

November 1, 2013

Dear Islesboro Neighbor and Landowner,

We are writing this letter to update you on the mission of the Islesboro Cemetery Committee and the current change in Maine Legislation regarding private cemeteries and ancient burying grounds.

Let's begin with a few interesting facts about our Islesboro Cemeteries. The Town of Islesboro owns two major cemeteries: Bayview and Sprague's. There are four privately managed cemeteries. Did you know that there are over 30 smaller, known cemeteries and ancient burial grounds spread out all over the island? There are 144 Veterans buried among these cemeteries. The Old Burying Ground is the final resting place of Judith Pendleton, born 1776 and died 1781 making it the oldest grave on Islesboro and Joseph Boardman who was a member of the Boston Tea Party. Sherman Point, located on the golf course of the Tarratine Club is the grave site of David Philbrook who died at the Battle of Fair Oaks in 1862 during the "War of the Rebellion".

Recently, the state of Maine passed L.D. 274 An Act to Preserve and Protect Ancient Burial Grounds and Burial Grounds in Which Veterans are buried. The spirit of this law states that towns shall keep in good condition all graves (first and foremost the graves of veterans), headstones, monuments and markers to the best of its ability. The law specifically says that grass, weeds and brush (including keeping the burial place free of fallen trees, branches, vines and weeds) will be suitably cut and trimmed on those graves from May 1 to September 30 of each year. The law also states that a municipality has the right to access ancient burial grounds on private property. So the question becomes, how do we as a town comply with this new law? Your cemetery committee has worked very hard to document each and every known grave site on this island. In addition, we do yearly inspections in order to preserve the integrity of these grounds. We are reaching out to private landowners who have ancient burying grounds on their property to assist us in our mission. Enclosed you will find a questionnaire. It is our hope that you will take a few minutes to answer the questions and make a commitment to aid us in these efforts.

The Cemetery committee recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the many volunteers and of the family members who have done their part in maintaining these treasured sites. We hope that you to will step forward and do what you can to help preserve the dignity and honor the memory of those who came before us. It is up to us to be stewards of our cemeteries, public and private for future generations.

Thank you,

Islesboro Cemetery Committee

# 2013 Islesboro Cemetery Preservation Questionnaire

Distributed by the Islesboro Cemetery Committee

Carole Nichter, Chair

Cemeteries: Joseph Pendleton

Map 15 Lot

Owner:

1. Are you willing to maintain the cemetery to the best of your ability?

- I would be willing to do the work required.
- I am unable, but I am willing to allow volunteers to help with maintaining the ancient burial ground on my property.

2. Are you willing to participate in the proposed 2014 Cemetery Tour celebrating the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Islesboro?

- Yes
- No

3. Please email us your ideas, concerns or questions at [clerk@townofislesboro.com](mailto:clerk@townofislesboro.com)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2013

Name printed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return by: December 1, 2013**

Thank you