The Elmsford Reformed Church Cemetery, the oldest burial ground in the Town of Greenburgh, was founded in 1793 and contains the graves of several veterans of the American Revolution. A marble monument in the center of the churchyard marks the grave of Isaac Van Wart, one of the three captors of Major John André. A few miles south of this churchyard on Route 9A sits the long abandoned and much overgrown burying ground of Saint Paul’s chapel, a small Episcopal house of worship that served the residents of the hamlet of Worthington from 1870 to 1900.

A few burial places are located in Greenburgh’s river villages. From 1823 to 1881, South Presbyterian Church was located on the present site of the Dobbs Ferry Lutheran Church. The Presbyterian congregation occupied a wooden structure known as the Little White Church, and the cemetery next to this building is still known as the Little White Church Cemetery. Although it is associated with the Little White Church, the cemetery predates the church, as it was founded in 1801, and was available for use by all of the residents of Dobbs Ferry regardless of creed. Zion Episcopal Church in Dobbs Ferry had a small burial ground that was used in the mid-19th century. The remains in this plot were removed by the families of the deceased in the 1870s. The Cooke Family Burial Ground is the only cemetery in the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson. This small burial ground, which was used from 1811 to 1887, contains only six graves and is maintained by Grace Episcopal Church. The Village of Irvington has but one marked burial: the grave of Johann Stolting, a German-born hermit who lived and was buried on a small lot that he owned in Irvington Woods.

Three large cemeteries are located on Saw Mill River Road in southern Greenburgh. Mount Hope Cemetery, a non-denominational burial place, was founded in 1886. Adjoining Mount Hope are two Jewish cemeteries, Temple Israel Cemetery and Westchester Hills Cemetery, which were founded in 1894 and 1919, respectively. These two cemeteries belong to congregations that are located in New York City.

Mount Calvary Cemetery, a Roman Catholic burial ground, is located on Hillside Avenue in Fairview. It was founded in 1892 and is owned by the Church of Saint John the Evangelist in White Plains.

Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale was founded as a Lutheran burial ground in 1903. In the late 1920s, the cemetery was acquired by a group that transferred the grounds into a “burial park,” with community mausoleums and flat markers instead of traditional, upright markers. Hartsdale was also home to Saint Paul’s Methodist Church Cemetery, which was located on East Hartsdale Avenue from 1812 to 1954 when it was removed to Kensico Cemetery. And no list of Greenburgh’s burial grounds would be complete without mention of the Hartsdale Canine Cemetery, which became America’s first pet cemetery when it was established in 1896.

Now located on Ardsley Road, Greenville Community Church was originally located on Central Avenue at Old Army Road. A cemetery was established behind the church in 1842. Although the old cemetery was not moved when the original church was replaced by a shopping center in the 1970s, it has suffered much vandalism over the last 40 years.

Two orders of Roman Catholic nuns had cemeteries for the members of their orders on their Greenburgh properties: the Sisters of Mercy in Dobbs Ferry and the Franciscan Sisters in Donald Park. The interments in both of these burial grounds were removed to other cemeteries in the 1980s when the sisters sold off portions of their campuses for residential development.

Other burial grounds have been lost to time and development. A slave burial ground was located near the Cosmopolitan Building in Irvington. The County Alms House Cemetery, which was located just east of the Tarrytown Lakes Reservoir, served as the potter’s field of Westchester County from 1827 to 1920. In 1935, 20 feet of soil was placed on top of the cemetery so that the Saw Mill Parkway could be built over it.

Patrick Raftery, a native of Hartsdale, has been the assistant librarian at the Westchester County Historical Society since 2006. He is a graduate of Concordia College and the Palmer School of Library and Information Science at Long Island University. All of Greenburgh’s cemeteries, as well as those of every municipality in Westchester County, will be detailed in his book, The Cemeteries of Westchester County, which will be published by WCHS in early 2011. To learn more about this publication, or to obtain a copy, please call the society at 914-592-4323.

“We wish to thank Patrick for doing this guest article as a preview of his upcoming book on Westchester’s cemeteries.”

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