

FIRST SETTLERS BURIAL GROUND



1635

TRUSTEES

McDonough “Mac” Scanlon

Bruce Ilsley

Anthony Matthews

First Settlers Burial Ground

Rules & Regulations

The mission of the Trustees of the First Settler's Burial Ground is to maintain, preserve and promote with dignity and respect this historic landmark for perpetuity. In order to continue this mission, the Trustees have adopted some rules and regulations.

1. Due to the uncertainty of the whereabouts of old grave sites, no burials will be allowed.
2. Any person or group wishing to have a monument installed must abide by the following:
 - Memorial stones will be erected for First Settlers only
 - All request for memorial stones must have prior approval from the Trustees
 - All stones must carry the wording "IN MEMORY OF"
 - All stones must be of a type similar to those already in place
 - All expense must be paid by the person or group involved
3. No planting of flowers or shrubs will be allowed. Cut flowers are allowed, but will be discarded at the Trustees discretion. No artificial flowers are permitted.
4. The site will remain open to the public and the public will always be welcome.
5. The present system of one (1) Trustee elected each year for a three-year term will be continued. In the event of a vacancy because of death, removal from town or a resignation, the remaining Trustees will within sixty (60) days meet and provide the Board of Selectmen with an interim Trustee to serve until the next annual election.
6. Visitors are asked to leave nothing behind but their footprints.

The Trustees of the First Settlers continue to accept any donations, to the Jane D Moore Fund, which are used for the upkeep of the grounds; they may be paid to the Jane D Moore Fund and mailed to the Town of Newbury, First Settlers Burial Ground, 25 High Road, Newbury, MA 01951

To locate interments on-line, please visit <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=1660757>

First Settlers Burial Ground

An excerpt from The Burying Grounds of Old Newbury, as written by Richard N. Cunningham

When the original settlers arrived in Newbury in 1635, one of their first acts was to establish a Church. The original Meeting House was built near the foot of Old Town Hill and, as was customary at that time, had a burial ground very near to it. No information is available on who, when or where the first burials were made there. A few small unmarked fieldstones probably mark the earliest graves. After about ten years most of the people abandoned the village at that end of town and built a new Meeting House where the present First Parish Burial Ground is today. A few families who stayed in the lower end of town continued to use the old yard to bury their family members.

In May of 1635, when the first of Newbury's early settlers came ashore on the north bank of the river, their first act was to listen to a sermon by Reverend Thomas Parker. Rev. Parker was chosen Pastor and Rev James Noyes the Teacher. As soon as each family had some type of shelter, their thoughts turned to building a meeting house. Today there is no record of just where it was, but as was the custom in England there likely would have been graves beside or behind the meeting house.

About 1646 the decision was made to move the town center to the vicinity of what became the upper green. The meeting house was moved in what is now the First Parish Burying Ground. A few people stayed in this end of town and continued to use this as their burial ground. This little place was used for about 150 years, mostly by Plummers, Doles and Ilsleys.

In 1927 following the organization of the Sons & Daughters of the First Settlers of Newbury, a woman from New York named Jane Dole Moore became very interested in the old burial ground. Jane Dole Moore worked with the Selectmen and as a result the site became the possession of the Town of Newbury. When Mrs. Moore died, she left \$1,000 in trust for maintenance, but very little was ever done. Being back off the road and very overgrown it was not easily see and very few people knew of its existence.

Few seemed interested, so Mr. Richard Cunningham set out to accept the challenge. Slowly, he cut brush and vines and burned many piles of refuse. Barbara Rogers, his daughter, became interested and did a lot of research on the site. They appealed to the Selectmen to be appointed Trustees, but they said the Highway Department would take care of it. Regardless Dick & Barbara stood their ground and the Town now elects three Trustees, one annually for a three-year term.

Barbara was able to secure a grant from the Mary Alice Arakelian Foundation to have a two rail fence installed. Richard continued to mow and trim this little burial ground each year for as long as he was able. The Town has control of the trust funds, and said many times "I sincerely hope that they are invested in the care and health of the burial ground, so that when the day comes that I am gone they may continue to represent the best interests of the burial ground and the memory of those buried there.



