

# GRAVE NEAR CHURCH ON MARKET STREET.

Headstone of Prominent Man  
Stands Near Saint Anthony's Church.

DR. NORMAN MORRISON  
WEALTHY IN HIS DAY.

Died of Smallpox and Was  
Buried in His Orchard  
April 9, 1761.

At the northeast corner of St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church on Market street is the grave of Dr. Norman Morrison, or "Morrison," as it variously spelled in documents and inscriptions bearing his name, who was once one of the wealthiest if not the most wealthy and extensive landowner in the town of Hartford. That was back in the first half of the eighteenth century, when the common lands had not been divided and the slave trade furnished a lucrative occupation to ship owners of the place Dr. Morrison, whose slab of Portland sandstone has rested unnoticed for years and which, by a strange circumstance, is at the very entrance of a church, was noted for his education and attainments and is said to have settled in this city about 1736. After years of successful practice in which he became one of the best known men in the colony, he died of smallpox and was buried in his own apple orchard. By his side is said to be buried his son, who died of the same disease. When the homestead of Dr. Morrison was divided the land that held the graves is reported to have carried a clause of defeasance vacating the title to anyone in possession of the land who neglected to care for the graves or allowed them to be disturbed.

However that may be, whether by Christian courtesy or by law, the graves have been undisturbed for more than a century now, while his homestead, which stood on Main street and divided all the land between Market, Main, State and Talbot streets, has been divided and subdivided until all trace of the original ownership is well nigh obliterated.

Like a number of the early settlers of this section he came from Scotland

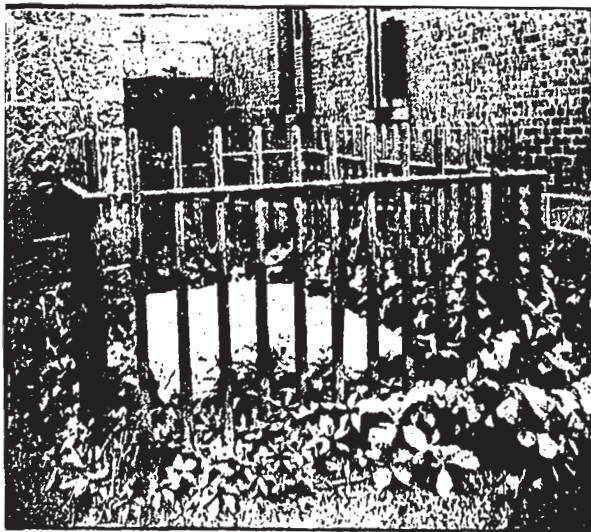
and with Scotch thrift purchased land when it was cheap. In early extensive portions of the common lands on the east and west sides of the river, and large tracts in the county of Hampshire, as the western portion of Massachusetts was called in those days, and lands in Bolton, Ellington, Plainfield and other portions of this colony. While few of the Italian congregation attending church at St. Anthony's and passing and repassing his grave hundreds of times in the year, have probably noticed the inscription on his gravestone, it is interesting to note that it is in Latin, with an English translation beneath. It sets out his virtues in clear simple language, and was evidently composed by one who was well acquainted with the tongue of scholars and professional men of that period. Mr. Morrison was a graduate of the university of Edinburgh and probably a student of the classics himself. The inscription reads as follows:—

Hoc sub marmore conditur re-  
liquas  
NORMAN MORRISON,  
Qui Ae huius natus & Edinno edu-  
catus.  
Medicus nihil Secundus,  
Coniux, frater, pater, & amicus,  
Inter praestans  
Moribus, facillia, egeritibus lib-  
ratis,  
Omnibus benivolus & beneficus  
Aque  
Christianus Bino fuce extitit.  
Mulum desideranda oblit  
9 no Id; Aprilis 1761. Annuum  
aetatis 55.

In English literally as follows:  
Under this Marble are Buried the  
Remains of  
NORMAN MORRISON,  
Who being born in the Western  
Island of Scotland and edu-  
cated in Edinbur  
Lived a Physician inferior to  
None.  
An husband, brother, father and  
friend,  
Among the most excellent,  
In manner gentle, to those in need  
liberal,  
Kind and beneficent to all, and  
A Christian without deceit.  
He died much loved and lamented  
the 9th of April 1761, in ye 55th  
year of his age.

The will of Dr. Morrison is recorded in the probate records, and bears the date of April, 1761, but the clerk of the court has neglected to inscribe the exact day. It must, however, have been made shortly before his death on the 9th. That he expected to die shortly, seems probable from the first clause of the will, for after reciting his name and other introductory matter he goes on to the customary statement of perfect memory, which reads:—"In the name of God, Amen, I Norman Morrison of Hartford in the county of Hartford and Colony of Connecticut in New England, of perfect memory, (pleased by God)."

