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Terminology

For an introduction to stone identification, see [this article](#).

Abrasive- Media used to inscribe modern monumental works. May be composed of aluminum oxide, silicon carbide, steel shot, etc; Sand or powdered pumice stone, which is rubbed against a sculpture's surface to create a smooth or polished effect.

Acanthus- A plant whose leaf is used to decorate the capital of the Corinthian order, or is found in moldings.

Acid Rain- Rainfall with a lower than normal pH.

Acidic Deposition- Acid rain fallen on an absorbent stone. The leading cause of damage and decay to calcium carbonate based rock, including most marble and some limestone.

Adhesion- The sticking together of substances that are contact with one another.

Aggregate- Inert granular material, such as sand, gravel, crushed stone, slag, pumice, and scoria which are mixed with water and cement being bound together in a mass, to make mortar or concrete.

Arch- A curved construction which spans an opening.

Architrave- Member of an entablature that rests on the capitals of the columns or piers, and supports the frieze.

Argillaceous- Consisting of, or containing clay.

Armature- Internal frame or hidden support.

Artificial Stone- Simulated stone composite material.

Ashlar- Angled patterns in a straight line of stonework.

Ashlar Block- A squared or rectangular block of building stone. Large finished stone block, which is set face bedded; often incorporated into facades of mausoleums, crypts, and historic masonry structures.

Assemblage- Sculptural form made by assembling various shapes and materials.

Assessment- To determine the condition of an object, as in a condition assessment.

Atmospheric Staining- Deposition of particulate matter such as soot.

Atmospheric Incrustation- A surface crust, formed by a reaction between calcium and acidic water to form calcium sulfate.

Backfill- The operation of replacing dirt removed in excavation.

Baluster- A miniature column or other form of upright which, in a series, supports a railing or handrail.

Barrow- Mound of stones or dirt on top of a grave.

Basalt- A dark, dense volcanic rock difficult to shape.

Base Coat- Scratch coat. First layer of infill.

Bead- A jutting horizontal protrusion nears the top of a decorative pillar.

Bed- In rock, the flat surface of a stone parallel to its stratification.

Bed Joint -The horizontal layer of mortar on which a masonry unit is laid.

Biological Activity- Algae or Lichen growth visible on the stones surface.

Blind Pinning- To place hidden support in a structure or monument to join sections together. May be employed during construction or as a repair technique. Pinning should be of a non-ferrous metal or fiberglass material.

Blistering- Spalling of the second degree.

Block- A concrete masonry unit made with fine aggregate and cement that is shaped in a mold.

Bluestone- A hard fine-grained stone often used for mainly for walkways or patios.

Bond- The property of a hardened mortar that knits the masonry units together; The overlapping of masonry units to make them stronger or more pleasing in appearance.

Border Design- The carving which often ornamented the side panels of historic tablet stones.

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Boxed Column- A supporting column that is square shaped as opposed to circular. It is most often found on a Doric capital.

Box Tomb- A crypt style monument with no body interred inside. The interior is a hollow cavity.

Brass- An alloy of copper and zinc that is malleable and stronger than copper.

Brick Masonry- A type of construction that has units of baked clay or shale of uniform size, small enough to be placed with one hand, laid in courses with mortar joints to form walls, pillars, and various structures.

Brick Set- A wide-blade chisel used for cutting bricks and blocks.

Bronze- An alloy of approximately 90 percent copper and 10 percent tin, which contains small amounts of other metals such as lead and zinc. Hard and durable, it is one of the most commonly used materials for sculptural works.

Brown Coat- The second coat of stucco in a three-coat work.

Brownstone- Sandstone. Can be reddish, light brown- blond, and dark brown. Found throughout New England, East Middletown Connecticut, which is now Portland, contained the largest number of brownstone quarries in the world, during the 1800s.

Burial- To place in the ground, tomb, or sea; to hide.

Burial Mound- A mound resulting from dirt piled upon a corpse.

Burial Vault- A concrete or other material used as a grave liner; to keep a grave from subsiding.

Butter- To apply a quantity of mortar onto a brick, block or stone, often on the small end, prior to it being laid.

Buttress- Often associated with Gothic architecture. The out-jutting, or thickening of a wall to support an overhead beam or roof arch. Added support to oppose horizontal forces on tall walls.

Cairn- A mound of stones serving as memorial or marker.

