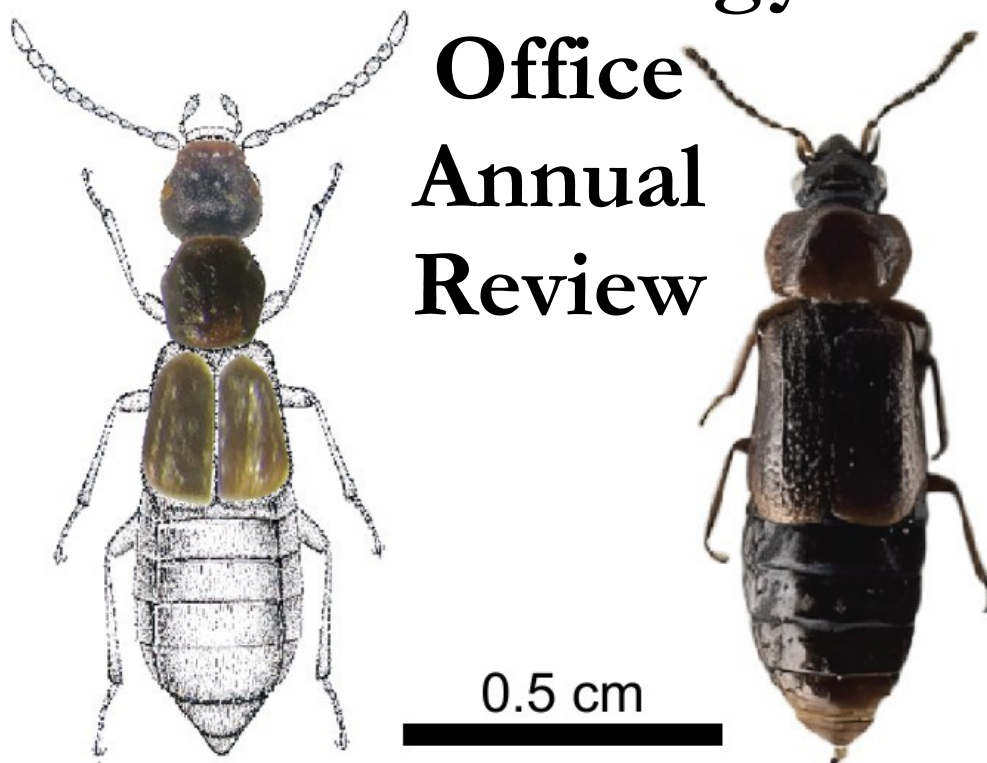


Provincial Archaeology Office Annual Review



2022

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Old Blackhead Methodist/ United Church Cemetery

