

ERECTED
IN MEMORY OF
D. BORDEN
DAVIS

Thanks to:

- * The Somerset Highway Department for their dedicated maintenance over the years,
- * Dolores Berge and Kathleen Maiato for their support of the preservation and restoration of monuments in the town cemeteries,
- * The Somerset Local Cultural Council for their financial support to print this self-guided tour,
- * The Somerset Historical Society for their support of historic community resources.

Somerset Historical Society

274 High Street

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Somerset Historical Society

Self-Guided Walking Tour
Palmer Street Cemetery

Welcome to the Palmer Cemetery. Please remember this is the final resting place of many of our Somerset friends' and neighbors' ancestors. Please note the following suggestions to make your visit pleasurable and respectful of the interred.

- Please follow cemetery rules.
- Please follow grassy pathways, and watch your step
- Please keep children close by and do not allow them to touch any monuments or headstones as damage may occur. The cemetery is not a playground.
- Please be respectful by keeping voices down, no foul language, and turn off car stereo when on grounds.
- Please refrain from touching any monuments or headstones. Some memorials are very fragile.
- Please take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footprints.
- Please get permission if visiting the cemetery after dark.

Death and Burial Traditions of the 19th Century

At the time of a death, curtains were drawn and clocks were stopped.

Mirrors were covered with crepe or veiling to prevent the deceased's spirit from being trapped in the looking glass. A wreath of laurel, yew, or boxwood tied with crepe or black ribbons was hung on the front door to alert passerby that a death had occurred. The body was watched over every minute until burial, hence the custom of "waking". The wake also served as a safeguard from burying someone who was not dead, but in a coma. Most wakes lasted three to four days to allow relatives to arrive from far away. The use of flowers and candles helped to mask the unpleasant odors in the room before embalming became common during and after the Civil War. The deceased were carried out of the house feet first, in order to prevent the spirit from looking back into the house and beckoning another member of the family to follow. Family photographs were also sometimes turned face-down to prevent any of the close relatives and friends of the deceased from being possessed by the spirit of the dead. Burial usually followed four days after death.

Grave robbery, often by doctors, was a problem in the 19th century as medical schools needed fresh cadavers for dissection classes. "Bricking-over" a grave was a way of guaranteeing some security after death. In the Victorian period people were concerned about being buried alive; a subject Edgar Allan Poe addressed in "The Premature Burial". The fear of being buried alive inspired coffin makers to design warning systems such as a bell on the grave which was connected by a chain to the inside of the coffin in cases of premature burial.

Cemetery Symbols

As you tour the cemetery you will run into various decorations on the headstones and monuments. The following describes the symbolism of the various decorations.

Anchor: Hope or eternal life, often found on a sailors' grave and the anchor is also symbolic of a seafaring occupation. A Masonic symbol for well hope.

Angel/Cherub: Guardians of a sacred place, servants of God, and divine wisdom of judgment.

Calla Lilly: Flower that represents beauty and symbolizes marriage.

Chain with Broken Link: Severance and the subsequent release of the spirit from the body and a loss in the family

Crown: Immortality, righteousness, victory, triumph, resurrection, honor or glory of life after death.

Door, arch, gateway: Passing one existence to the next.

Dove: An important symbolic bird in Christianity representing the Holy Spirit.

Draperies/Curtains: In the days when the body lay in state in the parlor, it was the custom to cover everything in black. Draperies, with their fancy frills and tassels, are more elaborate than a simple shroud. They allow the expression of mourning to linger long after the body had been taken out the front door and items have been stowed for the next death in the family. Curtains can also set the stage. Parted they reveal a telling excerpt. What is important in such displays is the main actor or central object on the stone.

Fern: Frankness, humility, sincerity.

Fleur-de-Lis: Flame, passion, ardor, and mother.

FLT Chain Links: A symbol of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization that takes care of widows and orphans and in general does good work. The symbol stands for friendship, love, and truth.

Grape & Leaves: Christian faith.

Hands Clasping: An earthly farewell, a heavenly welcoming or matrimony

Hand Pointing Up: Indicates the journey of the soul and confirmation of life after death, and ascension to heaven.

Hourglass: Fleeting time, Tempus Fugit, inevitability of early death.

Ivy: Memory, immortality, friendship, fidelity, faithfulness, undying affection and eternal life.

