



CEMETERY

HISTORY

Kingsbury also mentions a church built by the Methodists at Chadwick's Corner. This building was abandoned by 1882 when it was purchased by the newly-created Erskine Academy.

The only Catholic church in China is St. Peter's Chapel, dedicated on July 8, 1962, as a mission of St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church of North Vassalboro. This small building on the Pond Road just south of the Friends Camp is the scene of weekend masses during the summer months only.

The churches described above may not be the only ones that have been organized in China. The 1856 map of the town showed two buildings labeled "Ch" for church, neither of which has been definitely connected with any of the denominations discussed. As mentioned above, the one at the intersection of the Windsor road and the road to Pigeon Plains may have belonged to the Weeks Mills and South China Free Will Baptists. The other church was farther east, on the no longer used road running southeast off the North road from Weeks Mills to Dirigo. Neither building appeared on the 1879 map.

Cemeteries

Within the town limits of China there are twenty-seven known and located cemeteries and two others, the Seco cemetery and the Talbot cemetery near the eastern boundary, known but not located on the map accompanying this history.¹ Some or all of the people buried in these two graveyards, and in the Sewall cemetery (#23 on map 6), were Negroes. Each of the four villages has at least one burying ground; some of the others are denominational, and are or were located near meeting houses, like the Friends cemeteries on China Neck, on the Pond Road, and at Dirigo; and still others are or were originally family burial grounds.

Undoubtedly these twenty-nine are not the only burying places in town. Mention has already been made of the early Clark family cemetery which may have existed near the present Clark monument and of the pre-1819 cemetery at the northeast end of the lake.² Mrs. Jackson has found references in town records to a York cemetery in Yorktown, in eastern China, but has been unable to locate it. Mrs. William Carpenter has been told that there used to be a small family burying ground across the Neck Road from her house, in the corner between the Neck Road and the road going down to the lake. It had apparently been abandoned by the time her grandparents bought the house in 1875. Besides these, and probably other, lost cemeteries, the 1856 and 1879 maps showed two cemeteries which no longer exist, one on the west side of the Neck Road some distance north of the Friends meeting house and one at the corner of the Pleasant Ridge and McCaslin roads. Mrs. Jackson says that these graves, like the ones near the site of the old Hanson schoolhouse,³ have been moved.

1. The editor is grateful to Mrs. Charles Jackson and others for information about cemeteries in China. Mrs. Jackson prepared the map of China cemetery locations. (see Map 6 opposite;) she has also compiled from DAR records, town records, and personal observation a booklet of China cemetery inscriptions. A copy of the first edition of this valuable source is in the town office; a revised edition is now in preparation.

2. See above, p. 4, footnote 4, and p. 25, footnote 1.

3. See above, p. 113, footnote 2.

The China Village cemetery (#9 on Map 6) is situated on a knoll at the northeast corner of the lake. Because of the limited space there, the China Village Extension (#10) was opened on the east side of the Neck Road in the 1940's. Local legend says that the original Washburn family plot was on the point now called Church Park, at the northwest corner of the lake across the road from the lot where the church has stood since 1822, and that the graves were moved from there to the present cemetery.¹ Among the early settlers buried in the China Village cemetery, besides Japheth Washburn (1746-1828),² were James Brackett (died January 3, 1825, aged 99 years) and his wife Margery (died July 7, 1816, aged 85 years). Many of the second generation of such families as the Lancasters, McLaughlins, Wards, and Wiggins were also buried here.

