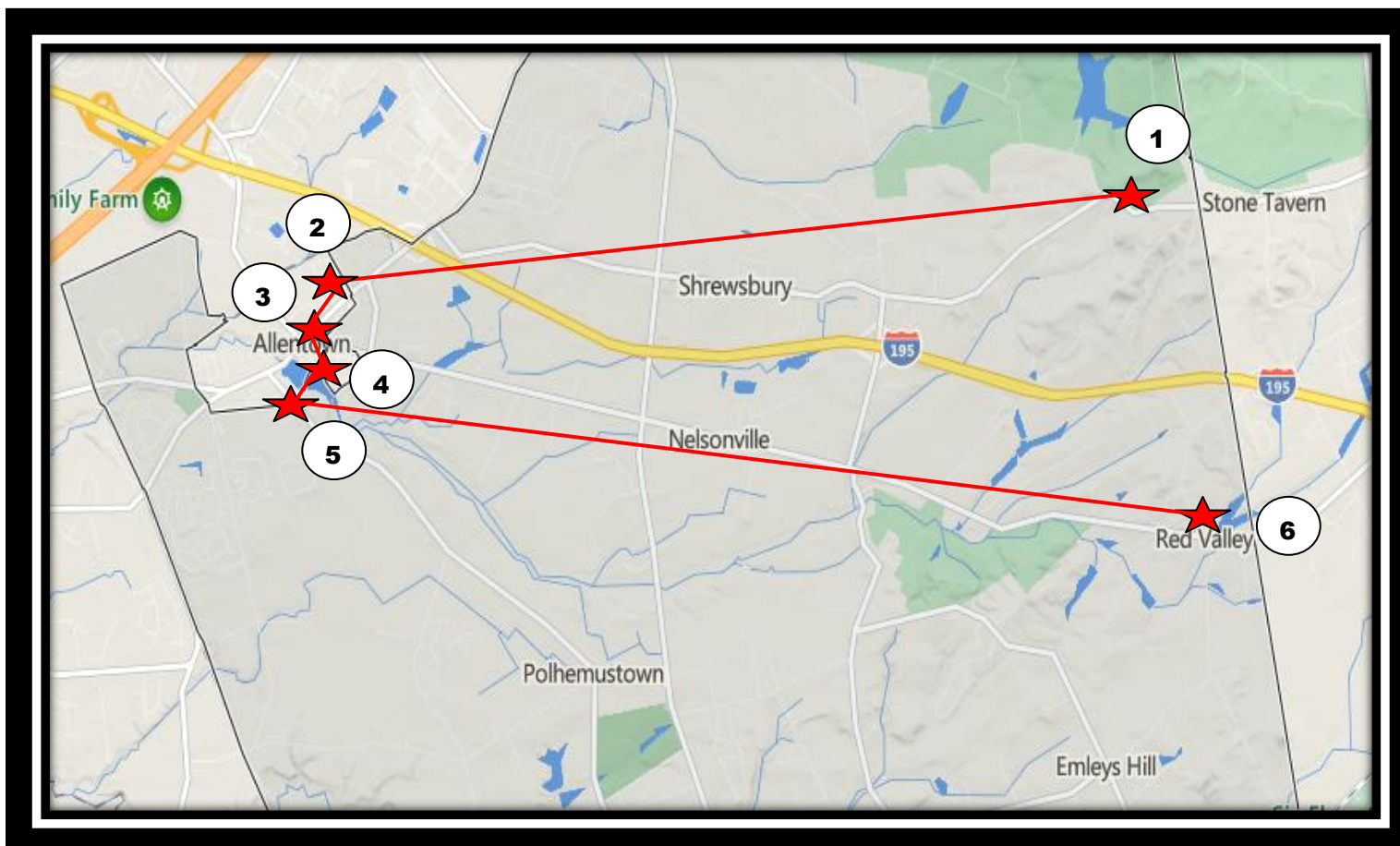


The Allentown Village Initiative (TAVI)

Allentown/Upper Freehold, New Jersey

Historic Cemetery Trail



Key

- 1. Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place
- 2. Allentown United Methodist Church Cemetery
- 3. AME Cemetery
- 4. The Old Burying Ground
- 5. Allentown Presbyterian Church Cemetery
- 6. Ye Olde Yellow Meeting House Cemetery



A **TAVI250** (Semiquincentennial) Project



This program is made possible in part by funds from Monmouth Arts a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners.

