

The Early History of Tolland County, Connecticut

This series began in the Fall 2004 issue, page 56 which you should see for background and source information. It all comes through the courtesy of CFA Member #184, Leonard Chapman who sent the reprint for the CFA data collection. This is the smallest part of the series. Yet to come is information on "post offices," "town clerks," and censuses.

Burying Grounds

The first record of any burial in Tolland was made in the year 1785, and is in these words: "Ebenezer Eaton, a son of William Eaton, died in June the 27th day one thousand seven hundred and sixteen, (1716,) in the nineteenth year of his age, and was the first that was laid in the burying-place of the above said Tolland."

"Daniel Eaton, the son of William Eaton, died July the twentieth day, in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixteen, (July 20, 1716,) in the twenty-third year of his age, and was the second in the burying-place in the above said Tolland."

These young men were the sons of William Eaton, the first of that name in Tolland. of whom I have already spoken. It would seem that the inhabitants of Tolland, by a kind of common consent, set apart a portion of land where these young men were buried, and now included in the south burying-ground, as a public or common place of burial. Whether this was the only spot then used for that purpose, does not distinctly appear, nor does it appear that there was any action of the town or proprietors of the land upon this subject before 1720. At a town meeting held and recorded under date of August 8, 1720, the following vote was passed:

"At a town meeting in Tolland adjourned to the 8th day of the same month it was voted: that there shall be a burying-place where they did formerly bury in, about two acres.

"This vote constituted the whole action of the town at that time, and was deemed a sufficient appropriation and consecration of the ground for the purpose of burying the dead. This ground was then common land, and it was permitted to remain in common without being fenced, for about fourteen years. On the 11th day of December, 1784, the town passed the following vote:

"It is further agreed and voted at said meeting *to fence* the Burying-place in Tolland with a decent five rail fence; that is to say—post and rail fence in some convenient time in the year ensuing: Also voted to choose a committee to complete the fencing of the burying-place as aforesaid,—Sergt. Ephraim Grant, Ichabod Hatch are chosen a committee for to do or see said work well done."

In order to have the foregoing vote carried into effect, it became necessary to locate this ground; accordingly a survey was then made by Jonathan Delano, a selectman, and Zebulon West, surveyor, as follows :

"Whereas it was voted by the town of Tolland at a meeting on the 8th of August, 1720, that there should be a burying-place where some dead had before been buried, viz.: about two acres of land, and there being no survey of the same to be found on record: We the subscribers have this first day of March A. D. 1785, surveyed, measured and laid out for the town, two acres of land a little southward of Scungamug pond, containing within the same all the graves that are thereabout; bounding the same as followeth: Beginning at a white oak tree, marked, for the south-east corner—standing in the west line of Doctor James Stimson's land; from thence run with six degrees to the west, twenty- two rods and a half to a stake and heap of stones;—from thence run west twelve degrees to the south, fifteen rods to a stake and heap of stones;—thence run south, six degrees to the east twenty-two rods and a half to a stake, and heap of stones;—thence a straight line fifteen rods to the first mentioned white oak tree;—abutting east in said Doctor James Stimson, and west on Daniel Benton; south on the heirs of Barnabas Hinsdale. The above written recorded March 30, 1735." Signed by Jonathan Delano, selectman, Zebulon West, surveyor.

On the same day Daniel Benton gave a path one rod wide across his land to this burying-place. On the 16th day of March, 1761, the town passed the following vote:

"Voted to procure two pieces of land of about one acre in each in the northward part of the town for burying-places. Also voted that Timothy Benton, Capt. Isaac Hubbard and Mr. Stephen Steel be a committee to procure such pieces of land by their discretion."

On the fifth day of January, 1762, Timothy Benton gave the town of Tolland a deed of one acre of land for a burying-ground, to be used for that purpose, for the consideration of five pounds, lawful money. This is the burying-ground in the north-west part of the town. Jonathan Ladd, son of Jonathan Ladd, Jr., and Anna his wife, died August 25, 1762, aged two months and ten days, and was the first person laid in this burying-ground. The child was a brother of Eliab Ladd, father of Ariel Ladd, Esq., now of Tolland.

On the seventh of February, 1762, Nathan Flynt, for the consideration of five pounds lawful money, gave the town

of Tolland a deed of one acre of land for a burying-ground, which is now the ground in Scungamug village.

With the exception of the north-west, which has been kept in repair by those who felt an interest in its appearance, the town has taken charge of these burying-grounds, has appointed persons to take care of them, (called sextons,) and has done most that has been done to make them even respectable. On the ninth day of April, 1859, the town voted to purchase land to enlarge the south burying-ground, and grade and drain the one at Scungamug. On the thirteenth of April, 1859, the town procured a deed of land lying between the south burying-ground and the highway, which was graded and prepared at the expense of the town, and the town also drained and graded the ground at Scungamug, and erected a substantial stone fence on the side next the road, during the same year.