THE GROVE STREET CEMETERY

A Paper Read Before the New Haven Colony Historical Society
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"Time honored spot with cautious feet
Thy sacred aisles we rev'rent tread,
While whispering voices oft repeat,
These only sleep, they are not dead;
They live and mingle with you still.
Their mortal forms were here consigned,
Their souls, inspired, still prompt the will
That seeks the uplift of mankind."

When Mrs. Letitia Todd of North Haven wrote this in 1926 she may not have reached the perfection of Thomas Gray's soothing, flowing rhythm, nor the magical comfort of his rustic imagery, but she did strike a note that he did not, the note of immortality. For

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does embrace a concept of immortality that is comprehensible whatever may be one's philosophy or religion. Nor did Mrs. Todd find in the Grove Street Cemetery the frustration that so oppressed Gray. If I know my New Haven from tradition and hearsay there are none buried there who did not have the opportunity, and vociferously grasp it, of enjoying the sensation that comes from commanding "the applause of listening Senates;" a Timothy Dwight the Elder with a "Conquest of Canaan" and a "Greenfield Hill" to his credit can hardly be classed as a "mute inglorious Milton", a Roger Sherman not only might but actually did "sway the rods of Empire", and the flowers of Websters, Morse and Silliman's learning, with all the galaxy of Yale, were certainly not "born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air." It too would be inappropriate in this place and before this audience to speak of our "rude forefathers" whatever we may personally think of some of them, and this quite aside from the fact that a large number do not lie in the Grove Street Cemetery at all. The difference between Stoke Poges and the Grove Street Cemetery is that in the one there is so much that might have been, in the other there is so much of actual accomplishment.

Death came early to the New Haven settlers. The cold, damp huts or dugouts on the West Creek, in which the seven spent that first winter, were not healthy abodes, and it was probably John Beecher who succumbed and was buried close at hand near the corner of George and Meadow Street, his remains being unearthed in 1750. The others survived and helped clear of wood and brush the market place that the son of Sir John

Brockett, of Brockett-Hall, Herefordshire, laid out in the center of their settlement, a spot destined to be their own final resting place. There by necessity, by example, and by tradition were gathered those who passed away. By necessity, because it was the only available spot amidst their savage surroundings. While some had brought more of worldly goods into the settlement than others none could take more out and whatever might be the technicalities of ownership, this market place was nearer Common Land than any other and a fitting place for the common lot to which death had brought the body. By example, because the majority of the settlers during their winter spent in Boston had become familiar with the burial grounds in the center of that town. At least two of the original settlers had died and were buried in this market place before the first Meeting House was built. But when it was finally erected in 1639 the age long English tradition that shepherded the departed around the parish church and under its sacred protection was satisfied. There was no orderly arrangement of burial. Between the church and the west side of the market place on the ground gently sloping to the east, the graves were dug by relatives or friends and the interments were made as fancy, or affection, dictated. There was a solemn procession on foot, the grave was filled in, and those present solemnly departed.

Lechford has given us a picture of what took place.

"Nothing is read nor any funeral sermon made, but all the neighborhood, or a goodly company of them, come together by tolling of the bell and carry the dead solemnly to his grave and then stand by him while he is buried. The ministers are most commonly present."

It was not until days afterwards that the funeral sermon was preached, the funeral eulogy published and distributed as black-bordered and gruesomely decorated broadsides and pamphlets, with their skull and cross bones, scythe, coffins, hour-glasses, bowlegged skeletons and squinting all seeing eyes, the literary quality of which I think may best be left for determination by whoever is curious enough to read them. As Judge Sewall once remarked, "The office for the dead is a Lying bad office, makes no difference between the precious and the vile."

There was a morbidness on this subject that led to some curious literary results, but a sentimentalism such as we of an older generation knew did not then exist. That came later and probably reached its peak during the 19th century. With no private ownership in the burial space, no responsibility seems to have been felt. Neither state, church, nor family were under any further obligation after the last glass of the funeral grog was drunk, and the last pair of mourning gloves and the last mourning ring had been distributed. Then, too, while the three generations that span the life of the burial ground varied greatly in their spiritual intensity, they never quite lost belief in the utter helplessness of man to achieve his own salvation as expounded by Hooker, Sheppard, and Davenport. Although this depressing doctrine was partially offset by a strong belief that providence continuously worked on their side, it did not inculcate any great respect for the mortal body after the spirit had departed.

" For thus our Fathers testified
That he might read who ran
The emptiness of human pride
The nothingness of man.

"They dared not plant the grave with flowers
Nor dress the funeral sod
Where, with a love as deep as ours
They left their dead with God

"The hard and thorny path they kept
From beauty turned aside.
Nor missed they over those who slept
The grace to life denied."

This was almost universally true in New England and the burial places went untended, unfenced 'and unadorned. Twenty years after the settlement, by 1659, it has been estimated that there must have been at least fifty graves. In that year Governor Newman was disturbed over the situation, and, strange to say, principally on the question of health, a most unusual attitude in the early 17th century. Nothing came of his suggestion that some other place be found and he died and was buried there the next year. If there is anything certain in this life of ours it is that the number of graves continued to grow and not diminish. They probably increased then at the rate of 5 to 10 a year, grew in a haphazard, sprawling manner; children pranked amongst them, young people galavanted, their elders indiscriminately walked over them, lounged amongst them and between Sabbath day services gossiped and ate their lunch; cattle roamed through them, dogs ran riot, and in the words of the old town records there was no "comliness or safety from creaturs rooting up ye ground." In 1683 Captain Mansfield for the selectmen suggested that the place be enclosed. This novel proposition was digested for seven more years and in 1690 resulted in a vote to do so at the Town's expense. It was not done. Nothing happened - for the next thirty-two years and the space was getting crowded. The second Meeting House was built in 1668 and its new location gave some extra space.

