



Volume 24 Number 3 Fall 2017

President's Letter

Happy Fall! I for one will not complain if the warm weather hangs around awhile longer. Having been short-changed weather-wise in the spring makes the warm days of September-October all the more special.

In recent weeks NHS has tackled several key issues. Specifically:

- Museum Collections Policy
- Revision of Dues & Support Policy
- Building maintenance over the winter—a/k/a: Let there be heat!!! This will allow winter workshops, and will be good for the well-being of the building and the collections.

Picking up on an anonymous benefactor's challenge to contribute \$1000 towards oil if NHS members would also raise money, a mega yard sale was held the first weekend in October. While we raised over \$1,000 dollars, the best part of the event for me was the team effort put into this by our local members. The team was very generous both in terms of the quality of the items donated (several "big ticket" items as well as many popular smaller items such as housewares, antiques /collectibles, puzzles, books, tapes, etc.) and the many hours spent on preparing for and running the sale. It was also good to see so many members of the community turn out to browse. Everyone was in good spirits. (Note: If you were unable to participate, but would like to contribute to this fall fund raiser, it is not too late! Donations payable to NHS marked "fall fund raiser" can be sent to: NHS, PO Box 903, Norridgewock, ME 04957.) As we work away inside the museum during the winter, I hope that more ideas for helping NHS to flourish will be developed. The goal is to flourish not only in terms of revenue and developing a strong reputation for the caliber of our collections, but also by increasing our membership count and doing a better job of engaging the community in all things NHS.

Share your thoughts and ideas with us. (Write to me at: norridgewockhistsoc@gmail.com)

Enjoy the fall! Becky Ketchum

Can anyone solve this mystery?

Last spring a group of NHS volunteers helped clean out the old shed that is in the back of the museum yard. In the process the bottom half of an old cemetery stone was found. Valerie Sirois (sec'y of NHS) suggested that we try to identify the deceased. Here's her challenge: "This would be a great mystery to solve. Maybe one way to start would be to look at some of the marriage records in town 1845 to 1855? Maybe a good dead (no pun intended) of winter project/game for some NHS members." Any ideas? Let us know.

This is the info on the stone:

June 27, 1862

AE. 7 yrs. & 6 mos.

Was it my heavenly father's will,
to call him home so soon;

Then I will love that father still,
And him beyond the tomb.

Museum Collections Policy

During our twenty years of operating a museum we have acquired a vast number of “treasures” to the point where we are now facing capacity/space issues. Heretofore we have not had a formal acquisition policy. Addressing the issue of space as well as ensuring a high caliber of collections, the museum goals were reviewed and a mission statement devised along with policies relating to both acquisitions and deaccessions. Following discussion, the mission statement and collections policy were approved by the membership at the regular monthly meeting, September, 2017. The Museum Collections Policy reads as follows:

It is the policy of the Norridgewock Historical Society to collect or accept as donations only items that are both relevant to the history and cultural heritage of the Town of Norridgewock specifically and are of significant historical and/or antiquarian interest.

Some key points relating to acquisitions going forward are:

The item must fit the NHS mission and meet the collections scope criteria. The item is given without restrictions as to its use. Transfer of the item to NHS is absolute and unconditional.

Dues & Support Policy

For some time (and like many small historical societies) NHS has been living a little bit on the edge in terms of revenue vs. expenses. Additionally, there are a number of building and collection maintenance issues that need to be addressed. The revenue from dues does not carry us through. The dues are relatively low (\$10 annually). Moreover, many of our members were awarded “life membership” (“LM”) during the museum’s start-up years and thus, do not have to pay dues –although many LM still do send in dues and we are thankful for that! After some discussion, as well as undertaking a comparative study of other historical societies in the region, the Dues & Support Policy shown below was passed by the membership at the September meeting. Payment is based on the calendar year, with a January 1 due date. Please note that the annual membership fee has been maintained at the same low rate (\$10). This was done to keep our reach as broad as possible. We don’t want fees to be a barrier in the attraction of new members or retention of the current membership.

“Help Fund Us” Categories (renewable annually and the amount includes the basic \$10 membership fee).

- Supporter \$25
- Patron \$ 50
- Conservator \$100 or more

Notes:

- The “Life Membership” category will no longer be offered/awarded. Existing LMs will maintain LM status, however. The support and labor of our LMs will always be recognized as awesome – and inspirational. You set the mark high. Thank you!
- There is no “business” category for membership/support, but business support via advertisements in the quarterly newsletter will be continued at a rate of \$75 per year. If you are a business owner or know of a business owner who might be interested, please send a copy of your advertisement or business card to our treasurer with a check for \$75 made out to NHS. Send to: NHS, PO Box 903, Norridgewock, ME 04957. We will run your advertisement for four issues.

