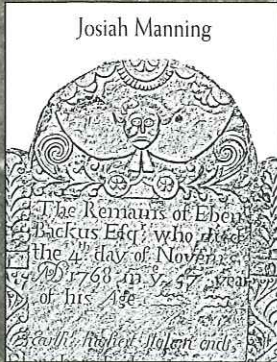


Carvers of the Norwichtown Cemetery

Josiah Manning



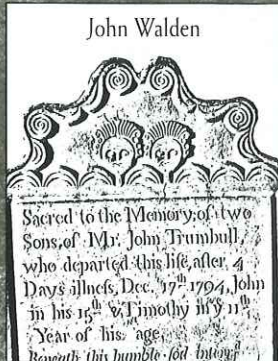
David Lamb



Norwich Ovoid Carver



John Walden



Benjamin Collins



Obadiah Wheeler



David Lamb II



Zerubbabel Collins



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Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and It's Symbols 1650-1815

James A. Slater

The Colonial Burying Grounds of Eastern Connecticut and The Men who Made Them



This brochure focuses on the oldest section of the Norwichtown Cemetery. It was researched and written by local historian David Oat.

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A Walking Tour of

OLD NORWICHTOWN Burial Ground



ew England's Colonial burial grounds are special places of intrigue and mystery. Here lie the now silent remains of America's early Colonial inhabitants. By studying the old headstones you will discover vivid stories of the past. The inscriptions speak of family histories, religious philosophy and long forgotten traditions. These stone markers also represent early American sculpture. The stone markers and their arrangement within the burial ground reflect the attitudes and philosophies of the Puritan people who made them several hundred years ago. Colonial burial grounds truly are outdoor museums.

In Europe, the custom of churchyard burials was practiced by followers of Judeo-Christian tradition. Interments often occurred near or within the cathedral walls for those of the highest social rank. The Puritans, who came to New England in the early 1600s, had rejected this practice along with other perceived papist customs, as heretical and idolatrous. As a result, many New England towns set aside land, away from the Meeting House, to be used as community burial grounds. The area chosen for burials was usually hilly and not considered suitable for farming. The Norwichtown burial ground, with the Meeting House located up on the Green, serves as a fine example of this Colonial tradition. Familiar Christian symbols, such as the cross or images of the holy family, were also rejected by the early Puritans in favor of more secular figures, such as winged skulls and cherubs which appear in their tombstone art.

In the early 1600s, life in Colonial New England was difficult. People struggled for basic food and shelter. The benefits of hygiene and the link between microbes and disease was not understood. Death was common. It occurred often and suddenly. The earliest gravesites had low wooden markers, following an English tradition referred to as 'post and rail.' Two wooden posts were placed at the head and foot of the grave site to which a wide board or rail was fastened. The board spanned the length of the grave and provided an area for inscriptions. Unfortunately, none of these early New England markers have survived. By the middle 1600s stone monuments came into use to mark grave sites. One of the oldest dated New England stone marker was discovered in Warwick, Rhode Island. It is a crude fieldstone with the carved inscription "HERE LIETH THE BODY OF SARAH TEFFT 1642".

Throughout the remainder of the Colonial period (from 1620 to about 1800) hand-carved stone markers were used to memorialize individuals. They carved according to their own ability and individual skill, often copying figures or designs from printed material or from other carvers. Tombstones were purchased in pairs and placed at the head

(headstone) and feet (footstone) of the deceased. Inscriptions were carved into the back of the headstone so they might be easily viewed. The footstone received less attention, left blank or carved with an individual's initials. Because of their belief that with death came judgment, Colonial burial grounds tend to be oriented in an east - west configuration. Bodies were buried with their feet to the east, so that as the day of judgment dawned, they might all sit up and face the rising sun.

The brevity of life and the certainty of death, and with it judgment, were major philosophical themes for the early Puritans. This outlook was impressed on them by their daily struggle for survival. These ideas were part of a pessimistic view of life in this world and uncertainty about continuance in the next. Skulls with crossed bones, winged hour glasses, along with other death and burial symbols such as coffins and shovels, were popular images for tombstones. Even for the illiterate, these images were powerful symbols which reinforced the religious philosophy of the day.