The two China Village cemeteries are maintained by the China Cemetery Association. The association was organized in September 1865, according to Kingsbury; its nineteenth-century presidents included Samuel Hanscom, John F. Hunnewell, Jabez Lewis, S. H. Farnsworth, Abisha B. Fletcher, and Charles E. Dutton. In 1892 Theron E. Doe was secretary of the association;³ he still held that office on May 5, 1911, and the fire which destroyed his house on that date also destroyed the association's early records.⁴ A new secretary's book started on June 24, 1911, is still in use.⁴ At the June 1911 meeting, the members present (meeting in association treasurer Willis Washburn's office) instructed a committee consisting of Mr. Washburn, Dr. G. J. Nelson, and Mr. Doe to draw up a new constitution and by-laws. This document was adopted at the June 1912 meeting.⁵ The constitution provided for annual meetings and for election of a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer and of a superintending committee and a finance committee. The superintending committee was charged with regulating the price and sale of cemetery lots and with maintaining the cemetery, including mowing grass and cutting bushes, painting and repairing the fence (which Kingsbury says was erected in 1866), and looking after the tombs and righting any fallen stones.⁶

1. However, Kingsbury says (p. 1159): "The family ground of the Washburns was pleasantly situated on the knoll near the present cemetery, and this knoll was selected, embodying that ground." The church park lot is the one that was sold by John Brackett to the China Academy in 1820; the academy gave the lot to the town about 1828 and the village schoolhouse was built there soon afterward.

2. Japheth Washburn's son, Japheth C. Washburn and his first wife Betsey also have stones here, but Miss Clifford (Japheth C. Washburn's great-great-grand-daughter) says that Japheth C. was buried in Calais, Maine.

3. Kingsbury, p. 1159.

4. The editor is grateful to Mrs. Foster for the loan of the Cemetery Association secretary's book.

5. The 1912 meeting was first called for 2:30 p.m. on Monday, June 24; there being no quorum, it was adjourned to 7 that evening, when there was still no quorum; the meeting was finally held on the evening of June 25. The same thing happened in several succeeding years, and in 1919 and 1920 the association never did get a quorum.

6. These 1912 by-laws remained in effect until June 1974, when revised by-laws were adopted. Several minor changes were made, including the institution of nominal membership dues, a change in the annual meeting date from June to May, expansion of the superintending committee from three to five members, and provision for an elected nominating committee.

The officers elected in 1911 were Charles Dutton, president; G. J. Nelson, vice-president; Theron Doe, secretary; and Willis W. Washburn, treasurer. All four were re-elected annually until 1915, when John A. Woodsum succeeded Dr. Nelson as vice-president.¹ He remained vice-president until 1921, when he succeeded Mr. Dutton as president; in that year, too, W. C. Washburn replaced Theron Doe as secretary. Mr. Woodsum served as president until his death in August 1938; he was followed by Carl Stenholm (1939-1945), Willis F. Washburn (1946-1947), William Foster (1950-1954), Edna Meader (1958-1964), Eileen Morris (1965-1968), and Nelson Bailey (1969-present). Willis W. Washburn remained as treasurer until he died in 1942.

The Cemetery Association minutes in the 1920's record the election of officers and committees and occasionally approval of an expenditure for repairs and maintenance. A modern problem first appeared in 1930, when it was voted "to post signs in Cemetery road forbidding parking." In June 1932 the following motion was approved:

Voted that the Superintending Committee be authorized to offer a reward not exceeding \$25.00 for information that will lead to the arrest and conviction of any person or persons removing non-parking signs on the road leading from the highway to the Cemetery.

The June 1932 meeting also instructed the superintending committee to find out what could be done to improve the road. In 1940, Charles and Will Bailey were constituted a committee to repair the road, using good gravel but not spending more than fifty dollars; they reported in June 1941 that the work was done.

Planning for another cemetery in the village began in 1940 when a committee was asked to discuss with Wayland Jones purchase of some of his land. Negotiations were unsuccessful, and in June 1941 the same committee was asked to try to buy a lot ("not more than two acres at \$100.00 per acre with a frontage of at least ten rods") from Bateman Wentworth. The committee was further authorized to "plow, harrow and seed the plot" and otherwise prepare it for division into lots. In 1942 this latter responsibility was turned over to the superintending committee. Three years later, a problem arose: the 1945 meeting authorized test borings to see whether there was ledge too close to the surface, and instructed the superintending committee to dispose of the lot ("at not less than the purchase price") if the topsoil was not deep enough and to buy some other lot "after a similar test." The Wentworth lot turned out to be usable, however, and at meetings held in 1946, 1947, 1950, 1953, 1958, and 1959 the association discussed the laying-out and landscaping of the new cemetery.

