

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received JUL 28 1981

date entered AUG 27 1981

1. Name

historic COMMON BURYING GROUND AT SANDY BANK

and/or common BELL ROCK CEMETERY

2. Location

street & number GREEN STREET (COR. OF MEDFORD ST. & CONVERSE AVE.) ___ not for publication

city, town MALDEN ___ vicinity of congressional district Seventh

state MASSACHUSETTS code 025 county MIDDLESEX code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
		___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			___ private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Cemetery

4. Owner of Property

name CITY OF MALDEN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, CEMETERY DEPARTMENT

street & number c/o FORESTDALE CEMETERY, 150 FOREST STREET

city, town MALDEN ___ vicinity of state MASSACHUSETTS

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, MIDDLESEX COUNTY COURTHOUSE

street & number 140 THORNDIKE STREET

city, town CAMBRIDGE state MASSACHUSETTS

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets
title of the Commonwealth

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date 1977 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

city, town BOSTON state MASSACHUSETTS

7. Description

Common Burying Ground at Sandy Bank

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Bell Rock Cemetery is a grassy wooded plot of slightly more than three acres, located in the south-west corner of Malden.* The burial ground lies to the west of Main Street and just to the east of a railroad line and the Malden (or North) River. A residential neighborhood is adjacent to most of the site. The east, or principal, entrance is on Green Street. Medford Street and Converse Avenue border the cemetery to the north and to the south.

The site is rectangular in plan, except for a small triangular lot in the south-west corner, once used as part of a passenger railway station. The grounds, enclosed with a low wall of coursed granite rubblestone, slope about ten feet from the north-east to the south-west. In the central area, where the oldest gravestones are found and the elevation is lowest, moss covers most of the ground. Mature hemlock, oak, and white pine trees are clustered throughout the site. Nine family crypts and 493 headstone markers are extant within the burying ground. Most of the early stones are of local slate; those after 1820 are generally of marble or granite. The stones date from 1670 to 1909 and are laid out at random. Only a few family plots from the 19th century are arranged formally in lots enclosed by low granite partitions. In nearly every instance, the early stones (e.g., before 1800) face toward the south. This local variation from the custom of directing stones toward the east originated by having the main pathway into the grounds, at least through the 1880s, enter from the south, off Burying Ground Lane (now Converse Avenue).

The only existing pathway, overgrown with grass, leads in from Green Street, past an aging wooden gate and commemorative tablets, through some tombs in earth-covered mounds, and into the central area, crowded with gravestones. The tombs meander, in a rough parallel to Green Street, from north to south. While some of the brick and granite tombs have been reinforced with a stucco covering, other have, since 1900, been removed, and the mounds have been graded. The entire southeast quadrant of the burying ground, where there are few headstones or tombs, is comparatively flat.

Founded on the "sandy bank" landing of the Malden River, the burying ground was, in its early period, a marshy site. Bordering it were tracts of farmland, known as Perkin's Marsh, a pasture, and clay pits used for brick-making. The town meetinghouse stood, until 1730, just to the north in what is now Bell Rock Park. Construction in the immediate vicinity of the railroad, in 1845, and a river wharf, in 1847, ended the pastoral setting of the charnel grounds. An 1849 account describes the premises as "much neglected," with cartpaths cut above "moss-covered stones...thrown down or sunk in the earth." Fifty or more graves were lost in the 1840s to a lumberyard, and stones covering one-quarter of an acre disappeared in 1851 for the building of a chemical mill and two public roadways (the present Medford and Green Streets). Sale of the quarter-acre site provided the town with the money for the rubblestone wall, completed in 1851.

On an 1843 map of Malden, the boundaries of the cemetery extend to the Malden River. The town sold the three lots which front on the river between 1853 and 1857, after the railroad had severed them from the burial ground. No records indicate whether gravestones once stood on these lots (now leased to the Massachusetts Electric Company).

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In 1881, the cemetery committee, reporting the condition of the grounds as a "reproach to the town," had years of brush undergrowth and deposits of rubbish removed from the site. Carriage paths were also laid out, and trees and vines were planted "to conceal the ravages made by time." Annual maintenance by the city has continued since 1881.

In 1891, after a proliferation of new housing in the neighborhood, residents unsuccessfully petitioned the city government to have the stones plowed-under and the grounds reclaimed as a park or playground. A simultaneous threat to the cemetery came from the nearby railroad and manufacturing plants. For over half a century, the constant passage of freight trains repeatedly shook the gravestones and left accumulations of soot on them. A report published in 1916 concluded that numerous markers vanished between 1880 and 1915.

During the past two decades, the surroundings of Bell Rock have become more residential and less industrial. Trains rarely travel alongside its grounds, and stretches of the riverbank have been landscaped. The burying ground is maintained well and preserves much of its primeval appearance. Vandalism, while infrequent, is largely responsible for the deteriorating condition of thirty-eight gravestones which are fractured or toppled over onto the ground. The 1981 assessment for the property is \$13,500.

