

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Old Burial Hill

other names/site number Burial Hill Cemetery

## 2. Location

street & number Church Street, School Street, South Russell Street

city or town Plymouth

state Massachusetts code MA county Plymouth code 023 zip code 02360

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ **national**      \_\_\_ **statewide**      \_\_\_ **local**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	-	buildings
1	-	sites
8	-	structures
33	-	objects
43	-	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary: Cemetery

Defense: Fortification, Magazine

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary: Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: N/A

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## 7. BURIAL HILL NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

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### SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

Burial Hill Cemetery, also known as Old Burial Hill, is a 5.12-acre burial ground in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was part of the original Pilgrim village established by the passengers of the Mayflower. From 1620 to 1676 it was known as Fort Hill and was the site of the Pilgrim fort and meetinghouse. Since that time the area has served as the burial place of many generations of Plymouth residents, including some of the early settlers and their descendants. The oldest extant headstone is dated 1681 and the most recent burial was in 1957. There are roughly 2,269 primary gravestones, including four from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These include an outstanding collection of skillfully carved slate headstones, many of which have been attributed to specific carvers.

### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

#### Setting

The town of Plymouth is located on Plymouth Harbor in southeastern Massachusetts. Despite many changes over the years, the compact town center, which features small-scale commercial, tourism and harbor related activities, retains much of the street layout of the 17<sup>th</sup> century settlement, as well as residential and commercial buildings dating primarily from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The community had a population of 56,468 in 2010.

Burial Hill is located one block west of Main Street. It has dramatic views to Plymouth Harbor and Cape Cod Bay. Immediately to the southeast of Burial Hill is Town Square, located at the western end of Leyden Street, the main street of the Plymouth settlement and the historic civic and religious center of the community. At the head of the square adjacent to Burial Hill is the First Parish Church (MHC91), erected in 1899, with Romanesque design by Hartwell, Richardson and Driver. The church has Tiffany stained glass windows illustrating the Pilgrim story, and the town bell, cast by Paul Revere. The present church is the fifth church on this site.

On the north side of Leyden Street facing Town Square is the Church of the Pilgrimage (MHC92), erected in 1840. The present church was built to replace an earlier meetinghouse. On the south side of Leyden Street facing Town Square is the 1749 Old Plymouth County Courthouse (MHC90, NR), the oldest extant wooden courthouse in America, which is now a museum.

To the northeast of the burial ground is Courthouse Square, which includes the 1820 Courthouse (MHC1596) on Main Street between North Russell Street and South Russell Street, as well as a green facing Main Street. The courthouse, which served as the Plymouth district court for over 185 years, has been enlarged and remodeled many times. It closed in 2007 when a new courthouse was constructed on another site. The old courthouse is now owned by the town and leased to the Plymouth Redevelopment Authority.

#### General Description

This nomination includes the town-owned parcel that comprises **Burial Hill** (map 1). Church Street forms the southern boundary of the burial ground; School Street forms the eastern boundary; municipal and state-owned land along South Russell Street form the northern boundary; and wooded private property forms the western boundary. The boundaries of Burial Hill were initially slightly smaller than they are today and early burials were primarily near the top of the hill. The frontage along School and South Russell Streets was occupied by the Russell School and various small-scale buildings around the perimeter of the burial ground, which have since been demolished.

Fort Hill, as Burial Hill was initially known, is located about 1,500' west of Plymouth Harbor and 500' north of Town Brook. It rises 165' above sea level and was strategically important to the early settlers because of its

panoramic views of the harbor and the surrounding area, which made it ideal for defense. Once the hill was no longer needed for military purposes, it became the town's primary burial ground. The topography retains its steep uneven character, particularly around the perimeter. There are also subtle variations in the micro-topography in some burial areas where family lots were laid out. This is most visible in Section K near the powder house (photo 1).

Initially the **circulation system** was a series of rough dirt paths that led to the early headstones near the top of the hill.<sup>1</sup> By 1870 there was a wide gravel-surfaced path that extended from the main entrance near Town Square to the top of the hill. The 1892 burial ground map (map 2) shows a more extensive system of paths, as well as secondary entrances south to Church Street, east to School Street and north to South Russell Street. There is a path running east/west near the northern edge of the cemetery and several paths in the western section that lead to the powder house. Improvements were made to the circulation system in the late 1890s, through a bequest that also paid for new gates and granite steps at the main entrance. The most recent and detailed map is the 1937 veterans map (map 3), which shows the same path system that exists today. The paths are now paved with asphalt and are heavily used by visitors. Steps or stepped ramps are used in steeper areas, particularly at the entrances (photo 2).

Like most burial grounds that have been in use for many years, the spatial organization of Burial Hill has evolved over time. The earliest burials were located near the top of the hill where small older headstones are clustered in close proximity to each other (photo 3). Later burials were added haphazardly, as shown on the 1892 map. Additional burials are shown on the 1937 veterans map (map 3). The headstones are oriented in all different directions, which is typical for burial grounds that developed over many years.

Individual burials predominated at Burial Hill until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Around that time, family lots, where relatives could be buried together in perpetuity, became popular. Most of these are found around the perimeter of the burial ground. Some are enclosed by granite curbing or iron or wooden fences. The 1937 map delineates more than 100 curbed lots, but fewer than that are visible in the landscape today, and only a few fences remain, some iron and some wooden.

Like most burial grounds of the time, Burial Hill initially had almost no trees. This provided a critical advantage during the 1600s when it was known as Fort Hill and the panoramic view of the surrounding area was important for defense purposes. In the early years, the area may have been used for grazing, as many New England burial grounds were. The 1853 engraving (figure 1) looking east towards the harbor shows the area devoid of vegetation. The c. 1870 photograph (figure 2) shows scattered deciduous trees, most of which appear to be relatively young. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs show young American elms along School Street. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the burial ground has gradually become more tree covered, primarily with beeches and lindens, which now provide substantial coverage, especially in the older sections of the burial ground. There are a few scattered shrubs and small-scale ornamental plantings, but these are isolated and occur either as remnants of earlier lot plantings or as plants that have seeded themselves. There is turf grass throughout the cemetery, which is well established in some areas and less so in others, particularly where there is a heavy tree cover.

Burial Hill retains most of the landscape character associated with an old New England burial ground in its topography, spatial organization and circulation system. There have been changes over the years but most of these have occurred incrementally as the burial ground has expanded to accommodate new burials. The most dramatic changes have been the construction of the new gates and steps at the main entrance in the 1890s and the larger number of mature trees, which have given the burial ground a more park-like appearance than it initially had (photos 4 and 5).

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<sup>1</sup> Features listed in boldface type are listed in the district data sheet that accompanies this nomination.

## Buildings and Structures

The **perimeter wall** (photo 6), which dates mostly to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was built in stages as the burial ground evolved, partially as a retaining wall to support the steep slopes of the burial ground, which is at a higher elevation than the surrounding area, and partially to provide a more finished edge between the burial ground and its surroundings. The perimeter wall extends north along School Street from the main entrance as a roughly 3' tall random rough-cut granite block retaining wall to the corner of South Russell Street and then west along South Russell Street to a former schoolyard that is now a parking lot. Segments of the wall along the northern edge of the burial ground vary in their construction, indicating that they probably were associated with earlier uses of the area. The western wall is a 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete retaining wall that is not visible from the burial ground. The section of wall that extends along the northern edge of Church Street, forms the southern boundary of the burial ground. It is more than 6' tall and is built of large rough-cut granite blocks to support the steep slope and higher elevation of the burial ground. Only the sections of wall directly abutting the burial ground are included in this nomination.

The main entrance is located just off Town Square near the southeast corner of the burial ground. The formal **entrance gates** (photo 7), which were added in the late 1890s, match the Romanesque style of the adjacent First Church (figure 3). The gates, which were designed by landscape gardener Ernest W. Bowditch, consist of two tall pillars of tan seam-faced granite with sandstone trim surmounted by stone balls.<sup>2</sup> The main pillars are flanked by an outwardly curved lower wing wall with shorter pillars with a simpler stone coping at the outer edge. The wing wall, which is about 3' tall, also extends back from the main pillars into the burial ground to create semi-circular spaces on either side of the path as it leads to a set of low pillars at the base of a series of four short flights of steps that lead up into the burial ground.

The **maintenance building** (MHC1348, photo 8) is located on Church Street in the southeastern corner of the burial ground immediately behind the First Church. The town's Annual Reports indicate that the building was completed by 1915 and originally housed the old town hearse, which was no longer actively used but was considered an interesting artifact. The 1885 and 1891 town atlases show a small structure just west of the present maintenance building, which may have been the original hearse house or a tool shed. The current building is used for storage of maintenance equipment. It is approximately 24' x 24' with a 2 by 2 bay, 1 story, shallow gable roof building set into a small slope with a full-height raised story on its rear elevation. This concrete-over-wood building sits on a concrete foundation and has overhanging eaves and a wood gutter. The primary entrance is located on the north facade and consists of a metal security door. To the west of this is a wider entrance that consists of a pair of 16-light doors, each with two vertical, recessed panels below. There is a modern metal garage door behind the original doors. Windows are 6/6 double-hung sash with simple wood surrounds.

The original brick powder house, located in the northwest corner of the burial ground, was built in 1770 to provide safe storage for Plymouth's arms and ammunition, which were kept there into the 19th century. At some point it was sheathed in wood and shingled, perhaps to avoid repointing. The old powder house was demolished about 1880 because it had become deteriorated. The current **powder house** (MHC 928, photo 9) was constructed on the site of the earlier powder house in 1920 as part of the town's tercentenary activities. It was based on the original design but was made of heavier construction to ensure its longevity. It is a one-story, octagonal, hipped-roof, brick structure with a corbelled cornice. It measures approximately 6' high, 13' across and sits on a concrete foundation. The walls are 6" thick and constructed of late 18<sup>th</sup> century brick. The single entrance, located on the southeastern elevation, consists of a metal door beneath a metal grille. A bronze plaque to the north of the entrance bears the inscription: *"The Old Powder House was built here in 1770. This building erected in 1920 is dedicated to those descendants of the Pilgrims, by birth or by spirit, who helped establish American independence. -- Massachusetts Society of the American Revolution."* The 1920 powder house was built by Burton Wiggin of Lowell. The marble plaque by stone carver William Coye, which was originally on the outside of the old powder house, is now located inside the powder house for protection

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<sup>2</sup> *Old Colony Memorial*, May 15, 1897.

from the elements.

There are two groups of hillside tombs and one individual tomb at Burial Hill. The **brick-faced tombs** behind the First Church pre-date 1870 as they are visible in a photograph taken from the steeple of the Church of the Pilgrimage around that time (figure 2), when they appear to have been painted white. The tombs consist of a brick retaining wall roughly 8' tall and 30' long that extends north from the maintenance building parallel to the rear wall of the First Church. Plaques in the wall denote the names of families interred there. The six **granite-faced tombs** are built into the hillside north of the main entrance along School Street. These also appear to be new in a c. 1870 photo, with granite block fronts and a solid roof. These tombs are now heavily overgrown with vegetation. The only single tomb is the granite-faced **Paty tomb** (photo 10), built into the hillside behind the First Church just west of the brick-faced tombs. The face is constructed of large granite blocks and has a metal security door.

## Headstones

Burial Hill has an unusually rich and well-documented collection of gravestones dating from 1681 to 1957. This section addresses headstones that serve as primary burial markers. Memorials, which are not necessarily associated with burials, are discussed in the next section. There are presently about 2,269 burial markers, the majority of which were made before 1850. Of these, approximately 1,400 are slate, sandstone or schist – the primary materials for gravestones before 1820, while about 750 were carved from marble or granite. Resident Plymouth carvers were responsible for roughly 950 of the 1,400 earlier stones that have survived. Recent research by James Blachowicz indicates that five workshops or carvers were the most prolific at Burial Hill: John Tribble Workshop (524), Lemuel Savery (153), Nathaniel Holmes (104), Amaziah Harlow, Jr. (70) and William Coye (36).<sup>3</sup> The discussion of headstones is organized into five main periods.

