

ALLIS CEMETERY AND OLD SAVOY COUNTY ROAD

P Parking for this walk is best at the NW corner of Liberty and Prospect, though not in the winter.

1 Probably built by Noah and Consider Pixley and last lived in by Mila Stetson in the 1930s. *PP*

? Stone wall separating forest and field on L. The “Hatfield Equivalent” was one of the early grants of land in Plainfield, given in 1744 to residents of Hatfield, who had been shortchanged on their grant long before, but settled much later. The entire grant was surveyed in what is now Plainfield and Hawley—it contains the most arable land in both towns—and then parcelled out on the map in Boston. The descendants of each original Hatfield “proprietor” received proportional acreage. Between the lots, space was left vacant for roads. Summit and West Hill (formerly High St.) run along a “Vacancy.” Liberty St.—formerly the County Road to Savoy—follows a traveled path rather than a survey. Check out the direction and placement of this wall with compass and Topo.



We know about the layout of the grants and details about the cellar holes from maps made by Arvilla Dyer and Priscilla Allen. Detail from Plainfield c.1935 by Priscilla C. Allen ©N. Allen 2007

1 L. Check out the circular stones. What gives? *PP* Note Audubon signs on R. From boundary up to the cemetery the road and the woods are open to the public.

2 L. First we thought it might have been a bridge. What do you think? *AP*

1 The road narrows. Enough space to actually run a road?

2 L: Turn L at opening in the wall. After about 80 feet, turn R to find cellar hole. *AP*

? L: Do not enter diagonally: wet. Bayberry grows here. Pass the site, L along the stone wall to blue marker, L down. Any idea what it might have been?

★ Check the size of these boulders. Bedrock, glacial erratics, what?

➔ to **3** Philip Packard Cellar Hole. Any sign of the well?

➔ Diagonally “onward” to road and continue NW

4 R, in about 50 feet. Furthest site on this tour. *AP* Turn back up the road, retracing your steps

? L Allis cemetery (see map inset) *TP*

PP—Private Property;

AP—Audubon property: Public access, no dogs;

TP—Town property: Public access.

Upper Liberty (formerly Savoy County Road) is town property to the cemetery.

PLAINFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HIDDEN WALLS, HIDDEN MILLS EXPLORING THE PLAINFIELD LANDSCAPE

OLD COUNTY ROAD ALLIS CEMETERY



**MODERATE WITH STRENUOUS
OPTIONS
2-3 MI
WALK OR SNOWSHOES
AGE 12 (WITH ADULT) TO ADULT**

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READING THE LANDSCAPE

FARM AND FIELD

CELLAR HOLE • If 8 x18 and “C” shaped, it is a “half” cellar. probably with chimney base, built by 1800, under about 1/3 of house. • Signs of change: L-shaped with chimney, presence of bricks, marks where chimney base was removed. • Later cellars are rectangular/larger. • Barn foundation: “gap” in foundation wall (no lillies by barn)

HABITATION • Day lillies, bayberry • Remnants of apple orchard • Old maple trees lining the walls

FIELD • Very old or mature trees surround young trees in a former field or pasture. • Farmers leave large trees (shade/sugaring/ too much work to cut from the wall/no need to cut them) • Sheep eat shoots where they can reach them and prefer hardwood • Loggers cut down the large mature trees except right by the road.

LANDSCAPE • Sharp or square corners, circles, straight or horizontal lines are often man-made • inclined 'stacked' rocks are natural • 2 over 1 and horizontal, man-made

WALLS • Walls lining the road higher, better maintained, and with defined gaps (field or wagon entrance, walkway entrance) near habitation. Many gaps in old walls are made by water and/or a road crew, look for end stones.

DID YOU NOTICE THAT:

“NATURAL” ROADS follow topography or run by streams and wend this way and that. Straight roads have been laid out by surveyors

TIGHT FIELD CORNERS ARE HARD TO MOW. In Plainfield, a tight corner of a field/ property line, made visible by the angle of the walls, often suggests that a line surveyed for the original grants from the 1700's - done “on the map” and not “on the ground”, intersects unhappily with road that grew where people went.

WHERE THE SOIL IS ERODED AWAY BY WATER there are piles of stones: you're walking on the same piles of stones unless—the field was plowed and the stones are in the walls around it. Or . . . you're on a road bed, and the field walls may have been used to make or augment it, build it up around culverts. Step off the road and have a look!

WATER RUNS DOWNHILL EXCEPT WHERE IT DOESN'T: up into trees by capillary action (sugaring), through a pipe with some speed and force (mill flumes), or is under pressure (spring or artesian well). All were used on farms.

