# MARKERS III

## The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies

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Dedicated to

Avon Neal
Ann Parker

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# Where the Bay Meets the River: Gravestones and Stonecutters in the River Towns of Western Massachusetts, 1690-1810

Kevin M. Sweeney

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the towns lying along the Connecticut River in western Massachusetts constituted a distinct region within the Bay Colony. Though politically a part of Massachusetts, the river towns were separated from Boston by over eighty miles of sparsely settled hill country (Fig. 1). Because of the distance to the Bay and the rugged nature of the intervening terrain, the Massachusetts river towns found themselves more closely tied to the colony of Connecticut, and from the time of the first settlements, ties of family, trade and communication bound the settlers of western Massachusetts to the residents of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield, Connecticut. At the same time, however, kinship, politics and commerce helped preserve ties with Boston, and in the course of the eighteenth century, such links with the Bay grew in importance. The happenstance of political development and the influence of geography, therefore, combined to produce in the river towns of western Massachusetts a cultural region which was, despite its comparative isolation, open to influences from the Bay area and from Connecticut and which could occasionally produce its own distinctive artistic expressions.

The region's surviving gravestones, when studied in combination with relevant documentary evidence, offer a coherent picture of changing cultural orientation in western Massachusetts and provide insight into the relative influence that craft practices, family ties, patronage preferences and religious sentiment had on changing styles in funerary art. What emerges is a portrait of a craft tradition strongly influenced by trained, full-time stonecutters and their networks of apprentices and journeymen, and by consumer preferences for particular materials as opposed to particular motifs. The progression in gravestone styles in this region can be traced through five distinct stages. These stages differ significantly from the tripartite scheme of death's head, cherub and urn popularized by some studies of New England gravestones, and in particular the evidence provides little support for the assertion that "the stylistic sequence there [the Connecticut River valley] seems to follow the urban Boston-Cambridge pattern . . . ."[1] Each of the five stages in western

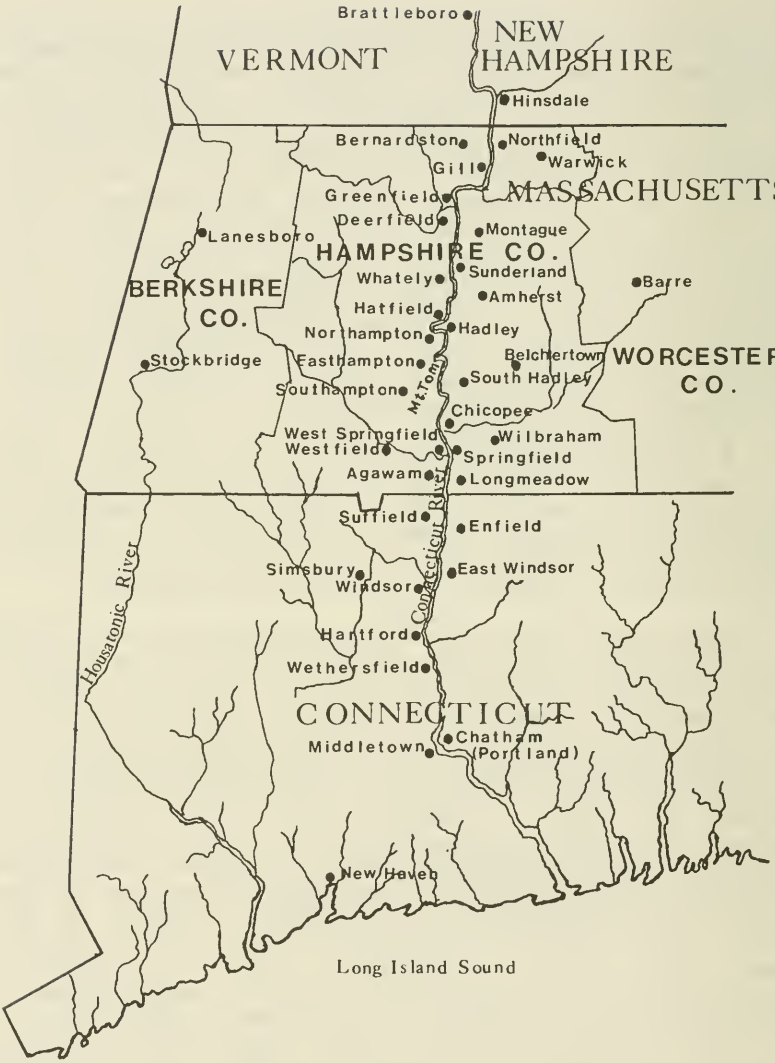


Figure 1. Map of Connecticut River valley region. Drawing by author after J. Ritchie Garrison.

Massachusetts is marked by the ascendancy of a particular shop tradition and by a particular cultural orientation. Though exceptions to this rather schematic approach exist and will be noted, the overall pattern that is revealed parallels other cultural changes in the river towns of western Massachusetts.

In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the settlements along Massachusetts's Connecticut River frontier formed a relatively isolated cultural pocket whose residents had limited resources and relatively restricted cultural horizons. Very few surviving gravestones date before 1720, and a number of these are clearly backdated examples of later work. The majority of the residents of the river towns of Old Hampshire County, Massachusetts[2] lay in unmarked graves or possibly in graves marked only by wooden markers. The earliest stone markers were probably cut by George Griswold (1633-1704) of Windsor, Connecticut, and transported up the river valley.[3] Griswold's carefully lettered stones in the distinctive reddish brown Windsor sandstone mark three graves in Enfield, six graves in Northampton, and five in Westfield, including that of his son Edward, who died in 1688 (Fig. 2). The stones with right-angle shoulders, rounded tops and simple, incised borders set the pattern for utilitarian sandstone grave markers that were in Old Hampshire County from the early 1700s to the late 1730s.

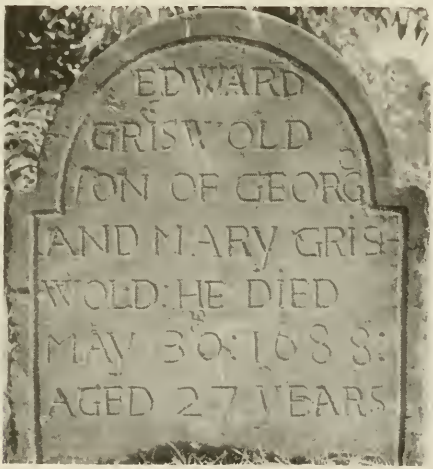


Figure 2. Edward Griswold, 1688, Westfield, Mass. Attributed to George Griswold.

Most of the lettered but undecorated gravestones set up in the early 1720s and 1730s were the work of Joseph Nash (1664-1740) of Hadley. It is unlikely that there was any direct connection between Nash and Griswold who died in 1704. An unidentified Northampton stonecutter working in the 1710s and 1720s produced stones similar to Griswold's gravestones and may have provided a stylistic link between Griswold and Nash. Nash's own work ranges in date from the early 1720s to the mid-1730s, and references to Joseph Nash in probate records begin in the 1720s (Fig. 3). The earliest stone in his style, for Dr. John Westcarr, 1675, Hadley, was actually cut in 1737 (Fig. 4). This stone for which Nash was specifically paid provides the key to documenting his work.[4] It is possible that Nash, the son of Timothy Nash, a Hadley blacksmith and joiner, may have been making wooden grave markers before taking up stonecutting. The granite coffin post Nash made for Jacob Warner, 1711, Hadley, which, as Peter Benes observed, "was probably in imitation of comparable wooden posts . . . ," provides a piece of circumstantial physical evidence suggesting an earlier career as a maker of wooden grave markers.[5]

During his working career as a stonecutter, Nash placed his stones in just about every Massachusetts town then existing along the Connecticut River, and cut stones for the families of yeomen farmers and leading magistrates such as Col. Samuel Partridge of Hatfield and Lt. Col. Eleazer Porter of Hadley.[6] Nash's crudely lettered stones show little awareness of contemporary stone carving in eastern Massachusetts and only hint at their indebtedness to Griswold's style of cleanly cut stones. Six of his stones that have some crude attempts at skulls, picks and shovels are notable only for their scarcity.[7] Variations in style alone relieved the sameness of Nash's markers. The religious enthusiasm of the valley revival of 1735, a precursor of the Great Awakening, left not a mark on his work. The same conservatism and entrenched craft practices that supported the continued production of carved, joined Hadley chests and of houses with hewn overhangs during the early 1700s also supported Nash's conservative, plain gravestones. After Nash's death in 1740, another stonecutter--possibly John Clark (1704-c. 1750) of Hadley[8]--made a half dozen stones in his style that are in South Hadley's cemetery.

Alternatives to Nash's simple markers became available in Old Hampshire County during the 1720s and

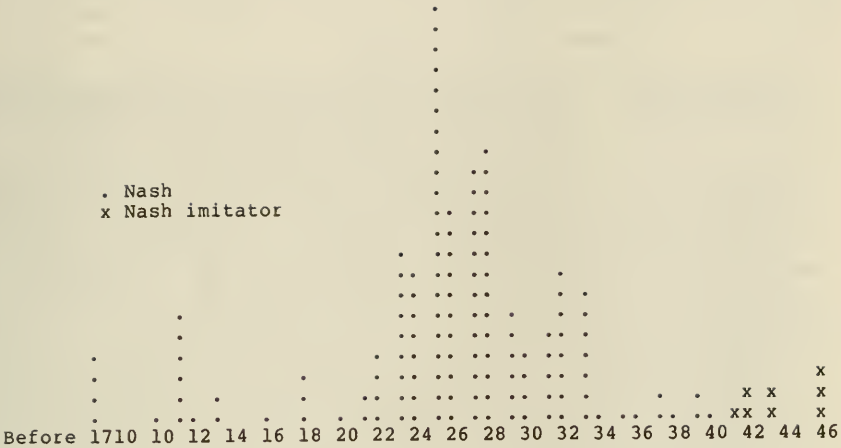


Figure 3. Distribution by Date of Surviving, Legible Gravestones Attributed to Joseph Nash (Massachusetts river towns only). The stones with dates before 1710 and those with dates in the mid-1710s were probably backdated.

Figure 4. Dr. John Westcarr, 1675, Hadley, Mass. Documented to Joseph Nash. See note 4.

1730s, but their limited distribution underscores the extent to which Nash's local patronage rested on more than just isolation and a lack of alternatives. In Deerfield several interrelated families began importing slate gravestones from the Boston area. In 1715, Ebenezer Barnard of Deerfield moved to Roxbury and married Elizabeth Foster, sister of the Dorchester, Massachusetts carver James Foster (1698-1763), and, probably as a direct result of this marriage, winged death's heads cut by members of the Foster family began appearing in Deerfield's burying ground during the later 1710s or early 1720s.[9] Almost two dozen greenish gray slate stones cut by the Foster shop, a single stone made in the Lamson shop in Charlestown and two red slate stones which can be attributed on the basis of style to Nathaniel Emmes (1690-1750) of Boston were transported to Deerfield at various times between 1715 and 1756. Two-thirds of these stones were erected by members of the Barnard, Hinsdale, Wells and Williams families. Though the total number of such gravestones purchased by the town's leading families was comparatively small and had no impact on the surrounding towns, the patronage of Boston area carvers did create in Deerfield a taste for slate stones that lingered and that distinguished Deerfield's burying ground.

The second challenge to Nash and established gravestone cutting in the mid-Connecticut River valley came from the quarries around Middletown, Connecticut. Early in the 1700s a few members of the county's elite bought stones from the Stancliffs--James Stancliff (1634-1712) and his son William Stancliff (1687-1761)--of Chatham and had them shipped up the Connecticut River. In Hadley the tablestones of Rev. John Russell, 1692, and of his wife Rebeckah Russell, 1688, and the Nathaniel Dwit [sic Dwight] stone, 1711, West Springfield, document the importation of Middletown, Connecticut gravestones in the 1700s and 1710s. In the late 1720s, some of the county's leading families turned to Thomas Johnson I (1690-1761) of Middletown for gravestones. In 1729, the heirs of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield purchased two pair of gravestones to mark his grave and that of his first wife Eunice.[10] The winged death's heads on the stones were typical examples of Johnson's work,[11] and resembled the effigies on contemporary stones from eastern Massachusetts (Fig. 5). Early in the 1730s, other families ordered similar stones from Johnson, or other Middletown carvers.[12]

Around the same time, residents of Westfield and

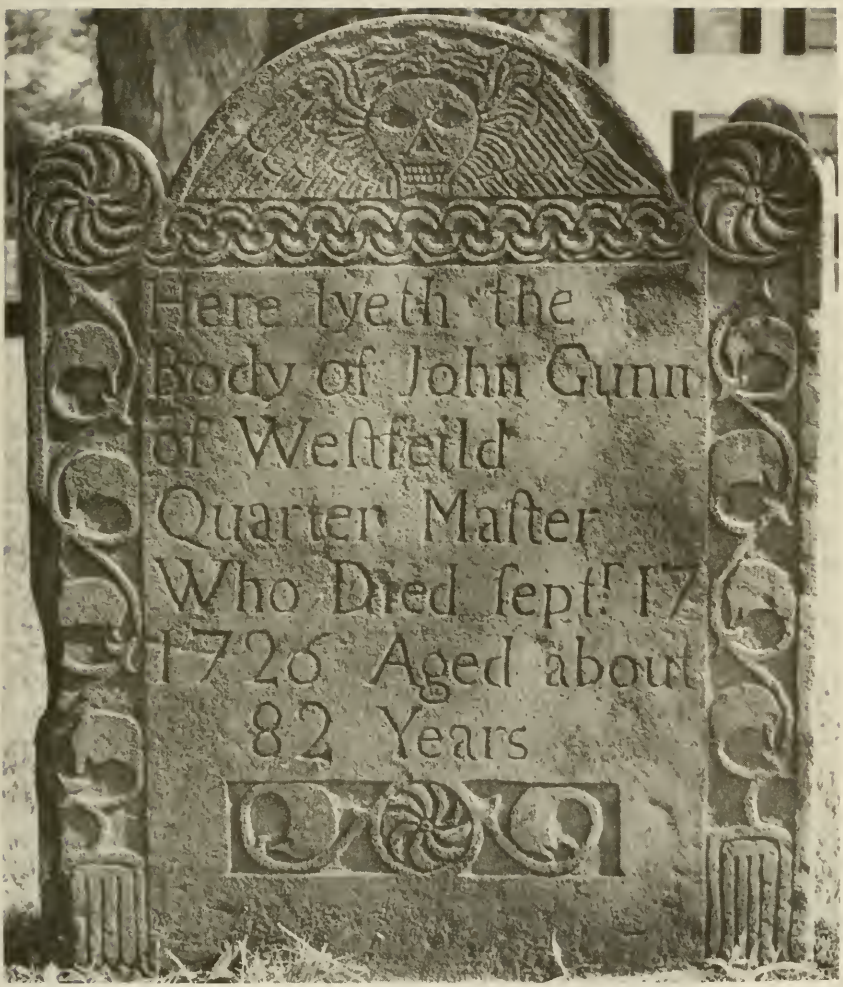


Figure 5. John Gunn, 1726, Longmeadow, Mass. Attributed to Thomas Johnson I.

Figure 6. Mary King, 1737, Suffield, Ct. Attrributed to "The Bat Carver."


Figure 7. Henry Dwight, Esq., 1732, Hatfield, Mass. Attributed to Gideon Hale.

Suffield (then a part of Old Hampshire County, Massachusetts, but now a part of Connecticut) started obtaining gravestones with death's heads from a carver working in the Simsbury, Connecticut area. This still unknown carver has been dubbed "The Bat Carver" because his death's heads usually have blank wings with scalloped borders that resemble the wings of a bat.[13] The hollow eyes, triangular nose, long chin and prominent teeth of the death's heads and the borders found on the earliest stones by "The Bat Carver" clearly show the influence of Thomas Johnson's death's heads (Fig. 6). At present it is not possible to determine if "The Bat Carver" was apprenticed at the Middletown quarries or merely imitated Thomas Johnson's work. Ten examples of his work are in Westfield and about twenty are located in Suffield. His influence remained circumsribed geographically and chronologically.

The efforts of Gideon Hale (1712-1776) to establish a market for his work in western Massachusetts proved to be no more successful. Sometime around 1734, Hale moved to Northampton from Middletown, married a woman twenty years his senior, and set himself up as a gravestone cutter.[14] During the next six years he cut a few--approximately a dozen--stones with winged death's heads that are easily distinguished from Thomas Johnson's own work by Hale's use of local sandstone which is not always of the best quality (Fig. 7). Again, as in the case of Nash's work, the enthusiasm of the revivalism in Northampton and the surrounding towns was not expressed in Hale's gravestones, though Hale himself was moved and joined the church in 1735. Unfortunately for Hale, he failed to make much of an impression on individuals who bought gravestones locally. About 1740, he abandoned his wife and returned to Connecticut where he worked briefly for Joseph Johnson in East Windsor before going into partnership with the Johnsons in Middletown, where he subsequently died in relative poverty.[15]

Despite Hale's failure to sell many of his Middletown style gravestones, Connecticut shop traditions centered in Windsor and Middletown eventually won acceptance in western Massachusetts during the 1740s, and this development marked the beginning of a second stage in the evolution of gravestone carving in the mid-Connecticut River valley. From the mid-1740s to the early 1770s, stonecutters from down the Connecticut River or those trained by them grew to dominate gravestone making in Old Hampshire County. Patronage net-

works among the region's leading families also played a role in diffusing new fashions throughout the entire valley, and differences in patronage came to be more closely related to differences in status than to differences in residency. Certain purchasers of gravestones in Old Hampshire County appear to have had more in common with some consumers in Middletown and Wethersfield than with their immediate neighbors and fellow townsmen.[16]

The new stones from Windsor and Middletown which began appearing in Old Hampshire County graveyards during the 1740s bore winged cherubs that marked a break from the earlier Johnson stones with winged death's heads (Fig. 8). While it is tempting to attribute or to relate the shift in effigies from winged death's heads to cherubs to the religious revivalism of the mid-1730s and the early 1740s, the character of some of the earliest Hampshire County patrons of the new style of stones belies this theory. Johnson cherubs found favor with Col. Israel Williams, who publicly opposed the visit of itinerant revivalist George Whitfield to the county in 1745; with Rev. Jonathan Ashley, one of the region's first clerical critics of the Great Awakening; and with Lt. Col. Oliver Partidge, Colonel


Figure 8. Israel Williams, Jr., 1741, Hatfield, Mass. Attributed to Thomas Johnson II.

Williams's ally, who sat on the council that voted to dismiss Rev. Jonathan Edwards in 1750.[17] These individuals were very self-conscious consumers, and it is hard to believe that they would have knowingly purchased recognizable emblems suggesting religious enthusiasm or association with the Awakening. The purchase of such stones probably indicated nothing more nor less than a desire to keep up with funerary art down-river and to affirm their kinship with leading gentry families in the lower valley who also patronized the Johnsons.

The majority of the strikingly similar cherub stones with elaborate foliate borders that appeared in Old Hampshire County during the 1740s were carved by Thomas Johnson II (1718-74), Joseph Johnson (1698-c. 1770), William Holland (working 1748-67) and Nathaniel Phelps (1721-89).[18] The similarity of the stones resulted from the master-apprentice relationships which bound together these cutters (Fig. 9). Thomas Johnson II, his uncle Joseph Johnson and Gideon Hale all undoubtedly trained with Thomas Johnson I in Middletown, and even though Joseph worked in East Windsor during much of the 1740s, the Middletown quarries remained the focal point for the family. William Holland is known to have worked for Joseph Johnson in East Windsor in

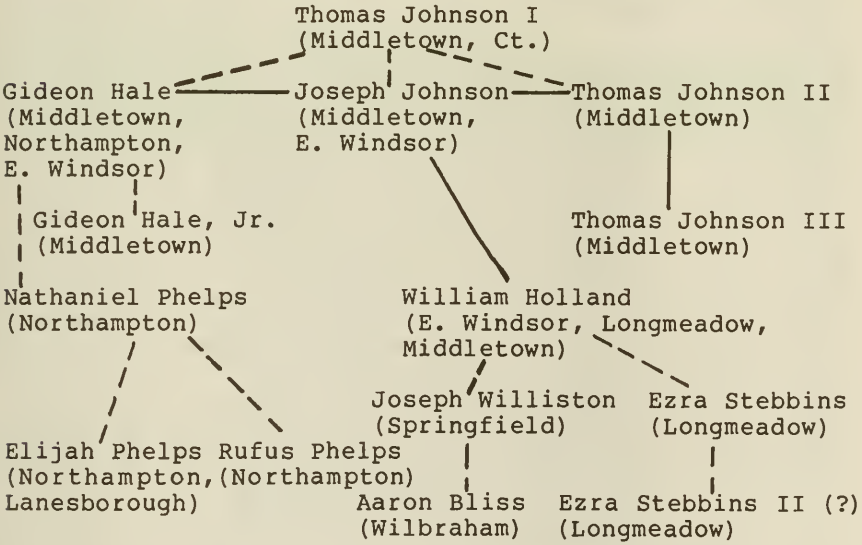


Figure 9. Middletown-Windsor-Hampshire Network. Solid lines: documented; dashed lines: probable.

1748, and very well may have been trained by him, for he returned with Joseph to Middletown around 1750. Nathaniel Phelps, the son of a prosperous Northampton brick mason, probably received his training from Hale or possibly a Johnson. The connection has not been documented, but the echoes of their work in Phelps's early stones are so striking that his work could be mistaken for that of a Johnson.[19] Once established, this Connecticut-based network of stonecutters working in sandstone put down deep roots as Thomas Johnson II, Gideon Hale and Nathaniel Phelps all trained sons to be stonecutters.

Phelps, the Northampton native, initially captured the largest share of the growing gravestone market in Old Hampshire County. For four decades, from the late 1740s to the mid-1780s, his shop was the most prolific in Old Hampshire County as he became the prime source of gravestones for those of moderate means. He supplemented his income by farming, and he followed his father's trade as a brick mason, building and repairing chimneys. He usually obtained sandstone for grave markers from a quarry he owned on Mount Tom, but occasionally he carved markers of shale, of schist, and of sandstone obtained from outside of the Northampton area.[20] His earliest work, which probably does not date before the late 1740s, included a few death's heads (Fig. 10). In the early 1750s he carved winged cherubs which were clearly indebted to the Johnsons' work, although Phelps's use of local stone, usually flatter relief and hollow eyes without pupils distinguished his cherubs from those of his probable master (Fig. 11). Phelps's later work was marked by stylistic diversity. Circumstantial evidence suggests strongly that the increased diversity resulted from constant efforts to keep up with competition from other stonecutters. For a time in the mid-1760s, the competition from stonecutters down river and the apparent loss of his usual source of sandstone seem to have put him out of business, plunged him deeply into debt and forced him to mortgage his lands (Fig. 12).[21] He resumed cutting and selling stones in the late 1760s and recovered some of his lands, though he still faced stiff competition and remained in precarious financial circumstances for the last twenty years of his life.[22]

The competition that threatened Phelps's livelihood came initially from the Johnsons and William Holland. The ties that linked stonecutters in the Connecticut River valley during the third quarter of the eighteenth

a. 1742-53

b. 1745-85

c. 1745-70

d. 1767-72

e. 1767-74

f. mid-1770s

Figure 10. Major examples and date ranges of effigies by Nathaniel Phelps.

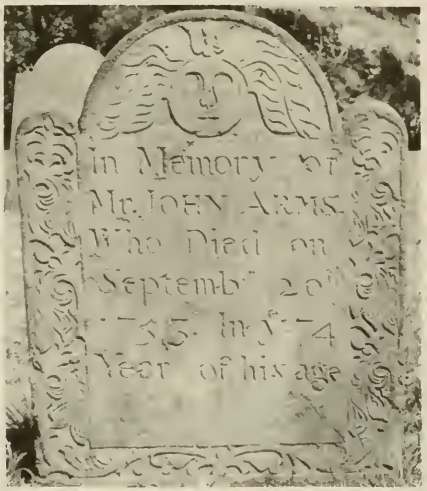


Figure 11. John Arms, 1753, Deerfield, Mass. Attributed to Nathaniel Phelps.

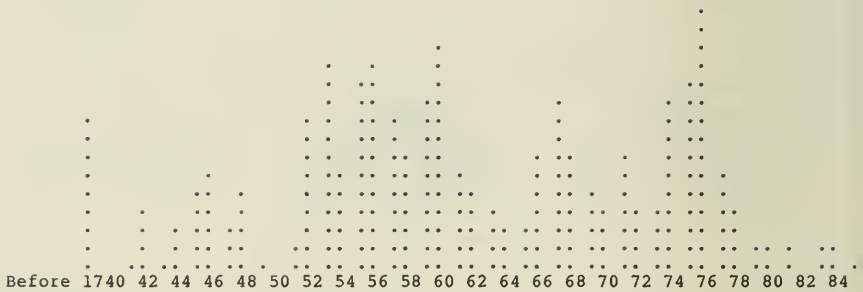


Figure 12. Distribution by date of surviving, legible gravestones attributed to Nathaniel Phelps (Massachusetts river towns only). In the late 1770s the Phelps shop is producing other stones which clearly are the work of another hand. Even the stones in the 1780s with motifs similar to those cut earlier by Nathaniel are lettered by another hand. The chart includes only those in which Nathaniel had a hand.

century did not blunt competition among individual shops. Despite the advantages provided by Northampton's central location in Old Hampshire County and by his access to locally quarried stone, Phelps failed to win the patronage of certain groups of consumers. Some of the county's leading gentry families continued to prefer gravestones and large imposing tablestones produced at the Johnson quarry in Middletown.[23] They bought stones with cherubs from Joseph Johnson and Thomas Johnson II's "curiously wrought" (i. e. heavily ornamented) stones with shaped profiles and baroque scrolls (Fig. 13).[24] Phelps did not have a counterpart for these latter stones during the 1750s and 1760s, nor did he produce the tablestones that found favor with the leading gentry families. His failure to win the patronage

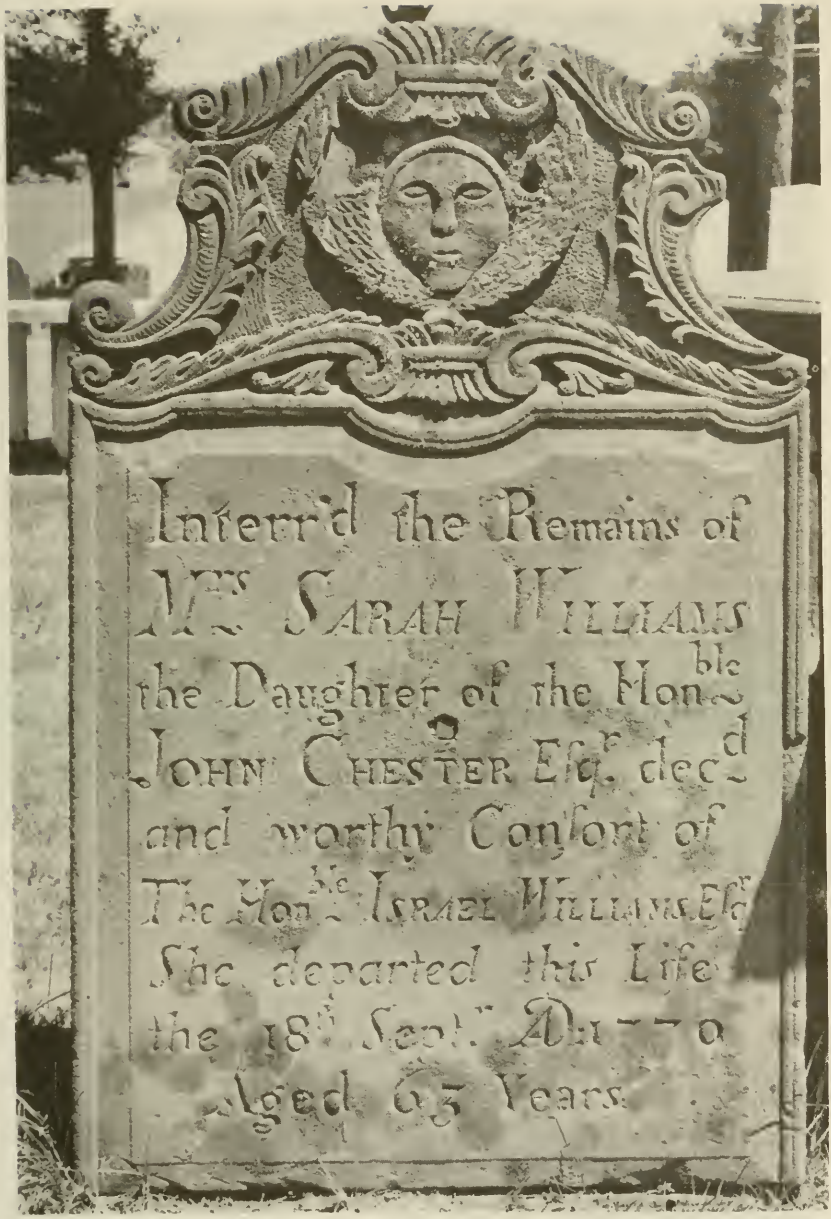


Figure 13. Sarah Williams, 1770, Hatfield, Mass. Documented to Thomas Johnson II. See note 24.

of the region's wealthiest residents limited his opportunities to produce the elaborate and ambitious works of which he was capable.

Competition also cut into the market provided by middle class consumers in the county's southern towns. Residents in the towns of the Connecticut River's east bank from South Hadley to Longmeadow continued to buy from the Johnsons, who supplied most of the gravestones placed in these towns during the late 1740s and early 1750s. Around 1756, William Holland moved from Middletown to Longmeadow to take advantage of this ready market for the work of Middletown stonecutters. He bought land and began producing grave markers in locally quarried stone. An extremely skillful carver, Holland spent most of his career as a journeyman working for others and working in their styles. Several distinctive gravestones in Connecticut which can be documented to be his work clearly reveal that his status as a journeyman had nothing to do with his talent as a stonecutter or "stonecarver" as he called himself.[25] During his three to four year stay in Longmeadow, he was his own master and produced stones with his own distinctive touches (Fig. 14). The low hairy foreheads, the precise lettering and the hooked numeral '1' recall his earlier work and that of his probable master, Joseph Johnson, but the languid, open foliate borders and the crown surmounted by a globe and the Maltese cross are innovations of Holland.[26] The use of the cross may explain why Holland placed only a few stones outside of Longmeadow in neighboring Springfield; the mid-Connecticut River valley probably was not really ready for such a papist symbol. Holland left Longmeadow at some time in 1760 and returned to the Middletown area where he cut stones with his distinctive pointed crowns that can be seen in Durham, Middletown, North Guilford and North Haven, Connecticut graveyards. He stopped working in the late 1760s and vanished without a trace.

Holland's influence in southern Hampshire County lingered long after his departure, for he appears to have trained two or three Springfield area stonecutters. Between 1759 and 1767, Joseph Williston (1732-68) of Springfield produced approximately 100 gravestones in a red sandstone. Williston copied Holland's lettering, borders and effigies, but dispensed with the hair on the forehead and only cut three stones with crosses.[27] A certain stiffness, a reduction in scale and a tendency to simplify distinguished his work from that of Holland (Fig. 15). He embellished at least four of his stones

Figure 14. Thomas Hale, 1750, Longmeadow, Mass. Documented to William Holland. See note 26.

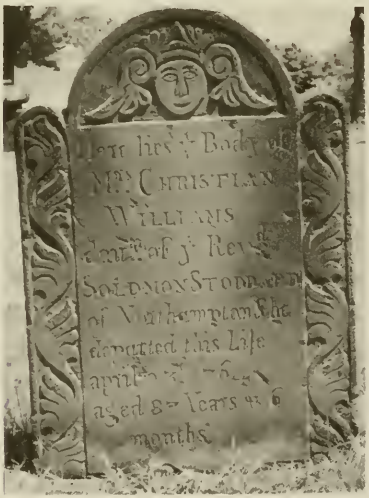

Figure 15. Mrs. Christian Williams, 1766, Hatfield, Mass. Documented to Joseph Williston. See note 27.

by carving a brick wall under the effigy. He placed most of his stones in South Hadley, Springfield, West Springfield and Westfield, and examples are found in Chicopee, Deerfield, Hadley, Hatfield and Northampton. The four latter towns had been prime markets for Nathaniel Phelps who, as noted above, produced few stones during the mid-1760s. Williston's untimely death cut short what appears to have been a promising career.

