

Frequently Asked Questions about Charter Street Cemetery

Help us preserve our burial grounds

CHARTER STREET CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1637

*This burial ground is a place of
honor and history*

Gravestones and tombs are fragile

Be respectful

*Do not lean, stand or push on
gravestones and tombs*

No stone rubbings

No scavenger hunts

Stay on the paths

Remove masks

*Candles and open flames are not
allowed*

Dogs are not allowed

Please report suspicious behavior

Is it real?

Yes! Charter Street Cemetery dates back to 1637. The oldest known gravestone dates to 1673.

What's the oldest stone?

Doraty Cromall who died in 1673. It is a very simply designed stone and can be found near her husband Philip's (1693) stone.¹

What happened to the stones between 1637 and 1673?

The earliest New England grave markers were made of wood. Following English custom, graves were marked with what were called "coffin rails."² These wooden markers would have deteriorated over time.

What are the stones made of?

A lot of them are slate. There are also sandstone markers (kind of a reddish brown color), schist (similar to slate but more granular), and there are a few marble markers (those are white and newer).

Gravestone Rubbing

Gravestone rubbing is not permitted in any of Salem's historic cemeteries.

Which graves are related to the Salem Witch Trials?

Mary Corry, d. 1684, was the first wife of Giles Corey, who was accused in the Witchcraft Hysteria, and who was pressed to death for not entering a plea.

John Hathorne, d. 1717, was one of the judges of the witchcraft trials and an ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Are the witches buried here?

The innocent people who were accused and executed during the Witchcraft hysteria did not receive Christian burials. Their bodies were cast into a pit or shallow grave by the gallows. Family histories say that some people came back under dark of night to claim their relatives' bodies and give them unmarked graves at their homes.

What walking tours visit the cemetery?

Bewitched After Dark

Hocus Pocus Tours

Salem Day Tour / Salem Night Tour

Salem Heritage Tours

Sinister Stories

Essex Heritage / Myths & Misconceptions

Now Age Tours

Salem Food Tours' Coffee Walks

Salem Historical Tours

Spellbound Tours

Where can I learn more?

The book, "Our Silent Neighbors, A Study of Gravestones in the Old Salem Area," by Betty J. Bouchard, is available at The Trolley Depot at 191 Essex Street. For more information on walking tours, visit HauntedHappenings.org or Salem.org.

¹ [Our Silent Neighbors](#), Betty J. Bouchard, 2000. Page 22

² *Ibid.* Page 6

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What are the houses?



The **Grimshawe or Peabody House** sits at 53 Charter Street. Centuries ago this house was a grand display of Federal style architecture and a meeting place for great literary thinkers. In 1835 Dr. Nathaniel Peabody, a dentist, purchased the home and it was in the home that Peabody's youngest daughter Sophia met Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom she would later wed. Sophia's sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Peabody, would open the first kindergarten in America. The two actively advocated education reform.

The Grimshawe House over went many renovations and additions during the 20th century and today greatly differs in appearance from the time of the Peabody's residence. The original portico is now housed on the back exterior of Plummer Hall at the Peabody Essex Museum, at 132 Essex Street.



Samuel Pickman House, ca. 1665, is a Post-Medieval or First Period building, "discovered" beneath a much-later mansard roof. It stands on its original site and exhibits the characteristics associated with this style. The house was restored by Historic Salem in 1969 and purchased by the Peabody Essex Museum in 1983. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Summer School Building on Charter Street was built in 1876 to house a biology summer school associated with the Peabody Museum (today the PEM).