Then someone had the idea of renting out the land where the City Hall now is for burial purposes, the proceeds to go to the Hopkins Grammar School. To be buried in leased ground seemed a bit uncertain, so nothing was done about this proposition. Another thirty-four years went by and in 1762 the Proprietors Committee took a hand and said the burial place might be fenced but "without cost to them," and at the next Town meeting it was voted to join hands with the proprietors but "without cost to the town." This extraordinary burst of co-operation and generosity left things exactly as they had been for the past 124 years. Then in some mysterious manner, mysterious at least as far as any records go, we suddenly find in Dr. Stiles's map of 1775, an octagonal picket fence, painted red. To those who are inclined to the supernatural and the occult I offer this as a fascinating subject for speculation. Perhaps it was more than human resentment over the long endured disrespect.

If any of you are interested in vital statistics, which I certainly am not, I suggest that you take down your Ezra Stiles Diary and Timothy Dwight's 1811 account of New Haven and read what they have to say of New Haven's illnesses. They are not a flattering prospectus of New Haven as a health resort. Dysentery, malaria and consumption were always more or less present and often fatal. The year 1711 was a bad one. So were 1724, 1734, 1735 and 1751; then almost every year to a culmination in the epidemic of Febris Scarletina Anginosa, vulgarly known as Scarlet Fever, and the plague of yellow fever of the years 1794 and 1795. The children looking out of the windows of the Pierpont and other houses had their cravings for the dramatic fully satisfied by the lurid glare from the torches of the midnight burials of the victims of these plagues. The same ground is there within the every day sight of all of you. Visualize an octagonal space bound on the east by Center Church and reaching almost to College Street on the west, for when the State House was built in 1829 graves were uncovered, and on the north and south by a line drawn short of half way between Center Church and North and Center and Trinity, in which were at a very conservative estimate from 3,000 to 4,000 and possibly as many as 5,000 graves. We know positively that skeletons of 16 people were unearthed in a space 12 ft. square in 1849. The Doolittle map, the first to give us any reliable data, indicates an area of approximately 70,000 square feet. This is a pretty crowded condition whatever estimate we may take.

The closing years of the 18th century and the opening ones of the 19th had brought an increased sense of taste and refinement. What the generation then in its prime saw on the Green did not present a very attractive picture, and their part in its future was not one to be anticipated with much gratification. It is possible for things to get so bad in New Haven as to jar its habitual complacency into action.

My personal opinion of James Hillhouse has always been that he was endowed with more than a full share of Yankee shrewdness and common sense. He was a man forty-two years of age in 1796 and not unmindful of the uncertainties of human life. He had just witnessed and survived the severe plague of 1794 and 1795. There had been brought home to many, of which he was one, the intolerable situation on the Green. It is reliably reported that he contemplated a private family burial spot on his farm in Sachems Woods, but with his usual foresight he saw that it might not always, except happily by tradition and reverence, remain a Hillhouse shrine, a prophetic vision.

Among the ephemeral matters that are irrevocably lost to the historian are the many and earnest conversations that must have taken place between the leading citizens over the situation. Of the obvious solutions, that of sequestering the ground around the meeting house was proving impractical. The not at all uncommon practice, especially in Rhode Island, of private burial places which had occurred to James Hillhouse was impossible for most and could not meet the common need. There remained the possibility of appropriating unoccupied ground in some part of the town. Whatever reverence our forefathers expressed for the departed, it was not in their thrifty nature allowed to go so far as to encroach on the material advancement of the living. In traveling through our countryside you will note apparently two requisites of the village cemetery, ease of access from a highway and avoidance of usable property. In the latter respect they were not always successful. They misjudged the growth and development of the community, but these considerations did lead them to choose the most forlorn, desolate and depressing of locations.

"Our vales are sweet with fern and rose
Our hills are maple crowned
But not from these our fathers chose
The village burial ground.

"The dreariest spot in all the land
To death they set apart
With scanty grace from nature's hand
And none from that of art."

There was at this time, 1796, at what was then the outskirts of the town a spot which seemed to satisfy these requirements. Its accessibility was unquestionable; as a barrier to the town's development it seemed negligible and for attractiveness of

surroundings it met the most exacting taste of the times. There was nothing beautiful about it. It was an almost level, sandy, and loam plain dipping to the north into a swale, the drainage basin of the East Creek, later to be the Farmington Canal. It was covered apparently with poplars and scrub. Across it ran two roads. One diagonally from the end of the present High Street in a northerly direction, the Plainfield Road; the other known as the Second Quarter Road. In the 1820's as Pleasant Street, later as Smith Avenue, and when it got very respectable, Prospect Street, ran also northerly off into the wilderness east of the Plainfield Road, but not parallel with it. Nathan Mansfield had a home and farm on it and acreage was owned by the Fitch family, Capt. John Mix, and later his estate, all in the southerly part between these two roads and Grove Street. Further north James Hillhouse and James Dana owned land. It was not in James Hillhouse's nature to be backward in any matter of public interest. So when the agitation regarding the condition on the Green became acute and something had to be done, he was in a position, because of ownership in this tract, to offer some seven acres. A small triangular portion he had acquired as far back as 1791 from the Mansfields; the rest in two deeds, one of 3.7 acres dated Sept. 10, 1796 and another of about 3 1/2 acres dated Oct. 3, 1796 from the Mixes. We do not know whether James Hillhouse acquired this at the request of some thirty-two fellow citizens for this purpose, or whether he did it on his own initiative, and got them to join with him. The former surmise is probably the correct one as to the deeds of 1796. In either case, whether the scheme should succeed or not, it must have been a matter of considerable personal interest to him for he was protecting his farm boundary on the west by a neighbor who certainly would not be aggressive, and he was providing a burial place for himself on what was almost his own farm. As a matter of fact these thirty-two citizens did form a syndicate and signed a written agreement dated Sept. 9, 1796 that reads as follows:

"The citizens of New Haven having experienced many inconveniences from the small portion of ground allotted for the burial of the dead in the center of the city; to obtain larger better arranged for the accommodation of families and by the retired situation better calculated to impress the mind with a solemnity becoming the repository of the dead; after several fruitless attempts a subscription was opened in Sept. A. D. 1796 as follows.

"We the undersigned agree to advance fourteen Dollars each to pay the purchase money of six acres of Land purchased for a buring ground and to fence the same, to be at the future disposition and order of the subscribers so far as relates to laying out and locating the same. New Haven Sept. 9th 1796."

This is not the place for a catalogue of the signers. Suffice it to say a representative of nearly every old New Haven family prominent at that time, signed, except a Trowbridge. Why the Royal Family abdicated on this occasion I do not know, nor is there a Whittlesey, but as Martha Whittlesey was the last person to be buried on the Green in 1812, it is safe to presume that the family of the Reverend Chauncy, still felt the aegis of Center Church the safest passport to Paradise. With such lawyers as Simeon Baldwin, Pierpont Edwards, David Daggett and Jonathan Ingersoll among the subscribers to this venture a method was soon evolved for the practical handling of its affairs. They petitioned the General Assembly to be made a body corporate and politic to be known as "The Proprietors of the New Burying Ground in New Haven" and that they and their heirs may have succession, may sue and be sued, make rules and regulations, sell, convey and give good title to lots for burial; that they could tax themselves for all necessary expenses; that the ground shall forever remain and be used for burials only, and that each lot shall forever be exempt from taxes and all liability to be sold therefor, or for any other debt whatever due from said corporation, or any individual proprietor thereof, that any owner of a lot shall be a legal member of the corporation and entitled to one vote for each lot owned, and that it can hold no other land than that conveyed to it for this purpose. The land actually conveyed to this corporation was ten acres by deed dated Nov. 6, 1797. Four acres more than the amount mentioned in the agreement of the syndicate ; this was the acreage specified in the act of incorporation that it was empowered to administer and control. The extra acreage .necessary to make up this amount was acquired as follows; about an acre from the Fitch family in 1796 and the remainder by exchange of land between the Hillhouse and the Mansfields. The consideration was £ 166, 1 shilling and the boundaries were well defined. "South on Grove Street, West on the Plainfield Road, North on the heirs of Nathan Mansfield and East on Second Quarter Road, to be used for the sole purpose of a burial ground forever." This layout as applied to the present streets would be up Prospect Street to at least the northerly line of Prospect Place, up Grove Street to the present stone gateway, then along the east side of Plainfield Road to Lock Street, and then along the north line of Lock Street and Prospect Place across the present railroad tracks to the corner of Prospect Place and Prospect Street. This act was passed in October 1797 and the first meeting was held on October 30, 1797. A committee was appointed to collect the bills, ascertain the expense, set a valuation on the lots, and plant trees. Mr. Hillhouse was requested to transfer the fee of the land he then held in trust, that the Plat of the lots as drawn by Mr. Meigs, professor

of mathematics and natural philosophy at Yale, containing 6 tiers of lots and a vacant lot on the northwest corner called Potters Field, be approved and recorded; that the Tiers be numbered from east to west and the lots from Grove Street northerly. A committee of five were made a standing committee, any three of whom could convey the fees of the several lots. This committee was ordered to convey Lot No. 1 in 3rd Tier to the President and Fellows of Yale College. Lots No. 1 of the 1st, 2nd and 4th Tiers to the several ecclesiastical societies as determined by lot. The drawing of this lottery resulted in Lot 1 of First Tier going to the United Society, Lot 1 of Second Tier to the Episcopal Society and Lot 1 of the 4th Tier to the First Society. Lot No. 2 in the 5th Tier was set aside for strangers who might die in New Haven, and Lots 3, 5 and 7 of the 5th Tier for the poor of the Town. Lot 1 of the 6th Tier for people of color. Elias Beers was made Treasurer and the name of each owner of a lot was to be painted on its front railing with its proper number. A general drawing for lots was to be held at the State House on the next Wednesday at 2 P.M., notice of which was to be given by the clergy from their respective pulpits and by advertising. Thus the Grove Street Cemetery as we know it today was started on its career. The plat referred to is on record in the Town Clerk's office, as is the deed that Mr. Hillhouse was requested to execute.