Laurel: Special achievement, distinction, success, victory, eternity, immortality

Lyre: References a harp, heaven, angelic music, occasionally used on the grave of a poet.

Masonic Compass and Set-Square: Freemasons combine religious, construction and architectural forms in their symbols. Viewing God as the architect and builder of the universe. The compass, used in geometric calculations, symbolizes the creation and spirit. The set-square draws perfect right angles, so represents uprightness and lawfulness. The compass and square measure things, so the symbolize judgment. The letter "G" in this symbol represents God, geometry and geomancy.

Morning Glories: Triumph, resurrection, mourning, youth, farewell, brevity of life, departure and mortality.

Oak Leaves: Strength, endurance, faith and virtue.

Open Book: Book of Life, list of St. Peter, life of the deceased as an open book, a pure life.

Rings: Odd Fellows Fraternal Society if accompanied by IOOF or FLT.

Rosary: Symbol of constant prayer for a loved one.

Roses: Love, beauty, hope, unfailing love.

Ship: Seafaring life, a journey, or symbol for the Church universal with the mast as a cross.

Swords Crossed: Indicates death in battle.

Torch: Upside down position has the meaning of extinguished life.

Urn: Symbol of mourning, originated as a repository for the ashes of the dead in ancient times.

Weeping Willow: Nature's lament; symbol of sorrow and mourning.

Wheat of wheat sheaf: Long life, the reaping of years, productive and abundant.

Wreath: The use of garlands, wreaths, and festoons dates back to ancient Greek times and it was adopted into the Christian religion as a symbol of the victory of the redemption.

A Word About Embalming

Embalming became a necessity in transporting Civil War dead from distance back home again. Before that time, the dead were usually quickly buried. In their haste, errors were made and those in comas or showing signs of death were mistakenly buried alive. Many patented safety coffins were invented to prevent this by means of a bell rope tied to the hand of the buried person who could communicate with the living by means of a bell above the ground. Sometimes a flag could be raised, or even explosives ignited by the unfortunate undead. Exhumations over the years have proven that premature burial did indeed take place.

As a well spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death. ~ Leonardo da Vinci ~

"You live on earth only for a few short years which you call an incarnation, and then you leave your body as an outworn dress and go for refreshment to your true home in the spirit."

~ White Eagle ~

Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow. - Abraham Lincoln

A man's dying is more the survivors' affair than his own.
- Thomas Mann

Start the walking tour on the first entrance path on the east side of the cemetery (Entrance closest to High Street). This is the oldest portion of the cemetery, and has the earliest graves of settlers in the Somerset Village. According to Dr Frank Shurtleff, who documented the history of the cemetery in 1906, the land changed hands several times in the early years of the settlement of land after the King Philips War in 1675. It has been documented as being in the hands of Joseph Swazey. In 1819, Samuel Swazey sold a piece of land to John Hood, which included a strip of the cemetery on the south, known as the Hood Cemetery. Soon after, Jerathmael Swazey sold an adjoining parcel to Capt Anthony Hintz. Capt John Hood and Capt Hintz and their families are all buried in the southeast corner of the cemetery. In 1841, Jane Hintz, widow of Capt Hintz, sold the land to Joseph Marble, who in turn sold it to the Somerset Village Cemetery Company. The land at this point contained one acre and 50 rods for the purpose of 'burial ground'. Joseph Marble's father, Deacon Joseph Marble, was the first person buried in this new cemetery entity. Three additions were made by 1906 and it became about 4 acres divided into 95 lots of uniform size and numbered. By 1906, there were 879 known graves, many of which had no headstones or markers of any kind. Dr Shurtleff and William H Woodman documented every grave in 1906 for future generations, and constructed a receiving tomb in 1905.

Over the last century, the cemetery has reached its maximum expansion, and no plots remain with the exception of a few spaces in family owned parcels. These original founding families, Hood, Hintz, Marble, and Swazey, are all represented in the cemetery.

Pathway 1, the border of the cemetery on the east boundary.

Names like **Peleg Swift**, and names of Borland, **Captain Baylies Davis**, other Davis's, and Simmons families. Also, an original small brick tomb is found along this path.

