

# The Plain Cemetery

## North Main Street



*The Plain Cemetery, May 10, 2008*

<b>Form No.</b>	803
<b>Town</b>	Sherborn
<b>Address</b>	North Main Street
<b>Name</b>	The Plain Cemetery
<b>Ownership, 1981</b>	Public
<b>Approximate number stones</b>	250
<b>Earliest death date</b>	Rebecca Newall June 30, 1792
<b>Latest death date</b>	1928
<b>Condition</b>	The Plain Cemetery is in excellent condition. Still intact are its ornate ca. 1855 cast iron gates
<b>Recorded</b>	June-July 1981

### ASSESSMENT OF ART WORK

The gravestones of the Plain Cemetery are surrounded on three sides by a 4 1/2 foot high fieldstone wall. Its western (North Main Street) boundary is a low granite wall. Its entrance features granite gateposts and ornate ca. 1855 cast iron gates. Approximately 14 rows of stones flank a central aisle which culminates at a raised granite faced vault. The majority of its stones are round headed and are composed of slate, limestone and granite. Particularly noteworthy is the Clark family's memorial - a limestone plinth upon which rests a "flaming urn". Most of the stones date to the first half of the 19th century the willow and urn is the most popular motif.

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Situated on Edward's Plain, this cemetery was laid out in 1792 by a private group called "The Friendly Society". Initially The Friendly Society was composed of Andrew Newall and fifteen others, residents of the Plain and Sherborn Center. They banded together "for the express purpose of assisting each other ... when in

distress by the death of our friends". The Plain Cemetery's land was given by Adam Leland. At first it was laid out in 20 equal lots. Lots 1 and 2 were reserved for Adam Leland and Rev. Elijah Brown. The remaining lots were awarded by drawing ballots.

In 1801 the cemetery was extended by 18 rods. Among the stipulations included in the order of its creation was the prohibition of bushes and rocks from the grounds and only Mr. Leland's sheep could graze within its walls. The Friendly Society disbanded in 1850. Since 1883 this cemetery has been maintained by the town.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY and REFERENCES**

- The Friendly Society, an unpublished paper in the collection of the Sherborn Historical Society.
- Anne C. Shaughnessy - The History of Sherborn, 1974