

## SUGAR GROVE CEMETERY

Sugar Grove Cemetery marked its full first year under the care and supervision of the City of Wilmington. Since the City acquired the cemetery in April 2015, restoration and site improvements have continued to be a primary focus.

In addition to the regular mowing and maintenance program, the city is fortunate to have energetic community volunteers who help to carry out special grounds maintenance projects. Early in the year, the city began the process of removing approximately twenty trees identified as hazardous from the cemetery. Community volunteers, in concert with city workers and contractors, removed the trees and brush from the grounds, just in time for the Memorial Day services.



Additionally, the roadside view of the cemetery received a facelift in September. A volunteer force comprised of members of a local church descended upon the cemetery and, in two weekends, painted the wrought iron fencing that stretches along the front of the cemetery. In total, approximately 2,100 feet of fence was painted. Grave restoration took center stage for the cemetery administration in 2016. The process of grave restoration is multi-stepped and complex and the City of Wilmington is committed to using best practices in Sugar Grove Cemetery restoration projects. The restoration of a single grave may

include smoothing the burial site, resetting and straightening the monument, leveling and reinforcing the monument foundation, repairing and restoring a chipped or broken marker, and cleaning and protecting the stone.

The City's first grave restoration project this year included several graves in a large area of



Section 2 near the front of the cemetery. Shortly afterwards, Soldier Point underwent a comprehensive makeover. Prior to the restoration, the hat on the statue of the soldier was broken, graves were crooked and perched haphazardly at various heights, and the stones had deteriorating surfaces and peeling paint. The base of the statue that contains the identifying signage was also in disrepair. Thanks to the support of the Clinton County Commissioners, the city repaired the soldier's hat and

restored the remainder of the statue, straightened and restored individual monuments, and refurbished the base of the statue.

Another successful restoration project, which was very helpful for visitors, was refurbishing the section markers. Prior to this restoration, section numbers were difficult to see. Now, with the advanced detail, each section is clearly identifiable and easily located.



Finally, another very visible restoration is the Veteran's Memorial. This monument received a complete facelift and an update to its landscaping in 2016. It was the City's honor to be a part of restoration efforts to honor our veterans.

Because the cemetery is under the City's jurisdiction, its bridges are now part of the citywide bridge condition survey. This year, two of the bridges were identified as being in a state of disrepair. Upon notification, the city immediately closed both of the bridges. Although the closing of both bridges was challenging to those using the cemetery, by mid-summer, the City had repaired one of the bridges. The other bridge remains closed at this time but does not greatly affect the traffic flow. The cemetery bridges will continue to undergo regular inspections and repair under the City's watch.

In terms of land sales and interments, Sugar Grove Cemetery had 63 burials in 2016 and sold 72 gravesites.

The City of Wilmington continues to be committed to the preservation of the rich heritage and traditions of the Sugar Grove Cemetery. At the same time, we look forward to implementing technological improvements in the services offered, with special attention given to maintaining the integrity of these beautiful, historic grounds.

Submitted by:

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