

## Carver Family Biographies continued from opposite panel

design. The chin of the cherub is generally more pointed and the eyes more drowsy. In addition, the wings on Thomas III's stones sweep upward instead of downward.

Joseph Johnson (1698-1783) was Thomas Johnson I's younger brother. Joseph carved on dark, red sandstone quarried from Windsor and decorated his borders with vines, fruits, flowers, and leaves. The two distinctive designs attributed to Joseph are the skull with hollow eyes, row of even teeth, and a crown above, or an angel head with spaced pupils in the eyes giving it a sad look despite the turned up mouth.



Josiah Manning

### The Manning Carvers

Josiah Manning (1725-1806) and his two sons Rockwell (1760-1806) and Frederick (1758-1810) established a style of gravestone carving that became dominant in eastern Connecticut for nearly fifty years. Josiah was born in Hopkinton, MA, and moved to Windham, CT about 1730. Later he settled in Norwich (now Franklin) in 1748. There are five types of Manning stones, although some of these types show considerable variations. The earliest stones, produced mainly in the 1760's and early 1770's are bat-winged types with curious hoods over the faces and a series of half loops below the face. It is probable that Josiah himself carved all of these designs. The predominant Manning style uses a frowning face pattern, circular staring eyes, and an elaborate hairstyle. The wings are solid and curve upward and are often accompanied by a scroll design below. A third style is used almost exclusively for children and has lines curving downward for the wings. A fourth style, with no carving beside the face, is also exclusively for children and is a late style, possibly carved only by the two sons. Lastly the fifth style appears subsequent to the Revolutionary War and probably resulted from Rockwell and Frederick. Aspects of the many styles were imitated by many carvers and greatly influenced the work of Lebbeus Kimball, Amasa Loomis, Thatcher and Luther Lathrop, John Walden, and Aaron Haskins.

**Location and Hours:** Ancient Burying Ground, Rear of Center Church, Hartford, Connecticut. Gates open: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, May 1 through October 31. Admission is free. For more information call 860.561.2585.

This brochure was produced by The Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc. Summer Tour Program 2003.

**Production:** Caroline Kiczuk, Braden Barrett, Anthony Garcia, Magdalena Miranda, Miranda Stephenson

**Advisors:** Leah Byrd, Jon Harden, Andy Hart, Jan M. Hickcox, Chris Ladd, Michael McDonough, Aaron Mobley, Marge Morrissey, Frederick W. Sawyer III, Ruth Shapleigh-Brown, Heather R. Vega

**Photographs:** Frederick W. Sawyer III

**Program Supporters:** Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Murtha Cullina LLP, The Knox Foundation, Trust Company of Connecticut, Ancient Burying Ground Association, Sovereign Bank, The Hartford News

**Resources:** \*Ancient Burying Ground Association Walking Tour Brochure 2002

\**The Colonial Burying Grounds of Eastern Connecticut and the Men Who Made Them* by James A. Slater, used with permission from the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences

\**By Their Markers Ye Shall Know Them* by Shepherd M. Holcombe and William Hosley

\*[www.ctgravestones.com](http://www.ctgravestones.com)

[www.ancientburyingground.org](http://www.ancientburyingground.org)

The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History  
[www.mnh.uconn.edu](http://www.mnh.uconn.edu)

\*The Connecticut State Library

\*Connecticut Historical Society

\*indicates sources used for this brochure

This brochure was printed courtesy of the Hartford Courant.

## The Hartford Courant.

Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc.

