

FORM E BURIAL GROUND

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

11-519
11-512A

Salem

BEV.A

BEV.800
(update)

NRDIS 7/5/1984

Town: Beverly

Place: Downtown

Photograph



Photo 1. View NW into north section of Burial Ground. Abbott St in foreground; Baptist Church on left; First Parish Church center, Unitarian Chapel at right; stone wall bordering Hale Family lot, right foreground.

Name: Ancient Burial Ground

Ownership: *Public Private*

Approximate Number of Stones:

north section (11-519) : 240
south section (11-512A): 53

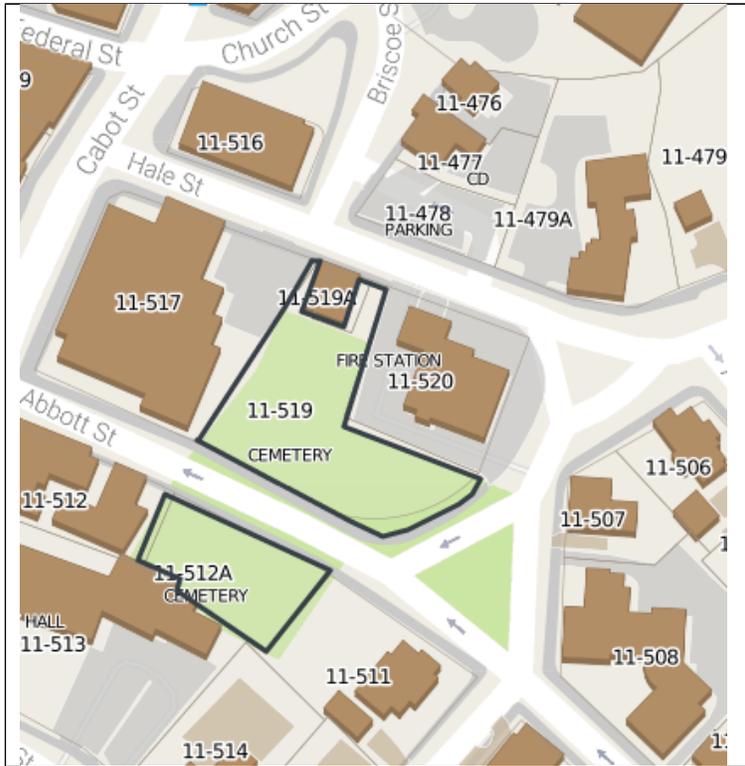
Earliest Death Date: 1677

Latest Death Date: 1848

Landscape Architect: NA

Condition: Fair to poor

Locus Map (north at top)



Acreage: 11-519 = .53 acres (north)
11-512A = .25 acres (south)

Setting: Within the Beverly Center Historic District, adjacent to Monument Square. Surrounded by civic, commercial, and residential properties of various periods.

Recorded by: Pamela Hartford and Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date: September 2016

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Context

The Ancient Burial Ground, Abbott Street (1672) was established as the burial ground for the First Parish Church, 225 Cabot Street, (1770, BEV.106). It presently consists of two separate plots of land, divided by Abbott Street. The first (north) parcel is across Hale St from the First Parish Church, and spans the block between Hale Street and Abbott Street directly behind the First Baptist Church, 221 Cabot Street (1771, BEV.113). The second (south) parcel is directly across Abbott Street from the north parcel, and sits behind 201 Cabot Street. Abbott and Hale Street converge behind the north section in Monument Square, a large triangular intersection containing the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, Abbott St (1882, BEV.904) an important civic anchor of the Beverly Center Historic District (NRDIS 1984).

The Ancient Burial Ground contains nearly 300 gravestones and perhaps additional, unmarked burial sites on approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land. The site is generally flat and maintained in rough turf with irregularly spaced trees of various sizes, including young street trees along both Abbott Street edges. A cast iron picket fence lines both Abbott Street edges of the Burial Ground, as well as the north and east sides of the north parcel. Low stone walls form a square enclosure for the Hale Family Plot in the southeastern corner of the north parcel. Major trees include, in the north parcel, a mature locust tree near the corner of Abbott Street and Monument Square, large deciduous trees along the Central Fire Station boundary and along the northern edge of the Baptist Church property, and, in the south parcel, a large cedar tree near the center of the Abbott Street frontage. A modern flagpole (1998) rises just inside the Abbott Street entrance to the Burial Ground.

