

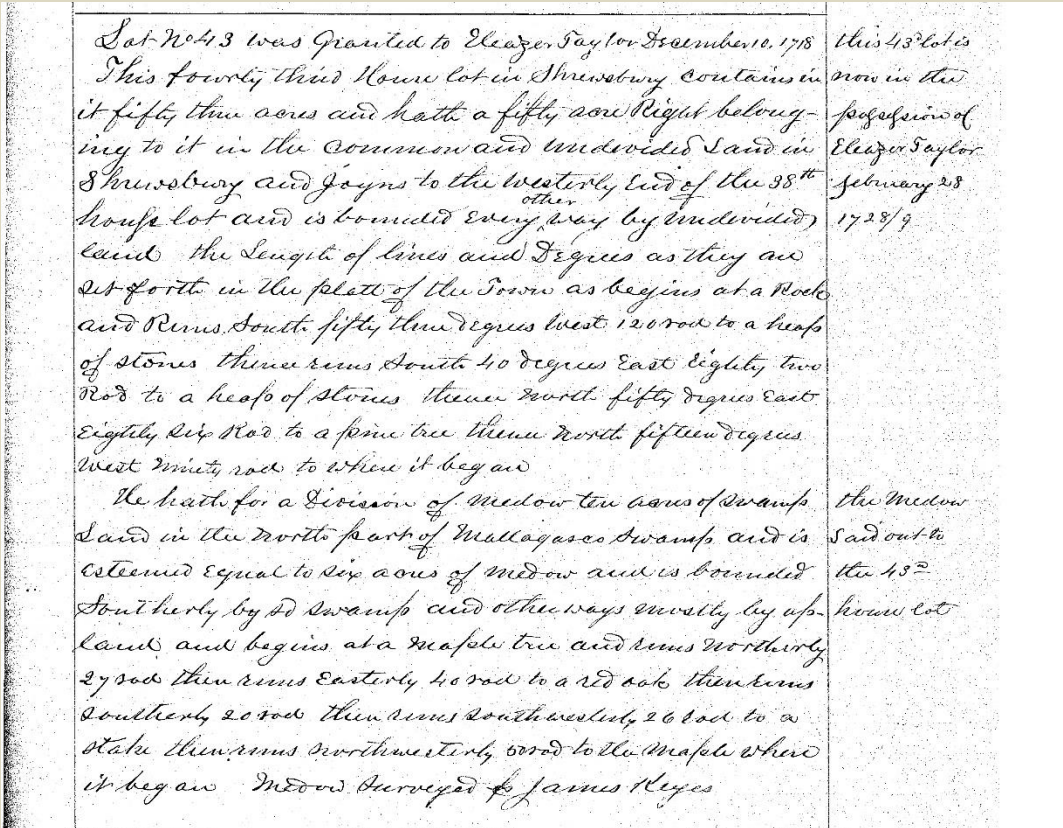
**COTTON HOME
NOW!**



The Ward Cotton Homestead

Boylston Historic District
Photograph by John Martiska

Located on the original 53-acre parcel Shrewsbury lot #43, which had been granted to Eleazar Taylor December 1718. Eleazar Taylor built his home on the southerly side of Cottonwood Place and settled there in 1729. The well for his house was dug while armed men stood guard against possible Indian attacks; the well is still in existence, and can be seen somewhat below the site of the original house. Taylor was a Lieutenant in the Militia, and active in civic affairs. In 1843, Eleazar Taylor was one of the founders of the Boylston Church. His land holdings included Cottonwood Place, the current location of the Old Burial Ground, the Old Common, and much of the centre of Boylston. He died September 20, 1753.¹



Shrewsbury Land Grant Lot #43

Shrewsbury Proprietors Records with the Plan of the Lots and of the Great Farms and A Map of Shrewsbury Presented to Shrewsbury Historical Society by Major William T. Harlow, February 1906

A description of downtown Boylston as it may have appeared in 1774 can be found in ‘History of Boylston, 1742 – 1786,’ by William O. Dupuis:

“First in prominence was the Meeting House built at the extreme corner of the Old Common, and opposite what is now 661 Main Street [Taylor Tavern built by Eleazar’s son David on Lot #43]. Immediately behind it was the Noon, or Sabbath-House, and to round out the religious complex, the Burial Ground. At the gate of the Burial Ground was erected the stocks, for the punishment of petty offenses. The schoolhouse, which existed prior to 1742, was located at the extreme easterly point of the Old Common. Precinct Meetings were usually held in the Meeting House, thus making this small area the heart of the North Precinct”.²

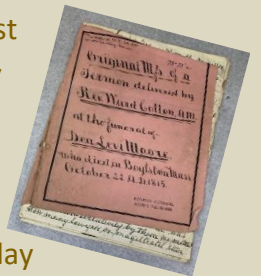
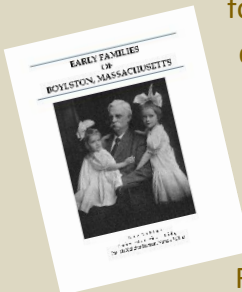
Eleazar Taylor’s house was later owned by the Reverend Hezekiah Hooper in 1794.



Reverend Ward Cotton Homestead
Cottonwood Place
Boylston, Massachusetts
BHSM Photograph Collection

The Reverend Ward Cotton house was built between 1800 and 1810 by Reverend Ward M. Cotton, the fourth minister of the Boylston Church. The home is located on Cottonwood Place on the opposite side of Cottonwood Place as the original Taylor home. The Town of Boylston named the street leading to the original Reverend Cotton homestead in its Historic District, *Cottonwood Place*. The street sign is there today.³

The Reverend Ward Cotton of Boylston was a descendant of such famous churchmen as Reverend Cotton Mather of the Salem Witch Trials, and John Cotton, the Puritan minister of Boston, Massachusetts. His son, Ward Cotton was the deacon in the First Congregational Society for more than 30 years and the secretary of the Northeast District Temperance Union, during New England’s growth of the Transcendentalists movement, a time in which people celebrated individualism and self-reliance.⁴ The adventures of Reverend Ward Cotton’s granddaughter, Lydia (Cotton) Rixford’s move south and the first settlement “Rixford” in Suwannee Springs, Florida can be read in the “*The Early Families of Boylston*” available at the Boylston Public Library or the Fuller Research Library at the Boylston Historical Society. Original sermons of Reverend Ward M. Cotton are held in the Manuscript Collection at the Boylston Historical Society and Museum at 7 Central Street.⁵ To view them, stop by any Sunday between 2- 4 pm.



¹ *Boylston Historical Series*, Bruce D. Filgate, 2012

² *History of Boylston, 1742 – 1786*, William O. Dupuis, Boylston, Massachusetts

³ *Boylston Historical Series*, Bruce D. Filgate, 2012

⁴ *The Early Families of Boylston*, Nancy O’Loughlin Filgate, Patricia Kelleher Bartram, Nadine Ekstrom, Nathan Rollins, & Victoria Triolo, Boylston Historical Collaborative, Boylston, Massachusetts, 2022

⁵ Boylston Historical Society & Museum Collection, Historic Town Hall, Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts
Shrewsbury Proprietors Records with the Plan of the Lots and of the Great Farms and A Map of Shrewsbury, William Harlow, 1906