CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY
(Washington Burying Ground)
1801 E Street, Southeast
Washington
District of Columbia

HALS DC-1
DC-1

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY
(Washington Parish Burial Ground)

HALS No. DC-1

Location: The main entrance and gatehouse of the Washington Parish Burial Ground are located at 1801 E Street, Southeast, Washington, District of Columbia. The cemetery occupies approximately thirty-two acres, defined at its northern boundary by E Street and Potomac Avenue, SE, at the west by 17th Street, SE, and at the east by a stepped boundary that heads south along 20th Street as far as G Street, and then moves eastward roughly equal with 23rd Street and H Street.[1] The southern boundary is disputed, but runs roughly from the northern edge of Commodore Barney Circle diagonally to meet up with H Street, SE.

Present Owner: Christ Church Episcopal, Washington Parish, located at 620 G Street, Southeast, Washington, District of Columbia. The cemetery is leased and managed by the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, with a contract ending July 21, 2019.

Present Use: Cemetery

Significance: Washington Parish Burial Ground was created in 1807 by a private corporation of citizens, intent on creating a cemetery in the tradition of churchyard burial grounds, and at the same time acting in the name of the public good of the federal district's inhabitants. Another layer of the site's history relates to its rapidly developed ties to the federal government. Congressmen were routinely buried here and monuments erected for them after a design by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Surveyor of Public Works for the nation's capital. The government regularly gave funds to this cemetery, which came to be known as the National Burying Ground or more commonly the Congressional Cemetery.[2]

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[1] The total acreage of the cemetery's property has not been conclusively determined. In *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972, the federal government reported that the cemetery encompassed 30 acres. The *Historic Landscape and Structures Report for Historic Congressional Cemetery Architect of the Capitol*, 5 Vol. (Portland, ME: Turk Tracey & Larry Architects, LLC, 2003), records that the cemetery has approximately 36 acres. The figure of thirty-two acres derives from Oliver W. Clemons,' *Barney Circle Freeway Modification Project: Congressional Cemetery Boundary Description*. Washington, D.C.: Fleming-DeLeuw, 1992. While Clemons' is not an unbiased study, this total acreage seems to come closest to assessing the occupied acreage of the cemetery.

[2] The term 'cemetery' did not come into common use in English until the nineteenth century. Until that time 'burying ground' was the accepted title for sites of burial. When the word cemetery did come into use, it was not universally applied. Instead, it was employed to distinguish rural cemeteries from their more traditional counterparts. For more information see Phillipe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981): 55. Because of this chronology in terms, the phrase "burial ground" is generally used in this report until the discussion of the rural cemetery movement, and the term cemetery applied after that point.

These close ties between the cemetery and the federal city were reiterated by the landscape. The cemetery was connected by a graded and graveled direct route to the Capitol, and much of its grounds occupied by federally owned plots. While it ostensibly offered the civic service of burial to all residents of the capital, this cemetery was founded by an elite group who consciously created an upper-class environment within its bounds. The landscape echoed the strata of Washington society, with the wealthy buying strategically located family plots, and individual burial sites relegated to the site's outer edges. Indigents, African-Americans and 'infidels' were given grave sites outside the cemetery's wall. The landscape of Congressional Cemetery still reflects the form of these social structures. Through its congressional monuments, physical link to the Capitol, and socially-stratified organization, the cemetery's landscape of death gave form to the nineteenth century social and moral order of the nation's capital.

The landscape of Congressional Cemetery also reflects the nation's progression of cemetery development. It retains traces of its original burial-ground form, the urban grid over which the cemetery was laid out, and the picturesque influence of the rural cemetery movement. Its site, now surrounded by the urban fabric of Capitol Hill, gradually slopes down toward the banks of the Anacostia River, combining urban and rural vistas throughout just as it melds urban and rural cemetery models. The final addition of land to the cemetery bears the mark of the lawn cemetery movement, bringing the form of the cemetery into the fashions of the later nineteenth century. While the placement of the burials in Congressional Cemetery echoes the society of Washington, D.C., its landscape bears the marks of the nation's developing standards of cemetery design. Truly the project of many local minds and a highly original fusion of vernacular tradition with the individual goals of a group of educated and powerful men, this cemetery holds a unique place in the history of cemetery design and within the development of the urban landscape of the nation's capital.

Historian: Julia A. Sienkewicz, PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2005

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of establishment: The land for the burying-ground was purchased in April of 1807, with the first burials occurring shortly after this date, though an official deed for the purchase of the land was not written until March 1808. The preamble and articles of subscription of the cemetery were written on April 4, 1807, declaring that

this public cemetery would replace an earlier site inappropriate for burial. Despite the claim of these articles of subscription, the cemetery was not public: it was run as a private, independent cemetery company between 1807 and 1812, though restricted by regulations imposed by the City of Washington.[3] In the articles of subscription, the cemetery's investors likewise noted that, at such a point as the corporation should become free of debt, the cemetery would be given to the local Episcopal Parish of Christ Church. While the congregation had been active for a number of years, this church was established in the same year as Congressional Cemetery, and many of the same individuals were involved in both its development and the cemetery's founding. In its early years, then, the cemetery was a private corporation, but under the administrative jurisdiction of the City of Washington, and with the silent influence of the vestry of Christ Church. The cemetery came under the official administration of Christ Church, Washington Parish in 1812, at which point its lasting identity as the burying-ground of Christ Church, Washington Parish, was established, though the multi-layered nature its administrative authority persisted.

2. Landscape architect, designer, creator: Washington Parish Burial Ground is not a professionally designed landscape. Instead, it was formed within a vernacular tradition of cemetery design, modified through the influence and organization of highly educated individuals. The cemetery was officially laid out and a plot plan designated, but no documents showing these original plans have been preserved, and no attribution can be made to a specific individual for their creation. In any case, this 'laying out' of the cemetery consisted of simply the designation of burial sites along a grid system, in a highly regular and geometric format. Such a plan reflected more a response to economic and organizational demands than to any artistic impetus. No record of a cohesive planting or landscaping plan exists, nor does the cemetery's form suggest that such a plan was implemented. The physical appearance of the cemetery's landscape can thus be understood as the result of the influence of this burial plot grid, the expertise of the cemetery's vestry who initially were all men involved in the building and construction trades, and the hand of individual laborers at the cemetery. It must not, however, be evaluated as a cohesively designed landscape.

   The earliest record of a professional landscape architect being consulted for work on the site was not until 1917, when George Burnap, landscape architect at the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds in Washington, provided drawings for the improvement of Congressional Cemetery.[4] However, it is unknown whether any of

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[3] The signers of the articles of subscription, and thus the cemetery's original investors were: Henry Ingle, George Blagden, Griffith Coombe, S. N. Smallwood, Dr. Frederick May, Peter Miller, John T. Frost, and Commodore Thomas Tingey. While exhaustive research still remains to be done to determine the interdependent roles of these individuals, and the actual part that each played in the formation of the cemetery, it seems likely that Henry Ingle, Goerge Blagden and Griffith Coombe, who served as the trustees to the cemetery for the first four years of its existence and were very active within the parish, played the most vital roles in establishing and managing the cemetery.

[4] Cathleen Breitkruetz, "Developmental History [of Congressional Cemetery]," *Historic Landscape and Structures Report for Historic Congressional Cemetery Architect of the Capitol*, Vol. 1 (Portland, ME: Turk Tracey & Larry Architects, LLC, 2003), 48. Note: While as yet no archival collections of Burnap's work have been located, a 1911 publication *American country houses of today*, written by Frank Miles Day and Ralph Adams Cram (New

his suggested improvements for the site were carried out, and no record of his plans and drawings seems to have been preserved.[5] It is certain that his plans were not implemented to such a degree as to change the vernacular nature of the landscape into a cohesive, designed space. The vestry talked again about hiring a professional landscape designer at later points in the twentieth century, but the records do not actually indicate that anyone was indeed hired. A landscape study of the cemetery, completed in 2005 by the design firm EDAW, is probably the first comprehensive study of the cemetery's landscape, as well as the first point at which a uniform and professionally prepared design plan has been created for the cemetery's form.[6]

While the landscape is vernacular, the two major extant structures are architect designed. The chapel on the site was designed by A.M. Pynton in 1902, and the current gatehouse designed by H.V. O'Brien in 1922, and constructed between 1923 and 1924.[7] Likewise, the Congressional Cenotaphs, which are the single most prominent element of the cemetery's landscape, are clearly a designed element of the landscape. They have been attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, though completely conclusive attribution of their design to Latrobe can not be made. Latrobe, first architect of the Capitol and surveyor of the public buildings for the city of Washington, was active in the city between 1803 and 1817. The date of the design and construction of the first cenotaph in the cemetery is not known, but is likely to have occurred around 1816 or 1817, when the vestry donated one hundred sites in the cemetery to the federal government for its own use.[8]

3. Builder, contractor, laborers, suppliers: Records of this information throughout the cemetery's history are spotty, yet offer tantalizing hints at the individuals who played

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York: The Architectural Book Publishing Company) features a number of homes designed by Burnap, and may offer the curious a sense of his approach to design.

[5] Since this landscape plan would have been developed more than a century after the cemetery's founding, it is certain that implementing a cohesive landscape design would have had an extreme impact on the cemetery's form. Because no visual or textual record exists for such a drastic transformation, it must be surmised that none was carried out. It also seems probable that no such exhaustive plans were made. What seems more likely is the possibility that Burnap offered suggestions about plantings, and presented an approach for managing the replacement of the cemetery's older generation of trees with new plantings. This possibility is corroborated by the fact that a large number of tree purchases were made by the vestry in the years following the commissioning of Burnap's plan. See Breitkruetz, *Historic Landscape and Structures Report*, 48.

[6] EDAW is a design firm that works primarily with issues of environmental sustainability. Their Alexandria, Virginia office, managed by Paul Moyer, Greg Ault, Dennis Carmichael, Roger Courtenay, Richard Dorrier, Alan Harwood, Marsha Lea, and Brad Wellington created the cemetery's landscape study. For further information on the firm see its website: www.edaw.com. The firm has been featured in a number of academic studies, especially concerning its work on the Washington, D.C., Vietnam Veteran's Memorial site-plan. For a book-length study of the firm see: *EDAW: The integrated world: landscape design and sustaining environments* Process Architecture, 120 (Tokyo, Japan: Process Architecture Company, Inc., 1994).

[7] Both of these men are obscure, local designers, about whom little or no information seems to have been preserved. Perhaps materials will eventually find their way into archival collections.

[8] Dates of death recorded on the cenotaphs can not be used as indicators of the original date of their creation. While the earliest date cited on a cenotaph is 1807, it is extremely unlikely that the tradition of their construction began in that year. The oldest cenotaphs are arranged in a random pattern, but starting with those dating to 1820, they are all in regular lines, perhaps indicating that the custom was formally initiated in or around that year.

a formative role in the cemetery's construction. In the early years of the cemetery's existence, it seems likely that its founders, who seem to all have been men intimately associated in one manner or another with the building community in Washington D.C., may have played a significant role in determining its form. The three original trustees of the cemetery, Henry Ingle, Griffith Coombe and George Blagden, seem the most likely to have influenced the cemetery's development. Henry Ingle, who played a key role in the purchase of the land for the cemetery and was extremely active with its management for the remainder of his life, was himself an ironmonger and sometimes land-speculator. His skills would, therefore, have enabled him to offer expertise in the construction of metal gates, locks, hinges, etc. for the cemetery, all of which objects he made on a regular basis for the federal government's work on the Capitol and surrounding buildings.[9] Griffith Coombe seems to have owned a lumber yard and wharf, as he offered services in both of these capacities to the federal government.[10] Coombe constructed the first gatehouse of the cemetery in 1832.[11] George Blagden was a stone mason, who was employed by Latrobe on the construction of the Capitol from 1803 until 1817, and may have been involved in the site even after Latrobe's resignation. Blagden was a skilled craftsman with connections throughout the building network in Washington, a fact that is amply evident from Latrobe's respect for Blagden, and his dependence on Blagden's advice at various points in the construction of the Capitol.[12]

After the early formative period of the cemetery the vestry of Christ Church, in conjunction at times with the federal government (such as, the construction of the public vault, the iron fence, etc.), made the major decisions about the cemetery's appearance. More routine decisions about plantings, basic construction, and maintenance were made by employees of the Vestry. The successive superintendents (also called sextons until 1879) of the cemetery played perhaps the most major role in shaping the appearance of its landscape, especially in the nineteenth century. It is possible to assemble a partial list of the cemetery superintendents: E. Vidler (served 1807-1811), Electious Middleton (1812-?), Robert Clark (1847-?), Jeremiah B. Cross (1864-7, 1869), E.A. Ryther (1868), William H. Lusby (1870-1873), Charles F. Smith (1874-1882), Jeremiah B. Cross (1883-1890), Charles W. O'Neill (1891-1897), H.S. Vanderver (1898-1901), John T. Earnshaw (1902-1918), Lewis B. Taylor (1920-26,

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[9] For references to Ingle's work on the Capitol see: *Accounts of and Abstracts of Expenditures, 1817-22, and 1830-33*. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Vol. 1, Records of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Financial Records. RG 42, Entry 72, National Archives, Washington, D.C. For references to his endeavors in land speculation see: Henry Ingle Family Papers, 1829-1899. Kiplinger Research Library of the City Museum of Washington, D.C.

[10] See the *Accounts of and Abstracts of Expenditures, 1817-22, and 1830-33*. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Vol. 1, Records of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Financial Records. RG 42, Entry 72, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Coombe seems to have been most active for the government as a supplier in 1819.

[11] See Breitkreutz, 18. This original gatehouse was a brick structure. Photographs from the early twentieth century show a wood-sided structure on the site. Records offer only scant suggestions of the renovations and additions to this house. Perhaps the later wooden structure was built around the earlier, smaller, brick building.

[12] See the *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 1803-1817. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C., especially the letter written August 7, 1803 to John Lenthall, and the letter of January 7, 1808 written to John Lenthall and George Blagden.

1927-1934), William M. Jeinline (1935-?), Ruth and Peter Larson (1979-1982), Lewis Adkins (1983), Ivan E. Smith (1984-1987), John Hanley (1988-1997), William Fecke (2002-2005), Tom Kelly (2005-present). From 1879 until 1926 a management committee was in place that may likewise have played a significant role in decisions involving the cemetery's construction and maintenance, perhaps quite similar to that played by the cemetery's trustees in the early nineteenth century. Again, the names of many of these individuals are recorded, but their individual roles in the cemetery's maintenance have not been traced.[13]

In addition to the superintendents, the maintenance crew employed by the cemetery may have made decisions about specific plantings, and about the construction of tombs/vaults. Superintendent reports to the vestry of Christ Parish record the surnames of these regular laborers, though little is known about the individuals.[14] Individual laborers could be hired by plot and vault owners, with the approval of the cemetery, thus the cast and crew of hands involved in the shaping of the landscape did vary in accordance with the wishes of plot owners. While materials and supplies for individual vaults and family plots could be contracted by individual families, the regular suppliers used by the cemetery can be traced to a limited degree of accuracy.[15]

It should also be noted that while the vestry may have been concerned about the larger issues at stake in the cemetery (such as questions of landscape design, etc.), the superintendents were concerned with the pragmatic issues of construction and maintenance. Unlike 'skilled' craftsmen, such as Blagden, Ingle, and Coombe, the superintendents seem to have been largely individuals who advanced through the

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[13] This list of cemetery superintendents and their dates of service was compiled by Sandra Schmitt, board member of, and archivist for, the APHCC. The names and dates for the individual cemetery managers were compiled by Sandra Schmitt, board member of, and archivist for, the APHCC: William E. Hutchison, Peter P. Little and Charles H. Venable (1879-1882), Horatio Browning, Peter P. Little, and Charles H. Venable (1883), Horatio Browning, Dr. William E. Roberts, and Charles H. Venable (1884-1887), Dr. William E. Roberts and Charles H. Venable (1888), William E. Hutchinson, George C. Henning, and Charles H. Venable (1889-1890), William E. Hutchinson, Henry C. McCauley, and James Berry (1891), W. W. Danenhower, Henry C. McCaulet, James Berry (1892), W.W. Danenhower, Henry C. McCauley, and James Berry (1893), W. W. Danenhower, Thomas S. Denham, and Lewis B. Taylor (1893), W. W. Danenhower, Thomas S. Denham, and Lewis B. Taylor (1894), Lewis B. Taylor, Rev. Gilbert F. Williams and Dr. Alexander N. Coby (1895), Rev. Gilbert F. Williams, Dr. Alexander N. Coby, and Charles W. Bland (1896), Lewis B. Taylor, Dr. Alexander N. Coby and John T. Earnshaw (1897-1898), Lewis B. Taylor and John T. Earnshaw (1899), Lewis B. Taylor, John T. Earnshaw, and Adam Gaddis (1900-1901), Lewis B. Taylor, Adam Gaddis, and Charles W. Bland (1902), S. J. McCathran, Adam Gaddis, and Charles W. Bland (1903-1906), Albert W. Bright, James E. Hutchinson, and John C. Shroeder (1907-1908), James E. Hutchinson and John C. Shroeder (1909), James E. Hutchinson, John C. Schroeder, and Charles W. Terry (1910-1913), James Berry, John C. Schroeder, Lewis B. Taylor (1914-1915), James Berry, John C. Schroeder, and John L. Johns (1916-1917), William M. Heinline, John C. Schroeder, and Lewis B. Taylor (1918), John C. Shroeder, William M. Heinline and John Gordon (1921-1926).

[14] The reports of Charles J. Smith regularly mention the names Graham, Johnson, Lovejoy, Jr. and Cross on the cemetery labor payroll between c. 1860 and 1881, though other names appear from time to time, flagging was provided by Shelton, bricks by Rothwell, and cement by Campbell

[15] Records are not complete about this type of information, and the accuracy and detail seem to vary depending on the superintendent involved. The only known surviving archival sources for this information are available in the archives of Christ Church.

ranks of 'laborers,' and were thus cognizant about practical issues of construction, even while having no formal instruction in design.

One feature of the cemetery for which there seems to be relatively complete documentation of construction is the public vault. Because this project was funded by the federal government, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital recorded the individuals involved in its construction, and the services that they rendered to the endeavor. Phillips and Hanna completed the scrolled stone-work on the front of the vault, Gideon Davis made the iron door and its ornate lock, W.W. Lowe completed the brickwork for the door, C. Buckingham supplied the iron railing, and William Bush completed the necessary excavation of the ground. [16]

4. Original and subsequent owners, occupants: After purchase for the use as a burying-ground, the land was owned by Henry Ingle, vestryman of Christ Church and one of the commissioners for the city of Washington's committee for the direction and improvement of the city's public burying grounds. While only Ingle's name was on the deed for the land, the cemetery's preamble and articles of subscription indicate that the financial burden of the endeavor was borne by a group of men, not solely by Ingle himself.[17] In 1812, when all expenses for the cemetery had been repaid to the original subscribers, presumably through the sale of family and individual burial plots, Ingle signed over ownership of the cemetery to the Vestry of Christ Church, which owns the cemetery to the present day.[18] Since 1976 the cemetery has been leased from the parish by the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC), an "independent and non-denominational" organization.[19] The lease bears a term ending July 21, 2019, after which date the direction of the cemetery's administration will be renegotiated.

5. Periods of development
    a. Original plans and construction: The original burial ground occupied square 1115, in the Southeast quadrant of the L'Enfant plan for the city of Washington, a square that can be roughly approximated according to the modern street grid by E Street on the north, 18th Street to the West, 19th Street to the east, and G Street to the south. This original square encompassed 4.5 acres of land.

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[16] *Accounts of and Abstracts of Expenditures, 1817-22, and 1830-33*. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Vol. 1, Records of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Financial Records. RG 42, Entry 72, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[17] The 1812 bill of sale of the cemetery from the corporation to the church, like the original deed for the land, mentions only Henry Ingle as the proprietor of the cemetery. This suggests that he officially managed the affairs of all the subscribers to the cemetery, and that his was the name publicly associated with its management. The bill of sale is in the Christ Church, Washington Parish archives.

[18] The signers of the articles of subscription, and thus the cemetery's original investors were: Henry Ingle, George Blagden, Griffith Coombe, S. N. Smallwood, Dr. Frederick May, Peter Miller, John T. Frost, and Commodore Thomas Tingey..

[19] For information about the APHCC, refer to the cemetery's web-site, "Historic Congressional Cemetery": http://www.congressionalcemetery.org/ .

No physical descriptions of the cemetery exist for the first decade of its existence, nor has any visual documentation of its form been located. The site was rural, surrounded by farms, and overlooking the Anacostia river. Preparation for the establishment of the cemetery must have included surveying the site, and allocating its boundary lines (the cemetery was within the L'Enfant grid, but outside of the urban core that was under construction, so that would have been necessary to demarcate its boundaries clearly given the lack of extant roads). Once the boundaries of square 1115 were surveyed, the existing tree cover must have been thinned, or completely cleared, and perhaps the ground was leveled to a certain extent. The cemetery was laid out by its subscribers, within the square boundary of its street lines. Burial sites were also allocated according to a regular, linear system, and that paths were probably inscribed according to a grid-plan. It is likely that a wooden fence was constructed to enclose the burial grounds, as is supported by the fact that similar enclosures were ordered for the public burial grounds of the district.[20] While a program was not set in place for plantings, articles from the 1820s mention the presence of cedar trees, a traditional planting for burial grounds, and it is likely that other trees would have dotted the landscape.[21]

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the landscape during this period was the group of federal cenotaphs. Constructed from Acquia Creek sandstone in a simple geometric form (consisting of two steps, topped by a cube, with a conical cap), these cenotaphs were grouped together in a section of the burial ground, and arranged in a regular, strictly geometric, pattern. They were painted white, most likely to imitate the appearance of marble, and would have presented a strong contrast to the simple grey sandstone and slate markers that were otherwise in place throughout the cemetery. These markers were a distinct break from tradition and their form was the most original feature of the landscape.

b. Changes and additions: Additions of land to the cemetery were made in approximately five stages. The first addition was made around 1854, when two sections of land were added to the cemetery: it was extended to the west as far as 17th Street, SE and a segment of land was also added south of the original burial ground, extending the southern boundary for this leg of the cemetery south to H Street SE. In 1859 a block of land was added to the cemetery to make it a solid square in shape, at which point the cemetery could be described as bounded by E Street SE to the north, H Street SE to the south,

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[20] See Appendix 1 for "An act for the improvement of the Grave Yards in the City of Washington, for the appointment of Sextons thereto, and for other purposes," *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, VII, no. 990 (20 March 1807): 1, which stipulates the requirements of the district's commissioners for improvements to be made to public burial grounds.

[21] For two of the earliest descriptions of the cemetery see: "Congressional Cemetery: Extract of a Letter, dated Washington City, April 24, 1820," *The National Recorder*, 3 June 1820: 364, and "National Burying Ground: Extract of a Letter from one of the Editors, now in Washington," *The New England Farmer, and Horticultural Register* 1, no. 26 (25 January 1823): 206.

17th Street SE and 19th Street SE as its western and eastern boundaries respectively. In the mid 1860s, two additions of land were made. One addition acquired a segment of federally-owned land for cemetery use, pushing its eastern boundary to 20th Street SE. The second addition, to the southwestern portion of the cemetery, pushed its boundary along 17th Street SE to the heights just above the Anacostia River (a southern boundary line that is ambiguous due to the changing course of the river, but now generally accepted to be defined by the path of the Commodore Barney Circle and then running diagonally up to H street). The final addition to the cemetery was made in 1874, when an arm of the cemetery was added, pushing its boundary between G and H Streets SE as far east as the line of 23rd Street SE.

It is significant that the cemetery did not begin to make additions to its territory until 1854. For nearly the first fifty years of its existence, the cemetery's form had adopted the traditional churchyard burial-ground form, and had not participated in any aesthetically-oriented design plans. When the cemetery began to make additions to its land in the 1850s, this action was due to two motivators. First, the burial ground was starting to approach full-capacity, and the vestry wanted to receive revenue from continued burials. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the rural cemetery movement had changed the national approach to cemetery construction. The managers of Congressional Cemetery added land, increased plantings, and took various actions to beautify the cemetery in correspondence with the values of the rural cemetery movement. While they continued to lay out the new sections of land in their conventional grid-plan method, a gatehouse, brick and iron enclosing walls, a flag-stone entryway fountain, and an Italianate public vault were all constructed at the cemetery. These additions to the landscape indicate the vestry's interest in keeping the cemetery's appearance fashionable with current trends. Descriptions of the cemetery from this period also indicate that visitors to the cemetery evaluated it in terms of the rural cemetery movement. The variety of plantings was increased, and records also indicate that families began to invest time, money, and energy in the plantings on their individual plots. Family plots were enclosed by iron fencing, and ornate plantings made within their borders.

The final addition to the cemetery, in 1872, came at the end of the rural cemetery movement. It corresponded, however, with the beginning of the national lawn-cemetery movement. Perhaps conveniently for Congressional Cemetery, since the lawn cemetery movement reduced construction and maintenance costs of cemeteries, it also was made at a point when the cemetery's resources were limited by the withdrawal of federal support. This new arm of the cemetery, thus, received a more minimal approach to beautification. Most monuments are simple and close to the ground, and plantings more scarce. Copings around family plots were discouraged at this point, and the appearance was dominated by monuments, the occasional tree, and lawn instead of ornate plantings.

B. Historical Context:

In the churchyard tradition: the early years of Washington Parish burial ground

I long to lay this painful head,
And aching heart, beneath the soil,
To slumber in that dreamless bed
From all my toil.

For Mis'ry stole me at my birth,
And cast me helpless on the wild;
I perish! Oh, my mother Earth!
Take home thy child!

On thy dear lap these limbs reclin'd.
Shall gently moulder into thee;
Nor leave one wretched trace behind,
Resembling me.[22]

In 1807, when the ground subsequently occupied by Congressional Cemetery was purchased for use as a burial ground, there is little evidence that Americans thought about cemeteries as landscaped spaces, let alone as dynamic parts of the urban fabric. Rather, burial grounds were incidental as sites and important solely for the role they played in acknowledging the human connection to death and triggering mediations upon the phenomenon of dying. In the opening excerpt from a poem published in 1807, the anonymous American author's approach to the concept of death and burial is perhaps typical of the period. Death is not an event to fear, but rather a much-anticipated opportunity to escape from the travails of the world. Likewise, burial and the subsequent decomposition of the body offered the individual a chance to retire to an untroubled union with nature ("my mother Earth") and implicitly with the world's divine creator. A burial site was, thus, a transient place for the commemoration of an individual and one that, rather than eternally eulogizing the dead, marked the return of a once-human form to the hands of nature. This manner of approaching the concept of death and burial is in keeping with the traditions developed in Europe around the construction of churchyard burial grounds, a burial tradition that was carried nearly seamlessly to North America in the period of Colonial settlement. It is in large part to this tradition of churchyard burial that Congressional Cemetery owes its original form and conception, and thus it is necessary to establish key concepts and parameters of this tradition before situating the site more specifically in the budding new nation.

The churchyard form

The churchyard as it existed in eighteenth-century Europe was a form that had begun to develop in the middle-ages and had become a fully-developed type by the sixteenth century.[23]

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[22] Stanzas 3-5 from the anonymous poem, "The Grave," *The Literary Magazine, and American Register* 8, no. 47 (August 1807): 101.

Churchyards were constructed in the cloisters of churches, or on the grounds immediately surrounding the church, though the designation of churchyard could be given to any burial ground owned and administered by a parish, irregardless of physical distance from the church itself. Churchyards developed due, in part, to the desire to be close to the relics and the other physical remains of holy individuals, which were housed in churches. The phenomenon expanded because of the belief that, "the dead body of a Christian created by its very nature a space if not altogether sacred, at least . . . religious."[24] With the passage of time, burial in churchyards became an important source of revenue to parishes, as individuals and families paid for privileged locations. The profit margin of the churchyard increased its ubiquitous nature, and it can be imagined that this was one strong motivator for the continuation of the churchyard practice across the Atlantic in struggling Colonial parish communities.

Those who could not afford to purchase specific sites were buried in common graves, essentially large pits into which bodies were deposited. In urban areas, with churchyards in Paris and London as the quintessential examples, these common graves took on mammoth proportions, becoming "veritable pits thirty feet deep and fifteen by eighteen feet in area, which contained between twelve hundred and fifteen hundred bodies; the smaller ones between six hundred and seven hundred. There was always one open, and sometimes two. After a few years (or months), when they were full, they were covered over and other pits were dug nearby, in the part of the atrium left undisturbed the longest."[25] It is perhaps this last point that is the most important, at least to understanding the diffusion of the churchyard form in the colonies. In churchyard burial, bodies only remained interred as long as there was empty space in the grave-yard. When the area was full, the soil would be turned over anew, and any un-decomposed human remains were disinterred and deposited elsewhere. Because of this, the site of individual burial was not understood to be permanent, and focus was placed more on the religious connections between site, death, and afterlife, than upon enduring memorialization of the dead at the site of burial.

The landscape of the European churchyard was thus defined by a few key elements. First, the area of ground encompassed by the cemetery was small – rarely more than five acres. Second, the space was defined more by its vicinity to the church than by the monuments that it contained. Wealthy burials were typically made inside the churches themselves, causing the few markers standing in churchyards to be of a more modest scale. Third, the space was crowded with burials, and distinguished by the presence of the anonymous common pit grave. The presence of these anonymous mass burials would have been amply evident both to the senses of sight and smell, and would have contributed significantly to the impact of the churchyard on visitors. Finally, a sense of the transience of humanity coupled with the permanence of immortality was intended to be imbued in the space. The ground was less a space of the individual dead than it was a site marked by its own holiness. Visitors focused on the universal truths of the temporary human form and the endurance of the after-life, instead of meditating on individual biographies.[26]

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[23] See Phillipe Ariès', *The Hour of Our Death*. H. Weaver, trans. (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1982) for the most extensive study of the European tradition of death and burial. For his discussion of the development of the churchyard form see pp. 55-56.

[24] Ibid., 41.

[25] Ibid., 56.