*Predictably this was the first area of settlement in Malden, which was established as an independent town in 1649.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1649-1820

Builder/Architect Joseph Lamson, James Foster

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bell Rock Cemetery possesses integrity of location, design, materials, setting and workmanship and is significant as a treasury of the early mortuary art of New England. Its surviving gravestones, nearly all of which date before 1820, constitute some of the finest and earliest decorative carvings in Massachusetts. The burial ground also claims the distinction of being the resting place of settlers from the Great Migration of 1630, of Michael Wigglesworth, and of veterans from three colonial wars.

A Common Burying Ground within the Charlestown Grant, of which Malden originally formed a part, existed at Sandy Bank before 1649, the year of the incorporation of Malden, and conceivably as early as 1638. While the oldest interment documented from probate records occurred in 1654, earlier burials came from the Mystic Side settlements and, until 1660, from Charlestown. Vital records from Malden alone attest to 148 known burials prior to 1700.

The diminutive headstone of Alice Brackenbury (d. 1670) is the oldest marker at Bell Rock, and among the most ancient stones in New England executed in the ornamental tradition. The first use in New England of architectural ornament, along with customary emblems of skulls, wings, shovels, and hourglasses, appears on the Thomas Call stone of 1676. Among other stones from the 1670s, some listed in 1849 and 1891 descriptions have disappeared, and others were already deteriorated in those years.

The work of the earliest recognized stone carvers in the Boston area, Joseph Lamson (1658-1722) and James Foster (1651-1732), is preserved on several gravestones at Bell Rock. A Lamson stone memorializing his wife, a Malden woman, dates from 1703. The Peter and Mary Tufts stone (1702-3), also attributed to Lamson, is the most ornate stone at Bell Rock. Its eschatological motifs include cross bones, moustached soul effigies,imps, foliage, and gourds. The haunting "death head" identified with Foster's carvings appears on the 1697 gravestone of his father-in-law, Job Lane.

John Upham (1597-1681), ancestor of the American Upham family, has the earliest birthdate of those interred at Sandy Bank. His son Phineas perished in 1676, according to the inscription on his stone, from "wounds received in the Indian War" (i.e., King Phillip's War). The headstones of forty veterans of the Revolutionary War and four ministers of Malden also lie within the walls of Bell Rock. The most famous of these memorializes the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705), the Puritan poet, diarist, theologian, and physician. The gravestone of the Reverend Eliakim Willis (1735-1799) is a rare example of a portrait stone arranged in three pedimented tablets, and the marker to the Reverend Joseph Emerson (1699-1767), forty-five years minister of Malden, commemorates the patriarch of the Emerson lineage in America.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Annual Report of the Financial Concerns of the Town of Malden, March 1, 1850, Boston, 1850.
Corey, Deloraine P., History of Malden, Malden, MA, Published by the author, 1899.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres (131, 398 sq. ft.) UTM NOT VERIFIED
Quadrangle name Boston North Quadrangle scale 1:25000

UMT References

A	<u>19</u> <u>329580</u> <u>46980100</u>	B			
	Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing		
C		D			
E		F			
G		H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Property bounding the junction of the Saugus Branch Railroad and Medford St. and running easterly along Medford St. to the junction with Green St., thence running southerly along Green St. to the intersection of Converse Avenue, and then westerly along Converse Avenue and north-westerly by a small parcel (cont'd.)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Registration Director with Jeffrey Cronin

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May, 1981

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston, state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Patricia Wesloski 7/14/81

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

8/27/81

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Similar to burial grounds in rural England, Sandy Bank has long had a secondary use as a recreational spot. Throughout the 18th century, the town permitted livestock owned by widows to graze on the site. Cows and horses pastured there during most of the 19th century. In later years, employees from adjoining factories regularly spent lunch hours sitting and strolling among the moss-covered gravestones.

Burial spaces became scarce around 1820. Few interments ensued after Salem Street Cemetery opened in 1828. The city prohibited burials in 1882, allowing exceptions only for those with family lots. The final interment occurred in 1949, three full centuries after the first burials were floated on barges to Sandy Bank up the Mystic and Malden Rivers.

A century-long tradition in Malden of appreciation for Bell Rock Cemetery has been instrumental in preserving the grounds as a site of outstanding antiquity. In the 1880s, residents raised funds for its maintenance, renamed the site "Bell Rock Cemetery," transcribed headstones inscriptions, and even exhumed some graves. In 1881, the City Press reported the cemetery as "a place dear to our citizens." The city, in 1899, 1928, 1949, and again in 1977, installed historic plaques by the front gates, and patriotic exercises at the grounds on Washington's Birthday, first held during the Washington Bicentennial in 1932, have continued annually.