Introduction

In celebration of our nation's 250th birthday in 2026, The Allentown Village Initiative (TAVI) has taken the opportunity to create, along with a number of other projects, this Allentown/Upper Freehold Historic Cemetery Trail. This region is chock full of history, including that of indigenous peoples (aka Native Americans), who populated this area approximately 12,000 years ago; early European settlers of the 17th and 18th centuries, whose descendents fought for their, and our, freedom during the War for American Independence (we live at the 'Crossroads of the American Revolution'); the agrarian/early-industrial period of the 19th century, which included the painful period of our own Civil War; and more modern times, which have seen an evolution away from an economy largely focused on agriculture to one more focused on light industry and the service sector. The cemeteries included on this tour are the resting place of young and old, rich and poor, famous and not so famous – ordinary citizens and extraordinary individuals who served their families, their communities, their state, and their country with love, dignity, dedication, and pride.

The trail can be started at any one of the 6 cemeteries, but to follow it as shown on the map, above:

1. Begin at the **Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place** on Rt. 524 (Stone Tavern Rd.) in Upper Freehold Township (see GPS coordinates for each location in the respective summary, below).
2. Then, proceed west on Rt. 524 towards Allentown (take a left at the light onto Old York Rd./Main St.). Once in Allentown, take a right onto Broad St. **The Allentown United Methodist Church Cemetery** is directly in front of you on Hamilton St.
3. From the Methodist Church cemetery travel down Hamilton St. to the **AME Cemetery**, which is on the left.
4. Continue along Hamilton St., take a left onto Church St., and return to Main St. Take a right onto Main St., then a left onto Lakeview Dr. **The Old Burying Ground** is on the left.
5. Return to Main St. Take a left onto Main St., then a left onto High St. The **Allentown Presbyterian Church Cemetery** is on the left.
6. Return to Main St. Take a right onto Main St., then a right onto Rt. 526 (Waker Ave.). Continue on Rt. 526 (aka Red Valley Rd.), and take a left onto Yellow Meeting House Rd. just before reaching Red Valley Lake on the left. **Ye Olde Yellow Meeting House Cemetery** is on the left.

Note: Much of the text in the following summaries is taken verbatim from the respective source(s).

1

Ye Olde Robbins Burial Place (aka Covell Hill Cemetery, Covill Hill Cemetery; 1695)

(40.10164,-74.28398)

Daniel Robbins, an early settler of western Monmouth County, purchased 500 acres of pristine wilderness here in 1695. Eventually this one-acre hilltop plot became a cemetery for his kinfolk and others, perhaps more than 200 all told — including **Deborah Lincoln**, a great aunt of Abraham Lincoln.

Deborah Lincoln died at age 3 in 1720. Her gray-brown sandstone grave easily could be mistaken for a rock. Her name is crudely inscribed and appears misspelled with a missing “l”, but Lincon was the spelling used back then. How did this relative of the 16th president, who was born in Kentucky and lived in Illinois, wind up here?

“A Richard Saltar had moved from Middletown and established a mill,” said John Fabiano, executive director of the Monmouth County Historical Commission. “He wanted to establish an iron forge, so he recruited two iron masters from Massachusetts: Abraham and Morcedai Lincoln.” Mordecai Lincoln eventually married Saltar’s daughter Hannah. Deborah was one of their several children. “From that line the Lincolns descended,” Fabiano said. “They went from there to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and (later) to Kentucky.”

“In 1965, the New Jersey State Green Acres program acquired the properties surrounding the burial ground to form the Assunpink Wildlife Management Area,” and the local community thought the burial ground was part of this purchase. Tom Robbins, a descendent of Daniel Robbins, recently found that the state did not own it and the original deed and subsequent deeds of trust still reside with the West family, also descendants of Daniel Robbins, who now reside in Missouri.

“The fact that he was able to locate those deeds is fantastic,” said Fabiano, who believes the cemetery could receive recognition as a national historic site.

