

Tour Notes– November 15, 2023

Willow Cemetery

by Jayne O'Connor, jjoco77@gmail.com

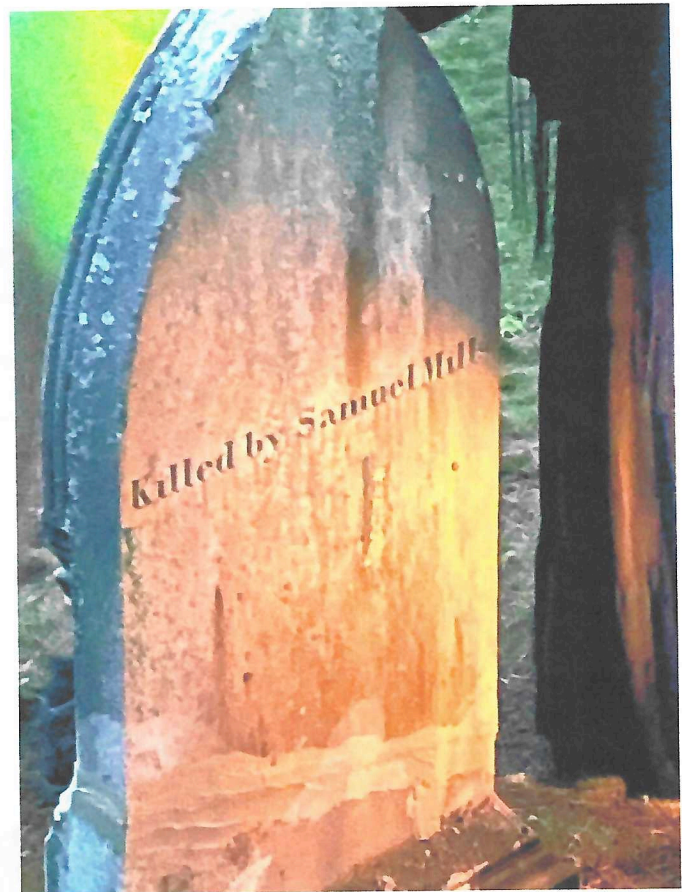


For the Franconia Area Heritage Council

Willow Cemetery Mysteries:

Every cemetery has interesting stories and fun mysteries. We'll explore some that are found in Franconia's first public burial ground - the Willow Cemetery.

- Who was "Killed by Samuel Mills?"
- Why were gravestones thrown in the gulley by the cemetery?
- Did Luke Brooks really discover The Old Man of the Mountain?
- Why are there graves in the "new" cemetery older than those in the "old" cemetery?





Respect

The Willow is closed to new burials, but there are plenty of local people with relatives here, and the cemetery is open to visitors during the daytime hours.

The photo above shows flowers placed by a family member. The stone is impossible to read...except perhaps for the date which looks like 1880, but someone knows who is there and visits the grave.

As you walk through the gates of this or any burial ground, remember that this is the final resting place of people who were here before us. Please respect them, and remember that many of the graves are no longer marked.



Where are the graves?

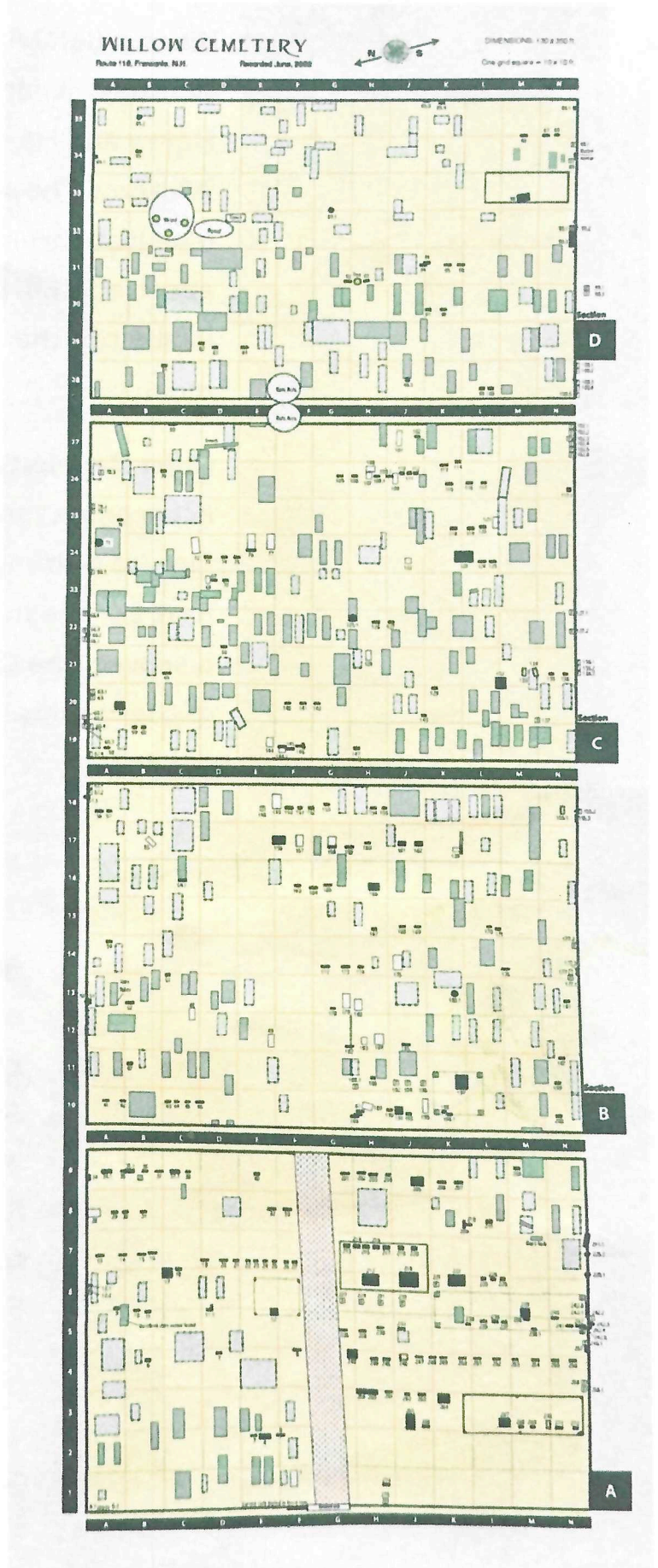
View of the back section (Section D) of the Willow Cemetery with the airport and Cannon Mountain in the background beyond the trees.