With two cemeteries to keep in order, expenses increased in the 1950's and 1960's. The sale of lots in the extension cemetery brought in some revenue. In the 1960's, the Cemetery Association requested donations from local residents for care of the cemeteries and held

1. It was also in 1915 that the finance committee (constitutionally responsible for examining and certifying the treasurer's books annually) changed from a three-man to a three-woman body with the election of Abbie Sturtevant, Ella Bartlett, and Hattie Pamlin.

summer food sales for several years. Money thus obtained was spent to pay the salaries of cemetery caretakers each summer, to provide loam and fertilizer for the extension cemetery, and to maintain the road and the fence at the original cemetery and reset many of the old gravestones there.

The South China cemetery (#3), behind the church in South China village, has stones dating back to the 1830's.¹ Some of the second generation of the Clark family in China were buried here, as were Dr. George E. Brickett, who served in the Civil War; Ebenezer Meiggs (who lived from 1785 or 1786 to 1845 or 1846) and his wife; and many Webbers. There used to be a South China Cemetery Association, organized in 1878 by George F. Clark, Charles B. Stuart, William Crossman, and half a dozen others; this association disbanded when the town took over maintenance of the South China cemetery in 1967.

The Franch Mills cemetery (#14), on the south side of the main street a little west of the church, was laid out early in the nineteenth century. Kingsbury says that the land for the village cemetery and for a Friends cemetery was donated by John Dow, who came to Branch Mills in 1807.² The Branch Mills Cemetery Association was incorporated in January 1854 and soon bought additional land around the Dow tracts. Mrs. Ballantyne has found a deed of May 8, 1854, by which Thomas Dinsmore gave the Branch Mills Cemetery Corporation "land to add to the present burial ground which was originally deeded by John Dow to the China Monthly Meeting of Friends." Apparently the Friends maintained one part of the burying ground and the cemetery association the other part for many years, for Mr. Thurlow found that in May 1930 the Friends' part of the cemetery was transferred by lease to the Branch Mills Cemetery Association by the Trustees of the Society of the Friends' Burying Grounds (Harry W. Austin, Charles W. Jones, and Roscoe E. Jones). In March 1975 voters at town meeting approved a warrant article "to accept from the Branch Mills Cemetery Corporation, the funds in trust and in general funds for the perpetual care of the Branch Mills Cemetery."

Mr. Thurlow wrote that the earliest burial in the Branch Mills cemetery was that of Rufus Patten, who died July 26, 1820, aged 12 years and 11 months. Captain Caleb Parmenter (died July 17, 1864, aged 83 years) and his wife Lydia and his brother Joseph (died January 5, 1866, aged 83 years) and Joseph's wife Roxa were all buried here, with many members of their families. There are also graves of Dinsmores, Worthings, Greeleys, Hansons, and other families well-known in the history of Branch Mills and Palermo.

The Weeks Mills cemetery (#17), on the south side of the main street behind and beside the church, has graystones dating from the first two decades of the nineteenth century.³ Among the earliest burials were the children of Captain William Mosher (a veteran of the War of 1812) and his wife Freelove (Weeks) Mosher: of their daughters, Lydia B. lived from 1814 to 1816, Judith C. 1825 to 1826, Vesta M. 1834 to 1848, and Lydia A. 1835 to 1847. The first records pertaining to this cemetery are from the 1840's. The Union Church deed of 1842 refers to the

1. Kingsbury says that the South China cemetery was at one time a Friends cemetery (p. 1159), but Mr. Ralph Austin has found no Friends records substantiating this statement.
2. Kingsbury, p. 1159. The editor is grateful to Mrs. Ballantyne for information on the Branch Mills cemetery.
3. The editor is grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Merle Jones for information on the Weeks Mills cemetery.

graveyard; and by a June 1849 deed William Mosher¹ of China sold to the Weeks Mills Burying Ground Society for thirty dollars the following parcel of land:

...a part of lot No. 60...bounded as follows, beginning at a stake and stones about eight rods from the North West corner of the Union Meeting House Lot at Weeks Mills in a Southerly direction, thence North Westerly about ten rods to the South West corner of the old burying ground, thence Easterly four rods to the Northeast corner of said burying ground, thence North-erly four rods to the road at the Northeast corner of said burying ground, thence Easterly by said road to the Meeting house lot, thence Southerly about eight rods to the first mentioned bounds, containing thirty four rods more or less.

