

1979/80 EDITION · THE ANNUAL JOURNAL OF



MARKERS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES



Cover: The Zion Cemetery, Washington Township, Pickaway County, Ohio. (Photograph by Francis Y. Duval)

Centerfold: The Old Settlers' Burial Field, Lancaster, Massachusetts, in wintertime. (Photograph by Daniel Farber)

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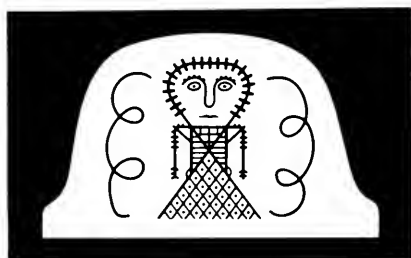
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1979/80 EDITION

MARKERS

VOLUME I

THE
ANNUAL JOURNAL
OF THE
ASSOCIATION
FOR
GRAVESTONE
STUDIES



AGS PUBLICATIONS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES

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1979/80 EDITION, MARKERS, VOLUME I

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Notes on meeting 20 Dec 1976 of Peter Bones, Jessie Lee, Gay Levine, Robert Macketh, and Ralph Tucker.

After discussion it was decided that we adopt the title of "Association for Gravestone Studies" as being broad enough to be inclusive of a wide range of studies, and specific enough to define the area of our concern.

A general agreement was had that a brief statement of purpose be drafted stressing the "fact disappearing cultural resources represented in our gravestones, and that these resources are little appreciated or understood. We then elaborated on the need for preservation & conservation of the stones, the development of model laws and guidelines to protect them, the gathering of information, photographs, etc for recording purposes, need of education, ~~the~~ strengthening of local and regional groups interested in this area, development of archive/library/museum, research, and other such concerns. Mr Macketh volunteered to draft a proposed statement of purpose to be circulated among us for comment. We all desired a statement which would be broad enough to avoid being restrictive and allowing of ample room for amplification.

An organizational meeting to be held at Dublin School on 2 & 3 July 1977 was agreed upon. A series of task groups would be held dealing with such areas as 1) Constitution for our association 2) Nomination Committee to line up personnel 3) Finance committee to work on costs of newsletter, publications, funding of seminars, seeking of grants, etc. 4) Publications committee to develop newsletter & other publications, 5) Education committee to develop a program for use of the educational opportunities 6) Archival development committee to investigate ways of gathering, preserving, collecting sets of relevant material, 7) Conservation Committee to investigate model laws, scientific preservation data & material 8) Activism committee to get out propaganda, publicity, and public relations — These ~~will~~ workshop groups would develop a variety of goals in their several areas, then report one to another to develop a sense of direction & purpose for our new organization. Ralph Tucker was charged with the further development of this area. Others are to suggest to him persons who could be specifically involved in the several areas. There would be some leadership pre-planned, but the various groups would be free to develop specific goals.

Introduction

This first issue of *MARKERS* had its beginnings in Dublin, New Hampshire, five years ago. At that time, Peter Benes, a New Hampshire history instructor with an intense interest in colonial gravestone iconography, recognized a need. In the course of his research and writing he noted that students of early gravestones tend to work more in isolation than in concert, largely unaware of each other's problems, contributions, and often of each other's existence. As a result of this observation, Benes began in the fall of 1975 to make arrangements for a gathering of interested scholars and laymen. The site selected for this meeting was the Dublin School, where he was a member of the faculty. The dates chosen were Saturday and Sunday, June 19 and 20, 1976, and the event was called "The Dublin Seminar." Benes' account of the meeting is related in his introduction to the Seminar's published proceedings, *Puritan Gravestone Art*. He writes that plans for about forty participants had to be expanded to accommodate:

. . . a diversified, full-scale conference that attracted over 116 scholars, curators, preservationists, and dedicated enthusiasts from as far away as California, Georgia, and Nova Scotia . . . The purpose of the conference was to give visibility and interdisciplinary focus to the study of Puritan gravestone symbols and artwork, a field limited in the past to genealogists and antiquarians, but which now attracts increasingly the attention of anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians, and social historians. The conference was also seen as an attempt to address the problems posed by the deterioration and theft of colonial-period grave markers.

We are pleased to report that many of these aims were realized. The seminar brought together a core of scholars and laymen, most of whom were meeting each other for the first time. No fewer than nineteen lectures were scheduled into 26 hours . . . Exhibitors filled six classrooms and the Dublin School auditorium with photo displays, maps, charts, and rubbings.

Among the speakers and exhibitors were Allan Ludwig, Ann Parker and Avon Neal, David Hall, Daniel Farber, Stephen Foster, James Slater, Francis Duval and Ivan Rigby, Deborah Trask, and William McGeer.

After the conference, the momentum it had generated needed direction. Benes invited five of the conferees — Nancy Buckeye, Gaynell Levine, Jessie Lie, Robert Mackreth, and Ralph Tucker—to meet with him to discuss the formation of an association. The meeting was held December 20, 1976, in the library of the Episcopal Diocesan House, One Joy Street, Boston. Notes taken by Ralph Tucker outline deliberations concerning the proposed organization's name and purpose.

... it was decided that we adopt the title of "Association for Gravestone Studies" as being broad enough to be inclusive of a wide range of studies, and specific enough to define the area of our concerns.

A general agreement was had that a brief statement of purpose be drafted stressing the "fast disappearing cultural resources" represented in our gravestones, and that these resources are little appreciated or understood...

The group agreed that an organizational meeting, open to any interested person, should be called for the purpose of setting the proposed association into motion. Work areas were discussed and defined. Tucker's notes continue:

An organizational meeting to be held at Dublin School on 2 & 3 July, 1977, was agreed upon . . . workshop groups would develop a variety of goals in their several areas, then report one to another to develop a sense of direction and priorities for our new organization.

A newsletter was seen as an immediate need, and Robert Mackreth was asked to edit the first issue. Benes announced tentative plans to conduct a series of Dublin Seminars on a variety of folklife subjects and, in 1978, to offer a second seminar repeating the gravestone topic. He expressed the hope that this 1978 meeting would be co-sponsored by the newly conceived Association for Gravestone Studies and by the Dublin Seminar, which would function as a separate organization. It was agreed that the Association would want to share in such a joint effort.

In January, 1977, in a letter to participants in the first (1976) Dublin Seminar, Benes announced an agreement between the Dublin School and Boston University's American and New England Studies Program to continue the Dublin Seminar as the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife (DSNEF), retaining the format used at the 1976 conference but enlarging the scope of study to include not only gravestone art but a variety of subjects dealing with material culture and folklife in the Northeastern United States. The 1977 topic would be New England Historical Archaeology. The topic of the 1978 conference, to be co-sponsored by AGS and DSNEF, would be Puritan Gravestone Art II.

In April, 1977, the first *AGS Newsletter* was mailed to prospective members. It offered the following PROPOSED STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVESTONE STUDIES.

Early grave markers are important as memorials, as historic and genealogical documents, as art objects, and as material expressions of cultural attitudes. The value of these markers is not now widely appreciated, however, and natural erosion, the pressure of development, and vandalism in all its forms threaten to obliterate in a short time many monuments that have stood for centuries. In recognition of the need for immediate corrective action, the Association for Gravestone Studies has been organized as an effort to encourage the study and preservation of this endangered cultural resource.

The Association for Gravestone Studies will endeavour to educate the public on the historic and artistic importance of early gravestones and graveyards, and will encourage communities to protect, restore, and record their burying grounds. The Association will promote research into the technology of gravestone preservation, and will work toward the creation of model laws that would aid their protection. The Association for Gravestone Studies will cooperate closely with other organizations devoted to similar goals, and will provide guidance and assistance to individuals or groups interested in the study and preservation of funerary art.

To promote the study of gravestones, the Association will gather, record, and disseminate information through publications and meetings. The Association will publish a newsletter and plans to establish a journal devoted to gravestone studies; it will hold meetings and

seminars where ideas and information may be exchanged. Finally, the Association will work toward the foundation of a center for gravestone studies, which will serve as a clearing house for information on the subject and will house collections of books, papers, photographs, and reproductions.

The July 2, 3, 1977, organizational meeting was attended by 37 participants, who drew up the Association's constitution, chose its logo, elected its officers, and approved dues, fees, and dates for the 1978 conference to be co-sponsored with the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife. Daniel Farber was the recipient of the first AGS Award for Outstanding Contributions to Gravestone Studies, later named the Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award.

In the months following the 1977 organizational meeting, James Slater, Peter Benes, and Nancy Buckeye began a concentrated search for a repository for the Association's archival materials. The arrangements they worked out with New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston concerning screening, housing, and care of the collections met AGS's needs. The Society's convenient location, within walking distance of the Boston Athenaeum, the Boston Public Library, and the Massachusetts Historical Society, was an additional factor in the decision to house the Association's archives there.

The second Annual Meeting and Conference of the Association for Gravestone Studies, co-sponsored by the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, was held in Dublin, New Hampshire, June 23, 24, 25, 1978. It was attended by ninety-three conferees, who heard twenty-one papers on a wide variety of gravestone-related subjects and participated in demonstrations of stonecutting, photographing, rubbing, and reproducing gravestones. Featured speakers were Ann and Dickran Tashjian and Norman Weiss. The late Ernest Caulfield was named recipient of the Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award. Boston University published the proceedings, *Puritan Gravestone Art II*, edited by Peter Benes.

The third Annual Meeting and Conference, held at Salve Regina College, Newport, Rhode Island, July 7 and 8, 1979, was attended by 119 Association members. The Newport Carvers were the central subject-theme of the conference program, which featured visits to Newport's Common Burying Ground and the John Stevens Shop. Nineteen speakers were on the program, among them Esther

(Mrs. John Howard) Benson, Edwin Connelly, Jonathan Fairbanks, David Watters, Vincent Luti, and C. R. Jones. Seventeen exhibits were given space, and a publication sales table attracted considerable activity. The Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award was presented to Peter Benes, author of *Masks of Orthodoxy*, Director of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, and the major force in the founding of the Association for Gravestone Studies. The presentation was made by Harriette Forbes' daughter, Catharine Forbes Erskine.

The Association voted to hold its 1980 Annual Meeting and Conference at Bradford College in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and to extend the meeting time from two days to three. The emphasis of the Conference: Above Ground Archaeology, with special attention given to the stonecarvers of the Merrimack River Valley School. At a November 2, 1979, meeting of the Executive Board, the Conference Planning Committee recommended that AGS schedule its dates to coincide with those of the Bay State Historical League, also meeting in Haverhill, with the expectation that the two organizations would find a creative overlap of interests among their members. The recommendation was accepted, and the dates, June 20, 21, 22, were set.

It was at this November meeting in 1979 that *MARKERS, The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies* was born. An annual publication was needed, the Board agreed, to present the year's most interesting and significant papers dealing with gravestone studies. The title *MARKERS* was chosen as one that would identify the publication's subject without limiting the scope of its contents to any period or location. A committee to review submissions to the first issue was named: Joanne Baker, James Slater, and Daniel Farber. Francis Duval and Ivan Rigby were chosen to design *MARKERS 1980*.

Jessie Lie Farber, editor
March, 1980

Wanted: The Hook-And-Eye Man

Ernest Caulfield

About the Author

The following essay was found among the unpublished manuscripts of the late Dr. Ernest Caulfield. It is fitting that the first issue of *MARKERS, the Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, contain an article by Dr. Caulfield as he was the recipient of the Association's 1978 Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award for outstanding contributions to gravestone studies.

Dr. Caulfield and Mrs. Forbes are by far the two most distinguished figures in what was the pioneer period or really the genesis of serious study of American gravestones. In neither case, I think, do their gravestone-related publications, impressive as they are, quite do justice to the background scholarship behind them.

Dr. Caulfield was working toward an extensive treatment of Connecticut carvers which he was unable to complete due to blindness in his later years. However, his series of articles published in *The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, ably continued and edited after his death by Peter Benes, still constitutes the only substantial body of scholarly work on the identity of Connecticut's colonial carvers.

While Dr. Caulfield's background and accomplishments are familiar to many members of the Association for Gravestone Studies, and while *MARKERS* hopes to publish in a future issue a detailed biographical profile, it is perhaps not inappropriate to comment briefly here on the life of this extraordinary man.

Dr. Caulfield was for many years a practicing pediatrician in Hartford, Connecticut. His work on gravestones came after he produced a number of important publications on causes of death in early New England. Indeed he was fifty-eight years old when his first article on Connecticut gravestones appeared in 1951. Despite our respect for his gravestone scholarship, his major publications, which include two books (and even an article on pediatrics of the Salem witchcraft tragedy), dealt chiefly with causes of death,

especially of children, in colonial New England. His interest in gravestone carvers developed directly from his utilization of colonial burying grounds as a resource base to obtain information on causes of death. Indeed in 1965 Professor L. G. Stevenson of Yale University published an article entitled "The Historical Writings of Ernest Caulfield" in which Caulfield's gravestone work receives summary treatment: "In yet another category are some of the brief notes on Connecticut gravestones . . ." Dr. Caulfield's masterpiece appears to have been *A True History of the Terrible Epidemic Vulgarly Called the Throat Distemper*. Carl Bridenbaugh, the eminent colonial historian, in reviewing the book a decade after it appeared stated, "It is undeniably the ablest study of colonial medical history that I have ever come across."

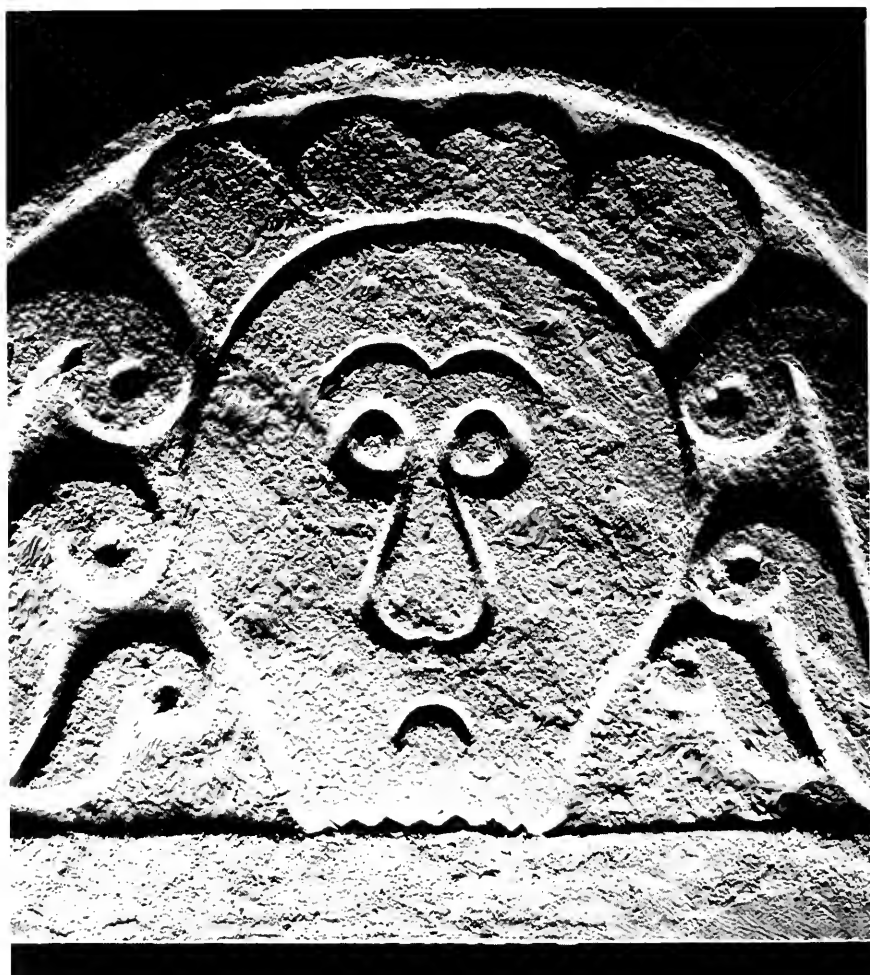
Anyone who has seen Dr. Caulfield's original gravestone notes realizes only too well the tremendous amount of effort he put into his work and the amount of completely original information he assembled.

Gravestone students will be using his published and unpublished material for decades to come. It is most fortunate that he left a manuscript that allows us to catch a little of the personal flavor of the man. Stevenson's conclusion regarding his historical studies is very appropriate for his gravestone work as well: "Ernest Caulfield, historian, at once the model amateur and the genuine 'pro'."

373 Bassett's Bridge Rd
Mansfield Center, Conn. 06250
January, 1980

Betty Slater
James Slater

Re: MARCELS



Wanted: The Hook-And-Eye Man

The Search for an Elusive Stonecutter

Once while searching for the hook-and-eye man, we lost our way near Stafford Hollow, and we were happy to meet a toothless native trudging along the road, pitch-fork in hand. When we asked for the old graveyard, he asked us, "What do you want to go there for?" We explained that we were interested in gravestones as manifestations of early American art and that we could often identify the stonecutter by the inscription and the design. "And what good does that do you?" he asked us next. We had no answer, and as we drove on we kept repeating to each other, "And what good does that do you?"

Without doubt the hook-and-eye man was the most popular stonecutter of his day in eastern Connecticut, where he catered to the beaver-hat trade and won favor despite the repetitious and rather awkward creations which gave him his name. Years ago Harriette Forbes dubbed him the "hook-and-eye man," an appropriate name because his carved faces, made with simple curved lines, suggest the eye of the old-fashioned garment fastener known as hook and eye.

He was, of course, attempting to imitate earlier Hartford and Middletown carvers, but he lacked the material, the ability, and the imagination to go beyond the simplest designs. He embellished each moon-like face with a few notches on the jaw-bone, presumably to resemble teeth. He also carved under each bulbous nose a small turned-down mouth, which gives a sad but ludicrous expression to his mask. Two separated, raised eyebrows completed the face, which was surmounted by a four-pointed crown and enclosed on either side by three tiers of wings. For important people, ministers, deacons, and some others, he sometimes carved a formless mass exuding from the ears, its significance still unknown.

In the rounded finials, where the more skillful artists usually carved the multi-foliate rose, a symbol of paradise since early times, the hook-and-eye man experimented with various figures and then adopted a simple four-leaved clover. Often he also carved a

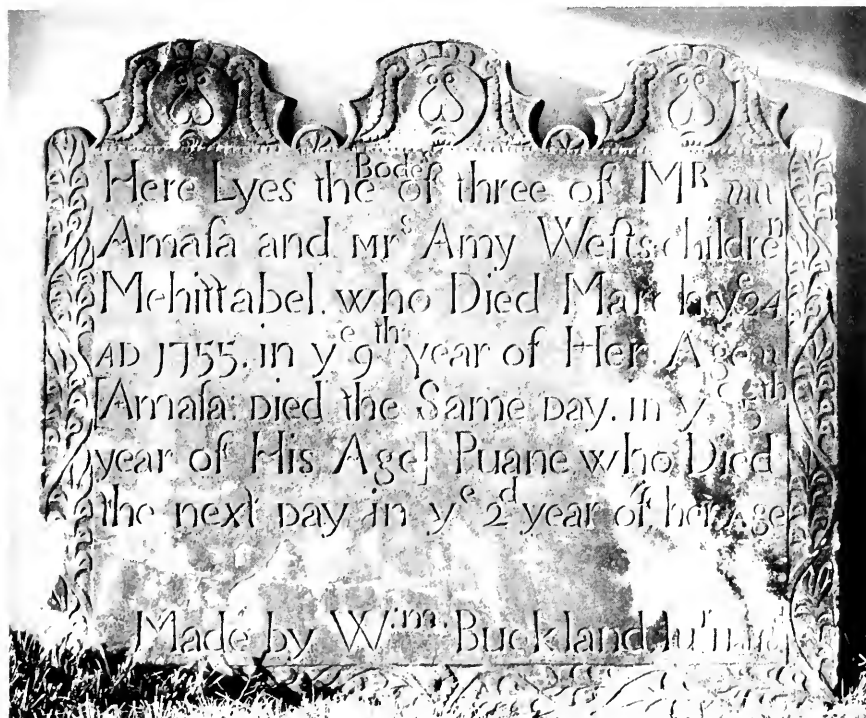
heart at the bottom of the stone, and occasionally he supplied a footstone engraved with diamond shapes. We took many pictures in order to compare his work with that of others, since the old stonecutters frequently carved their letters, numerals, and designs in their own peculiar manner, which now helps us identify their work.

One effort we made to trace the hook-and-eye man was a spot map of his stones, in the expectation of finding him near their geographic center. Some stones appear in Hartford, Farmington, and Wethersfield, west of the Connecticut River, but nine out of ten are located east of the river. His stones occur frequently in towns along the Massachusetts border, as in Enfield, Somers, and the Woodstocks, and they are also found in Pomfret, Brooklyn, and Plainfield near the Rhode Island border. Although he placed an occasional stone in New London, Old Lyme, and even in New York City, most appear north of the Glastonbury-Colchester-Norwich pike.

This geographic distribution, reinforcing the clue given by the stone itself, led us to believe that our stonecutter lived somewhere near the Bolton quarries. The stones are nearly all gray schists. The Bolton quarries produced a sparkling, quartz-containing schist and once occupied an important place in Connecticut economics. Grindstones from Bolton schist were inferior because the stone was too soft, but Bolton flagstones were in great demand in many New England towns.

One day in summer we decided to hunt gravestones in Tolland, the ancestral home of President Grant. The Boston highway now skirts the town, leaving it as it was long ago—a one-store village with shade-trees surrounding a typical New England green. Even the Tolland jail, overlooking a broad, colorful valley, seemed an attractive place to live.

After inquiries we found Cider Mill Road, leading to the old graveyard, with many exciting stones. There we were startled to come on a triple stone for three West children, who all died, probably from diphtheria, within forty-eight hours in March of 1775. Their stone has many characteristics of the hook-and-eye design, even the misplaced teeth and four-pointed crown. Across the bottom of the stone, in letters written large, is this obvious advertisement: "Made by W^m Buckland Ju^r Hartford." Our problem was solved, or so we thought.



West Children, 1755, Tolland, Conn.

Many clues favored William Buckland Jr. as the long-sought hook-and-eye man. Both his wife's and his mother's gravestones conform very much to type, indeed so closely that we decided that if Buckland did not make most of the common hook-and-eye stones, he was at least related in some way to the man who did. Reservations, however, soon began to accumulate. Buckland, we learned, lived in East Hartford, which was contrary to our belief that the hook-and-eye man lived in Bolton. A stonecutter in Bolton would have had difficulty enough transporting his stones over bad country roads as far away as Pomfret, Scotland, or Norwich, but carting them over the mountain from East Hartford would have been even more difficult. Furthermore, hook-and-eye faces that are known to be Buckland's work had tiny eyes and enormous bulbous noses that were almost caricatures rather than typical of the work we believed to be the original hook-and-eye man's. Buckland's footstones are also decidedly different; and, furthermore, all of his typical known stones were made from red sandstone. Not a single gray schist stone had the enormously enlarged nose found on the



Daniel House, 1762, E. Glastonbury, Conn.

stones known to have been carved by Buckland. So we tentatively eliminated William Buckland Jr. as the man we were after.

Next in line was William's brother, Peter Buckland, who also cut gravestones and signed his name at least once on sandstone and three times on gray schist. He lies buried in Manchester, not far from Bolton, so he had to be considered. Peter's known stones are also somewhat similar to typical hook-and-eye stones, but the style of his signed stones seemed to us quite distinctive, especially his border panels and footstones. At this point we felt much confused by our evidence.

A year or so later, driving from Hartford to a medical meeting in Quebec, we spotted an old graveyard on the roadside in Wilder, Vermont, which is near the crossing to Dartmouth in Hanover, N.H. And who should we meet there? None other than old Hook-and-eye himself. There he was, sneering at us through his funny faces. We soon began to doubt, however, that the Vermont cutter could be the same as our Connecticut hook-and-eye man, for although we saw some four-leaved clovers, typical hearts and diamonds, and the same ridiculous crowns, we thought he was much too far from home, about one hundred and sixty miles. So we concluded that some Vermont workman had attempted to imitate the master. Besides, rain began to fall, and we resumed our journey.

Through two following years, good weather and bad, we continued to hunt gravestones. The winding country lanes, inviting doorways, stone fences, hundreds of little lakes, and the ubiquitous laurel of the Connecticut countryside were never without charm. We could not see too much of Sharon, Gilead, Coventry, the Woodstocks, Old Lyme, and Essex, each with its graveyard on a hill—the choicest land in town. We will never forget that autumn day when we intruded on the old graveyard on the crest of a hill in Bolton Center where one could look over numberless hills and valleys far away to Rhode Island and see nothing but wave upon wave of color. What a glorious place it would be, we thought, to behold the Resurrection.

For every interesting or pleasant aspect of gravestone hunting there was a compensating hazard. We soon learned to respect even a single leaf of poison ivy. We also learned the hard way that woodchuck holes may be disregarded only by those with rubber bones. Snakes inhabit nearly every country graveyard, but they never bothered us much after our first encounter, for we always gave any

snake the right of way. But these were minor irritations compared to the gruesome verse that abounds in old graveyards:

All you that read with little care,
And walk away and leave me here;
Should not forget that you must die,
And be intomb'd as well as I.

Meanwhile, with all our theories on the hook-and-eye man upset by our Vermont discovery, we traced other stonecutters, especially George Griswold, the earliest known stonecutter in the American colonies, with his simple unornamented stones in Hartford, Windsor, Suffield, Longmeadow, Westfield, and Northampton. We also enjoyed pursuing Ebenezer Drake, with his scare-crow designs, and possibly the most fascinating of all Connecticut stone engravers, if only because he varied his designs from year to year. Always skillful with his chisels, Drake might have become a famous sculptor, had he not been so thoroughly infatuated with his own brand of surrealism. He almost seems to have created designs solely for the purpose of keeping colonial boys and girls out of graveyards at night, for surely nothing in this world could have been more discouraging to romance than suddenly to encounter one of Ebenezer's stony ghosts lighted by a harvest moon. But nearly everywhere we went, especially around Glastonbury and Wethersfield, we found old Hook-and-eye with his taunting sneer seeming to defy detection.

Lacking any definitive evidence from the stones, we came to believe that probate records offered our only remaining possibility of success.

At first a probate search seemed very simple. One had only to copy names and dates from hook-and-eye inscriptions and then to search the probate records of the decedent. In Connecticut, the old probate records for nearly all districts are on file in the State Library in Hartford, well-indexed and well-preserved, each in its own folder. These include some 6000 estates, all before 1800, for the Hartford district alone. We quickly realized, however, that this avenue of research was not as simple as it seemed.

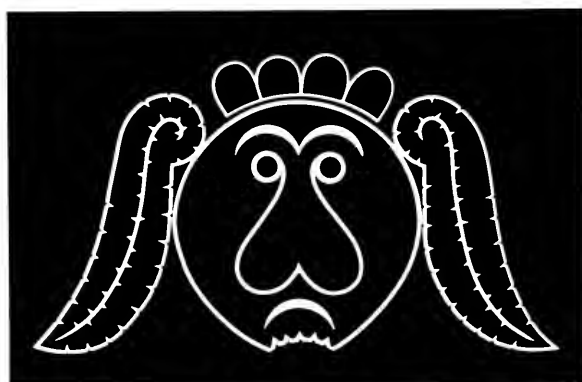
In the first place, many records consist of the decedent's will or bonds of administration, neither of which reveals the expenses of an estate. And again, many consist of only inventories and distributions, which though interesting, rarely yield any information on stonecutters. While glancing through some inventories, we did,



1750, Enfield, Conn. A Gershom Bartlett design influenced by the “horseshoe skull” carver of East Windsor.



1751, East Hartford, Conn. A Gershom Bartlett variation of the basic design illustrated above.



1755, Tolland, Conn. An imitation of a Gershom Bartlett design carved by William Buckland of East Hartford.

however, find items of interest. Ichabod Higgins of Durham, for example, left some unfinished gravestones in his estate (1758), so we thus discovered another Connecticut engraver that no historian had reported. In short, the probate records yielded no quick solution to our problem.

When a stonecutter's name appears in the probate records, we usually find it in separate papers called "Accounts of Administration" or "Returns to the Court," but only about one estate in five includes such papers, so our problem was at least five times more difficult than we first supposed. We were encouraged, though, to find the names of the men who made coffins, and we learned to our surprise that the leading cabinet makers also spent considerable time making coffins. Even gravediggers' names could be easily found. Old Uriah Burkit, who was no Dickens character, made his living digging graves in Hartford for fifty years. To Uriah, each burial was a statistic, for when he died in 1801, his obituary noted that he had buried 2,245 persons.

The "Accounts of Administration" showed other expenses for funerals. The drummer boy had to be paid, and mourning gloves purchased by the dozen. When the widow Grant was buried in 1705, the "6 qts. of Rom for her funrill" came to ten and six, and this charge was typical of scores of similar entries. We found one instance where the mourners drank nearly the whole estate.

Our problem, however, was that even detailed "Accounts" seldom included the name of the stonecutter, because, as we later discovered, the "Accounts" were made up fairly soon after the individual's decease, and the estate was settled long before the gravestone was erected. Sometimes one or more years elapsed between the funeral and the payment for the gravestone. Only when a contract for a gravestone was signed or the gravestone actually delivered could the cost be considered as a legitimate expense. We finally realized that often the cost of the gravestone was voluntarily contributed by one or more of the descendants after the estate was settled. On occasion, disagreement about the gravestone prevented timely allowance of the cost. In South Canterbury, for example, a gravestone dated 1804 bears this note: "This monument was erected wholly at the expense of Mr. G. Justin Son of the deceas'd."

The most tantalizing aspect of our probate search was to find administrative accounts with names of creditors but with no indications of the objects of expenditure. And worse still was occasion-

ally to find the exact cost of the gravestone but no mention of the engraver's name.

We searched over 350 probate records for the hook-and-eye stones on our list without finding a single, definite clue. We would go to the old graveyard in Windham, for instance, copy all the names and dates from the hook-and-eye stones, spend hours examining the corresponding probate records, and come home with nothing more than a list of suggestive names, none of which meant much. We did this for town after town.

We frequently cursed the old probate judges and clerks for keeping such miserable records. They would write the administrator's receipts in one column and expenses in another, accounting for every shilling without divulging one bit of useful information.

Making little progress in our search, we next made a list of creditors of Hartford estates for matching against the creditors from Tolland estates, hoping that any name common to both would be the name of the hook-and-eye man who made the gravestones for all the estates. Here again, we met disappointments. Joel White was a name common to both groups, but he turned out to be a money-lender. William Ellery turned out to be Hartford's first postmaster, who also kept a general store. Elisha Burnham happened to be a blacksmith who was popular throughout both counties. We found that certain men in every community were creditors of nearly everyone for miles around.

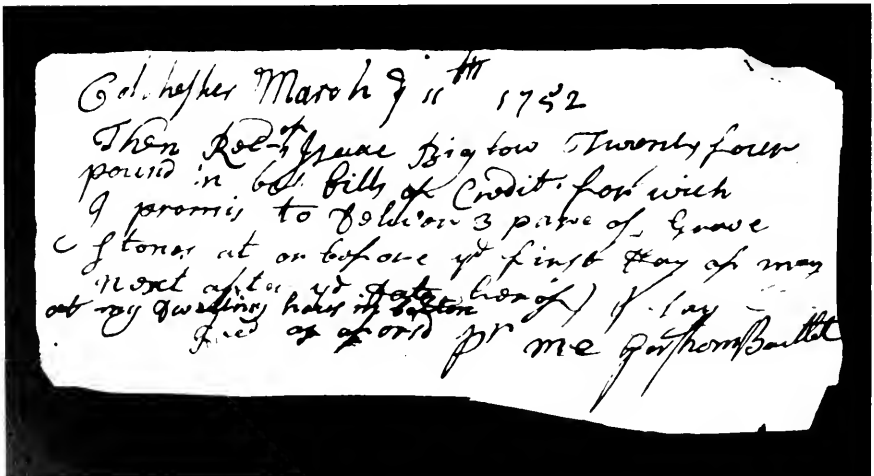
We continued until we had examined the estates for all of our hook-and-eye stones in Hartford, Tolland, and Windham counties, and we were no nearer to a solution than when we began. We still had some Colchester estates to examine, but we were leaving town the next morning on vacation, and it hardly seemed worth while to begin them.

Suddenly we had a break. Colchester had had a judge who knew how to run a court. He had saved every scrap of paper. We found scores of individual receipts signed by every person to whom the estate had paid money. We had about twenty-five Colchester estates to investigate, each with five to thirty slips of paper, and we had to read every word. But it was closing time for the library, and the young lady in charge, though too polite to tell us to leave, began bustling around the room, shutting doors and windows, putting

away books from our table, turning out lights, and dropping other forceful hints. Yet we felt driven to finish those Colchester records before leaving on vacation. Noting our dejected expressions, James Brewster, the State Librarian, gave us permission, despite the rules, to return to the library that night to examine the records.

It was a memorable night for us—that night of July 30, 1950. Alone in the eerie basement where the old probate records are kept, we felt squeamish in our task of tracking down those eighteenth-century ghosts. We had already learned to decipher most of the handwriting of the period, but even so, we found many receipts written and signed by tradesmen who seemed never to have grasped a quill before. The hours went by and our pile of unexamined records went down, but long after ten o'clock we were suddenly electrified by the discovery of a single scrap of paper with an item that seemed almost too good to be real. This precious, fragile document was among the records of the estate of Isaac Bigelow, who died on September 11, 1751:

Colchester March ye 11th 1752
 Then rec^d of Isaac Biglow Twenty four
 pound in bills of Credit. for wich
 I promis to Deliver 3 pare of Grave
 Stones at or before ye first Day of may
 next after ye Date herof
 at my Dwelling hous in bolton
 Rec^d as aforsd I say
 p^r me Gershom Bartlet



The estate of Abner Kellogg (Colchester, 1755) proved an anticlimax, with another receipt signed by Gershom Bartlett, but we needed no additional proof. We had found our man.

To us Gershom Bartlett was the most elusive carver of the eighteenth century, and we had caught him with his stone hammers, his chisels, and his leather apron. He lived in Bolton, right where the quarries are. The evidence was perfect!

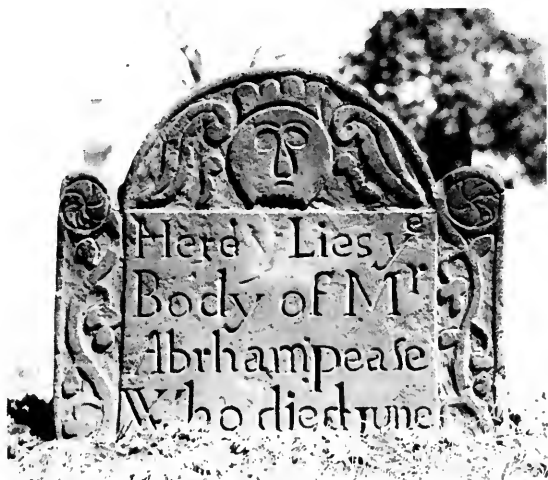
Now who was Gershom Bartlett? When and where was he born? What became of him after 1772, when he stopped carving gravestones in Connecticut? When and where did he die?

Once we had his name, we had new leads into the old records and new leads through the old graveyards.