Visual Description

The L-shaped north section of the Burial Ground is slightly less than half an acre in size, wrapping around the Central Fire Station and Signal Tower, 15 Hale Street (1949-50, BEV.432) at the intersection of Hale Street and Monument Square. The Burial Ground's long northwest boundary spans the block between Hale Street and Abbott Street, bordered by the Baptist Church playground and the Church's parking lot. The Burial Ground has a 52-foot frontage directly on Hale Street on its northeast boundary. The Unitarian Chapel, 9 Hale Street (1806, BEV.106) sits in the center of the of this street frontage, surrounded by the Burial Ground on three sides. The Burial Ground's southeast corner extends out to Monument Square.

A three and a half foot high cast iron picket fence surrounds the north section of the Burial Ground, along the Abbott Street and Monument Square boundaries and around the property of the Central Fire Station. The formal entrance to the north section of the Burial Ground is through an opening in the cast iron fence, midway along Abbott Street. This opening is four feet wide, with two cast iron bollards limiting the effective opening width to allow a single person through. (Photo 2) No fence separates the Burial Ground from the Baptist church's playground (Photo 3), or from the Unitarian Chapel.

The north section of the Burial Ground has several spatially distinct areas. The large rectangle of land comprising the western section of the north parcel contains widely spaced gravestones in rough linear arrangements running north-south in the space. Extant gravestones here are typically slate slabs concentrated around the edges of this parcel, with a large open space in the center of the section; nearly all of the stones face west. (Photo 4) A pair of tabletop stones with marble slabs and stone veneer bases stand at the southeast edge of this section, near the stone enclosure of the Hale Family Plot.

A second spatially distinct area is a fifty-by-fifty foot square space known as the Hale Family Plot, which is enclosed by a five-foot-wide, three-foot-high stone wall. (Photo 6) The wall is made up of very large, random sized fieldstones that have been piled on one another in an unstructured fashion. (Photo 7) Within the walled enclosure are thirteen burial stones, placed around the perimeter of the space, facing inward. Some of the Ancient Burial Ground's earliest and most sophisticated gravestones are

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located within this enclosure. The south and west walls remain stable, while the north and east walls have begun to collapse. Several volunteer trees are growing in the collapsing areas of the walls, and the entire walled area has vegetation and vines growing over and around it.

To the north and east of the Hale Family Plot is a narrow area with four rows of closely spaced gravestones running east-west. Three rows of gravestones face east; one (with very small gravestones) faces south. (Photo 8) The northernmost line of stones is as close as one foot to the iron boundary fence; another row contains a number of footstones placed within only two feet of the headstones. Immediately to the east of the Hale Family Plot and aligned with its north wall is a group of three large tabletop stones consisting of sandstone slabs on granite block bases.

The north section has several trees, mostly around its perimeter; all are native to the area. On the southeast corner of the Ancient Burial Ground, between the south wall of the Hale Family Plot and the fence, and directly opposite from the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, is a picturesque mature locust tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) with a deeply furrowed and twisted trunk. Near the locust, north toward the Fire Engine House, is a large black cherry tree (*Prunus serotina*). Clustered around the corner of fence at the southwest corner of the Fire Station is group of locusts. Just south of the Unitarian Chapel stands a black cherry tree. Another black cherry, with multi-stemmed off shoots growing from the base of the parent tree, grows near the center of the main space of the north parcel.

The smaller south parcel of the Burial Ground is bounded by Abbott Street on its northeast side, and by the wood fence enclosing the garden of the Joseph C. Kilham House, 19 Abbott Street (1891, BEV.153) on the southeast. On the southwest boundary of the Burial Ground lies the back of the Beverly Police Department building, an addition to Beverly's City Hall in the Andrew Cabot House, 191 Cabot St. (1783, BEV.104). The northwest boundary is defined by the rear wall of 201 Cabot Street (not inventoried).