Robert L. Hill, President

P.O. Box 347, Hartford, CT 06141

[www.theancientburyingground.org](http://www.theancientburyingground.org)

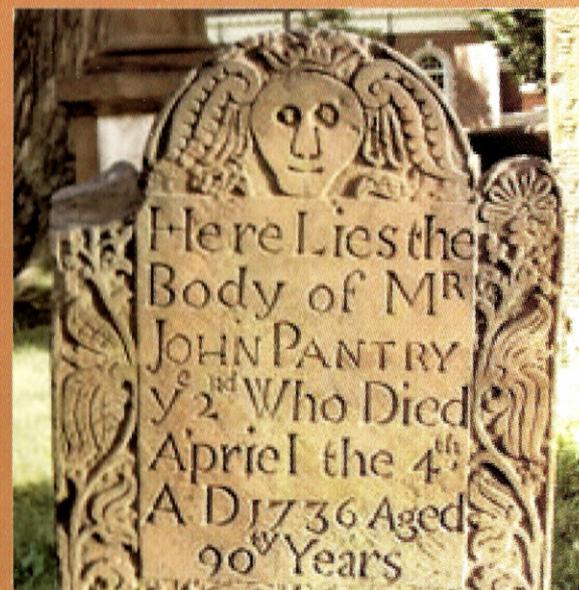
**Stone rubbings damage gravestones and are NOT Permitted in the Ancient Burying Ground!**



# The Makers of the Markers

## A Walking Tour of Colonial Stonecutter Art

Ancient Burying Ground  
Hartford, Connecticut



## The Ancient Burying Ground

The Ancient Burying Ground is the oldest historic site in Hartford, and the only one surviving from the 1600s. From 1640, four years after the arrival of the first English settler, down until the early 1800s, it was Hartford's only graveyard. During that period anyone who died in town, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic background, economic status, or religious faith, was interred here.

Approximately 6,000 men, women, and children are believed to have been interred in the Ancient Burying Ground, which was originally considerably larger than it is today. Over the centuries, commercial buildings, as well as the First Congregational meeting house, were erected on Burying Ground land, whitening it down to its present size of four acres.

Since gravestones were expensive, the vast majority of people interred in the Ancient Burying Ground – perhaps as many as 90 percent – never had one to mark their final resting place. In 1835, there were 563 stones in the Ancient Burying Ground; by 1877, 526 stones were left. Today, approximately 415 stones still stand.

## Gravestone Styles



### Plain Style

The first gravestones in Connecticut consisted of only brief facts about the deceased, with little or no decoration.



### “Death’s Head”

Imagery began to appear on Connecticut gravestones late in the 1600s. Stones from this era feature hollow-eyed, grimacing skulls flanked by bat-like wings. The “death’s

heads” are believed to reflect the Puritan’s grim attitude toward human mortality, emphasizing the specter of death and the decay of the flesh.



### “Angel’s Head”

Beginning around 1730, death’s heads became more “human” in appearance, more sophisticated in design and execution. The fearsome expression gradually softened into a sober, even smiling one. These “angel’s heads” are believed to symbolize the soul’s flight to heaven, emphasizing the blissful life everlasting that awaited the righteous.

## Gravestone Art

Gravestone carvings are recognized as important works by folk artists who developed distinctive individual styles.

Tombstones were the major form of sculpture produced in colonial New England. The Ancient Burying Ground contains fine examples of stones by many well-known carvers, making it, in effect, an open-museum.

Most markers in the Ancient Burying Ground were carved of brownstone quarried in East Middletown (present-day Portland), Connecticut.

Brownstone was favored by gravestone carvers because it is a “soft” stone that can be cut with relative ease. Unfortunately, that very characteristic makes brownstone a poor choice for gravestones. It is extremely vulnerable to the elements and pollution, with the result that countless gravestones in

Hartford and beyond have literally crumbled. It is interesting to note that the further north the brownstone was quarried, the better the quality of the stone.

In addition to the brown sandstone, the Ancient Burying Ground has markers of granite schist, slate, marble, and red sandstone. Our schist collection is one of the best in the state. Granite schist was mainly quarried from Bolton. Red sandstone quarried from Windsor held up better than most local brownstone. Marble was favored at the turn of the 19th century because it was believed to be the new revolutionary gravestone material. Unfortunately the engravings on these marble stones have almost completely disappeared due to acid rain. The few slate markers we have were quarried from Boston and have remained in excellent condition.

