



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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JEDEDIAH FOSTER HOMESITE, WEST BROOKFIELD, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Jedediah Foster Homesite in West Brookfield for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 20, 2013, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Jedediah Foster Homesite in the National Register will help preserve a property associated with significant events in Massachusetts history.”

The Jedediah Foster Homesite is significant for its association with two men who made great contributions to their community and country: Brigadier General Joseph Dwight and Jedediah Foster. Joseph Dwight was a soldier and politician who played an integral role in the French and Indian War. Dwight built the Foster House around 1735; his daughter, Dorothy, married Jedediah Foster in 1749, and Dwight deeded his house over to the couple soon after. Jedediah Foster practiced law in the small office he built adjacent to the house. Foster served as a representative in the Massachusetts legislature from 1761 to 1775 and again in 1779. He supported the American cause for independence, was a colonel in the militia during the Revolutionary War, and served as a justice of the Superior Court of Massachusetts. Perhaps his most notable achievement was his involvement in the drafting of the Massachusetts Constitution, as one of the thirty men appointed to the Constitutional Convention in 1779.

In its day, the Foster House was one of the most famous in the state, and sat on 75 acres. Over time, the Foster family sold off large portions of the parcel; the house and half an acre of land remained under the ownership of the Foster family until 1901. In November 1901, a fire broke out in the law office, destroying it and the house, both uninhabited at the time. In 1902, the Foster family deeded the ½-acre parcel to the Quaboag Historical Society, with the restrictions that no building ever be erected there, and that the property should be forever kept open as a place of historic interest. Today, the site contains remnants of the house and law office foundations, two entry stones, and a partial stone walkway. The homesite has remained relatively untouched and intact following the fire of 1901. The Quaboag Historical Society has set up picnic tables and an information kiosk near the foundation, and the Jedediah Foster Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has placed a historical marker commemorating Foster on the edge of the property.

The Jedediah Foster Homesite is one of 6 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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