Calcareous- Consisting of, or containing, calcium carbonate or carbonate of lime.

Calcining- Burning: Enough heat to cause disintegration, or total fusion.

Calcite- A rock forming mineral, calcite is found in limestone and seashells. It is very common on the earth's surface, as it dissolves in water and grows anywhere that water can reach.

Calcium- A soft, silver- white chemical element found in limestone, marble and chalks.

Caliper- A measuring instrument that has two parallel jaws, which move and then hold in place, in order to transfer a specific size.

Cap- The top cement surface on a masonry structure.

Capital- The upper-most member of a column or pilaster. It often supports an architrave or entablature, and is often decorated.

Capstone- Stone on top of a monument or wall.

Casket- A rectangular coffin.

Carving- A traditional subtractive method of producing a sculpture in which the material is cut away or chipped away; also a term used to describe letting an inscription or decoration in a gravestone or monument.

Cast- The form produced by filling a mould. The positive form.

Cast Iron- Iron made in a mold.

Catacomb- An underground cemetery, with tunnels and chambers having places for graves.

Caulk- To seal up crevices with some flexible material.

Cavity Wall- A wall with an air space behind it, such as in a box tomb.

Cement- The binding material which holds the aggregates together, in concrete and mortar, binding them into a solid mass. Derived from the Latin "caedere" (to cut), and signifies any substance used to adhere objects together.

Cemetery- A final resting place for human remains. Larger, planned, and more organized in structure, than the earlier graveyards and burying grounds.

Cenotaph- Greek for empty tomb. A monument to honor a deceased who is buried elsewhere, or who's body was never found, as in "drowned at sea".

Chasing- The final process of finishing a bronze cast once it has cooled from the furnace. Chisels and punches are used to remove imperfections, and the surface is polished or smoothed down.

Charnel House- A place for storing bones or corpses.

Chatoyancy- Silky appearance on the surface of a mineral, known as "cat's eye" effect.

Chamfer- The beveled surface formed by cutting off the edge or corner, from a squared surface, at a 45% angle.

Chisel- A steel tool used for shaping stone, wood or metal. It is often held at an angle and struck with a mallet to force the sharp cutting edge along the surface being carved.

Clasts- Fragments in sedimentary rocks that originally formed part of other rocks.

Claw Chisel- A chisel with its cutting edge divided into two or more prongs.

Clay- A malleable, moist earth mixed with water that becomes hard when baked.

Cleavage- The way a mineral breaks along a plane according to its atomic structure. In rocks, the way it splits along the bedding planes or striations.

Closure Brick- A partial brick that is cut to fit into a place to complete a course.

Coffin- The boxes in which bodies are laid to rest.

Colonnade- A row of columns.

Coloring Agents- Colored aggregates or iron oxides ground finer than the cement.

Columbarium- A vault with niches for urns which contain human ashes.

Column- A tall, vertical, cylindrical member, most often associated, with a classical capital.

Come-Along- A ratchet hand winch.

Composite Stone- Artificial stone formulated to match existing substrate in stone conservation.

Compressive Strength- The power to resist crushing under pressure. Contrasted by tensile strength, the power to resist the action of forces pulling apart.

Concrete- A artificial stone made by mixing cement and sand with gravel, broken stone, or other aggregate. These materials must be mixed with sufficient water to cause the cement to set and bind the entire mass. The preferred material for all modern monuments foundations.

Conservation- To conserve; to save and protect what is left as it is found. To stabilize what is left of an artifact. The proper term to describe a huge scope of procedures and treatments performed to save and protect art and historic gravestones, monuments, sculptures, structures, etc.

Consolidation- The process whereby a weakened stone is treated to strengthen it, and prolong its life span.

Coping- Large stone blocks set at the perimeter of a grave site. Most often found on large Victorian family plots; The top course of a masonry wall.

Corbel- A horizontal course of masonry projecting past the last course, and supporting the course above; A self supporting projection.

Corinthian- The most ornate of the three Greek orders, (Corinthian, Ionic, Doric). It is formed with a bell shaped capital, two rows of Acanthus leaves, and a detailed cornice.

Cornice- A decorative molding such as at the top of a window, a ceiling or exterior wall; The upper- most section of the entablature.

Course- One of the continuous horizontal layers (rows) of masonry that forms a structure.

