

# Introduction

## Walpole Cemetery Transcription Project

**Purpose:** The objective was to record, via written transcription and photograph, the headstones for future generations. This study would generate a census of the names of those interred in Walpole, which would be a valuable tool for genealogists. Steps in this transcription process would include:

- To completely and accurately transcribe all the headstones in 10 of 11 cemeteries in Walpole. (The only Walpole cemetery not included was the St. Francis Cemetery, on Washington St., est. 1905). Also included in the study were 6 cemeteries in abutting towns. These cemeteries were included because parcels of Walpole land were annexed to other towns (and in some cases, annexed back to Walpole), and also, families often relocated to back and forth between neighboring towns;
- To Map (schematic) the cemeteries;
- To Record condition of the head and foot stones;
- To photograph headstones;
- To locate and document all Veteran's Graves;
- To create a "master list" of interments for easy location of graves;
- To put completed transcriptions and photographs on line;

### Cemeteries in Study:

- Blake Burial Ground, town forest, Walpole
- Abigail (Clapp) Hartshorn Smith tomb, Washington St., Walpole
- Morse Burial Ground, West St., Walpole
- Guild Cemetery, Old Post Rd., Walpole
- Old Burial Ground, Kendall & Main Sts., Walpole
- Plains Cemetery, Kingsbury St., Walpole
- Rural Cemetery, Pemberton St., Walpole
- Maple Grove Cemetery, Kendall St., Walpole
- Terrace Hill Cemetery, South St., Walpole
- East Walpole Cemetery, Pleasant St., Walpole
  
- Second Parish Cemetery, Railroad Ave., Norwood
- West Sharon (Billings) Cemetery, Main St., Sharon
- North Sharon Cemetery, High St., Sharon
- Oliver Lothrop Burial Ground, Moose Hill Rd. Sharon
- (Also, 1 other small family cemetery in Sharon: Esty Burial Ground)
- Pondville Cemetery, Everett St., Norfolk
- Norfolk Cemetery (old section only) Seeconk & Main Sts, Norfolk
- Third Parish Cemetery, High St., Westwood.

### History:

Early Colonial's chose situate their burying grounds on a hill. It was no longer important to establish a cemetery in a churchyard, as had been the custom in England, (although, New England does have a number of churchyard cemeteries.) The Colonials buried their dead in an east-west orientation. They believed, this way the dead would be the first to see the "second coming" (as it would come from the

east), and they would stand up in their graves and be taken to heaven. As one looks around New England towns, one can see many old burying grounds are indeed located on hills.

Walpole's earliest cemetery is the Old Burial Ground. The first known burial occurred there in 1714, some ten years before Walpole was set-off from Dedham. Before the establishment of this burying ground, early Walpolians had to bury their dead in Dedham (proper) which was many miles away. The next Cemetery established was the Billings Cemetery in Stoughtonham (now Sharon) in 1717. It is located just over the border from South Walpole. The Plains Cemetery, in West Walpole, was the next cemetery established in 1731, followed by South Dedham (now Norwood), which established their first cemetery, the Second Parish Cemetery, some ten years later in 1741. In the late 1700's, in Norfolk County, many families began to establish their own small family cemeteries on their land. In our study, those family cemeteries include the Morse, Guild, Blake, Lothrop, Hartshorn and Esty. Some of these cemeteries have grown into a small neighborhood cemeteries, such as the Guild and Esty Cemeteries.

In the 1830's a new movement began to occur in America, with the establishment of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This movement is referred to as the Rural Cemetery Movement or the Garden Cemetery Movement. Cemeteries took on a garden-park like air; meandering paths were laid out, specimen trees, bushes and plants were imported and planted, ponds were dug, and cemetery monuments became grander and reflected the Greek revival and many other architectural movements that were popular among early Victorians. No longer were cemeteries just a place for the dead, now the living could enjoy them too. Approximately, ten years before this Rural Cemetery Movement, Walpole, Sharon, Wrentham and South Dedham established new cemeteries, as their ancient burying grounds were small and becoming over crowded. Like the early Colonials, these cemeteries are situated on hills, but they quickly began to reflect the Garden Movement that was so popular. These cemeteries include; Terrace Hill, Rural Cemetery and Maple Grove in Walpole, West Cemetery in Sharon, the Pondville Cemetery in Wrentham (now Norfolk), and the "New Cemetery" in South Dedham (Now "East Walpole Cemetery" in Walpole). It should be noted; Sharon, Norwood, Norfolk and Wrentham established other cemeteries about this time that are not included in this study).