## Carver Family Biographies

### The Stanclift Carvers

The Stanclifts were one of the first and most prominent of the Connecticut carving families. Five generations of carvers left their mark on the lower Connecticut River Valley from the late 1600s into the nineteenth century. The Stanclifts worked on sandstone that came from their quarry in Middletown (present-day Portland).

James Stanclift I (? - 1712), originally from England, came to Lyme, Connecticut about 1684 and moved to what is now Portland in 1689, where he worked as a mason and stonemason until he died in 1712. The style of his stones was simple rounded tops. His gravestones are distinguishable by the elongated roof-like line that he placed at the top of his letter “A”. He carved in a plain style with capital letters and no additional adornment; although it is believed he was most likely the first artist in this area to depict a skull.

William Stanclift (1686-1761) was the oldest son of James Stanclift I. Like his father he carved in capital letters, and some of his stones have evenly rounded tops. William, however, produced stones with designs, including some delightful folk-skulls and Halloween-like faces. His more common stones are shouldered and have nicely finished but simple rosettes in the finials. He also used combined letters.

James Stanclift II (1692-1772) was a younger brother of William. His stones resemble those of William in that he used simple rosettes in the finials (shoulders) of his small sandstones; however, he used lowercase letters in combination with capitals. James Stanclift II and Gideon Hale joined with members of the Johnson family to form a quarry company sometime before 1761. Later, his style changed to show some

of Thomas Johnson’s characteristics. His son and grandson, both named James, were also stone carvers.



Joseph Johnson

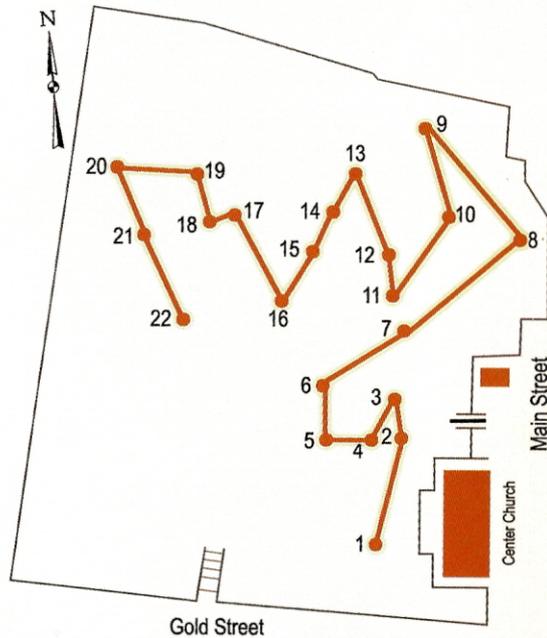
### The Johnsons

Three generations of the Johnson family established one of the great gravestone carving reigns of eighteenth-century Connecticut. They worked from the famous brownstone quarries in Middletown. All known Johnson stones are brown or red sandstones. Thomas Johnson I (1690-1761) started out as a mason in New Haven and later moved to Middletown. His earliest stones were apparently simple with only pinwheel designs in the finials. Between 1723 and 1736 Thomas I produced a series of original looking skull stones, with menacing faces, triangular noses and border panels of fig-like designs. (Deacon) Thomas Johnson II (1718-1774) developed a more elaborate style using the cherubim, most often crowned and with wings extending outward and usually downward. After the period of Thomas I’s skull stones, he and his son followed each other’s styles and in fact often worked together. Thomas Johnson III (of Chatham) (1750-1789) seemed to use the same basic designs as his father and continued to add to the busy