After Williston's death, Aaron Bliss (1739-76) of Wilbraham attempted unsuccessfully to supply Williston's market.[28] Ever since the publication of Harriette Merrifield Forbes's work in the 1920s, Aaron Bliss has been confused with a contemporary Longmeadow stonecutter who may or may not have been an Aaron Bliss living in Longmeadow from 1730 to 1810.[29] It was, however, Aaron Bliss of Wilbraham who called himself a stonecutter, and it was his probate inventory that contained "four stone axes 6/, four hewing Chisels 3/, nine writing Chisels 4/, two Iron Claws 1/6, Iron Mallet 1/, Iron Sledge 8/ and Pair of Compass 2/6."[30] A man of modest circumstances, Bliss supplemented his income from stonecutting by blacksmithing. He appears to have begun cutting gravestones in the later 1760s in a dark brown sandstone easily distinguished from the red sandstone used by Williston and the paler, closer grained brown sandstone used by the Longmeadow stonecutter. His stones usually had winged cherubs and foliate borders which recall the work of Holland and Joseph Johnson (Figs. 16-17). Most of Bliss's stones, including those which mark his children's graves, are in Wilbraham; several are in Westfield, and examples can be found in South Hadley, Springfield and West Springfield. His death brought a temporary halt to stonecuting in Wilbraham, and when activity resumed in the 1780s, under the direction of John Buckland (1748-93) of East Hartford, it marked a break with the traditions derived from Holland's work.[31]

The legacy of William Holland persisted much longer in Longmeadow. After Holland's departure, a stonecutter obviously trained by him continued to produce crowned cherubs that closely followed his work, even though the Longmeadow stonecutter's cherubs are more broadly proportioned and less deeply cut than Holland's own work (Fig. 18). Traditionally, Aaron Bliss (1730-1810) of Longmeadow has been identified as the Longmeadow stonecutter who began working in the 1760s. This Aaron Bliss appears to have been a mason and may have been a stonecutter, but this latter assumption cannot be docu-

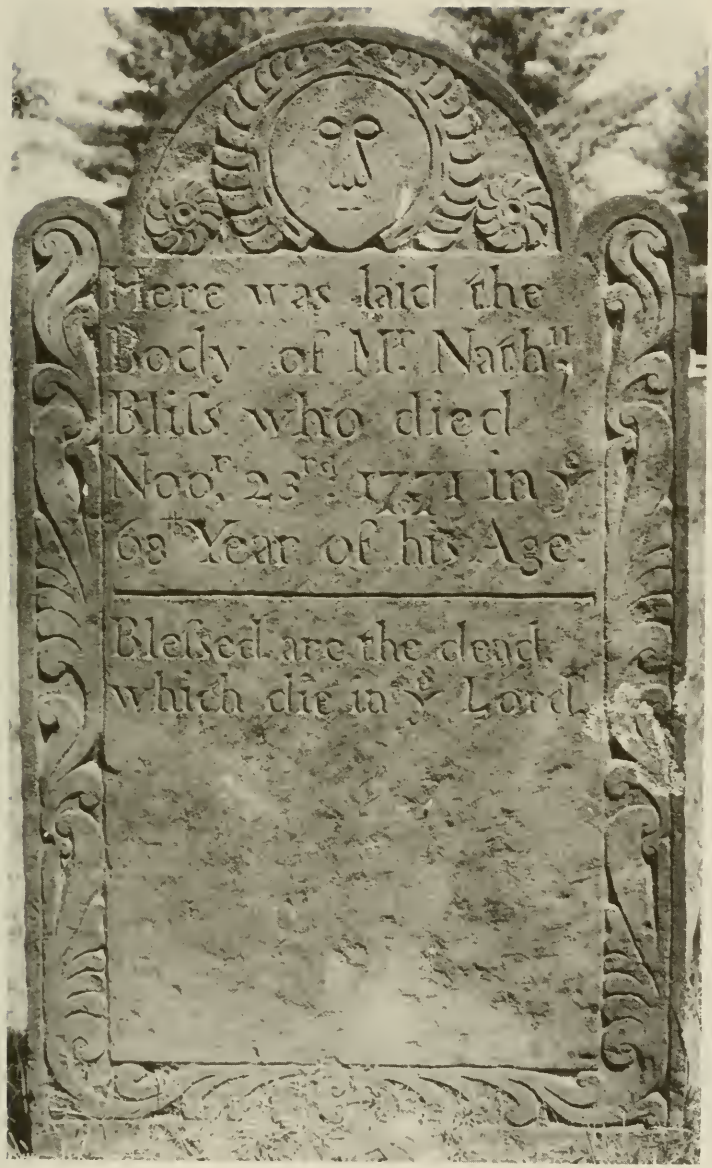


Figure 16. Nathaniel Bliss, 1772, Wilbraham, Mass. Documented to Aaron Bliss. See note 28.

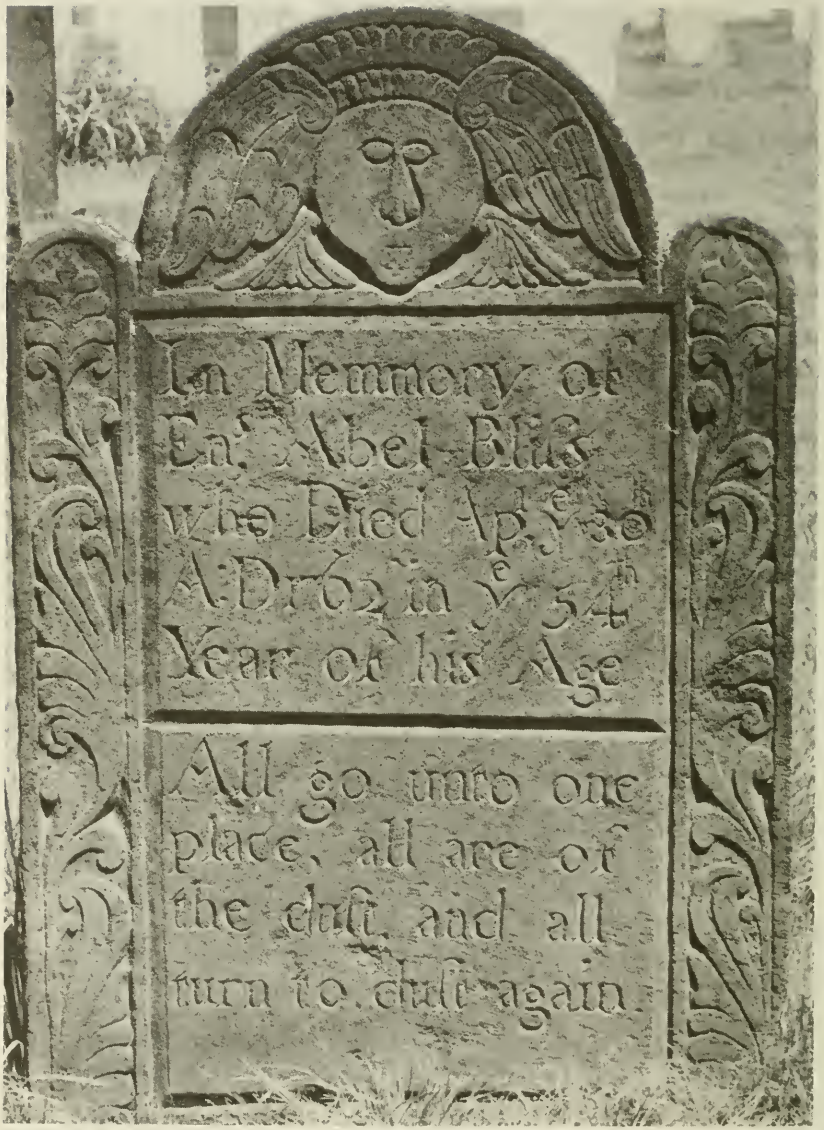


Figure 17. Abel Bliss, 1762, Wilbraham, Mass. Attributed to Aaron Bliss.

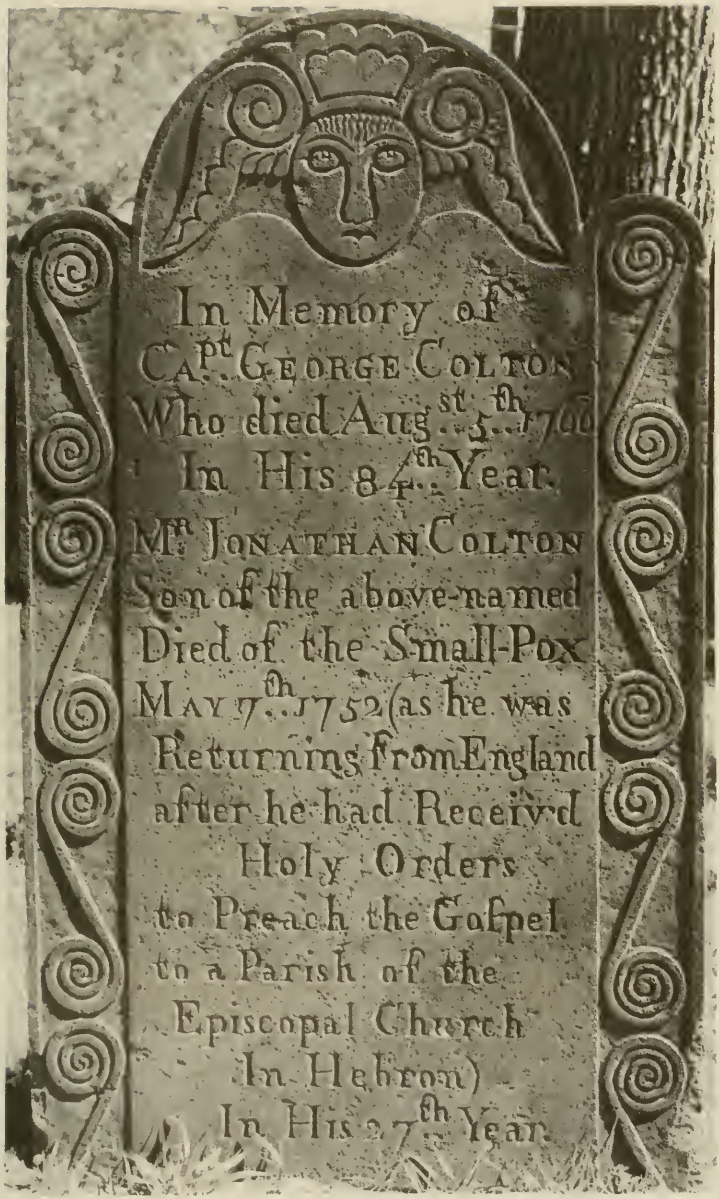


Figure 18. George Colton, 1760, and Jonathan Colton, 1752, Longmeadow, Mass. Attributed to Ezra Stebbins I.

mented for he never called himself a stonecutter, and the record for payment cited by Harriette Merrifield Forbes clearly refers to a stone cut by Aaron Bliss of Wilbraham.[32] A more likely candidate for the Longmeadow stonecutter is Ezra Stebbins (1731-96) of Longmeadow who was paid for gravestones in 1773 and 1784 and is identified as a gravestone maker in the Stebbins family genealogy.[33] The 1773 payment to Ezra Stebbins could have been for the Mary Bliss stone, 1757, Longmeadow (Fig. 19).[34] Whoever he may have been,[35] the Longmeadow stonecutter soon dispensed with Holland's crosses and eventually did away with the hairy foreheads. In the late 1760s and 1770s, the Longmeadow shop began to develop motifs that were richly symbolic: hour glasses, cocks crowing, and flowers cut by scythes (Fig. 20). During the 1780s and 1790s, the shop produced portrait stones and crowned cherubs reminiscent of, though distinguishable from, the cherubs of the 1760s. These stones with profiles and crowned cherubs, which continued to be produced after the death of Ezra Stebbins I in 1796 may have been the work of Ezra Stebbins II (1760-1819) of Longmeadow.[36] Under the leadership of Herman Newell (1774-1833), the Longmeadow shop continued to produce gravestones until the 1820s.[37]

The developments in the southern towns of Old Hampshire County, Massachusetts, during the 1760s and 1770s did not have much of an impact on the more northerly river towns. Williston did place gravestones in Deerfield, Hadley, Hatfield and Northampton during the mid-1760s, but Phelps resumed his business and recovered his customers by the late 1760s. Most people around Northampton bought from Phelps during the late 1760s or did not buy. In Northfield and Sunderland, the vast majority of those who died before 1770 lay in graves unmarked by stones. West of the river in the recently settled and rapidly growing hill towns, unmarked graves were the rule.

The situation in the northern part of the county changed dramatically during the 1770s. Once again Nathaniel Phelps saw his livelihood threatened by outsiders. The challenge to Phelps and to the popularity in western Massachusetts of the Connecticut shop traditions of sandstone carving came from the Soule family of southeastern Massachusetts stonecutters who had already established themselves in neighboring Worcester County. Around 1760, Ebenezer Soule, Sr. (1711-92), the patriarch of this family of gravestone cutters, moved from Plympton in Plymouth County to Rutland Dis-


Figure 19. Mary Bliss, 1757, Longmeadow, Mass. Documented to Ezra Stebbins I. See notes 33-34.

a. 1760s

b. 1760-70s

c. 1780s

d. 1780-90s

e. 1780-90s

f. 1790-1810s

Figure 20. Longmeadow shop motifs.

trict, now called Barre, in Worcester County.[38] Later his sons Beza (1750-1835) and Coomer (1747-77) joined him. Visits by members of this family to the mid-Connecticut River valley marked the beginning of a third stage in the progression of gravestone carving in western Massachusetts. During the late 1770s and 1780s, the successors of these southeastern Massachusetts stonecutters, who preferred to work in slate, dominated stone carving in the northernmost towns of Old Hampshire County and even challenged the popularity of sandstone gravestones as far south as Hadley and Hatfield.

The Soules were the first true itinerants to cut gravestones in the river towns of Old Hampshire County. From their base in Barre, they traveled to Deerfield, Sunderland, Stockbridge, Lanesborough and other towns in western Massachusetts to cut grave markers in locally available slate, sandstone, limestone and marble. Unlike Gideon Hale and William Holland, they did not own land in Old Hampshire County nor give any other indication of an intention to settle in the communities they visited; occasional account book references, payment of a poll tax, and scattered gravestones mark their peregrinations during the early 1770s.[39] When they found there were few gravestones to cut, they hired themselves out as casual laborers. Farming appears to have played only a minor role in providing for their subsistence.

The distribution of their stones in western Massachusetts suggests the varying degrees of success that greeted their itinerancies. In the graveyards of Sunderland and neighboring Montague, where there had been few grave markers, Ebenezer Soule or possibly his son Coomer used a locally available sandstone to cut approximately two dozen stones with the family's distinctive "medusas."[40] Because of the poor quality of the stone, these medusa markers were rather roughly cut and the placement of such markers remained a localized phenomenom. In Deerfield, where Beza and Coomer placed two dozen anthropomorphic angel stones in 1772, they successfully capitalized on a lingering taste for slate gravestones (Fig. 21).[41] The availability of slate in nearby Bernardston enabled them to satisfy an existing desire for quality slate gravestones at an affordable price. Few of these slate stones, however, were placed by the Soules in neighboring towns. Sometime around 1774, Coomer traveled through Berkshire County in far western Massachusetts, but cut only a few stones, for members of the region's leading families.[42]

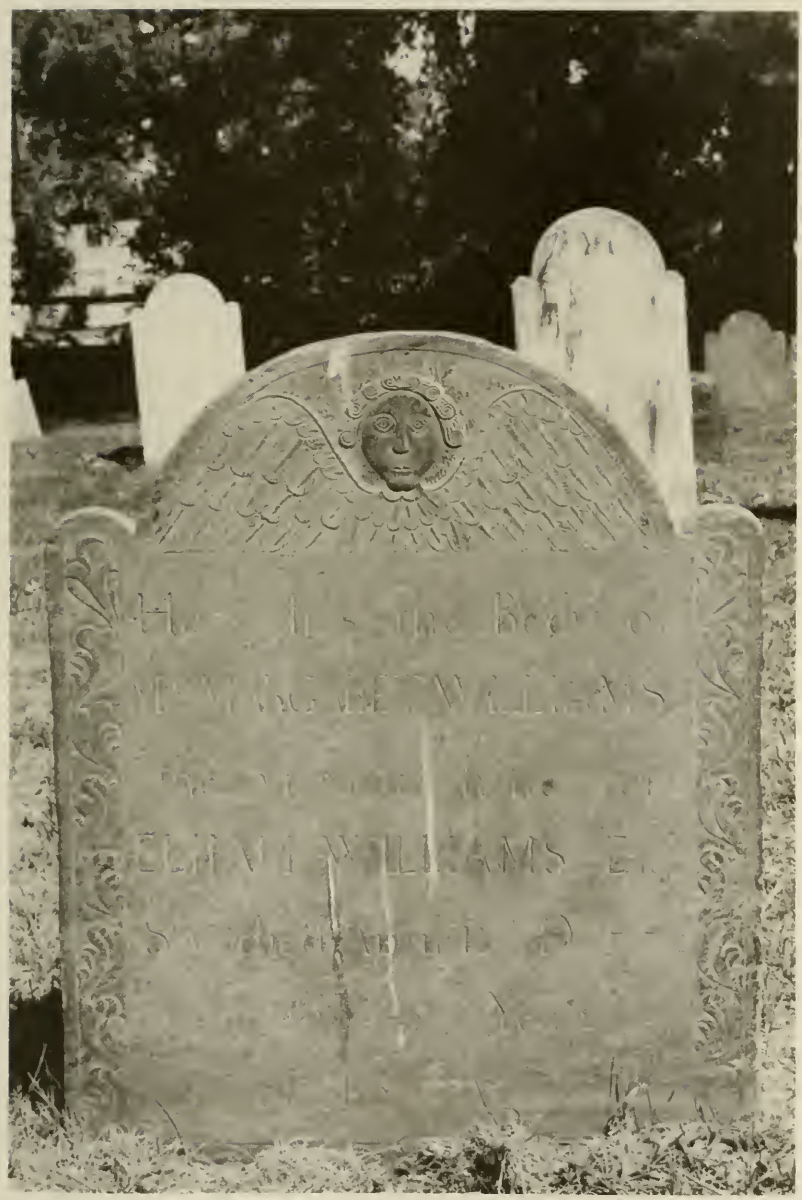

Figure 21. Margaret Williams, 1773, Deerfield, Mass. Attributed to Beza or Coomer Soule.

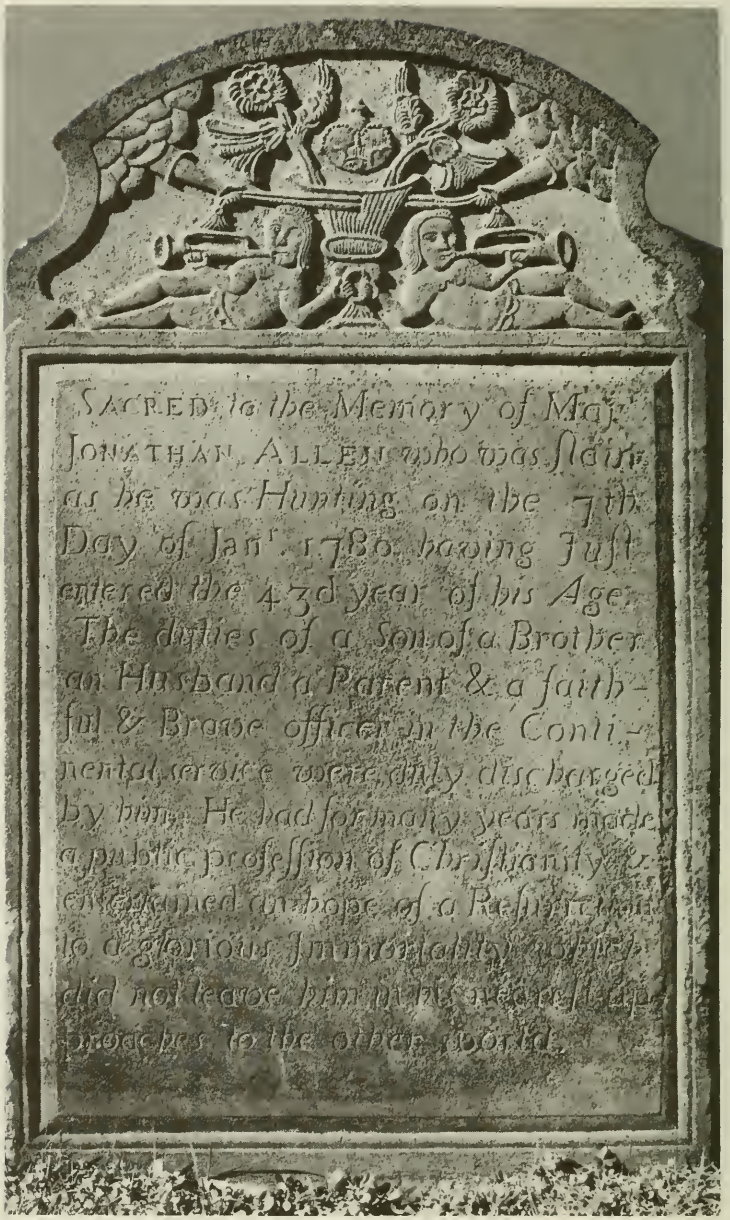


Figure 22. Jonathan Allen, 1780, Northampton, Mass. Documented to Nathaniel Phelps. See note 43.

The itinerancies into western Massachusetts by the Soules ended with the death of Coomer in 1777 and Ebenezer's departure for Hinsdale, New Hampshire in the same year. Despite the brief duration of the itinerancies, the family's work had a lasting influence in the Massachusetts river towns, because competitors such as Nathaniel Phelps and their own apprentices quickly domesticated the anthropomorphic angel. For the remainder of the 1770s and throughout the 1780s, naturalistic angels replaced stylized winged or crowned cherubs as the most popular image on gravestones in the northern towns of Old Hampshire County.

Soon after the Soules' stay in Deerfield, Nathaniel Phelps's Northampton shop began making very austere sandstone markers with anthropomorphic angels (Fig. 10e). In the late 1770s or the 1780s, the shop produced several very ambitious stones with angels or imps holding aloft crowns and blowing trumpets or bugles that owed little or nothing to indigenous traditions but attempted to respond to a new taste for naturalistic gravestones (Fig. 22). While Phelps received payment for at least one of these stones, they could be the work of another hand.[43] Phelps's son Elijah (1761-1842) could have had a hand in producing these stones or they may be largely the work of an undiscovered stonecutter working as a journeyman for Phelps.

More directly indebted to the Soules' angels were the images on slate stones that a new generation of stonecutters in the Deerfield area began producing. These stonecutters continued to supply interested customers in Bernardston, Deerfield, Greenfield, Hatfield, Montague, Sunderland and Whately with a version of the Soule angel until at least 1800. The training of these stonecutters who set up local shops was the most lasting legacy of the Soules. Though it is not possible to document certain stonecutters' associations with the Soules, timing, proximity and visual evidence suggest the existence of master-apprentice relationships with members of the Soule family (Fig. 23). The production of slate gravestones by these cutters and their acceptance in the northern river towns broke the unity created by the Connecticut River valley's network of stonecutters working in sandstone.

First of the local stonecutters to begin working in slate was Ebenezer Janes (1736-1808) of Northfield. Janes may have been a practicing stonecutter before the Soules' itinerancies, but the dates of the surviving

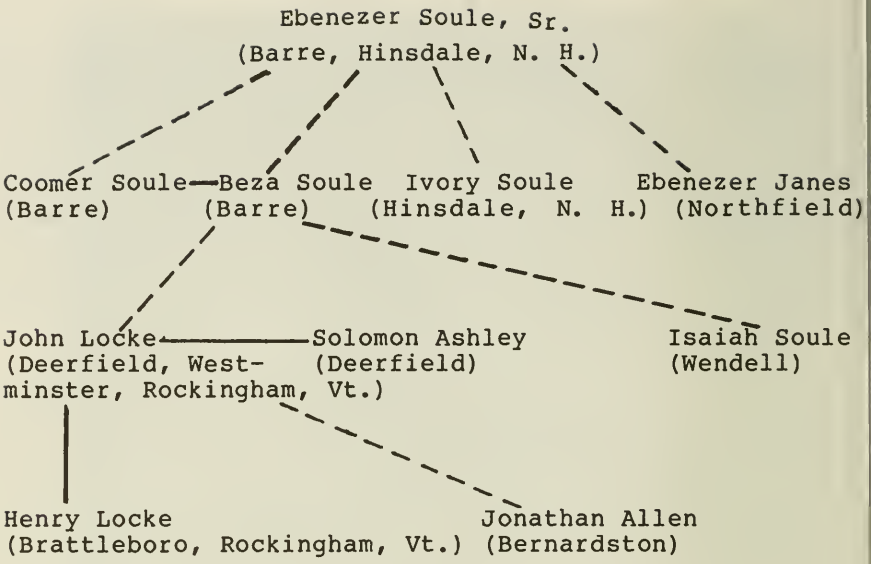


Figure 23. The Soules and their probable apprentices. Solid lines: documented; dashed lines: probable.

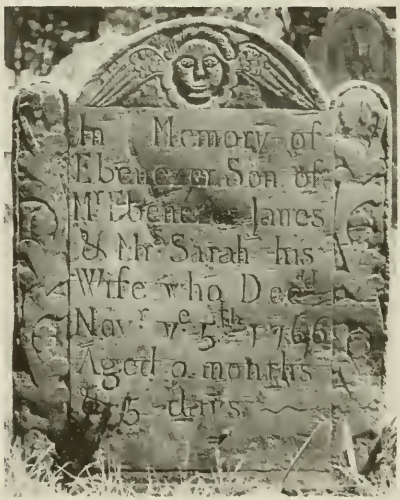


Figure 24. Ebenezer Janes, Jr., 1766, Northfield, Mass. Attributed to Ebenezer Janes.

examples of his work suggest that he learned the stonecutter's trade late in life, perhaps from Ebenezer Soule, Sr. A prominent life-long resident of Northfield, the forty-one-year-old Janes stood fifth on Northfield's tax list in 1771. He owned a mill and sixty-three acres of prime farm land.[44] A town leader, he served as a selectman and would later represent the town in the legislature and would receive a commission as justice of the peace. Janes was also a part time "gravestone manufacturer."[45] The earliest stones which can be attributed to him are winged angels that began appearing in the Northfield graveyard probably during the 1770s; among the earliest dated of these stones is the marker of his son, Ebenezer Janes, Jr (Fig. 24). These early slate stones, which bear a strong resemblance to the "fish winged" angel stones of Ebenezer Soule that are found in neighboring Hinsdale, New Hampshire, suggest that sometime in the 1770s Janes came under the elder Soule's influence (Fig. 25). Several characerteristics found on contemporary angel stones of the Soules are found on Janes's earliest stones: almond-shaped eyes with split pupils, a split upper lip, wings with scalelike feathers and stripes, and tightly curled hair or wigs. During the 1780s and 1790s, Janes developed his own distinctive winged effigies characterized

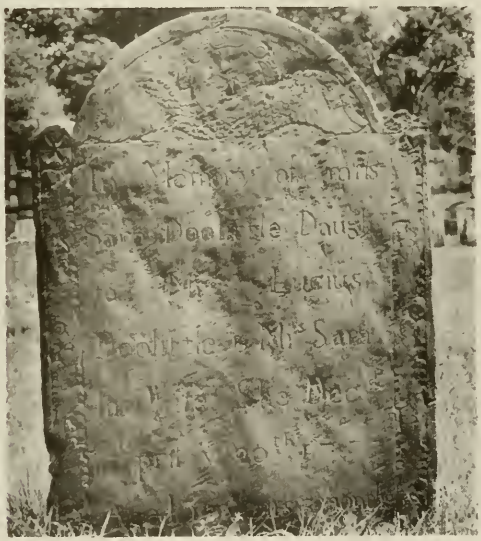

Figure 25. Sara Doolittle, 1773, Northfield, Mass. Attributed to Ebenezer Soule, Sr.

by very human-looking, puffy faces with long narrow eyes and wavy hair and wildly flapping wings (Fig. 26). Around 1800, he began to cut stones with male and female portraits (Fig. 27). Despite his obvious artistry and technical proficiency, he placed few stones outside of Northfield and the neighboring towns of Bernardston, Gill and Warwick. It appears that for this prosperous and prominent Northfield resident, gravestone manufacturing remained a sideline.

For Janes's neighbors and contemporaries--John Locke (1752-1837) and Solomon Ashley (1754-1823)--gravestone cutting was a way of life and probably the chief source of their income. Locke moved in the early 1770s from Woburn, in eastern Massachusetts, to Deerfield, where he probably came into contact with a member of the Soule family who trained him as a stonecutter.[46] Surviving stones in Deerfield, Hatfield and Whately as well as documentary evidence suggest he began working on his own around 1780.[47] Like other stonecutters who were masons, he supplemented his income by plastering and laying bricks.[48] His earliest gravestones with anthropomorphic angel heads with feathered wings and vine borders bear a striking resemblance to the gravestones Beza and Coomer Soule placed in the Deerfield burying ground, though Locke's flatter relief overall, his more cursory articulation of the feathers, his treatment of the pupils, and the angel's broader proportions distinguished his angels from those of his probable mentors (Fig. 28).

At some time in the late 1780s, Locke formed a partnership with Solomon Ashley, the son of Deerfield's former minister. Ashley was trained either in Hinsdale by Ebenezer Soule, Sr. around 1783 or in Deerfield by Locke himself.[49] The fact that Ashley's angel stones were virtually identical to Locke's version and remain hard to distinguish from it suggests strongly that Locke may have been his master (Fig. 29). Clearly the two worked together during the later 1780s and early 1790s, producing flocks of winged angels. During this period Locke also produced a male portrait stone which closely resembled his almond-eyed angels,[50] and an angel stone with blank eyes and no articulation of the wing feathers, while Ashley produced gravestones for children with coffins or six-pointed rosettes as the central motif (Fig. 30). They placed their stones as far south as South Hadley and Northampton and as far north as Hinsdale, New Hampshire, but the river towns immediately adjoining Deerfield and the rapidly growing

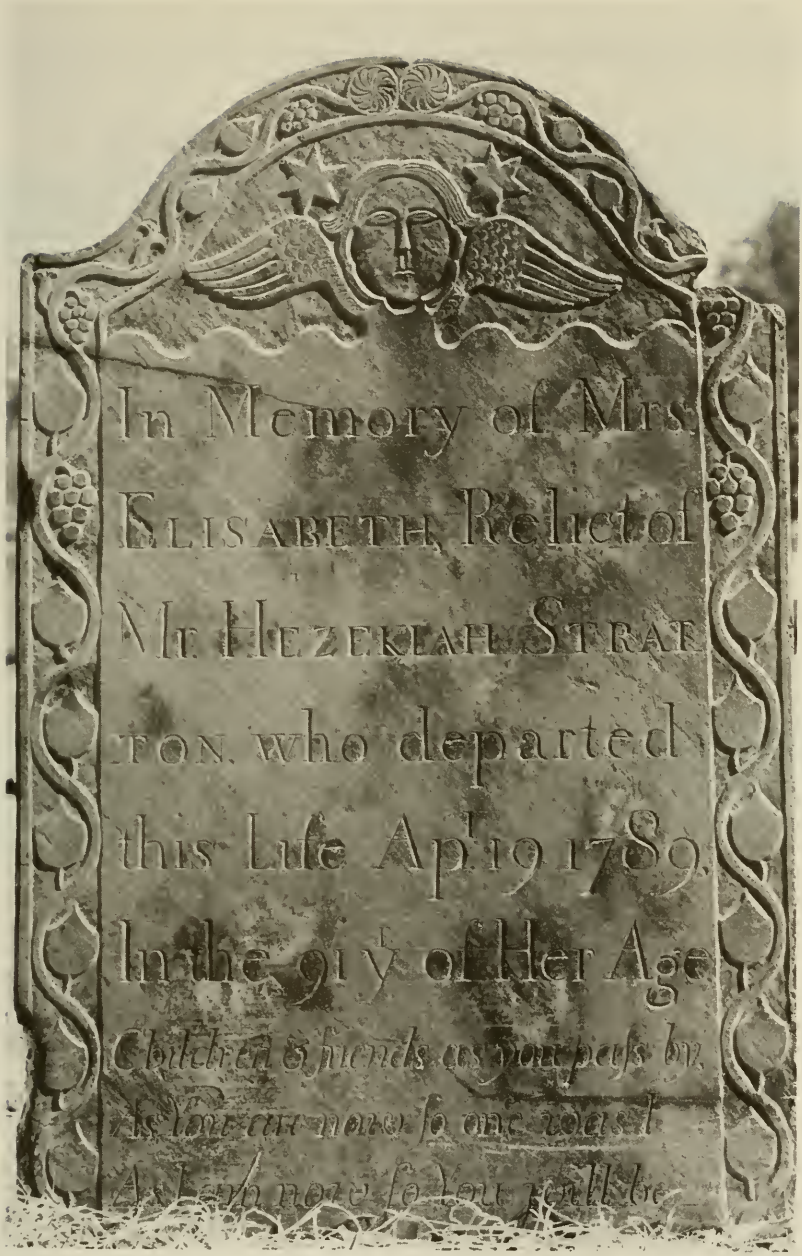


Figure 26. Elisabeth Stratton, 1789, Northfield, Mass. Attributed to Ebenezer Janes.

a. 1770-80s

b. 1780s

c. 1790s

d. 1800s

Figure 27. Effigies by Ebenezer Janes and date ranges.

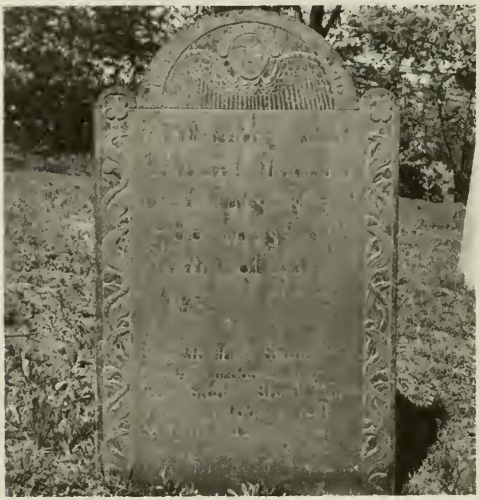

Figure 28. Samuel McCall, 1780, So. Deerfield, Mass. Documented to John Locke (Hampshire County Probate Registry, Box 95, no. 51).

hill towns to the north and west formed their prime market.

In addition to producing slate gravestones, the shop offered marble markers. As early as 1787, Ashley purchased marble from Elijah Phelps, the son of Nathaniel, who operated a quarry in Lanesborough, Massachusetts.[51] It is possible that Ashley received some training in working marble from Phelps. It is documented that both Locke and Ashley began producing marble gravestones with abstract effigies and angels in the early 1790s. Some of their portrait stones, such as those in Hatfield for Deacon Obadiah Dickinson and his wives, that can be documented to different hands, are indistinguishable and suggest common workmanship.[52] Eventually, Ashley's marble stones evolved into haunting, stylized mourning figures, while Locke produced primarily abstract angels in marble. Occasionally, Locke put his abstract angels and unadorned heads on slate stones, a practice which became more common after he moved to Brattleboro, Vermont around 1797.[53]

This experimentation by Locke and Ashley was not an isolated development peculiar to their shop. During the 1790s other stonecutters working in the region produced alternatives to the anthropomorphic angel that had become popular in the 1770s and 1780s. In Northampton, the Phelps shop, under the direction of Rufus Phelps (1766-1826), produced rather abstract, incised angel stones that marked a break with the naturalistic carving that had distinguished the shop during the late 1770s and 1780s.[54] Up the Connecticut River in the area of Rockingham, Vermont, imaginative stonecutters working in slate produced unusual stones that mixed previous gravestone motifs and neoclassical devices with soul discs, foliated carving, scalloping, hearts, rosettes and birds.[55] Despite the diversity of technique, training and materials, the work of all of these cutters shared a rejection of the literal reproduction of gravestone designs taken directly from southeastern Massachusetts or Connecticut and an increasingly abstract treatment of central motifs.