By the mid-1700s life in Colonial America had stabilized. Farms produced abundant crops and trade flourished. From this, a more confident attitude about the future emerged. Tombstones from this period displayed images of winged cherubs, symbolizing the ascending spirit of the deceased, and reflected an optimistic view about the afterlife. Gone are the grinning skulls and other ghoulis reminders of death and decay. Inscriptions which previously began, "Here Lyes the Body of.....", now began, "In Memory of.....".

The Colonial period came to a close around 1800. At this time, society's attitude again shifted toward an appreciation for the 'classical style.' This trend continued throughout the century. It was expressed in many areas of American life including architecture, literature and in tombstone art. Grecian urns and lamps of knowledge reflected a national interest in recent archaeological discoveries in Greece, and a romantic attitude toward the relationship of God in nature. The reality of death was blunted. Bending weeping willows symbolized mourning and loss. Previous terms such as graveyard or burial ground were replaced by the term 'cemetery,' a Greek word meaning sleeping place. Funeral customs, which had previously been conducted in the home, were now handled by an undertaker. This new and growing business had adopted the term 'parlor' after the name for the room most often used in the home for such occasions. The stigma of death was further removed from the home by renaming this room the 'livingroom.' The disassociation of life and death continues to this day.

To find out more about cemeteries, contact the Connecticut Gravestone Network, 135 Wells St., Manchester, CT 06040, or Association for Gravestone Studies, 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301, or through the books listed on the back of this brochure.

POST-GAGER BURIAL GROUND

March of 1661 in Norwich, Mary Andrews, the wife of Thomas Post died and was buried in the rear of their home lot located on West Town St. In December of that year, the Town purchased this land to be used as a community burial ground. This was the first burial ground in Norwich and is the final resting place for many of the men and women who founded the Town and other early settlers. Prior to 1693, additional land was added from the adjoining home lot of John Gager. In 1871, a monument to the original founders was erected at this site and is inscribed with the names of the original Founders of Norwich. This sacred ground can be visited today. It is located at the end of Lee St. and access is by right of way.* Unfortunately any early Colonial burial markers have long since weathered away and no sign remains to mark the resting places of the earliest inhabitants of Norwich.

** Park at the low end of the street. The home and lot at the top of Lee St. are private. Please be respectful of the nearby grounds. Follow the pathway and enter the burial grounds through the gate.*

OLD BURYING GROUND AT NORWICH TOWN

Old Norwichtown Burying Ground reveals Norwich's rich Colonial history. Gravestones bear the familiar names of many of Norwich's earliest residents. It was established on January 4, 1700, to satisfy the needs of a rapidly growing community. Lieut. Samuel Huntington conveyed to the town of Norwich in consideration of £90, his home lot, a portion of which was to be set aside for community burials. This land was originally part of the home lot of Reverend James Fitch, the first minister of Norwich. As the population of Norwich grew, additional parcels of land were added to provide more ground for interments. The burial grounds can be divided into two general areas. The original Colonial section, containing primarily headstones from the 1700s, is located immediately through the gates at the end of Cemetery Lane. The area opened through the gates off East Town St. was used mostly during the 1800s. The two sections are connected by a small bridge which crosses a seasonal brook. Over the years there have been several thousands burials, but today only about thirteen hundred tombstones remain to mark these final resting places. This brochure focuses on the oldest section of the cemetery.

1. MEMORIAL TO LAFAYETTE'S FRENCH SOLDIERS

In Memory of
Twenty French Soldiers
who, serving under
LAFAYETTE,
Died While at Camp at
Norwich Town 1778

Upon entering the Norwichtown burial grounds, through the gates at the end of Cemetery Lane, you will pass a memorial dedicated in 1901 by the Faith Trumbell Chapter of the D.A.R. to the French soldiers who died in Norwich in 1778. At that time General Lafayette was moving his troops south from Providence and halted in Norwich for several days due to an illness within his troops. The sick soldiers were quartered in the court house, while the remainder camped on the Town Green. Eventually, twenty soldiers died and were buried on either side of Cemetery Lane. The exact location is unknown. Behind this monument (1B) is another marker dedicated to these soldiers by the "Societe National Sovenir Francais" from France.