The Weeks Mills Burying Ground Society appears in surviving records at least once more, when it was organized again in 1872. Kingsbury wrote in 1892 that the Weeks Mills cemetery

was formerly under the direction of a corporation, which after many years was allowed to be dispersed. Lots on the adjoining lands of Frank Percival are still sold by him, and the grounds present a clean, regular appearance, with good fences.²

In 1913 the Weeks Mills Cemetery Association was chartered as a corporation under state law. The Cemetery Association's first officers were W. B. Shuman, president; George E. Marr, vice-president; M. F. Perkins, secretary; and R. E. Reed, treasurer. This association still maintains the cemetery; in 1973 the members began the task of cleaning from the old stones the moss and lichens which had obliterated many of the inscriptions.

All of the China cemeteries now associated with a specific religious group are Friends'. There are seven Friends cemeteries in China,³ of which the oldest is behind the former meeting house (now part of the Friends Camp) on the Pond Road (#6). The first burial there is said to have been that of Mrs. George Fish, daughter of Jonathan Clark, one of the original settlers of China. There appear to have been other early burials here, with only fieldstones as markers. The first engraved stone is that of Jedediah Jepson and his family, with the dates 1758-1822. The next oldest date is the February 8, 1829, death of Dorcas

1. The Captain William Mosher mentioned above lived from 1790 to 1854; there is also the gravestone of another William Mosher, who died in January 1876 at the age of 59.

2. Kingsbury, p. 1159.

3. Kingsbury, in 1892, mentioned only three, the Pond road (#6) and Neck road (#12) yards and the South China cemetery (#3). The editor is grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Austin for information on the China Friends cemeteries.

Winslow (daughter of Caleb and Peace Jones and wife of Elijah Winslow).

Another early Friends cemetery (#12) is on the lake side of the Neck road near the site of the former Friends Meeting House there. The earliest dated stone there is that of Isaiah R. Jones, son of Isaac and Nancy Jones, who died August 27, 1826, at the age of eight months. There were several more Joneses buried there, with Pinkhams, Wentworths, Winslows, and other families. One stone marks the grave of Denmark Hobby, a former slave of the Vassalboro Quaker Remington Fobby.

There are two more Friends graveyards at Dirigo Corner, again near the site of a former meeting house. The one farther from the road (#15) has a stone, that of Mary Buffum, dated March 1, 1823. Eli and Sybil Jones were buried here; so also was their oldest son, Major James P. Jones, the "Fighting Quaker" of Civil War fame, with his wife Rebecca (who took a second husband, Rev. Moses Newbert, and died in 1899) and two of their children. Major Jones was killed in July 1864, and his widow lost her new-born daughter on August 11 and her three-year-old son on August 14. The other cemetery at Dirigo (#20) is closer to the road and may be the more recent of the two, as the earliest legible date on a gravestone is 1837 (although there are also numerous earlier fieldstones lacking names or dates in the plot).

The Jones cemetery in South China (#21) is also a Friends cemetery; the earliest legible date in this neatly fenced, pine-shaded yard is 1822. Several family names besides Jones are found on the gravestones here. Similarly, in the Fussey cemetery (#24) on the Pleasant Ridge road, another Friends burying ground, most but not all the graves are those of Husseys. The oldest stone in this cemetery is dated 1818, and the others range from 1820 to 1872.