Abstract treatment of effigies and the presence of folk motifs could also be found on the gravestones purchased by residents of the Massachusetts river towns from stonecutters outside of the Connecticut River valley. Members of the Sikes family working in Belchertown, Massachusetts sold some of their stones decorated with stylized spirit images or effigies, undulating

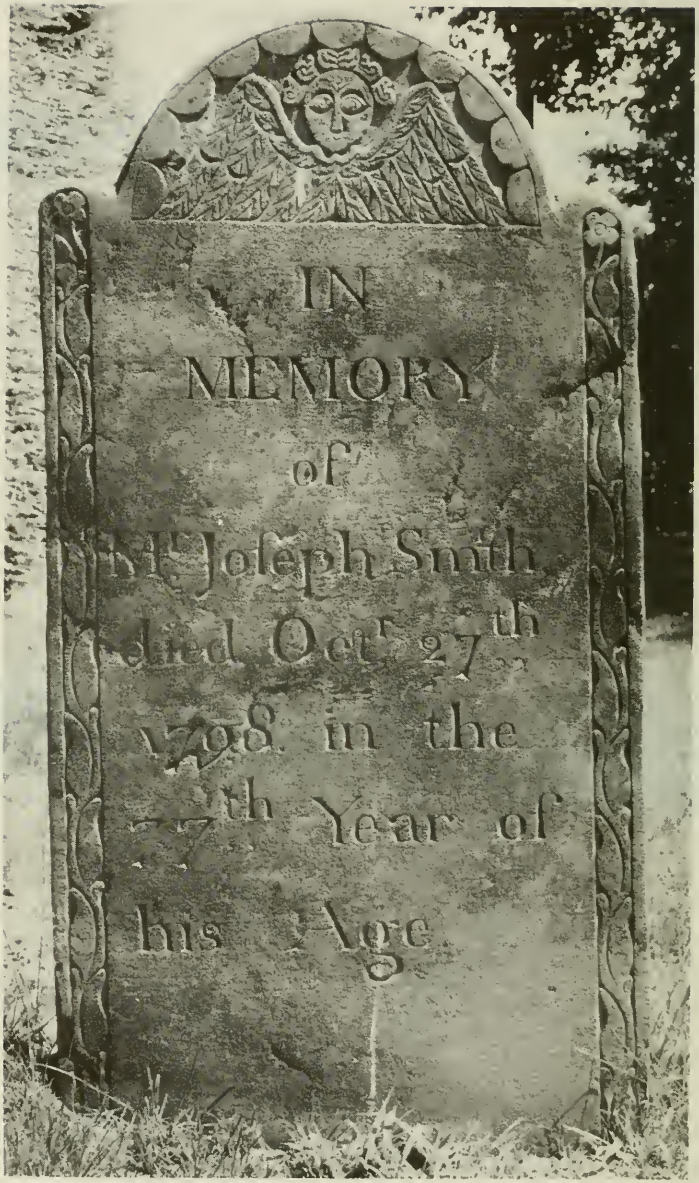


Figure 29. Joseph Smith, 1798, Hatfield, Mass. Documented to Solomon Ashley (Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 20, p. 278).

a. Locke & Ashley, 1780-1800

b. Locke, late 1780s

c. Ashley, 1780s

d. Locke, 1790s

e. Locke & Ashley, 1790s

f. Ashley, 1790s

g. Locke, early 1790s

h. Locke, mid-1790s

Figure 30. Effigies produced by the shop of John Locke and Solomon Ashley.

vines, hearts and whorl rosettes to customers in Hadley Hatfield, Northampton and Sunderland.[56] These schist stones did not lend themselves to precise detail, and their carvers drew upon a more abstract ornamental tradition from eastern Connecticut. Also distinguished by stylized portraits, whorl rosettes, tudor roses, vines and hearts were the marble gravestones of Roger Booth (d. 1849) that leading families in Northampton, Hadley and Hatfield imported from southern Vermont.[57] Elijah Phelps of Lanesborough also supplied marble gravestones, and other stonecutters from the hill towns east of the Connecticut River supplied customers along the river with schist or granite gravestones during the late 1780s and the 1790s.

It is difficult to decide what to make of this sudden popularity of abstract treatment of effigies and folk motifs. Though this development in the northern part of Old Hampshire County remained a counterpoint to the continued production of stones with winged angels and to the introduction of neoclassical urns and more naturalistic portrait stones, these gravestones do represent a recognizable stage--a fourth stage--in gravestone usage and carving in the Massachusetts river towns. The use of marble and harder materials such as schist and granite, which did not lend themselves to cutting precise detail, probably encouraged the abstrac rendering of stylized images. The slowly growing popularity of marble stones, especially among the well-to-do, supported the production of such portrait stones and spirit images, for the customers may have bought the stones because of the material as well as the images. Advertisements in newspapers during the 1790s and early 1800s make much of the materials used. The specificity of the information on materials such as "best blue stone, of the Bernardston kind" (slate from the Bernardston quarry), "Lanesborough white marble," and "Middlebury Marble" contrasts sharply with the complete lack of information in advertisements on the decoration of the stones.[58] In addition to the aesthetic appeal of the materials, claims in the advertisements for their durability may have encouraged their use.[59]

Competition among stonecutters also contributed to the innovation and experimentation. Newspaper advertisements indicate that competition existed among local stonecarvers and between established carvers and newcomers.[60] By reducing detail, eliminating foliate borders and employing stylized effigies, stonecutters

such as Ashley and Rufus Phelps reduced the labor that went into their stones and presumably made them less expensive to produce and more marketable. At the same time, use of folk motifs could produce distinctive stones that would be distinguishable from the flocks of winged angels. Competition in a developing commercial environment rather than isolation and unchallenged traditions seems to have produced these individualistic stones rich in imagery.

Whatever the factors initiating and supporting it, the flowering of the 1790s proved to be short-lived. Neoclassical motifs--primarily the urn and willow--began appearing in the region's graveyards in the 1790s and marked the beginning of the fifth and final stage in eighteenth-century stonecutting in the river towns. In Deerfield, Greenfield and Sunderland, the urn motif quickly came to dominate in the first decade of the new century. Local cutters working in slate, such as Solomon Ashley and Jonathan Allen (1766-1836) of Bernardston,[61] and their customers adopted the new motifs without apparent hesitation. By the 1810s the urn motifs penetrated the hill towns, while rosettes and hearts assumed a distinctly subordinate and diminishing role as secondary motifs. The speed with which the neoclassical imagery was adopted probably resulted from the intense competition among established local cutters and their vulnerability to incoming eastern Massachusetts stonecutters who could quickly set themselves up to supply slate gravestones for local customers.[62] The neoclassical stones not only bespoke the latest fashion, but also could be inexpensively produced.[63]

In those towns in which a preference for sandstone gravestones continued to hold sway, the urn and willow made a late and often rather brief appearance in the 1810s and 1820s. The shop in Longmeadow and other stonecutters who worked in sandstone in the Springfield area could still market stones with motifs that were in many cases direct descendants of William Holland's gravestones of the 1750s (Fig. 31a). Until around 1810, an imitator of the Sikes family's style continued to supply residents of Granby, South Hadley and Wilbraham with sandstone imitations of the Sikes family's distinctive effigies. In Northampton during the 1800s and 1810s, Rufus Phelps produced sandstone markers with heads simply outlined and surrounded by wavy lines or arched bands (Fig. 31c). The sandstone medium in which these cutters worked and their customers' preference for it temporarily protected the cutters from some of

a. Longmeadow shop

b. Sikes family imitator

c. Rufus Phelps, Northampton

Figure 31. Late effigy styles.

the innovations in motifs that grew out of the intense competition among the stonecutters who worked in slate in the county's northern towns. In particular, migrating stonecutters from eastern Massachusetts, who worked in slate, avoided the sandstone quarries and preferred to establish themselves in areas where they could obtain a material with wich they were familiar. The urn would eventually triumph even in the towns from Hatfield and Hadley to Agawam and Longmeadow, for the shift in motifs eventually transcended the shift in the preference for particular materials. With the acceptance of the urn and willow and the growing dominance of marble as the material of choice, the Connecticut River valley traditions in stonecutting passed from the river towns of western Massachusetts.

As with other regional analyses of stone carving, a study of the eighteenth-century gravestones and stone carvers of the mid-Connecticut River valley helps to refine the views of New England gravestone carving that were created by the early focus on eastern Massachusetts and also by the early fascination with iconographic analysis. This study points up the often slighted roles played by networks among craftsmen and by materials in shaping regional styles in stonecutting. It

also suggests the extent to which competition among stonecutters may have influenced stylistic change.

In the Connecticut River valley the availability of river transport, the similar training of stonecutters and the distribution of the valley's sandstone created an environment in which it was hard for the archetypal, isolated folk craftsman to flourish, and few did in the Massachusetts river towns. Stonecutters in the river towns in Old Hampshire County were by and large skilled craftsmen knit together by shared training and kinship into networks that transcended parochial boundaries. Their customers included merchants, ministers and prosperous yeomen farmers enriched by the valley's commercial farming. Changing gravestone fashions from the 1730s to the 1770s were quickly communicated throughout the valley by stones shipped from Middletown as far north as Deerfield and by Middletown trained apprentices and journeymen who traveled up the valley seeking to establish themselves as local masters. Resident stonecutters in the river towns of Old Hampshire County had to respond or watch their clients purchase stones from these readily available alternatives.

The favored styles in gravestone carving shifted over the course of a century as stonecutters and their customers responded to changing fashions. The resulting progression of styles from the unadorned, simply lettered markers to gravestones with urns and willows did not closely parallel the evolution of styles in eastern Massachusetts. Old Hampshire County stonecutters working in sandstone responded to stonecutting traditions rooted in Windsor and altered by innovations from Middletown, Connecticut. Outside of Deerfield's burying ground, winged death's heads made only a brief and uneventful appearance in the 1730s. The ebb and flow of religious enthusiasm in what was the cradle of religious revivalism in eighteenth-century New England left no obvious impression on the region's funerary art. The 1735 valley revival left not a mark on local cutters' work, and the introduction of the cherub in the 1740s was embraced by friends and foes of the Great Awakening of the 1740s.

A taste for different materials and a shift in materials did clearly influence consumers' preferences and influenced motifs. In Deerfield, family ties to Dorcester stonecutters created a preference for slate gravestones in the 1720s and produced a burying ground that has fifty-five stones with death's heads. After

1770, this preference for slate gravestones and the availability of slate deposits opened the county's northern towns to influences from eastern Massachusetts. The shift in material introduced a new motif--the anthropomorphic angel--and broke the unity in the river towns which had rested on the shared use of sandstone. By the 1790s competition among local stonecutters, who worked in slate, and newcomers produced a creative flowering. It was curiously under these conditions of competition in an environment shaped by population growth and economic growth that the production of stones with motifs usually associated with folk traditions and folk artists flourished. During the same period the introduction of marble as a medium encouraged the creation of stylized, abstract angels and portraits. The medium in which stones were cut, as well as the inscriptions and iconography, thus appears to be part of the message worth studying in an analysis of a region's changing preferences in gravestones.

NOTES

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[1]James Deetz, In Small Things Forgotten: The Archeology of Early American Life (New York: Doubleday, 1977), p. 85.

[2]All Massachusetts towns west of today's Worcester County were part of Hampshire County from 1662 to 1761. In 1761 the far western towns were set off to create Berkshire County. In 1812 Hampshire County was divided into thirds to create today's Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden counties. In this article the term "Old Hampshire County" will be used to refer to the area presently covered by the counties of Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden. The river towns of Old Hampshire County on which this study focuses are Bernardston, Gill, Greenfield, Deerfield, Whately, Hatfield, Northampton, Easthampton, Southampton, West Springfield, Agawam, Westfield, Northfield, Montague, Sunderland, Hadley, South Hadley, Chicopee, Springfield, Longmeadow, Wil-

braham (originally a part of Springfield), and Enfield and Suffield, Connecticut which were a part of Old Hampshire County, Massachusetts until 1750. See map.

[3]Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones I," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 16, no. 1 (1951), 1-5.

[4]Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 6, p. 77.

[5]Peter Benes, The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805 (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), p. 38.

[6]Mehitable Partridge, 1730, Hatfield; Jerusha and Eleazer Porter, 1726, Hadley.

[7]E. g. Experience Nash, 1724, Northampton; Sgt. John Marsh, 1725, Hadley; Dr. John Bernard, 1726, Hadley.

[8]Called stonecutter in deed dated 1747, Hampden [originally Hampshire] County Deeds, vol. R, p. 129 (Springfield, Mass. Registry of Deeds).

[9]Harriette Merrifield Forbes, Gravestones of Early New England and the Men who Made Them, 1653-1800 (1927; rpt. New York: DaCapo, 1967), p. 55.

[10]Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 5, p. 64.

[11]Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones V," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 21, no. 1 (1956), 1-21.

[12]The Thomas Bliss stone, 1733, Springfield, is by an unknown Connecticut carver referred to as the "Glastonbury Lady Carver." See Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones IV," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 19, no. 4 (1954), pp. 105-08. The Rev. Daniel Brewer stone, 1733, and the Daniel Brewer, Jr. stone, 1733, Springfield, are of a type that have been attributed to the Johnsons but may be by an unidentified carver working in their shop. For an example of the type, see Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones V," p. 9, figure 11.

[13]Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones VII," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 25, no. 1 (1960), pp. 1-6.

[14]Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones V," p. 11; "Connecticut Gravestones VI," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 23, no. 1 (1958), p. 36; Hampden County Deeds, vol. K, p. 381; Donald L. Jacobus and Edgar F. Waterman, Hale, House, and Related Families (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1952), pp. 38, 64, 65.

[15]Estate of Gideon Hale, 1777, Middletown Probate District, File no. 1563 (Connecticut State Library; cited hereafter as CSL).

[16]Kevin M. Sweeney, "Mansion People: The River Gods and Material Culture," pp. 6-7, paper delivered at Historic Deerfield Colloquium on Material Cuture in the Connecticut Valley, 1982 (copy at the Historic Deerfield Library, Deerfield, Mass.).

[17]Israel Williams, 1741, Hatfield; William Ashley, 1742, Deerfield; Col. Samuel Partridge, 1740, Hatfield.

[18]Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones V," pp. 11-13; "Connecticut Gravestones VI," pp. 33-39; James Russell Trumbull, "Northampton Genealogy," unpub. vol. 3 of his History of Northampton, p. 336 (Forbes Library, Northampton); Hampden County Deeds, vol. 4, p. 600.

[19]Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones V," p. 6.

[20]Joseph Hawley 2nd, "Account Book, 1724-58," p. 95 (Forbes Library, Northampton).

[21]Anne B. Webb, "On the Eve of Revolution: Northampton, Massachusetts, 1750-1775" (Ph. D. diss. University of Minnesota, 1976), pp. 242-43.

[22]Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 13, p. 4; he died insolvent, Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 16, p. 110.

[23]E. g. Rev. William Williams tablestone, 1741, Hatfield; Col. John Stoddard tablestone, 1748, Northampton.

[24]The Sarah Williams stone, 1770, Hatfield, is called "curiously wrought" in a receipt signed by Capt. Thomas Johnson in John Williams, "Journal and Account Book," n. p. (Northampton Historical Society).

[25]Hampden County Deeds, vol. Z, p. 19; e. g. Nathan-

iel Sutlieff, 1760, Durham, in Allan I. Ludwig, Graven Images: New England Stone Carving and Its Symbols, 1650-1815 (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), plate 192 A; see also Estate of Nathaniel Sutlieff, 1760, Middletown District File no. 3449 (CSL).

[26]Thomas Hale, 1750, Longmeadow; agreement to make two pair of gravestones for the parents of Jonathan, John and Noah Hale, ms. receipt, Feb. 21, 1757, signed by William Holland (Springfield Public Library).

[27]Thomas B. Warren, "Springfield Families," vol. 3, p. 755 (Springfield Public Library); Joseph Williston was paid forty-one shillings, four pence for the Christian Williams stone, 1766, Hatfield, John Williams, "Journal and Account Book," n. p. (Northampton Historical Society).

[28]Estate of Nathaniel Bliss, 1772, Box 16, no. 35, Registry of Probate, Northampton; John H. Bliss, Genealogy of the Bliss Family about the Year 1550 to 1880 (Boston: privately printed, 1881), pp. 54, 84.

[29]Forbes, pp. 117, 118, 127.

[30]Hampden County Deeds, vol. 13, p. 95; Hampshire County Probate Records, vol. 13, pp. 83-84.

[31]Hampden County Deeds, vol. 29, p. 88; East Hartford, First Church Records, vol. 1, p. 21 (CSL); Estate of John Buckland, 1793, Box 22, no. 3, Registry of Probate, Northampton.

[32]E. g. Hampden County Deeds, vol. 2, p. 431, vol. 13, p. 64, vol. 23, pp. 483-84. In 1752 Aaron Bliss of Longmeadow is paid for the following: May 30, "making brick," June 1, "carting clay," and July 10, "seting Brick." See Samuel Colton, "Account Book, Journal A, November 18, 1748 to November 28, 1753," p. 46 (Longmeadow Historical Society). See n. 28.

[33]"Ezra Stebbins, May 4, 1773 By a pair of Grave Stones for Mary Bliss 22/," entry in an unidentified merchant's account book (Longmeadow Historical Society); Estate of Jedediah Bliss, 1778, Box 16, no. 17, Registry of Probate, Northampton; Ralph Stebbins Greenlee and Robert Lemuel Greenlee, The Stebbins Genealogy (Chicago: privately printed, 1904), I, 180.

[34]The stone in Figure 19 is backdated. It is of a

type probably made between the late 1760s and late 1770s. A 1773 date of manufacture is consistent with the Mary Bliss stone in Longmeadow. It is the only Mary Bliss stone which the author has located.

[35]A Martin Root is paid Ь 20 for the stone for Rev. John Ballentine, 1776, Westfield. See John H. Lockwood, Westfield and Its Historic Influences, 1669-1919 (Springfield, Mass: by the author, 1922), II, 159. The Ballentine stone is clearly part of the production of the Longmeadow shop. There is no record that Root was a stonecutter. He was a life-long resident of Westfield; the Ballentine stone and the others like it were clearly made in Longmeadow. Root appears to have been acting merely as a third party in this transaction. See James Pierce Root, Root Genealogical Records, 1600-1870, Comprising the General History of the Root and Roots Families in America (New York: R. C. Root, Anthony & Co. 1870), p. 329.

[36]Ezra Stebbins, Jr. was the son of a stonecutter and the son-in-law of a mason, Aaron Bliss (1730-1810). There is no proof that he cut gravestones. The family genealogy provides no support for the supposition that he was. See Greenlee and Greenlee, vol. 1, p. 246. Forbes lists Ezra Stebbins (1760-1819) as a gravestone maker (p. 130).

[37] Forbes, p. 129. She lists Herman Newell (1774-1833) as having signed gravestones, such as the stone for Roger Ellsworth, 1811, Windsor, Ct.

[38]See Benes, pp. 123-30, 134-41.

[39]1772 Deerfield Tax List, microfilm (Historic Deerfield Library); Sarah Barnard, "Account Book," September, 1772, Nov. 24, 1772 (Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield; hereafter cited as PVMA).

[40]Benes, p. 140.

[41]See n. 39.

[42]E. g., Timothy Woodbridge, 1774, Stockbridge; Abigail Woodbridge, 1772, Stockbridge; Hannah Williams, 1769, Lanesborough; Nathaniel Williams, Jr., 1769, Lanesborough.

[43]Estate of Jonathan Allen, 1780, "paid Nathaniel Phelps for grave Stones Ь 9-17-0," on April 11, 1786,

"List of Debts paid by the Executrix of the Estate of Jonathan Allen," Box 2, no. 46, Probate Registry, Northampton.

[44]Betty Hobbs Pruitt, ed. The Massachusetts Tax Valuation List of 1771 (Boston: G. K. Hall and Co., 1978), p. 458.

[45]J. H. Temple and George Sheldon, History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts (Albany, N. Y.: Joel Monsell, 1875), pp. 319, 338, 364, 342, 364-65.

[46]George Sheldon, A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts (Deerfield: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1895-96), vol. 2, pp. 231-32.

[47]Advertisement by John Locke in Greenfield Gazette, July 2, 1795.

[48]See ms. bill, John Williams to John Locke, Williams Papers (PVMA).

[49]Amelia F. Miller, The Reverend Jonathan Ashley House (Deerfield: Heritage Foundation, 1962), p. 37.

[50]Portrait stones of this type can be attributed to both John Locke and Jonathan Allen (1766-1836) of Bernardston. Neither carver's portrait stones can be firmly documented at present.

[51]Ms. bill, Elijah Phelps to Solomon Ashley, Nov. 26, 1787, Ashley Papers (PVMA).

[52]See ms. bill, John Williams to John Locke, March, 1790, March, 1791, Box 4, Williams Papers (PVMA); Estate of Obadiah Dickinson, Hampshire County Probate, Box 48, no. 32.

[53]William N. Hosley, Jr., "The Rockingham Stonecarvers: Patterns of Stylistic Concentration and Diffusion in the Upper Connecticut River Valley, 1790-1817," Puritan Gravestone Art II, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folk Life Annual Proceedings, 1978 (Boston: Boston University Press, 1979), pp. 70-76.

[54]Advertisement by Rufus Phelps in Hampshire Gazette, Sept. 1, 1802; Hampden County Deeds, vol. 27, p. 114; Hampshire County Probate, box 113, no. 50, Registry of Probate, Northampton.

[55]Hosley, pp. 66-78.

[56]Forbes, pp. 108-09; Ludwig, pp. 412-16; additional work is being done on the Sikes family by Robert Drinkwater.

[57]One of the stones was signed "R Booth, Sculpt. Bennington." See Sue Kelly and Anne Williams, "'And the Men who Made Them': The Signed Gravestones of New England," MARKERS II: The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies (1983), p. 10.

[58]Greenfield Gazette, July 2, 1795; Hampshire Gazette, Aug. 24, 1812.

[59]Hampshire Gazette, Jan. 26, 1807.

[60]Greenfield Gazette, Sept. 18, 1794; Greenfield Gazette, July 2, 1795.

[61]Greenfield Gazette, Sept. 18, 1794; Sheldon, History of Deerfield, vol. 2, Genealogies, p. 17.

[62]For examples, see advertisements for Luke Carter, Greenfield Gazette, Oct. 25, 1802, Alpheas Longley, Hampshire Gazette, Nov. 19, 1805, and Samuel Doughtery, Hampshire Gazette, Dec. 30, 1806.

[63]Hosley, p. 78.

# Speaking Stones:
# New England Grave Carvings and the Emblematic Tradition

Lucien L. Agosta

> And know, reader, that though the stones in this wilderness are already grown so witty as to speak, they never yet that I could hear of, grew so wicked as to lye.
>
> --Cotton Mather, 1693[1]

Most commentators on Puritan gravestone art agree that New England Puritans, from the educated ministerial class to the laboring class responsible for the gravestone carvings, were familiar with the popular emblem tradition and were aware of specific English emblem books, most notably George Wither's A Collection of Emblemes (1635) and the enormously popular works of Francis Quarles, Emblemes (1635) and Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man (1638).[2] According to John W. Draper, the works of Francis Quarles "became for a hundred years the most approved expression of social and religious uplift among those Puritan readers whose powers could hardly presume to the consumption of Paradise Lost," while Rosemary Freeman, in discussing John Bunyan's use of emblems, has observed that "emblematic habits of thought" had been thoroughly "fostered in the Puritan mind by Quarles and Wither."[3] In spite of evidence for the popularity of emblems among Puritans in England and the New England colonies, however, few commentators on Puritan stonecarving have used the emblem tradition as a perspective glass with which to view the carvings. Including the carvings in the larger European emblematic tradition, however, helps to explain the origins of the various epitaphic conventions manifested on Puritan stones, many of which are quite voluble with moralizing verse addressed to the deceased or to the viewer. In addition, the identification of emblems and gravestones helps to explain why the iconophobic Puritans paradoxically exempted from an otherwise strict ban the profusion of images which fill their burial grounds. More important, seeing the stones as emblems provides a way of understanding how they may have been interpreted by those who erected them. In this essay, then, I would like to suggest that the Puritans, trained in ways of seeing by the emblem tradition, perceived their gravestones themselves as emblems and derived from the emblematic conjunction of epitaph and image the same kinds of moral, metaphysical, even mystical meanings which resonate in emblems

for those accustomed to viewing them. The communal Puritan burial ground may thus be seen as an emblem book with each separate stone a page in that book.

Due in part to the resilience of conventional images, the emblematic stonecarving tradition persisted in New England from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries, surviving even the significant changes wrought in Puritan culture by the Great Awakening and by a growing nationalism. Though aware of the need for qualification, I will use the term 'Puritan' to refer to that part of New England colonial culture which continued to carve and read gravestones as emblems until the end of the eighteenth century when the introduction of machine engraving, standardized urn and willow images, and marble as a replacement for slate ushered in a new set of gravestone conventions.

The slate markers carved by the Puritans and their 'Old' and 'New Light' eighteenth-century successors share the features of the traditional emblem, which combines picture and words that reciprocally interpret each other. The emblem's meaning is more connotative than denotative. Emblems suggest meanings which transcend the images and verses which compose them; they shadow forth the metaphysical or the unknown and thus provide intimations of that which can only be intuited. The emblem usually consists of three parts: the inscriptio or motto, which provides a general or abstract meaning; the pictura or image, which provides concrete, visual particulars; and the subscriptio or moral exposition, which provides, usually in verse, the application or exploration of the general idea. The emblems in George Wither's Collection of Emblemes have all three parts, though emblems in other collections may be truncated. In Wither's emblem 27 of book iv, for example, appears a picture of a death's head surmounting a winged hourglass (Fig. 1).[4] Surrounding this pictura is the motto or inscriptio "Vive Memor Lethi Fugit Hora" (Live mindful of death; time flies). Under this illustration and motto appear the verses which moralize the emblem, including the following lines:

> This vulgar Figure of a winged glasse,
> Doth signifie, how swiftly Time doth passe.
> By that leane Scull, which to this houre-glasse clings,
> We are informed what effect it brings;
> And, by the Words about it, wee are taught
> To keepe our latter ending still in thought.

Live, *ever mindfull of thy* dying;
*For,* Time *is alwayes from thee flying.* 235


ILLVSTR. XXVII. *Book.* 4

THis vulgar *Figure* of a *winged glaſſe*,
Doth ſignifie, how ſwiftly *Time* doth paſſe.
By that leane *Scull*, which to this *houre-glaſſe* clings,
We are informed what effect it brings;
And, by the *Words* about it, wee are taught
*To keepe our latter ending ſtill in thought.*
The common *houre-glaſſe*, of the *Life* of *Man*,
Exceedeth not the largeneſſe of a *ſpan*.
The *Sand*-like *Minutes*, flye away ſo faſt,
That, *yeares* are out, e're wee thinke *months* are paſt:
Yea, many times, our *nat'rall day* is gone,
Before wee look'd for *twelve a clocke at Noone*;
And, where wee ſought, for *Beauty*, *as the Full*,
Wee finde the *Fleſh* quite rotted from the *Skull*.
Let theſe Expreſſions of *Times* paſſage, bee
*Remembrancers* for ever, *Lord*, to mee;
That, I may ſtill bee guiltleſſe of their crime,
Who fruitleſly conſume their precious *Time*:
And, made my *Death*; not with a ſlaviſh feare,
But, with a thankfull uſe, of *life-time*, here:
Not grieving that my *dayes* away doe poſt;
But, caring rather, that they bee not loſt,
And, labʳing with Diſcretion, how I may
Redeeme the *Time*, that's vainely ſlipt away.
So, when that *moment* comes, which others dread,
I, undiſmay'd, ſhall climbe my *dying bed*;
With joyfull *Hopes*, my *Fleſh* to duſt commend;
In *Spirit*, with a ſtedfaſt *Faith* aſcend;
And, whilſt I *living* am, to *ſinne* ſo *dye*,
That *dying*, I may live eternally.



Figure 1. George Wither, A Collection of Emblemes (1635), book iv, emblem 27.

This emblem from Wither's Collection was a popular one in emblem books and appears, with variations, again and again on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England stones. For example, on the stone erected in 1678 for Captain Jonathan Poole of Wakefield, Massachusetts, appears the image of a skull surmounting an hourglass (Fig. 2). Wither's pictura is almost exactly reproduced on this gravestone, except that the wings, clearly attached to the hourglass in Wither, have become ambiguous on the Poole stone: Do they belong to the skull or to the hourglass, or to both? The stone also includes crossbones, a coffin, and a pick and shovel, schematized representations of the funeral procession depicted in the background of the pictura of Wither's emblem. As in the Wither emblem, the pictura on the Poole stone is surrounded by an inscriptio or motto; "Memento Te Esse Mortalem C ye 2" is inscribed over the arch containing the pictura, and "Fugit Hora" is inscribed beneath. The image and motto on the stone are followed, in true emblematic fashion, with a moralized verse which emphasizes the transformations death and time bring:

> FRINDS SURE WOULD PROVE TO FAR UNKIND
> IF OUT OF SIGHT THEY LEAVE HIM OUT OF MIND
> & NOW HE LIES TRANSFORM'D TO NATIVE DUST
> IN EARTHS COLD WOMB AS OTHER MORTALS MUST
> IT'S STRANGE HIS MATCHLESS WORTH INTOMB'D SHOULD L
> OR THAT HIS FAME SHOULD IN OBLIVION DY

This stone, and the many like it, could thus be read in the same way that one would read an emblem by Wither or Quarles.

Not all New England emblem-like stones have the three components of the emblem as clearly delineated as on the Poole stone. Though it is a very early or a very unusual later stone indeed which has no pictura, many stones have no inscriptio or motto and many, especialy early stones, truncate the subscriptio into a retrospective identification and chronology of the deceased, omitting a moralized verse. Though the stones vary in their adherence to strict emblem form, they are nevertheless to be read as emblems. This seems to be insisted upon by the carver of the Elizabet Butterick stone, 1772, Concord, Massachusetts, who replaces the moralizing verse by a long retrospective encomium to the virtues of this "Gentlewoman of Uncommo Prudence" (Fig. 3). That we are to read this stone as an emblem the carver has left no doubt. Above the

Figure 2. Capt. Jonathan Poole, 1678, Wakefield, Mass.

Figure 3. Elizabeth Butterick, 1772, Concord, Mass.

pictura, a schematized portrait, he has inscribed the word 'MOTTO' and on either side of the portrait medallion the words "Not as I will / But as Thou wilt." Though the stone has no clear explanatory verse in the tradition of Quarles and Wither, it nonetheless has a feature which forces us to read the stone as an emblem or, better, as an impresa, an emblem composed only of motto and image. Similarly, the reader of the Rebecca Bond stone, 1767, Concord, Massachusetts, is guided, probably by the same carver, to an emblematic reading by the placing of the word 'MOTTO' over a portrait flanked by "All is / Well!"

The emblems on Puritan stones may be divided into two large classes according to whether or not they include verse epitaphs. Those with epitaphs derive their power from the conjunction of image and verse, while those without rely primarily upon the immediacy of a startling image. These two classes of Puritan emblems reflect a similar division in the emblem tradition which early forked into two streams according to which aspect of the emblem, the verbal or the visual, the emblematist wished to emphasize. Those emblematists who emphasized the verbal component of the emblem belonged to the epigrammatic or rhetorical stream of the emblem tradition. Puritan gravestones featuring verse epitaphs may be included in the epigrammatic stream as well. On the other hand, those emblematists who emphasized the visual or pictorial component of the emblem belonged to the representational or hieroglyphic stream of the tradition. Most New England gravestones carved before the early eighteenth century are in this stream of the emblem tradition because they feature an image, usually a winged death's head, uninterpreted by a moralizing verse or epitaph. For Puritan viewers of these hieroglyphic stones, the verbally uninterpreted picturae served as ideograms in a pictorial language for making important religious truths accessible to all in the community, even to children and to the illiterate, much as did the bas-reliefs on medieval cathedrals.

The Puritans were heirs to an understanding of emblems as hieroglyphics through their familiarity with the works of Francis Quarles, who apparently accepted the Renaissance humanist belief that a major source of the emblem tradition was Egyptian hieroglyphics, which were interpreted as foreshadowings of divine things in the mysterious language of God. In the preface to Emblemes, Quarles asserts that "Before the knowledge of Letters God was known by Hieroglyphicks. And indeed

what are the Heavens, the Earth, nay, every Creature, but Hieroglyphicks and Emblemes of his Glory?"[5] Quarles called his second book of emblems Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man, and his preface to the reader called the work "an Aegyptian Dish," though it was "dress'd on the English Fashion," apparently a reference to the verses he attached to each image.[6] The makers of hieroglyphic Puritan stones, then, were emblematists for whom the uninterpreted pictura spoke internally to the hearts of beholders.

Those featuring a conjunction of image and moralized verse belong to the epigrammatic stream of the emblem tradition. This stream has its source in the Greek Anthology (sometimes referred to as the Planudean Anthology), that collection of ancient Greek tituli, votive offerings, and elegiac tombstone inscriptions preserved by various scholars through the ages, most notably Maximus Planudes (c. 1255-1305). Quarles and Wither derived a number of their emblems from the Greek Anthology through their borrowings from Andrea Alciati, the first emblematist and the coiner of the term. Alciati was so indebted to the Greek Anthology that almost fifty of the 220 verses in his Emblematum Liber (1531) were either imitations or translations directly from it, leading Mario Praz to assert that "between an emblem of Alciati and an epigram of the Anthology there is a difference only in name."

The verse epitaphs of epigrammatic New England stones, the epigrams of the Greek Anthology, and the emblematic verses of Quarles may all be divided into three rhetorical types according to their varying speaker-auditor relationships. That they all employ similar rhetorical conventions suggests a close familial relationship.[8] The first type includes those verses in which the speaker describes the subject of the verse in third person. On the Hannah Goodwin stone, 1777, Plymouth, Massachusetts, for example, a winged cherub presides over the following epitaph:

A Soul prepar'd Needs no delays
The Summons comes the Saint obeys
Swift was Her flight & short the Road
She closed Her Eyes & saw Her God
The Flesh rests here till Jesus comes
And claims the Treasure from the Tomb. (Fig. 4)

The voice in this epitaph refers to Hannah Goodwin in third person and directs the viewer into a sequential

reading of the emblem. The saint, represented in bliss by the winged cherub carved on the stone, is described as being now in the presence of God. The viewer who contemplates the angelic image of Hannah Goodwin is thus granted a glimpse of the celestial realm by the speaker in the epitaph, much as Dante is guided through Paradise by Beatrice. The viewer is then conducted back into this world in the concluding lines of the epitaph. Prepared by the celestial vision for the grim contemplation of the grave itself, the viewer is left with the assurance that death reigns over this realm only until Jesus comes to reclaim "the Treasure from the Tomb."

