



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

October 27, 1915

**RIDGEWOOD CEMETERY, NORTH ANDOVER, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission recently approved Ridgewood Cemetery in North Andover for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. 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 historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of Ridgewood Cemetery in North Andover in the National Register will help to preserve a significant historic cemetery with a wealth of important buildings, funerary art, and landscapes.”

Ridgewood Cemetery, 177 Salem Street, occupies 46 acres of land one-half mile from the historic town center of North Andover. The privately owned cemetery contains nearly 3,000 graves, with headstones dating from 1850 until the present. The earliest burial and extant headstone is for Sarah Jane Long, age 5, who died in October of 1850.

The Andover Cemetery Association was organized in 1849 by 22 subscribers who desired a more convenient burial ground for the residents of the rapidly growing North Parish section of Andover. The founders were members of the Trinitarian Church; they had left the Unitarian North Parish Church over theological differences, and may also have wanted an alternative to a Unitarian burial ground.

-more-

The cemetery association's vision for the burial place was clearly influenced by Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge and Watertown (NR 1975, NHL 2003) and the mid-19th-century Garden Cemetery Movement in New England. Prominent landscape architect Harlan Kelsey designed the Atkins Gate and associated landscaping at the cemetery's southern border in 1944. Kelsey is known for collaborating with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in planning and implementing the landscape along the entire length of Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park.

The oldest part of Ridgewood Cemetery, located in the northernmost half of the site, is set in rolling terrain with a complex pattern of monuments, family plots, vegetation, and rectilinear lanes and paths. It is bounded on Salem Street by a drystone wall completed three years after the cemetery was consecrated. Also located on Salem Street are the cemetery's cast-bronze main entrance gates with bas-relief sculpture and mortared anchoring walls, a posthumous gift to the cemetery in 1909 by George H. Gilbert in memory of the aunt who raised him. Architect Julius A. Schweinfurth (1858-1931) designed the gates.

One of the most unusual monuments in the cemetery is the massive unadorned sculpture marking the grave of civil engineer Phineas Stevens (d. 1864). The four-part monument, which has a strikingly modern appearance, features a granite cube topped respectively by a cylinder, a sphere, and a cone. There are also several historically significant buildings at the cemetery, including a Gothic Revival-style former hearse house, built in 1855.

Notables interred at the cemetery include poet Richard Hovey; Major General Isaac Ingalls-Stevens, who served in the Mexican-American War and was the first governor of the Washington Territory; and Civil War hero Frank Sampson Gile, one of the youngest Congressional Medal of Honor recipients in US history for helping free the *U.S.S. Lehigh* from heavy enemy fire in Charleston Harbor. Ridgewood Cemetery is still in use today.

Ridgewood Cemetery is one of five historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

-more-

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 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-