Norridgewock Cemeteries

By Becky Ketchum; photos by Sallie Wilder

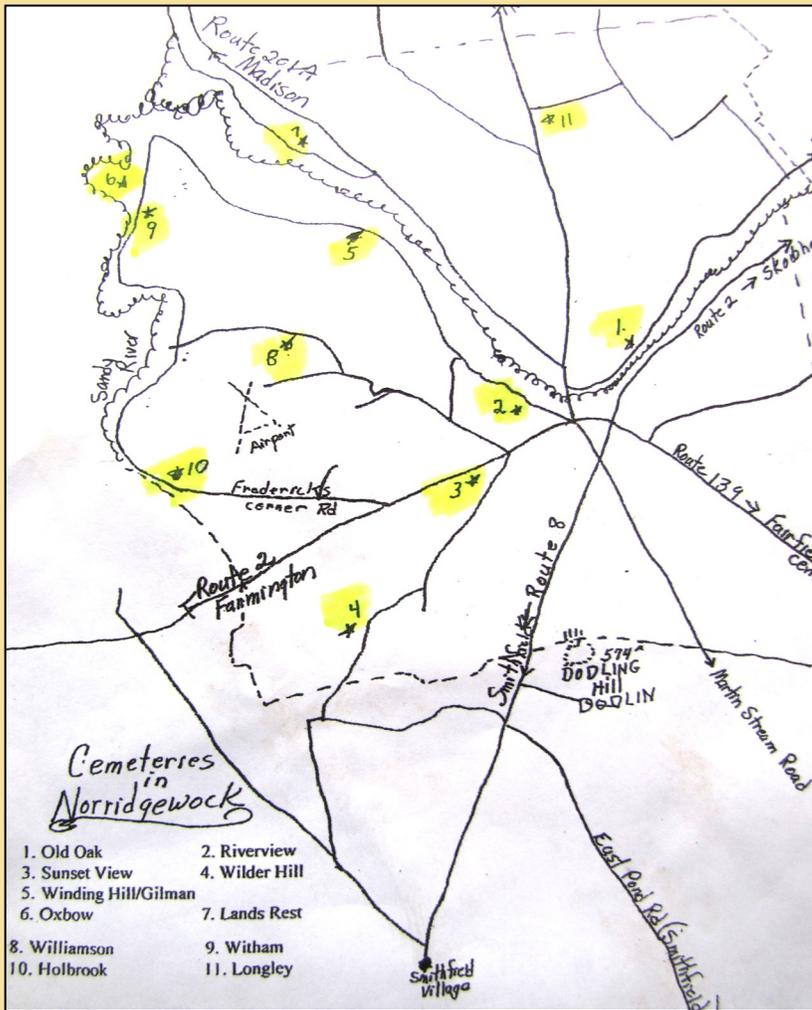
One of the projects that we are undertaking for 2017-2018 is to review and help organize the records for our Town’s cemeteries. Norridgewock has eleven cemeteries, public and private. Ten of the eleven are essentially “sold out”; only one, Sunset View on the Mercer Road still has lots for sale. An issue with the latter cemetery in terms of record keeping emerged several years ago when it was discovered that one lot had been sold to more than one family! Although resolved, this error was a stressful experience for the families involved. Consequently a new town cemetery committee was activated and charged with developing a strict cemetery ordinance. The ordinance was approved at the 2017 Town Meeting. (Contact the Town Office if you would like to have a copy of the ordinance.)



Norridgewock Cemeteries (continued)

The town is also working on new signage for the cemeteries. Purchase and installation of the signs will be staggered over time. To start, new signage is in the works for Sunset View Cemetery, Riverview on Upper Main Street and Old Oak, which is down the street from the Congregational Church. There is still work to be done in terms of updating cemetery records and maps. In some cases for example, there is a record of who bought a particular lot, but no record of who is buried in each plot within the lot. Some members of NHS have volunteered to work with the town office, reviewing records. If you would like to be on this committee, please raise your hand! Contact Becky at norridgewockhistsoc@gmail.com