### **Early Headstones (1680 - 1720)**

There are most likely earlier unmarked burials on Burial Hill, but the oldest extant headstones date to the 1680s. There are currently four 17<sup>th</sup> century headstones, which are in fairly good condition and have been enclosed in granite surrounds for protection. Gravestone experts initially thought these early stones came from England, but more recent scholarship indicates that they were from the Boston area, which developed a tradition of skilled gravestone carving in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest headstones at Burial Hill were typically about 2' tall and made of gray or purplish slate. They were squat and thick with rounded tympanums flanked by high rounded shoulders. There was typically a winged head in the tympanum. Initially these were skull-like figures with large oval eyes, some with triangular noses and large teeth. Later they became more life-like, reflecting a more optimistic view of death. Abstract floral motifs were almost always used in the side borders. The early lettering was fairly rough compared with later headstones. All of the 17<sup>th</sup> century stones fit this pattern.

The headstones of **Edward Gray** (d. 1681) and **William Crowe** (d. 1683/4) are both small and fairly crude examples of this style. The **Hannah Clark** (d. 1687) headstone shows a refinement of the earlier two with clearly articulated winged skull. The **Thomas Clark** (d. 1697) headstone is a slightly later and is a more refined version of the Hannah Clark stone, with life-like head rather than skull, and shield-shaped tablet framed by a raised border. While few of the early headstones at Burial Hill have been attributed to specific carvers, the Farber Gravestone Collection lists the Thomas Clark headstone as the work of Boston-based carvers, Faces with Wings (1680-1699).

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<sup>3</sup> James Blachowicz, *From Slate to Marble 1770-1870: Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts*. (Evanston, IL: Graver Press, 2006), 16.

Slightly later is the **Francis LeBarran** (d. 1704) headstone of purple slate. The winged head is more three-dimensional and life-like than the earlier ones, with an hourglass above the head. The carving is also more precise and refined. The **Hannah Bartlet** (d. 1710, photo 11) headstone reverts to the older convention of a skull rather than a more life-like figure but includes an hourglass, and the inscription is set in a distinctive heart-shaped tablet. Decorative motifs in the side panels are bolder and more abstract. The Farbers attribute this to Skulls and Skeletons (1700-1719).

The **Thomas Cushman** (d. 1691) headstone was carved ca. 1716, 25 years after his death. It is of purple slate and has been placed in a gray slate surround for protection. It is larger than most of the other stones of the period, befitting a man of Cushman's stature as a long-term elder of the Plymouth colony, and was funded by the First Church in recognition of Cushman's service to the congregation. The Cushman stone was moved to its present location when the adjacent obelisk, which honors Thomas Cushman, as well as his wife Mary Allerton Cushman (d. 1699), was erected in 1858.

### ***Stones from Boston and South Shore Communities (1720 - 1770)***

Most of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century headstones at Burial Hill came from Boston or from nearby Kingston, which had resident carvers before Plymouth. The carving of this period was generally more skilled and more elaborate than the previous period. The imagery is more complex and the iconography more optimistic, as thinking moved away from the grim Pilgrim ideas of death. During this period the styles of individual carvers or workshops became more clearly identifiable.

The headstone for **Nathaniel Jackson** (d. 1743), which has been attributed to carver William Codner, illustrates both the influence of the earlier style as well as new trends. By this time gravestones were made from better quality slate and were typically bigger than the early stones. The main block is larger in relation to the shoulders, which have been reduced a narrow band on either side. The inscription panel has become more prominent and the lettering is more skilled. The greatest change is the imagery in the tympanum, which is more elaborate and eclectic, with skulls, cherubs, skeletons, scythes, tombs, hourglasses and vines used either individually or in combination.

Soul effigies and cherubs were common motifs in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The headstone for **Isaac Lothrop** (d. 1743, photo 12) is a well-carved three-dimensional face with well-articulated wings and detailed carving in the shoulders. It is not literally a portrait but its most distinctive feature is a well-carved, three-dimensional head with sculpted hair, face and wings.

The **Thomas Faunce** (d. 1746) headstone, possibly carved by Henry Emmes, shows refinement in the text, border and shoulders, with even greater elaboration in the tall tympanum. The central motif is a grim reaper with scythe sitting on an hourglass and a pair of wings rising from beneath the figure. Above the figure is a large scallop shell and in the sides of the tympanum are swirling vine-like features, which are also reflected in the shoulders.

Cherubs, which are often a symbol of death at a young age, feature prominently in the headstone for the three **Goddard children** (photo 13) who died between 1762 and 1767. This small stone, credited to the Savery workshop, includes three cherubs, each with a distinct design. The **Hannah Cooper** (d. 1763) headstone has a distinctive pattern of hair extending out from the head. This type of stone is sometimes called a Medusa stone because it has the "electric hair", which is characteristic of the early work of the Soule family of carvers, who were prominent from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> in eastern and central Massachusetts.

The **Perez Tilson** (d. 1767) headstone, probably carved by Ebenezer Soule, Sr., is noteworthy primarily for the expressiveness of the winged face. The **Patience Watson** (d. 1767, photo 14) headstone was probably carved by William Codner. The general shape of the stone, decorative motifs and lettering are similar to the stones that preceded it. What distinguishes it from others of its period is that it is an early example of a portrait

stone, which is more three-dimensional than other stones of the period and depicts an individual rather than a generic figure.

### ***Plymouth Carvers in the Federal Period (1770 - 1800)***

Around the time of the American Revolution, several developments influenced the gravestone art at Burial Hill. The first was changing preferences in iconography, as late 18<sup>th</sup> century winged faces yielded to the more secular, neoclassical symbolism. The second was the arrival of resident gravestone carvers in Plymouth, initially William Coye, who was soon followed by others who worked in his studio and later started their own studios.

Four of the six examples from this period were carved by William Coye. They illustrate the wide range of carving styles within a single studio and how Coye's style evolved over time. The **Nathaniel Goodwin** (d. 1771) headstone is an early Coye stone, carved on sandstone, which bears little similarity to his later work. Rather than the dominant images typically found in the tympanums of other stones of this period, this is primarily an abstract composition of floral patterns with a relatively small face. The shape of the stone is also narrower than most of the earlier stones at Burial Hill. Attributions of gravestones are always difficult, but this one is probated to William Coye.

The **William Rider** (d. 1772) headstone, also carved by Coye, is small portrait stone with the figure set in an oval panel in the tympanum, which also includes a tomb and a scroll. There are no side blocks and there is an elaborate floral pattern in the sides of the tympanum, a somewhat unusual form. The **Susanna Attwood** (d. 1785) headstone has a face framed by elaborately carved wings in a large tympanum. The inscription reads "Died with her infant in her arms." The **Betsy Shaw** (d. 1795, photo 15) headstone has multiple motifs of tomb, tree, winged figure and urn and is a good example of Coye's later style.

Two examples illustrate the work of other major Plymouth carvers of the period. The **Captain Thomas Davis** (d. 1785) headstone is an example of the mature work of Lemuel Savery, who was active in Plymouth in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and is particularly known for his cherubs. Distinctive features of this stone are the stippling in the background of the tympanum and the columns in side panels, an early example of the use of classical motifs in gravestone art. This stone is probated to Savery. The final example from this period is the **George Thomson** (d. 1798, photo 16) headstone of gray slate with a large urn in the tympanum. This early example of a simple, elegant urn is credited to Amaziah Harlow Jr.

### ***Classicism and Early Use of Marble (1800 - 1850)***

Headstones from this period are typically found around the perimeter of the burial ground, particularly the northern and western edges. Five examples illustrate the prevalence of classical motifs and the wide variety of carving styles and techniques in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The obelisk shape, with tapered (rather than vertical) sides and pointed top, is a distinct style that that was popular at Burial Hill and elsewhere in southeastern Massachusetts during this period.

The **Fanny Crombie** (d. 1804) headstone is a good example of the obelisk silhouette. It is an expressive portrait stone for a young girl who died at age 8. Her face is framed by parted curtains, another classical motif. The portrait has been attributed to William Coye, who signed the stone at the base, but the lettering has been attributed to Nathaniel Holmes. This is a good example of the pitfalls of gravestone attribution.

The **Lewis Goodwin** (d. 1809) headstone is an early example of classical influences in its squat obelisk silhouette and its imagery. The focal feature is an oval raised tablet, with a simple, stylized willow tree arching over it. The "succulent" willow is a characteristic of the work of stone carver John Tribble. Another John Tribble stone from this period is the **Sarah Jackson** (d. 1811) headstone. Although it is only two years later than the Lewis Goodwin stone, it is a more fully realized use of classical form and imagery with its taller, narrower

silhouette, small winged faced at the top, decorative swags and stippling. John Tribble reportedly carved this stone as a match for the adjacent headstone for Thomas Jackson, which was carved by Lemuel Savery.

The **Captain John Virgin** (d. 1814) headstone is another John Tribble stone, made only a few years later, but in a very different style. It has a rectangular tablet with a raised oval panel where the inscription is located, with characteristic stippling around the outside. Unlike the other stones of this period, which do not have a separate tympanum, this one is clearly separated from the main block of the headstone and has a portrait set in a small oval panel.

The **Sally C. Robbins** (d. 1828) headstone of purple slate is a full expression of early Victorian mourning motifs. Primary elements are an urn with an eternal flame, a well-articulated willow, and a classically dressed grieving woman. The stone was carved by William Hudson Soule, one of many carvers from the Soule family.

### ***Marble, Granite and Machine-made Stones (1850 - Present)***

By mid-nineteenth century, marble was the preferred material for gravestones because it was softer and easier to work with. The design of the early marble headstones were much like the slate stones of the period, but because the stone was softer they could be carved into more elaborate forms. After the 1850s, marble headstones were increasingly made in standard patterns and components rather than custom carving. The most popular imagery of the period was willows and urns, a reflection of the classicism of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century cemetery movement. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century polished granite became the preferred material for gravestones because of its greater durability. There were very few burials in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last was the **Anna Klingenhagen** (d. 1957), whose headstone is a flat granite marker.

## **MONUMENTS**

One of the earliest monuments at Burial Hill was the **William Bradford monument**, erected in 1835 to honor Governor William Bradford (d. 1657), who came to Plymouth on the Mayflower in 1621 and served as governor of the Plymouth colony for many years. The 8' marble obelisk on granite and marble base is one of the most popular features at Old Burial Hill. The inscription reads in part "Under this stone rest the ashes of Willim (sic) Bradford, a zealous puritan & sincere Christian. . ." While not all scholars agree, nineteenth century historian James Thacher quotes several sources that indicate Bradford was interred at Burial Hill.

The **Cushman monument** (photo 17) honors Robert Cushman (d. 1625 in England), his son Thomas (d. 1691) and Thomas's wife Mary Allerton Cushman (d. 1699), the last surviving passenger of the Mayflower. Robert was instrumental in arranging the voyage of the Mayflower and Thomas served as ruling elder of the Plymouth colony for 43 years. The monument, which was erected by Cushman descendants in 1858, is a 25' obelisk of Quincy granite. It is set on a multi-tiered base that includes four inscriptions on bronze panels. There is an integral fence enclosing the lot, which has granite curbing and posts, and metal rails. The Cushman monument is the tallest monument at Old Burial Hill and is located near the summit. It was much more visible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when there were fewer trees on the hill. Adjacent to the monument is the original slate headstone for Thomas Cushman, which is discussed above under early headstones.

