

# Old Downsville Cemetery



Urn Carving



Dry-Stack Blue Stone Wall



Willow Carving



Stag Horn Carving

One of the oldest cemeteries in Colchester, the Old Cemetery, sometimes referred to as the Covered Bridge Cemetery dates back to 1736. The first person buried here was a two year old pioneer girl Sally Hitt.

The cemetery is surrounded by a locally cut dry stack bluestone wall. This cemetery has several examples of the itinerant gravestone carvers: "Coffin Man," "Coffin Man's Apprentice" and "Eclectic Man." During the early part of the nineteenth century itinerant carvers would travel from town to town carving gravestones. Archeological researchers have attributed these carvings to Jonas W. Stewart and his apprentices. Gravestones in this cemetery show examples of their Urn, Willow and Stag Horn carvings. Stewart carved stones in this area from the late 1790's to 1820.

Some notable persons buried here are:

William Holiday a blacksmith and armaments maker for the Continental Congress; also served as a scout and Revolutionary War soldier. He was captured by the British in the Battle of Long Island and made a daring escape through a swamp to rejoin his unit. He moved to Colchester in 1795 where he made his home until his death at age 104.

William Horton built the first grist mill in Delaware County in Colchester. People brought their grain to his mill in canoes from as far away as Equinunk, PA. As many as 7,000 bushels of wheat was ground at his mill in a single year. Horton was the first elected Town Supervisor in 1793; a member of the Assembly in 1798 and was one of the Associate Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, when the court was first organized in Delaware County in 1798.

Honorable Judge John H. Gregory, a member of the New York Assembly in 1820 used his influence to bring the first State road into Colchester which was the first state road in Delaware County.

James W. Stevens, a Civil War veteran that served with the 144<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment, Co. K.