

## Fairview Cemetery

### Description

#### Introduction

Fairview Cemetery came into use in the early 18th century. The precise date of the first burial has not been determined but an early stone marking the grave of Abram Wright is reputed to bear the date 1702. During the Colonial Period, the appearance was that of a small cleared parcel of land occupied by slate markers with arched tops. Fairview retained this form until the late 19th century when, in imitation of Rural or Garden style cemeteries in many other Massachusetts communities, the local Commissioners of Public Cemeteries caused stone walls and gateways, plot plans and curving avenues to be created. This activity affirmed that Fairview would become the town's principal place of burial.

Given its status as the town's oldest, largest and most fashionable resting place, it attracted the leading industrialists, politicians, ministers as well as mill hands and farmers. The variety of personal backgrounds is matched by the variety of grave marker sizes and types. Large granite obelisks are found adjacent to diminutive marble tablets. Arched slate markers from knee height to six feet are present. A variety of other types is scattered throughout the cemetery.

Colonial and Federal Period slate markers, numbering in the hundreds, are well preserved and demonstrate typical artistic conventions and motifs such as death's heads, portal designs and urns under willow trees. Markers from these periods are divided geographically from later examples by the difference in circulation patterns. Slate markers are placed amid a grassy section that continues to bear evidence of short glacial mounds of earth such as existed prior to centuries of plowing and grading. No avenues exist between stones in this area. These occupy a central rectangular area, known as the Old Division, that abuts Main Street.

Victorian Period gravestones are mostly carved from granite, a locally quarried material. Standard forms such as tablets and chests exist along with unusual examples such as a millstone and a sphere. A single monumental bronze example has been identified. Plots from this period are frequently delineated with curbs and corner posts. Nearly a dozen gravestone carvers, some with several markers to their credit, have been identified.

In addition to occasionally ornate grave markers, some sections of Fairview have winding paths and avenues to provide access to plots. Ground in this area has been graded to reflect gradual changes in elevation. Mounds have been removed to accommodate circulation paths and organization of plots. These changes came in response to trends in cemetery design promoting the picturesque, part of which consisted of renaming the former East Burying Ground to Fairview Cemetery in 1904. The curvilinear portion, known as the East Division was added in 1876. Additional land was again added in 1924 (New Division) and in 1936 (Tadmuck Division). The cemetery continues in use today, but has run out of plots to sell.

#### Landscape

The 18th century appearance of the East Burying Ground was that of a grassy half-acre parcel of short rolling mounds occupied by arched slate gravestones. Located immediately south of Main Street and one mile east of the town center and meetinghouse, the burial ground was mowed and its volunteer growth of bushes trimmed as if it were a farm field. Nineteenth century structures include tombs in the center of the burial ground on two sides of a low earthen mound and two tombs built into the stone wall that lines Main Street. Ornamental trees planted on the grounds include maples, oaks, hemlocks and a variety of evergreen species. Nineteenth century efforts to improve the appearance of the burial ground by grading and constructing avenues among the stones encompassed land on three sides of the Colonial Period burials. A short embankment distinguishes between the rolling mounds of un-tilled earth around earlier burials and the more gradual changes in elevation that were the result of attempts to create a Garden style cemetery.

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## Walls

Stone walls separate the cemetery from Main Street and from Tadmuck Road. The most refined in materials and design is the segment from the corner of the two roads heading east to the main gateway. This is coursed granite ashlar construction three to four feet in height with flat capstone. From the main entrance to the eastern end of the Main Street side is a similar granite ashlar wall of older, uncoursed construction and a similar capstone. The entire wall is approximately 1000' long. The Tadmuck Road side of Fairview Cemetery is lined with approximately 500' of two to four foot high cobblestone wall with concrete cap. The rear or south boundary of the cemetery is lined with dry-laid fieldstone that may have been built as part of an adjacent farm field boundary.