Crazing- The checking or cracking of the surface of artificial stone, concrete, etc.

Creekstone- Smooth rounded quartzite stone worn by water.

Crypt- A subterranean vault used as a burial chamber; may be located beneath a church floor.

Curing- The hardening of epoxy or resin; The process of protecting masonry against loses of moisture during the early stages of setting.

Darby- A large float of metal or wood, used to smooth freshly poured concrete.

Death's Head- The most common symbol on early American gravestones, warning those above ground that they may be next to die. Very common from the earliest American stones or the late 17th century, until the soul effigy became more popular in the mid 18th century.



Death Mask- Cast made of the deceased face just after death.

Delimitation- Separation of stone layers along its bedding planes.

Dentils- A series of Small Square toothed or block like projections, which are usually found below a piece of molding. Most commonly associated with Greek revival and Colonial Revival structures.

Descanos- Roadside crosses; often found on alongside sharp bends in roadways.

Dissolution of Marble- Very advanced stage of deterioration; a combination of multiple decay mechanisms including, erosion, sugaring, and spalling.

Dolomite- Geologically it is a name for a carbonate rock that consists dominantly of this compound. As a mineral component, it is found in certain crystalline schist's, and in beds of gypsum.

Dolomitic Limestone- Limestone containing 10% - 80%, mineral dolomite.

Doric- The simplest, and most basic of the three Greek orders, (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian). It is associated with thick columns, and a capital with a flat bowl below a block. The column does not stand on a base.

Dress- To shape a stone finely to fit in place.

Dressed Stone- The stone in masonry, after it has been squared with a hammer and

chisel.

Dry-Stack- Stonework with mortar recessed so that it is invisible.

Dry Stone Wall- A stone wall built without mortar.

Efflorescence- The white or grayish crust sometimes formed on the surface of masonry or stone, often as calcium sulfate. It is caused by the leeching-out of soluble chemical salts, from the stone, brick or mortar joints through the forces of capillary action and evaporation.

Embalm- To preserve to prevent decay. Until modern embalming began after the American Civil War, it was almost impossible to transport the deceased any great distance. Thus most people were buried in or near the town where they expired.

Embellish- To add ornament so as to adorn. To add decorative elements.

Emery- A grayish black mineral used as an abrasive; example, emery cloth which is a type of fine sand paper.

Empirical- Based on practical experience.

Engraving- Inscription formed by carving or sandblasting into stone.

Entablature- the Greek revival style, the horizontal group composed of three members, held up by the columns. From the lowest to highest in a structure the three members include; architrave, frieze, and the cornice.

Entomb- To place in a tomb or grave.

Epitaph- An inscription on a gravestone or monument. Often a short poem, literary piece, or description of the deceased virtues. Very common on historic gravestones, but seldom used in modern monuments.

Erosion- When pertaining to stone; gradually wearing away of surface; associated with sugaring in marble. Regarding landscape, the slow tendency of earth to move down hill, through the forces of wind water, and ice.

Evaporate- To change into or pass off in vapor; Important part of the rising damp cycle in gravestones; the force which pulls salts and minerals towards the surface of stone and masonry structures combined with capillary action.

Excavate- The process of digging out or around something.

Exfoliation- Peeling or scaling of stones surface.

Exhume- To remove from a grave or dissenter.

Face- The front or inscribed surface of a gravestone or monument.

Failure- Collapse, rupture, or fracture. In gravestones, usually refers to a break down of a previous repair procedure.

Fallen- A memorial or sculpture which has been toppled over onto the ground.

Fat- Cement brought to the surface by floating the slab.

Fat Mortar- A very sticky mortar due to lack of sand.

Feather- Metal spacer used with wedges in drilled holes to crack apart stone.

Feldspar- One of the crystalline minerals in granite.

Ferrous Pinning- Metal that rusts and expands was use extensively in historic monumental installations. It has contributed to a host of problems, including, cracking, staining, stone degradation, and complete collapse in some instances. (Read Ferrous Metal Dowels.)



Fieldstone- Rough uncut stones as they are picked from a field.

Figurative- Sculpture or art form in which figures or object are displayed; most sculptural works found in cemeteries are figurative.

Finial- An image which is inscribed at the shoulder area, or top upper sides, most common on a historic tablet stone.

Flaking- Minor delimitation of surface, a form of spalling; Followed by blistering, and scaling, in a successive order of severity.