A three-foot-high cast iron picket fence runs the length of the Abbott Street side of the south section of the Burial Ground, with an opening mid-way along the Abbott Street boundary. As in the north section, there is much open space in the south section, suggesting a significant loss of burial stones. The stones in this section are in poorer condition, with many verging close to illegible, and many sunk quite far in ground. Also in this section are half a dozen stones that have been preserved by means of encasing them in concrete. All stones face toward the northwest, as in the northern section.

Both sections of the Ancient Burial Ground are traversed by pedestrians as a short cut to or from Abbott Street, although not to the extent that very obvious footpaths are visible.

Gravestone Design

Given the predominance of eighteenth century gravestones in the Ancient Burial Ground, the most represented tympanum motifs are the winged skull and winged face. A dozen eighteenth century stones, with urn and willow motif and accompanying sleek form lacking shoulders, stand out among a sea of portal shaped stones. The predominant material of the stones is slate, varying in color and texture, demonstrating different sourcing of this material over time. (Photos 10 through 19)

Five tabletop grave markers, as described above, are located in the north parcel. Footstones are uncommon. Gravestones are generally small to moderate in size, with simple incised borders and a significant but small fraction of decoratively carved side bars (usually scrolled designs, with rare examples of abstract circular motifs.) Inscriptions generally consist of names, birth dates, death dates, spouse's name for women, and identification of daughters and sons for young children. Epitaphs are relatively uncommon. Virtually all headstones mark single graves; a handful of double-stones exhibit various visual treatments. Carvings are typically simple in design and execution; the small fraction of elaborate and unusual gravestones includes a trio of Hale family markers within the stone enclosure that employ winged skulls surrounded by a variety of complex geometric patterns.

The Ancient Burial Ground is in poor condition as the result of many factors, including natural de-lamination of the slate tablets, weathering of inscriptions, settling of many stones, widespread damage from grass-cutting equipment, and lack of maintenance. Leaning, broken, moved, and highly illegible stones are common. The cast iron perimeter fence has extensive areas of peeling paint and rusted metal. Volunteer trees and vegetation compromise the stability of the stone enclosure at the Hale Family Plot.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Ancient Burial Ground was established for the members of the First Parish Church of Beverly, which was organized on September 22, 1667. The town procured an acre of land from John Lovett, Jr. on August 17, 1671, for purposes of establishing a burial place. This area was not adjacent to the church; its location has been estimated to be near the present day corner of Milton and Cabot Streets, a block and a half south of the church, and on the opposite side of Cabot Street. In 1672 the Church voted to exchange this plot for a half acre each from land owned by Ensign Corning and Josiah Rootes, which abutted the church.

At that time, the parcel was a long rectangle, including the section now covered by Abbott Street (See Historic Sketch Map). The land immediately adjacent to the Burial Ground to the east was owned in part by the Hale family and by Albert J. Kilham. In 1740, Joseph Morgan sold Col. Robert Hale (1702/3 – 1767) his right of commonage in the Common Lands, which he had inherited from his father, Robert Morgan (The common lots, consisting of six acres, were distributed in 1716 to all those who had built houses prior to 1661.) The "Morgan Lott" directly abutted the Ancient Burial Ground along two thirds of its northeast boundary.

At some point after this purchase Col. Robert Hale built the fifty-foot by fifty foot walled enclosure on his land, abutting the Burial Ground. In his 1766 will, Col. Hale declared: "I will that a small piece of land in said Beverly in the Lott called Morgan's Lott adjoining to the Easterly side of the public burying place, which I have fenced off for a family burying place together with the stone wall fence which I have built about it, shall be kept inviolate for a burying Place for myself and my descendents their husbands and wives and respectively forever, for which use alone I give it to my said daughter and her heirs for the space of one thousand years and I will have no part of the said stone wall be removed or demolished on any pretence whatsoever." Col. Hale's gesture proved provident for his ancestors, though not for his descendents, as over the next hundred years, the Ancient Burial Ground was subjected to two encroachments.

In 1834, the Universalist Chapel was moved onto the Burial Ground at Hale Street. By 1846, the last vacant space in the Burial Ground was filled by the body of Thomas Barrett, the long-time sextant of the First Parish Church, who had reserved his spot many years before his death.

