

Pine Grove Cemetery

A Brief History and Photographs from Times Past

By Inga Milbauer

The Burial Ground was the first graveyard in the North Precinct of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts (later known as the Town of Boylston, Massachusetts) located in the precinct's center on the two acres of land acquired from Lieutenant Eleazar Taylor to be used for a Meeting House and burial ground. The first burial was that of Garner Maynard, the eleven-month-old son of Elisha Maynard and Huldah Bannister, on 14 April 1745.¹ Elisha Maynard, one of the original petitioners of the North Precinct, resided on Tower Hill with his family.² By the early 1830's the Burial Ground had become crowded, so a second burial ground was established in 1837. After 1837, burials in the "Old" Burial Ground took place infrequently.

On 17 April 1837 Colonel Jotham Bush conveyed two acres about 400 feet off Scar Hill Road to the Boylston inhabitants for \$5.00.

"and especially in consideration of the regard I have for said town", to be used "as a public burying place or grave yard" - the transaction recorded in the County of Worcester Registry, Book 374 page 377.³

Jotham Bush Jr. was born in Shrewsbury on 8 April 1757, the son of Jotham Bush (1729-1778) and Hepsibah Keyes.⁴ Jotham Bush Jr. married Mary Taylor (1761-1836) in the Second Parish of Shrewsbury (now Boylston) on 28 June 1781.⁵ Mary Taylor Bush died in Boylston on 17 November 1836, her husband Colonel Jotham Bush died in Boylston on 13 December 1837. Both are buried in the Old Burial Ground.⁶

The total area of the new burial ground increased to about ten acres on 28 March 1855 when Deacon Jotham Bush (son of Colonel Jotham Bush), sold the land between Scar Hill Road and the previous plot of land to the town for \$400 - this transaction recorded in the County of Worcester Registry in Book 543 page 358.⁷ Deacon Jotham Bush was born on 30 September 1800 in Boylston and died on 30 July 1880 in Boylston. He is buried in the Old Burial Ground.⁸



**Pine Grove Cemetery
Postcard**

*Circa 1907-1909
BHSM Photograph Collection*



**Pine Grove Cemetery
Pine Trees in Background**

*1918
BHSM Photograph Collection*

The new cemetery was named for the avenue of pine trees planted by Deacon Jotham Bush between 1837 and 1855. The original avenue is now the easterly cemetery lane, passing from Scar Hill Road to the back (northeasterly) corner of the cemetery.

¹ Boylston's Graveyards (boylstonhistory.org)

² Boylston Historical Series, Bruce D. Filgate, 2012

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/91448/pine-grove-cemetery>

⁴ *Boylston Historical Series*, Bruce Filgate, 2012, p.108

⁵ *Early Families of Boylston*, Massachusetts, Nancy Filgate et al, 2022, p.109

⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8029443/jotham-bush>

⁷ <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/91448/pine-grove-cemetery>

⁸ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8029449/jotham-bush>

“At one time there was a wooden gate at the road; by which entry was obtained to the pine lined avenue, passing by later acquired sections 3 and 2 to the original acquisition, now Section 1 at the far end. The early burials were along the front of these sections facing the avenue.”⁹

According to the *History of Boylston 1786-1886*, the first burial in Pine Grove Cemetery took place in July 1837. Oscar Warrington Ball, the son of Dunsmore and Elmina Shepard Ball, had died on July 15th when he was just 1 year and 4 months old.

“His mother could not bear the thought of his being alone in that large field, and she had him removed to the burial ground in the center.”¹⁰

However, there are four grave stones with dates preceding both the purchase and the previously mentioned first burial date. “The earliest death being four-year-old Albert H. Ruggles, the son of Brigham Ruggles and Abigail Crain Ruggles, with a death date of January 2, 1818.”¹¹



Avenue of Pine Trees
Circa 1912
BHSM Photograph Collection



**Avenue of Pine Trees
Cemetery on left**
Date Unknown
BHSM Photograph Collection

The Great Hurricane of 1938 which brought havoc in Boylston on 21 September 1938 also affected Pine Grove Cemetery. The hearse house was crushed, many tombstones were shattered by the falling trees, and the hurricane destroyed the pine trees lining the avenue to the cemetery. For more information on the Great Hurricane of 1938, please read the Friday's Fascinating Finds article *Boylston, a Maze of Trees* by Carrie Crane FFF09092022 *Boylston, A Maze of trees.pdf* (boylstonhistory.org) Below are some photographs of the damage caused by the hurricane to the cemetery and the avenue of pine trees.



**1938 Hurricane Damage
Pine Grove Cemetery**
September 22, 1938
BHSM Photograph Collection
Photograph Album Marv E. French



**1938 Hurricane Damage
Pine Grove Cemetery**
September 23, 1938
BHSM Photograph Collection
Photograph Album Marv E. French

⁹ <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/91448/pine-grove-cemetery>

¹⁰ *Boylston Historical Series*. Bruce Filgate, 2012, p.438

¹¹ *Ibid*



View of Pine Grove Cemetery
After September 21, 1938
BHSM Photograph Collection



View of Pine Grove Cemetery
After September 21, 1938
BHSM Photograph Collection



Entrance Pine Grove Cemetery
After September 21, 1938
BHSM Photograph Collection

A note written on the back of the photograph from 1912 of the avenue of pine trees reads:

“The trees were all blown down. A new and wider drive has been completed, but no trees, only at the right of new driveway. This is written on February 28, 1940.”



View of Pine Grove Cemetery
1990s
BHSM Photograph Collection



View of Pine Grove Cemetery
1990s
BHSM Photograph Collection

In the fall of 2010 and spring/summer of 2011 all of the existing stones in the cemetery at that time were photographed and can be found in the findagrave.com database.¹² Pine Grove Cemetery is still an active cemetery, managed by the town of Boylston.

¹² <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/91448/pine-grove-cemetery>

Acknowledgements:

Boylston Historical Society Photograph Collection, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc.
Editor, Nancy A. Filgate, Director, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., Boylston, MA