IT'S THE LAW

• The rules are clear: unless a land owner “posts” her property every 50 feet with signs, and has some kind of boundary around it (like a stone wall) you can go there. Mass. General Laws (MGL) Chapter 266: Crimes Against Property Section 120
[\[http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/Search\]](http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/Search)

• Cellar hole walls and mill foundations can be slippery and unstable - use care when walking around them and please, never walk or climb on walls, both for your own safety and that of the wall. It's against the law to pull down stone walls! MGL C.266 Sec. 94,105,126A. Gravity, which is the law for walls, is doing it for us. Newton's Second Law of Motion: The Theory of Universal Gravitation
[\[http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/history/newtongrav.html\]](http://csep10.phys.utk.edu/astr161/lect/history/newtongrav.html)

READING THE LANDSCAPE

TREES WHISPER TALES

White pines grow 1 “whorl” of branches per year: “huge” white pines may be as little as 40 years old!

The foresters’ fallback position in Massachusetts: mature but not old hardwood trees 12-20” diameter—60-80 years old.

If you see white pine that size: count the whorls. Small maple and beech trees around it may be the same age as the pine.

A hardwood tree with many branches all the way around and close together, or scars where branches once grew low out of the trunk are signs that it did not have to compete for light when young.

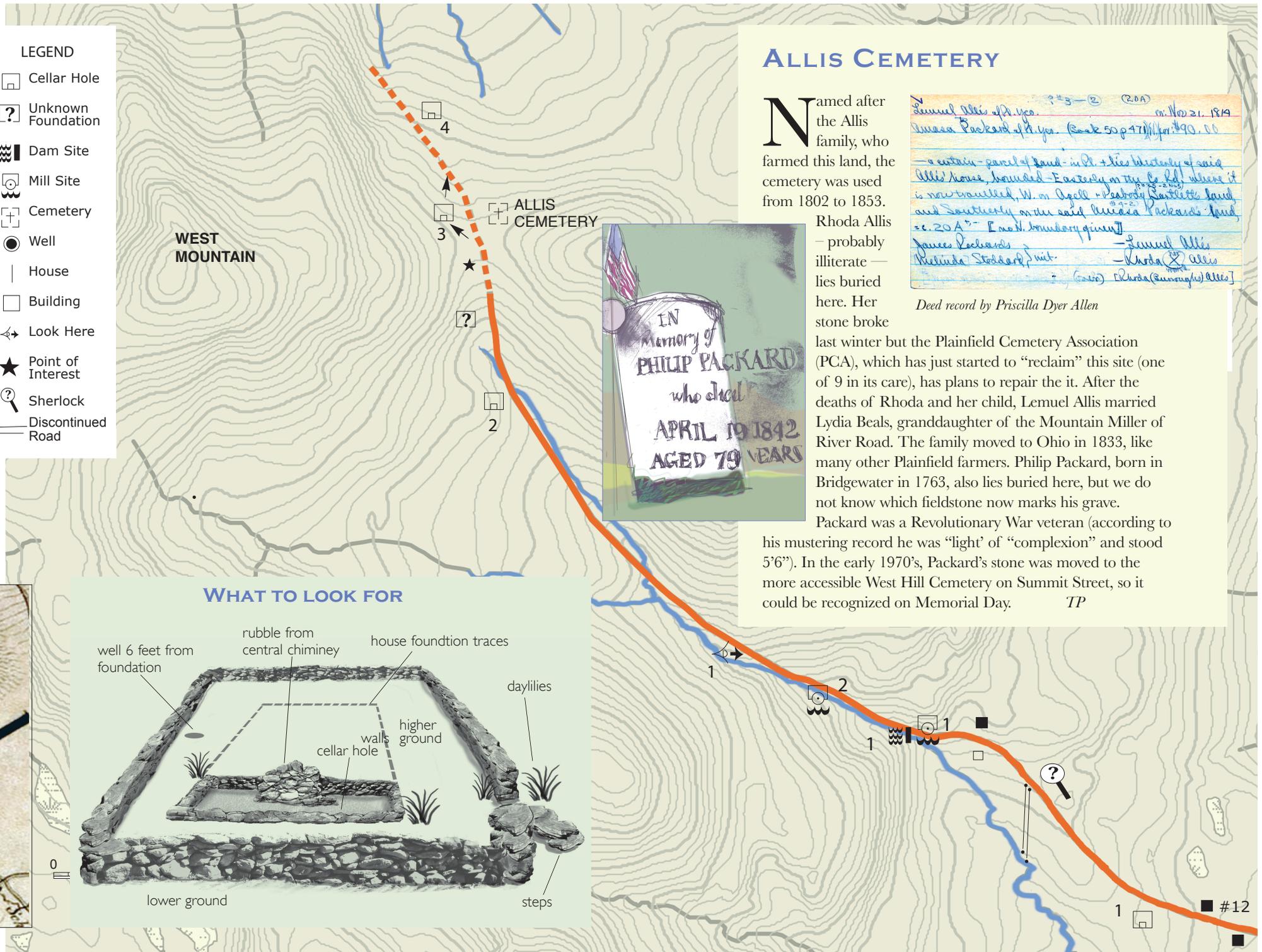
Trees with many leaders probably met with some mishap when they were much younger: logged, hurt at the base by logging (basal scar)

