1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Congressional Cemetery

Other Name/Site Number: Washington Parish Burial Ground

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1801 E Street, Southeast Not for publication:

City/Town: Washington Vicinity:

State: Washington, D.C. County: District of Columbia Code: 001 Zip Code: 20003

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	___
Public-Local:	___	District:	X
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	X	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
___	4	buildings
1	___	sites
8	22	structures
187	3	objects
196	29	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 196

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Funerary Sub: Cemetery

Current: Funerary Sub: Cemetery

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:
Congressional Cenotaphs: Early Republic (Early Classical Revival)
Public Vault: Early Republic (Early Classical Revival)
Arsenal Disaster Monument: Late Victorian (High Victorian Eclectic)
Elbridge Gerry Monument: Mid-19th Century (Exotic Revival)
Frederick Rodgers Monument: (Egyptian Revival)
William Thornton Monument: Early Republic (Early Classical Revival)
Thomas Tingey Family Plot: Colonial
Blagden Family Vault: Early Republic
Coombe Family Vault: Early Republic
Mausoleums and Monuments: Early Republic, Mid-19th Century

MATERIALS: Congressional Cenotaphs: Aquia Creek Sandstone, Marble
Public Vault: marble, earth, brick
Arsenal Disaster Monument: marble
Elbridge Gerry Monument: marble
Frederick Rodgers Monument: Sandstone
William Thornton Monument: Aquia Creek sandstone
Thomas Tingey Family Plot Markers: slate
Blagden Family Vault: brick, earth
Coombe Family Vault: brick, earth
Mausoleums and Monuments: sandstone, marble, granite
Pavement Materials: cobble-stone, gravel, asphalt
Plant materials: various species of trees (most prominent are Linden, Cyprus and Magnolia), and shrubs
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

SUMMARY

Located on a thirty-three-acre tract of land in the farthest southeastern corner of the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Washington, D.C., Congressional Cemetery is a nationally-significant cemetery landscape. The cemetery was the first and only cemetery of national memory until the creation of the National (military) Cemetery system following the Civil War. Founded in 1807 as the Washington Parish Burial Ground, Congressional Cemetery was an ostensibly private institution chartered to serve a broader civic purpose, but it soon became America's first cemetery with aspirations to be the focus of national remembrance. Beginning in 1816, when the first plots were set aside by the vestry for the burial of congressmen, the landscape became imbued with a Federal presence, both physically and emotionally. The most overt representation of this presence was the construction of the austere, neoclassical Congressional cenotaphs, monuments whose design is attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the first Surveyor of Public Works. Latrobe worked most notably on the Capitol and White House. The form and material chosen for the cenotaphs linked them directly to these two buildings, which were the principal instances of contemporary Federal construction in Washington. In time, a graded and graveled road provided direct access to the cemetery from the Capitol. This road, along with a dedicated gateway and public vault also funded by the government, provided a ceremonial approach for Federal funeral processions. Although Congressional Cemetery was never designated as a Federal institution, Congress appropriated monies for the expansion, enhancement, and maintenance of Congressional Cemetery between 1823 and 1876. This money included funds for key projects such as the gatehouse, the public vault, paving, and fencing, as well as the cenotaphs, and funerals for congressmen buried there. As early as the 1820s the site was popularly viewed as the "national burying ground."[1] Ultimately, 168 cenotaphs were constructed and the site became integrally linked to the nation's and national capital's history from the War of 1812 through the Civil War. In the twentieth century, the fortunes of Congressional Cemetery fell along with those of the city of Washington; however, after years of neglect, the past decade has seen a vigorous and positive turnaround in its preservation and interpretation. This positive trend befits a site whose history is a nationally-significant touchstone for both the early republic and the establishment of sentiment about its capital city.

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

OVERVIEW

Congressional Cemetery is an historic, but active cemetery with continuing burials. Encompassing approximately thirty-three acres, it is situated in the southeastern corner of Washington's Capitol Hill neighborhood where the Anacostia River gently bends as it flows toward the Potomac. Congressional Cemetery is a designed landscape only in the broadest sense. The piecemeal expansion and acquisition of city squares during the nineteenth century resulted in the practical adoption of the L'Enfant plan grid within the cemetery 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 and cross-axis focused on the burial chapel. In combination with a back-drop pastiche of varied monument types, grouped rows of uniform monuments, known as "Congressional cenotaphs" or, more simply, "cenotaphs," constitute the defining character of this cemetery.[2] 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 eastern extension of the site. While still an active cemetery, the site has also become a vibrant urban park and is constantly peopled by an active dog-walking community.