## Gateways

The cemetery acquired some refinements in appearance with construction of stone gateways on both the Main Street and Tadmuck Road sides. Most prominent is the main gateway halfway along the Main Street side. Here, two coursed ashlar granite walls curve into the cemetery and toward each other in 90-degree arcs ending in square nine-foot high pillars with square capstones. Secondary pillars mark the departure of the curved sections from the main wall. The corner access at Main Street and Tadmuck Road has a similar arrangement of pillars without the curving wall segments. Both have stones in one pillar bearing the name "Fairview." The Tadmuck Road entrance is flanked by two round pillars built of cobblestone to a height of seven feet. The eastern end of the Main Street side has an unornamented secondary access through the ashlar granite wall for vehicles that is unornamented. A flight of three narrow steps is built into the Main Street wall near the mid-way point.

## Paths

Circulation among plots is guided in the eastern and western sections of the cemetery by a system of asphalt paths or avenues, ten feet in width. The more picturesque curvilinear avenues emanate from the secondary Main Street entrance. Diverging to the east and west, paths follow a winding course toward the south and meet near the rear of the parcel, encompassing the 19th century addition to the East Burying Ground. A central winding route nearly bisects these paths around the perimeter. The 1876 plan of this section of the cemetery grounds reflects among these avenues several narrower paths that may have once existed as dirt surfaced footpaths but are now planted in grass and of uncertain direction. The principal gateway on Main Street gives onto two straight parallel avenues heading directly to the rear of the cemetery with a transverse avenue gradually curving to the east and connecting to the more picturesque section of the circulation network. The central 18th century section of the cemetery has no paths between markers. Newer sections of the cemetery in the west and south also have asphalt avenues that are mostly straight except for a loop in the northwest corner, site of current burials. While not consistently apparent, a small number of curbs and low piers mark some edges and corners. The most ornate is close to the secondary entrance from Main Street and has a granite ball and curbstones marking the corner of two converging paths.

## Plot Delineation

Plots in Fairview are delineated in some cases with granite curbstones. These are alternatively flush with the ground or elevated up to a foot above grade. In some cases, such as the Abbot - Cameron plot, the front is lined with stones near grade level while granite slabs at the rear of the plot act as a three-foot high retaining wall, thereby leveling the plot on its sloping site. A single iron fence remains in existence at the Thomas and Edmund Symmes plot. Ornate pales with pointed ends are connected by filigree and low granite posts to enclose an area of approximately eight by ten feet. It is likely that there were at one time many more such plot defining fences but that they have been removed to ease the chore of mowing.

## Tombs

Three tombs exist in Fairview, two of which are incorporated into the Main Street wall. The Town Tomb, marked as such on the 1938 cemetery plan but not so on the actual structure, has a low pedimented slab of granite rising slightly above the level of the wall. Two stout vertical slabs of granite flank the central iron door. Adjacent to the Town Tomb on the east is the Solomon Richardson family tomb, marked with a slate tablet that names nine family

members interred from 1817 to 1902 and is set into the granite entry. The only tomb inside the boundaries of the cemetery contains five families: Heywood, Keyes, Proctor, Fletcher and Abbot. The low mound of earth at the south end of the 18th century section has tablets for two families on the east side and three on the north. Dates of these interments range from 1816 to 1926. Construction of doors is primarily granite with some inset slate tablets carved with names and dates. Modern granite tablets with names and dates have been added posthumously during the 20th century to the Abbot marker.

## **Buildings**

Two buildings exist in the southwest corner near Tadmuck Road. The former Hearse House, also called a tool house on the 1938 plan and now used as the superintendent's office, is a one-story, side-gabled frame building sheathed in wood clapboards. The plan is two by two bays. Architectural ornament includes gable returns, corner boards and molded trim at the eaves. Modern windows have been installed. The outline of a vehicle door exists on the west elevation, which backs up to the cobblestone wall along Tadmuck Road. The proximity of the door to the wall now prevents vehicles from entering and suggests either that the building was moved or the wall was built after the need for the door was obviated. A shed ell expands the rear of the plan. A modern gabled shed or storage building is oriented perpendicular and immediately adjacent to the former hearse house. Three overhead doors on the east elevation provide access to the interior of the shed.

