



# Modern Times

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## No Longer a “Gated Community” ... but soon to be gated again!

### Museum Hours

Saturdays - Noon to 4

Sundays - 1 to 3

### Services Provided Year Round

We continue to provide research assistance each

Thursday from 9:30 to 4.

You may also reach us via email, snail mail, our website and phone calls.

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Current board terms extended for one year due to Covid. Dates shown are the original term dates.

Passersby on South Main Street in Granville are doing a doubletake this summer. They're noticing that the beautiful wrought-iron gates at the Old Colony Burying Ground, longtime iconic fixtures at the north and south ends of the historic graveyard, have disappeared! In the place of the elegant carriage portal and pedestrian gates at the south end of the yard, there now stand only gaping sandstone pillars, their gates and connecting arch gone. And the small Victorian gate at the cemetery's north entry has vanished as well, leaving its two posts looking abandoned and forlorn.

Granville history lovers, rest assured; these gap-tooth absences are not the result of vandalism, and they won't last for long. The iron gates at the 1805 graveyard have been temporarily removed for repair and restoration, and they will soon be returned in all their renewed glory to the locations they've adorned for more than a century.

The large south gate was the gift in 1912 of the Granville Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, a memorial to the Revolutionary War veterans buried in the Old Colony. Dedicated on Memorial Day 111 years ago, the structure is called the Memorial Gate, and was one of the first projects of the DAR chapter, founded in 1909. The smaller gate on the north end of the yard, large enough only for pedestrians, is probably somewhat older – or at least its elaborate iron posts may be. Its origin has not been uncovered, but it may date to the late nineteenth century.



The DAR Memorial gate not long after its construction in 1912

About two years ago, Old Colony volunteer Lyn Boone and Granville DAR member Becky Underhill noted with distress that longstanding deterioration of the gates' ironwork was becoming a critical problem. From a distance, the gates appeared sound, but close-up scrutiny told the real story of the structures' condition. The ironwork was marred by deep and substantial rust, some of the horizontal structural bars were pitted and corroded, and parts of the gate mechanisms were bent, frozen, or no longer functional. And that's only what two laypersons could see! Clearly professional evaluation would be needed. (see image below)

After a protracted search, Underhill and Boone found such expertise in the person of Kelly Wetzel of Blackhand Forge in Newark, Ohio. A seasoned iron artisan, Wetzel had the needed skills, decades of experience in both blacksmithing and teaching blacksmithing, and a deep-seated love of historic ironwork that inspires him even in semi-retirement. Wetzel's prognosis for the Old Colony Gates was optimistic, provided thoroughgoing repairs could be undertaken. The gates would require restorative processes like sandblasting, powder coating, and painting, and new parts for repairs would have to be fabricated and installed. Complete disassembly and removal to offsite workplaces would be necessary. The job would take several months, and the cost would be about \$12,500. (see image below)

Underhill and Boone proposed a joint fund-raising campaign to their respective organizations, the DAR chapter and the Old Colony volunteers. The latter is headed by Boone, who is also a member of the Granville Union Cemetery Board, a local public board that oversees the historic graveyard. All three of these organizations rallied generously to the proposed collaboration, contributing a total of more than 70 percent of the target amount. Additionally, the Granville Township crew pledged to contribute valuable in-kind services with the dismantling and eventual reassembly of the gates. Then in April this year, a "last-dollar" grant of \$3,560 was awarded to the DAR by the Granville Community Foundation to complete the needed funding. The project would be able to start in June!

According to blacksmith Wetzel, progress on the project since then has been steady, if not without its surprises, both good and bad. For example, Wetzel was stunned to discover that both the north and south gates had beautiful brass handles, obscured under layers of black paint. But it was also discouraging that one of those antique handles was missing. He's currently conducting an exhaustive search for a replacement. Setbacks aside, Wetzel estimates that the restoration of the gates will be completed as planned this summer.

A public ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, September 24th. It will be a celebration of community collaboration, individual and organizational generosity, and the preservation of an invaluable historic Granville landmark. Mark your calendars and plan to attend!