

Old Burying Ground Walking Tour

SUNDAY · JUNE 25, 2017 · 2-3:30 PM



About the Old Burying Ground

IN THE SETTLEMENT of early towns provision for a burying ground was of necessity among the first requirements. Custom and convenience had it situated close by the church and this convention was observed here in Jaffrey.

The original grant of the township—at first called Middle Monadnock No. 2—was made in 1749 and among the stipulations was “that a good Convenient Meeting House be Built...as near the Center of the Town...and Ten Acres of Land reserved for Publick Uses.” The Burying Ground qualified as such a use and so too the Common for military training and reviews. Later, a petition to the Township proprietors noted that before incorporation in 1773 a burying place had been reserved on the Common “...and some persons interred there.” The present form of the Burying Ground reflects the work of a committee appointed by the Town in 1784. Of the four members, three—ROGER GILMORE, DANIEL EMERY and ADONIJAH HOWE—are buried within. No trace remains of the earliest gravesites, but at least eight marked graves pre-date the laying out of 1784, the oldest being that of Mrs. Jaen Harper who died in 1777.

1 DEACON DANIEL EMERY (1730-1849) Born in 1730 in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, Daniel Emery came to Jaffrey in 1776 and became very active in town affairs. For three years he was a member of the Committee of Inspection, a Moderator of special meetings for three years, a Selectmen for four years and served as Deacon of the church for many years. In 1784 he and others laid out the burying ground. He died in Jaffrey in 1819, age 89 years. 551 ☞

2 JOSEPH THORNDIKE (1749-1814) Shortly before the incorporation of the Town of Jaffrey, three men from Beverly, Massachusetts, arrived in town and purchased around 250 acres of land from one of the original settlers. This land was in the vicinity of present-day Thorndike Pond. The men were among the residents who voted for incorporation in 1773. Joseph Thorndike was 24 years old. He quickly became a leader in town affairs and his judgment and influence were greatly admired. He was a Selectman, Town Moderator, Tax Collector and Representative. The General Court appointed him as Justice of the Peace, and he often served on committees for laying out roads and as an arbitrator for neighboring towns. He married twice; with his second wife he had seven children. Two of his sons operated the store on the Common; the building still stands not far from his grave. He died in 1814 at the age of 65. 468a ☞

3 ROGER GILMORE (1739-1807) In 1756, when Jaffrey was still known as Middle Monadnock, Roger Gilmore’s father bought 600 acres of land. The parcel, which included today’s Gilmore Pond, was later passed on to Roger and his brother John; both were born in Londonderry in the late 1730s. Arriving in Middle Monadnock the brothers immediately became very active in town affairs and purchased additional land. Roger was the more active of the brothers and as the town grew he held nearly every important office in the town. First chosen to be Auditor of Accounts, he later was a Tithingman, Constable, Moderator, Town Clerk, Justice of the Peace, Delegate to the Constitutional Convention and served eleven years as a Selectman. He married twice and was father of 15 children. He served in the Revolution and was captain of a company of Jaffrey men. He died in 1807 at the age of 69. 589 ☞

4 THE REV. LABAN AINSWORTH (1757-1858) First Settled Minister in Jaffrey, serving from 1782 to 1858 (76 years). “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the FAITH.”

And from all historical sources, it seems that Mr. Ainsworth did all of the above, entering fully into the lives not only of his parishioners, but also of all the citizens of Jaffrey. He visited the sick all over town and helped resolve disputes, not only theological and other family issues, but also those involving boundary lines, taxes owed, and other Town Meeting debates. He assisted in getting the Library going (by loaning his own books), became the Superintendent of Schools, cleared hundreds of acres of land at the bottom of Mt. Monadnock, sold property, fished and hunted seriously for all his family’s needs, all with a withered arm with which he was born.

He was a very formal (and strict) Calvinist (Presbyterian) but apparently had an excellent sense of humor and “prodigiously” chewed tobacco all his life, even while striding across the Common on Sunday mornings, dressed in his formal clergy clothes (black with the collar tabs), with knee and shoe buckles jangling for all to hear.

He was ordained by the ministers and churches in surrounding towns in 1782 and was married five years later to Mary (Polly) Minot, bringing her to the first parsonage he built. That building burned down in a tragic fire but with an outpouring of financial and physical help from the parishioners, he rebuilt the large one still inhabited today by ancestors on land given him by his parishioners.

He outlived his wife and son and daughter and died at the age of 100 and seven months. Living at the base of the mountain he loved so deeply. Rev. Ainsworth’s life reflected the steadiness, deep faith, and hard-working qualities of a New Englander, endearing him forever to the lives of the many generations of Jaffrey’s citizens which have followed him. 474 ☞

5 AMOS FORTUNE (1810?-1801) Although there is much which is unknown about Amos Fortune, his name is likely one of the best known in the Old Burying Ground. His grave marker gives his age as 91 years in 1801 which would make his year of birth around 1710, somewhere in Africa. He was transported to America on a slave ship and by 1763 had acquired the name we know him by, and had learned the trade of tanner. He eventually bought his freedom and was a free man in 1769 at the age of 59. But Amos had many good years ahead of him. He bought a wife and moved to Jaffrey in 1781. By 1789 he purchased land by Tyler Brook and set up his tannery which provided him and Violet with an income that enabled him to leave money to his church and the town. A life which began with terrible suffering ended with honor and grace. 505 ☞

6 DR. ADONIJAH HOWE (1759?-1832) Dr. Howe was the first known resident physician in Jaffrey, and was spoken of as the “beloved” physician, even though it is not known where (or if) he actually studied medicine. He owned a great deal of property which he rented out and was very attentive to his renters, offering any medical advice or help that was needed.