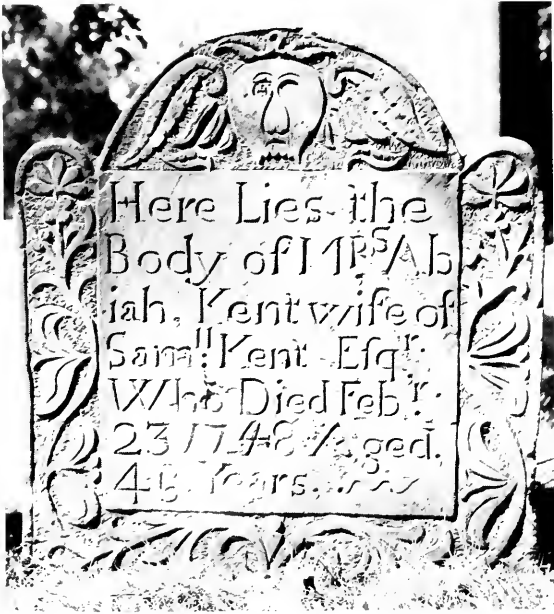
The old Bolton church records, which have been published by the Connecticut Historical Society, show that Bartlett was born in 1723, the son of Samuel and Sarah Bartlett. Samuel had migrated from Northampton, Massachusetts, and was admitted to the church in 1725. Gershom had many children by his wife, Margaret, but there is no record of his death in Bolton.

The original Bolton land records also provided an important clue. An entry dated June 20, 1747, shows that John Ellsworth bought ten acres of land in Bolton from "Garshem Bartlett of

Abraham Pease, 1749, Enfield, Conn.



Ernest Caulfield



Abiah Kent, 1748, Suffield, Conn.



Abiah Kent (footstone) Suffield, Conn.

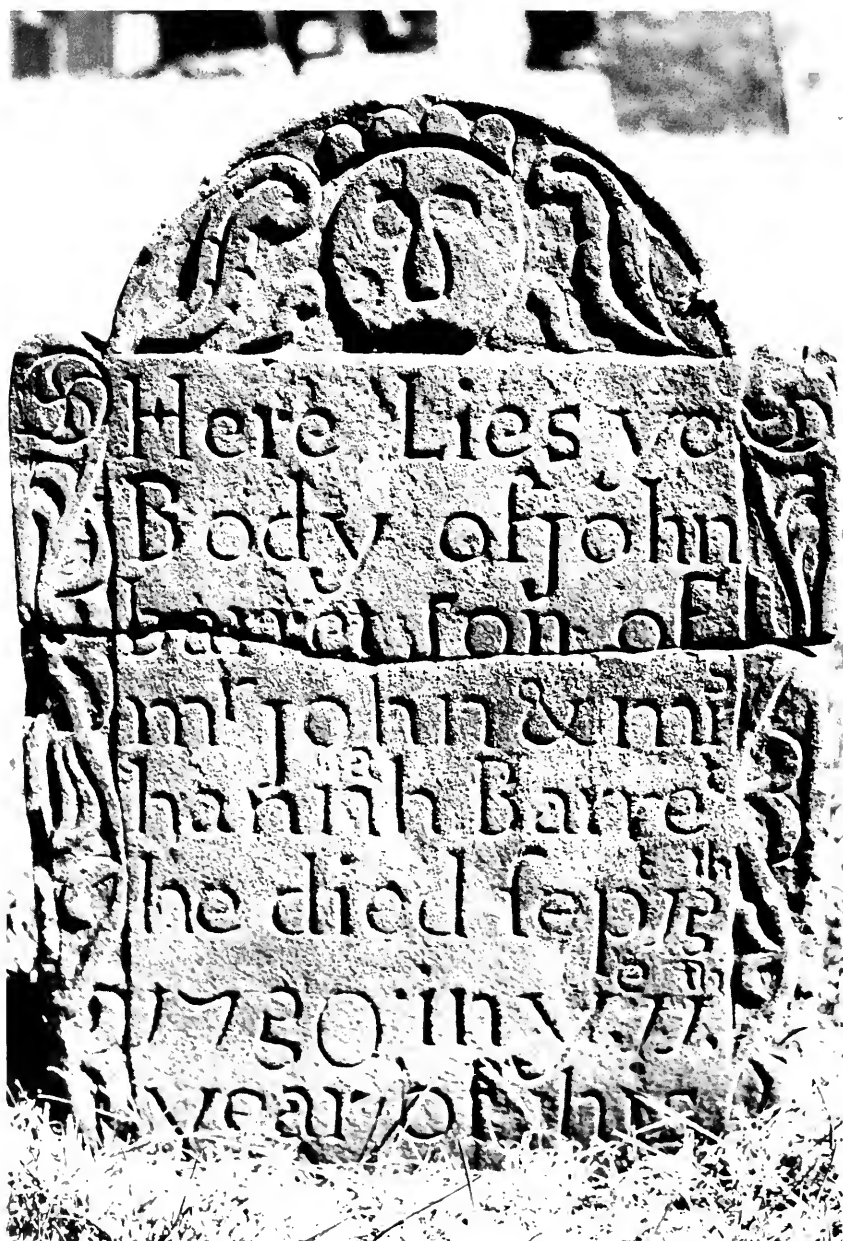
Windsor.” Since we knew that Bartlett had lived for a good part of his life in Bolton, this reference to Windsor came as a distinct surprise and opened up a new line of research. Stiles’ “History and Genealogy of Ancient Windsor,” confirmed Bartlett’s residence in Windsor, because his son Joseph was born there in January 1749, and his daughter Lucy in November, 1750.

The association with Windsor led back to the graveyards, since it reminded us of 14 red sandstones which we had previously classified as “modified hook-and-eye,” but which we had been unable to assign to any known stonecutter of that period. Of these stones, four are in South Windsor (originally part of East Windsor), four in Enfield, four in Ellington, and one in Somers, all on the east side of the Connecticut River. There are no similar stones in Windsor proper or anywhere west of the river except a pair of stones for Mrs. Abiah Kent in Suffield dated 1748.

We became convinced that these little gravestones were Bartlett’s work, and our belief grew firmer when, on checking our files, we found that the estate of Abraham Pease of Enfield had paid “Garshem butlit . . . 8 pounds” in 1750. Although this probate record does not specifically mention a gravestone and the amount is considerably more than was usually paid for gravestones at that time, we can be sure that Bartlett, the stonecutter, was a creditor of the Pease estate. The stone for Pease differs from the common Bolton hook-and-eye stones, being a velvety smooth red sandstone less than two feet high and having hollowed eyes and a rather pleasing tear-drop border. We later noticed that hollowed eyes and tear-drop borders appear on several early grey schist stones from the Bolton quarries. Furthermore, the Pease stone has the typical crown, raised eyebrows, turned-down mouth, and teeth at the bottom of the skull, all common characteristics of Bartlett’s Bolton stones.

The tear-drop border, representing grapes or leaves growing on a vine, then took on added significance, because this feature helped attribute to Bartlett five more stones, including markers for Hannah Parce (1749) and Ebenezer Chapin (1751) in the same graveyard. These early stones all show typical Bartlett features, and four of them show a sixteenth century numeral 5, which became our principal means to identify more of Bartlett’s early work. No other eighteenth century stonecutter made this unusual 5.

Having found that Bartlett’s early stones could show con-



John Barret, 1750, Ellington, Conn.

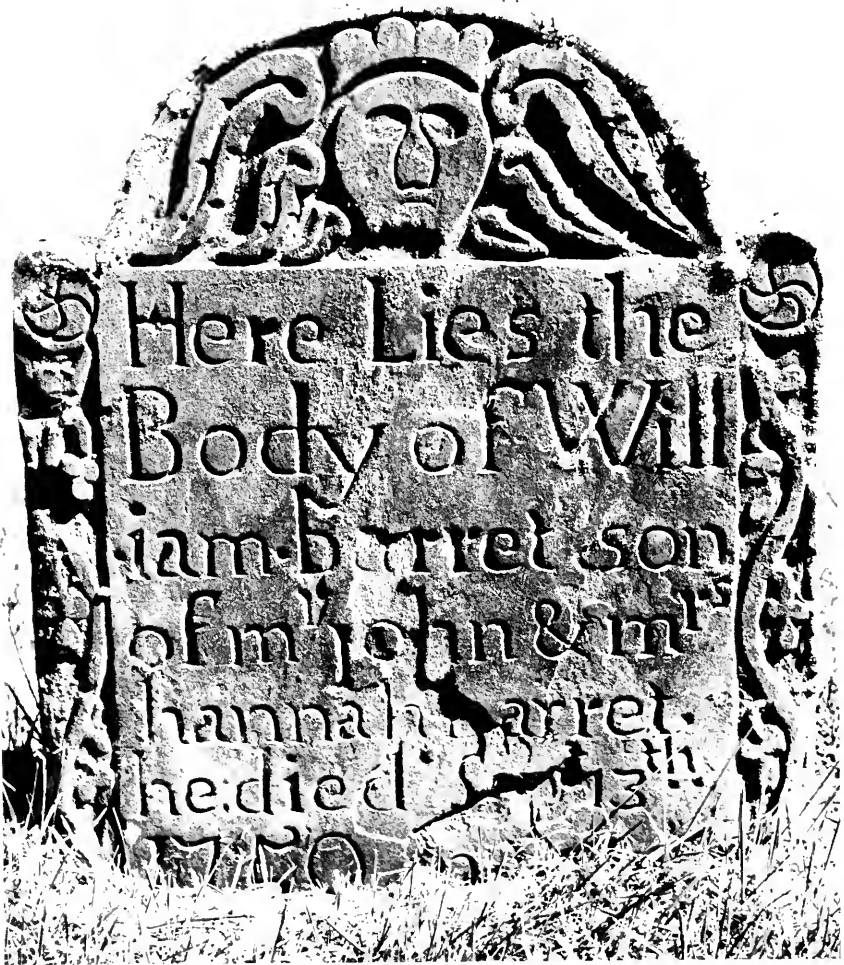
siderable variations in border designs, we then returned to Somers to review one of the earliest stones there, the marker for Jacob Ward, who died in 1748. On Ward's stone was the imperfect pin-wheel for a finial, typical crown, raised eyebrows, misplaced teeth, unclosed small a's, space-filling serpent, as well as the typical and distinctive numeral 5. We concluded that Bartlett was the carver, despite some variations, such as the slit-like eyes, angular nose, and crude, elementary wings, but the most interesting variation was the border, which showed an undulating climbing vine adorned with simple, pointed philodendron leaves, noticeably asymmetrical.

The border on the Ward stone became in turn the clue that led us to finding the first stones that Bartlett ever made, at least the first of all his stones still standing in place. Two are in Ellington, both dated 1747. We can see at a glance that Sarah Moulton's and John Bingham's stones were cut by the same carver who made the Ward stone because the borders are practically identical. Other similarities include square shoulders and the absence of a mouth. The only differences are in the lack of teeth and in the crowns, the two early stones having crowns with three tufts, one of them peaked.

We thus found that in his early days, Bartlett was not a hook-and-eye man at all. His squinted eyes, joined to an angular elementary nose, though lending an amusing, inquisitive expression to the face, cannot be classified as a hook-and-eye design. And his earliest stone, for Deborah Ellsworth who died in East Windsor in 1747 shows no face at all, but a meaningless (to us) pair of "cucumbers" and some six-pointed stars, indicating that Bartlett had been trying a compass to lay out his work.

Stones for the two Barret boys, who died in Ellington during a dysentery epidemic in September 1750, show Bartlett's variations in style, even for stones made at the same time. One stone shows a turned-down mouth, three tiers of wings, perpendicular numeral 1's, and a tear-drop border. The other shows no mouth, a tier and a half of wings, a numeral 1 slanted and hooked, and—most interesting of all—a border which later evolved into the pattern of bisected mushrooms on an undulating stalk that Bartlett adopted for nearly the remainder of his life.

We searched for every kind of Bartlett record, published or unpublished, while he lived in Windsor, but except for references to the births of his first two children, we had little luck. We had little



William Barret, 1750, Ellington, Conn.

prospect of finding him for, after all, stonecutting was not a trade commanding great respect and, besides, Bartlett was only a novice at this period of his life. Then, while engaged on another project, we came across the manuscript account book of Ebenezer Grant of East Windsor. Grant's house still stands, a lovely colonial mansion on "The Street" in what is now South Windsor, north of the old Edwards burial ground. Grant kept a general store where he traded assorted goods, including cloth, salt and rum; and many a neighbor crossed a page of history merely by charging a purchase in Grant's store.

On the debit side of Grant's account book are some entries made when Bartlett was a boy of twenty years:

Gershom Bartlett Dr

1743 Octobr 5	to three qrts Rum 4s/2d pr quart	00 12 06
1745 April 4	to 2 Gallons Rum 18s/prG & ½ quire Paper	01 19 00
" 15	to pint Rum 2s/4d: 23rd from Day Book 72s	03 14 00
May 13	to 4 yrds Green Tammy 10s per yrd. pd Suger 3s/	02 03 00
May 28	yard fine Holld for Wallis 23s	01 03 00

From the Windsor vital records we can deduce that Bartlett married around April or May in 1748, so it was of interest to see what he might have bought for his bride on that occasion. The only entries for 1748 are as follows:

1748 May 21	to Galln Rum 45s/ 2pd Suger at 6s/	02 17 00
July 28	to half pint Rum 3s/ 29th Galln molas 28s/	01 11 0
Sept 29	to Bushel Salt 46s/	02 06 00
October 14	to molas 6/6 & pound Suger 5/6	00 12 00

The price of rum went from 18s to 45s between 1743 and 1748, or else Gershom was treating his bride to better quality. Numerous other entries show Bartlett buying salt, sugar, molasses and "sundries," and at one time his debt to Grant was as much as £22-02-02.

The opposite side of the ledger is also revealing. In the first place, the rum that Bartlett bought on October 5, 1743, was not paid for until February 24, 1745, although it cost a mere twelve shillings. We might suppose that he was nearly broke, except that it was not

unusual for even the well-to-do to let their accounts stand unpaid for years, only to be settled in full at a later date by barter or someone else's note. Cash was scarce, but trade nevertheless went on. The fact that Bartlett was not a wealthy man, however, is confirmed by other entries:

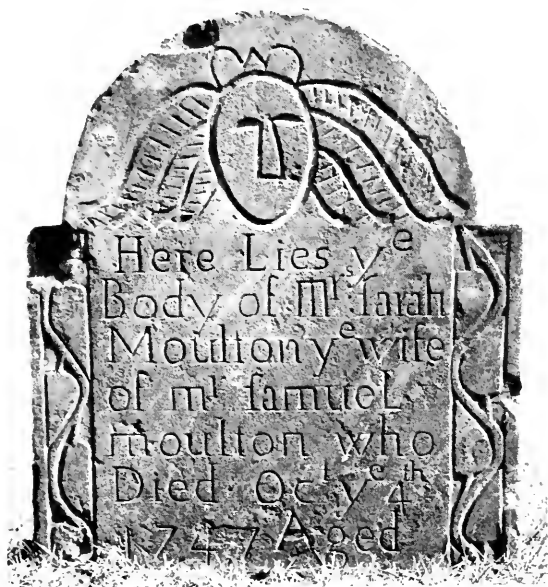
Gershom Bartlett pr Contra is Cr[edited]

1748 July 28	Recd 2 Days to mow as by Day Book	01 12 00
1749 July 11	By Day to take up Oats	01 00 00
July 19	By three Days to mow and be kept night and Day at 18s	02 14 00
1750 June 12	Recd a Day to mow. Come late	00 16 00
July 27	Recd a day to mow	00 18 00
Septr 10th	Recd a day to thresh flax	00 16 00
	Rub Stone las July	00 05 00

Apparently Bartlett lived far enough away from Grant to find it convenient to stay overnight at least on one occasion in July 1749; but he still lived within Windsor bounds, because his children were officially listed as having been born there. We can conclude, therefore, that he lived east of the river (thirteen of his fourteen early stones are there) and that his home was probably far to the east of Grant's, probably in that part of Windsor, East Parish, which became the farming town of Ellington.

Ebenezer Grant's account book is still more interesting for other entries, which at first sight do not concern Bartlett but which may throw light on some of his early work. Among the latest entries are transactions with Joseph Johnson, who on two occasions was paid for gravestones for members of Grant's family. The Johnsons were a family of skillful stonecutters in Middletown, and Joseph was, in my opinion, the most versatile and accomplished stonecutter in Connecticut in colonial times. His carvings, easily identified by their excellence in workmanship, may be found in almost every old town in the Connecticut Valley south of Springfield. Grant's account book definitely places Johnson in South Windsor in the 1740's, which explains the presence of so many of his stones there and in Windsor, East Hartford, and Glastonbury. It also explains why all the Joseph Johnson stones of this period were carved on smooth Windsor sandstone.

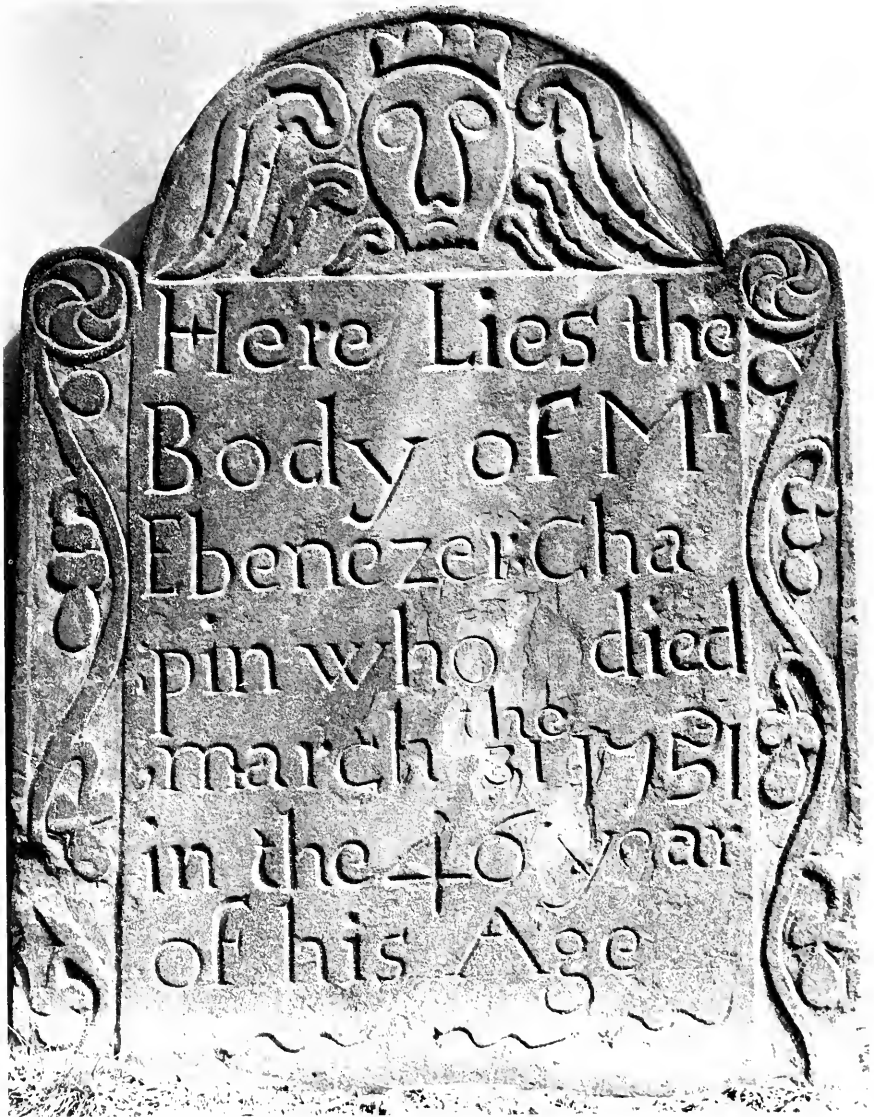
No direct evidence of his acquaintance with Gershom Bartlett has so far come to light, but Johnson's influence in Bartlett's early



Sarah Moulton, 1747, Ellington, Conn.



Jacob Ward, 1748, Somers, Conn.



Ebenezer Chapin, 1751, Enfield, Conn.

work cannot be doubted. The best of Bartlett's early stones, the marker for Mrs. Abiah Kent who died in Suffield on February 23, 1748, shows carefully cut, even letters, with serifs, fancy capital H's and A's, and other imitations of Johnson, such as a Johnson crown and a time-consuming stippled background. In fact, Mrs. Kent's gravestone was so well made that at one time we tentatively attributed it to Joseph Johnson, but we came to believe that Bartlett cut the stone during his formative years when he either worked as an apprentice to Johnson or when he needed patterns to follow.

The last purchase that Bartlett made from Grant was dated May 18, 1751, which is near the date of his last red Windsor sandstone. He soon moved to Bolton, because his next child, Margaret, was born there on September 6, 1752; and practically all hook-and-eye stones for the next twenty years came from the Bolton quarries. Determining the exact date of his move to Bolton was a problem. Dates on gravestones are not reliable, inasmuch as the stones were frequently made much later than their inscribed dates. For example, stones from the Bolton quarries often carry dates in the 1740's, at a time when Bartlett is known to have lived in Windsor. The texture of the stones is more helpful. The last of his smooth, red Windsor sandstones is dated March 31, 1751, whereas his stones from grey Bolton schist increase in number during and after 1751. Bolton land records give another clue. A deed dated December 27, 1750, mentions "Garshem Bartlett of Windsor," whereas another dated October 7, 1751, mentions "Garshem Bartlett of Bolton." We can suppose that he moved to Bolton in the summer of 1751.

Just as carving gravestones did not fully occupy his time in Windsor, so he had time in Bolton for other pursuits. Like many of his contemporaries, he tried his hand at real estate speculation and enjoyed beginner's luck. On August 27, 1753, he bought 24 acres of land "on East Side of ye Great River" within Windsor bounds from William Phelps for £75, and he then sold the same land on May 12, 1756, to Salvanus Willobee for £115. As time went on, however, he was less fortunate. In 1764 he paid £100 for a "Sartain tract of Land in Coventry . . . with a Grist-Mill Standing thereon, the whole of ye Land where the Grist-mill stands and ye whole of ye Land that is Poned by the said Mill Dam and Liberty of a Convenient pent Road from Sd Gristmill Southerly to ye highway."

Possibly he considered becoming a miller, especially since he raised "corn grain flax and oats" on his Bolton farm, but the grist-mill venture did not succeed, because two years later he sold out

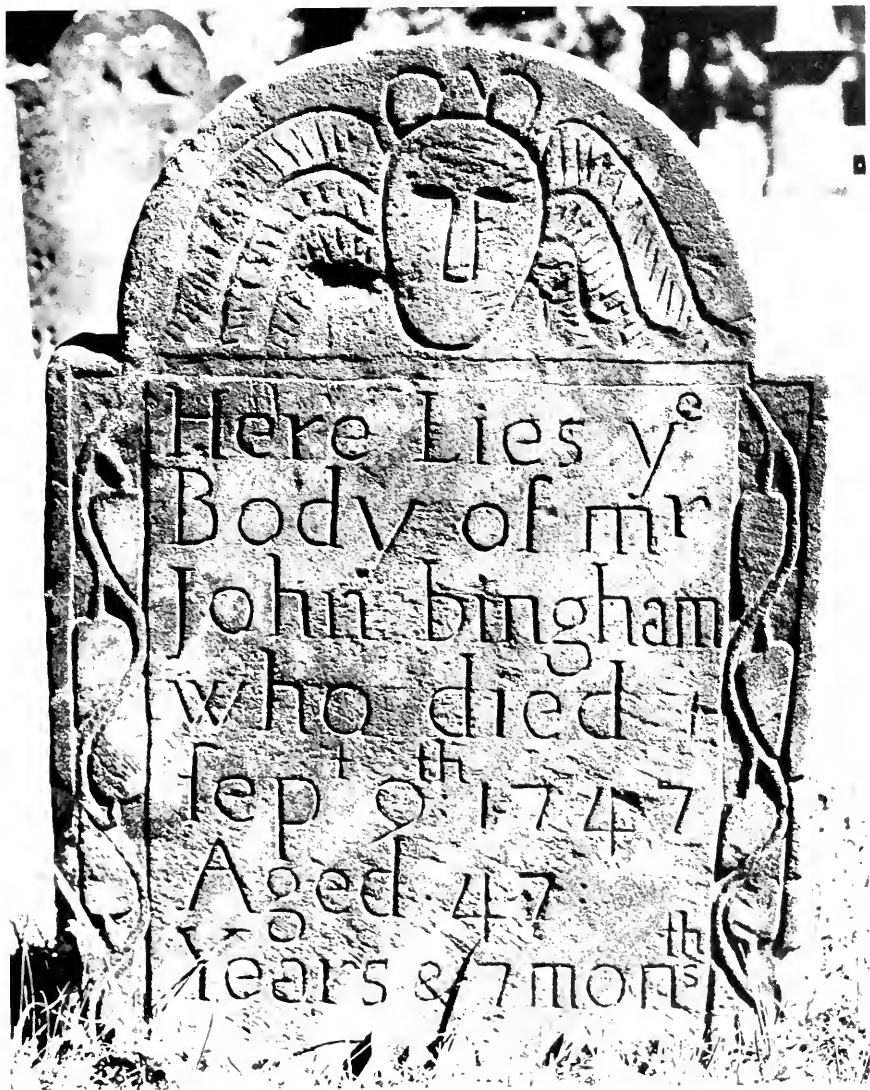
for £85. Altogether he bought about eighteen parcels in different parts of Bolton, yet when the time came for him to sell his land and buildings, the £369 which he received was considerably less than his original costs. Despite his losses he still was considered financially respectable, for at one time he was tax collector in Bolton and collected part of the town dues in 1763.

Bartlett might have done some work with wood, but our evidence on this score is all indirect. His son Joseph, when about twenty-one, "builided a small house" in Bolton, so Gershom probably knew the tricks of carpentry. In 1754 he bought fifteen hundred four-penny nails from a store in Coventry; also, the land he sold in 1772 had buildings on it which did not come with his purchase. His largest plot in Bolton was about fifty acres of none-too-fertile land running slightly northeast from "a Great Rock on the Top of the Ledges" which still exists as a landmark a few rods north of the famous notch in the mountain.

All this time Bartlett's production of gravestones was increasing, although his resulting prosperity barely kept pace with the increase in his family. In addition to his two children born in Windsor, eleven more were born in Bolton between 1752 and 1771. On January 24, 1754, John Potwine of "Covintrey" sold Bartlett some paper, pins, and "a primer (costing) 0/4/6." Four Bartlett children died in Bolton, all when very young.

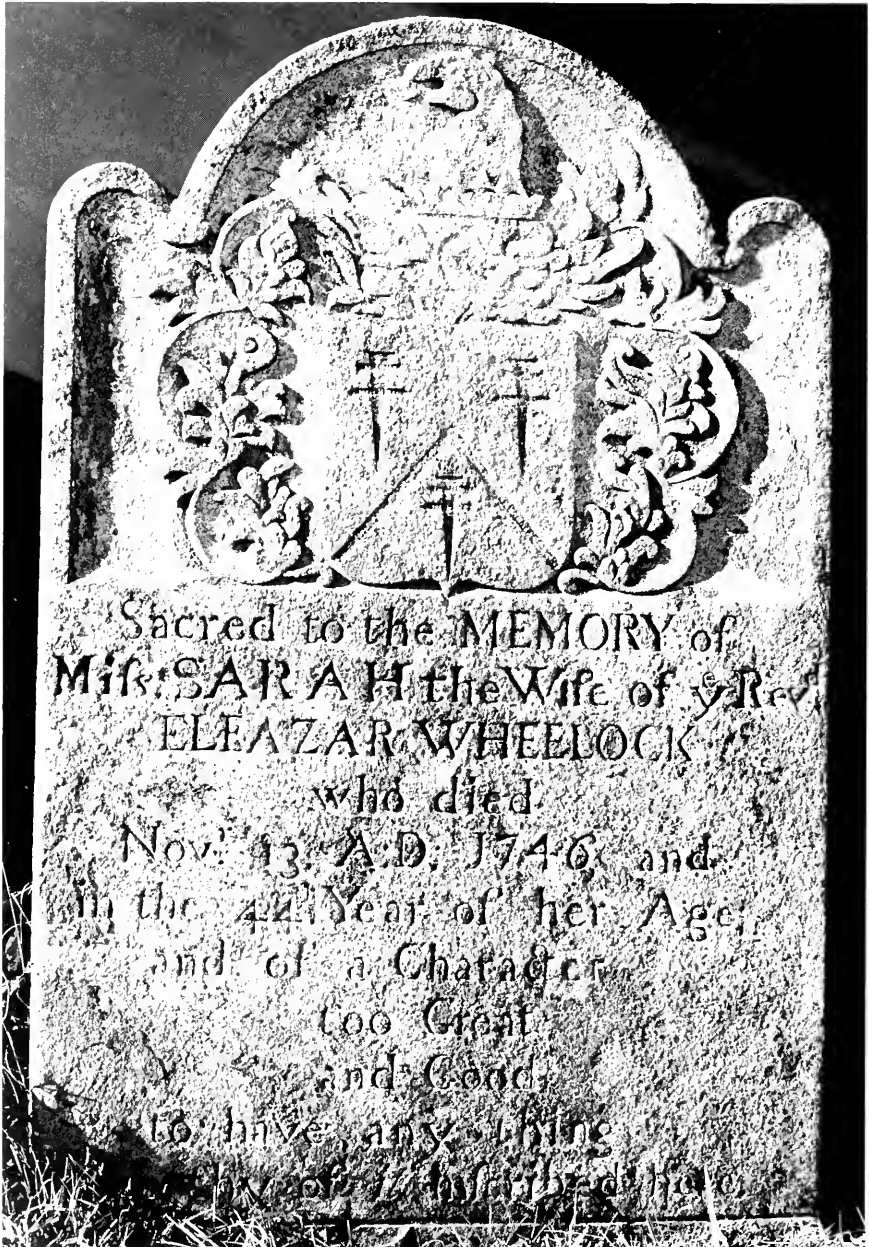
A list of persons for whom Bartlett made gravestones during his Bolton period would make a good "Who Was Who in Colonial Connecticut." For examples, there were the Reverend Samuel Tudor of East Windsor, the Reverend Thomas White of Bolton, the Reverend Nathaniel Huntington of Ellington, and the Reverend Ephraim Avery of Brooklyn. Also Colonel John Whiting of West Hartford, Captain Joseph Hooker of Farmington, Captain John Manning of Scotland, and a host of other captains and lieutenants. The list of doctors includes Dr. Jonathan Marsh of Norwich, Dr. Thomas Mather of Farmington, Dr. John Wells of Wethersfield, and Dr. Jonathan Bull of Hartford. Mrs. Esther Edwards (mother of Jonathan Edwards) of East Windsor, Thomas Welles, Esquire, of Glastonbury, Colonel Israel Putnam's sons of Brooklyn, Benoni Trumbull of Gilead, and David Luce of Scotland all had stones by Bartlett.

As every Dartmouth man well knows, "Eleazar Wheelock was a



John Bingham, 1747, Ellington, Conn.

very pious man." He lived in that part of Lebanon called "The Crank" (now Columbia), where he kept a school for educating Indians. His most famous pupil, Samuel Occum, was converted from his primitive beliefs to become, at least temporarily, "a saved heathen." In 1766, Occum went to England to raise funds for a new college, and there he proved his conversion to the white man's



Sarah Wheelock, 1746, Columbia, Conn.

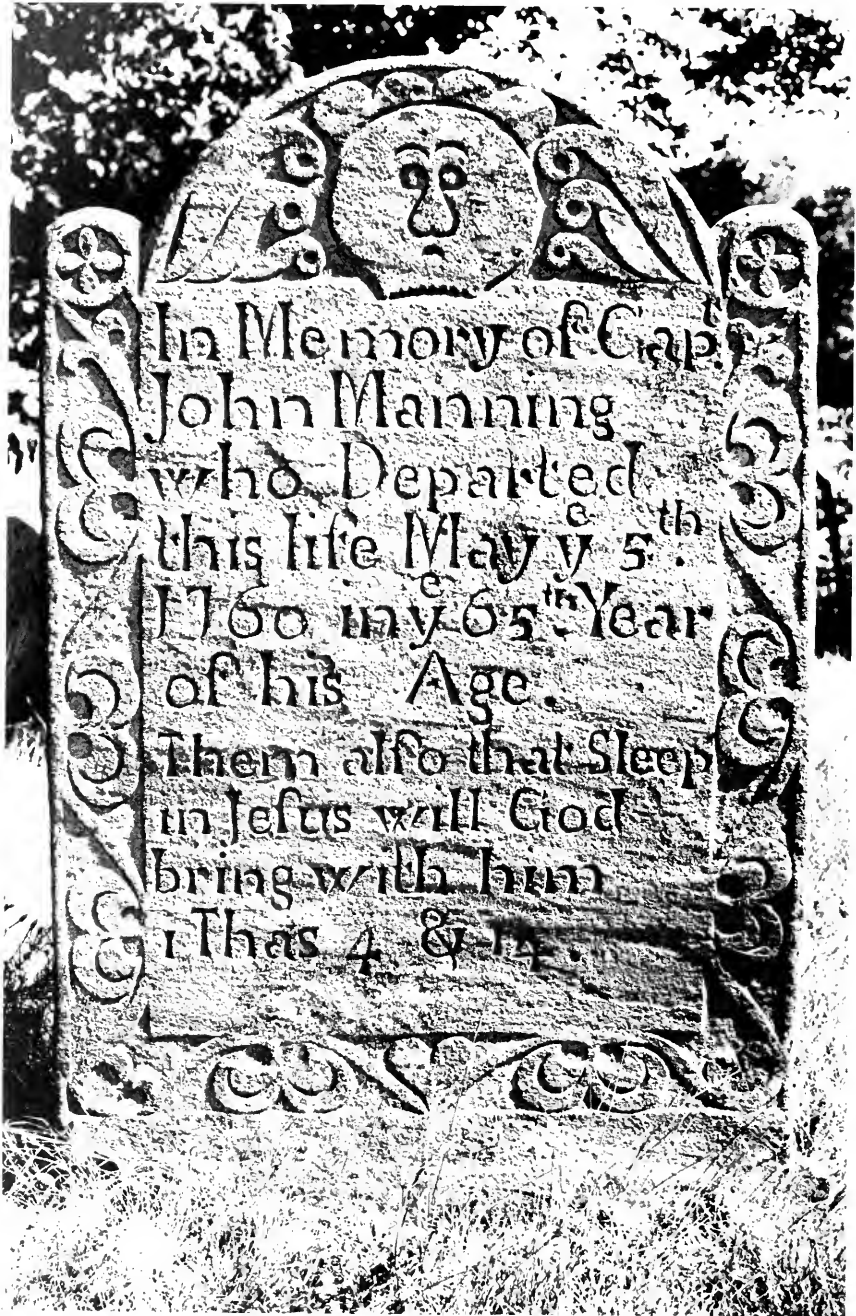
ways by organizing a drive which yielded a handsome sum of money. In this effort he was aided by the Earl of Dartmouth, and in grateful remembrance, Eleazar Wheelock named the new college after the good earl. The point of this digression is that the illustrious Eleazar Wheelock must have known Gershom Bartlett.

