

## Discovering the Past

Eastern Cemetery is one of the oldest and best examples of colonial graveyards in New England. The burial ground for Portland's earliest settlers (mainly English colonists who began arriving in 1632), it was declared a public burial ground in 1668 and was in use for almost 200 years. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated an historic cemetery by the City of Portland.

Within its gates, you will find stunning hand-carved stones reflecting early spiritual views. Here are buried military heroes, from the earliest colonial wars to the Civil War. The graves of underrepresented groups, set off in designated areas, include those of Black people, Quakers, Catholics, and paupers.

Eighty-six underground tombs were constructed between 1795 and 1830. Each is reached by a concealed stairway and built to hold up to 30 wooden coffins.

The "Dead House," which was built in 1873 and is now used as a tool shed, stands just inside the front gate. It protects the entrance to the city's receiving tomb, which long ago held the coffins of those who had died during the winter until spring thaw allowed final burial elsewhere.

The cemetery is home to the finest collection of stones carved in the early 1800s by Bartlett Adams, the first stonecutter in the region.



## Summer and Fall Guided Tours

Guided walking tours run daily from May 24 through October 15, in 2025. Tours begin at the Congress St. gate at 4 pm, weather permitting. Tours last about an hour. Cost \$10; children under 12 free. Tickets available via Eventbrite or exact change is welcome at the gate.



↑  
For  
Tickets

## Visit on Your Own

We invite you to visit Portland's oldest burial ground. The gates are open summer through fall and are locked at night. A map of the cemetery indicating where our more famous residents are buried is found inside this brochure. A self-guided tour can be found on our website. Due to the fragile nature of stones and the uneven ground, we ask you not to touch stones and urge you to watch your step. No dogs are allowed.

## Merch



Check out our new Zazzle store! Caps, hoodies, mugs, t-shirts, tote bags, and more

—all with our great logo.



# Welcome to Eastern Cemetery

## Spirits Alive

After years of vandalism and neglect, Eastern Cemetery became overgrown and uninspiring. Seeing a need for advocacy, public education, and conservation of Portland's oldest historical landscape, Spirits Alive was formed in 2007 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. We are dedicated to restoring and preserving Eastern Cemetery, as well as educating the public about this historic treasure. Volunteers carry out a year-round program of stone conservation, cemetery preservation, advocacy, public education, and fund raising to enable its programs.



## Directions

**From I-295:** Take Exit 7 (Franklin St.). Proceed to the Congress St. light where you will take a left. Proceed through two lights. Eastern Cemetery will be on the right as you reach the Mountfort intersection. Limited street parking is available.

**From Ocean Gateway:** Walk up Hancock St. Take first left onto Thames (Commercial) St. Take first right onto India St., then fifth right onto Congress St. Eastern Cemetery will be on your right.

## Winter Lecture Series

Learn more about the fascinating history of the Portland area through talks given by historians and authors. Offered the last Saturdays in January, February, and March on the USM campus.

## How Can You Help?

You can support Eastern Cemetery with your time and/or money. Volunteer opportunities include stone conservation, gardening, photographic documentation, research, advocacy, and help with fundraising. Go to [spiritsalive.org/volunteer.htm](https://spiritsalive.org/volunteer.htm) for more info.

## Many Thanks to Our Generous Supporters

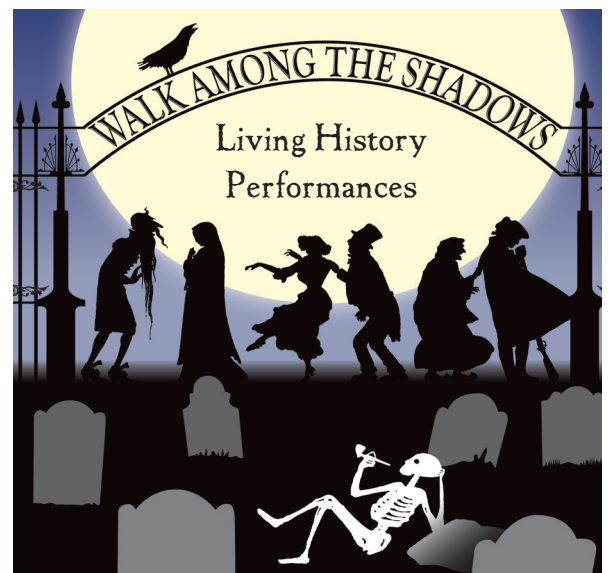


at Eastern Cemetery

[spiritsalive.org](https://spiritsalive.org)

2025

## Walk Among the Shadows



Our annualevening event happens October 16-19 and 23-26, in 2025. Walk along Funeral Lane guided by lantern-carrying specters, and enjoy costumed actors who embody the spirits of people buried here, and portray important events in our history.

Our theme for 2025 is, "The Bombardment of Falmouth, 1775: The 250th Anniversary of Maine's Baptism by Fire." On October 18, 1775, on the eve of the War of Independence, Captain Mowatt of HMS Canceau was ordered by Admiral Graves to bombard Falmouth (now Portland), and burn the town to ashes.

The Battle of Lexington forced Mainers to choose sides, from Tories to Patriots, and ministers to tavern-keepers. After October 18, the illusion of safety and neutrality was burned away. Hear from participants, witnesses, and victims.

Tickets will be available on Eventbrite or at the gate (cash only). Adults \$10 and children under 12, \$5. Check [spiritsalive.org/wats](https://spiritsalive.org/wats) for details.



at Eastern Cemetery  
224 Congress Street, Portland, Maine



[spiritsalive.org](https://spiritsalive.org)

PO Box 18209, Portland, ME 04112

[easterncemetery@gmail.com](mailto:easterncemetery@gmail.com)  
[facebook.com/spiritsalive](https://facebook.com/spiritsalive)  
[Instagram.com/spiritsalive](https://Instagram.com/spiritsalive)

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