Yellow or Silver Birch (looks like a very large birch with leaves similar to beech) – tend to resprout or recover after logging or other damage, and —with ash and cherry—to grow out of cellar holes: they tell a story.

Poison ivy: invades wet, “disturbed” soil, like at the edges of former mill ponds

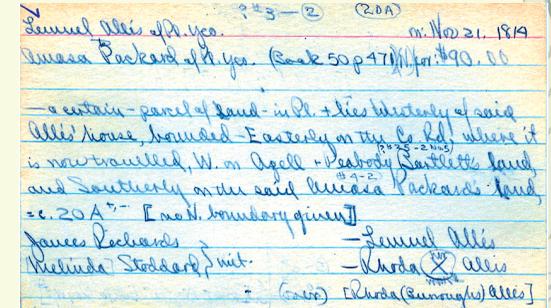
LEGEND

- Cellar Hole
- Unknown Foundation
- Dam Site
- Mill Site
- Cemetery
- Well
- House
- Building
- Look Here
- Point of Interest
- Sherlock
- Discontinued Road



ALLIS CEMETERY

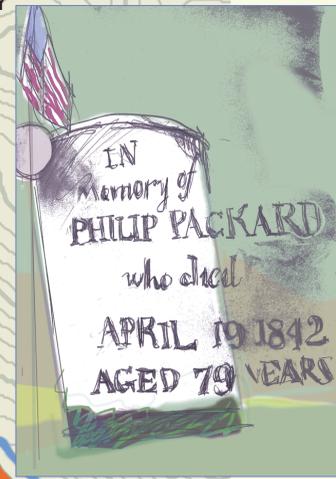
Named after the Allis family, who farmed this land, the cemetery was used from 1802 to 1853.



Deed record by Priscilla Dyer Allen

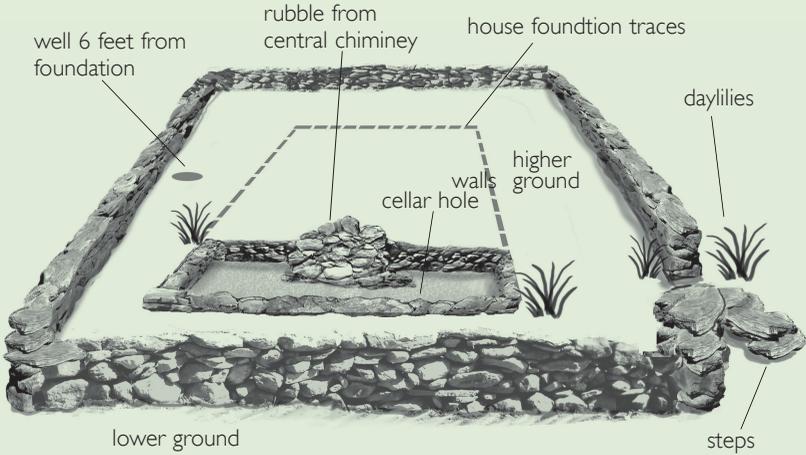
Rhoda Allis – probably illiterate – lies buried here. Her stone broke

last winter but the Plainfield Cemetery Association (PCA), which has just started to “reclaim” this site (one of 9 in its care), has plans to repair the it. After the deaths of Rhoda and her child, Lemuel Allis married Lydia Beals, granddaughter of the Mountain Miller of River Road. The family moved to Ohio in 1833, like many other Plainfield farmers. Philip Packard, born in Bridgewater in 1763, also lies buried here, but we do not know which fieldstone now marks his grave.



Packard was a Revolutionary War veteran (according to his mustering record he was “light” of “complexion” and stood 5’6”). In the early 1970’s, Packard’s stone was moved to the more accessible West Hill Cemetery on Summit Street, so it could be recognized on Memorial Day. TP

WHAT TO LOOK FOR



"Liberty Village" detail from H.F. Walling's Topographical map of Hampshire County Massachusetts (1856)