

FARM AND FOREST HERITAGE - THE VALLEY TRAIL - GUIDE AND MAP

Welcome to the Valley Trails, over two miles of hiking possibilities through fields, hillside, woods roads and streamside. Access and parking are from Old Ways at Dave Emerson's, 1 ¼ miles North of Canterbury Shaker Village. Trails are well marked and maps provided. Please stop by the shops and exhibits when open. Hiking shoes, compass, and insect repellent are recommended. There are a number of trails and they're on the edge of a large roadless area. Horses may be pastured in the West field. Avoid electric fence, and never open gates. Dogs are welcome if they can be calm when near horses.

The trail starts beyond the woodpiles behind the workshop at Old Ways. You'll soon notice typical trees marked with letters: A – black birch, B- red maple, C- White Pine, D- red oak, E- spruce, F- hemlock, G- beech, H-sugar maple.

The first viewpoint, #1, is West to Bean Hill Ridge in Northfield, highest elevation 1500 feet. Here you may proceed downhill on the main Valley Trail or take the short East Loop by the Rock Quarry (surface quarry #9 where stone was probably quarried for the Ham cemetery. All trails are on the original Ham farm, c 1785.

After crossing the sloping East field you'll come to #2- where a seasonal flow passes through a rock-filled gully. Listen carefully, and you may hear the water flowing underground. If you go left into the long South field you'd be on the shorter South Loop and pass by a huge stone pile. Going right on the main Valley Trail you proceed to the highest point of the North field, through a bar gate, (opening in stonewall) and left down a woods road to #3. On the left and slightly off the road is the largest white pine on the property.

Follow the arrows to the right and you'll soon be at the brook. #4 indicates a short side trip to a one-time beaver pond. #5, down the brook, is a beaver-chewed tree. The trail goes straight from where the brook curves right and joins an old skidder road. All these woods have been logged many times.

#6 indicates a very basic stone "wall". Stone removal was limited in this area as the one-time fields were probably pasture only, not hayed or cultivated. At #7 bargate to the West field there is a single stonewall on the left and a double filled stonewall on the right. Down the wall is an old dump. Look, but don't visit.

You'll cross the field to a short road connecting to the East field. As you enter this road you can see a rock dump uphill to the left. #8 locates the remains of the oldest form of horse-drawn hay rake, which would have had a wood frame. Here the rock filled gully is obvious. Stone removal was extensive in this area due to haying and cultivation from a very early date. If you go right on the South Loop you'll eventually reach the #9 surface quarry just before your return to Old Ways.

Recommended Reading: Stone by Stone, by Robert M. Thorson. 2002