[26] For a much more detailed discussion of the phenomenology of the churchyard, see Phillipe Ariès', *The Hour of Our Death*, in which the first half of the book is dedicated to sorting through the various narratives about

This cemetery form was carried virtually unchanged to colonial North America. Ubiquitous across Europe, it was recreated relatively seamlessly by the various colonizing nationalities. While rural cemeteries tended to be family plots rather than churchyards (due to the difficulty and expense of transporting bodies by cart, horseback or foot to churchyards several miles distant), the urban churchyard was the norm in the developing cities.[27] In his study of American cemeteries, J.B. Jackson remarked that in this early period, the importance of the cemetery was in forming a "community of the dead, an army of the saints, admonishing the community of the living," a statement that recalls the universal message of life's transience and immortality's permanence developed within the European tradition.[28] In the North American continuation of the European churchyard tradition, the individual grave-site was relatively unimportant. Instead, the churchyard existed in societies as a reminder of the passing of life, the values of community and the moral precepts of religion. While a focus on landscape and site grew progressively important in the nineteenth century, in the eighteenth- and early years of the nineteenth-centuries, no such considerations were made, "There were no family plots … When the last row was filled subsequent graves were crowded in wherever there was room. … The frequent cutting of grass to produce a lawn was a 19th Century innovation; floral decorations were rare, and the custom of visiting the grave to tend to it was still not general. Ornamental planting was unheard of."[29] Instead of being important for its physical characteristics, the site was key for the moral lessons the community of the dead could teach the community of the living.

All this does not mean that the early churchyard did not have specific landscape characteristics. Rather, it means solely that those who lived in these communities did not consciously focus on the physical qualities of burial grounds. The early American churchyard was defined spatially by its small size, its vicinity to a church, and the relatively haphazard placement of burials marked simply by slate or wooden monuments. Trinity Church Episcopal burying-ground in New York City is the most famed urban example of this Colonial adoption of European cemetery form, and clearly demonstrates the Colonial tendency to repeat in full the European conventions of churchyard burial.[30] Certainly there was more land available for burials in the colonies than there was in the congested urban spaces of Europe. This larger available space did not cause modification in modes of burial practices. In the urban churchyards of the colonies, burials were anonymous for the large part, and as cities grew, shortness of space caused continuous re-use of burial sites, and the layering of one grave above another. As the years passed, therefore, the American churchyard grew closer to its European paradigm.

Changing traditions

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churchyards, and to conveying a sense of what these spaces would have been like, as well as defining their importance within communities.

[27] See the first chapter of David Charles Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) for a discussion of the family plot vs. churchyard conventions in the colonial period.

[28] "The Vanishing Epitaph: From Monument to Place." *Landscape* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1967-68): 23.

[29] Ibid., 23.

[30] For further discussion of Trinity Churchyard, as well as a reproduction of the cemetery's appearance, see Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, Ch. 1.

Despite this deeply ingrained tradition of urban churchyard burial, change was in the air on both sides of the Atlantic. It is apt that the age of Revolutions, in which the United States gained its independence from Great Britain, and France rose against the rule of monarchy, is also the era in which tradition began to lose its grip upon burial practices. Richard Etlin ascribes this change in burial practice to a larger urban reform movement, which sought to purify the city and to make it more egalitarian:

> The vision of the new city questioned both the physical aspect of the urban infrastructure – squares, streets and the network of houses –and the public institutions which traditionally were located there. The reform program was twofold in its aims. First, it sought to refashion the city through an amelioration of the public thoroughfares and the private dwellings. Second, it embarked upon a campaign of exclusion which sought to rid the inner city of institutions which harbored disease and decay.[31]

In France in the period of the Terror and Directory, reforms were made that specifically separated burial grounds from the urban fabric, and that also attempted to recreate burial grounds as monumental areas, celebrating the ideals of the new governmental regime.[32] These burial reforms in France were triggered by an urban catastrophe that occurred at the Cimitière des Innocents in 1780. In that year the basement walls of buildings nearby this, the oldest and most heavily used churchyard in Paris, collapsed, causing a few thousand bodies to fall from their graves in the cemetery into the basements of neighboring buildings.[33] This event captured the attention of an international audience, and authors outside of France began to speak of the need for reform.

In some senses the young United States can be perceived as lagging on the heals of this European movement. Its federal government, unlike that of France, made no nation-wide declarations for cemetery reform, and the fact that the creation of cemeteries as monumental areas was certainly not on the forefront of the American government's thoughts seems obvious given the hesitant and gradual commitment to federal monumentality even in the nation's capital. Likewise, no significant manuscripts published by civic leaders, theorists, or reformers of the era dwell extensively on the reforms needed to burial systems. Perhaps this general silence is due to the fact that the largely rural nature of colonial society caused there to be a lack of urgency for the reform of burial practices, in contrast to the European need for immediate intervention to prevent further disasters. Equally possible is the fact that, with all the other complications of managing the new nation's administration, reform of burial practices was neglected for the default comfort zone of the traditional churchyard form.

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[31] "Landscapes of Eternity: Funerary Architecture and the Cemetery, 1793-1881," *Oppositions* 8 (Spring 1977): 15.

[32] See Etlin, "Landscapes of Eternity" for further discussion. In 1804 Napoleon's Imperial Decree on Burials declared the separation of burial grounds from inhabited areas. Pierre-Louis Roederer's document, *Des institutions funéraires convenables à une république qui permet tous les cultes, et n'en adopte aucun…* (Paris, year IV), discusses the Republican values that the French of this era connected with reformed burial grounds.

[33] See Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 28-29 for a discussion of this event and its international ripples. For a further description see "Cemeteries and Catacombs of Paris," *Quarterly Review* 21, no. 42 (January-April 1819): 359-97.

Perhaps reflecting the relative silence of the nation's founders on the topic of burial grounds, the scholars who have written histories of American cemeteries tend to focus either on early colonial forms of cemetery design, or to jump to the innovations of the rural cemetery movement and thereafter, without defining any particular national interest in cemetery design in the early years of the Republic.[34] Yet, evidence does indeed suggest that Americans were thinking about the issues at stake in sites of burial, and were both aware of the reforms being undertaken in Europe and concerned to make similar efforts in their own country. Understanding these issues is crucial to sorting through the complexities evident in the founding of Washington Parish Burial Ground in Washington, D.C., the unique origins of which suggest the influence of a populace negotiating the early stages of a shift from tradition to innovation in cemetery planning and management.

The first form of evidence to the fact that Americans were concerned about their cemeteries is physical. There are at least two American cemeteries, now noted and recognized by historians, that show evidence of reform-minded notions in their planning and precede the establishment of the Washington Parish Burial Ground in 1807: the New Haven Burial Ground, New Haven, Connecticut (begun 1797) and the Franklin Square Cemetery in Buffalo, New York (established 1804). Both of these cemeteries were organized by private corporation, rather than administered and funded by parishes. Likewise, both were constructed on picturesque sites, outside of the cities themselves, and beautified by a certain degree of planning and planting. New Haven Burying Ground was planned by a known designer, Josiah Meigs, and both individual and family lots were sold. In these sites, thought was given to creating a physical appearance that developed a certain beauty and dignity for the site. In direct contrast to the shabby appearance of traditional burying sites, "The new corporation placed Lombardy poplars along the roadways. The poplars grew fast and straight, quickly providing the grounds with shade and ornamentation. The straight trees accented the geometric design of the grounds, emphasizing the regularity and stability of the institution. A few weeping willows were scattered throughout the grounds."[35]

These 'reformed' cemeteries presented a number of significant differences from the churchyard traditions of the past: first, the organization was private/civic, not religious, second, attention was given to the physical appearance of the cemetery as a site, and, finally, the notion was developed that the site would be a permanent resting place and exist in perpetuity as a landscape of memory for the individual dead. The landscapes created by these reforms were characterized by the presence of more enduring monuments, plots that were carefully laid out, an over-arching organization of circulation in the cemeteries, and specifically planted and cultivated greenery. While they did not represent the extreme espousal of picturesque theory later embodied more fully in the rural cemetery movement, these early planned cemeteries differed significantly in their appearance from the traditional churchyard, and paved the ground for change in burial conventions.

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[34] This broad statement will be supported by perusal of monographs and articles alike. As prime evidence of this phenomenon see the broadest survey of American cemetery history, Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity*. While Sloane writes that after the revolution "the old colonial ways were unacceptable," and that "In this atmosphere, Americans decided that the colonial graveyard reflected older ideas, passé theologies, and social conflicts," he moves quickly in a single chapter from the revolutionary moment to the mid-nineteenth century discussing only three innovative burial grounds over the course of a few pages, and not placing them within a nationalizing framework. To Sloane, as to others, the cemetery history of this moment is only a quick prequel to the blossoming of the rural cemetery movement (to which he significantly devotes more space).

[35] Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 32.

The second form of evidence for a national interest in cemetery reform during the early Republic is literary. American writers in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries began to take notice of the reforms occurring internationally in cemetery form, and to advocate for the validity of these reforms. Stories introduced in the form of 'international news' also helped to teach such reform-minded lessons to the nation's readers. In *The Literary Magazine, and American Register*'s 1805 volume, for example, a number of articles spread across the journal's issues reiterated this theme. These articles will perhaps help to situate the status of the cemetery in the American mind in the early years of the Republic, and to suggest the manner in which the new nation's citizens were thinking about the moral and physical aspects of cemetery reform.

In July 1805, an article appeared entitled "German Cemeteries," which remarked to the journal's readers that,

> it is certainly a curious fact and worth noticing, that Germans have begun to remove the burying-place a mile or two from every city or town, by which means they have abolished, or paved the way towards abolishing, all the epitaphs and inscriptions which generally abound in church-yards, and too often disgrace the memory they mean to celebrate; and have substituted for the offensive cemetery an agreeable kind of garden, more calculated to inspire calm devotion than sentiments of horror.[36]

The implications of this statement for a new direction in American cemetery design are clear. First, separation between burial and solely religious affiliation will allow memory to be retained about the dead without offending changing sensibilities. This point reflects the desired republican separation between religion and the state, as well as the multi-denominational identity of the United States. Second, by referring to the church yard as an "offensive" form of cemetery, and to the new burial grounds as an "agreeable kind of garden," the author urges the reader to espouse the reform-minded cemetery. There is no question that churchyards are offensive – both physically and morally – the author claims, and the new form of cemetery offers an agreeable appearance to the senses, even as it likewise coincides with the values of the new civic government. Questions of visual appearance and moral lessons are linked to the physical form of cemeteries in this passage.

Two articles in the August 1805 issue of this journal dwell on the same theme. A short article entitled "A Rustic Cemetery" acts as a strong invective against the churchyard burial form. This article is worth quoting nearly in its entirety as it grapples clearly and forcefully with the issues at hand:

> When I walk amidst the woods and groves which have been reared and fostered by my own care, there is a pleasing melancholy in the thought of reposing beneath their protecting shade, when the hand that planted them lives no more.

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[36] Anonymous, "German Cemeteries," *The Literary Magazine, and American Register* 4, no. 22 (July 1805): 38.

> How different an asylum to that with which the crowded churchyard presents us; where the avarice of the living confines within narrow limits the repository of the dead; where the confused medley of graves seems like the wild arrangement of some awful convulsion of the earth. Humanity recoils at the thought of lying down amidst so confused a multitude, and sighs for a peaceful grave!
>
> Talk not of consecrated ground! The beneficence of my Creator is as extensive as the circle of the universe; nor can a spot be found which does not bear the impress of his providential care and kind regard.
>
> Give me to rear a grove of majestic oaks, under whose shade I may, while living, behold my children sporting, and, when dead, my bones may quietly rest.[37]

In this passage, the author represents the churchyard as a place without peace, without the true consecration of religion (which is linked with the presence of nature), and filled instead with the unorganized jumble of humanity, as well as the greed and confusion of the city. While this author does not specifically outline the need for a cemetery outside of the limits of the city, it is clear that his sentiments would be more closely aligned with this idea than with the perpetuation of burial in crowded churchyards. Likewise, his adamant love of nature and the "pleasing melancholy" of the natural setting is a strong argument in favor of the picturesquely sited and designed burial ground on the periphery of the urban setting, or even beyond its limits. There is also the sense that a meaningful site of burial, surrounded by the beauties of hand-planted natural elements will create a potent space to be memorialized across generations – the author's children have played on the future site of the grave, and it is imagined that they themselves may lie beside their father on the site where their own children have played – each generation will remember, honor, and cherish their ancestors on a meaningful site, which is constantly renewed by the beauties and cycles of nature, and the cultivating hand of man. This article could simply be touting the superiority of the family burial ground over the urban churchyard, but its strong invectives against the churchyard, and its even stronger meditation upon the religiously-inspired natural site would have had obvious implications to the early nineteenth-century reader.

A second article in this same issue, "Impropriety of Burying in Churches," attacks urban churchyard burials more directly by using international evidence.[38] It tells of a Swedish physician, a Dr. Hasselquist, who travels in Turkey and observes the beauty of Turkish burial sites – a beauty that he specifically attributes to their distance from towns, and to the beautiful plantings that are made on the burial sites. The author then proceeds to quote a British nobleman, Sir Matthew Hale, in an invective against churchyard burial, and to cite the premier text arguing for rural burial, John Evelyn's book *Sylva*.[39] The author ends his article by turning explicitly to the American situation, and suggesting improvement for the future:

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[37] W. "A Rustic Cemetery," *Literary Magazine and American Register* 4, no. 23 (August 1805): 127-128.

[38] O., "Impropriety of Burying in Churches," *The Literary Magazine, and American Register* 4, no. 23 (August 1805): 133.

[39] I have not been able to determine if the citation of Sir Matthew Hale refers to any particular extant text. Hale (b.1609-d.1706) was primarily a legal and scientific theorist of the seventeenth century. John Evelyn's (b.1620-d.1706) book is still recognized as a foundational text for the history of landscape gardening: *Sylva, or, A discourse of forest- trees, and the propagation of timber in His Majesties dominions as it was deliver'd in the Royal Society the XVth of October, MDCLXII, upon the occasion of certain quaeries [sic] propounded to that illustrious assembly by the Honourable the Principal Officers, and Commissioners of the Navy: to which is annexed Pomona, or, An*

> In America, the practice of burying in churches is not yet abolished, either by law or by common sense. But ideas of a better mode are gradually advancing among us; and in time we shall probably observe an absolute divorce pronounced between the church and the cemetery, so that they shall not only cease to be one and the same, but even be removed from each other's neighbourhood.[40]

In this concluding paragraph, the author gently chides his countrymen for being behind-the-times on the issue of burial reform, and for failing to use their common sense to arrive at these ideas on their own. Like the authors already discussed, this man calls for a complete separation between church and cemetery, the expression of a desire for a civic space that is divorced from the constraints of a particular religious denomination. The removal of the cemetery from the neighborhood of the church is implicitly a move of the burial ground away from the urban fabric. There is a sense created by the accumulated arguments of this article that it is necessary to create spaces appropriate for death, just as one creates spaces appropriate for life – the cemetery as a spatial concept is thus in its initial moments of conception. The church must be located in a residential area if it is going to appropriately serve the community. By moving the cemetery out of the neighborhood of the church building, society is removing it from the realm of the living as well, relegating the cemetery to a space of its own.

What these texts suggest is that Americans of the early Republic were indeed concerned with cemetery reform. These articles discussing the proper form of cemeteries occurred frequently, and they had the common refrain of linking burial with nature and removing it from crowded churchyard spaces. This suggests that the two reformed cemeteries known in this early period to scholarly literature may indeed not have been the only cemeteries whose form was affected by these concerns and predilections. In fact, the complex early history of the Washington Parish Burial Ground will reveal that precisely these types of concerns were indeed on the minds of citizens developing the nation's capital, and that this landscape was created partially in response to these reform-minded movements.

Washington Parish Burial Ground in the young capital

The early history of the Washington Parish Burial Ground situated within this formative period of nation-building and civic reform. Constructed at the sunset of the churchyard era, but a number of decades before the start of the rural cemetery movement, this burial ground was created on uneasy territory somewhere between traditionalism and reformation. As a burial ground ultimately affiliated with an Episcopal parish, the church-origins of the cemetery could not have been more conservative or more fully nested in the traditional ideals of the European churchyard. If the early history of the cemetery were solely that of a conventional church burial ground, this would be a simple and predictable story to tell. However this cemetery was unique

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appendixe concerning fruit trees in relation to cider the making and severall ways of ordering it published by expresse order of the Royal Society: also Kalendarium hortense, or, the Gard'ners almanac, directing what he is to do monthly throughout the year. London: Printed by Jo. Martyn and Ja. Allestry, 1670. It is important to note that the specific citation of European texts proves the American connection with the current debates ongoing in Europe about the reform of burial grounds.

[40] Ibid.

for its role as a national cemetery and burial ground for Federal officials until the advent of the Civil War. It was also an anomaly in the fact that it was created as both a civic and a church burial ground. Through these multivalent influences, the Washington Parish Burial Ground came to be closely linked with all of the reform-minded ideals of the Republic. It is only through this accumulated background discussion of traditional cemetery form, innovative American models, and textual accounts of early American cemetery reform, that the seeming contradictions of the early history of Washington Parish Burial Ground can be understood as a cohesive web. The early history of this cemetery is that of an unexplored 'type' in cemetery history. Following the churchyard burial ground, and preceding the development of the rural cemetery movement, Washington Parish Burial Ground represents the Early National reform cemetery, a burial type in need of further research.

The nature of the federal city's founding created the multilayered civic and social situations in which this cemetery could come into being on a middle-ground between tradition and reform. In 1791-92 the site for the new federal city was chosen, and its ground-plan laid out by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in an area encircled by a few pre-existing communities (including Georgetown, Alexandria and Bladensburg). The grand plan for Washington D.C. as designed by L'Enfant was a vision of a glorious capital city, carefully organized around a core of federal buildings, and representing each member of the republic's family in its street-plan. It was conceived to harbor the ideals of the nation and to be a microcosm for the growing Republic's structure. The city grew slowly, however, due to the ever-present forces of politics, the general civil unrest in the post-Revolutionary period that caused problems nation-wide, and the lack of financial support from the federal government. Acting out of its temporary home in Philadelphia, the federal government administered the new city from afar, while individual builders, land-speculators, and contractors did the actual work on site to move the new city toward fruition. The government did not move to Washington until 1800, and even in that year federal commitment to the capital city was ambivalent at best, with Thomas Jefferson modifying the vision of the city from a grand national capital to a 'federal town.'[41]

In all its anticipated grandeur, however, the plan did not account adequately for the mundane, while competing federal and local legislations made the establishment of practical aspects of the city unusually complex. A telling example of this selective planning was the fact that no designations were made by L'Enfant on the city's plan for a civic burial ground. This exclusion, however, did not prevent the obvious necessity for such sites. The early history of the capital's burial grounds is not extensively researched, and contemporary published sources offer only hints toward uncovering its history more completely.[42] It seems clear that families continued the

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[41] A good source for reading about the history of Washington, D.C. in this early period is, "Coming into the City: Essays on Early Washington, D.C. Commemorating the Bicentennial of The Federal Government's Arrival in 1800," Kenneth R. Bowling, editor. Special Issue, *Washington History* 12, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2000). See specifically C.M. Harris' article "Washington's 'Federal City,' Jefferson's 'federal town'," 49-53, for a discussion of the city's changing urban vision.

[42] The most wide-ranging studies of Washington, D.C.'s cemeteries have been carried out by Paul Sluby for the Columbian Harmony Society, and his research seems to be virtually the only work that has been published on early cemeteries of the capital city that are no longer extant. See the bibliography of this report for a complete list of Sluby's publications on D.C. cemeteries. In reading through the Washington newspapers from the early years of the 19th century, there are very few references to burial-grounds. The few that occur are folded in obituaries, and make largely oblique references to family burying plots. Most obituaries do not even mention the site of burial. A good

tradition of family burial grounds well into the nineteenth century, and that public burial grounds were a relatively new phenomenon developed in the last decade of the eighteenth century, but not truly given any attention until the early nineteenth century.[43] Churchyards were also a ubiquitous burial tradition in the area, with the establishment of the parish burial ground of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, referred to from early days as Rock Creek Cemetery, having preceded the arrival of the federal capital by more than seventy years. The fact that the nation's capital grew slowly and that much of what composed the District of Columbia remained relatively rural until the final decades of the nineteenth century perhaps allowed the city to deal with the burial of its citizens in a somewhat casual manner. The complex status of Washington as a city with federal, local, and religious organizations all with a certain degree of over-lapping administrative power also makes the early history of burial in the city more difficult to trace, with the persistent multilayered authority over these sites continuing through much of the nineteenth century.[44] All of these factors are at play in the early history of the Washington Parish Burial Ground, and influenced the nature of its formation.

The city of Washington established public burial grounds in 1798, with a declaration that seemed to acknowledge early recognition of the problems that citizens perceived with the nation's casual burial systems, and perhaps to suggest familiarity with the nascent cemetery reform movements as well. The original order written by the city's commissioners on February 23, 1798 declared:

> In consequence of the numerous objections which have been made against burial grounds in other cities, the Commissioners of Washington have laid out two squares on the borders of the city, viz. squares 109 and 1026, and have directed a portion of each to be well inclosed for public burial grounds for the use of all denominations of people.[45]

Two phrases in this order are particularly important. The first is the opening statement, "in consequence of the numerous objections," that alludes quite clearly to the authors' awareness of the urban problems with cemeteries in other cities, and their conscious response to the vociferous cries of the reform movements. Second, the explicit notice made by the authors that the sites selected are "on the borders of the city," should remind one of the common theme of calling for

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example of this phenomenon would be the Holmead family burying ground. Although the burial plot was located on the Holmead family farm, no mention of it was made when Anthony Holmead's sons (John and Anthony) advertised the sale of the land at auction on April 12, 1806 (*The Washington Federalist*, No. 831). Mention of the family burial ground was also not made in later discussion of the adjacent public burial ground, even though it seems that the two sites may have become one. Paul Sluby's study *Holmead's Cemetery (Western Burial Ground) Washington, D.C.*. (Washington, D.C.: Columbian Harmony Society, 1985), seems to have been the first text to explicitly sort through the conflation of the two names and sites, and identify the early history of the cemetery as a family burial ground.

[43] See above footnote. The first reference in area newspapers that I have found to a civic burying ground is in the March 19, 1806 obituary of Charles McLaughlin, Esq. run in the *Washington Federalist*, no. 833 (based in Georgetown), in which the author notes that the remains of the deceased were brought to Georgetown and were "conveyed to the new burying ground." I have not found any equivalent notice of the civie burial grounds in the Capital city itself, though it is reasonable to suspect that one might exist.

[44] A useful article discussing the early disputes over legislative power between district and federal governance is Willam C. diGiacomantonio's, " 'To Sell Their Birthright for a Mess of Potage': The Origins of D.C. Governance and the Organic Act of 1801," *Coming into the City*: 30-48.

[45] As quoted in the *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972.

rural burial sites made by the *Literary Magazine*'s authors. The sites selected were indeed each approximately a mile from the city's planned civic core, thus at a healthy distance from what the city's commissioners anticipated would be its most heavily populated urban center. Also, both were in the northern quadrants of the city, though one was on the western border, and the other near the eastern border. Located on the periphery of the city, these burial grounds would thus adhere to the links between death and nature, exhibited in the texts already discussed. Likewise, by ordering good enclosures for the sites, the city's commissioners suggested that they would be at least minimally tended by the city and not allowed to disgrace the name of the new capital. Finally, it is worth noting that the order calls for the burial grounds to serve for "all denominations of people," since family and churchyard burial grounds could restrict the individuals with a right to burial on their land, this phrase is particularly important. It acknowledges the civic mores of the public burial ground – like the republic that was being formed, these burial ground were, at least nominally, to be accessible to all races and classes.

Evidence suggests that these sites were indeed used for burial, however, there is no record that they were properly enclosed and cared for as stipulated. A later act from 1807, which will be discussed extensively below, suggests that these early burial grounds were simple and un-managed spaces used for the burial of the city's least privileged citizens, while middle class and farming often made use of family burial grounds. Rock Creek Parish's burial ground, established in the churchyard of St. Paul's Episcopal Church sometime before the Revolutionary War, seems to have been the destination for elite and governmental burials in the first years of the nation's capital. Evidence of this fact comes from newspaper discussions of funeral ceremonies. Extensive obituaries were not common, but when a federal official or military leader died, lengthy descriptions of the ceremonies accompanying his funeral and burial appeared in the local press. One such description of a funeral procession arriving in the Rock Creek burial ground was included in the *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*'s obituary for Brigadier General Levy Casey,

> When the procession arrived at Rock creek, it was formed on foot, (two and two) the carriages following behind, and proceeded in that manner to the grave. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Pall-bearers, with white scarfs [*sic*]over their right shoulder and white gloves. The chaplains of Congress and other ministers with white scarfs over the right shoulder and round the hat, and white gloves. The serjeants [*sic*] at arms, clerk of the House, and Secretary of the Senate, with white scarfs [sic.] over the right shoulder only. The members of the House of Representatives, with black crape on the left arm.[46]

[46] "Death of Brigadier General LEVI CASEY." *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*. Vol. VII (6 February 1807): 3. Note: Congressional Cemetery records indicate that Levi Casey is buried in that cemetery. I have not traced the history of this particular burial, however, this evidence suggests that if indeed Casey is buried in Congressional, he must have been moved to the burial-site at a later date. This would not have been entirely unlikely as re-interments were common, and could have been completed in this case because of the later purchase of a family plot at Congressional, or the new cemetery's higher status and semi-official governmental connection. This fact is also supported by the federal government's transfer of a number of important bodies to Congressional Cemetery in 1832.

Even though cemeteries were not frequently in the national news, it is clear from this passage that the cemetery formed an important site for public display of mourning and ritual activity. In this descriptive passage, some of the themes that later become key to the site-identity of Congressional Cemetery are evident: the act of processing through the countryside, national leaders dressing to play the role of mourning, and wearing specifically ceremonial attire. The funeral procession created a space of mourning around it, of which the burial site was offered the spatial climax. This procession connected the city with the burial site in the countryside, while the prominent presence of Federal officials transformed the event from the memorial of an individual citizen into a civic pageant of mourning. Such public displays of mourning would have occurred solely for middle-to-upper-class burials, and this particular newspaper description is so detailed only because the individual involved was a prominent federal figure. Naturally it was also this powerful class of individuals who took the lead in changing the burial systems of the city.

While Rock Creek Parish may have offered a suitably dignified burial ground for the city, there were also several reasons for seeking out a more appropriate location in which to bury the city's dignified dead. Rock Creek Parish is located five miles from the Capitol, a substantial distance in the early nineteenth century. This distance meant that funeral processions would take most of the day to wind from the center of the nation's capital to the burying-ground beyond its periphery, negotiating poorly-graded (or non-existent) roads, and perhaps incurring great expense in the transportation of the corpse and funeral cortège to the burial site. Imagine the nation's dignitaries – Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate – spending their day decked out in funeral regalia, riding along dusty roads on horseback or in carriages, each time that a person of importance died in the nation's capital. The situation must have been far from ideal. These inconveniences would only have been dominant themes for upper class burials – lower class burials would have been made in the civic plots closer to the city's center, or on family sites near farm residences – and the faults of the cemetery system, therefore, would have been a major factor solely in the lives of those who wished to maintain a certain status in burial. An additional complication to the use of Rock Creek burial ground as the premiere cemetery for the nation's capital was the fact that burial on its grounds was reserved solely for members of the Episcopal Church. While many of the nation's leaders were indeed Episcopalian, this type of restriction surely must have frustrated those who were not, or who espoused republican ideals of separation between civic and religious functions. Perhaps the deaths of a few of the nation's dignitaries sparked citizens in the capital to think about these complications and to foment for a change in the situation – just a little over a month after the burial of Levi Casey, evidence of the beginning of an improved burial system for the nation's capital began to appear.

The individual history of the Washington Parish Burial Ground originates in this early moment of Washington's history, when attention was first paid to its civic burying grounds, and perhaps was triggered by a number of awkward high-class funerals. This new concern for the city's burial practices was signaled by the passage of "An Act for the Improvement of the Grave Yards in the City of Washington, for the appointment of Sextons thereto, and for other purposes," in March 1807 (Appendix 1).[47] This act calls for the city of Washington to lay claim to the two city

[47] The entire text of this act was published as, "An act for the improvement of the Grave Yards in the City of Washington, for the appointment of Sextons thereto, and for other purposes." *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, Vol. VII, No. 990 (March 20, 1807): 1. Perhaps not incidentally, this was also the first

squares offered by the federal government to the city for use as burial grounds (no. 109 and 1026). Since burials were already occurring at these sites prior to this date, the city's 'laying claim' to the burial grounds took the form of organization and administration rather than actual acquisition and definition of territory. The act calls the mayor to appoint three commissioners to over-see the fencing-in of the burial grounds with "sufficient locust or cedar posts and chestnut rails," as well as the construction of "the necessary gates and stiles," and it appropriates $450 dollars for these activities. In addition, it calls the commissioners to divide the two squares into burial sites, and to lay out appropriate paths and passages through the two cemeteries. The act authorizes and funds the construction of houses for the sextons at both of the sites, and outlines the duties of the sexton and the procedures for burial-site sales in the cemeteries.

The "Act for the Improvement…" contains several elements pertaining to the physical appearance of the site. It outlines that there will be three separate sections in both burial grounds: one for family plots, the second for "white persons of all denominations" in individual burial sites, and the third for "slaves and people of color." It then notes that "the commissioners shall separate the several portions by a thorn fence, if they should deem it advisable."[48] Thus, the rigid social strata are to be forcefully inscribed in the landscape of the cemeteries. In addition, the sextons of the cemeteries are given the injunction to "dress the graves neatly, […] use diligence to keep the grave-yards, fences and stiles from being injured." All of these administrative layers of the cemetery's management are new, since up until this point the cemeteries seem to have been managed rather organically by the community, without leaving any particular legislative or administrative record. The importance of this fact can not be over-emphasized – civic burial was entering a new era in which organization and management were crucial to its perpetuation. These modifications can be understood as being established place in direct response to the general civic concern for improvement in the nation's burial systems.

The act did not contain extensive stipulations for the appearance of the landscape, but it did clearly impart the fact that the city's commissioners felt invested in the appearance of the cemetery landscape, and wanted it to reinforce the social structure of the city, while presenting an appearance of the city's civility. These underlying values can be seen through a few different aspects of the act. Particularly crucial was the concept of planting thorn fences between the three portions of the burying-ground. This would provide both a physical and a visual barrier between the burial zones. Upper-class citizens could feel protected from the presence of the burials of inferior classes, and also from seeing any visitors to these burial sites. Likewise, the thorn bushes would at least provide the illusion that there would be no physical contact or contamination within the shared burial ground for these groups. Interestingly, this act also links the cemetery plots directly to the urban fabric of the nation's capital – private family plots could be purchased and registered by address of residence, and then later sold along with the real-estate of the house if a family so desired. This provision may have been conceived as a mode of reiterating social and urban order in the cemetery's fabric. Finally, the presence of an appointed sexton in residence at the cemetery, and controlling its daily functions, would allow the city of Washington to maintain constant surveillance of burial activities. Likewise, the city-administered aspects of the cemetery linked it carefully with civic rather than religious affiliation. The burying-grounds

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instance in which a Washington, D.C. newspaper ran a front-page article containing any form of discussion of burial grounds.