An open, wood-framed octagonal building with octahedral roof, approximately ten feet across and 12 feet high, is described in town reports at the time of construction as the "Summer House." Turned posts with jigsaw brackets support the roof. A jigsaw baluster and benches on seven sides rim the floor. A pointed brass finial occupies the peak of the roof.

## **Markers**

Fairview Cemetery reflects trends in gravestone development in its variety of slate, sandstone and granite markers. Slate is the oldest surviving material used for marking burials and is carved in arched, shouldered-arched and flat-topped tablets. Ranging in height from one foot to over five feet, this type of marker can demonstrate a relatively crude, hand cut appearance, a well-designed and possibly machine cut sharpness and several levels of workmanship in between.

Quality of workmanship of the slate marker is sometimes obscured by the fact that the stone has deteriorated or been broken. Inscriptions also vary in quality and detail. The simplest have fine, narrow letters with little relief or depth. Some of this type are well organized and clearly laid out. Others are jumbled in the way words are divided among lines. Later slate stones from the 19th century are more likely to demonstrate clear, deep, stylized letters with a pronounced serif and well thought out organization relative to the shape of the stone.

Markers appear in a variety of shapes. Those from the earliest period are most commonly cut in a rectangular form with an arched top, representative of the figurative portal between life and death. The shape is also considered an abstraction of the human head and shoulders. This form of marking the passage from life is a Puritan concept brought from Boston and elsewhere during the region's period of first settlement. Eighteenth century stones are typically carved with one of a variety of motifs. The earliest marker in Fairview, thought to be that of Abram Wright from 1702, is unidentified. Other early stones have faces inscribed in portals, such as the 1783 slate marker of Ephraim Hildreth. Representative of the spirit of the deceased glancing back into the world of the living while simultaneously offering the living a preview of the afterlife, the portal is rich in Puritan symbolism and attitudes toward the transcendent nature of death. In addition to the portal are rows of diamond trim at the edges of the marker.

The symbol of winged death, in the form of either a skull or abstracted human head flanked by a pair of feathered wings spread wide, occurs frequently on stones carved in the late 18th century. This is another representation of the belief that the human spirit was released at the time of death for the flight heavenward. An example of this design motif is found on the double arched stone of brothers Ezekiel and Timothy Hildreth, who died in 1747 before they turned three years old, possibly because of small pox. They are remembered by a double-arched stone with floral

trim and a pair of death's heads flanked by wings and decorative circles. Circles figure prominently in the design of the slate marker for William Chandler who died in 1757 at the age of 67. Here, the winged skull is sited below the legend "memento mori", a reminder to the living observers of their impending deaths. At the peak of the arched stone and above all other design features, are three concentric circles that symbolize eternal life and resurrection. Deacon Paul Fletcher, who died in 1735 at the age of 57, is buried beneath a stone with a death's head, circles and flowers but without wings.

Based on classical influences exerted by the spreading glow of the Enlightenment, new images for gravestone ornamentation rapidly made the older themes seem outdated. Urn and willow designs appear frequently on gravestones from the Federal through the Victorian Period. Both slate and sandstone markers exhibit this late 18th and early 19th century motif that is an icon of sorrow and grief. A sculptural granite example also exists. Change from the puritan death's head to the classically inspired urn and willow marked a change in the way death was viewed by New England society. Previously, the event was considered a common reality whose dim portent reflected the stern view of life as a struggle for survival. The Post-Puritan view of death adopted a sentimental quality that spoke more of the emotional state of those left behind than of the journey of the deceased, causing the replacement of darkly spiritual carvings with abstract sorrowful imagery. The use of columns in gravestone design, frequently of the Doric order, is evidence of the pervasive influence of imagery popularized by publications and designs featuring drawings of classical architecture. Major Jonathan Minot's 1806 slate marker has an urn and willow design in its arched top with Doric columns flanking a central panel for the inscription.

A marker type with one example in Fairview is the tablestone used to mark the grave of the Reverend Willard Hall. Here, three vertical granite slabs support a horizontal slate slab inscribed with Reverend Hall's dates and commemoration of his service to the First Church of Christ in Westford. The grave is also marked by a cast iron Maltese cross placed by the Sons of the American Revolution. The British flag identifies the minister as a Tory.

