



*Leverett Veterans' Recognition Project*  
**ASSESSMENT REPORT**

*prepared for the*

*Town of Leverett, Massachusetts  
Leverett Historical Commission*

*by*

*Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC*

*November 2018*

*Funding for this project was provided by a grant from the  
Massachusetts State Historic Records Advisory Board*



## INTRODUCTION

Leverett, Massachusetts contains twelve known cemeteries, burial grounds, and burial sites, scattered throughout the town. None of the properties is municipally-owned, and several are operated by a small association funded by perpetual care accounts, gifts and sales of lots.<sup>1</sup> The earliest, the Wiley Cemetery, was established in ca. 1774, followed by North Cemetery in 1780, Long Plain Cemetery in 1787, and Jackson Hill Cemetery in ca. 1794. The remaining eight sites date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The condition of sites varies, and only four remain active with available lots or sites for cremation burials.

Out of concern about the long-term condition of the twelve sites, the Leverett Historical Commission (LHC) launched an effort to document, interpret, and physically preserve the cemeteries. In the summer of 2017, two graduate students in history from the University of Massachusetts prepared inventory forms (MHC Form E) for six sites. This work led to a fund-raising campaign. The LHC applied for and received a Massachusetts SHRAB (State Historical Records Advisory Board) grant for landscape assessment and interpretive planning at each of the twelve sites. The foregoing *Leverett Veterans Recognition Project Assessment Report* is a product of this funding.

### Assessment Goal

The goal of the assessment was to provide recommendations for preserving each of the twelve cemetery landscapes, with a focus on increased visitor access and opportunities for interpretation.

### Assessment Method

The LHC hired a preservation consultant to complete the assessment. The consultant began by reviewing historical documentation, compiling sketch maps, and visiting each cemetery with members of the Leverett Historical Commission and the cemetery association. During the visits,



*The Marvell Cemetery, located on Jackson Hill Road, is one of Leverett's most intact ornately enclosed burial sites, featuring a perimeter stone wall topped by a wood picket fence.*

the consultant assessed the overall condition of each cemetery, and identified any preservation issues and/or potential challenges to placing interpretive signs, including pathways, entrances, circulation. The consultant then developed recommendations for each cemetery, and prepared guidelines for establishing access and designing identification and interpretive signs.

### Assessment Report

The assessment report is organized into three sections: (1) a brief overview of the cemeteries' historical development; (2) the assessment organized by cemetery; and (3) access and interpretation guidelines. A bibliography appears at the end, listing historic and mapping resources used in the assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Until 2016, the Leverett Cemetery Association (LCA) owned and managed five cemeteries and the North Leverett Cemetery Association (NLCA) oversaw four. In March of 2016, the two associations merged and are now known as the

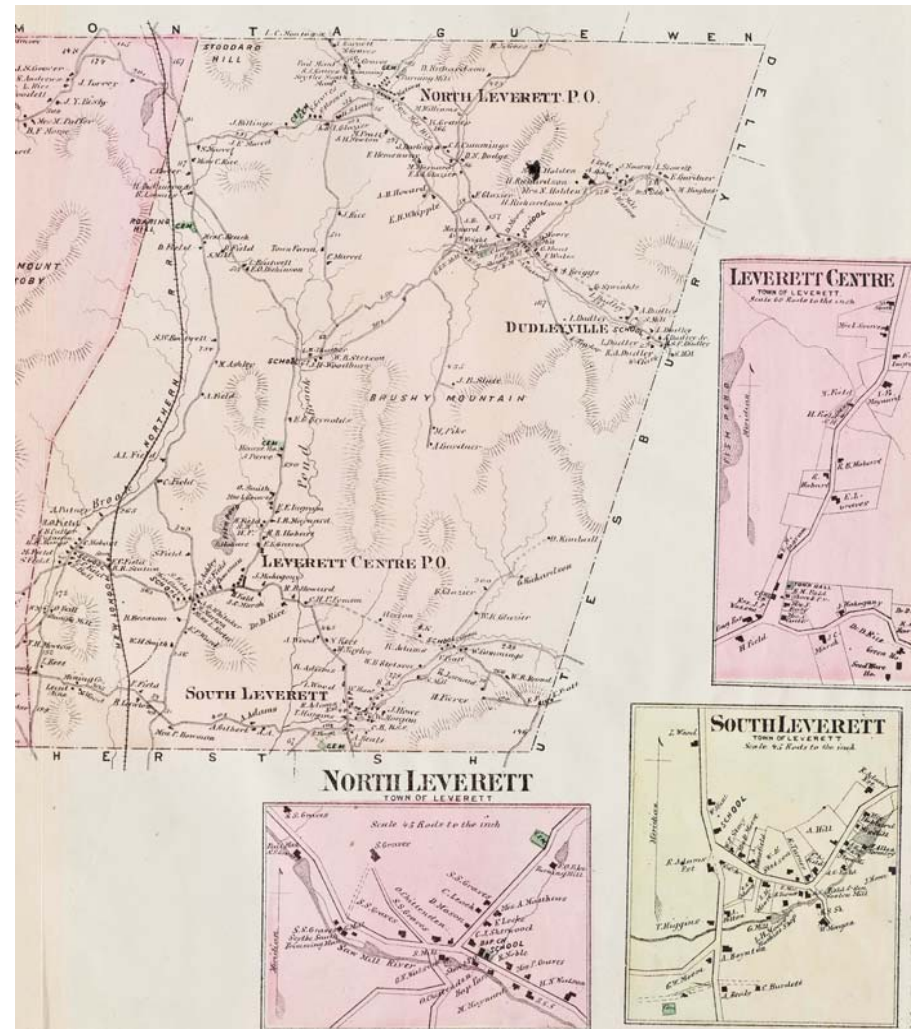
Leverett Cemetery Association (LCA). The remaining three cemeteries are privately owned (P) and maintained.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of the LEVERETT CEMETERIES

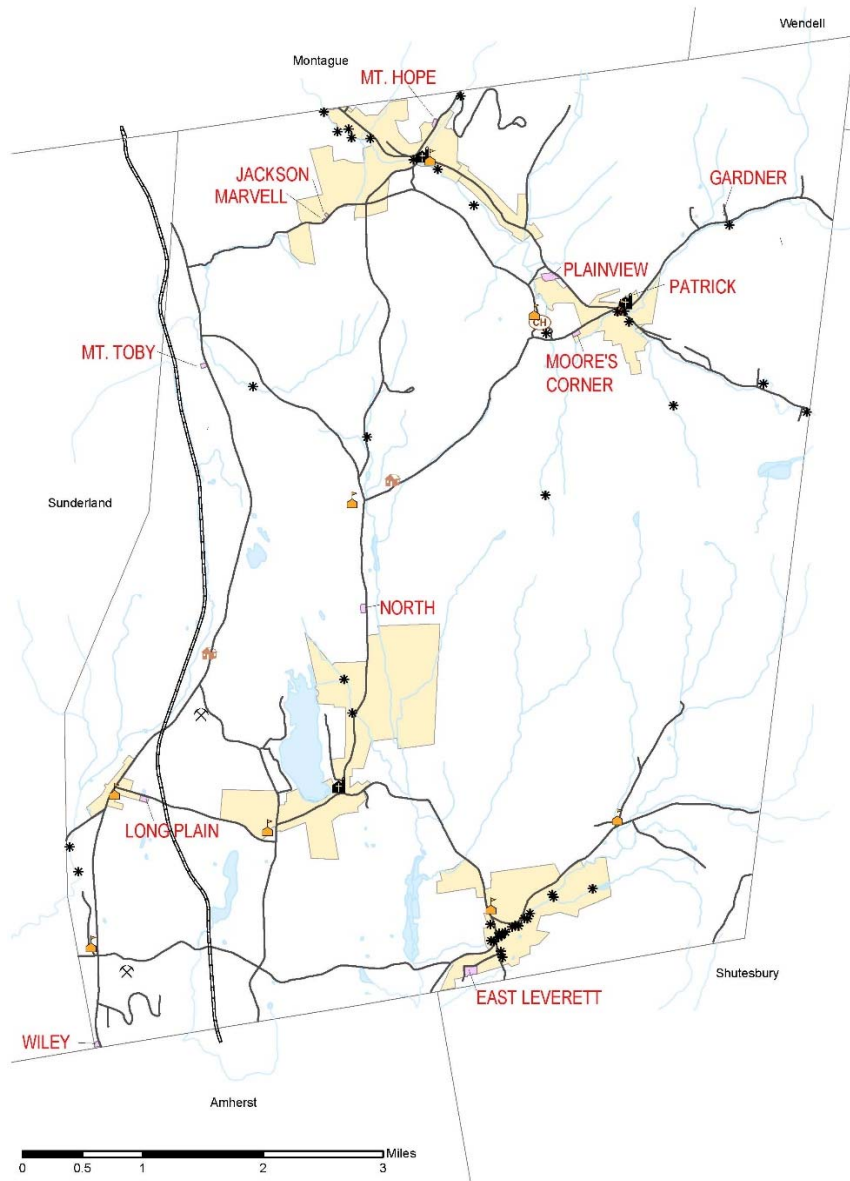
Originally part of the Town of Sunderland (established in 1718 and known originally as Swampfield); Leverett broke off and formed its own municipality in 1774. Early settlement took place along Long Plain (today's Route 63 corridor) and in the area of today's Leverett Center, with the colonial economy dominated by agriculture. By the early 1900s, manufacturing had begun, with factories, mills and shops operating to the north and east of the center, along the Roaring Brook and other waterways. Establishment of burial sites throughout the town corresponded with the fanning out of settlement.