[48] Ibid.

envisioned in this act, therefore, while not elaborate by later standards, were clearly envisioned as carefully maintained, organized and supervised sites. These provisions also signal the fact that the conception of a cemetery is starting to transform: burial is no longer intended to be the transient, casually marked family cemetery, but instead to be a recognized civic site.

Steps were taken immediately after the passage of this law to move the improvement of the two burying-grounds toward fruition. In early April, the three commissioners appointed by the city posted a notice in *The National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* calling for bids to be placed to provide the materials for the enclosure and ground-work on the cemeteries. Since this is a key piece of documentation in the history of the city's cemetery construction, it is repeated in full here:

NOTICE

In pursuance of a law of the Corporation of the city of Washington, directing the improvement of the Public Burial Grounds, PROPOSALS will received by either of the subscribers, until the 1st day of May next, for furnishing the following materials; by the 1st day of June next, viz.

4	red cedar posts, 8 feet long, and not less than 8 inches diameter at the smallest end
6	do. 12 feet long, and not less than 12 inches diameter at the smallest end
750	Neat split chestnut rails, 11 feet long, not less than 7 inches wide, and not less than 3 inches thick at the thickest edge.

The above to be delivered on the Wharf, on the Tyber creek near the Theatre, or on square No. 109 near Mr. Hollmead's.[49]

191	red cedar posts, 8 feet long, and not less than 8 inches diameter at the smallest end.
6	do. 12 feet long, and not less than 12 inches diameter at the smallest end.
955	best split chestnut rails, 11 feet long, not less than 7 inches wide and not less than 3 inches thick at the thickest edge.

To be delivered on the Commissioners wharf on the Eastern Branch, or on square No. 1026, near Mrs. Young's on the Bladensburg road.[50]

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[49] While the history is not well documented the Western Burial Ground seems to have been located on or near the site of the Hollmead family burying plot. With time, the two came to be joined, and Western Burial Ground was known in subsequent years as "Hollmead's Burial Ground."

[50] Square 1026, in the Northwestern quadrant of the city, would have been a fair distance from the Eastern Branch of the Potomac. While this indication is vague, one of the commissioners must have owned a wharf on the Potomac, and was willing to transport the materials from his wharf to site 1026, if the proposals were sufficiently modified. It is worth noting, coincidentally, that the Washington Parish Burial Ground *is* located adjacent to the Eastern Branch, and that such a point of delivery would have been much more convenient for bringing materials to that new burying ground than to the Eastern Burial Ground at a fair distance.

The proposals must specify at which of the aforesaid places the materials will be delivered.

PROPOSALS

Will also be received until the 1st May next, for making &c. putting up in a Good & Workmanlike manner, 36 pannels of s rail, morticed post and railed fence, and 6 large Gates. The whole of the work to be completed by the 1st day of July next

ROBERT UNDERWOOD,
HENRY INGLE,
THOMAS H. GILLIS,
Commissioners.[51]

This notice provides evidence both for the materials that the commissioners thought would be necessary to complete the work, as well as their general approach to contracting the labor, and their time-line for the completion of the project – it seems that the project had a certain urgency and momentum, since the commissioners hoped to have the improvements completed within two months of the advertisement's appearance in the newspaper. The sites upon which the burying-grounds were to be completed are indicated to the readers by person-oriented knowledge ("near Mrs. Young's on the Bladensburg road" and "near Mr. Hollmead's"), suggesting that although these plots of land had been the sites for burials since 1798, they had yet to develop independent identities as burying grounds. The emphasis of the commissioners was on the acquisition of appropriate materials for the cemeteries' improvement, which would be prepared and provided through contract with a local individual(s). Likewise, the preparation of the sites themselves was to be contracted, and the commissioners' stipulations for such bids were simple. The individual must simply estimate the cost of making and assembling on site a "morticed post and railed fence" and "6 large Gates." The desired physical appearance of these various elements is not given any elaboration, and it must be assumed that the commissioners were relying on traditions of craftsmanship and construction convention to provide them with materials crafted to produce the desired effect. The cemeteries planned, therefore, were to be created within vernacular traditions of design, construction, and maintenance. The era of the cemetery as designed landscape was yet to come.

With these plans for civic burial grounds underway, what need would there be for a churchyard to be planned at the same moment? At least one of the city commissioners, even while acting upon the city's stipulations expressed in its "Act on the improvement…" was dissatisfied with the land supplied by the city and federal government for the burial grounds and was using his own social and religious connections to change the situation. On April 4, 1807, a week before the city commissioners' call for bids was published in the National Intelligencer, Henry Ingle met with the other vestry of the newly-formed parish of Christ Church Episcopal, Washington Parish, and wrote the "preamble and articles of subscription" for a new cemetery (Appendix 2).[52]

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[51] "Notice in pursuance of a law. . .," *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, VII, no. 1012 (10 April 1807): 3.

[52] Henry Ingle was a key figure at a number of levels. The Parish of Christ Church was being established at this same moment and the church building's design negotiated. In December 1806, it was Henry Ingle himself who had placed a notice in *The National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* calling together all the "subscribers for

Claiming that "a great inconvenience has long been experienced by citizens residing in the eastern portion of the city for want of a suitable place for a burying ground," the preamble for the new cemetery announces, "it is well known that the one [burying-ground] at the Northeastern boundary of the city; now occupied as such, is a low and watery situation and very unfit for a place of interment."[53] Citing the necessity for a more appropriate piece of land to be provided for burials, the authors of the document announce that square 1115, located near the marine hospital, has been purchased for the location of a new burial ground, and declare that "this piece of ground is thought equal to any that can be had in the city for that purpose."[54]

This cemetery, owned by a group of subscribers, followed the model of cemetery administration established in the New Haven Burying Ground. However, by promising that once free-of-debt the cemetery will be given to Christ Church, the subscribers partially reverted to an older model of cemetery administration and in the process created what seems to have been a rather unique hybrid form. The stipulations about sale of lots, laying off of the ground, and the immediate instatement of a sexton echo the city of Washington's stipulations for the city's cemeteries.[55] The $2 per burial site price tag attached to the new subscription cemetery is substantially cheaper than the price set by the city for burial (between $2.50-$3.00), suggesting either that the subscribers wanted to offer a more charitable option to the citizens of the city, or else they desired to give people an incentive to turn to them instead of to the civic cemeteries. Just like the act for the civic cemeteries, this document calls for the enclosure of the new cemetery with a post and rail fence, as well as for the clear furnishing of a plan of the cemetery to the sexton. This plan was to consist of "the burying ground laid off in lots properly numbered, and each proprietor's name marked on his particular lot."[56] This was not a design plan for the cemetery, but rather a chart that demarcated the 3x5 foot lots, and mapped out the cemetery's site in terms of family names. This chart would have allowed for the maintenance of sites in perpetuity reflecting the importance of the individual and the family within the cemetery's form, and it also would have assisted individuals and families in the purchase of strategic sites within the cemetery, adjacent to figures of prominence. Unlike the civic stipulations, the cemetery's subscription did not call for the separation of zones of the cemetery with thorn barriers, but it did clearly specify that non-Christians could not be buried on the site. In each of its elements,

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building a Protestant Episcopal Church in the East part of the city of Washington," so the evidence is clear that he was deeply personally invested in the mission of the new church (VII, no. 964, 17 December 1806:3). Did Ingle have a conflict of interests between his official role as a civic commissioner on public burial grounds, or was his vision of the new cemetery ground truly one that would allow for civic egalitarian burial? There may not be enough archival evidence to answer this question. This may be a slight of hand – Ingle using his advantage as a commissioner to scope out expenses for his new burying ground – or he may simply have considered it a fair and simple substitutions – one burial ground for another. Alternatively, Ingle's intent may have been to both continue the public burial ground at square 1026, but simply allow citizens the option of a more fit place for burial. The records offer evidence that seems to point in slightly conflicting directions, so perhaps there was no real, cohesive plan/direction for the civic cemeteries other than the act cited.

[53] The original document is in the Vestry minutes at the archives of Christ Church. See the *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972 for transcribed document.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Perhaps these two sets of stipulations are so similar because of Henry Ingle's role in the formation of both, though specific authorship of both documents to Ingle can not be made conclusively.

[56] "Preamble and Articles of Subscription," Sixth point.

therefore, this cemetery was an interesting fusion of the old and the new, the religious and the civic.

One final early document reiterates the dual character of this cemetery: the deed for the purchase of the cemetery's land from the city of Washington, recorded March 25, 1808 (Appendix 3).[57] This deed reiterates the claim that "the square numbered 1026, heretofore appropriated and used as a burial ground, is an ineligible site for that purpose, in consequence of its low and wet situation," and notes that the sale of the plot was made on April 15, 1807, to Henry Ingle as the representative for a group of private subscribers helping to create the cemetery.[58] There are two elements to this deed that hint at the anomalous status of this new burial ground. First, the deed proclaims that this is a burial ground run by a private group of subscribers, but then notes that the cemetery will be "subject also to such regulations as the vestry of Washington parish in the Territory of Columbia shall ordain and establish," a fact that notes the cemetery's intermediate status neither as completely a privately run cemetery, nor as a typical parish-run burial ground. Second, the deed adds civic stipulations to the cemetery's existence. In the deed, the city official claims that this private/church run cemetery is also subject to the needs of the city, and *ipso facto* requires that one quarter of the cemetery's area be devoted to ground for the burial of those who can not afford the interment fee. The deed announces a two dollar cap for the sum that the cemetery can charge for a burial site, reiterating the stipulation of the cemetery's own articles of subscription, but perhaps also legally constraining the new private cemetery to offer a public service with its continued discounted burying rates. This document, then, is suggestive of the fact that even in its origins Congressional Cemetery was not easy to categorize; it was not administered solely by a private corporation, was not under the sole authority of a church, and the city did not have complete control over its development either. Instead, in its early years Washington Parish Burial Ground developed as a unique type, constructed from the influences of all these forces, but completely defined by none. In a developing and changing society, this cemetery was as experimental as the country in which it was created, and this fusion of types and identities paralleling within the cemetery's form became a key characteristic of the cemetery throughout its history.

There are no surviving descriptions of the cemetery in the first decade of its existence. In a city where even the central core of federal buildings were only in the process of construction, and the grand plan was more evident on paper than in reality, it is hardly surprising that a new cemetery would come into existence on the fringes of the city with little record or fanfare of its appearance. A visitor to Washington city in this period described the capital in terms that may help to place this newly forming cemetery within a larger urban landscape:

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[57] Liber T, No. 19, folio 219. An original copy is also in the archives of Christ Church. See the *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972 for transcribed document.

[58] Ibid. It is important to note that the claim that lot 1026 was too wet to be used as a cemetery may, in fact, have simply been persuasive rhetoric. While there is little surviving documentation of the Eastern Burial Ground, it was used as a cemetery from 1797 until at least the mid-19th Century, at which point the bodies were disinterred and removed to other area cemeteries. Thus, while it may not have been the best possible site for burial, it was an active burial ground for an extended period of the city's history. We must assume, therefore, that either other causes were motivating the founding of this new cemetery, or different groups of people were making use of the two locations.

> Washington wears, at present, rather a grotesque, than a picturesque appearance. The different proprietors and purchasers have cleared the wood upon their own lands, and erected houses, or parts of houses, leaving the adjacent ground to be cleared by those to whom it may hereafter belong; so that, except at Greenleaf's Point, and one or two other places, where there is something like a continuation of buildings, the whole is a kind of patch-work. At one place, a finished house presents itself totally surrounded by wood; at another, a half-finished one; at a third, the foundations of houses only are to be seen; and at a fourth, three or four unfinished carcases [*sic*]; so that any very correct calculation of the number or topographical description of the whole cannot be expected.[59]

Washington was a city where even the urban core could most aptly be described as a "patchwork" and its character qualified as an unfinished counterpoint of shells of houses within swaths of forest. The new burial ground was located a mile from the site of the Capitol, in an area that was well beyond the somewhat settled center of the city. The closest urban developments were those under construction at the Washington Navy Yard, a good half mile closer to the city's center than the cemetery. The site, when selected by Henry Ingle and the other subscribers to the cemetery, was almost assuredly covered by uncleared woods, and its nearest neighbors would have been outlying farms on either side of the Anacostia.

Yet, Washington was also a city of dreams and future imperial vision. Its residents might have been looking at somewhat shabby forests and unfinished houses, but seeing a grand urban center of the future. This dual vision of the city is evident in a description of Washington from 1800, particularly important because it was penned by Thomas Tingey, one of the cemetery's founding subscribers and long-time vestryman of Christ Church, in a letter to his daughter Margaret Gay Tingey. The excitement and future vision of this description gives some sense of the grandiose associations that citizens linked to the rural setting:

> A city in an infant state, not yet entirely eradicated from the semblance of Forests! – Cornfields! where abundant harvests have of late repaid the toil of the husbandman! Meadows & pasture grounds, yet replete with wild luxuriant flowering shrubs! Now destin'd for the seat of Empire – of the Arts, Sciences – the Emporium of Wealth and Commerce of your Country – where the Deliberative councils of the collected wisdom of our Nation, shall henceforth emanate into laws, maturely digested, for ameliorating the state of man in social government – uncontaminating Liberty to an admiring Universe[60]

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[59] Anonymous, "An Account of the City of Washington, Drawn up by a Foreigner, in 1803," *The Literary Magazine and American Register* 4, no. 23 (August 1805): 133-137.

[60] Letter of c. February 1800, written from Georgetown. Transcription in the Correspondence of Thomas Tingey. Lewis D. Cook Research Collection on Thomas Tingey. Kiplinger Research Library of the City Museum of Washington, D.C. Margaret's reply of March 8, indicates that she found this description quite compelling, and suggests that this type of though about the city would have been appealing to other citizens committed to the nation's future vision: "… The description you give me of the City pleased me extremely I think every person must like it when they see it in its infant state & thinking that it will be one day the Emporium of Wealth and Commerce of our country affords much pleasure."

In Tingey's description, views of rural productivity and natural wild luxuriance are coupled with visions of wealth and commerce. Imperial prosperity is tempered by "collected wisdom" and "uncontaminating Liberty."[61] This small section of only partially cultivated wilderness is anticipated as the universal city of admiration – the Rome or London of the future. These big dreams must also have been underlying the social vision of the cemetery's founders, and perhaps they were likewise present in their minds when they visited the site itself. A model of cemetery reform principles – on the outer limits of the cemetery, with a clearly demarcated burial plan for the perpetual rest of the city's dignified citizens – this site would have carried with it even in this early moment a kernel of national dreams wrapped around the capital city.

Within this unfinished shell of a city, certain details of the written record can give a sense of what a visitor to the cemetery might have seen in its first ten years. The square 1115 on the city grid was a plot of about four and one-half acres, a rather conventional size for a churchyard burial ground, and was roughly defined on the modern city grid by E Street SE to the north, 19th Street to the east, G Street to the south and 18th Street to the west. While the terrain of the area has certainly changed a great deal since this period, the site was probably even in 1807 a slightly sloped area near the crest of a hill and overlooking the hills on the banks of the winding Anacostia River. The site was probably not extensively modified in preparation for its function; it is likely that the trees were at least thinned, if not completely cleared as they would have been for the preparation of farmland, and that roughly geometric pathways were made through the square plot, perhaps running along its edges, and bisecting it into four even quadrants.

It is quite likely that some form of plan for the graveyard was actually drawn up, though this plan would have consisted in demarcations, and boundary definition rather than aesthetically defined planting and circulation patterns. In a meeting one month after the purchase of the land for the cemetery, a board of trustees was assigned to the cemetery, consisting of Griffith Coombe, George Blagden and Henry Ingle. These men were charged to "take the necessary care of and have a plan of the said graveyard laid off, agreeable to the best of their skill and judgment, and to contract for enclosing it in a suitable manner."[62] While this plan no longer survives, the evidence provided by the interment records of the cemetery shows that, from the earliest dates, plots were referred to by a numbering system that does, in fact, suggest a relatively accurate plan, carefully diagrammed and labeled, in use from an early moment. Designed in a practical fashion, this plan would have laid out the cemetery into purchasable lots, in rows that were as even as possible, and demarcated paths through the cemetery.[63] The plan could have been comparable in form to that drawn up for the New Haven Burying Ground, though perhaps not as finely drawn since no record of an individual designer has been preserved for posterity. The three trustees of the

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[61] Lest one get too caught up in Tingey's vision of "uncontaminating liberty," it seems necessary to mention that in January of the same year, his wife and he were corresponding about the sale of their slave and her daughter with their farm in New Jersey. The concepts of 'equality' and democracy that come to the forefront at Washington Parish Burial Ground were quite different from the vision of equality valued in the 21st century.

[62] Original document in the archives of Christ Church. Subsequently published in the *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972: 6.

[63] See the records in the archives at the gatehouse of the cemetery, under the care of the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery. The original system of marking sites was a system that identified burial ranges by letter. In the 1840s when the cemetery began to add large tracts of land to its territory, a new system of numbering was put into place that is still in use today. See Vestry Minutes, Book 1: 19 April 1854: 454, 457.

cemetery were men who were well-connected in the society of the new capital city, and they certainly could have asked any number of skilled draftsmen in the city to develop a plat of the cemetery, but likewise, as upper-class, powerful men any one of them would likely have had the resources to create such a drawing on his own, using published plans of other cemeteries as guidance. This site was certainly surveyed and mapped (to a limited degree) by a skilled workman, but the landscape itself was not designed; its burial, planting and circulation patterns were all vernacular.

A brief look at the biographies of these three trustees – Henry Ingle, George Blagden, and Griffith Coombe – may hint at the skilled resources available to the cemetery in this early period. Henry Ingle, already discussed above as a city commissioner on cemetery improvement, and a key figure in the founding of both Christ Church and Washington Parish Burial Ground, was an ironmonger (i.e. blacksmith) by trade.[64] He fashioned locks, gates, and other metal tools for the federal government in the construction of the central core of federal buildings. Griffith Coombe seems to have had a lumber yard and wharf, and was perhaps a contractor himself.[65] Of the three trustees, George Blagden was the most prominent in the building community of the young capital city. He was a free-mason, who worked directly with Benjamin Henry Latrobe from 1803 until Latrobe's 1817 resignation, on the construction of the U.S. Capitol, and on the Navy Yard.[66] Blagden was involved in the selection of the quarry from which Acquia Creek sandstone was supplied for the Capitol. Likewise, Latrobe sought Blagden's advice about questions of laborers for the capitol, contractors with whom to engage in negotiations, and even design decisions about certain elements of the structure.[67] This may seem like information peripheral to the early appearance of Congressional Cemetery, but it is crucial, since the knowledge and skills of these individuals must definitely have had an impact upon the formation, appearance and management of the cemetery. In questions involving the supply of lumber, Coombe would certainly have contributed expertise, while Ingle could have contributed to the process of fencing and securing the property, and Blagden might have influenced decisions such as the acquisition of stone for monuments in the cemetery, as well as the individual laborers commissioned to carve them.

In addition to the drawing of the cemetery's plan, and the surveying and preparation of the land for burial, the cemetery was fenced, presumably with the post and rail fence called for in the original "Preamble and Articles of Subscription." Perhaps this fence was built with the same types of materials called for by the city's commissioners on cemeteries, a likelihood that seems amplified by the fact that Henry Ingle played a vital role in the formation of both early cemeteries. If so, then the early cemetery can be visualized as being enclosed by a post and rail fence, made with red cedar posts and split chestnut rails. This cemetery would have had at least one gate, also of wood, though the fact that the city's commissioners had requested six gates for

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[64] For evidence of Ingle's activity in this capacity, see: *Accounts of and Abstracts of Expenditures, 1817-22, and 1830-33*. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Vol. 1, Records of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, Financial Records. RG 42, Entry 72, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[65] Ibid.

[66] See *Accounts of and Abstracts of Expenditures*, as well as the *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 1803-1817. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

[67] See the letters to Blagden, and the references to him in letters to John Lenthall in the *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 1803-1817. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

two burial grounds, suggests that this cemetery may have had multiple openings.[68] Inside the enclosure, the earliest slate and sandstone tombstone markers were erected. There are no records that discuss the plantings on the site in this early period. Copses of trees from the thinned forest could still have been in place, but no specific planting or organization of trees was carried out. Individuals may have planted specific trees or flowers near to the gravesites of their loved ones, though this custom was not securely in place at this period. The paths were at most graveled lines, inscribed in straight paths echoing the lines of the graves and the square boundary of the cemetery's fence.

Choicest sites were allocated for family plots, with individual burial sites made toward the outer edges of the cemetery. The family vaults of Blagden, Coombe and Samuel Smallwood (an original subscriber of the cemetery), are all gathered together along what became in the mid-nineteenth century the ceremonial entry-road to the cemetery. This cluster of ornate family vaults for the cemetery's founders reinforces the ties of status linked to specific burial sites. Finally, it is known that land was set aside south of the southern fence for "gratuitous interments, subject nevertheless, to the rules and regulations of the vestry."[69] While the cemetery did not adopt the thorn fence policy recommended by the city officials to separate different sectors of society, the separation between those who owned multiple/family lots, those who owned individual plots, and those who were buried beyond the physical boundary of the cemetery's fence reproduced to a certain degree the vision of social control created by the city officials. Here, perhaps, the contrast was made even more pronounced by the creation of a landscape that denied the presence of the gratuitous interments – outside of the cemetery's fence, these burials were excluded from the consciousness of visitors and would have certainly gone unmarked by any permanent monument. Marked only by human-length indentations in the covering grass and foliage, these burial sites effaced the excluded 'others' from society's norms. The landscape of the cemetery, therefore, while not rigidly designed, nor constructed to adhere to any high-art aesthetic theories, would have created a specific aesthetic. In its form it maintained established norms of cemetery appearance in scale and in level of beautification, while it also began to embody the social structure of the nation's capital.

Becoming the Congressional Cemetery

In 1812 the cemetery was declared "free of debt" by its subscribers, and was sold to Christ Church, an event recorded in a bill of sale between Henry Ingle and the vestry of Christ Church (Appendix 4).[70] Very little seems to have changed about the cemetery in the first few years of the church's tenure of the property, and it is possible that for a brief period the cemetery did indeed function rather traditionally as a churchyard-style burial ground, with the exception of the presence of the city's restrictions on the cemetery's practices. The church had been established in the same year as the cemetery, and many of the same individuals were involved in the founding of both (Thomas Tingey and Henry Ingle, for example, were both founding members of the

[68] See the "Notice In Pursuance…" reproduced a few pages above. The six gates for the city's civic cemeteries are likely to have been needed because of the division of each of the cemeteries into essentially three socially-stratified burying grounds. Since the Washington Parish Burying Ground is not recorded to have had quite as rigid divisions in its burying procedures, and since it relegated undesirable individuals to burial outside of the cemetery's fence, it is possible that it in fact had fewer gates.

[69] Ibid.

[70] The original deed is preserved in the archives of Christ Church.

church and subscribers to the cemetery). As a church-run burial ground, the cemetery may have been seen as fulfilling a public service to the community (as claimed in its original articles of subscription), and as offering a moralizing space to the community, in the tradition of churchyard burial. Christ Church was seen by its parishioners as offering a boon to the morals of the community. One piece of evidence for this perspective can be found in a letter written by Margaret Tingey responding to her father Thomas Tingey's announcement of the founding of the new church, "I am pleas'd at the decision of a New Church, & at your unvaried attendance, knowing it will influence many whose time otherwise would be misspent seeking in idle unsatisfied pleasures the amusement punctuality would create."[71] It is reasonable to connect the moral force of the church with its burial ground. Yet, perhaps due to the unique dynamics of the young federal city, or the ambiguous public-private status of the Washington Parish Burial Ground, embodying the moral values of solely the local community seems not to have completely satisfied the trustees and the vestry.

In a vestry meeting in April of 1816, the church decided to set aside one hundred of the cemetery's best sites for the burial of members of Congress.[72] It is unclear exactly what motivated the vestry to make this decision, but one can only assume that it was made on the basis of a deliberate process of thought and was by no means a casual decision, since it deviated so strongly from any historic precedent.[73] In the after-math of the War of 1812, in which much of the capital was destroyed by the British, and the Washington Navy Yard, closest urban neighbor to the cemetery, was destroyed by retreating American forces, there may have been a desire on the part of the cemetery's trustees to help in the rebuilding of the capital city's identity and reputation after the war, by contributing a memorial site to honor the nation's dignitaries.[74] Or perhaps this decision was made in order to offer an additional incentive for the government to solidify and invest in its ties to the capital city. Because this decision is poorly documented, it is uncertain whether it was purely an entrepreneurial move on the part of the cemetery's trustees, or whether, perhaps, it was even solicited behind the scenes by individuals serving in the federal government. By the following April the appointed committee announced that the lots had been chosen.[75]

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[71] 5 Sept. 1807, written from Bath, ME. Transcribed in the Correspondence of Thomas Tingey. Lewis D. Cook Research Collection on Thomas Tingey. Kiplinger Research Library of the City Museum of Washington, D.C. The letter to which Margaret is replying, unfortunately, does not seem to have survived.

[72] See Book 1 of the vestry record in the archives at Christ Church, or the 1906 *History of Congressional Cemetery*. The vestry at this time consisted of Commodore Thomas Tingey (commander of the Washington Navy Yard), Griffith Coombe, James Young, Samuel N. Smallwood, and Mordecai Booth.

[73] One can certainly speculate, however. Perhaps congressmen were already being buried in the cemetery, and the cemetery hoped to profit in status for this phenomenon. Perhaps the cemetery felt that since government officials were being buried in the cemetery, the costs of security and maintenance were higher and an official alliance with the government would help to cover the costs. There is always the chance as well that this was a simply money-making venture by the vestry. Setting aside prominent burial sites for congressmen would potentially cause the more expensive sites to sell and bring greater revenue to the cemetery.

[74] This seems reasonably likely to have had a strong influence on the cemetery managers, given the fact that a number of veterans of the War of 1812 are buried in the cemetery, and that Commodore Tingey, personally involved in the military events of the period was also a trustee of the cemetery. It is unlikely, however, that conclusive evidence will ever be found to support or negate this possibility.

[75] See Book 1 of the vestry record in the archives at Christ Church, or the 1906 *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

A few years later in 1820, the vestry determined that these lots could also be made available to governmental department as well as their families, and also to the families of Congressmen. These lots were located in the eastern portion of the cemetery, extending from its northern corner, down most of its length to the south. This governmental axis of graves would have been paralleled by the prominent family plots of individuals, like Coombe and Blagden, that ran close to the western boundary of the burial ground along a north-south axis. This decision to relegate land specifically for use as the burial ground of the federal government was crucial to the ultimate form and history of this cemetery. While officially a church-owned burial ground from 1812 until the present, this 1816 vestry decision to become the congressional burying-ground changed the identity and status of the cemetery. The cemetery had already been created with an ambiguous and multi-layered civic/private identity, but from this point on, its most prominent identity was that of being the national cemetery.

With this decision to welcome the burial of the nation's serving congressmen, the cemetery also received one of the most formative elements of its landscape. Though their history is somewhat ambiguous, identical monuments and cenotaphs were constructed marking the sites of burial of each of the nation's congressmen (or in later years when their bodies were returned to their home-states, commemorating their deaths). These monuments took the form of a small platform, onto which a cube is placed, and the cube is capped by a simple conical form. The monuments were constructed of Acquia-Creek sandstone. This local stone was selected for use on the federal buildings by Latrobe, Blagden and Latrobe's assistant John Lenthall (though it must be noted that, with Latrobe absent in Philadelphia for the final decision, it was George Blagden, and John Lenthall who ultimately selected the stone and the quarries with which the government would deal).[76] A marble panel with brief carved inscriptions was inset on each side of the cubic form.[77]

The cenotaphs have long been attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect of the capitol, and an architect also in private practice in Washington for much of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, though the date of their design and initial construction has always been uncertain. The tendency has been to date the cenotaphs to 1807, the year marked on the oldest of these monuments.[78] Given the extreme rural nature of the cemetery's site in 1807, the fact that it was only just being cleared, established and fenced, and that the capital city as yet had no substantive iconographic program developed, such a monumental effort as constructing Latrobe's large cenotaphs in this very early year would have been truly exceptional. It seems more likely that this uniform design was not established until after the cemetery's decision to offer land directly to Congress for a unit of burial sites. The possibility that these cenotaphs date to a slightly later point in the cemetery's history is also corroborated by the fact that it is not until 1819 that a sketch of the cenotaphs, showing the brick vaulted tomb beneath, appears in the journals of Latrobe.[79]

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[76] See letter of January 17, 1804 from Latrobe to Blagden and Lenthall in *Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 1803-1817. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

[77] It seems likely that these inset marble panels are the result of a later nineteenth-century revamping of the design. Early descriptions mention the monuments entirely painted white, with inscribed lettering that is highlighted with black paint. If indeed marble panels were used in the original design, then why would they have been painted?

[78] For a review of the extant literature debating the dates of the cenotaphs see Breitkreutz, *Historic Landscape and Structures Report*.

[79] The sketch of the cenotaph is in a journal at the Architect of the Capitol Archives. See Breitkreutz, *Historic Landscape and Structures Report* for a reproduction of this sketch.

A famous 1812 sketch by Latrobe showing a possible monument for George Clinton, represents a similar cenotaph in the foreground, and in the background three cenotaphs nearly identical to those that are in Congressional Cemetery today. This monument to George Clinton was not constructed, however, and there is no evidence that the three cenotaphs in the background of the image had already been constructed prior to the creation of this sketch. Instead, it would be reasonable to hypothesize that Latrobe envisioned this cenotaph form as part of a possible commission for Clinton's monument, but did not actually design and erect the famed cenotaph form until after the cemetery's decision to designate a large portion of the cemetery's sites for the burial of Congressmen, sometime between 1816 and 1819.[80] After this decision was made, it would have been logical for Latrobe to be asked to create a vision for these governmental memorials, especially since he was then employed by the government, working closely with Commodore Thomas Tingey, director of the Washington Navy Yard and vestryman of Christ Parish, and directly with George Blagden on the Capitol.[81]

If indeed this cenotaph form was specifically designed by Latrobe to be repeated in a ritual manner over the grave-sites of each congressman buried in the cemetery, then it represents a significant designed element to the cemetery landscape, consciously claiming this site for federal memory, and dominating the form of this traditional churchyard by the inclusion of a repeated governmental iconography. Whether or not this was designed as a specific vision by Latrobe for a national cemetery, what is certain is that with the designation of the plots for federal use, and with the initiation of the construction of these monuments, the Washington Parish Burial Ground was no longer a parish churchyard, or even a municipal burial ground -- this re-envisioning of the burial ground created the first national cemetery.