[1] "National Burying Ground: Extract of a Letter from one of the Editors, now in Washington," *The New England Farmer, and Horticultural Register* 25 Jan. 1823: 206.

[2] While the definition of cenotaph denotes a monument erected in honor of a person or group of persons whose remains are located elsewhere, in this instance remains are buried under some of the monuments.

The character and use of this landscape is also defined by the types of funerary monuments erected here from 1807 to the present. From its earliest days, the cemetery 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 with the design of the cenotaph. The site is characterized by monuments that organize its landscape in a hierarchical manner. The regular blocks of rows of cenotaphs, are located prominently along the cemetery's main arteries. The family vaults and family plots each have 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). These line the main arteries of the cemetery. Individual grave sites, with the exception of the 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.

EARLY CHARACTER

When Washington Parish Burial Ground was founded in 1807, the site occupied square 1115 in the Southeast quadrant of the L'Enfant plan for the city of Washington. This original site encompassed 4.5 acres of land and was square in shape and approximately enclosed on the modern street grid by E Street SE on the north, 18th Street SE to the west, 19th Street SE to the east, and G Street SE to the south. 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 rural location was surrounded by farms and overlooked the Anacostia River. Burial sites were allocated according to a regular, linear system, and paths were probably inscribed according to a grid-plan—a system that remains in use up to the present. The early cemetery can be visualized as a small landscape, enclosed by a post-and-rail fence, made up of red cedar posts and split chestnut rails.[3] This cemetery would have had at least one gate, also of wood.[4] Inside the enclosure, the earliest slate and sandstone burial markers were erected. There are no records that discuss the plantings in this early period. Trees from the thinned forest could still have been in place, but no specific planting was carried out at this time. The paths were either dirt or gravel, and were inscribed in straight lines throughout, echoing the lines of gravesites and the square boundary of the cemetery's fence.

While the cemetery was not designed in any formal sense of the term, it began, over the next decade, to take on a regulated form that reflected the social strata of the surrounding community. Choicest sites were allocated for family plots, with individual burials distributed toward the outer edges of the cemetery. The family vaults, many of them purchased by the original founders of the cemetery, were all gathered together along what became, in the mid-nineteenth century, the cemetery's ceremonial entry road. This cluster of expensive family vaults reinforced the ties of status. 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."[5] The separation between those who owned multiple or family lots, those who owned individual burial sites, and those who were buried beyond the physical boundary of the cemetery's fence reproduced, to a certain degree, the structure of the city's society.

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[3] See "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* 20 Mar. 1807: 1, which stipulated the requirements of the district's commissioners for improvements to be made to public burial grounds. For two of the cemetery's earliest descriptions, see: "Congressional Cemetery: Extract of a Letter, dated Washington City, April 24, 1820," *The National Recorder*, 3 Jun. 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* 25 Jan. 1823: 206.

[4] See "Notice in Pursuance of a law…," *National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser* 10 Apr. 1807: 3.

[5] Ibid.

THE NATIONAL ERA, 1816-1876

After the cemetery allotted a block of burial sites for use by the Federal government in 1816, the government established the practice of erecting the monuments now referred to as cenotaphs. By definition, the term "cenotaph" signifies a funerary monument for someone who is buried in another location. By tradition, the cenotaphs at Congressional Cemetery denote the 168 Latrobe-attributed markers raised as memorials to members of Congress who died in Washington while in office (more generally cenotaphs are often erected when the location of a body is unknown). The cenotaphs were raised regardless of whether they are actually buried in the cemetery. The cenotaphs date from a period ranging from ca. 1816 until just after the Civil War, with the bulk of them appearing between the 1830s and 1850s. Constructed of Aquia sandstone in a simple geometric form (consisting of foundation, base, and cube-shaped die with a conical cap), they were grouped together in two sections of the burial grounds and arranged in rows called ranges. Like the White House and Capitol, which were constructed of the same stone, the cenotaphs were painted white and would have presented a strong contrast to the simple, grey, sandstone and slate head stones used throughout the cemetery. These monuments broke with tradition and their form was the most original feature of the landscape. They also made a strong physical connection, in materials and design, to the Federal buildings then under reconstruction after the burning of Washington in 1814.