Additional marker types in the form of obelisks, chests, and tablets with biblical and classical symbolism appeared during the Victorian Period. Obelisks are carved mainly from granite although several early sandstone examples are present. This type of marker was in frequent use from the mid 19th century forward and ranges from six to 15 feet tall. The most prominent example, marking the burial site of the family of John William Pitt Abbot, is carved of pink granite. Its polished facets are inscribed near the base with dates for Mr. Abbot, his wife and three children. This is the largest monument in Fairview. Numerous other obelisks are from the late 1800s and have capstones and smooth, polished granite faces.

Chest markers appear throughout the cemetery with dates from the mid 1800s to the present. These are larger than tablets and are most frequently cut from granite. The William E. Frost (1842-1904) chest marker is an unornamented rectangle with polished front and rear faces. Edges of the marker have a rough quarry-faced finish. The Albert P. Richardson (1843-1903) chest marker, however, has all faces polished smooth and is trimmed with a floral motif and ovolo molding at the top.

Tablets with biblical symbolism appear, usually in marble. A poignant example is that of Agnes Cameron who died eight days after her birth in 1865. She is remembered with a small white marker topped with a lamb, symbol of youth and innocence.

Some non-traditional marker types appear in Fairview. Along the northern boundary of the cemetery is the marker for the mill owner George Heywood (1829-1914) and his family. The inscription appears in the polished circular face of a granite millstone. The rear of the marker has grooves as in an actual grindstone and may have been taken from the Heywood mill located at the crossing of Depot Street over the former Stony Brook Railroad (now CSX). The Griffin family marker is unusually large and has the cemetery's only spherical ornament. Made of polished pink granite and resting on a stout pier and gray granite base, the sphere measures approximately three feet in diameter. The marker commemorates the lives of Joseph B. Griffin (1816-1896), his wives Deborah (1807-1848) and Eliza (1835-1912) and three other family members.

A single example of a zinc grave marker exists in Fairview and commemorates the Charles J. Searles (1836-1901) family. This unusual marker is the product of the Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, which operated from the 1870s until after WW I. The three-foot high imitation stone is made to resemble quarry-faced

granite in the form of a shortened obelisk. The top is ornamented by a rounded finial above a flared molding and hollow shaft. Below the shaft, the base flares in four-peaked fascia, the southerly of which bears the family names. This is the only known zinc monument in Fairview Cemetery but they are commonly found in cemeteries across the nation.

Military markers in Fairview are scattered throughout the cemetery. Charles Brooks is buried beneath a typical low arched marble tablet inscribed with the military unit with which he fought in the Spanish American War. Similar markers appear for veterans of the Civil and World Wars. Soldiers involved in actions prior to the Civil War are remembered by their ranks inscribed with their names, usually on slate markers. Many military markers are redundant, located adjacent to family stones that repeat dates for veterans.

## **Carvers**

The earliest known gravestone carver's name to appear is that of I. Hartwell who carved a marble marker for Horace Parker, MD in 1829. Later stones bear carvers' names and locations such as F. A. Brown of Derry, New Hampshire and A. Stone of Groton. B. Day, Charles Wheeler, T. Warren and D. Nichols, Gumb Bros. all had workshops in Lowell. Such evidence suggests this industrial center to the east was the primary community for buying items not available locally such as gravestones and other manufactured goods. The J. W. P. Abbot obelisk bears the inscription A. MacDonald Field & Co. Aberdeen.

## **Existing Conditions**

Fairview has evolved into a modified rectangle and is currently known by four Divisions. The Old Division West occupies the center of the plan and abuts Main Street at the north. The East Division is recognizable by its curvilinear path network drawn in the 1870s by Edward Symmes. The New Division comprises a narrow rectangle at the south and was added in 1924. The Tadmuck Division, added in 1936 and landscaped between 1938 and 1953, occupies the west end of the overall plan. While records do not indicate as much, it is possible that, since few remain, footstones were removed as part of past efforts to tidy the grounds. Repairs have been carried out in the cemetery on a regular basis since the 19th century, resulting in visible repairs to some slate stones. Since the material is particularly susceptible to cracking and toppling, several different methods have been used to stabilize markers. There are some which have been re-set in concrete footings poured at ground level. Others have been re-attached at severed points with metal braces and bolts or cemented or glued across fractures. Most stones remain in good to excellent condition, although some slate markers are difficult to read due to erosion. The Cameron family marker appears originally to have had a finial which is now missing. While very little other vandalism has taken place, damage has been sustained in many cases due to scraping by lawn-mowing equipment. However, the large number of remaining 18th and 19th century markers make it possible to get a clear sense of historical burial and gravestone carving techniques in Westford.