In the early 1900's, concerned citizens in Walpole were alarmed at how the town's cemeteries had fallen in to disrepair, stones had fallen over, grass was uncut, and plants were either over-grown or had died. Cemeteries were privatized, and a board of directors were established at each the 4 garden-like cemeteries. These newly created boards were to over see and care for these cemeteries. They quickly cleaned up the cemeteries, many new maple trees were planted to replace dying vegetation, or to simply beautify the cemetery. The cemeteries were also, expanded by the purchasing of neighboring parcels of land. However, as the members of the board retired, it became difficult to find replacement members, and by the 1970's Walpole's cemeteries again fell into disrepair. One by one, the board of directors voted to be dissolved and to make the town of Walpole the trustee of their cemeteries. The only cemetery, which remains privately maintained, is the East Walpole Cemetery, which is care for by the Bird Family. Today only East Walpole, Terrace Hill, Maple Grove, Rural and Pondville Cemeteries are still in use, although, the town of Walpole has allowed a few burials to West Walpole neighbors in the Plains Cemetery.

# Information about documentation in this study:

**Cemetery Notes Page:** There is an introduction notes page for each cemetery transcription. These notes include the address, history, usage years, and condition for the cemetery. Some notes contain a genealogical capsulation for families buried there, or other interesting facts.

**Schematic Maps:** These maps are not accurate. They are simply a tool to help with the location of graves, and to help demonstrate they lay out of each cemetery. Great care was taken to incorporate older maps into these schematic maps, by including names of owners that do not have a headstone, by maintaining consistency in the “numbering” of the plots.

## **Transcription Spreadsheet/Database:**

- The first column (col. #1) is for “names”; family names, first names, middle initials or middle names, and in parentheses, maiden name if known. In some cases, the spelling of family name in the first column may not match the spelling or the family name in the “transcription” column. Very often there are several variations to spelling a name. Most times it depends on the literacy of the person recording the name. For instance, sometimes “Clapp” is spelled with one “P”, or “Gilmore” is spelled without the “E”, or “Carroll” has one “R” or uses an “E” instead of “A.” By being consistent with name spelling in column one, it will help make computer searches easier, and make it easier to read/generate an alphabetical list.
- The second column (col. #2) has “titles” if they appear on the headstone.
- The next three columns are for recording the (col. #3) birth date and/or (col. #4) age at time of death and (col. #5) death date. In some instances both birth date and age at time of death is recorded, as during the transcription process transcribers may have found extra information and recorded it.
- The 6<sup>th</sup> column is for the location of each tombstone. Codes were assigned to each grave. These codes have a three letter code for each town, followed by initials for each cemetery, followed by cemetery section (or column) and finally grave number.
  - Town codes are:
    - WAL = Walpole;
    - NRD = Norwood;
    - SHA = Sharon;
    - NFK = Norfolk.

Cemetery codes in are: THC = Terrace Hill Cemetery; MGC = Maple Grove Cemetery; RC = Rural Cemetery; EWC = East Walpole Cemetery; OBG = Old Burial Ground; PC = Plains Cemetery; MGB = Morse Burial Ground; BBG = Blake Burial Ground; GC = Guild Cemetery; “tomb” = Abigail Smith tomb; SPC = Second Parish Cemetery, PVC = Pondville Cemetery; NC = Norfolk Cemetery, NSC = North Sharon Cemetery; OLC = Oliver Lothrop Cemetery; WSC = West Sharon (Billings) Cemetery; EBG = Esty Burial Ground.
- The 7<sup>th</sup> column is to record if there is a footstone or a marker, and its transcription.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> column is an accurate transcription of the tombstone. In some cases, the stone is gone or obliterated, and an early transcription is recorded. Brackets are used to complete transcriptions from earlier recordings that are no longer legible or below ground.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> column records information about the tombstone; style, materials, design, and condition.