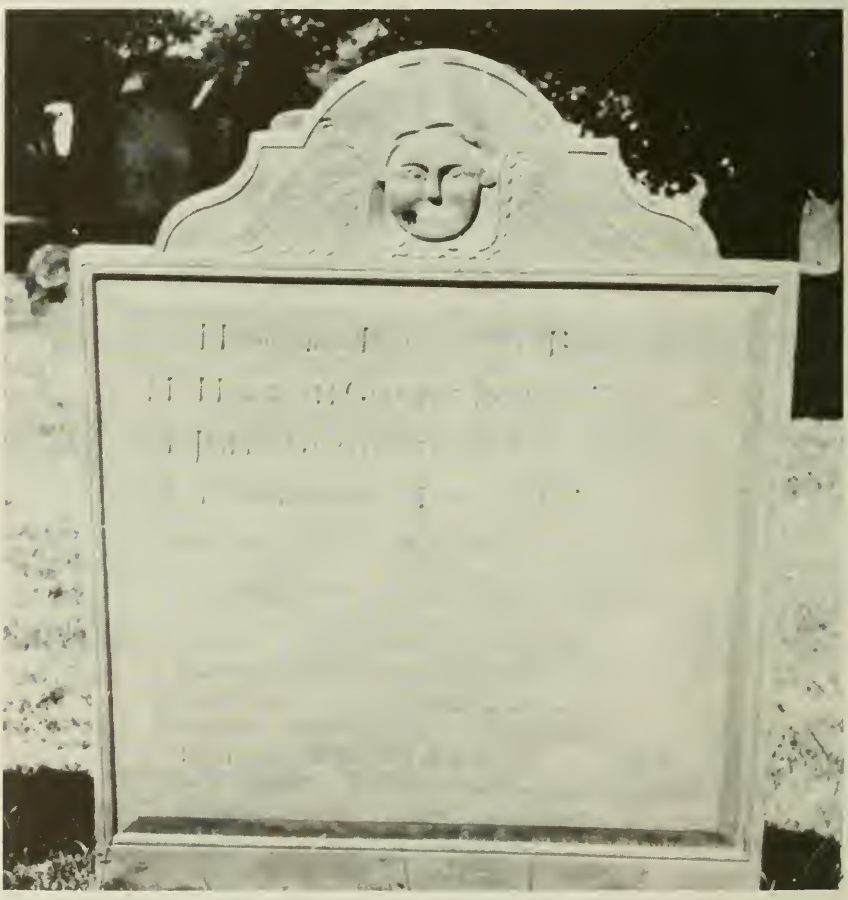


Figure 4. Hannah Goodwin, 1777, Plymouth, Mass.

Figure 5. Mary Brown, 1782, Plymouth, Mass.

The second rhetorical type consists of those epigrams, emblematic verses, and epitaphs which address or apostrophize their subject. Numerous examples of apostrophe appear in the Greek Anthology, in Quarles' emblems, and on New England stones. On the Mary Brown stone, 1782, Plymouth, Massachusetts, the pictura, a portrait of a woman wearing a locket and holding a spray of flowers, represents a dead woman who is addressed directly (Fig. 5). The verse offers her the consolations of the promised resurrection:

> Sleep silent Dust till Christ our Lord
> The Omnipotent, will speak the word.
> Then Soul & Body both will arise
> To endless joys above the Skies.

The voice which speaks through this stone counsels Mary Brown to rest in hope of the resurrection when both her body and her soul will flee from death's captivity to share in the "endless joys" promised by her Redeemer. Mary Brown confidently holds in her hand the symbol of the promise that she, though decayed into "silent

Dust," will freshen and bloom again. The viewer, who eavesdrops on the speaker's direct address to the dead woman, shares in the hope with which she is consoled.

The third rhetorical type is composed of those verses in which the subject, whether it be a statue, a dead person, or a tombstone, speaks directly in the first person to an auditor. The Paul Titcomb stone, 1773, Newburyport, Massachusetts, contains a verse in which the speaker is quite voluble, even playful in his address to the passerby:

> You that pass by this place may think on me
> For as you are so once you did me see,
> What I am now will quickly be your Doom
> My house is straight but by my side their's room,
> And if your dust should fall into my Grave
> Tis no great matter every man should have,
> His very dust and neither new nor more
> For he that made it keeps it all in store.
> (Fig. 6)

Paul Titcomb's verse interpretation of the dour skull and crossbones by which he is represented is grimly playful. After the traditional memento mori of the first three lines, Titcomb's tone changes from the admonitory to the consolatory: it matters not if the dust of those soon to lie by his side mingles with his own because God will sort it all out at the resurrection. Comforted with this realization, Paul Titcomb can defy death by joking about it.

Though Puritan gravestones with epitaphs governed by descriptive, apostrophic, and first personal rhetorical conventions may all be read as emblems, the stones with first personal epitaphs most direclty suggest the nearly mystical way in which gravestone emblems were used to connect this world with the next. According to Peter Benes, first personal epitaphs represented "the voices of what Cotton Mather liked to call the 'Invisible World.'"[9] These voices communicated news from regions towards which the Puritans were ever mindful of journeying. Perhaps the Puritans so readily attended to the voices of first personal epitaphs because of the way in which emblems were perceived and interacted with by those in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries accustomed to emblematic conventions, modern viewers are no longer familiar with these conventions which may grant a clearer access to the power and significance of the stones.

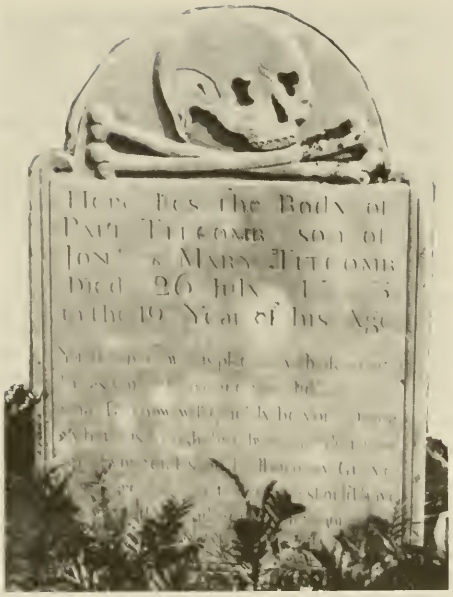


Figure 6. Paul Titcomb, 1773, Newburyport, Mass.

Mario Praz describes the ways that emblem writers "made the supernatural accessible to all by materializing it" in emblems:

> The fixity of the emblematic picture was infinitely suggestive; the beholder little by little let his imagination be eaten into as a plate is by an acid. The picture eventually became animated with an intense, hallucinatory life, independent of the page. The eyes were not alone in perceiving it; the depicted objects were invested with body, scent, and sound: the beholder was no longer before them, but in their midst. He was no longer impressed only, but obsessed.[10]

The early emblematists were certainly aware of this "iconomystical" animation of images which they could accomplish through emblems. Paulo Giovio, an early Italian emblem theorist, argued that an *impresa* (a truncated emblem) "should have just proportion between body (*pictura*) and soul (*incriptio*)."[11] George Wither is also within the tradition of seeing emblematic images as being animated by the addition of verses. On the

title page of his Collection of Emblemes, he indicates that his emblems are "quickened with metricall illustrations," and in his preface to the reader, he asserts that the picturae alone are delightful only to "Children, and Childish-gazers," but with the addition of the moralized verses, "they may now be much more worthy; seeing the life of Speach being added unto them, may make them Teachers, and Remembrancers of profitable things."[12]

Thus, Puritan stones may be seen as animated through the collaboration of emblematic image and verse. For the beholder who lets "his imagination be eaten into as a plate is by an acid," the Puritan stones seem endowed with a sort of consciousness, a mental as well as a physical presence. This presence is most acutely perceived in those stones inscribed with first personal epitaphs where the speaker's image, whether it be a death's head, a cherub, or a portrait, appears in the tympanum with his or her words incised beneath. In true emblematic fashion, this image is capable of becoming "animated with an intense, hallucinatory life" if viewed by one familiar with the workings of emblems and in a receptive frame of mind.

This "hallucinatory life" of the gravestone emblem is more intense than that assumed by other "speaking pictures" in the emblem tradition because the stone is directly associated with a dead body and with what was believed to be a living spirit, while an emblem confined to the pages of a book does not share this proximate and potent association. The unique power of the stones comes from the confusion in the viewer between artistic convention and life itself, a confusion which the emblematist encouraged. Rationally the viewer knows that the winged death's heads, soul effigies, or portrait medallions speak in first personal epitaphs only because the gravestone carver has adopted various artistic conventions to endow them with mentality and speech. On the other hand, as Praz indicates and as the emblematists apparently intended, it is easy for a viewer to lose that rational, denotative awareness of artistic convention and to adopt in its place a nonrational, connotative perspective which allows the dead individual to speak through the image on the stone. The viewer then becomes unable to sort out the claims of life from the claims of art. For such a viewer the illusion of the image speaking and taking on a life of its own assumes primacy because the stone serves as a lapidary double for the dead. Through this illusion the dead

come to life and communicate about the afterlife through their stones.

Apparently the Puritans were avid listeners to these voices which accosted them on their visits to the burying grounds. The eschatological consciousness of the Puritans predisposed them to see the dead human being primarily as an immortal spirit who had shed the body but had nevertheless retained ties to those members of the body of Christ who have not yet died. These spirits thus return to admonish members of the ocmmunity to look towards death and reunion with God through the intercession of Christ. According to Dickran and Ann Tashjian, the Puritans recognized the graveyard as "a ground of discourse between this world and the next rather than a final resting place."[13] Cotton Mather seems to have been of that opinion when he encouraged what he called "conversations with heaven":

> The Saints, whose Bodies are Laid in the Earth, are the Excellent ones in whom we are to have a singular Delight, and are the Nobler members of the Family, which we in a Lower State belong unto. And they may be thus convers'd withal. To bring some warmth into us, & make our Hearts burn within us, Lett us thus bring down the Rayes of Paradise upon our souls.[14]

This "intercourse with paradise" was to be accomplished most cogently in the Puritan burial grounds through the emblematic animation of images.

Thus, far from seeing emblems as "magical, mystical, monkish and Gothic," as Shaftesbury did, the Puritans apparently saw them much as did George Wither, offering "wholsome nourishment to strengthen the constitution of a Good-life," so that those who "have most need to be Instructed, and Remembered," and those "who are most backward to listen to Instructions, and Remembrances, by the common course of Teaching, and Admonishing," shall be "hereby, informed of their Dangers, or Duties . . . before they be aware."[15] Accustomed to and approving of emblems, the Puritans apparently had relatively little difficulty transferring them from their emblem books into their burying grounds.[16] The iconophobic Puritans admitted symbolic representations of the spirit world into their graveyards because they perceived these images as emblems charged with instructional force.

An emblematic reading of Puritan stonecarvings allows an approximate understanding of the significance these stones may have had for those who originally erected and viewed them. Like emblem books, the New England burial grounds feature a variety of verse inscriptions and picturae on the stones, the predominant images being winged death's heads, cherubs (or soul effigies), and portrait medallions. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, neoclassical urn and willow stones begin to displace the traditional images, marking the end of the emblematic stonecarving tradition in New England. The stones discussed below have been chosen to demonstrate the emblematic interaction of first personal epitaphs with a variety of images.

On the Abiah Holbrook stone, 1769, the Granary, Boston, is a winged death's head followed by an inscription identifying Holbrook as "Master of the South Writing-School in Boston" (Fig. 7), The pictura is complemented by the following verse:

> Still speaks th' Instructor from the solemn Shade:
> "Ye living! learn the Lessons of the Dead.
> Repine not that these dreary Vaults conclude
> A Life of Labours for the Publick Good:
> Calm sleeps the Flesh--Far distant, unconfin'd,
> In Joys unbounded wakes th' immortal Mind."

The first line of the epitaph instructs the passerby how to view the emblem, insisting that we perceive Holbrook as speaking through the stone. Represented by a stylized death's head to which animating features have been added, Holbrook continues after death to do what he did in life; he teaches "the Lessons of the Dead" and shares the new knowledge he has acquired in the world to which he has gone. He reflects, with some pride, on his "'Life of Labours for the Publick Good'" and gives and takes comfort in the belief that though the flesh is confined to "'these dreary Vaults,'" the mind (as befits an educator) wakes in unbounded joy. Ultimately, the stone denies the power of death: the teacher is not silenced; he does not despair; he revels in his ultimate fulfillment; he directs his pupils in his footsteps. In short, the teacher teaches still, animated by his emblematic stone.

Another verse which specifically directs our reading of the emblem may be found on the Mary Peirce stone, 1776, the Granary, Boston. The stone is surmounted by a foreshortened skull centered on crossbones

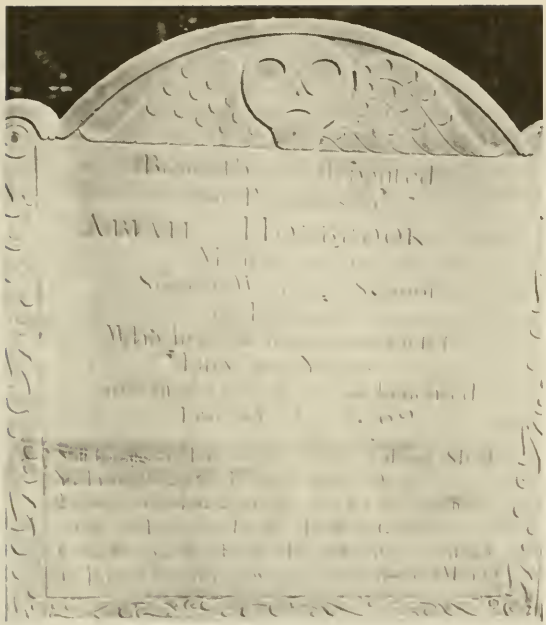


Figure 7. Abiah Holbrook, 1769, the Granary, Boston, Mass.

similar to the one found on the Paul Titcomb stone. This dour pictura is accompanied by a memento mori verse:

> Behold: this little Pile enfolds my Limbs,
> And puts a Period to my Time below.
> Mortal attend: there's no mutation here,
> Ere long you will Participate my Lot.

In this emblem, the dead woman speaks directly, and peremptorily, to the passerby, a very frequent feature of the Sta, Viator! first personal epitaphs recorded in the Greek Anthology. In the verse Mary Peirce demands that we view her entire grave--stone and mount --as the pictura. The two parts of the pictura, the first chiseled on slate, the second dug in earth, interact so that the skull and crossbones on the stone provides us with a glimpse of what lies beneath "this little Pile" over which the stone stands. Together, the verse and pictura preview or shadow forth, in true emblematic fashion, a realm we do not yet occupy but towards which we all are tending.

Though the idea of a talking skull is grotesque to a modern viewer, it was not grotesque to contemporary Puritans who, according to Peter Benes, apparently saw the image as a pictorial representation of the spirit. In The Masks of Orthodoxy, Benes argues persuasively that these winged death's heads, often overlaid with personalizing features, such as eyebrows and mustaches and witty expressions, "did not represent 'death' or even 'death and resurrection,' but . . . the invisible and immortal spirits which were separated from their bodies by the event of death." They were souls "pictured in an embryonic form before the general resurrection."[17] Benes also notes in an earlier article that certain New England carvers frequently added "tokens and signs of intensity, life, and energy" to winged skulls so as to animate them. "This they did," he continues, "by carving nostrils in the skull so the spirit could 'breathe'; a mouth, so the spirit could 'talk'; and intense eyes so it could 'see.'"[18] If this is indeed the case, then the Holbrook and Peirce stones are emblems invested with what Praz calls "an intense, hallucinatory life."

The same may be said of the Sally Goodwin stone, 1781, Copp's Hill, Boston. A winged death's head surmounts an inscription indicating, in addition to Sally Goodwin's identity and chronology, the names of her husband and parents. In the following verse, Sally Goodwin speaks:

> My hope is fix'd my Spirit's free,
> Longing my Saviour for to See;
> Such joy and bliss doth fill my soul,
> Nothing on earth doth me controul.
> My loving Husband and Infant small,
> My Parents dear I leave you all;
> My Soul doth wing the heavenly way,
> My Saviour's call I must obey.
> Read this and weep, but not for me,
> Who willing was to part with thee,
> That I may rest with Christ above,
> In peace and joy and endless love.

Sally Goodwin's auditors form a smaller group than the universal audience addressed by Abiah Holbrook and Mary Peirce. Dead at twenty-five, Sally Goodwin informs her husband, child, and parents that she abandoned them only because she goes to one who has prior claims on her. Though the stone remains even now a powerful emblem, it must have been extraordinarily expressive

and consolatory for the family audience at whom it is specifically aimed. The young wife and daughter returns to assuage grief and to presage joy. She dissolves the boundaries between worlds: the living and the dead commune; eternity penetrates time; past, present, and future coalesce; sorrow is mastered by joy; and private grief is shared in a public, communal way.

The coalescence of past, present, and future may also be seen on the Ruth Nicholson stone, 1789, Marblehead, Massachusetts (Fig. 8). Surmounted by a beautifully carved cherub or soul effigy are the following verses:

> A few more rolling suns at most,
> Will land me on fair canans cost,
> Where I shall sing Redeeming grace
> And see my blessed Saviour's face.

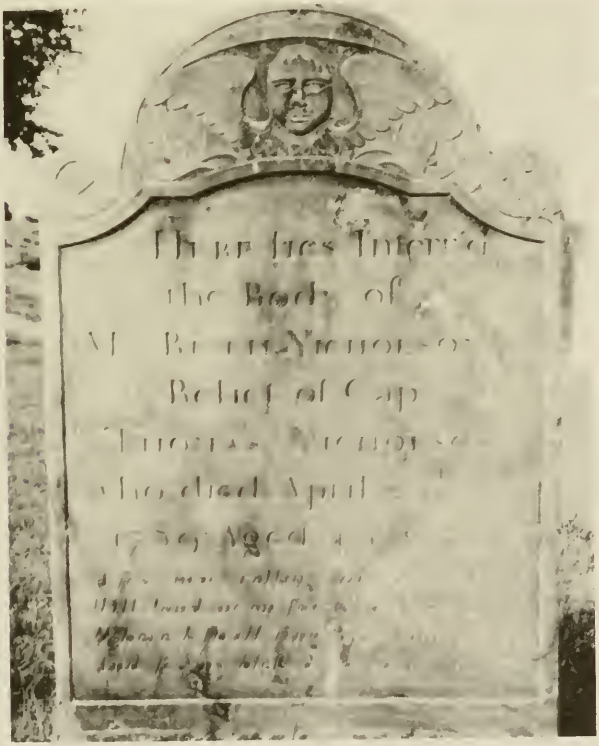


Figure 8. Ruth Nicholson, 1789, Marblehead, Mass.

The soul effigy has replaced the earlier death's head, and, accordingly, the verse deals, not with the memento mori theme, but with an expectation of bliss. Benes argues that these "new angel designs," which begin to predominate after the Great Awakening, depict the same spirits as are represented in the death's heads, except they are now pictured "in a realized form after the resurrection and after their translation into time-resistant celestial beings."[19] This seems to be the case on the Nicholson stone. The sprightly cherub appears as a resurrected spirit already in rapture, the verse is anticipatory and apparently looks towards the general resurrection and the end of time, and the inscribed identification and chronology remind a viewer of the presence of Ruth Nicholson's dead body. The stone thus seems to deny the importance of human time, to coalesce it. The body over which the stone stands figures in the past, the epitaph looks to the future for the general resurrection, and the soul effigy portrays present happiness.

Portraits too could be emblematized, a feature prominent in the Greek Anthology where verses appear which were originally attached to statues and paintings. George Wither uses his own portrait as his first emblem in the Collection. As are all his emblems, Wither's portrait is circled by a motto and followed by "The Authors Meditation upon sight of his Picture," a moralized verse employing the portrait as an introduction to the nature of emblems:

> A Picture, though with most exactnesse made,
> Is nothing, but the Shadow of a Shade.
> For, ev'n our living Bodies, (though they seeme
> To others more, or more in our esteeme)
> Are but the shadowes of that Reall-being,
> Which doth extend beyond the Fleshly-seeing;
> And, cannot be discerned, till we rise
> Immortall-Objects, for Immortall-eyes.

In short, Wither uses his fleshly portrait as an emblem for the immortal spirit which dwells obscured behind the "Carnall-Screene."

The Puritans used portraits on stones in much the same way. For example, on the Reuben Hunt stone, 1777, Concord, Massachusetts, appears a schematized portrait of a three-year-old boy in collar, waistcoat, and coat surrounded by trees of life. The moralized verse on this stone is particularly interesting because it in-

volves a dialogue between the boy's parents and his spirit:

> Say, lovely prattling, playful boy
> Thy Father's hope, thy Mother's joy;
> Why didst thou make so short a stay
> But steal our hearts, & then away!
> God gives & takes let men adore!
> Death wafts me to th' immortal shore.

Appropriately, this child's epitaph imitates the question-answer format of the catechism and the schoolbook, though here it is the adult parents who go to school to their dead infant. The question the parents ask in the first four lines betrays their blind bereavement, their inability to understand or accept the will of God. In the last two lines the boy answers with a consolatory reprimand for their lack of submission to God's will. In death, the child has become father to the man; granted oracular powers, Reuben Hunt speaks dispassionately, with a gravity and authority far beyond his years, because he has been transformed from the "lovely prattling, playful boy" to an eternal spirit. Through this emblematic portrait stone, then, Reuben Hunt returns to grant his parents a glimpse of divine things, an understanding of God's workings behind the "Carnall-Screene."

The winged death's heads, cherubs, and portraits persist on New England stones into the nineteenth century before being replaced by the ubiquitous images of urns and willows. Some early urn and willow stones retain the flavor of the emblematic tradition, though most repeat, for a while, the old pious verses without accomplishing the connection of pictura and verse characteristic of emblem-stones. The Sarah Hine stone, 1804, Marblehead, Massachusetts, is an example of an urn and willow stone which does attempt the emblematic fusion of pictura and moralized verse, but it is one of the few stones of its kind which do. The verse reads:

> Sure never with my latest breath
> Shall I forget your looks my tender friends,
> I must leave thee
> And go to Christ that died for me:
> Rise up my friends, condole the loss
> Of those that mourn this day,
> A solemn march we make,
> Toward the silent grave;
> O what a striking scene!

In this cold grave we pass,
To Day I'm seen by all my friends
But this must be the last.
Let friends no more my sufferings mourn
Nor dont my children be alarm'd;
Cease to drop the pitying tear,
I'm got beyound the reach of fear.

The urn on the stone is completely appropriate, since the verse insists that Sarah Hine is no more to be seen on earth. The urn thus conceals that which is mortal, but Sarah Hine speaks to her friends and children of her comfort beyond the grave, concerning herself with earthly matters only up to her final leave-taking at interment. Though the Sarah Hine stone may be considered an emblem, the majority of the urn and willow stones cannot since in most of them the pictura has become divorced from the verse.

When image and verse are no longer complementary, even interpenetrated, there is no emblem. An emblem may, however, be composed of conventional and cliched images or verses if the combined image and verse cliches remain interdependent. Originality is not a precondition for an effective emblem or even for an effective epitaph verse, as the poet Wordsworth maintains. In his second "Essay upon Epitaphs," Wordsworth argues that "it is not only no fault but a primary requisite in an Epitaph that it shall contain thoughts and feelings which are in their substnce common-place, and even trite," as long as they are "perceived in their whole compass with the freshness and clearness of an original intuition." The writer "must introduce the truth with such accompaniment as shall imply that he has mounted to the source of things--penetrated the dark cavern from which the River that murmurs in everyone's ear has flowed from generation to generation."[20] This the New England carvers managed to achieve in the stones they carved. The carvers were mediators between time-bound mortals and immortal spirits who return to provide common, received truths with an immediacy which allowed their auditors to readmit them as revelations. Though the souls of those who preceded their families and friends in death often speak in formulaic and regularized conventions through the stones, they nevertheless bring comforting and coherent news from supernatural regions, and for such news the Puritans were avid, especially if it is true, as David E. Stannard claims, that they "were gripped individually and collectively by an intense and unremitting fear of death."[21]

For Puritan auditors the stones, with their familiar images and verses, provided a consistent and coherent vision of the world beyond. They made the invisible intelligible by shadowing forth, in true emblematic fashion, the mysterious realm towards which all mortals travel. Viewing the stones they erected in their burial grounds, the Puritans could share the vision that George Wither claims to have been granted through the mediacy of emblems God has planted in nature:

> Even so, me thinks, I see
> A Glimpes, farre off, (through FAITH'S Prospective glasse)
> Of that, which after Death, will come to passe;
> And, likewise, gained have, such meanes of seeing,
> Some things, which were, before my Life had being,
> That, in my Soule, I should be discontent,
> If, this my Body were, more permanent;
> Since, Wee, and all God's other Creatures, here,
> Are but the Pictures, of what shall appeare.[22]

## NOTES

This study results from my participation in a National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar on funerary monuments and Puritan iconography held at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, in the summer of 1982. I am grateful to Ruth Butler for selecting me as a participant.

[1]Quoted in Harriette Merrifield Forbes, Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them, 1653-1800 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), p. 7.

[2]A number of commentators demonstrate that some Puritan carvers apparently used emblem collections as pattern books. See Dickran and Ann Tashjian, Memorials for Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), p. 176 and Figs. 119-20; Allan I. Ludwig, Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650-1815 (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), pp. 263, 274.

[3]The Funeral Elegy and the Rise of English Romanticism (New York: New York University Press, 1929), p. 76; Rosemary Freeman, English Emblem Books (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), pp. 206-207.

[4]Photofacsimile edition of George Wither, A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne, 1635 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), p. 235.

[5]Francis Quarles, Emblemes and Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man (London: William Freeman, 1710?).

[6]Quarles, p. 321.

[7]Mario Praz, Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1964), p. 25.

[8]Though the linking of Puritan epitaphs with classical sources will seem odd to many, Allan Ludwig has shown convincingly that classical and early Christian iconography appears on Puritan gravestones. See Ludwig's "Eros and Agape: Classical and Early Christian Survivals in New England Stonecarving," in Puritan Gravestone Art, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1977). Harriette Merrifield Forbes has also demonstrated that certain of the mottoes inscribed around the picturae on Puritan stones come from classical writers, particularly Ovid, Perseus, and Horace (Gravestones of Early New England, p. 25). This is certainly not to say that New England carvers were directly or consciously influenced either by Egyptian hieroglyphics or by classical Greek epigrammatists in the carving of stones. Instead, they came by these influences through the emblem tradition. Examples of the three rhetorical types of Puritan stones follow in the text. Examples of the three rhetorical types of epigrams abound in the Anthology and in Quarles' emblem books and need not be cited here.

[9]Peter Benes, The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), p. 43.

[10]Praz, p. 170. Praz writes here specifically on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Jesuit emblem books, though this animating tendency characterizes the entire emblematic tradition.

[11]Peter M. Daly, Literature in the Light of the Emblem (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 21.

[12]Wither, A Collection of Emblemes, p. A2.

[13]*Memorials for Children of Change*, p. 14.

[14]Quoted in David H. Watters, "*With Bodilie Eyes*": *Eschatological Themes in Puritan Literature and Gravestone Art* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), pp. 111-12.

[15]Jean Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 123; Wither, "Preface," pp. A1-A2.

[16]Since both British and American Puritans were iconophobes who feared the animation of images, the profusion of gravestone carvings in the burial grounds is perplexing to modern students of Puritan culture. Rationales for Puritan prohibitions against images were offered by various Puritan divines, including Joseph Mede, who, in *The Apostasy of the Latter Times*, argued that "Images were made as Bodies, to be informed with Daemons as with Souls: For an Image was as a Trap to catch Daemons, and a device to tie them to a place, and to keep them from flitting." See *The Works of the Pious and Profoundly-Learned Joseph Mede, B.D.* (London: R. Royston, 1663-64), Bk. III, p. 779. Puritan revulsion at Catholic and more liberal Reformation iconography came from an intuitive recognition that it is easy to cross over from the rational realm of artistic and representational convention into an idolatrous interaction with the image as if it were living and animate. The central irony of Puritan tomb carvings is that they facilitated what the Puritan iconophobes most feared: the carvers and the Puritan viewers *did* cross over into a perception of the stone images as endowed with voice and human presence. In spite of the danger of idolatry, however, the Puritans apparently made animate images because, as Allan Ludwig claims, the rational, mediate theology of Congregationalism was insufficient to provide the common folk with a felt connection betwen the mutable and the eternal. To feel this nexus more fully, the Puritans placed animate emblems in their graveyards. I would like to suggest that their tolerance for this iconography stemmed at least in part from their familiarity with the emblematic tradition. Accustomed to seeing emblems in their instructional and devotional books, most were not disturbed to see emblems in their burying grounds as well.

[17]Benes, pp. 52, 133.

[18]Peter Benes, "The Caricature Hypothesis Re-examined: The Animated Skull as a Puritan Folk Image" in Puritan Gravestone Art, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1977), p. 66.

[19]Benes, The Masks of Orthodoxy, p. 133.

[20]The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), II, 78-79.

[21]David E. Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 79.

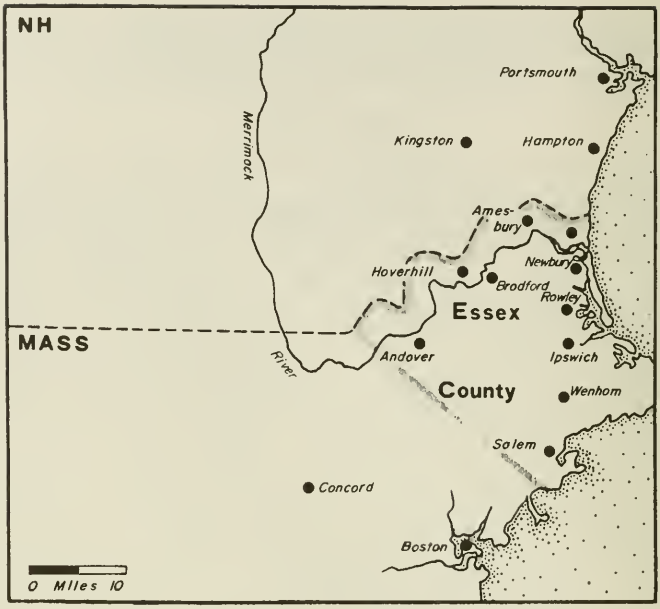
[22]Wither, "The Authors Meditation upon sight of his Picture."

# A Particular Sense of Doom: Skeletal "Revivals" in Northern Essex County, Massachusetts, 1737-1784

Peter Benes

Until the extinction of their native decorating practices in the late eighteenth century, gravestone carvers in northern Essex County, Massachusetts, pursued a succession of characteristically regional styles that followed a model developed by the Haverhill carver Lt. John Hartshorn (1650-1734), and distinguished by the use of schist and by geometrically conceived "primitive" spirit faces (Figs. 1-5).[1] The style was initially distributed in a handful of lower Merrimack River valley towns such as Salisbury, Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Haverhill, Bradford, Amesbury, and Andover; but through the relocation of carvers, the style gradually disseminated into Rockingham and Hillsborough counties in southern New Hampshire and into portions of Middlesex and Worcester counties of Massachusetts (Figs. 6-7).[2] When Lt. John Hartshorn removed to Norwich, Connecticut in 1720, a comparable Connecticut variant of the Merrimack school developed in Tolland, Windham, and New London counties in eastern Connecticut where it survived in derived forms until the early nineteenth century (Figs. 8-9).[3]

A comparison of the dispersed variants of the Merrimack designs with those found at its point of origin in northern Essex County reveals an interesting difference. Each of the four dispersed offshoots is characterized by a continuous evolution in which the Hartshorn model undergoes increasing stylization, complication, and animation. In Connecticut, for example, a three-generation succession of carvers that included Obadiah Wheeler (1673-*c.* 1750), Benjamin (1691-1759) and Zerubbabel (1733-1797) Collins, the Loomis family (fl. 1760-1800), and the Manning family (fl. 1770-1800) animated Hartshorn's spirit face into a distinctive geometric angel noted for its large, round eyes and heavy, down-turned mouth (Figs. 8-9).[4] A comparable animation of the Hartshorn face took place in the work of other dispersed Merrimack school carvers such as Jonathan and Moses Worcester of Harvard, Massachusetts, Abel Webster of Hollis, New Hampshire, and a handful of still-unidentified Hartshorn imitators who left stones in southern New Hampshire and along the Maine coastline. By contrast, the several Merrimack school carvers who continued to live and work in northern Essex County




Map 1. The lower Merrimack River valley of eastern New England showing Essex County, Mass. and the locations of towns cited in this study.

towns where Lt. John Hartshorn was initially active, abandoned Hartshorn's face symbols and replaced them with unrelated skeletal ones, presumably imitating Boston and Charlestown models. In doing so they became the only gravestone makers in New England to revive the Massachusetts Bay skull image at a time (1737-1784) when the image elsewhere was rapidly being animated and/or replaced.

Any explanation of the short-lived popularity of the Hartshorn model in the area where it originated must bear in mind that time itself was a factor. "Aesthetic fatigue," as it has been called elsewhere, may in part account for this reversal in local Merrimack-school designs.[5] Indeed, colloquial or naive styles are replaced in Essex County several decades before they are replaced in eastern Connecticut. But aesthetic fatigue argues for a quicker evolution of existing images rather than a revival of earlier ones. This essay addresses the artistic intentions of the third- and fourth-generation Merrimack-school carvers active in northern Essex County and attempts to learn to what

extent, if any, compelling regional or particular circumstances may have influenced their delayed adoption of the Massachusetts Bay skull.

## I

Besides Lt. John Hartshorn himself (who continued to make gravestones in Haverhill and Rowley until 1720), the second generation of local Merrimack school carvers included Hartshorn's nephew-in-law, Richard Leighton (1686-1749), who worked in Rowley; Richard Leighton's father, Ezekiel Leighton (1657-1723), of Rowley; Hartshorn's presumed apprentice, Robert Mulican (1664-1741), who worked in Bradford; and at least two and perhaps as many as four unidentified lesser, semi-professional Hartshorn and Mulican imitators who left stones in the second parish in Rowley (now Georgetown) and in Topsfield. Before 1737 these carvers closely approximated Hartshorn's spirit faces and duplicated in some form Hartshorn's circular-maze, bell-shape, or vine-and-leaf borders.[6] Some imitations were clearly more faithful than others; some are scarcely recognizable as faces. All clearly display the primitive quality for which the Merrimack school designs and their offshoots are known.

