



One of the most rewarding experiences in genealogy is researching, locating and photographing the gravestones of your New England ancestors. With so many graveyards, how do you find your dead folks? Can you rely on the information carved on the stones? How do you tell if the gravestone is an original or a replacement? Until a few years ago, gravestone work was difficult to accomplish but now technology has made this an engaging experience for all family historians.

**Finding Your Dead Folks: Places to Search**

Find-A-Grave <<http://www.findagrave.com/>>, Histopolis <<http://www.histopolis.com/Cemeteries.aspx>>, Google Maps <<http://maps.google.com>>, Geneablogger Cemetery Blogs <<http://www.geneabloggers.com/genealogy-blogs-type/cemetery-blogs/>>, USGS Cemetery Finder <<http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic>>, A Very Grave Matter (New England) <<http://www.gravematter.com/default.asp>>

**Original, Replacement or Memorial Stones** (photo above by Frederick Burdick, town historian Stonington, CT)  
 Many replacement stones have been re-created to look like the original so if a stone looks perfect that is supposed to be from the late 1690s to early 1750s or later beware that it is a replica. Check the back of the stone or near the bottom of the stone front for a notation.



Ebenezer Gallup 1757-1794 (Gallup Hill Burying Ground, Ledyard, CT)  
 Collection of the author (Revolutionary War soldier)

Just because it is a incised or carved slate gravestone it may not be that old. Slate is a popular choice of modern colonial replica stone carvers and you can still have one custom made.

Research of New England Gravestones  
Midge Frazel, Topic Moderator: NEAPG Luncheon @ NERGC, Sat. Apr 9, 2011

Sometimes the original stone is still in the graveyard. It may be only partially readable, worn or broken. Look near the wall of the graveyard or right next to the new one as in this photograph.



Mrs. Ruth Joy (an unmarried woman whose title Mrs. was one given out of respect in her community) 1699-1774, Collection of the author (Old Ship Meetinghouse Graveyard, Hingham, MA)

Memorial stones have been erected for many of our earliest New England ancestors including passengers of the Mayflower. These are not originals as their graves were probably not marked or marked with wooden markers or un-carved fieldstones.



John and Priscilla (Mullins) Alden, Passengers on the Mayflower Memorial Stones, Collection of the Author, Myles Standish Burying Ground, Duxbury, MA



### Using Technology to Photograph Your Ancestors

Digital Camera Photography and the posting and sharing of these images has changed gravestone research dramatically. The use of a mirror or a photographer's reflecting circle to focus light on the carved surface of a gravestone can improve the readability of the stone.

Sometimes just taking the photo at a different time of day can make a big difference. The clear one was taken in the morning the other with a mirror in the afternoon.

Clift-Denison Monument Photos, Collection of the Author (Elm Grove Cemetery, Mystic, New London, CT)



The Fish children (an unnamed son and his brother John Dean Fish) collection of the author (Elm Grove Cemetery, Mystic, CT)

Top photograph taken in the afternoon but only the one photographed in the morning is readable.

My Gravestone Kit (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/midgefrazel/2449236502/>)

