

**INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM**

**NHDHR INVENTORY # EXE0042**

**Name, Location, Ownership**

- 1. Historic name: Plains Cemetery/Old Cemetery/ Winter Street Cemetery
- 2. District or area: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Street and number: Front and Winter streets, Railroad Avenue
- 4. City or town: Exeter
- 5. County: Rockingham
- 6. Current owner: Town of Exeter

**Function or Use**

- 7. Current use(s): Cemetery
- 8. Historic use(s): Burying ground

**Architectural Information**

- 9. Style: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Architect/builder: Unknown
- 11. Source: \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Construction date: ca. 1743/1823 (walls)
- 13. Source: Research, Inspection
- 14. Alterations, with dates: see text
- 15. Moved? no  yes  date: N/A

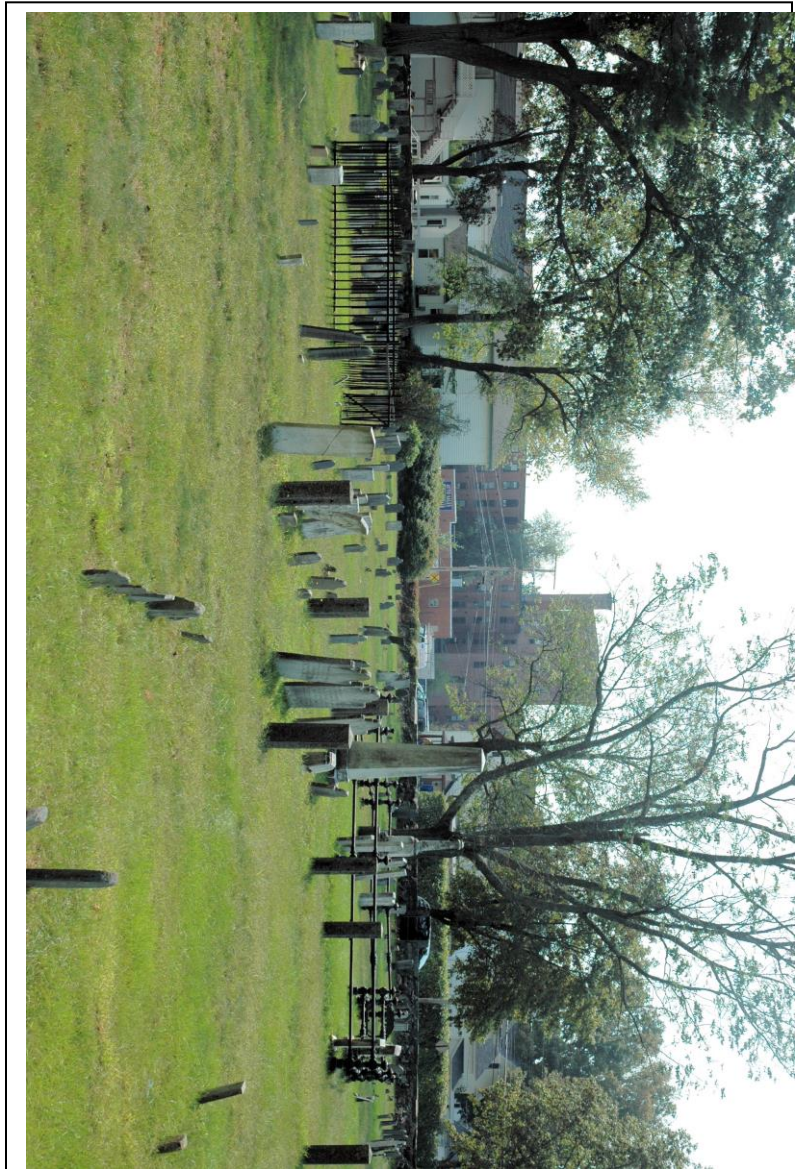
**Exterior Features**

- 16. Foundation: N/A
- 17. Cladding: N/A
- 18. Roof material: N/A
- 19. Chimney material: N/A
- 20. Type of roof: N/A
- 21. Chimney location: N/A
- 22. Number of stories: N/A

- 23. Entry location: Gates, southwest, northwest walls
- 24. Windows: N/A  
Replacement? no  yes  date: N/A

**Site Features**

- 25. Setting: Mixed-use neighborhood
- 26. Outbuildings: N/A
- 27. Landscape features: Burial ground, stone walls, mature trees
- 28. Acreage: 2.9 acres
- 29. Tax map/parcel: 73/188
- 30. UTM reference: 19.339960.4860210



35. Photo #1 Direction: S  
36. Date: September 2011  
37. Image file name: EXE0042\_01  
Winter Street Cemetery interior looking towards Front Street, (?) and Janvrin family enclosures

31. USGS quadrangle and scale: Exeter, 1:25000

**Form prepared by**

- 32. Name: Laura B. Driemeyer, Kari Laprey
- 33. Organization: Preservation Company, Kensington, NH
- 34. Date of survey: September 2011