In 1737, however, a Bradford innkeeper tentatively identified as Robert Mulican's son Joseph Mulican (1704-60) introduced into local burying grounds a handful of stones emblematically and decoratively unrelated to the Hartshorn model. Joseph Mulican is identified as a stonecutter on the basis of two probate payments and an inventory filed in 1768 by his widow Phebe that cited gravestones in stock. Neither probated stone has yet been recovered; however, he commonly received payments (presumably for providing stones) from estates where stones attributed to him have survived.[7] Made of the usual schist, these stones were decorated with a skull and wings or skull and trees images carved without the customary double lines and ridges of stone. The earliest examples lack teeth and are recognizable as skulls from their hollowed eyes and wedge-shaped nose sections.[8] All have a prominent "mouth mark"--a line or lines ostensibly representing the lower element of the triangular nose but positioned to suggest a mouth. The stones' lettering style (particularly the m and e) indicates they originated from the Mulican's shop; clearly, someone in the shop had replaced the usual Mulican decorative vocabulary with a new one.[9]

Figure 1. Birds and face by Lt. John Hartshorn, Haverhill and Rowley.

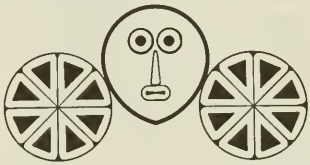


Figure 2. Stars and face by Robert Mulican, Bradford.

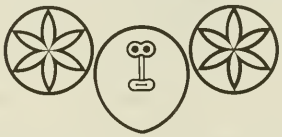


Figure 3. Stars and face by Richard Leighton, Rowley.

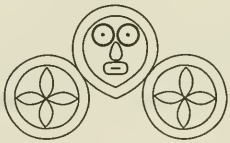


Figure 4. Stars and face by an unidentified carver active c. 1730 in the second parish, Rowley (now Georgetown).

Figure 5. Rare stars and skull by Robert Mulican noted for its triangular-section eyes.

GRAVESTONE DESIGNS
OF DISPERSED MERRIMACK SCHOOL STONECUTTERS
THIRD THROUGH FIFTH GENERATIONS

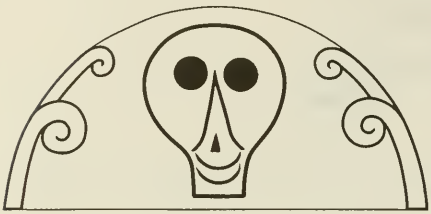
Figure 6. Stars and face by Jonathan Worcester, Harvard, Massachusetts.

Figure 7. Whorls and face by Abel Webster, Chester and Hollis, New Hampshire.

Figures 8 and 9. Cherub faces by the Manning family, Norwich and Windham, Connecticut.

Found principally in Haverhill and Bradford, the Mulican shop's skull stones (c. 1737) were the first of a series of related skull designs produced by Joseph Mulican, by his brother Robert Mulican, Jr. (1688-1756), and probably by Joseph Marble (1726-1805), over a period of four decades.(Figs. 10-14).[10] The new designs kept some Merrimack-school traits (maze borders, geometric stars, schist stone). Initially, too, the earlier Hartshorn "face" images co-existed with the new series. By 1740, however, when the skull symbol had displaced the Hartshorn face on most Mulican stones, the skull had gained clenched teeth and had converted its "smiling" mouth-mark into a "frowning" one (Fig. 12). The result was a steadfast scowl that is found on scores of stones in Bradford and Haverhill, and in communities contiguous to them.

In the two decades that followed, the Mulican skull evolved through a succession of variants distinguished by rounded- or oval- shaped outlines, long



Figures 10 and 11. Whorls and skull and winged skull, c. 1737, and attributed to Joseph Mulican, Bradford; designs include "smiling" mouth-mark.

Figure 12. Detail of winged skull introduced by Joseph Mulican after 1740 revealing the "scowling" mouth-mark and explicit teeth.

Figure 13. Winged skull with "wig" or "bonnet" by the Mulican/Marble shop, Bradford, before 1768.

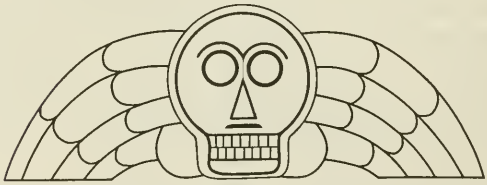


Figure 14. Winged skull by the Mulican/Marble shop, Bradford, 1770-84.

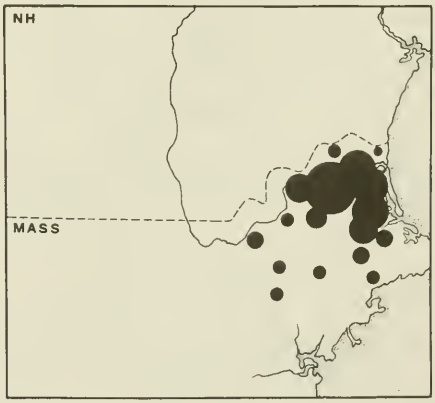
noses, and close-set eyes. It also acquired an interesting secondary trait: on the stones of women, the image was provided with a composite wig, sometimes made up of as many as fourteen segments, but usually fewer. Later versions of the wig were simplified and resemble bonnets; their use was so common that by 1750 a wig or bonnet on a stone from the Mulican/Marble shop was an unmistakable mark of a woman's headstone; the lack of such a wig, a man's (Fig. 13).

After Joseph Mulican died in Bradford in 1768, "wig skulls" were no longer produced in the Mulican shop. At this point (1768) the shop began to carve a new skull variant (Fig. 14). Distinguished by its keyhole profile, prominent circular eyebrows, a squared jaw, and a quizzical expression, this stone is the presumed work of Joseph Marble and John Marble (1746-1844). It is commonly found in Bradford, Rowley, and Haverhill burying grounds in the years from 1766 to 1780 and represents the Mulican skull in its final phase.

In the meantime, a comparable design reversal had taken place in the work of a gravestone shop centered in Newbury and Rowley, which produced distinctive "spectacles" stones (Figs. 15-16). The principal workers in this shop have tentatively been identified as Jonathan Hartshorn (1703-?) and Jonathan Leighton (1715-?). One of the three grandsons of Lt. John Hartshorn who survived the 1708 Haverhill massacre that took the lives of the father, John, Jr., and three other brothers, Jonathan Hartshorn is known to have been living in Newbury in the 1750s and 1760s when most of the spectacles type were made. He is paid for gravestones by Joseph Coffin of Newbury in 1764, and by James Pearson, probably of Newbury, in 1742. (Neither pair of stones has yet been discovered.) Jonathan Hartshorn married, first, Sarah Cross of Methuen in 1729 where their five children were born in the years 1730 to 1738. Two of his children died in 1738 and were buried under crude prototypes of the spectacles design in the Methuen burial ground. He married, second, Mary Boynton of Newbury in 1739; five children were born to Jonathan in Newbury fron 1745 to 1752.[11] Jonathan Leighton in turn was the son of the Rowley stonecutter Richard Leighton and grandson of the carver Ezekiel Leighton, Lt. John Hartshorn's brother-in-law by his fourth wife Mary Spofford Leighton. "Jona. Lighton" is paid for gravestones by John Barker of Ipswich in 1740. In 1749 his father Richard Leighton willed Jonathan one-half his

lands, meadows, and barn. Jonathan Leighton sold property in Rowley in 1761 and 1771, and later moved to Maine.[12]

The reversal to skulls was accomplished somewhat more slowly in the Hartshorn/Leighton shop in Newbury than in the Mulican/Marble shop in Bradford. The source design was Richard Leighton's attenuated, if crude, version of the Hartshorn face. Following Richard Leighton's death in 1750, an unknown apprentice or apprentices (presumably Jonathan Leighton jointly with Jonathan Hartshorn) worked the Leighton variant into a geometric face found commonly in Newbury and Rowley from 1751 to 1759 whose eyes were joined by a distinctive ridge. Through a gradual process of elimination and substitution, the spectacles design was divested of its Hartshorn characteristics and assumed a more conventional appearance. At the same time the image itself became more skeletal (Fig. 17). Whereas early versions of the nose are suggested by a single vertical line, later versions are drawn with the caret mark usually associated with skulls (Figs. 18-19). After 1758 Hartshorn/Leighton stones lost all their Hartshorn characteristics and became explicit winged skulls whose expressions appear benignly amused (Fig. 20). These skulls, only tentatively identified as the work of the Leighton/Hartshorn shop in Newbury, were produced in large numbers in the sixteen-year period between 1767 and 1782. By 1783 the shop had converted the skull into an angel.

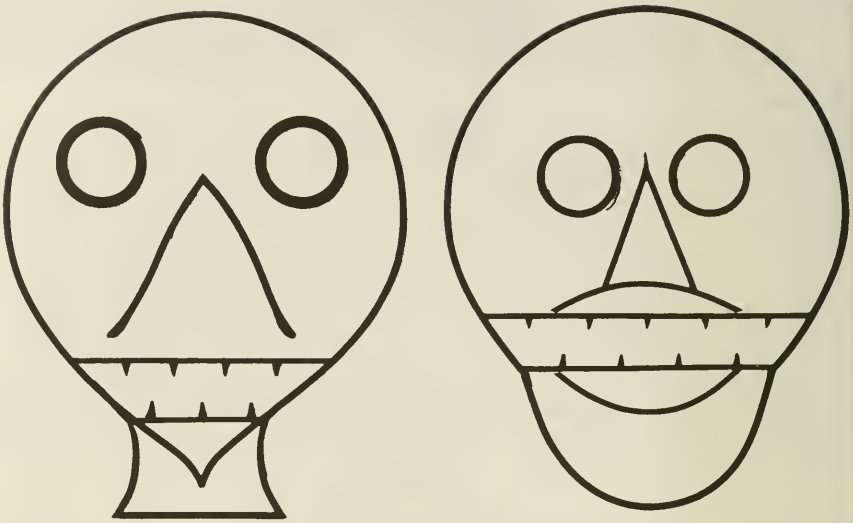



Map 2. Distribution of 700 skull stones by the Mulican/Marble and Hartshorn/Leighton shops, 1737-84. 475 (70%) are located in Bradford and Newbury.

Figure 15. "Scowling" winged spirit-face by the Leighton shop, Rowley, 1747-50.

Figure 16. Winged spirit face or cherub with "spectacles" eyes by the Hartshorn/Leighton shop, c. 1750-55.

Figure 17. Winged spirit face or cherub by the Hartshorn/Leighton shop showing the substitution of a skeletal nose, c. 1750-55.



Figures 18 and 19. Details of winged skull-faces by the Hartshorn/Leighton shop, 1755-59, showing the increasing skeletalization of the "spectacles" design.

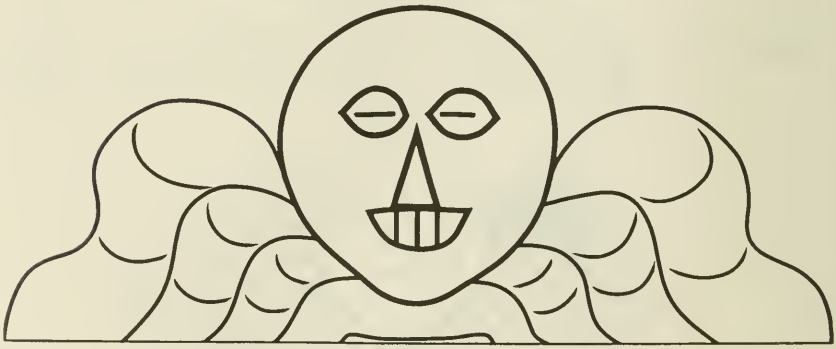


Figure 20. Winged skull by the Hartshorn/Leighton shop, Rowley and Newbury, 1770-84.

## II

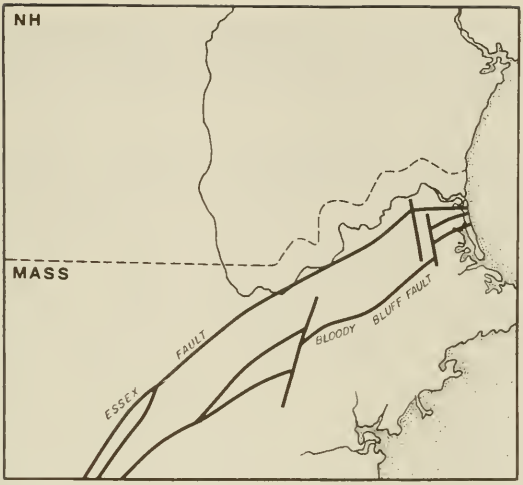
Because their work was largely confined to a dozen small- to middle-size coastal parishes located in northern Essex County, the domestic Merrimack school of gravestone makers was serving a rural constituency that was rarely in touch with Boston, but that was nevertheless aware of Boston's influence. An initial explanation of the skeletal reversal is that third- and fourth-generation Merrimack school carvers were divesting themselves of embarrassingly provincial decorating practices and assuming the styles of urban Massachusetts Bay carvers. Ipswich, for example, which before 1735 had drawn about equally on local carvers and those in Massachusetts Bay, after that date turned increasingly to Boston, Charlestown, and Salem gravestone makers. It is quite possible that Joseph Mulican in 1737, and the Leighton/Hartshorn shop in 1758, consciously reworked their designs in response to competition from gravestone makers working in "The Bay". This explanation is reinforced by the fact that comparable imitations of urban cultural and ecclesiological models were undertaken by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century northern Essex County housewrights and meetinghouse builders and that the more sophisticated and fashionable community of Ipswich, like Beverly and Salem, was the channel for these innovations. In 1696 Haverhill designed the pulpit, galleries, windows, doors, floors, and stairs of its new meetinghouse "after the pattern of the Beverly meeting house." In 1700 the new meetinghouse erected by Newbury duplicated (and, in fact, probably imitated) the exact dimensions of the giant Salem meetinghouse of 1670, including its hip-roof, four-gable exterior contruction.[13] Similarly, in the choice of psalms, Ipswich First and Third churches, were the first in northern Essex County to sing Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady's translations (their version had been previously adopted by six Boston and Salem churches); the two Ipswich churches were followed by Newbury First in 1761; Haverhill First in 1764; and Boxford First in 1767.[14] Here, then, is a familiar pattern whereby fashionable urban cultural modes are filtering or seeping into the Essex County hinterland through a chain of imitations in which certain key parishes (such as Ipswich First) play a leading role.

A fashion hypothesis has several drawbacks, however. Not only did Merrimack skull carvers fail to duplicate the secondary elements of their presumed Boston and Charlestown gravestone models (borders, feather work,

lettering, skull outline, and eyebrows), but they boldly reworked the skull design to their own special purposes --for example, the wig variant. By way of contrast, stonecarvers in Groton, Massachusetts, and Milford, Connecticut, who clearly did imitate the designs of the Charlestown carvers, Caleb and Nathaniel Lamson, accurately reproduced these designs almost to the last detail. Groton and Milford replicas of Lamson stones can only be distinguished from Lamson originals by the differing stone source of the imitators. Then there is the social evidence. Prominent families in Andover, Ipswich, and Newburyport frequently purchased angel stones from the Lamsons rather than the Lamsons's more common skull stones. If imitation of a Boston area high style had in fact been a reason for abandoning the Hartshorn tradition, there was at least as much reason to imitate a fashionable Lamson angel as a fashionable winged skull. No such angel imitations were attempted.

A better explanation for the reversal may be found in the "mentality" of the northern Essex County parishes that produced and patronized these designs. Was there anything unique in the history of the region that might have encouraged or inspired the use of winged skulls? Three particular circumstances immediately stand out. The first of these was the earthquake that was felt throughout New England on the night of October 29, 1727. Although no fatalities were reported, the tremor toppled chimneys, tolled bells, and woke a starled people from their sleep. By all contemporary eyewitness accounts, as well as modern geological and seismological studies, the epicenter and the strongest tremors were located near the mouth of the Merrimack River at the confluence of what present-day maps call the Essex and Bloody Bluff faults where loud explosions were reported and fissures appeared in the earth.[15] Major aftershocks were also recorded in the area, sometimes several in the same day.

More lasting, perhaps, were the religious repercussions. Ministers throughout New England, and particularly those in parishes located in northern Essex County, used the occasion to remind their congregations of the disaster that took place at Port Royal in 1692, and to consider the October event as a divine warning.[16] Interpreting the earthquake as a divine "Voice" or "Token of displeasure," ministers chastised their listeners for having "gone a whoring from . . . [their] God" and urged them to shun a list of sins that among others included pride, sensuality, drunkenness and




Map 3. Map showing the location of the Essex and Bloody Bluff geological faults which converge in the town of Newbury, and which determined the epicenters of the 1727 and 1755 earthquakes. From Robert Castle, et. al., Structural Dislocations in Eastern Massachusetts.

unchastity. While ministers balanced their interpretation in terms of God's mercy (no serious casualties), uncompromising imagery such as the dog turning to "his own vomit," and the newly washed sow returning "to her wallowing in the mire" was not uncommon in the sermonic literature.

The results, perhaps, were predictable. As the minister John Fox wrote, "never were the Body of this People . . . thrown into the like Consternation."[17] An estimated five thousand New Englanders took communion for the first time in the six months following the event. And what was true of New England generally was true particularly of a line of towns and parishes lying along the eastern half of the Essex fault system that stretches from the mouth of the Merrimack River southwesterly to Worcester, where the intensity of the shock had been greatest.[18] In the six months following the October earthquake, Haverhill First Church received 226 new communicants; Andover First, 158; Newbury Second, 147; Newbury First, 133. Admissions elsewhere in New England averaged one-fifth to one-tenth these figures or less.[19] So alive was the memory of earthquakes in the fault region that when another powerful tremor

shook New England twenty-eight years later in 1755, a number of Essex County churches experienced what might be described as an "echo"--a sudden rise in church admissions--the only area in New England to do so.[20]

The second circumstance was the diptheria epidemic that struck New England, New Jersey, and New York in the years from 1735 to 1737. Called "throat distemper," the epidemic first broke out in the household of a Kingston, New Hampshire, farmer who had butchered an infected hog. It soon spread south to Haverhill and Newbury, and thence along the Boston-Portsmouth post road to Salem. The epidemic ravaged the Merrimack Valley more severely than any other sector of New England. More than half the estimated two thousand deaths resulting from this outbreak in Massachusetts occured in Essex County, most of these in the county's northern and eastern parishes. Byfield parish, for example, lost one-third of its infant population and one-seventh of its total population within a year; Haverhill lost one-half its infant population; Rowley lost one-eighth of its total population.[21] Comparable losses decimated the towns of Newbury, Ipswich, Rowley, and Bradford. In the words of a contemporary Boston verse writer:

> To Newbury, O go and see,
> To Hampton and Kingston
> In York likewise, and Kittery
> Behold, what God hath done.[22]

A third circumstance is the mid-century religious revival in northern Essex County, or more accurately the absence of this revival. Excepting what was then the third parish in Newbury (Newburyport), which admitted 158 new communicants during the Great Awakening, church admissions in northern Essex County parishes were negligible during the peak revival years from 1741 to 1742, which saw parishes elsewhere in New England admit scores and hundreds of new communicants. Haverhill First, for example, which admited 226 new communicants from 1727 to 1728, added only four new communicants from 1741 to 1742. Newbury Second (West Newbury) gained 147 in 1717-28, but only thirty-two in 1741-42. Amesbury Second admitted 100 in 1727-28, but only thirty-one in 1741-42.[23] The same pattern is found among congregations elsewhere in the northern sector of the county and in the towns and parishes that lay on the Essex fault system, and it is accompanied by comparable attitudes on the part of the clergy. Although a handful

of ministers invited itinerant evangelical ministers such as George Whitefield and John Davenport to preach in their pulpits, the lower Merrimack area clergy as a whole was clearly inclined toward Arminian (formalistic) sentiment. In a letter sent to their Boston colleagues in December 1744, nineteen ministers out of thirty-five in the Merrimack region announced publicly their determination to exclude Whitefield from their pulpits and affirmed their opinion that enthusiastic preaching did more harm than good.[24] Only three clergymen took the opposite view. Revival-generated separations took place in only two parishes; Baptist denominations emerged at relatively late dates and were few in number.[25] So far as can be read through church admission data and the known positions of practicing ministers, therefore, the Merrimack area was antienthusiastic in its orientation. Indeed, the area ultimately developed its own style of Arminianism that in the early nineteenth century was identified as "Merrimack Divinity."[26]

## III

The question to be considered, of course, is whether these special circumstances--the 1727 earthquake, the 1735-37 epidemic of throat distemper, the prevailing postrevival Merrimack-area Arminianism--had any influence on iconographic and artistic choices made by the Bradford innkeeper Joseph Mulican and by the presumed stonecutting partners Jonathan Hartshorn and Jonathan Leighton. And, if so, whether these influences were in any way stronger or more meaningful than aesthetic fatigue or shifts in fashion. To answer this (if only on a tentative basis) it is necessary first to refine our interpretation of Puritan gravestone skulls. Now commonly regarded as symbols of death, the winged skull symbols carved on colonial gravestones were probably perceived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as spirits released by death (hence the wings). It is likely that they were ghosts in the traditional sense of "giving up the ghost," and were equivalent in meaning to other skull-based and face-based spirit symbols and emblems, such as the trees and skull, bird and skull, stars and skull, stars and face, trees and face, and winged face. There is evidence to suggest, moreover, that through a complex, superimposed folk language of caricature and heraldry, eighteenth-century New England stonecarvers sometimes expressed popular hopes and fears and conventional religious attitudes and expectations towards death and resurrection. Scowling spirits presumably anticipated resurrection with

caution; blissful or ecstatic ones perhaps confidently awaited it. In between were semiskeletal and semifacial variations that exhibited mixed elements of both.

The shift by Merrimack school carvers to skull emblems and to harsh caricatures within these emblems can be interpreted in this folk heraldic context. Two key dates are involved in the iconography: 1737 when the Mulican shop introduced a skull stone (Figs. 10-11), and about 1750 when Hartshorn and Leighton skeletized their spectacles stones (Figs. 16-19). The 1737 date is probably linked to the outbreak of throat distemper; indeed, the initial Mulican skull stones mark the earliest victims of the disease, principally children in Haverhill and Bradford. Some relationship--still unclear in its details, but perhaps involving a community-sensed recognition of a terrible tragedy, probably ties the choice of the new skull design to the epidemic. This follows a pattern found elsewhere in New England where carvers introduced major design changes at moments of unusual societal stress. In a 1747 epidemic, for example, the carver Nathan Hayward of Bridgewater, Massachusetts, introduced highly innovative variations of traditional Plymouth County skull designs. Similarly, the Soule carvers of Plympton, Massachusetts, animated their "Medusa" stones after smallpox struck Chatham, Massachusetts, in the years from 1765 to 1766.[27]

The 1737 epidemic in Essex County, however, must also be seen in its wider context. As has already been pointed out, the October 1727 earthquake produced more religious conversions in northern Essex County than anywhere else in New England. But there may have been a difference in perception, as well. This is hinted at by the highly suggestive language of a 1727 letter by Richard Waldron of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to his sister in which he describes the experiences of "a Man who lives about a mile distant from us," and who

> immediately after the first Rumbling and little Shock, heard a fine musical sound, like the sound of a Trumpet at a distance. He could not distinguish any Tune that he knew; but perceiv'd a considerable Variety of Notes. The Musick continued till after the Second Rumbling . . . The Man's wife heard what he did.[28]

Perhaps not everyone in the Merrimack region believed

the world was coming to an end with a blast of a "Trumpet" on the night of October 29, but enough may have that when the throat distemper epidemic struck their communities then years later, their worst fears became confirmed. From this viewpoint, the absence of the 1740-42 religious revival in the region can be seen as a symptom of a continuing malaise. Having already experienced conversions and renewals after the 1727 earthquake, Christian believers in northern Essex County may have found few new converts to make among themselves. It might be said that the region found itself in the unenviable predicament of sharing a prevailing religious apprehension while having exhausted the collective means of coping with it.

Precisely how a state of mind might be translated into a specific gravestone symbol is now impossible to say. In a surviving 1739 letter addressed to the Bradford stonecarver Robert Mulican (1664-1741), a buyer specified only names, ages, and death dates of the deceased; no reference to pictorial symbols was made, and no document has so far come to light that provides any real insight as to Mulican's artistic intention or that of his innkeepper son, Joseph.[29] We can only presume that in their reversal to skull imagery Joseph Mulican and the Hartshorn/Leighton carvers, acting alone as naive artists or collectively with their neighbors and communities, chose skeletal imagery over the earlier Hartshorn imagery, in part because the former was now in fashion, and in part because they, the carvers, judged it more appropriately met the felt needs and purposes of memorialization. Whatever our interpretation, one fact stands out: the greatest number of 1727-28 earthquake-related conversions, the highest mortality rate in the 1735-37 throat epidemic, and the only known instance in New England of a reversal to skeletal gravestones all took place in northern Essex County at roughly the same time period. If we are correct in our belief that New England carvers devised masks and caricatures in order to express popular hopes and expectations about death, the late introduction of skull imagery in northern Essex County was compatible with at least two and perhaps three historical circumstances that had uniquely affected this region and that may have generated a particular sense of doom. Articulated with the freshness, wit, and simplicity that eighteenth-century gravestone artists brought to their work, this doom (if indeed it was doom) is preserved in the haunting and intensely beautiful folk effigies of the domestic Merrimack school.

## NOTES

Thanks are due to Ralph L. Tucker of West Newbury, Massachusetts, for furnishing key probate and genealogical data for carvers in northern Essex County; for locating relevant seismological monographs; and for a critical reading of the manuscript. This paper was presented at the Association for Gravestone Studies annual conference held at Bradford Junior College in 1980.

[1]Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones XII: John Hartshorne vs. Joshua Hempstead," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 32 (July, 1967), 65-79; Peter Benes, "Lt. John Hartshorn, Stonecutter of Haverhill and Norwich," Essex Institute Historical Collections, 109 (April, 1973), 152-64; James A. Slater and Ralph L. Tucker, "The Colonial Gravestone Carvings of John Hartshorne," Puritan Gravestone Art II: 1978 Annual Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 1979), pp. 79-146.

[2]Peter Benes, "Abel Webster: Pioneer, Patriot, and Stonecutter," Historical New Hampshire, 28 (Winter, 1973), 221-40; James L. and Donna Belle Garvin, "Stephen Webster, Gravestone Maker," Historical New Hampshire, 29 (Summer, 1974), 93-104. Harriette M. Forbes, Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them, 1653-1800 (1927; rpt. New York: Da Capo, 1967), pp. 77-78; Allan I. Ludwig, Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650-1815 (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), pp. 371-73; Dickran and Ann Tashjian, Memorials for Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), pp. 201-04.

[3]Forbes, 102-05; Ludwig, 380-89; 401-16; Tashjian and Tashjian, 204-11; Ernest Caulfield and James A. Slater, "The Colonial Gravestone Carvings of Obadiah Wheeler," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, 84 (April, 1974), 73-103; James A. Slater and Ernest Caulfield, "The Loomis Carvers: Connecticut Gravestone Art XVI," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 48 (Fall, 1983), 143-68.

[4]Ernest Caulfield, "Connecticut Gravestones XIII: Richard Kimball, Lebbeus Kimball, Chester Kimball," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 40 (April,

1975), 33-45; "Connecticut Gravestones XV: Three Manning Imitators," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 43 (January, 1978), 1-16; "Connecticut Gravestones VIII: Josiah Manning, Frederick Manning, Rockwell Manning," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, 27 (July, 1962), 76-82.

[5]George Kubler, The Shape of Time, remarks on the history of things (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 82.

[6]For evidence that Ezekiel Leighton carved stones similar to Hartshorn's original style, see Sue Kelly and Anne Williams, "'And the Men Who Made Them': The Signed Gravestones of New England," MARKERS II (1983), 45, 85.

[7]"Joseph Mulickon" was paid forty shillings for gravestones in 1738 by John Sanders of Haverhill (Caulfield, XII, p. 77), and by Stephen Morss of Newbury (Essex County Probate Records, hereafter cited ECPR, 326:311). Joseph's widow "Phebe Mullikin" was paid two pounds, five shillings, and four pence for "two Setts of grave stones" by the estate of Ebenezer Osgood, of Andover in 1768, presumably the same "Two Pair of Grave Stones" that were inventoried in her husband's estate at the same value (ECPR 345:25, 26). Cited in his inventory as an "innkeeper," Mulican left "twelve Bow-back't Chares" in his estate along with "Six black Chares," "ten pair of Sheets," and no fewer than "twenty Gallons" of "Rum and Spirits."

[8]Fifteen examples of Robert Mulican's early skull stones are known: six in what were then Newbury parishes; six in Haverhill; and three in Merrimac. Four of these stones have unusual triangular eyes. The inscription date distribution of the group is: 1736 (2); 1737 (3); 1738 (6); 1739 (3); 1740 (1). Hartshorn occasionally gave his faces jagged teeth or triangular noses, but he is not known to have used a skull design as such.

[9]Ralph L. Tucker and Fred W. Boughton, "By Their Lettering Shall Ye Know Them," Newsletter of the Association for Gravestone Studies, 8 (Spring, 1984), 7-9.

[10]Kelly and Williams, p. 87; Forbes, p. 129. Joseph Marble is first paid for gravestones in 1776 (ECPR 352:197, Edward Barnard, Haverhill); John Marble is first paid for stones in 1789 (ECPR 360:174, John Ela,

Haverhill). Both stonecutters left signed stones.

[11]Vital Records of Newbury (Salem, Mass: The Essex Institute, 1911), I:216; ECPR 341:357; Caulfield, XII, p. 79. This is the same Jonathan Hartshorn who as a child in 1710 scratched his name on the base of a footstone now standing in the Ipswich burying ground (Benes, "Hartshorn," p. 160).

[12]Forbes, p. 128; Amos E. Jewett and Emily M. Jewett, Rowley, Massachusetts, "Mr. Ezechi Rogers plantation," 1639-1850 (Rowley, Mass.: Jewett Family of America, 1946), p. 141; ECPR 324:604; Vital Records of Rowley, Massachusetts, to the end of the year 1849, 2 vols. (Salem, Mass.: The Essex Institute, 1928-31), I, 129; ECPR 328:614.

[13]D. Hamilton Hurd, History of Essex County, Massachusetts (Philadelphia: Lewis, 1880), pp. 1947-48; The First Parish, Newbury, Massachusetts, 1635-1935 (Newburyport, Mass.: The First Parish, 1935), pp. 31-32; Marian C. Donnelly, The New England Meeting Houses of the Seventeenth Century (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 126. For a study of the transmission of architectural styles through a sequence of regional and local imitations, see Peter Benes, "The Templeton 'Run' and the Pomfret 'Cluster': Patterns of Diffusion in Rural New England Meetinghouse Architecture, 1647-1822," Old-Time New England, 68 (Winter-Spring, 1978), 1-21.

[14]Henry W. Foote, Three Centuries of American Hymnody (1940; rpt. Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1968), p. 160; Joseph B. Felt, History of Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton, Massachusetts (Cambridge: C. Folsom, 1834), p. 212; First Parish, Newbury, p. 35; B. L. Mirick, History of Haverhill, Massachusetts (Haverhill, Mass.: Thayer, 1832), p. 166; Sidney Perley, History of Boxford, Essex County, Massachusetts (Boxford, Mass: The author,1880), p. 193. For a more complete study of the movement of translations by Tate and Brady and by Isaac Watts in eighteenth-century New England, see Peter Benes, "Psalmody in Coastal Massachusetts and in the Connecticut River Valley," The Bay and the River: 1981 Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife (Boston: Boston University Scholarly Publications, 1982), pp. 117-31.

[15]William T. Brigham, "Historical Notes on the Earthquakes of New England, 1638-1869," Boston Society

of Natural History, Memoirs, 2:1; a contemporary account appears in Thomas Prince, Earthquakes the Works of God and Tokens of his Just Displeasures (Boston, 1727).

[16]Of thirty-three earthquake-related sermons published in New England following the October tremor, ten were composed by ministers of Essex County parishes; three others were composed by ministers in Rye and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. See Charles Evans, American Bibliography (Chicago: Privately printed, 1903), listings for 1727-28; William D. Andrews, "The Literature of the 1727 New England Earthquake," Early American Literature, (Winter, 1973), 280-94.

[17]John Fox, God by his power causes the earth and its inhabitants to tremble (Boston, 1728), p. 28.

[18]Robert O. Castle, et. al., Structural Dislocations in Eastern Massachusetts: A description of the major faults and mylonite zones that form the eastern Massachusetts dislocation belt. Geological Survey Bulletin 1410 (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 3-4, 8-15.

[19]Essex North Association, Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Essex County, Mass. (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1865), p. 290; Abiel Abbot, History of Andover, from its settlement to 1829 (Andover, Mass.: Flagg and Folsom, 1829), p. 77. The east precinct in Middleborough, Massachusetts, admitted twenty-six new members into the church in 1727-28; by contrast, this church admitted 162 in the revival years of 1741-42 See Book of the First Church of Christ in Middleborough (Boston: Moody, 1852).

[20]Salisbury Second Church admitted seventy-nine in the years 1755-56 after averaging three or four new communicants per year; Bradford First Church admitted thirty-five, and Newbury Third Church (West Newbury), twenty-seven in 1755-56. See Essex North Association, p. 290.

[21]Ernest Caulfield, "A True History of the Terrible Epidemic," Disease and Society in Provincial Massachusetts (New York: Arno, 1972), pp. 103-04, 110, 62, 279. See also, Felt, p. 196.

[22]Awakening Calls to Early Piety (Boston, 1738).

[23]Essex North Association, p. 290.

[24]A Letter from Two Neighboring Associations of Ministers in the Country . . . relating to the admission of Mr. Whitefield into their pulpits, December 26, 1744, quoted in Joseph Tracy, The Great Awakening (Boston: Tappan, 1842), pp. 344-45.

[25]Of the thirty-five parishes in northern and eastern Essex County, only Topsfield, Gloucester First, and Ipswich First openly favored the revival and invited Whitefield on his 1744-45 tour of New England. They were joined by two separating parishes: Newburyport's Presbyterian Church and the separatists at Chebacco parish in Ipswich. Amesbury Second, Andover First, Beverly First, Bradford First and Second, Byfield, Ipswich Second, Manchester, Newbury First through Fourth, Salisbury First and Second, Methuen, and Boxford Second all went on record against the revival.

[26]Essex North Association, p. 185.

[27]Peter Benes, The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 1689-1805 (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), pp. 116, 136-37.

[28]Letter from Richard Waldron, Portsmouth, N. H., to Madam Waldron his sister, in Boston, January 12, 1728; quoted in "A Letter Book of Samuel Sewall," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, II, 6th series (Boston, 1888), 232.

[29]Forbes, p. 15.