## **Statement of Significance**

### **Introduction, 1700-1830**

Originally called the East Burying Ground (also called Snow's after the former groundskeeper and neighbor Levi Snow), Westford's first place of burial came into use before the founding of the town in 1729. While still considered Chelmsford's West Precinct, Abram Wright was interred here in 1702. This is the earliest recorded burial although there were likely previous occupants. The record for Mr. Wright appears in the 1883 town history written by Edwin Hodgman who claims to have examined all existing markers. This occurred at a time when far more of the inscriptions were legible than is the case today due to erosion and other types of damage. Mr. Hodgman's usually exacting efforts to reveal town or precinct records for establishment of the burial ground were fruitless. The 1702 stone is unidentified.

Bounds of the burial ground were found in 1753 by a committee chosen for the purpose at town meeting. It appears that even at that time, much of the origins were unclear. After agreeing upon property lines in relation to surrounding farmland, the committee lost little time in erecting a gate and horse mounting block, neither of which

are evident today. Adjacent landowners Thomas Cummings and Josiah Brooks donated to the town in 1768 parcels for expanding the grounds by 18 rods to the south and an additional 30 rods in an undetermined direction.

Occupants of the East Burying Ground from the period include the town's first mill owner, William Chandler (d. 1756, 67 years of age) who operated a fulling mill on Stony Brook near the current Brookside Road, Deacon Paul Fletcher who was chosen as such on January 5, 1733 and who died just two years later at the age of 57, Joseph Underwood (1681-1761) who was responsible for the sale to the town in 1748 of the parcel of land that became the Common, Deacon John Abbot (1713-1791) who was a selectman, school teacher, town clerk and progenitor of a leading family of industrialists, Reverend Willard Hall (d. 1779) who was the Tory minister of the First Parish Church from 1729-1775.

Revolutionary War veterans who fought in the Battle of Concord in April 1775 and were recognized by the Sons of the American Revolution with iron cross markers in 1902 include First Lieutenant Zaccheus Wright (later Captain at the Battle of White Plains, NY), Sergeant William Hildreth, Corporal Hosea Hildreth and Sergeant Major Jonathan Parker who also fought at Bunker Hill.

Less well-known residents tell of other aspects of the town's history. Ezekiel and Timothy Hildreth share a double arched slate marker. Children of Abigail and Joseph Hildreth aged under three years, they both died in January 1747. This and other examples in Fairview of the loss of multiple children remind modern visitors of the hardships of Colonial life. Approximately 300 Colonial Period slate markers occupy the central part of the cemetery. The North and West Burying Grounds (now called Hillside and Westlawn) were in use by this time. These are smaller than Fairview and occupy sites farther from Westford Center.

## **1830-1897**

The transformation from burial ground to the local version of a Rural style cemetery began nearly ten years after the founding in 1831 of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Nationally influential for its landscape designed by horticulturists and landscape architects and its governing body's intention to beautify the final resting place, Mount Auburn served as a model to cemetery commissions across the country. Over a period of nearly 40 years, Westford's cemetery commissioners would gradually create a simple version of a Rural cemetery by building walls, grading circulation paths and planting trees and shrubs.