Half way down the pathway on the left, you will see the graves of **Captain Joseph Marble** and his brother, **Captain Surbinas**

Marble. They recognized the advantage to owning businesses both locally and in the south. In 1820, Joseph built a 127-ton packet brig, The New Packet of Somerset. They established stores in Savannah, GA, one in Somerset, and traveled between the two regularly. Later, passenger service and mail were added to the Charleston packet, and passenger stops in Warren, Bristol, Providence, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Another store was established in Charleston, SC, where they supplied southern stores with New England manufactured goods, and returned with southern goods for the Somerset store. Joseph later purchased the Hood shipyard from his cousin James Madison Hood. After an unsuccessful run at this business, it was turned over to the expansion of the Mt Hope Ironworks. With the advent of the Civil War, Surbinas sold three of his vessels to the US Government, The Chieftan, The Black Hawk, and The Mary and Susan. Captain Joseph Marble was known as the richest bachelor in Somerset, and Captain Surbinas Marble is buried between both of his wives, Mary and Susan.

In the back southeast corner section, you will find early graves of the Hood family. **William Moore**, and his wife **Elouisa M Hood Moore**, ran a hotel on Main Street where they hosted many businessmen and seafarers that came through town. During the Civil War, Union officers and soldiers would patronize the hotel. Some army units had bands who performed concerts in the evening beneath a great chestnut tree that grew near the hotel. Their son, Eugene H Moore, became mayor of Melrose, MA

Captain John Hood's marker is lying flat just to the left of the brick tomb. Captain Hood was one of the original owners of this land when it was a private cemetery. He served in the War of 1812, and fathered 11 children, all of whom became sea captains, merchants, and shipbuilders. He and his descendants built the Somerset Village into a prosperous community in the 19th century.

HISTORY IN PICTURES



FREEMASONS



THE TEMPERANCE CRUSADE.
FOUR HOURS IN A BAR ROOM.



1st HOUR
CYNICAL INDIFFERENCE.



2nd HOUR
BRANDY
SHIRAZ
MOCKERY AND DEFIANCE.

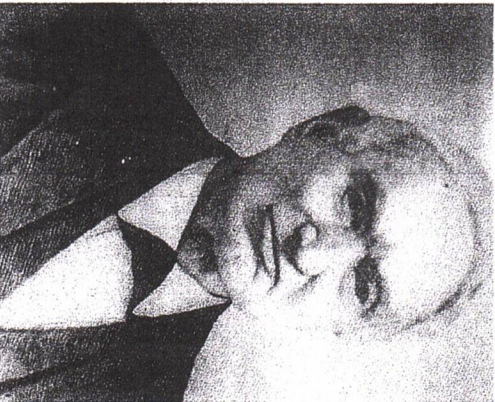


3rd HOUR
RAGE AND DESPAIR.

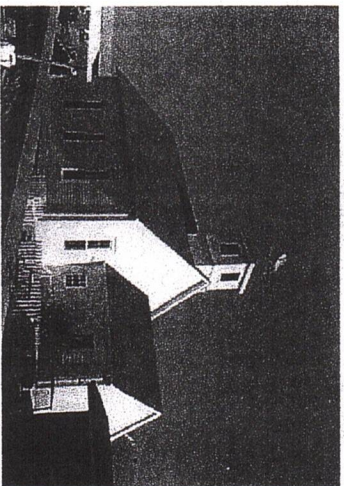


4th HOUR
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.



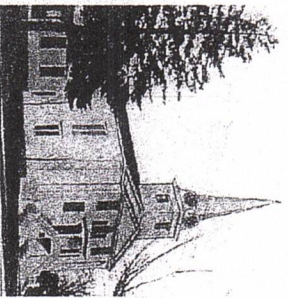


Captain Deacon Nathan Davis



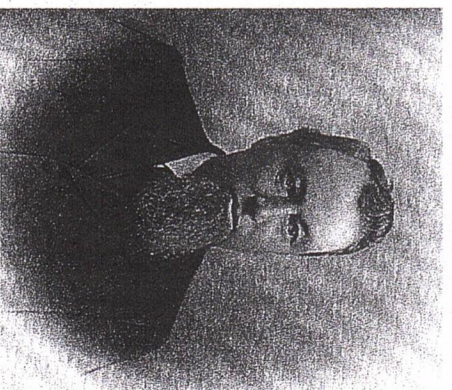
Cuttyhunk Union Methodist Church

Church on the island of Cuttyhunk where Deacon Davis would preach during his summers.