The Lakeview cemetery (#7), a fairly large and well-tended graveyard on the west side of the Pond Road, is also a Friends cemetery, as is indicated by the prevalence of such Quaker names as Austin, Hawkes, Fussey, Jepson, and Jones. The earliest marked stone there is that of E. Hawkes, who died September 4, 1832. Another early stone marks the grave of Lydia M. Hawkes, who died July 14, 1834, aged 18 years. According to the local Friends' records, the first could be the grave of Esther, wife of Isaac Hawkes, who died September 3, 1832, aged 27; and Lemuel and Abigail Hawkes had a daughter Lydia, who was born in Harlem on January 26, 1816.

Expenses for the care of the local Quaker cemeteries are paid from the China Monthly Meeting Burial Ground Fund, administered by a committee of China Friends. Mr. Ralph Austin currently serves as treasurer of this fund.

Two other early cemeteries in China are the Clark cemetery (#1) and the Lakeshore cemetery (#5). The former, now overgrown with brush, can be reached only by walking through the woods from route 32. According to Mr. Raymond Clark's detailed description of this yard,¹ the earliest burial was in 1775, although the earliest dated stone is that of Mary Coffin, who died in 1814. In some cases graves were marked only by fieldstones, and in some of the lots Mr. Clark did not know whether or not there were any burials. Besides several Clark families, Pages, Nortons, and Bassetts were buried in this cemetery.

1. Clark, History: Family of Thomas and Mary Church Clark, pp. 55-57.

The Lakeshore cemetery (#5) covers an area about ten thousand feet square close to the east shore of the lake nearly opposite the Alder Park road. Many of the stones in this yard are fieldstones with no inscription at all or with only initials. Among the marked graves are those of Michael Norton and his wife Hannah, Jacob Norton and his wife Betsey, and Thomas Norton and his wife Abigail. Michael Norton, one of the earliest settlers in China, served in the Revolutionary War and died in 1854 at the age of 94. His son Thomas, the first white male born in China, was 75 when he died in April 1849. Both he and Jacob are identified as veterans of the War of 1812. Dr. John Hall (died April 18, 1836, aged 82), another Revolutionary soldier, was buried in this cemetery; the earliest dated stone is that of his daughter Hannah, who died May 21, 1818. According to Mr. Lawrence Hall,¹ Mr. Thomas Dinsmore of Branch Mills provided some of the funds to help maintain this cemetery; the Hall family used to do some of the work. Years ago cows grazed among the graves and kept the bushes down, but people thought this was disrespectful and the cemetery was fenced.

The Chadwick Hill cemetery (#18) also contains some early graves, including those of Selina Abbott (died December 20, 1820, aged 23 years), Paul Chadwick (died in 1809),² Judah Chadwick (died August 9, 1816, aged 51), and Abner Starrett (died August 14, 1819, aged 43). This cemetery, or part of it, is probably the one shown on a map in the town records for 1872;³ it was purchased in that year by G. B. Chadwick and William N. Rollins, and for some reason the map was recorded and attested by the town clerk. The map shows two rows of lots of varying sizes, with prices beginning at \$6 for each of two 12 by 32 foot lots at the east end (some 9 by 32 foot lots near the west end cost \$6.50 or \$7) and rising to \$12 for the 26 by 32 foot lots near the middle of the area. Names of lot owners on the map include William N. Rollins, Abie Chadwick, Joseph Newcomb, G. B. Chadwick, and A. H. Abbot.⁴

The Chadwick Hill Cemetery Association was organized in 1891; its records include a copy of the documents calling the founding meeting of the association on April 30 of that year.⁵ The meeting was requested by Samuel C. Starrett, A. H. Chadwick, N. Hilt, A. D. Chadwick, O. M. Fernald, F. C. Goodspeed, and Daniel Starrett. Their purpose was to organize

