

# WRITTEN IN STONE

Friends of Burial Hill

Spring Edition 2014

## “Here lies Buried: Graveyards and Cemeteries of the South Shore” – Symposium

Our very own Cheryle Caputo will be speaking about our preservation efforts on Burial Hill at this special event.

*Back Roads of the South Shore*  
presents

THE 2014 South Shore History Symposium  
“HERE LIES BURIED: GRAVEYARDS AND CEMETERIES OF THE SOUTH SHORE”

**APRIL 12, 2014**  
10 AM TO 2:30 PM  
**THE SPIRE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**  
25 Court Street, Plymouth

9:00-9:45 AM Registration  
9:45-10:00 AM Welcoming Remarks, Tim Davidson, Co-Chair of the Backroads of the South Shore and President of the Marshfield Historical Society.  
10:00-10:30 AM “Shipwreck Gravestones of the South Shore,” Victoria Stevens, Curator and Educator, Hull Lifesaving Museum.  
10:30 AM “Letters, Journals and Gravestones: The Stories of Duxbury’s Mayflower Cemetery through Archival Sources,” Carolyn

Ravenscroft, Archivist, Duxbury Rural and Historical Society.

11:00 AM “Burial Hill: From Neglect to Nurture,” Cheryle Caputo, Friends of Burial Hill  
11:30-1:00 PM Lunch on your own. The Spire Center for the Performing Arts is conveniently located in downtown Plymouth with numerous eating establishments in easy walking distance. A list of suggestions will be available.

1:00 PM “Plymouth’s Oak Grove and the Rural Cemetery Movement on the South Shore,” Donna Curtin, Executive Director, Plymouth Antiquarian Society

1:30 PM “Plymouth’s Burial Hill and Massachusetts’s Top Five Cemeteries,” Stephen O’Neill, Associate Director/Curator of Collections, Pilgrim Society & Pilgrim Hall Museum

2:00 PM “Graves and Gossip: A Do-It-Yourself Toolkit to Designing Your Own Cemetery Tour,” Rachel Lovett, Executive Director, Hanover Historical Society

\$15 per person includes refreshments and six presentations. Register by April 7th.

Registration: <http://www.brss.org/images/Brochure2014.pdf>



Spring is finally here! If you have a picture of Burial Hill or other information to share, email along with your name to [jfsdms@verizon.net](mailto:jfsdms@verizon.net) and you may see it in the next newsletter.

### Slate Breaking News



- Sat, April 19th 10-12pm  
Survey Workshop-meet at top of hill. Please bring clipboard if you have one.
- Sat, April 26th 9-12 pm  
Burial Hill Cleanup (one week before town wide clean up). Meet at top of hill, bring work gloves
- Sat, May 24th 9-11 am  
& Fri, May 30th 9-11 am  
Gravestone Conservation Workshop (free to members). Meet at top of hill. Check website for additional dates as we schedule them.
- Sat, Oct. 25th 1 pm  
Third Annual Archaeology Month Event with Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project’s principal archaeologist Craig Chartier
- Sat, Dec. 6th 1 pm  
“A Christmas Carol” a la the Friends of Burial Hill & in conjunction with the Plymouth Antiquarian Society at Burial Hill and the 1749 Courthouse Museum

## Featured Stones: John & Hannah Cooper

John and Hannah (Rider) Cooper died three years apart. Their tombstones, a “matched set,” were undoubtedly made at the same time, after Hannah’s death in 1763. John was born in 1697, Hannah in 1711; the couple married in 1737. John served in a few very minor town posts – several times on a grand jury and twice as a hog reeve, once in 1724 and again in 1736. The reeves saw to it that hogs, who were left to forage on their own and given the run of the town (serving a useful function as “organic” garbage disposals), did not trample on or root up gardens; unruly hogs were locked up in the local animal pound until reclaimed by their owners. John was evidently content with this

low level of responsibility; in 1730, town meeting appointed him constable but he declined to serve, instead paying a £5 fine to be released.



The motif used on the Cooper stones is a curious “spirit head.” Meant to represent the human soul as it makes the transition to everlasting life, these spirits have upright hair,

giving the impression that they are rising through the overhead arch, meant to represent the heavens.