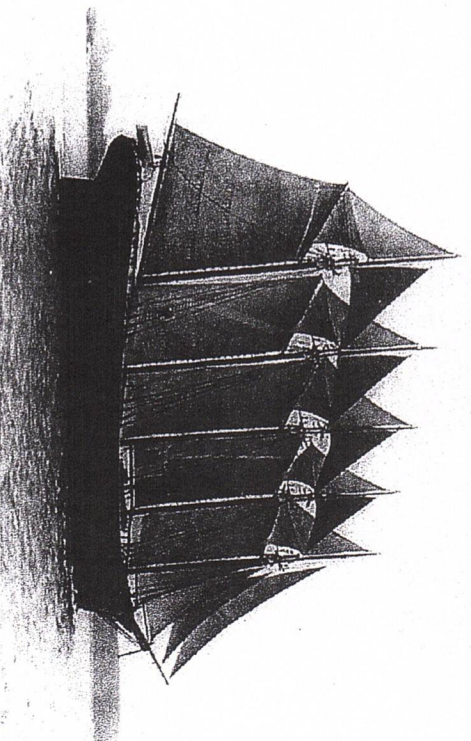


Somerset Baptist Church

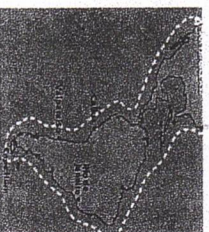
Deacon Davis devoted his life in accordance to his office at this church. He was a deacon here for 52 years.



Captain Joseph Davis

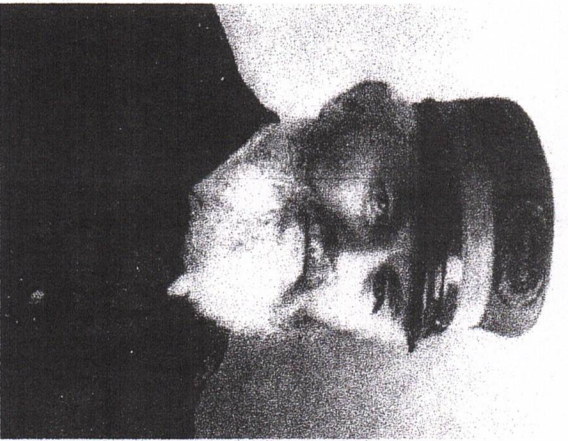


Governor Ames

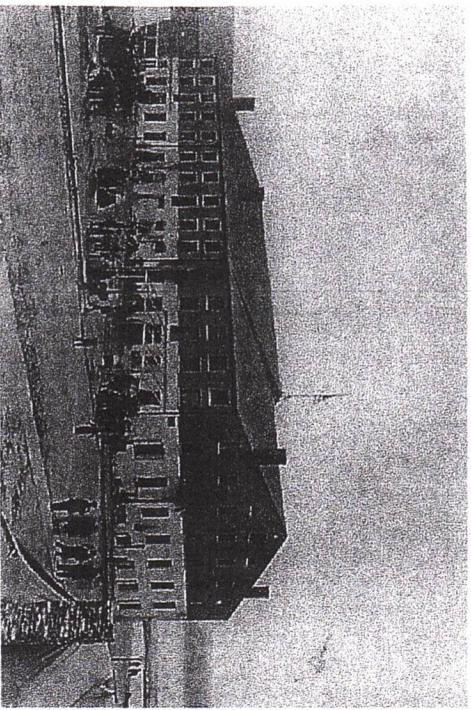


Cape Horn South America

The Governor Ames made maritime history under Captain Cornelius Davis. The Ames was the first 5-mast schooner to ever round Cape Horn.