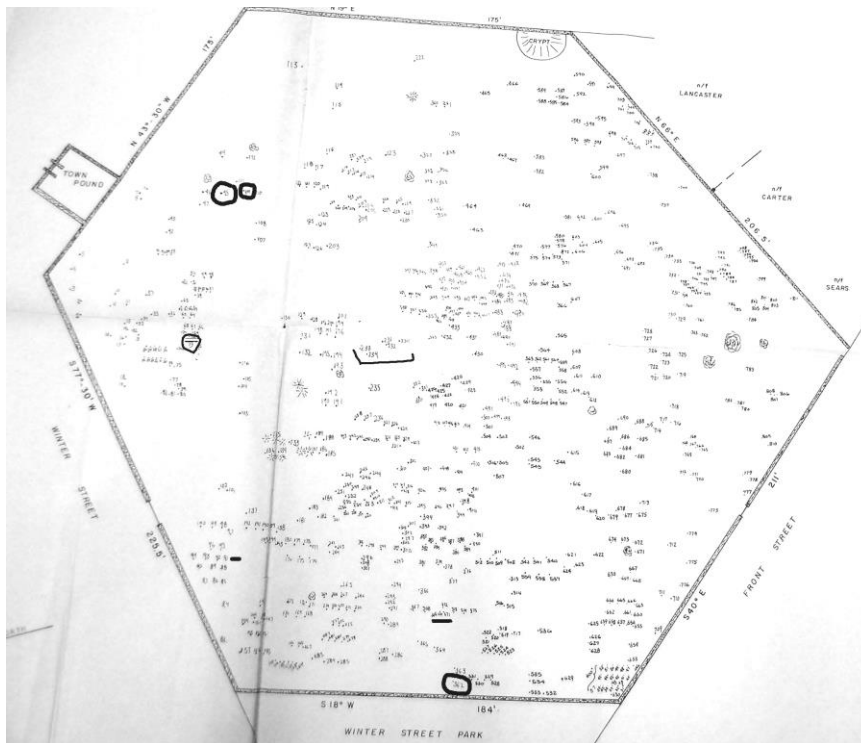
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39. LOCATION MAP:



40. PROPERTY MAP:



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**41. Historical Background and Role in the Town or City's Development:**Winter Street Cemetery History

The Winter Street Cemetery, known originally as the Plains cemetery, was Exeter's fourth burying ground (Bagnall 2000:3; Bell 1888:408-414). The cemetery is located west of the downtown Exeter area, just west of the railroad and industrial corridor. The cemetery is bounded by three streets. The streets form a triangle, but the cemetery is hexagonal in plan, with each corner of the triangle cut off. Along the southwest side is Front Street (NH 111), the main historic route to points southwest of town. Along the northwest side is Winter Street, which connects Front with Main Street on the route west to Brentwood and Epping. The third roadway, Railroad Avenue is the nineteenth-century name for an early short cross street along the east side.

The land that became the Winter Street Cemetery was bequeathed to the town by Colonel John Gilman (1676-1742) in his 1738 Will (Metcalf 1914: 711-712). In it he gave to the town of Exeter

forever for a burying place parte of that triangular piece of land in the Comon field afores<sup>d</sup> that lyes near that which was lately the dwelling house of Sam<sup>ll</sup> Sibley late of Exeter afores<sup>d</sup> between the Road that leads from the Meeting house & that from the lanes end in Exeter afores<sup>d</sup> to Kingston provided S<sup>d</sup> Town fence the Same within three years after my decease... (Metcalf 1914: 711).

The hexagonal-shaped parcel given to the town was that left over after each of his three sons Nicholas, Samuel, and Nathaniel received a half-acre corner lot. Gilman was the son of Councilor John Gilman (1624-1708), an important figure in Exeter's seventeenth-century government. The younger Gilman followed in his father's footsteps, serving as selectman in Exeter at least twice and as Representative from 1716-1722 (Chapin 1974:[8]).

The town did meet Gilman's stipulation that the cemetery be fenced within three years after his decease, erecting the first wooden fencing in 1743 (Town Records 1740-1797:23). Town records suggest the fences were replaced or rebuilt every twenty or thirty years. For instance, in March 1793 the town voted that the selectmen repair the "Upper Burying Yard Fence" (Town Records 1740-1797:461). An excerpt from "Historical Exeter" in the "Evening Gazette" of April 1898, likely referring to the early nineteenth century before the construction of the stone walls in the 1820s, indicates:

The old burying ground was surrounded by a two-board fence with two gates, one on Front street for white people, and one at the back for colored people. The latter were all buried in the northeast corner of the yard [near Railroad Avenue]. The bier house, so called, stood about where the Greeley house stands now [on Front Street at Railroad Avenue], at the southeast corner (Exeter Historical Society).<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century the town decided to surround the burying ground with a more permanent structure. In January 1822 the town voted that

the Selectmen be authorized to contract for a Stone Fence such as they shall think the interest of the town requires to enclose the Burying ground at the Plains and such portion of the town land as can be conveniently enclosed with it (Town Records 1815-1829: 155).

<sup>1</sup> The Greeley House is shown on the 1892 Hurd map.

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In March 1823 the town then voted that the sum of \$325 be raised for walling the burying ground (Town Records 1815-1829:187). The capstones on the walls feature cape chisel quarry marks, confirming a pre-1830 date of construction. The walls have been rebuilt several times since that time including ca. 1880 and most recently in 1998 (*Exeter News-Letter* 16 March 1961; Dufour 2011.)

The Winter Street Cemetery was Exeter's primary burying ground for roughly 100 years, from the time of its establishment in 1743 to ca. 1850, though it continued to be used into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with a few additional internments in the twentieth century. The majority of extant stones, however, date to the period ca. 1800 to ca. 1870. This, however, may be more indicative of how many stones have been lost from the earlier period, or that only footstones were used to mark the earlier graves. The last authorized burial occurred in 1909 though the cemetery does have stones for one family from the 1960s. The earliest dated stone is 1735 (Mary Gilman), raising the possibility the land was used by the Gilmans for burial purposes and thus was one reason Gilman bequeathed the land to the town. In addition to the burial of some of the town's freed blacks in the northeast section, paupers are also thought to have been buried in that section. The graves for the latter are generally marked only by a stone or rock, most without any form of identification (Exeter Historical Society files).

