

FORM E - BURIAL GROUND

Assessor's number  
46/7

USGS Quad  
Plymouth

Area(s)  
F

Form Number  
801

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Facility  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town Kingston

Place (neighborhood or village) Jones River Village

Address or Location 221 Main Street

Name Old Burying Ground

Ownership Public ☒ Private

Approximate Number of Stones approx. 350

Earliest Death Date ca. 1717

Latest Death Date ca. 1850

Landscape Architect unknown

Condition Fair/Good

Acreage approx. 3 1/2-acres

Setting First Parish Church (MHC 71, 1851) to east,  
private residence to west, Main Street to south, Evergreen  
Cemetery to north

Recorded by V.H.Adams, N.C.Avery, M.K.Harrington

Organization The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.

Date (month/day/year) May 1997



Sketch Map



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## BURIAL GROUND FORM

### VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT — *see continuation sheet*

Surrounding the First Parish Church (MHC 71,1851) on three sides, the U-shaped graveyard is roughly 3½-acres in size. The property is delineated by a chain link fence on the west. The southern edge of the cemetery, on the west side of the church, is held by a low, stone wall. The southern edge of the cemetery on the east side of the church is marked by a wrought iron fence and gate which terminates at the east end of the property at a low stone retaining wall, facing the Training Green (MHC 912, ca. 1720). The historical northern edge of the cemetery is marked by a thick row of shrubs and trees. This is a soft border, as the Old Burying Ground expanded into Evergreen Cemetery in 1853 when it became full. Access to the cemetery is either through Evergreen Cemetery, from the parking lot to the rear of the Town House (MHC 3,1841), or through the wrought iron gate or opening in the stone wall on the south.

Grave markers are in rows with stones consisting of granite, slate, and marble. The most common carved motifs are weeping willows and draped urns, with winged cherub faces and skulls on a number of the older stones. A number of multiple family tombs are located on the east side of the cemetery consisting of raised granite slabs on brick bases. The names of many of the founding families of Kingston are found within the cemetery, including Holmes, Churchills, Bradfords, Bartletts, and Cushmans. A single large obelisk monument dedicated to the Adams family is located in the center of the graveyard.

The graveyard is sparsely landscaped. There are no organized footpaths or roadways within the yard. Groundcover consists of grass and clubmoss. Mature Norway Spruce, Hemlock, and Arbor Vitae grow randomly throughout the grounds.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE X *see continuation sheet*

In 1717, 41 residents of the northern part of Plymouth petitioned the General Court to allow them to be set off from Plymouth as a separate township or a precinct. They were allowed to become the north precinct of Plymouth on the condition that they maintain a suitable minister (Bailey 1920:33). At that time, the central part of the present town of Kingston belonged largely to Major John Bradford who gave the precinct fourteen acres of land in 1717 which is recorded in a deed of 1720/21. This land was to be used for the town woodlot, the Training Green, a burying ground, and a meetinghouse (Bailey 1920:36). In 1726, the north precinct, after having been a part of the town of Plymouth for 106 years, acquired its independence and became the town of Kingston (Bailey 1920:41).

Bradford set aside two acres of land to be used for the town Training Green, the Old Burying Ground, and a meetinghouse (Drew 1944:65) which was erected on the corner of Main and Green streets ca. 1720 (MHC 1980:3). The Old Burial Ground was used for burials as early as 1717 when Charles, the infant son of Charles and Sarah Little was buried there (see Little Tavern, MHC 90, 1714). Other early burials include Major John Bradford and his wife who are buried to the north of the Little lot (Bailey 1920:48).

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES — *see continuation sheet*

- Bailey, Sarah Y. *The Story of Jones River in Pilgrim Plymouth, 1620-1726*. Kingston, MA, 1920.  
 Bailey, Sarah Y., and Emily F. Drew. *The Civic Progress of Kingston [and] A History of Her Industries, Two Hundred Years, 1726-1926*. Kingston, 1926.  
 Drew, Emily. *Kingston: the Jones River Village*. 1944 (Edited and annotated by Doris M. Johnson, 1995).  
 Drew, Thomas Bradford. "History of Kingston," in D.H. Hurd, *History of Plymouth County, Massachusetts*. Philadelphia, 1884.  
 Massachusetts Historical Commission. *Reconnaissance Survey Report: Kingston*. Boston, 1981.  
 Melville, Doris Johnson. *Major Bradford's Town: A History of the Town of Kingston, 1726-1976*. Kingston, 1976.  
 Vertical Files located at the Local History Room of the Kingston Public Library.

— Recommended as a National Register District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET****Community:**  
Kingston**Property Address:**  
Main Street**Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Facility  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125****Area(s)****Form No.**  
801**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)**

On April 2, 1787 the Old Burying Ground was enclosed with a wall (Hurd 1884:264). In 1839 an extension to the Bradford parcel was added by a lot purchased from Captain Daniel Adams for \$600 (Hurd 1884:268). This additional land was most likely the lot on which the Town House (MHC 3, 1841) was built, as records seem to indicate that the First Parish did not give consent to having the Town House erected on Parish land, as the Green was considered by some (Drew 1944:66). The additional land also made further room for burials and served until the Evergreen Cemetery (MHC 800, 1854) was opened in 1854. It also provided a second means of egress for the Old Burying Ground, other than through church grounds (Drew 1944:65). In 1854, Evergreen Cemetery was laid out by Horace Holmes and Caleb Bates, adjoining the Old Burying Ground.