Float- A wooded tool used to finish a concrete or masonry surface.

Fluorescence- Optical effect whereby a mineral appears a different color in ultraviolet light then in ordinary daylight.

Flute- A groove or channel cut or carved in as an architectural decoration. Most commonly placed as parallel grooves, as found on an Ionic column.

Foliations- Patterns caused by aligned crystals in metamorphic rocks.

Footing- Foundation; A base for a wall or other structure that provides stability; may be concrete, or built masonry.

Footstone- Smaller gravestone set at the foot of a grave, most often in conjunction with a headstone. May be inscribed with only initials, or name, and is smaller then headstone.

Form- Used to shape concrete, as in the construction of a replacement base, to reset a broken tablet stone.

Foundation- The part of construction that supports the structure. In monuments, poor quality foundations or no at all account for a large percentage of structural failures.

Fragment- A piece of a broken gravestone, monument, or sculpture.

Frieze- The middle horizontal member, as found in classical entablature. The architrave is located below, with the cornice being above the frieze.

Frost Line- The maximum depth to which frost normally penetrates the soil during the winter. The depth varies from area to area depending on the climate. In Connecticut it is 42" below grade.

Furrowing- Striking a V-shaped trough in a bed of mortar.

Fusion- Melting: The melting of minerals at extremely high temperatures.

Gable- The upper vertical triangular section, of the end of a building having a double sloped roof.

Gneiss- Hard coarse grained metamorphic rock, not easily worked. It is also known as a type of granite, composed of mica, quartz, and schist, with additional iron, magnesium and silicates.

Gradation- The distribution of particle sizes, from coarse to fine, in a given sample of aggregate.

Grade- The slope of the ground around a gravestone, monument or structure.

Grade Line- The point at which a stone enters the ground. The most common site of tablet stone breakage.

Granite- Geologically an igneous rock made up of mica, quartz, and feldspar. The predominant stone which was used in American monuments during the twentieth century. Most modern monuments and footstones are composed of granite, which is now imported in a wide range of colors from around the entire world.



Granular Disintegration- The final and most advanced stage of marble or limestone decomposition exhibiting extensive sugaring and erosion with lost inscription. A highly weakened and deteriorated stone.

Grave- A place of burial, especially the excavation itself.

Grave Marker- Something placed in remembrance of the dead; a universal name to describe many types of memorials.

Gravestone-A stone placed on a grave to mark it, commonly inscribed with name, birth and death dates; most often describes a historic memorial. Tends to mean a monolithic, or a one piece stone such as a tablet stone.

Gauging- Stirring or mixing.

Granolithic- Consisting of artificial stone of a fine granular structure.

Grout- Thin mortar used in almost liquid consistency, to fill joints or cavities solidly.

Gypsum- A mineral consisting of the hydrous sulphate of calcium. Used to make Plaster of Paris.

Gypsum Crust- Calcareous stone sometimes degrades to form a highly decomposed incrustation, on its outer surface in areas protected from rainfall. If removed a crumbling stone is likely to be underneath.

Hardening- Setting of concrete or mortar. May continue for months or years.

Hawk- A fairly small board with a handle beneath it that is used for holding mortar.

Header- A masonry unit laid flat with its longest dimensions perpendicular to the face of the wall. Its is generally used to tie two widths of masonry together,

Headstone- A stone set at the head of a grave.

Hipped Roof- A roof which slopes upward from all four sides of a building.

Historic Pointing Mortar- A softer mortar designed for historic preservation. Contains a low percentage of Portland cement, such as a 1-4-8; meaning 1 part Portland, 4 parts hydrated lime, 8 parts sand, by volume. It may contain natural cement, or can be a pure lime mortar, with no cement present.

Hydration- The chemical reaction that occurs when water is added to cement, causing it to harden.

Hydraulic- Active in the presence of, or under the influence of, water. Example; hydraulic cement hardens under water. Derived from the Greek "hudor" (water).

Igneous Rock- Rock formed as molten magma cools and hardens under ground. Granite is the most common example, today being almost exclusively employed for monumental works. Coarse grained igneous rock are called granite and are preferred for monuments and building facades.

Immurement- To entomb in walls.

Incised Carving- Decorative image or inscription cut into stone.

Incipient- Beginning to take place.

