

# Early Boylstonians: The Kendalls

by Patricia Kelleher Bartram

*This article is part of a periodic series of "portraits" of some of Boylston's earliest families.*

The Kendalls were among the families who settled Boylston, Massachusetts. One of the family's earliest members was Caleb Kendall (Abt. 1748/49-1806), son of Samuel Kendall (1711-1792) and his wife, Phebe Brintnall/Brintain (1713-1790) who had married on 23 September 1736 in Woburn, Massachusetts where both were residing at the time. Caleb, one of many children of Samuel and Phebe, was born in Sterling, Massachusetts (then called Chocksett, part of Lancaster) and baptized on 24 March 1750 in the Chocksett church at Sterling by the pastor Rev. Mr. Mellen.

## **Marriage and Children, Including Time in Ashburnham**

Caleb married twice and had 12 children between his two wives. He first married Priscilla Townsend (1753-1786), daughter of Joshua Townsend (1726-1804) and Mary Keyes (1733-1812), on 8 December 1773 in a service officiated by the Rev. Ebenezer Morse, a graduate of Harvard. They married in the North Parish of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, which at that time included the land we now know as Boylston. (Morse, Boylston's first minister, would become *persona non grata* by Patriots in Boylston due to his vocal and vigorous support of the Tories during the American Revolution.) Caleb's children with Priscilla were four: Priscilla (1777-1856); Caleb Jr. (1779-1857); Joshua (1781-1813) and Zipporah (1786-1855).

Priscilla died at age 33 years on 9 November 1786 soon after her sister Zipporah's birth and was buried in Boylston's Old Burial Ground. Left with four children under the age of 10 years, Caleb married his second wife, Lucy Baldwin Kendall (1760-1845), about a year and a half later. She was the widow of Thomas Kendall who had passed away in 1784. After Priscilla's death, Caleb had removed from Shrewsbury to Ashburnham, Worcester County, Massachusetts, where a cousin was living. It was where he was residing at the time of his marriage to Lucy, who was then a resident of Lancaster, Worcester County, Massachusetts. Caleb and Lucy were married in Lancaster by the Reverend Timothy Harrington, the fourth minister of the Church of Lancaster, on 15 April 1788. With Lucy, Caleb had eight children: Lucy (1789-1861); David (1791-1868); Samuel (1792-1884); Hannah (1793-1873); Emily/Emelia (1797-1825); Elmira/Myra (1800-1839); William (-1802) and William (1803-1879).

Lucy had also brought one child from her first marriage, Thomas Kendall Jr. (1783-1862), to her second marriage. After they married Caleb and Lucy remained in Ashburnham for several years through the births of their first two children, but in 1792 moved to Winchendon, Worcester County, Massachusetts for a short time. Later that same year they moved to Boylston, where the remainder of their children were born, and they lived out their lives. During the interim period between when Caleb had left Shrewsbury, and returned, Boylston in 1786 had become incorporated as a town separate from Shrewsbury.

## **Revolutionary War Service**

Caleb was a veteran of the American Revolution. Although he was mentioned as having marched with Captain Andrews and his Minute-men in answering the Alarm on 19 April 1775, no definitive proof of this was found during recent research. He did join the volunteers for Fairfield on 22 September 1776 for a period of two months and on 6 June 1777 Caleb joined Captain Ezra Beaman's Company, where he was promoted to Sergeant. He then served in Captain John Maynard's company, Colonel Job Cushing's regiment, marching to Hadley on 21 August 1777 on the order of Colonel Denney to answer the Alarm at Bennington, Vermont. His service for this last period was for six days, including three days' travel home (60 miles).

Caleb Kendall of Shrewsbury, once again enlisted on 23 June 1778 serving as a Sergeant in Captain Nathan Fisher's Company, Colonel Nathaniel Wade's regiment. This company, stationed at Rhode Island, was raised to serve until 31 December 1778, unless sooner discharged.

## **Post-War**

Once back in Boylston and with a growing family and many mouths to feed, he took up his trade as a "housewright" (builder of houses) by profession, and the family lived in the house at 18 Diamond Hill Avenue. At one time, he was the Keeper of the Keys for the Boylston Church.

