

## Journey Through History Beginning With Lobb Cemetery By Elizabeth Hertzler (South Park High School, PA)

After a winding journey through Jefferson County (and a missed turn or two), Mr. Ohm and South Park High School's History Club pulled up to Lobb Cemetery for a day of discovery. We all recognized the privilege of being in this club and the unique opportunities, such as this day, that membership presented. With the help of archaeologist Dr. Diane Landers and the Jefferson Historical Society, our club dove headfirst into the day.

The club members familiarized themselves with the cemetery grounds for the first portion of the day. We observed the headstones and learned signs that signify the presence of unmarked graves from Dr. Landers. The small dips that scattered the cemetery's grounds were one indicator. Also, a patch of grass that was a darker shade of green could also have been a sign of an unmarked grave. After exploring, our club proceeded to help plot the exact position of several graves on an official map that would be used to update the state historical site's records. The first plotting of the day was of Elmer Vaughan's and Bernice Vaughan's graves in the middle of the hillside that makes up the majority of Lobb Cemetery. Also plotted through the course of the day were the graves of Thomas Walker and Alexander Beall.

As our club worked, we learned some of the history of the cemetery we were working in. It was discovered that the Yohogania Courthouse used to rest on the top of the hill overlooking the cemetery. This explains why some of the graves are seemingly facing the wrong way or away from the road; the courthouse was the landmark for the graves when they were laid, so it made sense for them to face that way. This area of Allegheny County (in present day-western Pennsylvania) was claimed first by Virginia. The state of Virginia established Yohogania County, thus the Yohogania Courthouse was named. This also explains the types of people that lie in the 900+ graves at Lobb

Cemetery. There are soldiers from the Revolutionary War, the Whiskey Rebellion, the Civil War, and both World Wars lying on the cemetery grounds.

Each club member was assigned a different soldier that lies in Lobb Cemetery to research. I personally got to research a soldier named Lieutenant Alexander Beall. I learned to use books and websites to further discover the history of my soldier. At a meeting with the Jefferson Historical Society after the day at Lobb Cemetery, I learned how to use [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) to further my research and also had access to books and other records that helped me in my quest to discover who Alexander Beall was. Some other resources I used were [usgenweb.org](http://usgenweb.org) and [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org). In doing my research, I got not only to discover part of Lt. Beall's personal history but also to discover a little more about the Whiskey Rebellion. He was originally from Berkeley County in present-day West Virginia, but he was brought up to western Pennsylvania in 1794 by George Washington's orders to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion that began when Congress passed a federal excise tax that added seven cents tax per gallon of whiskey sold.

Alexander Beall was only nineteen years old when he became a lieutenant in the United States Army; unfortunately, he was also only nineteen years old when he came to his untimely death. The regiment Lt. Beall was serving in came up to the Old Virginia Courthouse and camped at a river bottom near the site of the courthouse. When winter came the soldiers were still finishing up with the Whiskey Rebellion's suppression; however, a small pox epidemic broke out. Alexander Beall was quickly claimed as a victim due to the close quarters of the infected soldiers and prisoners kept on the courthouse location. He passed away on January 10, 1795. Lieutenant Beall was one of only two victims of the epidemic to receive a headstone in Lobb Cemetery, which was the burial site of the small pox victims. The other headstone commemorates Captain Thomas Walker, who passed away just six days after Alexander (on January 16, 1795). It is likely that the

other victims (who were privates or non-officers) were buried in a mass grave somewhere on or near the premises of present-day Lobb Cemetery.

In conclusion, our visit to Lobb Cemetery was fun, informative, and enlightening. I got to spend the day in a historically important site that I would not have know about otherwise, even though it was nearly in my backyard. Also, I learned how to research the genealogy of a specific person. Our entire club still has more research to do on our individual soldiers but progress is definitely being made. We plan to visit the Pennsylvania Room in the Carnegie Library at Oakland and the Washington County Library. In doing this project, we get to contribute information to a nationally recognized archive and know that what we did (no matter how small) will help everyone who takes the time to discover the untainted history that has been preserved by Lobb Cemetery.