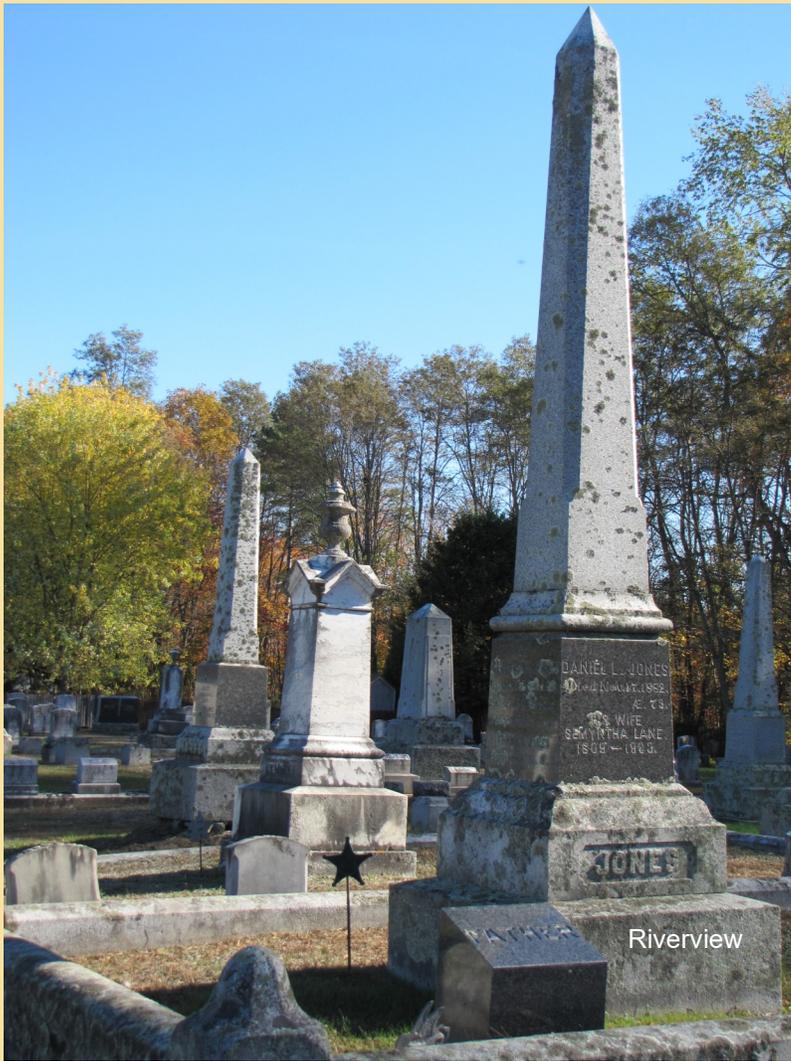
For our first cemetery newsletter report, here is the current location map for the eleven cemeteries and a few “tidbits” about some of the cemetery stones and markers.



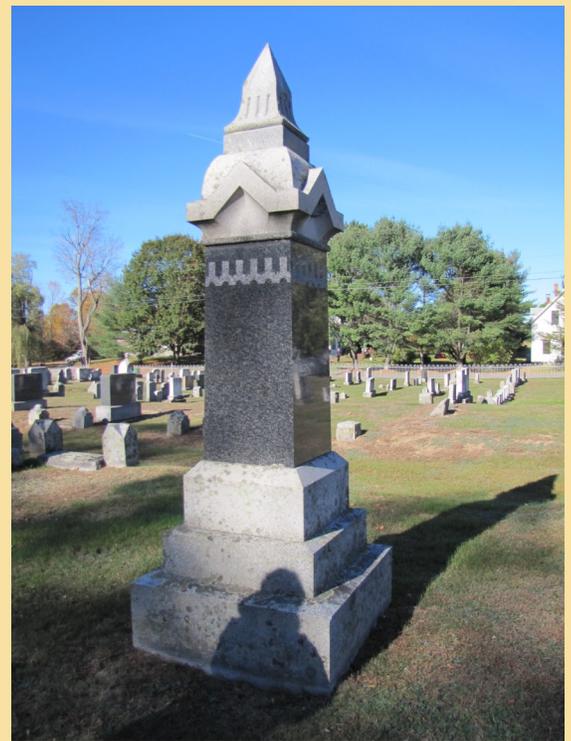
Urns were used as symbols of immortality, the soul and sorrow.

Some common markers from late 1800's— star (lower left below) Grand Army of the Republic veteran; dove below: Rebekahs.