Juliet Lanphear

Historic Plaque Intern, Heritage NL

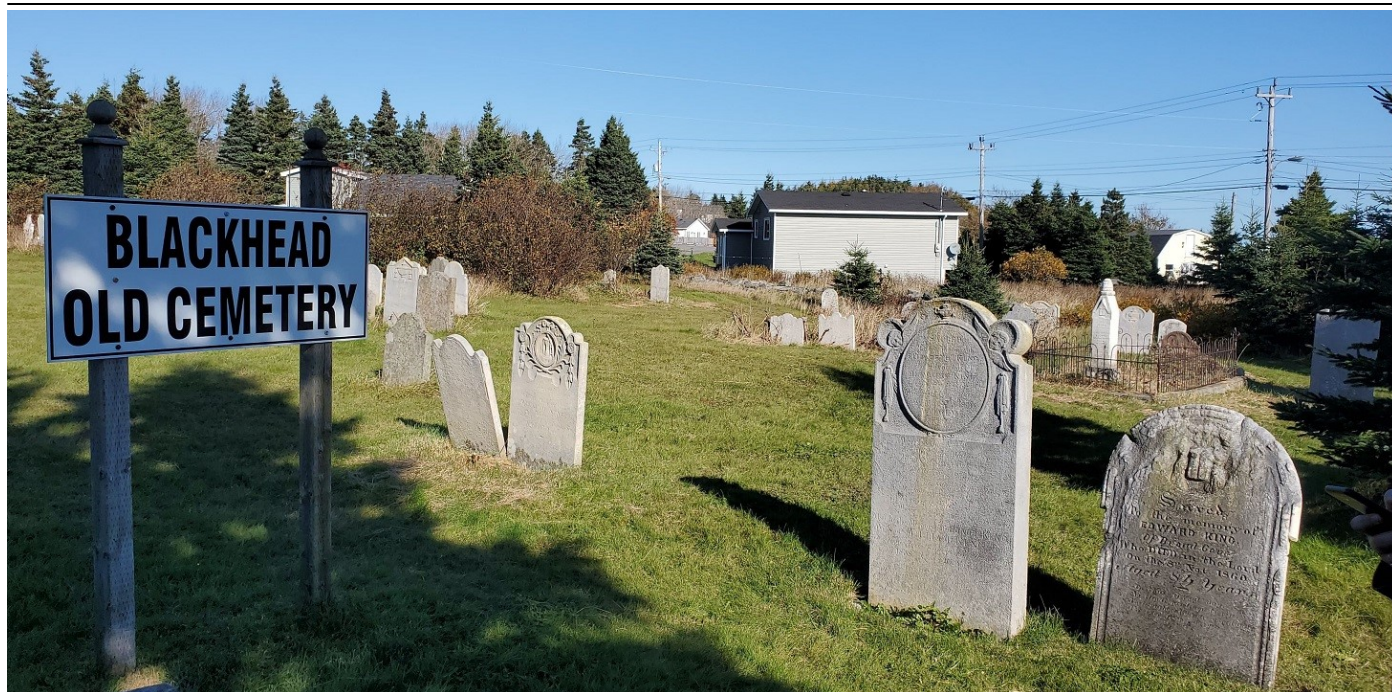


Figure 1: Photograph of the Old Blackhead Methodist/United Church Cemetery (Photo credit Heritage NL, 2022).

The Old Blackhead Methodist/United Church Cemetery is located off the NL-70 highway in Small Point-Adams Cove-Blackhead-Broad Cove, Conception Bay, between the Old Church and Pumphouse Roads. The cemetery corresponds to the site of the first Methodist church in Canada, built in Blackhead in 1769. Founded by John and Charles Wesley, Methodism is an evangelical movement within the Church of England, from which it separated in 1795 (Piper 2000). Methodism arrived in Newfoundland in 1766 with the Church of England Reverend Laurence Coughlan, who served in Newfoundland from 1766 to 1773 and was a follower of John Wesley (Piper 2000).

In a 1998 survey of the Blackhead Cemetery (Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogical Society Inc.), 218 headstones were recorded, but the number of occupants in the cemetery is over 1000 according to government death records which include the location of burials (Newfoundland's Grand Banks 2022). The death dates on the headstones range from the

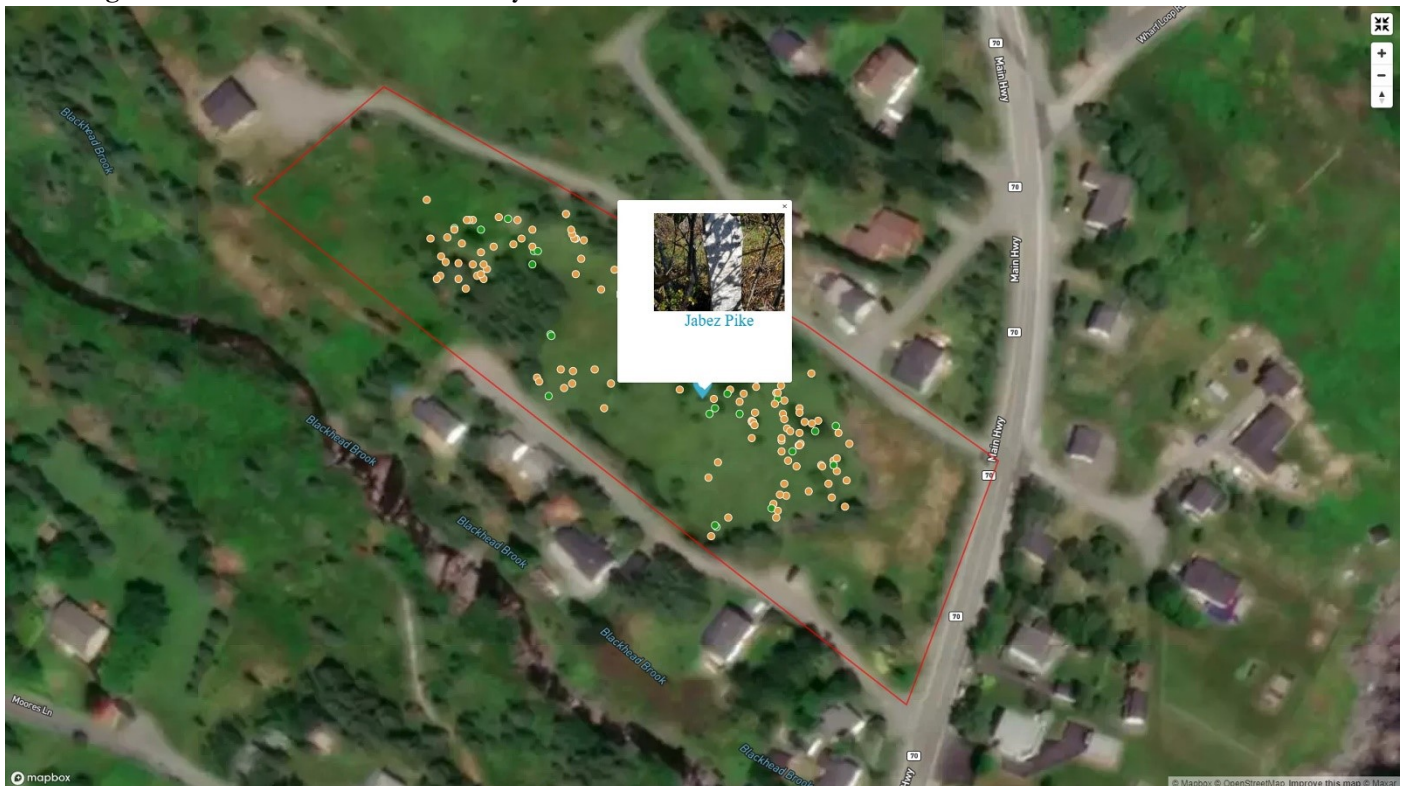
1770s to the 1920s, while the earliest date for government death records is 1891. Earlier death records are available in the United Church archives but were not included in this research due to restrictions on publication. According to death records, the most common family names recorded on grave markers and of individuals buried in the cemetery are Moores/Moors, Thistle, King, Hudson, and Legrow. Most cemetery occupants were from Blackhead or nearby communities (Adam's Cove, Broad Cove, Mulley's Cove, Small Point). However, some were born in other parts of Newfoundland, such as Greenspond and St. John's, and several were Americans from Massachusetts.

