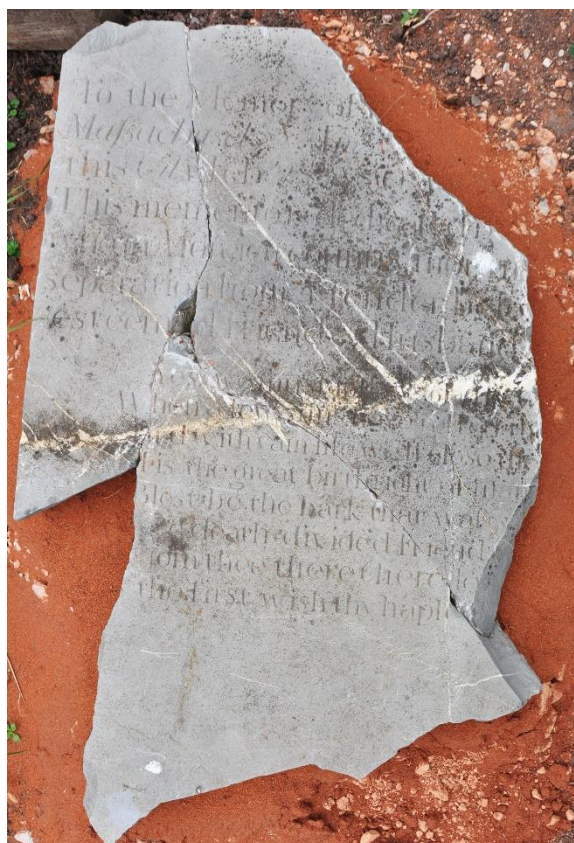


HARTLEY WOOD died 28th February 1810

Memorial 4



According to his memorial Hartley Wood was visiting from Massachusetts when he died on 28th February 1810, aged only 25. We do not know how he died - there is no record of him having been in the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital prior to his death, and the entry in the Exeter Flying Post (Thursday 8th March 1810) reads, "*On Wednesday evening last died, at his lodgings at Heavitree, aged 26 years, Hartley Wood, esq. of Caldwell-house in the province of Massachusetts, North America*". He was buried on 3rd March 1810. The poignant epitaph on his memorial from his young widow Sophie, nee Sewall, is a delightful tribute to the husband she had married only twenty months earlier, on 26th June, 1808, in Wiscasset, Lincoln, Maine. Maine was then a part of Massachusetts. We can only surmise that he was here on

account of family business interests.

The entry in the burial ledger reads, "*By cash of Mr Henry Cross for leave to erect a tomb over the grave of Mr Hartley Wood buried 3 Mar last £4.4.0d paid 9 Dec 1810*". Henry Cross was a tobacconist and salt dealer operating from premises at 77 Fore Street. He is described as a Quaker.

Hartley was the son of Abiel Wood and his wife, Betty, nee Tinkham, born on 13th November 1784 in Wiscasset, then known as Pownalborough, Maine. He was the youngest of their nine children.

Abiel Wood was born on 18th July 1743 in Middleborough, Massachusetts, to Ebenezer Wood and his wife Lydia Lovell. Churchgoing was a requirement in the eighteenth century, and he was sent to court in 1758, aged 14 or 15, for "irreverently behaving himself by chalking the back of one Hezekiah Purrington, Jr., with Chalk, playing and recreating himself in the time of publick worship".¹ In 1775 his loyalty was questioned by a committee of some of the townspeople of Pownalborough (Wiscasset). However, a new Committee wrote a testimonial endorsing his loyalty on 3rd October that year.² He was successful in business and a wealthy man, said to have been one of the largest ship owners in New England. He was also promoted to General

¹ Cox, James A (2003) Bilboes, Brands, and Branks - Colonial Crimes and Punishments. Colonial Williamsburg Journal, Autumn 2003.

² Pownalborough (Massachusetts) Committee (1775), pp v3:151, v3:941.

in the army. Wiscasset was known for ship building, fishing and the export of lumber, and was described as “the busiest seaport north of Boston until the embargo of 1807 halted much of the trade with England”. This ended in 1809.

Abiel's wife Betty died in 1802. In 1804 he married again to Sarah Sayward Keating, known as Sally, the widow of Richard Keating, nee Barrell. She was a writer and considered to be the first American female author of Gothic novels. Abiel died in 1811 and was buried in Wiscasset. His son Abiel built a house in Wiscassett in the “Federal” style between 1810 and 1825, which still survives today.

Hartley's widow Sophia Sewall was the daughter of Moses Sewall, a member of another family with large shipping interests in Wiscasset, and his wife, Ruth, nee Barrell, the younger sister of the Sally Keating who later married Abiel Wood. Sophia was born on 16th May 1788 in Hallowell, Kennebec, Maine. The family were still living there in 1790. Moses died in 1798 and was buried in Hallowell. Ruth remarried in 1804, to Captain John Arnold.

Five years after Hartley died Sophia married Edmund Munroe. They went on to have eight children. Edmund was a banker and broker in Boston,³ and had many other business interests in the area. In 1818 he was one of four people who purchased the Boston Porcelain and Glass Manufacturing Company in East Cambridge, Boston, renaming it the New England Glass Company.⁴ He was also part owner of Munroe and Francis, a publishing firm that produced a popular book of nursery rhymes. In the 1830s he purchased land and mills in what then became known as Munroe Falls. Although the attempt to create a prosperous town failed and he had to sell up, the family name survived. He was interested in education and the spread of the gospel abroad, and was a founder of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.⁵ In 1850 he and Sophia were living in the Cambridge suburb of Boston with four unmarried daughters. He died in 1865, and Sophia in 1878, aged 90.

³ Munro, R S (1986) History and Genealogy of the Lexington, Massachusetts Munroes, 2nd Edn.

⁴ Cavanaugh, Doris H (1926) Early Glass Making in East Cambridge. Proceedings of the Cambridge (Massachusetts) Historical Society, Vol 19, p 32 - 45.

⁵ See 3 above.

The inscription reads:

*To the Memory of
Mafsachusetts N^o Am^a. w..
this City Feb 28th 1810. Ag..
This memento is dedicated
whom? A foreign country ?mourn..
separation from A tender belo..
..esteem-d Friend & Husband*

*Have ?rolled ?the
?le well close the
bright of ?man
?ar ?waf-s
..iend
?lo*

*..es..
..hen a few..
..rd with vain..
..I is the great birth..
Blest be the bark th..
..ere death divided fi..
join thee there (here..
the first wish thy hapl..*