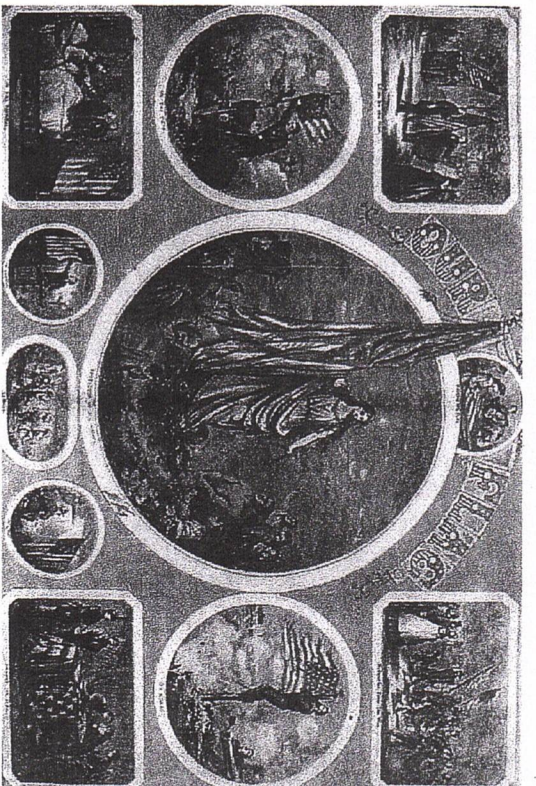


Captain Elijah Gifford Davis
"Danger Davis"

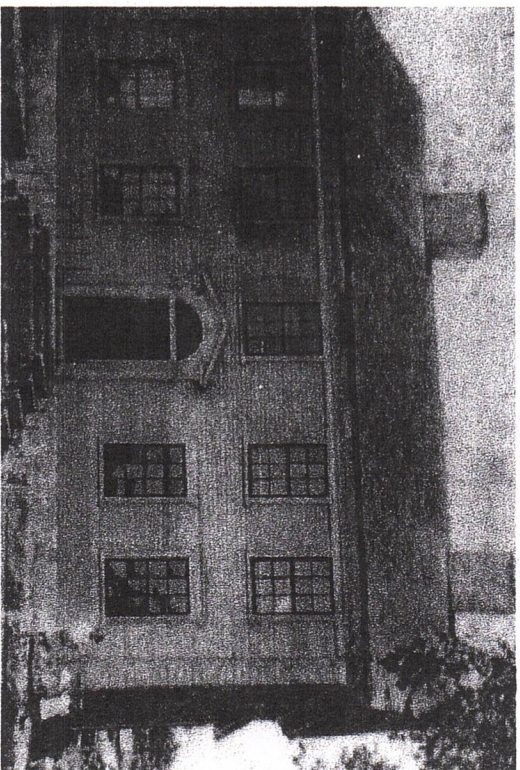


Libby Prison Richmond, Virginia

During the American Civil War the prison gained an infamous reputation for the harsh conditions under which the prisoners from the Union Army were kept. This is the location where Elijah G. Davis was held when taken by the Confederate Army.



Civil War



Petis House

Site of William W. Moore and Elouisa M. Hood Moore's hotel on Main Street. The hotel hosted captains and Union Army Units during the Civil War.

Patent # 144,373

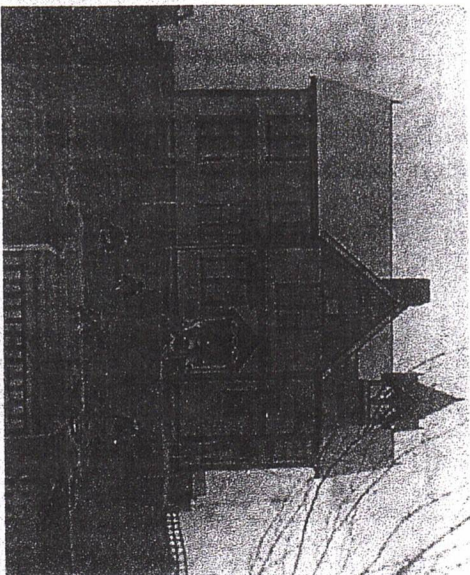
IZANNAH F. WALKER,
Manufacturer of Dolls.

No. 144,373.

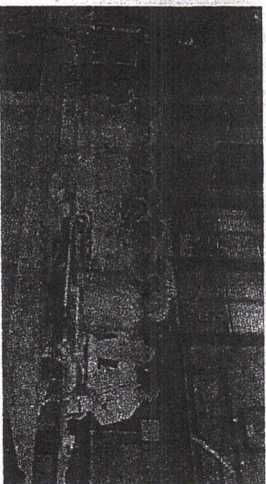
Patented Nov. 4, 1873.



Dr. Frank A. Shurtleff



Somerset High School



Somerset High School Cooking

Class 1915

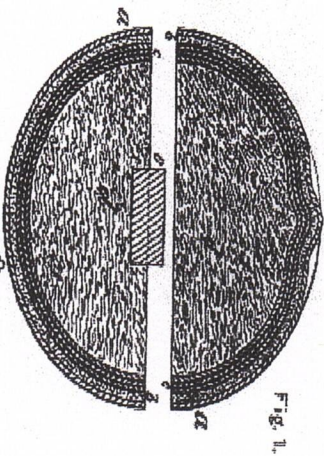


Fig. 1.

