



NOW!

Green Street

Boylston - Northborough Town Line

It is the last house on Ball Hill in Boylston on the East Woods Road [Green Street]. The buildings are located so near the Northborough and Boylston town lines, that the house is in Boylston and the barn in Northborough!

The homestead and barn were built circa 1781 and deeded to Joel Brigham from Captain Cyrus Gale of Northborough in 1834. This property had been the homestead of John Ball. The farm expanded in size and continued in the possession of the Brigham family transferring from father to son and grandson.



Brigham Farm on Ball Hill

In the Brigham Family for over 100 years!

BHSM Photograph Collections

Joel Brigham, the son of Gardner Brigham and Sarah Rice, was born 13 December 1788 in Northborough, Massachusetts. His 2nd great grandfather "John Brigham was a man of many efforts. He was a pioneer settler, farmer, miller, a land surveyor, and was sometimes styled as Doctor Brigham, though with what authenticity we cannot say. He lived in the westerly part of Marlborough upon territory that afterwards, became Westborough, and then finally Northborough. About 1675 he built the first saw mill erected in Northborough, and he has always been considered as the first settler in that town.

His family suffered much from the Indian raid in 1707; his mill and nearby log cabin were burned, and his daughter, Mary Fay, wife of Gershom Fay, barely escaped capture; a grand-daughter, Mary Goodenow, was slain.

In 1713 he sold his real estate in this region, and removed to a less exposed location near Boston. He was much employed by the General Court surveying and laying out grants of land. At the time he was engaged in laying out and dividing the Haynes Farm, he was also employed in the same

work in the southwesterly part of Marlborough, and headed a petition for the incorporation of this section into a new township, which became Westborough, and later a portion of it, Northborough. He may be styled, in a certain sense, as one of the founders of the three towns of Westborough, Northborough, and Shrewsbury. The first we learn of him in connection with Boylston history was in a survey of a grant of 200 acres near Rocky Pond made by him in 1684”.

John’s great grandson, Joel Brigham married Nancy Brigham, the daughter of Fortunatus Brigham and Martha Barnes on 13 September 1808. Joel and Nancy resided on the property and went on to have ten children.

In 1850 the Brigham farm, owned by Joel Brigham of Northborough [Boylston] included 33 acres: 23 acres of improved land and 10 acres of unimproved land with a value \$800. He had 2 working oxen and produced 10 bushels of rye, 25 bushels of Indian corn, 10 bushels of oats, 40 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 10 tons of hay. His farm implements and machinery were valued at \$30. After the death of his wife Nancy in 1850, Joel Brigham resided with his son Samuel in Berlin until they moved back to Northborough where he died in 1869.



Hayride Fun!
*Brighams and Neighbors
at the Brigham Farm
BHSM Photograph Collections*

By 1860 the Brigham farm had increased to 100 acres; with 75 acres of improved land and 25 acres of unimproved land, valued at \$2750. The farming operation had expanded to include orchard produce. At this point the farming implements and machinery were valued at 200. The farm had 2 laborers, a horse, 5 milch cows, 2 working oxen, 9 beef cattle, and produced 8 bushels of rye, 50 bushels of Indian corn, 35 bushels of oats, 4 bushels of peas and beans, 50 bushels of Irish potatoes, 700 lbs. of butter, and 25 tons of hay.

Herbert A. Brigham
Driving his Milk Wagon
BHSM Photograph Collections



It was Joel’s son, John Brigham, who took over the farm and later passed it to his son, Herbert A. Brigham who served the Boylston community with his milk wagon. He retained the property ownership until the mid-20th century. A severe fire damaged the property in the 1920’s. Fortunately, Boylston’s history remains preserved with much of the original structure restored.

Acknowledgements

Google Earth Pro

Boylston Historical Series, Bruce D. Filgate, 2012 “History of Boylston 1641-1742, A Critical Edition of Papers of George L. Wright by William O. Dupuis”

Photograph Collections, Boylston Historical Society and Museum, 7 Central Street, Boylston, Massachusetts