The first National Cemetery

The importance of this new status, and the advantages and vision that could be reaped from this development was not lost on the cemetery's directors. Now the wood post and rail fence and the generally simple rustic appearance of the cemetery were no longer deemed appropriate. The increasingly monumental appearance of the multiplying cenotaphs must have made the simpler trappings of the cemetery seem rather anomalous. There was no precedent in the United States for the grand-scale cemetery, and the improvements made to this cemetery in the period are poorly documented and must have been tentative stabs at creating such a national landscape of the dead. What is certain is that the cemetery's trustees took full advantage of their new alliance with the federal government, and seemed to be attempting to establish closer ties, both physical

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[80] Since Latrobe resigned from his position as Surveyor of Public Buildings in Washington in Nov. of 1817, it is likely that his direct involvement with this project would predate his departure from the city in 1818. However, even if Latrobe initially designed the cenotaphs before his departure from the city, this does not mean that they were immediately constructed and set in place. Certainly they were constructed prior to 1820, when the first newspaper reference to their appearance occurs, see: Anonymous. "Congressional Cemetery: Extract of a Letter, dated Washington City, April 24, 1820." *The National Recorder*, 3 June 1820, 364.

[81] Another possibility, which remains unexplored, and for which there could possibly be no extant evidence, is that George Blagden, familiar with the 1812 cenotaph watercolor of Latrobe's, and with other of his designs for monumental funerary markers, may have produced the cenotaph form in use at Congressional, either on his own, or in consultation with Latrobe. It would certainly be reasonable to imagine that, even if designed by Latrobe, these monuments were carved by Blagden, or by his network of laborers.

and financial, with the government. The first example appeared in 1823 when a committee was appointed by the vestry of Christ Church to approach Congress for the appropriation of funds for the construction of a brick wall around the cemetery. In exchange for funding from the government, the cemetery's officials offered the government a larger hold on the cemetery's land – an additional three hundred sites. In this way they further solidified their ties with the government, even as they established the precedent of federal funding for the site. The petition was successful, and a $2,000.00 appropriation was received from Congress for the construction of the brick wall (Appendix 5).[82] The construction of the wall in question was over-seen by a committee of four vestrymen, who were also charged with establishing the plan that the cemetery's wall would follow.[83] The wall was finally completed in January of 1825.[84] Other improvements may have been made to the cemetery in this period, in the form of plantings, and the more careful detailing of paths, but there is little record of these efforts, which probably would have been carried out on an as-needed basis by the sexton of the burying-ground or at the specific request of the church officials. While the federal government offered this single, large assistance to the cemetery in these first ten years of alliance between the cemetery and the government, there is little evidence that any other actions were taken by the government to claim the cemetery as its own, other than the construction of the cenotaphs, and the large appropriation for the cemetery's walls. In the 1824 appropriation of funds to the cemetery, the statute refers to the cemetery solely as the "Christ Church, Washington Parish" burial ground, and does not overtly discuss the ties between the cemetery and the government.

It is probably in this period, and perhaps in response to the construction of the federal monuments, that the prominent families owning plots in the cemetery began to construct earth-domed family vaults. Two extant vaults along one of the main entries to the cemetery can serve as models for this new burial type. George Blagden was buried in his family vault upon his death in 1826. This brick structure has with a domed vault, and a stepped pyramid-like façade with sandstone trim capping the brick wall. The adjacent Coombe family vault, while more low-lying, also was constructed of brick with sandstone trim. These extravagant family vaults contrast significantly with the early form of family plot, well-represented by the simple sandstone markers over the grave sites of Mrs. Thomas Tingey (who died in 1807), and her husband, who was buried near her in 1829. The construction of vaults began a process of greater manipulation of the landscape, as well as greater elaboration of the visual appearance of the cemetery. This process gained momentum as the century progressed.

If the government only tentatively embraced its "national cemetery," and the church made minimal corresponding changes to its form, popular sentiment made a closer link between the burial ground and government, and in the eyes of the nation's citizens, this had become the official governmental burial ground. An article published in 1820 and circulated between a number of the nation's newspapers, was perhaps one of the first sources to make the cemetery

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[82] See 6 Stat. L., 294, or the 1906 Senate *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[83] See the Vestry Record, Book 1 page 191. The four appointed vestrymen were Reverend Allen, Samuel Smallwood, Thomas Tingey, and Henry Ingle.

[84] See the Vestry Record, Book 1.

publicly known as Congressional Cemetery.[85] While quite brief, and predominantly focused on making known to the public the prominent governmental officials who are buried on this site, this article observes two of the qualities of the cemetery that were to become the classic, identifying features of its landscape. First, the article discusses the qualities of the location of the cemetery – near to the banks of the river, and in a quiet out-lying portion of the nation's capital:

> During a morning ramble, which I took yesterday, along the eastern branch of the *Potomac*, I came to the grave yard, in which are interred the remains of those members of Congress, who departed this life while at the seat of the national government. It is situated on the bank of the river, about a mile southeast of the capitol.[86]

This description of arriving at the cemetery almost by chance, of discovering it in a natural site within the capital of the nation, creates an important identity for the cemetery as an appropriately constructed burial ground on the out-skirts of an inhabited area and in harmony with nature, but still within vicinity to the federal center in which the congressmen had served. Next, the article describes the monuments that have been constructed to the memory of the deceased congressmen, "The graves of those public characters are grouped together in one corner of the burial ground, over which is erected a neat and durable *monument* of free stone, inscribed simply with the name, age, &c. of the occupant beneath."[87] The distinctive element of the cemetery's landscape is noted as the group of congressional monuments. Located in a corner of the cemetery, these monuments carve out a national space of memory. In their simple and durable design, they offer visitors the opportunity to meditate on the simple moral principles for which the nation's leaders had offered their services to the government, and the lasting nature of these principles coupled with the nation's identity. In a city recovering from a war that had challenged national sovereignty, and in which the nation's capital itself had been ridiculed as unsubstantial, these monuments created a stable landscape in which to admire the nation's leaders as a group and to reinstate belief in the identity of the national cause. For this visitor to the cemetery, the opportunity to "come upon" these graves in a rustic setting at the fringes of the nation's capital, and to read and meditate upon the names of the nation's great men who had been buried on the site, represented an opportunity to solidify his/her own national loyalties.

These simple memorials would likewise have complimented the contemporary impulse to memorialize the nation's founders, tempered by concern about excessive luxuriance. The wide-spread desire for the construction of a mausoleum to George Washington in Washington, D.C., and the debates that were sparked by this monument-building impulse, brought questions of national memory to the forefront of public debate. While the question of a proper memorial to George Washington was not settled until after the Civil War, the important relation to the cemetery is the fact that citizens visiting its site would find monuments that could fulfill their desire for triggers of national memory. A watercolor sketch of a grand mausoleum for Washington painted by Latrobe in 1800, for example, assumed a form that was quite similar in

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[85] Anonymous, "Congressional Cemetery: Extract of a Letter, dated Washington City, April 24, 1820," *The National Recorder*, 3 June 1820, 364. This article in *the National Recorder* is cited as coming from the *American Republican* and it is possible that it appeared in other sources as well.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

its massing and Egyptian revival iconography to the cenotaphs that were ultimately constructed.[88] Meanwhile, John Nicholas, a congressman from Virginia, vetted the simplicity of a monument in the form of a "plain tablet" on which a visitor could "inscribe what his heart dictated."[89] These simple, geometric cenotaphs were created in sympathy with these sentiments. The pseudo-Egyptian/Classical form allowed the cenotaphs to be associated with ancient dignity and knowledge, while the simple inscriptions offered each visitor the opportunity to bring his own memories and associations of the deceased to the monuments, and to wrap each in an aura of personal/national memory.

An 1823 article discussing the "national burying ground" in detail must have furthered the popular knowledge about and sentiment for the cemetery. It also offers valuable information about the appearance of the cemetery in its early years as a national memorial site, and about the manner in which it was perceived by visitors to the capital.[90] The author of this article was an unidentified New York State journalist, visiting the nation's capital for the first time. He writes in this article that:

> the selection of a site for a burying-ground, the manner of laying it out, the sculpture of the monuments, and the inscriptions they bear, furnish a pretty correct index to the intelligence and taste of the inhabitants. In the congregation of the dead, you may study and catch the manners of the living, discovering in turn refinement or rudeness of taste, knowledge or ignorance, ostentation or modest retirement, affectation of sorrow, or the simplicity and sincerity of real affection and real grief.[91]

Thus, his visit to the cemetery and subsequent evaluation of its effects was not a casual occurrence. Instead, he judged the cemetery as an index of the civility of the city, but more broadly, since he does indeed speak of this as *the* national burial ground, he considered it to be an index of the refinement of the whole nation.

In order to make his study of the cemetery, the journalist made two trips to the site, the first a quick visit, by twilight with two friends (one American, one British), the second a solitary trip of a meditative morning hour before heading back to the Capitol for a session of the House. The site of the cemetery is quite important to the journalist. He describes it in these terms:

> This cemetery is in a remote and lonely situation, being something more than a mile in a southeasterly direction from the Capitol. It lies immediately upon the bank of East Branch, at the distance of only a few yards from the water's edge, but elevated considerably above it, and commanding an extensive view of the river. The winding path leading to it is over a wide and barren common – there

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[88] See the illustration in "Imagining Washington: Monuments and National Building in the Early Capital," by Rubil Morales-Vázquez in *Coming into the City*, 23.

[89] Ibid., 24.

[90] Anonymous, "National Burying Ground: Extract of a Letter from one of the Editors, now in Washington," *The New England Farmer, and Horticultural Register* 1, no. 26 (25 January 1823): 206.

[91] Ibid.

> are no houses in the vicinity – and it will be long before it will be in the midst of the city.[92]

The image conveyed in this description holds elements of both the sublime and the picturesque. The cemetery is 'remote and lonely,' at a great elevation, and to arrive at it one must cross a 'wide and barren common,' all elements that speak to the sublime experience of the rural setting. Yet the presence of the river below, and the winding nature of the path to the cemetery, likewise suggest that the harsher sublime elements of the view are moderated by the gentle civilizing qualities of man's hand on the landscape. The author praises this cemetery for its siting – and bemoans the fact that such precautions were not taken in New York City with the founding of its burial grounds. He then describes the appearance of the cemetery, prior to the construction of its new brick wall:

> This grave-yard contains an area of two or three acres, enclosed by a plain wooden fence, and sprinkled with copses of native cedar, stinted in their growth and many of them withered, either from the poverty of the soil, or from having their roots broken by the spade of the grave-digger. There are however, enough living to conceal many of the graves; and their verdure contrasted with the grey tomb stones produces an agreeable effect.[93]

Again, the cemetery itself is described in picturesque terms. The simple wooden fence, and the contrast between the cedar trees and the grey tomb stones would have given the landscape of the cemetery a domesticated quality in the sublime rural setting within which it was placed. The author approves of the cemetery's appearance. His approval suggests that the cemetery's rustic simplicity, combined with its natural site, and the picturesque quality of its monuments and plantings added to the landscape, presented a cemetery fully espousing the values he sought for his nation.

While much of the rest of this article focuses on individual inscriptions on monuments, it is worth pausing to read the reflections of this author upon the cenotaphs:

> Near the grave of George Clinton, commences a range of monuments, which extends for some rods toward the south, erected to the memory of members of Congress, who died at Washington. These memorials are placed in an exact line, are of the same height, composed of the same materials, uniform in their structure, and uninterrupted in the series, except by a marble pyramid in honor of Capt. Hugh George Campbell, of South Carolina. They are built of free stone, painted white, and consist of short, square, and plain pillars, with a cone at the top, and resting on a broad pedestal which rises by two steps. On the face of the pillar, is an inscription, similar throughout, with the exception of names and dates.[94]

These memorials are described in contrast to the rest of the setting. While the site of the cemetery is sublime, and its rustic qualities are picturesque, the cenotaphs introduce a

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

symmetrical and classical quality to the cemetery. The monuments are described as "same" and "uniform," and it is important to the author that they are erected in an exact line, painted white, and with the chiseled brief inscriptions painted in black to accentuate their words. This description of the cenotaphs differs distinctly from the 'grey tomb stones' remarked upon in the author's first description of the cemetery, and it becomes clear that this burial ground would have presented a landscape with markedly different zones. Upon approaching the cemetery, a visitor might first have been struck by its rusticity – the wooden fence, the slate monuments, and the shade of the cedar trees – then have been awed by the view out over the river and to the mountains beyond, perhaps especially noting the large drop in elevation from the height of the banks to the river below. Then, the Congressional monuments would have presented a third aspect to the cemetery, an elite Congress of the dead, giving order and a particular classical air of dignity to the site. By mimicking the appearance of marble monuments – painted white, with lettering incised and accentuated in black – these monuments made a claim of status and refined tradition for the nation. The slate monuments, more in the Colonial tradition, contributed to the earthy, local feel of the land, while the cenotaphs made this a landscape with a grand, national vision. This significance was not lost on visitors, as is amply evident from the reflections of this author.

Perhaps due to the publicity that the cemetery began to receive, or due to the increased interest and investment of the government in the idea of creating a national cemetery, the next decade would bring about significant changes to the cemetery's appearance. The new brick wall replacing the wooden fence was the first sign of change, but within five years there would be others. The cemetery created in the values of the early Republic would gradually be changed into a more deliberately crafted, picturesque, national landscape. These were not changes that occurred in isolation, however. Change was again afoot for the nation's burial practices. This time, the makers of Congressional Cemetery would not be on the cutting-edge of the reforms, instead, they would gradually espouse the precepts of the rural cemetery movement and slowly adapt the cemetery's form to the new standards. In order to understand the next phase of the cemetery's development, therefore, one must turn to the influence of Mount Auburn Cemetery and the subsequent evolution of the rural cemetery movement.

Rus in urbe: the development of the rural cemetery movement

The design of Mount Auburn Cemetery on land outside of Boston, Massachusetts has often been touted as a water-shed moment in the history of American burial practices. This is true to such an extent that rehearsing the details of its design and the general degree of excitement about its form would be redundant here.[95] Instead, a broad discussion of the general impact of the rural cemetery movement on a national level, and the specifics of its cemetery-landscape ideals will serve to situate the next phase of Congressional Cemetery's development within the national

[95] There are many good sources for reading about the history and development of Mount Auburn. Consulting a few general histories will lead a researcher to the rest. As a brief introduction to the topic, one could read the relevant sections of Sloane's *The Last Great Necessity*. For a book-length study of Mount Auburn and its history see Blanche Linden- Warden, *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery*, (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1989). A good article with which to begin thinking about Mount Auburn, and its effect upon the perception and design of American cemeteries is Stanley French's article, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (March 1974): 37-59.

sphere.[96] A more detailed discussion of the arrival of the rural cemetery form in Washington, D.C. will also contextualize the urgency of the vestry of Christ Church, Washington Parish, and of Congress to bring the National Burial Ground up to the new standards of cemetery design.

The term "rural cemetery" indicated a "burial ground located on the outskirts of a city that was designed according to the romantic conventions of English landscape gardening."[97] While beyond the boundaries of a city, and consisting of large and purportedly untouched tracts of beautiful nature, these carefully arranged landscapes of 'rural' land were constructed within a particular ideology of a distinctly urban culture.[98] These cemeteries were not solely designed to be locations for the eternal rest of the dead, but were also intended to be destinations for the living.[99] In an era of growing urbanism, these cemeteries were expressions of a pastoral vision – urban residents could make day trips to the cemeteries, picnic on their grounds, and meditate upon the transience of human life while enjoying the salubrious country air. These cemeteries were intended to be educational, teaching the visitors about horticulture and nature, while at the same time also offering art to urban residents. Thus, while rural in location, these cemeteries were dependent on urban money, visitors, and corpses for their continued existence. In this manner they were integrally linked to the fabric of neighboring cities, even while being located within the countryside.

Historian Aaron Wunsch has summarized the key qualities of the rural cemetery as embodied by Mount Auburn in the following terms,

> its layout represented an attempt to augment natural beauty with art and science. Roads and paths fitted the site's varied topography, a design solution that was at once economical, accessible and picturesque. Monuments, plantings, and the overall plan were to serve as lessons in art, history, botany and taste… While Mount Auburn was a metropolitan institution, it provided a 'soothing' alternative to the city. Contagion, commerce and the regimentation of the urban grid lay well outside its borders.[100]

The key differences between these cemeteries and their earlier urban counterparts for the purposes of this study can be summarized in a few quick points. First, rural cemeteries were deliberately located at a distance from settled urban areas, a quality to which Congressional Cemetery was already privy. Second, these cemeteries were no longer constructed on small tracts of land, but instead occupied large swaths of rural territory (Mount Auburn Cemetery was

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[96] Much has been written about the rural cemetery movement as well, and the ideas presented here will to a great extent be generalizations and broad claims about the movement distilled from these writings. To begin digging more deeply into the history, qualities and effects of the rural cemetery movement, consult the sources listed above about the history of Mount Auburn, but also read Thomas Bender's "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature," *The New England Quarterly*, XLVII, no. 2 (June 1974): 196-211, and David Schulyer's "The Evolution of the Anglo-American Rural Cemetery: Landscape Architecture as Social and Cultural History," *Journal of Garden History* 4, no. 3 (July-September 1984): 291-304.

[97] Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement," 196.

[98] See Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement," for a discussion of the changing ideologies at play in the Rural Cemetery movement as it developed over the course of the nineteenth century.

[99] A point first clarified by Bender in, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement," 196.

[100] *Historic American Buildings Survey: Laurel Hill Cemetery*. HABS No. PA-1811, 1999: 6.

constructed on a land parcel of 72 acres, Laurel Hill, the second rural cemetery to be designed, was on a tract of 32 acres near Philadelphia). Congressional Cemetery, with its 4.5 acres could certainly not claim this status of size. Third, unlike the churchyard cemeteries, which were designed largely by convention, the rural cemeteries were each uniquely designed to create particular landscape effects. Finally, these cemeteries were conceived as bearing messages in their own right: they taught visitors about history, art, and ideology, in a manner that was carefully crafted by their designers. This represented a distinct break from the churchyard form, in which the cemetery was an incidental space conceived solely as a place to bury the dead and to meditate upon the transience of human existence.

A predecessor to the urban park movement, the rural cemetery movement became extremely popular nationwide. Wealthy urban residents appreciated the opportunity to spend weekend days enjoying a cultivated park-like setting. Reformers were pleased that removing cemeteries from the urban core, and relocating them in rural areas, reduced the likelihood of contagion and disease spreading among urban populations. The rural cemetery movement dominated cemetery design in the United States from 1831, when Mount Auburn was constructed, to 1870, when Cedar Hill Cemetery in Newburgh, New York offered up the new model of the 'lawn' cemetery. During this nearly forty year history, the major cities of the United States competed with one another for the construction of the most-famed rural cemeteries. The residents of Washington, D.C., while not in the avant-garde of this movement were certainly aware of its precepts, and interested in taking advantage of the benefits of this popular movement. Likewise, the attention that the rural cemetery movement brought to the design and experience of cemeteries nationally, directed a proportionally greater level of attention to the country's national cemetery.

In the shadow of the rural cemetery movement: Beautifying Congressional Cemetery

In May of 1832, one year after the opening of Mount Auburn cemetery, Congress appropriated $1,500 to Washington Parish Burial Ground for the "erection of a keeper's house, for planting trees, boundary stones, and otherwise improving the burial ground allotted to the interment of members of Congress and other officers of the General Government."[101] For the first time the federal voice refers to this as the burial ground allotted for federal purposes, and it appropriates money to beautify this cemetery in a fitting fashion. A site was selected for the gatekeeper's house in the northwestern corner of the cemetery, but outside of the walls of the burial ground, and a committee of vestrymen oversaw its construction.[102] Between 1832 and 1834, the federal government then appropriated further funds to construct a public burial vault on the grounds of the cemetery, an important structure to the federal officials, since the government lacked an appropriate place for the bodies of officials to rest between their funerals and such time as a fitting grave could be prepared for them.[103] In 1834, the government also funded the rebuilding of the brick wall, which had been damaged by water, and also the construction of a culvert and drain, more carefully routing the passage of a small stream through the cemetery to prevent

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[101] 4 Stat. L., 520. Or see the Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[102] No designer or contractor was recorded by the Vestry for the construction of this building. Likely candidates, of course, would have been members of the parish community.

[103] Three separate statutes appropriated the money for the vault: 4 Stat. L, 581 (July 14, 1832), 4 Stat. L., 659 (March 2, 1833), and 4 Stat. L., 722 (June 30, 1834). See the Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*. See the Builders, Contractors, Laborers section of this report for the names of the men involved in the design and construction of the vault, as well as the amounts paid to each individual.

further damage.[104] As an indication of the government's increased commitment to the Washington Parish Burial Ground as the official national cemetery, the government paid in 1832 to have the bodies of Congressmen who had been buried in Rock Creek Cemetery transferred to Congressional.[105]

These changes to the cemetery's landscape may seem relatively minor but they represented a significant managerial and aesthetic shift. First, the federal government was funding projects to improve the cemetery with a virtually free hand, and actively investing in its appearance. Second, prior to these interventions, relatively few actions were taken to make a direct change in the over-arching landscape of the site. In the years between 1832 and 1834 several significant changes were made to the landscape. The government funded improvements for the beautification of the cemetery, offering funding for plantings made in the cemetery, as well as landscape-shaping boundary stones for grave-sites, and for the general improvement of the site's appearance. In the construction of the drain and culvert, the government also invested in a significant re-shaping of the natural landscape, in such a manner as to re-order it more fittingly for its purposes as a cemetery.

These changes, however, were not sufficient to bring this more than twenty-year-old burial ground up to the modern standards of cemetery design. More radical steps could have been taken by the government for the expansion and improvement of the land, but there seems to have been a certain level of ambivalence about the identity of the nation's cemetery. Several articles from this period discuss Congressional Cemetery, but then reflect on the popularity of the idea of moving the nation's cemetery to the site of George Washington's grave – a site that would be both more rural and more able to cement the national spirit because of its vicinity to the body of the 'father of the nation.'[106] Generally, however, the public praised the appearance of the cemetery in this period. They appreciated the changes in the cemetery's landscape that made it more 'garden-like' in form, and they associated feelings of nationalism with the cemetery even more strongly than in earlier periods.

Whether looking positively or negatively upon the cemetery's appearance, its visitors were judging it against the standards set by the new rural cemeteries. A woman who visited the cemetery in 1836 remarked, "The Congressional burying ground is an interesting place, though not so picturesque as such a spot should be. . . there is a *setness* about the long line of tombs of the Senators and Representatives rather chilling to the eye which associates poetry with the grave."[107] This woman measures the burying ground on the picturesque standard formed by the rural cemetery movement, and finds it to be defective; she also fails to appreciate the earlier, classical aesthetic evident in the cenotaphs, and objects to their jarring regularity that intrudes with the wandering of poetic thoughts about the site. In a letter to the editor of the *National Intelligencer* in 1839, an anonymous author noted that, "The site of this grave yard [the Congressional or Eastern burial ground] has been most judiciously chosen. It commands a fine

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[104] 4 Stat. L., 722 (June 30, 1834), a second appropriation was made in 1835 to have the job completed, 4 Stat L., 770 (March 3, 1835). See the Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[105] 4 Stat. L, 580. See the Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[106] See, for example, the comments in "Notes on a Northern Excursion," *Southern Rose* 4, no. 19 (14 May 1839): 148.

[107] "Notes on a Northern Excursion," 148.

view of the surrounding country and the Anacostia, which flows at a short distance below it, and, in a calm summer evening, when the water is still and placid, reflects from its polished bosom the beautiful landscape on the opposite side of the river."[108] The praise of the rural site of the cemetery, and the picturesque views available from it of the surrounding countryside, reinforce a conception of this as a cemetery fitting well with the national standard of cemetery design. The author of this article also praises the attempts made toward the beautification of the cemetery itself, noting that the cemetery is, "surrounded by a substantial brick wall, with three handsome gateways leading into the cemetery, through which run several fine avenues and smaller walks, ornamented with trees and shrubs, that are now beginning to give the appearance of a garden."[109] Here the author describes the cemetery turning into a garden, espousing the aesthetic of the rural cemetery movement. Instead of being dotted with cypresses in a romantic fashion it is now "ornamented with trees and shrubs," and the careful disposition of both grand avenues and smaller paths, corresponds to the carefully choreographed nature of paths through Mount Auburn, and other rural cemeteries. Another author admires both the order of the cemetery, as well as its ornamentation, perhaps appreciating the fact that the cemetery has not been completely re-done in the rambling picturesque fashion, "The ranges of lots are designated, north and south, by the letters of the alphabet, and east and west by numbers. The grounds are handsomely laid out in grass plats, which intersect, at convenient spaces, with graveled walks and ornamented with shrubbery and trees of various kinds, such as the willow, cedar, American poplar, &c. and the whole is enclosed by a substantial brick wall about seven feet high."[110] Here again, the author praises the ornamentation of the cemetery and the horticultural variety of its trees, both qualities valued because of the rural cemetery movement.

One final quality of the cemetery is given particular attention by visitors/authors in this period. Earlier authors focused on the illustrious graves of the congressmen buried in the cemetery. Authors of this period were attracted to the graves of famous men, but they frequently coupled these reflections with meditations on the humble and unidentified graves in the cemetery as well. While Mount Auburn, and a number of the other rural cemeteries, were essentially inaccessible to the lower classes, Congressional Cemetery was obliged to offer burial to even the most humble of citizens. The contrast of the celebrated graves of illustrious men, with the unmarked grass-covered hollows of indigent burials made an impression that appealed to the poetic spirit of the age. The significance of the presence of both the wealthiest and the poorest of the nation's citizens within the cemetery's bounds was not lost on the authors of this period. While a number of other sources could be cited expressing similar sentiments, a few stanzas from a poem published about Congressional Cemetery will serve here to demonstrate this phenomenon:[111]

The pomp of death was there; –
The lettered urn, the classic marble rose,
And coldly, in magnificent repose,
Stood out the column fair.

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[108] "The Grave Yards of Washington," *The National Intelligencer*, 10 May 1839.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Anonymous, "The Congress Burial Ground," *The National Intelligencer*, 5 November 1841.

[111] Another excellent example of this paring of the noble with the humble at Congressional Cemetery can be found in: E.B., "Meditations among the Tombs: Congressional; Burying-Ground," *Southern Literary Messenger* 8, no. 1 (January 1842): 81-85.

The hand of art was seen
Throwing the wild flowers from the graveled walk; –
The sweet wild flowers, – that hold their quiet talk
Upon the uncultured green. . . .

Did my heart's pulses beat?
And did mine eye o'erflow with sudden tears,
Such as gush up mid memories of years,
When humbler graves we meet?

A *humbler* grave I met,
On the Potomac's leafy banks, when May
Weaving spring flowers stood out in colors gay,
With her young coronet.

A lonely, nameless grave,
Stretching its length beneath th'o'erarching trees,
Which told a plaintive story, as the breeze
Came their new buds to wave.[112]

The author of this poem used various cues to spark specific emotional reactions in his or her readers. Classical allusions associated the cemetery with dignity, refinement and art. Natural descriptions evoked wilderness and rusticity. These two modes (the classical and the rustic) are intended to encounter one another in the reader's mind in a rather poetic or picturesque manner. In just such a way the contrast between the monument (the classical) and the unmarked pauper's grave (the rustic) brought a teary-eyed poignancy to the human experience of the landscape. The poet also brought together thoughts of individuality and citizenship – the great leaders lie in the vicinity of the most destitute, the egalitarian spirit of the nation is played out on this land.

In this transitional period, therefore, Congressional Cemetery attempted to respond to the increasing pressures brought on by the rural cemetery movement. While the cemetery does not appear to have been the subject of any artists' brush, these descriptive passages allow a tentative reconstruction of what the cemetery's landscape might have been like in this period. A visitor to the cemetery would still encounter the same small site, now enclosed by a seven-foot tall brick wall. Entering through the main gate of the cemetery, the visitor would walk down the central graveled avenue. The main entrance to the cemetery would offer the visitor a view of a landscape dotted by monuments of various sizes, and trees of various species (including willow, cedar, and American poplar) and ornamental shrubs. Just outside of the brick wall of the cemetery, to his/her right, the visitor could see the walls and roof of the brick gate-keeper's house. After walking down this central avenue, the visitor would come upon the public vault, surrounded by a neat iron gate and with a garden planted in its entryway. In the northeast corner of the burial site were located the oldest of the cenotaphs, and the most ornate gravestones of the cemetery – the monuments to Eldridge Gerry and George Clinton – stood in all of their marble-glory looking

[112] C.G., "The Congressional Burying-Ground," *Southern Rose* 4, no. 2 (28 May 1836): 106.

down upon the white-washed cenotaphs below. The southeast, and northeast corners of the cemetery were thus both occupied by Congressional monuments. Family plots lined the main avenues of the cemetery, many of them marked by domed and grass-covered vaults, while individual lots filled the less-desirable spaces in-between. A few marble monuments are set against the back-drop of white-washed sandstone monuments, and the delicate lines of old, grey, slate markers. The indigent and outcast were buried in the outer edges of the cemetery, underneath the paths, and in the sites farthest from the congressional monuments, their grave-sites only marked by human-length indentations in the grass above.

Rural Cemetery Aspirations

Congressional Cemetery had made some advances toward the ideals of the rural cemetery movement, but it was limited by the constraints of its less-than five-acre site, and by the uncertain direction and perhaps conflicting agendas of the federal government and the vestry of Christ Church. In the next defining period of the cemetery's existence (roughly between 1843 and 1875), however, both the church and the government, though not working toward any publicly discussed goals, consistently directed the cemetery's development toward a model that more closely resembled that of the rural cemetery. Tracts of land were added to increase the cemetery's size significantly, so that by 1870 the cemetery consisted of over thirty acres (or the same size as Laurel Hill, one of the defining cemeteries of the rural movement). At the same time, the ties with the federal government were more fully solidified, with the government integrating the cemetery more closely into the urban fabric of the national capital, and playing a defining role in the cemetery's maintenance and over-all appearance. The result of these efforts was increased prominence for the cemetery, and a full-fledged identity as a national cemetery. Even as it reached this peak of its fame, however, the very aspects that had ingrained the cemetery in its community – its ties to the Episcopal church, monuments by Latrobe, its nation-building ability after the War of 1812, and its early churchyard history – would be the same aspects that would make it appear old-fashioned and retrograde and trigger the federal government to look elsewhere for an inspiring national cemetery in the wake of the Civil War.