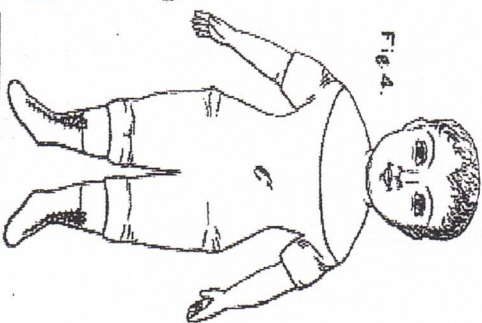


Fig. 4.

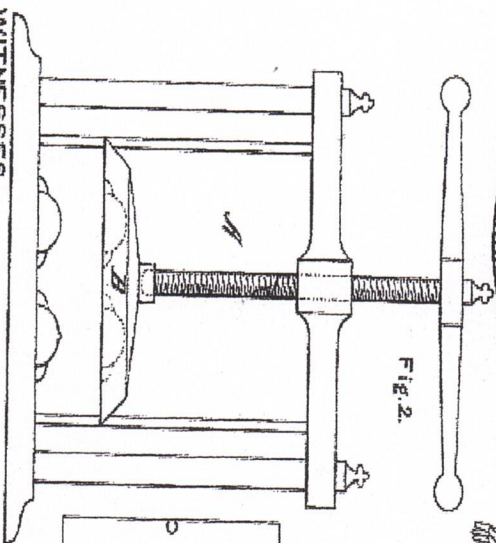


Fig. 2.

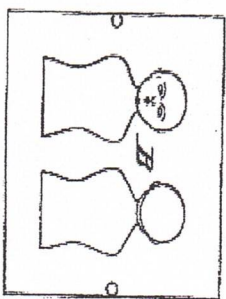
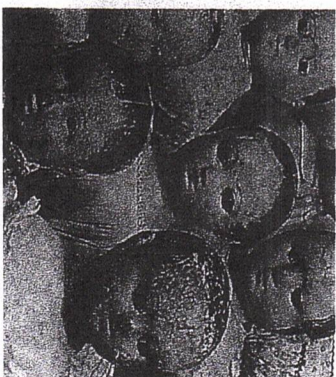


Fig. 3.

WITNESSES
Willie Jackson
George S. Johnson

INVENTOR,
Izannah F. Walker
By



Stove Foundry



William P. Hood

THE NEW
SOMERSET PALLAS RANGE

For heat or cool, for steam and power, and perfect in quality, compare every other range with this one. It is the only one that has been awarded the highest honors by the London and Philadelphia Expositions. It is the only one that has been made in a manufacturing plant of over 100,000 square feet.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:
It is made in the U.S.A.
It is made in the U.S.A.
It is made in the U.S.A.

THE SOMERSET STOVE FOUNDRY CO.
SOMERSET, R.I.

Patents Somerset's grand
Jeweled and iron
patent Stoves.

Advertisement



Somerset Stove Foundry Co.

Dr Shurtleff

He was one of Somerset's early physicians serving the community. He became the school physician earning \$25 per year for services caring for the children. It was a rate of about 5c per child. He was not only interested in medicine, and was a pioneer in education reform. He introduced a grading system, wrote curriculum, and was a leader in establishing the town's first High School. He later served on the School Committee, and was responsible for reducing the board from a 9 man committee to a 3 man committee in 1880 by attrition. As Chairman of the School Committee, the board voted to elect him as Superintendent of Schools, earning him \$150/year.

Captain Daniel Brayton Eddy was a mariner and merchant. His home is well known to Somerset residents as being named "The Poplars". It is the beautiful white columned Southern plantation style home located on Main Street on the former location of the Jerathmael Bowers sunken gardens. Capt Eddy was absent for long periods of time at sea. The home beside his was operated by his wife for a time as a hotel for the frequent mariners and visitors to Somerset's bustling waterfront.