# The Colburn Connections: Hollis, New Hampshire, Stonecarvers, 1780-1820

Theodore Chase and Laurel K. Gabel

We began our study of the gravestone carvers of the Lancastrian towns with an article on James Wilder of Lancaster, Massachusetts.[1] Paul Colburn appeared to have taken on the mantle of James Wilder, and our research reveals that Colburn became a highly influential carver in the region. Colburn came to Sterling from Hollis, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire in 1784, three years after Sterling had separated from Lancaster. Our field studies in Hollis yielded a large number of stones which we at first attributed to Paul Colburn. It gradually became apparent, however, that there were several other carvers in Hollis, contemporaries of Colburn, most of them related to him by marriage, and one with a carving style almost indistinguishable from his. As a result, we found ourselves studying not simply the life and work of Paul Colburn, but also that of four hitherto unknown stonecutters of the 1790s and early 1800s. By examining their lives and work, we discovered a great deal about the patterns of intermarriage, apprenticeship, and craft succession in the stonecutting trade. Documents reveal the economic status of stonecutters in the period, and an inventory of stones outlines significant patterns of image used on stones for men, women and children.

## PAUL COLBURN 1761-1825

The Colburn line in Hollis began with Paul's grandfather, William Colburn, who in 1738 brought his family from Concord, Massachusetts to Patch's Corner "in an oxcart, guided by marked trees." This land was then part of West Dunstable, Massachusetts. In the year of his arrival, William Colburn was one of those who signed a petition to the General Court seeking to have West Dunstable set off as a separate town from Groton and Dunstable. A new line was established between Massachusetts and New Hampshire in 1741, and Hollis was chartered as a New Hampshire town on April 3, 1746. William Colburn was assessed the first parish tax in 1740 and was a member of the pulpit committee which secured Daniel Emerson as the first Hollis minister in 1742. Two years later he signed a petition for the protection of West Dunstable from the Indians. Paul's father, William, Jr., was born in Concord in 1726. He married Abigail Wheeler of Concord in 1757, and they

too settled at Patch's Corner in Hollis. William, Jr. farmed the fertile land which brought the first settlers to the town, leaving only to serve in the French and Indian War. Paul, William and Abigail's first son, was born in Hollis October 4, 1761, the second of seven children.[2]

Paul Colburn was fourteen years old when his father died in 1776. John Ball, who was also to become a stonecutter, was living in Hollis at that time; he was two years older than Paul. We believe that both boys learned to carve gravestones, and perhaps apprenticed, together for they later used almost identical designs and lettering styles. While Colburn and Ball may have been influenced by the work of the brothers Abel and Stephen Webster, both of whom lived for a time in Hollis, the Websters' work in that town was confined to the period prior to 1766, and hence Colburn and Ball would have been too young to have served in their shop. Abel and Stephen moved to Plymouth, New Hampshire in 1765 and 1766, respectively.[3] In any event, Paul married John Ball's sister Mehitable in 1780. In the following year William Ball, brother of John and Mehitable, married Elizabeth Colburn, Paul's first cousin, thereby drawing the two families even closer. Two children, Mehitable and Elizabeth, were born to Paul and Mehitable Ball Colburn while they were still living in Hollis. Elizabeth, or Betsy, was born January 13, 1784.[4]

Among the papers in the estate of Paul's father, William Colburn, Jr., is a bond dated December 9, 1784 in which Paul is described as "of Sterling, Massachusetts, cordwainer." It seems evident, therefore, that Paul moved to Sterling in 1784, although he did not acquire land there until February 1786 when he bought a parcel from John Kilburn containing 133 rods, a little less than an acre. John Kilburn was the father of Samuel (1783-1858) and Cheney (1796-1873) Kilburn, both stonecutters at Sterling, Massachusetts. Samuel's home and shop were less than a mile from Paul Colburn's house. It is possible that Samuel Kilburn learned the trade from Colburn. Paul Colburn's house still stands on the Old Princeton Road near the top of Fitch Hill. The 1798 Direct Tax Census for Sterling shows Colburn as the owner of a dwelling valued at $80 and one acre of land valued at $14. Some twenty years ago the present owner found a quantity of slate stones buried in the yard, some "with lettering on them," presumably relics of Colburn's occupancy. Paul's shop was less

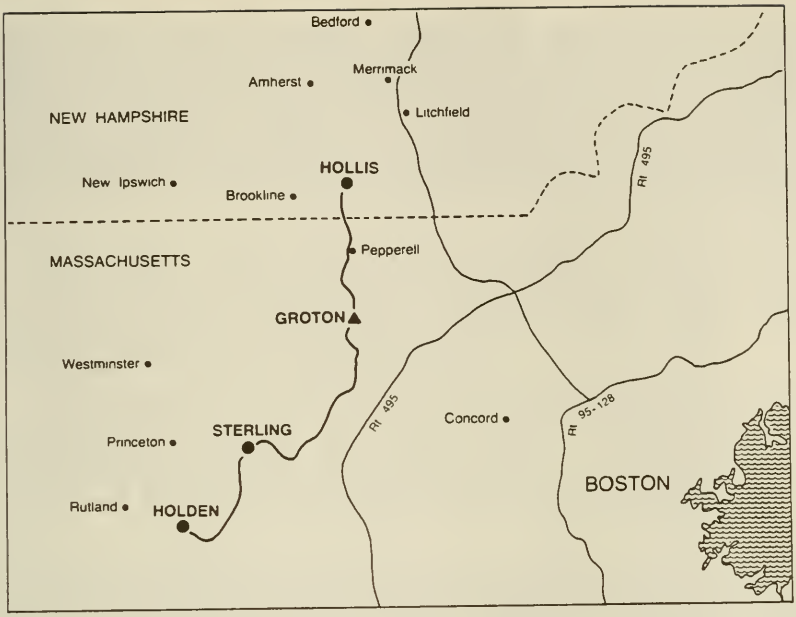



Figure 1. Map of towns in which carvers resided.

than two miles to the south, near the Quag, as it is called (being a small lagoon cut off from Washecum Pond when a causeway was built for the railroad); the Town and Country Restaurant now stands near the site. The Worcester Registry of Deeds has no record of his acquisition of the shop, but there is a deed dated January 8, 1806 whereby Paul Colburn, described as "of Holden, stonecutter," for $30 conveyed to Israel Allen, a physician, "one certain shop, being and standing in Sterling near Washecum Pond, so-called, in or near land belonging to Abigail Wait which said shop I have heretofore occupied in my business of stonecutter."[5]

We have found little evidence of Paul's life in Sterling, since many of the early records of that town were destroyed by fire. It does not appear from the records of the Court of Common Pleas or the Court of General Sessions that he engaged in litigation or was involved in any criminal proceedings. We know, however, that he and his wife had nine more children, born at frequent intervals from 1786 to 1798 and named for various members of Paul's and Mehitable's families. Notes found at the American Antiquarian Society indicate that he had a seat in the side gallery of the

Second Church in Sterling, the Chocksett Meetinghouse. He and his wife evidently left the Congregational Church and became Baptists, for they are listed among the forty-seven members of the First Baptist Church in Holden as of December 31, 1807.[6] At the Sterling Historical Society we found an engaging recollection in a centennial address given by William Frederick Holcomb on June 15, 1881:

> It would be no small treat now to hear the Sterling choir of old-fashioned men and women, boys and maidens, singling 'Old Hundred,' 'Cornonation,' 'Old Lang Syne,' or the 'Doxology' as led by Paul Colburn or Cephas Newell with fiddles, accompanied by a full orchestra of strings and wind instruments as in former times . . . There was one large (or double) bass viol . . . a single bass viol; and Paul Colburn and Cephas Newell always led with a fiddle.

Paul's father, William, died intestate so that his real estate, valued at £100 "silver money the old way," was inherited one-third by his widow and two-thirds by his children. Abigail disclaimed her interest in favor of her children. Thus Paul acquired an interest in Hollis real estate, and the assessors' records indicate that he paid taxes thereon in 1781 and 1782, but not thereafter.[7] The widow's taxes for 1777, the year after her husband died, were abated, presumably because of her disclaimer. In 1783 Paul's mother, Abigail Wheeler Colburn, married Gershom Hobart of Plymouth in central New Hampshire, she being his third wife. They subsequently lived in the neighboring town of Hebron, and upon their deaths were buried in a now unmarked grave in the Hebron Village Cemetery. Paul's oldest sister Isabel married Reuben Hobart of Groton, New Hampshire, another neighboring town; Paul's brother William married Phoebe Hobart of Groton, and they are believed to have lived in Lyme, New Hampshire; another brother, Abel, married Elizabeth Bailey of Groton, and they lived there. Accordingly, when Paul decided in 1807 or early 1808 to leave Holden, Massachusetts, he had few remaining ties in Hollis, but many reasons for moving to central New Hampshire.[8]

And so in 1808 we find Paul in Hebron, assessed a poll tax and a tax for owning one horse. In 1809 he was again assessed a poll tax and a tax for two neats (oxen) for a total of $1.35. In that year, school

district six was divided by a line "beginning at the pond and running between Paul Colburn's and Mr. Chaffin's," and Paul paid a school tax of forty-six cents. In the following year his livestock had increased to one cow, three neats and one horse, and he paid a tax of eighty-three cents for the support of school district seven. In 1811 he was chosen sealer of leather (one remembers his original trade as a cordwainer). Town records show that by 1814 his livestock had increased to two oxen, two cows and two horses, and that he continued to pay taxes in 1815. Both the tax records and the absence of any recorded deeds suggest that Paul Colburn never owned land in Hebron.[9]

In September 1815 Paul Colburn and his wife, his twenty-seven-year-old son Isaac with his wife and children, his son William (who had married Achsa Phelps of Hebron on August 15, only a few weeks before) and his unmarried daughter, Isabel, started out from Hebron in wagons to seek a new home in the west.[10] They took five years to reach that home in Loami, Illinois. On reaching Olean, on the Allegheny River in the southwestern part of New York, they found the river too low to bring all their goods in boats. They sold their wagons and teams, put their remaining goods and families on a raft, and started down the river, reaching Pittsburgh on Christmas Eve. Ice was forming on the river, and they were compelled to stop there for the winter.

While in Pittsburgh they were joined by Paul's son Ebenezer, who had been serving in the War of 1812 (as had his brothers Abel and William). In the spring of 1816, sons Isaac and Ebenezer went up the Allegheny River and made a raft of logs suitable for later use as shingles, and partially loaded the raft with hoop poles. They expected to go down the Ohio River in June, but the season was one of unusually low water and they did not reach Pittsburgh again until December. All of them continued down river on the raft to Marietta, Ohio, where they paused to engage in farming and "other pursuits." Ebenezer married Julia Smith, of New York, in Marietta and stayed on there temporarily, as did William and his wife, while Paul, Isaac and Ebenezer and their families continued down the river to Shawneetown, Illinois, where Paul, his wife Mehitable and their daughter Isabel remained. Ebenezer and his new wife went on to join her relatives in Monroe County, Illinois.

In August 1820 tragedy struck when Isaac and his

wife died within two days of each other, leaving six young children orphaned and alone in Louisville, Kentucky. On November 1, 1820, Paul's wife Mehitable died at Shawneetown. At about the time of her death William, having closed up the family business in Marietta, embarked on a boat with his family, floated down to Louisville and took on board four of his brother Isaac's children. One of the other children had died and still another had been placed in a good home. William arrived in Shawneetown with his group on December 24, 1820, the fifth anniversary of the family's arrival in Pittsburgh.

In March 1821 Paul Colburn, his twenty-five-year-old daughter Isabel, his son William with his wife and three children, the four orphaned children of Isaac, and a Mr. Harris, started in Mr. Harris's wagon drawn by four oxen for Morgan County, Illinois. They travelled through spring rains and mud and across unbridged streams for about five weeks until they came to the south side of Lick Creek in what is now Loami Township in Sangamon County, Illinois, where they found an empty cabin. Too tired to proceed further, the Colburn family decided to stay there.

Soon after their arrival William Colburn exchanged his gun for a crop of newly planted corn and thus began to provide for the family. Shortly after their arrival William and his brother Ebenezer built a small horse mill and for some years ground the grain of the neighboring farmers. Subsequently they built a watermill on Lick Creek, but this proved a failure and they erected a steam saw and gristmill in 1836. Around this mill grew up the village of Loami, where Colburn's Mill and its successors became the most noted institution in the area. Having succeeded in the long and arduous trek west, established his family and helped to found a new settlement in the wilderness, Paul Colburn died on February 27, 1825 near the present town of Loami.

Despite the large number of stones in the graveyards of Sterling and surrounding towns which we attribute to Paul Colburn, we have found only three, those of Joseph Eveleth, 1790, Princeton, Nathan Whitney, 1803, and Nathan Cutting, 1803, both buried in Westminster, where the probate accounts contain specific entries showing payments to Paul Colburn for gravestones (Worcester, Mass. Probates A19398, A65066, A14990). However, there are five other stones where the records at the Worcester Registry of Probate show payments to him in amounts clearly appropriate for his work:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A65475 | Silent Wilde<br>Princeton, 1790 | Paul Colburn £1-8-0 |
| A38530 | Prudence Manning<br>Lancaster, 1793 | Paul Colburn rec't £1-10-0 |
| A20531 | John Fessenden<br>Rutland, 1793 | Paul Colburn $10.33 |
| A65633 | Jonathan Wilder<br>Sterling, 1797 | Paul Colburn £2-2-0 |
| A41528 | Paul Moore<br>Princeton, 1799 | Paid Paul Colburn $9.00 |

The Nathan Whitney and Nathan Cutting stones carry the urn and willow design (Fig. 2). The remaining six stones are similar in style: an oval face set between wings in the tympanum, embellished with foliage in bas relief. This we have called the "face with wings" design (Fig. 3).

We have attributed one other major style to Paul Colburn because of the similarity of lettering and design elements to those of the probated stones, because of the large quantity of stones carved in this style in Sterling area burying grounds and because they all fall within the period of his residence there. This third style portrays a face in a niche or arch, made familiar by the earlier work of the Park family of Groton, Massachusetts (Fig. 4).

Figure 2. Nathan Whitney, 1803, Westminster, Mass.

Figure 3. Mary Morse, 1801, Boylston, Mass.

Figure 4. Elizabeth Temple, 1796, Boylston, Mass.

We were mystified to find a pair of Colburn face with wings and face in arch stones as far east of Sterling as Lexington, Massachusetts--those of Deacon Joseph Loring, 1787, and of his wife Kezia, 1789. Deacon Loring had purchased a farm in that part of Lancaster which became Sterling and conveyed it to his son John in November 1764, presumably as a wedding present, for John married Elizabeth Howe of Concord in January of that year. John was the oldest son, and when his parents died no doubt it was he who arranged to have their gravestones cut by his fellow townsman, Paul Colburn. Two of John's children, Becky and Betsey, who died in 1786 and 1800, respectively, are buried in the Cookshire Cemetery in Sterling with Colburn stones marking their graves. The stone done for Becky is of the face in arch variety and that done for her sister Betsey, who died at the turn of the century, is, appropriately enough, of the urn and willow design.[11]

We found no record of payments to Colburn in the Grafton County, New Hampshire probate records, although some of the stones in Hebron and Groton appear to be his work. We can only suppose that Paul Colburn continued as a stonecarver after his return to New Hampshire in 1808. He may, for example, have carved the urn and willow stone for his niece, Isabel Hobart, 1812, in Hebron. Nor do we know whether he continued to carve grave markers after he left Hebron for Illinois, although his son-in-law, Adna Phelps, is described as "a stonecutter by trade" in the History of Sangamon County.[12]

## JOHN BALL 1759-1840

Our search for the work of Paul Colburn took us to many beautiful graveyards in Hillsborough County in southern New Hampshire and to Middlesex County, Massachusetts border towns such as Pepperell, Townsend, Dunstable and Ashby. In these graveyards we found literally hundreds of stones, representing all three of the Colburn designs discussed above (face with wings, face in arch, and urn and willow). All of these stones fall within the period when Colburn was known to be working in Sterling, and a search of the records at the Hillsborough Registry of Probate and at the Middlesex Registry disclosed not a single payment to Paul Colburn for these gravestones or anything else. They did disclose, however, five payments to a John Ball for gravestones:[13]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 03729 | Nathaniel Griffin<br>Temple, 1790 | £2-5-0 |
| 01498 | Wyseman Clagett<br>Litchfield, 1784 | £3-16-2 |
| 08204 | John and Molly Seccombe<br>Amherst, 1796 | £3-18-0 |
| 13703<br>(Msx) | Captain James and Mary Lawrence<br>Pepperell, Mass., 1800 | $15.25 |
| 09553 | Thomas Whiting<br>Amherst, 1801 | $14 |

There were also probate payments in appropriate amounts to John Ball in eight other instances:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 04481 | Josiah Hodgman, Merrimack, 1787 | £3-0-0 |
| 02933 | Ralph Emerson, Hollis, 1790 | £8-8-0 |
| 05583 | Daniel Kendrick, Hollis, 1790 | £1-19-13 |
| 09058 | Benjamin Tenney, Temple, 1790 | £3-8-0 |
| 05365 | Samuel Jewett, Hollis, 1791 | £1-12-0 |
| 02477 | John Duncklee, Amherst, 1792 | £2-14-0 |
| 03183 | David French, Bedford, 1793 | £4-0-4 |
| 08266 | Eldad Spafford, Temple, 1806 | £3-0-11 |

And in Bedford, New Hampshire we found a handsome double stone, with Ball's urn and willow design, for the Reverend John Houston and his wife. The account filed in his estate (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 04527) contains the following entry dated October 1803: "by gravestones for the Rev. John Houston and for Madam Houston $15.00; for transporting said stones from Hollis and setting them up $4.00." As indicated above, all three styles are represented by these stones. The John Seccombe stone in Amherst, marking the grave of John and his wife Molly, includes both the face with wings and the face in arch designs, thus linking these two designs indisputably to the same carver (Fig. 9).

The census, tax and vital records show that there were a number of men by the name of John Ball who lived in southern New Hampshire between 1780 and 1800. The administrator's account in the estate of Captain James Lawrence provided a clue that John Ball of Hollis was the carver:

| | |
|---|---|
| For going to Hollis to speak for gravestones for dec'd | $ 1.00 |
| Pd to man team to bring gravestones from Hollis and helping set them up | $ 2.00 |
| Pd John Ball for gravestones | $15.25 |
| Pd David Shattuck for setting them up | .25 |

Examination of the Ball family genealogy and of Hollis town records indicates that there were only two John Balls in Hollis, our John and his son, who was not born until 1788. Deeds of various parcels of land to John Ball of Hollis in 1794, 1798 and 1802 all describe him as a stonecutter as do the deeds by which he sold his land in 1806, in one of which his wife Molly joined to release her dower rights.[14]

The Ball family, like Paul Colburn's family, came from Concord, Massachusetts. Mrs. Forbes's notes at the American Antiquarian Society indicate probate payments to a Nathaniel Ball of Concord in the 1730s.[15] This would have been John's grandfather. John's father Ebenezer was born in Concord in 1721, was married by Rev. Daniel Bliss to Sarah Gookin in 1746 and moved to Hollis, where their first child Ebenezer, Jr. was born in February 1749.[16] We should like to have found that John's father Ebenezer was himself a stonecutter, thus establishing from whom John Ball and Paul Colburn learned the trade. But our efforts to confirm that either Ebenezer or Ebenezer, Jr. was a stonecutter have thus far proved fruitless.[17]

A further word about John's father, Ebenezer the first, may be of interest. He was chosen as a surveyor of highways by the town meeting from time to time and engaged in various real estate transactions in Hollis. He may have been the Ebenezer Ball who was one of sixty-four grantees of the town of Granby, Vermont.[18] He was one of thirty-four Hollis men in a regiment of 600 raised in 1755 and commanded by Colonel Joseph Blanchard to aid in the expedition against the French forts on the west shore of Lake Champlain, serving as a private, or sentinel, under Captain Peter Powers. He enlisted on May 1 and was discharged on October 22. Attempts to place John Ball's father in the war of the Revolution probably confuse him with his son and namesake, Ebenezer the blacksmith, who answered the call on April 19, 1775, was a member of Captain Reuben Dow's company in Col. Prescott's regiment at Bunker Hill, and saw further service in 1776 and 1777. The elder Ebenezer's other three sons, Nathaniel, William and, as will appear later, John, also saw service in the Revolution.[19]

John Ball the stonecutter was the sixth child of Ebenezer and Sarah Gookin Ball, born in Hollis January 7, 1759. He married Mary (or Molly) Chamberlin, daughter of Samuel Chamberlin of Hollis, on April 24, 1782.

They had eleven children, all born in Hollis between 1783 and 1804. We found many bits and pieces in the Hollis town records from which we endeavored to reconstruct the life of John Ball: the birth dates of his brothers and sisters and of his own children; his marriage; his appearance on the tax rolls in 1781 at the age of twenty-two and continuing annually thereafter through 1805; his appointment in 1793 as constable and collector of taxes for the east side of the town, for which he was to receive fourpence on the pound collected; his election as tithing man in 1794 and 1801; and as a surveyor of highways in 1805; drawn as a petit juror in 1795 and 1796; appointed with eight others in 1796 to promote the "decent and laudable purpose" of seeing that his neighbors marched two-by-two at funerals in the town; and in 1801 his name appears along with ninety-three others (including Solomon Wheat, Sr., whom we shall meet again) as a signer of the articles of association of a religious group dedicated to prayer meetings and general moral uplift (a contemporary newspaper article describes the group as "a Philanthropic Society formed to support the gospel without taxes").[20]

The town records with respect to John Ball's service in the Revolution are somewhat confusing. He appears in a list of Hollis militia under Joshua Wright as of January 26, 1775, when he had only just reached the age of sixteen, and in a list of the militia in June of that year; but unlike his brothers Ebenezer and Nathaniel, he was not one of the ninety-two men who marched to Concord on April 19. He was one of the "several soldiers belonging to Hollis that went into the army to Canady July 1776 as apprised by the Committee of Safety for said Hollis," being a member of Captain Daniel Emerson's company in Col. Joshua Wingate's regiment of volunteers. Though recruited for service in Canada, the regiment went no further than Ticonderoga. Ball's signature appears on a receipt dated Mount Independence 19 September 1776 for billeting and mileage 11s.3p. and on another receipt dated 7 October 1776 for one month and twelve days of service. The roll of Captain Daniel Emerson's company in Col. Wingate's regiment as mustered and paid by Azar Davis, Muster Master, July 1776 lists John Ball as receiving in advance wages and bounty £9-18. At another point the records indicate that John Ball was paid £12 for about six months' service in this campaign. Ball is shown as one of the Continental soldiers from Hollis enlisted in 1777 for a period of three years. But the

return for the Fifth Regiment in New Hampshire, Col. Nichols, shows John Ball of Hollis in Captain Frye's company, Col. Scammond's regiment, and enlisted for eight months. Worcester, in his History of the Town of Hollis, New Hampshire summarizes John Ball's eight months of military service in 1777 as including the Battle of Saratoga, the Battle of Monmouth, the Pennsylvania Campaign and winter at Valley Forge.[21]

Further light, and some darkness too, is cast upon the life of John Ball by examining the various deeds in which he was either a grantee or a grantor. The earliest of these is a deed dated April 28, 1783 from his father Ebenezer granting to a syndicate of seven men, including John Ball and Solomon Wheat, in consideration of £5 "all such mines, mine ores, minerals or other hidden treasures of the earth that may be dug up or found upon, in or under the surface of the earth in my the said Ebenezer Ball's land or farm in Hollis."[22] The history of Hollis contains no suggestion that there were any hidden treasures within its bounds. However, John's circumstances appear to have been such that he was prepared to gamble a bit, for the records of the Court of Common Pleas indicate that he had given a note for £7-9-6 on February 21, 1780 to Daniel Boyle, a carpenter, which he was unable to pay. Boyle brought suit and obtained judgment for £4-6-7 and court costs of £1-17-10, and execution issued March 3, 1784. In any event, this 1783 deed indicates an early interest on the part of John Ball in what, like slate, may be extracted from the earth.

In this connection a lease dated October 20, 1786 from Jonathan Wetharbee of Harvard, Massachusetts to John Park, Sr. and Jr., Thomas Park and Daniel Hastings of a portion of the famous Pin Hill slate quarry in Harvard is of interest. This indenture refers to "Mr. Marble and Ball's part of the quarry." Mr. Marble was presumably either Joseph or John Marble, father and son, both stonecarvers of Bradford, Massachusetts. We have found no lease or deed of land in Harvard to John Ball, but this is not significant since leases were at that time rarely recorded. A deed from Joseph Stone of Harvard to Israel Reed and Thomas Park, stonecutters, dated December 1794 refers to "blue stone in Pine Hill except what lays opposite of Ball's quarry."[23] We have recorded forty-six gravestones in the Sterling and Hollis areas with a "B" or "JB" quarry mark on the back (Fig. 5a). The slate appears to come from Pin Hill. Nearly all of these stones seem to have been carved by

Paul Colburn or John Ball. The conclusion is almost irresistible that John Ball leased a portion of the quarry and shared its produce with his brother-in-law.

We have found in southern New Hampshire thirty-four gravestones of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with "W" on the back (Fig. 5b). The stone for Mindwell Brigham, who died in 1784 and is buried in Northboro, Massachusetts appears to have been carved by Paul Colburn; this stone has the letter "C" on the back. We have found a variety of such quarry marks. It is tempting to assign them to individual carvers:

B or JB for Ball (or Colburn)
C for Colburn
dh or H for Daniel Hastings
H for Luther Hubbard (another Hollis carver)
S for Ithamar Spauldin
W for Wheat (also Hollis carvers)

Figure 5a. Rachel Pierce, 1791, Pepperell, Mass.

Figure 5b. Martha Farrar, 1798, Pepperell, Mass.

Figure 5c. Aza Spaulding, 1815, Merrimack, N. H.

Likewise the marks T, ⊭ or ⊬ are seen on many Park stones and ✗ on stones carved by Spauldin. However, an occasional exception makes any such connections doubtful. For example, there is a handsome stone carved by Ball in Bedford, New Hampshire with a Park quarry mark and a probated Park stone with a "W" on the back. This letter also appears occasionally on Ball's stones, and so, even though the "H" on Hastings stones are of an earlier period, the "H" on stones of Hubbard's time cannot be established as related exclusively to Hubbard (Fig. 5c). Some of these marks may simply identify the quarryman. At this stage of our research we can only say from a study of these symbols that carvers seem to have had professional associations with each other and occasionally exchanged or shared their quarry rights or slate supply.

On April 1, 1790 John Ball acquired from his father for £150 the homestead farm in Hollis, containing about forty-five acres. In 1794 by deed in which he is described as "stonecutter" he acquired land adjoining that of his brother William from Daniel Emerson, Jr. and Solomon Wheat for £3-6-18, and on March 28, 1798 he acquired from Peleg Lawrence for $566 two parcels of land, with the buildings thereon, lying on the road leading from Hollis to Pepperell. Almost exactly a year later he sold the homestead and the land which he had acquired from Emerson and Wheat "excepting gold, silver and led ore in or under the surface" (still clinging to the hope that treasures might be found there). One of the two parcels acquired from Peleg Lawrence consisted of ten acres on the east side of the road. We believe that Ball built his house there and that this is part of the attractive enlarged cottage at 84 Main St. The other parcel, consisting of one acre, lay on the other side of the road; records suggest this as the location of his shop.[24]

In January 1802 Ball acquired from Josiah Hoar nine acres in the western part of Hollis, and in May of the same year he bought from William Hale another ten acres of land about three-quarters of a mile southwest of the meetinghouse. In the latter part of 1806 Ball started to dispose of his land, beginnning with the two parcels which he had purchased from Peleg Lawrence. The grantee was his apprentice Luther Hubbard and the consideration was $833, represented by five notes payable over a period of five years and secured by a mortgage on the property. In September he sold another parcel and in December the last of his land in Hollis.

At this point John Ball and his wife Molly disappear from the records of that town.[25] There is some jurisprudence involving a Lucy Ball, single woman, of Hollis, to be found in the records of the Court of Common Pleas involving suits for support of an illegitimate child (Vol. 12, pp. 184-93). John and Molly Ball had a daughter Lucy born in 1790. John's brother Ebenezer had a daughter Lucy born in 1785. We have found no record of any other Lucy Ball living in Hollis in 1810, so the plaintiff in this case appears to have been either the daughter or the niece of the stonecutter.

On April 30, 1806 John Ball purchased two large tracts of land in the northwest corner of Vershire, Orange County, Vermont, one consisting of 100 acres for $1200 and the other of 190 acres for $800. On January 9, 1807, still describing himself as a stonecutter of "Holles, New Hampshire," Ball sold 100 acres for $525. The large tracts involved and the fact that he disposed of more than one-third of the land less than a year after he bought it may indicate that Ball entered into these transactions as a matter of speculation rather than for farming the land himself. We do not know just when the Ball family moved from Hollis to Vershire, but it must have been early in 1807, for he was one of those who asked that town to establish a separate school district, and an article for that purpose appeared in the warrant for the August 14, 1807 town meeting. None of the petitioners attended the meeting and accordingly the article was dismissed.[26]

Nor do we know why the Ball family moved from Hollis to Vershire. John appears to have been a person to whom religion was important, and it may be that he was attracted by Stephen Fuller, who had married Phebe Thurston of Hollis and had been called to be the first minister of the Church in Vershire in 1788. Fuller was beloved by his congregation and stayed in Vershire until his death on April 12, 1816. It may be of significance that John Ball and his family moved to Thetford at about that time.[27]

In 1808 a general revival of religion in the town of Vershire, commencing in February and inspired by a preacher named Wright who was passing through, resulted in bringing fifty new members into the small church. Perhaps John Ball was one of these. In any event, a manual of the church published in Windsor in 1863 lists John Ball in a catalog of church members as of 1814, indicates that he was received into the church by

profession of faith in 1801 (the year in which he and others established the Philanthropic Society in Hollis) and that, subsequent to 1814, he "moved away." More important, the manual lists John Ball as a deacon.

It appears from the town clerk's records that on January 27, 1808 the town constable served notice on "John Ball and family now residing in the town of Vershire to depart said town." A similar notice was served on many other families. The action of Vershire, and later of Thetford, in "warning out" John Ball and his family shortly after they had settled in town is explained by Charles Latham, Jr. in his Short History of Thetford:

> The poor traveling from place to place seem to have become a matter of growing concern. In 1797 the state legislature passed an act which, while making each town chargeable for its poor, empowered justices in each town to examine new arrivals and if necessary order them to 'remove to the place of his or her former settlement'. Under the provisions of this act, the town of Thetford voted in August 1805 'that the selectmen be directed to warn all Persons who may come into said town to reside to depart said town without discrimination' in order 'to prevent their gaining a legal settlement or becoming chargeable to said town'. That September began the first of a series of actions in which the selectmen ordered the constable to serve writs on people to leave town. In the next six years a total of 58 persons were ordered to leave town; several of them were women; among them were at least two, Adolphus Fellows and Joseph Lord, who had previously lived in town. This 'warning out' was a standard practice at the time in both Vermont and New Hampshire. Appearance on a warning-out list is a fairly good indication that the person named has recently arrived in town, but it was not indicative of present or probable destitution. It is left to the reader to decide what the practice tells about the New England social conscience.[28]

Neither Ball nor his family left town as a result of that warning, and less than three months later, at the March town meeting, John was chosen a grandjuryman

and a highway surveyor. Tax collector's deeds in April 1809 discharging tax liens imposed on almost 200 acres of land indicate that John Ball had failed to pay a tax of one cent per acre imposed by the Vermont legislature at its October session in 1807 to defray the expense of erecting a state prison, that a public auction was held on April 4, 1808 and that Ball thereupon redeemed his property for the trifling sum of $2.80.[29]

In 1811 Ball sold a ten-acre parcel to Isaac Senter. Four years later he and Senter engaged in a land swap, the stated consideration in each deed being $550. On November 24, 1815 John Ball, still described as a stonecutter, disposed of the rest of his land for $900. He thus received a total of $1525 for land that he had bought for $2000--hardly a successful speculation.[30]

We do not know precisely when John Ball and his family moved to Thetford but it must have been shortly thereafter, for on May 18, 1816 an order to leave Thetford was served on them. Again the order was not carried out and again John Ball proved his respectability by becoming a Deacon in the church. (The church records have been destroyed by fire, but he was so described in a deed dated November 27, 1817 and on his gravestone.) On October 6, 1817 he acquired nine acres of land in East Thetford with a small house which had been built some years before by William Heaton. This house, or the original structural members, still stands and is much like the house which Ball had owned in Hollis. It was removed some 800 feet westerly up the hill when Interstate 91 and the exit ramp at Route 113 were built. On November 27, 1817 Ball purchased from Henry Gillet for $150 an adjacent piece containing about four acres. He mortgaged this property back to Gillet to secure a note representing half the purchase price. The note was payable January 1, 1819, but Ball again mortgaged the property on April 5, 1819, this time to Joseph Hosford to secure payment of a note for $100. On February 17, 1823 Ball borrowed $200 from his brother, Nathaniel Ball of Hebron, New Hampshire. On April 2, 1823 he used $130 of this money to pay off a mortgage on the original nine-acre parcel held by William Latham and Thomas Kendrick, and in the following September he gave his brother a mortgage on the entire property to secure the $200 note.[31]

John Ball's son John married Phila Pomeroy of Vershire in January 1810. Their first child, Elisha

P., was born August 10, 1810 in Vershire. John, Jr. was chosen a highway surveyor in 1811 and enlisted in the War of 1812. He continued a resident of Vershire after his father and mother had left and is shown as a resident in the 1820 census. Four of his nine children were born there. He must have moved from Vershire some time in 1820 after the census was taken, for his son John William is shown as born in Thetford in that year. On January 23, 1826 his father conveyed to him for $200 both parcels of the land which the father had theretofore acquired in Thetford, totaling some thirteen acres, reserving the right for the father and mother and their daughter Mary to live in the house during their respective lives and reserving also "use of the woodhouse and Pen adjoining the house." John Ball and his daughter Mary were still living there in 1835 when the property was mortgaged to William Ball of Hebron, New Hampshire, John's nephew.[32]

John Ball's wife Molly died February 6, 1827.[33] It is evident from a letter written on September 26, 1828 by John Ball to his nephew and namesake (then of Lansingburgh, New York and later of Grand Rapids, Michigan) that both Molly and her husband had been ill for some time and that life had been far from easy for them.[34]

Thetford, Sept. 26, 1828

John Ball Esq Sr--

Through the goodness [of] God I am yet in the land of the living. I have had several sick turns the summer past of the disentary diarea & colick that I did not expect to se this day, but I am some more comfortable now. Mary was sick of a fever last fall & has been in a very low state of health ever since, we are not able either of us to sit up more than half the time yet we have had to do chiefly alone for 5 or 6 weeks excepting washing baking &c. John's little Mary comes in at night makes our beds & sleeps with her aunt. They fetch in our wood & water, we are not able to hire & it has been & is now very sickly here & very difficult getting a girl. John & his family was very sick last fall & sick with a feever at one time. He has to work very hard. He does everything for us that we can expect--Eben was at home last

winter. He got me up a good wood pile & did considerable more. Your father was over last summer & made me some help. Saml sent me a present of several dollars not long since. By reason of such help I have kept a long till the present time without calling upon the town but how soon I shall come to the disagreeable task I do not know--Why it is, whether on the account of the name or nature & disposition or all that it is so, but I feel a greater nearness to you than to my nephews in general. You must therefore excuse me if I use freedom in writing. You may think strange that I have gotten reduced to poverty but a short history may remove the difficulty. I had not much property fifteen years since. In this fifteen years I have lost nine years of labor myself.

