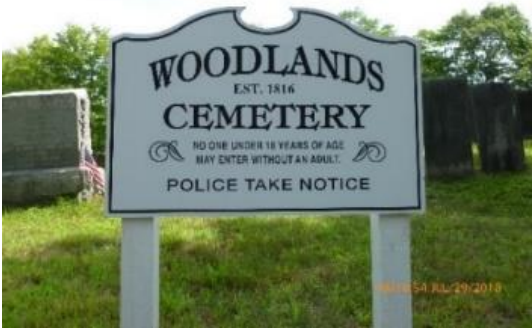


Woodlands Cemetery Update and History



These are challenging times for sure. We will all attempt to hold our worlds steady until this enormous coronavirus threat is tamed. At Woodlands we will do our very best to keep the maintenance and all aspects of Woodlands working for this coming season. In the meantime, the beautiful wildflowers all over our cemetery have bloomed. Our welcome sign and information box, containing the list of all graves with their GPS coordinates, have been hung. And it is a lovely, quiet, peaceful place for a walk if you are so inclined.

THE FOOTSTONES OF MAIN ROAD CEMETERY GRANVILLE, MA

This past fall, while reviewing the needs of the Main Road cemetery, Martin Johnson, of the restoration company, MCC, discovered that we had a very physically “unique” cemetery, right there on the main roadway through our town. And, in fact, he used the word “phenomenal” in regard to the number of footstones that exist at our Main Road Cemetery. This cemetery has footstones that, over the centuries, have not been moved from their place or cast aside by some commercial landscaping company just because they were in the way.

A footstone is a stone that is placed at the foot of the buried body and defines the grave. It is usually about 1/8th the size of the headstone and typically carries the initials or name of the person, often is the same shape as the headstone, and sometimes has lovely carvings that match the headstone. Typically, but not always, in this cemetery, the engravings on the headstone and footstone face away from the grave with the blank sides of the two stones defining the burial. Martin was surprised by how many footstones there were. He said he was shocked at the large number of them and in fact was tripping over them on occasion. With a quick scan of the cemetery, he thought that there were at least 30 to 40 of them.

Based on that information, we went there to check it out. We identified and have photos of footstones which define the graves of 153 people resulting in about 130 physical footstones. This means that of the 331 known graves in Main Road cemetery, about 50% of them have footstones. As with headstones, some footstones identify more than person. And there are more. There are 18 headstones so eroded that we can't identify the person...and there are at least that number of footstones that we can't identify. The dates for those that we can identify range from 1751 to 1881.



Nathaniel Gillett
1802 – age 55

. view from the
headstone and

. view from the
footstone



Cont'd -->

Woodlands Cemetery Update and History Cont'd

Woodlands and Northeast cemeteries have no footstones that we know of. Main Road has an astounding number of them and they are very historically significant. Here are several examples of the footstones in Main Rd Cemetery.



Capt. Ezra Marvin
1811 – age 67



Comfort Bancroft - 1773 - age 2
Statira Bancroft - 1776 - age 3 wks
Anne Bancroft - 1791 - age 2



It is important to note that MCC wanted us to know this for the benefit of the town and had no bearing on the proposal that he would be doing. Any repairs to footstones would be well down the list of repairs needed if ever we were to get that far in the restoration.

Be good everyone and stay safe.

From the members of the Woodlands Cemetery Association,
WoodlandsCem@comcast.net.

Credits: MCC (Monument Conservation Collaborative), and
ancestry.com.



Hannah Coe 1751 – age 3 wks