Please fold panel over for continuation

## Identification of Carvers

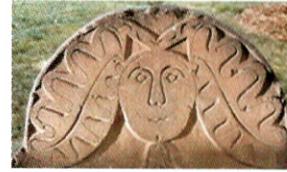
There are over 20 different carvers represented in the Ancient Burying Ground. Carvers are identified in two ways: searching for original documentation such as probate and estate records, newspaper advertisements, and by establishing carving trademarks such as the shape of the stone, lettering, footstones, designs, or quality of work. Despite the efforts of researchers and "experts", it is not always an easy task to accurately identify the colonial carvers. Even though carvers had distinctive styles, many had variations on their own style, or their style evolved over time. Another difficulty is that there were many carvers that imitated the work of other more prominent carvers. To make it even more challenging, some carvers worked together on stones; one doing the lettering and another carving the designs.



1. Susanna Eddy  
Carved by **James Stancliff II**

6. Azubah Warner  
Carved by **Ebenezer Drake**

This is an example of how a carver could have more than one distinct style. Notice the difference between this stone and the other Drake stone earlier in the tour.



7. Mary Hooker  
Carved by **Thomas Johnson III**



8. Hannah Coules  
Carved by **George Griswold** (1633-1704)

George Griswold was one of the earliest carvers in Connecticut. His stones have a raised border that outlines to rectangular-shaped shoulders and rounded tympanum. There are about 30 Griswold stones in the Ancient Burying Ground. His stones have a smooth texture showing that they were probably quarried in Windsor. His lettering was deep and very legible. His capital Y's resembled lowercase y's. He also misspelled words like "neer" for "near" and "yeres" for "years". (see picture for plain style.)

9. Abigail Goodwine  
Carved by **Zerubbabel Collins** ?

This stone was likely carved by Zerubbabel Collins. However, it is possible that it was carved by the great imitator Aaron Haskins (1752-1795). Aaron Haskins' work was very common in the western part of Connecticut but rare in the eastern half of the state. Haskins mostly used granite when he carved. He imitated the Manning Family, Ebenezer Williams and Zerubbabel Collins.



15. Mary & Richard Edwards, Carved by **Thomas Johnson I**



16. Deacon Isaac Sheldon  
Carved by **Thomas Johnson II**



17. Hezekiah & Grove Collier  
Carved by **Gershom Bartlett** (1723-1798)

Gershom Bartlett was a native of Bolton, CT. It is believed that Bartlett was the first owner of the Bolton Notch Quarry. Here he sold much of his work and worked with other carvers such as the Bucklands and Loomis'. Bartlett worked mainly with schist stone.



Bartlett's trademarks include a hook-and-eye, bulbous noses, turned down mouths, a row of vestigial teeth, a four-lobed crown and three curved wings. He put pin-wheels or four leafed clovers in the corners of his stones and a small heart at the bottom center. Lastly, Bartlett's footstones had a pattern of diamonds or squares on them.

18. Capt. Hezekiah Collyer  
Carved by **Gershom Bartlett**

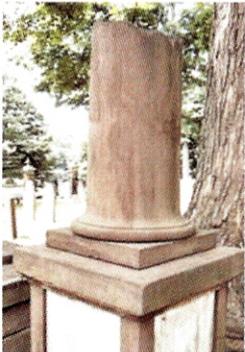
This is an example of a slightly different style, often referred to as "mushroom ears", used by Bartlett.





2. John Pantry II  
Carved by **Joseph Johnson**

3. Capt. John Talcott, Carved by **Ebenezer Drake** (1739-1803)  
Ebenezer Drake lived in South Windsor along with the rest of his stone carving family. The stones that his brothers made are often classified under his name. His stones are concentrated in the South Windsor area but can be found scattered throughout Connecticut. Some were even found in Colchester and Lyme. Drake stones often have a moon shaped face and a dimple on the chin as well as an elaborate border around the face and striated dirigible wings.



4. Jeremiah Wadsworth  
Carved by **Isaac Sweetland** (? - 1803)  
Isaac Sweetland was a diversified Hartford stonecutter. He dominated the marble market during the 1790s, although he also worked with brownstone. Sweetland's neoclassical forms reflected the young United States' identification with the grandeur and nobility of the ancient Greek and Roman republics, as well as a decline in the influence of religion in New England.