*“Four Civil War veterans lie peacefully
on top of Covell Hill marking time
till judgement day.”*

Sources:

www.app.com/story/news/history/2021/03/04/abraham-lincoln-deborah-aunt-upper-freehold-cemeter
<https://midjersey.news/2022/12/14/the-veterans-of-the-ye-olde-robbins-burial-place/>



2

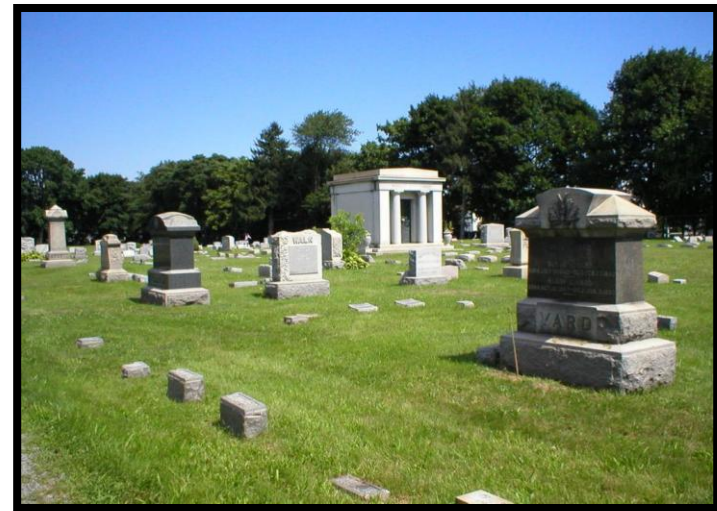
Allentown United Methodist Church Cemetery

(40.181250, -74.583349)

Allentown United Methodist Church was officially established in 1810, though Methodist sermons were being performed in Allentown as early as 1790. The present-day location at 23 Church St. began in 1832. However, the present-day building was erected in 1859.

Originally burials were performed on church grounds, surrounding the church building. As the congregation grew, more land was needed to expand the church building.

On March 9, 1880, the church bought land for a cemetery on the corner of Broad St and Hamilton St (the present-day cemetery). All of the graves surrounded the church building were relocated to the new cemetery.



Source:

<https://www.interment.net/data/us/nj/monmouth/allentown/index.htm>

3

AME Cemetery

(40.18012, -74.58468)

The AME Cemetery's most notable resident is **George Ashby** who was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on January 25, 1844. In 1864, Ashby, then living in Crosswicks, New Jersey, enlisted as a private in the 45th United States Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn outside of Philadelphia between June and August of 1864. He was one of more than 2,900 African Americans from New Jersey who enlisted in the Union Army. When the regiment arrived in Washington, DC, four of its ten companies were detached for duty in defense of the capital, while the remaining companies, under the command of Colonel Ulysses Doubleday, continued south to City Point, Virginia, where they were assigned to the 10th Army Corps of the Army of the James.

Sergeant Ashby was mustered out of the service at Philadelphia with the 45th in November 1865 and returned to his life as a New Jersey small farmer. In 1869 he married Phoebe Cole of Crosswicks and had nine children with her. He moved with his family to Allentown, New Jersey

When George Ashby died at the age of 102 in Allentown on April 26, 1946, he was the last surviving New Jersey Civil War veteran. Ashby received a military funeral complete with color guard and firing squad provided by the Hamilton Township American Legion Post #31.



**George Ashby's Regiment –
the 45th Colored Infantry**

Source:

<https://monmouthtimeline.org/timeline/george-ashby/>

4

The Old Burying Ground (aka Old Christ Episcopal Burial Ground; circa 1720)

(40.17653, -74.58440)

Allentown was founded in 1706 when Nathan Allen purchased a tract of land from his father-in-law. The town subsequently became Allen's Town and then Allentown. Due to its location somewhat equidistant between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, Allen's Town was settled by an extremely diverse group of immigrants. Many of the earliest settlers following Nathan Allen were Quakers, but, by the mid-1700s, two other faiths were firmly established. Presbyterians, mainly Scots and Scots-Irish, arrived in 1720, and, by 1730, English Episcopalians. Both shared the early Meeting House and "Old Burying Ground" cemetery site located behind S. Main Street along Lakeview Drive. The configuration of the The Old Burying Ground follows that of European church yards. The bodies were laid to rest with their feet pointing east so that on Judgment Day they would face the Angel Gabriel. Inscriptions on the gravestones faced away from the body to ensure that visitors would not stand or walk directly over the body. Usually a small foot stone marked the actual foot of each grave. Generally, the English, Scots, and Quakers arrived by way of Philadelphia and Burlington, while the French and Dutch arrived via New York and Perth Amboy ports. In 1744, the Presbyterians purchased property on Saw Mill Road (now named High Street) and built a church in 1756. (Replaced in 1837, today the Presbyterian Church proudly stands on a bluff overlooking Conines Millpond; see 5, below.)

