

Mr. James Connolly, Wildlife Biologist
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
270 Lyons Rd.
Sidney, Maine 04330-2524

September 16, 2002

Dear Mr. Connolly,

Last year I had a telephone conversation with you regarding a desecrated gravesite (tomb) located in the Bowdoinham Wildlife Refuge and my thoughts about establishing some kind of memorial to mark its site, which is becoming more and more overgrown every year.

Below is a summary of the information I have been able to assemble through discussions with many Bowdoinham residents, several of whom are Thomas Reed's Descendants, and my own genealogy research. Based on this information I respectfully request approval to do the following:

Erect a plaque or monument to commemorate the site of this tomb including information on who was interned there.

Recover some or all of the granite blocks currently lying in the water at Lazy O Point and bringing some of them back to serve as a base for the plaque. (It would be impractical to rebuild the tomb, as the area is very overgrown.) Another descendant of Thomas Reed, who lives in town has volunteered to undertake this task.

I would further like to suggest that, because of the truly terrible and shameful fate of this resting place, that the state of Maine give consideration to renaming the Bowdoinham Wildlife Refuge in honor of Thomas Reed. Also, changing any references to this point of land on future maps to Reed's Point, as it has been known since the late 1700's.

Before discussing the background information, I think it's necessary to explain the use of the surname Reed and Read. The family names Reed/Read are often interchangeable and this is the case with this family. Although Thomas used the surname Reed, earlier generations sometimes used the name Read. In fact Thomas's grandson Thomas Bowdoin Read, who will be mentioned later, chose to use the Read alternative. Descendants living in Bowdoinham today use the name Read.

BACKGROUND:

The Thomas Reed family erected this tomb in approximately 1812 on their home site, which is now part of the Wildlife Refuge. Earlier this point of land was referred to as Reed's Point. Early maps of Bowdoinham still name this point Reed's Point. The estimated date for the building of the tomb is based on the death of Thomas's young daughter, Ruth, who died at age 10 years in 1812.

Some damage to the tomb must have happened in the early 1900's. In the mid 1920's, this tomb was partially open when several young teenage boys looked in and saw the body of a man lying on a slab. They flipped a coin to see which one would go inside and remove the skull from this body. One finally did enter the tomb and removed the skull. An argument ensued over which boy would keep the skull during which the skull was dropped, broken, and thrown into the Bay. I have had a personal conversation with one of these boys, now in his late 80's and still living in Bowdoinham. I hope you can understand the horror my 92-year-old father and I felt as we listened to this story earlier this year. This information, along with information from descendants of Thomas Reed related to the burial of Reed family members, leaves little doubt that this site was the gravesite of the Thomas Reed family. During this time the land that the tomb is on was being used to graze sheep. Many town residents including my father, who was born and raised in Bowdoinham, remember seeing the open tomb, and mentioned seeing the bones of sheep that had fallen into the opening. Of course my father had no idea that this was the tomb of his ancestors and that some of the bones he was looking at were most certainly theirs. Another individual remembered looking in and seeing six slabs, three on each side with bodies on most of them.

In September of 1942, two men, Lloyd W. Hickey of Gardiner, Maine, and Herbert S. Brown of Randolph Maine, purchased this point of land. They sold the land on June 5, 1970 to the State of Maine. Sometime during the 1960's, Herbert Brown contracted with several men to dismantle the tomb and carry the granite blocks down to the shore of the Bay, near what is known locally as "Lazy O Point", to make a pier for his camp. I have to believe that this was, in some way, a violation of State or Federal Law. If not, then at the very least it would be considered a breach of civilized behavior. The granite blocks are still there. Many of the town's people in Bowdoinham were aware of this activity and were very disturbed. However, no one, including Town Officials, took any action to stop this shameful act.