Near the top of the hill is the **John Howland** (d. 1672/3) **monument**. It is a well-carved purple slate monument erected in 1897. It has an image of a ship in full sail at the top with a scallop shell on either side. John Howland died about a decade before the burial ground was established, so it is uncertain whether he was actually interred at Burial Hill. William T. Davis wrote in 1884,

*"Among those supposed to have been buried on the hill is John Howland, who died at his home in Rocky Neck, in 1673, and a few years since a stone was placed by some of his descendants over his supposed grave . . . the only foundation for belief that he was buried on that spot is the presumption that he was buried in the ancient ground, and that his descendants were deposited*

*by the side of their ancestor. It is more probable that he was buried on his estate, where, in the cultivation of its fields, his grave was long since leveled, and all signs of it were obliterated.”<sup>4</sup>*

The **Judson monument**, erected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, honors Adoniram Judson (d. 1850), a Baptist missionary to Burma who died at sea, as well as members of his family, many of whom also lived abroad. The monument, which is prominently located at the head of the main path, consists of a large slab of white marble placed horizontally on six columns resting on stones and enclosed by a white wooden fence.

The **James Warren monument** was erected in 1923 by the Sons of the Revolution to honor James Warren (d. 1808) who was President of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress and paymaster general of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. The monument consists of a low relief bronze bust in granite surround that is located in a family lot that is surrounded by a delicate iron fence. There is also a marble headstone for James Warren in the family lot.

Monuments and memorials also honor events that occurred at Burial Hill. Most of these were erected around the time of the 1920 tercentenary when there was a strong antiquarian interest in Plymouth.

The **Ancient and Honorable Artillery monument** (1921) includes a bronze plaque, iron picket fence and concrete platform built into the hillside. Two historically accurate cannons donated by the British National Artillery Museum have been removed because they were becoming deteriorated after many years outdoors. One cannon is now on display at the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Town Square and the other cannon was returned to England. The monument is located in the vicinity of the original fort.

Alexander Scammell (d. 1781) was a Plymouth schoolteacher who joined the Continental Army, where he became a colonel and adjutant general. He was mortally wounded at the battle of Yorktown. The **Scammell monument**, erected in 1926, is located near School Street on the eastern edge of Burial Hill. It consists of a vertical boulder with a low-relief bronze portrait plaque. The **John Alden house site monument**, which is located north of the main entrance to the burial ground, consists of a bronze plaque on rough boulder. It was erected in 1930. The inscription reads “Site of the House where John Alden lived while in Plymouth”.

Since so little remains from the early years of the Plymouth settlement, monuments and memorials have played a particularly important role at Burial Hill, assuming stature as historic artifacts in their own right. The reconstructed powder house, which is described above under buildings and structures, can also be considered a historic monument. Markers denoting veterans’ graves have been used at Burial Hill since 1914.

## END OF SECTION 7

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<sup>4</sup> William T. Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*. (Boston: A. Williams and Company, Old Corner Bookstore, 1883), 132-134.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Art \_\_\_\_\_
- Exploration and Settlement \_\_\_\_\_
- Landscape Architecture \_\_\_\_\_
- Social History \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1620 - 1957  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

- 1620 Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth \_\_\_\_\_
- 1681 Earliest extant headstone \_\_\_\_\_
- 1957 Last burial \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

See list on next page \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

The period of significance for this nomination extends from 1620 when the Pilgrims first settled in Plymouth to 1957, the date of the last burial.

**Criteria Considerations**

Criteria consideration D applies to Old Burial Hill because it is a cemetery. However, it derives primary significance from its age, its distinctive design features and its association with historic events of national significance.

## DESIGNERS/STONECARVERS

**Note:** This list is based on SpreadsheetDatabaseExcel by James Blachowicz, which is found on the CD that accompanies his book *From Slate to Marble, Gravestone Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts 1770 - 1870*. Blachowicz was able to make carver attributions for nearly 950 stones at Burial Hill. Earlier carver attributions were made by other gravestone experts, but subsequent research has brought many of these into doubt so they are not listed here.

### Partial List of Stone Carvers at Burial Hill

William Bennett  
Davis T Bowker  
Nehemiah Burbank  
William Codner  
William Coye  
Henry Emmes  
Nathaniel Emmes  
Nathaniel Fuller  
George H. Green  
Green & Co.  
Green & Hunt  
Amaziah Harlow, Jr.  
William Harlow Jr.  
Ephraim Holmes Jr.  
Nathaniel Holmes  
Lemuel Savery  
William Hudson Soule  
William Sturgis  
George Thompson  
Hiram Tribble  
John Tribble Workshop  
Bildad Washburn

### Other Designers/Builders

Ernest W. Bowditch	Designer of entrance gates, 1890s
Burton Wiggin	Builder of second powder house, 1920

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## SECTION 8 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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### SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

Burial Hill, located in Plymouth, Massachusetts, derives significance from its age, location and patterns of use from 1620 to the present. It was an integral part of the Plymouth village established by the Mayflower passengers in 1620 and the site of the Pilgrim fort from 1620 to 1676. When the fort was no longer needed for defensive purposes, Burial Hill became Plymouth's primary burial ground and remained an active burial place for nearly 300 years. It has a collection of approximately 2,269 well-preserved headstones and monuments dating from 1681 to 1957. Burial Hill meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local, state and national level.

### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Plymouth, Massachusetts was founded in 1620 by the Pilgrims who arrived from England on the Mayflower. It is the oldest municipality in New England and one of the oldest in the United States. As one of the country's first European settlements, Plymouth is central to our national history and identity. Burial Hill is a rare surviving link to the early years of the community, a strong physical presence that has borne witness to nearly 400 years of American history.

Burial Hill meets Criterion A for its associations with the broad patterns of history, specifically exploration and settlement, as well as the rich social history conveyed by the headstones and monuments. It meets Criterion C as the repository of an outstanding collection of funerary art. There is presently insufficient documentation to make a case for Criterion D, but Burial Hill may also have potential to yield archeological information regarding life in the early Plymouth colony, as well as the earlier Wampanag occupation of the site. Burial Hill meets Criteria Consideration C as a cemetery associated with the Plymouth colony and the burial place of some of the nation's earliest European settlers. The period of significance is from 1620 to 1957, the date of the last burial. Burial Hill has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century historian Frank H. Perkins provided his perspective on significance:

*"No spot in Plymouth is so interesting to the antiquary as Burial Hill. Here are the sites of the Pilgrims' fort and watchtower. Here sleep the early settlers of the colony, the heroes of the Revolution and of our later wars, and the men who went "down to the sea in ships" and braved dangers, in the days of Plymouth's maritime glory. Here are to be seen the rude symbols of the sculptor's art and the crude effusions of the elegiac poet."*<sup>5</sup>

### Criterion A: Broad Patterns of History

#### ***Exploration and Settlement***

Burial Hill is a rare surviving witness to events that extend back even before the arrival of the Pilgrims to the time when the Wampanoag village of Patuxet had a population of nearly 2,000. (note: archeological section to be added by MHC will be better able to support this aspect of significance)

Burial Hill is nationally significant for its association with the settlement and early years of the Plymouth colony, the first permanent European settlement in New England. The early history of the colony is one of the most significant and compelling events in the history of the United States. Nearly 400 years after the arrival of the Pilgrims, there are few visible reminders of the early settlers, other than the natural features such as the harbor and Town Brook that drew them to the area, and Burial Hill, which remains the most tangible artifact of the

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<sup>5</sup> Frank H. Perkins, *Handbook of Old Burial Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Its History, Its Famous Dead and Its Epitaphs*. (Plymouth, MA: AS Burbank, 1896), 5.

early years of the colony. Remnant features that are still extant bear a special place in American history, a powerful authenticity and direct physical link with the past.

Burial Hill is the most direct connection to the Pilgrim era, a powerful presence that evokes a strong sense of place. It was here that the Pilgrim fort was built looking down on the town square. In the early years of the community the fort was the largest indoor space so it served multiple functions as a place of refuge in case of attack; as a place of worship for the community and as a town hall where civic matters were discussed and the future of the colony was shaped. The steep uneven hill that rises above the village gives physical presence to the rituals of the Pilgrim society so often described in literature or portrayed in sketches, such as the 19<sup>th</sup> century sketch of the Pilgrims marching up the hill to attend religious services in the multi-purpose fort (figure 4).

While the fort and the palisade that surrounded it were torn down in 1676, there was evidence of the fort and related structures into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Small oval signposts still mark the location of the fort and the brick watch tower located nearby. Based on map overlays prepared by the Plymouth Planning Department, it is clear that the fort and watch tower were located within the area that is now Burial Hill. Additional features, including several of the Pilgrim houses, may also have been located on Burial Hill.

### ***Social History***

Burial Hill is the setting and context for the rich social history conveyed by the headstones, monuments and other artifacts found in the burial ground. The gravestone art, iconography and epitaphs provide a rich story about life in the community, whether it be a single headstone that reveals details about a person or family, or the collective wisdom gleaned from all the burial markers at Burial Hill.

The desire for freedom of religion was central the decision of the Pilgrims to come to North America. The strict Puritan beliefs were a defining feature of the early Plymouth community and shaped all aspects of life, from daily routines to religious services to the civic structure of the colony. These beliefs were reflected in the austere lives lived by the Pilgrims, as well as in the art and iconography of the gravestones.

Historians have placed special emphasis on the early headstones at Burial Hill, most of which are in good condition despite their age. Edward Gray (d. 1681), whose headstone is the oldest at Burial Hill, was a merchant who became one of the richest men in the Plymouth colony. He also served as deputy to the General Court from Plymouth. His wealth may be one reason that he was able to purchase a headstone, as they were expensive in the 1680s and had to be ordered from Boston or another distant town. The second oldest headstone is that of William Crowe (d. 1683/4), who came to Plymouth from Ireland and became a merchant in Plymouth. Next was Hannah Clark (d. 1687), who died at age 29. Thomas Clark (d. 1697), who came to Plymouth from England in 1623, was 98 when he died.

Thomas Cushman (d. 1691) was ruling elder of the First Church in Plymouth for 43 years. He was married to Mary Allerton Cushman (d. 1699), the last surviving Mayflower passenger. Thomas Cushman and his father Robert, who was instrumental in arranging the voyage of the Mayflower, are also commemorated by a tall granite obelisk erected in 1885.

Gravestones also reveal poignant details about health in the community. One of the major themes reflected at Burial Hill is the high level of infant mortality, often associated with maternal deaths as well. However, those who survived past infancy often lived into old age, including many who lived into their late 90s. Among the diseases listed on the headstones at Burial Hill are: consumption, malignant fever, smallpox, typhus and "lingering distressing illness". Epidemics were common, such as the typhus epidemic of 1802, which killed 82 people. Other major causes of death included "lost at sea" and shipwreck. Several people were struck by lightning.

The headstones at Burial Hill also record the occupations of numerous Plymouth residents, mostly men, as women didn't work outside the house. Many were employed in maritime related occupations, because of Plymouth's deep harbor and extensive trading connections throughout the world. It was a hazardous occupation and many died at sea. The loss of the Brig Arnold was the most serious maritime accident to occur in Plymouth. An obelisk at Burial Hill commemorates the 72 seamen who perished on the Arnold, which was in Plymouth Harbor during the storm of December 26-28, 1778. Sixty of the men were interred at Burial Hill. Plymouth sailors traveled widely and many died in far-flung places around the world, just as sailors from around the world are interred at Burial Hill.

Ministers also had a prominent place in the community as they were among the best-educated citizens and often functioned as community leaders. Rev. Chandler Robbins (d. 1799) was minister of the First Parish from 1760 to 1799. Rev. James Kendall, D.D. (d. 1859), who was minister of the First Parish for sixty years, was ordained in 1800 and died at the age of 89. The Judson monument, erected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, honors Adoniram Judson (d. 1850), a Baptist missionary to Burma who died at sea.

From the time that Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth they were active soldiers, described as having a rifle in one hand and a prayer book in the other. Constructing the fortifications on Burial Hill was one of the first actions of the Plymouth colony, which was described in detail by early residents and visitors. The fort and watch tower were important features of the early community that were built directly on Burial Hill. As Burial Hill is also the most undisturbed place in downtown Plymouth, the section of Burial Hill where the fort and watch tower were located may have potential to yield archeological evidence about the early defense of the Plymouth community.

