

## Then & Now – Hessian Grave Stone

In the late 1940's, while walking their 50 acre summer grazing pasture for their Heifer cows on Thompson Road. Tom Allen Sr. and Jr discovered a granite stone sticking upright out of the ground near the marsh on their property. To them it looked like a grave stone measuring 40" tall, 17" wide, and 2" thick.

In the early 1950's, Allen's. and some friends, decided to turn the stone into Hessian grave marker, using stones to do the etching.

**HERE FELL  
Capt.  
HANS SCHMVK  
41st Regt.  
v. HESSE  
JVLY 11 1777**

The numerals and letter V were chosen to make it easier to carve.

They left the marker where it had originally been found by the marsh to see if anyone would ever find it. They were amazed when it was discovered and believed to be the real deal by Chandler Bullock a Worcester businessman and of Princeton of tennis fame.



Chandler was so excited by this artifact that he called the Worcester Telegram, and planned to send documentation on to Washington, DC. It was his hope that his find would prove the presence of captured Hessian soldiers who fought with the British and remained in Princeton after the end of the Revolutionary War.

*Scan taken from Men of Worcester in Caricature by L.C. Fifer, c. 1917 and adapted by Theo Brown for a Christmas card.*



Unfortunately, what started as a practical joke had backfired. Chandler was a respected member of Worcester society: a former president and board chairman of the State Mutual Life Insurance Company, a trustee of the

Worcester Public Library, a member and treasurer of the American Antiquarian Society to list just a few of his positions.

Now semi-retired, Chandler had glaucoma and was failing physically as his contemporary, Clifford K. Shipton, attests:

“During the last decade of Chandler’s life, he was an example of courage which shamed the rest of us. Almost blind, quite feeble, he nevertheless went to his office regularly, and attended meetings when the weather kept other younger men home.”

*The Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, April 1962.*

The last thing Allen’s and friends wanted to do was to embarrass one of Princeton’s finest men. Thus, they confessed to their hoax.

The stone became a destination for towns’ people to find on their walk in the woods. A Christmas card and poem by Theo Brown Sr. kept the legend alive.

A few years later, the then owner of the 50 acres, Larry Greene Sr., came home one day and found that someone had dragged the stone out of the woods and halfway up the field behind his home. In fear it would be stolen, Larry buried the marker near his pond.

### **Impractical Joke Becomes Part of Princeton History**

*(Title taken from The Landmark, April 9, 2015,  
page A30)*

In the fall of 2014 Larry Greene along with his son and grandson dug up the stone and moved it into his garage. Larry Greene Sr. contacted Tom Allen who agreed to donate the Hans Schmuck marker to the Princeton Historical Society. Larry Greene, Jr., his son



There is a man of Princeton  
Who's lately gained some fame,  
He carved an Hessian grave stone,  
Tom Allen is his name.

He waited long and patiently  
For some one passing by  
To make the great discovery  
And raise the hue and cry.

Till finally arrived the day  
When it was noised around  
That an Hessian grave stone  
Had actually been found.

And so an expedition large  
Set forth to have a look,  
They tramped afar thru field and wood  
To see where fell HANS SMUCK.

Parker, and Alex Gelinias delivered it to the museum room at the Princeton Center on November 30, 2014.

The stone now sits in storage in the Mason Room at Post Office Place awaiting its next adventure.

**Many thanks Larry Greene Sr. and to Betsy Beth the Secretary for PHS for researching this piece of Princeton humor for the April 2021 "Then & Now" issue.**



LARRY  
GREENE JR

Alex  
GELINAS

PARKER  
GREENE

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