

Central Cemetery

South Main Street

Form No.	805
Town	Sherborn
Address	South Main Street
Name	Central Cemetery
Ownership, 1981	Public
Approximate number stones	50 stones, remnants of many more
Earliest death date	Grace Bullen - 1686
Latest death date	Capt. Samuel Sanger - 1822
Condition	This venerable burial ground is in generally good condition. Many of its stones are so badly weathered that their inscriptions are undecipherable.
Recorded	June-July 1981

ASSESSMENT OF ART WORK

The Central Cemetery contains approximately 50 stones. The principal material for its markers is slate. Virtually every gravestone motif popular between the 1680's and the 1820's is located within its relatively small rectangular lot. Motifs ranged from late 17th century winged skulls to winged human faces popular in the 18th century to the early 19th century willow and urn. Several of its 17th and 18th century stones have delicately carved vertical borders depicting intertwined leaves and flowers. This cemetery's newest stone, marking the grave of Capt. and Mrs. Samuel Sanger (1828), is particularly noteworthy as it features a highly architectural design. Incised in fine thin lines on its surface is a triumphal arch flanked by Doric columns and topped by a willow and urn. Every brick in the arch is clearly depicted.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Central Cemetery is the second oldest burial ground in Sherborn and was originally part of the church common. For many years it was sometimes called Sanger Burying Ground.

The town's first three ministers were buried in this lot before being moved to the Sanger Family plot on Pine Hill in 1857. In 1883 C. H. Dowse, chairman of the Cemetery Committee for Sherborn, copied the inscriptions on the remaining headstones to be sent to the New England Genealogical Society.

Shielding Central Cemetery from automobile traffic on South Main Street is Cyrus Dallin's Memory Statue. A memorial to Sherborn's citizens who died in wars between 1686 and World War II, this statue and its architectural setting were erected in 1918.

Note: The oldest stone dates to 1686 It bears the inscription "The first grain sown in this granary". Originally, the ground was much larger stretching southward. During the early 19th century Capt. Samuel Sanger maintained this burial ground and took it for a family cemetery. It was surrounded on three sides by Sanger land.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn. 1974
- Francis Bardwell - Historical Sketches, Sherborn Tercentenary, 1652-1952