2. JOHN TRUMBELL

Mr JOHN TRUMBELL Departed this life
aug 14, 1802,
age 50 Years. He was born in
Cambridge, Mass. from whence he
early removed to the town in which
he was the first publisher of a
NewsPaper. He was a member of
Sumerset Lodge and was the
first interred with Masonic honors in this yard.

In 1773 John Trumbell, along with the Robertson brothers, Alexander and James, formed the first newspaper in Norwich called the Norwich Packet. The subscription price was six shillings and eight pence per year. The presses were located in a shop near the courthouse on the Town Green. During the War of Independence support for the Patriots ran high in Norwich. The Robertsons, who remained loyal to the Crown, found it increasingly difficult to conduct their business in town. They left for New York in 1776 turning over sole ownership of the newspaper to John Trumbell.

3. JOHN AND TIMOTHY TRUMBELL

Sacred to the memory of two
sons of Mr. John Trumbell.
Departed this life after four
days illness. Dec 17, 1794, John
in his 15 & Timothy in the 11 year
of his age.

Next to John Trumbell's tombstone is the marker for two of his children. Both died on the same day. In the 1700's, before modern medicine, about half the children died before reaching maturity. This headstone (along with their fathers) was carved by **John Walden** (signed) of Scotland, CT. Walden carved his figures in a similar manner to those from the Manning family and is referred to as a Manning imitator. Notice the quality of the carved figures and lettering in the well preserved children's stone.

4. BENJAMIN BUTLER

Alas, poor human nature
In Memory of Mr.
BENJAMIN BUTLER
who died of a Phthisis
pulmonasis June 17 th AD
1787 in the 43 year
of his age.

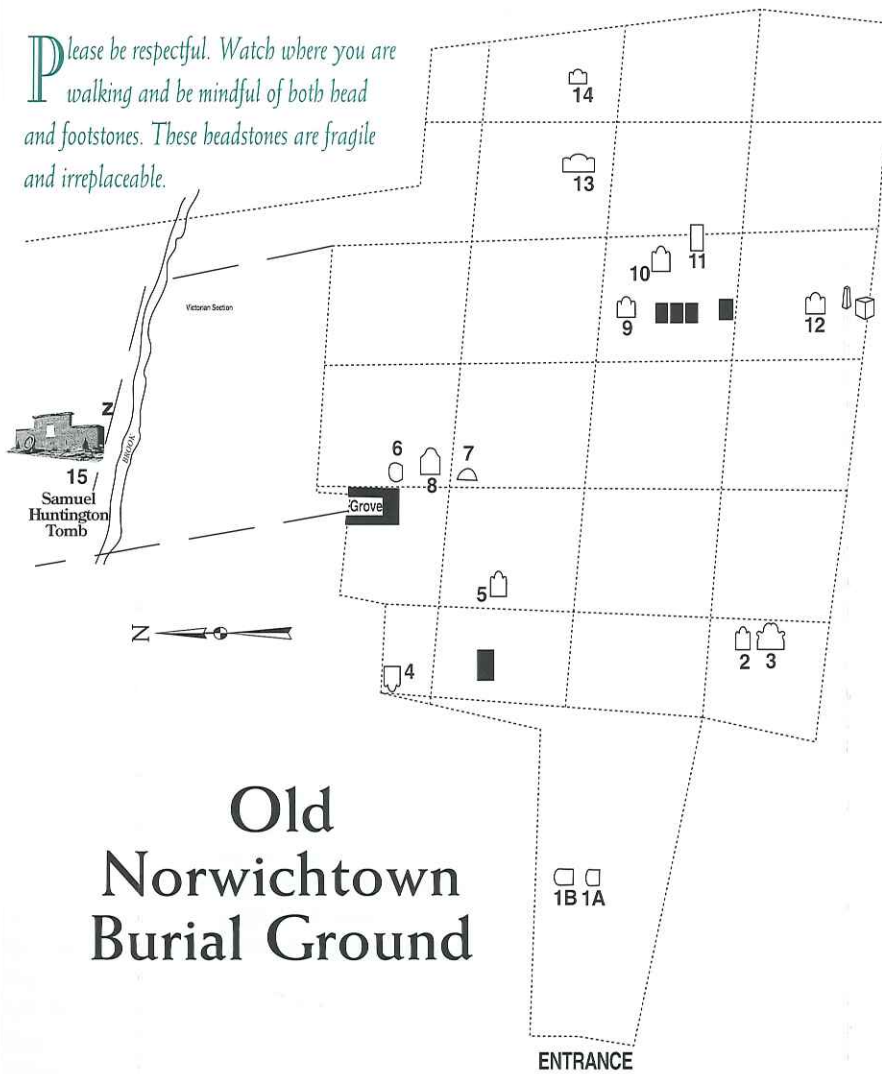
This white marble headstone indicates that Benjamin Butler died from a mysterious disease. It was carved by Rockwell Manning. Toward the end of the 1700's white marble could be shipped from the famous Vermont quarries. In the later part of his career, Rockwell frequently used this marble to carve his headstones. White marble gained popularity as a material for gravestones, and was used almost exclusively for the elaborate neoclassical memorials that can be found in nineteenth century cemeteries.

