

# BOYLSTON'S BICENTENNIAL 1786 - 1986

By Judy Haynes & Nancy Filgate

*Boylston was a part of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts until 1786. It was on March 1, 1986 when Boylston townspeople, began seven months of Founder's Day festivities in celebration of the 200 years anniversary since Boylston's incorporation.*

## Boylston Separation from its Parent Town

“At the first Town Meeting held December 1727, Deacon John Keyes, Senior, was chosen Moderator, and also Town Clerk, and Isaac Stone was chosen one of the Selectmen; they were both from the north part of Shrewsbury. This part of the town kept pace with that of the other parts of Shrewsbury, so that within ten years after this first Town Meeting, the people of the north section were considering the question of being set off and incorporated into a township of their own. To this project, the town of Shrewsbury offered no objection, and the matter went so far that a petition was presented for this purpose, which passed the General Court, but was vetoed by the Royal Governor. The matter was later taken to the King's Privy Council, who sustained the Royal Governor. Even at that early period, the King was jealous of his royal prerogatives, and had begun to view with suspicion the rapid growth and development, and somewhat independent attitude of the American colonies. At that time every incorporated town was entitled to a Representative in the General Court, and an increase in the number of Representatives might mean, in the case of any difficulty with the colonies, a stronger democratic expression of the will of the people.

So the people of the North Precinct were forced to remain a part of the parent town. The distance from the Meeting House in Shrewsbury, and their poor condition of travel rendered attendance upon divine worship and at town meetings inconvenient and difficult, and they took measures for incorporation as the Second or North Precinct and Parish of Shrewsbury. This project did not meet with any objection from the church and townspeople in the other parts of the town, or from the province authorities, and so they were accordingly incorporated as such on December 17, 1742. They, however, remained a part of Shrewsbury for municipal purposes until March 1, 1786, when the Precinct became the Town of Boylston.”<sup>1</sup>



## CAPTAIN ROBERT ANDREWS MILITIA - 1986

*Norman French, Joshua Bradford, Joe Nedder, John Burkhardt, Davis Hobbs,  
Roger Wentzell, Garrett Hollands & Ray Duffy  
Founders Day - March 1, 1986*

## Let the Celebrations Begin

Formalities for the Bicentennial festivities began with speeches and the history outlining the 'birth' of Boylston (1786). Following came the fun: a Bicentennial Ball, originally scheduled to be held appropriately at the Hastings Tavern, built 1818 by Silas Hastings. Ancestors of this family had settled here in the early 1700's by horse and wagon from Watertown. Daniel Hasting went onto serve as one of the leaders in the Shrewsbury North Precinct, and one who worked toward Boylston's separation from Shrewsbury and its eventual independent incorporation.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Bicentennial Ball turned out to be too large a gathering for the Hastings ballroom, so the many costumed dancers and happy revelers instead showed off their dancing moves at the Tahanto High School Gymnasium.



**AMERICAN LEGION  
RAISES THE 1786 FLAG AND THE BOYLSTON FLAG**

<sup>1</sup> Filgate, Bruce, Boylston Historical Series, *Early Boylston Families*, 2012, Boylston Historical Society, Boylston, Massachusetts

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



**PAT AND FRAN BRISSETTE**  
*Bicentennial Ball*



**TINA AND SETH BILAZARIAN**  
*Bicentennial Ball*



**DON PARKER AND ROGER WENTZELL**  
*Bicentennial Ball*



**JOSH AND JANET BRADFORD**  
*Bicentennial Ball*

Seasonal events occurred with Spring recognizing Arbor Day, and early May hosting a Fishing Derby, a Fashion Show and more happenings continued the festivities. Memorial Day opened summer and in June a Young & Old Field Day, a parade and Concerts on the Common. Teen dances and a square dance added to the liveliness.



