

TOUR 1, PART I: THE ALLINGTOWN GREEN

Welcome to this viewing and discussion of this small park of Allingtown. Tiny as it may be, it has shrunk again in recent years, it is one space in the village that most everyone that has lived nearby knows well. Many will have a story about something that happened here, once or many times over on: “The Green.”

- As intended, this park, referred to here as in so many New England towns, as **The Green**, is located near the geographical center of the village. It might owe its existence to nothing more than an awkward conjoining of two roads and a short cut between them instituted by practical or weary travelers. Accidentally created or not, this place of convergence for three old, major thoroughfares, the **Boston Post Road, Forest Road** and **Campbell Avenue**, became Allingtown’s ground zero location, protected as a quiet spot in an ever more busy environment. Had this early and consistent cut corner action not become the practice, you might well be now standing in a Quick-Stop Gas Station parking lot.
- The Green, never large, has, as of 2020, been refashioned and trimmed as the neighborhood adjusted to the transforming new circumstances of a significant rebuild. Vehicle traffic, always more, never less, has also played a part. Getting through the four-way intersection has always been a wait and often a challenge. The new design of the park is also much changed, there is less green on the Green but, overall, where you are keeps to the purpose as a pleasant place to pause and rest, catch some sun or a breeze, meet with friends or just quietly contemplate, the latter requiring you to avoid the traffic noises, perhaps by donning earphones, which you, listener, have quite likely done already.

- We will first visit with the installations that are on the Green and another that once was. Then, we'll remember some of the features and views once available from this spit of land at the intersection of the busy roads, Forest, Orange and Campbell.
- The **Clock on the Green**. Modeled in the European street model, often seen on colonial commons and on important corners, Allingtown's tower clock has stood for many years near the top of the park's triangular point, just a few feet from where the trolley car stop and turnaround would gather or disembark travelers. From a glance, one might see if she or he was going to be early or late to work or dinner. Sometimes a casualty of wayward traffic of the motor vehicle kind, the clock keeps rewinding its way back, a welcome icon touchstone to all who have called Allingtown home. The clock was originally installed to honor the Chief of Police and lifelong Allingtown resident Joseph Harvey.
- **The War Memorial**. As with so many communities, Allingtown has sent its sons and daughters to the nation's wars and some did not return. The sparsely populated village did not memorialize its losses in conflicts until after the First World War. From those earlier eras, only an enemy soldier from the Revolutionary period is honored in Allingtown today, as you will see shortly if you complete the second leg of Tour 1. The 16 men inscribed on the stone are from the two global engagements of the 20th century. That so many more on this stone were from the Second World War is no doubt due to that war's longer duration and the fact that a great many more Allingtowners left the village to fight in Europe, Asia or the Pacific. One of those on this stone, John Cellini, the first local casualty of WWII, has been further recognized by the short street that helps to form this triangle, recently re-named for him: **Cellini Place**.

- **The World War Two Tote Board:** During the Second World War, Allingtown erected here a second, much larger structure, a hollowed out square made of signboards, with the names of all those locals that were active in one of the services. Photographs of the time show only two sides of this temporary structure. From them it appears that over 200 young people were away serving their country and it also appears that those waiting for their return were keen for that to happen.
- **The Fireman's Monument:** For about a century, firefighting in Allingtown was the responsibility of a company raised in the early 1900's when more and more buildings were going up and, in the days of heating with stoves, wood and coal, so did the number of fires. Being a member of this company earned one a great deal of respect and good friendships that lasted a lifetime. When some of the early members had passed, the tight group that was the Allingtown Volunteer Fire Department installed this stone in their memory. Tour 2 visits the old firehouse, which is still in use just a few hundred feet away.
- Before completing the second part of *Mini-Tour A*, to visit the Campbell monument, please have a look in all four directions. Down the hill, which is to the east, in the foreground is the traditional commercial and manufacturing and services heart of Allingtown. These are apart of Tours 2 and 3. A half mile from here in this direction, is the **West River**, where the first settler footprints appeared in the soft ground of the marshes. Tour #3 covers it. For those who may be curious, New Haven's center with its much larger Green, is two miles in this direction from this spot.
- Now, turning to the right you face today's Orange Avenue, still known today beyond the intersection here as it rises up the Milford Hill towards New York, 75 miles away, as the

Boston Post Road. Facing Orange/BPR, you get a view, south of the upper stretch of Campbell Ave, which runs from the shoreline to this point. Between the two main arteries, is the part of Milford Hill that parallels Campbell Avenue well beyond Allingtown. Today, this section of hill is all the University of New Haven. There is sort of a poetic connection here. Where the Post Road and Campbell meet and form a point of land, is where the old Allingtown school was located. *Tour 4's loop will take you down Campbell and then up on the hill for a varied group of sites and historic happenings.* The return to the Green will be through parts of the campus of The University of New Haven. This institution arrived in Allingtown only in 1960. It has become, by far, the community's largest institution and employer.

- Once more, turning to your right to the base of the triangle, you view the southern terminus of Forest Road. On its other side, a construction site as this is written, is the location for another long and valued community institution. As with so many of the village businesses, the low slung, unassuming Forest Theater was a family run affair for the half century of its life, being at one time or another, every type of cinema possible except for X-rated. First run, Saturday kids' matinees, art house, second run movies, throughout all, the Forest hung on until finally suffering the fate of so many neighborhood screens. It is probably impossible to find anyone who lived in Allingtown after 1943, and before 2000 who has not seen a movie at the Forest. While at the Yale School of Law, Bill and Hillary Rodham found its bill fit the bill for a cheap date.
- For a final time turning to your right, you have a short view of Forest Road heading off to northern Allingtown and western New Haven. Tour 5's loop will take you up this ancient

road and around in a wide sweep. Tour 5 covers a few miles and is more for bicycling than hiking although those in shape and with a good pair of shoes can complete it on foot. You are also looking at a section of the “new Allingtown,” which is still in the making, though complete here. Tours 2 and 3 will take you past this block and give you the details to help you understand why this and succeeding blocks on and off Orange Avenue were so vital to the village.

- You are now free to move around the village. Thank you for your visit to the Allingtown Green.