

HISTORIC HAVENS

A Walk Among the Tombstones

BY LORI DRAZ

This month, we will take a walk through some of the area's oldest and most interesting cemeteries. Some may choose to visit to chase a thrill at this ghostly time of year, but please remember that cemeteries are places of respect and reverence.

Cemeteries are also amazing links to history, as well as the final resting place for their residents. You be nice in their home, and they'll be nice in yours. We send special thanks to Greg Caggiano and Muriel Smith for their help with this article, and to Muriel for sharing her son's frightening story of his haunted Victorian home, which you can read online. There are far too many cemeteries to list; here are some good ones.

Greg Caggiano is a history lecturer and a paranormal investigator, who shares two of his favorites. Rose Hill Cemetery in Matawan is located in the middle of a residential area, but feels eerily secluded. You walk a path that winds around the hill, climbing higher and higher, passing numerous mausoleums built into the hillside.

Rose Hill is home to the grave of Lester Stillwell, an unfortunate 1916 shark attack victim, and pirate Captain Kidd. Legend has it that Captain Kidd used a tree on the top of Rose Hill as a navigational marker when sailing the creeks in Matawan. Many believe his treasure is still buried in the vicinity of the Matawan creeks and Cliffwood Beach (where coins from the 1600s have actually been found). To learn more, visit weirdnj.com/stories/mystery-history/captain-kidd/.

Caggiano hasn't found the gold, but he did capture a photo of a giant ghostly orb. Rose Hill has connections to an American Indian burial ground, and there are some Civil War and Revolutionary War graves - and one Zombie. It took three visits, but Caggiano eventually found a large tombstone for the Hulsart Family - Clinton, Miriam, Beatrice and others.

Right next to that was Zombie, 1960 to 1973. Seeing the name Zombie while standing in a very real cemetery is a mix of cool and creepy, and we will keep the secret just a little longer.

His second pick is the tiny Dorsett Town Historic Cemetery in Holmdel off Telegraph Hill Road. The sign says it was established in 1700, but there are older graves and many of the old "Death's Head"/winged skull designs. It was supposedly founded by one of the county's original founders.

Rumson's Rumson Road Cemetery is known locally as the Rumson Burying Ground or the Quaker Burial Grounds, though the Quakers make no official claim on the cemetery. It is home to many members of the Hance family as well as the Wooley, Woolford and Borden families. Many of these graves date back to the 1700s.

For sheer photographic punch, visit All Saints' Memorial Church Cemetery on the grounds of Episcopal All Saints' Memorial Church, which dates back to 1861. It is on the New Jersey State Register of Historic Places, the National Register, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1988.

The entire property is worth a visit and the cemetery, which is still in use today, is right out of the black and white movies of cemeteries in old Europe. It twists and turns up dirt and gravel roads, and some caskets must be hand-carried to their place of interment.

All Saints' Memorial Church Cemetery contains



(TOP) Rose Hill (BOTTOM LEFT) Rose Hill cemetery and giant ghostly orb (BOTTOM RIGHT) Rose Hill zombie

the graves of many of the area's founding families, along with a Memorial Garden for the interment of ashes from cremation.

In 1915, the graves of Old Reformed Church in Highlands (later St. Andrews in Highlands, now closed), were re-interred in All Saints' Cemetery. An obelisk stands there to commemorate these graves.

More recently in 2014, the remains from the Memorial Garden of the Church of the Holy Communion in Fair Haven were re-interred and re-committed in the All Saints' Cemetery as well. All Saints' Church and Cemetery is located at 202 Navesink Ave. in Atlantic Highlands.

Last but by no means least is a contemporary grave worth noting, especially now during football season: that of Vince Lombardi, the legendary Hall of Fame Coach of the Green Bay Packers and the Washington Redskins. He is buried at Mt. Olivet cemetery in Middletown.



(LEFT) Rumson Road Cemetery (CENTER) All Saints Memorial Church Cemetery (RIGHT) Vince Lombardi' burial