The addition of land to the cemetery was carried out slowly over an extended period of time. In 1843 the commissioners of the cemetery began to ask Congress to allow the expansion of the burial ground, a request that they repeated four times until it was finally approved in 1848, though the approval came only with the stipulation that the federal government not be expected to put forth any money toward the enclosure or the upkeep of this added portion. This statute also limited the amount of land that the cemetery could add to 30 acres, a figure possibly excluding acreage gained by means of annexing intervening roadways.[113] In October of 1848, the vestry also authorized the register of the cemetery to work to purchase the lots in the square of land directly to the south of the cemetery and in 1849 the cemetery added lot 1116 in its entirety to their property. In 1851, square 1104 (the city square to the west of the original cemetery block) was annexed to the cemetery. In 1858, square 1105 was added to the cemetery. In 1858, the cemetery also added a section of land to the east, consisting of 2.25 acres of former government reservation 13. In 1870, lots 1117 and 1106, the final two lots separating the cemetery from the

[113] 9 Stat. L. 250 (25 July 1848), cited in Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*, 16-17.

Anacostia River to the south were added to the cemetery.[114] Only one addition was made after 1870 – the addition of square 1130, 1148, and 1149, extending the eastern portion of the cemetery to its current boundaries in 1874.[115]

It is logical that since the land of the cemetery was increased during this period to about eight times its original size, the over-all landscape and organization of the cemetery changed drastically during this period as well. The first forty years of the cemetery's existence could be interpreted as a formative period, in which it developed an identity born of combining Republican ideals with the traditional churchyard form, and growing into a more fully developed sense of self as a unique national landscape. Much of the change of this second period was due to improvements to the cemetery that were funded by the federal government, and that were probably conceived by the government and vestry alike as opportunities to further the national identity of the cemetery. Perhaps the most significant of these changes (at least to the urban identity of the cemetery) was the construction of a graded and graveled road between the Capitol and the cemetery.[116] This path, probably approximately following the route of present-day Pennsylvania Avenue to Potomac Avenue, allowed federal funeral processions to travel directly between the two important urban nodes, and to do so without the significant discomfort of traveling along entirely unpaved dirty/mud roads. In 1856 the federal government helped to fund the construction of an iron fence on the north side of the burial ground, in exchange for the offer of 400 additional federal burial sites.[117] In the following year, 1857, the government appropriated money to put flagstones along the path that connected the public receiving vault to the cemetery entrance.[118] Through these three steps of financial assistance, the government funding made it possible to completely update the public front of the cemetery. While all decisions about the appearance of the fence were left up to the vestry, and the desire for a new, iron fence originated in the vestry as well, it is likely that the funding was granted to the cemetery because of a federal desire to see the Congressional Cemetery well-maintained and with an appropriately decorated appearance. Improvements were made using Congressional appropriations for the cemetery until 1873, and the final federal money toward the construction of cenotaphs was given in 1875.[119]

While the cemetery grew extensively in its land-holdings during this period, and significant changes were made to its physical appearance, many aspects of its original form were maintained. The quintessential winding paths so loved in the rural cemetery movement were

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[114] The Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery* and the Breitkruetz report disagree about the dates in which various of these additions were made to the cemetery. It is likely that this discrepancy lies in a conflict between extant federal documents and the church and cemetery records. Detailed comparison of the two would be needed to clarify this discrepancy, although it may prove only that the paper trail on the cemetery is not sufficiently accurate to iron out all of these details.

[115] For a detailed history of the additions to the cemetery, systems of land purchases, etc. see Cathleen Breitkruetz. "Developmental History [of Congressional Cemetery]" in the *Historic Landscape and Structures Report for Historic Congressional Cemetery Architect of the Capitol*. The Barney Circle commission report also goes to great pains to trace the history of the cemetery's land acquisitions.

[116] Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[117] 11 Stat. L. 88 (August 15, 1856). See also Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[118] 11 Stat. L., 226 (March 3, 1857). See also Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

[119] In March 1869, May 1872, and March 1873, Congress appropriated money for further improvements to the cemetery. See Stat. L.309 and 17 Stat. L. 541. For an explanation of these different pieces of legislation see Senate 1906, *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

never adopted in Congressional Cemetery. Instead, as each new section of land was added, it was divided into regular plots along a grid system, as had been completed in the early phases of cemetery development. Perhaps this was continued because the sexton and vestry simply continued out of habit to draft the lines shaping the cemetery in the same manner. Alternatively, perhaps they were interested in maintaining a cohesive system for the cemetery and uninterested in making such an extreme concession to the conventions of contemporary burial systems. Certainly a cemetery administered by the combined forces of an Episcopal Church vestry and federal officials was bound to be more conservative in its design decisions than a private corporation managing a cemetery as a money-making venture, and it may have been this conservatism as well that kept the cemetery's directors from espousing a more fully-developed rural cemetery plan.[120]

These additions and improvements to the cemetery were perhaps triggered by aspirations to remain comparable to other famed cemeteries in the national sphere – certainly the citizens of Washington did not want to hear the national cemetery of which they were in charge criticized with respect to Mount Auburn and other famed rural cemeteries. However, there were also local motivators for these changes that may have had an even stronger impact on those managing the cemetery. Congressional Cemetery had been the most popular burial place in Washington, D.C., and certainly it needed to add land in order to maintain available burial sites. Its directors also had to be concerned about maintaining its popularity in light of increasing competition. In 1830, Rock Creek Cemetery, further out from the business district of Washington, opened its gates for non-Episcopalian burials and began making motions toward the expansion of its grounds.

Perhaps more importantly, the first cemetery constructed completely on the rural cemetery model in the Washington D.C. area, Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown, was incorporated in 1848. Oak Hill was founded by a private corporation of individuals, but spearheaded by the wealthy and prominent William W. Corcoran. Planned on a hilly site along the Rock Creek valley, its gatehouse and front gates were constructed in 1850 on designs made by James Renwick.[121] Oak Hill was a phenomenal success, attracting many of the areas richest families to construct tombs and vaults on its property, and attracting the attention of journalists as well. Its success – both socially and aesthetically – is not surprising, since Corcoran was well-connected in Washington, D.C. (i.e. federal) society, and was likewise a famed patron of the arts. For the first time in its history, Congressional Cemetery had significant competition for the support of the government and competition from a site that could offer more aesthetically pleasing surroundings to federal officials, without costing the federal government any money. Despite its popularity, the construction of this cemetery did meet with its detractors – one particularly impassioned publication written by a physician in 1850 spoke of the danger to the citizens of Georgetown in letting this cemetery be constructed.[122] The doctor claimed that the hilly site, not far removed

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[120] This hypothesis is bolstered by a lengthy article by an anonymous author "Cemeteries and Monuments." *New Englander* 7, no. 28 (November 1849): 489, in which the author criticizes the rural cemetery mode of cemetery design for distracting the visitor from the religious and moral qualities of a cemetery.

[121] To my knowledge no cohesive history has been written about Oak Hill Cemetery, but the commissioner's reports published in pamphlet form about Oak Hill during the nineteenth century offer valuable information about the management and goals of that cemetery during the period. See *Oak Hill Cemetery Reports* in the bibliography.

[122] Louis Mackall. *Oak-Hill Cemetery, or, A Treatise on the fatal effects resulting from the location of cemeteries in the immediate vicinity of towns.* (Washington: Printed by Henry Polinkhorn, 1850).

from Georgetown, would let the noxious substances emanating from the cemetery be transported down hill into water sources and would cause sickness and death among the city's inhabitants. Neither the popularity of Oak Hill, nor the impassioned accusations that a cemetery near inhabited areas would cause sickness and death in the local population were positive developments for the directors of Congressional Cemetery, which had to thus compete aesthetically for popularity with a much better-funded rival, and in addition had to justify the propriety of its very existence on the city's fringes.

The following decade saw the founding of three other major rural cemeteries just beyond the borders of the city of Washington: Glenwood Cemetery (originally a family burial ground, but privately incorporated as a rural cemetery in 1854), Mount Olivet (a Catholic cemetery, founded 1858), and Prospect Hill (an "immigrant" cemetery, founded 1858). These cemeteries all varied in size, and none approached the immense scale of Mount Auburn, however, they changed the dynamics of cemeteries in the city. Each was laid out employing a picturesque plan, with winding roads, and garden-like planting. The re-making of Rock Creek into a popular and upper-class rural cemetery must also have had an extreme impact on Congressional Cemetery, since both were affiliated with prominent Episcopal communities in the Washington, D.C. area. The availability of better, faster, forms of public transportation allowed trains and trolleys to offer visitors transportation to the various farther-dispersed sites, and thus reduced the convenience of Congressional Cemetery's location merely a mile from the Capitol. Glenwood and Prospect Hill, meanwhile, were roughly the same distance from the city's business district as Congressional, though to the north of the urban core. They were located more conveniently in the vicinity of the city's developing neighborhoods, and had the advantage of being laid-out in the stylish picturesque mode. The vestry of Christ Church responded to these new trends in cemetery management in two ways, first, by updating the manner in which they administered the cemetery to more closely follow the private corporate model, and, second, by making improvements to the landscaping of the cemetery.

Rural cemeteries managed by corporations were administered using a system of rules and regulations. These guidelines typically mandated not only the cost of burial sites, and the manner in which the sites and burial procedures would be managed, but also the types of monuments and plantings that lot-holders would be permitted to use. In some instances the regulations might also restrict visiting hours, and the types of activities permitted in the cemetery.[123] In 1854 the vestry established a set of rules and regulations for Congressional cemetery, and also a trust fund that would enable the church to more easily manage "the improvement and keeping in order" of the cemetery, though no record seems to exist of their having published these regulations for their visitors in pamphlet form until much later in the century.[124]

So many changes were made to the cemetery's appearance in this period that it is difficult to trace them all and to convey an accurate sense of what the landscape would have felt like, as the cemetery's directors attempted to use the landscape vocabulary created in tandem with the rural

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[123] For a good, local example of a rules and regulations pamphlet, see: *Rules and Regulations of Glenwood Cemetery, and then act of incorporation*. Washington, D.C: Stickney Pamphlets, v. 33, 1854. George Washington University and at the Historical Society of the District of Columbia.

[124] See Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1795-1862), 19 April 1854: 445, and Breitkreutz, 25. The 1891 book of rules and regulations for the cemetery will be discussed further below.

cemetery movement to their advantage. Three types of sources of information are available to offer a sense of what the cemetery's form would have been like in this period. First, records of the substantive changes that were made after the additions of land to the cemetery exist, in both vestry and federal archives. Second, written reflections on the cemetery's landscape, which, like the early examples, do an excellent job of presenting the appearance of the cemetery within the context of its contemporary viewers, give hints at the constant attributes within the cemetery's developing appearance. Finally, two prints representing the cemetery offer visual evidence for the physical and aesthetic attributes of the site that were important to its contemporary viewers.

As sections were added to the cemetery, the vestry seems to have developed temporary solutions for their incorporation into the cemetery's landscape. Post and rail fences were authorized for their enclosure, and parcels of land were slowly prepared for burials (although the vestry books do not mention what exactly such preparations entailed we can surmise that they might have included clearing the land of any trees and extent structures, surveying it, and leveling its surface).[125] By 1854, however, the cemetery had added sufficient extents to its grounds that it constructed a new wall, which now included the gatehouse inside the cemetery's enclosure.[126] In the series of improvements to the cemetery that accompanied the construction of this new wall and the addition of the grounds, a new major entryway was constructed to the west of the gatehouse, which divided the cemetery equally across its east-west axis, and which the cemetery's directors may have conceived as a new main entryway to the cemetery.[127] This central allée ended in a turnabout, which offered carriages either access to the southeastern portions of the grounds, or an opportunity to backtrack to the exit of the cemetery.[128] While no visual records of this turnabout exist, it seems likely that it was intended to be a look-out point to the river panorama below. Located at a corner of the cemetery, with a view to the southwest, this point could have offered an excellent vista of the wooded hills and river beyond. After the new brick fence was constructed on the western boundary of the cemetery, the vestry received funding from the federal government to erect an iron fence along the northern line of the cemetery, around which time the government also funded the paving in flagstones of the path from the entrance of the cemetery to the public vault. The coincidence of this action, with the construction of a secondary main entrance just to the west suggests that in this era the cemetery could have had two primary entrances, the western allée for regular visitors and everyday usage of the cemetery, and the flag-stoned entryway just to the east for the funeral ceremonies of the government.

The landscape of the cemetery was dynamic throughout this thirty year period, and even after this major push to update its appearance, the addition of more sections of land caused a continual rotation of temporary enclosure, followed by demolition and reconstruction of sections of the brick walls. It seems that the cemetery's directors were not concerned with maintaining a cohesive appearance for the cemetery's enclosure. The northern boundary was enclosed by an iron fence, while the southern was given a new wooden fence in 1868, and the western and

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[125] Breitkreutz: 24.

[126] Breitkreutz: 25.

[127] See the Boschke map from 1857 (reproduced on Breitkreutz, 25) for a representation of this turnabout. This road is now the main entryway to the cemetery.

[128] This turnabout was located at the point that the cemetery chapel occupies today.

eastern boundaries seem to have varied in waves between wood and brick enclosures, and some combination of the two.[129] The authority over these decisions fell ultimately to the vestry, whose hands were frequently tied pending the approval of the federal government. Ultimately, however, the labor and the efforts involved with it fell on the shoulders of the cemetery's superintendent.

A letter from E. A. Ryther, superintendent to the cemetery, discussing the status of the requests for the enclosure of squares 1106, 1117, and 1124 makes this amply evident. It is his duty, not only to determine that the entirety of these tracts of land are indeed in the possession of the vestry, but also to ensure that the federal government had ratified their enclosure, and finally to "secure the City Surveyor to be engaged at once to run the squared lines for the new fence as there appears from the deed to be obstructions in the way of building the said fence at once."[130] Thus, it seems that while top-down decisions were being made to add land to the cemetery, and to attempt a certain status in appearance and form, the actual revisions to the cemetery's appearance were being made through the action and individual decisions of the cemetery's superintendent, rather than by a design professional, or by committee decision of the vestry.

While the enclosures may have had a constantly-changing appearance, the cemetery's officials tried to improve the over-all dignity of its landscape. The cenotaphs were regularly painted white. Many of the newer monuments were of marble, and since these were constructed on more expensive plots, their locations were prominent and they offered a wealthier appearance to the cemetery. One major improvement was made to the cemetery that fully demonstrates the director's desire to elevate its status: in 1869 the vestry funded the construction of a fountain on the site that had formerly held the turnabout of the carriageway. This fountain, set on a grassy knoll, overlooking the Anacostia and the hill side, and with the crisp, white cenotaphs and military monuments flanking it on two sides must have offered a dramatic visual center to the cemetery. Like the cenotaphs, it appears to have been white in color (though no records of whether it was painted sandstone, or actual marble, exist). The base of the fountain was circular, with a central sculpture out of which the water spewed. The central sculpture was three-tiered tapering toward the top, each tier consisting of a goblet-shaped form with a long stem. Views of the fountain, and of the cemetery during this period show a landscape in which white monuments contrast prominently with green foliage, and the pastoral qualities of the informal plantings of the trees meld with the classical pretensions of the cenotaphs and central fountain.

During the Civil War period the cemetery was surrounded by soldiers' barracks and service facilities, disrupting its pastoral setting for the first time. This complex of temporary constructions around the cemetery must have been a fitting compliment to the cemetery's own appearance, qualified by its continual renovations. The events of the war also temporarily brought the cemetery closer to the national heart. The government purchased fifty sites for the burial of soldiers who died in Washington hospitals during the war, and while there were no cenotaphs constructed during the actual war period, twenty-one were constructed in 1870 to atone for the lag in construction.[131] When an explosion at the Washington Arsenal killed fifteen young female workers in 1864, it was to Congressional Cemetery that their bodies were brought

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[129] See Breitkreutz, 31.

[130] Letter from E.A. Ryther to the Vestry of Christ Church, 16 June 1868. Archive of Christ Church, Washington Parish.

[131] See Breitkreutz, 29, as well as the Senate 1906 *History of the Congressional Cemetery*: 1960.

for burial, and the funeral ceremonies accompanying the event demonstrated that the cemetery was truly at the heart of the national spirit, as president and residents of Washington alike attended the grave-side ceremonies.[132] Another signal of the cemetery's position in the nation's consciousness was the assumption in articles discussing the death of President Abraham Lincoln that his body would be held in the public receiving vault at the cemetery before being sent by train to Illinois.[133]

Writings discussing the appearance of Congressional Cemetery in this period fall roughly into three categories. There are those, like the articles accompanying the Arsenal disaster, which speak of the cemetery in its ritual context during funerals and times of national strain. The second category consists of articles that discuss the cemetery in terms of the famous men buried there, virtually as a museum of noteworthy memorials. Thirdly, guidebooks to the city of Washington present the cemetery as a tourist site, within the traditions of visiting graveyards established by the rural cemetery movement, and also as a national site containing memorials to famous men. These texts all seem to agree in discussing Congressional Cemetery as a pastiche landscape – a mix of the old, with some of the new, rather than a coordinated or planned landscape.

A particularly rich article was written about the cemetery in 1869, accompanying a description of the funeral ceremonies for Secretary of War General John A. Rawlins, with an extensive description and critique of the cemetery.[134] This article is worth considering at length for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the manner in which the cemetery played an integral role in national ceremonies of funereal display, in which the citizens joined together as a body to commemorate the illustrious dead. During these moments the cemetery was linked within a network of ritual structures and streets, and was the spatial climax to an urban display of mourning, subsequently recorded in articles in newspapers throughout the nation. Second, the subsequent lengthy article discussing the appearance of the cemetery, and critiquing its form presents the somewhat ambivalent status that the cemetery held in the eyes of the nation's citizens. On the one hand, it was the site of burial for some of the nation's greatest leaders, but on the other it was a vernacularly formed landscape, with little to recommend it in terms of the rural cemetery movement's ideals, and quite old-fashioned in its landscaping and monuments.

The description of the funeral procession of General Rawlins does an excellent job of locating the cemetery as the climactic end-point to an urban mourning ritual. The author first describes the funeral ceremonies held in the War Department building, records the eulogies read in honor

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[132] The explosion occurred on June 17th 1864, and the funeral on June 20th. See the articles that appeared in *The National Intelligencer* in the intervening period for descriptions of the event and the role that the cemetery played in the ceremonies.

[133] See for example, "The Succession," *New York Times*, 16 April 1865, 1, "It is expected, though nothing has been determined upon, that the funeral of the late President Lincoln will take place on or about Thursday next. It is supposed that his remains will be temporarily deposited in the Congressional Cemetery." Ultimately the body was did not pass through the vault at Congressional Cemetery, but instead lay in state in the Capitol until its transportation by train back to Illinois.

[134] "Rawlins: Funeral of the Late Secretary of War, Impressive Ceremonies at the National Capital, The Services at the War Department, Progress of the Funeral Cortege Through the Streets, The Last Sad Rites at the Congressional Cemetery," *New York Times* 10 September 1869, 1.

of the general and the dignitaries who were in attendance. The next section of the article then discusses the order of the individuals in the funeral cortege, and their manner of transportation. Finally, it arrives at the procession of this cortege through the streets of the cities, a scene that is worth pausing to read:

> The line of the procession was from the corner of Seventeenth-street and Pennsylvania-avenue, along Pennsylvania-avenue to Fifteenth-street, down Fifteenth-street to Pennsylvania-avenue again, and thence along around the Capitol to E and Eleventh Streets East, and along E street to the Congressional Cemetery. . . . There was the White House, first of all, gloomy in mourning; the Treasury, dark with drapery and human beings, and further on, a mile past, the Capital, whose flags were at the half-mast, and whose balconies and steps were thronged with sorrowful crowds. . . . Public buildings, hotels, and newspaper offices were black with mourning – everywhere the flag of the Union was heavy with crape. . . . After an hour and a half wending past draped buildings and gazing, sorrowful throngs, the grounds of the cemetery were reached.[135]

The cemetery is part of a city-wide ritual. Public buildings are draped with black cloth, flags blow at half-mast and are draped in black crape. The congress, the cabinet and the average citizen of the city all participate in the display, publicly declaring their mourning. The drama of the event builds, in slow and steady progression over the course of more than an hour, as the procession winds through the city. The events ultimately culminate at the graveside of the General in the cemetery:

> The temporary tomb of Secretary Rawlins is within a few yards of the gates of the cemetery, and on one of the principal avenues of the inclosure. It is plain and unpretending, being remarkable for nothing except its massiveness and durability. It is shaded by fine old trees, its brick walls and granite facings being almost concealed from view by a luxuriant growth of English ivy. Four somber cypresses stand guard around it, and they, too, are covered almost to their topmost branches with the same evergreen. . . . At the conclusion of the services and the singing of the requiem . . . the eight cavalrymen who had borne the corpse were called, and carried it into the vault . . . the mourners leaving. The vast assemblage soon followed, and the cemetery resumed its usual quiet appearance.[136]

Within the gates of the cemetery the sprawling and clamoring mourning of the urban masses is silenced. Here the scene is typified by "somber cypresses" that "stand guard" and large growths of ivy, both of which symbolize the age and quiet dignity of the burial ground. Even though the General's burial in this vault was intended to be temporary, the description of the site is of a timeless space of commemoration. The vault is notable for its "massiveness and durability" dignified in its "plain and unpretending" appearance. Its silent permanence is the perfect counterpoint to the city draped in mourning – the following day business would reopen, the drapery of black clothes would be removed from the fronts of public buildings, but the vault

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

would remain unchanged and stable, a permanent site for the focusing of national memory upon the commemoration of a great man.

In the context of this narrative of the funeral procession, the cemetery plays its role perfectly. It offers age, dignity, nature, stability and memory to the ritual of mourning. The subsequent extended discussion of the cemetery and critique of its appearance suggests, however, that in reality the cemetery may not have played quite such a seamlessly perfect role. At the heels of the article about General Rawlins' funeral, an additional article entitled "The Congressional Cemetery" introduces readers to the cemetery, describing its rural context, site, and monuments.[137] Perhaps written by a New York reporter, this article compares Congressional Cemetery to New York City's great rural cemetery, Greenwood, and finds it distinctly lacking. Except for its site and its history, Congressional Cemetery is presented as haphazard in its maintenance and landscaping. The article begins by describing the visitor's long trek to arrive at the cemetery, reproducing the route followed by the funeral procession, and expressing immediate displeasure with the appearance of the cemetery grounds:

> Five minutes' walk from the War Department, past the White House to the Treasury buildings, one mile from the Treasury, down *Pennsylvania-avenue* past double line shopkeeper stores and poplar trees to the Capital gates and semicircle, up the hill of the Capital past on the right hand swamp land and mean tenements, to the magnificent cast front: still further on one mile over a wide, dusty street, lined with young sickly shade trees, and houses small and contracted – half stores, half dwellings – past vacant lots used as goat and cow pastures, and the Congressional Cemetery is reached. The entrance is unpretending – nothing of the magnificent solemnity of Green-Wood, no attempt at adornment or decoration. The brick walls and black-painted railings are painfully gloomy: the keeper's lodge is mean. Within the gates the scene is no better. Death is, if possible, invested with fresh horrors. There is a general air of neglect about everything. The walks are grass-grown and untrimmed. The only redeeming features are the magnificent old trees, of oak and maple and willow and cypress.[138]

As the visitor passes from the urban core to the cemetery, the scene becomes progressively less pleasing. The federal center is remarkable for "shopkeeper stores and poplar trees," but the mile of land leading to Congressional Cemetery, and the street that federal funding had paid to have graveled and graded leading out to the cemetery is described disparagingly as a "wide, dusty street, lined with young sickly shade trees." While in the narrative about the funeral ceremonies, arrival at the cemetery was dignified and evoked timeless funereal imagery, in this description the entrance is "unpretending," lacking all of the solemnity of the great rural cemeteries, and instead of inspiring poetic rhapsodies about the pastoral nature of its shabby upkeep, the author instead sees the cemetery's landscaping as "painfully gloomy," "untrimmed," and a scene of wide-ranging neglect. The author is quick to note to his readers that, as luck will have it, this cemetery is not actually owned by the federal government, instead, he proclaims, it is the responsibility of a church, a fact that "will be consoling to the mind of the patriotic visitor."[139]

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[137] "The Congressional Cemetery," *New York Times,* 10 September 1869, 1.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

Yet, even to this critical viewer, there are redeemable aspects about the cemetery, virtually all of which are related to its site and its flora. He refers at multiple points to the "magnificent old trees" and the "evidence of the great primeval forest," comments that seem to admit a certain value to the cemetery's now virtually ancient origins. He also praises the site, as if it were the spontaneous selection of nature, without a hand of human agency in its framing and positioning:

> Nature has done more for the place than man. It is beautifully situated on a gentle eminence overlooking the eastern branch of the Potomac, trending down rather precipitously to the water's edge. The country on the other side of the river is beautifully wooded, handsome villas and farm-houses peering out here and there from dark forests. To the right is the pretty little village of Uniontown, backed by steep hills, gridironed by narrow winding roads . . . close by is the bridge of the Navy-yard, a tape-line across the river, widening as it flows.[140]

The surrounding countryside is pastoral. No longer completely the wilds of nature, the view consists of small human settlements and natural areas gently crafted by the hands of man – "gridironed" hill-sides are complimented by "handsome villas and farm-houses peering . . . from dark forests." Throughout this extended passage of description, the natural site is coupled with the presence of the capital city, and this description culminates with a view of the "iron dome of the Capitol, cutting the air sharp and clear" in the distance. Likewise, the author describes the history of this cemetery within the context of the city, recalling that during the Civil War the cemetery was in the midst of bustling barracks, and reflecting on the ceremonies held there after the arsenal disaster.

The form of the cemetery, in its disorganized, dynamic, and changing nature was confusing and displeasing to the visitor, who described it as "almost undefinable," and suggested that, "The best idea that can be given of it is to say that it is three-fourths of an exact square with one-quarter cut out." The circulation patterns are described as poorly maintained and poorly defined, "Four or five avenues run through it, but for the most part they are abandoned by pedestrians, who, with the usual human defiance of rules and regulations, walk on the grass and in places where they ought not. A large portion of the walks are paved with brick, but weeds and grass grow through the seams and interstices." Finally, the Congressional monuments are discussed as the most significant defining element of the landscape, but also as not entirely pleasing. In reflecting upon their appearance, the author seems to regard them more as oddities then as worthy memorials to dignitaries:

> It would be difficult to imagine anything more ghastly than these cenotaphs. The painful regularity with which they are arranged, row behind row, and at equal distances, has a very singular effect. The inscription on all of them is in the same style – the name, the date, the Congress – nothing more. They remind one of the benches in the House or Senate – greatness and littleness are side by side – the few whom history embalms and the great majority on whom its annals are silent.[141]

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[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

Highly critical of the cenotaphs, the author seems to object to them primarily for their regularity and the lack of effusive eulogies in their inscriptions. The insistent regularity and equal treatment given to each monument, does not allow the viewer to poetically separate the great from the small. Now almost a half-century from the time of their inception, the cenotaphs no longer connect with the prevailing social ideals. The 'Republican' values of the early nineteenth century have been replaced by a society invested in the entrepreneurial glorification of the individual, and these stoic monuments could no longer communicate appropriate sensibilities of monumentality and national memory to their viewers

Guidebook authors tended to be less critical of the cemetery than their journalist counterparts, and their texts hint at a position that the cemetery could, in the most ideal of cases, have held in the eyes of its visitors. Particularly vociferous in his praise for Congressional Cemetery was William Force. In his 1850 guide to Washington, Force remarked that the cemetery, "commands an extensive view of the country, is well enclosed with a brick wall, laid out with taste, and adorned with many shrubs and trees and impressive and beautiful monuments."[142] He speaks of the cemetery as if he is describing a fully-fledged rural cemetery – the site is "laid out with taste" and it is "adorned" by plantings and "impressive and beautiful" monuments. Instead of describing the site as antiquated, Force sees it as picturesque. Force then makes direct illusion to the rural cemetery movement, remarking that,

> Measures have been adopted to enlarge this cemetery, and some twenty acres additional will soon be brought within its limits. It is hoped that the entire enclosure may contain not less than fifty acres, and that the whole area may be planted and adorned with the good taste and judgment which render the cemeteries of Mount Auburn and Greenwood so inviting to pensive minds.[143]

A true believer in the supremacy of the nation's capital city, Force hopes that the national cemetery will be able to compete with its rivals. Force is over-ambitious in his anticipation of the cemetery's expansion, but he is so for a purpose. In the introduction to his guide, he spoke of his belief that the capital had to set both a moral and a cultural compass for the nation, "Ignorance and vice at the heart will send a pernicious influence to the extremities of the political body; while every pulsation there of intellectual energy and virtuous sentiments will infuse health and gladness through the entire system."[144] Given the cultural importance that the rural cemetery movement had brought to the proper adornment of cemeteries, it is no surprise that Force should have high hopes for the National Cemetery, and that he should praise it for its potential to edify the American populace to a greater degree even then the prototypes of the movement. It should be noted, however, that the aspects of the cemetery that Force chose to praise – the view, the brick wall, and the impressive monuments – were all key features of the site, remarked upon by other authors as well. Force simply chose to elevate them to a higher degree of admiration.

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[142] William Q. Force, Picture of Washington and Its Vicinity, for 1850, with Thirty-eight engravings: also, the Washington Guide, containing a Congressional Directory, and much other Useful Information, (Washington: William Q. Force, 1850), 42.

[143] Ibid., 43.

[144] Ibid., 13.

William H. Morrison's *The Stranger's Guide for Washington City*, first published in 1866, was much less voluminous in its admiration for Congressional Cemetery.[145] The author first corrected its readers about the ownership of the site, reiterating the fact that the cemetery was the property of an Episcopal parish, and that the "Government is in no way responsible for its preservation."[146] The author then describes the cenotaphs merely as "plain" markers, and proceeds quickly on to discuss the more remarkable monuments in the cemetery. Consistent with most other writers of the period, the author is quick to note that the site itself is spectacular, remarking that the cemetery:

> … is beautifully situated on the banks of the East Branch, about a mile above the Navy Yard, with the noble range of forest-clad hills on the opposite side of the broad expanse of water, forever looking down upon the peaceful repose of the dead.

The cemetery is still described as the "Congressional" burying ground, yet in this guidebook it is remarked upon more for its fortunate picturesque site than for any national associations.