The first known place of interment in Leverett dates to ca. 1774. The small Wiley Cemetery stands at the intersection of the town lines of Leverett, Sunderland and Amherst, on the west side of Long Plain Road (Route 63), in the area originally settled in 1739 and known as "Plumtree." Within a few years, cemeteries appeared in Leverett Center (North Cemetery, 1780) and off Long Plain Road (Long Plain/Hillsboro Cemetery on Depot Road (1787). Nine other cemeteries and small family burial grounds were sited between 1800 and 1875, with the last of these located in North Leverett, the Plainview Cemetery. The map shown at right locates each of these properties within the town.

Today, just four of the twelve cemeteries continue to actively accept burials: East Leverett, Plainview, North and Long Plain/Hillsboro. Cremation burials only are accommodated at North and Long Plain/Hillsboro. The other seven are considered ancient burying grounds, protected by Massachusetts State Law from alienation or appropriation for any other use. The private non-profit Leverett Cemetery Association (LCA) legally owns and maintains nine of the cemeteries. Three cemeteries, the Gardner, Patrick, and Marvell, are privately owned (P) and managed.



*Beers 1871 Atlas of Franklin County, Massachusetts included seven of Leverett's twelve cemeteries. Gardner, Patrick and Wiley, all small family burying grounds, were omitted, and Plainview had not yet been established.*



Leverett's twelve cemeteries identified by name in red lettering.

## ASSESSMENT

The assessment on the pages that follow documents the existing physical features of each of the twelve cemeteries and analyzes the general conditions. Recommendations, while centered on access, include steps the LHC can take to make physical improvements to the cemetery landscapes.

Proposed locations for identification and interpretive signs are designated as follows:

**ID** Identification Sign (to be placed outside the cemetery)

**IN** Interpretation Sign (to be placed near or inside the cemetery entrance)

Proposed locations for parking are marked by **P**

Ownership Key:  
 LCA: Leverett Cemetery Association  
 P: Private Ownership

## Wiley Cemetery (ca. 1774, LCA)

### Assessment

- The cemetery sits along the west side of Long Plain Road (Route 63) approximately 35 feet from the road edge and 75 feet to the first cluster of graves. The land slopes downward from the road edge, placing the elevation of the cemetery several feet below the road.
- The cemetery is obscured on all sides by dense woodlands and is therefore not visible from the road. On the south side, a cluster of mature hemlock trees screens the cemetery from the adjacent house, driveway and barn. The lower limbs of the hemlocks have been removed, opening views into the cemetery. The driveway very closely abuts the hemlocks and cemetery.
- Graves remaining in this cemetery are clustered toward the south end. It is likely that the cemetery is larger than it appears – assessor's record indicate that it occupies approximately 0.7 acres, yet the visible graves occupy a small fraction of this area.
- The visible stones are made of sandstone, slate and marble, all in the form of tablets. Four granite posts outline the graves of Ebenezer Wiley (d. 1825) and his wife, Catherine (d. 1850); Ebenezer Wiley's grave is marked twice, with both a sandstone tablet and footstone, and a slate tablet.
- Maple saplings have sprouted throughout the cemetery, and a mass of *Euonymus alatus* (Burning Bush, an invasive shrub) grows in the northeast corner.
- The cemetery is in very poor condition with many stones leaning or altogether broken.



### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* along the southbound lane of Long Plain Road, alerting motorists to the upcoming cemetery (location to be determined by study of average speeds);
- To increase access, explore one of two avenues: (1) create a pull-off along Long Plain Road, where vehicles can pull in and out, and briefly park; (2) negotiate with the owners of 563 Montague Road (Amherst) to allow visitors to access the property via the driveway, create a parking space perpendicular to the driveway;
- Depending on the access, construct an unpaved pathway from the pull-off/parking space to the east side of the cemetery;
- Place an *interpretive sign* at the head of the pathway;
- Clear the woodlands of dying or dead trees and remove small volunteer trees to open light into the cemetery. If the hemlocks are determined to be at the end of their lives, remove the trees. Remove invasive shrubs;
- Complete an assessment of the remaining headstones and conserve the stones per the recommendations of the assessment;
- Restore any disturbed grades with low-growing perennial ground covers.

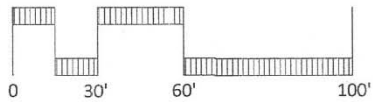


# WILEY CEMETERY



- Place identification sign along southbound lane
- Create pull-off area or access via driveway
- Place interpretive sign at head of path

- Create access path
- Clear woodlands of dying/dead trees
- Complete assessment of remaining stones



## North Cemetery<sup>2</sup> (1780, LCA)

### Assessment

- North Cemetery lies along the west side of Montague Road, one acre north of the center of Leverett Center.
- One acre in size and roughly rectangular in shape, the property is surrounded by deciduous woodland.
- The cemetery has been laid out in three sections: (1) an eastern section (bulk of cemetery) set 4' off the road edge, surrounded by a dry-laid fieldstone wall (ranging in height from 2 to 4 feet), retaining on the east side along road edge; (2) a northern section containing Woodbury graves (abuts southern section and is incorporated by the same dry-laid stone wall; and (3) a western section containing cremation burials, outside the stone wall and accessed by a narrow break the wall towards the northwest end.
- The western/cremation section is also accessed via an old logging road rimming the north side of the cemetery, allegedly privately-owned by the Cowls family.
- No other roadways lead into the cemetery.
- Pedestrian access is via a centered break in the front (east) retaining wall and set of steps.
- A mature sugar maple, tree hydrangea, forsythia shrubs and a colony of sumac stand within the cemetery; otherwise the ground is covered with turf. Daffodils have been planted near one of the graves (Fishel). A large dead limb extends through the center of the maple, indicating signs of decay.
- Gravestones and monuments are made of slate, marble and granite. Most are individual tablets, but the cemetery does contain several larger obelisks. The stones' overall condition is good – most are plumb and appear stable.



