived and worked as a farmer until his death in 1844.
  
- ∞ Additional known family information:
  - > the Stanbroughs originally came from England to the United States in the early 1600s, settling in the South Hampton, Long Island, NY area.
  - Hannah Whittlesey, John, Jr.'s wife, was born in Rhode Island. Her father's name was Isaac Whittlesey. There were 12 children born to John Jr. and Hannah...most of whom stayed in the Cortland area, with grandchildren moving as far away as Iowa, Kansas, and Oregon in the late 1800s.
  - > The family was believed to be Quaker, as were many families in the area
  - > In 1831, John Jr. received his Revolutionary War

# 76<sup>th</sup> Regiment info (Watsford McAllister)



South  
Cortland  
Cemetery

∞ The following is taken from *The Union army: a history of military affairs in the loyal states, 1861-65 -- records of the regiments in the Union army -- cyclopedia of battles -- memoirs of commanders and soldiers*. Madison, WI: Federal Pub. Co., 1908. volume II.

Seventy-sixth Infantry.—Cols., Nelson W. Green, W. P. Wain-wright, Charles E. Livingston; Lieut.-Cols., John D. Shaul, Charles E. Livingston, Andrew J. Grover, John E. Cook, Charles A. Watkins; Majs., Charles E. Livingston, Andrew J. Grover, John E. Cook, John W. Young. The 76th, the "Cortland Regiment," recruited principally in Cortland and Otsego counties, was mustered into the U. S. service at Albany, Jan. 16, 1862, for three years. It left the state the next day for Washington, was assigned to the 3d brigade of Casey's division and served in the vicinity of Washington during the first winter. It suffered its first severe loss at Manassas in Aug., 1862, when it served with the 2nd brigade, 1st division, 3d corps, losing in the several engagements of Gen. Pope's campaign, 147 in killed, wounded and missing. It was active at South mountain and Antietam, its brigade and division having been assigned to the 1st corps, with which it accompanied the cavalry advance through Philomont, Union and Upperville, Va. It participated in the battle of Fredericksburg, went into winter quarters near Falmouth and during the Chancellorsville movement, lost 3 men while guarding bridges. At Gettysburg the regiment took a prominent part and suffered the loss of 234 in killed, wounded and missing. Previous to this battle the ranks had been reinforced by the addition of the veterans and recruits of the 24th and 30th N. Y. infantry, but after Gettysburg they were again sadly thinned. The regiment participated in the Mine Run fiasco, and at Brandy Station in Jan., 1864, was transferred to the 1st brigade of the same division, returning to its old brigade in March, and was later assigned to the 2nd brigade, 4th division, 5th corps, and broke camp in April for the Wilderness campaign, in which it suffered its greatest loss during the first two days—282 killed, wounded or missing. It continued to see hard service at Spottsylvania, the North Anna, Totopotomoy, Cold Harbor and Petersburg, where it took part in the siege operations until the end of its term of service. It was mustered out by companies, July 1, Oct. 11 and 20, Nov. 8 and 18, Dec. 1, 1864, and Jan. 1, 1865, the veterans and recruits being transferred to the 147th N. Y. infantry. The regiment lost during its term of service 175 by death from wounds and 166 by death from accident, imprisonment or disease, of whom 56 died in imprisonment. It ranks among the "three hundred fighting regiments."

**Article 15 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law: CEMETERIES AND  
CREMATORIES (Laws, Rules and Regulations of the New York State  
Cemetery Board) -- TOWN LAW § 291. Burial grounds**



- ∞ 1. The title to every lot or piece of land which shall have been used by the inhabitants of any town in this state as a cemetery or burial ground for the space of fourteen years shall be deemed to be vested in such town, and shall be subject in the same manner as other corporate property of towns, to the government and direction of the town board. In any town the town board may adopt regulations for the proper care of any such cemetery and burial ground and regulating the burial of the dead therein. It shall be the duty of the town board to remove the grass and weeds from any such cemetery or burial ground in any such town at least three times in each year, and to erect and maintain suitable fences around such cemetery or burial ground. The town board of any town must also provide for the removal of grass and weeds at least twice in each year from any cemetery or burial ground, by whomsoever owned, in such town, where such control is not vested by other provisions of law in the town or in trustees or other corporate body, and provide for the preservation, care and fencing of any such cemetery and the town board of any town must also provide for the removal of grass and weeds from all cemeteries, other than private burial grounds, which are abandoned or not controlled by any existing board or body and for the care of which there exists no special fund or endowment and such duties shall be performed under the supervision of the town board, or a person whom the town board may designate; provided, however, that such duties shall not be exercised in respect to any private ground or particular lot or lots therein after the true owner or owners thereof file written objections thereto with the town clerk. The cost and expenses of any officer or person in performing any duties under or pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be a town charge, and the town board shall appropriate and provide annually the moneys necessary for carrying out the provisions of this section, and make the same available for the proper officer or persons by whom the moneys are required to be expended. The town board may also receive and execute any trust for the care of any cemetery which the town is required to care for pursuant to the provisions of this section and to receive and execute any trust for the care of lots in any such cemetery.