

## Abner Stowell 1821



The sandstone gravestone of Abner Stowell, who died when he was 35, was erected by his Masonic Lodge and is covered with the symbols of masonry. There are two columns representing the two pillars of Kings Solomon's temple; the arch of heaven and of Royal Arch Masonry; the Bible and the square and compass of reason and faith; the keystone containing the letters H T W S S T K S in a circle, an acronym for Hiram The Widow's Son Sent To King Solomon, part of the mythology central to a Masonic degree; the eye of God; the three lesser lights of the lodge--the son, moon and worshipful Master of the Lodge; and the seven stars--the number needed to make a perfect lodge. There is also a ladder, probably representing advancement in Masonic knowledge and the three steps of life; an ark, a winged hourglass, a "Y", a flaming lamp and an anchor. The Stowell stone is signed by the carver, David Kinnear, who advertised in 1818 that he was nearly finished at the Province Building. He carved the coat-of-arms in the pediment over the main entrance of that building.

## Benjamin James 1797



Early in the morning of November 23, 1797, with signs of a storm to come, the British frigate *La Tribune* became stranded upon Thrumcap Shoal. Among the many volunteers who manned boats that reached the ship to help was Lieutenant James of the Royal Nova Scotia Regiment. Although there was ample time for people to be removed, the Captain refused to permit any of the crew or passengers to leave the ship because a brother officer had been punished previously for allowing the persons on board his ship to save themselves. So when the *La Tribune* sank suddenly, 240 people were drowned, Lieut. James among them. His memorial in the Old Burying Ground is a formal flat tombstone, paid for by his Commanding Officer, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, who went on to father Queen Victoria.

## Lawson Children 1772-84



The sad stone in memory of six of John and Sarah Lawson's children shows two angels who are both trumpeting and writing at the same time. Above them are two intertwined palm fronds and below them a four-pointed crown made of three rings. The angels perhaps represent a composite of the recording angel and the angel sounding the trumpet of resurrection. This stone was probably carved in New England. John Lawson was born in Boston, the son of a New England merchant who came to Halifax in the first year of settlement. William Lawson, one son of John and Sarah who survived the childhood diseases that killed his siblings, went on to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Halifax County for thirty years and was the first President of the Bank of Nova Scotia.

## James/George Fillis 1759



James and George Fillis, two infant sons of John and Sarah Fillis, died within a day of each other, presumably of one of the innumerable life-threatening childhood diseases of that time. John Fillis, a native of Boston who came to Halifax about 1751-52, was a merchant, shopowner and distiller. In 1774 he got into trouble with the Executive Council because he openly sympathized with the organizers of the "Boston Tea Party". Later the Assembly passed a resolution clearing his character. The gravestone for his two sons is a typical Boston-style slate "death-head" design, with benign winged skulls and a scrolled border. The stone itself is very small, indicating the grave of children.

## Timothy Ryan 1777



The slate stone for Timothy Ryan and his daughter Margaret Mahaney was undoubtedly carved in Halifax, perhaps by the carver James Hay who had arrived from Scotland in 1775. The symbols of the cross and the "I.H.S." show that the Ryans were Catholic. The Old Burying Ground was the common graveyard, used by all denominations in common from 1749 to 1793.

# Twelve neat things to look for in Halifax's "Old Burying Ground"

Have you ever really looked at tombstones? You might be surprised at just how rewarding it can be. You can, for example, learn a great deal about early Halifax by taking a careful look at the images, symbols and inscriptions carved on the stones in the Old Burying Ground.

This graveyard was actively used by Haligonians for almost the first hundred years of the community's life. English colonists settled Halifax in 1749 and immediately set aside an area of land just south of the new town as a common graveyard. The last burial took place in 1844.

But in 1860 the Welsford-Parker monument was erected in memory of two Haligonians who fought in British regiments in the Crimean War. So what had by then become known as "St. Paul's Cemetery" was spruced up and given a bit of a new lease on life.

Every community and town in Nova Scotia has an old graveyard full of historical artifacts. Although rarely as old as the Old Burying Ground, most contain interesting and eloquent evidence of people who lived there in a different time. Go and see for yourself.

## Robert Ross 1814

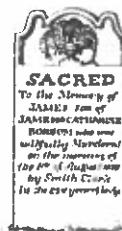


Major-General Robert Ross, a blue-eyed Irishman, had a very distinguished career in the Napoleonic Wars. The Duke of Wellington then placed him in command of the British troops who were sent to America in 1814 after Napoleon's defeat to relieve the military pressure on Canada in the War of 1812. The troops under Ross were met by the American Army at Bladensburg, about five miles north of Washington. Ross used Congreve rockets, which the American troops had never seen before. The British won the battle and General Ross marched into Washington where his troops set fire to a number of public buildings, including the president's mansion. This pale limestone

building was so badly stained by the smoke that it had to be painted white.

