



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Deb O'Malley
Telephone: (617) 878-3135

September 24, 2019

**TWO CEMETERIES IN LANCASTER
— MIDDLE CEMETERY AND OLD SETTLERS' BURYING GROUND —
APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved two cemeteries in Lancaster for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its September 11, 2019 meeting. The nominations will now be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

"The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth's rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources," Secretary Galvin said. "Middle Cemetery and the Old Settlers' Burying Ground in Lancaster are important early cemeteries in the town of Lancaster. Their listing in the National Register documents the artistic significance of the gravestones, as well as information on individuals buried in them, for posterity." The two cemeteries are two of seven historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting. Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

Most likely established at the same time as the town was first settled by English colonists, the Old Settlers' Burying Ground is the oldest cemetery in Lancaster and was active from the 17th century until the mid-19th century; it retains important examples of gravestone styles and iconography from that entire period. Middle Cemetery was established at the very end of the 18th century and served as the primary secular burial ground in Lancaster until 1878. Its last interment was in 1968 and the cemetery retains representative examples of gravestone styles and iconography from around 1800 through the mid-20th century.

The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are more than 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

-End-