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(at the south-west corner of the acreage), and finally to the north by the railroad tracks.

No Assessor's parcel number is assigned to the premises.

DUE after 8/26/81 - 9/11/81

dnr-3

Name Common Burying Ground at Sandy Bank
State, County MA, Middlesex Fed Nom or Request-Agency _____
Working Number 228.81.268 Federal Register Date 2.2.82

Nomination
 Determination of Eligibility
 On Nomination Form

Bldg(s) _____
 Site
 Object
 Structure
 District

Within:
 Multiple Resource Area
 Thematic Group

Maps 1
Photos 2

Nomination prepared by:
 State Staff
 Local
 Other

Entered in the
Action: National Register
 ACCEPT 8/27/81
 RETURN _____
 REJECT _____

Check if Appropriate:
 State Request for Review
 Keeper's Decision to Review
 2nd Return

I. Evaluation of Resource (cont. on back if necessary)

II. Evaluation of Nomination

	Good	Adequate	Poor	Comments
1. Descriptive Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
2. Significance Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
3. Concepts/Integrity				
4. Concepts/Criteria				
5. Concepts/Boundaries				
6. Contextual Evaluation				

General Comments (cont. on back if necessary):

Reviewer/Date _____

See Attached _____



HE MEN TO
HOPE

RIGHT
HOPE

HERE LYES BURIED Y^e BODY OF
 THAT FAITHFULL SERVAUNT OF
 JESUS CHRIST Y^e REVEREND
 M^r MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH
 PASTOUR OF Y^e CHURCH OF CHRIS^t
 AT MAULDEN YEARES WHO
 FINISHED HIS WORKE AND ENTERED
 APON AN ETERNAL SABBATH
 OF REST ON Y^e LORDS DAY THE
 10. OF 1703. IN Y^e 74. YEARES AGE
 HERE LIES INTERED IN SILENT GRAVE
 BELOW MAULDENS REVEREND
 FOR SOUL AND BODY 1770



MALDEN, MA

Bell Rock Cemetery

*Common Burying Ground at
Hardy Bank*

Michael Wigglesworth

Gravestone

Photo by Joseph Ghiozzi

Negative at Malden

Public Library

November 1980

Photo 2 of 2

Middlesex Co.

JUL 28 1981

BELL ROCK CEMETERY

MALDEN, MA.

PHOTO # 2

GRAVESTONE OF MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH

NOV., 1980



Common Burying ground at
Malden, MA Sandy Bank
Bell Rock Cemetery

JUL 28 1981

View toward southeast
Photo by Joseph Ghiozzi
Negative at Malden
Public Library.
November 1980
Photo 1 of 2 Middlesex Co.

BELL ROCK CEMETERY

MALDEN, MA.