**CLAYTON FULLER, CLIFF MACDONALD, BARBARA BEAN, EDITH MACDONALD, GRACE HEDLUND, STEVE WHITE, FENTON BEAN, PAUL AUCOIN, HELEN DUFFY, KEWPIE STOWE, ERICA COSTELLO, TEX NELSON, CLARA FELLOWS, RAY DUFFY**  
*Planted a Tree on Arbor Day – April 26, 1986*



**JAN AND BOB MECCA**  
*Bicentennial Revue*

Plus, no celebration happened without food; thus, a Senior Citizen Breakfast, International Day, Strawberry Festival, a Progressive Supper, clambake and Oktoberfest were held throughout the seasons and satisfied the appetites.

These incredible seven months of programs (24 in all!) in 1986 began with seven years of planning, starting in the Fall of 1979 with an Oktoberfest as an opening fundraiser. The Oktoberfest continued to raise monies annually plus added to that was the town taxpayers who approved and appropriated \$40,000 to defray expenses for this fabulous celebration.<sup>3</sup>

Many of Boylston's citizens gave generously and tirelessly of their time as many committees and subcommittees were formed to bring about the multitude of fetes under the leadership of the Bicentennial Committee: Carolyn Stowe, David J. Fehser, John Rose, Helen Duffy, and Paul W. Kalinowski.<sup>4</sup> For those who were there, or those who weren't, can take a pictorial walk through 1986 history in the 144 page book *A Bicentennial Celebration* depicting the times.<sup>5</sup>



**RUSS FULLER, CAL HASTINGS AND PAUL HOLLY**  
*Bicentennial Revue*



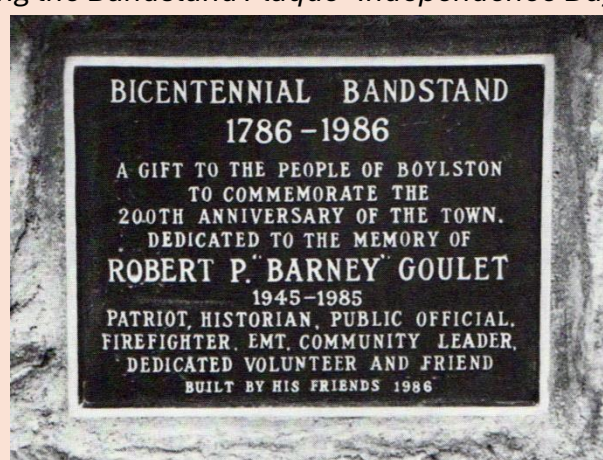
**SUE AND ARTHUR MOORE**  
*Square Dance*  
July 17, 1986



**JAN NEDDER AND BRUCE SYMONDS**  
*Square Dance*  
July 17, 1986



**FREDDIE AND PAT GOULET**  
*Unveiling the Bandstand Plaque -Independence Day 1986*



<sup>4</sup> *A Bicentennial Celebration, Boylston 1786-1986*, Boylston Bicentennial Committee, copyright 1987.

<sup>5</sup> A copy of *Bicentennial Celebration* can be found in Boylston Historical Society Library



**JANE EATON**  
*Garden Club Tours*  
*August 3, 1986*

**JOSH AND JANET BRADFORD'S GARDEN**  
*Garden Club Tours*  
*Held August 3, 1986*



**NANCY TOMB, NANCY HATCH, JOANNE COX, & JEAN FELDKAMP**  
*Garden Club Tours*  
*August 3, 1986*

### **Coin Minted**

A Bicentennial coin was created to mark the commemoration. The face of the coin portrays the Old Town Hall, the Congregational Church, and the Sawyer Memorial Library.<sup>6</sup> The reverse outlines the town's four areas: Sawyers Mills, East Woods, Straw Hollow and Morningdale with the incorporation date of March 1, 1786 etched on the bottom of the coin. Other commemorative articles were medals, mugs, historic plates, numberplates, and jewelry, souvenirs of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Examples of some of these as well and the many photographs of these events can be seen at the home of the Boylston's Historical Society Museum at Boylston's Historic Town Hall.



<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 3.