

# Story of the Whippany Burying Yard Landscape Project

*An evergreen hedge planted along and behind the historic wrought iron fence*



The Whippany Burying Yard was once a village of Native Americans known as the “Lenape” Tribe and referred to by the early settlers as “Whipponong Indians.” They lived a peaceful, quiet life between the Whippany River and a foot path, historically referred to as the “Minisink Trail.”

Part of the Minisink Trail became the road from Newark to Whippanong that brought explorers and eventually settlers to the area.

► The old aboriginal Minisink Trail started out as a foot path through the wilderness; it became a wagon road known as Mount Pleasant Avenue, and it is now a busy, four-lane highway known as NJ State Highway Route 10.

► **Traffic on Route 10 has almost ruined the peaceful ambience that the Whippany Burying Yard once enjoyed.**

In 2016, The Hanover Landmark Commission initiated the “Whippany Burying Yard Landscape-Improvement Project.” The project was designed to “reduce the visual and audible effects of State Highway Route 10, as well as the exhaust pollution causing deterioration of the historic headstones.”

The Whippany Burying Yard is a State and National Historic Site. When planning the project, Hanover had to first obtain a permit from the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”). The rules require a Historic Landscape Architect to make Application. Alterations to historic sites must adhere to a strict set of rules as set forth by New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act and the United States Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

In 2017, the Township of Hanover hired a Historic Landscape Architect and made application to the State Historic Preservation Office to build the Whippany Burying Yard Landscape-Improvement Project.

To begin the process, a small backhoe was brought in by Whippany excavator and volunteer, Bruce Bruche, who scraped the surface of the land within 4 inches below the sod in order to verify the presence or absence of historical artifacts or gravestones. No hidden artifacts were found.

Then, Assistant Hanover Township Engineer Dave Leo drew the planting plan and wrote the job specifications. The historic landscape architect certified the type of shrub, and the plan was submitted to SHPO.

The earthen berm was designed to match the elevation of Route 10 which was raised 2-feet above the Whippany Burying Yard when Route 10 was widened and improved in 1931 and again in 1961.

In late November of 2017, after much designing and extensive review, the State determined that the project “does not constitute an encroachment” and granted permission to build the hedgerow.

▶ In the spring of 2018, the Township of Hanover built a 285-foot linear earthen berm and planted a row of 80 evergreen shrubs along Route 10, between the historic wrought iron fence and the 1718 Whippany Burying Yard.

The plants had to be indigenous, 18th century shrubs. There are only a few plant species from early colonial times that are acceptable.

The WBY hedgerow is "Winter Gem" Boxwood.

Boxwood remains green all year round. The plants were purchased in containers; the largest size available was 3 feet tall. They will grow 6" to 12" a year.

▶ The hedgerow is 80 boxwood plants at 285 feet long.

The project was paid for out of the Hanover Tree Fund. The Tree Fund is funded by developers and homeowners when trees are cut down and cannot be replaced—the fund is designed to pay for the care, maintenance, and planting of trees.

▶ **It is hoped that this hedge will eventually establish a vegetative barrier to partially block the visual, noise, and exhaust pollution from State Highway Route 10.**

**Len Fariello**  
**HANOVER TOWNSHIP LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**Township of Hanover**  
1000 Route 10  
Whippany, NJ 07981  
[Len@Whippany.net](mailto:Len@Whippany.net)