In Hebron we found a miniature hook-and-eye stone for Mercy Wheelock, who died in 1758; and a double hook-and-eye stone in Columbia marks the graves of two more of Eleazar's children, both named Eleazar and both dying under three months of age.

More interesting still is the Columbia gravestone for "Miss Sarah the wife of ye Revd Eleazar Wheelock who died Novr, 13, A:D: 1746." She was the daughter of John Davenport of Stamford and was earlier married to William Maltby, by whom she had a son, John, who later became the first to be buried in the Dartmouth graveyard in Hanover, New Hampshire. The interest in Sarah Wheelock's gravestone, other than its elaborate coat of arms and fine inscription, which could not be Bartlett's work, is the stone itself, which came from Bartlett's quarry. The footstone, however, is certainly Bartlett's, being engraved with diamond shapes, a Bartlett trademark.



Deborah Ellsworth, 1747, E. Windsor, Conn.



Capt. John Manning, 1760, Scotland, Conn.

As soon as we had identified Gershom Bartlett, we made a triumphant call to Kendall Hayward, another gravestone sleuth who had been as annoyed by the hook-and-eye mystery as we had. Hayward had visited us to swap photographs and yarns about our various discoveries. He was particularly interested in the Collins family, starting with Benjamin, one of the finest early stonecutters, and one who had been both proud and obliging enough to place an occasional signature on his work. At that time, Hayward was investigating Zerubbabel Collins who, after discovering that Vermont marble was a superior medium for inscriptions, settled in Shaftsbury, where he carved some of the most beautiful of all New England gravestones. Having just returned from tracing Zerubbabel in Vermont, Hayward told us that he had seen some hook-and-eye stones near White River Junction. We immediately recalled the stones that we had seen in Wilder, so the itinerary of our vacation to Vermont was decided at that moment.

During the summer, Dan Harvey, a colleague of mine at the Hartford Hospital, had invited us to visit in South Strafford. The night before our departure, Dan had dropped in to give us directions for finding their house. He also told us that a friend of his at the Hitchcock Clinic in Hanover had just shown him an old graveyard that had been long deserted and was not well known. We always followed leads like this and usually found why they were deserted; they usually contained nothing but urn-and-willow designs, the most uninteresting gravestones ever carved. Nevertheless, we promised Dan that we would take a look at his new discovery, which, he told us, was on top of a hill at the end of a country road across a bridge near some railroad tracks somewhere in Vermont. "You just can't miss it," Dan told us, and we knew what he meant; it would be hard to find.

Winding up the Connecticut River valley past Brattleboro and Putney, finding nothing exciting, we stopped at Ascutney for lunch in an old graveyard where we noticed two designs new to us, which, for want of better names, we called "the fat-faced angel" and "the sloe-eyed guy." In the churchyard of the Old South Church in Windsor we picked up Bartlett's trail, five or six stones, including a small black soapstone for Rachel Abbot who died in 1774. This stone, without question by Gershom Bartlett, showed not a letter or figure that was not duplicated on his Connecticut stones.

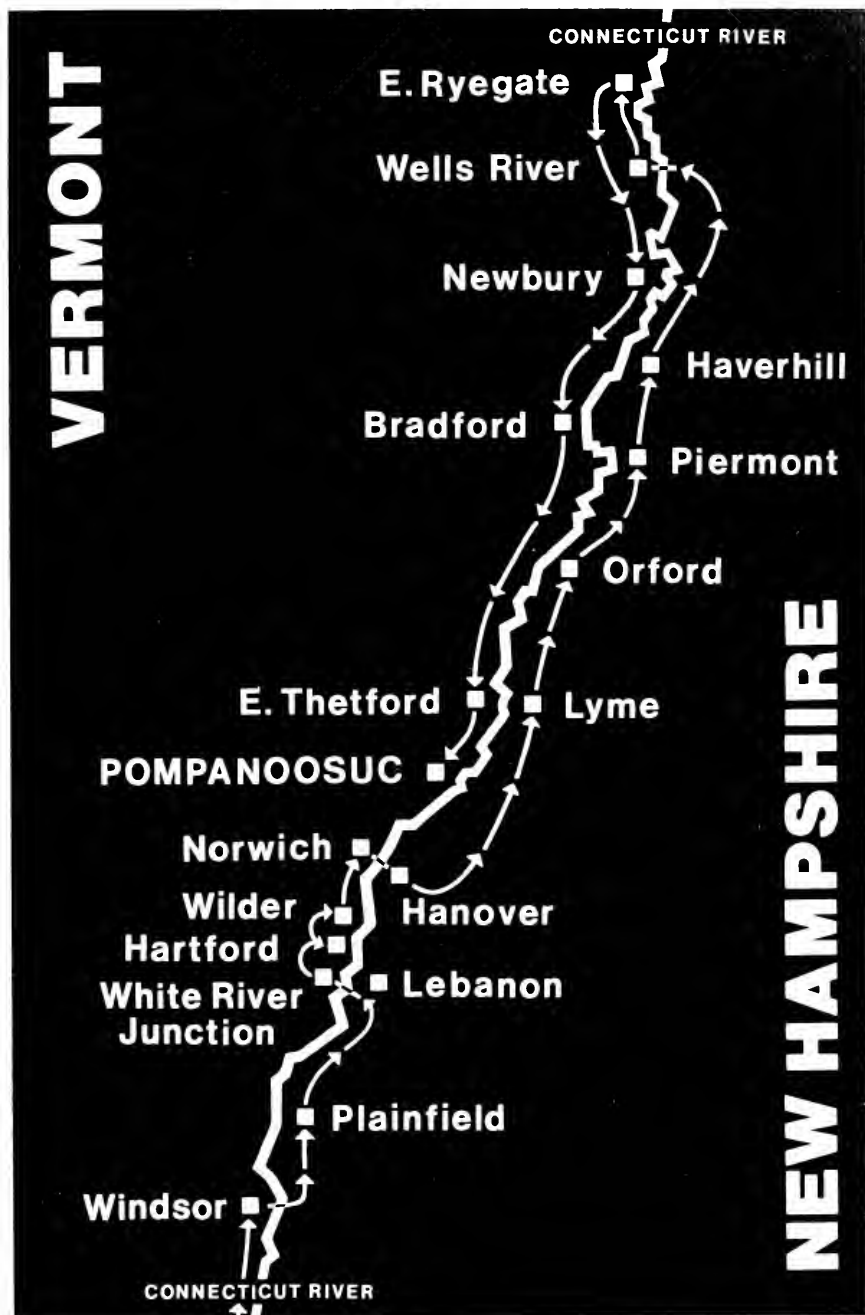
Crossing the river we proceeded north to Plainfield, where we

found more Bartlett stones, one for Persis Freeman dated 1793. The date made Bartlett seventy years old and still cutting gravestones. Then to Lebanon, and across the bridge to White River Junction, with a side trip to Hartford, which, like numerous other towns in the region, contained many stones for the Bartlett family, but none carved by Gershom Bartlett. We then proceeded to Wilder where we had found hook-and-eye stones in 1948. Wilder had over a dozen early Bartlett stones, dating from 1775. About five o'clock in Norwich, we found one hook-and-eye design on a poor grade of Vermont marble, though most of the stones were various attractive red slates, dating between 1775 and 1791. We also found gravestones which suggested a dysentery epidemic among the children during the autumn of 1775.

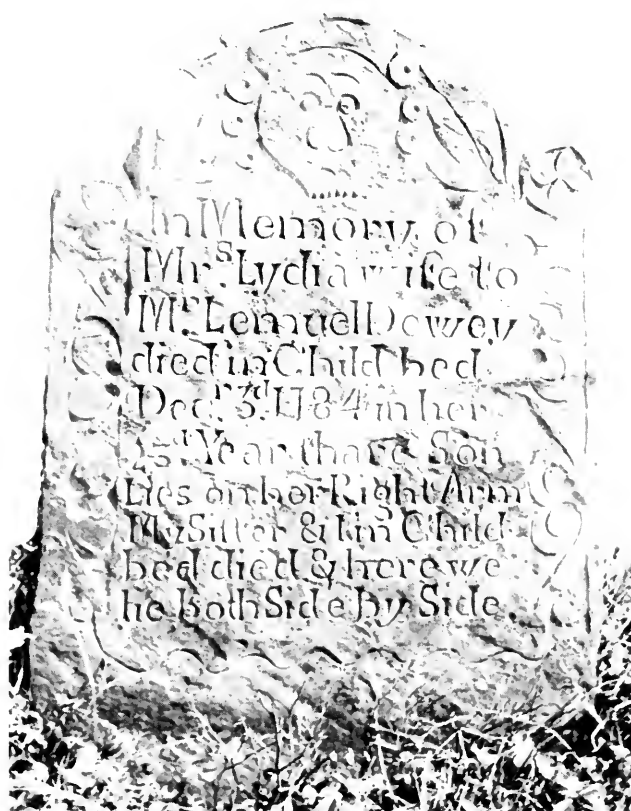
Enough daylight remained on our reaching Hanover, just across the river, for us to see that Gershom Bartlett was not only the earliest stonecutter in the region, but that he had been successful, just as in Connecticut, in building a large trade. From the perpendicular 7's and bisected mushroom borders, we could tell that he had made the table stone for the Reverend John Maltby, step-son of his friend Eleazar Wheelock. Nor was there much doubt that Bartlett had joined the migration from Connecticut to New Hampshire and Vermont. Convinced that somewhere in the upper Connecticut valley he had lived and died, we retired for the night, anticipating some fruitful exploration on the following day.

It was crisp and cold as we started up the east bank of the river the next day on a clear September morning. It was a New England autumn day in all its glory. It seemed good just to be alive. We picked up the Bartlett trail again in Lyme and in various small graveyards along the road to Orford. On some stones he showed causes of death, which he had seldom done in Bolton. Two stones in particular, those for Mrs. Abigail Barron and Mrs. Lydia Dewey, aroused our interest, as we had long been studying maternal mortality in colonial times. One stone was inscribed: "My sister and I in childbed died and here we lie both side by side." One sister was twenty-one years old, and the other twenty-three. We took photographs of these for our collection.

At Peirmont were some peg-shaped stones and another stone of white marble dated 1792. We noticed that throughout the region most of the leading military men had Bartlett stones. In Orford, we had seen a stone for Captain Jeremiah Post who fell at Bennington;



Caulfield's Journey in search of the Hook-and-Eye Man.



Lydia Dewey, 1784, Orford, Vt.

there was one for Colonel Bailey in Peirmont dated 1794; and in the next town, Haverhill, noted for its handsome village green, there was a large double stone for Colonel and Mrs. Timothy Bedel.

We paused in many places to admire the ox-bows in the river and the foliage on the far side, but having lost the trail, we crossed at Wells River and drove on as far as East Rygate. We later concluded that Rygate Corners, two miles inland, is the northernmost point for Bartlett stones. Near noon we turned south to Newbury and had lunch in the Ox-Bow Graveyard, said to be the oldest and most beautiful in all Vermont. There Bartlett carved a double stone for two of the three wives of Captain Robert Johnson, a military hero of the town.

Our next stop was in Bradford, where Bartlett stones increased in number. He surely had an eye for attractive material. The jet-black soapstones have so well retained their sharp inscriptions that they look as if they were made yesterday, although the red and black slates are often badly shaled. Vermont must have invigorated Bartlett as he advanced in years, because he began to use various sizes and shapes of stones, and he even made many scalloped borders. He showed more originality as he grew older than he had shown at the peak of his career in Bolton, though he retained the perpendicular descender on the numeral 7, which appears on all of his Bolton stones.

In the old graveyard in East Thetford were more Bartlett stones, one dated 1796, when he would have been seventy-three years old, but his hand was as steady as ever. One badly shaled stone has particular interest: "In Memory of M^r Stephen _____ar y^e 3^d of Middletown [who] was Killed by [breaking up] a Jam of Logs. April 1793." This stone commemorated Stephen Miller, whose estate was settled in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1796, and among the creditors was Gershom Bartlett with a charge of three pounds for that gravestone. The selfsame identity of the Vermont and Connecticut hook-and-eye men is clearly established by Miller's gravestone.



Stephen Miller, 1793, E. Thetford, Vt.

Near sundown we left East Thetford, with one more stop to make before we were expected at the Harvey's. We had promised Dan that we would visit his deserted graveyard in Pompanoosuc, and when he had said that very few people knew its location, he spoke the truth. After going off course, our second trial took us over a covered bridge and up a steep hill where the road turned to make a sharp angle. We took this hair-pin turn in high gear, and our luck ran with us, because the car stalled within inches of a gully. Within the week since Dan's visit, a flood had washed out gullies on both sides between two and three feet deep. So we panted up the remainder of the hill, only to find the graveyard shoulder high with brush. It was near darkness, but we were determined to be able to report to Dan that we had given the place a look. The snakes had gone to bed, but woodchuck holes honeycombed the ground, and we stumbled repeatedly as we peered from stone to stone.



Gershom Bartlett, 1798, Pompanoosuc, Vt. (old marker)

To our great surprise, we found over twenty-five Bartlett stones in Pompanoosuc, many of them for members of the Fitch, Kimball, Spaulding, and Waterman families, all eastern Connecticut names. In the center of the yard were many stones for the Bartlett family, all difficult to read in the darkness. One white stone suddenly caught my eye. I let out a yell that echoed back from across the Connecticut River in the distance. Nothing like it had been heard in that region since the St. Francis Indians raided Royalton, nearly two hundred years before. The name on the stone was GERSHOM BARTLETT.

We could barely read the recently erected white marker for "Gershom Bartlett Pvt. Olcott's Regt. Vt. Mil. Rev. War December 23, 1798." The end of the trail. Fully satisfied but exhausted, we found our way up to South Strafford and the Harveys.



Gershom Bartlett, 1798, Pompanoosuc, Vt. (new marker)

Up early the next morning, we could not wait to return to Pompanoosuc. Driving back we imagined that along that very road old Gershom Bartlett and his eldest sons had marched with their hastily aroused Norwich neighbors "to assist the Strafford people in their retreat" in August and September, 1777, and again in 1780 when "the enemy came to Royalton." In charge of that small band of citizen soldiers was Colonel Peter Olcott, Bartlett's old friend and neighbor from home in Bolton.

In the morning, the graveyard was easier to find. By daylight the gullies looked even more formidable than they had in darkness. The graveyard looked more unkept, with its broken-down fence, overturned stones, weeds and bushes, and with a forest obstructing the view. We could easily imagine, nevertheless, the beautiful spot that it must have been in the old days, situated on a high crest overlooking the Oompomponoosuc and Connecticut Rivers. We found Bartlett's original gravestone, its surface badly shaled with only fragments of the original lettering still clear. What irony! This man who had spent at least fifty of his seventy-five years taking extraordinary care to see that his contemporaries had enduring monuments on their graves had for himself a stone which in a very few years would be but a heap of dust.

We found other interesting surprises in the Pompanoosuc graveyard. Bartlett had two wives, Margaret, who died in 1778, and Hannah, who survived him. Margaret's stone is puzzling. We had seen many similar stones in Vermont and decided they were cut by someone closely associated with Bartlett, perhaps an apprentice or, more likely, a son. The skull and wings bear no resemblance to the hook-and-eye stones, yet there were snails, four-leaved clovers, perpendicular sevens, typical borders, and most important, the completely unmistakable Gershom Bartlett footstone with its diamonds. We came to suppose that the old man himself had cut the borders and the inscription after a son or other associate had cut the skull and wings, though we felt less certain about our attribution of this important Bartlett stone than about any other that we had ever made.

The inscriptions especially surprised us. "In Memory of Mrs. Margret wife of DD Gershom Bartlet," and "In Memory of Hannah, wife of Gershom Bartlet DD." We later learned more about him from Vermont records, many supplied by Arthur Chivers, who was then working on the history of the Dartmouth graveyard. We learned that Bartlett had subscribed to the first Dartmouth College Fund about



Margret Bartlett, 1778, Pompanoosuc, Vt.

1770; he was a pioneer settler in Norwich (Pompanoosuc was then a district of Norwich), an official fence viewer, also a member of the committee for laying out roads to the meeting house. Numerous Vermont records tell of his service in the militia during the Revolutionary War and earlier service in 1757 in the French and Indian Wars.

But how did he get his doctorate in divinity? Throughout his life he had preached sermons on stones, frequently using scriptural quotations, but his name is not officially listed as a graduate of Dartmouth or of any other American college existing at that time. His probate papers, now in Woodstock, Vermont, revealed many facts, among them the fact that he lived on the banks of the Oompompanoosuc River not far from the old graveyard; that he died intestate and left some household furniture including a looking-glass valued at 21 cents and a tea set valued at 71 cents. We can also note the significant fact that he left not a single book, suggesting that he had no formal education.

We ended by believing that Bartlett's degree was justly earned, if not by scholarship, then by his contributions to early American art, recognized by his life-long friend, Eleazer Wheelock, scholar and founder of Dartmouth College. Perhaps Bartlett assisted Wheelock in transporting from Connecticut those five hundred gallons of New England rum, now celebrated in Dartmouth song, and perhaps his degree in divinity was granted, though not recorded, on the happy occasion of its arrival.

April
14-1975

Concord April 14-1975

- 14 we began to lay Mr. Spina Jones bellows with
lawday in. I worked in till 8. Mr. Huntable, Samuel Hunt & J. Hunt
- 15 we all worked. and went to work
- 16 we all worked. Joseph Spaulding came in in the afternoon
- 17 we all worked (in Mr. Spaulding was 130 tons
of here except the afternoon)
- 18 we all worked
- 19 Sunday
- 20 we all worked except it's raining in part of forenoon
- 21 we all worked. Joseph that buck came down at night
- 22 Mr. Spaulding, Mr. Huntable, Hunt worked at Baker's wharf
myself, Joseph Spaulding & Sam Huntable at Jones, S. Jones &
Hunt in the afternoon of the day
- 23 we all worked in the forenoon & long Huntable worked at Jones, S. Jones
in the forenoon in the afternoon at Hunt's. Huntable
The Huntable, Joseph, that buck & Sam Hunt worked
at Bond's all day
- 24 we all worked at Jones underpining till break-
fast & then we all went to Bond's chimney
- 25 we all worked at Bond's chimney & Hunt
went at in the afternoon. Huntable & Joseph
went to Jones in the afternoon
- 26 Sunday
- 27 we all worked at Jones in the forenoon except
Huntable & Hunt till breakfast - in the afternoon
The Huntable & Hunt worked at Bond's & the
night at White Heywood
- 28 I worked at White Heywood in the forenoon & Huntable &
& Joseph all the forenoon - in the afternoon
I worked at Jones & Huntable, Joseph & Sam Hunt
& The Huntable & Hunt worked at Bond's
- 29 we all worked at Jones except The Huntable
& Hunt at Bond's in the forenoon
- 30 we all worked at Jones except The Huntable
& myself part of the forenoon we worked in Bond's

14-1975
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Ithamar Spauldin, Stonecarver of Concord, Massachusetts 1795-1800

C. R. Jones

In 1895 the Rev. Calvin Keyser found a Concord account book in Solon, Maine, and, recognizing its antiquarian interest, presented it to the Concord Antiquarian Society. The book, *Ithamar Spauldin's Book of Accounts and Proceedings from April 13, 1795*, is a lucky survival, for it gives a vivid picture of the manufacture and sale of gravestones and the activities of the man who carved them.

Ithamar Spauldin, the eldest son of Thomas and Lydia Spauldin, was born in Pepperell, Massachusetts, March 2, 1767. He appears in the Concord, Massachusetts, records in August, 1794, when he declared his intention to marry Lydia Tarbell Reed, also of Concord. The couple were wed April 12, 1795, in Littleton, Massachusetts, by Sampson Tuttle, Justice of the Peace. They did not have any children.

In 1797, Spauldin was a charter member and served as the first Junior Steward of the Concord Masonic Lodge. On June 30, 1800, he asked to be dismissed from membership as he intended to leave Concord. Records indicate that he moved to Norridgewoc, Maine, in that year.

From the entries in the account book an interesting picture of Spauldin's life and work can be constructed. The first 24 pages were used as a day book or diary. His first job was laying a cellar wall for Joshua Jones. The construction of this large brick house kept him busy for some time. Ithamar's younger brother Joseph worked with him "in the shop" for several years. On May 17, 1795, he and Lydia "went to keeping House." No work was done on Sundays or Muster Day for the Concord Regiment. November 19, 1795, was designated "Thanksgiving." On November 24 he "salted Cabbage." Several entries suggest that he tended a large garden. On February 4, 1797, he "went a fishing to Flint's Pond." On March 4 he "went to Lincoln and brought home our puppy who was 5 weeks and 2 days old." On October 14, 1799, he bought six green chairs. He made several trips to Pepperell and "Kenebeck," Maine, in 1799 and 1800, apparently to visit relatives and prepare to relocate. On August 27th, 1800, he agreed with "S. Emerson to keep the bed that

was in my house & allowed him 13 dollars with what I had before paid him."

Most of the time was devoted to business, either working in his shop or at various houses and business establishments. Frequent trips were made to the Harvard, Massachusetts, quarries to "get out stone." On October 25, 1797, he paid Joseph Willard's wife "one dollar for the last year's quarry rent."

The second section of the book lists the charges for individual jobs and in some cases for produce or services—hauling stone, for example—received as payment. Dollar values are included with each entry. Toward the end of the book, the entries appear to have been made at irregular intervals, so it is possible that some work was paid for at completion and not put into the book at all.

Spauldin produced more than tombstones. In the five year period he built 34 chimneys, 9 foundations, and one brick house. He plastered 20 rooms, did 8 whitewashing jobs, and papered a barber shop. He sold 12 whetstones, grindstones, and hammers. One customer ordered a "stone to pound paper on." He also set several hatter's kettles, built an "ash hole," fixed the "mouth of a copper furnace," and repaired the local jail after someone damaged the building.

During the five years, Spauldin recorded the sale of 71 pairs of tombstones, 36 of them in Concord. At least 26 of these can be located today. Six pairs were sold to people in Carlisle and six pairs in Bedford; five pairs in Lincoln; three pairs in Acton; two pairs each in Framingham, Ashby, and Sudbury; and one pair each in Temple, Westford, Pepperell, Maynard, Billerica, Marlboro, Dracut, Peterborough, and Hallowell.

The hard, greenish slate he used came from the Harvard quarry. He produced three styles. His cherubs have moon faces, frequently with hair parted in the center and wings with a row of scallops, connecting at the neck. Shallow incised lines form a simple border and inscriptions are in rather small, fine lettering. The inscription is usually flanked by Tuscan columns. His small portrait stones are quite simple with the bust in an oval, flanked by sprigs. (Figure 1) The larger portrait stones have slightly more elaborate busts, trees on either side, and columns below to frame the inscription. (Figure 2) His urn-and-willow stones are also shallowly carved. (Figure 3)

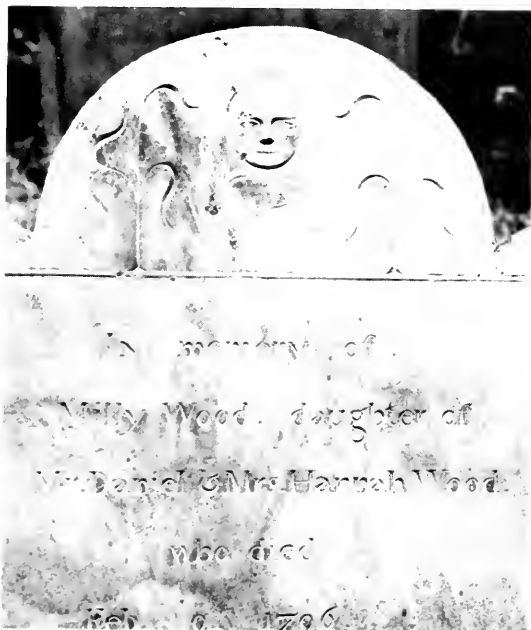


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

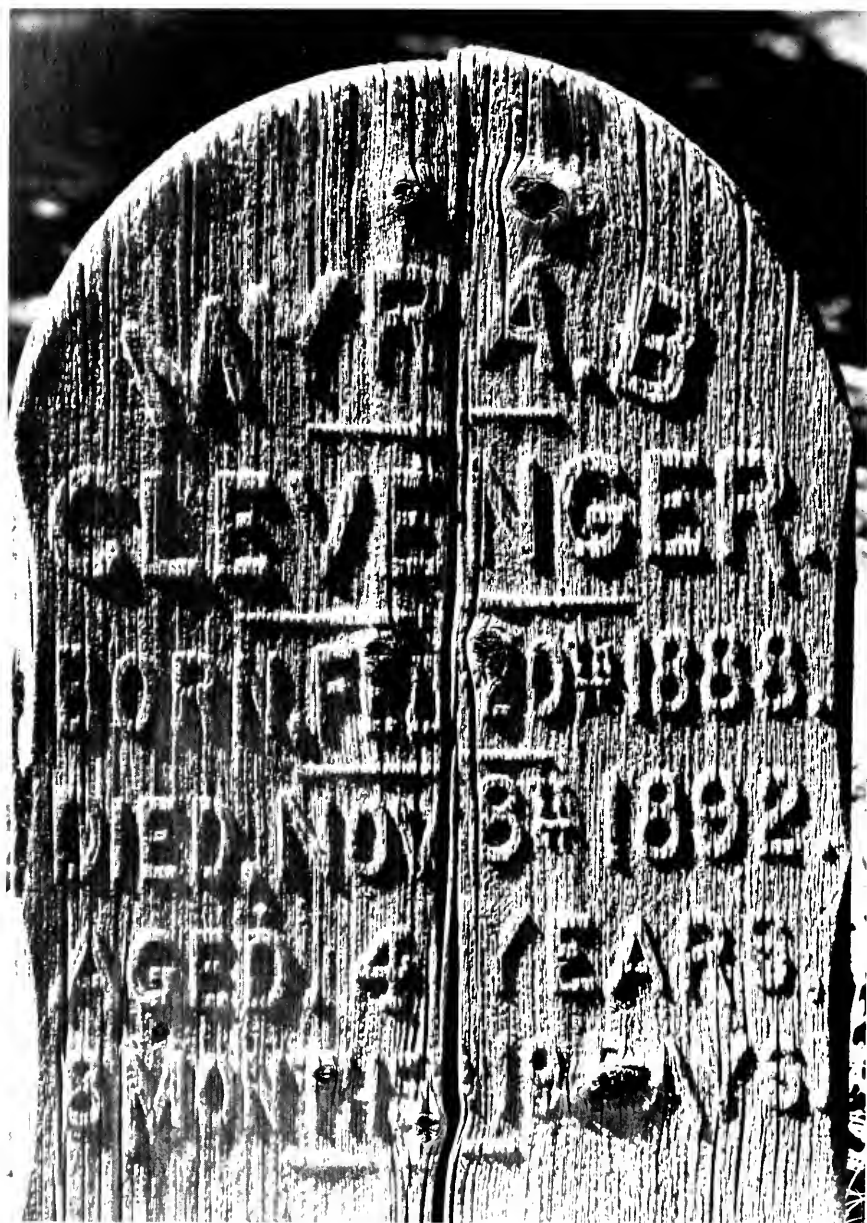
The account book provides a rare opportunity to determine the cost, date of sale, and purchaser for these eighteenth century artifacts. Charges ranged from two dollars to twenty-four dollars, the most popular size costing about seven dollars. Four lines of poetry cost an extra seventy cents, and in one case he charged one dollar for “putting the age & death of a child on the lower part of Mrs. Betsey Mead’s gravestone.” He sold two “Monumental stones,” one of which survives. The cost was “£10, extra writing 12 shillings —\$35.34.”

At this writing, not all of the Spauldin stones referred to in the account book have been located and documented by present day students of gravestone studies. I have not investigated Spauldin’s work after his removal to Maine. Fortunately, another researcher, John S. Wilson of Natick, Massachusetts, has continued this study and has already located a number of stones which were not listed by town, and others not mentioned in the account book but certainly cut by Spauldin.

A final section of the account book is worthy of note. A list of books owned by Spauldin gives an interesting picture of the man. One might hope that an examination of the appropriate editions of these works would reveal printed designs that may have influenced Spauldin's carving style.

List of books from Ithamar Spauldin's account book, 1795.

		Dollar	Cnt.
Jan.	179(?) Perry's Dictionary	1	16
Dec.	1794 Manser Universal Geography 2 Vol.	3	50
	1795 Tristram Shandy 6 Vol.	3	50
	Thompsons Works the second volume	0	90
	The American Young Mans best companion	0	75
	1795 The American husbandry 2 Vol	2	25
	Websters 2 & 3 part	0	50
	Childs Friend	0	75
	Chesterfields Principles of Politeness	0	25
	1795 A short account of Algiers (?)	0	25
Nov.	1795 Popes Works	0	25
	An Authentic Key to Masonry	0	25
Dec.	1795 The Paine rights of Man	1	12
	1795 Pains Age of Reason	0	25
	1795 The Age of Infidelity	0	20
	Female ___?___ detected	0	25
	Shaws Justice the second volume	0	90
	A new Introduction to Book Keeping	0	25
Jan.	1796 The Prompter	0	20
Feb.	1796 British Album	1	25
	for binding American Apollo	0	75
	for binding Historical Collection of Algiers (?)	0	59
Feb.	1796 Loves Surveying	1	25
Mar.	1796 Johnson's Dictionary	2	75
July	1796 Pains Age of Reason 2 part	0	37
	Total	24	44
Sept.	1796 Dr. Franklins Life	0	50
	Saundry (?) Journal	0	50
	Massachusetts Constitution	0	34
	1797 Brigs Cookery	1	33
	1797 Valuable Seceretts	1	00



W. A. B. 1888
W. A. B. 1892
W. A. B. 1896
W. A. B. 1900
W. A. B. 1904
W. A. B. 1908
W. A. B. 1912
W. A. B. 1916
W. A. B. 1920
W. A. B. 1924
W. A. B. 1928
W. A. B. 1932
W. A. B. 1936
W. A. B. 1940
W. A. B. 1944
W. A. B. 1948
W. A. B. 1952
W. A. B. 1956
W. A. B. 1960
W. A. B. 1964
W. A. B. 1968
W. A. B. 1972
W. A. B. 1976
W. A. B. 1980
W. A. B. 1984
W. A. B. 1988
W. A. B. 1992
W. A. B. 1996
W. A. B. 2000
W. A. B. 2004
W. A. B. 2008
W. A. B. 2012
W. A. B. 2016
W. A. B. 2020

Colorado Wooden Markers

James Milmoie

The rare wooden grave marker on the facing page was photographed recently in the cemetery of the small town of Lake City, Colorado. Lake City, population ninety-one in the 1970 census, is the county seat of Hindsdale County in southwest Colorado. It is the only town in that mountainous county of about the size of the state of Rhode Island. Lake City is fairly isolated, fifty-miles south of its nearest neighbor, Gunnison. Isolation, I am sure, is partly responsible for the survival of this and similar markers. More significant to their preservation, I believe, is the altitude of the cemetery (about nine thousand feet), the low average temperature, and the low relative humidity.

The professional quality of the lettering suggests that it is the work of a sign painter in Lake City. The paint protected the lettered area of the wood from the weather, producing the high relief effect we see today. At these high altitudes with cool dry air, rot and fungus attack is at an absolute minimum.

The accompanying M. B. C. marker is a footstone, relatively unusual in Colorado. Both markers are weathered to a silver grey. The photographs are printed with exaggerated contrast to increase legibility and texture.

The markers for W. H. Harrison and Jane Lampshire on the following pages were photographed in the Aspen Grove Cemetery, Aspen, Colorado, in June, 1966. They may or may not still be there. Aspen Grove is a small, rather secluded cemetery with an altitude similar to that of Lake City. It is located in a dense aspen forest, as its name implies. As in the cemetery at Lake City, the force of the weather is modified by trees. The Lampshire marker is not completely legible and has been damaged, probably by woodpeckers.

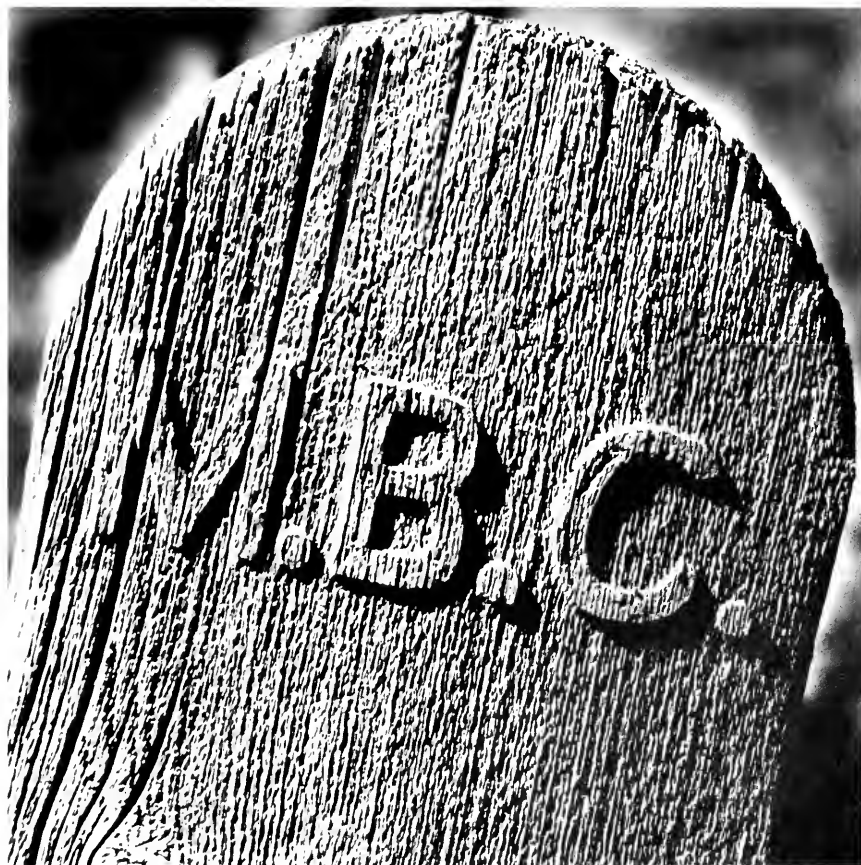
Most of these rather primitive, hand-made wooden markers were erected in the second half of the nineteenth century. They can be found in Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

The photographs shown here illustrate three representative styles of western tablet markers. Wooden cross styles are found throughout the world, particularly in areas of Catholic influence, such as New Mexico and Mexico. Time and weather have taken a heavy toll on the wood in these areas, and few are as well preserved as the ones illustrated here.