He came to Jaffrey as a young man and became very active in town affairs (as Selectman, Town Clerk, Moderator and a Representative to the New Hampshire House), as well as being a very active farmer (sheep, cows, horses).

All of this during the tumultuous and financially chaotic years after the American Revolution, when town government and finances were at their very beginning. He helped the town collect taxes and thereby pay teachers, the clergy (at least until 1819) and other town employees. And he was a very active church member and close friend to the minister of the Jaffrey church, Rev. Laban Ainsworth. 334 ☞

7 HANNAH DAVIS (1784-1863) A unique and much loved character in the history of Jaffrey was Aunt Hannah Davis, born in 1784, inventor and sole manufacturer of the nailed, wooden band box, the colorful but sturdy trunk and satchel of those days, a receptacle dear to the feminine heart. Upon her wagon loaded high with wares she would make the rounds of Lowell and Manchester where the young mill girls proved eager customers. She was called Aunt Hannah because of her kindness and good will. A memorial stained glass window dedicated to her

hung in the Baptist Church—which stood where the post office stands today—and now resides in the Jaffrey Historical Society rooms at the Civic Center. Aunt Hannah died in 1863 at age 79. She is buried alongside her mother, also named Hannah Davis. 139 🏠

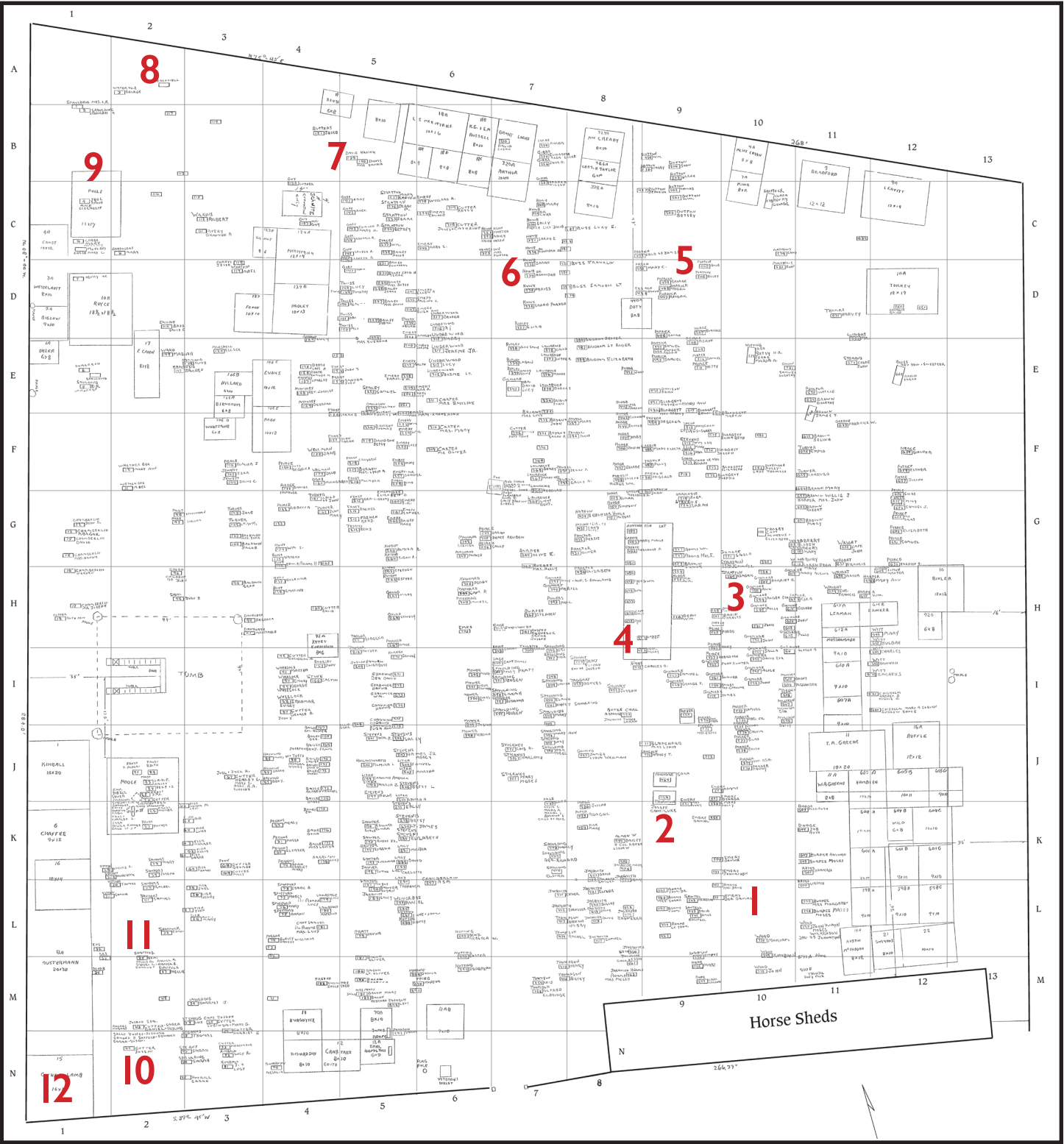
8 DOROTHY CALDWELL (1869-1926) and her infant daughter. Dorothy and her husband, Count Viggo Brandt-Erichsen, met in Paris, married, and had a daughter, who died a newborn. Dorothy expressed her desire to be buried in Jaffrey where she had summered for many years in the shadow of Mt. Monadnock. Viggo, a sculptor, honored her request. He carved this tomb for his wife and daughter’s remains. His wife’s bas-relief face is at top with scenes of the Ascension depicted below. He was the sculptor, as well, of the War Memorial by the Jaffrey Police Department. 703a 🏠

