

# Intern uses 'crypt keeper' to help catalog town cemeteries

By Beth A. Birmingham | Aug 20, 2018



Patrick Groening shows off some of the data he entered into software called "Crypt Keeper" that catalogs all the gravestones in Union. He spent the entire summer on the project as part of his internship with the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. *Photo by: Beth A. Birmingham*

**UNION** — A third-year student from the University of Maine at Orono spent the summer plotting and logging information on four of Union's six cemeteries.

The project, which had been started by the town six or seven years ago, is now 80 percent done, thanks to Patrick Groening's persistence.

Groening, of Belfast, was one of more than 100 interns statewide chosen to participate in the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center program.

Town Manager Jay Feyler said this is the third year his town has been assigned an intern to assist with municipal projects.

The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center is a nonpartisan, independent research and public service unit of the University of Maine.

The center, created in 1989, was named to continue the legacy of U.S. Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, who served as a model of civil discourse and integrity, according to its website.

"The Policy Center is dedicated to improving and promoting the quality of public dialogue about state, regional, and national policy issues through applied policy research and community engagement," it says. "Our research is interdisciplinary, cutting across departmental lines to bring together faculty, students and external policy experts to address issues confronting the state and nation."

Groening, majoring in internal affairs, worked 40 hours a week for 12 weeks cross-checking all information from books dating back to 1980, entering that information into software called "Crypt Keeper." More than 4,200 entries were put in by Groening, who worked closely with Union's cemetery director, Myrna Soule.

The intent is to have every burial able to be researched -- including Civil War and Revolutionary War veterans -- some dating back to 1775.

Although some of the information had been inputted, Groening said he went back through it all again, just to be accurate.

Then he went through all four of the cemeteries he worked on and took photographs of the headstones that were visible and wrote down the information. He then worked with a geographic information system expert with the Emergency Management Agency in Rockland to do the mapping -- which includes latitude and longitude.

When completed, the project will allow anyone to pull up a given cemetery, click on a headstone, and view information on who is buried there, their birth and death dates, and any family history that is available.

Groening said the condition of some of the stones made his job difficult.

"Some were sunken into the ground, and I read what I could," he said. "Some you could see there's a stone but can't read anything -- which is too bad."

"That's why we want to get them in the system now, before any more crumble," Groening said.

Groening said he was amazed at just how much work was involved. "It's so important and you don't really think about it," he said.

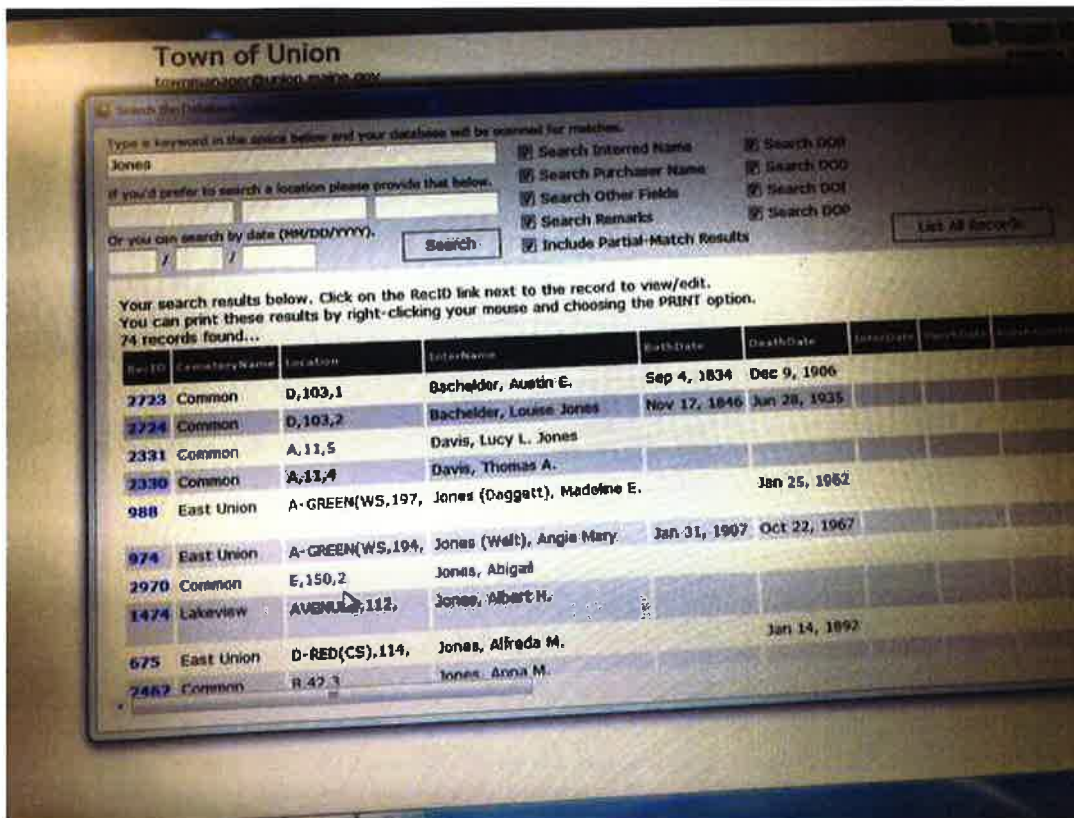
"It definitely was a unique project," Groening said.

*Courier Publications reporter Beth A. Birmingham can be reached at 594-4401 ext. 125 or via email at [bbirmingham@villagesoup.com](mailto:bbirmingham@villagesoup.com).*

AVENUE D CONTINUEDNOTES

LOT 102	LIBBEY, Isadore M., Daughter of Andrew & A. E. Libbey d. June 27, 1859 AE 12 ys, 21 ds	1 & 2
	LIBBEY, Aroline E., Wife of Andrew Libbey d. Oct. 4, 1860 AE 37 yrs, 3 mos, & 3 d's "We mourn for her who sleeps below Now free from every pain and woe Yet for ourselves not here we weep . . ."	7
LOT 103	BACHELDER, Austine E. Sept. 4, 1834 Dec. 9, 1906 Co. b 24 Me. Vols	1 G. A. R.
	BACHELDER, Louise Jones, His Wife Nov. 17, 1846 June 28, 1935	
	BACHELDER, Belle Celeste, Only child of Austin E. & Louise Bachelder d. May 12, 1871 Ae 4 y's 11 m's 19 d's	1
	JONES, M. Jane "Mother" 1826 - 1895 "We miss thee from thy place.	1 & 5
	JONES, Celest "Sister" 1852 - 1873 "A precious one from us has gone A voice loved is stilled."	
LOT 104	NEWBERT, Rebecca, Wife of Capt. Aaron Daggett who was lost at sea. Also the wife of John Newbert. Daughter of Stephen & Ruth S. Peabody of Salem, Mass. d. Mar. 21, 1859 AE 87 ys, 6 ms.	
LOT 105	WILEY, Aaron d. Apr. 9, 1918 AE 88 ys, 7 ms	1
	WILEY, Archann H., Wife of Aaron D. Wiley d. May 7, 1891	1

Some of the typewritten logs that were transcribed into new software called "Crypt Keeper" to catalog cemetery plots in Union. (Photo by: Beth A. Birmingham)



Once completed, information on burials in Union will be available to look up via many different methods using software called "Crypt Keeper." (Photo by: Beth A. Birmingham)