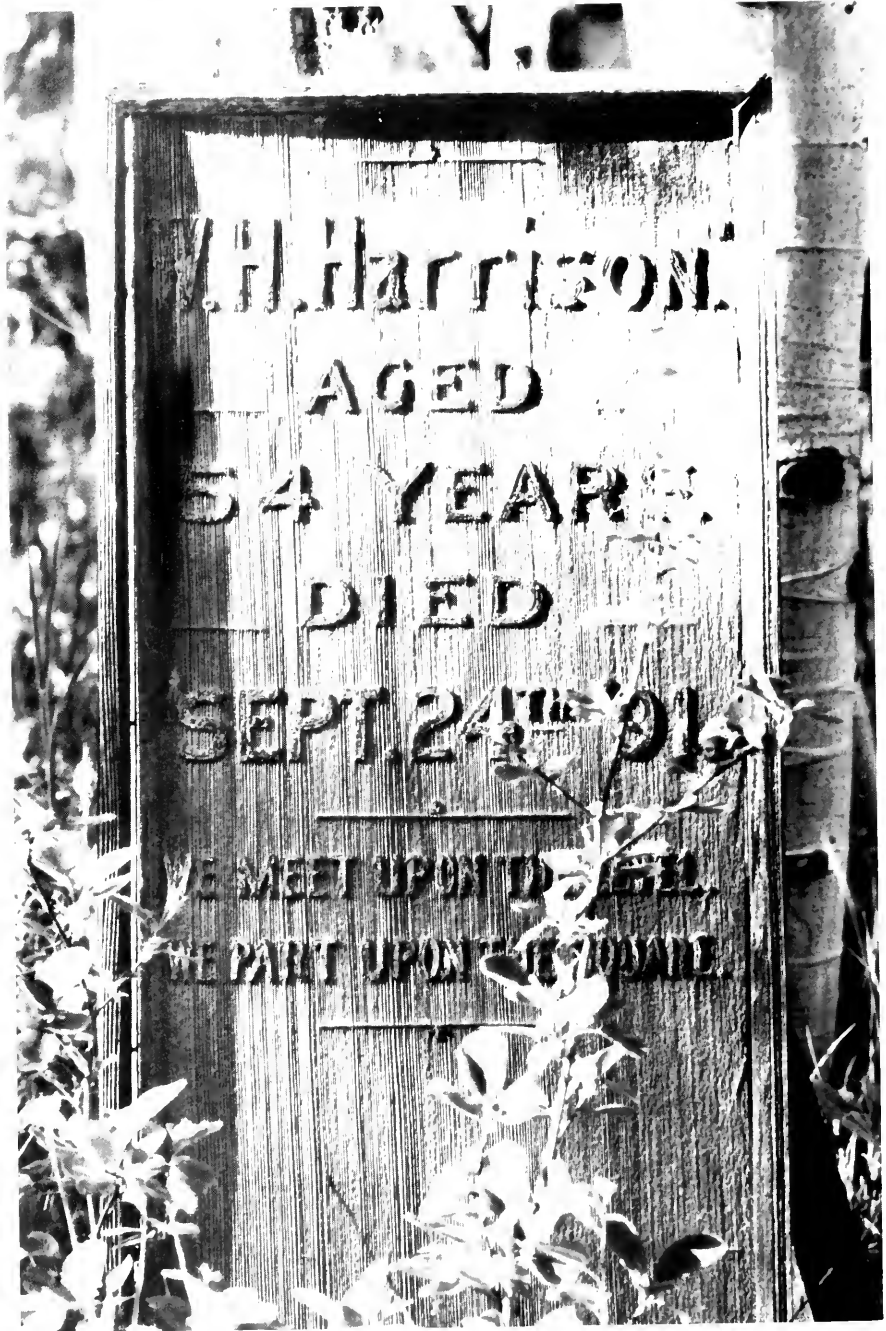
Frontispiece: Myra B. Clevenger, 1892, Lake City



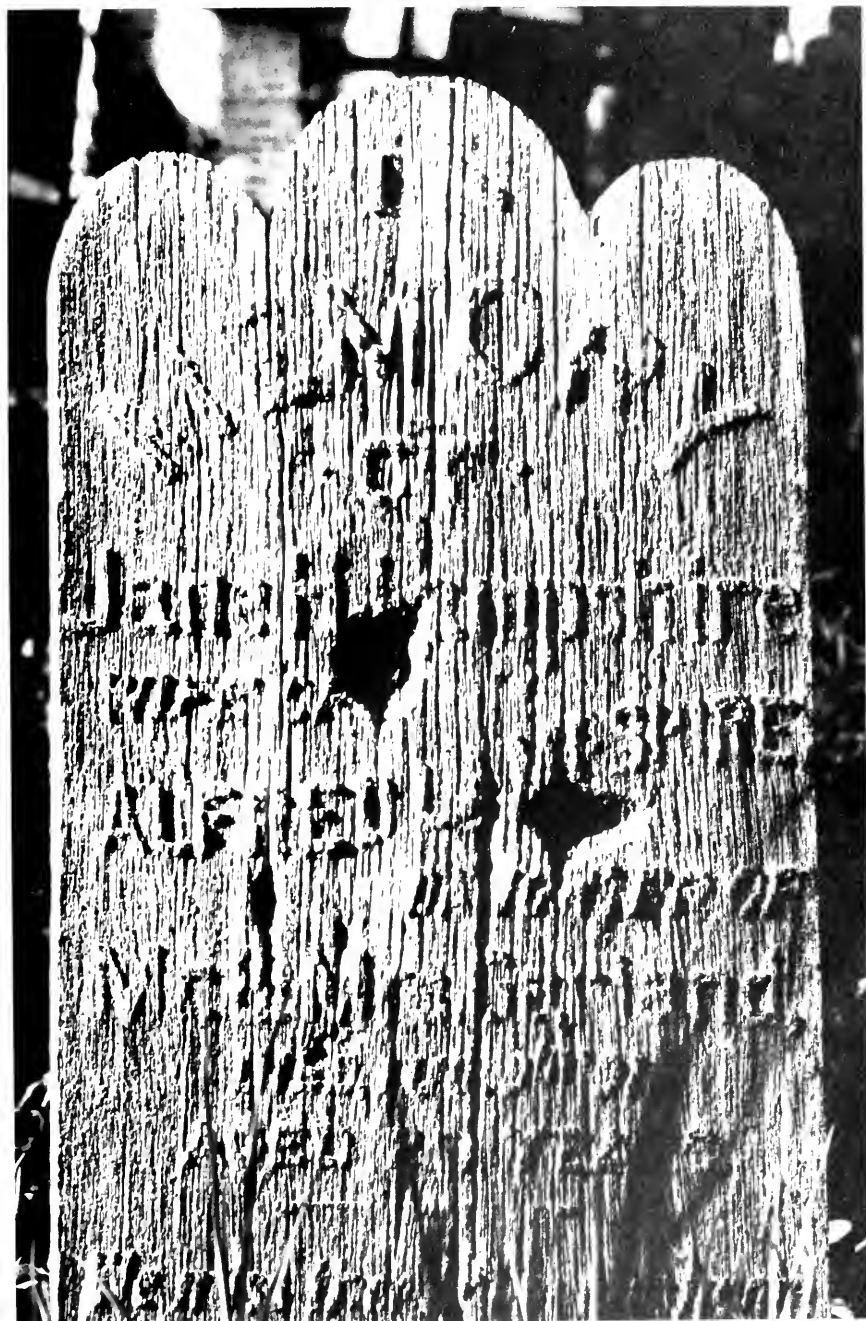
Locations of Hinsdale County, Lake City, and Aspen, Colorado



M.B.C. (footstone), 1892, Lake City



W. H. Harrison, 1891, Aspen



Jane Lampshire, ca. 1890, Aspen



Openwork Memorials of North Carolina

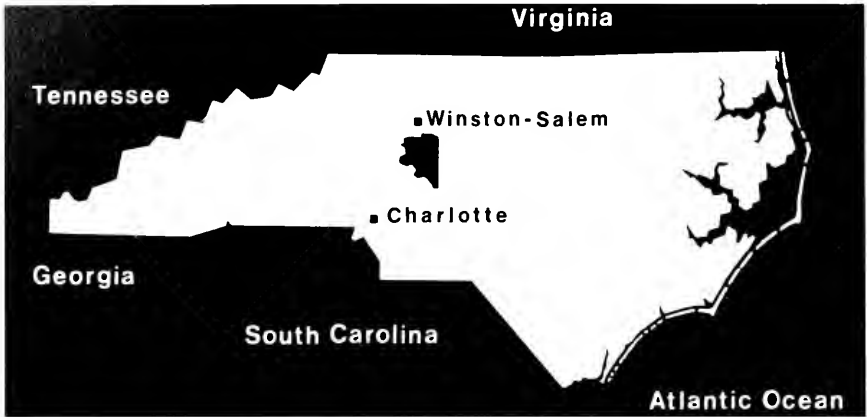
Francis Y. Duval and Ivan B. Rigby

Davidson County is located in west central North Carolina (map, top). It was formed from Rowan County in 1822, about the time many of the openwork memorials were being carved. The county seat is Lexington, and specimens of this style still stand in the churchyards of eleven parishes in various townships surrounding it (map, bottom). Most of these churchyards are within a few miles of each other. The distance between Abbots Creek and Jersey, the most distant points, is about twenty-five miles.

The churches of this region were organized during the second half of the eighteenth century by immigrants from the Palatinate (western Rhine region), from Switzerland, and also from the eastern part of France, such as Alsace. This North Carolina flatland was commonly referred to as the Piedmont, where English, Scots and Welsh settlers also made up the early population.

The oldest memorials found in these parts date to the mid-1770's, but none of these early unadorned markers are of the openwork type due to appear over a generation later. The earliest openwork memorial bears a 1797 date, probably back-dated by several years. The latest example is dated 1857, and its carving is a dilution of the openwork style at its peak period, 1815-1840.

Openwork stonecarving was practiced in ancient times, long before that technique became identified with Gothic structures. The tracery-like effect it produced has been much admired ever since its introduction. While on a lesser scale in size and intricacy, and of a more recent vintage, the openwork memorials of Davidson County are equally deserving of admiration for their unique gravestone style and their refined craftsmanship. The majority of these unusual memorials can be seen in the burial yards of the following churches:



Top: location of Davidson County, North Carolina, immediately south of Winston-Salem and northeast of Charlotte. Bottom: Davidson County's churchyards with openwork stone examples. 1-4 are choice locations; 5-11 offer fewer specimens.

Abbotts Creek, a Baptist Church, which bears the name of William Abbott, who named the creek. He and Matthew Rowan, after whom the county was originally named, were among the early eighteenth century settlers of the region. The churchyard abounds with some fifty specimens of openwork stones.

Bethany, a Reformed Church, which was originally called Fredericktown in honor of Frederick Miller, who granted the land for the church in 1789. It was renamed Bethany in 1861. Its yard is also a prime location, with over thirty examples.

Pilgrim, a Lutheran Church, which was once called Dutch Congregation on Abbotts Creek and is sometimes referred to as



Josiah Spurgin, 1802, Abbotts Creek churchyard. A rare signed specimen inscribed, MAID BY THE HAND OF JOSEPH CLODFELTER.



Moses Welborn,
1826,
Abbotts Creek
churchyard.



Catharine Couse,
1823,
Beulah churchyard.



Rosanna B. Teague,
1825,
Abbotts Creek
churchyard.

Amie T. Jones,
1823,
Abbotts Creek
churchyard.



Leonard's Church, after Valentin Leonard (Valentein Leonhart, originally), who parceled some of his land holdings to the church. It is in that churchyard that German inscriptions appear with frequency. The burial yard offers only seven openwork memorials, but it abounds with other styles indigenous to the region.

*Beulah*¹, a Reformed Church, which is located in the little town of Arnold. It was also known as Sauer's (Sowers) Meeting House in appreciation of the land donated by Phillip Sowers. This yard offers over twenty openwork stones.

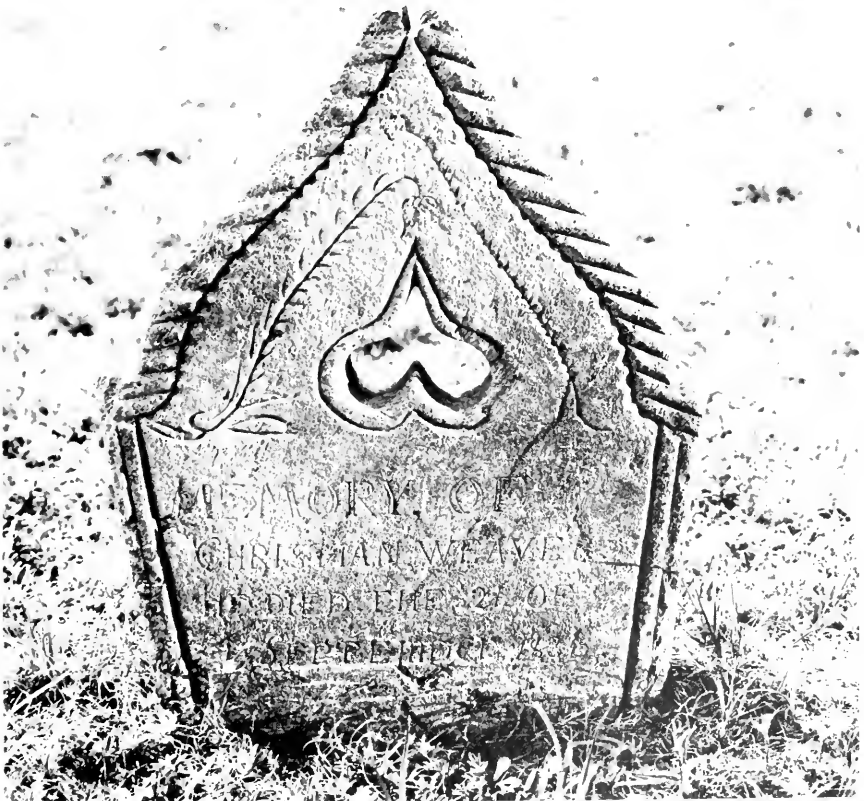
A more limited openwork style sampling may be seen in these



Felix Gladfelter, 1814. Bethany churchyard.

churchyards: Fair Grove, Emanuel, Spring Hill, Good Hope, St. Luke's, Beck's, and Jersey.

The openwork memorials are generally tapered in silhouette and small in size—within 20-30 inches in overall height, 12-20 inches in overall width. Their thicknesses vary from one inch to over two inches. Some other specimens, footstones especially, are among the most diminutive markers ever seen. With the exception of a few slate specimens, the majority of these gravestones were fashioned of steatite, a soft soapstone rich in talc, which probably encouraged the openwork carving technique. The negative volume design effect was probably achieved by a combination of drilling, gouging, and abrading. A clue to the technique used is offered by



Christian Weaver, 1836. Beulah churchyard.



Benjamin Farabee, 1836. Bethany churchyard.



Jacob Long, 1824. Beulah churchyard.

an unfinished memorial at Abbotts Creek, which displays only drill holes as design elements.

The most frequently used symbol is the fylfot, whirling sun, or swastika (from the Sanskrit: su-asti-ka, meaning "it is well"), intimating resignation to things as they are.² The fylfot is an ancient symbol with implications other than a resignation to the inevitable. It often stood for the sun and, by derivation, for eternal life. It is presumably in that context that it appeared with such frequency on these memorials. The heart motif is also recurrent, as are (not illustrated here) trees of life, birds and tulips, and the Ur-bogen, a sacred Nordic symbol of the diminishing arc of the sun, which brings on the barrenness of winter, earth's season of death. Many stones bear unrelated carvings on their two faces—the fronts displaying the inscriptions, the backs or reverse faces showing high-relief geometric designs (illustrated in the frontispiece). The openwork design is, of course, visible from either vantage point.

It is thought that these memorials represent the collective output of members of the Swisegood school of cabinetmakers.³ These eighteenth century woodcarvers are known to have produced household items such as cupboards which have details bearing a close resemblance to the memorials' decorative style. It is recorded that in 1810 John Swisegood became apprentice to Mordica Collins, a local wood artisan, until Collins made a sudden move to Indiana in 1816. While in business, Swisegood took on two apprentices, Jonathan Long and Jesse Clodfelter, and taught them the woodworking trade. Jesse Clodfelter might well have been the "Joseph" Clodfelter who identified himself by signing the back of the 1802 Josiah Spurgin memorial⁴ at Abbotts Creek. This stone is probably back-dated by at least two decades, a common practice at the time. John Swisegood moved to Illinois in the mid-1840's, while Jonathan Long remained a thriving carver until about 1853. Little is known of the whereabouts and/or trade pursued by Jesse or Joseph Clodfelter during the 1820's, which saw the carving of most of these unique memorials.⁵ One thing is clear upon scrutiny: they are not from the hand of a single carver. Therefore, it is safe to assume that Jesse or Joseph Clodfelter carved a fair share of the total output, either operating a stone workshop of his own or moonlighting from his woodcarving activities. The artisans who chose anonymity are equally deserving of admiration for their contribution to this remarkable local art form. It is hoped that one day these carvers will be identified.



Peter Lapp, 1827. Pilgrim churchyard.

Fragile as they are, most of the openwork memorials are in surprisingly good condition. However, recent stone chipping and scarring are painfully visible on the lower half of many specimens. Before further serious power mower defacements occur, local cemetery associations should insist on better supervision of the yards' maintenance crews. The alternative is the extinction of this unparalleled gravestone art legacy. For the sake of posterity, local and state governments should collaborate in arranging the removal of some memorials from the burial yards to the safety of museums.



Elisabeth Bodenhamer, 1824. Abbotts Creek churchyard.

NOTES

1. For an unexplained reason, this important location was overlooked in the Rauschenberg survey of Davidson County's memorial styles.
2. Preston A. Barba, *Pennsylvania German Tombstones: A Study in Folk Art*, Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, vol. 18 (Allentown: Schlecter's, 1954), p. 7.
3. Bradford L. Rauschenberg, "A Study of Baroque and Gothic-Style Gravestones in Davidson County, North Carolina," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, 3, no. 3:24-50.
4. *Ibid*, p. 46. The author writes, "It is regrettable that research has not located a single stone that was signed."
5. Isolated instances of openwork stone memorials exist elsewhere, for example in Scotland and Nova Scotia, but not on the scale existing in Davidson County, North Carolina.

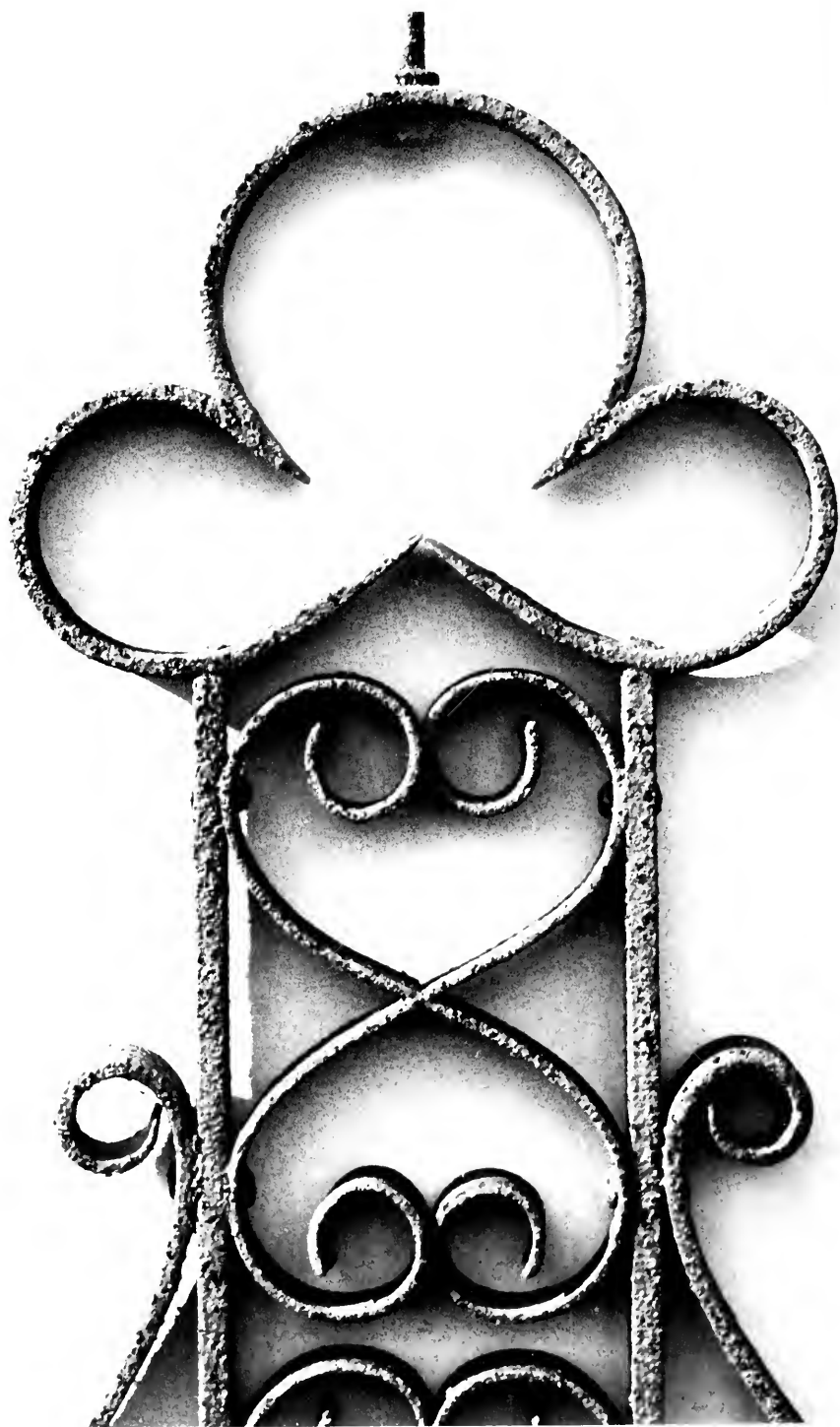
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Frontispiece: the back surface of the Kezia Jones memorial, 1828, Abbotts Creek.



Sarah Sowers, 1823. Beulah churchyard.



Wisconsin's Wrought Iron Markers

Julaine Maynard

St. Mary's Catholic Church of Pine Bluff is located in a tiny crossroads community about eight miles west of the city of Madison, in Dane County, Wisconsin. It is a stone church of impressive size with brilliant stained glass windows. Behind the church, on a hilltop, lies a quiet rural cemetery that contains, among its markers, fifteen wrought iron crosses. They stand out starkly in their haunting beauty. Although they resemble delicate lacework, they are deeply weathered with age.

Some of the crosses give no clue to who is buried beneath them. Church records do not help, for the locations of early burial sites are not documented. Other crosses have an oval stone plaque attached to the center of the cross. Inscriptions on the stone plaques show death dates ranging from 1873 to 1898.

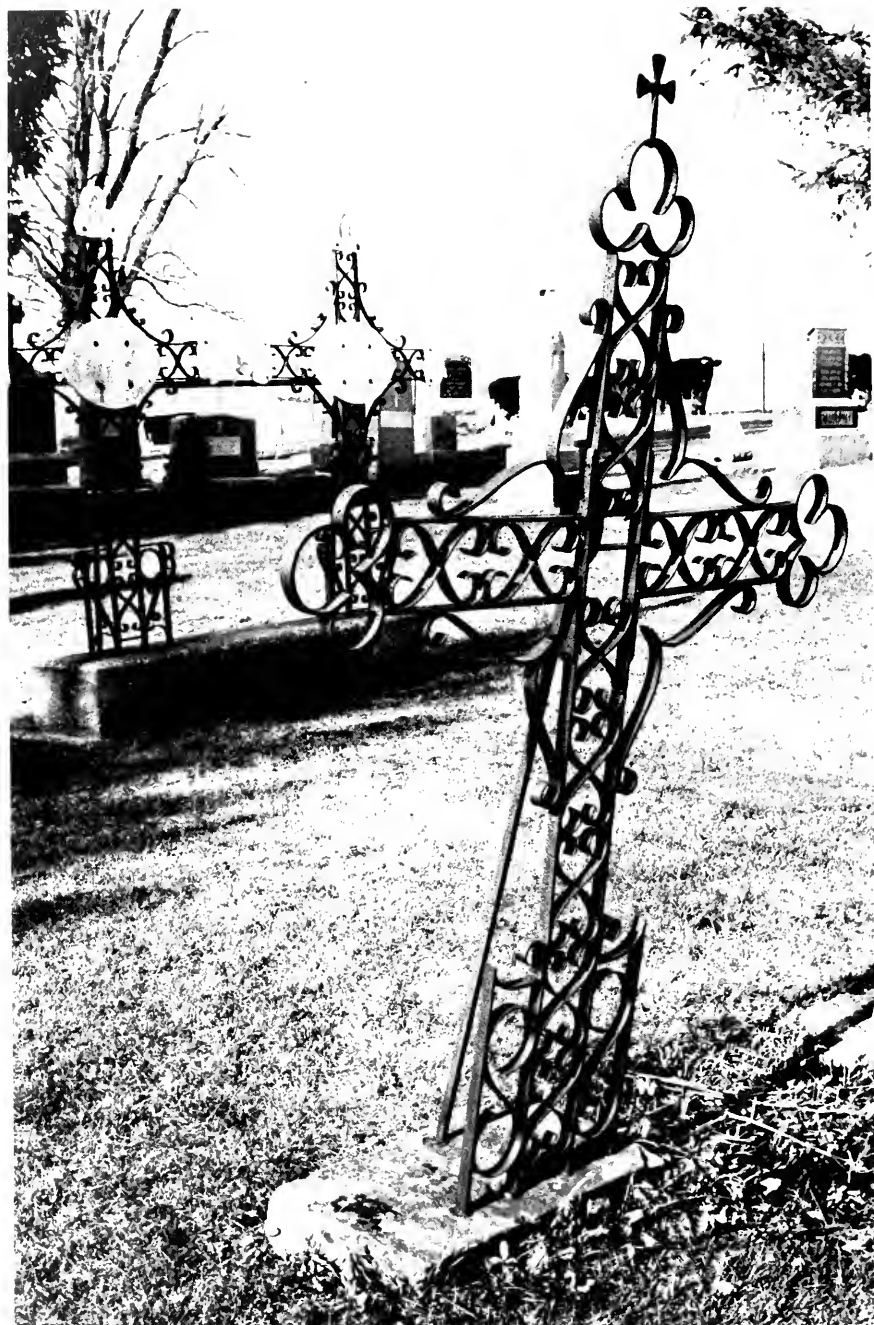
One prominent pair of crosses bears the following inscriptions:

Michael Birrenkott Geb Sept 7 1830 Gest Jan 12 1874

Maria Clara Birrenkott Geb Juli 13 1830 Gest Feb 26 1884
R.I.P.

The church records show that John Michael Birrenkott and Maria Clara Kalscheur, natives of Kerpen, Prussia, were among the earliest members of the church. They were married August 15, 1854, the day of the church's very festive dedication ceremonies. The church was hung with branches of tamarack and filled with fragrant flowers. Rifle shots announced the start of the morning services. Immediately after their wedding in the early afternoon, the blessing of the cemetery took place, after which the young couple moved on to their wedding dinner.

Other iron crosses in this cemetery mark the graves of early immigrants from Scotland, Germany, England and Ireland. Only three iron crosses have been found in other Dane County cemeteries. Two are in Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison; one is in a cemetery in Waunakee.



St. Mary's, Dane County.

Lois Stein of Kenosha, Wisconsin, has long been interested in the iron crosses that mark the graves in St. Alfonso's and St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church cemeteries of Kenosha County. According to Mrs. Stein, the presence of Wisconsin's iron cross markers appears to be limited to Catholic churchyard cemeteries, and to date from the 1880's. The two Kenosha cemeteries contain about thirty-five iron crosses of many different designs and sizes, some of which are said to have been made by a blacksmith in Burlington, Wisconsin. Members of the Wisconsin State Old Cemetery Society report the existence of a few isolated iron crosses in Racine and Milwaukee Counties.

The ornamental iron crosses marking the graves of early Wisconsin settlers remain intricate enigmas. Until these markers are more thoroughly studied, one can only speculate about their origin and their distribution patterns and how these may relate, for example, to the settlement patterns of Wisconsin's German and Austrian immigrants.

Frontispiece: Wrought iron cross detail, Dane County, Wis.



St. Mary's, Dane County.

IN MEMORY of
POMPEY
BRENTON
who died Aug^r
the 5th A.D. 1772
aged about 55
Years.

Cut by J. Stevens, jun.

The John Stevens Shop

An introduction and a welcome delivered at the opening session of the 1979 Annual Conference of the Association for Gravestone Studies, Newport, Rhode Island, July 7, 1979.

Esther Fisher Benson

Several years ago a letter came to me at the John Stevens Shop from one of AGS's founding fathers. The letter asked how many graveyards still exist on this Island. My answer, giving a large figure, met with his request that I might show him where these graveyards are. I did not answer that letter, being floored by the prospect of tramping all over Aquidneck Island through brush and briar, trespassing, searching, climbing broken walls, consuming many hours. There are many small burying grounds on the Island; each farm had its own. These are now, for the most part, in a devastated condition, the walls fallen away, bushes and briars overgrown, the stones split, knocked sideways, lettering often obliterated. Well-preserved family grounds can be seen at Lawton's Valley, the Prescott farm, John Clarke Burying Ground, Coggeshall, Holmes, and Bliss. On Farewell Street in Newport lies the Governors' Burial Ground, with two Wanton and two Bull governors. About a block away is the Common Burying Ground, which, thanks to Ed Connelly, will survive many more years. The Golden Hill Cemetery is small and has certainly suffered in the past. Trinity Church and the Jewish cemetery are kept in excellent condition. There is also the Arnold Burial Ground on Pelham Street, where lie Governor Benedict Arnold and his son-in-law, Edward Pelham.

Newport was, as I am sure you know, an important coastal city, forming a link between New York City and Boston. There was wealth and culture and taste developing through the large shipping interests up until the Revolution. The single element that gives Newport a particular value to all of you is the John Stevens Shop, at 29 Thames Street. Begun in 1705 by a fifty-two year old mason from England, it grew and prospered, rose and fell with the times, but has continued until the present day. Within those walls now, as in the past, skilled hands wield the mallet and chisel, cutting into the fine density of the slate, revealing patterns, shadows, depths, and above all—letters.

It has bothered me many times to realize that your membership seems uninterested in lettering. Wandering as you do, like bird-watchers or hunters of wild flowers, how have you resisted all those words and their messages? Is it because the fact of death, the message on these stones is too dreary, too gloomy for you? Why in your photographs and rubbings do you so often cut off the lettered area? The purpose of a gravestone is not primarily sentimental or even decorative. It is factual, so that the dead may not be forgotten by future generations. It is a record to last as long as may be possible. Sometimes I have felt that you are really interested only in early American *decoration*.

Yet to us in the John Stevens Shop, much thought and time go into the balancing, the unifying of the parts which make up a headstone. The lettering and ornament must fit into a given space. Neither should dominate the other. The Stevenses were not, perhaps, innovators, but in lettering they were masters: John the first, scratching the grim skull with hanging jaw and teeth, which he softened with stylized chrysanthemum heads down each side, and tying the whole thing together with correct seventeenth century capitals; John the second, cutting away the background to define his leafy borders, pursing the lips of his cherub heads, while across his great tombstones march capitals and lower case never to be surpassed; John the third starting his creative life with delicate portrait heads, ending up after the Revolution—pushed to the wall like so many others in the post-war depression—no ornament, only letters, competent and satisfying; Philip Stevens, cutting into the nineteenth century white marble a type face letter, deep and very small. They all possessed it, these Stevenses, an unflinching understanding and love of lettering, inherited in their genes, learned in the shop from parents or grandparents.

We have four Stevens account books, going back to 1705 and carrying through until 1794. The present building was put up by John III in 1781. the Newport Historical Society pamphlet gives the story as revealed in these books.

How have we, then, maintained the Stevens Shop tradition in this age when speed and multi-production are all-important? We do not copy colonial stones, although we will do so if asked. We use mostly slate for gravestones, though of a much tougher quality than the local stone got from around the Island in the past, so hard with iron that we must use carbide-tipped chisels. We cut the head shapes with an electrically driven saw; we sharpen the tools on an

electric wheel. The rest we do by hand. We prepare the surface on a slate stone by lengthy hand rubbing, using modern silica grit bricks.

We make many tablets for libraries, churches, hospitals, schools, and museums. We cut large names on public buildings, and dedication inscriptions on walls. More than half our work is architectural—not so out-of-line when you consider that John I and II were primarily masons.

It is, however, the gravestone which afford us the best creative opportunity. Each one is designed individually. The letters are composed fo fit nicely across the stone. We cannot, like John I, pay no attention to the number of letters which must be stretched or squeezed into a given line. We cannot indulge in primitiveness, no matter how charming. Although choosing these ancient techniques of stonecutting, we are, nevertheless, of the twentieth century. Every piece of work we do must stand up against machine-made products, must in fact be far better. The process of creativity, of imagination, lies now as it always did in the mind of the stonecutter who was and still is the designer. The image in his mind, coupled with his skill and an understanding of material and tools, continues to produce the stones which you will see this weekend.

As you walk through the Common Burial Ground I hope that your visit to the John Stevens Shop will have given you a new insight into these early gravestones, so that you can see that the letters and their words, together with the peaceful cherub heads, are the essence of a colonial gravestone.

Oh, what a place to lie until eternity.



HERE LYES Y BODY
OF CAP OBADIAH
SMITH WHO DIED
MAY Y 11th 1727
IN Y 50th YEAR
OF HIS AGE
NOW BETWEEN
THESE CARVED STONS
RICH TRESVER LIES
DEER SMITH HIS BONES

Resurrecting the Epitaph

Dianna Hume George and Malcolm A. Nelson

The central focus of modern gravestone studies is the carved icon, not the words on the stone or the arrangements of stones in a burying ground or other possible emphases. Literary approaches to gravestones and the early American culture of death—and serious study of American epitaphs—has yet to begin, although Ludwig¹ and the Tashjians² have given significant encouragement in this direction.

We here present our argument for two badly needed shifts in emphasis which will both complement and develop iconographic research:

1. Study of epitaphs, their linguistic and literary effects, literary sources, and symbolic significance; and
2. A holistic approach to the study of gravestones, treating epitaph and icon as a single unified work in which each element complements, completes, or contrasts with the other, producing different and more powerful effects than those which emerge in studies of the isolated individual elements.

We suggest that these avenues of gravestone research will show a great deal more than we already know about the behavior and beliefs of the people who lie under the stones.

Most Americans commission only one work of art in a lifetime: a tombstone. What they select is a function of pressure, availability, price, and fashion—and it always was. Yet what they choose, and what they chose two and three hundred years ago, is as accurate and intimate a statement as we are likely to find in durable physical form of things beyond mere fashion and price: feelings and attitudes, held both consciously and unconsciously, about the most ultimate matters. The gravestone record is even more important in the case of a culture like the Massachusetts Puritan culture of the colonial years. Because of the Second Commandment's prohibition of "graven images," we have a slim legacy of the artistic

visions of these people. The physical expressions of beauty which remain are their trim, functional tools and elegant buildings, not their painting or sculpture. Formal "fine art" as such is preserved for us in only one great storehouse, the early burying grounds. And in the burying grounds of the colonial period we find no conflict or substantive difference between *elite* and *folk* art. With a few notable exceptions, it seems that in early America death levelled not only all men, but also all men's responses to it. The icons of early American gravestones, as documented by gravestone research, preach to us truths we can find nowhere else.

The accepted view of the development of iconographic motifs in American gravestones is roughly as follows. The dominant symbol of the first century of American gravestone making is the winged skull. Its meaning is less clear than its dominance. Does it represent the *memento mori*? Does it remind us of the most common of all early American epitaphs, with which it is often united?

Stranger, stop and cast an eye;
As you are now, so once was I,
As I am now, so you shall be.
Prepare for death and follow me.