At this point it is important to pause and call attention to two outstanding facts — the use of the corporate form for the conduct of the cemetery's affairs, and the division into family lots. Both of these were an innovation. The English crown never conceded to the colonies be they Royal, chartered or proprietary, the right to create private corporations. A Fishing Company in New York in 1675, a Trading Company in Pennsylvania in 1682, The New York Chamber of Commerce in 1770, and a Trading Company in New London in 1732, were, with some temerity chartered; but all except the New York Chamber of Commerce led a precarious existence and died. The survival of the latter was due to it being in the public and non profit class, for non profit corporations for ecclesiastical and charitable purposes were tolerated. It was not a familiar form of business association. After the Revolution the former colonies felt it safe to exercise this prerogative of government and beginning with 1782 we find it increasingly used. It was generally limited to undertakings that partook of a public character: toll and plank roads, bridges and navigation and later to banks, insurance companies and waterworks. But nowhere in the original thirteen colonies nor in the present states of Kentucky and Tennessee down to 1800 had anyone, anywhere, applied it to a cemetery. The Grove Street Cemetery was therefore, as far as I can discover, the first chartered cemetery in this country. That this was so may have been due to the unique situation created by the underwriting agreement from which it started, rather than to any lack of legal acumen in the rest of the country. To the same source we can trace the division into family lots with their family ownership, i.e., a segregated piece of ground over which the family had the free and sole and exclusive control. The underwriting agreement stated, that it was "to be at the future disposition and order of the subscribers so far as the laying out and locating of the same" and the procedure immediately after incorporation of drawing lots by the subscribers for the choice of a particular piece, pretty plainly indicated that the acquisition of private lots was one of the objectives. It has long been asserted that this was the first cemetery in the world to be laid out in family lots. To substantiate such an assertion would require considerable research, but it does seem reasonable and probable that this was the fact in this country and so consciously or unconsciously another seed was planted later to flower into that luxuriant and exotic growth known as "Town Born."

The rest of 1797 and all of 1798 was occupied by James Hillhouse, Joseph Drake, Isaac Mills, Elias Shipmen and Simeon Baldwin in carrying out the committee's directions, laying out and numbering progressively the family lots from Grove Street northerly along the six tiers, planting trees and shrubs and leveling the ground, an occupation that we can well imagine James Hillhouse delighted in. The expense actual and estimated was £ 500 or about $1,665. The space so improved was perhaps one half of the land owned and the anticipated receipt from sale of lots, ranging from $5 to $15 per lot, was $1,715, equal to £ 515.

President Dwight was presented with a lot adjoining the College lot and Professor Meigs, the adjoining lot in its rear; presumably in recognition of his assistance in drawing maps and plotting the ground. The work was pursued so energetically that the first burial, that of Martha daughter of John Townsend, took place there on Nov. 4, 1797, and it all apparently met with such approval that in the next year 1798, the tiers were directed to be continued northerly and new lots plotted. But here something happened. Interest died out, or subscriptions were not forthcoming, although some lots were reduced $3.00 in price, for on Sept. 8, 1800 we find the following entry.

"Voted That the committee of conveyance convey to James Hillhouse, Esq. all the lots in the New Burying Ground not otherwise disposed which are already completed and which by a plan this day exhibited are proposed to be completed, not to include, however, the alleys and passages exhibited on said plan and that they also lease to him the rear ground northward of that laid into lots for him to use and improve until the same shall be wanted by the proprietors for the purpose of Burials

- on condition, however, that the said Hillhouse shall release and discharge the proprietors of and from all claims for any sum due to him, or others on account of expenditures on the burying grounds and that he assume the annuity due to Mrs. Mix and discharge the residue of the purchase money of said lot and that he engage to complete the yard at his own expense according to a plan this day exhibited running the side fences to the bottom of the yard with pale fence and a slat fence on the rear thereof." At the time James Hillhouse took over the cemetery there were 284 Lots plotted exclusive of the lots allotted to Yale, the three: Ecclesiastical Societies, the lots for Strangers, Negroes and the Potters Field. Of these 129 had been sold and deeded to individuals leaving 155 to Hillhouse that he could sell to reimburse himself.

No meeting of the proprietors was again held until June 8, 1815. By this act they relieved themselves of all financial responsibility, amounting to about $1,600, and placed it squarely on the shoulders of James Hillhouse. The northern part thus leased to him adjoined his farm, and I hope he profited by its use and collected enough from lots sold to pay the obligations he incurred. It has been said that it took thirty years to do it and it is doubtful if he ever did reimburse himself. He evidently did not neglect the care and development of the grounds already laid out, for President Dwight in 1811 could say, "I have accompanied to it many foreigners and many Americans who have traveled extensively on the Eastern Continent, none of whom had ever seen or heard of anything of a similar nature. An exquisite taste for propriety is discovered in everything belonging to it * * * No plot of ground within my knowledge is equally solemn and impressive." If his foreign friends were from England I can appreciate their surprise; if they were from France they must have overlooked or neglected the Père le Chaice, which in 1804 had been laid out along the same lines and is today one of the sights of Paris. Whatever may have been the financial failure of corporate management, there was no slackening of demand. For by Sept. 10, 1814 all the lots in the New Burying Ground had been sold and great distress was experienced. Again thirty-two citizens clubbed together and purchased for $1,600, payable in 5 years, from Henry Daggett, Esq., 8 acres of vacant land adjacent to and west of the Plainfield Road and bounded south on Grove Street. Jonathan E. Porter was their agent for preparing the ground, for burial purposes. James Hillhouse and a few others of the underwriters for the first purchase were members of this undertaking, but the majority had not taken part in the former adventure. To the $1,600 purchase price was added $926.61 for leveling, enclosing and preparing this new ground. The Plainfield Road was then discontinued and a new road built to take its place, which is now Ashmun Street, and a further cross road, now Lock Street, and Prospect Place connecting Ashmun Street with Prospect Street. For extra land needed for these new roads $253.50 was paid. The entire plot was then completely surrounded by highways at an expense of $2,840. James Hillhouse must have turned back to the proprietors the land, less the lots sold, that was transferred to him under the vote of Sept. 8, 1800 by 1815, for the records show the proprietors assessing the lot owners that year for repairs to the fences. The conveyance to Hillhouse is on record in the Town Clerk's office, together with his release of the proprietors from all liability, and it is essentially a lease as to all land not plotted lots. The term is actually used in it and it is to be held by him "until the same shall be wanted by the said proprietors for the purpose of burials." Consequently, no formal reconveyance was necessary for the return of land not sold by him as burial lots. A statement by the proprietors that they needed the land for burials was sufficient to terminate it, and this is in all probability what took place.