The establishment of the Exeter Cemetery nearby by a private association in 1844 supplanted the Winter Street site as the town's primary burying ground. The new cemetery is located southeast of the Winter Street Cemetery, south of Front Street between Linden Street and the railroad tracks. It was created by state charter as a private entity, has been expanded over the years, and measured over thirty acres by the late 1880s. The Exeter Cemetery, in keeping with emerging ideas about cemeteries as landscaped sites, the grounds included plotted burial sites, paths, trees, and other picturesque elements. Burials in the "Old Cemetery" continued on family plots through the late nineteenth century.

Since the supplanting of the Winter Street Cemetery as the town's primary burying ground it has been subjected to periods of neglect, vandalism, followed by efforts to restore the site and repair any damaged stones and the stone wall. The historian Charles H. Bell noted the site had generally fell into disrepair by the 1880s but a local resident had recently taken "steps that resulted in the appropriation by the town of a sum of money for the restoration and improvement of the burying-place" (Bell 1888:410). In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the cemetery received further attention in response to its deteriorating condition. By this time at least thirty-five head stones had broken off and were lying on the ground. Consequently funds were procured at a town meeting ca. 1910 to reset the stones and for general improvements to the cemetery grounds. Exeter resident Elizabeth K. Folsom spearheaded these improvement efforts while also systematically documenting the stones then visible in the cemetery. (Exeter Historical Society files). New iron gates manufactured by the Stewart Iron Works Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, were installed ca. 1910 on the Winter and Front street sides, along with a new gate to the pound (**Photos 2, 5, 7**). In the same period, the D.A.R. placed white marble markers supplied by the US War Department, to mark the graves of fourteen Revolutionary soldiers (**Photo 27**). The new stones included the name and rank of the soldier in raised letters on a sunken shield. The stones were in addition to rather than replacements of any original gravestones. The graves to receive these new stones were those of Captain Benjamin Boardman, Samuel Dutch, Noah Emery, Jr., Nathaniel Folsom, Samuel Folsom, John Taylor Gilman, John Ward Gilman, Nicholas Gilman, Samuel Gilman, Jonathan Hill, Benjamin Leavitt, William Parker, Enoch Rowe, and Jeremiah Smith (Exeter Historical Society files).

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By the 1980s the cemetery was again suffering from neglect with more stones broken and deteriorated conditions throughout the site. At the time the cemetery was being maintained by the town's Park and Recreation Department. The Exeter Historical Society initiated a fundraising effort to foster preservation of the historic site. In the late 1990s the Exeter Cemetery Association Trustees took over care of the site and initiated a three-year project to restore the cemetery including mending broken stones (*The Exeter News-Letter* 1998). George Dufour thoroughly investigated the site by probing for stones, creating a grid and plotting the location of each stone. This effort uncovered over thirty-five hand-carved fieldstones (Bagnall 2000:2-3). A database of all the stones, with names and any biographical data and inscriptions was created, along with a new map locating the stones, keyed to the database.<sup>2</sup> The Exeter Cemetery Association Trustees had responsibility for the maintenance of the cemetery from 1998 to 2004. During that time they expended roughly \$50,000 on restoring the cemetery, including rebuilding sections of the wall along Front and Winter streets in particular, resetting the granite posts supporting the gates, repairing the gates, and installing cobblestones between the Winter Street gate and street. Since that time the care of the grounds again has been under the supervision of the Exeter Parks and Recreation Department (Dufour 2011).

Development of Area Around Cemetery

The Winter Street Cemetery is located close to the West End Railroad and Industrial District. Most of the existing structures along Front and Winter streets, and Railroad Avenue are mid-to-late-nineteenth-century residential and industrial buildings. Historic maps suggest only two of the three corners abutting the cemetery were ever developed. The 1802 Merrill map, the earliest known nominative map of the area to date, seems to show a pair of buildings on the southeast corner, facing Front Street, and one in the northeast corner facing Railroad Avenue (Merrill 1802). A small number of other residences are present along Front Street.

By the mid-nineteenth century the railroad had arrived in Exeter, and crossed Front Street less than 500 feet southeast of the cemetery. At that time the depot was located on Front Street, just southeast of Railroad Avenue. The 1845 Dow map shows a house, owned by David Lang, on the southeast corner, fronting on Front Street; a small house owned by Mrs. Batchelder is near the northeast wall and fronts on Railroad Avenue. The pound is to the northwest of Mrs. Batchelder's house. A few houses are present on the east side of Railroad Avenue and a few additional houses are present on the other two streets, fronting on the cemetery parcel. The 1857 Chace map shows a dramatic change to the area east of the cemetery, along the railroad tracks in the form of industry. In addition, a "Hearse House" is located within the cemetery along the Front Street frontage. Inexplicably, however, no buildings are shown on any of the triangular parcels abutting the cemetery.

By 1874 the landscape around the cemetery has further changed significantly with new residential and industrial development. In addition, by this time, the cemetery was used only occasionally for internments. These physical transformations are in evidence particularly in the 1884 and 1896 Bird's-eye views which provide the first three-dimensional views of the cemetery located to date. The 1884 view of the "old cemetery" shows a different landscape from the present-day one, with a row of trees along the eastern side of the cemetery and small clusters of trees adjacent to the west corner and northwest walls. To the west is considerable residential development along Front Street while to the east, paralleling the railroad tracks, are several industrial buildings. Only the southeast corner adjacent to the cemetery has buildings, a small cape on Railroad Avenue and a large building, likely the Greeley & Sons Marble Works (Wellge 1884). Twelve years later even more residential

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the map and database is available at the Exeter Cemetery Association Trustees office. The Exeter Historical Society only has a copy of the database.

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development has occurred in the vicinity of the cemetery, including two new houses immediately southeast of the cemetery (Moore 1896).

In 1893 the town built a new one-room schoolhouse on Winter Street, across from the cemetery (Merrill 1988:349). Just nine years later the building was moved and a larger building with four classrooms was erected on the site. The Exeter Presbyterian Church acquired the building in 2006 from St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church who had used it as their Parish Center. Before that it had been owned by the Knights of Columbus since 1955 after the town closed the school (Aten 2003:100).