Do the skulls' rows of fearsome teeth grin at us the dusty truth about the mouldering fate we all share? In a word, yes. A fearsome death is what the skulls are telling us about, staring hollow-eyed from hundreds of dark slates. Death was, after all, a more familiar companion to these people than it is to us. They knew and expected and met with him earlier and more frequently than we do. As David Stannard documents in *The Puritan Way of Death*, death had not the same taboo status that it does for us. (See Phillippe Aries' *Death in America* for an assessment of the way death developed into the kind of taboo it now is.) Those who lived to maturity in early America were a minority, and they knew it, as the poignant gravestones for children—as many as six in one family dead in a month—mutely attest.³

But the perversely grinning skull *is* grinning as well as grimacing, and it is also winged, probably suggesting the flight of the newly fledged soul to heaven.⁴ The soul is freed by death as the body is enslaved by it, and the winged skull looks two ways: down into the grave, and up to heaven, as is proper for a symbol of the greatest and most permanent rite of passage. There is hope in the grin, as well as fear. More than hope, there is the wish, expressed repeatedly in epitaph as well as icon, for the release into eternity prom-

ised by death. In the icon of the grinning skull, fear and wish are one, as they are in the unconscious depths of the human psyche, where opposites are always true, and paradox dissolves into unity. Yet, though the gravestone icon combines opposites, it also preserves ambiguity. Grinning and winged, a skull is still a skull, a representation of the decayed body divested of its individuality, its particulars, its dear human flesh and features.

The winged skull is eventually succeeded by the winged cherub, after a great deal of delightful experimentation by carvers with transitional forms—playful abstractions which develop the motif of the skull almost beyond recognition. The cherub motif is, in our view, less a distinct and total transformation than a shift in emphasis. Indeed, there are many stones which are impossible to classify as either skull or human face.⁵ But the shift is still clear; the skull is supplanted by the cherub with its fully fleshed human face denying death, while its wings reaffirm its angelic nature, “The dead shall be raised incorruptible.”

It is noteworthy that the shift from skull to cherub occurs just after the Great Awakening of the 1740s, that the hard and dour Calvinism of the founders is replaced by a more euphemistic or more simply optimistic gospel of salvation at the same time that the human face supplants the skull.⁶ It is similarly significant that, as the intellectual life of the American colonies is more and more influenced by Continental thought and by the attempt to achieve on earth “the heavenly city of the eighteenth century philosophers” (in a pragmatic Yankee incarnation); that as human possibility and perfectibility are trumpeted in *Poor Richard's Almanac* and the *Declaration of Independence* and *The Rights of Man*, so the aspect of gravestones becomes more tonally positive, more affirmative, more worldly.

The next great shift in tombstone motifs similarly fits into major social and intellectual developments of American society. By the 1820s, the human face is almost entirely replaced in Massachusetts, chiefly by the motif of the Age of Jackson: the urn and willow. Later, icons will tend to disappear altogether, and most stones will look like a newspaper page—full of rich and beautiful typefaces, but without icon. This dehumanization is appropriate for the first American age of Mass Man. In its earlier incarnations at the turn of the century and the first decades of the 1800's, the urn and willow motif also reflects the emphasis on nature as symbol for a kind of salvation characteristic of the spirit of Romanticism. Similarly, less

restrained versions of the urn and willow, often flanked by dramatic mourners at the tomb or the urn, are carved embodiments of romantic sentimentality.

The pattern of motif development traced above is accurate enough, subject to the usual discount for sweeping and partial truths, without which scholars could write almost nothing. But there is more to learn from gravestones than the closest study of icons can yield. Epitaphs comprise the still untold story. Until we began studying epitaphs with the same kinds of techniques that we bring to the study of other literature, epitaphs were the province of collectors of the quaint, the outrageous, the unintentionally hilarious. Indeed it is hard not to be amused by the lugubrious woe expressed by the "disconsolate" hearts of the survivors of "Mrs. Mary McHard . . . of Newburyport . . . [Who was] suddenly summoned to the Skies . . . by swallowing a Pea at her own table, whence . . . she sweetly breathed her Soul away into her SAVIOUR'S arms."⁷ There is more than quaintness in such epitaphs, of course. The details of one's last moments which are deemed worthy of posterity's ear tell us something valuable about what the survivors considered important.

The writers of this piece were first attracted to these grand old stones as much by language and script style as by skulls and cherubs. We can find as much material for study in a motifless fieldstone as in a sumptuously decorated carving, if the language has power:

MARY DR TO
IRA ATKINS
HAR 14 DAYS
1744

Mary, daughter to
Ira Atkins
Here 14 days
1744

[Truro, Mass.]

Even a parenthetical aside can make a family's grief and loss come alive for one powerful moment; consider Reliance Megee, "(a hopeful child)," dead at twelve years of age in West Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard.⁸

Epitaphs must be studied seriously as the last and in most cases the only lasting verbal representation of the people who sleep under the stones. "I have been and that is all."⁹ One modification on that; as everyone knows, burial rituals and artifacts, including gravestones, are really for the living, rather than the dead.

Living people, in most cases, either write or select the epitaph, but they do so as a memorial to their dead. Furthermore, the broad generalizations of the shift from skull to cherub are sophisticated and complicated by a study of not only epitaph, but of epitaph and icon, the whole work of art, the gravestone as conceived, designed, and created. The fact that pre-carved icons were often united with epitaphs after the fact matters little, except to those concerned with the impossibly conjectural question of artistic intention. Whatever the circumstances of composition, a whole and single artistic statement results and remains for later viewers.

To illustrate the importance of considering the whole work, we choose a great stone from the Old Burying Ground in Brewster, Massachusetts. It memorializes the death of John Simpkins, the young son of the third minister of the Brewster parish. The stone is large, dark, and simple, the work of John Just Geyer of Boston; Harriette M. Forbes ¹⁰ refers somewhat deprecatingly to Geyer's "level-eyed cherubs." This one is appealing and animated, and looks like a child whose attention has been quite suddenly drawn to his right. The mouth smiles slightly, and the hair is rumpled. Beneath this pretty, thoroughly humanistic reproduction of the living child is the epitaph:

Here lies the body of John Simpkins.
 Son of the Rev'd John Simpkins,
 Who died Feb 17th 1799
 Aged 2 years and one month

Lovely in life, pleasant in death.
 Reader.

Let this stone, erected over the grave,
 Of one who was once, the florid picture of health,
 but rapidly changed into the pale image of death,
 Remind thee,
 That God "destroyeth the hope of man."

"Lovely in life, pleasant in death," at first the pleasant aspect of the icon is reinforced. Then, slowly, through carefully developed dependent clauses, we are led to that thunderclap of a last line, with its tough, bitter, paradoxical, even tragic statement.


The child was "pleasant," but was also "the pale image of death." This was the beloved son of the parish's spiritual leader, his namesake, probably his first son. The homiletic statement of the

fragility of life is expressed with classic balance and control (“florid picture of health . . . pale image of death”). A smiling cherub, a conventional epitaph, and then—“God ‘destroyeth the hope of man.’”

The source of the last line is Job 14:16, slightly modified. In this context, it gives a stunningly ambiguous view of Divine Providence, yet remains within the boundaries which must be observed by a vicar of that Providence which has destroyed his own hope with his child. This epitaph, under the smiling face, channels anguish, bitterness, even rage, into doctrinally and socially acceptable statement. Job lost his children to the unknowable dictates of Jahweh. Job got a whole new set, and this stone could have moved toward that hopeful projection into the afterlife which is so common on American gravestones. It refuses to indulge in that easy comfort.

On the basis of its carving, its icon, its physical aspect, the John Simpkins stone is attractive but unremarkable. Considered holistically, the stone is a profound and powerful work of art. It tells us that death, particularly the death of the young, was a terrible thing, even to a sophisticated, well-educated, and pious minister of the enlightened 1790’s. The elder John Simpkins was a Harvard graduate of the class of 1786, and was very likely responsible for the epitaph on his namesake’s stone. The joining of that epitaph with this sweet and smiling human face may have been largely accidental, but no matter; Reverend John Simpkins left a powerful sermon in stone which does not depend on his artistic intention. The sweet and smiling face reinforces the agony and irony of the sudden death of the child and makes our two points clear: icon must be read with epitaph; and smiling cherubs are indicative of only the most highly qualified optimism.

A reverse example will make both points clearer. The James Minott stone, from Concord, Massachusetts, is a large and beautiful slate from the Lamson workshop. It is elaborately and elegantly carved, richly decorated, and topped by a toothy and awesome death’s head. Here is the epitaph:

An
 Excelling Grammarian Enriched
 with  Gift of Prayer & Preaching
 a Commanding Officer, a Physician of
 Great Value, a Great Lover of Peace

as well as of Justice. & which was His
greatest Glory a Gen.^m of Distinguisht
Virtue & Goodness, happy in a Virtuous
Posterity, & Living Religiously Died
Comfortably. Sept. 20th 1733

James Minott's is a very worldly epitaph, emphasizing not only the usual virtue and goodness, but also the grammatical and homiletic skills, medical knowledge, military leadership, even the virtuous offspring to insure the earthly continuity of his life. The phrase "Living Religiously Died Comfortably" implies a long and full life; Minott died in his 83rd year. This phrasing subtly indicates a cultural assumption commonly reflected in early American stones; if you live virtuously in the Lord, you will die full of years and, probably, worldly goods. The epitaph could be a text for a sermon on *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.¹¹ And all this celebration of earthly achievements, all this sweet and positive treatment of life and death on James Minott's stone, stands under the fiercest of grinning winged skulls.

Another example from the Brewster Old Burying Ground is the stone of Benjamin Bangs, 1769, a grand and imposing slate carved by William Codner of Boston. It shows a mature, bewigged human face, a fully fleshed head with wings, carved in a firm and assertive style. It is a proud and worldly stone, and its position in a whole row of Bangs family stones (Benjamin was the patriarch) reasserts that pride in human, worldly affairs. Here is the epitaph:

Some hearty friend shall drop his Tear
On my dry Bones and say
"These once were strong as mine appear
And mine must be as they."

Thus shall our mouldering Members teach
What now our senses learn:
For Dust and Ashes loudest preach
Man's infinite Concern.

This is a sophisticated version of "Stranger, stop and cast an eye." The voice of the dead speaks to the ear of the living, reversing their roles; the deceased lives through the voice of the stone, defying death and yet reminding the living of their own mortality. Here, two voices are involved, deepening and complicating the relation of dead and living, and the relation of both to death. It is, in fact, even more distant than that. A living poet—in this case, Isaac Watts—

attributes words to the dead, who then attributes them back to the living.¹²

In the second stanza, the epitaph drops the distinction between the voice of the dead and the voice of the living, which permits, even insists on, the ultimate unity of living and dead. The “mouldering Members” of the dead “teach” the senses of the living, their students and inheritors. “Dust and Ashes loudest preach / Man’s infinite Concern.” The teaching / learning metaphor is a wry analogue on preaching, one not likely to be lost on the early readers of the stone. The preacher in the pulpit, which is about forty yards from Benjamin’s stone, may convey his message through logic or harangue, but no matter how loudly he exhorts, the voices of the dead in the burying ground just outside preach more eloquently and loudly than he ever could.

Benjamin Bangs’ expensive and fashionable stone, with its human icon and worldly aspect, concentrates on mutability, although, with characteristic epitaph reticence, it does not state the hope and fear it embodies. “Man’s infinite Concern” is that which concerns man infinitely, ultimately, endlessly, i.e., death, and the mortality which obsesses man. This infinite concern is neatly hidden in wit; man’s infinite concern is infinity, for what lies terrifyingly beyond death and time and space, in eternity. And over all this troubled complexity stares the face on the stone, paradoxical, tonally ambiguous. The gaze is even, direct, open-eyed, probably smiling. The viewer can see in it a face enough like his own to identify with it as the epitaph invites him to, and which he could less readily do if it were a skull. The whole work of art is neither cheerful nor gruesome—it is too complex for that. Icon and epitaph are a forceful and ambiguous whole, capable of complex interpretation.

We will close our discussion of skulls and cherubs with two brief examples from one small yard, Tower Hill, in Edgartown, Martha’s Vineyard. Mary Smith died in 1755 in her eighth year; she lies under a tiny winged skull and this epitaph:

If blooming Beauty, Innocence
 Fine wit, or Grace, were a Defence
 Against the Dart of cruel Death
 This Child had not resigned her Breath.

What a fine little poem, restrained yet eloquent. Death is cruel, but drawn with a sense of classical imagery (Dart). Great claims are made for the virtues of the little lady, but all in a cool subjunctive

mode ("were . . . had not"). Her beauty, wit, and grace are now all reduced to a neat little skull. The whole effect is one of delicacy and sweet acceptance.

Her neighbor, Thomas Trapp, died in 1719, and lies under a harsher, earlier winged skull, and this epitaph:

ALL YOU THAT COMS MY GRAVE TO SEE
 SUCH AS I AM SO MUST YOU BE
 FLEE SIN THEREFOR LIVE GODLY STIL^L
 THEN WELCOME DEATH COME WHEN IT WILL

Death could indeed be fearful, powerful, even cruel, especially when he took pretty children like John Simpkins or Mary Atkins or Reliance Megee or Mary Smith. The grinning skulls on the slates seem to tell us this, and epitaphs often reinforce that interpretation.

But this epitaph tells us that Thomas Trapp welcomed death—or that those who were responsible for his monument wished to believe so—and the grinning skull on his stone must be seen as a supporting qualification of this assertion, not its negation. To those who visualized death in the hideous grinning skull, death seems to have been a more intimate acquaintance than he is to us, a personified guest at the banquet of New England life. Like Job's and John Simpkins' God, like a powerful but capricious uncle, he could be cruel, but he could be benevolent as well. These early Americans did not yet need to euphemize his appearance with wigs or plump-cheeked cherubs, or keep him at two removes with urn and willow, which emphasizes mourning, not death. The skull shows us a death to be confronted and understood, so that a busy and practical people could get on with the difficult business of living.

Exclusive concentration on icons has produced another kind of omission in gravestone studies as well. When the icon is standardized, or unremarkable, or judged to be dull and unimaginative, researchers often bypass the stone, whose epitaph may have considerable literary merit. The study of the urn and willow motif has not been nearly so fully developed as that of death's head or cherub. This is unfortunate, in part because some beautiful carving exists in this style; yet one must agree that the urn and willow motif tends to be less complex and interesting than the skull or the cherub.

A perfect example is the tall gray slate of Desire Bangs, from the Old Burying Ground in Brewster, Massachusetts. She died in

1807, and her slate shows a sudden leap into the nineteenth century; its motif is almost embryonic, even apologetic, a small, thinly inscribed urn and willow, easy to overlook. Beneath it is this epitaph:

Dear to her children
 loved by all who knew her
 her memory will be charrished
 So long as these Survive.
 But for Immortality
 Vain are monuments, Vain were
 the Historian's pen,
 The Painter's or the Poet's pencil,
 VIRTUE has made it sure.

The first part of this is simply a reminder that the dead Desire lives on in the lives of those who knew her; the model is memory, projected into the future of remembrance. But this future is itself as mortal and mutable as the body of the dead, and lasts only as long as her survivors survive. The second part recognizes this, disclaims the efficacy of its own words, and undercuts each element of the memorial of which it is a part. The historian, the poet, and the painter (or carver) are ultimately useless; only virtue ensures immortality, not the transient attempts of the living to commemorate the dead and reassure themselves.¹³ In effect, the epitaph erases itself and the stone on which it is carved, acknowledging that both will be obliterated in time. This gesture is, of course, partly rhetorical, but it has considerable wit and eloquence.

Desire Bangs' stone is a memorable anti-memorial. The icon is something like the epitaph—modest, quiet, unexceptional—and thus, well suited to the self-effacing tone of the whole composite work of art. And it is a work of art we would never have noticed had we not given epitaph equal status with icon.

Probably the replacement of skull by cherub and of cherub by urn and willow do betoken important shifts in social and religious behavior. But epitaphs have as much to tell us as icons. From epitaphs, and from their relation to icons, we can learn that American gravestones are beautiful *composite* works of art, and we can learn that death was no less terrifying to the man who lies under the cherub than to the man who lies under the skull. This approach can take gravestone studies closer to the minds and souls of our American predecessors than a study of icons alone could ever do.

NOTES

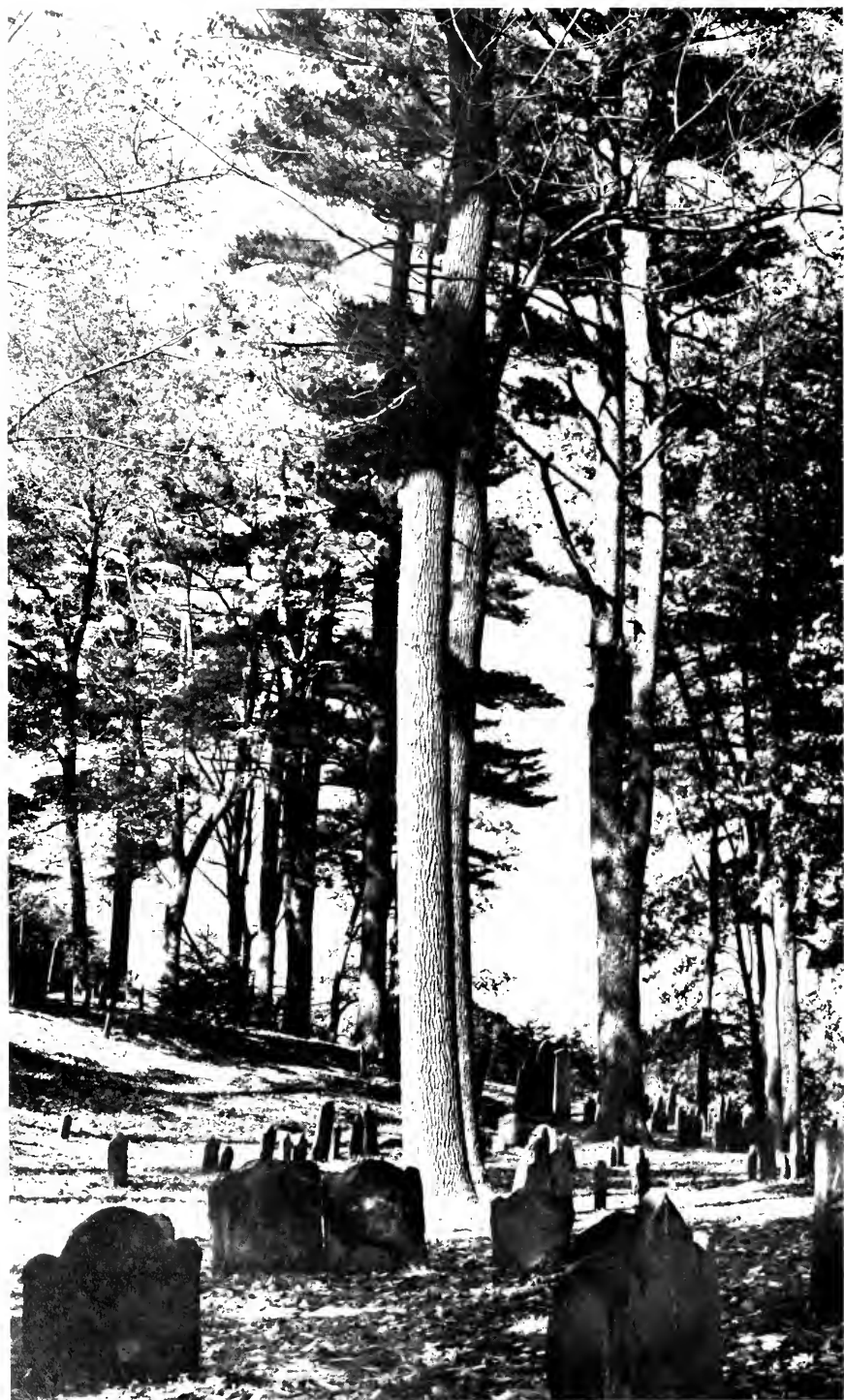
1. Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images* (Wesleyan University Press, 1966), Cf. especially "The Language of Religious Symbolism," pp. 6-20.
2. Ann and Dickran Tashjian, *Memorials for Children of Change* (Wesleyan University Press, 1973).
3. Six children of Abijah and Sarah Childs died between August 23rd and September 6th, 1778—within two weeks—and lie under one horrific stone in the Old Burying Ground, Lexington, Massachusetts.
4. Ludwig, *Graven Images*, pp. 17-18. Ludwig is, of course, fully aware of the ambiguous nature of the "language of paradox."
5. Cf. the wonderful icon on the slate of Desire Thacher (d. 1769) in Brewster, Massachusetts. It is basically a rounded skull with formalized but formidable teeth, but it also has the fleshiest, most naturalistic nose this side of pop art.
6. Peter Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy* (Univeristy of Massachusetts Press, 1977), *passim*. Cf. especially pp. 159ff.
7. From our rubbing of the stone at the top of the hill in the old yard at Newburyport. Thanks to Andrew Kull for calling our attention to it in his *New England Cemeteries* (Stephen Greene Press, 1975).
8. One thinks of that other young "hopeful lady of my earth," Juliet.
9. From the slate of the Reverend Caleb Upham (d. 1786), Old North Burying Ground, Truro, Massachusetts.
10. Harriette Merrifield Forbes, *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men who Made Them* (Boston, 1927), p. 64.
11. Paradoxically, this assumption exists side by side with the contrary attitude toward an early death—that those who leave this life early are innocent, untarnished, and fortunate. Both are necessary rationalizations, both *ex post facto* justifications. They do not disturb, much less refute, each other.
12. These stanzas are taken from "Death and Eternity," from Isaac Watts' *Horae Lyricae*, Book I. Thanks to Allan Ludwig for the clue that helped us discover this.
13. Cf. George Herbert's "Virtue":
 Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
 Like seasoned timber, never gives;
 But, though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.

Frontispiece: Capt. Obadiah Smith, 1727, Norwichtown, Conn.

This powerful and touching stone, not specifically referred to in the accompanying article, illustrates the importance of viewing a marker as a whole. Its carving and epitaph combine to produce a total work of greater artistic and dramatic impact than either produces in isolation.







Recording Cemetery Data

*F. Joanne Baker and Daniel Farber
Field Testing — Anne G. Giesecke*

Weather, time, industrial pollution, and an alarming increase in vandalism are threatening one of our most valuable cultural resources, old gravestones. If the information they bear, both verbal and iconographic, is to be available for future generations, it is imperative that it be recorded as soon as possible. In some places both scholars and community groups have recognized the importance of this task; individual communities such as South Hadley and Bradford, Massachusetts, and organizations such as the Maine Old Cemetery Association have carried out important recording projects. However, thus far there has been no attempt to systematize or coordinate the information collected by various groups or to make it available for general use. In order for the value of such material to be fully realized, it must be collected in a uniform and systematic way, housed in accessible locations, and organized to allow for future treatment by computer.

The need for systematic and useable procedures for data collection became evident at the founding meeting of the Association for Gravestone Studies. A survey of those present indicated that the single most useful service AGS could provide would be the development of an information collection process which could be used effectively by both community groups and scholars. The purpose of this article is to suggest a method whereby information from cemeteries can be gathered, organized, and maintained by local groups for use by both the professional and lay researcher.

Of course, all persons doing work in any graveyard should have permission to be there. Before any part of a recording process begins, the person in charge of the project should determine who has the legal authority over the graveyard and then secure a written acknowledgement of the work to be done.

A complete set of information on a given cemetery includes four kinds of documentation, coded so that all the data collected can be readily identified.

1. A *master survey card* giving information about a cemetery—its location, size, general condition, stone styles represented, and significant historical background. The master card should be assigned a code number or letter which is repeated on each of the other pieces of data.
2. An *individual record card* for each marker giving detailed information about it—its size, condition, composition, location, decorative carving, and inscription. The card should bear the master card code followed by the individual number of the stone.
3. A *compass oriented diagram* showing permanent landmarks and the location of each grave marker. The diagram should have the same code number as the master survey card.
4. A *photograph* of the inscribed face(s) of each marker and several views of the yard. The photograph and the individual record card of a stone should be coded the same.

The Master Survey Card

The master survey card gives capsulated information about a particular cemetery. It should contain the cemetery name, an estimate of the number of stones there, their condition, the time span they cover, remarks about any special characteristics of either the stones or persons buried there, and a clear designation of the cemetery's location. Location can be given by citing route numbers, road names, prominent landmarks, and mileage figures. The most accurate method, however, is to identify location by giving the coordinates of a United States Coastal and Geological Survey map.

The master card file serves two important functions. First, it provides local authorities with summary information for deciding which burying grounds should receive priority time and funds. Second, it helps researchers and visitors determine which cemeteries they might wish to see. AGS recommends that community master card files be housed in the town clerk's office, the local library, or other central location accessible to the public. A second copy should be placed in a secure, fireproof place, and a third copy would be welcome in the AGS archive for use by diverse researchers. Figure 1 is an example of a master survey card.

MASTER SURVEY CARD — 4	
<p>MATERIAL of which markers are made. Approximate number of markers of each material:</p> <p>_____ slate; _____ marble; _____ schist; _____ granite; _____ sandstone; _____ fieldstone;</p> <p>other(s) _____</p>	
<p>DECORATIVE CARVING on the markers. Approximate number of stones with these motifs:</p> <p>_____ skulls; _____ faces; _____ urns and/or willows; _____ other(s)</p>	
<p>NAMES OF STONECARVERS whose work is in the cemetery, when known:</p>	
<p>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND of the cemetery, if known. For examples: Is the cemetery in its original location or moved? Are the markers in their original locations or rearranged? Has the cemetery been documented before, and if so, when? Are there unusual features or historical incidents which are of interest?</p>	

FOLD ON DOTTED LINE	
MASTER SURVEY CARD — 1	
<p>_____ Name of cemetery</p>	<p>_____ Master Card Number</p>
<p>_____ Religious affiliations, if any</p>	<p>_____ Year of cemetery survey</p>
<p>_____ Person or group in charge</p>	<p>_____ Recorder</p>
<p>LOCATION</p> <p>_____ Nearest street/road/junction</p> <p>_____ Nearest city/town County State</p> <p>_____ U.S.C.G.S. coordinates</p>	<p>Terrain: (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> level</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> hilly—moderate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> hilly—steep</p> <p>Bounded by:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> fence <input type="checkbox"/> hedge</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> wall <input type="checkbox"/> other</p> <p>Lighting:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> mostly shaded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> mostly unshaded</p>
<p>Access <i>into</i> the cemetery: (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> by foot <input type="checkbox"/> by car</p> <p>Orientation: Most stones face</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> north <input type="checkbox"/> south <input type="checkbox"/> east <input type="checkbox"/> west</p>	

Figure 1. Master survey card: Front side (1 and 4). To be folded.

MASTER SURVEY CARD — 2											
<p>SIZE: Approximate number of markers (check)</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> over 2000</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 2000</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 500</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1750</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 250</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1500</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 100</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1250</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> fewer than 100</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> over 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000	<input type="checkbox"/> 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> 500	<input type="checkbox"/> 1750	<input type="checkbox"/> 250	<input type="checkbox"/> 1500	<input type="checkbox"/> 100	<input type="checkbox"/> 1250	<input type="checkbox"/> fewer than 100	<p>Approximate area size</p> <p>_____ ft. x _____ ft.</p> <p>or</p> <p>_____ meters x _____ meters</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> over 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> 1000										
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000	<input type="checkbox"/> 500										
<input type="checkbox"/> 1750	<input type="checkbox"/> 250										
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500	<input type="checkbox"/> 100										
<input type="checkbox"/> 1250	<input type="checkbox"/> fewer than 100										
<p>AGE: _____ earliest date</p> <p>_____ most recent date</p>	<p>Approximate number of markers w/dates from:</p> <p>_____ 17th century _____ 19th century</p> <p>_____ 18th century _____ 20th century</p>										
CONDITION OF THE GROUNDS											
<p>Overall Evaluation (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally excellent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally poor</p>	<p>Specific Problems (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> overgrown vines</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> overgrown grass</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> overgrown shrubs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> unpruned trees</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> fences, walls in poor repair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other(s) _____</p>										
MASTER SURVEY CARD — 3											
CONDITION OF THE MARKERS											
<p>Overall Evaluation (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally excellent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally good</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally fair</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> generally poor</p>	<p>Specific Problems (give number)</p> <p>_____ badly tilted stones</p> <p>_____ fragments on ground</p> <p>_____ broken but standing</p> <p>_____ damaged surfaces</p>										
<p>Restorations (give number)</p> <p>_____ metal supports</p> <p>_____ capped w/metal</p> <p>_____ set in concrete</p> <p>_____ enclosed in concrete</p> <p>_____ repaired w/adhesive</p> <p>_____ painted to protect</p> <p>_____ other _____</p>	<p>Footstones (check)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> none, or very few</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> reset behind headstones</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> in original positions</p>										

Figure 1A. Master survey card: Reverse side (2 and 3.)

The Individual Record Card

An inscription is most easily and accurately read when the stone is lit by bright sun raking across its face, causing highlights and shadows to outline the carving. If the stone is facing away from the sun or is in a shadow, bright light can be raked across the shaded surface by using a mirror to reflect the sun's light. The use of either direct or reflected sunlight is by far the best method for deciphering an inscription which is eroded, lichen covered, or otherwise hard to read. When it is not possible to use sunlight, other methods such as rubbing, tracing with the fingertip, and artificial lighting have been used with limited success. Some sources recommend the use of chalk rubbed over the surface or worked into the lettering. AGS does *not* recommend this practice as residue from the chalk could harm a porous stone's surface. The Association urges recorders to exercise great caution in selecting methods for making stones readable. Similar care should be taken in the removal of moss or lichen. No harsh abrasives, detergents, chem-

CEMETERY SURVEY INDIVIDUAL MARKER RECORD CARD													
14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1													
Cemetery or Graveyard _____													
Religious Affiliation (if any) _____													
1. Master Record Number _____													
2. Date of Record _____													
3. Name of Recorder or Group _____													
4. Marker Number (from Grid) _____													
5. Marker Type: 1. Table 2. Head 3. Foot 4. Tomb 5. Family 6. Other _____													
6. Material: 1. Slate 2. Marble 3. Granite 4. Sandstone 5. Schist 6. Fieldstone _____													
7. Stonecarver _____													
8. How many surfaces are carved? _____													
9. Carving technique used: 1. Incised 2. Relief 3. High 4. Three dimensional _____													
10. Decorative carving motif(s): 1. Skull 2. Face 3. Urn and/or willow _____													
4. Lettering only 5. Other(s) _____													
11. Number of people commemorated _____													
12. Condition of marker: 1. Sound 2. Unsound—chipped 3. Unsound—cracked _____													
4. Unsound—Crumbled 5. Eroded 6. Broken 7. Tilted 8. Sunken 9. Discolored/Stained _____													
10. Moss/Lichen covered 11. Overgrown (vines, grass, brush) _____													
12. Repaired or protected 13. In situ 14. Displaced _____													
13. Condition of the inscription: 1. Mint 2. Clear but worn 3. Mostly decipherable _____													
4. Traces 5. Illegible or destroyed _____													
14. Dimensions (in centimeters) Height _____ Width _____ Thickness _____													
15. Photograph negative number _____													
16. Which way marker faces? (circle)													
N	S	E	W	NE	SE	NW	SW						

Figure 2. Individual record card: Front side.

icals, or metal should *ever* be used to clean gravestones. If employed carefully, plastic brushes, plastic dish scrubbers such as Chore Girl, natural bristle brushes, orangewood sticks, and water from a spray bottle are effective and safe.

Many communities long ago recognized the genealogical importance of transcribing the written information on gravestones. Check your local library, historical society, and town hall for records about local graveyards and stones. Records made when the stones were more legible can be of tremendous assistance. They may, however, be carelessly transcribed and should be used as an aid, not as a substitute for taking accurate readings of the stones. When copying inscriptions, write the words as they appear on the stone. That is, copy each word and line exactly with regard to spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, and the number of words per line. Take care that letters and numerals are read correctly. The numbers three, five, and eight, for example, are easily confused. Figure 2 is an example of an individual record card.

PHOTOGRAPH	INSCRIPTION
REMARKS	

Figure 2A. Individual record card: Reverse side.

The Cemetery Diagram

To diagram a cemetery accurately, construct a measured grid. The diagram should be made to metric scale; one to 100 or one to 200 will probably be the most suitable. In selecting a scale, the most important consideration is whether or not it will allow for a neat, accurate diagram. If a large scale must be used, the finished plan can be reduced photographically. Begin by numbering each stone. With an indelible felt tip pen, number a square of masking tape and affix it to the edge of the stone, as in Figure 3. These squares of numbered tape hold up rather well, but they should be checked and replaced as needed until the documenting work is complete.

Next, establish a base line. Do this by setting up two poles, such as dowels or broomsticks, near a boundary of the yard and the length of the yard apart. Connect them with a string. At ten meter intervals along this line, lay off additional lines at ninety degree

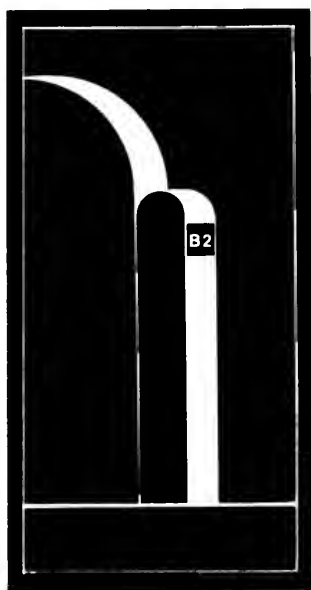


Figure 3.

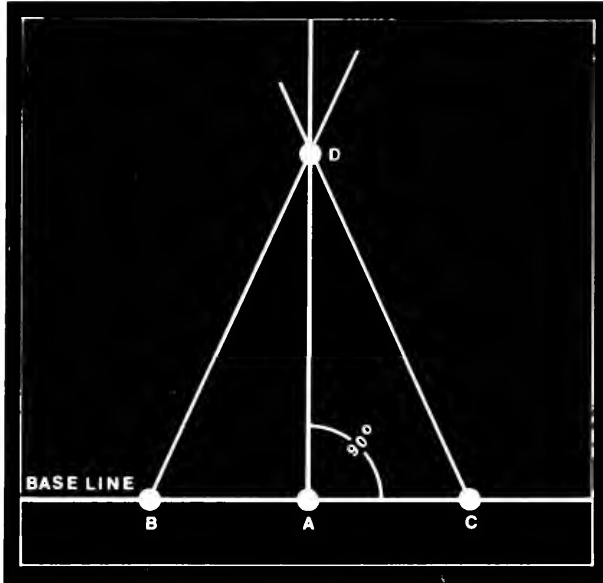


Figure 4.

angles to it. A simple way to construct a ninety degree angle is illustrated in Figure 4. Point A is the spot along the base line at which a perpendicular line is needed. Measure along the base line and mark two points, B and C, on either side of and equidistant from A. Point D is the place at which two tapes attached to B and C cross at the same length.

Along these secondary lines, also mark off points at ten meter intervals until a grid of ten meter squares is established. Mark the ten meter interval points with pegs or other markers durable enough to remain in place throughout the entire mapping operation. Record the position of these pegs on your scaled diagram. *Number* the pegs along the base line and *letter* those perpendicular to it. Then identify individual pegs by citing the letter/number combinations. Figure 5 is an illustration of a grid.