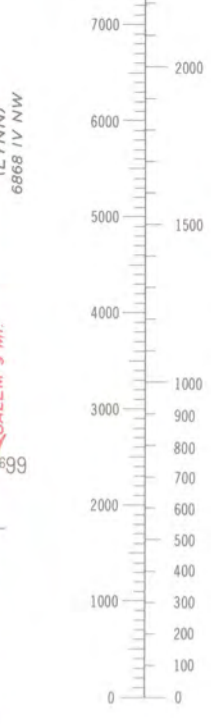
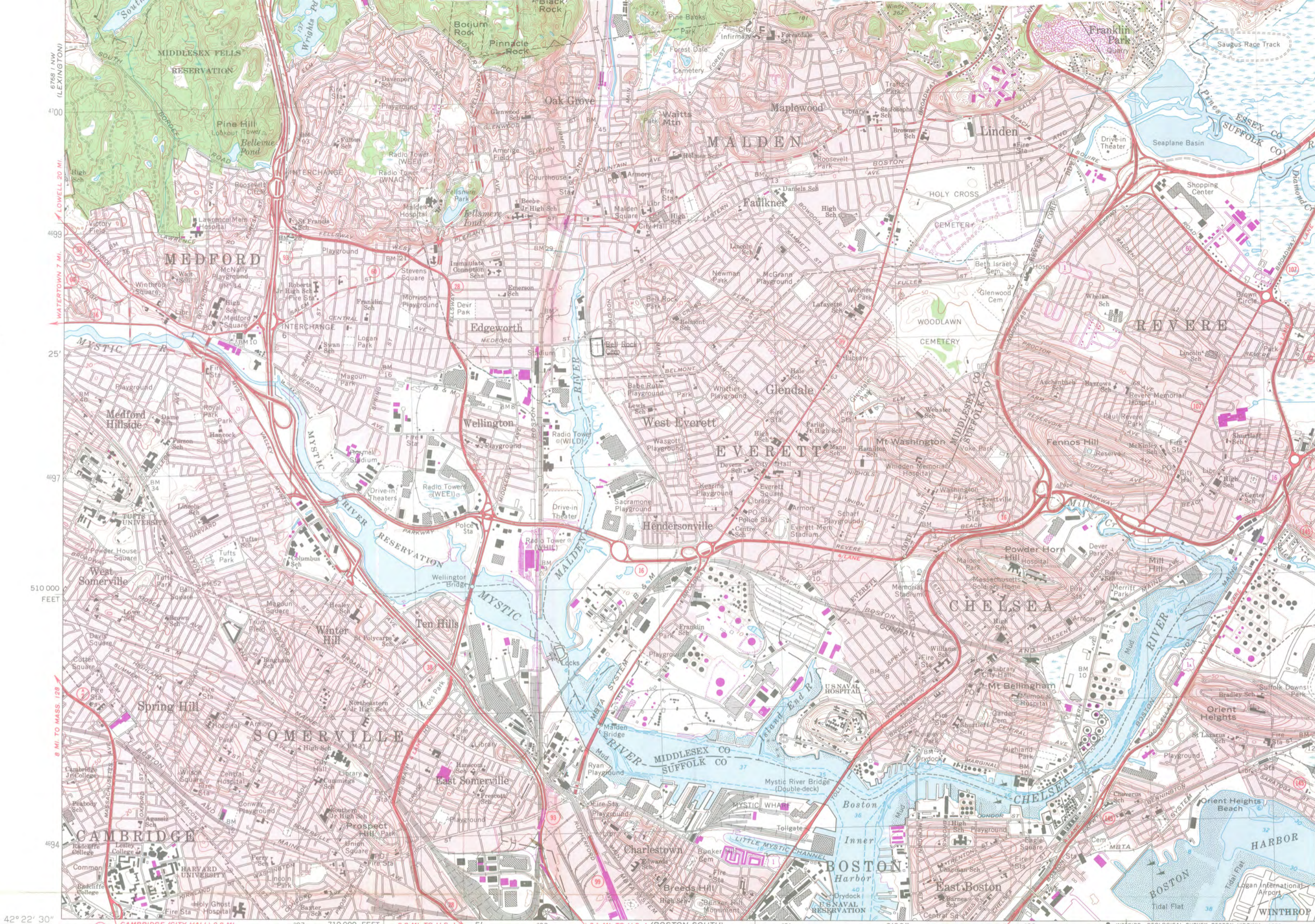
PHOTO #3

VIEW TOWARD SOUTH-EAST

NOV., 1980

AUG 27 1981

Bell Rock Cemetery
 Malden, MA
 UTM Reference
 19/329530/469800



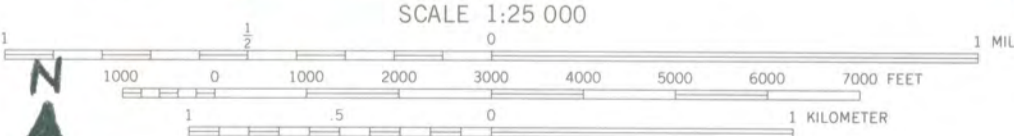
Feet	Meters
1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters multiply by 3048
 To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

42° 22' 30" 71° 07' 30" CAMBRIDGE (CITY HALL) 0.8 MI. 710 000 FEET 0.8 MI. TO U.S. 1 5' 0.4 MI. TO U.S. 1 (BOSTON SOUTH) 6768 S.E. 2'30" BOSTON (CITY HALL) 1.9 MI. 335 000 E 71° 00" 42° 22' 30" N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971 Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 248 (1971) This information is not intended for navigational purposes Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19

Boundaries in tidewater areas from information supplied by Massachusetts Department of Public Works Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9.5 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Primary highway, hard surface
 Secondary highway, hard surface
 Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
 Unimproved road
 Interstate Route
 U.S. Route
 State Route



BOSTON NORTH, MASS. N4222.5—W7100/7.5 1971 PHOTOREVISED 1979 AMS 6768 1 NE—SERIES V814

BELL ROCK CEMETERY, MALDEN

AUG 27 1981

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

MASSACHUSETTS

STATE

Date Entered AUG 27 1981

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Granite Keystone Bridge	Rockport Essex County
Common Burying Ground at Sandy Bank	Malden Middlesex County
Salem Street Burying Ground	Medford Middlesex County
Intermediate Building	Wellesley Hills Norfolk County
Baxter Mill	West Yarmouth Barnstable County

Honorable Paul E. Tsongas

Also Notified

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Nicholas Mavroules
Honorable Edward J. Markey
Honorable Margaret M. Heckler
Honorable Gerry E. Studts
Mid-Atlantic Region, NPS

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR

Eady/bjr/9/1/81

For further information, please call the National Register at (202) 343-6401.

272-3504