In-fill- Replacement compound used patch or repair areas of lost or decayed stone, concrete, or masonry.

Injection Grout- A very thin grout which is injected or gravity fed into cracks or voids.

Interment- Burial

Inscription- Lettering carved or sandblasted into a gravestone or monument.

In-Situ- On site, constructed or conserved in position.

Ionic- The second of the three classical Greek orders, (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian). It was founded by the Ionic Greeks characterized by a spiral scroll, a volute.

Iridescence- A play of colors on the surface of a mineral, like a film of oil on water.

Joint- Any place where two or more edges or surfaces come to a union.

Keystone- The top stone in an arch or the center stone in a flat span.

Lamination- A thickness built up in layers.

Laminated Stone- Built up in layers when formed, such as sandstone.

Lancet Windows- Tall narrow Gothic windows, characterized by sharply pointed tops.

Lava- Magma on the Earth's surface.

Leaded Glass Windows- A window having small panes of glass held in place by lead. Assorted decorative shapes were often combined with clear, etched, stained, and beveled glass. Commonly associated with church buildings, they were often incorporated into mausoleums of the very wealthy.

Ledgestone- Pattern of stonework utilizing horizontal joints.

Lime- Produced by burning limestone in a kiln. The base for mortar.

Limestone- A sedimentary rock formed from shells and organic sea matter. If metamorphosed becomes marble. Limestone was often used in nineteenth century monuments as a base. May be difficult to distinguish from marble, but tends to be grayer in color than the originally white marble.

Lintel- A horizontal support for masonry or a stone spanning an opening; A horizontal beam, over a door or window which carries the weight of the wall above.

Lunette- Tympanum, upper center area on a gravestone, which often contained an image such as a cherub, urn & willow, or a death's head.

Luster- The way a mineral shines. It is affected by light reflecting off the surface of the mineral.

Magma- Molten rock beneath the Earth's surface.

Mantle- A shelf built into masonry for ornamental reasons.

Marble- Metamorphosed Limestone. The most common stone type used from the late 1700s in some areas through present day. Predominantly used during the Victorian era for gravestones, monuments, and sculpture. Most sought after in its purest white form of calcium carbonate. Unfortunately the stone most adversely affected by acid rain.



Masonry- Anything constructed of the materials stone, brick, block, concrete, tile, and mortar.

Mausoleum- Large, elaborate tomb or building to hold human remains.

Medallion- A decorative plaque with slightly projecting carvings.

Metamorphic Rock- Rock formed or changed by heat and compression. Formed under high pressure and heat over a long period of time. Examples include: Limestone becomes marble, shale becomes slate, and some sandstones become quartzite.

Metamorphism- The action of heat and pressure.

Memento Mori- Latin for "remember thy death".

Memorial- Stone commemorating a person, may or may not be marking a grave site. Example, sea captain lost at sea; a gravestone would have been placed at the site without a body. Gravestones moved away from remains become memorials.

Mend- To join broken fragments together again.

Mica- Mineral that occurs in thin sheets and tends to sparkle. A major part of granite.

Mineral- A solid mixture of chemicals that has certain regular characteristics, such as atomic structure and chemical composition.

Mineral Vein- Cracks in rocks that become filled with hot, mineral-rich liquids during their formation.

Missing Gravestone- Buried or disintegrated stone, unable to be found in a previously documented location.

MOH's Hardness Scale- A scale devised by the Austrian mineralogist Friedrich Mohs that measures the hardness of mineral by scratching. It is based on a scale which ranges from one to ten. Talc represents the number one, with diamond being at the top of the scale, as a ten in hardness.

Monolith- A term applied to a single piece work. A one piece gravestone or monument. Derived from a word of Greek origin: its literal meaning is "one stone".

Monument- From the root word meaning, "to think". A building, structure or memorial; a headstone constructed of two or more sections. Can include a wide range of types and styles.

Mortar- A plastic mixture of lime and sand, with possible other possible ingredients, such as horse hair; it is used chiefly for bonding masonry units together. Modern mortars include Portland cement.

Mould- The negative form, from which a cast is made.

Mud- Mortar

Natural Bed- The surface of a stone, parallel to its stratification.

National Historic Landmark- America's highest designation for historic structures. It was instituted by the Roosevelt Administration in 1935. See web site.