From 1812 to 1815 was the great period of ecclesiastical building in New Haven. Trinity, Center and United Church, in architectural and religious rivalry then assumed their present trinitarian grandeur. United and Trinity were without the pale of the ancient burial ground, but Center in order to present as uniform a religious front as possible to schismatic New Haven had to be moved around so as to face Temple Street. This made it encroach on the graves in the old burying ground. Sentiment is a most mercurial and uncertain human emotion. It can explode with startling results after long periods of quietude. It did in this case. To disturb the graves that had so long laid neglected was sacrilege. Some 178 signed a so called "subscription paper" signifying their "decided disapprobation of any encroachment on the burying ground for the purpose of such building." Attention was called to the solicitude of Abraham and Isaac, of Jacob and Joseph, for that field in Ephron where Sarah was buried; that the burial ground on the Green was more uplifting than unsightly; "it is better to go to the home of mourning than to the house of feasting;" and that the inhuman and unscrupulous attitude of the contracts would set a precedent for every kind of sacrilege. In 1812 the city had granted permission for this relocation, "provided it does not vary the rights of individuals," thus recognizing the opposition that was certain to arise and washing their hands of it. It therefore became a contest between the church and its contractors and a rather unorganized opposition. Most of the influential citizens were also Center Churchers and could not object too actively. Some of the opposition was appeased by building the church over the graves and leaving them undisturbed and, where this could not be done, by agreeing not to dig

the foundations more than three feet over any grave that was so unfortunate as to be in the way. The unorganized opposition was thus diminished in intensity and numbers and while some irreconcilables shoveled in dirt as fast as the contractors excavated it, the work was finally completed without bloodshed and left no rancor. The result was that the floor of the Center Church crypt, as it exists today, is the original level of the Green. The graves left undisturbed outside of the foundations became more unsightly and neglected. No burials were made after 1812 and many individuals moved their family stones and interments into their lots in the new burial grounds. Those that were left had no one interested enough to care for them and the situation became, if possible, more unsightly than ever. In October 1820 the common council took action. A committee found that those who had relatives buried there wanted them left undisturbed and the space walled in; those who had no relatives buried there wanted the stones and graves removed to the new burial ground. A wall would cost about $1,700 and who was to pay for it? The people living around the Green had met the expenses for so many improvements that it was unreasonable to ask them to do so, and the inequality of contributions to any subscriptions for the purpose made this method inadvisable. The committee noted there was an unoccupied area of about three acres in the northwestern part of the new burial ground which could be obtained for $840, providing not only room for the removal from the Green but also for future city burials, and that Yale College would probably contribute for a portion of it for its own use; that the city had received benefits by the laying out of Ashmun and Lock Streets that were worth possibly $280; and that $560 would be sufficient for the removals, leveling the ground, and erecting a marble monument in the rear of Center Church commemorating the ancient use of the ground as a burial place. This latter suggestion satisfied most of the opposition of those who opposed the removal and as the total came to $1,400, a sum less than a stone wall would cost, and would be a matter of public expense, the Freemen and officers of the city voted on Nov. 23, 1820 to settle the matter in this way. As usual in New Haven there was opposition even then and some bitter criticisms of the move. Dr. Croswell of Trinity objected to the price paid for the new ground, but it was carried through and a tax of one cent and five mills on a dollar was levied on all except the residents of Fair Haven, who would not be benefited, since they had their own burial place.

On June 26, 1821 a great concourse met in Center Church. They sang with fervor "Hark from the Tombs a doleful Sound" and "How long shall Death the Tyrant Reign" and listened in true Sabbath-day style to an address prepared by Abraham Bishop and delivered by the Baptist minister, Rev. B. M. Hall, written in the best tradition of the mid-centuries, gloomy and melancholy sentimentality.

On Sept. 1, 1821 James Hillhouse as chairman of the committee could report that Yale had moved all the graves of officers and students to the new Yale lot; that at family requests all family stones and remains had been removed into family lots; and that they had moved all others to the city plot; that they had reserved lots for the Baptist and Methodist societies; that they had leveled the ground on the Green and erected a memorial tablet in the rear of Center Church, all at the cost of $1,289.38, which the city had fully paid. The great hegira had taken place. The new burial ground came of age on its 24th birthday and one of New Haven's problems had been settled.

In 1821 the General Assembly passed a resolution annexing formally the eight acres that had been purchased of Henry Daggett in 1814, which for all practical purposes had been considered to be part of the original burial ground. The same privilege of exemption from taxation and execution was extended to this land as granted to the original ten acres. So casual and informal were the affairs of cemetery conducted that this resolution was not formally accepted by the proprietors until May 1839 and it was very carefully provided that the Proprietors should not be liable for any indebtedness incurred in the purchase and development of the eight acres. Nor should the individuals who purchased it be liable for any of the Proprietors indebtedness. Any of you, therefore, who may expect to be in these eight acres can rest assured that you are as free from taxes and execution as those town born lying in the older portion; as no specific mention was made of it I cannot give you the same assurance as to your sins.

