

American inhabitants, with whom they sometimes intermarried. Most became free following the American Revolution. African Americans were buried in the same graveyard as white residents, but in a separate section. Tombstones were so expensive that only a small proportion of white individuals could afford them. Gravemarkers were unimaginable luxuries for all but a very few African Americans, who were barred by prejudice and discrimination from all but the lowest-paying jobs.

Five "black governors" believed to lie in the Ancient Burying Ground bear witness to the existence in Hartford of an African-American community with its own customs and ceremonies. Black governors were elected by their fellow African Americans to preside over the black community. Although they had no power officially recognized by the white establishment, their authority was acknowledged and respected throughout the African-American population. Boston Nichols, who was elected the black governor in 1800, died in 1810, and was one of the last people interred in the Ancient Burying Ground.

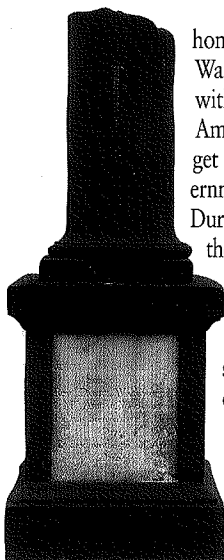
#3 Jeremiah Wadsworth (1743-1804)

To the Memory of
JEREMIAH WADSWORTH, Esq.
Son of the
Rev. DANIEL WADSWORTH
& **Mrs. ABIGAIL WADSWORTH**
He was born on the 12th of July
AD 1743
& died on the 30th of April
AD 1804

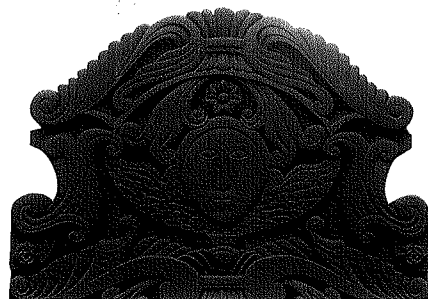
George Washington made four visits to Hartford during his life, and each time he was entertained at the Main Street

home of Jeremiah Wadsworth. Washington had worked closely with Wadsworth to win the American Revolution and later to get the fledgling United States government off to a sound start. During the war Wadsworth assumed the critical responsibility of supplying provisions to Continental Army troops and their French allies. He was a key player in securing Connecticut's ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

This brownstone obelisk has not been broken off. It was originally made this way to symbolize Wadsworth's death as the cutting down of greatness.



Upon Hooker's death in 1647, Stone succeeded him as pastor of Hartford's First Congregational Church. Tradition says Hartford was named for Stone's native Hertford (pronounced "Hartford"), England.

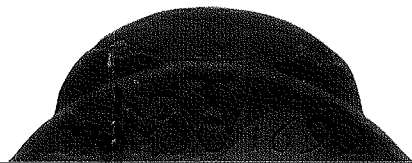


#6 Ebenezer Watson (1743-1777)

MR. EBENEZER WATSON
Printer, who Died Sept. 16th 1777.
AET 35 His heart was benevolent, he was kind to the distressed & an advocate of the injured his life exhibited the Marks of an honest Man Friendship to the rights of human nature At his death which happened in the years of vigor & usefulness he received the distinguished Eulogy the undissembled grief Of a numerous Acquaintances Man cometh forth like a flower & is cut down, he flieth away as a shadow & continueth not

Ebenezer Watson boldly championed America's struggle for independence from Great Britain in his weekly *Connecticut Courant* newspaper, founded in 1764. For a time during the American Revolution the *Courant's* circulation was the largest

of any newspaper in the nation. When Watson died of smallpox in 1777, his 27-year-old widow, Hannah Bunce Watson, continued issuing the *Courant*, becoming one of the first woman publishers in America. Today the *Connecticut Courant* lives on as the *Hartford Courant*, which proudly proclaims itself "America's oldest continuously published newspaper."



#7 Phenias Willson (1628-1692)

ANO DOM
1692
WELLCOME DEATH
PHENIAS WILLSON
AGED 64 YEARS
DYED MAY 22

Phenias Willson of Dublin arrived in Hartford around 1680, making him the community's first Irish immigrant. His is one of the earliest Connecticut gravestones to depict a skull.

Connecticut Courant, lightning "struck the chimney ... forcing its way through the garret stairs into a closet." The bolt traveled along a stud, "directly over the front door where Captain Seymour was standing," then into Seymour, killing him instantly. Congregational ministers pointed to Captain Seymour's unexpected, instantaneous death as a warning to people to repent of their sins and embrace God immediately, in case they should be called to Final Judgement just as suddenly.



#9 Richard Bernham (1748-1766)

In Memory of
Mr. Richard
Bernham, Killed
By ye Bloing up of
ye School house
June 1766 Aged
18 Years & 3 Months
Son to Mr. Elisha &
Mrs. Sarah Bernham

Hartford went wild with joy in May of 1766 at the news of the British Parliament's repeal of the despised Stamp Act, which taxed paper products used in the colonies, ranging from newspapers to legal documents. Thirty young

men met in the brick school house on May 23 to prepare a fireworks display in celebration. Gunpowder stored in the schoolhouse was accidentally ignited, causing an explosion that "in an instant reduced the Building to a Heap of Rubbish," according to the *Connecticut Courant* newspaper. The blast killed Richard Bernham and five other men.



#10 Richard Edwards (1647-1718)
Mary Edwards (1661-1723)

Here lies
Interd yE Body of Mr
Richard Edwards
Who DYED
April 20th
1718 Aetatis
Sue 71

Here lies the Body of Mrs
Mary Edwards Relict of Mr.
Richard Edwards who
Deceased April ye 19 1723
Aged 62 years.

Seventeenth-century Hartford was no stranger to scandal, as the story of Richard Edwards and Mary, his second wife, vividly proves.

In 1667 Richard Edwards, 20, married 22-year-old Elizabeth Tuttle of New Haven. During two decades of marriage

admitted to full communion in the First Congregational Church, and Richard later was appointed Queen's Attorney for Connecticut. Mary bore Richard another half dozen children before his death in 1718.

No one knows where Elizabeth Tuttle Edwards is buried. The only son Elizabeth bore Richard, named Timothy, became the father of the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, one of the greatest religious figures in American history.



#11 Mary Skinner (1731-1772)

Here Lies Interd ye Body
of Mrs. Mary wife of Mr.
John Skinner, Junr. who
Departed this Life May
ye 23d, AD 1772 in ye
42nd Year of her Age
with 10 of her Children
by her Side who all
Died Soon After they
ware Born

In the 1600s and 1700s, most parents buried at least one, if not more, of their children. Evidence of this grim reality can be found on gravestones throughout the Ancient Burying Ground memorializing sons

and daughters who died from disease or accidents.

Mary Whiting was 17 when she wed John Skinner. During their 24-year marriage, she bore 12 children, only to watch helplessly as 10 of them quickly died of unrecorded causes that might have included prematurity, complications of delivery, or congenital defects. Every delivery would have endangered Mary's life as well, and she may have died during or shortly after the birth of her last child.

Tour continues on back →

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Cover illustration: gravestone of Dr. Thomas Langrell of Hartford, drowned June 15, 1757, age 29.