



## SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

# Technical Soil Services

## Special Projects Region

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## Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff Assists the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3336

### Purpose

At the request of the emeritus state archaeologist, Friends of the Office of State Archaeology, and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3336 cemetery troopers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff conducted a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) investigation at Three Bridges Cemetery in East Haddam, Connecticut. Dr. Krista Dotzel, a Connecticut NRCS archaeologist, and Debbie Surabian, NRCS Soil and Plant Science Division national leader for standards and GPR operator, helped identify whether Asa H. Havens and his mother, Clarissa Havens, are buried in marked graves within the cemetery. This investigation was completed in accordance with USDA NRCS's commitment to the protection and enhancement of our nation's communities.

### Background

The following abbreviated story was written by Hilda Carter Fletcher and can be found online at [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com). Irma Carper-Miller, a VFW Post 3336 cemetery trooper, shared further information about the story through discussions in the field and email, based on her research.

Asa H. Havens was the second mate of the Barque Glenn, a sailing vessel with three or more masts, under Captain Small. In the summer of 1850, Captain Small and his crew were transporting copper ore, valued at \$300,000, to New York. At a stop in Iquique, Chile, he took on a few new crew members. The ship sailed out of Iquique on August 29, 1850. Days later the officers became violently ill after eating. The men quickly recovered, but soon after a mutiny occurred.



On the early morning of September 17, 1850, Captain Small awoke to the sound of a musket. Captain Small rushed up on the deck to find Asa Havens mortally wounded.

A sailor and the cook, both armed with bayoneted muskets, confronted the captain and ordered him below deck. The mutineers had armed themselves with the barque's stock of muskets, bayonets, axes, knives, and pistols. They failed to find the cutlasses, the short, heavy cutting swords used by sailors. Arming himself, the captain escaped out of a window and charged the sailor he presumed to be the ringleader. At the same moment, he was joined by George Waite, the first mate.

The captain and first mate worked together to disarm the four mutineers. With most of the crew in irons, the second mate dead, and the first mate badly wounded, Captain Small almost singlehandedly sailed the Glenn to Valparaiso, Chile. There he delivered the mutineers to the United States Consul, who shipped them to New York, in irons, aboard the sloop-of-war Supply.

When the Barque Glenn arrived in New York, the mutineers were tried. In a letter dated October 6, 1850, Captain Small gave an account of the mutiny. Two mutineers were found guilty and executed. Assuming all the freight money for the voyage was aboard, the mutineers planned before they set off to capture the vessel after murdering all the officers. It was the cook who poisoned the food and stole the arms from the cabin.

On August 7, 1851, the Burlington Hawk Eye in Iowa published a report stating that Edward F. Douglass and Thomas Benson were executed in New York on Friday, July 25, for the murder of Asa A. Havens at sea. According to historical documents, it was also noted that Mr. Waite, the first mate, received \$1,500; the mother of Mr. Asa Havens, the second mate who was murdered, received \$500; and the three seamen who refused to join the mutineers each received a sum of money.

Articles about the event give no information on the location of the remains of Asa A. Havens. The mystery is whether he was buried at Three Bridges Cemetery behind his headstone or given a burial at sea (fig. 1).

## Key Outcomes

According to the results of the GPR investigation, the surveyed area contains burials, although it is difficult to interpret which individual burial corresponds to each headstone (fig. 2). Two small ground-truth investigations were completed by a team of archaeologists and a soil scientist.



Behind Asa Havens' headstone, in the first pit, they found an undisturbed, natural soil profile with a dark brown surface layer and a light brown subsoil below. The team concluded Asa Havens was not buried behind that headstone. Behind Clarissa Havens' headstone, in the second pit, the team found a disturbed soil profile with a thicker, dark brown layer. The team concluded that someone is buried behind the uninscribed headstone, possibly Asa's mother, Clarissa Havens.



Figure 1.—The Havens' family headstones at Three Bridges Cemetery.



Figure 2.—A GPR investigation being conducted by NRCS staff at Three Bridges Cemetery.

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