The triangular parcel adjacent to the cemetery at the intersection of Front and Winter streets had been maintained as neighborhood park in the late nineteenth and early twentieth by the property's owner, Mrs. Charles Marseilles. In 1906 it was sold and a group of local residents set out to make it a park permanently. Rock maples and woodbines were planted along the cemetery wall. In 1907 the town accepted the park, which came to be known as West End Park (Merrill 1988:77). Now the park is a children's playground.

Overview of Exeter History relevant to broad patterns of the community's history and culture<sup>3</sup>

The history of the town from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century has several distinct phases. Its earliest history is characterized by one of Puritans seeking religious freedom from governments on both sides of the Atlantic and an economy based on farming and the lumber industry. Most of this early phase predates the establishment of the Winter Street Cemetery but some of the descendants of the early settlers who rose to prominence and played important roles in state and national politics in the coming century can be found in the cemetery. By the 1760s, during the emerging conflict with England, Exeter emerged as an important early political center, with a significant role in the development of the state constitution and the Continental Congress. In the nineteenth century the town emerged as a key industrial center with textile mills and other large-scale manufactories, many located near the railroad that had arrived in town in the early 1840s. Many of Exeter's residents who played central roles in these broad patterns of Exeter's history and culture are buried in the Winter Street Cemetery.

The town of Exeter was settled in 1630 by Reverend John Wheelwright, a Puritan minister seeking religious freedom from the governments of both England and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He brought his congregation from Newburyport, Massachusetts, to the falls of the Squamscott River to found the Exeter plantation. This location was far enough from both the "wild" port of Strawberry Banke and the Massachusetts Bay Colony to give the plantation autonomy.

Lumber became the early economic mainstay of the settlement. By 1638, John Wheelwright had built a saw mill at the falls of the Exeter River, the Gilman family built another saw mill in 1647, and the town soon became influential in the lumber industry. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, other sawmills were built at falls further up the Exeter River, at the present location of Pickpocket Falls and others. Lumber roads were constructed to the interior; by 1650 Epping Road had been established as a main thoroughfare west from the Squamscott River.

The settlers moved into the outlying areas of town throughout the eighteenth century. These farmers cleared fields for crops and grazing animals and established large, self-sufficient farms, each producing most things needed by the family.

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<sup>3</sup> The following largely draws upon an earlier document prepared by Preservation Company, "Exeter," Project Area E (1990):2-5.

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Exeter also developed as a regionally significant shipbuilding center, with lumber yards and shipbuilding facilities lining the banks of the Squamscott River in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The river, a tidal waterway, provided the town with easy access to the ocean and became the focal point for industry and transportation in the region into the middle of the nineteenth century. By that time, however, natural silting made the channels too shallow for larger ships to pass (War Department 1910). However, the railroad had arrived in Exeter in 1842 and soon became a primary means of transport for goods.

During the rebellious years preceding the Revolution, unofficial sessions or assemblies were held in Exeter, away from the seat of royal government in Portsmouth. The First Provincial Congress of New Hampshire met in Exeter in July 1774. After the overthrow of the royal governor in 1775, Exeter became the unofficial seat of the new independent government, with the meeting of several additional Provincial Congresses. At the Fifth meeting in January 1776 in Exeter the new "temporary" state constitution was drawn up, as authorized by the Continental Congress. New Hampshire participated in the formation of the national constitution, sending Nicholas Gilman of Exeter to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Exeter remained the central location of state government during the struggle to build a new government after the Revolution. The temporary constitution remained in place until a new state constitution was drawn up in 1784. Because the towns in the Connecticut and Merrimack River Valleys could not identify with government in Exeter, the center of government was moved to Concord, which allowed for stronger representation from all parts of the state.

During the Revolution, the emphasis of the region's economy shifted from international timber trade to internal transportation and shipbuilding. The boats that traveled the inland waterways, known as gundalows, were developed for this purpose and operated in this region for over 200 years, into the twentieth century. Used primarily as a cargo ships, they carried local bricks, granite, and cord wood up and down the rivers. In the nineteenth century they carried supplies of cotton and raw materials to the mills.

One special influence in the development of the character of the town was Exeter Academy, established in 1781. The Academy grew to become one of the largest and most respected secondary schools in the nation.<sup>4</sup> This facility has played a significant role in the local economy since its establishment.

In the years before the Revolution, manufacturing efforts had been fairly small and locally based, with a reliance on imported English manufactured goods. After the Revolution, it became necessary to manufacture products locally, regionally, and nationally. This led, in the early nineteenth century, to the development of a variety of small-scale industries, managed and financed locally. It also coincided with the development of large textile mills in the state's major towns such as Manchester, Nashua, Dover, Somersworth, and Exeter. These mills were financed by large corporations, often from outside the state. These developments, in turn, contributed to the decline of the seacoast as the primary commercial center with the emergence of the new industrial centers in the Merrimack River valley.

In Exeter, the falls of the Squamscott/Exeter River were again the site of change and growth in the town center. The Exeter Manufacturing Company was chartered in 1827 and construction began the following year of the new cotton mill. Cotton from the south was shipped to Portsmouth and brought up river until 1842, when the railroad reached Exeter. The Exeter Mill, however, due to its location continued to rely on the river for its primary source of transportation.

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<sup>4</sup> Most of the campus is located in the Front Street Historic District.

