

## Tablet and Slab

The earliest grave stones at the Charles Baber Cemetery were called slab stones or tablets. They were made of slate, sandstone, brownstone, or limestone, depending upon which material was available and reasonably cheap at the time. The **slabs** were rectangular in shape with a general size of 12 inches in height, 10 inches in width, and 4 inches in thickness. They were engraved with the minimum information of name and date of death. Because the early stone composition did not weather well, and because the lettering was not deep, over time the names and dates have become erased from the stones. Most of the slabs can only be found in the section directly in front of the chapel because that is the oldest part of the cemetery. The land was purchased in 1845 by the Trinity Episcopal Church, and it was called the Mt. Laurel Cemetery. Charles Baber developed his adjoining cemetery in the 1850s through the 1860s, and some slabs can be found in the family plots inside the main entrance. A few slabs are taller with a height of 18 to 36 inches, and a few are smaller with a height less than 12 inches. Real small ones were used for babies and young children. The slabs date from the 1840s to the 1880s.



The unprecedented demand for memorial markers during the Civil War (1861-1865) caused the monument-producing industry to grow and to offer more elaborate products. **Tablets** were created as an answer to this demand. The stones were given rounded or pointed tops or tiered rounded tops. Some had part of the outer edge of the front chiseled off so it looked like the marker had an outer plate or shield attached.

Some even had simple motifs added, like the two tablets at the bottom, with flowers and ivy. And some tablets were increased in thickness from the standard 4 inches to 6 or 8 inches. The tablets, like the slabs, were made of the same material composition, and did not weather well. Tablets held their own from the mid to the late 1800s. After that they gave way to the box, chest, cradle, hip tomb, and the standard marker. And by the 1900s, they became bigger and taller, evolving into columns, blocks, pedestals, obelisks, and eclectic markers.

