Brier Hill Cemetery, Oak Summit | Washington, New York

Before you is the final resting place for some residents of the nearby Dutchess County Poorhouse, along with other individuals who died under tragic circumstances. Interments occurred between 1864 and 1955, at which time the cemetery became inactive. The reverse side of this sign contains a list of the identified marked graves.

Death at Brier Hill

The Poorhouse Burial Book lists causes of death for individuals interred in the marked graves. Many residents of the poorhouse arrived ill and succumbed to paralysis, blindness, frostbite, rheumatism, palsy, and general infirmity. Other people buried here lacked identification or local family. An unidentified man discovered dead at Chelsea, NY (Grave Marker 684) in December 1940 is interred here, as is Daniel Wright of North Carolina (Grave Marker 691), who died in an accident at Glenham in August 1941.

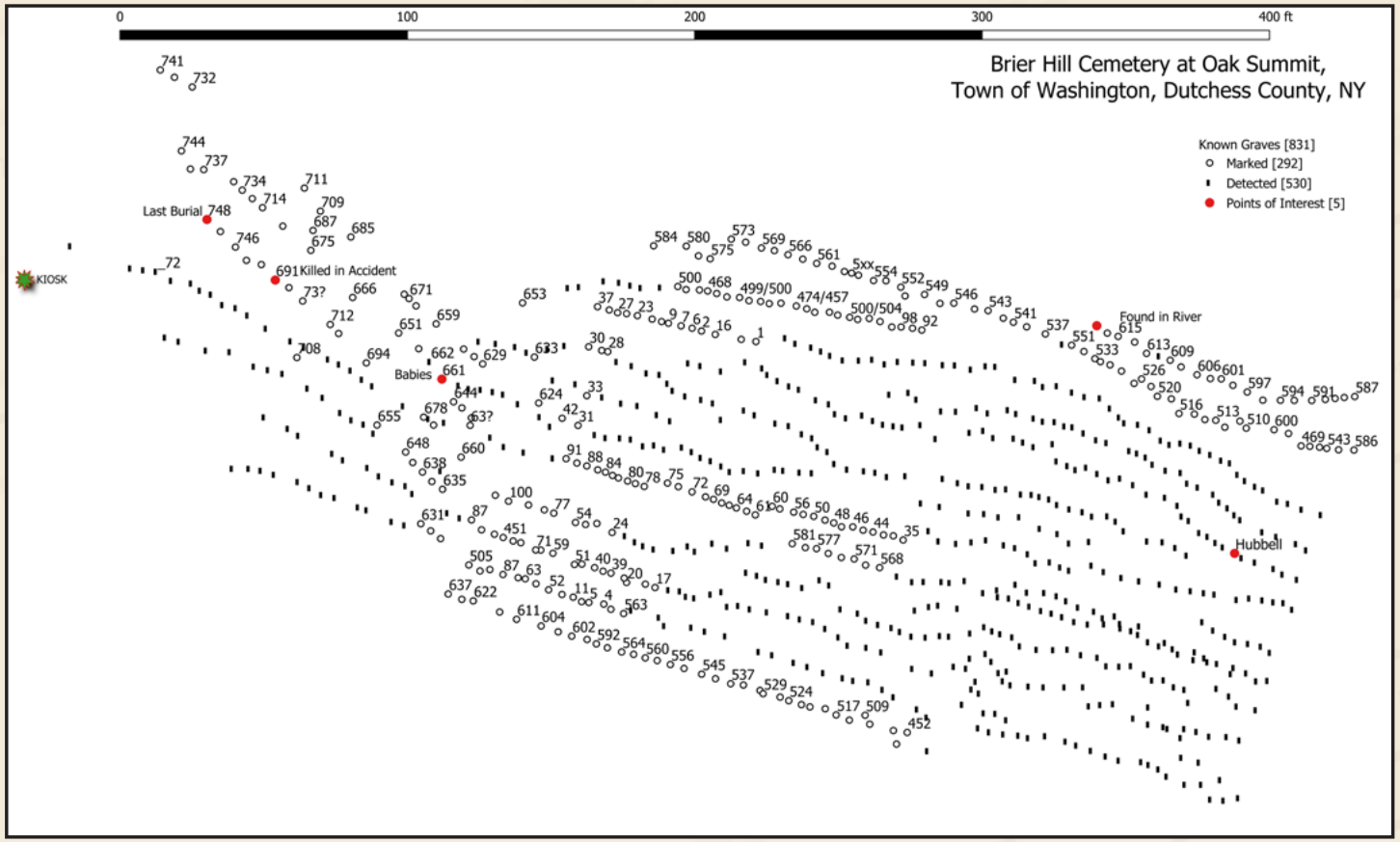

Photo Credit: Vassar College

Archaeological Surveys of Brier Hill

In the autumn of 2003, Vassar Professor Brian McAdoo, local historian Virginia Buechele, and a team of Vassar College students conducted a geophysical remote sensing survey of the cemetery. Their work uncovered evidence of over 800 graves, most of them unmarked. Subsequent surveys in 2014 and 2019, led by Vassar Professor April Beisaw, confirmed the 2003 data and uncovered traces of additional graves. The map above records the results of these surveys.