The stones are attributed to Ebenezer Soule Junior (1737-1817), the oldest of three brothers who followed their father (Ebenezer Senior) in the trade of stone carving. Ebenezer established himself in business in Plympton soon after 1758; he was skilled and enterprising, and well known throughout southeastern Massachusetts. Ebenezer Junior is responsible for many stones on Burial Hill, including not only “spirit heads,” but also a number of later angel carvings. PMBaker2014

## Announcements

Cheryle Caputo, co-founder of FOBH, is the Chair for the Southeastern New England and Cape Cod chapter of the Association for Gravestone Studies. Join Cheryle for the chapter's spring/summer event on May 10, 2014 in Duxbury for an exploration of the Mayflower Cemetery, the Myles Standish Burial Ground, and a tour of the Alden House. If you are not a member of the Chapter, please email Cheryle to reserve your spot. See our website for additional details.

**Third Annual Massachusetts Archaeology Month Event** will be held Saturday, October 25th at 1:00 pm. The Friends of Burial Hill and principal archaeologist Craig Chartier of Plymouth Archaeological Rediscovery Project are partnering once again for this event. Join us as Craig discusses his GPR survey findings and delves further into what lies beneath.

**Mourning: Trappings and Traditions** will be held Saturday, November 15th at 1:00 pm. The Friends of Burial Hill commemorate

the sesquicentennial of the Civil War with an enlightening presentation on mourning. Mourning: Trappings and Traditions will focus primarily on 19th century America when the practice of mourning was at its peak, sample 19th century funeral baked goods, and enjoy hymns and patriotic tunes of the era.

**Digitization of Burial Hill Surveys**—FOBH is uploading completed survey sheets on gravestones that have been cleaned by workshop volunteers for all to access. To volunteer to enter data, contact Don Dewey at [d49dewey@gmail.com](mailto:d49dewey@gmail.com)

**Burial Hill Photos**—If you have old photos of Burial Hill, please email to Cheryle (see below for email address).

**Photographers Needed**—There is a need for designated photographers to document FOBH activities.

**Burial Hill Volunteers** - FOBH needs your help for cleanup, gravestone conservation, and special events. Training provided.

### Gravestone Iconography

#### Winged head or cherub

Represents a softer view of the death's head and the afterlife. Leaving aside the earlier grim effigies, this was a popular symbol at the time used to depict the soul's ascension to Heaven. This example from Elizabeth Bartlett's headstone (d. March 29, 1793) is ascribed to Lemuel Savery. Typical Savery winged head.



### Burial Hill History

#### Mercy Otis Warren

-Born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, where she lived until 1754, when she married James Warren and moved to Plymouth, Massachusetts. There, Mercy found herself at the center of a lively Patriot family: both husband and brother James Otis took active parts in Massachusetts politics, and the Warren home became a common meeting place for revolutionaries. She also participated in the Patriot cause, beginning with the 1772 publication of her play *The Adulateur*, the first in a long line of similar propagandistic pieces published anonymously. She developed friendships with Abigail and John Adams at this time and corresponded with both throughout her life. Warren continued to write and publish after the war, issuing a volume of poetry under her own name in 1790 and in 1805 publishing her three-volume *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*. <http://www.masshist.org/bh/mercybio.html>

### Gravestone Vocabulary

#### Thanatology

The study of death, dying, and grief, and the practices associated with them.

**Member dues are from January 1st through December 31st each year.**

**If you have not yet remitted, please send as soon as possible.**

**Workshops are free to members and \$30.00 for non-members.**

**Thank you for your support!**

### **Find Friends of Burial Hill online!**

Website: <http://friendsofburialhill.org/>

Like us on Facebook: <http://goo.gl/dDlxGc>

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To contact the Friends of Burial Hill, become a member, or renew your membership, please visit [www.friendsofburialhill.org](http://www.friendsofburialhill.org), or email

Cheryle: [cheryle.burialhillfriend@verizon.net](mailto:cheryle.burialhillfriend@verizon.net)

or June: [june.burialhillfriend@hotmail.com](mailto:june.burialhillfriend@hotmail.com)

**Membership dues remain the same at \$25.**

**Pay online or a printable form is available on the website.**