Perhaps even more evocative than these textual passages for capturing the reputation of Congressional Cemetery during this period are two prints of the cemetery. The more common of these two prints appeared in two formats, variously entitled "Burial Ground" and "Congressional Cemetery." While the original delineator of this sketch is unknown, the print was published under the title "Burial Ground" in Force's 1850 edition of *Picture of Washington*, with thirty-eight other views of the nation's capitol (Fig. 1).[147] A later re-working of this print appeared in Ellis' *Sights & Secrets* in 1869 (Fig. 2).[148] There are a number of differences between the earlier and later versions of this print the most significant of which is that the later printmaker added a dramatic sky with clouds and rays of sunlight, creating a more vibrant and action-filled scene, than the original placid setting. This view of the cemetery is intended to make it look both ornately planted and decorated by simple, Classical monuments. On the left-hand side of the image, a broken column stands on a tall pedestal, poignantly remembering a life cut short. In the central foreground, a pyramid-shaped monument seems to allude to the cemetery's famed cenotaphs, while offering a more purely classical form. The juxtaposition of a tall severed column with a pyramid-shaped monument could also have been inspired by the monument to Commodore John Rodgers, and the large broken column adjacent to it. If the pyramid does refer to this monument instead of to the Congressional Cenotaphs, the slight must have been deliberate since the monument to Commodore Rodgers is located directly adjacent to the largest grouping of cenotaphs. In the right-hand foreground corner of the image a table-top monument reminds the viewer of the old-age of this cemetery, recalling the monument conventions of its early

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[145] William H. Morrison, *Morrison's Stranger's Guide for Washington City, with Etiquette*, (Washington: W.H. & O.H. Morrison, 1866).

[146] Ibid., 35-36.

[147] See Force, *Picture of Washington* (1850). A copy of this same print may have also appeared in Morrison's *Stranger's Guide* in this same year (according to the attribution on the D.C. Public Library's copy of the print in the Washingtoniana Collection). In the 1866 edition of Morrison's *Stranger's Guide* this print was reused, but given the attribution "Published by W.H. & O.H. Morrison. Printed by S. Siebart. Washn."

[148] The source and date of this second etching are dependent on the attribution of the D.C. Public Library's Washingtoniana Collection. This version of the print was made by "Lossing-Gangil (sp?)" according to the caption of the image.

nineteenth-century origins. Receding toward the horizon-line, the eye encounters an ornate vault in the right middle-ground, perhaps showing the cemetery's renowned public vault from the rear, the print shows the back of an elaborate carved façade on the vault, an iron fence surrounding its grassy-dome, and stone pillars marking the corners of the fence. These monuments are framed by tastefully arranged trees and shrubs, which form a backdrop to the print, and also offer a picturesque ground cover from behind which other, less-prominent, monuments peak. Amongst the variegated masses of foliage, the viewer can make out weeping willow and cypress trees as prominently elements of the site.

This view should not be interpreted as realistically representing any single portion of the cemetery's grounds. Instead it presents a distilled image of monumentality. Much as visitors to the cemetery would have to abandon reality and imagine that the white-washed monuments were truly marble, and interpret the rather random plantings of the cemetery's superintendent as being 'picturesque' in nature, so the author of the print assumed a romantic mode of representation when rendering the cemetery. The cemetery is rustic, yet in a delicate and picturesquely arranged manner. Likewise the monuments evoke a Classical aesthetic, but in an even more pure manner than those actually present in the cemetery itself.

A second print, which seems to have been reproduced both within a book, and as a free-standing carte-de-viste, shows an even more greatly romanticized view of the cemetery (Figs. 3 & 4).[149] In this print a vine-like rectangular frame encloses a circular view of the cemetery with four vignettes around its edges. In the upper-right and left-hand corners angels bear a young child and two babies up toward heaven, through a delicately star-studded sky. In the lower-left-hand portion of the image, a gothic-chapel-like monument stands amid a mass of trees and foliage, while a column and two vaguely classical and urn-shaped monuments peek from the foliage around it. A falling colonial-era slab marker indicates the passage of time and, somewhat hyperbolically, to function as a *momento mori* within this cemetery scene. In the vignette at the lower-right a woman, dressed in mourning, stands face in her hands, flanked by two young children. They seem to be visiting one of the cemetery's cenotaphs (though virtually hidden by an over-growth of foliage). Surrounding the central cenotaph are a variety of other monuments, to the right a monument that evokes a shrine, and to the left an obelisk topped by a globe, and two ornate, classical/Renaissance inspired monuments behind. All the monuments are incased within frilly foliage, and they seems to peak out from behind the leaves as almost natural encrustations of the landscape.

The circular central vignette offers the most detailed and elaborate representation of the cemetery. The vignette is dominated by a row of Congressional cenotaphs, which slice across the scene diagonally through the central fore-ground of the image. These monuments are truly massively proportioned – the man and two accompanying women who stand on the foreground plane of the image are dwarfed by their scale. A single cenotaph in the foreground to the right of the cluster of figures helps to make this point of scale even more strongly. The cenotaphs stand as moral beacons, for the great statesmen who lie below – the figures turn to gaze at the

[149] I have not been unable to find reproductions of this print to which a specific date can be attached. The two copies I have found are both in the Washingtoniana Collection of the D.C. Public Library. The only attribution available is to note that the carte-de-viste style issue of this print is captioned "Published at the Music Depot of W.G. Metzerott."

monuments, and the man gestures with his left hand toward the monument to John Quincy Adams, as if he is in the middle of rhapsodizing at length about the deceased leader. The brilliant white cenotaphs stand against a thick backdrop of trees and foliage. These trees present a variety of species, offering rich textures of height, leaves, and bark that give the print a harmonic rhythm. Peaking from behind the foliage on the left is an old mound-style vault, completely covered in foliage, and behind this the corbelled façade of another, more fashionable family vault. White obelisks stand out as beacons from within the trees, and a large, central monument consisting of a tall pedestal topped by an urn, adds to the Classical dignity of the scene.

While this print does in many ways reflect what must have been the visual reality of the cemetery, in others it takes poetic license with the burial ground's appearance. By increasing the scale of the monuments, the artist emphasizes the great impact of their dignity. Some of foliage of the cemetery almost certainly was quite well grown up by this period, however, the continually expanding size of the cemetery, and the unsystematic planting of trees, would certainly not have allowed for this perfect, rhythmic covering of foliage. Instead, a variety of trees were probably scattered and clustered across portions of the site with other, newer, additions to it relatively barren of trees and having a rather raw and newly-formed appearance. Perhaps most significant about this image is the manner in which the artist recreates Congressional Cemetery as a fully-fledged rural cemetery. In the image, the foliage is thriving, and the monuments are both edifying and picturesque. The site is (in the small vignette) a place for mourning but it is more prominently (in the central vignette) a place for reflecting upon moral and aesthetic values. This print also underlines the attribute of this cemetery that made it unique from all others – its federal connection. By clearly reproducing the names of the great congressmen on the sides of the cenotaphs, the artist left no doubt as to the civic importance of the site. Not only is this site, like other rural cemeteries, one where visitors can reflect upon nature and mortality but it is also, above and beyond all else, a site for meditating upon nationhood.

In this period of transition and change, the cemetery reached both the greatest heights of its national identity, but also failed to attain a level of landscaping and beautification sufficient to cement it permanently into the status of the national cemetery. While guide-book authors and printmakers could find enough material in the site to justify representing it as the epitome of rural-cemetery beauty, its reality was not quite as elaborately perfect. Other sites had gained importance to the national memory during the Civil War, and as an indicator of the times, the federal government shifted its attention to Arlington, where it could invest in the design of a purpose-built cemetery for national memory, establishing it as the National Cemetery in 1864. Congressional Cemetery, with its layered historic landscape, and its church affiliation could not offer such commemorative freedom. Without the conscious recognition of contemporaries, the site was shifting from being an active space of inscribing national memory (as it was to Washingtonians after the War of 1812), to being a site of historic memorialization.

The Post-national cemetery (c. 1875-1915)

While it did not lose its title "Congressional Cemetery" after its final period of federal funding (c. 1875), the cemetery came to be regarded as the "historic congressional burying ground" instead of the current national cemetery. The vestry did their best to capitalize on this national

history of the cemetery, while at the same time maintaining an image of the cemetery that was both historic and contemporary. The cemetery's directors had gone through extensive efforts to accommodate the trends of the rural cemetery movement in the mid-19th Century, but this method of designing cemeteries lost popularity in the 1870s and the "Lawn-cemetery" movement began to dominate. This new method of cemetery design was characterized by a de-emphasis on individual monuments and burial plots, including the removal of boundary stones, and a low-profile design for monuments, allowing for large expanses of grass and easier mowing.[150] In typical fashion, Washington Parish Burial Ground adopted the lawn cemetery model for its final addition of land in 1874. Its directors may have been attempting to curry federal favor by this new landscaping method, as can be surmised by their comment in the 1897 *Rules and Regulations* handbook that, "The grounds, which have been enlarged by the addition of the most romantic portion of the land bordering on the Eastern Branch, will be extended, improved, and adorned, so as to commend the WASHINGTON (CONGRESSIONAL) CEMETERY to the continual favorable regards of the community, as well as the National Legislature."[151]

Throughout the country by the late nineteenth century, greater emphasis was placed on efficiency of administration and all business-related aspects of the cemetery industry and less upon the reflective and poetic attributes favored by the rural cemetery movement. Congressional Cemetery adopted some of these practices as well, publishing its *Rules and Regulations* in 1897, and again in 1913.[152] These rules and regulations limited the people who could visit the cemetery, and restricted the types of plantings that could be made on grave-sites. Attempts were also made by the vestry to control the public appearance of the cemetery and to make it adhere, up to a certain point, to the stream-lined appearance called for by contemporary cemetery trends.

Further evidence of the vestry's attempt to modernize the cemetery came with the attention given to updating the services offered by the burial ground. In 1899 a call for subscriptions was made for the construction of a funeral chapel. Plans were drawn up for the current chapel in 1902 by Arthur M. Poynton, a local architect. The building was constructed in 1903.[153] This chapel was purpose-built to house funeral ceremonies, with three coffin-sized storage areas with grated windows opening to the exterior and onto the altar of the church, allowing six coffins to be stored in the chapel for funeral ceremonies over the course of a day. The chapel, rather than being oriented toward the main Congressional axis of the cemetery, was turned facing a path toward the East that ran from the cemetery in the direction of Christ Church, and its exterior was covered in pebble-dash stone, as was the exterior of Christ Church and the parish's mission church. Through this reorientation of the ceremonial entrance to the cemetery, and the architectural connection with other parish churches, the vestry seems to have been reasserting the connection between the cemetery and Christ Church.

As the federal government withdrew its monetary support of the cemetery, it also began to question issues of land-ownership and maintenance, and to sort through the exact 'status' of the

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[150] See Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity,* for a history of the Lawn Cemetery movement and its national implications.

[151] *Rules and Regulations of the Washington (Congressional) Cemetery Adopted by the Vestry of Christ Church (Protestant Episcopal)*, (Washington, D.C.: Terry Bros., Printer, 1897), 5.

[152] *Rules and Regulations*, 1897; *Rules and Regulations: Washington Parish Burial Ground (Congressional Cemetery) Washington D.C.*. ([Washington, D.C.]: The Vestry of Washington Parish, 1913).

[153] See Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1883-1911) and Breitkreutz, 43.

old national cemetery. The Senate's commissioned *History of Congressional Cemetery* of 1906, sorted through all the legislation passed by Congress about the cemetery over the course of the past century, in an attempt to establish exactly which grave-sites were owned by the government, as well as the history of interments and government monuments in the cemetery.[154] Likewise, the government and cemetery had to work out some questions of property ownership, as demonstrated by an exchange of letters in 1911 between the Vestry of Christ Church and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds.[155] The vestry, meanwhile, made further arrangements to solidify their financial situation by establishing a second trust fund for the cemetery's perpetual maintenance. The cemetery committee also was charged with considering what changes to the cemetery's regulations might help them to increase its annual revenue.[156]

An additional testimony to the vestry's reinvestment in the cemetery, and their attempt to promote its historic status was its issue in 1913 of a small booklet, entitled *Washington Parish Burial Ground*, which discussed the history and appearance of the site, and illustrated both its major monuments, and its more picturesque vistas.[157] Like the post-Civil War era articles, it cited the old trees as particular elements of the cemetery's beauty, but also made claims for the general high-level of maintenance and planning in place at the site:

> The grounds are adorned by several hundred fine old trees, unsurpassed by any in the city parks. Well kept brick and gravel walks, and carefully constructed roadways give easy access to ranges in all portions of the grounds. The sod, for the beauty of which this cemetery has been long noted, is given particular care at all times, and is the object of the expert attention of a large corps of experienced and efficient gardeners and landscape artists.[158]

By claiming the work of "experienced" gardeners and "landscape artists" the author of this pamphlet attempted to attribute the landscaped appearance of the cemetery to the hand of trained designers. Since one of the significant criticisms of the cemetery had been its haphazard landscaping and its unkempt appearance, it is not surprising that the vestry attempted to remake its reputation.

This brochure disparages the government's role in the formation of the cemetery, not even mentioning that it was federal money that paved the central avenue of the cemetery and built the public vault. Instead, perhaps bitter because of the increasing federal neglect, the vestry absolved itself of responsibility for the unpopular Congressional cenotaphs, noting tersely:

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[154] Senate 1906 *History of Congressional Cemetery*. Interestingly, the investigators of this report located the origins of this cemetery in the decision of the federal government, and explained its affiliation with the church as a natural side-effect of the fact that many of the government offices were filled by members of the parish: "when the cemetery was first established in 1807 it was chosen by the United States as the p lace of interment for nearly every member of Congress or executive officer who died while holding office, and the custom was adhered to by the Government for many years afterward," 4.

[155] See the archival records at Christ Church and a detailed discussion of this exchange in the report of Breitkreutz, 44.

[156] Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1911-1926), see also Breitkreutz, 47-48.

[157] *Washington Parish Burial Ground*, ([Washington, D.C.]: Vestry of Christ Church, Washington Parish, 1913).

[158] Ibid.

> These memorials are of sand-stone for the most part, of uniform size, and of such a peculiar pattern that the late Senator Hoar of Massachusetts, once declared on the floor of the House of Representatives, in which he was then serving, that the thought of being interred under such structures added a new terror to death.
>
> Without passing comment on the appropriateness of these cenotaphs, for which the Vestry of Washington Parish is in no wise responsible, the Vestry in concluding these discursive reminiscences, can only declare that, in executing its sacred trust and duty in the management of this Burial Ground, it gives the same thought and bestows the same care for the preservation of these memorials, that it does for the most beautiful monument or for the humblest unmarked grave. In the democracy of death, there can be no distinctions.[159]

While they were quick to praise the beautiful site and foliage of the cemetery, the vestry was equally eager to disparage and deny responsibility for the federal cenotaphs, since they were now fully outmoded by the conventions of cemetery design. By pledging to care for these monuments as they would the 'most beautiful' funeral monument, the vestry implicitly expressed their opinion that beautiful, these congressional monuments certainly were not!

While the text of this pamphlet offers hints at the vestry's position on the cemetery's status, and weaves a particular narrative of the site's history, the accompanying photographs by Washington, D.C. photographer E.B. Thompson offer an invaluable trove of historical evidence about the cemetery's appearance (Figs. 5-11).[160] While an entire study could certainly be made about this series of images, three will be discussed here in order to give a sense of the rich cache of historical information available in these images, "The Public Vault," "Tomb of Vice-President Elbridge Gerry," and "A View of the Southern Portion of the Grounds."[161]

In "The Public Vault" Thompson captured a side view of the public vault, a portion of the national-era grand entrance-way, and the gatehouse in the distance (Fig. 5). While the main entrance to the cemetery might already have been shifted to the modern entrance (just west of the gatehouse), this photograph captures the flag-stoned ceremonial entryway to the cemetery, the path that would have been followed by federal processions leading to the public vault. The public vault, in the middle-ground of the photograph is painted a brilliant white, with its ornate stone pillars and scrolled façade demarcating it as a ceremonial node. The flagstone path is lined by mature trees on both sides, and their thick foliage meets across the middle of path. Their tall, straight, trunks suggest that perhaps some were cedar trees, while others with more leafy foliage may have been elms. A flower garden was planted in the entranceway in front of the public vault, though it is not possible to distinguish which leafy plants were located there. While other trees and shrubs dot the cemetery's landscape, most of the area around the graves is covered by neatly-cropped grass. The family plot of older gravestones adjacent to the public vault has no

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[159] Ibid., [5].

[160] The D.C. Public Library purchased E.B. Thompson's glass plate negatives in May 1945. While these photographs represent a fantastic oeuvre, no research seems as yet to have been done on Thompson's life and work.

[161] The titles used here for these works are those with which they were presented in the 1913 booklet, *Washington Parish Burial Ground.*

ornamental planting or floral arrangement in front of it. Instead, the monuments are displayed by the crisp contrast of stone against grass.

From "Tomb of Vice-President Elbridge Gerry," a viewer can begin to discern the picturesque elements upon which the earlier prints were based (Fig. 6). In the foreground of this image stands the ornate marble monument to Gerry. It is enclosed within a black, iron fence with Gothic detailing. The monument stands surrounded by Congressional cenotaphs (the only grouping of these monuments *not* arranged in a strictly geometric pattern), and thus it appears to be complimented and embraced by them in a picturesque manner. Most important about this image, however, is the manner in which it captures the overall feel of the cemetery's plantings. Across the horizon-line of the photograph a straight line of trees is visible – marking the formal federal allée, but in the middle and intermediate grounds, trees dot the landscape casually. The over-all effect is of a romantically wooded space, where trees and shrubs stand individually in such a manner that they can be appreciated for their unique form and foliage, but close enough to one another so that the leaves of the trees meet to form a dappled umbrella across the sky, and the shrubs create a variegated rhythm of textures along the lines of the monuments. Stone and leaf contrast one another, but also join together to appeal in variety of color, texture, and form to the picturesque sensibility.

Finally, "A View of the Southern Portion of the Grounds," offers a scene of the southern boundary of the site (Fig. 7). In this newer portion of the cemetery, the monuments are less densely packed against one another, and the cemetery's use as an urban park seems more natural. On the right-hand side of the image, a viewer can make out the wooded hills on the opposite bank of the Anacostia River, as well as the winding path of the river itself. A monument of a woman, carved in white marble, stands on the right-hand side of the photograph. The woman's back is turned to the camera, the monument situated so that it looks for eternity out over the view of the river beyond. The gravel path of the road, while axially oriented, has the appearance of gently winding through the cemetery here, since the angle of the photograph is such that the viewer can not see the straight line of the road receding down the hill toward the horizon. A straight line of trees on the right-hand side of the road (possibly elms?) hints both at the southern boundary of the property, and at the grid-line arrangement of the circulation, but does so with the gentleness of a natural boundary. The left-hand portion of the image, meanwhile, shows a landscape dotted by brilliant white monuments, against green leafy verdure, with a number of iron enclosures surrounding family plots. The view here is both picturesque and park-like, accentuating the ties of this cemetery's development to the values of the rural cemetery movement.

A visitor to the cemetery in this period would thus have found the landscape to be more stable then in its years of rapid growth. The trees that had been planted in emulation of rural cemetery ideals were reaching maturation, thus the cemetery was recognized for its large and ancient trees. These trees are visible throughout Thompson photographs of the site, and offer a forested backdrop to the cemetery's monuments. The Congressional Monuments, while no longer dominating the entire site, and less-well maintained than in earlier years, were still regularly white-washed. The cemetery was divided along paths that followed the regular grid-pattern of the city, except for the circle-drive around the chapel, these the regularity of these paths did not create a strictly rigid effect. The presence of lush greenery, iron fences around family plots, and

decorative burial plantings combined with the vistas out over the river, and the still somewhat rural hills along the Anacostia to maintain the site's picturesque appearance. Meanwhile, the cemetery's piecemeal enclosure – brick along its edges, ironwork to the north along 18th Street, and wooden along part of its eastern and all of its southern borders – would have contributed to the patchwork feel of the old burial ground.

Searching for a modern identity (c. 1915-1970)

After the settlement of questions of land and plot ownership with the federal government, it became clear that there was going to be little opportunity for the cemetery to receive further federal patronage. The cemetery would have to find a new identity, divorced from its history as a national cemetery. The construction of the chapel and accompanying changes to the landscape in the early twentieth century had taken the first steps toward crafting this new identity, however the cemetery was without a cohesive vision, or a particular direction for the future.

The vestry must have recognized this issue because, in 1917, for the first time, they paid a professional landscape architect to draw plans for the improvement of the cemetery.[162] George Burnap, an active landscape architect who had a local private practice and also was employed for the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, completed these drawings. Their whereabouts are now unknown and it is likewise unknown whether any of his suggestions for the landscape were executed. It seems likely that, since the site already had such a built-up landscape, the vestry consulted Burnap largely about questions of planting and cosmetics rather than major revision to the cemetery's form. In 1922, the vestry also solicited bids for drawings of a new gatehouse. After a series of negotiations with architects and contractors, the building was ultimately designed by H.V. O'Brien, about whom nothing further is known.[163] The four-square house was completed in 1923, and the front gates and iron fence were re-aligned to run in a straight line across the northern boundary of the cemetery, flush with the front of the house. In 1937, the vestry again returned to the idea of employing a professional landscape architect to give the cemetery a long-term vision, stating in the vestry minutes that hiring such a professional would have the, "purpose of laying out a long time plan for the landscape development of the cemetery. . . . Such a plan would make for the conservation of the good things that are already planted and assure a greater efficiency and more artistic result as new work is done."[164] No records indicate that a professional landscape architect was indeed hired by the vestry. Perhaps their vision had exceeded their means. Continued mention of expenditure for trees, shrubs, etc. over the next few years, without accompanying discussion of fees for a professional designer suggest that the vestry had determined to beautify the cemetery using alternate means.[165]

In the 1940s, the vestry began to be frustrated by the high maintenance costs of keeping the cemetery properly coiffed. The development of power-mowers could have made the task of trimming the cemetery's sod easy, but instead the copings and fences around family plots made it difficult to use anything other than a scythe for trimming the grass. Meanwhile, the extensive plantings on family plots were not consistently maintained, and the cemetery did not have

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[162] Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1911-1926), and Breitkeutz, 48.
[163] Breitkeut, 49-40, and Vestry meeting mintues (Book 1911-1926).
[164] Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1926-1944), 13 July 1937, 210, and Breitkeutz, 52.
[165] Breitkeutz, 52.

sufficient funds to deal with this issue. The vestry thus made the decision to further stream-line and modernize the cemetery by requesting that a letter be sent to the lot owners stating that "due to the present wage scales it would aid materially in having the corner stones lowered to the ground level and all fences or enclosures removed thereby allowing the cutting of the grass by mowers rather than by hand."[166] These discussions demonstrate further interest on the part of the vestry in bringing the appearance of the cemetery up to modern standards, and equally updating the methods used to care for the grounds.

Other, less significant, changes to the cemetery's appearance during these years included the construction of a garage in 1936, which then was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1949. This garage, at the far-end of the new arm of the cemetery plays a minimal role in its appearance. In 1955 a chain link fence was built to replace the wood fence along the southern and eastern end of the cemetery, cleaning up the appearance of these areas by removing the aging wooden barrier. Constructing a brick wall to match that along the western border of the cemetery was not even considered.

These improvements must have done a great deal to 'tidy' the cemetery's appearance, and to make it more agreeable to the stream-lined standards of twentieth-century cemetery design. These efforts were hindered, however, by the presence of all the government plots, the condition of which was deteriorating rapidly, and for which no funding was being provided by the government. Private plot owners were required by the cemetery's rules and regulations to maintain their own sites, or to pay for their perpetual maintenance, but no such negotiation had been made with the government. The matter came to the attention of Congress in 1929, at which time a bill was presented proposing that the cenotaphs and other federal monuments be put under the charge of the War Department. The accompanying report by the Quartermaster General offered a significant survey and study of government monuments, but ultimately suggested the removal of the cenotaphs and the erection of new monuments in their place.[167] Fortunately this advice was not followed, and in 1933 the cenotaphs were cleaned and painted at the expense of the vestry.[168] In 1937, however, a bill was passed by Congress to offer funding for the maintenance of the cenotaphs, at which point a report was also written by the Quartermaster General reiterating the history of government appropriations and burials in the cemetery.[169]

Perhaps this successful receipt of Congressional funding was due in part to an effort carried out by Works Progress Administration photographers to document the condition of the cemetery in 1933. In addition, two photographers, Joseph A. Horne and Theodor Horydczak, worked extensively to document the cemetery.[170] It is ironic that even as these photographers began to gain interest in the cemetery as a historic entity within the city and nation, the vestry of the parish was working to create a new, modern form and vision for the cemetery. These

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[166] Breitkeutz, 53, and Vestry meeting minutes (Book 1944-1949), 1947.

[167] Report No. 1463 "Care and Preservation of Certain Land and Monuments in the Washington Parish Burial Ground (Congressional Cemetery)," 11 February 1929, to Accompany HR 11916, 70th Congress, 2nd Session.

[168] Vestry records (Book 1926-1944), 13 June 1933.

[169] 50 Stat. 515 was the legislation granting the funding. The report was entitled *Burial Register of United States Federal Personnel in Congressional Cemetery*, there are no known copies of this report.

[170] The photographs taken by these two men are in the Works Progress Administration files at the Library of Congress.

photographs offer invaluable clues as to the appearance of the landscape during the pre-WWII era.

Between 1950 and 1970, the church fell into a difficult period. No longer were discussions held about a landscape and future vision for the cemetery. Instead, concerns were focused on more pressing issues – decrease in parish membership, and insufficiency of the cemetery's trust funds.[171] The cemetery's managers focused on bringing in revenue through perpetual care funds. Additionally, a 1953 Act of Congress returned a large number of burial sites to the cemetery for subsequent sale, in exchange for "release from the Vestry of any claim it may have against the Government for reimbursement of moneys expended by it during prior years for upkeep and special care of Government-owned lots situated in the cemetery."[172] This sale of lots was significant, since it caused a large number of sites, particularly along the broad avenues of the cemetery, to become available for burial. These empty sites, which had been held open for the burial of Congressmen and the construction of further cenotaphs, had created broad open vistas along the main entrance avenue of the cemetery, and certain other sections of the cemetery. Now the final open spaces of the cemetery would begin to get filled in.

The neighborhood surrounding Congressional Cemetery had changed from rural countryside to rows of townhouses in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Toward the end of the 1960s, it began, along with much of Washington D.C., to experience the phenomenon of the urban flight of the middle class, and the subsequent impoverishment of the surrounding neighborhood. Just as funds from the church were dwindling, and federal support was minimal, support from the surrounding neighborhood also disappeared.

There was a positive moment in this difficult period for the cemetery, however. In 1969, the cemetery, coupled with the church, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The irony of this nomination coming after a number of decades of the cemetery's vestry working to modernize the cemetery, and "improve" its historic form went unnoticed.

Looking backward: recognition of history and search for historical status (c. 1970 - 2000)

With the listing on the National Register, the cemetery was more frequently recognized as a historic landscape in need of preservation, and the federal government began to pay attention to its deteriorating condition. Yet, this period also saw rapid degeneration and damage to the site. In 1969, thirty-four feet of the cemetery's brick fence was knocked down. In 1973, the cemetery was subject to a series of attacks of vandalism, crypts were broken into, and unknown quantities of items stolen.[173] In September of 1981, 120 tombstones were vandalized, causing an estimated $30,000 worth of damages.[174] While these are the major incidents of vandalism, the cemetery's condition was deteriorating daily and in need of drastic intervention. With nowhere else to turn

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[171] For an extensive discussion of the cemetery's financial situation and money-making endeavors of this period, see Breitkreutz, 55-56.

[172] Report No. 433, to accompany S. 1545, 83rd Congress, 1st Session. "Authorizing the Secretary of the Army to Convey Certain Government-owned Burial Lots and Other Property in the Washington Parish Burial Ground, Washington, DC, and to Exchange Other Burial Lots," 20 May 1953.

[173] For discussion of the difficulties with vandalism see Brieitkreutz, 57-59.

[174] See Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery Newsletter, Winter 1982. In the archives of the APHCC at the cemetery.

and falling resources, the church again turned to the federal government for assistance. In 1971 a government official wrote a memorandum on his visit to the cemetery, noting that he observed stray dogs in residence on the grounds, saw dead trees, and many monuments in need of repair.[175] As a result of these concerns and appeals to the government, a bill was introduced to the House of Representatives calling for the cemetery to be added to the National Park Service.[176] At this time a proposal was drawn up detailing a development plan for the cemetery, and creating a vision for it as a national historic site.[177] The decision-making process dragged on for a number of years, during which the church transferred most of the cemetery's financial assets to its own accounts, presumably anticipating that the plan would be carried out. However, in 1974 the government rejected the offer of incorporating the cemetery within the Park Service, and recommended instead that the church consider other options.[178] After considering closing the cemetery and moving all the burials, the church instead determined to create a volunteer association to maintain the cemetery. In 1976, the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC) was formed, and began administrating the all cemetery's affairs. Possibilities for federal funding to support the association were denied in 1977 and 1978, and the association struggled to complete basic maintenance on the site. Meanwhile, vandalism caused the situation to deteriorate further.

While the cemetery remained at the periphery of federal consciousness (for example, a modern cenotaph was constructed in 1981 for Representative Thomas Hale Boggs, the first cenotaph built in more than one-hundred years), the cemetery's situation was extremely tentative, and no major renovation or rehabilitation efforts were carried out on the site. A low point was reached in 1997, when it was discovered that the cemetery's superintendent between 1989 and 1997, John Hanley, had embezzled significant funds from the association. Perhaps the silver lining for this cloud was the fact that this event made national news, and brought the sad situation of the cemetery to national attention. Over-grown with weeds, marred by toppled monuments and two decades of vandalism, the cemetery was listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 1997 "Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places" list. National attention brought much-needed funding, and set the crippled cemetery association, and its much-damaged site, back on the road toward survival.[179]

Conclusion

With renewed federal interest in the site, and increased volunteer activity, the Association has begun to create a new vision for the cemetery. While acknowledging the history of the site, the cemetery association is striving to give it meaning for the present and the future. The cemetery was a destination for tourists and visitors to the capital city in the nineteenth century, and is again regaining prominence as a site of national memory. In 2004-05 the Ward II, September 11, 2001 memorial was completed, a site development that included the re-gravelling of a path in the

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[175] "Memorandum for Record: Mr. Zieg/Cem Br/Mem Div/30059/10 May 1971, Subject: Congressional Cemetery Soldier's Lots," at the National Archives.