In any case, this tomb was the final resting place of my third great grandfather, and forth-great grandfather and grandmother. I am greatly disturbed that this place was desecrated and to this day lies open to the elements. The inner brick arch is still visible but suffers from years of deterioration from the weather. No remains of the bodies can be seen now as years of rain, snow and mud have filled in a good part of the tomb.

Based on many years of research, I believe that I can confidently state that at least the following people were buried in that tomb:

Thomas Reed	died: Oct 19,1843
Ruth Wait (Thomas's 1 st wife)	died: Jul 26, 1826
James Bowdoin Reed (son)	died: Jul 7,1823
Margaret Pratt (Thomas's 2 nd wife)	died: Unknown date
Ruth Reed (daughter)	died: Dec 9, 1812

Hopefully, if permission is granted to recover the granite blocks now in the Bay, one or two may contain engravings, which could shed further light on who was interned in the tomb.

Thomas Reed was an early settler in Bowdoinham, arriving in the late 1700's. He settled on what was then referred to as Reed's Point (part of the so-called Bowdoin Tract). His father, John Reed, had given this land to him. His father was deeded this land by Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts (then including the current state of Maine) in appreciation of his long-time service to the Governor. John Reed had served as an overseer for Governor Bowdoin for many years and managed his properties including the Elizabethan Islands off the coast of Massachusetts, near Martha's Vineyard Sound. Thomas Reed served as Bowdoinham Selectman in 1803, and was active in town affairs for many years. Because of this close relationship with Governor Bowdoin, Thomas named his son James Bowdoin Read. The Bowdoin name was used in several future generations. Many of his descendants continue to live in Bowdoinham to this day. His grandson, the Honorable Thomas Bowdoin Read (1816-1888), served two terms in the Maine Senate.

I think you can understand my deep feelings and those of my family, and other descendants of Thomas Reed, regarding these horrendous acts perpetrated on this sacred area. I look forward to hearing from you and receiving permission to restore the Reed's Point tomb as the final resting place for the Read family.

As we discussed during our telephone conversation on September 16th, I will call you on Friday morning, October 4th to see if there is any possibility to meet with you while I am in Maine on October 6th and 7th. Thank you the time you spent with me on the phone. Please let me know if you require any additional information.

Respectfully,

Dudley B. Henderson
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 Manchester, Ct 06040
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READ Family of Bowdoinham:

John Reed /Read (1728-1813)

In 1730, after the prevailing epidemic had carried off several of the family, he was taken by his aunt Abigail [Rice], the wife of Daniel Bugbee of Roxbury, his mother's sister, who carried him before her, on horseback, to her residence in Roxbury, where he lived till his majority, and learned the trade of a tanner of a Mr. Williams. He afterwards became a kind of steward or agent for Gov. Bowdoin, who owned great estates near Cape Cod, among which was Naushon Island and its dependencies, constituting the group known as the Elizabeth Islands, between Buzzard's Bay and Martha's Vineyard Sound, in whose employ he continued many years. He afterwards moved back to Roxbury, and was much in Public life: justice of the peace and quorum throughout the Commonwealth, and land agent for Massachusetts, which was at that time an important office. His residence was what was afterwards the residence of Gov. Eustis. He was known as Major Read, from his having acted as paymaster of the militia before the Revolution.

He married a Hannah (?) Whose married name had been Goddard?

Thomas Reed/Read (1767-1843)

(Buried in Tomb on Red's Point)

Thomas Reed was an early settler in Bowdoinham, arriving in the late 1700's. He settled on what was then referred to as Reed's Point (part of the so-called Bowdoin Tract). His father, John Reed, had given this land to him. His father was deeded this land by Governor James Bowdoin (1729-1790) of Massachusetts (then including the current state of Maine) in appreciation of his long-time service to the Governor. Thomas Reed served as Bowdoinham Selectman in 1803, and was active in town affairs for many years. During the shipbuilding boom in Bowdoinham, Thomas had two ships built; the *Mind*, an 82-ton Schooner, and the *Reed*, an 85-ton Sloop, both built in 1819. Because of this close relationship with Governor James Bowdoin, Thomas named his son James Bowdoin Read. The Bowdoin name was carried on in several future generations. Many of Thomas's descendants continued to live in Bowdoinham to this day. His grandson, the Honorable Thomas Bowdoin Read (1816-1888), served two terms in the Maine Senate. (see below)

