

**Laurel Glen Cemetery
and
John Porter Bowman**

Cuttingsville, Shrewsbury, Vermont

Laura V. Trieschmann, SHPO

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The Laurel Glen Cemetery wall framing one side of Route 103 at the Bowman Estate dates from the late 18th century with an update constructed in 1881 by John Porter Bowman. The Cuttingsville community cemetery has 504 interments, including Revolutionary and Civil War patriots. The cemetery, because of its association with John P. Bowman, is visited by many thousands of people annually.

Bowman was born in Clarendon and moved to Rutland to learn the tanning trade. He opened a tannery in Cuttingsville in the mid-1840s, married in 1848, and was elected to the state legislature in 1851. Already successful, he made a great fortune selling leather goods to the United States government during the Civil War. The Bowman estate includes the 1882 main house, landscaped grounds, 1882 icehouse, 1882 carriage barn, 1882 conservatory, c. 1860 caretaker's house, 1881 mausoleum and cemetery wall, both the original portion and the Bowman upgrade.

Laurel Glen Cemetery and Mausoleum 1880-81

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Bowman's first daughter Addie died at the age of four months in 1854. His second daughter Ella passed in her teens in 1879. Jennie Bowman, his wife, died in 1880. The grief-stricken Bowman made plans for an elaborate memorial to be placed at the family plot in East Clarendon, but the town was reluctant, so he moved his family to the existing Cuttingsville cemetery where construction of the Laurel Glen Mausoleum began in July 1880. The Laurel Glen Mausoleum is a mix of the Classical and Egyptian revivals, designed by New York City architect G.B. Croff, who was known as a special designer of mortuary architecture. It is one of the most elaborate mausoleums in Vermont

Laurel Hall 1882

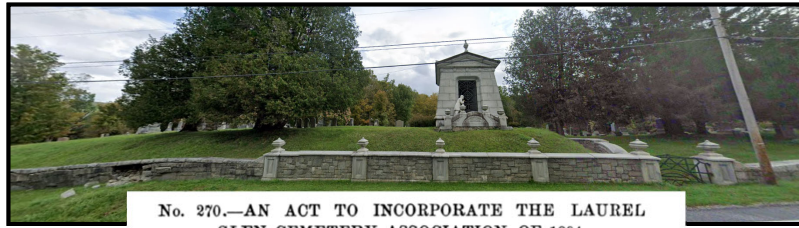


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Laurel Hall was also designed by G.B. Croff, this time reflecting the queen anne style with stick and Eastlake style influences. The lavish main house, one of the first in Vermont with electric lighting and running water, was strategically placed to allow Bowman to see the mausoleum when he was in town vacationing; he ultimately retired to Laurel Hall in 1887. Bowman died here in four year later and was placed in the mausoleum alongside his family.

Laurel Glen Cemetery and Mausoleum 1894



No. 270.—AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE LAUREL GLEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION OF 1894.

SECTION

1. Corporators; name; general powers and privileges.
2. Right to acquire real and personal property, and receive property bequeathed by John F. Bowman.
3. Trustees shall execute wishes of said Bowman.
4. Board of trustees; other officers; treasurer to give bonds and receive pay for services.
5. First board of trustees, meeting of; classified; terms of office; annual appointments, how made; failure to elect, proceedings in case of.
6. Officers, how removed; vacancies, how filled; who eligible to office of trustee.

SECTION

7. Powers of trustees in laying out cemetery; lots, how conveyed; proceeds from sale of lots added to general fund.
8. Rules and regulations.
9. Property exempt from taxation and levy.
10. Mode of investment of moneys received under said will.
11. Itemized accounts to be filed in probate court annually; provisions concerning.
12. Penalty for misappropriation of funds.
13. Fines, how disposed of.
14. Fines, when remitted.
15. When to take effect and subject to future legislation.

