

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD

In the 225-year history of Hope Cemetery this newsletter is a first! Many will read this out of curiosity...why did I receive this? Most readers have a vested interest because their ancestors or loved ones are buried in Hope Cemetery. Some reading this are cemetery neighbors. Some stumbled on this newsletter on our website or a print version at a local house of worship or public building. Some readers may be high school students who volunteered to record the barely readable epitaphs on the oldest stones.

Hope Cemetery has long been a very quiet member of the Kennebunk community. The cemetery proper reflects the influence of the garden-style designs of Frederick Law Olmsted; its woods and wildflower meadows with trails open to the public invite visitors to explore Kennebunk's past and nature's beauty. Its trails connect with town-owned property including a path around the shallow Wiggins Pond off Wood Pond Lane where there is a path through a hemlock grove that connects with cemetery trails.

The 120-acre Hope Cemetery and Woods is a park-like setting, a green space in downtown Kennebunk to be enjoyed by locals and visitors who seek a break from the busyness of Main Street. Come explore the trails... walk, ski, snowshoe, bike, bird-watch. Walking access is through the Old Kennebunk Burial Ground behind the library and Unitarian Church, or on a path that begins off Fletcher Street south of the roundabout, or from Wood Pond Lane. Walking and car access is from Barnard Lane off Route One. Drive along the edge of the cemetery to a field near the central woods path. Parking and trails are marked or indicated by signs. A map is included in this newsletter.

Hope Cemetery is not town owned; it is a not-for-profit corporation with income dependent on gifts, lot sales and burial fees. The town contributes some funds toward the cost of maintaining veterans' graves. A volunteer board of directors made up of community members oversees a seasonal staff. We welcome input and questions from the community.

On behalf of Hope Cemetery's Board of Directors, I invite you to come visit the cemetery, woods and fields. Explore Kennebunk's well-kept secret!

Betsy T. Stevens
President, Board of Directors

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THE NAME: HOPE CEMETERY

In 1854 the founders of Kennebunk's new cemetery, which was to have a park-like setting, named it "Hope Cemetery." The concept of Hope is embedded in nature as well as in the philosophical and religious beliefs of those times.

Common in 19th century cemeteries are sculpted human forms depicting the Seven Virtues. So it is not surprising that in Kennebunk's Hope Cemetery are found sculptures of the theological virtue Hope. In funerary art Hope is usually seen wearing a Crown of Immortality (laurel wreath) and with an Anchored Cross or Mariner's Cross, a stylized cross in the shape of an anchor. Appropriate for Kennebunk's seafaring roots, the anchor is an ancient symbol of hope.

The image below shows a statue of Hope standing with her right arm uplifted towards the heavens and her left hand holding onto an anchor. This tombstone marks the graves of Capt. Jonathan (Jott) Stone Perkins (1801-1871) and wife Sarah Cleaves Lord Barry Perkins (1821-1904), widow of Capt. Charles Barry; as well as Jott's brother Charles C Perkins (1805-1894) and wife Eveline G (1809-1859).



VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

In the past few years, Hope cemetery staff and board members have been fortunate to work with community volunteers on special projects to preserve the oldest portions of the cemetery and to develop nature trails in the undeveloped portion of the property for the public to enjoy.



In the photos above, volunteers worked under the direction of tombstone conservation expert Ghlee Woodworth to reset stones that were tilting and in danger of falling/breaking.



With the help of volunteers on United Way's Day of Caring, existing trails were cleared and new trails were created for public enjoyment.

FROM LOW'S BURYING GROUND TO HOPE CEMETERY

In the 18th century the English, in both the Old and New worlds, used the phrase “burying ground,” “burial ground” or “church yard” when referring to the place for burying the dead. What would become Hope Cemetery in Kennebunk began as a small burying ground owned by John Low near the First Parish Church (now the Unitarian Church).

The first person buried in Low's Burying Ground was Colonel Joseph Storer's widow Hannah March Storer who died 27 February 1790 at age 54. In 1816 local citizens organized the Kennebunk Burial Ground when they purchased $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land, including the burial grounds from John Low. Most of those buried before 1854 were buried in that area now called the Old Hope Church Yard or Old Cemetery.

The mid-19th century experienced a new type of burial place and the word cemetery entered into the vernacular. The rural cemetery or garden cemetery moved burials into park-like landscapes. In Kennebunk an additional six acres were purchased and in 1854 W. L. Thompson, F.M. Thompson, Nathaniel Lord Thompson, Charles Thompson, George Wise, William Lord, George W. Bourne and Edward W Morton formed the Hope Cemetery Corporation. Hope Cemetery's ground and its markers represent the burial practices of over two centuries of people associated with the Kennebuks.



The gates to the Kennebunk Burial Ground, marked on a circa 1840 map as “The Gates of Death,” still stand today.

