

Rogers Cemetery

Transcribed October 1, 2000 by Eric Weber. [Revised 2/8/02]

This tiny family graveyard, the only one in Williamsburg, is surrounded on three sides by a large gravel pit, much of which is no longer being worked. The cemetery is on a knoll studded with tall pines, high above the surrounding excavations. It is most easily reached on foot by walking in from East Street in Goshen along the road used by the gravel trucks — a distance of a little under a mile.

There appear to be six graves, but I think one is imaginary. See note (a) below.

In memory of Miss
Tabitha Luce who
died May 20, 1789
in the 21 year of
her age

1

In Memory of Mrs.
Jane wife of Mr.
Silas Bassett who
died Feb 25th 1788
in the 29th year of
her age

2

In memory of Mr.
Rowland Rogers
who died May 25th
1826 in the 81 year
of his age

3

In memory of Mrs.
Lois Rogers wife of
Mr. Rolin Rogers
who died August 6
1816 in the 62 year
of her age

4

In memory of widow
Hannah wife of Capt.
Lemuel Butler who
died Septth 15 AD 1802
aged 75 years

5

Widow Han
nah Butler
Died AD 1802

6

NOTES:

- a. Five of these six apparent graves are marked with footstones as well as headstones; only Jane Bassett's grave clearly lacks a footstone. Stone 6, in a row with three larger headstones, appears to me to be a footstone that someone has mistakenly repositioned. If this is true, then it surely belongs at the foot of grave 5. The chances that two *different* Widow Hannah Butlers both died in 1802 in this remote corner of Williamsburg seem very small. At the foot of grave 5 there now stands a small footstone of irregularly broken, uncut schist — a material not used for any of the other head- or footstones — without any inscription. The surviving original footstone of grave 4 beside it is so similar in size, shape, material, and inscription to stone 6 that I believe they were carved by the same hand, and for the same purpose. I theorize that Hannah Butler's footstone was disturbed or fell over long after she was buried. It was found later by someone who, with all good intentions, mistook it for a headstone and reset it as one, in line with those of Rowland and Lois Rogers and Hannah herself. The same person, or perhaps even someone else, stood a scrap of local fieldstone at the foot of Hannah's real grave, and may have put a second small stone beside it as a footstone for the newly positioned "headstone". This last "footstone" now rests between two pine trees in front of Stone 6. Perhaps it was not placed there at all, but is just a naturally-occurring cobble or boulder raised into view by the trees' expanding roots. There is no visible inscription on it.
- b. Stone 5 has a circular flake missing from its inscription, about 5 inches in diameter. The missing letters, at which I have guessed, are underlined above. An interesting oddity is the way in

which the date was inscribed on this stone: the superscripted “th” comes *before* the “15”. Was this a mistake that the stone-carver just didn’t bother to correct?

- c. The death date on stone 1 is partly obscured by damage from a shotgun blast, but can still be read. The other surviving stones have not been vandalized and are, for the most part, easy to read. It is impossible to know how many other stones, if any, once stood here and are now gone. Apart from the barbarian marksman, most visitors seem to have treated this isolated site with respect.
- d. Only one — Jane Bassett — of the seven people whose names appear on these stones can be found in the vital records kept by Williamsburg’s town clerk.

Plan of the Cemetery

The perimeter is not marked, so there is nothing to indicate the original extent of the graveyard except the few stones that remain. They are arranged as shown below. Stones 1 and 2 are about twenty feet apart. The headstone inscriptions face approximately east.

