

South Cemetery

South Main Street

Form No.	807
Town	Sherborn
Address	South Main Street
Name	South Cemetery
Ownership, 1981	Public
Approximate number stones	36 and fragments of other stones
Earliest death date	1727
Latest death date	1788
Condition	Although Sherborn's burial grounds are generally well maintained, South Cemetery is overgrown with weeds. Many of its stones are badly weathered or lie in pieces on the ground.
Recorded	June-July 1981

ASSESSMENT OF ART WORK

With the exception of a marble marker and a granite marker, most of the South Cemetery's gravestones are composed of slate. Most of the stones display winged skulls. The Joseph Ware Stone (1754) is a particularly good example of the transition from winged skull to winged human face. Facing the walled entrance is the memorial boulder erected in 1915 by the Sherborn Historical Society in honor of the town's first settlers. Inscribed on its inset bronze plaque is "The Most Ancient Burying Ground, on the West Bank of the Charles River, Established by the Settlement of Boggestow Farms before 1660. Here rest from their labors The Founders of Sherborn, Holliston, Medway. Erected by the Historical Societies of the Three Towns, 1915"

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Sherborn's first settlers are buried in the South Cemetery. It is the oldest burial ground west of the Charles River. Hopstill Leland was the first person buried here in 1655 (his gravestone is no longer extant). Here, also, lie those who died in the epidemic known as the "Memorable Mortality" in Sherborn, the "Great Sickness" in Holliston, and later spoken of as the "Holliston Plague." This epidemic occurred in the 1750's

By 1830 William Biglow noted in his History of Sherburne that the South Cemetery "lies unfenced in a pasture, is over-run with Whortleberry, fern, and other bushes, and many of its gravestones are prostrated and exposed to the trampling of horses and cattle." In 1915 the Sherborn Historical Society undertook its restoration.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES

- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn, 1974
- William Biglow - History of Sherborn, 1830
- Francis Bardwell - Historical Sketches, Sherborn Tercentenary 1652-1952