### Recommendations

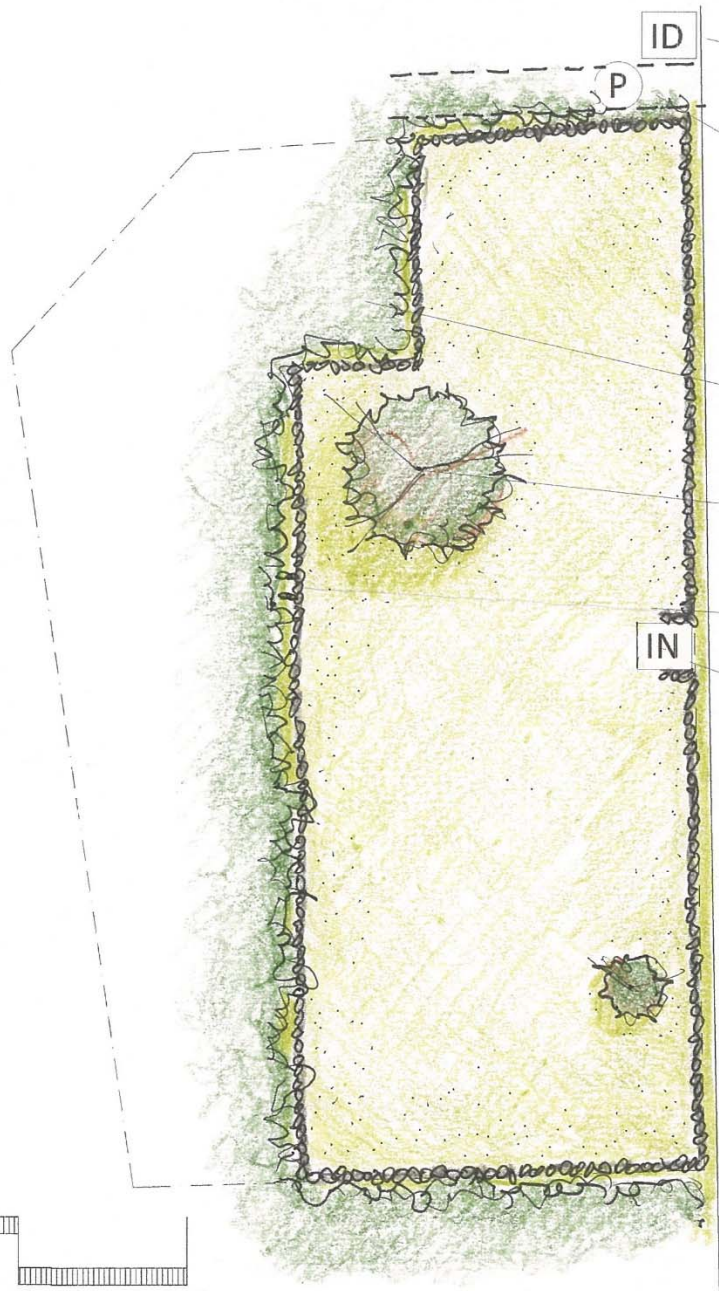
- Place an *identification sign* along the southbound lane of Montague Road, alerting motorists to the upcoming cemetery (location to be determined by study of average speeds);
- Negotiate with the owners (W. D. Cowls) of the adjacent property to the north to better define the old logging road and allow for visitors to temporarily park;
- Place an *interpretive sign* at the bottom of the central steps;
- Continue to maintain the cemetery as is – the landscape, in general, is in very good condition;
- Reconstruct portions of the perimeter wall as stones become loose and dislodge;
- Enlist an arborist to assess the condition of the maple, and prune or remove the tree as recommended;
- Upgrade the steps leading to the western section and the cremation burial area;
- Restore any disturbed grades with low-growing perennial ground covers.

<sup>2</sup> North Cemetery is also referred to as Leverett Center Cemetery.





# NORTH CEMETERY



Place an identification sign along Montague Road

Define pull-off spot on old logging road

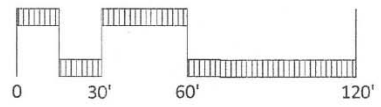
Reconstruct perimeter wall

Evaluate condition of maple and prune/remove, as advised

Upgrade steps leading to cremation burial area

Place interpretive sign at base of steps

MONTAGUE ROAD



## Long Plain Cemetery (1787, LCA)<sup>3</sup>

### Assessment

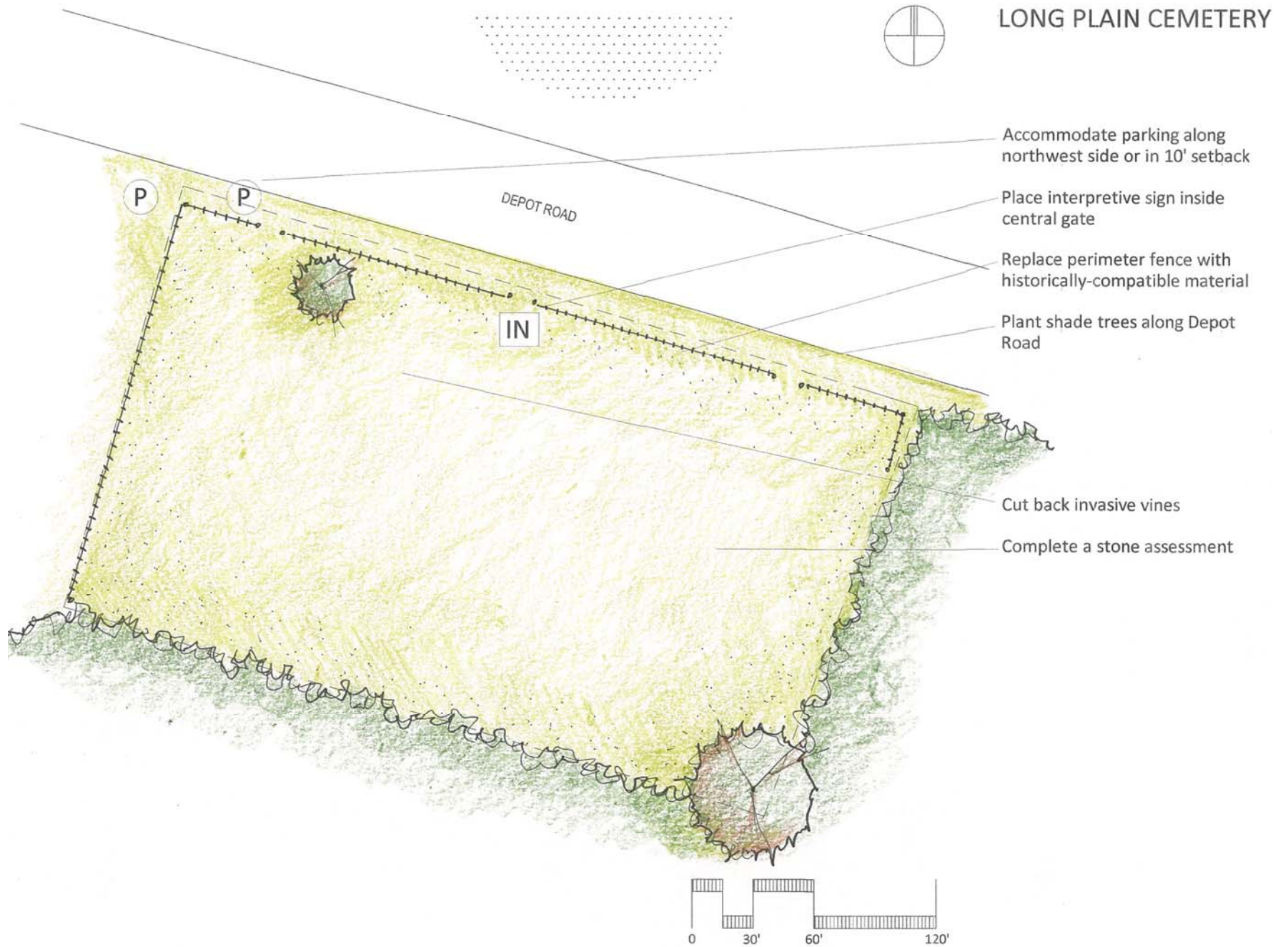
- This one-acre cemetery is located on the south side of Depot Road in the “Long Plain” section of Leverett. The cemetery is highly visible to motorists from a distance, particularly those approaching from the west.
- Agricultural fields stand on the west side and mixed deciduous/coniferous woodlands border the east and south sides. Three residences stand across Depot Road on ample-sized lots; the westernmost of these contains a pond.
- The cemetery sits back ten feet from the road, lined on the north, west, and portion of the east sides with a PVC picket fence (4' height). Old granite posts from an earlier fence stand outside the newer fence.
- Three gates allow access into the cemetery from Depot Road through the fence; a vehicular (double-leaved) gate stands at the western end.
- An informal (grass-surfaced) roadway leads from the vehicular gate into the cemetery.
- Topography across the cemetery is generally level and rolls gently towards the west.
- Deciduous trees grow throughout the cemetery, and a thick mass of bittersweet vine enshrouds some of the gravesites [likely emerged alongside a gravesite planting (shrub) and eventually covered the shrub and gravestone].
- Gravestones consist of tablet markers, monuments and obelisks, including one table marker; the stones are made of slate, marble and granite. The condition of these is mixed, with some leaning and others broken.
- One of four active cemeteries in Leverett, Long Plain Cemetery only accepts cremation burials.



