

TOWN OF DUXBURY
CEMETERY DEPARTMENT

Excerpt From:
“A HISTORY OF OUR FOUR MUNICIPAL CEMETERIES & TOMBS”

STANDISH BURIAL GROUNDS

(Located in South Duxbury on the corner of Pilgrim by Way and Chestnut Street)

Standish Cemetery sits on 1.44 acres, the first burial ground in Duxbury and the second cemetery in Plymouth Colony. In 1892 this cemetery, near where the first and later the second Meeting House in Duxbury was located in 1632, received its name when, as a result of painstaking research, it was found to be the resting place of Capt. Myles Standish, whose headstone dates October 3, 1656. In it lie the men who bore arms with him, as well as Revolutionary heroes and veterans of the War of 1812.

In the early days of New England the dead were silently laid to rest without prayers of any kind. The first known funeral sermon in this country was delivered in Duxbury in 1697 when Pastor Ichabod Wiswall officiated at the burial in Standish Burial Grounds of Capt. Jonathan Alden, son of the famous John and Priscilla Alden who are also interred in this cemetery. The oldest memorial stone marks the grave of Capt. Jonathan Alden, his father John Alden was also the last survivor of the Mayflower passengers dying in 1687.

The oldest colonial burial ground in the U.S. was in St. Augustine, FL, where some of the Spanish conquistadores rest. However, this cemetery has been lost to history, as has the original Pilgrim cemetery on Plymouth's Cole Hill. There in, lay the honor bestowed by the American Cemetery Association in 1977 as naming Standish Burial Grounds the oldest maintained cemetery in the country. A bronze marker set in a natural granite stone is placed within the cemetery grounds as commemoration to this.