Within each ten-meter square, the position of individual head and foot stones should be plotted by measuring the distance from a given stone to both the vertical and horizontal boundaries of the square. In order to measure accurately, first mark the perimeter of the square by meters. To do this you will need four ten-meter

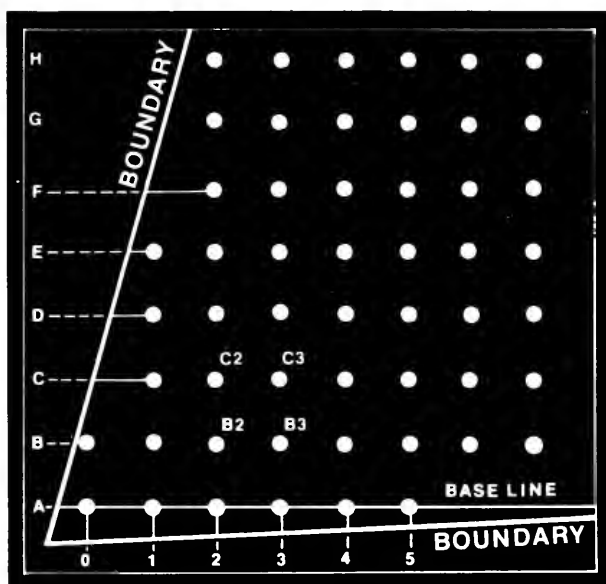


Figure 5.

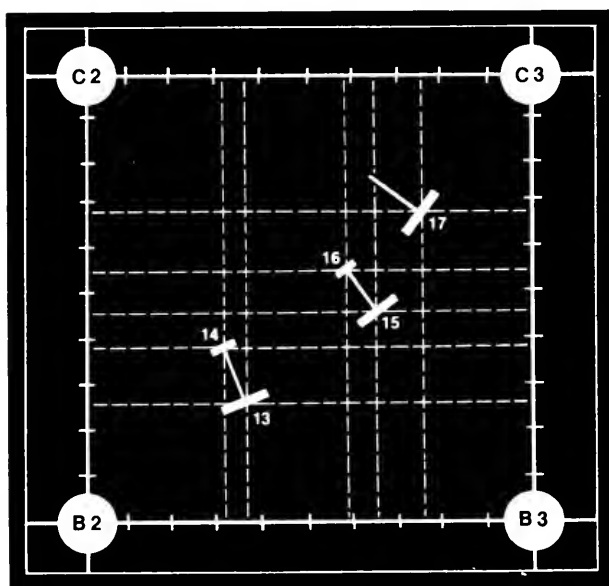


Figure 6.

lengths of rope or clothesline, attached at each end to stakes such as tent stakes. At one-meter intervals mark the rope with tape of contrasting color. Stretch one such piece of rope along each border of the ten-meter square by inserting the stakes next to the corner pegs already in the ground. When these steps are completed, the perimeter of the square will be outlined by this measured rope.

Next, stretch any piece of rope straight across the square so that it touches a particular stone and intersects the horizontal boundaries of the square at points equidistant from corresponding pieces of tape. Repeat the process from the stone to the vertical boundaries. For example, in Figure 6 the lines between the B and C coordinates represent the perimeter of the square marked off by meters. The dotted lines indicate how individual stone locations have been plotted both horizontally and vertically. (Figures 13-17.)

Although it is desirable to plot the positions of individual stones with absolute accuracy, as described in the preceding paragraphs, such accuracy is expensive in terms of both time and resources. As an alternative it is possible to produce acceptable drawings by sketching freehand the positions of the stones within each ten meter square.

The Photograph

A fine photograph of a gravestone is not necessarily an excellent photographic *document* of the stone.

The artist/photographer has technical skills which he uses as his taste, judgement, and emotional involvement dictate. His work exists to be enjoyed for its beauty and esthetic impact. A photographic document serves a different purpose, and the photographer/documenter uses a different approach. His primary purpose is to produce an accurate, detailed, long lasting record of the stone. The following paragraphs offer suggestions for making good photographic records of gravestones.

Whenever possible, photographic records of gravestones should be made in bright sunlight; hazy and cloudy conditions produce inferior records of the inscribed surfaces. Good photographic records cannot be made when snow is on the ground because reflected light from the snow diminishes the contrast needed to

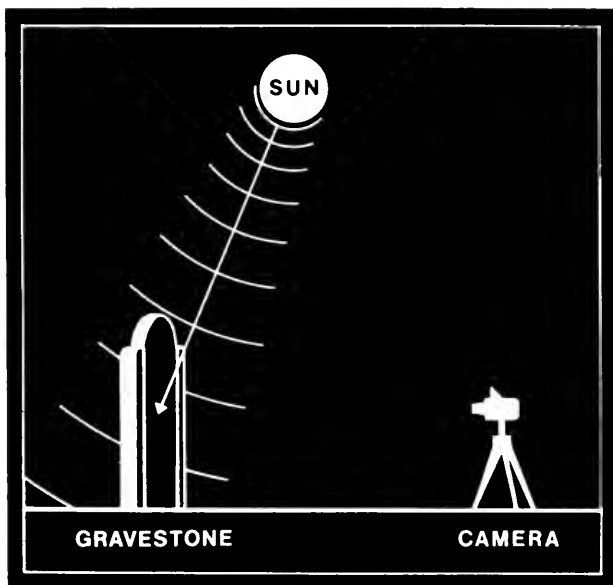


Figure 7.

give sharp delineation to the carved surface. The sun should rake across the face of the stone from the side or top at an angle to the stone of no more than thirty degrees. (Figure 7.) If the sun strikes the face of the stone squarely instead of at a raking angle, the details of the stone's design will not be as well defined and legible. (Figure 8.)

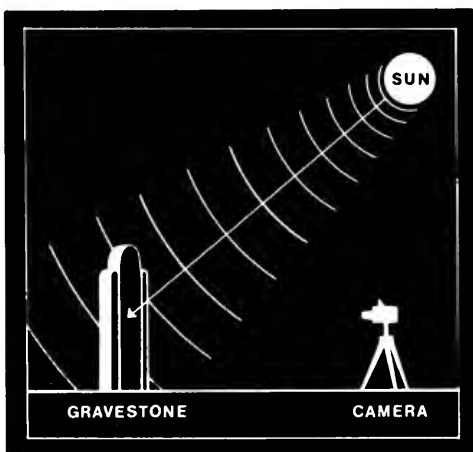


Figure 8.

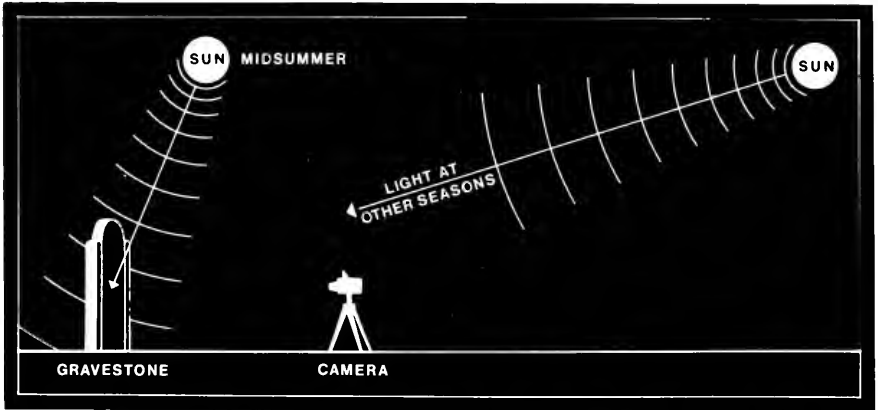


Figure 9.

Because the sunlight strikes most stones at a raking angle for less than two hours daily, the photographer must know when to be at the site. The stones in new England burying grounds tend to face west and to "light up" between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m., standard time. Stones that face north are lighted by the sun in the late afternoon in midsummer and are in shade at all other times of the year. Stones that face south are in raking light all day in midsummer but are lighted flatly from the front in other seasons. (Figure 9.)

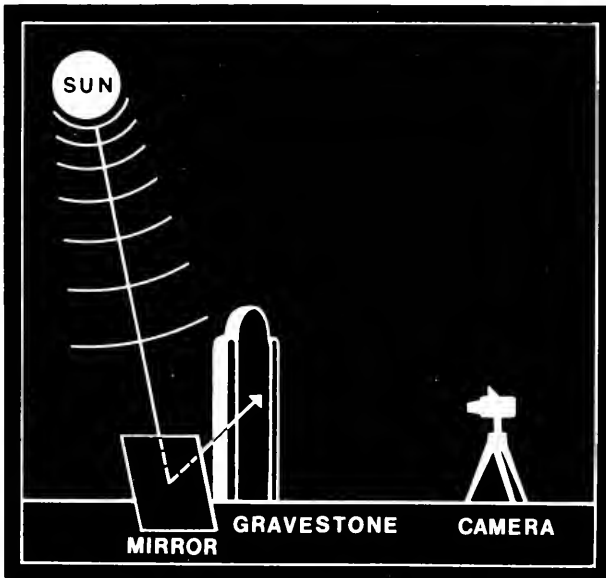


Figure 10.

Dependance on the position of the sun can be avoided by the use of a mirror. Sears Roebuck & Co. sells an inexpensive door mirror tall enough to light the entire face of most stones. (For photographing only a portion of a gravestone, a small mirror is adequate.) To protect the mirror from breaking, it should be framed. The frame can be made of plain pieces of lumber; framing with molding by a custom framer is expensive. To prevent a distorted reflection, the frame should cover any beveling along the edges of the mirror. All grades of mirror glass are effective. Plate glass, while heavier to work with and more expensive, produces the sharpest, brightest light with the least distortion. The reflected light of the mirror can be used to light any shaded stone, provided the mirror can be positioned in a spot of bright sunlight. This spot can be as far as 100 feet from the stone being photographed. (Figure 10.)

Any camera with a good lens can produce a good photographic record. With a single lens reflex camera the photographer is less likely to make errors centering the stone in the picture; what he sees in the finder is what he gets on the negative. The single lens reflex camera, on the other hand, is expensive, and it is by no means necessary for making good photographs of gravestones.

Another feature to be considered when selecting a camera is the film size the camera uses. Cameras which produce small negatives are generally easier to handle and less expensive to operate. Large negatives have the advantage of making better quality enlargements, which may or may not be important to a recording project. For making prints in the 8 x 10 size or smaller, the 35mm camera is excellent.

Film speed, like choice of camera, involves weighing various advantages. "Fast" film allows the use of faster shutter speeds and smaller apertures than "slow" film. Fast shutter speed prevents blurring due to camera motion and often eliminates the need for a tripod. Small aperture increases the depth of focus so that objects in front of and behind the gravestones are more likely to be in focus. Slow film has a fine grain and should be used when large prints are desired. For most documentary work, fast film such as Tri-X (ASA 400) in black-and-white, and Ektachrome 200 (ASA 200) in color are recommended. Black-and-white film is more suitable than color. Black-and-white prints are more permanent than color prints and both the film and the prints are usually less expensive than color. They also reproduce better for publication. If there is a need for color slides in addition to the black-and-white record, time will be

saved if it is possible to work with two cameras. Once the photograph has been set up, it takes very little additional time and effort to make the second exposure.

Using a light meter to determine the correct exposure will save the photographer countless trips to the graveyard to remake improperly exposed photographs. If a hand meter is used, it should be held close to the stone while the reading is taken so that only the light on the stone is recorded by the meter. If the meter is built into the camera, the camera itself should be near the stone while making the reading; otherwise the meter reading will be distorted by light and dark areas surrounding the stone.

In some instances a graveyard record may require photographs of groups of stones—a grouping in a family plot, for example—but usually only one marker is shown in each photograph. To photograph a single gravestone, the camera should be placed as close to it as is possible without cutting off any part of it. Attaching to the camera a +1 Portra lens will allow close-up exposure for recording details. In all instances, the camera should be positioned so that the vertical sides of the stone are parallel to the sides of the view finder. If the camera is pointed upward or downward, the shape of the stone will be distorted.

Background details are occasionally of interest, but often they detract from the photographic record. Irrelevant and unattractive backgrounds can be eliminated by the use of a backboard. A dull-finish formica makes a suitable backboard material because it is not reflective and it is both durable and easily cleaned. For black-and-white photographs, any color of formica is suitable, but for color work, gray should be avoided as it merges with the color of many stones. It is best to choose a contrasting value: dark if most of the

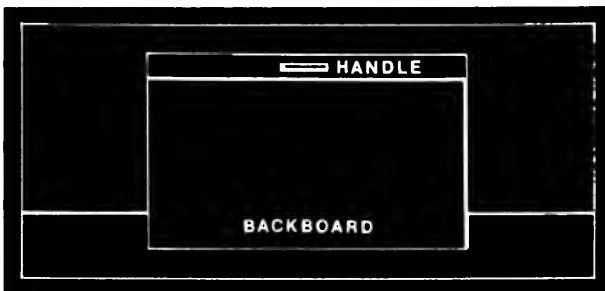


Figure 11.

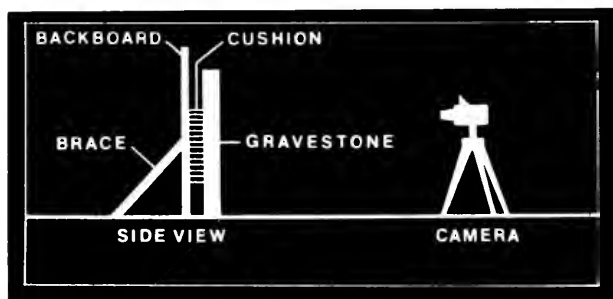


Figure 12.

stones to be photographed are light; light if the stones are dark. For general use with a variety of stone materials, a medium shade is recommended. The formica backboard works nicely when mounted on $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood cut enough wider than the formica on one side for a hand-hold to be cut into it as shown in figure 11. The size of the backboard is limited only by the size of the car that will transport it. For a shop to make this board, look under "kitchen counters" in the yellow pages of the telephone book.

If the photographer has an assistant, the assistant can hold the backboard in place. If not, a light angle-iron about forty-five inches long propped against the backboard will hold it securely against the stone. A cushion between the stone and the board prevents scratching the board. A piece of urethane foam secured from the scrap pile of an upholstery shop, probably at no cost, makes an effective cushion. (Figure 12.) Stains and scratches can be removed from the board with furniture polish.

Before a stone is photographed, it should be cleaned with a soft bristle brush and water to remove dirt and bird dung. Chemicals, detergents, and stiff brushes may damage the stone and should not be used. Clippers often come in handy for trimming grass around the marker. Grass obstructs the camera's view of the lower lines of many epitaphs and of bottom border designs. It also hides signatures, prices carved into the stone, and other significant markings which should be recorded when the marker is photographed.

In the course of documenting an entire graveyard, each monument will probably be given an identifying number to be recorded on a master diagram of the graveyard and on an individual record card for each stone. It is desirable for this identifying number to show

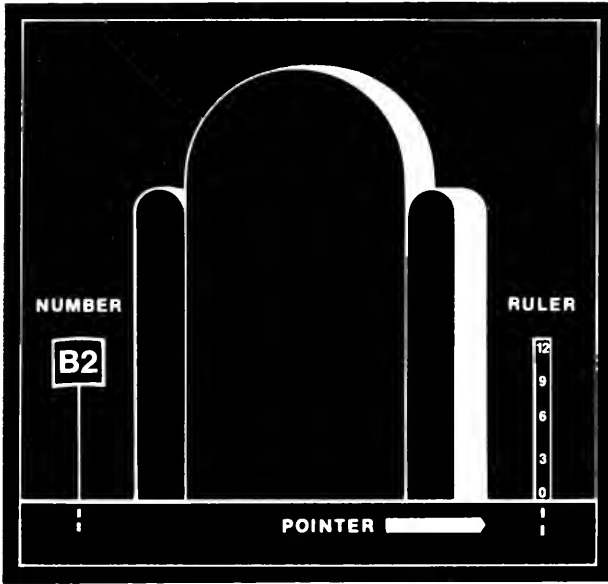


Figure 13.

also in the photograph of each stone. It is helpful to the researcher if the photograph shows, in addition, the size of each gravestone and the direction in which it faces. There are simple devices for recording this data photographically without sacrificing the detail or beauty of the photograph. (Figures 13 and 14.)

Before the documenting begins, the photographer should recommend that no one affix an identifying number to the carved face of a stone. Instead, identifying numbers can be placed on the stones' sides or backs, where they will not show in photographs and obliterate important details or interfere with the esthetics of

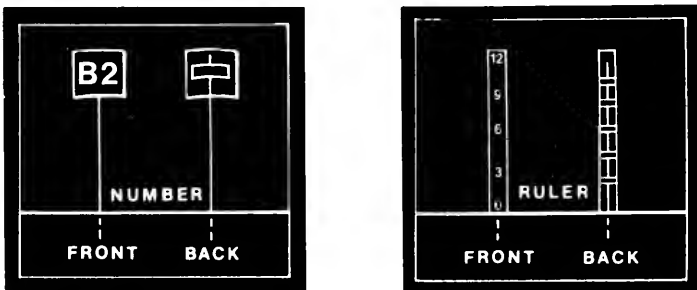


Figure 14.

the photographs. The photographer can record a stone's identifying number in the photograph and in the negative by inserting a numbered marker into the ground close to but not in front of the stone to be photographed. Such a marker is easily made from a length of sturdy coat hanger wire to which a numbered cardboard square has been attached. The same identifying marker can be renumbered and used to record the number of every stone photographed.

To indicate stone size in a photograph, use transparent tape to attach a length of coat hanger wire to a 30 centimeter ruler so that the wire extends a few inches beyond the length of the ruler at the zero end. The wire extension, when pushed into the ground, will support the ruler in a vertical position. When the stone is photographed, the ruler should be positioned a little to the side of the stone in line with its carved face, not in front of the stone. It will provide a scale from which the stone's size can be derived.

A stick with one pointed end is all that is needed to show the directional facing of a stone in a photograph. Lay the stick on the ground to one side of the stone and point it to north.

These devices are effective for recording a stone's identifying number, size, and directional facing in a photograph, and all three devices can be positioned so that the photographer can crop them from any photograph he may want to exhibit or publish without these data.

In very large cemeteries it may be necessary to use numerous rolls of film. In these cases, it is desirable to use a simple device to maintain continuity from one roll of negatives to the next. The last stone photographed on each roll should be photographed a second time so that it becomes also the first stone on the next roll.

Photographs are more useful than other forms of documentation such as drawings and rubbings. While the latter have their own special appeal as works of art, they have characteristics which make them far less valuable as documents. First, they take longer to produce and are more difficult to store and reproduce. From a photographic negative it is possible to make unlimited reprints of any size at a relatively low cost. Second, not all stones lend themselves to the rubbing technique, and some can be damaged by rubbing. The fact that rubbings do show exact size, and the fact that drawings and rubbings are not dependent upon bright sunlight

may recommend their use in specific recording situations. Nevertheless, the fact remains that an excellent photograph is the best single record one can make of an old gravestone.

A complete record of a cemetery, then, consists of a master survey card and a compass-oriented diagram for each cemetery, together with a photograph and an individual record card for each stone. However, AGS recognizes that not every community will find it possible to provide full documentation of its old graveyards in the near future. The process suggested in these pages is flexible enough to allow communities and individuals to work toward complete data collection as they are able to muster time and resources.

Where choices must be made, AGS recommends that the master card file and the photograph be given priority. The master card file will locate and identify the old burying grounds and provide decision-making information. A high quality photograph will record a stone's salient features before it is further destroyed.



Example of photographic documentation: Polly Harris, 1787, Charlestown, Mass.
(Detail)

Moreover, in many cases, an individual record card for a marker can be made from the photograph at a later date.

If groups begin now to document uncharted burying grounds, we can look forward to a uniform information base throughout the cities, towns, and villages of our country. Moreover, the use of the system set forth here will assure that information gathered can be processed and stored by computer, the only feasible means of dealing with large quantities of information. In this way, we can make the vast cultural heritage of our old graveyards available to both present day laymen and scholars as well as to those of future generations.

The authors are indebted to Jeremy Jones, author of *How to Record Graveyards*, published and distributed by the Council for British Archaeology, 7 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HA, England.

Frontispiece: The Old Bradford Burying Ground, Bradford, Mass.



Example of photographic documentation: Patience Watson, 1767, Plymouth, Mass.
(Detail)



The Care of Old Cemeteries and Gravestones

Lance R. Mayer

I. THE PROBLEMS

The Importance of Old Gravestones

More and more people are coming to realize that gravestones are one of the most beautiful and distinctive forms of American expression. Several books and dozens of scholarly articles have been published on gravestone topics, primarily within the past twelve years. In general, however, gravestones have not attracted as much public attention as more portable antiques, which have grown in monetary value and scholarly esteem through constant trading on the art market. Nor have they yet any economic value as tourist attractions, so they have not aroused the interest of governments in the way that Europe's cathedrals and monuments have recently spawned a number of nationally funded research projects.

The Seriousness of the Problem

The deterioration of gravestones and graveyards is becoming increasingly evident. In Connecticut alone the beautiful and unique portrait of a child, illustrated as a full-page plate in Allan Ludwig's 1966 *Graven Images* (plate 12),¹ is now completely destroyed; another important stone in East Hartford (Ludwig, plate 192B) has recently lost half of its face; the well-known Amasa Brainard stone (Ludwig, plate 202) is in imminent danger.

In addition to the natural weathering of stone, it is thought that growing industrial and automobile pollution may be causing some types of stone deterioration to increase at an ever faster rate, so that the next several decades may see as much damage as has occurred in the previous 200 years.² Estimates of the rate of loss of old gravestones in various parts of the Northeast vary widely, ranging from 1 to 5 stones per year per thousand stones^{3,4} to 30 stones per year per thousand⁵.

Conservation vs. Restoration

There are no easy answers to these alarming problems, and before pursuing them further, it may be useful to discuss briefly the philosophy of modern conservation.

Conservation is a relatively recent discipline, one which is just beginning to extricate itself from the ignorance, alchemy, and secret recipes of previous decades. Known as *restoration* until fairly recently, *conservation* is favored in modern use because it emphasizes the preservation of the original object rather than its restoration, which in the past often meant trying to make it look new. The number of qualified art conservators is not large, and the number of stone conservators is even smaller, consisting of only a handful in the United States. Although there is a professional organization of conservators—the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works⁶—there is, at present, no licensing body. Thus, anyone may call himself a conservator and set up business. Most responsible professionals favor word-of-mouth referrals by respected colleagues as the best way to select a conservator. This system is far from perfect and is open to charges of elitism, but it may be the best answer for the present. The Conservation Committee of the Association for Gravestone Studies serves as a clearinghouse for information relating to gravestone conservation by maintaining contact with American and international experts.

In an ideal world, all old gravestones would receive the same kind of care as do valuable museum objects. However, their great number, outdoor location, and other factors preclude such treatment in the immediate future.

Therefore, priorities for treatment should be determined. A major question is whether some of the best early stones should be moved indoors for safekeeping. This was suggested as early as 1938,⁷ and the idea has been recently revived. There is, however, a philosophical conflict between preserving the integrity of individual gravestones as art objects, and preserving the integrity of a cemetery as a collection of memorials made for that location. This question will be discussed later in this article.

It cannot be emphasized too much that old gravestones are important enough to deserve the best efforts of modern conservation, including serious consideration of all possible alternatives, con-

sultation with the best experts available, and caution appropriate to navigating in uncharted waters.

Political Considerations

It is extremely important to seek permission from the governing authority of a cemetery before contemplating any conservation activity. Of course, jurisdiction over cemeteries varies. Only one state, Rhode Island, has a full-time Cemeteries Director with the authority to act for the preservation of old gravestones. Through his efforts, the state legislature recently passed an act which requires each city and town to record the locations of all historic cemeteries on a tax plat or other permanent record. Such records will be valuable aids to researchers. Moreover, the act may prevent some of the abuses which have occurred occasionally in other states, where cemetery land has been appropriated for other purposes and the stones dispersed.

State laws may sometimes inhibit local initiatives unless legal changes are sought. For example, the Gloucester, Massachusetts Community Development Corporation found that Massachusetts laws, in an effort to protect the stones, strictly prohibit their removal from cemeteries. As part of a restoration project this group worked for the passage of an Enabling Act which permits community sponsored, professionally directed teams to temporarily remove monuments for repair, while insuring adherence to high standards of technical assistance and treatment.⁸ If legal changes are necessary in other states to conform to modern conservation practice, similar groups or individuals should petition for changes.

Communications

Since interest in old gravestones and knowledge of stone conservation are recent developments, poor communications often prevent their paths from crossing. For example, a well-meaning New England town council recently appropriated money for the treatment of a cemetery by an amateur. Any professional conservator could have advised the council that the proposed treatment would almost certainly do more harm than good. Again, it should be emphasized that the best advice should always be sought. Experts, both here and abroad, have expressed their willingness to advise the Association for Gravestone Studies on specific problems, but interested individuals at the local level must initiate the chain of communications.

II. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The magnitude of gravestone conservation problems requires the interest of a great number of people if anything is to be accomplished. Individuals can help, first of all, by promoting interest in gravestones. Raising interest on the local level will increase the potential for the funding of projects, because federal or state conservation grants must usually be matched by town councils or other local groups. Secondly, individuals can educate themselves and others with regard to the problems of conservation.

Improving Maintenance

Simple maintenance is an important first step in the conservation of any graveyard. Well-kept cemeteries tend to discourage vandalism. Uncontrolled growth of trees and weeds not only hides loiterers or vandals, but can cause the widening of cracks in already damaged stones, or even cause the toppling of stones. For example, large, unpruned trees have been known to destroy several gravestones with the fall of a single dead limb. The regular repair of



Charlestown, Mass. The Phipps Street Burying Ground is a major site which is endangered by lack of maintenance and conservation efforts. Rubbish often clutters the enclosure.

fences and mowing of grass will emphasize to members of the community that their old cemetery is an important part of the town, and a well lettered sign can underscore the point.

Power mowers, when carelessly used, have scarred and broken old tombstones; maintenance personnel should be made aware of both the importance of the monuments and of the fact that the types of stone used in old gravestones are softer and more easily damaged than are modern granite markers. If possible, the grass growing closest to old gravestones should be either clipped by hand or cut with a rotating plastic filament-type cutter which will not damage the stones. An English book suggests keeping sheep in the churchyard to keep grass short! A more practical solution may be reseeding with a variety of grass which does not grow so tall that it needs frequent cutting.

Improving visibility of a graveyard from the road or illuminating it at night are reported to decrease vandalism.¹⁰ Citizen's complaints to the police, if a graveyard is a hangout for destructive juveniles or derelicts, can also help. In extreme cases, cemeteries



Boston, Mass. One of the many sunken gravestones repeatedly damaged by careless lawnmower operators in the historic King's Chapel Burying Ground.

have been fenced and locked by local authorities; this may, however, keep out scholars and the interested public without deterring vandals.

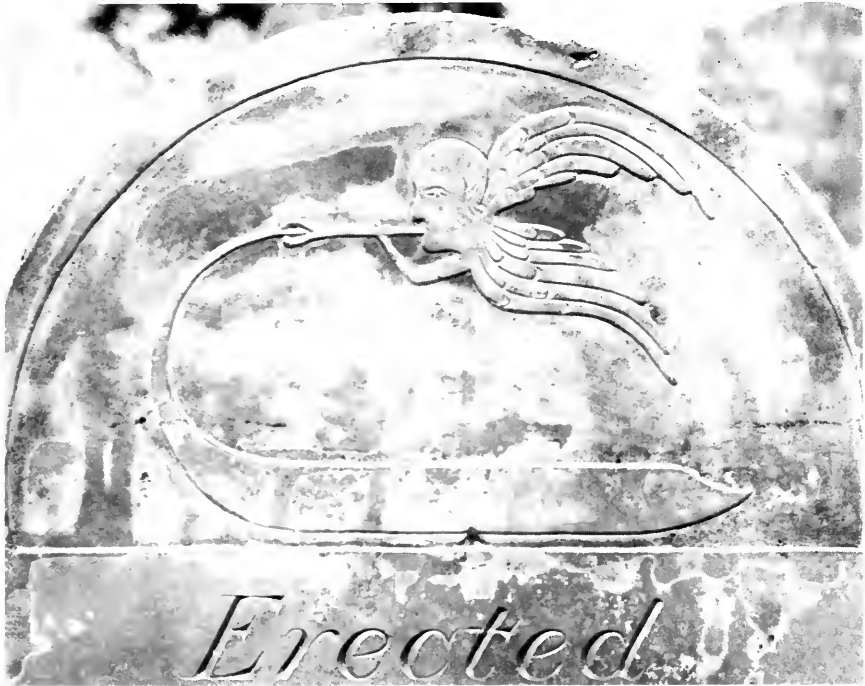
Discouraging Theft

If interest in gravestones continues to rise, outright theft may eventually become as serious a problem as vandalism. Already, there are rumors of antique dealers looking for gravestones to sell, and a few have appeared on the market. Even if the stone was removed from its original site many years ago, the private ownership of an old gravestone is ethically questionable, and every effort should be made to determine the origin of the stone and to effect its return. The AGS Archives at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston may be able to assist in such efforts. The raising of public consciousness should not be underemphasized; for example, a proposed auction of some privately-held gravestones recently aroused such public outcry that the sale was cancelled and the stones donated to a museum.¹¹

Establishing Rubbing/Daubing Criteria

The practice of making gravestone rubbings has aroused controversy, notably at the 1976 Dublin Seminar.¹² Some communities and the entire state of New Hampshire have restricted rubbing to those who have obtained a permit. Ideally, such legislation should also require that the applicant demonstrate competence in an acceptable rubbing technique before being given a permit. Such steps have been taken because of an increasing number of incidents where stones have been defaced by careless applications of wax or ink. A very serious example of such accidents has occurred in Columbia, Connecticut; the Lydia Bennitt stone (Ludwig, plate 244), one of the most beautiful marbles in New England, has been disfigured, perhaps permanently, by a black ink-like substance, presumably applied by a person using an Oriental style wet ink rubbing technique.

Persons taking rubbings from gravestones must understand that stones differ in their fragility. While a sound stone can be rubbed with perfect safety, many are so delicate that touching the surface could cause the detachment of a major portion of the design. Connecticut Valley sandstones are particularly susceptible to damage from handling, but every stone should be examined



If persons who rub or daub were required to demonstrate competence in an acceptable technique, valuable stones would not be defaced; this example bears the scars of an amateur's attempts.

carefully before rubbing. If cracks can be seen, if a hollow sound is heard when the face of the stone is tapped lightly with the back of a fingernail, or if grains become detached when the stone is rubbed with the fingertip, the stone should not be rubbed.

Even greater caution should be exercised in making three dimensional castings of gravestone designs. Casting materials which might penetrate or stain a stone, or release compounds which could eventually discolor and become insoluble, such as vegetable oil aerosols like *Pam*, should never be applied to the surface of a gravestone.

Enforcing rubbing standards is difficult for municipalities, especially since most rubbings are done on weekends, when offices which issue permits and offer advice and guidelines are closed. Therefore, the task may be left largely to word-of-mouth transmission by interested individuals.

Recording Data

Since gravestones *are* going to continue to deteriorate and be lost, the single most important service that an individual or group can do for an old cemetery is to carefully record everything that remains. The AGS article, *Recording Cemetery Data*,¹³ outlines steps which can be taken by a local group. Documentation should incorporate both a written record and archivally processed black and white photographs of every gravestone, fragment, and field-stone. Black and white photography is preferable to color photography for visual recording because color slides and photographs fade; rubbings tend to be more subjective than



Springfield, N.J. In a neglected yard for Revolutionary War dead, broken gravestones are piled randomly on top of and under a table stone. While this practice avoids stone loss, it is contrary to sound gravestone conservation.

photography. Not only will photography record the appearance of stones, but it will also serve as future evidence of their rate of deterioration. The deposition of copies of cemetery records with the AGS Archives in Boston will enhance the value of the archive for both art historians and conservators.

The dictum that *nothing should be thrown out* is an important principle of modern conservation. In the case of cemeteries, even fragments of stones, however illegible, can provide clues for future investigators. They should be photographed, their locations carefully recorded, and they should be labelled and deposited for safekeeping. In particular, fragments of identifiable origin should be put into plastic bags with labels and kept for that day in the future when repairs can be made. Cemetery custodians and interested groups or individuals can do a great service by saving such broken pieces, which will crumble to bits in a very short time if they are allowed to remain scattered about the yard, to be run over by power mowers and otherwise carelessly treated. Often an adjacent church or a local historical society is a convenient repository. Interested parties should, of course, check state laws and talk to local authorities before removing any fragments from a graveyard. A special warning is warranted concerning unmarked fieldstones. These were often used as grave markers during the earliest periods of settlement and should be recorded and preserved as carefully as carved gravestones.

Conserving Tilted or Fallen Gravestones

If a gravestone is tilting so that it is in danger of falling over, or if it has already fallen, it should be reset in an upright position. Stones which are tilted or lying flat are more liable to be damaged by lawnmowers. Deterioration may be accelerated because they will collect rainwater and absorb moisture from the ground.¹⁴ The temptation to straighten a tilted stone by force, without digging out the soil around it, must be resisted, for the stone may snap off at the ground line.

Some communities have set stones in concrete to prevent tilting and theft. This has several major disadvantages and probably should not be recommended. A gravestone set in concrete has no "give," and is more likely to snap off at the base if pressure is exerted, maliciously or otherwise. Also, soluble salts in a poor quality cement may migrate up into a porous stone such as sandstone, forming efflorescences and accelerating deterioration. To a certain

extent, this may be mitigated by careful choice of cement. For example, on the recommendation of the Portland Cement Association, a low alkaline content cement was used to set stones at Trinity Churchyard in New York; this seems to have produced no ill effects on sandstone markers after several years. Perhaps the most important disadvantage of setting stones in concrete is that they cannot be removed afterwards for conservation treatment, such as washing to remove salts, or impregnating with a consolidant. Better than setting a stone in concrete is placing it in alternate layers of soil and a mixture of sand and broken stone, ($\frac{1}{2}$ " - $\frac{3}{4}$ " sharp-edged gravel), periodically wetting the earth as it is applied. This base will not prevent theft, but even concrete will not prevent a thief from snapping off and taking the thinner stones.

If a gravestone is broken so that there is insufficient shaft to reset the stone, it might be leaned against the back of another stone; this, however, may invite theft. In the past, important fragments were occasionally encased in granite or concrete, and the new structure set in the ground. A less drastic solution, perhaps more respectful of the integrity of the piece, might be to erect a copy of the stone (identified on the back side as a replica) and place the original indoors for safekeeping.

Documentation of treatment by both written records and photography, before and after treatment, is an important conservation practice. Not only will this document the appearance of a gravestone at a certain time, but it will provide evidence of the efficacy of different types of treatment after weathering and aging.