The following month the British attempted to land at Baltimore, but they were defeated. Pierre Burton, in *Flames Across the Border* describes how the young lawyer, Francis Scott Key, after watching Ross' rockets' red glare was moved to compose "a national anthem for his country to celebrate the sight of the Stars and Stripes flying bravely in the dawn's early light to signal British defeat." General Ross was killed. His body was brought back to Halifax where it was buried in the Old Burying Ground with full military honours. His grave is marked with a very formal, high, flat tombstone. Major-General Ross inadvertently gave Americans a name for the White House, and inspired their national anthem.

**James Bossom 1839**



This sandstone gravestone, leaning on a precarious angle under a large Chestnut tree in the Old Burying ground is inscribed: "Sacred/to the memory of JAMES/son of JAMES and CATHERINE/BOSSOM who was willfully Murdered on the 8th of August 1839/by SMITH D. CLARKE in the 23rd year of his Age." Apparently Bossom was a bit of a bully who constantly harassed and insulted Clarke, a shopowner. At 6:25 on the morning of August 8, Bossom, who was walking past the open door of Clarke's shop, shouted for him to come out and fight. Clarke came to the door with two pistols and, after some yelling, shot at him. The bullet entered above the right eye and Bossom fell. At the trial, Clarke was found guilty of first degree murder and sentenced to death. His lawyer appealed for Royal clemency from Queen Victoria, which was granted, and in July 1840 Clarke was deported to an unknown destination.

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**John Clewley 1783**



According to his well-carved, high relief gravestone, John Clewley was "a Master Carpenter in His Majesty's Service for 48 years" and died in Halifax at age 75. The stone shows a crowned skull, cross bones, and an hourglass on its side to show that time has stopped (for him), all surmounted by a winged angel head. This stone was carved in sandstone by James Hay. It cost 34 pounds.

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**Winckworth Tonge 1792**



Winckworth Tonge, born in County Wexford, Ireland, had an active military career. He served in the garrison at Louisbourg from 1746 to 1749 when his regiment was sent to assist in the establishment of Halifax. He was at the capture of Fort Beausejour, the siege of Louisbourg, and with Wolfe at Quebec in 1759. Tonge amassed considerable land holdings in Nova Scotia but, partly because he suffered heavy losses

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to American privateers during the Revolution, he had to sell most of his property, including Winckworth, his estate in Hants County. He became naval officer for the colony in 1773, responsible for the regulation of shipping. Following his death in 1792, an elaborately carved tombstone was erected in the Old Burying Ground. This sandstone memorial was probably carved by the prolific Halifax carver, James Hay.

**Margaret Newton 1769**



Margaret Newton, as it says on her gravestone, was a daughter of Benjamin Green. The Greens were a prominent commercial family in Massachusetts. Benjamin Green had been at the capture of Louisbourg in 1745 and was an important official in Halifax from its founding. John Newton was the Surveyor of Customs at Halifax. Margaret's beautiful slate gravestone in the Old Burying Ground is attributed to the shop of the Boston carver, William Codner. Codner himself died a couple of months before Margaret Newton, but there would have been pre-cut stones awaiting lettering, and Codner's sons kept the business going for a time. As many women who died before they were 45 at that time, Margaret probably died in childbirth.

