



POINT OF GRAVES

THIS BURIAL GROUND HAS some of the finest Colonial Era gravestones in northern New England. Portsmouth residents patronized Massachusetts gravestone carvers until the early 1800s. Among the artists whose work can be found here are Bostonians William Mumford, a Quaker; Nathaniel Emmes; John Homer; and the carver known only by his initials JN (possibly the silversmith John Noyes). Other carvers include brothers Caleb and Nathaniel Lamson and possibly their father and mentor, Joseph, of Charlestown; James Foster of Dorchester; and John Hartshorne and Joseph Mullicken of Haverhill.



WILLIAM BUTTON
d. 1693

One of the wealthiest men in New Hampshire, Button drowned after falling overboard from his ship the *Lyon* in Portsmouth harbor. This elaborate stone was crafted by the carver known only as JN.



ALICE AYERS
d. 1718

James Foster carved this striking stone for the wife of a blacksmith. The light-bulb shape of the skull and the use of the winged hourglass are both Foster trademarks.



ELISHA BRIARD
d. 1718

Briard made blocks for ships' rigging and also made coffins. His unusual stone was carved by John Hartshorne, whose style was a radical departure from that of Puritan-influenced Boston. This work represents the start of the Merrimac Valley style of carving. The unusual design motifs on this stone are hallmarks of this early American folk artist.



JOSEPH SMALL
d. 1720

Little is known about Small. The stone is an early work of Caleb Lamson, whose initials are found below the jaw of the death's-head. Signed stones are rare, but Caleb signed six other stones still in Point of Graves, perhaps to distinguish this early work from that of his father and brother Nathaniel. Only five other signed stones by him are known to be in existence, all in Massachusetts or Connecticut.



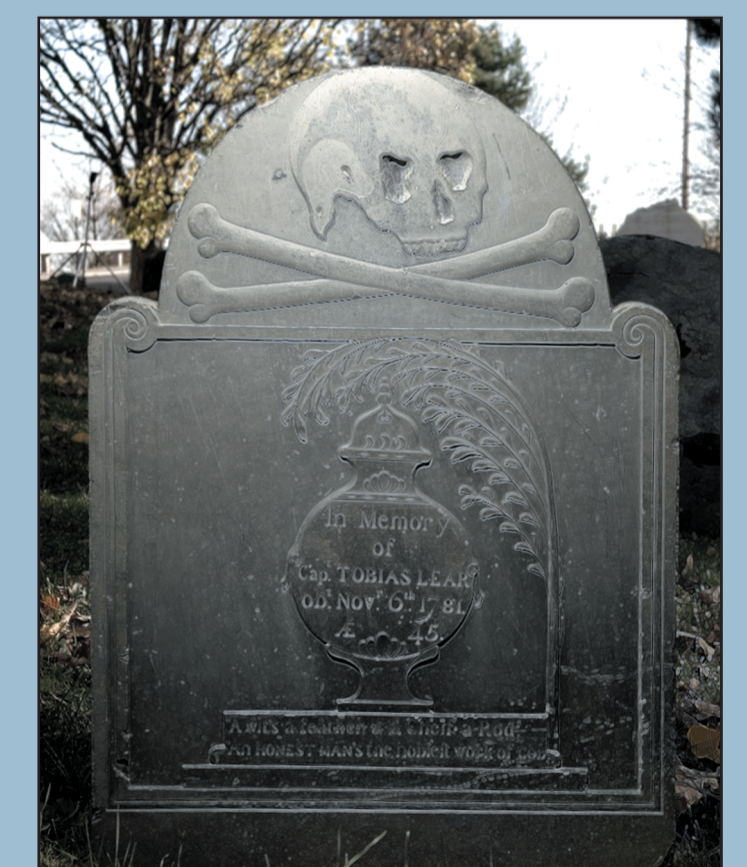
OBADIAH MARSHALL
d. 1746

Marshall was a blockmaker. The gravestone is called a pumpkin stone from the oval shape of the angel's head. This stone, with its unique style of carving, was crafted by Joseph Mullicken.



FRANCIS MESSER
d. 1692

This stone, carved by William Mumford for a Portsmouth carpenter, is unusual for its Latin inscription *Memento Mori*, meaning Remember Death. Gravestones with this wording are common in Boston but rare in Portsmouth.



CAPTAIN TOBIAS LEAR
d. 1781

Lear was a mariner of Portsmouth whose home, now a historic site, is a few blocks from Point of Graves on Hunking Street. His son Tobias Jr. served as President George Washington's private secretary. The elder Lear's gravestone was carved by John Homer and displays the realistic skull and crossbones for which he is best known.