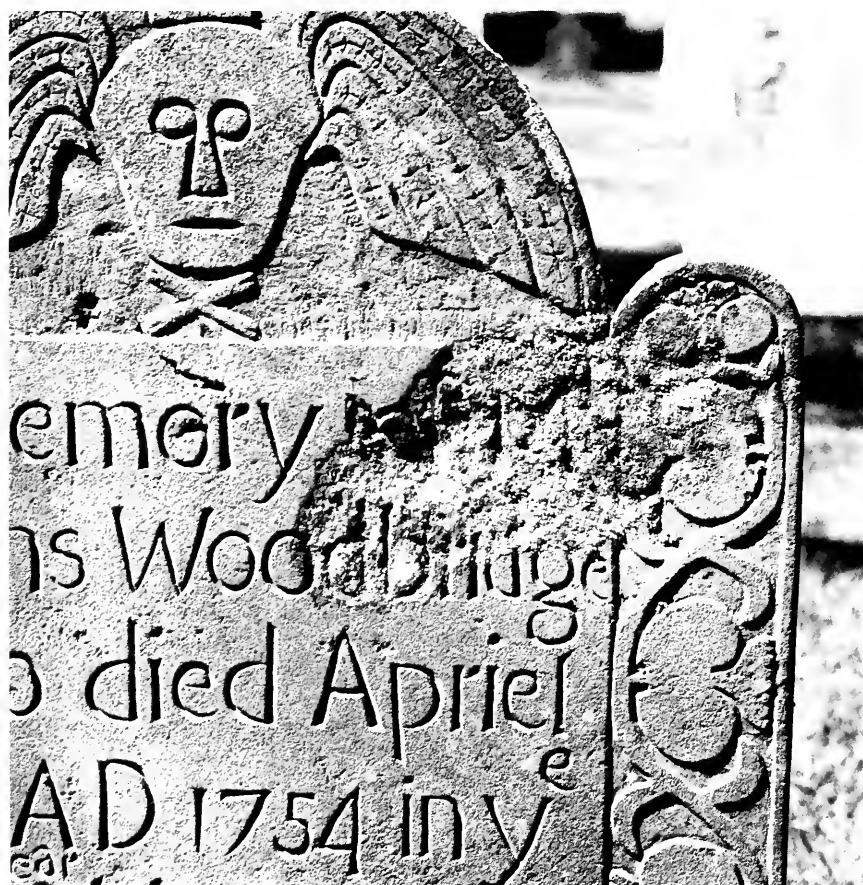
Removing Lichen

The benefits of lichen removal are debatable. Lichens *do* produce acids which can, on a geological time scale of thousands of years, eat into stone, especially marble and limestone. On the other hand, the wholesale removal of lichen, particularly from weakened stones, has considerable potential for harm. A professional stone conservator could determine the advisability of lichen removal in specific cases, and eventually AGS may be able to provide this expertise. In the absence of such advice, examination techniques, as discussed under *Rubbing*, should be employed to insure that the stone is in good condition. If it is secure and the removal of lichen is necessary to photograph or read an inscription, the safest method is to soften the lichen with water and gently remove it with a plastic brush or wooden stick. Dilute ammonia solutions, ex-

cluding proprietary ammonia/detergent mixtures, have been recommended by some experts; others believe they might cause eventual harm, especially to porous stones. Formaldehyde (formalin) and several commercial products have also been recommended for killing lichens.¹⁵ Because research in this area is inadequate, an appropriate spirit of caution should be adopted.

III. MAJOR TREATMENT

A great deal remains to be learned about the deterioration and treatment of outdoor stone objects. Although only substances commercially available in the United States were tested, a 1977 Na-



Simsbury, Conn. Lichen acidity has damaged this otherwise well preserved sandstone grave marker.



Bedminster, N.J. Cracks develop and widen, then stone layers pull apart during the initial phase of eradication caused by the freeze/thaw cycle.



Norwichtown, Conn. Overall fissures in stone fronts bring about crumbling and erosion during the terminal phase of eradication caused by the freeze/thaw cycle.

tional Bureau of Standards publication concluded that "None of the stone preservative materials evaluated fulfilled all the proposed performance criteria."¹⁶ Furthermore, the author stressed that "When choosing a stone preservative for a specific stone decay problem it is essential to identify the cause of decay."¹⁷

The identification of the cause of decay is difficult, and therefore may be expensive, because of the complexity of stone deterioration. Causes of deterioration can include pollutant gases and acidic rainwater, soluble salts which repeatedly crystallize and dissolve depending upon the relative humidity, and freeze/thaw cycles, as well as other factors which are only in the initial stages of investigation.

Another significant cause of deterioration is previous restoration, a fact which should temper present treatments. For example, the application of a surface consolidant to a stone which contains soluble salts will probably *accelerate* deterioration because salts may crystallize beneath the surface and cause large pieces of the surface crust to fall off. The British Commonwealth War Graves Commission used a sealer on some 500,000 gravestones between 1920 and 1951 and found that those which had been treated were generally in worse condition than those which had not.¹⁸ The application of consolidants impermeable to water has likewise caused exfoliation because water rising from the ground or absorbed from uncoated surfaces tends to build up behind the consolidated layer. The application of high strength substances, such as epoxies, for the consolidation of weak, porous stone has caused shearing at the strong/weak interface. Furthermore, cements or mortars, traditionally used for securing detached pieces, have often been found to become unstuck. Iron has often been used for supports or braces in the past, but it can stain stones badly, or, if used as internal dowels, crack a stone by expanding as it rusts.

Some types of epoxies and other resins have shown promise as stone adhesives, and field tests have been carried out on a number of slate gravestones in New England. In the near future, it is hoped that there will be enough evidence to allow the results of these trials to be published, and specific materials and procedures recommended.

The problems connected with porous stones, such as sandstone, are more complex than those of non-porous stones like slate. For example, if a porous stone contains soluble salts, it may need



Coshocton, Ohio. Natural erosion has transformed this marble carving of a wreath, a lily, a rose, and a farewell handshake into these monster-like features.

to be washed in tanks of water for up to several months in order to remove them. A major difference stems from the nature of deterioration; sandstone binder tends to dissolve and cause general weakening of the stone fabric, whereas slates tend to separate strictly along bedding planes. Therefore, porous stones such as sandstone, marble, and limestone may require general consolidation. Various types of silicate compounds have been under investigation for a number of years as consolidants for porous stones, and some show considerable promise.¹⁹ However, even these can be dangerous if improperly applied.²⁰ Complete impregnation with plastics, such as methyl methacrylate, has also been advocated.²¹ These types of treatment are expensive, because



Scituate, Mass. Malicious acts of vandalism deplete many old burial yards of valuable gravestone art.

of the cost of the materials and the labor involved, and they have other disadvantages. Treatment with silicates may have to be repeated approximately every twenty-five years. The stability of methyl methacrylates has been questioned, and they may alter the stone's appearance slightly.

For the present, a sensible approach to the conservation of deteriorating gravestones must recognize the importance of: 1, consultation with a number of experts regarding causes of deterioration and possible treatments, and 2, small-scale trials, on actual tombstones, of any type of treatment which is proposed. This may seem extremely difficult and frustrating to those who love old

gravestones, see them deteriorate daily, and are eager to do *something*. But the sad lessons of the past must be heeded. Josef Riederer writes: "Particularly in the period before 1940 many buildings and sculptures in Germany were treated with oils, waxes and similar substances which at that time had already been tested out for a fairly long period. But today after 30 years we find that this treatment was harmful, because the objects are destroyed to a greater extent than those which were untreated."²²

This raises again the question of whether some of the most important and most fragile American gravestones should be put, at least temporarily, into museums. The legal ramifications of removal will have to be worked out, but there are precedents elsewhere. On the Scottish island of Iona, many of the great stone crosses and gravestones, some of which had stood in the same place since the ninth century, have been moved indoors to an "infirmary museum." A bronze plaque politely explains to visitors that the measure has been taken to prevent the complete destruction of the stones. In Canada, resin and fiberglass replicas of some important early wooden grave markers have been erected; the replicas are almost indistinguishable from the originals, which are now in a museum. A start in this direction is being made in New England, where at least two gravestones have recently been brought indoors and replaced with cement casts made by William McGeer.²³ In the past, monument firms have occasionally arranged for the cutting of replicas in stone, but in this case, the quality of the copy depends upon the skill of the stonecutter.

It is hoped that this publication, which is of necessity general in content, can be revised to include more specific information, such as lists of recommended conservators or tips on state or federal grants. To this end, the author and AGS welcome any and all information about conservation projects, problems, and successes. Readers are also strongly urged to get in touch with local museum conservators, who will often give valuable advice, or recommend others who can, if they are made aware of the importance of old gravestones.

There is much that *can* be done at present and it will take a great many interested people to help the spread of information and to generate support for the small or large research projects which will pay dividends in the future. European countries are already investing large amounts of money and personnel for very sophisticated work on stone conservation problems, and it is hoped that



Malden, Mass. The deliberate disfigurement of gravestones is increasing in both urban and rural burying grounds. Spray paint in the hands of youngsters is often the culprit.



Boston, Mass. No thought was given to protecting King's Chapel gravestone art from paint spillage during the renovation of nearby buildings.



Logan, Ohio. The unique Maria Smith memorial and over fifty others were broken, uprooted, or overturned following a defeat of the local high school basketball team.

five or ten years' time will see substantial progress.

The most useful function which the Conservation Committee of AGS can play at this time may be to serve as a clearinghouse for information on cemetery conservation. A dream for the future is for federal, state, or local funding which would permit the organization of a national or international team of specialists to analyze the causes of gravestone deterioration and conduct field tests of possible solutions to the problems.

This paper is a compilation of the ideas of many people. I would especially like to thank Norman Weiss of the Historic Preservation Program, Columbia University, and Clifford Price of the Building Research Establishment in England for their very useful advice and critiques of an earlier draft. Encouragement, advice, and references to published sources were given by K. Lal Gauri of the Department of Geology, University of Louisville, Erhard M. Winkler of the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Notre Dame, James R. Clifton of the National Bureau of Standards, and Seymour Z. Lewin of the Department of Chemistry, New York University. I am grateful for the suggestions of many members of the Association for Gravestone Studies, including Joanne Baker, Jessie Lie Farber, Anne Giesecke, Gaynell Levine, Ralph Tucker, Francis Duval, Thomas McGrath, and Edwin Connelly, Cemeteries Director of the State of Rhode Island. A great deal of thanks is due Carol Grissom of the Center for Archaeometry, Washington University, for helping to improve the manuscript in matters of both style and substance, and to Gay Myers of the Cincinnati Art Museum for her advice and help during every stage of its preparation.

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4. "Stone Rubbing: Are Model Laws Needed?," *Puritan Gravestone Art*, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings, vol. 1, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press for the Dublin Seminar, 1976), p. 102.
5. Peter Benes, "The Restoration of Burying Grounds: the Viewpoint of Gravestone Artwork," *Journals from the Gloucester Experiment: A School Community Partnership Project* (New England Program in Teacher Education, 1974), p. 10.
6. AIC publishes a *Journal* and *Newsletter*. For information contact Martha Morales, Executive Secretary, 1522 K Street, N. W., Suite 804, Washington, D. C. 20005.
7. Marion Nicholl Rawson, *Candleday Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1938), p. 63.
8. Coit Butler, "Laws, Regulations and Procedures Governing Historic Cemeteries," *Journals from the Gloucester Experiment: A School Community Partnership Project*, pp. 23-29.
9. Rev. Henry Stapleton and Peter Burman, *The Churchyards Handbook: Advice on their Care and Maintenance* (London: CIO Publishing, 1976), pp. 55-56.
10. Peter Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), p. vii.

11. "Stone Rubbing," p. 103.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-105.
13. A model publication is *The Old South Hadley Burial Ground*, ed. Jessie Lie (South Hadley Historical Society, 1976).
14. One author, however, feels that the opposite may be true of slate gravestones in Australia. See John H. Cann, "A Field Investigation into Rock Weathering and Soil Forming Processes," *Journal of Geological Education* (November, 1974), p. 228.
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16. Gerald A. Sleater, *Stone Preservatives: Methods of Laboratory Testing and Preliminary Performance Criteria* (Washington, D. C.: National Bureau of Standards, 1977), p. 29.
17. *Ibid.* p. 21.
18. W. H. Dukes, "Conservation of Stone: Chemical Treatments." *The Architects' Journal Information Library*, 23 August, 1972, p. 434.
19. See K. Lal Gauri, "Conservation of Stone: A Literature Review," *Decay and Preservation of Stone*, Engineering Geology Case Histories, no. 11, ed. Erhard M. Winkler (Geological Society of America, 1978), p. 102.
20. Dukes, p. 434.
21. For example, Rolf Wihr, "The Use of Aethyl-Silicate and Acrylic-Monomers in Stone Preservation," *Deterioration and Protection of Stone Monuments*, Proceedings of the International Symposium June 5-9, 1978, 3 vols., (Paris: 1978), 7-12.
22. "Stone Preservation in Germany," *Conservation of Stone and Wooden Objects: Reprints of the Contributions to the New York Conference on Conservation of Stone and Wooden Objects, 7-13 June 1970* (London: International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1971), p. 129.
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Boite Postale n° 1
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Available from the publisher at 42.40

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London SW1P 3N2

England

Intended for clergymen of the Church of England, this book is of limited interest to American readers. It was reviewed in the *AGS Newsletter* 3 no. 1 (Winter, 1979): 5.

Farber, Jessie Lie, "Recommendations for the Care of Gravestones." Association for Gravestone Studies, 1979. (Mimeographed).

Available free of charge from the Corresponding Secretary

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Frontispiece: Wapping, Conn. Remnant of a once superb gravestone, one of the countless victims of the freeze/thaw cycle in the Connecticut River valley.



Protective Custody: The Museum's Responsibility for Gravestones

Robert P. Emlen

The Sara Tefft gravestone of Warwick, Rhode Island, dated the same year the town of Warwick was settled, bears the earliest date of any known gravestone in New England: 1642. (Opposite) Documented events associated with its long life may be significant in our evaluation of ways to preserve old gravestones.

Sara Tefft's gravemarker was noted at the end of the nineteenth century by Rhode Island Antiquarian James Arnold, who had set out to record his state's early gravestones. By 1890 he had worked his way to the Warwick shoreline, where, on August 17, he jotted in his notebook:

In open pasture at Mark Rock, without protection, a yard containing but a few graves . . . Possibly there may have been more here, [of] which time has obliterated all traces.

Then he recorded the Tefft stone's simple epitaph:

Here lieth the bodie of Sara Tefft, Interred March 16, 1642, in the 67th year of her age.

But the stone Arnold was documenting that day ninety years ago was not Sara Tefft's original grave marker. It was a *replacement* stone, thoughtfully erected on the site of the original when that highly regarded memorial to Warwick's past was removed for safekeeping about 1868, twenty-two years earlier. His quotation from the inscription on the replacement stone continues:

The above is a copy of the original stone, taken from this spot and deposited with the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence.

The original stone is still in the safekeeping of the Society's museum. But today Mark Rock, the site of Sara Tefft's grave, is crowded with summer cabins, the open pasture long gone. The old cemetery is hidden in a clump of brush and only one stone remains

— the Victorian replacement stone for Sara Tefft's original grave marker — and even that has been vandalized. Pulled from its cement footing and smashed, it will doubtless disappear altogether before much longer. (Figure 1.) It appears that the local historian who removed Sara Tefft's original stone saved it from obliteration.

Gravestones disappear in all sorts of ways. Natural erosion is constantly deteriorating and destroying the old stones, and the sad fact is that without protection from the weather they will all disappear in time. Only the *rate* of their loss varies from yard to yard and stone to stone. Some markers, like Sara Tefft's replacement stone, have been actively destroyed. Others, like those Arnold noted in the yard with the Tefft stone, are just lost, probably scattered or plowed under the soil.

But genteel vandalism is also growing, and stones are disappearing into private collections. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, there is a market for gravestones, and occasionally buying and selling are carried out in the open. In the fall of 1975, nineteen Shaker grave markers, deconsecrated by the Shakers some years earlier, were catalogued and advertised for sale at public auction. (Figure 2.) The March, 1979, issue of the *Maine Antique Digest* carried an art gallery's advertisement for a fragment of a Connecticut stone, handsomely mounted on metal. (Figure 3.)

As our culture's traditional reverence for burying grounds diminishes, as the availability of open land grows ever scarcer, and as collectors of American art and antiques discover the beauty of gravestones, graveyards become increasingly vulnerable. We can no longer assume that they will be protected by the good faith and mutual respect of our fellow citizens. In fact, graveyards are under siege, and we need to develop long-term strategies for their preservation.

A first consideration for those interested in preserving gravestones may be laws such as the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, now under consideration in Congress. Passage of the bill will improve considerably upon the 1906 Act for Preservation of American Antiquities, which provides minor penalties for the violation of archaeological sites on federal lands. The new legislation recognizes the fast-growing trade in archaeological antiquities carried on by both weekend treasure hunters and systematic, profit-minded looters, and includes criminal penalties, namely fines of up to \$100,000 and imprisonment for up to five years. Provision is also

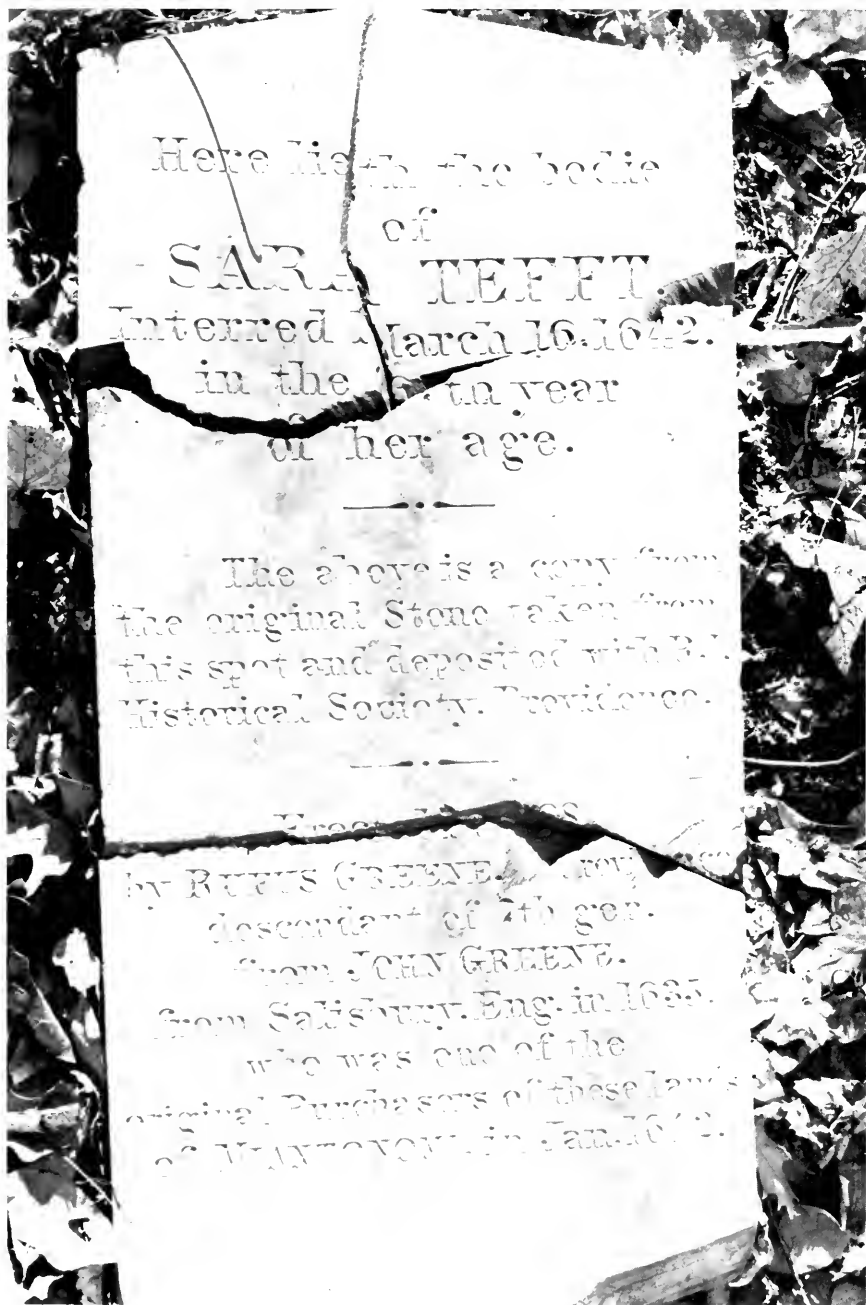


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

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Figure 3.

Figure 2 shows a Shaker gravestone catalogued and advertised for sale in Lenox, Massachusetts in 1975. In this case the advertised sale was legitimate and legal. Nineteen Shaker markers had been removed by the Shakers in 1943 from their Hancock Village cemetery, replaced by one central monument, and subsequently given or sold to a homeowner who used them to floor his cellar. A later owner of the house sold them to the auction gallery. When the Hancock Shaker Museum learned of the impending auction, it offered to purchase the stones. This offer was announced at the auction, and as there were no objections from the audience (rather, there was applause), the stones did not go on the block. However, the fact that a market for gravestones exists is underlined rather than denied by this series of circumstances.

made for strong enforcement of the law. It is unclear whether the Archaeological Resources Protection Act applies to old burial grounds. We may have to resort to similar, equally serious measures to insure the security of our graveyards.

Meanwhile, immediate solutions are needed to protect the stones. One such answer is to deposit particularly vulnerable examples in institutions where they can be cared for and protected. Community museums are the best places to do this.

The decision to remove a gravestone from its original site is a serious one; it contradicts the wishes of those who erected the

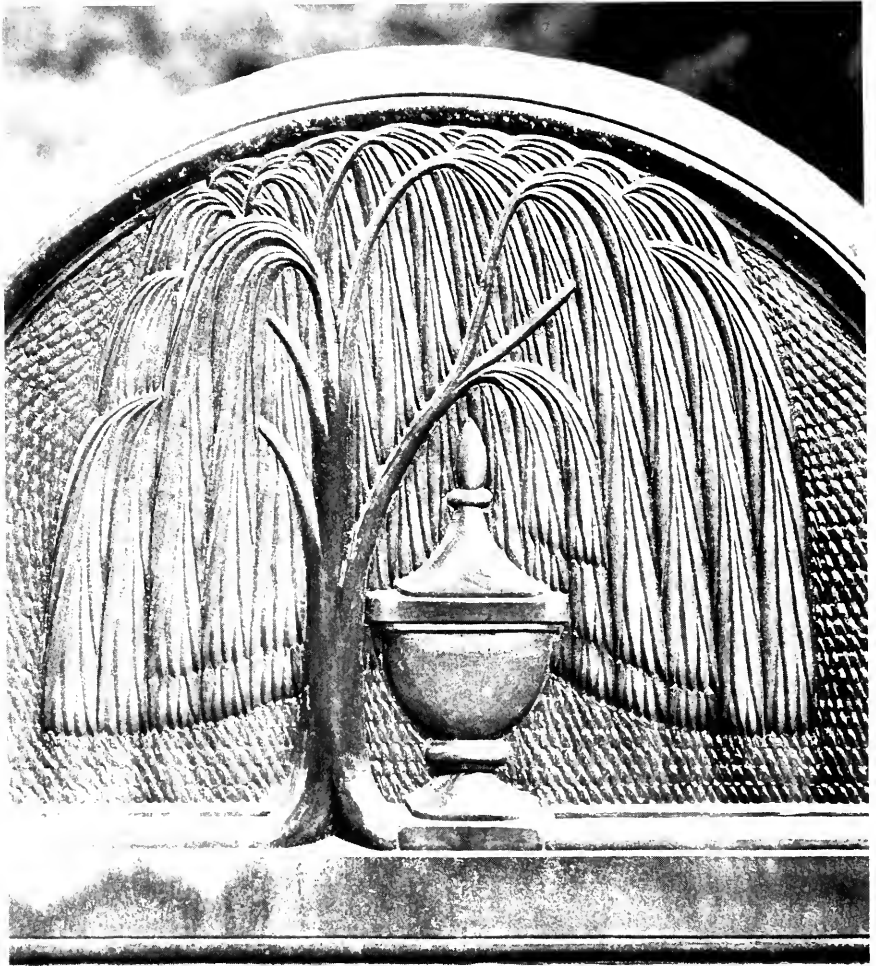
memorial. There must be no doubt that the stone's new site will be an improvement over its original one. Removing a stone implies the acceptance of large obligations and means that basic responsibilities must be met. This distinguishes the serious preservationist from the collector who "saves" a stone by taking it home to use as a coffee table.

Because it is large, heavy, and fragile, an uprooted stone must be carefully protected. The museum that accepts it accepts the responsibility not only to care for it properly, but also to make it available for public view. Grave markers are intended to leave messages for posterity, and it is incumbent on those who take responsibility for a stone to respect and support that original intention.

It is essential, not only out of consideration for the dead but to all who study gravestones, that some documentation be left at the site. This documentation must identify the grave and record the inscription left for the deceased. The Victorian stone left at Sara Tefft's gravesite performs this service and explains where the original stone can be found. Better still is the replacement for the John Foster stone of Dorchester, in Greater Boston. Threatened by weather, vandals, and powermowers, this spectacular stone was recently removed by the City of Boston to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where an excellent replica was cast from it. When the copy is placed in the Dorchester Burying Ground, it will provide the community with a durable facsimile of one of our most important pieces of seventeenth century American sculpture, while the original work can be viewed and studied in a secure setting.

Separating a gravestone from its gravesite is a drastic move, and we hope that better ways to save important stones will be found, but we must recognize that in many cases this is the only procedure currently available to us. Any thoughtful person would prefer that the stones be left in their original settings, but for some stones, to leave them is to insure their speedy destruction or disappearance — as in the case of the Sara Tefft replacement stone, lying in pieces in the leaves. As the problem grows, we must put our wishful thinking behind us. Responsible museum custody for selected gravestones may be one of the steps necessary to preserve this important heritage for everyone, for all time.

Frontispiece: The Sara Tefft stone, 1642, in protective custody at the Rhode Island Historical Society since ca. 1868.



In memory of
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The Willow Tree and Urn Motif: Changing Ideas About Death and Nature

Blanche M. G. Linden

Certainly the colonial craftsmen who produced gravestones and the people who bought them did not ponder the intellectual nuances of the stones' symbols and decorative elements. Yet in order for a gravestone to sell and to receive community acceptance for placement in the common burial ground, the iconography had to have a certain degree of resonance with the values, beliefs, and tastes of the society. With this in mind, I would like to survey briefly some of the changing ideas about death and nature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that contributed to and were manifested by the appearance of the willow tree and urn motif on New England gravestones.

The earliest examples of this motif which I have found date from the 1760's, but some of these were probably post-dated, judging from the use of neo-classic columns in the decorative panels flanking the stones. The motif's real introduction occurred in the 1780's and 1790's and reached a peak of popularity in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.¹ During the period of its use, the willow tree and urn design evolved from a single hieroglyph to a more detailed and faithful depiction of reality, progressing from a line drawing in the early years to a three-dimensional landscape *haut relief* in the decade after the Civil War.

This motif preceded and pointed the way to the creation, from 1830 to about 1865, of a new sort of burial landscape, the *rural* or garden cemetery. Urban boosters in every major city east of St. Louis built one of these institutions during this period, following the form and example of Mount Auburn, outside of Boston. Numerous practical considerations, such as the threat of disease from overcrowded city churchyards, dictated the removal of graves to rural locations, but there was also a growing philosophical and cultural disposition which contributed to the move.² For the first time in America, burials were placed in a landscaped setting of picturesque winding roads and paths, where ornamental planting accented the existing forest growth. The aesthetics of the rural cemetery were derived both from the English country garden and,

more directly, from Père Lachaise, the Parisian cemetery established in 1804.

The symbol of the willow tree and urn preceded the creation of the landscape it depicted by about sixty years, implying that the symbol was only a shorthand for ideas about death and nature which began to change dramatically around the middle of the eighteenth century throughout America and most of North Atlantic civilization.

As Deetz and Dethlefsen have noted in connection with the transition from death's head to cherub on gravestones, the atmosphere of religious ferment following the revivalism of the Great Awakening in America during the 1730's and 1740's contributed to a new, more optimistic, and increasingly liberal outlook on death.³ The stern, Calvinistic belief in predestination, which mandated an eternity of hell for large segments of the population, declined, and Arminianism, which held that the individual could gain his own salvation through good works and grace, increased. This was indeed a more optimistic attitude than that reflected by the cultural legacy of the Middle Ages, though from our vantage point in the twentieth century we see in this trend the roots of the denial of death that grew from the second half of the nineteenth century.

Americans, moreover, were not immune to the romanticism and sentimentalism growing in England and on the Continent during this period. The willow and urn motif was borrowed from neo-classicism and the taste for Roman archeology that became the vogue in art and architecture in eighteenth century England and Europe. Along with the decline of Puritanism in the colonies, ideas about death mellowed to the point in 1757 when Jonathan Edwards' daughter would rationalize the death of her child as a God-given opportunity for sacrifice. Like other New Englanders, she began to muse on "the glorious state" enjoyed by dead relatives and even looked forward to her own death with "longing desires." More liberal clergy, like Charles Chauncy of Boston, encouraged this trend by advising their congregations to "be not discouraged" at the thought of death.⁴

Beginning in the years just preceding the Revolution, the new liberalized attitude toward death reverberated in sermons, poetry, journals, correspondence, and in popular art forms. Increasingly, death was equated with benign sleep under the aegis of a benevolent Providence, rather than as a possible route to hell. This

trend was also reflected in the turn-of-the century change of terminology associated with the place of burial. No longer would the explicit words "graveyard" or "burial ground" be used except with reference to already existing burying places. From the 1797 founding of New Haven's Grove Street burial site to the present, new spaces opened for burials were called *cemeteries*, meaning dormitories.

The rise of the willow tree and urn motif in New England was the result of significant changes in the attitude toward nature as well as toward death. For the first settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wilderness seemed evil. The woods were a netherworld where the faithful could become *bewildered* by evil spirits, witches, or even the Devil Himself. A hostile, menacing Nature loomed large around the Puritan town, tightening community cohesion.⁵

From the mid-eighteenth century, the American view of nature changed for another reason. Philosophers in England and France viewed nature as a holy place capable of eliciting a spiritual response within the soul of the visitor. Shaftsbury said that "Rural Meditations are sacred." Addison agreed that nature in the form of groves, woods, fields, and meadows "heightens the Pleasures of the Eye, and raises such a rational admiration in the Soul as is little inferior to Devotion." Aldous Huxley later noted that "for good Wordsworthians a walk in the country is equivalent to going to church." This view, in tune with the liberalization of religious beliefs, called for the fostering of environments conducive to consoling meditation.⁶ This particular landscape is the one represented by the willow tree and urn motif.

Additional factors in New England sped the adoption of new ideas about nature. With the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, the woods were not quite the dangerous places they had previously been. By that time colonists began to feel that they could master their environment. Settlers had initially found New England land poor and difficult to cultivate, a fact which certainly did not predispose them to look on nature as benevolent or benign. By the 1760's, however, they had mastered the farming of the area and migrated north into the former wilderness of Vermont and Maine. By this time, also, gardens began to appear near the homes of the wealthy in towns and cities. Previously, the few existing gardens contained only vegetables and other useful plants, or they were formal, cramped squares of cultivation walled in from the contrasting wilds of nature. The introduction and development of orna-

mental plantings was an unheard of luxury until well into the eighteenth century.⁷

While these changes were developing in the popular American mind, they were not reflected in the actual burying grounds of the time. Aside from the artistry of the stones themselves, colonial graveyards, and for that matter, most of those in England and France until the beginning of the nineteenth century, were generally barren, purely functional spaces. Few if any trees and shrubs were planted there, with the possible exception of a somber yew.⁸ The only grounds-keeping was provided by the sexton's cow, which used the enclosure as a grazing common, preventing it from becoming a tangle of weeds—leaving a browsing line along the bordering trees. Exceptions to this pattern of neglect did not emerge until the last half of the eighteenth century, when the town of Newport, Rhode Island, for instance, planted imported flowering bulbs in its common graveyard and James Hillhouse placed trees and shrubbery along the grid of roads in New Haven's Grove Street Cemetery, incorporated and laid out in 1797.⁹

In gravestone art, the coalescence of these new attitudes toward death and nature manifested itself in the appearance and rapid domination of the willow tree and urn motif. In epitaphs, the trend was manifested in the increased use of biographical detail, while verses of consolation and hope replaced those of grim resignation and loss.¹⁰ They are short poems, personalized statements in which death and nature are joined. The stone erected for John Thompson, Junior, buried in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in 1796 is an example of this association. It proclaims under its urn and willow: "Death, like an overflowing stream / sweeps us away, our life's a dream . . ."

What willow trees and urns on gravestones have in common with eighteenth century intellectual thought in England is that they both reflect certain attitudes or ideas that were *in the air* during that period. The connection may seem tenuous if we consider the iconography alone; but as Deetz and Dethlefsen discovered, the gravestones marked by the willow tree and urn motif evince a much greater number of descriptive epitaphs and funeral verse than do stones with even the contemporaneous cherub motif.

Now, there is a wide gap between the writings of philosophers and the creation of a popular art form. We do not know, nor should we assume, that New England stonecarvers read British or French



The willow tree in the “rural” cemetery landscape, Halcyon Lake, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Mass., founded 1831.

philosophy. Yet we should not assume because they worked with their hands that they did not. In any case, it is reasonable to assume that the thrust of the philosopher’s ideas filtered down to the craftsmen of the period.

The native flora of New England was much less diverse than it is today. Specifically, the Babylon weeping willow, or *salix babylonica*, was not introduced into America until 1730. This is the tree which became internationally associated with melancholic meditation during the Romantic era and is depicted on gravestones and in mourning pictures. It became preferable to other plants traditionally associated with death. The yew, the cypress, and the holly now seemed too somber. They lacked the airiness, lightness, and purity of form which appealed to the neo-classic tastes of Americans who had sought these qualities in Georgian and Federal architecture. The willow reached the peak of its popularity in the 1820’s following the report that the exiled Napoleon sat under one for daily meditation on the island of St. Helena and loved it so much that he asked to be buried on that spot. Cuttings from that one willow were in demand and were shipped throughout the world.¹¹

Half a century after its introduction to America, the willow tree was found everywhere, not only because of the melancholy, bitter-sweet associations attached to it but because of the speed and ease with which the species propagated itself. Like hope, it seemed to spring eternal. It virtually grew like a weed, preferring moist land along streams, rivers, and lakes. Perhaps in the context of a burial ground it was thought to help dry the land and hence became desirable for functional reasons; but this would have been only a secondary factor in hastening its adoption.