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The arrival of the railroad to the west end, a largely undeveloped area of town, with the exception of the Winter Street Cemetery and a few houses along Front Street, allowed that area to emerge as the industrial center of town, in addition to the railroad center. The railroad facilities included a roundhouse, freight house, and passenger and freight depots. A variety of industry developed in the area. The largest, the Exeter Machine Works (established 1864) manufactured engines, boilers, and heating equipment. Other important manufacturers in the area included the Rockingham Machine Company, Exeter Brass Works (whose early twentieth-century President Mrs. Elizabeth K. Folsom played an active role in the early documentation and preservation of the cemetery), and the R.E. Prescott company. These industries were support industries to the large textile manufacturing companies (Merrill 1988: 477). Other types of industry used local materials to manufacture finished goods. These included Lamson's Pottery, the Exeter Marble Works (located adjacent to the cemetery at the intersection of Front Street and Railroad Avenue), and Gale Bros Shoe (located adjacent to the east side of the railroad tracks on the southeast side of Front Street).

The demand for labor in the new mills attracted new residents including many Polish, Italian, and French-Canadian immigrant workers, changing the character of the population. The population of Exeter quadrupled in this period from 881 in 1830 to 3,640 in 1880. There was extensive real estate speculation and development by some of the town's businessmen. New residential neighborhoods were developed in the west end to house the new workers.

Notable Individuals Interred in Cemetery

The Winter Street Cemetery was the primary burial site for town residents during its over 100-year use from 1743 to ca. 1870, with occasional use after that time. Consequently, many of the town's individuals who played significant roles in the state's political and industrial history are buried there. In addition, it contains not only those prominent individuals but also their families. Exeter also had a small but recognized enslaved and freed African-American community, at least two of whom are known to have served in the state militia in the Revolutionary War and are buried in the Winter Street Cemetery.

Important political figures buried in the yard include two New Hampshire Governors, Jeremiah Smith (**Photo 19**) and John Taylor Gilman (**Photo 27**). The long-lived Jeremiah Smith (1759-1842), a graduate of Harvard and Queen's (now Rutgers) College, served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. He held multiple state and federal offices, including in the state legislature (1788-1791) and as U.S. Representative from New Hampshire (1791-1799). He was a delegate to the New Hampshire state constitutional convention (1791-1792). Other state offices included U.S. Attorney for New Hampshire (1791-1801), state court judge in New Hampshire (1800-1802; federal judge (1801-1802), chief justice of New Hampshire state supreme court (1802-1809, 1813-1816), judge of probate of Rockingham County, and Governor of New Hampshire (1809-1810) (Exeter Historical Society files; Political Graveyard). John Taylor Gilman (1753-1828), a native of Exeter and member of the locally and state significant family, had an equally lengthy tenure in state politics. He served in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. His political service included several terms as a member of the New Hampshire state house of representatives (1779-1781, 1810-11), Delegate to the Continental Congress from New Hampshire (1782-1783), New Hampshire state treasurer (1783-1789, 1791-1794), and several terms as New Hampshire Governor (1794-1805, 1813-1816) (Political Graveyard).

The cemetery includes over ten more men identified as having served in the Revolutionary War. In the early twentieth century the D.A.R. added tablets to their burial sites (**Photo 27**). They include those of Captain Benjamin Boardman, Samuel Dutch, Noah Emery, Jr., Nathaniel Folsom, Samuel Folsom, John Ward Gilman, Nicholas Gilman (d. 1783), Samuel Gilman, Jonathan Hill, Benjamin



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Leavitt, William Parker, and Enoch Rowe. At least two freed blacks who fought in the Revolutionary War are buried in the cemetery. Tobias Cutler (d. 1834), a slave of Enoch Hale of Rindge, New Hampshire, who freed Cutler at age 21, enlisted in the Continental Army in 1781 and after the war settled in Exeter. His wife Dorothy (d. 1835) is buried next to him. Jude Hall (ca. 1760-ca. 1827), a slave of Philemon Blake of Kensington, fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill and served in the militia until the end of the Revolutionary War.

Other noteworthy New Hampshire citizens (and Exeter residents) buried in the Winter Street Cemetery include George Sullivan (1772-1838), Attorney General of New Hampshire and son of Revolutionary War hero General John Sullivan. Sullivan served in the New Hampshire State House of Representatives in 1805 and 1813, as State Attorney General 1805-06 and again 1815-1835. He served one term as a U.S. Representative 1811-1813 and was a member of the New Hampshire State Senate from 1814-16 (Political Graveyard). General Nathaniel Folsom (d. 1790), father-in-law of John Taylor Gilman, was Commander of all New Hampshire troops in the Revolution. Dr. Samuel Tenney (1748-1816), though a surgeon in one of the Rhode Island regiments, had settled in Exeter before the war and subsequently married an Exeter woman. In addition to contributing articles to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences publications, he wrote the topographical description of Exeter for the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. His political service included seven years as a representative in Congress (1800-1807) and at the state level delegate to the New Hampshire state constitutional convention in 1791 and probate judge from 1793-1800 (Bell 1876:32; Political Graveyard). William Parker, a Harvard graduate (1751) also served in the war, and was register of probate (Exeter Historical Society files).

The cemetery includes the graves of several early prominent town ministers, including Rev. Nicholas Gilman (d. 1748), member of an early and well-known Exeter family. In addition, the Reverend Daniel Rogers (1707-1785), of the First Parish Church, was originally buried in the cemetery, along with his daughters. He was subsequently disinterred and buried in Exeter Cemetery (Exeter Cemetery Association Trustees files).

At least seven Civil War soldiers are also buried in the cemetery. They include Hezron G. Van Duzee a sergeant in the 13th Regiment of New Hampshire Volunteers, who was killed in the battle of Cold Harbor, Virginia, (d. 1864) and his brother John C., who served in the same regiment and fought in the same battle (d. 1865).

In addition many families who played important roles in the town's economic development, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are buried in the Winter Street Cemetery. They include the Gilmans, the Folsoms, the Janvrins, and the Bickfords to name just a few. And while the cemetery contains many notable individuals of state and national significance, it also contains many individuals of all classes and races who resided in Exeter in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Near the Cutlers is the African-American Charles G. Tash (1794-1864), son of Oxford and E. Tash, who served in the family of the late Nathaniel Gilman.