One could not wander around New Haven much during the 1820's without in one way or another, falling into the Farmington Canal. The New Burial Ground was no exception. That all consuming monster took off the entire northeastern corner. This was a swale then unoccupied for burial purposes and was the portion leased to James Hillhouse in 1800 to be farmed by him. There are no entries in the minutes of the Proprietors from Jan. 7, 1818 to April 7, 1832, so we do not know officially from the cemetery records how this was done. However, James Hillhouse and everyone else connected with the cemetery were deeply involved in the canal project; the lay of the land was not particularly suited for burials and there seemed to be enough unoccupied acreage for all purposes.

My surmise is that the Proprietors of the Burial Ground for these reasons did not demand the land back under the terms of the lease, but that it was virtually surrendered to James

Hillhouse. That the Farmington Canal condemned as much of it as it wanted and the remainder was part of James Hillhouse' estate. We know there were condemnation proceedings against him and Glover Mansfield over this property and that when the wall. surrounding, the cemetery was built in the 1840's about 3/4 of an acre of this land was purchased and integrated with the cemetery by the Legislature in 1841 to straighten the line and make what was designated the North East Tier. In 1877 a small triangular piece remaining outside of the cemetery wall on the northeast corner was deeded to the city for Canal Street.

During the 1820's and 1830's the affairs of the cemetery were conducted rather casually. There are no records of any meetings between January 1833 and May 1839. The northerly unoccupied portion of the Tiers were, however, developed as demand increased. The triangular piece back of the present Chapel that had been set aside in the original layout as a Potters Field was sold by the City to individuals as separate lots, the city now having a more extensive area of its own in the northwest corner. The closing of the Plainfield Road had left the city with some of the lots in rather an awkward shape and the Proprietors deeded to it land of the former highway to make them uniform with the other lots. Some attempt was made to beautify the grounds with trees and shrubs to the elimination of unwanted poplars. The old ghost of a proper enclosure arose again. The plot was surrounded by an open rail fence that was constantly rotting and required assessment against the lot owners for repairs. It was also very inefficient as a protection. "It was open at all places and at all times to the resort of the idle, the thoughtless and the Vicious, at all times of the day and night and especially on the sabbath for mere amusement or for worse purposes." A new wave of interest swept the community and under the leadership of Professor Olmstead, and again a committee of citizens made observations and submitted recommendations to their fellow citizens and the Proprietors, who either needed spurring or civic backing. Sylva culture in New England at this period had its heyday unhampered by any inhibition of cankerworms, beetles, elm tree or chestnut fungus, and the committee were for making their last resting place a rival of the Tomb of Sarah and the Patriarchs under the oaks of Saul, under the trees of Jabesh, and of Manasseh and Ammon in the Garden of Uzza, all of which would probably have disappointed them if they had actually seen them; but they were modest enough not to expect the glory of the cypresses that shrouded the tombs of Turkey, or the thick groves of Père le Chaice and Mt. Auburn. All this romantic setting could be obtained cheaply, but the problem of its proper enclosure still remained as an expensive obstacle and to this the aroused energy of the public was now directed. So much was it considered a matter of public concern that in 1840 the city voted $5,000 conditioned upon the sum being matched from other sources. This challenge was met by the creation of a joint committee of citizens and Proprietors for raising funds, and a committee of five from the Proprietors and five appointed by the Mayor to supervise its expenditure. The Proprietors Committee was composed of Aaron N. Skinner, Eli W. Blake, Hezekiah Augur, Augustus R. Street and Denison Olmstead. The men most active were, I think, Aaron N. Skinner and Denison Olmstead. The latter headed the larger joint committee and so responsive was the general public that the sum of $7,000 was soon raised to match the $5,000 given by the city. Not to be outdone the ladies of New Haven held a fair in the Old State House, which added $854.85, or a total of about $13,000. This amount was so far beyond what had been hoped for that the committee completely abandoned its original idea of building a wooden fence and set out to complete a structure that would "descend to a distant posterity as a monument of the moral sentiments, the good taste and the liberality of the present generation." In this, I think, you will all agree they succeeded. So impressed were they with the undertaking that they went at it with great deliberation. Commencing in the rear they built a stone wall of East Haven sand-stone. This was completed the first season and met with such general approval that the next season they continued it on the east or Prospect Street side, and then on the west or Ashmun Street. The Grove Street front they felt presented a peculiar problem. With such men of taste as Hezekiah Augur and Augustus R. Street on the committee, and with numerous suggestions from their fellow citizens, the iron fence and the impressive stone gateway of Egyptian motive was adopted. I have a suspicion that the choice of the open iron fence on Grove Street was in part due to the sentiments of the time as expressed by Prof. Olmstead at the dedication of the gateway, "Finally let us all come hither to think calmly but wisely on our own inevitable destiny. May we here learn, in the light of Christian hope, to divest the grave of unavailing gloom and terror and to contemplate it as a refuge from the storms--as the gate of Heaven, as a covert where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.' " All of this might have been difficult to do if the massive stone wall intervened. The gateway, the crowning glory of it all, designed as a happy inspiration of Henry Austin, is, to say the least, unusual among American cemeteries. Dignified and beautifully proportioned, it is symbolic of an attitude towards the dead and their part in the hereafter, excessive but respectful and reverend, which arose in the Valley of the Nile centuries before Christianity and is consequently so detached from any modern creeds, prejudices or sentiments that it can appeal to

any faith or belief Whatever anachronism an Eygyptologist may find in the inscription is lost in the perfection as an Egyptian replica. It is said that President Hadley on reading it "The Dead shall be Raised" turned to his companion and quite forgetful of the Twinings and Hadleys buried there remarked "They certainly will be if Yale University wants this land."