The early military history of Burial Hill is represented by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery monument. It was erected in 1921 as part of the tercentenary activities and is a tangible reminder that Burial Hill was initially used for fortifications. The memorial initially included two cannons donated by the British National Artillery Museum, as well as a bronze plaque, iron picket fence and concrete platform built into the hillside. The cannons have been removed because they were becoming deteriorated after many years outdoors. One is now displayed at the Pilgrim Hall Museum and the other was returned to England. The monument is located in the vicinity of the original fort but its siting was based on local tradition rather than archaeological evidence.

Like many New England towns, Plymouth is fortunate to have an inventory of veterans graves made during the 1930s and also a detailed map showing the location of each veteran's grave, as well as paths, family lots and major monuments (map 3). This remains the best extant map of Burial Hill. The list of veterans, which is published in Robinson's *Burial Hill in the 1990s*, includes 139 extant veterans graves as well as three graves that had previously been recorded but were not found in the Robinson inventory of the 1990s.

Other than the early skirmishes with the Wampanoags, the first record of military service (which is not included in the WPA inventory) was Captain Caleb Cook (d. 1721/2) who served in King Philip's War and was with Captain Church at the battle in which King Philip was killed. His occupation is listed as yeoman and he died of smallpox. His small slate headstone at Burial Hill is in poor condition.

Most Plymouth soldiers served on the American side during the Revolutionary War but some also joined the British forces. There are 79 Revolutionary War veterans interred at Burial Hill. General James Warren (d. 1808) was president of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress and a paymaster general of the Continental Army. In addition to his marble headstone, a bronze monument to Warren was erected at Burial Hill in 1923 by the Sons of the Revolution. Captain Simeon Sampson (d. 1789), the first naval officer commissioned by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, served on the Brigantine Independence. Alexander Scammell (d. 1781) was a Plymouth schoolteacher who joined the Continental Army, where he became a colonel and adjutant general. He was mortally wounded at the Battle of Yorktown. The Scammell monument, erected in 1926, is located near School Street on the eastern edge of Burial Hill, where he had taught school before the war. On

the west side of Burial Hill are the graves of three sons of Dr. William Thomas who served in the Revolution. Dr. James Thacher (d. 1844), who was a surgeon in the American army, later wrote a history of Plymouth.

There are 12 War of 1812 veterans interred at Burial Hill. Additional men from Plymouth served in the war but others were buried elsewhere, including those who served in the Navy and were buried at sea. There are 48 recorded Civil War veterans interred at Burial Hill, a surprising number as by this time there were many newer cemeteries in Plymouth. The information about 19<sup>th</sup> century veterans at Burial Hill is less detailed than that of earlier veterans because the burial monuments of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were plainer and tended to have only basic information. The veterans inventory does not include World War I and World War II veterans, but there would have been few if any, as there were only a handful of burials at Burial Hill after 1900.

These are just a few of the broad patterns revealed by the headstones at Burial Hill. There are a surprisingly large number of children's graves, which have their own unique epitaphs and are typically sentimental and more optimistic about the possibility of an afterlife than those of adults. Women's headstones tend to emphasize their role within the family, although there are a few notable exceptions. One of the most distinguished women interred at Burial Hill was Mercy Otis Warren (d. 1814), a prominent political writer and advocate for American independence. Tabitha Plasket (d. 1807) was a local character whose epitaph reads: ". . . Adieu vain world I have seen enough of thee And I am careless what thou say'st of me Thy smiles I wish not; Nor thy frowns I fear, I am now at rest my head lies quiet here."

## **CRITERION C: ART AND DESIGN**

### **Landscape Architecture**

Burial Hill is one of the oldest and best-preserved burial grounds in New England. Distinctive features of the early burial ground, such as setting, topography, spatial organization and paths remain largely intact. While Burial Hill retains much of its early vernacular character, it also incorporates late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> improvements, such as the entrance gates, improved circulation system and granite perimeter wall that reflect later notions of the burial ground as a more-refined and park-like landscape.

The entrance gates, designed in the late 1890s by Ernest W. Bowditch (1850-1918), are a notable formal element built in association with the 1899 First Church at the southeast corner of the burial ground. This was an unusual project for Bowditch, who is better known as a surveyor and landscape designer.<sup>6</sup> The project was funded by a private donation of \$10,000. It is part of the Colonial revival efforts that began throughout Plymouth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and reached a peak at the time of the 1920 tercentenary of the landing of the Mayflower.

Because of its age and its historical associations with the Plymouth colony, Burial Hill was an early leader in cemetery preservation and interpretation. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were few new burials but there was growing interest in Burial Hill as a surviving icon of the Pilgrim era and an increasingly popular tourist destination. Paths were improved to accommodate the growing number of tourists; trees were allowed to grow up, creating a more park-like appearance; signage was increased and initial stone conservation work was undertaken, placing metal hoods over the oldest and most fragile gravestones. Changes were also made around the perimeter with the removal of small dilapidated buildings and sheds, and the regrading of the slopes along School and South Russell Streets to create views into the burial ground and a smooth grassy slope leading up to it.

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<sup>6</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), pages 32-35.

## Collection of Funerary Art

The headstones and monuments at Burial Hill are noteworthy for their age, size, the skill and sophistication of the carving, and the good condition of the stones. They reflect multiple artistic and social traditions, extending over nearly three centuries and include the work of many New England carvers, including a large number from Plymouth. Thanks to extensive scholarship by many people dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, much of Burial Hill's collection can be attributed to specific carvers. Most recently, James Blachowicz has expanded and refined the base of knowledge about Burial Hill, challenging some assumptions of earlier researchers and using more sophisticated photographic techniques to better document extant stones and to make more accurate attributions about carvers. He provides the most concise summary of the collection.

*“Benjamin Drew’s 1894 book of inscriptions describes 2160 gravemarkers on Burial Hill in Plymouth, about 140 of which have not survived the hundred years since Drew’s survey. Of this total, approximately 1400 were made of slate, sandstone or schist – the primary materials for gravestones carved before about 1820 – while 750 were carved from marble or granite – the preferred material for markers late on.”<sup>7</sup>*

The primary focus of this analysis of significance is on the roughly 1,400 extant slate, sandstone and schist headstones and monuments erected at Burial Hill between 1681 and 1820. According to Blachowicz, approximately 950 of these were carved by resident Plymouth carvers, providing a remarkable collection of stones created by a small group of carvers over a roughly 140 year period when New England gravestone carving was in its prime. The approximately 750 marble and granite headstones, which were carved later, convey important social information but are less artistically significant.

### Carvers at Burial Hill

There is relatively little information about the earliest stones and carvers at Burial Hill. This is in part due to the fact that the early stones were not made in the Plymouth area, making them harder to trace. Some researchers have connected similarities in design to carvers’ signature styles.

Two early gravestone researchers, Daniel and Jessie Lie Farber, who worked at Burial Hill in the 1980s, made attributions to early carvers such as the Thomas Clark (d. 1691) headstone, which they attribute to “Faces with Wings” (1680-1699); the Francis LeBarran (d. 1704) headstone, which they attribute to carver Nathaniel Fuller; the Hannah Bartlet (d. 1710) headstone, which they attribute to Skulls/Skeletons (1700-1710) and the Nathaniel Jackson (d. 1743) headstone, which they attribute to Nathaniel Emmes. However, many of these early attributions have been challenged by later researchers who have a larger body of scholarship to draw from.

The most extensive analysis of gravestones at Burial Hill was made by James Blachowicz in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. His detailed research on the period from 1770 to 1850 focuses on a time when resident Plymouth carvers worked in local Plymouth studios and developed clearly defined personal styles. Blachowicz’s findings detail the major figures who established workshops with apprentices, many of whom often went on to establish their own studios. Different studios developed specialties and sometimes even collaborated with each other, thus creating a skilled and complex network of design that lives on at Burial Hill today. The Plymouth carvers and studios whose work is most heavily represented at Burial Hill are described below. They are organized according to the number of stones that each carved, with the most prolific carvers listed first.

The **John Tribble Workshop**, which was active from ca. 1800 to 1861, produced nearly a quarter of the total headstones at Burial Hill. Blachowicz attributes 524 stones at Burial Hill to the Tribble Workshop, as well as 19 that he attributes to Tribble’s apprentice Ephraim Holmes Jr. (1805-1877). John Tribble’s son Winslow Tribble (1810-1860) was also an important apprentice at the firm, although no Burial Hill stones are specifically

<sup>7</sup> Blachowicz, *From Slate to Marble 1770-1870*, p 16.

attributed to him. Some of the marble headstones at Burial Hill may also have been carved by the Tribble workshop but there is no exact count because of the faster weathering process of marble, which leaves the inscriptions less distinct. John Tribble (1782-1862) was born in Plymouth. His prolific career embraces the transition from slate to marble headstones. His shop had multiple employees and reflected the trend towards treating carving as a business rather than an art. Virtually all the firm's carving was for Plymouth residents, although not necessarily at Burial Hill.

**Lemuel Savery** (1757-1797) was the second most prolific carver at Burial Hill, with 154 stones attributed to him. He probably learned his craft from carver William Coye, who married Savery's sister. However, Savery is generally considered more skilled than Coye. Savery's stones reflect a stylistic change from the cherub designs and portrait stones of the 1770s and 1780s to the neoclassical style, including some urn designs in the 1790s. His mid and late cherubs have small scalloped feathers around the face. He was known during his later period for his distinctive life-like cherubs, with eyes set lower than those of other carvers.<sup>8</sup>

**Nathaniel Holmes** (1783-1869) was active in Plymouth from 1783 to 1805. He was very prolific, with a total lifetime output of about 1,500 stones, but only about 100 of these are at Burial Hill. He was initially an apprentice to Amaziah Harlow, and took over Harlow's shop briefly after Harlow's death. Holmes later moved to Cape Cod to become its first resident carver.

**Amaziah Harlow Jr.** (1747-1803) was born in Plymouth and was active as a carver from roughly 1792 until 1802. He initially worked with Coye and eventually became a skilled carver in his own right, producing about 80 stones during his career, 70 of which are at Burial Hill. He used a variety of shapes and like other carvers of his period, he moved towards the distinctive obelisk shape that became popular in Plymouth in the early 1800s. Most of Harlow's headstones include cherubs, and some of his later work included urns. Another characteristic of Harlow's work was the use of mourning draperies or swags as a primary decorative element. Harlow frequently collaborated with Nathaniel Holmes, who was his apprentice and who took over the shop after Harlow's death.

**William Coye** (1750-1816), who came from Rhode Island, arrived in Plymouth in 1770 and is considered the father of the Plymouth carving tradition. He was the town's first resident carver, beginning nearly a century of skilled local carving. During his later years, Coye's output of stones was uneven, with a career total of about 62 headstones, 36 of which are at Burial Hill. Blachowicz summarizes Coye's contributions as distinctive representational designs for tympanum, traditional but well carved cherubs, scene-like compositions on the tympanum, and as teacher and advisor to four subsequent Plymouth carvers. He also suggests that Coye may not have been a full-time carver and may have been more important as mentor than as carver.<sup>9</sup>

Three carvers from nearby Kingston each produced multiple stones at Burial Hill. Ephraim Holmes carved 19 stones between 1827 to 1853; Hiram Tribble carved 13 stones between 1830 and 1858; and Bildad Washburn carved five stones between 1800 and 1810. William Hudson Soule of Plympton, who was part of the large Soule family of carvers, carved four stones at Burial Hill between 1819 and 1839.

After 1850, most of the headstones were made of marble instead of slate and carving had become less of an art and more of a production business, with headstones increasingly machine made rather than hand-carved. A result attributable to this switch was the standardization of many designs. Stones of this period lack the creativity and individuality of the earlier periods and are generally not considered unique or significant. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century, granite, which was much more durable than marble, became the primary material for gravestones.

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<sup>8</sup> Blachowicz, *From Slate to Marble 1770-1870*, 145.

