

Sunapee's Historic Buildings & Places – by Barbara B. Chalmers  
**South Sunapee Cemetery and South Meeting House**  
85 Harding Hill Road



**Cemetery established:**  
1820s

**Use:**  
Public Burying Ground

1896 photo of South Meeting House and Burying Ground from the Sunapee Historical Society Collection

**Property History:** In 1819 Paul Knights sold his 150-acre farm for \$1,500 to David Angell, who already owned nearly 170-acres in the immediate area along today's Stagecoach and Harding Hill Roads. When David died in 1828, he was one of the wealthiest men in Wendell. David and his son Horace, who also died in 1828, were interred on the farm. David's widow sold a small part of the homestead to her son-in-law Hazen Crowell, which included the land with the burial ground and



an area that Hazen soon gave for construction in 1833 of the South Meeting House. It was a union church in which each pew owner had a say in what denomination should occupy the pulpit for a portion of the year. The meeting house faced south at the intersection of today's Harding Hill Road and Bradford Road with the graveyard behind the church. This intersection was discontinued when Route 103 was built in the 1950s. The original burying ground at the northwest end is about 33 by 66-feet in size and was expanded when Hazen provided more land in 1838, 1849 and 1867. Hazen served as sexton for this cemetery, the town official in charge of burials and record keeping. In the mid-1850s, Egyptian design influenced public art and obelisk monuments became popular. They were considered tasteful with pure uplifting lines, a symbol of the great ancient cultures. South Cemetery has several such monuments, including Hazen Crowell's of 1885, shown at left. There are 181 known graves in the old section.

Like the North Meeting House, use of the South Meeting House declined. The 1891 funeral of Ira Hurd may have been the last time this church was used. By 1896, as shown in the photo above, the building was derelict with broken windows and a hole in its roof. In 1900 the building was dismantled. Lempster writer and poet, George Bancroft Griffith (1841-1909) documenting the demolition of the South Meeting House. The following is an excerpt:

"Near each door there was an inclined platform of solid Sunapee granite, probably taken from or near the present fine quarry at the Harbor. Each stone rose to a convenient height for mounting a horse at one end, and ascended at the other by good broad steps. In those early days the population was equestrian or pedestrian and horse blocks were common. The dear old meeting house has disappeared, and no fond greetings can sound again at its open doors. We lingered a few days since near the site where it stood, and nature had half veiled the scene with wild raspberry and other vines gracefully bending in the wind, while the long grass partly hid the debris and made a pleasing feature in the landscape."

In 1911 Hazen Crowell's heirs sold the former meeting house site to the town of Sunapee to expand the South Cemetery. This eastern section is known as the new part of the cemetery where there are 143 known graves. South Cemetery continues to provide a final resting place for those with connections to south Sunapee.