### Recommendations

- Because this cemetery, unlike several others, is so visible from a distance while traveling along Depot Road in either direction, an *identification sign* is not necessary;
- Accommodate parking for the cemetery within the 10' setback of the cemetery from the road, or adjacent to the northwest corner, just outside the fence;
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the central gate;
- Eventually replace the perimeter fence with a more permanent, historically-compatible material. Opportunities exist to re-use the old granite posts to accomplish this. PVC should not be used in the future;
- Cut back and remove invasive vines, such as the bittersweet;
- Plant shade trees at regular intervals along Depot to help define the cemetery's north edge and shelter the property from the road;
- Complete an assessment of the remaining headstones and conserve the stones per the recommendations of the assessment.

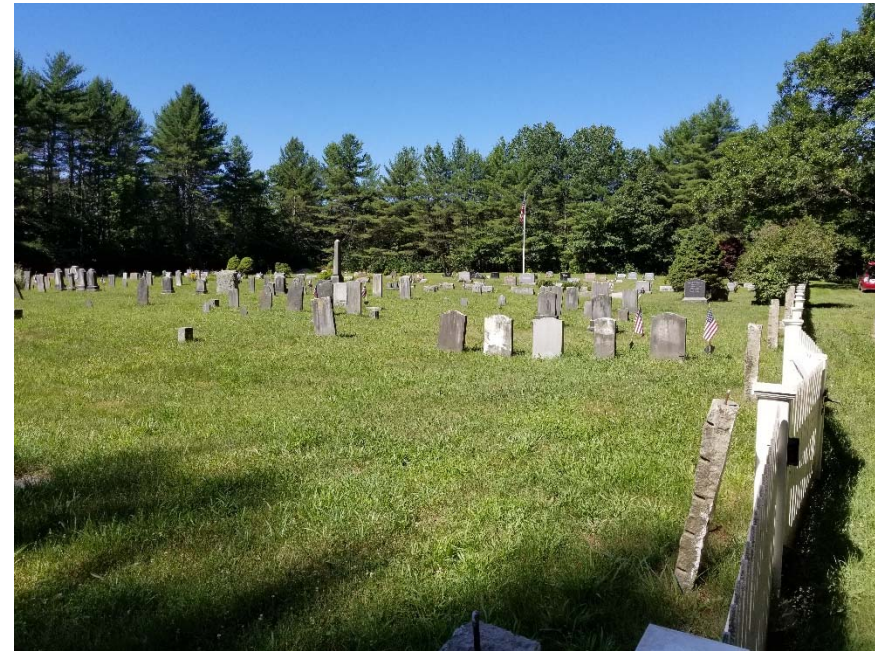
<sup>3</sup> Long Plain Cemetery is also known as the Hillsboro Cemetery.



## East Leverett Cemetery (1811, LCA)

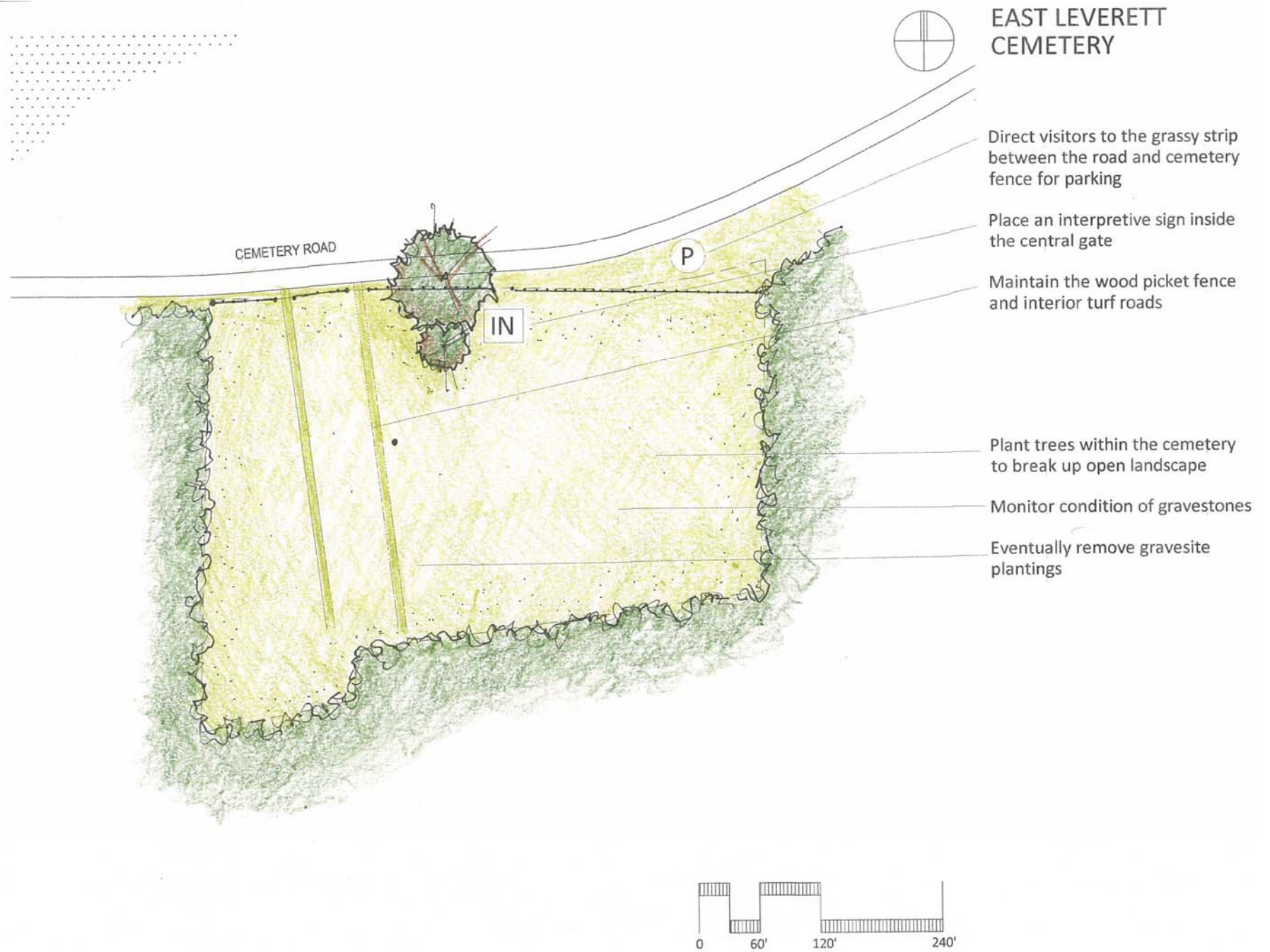
### Assessment

- The East Leverett Cemetery is located on the south side of Cemetery Road, an unpaved way, and set back from the roadway edge with enough width to allow for parking and signs.
- The cemetery is visible to drivers approaching from the east and west.
- The property is edged along the north side by a 4' high wood picket fence; bordered on the east, south and west by woodlands; remnants of an earlier fence (rough-cut granite posts) stand at regular intervals inside the existing wood picket fence.
- Three gates permit entry in the cemetery, two vehicular gates, nearer to the western end and newer section, and a third in the center of the cemetery.
- Turf-covered vehicular roads, each approximately eight feet in width, extend from the western two gates into the cemetery.
- The earliest graves stand near the southeastern end with most marked with slate tablets. Most stones appear to be in good condition, standing plumb and unbroken.
- Active burial takes place at the western end.
- The cemetery contains approximately 50 veterans' graves.
- The cemetery contains no tall shade trees, however a few smaller evergreens grow toward the western end, likely originally planted as gravesite decorations.
- A flagpole stands near the western end.
- East Leverett Cemetery is one of the four active burial sites in the town.