In November 1867, Robert Hale Bancroft (1843-1918) sold an acre and a half of the Morgan Lott to John I Baker for the construction of the John I Baker House, 1871 (1 Monument Square, BEV.149). Shortly after this, Baker, a town alderman, began his campaign to have Abbott St extended past his property to connect with Cabot Street, cutting across the Ancient Burial Ground. On June 30, 1868, Baker reconvened the town Alderman, who voided the earlier vote of the town against the Abbott St extension by approving its implementation.

In September 1868, Bancroft sold the upper end of Morgan Lott, about half an acre, to the city "for purposes of cemetery, roads or other public purposes." The boundaries of the parcel began at the western corner of Endicott street, excluded the Hale Family plot from the parcel, extended 128 feet from the northwest corner of the Hale Family plot directly to Hale street, ran 112 feet south along Hale, and returned 236 feet southeast to the corner of Endicott Street (See Historical Sketch Map). In addition to placing a condition on the future use of the plot, the deed also stipulated that "no portion of any building of the town or of any religious society or parish therein shall be placed within fifty feet of any portion of the private burial lot of the Hale family estate." In October, 1868, six members of the Hale family - Rev John Hale (1636-1700), his first wife Rebecca, their daughter Rebecca, and his second wife Sarah, his son Robert (1668- 1719), and Robert's wife, Elizabeth, were disinterred from the Ancient Burial Ground soon to be paved over by Abbott St, and were placed in the Hale Family plot.

In Perley's account of the Ancient Burial Ground (1899), he includes an eyewitness account of a parishioner's father who superintended the removal of the Rev. John Hale and six of his family members to a private walled lot in October, 1868. In November 1868, a survey done for the city by John F. Meacham identified all the burials in the middle section of the Ancient Burial Ground, the section that was to become Abbott Street in 1868, and about one third of the north section, abutting the proposed line of Abbott Street. No Hales were noted in the index of all the burials that were surveyed. Over seventy stones were removed from the proposed Abbott Street area in 1868, although it is not immediately apparent where these stones have been placed. The stones occupying the space between the Hale Family Plot and the Central Fire Station do not include the burials

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surveyed in the section under the proposed Abbott St area, but rather, family groups of the Lovetts, Woodburys, Herricks and a few others, all of whom were identified on the 1868 survey as being in the in the northern section of the Burial Ground. This en masse departure of family groups explains the empty area in the center of the northern section.

In 1875 the town completed building a wood post and rail fence on either section of the Ancient Burial Ground along Abbott St. In 1884, the Central Fire Station was built on the corner of Hale and Monument Square, on the Hale land sold to the city in 1868, and the Soldiers and Sailor Monument was erected. The south side of the Central Fire Station, as well as the subsequent replacement to the fire station in 1949, is fifty feet from the north wall of the Hale Family burial plot, as stipulated in the 1868 sale,

In 1896, the City took over management and control of all burial grounds, and In 1900, two walkways – one crossing the north section, and one crossing the south section, were closed to prevent the burial grounds being used as pathways. In 1918, a three and a half foot high cast iron fence was constructed around both sections of the burial ground, replacing the post and rail fence. A flagpole erected in 1998 just outside the iron fence at the south corner of the Hale plot commemorates the Revolutionary War casualties and their families.

The Ancient Burial Ground is a site of significance for its inclusion of many of the first settlers not only of Beverly, but of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. As the earliest recorded burial ground in Beverly, the Abbott Street Burial Ground contains many individuals of significance from the earliest period of Beverly's settlement.

Extensive research conducted by Beverly and William Carlman includes the reference from town documents which states that the Ancient Burial Ground contains the remains of the first female child born in the Colony, Elizabeth Brackenberry Patch (1629/30 -1714/15) Her stone, in the south section of the Burial Ground, is among those which have been encased in concrete.