National Register of Historic Places- America's official list of buildings, sites and districts which includes some cemeteries. It was founded by Congress in 1966, but is administered by the states. See web site.

Necropolis- A city of the dead; a cemetery, especially a large extensive one in an ancient city.

Oolith- Small, rounded grains that make up some sedimentary rocks.

Order- The three Greek orders included, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. They were each symbolized by a specific style of column, capital, and entablature. Sometimes the orders were interchanged or combined in the same structure.

Ore- Rock or other material from which a metal is extracted.

Parapet- In an exterior wall, the part entirely above the roof.

Patching Compound- Composite mixture to infill lost stone.

Patina- The final surface texture or color. The protective crust which forms over time, on the surface of some types of stone outdoors.

Pavers- Bricks in numerous sizes and shapes that are used for constructing sidewalks, patios, and driveways.

Pediment- Triangular gable end of the roof, which is above the horizontal cornice.

Perfect Cleavage- Property of mineral that breaks only in certain directions.

Perpetual Care- Guarantee of eternal cemetery upkeep; funds were collected and set aside and sometimes markers were placed beside monuments, or inscriptions added to stones, to denote a payment had been collected.

Pier- A very wide pillar; a free-standing column; a vertical stone column that supports structures; a section of masonry used to carry weight from above, as in a arch, beams or girders.

Pigment- Substances used as a coloring agent; originally made from natural products, but today include synthetic materials; coloring pigments are often used in paints, dyes, and in stone conservation to shade or color composite infill materials.

Pilaster- An attached pier or pillar, often with a capital and base; a pier built in a wall to strengthen against horizontal forces or for appearance.

Pillar- A column-like support, without a classical capital.

Pitch- To use a chisel to square a stone. A stone chisel.

Pitting- Distinct depressions on a stones surface.

Plastic- Capable of being molded, formed, modeled, or spread, like a mortar or paste.

Plasticity Consistency- A sluggish flow without segregation.

Plinth- A block that raises a monument or sculpture.

Plinth Course- The projecting course of masonry often called the water table.

Plumb- Straight up and down; vertically perpendicular as measured with a spirit level, or plumb bob.

Plumb Bob- A weight, attached to a line used to establish a plumb point on a surface.

Plumb Line- To extend a line forms the top to the bottom of a structure.

Pointing- The process of filling in joints; by inserting mortar, after masonry has set.

Pointing Trowel- A small towel used for filling in small holes and for pointing up work.

Porcelain- The finest of all ceramics, it retains its strength even when very thin. Photographs of deceased were affixed onto monuments in porcelain frames or lockets.

Portico- A monumental projecting porch with a roof supported by columns. They were most commonly found at the front entrance of an important building or structure.

Portland Cement- Cement most often used in modern construction to formulate concrete, mortar, and pre-cast products. Creates a very hard solid, not recommended for most aspects of historic preservation.

Precast Concrete- Any concrete member that is cast in forms at a place other than its final position in use.

Preservation- To keep safe from harm or injury; Historic preservation attempts to preserve our histories artifacts and objects from previous generations.

Proportion- The correct or desirable relationship between parts.

Punch- A pointed steel tool used like a chisel to remove chips or stone. Historically the work-horse of stone cutting.

Pry Bar- Any tool used to lever or pry stone or heavy objects.

Pumice Stone- A volcanic stone, finely ground and used for polishing.

Quartz- A common crystalline stone. A major part of granite.

Quartzite- Metamorphic sandstone. A harder denser sandstone.

Quarry- A rock bed. A place where rock is cut from.

Rafter- A diagonal member which forms the shape and structure of a sloping roof, and supports the roofing material above.

Rake Joint- To remove some of the mortar from a joint to a uniform depth, before it hardens.

Reguage- Retemper, remix mortar as it begins to harden to extend pot life.

Reinforcing Rod- Rebar; A steel rod that is used for reinforcing concrete or masonry.

Relief- A design made to relieve the flat surface. It can project or be incised.

Reset- The reinstallation of a leaning, fallen, or damaged gravestone or monument.

Reset Lowered- A gravestone which has been reset in a lowered position due to being fractured, most often near the ground level.

Restoration- To restore or make new again. More aggressive than conservation, restoration implies recreating what has been lost.

Retaining Wall- A wall of masonry used to keep soil or other material from in place, and from falling.

Retemper- To stir thoroughly again, so as to give a workable consistency.