### Recommendations

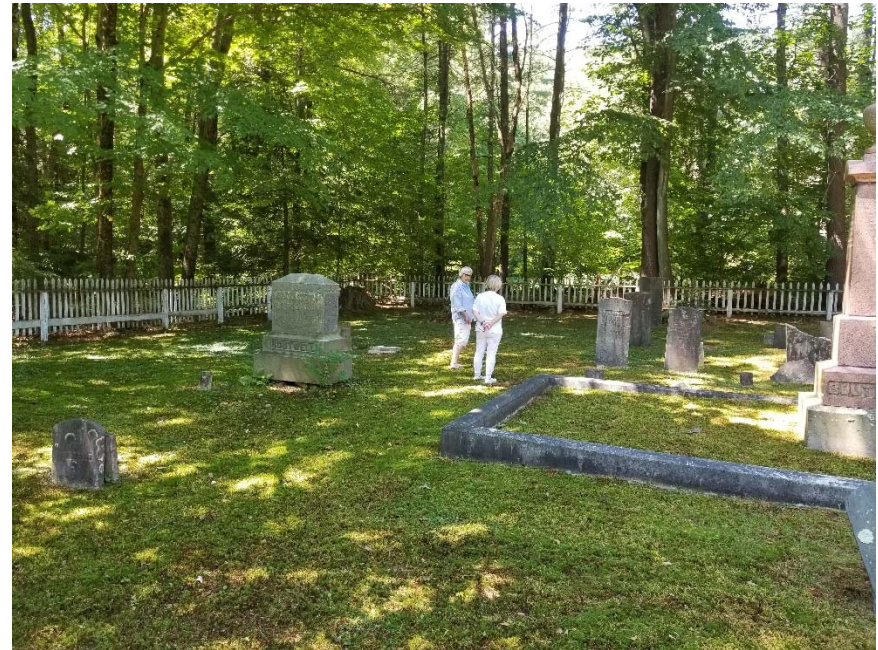
- Because Cemetery Road is unpaved, drivers travel at slower speeds than on paved roads. An *identification sign* is not necessary;
- Allow for parking in the ten to thirty feet of setback of the cemetery from the roadway;
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the most central gate;
- Continue to maintain the wood picket fence and gates and maintain the interior vehicular ways as turf;
- Monitor the condition of the monuments and markers on a regular basis;
- Consider planting deciduous trees within the cemetery to provide shade and break up the open landscape into smaller, more intimate sections;
- Remove evergreen gravesite plantings to reduce maintenance needs.



## Mount Toby Cemetery (1824, LCA)

### Recommendations

- The cemetery covers 0.45 acres on the west side of Long Plain Road, set back approximately 20 feet from the road edge. The setback contains a depression (drainage swale), resulting in an uneven surface along the road edge.
- Long Plain is a very busy road, with vehicles passing at high speeds; the cemetery is not visible from the distance by moving cars.
- A white pine forest surrounds the cemetery on the north, west and south sides.
- An unpaved driveway (once led to the Peace Pagoda) runs along the south side of the cemetery.
- A 3' height wood picket fence, painted white, surrounds the property on all four sides. This fence is in fair condition.
- A very mature white pine stands at the northeast corner.
- Mosses cover much of the cemetery floor.
- Gravestones consist of marble and granite tablets and monuments, with one large family plot (Boutwell family) rimmed with a stone coping standing near the front and center of the cemetery. Most stones are upright; some have broken; many contain biological growth.



### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* in the public right of way near the northeast corner of the cemetery, alerting motorists traveling south along Long Plain Road;
- Allow for parking over the depression (drainage swale);
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the central gate near the front (east side) of the cemetery;
- Repair and paint the white picket fence. Remove altogether when deteriorated;
- Remove the white pine; restore the grade with mosses/perennial ground covers;
- Assess and conserve, as appropriate, the damaged gravestones.



MT. TOBY CEMETERY

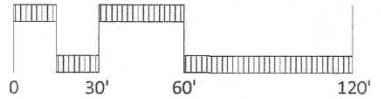
Place an identification sign near the northeast corner

Remove the white pine

Place an interpretive sign inside the central gate

Repair and repaint the perimeter fence

Assess and conserve the damaged gravestones



## Moore's Corner Cemetery (1810, LCA)

### Assessment

- The cemetery covers approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre on the south side of Rattlesnake Gutter Road, an unpaved way. The property is within walking distance of the Leverett Village Coop, and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail runs along the opposite side of the road. The cemetery is a contributing resource in the North Leverett National Register Historic District.
- A creek flows along the south side of the cemetery, draining into a wetland area near the southwest corner. Land along the east and south sides drops off precipitously towards the creek and wetland.
- Mixed deciduous and coniferous forest stands along the east, south and west sides and the cemetery is surrounded on these sides by a dry-laid stone wall. The cemetery does not contain interior trees and its surface consists of one large shrub, turf and perennial ground cover.
- Visitors to the cemetery can walk from the Coop, or park in the setback area between the road and cemetery fence.
- A new 4-height picket style wrought iron fence, made by a local artisan, edges the north side. Gates in this fence stand at the center (double) and near the west end (single for pedestrians).
- Terrain across the cemetery is relatively flat.
- Gravestones range in style from early 19<sup>th</sup> century slate tablets to contemporary granite obelisk-style monuments. Some are tilted and/or leaning; several have recently been conserved.
- A mound tomb, constructed of granite blocks with a steel plate door, stands along the north side of the cemetery (reached via the gully along the north side). The new iron fence obstructs a former carriage way leading from the road to the tomb. This structure is in very poor condition – its granite façade stones have shifted from side to side and are moving forward, suggesting that the tomb is in danger of overturning (at some time in the past, a wooden brace was placed in front of the tomb to help prevent this).



### Recommendations

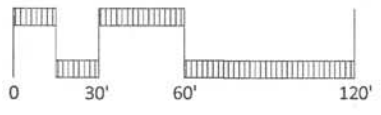
- Place an *identification sign* at the northeast corner of the cemetery, between the fence and roadway, alerting visitors to the property;
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the central gate;
- Maintain the perimeter stone wall by resetting loose stones and removing invasive growth and leaves;
- Continue to assess and conserve, as appropriate, stones in need of treatment;
- Open access to the tomb by clearing vegetation and re-establishing a walkway leading from Rattlesnake Gutter Road to the tomb. Evaluate the tomb's condition and restore the structure as recommended by the assessment.





### MOORE'S CORNER CEMETERY

- Place an identification sign at the northeast corner
- Maintain the perimeter wall by resetting dislodged stones
- Evaluate and restore tomb; open access via carriage road
- Place interpretive sign inside central gate
- Assess and conserve, as appropriate, stones in need of treatment



## Mount Hope Cemetery (1850/1852, LCA)<sup>4</sup>

### Assessment

- Mount Hope Cemetery stands along the west side of Chestnut Hill Road on a rectangular parcel of land, approximately ½ acre in size.
- The cemetery is not easily seen from the roadway, as it sits several feet above the road surface, retained by a wall (described below).
- Parking along Chestnut Hill Road in front of the cemetery is difficult due to the rising terrain between the road edge and the cemetery wall.
- A rectangular wedge of land abutting the south side of the rectangular cemetery parcel once contained an entry drive, extending from Chestnut Hill Road up the south cemetery slope and into the cemetery at the southwest corner through a set of granite gate posts. Remnants of this roadbed remain.
- Deciduous forest stands along the north, west, and south sides, and fills the triangular shape of the south end of the cemetery.
- A second set of granite gate posts stand at the northeast corner, marking a second vehicular entrance to the cemetery.
- A cut stone retaining wall, built in an ashlar pattern, rims the east and south sides; a wood picket fence stands along the north and west. The fence is in poor condition with some parts fallen and/or decomposing. Remnant granite posts that likely held an early fence still stand along these sides and most are plumb and in good condition.
- A set of granite steps, built into the front wall, provide pedestrian access to the cemetery interior.
- Remnants of a roadway appear along the west and north edges of the cemetery, connecting the two gates. This is covered with turf.
- While the cemetery does not contain trees, many trees growing adjacent to but outside the cemetery have limbs overhanging the property. Blueberries grow atop the front wall, and lichens cover much of the cemetery floor. Lamium (Deadnettle) and ferns grow in the northwest corner.