Pathway 3 with the Granite Pillars at the entrance

Jane and Izhannah Walker

Along the south side of pathway 2, you will find the family obelisk monument of the Swazey and Hintz family. At an early age, Jane, Anne, and Izannah, daughters of Sarah Swasey and Gilbert Walker, were left in the care of their aunt Jane Swasey Hintz and her husband Captain Anthony Hintz when Sarah and her newborn son passed away. The couple had no children of their own, and took the girls in. Izannah was inventive, eccentric, and reclusive. She never married and tinkered with household gadgets, designed a parlor heater, dabbled in real estate, became a skilled carpenter, and is well known today for her doll-making skills. Her dolls were made in a mold style with the look of primitive folk portraits. Her design was patented, and her business grew. She later moved to Central Falls, RI, and is buried at Swan Point Cemetery, but memorialized here on

this monument. Her sister, Jane Walker, continued making dolls here in Somerset. After the death of their aunt, Jane Hintz, the two surviving nieces were left the estate. Town maps showed that Jane owned the Hintz home of their childhood at 373 Main St. She also owned a home and store on South St.

The Davis Family, Capt Joseph Davis, Capt Cornelius Davis

Captain Deacon Nathan Davis was born in Freetown and began his seafaring training under his father Jonathan. He was master of his first sloop, the "Mary", at the age of 17. He commanded the ship for 5 years, became a partner with a shipbuilder to build vessels and hauled freight. Captain Davis and his wife, Clarissa Bowen Davis, were firm believers in the temperance movement. When building one of his vessels, he made it clear there was to be no alcohol drunk by the workers, and the ship, "The Temperance", was christened with a bottle of water. Clarissa was known to have marched down Main St to the local saloon with other females, made a mess of the barrels, bar, and other items, and encouraged them to close their doors.

Capt Deacon Davis was more than a shipbuilder and master. He was known for many decades to sail his ship to Cuttyhunk Island to preach on Sundays, and preached to the native people on Martha's Vineyard. They had five sons who learned the seafaring trade aboard "The Temperance" before becoming masters of their own vessels. For a time, Deacon Davis ran a grocery store with goods brought from his vessels by his sons. As his sons began to prosper in their own lives, Deacon Davis returned to the sea as a captain, and retired at the age of 70.

Capt Elijah "Danger Davis" was one of their sons, and was known later in life as a captain of the "Priscilla" in The Fall River Line. During the Civil War, he was captured, and held in Libby Prison. His family was preparing to exchange \$10,000 for his freedom. Luckily, the war ended and the bond for his freedom was never paid.

Capt Nathan Davis, son, also took to the sea, but in later years, became a farmer, and ran a business on Main Street selling the traded goods from their ships until his retirement.

Capt Amos Davis, like his brothers, took to the sea. Sadly, at the age of 31, he was lost at sea serving on the vessel "Thomas Wimen". There is a headstone commemorating his life, but he was not buried.

Capt Joseph Davis and Captain Cornelius Davis became successful businessmen and shipbuilders. They were in the coal hauling business in summer months to prepare for the winter, and in the winter, they traded in the West Indies and South America. They prospered and incorporated the Atlantic Shipping Company. They employed other captains and commanders to expand their freight business. They were best known for commissioning the construction of the first ocean venturing 5 masted schooner, the "Governor Ames". She was the largest centerboard schooner in her day, and the first to venture around South America to California and Washington for lumber and other goods. Although they had difficulties maneuvering the vessel on her early voyages, she was successful and profitable for many years before being lost at sea in a gale off North Carolina. Capt Cornelius lived on the corner of Pleasant St and Borland Ave, retired to Florida, and the Davis brothers spent time at a Martha's Vineyard home.

Captain Burgess and Family

Captain John A Burgess was born in Somerset, and like many others, took to the life of the sea. He married Sarah Moison, daughter of a sea captain, and descended on her mother's side from Myles Standish of Plymouth Colony. Burgess was the brother in law of Capt James Madison Hood, and he was the master of some of the ships built by Hood's shipyard across from the Burgess home on Main St. Burgess lived in 274 Main St, and the home remained in his family for about 100 years. In his later years, he was the captain of the Mystic, CT built ship Davy Crockett, which is well represented at Mystic Seaport. He was known as a stern captain, and is names in the sea chantey "The Leaving of Liverpool". On his last voyage from San Francisco to home, he had to return after a few days at sea to quell a mutiny. The second attempt to return home ended with a severe storm off South America, and resulting in Burgess being washed overboard when trying to repair rigging. He has a marker in

the cemetery, but like many others, it only commemorates his life, and he is actually lost at sea. His family, widow, only child Abby Harding, and grandchildren, are buried in this family plot.

