



Hannah Williams d. 1745
Carver: Jonathan Worster
Motifs: coils, spirals, geometric rosettes and pinwheels spin around the primitive mask-like central carving



Ens. John Warren d. 1703
First Recorded Burial in Weston
Boston carver



Sarah Warren, wife of John Warren, d. 1704. Carver: Joseph Lamson

Find these gravestones by known carvers

Find examples of double tombstones.

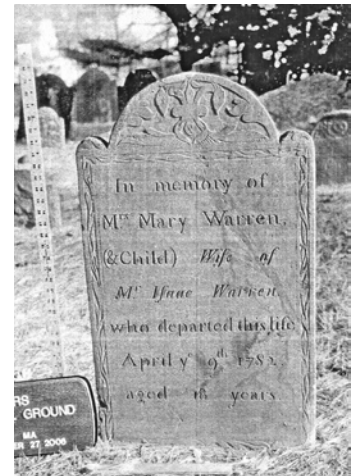
Find examples of footstones.

Look for the gravestone of Samuel Philips Savage, Weston's most important Revolutionary War figure.

Look for the gravestone of one of the early First Parish Church ministers, Samuel Woodward. Is this the longest epitaph at Farmers' Burial Ground?

Find examples of the winged skull motif and the cherub's head with angel wings. Which are earlier in date?

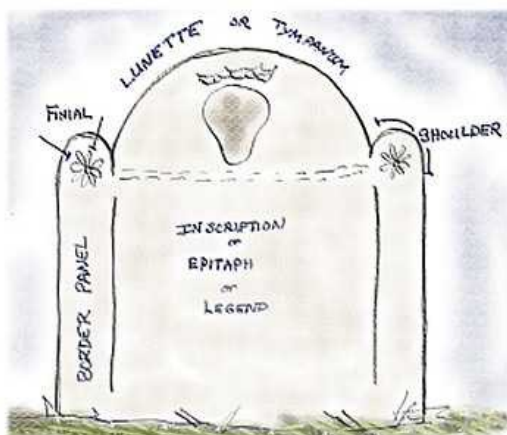
Notice the way many 18th century gravestones have the same shape and are divided into sections. The curved top is called the tympanum. The main symbols were carved here. The side wings are called the shoulders. These are decorated as well.



Mary Warren and child, d. 1782
Carver: Daniel Hastings



Nathan Fiske c. 1769
Carver: Daniel Hastings shop



Parts of an 18th century gravestone.



In 18th c. cemeteries, bodies were positioned so that on the Judgement Day, the corpse could sit up and face the rising sun. Headstones were placed facing west and footnotes facing east, so that there was no need to stand over the body to read the markers.

Farmers' Burial Ground

History

The Farmers' Burial Ground, also known as Farmers' Burying Ground, is Weston's oldest cemetery, established when Weston was the "Farmers' Precinct" of Watertown. The first burial was in 1703, ten years before the town was incorporated. The location makes it easily visible and available to passersby and visitors. A 2007 report describes it this way: "Well kept and filled with handsome slate markers carved by noted artisans, the burial ground offers a quiet green space in contrast to the bustle of the world outside the surrounding stonewalls." According to this report, "It is commendable that so many footstones have been retained in the burial ground. These smaller stones often are removed to make mowing easier, but this changes the character. . . The Town of Weston has done an outstanding job of keeping the footstones."

Important people buried here

Samuel Phillips Savage, "Weston's most prominent patriot," moderated the meeting that preceded the Boston Tea Party and presided over the Massachusetts Board of War; Rev. William Williams, second minister at First Parish Church, served from 1709 to 1750; Rev. Samuel Woodward, third minister at First Parish Church, served from 1751 until his death in 1782.; Josiah Smith, prominent citizen and builder of the tavern that bears his name; Nathan Fisk [sic] bought his 220-acre farm on North Avenue for 10 pounds in 1673. It passed undivided from father to son for six generations and is now the Kings Grant neighborhood.

Many town leaders and members of Weston's earliest families are buried here, including Lamson, Upham, Warren, Hobbs, Harrington, and Coburn.

Gravestone Art

The Farmers' Burying Ground is known for its slate gravestones, including an unusual number of large and double slate markers. Some represent the work of these recognized carvers:

James Foster II of Dorchester (gravestone of Benoni Gearfield)

Daniel Hastings, resident of Newton, popular and prolific carver in the area west of Boston (gravestones of Ensign Joseph Livermore and Mrs. Mary Warren)

Hastings Shop (gravestone of Mr. Nathan Fisk)

Ebenezer Howard, resident of Newton and later Marlborough, brother-in-law of Daniel Hastings (gravestone of Mr. Ebenezer Hobbs)

Joseph Lamson, member of a family of carvers living in the Malden area (gravestone of Mrs. Sarah Warren)

Jonathan Worster (Worcester), lived in Harvard MA (gravestone of Mrs. Hannah Williams)

Condition

In 2007, the Town of Weston commissioned a report on the condition of gravestones and monuments in Farmers' Burying Ground and Central Cemetery. At Farmers', the consultants found 146 gravestones and footstones requiring conservation. The stones were tilting, broken, fallen, or delaminated and tree roots were causing damage to markers. In 2013, Town Meeting voted to allocate \$125,000 of Community Preservation Act funds for Phase I of a three-phase project to restore the Farmers' Burying Ground and Central Cemetery. Most of the work at Farmers' was completed by the fall of 2017. Restoration techniques included hand excavation, stone resetting, backfilling disturbed areas, removing failed adhesives, filling cracks and voids, and cleaning with D/2 Biological Solution. In November 2017, voters approved \$205,000 for Phase II, most spent at Central Cemetery. At the May 2020 Town Meeting, voters will be asked to approve funds for Phase III, which will address stone walls, gates, steps, and posts at both cemeteries.

Reference *Farmers' Burial Ground, Central Cemetery, Weston, Massachusetts, Gravestone/Monument Condition Assessment Report*, May 2007, Prepared for the Town of Weston.