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SOMETHING NEW HAPPENED LAST DECEMBER

For the first time ever the South New Hope Cemetery Association laid wreaths on all the graves of our veterans. These veterans gave a part of their lives, some to serve during war, to keep us safe. Some served to keep our country strong in order to deter armed conflict.

SNH joined up with the national organization of Wreaths Across America (WAA) in their mission, "Remember, Honor, and Teach, as carried out in part by placing wreaths on veterans' graves . . . during the holiday season at locations all over the country and beyond."



It was a moving ceremony as a group of adults and children came together at the SNH cemetery to prepare the wreaths and then the actual laying of the wreaths at the headstones of 23 veterans. The WAA provided seven wreaths and flags to represent all the branches of service: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines and POW/MIA. These were installed on our decorative iron fence at the entrance to the cemetery along County Rd. T.

The cost of the 23 wreaths was donated by a private individual in 2015. The cemetery association would like to make this an annual event, but we will need other individual participation from those who read this newsletter.

WAA has made it easy for individuals to join in and put one's passion into action to help us continue to show our appreciation to those who have served on our behalf. See an accompanying article in this newsletter on how you can help, regardless of where you may live. We are hoping that all 23 wreaths for our cemetery can be sponsored.

Calendar of Activities - All activities at SNH

May 21: 8:30 - Workday. Volunteers needed, lunch is provided.

June 21: Stevens Point's Sons of Norway Vennligfolk Lodge member Midsummer Celebration picnic.

June 26: 2:00 - "Heroic Women Homesteaders" presentation by Elaine Anderson. Get a glimpse into the history of tough, strong women who on their own conquered the prairie.

July 4: 2:00 - New Hope Firecracker Parade, ending at the church. Church will be open before & after the parade.

July 17: 2:00 - Hymn Sing and Barbershop Quartet. Chuck Fritz, hymn leader; Hannah Gutho, accompanist; "The Professionals" Barbershop Quartet, members of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

September 17: 8:30 - Cemetery Grounds Workday. Volunteers needed, lunch is provided.

October 1: 11:00 - 5th Annual Pie Social. (new beginning time-until pies run out) SNH is located along the trail of the Hidden Studios Art Tour. See www.hiddenstudiosarttour.com.

December 17: 10:30 - Wreaths Across America. Laying wreaths on veterans' graves.

*We welcome you to these events and activities!
See our website for details and possible program additions as the season unfolds.*

South New Hope Cemetery Association

CIVIL WAR BURIALS AT SOUTH NEW HOPE *By Mark Kjer*

In this newsletter we are meeting the third of four Civil War veterans buried at South New Hope, **Torger Wesley 1835-1905**. Thanks to Mark Kjer for writing the following article about Torger. Mark only recently became aware of his grandfather Ludvig Kjer's close association with South New Hope Church.



Torger Pederson Wesley

Torger Pederson Wesley (Americanized spelling of "Vestli") was born in 1834 in Oppland, Norway. He immigrated to the United States with his parents and siblings in 1848, arriving in New York. From there, he and his family traveled via a steam ship to Albany and across the Erie Canal to Buffalo. From Buffalo they traveled across the great lakes to Milwaukee,

initially settling in Jefferson County, Wisconsin. His family later moved to St. Lawrence Township in Waupaca County.

In 1861, 26 year-old Torger enlisted in the Army at Scandinavia, and was a Corporal during the Civil War. His service records are a list of his being sick in locations such as Illinois, St. Louis, Nashville, and Iowa. He was mustered out in Madison Wisconsin in February 1865, not collecting his bounty of \$100. In 1866 he married

Anne Severine Christiansdatter and they settled on a farm west of the New Hope town hall. Anne Severine was widowed with children, and Torger and Anne would also have a daughter of their own named Anne. Anne died in 1881 at age 13 and is buried in the North New Hope Cemetery.