[176] HR 14339, 12 April 1972, S.3580, 4 May 1972; HR 15039, 17 May 1972; HR 1891, 11 January 1973; and HR 8883, 21 June 1973.

[177] Richard L. Stanton and Russell E. Dickenson, National Capital Parks, "Draft Environmental Statement, Proposed Legislation for the Acquiring of the Congressional Cemetery," no date, from AOC archives.

[178] See Breitkreutz, 59-60 for a more extensive discussion of these events.

[179] Details about this funding in Breitkreutz, 62.

cemetery, and planting of a commemorative tree-grove along the path. Intended to be linked to a series of such memorial groves across the city, Congressional Cemetery is regaining its status as a memorial site of national memory within the urban fabric. On a different note, the cemetery association created a center for community gathering by establishing a dog-walking membership program for the site. Daily throngs of local residents come to the cemetery, to enjoy the 32 acres of landscape along with their canine companions and neighbors. Perhaps the park-like features incorporated in the cemetery during the mid-decades of the nineteenth century help this site to adapt naturally to its role as an urban park.

PART II. PHYSICAL INFORMATION

A. Landscape Character and Use:

Congressional Cemetery is a historic cemetery with continuing burials. It is located on a site of approximately thirty-two acres, laid over the street grid of Washington, D.C. It is a designed landscape only in the broadest sense, in that its paths adopt the grid of the underlying L'Enfant plan, and its burial plots are laid out in regular lines that echo the city streets. This grid of streets is formally gathered around a central node. The burial chapel stands at the main cross-axis of the site. A circular road constructed around the chapel is the only curved circulation on the site, and emphasizes this as a key point in the space. Grouped rows of uniform Congressional monuments in combination with a back-drop pastiche of varied monument types constitute a unique defining aspect of this cemetery. Plantings tend to be regular, flanking the grid of circulation lines, but the varied monuments, and the occasional random tree-plantings dispersed within the fields of graves give the site a somewhat casual and picturesque feel. The cemetery is enclosed by a variety of fencing materials (brick walls to the west and east, an iron fence atop a brick base with sandstone capping along the northern boundary, and chain-link fencing around the southern and later eastern extension of the site). While still an active cemetery, the site has become a vibrant urban park, and is constantly peopled by an active dog-walking community.

Roughly three chronological periods of development are visually discernable within the overall character of this site. The oldest section of the cemetery, a square portion of the site, roughly defined by the lines of E Street, SE, Eighteenth Street, SE, Nineteenth Street SE, and F Street, SE, is a densely covered by monuments. This portion of the site was planned and organized within the European tradition of churchyard burials, and its crowded appearance is consistent with this historic type. The second distinct area of the cemetery is composed of those additions to the west, east and south of the original square added between 1848 and 1870, when the cemetery's directors desired to have their cemetery emulate the popular ideals of the rural cemetery movement, in spite of the continuation of a regular grid for plot designation. These portions of the cemetery contain no Congressional cenotaphs and are marked by a variety of monuments indicative of mid-nineteenth century notions of picturesque romanticism. The third section of the landscape consists of the arm that branches out to the east of the main cemetery block. This stretch of land, annexed to the cemetery in 1874, was laid out during the period of popularity of the lawn cemetery movement. Because of this influence, the monuments are lower to the ground, and more emphasis is placed on regularity of rows and greater expanses of manicured lawn then in other portions of the cemetery.

The character and use of this landscape is also defined by the types of funerary monuments erected here from 1807 to the present. From the early days of the cemetery, the site was organized around a system of family plots, individual sites, and 'outcast' or unmarked individual sites. This system persisted well into the twentieth century. A fourth type of plot form, unique to Congressional Cemetery, was developed when the design of the Congressional cenotaph was devised to adorn its surface. The site is, thus, characterized by monuments that organize its landscape in a hierarchical manner. The regular blocks of rows of Congressional cenotaphs, are located prominently along the cemeteries original main arteries. The family vaults and family plots, each with their own distinctive organization, markers and territory-defining boundaries (most frequently coping stones, stone boundary markers or fences, though many of these types of markers have been subsequently removed) line the main arteries of the cemetery. Individual grave sites, with the exception of plots of veterans and prominent individuals, are located in less strategic sites. Meanwhile, underneath the paths, and in the far corners of the cemetery along the boundary-lines of the site, human-length indentations in the sod mark the locations of unmarked graves, "charitable" burials provided by the cemetery for the destitute.

B. Overall Description

The experience of Congressional Cemetery reflects the layered nature of the site's history. Rather than presenting a uniform experience to the visitor, the site offers a variety of different effects, depending upon the path that the visitor follows. The overall effect of the site is the result of the accumulation of these various views, and can take the form in the mind of a visitor of isolated snapshots of views, a picturesque accumulation of types, or perhaps even a confusing jumble.

The main circulation arteries guide the visitor along a squared grid of avenues. Along these paths the views of the site are formal, and the visitor's gaze is directed toward the most lavish of the cemetery's monuments, which line the main arteries. Congress Avenue, the main entryway, is lined with a row of mature linden trees on either side of its length. To arrive at this road, the visitor passes through a formal gateway, on which the name "Congressional Cemetery" is inscribed. The largest formation of Congressional cenotaphs lies directly to the east of this path, and is visible immediately after crossing the threshold of the cemetery. The combination of these grand, formal elements (gate, trees, and cenotaphs), makes a dramatic impact on the visitor, and sets a formal tone for experience of the site. The repeating geometry of the cenotaphs dominates the viewing experience through much of the cemetery, until the visitor reaches the central circular drive around the chapel. At this site the visitor is reoriented away from the Congressional monuments, and must follow the curve of the road toward the front façade of the chapel. This is an important aspect of the site, because it turns the visitor's attention away from the formal, federal monuments, and refocuses it upon the burial chapel, and the path leading from the chapel toward the western entry gate (facing the direction of Christ Church). From the initial civic/federal experience of the site, the visitor is reoriented toward its religious connections. From this prescribed entrance (gate, along allée, to chapel) visitors can travel to any point east, south, or west, along the main arteries of the cemetery, and the effect of passage along these avenues is always geometric and formal.

Visitors who travel along the paths of secondary importance may experience the features of the site that were of primary importance in its most fully developed mid-nineteenth century period. Deviance from the primary cross-axis leads visitors along a path to the former main entryway (Coombe Avenue). Still lined with flagstones, and with a few tall trees on either side of its length, this path faintly recalls the full over-head canopy of leaves and branches that the formerly marked the avenue. Although the path itself is no longer the living ceremonial entrance to the cemetery, its former grandeur is quite clearly suggested to the visitor. Like a ruin, it marks the shadow of past glory. A number of additional paths, which are now grass-covered avenues through the oldest portion of the cemetery, lead visitors past many of the oldest and most significant monuments in the site.

Worn dirt paths that appear along the edges of the site and wrap around portions of the grounds that are not traversed by formal circulation arteries suggest that many visitors choose to experience the site through less formal and more incidental ways. Instead of being programmed by formal allées of trees, these paths are marked by views that are randomly framed by monuments, trees and bushes. Certain portions of the cemetery lend themselves to this level of incidental experience. In the southern portion of the site, a field of child and infant burials is both hidden from expansive views by its sunken location, and deemphasized to the visitor by the diminutive size of its markers and their relatively haphazard distribution. Likewise, the cemetery's unmarked graves go unnoticed by those who have not yet learned to detect their presence. Slight depressions in the grassy surfaces of the site's pathways are the only indicators of these burials, and the visitor is more likely to concentrate on the monuments lining the paths than on the undulations of the ground below his/her feet.

Because the cemetery is still in use, the grounds are marked by old monuments directly adjacent to newer additions. Visitors see the entire expanse of the nation's traditions of funerary markers arranged in what seems to be a random fashion across the cemetery. The variety of monument types, and the fact that through most of the cemetery the monuments are not rigidly arranged in straight lines, reinforces the picturesque nature of the plantings and echoes the scattering of trees across the site's surface.

The effect of the cemetery is also dependent upon the direction in which the visitor is walking. Views toward the north, west and east are dominated by urban elements. The views to the north and west are of small city streets lined by row houses. To the east, however, the view is largely dominated by the brick-bulk of the Washington D.C. Correctional Facility, which occupies most of the ground northeast of the cemetery. To the southwest as well, the site is marked by its urban surroundings – views of the Commodore Barney Circle Traffic circle, and the adjacent McDonald's restaurant, offer a jarring contrast to the tree-covered hills of the cemetery. In contrast to these urban views, views of rolling tree-covered hills to the south-east situate the cemetery along the banks of the Anacostia River, and offer the visitor a glimpse of the rural scenery for which this cemetery was famed throughout the nineteenth century.

C. Character Defining Features:

1. Natural Systems and Features:

a. Topography:

The cemetery is positioned on an elevated piece of ground which slopes downward as it approaches the river. The oldest portions of the cemetery are on the highest ground, which can be interpreted as a plateau, offering the most advantageous burial sites and the best views of the surrounding landscapes. The portions of the cemetery added in the era of emulating the rural cemetery movement slope down toward the water. The newest portion of the grounds, an arm branching to the east of the main body of the cemetery is the only flat portion of the site, and represents a lowland area. A topographical study of the cemetery indicated that there is a 55' drop in elevation from the plateau to the lowland area, though this drop is perceived by a visitor to the space as a gentle, sloping, hill.[180] The only route through the cemetery where a visitor becomes thoroughly aware of the steepness of the site is the sharply graded Prout Street which connects nearly the most elevated terrain of the site, just south of the chapel, to the lowland eastern arm of the cemetery. While certainly the terrain and topography of the cemetery has been manipulated by human construction, there is no record of significant manipulation and re-grading of the site. The changes that have been made to the natural topography have been completed in a piece-meal fashion, over the course of nearly two centuries, and without any consistent documentation.

b. Vegetation:

The planting of this cemetery has never followed a formal planting plan, and it has changed over time due to evolving values of landscape design. Study of the Thompson photographs of 1913 offers a record of an earlier generation of mature trees, and also shows a number of the particularly prominent mature trees now on the site shortly after their planting (See Figs. 5-11 for selections of Thompson's photographs, and see the HALS No. DC-1 photographs to compare the 1913 and 2005 conditions of the same views).

The cemetery contains a number of significant trees. The linden allée, planted in the early twentieth century is now a dominant element of the landscape. A large Magnolia that marks the high-point of the original ceremonial axis of the cemetery is now one of the most prominent trees on the site and can be identified as one of the recently planted trees in a 1913 photograph (Fig. 8, 9). The circle drive around the chapel is lined with mature cherry trees. A thick growth of trees defines the southern border of the site, and though beyond the boundary of the cemetery, give the landscape a sense of having a 'natural' setting instead of being completely enclosed within the urban grid. The main clusters of tree plantings occur at regular intervals along the site's primary arteries. Other trees stand as individual accent points, dotted seemingly randomly across the cemetery. A new generation of trees is now in the course of being planted by the cemetery association. Most prominent among these are the two rows of trees making up the September 11th memorial grove.

Thompson's 1913 photographs of the cemetery also give the viewer a sense of the rich undergrowth of shrubs that dominated the cemetery's vegetation in the nineteenth century. This

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[180] See, *Historic Landscape and Structures Report for Historic Congressional Cemetery Architect of the Capitol*, Vol. 1 (Portland, ME: Turk Tracey & Larry Architects, LLC, 2003), 81. Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery Archives, Washington, D.C.

understory of vegetation is now largely lacking from the cemetery, which is defined predominantly by trees, sod, and selected ornamental planting.

Ornamental planting was a dominant feature in the cemetery's landscape of the nineteenth century. Family plots were tended, and plantings planned by family members or their hired assistants. While certainly not every plot was elaborately tended, cemetery records do indicate a high level of investment of family members in the care and decoration of their cemetery plots. Thompson's photographs of 1913 offer glimpses of some of these plots, but by the early twentieth century the practice was already being discouraged by the cemetery's administration, and so few of the family plots visible in the photographs have ornate plantings. The cemetery association has made attempts at replanting ornamental vegetation on some of the family plots. Significant among these is the John Phillip Sousa memorial, which has been given an elaborate planting plan of low-lying shrubs and ornamental flowers. These replantings are, however, based on the judgment of contemporary cemetery volunteers, not on any particular historic evidence.

Short-list of prominent trees:

Littleleaf Linden (*Tilia cordata*)
Japanese Flowering Cherry (*Prunus serrulata 'Kwanzan'*)
Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*)
Easter Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.)*
Horsechestnut (*Aesculush hippocastanum*)

c. Water:

A creek runs underground across the site of the cemetery, traveling diagonally from its northwestern to mid-southern borders. While much of the creek is hidden within a subterranean culvert, a pipe discharges some of the water at the eastern edge of vault row, and there is generally a pool of standing water in this zone. Significant water damage is caused by this stream in the portion of the cemetery that lies to the south and downhill from this point. After any rainfall water, floods across paths, and standing water accumulates among the graves.

A fountain, constructed in 1870 and demolished in 1903 to make room for the funerary chapel, was once the dominant water feature of the site.

Today the site does not directly border the Anacostia River, but in the mid-nineteenth century the cemetery's land was bounded by the path of the river. The river has played an integral role in the cemetery's formation. It has contributed to the picturesque quality of the site, and has caused visitors to admire the cemetery, even when they disliked its landscaping and monument. Likewise, the river may have served to offer a circulation artery by which supplies arrived at the site and boaters may have even been able to see the cemetery from the river below. With the thick overgrowth of trees along the southern border of the site, the river view has now become obscured. This vital portion of the site's historic identity is no longer a defining element of its landscape.

2. Spatial organization and land patterns:

The site is elevated, located on what was once the hilly banks of the Anacostia River (the path of the river has in later years been modified, so that it runs a fair distance farther south of the site than it would have in 1807 at the date of founding). The main entryway brings visitors onto the highpoint of the hill and the site slopes, with rolling variations to the east and west of its central axis. Only the eastern-branching arm of the cemetery is flat; the rest of the site consists of gently rolling topography. No portions of the site are covered by overhead shelter, and one of the site's distinctive features are the long views of sky extending out over the rolling hills of the river's banks.

a. Circulation and paths:

The planned routes through Congressional Cemetery follow a grid-line pattern, due to the fact that the on-site roadways are continuations of the urban grid. This geometric circulation holds with only two exceptions. The first is the circular turnabout constructed around the chapel. The second is the angular boundary along the southwestern edge of the site, the shape of which was partially determined by the 1992 Barney Circle renovation and partially by the line of Water Street, running along the northern bank of the Anacostia River, in a course somewhat deviant to the regular pattern of the street grid.
The main artery of the cemetery runs along the line of Eighteenth Street (and is called Congress Avenue on the cemetery plan). This was once a brick carriageway, with the brick probably laid after the installation of the fountain in 1870. Now the route is covered in asphalt, and marred by large pot-holes. This route is open to vehicular traffic for the entire north-south axis of the site. The second main artery of the site, coincident with the line of G Street, SE (Ingle Avenue), runs the entire east-west axis of the site, intersecting Congress Avenue at the chapel. H Street, or Prout Avenue, runs parallel with Ingle, and allows cars to circulate through the cemetery along the main lines of its perimeter, and then exit using the main gate on Congress Avenue. These routes have all been covered with asphalt. Visual evidence from the 1913 Thompson photographs indicates that most of these primary circulation arteries were still graveled carriageways at that time, with neat brick gutters running along the edges of the roads. Small stones, painted white, were placed at regular intervals along the edges of the paths, perhaps marking the range numbers for visitors interested in locating specific burial sites.

Others of the cemetery's pathways are closed to vehicular traffic. Principal among these is the former ceremonial entrance to the cemetery, the only route through the burial ground that was paved with flagstones in the nineteenth century (designated as Coombe Avenue in 1874). While the flagstones are still in place, the crisp edges of the grass and the neat stone-lined entrances to the individual family vaults have not been preserved. Likewise, the growth of a large magnolia tree (planted around 1913 and visible in Thompson's photographs) has ripped through the flagstone path at its intersection with Ingle Avenue. The cemetery's second important footway is a route that runs north-south, halfway between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Streets. Here the cemetery association installed the September 11th Memorial Grove, and in the process set down fine, brick-red gravel, that gives this artery a distinct visual quality. The smaller formal foot paths of the cemetery are brick, though the brick probably was set down some time in the late nineteenth century to replace earlier gravel paths.

Impromptu trails have been worn around the edges of the cemetery by pedestrian and canine traffic. These less-formal circulation paths deviate from the cemetery's formal grid. Especially worn paths are located in the northeastern and southwestern portions of the cemetery. In the southwestern portion of the site, a small path winds around monuments as it scales the hill, though for the most part these trails stick closely to the fence-lines of the cemetery's boundaries and thus away from the actual monuments.

b. Views and vistas

From the early nineteenth century this site was recognized for the beauty of its location, and most particularly for the vantage points from which its elevated site allowed broad views of the Anacostia River and its surrounding rolling banks. In the elevated portions of the site, glimpses can still be caught of the classic views for which the site was appreciated in the nineteenth century, though these large panoramic sweeps of the surrounding hillsides no longer afford glimpses of the river below. Thick foliage and growths of trees along on the southern boundary of the lot, and in the land intervening between the cemetery and the river now block any views of the water from the cemetery. While at the time of its founding the cemetery was located in a rural, wooded area, today it has become firmly locked into the urban grid of Washington, D.C. Most of the views from within the cemetery are now defined by its urban neighborhood. The views to the east of the cemetery are dominated by the large form of the multi-storey brick Washington D.C. Detention Center just beyond the cemetery's walls. To the north and west, the views reveal neighborhood streets and early twentieth-century row houses. South of the cemetery, much of the view is blocked by trees, but the section that is revealed presents only the large traffic interchange, Commodore Barney Circle. This change in views from the cemetery reflects to a great degree the cemetery's own shifting identity. For much of the nineteenth century the rural site doubled as a picturesque garden or rural park for its visitors. Today the site, well within the folds of the city, plays the role of an urban park integral to the daily routines of the surrounding community.

Because of the traditionally ceremonial nature of this site, and aided by its grid pattern circulation, the landscape is marked by long, tree-lined vistas. Particularly striking to visitors today is the main entryway of the cemetery (Congress Avenue), lined by mature linden trees, that guides the eye of the visitor immediately deeply into the site, and focuses the vision on the small funerary chapel that acts as the focal center of the landscape's sight-lines. Parallel to Congress Avenue runs Coombe Avenue, the ceremonial entrance of the nineteenth century. Unlike Congress Avenue, whose axial vista is focused upon the funerary chapel through the linden allée, Coombe Avenue offers an open, unobstructed view along the north-south axis of the site. Free-standing vaults line either side of the flag-stoned path, and a single, monumental magnolia tree marks the high point of the site, as the path then proceeds down the hill toward the Anacostia River below. This vista is markedly different from the manner in which it was framed in the nineteenth century. Thompson's 1913 photograph "The Public Vault" offers a sense of what this vista was intended to look like, with the neat flagstone path lined on either side by a variety of mature trees (Fig. 5).

3. Structures, site furnishings, and objects:

The character of this site is defined in large part by the interaction between its natural/topographical elements, and the abundance of monuments and mausoleums arrayed across the landscape. The site includes a prominent gatehouse and several other small buildings, but is not dominated by any architectural or structural frame.

a. Buildings and structures:

The largest structure on the site is the cemetery's gatehouse. Designed in 1922, and constructed between 1923 and 1924, this building is two-story structure, built of yellow brick, with porch added to the rear. This modern building replaced the gatehouse that had stood on the same site since 1832. A free-standing garage, built of identical brick is gradually falling into a state of disrepair. The gatehouse has played an important cultural role in the cemetery's history, in the sense that the superintendents of the cemetery lived in this building (and prior to that in its predecessor) until the 1980s. The role of the superintendent was crucial to the management, and design of the cemetery, and thus this structure acted as the social core to the cemetery during its period of prominence in the nineteenth century.

The funerary chapel was constructed at the intersection between the cemetery's dominant axes in 1903, replacing the circular fountain that had added a picturesque element to the cemetery since 1870. It is Gothic Revival in style, with a pebble-dashed exterior finish and entrance door painted bright red. These attributes are important since they echo the appearance of the newly renovated-Christ Church. The satellite parish of the church was also given the same exterior treatment. Thus, to parishioners this chapel would have a familiar feel and association with the religious community. The most noteworthy feature of the chapel is a set of three square windows flanking its main altar, each with an iron grating on the exterior. These windows allowed the transfer of the coffins from a hearse to the building and back. The chapel was renovated in the 1980s, and is again in need of significant restoration.

A storage garage was built on the far-eastern boundary of the cemetery in 1949.

b: Small scale elements:

i. Fence

The perimeter of the site is marked by a series of fenced boundaries. The most elaborate of these fences is that running along the northern boundary of the site. This fence consists of a brick base, with a concrete cap (both adjusted in height to make the line of the fence level). An elaborate iron fence stands on top of this low-lying base. Portions of this fence may date to the nineteenth century, though it has been repaired, realigned and reconstructed on a number of occasions. There are four gateways facing Eighteenth Street along this northern boundary. The most prominent is the main entranceway, which is framed by a ceremonial gate, consisting of brick pillars that flank either side of the roadway, and an arched iron-work span emblazons the name of the cemetery between them. This entranceway was reconstructed in 1978. The three remaining gateways perhaps correspond more closely to the original form. Wrought iron pillars, with a scroll pattern in their shaft, and a capital in the form of an upside-down acorn stand at either side

of the gate. The gates themselves consist of two wrought-iron panels that swing open. At their edges and mid-point they have a spear-motif, and the rectangular base of the gate is caped by elaborate scroll-work in a roughly pedimental shape.

The western boundary of the cemetery is enclosed by a plain brick wall, approximately six feet in height, and concealed from view behind a thick row of hedges. The single gateway along this wall has the same wrought-iron gates described above, but the gates are hung between concrete pillars, capped by simple spheres. The eastern boundary is defined by a similar brick wall, until it meets the junction with the final 1874 addition to the property, at which point the boundary becomes a chain-link fence. The remainder of the grounds is surrounded by chain link fence, though largely concealed by copious foliage.

ii. Public Vault

The public vault was constructed by the federal government in 1832, and funded through the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capitol. Phillips and Hanna completed the scrolled stone-work on the front of the vault, Gideon Davis made the iron door and its ornate lock, W.W. Lowe completed the brickwork for the door, C. Buckingham supplied the iron railing, and William Bush completed the necessary excavation of the ground. The vault has been one of the most prominent features of the cemetery's landscape since its erection, and was the focal site of the ceremonial activities that occurred in connection with federal burials throughout the mid-nineteenth century. The vault is brick, with a domed earth-covered ceiling. It had four simple pillars capped by spheres that defined its corners, and elaborate iron fencing enclosing its exterior (since removed). Its façade has simple sandstone scrolls flanking the door give it a distinct Renaissance Revival-demeanor. A well-tended flower garden was once planted in its entrance yard (as can be seen in Fig. 5, Thompson's 1913 photograph of the site).

iii. Mausoleums

The cemetery's landscape is dotted with mausoleums (or family vaults) that play a significant role in defining its character. These mausoleums consist predominantly of two types.

The older, mid-to-late nineteenth-century mausoleums consist of brick or stone walls and façade, with a domed earthen vault behind. An excellent example of this type of vault is the public vault described above. Another such prominent vault is that of the Blagden family, a brick structure with a domed roof, and a stepped-pyramid façade with sandstone trim capping the brick wall.

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mausoleums are built into the hillside along Prout Avenue. These are much more elaborate tombs, and erected in more loyal revival styles. Marble façades glisten in the sunlight, and diamond patterned marble mosaics create elaborate classicizing entryways for these tombs.

iv. Congressional cenotaphs

These uniform funerary monuments create a distinctive and dominant visual element of the landscape. Each consists of a cube of Acquia Creek sandstone, approximately three feet in length

on each side, set upon a platform of two steps. The cube is topped by a short cylinder and then a conical cap. On the face of the cube flanking the nearest roadway, a marble panel is attached on which is inscribed the name of the memorialized congressmen, the state that he represented, and the date of death. These cenotaphs are attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, and the earliest can be dated to approximately 1817-1820.

v. Monuments

The cemetery contains a vast variety of monuments, varying in medium, size, and texture. The earliest monuments are sandstone slabs, simply shaped and carved. Some early markers also are in table-top, or sarcophagus form. By the mid-nineteenth century the stone of choice was changed to marble, and the cemetery has many elaborate marble markers. Common motifs included obelisks, broken columns, and pensive female figures. Particularly striking is the section of infant and child tombs in the lowland area, here a field of baby-lambs, obelisks, and miniature severed tree-trunks mark the graves of the youthful dead.

The most famed monuments of the cemetery are also its most elaborate. The monument to Eldridge Gerry, one of the oldest monumental tombstones, stands amongst the more stoic cenotaphs, like a wedding-cake (see Thompson's 1913 photograph "Tomb of Vice-President Elbridge Gerry"). This monument was greatly admired by mid nineteenth-century visitors to the cemetery. The Arsenal Monument dominates the northwestern quadrant of the cemetery, and is a primary element of the landscape to be visible well beyond the cemetery's boundaries. Its iconography narrates the story of the disastrous deaths of a number of young female workers in an explosion at the Washington Arsenal. An angelic young woman caps the tall monument, and panels close to its base show a rendering of the explosion and a brief narrative of the events of the disastrous day, and the names of the dead.

c. Archaeological sites:

No archaeological investigation of the cemetery has been completed, other than a study of the remains in the Coombe family vault by the Smithsonian Institution (as yet unpublished). This study focused on attempting to identify the individual remains, and on studying the bodies for information about the diet and health of upper-middle class residents in the nation's capital in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

APPENDIX 1:

"An act for the improvement of the Grave Yards in the City of Washington, for the appointment of Sextons thereto, and for other purposes." *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, Vol. VII, No. 990 (March 20, 1807): 1[181]

(By Authority)
AN ACT

For the Improvement of the Grave Yards in the City of Washington, for the appointment of Sextons thereto, and for other purposes.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the first and second chambers of the City council of Washington*, That the squares number one hundred and nine, and number one thousand and nine, and number one thousand and twenty six, heretofore assigned, by the commissioners of the federal buildings, to the public as burial grounds, for the interment of all denominations of people, be well and securely fenced in, with good and sufficient locust or cedar posts and chestnut rails, under the direction and superintendence of three commissioners to be appointed by the mayor, who shall also cause the necessary gates and stiles to be made and fixed thereto: and for defraying the expense of such inclosures, gates and stiles, there shall be, and is hereby appropriated, the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars, which the treasurer is hereby authorized to pay to the order of the said commissioners, and countersigned by the mayor for the purposes aforesaid.

SEC. 2 *Be it enacted*, That the commissioners shall cause the areas of the said squares exclusive of the necessary ways and paths therein, to be divided into scites for graves, and numbered in such manner as they shall deem best; after which they shall designate upon a plan of the same, to be filed in the office of the register of the city, a certain portion or portions of each square not exceeding one half thereof, as graves or scites for families, and may dispose of the same agreeably to the provisions of this act: another portion shall be designated for the interment of white persons of all denominations, and the remainder of the said burial grounds or scites for graves, shall be for the interment of slaves and people of color, but for the two last mentioned portions no price shall be demanded or received.

SECT. 3. *Be it enacted*, That the commissioners shall separate the several portions by a thorn hedge fence, if they shall deem it advisable, the expense of which shall be defrayed out of the proceeds of the sale of scites for graves. And when they shall have divided the squares or burial grounds into scites, and designated the portion for families, they shall proceed to dispose of the scites at the rate of two dollars for each grave to the inhabitants of the City of Washington, in any number not exceeding six scites or graves to one family or person applying. In making this diposition [*sic*] however, they shall proceed as follows. Those inhabitants, who have already interred a part of their families in the said grave-yards, shall be entitled to select in the first instance in that part or portion of the square nearest to the part at present used for interment. All other selection of rights purchased, shall be in the order of purchase or subscription to the said commissioners, who shall give public notice of the time and place of their receiving the same, at least thirty days previous thereto.

SEC. 4 *Be it enacted*, That the purchase money for scites or graves, shall be paid within thirty days from the day of subscribing, and on payment being made, the purchased shall receive a certificate thereof, designating the numbers on the plat so purchased and paid for.

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[181] *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser*, VII, no. 990 (20 March 1807): 1.

SECT. 5. *Be it enacted*, That any person purchasing a scite or scites for graves, may transfer the same, by an instrument of writings under his hand and seal, to be lodged with the register of the City, and to be by him recorded, for which he shall be entitled to receive the sum of twenty-five cents; or the person holding such scites of graves may attach any number thereof, not exceeding six, to any lot or house in the City of Washington, which act being recorded by the register as aforesaid, shall authorize the same scites to pass as an appurtenance with the said lot or house, in all legal transfers thereof.

SECT. 6. *Be it enacted*, That such of the scites as remain undisposed of at the end of ninety days, from the said notification of the commissioners, shall at the discretion of them, or their successors, be disposed of in single scites, on such terms as they may from time to time direct, provided that not more than three dollars, nor less than two dollars and fifty cents be demanded or received for any one scite.

SECT. 7. *Be it enacted*, That the said commissioners, or their successors, shall apply the monies arising from the sale of scites for graves in each of the aforesaid burial grounds, in defraying the expenses of carrying this act into execution, in improvements and repair of the fences and burial grounds, to the purchase of a lot of ground in the neighborhood of each, and for the erection of a house on each lot for a sexton: Provided that for the purchase of the said lots and erection of said houses they shall not expend a sum exceeding twelve hundred dollars, that is to say, one thousand dollars for the erection of the houses, and the [*two illegible words*] for the purchase of the lots, the residue shall be paid over to the treasurer of the City, and remain as a fund wherewith to purchase other burial ground as circumstances and the increased population of the city may require.

SECT. 8. *Be it enacted*, That the mayor shall appoint two suitable persons as sextons, one for each burial ground, who, or their deputees, shall be the only persons authorized to dig graves in the burial ground to which they may be respectively attached, and they shall receive such compensation for the digging and filling up of graves, as the commissioners shall establish.

SECT. 9. *Be it enacted*, That the sextons shall keep a regular and exact account of all interments by them made, with the numbers of the graves or scites in which they take place, and name of the person interred, and make a return thereof to the register of the city every three months, who shall file and keep the same safe. They shall dress the graves neatly, shall use diligence to keep the grave-yard, fences, gates and stiles from being injured, and shalt shew the place of interment of any person to those who may apply.

