

# EARLY SLAVE OWNERS AND SLAVES AT VINE LAKE CEMETERY AND GUINEA

§ Composed by Robert Tucker Gregg April 2014 and Edited January 2024 §

**I**n early Medfield, a society of slaves prevailed to an unknown extent. Buried at Vine Lake Cemetery are these town leaders who were slave holders.

- **The Reverend Joseph Baxter [1676 - 1745]**

He was Medfield's second minister, and his will was probated in 1745. In it he bequeathed to his wife his slave woman Nanny and named certain conditions of good behavior by which she could eventually gain her freedom.

"...and the service of my Negro Slave, Nanny, I give her freedom at my wife's decease." He afterwards added, "It is my will that upon condition my Negro woman shall not in all things carry and behave dutifully and well towards her said mistress, my wife, then shall she not have her freedom; but I give to my wife full power to sell or dispose of her for life at her discretion."



Nanny, or Ann as she was also known, had been baptized by her master on September 12, 1736, the same day in which she owned the covenant (a public profession of faith). There is no record of her burial location.

Reference is also made to Tony, Baxter's man who is paid for ringing the church bell in 1714. On November 7, 1758 his death is recorded. Less than a year later, record is made on August 24, 1759 of the death of Freelove Tony, perhaps his wife. There is no record of the burial location of either Tony.

- **Doctor James Gerauld [1687 - 1760]**

A native of France, he settled in the eastern part of Medfield by 1718 and operated a large estate there, cultivated with slave labor. His woman slave Ellen was baptized on July 16, 1738 and her son Nathan on July 11, 1742. Dr. Gerauld's Negro girl Deliverance was baptized July 16, 1738, and of his Negro women, Bethuel was baptized March 30, 1740 and Ketlin became a church member on December 9, 1744.



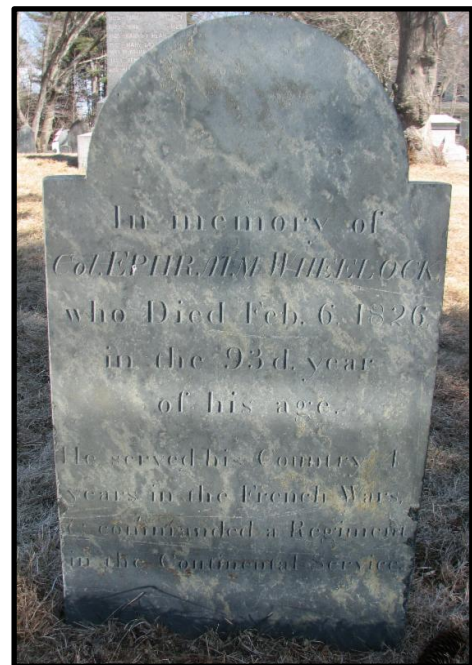
His will gave to his wife Martha "...other property, including negroes, excepting negro Cesar, who is not to be sold out of the family during his life..."

The death of an unnamed slave of Gerauld's is recorded September 25, 1753.

There is no record of the burial location of any of these slaves.

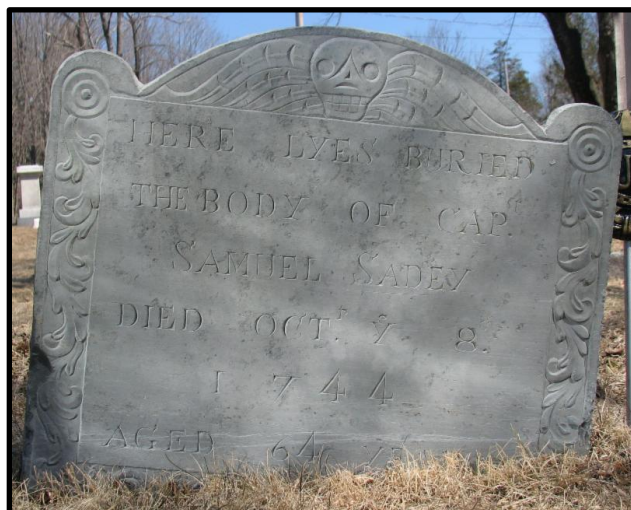
- **Colonel Ephraim Wheelock [1733 - 1826]**

While serving in the Revolutionary War, Ephraim kept as his body servant Worwick (or Warrick or Warwick) Green, a slave from Africa, who settled in Medfield, died in 1815, and is buried in an unmarked grave in a private burying ground called Guinea, off Green Street.



- **Captain Samuel Sadey [1681 - 1744]**

One of the founders of Keene, New Hampshire and an innkeeper at North and Dale streets in Medfield, he had a Negro woman servant named Keturah who was baptized September 12, 1736, owned the covenant the same day, and died March 15, 1742/3 at an unknown age. She is buried in an unmarked grave in Vine Lake Cemetery.



There were additional **slave holders** and **slaves** in early Medfield, some of whom are buried in unmarked graves either at Vine Lake Cemetery or Guinea (also called The Graves) off Green Street.

Slave Holder	Death Date	Slave	Death Date
Deacon James Boyden	2 Sep 1779	Violet	3 Jun 1780
Captain Jonathan Boyden	30 May 1732	Kuce, an Indian	1718
Thomas Boyden (buried in an unknown town)	?	John (buried in an unknown town)	Aug 1746
Seth Clark	16 Mar 1756	Unknown (buried in an unknown town)	
Major James Cunningham (buried in an unknown town)	?	Violet	3 Jun 1780
John Draper (buried in an unknown town)	?	John (buried in an unknown town)	?
John Fisher	7 Nov 1753	Pompey (buried in an unknown town)	21 Apr 1745
Doctor Jabez Fuller	5 Oct 1781	Unknown (buried in an unknown town)	1 Jul 1749
Moses Hartshorn (buried in Vine Lake Cemetery Lot 272 Grave 1)	30 Sep 1826	Newport Green (buried in an unmarked grave in Guinea)	3 Jun 1816

Slave Holder	Death Date	Slave	Death Date
Joshua Greene (buried in an unknown town)	?	Unknown (buried in an unknown town)	?
Joshua Morse	26 Apr 1749	Dinah (buried in an unknown town)	?
Nathaniel Smith (buried in an unknown town)	?	Jane (buried in an unknown town)	27 Mar 1745
John Wight	12 Dec 1770	Unknown (buried in an unknown town)	6 June 1767

(Sources: *History of the Town of Medfield, Massachusetts 1650–1886*; *History of Norfolk County, Massachusetts, 1622–1918*; *Vital Records of Medfield, Massachusetts to the Year 1850*; *Medfield Deaths from 1652 to 1875*; Douglas L. Winiarski, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, University of Richmond, Virginia; *New England Historic Genealogical Society Register, Volume 62*).

