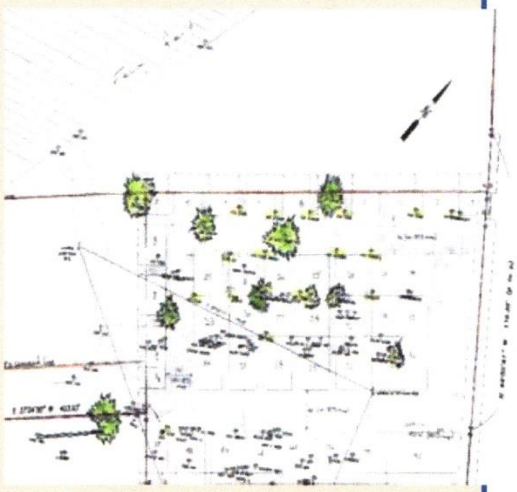
February 2017

Pond Hill Cemetery News

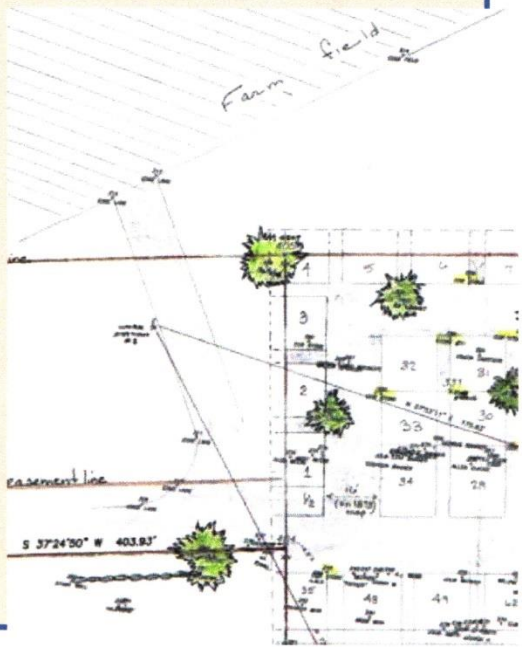
surveying & mapping of December 2016
By Betsy McKean

When I was approached to be on the newly re-formed Pond Hill Cemetery Association Board, I think I was the only person to have grown up around the Lake without hanging out in the cemetery, or even having seen it! With a fledgling interest in the history of the Lake, though, the names are so familiar and hold clues to many stories. Among the first burials, of course, were Jesse and Elizabeth Allen of Allen's Pond, although others buried before 1850 were Blauvelt, Bull, Kinner, Lent, Smith, and Webb.

Being a retired land surveyor, I immediately wanted a scaled map to see the cemetery's layout and where the stones were in each plot. However, beyond a rough schematic done by the Five Rivers Council Boy Scout Troop No. 5 in 2001, there was just a partial photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy of an 1873 survey that was done for the incorporation of the cemetery when the charter was filed on February 23, 1874. We have not yet found the original survey map, nor have we recovered any of the records from the original Association's dissolution in the 1970's.



In October 2015 we rented surveying equipment for the day and assembled a field crew that included Brooks & Penni Martin, Doreen DuBois, Walter Cook, Ron Cook, Jacob Cook, and Bob Martin. Fellow Board member Rusty Spencer had lent me the survey map of his property done by John W. Ward of Millstone Surveying which showed the rough boundaries of the cemetery, so our first challenge was to find property markers for all of the adjoining properties. Once markers were found in the surrounding woods, equipment work stations were established where the markers could be seen through the instrument's telescope, as well as all of the cemetery's headstones, fences, trees, paths, and lane. Doreen systematically recorded the information about each stone and feature as the prism rod relayed the location and distance back to the instrument.



The recent clearing and cleaning up of the cemetery had revealed additional plot corner stones, and the partial 1873 survey map showed alignments that helped us uncover more in unexpected areas. I took the data and what information I could glean from the 1873 survey to T. G. Miller Surveying in Ithaca, where patterns and lines began to emerge on the worksheet from the unearthed plot corner stones and adjoiners' property markers.

We now know the layout of the plots, and how the surviving stones fit in those plots. For Lake Wesauking history sleuths, the next challenges are to find out whose stones are missing and to tell the stories of those who rest on a sunny hillside above Allen's Pond. More to come…