9 JOEL POOLE (1842-1926) The third generation of Pooles in Jaffrey began in 1842 when Joel Hobart Poole was born. Factory Village, which became East Jaffrey, was growing, but there were still many active farms in town. Joel started farming, even trying fruit farming in New Jersey. But he and his wife, Elizabeth, a Jaffrey girl, returned to town and bought The Ark, the former home of Joseph Cutter. Joel hoped to restore the house and improve the farm. Summer visitors to Jaffrey prevailed upon the Pooles to rent them rooms in the spacious dwelling. Joel and Elizabeth began to see the possibility of using their home as a summer haven for travelers. They soon were successful hoteliers at a site by a mountain which was drawing more and more visitors. But the area needed protection. Joel and his son Arthur became part of an active group which succeeded in creating a 500 acre State Forest Park. At his own expense Joel had a road constructed to the park across his own land, and he contributed land for a new Jaffrey water system. He served as a Selectman, a member of the State Legislature and always remained greatly interested in the welfare of Jaffrey. His long active life ended when he died in 1926 at the age of 84. Elizabeth died in 1932 at 88 years of age. 004a 🏠

10 JOSEPH CUTTER (1752-1840) In the year that Middle Monadnock became Jaffrey, 1773, Joseph Cutter from New Ipswich came to Jaffrey and purchased land. Eventually he became the largest land owner in the town. In the foothills of Monadnock he built a house and with his wife Rachel started a family which eventually numbered eight, five boys and three girls. The first born was a son who was named Joseph, after his father. This is the Joseph buried here, born August 23, 1777. Joseph and his four brothers all received part of their father’s land by the mountain. Like his father, young Joseph was endowed with great energy and industry and was a successful farmer. He married Phebe Gage of Jaffrey, and like his father together they raised eight children. Wanting to keep his family around him, Joseph built what was recognized as the largest home in Jaffrey. The home became known locally as “The Ark.” It remains standing to this day. Joseph died in 1860 at the age of 83; Phebe departed 11 years later at 92. 044 🏠

11 EDMUND P. and EDMUND C. SHATTUCK (1811-1904) The story of what became Jaffrey’s largest hotel, Shattuck Inn, started in 1856 when Edmund P. Shattuck arrived in Jaffrey from Pepperell, Massachusetts, where he was born in 1811, and had been a schoolmaster. He came to town to manage the farm of his father-in-law, Daniel Cutter, the former large home of Dr. Adonijah Howe. When Mr. Cutter died Edmund became the owner of the property and it became known as Shattuck Farm. Mrs. Shattuck had begun taking in summer borders. A son, Edmund C., also born in Pepperell, in 1851, became fully engaged with the operation of Shattuck Farm in 1883. Additions were made to the property in 1889 and cottages added in 1893 and 1894. Another large addition was constructed in 1909 but it all burned before the opening. A year later a totally new building opened and the business flourished for several decades. The elder Edmund died in 1904 and his son in 1933. Shattuck Inn continued in family ownership until 1952 when the property was sold and became a seminary. 035a 🏠

12 WILLA CATHER (1876-1947) In this shady corner is the grave of renowned author Willa Cather, long a prominent figure in America’s literary life. She came to Jaffrey for many years between 1917 and 1940, mostly in the autumn, always staying at the Shattuck Inn where she pursued her writing. She was a private person and found Jaffrey people respected this and gave her the freedom she desired. She was the author of *My Antonia*, a great deal of which was written in Jaffrey in the shadow of Mt. Monadnock, as well as *One of Ours*, which made use of the wartime diary of the local physician Frederick Sweeney. The inscription on her grave is from *My Antonia*: “That is happiness, to be dissolved into something complete and great.” 673 🏠



Acknowledgments

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