The BURYING GROUND *of the* FIRST SETTLERS

The SONS & DAUGHTERS of the FIRST SETTLERS of NEWBURY



Located at 238 High Road, Newbury, MA

Nestled among the trees, a short distance from the traffic of High Road (Route 1A) is The Burying Ground of the First Settlers. Park along the main road at the sign and follow the path to the site.

History

On May 18, 1638 the town, for £3, granted to John Emery, "that parcel of land called the Greene." "About 3 akers more or less, bounded by the half aker lotts on the west, the hyeway on the southeast, and his own land on the North, being in the triangle, only the 20 rodods is reserved in said land for a burying place, as it is, bounded by stakes with a way to the East."

John Emery had been given the right to build at the end of the Green, that is, the field where the Jackman-Willett House now stands. In 1679 he conveyed his homestead and one-half the land granted him by the town to his son and moved farther north.

Jonathan Emery, in 1729, sold William and Richard Dole seventeen and one-half acres "Excepting and reserving the 20 Rods reserved for a burying place." William Dole conveyed one-half of his estate to Joseph Ilsley in 1793 and Joseph Ilsley's heirs conveyed to Paul Ilsley a part of their right, title and interest in the property. The land surrounding the burying place, now owned by the heirs of Mrs. Joseph Ilsley, is still known as the "Emery Field."

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The Sons & Daughters of the First Settlers of Newbury, Mass.

This burying place was, therefore, some distance in the rear of the meeting-house and there some of the first settlers were buried. As families moved toward the Merrimack River the

meeting-house was moved also. Although there was much remonstrance, and petitions against removal were sent to the General Court, all finally acquiesced in the removal of the meeting-house "to a knowle of upland by Abraham Toppans's barne" in 1647. Here was begun a new burying ground now called the First Parish Burying Ground.

The last person buried in the first burying ground was Judith Ilsley, 1794. Gravestones became worn and dilapidated. Some graves were never marked and bodies were laid to some extent outside and beyond the "20 rodds" set off. Centuries of neglect and forgetfulness followed. Stones gradually disappeared, few remembered the spot, fewer cared and two brief attempts to restore the burying ground came to naught.

In 1927 the society of the Sons and Daughters of the First Settlers was organized. Among the earliest members were Mr. and Mrs. William I. Moore of New York. Mrs. Moore's ancestor, Richard Dole and his wife, Hannah Rolfe, were buried in the first burying ground with stones still visible. Mrs. Moore, with her husband, offered to restore the place if it could be done under the auspices of the society.

Permission was obtained of the selectmen, Stuart Little, chairman, for the society to assume care of the place, with Mrs. Moore, trustee, appointed by the town.

Anne Colman Moody, 1935.

Founder and first President of the Sons & Daughters of the First Settlers of Newbury

 *The*
FIRST SETTLERS MONUMENT
The SONS & DAUGHTERS of the FIRST SETTLERS of NEWBURY



On Saturday, June 17, 1905, a new monument was unveiled on the Lower Green, honoring the memory of the early settlers of Newbury. Elizabeth L. Withington is credited with the success of the venture, as she wrote letters and engaged the interest of descendants. The design on top of the granite-based monument is a bronze replica of the *Mary and John* under full sail, originally executed by the Woodland Foundry. The *Mary and John* was the ship on which early settlers of Newbury made the voyage from England across the Atlantic.

In the fall of 1974, the unthinkable happened. The bronze replica of the ship had been stolen from atop the monument during the night. The replica weighed over 150 pounds, but evidently there was never a concern for its safety - it had been placed on the base in 1905 with no bond to the granite!

Burt Noyes, an active society member, spent the next year leading a campaign to restore the bronze ship and have it secured permanently to the monument. The design and bronze work, following the original, were completed at the Paul King Foundry of Johnston, Rhode Island. The monument was rededicated August 28, 1976.

Names on the Monument

It is important to note that the names listed on the back side of the monument are not the only first settlers of the town. One will note the wording above the names: *Descendants of these first settlers erected this monument.* We can assume that the later descendants of those listed on the monument were the ones who contributed funds toward the erection of the monument in the early 1900s. The monument itself is dedicated "to the men and women who settled in Newbury from 1635 to 1650 and founded its municipal, social, and religious life.