Although it seems empty, there is actually little space in this burial ground. Many of the stones are missing as they may have disintegrated if they were made of soft stone or even wood.

See the next page for the map showing the actual number of graves in Section D

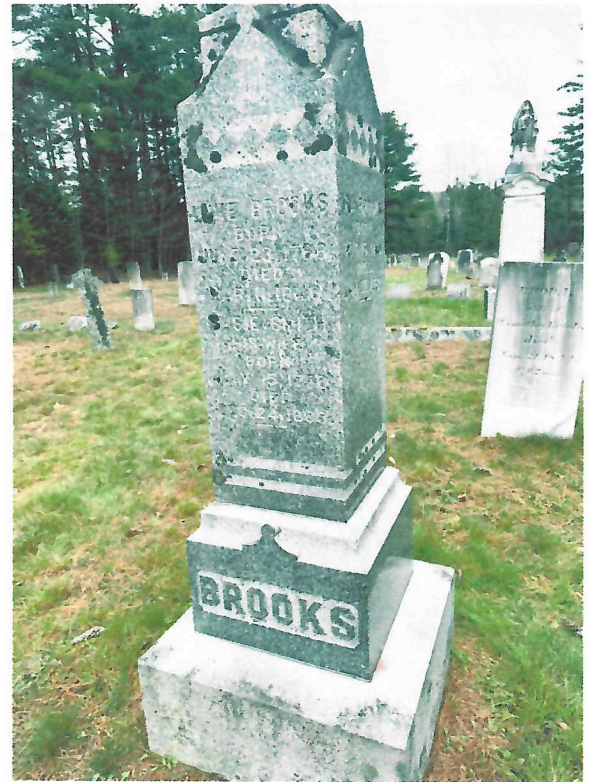
Map of existing burials in Willow Cemetery from the 2002 SiteStudy.

The photo on the previous page shows what Section D looks like from above ground.





Illness: (left) A double stone for Elma and Manning Whitney, children of Henry and Harriet Whitney. The siblings died just three weeks apart in 1864. Little lambs top the monument.



Luke Brooks: (right) Franconia's most famous citizen, the first European to discover The Old Man of the Mountain (of did he?)



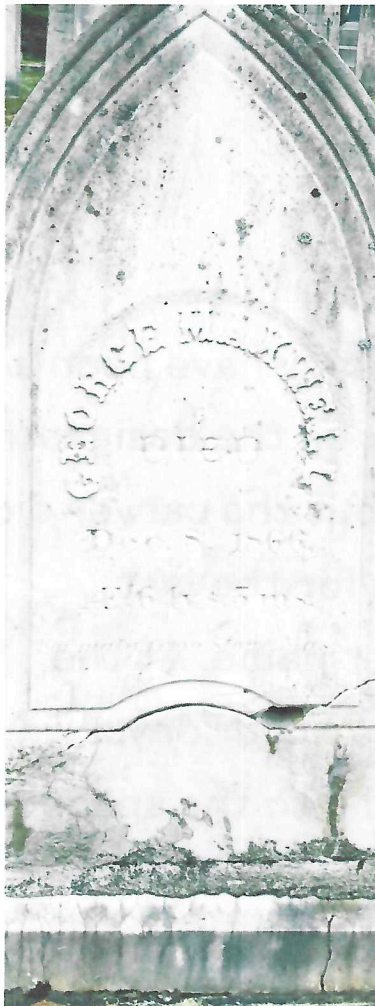
Mary & Jesse Rideout, (bottom left) both born in Franconia. Mary is the great granddaughter of Zebedee Applebee. Jesse ran a livery in Boston, while Mary was a doctor. After her husband died, Mary moved permanently to her house on Harvard Street in Franconia.

Deacon Samuel Barret, One of our Revolutionary Soldiers with a special acknowledgement by the D.A.R.



Lovisa Meed: this may have been a template stone, as the designs are well done, but the carver did not leave room for the last letter of her last name. At the bottom, the last word “days” seems squeezed into the space available.

George Maxwell's farmhouse, just a half mile from the Willow Cemetery



George Maxwell's unusual headstone at the Willow Cemetery. Both sides are shown.

The next photo shows the public hanging of Samuel Mills. It is up to you if you turn the page....

It was determined there was no tree or scaffold of sufficient height.

So a large wooden beam was put out the window of the jail cell and a rope attached.

Samuel Mills was walked out at the appointed time, dressed in a white canvas bag.

The beam juts out from the very cell in which he had been kept.



HANGING OF MILLS, May 6th, 1868.