<sup>9</sup> Blachowicz, *From Slate to Marble 1770-1870*, 133.

## SITE HISTORY

### Contact/Settlement Period (1600 - 1680)

By 1600 the Wampanoags were well established in southeastern Massachusetts, with a large settlement at Patuxet (later known as Plymouth) where they had cleared the land, planted corn and built their dwellings. Little is known about what role Burial Hill may have played during that period. Between 1616 and 1619 many of the Wampanoags in southeastern New England, including all at Patuxet, died from an epidemic brought to the area by European traders.

The Mayflower, carrying English colonists, arrived in Plymouth in December 1620. The protected harbor and natural resources associated with the Town Brook provided an ideal place to settle. The land was already cleared because the Wampanoags had occupied it until a few years earlier. The Pilgrims laid out their village just north of Town Brook, with the main street, which is now called Leyden Street, extending west from the harbor. The heart of the settlement was at the western end of Leyden Street in the area known as Town Square, which lies at the southeastern corner of Burial Hill. The western part of the Pilgrim village, including the fort and watch tower, were located in the area that is now Burial Hill.

Half of the residents of the Plymouth colony died during the first year, with many more deaths in the years that followed. The earliest burials occurred at Cole's Hill (NHL 1961) located on Carver Street near Plymouth Harbor. The hill was named for James Cole who owned the land in 1633. There were no headstones associated with these early burials and the Pilgrims deliberately leveled the ground to eliminate all evidence of the graves because they did not want the Wampanoags to know how many of their group had died. Over the years, human remains have been found in the area. Since 1921 they have been placed in a sarcophagus that was erected at Cole's Hill by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

Some sources indicate that burials occurred at Cole's Hill until at least 1640. It is unknown where the Plymouth colony buried their dead between 1640 and 1680, but nineteenth century historian William T. Davis offers a plausible suggestion:

*"The most probable theory is that, like Standish and others who were buried on their own estates in unknown graves, the early colonists were buried in private lots, where from neglect or indifference either on the part of their descendants, or of strangers who entered the possession of their lands, their graves have been leveled and their monuments destroyed . . ."*<sup>10</sup>

Defense of their community was a primary concern of the Pilgrims from the beginning. One of their first acts was to build a fort at the west end of Leyden Street on Fort Hill (now Burial Hill) to provide protection against the Wampanoags. The first fort was little more than a wooden platform with cannons on top. The second fort, which was larger and also included a stockade around the fort, was erected in 1622 near the southeast corner of the burial ground. It was described by Dutch explorer Isaac De Rasieres, who visited Plymouth in 1627, as:

*" . . . a large square house with a flat roof, made of thick sawn planks, stayed with oak beams, on the top of which are six cannon, which . . . command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their church."*<sup>11</sup>

The fort was the largest indoor space in the community and an important structure for the Plymouth colony that combined religious, civic and military functions. Initially the perimeter walls included only the immediate surroundings of the fort. A few years later a tall stockade was built around the entire Pilgrim village.

<sup>10</sup> Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, 130-131.

<sup>11</sup> Perkins, *Handbook of Old Burial Hill*, 9.

The fort was repaired and enlarged in 1630-35 and again in 1642. In 1643, a brick watch tower was built nearby.<sup>12</sup> Finally in 1676, at the time of King Philip's War, a larger two-story fort 100' square was built with palisades ten and a half feet high. It had three pieces of ordnance.<sup>13</sup> Once the threat of King Philip's War was over, the fort was torn down and the lumber was sold to William Harlow, who used it to build a house. There are currently interpretive signs in the southeastern part of the burial ground to mark the approximate location of the fort and watch tower, but their location is based on local tradition rather than archaeological documentation.

### **Early Years At Burial Hill (1680 - 1770)**

By 1680 the challenge of day-to-day survival had eased, and life in Plymouth had become more stable. The community had a population of 600 and had established trade with Boston as well as with other southeastern Massachusetts communities. Some accounts indicate that there may have been a few interments at Burial Hill before 1676, but 19<sup>th</sup> century historian William T. Davis, who has provided the most detailed information on the early years of the burial ground, indicates that it was established in 1679. The site already had strong associations for the Pilgrims and their descendants, and was also a powerful visual presence, looming over the town with dramatic views to the harbor and beyond.

The next mention of the hill as a burial place was in 1698, when Chief Justice Sewall, who was holding court in Plymouth, reported in his diary, "I walk out in the morn to see the mill, then turn up to the graves, come down to the meeting-house . . ." <sup>14</sup> There are no descriptions of the burial ground from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but most likely it would have been devoid of trees, with steep irregular topography, a rough appearance and a small group of headstones clustered at the top of the hill.

Visitors assume that the majority of the Pilgrim settlers were interred at Burial Hill, but this is not the case. Most of the early Pilgrims died before Burial Hill was used for interments and the location of their graves is unknown. Some of the early settlers, such as John Howland (d. 1672), are commemorated by monuments at Burial Hill, which were erected in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, these do not necessarily represent burials, which is cause for frequent confusion.

There are four extant 17<sup>th</sup> century headstones at Burial Hill dating from 1681 to 1699. These are among the oldest headstones in New England and the most tangible artifacts of the early Plymouth colony. Nineteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) century historians believed that the earliest stones came from England, although recent scholarship indicates that most were from the Boston area, which had a strong tradition of gravestone carving in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was the Boston carvers who first developed many of the decorative motifs and conventions used by later New England carvers. Between 1720 and 1770 most of the gravestones at Burial Hill continued to come from Boston, with some also from southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. This was an active period for Burial Hill with many examples of skilled stone carving.

### **Burial Hill Matures (1770 - 1850)**

At the time of the Revolutionary War, Plymouth had a population of about 2,600 and remained an active economic and civic center due in part to its busy port. Marine based activities included shipbuilding, fisheries and trade, with small-scale land-based manufacturing in the town center. One of the new industries was the arrival in 1770 of Plymouth's first resident gravestone carver William Coye, who established a studio in Plymouth, beginning nearly a century of skilled local stone carving.

Through the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Burial Hill remained the community's primary burial ground, with the same steep slopes and rough appearance that it had earlier. A brick powder house was built on the west side of the burial

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<sup>12</sup> Kingman, Bradford. *Epitaphs from Burial Hill From 1657 to 1892*. (1892, Reprinted in 1977 by Genealogical Publishing Co), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, 135.

<sup>14</sup> Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, 130.

ground in 1770 to store the town's supply of gunpowder, which was deemed unsafe in private residences. There were periodic reports of vandalism at the burial ground and in 1789 there were references to horses grazing there, a common practice in burial grounds of the period.

Funerals were typically conducted by the sexton, who after 1802 was generally selected by the town. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the long-term sexton was Clement Bates, who assumed the position in 1831 and held it until 1883. He died two years later at age 95. The fact that he had responsibility for both religious functions - ringing the bell of the First Parish Church - and secular - maintaining the burial ground and burying the dead - is a reflection of the close relationship between church and state. Perkins describes his role:

*"His duties have been to ring the church bells daily and to bury the dead. And it is said that he has buried 3250 persons, equal to about one-half the present population of the town. He rang the bell four times a day, beside those for church services on the Sabbath, for funerals and for fire alarms for fifty-two years, with out a failure and only two mistakes."*<sup>15</sup>

In 1800 the town of Plymouth began to establish new municipal cemeteries to provide burial space for the rapidly growing population. Many 19<sup>th</sup> century Plymouth residents preferred the convenience of these new cemeteries where there was plenty of burial space and access was more convenient, but some interments continued at Burial Hill.

The early 19<sup>th</sup> century was also a time of change to the surroundings of Burial Hill. The Plymouth County Courthouse was built in 1820 to the northeast and the Church of the Pilgrimage was built at Town Square to the southeast of Burial Hill in 1840 to replace an earlier building.<sup>16</sup>

The bicentennial of the arrival of the pilgrims in 1820 prompted a new awareness of the history of the community. There was still physical evidence of the early years of Burial Hill. James Thacher, author of the first major history of Plymouth, which was published in 1832, indicated that at that time there were no headstones earlier than 1681, although he did allow for the possibility that there might be earlier unmarked graves. At that time there was also clear evidence of the Pilgrim fort. "The whole circuit of the fort is still distinctly visible, a watch house of brick was also built near the fort." He also noted that in May 1832 he planted an elm tree near the center of the fort to mark its location, although later historians lamented that the elm did not last long.<sup>17</sup>

The 1832 map of Plymouth Village (map 4) shows a compact and well-ordered village center with the courthouse to the northeast of Burial Hill and Town Square to the southeast. School Street, with small buildings scattered along its western side adjacent to the burial ground, formed the eastern edge of Burial Hill, and a well-developed Church Street formed the southern edge. The area to the north and west of the burial ground was undeveloped at that time with no defined boundaries. The first illustrative view of Burial Hill was from "The Pilgrim Fathers" by Arthur Hall, published in London in 1853 (figure 1). It depicts a bleak burial ground with a cluster of small headstones and the Bradford obelisk. The First Parish Church is at the far right and Plymouth Harbor is in the distance. There are no paths and the ground is rough and uneven.

### **Recent History (1850 - present)**

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there were relatively few new interments at Burial Hill, as most residents preferred the newer Plymouth cemeteries. Burials that did occur during this period were typically around the perimeter of the burial ground, where family lots had been established so family members could be buried together in perpetuity. Marble headstones, which were initially much like slate ones, began to appear at Burial Hill in the

<sup>15</sup> Perkins, *Handbook of Old Burial Hill*, 308.

<sup>16</sup> Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, 158-59.

<sup>17</sup> James Thacher, *History of the Town of Plymouth, from its First Settlement in 1620, to the Present Time*. (Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1835), 351.

early 1800s. By the latter part of 19<sup>th</sup> century they became more three-dimensional and took advantage of the fact that marble was softer and easier to carve. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the headstones and monuments were increasingly of standard designs and marble gave way to polished granite, which was readily available from nearby quarries and was much more durable.

By this time, there is better documentation of the appearance of the burial ground. A ca. 1870 photograph of Burial Hill (figure 2) shows a wide gravel path leading from Town Square up into the burial ground. The tombs are in place and newly painted; the Cushman monument is faintly visible; there are newly planted trees along the main path and far more lot fences than exist today, many of which are painted white. The 1892 map of the burial ground (map 2) shows the First Parish Church, the tombs and the path system, as well as the location of the most significant monuments, headstones and lots.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Burial Hill had very little frontage except at the main entrance on Town Square because there were small houses and sheds along the School Street and South Russell Street edges of the burial ground. The 1885 and 1891 town atlases show what appears to be a house and a stable near the center of the burial ground, which may have been a caretaker's house and workshop. There was also a small shed behind the First Parish Church. None of these structures are shown on the 1896 or 1901 atlases (maps 3 and 4), indicating that they had probably been removed by that time. The 1896 atlas is the first to delineate the northern boundary of the burial ground along School Street and South Russell Street, which is more clearly shown on the 1903 atlas (map 5).

It is clear that the general character of Burial Hill changed relatively little during its first 200 years, except for the gradual addition of headstones. By the 1890s, the total number was approximately 2,150.<sup>18</sup> While the community's newer burial grounds were neatly laid out and well maintained, Burial Hill retained its rough unkempt appearance with no perimeter fencing and few improvements.

Construction of the new First Parish Church in the 1890s brought a much more finished appearance to the Town Square area where the entrance to the burial ground is located, making the burial ground seem rough and shabby by comparison. In 1897 J.H. Stickney of Baltimore, a vice-president of the Pilgrim Society, made a bequest of \$10,000 for improvements to the burial ground, especially its entrance and the unsightly buildings along School Street. The combination of the new church and the new gate and steps in the 1890s, brought a much more finished appearance to the entry area of the burial ground.