# Notes on Stones:

**Material:** In the cemeteries in this study, there are three kinds of rock used for headstones:

**Slate:** is a metamorphic rock which is produced by the heating a compression of shale, a sedimentary rock made from mostly clay. Slate can be found in many different colors, but mostly grey and a few red stones are what if found in our cemeteries. Slate does last well, because is thin and brittle, which makes it vulnerable to cracking, chipping and flaking. Slate has a wide range of hardness, it can be very soft or as hard as granite. Some of the slate headstones survayed appear as if they were cut yesterday, while others have chips and flakes missing which make it almost impossible to read. Slate was the very popular with the early Colonials through the 1850's. Perhaps because it was reddily available in New England, and could be cut with hand tools.

**Marble:** is a metamorphic rock formed from recrystallized limestone, or compressed shells. Marble comes in different colors, but the color of choice for headstones was pure white. When a marble headstone was first installed it was polished to a satin finish. Marble, being a soft rock, has not held up well to years of acid rain. Most of the marble headstones in this survey show various levels of erosion. A few are no longer ledgiable. White marble was a popular choice from about 1800 to about 1890. Marble is good for carving, making some marble headstones very elaborate.

**Granite:** is a coarse grained, igneous rock made by the slow cooling of silica rich magma. It generally consists of mica, feldspars, and quartz. Because of the many variations in the grain of granite, it comes in many different colors, and when granite is polished (vs. sawn) its color appears to change (ex. pink becomes red, dark grey becomes black). Colors in this study are mostly light & dark grey, polished black, and rose. Granite came into usage in the mid-1800's and currently is the stone of choice in most cemeteries today. Granite holds up well to years of acid rain and pollution. Stones that were installed 150 years ago, appear brand new today.

**Style and Design:** How is the stone cut? What is its shape? Its thickness?

**Tablet:** Is a tall wide but not very thick (about 2" thick) piece of stone. Some times refered to a "Slab" The top can be straight or curved. Sometimes there is a double tablet for two people (like husband & wife)

**Block:** Is a chunky cut of stone, from 6" thick and thicker. It can be a simple rectangle or carved into an elaborate shape, and it can come in many sizes, from small to many feet high.

**Shape:** what is the shape or form of the stone?

**Tablet Shapes:** There are two main shapes for the old (bef. Abt. 1820) slate tablets: Rounded shoulder (aka finials) with a lunette, (the semi-circular top) and flat shouldered with a lunette. The flat shoulder style continued to be used in both slate and marble tablets through out the 1800's.



With the introduction of marble tablets, simplicity came into style. Tablets were cut into simple rectangles, or the upper corners were notched, or only the lunette remained, (aka domed). By the mid 1800's the tops of tablet stones reflected the interest in the revival architecture styles that had become so popular in the buildings of the time, like gothic arch topped stone. Also popular was scalloping (curvy) on top, or a shape that looks like a fallen-over bracket “{“.

By the mid 1800's family block stones, made of either granite or marble became popular. Block stones come in many different shapes. A family monument consists of two or three pieces, the base and the die (the 'gravestone'), and sometimes the capitol. The base is wider and longer than the die and the die normally sits in the center of the base, and the capitol crowns the top. By spreading weight over a larger area, the monument is more stable. The family stones, could be very tall 15' or taller, in the style of columns, pilasters, or obelisks. Or these stones could be 3' tall but 4' or 5' wide, in the style of an alter, or sarcophagus. Sometimes a family stone may be a large rectangle with an ornate capitol. Very often these family plots may be surrounded by curbing, or rot iron fencing, or the corners of the plot would be delineated by a small square stone with the family initial etch on top. Usually each grave would be marked with a small or flat marker stone.

Today, headstones are rectangular blocks from 3' to 4' high/wide. Tops are reminiscent of tops one may see on older stones.