After Washington Parish Burial Ground began its transformation into a place of national memory, gradually coming to be known as the "Congressional Cemetery," the form of its landscape came under greater scrutiny. The modest scale and grid-plan with its simple, neoclassical monuments came to be perceived as retrograde in light of the developments of the rural cemetery movement, which advocated a lush, picturesque landscape with curving roads lined by family enclosures and single monuments of a highly individual character and all thickly planted with trees and shrubs. The first step necessary to respond to these criticisms was to increase the size of the cemetery. Accordingly, the cemetery's commissioners added parcels of land over an extended period of time. In 1843, the cemetery commissioners asked Congress to permit the expansion of the burial ground. This request was finally approved in 1848, though only with the stipulation that the Federal government not be expected to finance the enclosure or the upkeep of this added portion. This statute also limited the amount of land that the cemetery could add to thirty acres.[6] In 1849, the expansion began when the cemetery added lot 1116 to their property. In 1851, square 1104 (the city square to the west of the original cemetery block) was annexed. These additions extended the site west as far as 17th Street SE. The southern boundary for one portion of the cemetery was extended south to H Street SE. In 1859, the addition of another block of land made the site a solid square in shape, bounded by E Street SE to the north, H Street SE to the south, with 17th Street SE and 19th Street SE as its western and eastern boundaries, respectively. Two additions of land were made in the mid-1860s. One addition acquired a segment of federally-owned land for cemetery use, pushing the eastern boundary to 20th Street SE. The second addition, to the southwestern portion of the cemetery, pushed the boundary along 17th Street SE to the heights just above the Anacostia River—a southern boundary that is ambiguous because of the changing course of the river, but is now generally accepted as being defined by the path of the Commodore Barney Circle and a diagonal connecting the circle to H Street SE.

In addition to increasing its size, the managers of Congressional Cemetery sought to beautify the cemetery to reflect the values of the rural cemetery movement. However, each new section of land was still laid out using the site's existing grid-plan. In this era of national prominence, several improvements were completed. The government built the public burial vault in 1832-34 to provide an appropriate place to store the bodies of officials after their funerals, before graves were made ready. Its marble façade and neoclassical detailing was an ornate visual accent in the landscape, as well as the end-point for Federal funeral processions. It became a

[6] 9 Stat. L. 250 (25 Jul. 1848), cited 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, 16-17.

ceremonial center for the landscape. The path leading up to the public vault was paved in flagstones. The area surrounding this public monument was not only flanked by the cenotaphs, but came to be filled with the vaults of important Washington families. Around the same time, a new entrance, corresponding to the modern main entrance, was constructed along with a gatehouse (1832; replaced in 1922-24). It runs parallel to the Federal ceremonial road and served as the everyday entrance to the site. Later in the period ca. 1856-57, brick and iron enclosing walls were added along E Street. In 1870 the gateway and wall along 17th Street SE and a fountain were added, the latter located in a turnaround at the terminus of the "everyday" road. All of these improvements were enhanced by increased variety in the plantings. One final addition of land was made to the site in 1874, adding squares 1130, 1148, and 1149, extending the eastern portion of the cemetery to its current boundaries, pushing its border between G and H Streets SE as far east as the line of 23rd Street SE.[7] This final addition to the cemetery coincided with the period when the site lost its Federal funding and ceased to be considered an active site for national memory.

LATER INTERVENTIONS

The new, eastward arm of the cemetery resulting from the final 1874 addition received a more minimal approach to beautification. Most monuments constructed in this section were simple and close to the ground, with scarce plantings. Reflecting general trends favoring the landscape-lawn concepts for cemetery design which had evolved out of the rural cemeteries of the 1830s and 1840s, plantings around family plots were discouraged and plot appearance was dominated by monuments, the occasional tree, and lawn instead of the heavy and often ornate plantings typical of the rural cemeteries. A small funerary chapel was built in 1903 at the ceremonial center of the site, replacing a fountain installed there in 1870. By the time of the chapel construction, it had been a generation since the last appropriation of Federal funds. The chapel was constructed facing G Street SE in the direction of Christ Church. The construction of the chapel inscribed a third major axis on the landscape. In 1922-24 a new gatehouse was constructed on the site of the one built in 1832, which remains in use today.