*"A chaste and beautiful plan for improvement of Burial Hill, for which purpose the late J. J. Stickney, of Baltimore, left a bequest of \$10,000, is being prepared by the noted landscape gardener, Mr. Ernest W. Bowditch, of Boston. Surveys have been made, and the sketch shows a substantial gateway, with granite steps as far up the slope as the range of tombs. Thence a succession of terraces with steps will render the ascent of the present winding path to the summit less difficult. It is understood that improvement will also be made on the path to the old Pilgrim fort. Those who have seen the plan commend it highly and say it will give the hill, as seen from Town Square, a very fine appearance."*<sup>19</sup>

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a major theme at Burial Hill was commemoration of the past, especially the early years of the Plymouth colony. This happened in several ways. One was the creation of monuments at Burial Hill, most of which honored early residents of the Plymouth Colony, including some for whom no headstone existed. One of the earliest monuments was the Cushman monument, erected in 1858 to honor Robert and Thomas Cushman. It is still noteworthy as the tallest monument at Burial Hill. Other 19<sup>th</sup> century monuments included those of William Bradford and John Howland.

<sup>18</sup> Perkins, *Handbook of Old Burial Hill*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Old Colony Memorial*, May 15, 1897.

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century historians were also aware that evidence of the past was fading. William T. Davis wrote in 1888:

*“Traces may now be seen of the fort of the Pilgrims on the top of the hill, at what was, in the earliest days, the junction of Leyden and Spring Streets, where its guns could command both. In 1643 a watch-house was built near the site of the fort, and a little beneath the surface fragments of the brick used in its construction may still be found.”*<sup>20</sup>

In the 1890s, there were also multiple efforts to document the history and appearance of Burial Hill. William T. Davis’s, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, published in 1888, provides the most thorough description of the early years of the burial ground. Two books of inscriptions were also published in the 1890s: Bradford Kingman’s *Epitaphs from Burial Hill* in 1892 and Benjamin Drew’s *Burial Hill Plymouth, Massachusetts: Its Monuments and Gravestones*. According to the 1990s survey by Howard and Barbara Robinson, only about 140 of the headstones that existed in the 1890s no longer survive. This is a very small number to be lost over the course of a century. By the 1890s early conservation measures were already in place to protect the oldest stones.

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were very few interments at Burial Hill, as by this time most Plymouth residents preferred the newer Plymouth cemeteries. The last two were Stephen Spooner (d. 1954) and Anna Klingenhagen (d. 1957), both of whom were buried adjacent to family members. Interest in the history of the community continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and peaked at the time of Plymouth’s tercentenary in 1920. The tercentenary was a major event in the history of the town, with numerous projects geared towards physical improvements to the downtown area. The elaborate plans also included a pageant and an international exposition. A major outcome of the tercentenary was the growth of Plymouth as a tourist community, with new parkland in the downtown area and new facilities for visitors.

Tercentenary projects also included improvements at Burial Hill. At the time, there were still a number of small buildings around the School Street and South Russell Street edges of the burial ground. Most of these were not only unsightly, they also blocked views of the burial ground from the downtown area. Most of the perimeter land was acquired; the dilapidated buildings were removed and a low granite block retaining wall was built along the School Street frontage. Other improvements included new signage, upgrading of paths and planting of trees.

Another tercentenary project was the construction of a replica of the powder house on site of original one. In 1920, on the 438th anniversary of the Landing of Columbus, the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution dedicated this replica as their contribution to the tercentenary. The walls of the new building were made thicker than the original to add to the permanence of the structure. The marble tablet that was on the original powder house was relocated inside the replica to protect it.<sup>21</sup>

Since the 1950s there has been a renewed effort at Burial Hill to document and preserve extant headstones and monuments, especially the earliest, many of which are already badly deteriorated. The largest project was placing granite surrounds around the oldest and most fragile stones to slow their deterioration, which occurred in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gradually more parcels around the perimeter were acquired and the granite block retaining wall begun in the 1920s was extended further north along School Street and west along South Russell Street.

## CONTEXT

The earliest New England graveyards reflected the difficulty and austerity of life during the Puritan era. At the time, they were considered leftover or vacant land rather than sacred spaces. Most had only a few graves and

<sup>20</sup> Davis, *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth*, 135.

<sup>21</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, 10/9/1920.

no formal organization. The overall appearance was barren with uneven topography, rough grass, few trees and no attempt at embellishment. These early burial grounds also reflected rigid Puritan beliefs, including anticipation of death, which was a cornerstone of Puritan religious doctrine. Gravestones reminded Puritans that their time on earth was short and that death was inevitable but that they might hope to find resurrection through death.<sup>22</sup>

As communities became more established, burial markers, which had initially been rough fieldstones with crudely carved inscriptions, gradually became more refined. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century there was also a growing tradition of New England gravestone carving that began in Boston and Charlestown and spread throughout New England. Headstones during this period were usually portal shaped, with images of winged skulls and hourglasses. Inscriptions typically read, "Here lies the body of . . .", reflecting the Puritan rejection of bodily resurrection. Sometimes there was a scriptural message to the viewer, such as "Be ye ready." Most early headstones faced west, so the interred would face the east at the time of the resurrection. Another convention was the use of a headstone and a footstone, although many of the footstones no longer exist. A cradle profile was sometimes used to distinguish stones for infants or children.<sup>23</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the design of headstones continued to evolve. The earlier stark winged skulls became more lifelike, including optimistic motifs that became more animated over time. Carvers gradually humanized their designs, replacing teeth with mouths, and substituting hollow eyes for more realistic eyes and wings for hair. They refined resurrection conventions such as crowns, smiles, heart-mouths and face-in-mouths. Later carvers adopted portrait designs, which reflected the secularization of society. As religious views became less constrained, carvers also began to improvise and develop more personal or expressive styles. Plymouth had no resident carvers until 1770 so stones carved before that period were either purchased in Boston or Charlestown or from elsewhere in the south shore area.

After the Revolution, life in Plymouth became increasingly secular as Puritan values relaxed and the community took on a more liberal and tolerant view of life.<sup>24</sup> The steady expansion of the population, as well as the growth of political independence and economic prosperity increased physical and social mobility. This in turn resulted in a society with broader cultural and intellectual horizons, as well as new fashions in gravestone art.

By this time burial grounds were much larger than they had been a century earlier and began to reflect the orderliness that was valued in New England during the Federal period. They were no longer fields with a few scattered graves but were more likely to have rows of headstones and sometimes footstones. Burial ground landscapes remained rough and unadorned, although by this time they might be enclosed by a fieldstone wall or wooden fence. There would have been little if any ornamental planting.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ideas about death and burial continued to change as Unitarianism replaced Puritan beliefs. Attitudes towards death and the afterlife became more ambivalent, reflecting a cautious optimism that became evident in the burial grounds. Faces became more expressive, while winged cherubs and angels offered more positive images. Inscriptions took on a different tone as well. "Dedicated to the memory of" implied a permanent legacy, even though the body was departed.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the overcrowding and unhealthy conditions of urban burial grounds and city churchyards led to the perceived need to remove burial grounds from urban centers. While Boston's problems were the most serious, these issues were also reflected in other cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth, prompting a new approach to the design of burial grounds called the rural cemetery

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<sup>22</sup> Peter Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy: Folk Gravestone Carving in Plymouth County, Massachusetts: 1689-1805*. (University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), 56.

<sup>23</sup> Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy*, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Benes, *The Masks of Orthodoxy*, 25.

movement. Plymouth added a number of new cemeteries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the largest of which was Vine Hills.

Improvements in transportation made it possible to establish cemeteries in areas further removed from crowded living conditions. These locations provided assurance that the dead could be interred permanently and that their remains would not be disturbed. This concept also brought a change in nomenclature. The older term "burial ground" was gradually replaced by the term "cemetery" which comes from the Latin word "to sleep." Central to the concept of the rural cemetery was the idea of family lots where family members could be buried together in perpetuity. This is reflected in some of the perimeter parts of Burial Hill, where family lots were established, some with curbing or fencing.

Many older burial grounds were also upgraded during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, giving them a more park-like appearance with fencing, tree planting and other improvements. One of the most dramatic changes was the addition of vegetation as a normal part of the cemetery landscape. Victorian embellishments such as elaborate entry gates (representing earthly gates to paradise) and fencing were also common.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, grave markers and memorial iconography and materials changed dramatically. Urns, willows and other symbols of solace gradually replaced earlier images that evoked the bleakness of death. Classical symbols, particularly obelisks and columns were popular early in the century. Iconography became less abstract and more sentimental, with figures like lambs and cherubs used for graves of children. Affluent families, such as the Paty, constructed tombs often built into a hillside. Many cemeteries also built receiving tombs to temporarily house the bodies of those who died during the winter months. Hearse houses also became popular during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as cities and towns were becoming so large that the deceased could no longer be carried from their houses to the cemetery.

The materials being used underwent changes as well. Slate and sandstone markers were replaced by marble markers, granite obelisks. The whiteness of the marble markers was less somber than the earlier dark slate and more appropriate for positive feelings about the hereafter. While marble was comparatively easy to carve, its disadvantages became apparent over time. It was not as permanent and carvings began to erode. Improved quarrying technology made granite more readily available towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it soon replaced marble as the preferred stone for grave markers.

**END OF SECTION 8**

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### Maps

1832 Map of Plymouth Village.

1857 Map of the County of Plymouth.

1885 *Sanborn Atlas of Plymouth*.

1891 *Sanborn Atlas of Plymouth*.

1896 *Sanborn Atlas of Plymouth*.

1901 *Sanborn Atlas of Plymouth*.

1903 *Walker Atlas of Plymouth*.

1937 WPA Veterans Graves Project Map (Plymouth Cemetery Department files).

1990s Robinson Maps to accompany *Burial Hill in the 1990s, Plymouth, Massachusetts*. Delineates cemetery sections used in 1998 survey and location individual gravestones, not strictly to scale.

2011 *GIS maps*. Plymouth Planning and Development Department.

### Organizations/ Repositories

Farber Gravestone Collection. American Antiquarian Society. Online collection of New England gravestone photographs. <http://www.davidrumsey.com/farber/>

Plymouth Cemetery Department. (Has original of 1937 veterans map.)

Plymouth Colony Archive Project <http://www.histarch.uiuc.edu/plymouth/index.html>

Plymouth Public Library, Plymouth, MA. Local history room.