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

SECTION 1. Joel C. Baker, of the city of Rutland, Samuel F. Smith, John D. Miller, Dana G. Jones and George P. Phalen of the town of Shrewsbury in Rutland county, shall be, and they and

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Bowman enlarged the community cemetery and extended/modified the cemetery wall, added walks and carriage drives, shade trees, two fountains, benches, and a greenhouse to cultivate flowers for the graves. His Will left \$50,000 in trust for the perpetual maintenance of the house and cemetery, requiring they remain just as he left them. In 1894, the Laurel Glen Cemetery Association was formed and continues to own and operate the mausoleum and mansion today. The Association became a 501c3 in 2023. The Bowman funding was depleted by the 1940s and in 1953 the furniture was auctioned, and restoration and maintenance funding have been difficult to raise since.

Laurel Glen Cemetery Bowman Wall 1881



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Portions of the stone wall are original to the cemetery, dating back to the late 18th or early 19th century. In 1881, Bowman modified the existing granite and added another layer of wall to create a framed rise where the mausoleum was constructed. The older portions of the stone wall remain to the north and west of the Bowman section, running the length of the community cemetery.

Laurel Glen Cemetery Original Wall Deterioration

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Sections of the cemetery retaining wall to the north of the mausoleum are deteriorating. There is a steep slope ascending to the wall and highway from the cemetery above with mature trees at the rise. This is the most visibly affected portion of the cemetery wall but it all should be properly assessed and repaired.

Laurel Glen Cemetery Original Wall Deterioration

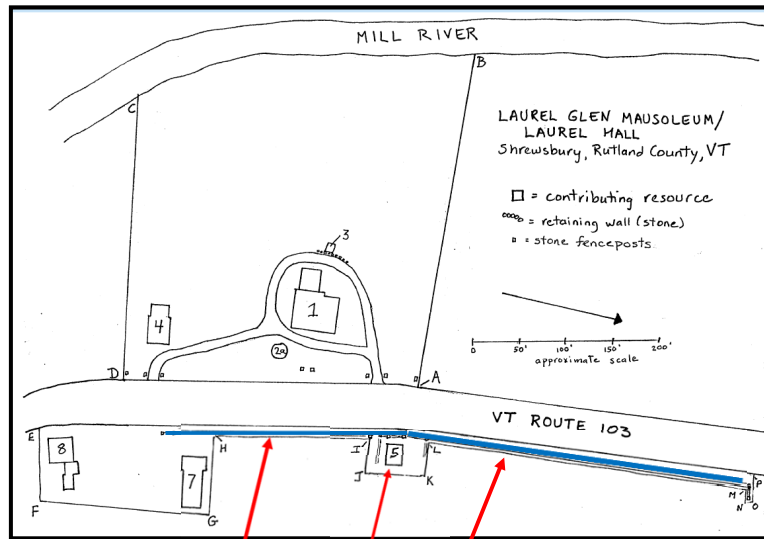
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The wall base has shifted in places, collapsing in other with the interior stone rubble falling out into or very close to the right-of-way and highway. These images are from 2021, when we were onsite for the dedication of a Roadside Historic Site Marker for Bowman, Laurel Hall and the Laurel Glen Cemetery. Where visible collapse of the dry-laid stone and rubble fill has occurred, the mortared cap stones have stayed suspended but the stress to the wall continues and it is just a matter of time before the wall falls in multiple places, compromising the Revolutionary-war era cemetery and highway traffic.

Laurel Glen Cemetery Wall National Register Boundary

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Stone Wall
(denoted in blue)

Mausoleum

Deteriorated
Areas



The John P. Bowman Estate was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in. The boundary includes the 1882 main house, landscaped grounds, 1882 icehouse, 1882 carriage barn, 1882 conservatory, c. 1860 caretaker's house, 1881 mausoleum and cemetery retaining wall. It is recognized for its architecture, funerary art, and social history at the state level. Preservation of this landmark needs to start with the historic stone cemetery wall.