

PLAINFIELD CEMETERIES

There are at present ten known burial places in town. Some of them are so ancient as to have no stones with inscriptions at all, others have only a few.

1. Judging by the location, it would appear that the most ancient is the one that lies on an old road that ran between the present Central and Grant Streets, but some half mile farther north. This cemetery would appear to have served the earliest residents of the town, and the part of Hawley that was later added to Plainfield. About 20 burials were made here.

[#3 on map and in Dyer's History]

2. The second one in point of age, which also has no inscribed stones, is opposite Mr. Ezra Billings. (43 South Central St) It is now an old pasture. There was a bar-way in the corner of the wall, but that has been filled with stone. This is so overgrown with brush (1942) that one would never guess its former use. (*It is now part of 54 South Central St and is lost? 2008 NEA*)

[#2 on map and in Dyer's History]

3. The one that might be third in age is located near Windsor Ave. In the extreme west part of town. This has inscribed stones and is quite small. This one served the residents of the southwestern part of town. There are 2 or 3 families there.

[#5 on map and Dyer's History]

4. The fourth one, which has many graves markers only of field stones, with some half dozen inscribed ones lies on an old pasture in the south part of town, It is about one fourth of a mile east of the main road and south of the house of Rev Sylvester Robertson, whose preceding owner was Carl Fisher. (208 West Hill Rd) (on old maps called High St) There is no road to this cemetery and one wonders just how it was reached when it was in use. (*Now it is found by following the stone wall after the hay field on the other side, south of 208 West Hill Rd and walking up a slight rise and into the woods on the right. watching out for the brambles NEA*) The inscribed stones cover a decade between 1790 and 1800, indicates the availability of a stone cutter in that time, and that the cemetery ceased to be used at the turn of the 1800 century. About a dozen inscribed stones (1946) it was from this cemetery that the body of young Mrs Hannah Cook was removed early in the last century - 18th century. The town records mentioned the fact, and some efforts at finding the remains and prosecuting the offenders. Tradition gives us the rest of the details. It seems, as was often the case in the early days of medicine that two medical students were in need

of a cadaver for dissection. As there was no legal way to come by one, and the practice was much frowned upon, illegal methods had to be used. These two young men, learning of the young wife's death and perhaps knowing her, went at night to the cemetery, and having provided themselves with horses, and the necessary implements, exhumed the body, and wrapping it in cloak and hood, placed it on the pillion behind one of them and rode away into the night. It is not apparent that they were ever discovered or prosecuted, but as may be imagined, feelings at the time ran very high. (*In the 1980's old bones were uncovered at 166 East Main St the former home of the Richards where several sons became doctors. NEA*)

[#7 on map and Dyer's History]

5. The fifth cemetery established may have been the one that lies south of W.A. Packard's store (347 Main St) in the lower village. It is now part of his cow pasture, and lies in the corner just inside the bar-way. This was in use for some sixty three years (ALD), several of the early settlers being buried there. Some of them were later disinterred and removed to the Hill Top cemetery when that was opened. In 1946 there were some 20 inscribed stones, only about 2 dozen remain.

[#2 on map and Dyer's History]

6. The sixth cemetery was quite a distance from town, lying on the eastern slope of West Mountain in the east side of the road. This is now difficult to access as it is reachable only by tractor or by foot. This is a somewhat larger plot surrounded on all sides by a stone wall. It has grown large trees and saplings, but lately has been trimmed out. Most of the stones fell flat, but it is hoped that they will be reset in the near future. This was used for some three decades about the 1800s. About a dozen inscribed stones there in 1946.

[#4 on map and Dyer's History]

7. The seventh cemetery lies north of the road just west of Thomas Packard's (183 Summit St?) and is still in use. It is called the West Hill Cemetery and has served those in that locality since the discontinuation of the fourth cemetery about 1800. This has all types of markers, from pieces of field stone, through the early dark slabs markers, and the marble slabs to the modern monument types. It is surrounded by a stone wall and has trees only on its borders. It is very pleasantly situated and easy of access.

[# 9 on map and Dyer's History]

8. The eighth cemetery is a small one in the extreme eastern part of town, on the south side of East Street beyond the cellar hole that marked the 'old Winslow place' and the brook known as "Still Brook". This might be called the 'Baptist Cemetery', because most of those

buried there seem to have been of that persuasion. They are also of one family, principally the Stockwells and their connections. This is a small lot, and particularly pleasing to the eye. It is well walled and carefully laid out. It is surrounded almost completely by hemlock wood which seem to have kept out rank growth from the grounds and carpeted much of it with the fine needles of the surrounding trees. A good distance from any dwelling, it is quiet and peaceful in the extreme and it has about a dozen inscribed stones which seems to vouch for the truth if the ancient term "God's Acre".

[#6 on the map and Dyer's History]

9. The ninth cemetery lies on the south side of the road just east of the house of Dana Urban of which the McCloud family were preceding owners (25 Pleasant St) and it is west of the brook "Meadow Brook". It is next to the road and the barn almost forms the wall on the N.W. corner. This has been well tended in times past, is walled on all sides and is in fair condition. Many early residents of the southeast part of town are buried here. The old names so familiar in the early annals, read like the names of old friends. This is a pleasant and open location and except for the steepness of the hill that leads to it. quits east of access.

[#8 on the maps and Dyer's History]

IO. The tenth and principle cemetery of the town is located on the hilltop north of the church and village and is the one in present use. This was opened about 1803 and was successor to the fifth cemetery. It takes its name from its location and is the place that is designated to visitors as the best available place to 'see off'. The view includes the whole horizon with the exception as small spaces both to the north and south which are obscured by near-by woods. This started as a small plot and has been expanded at least twice, the last addition made about fifty years ago, doubling the previous size . This procedure probably can be continued, as it is surrounded copiously by pasture land owned by different people. In it are buried the town's first pastor, the renowned Moses Hallock, and his nearly as well known parishioner and Deacon Joseph Beals "The Mountain Miller" . The first burial was that of Lt. Solomon Shaw. It was enlarged in 1856, then in 1894 and again about 1978 and nearly doubled in 1992. The Tomb was built in 1884 and taken out about 1950.

[#10 on map and Dyer's History]

Written by Priscilla C (Dyer) Allen about 1946 and revised several times and edited by Nancy Allen 2008

Note On the west side of Monument Street there was a women buried about 1870 and a monument was erected, hence Monument St. It was reported she was exposed to

smallpox but did not have them, hence couldn't be buried in the cemetery. (NEA)