**42. Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts:**

136. Public and private cemeteries and burials

**43. Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation:**

The Winter Street Cemetery, originally known as the Plains Cemetery, then later the Old Cemetery, is a characteristic mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century town cemetery. Mortared granite stone

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walls define all sides of the hexagonal parcel (**Photos 3, 4, 6**). The cemetery can be entered through gates on the Front and Winter streets sides (**Photos 2, 5**). The minimal landscaping is characteristic of early town cemeteries, denoting its utilitarian purpose, and before the landscaping movements of the nineteenth century. No paths or roads are present and the flat site is primarily open grass, with a small grove of tall, mature pines opposite the Winter Street gate (**Photo 9**) and a small number of deciduous trees scattered throughout, likely only added in the late nineteenth century or later.<sup>5</sup> A flagpole, donated by the American Legion, holds three flags including a United States flag and one bearing the "Don't Tread on Me" motto.

Typical of such cemeteries, the funerary monuments which number over 250, are predominantly tablet headstones, footstones (some not inscribed), fieldstones, and a small number of pedestal stones (**Photos 10-29**). Two fenced areas are present; and posts survive for a third one, all in the western part (**Photos 20, 21**). The stones are laid out in rough rows, generally running north-south, with the stones largely facing in a westerly direction in characteristic fashion. The spacing between stones varies. The older stones tend to be in the westerly section of the cemetery. Families are sometimes grouped together, or husband and wife have been laid next to each other but not always. Whereas the earliest stones are labeled with just one name, nineteenth-century stones are often inscribed with more than one name. In characteristic fashion the headstones become plainer over time, though a number of the mid-nineteenth century stones still employ some decorative carving but the stone is typically rectangular. The greatest number of stones (roughly two-thirds) date to the period 1800 to 1870 which may indicate not only the absence of stones for earlier graves but also the loss of the older stones due to the passage of time and vandalism. In addition, the increase in numbers is also partly due to the considerable increase in population in these decades.

On the northerly side is the small square pound that abuts the cemetery wall and also has stone walls but of a later period (**Photo 7**). On the east wall is a receiving tomb, with the opening (now sealed) on Railroad Avenue (**Photo 8**). The raised mound abuts the wall inside the cemetery.

Stone walls define all six sides of the perimeter of the cemetery. The walls are constructed of mortared rough-cut, irregularly shaped and coursed granite stones with a cap of granite blocks of varied lengths. Many of the cap stones feature pre-1830 cape chisel quarry marks. There is considerable variation in the size of the wall stones with some extremely large ones on the west wall in particular. The cemetery can be entered from Front Street or Winter Street, through early twentieth-century iron gates, manufactured by The Stewart Iron Works Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio (**Photo 25**).<sup>6</sup> The narrower Front Street entry is a single gate while the wider Winter Street entry is a double-leaf gate. The bow-and-picket iron gates have a small shield with the manufacturer's name located on the cross braces between the middle and bottom rails. The gates are suspended from older granite posts which have arched tops. The posts still have pintles and loops on the front faces that held the earlier gates.

The markers in this cemetery include approximately 200 headstones, some foot stones, and nearly forty hard-carved fieldstones (Dufours 2000). Clearly some have been lost over time. The marker styles and the imagery on them are representative of those popular between the mid-eighteenth century and the late nineteenth century, when the majority of internments occurred in the cemetery. Most of the headstones include visual symbols and biographical date of the deceased. Some also

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed examination of town records for the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century might provide some information about the chronology for any plantings in the cemetery, including the grove of trees.

<sup>6</sup> The Stewart Iron Company, which is still in business, is one of the largest manufacturers of iron fences used in cemeteries. Established in 1886 in Covington, Kentucky, the company opened a second location in Cincinnati in 1903. They closed it just eleven years later in 1914. <<http://chicora.org/cemetery-fences.html>>

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include epitaphs. Also characteristic of the funerary art of that time period, slate was the most commonly used material until the second decade of the nineteenth century, then marble and soapstone became the preferred material. While the preponderance of memorials is headstones, set directly in the ground, or fieldstones, the cemetery does include a handful of different monuments including a die, base, and cap; obelisk; box tomb, and pedestal tomb with a hipped roof. They range from rough field stones with chiseled lettering, to eighteenth-century slate and schist markers with elaborate carving, and simpler marble and sandstone stones from the later nineteenth-century period. There are many unmarked stones, others worn and broken. Nearly twenty-five stones documented by Elizabeth Folsom in the early twentieth century are no longer present (Dufours 2000:20). Many or all of the stones in the cemetery have been photographed and indexed on [www.gravematter.com](http://www.gravematter.com). When this copyrighted pictorial documentation is combined with the listing of stones and the location map prepared by the Dufours and the Exeter Cemetery Association Trustees, a fairly complete picture and list of stones in the burying ground can be established. However, the carvers and manufacturers of most of the stones in the cemetery have not been documented or researched.

The gravestone art in the Winter Street Cemetery follows typical trends. The first burials from the 1740s are marked by slate stones with death's head design (**Photo 23**). This was the predominant decoration through the 1760s. The cherub design was popular on slate stones from the 1780s-early 1800s. Many slate headstones with urn and weeping willow carvings date from the 1810s through the 1840s (**Photo 28**). Marble was introduced in the cemetery in the 1850s and had replaced slate entirely by the end of the 1860s. There are a number of marble headstones from the 1860s and 1870s and some as late as the early 1900s (**Photo 29**). They are usually members of early families buried in the old family plot. These later markers are simple marble slabs with little ornament and segmental arch or square tops. There is one box tomb and a few obelisks (**Photos 27, 16, 20, 21**).