**Mary/Freke Bulkeley 1775/96**

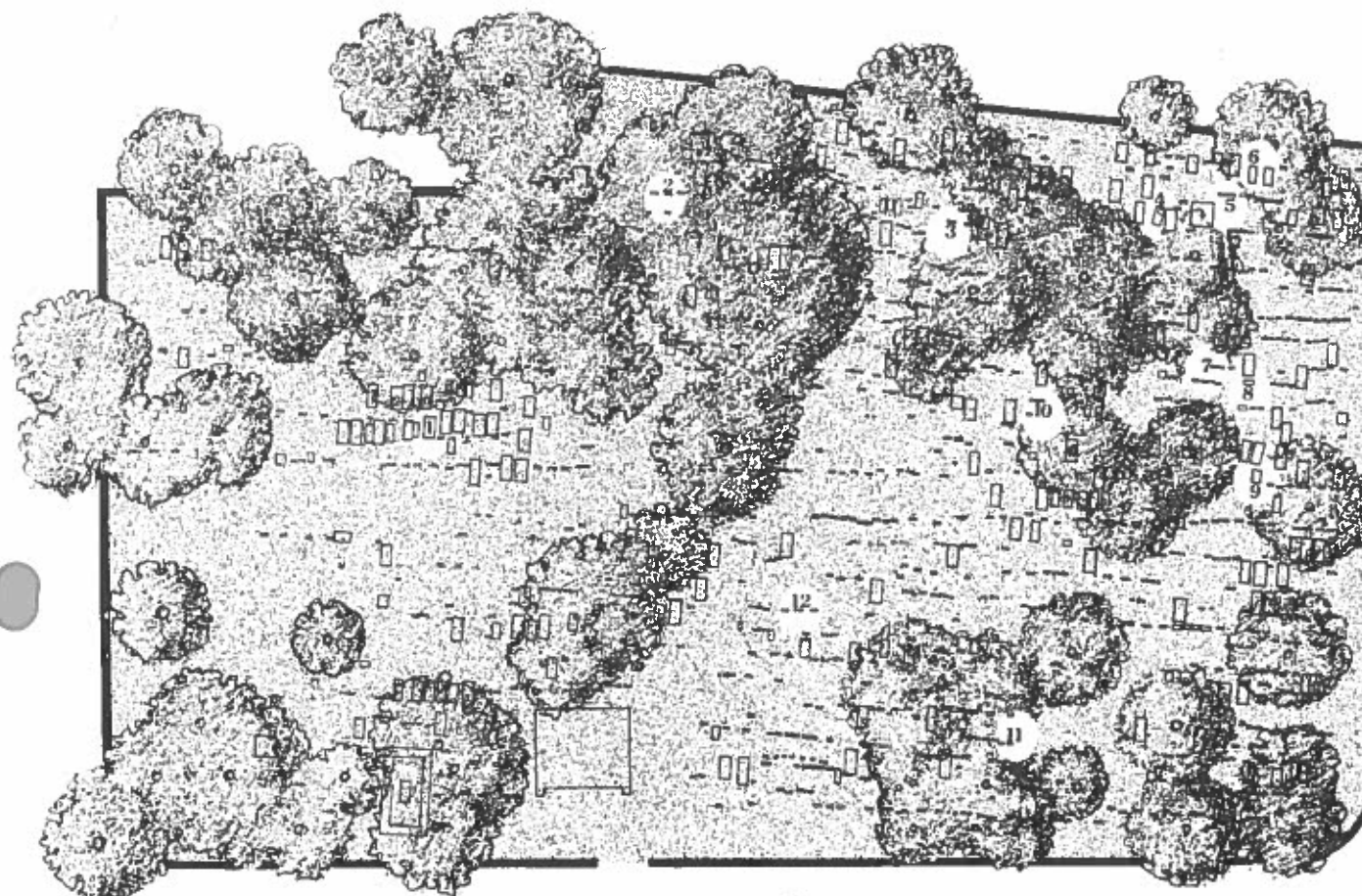


Richard Bulkeley, second son of Sir Lawrence Bulkeley and Elizabeth Freke, came to Nova Scotia in 1749 as aide-de-camp to the newly appointed governor, Edward Cornwallis. He married Mary Rous in Halifax the following year and they had four sons before she died in 1775. Bulkeley held numerous public offices, including that of Provincial Secretary, which he filled from 1758 until 1792 when he was succeeded by his son, Freke Bulkeley. When Freke died in 1796, he was buried with his mother, and one of the most elaborate tombstones in Canada was erected over their grave. Carved of local slate in high relief, probably by the Scottish stone carver James Hay in Halifax, this table tomb has two

**Map of the "Old Burying Ground"**

**Key**

1 Ross	5 Newton	9 James
2 Bossom	6 Bulkeley	10 Lawson
3 Clewley	7 Connor	11 Fillis
4 Tonge	8 Stowell	12 Ryan



Barrington St.

Spring Garden Rd.

allegorical end panels. The top shows the three boars' heads of the Bulkeley family crest. The eastern end shows a folksy carving of Adam and Eve, while the western end depicts a prone skeleton rising up to gain flesh and a crown when a winged angel blows his horn. The biblical source for this is I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This style of carving, although fairly common in parts of Scotland, is very rare in North America. Richard Bulkeley is buried in the Crypt of St. Paul's Church.

**John Connor 1754**



John Connor and his wife and children came with the first settlers to Halifax in 1749. At some time before that he had lost a leg. In 1752 he was

given a charter for three years to run a ferry between Halifax and Dartmouth, but by December of the same year he requested permission to abandon the service. His gravestone, dated December 16, 1754, is the oldest surviving stone in the Old Burying Ground. This slate stone, with its unusual skull profile, was undoubtedly carved in the Massachusetts Bay area.