

## **LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: GEOPHYSICAL INVESTIGATION OF REVOLUTIONARY WAR MASS BURIAL SITE**

*Laura Sherrod, Kutztown University; Heather Willever, Kutztown University*

The winter of 1777-1778 was brutal for the American men encamped at Valley Forge during the Revolutionary War. Starvation, disease, and exposure killed thousands of soldiers. In Chester County Pennsylvania, a small cemetery with crumbling grave markers holds many more fallen soldiers than tombstones. The Old Charleston Cemetery was located halfway between the winter encampment and the Yellow Springs Hospital. Injured and diseased men were transported back and forth between the encampment and hospital. Unfortunately, many men did not survive and were left at local cemeteries which were inundated with diseased bodies. The soldiers were often hastily buried in large unmarked graves to avoid the spread of disease with only a funeral shroud to cover their bodies due to the lack of proper caskets. The unmarked graves of the fallen were thought to be lost forever until a hand-drawn map of the cemetery turned up in a wall at the Chester Springs Hospital in 1919. Using the map as a guide, a geophysical investigation was conducted using GPR and magnetometer surveys. The surveys were performed using 0.46m line spacing to pinpoint the exact locations of unmarked graves and a mass burial pit thought to hold the remains of over 50 soldiers. Analysis of the data shows many features that could indicate the location of the unmarked graves. These soldiers were lost but now can be remembered thanks to the Charleston Historical Society which plans on placing new markers over the sites. Further research into the subsurface of the area may also show the location of the original church from 1743.