Revival Styles- To employ classical styles in new architectural works. Greek, Egyptian, Romanesque, etc, became very popular in America throughout the mid 19th and early 20th centuries.

Riprap- Irregular stone used for fill or to hold against erosion.

Rising Damp- Moisture brought upwards through the forces of capillary action and evaporation.

Rock- Solid mixtures, or aggregates, of minerals.

Roof Ridge- The top horizontal member of a sloping roof.

Romanesque Revival- The Roman and Byzantine styles which were characterized by their massive size and often included the round arch. They were popular during the second half of the 19th century.

Rowlock- A brick laid on its edge (face).

Rubble- Rough fragments, either natural or broken stone used in course masonry, or as fill in concrete or walls.

Running Bond- This is the same as common bond, with continuous horizontal joints, but the vertical joints are offset or inline.

Sandstone- A sedimentary rock made up of compressed sand. Formed from fresh water sediment. Extensively used in the form of brownstone throughout the Connecticut River valley from the late 1600s to about 1900.



Sarcophagus- A stone coffin.

Scaling- The most advanced form of spalling.

Scarify- To make scratches in mortar or cement, so the next coat has a stronger bond.

Schist- A metamorphic crystalline rock which easily splits along its bedding planes. Used to create gravestones in some geographic locations.

Scratch Coat- The first coat in infill, stucco, or plaster.

Screed- A long, very straight board used for striking off concrete.

Screeding- The process of leveling the surface of a concrete slab by striking off the excess concrete.

Sedimentary Rock - Rock that forms at the Earth's surface. It consists of layers or rock fragments or other substances that have been deposited on top of each other. Examples include; lake and river beds become sandstone, sea beds become limestone.

Segregation- The tendency of particles of the same size in a given mass of aggregate to gather together whenever the material is being loaded, transported, or otherwise distributed.

Sepulcher- A burial vault, a place to store relics in an altar.

Setting- The installation of a new monument; The process during which mortar or concrete hardens. Initial set occurs when the concrete or mortar has to be broken to change its shape. Rate varies greatly depending on the temperature, amount of sunlight, and specific masonry mix.

Setting Bar- Steel bar formed round, square, or the strongest, octagonal in shape. Constructed from two to six or more feet long. Used to lift, maneuver and handle heavy weights with a mechanical advantage through leverage; A monument is "set", by being dropped down off a setting bar.

Setting Clamps- Firmly attached onto a die stone, the stone is then lowered without risk of chipping.

Setting Compound- Also known as monument setting compound. Available in gray, dark gray, brown, and white. The preferred material used to install new monumental works.

Setting Cushions- A spacer placed between stone sections. It may be composed of lead, plastic, or other hard materials.

Shale- Thinly layered soft stone of clay origin. Becomes slate if metamorphosized

Shim- Cushion. Spacer placed between stone segments. May be lead, copper, plastic and

Can vary in thickness.

Siliceous- Containing silica (quartz or sand). Written also as silicious.

"Shot" Stone- Stone quarried with explosives.

Shoulder- Top Upper outside corners on a gravestone.

Slate- A hard durable rock which comes from metamorphic shale composed mainly of clay. Formed in layers it sometimes delaminates along its bedding planes. Many of the oldest and best preserved examples of colonial gravestones were carved from slate. They can be found in the throughout the New England stones, and especially in Boston, MA.



Slings- Constructed from polyester, nylon, or other very strong materials. Stone is hung from, in order to be raised, moved, or set.

Sling Bar- Spreads slings apart, from which monuments are lifted with.

Soap Stone- A soft stone composed largely of talc. It carves easily and resists heat well. It tends to work more like a wood than a common stone. Occasionally gravestones were carved from soap stone.

Soldier Course- A course of brick laid with the brick standing on edge with the thin side on the face.

Soul Effigy- The most common symbol found on American gravestones from the mid 18th century, through the mid to late 19th century. It was replaced largely by the Greek revival image of the urn & willow.



Soundness- Absence of the tendency to crack, swells, shrink, distort or disintegrate, under Varying conditions.

Spall- To flake or split away, indicates the lose of stone.

Specific Gravity- The comparison of a minerals weight with the weight of an equal volume of water.

Stabilize- To make safe or secure. To prevent from falling or being damaged.