# TABLET STYLES:



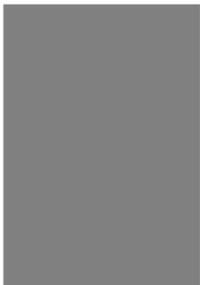
round shoulders



flat shoulders



dome top



rectangle



two-way



notched corner



notched corners  
with lunette



scallop



bracket

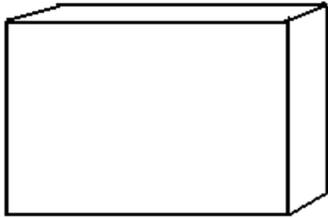


bracket scalloping

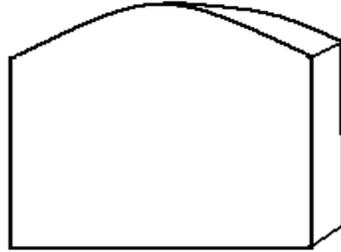


gothic arch

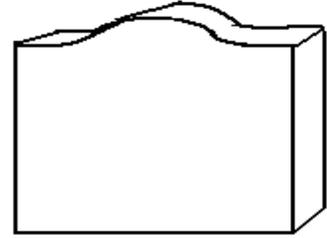
# BLOCK STYLES



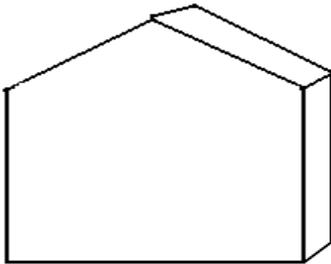
flat top



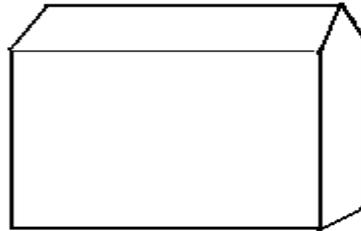
oval top



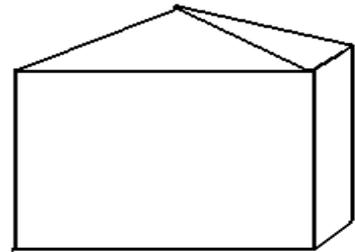
serpentine top



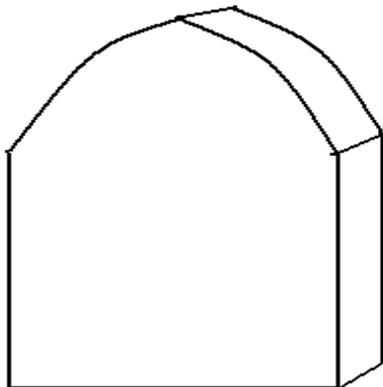