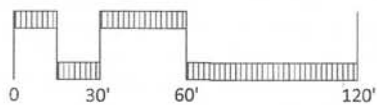
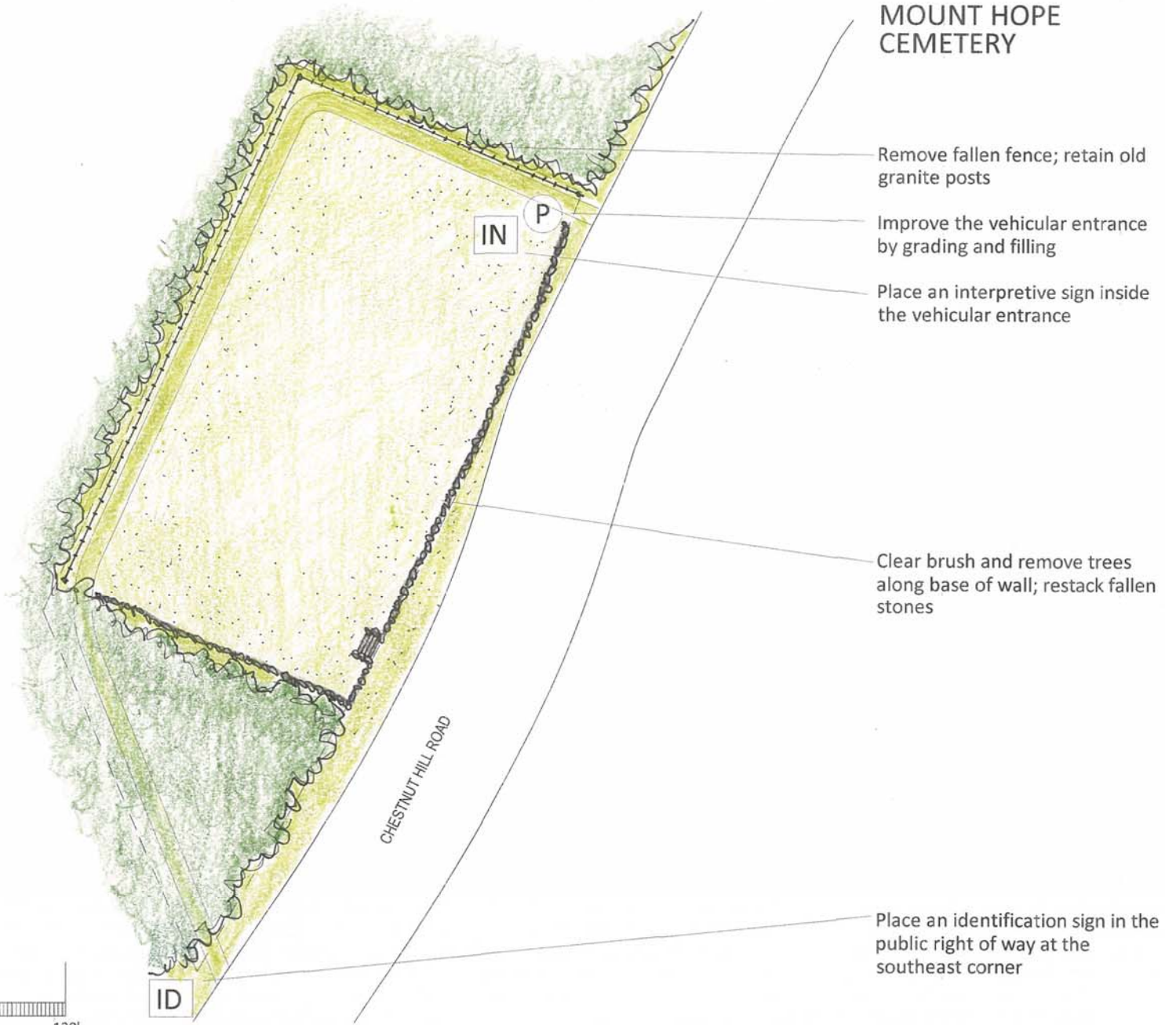


- Land within the cemetery slopes upward from the front wall, towards the back (west)
- Gravestones and monuments are made of marble and granite; most are in good condition, and several have recently been conserved.

### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* in the public right of way near the southeast corner of the triangular wedge;
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the vehicular entrance at the northeast corner of the cemetery;
- Clear brush and remove trees along the base of the perimeter retaining wall and re-stack any loose stones;
- Improve the northeast vehicular entrance by smoothing the grade and filling, where needed, with compacted gravel;
- Remove the dilapidate picket fence from the north and west sides, but retain the old granite fence posts, straightening them where needed;
- Assess and conserve, as appropriate, any gravestones and monuments requiring treatment.

<sup>4</sup> Mount Hope Cemetery is also referred to as Chestnut Hill Cemetery



## Jackson Hill Cemetery (ca. 1794/1870, LCA)<sup>5</sup>

### Assessment

- The Jackson Hill Cemetery is located on the west side of the unpaved Jackson Hill Road, the cemetery is easily spotted by drivers approaching from the north and south.
- The Marvell Cemetery (privately owned) sits on the same side of the road just to the south; the two properties are separated by woodland.
- A 20' width grassy strip separates the cemetery from the road edge; this strip ascends from the road edge to the cemetery wall (discussed below).
- The entire ¼-acre parcel is surrounded by a dry-laid stone wall, built in an ashlar pattern.
- A break in the wall along the front (east) edge forms a gateway into the cemetery, and this is marked further by a single-leaved iron pedestrian gate. A portion of this wall has collapsed near the cemetery's north west corner.
- Land in the cemetery rises up from the front wall reaches a high point near the center of the property, and then falls back downward toward the back wall.
- The cemetery interior contains no trees, but large trees, including some mature white pines, stand outside the perimeter wall. At least one, located outside the northwest corner, appears to be in decline and should be removed.
- The bulk of gravestones within this cemetery are made of slate or marble, crafted into the shape of tablets. Most appear to be in good condition and several have recently been conserved.



### Recommendations

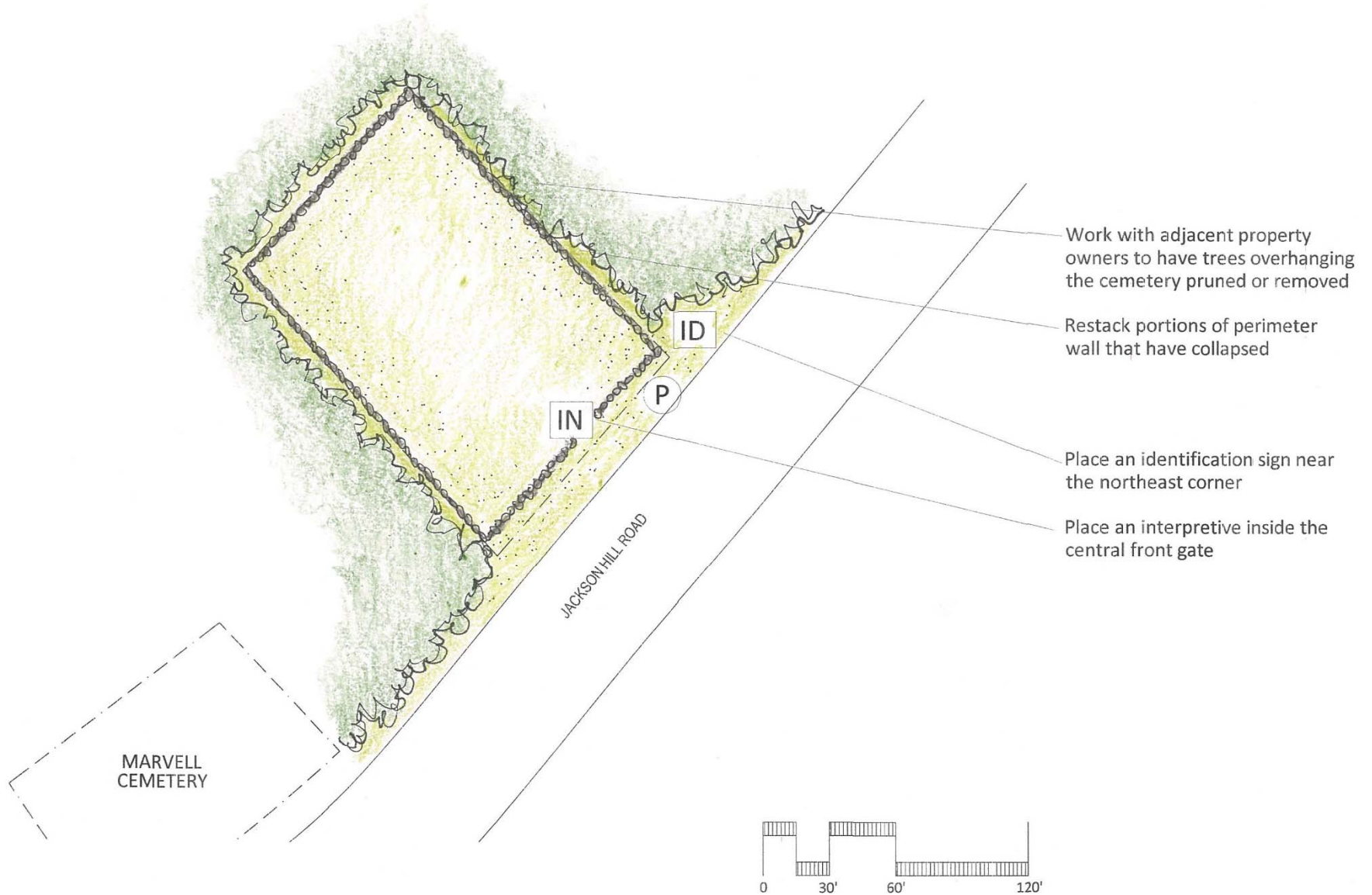
- Place an *identification sign* near the northeast corner, in the grassy strip between the cemetery wall and roadway;
- Place an *interpretive sign* inside the front gate;
- Work with the adjacent property owners to have trees pruned or removed so that they do not fall into the cemetery, crushing the wall and stones;
- Restack the portion of wall that has collapsed.