He married 1st Ruth Waite who died in 1826. (Buried in tomb on Reed's Point)

He married 2nd Margaret Pratt (Buried in tomb on Reed's Point)

Thomas and Ruth had three children:

Ruth (1792-1812)

(Buried in tomb on Reed's Point)

Rebecca (1806-)

James Bowdoin Read (see next)

James Bowdoin Read (1790-1823)

(Buried in tomb on Reed's Point)

James died at age 33 leaving a wife and a young son Thomas Bowdoin Read.
(see next)

Thomas Bowdoin Read (1816-1888)

Thomas moved to Wayne, Me. with his mother who had remarried to an Allen Wing of Wayne.

(The following information is contained in the History Of Wayne, Me.):

Thomas father died when he was but seven years old and from that time he was thrown almost entirely upon his own resources. From twelve to fourteen, when most boys are usually altogether dependent upon his own parents for maintenance, he was the chief support for his mothers and sisters. Although his educational privileges were necessarily limited, he determined to prepare himself for teaching, and this he did by hard farm work in summer and equally hard study in winter. He followed the profession at intervals for more than 25 years, and during that time taught forty terms of school. When fourteen, he went with his mother to reside in Wayne, Me. and lived in that town until he was 21, then returned to Bowdoinham and purchased the old homestead, upon which he resided about 10 years. During this time he usually taught during the winter months, and for two years had charge of the Bowdoinham village school with an attendance of nearly 140 pupils. He lived at home while teaching the village school, and not only walked the entire distance (about two miles each way) but had the care of 20 cattle, 100 sheep, and several horses. At the age of 31 he returned to Wayne and engaged in trade. The estimation in which the citizens of that town held him may be inferred from the fact that for many years he was chairman of the Selectman, chairman of the School Committee, taught the principle school several terms and was for two sessions elected a member of the Maine Senate. During his second term in the senate he was chairman of the committee on education and it was especially through his persistent work and influence that the bill was passed establishing the state normal school at Casire. The year following this he was appointed Collector of Customs at Fort Kent, which position he held for two years. There he was in charge of more than 100 miles of frontier and was obligated in the performance of his duties to travel over this entire circuit twice each month. When he assumed the duties of the position the office paid nothing to the government above expenses, but he was able to forward over \$2,000 per month to Washington. In 1871, he withdrew from public life, came to Bowdoinham, and devoted nearly all his time to farming. In this pursuit he was soon recognized as one of the best and most progressive farmers, not only in Sagadahoc County, but also in the state of Maine. In connection with his farming operation he had much to do with the ice industry, being for a long

time manager and agent of the Reed Ice Company. He was known as a warm hearted, public spirited, Christian gentleman, and one who kept him thoroughly informed of questions of the day and affairs of the world. He had a ready sense of humor, was courteous and affable in his intercourse with others.

Thomas married Margaret Goodwin Jellerson from Bowdoinham, descendant of Job Jellerson, an early settler in Bowdoinham.

Thomas and his wife are buried in the Topsham.

Thomas and Margaret had three children:

Julia E. Read (1845-)
James Bowdoin Read (see next)
Allen Wing Read (1854-1901)

James Bowdoin Read (1846-1904)

James Bowdoin Read lived in Bowdoinham his entire life, running the farm his father had started on land previously owned by John Patten overlooking Merrymeeting Bay. A portion of that farm is where the Bayview Cemetery is located today. He represents the third generation of Read's carrying the Bowdoin name.

He married Rosaline Crane Bishop of Wayne, Me.

He and Rosaline had two daughters:

Julia (1870-1956)
Margaret (1873-1959) * my grandmother