two-way



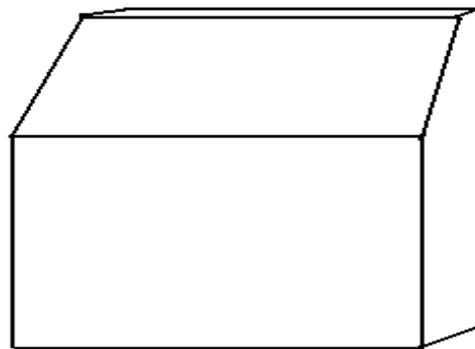
roof ridge



apex

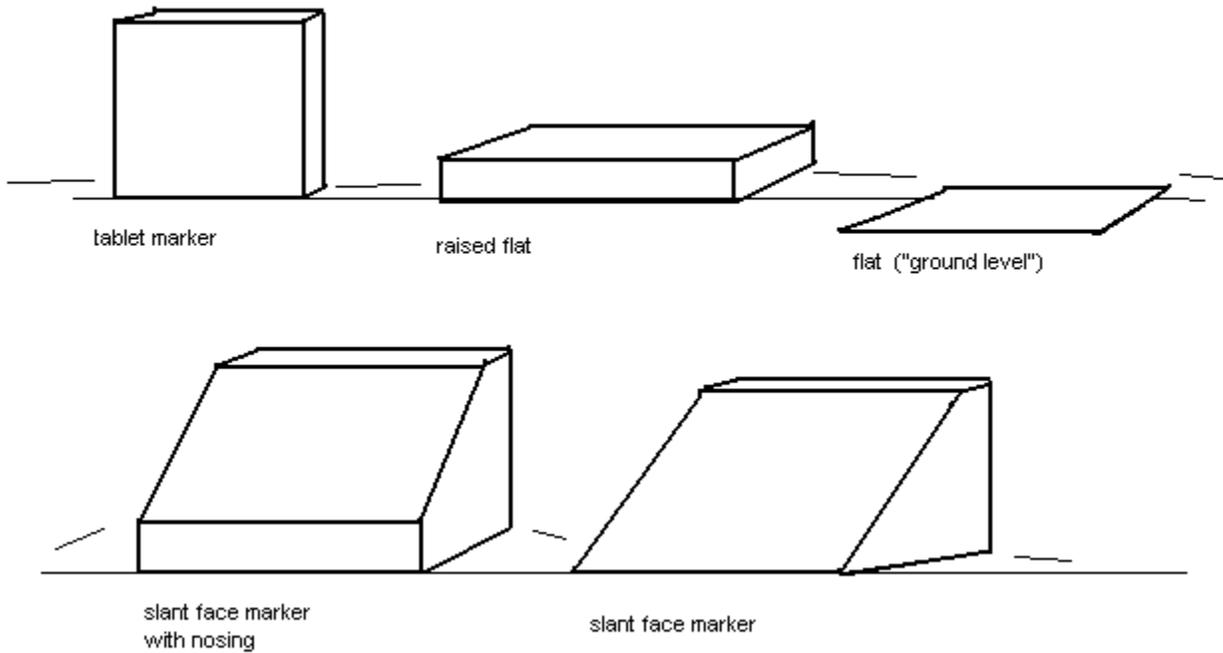


gothic arch

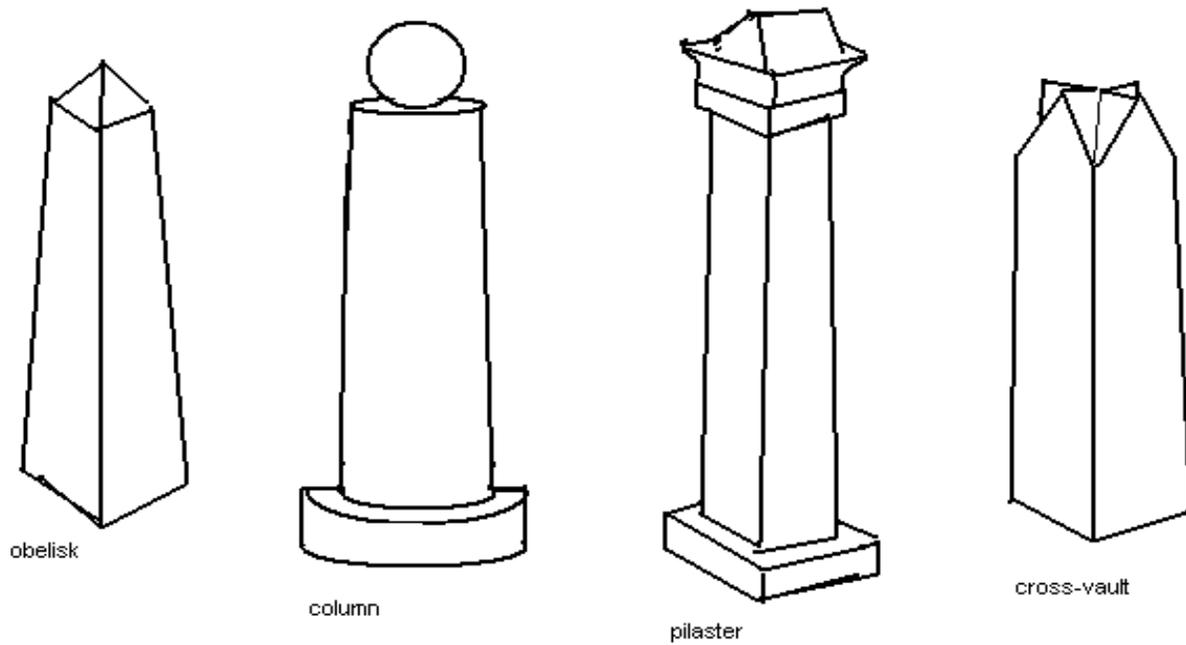


pulpit style

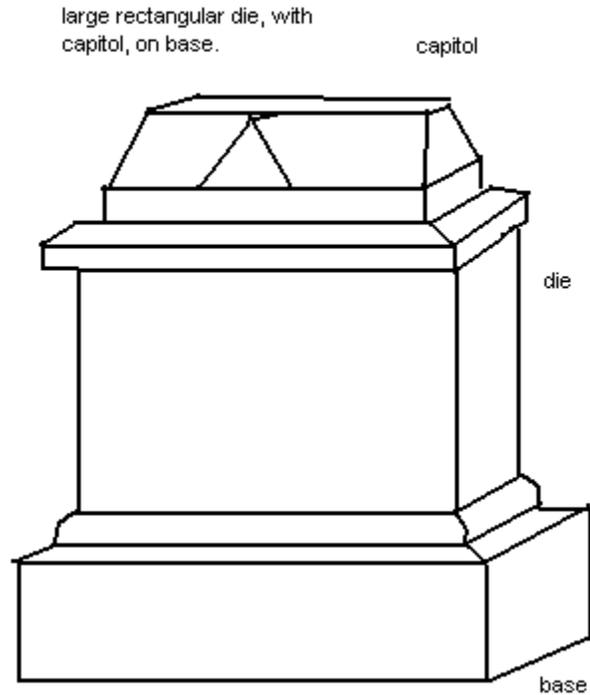
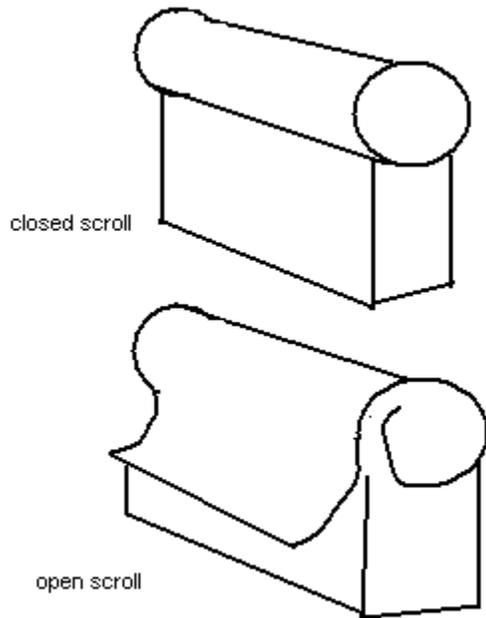
# MARKER STYLES