SECT. 10. *Be it enacted*, That the said sextons shall always on application, within a reasonable time (and the payment of his established fees) dig, or cause to be dug such graves as may be required, under the penalty of ten dollars for each neglect or refusal, to be recovered by the person prosecuting for the same, before any justice of the peace for the county of Washington.

SECT. 11. *Be it enacted*, That the said sextons shall be allowed to occupy the lot and houses, authorized to be purchased and built by this act, during the period of their continuing to act as sextons and no longer, free of expense except so much as the commissioners for the time being, shall direct them to expend in necessary repairs thereon; provided the sum so directed to be expended, shall not exceed twenty dollars per annum.

T.H. GILLISS, *President of the First Chamber.*

PHINEAS BRADLEY, *President of the Second Chamber.*

Approved, March 14th, 1807.

ROBERT BRENT, MAYOR

Test,
THOMAS HERTY, Register.

APPENDIX 2

Preamble and articles of subscription of the cemetery[182]

Washington City, April 4, 1807

A great inconvenience has long been experienced by citizens residing in the eastern portion of the city for want of a suitable place for a burial ground. It is well known that the one at the Northeast boundary of the city, now occupied as such, is a low and watery situation and very unfit for a place of interment. To remedy this inconvenience, a square of ground west of the marine hospital, being square 1115, hath been purchased from the superintendent of the city for $200. This piece of ground is thought equal to any that can be had in the city for that purpose.

To raise the purchase money and a sum sufficient to inclose the square with a substantial post and rail fence, we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, do promise to pay such sums as are annexed to our names, respectively, under such conditions as are hereunto prefixed; that is to say:

First. The ground shall be laid off in lots of 3 by 9 feet.

Second. Any person shall be at liberty to subscribe for lots from 1 to 15, at $2 each, the lots to be transferable.

Third. Any person applying at a future time to purchase shall be admitted at the same rate as the original subscribers.

Fourth. If there should be a sufficient sum subscribed to carry into effect the object hereby contemplated and any citizen will advance a sufficient sum to complete the same, they shall be reimbursed with interest the sum so advanced out of the first money arising from the proceeds of said ground.

Fifth. When the graveyard, with its improvements, shall be unencumbered of debt, then the subscribers shall assign over all the right and title of the said ground not subscribed for the vestry of Washington Parish, subject to the restrictions of the third article.

Sixth. Immediately after the ground shall be inclosed and laid off, a sexton shall be furnished with a plan of the burial ground laid off in lots properly numbered, and each proprietor's name marked on his particular lot. No person shall be permitted to dig a grave but the sexton or his assistant.

Seventh. No person known to deny a belief in the Christian religion shall ever be admitted to a right in this burial ground.

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[182] The original document is in the Vestry minutes at the archives of Christ Church. See the *History of Congressional Cemetery*, Senate Report, 59th Congress, 2nd Session, Document No. 72, Dec. 6, 1906, Presented by Mr. Pourkett to accompany H.R. 5972 for transcribed document.

APPENDIX 3:

Deed, Recorded March 25, 1808:[183]

Thomas Monroe, superintendent, to Henry Ingle, as an agent

TERRITORY OF COLUMBIA, City of Washington, set.

Whereas it appears that the square numbered 1026, heretofore appropriated and used as a burial ground, is an ineligible site for that purpose in consequence of its low and wet situation, for which reason a number of the inhabitants of the city have contributed toward the purchase, enclosure, and improvement of a more suitable site, and have nominated Mr. Henry Ingle their agent to purchase and receive a conveyance of such site. These are therefore to certify that the undersigned superintendent of the City of Washington, on the fifteenth day of April last, sold to the said Henry Ingle, for the sum of $200, all that square or portion of ground in the City of Washington designated and numbered on the plan of the said city, "1115" as for the use and purpose of a burial ground for all denominations of people, subject to the terms and conditions declared by the President of the United States for regulating the materials and manner of buildings and improvements on the lots in the said City of Washington, and subject also to such regulations as the vestry of Washington parish in the Territory of Columbia shall ordain and establish: *Provided, however,* That such regulations shall appropriate and set apart one-fourth part of the said square hereby sold for the gratuitous interment of those inhabitants who may die without leaving the means of purchasing grave sites, or paying for the privilege of burial therein: *And provided also*, That the price demanded for the said grave sites and privilege of burial shall in no case nor at any time hereafter exceed the sum of $2 for each corpse, exclusive of the customary expense of digging the grave. And the whole of the purchase money aforesaid being paid and satisfied by the said Henry Ingle to the said superintendent, it is therefore considered the said Henry Ingle, his heirs and assigned, be, and they hereby are, entitled to the said square numbered 1115 and in fee simple, for the use and purpose of burial ground, subject to the terms, conditions, regulations, and provisions aforesaid.

Done and certified pursuant to the act of assembly of Maryland, entitled "A further supplement to the act concerning the Territory and the City of Washington."

Witness my hand the 25th day of March, in the year of our Lord on3 1808.

THOMAS MONROE, Superintendent

[183] This deed is in the Christ Church, Washington Parish archives.

APPENDIX 4:

Deed of sale for the cemetery from Henry Ingle to the church in 1812.[184]

This indenture made this seventy-seventh day of March in the year of our Lord one-thousand eight hundred & twelve between Henry Ingle of the city of Washington & district of Columbia of the one part, & the Reverend Andrew T. McCormick, Thomas Tingey, Peter Miller, Samuel Eliot, Griffith Coombe, Samuel N. Smallwood, Joseph Forrest, James Young, & Henry Ingle, the rector & vestry of Washington parishe of the county of Washington and district of Columbia of the other part.

WITNESSETH That the said Henry Ingle for and in consideration of the sum of five dollars current money to him the said Henry Ingle in hand paid by the said vestry of Washington parishe at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof the said Henry Ingle do the hereby acknowlege [*sic*] Hath given granted bargained and sold aliened released enfeoffed and confirmed and by these presents Dothe give grant bargain and sell alien release enfeoff and confirm unto the said vestry of Washington Parish and their successors, all that square of portion of ground situated lying and being in the said city of Washington, and being known and designated in the plan of the said city, as the square numbered one thousand one hundred and fifteen. Together with all & singular the rights privileges and appertenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining. To have & to hold the said square or portion of ground above designated & described, together with all and singular the rights privileges and appertenances thereunto belonging unto the said vestry of Washington parish and their successors forever to and for their sole use and behoofe and to and for no other use intent or purpose whatsoever in as full and ample manner, as he the said Henry Ingle might or could have had and held the said square or portion of ground with its appertenances, under the authority and by virtue of a certain certificate of conveyance made executed and delivered to him the said Henry Ingle on the twenty fifth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred & eight by Thomas Munroe superintendent of the city of Washington, and subject to the terms conditions and provisos in the said certificate of conveyance specified and contained. And the said Henry Ingle for himself and his heirs executors and administrators do the covenant and agree to and with the said vestry of Washington Parish and their successors that he the said Henry Ingle and his hears, give the said square or portion of ground with its appertenances unto the said vestry of Washington parish and their successors, against him the said Henry Ingle and his heirs and against all and every other person or persons whatsoever claiming or to claim the said Square or portion of grounds or any part thereof, by from or under him or them, shall and will hereafter warrant and forever defend by these present. In Testimony whereof the said Henry Ingle hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal the day and year first above written.

Signed sealed and delivered
In presence of Wm Brent
Charles Gloom (sp. Unclear)

Henry Ingle

[184] This deed is in the archives of Christ Church.

APPENDIX 5:

An Act for enclosing the burial ground for Christ Church, Washington Parish[185]

Be it enacted, etc., That the Secretary of the Treasury be and he is hereby authorized to cause to be paid to the vestry of Christ Church, Washington Parish, in the city of Washington, the sum of two thousand dollars, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of aiding in the erection of a substantial wall around the burial ground of said parish: *Provided*. That the said vestry shall execute a bond to the United States to be approved by the Secretary of the Treasury, and deposited in his Department, conditioned in the penalty of four-thousand dollars, for the faithful application of the money and execution of the work, and securing to the United States the four hundred sites reserved in said burial ground, for the interment of members of Congress, and others, connected with the General Government.

[185] 6 Stat. L. 294. Reproduced in the 1906 Senate *History of Congressional Cemetery*.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Drawings, plans:

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery has the largest collection of maps directly related to the cemetery. Important among these are a 1935 site-map of the cemetery, the 1992 study for the Commodore Barney Circle freeway modification project, the historic landscape study maps prepared by Turk, Tracy, & Associates, and the master landscape plans prepared by EDAW in 2003.

The National Archives has a few maps relating to the boundary and site definitions of the cemetery in its Commodore Barney Circle File (RG66), dating to c. 1936. Note especially Sheet # 2 (Proposed Street-Car Route) and Sheet # 4 (Topography and existing conditions).

The best collection of historic maps of Washington, D.C., is in the Library of Congress Map & Geography division. A number of these maps do include Congressional cemetery.

B. Historic views, photographs

No prints, drawings or other visual representations of the cemetery have been found that precede 1850.

The Washingtoniana Division of the DC Public Library holds the E.B. Thompson collection of photographs of Congressional Cemetery (Figs. 5-11). They also own copies of the two extant historic prints of the cemetery, *Burial Ground* (alternatively titled, *Congressional Cemetery*) and *View at the Congressional Cemetery* (Figs. 1-4).

The Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs division holds the Works Progress Administration documentation of Congressional Cemetery. These include photographs by Joseph A. Horne and Theodor Horydczak.

The Kiplinger Research Library of the Historical Society of Washington, DC, housed in the City Museum, has perhaps the most extensive public archive of photographs of Congressional Cemetery. These photographs come from a wide variety of individuals, with the largest collection of images in the Emil A. Press Slide Collection. Most of these photographs date from 1960 to the present.

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery has extensive collections of photographs, mostly dating from 1976 (the date of inception of the association) to the present. These collections include photographs of each monument in the cemetery.

The George Washington University stereograph collection contains at least one image of Congressional Cemetery.

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E. Sources not yet investigated

Archival material at the Architect of the Capitol's office may likewise be useful for further tracing the involvement of Benjamin Henry Latrobe at Congressional Cemetery, or at least his interactions with George Blagden, Griffith Coombe, and Thomas Tingey, as well as other figures involved in both federal construction projects and the construction of Congressional Cemetery.

The drawings and watercolors of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, at the Maryland Historical Society may be able to offer further evidence for his involvement in the design of the Congressional Cenotaphs, or at least place them within the direct context of his career.

Photographic and archival materials at local universities, including George Washington University, Howard University, and Georgetown University, may yield additional material.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

Congressional Cemetery was documented by the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS, Paul Dolinsky, Chief), and funded by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS, John Robbins, Chief) (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Heritage Documentation Programs, HABS/HAER/HALS/CRGIS, Richard O'Connor, Acting Manager). This documentation was done with the cooperation of the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC). Lisa Pfueller Davidson, HABS historian, served as project leader. Julia A. Sienkewicz served as project historian. James Rosenthal, HABS/HALS photographer, completed large format photographs. Linda Harper, chair of the APHCC, Rev. Judith Davis, of Christ Church, and Sandra Schmitt archivist of the APHCC, all greatly facilitated the completion of this project.

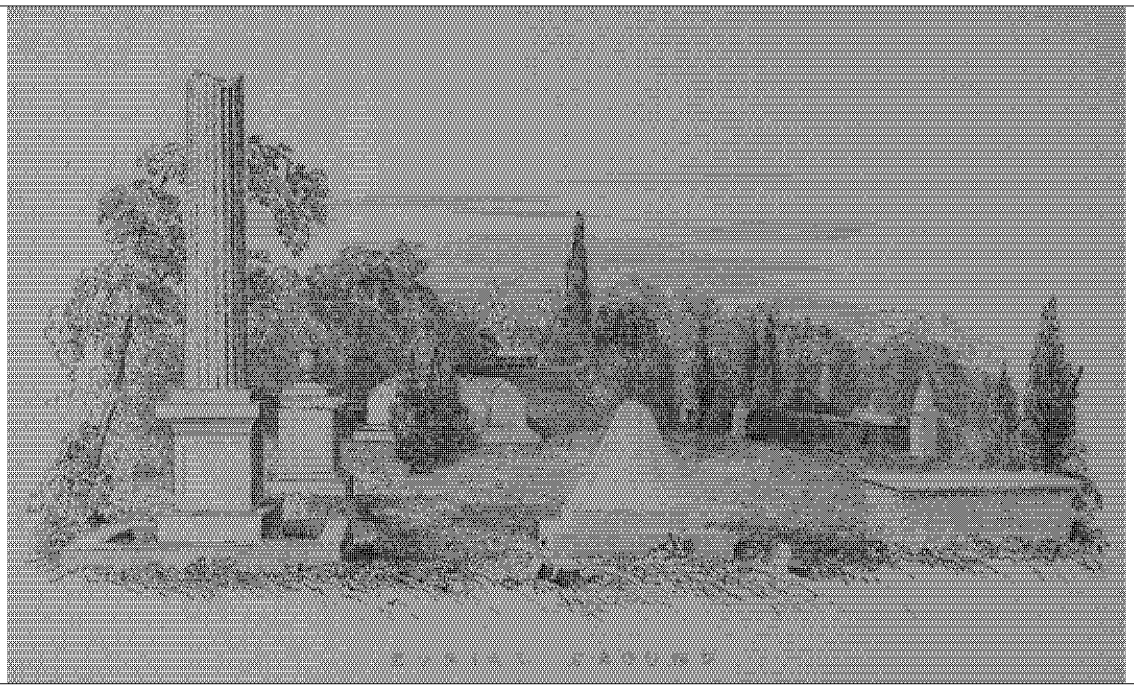

Figure 1: *Burial Ground* an illustration from William Q. Force. *Picture of Washington and Its Vicinity, for 1850* (Washington: William Q. Force, 1850), artist and printmaker unknown. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

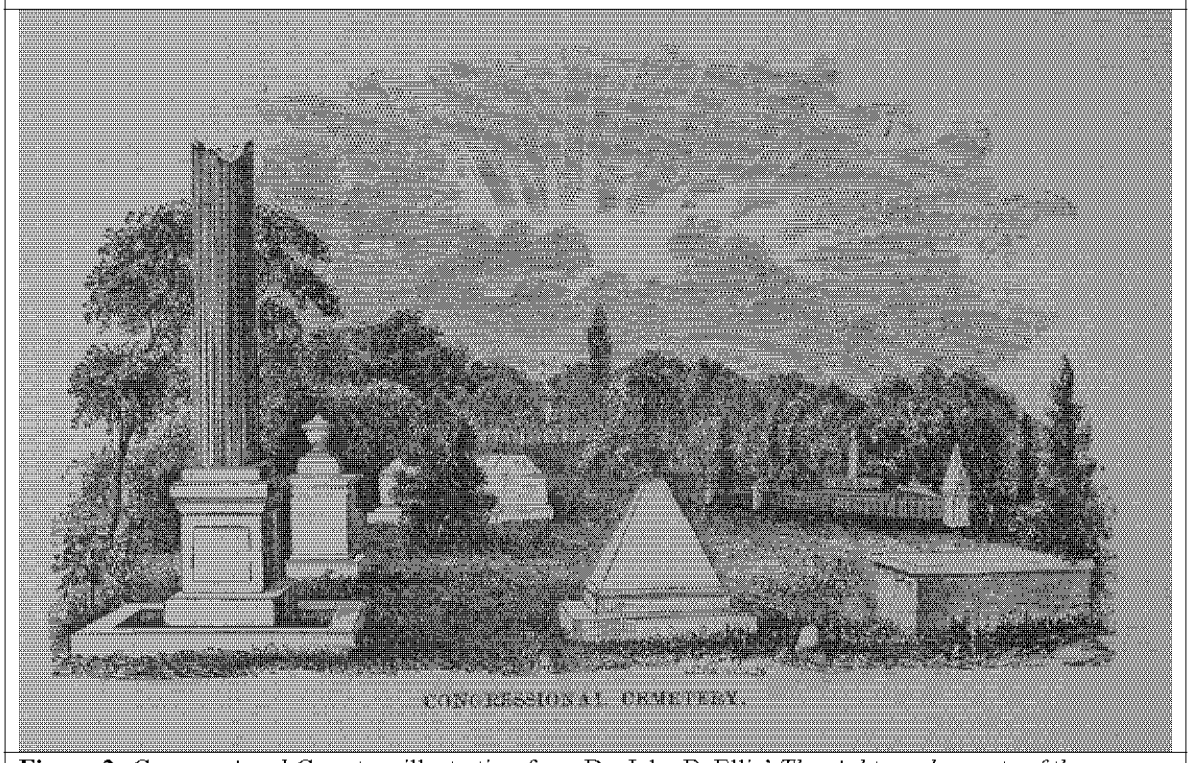

Figure 2: *Congressional Cemetery* illustration from Dr. John B. Ellis' *The sights and secrets of the national capital: a work descriptive of Washington city in all its various phases* (Chicago: Jones, Junkins & Co., c. 1869). Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

Figure 3: *View at the Congressional Cemetery, Washington D.C.*, unknown artist and provenance, c. 1860s. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

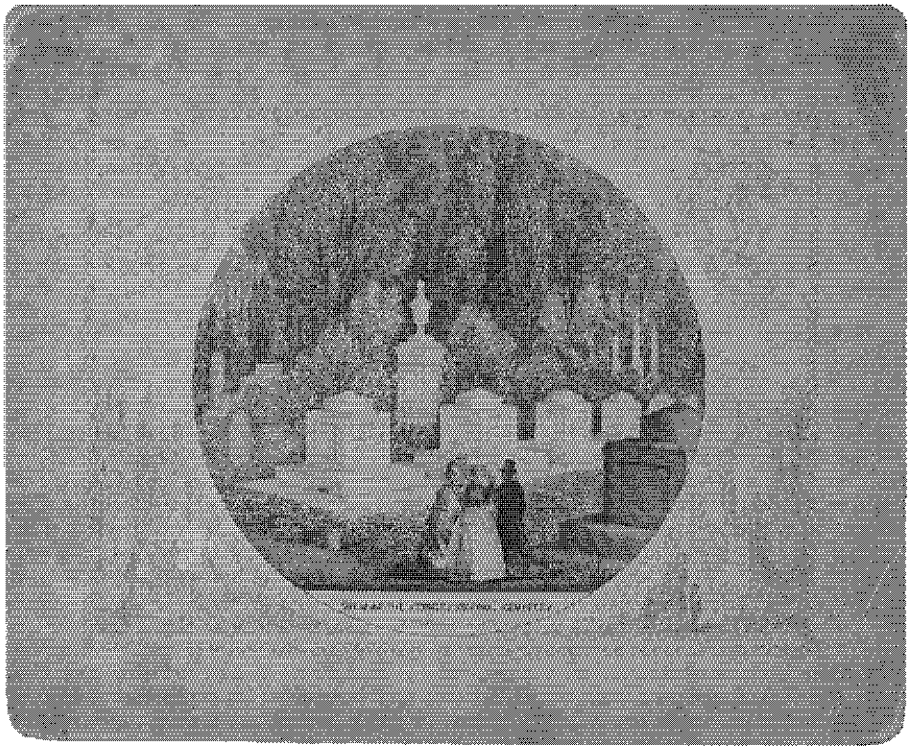

Figure 4: *View at the Congressional Cemetery Washington, D.C.* image in carte-de-viste format, unknown artist and provenance, c. 1860s. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

Figure 5: *The Public Vault*, photograph by E.B. Thompson, c. 1913. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

Figure 6: *Tomb of the Vice-President Elbridge Gerry*, photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

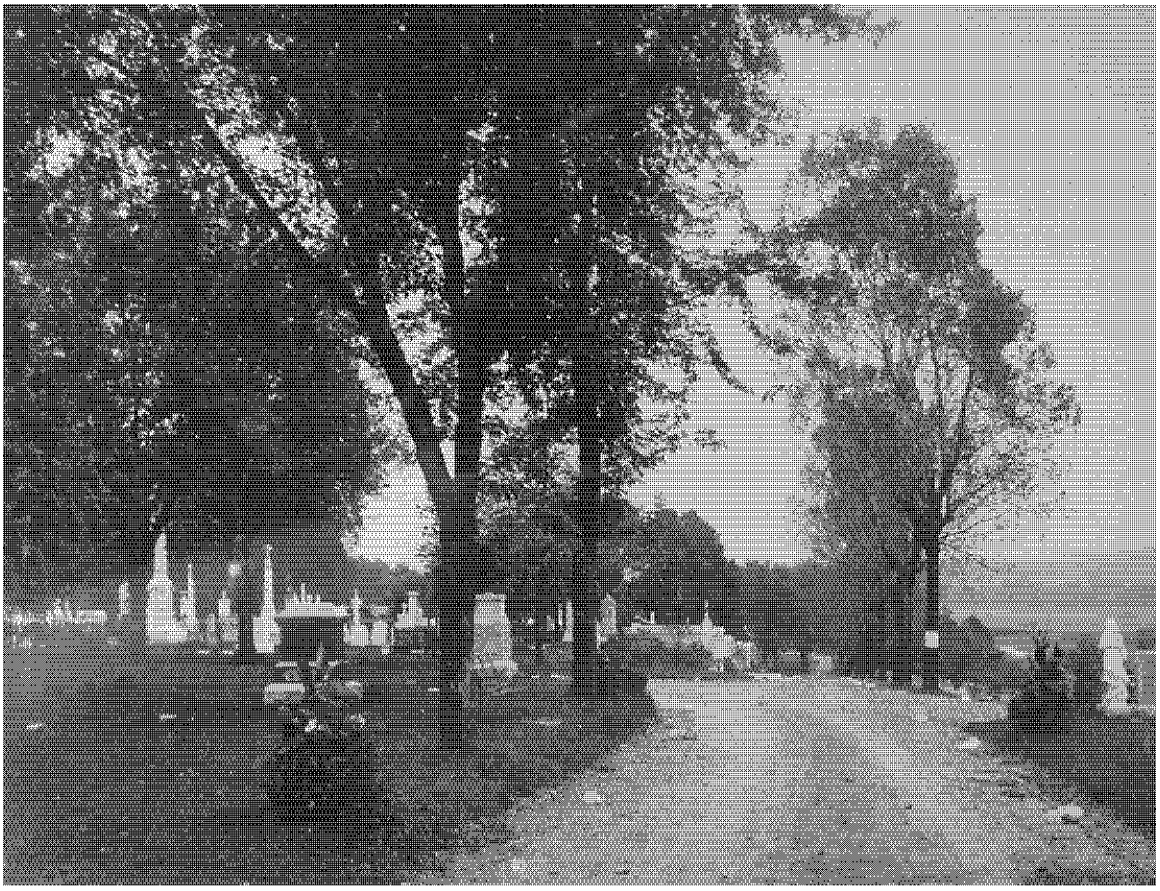

Figure 7: A *View of the Southern Portion of the Grounds*, photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

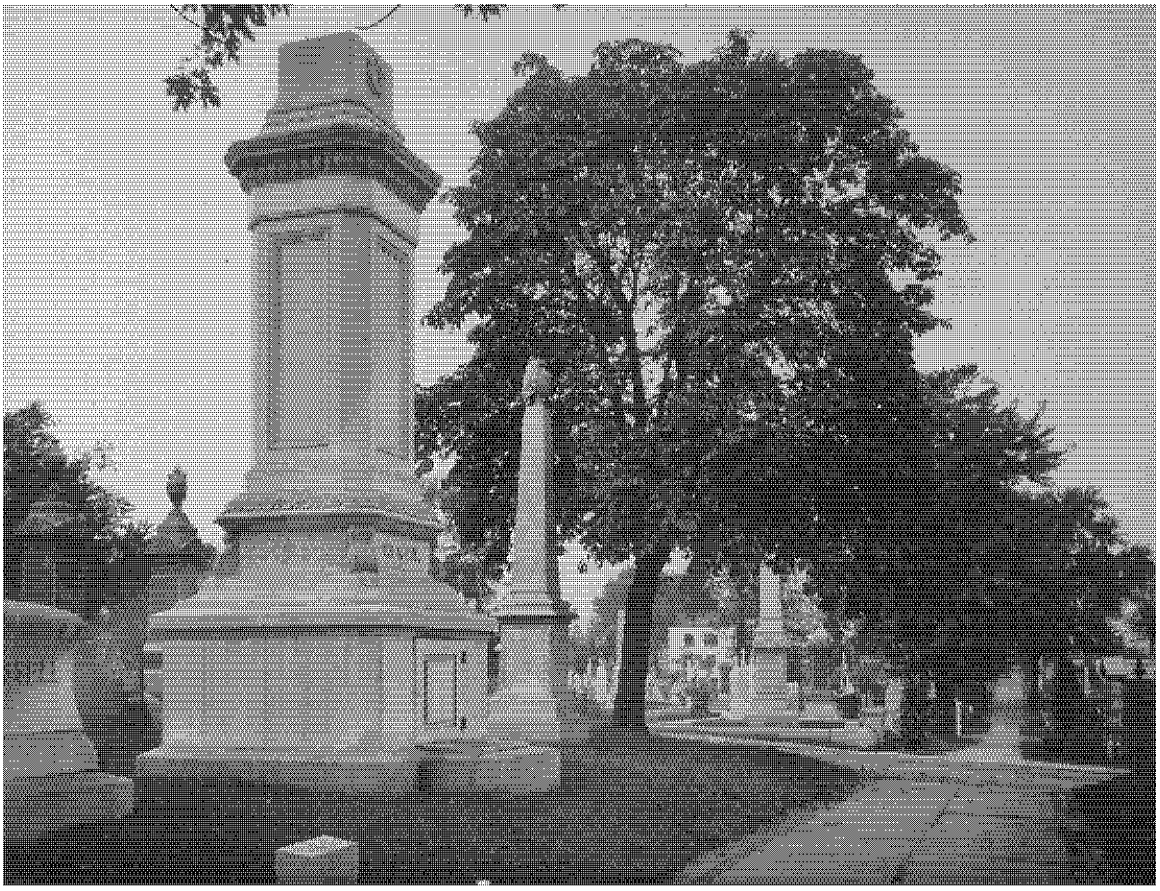

Figure 8: *Monument of William Wirt, Attorney General, U.S., 1817-1820*, photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. This image shows the view down Coombe Avenue, looking from the southern portion of the grounds toward the main entrance gate. Note the mature trees lining the avenue. Also not, on the far side of the crossroads, to the left, the young Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) that now dominates this view. The large tree in the foreground is a horsechestnut (*Aesculus hipposcastanum*), and a mature horschestnut still grows on this location. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library

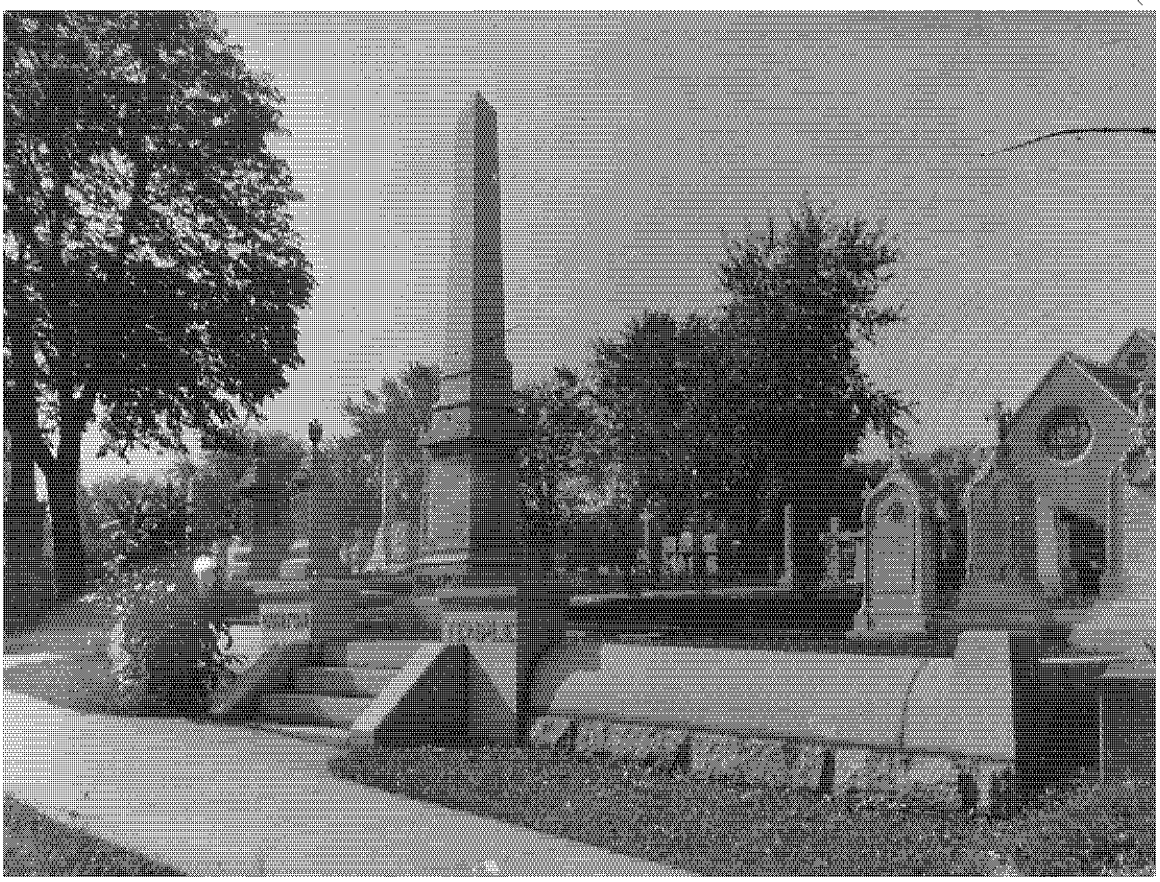

Figure 9: *The Gunton Temple Lot, containing the graves of those in whose memory the Gunton Temple Presbyterian Church of this city was erected*, photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. Note in the front-left of the image, the Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), that now dominates the views along Coombe Avenue. Note as well the condition of the flagstones on Coombe Avenue. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

Figure 10: *Graves of victims of the burning of the Steamer Wawaset, Potomac River, August 1873,* photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. This view was taken near the current main entrance gate, looking west. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library.

Figure 11: *Monument in memory of the twenty-one young women who were killed as the result of an explosion in the U.S. Arsenal (now War College), June 17, 1864*, photograph by E. B. Thompson, c. 1913. This image shows ornate iron fencing and ornamental plantings around the base of the Arsenal Monument. Reproduced from the collection of the Washingtoniana Division.

ADDENDUM TO:
CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY
(Washington Parish Burial Ground)
1801 E Street, Southeast
Washington
District of Columbia

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001