

Bank Teller buried at Sampson lot, in Bayview

By Frank Connors, Cemetery Sexton

It was June 21, 1866, when three dastardly men, under the cover of night, gained entry to the home of Robert Butterfield, then the manager of the National Village Bank of Bowdoinham. They crept into his bedroom, clubbed him senseless and bound his family in their beds. They dragged Butterfield to the bank, forced him to open the safe and stole more than \$73,000, making good their escape in a closed, two-horse carriage. Eventually caught in New York City, all three were convicted, and went to Maine State Prison.

The robbery was a gut blow to Bowdoinham, as none of the money was ever recovered. Mr. Butterfield, who suffered long from his injuries, would be dead at the age of 60 in less than seven years. Butterfield was married to Henrietta Sampson and was buried in the old Sampson lot (1846) off Bay Road. Henrietta died in 1893, and is buried beside him under a monument shaped like a Christian cross. The couple's son, Robert C. Butterfield, also a victim on that terrible night, died in 1886 at the age of 27, and is buried beside his parents. When Bay View Cemetery was established in 1909, it was developed around the Sampson lot.

Find the grave? Bayview Cemetery is located at 333 Bay Road, a mile from the Topsham line and less than a mile from Bowdoinham village. Enter the cemetery at the main gate under the iron arch, proceed to the flagpole and turn right. Straight ahead of you (perhaps 100 yards) will be several large spruce trees, sheltering a nearly square, old cast-iron fence. Looking inside the fence, the three Butterfield stones are easy to find.

