

“Back to Tranquility Grove” Commemorative Walk

Saturday, October 19, 10 AM to ~12 NOON

Sponsored by the Hingham Land Conservation Trust, as its Fall 2019 Walk, in collaboration with The Hingham Conservation Commission & New North Church



Today’s event recognizes the 175th anniversary of the historic “Great Abolitionist Picnic” at Tranquility Grove (then a larger privately-owned park in Hingham.) This year’s walk also celebrates renewed access to Burns Memorial Park, a public park located on a portion of the original Tranquility Grove site.

I. AT NEW NORTH CHURCH:



Welcome: Eileen McIntyre, board chair, Hingham Land Conservation Trust

Reading: Reverend Steve Aucella of New North Church will read an excerpt from Rev. Oliver Stearns’ sermon against the Fugitive Slave Act delivered on March 5, 1851 to his congregation, the Third Congregational Society of Hingham, at New North Church. Rev. Stearns, a noted abolitionist, also delivered the Opening Prayer at the 1844 Tranquility Grove event.

Overview of the “Great Abolitionist Picnic” at Tranquility Grove: Martha Reardon Bewick, author of recently published book about the event, will review why the event took place and some key figures involved.

Reading: Hingham author and journalist Roy J. Harris, Jr. will read an excerpt from letter sent to the 1844 Tranquility Grove event by Congressman (former President) John Quincy Adams.

Song: (All) “I am an Abolitionist” by William Lloyd Garrison, sung to tune of “Auld Lang Syne”.

1. I am an Abolitionist! I glory in the name;
Though now by Slavery's minions hissed, and covered o'er with shame;
It is a spell of light and power, the watchword of the free;
Who spurns it in the trial-hour, a craven soul is he.
2. I am an Abolitionist! Then urge me not to pause;
For joyfully do I enlist in Freedom's sacred cause;
A nobler strife the world ne'er saw, Th'enslaved to disentrall;
I am a soldier for the war, whatever may befall.
3. I am an Abolitionist! Oppression's deadly foe;
In God's great strength will I resist, and lay the monster low;
In God's great name do I demand, to all be freedom give;
That peace and joy may fill the land, and songs go up to heaven.
4. I am an Abolitionist! No threats shall awe my soul;
No perils cause me to desist, no bribes my acts control;
A freeman will I live and die, in sunshine and in shade;
And raise my voice for liberty, of naught on earth afraid.

II. WE WILL THEN WALK AS A GROUP TO BURNS MEMORIAL PARK

Walk will be led by Don Kidston and Art Collins of the HLCT Board of Trustees, along with members and friends of the League of Women Voters of Hingham, who will be carrying oak branches, as was done in 1844, to symbolize strength and endurance. (Many 19th c. suffragists were active abolitionists as well.)

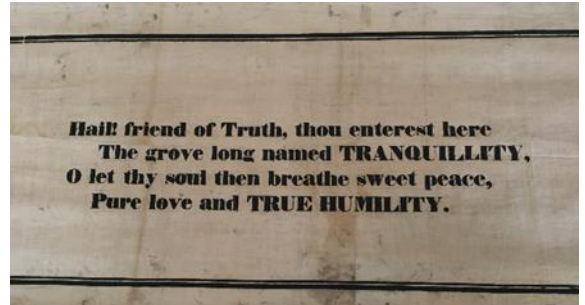
III. AT THE PARK:

Opening Remarks: Martha Bewick will “paint a picture” of what Tranquility Grove was like.

Reading: Joe Collymore, associate producer and news anchor at Harbor Media, will read from a speech by Frederick Douglass. Douglass was among the prominent abolitionists who spoke at Hingham’s 1844 Tranquility Grove event. As his specific remarks that day were not recorded, Joe will read from what Douglass said at a similar event, a few years later.

Song: Members & friends of the Unicorn Singers, all Hingham residents: Lynn Anderson, Ed Bartholomew, Sally Davenport, Jo-An Heileman, Kathy Reardon, Martha Reardon Bewick, and Steve Waynen, will sing:

“Get Off the Track” from the Hutchinson New Family Songbook. (The Hutchinson Singers sang at the 1844 Hingham event.)



IV. POST WALK REFRESHMENT STOP:

We will walk from the park to the Hingham Community Center at the corner of Central and South Street, where you are invited to stop in for cider or water and pick up a goodie bag in the front room. This building, which dates to 1718, was, like Tranquility Grove, then owned by a member of the Thaxter family, John Thaxter, who lived here with his family.

Special Thanks to:

Martha Reardon Bewick, for her inspiration and enthusiastic collaboration on this event. Martha’s book, *Tranquility Grove: The Great Abolitionist Picnic of 1844*, sponsored by the **Hingham Historical Commission** and published last year, has reminded us of this important event in Hingham’s history and brought attention to the need for renewal at Burns Memorial Park.

Jared Mayo, who got the ball rolling on renewing access to Burns Memorial Park with his Eagle Scout project to restore the entry steps and sign on Hersey Street.

Loni Fournier and Heather Charles Lis for the Hingham Conservation Department, and members of the volunteer board of the Hingham Land Conservation Trust, under the leadership of Don Kidston, for their work to refresh Burns Memorial Park: clearing the entrance path, defining the trails of the park, and clearing an area to accommodate visitors for the “Return to Tranquility Grove” event.

Reverend Steve Aucella for graciously providing New North Church as our program-opening venue.

Kathy Reardon, former Chair & 25-year board member of the HLCT, for organizing the singers for this event.

The Hingham Historical Society (reproduction banners), the **Hingham Community Center** (post walk refreshment venue) and **South Shore Senior Softball** (loan of sound equipment.)