5. Aron Cook. Carved by **Glastonbury Lady Carver**  
This person's work dates from the 1720's to the 1740's. Dr. Ernest Caulfield named this unknown carver the Glastonbury Lady Carver because most of his work is found in Glastonbury. Many of these stones depict a lady's face, and even those done for men seem to have a feminine appearance. The distinctive characteristics of these stones are a simple, scarecrow face, a Victorian style collar, hair going to the sides of the face and starting at the top of the head, two shoulders on each side of the stone, wavy lines forming a border, and pot-bellied letter a's. This cutter produced about 100 stones in Connecticut, most of which can be found in Glastonbury and Lyme. Another good example of this carver's work is found in front of Aron Cook's stone. Martha Cook's stone is nearly embedded in the maple tree.

10. Thomas Hosmer  
Carved by **John Hartshorne** (1650-1737)



John Hartshorne moved to Franklin, Connecticut from Massachusetts around 1722. His work included a blank face with a pair of what may look to be rabbit ears and he often carved four

converging hearts in the shoulders of his stones. Hartshorne's carving techniques influenced the later granite carvers of Eastern Connecticut.

11. Lennard Skinner  
Carved by **Josiah Manning**



12. John Skinner  
Carved by **Joseph Tucker** (1735-1800)



Joseph Tucker was from Bolton, Connecticut. He was influenced greatly by the Manning style and set up his business in the quarry formerly used by Gershom Bartlett. This stone is a

good example of how carvers collaborated. Records indicate that Tucker was paid for two pairs of gravestones from John Skinner's estate. However, the lettering and the pinwheel design on the footstone indicate that Peter Buckland had a hand in making these stones (as well as the stone for Mary, wife of John Skinner, Junior).

13. Elizabeth Bacon  
Carved by **George Griswold**

14. Jonathan Bigelow  
Carved by **Peter Buckland** (1738-1816)

Peter Buckland carved in the East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Manchester area along with his brother William. Peter mostly used granite when he carved but occasionally also used sandstone. Ways to identify his work besides his occasionally signing the stone are the heart and pinwheel designs he used. He also used backwards N's and his faces have a bulky appearance.



19. Samuel Wentworth  
Carved by **Lamson family**



This stone was most likely carved by the famous stonecarving family from Charlestown, Massachusetts. There

are few slate stones in the Ancient Burying Ground. Lamson stones are characterized by the tapered shape of the skull, and by the fig or gourd design on the border panels and often on the footstones. The lettering and floral border designs show great skill and elegance.

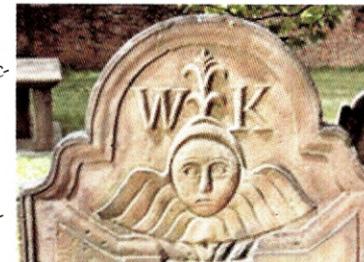
20. James Grimes  
Carved by **Daniel Ritter** (1746-1828)

Daniel Ritter (son of Thomas Ritter) carried on his father's stonecutting trade when he became older. The style of his cherubim had flared ears with Peter Buckland's styled border panels. These types of stones are found in the western and eastern part of Connecticut (Manchester Quarry) carved on both brick sandstone and granite schist.



21. William Knox  
Carved by **John Ely** (1735 - ?)

John Ely, a native of Springfield, Massachusetts, has many distinctive characteristics to his stones. One of them is the large red sandstone that he carves upon. The shape of the angel's head is oval or elliptical. He has almond shaped eyes and a linear headdress that is not a wig but rather a strange head ornament. Another unique characteristic is that the wings start at the bottom half of the face and curve strongly up and out. He also often put the initials of the deceased on the stone.



22. Roderick Lawrence,  
Carved by the **Mannings**

