Restoring S. Paul Teamer's Gravesite

Bart Van Valkenburgh

Malvern area historians and Conestoga High football team members restore vandalized tombstone of former Conestoga High School Principal S. Paul Teamer

Several years ago, the tombstone of S. Paul Teamer in the Baptist Church cemetery in Malvern, Pa. was vandalized and knocked over. The Church has limited funds available for cemetery maintenance and repairs, and was unable to have the damage fixed.

Recently, Sue Cory, Bart Van Valkenburgh and Eugene Hough—all board members of the Paoli Battlefield Preservation Fund, a group that teaches and manages the Revolutionary War battlefield in Malvern (Bart is also a member and current VP of Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society)—were discussing S. Paul Teamer's vandalized grave marker and possible remedies. Noting that the grave is located in the church cemetery across the road from the 1777 Paoli Battlefield, Bart mentioned Teamer's military service in WWI to Sue and Gene—Mr. Teamer served 1918–19 as a 1st Lieutenant in the 311 Field Artillery 79th Division of the American Expeditionary Force in France— and the three began developing plans to restore the gravesite.

Teamer—a Malvern resident—was a 1909 graduate in the first class of the new Tredyffrin High School. After graduating from Bucknell University, he returned to Tredyffrin High as a history teacher, and as football coach, a position he held from 1913 until 1931. In 1914 he was appointed Principal of Tredyffrin Eastown High School—now Conestoga High—a position he held until his death in 1940. In 1950, the Conestoga High football stadium was named Teamer Field in his honor.

In 1936, Teamer and Frank Burns founded the Tredyffrin Easttown History Club (TEHC) which became one of the preeminent historical organizations on the Main Line, now known as











(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) 1) The vandalized headstone on right. 2) Eugene Hough instructing the team on the restoration process. 3) Getting the fallen stone back in place on its prepared foundation. 4) Strong arms positioning the stone into its final location. *Images 1–4 courtesy of Bart Van Valkenburgh.* 5) S. Paul Teamer in October, 1937 *Courtesy of TEHS Archives.*

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(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) 1) The vandalized headstone back in its proper location. 2) Eugene Hough instructing a volunteer on the stone cleaning process. 3) The cleaned stones in their final locations. 4) Eugene Hough, in uniform, leading the Heritage Flag Ceremony. *Images 1–4 courtesy of Bart Van Valkenburgh.*







the Tredyffrin Eastown Historical Society (TEHS). Teamer servied as president of TEHC and wrote a number of superb articles for the club's *History Quarterly* publication. Many of his stories researched the 1777 "Paoli Massacre" battlefield located across the road from his final resting place.

Sue Cory, a retired Radnor police detective and Conestoga graduate, and Eugene Hough, who has significant experience restoring veterans' graves and historical markers, began the process. Cory enlisted Conestoga Head Football Coach Matt Diamond, who arranged for twenty members of the 'Stoga football team to join in the restoration work on Sunday May 2nd 2021. Several members of the T-E Conestoga Football Alumni Association also helped with the project.

Hough heads "Legacy Marker Program" (**legacymarkerprogram.org**)—a local organization that involves students and veterans in restoring similar sites—and noted how this kind of service and learning experience makes students more aware of our history and encourages positive engagement in their communities. When the gravestone was reinstalled and cleaned, Hough, dressed in the uniform of a WWI "Doughboy," led the students and others in a special "Heritage Flag Ceremony," unfurling a 20' x 30' American flag to honor S. Paul Teamer veteran, coach and teacher.

The Paoli Battlefield Preservation Fund (**pbpfinc.org**) is dedicated to maintaining the site and educating the public about this infamous 1777 Revolutionary War battle. Cory observed that "all history is important and work like this makes the world a better place."

Sources:

"Biographies: S. Paul Teamer" by Richard S. MacNamee, *Tredyffrin Easttown History Club Quarterly* Vol. 8 No. 4 (October 1955), p. 111

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