Your aunt was sick about one year before she died. Mary has been unable to do any labor. As much as three years out of six I have had 300 dollars to pay to the doctors & hireing young women more than two years & a large bill for necessaries besides about 200 dol I lost by men going a way in my debt. I hope I do not mention these things in a way of complaining thinking about my hard lot, for I receive daly mercies Infinitely greater and more numerous than all my chastisements & afflictions that it does appear to me that I ought to consider all my trials as light afflictions, they are so much less than my iniquities deserve. I was much disappointed that you did not come & se me when you was over last. The coat you gave me when you was in Coledge was the best coat I had till I rec'd another from you last week for which I am greatly obliged to you for which I hope you will be rewarded in the great rewarding day. Your Sr [sister] was here last week. Your friends were well in Hebron. Your Sr brought me some flower, some fresh meat & some honey. I have reason to bless God for all liberality I receive from my friends for were it not for that I must fare very hard. I hope you will write to me by the bearere my grandson respecting your [af]fairs of life but especially what are your hopes of futur happyness. Mary & I send our love to you &

kindest respect to Mr. and Mrs. Powers. I am afraid you will be weary in reading Uncles letter. This from your Uncle & friend and well wisher.

John Ball

John Ball Esqr

Mrs. Ferrin said she thought you put up a pair of [?] with the coat but if you did they somehow got lost. It is very difficult getting wheat here. I thought if I could have gotten the money of sending by my grandson for half hundred of flower but I understand it is very dear with you. I often think of the wheat loves your Sr said they had in Lancenburgh.

John Ball died on May 25, 1840 at the age of eighty-two.[35] He and his wife are buried in the beautiful Hillside Cemetery in Thetford. The road beside the graveyard winds down the hill and crosses the Pomponoosic River through a covered bridge to the little hamlet of Union Village. John and Molly lie beneath a small marble marker on which appears the epitaph which John had himself used so many times as a gravestone carver:

Friends and physicians could not save
Their mortal bodies from the grave
Nor can the grave confine them here
When Christ shall call them to appear

John Ball, Jr. lived until March 29, 1847, when he died at the age of fifty-nine. He is buried in the North Thetford Cemetery. His sister Mary did not fare well after the deaths of her father and brother John. She is listed in the 1850 census of Thetford as one of "seven elderly paupers" in the household of Dennis Howard. The Ball house in Thetford remained in the hands of the sons of John Jr., John W. and Merrill, until the latter acquired full title in 1860, conveying it out of the family three years later.[36]

The inventory which we found among the probate papers of John Ball, Jr. disclosed what was for us some startling information.[37] In this inventory the following items appear:

| | |
|---|---|
| Farm and buildings | $650 |
| Stone Quarry | $ 20 |
| Shop, Teakles [tackle], Tools | $ 10 |
| Grave Stones and Stone for Grave Stones | $ 20 |

So John Ball's son was also a carver of gravestones, as was his oldest son, Elisha P.[38] As indicated above, John Ball's grandfather, Nathaniel Ball of Concord, appears to have been a stonecutter. If we were able to establish that John's father Ebenezer followed the same trade, we should have another family like the Lamsons of Charlestown, the Parks of Groton and Harvard and the Stevenses of Newport, in which the craft was carried on in four or five successive generations of the same family. In fact, Thomas Ball, the famous American sculptor born in Charlestown, Massachusetts on June 3, 1819 known for such Victorian memorial masterpieces as the Lincoln Emancipation Group in Washington and the equestrian statue of George Washington in the Boston Public Gardens, and the Chickering monument in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, was descended from John Ball, brother of Nathaniel, our John's grandfather.

It seems fairly certain that John Ball continued to carve gravestones after he gave up his business in Hollis and moved to Vermont. He still described himself as "stonecutter" in the deed dated October 5, 1815 to Isaac Senter. We found a number of stones in the Thetford area which appear to have been done by him (for example, that of Mrs. Eunice White 1809 in Vershire Center). We do not know when he gave up stone carving. It may have been in 1826 when he sold his real estate, presumably including the shop, to his son, John, Jr., who was then thirty-two years old. John Ball's 1828 letter to his nephew contains no reference to his work other than the obscure sentence: "I had not much property fifteen years since; in this fifteen years I have lost nine years labor of myself." John Ball, Jr. was undoubtedly trained by his father, and this sentence may suggest that he took over his father's business long before 1826.

## THE WORK OF COLBURN AND BALL

In pursuing the Colburn connections, we gathered data from almost 1100 stones in three different states. The information collected in this inventory was arranged according to the towns we visited. For each stone we recorded the name of the deceased, the date of death, age at death, the location of the stone by town and

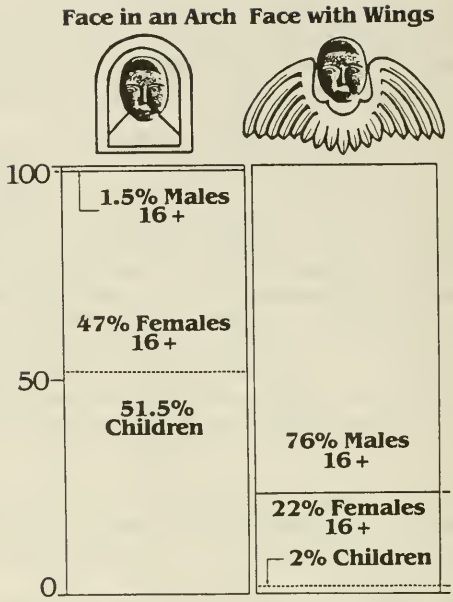



Figure 6. Distribution of designs.

specific burying ground, and the design category of the tympanum carving. As indicated above, it was soon obvious that there were three major design groups: a face in an arch, a face with wings, and an urn, willow or urn and willow combination.

Three hundred eighty-five, or 35%, of the total markers inventoried were of the urn and willow design. These were produced collectively by Colburn and four other carvers with Colburn connections. Except to illustrate the Colburn and Ball style, the urn and willow stones will not be discussed here. Instead we shall concentrate on the remaining 700 stones, all of the face in arch or face with wings design, which represent the pre-1800 or pre- urn and willow work of Colburn and Ball.

The face in arch design turned out to be used almost exclusively for women and children (Fig. 6). A remarkable 98.5% of the 423 face in arch stones are for children and females over the age of sixteen. Thus the face in arch design is clearly considered a feminine style. Women and children appear to be linked by common treatment in the late eighteenth-century social

structure. Conversely, the face with wings design is used for adult males in 76% of the examples studied. Although definitely considered a masculine design, there was more cross-over usage, with 22% of the face with wings design found on stones for women. Thus, while it was occasionally appropriate to use the so-called male design for women, the converse was almost never the case.

All of the inventoried stones for adults were checked for possible probate entries. This meant examining the original documents or microfilm copies on file in five different probate districts. Although time-consuming, this search of primary sources did yield a record of eight payments to Paul Colburn and fourteen to John Ball, as well as numerous probate entries showing payments to various other carvers having Colburn connections. The probate search was vital in establishing the existence of the stonecutter John Ball of Hollis and in distinguishing his work from that of Paul Colburn.

The work of these two carvers is almost identical. Consider, for example, the stone of Paul Moore, 1799, Princeton, for which Colburn was paid $9.00, and the stone of Josiah Hodgman, 1787, Merrimack, for which Ball was paid £3 (Figs. 7 and 8).

Paul Colburn carved in the Sterling area of Worcester County between 1784 and 1808. His work is concentrated in the area to the west and north of Sterling, with relatively few stones to the east or south. This more western distribution seems to be fairly typical of carvers working on the fringes of Boston's influence. John Ball lived and carved in Hollis, twenty-five miles north of Sterling, from 1783 to 1806. His work, although more evenly distributed north and south than Colburn's, is also heaviest in the west and relatively scarce in the towns to the east of Hollis. All of the probated Colburn stones are in the vicinity of Sterling, while all of the stones probated to John Ball are in the vicinity of Hollis (Fig. 1).

Let us now examine the three major styles of Paul Colburn and John Ball. First, the face in arch style. There are no probated face in arch stones to illustrate because, as we have seen, this was almost exclusively a design for women and children. Few women, and no child, had an estate to probate. But there is no doubt that the face in arch was a Colburn/Ball style. As we

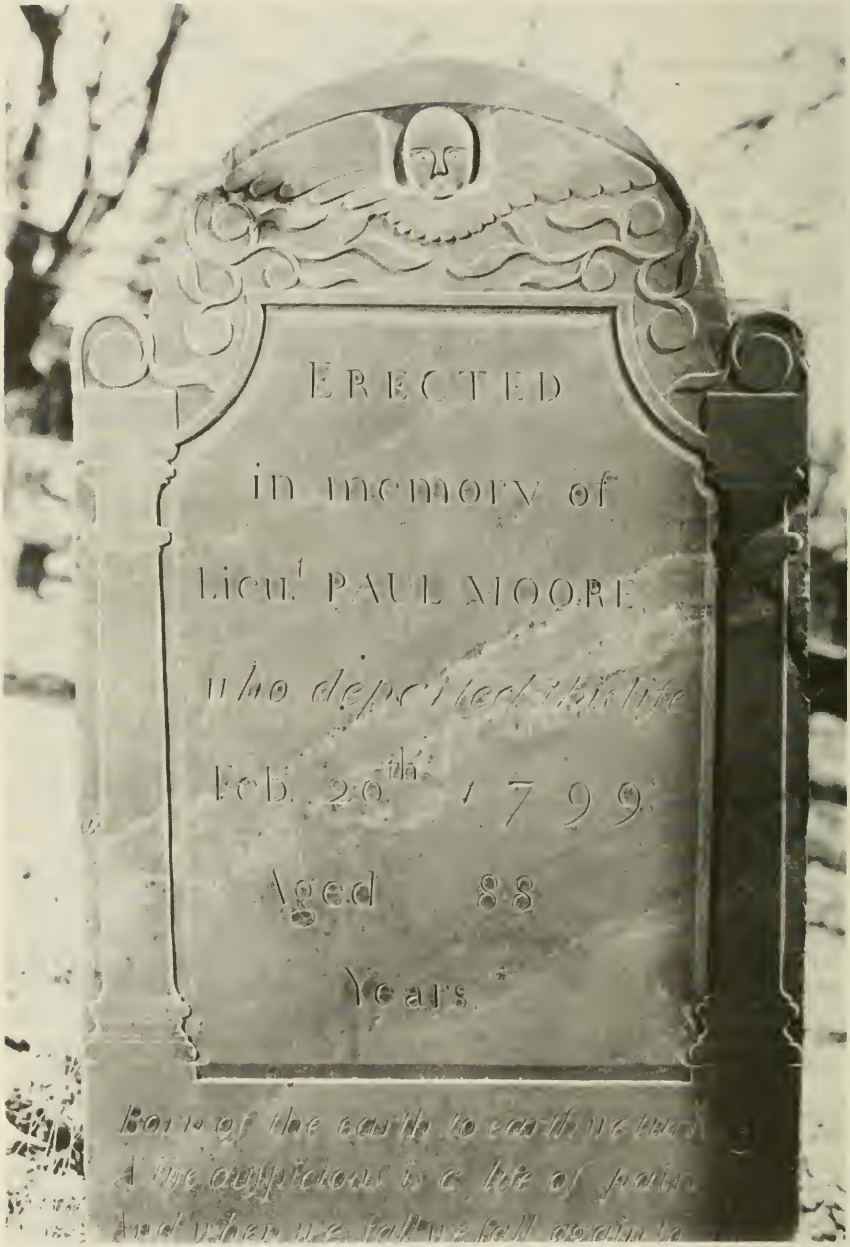



Figure 7. Paul Moore, 1799, Princeton, Mass.

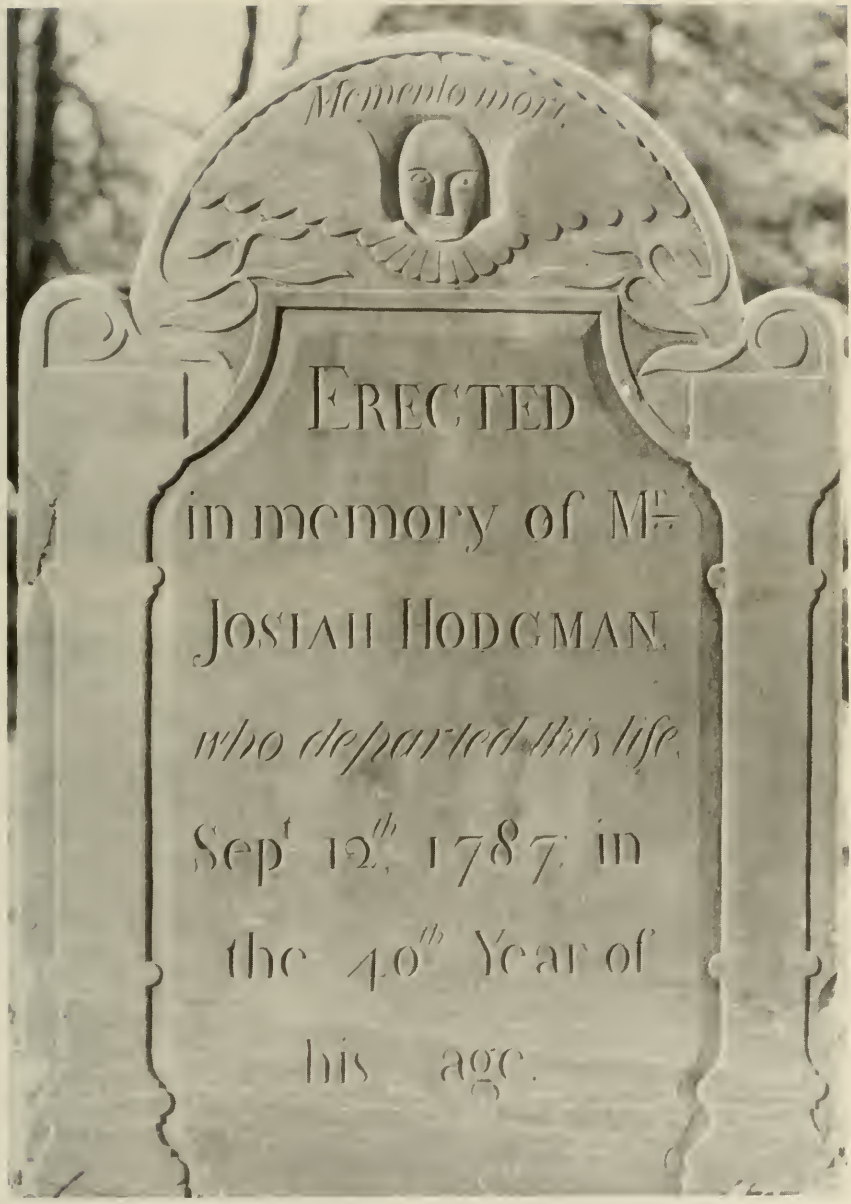



Figure 8. Josiah Hodgman, 1787, Merrimack, N. H.

have already pointed out, evidence is in the form of a probated "double stone" for John and Molly Seccombe in Amherst, New Hampshire, the husband's half marked by a face with wings and the wife's with a face in an arch (Figs. 9-11). The more common separate markers for husband and wife support the same finding: the husband's stone bears a face with wings, the wife's a face in an arch. The husband is almost always on the left side of the stone and the wife on the right. This is how the couple faced God at their marriage and likewise in death and resurrection.[39]

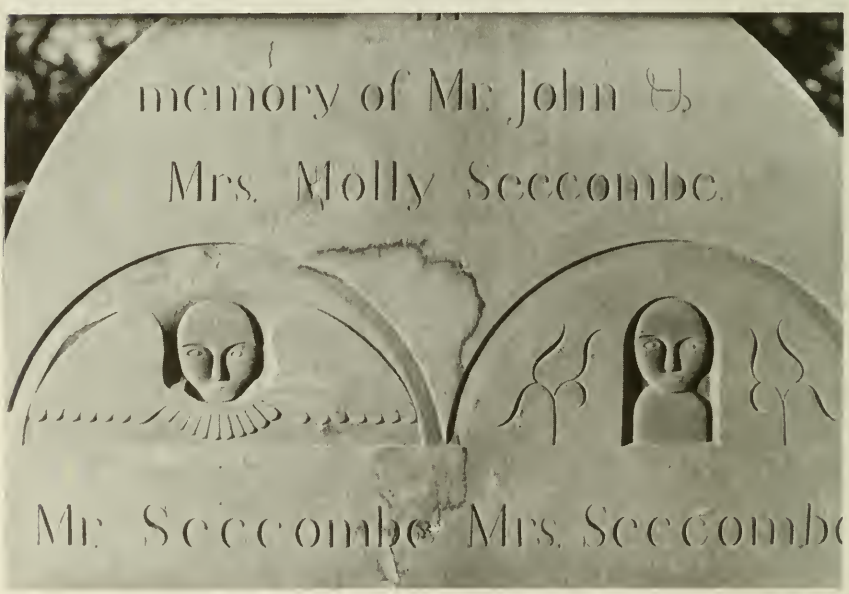



Figure 9. John and Molly Seccombe, 1796, Amherst, N. H.


Figure 10. Samuel (1756) and Mary (1760) Leeman, Hollis, N. H.


Figure 11. Stephen (1775) and Mary (1786) Harris, Hollis, N. H.

There are many examples supported by probate evidence of the second design group, the face with wings (Fig. 3). Although there are minor variations in style (Ball tended to use slightly more elaborate backgrounds, pie-crust detailing around the tympanum and memento mori additions, while Colburn produced a greater quantity of simple stones), the overall design remained relatively standard. Many of Colburn's carvings have a smoother, more highly polished look, almost as if the faces were sculpted in ice and then allowed to melt ever so slightly. This characteristic is associated with a particularly fine-grained slate. His faces convey a diminutive, more delicate proportion.

The third major design group consists of urn and willow stones (Fig. 2). Again the work of the two carvers is very similar, with Colburn favoring a slightly less ornate style. Ball's willow boughs commonly sprout two sprigs near the base, Colburn's more typically one. Both carvers frequently used bevelling as a means of dividing the tympanum from the tablet, and a smoothly indented arch for the urn.

The arrangement of the inscription in the work of both carvers is similar: frequently it begins "ERECTED In Memory Of," has "who departed this life" in italics, and the final work "Age" sometimes begins with a capital "A" or more frequently with an enlarged lower case "a." Italicized words are carved in exactly the same manner; characteristic are the open "p" and open "h" (Fig.12, by Ball; Fig. 13, by Colburn).

Both Colburn and Ball occasionally produced unique stones. That for William Harris in Sterling, for example, has an armorial emblem in the tympanum. The initials "IB" appear on the back of the headstone and "B" on the footstone. The Rev. Joseph Davis stone in Holden combines a portrait in an arch with a willow tree. The lettering on these two stones is similar and demonstrably the work of Paul Colburn.

In the cemetery behind the town hall in Amherst, New Hampshire is a large table stone, supported by four granite posts, marking the grave of Rev. Daniel Wilkins, pastor of the church for twenty-three years. He died February 11, 1784. At its annual meeting less than a month later the town voted £4-5-1 to defray his funeral charges, directed the selectmen to "provide gloves for the Bearers" and chose a committee of three to erect a monument over his grave. The town records contain no

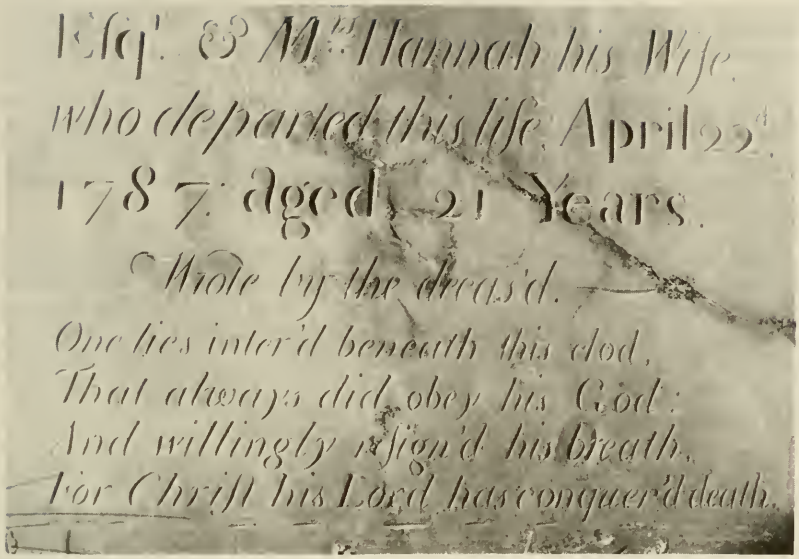



Figure 12. Matthew Thornton, 1787, Merrimack, N. H.


Figure 13. Daniel Mirick, 1792, Princeton, Mass.

report of that committee or evidence as to whom payment for the work was made, but the stone itself carries the statement that it was erected by the town, as well as a lengthy and rather fulsome account of the beloved pastor, prepared no doubt by the committee itself. The lettering includes the large "a" and the open italic "p" and "h" which are characteristic of John Ball's work. The stone bears no design--only lettering--but it is tempting to cite this as another unique product of Ball's shop.

Colburn and Ball produced some delightful, though usually simple, children's stones. See, for example, Colburn's stone for Daniel Mirick (Fig. 13). The footstones of both carvers are sadly noncommittal. Most of them are plain, and those with designs are not unique enough or sufficiently standard to be useful as an identifying factor.

It is interesting to speculate on the source of gravestone designs and the possible influence of other carvers. Few late eighteenth-century stonecutters worked in isolation. There is ample evidence to suggest that carvers borrowed freely, adapted, refined, combined, and consequently created their own style which seldom remained static. In fact, the three designs which we have been discussing were commonly used by virtually all carvers in this area during the latter part of the eighteenth century (Figs. 9-11). The Parks were probably the most dominant carvers in both Hollis and Sterling in the 1780s and 1790s. Their work is seen in great numbers in both areas (Fig. 10). Groton, Massachusetts is central to both Hollis and Sterling (Fig. 1). Colburn and Ball were undoubtedly influenced, if not actually instructed, by the Parks. There is also an undocumented carver--quite probably of the Park school--whose work is highly visible in the Hollis area in the late 1770s and 1780s and also seems stylistically connected with that of Colburn and Ball (Fig. 11).

Although an extended discussion of epitaphs is not within the scope of this article, a few used by Colburn and Ball are of interest. On the stone which Colburn carved for Nathan Cutting, 1803, Westminster, the inscription informs us that he "died in a surprizing and effecting manner" and the epitaph explains more explicitly:

Lo! Where this silent marble weeps
Our neighbor, friend and brother sleeps

Insanity and death are near alli'd
He gave the wound by which he died.

Both Ball and Colburn used this epitaph on many of their stones:

Youth like a vernal flower appears
Most promising and fair;
But death like an untimely frost
Puts all in silence there.

On Matthew Thornton's stone in Merrimack, 1787, done by John Ball (Fig. 12), the epitaph "Wrote by the deceased" reads as follows:

One lies inter'd beneath this clod,
That always did obey his God;
And willingly resign'd his breath,
For Christ his Lord has conquer'd death.

Paul Colburn used these prophetic lines on a stone in Boylston, Massachusetts:

The Stars shall fade away, the Sun himself
Grow dim with Age, and Nature sink in Years;
But the Soul shall flourish in immortal Youth,
Unhurt amidst the War of Elements,
The Wreck of Matter, and the Crush of Worlds.

## JOSIAH COOLIDGE WHEAT 1775-1815

In our pursuit of Paul Colburn's work in Hollis, where we found so many stones that we later discovered were the work of John Ball, we came upon a large and elaborate monument with a portrait face framed in an oval and the floral design, architectural columns and tablet characteristic of Ball and Colburn (Fig. 14). The inscription reads:

ERECTED
In Memory
of Doctor
JOHN JONES
who departed this life
July 14, 1796 in the
Year of his age
In youth he was a scholar bright,
In learning he took great delight;
He was a Major's only Son,
It was for love he was undone.


Figure 14. John Jones, 1796, Hollis, N. H.

We found a description of "Doctor" Jones and of the intriguing last line of the epitaph in a biographical sketch appearing in Worcester's History of Hollis.[40] According to tradition, Jones was the son of a wealthy British military officer of good family, born in England early in the century. He led a wandering life until he came to Hollis soon after the Revolution, when he built a cottage in a remote part of the town and devoted himself to the growing of fruit trees, shrubs, herbs and flowers. He supported himself by preparing medicinal herbs and various nostrums, which he peddled in Hollis and neighboring towns, thereby acquiring his title of "Doctor." In his youth he had an unfortunate love affair, as a result of which his mind became unsettled, and he thereafter lived an eccentric and wayward life. He told the entire story in a ballad of forty stanzas which he used to sing to himself in his isolated cottage and which, after his death, was sung for many years by the young people of Hollis and neighboring towns. It appears from the ballad that his father and mother were opposed to his marrying a young woman who they thought to be "of low degree." Angered at this opposition, the young lady's father refused to permit his daughter to marry Jones, and after this forced separation the girl pined away and died. Her brother returned the engagement ring to Jones, who attended her funeral as the chief mourner, as the ballad has it,

> And after that distracted run,
> And so forever was undone,
> And wandered up and down, alone.

Worcester's account concludes as follows:

> There were at the time, in Hollis, three young men to whom the doctor was strongly attached, and whom he called his adopted sons, viz., Thaddeus Wheeler, Jun., Timothy Emerson, and J. Coolidge Wheat, the last named, by trade, a stonecutter and maker of gravestones. During the life of Jones, and under his eye and direction, Wheat had made for him a large, neatly finished gravestone, fully completed and lettered, except the date of his death, with the epitaph inscribed upon it, furnished by the doctor, and copied from a stanza of his ballad. By his will dated January 1, 1791 the little estate that the doctor left was given to his three adopted

sons, with the single condition, that Wheat should finish and set up his gravestone.

An examination of the probate papers in the estate of John Jones confirms the accuracy of the reference to his will, and other evidence which we found in the course of our investigation, including deeds and the papers in his own estate, confirmed that J. Coolidge Wheat was indeed a stonecutter (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 05378). However, since he was only twenty-one years old at the death of his patron and since the stone gives every evidence of having been done by a mature craftsman, there is reason to doubt that Wheat was solely responsible for the work. In fact, it will be noted that Worcester himself states that Wheat "had the gravestone made" for Doctor Jones. We believe that the stone was done or supervised by John Ball, who was by then an accomplished carver.

We believe that Josiah Coolidge Wheat probably worked in Ball's shop. Some support for this belief may be found in the probate records for Ralph Emerson of Hollis, who died in 1790, payments being shown to John Ball of £8-8-0 and Josiah Wheat £1-4-0 (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 02933), and of John Smith of Peterborough who died in 1801, in whose estate payments show $6.89 to Josiah C. Wheat and $3.97 to J. Ball (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 08268). The tympanum on the Emerson stone is badly defaced but appears to have been of the face with wings design. The Smith stone has a stiff and angular face in an arch surmounting a circle; and the design is in other respects quite unlike the work of Ball or Wheat.

The stone of Martha Farrar, 1798, Pepperell has "W" on the back. The administrator's account in the estate of her husband Joseph 1802, which was allowed April 18, 1804, contains an entry indicating a payment of $26 to Coolidge Wheat (Middlesex, Mass. Probate 7312). Since son Coolidge was only a child at that time, the stone must have been carved by, and the payment intended for, the father, J. Coolidge Wheat.

These Hillsborough County Probate estates show payments to Josiah Coolidge Wheat for gravestones:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0469 | Joseph Beard, New Boston, 1799 | $ 9.00 |
| 0325 | Sarah Glover, Francestown, 1807 | 6.50 |
| 09105 | Katherine Thurston, Hollis, 1809 | 8.50 |
| 02556 | James Dinsmore, New Boston, 1814 | 13.82 |

and the following non-specific payments:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 05614 | Hannah Kendrick, Hollis, 1805 | $18.75 |
| 05392 | James Jewet, Hollis, 1808 | 9.50 |

All of these stones are of the urn and willow style. The price, $13.82, is carved on the Dinsmore stone. The James Jewet stone, like that of Martha Farrar, has a "W" on the back.

A comparison of the Sarah Glover stone, done by Wheat, with the Thomas Whiting stone, probated specifically to Ball, readily shows the affinity between the two carvers and reinforces the surmise that Wheat worked for a time in John Ball's shop (Figs. 15-16).

Josiah Coolidge Wheat was born April 18, 1775 in Hollis, the son of Solomon and Sarah Ball Wheat. He was named after his paternal grandfather Josiah and his grandmother, Ruth Coolidge Wheat. In tracing his genealogy we discovered a number of relationships which tied him to the Ball and Colburn families. Both his grandfather Josiah Wheat and his father Solomon, like John Ball's father and Paul Colburn's father, were born in Concord, Massachusetts. Solomon became an orphan, probably in 1759 when he was ten years old, and in 1764 was taken by his uncle Thomas Wheat to Hollis, where he grew up, became a prominent citizen, served as a lieutenant in the Revolution, held town office as clerk and selectman and occupied a fine house on Main Street. Uncle Thomas had married Mary Ball of Concord, John Ball's aunt, and Solomon married as the first of his three wives Sarah Ball, sister of John Ball, of Mehitable Ball Colburn and of the William Ball who married Elizabeth Colburn. Josiah Coolidge Wheat was thus related to both carvers John Ball and Paul Colburn.[41]

There are other points of connection between the Wheats, Paul Colburn and John Ball. Solomon Wheat, the father of J. Coolidge Wheat, was initially described in deeds as a cordwainer, though later as a "gentleman," and the papers in his estate (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 09718) suggest that even after he had gained wealth and status he continued as a cordwainer, for a list of his debts shows amounts owed to C. P. Farley for sole leather, upper leather, dressing sheepskins, dressing calfskin, black grain upper leather and hide Calcutta leather. His son Solomon, Jr. was also a cordwainer. Thus it is possible, even likely, that Paul Colburn learned his original trade of cordwaining

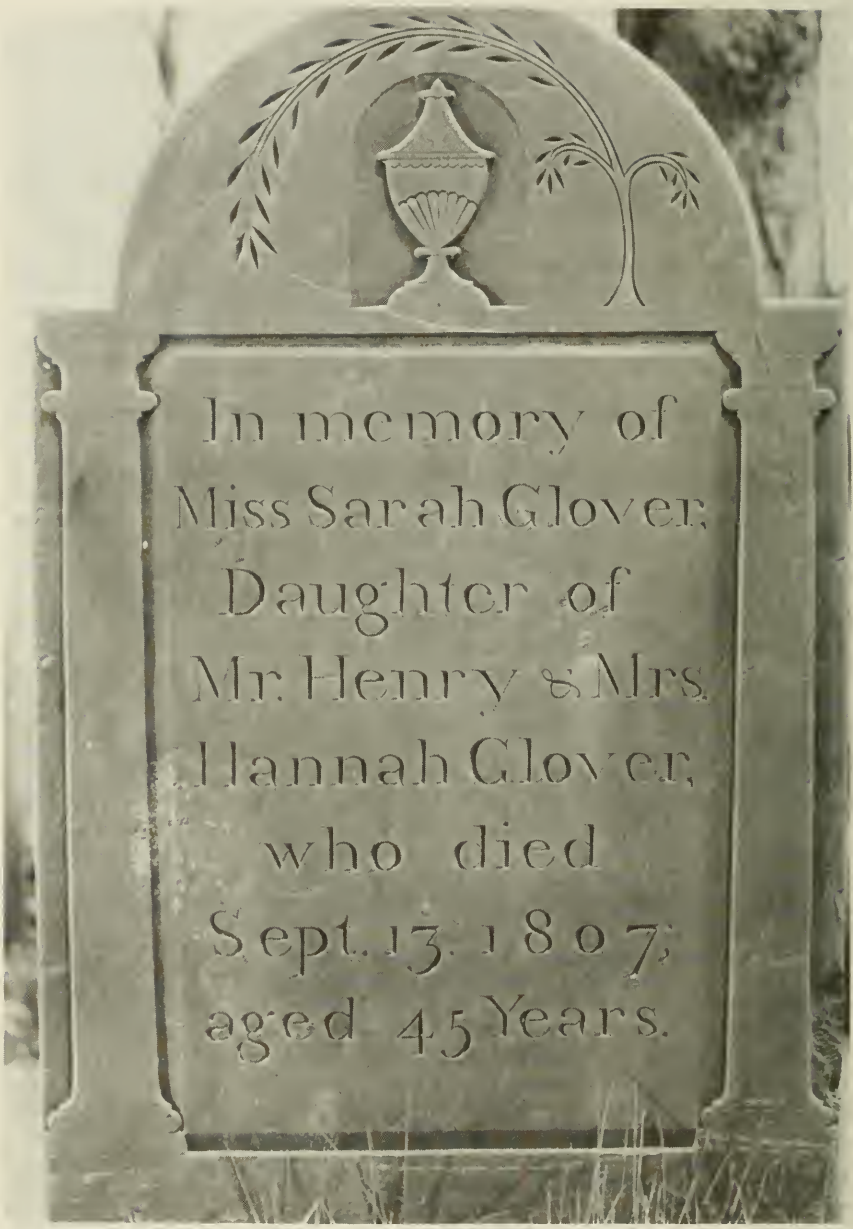



Figure 15. Sarah Glover, 1807, Francestown, N. H.