The 1840 town report indicates the stone cutter and Westford resident Nathan S. Hamblin was paid \$90 for building a wall and setting stone posts. In the same year, B. F. Keyes was paid for building and painting a fence. No evidence remains of a fence from the period but some portion of the stone wall lining Main Street from the main gateway to the northeastern corner is likely the work of Mr. Hamblin. Levi Snow was paid in 1858 for laying 24 ½ rods of wall (392 feet) which may have been the un-coursed granite section at the east end of the Main Street side. Asia Nutting was paid \$101.50 for unspecified stone work in 1868. In 1880 the selectmen reported in favor of building a faced stone wall and began advertising for construction proposals, finally selecting that of George Yapp who lived three miles away on Concord Road near Hildreth Street. By 1883, Mr. Yapp had built the western 580' feet of wall along Main Street using material quarried in Graniteville, thus completing the 1000' of granite wall now extant. No mention is made at this time of the granite gateways but they were likely built at this time.

A new hearse house was built in 1870 by George Drew. This is likely the existing Superintendent's Office at the southwest corner of the cemetery. Given the expansion of the grounds, the former hearse house has probably been moved so as to remain in a remote corner as the cemetery expanded. Town reports note that Mr. Hamblin was paid in 1871 for constructing the Town Tomb built into the Main Street wall. The first mention of the tomb appears in cemetery records on February 12, 1871. Prior to its construction, people who died during months when digging was impossible were temporarily interred in private tombs of other townspeople.

Cemetery commissioners acquired appropriations for another method of improving the appearance which involved re-setting older gravestones, presumably to put upright those that were leaning or had fallen. Colonial Period stones are now arranged in neat rows, oriented north to south, with most family members close together. The current absence of footstones may have come about as a result of this effort to tidy the grounds. Commissioners not only

improved the burial ground's appearance in these years but bought 38 rods of land from Joseph Henry Read in 1874 in order to expand the space available for burials.

The purchase of additional space and the community will to improve the burial ground led to a survey of the land in 1876. Locally prominent civil engineer Edward Symmes, a Fairview occupant who lived from 1806-1888, was retained to create a plan in a style fitting a Garden cemetery. Mr. Symmes also created the 1855 map of Westford. The result of the 1876 survey is the existing network of curvilinear paths and individual plots in the East Division. Water features were an integral part of Garden style cemetery planning for their ability to encourage reflection and to impart a sense of calm. Mr. Symmes appears to have intended a fountain to be built in a circular plot near the center of the cemetery, which, by the time of the 1938 cemetery plan, had been precluded by the plot's use for a burial.

An important aspect of the process of transforming the East Burying Ground into the local version of a Garden style cemetery was that of deciding upon a new name. There were "many ladies" who, at the invitation of the cemetery commissioners, signed a petition in 1896 suggesting the name Fairview. The petition was immediately granted.

In addition to the creation of picturesque paths and avenues, cemetery commissioners created in 1894 a procedure for residents to reserve lots and either to pay the town one or two dollars annually for maintaining them or to establish a perpetual care fund in the amount of \$50 to \$100, the interest of which would pay for labor to trim shrubs and mow grass. Interest in establishing such funds was intense for the subsequent five years as can be seen in the legend "Perpetual Care" carved on many markers from the period.

A campaign of tree planting was begun in 1895 which continued for many years. Maples, red cedar, spruce and hardy shrubs were set out. Ornamental plantings continue to be an integral part of the designed landscape although few examples have survived from the late 19th century. The final addition to the cemetery during the period of refinement was the octagonal Summer House. The open-walled building was designed and built in 1896 by local carpenter William Edwards who was responsible for many other Westford buildings such as the 1870 Town Hall and the 1895 J. V. Fletcher Library.

Westford Residents interred at Fairview during the 19th century include the full range of economic, educational and social backgrounds. Indeed, nearly all burials taking place in the town by the end of the period occurred in Fairview due largely to its improved landscape. John William Pitt Abbot, Esq. (1806-1872) is buried with his family on a plot distinguished by the tallest marker in the cemetery. Mr. Abbot's prominence in the community stemmed from his practice of law, title of president of the Stony Brook Railroad, involvement in the family industry of woolen manufacture in Graniteville and Forge Village, service to the town as selectman, town clerk and Westford Academy Trustee, service to the church as clerk for 40 years, and to the commonwealth as representative and senator. George R. Moore (1817-1892) is another mill owner buried in Fairview. He owned a number of companies in Chelmsford and the woolen yarn mill in the village of Brookside in Westford. Another resident of Fairview is Luther Wilkins, a farmer who lived with his wife and four children on the edge of the village of Westford Center. Mr. Wilkins' son Luther E. Wilkins served in the Union Army in the Civil War. Other residents from the period include the town physician Dr. Benjamin Osgood who died in 1863 and Ira Leland (b. 1798), a butcher and farmer from Westford Center.