An eloquent clause in itself and proof that he was aware of his condition and the danger of death. It is well known that smallpox was especially prevalent in Hartford at various periods. Three epidemics are mentioned in the early records, one of the worst occurring in 1702, and several others after that date. Whatever may have been the cause of Dr. Morrison's death he was eminently successful as a physician during his life and his inventory took up to \$5,304 11s. 7d, which was a good sized estate for the day. The inventory was filed November 24, 1762, by William Pitkin, John Keith, and Joseph Olcott. It is also interesting to know that Dr. Morrison was widely known as instructor of the young phy-



Grave of Dr. Norman Morrison.

sicians of his time. Dr. Sumner, a noted authority on medical matters, said he was the first one to advocate the establishment of an independent pharmacy in the city of Hartford, and persuaded the physicians of his day to separate the two callings. In other ways he was by education and natural talents at the head of the medical profession of his day.

The inventory shows something of the diversity of interests that then occupied the attention of a man of affairs. The most noticeable is the land speculation that must have been at the boiling point then. The physician had shares in nearly all the newly formed settlements that were promoted from Hartford, notably in the town of Hartland, one of the new settlements in the state. There is also a settlement called Greenock or Watson town in the illegal script of the book of records which seems to have been in the county of Hampshire, at that time in the colony of Massachusetts.

The great commons to the west and east of the present town of Hartford were then being divided and Morrison's will is full of references apt to puzzle anyone but an expert antiquarian. There were apparently several of the Morrison family here at the time; a brother Evander, called "Raymond" in one of the wills, for whom he provided with care, although Evander died a few years afterwards. He had no sons, at the time of his death, but left a wife, Ann, who appears to have previously married to a Captain John Smith and whose two sons, George and William Smith, are mentioned in the will. Both of these seem to have been very successful men, as were also his daughters and relatives at law. Daniel Marsh, Jr., who married his daughter Ann, received property in East Hartford; John Walker, the husband of his daughter Marian, received a substantial remembrance in interests in a house and

the hall, the middle room, the end bedroom next the garden, probably the same garden where the doctor was finally buried, the end room next Collins's or Collier's, and the hall chamber. Like many of the men of his time Dr. Morrison was interested in the slave traffic and this was not unusual in those days, when negroes were imported from Africa for servants. In his inventory are "sundry negroes,—being 7-16 part of the Schooner Speedwell." The valuations are from 140 to 120 and even less.

There's Wallace and Rambo and Lear and Tobia and Lunsula and Zomba and Tombo alias Spunk. Another called Yellow Jack, who might excite suspicion, is marked sick and appraised at £3. The girls have numerous peculiar names as Lazor, Bura, Futhungana, Conda, Yumbah, Shama, Serah, Yomba, Dumarba, Pindor, Galy and Semo. The valuation of the girls is about £300 and the boys are valued at £275. Dr. Morrison also owned one-half of the schooner Unity which was sold to John Hulkeby, for £10. His house and lot in Ellington is valued at £70, his home lot of John Walker with three acres, at £240, the warehouse on the water-side at £15, the farm at Plainfield of 118 acres on Clock Hill at £320, the Bolton farm at £600 and his share of the schooner Speedwell at £105. Five guns are valued at £15, twenty-six acres of land in the first division of the township of Hartland at £184, 325 acres in the second division £300, and 490 acres in the third division at £245. The property he gave Daniel Marsh, his son-in-law, is appraised at £400, fifty-four acres in East Hartford at £64, a house and land in Ellington at £220 and twenty-two acres in Windsor, purchased of Timothy Phelps, at £63. The last item of real estate is ninety-five acres in the Hartford commons on the west side, and is appraised at £118.

lands in this town, also on the east side of the river, as well as a large farm in Bolton. His daughter Jennet received a farm in Plainfield on Clock Hill and with this she went a negro girl named Silvia, and with the former gift a negro servant named Rene Margaret; the daughter of his brother Robert, he remembers by a devise of lands in Hampshire county, and the proceeds of the sale of other property in Ellington, and provision is also made for Frederick Morrison, the son of his brother Frederick. His favorite grandson seemed to have been Norman Morrison, the son of his brother Robert, who is the residuary legatee. While his largeness of heart is evidenced by his ample provision for his relatives there is a touch of the Scotch thrift in the closing clause of his will:—"Item—I hereby constitute and appoint my said wife Ann, and John Walker and George Smith, my sons-in-law, to be the executors of my, my last will and testament, and for the trouble they shall be in fulfilling their trust I discharge them of all debts due to me, they also discharging me from what is due to each of them. In witness whereof, I the said Norman Morrison, have to this, my last will and testament, set my hand and seal the day and year above mentioned."

The three witnesses are Nell McLean, Joseph Farnsworth and Eliza Williams. The inventory filed by the appraisers show that Dr. Morrison was unusually well provided with property. Many luxuries are mentioned in the closely written document, among them articles of china and glass and framed pictures as well as brass implements and silver and pewter for the kitchen and sideboard. A shop stood near his house which is mentioned as the shop chamber and one of his next door neighbors is called "Collins" or "Collier." The rooms in the house as designated by name were the hall room, the small bedroom next