Star Drill- Chisel like drill, struck with a hammer and turned, then struck again, to slowly create holes in stone.

Stele- A commemorative stone inscribed or sculpture, as a monument or set into the facade of a building.

Stone Point- Sharp, pointed chisel for finishing stone faces.

Streak- The color of a minerals powder. It is often a more useful identification tool then color because it gives less variable results.

Stretcher- A brick or block laid lengthwise in a wall.

Striations- One of a series of parallel stripes or lines; with rock, formed by veins of minerals joining, may be considered blemishes or defects to be avoided.

Striking- Taking down or removing, as in the removal of forms.

Struck Joint- A joint that has been made by pressing the mortar with a trowel.

Stucco- Cement mortar or gypsum plaster of two or more layers; used to surface coat exterior or interior masonry walls or structures.

Sub Foundation- The first layer of material placed in excavated ground prior to the foundation. May be composed of crushed stone, cinders.

Survey- To overview a graveyard or cemetery in planning for preservation.

Symmetrical- Having the exact same forms or masses on either side of a center line or plane.

Tablet stone. A single piece vertical gravestone

Table Stone- A memorial composed of legs or a built masonry base, supporting a large horizontal stone, usually containing inscription.



Table Tomb- Box tomb, a crypt style monument without a body inside.

Tamping- The act of pounding, packing or consolidating as in concrete; The compaction of dirt during backfill.

Tempering- Adding water to mortar to bring back to a workable texture.

Tensile Strength- The holding power or measure of adhesiveness of concrete, masonry or stone; power to resist the action of forces tending to pull apart. Contrasted with compressive strength, the power to resist crushing under direct pressure.

Texture- The tactile and visual quality of a surface, regardless of its color.

Texturing- Creating a particular finish, such as brushed, smoothed, etched or pockmarked.

Tie-Stone- A long stone which extends across a wall.

Tomb- A grave, burial vault or a monument.

Tombstone- Gravestone; denotes historical type, often within the western United States

Tower- A tall structure most often round or square, rises from the ground to a height above its entire surroundings.

Tracery- Curving bars which form a decorative shape, within a Gothic window.

Transom- An opening over a door or window, most often for ventilation. It contains a glazed or solid sash which is often hinged or pivoted.

Trap Rock- A dark-colored igneous rock of great weight and strength, including basalt, feldspar, etc.

Treatment- The proper term to describe performing a conservation procedure.

Trowel- A steel tool with a flat surface for buttering spreading, and smoothing mortar or concrete; comes in various shapes and sizes with specific names.

True Up- To make level or plumb.

Tuck Pointer- A long flat tool made in varying widths from ¼- ½ inch.

Tuck Pointing- Filling the joints in masonry with mortar by using a tuck pointer.

Tumulus- Burial mound or barrow.

Turret- A corner tower which rises from the second floor or roof line.

Tympanum- The semi circular top upper section on a tablet stone.

Unstable- A hazardous or dangerous gravestone, monument, or structure. May be in danger of toppling or falling apart.

Urn- Container for ashes of a person who has been cremated.

Urn & Willow- The most common of all Victorian symbols, found on a large portion of gravestones throughout the 19th century. Also associated with Greek revival, meaning mourning of the deceased.



Vaulted Ceiling- A ceiling formed from a continuous arch, found in Roman, Classical and Gothic architecture and revival styles. A common technique employed in the 19th and 20th century for the construction crypts and vaults in cemeteries.

Veneer- A layer of bricks or stones that serve as a facing.

Vitrify- To make glass-like, as vitrified clay, glazed surfaces, etc. Usually done by heating to fusion.

Voids- The air space created from the movement or decomposition of stone, or the air space between particles or aggregates. In a concrete or mortar.

Volute- A spiral scroll forming the major element of an Ionic capital.

Weathering- The breaking down of rocks or masonry, by the action of various processes such as freezing and thawing and dissolving in water.

Wedges- Stone chips used for leveling.

Metal tools used in conjunction with feathers to split stone by hammering on, when used in groups along a row.

Weep Holes- The openings made in mortar joints that facilitate drainage of built-up moisture.

Wrought Iron- Decorative iron that is hammered or forged into shape by hand. Very popular during the 19th and early 20th century for fences and ornament. Almost a lost art, as very few artisans continue to practice this trade.

Wythe- A vertical stack of bricks one thickness wide; a veneer course.