1. A descendant of Michael Norton and Dr. John Hall; see above, p. 82.
2. Perhaps the victim of the Malta Indian War; see above, p. 23, footnote 2.
3. "Plan of a parcel of land purchased by G. B. Chadwick & Wm N. Rollins and laid out into burial lots. Situated at South China." In Records of the Town of China, Vol. 4, n. p. (near the middle of the various records for the year 1872).
4. Mrs. Jackson's revised list of inscriptions on stones in the Chadwick Hill cemetery includes William N. Rollins (died February 7, 1882, aged 57 years), Abel Chadwick (1802-1885), Joseph Newcomb (1790-1877), and Rev. G. B. Chadwick (1832-1900). The only Abbotts buried in the Chadwick Hill cemetery were Constant Abbott (died August 24, 1847, aged 83 years), his wife Thankful, Selina Abbott (Constant's daughter?), John Abbott (Constant's son?), and John's wife Desire. The editor has been unable to find out when Ambrose Abbott died (although Rufus Jones implied that he was alive at the time of the South China fire in April 1872; see Jones, "Addresses About South China," p. 34) or where he was buried.
5. The editor is grateful to the late Mrs. Mina W. Jackson of South China for information on the Chadwick Hill Cemetery Association.

a society to care for the Chadwick Hill cemetery, including "fencing of the grounds, keeping in repair, straightening of walks, rightening up tablets and otherwise improve and beautifying the grounds as said society may determine." At the organizational meeting, by-laws were adopted and officers chosen. In the early days, the association had almost no money; work was done by the members, and occasionally it was necessary to borrow small sums, to be repaid as lots were sold. Beginning around 1916, however, the association began to receive gifts to establish trust funds for care of the cemetery or of specified lots in it. Among the early contributors was Laroy S. Starrett, who sent \$1000 in 1916 to establish a fund for the general care of the cemetery, \$600 in 1917 to provide perpetual care for the lots of his grandparents, parents, brother, sister, and other relatives (with any surplus income to be used wherever else in the cemetery it was needed), and an even larger sum in 1920. Joseph W. and Edward R. Chadwick established a trust fund for the care of the Abel Chadwick lot. Other lot owners followed suit; by the 1970's, all new lots were sold with perpetual care, and money had been donated for perpetual care of many of the older lots.

With the money available for general care of the cemetery, the Chadwick Hill Cemetery Association members have made several improvements. In 1930 a tomb was built. Additional land was purchased both north and south of the original area and laid off into three and six grave lots. Writing in February 1974, Mrs. Mina Jackson expressed appreciation for the work of the late Walter H. Arnold, a past treasurer of the association, and that of C. Frederick Nowland, the sexton. At that time, the following people had served for many years as association officers: Kenneth G. Ingraham, president; Edna Taber, vice-president; Mina W. Jackson, secretary-treasurer; Herman Masse, chairman of the board of trustees; and David Van Strien, Roy Grindle, and Philip Taber, trustees.

In the Chadwick Hill cemetery there is a tall monument to James and Ruth (Hatch) Chadwick, "pioneer settlers" of the southern part of China, who arrived in 1780. Another monument (#19) to these early settlers has been erected a mile or so farther west, closer to the site of their first dwelling. It is near the now impassable road called the Arnold or Old County road which ran from the north side of the Erskine Academy grounds to route 3.¹ According to inscriptions on both these stones, James Chadwick was born in Falmouth, Massachusetts, on July 25, 1725, and died in China (then still Jones Plantation) on September 6, 1786.

The Deer Hill cemetery (#16), like the Chadwick Hill cemetery, is quite large. Several of the burials there in the 1820's and 1830's were children; for example, Frederick and Charlotte Harmon lost two daughters, one three years old and one fifteen months old, in September 1827. Phebe Wight, daughter of Joseph and Mary Wight, was not quite nine years old when she died in February 1833. Two other early burials were Samuel Gray's wives, Lucy (died in 1821) and Abigail (died in 1838); Mr. Gray lived until 1869.

The Deer Hill cemetery is maintained by the Deer Hill Cemetery Association, organized December 28, 1907.² The first officers elected were

1. The editor asserts from personal experience that when the bushes are leaved out this monument cannot be located without a guide who knows where it is.