Pathway 4

William P Hood and his extended family are found at the end of this pathway on the southeastern side. Hood was the son of a merchant and businessman, in a long lineage of shipbuilders and sea captains. He was the nephew of the former ambassador to Siam Captain James Madison Hood. Before his uncle became ambassador, he had been a sea captain and shipbuilder here in Somerset, and William P Hood had been his clerk and manager. He held significant responsibilities in his life at a very early age. He sold goods over New England as a merchant, while also dabbling in the insurance business. He married Sarah Davis, daughter of Captain Deacon Nathan Davis, who was like her parents, was a firm believer in the Temperance movement. Their farm, known as the Spring Hill Farm, was located south of South St, and spanned many acres along Riverside Ave. William was a successful businessman, was involved in shipping, held shares in many vessels, invested in real estate, was involved in politics, was Chairman of the Board of Selectmen and Assessors, was a Freemason, and industrialist. He organized and incorporated the Boston Stove Foundry and became treasurer. The company was later sold, failed, and was repurchased, being later named the Somerset Cooperative Stove Foundry. Upon his passing, he left money to the town, and erected a public drinking fountain, which now stands outside the Bowers Cemetery. Upon his wife's passing, money was left to build the town's first freestanding library, known as the Hood Library on High St. His grandchildren became successful businessmen, lawyers, insurers, and engineer Clifford Holland.

Ira Mason Sherman (found on the northeastern side of the path) was a Civil War veteran who served for 9 months in the 3rd Infantry Division, spending much of his time in North Carolina. He lived with his wife and children on a farm on corner of North Street and Old County St. When the town needed to expand its schools by

building a new schoolhouse in the north area of town to end a tuition agreement with Dighton, Ira sold a piece of land for \$100 to the town. He was paid to construct the foundation, which was a one-room schoolhouse serving 4 grades. It still stands at 371 North St. Mr Sherman passed away 2 years later from an infection, which could have been easily treated with today's antibiotics. He left behind an established schoolhouse near his home where his children could complete their education without needing to travel to Dighton.

Fanny Bosworth Melvin (found halfway down the path) Fannie was a lifelong resident of Somerset, a journalist, and published writer of poetry. She married George Melvin in 1888, who was significantly older than she, and they had no children. Fannie wrote a weekly column for the Fall River Evening News where she chronicled the style in which Somerset residents lived. One of her books was called Souvenir of the Taunton River, published in 1905, and Indian Idylls. Her spouse, George, was significantly older than Fannie, and a civil war veteran. George had been widowed with one son. Fannie was the last survivor in this family due to George's son dying at a young age. Many of George's civil war items were donated to the Somerset Historical Society for its collection.

Avery Slade (found halfway down the path) was a farmer and merchant. He is best known for writing the first booklet documenting the history of Somerset. It is a 16 page booklet with stories of the early years, some factual, others tales passed down by word of mouth. In his younger years, he knew some remaining Bowers family members and passed along their stories, both fact and fiction.

Pathway 5

Dr Frank Morrill was one of the early town physicians serving our community. He and his wife, Abby, lived on Clark St just around the corner, and were involved in the church and community. Abby served for many years as a library trustee.

Pathway 6

The resting place of **Clifford Milburn Holland** can be found under the tree at the end of this last path on the side. Mr Holland was a Somerset native, only child, and grandson of William P Hood. He was descended from a lineage of pioneers, shipbuilders, and industrialists. It was inevitable that his skills would one day be tested with one of the greatest engineering marvels of its time. He attended Harvard College, and graduated with a degree in civil engineering. This degree was first used to design subway tunnels in New York, but his skill was later utilized to design a bigger project, the first underwater vehicular tunnel in NY. The obstacles were finding a way to vent the carbon monoxide exhaust from the shaft, and to open a large bore to accommodate all the lanes of traffic. His was the winning design, and construction began. He died 2 days before the two ends of the tunnel met under the Hudson River. Planned celebrations were canceled due to news of his unexpected death and the high esteem for Mr. Holland. In his honor, the project was named for him, the Holland Tunnel. His wife is buried beside him, despite passing decades after his death. He left four young daughters, and an engineering marvel for its time.



Clifford Milburn Holland