The cemetery had only a few groundskeepers during this period. From 1835 until his death in 1869 it was the farmer Levi Snow, who lived across the street and for whom the burial ground was occasionally called prior to its being renamed Fairview. His son George Snow performed the duty for two years until Samuel M. Hutchins took responsibility in 1871 and kept it until 1893. Mr. Hutchins occupied the house across Main Street from the cemetery after Levi Snow. Albert P. Richardson was the town's Cemetery Superintendent and maintained Fairview into the 20th century until the time of his death in 1902.

## **1897-1950**

Two parcels of adjacent land were added during the early 20th century to the cemetery's southern boundary. The first was in 1924 and is now called the New Division. In this narrow rectangle, circulation paths adhere more closely to a grid pattern. Another parcel was added in 1936 to the western boundary abutting Tadmuck Road. A

plan of the parcel from that year shows it outlined with dry-laid fieldstone walls such as a farmer might build to clear the land. Town reports from the years of the Great Depression contain sections that describe work done by members of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.). The W.P.A. report for 1938 discusses stone wall construction that was planned to enclose two sides of the cemetery, suggesting the existing cobblestone wall was W.P.A. work performed at that time.

Family members and friends of those interred established numerous trust funds to pay for maintaining plots. Markers are carved with the legend "Perpetual Care" as a way to notify groundskeepers of which plots get constant attention. The words may also have been a notice to passersby that the occupant enjoyed a certain level of status among cemetery residents. Costs for reserving burial plots during this period was two to five dollars. Perpetual care required the establishment of a trust fund, usually around \$100. It appears from names printed on gravestones that, while a handful of people with apparently Irish surnames were buried in the 19th century, there were very few non-English occupants of Fairview until after the addition of the New Division in 1924.

Markers were placed in 1902 at the graves of Revolutionary War veterans by the patriotic and historical organization Sons of the American Revolution. Westford veterans who had been at the Battle of Concord received the S.A.R. emblem, an iron Maltese cross with an image of Daniel Chester French's sculpture entitled *The Minute Man*. A Soldiers' Lot, established in 1906, was reserved for veterans of the Civil War. In 1909, the town received from the United States Government six stones for marking graves of Civil War veterans. These are marble with low arched tops.

A small section exists on the 1938 plan of the cemetery labeled "Strangers' Row". The 1876 version of the plot plan of Fairview makes no mention of this parcel and was probably reserved for the indigent or for those simply with no family nearby. The plot is approximately 15' by 30' and has no markers however a total of 14 people were buried in the plot from 1907-1939. Sadly three of these are listed in cemetery records as "Unknown".

Residents of Westford from the period who had an impact on town history and who occupy Fairview Cemetery include an array of industrialists, town officials, farmers and politicians. As in all other periods, members of the Abbot family of woolen mill owners were interred here. Several generations of this family were responsible for building the mills and much of the neighborhood of Graniteville and Forge Village with their side streets of worker housing. Adjacent to the J. W. P. Abbot family marker is that of Allan Cameron (1822-1900), a Scottish immigrant who worked first as a machinist and later operated a woolen yarn manufacturing concern. Mr. Cameron is the namesake of a former public grade school in Forge Village and was a family friend and business associate of the Abbots. George Heywood (1829-1914) was also an industrialist but on a smaller scale. He operated a grist mill at the Depot Street crossing of Stony Brook in the second half of the 19th century. Mr. Cameron and Mr. Heywood were commissioners of public burial grounds from 1892 to 1897. Frank Furbush (1861-1940) owned a gas station and auto repair shop in the village of Graniteville in 1921. In addition to his work on cars, Mr. Furbush acted as a manager at the woolen machinery manufacturing firm C. G. Sargent and Sons in Graniteville.