5. HANNAH ARNOLD

In Memory of
HANNAH
the well beloved wife of
Capt. BENNEDICT ARNOLD
and Daughter of
Mr. John and Elizabeth Watermen,
Who died Aug. 15, 1758,
aetatis suae 52.

Here is the headstone for Hannah, the mother of the infamous traitor, Benedict Arnold who fought alongside the British during the Revolutionary War and supervised the burning of New London. His father was also named Benedict Arnold. Nearby you will see the markers for Elizabeth, Mary, and Absolom (two sisters and a brother who died at an early age). These headstones were carved in Newport, R.I. by John Stevens II and shipped to Norwich. The gray-green color is typical of the Rhode Island slate used by this carver. It is extremely hard and holds up to the weather. There are several stones from the Stevens Shop here in Norwichtown which is testament to the prominent role Norwich played in maritime trade during the 1700s.

Please be respectful. Watch where you are walking and be mindful of both head and footstones. These headstones are fragile and irreplaceable.



Old Norwichtown Burial Ground

6. DEACON SIMON HUNTINGTON

DEACON SI
MON HUNT
INGTON DY
ED JUN
28, 1706
Æ 77

Deacon Simon Huntington was one of the original Founders of Norwich and his headstone is the earliest in the Old Norwichtown Burial Ground. His mother, Margaret Baret, was born in Norwich, England. Nearby (to the right) is a similar headstone for Simon Huntington, his grandson, who was bitten on the foot by a timber rattler while mowing a nearby field. He was carried to the Simon Huntington home on the Town Green where he died. Rattlesnakes were so numerous in colonial Norwich that a bounty was placed on them. Both headstones were cut by a local carver known as the **Norwich Ovoid Carver** whose tombstones were characterized by their oval shape and large, deep cut, lettering. The Norwich Ovoid Carver represents the earliest tombstone cutter in southeastern Connecticut. Note the curious spelling. Spelling was not standardized until Noah Webster published his dictionary in 1783. Prior to that time phonetic spelling was common.

8. JOSHUA HUNTINGTON

HERE
IS INTERRED
the Body of Capt. Joshua
Huntington Esq. who Departed
this Life on the 26 day of
August 1745 in the 47 th year
of his age and very justly
Lamented by the Surviving.

A merchant, Joshua Huntington was made Captain at age nineteen. For twenty seven years "traded more on land or sea than any other in Norwich". He contracted yellow fever while in New York, and quickly returned to Norwich where he died. He is the brother to Simon Huntington, who died from a snake bite. Joshua's headstone was signed by the carver, **Benjamin Collins** of Lebanon, CT. Collins was also a cabinet maker which influenced his headstone designs. The borders have a lace-like quality and the design is not cut very deeply into the stone which makes them difficult to read. The cherub's large nose is also characteristic of Collins work which is well represented in Norwichtown.

9. CAPT. OBADIAH SMITH

HER LYES YE BODY
OF CAPT OBDIAH
SMITH WHO DIED
MAY YE 11 th 1727 &
IN YE 50th YEAR
OF HIS AGE
NOW BETWEEN
THESE CARVE STONS
RICH TRESUER LIES
DEER SMITH HIS BONES

Captain Smith was the first constable in Norwich. His headstone was carved by **John Hartshorne** who lived in the West Farms area of Norwich. Hartshorne moved here in 1722 from Rowley, MA, to live with his daughter following the death of his third wife. In 1702, he lost a wife, son and three grandsons during an Indian raid in Haverhill, MA. At 70 years of age, he was the last surviving veteran of King Philip's War. Hartshorne

had been carving tombstones for many years and brought with him a skill and carving tradition. Although crude, his headstones represent the earliest examples of carved headstones in eastern CT. In the area of Capt. Smith's stone you will find many other examples of John Harthorne's headstones. In time, other carvers began copying this basic design then embellished it with their own.

10. THEOPHILUS AND ELIZABETH RODGERS

Here lyeth ye Remains of
Doctor Theophilus Rodgers
and of Mrs. Elezabeth his Wife
Daughter of Mr. William Hide.
The Doct. died on ye 29th of
September 1753 in ye 54th year
of his age. And his Wife on ye
24th off November 1753 in ye
54th Year of her age also.
Both Continued to ye same Year
of Life. Both died on ye same
day of ye Week, and both
deposited in this Grave.

Dr. Rodgers was a prominent physician in Norwich. During the Revolutionary period, he owned one of six Chases or Gigs (a type of carriage). His headstone was carved by **John Stevens II** of Newport, RI. The two winged cherubs represent the soul figures of the doctor (right) and his wife (left). Following Colonial tradition, the wife was buried on to the husbands left side with both their feet toward the east. So as the sun rose on Judgment Day they could both sit up and face Christ in the same order they stood before their minister on their wedding day.

11. REV. BENJAMIN LORD D. D.

(1692 - 1784)

Think, Christians, think!
You stand on vast eternity's dread brink
Faith and Repentance, Piety and Prayer
Despise this world, the next be all your care,
Thus while my Tomb the solemn silence breaks,
And to the eye, this cold dumb marble speaks.
'Tho' dead I preach, if e'en with ill success
Living I strove th' important truths to press,-
Your precious, your immortal souls to save,
Hear me at least, O ear me from my Grave.

Benjamin Lord was the third minister in Norwichtown and served for 67 years from 1717 - 1784. He graduated from Yale and at age 83 stated "he was the oldest practicing minister in the state." He began Sunday service with a prayer that often ran longer than one hour. His contract called for him to receive annually £100 and sufficient wood for his use to be delivered to his door. Reverend Lord's monument is called a tablestone. The Cyprus trees with peacocks are symbols for eternal life. This table stone was carved by **Rockwell Manning**, for which he was paid £13. Rockwell was the youngest son of stone carver Josiah Manning and began his career at an early age. His grandmother's headstone (located in Scotland, CT.) is inscribed, "carved by Rockwell Manning aged 13 years". Rockwell along with his brother Frederick ran a shop in Norwich. In Europe, space was often reserved within the cathedral for the interment of people of high social rank. The Puritans rejected these traditions, but used the tablestone (originally supported by five stone pillars) to symbolically represent the cathedral under which the body was buried.

12. HEZEKIAH HUNTINGTON ESQ.

To the Memory of Honobl
HEZEKIAH HUNTING-
TON Esq. who died at New
London in ye session of ye court
Febry 10 th 1773 Èteit 76. Deacon
of ye first Church in Norwich,
one of ye Council of ye Colony.
Judge of Probate. his Piety &
Affability, Prayers & Example,
Wisdom & Experience endeared
him to his Friends, to ye Church
& ye State.

Hezekiah Huntington's marker speaks for the well respected man, who dedicated his life to public service and his church. This well preserved headstone was carved by **Josiah Manning** (1725-1806), who was born in Hopkinton, MA and moved to Franklin, CT in 1748. Town records show at age 23, he was paid 8 shillings to dig the grave for Samuel Edgerton. He carved headstones for many years. Later he was joined in the business by two of his sons. His "pop eyed" cherub became very popular and can be found in most of the burial grounds in eastern CT. There are over two hundred at Norwichtown. In the 1770s he began working with a tan colored stone. The quarry's location is unknown. Because of its durability, these headstones appear fresh today despite several hundred years of New England weathering.

13. CHRISTOPHER HUNTINGTON

HERE LIES INTERD YE REMAINS
OF DEACON CHRISTOPHER HUNTING
TON OF NORWICH, BORN NOV'M
BER YE 1, 1660. YE FIRST BORN
OF MALES IN YE TOWN, HE SERVED
NEAR 40 YEARS IN YE OFFICE
OF A DEACON. DIED APRIL YE
24, 1735 IN YE 75 YR OF HIS AGE.
MEMENTO MORI

Christopher was the first male born in Norwich, although not the first born (Sam and Jane Hyde had a daughter in August of the same year). Christopher's oldest daughter, Ruth, was the mother of Dr. Eleazer Wheelock, the founder of the first Indian school in Lebanon. This school moved to New Hampshire and was renamed Dartmouth College where he served as president. Christopher's headstone was carved by the Lebanon carver, **Obadiah Wheeler**. Wheeler was a talented carver and there are many examples of his work at Norwichtown. His winged cherubs are similar to those of Benjamin Collins. However, if you focus on the nose you will see that it is narrow, unlike the Collins stones. See if you can identify other Wheeler/Collins stones in Norwichtown.

14. BOSTON TROWTROW

In Memory of
Boston Trowtrow
Govener of ye Affri
can Trib he Died
May 28 1772
Æ 66.

An area for the interment of Norwich's black residents was set aside at the rear of the burying grounds. Today only a few headstones remain to mark the gravesites for those buried here. Carved headstones were expensive and few poor families could afford them. The crude headstones in this area were either carved by family or friends of the deceased. Occasionally, slave owners also purchased headstones for servants who had lived with the family for many years. Such is the case for Boston Trowtrow whose tombstone was carved by a member of the Manning family of carvers. The Africans in Norwich held mock elections each year for their own leadership. This was a festive occasion which had no legal standing. Boston Trowtrow repeatedly won this annual contest for many years. Following his death, Samuel Huntington's own slave, Sam Hunton was elected governor for many years, more years than Huntington served as governor of Connecticut.

Leb Quy, a native of Africa, served for three years in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. His burial site is unknown.

15. HUNTINGTON TOMB

Governor of Connecticut
Having served his fellow Citizens
In various important offices
Died the 5th day of January AD. 1796,
In the 65th year of his age.
His Consort
Mrs. Martha Huntington
Died June 4th AD 1794 in the 57th
Year of her age.

Cross over the small brook in the back left of the Old Norwichtown Graveyard and you will find additional gravesites. This area was opened in the 1800s. The Huntington Tomb is located immediately on the left. This recently restored tomb contains the remains of Samuel Huntington Esq. and his wife Martha. Born in Scotland CT, Samuel was self educated and pursued a career in law. He moved to Norwich in 1760 and in 1764 was elected to represent the town in the State General Assembly. In 1774 he was appointed associate judge to the Superior Court and in 1775 delegate to Congress. In 1776 Samuel was seated in the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. In 1779 he was elected President of the Continental Congress. Samuel returned to Norwich and in 1786 was elected 18th Governor of the State of Connecticut and served until his death in 1796.