The popularity of the willow motif in America preceded the popularity of the tree itself by several decades. The willow became a common design for the folkart form of embroidered or painted mourning pictures which began to be produced by school girls in the 1790's. These pictures generally depicted mourners and an urn under the shelter of a weeping willow. The urn bore the name of a deceased family member and the pictures functioned as shrines within the home as well as elements of interior decor.¹²

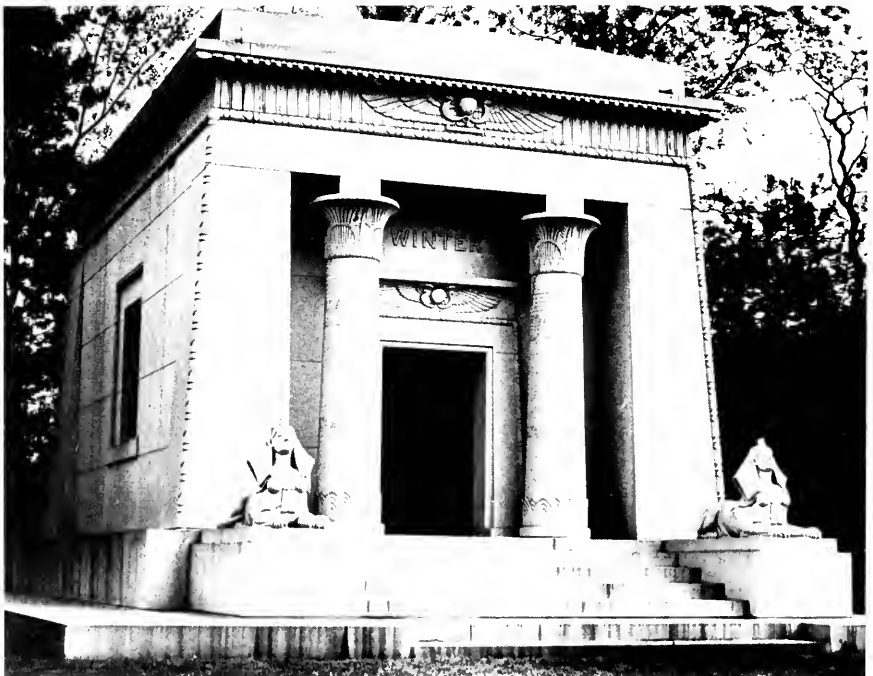
The weeping willow in its very shape suggested the prevalent and growing spirit of romanticism as well as the neo-classic tastes of the new American republic. The tree captured the imagination of an age, a fact evident in the spread of the willow tree and urn motif on gravestones.

NOTES

1. Susan Noel Verrier and Thomas Heyward Taylor, "Gravestone Style and 'Family' in Sudbury, Massachusetts," in "Style Change in Colonial Gravestone Design" (1963 typescript: Tossier Library, Harvard University), p. 12. Verrier and Taylor found that in Sudbury a few examples of the combined motif appeared around 1760 and 1780 but did not find extended use until the 1790's. By 1800, "practically no other designs were used." Individually, the urn first appeared there around 1770, the willow from 1800.
2. For a brief overview of this development, see Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly* 26 (March 1974): 37-59.
3. Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz, "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries," *American Antiquity* 31 (1966): 502-510.
4. David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 150.

5. See Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds. *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of their Writings*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963). Nathaniel Hawthorne expressed this attitude in *The Scarlet Letter*. The woods were the place of lawlessness, the only site where Hester Prynne and the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale could have their illicit rendezvous.
6. Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth-Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), pp. 64-65.
7. For a discussion of austere Puritan gardens see Grace Tabor, *Old-Fashioned Gardening: A History and a Reconstruction* (New York: McBride, Nast, and Company, 1913).
8. For further reading, see John R. Stilgoe, "Folklore and Graveyard Design," *Landscape* 22 (summer 1978): 22-28.
9. I would like to thank Edwin Connelly, Cemeteries Director of the State of Rhode Island for the information concerning Newport. The history of the Grove Street Cemetery is detailed in *Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the New Haven Burying Ground . . .*, (New Haven: B. L. Hamlen, 1839).
10. See Kay de Luca and Sister Blanche M. Leonard, "The Epitaph," in "Style Change in New England Colonial Gravestone Design," (1963 typescript, Tozzer Library, Harvard University).
11. Donald Wyman, *Wyman's Gardening Encyclopedia* (New York: Mcmillian, 1977), pp. 975-977; also Donald Wyman, *Trees for American Gardens* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 416-422.
12. I want to thank Jane Nylander of Old Sturbridge Village for sharing her bibliography on mourning pictures. For more information, see Anita Schorsch, *Mourning Becomes America: Mourning Art in the New Nation* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: William Penn Memorial Museum, 1976); Margaret M. Coffin, *Death in Medicine, Funerals, Burials, and Mourning* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1976); and *Sunday Globe* (May 27, 1979), p. 64.

Frontispiece: An urn and willow motif, Marlboro, Mass.



The Archaeological Significance of the Mausoleums in the Allegheny and Homewood Cemeteries of Pittsburgh: A Preliminary Statement

James B. Richardson III
Ronald C. Carlisle

James Deetz has demonstrated in his studies of eighteenth century New England gravestones that changes in art styles reflect changes in the religious ideologies of the period. He has further demonstrated that the various art styles have a temporal and spatial distribution. Deetz's studies of artistic change within the historic mortuary art styles of New England explain how these particular art styles change in relation to changes in religious values.

The archaeologist attempting to interpret changes in art styles of prehistoric societies has a more difficult task because there is no recourse to a written record of the concomitant changes within the culture being studied. The prehistorian is readily able to see the end result of stylistic change in ceramics, sculpture, and architecture of prehistoric societies, but he is not able to discern the cultural dynamics underlying and producing them. Most studies of prehistoric art styles deal with stylistic seriations and the development of chronologies, but there is little attempt to provide an explanation of how and why the style changes through time.

Of special concern to the prehistorian is the explanation of revivals of long dead art styles which reappear in the archaeological record hundreds and thousands of years after their disappearance. The revival of a past art style is usually seen by the prehistorian as either the duplication of a found object due to its aesthetic qualities, or as a recurrence of the style due to a rebirth of the related religious, political or social ideologies which had remained latent for hundreds of years before regaining favor.

The mausoleums of the Allegheny and Homewood cemeteries of Pittsburgh provide us with an opportunity to historically document the revival of Greek, Egyptian, Byzantine, and Romanesque

art and architectural styles for the burial of North America's Christian dead after 1830. Central to the study is our knowledge that in these examples of style revivals, the original function of each revived architectural style, with all of its concomitant religious systems, was *not* reintroduced. A prehistorian, if faced with a revival of Greek parthenons and Egyptian pyramids and temples, might very well incorrectly interpret their reappearance as the result of a revival of long dead religions. He would also be hard put to interpret the masked Christian symbolism contained within the mausoleums.

The Allegheny and Homewood Cemeteries and the Rural Cemetery Movement

In 1831 Mount Auburn, America's first *rural* cemetery, was opened in Boston, and soon thereafter numerous other rural cemeteries sprang up in the eastern United States—Laurel Hill, Philadelphia, 1836; Greenwood, Brooklyn, 1838; Mount Hope, Rochester, 1838; Greenmount, Baltimore, 1838; Worcester Rural, Worcester, 1838; Allegheny, Pittsburgh, 1844; Spring Grove, Cincinnati, 1845; Cave Hill, Louisville, 1848; Hollywood, Richmond, 1849; Magnolia, Charleston, 1850; Homewood, Pittsburgh, 1878. The creation of Mount Auburn Cemetery marked a radical change in the prevailing attitudes toward death and burial. The church graveyards with their headstones portraying death's heads and skulls and crossbones were morbid and constant reminders of death and were to be avoided. The rural cemetery movement had two overriding purposes: first, to provide a pleasant place for the burial of the dead; second, to function as a cultural institution. The movement from the small urban burial ground to the non-profit and non-sectarian rural cemetery was in part brought about by space limitations of urban graveyards which were unable to expand within the crowded cities. The resulting unsanitary conditions and the increasing need to bury large numbers of persons who had succumbed to various epidemics prompted the development of the rural cemetery. In addition to providing a decent burial place, these cemeteries, laid out with carriage paths, gardens, fountains, and lakes, were designed to serve as centers where historic continuity with the past could be preserved and patriotism strengthened. The sculptures and mausoleums erected to memorialize the dead and beautify the landscape were important in the establishment of the American school of sculpture. Soon rural cemeteries became, in essence, open air museums where imitations and duplications of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Romanesque, and Byzantine art treasures were

collected and viewed. According to Stanley French, one nineteenth century commentator on the importance of Mount Auburn Cemetery as a cultural institution stated that Boston hospitality included a boring dinner followed by a ride through Mount Auburn.

As early as 1834, Dr. James Speer attempted to establish a rural cemetery in Pittsburgh, but it was not until April 24, 1884, that the Allegheny Cemetery was incorporated. The first interments were made in September of 1845. Covering 275 acres, the cemetery was originally situated far outside the central city, but with the expansion of the steel industry the city soon engulfed the cemetery so that Allegheny is now within its huge urban sprawl. The cemetery has maintained its integrity and as recently as 1976 was referred to in the *Pittsburgh Press* as the only place in that part of the city where, walking among the impressive monuments, one could spend peaceful hours.

In 1878, the Homewood Cemetery was established to provide a suitable burial place in the eastern section of the city. Its rules and regulations expressed the hope that it be “. . . forever free from the smoke and dirt of manufacturing establishments.” The Homewood Cemetery covers 175 acres, formerly a portion of the estate of William Wilkins. Although partly encroached upon by the eastern suburbs, this cemetery borders the extensive grounds of Frick Park, which preserves much of the cemetery's original rural flavor.

Both Allegheny and Homewood cemeteries have strict regulations concerning types of interments, grade of monument stones, upkeep of plots, etc., stated in their published guides. These hard-cover publications also include attractive photographs of the mausoleums as inducements to those who are considering the purchase of a burial plot. The speech dedicating Homewood Cemetery on August 18, 1878, provides the rationale of the period for burying the deceased in park-like cemeteries using pagan art and architectural styles to commemorate the Christian dead.

. . . The difficulties and dangers of continuing the church yard in a city will suggest themselves without further mention; the practice had been discontinued in cities built long before the Christian era, and thus, naturally, came about the greatest advance in the mode of disposing of the dead—the rural cemetery—and in the dedication of one of these we meet to-day. Whatever love can prompt, whatever skill can give, is now a ready offering to make beautiful the homes of the dead. There are in

this two thoughts—one for the dead and one for the living. We may stand with awe within Westminster Abbey, or with sorrowful wonder in the Catacombs of Rome—think of the Egyptian swathed in bands and with spices, or of the Greek and his funeral pyre, but we turn from all with the hope that for our dead there may be none of these; that they may sleep their last sleep with the loveliness of nature around them, far away from the city's din and dust, where loving hands shall care for their last resting place—where flowers shall come in spring and sunlight shine, and birds sing carols above their graves—and the troubles and toils of an unthinking world be far off, while everything around them speaks the place of God! . . .

. . . We devote, then, these grounds, to the love of the living and to the repose of the dead.

The Study of Mausoleums

Our study of the Allegheny and Homewood mausoleums was begun in 1969 and has resulted in a detailed architectural analysis of each mausoleum; an analysis of the art styles of the stained glass windows; a photographic record of each structure; extensive use of the cemetery records of dates for pouring foundations, dates of interment, names of the builders' firms; and interviews with monument companies concerning construction, sources of granite and marble, and the cost involved in various phases of construction.

There are two predominant architectural styles represented in these cemeteries: Egyptian and Greek, or Greco-Roman. It was originally hypothesized in 1969 that the revival of these mortuary and religious styles of architecture was a reflection of the increasing amount of archaeological work in the Mediterranean during the nineteenth century. This supposition appears to be valid, for during the same period classical architectural revival styles were in vogue. The interest in Greek and Roman architectures stemmed from the eighteenth and nineteenth century archaeological finds which made classical qualities highly attractive for both religious and non-religious architecture. Ancient revivals—the Greek from 1820 to 1860, the Egyptian from 1820 to 1850, the Gothic from 1820 to 1860, and the Romanesque from 1835 to 1870—and the eclectic styles of the 1870's to the 1930's all had their impact upon the design and execution of cemetery mausoleums. During the eclectic

period, all architectural styles were acceptable, including revivals of the pre-Civil War styles and recently introduced modern styles. There is no need to verify the fact that increasing archaeological work was the main impetus to the development of the revival of Greek and Egyptian styles, for this correlation has been amply documented by the architectural historians and archaeologists, namely Bratton, Daniel, Hamlin, Irwin, Kidney, and Whiffen.

Of the ninety-six mausoleums in the Homewood Cemetery, sixty-six are Greek, ten are Egyptian, and the rest are of various other styles. In the Allegheny Cemetery there are eighty mausoleums that date between 1880 and 1960; forty-two Greek, six Egyptian, and the remainder of various other styles. The majority of these mausoleums date prior to 1930—only eight are dated after 1930—suggesting that this ostentatious mode of burying the dead either declined for reasons of preference or possibly due to increased costs of construction, especially after the initiation of the federal income tax system.



The Mellon Tomb. Homewood Cemetery.

The Egyptian mausoleums in both the cemeteries were constructed after 1900, which coincides with the tremendous archaeological activity in the Nile Valley by British and American archaeologists, culminating in 1922 with Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. The only true pyramid is in the Homewood Cemetery, the foundation of which was poured in 1921. The Brown pyramid has eight vaults, six of which have been used by the family. The largest Egyptian temple in either cemetery is the McAllister in Homewood with a foundation date of 1912. It contains twelve vaults of which five are used. The most elaborate mausoleum is in Allegheny; the foundation was laid in 1930. It has two female sphinxes on either side of the stairway leading up to the main entrance, and the bronze door portrays three personages in Egyptian costume. In the interior there are two sarcophaguses with Egyptian hieroglyphics in their borders.

The Greek mausoleums are usually small temples with four columns on the front portico with Doric, Corinthian, or Ionic capitals. In each cemetery there is a single Greek-like parthenon with columns on all sides. The mausoleums are generally located on the acropolis or highest ground within each cemetery, and from the family names associated with them it is clear that they were seen as symbols of social and economic status. The few statistics that we have suggest that the cost for pre-1930 mausoleums ran between fifteen and twenty-five thousand dollars.

The use of pagan monuments for the burial of Christian dead was readily accepted during this period, but the non-Christian religions that they reflected were never part of the religious values of those interred within these Greek and Egyptian temples. The use of Greek forms was an expression of ideal societal and artistic perfection; by using the Greek and Egyptian styles, Americans hoped to bask in the glory of these long vanished civilizations. Except for the single Egyptian pyramid, the function of the Greek and Egyptian temples was radically changed from its original purpose as a religious temple to an edifice which was solely for the burial of the dead.

Interpretations and Conclusions

To the archaeologist of the future looking back on these structures, even if he had no written record to help him, there would be many clues that could lead him to the correct conclusion that the

mausoleums in the Homewood and Allegheny cemeteries are *not* the product of the diffusion of Greek and Egyptian culture from the Old World. The stained glass windows, for example, are full of Christian symbolism and scenes which place the mausoleums in their nineteenth century cultural context. But if this hypothetical archaeologist looking back on our culture through our mausoleums were not careful to investigate thoroughly and discover these clues and read them correctly, he could easily be misled by the staggering number of these buildings that reflect *pure* Greek and Egyptian architecture to assume that, after several thousand latent years, Greek and Egyptian religion had been revived along with their architectural styles.

This exercise with mausoleums emphasizes the need for caution in the interpretation of religious revivals based on the re-use of artifact and architectural forms, designs, and styles. The prehistoric archaeologist, hampered by the lack of written record to aid in the explanation of his data, must exercise extreme caution when interpreting his findings.

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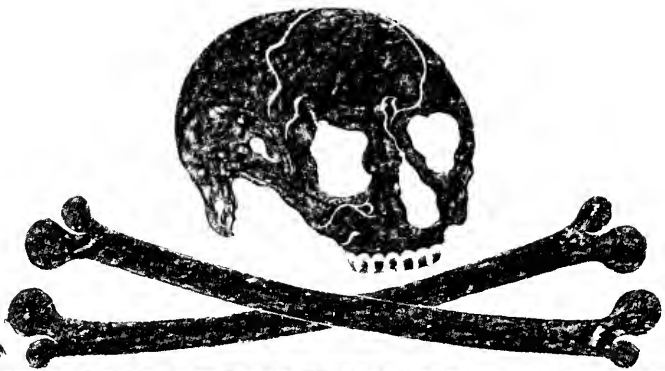
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**Frontispiece: Top—The Brown Tomb, Homewood Cemetery;
Bottom—The Winter Tomb, Allegheny Cemetery.**



Here lies the remains
of SARAH REVERE
Wife of PAUL REVERE
who Died May 3^d
1773
Aged 37

Mystery, History, And ... An Ancient Graveyard

Melvin Williams

There is little doubt that the hands-on kind of learning that is becoming popular in many of our finest indoor museums works equally well in the outdoor museums in which students of gravestones are interested: in the burial grounds that can be found in so many of our old communities.

Educating young persons about the value and the attractions of these repositories of culture is important; they can learn to respect their heritage as they learn to enjoy it and understand it.

This article, reprinted with permission from Today's Education: The Journal of the National Education Association, describes one such hands-on approach for younger school children.

Ask any class of fourth or fifth graders what they know of colonial life in New England, and you'll get answers ranging from the expected ones about Pilgrims and Indians at Plymouth to others about the primitive living conditions or the cruelty of the stocks and ducking stool. If the students put all their information together, they can probably create a wide-ranging and substantially accurate "history" of the New England region.

Their sources of information will be almost entirely second-hand—from books and television and from other children and adults, particularly teachers. And they may never have considered trying to verify any of the "facts" of history they know.

It is these students who can profit from a fascinating lesson in the historian's method of making firsthand observations and then drawing conclusions about some aspect of the past. Finding the data is not hard in any community in coastal or southern New England, and it should be fairly easy in other regions as well, for students all over the country have access to an unused and unappreciated museum close at hand—old burying yards.

One may well ask, What can an old graveyard tell that students will find interesting and worthwhile? Let the students—and the teacher—find out for themselves. (At least the teacher should try to be working and learning along with the class.)

Here is a four-step procedure.

Preparation

1. Ask the students to tell what they know of colonial life in their area (town or state). Write some of these answers on the board, organizing them under such headings as occupations, family life, government. Next, find out where the students got their information (teachers, books, TV, travel), and ask their reasons for accepting the information as accurate.
2. Ask students how they would get authoritative, firsthand information about their region's history. (After suggesting visits to historical sites or local museums, they will probably have no other ideas on the subject.)
3. Then introduce the local graveyard as a source of history. Describe it as a firsthand record of the way of life and death of the people who made their homes near the graveyard, a record carved in words and designs on stone.

The Trip

1. Plan to take a whole afternoon in the fall or spring for the trip. Permission to enter a graveyard is seldom necessary, but check anyway to be sure. Also check the graveyard and note the time of day the sun best lights the stones. Try to schedule your visit for the hours the inscriptions are most legible.
2. For efficiency, let the class divide into several small groups, each with a secretary (provide a clipboard to go with the title) to write down the data from the stones and any other information his teammates discover. (Call them reporters; then everybody has a title.)
3. What should the students look for? *Don't tell them. They're going on a fact-finding expedition, not a treasure hunt.* Let them be historians.

Follow-Up in the Classroom

1. Have each group prepare a report of their findings in class, and let them choose one member to give it orally. You will want to help them with the organization of the report, but again, you must not help supply the data.
2. Lead a class discussion after each report to help resolve uncertainties, to add support to any tentative judgments, and to give each student a chance to participate.
3. Then have each student write his report, outside of class, on a limited topic of special interest to him. Perhaps the class reports taken together could be developed into a town history, and, if someone is willing to type it, the history can be dittoed and distributed to class members.
4. Only at this point should you add any secondary material. Remember, the purpose of the lesson is not to fill students full of facts they can get from other sources, but to show them how to gather information themselves.

A Second Trip?

1. Plan one more trip so students can make rubbings of inscriptions or images on the stone.
2. Although several methods are possible, one is both simple and effective. Give each student a black wax crayon, a piece of white wrapping paper big enough to *generously* cover the part of the stone to be rubbed, and masking tape to hold the paper *securely* in place.

After stretching and fastening the paper over the part of the stone to be copied, all a student has to do is rub lightly with the flat side of the crayon until the image or inscription is transferred from the stone to the paper (just as he could rub over a penny and get the face of Lincoln). Once the image is visible, it can be darkened without letting any color get into the areas that should stay white.

The teacher who has taken the time to experience the stone-rubbing technique will be able to offer guidance concerning the type of stones which will yield the most satisfactory rubbings as

well as advice which will prevent careless defacement or damage to the stones.

What will the class actually learn from this project? Most valuable should be the experience of collecting and assessing data for themselves, with the sharpening of critical abilities that goes with this process. They will also develop an appreciation for the stones as artifacts worthy of care. But the information they gather will be important, too.

Consider the following information a class gained during an afternoon's work in a graveyard in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, a fairly representative example of a small town burying ground in New England.

Language

1. Spelling of some words in colonial times differed from today's spelling. Did a stonecutter make a mistake when he carved *hear* for *here*? Probably. But *lyes* and *dyed* appear too often to be misspellings.

Apparently colonials weren't as concerned as we are about consistency; One family spelled its name "Alvard," "Olverd," and "Alvord" on three different stones and another varied its spelling with "Merrick," "Mirick," and "Mirrick."

2. Some words—"landskip" and "consort" for example—sent us to the dictionary after we returned to the classroom. In the poem where the students found "landskip," it seemed to mean *landscape* and the dictionary confirmed the students' assumption. "Consort" yielded no hint, however, that it meant *wife*.

Activities and Occupations

1. Colonials apparently enjoyed swimming and boating just as we do—according to the record of a drowning of a group of people in Nine Mile Pond. (From stones in other graveyards, one learns of people flung from horses and of a group of people killed by a fireworks explosion.)

2. In addition to a stonecutter (obvious from the stones here, it seemed, though perhaps they were brought in from another town),

evidence was found of a doctor and a minister in the area. Stones showed that some military men were buried in the area.

3. Education must have been highly regarded, for the stone of one man records his having attended Wesleyan Academy. Later the teacher would explain that the Academy has no connection to Wesleyan University, but is now Wilbraham Academy—a private boys' school less than two miles from the graveyard. (In other towns, gravestones record that men attended Yale or Harvard—announcements of special status.)

Miscellaneous

1. Many colonials died young. One stone tells of twin sons who died in 1767, only “seven wee hours” old, and others of infants who died in the first weeks or months of their lives. Some may have died of smallpox, a disease mentioned twice on other stones. But some people lived surprisingly long lives. (A Plymouth man was 99 when he died there in 1745.)

2. People seem to have been very religious. The Bible verses quoted and the carvings of wings (flights to heaven?) and crowns (of glory?) on the stones support that. So do a host of Biblical names, including many that are unusual today: Dorcas, Jesse, Ebenezer, Ichabod, Jerusha, Ezra, and Abel.

3. Other unusual names appear that couldn't be found in the Bible index: Thankful, Experience, Temperance, Mercy, and Deliverance.

4. In time people seemed reluctant to mention death. Instead of saying “Here lyes ye body,” later stones read “In memory of” or “Sacred to the memory of” the person. And the images on the stones changed from ugly, skull-like faces to Madonna-like ones.

For the teacher who wants to supplement secondary sources on history with books about graveyards themselves, several excellent ones are available. By far the best is Allan I. Ludwig's *Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and Its Symbols, 1650-1815* (Wesleyan University Press, 1966.) It is valuable for its scholarly thoroughness, its excellent photographs, and its fine map of most of the important old graveyards in New England.

Frontispiece: Rubbing of the Sarah Revere slate, 1773, Granary Burying Ground, Boston, Mass. By permission of the author.

Resources for the Classroom Teacher: An Annotated Bibliography

Mary Anne Mrozinski

Halporn, Roberta. *Lessons From The Dead: The Graveyard as a Classroom for the Study of the Life Cycle*. Brooklyn: Highly Specialized Promotions, 1979.

A serious and sensitive approach to many areas of death education, using the cemetery as a catalyst. The discussion guide is invaluable for any class or group leader. It includes topics for discussion, questions, and areas for research such as the life cycle in nature, epitaphs, history, and art. Excellent thanatological bibliography. Fifty-eight pages. For more information address Ms. Halporn at 228 Clinton St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

New England Program in Teacher Education. *Journals from the Gloucester Experiment: A School-Community Partnership Project*. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Gloucester Community Development Corporation, 1974/75.

A series of eight monographs detailing the restoration of a colonial burial ground by local youths. It is written to help other communities design similar programs. Chapters 3, 5, and 6 are of particular interest to teachers and youth leaders. Eighty-six pages.

Milligan, Betty Ann and Trask, Deborah. *A Cemetery Survey: Teachers Manual*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum Publication. n. d.

Geared for secondary teachers, this manual focuses on mapping, recording, and interpreting collected data from cemeteries. It is filled with thought-provoking questions and activities to stimulate and motivate students and teachers in many areas of study. Seventeen pages.

Stranix, Edward L. *The Cemetery: An Outdoor Classroom*. Project KARE ed., Philadelphia: Con-Stran Productions, 1974.

A student workbook containing 27 activities to do while visiting a cemetery. Designed for use with middle school

students, the activities directly involve mathematics, language arts, social studies, science, and environmental studies. Some activities are suitable for elementary school students. Thirty-one pages.

Weitzman, David. "History at the Cemetery." In *My Backyard History Book*. pp. 72-74 Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975.

A witty, inspiring, and cleverly illustrated book to help young people, and adults too, learn about the past. Visiting the local cemetery is just one of many activities mentioned in this book to discover the past. Recognizes the wealth to be found in cemeteries but provides few specific details for planning a cemetery visit.

Weitzman, David. "Resting Places," In *Underfoot: An Everyday Guide to Exploring the American Past*, pp. 67-89. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.

Focuses on using cemeteries as outdoor museums for learning about the past. Lists many ways to locate burial grounds and suggests possible activities and studies to be carried out in the cemetery, ranging from collecting colorful names to studying immigration to your area.

Gravestones and Historical Archaeology: A Review Essay

David H. Watters

Deetz, James, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*.

Glassie, Henry, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*.

Glassie, Henry, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*.

Grave, Alexandra, *Three Centuries of Connecticut Folk Art*.

St. George, Robert Blair, *The Wrought Covenant: Source Material for the Study of Craftsmen and Community in Southeastern New England*.

Since the publication of Allan Ludwig's *Graven Images*,¹ and James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen's "Death's Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow"² which revamped gravestone study by asserting that gravestones could be interpreted as reflections of religious/aesthetic values, an increasing strain of criticism has appeared. Summarized by Stephen Foster and David Hall in papers published in the proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife,³ the argument goes that no real proof is offered that *elite* cultural and religious concepts were present at the time America's seventeenth and eighteenth century gravestones were being carved, with the implicit assumption that craftsmen do not think about such things. Furthermore, historical archaeologists stress that artifacts, before any act of interpretation can occur, must be studied objectively in terms of form and use. While no resolution to the split between the camps is presented in the books reviewed here, it is possible to see the direction artifact study is now taking, and to speculate on possible new approaches to the study of gravestone art.

For readers familiar with James Deetz's earlier work on gravestones, *In Small Things Forgotten*⁴ presents in a fuller form the methods of historical archaeology for the study of early

American artifacts. He stresses first the importance of establishing the typology, or form, of an artifact. Chronology is then explained, with useful definitions of the *terminus post quem* (date after which) and the *terminus ante quem* (date before which) an artifact could not have been created. Although most gravestones are dated, these concepts can help in establishing the true date of backdated stones.

Deetz then elaborates the thesis of the book, "the relationship between material culture and cognition." His broad definition of material culture as "the vast universe of objects used by mankind to cope with the physical world," encourages the examiner of artifacts, be they gravestones, ceramics, or houses, to look at each artifact not just in relationship to others of the same type, but to the whole material culture system of the time. The system as a whole can then be seen to reveal the ways in which people perceived and ordered their world. The strength of Deetz's approach lies in his elucidation of different cultural levels within a society, and of broad cultural changes over time. He offers sensible distinctions between folk and popular culture; he describes three periods of American colonial culture, an early time of recreating the home culture during the first generation of settlement, a period of indigenous development of cultures, and then, ca. 1760, a "re-anglicization" of American with Georgian style. Perhaps most compelling is his description of the deep psychological, social, and material changes from the "medieval" to the Georgian world view in America.

Which brings us to the chapter entitled, "Remember Me as You Pass By," the reworking of Deetz's earlier articles on seriation which argued that the three basic designs of colonial gravestones, death's head, cherub, urn and willow, have successive peaks of popularity which reflect cultural changes. Deetz backs away from his earlier error of identifying the Great Awakening as a liberalization of Calvinism, but he still argues the Awakening bred more hopeful views on death: thus the change from death's head to cherub in the mid-eighteenth century. Deetz also attempts to correct an earlier omission with an analysis of the effigy style carved by John Hartshorne which seems to violate the concept of seriation. James A. Slater, Ralph L. Tucker, and Daniel Farber's brilliant study of Hartshorne's work,⁵ establishing Hartshorne's practice of backdating stones, provides a comprehensive view of one carver's work. While death's heads were carved in Boston before Hartshorne began cutting stones, his style certainly did not follow a death's head design in the Essex County region. While admitting

that Hartshorne's images do not follow the death's head and that they are "strikingly different" from the death's head, Deetz claims that "their symbolism was the same as that of the death's head."⁶

There remain, then, basic problems of identification in seriation study. Perhaps the simplistic classification of certain images as death's heads or cherubs, combined with assumptions of which images are more or less hopeful to our eyes for the sake of "proving" changes in religious and cultural attitudes, blurs the perceptions of the stones themselves.

The problem for Deetz lies in the move from identification to interpretation. Though Henry Glassie's *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*⁷ treats gravestones only peripherally, and his *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*⁸ examines a small sample of houses, the methodology presented bears direct relevance to the problem of moving from analysis of form to interpretation of meaning of artifacts. Glassie shares Deetz's broad definition of material culture and agrees that definition must precede interpretation. Any artifact has form, construction, and use, but the most important is form, which reveals the underlying conceptual patterns in the maker's mind.

Some contemporary folklorists, dissatisfied with traditional sallies at tradition, are shifting their studies so that they move inward from the item to inspect the individual and his culture, rather than outward, away from the item, in a quest for hypothetical origins and unusual connections. Historic-geographic worries — types and taxonomy, systems of cultural relationship — must precede functional and psychological considerations.⁹

It is in *Folk Housing* that Glassie presents a full-blown theoretical work on just how form can reveal cultural values which can then be the subject of functional, psychological, or religious interpretations. He describes two fundamental abilities of the crafts-person: the ability to compose, "competence," and the ability to relate the composition to things external to it in its "context." The result of this interrelation is a person's actual "performance" — the product that can be observed by the scholar. Borrowing from Noam Chomsky's concepts of generative syntax, Glassie demonstrates that competence in the creation of forms is based on the possession of a "grammar." With certain fundamental spatial relationships, such as room size, and rules for combining them, a "syntax,"

the folk architect can create certain houses. And indeed, Glassie demonstrates that all houses in his sample area can be described as resulting from grammatical combinations. Given this system, Glassie can then move on to examine how it adapts to changing cultural values. While one may not agree with Glassie's emotional preference for one form of architecture over another, the conclusions about the psychological and social mind revealed by the forms seem sound.

Thus the direction of historical archaeological study demands an identification of stonemason competence and its relation to other arts as the basis of interpretation, and two books published in conjunction with recent exhibitions provide such an opportunity. *Three Centuries of Connecticut Folk Art*¹⁰ accompanied a major exhibition organized by Alexandra Grave, which toured throughout Connecticut in 1979-80. Illustrations of textiles, paintings, ceramics, decoys, school girl's art, and gravestones provide a glimpse of a variety of arts, but they also allow a comparative view of style through the centuries. One of the most interesting sections of the book is a selection of Susan H. Kelley's and Anne C. Williams' rubbings of seventeenth and eighteenth century Connecticut gravestones. Besides revealing the growing status of gravestone art in the museum world, the rubbings reveal the stylistic similarities between gravestone designs and furniture carving in the Connecticut River Valley. The startling originality of portraiture in folk carving leaps out from the Noah Andrus (Farmington, 1780) and the Peter Miner (Woodbury, 1796) stones. Indeed, the gravestones are among the book's few examples of true folk art, as much of the furniture and painting was produced by sophisticated makers — an example of the necessity of Deetz's distinctions between folk and popular culture.

The Wrought Covenant,¹¹ by Robert Blair St. George, documents a large group of furniture from the region studied by Peter Benes in *The Masks of Orthodoxy*.¹² Indeed, St. George compares particular furniture carvings to designs on tombstones cut by Jacob Vinal, Jr. and Nathaniel Fuller, and goes on to establish what Glassie called the competence of craftspersons in the region. Without explanation, St. George dismisses as fruitless "recent studies, especially those of gravestone carving traditions [which] labor inconclusively on the basis of iconographic referents to define the 'puritan aesthetic' as religion-linked."¹³ He looks to a close study of individual craftspersons as a means of "humanizing" history, to reveal the richness of everyday life in the

seventeenth century. Unfortunately, St. George does not deliver on his promise, leaving the reader to speculate on the significance of a craft competence in furniture and gravestone carving in the region.

Nevertheless, the technique of identifying a competence should be applied to gravestone carving. Perhaps such a study would reveal just what the relationships between design areas on stones are — what can or cannot appear in the tympanum, on the pilasters, in the body of the stone, and what happens when certain elements appear in each area. Was there a “grammar” in the mind of the carver which told him that only certain combinations of designs were appropriate on given stones? Can we detect a design grammar which could be related to person’s status, age or sex? Would it then be possible to consider changes in gravestone designs as the result of a changing “grammar” which could be related to cultural or religious principles?

Glassie demonstrated that craftspersons take new design elements, whether from other carvers or from high style sources, and integrate them into the preexisting conceptual framework. It would seem that we could then look at the similar process of integration of a new design element in a carver’s work as a way of understanding the carver’s own commentary on the design by his treatment of it. Moreover, it might be more appropriate to use a combination of Deetz’s seriation study and Glassie’s notion of competence to discover what cultural values do *not* change despite variations in gravestone imagery. Judging from printed sources, basic Protestant doctrine or eschatology remained remarkably consistent in England and America from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Perhaps too much time has been spent trying to match particular designs to such popular events as the Great Awakening, at the expense of recognizing much more basic, unchanging beliefs which gravestones express. Finally, it is to be hoped that such methodology can provide a meeting ground for students of gravestones, so that iconographic studies and material culture studies can complement rather than compete with each other.

NOTES

1. Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and Its Symbols, 1650-1815* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966).
2. James Deetz and Edwin S. Dethlefsen, “Death’s Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow,” *Natural History Magazine* (March 1967): 28-37.

3. Stephen Foster, "From Significant Incompetence to Insignificant Competence," *Puritan Gravestone Art: The Dublin Seminar for New England Folk Life, Annual Proceedings 1976*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1976), pp. 33-40 and David D. Hall, "The Gravestone Image as Puritan Cultural Code," *Puritan Gravestone Art*, pp. 23-32.
4. James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1977).
5. Daniel Farber, James A. Slater, and Ralph L. Tucker, "The Colonial Gravestone Carvings of John Hartshorne," *Puritan Gravestone Art II: The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings 1978*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1978), pp. 79-146.
6. Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten*, p. 82.
7. Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).
8. Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975).
9. Glassie, *Pattern*, pp. 15-16.
10. Alexandra Grave, *Three Centuries of Connecticut Folk Art* (New Haven, Connecticut: Art Resources of Connecticut, Inc., 1979).
11. Robert Blair St. George, *The Wrought Covenant: Source Material for the Study of Craftsmen and Community in Southeastern New England, 1620-1700* (Brockton, Massachusetts: Brockton Art Center, 1976).
12. Peter Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1977).
13. St. George, *The Wrought Covenant*, p. 18.

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