William E. Frost (1842-1904) was a very active public servant and is interred in Fairview. Mr. Frost worked as preceptor of Westford Academy from 1872 to 1904, and was namesake of the William E. Frost School on Main Street. He was educated at Bowdoin College and is said to have brought modern educational practices to Westford Academy. He was involved in the management of the J. V. Fletcher Library, and was a commissioner of public burial grounds from 1892 to 1897. Albert P. Richardson (d. 1902) was cemetery commissioner and caretaker of Fairview Cemetery. Farmers occupy many plots in Fairview. Oren Coolidge (1800-1872) who lived at 17 Forge Village Road for many years is interred here. Wayland Balch (1839-1937), the latest living Civil War Veteran from Westford, occupied farm houses at 24 Boston Road and 246 Concord Road during the late 19th century. He found his final resting place in Fairview.

Politicians of some note are interred here. Herbert Ellery Fletcher (1862-1956) occupies, with his wife Christina (1846-1912) and her family a granite above-ground tomb probably built with material taken from Mr. Fletcher's quarry. In addition to operating the town's largest granite quarry and a successful construction concern, Mr. Fletcher served in the state senate from 1901-1903, performed duties as delegate to the 1916 Republican National convention, and served in the Massachusetts General Court. He was a graduate of Westford Academy. Joseph Henry Read, (d. 1901) also a politician, served in local and state government and was a native of the town. He



graduated from Westford Academy in 1855 and went on to become selectman, school committee member, county commissioner and a representative to the Massachusetts State Legislature.

Nettie Stevens (1861-1912) is distinguished among those at Fairview by virtue of her outstanding accomplishments in the field of biology. After studying at Westfield Normal School and completing the course of study in half the usual time, Ms. Stevens took a job teaching at Westford Academy from 1885 - 1892. She then attended Stanford University, graduating with a M.A. in 1900, and Bryn Mawr, teaching and earning a Ph.D. in 1903. The daughter of a local carpenter and graduate of Westford Academy, she died prematurely at Johns Hopkins University Hospital due to a fall in 1912.

Lieut. William Metcalf (1819-1900), who is interred in Fairview, was a Civil War Veteran and native of England. Mr. Metcalf worked as a mechanic, served in the 16th Massachusetts Infantry and lived near the corner of Boston and Littleton Roads. He was remembered after his death in 1900 by his son who commissioned the Metcalf Civil War Memorial, a bronze statue in Westford Center dedicated in 1910 to all Civil War veterans from the town.

Non-Anglo names appear in increasing numbers during this period. While many Irish, English, Russian and Polish immigrants worked in factories in the town starting in the 1850s, Fairview seems to have been favored by members of long-established Westford families. Those with surnames not of English extraction, such as O'Brien and Walkovich begin to appear in the parcel of land added to the cemetery in 1924.

## **Conclusion**

The history and development of the East Burying Ground, renamed Fairview Cemetery in 1896, follow a path similar to many other cemeteries in New England. As in other communities, Fairview began during the 18th century as a cleared but otherwise unimproved parcel dedicated to burial of town residents. Major changes occurred as a result of 19th century trends in landscape design. These trends combined with the spirit of community involvement as seen in the numerous fraternal and social organizations of the time as well as the desire among rural residents to imitate more stylish urban examples of houses, dress, cemeteries and other aspects of life, combined to guide the will of Westford residents to create Fairview Cemetery.

## **Geographical Data**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

Fairview Cemetery comprises all of the land within the boundaries of the cemetery. It is bounded by Main Street on the north and by properties on Fairview Drive on the south and east. Tadmuck Road forms the western boundary. The cemetery encompasses 10.45 acres, described by the assessor's office as parcel 170 on map 27.

### **Boundary Justification**

Boundaries of the cemetery were determined by the Westford Historical Commission and by the consultant. Boundaries include all gravestones, burial-related buildings, structures, circulation paths and ornamental plantings. Stone walls encircle the cemetery and mark all boundaries.



SKETCH MAP

NORTH TOWARD TOP

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