When the New Hope church split in the 1880's, Torger and Anne were active members of the South New Hope Church. Torger served as the church's District Two collection man from 1888-1904, and his name can be found in early church subscription lists. Although their only daughter had died, Torger and Anne did not live alone- Anne's grandchildren Ludvig and Cora Kjer lived with them after their father Isaac Kjer died in 1890. Their mother Karine Kjer had quickly married Christ Larson, and Karine and Christ were members of the North New Hope congregation with their remaining children. With members attending both churches after the split it's interesting to think about family dynamics during those times.

Church yearly meeting minutes indicate the Pastor left the December 6, 1905 meeting to go to Torger's deathbed, but his family remained active in the Norwegian Synod church. After Torger's death, Anne supported grandson Ludvig's education at Wittenberg Academy, Luther College, and Luther Seminary. Ludvig also succeeded Torger as the church's district two collection man, and was eventually ordained at South New Hope in 1916, shortly after Anne's death.

FROM EARLY RECORDS

Any early history of South New Hope Church was written in "old" Norwegian, which was actually Danish, a carry-over from the period in which Denmark ruled Norway. There are fewer and fewer people who can translate this old Norwegian, but we felt fortunate to find Arne Maage, Cambridge, WI, to translate the minutes of the church.

The items put into the cornerstone were also in old Norwegian. Among the objects placed in the cornerstone were several synodical publications, which told about the controversy that led to the split.

Once again we were fortunate to find someone who would translate for us. Don Berg, Decorah, IA, translated several articles. While looking through these publications, he found another article about the service held for the cornerstone laying. We were surprised and delighted when he sent us a translated copy of it. Reading it gives you the feeling that it was a day of hope and joy for the people of the congregation.

The day was Sunday, August 17, 1890. The sermon was by Prof. Ylvisaker, based on Isaiah 28:16: "Behold, I am laying as a foundation in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, which is well based."

At the end of the service they also gathered outside and dedicated the cemetery.

The full article can be found on our website under the history of the congregation.

TAKE A “WALK ON THE WILD SIDE”

Have you taken a walk out to the back cemetery lately? The back cemetery has a curious history that in its early years was not connected to SNH.

As in so many things, a part of the history of the cemetery has been lost. But when we put together pieces about it that we know, we can understand it better.

Unfortunately, there was a lot of damage done to the cemetery about 50 years ago by vandals. Many gravestones were destroyed. What is told here begins with what remains there now.

The first burial (assumed) in the back cemetery was Bertha C. Johnson, born 22 July 1856, died 21 Nov 1858, young daughter of Haaken Johnson. This date is very early in the settlement of the Town of New Hope. South New Hope Church had not yet been established; neither had North New Hope Church. This mourning family needed to bury their child somewhere. Did they look for an organized church? We don't know, but probably not. We know from Rosholt's *From the Indian Land* that there was a group of Norwegian immigrants in New Hope who were following the teachings of a lay minister in Norway named Hans Nielsen Hauge. He encouraged meeting in homes rather than in a church building, as well as a more austere life style. The booklet *Christ in our Home* records that he was “the leader of a revivalist movement within the Norwegian church in the early 19th century.”

The earliest plat map found for the Town of New Hope is from 1870. At that time the property that Bertha's grave was on was owned by Fox River Improvement Company. On the 1876 plat map, Fox River is again shown as owner. The property then went through several owners and it's not quite certain as to how this spot was picked out.

Back to Haaken, though we don't know how he picked this burial spot, we do know the names on the remaining grave stones. Those other six people are: Haaken, died in 1880; Stella Kennedy, born and died in 1888; Ole Grothe, died in 1874; Anders A. Grothe, died in 1891; Ole O. Grothe, father of Ole and Anders, died in 1898; and Guri Grothe, wife of Anders, died in 1912.

We also know that they were all related. Bertha was the daughter of Haaken, Stella was the granddaughter of Haaken, Anders O. Grothe was a brother of Haaken's wife and the remaining three were from the Anders Grothe family.

What we still don't know and are eager to find out is who else is buried in the back cemetery. We hope someday to find that out.

