West Hill Cemetery
Perry Road
Barre, Vermont

Located in Barre Town, the West Hill Cemetery occupies a small site on Perry Hill. You access the cemetery through a gate in the wrought iron fence just off the edge of the adjacent gravel highway. The site is mostly open with only a few trees and a small bed of flowers at the cemetery sign. Except for the road frontage, the cemetery is ringed with a wire fence hung on granite posts visible through the sparse tree line that also rings in the site.

West Hill represents Barre Town's forgotten cemetery. Without written records, not much is known about the site. The few remaining stones provide the only snapshot of those that rest there, but all stones can speak to us about those who lay below them. Due to the age of the cemetery and the length of time since burials occurred there, the cemetery is no longer available for use by the local citizens. Although not used for active burials, the cemetery crew takes excellent care of the grounds, investing as much time and effort into maintaining the site as they do in the active cemeteries.

In early Barre – Wildersburg history, what is now the village of South Barre served as the center of town; the town's mail arrived there and the Ira Day Tavern hospitality

entertained such fine guests as General Lafayette. South Barre also sported many industries, merchants, and of course, granite. The village still provides the southern gateway into the city, highway designers brought the interstate access road from the ridgeline down into South Barre. If you leave South Barre and head up the hill towards I-89, about half way up, you come to Miller Road, turn to the north until you see Perry Road on the left. There, on a knoll, you will find the West Hill Cemetery, tucked behind a hill overlooking the village.

Unfortunately, none of the really old records concerning the West Hill Cemetery can be found in Barre Town, or Barre City, either. Without really knowing how old this cemetery might be, the use of photographic evidence in West Hill Cemetery uncovered a useable clue. The Vermont Old Cemetery Association referenced the oldest stone as 1800, surely within historic context, but a photo of a slate stone carrying the date of 1799 can be found. The epitaph:

“In Memory of
Experence (sic), dau[r] of
Ebenezer & Thankful
Kinsly, died Nov[r]
14th 1799 AE. 17y.”

In addition to the misspelling of the name, Experience, the adjacent stone for Sylvanus, his last name is shown as Kingsly.

On the flipside of the age question, according to the photos, the last burial at West Hill occurred in 1895, that stone reads:

“Villa E.
DAU. OF
J.P. & K. LADD
Feb. 12. 1870.
Aug. 7. 1895.

West Hill has a wide variety of grave stones scattered throughout the cemetery. In the old section, the rows don't necessarily follow the edges of the modern driveways. Among the sections, visitors can find old style New England slates, some remarkably readable, others, decayed beyond recognition. On one of the more unusual slates, a proofreader's mark can be found where a letter had been left out but etched in above the name. At the other end of the spectrum, granite monuments mark graves throughout the cemetery, some old and hard to read, others with the modern etching techniques of placing photos on the stone. Our local craftsmen personalized headstones for many of the families interred here. Marble monuments can be found, too, and as with the other stones, some readable and some decayed.