

Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants have completed four very busy and productive days at Ancient Cemetery. After accessing sixteen of our endangered stones, they were able to prioritize ten candidates for conservation. The first focus of their expertise was the downed marble marker for Oliver Gorham, in Section A. “Just an easy ‘set it up again,’ right?” Not so.



To correctly manage the repair, the large granite base needed to be dug out, cleaned, reset on a bed of sand and peastone, and, most importantly, leveled. A second marble base or plinth was likewise removed, every surface cleaned, and then positioned and leveled on top of setting compound, ready to receive the cleaned topmost tablet section of the grave marker.

Unfortunately, the bronze pins, used to connect all three stone components (in-ground granite base, marble base/plinth, and the pointed Gothic arch top) were broken off and deeply embedded in the marble top element and not likely to be successfully removed. (The greenish stain that remains on the plinth results from the deterioration of the bronze pins and the breakdown of their copper content.) Since the existing pin holes in the granite base and marble base were clear, it was decided to re-align the bases using two new fiberglass pins. To set the top element, matching holes were drilled in the top center of the marble



base and the exposed bottom of the arched-top gravestone itself to receive a single pin. Connecting surfaces were cleaned, carefully measured, and an epoxy adhesive placed into each drill hole and the pins inserted into the adhesive in the granite base. The middle marble base was placed onto two 1” mahogany blocks and setting compound placed around the perimeter of the

base. 1/8” thick plastic setting cushions were placed between the two bases and the marble base was carefully lowered onto the compound. Adhesive was placed in the holes in the marble base to affix the pins. Excess setting compound that squeezed out from between the bases after the marble base was lowered was removed. A tripod hoist lifted the arched top into position to be carefully guided onto the newly drilled waiting central pin. Again a roll of setting compound and 1/8” setting cushions were placed on the top of the outer edge of the marble base where the arched top would descend, effectively using the weight of the heavy stone to assure a good seal. As before the excess squeezed out by the heavy top element was removed. This provides a “gasket” to prevent moisture from accumulating, freezing, and altering the repair. The first rescued stone was standing proud!



Sanuel Thacher’s shattered stone will need to be worked on in stages over time. The base has now been cleaned, reset on a sand and pea stone foundation, leveled, and ready to receive the six stone pieces that will be affixed, pinned where necessary, voids filled, and eventually set up as one intact piece.





The Fannins will return to complete several repairs that were halted because of the need for drier weather. When complete, ten stones, each one with its own unique conservation profile, will be standing tall in Ancient Cemetery.



The Friends of Ancient Cemetery are grateful to the Fannin team, and for the support of Community Preservation Funds that help us continue with our mission to preserve, protect, and promote the historical and cultural significance of Yarmouth's oldest burying ground.

