

Celebrating the 250th Anniversary of Our Country

By Nancy Filgate & Inga Milbauer



The 250th Anniversary of our country will be celebrated on 4 July 2026. The spirit of 1776 gave birth to a new nation with historic events leading up to the signing of the Declaration of Independence. One such event was the historic day on 19 April 1775 when the rider arrived on horseback to say the “British are coming.” This, of course, was one of the early actions of the American Revolutionary War between the Thirteen Colonies and Great Britain. Local projects are underway to commemorate the birth of our nation.

Honoring our Veterans – The Old Burial Ground in Boylston

One local project to prepare for the semiquincentennial celebration is focused on the burial locations of those brave men from Boylston who responded to the Lexington Alarm when the British troops advanced towards Lexington and Concord prompting local militias to mobilize. Some of our men survived this war and unfortunately others succumbed to injury inflicted in ensuing battles or disease.

Today local citizens have rallied to honor the graves of 49 veterans who are buried in Boylston’s Old Burial Ground in Boylston Center, 42 of whom served in the American Revolutionary War between the Thirteen Colonies and Great Britain. With the support of the Cemetery Department, the Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., the Boylston Historical Commission, and the Boylston Historic District, this ongoing project aims to clean, repair, and restore the gravestones of our veterans. In early 2012, the cemetery research was completed to verify the 573 burial locations of our veterans and our early settlers of Boylston. This research team also mapped the burial location of our veterans in this cemetery. Since May 2025, a group of twenty townspeople have cleaned 87% of 465 gravestones in this cemetery!

The next phase of the project is the repair and restoration of these veterans’ gravestones, including uprighting those that are tipped or broken, both for the honor of our veterans and the safety of our townspeople who visit the cemetery. The Boylston Historical Society and Museum, Inc. has filed for a grant to repair and restore the Old Burial Ground gravestones of our veterans:

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|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Capt. Jason Abbot | 26. Pvt. Stephen Flagg, Sr. |
| 2. Lieut. Daniel Ames | 27. Pvt. Amos Fuller |
| 3. Capt. Robert Andrews | 28. Col. Hezekian Gibbs |
| 4. Cpl. John Andrews | 29. Pvt. Micah Harthan |
| 5. Pvt. Elijah Ball | 30. Lieut. Daniel Hartshorn |
| 6. Cpl. Oliver Barnes | 31. Drummer Ebenezer Hartshorn |
| 7. Cpl. Nathan Banister | 32. Cpl. David Hastings |
| 8. Pvt. Andrew Bigelow | 33. 2d Lieut. John Hastings |
| 9. Pvt. Charles Bigelow | 34. Stephen Hastings |
| 10. Col. David Bond | 35. Sgt. Caleb Kendall |
| 11. Capt. John Bond | 36. Cpl. Thomas Keyes |
| 12. 2d Lieut. Jonathan Bond | 37. Pvt. Simeon Keyes |
| 13. Pvt. Samuel Brigham | 38. Capt. James Longley |
| 14. Pvt. Stephen Brigham | 39. Pvt. Hugh Moore |
| 15. Ens. John Bush | 40. Cpl. Levi Moore |
| 16. Col. Jotham Bush, Jr. | 41. Abel Osgood |
| 17. Lieut. Oliver Dakin | 42. Pvt. Josiah Pierce |
| 18. Pvt. Oliver Dakin | 43. Timothy Ross |
| 19. Surgeon William Dunsmore | 44. 4 th Cpl. Aaron Sawyer |
| 20. Pvt. Joseph Eager | 45. Ens. Joshua Stiles |
| 21. Pvt. Gershom Eames | 46. Lieut. Eleazar Taylor |
| 22. Capt. Jonathan Fassett | 47. Lieut. Jonas Temple |
| 23. Sgt. Benjamin Flagg | 48. Pvt Timothy Temple |
| 24. Capt. Gershom Flagg | 49. Pvt. Joseph Tilton |
| 25. John Flagg | |

The *Burial Ground* was the first graveyard in the Second Precinct of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts (the area later known as Boylston) located in the precinct’s center on land acquired in 1742 to build a Meeting House and burial ground. Lieutenant Eleazar Taylor had donated the two acres of land for this use.

Eleazar Taylor was the son of Eleazar Taylor and Lydia Barrett, born in Marlboro on 3 December 1699. He married Judith Hapgood on 5 July 1721. He was one of the early settlers who had a 69-acre parcel, which was originally Shrewsbury Proprietors lot #43, granted on 30 December 1718.¹ He built his home on the southerly side of Cottonwood Place and it included what became the old Town Common and much of what we now know as Boylston Center. Judith Hapgood died on 8 November 1742/43. Eleazar married his second wife, Hannah Keyes (widow of Gershom Flagg) on 26 March 1744. On 20 September 1753 Eleazar Taylor, a French and Indian War veteran, died and was interred in the Burial Ground in the Second Precinct of Shrewsbury. The area known as Second Precinct of Shrewsbury would become incorporated as the Town of Boylston, Massachusetts on 1 March 1786.

For more information about the history of the Old Burial Ground, see [The Old Burial Ground A Brief History and Photographs From Times Past](#)

In addition to this project stay tuned for a Patriot game for the Boylston Elementary School’s Third Graders when they go on their tour of Boylston’s Historic District; and watch for the publication of a new book about the lives and military careers of these valiant veterans in Spring 2026!



**Burial Ground in Boylston Center
Andrews Mound in foreground
Boylston Common behind cemetery on the left**

BHSM Photograph Collection

¹ Boylston Historical Series by Bruce Filgate, 2012, Boylston Historical Society & Museum, Inc., Boylston MA
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