It took five years to complete the work, from 1840-1845; the stone wall cost $11,000; the iron fence about $3,500; the gateway about $5,000; and $2,400 was expended on trees shrubbery and the layout of the grounds. The city added $2,000 to its appropriation of $5,000, for the iron fence and $9,500 was finally raised on subscription. The ladies fair contributed $854 and $7,078 came from the sale of lots, a total of about $25,000. The committee turned back $1,500 for the care of the cemetery. Isaac Thompson did the mason work on the gateway.

The cornerstone of the Gateway was laid on Friday, July 18, 1845, with due and impressive ceremonies. All the clergy of the City participated and besides Professor Olmstead's address, the Rev. Dr. Bacon spoke, according to the reports, in "the style peculiar to himself, which commanded the breathless attention of all." Dr. Croswell of Trinity concluded with a highly impressive prayer. The following articles were deposited in the cornerstone of the Gateway on July 18, 1845.

24 engravings, portraits and views from Daggett, Hinman & Gorham
11 daguerreotypes: 1 of the Gateway and 10 portraits: Judge Baldwin, John Skinner, Gov. Baldwin, Hon. R. T. Ingersoll, Dr. Croswell, Dr. Bacon.
Kingsley's Historical Discourses
Bronze medal from the Conn. Academy of Science
The cornerstone had the inscription —
Laid July 18, 1845 H. Austin architect Thompson & Strong builders
G. Cameron stone cutter

The man to whom should go the most credit for this final touch to the cemetery was Aaron Skinner, late three times Mayor of New Haven. Daily for all of these five years he gave his constant attention to the erection of wall, fence and gateway, that they might be as enduring as possible. A consecrated effort that has been justified in the results.

The enormous public interest that was aroused in this under taking had a further result. The care of the cemetery was hereafter to be a matter of public concern and this was intrusted to a so-called "Standing Committee of the New Haven Burying Ground."

The space in the northwest corner of approximately three acres that was purchased by the city in 1820 to provide space for the removals from the Green that had not been provided for by private individuals, for the burial of strangers and people of color, needs a separate treatment. Besides the space set out to the Methodist and Baptist Society and the square purchased by Yale College and the one set out to People of Color, there were five squares that belonged to the City. To the first of these were removed and set up the remaining monuments from the Green. The burial of citizens not having family lots was commenced in the S. E. corner of Square No. 2 and then progressively in the other squares. Someone raised the question as to whether these lots were to be paid for, or were to be allotted free. The city voted in June 1836 to sell them to private individuals as private lots. This apparently aroused opposition. Under this vote the city had sold all of Square 3 and 2/3 each of No. 2 and No. 4, leaving Square 5 and 6 entirely unsold. The protest caused all further sales to cease, at least for a time, and the city reported it was ready to account for the sum already received that had not been expended on improving the grounds, the lots already sold not to be disturbed. As no further burials took place in this area a considerable space was left unoccupied, part of Square 2 and all of Square 5 and 6 ; nor had any burials been made in the Strangers Square. This was the situation in 1847, when at the Proprietors' suggestion the Legislature passed an act to sell for private lots all of the Strangers' Plot. Square 5 also was sold off into lots, leaving part of Square 2 and Square 6, which the city seems to have used as a general burial ground, or a kind of Potter's Field. In 1897 the legislature passed an act legalizing the removal of remains from this and from that assigned to People of Color upon the approval of the Mayor and necessary permit from the Registrar of Vital Statistics. Removals were made to ground originally designated as City Squares and in 1901 to other spots designated by the Proprietors. The city had long ceased to take any interest in this ground or to claim any title to it, and on the signing of the order for removal by the Mayor, practically abandoned it.

On May 20, 1876 Prof. Silliman in a much too long resolution, but couched in most chaste an academic English, called attention to the deplorable condition of the ancient gravestones that had been removed from the Green to the City Square reserved for them. Age and fate had followed them in their new abode. He suggested that they be placed along the north wall of the cemetery in alphabetical order beginning at the N. W. corner, the inscription cleaned and penciled in color, the expense to be borne by sale of the lots from which they were removed and that a suitable inscription be placed on the wall. This resolution was adopted but all its terms were not carried out; and there

today you find them, not in the precedent in which they sat in the Meeting House but in a more democratic array. Such is the leveling process of time and death, and so the special history of the city's three acres in the northwest corner, comes to an end.

Evergreen Cemetery was organized in 1849 and it was no longer appropriate to speak of Grove Street as the new cemetery in New Haven. The Legislature in 1852 changed its official title to "The Proprietors of the New Haven City Burial Ground." In 1862 the north and south alleys were given their present arboreal names and called avenues. The east and west were likewise named and called paths.

In 1872 the chapel was built at a cost of $4,648 in the severest of Victorian decorum, with only the gilded Bee under the front eaves as a bit of frivolity and that solely because of its symbolic significance, the release of the soul from its earthly mortality; and so you have the Grove Street Cemetery as you know it today.

There is need to touch on only a few highlights in the intervening years. In 1870 the charter had been amended to permit of the holding of funds for the perpetual care of lots. It was not until 1877, when Robert Battell and the Estate of Mrs. Learned gave $300, that funds were forthcoming for this purpose. In 1877 land was deeded to the city for Canal Street, and the curbing of the avenues was commenced in 1884. The corporate seal was adopted in 1897 and a new map of the cemetery ordered. In 1909 the Standing Committee was increased to five and the New Haven Trust Company made joint trustee with the treasurer of the Perpetual Care Funds. The years have rolled by since then with only routine upkeep, planting and trimming of trees, repair of walks within and without the walls, painting and improvements in the chapel, not artistically, paving and curbing of driveways, and care of the turf.