2. The editor is grateful to Mrs. Delbert Clifford for information about the Deer Hill Cemetery Association.

E. W. Pierce, moderator; F. O. Bonney, secretary; W. Hammond, president; C. T. Beale, treasurer; and F. O. Bonney, C. T. Beale, and C. R. Hatch, trustees. The association met twice a year for several years, and then as the number of members declined changed to annual meetings. To provide perpetual care for some of the lots and to pay for general cemetery maintenance, association members pay dues, and the association has income available from several trust funds. As one of its early projects the association erected a fence of wooden posts and iron piping around the cemetery, with an arch over the front gate with the name of the cemetery on it. Maple trees, now large enough to provide ample shade, were planted on the north side. The association keeps the fence repaired and painted; rakes up the maple leaves in the spring, and leads an annual work bee to clean up the cemetery for Memorial Day. G. T. Foster made a map of the cemetery, showing each lot that was owned and those that were for sale and locating them accurately on the north or south side or in the older part at the back on the east side. A record of all burials here has been kept in a special book begun by Miss Mildred Slater and later continued by association secretary Florence Clifford.

The earliest marked stones in the Morrill-Bragg cemetery (#2) near route 32 are in the Pullen and Stone lots. William Pullen lost his eight-month-old son Cyrus in March 1818 and his wife Abigail in August 1819. Miss Charlotte Stone of Portland died in March 1821, at the age of 28, and was buried in this graveyard. As the name suggests, members of the Morrill and Bragg families were also buried here, with various others.

The Pleasant Ridge cemetery (#13) contains stones dated in the 1830's and 1840's, as well as more recent ones. Many different families have been buried here in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The smaller Stanley Hill cemetery (#11) also records burials in the 1830's and 1840's; many Burgesses were buried here, along with Chapmans, Crowells, and Wards. Otis Burgess died in January 1892 at the age of 83, outliving his wife Eunice (died August 29, 1856, aged 42), his daughter Susan (died August 30, 1862, aged 16), and his daughter Ellen (died October 13, 1875, aged 26). Captain Moody C. Burgess and his wife Eunice lost at least six children (a seventh stone is broken and illegible) between 1836 and 1858; three sons and a daughter died in infancy, one son lived six years, and another son lived eight and a half years.

Kingsbury concluded his 1892 description of the cemeteries in China with the following sentence:

Throughout the town are family grounds in conspicuous places, and these are reverently cared for by the descendants who occupy the farms.

The family burying grounds which are now known are quite small, and in not all cases are they "reverently cared for." For example, the Turner cemetery (#27), on the north side of the fire road number 10 running from the Neck Road to the lake, is in a grove of maple and apple trees whose roots and foliage have toppled most of the gravestones. There are three visible stones here, and perhaps others hidden in the undergrowth.

1. There are no gravestones for Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Ward, but Miss Mary Washburn told Mrs. Jackson they were buried here.
2. Kingsbury, p. 1160.

The tree-shaded and walled Haskell cemetery (#4) on the Pond Road is the largest of the family plots; about thirty people have been buried there. The yard contains three Haskell lots, two Hanson lots, and the grave of Almira P. Kenn. The earliest burials were in the 1820's. The Morrill cemetery (#22) near the intersection of the Morrill road and the old road from China to Winslow contains only three marked graves. The Sewall cemetery (#23) in the woods on the east side of the Pleasant Ridge road has two Sewall gravestones and five or more unmarked fieldstones.

There are four marked graves in the Gray cemetery (#25) on Deer Hill; this cemetery is about twenty-five feet on a side, surrounded by a dry stone wall and shaded by large maples at three corners and two birches on one side. The principal marker is a tall stone with the family name conspicuously carved on it. The Nathaniel Bragg cemetery (#26) also has one noticeable marker, a piece of slate beside a wide-spread lilac bush in the field across the Pond road from the former Killdeer Lodge. The slate is inscribed:

Dea. Nathl. Bragg
Died
Mar. 21, 1838
Aet. 60.

Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone,
He whom I fix my hopes upon;
The track I see and I'll pursue
The narrow way till Him I view.

Mr. Dillenbeck, who mows the field around this graveyard, says that the stone has been there since 1838 or soon after; hidden under the lilac bush are two or three other graves marked with flat fieldstones. The house and the former barn across the road Mr. Dillenbeck believes were built around 1800. The barn was still known as the old Bragg barn in the 1920's.¹

The town of China as a political body took its first recorded action on cemeteries in the 1830's. At the March 5, 1832, town meeting, a committee (William Mosher, Elijah Winslow, and Alfred Marshall) was appointed to investigate the question of establishing public burying grounds. They reported to the March 4, 1833, meeting that they had decided two such cemeteries were enough. The sites they recommended, and the voters approved, were

one half acre on the west side of the Pond
near head of Charles McLaughlin, And one half
acre of William Pullen in the Southeasterly
part of said town near Pullen's Mills, so
called.²

If cemeteries were actually laid out and used at these sites, they are

1. See above, p. 35.

2. Records of the town of China, Vol. 2, n.p. (report of the meeting of March 4, 1833). The McLaughlins had settled on the northern part of the Neck Road; the 1856 map has a graveyard symbol, but labeled "S. H.," on the east side of that road. The same map shows a Pullen living near the sawmills on the west branch of the Sheepscot River between Branch Mills and Weeks Mills, but there is no sign of a cemetery in the vicinity.

no longer visible. The one cemetery now known which was (probably) always a town-owned burying ground is #28, the pauper cemetery on the former town farm land on the east shore of the lake. This area contains one marked stone, that of John Chase (died June 19, 1839, aged 38 years), an initialed footstone, and many fieldstones.¹

In 1959, the March town meeting approved the appropriation of \$200 for work on "the old Cemeteries, which have been neglected in Town," and which had no trust funds to pay for maintenance. Since 1961 a similar expenditure has been approved annually, the amount varying between \$250 and \$500. According to town manager Ira Singer, the town has responsibility for fourteen of the town's cemeteries: Clark, Morrill-Bragg, South China, Haskell, Lakeshore, Stanley Hill, Pleasant Ridge, Branch Mills, one of the Friends yards at Dirigo (#15), Weeks Mills, Morrill, Sewall, Gray, and Nathaniel Bragg.² The minimum maintenance involves mowing or cutting brush once a summer. When labor is available, the town will mow more than once and will also paint and repair fences and generally clean up as many of the yards as possible. Mr. Frederick Nowland did much of the maintenance work for several years in the 1960's; the annual town manager's reports in the early 1960's and in 1974 commented on the difficulty of finding people to do this sort of labor.

The Villages

China was a relatively large town in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the size and activity of the four villages reflected the progress of the whole town. The census of 1820 showed 894 people living in China and 862 in Harlem, for a total of 1756 inside the boundaries of present-day China. At that time China and Harlem together made up the fourth most populous town in Kennebec County, preceded by Hallowell, Augusta, and Vassalboro; Waterville's population was 1719. By 1850 China's population had increased to 2769, but this was the high point; for the rest of the nineteenth century there was a gradual loss of population, until by 1900 only 1380 people lived in the town.

For most of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the four villages in China were quite substantial commercial and manufacturing centers. Farming provided a living for much of the population, and the villages provided the commercial and professional services the rural population needed. As noted earlier, by 1820 there were stores, mills, and service shops of various sorts in all four villages. All stood on main roads, and China and South China on major junctions of highways: from China, the Bangor road went north and the Belfast road went east, while roads from Augusta to Belfast and from Bangor to Damariscotta intersected in South China. The stagecoach lines passing through China, South China, and Branch Mills provided an additional impetus to

1. Mrs. Jackson has abstracted from the town records and included in her list of cemetery inscriptions the names of other people probably buried here.

2. Mr. Singer added that when other cemeteries in town are not maintained by anyone else, the town may do some work on them, and discussed with the editor the possibility of town work on the Turner cemetery and cemetery #28.