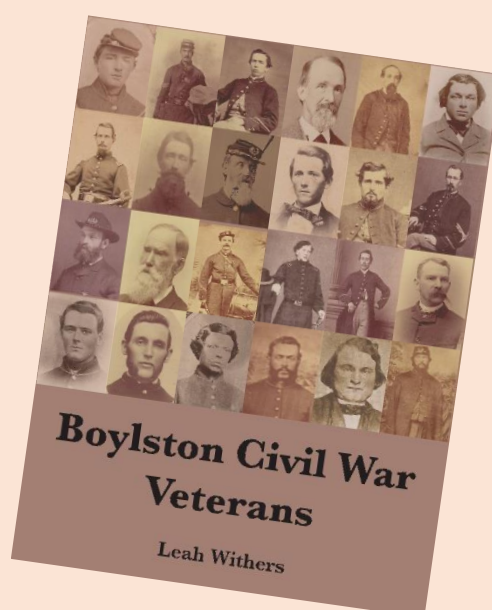
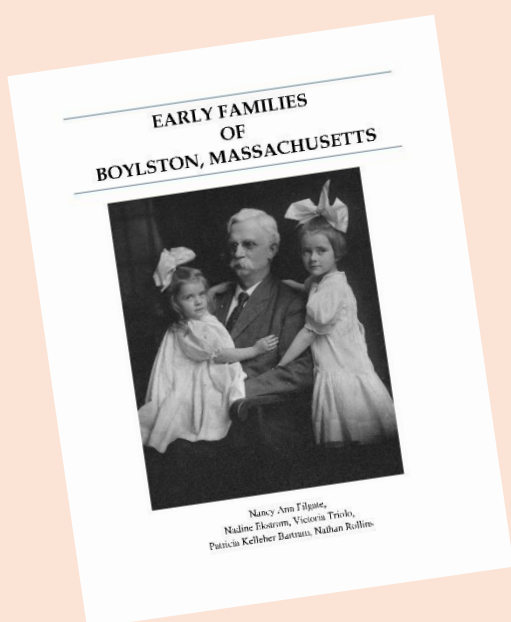
In a time when it was very common for families to lose children to disease and illness, Caleb was lucky that all but one of his many children grew to adulthood and outlived him. Caleb died in

Boylston on 5 January 1806 from fever at age 59 years and joined his first wife in Boylston's Old Burying Ground. His second wife, Lucy, outlived her husband by 39 years, passing away at the age of 85 years in Boylston on 21 November 1845.

On 2 March 1807, Caleb's eldest son, Joshua Kendall (then age 26 years and about to be married two months hence), was appointed guardian to his siblings Zipporah Kendall (then age 20 years), Lucy Kendall (age 17 years), Davis (David) Kendall (age 15 years), Samuel Kendall (age 14 years), minor, of their own choice being more than 14 years of age.

The Kendalls multiplied over several generations and intermarried with members of other early Boylston families including Sawyers, Hastings, Andrews, Howes and others. A number of Caleb's descendants went on to help meet Boylston's quota in serving the Union during the American Civil War. The Boylston Historical Society and Museum's (BHSM) collections were recently enhanced by the acquisition of a Windsor-backed chair that belonged to Caleb's daughter-in-law, Patty Sawyer Kendall, who was married to Caleb's son Joshua.

To learn more about early Boylstonians, check out the myriad of historical reference works at the BHSM and in the online archives at [boylstonhistory.org](http://boylstonhistory.org). Some excellent recent publications include: *Early Families of Boylston, Massachusetts*, Boylston Historical Collaborative, 2022; and *Boylston Civil War Veterans*, Withers, et al, Boylston Historical Collaborative, 2023. And stay tuned for a new publication coming in late 2024/early 2025 about Boylston's men who answered the Alarm of 19 April 1776, which kicked off the American Revolution – just in time to begin the celebrations of America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



*The BHSM is open for research: Sundays, 2:00-4:00pm; Tuesdays, 9:00am-12:00pm; and Saturdays, 9:00am-12:00pm, as well as by appointment by calling (508) 869-2720 or emailing [info@boylstonhistory.org](mailto:info@boylstonhistory.org). Assistance with genealogical research is also available by appointment.*

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