6



Source:

<https://www.allentownvinj.org/a-short-history.html>

4

The Old Burying Ground (aka Old Christ Episcopal Burial Ground) ***(Continued)***

(40.17653, -74.58440)

Following are some of the individuals buried in The Old Burying Ground:

Stone #2 - ISAAC PRICE (1722 - 1768)

Isaac's parents, Quakers, emigrated from Wales to Philadelphia shortly before he was born. He followed in his father's footsteps as a 'Fuller,' after advancing from the position of 'Walker.' At age 21 he came to Allen's Town, purchased the already operating Fulling Mill (where the present Allentown mill now stands) and raised his family.

Walker - A person, usually a child, who would be placed into a large vat containing soap, water, pot ash and the loomed woolen cloth to be cleaned. The Walker would walk round and round treading on the cloth, until all the odor/dirt was removed.

Fuller - A person who treads or walks.

Fulling Mill - A building where cloth is cleaned and washed. When woolen cloth comes off the loom it has a very loose weave, and is usually dirty, smelly, and unattractive. The Fuller carefully cleans and shrinks the cloth and readies it for making garments.

Stone #3 - JOHN HORSFULL BRUERE (1778 -1840)

John, of French Huguenot ancestry, was born in 1778 in Upper Freehold Twp. to a farming family. He was the son of Capt. James & Sally Horsfull Bruere. He married 3 times due to family illnesses and raised 7 children in a house that is still standing at the corner of Sharon Station Rd. and Route 539 (Polhemustown)._Earlier, in 1710, the Bruere family came from France and along with 75 other Huguenot families, boarded the ship FAME, and sailed for the colonies. After a difficult crossing, their small ship landed in Perth Amboy, NJ, on June 14, 1710. John's grandfather Pieter Bruere was a 'Cooper' (barrel maker) and at the age of 22 had come to Allen's Town and opened a shop behind the grist mill. His eldest son, James became a distinguished Captain in the Revolutionary War.

Stones #4 thru #11 THE JOHN HORSFULL BRUERE FAMILY

Stone #16 - JAMES ROGERS (1763-1791)

James, an Irish American Quaker, was the son of Isaac and Hannah (Talmen) Rogers. James was a grandson of Samuel Rogers. He was a private in the Continental Army in 1775, a member of the NJ General Assembly, Accessor in Allen's Town, and a member of the Masonic Lodge.

James married Harriet Luttrell Mullen, step-daughter of David Brearley. Brearley was a lawyer in Allentown, the second Chief Justice of NJ, and a signer of the U.S. Constitution.

4 **The Old Burying Ground (aka Old Christ Episcopal Burial Ground)**

(Continued)

(40.17653, -74.58440)

Stone #23 - ASHER BORDEN (1773 – 1845)

Asher Borden was an English Quaker from Philadelphia. He worked for a short time with David Hay in the hat-making business and became active in community affairs. A farmer, he purchased property in and around town, including the Breza (part of what is now Heritage Park) and Probasco farms. He became a prosperous ‘Hatter,’ owning a shop on Main Street, next to the current Woody’s Restaurant. He became mentally ill from continuous exposure to the chemicals used in the business and died from ‘Mad Hatter’s Disease.’

Stone # 26 - THOMAS OVEREND (1722-1764)

Thomas Overend has the most elaborate inscribed headstone in this cemetery.

“In hope of the resurrection. Here lies the body of Thomas Overend who departed this life on July 15, 1764 at the age of 42 years. Born 1722.”

He was a merchant/sales person in the shoe trade, of Welsh heritage and lived in Philadelphia....a ‘Cobbler.’ He might have been in Allen’s Town looking for a runaway Irish servant who was a heel maker for his business, Thomas Overend Co. He was a man of means from the elaborate execution of the headstone. Research shows that he had a connection with the Tannery in town, possibly purchasing leather for his shoe manufacturing business (excerpts from the PA Gazette, Nov. 8, 1750).