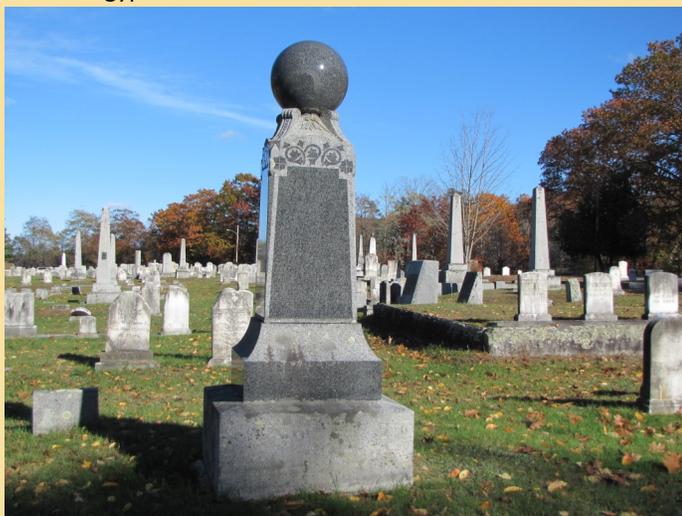




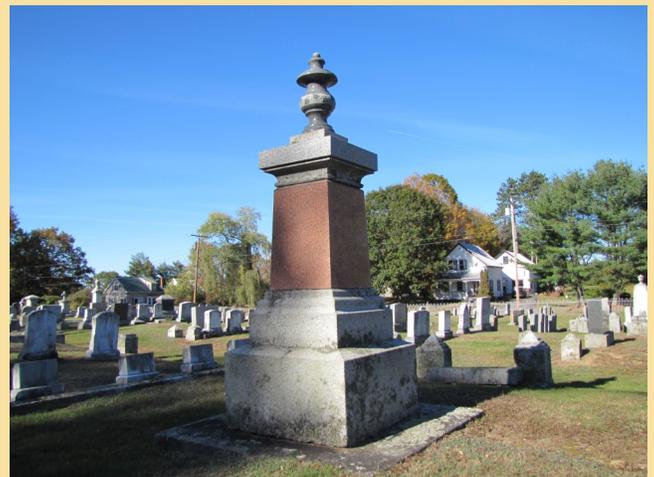
Columns are a symbol that was used to indicate that the deceased lived a noble life.



Have you noticed how many of the stones in the older cemeteries are pillars? When I was growing up I was told that these stones designated “pillars of the community”. I don’t know if that is true in all cases, but I did enjoy a recent walk around Old Oak (our oldest cemetery) and River View, with special attention given to the pillars. There are quite a few and they are varied in scope. They became popular cemetery grave stones during the Egyptian Revival Period (1820-1850), which was prompted by Napoleon’s Egyptian campaigns and then by Britain’s presence in Egypt.



An orb at the top is said to symbolize faith and the deceased’s “heavenly reward”.





Garden News

By Marilyn L. Dunlap and Valerie M. Sirois

Shh! The garden is sleeping! The perennials and shrubs are snuggled under a protective “blanket” of leaves and we are in hopes that they all sleep warm and well until the spring sunshine and warm rains arouse them from their slumber.

We have received for the second year in a row a donation from the Stickney – Melkonian family some of which went to the purchase of a Pagoda Dogwood and also much needed mulch. The tree gave us a scare when the unusual berries at the top which provides food for the birds began to look unsightly. On the advice of others we simply removed them and now the tree appears to be okay but we will feel much better if and when it begins to show its spring leaves and blossoms.

We also benefited from the large amount of donations following the passing of a long time Norridgewock resident, Lucille Theborge LaPlante. A small portion of these donations was used to purchase a “Pinky Winky” Hydrangea which was planted in the garden and a plaque in her memory will be placed by it in the spring.

Our fingers are crossed that the Dolgo Crabapple will survive to bear another year. It was infested with many tent caterpillar nests in early summer and Valerie climbed up to remove two or three nests. Arthur Wilder came to our rescue bringing his very long tree saw to remove five or six more. Also, Sallie and Arthur Wilder donated a February Daphne shrub last year which actually blossomed believe it or not, in February! We had never heard of this shrub and are still gaining a lot of knowledge from our fellow members. A trip up to Oak Hill to visit Warren and Helen Balgooyen resulted in our acquiring two rhododendrons and a mountain laurel shrub.



The first year we had a wren nesting and raising young in the birdhouse we installed in the garden. However he or she didn't return this year – maybe next spring.

Next spring we hope to have many named varieties of perennials and shrubs labeled with signs that are being prepared and donated by Donna Mickewich. Over the winter we plan to prepare a notebook for the society listing the various plantings with the name and a brief description with a bit of information about each one.

On occasion when we're working in the garden a few people have walked by and rested on the Hamlin Eaton bench. Also some have commented on the signs announcing the society's monthly meeting times and topics.

Meanwhile we would like to thank several people who have graciously donated plants, shrubs, mulch, rototilling, money as well as ideas and encouraging words. We love the challenges – it is really a labor of love. Please be patient with us as we continue to renovate the garden in the coming years.

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Membership Form (Make check payable to NHS. Send to: NHS PO Box 903 Norridgewock, Me 04957)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip code _____

eMail Address: _____

Basic Membership: \$10

Supporter: \$25

Patron: \$50 or more

Conservator: \$100 or more



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