A small number of the eighteenth-century stones have the stone carvers' names on them or have been attributed to a particular carver based on characteristic design features. Many, however, have not yet been identified by researchers. Identified names include J. Parker, T. C. Eastman, and the Lamson family, the best known of the carvers. The earliest identified stone in the cemetery, that of Mary Gilman (d. 1735), is attributed to the Lamson family, a well-known group of carvers from Charlestown, Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> The stone of Samuel Gilman (d. 1785) has been attributed to Jeremiah Lane, based on stylistic similarities to his other known work (Knoblock 1996:79).<sup>8</sup> Typical details of the period on this stone include a male face flanked by wings, pinwheel finials, scrolled borders, and well-formed mixed lettering. Though the Gilman stone lacks scrolled borders it does have the other common elements of stones of this period. In addition, the material brownish-gray schist) and certain elements of the lettering, such as the first "E" that occupies two lines and the slant numeral "5" are characteristic features of Lane's identified work (Knoblock 1996: 78-80).

#### Location and Setting

The Winter Street Cemetery is located on the west edge of the downtown. A small triangular park is on the corner of Front and Winter streets. Always an undeveloped space, West End Park is now the site of a Kids Park with modern playground equipment. In the northern corner, between Winter and Railroad, a short cross street is unnamed. On the east side of the cemetery, private land includes several buildings fronting on Front Street and a new large duplex on Railroad Avenue which recently replaced a small cape long on the site. On the east side of Railroad Avenue, set close to the railroad tracks are brick industrial buildings. On the other streets are predominantly nineteenth- and

<sup>7</sup> For information on the Lamsons see Ralph L. Tucker, "The Lamson Family Gravestone Carvers of Charlestown and Malden, Massachusetts," 151-217.

<sup>8</sup> Many stones in nearby Hampton and Kensington have been attributed to Lane (Knoblock 1996: 74-111).

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early-twentieth-century residential buildings and one former public school, now a church. To the north of the cemetery, at the intersection of Winter Street and Railroad Avenue is a small grassed plot with an anti-aircraft gun with a breech mechanism invented by an Exeter native, George Leonard Smith.

**Comparables**

Winter Street Cemetery was the fourth public cemetery established in Exeter, but it is the oldest one that survives intact. Here and throughout New England, stone grave markers were rarely erected until the very late 1600s, or early 1700s. There were no markers or mounds remaining in Exeter's first burial site by the time Charles H. Bell wrote his 1888 *History of the Town of Exeter*.

The second burying ground, known variously as the "Thing Burying Ground" and later as the **Gas Works Cemetery** because of its later proximity to the town's nineteenth-century manufactured gas facility, is located on a rise at the corner of Water and Green streets (see photos). Established in the late 1600s, the site has less than twenty stones remaining including that of Samuel Dudley, minister, and members of the Nathaniel Ladd and Jonathan Thyng families. The grounds include slate stones with decorated tympanums, a brick box tomb, and a small area enclosed by a granite post and iron railing fence containing a die, base, and cap monument, and a mix of carved slate headstones and footstones. The inscriptions were transcribed and published in 1864 in the *New England Historical Genealogical Society Register* and later in *Historical Collections of the New Hampshire Antiquarian Society* in 1875 and date primarily to the eighteenth century (Bell 1888: 408; Exeter Historical Society files).

The third cemetery, the Congregational Church yard, begun in 1696, was on Meetinghouse Hill (see photos). It was used for about fifty years. However, in the early 1800s after the Winter Street Cemetery had superseded it, the site was leveled and many of the stones were removed or buried, according to Bell. In 1938 a study was done in the cemetery, with soundings by an 18' iron rod to test for stones and a plan was made of each digging. When something was found, it was unearthed and documented. Thirty-nine places were excavated, fourteen stones with inscriptions (headstones and footstones) were found, along with one large table-top stone (no visible inscription) and two table-top stones with missing tablets. The stones dated to the first half of the eighteenth century. After excavation and cleaning, the stones were then relocated to near the church to suggest "the appearance of an ancient burial place" (Committees Report 1938).

In addition, scattered throughout Exeter are over twenty small graveyards, private family burying places that are not comparable to the Winter Street Cemetery as they are small and private. They, however, have been located and documented (Easton and Gustin 1999).

**44. National or State Register Criteria Statement of Significance:**

The Winter Street Cemetery, established in 1743, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the state level as a historic site under Criteria A, B, and C, and Criteria Consideration D. Under Criteria Consideration D the Winter Street Cemetery derives its primary significance from association with the evolving broad patterns of Exeter's history, from the graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, and from design features representative of common patterns. This public town burying ground is characteristic of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century town burying ground, as the principal place of local internment from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century for Exeter residents, including a number of individuals of transcendent importance owing to their roles in the Revolutionary War or serving in public office at the local, state, or federal level. It is of sufficient age and scope to represent patterns of early settlement and

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the values of a society generally. The collection of funerary art is representative of that used from the Colonial period to the late nineteenth century. The cemetery is eligible under Criterion A for its significance as the town burial ground whose creation and continuity reflected the broad patterns of the community's history and culture. The cemetery is eligible under Criterion B for its containment of persons of transcendent importance, including graves of New Hampshire's "founding fathers" and their families, colonial leaders, Revolutionary War veterans, and early congressmen. Under Criterion C, the cemetery is eligible for the funerary art, representative of the common and popular stylistic types and materials produced by local stone carvers for the only public Exeter cemetery from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

Criterion A: The Winter Street Cemetery is individually eligible under this criterion for its significance as the town burial ground whose creation and continuity reflected the broad patterns of the community's history and culture. The Winter Street Cemetery is part of Exeter's history as the town's fourth burying ground and the largest and most intact of the early public burying grounds. It was the only town burying ground for a 100-plus-year period beginning in 1743. Burials largely ceased by the 1880s, though a few occurred in the twentieth century including as late as the 1960s. Of the early town burying grounds, nothing remains of the first burying ground originally located on the northwest slope of Meetinghouse Hill near the first meetinghouse. The second burying ground later known as the Gas Works Cemetery, on the corner of Water and Green streets was a small cemetery with less than twenty stones remaining. The third burying ground, adjacent to the newer Meetinghouse was used for about 100 years and was largely replaced by the newer and larger Winter Street Cemetery. In addition, the Winter Street Cemetery contains the graves of Exeter residents of all classes and races, characteristic of an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century town cemetery. These include local, state, and federal government officials, jurists, local businessmen, physicians, and soldiers from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars but also the graves of ordinary citizens including a small number from the African-American community, and the poor.

