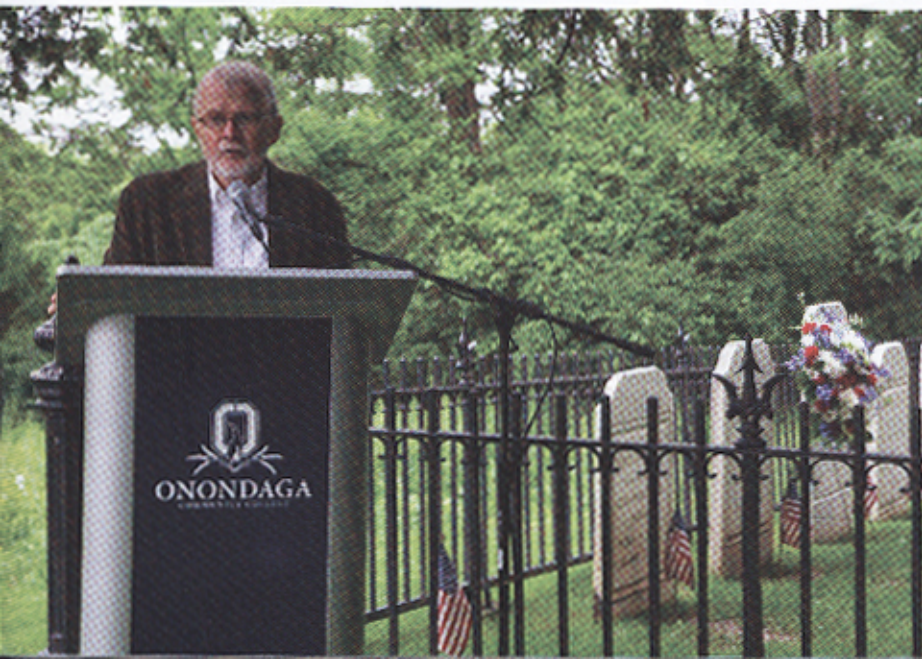




Before the restoration in the General Ellis Cemetery, headstones were broken and weathered. Now the restored headstones stand proudly (inset).

General Ellis Cemetery is restored for future generations

Onondaga Historical Association volunteer and former Post Standard columnist Dick Case speaks at the ceremony commemorating the cemetery's restoration.



Preserving History

One of Onondaga County's oldest cemeteries, General Ellis Cemetery, has been restored and preserved by Onondaga Community College with the help of generous donors. A ceremony commemorating the cemetery's restoration was held in June. The cemetery is located on a hillside above Onondaga Road, across the street from Muir Hall, as indicated by a blue historical marker on the shoulder of the road. The cemetery is named after General John Ellis who moved to Onondaga Hill when it was a wilderness. He was a Revolutionary War-era veteran who came here in the 1780s from Massachusetts. The first burial in the cemetery was recorded in 1798.

As part of the restoration the headstones were removed and repaired by Sweet-Woods Memorials of Phoenix, NY. "There were some areas of the headstones we actually had to reconstitute because the pieces were missing," said Glenn Candee, owner of Sweet-Woods Memorials. "The headstones were made of marble. Because our rain is so acidic, it slowly deteriorated the headstones." Before and after pictures of the headstones show the remarkable work that was done on them. "It's very impressive to be able to stand back and see it finished," said Candee. Other restoration to the site included repairing ground cover and correcting erosion, removing and pruning trees, and restoring the black wrought iron fencing that surrounds the cemetery to its original look.

Onondaga Historical Association volunteer and former Post Standard columnist Dick Case spoke at the dedication ceremony. He played an important role in the work done at the cemetery and was pleased with the finished product. "To see this restored in this way by the College - I think it's important. It's a little park, a memorial park, and that's what it should be."

Rick McLain, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of History at Onondaga who has regularly brought students to the cemetery. "Having a general from the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 here on campus is a great opportunity for students to learn. It's great that it's been restored so students can appreciate the significance of it."

Several groups collaborated on the restoration project including the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution and its local chapters: Betsy Baldwin Chapter, District O-Central New York Roundtable, Fayetteville-Owahgena Chapter, General Asa Danforth Chapter, Onondaga staff; Sons of the American Revolution Oriskany Battle and Syracuse Chapters; and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. Special thanks to former Town of Onondaga Historian Jane Tracy for her assistance.