Old Burial Hill  
Name of Property

Plymouth MA  
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government Public Library, Cemetery Department  
 University  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 5.12 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description/Boundary Justification**

This nomination includes parcel 19-22, which is 5.12 acres and includes all of the land that was historically considered Burial Hill.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Shary Page Berg, preservation consultant with Betsy Friedberg, MHC NR Director  
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date August 10, 2012  
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470  
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125-3314  
e-mail betsy.friedberg@state.ma.us

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Lee Hartmann, Director of Planning and Development, Certified Local Government Coordinator  
street & number Town Hall, 11 Lincoln Street telephone 508-747-1620 x143  
city or town Plymouth state MA zip code 02360



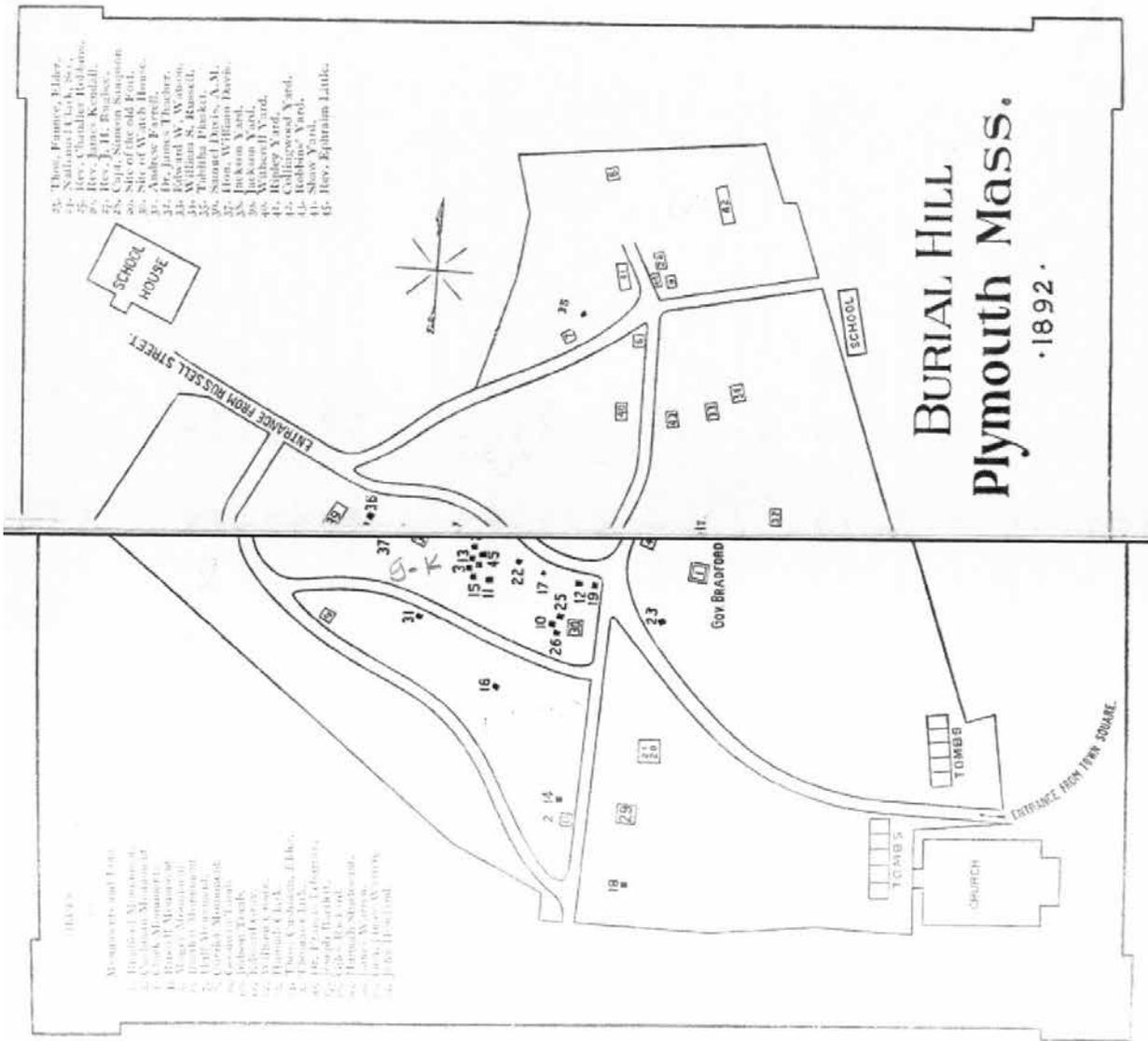
**BURIAL HILL (Parcel 19-22)**

1 inch = 100 feet

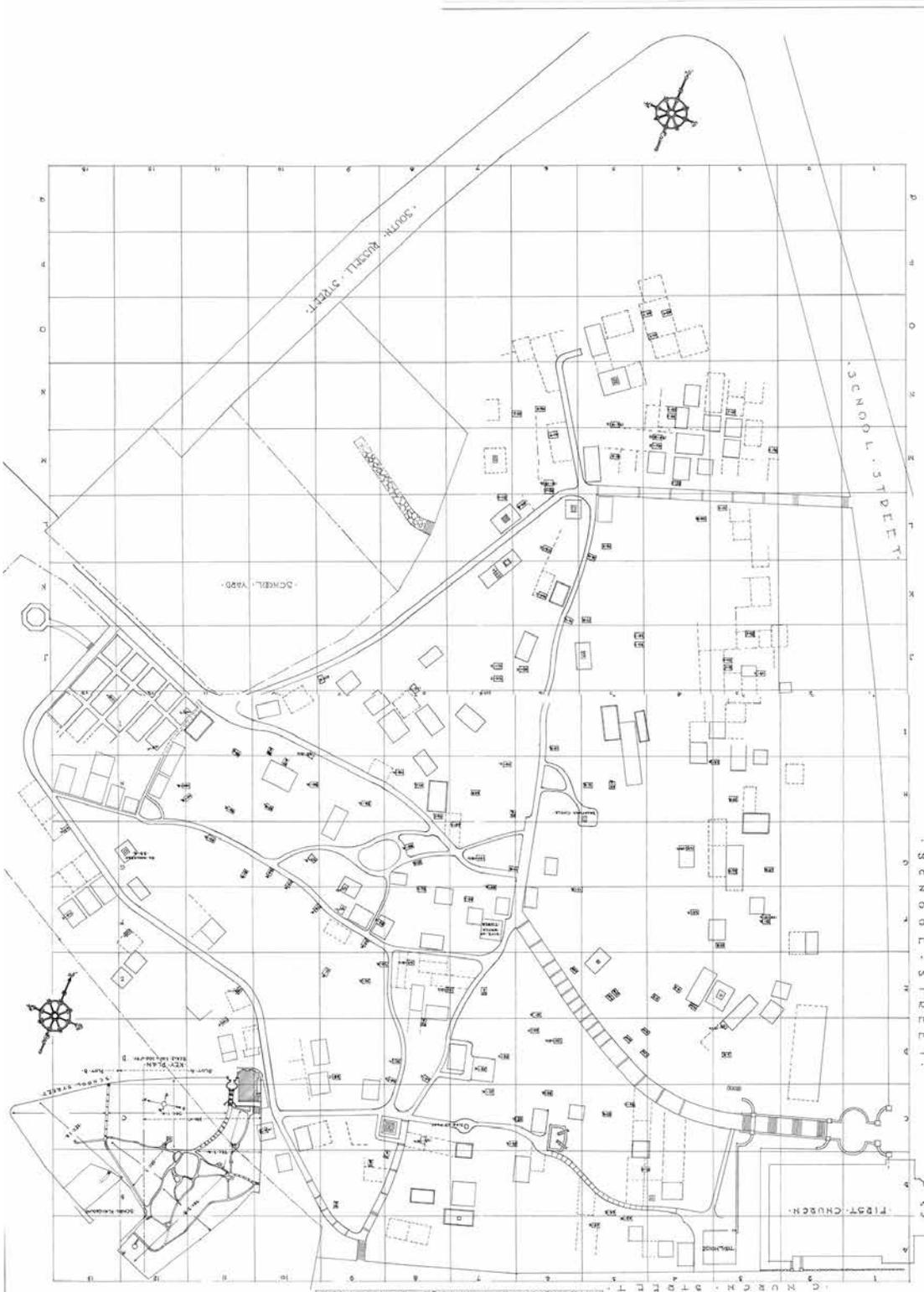


**Plymouth Historic District  
Commission**

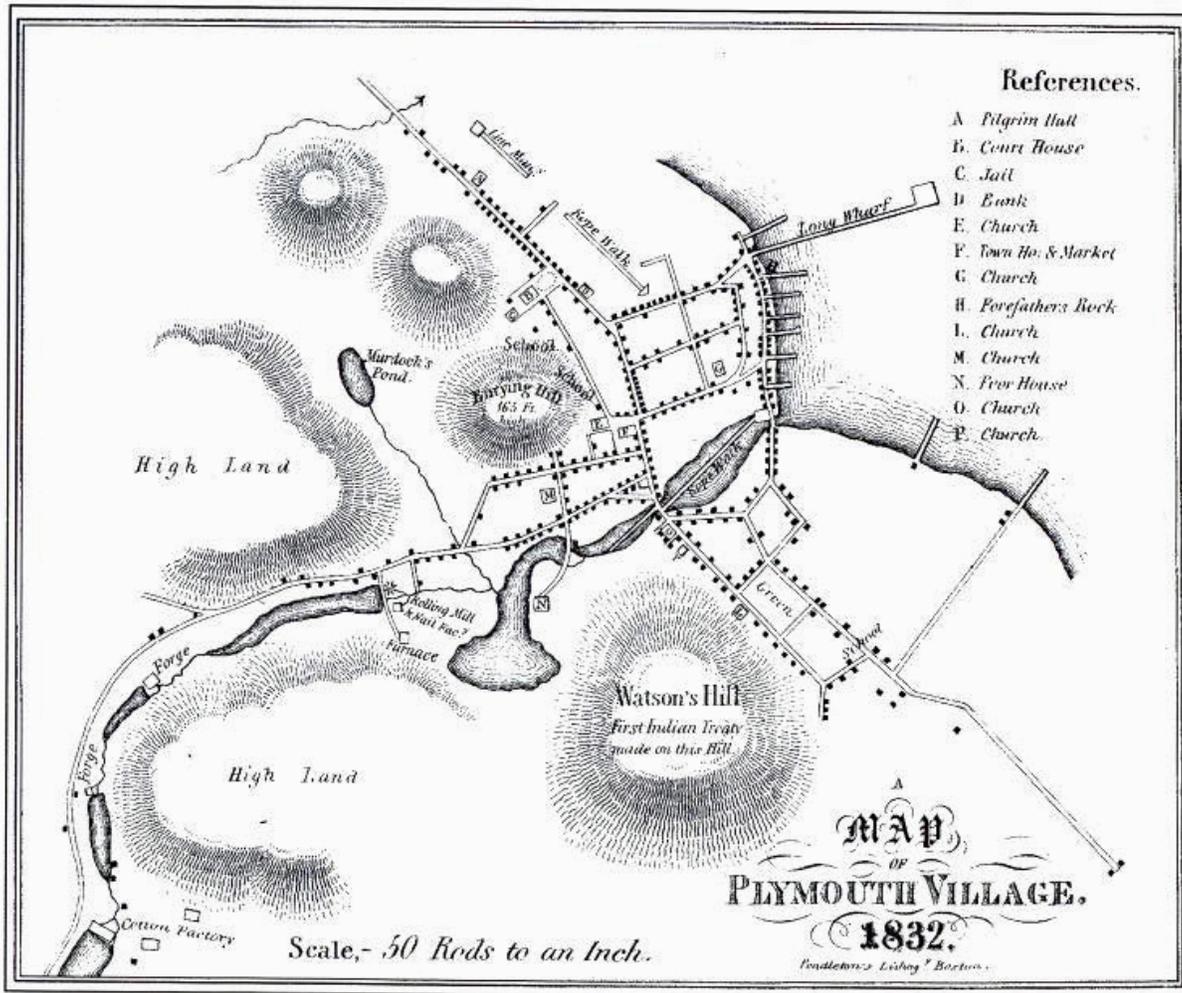
Map 1 - Burial Hill National Register Boundary, Plymouth Planning and Development., 2012.



