

# KNOWLTON-RUSS CEMETERY

## GR40

Very little documentation exists for this cemetery. There are two references in the 1790 Nobleborough Town Meeting minutes. The first is when four men proposed to provide land to the Town for burying grounds in different parts of town, and the second is when those donations were accepted. Jeremiah Knowlton was one of the men who each gave one-quarter acre for such use, resulting in the site now known as Knowlton-Russ Cemetery. The 1790 Nobleborough Town Meeting minutes are at the Nobleboro Historical Society. (Damariscotta was formed in 1848 from Nobleboro and Bristol; the area where this cemetery is located had been part of Nobleboro.)

No documentation has been found that shows the original layout of the cemetery or burials.

No documentation has been found indicating ownership of specific lots within the cemetery, or sales of lots from the Town to individuals. It is unknown whether such sales occurred, or whether the Town provided burial sites for people in the surrounding neighborhood at no charge.

No documentation has been found that shows the boundaries of the cemetery. There is a reference to the cemetery on a warranty deed at Lincoln County Registry of Deeds, Book 2300, Page 110, stating:

*...the above described property contains a cemetery, known as the "Knowlton-Russ Cemetery".  
The limits of the cemetery which is located in the southeasterly portion of the property are not readily apparent.*

That deed transferred the property surrounding the cemetery from Calvin H. Dodge and Marjorie A. Dodge to the State of Maine, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and is dated December 31, 1997.

A survey dated March 19, 1997, prepared by Mark H. Daiute of True North Surveying Services in Newcastle, and H. Karl Olson of Karl Olson and Associates in Wiscasset, identifies an area with the following notation:

*Within this area lies a burial ground labeled "Knowlton-Russ Cemetery". No reference to this burial ground was found in the deeds examined. Location of access to the burial ground and who may have rights to the burial ground have not been determined.*

A copy of the survey was obtained from the State of Maine, Department of Transportation; D. O. T. File No. 8-135; project STP-6185(00)X.

A chain of deeds was traced back as follows, without finding any reference to the cemetery other than the 1997 text cited above:

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Page</b>
Dodge	State of ME, IF&W	12/31/1997	2300	110
Cooper	Dodge	9/18/1984	1208	272
MacDonald	Cooper	3/29/1944	450	349
Knowlton	MacDonald	4/2/1943	446	418
Knowlton	Knowlton	2/16/1871	250	203

(Documents pertaining to inheritance and probate have been omitted from the above list.)

The Jeremiah Knowlton of the 1871 deed cannot be the same Jeremiah Knowlton who originally gave the quarter-acre site to the Town of Nobleborough, as the donor had died ca. 1825. The 1871 transfer was most likely from the donor's son, also named Jeremiah, who died 3/2/1871. It is possible that the

Jeremiah referenced in the 1871 deed was the donor's *grandson* Jeremiah (1833-1898). Additional research is required.

In the fall of 2014, efforts were undertaken to identify the boundaries of the cemetery.

The following facts had been determined through research:

- Jeremiah Knowlton had donated  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of his land to the Town in 1790.
- The 1813 map (nearest available) shows him owning property that encompasses the cemetery.
- Thomas Chapman had donated  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre at the same 1790 meeting.
- Thomas Chapman's donation – now known as the Chapman-McAllister Cemetery, GR22 – is completely enclosed by a stone wall, making the boundaries clearly identifiable.
- The measurements of GR22 had previously been determined to be 80'x90', based on the perimeter stone wall. While less than a quarter acre, it is reasonable to believe the intended site is contained within the stone walls.

At Knowlton-Russ, a measurement was taken of the distance between the stone wall opening near a headstone and a large pine tree estimated to be more than 200 years old.

- The length was 85', indicating the likely bounds of the cemetery based on a comparison with the GR22 dimensions.
- Calculations were made to determine the perpendicular distance required to achieve a quarter-acre space, and a line was followed from the pine tree toward Rt. 1 a distance of 115'.
- Trees were marked with surveyor's tape at what were estimated to be the four corners of the quarter-acre site.
- Slight adjustments were made to align the north-south and east-west boundaries in parallel, and to encompass field-stone graves that were discovered in the process.

In April 2015, with the permission of State Wildlife Biologist Keel Kemper, John Blagdon III of Tired Iron Logging in Windsor, ME, donated his services to clear the cemetery of trees.

This map is an approximation, created in the fall of 2015 as follows:

1. A team of three unskilled volunteers laid out a grid of squares on the ground, each 10'x10', working parallel with the stone wall that serves as the west boundary of the cemetery.
2. Each corner was marked with a surveyor's flag as a reference point for measuring distances to headstones, footstones, fieldstones, obvious burial depressions, and natural rock outcroppings.
3. Those dimensions were drawn on paper using a scale of 1"=20'.
4. Minor adjustments were made as needed to reproduce, as closely as possible, the layout as it appears on the ground. While not a survey, the drawing was deemed adequate for documenting headstone locations in their positions relative to each other and to the boundaries.