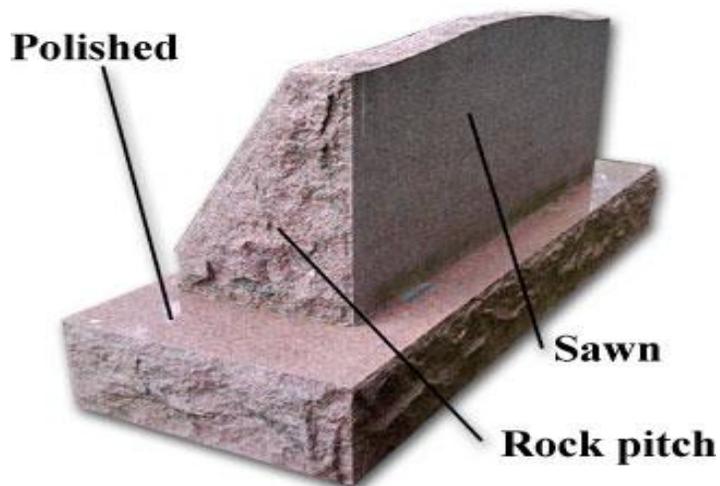
# OBELISKS, COLUMNS AND PILASTERS



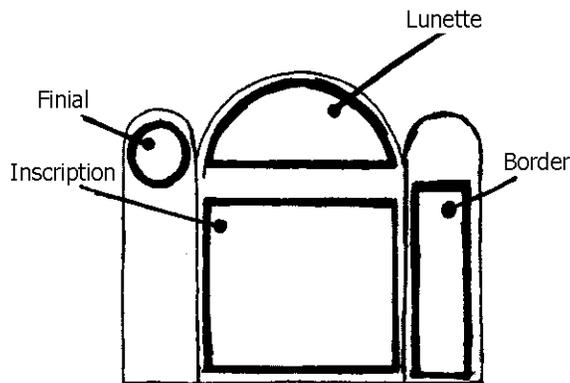
# OTHER STYLES



**Head Stone Finish Terms:** The standard finishes are "**polished**," "**sawn**," and "**rock pitch**." **Polished** is a high gloss surface produced from a process of rubbing and buffing the granite until the natural polish shows through. Generally, there is nothing on the granite to make it shine. **Sawn** finishes are produced by gently sandblasting the surface. **Rock pitch** is a rough finish produced by splitting the granite. This finish is normally seen on the sides of the die and base and on the top of the die. These finishes can be mixed to provide texture and contrast. For example, a die may be 'Polished 2' (Polished on two sides – front and back.) with the balance rock pitch (Top and sides split). Or a die can be polished on all sides (polished 5) or have a polished top with rock pitch sides (polish 3).



**Designs:** In the case of most headstones, a symbol is etched or carved on to the stone. These symbols have many different meanings, and often reflect the style of the day.



On the oldest slate tablet stones the designs are in the Lunette portion of these old headstones. Winged Skulls, skull and cross bones, flying skeleton, and other scary images of death, by the late 1700's through the mid 1800's less scary images were used, a setting sun, winged cherubs, urn & weeping willow and other images of mourning were popular. Sometimes images of the decessé's profession were etched on the lunette. It should also be noted that the finials and the border of the "round-shoulder" stones had their own unique designs too. Finials had rosettes, whorls, or concentric circles, vines, spider-web designs to name a few. The borders, or the section directly under the finial had vines; some with fruits and some with leaves, scrolls, and columns carved on.

Slate tablet stones in the late 1700's and early 1800's were simpler and had fewer details carved on them, but the lunette remained the focal point of the headstone. Both, marble and slate tablet stones were popular choices in the early to mid 1800's. Slate and marble tablets had similar shapes and styles, but because marble was easily carved, many lunette designs were in base-relief, and "popped" out (or off) the face of the tablet. The same symbols carved in base-relief on to the face of a marble tablet, were often the same symbols carved on to marble block. Sometimes these small sculptures are a separate feature that is set on top of the marble block stones.

Granite stones of today also are etched with symbols; ivy leaves, oak leaves, dogwood flowers, Crosses, or Star of David, are the most popular. Usually the family name appears on the front of these family stones, with a small etched symbol also on the façade. Family information is usually listed on the back.

Symbols of Death or Mourning: dove (resurrection), hand pointing up (pathway to heaven) or down (), drapes (mourning), urn (immortality), weeping willow (earthly sorrow, grief), clasped hands (farewell), Open book (Bible)

Symbols of Lost Youth: broken bud (life cut short), lamb, (innocence)

Floral Symbols: Roses (prime of life), Lily of the Valley (purity, innocence), bouquet of flowers (condolences, grief, sorrow), dogwood flower ()

Leaf Symbols: Oak Leaves (maturity), Ivy Leaves (friendship & immortality), laurel wreath (victory), palm branch (victory & rejoicing), sheaf of wheat (ripe for harvest), tree (life)

Organizational Symbols: Three Link Chain (Odd Fellows), open calipers (Masonic Symbol), family initials, Alpha and Omega

Condition: The appearance of the stone is also noted, ratings are “Excellent”, “Good”, “Fair” and “Poor”. Fair and Poor are usually followed by a reason.