There is still much mystery to the back cemetery. Nonetheless, taking a leisurely walk back there can slow down one's stress level, taking time to reflect on those years gone by.



Dedication Marker

KEEPING OUR FOCUS

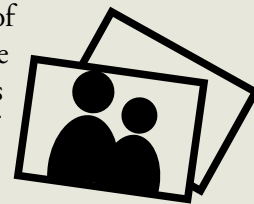
This June we begin the fifth year of restoration projects on the church. Emphasis during the first four years has been on the structural and exterior problems of the church, with some interior projects and problems addressed to keep the interior useable for activities and events.

In 2016, the board will undertake several smaller projects in order to continue saving funds for the big job, which is to repair and paint the church exterior. Then as we move ahead, the Board has agreed to continue emphasis on the exterior until all these projects have been completed before addressing major interior projects.

Donations over the past five years have been extremely generous, and the board is very appreciative of every single donation received. As from the very beginning of the restoration project, the board will move ahead with the remaining projects only as funds become available. It is important to note that no funds from the cemetery trust have been or can be used for church restoration.

PICTURES PLEASE

A reminder to relatives of those buried at SNH. We are requesting pictures to accompany the list of burials on our website (located elsewhere in the newsletter). We are 50% done, so if you haven't sent pictures already, we would so appreciate receiving them.



TWO EASY OPTIONS available to send to our historian:

- 1) Send photos to: SNH, PO Box 62, Nelsonville, WI 54458 They will be returned to you.
- 2) Scan each picture as a jpg and email to: **info@southnewhope.org**

We have received wonderful pictures – beautiful, cute, homey, formal, informal – anything works. Soooo, let's get this project done!

DECISIONS, DECISIONS!

South New Hope Church, as we call it now, did not always have that name. There were several revisions over the years. Some were official; others were picked up along the way. All the changes may not even have been found, but here are some in the order they are found in the Minutes Book:

- New Hope Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Portage County, Wisconsin
- New Hope First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Portage County, Wisconsin
- The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in New Hope, Portage County, Wisconsin.
- New Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church
- South New Hope Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- South New Hope Lutheran Church

In spite of the fact that some people today would like to keep that last name, we now simply say South New Hope Church.

LOOKING TO NEXT DECEMBER

In 2015, Wreaths Across America, WAA, was able to help in the placement of 900,000 wreaths on graves of veterans at over 1,100 locations. An outstanding job! We at the South New Hope Cemetery want to continue to be a part of that come December 17, 2016. With your help we can do it.



Bardley, Addie and Molly did their part.

Here are a couple of ways donations of \$15.00 can be turned into a wreath for one of our veteran's graves:

1. Write a check to SNHCA in the amount of \$15.00 and write "wreath" in the memo section of your check. Send payment to SNHCA, PO Box 62, Nelsonville, WI 54458.
2. Visit the WAA website www.wreathscrossamerica.com. From their home page click on the box "Sponsor Locally", which will bring you to a page that is entitled "Support a Local Fundraising Group". In the fourth paragraph they explain the next procedures to follow. You will need the SNHC ID#, which is W10016P. Entering this number makes sure that your donation goes to SNH. You can use your credit card on this secure site for making your donations.
3. All transactions are tax deductible when you use either option.
4. After you have completed your purchase, we invite you to go back to their home page and click on "Who We Are". The history of the organization is very interesting and educational, as are the photographs.

AVAILABLE FOR ORDERING

COLOR PRINTS

Color pictures of SNH in the autumn, as seen on every newsletter, are available for sale. They are in color and ready for framing. Cost, including postage and handling, is \$35.00 for an 8X10, and \$25.00 for a 5X7.

MINUTES BOOK

Translated minutes of SNH church and cemetery board for the years 1888-2007 are for sale for \$25.00 each.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State, Zip _____

8X10 color picture: \$35.00, # _____, \$ _____

5X7 color picture: \$25.00, # _____, \$ _____

Minutes Book: \$25.00, # _____, \$ _____

Total amount enclosed _____ \$ _____

Send to:

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SouthNewHope.org