<sup>5</sup> 1870 is the date listed in Lambert's [A Guide to Massachusetts Cemeteries](#). Many of the graves in the cemetery date to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting an early date of establishment, including the grave of Richard

Montague, d. 1794. The property is also referred to as the Jackson Hill Road Cemetery.



JACKSON HILL CEMETERY



## Plainview Cemetery (1875, NCLA)

### Assessment

- The cemetery lies on 2.66 acres along the west side of North Leverett Road.
- Access to the cemetery is via a single-lane unpaved road leading from North Leverett Road through a parcel containing overhead power lines and owned by the Western Massachusetts Electric Company. This is the only way in and out of the cemetery.
- A pasture abuts the south and west sides, with a wire mesh fence separating pasture from the south cemetery edge.
- A mix of deciduous and evergreen trees, in the form of hedgerows, surrounds all sides, buffering the cemetery from the road and field.
- The cemetery contains a road network consisting of two linear unpaved single lane roads, connecting to an exterior loop road.
- The property contains no interior shade trees, but many of the gravesites are ornamented with dwarf evergreen trees (Alberta spruce, yew), ornamental shrubs (rhododendron, hydrangea) and grasses.
- A majority of the gravestones are 30" height standard markers, made of granite, and appear in good condition. Plot site owners have decorated many gravesites with artificial flowers and statuary.
- Plainview Cemetery is one of Leverett's four active cemeteries.



### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* at the end of the drive leading through the WMECO property along North Leverett Road, alerting oncoming drivers as to the entrance;
- Place an *interpretive sign* at the first fork in the cemetery roadway, just inside the cemetery property;
- Discourage/discontinue planting of small trees and shrubs at gravesites (these become overgrown and present maintenance issues for cemetery crews); remove the trees as they become large and out of scale;
- Consider planting deciduous trees within the cemetery to add shade and break up the burial areas into smaller, more intimate spaces.



OLD COKE KILN ROAD

NORTH LEVERETT ROAD

## PLAINVIEW CEMETERY

Discourage/discontinue planting  
small trees at gravesites

Plant deciduous trees within  
cemetery

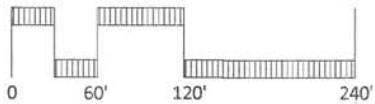
Place an interpretive sign inside  
the entrance

ID  
Place an identification sign  
along North Leverett Road

P

IN

ID



## Marvell Cemetery<sup>6</sup> (1800, P)

### Assessment

- The cemetery lies approximately twenty feet to the south of the Jackson Cemetery on the west side of Jackson Hill Road, an unpaved way. An unpaved narrow drainage swale along the road edge.
- The small family burying ground covers just 0.13 acre and is set back from the road approximately twenty feet, rising upward from the road edge to the cemetery wall (described below).
- A dry-laid stone retaining wall, built in an ashlar pattern, lines the front (street-facing) edge; it stands approximately 36" to 42" high.
- A wood picket fence, painted white, sits on top of the wall, and continues around the entire cemetery, ranging in height from two to four feet. Low granite blocks, spaced evenly across the top of the wall, provide support for the fence.
- A break in the center of the stone wall contains four granite steps leading from the road up into the cemetery.
- To the left (south) of the steps and set back from the wall is the Marvell Cemetery tomb, a granite walled-structure built into the front slope. The white picket fence stands in front of the door to the tomb, and the tomb is secured with a wooden door.
- The cemetery does not contain shade trees, but a deciduous woodland surrounds the property on the north, west and south sides. Limbs from several trees overhang the cemetery.
- Perennial ground covers blanket the cemetery floor.
- Tablet-style stones, made of granite and marble, mark the graves and most are plumb and intact.
- Overall, the cemetery is in good condition, except for the fence which is in need of painting.



### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* near the northeast corner of the cemetery, in the grassy strip between the wall and road to alert passersby;
- Place an *interpretive sign* at the base of the steps (outside the cemetery wall);
- Work with owners of abutting properties to remove tree limbs overhanging the cemetery and/or remove any diseased or dying nearby trees;
- Replace any missing or decaying fence members and re-paint the fence;
- Conduct a structural assessment of the tomb to evaluate its condition and stabilize as needed; repair or replace the tomb door;
- Continue to monitor the condition of the gravestones, providing conservation treatment, as required.

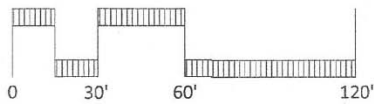
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<sup>6</sup> The Marvell Cemetery is also referred to as the Marvell-Billings Cemetery. The spelling of Marvell reflects that on the cemetery's tomb; the name is sometimes spelled with one "l."





# MARVELL CEMETERY



## Patrick Cemetery (ca. 1834, P)

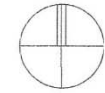
### Assessment

- This small family cemetery lies atop a wooded knoll to the north of 262 North Leverett Road.
- The property is inaccessible from the road; no pathways lead from the road up to the cemetery; it must be accessed by trespassing on 262 or 266 North Leverett Road.
- Woodland of birch and pine cover the knoll and enshroud the cemetery, making it difficult to find.
- Approximately 450 sf in size, the rectangular plot is surrounded on all sides by a 2' high dry-laid stone wall. Several portions of the wall have collapsed.
- Two stones stand in the cemetery; the larger marble stone is significantly leaning.
- The overall condition is poor.