CEMETERY INFO & REMINDERS:

- The cemetery is open dawn to dusk from April 1 to November 30, conditions permitting.
- In the cemetery proper, dogs must be on a leash or confined to a vehicle; on the trails, dogs may be off-leash but under voice control. Owners must pick up any waste.
- No motorized vehicles allowed on the trails.
- Please respect the sanctity of the gravestones.

For more information, please see the Rules and Regulations at www.hopecemeterykennebunk.com.

STORIES FROM THE STONES

From information recorded in Hope Cemetery ledgers, we bring you the story of a famous cemetery “resident.”

In this issue, we feature Sally Wood (1 October 1759 – 6 January 1855), believed to be the first authoress in the State of Maine. She wrote many novels and was known for her deep knowledge and interest in literature.

She was born in York, Maine at the Barrett Farm. She married Richard Keating, “the beloved of her youth,” in 1788. He died only 5 years later, leaving her with 3 young children. In 1804 she married again, to General Abiel Wood of Wiscasset.

At the turn of the 19th century she embarked on her writing career and in 1800 her first work, *Julia and the Illuminated Baron*, was published. Several others followed.

Madam Wood lived in Portland and Wiscasset before moving to Kennebunk to spend her final years living with her granddaughter and great-grandson Dr. Edward Morton (the town's leading physician) at 33 Summer Street.

In Kennebunk, she was known as “The Lady of the Old School” for retaining her title of “Madam” (even as it became obsolete), her refined ways, and her old-fashioned clothing. She was also known as a very kind and generous woman, “always trying to do good to some neighbor or seeking to make them happy.”

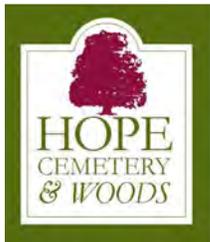
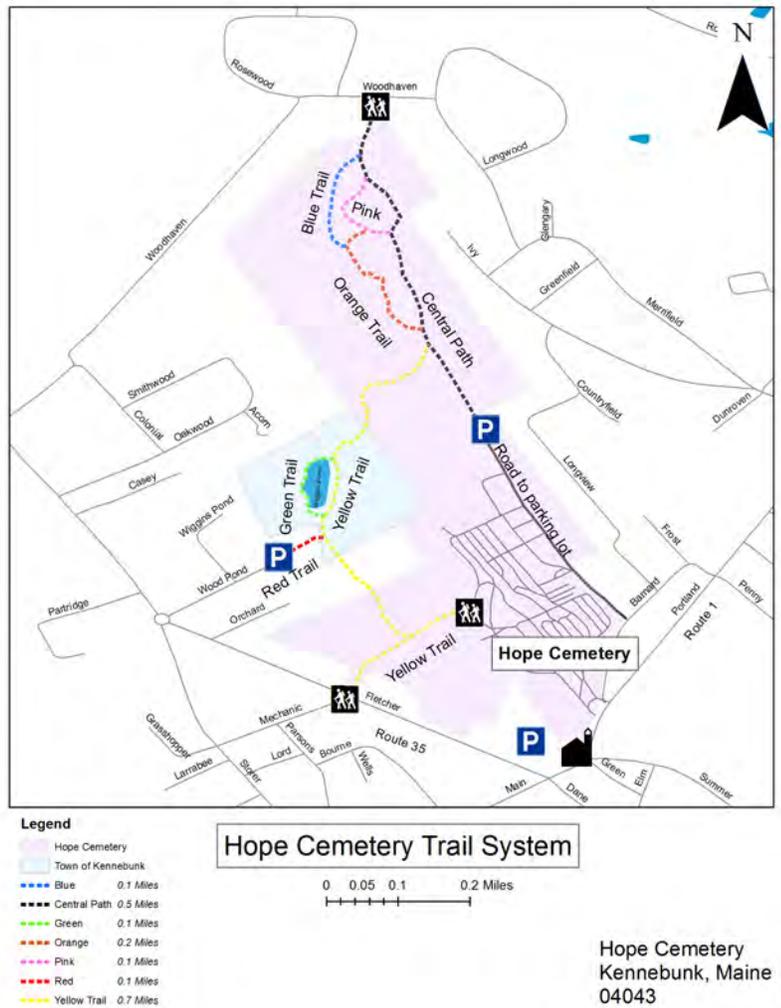
EXPLORE OUR TRAILS!

More than half of Hope Cemetery's property is undeveloped, with trails that have existed for many years. Recently, volunteers have been working to improve existing trails, create new ones, and mark them so that the public can more easily enjoy them.

What had been missing was a trail map, so that people unfamiliar with the cemetery property (or with a less-than-accurate sense of direction!) would be able to find their way through the area.

With the generous help of Kennebunk Sewer District and their intern Jordan Heath, volunteer Dean Meggison was able to use GPS to capture the trail locations so that Jordan could then create the maps.

Visit our website www.hopcemetrykennebunk.com to download your own copy!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED