

The Guild Cemetery

Common Street, Walpole, Norfolk County, Massachusetts

GPS: N42.1256544 W71.2333867

Location: This cemetery is located on Old Post Road, near Hawthorne Drive and near where Old Post Road merges in to Common Street.

Layout/Condition: The Guild Cemetery is a small family cemetery. It is approximately 50' long by about 100' deep. It is surrounded by a fieldstone rock wall. The front wall is stone and mortar, with two granite posts flanking the entrance footpath. At one time these posts supported a rot iron gate, which can be seen in a 1917 photograph. The remaining three fieldstone walls have fallen into disrepair. The Guild Cemetery is a terraced cemetery, having 5 defined terraces. There is a tomb on the fourth terrace. The very top of this cemetery is the oldest part of the cemetery, and the last row of gravestones face the forest and not Old Post Road. This is due to the fact that at one time the "front" of the cemetery was on Common Street. The original granite post "entrance" can be seen, however, if one was to walk through it, they would end up in a private yard.

Usage: The first burial occurred here in 1796 (Nathaniel Guild, Sr.) and the most recent was in 1985 (Agnes E. (Johnson) Dunbar).

Stones: There are approximately 50 headstones and about 110 people buried here. The oldest are slate tablet style, there are a few marble tablets and two marble obelisks, the newest stones are granite family stones.

Cemetery History: The land for this cemetery was set aside by Nathaniel Guild, Sr. and was originally on his farm. In an 1836 map of Walpole, the property is inhabited by Nathaniel and Horace Guild. In an 1878 map Charles Guild and Charles Guild, 2nd are living there.

Family/Genealogy: This is a family burial ground. Originally on the farm of Nathaniel Guild and his wife, Mary Boyden. However, there are other families represented here, the families of Baker, Billings, Hewins, Mann and Rhoads also have plots here. The Billings and Rhoads families can be directly connected to the Guild family. The Philip Hewins and Charles Mann families that have small plots here, and can be loosely connected to Nathaniel Guild's family. (Nathaniel's brother, Moses, married into the Manns and his daughter, Mercy, married into the Hewins, but not into the branches represented here). There is no apparent direct (or indirect) connection to the Baker Family to the Nathaniel Guild family. The Bakers came from West Walpole. Ebenezer Baker's (17??-18??) father, Ebenezer Baker, Sr., first wife was the daughter of a Guild and his second wife was a Boyden. In fact Esther (Boyden) Baker is buried here. Perhaps she is the connection, as no one seems to know the origins of Nathaniel's wife, Mary Boyden.

Guild: Nathaniel Guild (1711-1796), was the son of Nathaniel & Mehitable (Hartshorn) Guild. He married Mary Boyden in 1733. Together they had six children; Mary (1735), Nathaniel (1739-179?), Mercy (1741), Susanna (1743-1822), Mehitable (1745-1816) and Samuel (1746-1816). The only one of their children who is buried in this cemetery is Nathaniel. Also, Mary does not appear to have a grave here.

Rhoads: After the death of Mary, Nathaniel married Anna (Gould) Rhoads in 1777. She was the widow of Benjamin Rhoads, Sr., and the daughter of Jeremiah Gould. (She is buried in the West Sharon "Billings" Cemetery, next to her husband and two sons). At the time of Nathaniel and Anna's marriage, they would have had a house full of teenagers, as Anna would have brought with her 5 children; Jeremiah (17??-1802), Anna, (son, Benjamin died in 1771). Son Jeremiah, married Mehitable Coney and they were the parents of Benjamin Rhoads. Mehitable and Benjamin are buried here, along with Benjamin's two wives, Hannah Gay and Harriet Keith, and their children; Hannah (Rhoads) Hersey, Charles E. and Francis E. and Benjamin, Jr.. Benjamin Jr., has a large marble obelisk family monument on terrace 2, buried with him is his second wife Ann McCurdy, and their children, Sarah A. Holmes, and Benjamin F., and Benjamin F.'s wife, Nellie M. Holmes. Ann McCurdy's sister Margaret is also buried in this cemetery.

Billings: Nathaniel Guild's (1711-1796) sister, Sarah (1725) married Jonathan Billings. Their son, Jonathan Billings, Jr. (1749-1827) is buried in the Guild Cemetery along his second wife, Mary Fisher and their niece, Susanna, and sons, Hartford, Bradford and Jonathan, III. Jonathan Billings, III is in the front terrace with his wife, Betsey Tolman and two of their children, Hervey and Louisa.

Guild: Nathaniel Guild, III (1739-1793), son of Nathaniel (Jr.) & Mary (Boyden) Guild, married Rebecca Hart in 1767. She was the daughter of Jacob Hart and his second wife, Sarah Farrington. (Jacob Hart's first wife was Susanna Guild, daughter of Nathaniel & Mehitable Guild.) Nathaniel & Rebecca were the parent of 11 children; Mary (1767), Nathaniel (1769), Herman (1773), Jacob (1775), Samuel (1777), Rebecca (1779), William (1780), James (1782), Rebecca (1784), Polly (1786) and Chester (1791). Only three of their children lie with them here: Herman & his family in the tomb, Nathaniel (IV) and his family, and Polly and her husband, John Turner.