Burial stones from the seventeenth century include that of five year old Deliverance Woodbery (d 1683) and her three year old sister, Elizabeth Patch Woodbery (d. 1683); planter Ralph Ellenwood (d. 1673); Lydia Woodbury Herrick (d. 1690); Humphrey Horrel (d. 1683); Christian Trask (d. 1689) and her daughter Christian Trask (d. 1687); Eror Woodbat, 1689; Hannah Woodberry (d. 1693), Elizabeth Woddburie (d. 1688) and William Woodbury Sr (d.1677) and Jr. (D. 1669)

The Ancient Burial Ground is a significant archaeological site. Further research and indexing of the extant stones in the northern section against the 1868 survey index and the burial stones in the section north of the Hale Family Plot is recommended. A survey undertaken in 1943, as part of a Public Works Project, represents the most current survey of the Burial Ground.

Stonecarvers

The Ancient Burial Ground includes an array of examples of stone carvers working locally and in Boston. Eighteen burial stones in the Ancient Burial Ground were documented by Daniel and Jessie Lee Farber in the 1920's and are included with carver citation in the American Antiquarian Society's Farber Gravestone Collection. Nathaniel Emmes, an accomplished Boston carver, is represented in the work of two Hale family stones; his design of John Hale's tympanum is especially remarkable (Photo 10, 11). The work of the Lamson family and the Parks family of carvers (William, John, Thomas and John Jr.) from Boston is also represented. The graphic style of the Merrimack Valley School of carvers, including John Hartshorn and members of the Mellickan family, are well represented (Photos 12 & 13). Other known carvers whose work can be seen in the Ancient Burial Ground include James Ford, John Wright, John Holliman (Photo 14). Two known groups of carvers, Skulls/Skeletons (1700-1719) and Faces With Wings (1740-1759) are also represented.

As the burial ground for the first settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, it a significant archaeological site. Due to the loss of burial stones associated with the earliest burials, and due to the physical disruption of the site over time, an archaeological survey is recommended. The burial stones represent a potentially valuable collection of early New England stone carving which, if further researched, could contribute to the knowledge base of early carvers of New England.

The Ancient Burying Ground is a contributing resource in the Beverly Center National Register District (1984).

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SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



Photo 2. View from Abbott Street, north toward entrance to north section. Stone wall of Hale Family Plot at right, Unitarian Chapel center, First Parish Church on left



Photo 3. Baptist Church playground at edge of north Section of Burial Ground.



Photo 4. View from rear of Universalist Chapel looking across Burial Ground to Abbott Street.



Photo 5. Hale Family Plot from northwest corner; entrance to lot at right; Col Robert Hale stone seen just inside plot; locust tree and Soldiers and Sailors Monument in center rear.



Photo 6. Detail of southeast corner of Hale Family Plot wall.



Photo 7. View from Monument Square boundary of Burial Ground, looking north toward Baptist Church. Fence of Central Fire Station at right

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Photo 8. View from Abbott Street looking northeast into south section of Burial Ground; rear of Beverly Police Station in background



Photo 9. View of south section of Burial Ground, looking south toward garden fence of 19 Abbott Street.



Photo 10. Rev. John Hale burial stone, d. 1700.



Photo 11. Robert Hale burial stone, d. 1718/9



Photo 12. Susanna Hardy, d. 1736

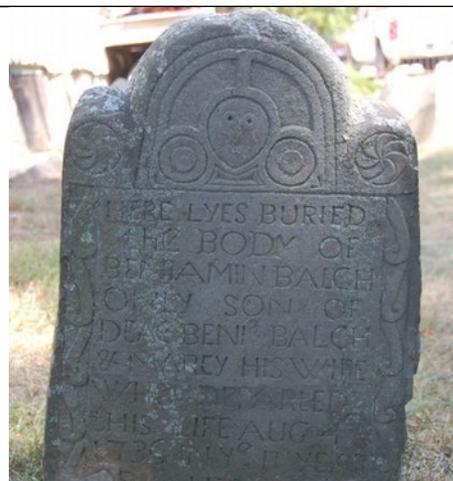


Photo 13. Benjamin Balch, d. 1736.

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Photo 14. William Wood, d. 1757



Photo 15. Lydia Morgan (left), d. 1737; Henry Woodbury, d. 1737



Photo 16. Isaac Gray, d. 1760



Photo 17. Hannah Raymond, d. 1789



Photo 18. Elizabeth Trask, d. 1804



Photo 19. Col. Robert Hale, d. 1767; stone made 1895