During the Fall of 2022, Heritage NL undertook documentation, preservation, and community outreach of the Old Methodist/United Cemetery. For documentation, Heritage NL used BillionGraves and created a database of individuals buried at the Blackhead cemetery to document the graveyard. Bil-



Figure 2: Several of the older cemetery headstones belonging to Mary and Jonathan Moors (Photo credit Heritage NL 2022).

Figure 3: The Old Blackhead Cemetery on BillionGraves. The circles are the GPS locations of each headstone.



lionGraves is an app which allows users to photograph headstones and record their GPS locations.

Most headstones in the Blackhead cemetery were recorded with BillionGraves, except those densely covered in vegetation that could not be photographed. Documenting the cemetery with BillionGraves creates a record of each headstone's location and photographs the inscription, preserving the information in case of future damage or weathering (BillionGraves 2022). A database of the individuals buried in the cemetery was created using a 1998 headstone survey completed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Genealogical Society and historical death records from the Newfoundland government. The database includes biographical information (first and last name, place of birth, date of death, age at death) and information about the headstone, if applicable (marker type and material, inscription, size). The database includes 1070 entries. The link to the database is here: <https://tinyurl.com/OldBlackheadCemetery>.

Some preliminary work was completed to preserve the headstones at Blackhead cemetery, which included a headstone cleaning workshop and

clearing some vegetation around headstones. Headstones were cleaned with a 50/50 solution of D/2 biological cleaner and water, then scrubbed with soft bristle brushes to remove organic matter such as lichen, moss, and dirt. Vegetation around the headstones was carefully removed to prevent further damage and to increase visibility, but further work is required, especially northwest of the cemetery.

Community outreach was an important aspect of the work conducted at Blackhead cemetery to engage the public and to ensure that research would be accessible to the public. A workshop was conducted with the local community at the Blackhead cemetery in October 2022 to teach proper headstone cleaning techniques and cemetery maintenance. Also, weekly social media posts under the hashtag Mortuary Mondays were posted on various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn) about the Blackhead Cemetery, including articles about the headstone art and the cemetery database.

Figure 4: Headstone cleaning workshop at Blackhead Methodist Cemetery in October of 2022 (Photo credit Heritage NL 2022).





Figure 5: Headstone prior to vegetation clearing (Photo credit Heritage NL 2022).

Figure 6: Headstone after vegetation clearing (Photo credit Heritage NL 2022).





Figure 7: Headstones in the southwest area of Blackhead Methodist Cemetery are covered in vegetation (Photo credit Heritage NL 2022).

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