Cobbler – A shoe maker

Tannery – A place where tree bark is stripped off trees and crushed into shreds (tanbark) under a heavy toothed stone wheel. At the tannery, the tanners steeped the bark in water to extract the tannic acid that cured animal hides and skins, a smelly and time-consuming process. It took a full year to turn a new hide into good leather.

Stone #43 - SAMUEL ROGERS (1692-1756)

Apparently Samuel Rogers must have been a “man of means,” as upon leaving Ireland in 1723 he paid in full the transportation and shipping fees for his servants and their families along with household furniture and personal belongings. He was a zealous Episcopalian and married Sarah Hyne, an Orthodox Quaker. He purchased lands around town and owned a prosperous mercantile business. He built a magnificent house on South Main Street with a mahogany door and brass lion door knocker and a large spring house with second floor ballroom (Hutchinson files, dated 1904).

5

Allentown Presbyterian Church Cemetery (1756)

(40.174153, -74.586204)

The Presbyterian Church's history began in Scotland where a band of Presbyterians were imprisoned in Dunnottar Castle for refusing to pledge allegiance to the Church of England. They were banished to slavery aboard the ship "The Henry and Francis" bound for the West Indies. But the ship was blown ashore on the coast of Monmouth County in December of 1685, which led to the founding of the Old Scots Presbyterian Church at Free Hill, now known as Old Tennett Church. Some moved west and lived among the Quakers here in Allens Town. They worshiped in homes until 1720. Their first meeting house was built on what is now Lakeview Drive.

One of many notable residents of the Allentown Presbyterian Cemetery is **William Augustus Newell** (September 5, 1817 – August 8, 1901), was an American physician and politician, who was a three-term member of the United States House of Representatives, served as a Republican as the 18th governor of New Jersey, and as the 11th governor of the Washington Territory from 1880 to 1884. He is probably best known for, and was most proud of, the Newell Act, which created the United States Life-Saving Service (a federal agency that grew out of private and local humanitarian efforts to save the lives of shipwrecked mariners and passengers, which ultimately merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to form the United States Coast Guard in 1915). Another notable resident is **James Henderson Imlay** (November 26, 1764 – March 6, 1823) who was a United States Representative from New Jersey. He served two terms from 1797 to 1801. Born in Imlaystown, he pursued classical studies and graduated from Princeton College in 1786, where he was also a tutor. He studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1791. He was a major in the Monmouth County Militia and served in the Revolutionary War. He was a counselor in 1796, and was a member of the New Jersey General Assembly from 1793 to 1796, eventually serving as speaker. Imlay was elected as a Federalist to the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, serving from March 4, 1797 to March 3, 1801. In 1804 and 1805, Imlay served as postmaster of Allentown, New Jersey, and resumed the practice of law there; he died in Allentown in 1823.

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Sources:

<https://allentownpresbyterian.org/history/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_A._Newell

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Henderson_Imlay



6

Ye Olde Yellow Meeting House Cemetery (1720)

(40.10164, -74.28398)

In 1720, a house of worship and a burying ground were established on land donated by Thomas and Rachel Salter. Thomas was the brother of Hannah who married Mordecai Lincoln. They were the great-great grandparents of President Abraham Lincoln.

The original church burned, was replaced by the present Meeting House in 1737, and became informally known as the Old Yellow Meeting House. It is the oldest Baptist Meeting House in New Jersey and believed to be the third oldest in the USA. The parsonage that is still standing was built around 1830.

The cemetery contains approximately sixty graves dated prior to 1800. The oldest dated grave in the cemetery is that of **John Salter**, son of Thomas and Rachel, who died August 29, 1723. There are unmarked stones thought to be older, and it is believed that there are unmarked graves. If you walk through the cemetery you will see these unmarked stones, and also many interesting stones with folk art designs. There are veterans of the American Revolution and of subsequent United States wars buried here. United States flags mark these graves. Many generations of some families starting in the 1770s or possibly earlier, and continuing to the present are interred here. Some of the old dates are difficult to read. This site is on the National Register of Historic Places.

10

“Many of these early headstones are decorated with poignant inscriptions and folk-art that reflect the Colonial American experience and deeply held beliefs of these early Baptist settlers.”



Sources:

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=79435>

<https://www.oymh.org/history>