In 1916 the Augur family raised the question as to whether or not Hezekiah Augur was the architect of the gateway. He was an inventor and sculptor of some note and he originally was on the committee to supervise and build the wall and gateway. He did submit plans in connection with the wall and one of the end towers on the north side was built from his designs. He resigned from the committee in 1841 before the final acceptance of any plan for the iron fence and gateway. We know that several plans for a gateway were submitted but whose they were we do not know, except that Henry Austin's is specifically mentioned in the minutes of July 17,1844. A drawing of the gateway appears in a book in the Yale Library of Austin's architectural works and all the evidence goes to show that he, not Augur, was the architect. This does not eliminate the possibility that Augur made suggestions, but I am not aware of any architectural work ever done by him. If the present gateway is ever demolished the stone covering the coffer box placed there at the dedication is said to have cut on it the name of the builders, the stone cutter, and H. Austin, architect, and this evidence would be conclusive.

By 1918 all the lots had been sold and in 1923 two of three that had been allotted to the Methodist Society were sold by them to the Proprietors and disposed of to individuals. Some twenty-four half and quarter lots were unoccupied and their owners had been unheard of for more than forty years. The legislature passed an act in 1929 which permitted the title to these to be cleared through the Superior Court and all have now been disposed of. During World War II there were removed for scrap-iron many of the fences which were unrepairable. Mr. Dwight B. Snow who had known the Cemetery intimately for over fifty years prepared a card catalogue of every lot and the location of each grave, an invaluable record for those who come after him. And so we come this month to the 150th year of its existence.

I suppose no history of a cemetery would be complete without some reference to the epitaphs a former generation felt compelled to put on their monuments. If you have been waiting for this delectation the time has arrived, but I fear you are to be sadly disappointed. It is not hard to understand why the inscriptions that we today find so amusing are lacking in the Grove Street Cemetery. New Haven in 1797 was already a college town of refinement and taste. It had outgrown what is to our ears the crude punning and uncouth rhyming that our early forebears seemed to reserve for the momentous occasion of death, and which a psychologist of today might explain as a defense psychosis or emotional upset of some sort. It would only be on the stones of the 17th and early 18th centuries that we could expect to find them and in most cases these are so defaced by time and weather, that whatever gems they contain cannot be deciphered. Among the Hillhouse papers are drafts for the Rebecca, Taylor, Benjamin Woolsey, and the Ezra Stiles monuments. James Hillhouse was a gentleman and a scholar and his efforts had only elegance and grace. In fact many of the stones, especially of the college set, bear inscriptions in classic Latin, a recitation of which, I am sure, would not amuse you; as an example of 18th century phraseology I do commend to you, however, the tomb of Sarah Hillhouse.

"How uncertain, short and vain are
Our fondest hopes of sublunary joy
When joined in wedlock the approbation of Friends,
and mutual tender affection promised the height of
conjugal Felicity.
But alas! one year had not revolved before this lovely Fair
was called

(as there is good grounds to believe and hope to
happier Realms)."

Is there not here just the suspicion of a doubt as to her future state? And on the stone of her infant daughter Mary Lucas this appears.

"Peace to thy dusty bed
Fair lovely sleeping clay"

With all due allowance for the superior females our grandmothers and great grandmothers must have been, the number that were virtuous, amiable, endowed with a sweet and delicate temper and all female purity, patience, and resignation, is truly amazing. It is only when we come to Abigail Noyes. "To ye Faulty a Faithful Reprover," that we have our doubts as to their Grief, tragedy and misery there was a' plenty: fathers and sons lost at sea; death in the ghastly prison ships in New York; Benjamin English and Nathan Beers killed in their homes, and Caleb Hotchkiss at the outskirts of the town, at the time of the British Invasion; young men of Yale who died far from home and friends; the long, painful and distressing ailments that it was felt we of a later generation should know about and if possible sympathize with, a not impossible task in the case of Sarah Whiting who was "the Painful mother of eight children." There was a forcefulness, vigor and directness in these early inscriptions sadly lacking in the later effusions, mostly poetical, over the untimely death of those too good for this world, the briefness of life in general and the unpermanency of its treasures. Mrs. President Daggett needed only "Her character is found in Proverbs XXXI :10:11," which for the benefit of the heathen present is

"Who can find a virtuous woman
For her price is above rubies."

And the oft-repeated but none the less memorable lines on the Tomb of Theophilus Eaton.

"Eaton so famed, so wise, so meek, so just
The Phoenix of our world here hides his dust
The name forget, New England never must"

loses none of its force and rugged strength from the anti climax appearing just below it on the same stone.

"Attend ye Sir under these framed stones
Are come your honored son and daughter Jones
On each hand to repose their weary bones."

As a touch of unconscious local humor, New Haven's premier stone cutter and monument builders, John Ritter's habit of signing with pardonable pride examples of his craftsmanship led to the following startling result.

Ann Smith
Born
Died
As designed by John Ritter

This, however, is the story of the Grove Street Cemetery, not of those who are buried there. The honor roll of their names is too long and too well known to be called here. Kinsmen of the men whose praise is sung in the rich prose of Ecclesiasticus, they were "honored in their generation and were the glory of their time." Some were "men renounced for their power, giving counsel by their understanding and declaring prophecies; leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions." * * * "and some there be which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born * * * But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten." With loving, tender care the Grove Street Cemetery shelters them all, famous and humble alike, we hope and pray

"Till these eternal hills remove,
And spring adorns the earth no more."