Criterion B: The Winter Street Cemetery is individually eligible under this criterion due to the presence of so many graves of New Hampshire's "founding fathers" and their families, colonial leaders, Revolutionary War veterans and early congressmen. This collection meets the requirements for personages of "transcendent importance." In addition the cemetery includes the graves of a number of individuals who served in a number of state offices including two governors, several state legislators, judges, and county officers such as probate.

Criterion C: The Winter Street Cemetery is individually eligible under this criterion due to the representative collection of gravestone art, predominantly for the period ca. 1735 to ca. 1910. This is a finite collection of gravestones because it was the only public cemetery for Exeter during this period. The gravestones, though not high style, are representative examples of popular forms, styles, and materials of funerary art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They also represent the work of local craftsmen over a hundred-plus-year period. While a few stones can be attributed to particular craftsmen, including J. Parker, T.C. Eastman, Jeremiah Lane, and the Lamson family, more research is needed in this area.

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**45. Period of Significance:**

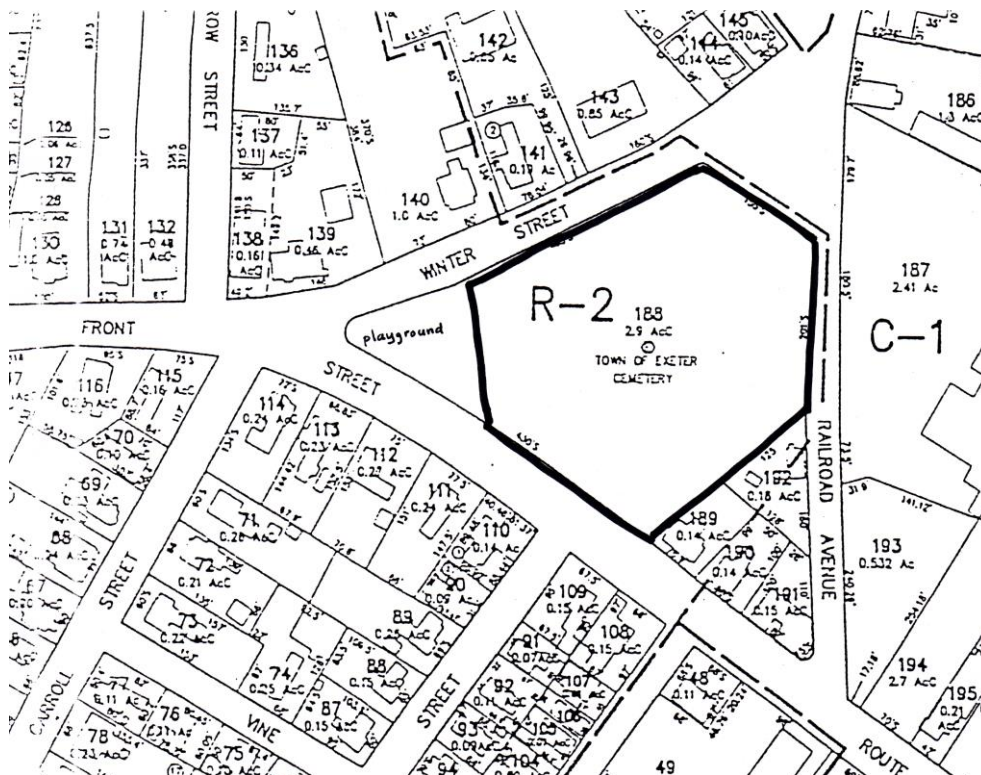
1735-1910

**46. Statement of Integrity:**

The Winter Street Cemetery retains integrity of location and setting as an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New England town cemetery, characterized by a flat, open space with no formal plantings and only mature conifer and deciduous trees in scattered locations. Though the site is now surrounded by nineteenth-century residential and industrial development, they do not compromise the setting. Streets on all sides of the cemetery act as a buffer between the grounds and the development, helping to keep a sense of openness. The only development directly adjacent to the cemetery is at the southeast corner, but historically buildings have always been in that location. The cemetery retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Though some markers have been lost or damaged over the years, the majority remain largely intact. The range of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slate, schist, marble, and sandstone funerary monuments are characteristic of regional funerary art of the period. Some of the eighteenth-century stones can be attributed to particular stone carvers, who combined local stylistic elements with popular design features of gravestones of the period. The cemetery retains integrity of feeling and association as an eighteenth and nineteenth-century town burying ground, where many of its residents were buried, from the prominent families to freed blackmen to unidentified paupers.

**47. Boundary Discussion:**

The boundary is the entirety of lot 188, tax map 73, with the exception of the roughly half-acre west corner, outside of the stone walls and now occupied as a children's playground.



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**48. Bibliography and/or References:**

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**Interviews**

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**Surveyor's Evaluation**

NR listed: individual   
 within district

Integrity: yes   
 no

NR eligible:  
 individual   
 within district   
 not eligible   
 more info needed

NR Criteria: A   
 B   
 C   
 D   
 E