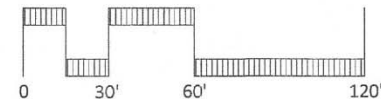
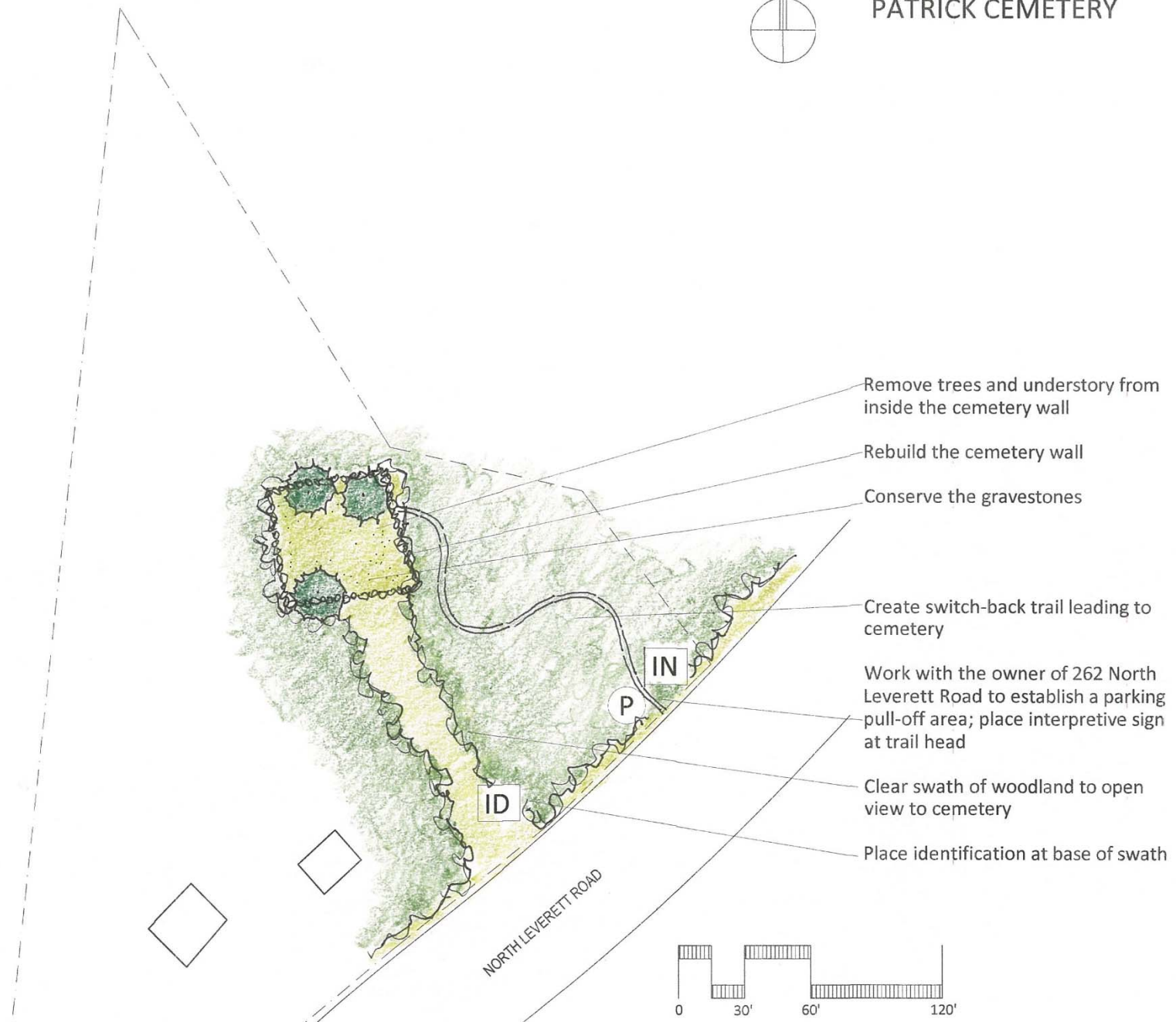


### Recommendations

- Place an *identification sign* along North Leverett Road at the base of the knoll, alerting visitors to its location within the woods;
- Work with the owner of 262 North Leverett Road to create a trail leading to the cemetery; this could take the form of a switch-backed trail, leading from the road up to the knoll on its east side;
- If this trail is created, place an *interpretive sign* at the lower end of this trailhead (close to the road);
- Clear a swath of woodland to open a view of the cemetery from North Leverett Road;
- Remove any trees or understory growing inside the cemetery wall;
- Rebuild the portions of the perimeter wall that have collapsed
- Conserve the existing gravestones.



# PATRICK CEMETERY



## Gardner Cemetery<sup>7</sup> (ca. 1842, P)

### Assessment

- The cemetery is located in the northwest corner of 12 Skerry Road and covers approximately 0.3 acres.
- To reach the cemetery, visitors must park at a pull-off area on the west side of Skerry Road (marked with a wooden sign), and hike through wooded wetland for approximately one-tenth mile (450 feet). While much of this route is relatively flat, the terrain steepens nearer the cemetery, making it inaccessible to persons with limited physical ability. The trail is also poorly defined with understory overgrowing a good portion.
- The cemetery is rectangular in shape, with a dry-laid stone wall rimming the southern end. This wall is collapsing in several locations.
- Wood posts, remnants of a fence, stand at regular intervals around the west and north sides. An iron gate is attached to the fence on the west side, marking the entrance.
- Reforestation has begun within the cemetery grounds, due to neglect. This primarily consists of white pine.
- A single 24' x 40' family plot belonging to the Gardner family lies at the southwest corner. Marble blocks define the outside of the plot, but many of the blocks have been covered by uncontrolled growth of ground covers.
- Most of the gravestones stand at the center of the cemetery. Most are marble tablets and many are broken and/or illegible.
- The overall condition of the cemetery is very poor.



### Recommendations

- Replace the wood sign at the parking area with an *identification sign*;
- Place an *interpretive sign* at the entrance to the trail leading to the cemetery;
- Construct a well-defined pathway leading through the woodlands, across the wetland, and up the slope to the cemetery, using boardwalk material to cross the wetland;
- Reconstruct the fence around the cemetery, incorporating the existing gate;
- Rebuild the stone perimeter wall where it has collapsed;
- Remove reforested growth from the interior of the cemetery and establish a program for routine removal of future growth;
- Conduct an assessment of the remaining gravestones and conserve as needed.

<sup>7</sup> The Gardner Cemetery is also referred to as the Gardner-Briggs Cemetery.



### GARDNER CEMETERY

- Construct pathway to cemetery, installing boardwalks, as required
- Place an identification sign at the parking area
- Place an interpretive sign at trailhead
- Reconstruct fence around the cemetery
- Rebuild stone wall
- Remove reforestation
- Assess and conserve, as recommended, gravestones and monuments

## GENERAL ACCESS and INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES

### Access

In providing increased access to the twelve cemeteries, the Town of Leverett should adhere as much as possible to the guidelines of the American Disabilities Act (ACA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). Specifically:

- Create parking spaces/areas within walking distance of a cemetery entrance, and no more than 200' from an entrance;
- Place parking spaces/areas in locations that connect via a gently sloping route (less than 5%) to the cemetery entrance;
- Place parking spaces/areas on level surfaces (ideally 2% or less);
- Cover parking spaces and walkways with firm surface materials;
- If a cemetery must be accessed via steps (such as Mount Hope), install handrails made of historically compatible materials;
- At cemeteries where the existing topography prohibits entry to persons with limited physical abilities, consider placing interpretive signs outside the cemetery, near the road or parking area. The Marvell-Billings Cemetery (below) is one such cemetery with this limited type of access.



### Interpretation

In developing identification and interpretive signs for the twelve cemeteries, consider the following:

- Develop a sign program that establishes a palette of materials, colors, font styles, and content layout to be used in both types of signs;
- Draw inspiration for this palette from the existing signs in Leverett, such as the historic district signs (above);
- When sizing and placing identification signs, consider the perspective and needs of visitors approaching the cemeteries by car; light or white lettering on a dark background is easier to read than dark lettering on a white background;
- When sizing and placing interpretive signs, consider the perspective and needs of visitors standing at or inside the cemetery entrances;
- When designing both types of signs, specify durable, weather-resistant materials, such as porcelain enamel;
- Interpretive sign content should include, as a minimum, a brief historical summary of the cemetery, a sketch map, and locations of prominent graves, including veterans' graves.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Historic Resources

Massachusetts General Laws, Part 1, Title XVI, Chapter 114 (governance of cemeteries and burying grounds in the Commonwealth, <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter114>)

Massachusetts Historical Commission Form E – Burial Ground, Long Plain, Mount Hope, Moore's Corner, Mount Toby, North, Plainview and Wiley Cemeteries, 2017

Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Town Report, Leverett, 1982

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, East Leverett Historic District, 2013

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, North Leverett Historic District, 2014

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Leverett Reconnaissance Report, Connecticut River Valley Reconnaissance Survey, Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, 2009

### Mapping Resources

Mass GIS (Bureau of Geographic Information, [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov))

Amherst Neighboring Community Property Maps ([www.amherstma.gov](http://www.amherstma.gov))