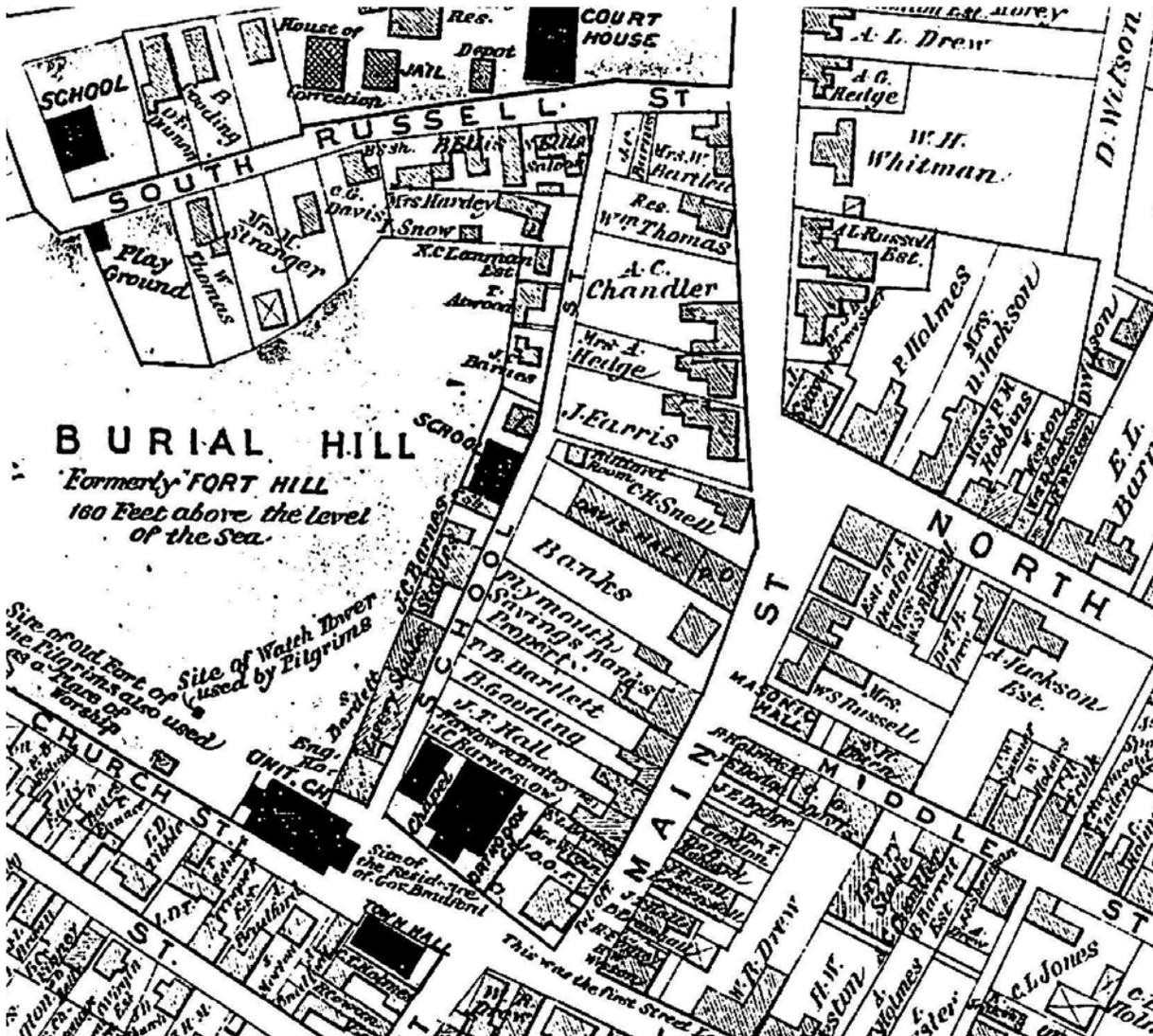
Map 2. 1892 Map of Burial Hill (from *Kingman's Epitaphs of Burial Hill*). Note: this map is deliberately rotated so that it is the same orientation as the other maps.



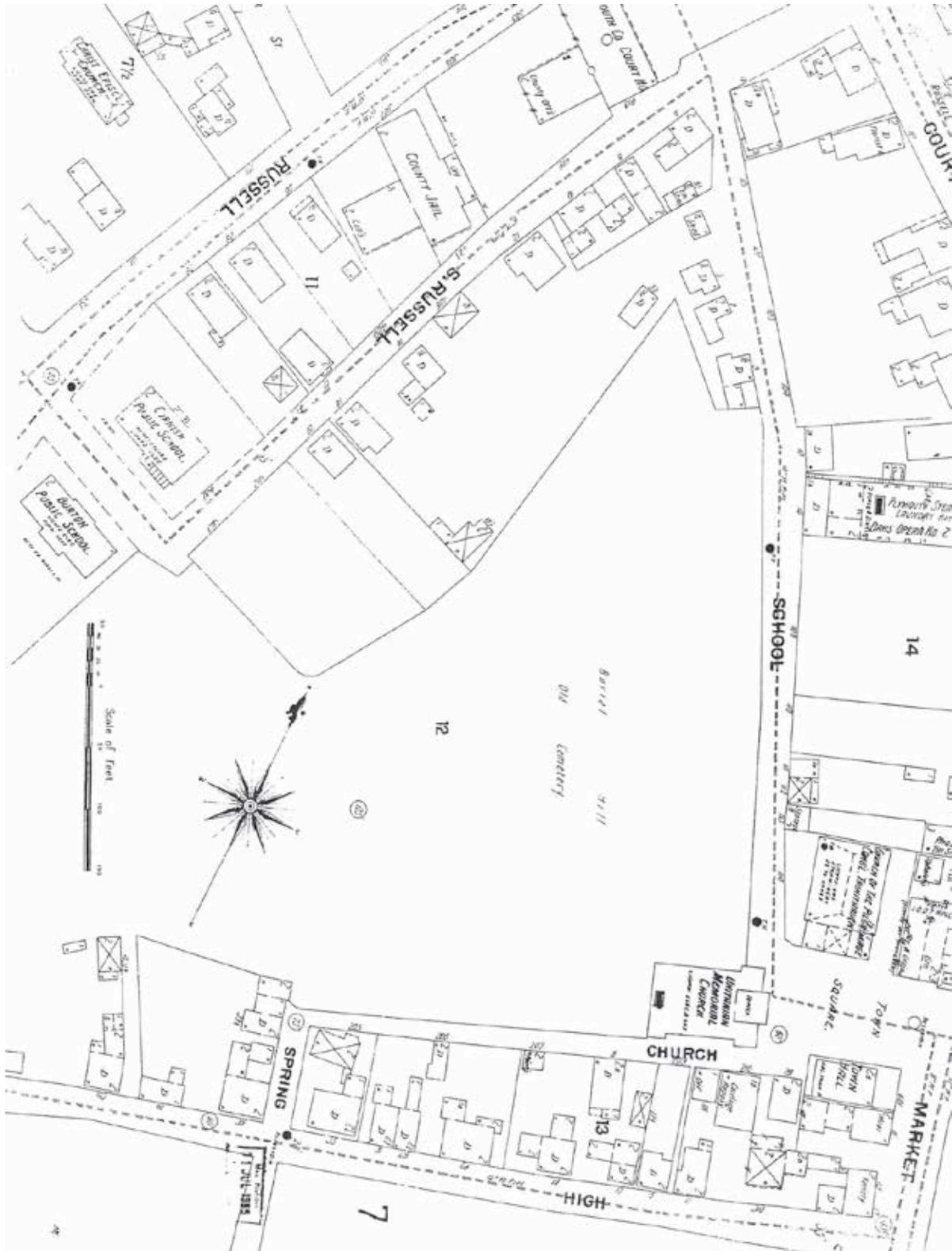
Map 3 - 1937 Map of Veterans Graves, Plymouth Cemetery Department. (Note: this has been rotated to match the orientation of other maps and the veterans names have been removed because they are too small to read at this scale. First Church is in the lower right and School Stret is along the right edge.



Map 4 - 1832 Map of Plymouth Village from Thacher's *History of the Town of Plymouth*, published in 1835. "Burying Hill" is near the center, the harbor is to the right.



Map 5 - Detail of Beers 1870 Atlas of Plymouth. Burial Hill is at left with First Parish Church below it. Note buildings along west side of School Street and south of South Russell Street.



Map 6 - 1903 Atlas showing boundaries of Burial Hill. By this time some of the small buildings along School Street (right side of cemetery) had been removed.



Photo 1 - Section K, view east showing topographic variation. (DSCF0034)



Photo 2 – Steps leading into cemetery, view to the northwest. (DSCN5324)



Photo 3 - Sections G & M, view south towards Church Street. (DSCF0054)



Photo 4 - Section B, view to north. School Street is at far right. (DSCF0123)

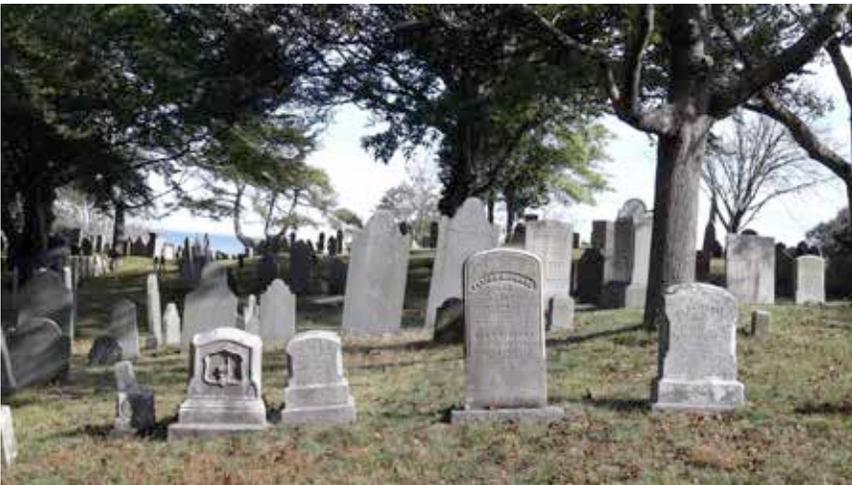


Photo 5 - Section F, view northeast towards harbor. (DSCF0039)

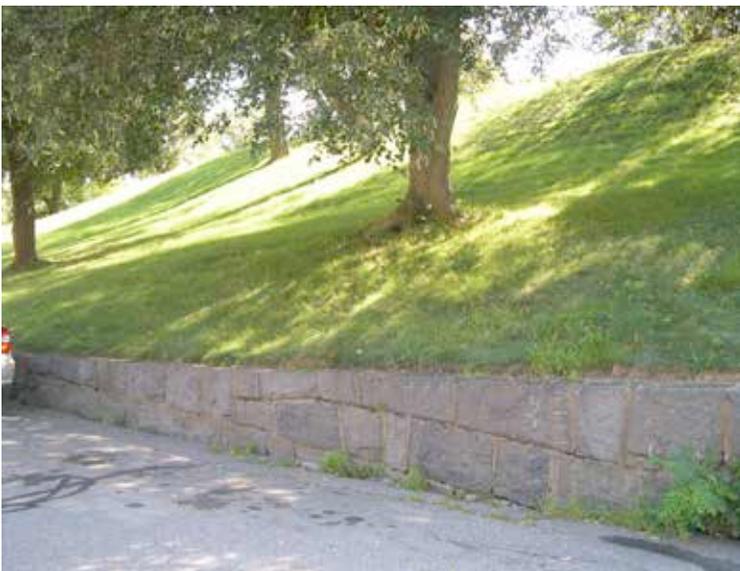


Photo 6 - Perimeter wall along School Street, looking southwest. (DSCN5329)



Photo 7 - Entrance gates with First Church at left, view to the west. (DSCN5329)



Photo 8 - Maintenance Building, adjacent to Church Street, view to southeast. (DSCF0156)



Photo 9 - Powder House, view to the west. (DSCF0217)



Photo 10 - Section A with Paty tomb at right, view to west. (DSCF0158)



Photo 11 – Hannah Bartlet headstone (d. 1710). (DSCF0071)



Photo 12 – Isaac Lothrop headstone (d. 1743). (DSCF0113)



Photo 13 - Goddard children headstone, 1760s, attributed to Lemuel Savery. (DSCF0184)



Photo 14 - Patience Watson headstone (d. 1767), probably by William Codner. (DSCF0227)



Photo 15 - Betsy Shaw headstone (d. 1795), probably by William Coye. (DSCF0221)



Photo16 - George Thomson, (d.1798), attributed to Amaziah Harlow. (DSCF0060)



Photo 17 – Robert and Thomas Cushman monument, the tallest monument at Burial Hill, view to southwest. (DSCF0009)

**List of Figures**



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Figure 3 - Photograph of entry gates soon after construction, late 1890s. From *Plymouth, Postcard History Series* by Donna DeFabio Curtin.



Figure 4 - Sketch of Pilgrims on their way to the meetinghouse. From Frank H. Perkins, *Handbook of Old Burial Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Its History, Its Famous Dead and Its Epitaphs*.