



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

CCCXXXI

Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

November 2025



Next Meeting & Program: December 5, 2025. History of the Juniper Hill Golf Course. Built on the old Brigham farm, the Juniper Hill Golf Course has been in operation for 95 years. Originally built in 1931 by Homer C. Darling, the golf course has remained in the family. It is now run by Dudley Darling who will present a review of the history of this Northborough institution. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Society building, 52 Main St., Northborough, MA. The event is free and open to the public. Masks will be optional.



History Corner

by Norm Corbin, Historian

CPA and Cemetery Restorations

2025 marks the 20th Anniversary of Northborough using Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding. In the past few months, some Select Board members have questioned if Northborough should continue participating in this funding program. Without CPA Funding, the many Historic Preservation Projects conducted over the last 20 years would not have occurred.

This month's Hourglass article will highlight the use of CPA funding for the preservation and restoration of Northborough's historic burial grounds and cemeteries. As of 2025, CPA has funded cemetery projects to the tune of \$261k. Subsequent Hourglass articles will review other Historic Preservation projects using CPA funds.

What is Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding? - The Community Preservation Act allows communities to create a "Local Community Preservation Fund" for funding projects in the following categories: historic preservation, open space protection / outdoor recreation, and affordable housing. It was signed into law by Governor Paul Cellucci and Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift on September 14, 2000.

CPA funding was adopted in Northborough through a successful vote at the Town election in November 2004. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) was formed at the April, 2005 Town Meeting with the first grants being funded in 2006. All funding requests are reviewed by the CPC to make sure the requests follow CPA guidelines before being presented at Town meeting.

The CPA monies come from two sources:

- A local surcharge on property tax within the community. Northborough's surcharge on property tax values over \$100,000 is 1.5%. Low-income residents are exempt from the surcharge.
- State matching funds come from a trust fund derived from a surcharge placed on all real estate transactions at the State's Registries of Deeds. The State match to Northborough's local surcharge revenue has averaged 35% over the 20 years of CPA in our town.

Brigham Street Cemetery Project - The Brigham Street Cemetery is a 3.3 acre site and the oldest cemetery in town. It was laid out in November of 1729 and used until about 1744. Few people knew it was there, even when they drove by it. CPA funding was used to identify, evaluate, preserve, and improve the area. Funding was used to:

- install a sign to identify the location as a Burial Site.



Improved Brigham St Burial Ground

- install an interpretive sign that reviews the history of the site and contains a list of known and potential colonist buried there.
- inventory, clean, and straighten the few remaining head and foot stones.
- confirm property lines.
- utilize "Ground Penetration Radar (GPR)" to identify that the burials are located toward the southwest corner of the site; historically, there could be as many as 60 burials located at the site.
- beautify the site by removing the many dead and sickly trees, regrade the area for planting new grass, install fencing and a gravel area for safe parking; the last step will be to mark off the area where the burials were identified.



Mike Gallagher of Westmill Preservation Services removing a grave marker.

Howard Street Burial Ground - This burial Ground is located directly behind today's Unitarian Universalist Meeting House. Burials started there in about 1749. This was when the area currently known as Northborough became the North Precinct of Westborough. The Precinct designation allowed it to form a community with its own Meeting House and Burial Ground.

Funding was used to:

- install a sign to identify the location as a Burial Ground.
- replace the weather worn wooden sign that identified all the grave markers with a new weather resistant one.
- fully document the conditions of all 202 head and foot stones at the site; this information was used to prioritize the stones in need of repair, cleaning, and resetting.
- repair, clean, and straighten many of the headstones and footstones.
- nominate this Burial Ground, along with the Howard Street Cemetery, for listing in the "National Register of Historic Places".

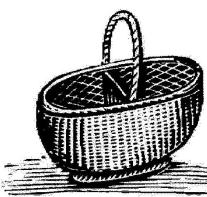
Howard Street Cemetery - This cemetery is located just north and adjacent to the Howard Street Burial Ground. The original roughly 5 acre site from 1837 is located within the larger current cemetery.

Funding was used to:

- install signage to identify the Howard Street Cemetery and the Kiser Section of the cemetery.
- nominate this Cemetery, along with the Howard Street Burial Ground, for the "National Register of Historic Places".
- future plans are to use CPA funding for a conditions assessment of the burial markers, then have the most severely damaged and leaning headstones repaired and straightened.

In summary, Community Preservation Act funding has been critical to the preservation and restoration of Northborough's historic burial grounds and cemeteries.

Community Advocate articles relating to this subject are online, issues dated Aug 30, 2018, and Jan 17, 2025.



Curator's News by Ellen

Accessions this month were news-worthy: A silver Bicentennial coin, 1966 from Jo-Ann Sullivan, and Northborough High School yearbooks, 1953 & 1954, senior photos, and individual class photos from the Hudson Street School during the 1950s – most of them identified, from Ron Ackley's collection. On a recent visit to the Town Hall I gathered a box of printed material and photos from the Bicentennial era saved by Claire and Parker Swan.

Also included was a printed copy of Northborough's charter of 1766 to become a separate district from Westborough, and an 1851 plot plan from an old section of the Howard Street cemetery. I hear there are a few plots available for someone who would prefer eternal rest in close proximity to our town's early citizens: Dr. Stephen Ball, Dr. Able Ball, Jonas Babcock, Fisk, Potter, Rice, Valentine, Fay, etc.



Claire and Parker Swan



1851 Cemetery Plot Plan Extract



Northborough's Charter of 1766

Westborough Historical Society's Annual Holiday Boutique

Saturday, December 6, 2025
9 am - 1 pm
13 Parkman St., Westborough, MA 01581

Come browse through our displays of jewelry, tree ornaments, prints, toys, glassware, Holiday-themed ornaments, and much more. All kinds of gift ideas for your Christmas list, donated by our members and for sale at rock-bottom prices.

Welcome New Members!

Francesco Buccella
Valerie Montuori
Rebecca Shaw
John Clifford

As we enter the season of thanks and giving, would you please consider making a small donation to the Society?

Any support would be greatly appreciated, and would help us to maintain our beautiful old building and care for our collection.

Please make checks payable to *Northborough Historical Society* and mail them to:

Northborough Historical Society Attn: HGTG
PO Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

Northborough Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent provided by law.



The Northborough Historical Society is thankful for the support of all our members and friends. We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season!

Membership

Annual Dues:

Single — \$30
Student/Senior — \$25
Family — \$55
Lifetime — \$500

Mail dues to:

Northborough Historical Society
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532

*Please make checks payable to
Northborough Historical Society*

Dues are due in September each year

Scan QR code
to donate via
PayPal



**Next
Board of Directors
Meeting
Tuesday, January 13**

PO Box 661, Northborough, MA 01532

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