



**William Francis Galvin**

Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**PINE GROVE CEMETERY IN LEOMINSTER 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 the Pine Grove Cemetery in Leominster for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 12, 2007 meeting. The nomination will 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 architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of this property on the National Register will help to protect our heritage for generations to come.”

Originally referred to as the “burying yard,” Leominster’s Pine Grove Cemetery was established in 1742 within the east end of Leominster’s first meetinghouse; it is the oldest municipal burying ground in the city. Following the removal of the meetinghouse in 1774 and two expansions in 1776 and c. 1820, the cemetery reached its present size of three acres. Important elements from the 1700s, 1800s, and 1900s, including gravestones, surrounding stone walls, wrought-iron entry gates, granite tombs, many mature trees, and several flowering trees and shrubs remain. Established two years after Leominster incorporated, Pine Grove is the final resting place for the town’s first settlers and ministers. It contains gravesites for nearly 100 Revolutionary War veterans, including soldiers who marched from Leominster to Lexington on April 19, 1775. Pine Grove also contains the graves of several citizens who contributed to the development of the town’s plastics industry during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an industry that historically has defined this community and that remains vital to the economy and identity of Leominster today. The oldest parts of the cemetery are characteristic of a Colonial burial ground, with slate gravestones carved with death’s heads, an arbitrary layout without family plots, and no decorative landscaping. The 1820s expansion is typical of 19<sup>th</sup>-century cemetery design: it contains tombs and marble headstones, is carefully surveyed and subdivided into family plots, and is adorned with many decorative flowering trees and shrubs.

Pine Grove Cemetery is one of 6 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places 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.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 65,000 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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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