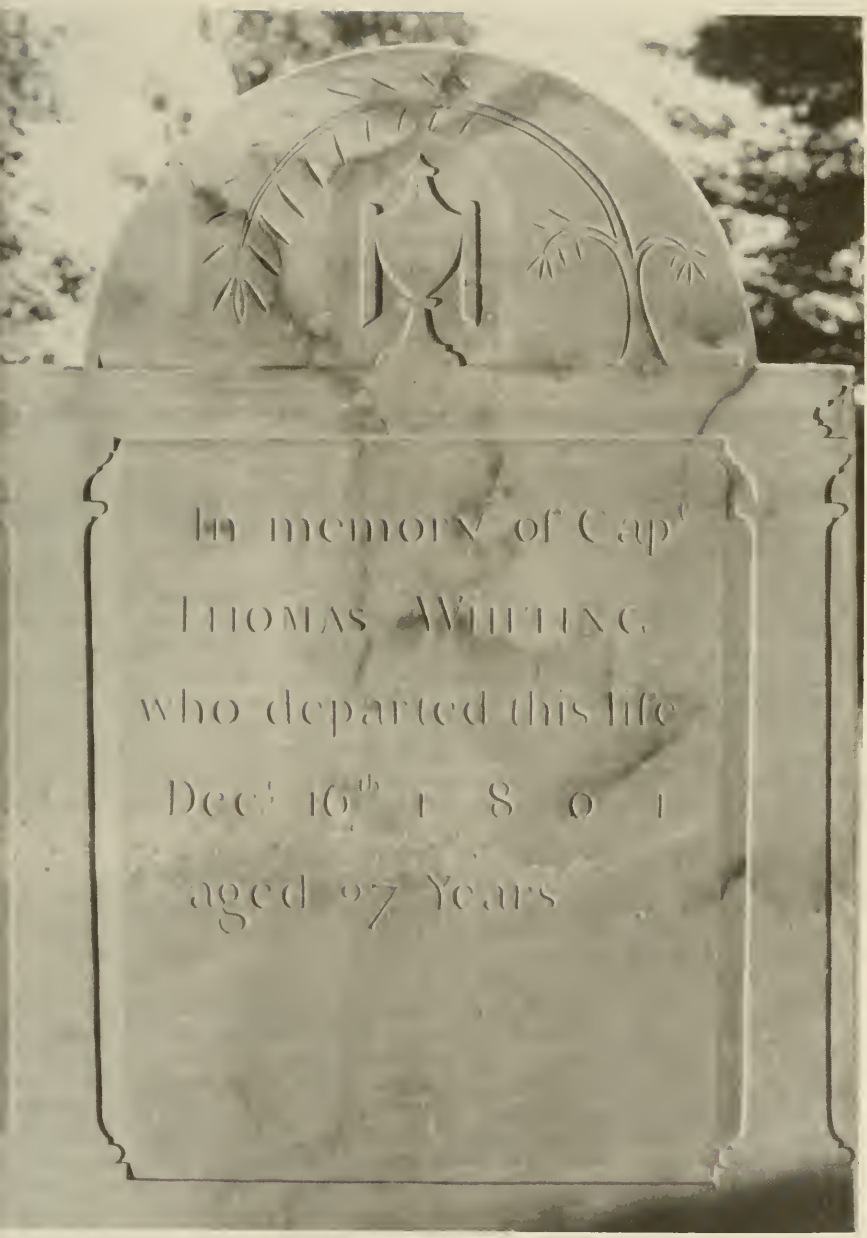



Figure 16. Thomas Whiting, 1801, Amherst, N. H.

from the Wheats.[42] We believe that the homestead of Solomon Wheat, Sr. was adjacent to John Ball's land and shop, and J. Coolidge Wheat's own house (now 5 Ridge Road) and shop were very near the house and shop of John Ball (later owned by Luther Hubbard).[43]

Josiah married Sarah Cummings of Litchfield, New Hampshire, sister of his older brother Solomon's first wife, Hannah. Josiah and Sarah had seven children. The oldest was Coolidge Wheat, who was born in Hollis in 1797. Josiah appears on the tax rolls annually from 1797 until his death in 1815, with the exception of 1802-04, 1806-08, and 1811. In 1801 the town voted to abate his taxes and not to tax him for the ensuing year.[44]

Josiah acquired three acres of land in Hollis from his friend Timothy Emerson, Jr. by deed dated February 8, 1792 which described him as "minor yeoman." On January 30, 1797 in consideration of $45 he sold three acres, with the buildings thereon, to Benjamin Fletcher, the deed describing Wheat as "stonecutter."[45]

Josiah Coolidge Wheat died April 9, 1815 at the early age of forty. His widow declined appointment as administrator of his estate (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 09634) and his father Solomon was appointed and gave bond in the amount of $1000. The inventory filed in the estate shows one-quarter acre of land, a shop and old barn valued at $80 and personal estate of $276.93 of which $143.14 is represented by unfinished gravestones, described as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 60 feet gravestones unfinished | $ 24.00 |
| 6 DoDo | 2.40 |
| 136 Do smoothed | 102.00 |
| 22 Do lettered | 14.74 |
| 1 box stonecutters tools | 2.50 |

Claims against the estate in the amount of $980.72 were presented. The administrator represented the estate as insolvent in October 1815. Commissioners were appointed and a vendue was held, resulting in proceeds of $298.98. After payment of $80 for the widow's support and $81.64 for preferred claims, only $137.34 was left for creditors. The administrator was licensed to sell the real estate, and the shop and quarter acre of land were bid in by Josiah's son Coolidge Wheat for $21.[46]

## COOLIDGE WHEAT 1797-1849

Three weeks after his father's death Coolidge Wheat placed the following advertisement in the Farmer's Cabinet, a weekly newspaper published in Amherst:

STONE CUTTING

> THE STONE-CUTTING business will be continued by the subscriber, at the shop of Josiah C. Wheat, lately deceased. Those who had left orders with him for grave-stones, which were not executed, are requested to renew them to
>
> COOLIDGE WHEAT
>
> Holles, April 29, 1815

This advertisement was repeated in the issues of May 6, May 13, and May 20.

Coolidge Wheat was born December 19, 1797.[47] The Wheat Genealogy by Silas Carmi Wheat and Helen Love Scranton says that he was married twice and "by profession a marbleworker, he was also a musician and played many instruments."[48] He is listed as head of a family in Hollis in the 1820 and 1830 census. At some time after 1830 he moved to Montpelier, Vermont, where he died July 27, 1849. Henry Gilman Little in his Hollis, New Hampshire 70 Years Ago says that he lived in the northern part of the town, next to Ethan Willoughby and that he "had a taste for lighter things, as was shown by the dash of horse-jockey in his composition." Little goes on to say:

> I listened on training day to Coolidge Wheat and other musicians while they discussed, as they drank, the question of what kind of liquor was best to blow their wind instruments. One could blow best on West Indies rum; another on brandy; and still another, who was already pretty 'full,' could blow best on gin.[49]

We found two handsome stones in New Ipswich, New Hampshire with the urn and willow design, both signed by Coolidge Wheat. That of Susanna Wilson, 1815, bears a legend just above the ground, "C. Wheat, Holles, N.H. 1817." The other stone is that of Francis Appleton, on which the legend reads "C. Wheat, Holles, N.H. $27.00." We discovered a stone in Thompson Cemetery, Tyngsboro, Massachusetts for Capt. Nathaniel Holden, 1817, "Exec.


Figure 17. Daniel Emerson, 1820, Hollis Center, N. H.

by C. Wheat, Holles, NH." The table stone which marks the grave of Noah Worcester, 1817, in the Main Street Cemetery in Hollis has this legend at the top: "Engraved by C. Wheat for J. Worcester, Jan. 1832." The stone is bare of decoration but offers a rich genealogical resource, for it recites not only the decedent's ancestry but his numerous progeny as well. It must have been ordered by Noah's son Jesse. The handsome stone for Daniel Emerson, 1820, in the Hollis Center Cemetery (Fig. 17) bears the inscription "Exc. by John Park, Jr. & C. Wheat." John Park, Jr. was in the fourth of five generations of stone carvers in a family in which at least twelve members made gravestones. The signatures suggest the possibility that there may have been an earlier association between the Wheats and the Park family shop.

## LUTHER HUBBARD 1782-1857

One more Hollis carver of this period remains to be discussed, Luther Hubbard, who, it will be remembered, was an apprentice of John Ball and bought his house and shop to continue the business when Ball left Hollis. Charles S. Spaulding gives a succinct account:

> Major Luther Hubbard, son of Thomas and Lois White Hubbard, was born in Hollis, August 13, 1782. He married Hannah Russell, of Carlisle, Mass., December 18, 1806, and settled at the Page Wright place, Butterfield Hills, Hollis; he purchased this place of John Ball, of whom he learned the stone cutting trade, which he worked at during his life time. Mr. Hubbard acquired the title of Major, although he never held a Major's commission. In 1834, Mr. Hubbard moved to Kendall Mills at North Hollis, residing here until the fall of 1836, he then removed to near Riddles in Merrimac, from here he went to Manchester about 1845, residing here until his death, with his son, Thomas Russell.[50]

The account goes on to recite the names and birth dates of Major Hubbard's children and to state that he died in Manchester, New Hampshire March 2, 1857, while his widow survived to die at Manchester June 21, 1870. A Hubbard genealogy adds the following information:

> The abutments on which rested the bridge over the Nashua at Runnel's Mills were constructed

by him, and were the only ones that stood the test when the ice gave way in the spring, while the bridge was below the falls. He was a good husband and father . . . Monumental stones finished by him may be seen in the cemeteries of Hollis, Nashua, Litchfield, Groton, Brookline, Amherst and Milford, where he was well known and highly esteemed. He probably never had an enemy.[51]

Perhaps in order to capitalize on the recent death of Josiah Coolidge Wheat, his competitor in Hollis, Luther Hubbard inserted the following advertisement in the Farmer's Cabinet:

GRAVE STONES

The subscriber acquaints the public, that he keeps constantly on hand a stock of GRAVE STONES, and will prepare them to orders on short notice, either at his shop in Amherst, near David Stewart, Esq. house, or at his shop in Hollis.

Luther Hubbard

June 20, 1816

This advertisement appeared in the June 22 issue. The same advertisement with a small engraving of an urn and willow gravestone and signed "Luther Hobart" appeared in the June 29 number and again a week later. In the issues of July 20 and September 7 the notice was the same but the signature reverted to "Luther Hubbard" and the cut was changed to that of a tipsy gravestone and a getting sun.

The Hollis town records indicate Hubbard as a taxpayer from 1805 until 1829, his name sometimes being spelled Hobart, Hobard and Hubert. He was elected a surveyor of highways in 1812, 1823 and 1829, hogreeve in 1816 and 1817; and in 1827 he received one vote for governor's council. Like so many of the stonecutters whom we have studied, Luther Hubbard ran into debt. He bought his house and shop from John Ball with a purchase money mortgage. On December 31, 1814 he again mortgaged the property, this time to Nathan Thayer to secure a debt of $200. In January 1821 he mortgaged the property of Benjamin Farley to secure an indebtedness of $105.30, and on April 1, 1823 he placed a first mortgage on the property in favor of Josiah Conant to secure repayment of $200 and a second mortgage for $100 to the

Philanthropic Society. Thus the Society founded in 1801 by a group which included both John Ball and Solomon Wheat as well as Josiah Conant truly lived up to its name.[52]

The Hillsborough, N. H. Probate records indicate payments to Luther Hubbard for gravestones in five estates:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01632 | Deacon Josiah Conant, Hollis, 1807 | $12.50 |
| 05917 | Timothy Lawrence, Hollis, 1815 | 12.25 |
| 08343 | Asa Spaulding, Merrimack, 1815 | 33.25 |
| 0627 | Deacon John Ball, Temple, 1815 | |
| | Hannah Ball, Temple, 1814 | 29.65 |


Figure 18. John Ball, 1816, Temple, N. H.

Deacon John Ball was the son of our John Ball's uncle Nathaniel and therefore his first cousin.[53] The probate account has these entries: "Paid Luther Hubbard for gravestones $29.65" and "For hauling up said gravestones $3." The stone for Asa Spaulding in the charming Turkey Hill cemetery has an "H" on the back (Fig. 5c). We found two very similar stones, each with the same quarry mark and undoubtedly done by Hubbard---one for Colonel Daniel Warner in Amherst, 1813, and the other for Sarah Standly in Francestown, 1814 (where the "H" appears on the footstone). And Hubbard must have done the marker for his son Thomas, who died July 21, 1815 aged twenty months and is buried in Hollis.

All of these gravestones carry the urn and willow pattern and are, as one might expect, in the tradition of John Ball's shop. Thus in the Conant and Standly stones the central panel is flanked by the familiar architectural columns, although in the former the carver has added an ornamental shaft of lozenges in the side panels. This diamond pattern, and panels decorated with a simple column of crosses, we soon recognized as standard indicia of Luther Hubbard's work (Fig. 18). He continued to achieve the same crisp lettering, with the open "h" and "p" in italics, which had been characteristic of John Ball's carving.

Thus our pursuit of Paul Colburn led us inexorably to four other stonecutters who carried on their craft in the attractive New Hampshire town of Hollis. Four of these five craftsmen traced their family origins to Concord, Massachusetts and were interrelated. With the exception of our initial subject, Paul Colburn, none of these artisans appears to have been listed in hitherto published gravestone studies. We also found stonecutters in succeeding generations of the same families. And in the course of our study we encountered dozens of others, only a few of whom we knew about.[54] While this paper cannot claim to present a definitive study of any of these carvers, it does suggest, we think, the importance of genealogical research in gravestone attribution and the important results which such research can produce.

## NOTES

This paper was prepared for the Association for Gravestone Studies, and parts of it were presented were presented at the annual conference of that Association in June, 1983. A fuller version of the paper is on deposit in the archives of the Association for Gravestone Studies at the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Beside those whose assistance is specifically acknowledged in later notes, we should like to thank the following for their interest and help in the preparation of this article: Lucy Beebe and Ellen Nichols of Hollis, New Hampshire; Ruth Hopfmann and Barbara Dudley of Sterling, Massachusetts; Daniel Farber of Worcester, Massachusetts; Charlotte McCartney and Marian J. Fifield of Thetford, Vermont; the town clerks of Thetford and Vershire, Vermont; Philip A. Hazelton of Hebron, New Hampshire, and most particularly, Pamela Bryson, who cheerfully typed countless versions of this monograph.

[1]"James Wilder of Lancaster, Stonecutter," New England Historical and Genealogical Register, 136 (April, 1983), p. 87.

[2]For William Colburn, Sr. (1689-1769), see Charles S. Spaulding, An Account of Some of the Early Settlers of West Dunstable, Monson and Hollis, N. H. (Nashua, N. H.: Telegraph Press, 1915), p. 34; Samuel T. Worcester, History of the Town of Hollis, New Hampshire (Nashua, N. H.: O. C. Moore, 1879), pp. 34-35, 46, 57, 42, 51, 96. For William Colburn, Jr. (1726-76), see Concord, Massachusetts Births, Marriages and Deaths 1635-1850 (Boston: Beacon Press, n. d.), p. 117; Spaulding, p. 97; George A. Gordon and Silas R. Coburn, Descendants of Edward Colburn/Coburn (Lowell, Mass.: Walter Coburn, 1913), no. 55; estate of William Colburn, Jr., Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 01521. We have found no evidence to support the conclusion that Elias (b. 1762) was a son of William and Abigail; Abigail and Hannah appear as daughters in the will of William Colburn, Jr.

[3]See articles by Peter Benes, "Abel Webster, Pioneer, Patriot, and Stonecutter," Historical New Hampshire, 28 (1973), p. 221, and James L. and Donna-Belle Garvin, "Stephen Webster, Gravestone Maker," Historical New Hampshire, 29, p. 93.

[4]Frank D. Warren, comp., Descendants of John Ball of Watertown (Boston: n. p., 1932), Part 1, no. 265;

Worcester, pp. 365, 370; Spaulding, p. 82. In a Hollis antique store we discovered a framed family register made in 1845 showing the issue of Betsy Colburn and Eliphalet Kendall; Betsy's birth is recorded as January 13, 1784.

[5]Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 01521; Kilburn to Colburn, Feb. 17, 1786, Worcester, Mass. Deeds, bk. 99, p. 297; Colburn to Allen, Jan. 8, 1806, Worcester, Mass. Deeds, bk. 160, p. 411.

[6]Gordon and Coburn, no. 139; Sterling Church Records, p. 168; notes in Colburn file, Sterling Historical Society.

[7]The New Hampshire State Library in Concord has copies on microfilm of most New Hampshire town records prior to 1835; a card index of names mentioned provides quick access to the appropriate records..

[8]For tax payments, see Hollis, N. H. town records (N. H. State Library microfilm), vol. 4, pp. 455, 494, 339. For Abigail's marriage and death, see Spaulding, p. 97; Ezra S. Stearns, History of Plymouth, N. H., Vol. II (Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1906); John Keniston, "Plans of Village and Pratt Cemeteries" (ms., New Hampshire Historical Society, 1930). For the marriages of Paul Colburn's siblings, see Gordon and Coburn, nos. 55, 141-42.

[9]Hebron town records, 1808-15 (N. H. State Library microfilm).

[10]Paul's son Abel had married Achsa's sister Deborah Phelps of Hebron in 1811, and Paul's daughter Mary married a brother, Adna Phelps. John Carroll Power, History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois (Springfield, Ill.: Edwin A. Wilson & Co., 1876), states that Adna was born in Hebron in 1792, moved to Loami, Sangamon County in 1844 and died in 1852. Two of Adna's children intermarried with other members of the Colburn family in their generation. See Power for the story of the westward movements of the family.

[11]Charles Hudson, History of Lexington, Vol. II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913); Charles Henry Pope, Loring Genealogy (Cambridge, Mass.: Murray and Emery, 1917), nos. 84, 201.

[12](Chicago: Inter-state Publishing Co., 1881).

[13]The account in the estate of Thomas Whiting (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 09553) contains an entry dated November 8, 1802, "Paid E. Ball for gravestones $14." John Ball's father and brother, both Ebenezers, were probably dead by this time. John's son Ebenezer was only six years old; his nephew Ebenezer was twenty-one, but we have found no evidence to indicate that he was a stonecutter. The Whiting stone appears to be the work of John Ball. The next entry in the account reads, "Paid E. Rea for digging grave $1.50." We think that the initial letter in the preceding entry is an error and have accordingly included this stone in the list of specific payments to John Ball.

[14]Hillsborough County, N. H. deeds: Emerson and Wheat to Ball, February 4, 1794, bk. 62, p. 407; Laurence to Ball, March 28, 1798, bk. 62, p. 409; Hoar to Ball, January 2, 1802, bk. 62, p. 411; Hale to Ball, May 20, 1802, bk. 62, p. 412; Ball to Hubbard, Aug. 16, 1806, bk. 71, p. 113; Ball to Merrel, September 17, 1806, bk. 75, p. 383; Ball to Cumings, December 9, 1806, bk. 77, p. 233.

[15]The administrator's account in the estate of Thomas Flagg, Jr., of Weston, 1733, contains an entry, "Nathaniel Ball for gravestones ℔ 5-7-0" and in the estate of Robert Ward of Charlestown, 1736, a non-specific payment to Nathaniel Ball of £1-18-6 (Middlesex, Mass. Probate vol. 20, pp. 62 and 372). We have been unable to locate either of these stones.

[16]Warren and Ball, nos. 41, 104, 261, 266; Concord Massachusetts Births, Marriages and Deaths, pp. 36, 104, 166; Worcester, p. 365.

[17]John's father Ebenezer is described in deeds as "yeoman" and appears regularly on the tax rolls of Hollis from 1750 until 1791. It is said that he died after 1790 by Dorothy Stivers Brown and Forrest David Brown, comps., The Balls in the Ball-Stivers Line (Lewisburg, Pa.: n. p., 1976), I, 21, and it is very likely that he did, but we have not as yet found the date of his death. His son Ebenezer, Jr., John's brother, is described in deeds as "blacksmith." He first appears on the tax rolls in 1770, and an Ebenezer Ball, Jr. is listed on the rolls every year thereafter until 1796, when the listing becomes simply "Ebenezer Ball." There is no Ebenezer Ball, Sr. or Jr., in the 1800 census for Hollis. Both may have died before that year. Certainly Ebenezer, Jr. died before February

1803, for in that month his brother, our John Ball, was appointed guardian of the blacksmith's son David (Hillsborough, N. H. Probate 0494), presumably so that David, not yet twenty-one, could join in a release of interest in his late father Ebenezer's estate. In this deed, which is dated May 28, 1804, the blacksmith's son Ebenezer, then twenty-three, is described as "late of Hollis, Gentleman" (Hillsborough, N. H. deeds, bk. 90, p. 297).

[18]The document, dated October 10, 1761 and signed by Governor Wentworth, provides that the town may have two animal fairs and, when it reaches fifty families, a market; grants must be taken up and five acres planted for every fifty acres within five years; tall white pine trees are to be preserved for the King's navy, and an annual rent of one ear of corn is to be paid the first ten years and one shilling thereafter (New Hampshire State Papers, vol. 26, p. 195).

[19]For Ebenezer Ball, Sr. (1721-96), see Hollis town records, vol. 1, p. 247; vol. 4, p. 40; Worcester, p. 99; Chandler E.Potter, Military History of New Hampshire 1623-1861 (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1972), part 1, p. 132. For Ebenezer Ball, Jr. (1749-before 1803), see Hollis town records, vol. 6, pp. 135, 147, 154, 191, 196, 179, 181, 182, 211, 330, 331, 333, 335. For Nathaniel and William Ball's role in the Revolution, see Hollis town records, vol. 6, pp. 9, 79; New Hampshire State Papers,, vol. 14, pp. 32, 206; Worcester, pp. 128, 147.

[20]Vital statistics: Hollis town records, vol. 6, pp. 236, 283, 237; vol. 1, pp. 321, 264; Worcester, p. 365; taxes listed annually in town records, vols. 3-5; constable and collector, vol. 5, pp. 306, 323, 331; tithing man, vol. 5, p. 357, vol. 3, p. 14; surveyor of highways, vol. 3, p. 73; petit juror, vol. 5, pp. 361, 374; funeral procedure, vol. 5, p. 378; Philanthropic Society, vol. 6, pp. 341, 51; Worcester, p. 248.

[21]Hollis town records, vol. 6, pp. 178, 180, 195, 88-90, 133, 197, 109; New Hampshire State Papers, vol. 14, pp. 346, 573; Worcester, pp. 170-76.

[22]Hillsborough, N. H. deeds, bk. 11, p. 220.

[23]Worcester, Mass. deeds, bk. 143, p. 46; bk. 124, p. 109.

[24]Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: Ebenezer to John Ball, April 1, 1790, bk. 29, p. 105; Emerson and Wheat to Ball, February 4, 1794, bk. 62, p. 407; Lawrence to Ball, March 28, 1798, bk. 62, p. 409; Ball to Powers, March 21, 1799, bk. 56, p. 222.

[25]Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: Hoar to Ball, January 2, 1802, bk. 62, p. 411; Hale to Ball, May 20, 1802, bk. 62, p. 412; Ball to Hubbard, August 16, 1806, bk. 71, p. 113; Hubbard to Ball, Aug. 20, 1806, bk. 71, p. 132; Ball to Merrel, September 17, 1806, bk. 75, p. 383; Ball to Cumings, December 9, 1806, bk. 77, p. 233.

[26]Vershire, Vt. deeds: Langdon to Ball, April 30, 1806, bk. 7, p. 22; Langdon to Ball, April 30, 1806, bk. 7, p. 23; Ball to French, January 9, 1807, bk. 7, p. 138. Vershire town clerk's records for August 14 and September 14, 1807.

[27]Manual of Congregational Church of Vershire (Windsor, Vt.: Vermont Chronicle Press, 1863); Boston Transcript, July 27, 1931, no. 1835, p. 4.

[28](West Topsham, Vt.: Thetford Historical Society, 1972), p. 24.

[29]Vershire town clerk's records for March, 1808. Vershire deeds: Titus to Ball, April 17, 1809, bk. 8, p. 408; Titus to Ball, April 19, 1809, bk. 8, p. 407.

[30]Vershire deeds: Ball to Senter, November 26, 1811, bk. 9, p. 109; Ball to Senter, October 5, 1815, bk. 9, p. 398; Senter to Ball, October 4, 1815, bk. 9, p. 397; Ball to Spears, November 24, 1815, bk. 9, p. 407.

[31]Thetford, Vt. town clerk's records for May 18, 1816. Thetford deeds: Tucker to Ball, October 6, 1817, bk. 10, p. 90; Gillet to Ball, November 27, 1817, bk. 10, p. 116; Ball to Gillet, Nov. 27, 1817, bk. 10, p. 117; Ball to Hosford, April 5, 1819, bk. 10, p. 300; Lathan and Kendrick to Ball, April 2, 1823, bk. 11, p. 224; John to Nathaniel Ball, September 9, 1823, bk. 11, p. 225.

[32]Addie M. Ball, Additions and Corrections to Descendants of John Ball of Watertown (North Amherst, Mass.: n. p., 1942), no. 580; notes in Ball file, Thetford Historical Society. Vershire, Vt. town clerk's records for March, 1811. Thetford, Vt. deeds:

John Ball to John Ball, Jr., January 23, 1826, Bk. 11, p. 502; John Ball, Jr. to William Ball, February 13, 1835, bk. 13, p. 46.

[33]Robert L. Bacon, Register of Persons Buried in the Cemeteries of the Town of Thetford, Vermont 1768-1976 (East Thetford, Vt.: n. p., 1977), p. 4; Ball-Stivers Line, p. 21.

[34]The letter is among the papers of John Ball (1794-1884) in the Clarke Historical Library of Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Michigan.

[35]See n. 32.

[36]See n. 32. U. S. Census 1850 M432, Thetford 926:43. Thetford, Vt. deeds: estate of John Ball, Jr. to John W. and Merrill Ball, bk. 16, p. 280; John W. to Merrill Ball, April 8, 1860, bk. 19, p. 498; Merrill Ball to Adeline H. Webster, 1863, bk. 20, p. 231.

[37]Vermont State Archives, Bradford, Vt. Probate District, vol. 8, p. 177.

[38]The Grafton County Gazetteer (1886), p. 545, states, "Elisha P. Ball, a stonecutter, moved with his family to Lyme in 1844. He died May 20, 1871, aged 61 years."

[39]Anna Merz, "Symbols and Sermons in Stone," Connecticut Nutmegger, vol. 11, no. 2 (Sept. 1978), p. 194.

[40]Pp. 334-38.

[41]Silas Carmi Wheat and Helen Love Scranton, Wheat Genealogy (Guilford, Ct.: Shore Line Times, 1960), nos. 318, 30, 85, 32.

[42]For Solomon Wheat, Sr., see Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: bk. 7, p. 217; bk. 22, p. 26; bk. 29, p. 41; bk. 43, p. 149; bk. 48, p. 415. For Solomon Wheat, Jr., see bk. 87, p. 149; bk. 43, p. 108; bk. 88, p. 275.

[43]See Bertha Hayden's account of old Hollis houses on deposit with the Hollis Historical Society and the Hollis Town Library. She refers, on p. 93, to notes on the Wheats's stonecutting shop, but we have been unable to locate these notes. She does refer, p. 13, to

Solomon Wheat who "used to make gravestones of slate." While we have found no support for this statement, if it is true, then Solomon Wheat could well have been the master connecting Colburn, Ball and Josiah Wheat.

[44]Wheat Genealogy, nos. 317-18, 877; Hollis town records, vols. 5 and 3, vol. 3, p. 33.

[45]Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: Emerson to Wheat, February 8, 1792, bk. 41, p. 49; Wheat to Fletcher, January 30, 1797, bk. 42, p. 170.

[46]Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: Solomon to Coolidge Wheat, January 27, 1820, bk. 127, p. 220.

[47]Josiah Coolidge Wheat had two other sons; one of them, Josiah Alfred, married Susan Danforth of Amherst, N. H., and her brother Jesse Danforth, Jr. married Josiah Alfred's sister Sarah in 1824 (Wheat Genealogy, nos. 882, 878). We found the stone of Mrs. Dorothy Parker, 1823, in the Hillcrest Cemetery in Litchfield, N. H., signed at the base, "Engraved by J. Danforth Amherst."

[48]Wheat Genealogy, n. 877.

[49](Grinnell, Iowa: Ray & MacDonald, 1894), p. 57.

[50]An Account, p. 180.

[51]Luther Prescott Hubbard, Descendants of George Hubbard from 1600 to 1872 (New York: L. P. Hubbard, 1972), p. 12.

[52]Hollis town records: taxes, vol. 3; surveyor, vol. 3, pp. 197, 343, 533; hogreeve, vol. 3, pp. 241, 256; governor's council, vol. 3, p. 446. Hillsborough, N. H. deeds: Ball to Hubbard, August 16, 1806, bk. 71, p. 113; Hubbard to Ball, August 20, 1806, bk. 71, p. 132; Ball to Thayer, December 31, 1814, bk. 104, p. 136; Ball to Farley, January 1, 1821, bk. 131, p. 85; Ball to Conant, April 1, 1823, bk. 137, p. 632; Ball to Philanthropic Society, April 1, 1823, bk. 137, p. 633.

[53]Warren, nos. 41, 102, 104, 257.

[54]Elisha P. Ball, Lyme, N. H. (1810-71); John Ball, Jr., Thetford, Vt. (1788-1847); J. Brown, Amherst, N. H. (1830s); Brown & Eastman, Derry, N. H. (1840s); J. B. Campbell (1850s); M. Coniche, Amherst, N. H.

(1830s) J. Danforth, Amherst, N. H. (1820s); C. Daby (or Darby), Worcester, Mass. (1830s); M. Davis, Nashua, N. H. (1830-50); B. Day, Lowell, Mass. (1830s); Nathan Farley, Concord, N. H. (1820s); Nelson Farley; William Farnsworth, Groton, Mass. (c. 1800); Joseph W. Goddard, Lancaster, Mass. (1810); Wm. Goddard, Lancaster, Mass. (1811); Isaac Hartwell, Sterling, Mass. (1840s or earlier); Daniel Hastings, Newton, Mass. (1749-1803); E. Kendall and Stephen Kendall, Littleton, Mass. (after 1800); Josiah Kidder, Sterling, Mass.; Cheney Kilburn, Sterling, Mass. (1796-1873); Samuel Kilburn, Sterling and Concord, Mass. (1783-1858); T. Lewis, Harvard, Mass. (1810); John Marble, Bradford, Mass. (1764-1844); Joseph Marble, Bradford, Mass. (1726-1805); Abel Moore, Lunenburg, Mass. (1805); B. Morse (1818); D. Nichols, Lowell, Mass. (1840s); Benjamin K. Park; John Park, Groton, Mass. (1731-93); John Park, Jr., Groton, Mass. (1761-1811); John Park, Groton, Mass. (1787-1848); Thomas Park, Groton, Mass. (1745-1806); Life Parker, Pepperell, Mass.; Adna Phelps, Groton, N. H. area (1792-?); I. Reed, Jr., Harvard, Mass. (1818); David Sawtell, Shirley and Groton, Mass. (1820s); Ithamar Spauldin, Concord, Mass. (1795-1800); A. Stone, Groton, Mass. (1838); I. N. Stone, Harvard and Worcester, Mass. (1840); Abel Webster, Hollis, Plymouth and Kingston, N. H., Danville, Vt. and Chester, N. H. (1726-1801); Stephen Webster, Chester, Hollis and Plymouth, N. H. (1718-98).

# "And the Men Who Made Them": The Signed Gravestones of New England 1984 Additions

Sue Kelly and Anne Williams

The following entries contain newly recorded signed stones by carvers included in the list in MARKERS II. The authors invite submissions of additional data as it is recorded, for inclusion in an annual updating of the original list.

J. B.

Joseph Godfrey, 1750, Morton, Mass. (Timothy Plain Cemetery); slate; fair. "J. B."

MICHAEL BALDWIN (1719-87), New Haven, Ct.

Martha Landon, 1775, Southold, N. Y.; sandstone; excellent. "Michael Baldwin N Haven"

ZERUBBABEL COLLINS (1733-97), Lebanon, Ct. and Shaftesbury, Vt.

Femmitie Snyder, 1789, Albany, N. Y. (Albany Rural Cemetery); marble; stone on ground. "Z. Collins Sculp"

JOHN JUST GEYER, Boston, Mass.

Abigail Burbeck, 1790, West Bath, Me. (West Bath Cemetery); slate. "John Just Geyer fect. Boston"

JAMES NEW II (1751-1835), Wrentham, Mass.

Susannah Drake, n. d., Upton, Mass. (Grove Street Cemetery); slate; excellent. "J. N."

C. and/or E. SIKES, Belchertown, Mass.

Archelaus Anderson, 1790, Chester, Mass. (Bromley Road Cemetery); schist; excellent. "E. S."

BEZA SOULE (1750-1835), Middleborough, Mass. and Brooklyn, Ct.

Esther Ross, 1777, West Brookfield, Mass.; slate; good. "by Soule"

Jemima Lincoln, 1786, Warren, Mass. (Pine Grove Ceme-

tery); slate; good. "B. S."

Zeruah Mighells, 1796, Putnam, Ct. (Aspinwall Cemetery); slate; good. "Beza Soule"

Ezra Dean, 1798, Putnam, Ct. (Aspinwall Cemetery); slate; excellent. "Made by B. Soule June 21st 1799"

Levina Wood, 1800, West Brookfield, Mass.; slate; good. "Engraved by B. Soule"

William Thomas, 1805, West Brookfield, Mass.; slate; excellent. "Engraved by B. Soule"

STEVEN SPALDING, Killingly, Ct.

William Phillips, 1792, Plainfield, Ct. "By S. Spalding"

JOHN STEVENS III (Jr.) (1753-?), Newport, R. I.

Ruth Gibbs, 1784, Newport, R. I. (Common Burying Ground); slate; excellent. "J. Stevens"

Three Children of Godfrey Wenwood, 1780-84, Newport, R. I. (Common Burying Ground); slate; excellent. "J. Stevens"

EBENEZER WINSLOW (1772-1841), Uxbridge, Mass.

Deacon Daniel Deane, 1801, Norton, Mass. (Pine Street Cemetery); poor. "E-W"

?, ?, n. d., Assonet, Mass. (Lawton Cemetery); unadorned base fragment. "By E. Winslow, 2$^{t}$, $14."

## LOCATION GUIDE

MAINE

West Bath: John Just Geyer

MASSACHUSETTS

Assonet: E. Winslow

Chester: C. and/or E. Sikes

Norton: Ebenezer Winslow; J. B.

Warren: Beza Soule

West Brookfield: Beza Soule

NEW YORK

Albany: Z. Collins

Southold: Michael Baldwin

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## Also of Interest from University Press of America and The Association for Gravestone Studies

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