Between 1950 and 1970, Christ Church's funds were greatly reduced, and it put cost-saving measures into place. Families were asked to remove enclosing fences and complex plantings from family plots in order to reduce the cost of maintaining the cemetery. It is fortunate for the historic integrity of the cemetery that the church vestry did not have greater available funds in this period. The financial collapse of the site's support had been preceded by a period during which architects and landscape designers were consulted about a future vision for the cemetery. While the loss of many of the family gates and plantings is unfortunate, these losses present only a relatively cosmetic shift in the cemetery's appearance and enough remain to suggest the earlier appearance of the cemetery. These mid-twentieth century changes also illustrate the overall connection between cemetery and city, for the nation's capital endured a similar period of financial and physical blight until the mid-1990s.

PRESENT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE—LEGACY AND INTEGRITY

Congressional Cemetery maintains its historic grid layout and many of its key historic features. The main circulation arteries guide the visitor along a squared grid of avenues. These arteries still correspond to the established routes laid out in the nineteenth century. 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, many of which line the main arteries.

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

The Federal ceremonial axis (now "Coombe Avenue") maintains its key elements, including the long flag-stone- lined path, cenotaphs, public vault, and early earth-domed family vaults. Indeed, with only a few tall trees on either side of its length, this path recalls the full, overhead canopy of leaves and the neatly coiffed formality that formerly marked the avenue. Its historic grandeur is quite clearly suggested to the visitor although the avenue itself is no longer the ceremonial entrance to the cemetery and shows the wear of nearly two centuries upon its materials. A number of grass-covered paths through the oldest portion of the cemetery lead visitors past many of the most august monuments.

Likewise, the second entrance, added during the rural cemetery period, still offers a dramatic and picturesque entry to the cemetery, with mature linden trees flanking the road and the funerary chapel at the apex of the view. Modern visitors to this landscape, perhaps without realizing it, experience a site that physically represents its first century of significance within the capital city and to the nation as a whole.

Congress Avenue, running parallel to the west side of the ceremonial axis, was created in the mid-nineteenth century after the cemetery expanded its lands holdings. It provided an entrance for everyday traffic, supplementing the ceremonial entrance, as well as a carriageway extending to the turnaround at the center of the enlarged cemetery. The largest formation of 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 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 point the visitor is reoriented away from the congressional monuments, to follow the curve of the road toward the 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 chapel and the path leading from the chapel toward the western entry gate, which faces the direction of Christ Church. From the initial civic/Federal experience of the site, the visitor is reoriented toward its religious connections. While this particular emphasis was strengthened in the years following the national era of Congressional's history, the driveway turnaround as a focal point—originally featuring a fountain at its center—and the drive extending from the gate on 17th Street SE were constructed within the period of significance and represent the influence of the rural cemetery movement on the landscape.

Worn dirt paths along the edges of the site and wrapping around portions of the grounds not accessible via the 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 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 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 focus on the monuments lining the paths as opposed to the undulations of the ground below his or her feet. Because the cemetery is still in use, the grounds are marked by old monuments directly adjacent to newer headstones and markers. Visitors see the entire expanse of the nation's traditions of funerary markers arranged in what seems, at first, to be a random fashion across the cemetery, but which, in reality, reflects the historic development of the site. 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.

Beginning in the early-nineteenth century this site was recognized for the beauty of its location, and most particularly for its broad views of the Anacostia River and surrounding rolling banks. From the elevated portions of the site, these classic views can still be seen, although these large panoramic sweeps of the surrounding hillsides no longer afford the same views of the river below. Thick foliage and growths of trees along the southern boundary of the lot and in the land intervening between the cemetery and the river now block views of the water from the cemetery. When it was founded, the cemetery was located in a rural, wooded area, but today it has become a part of the urban landscape of Washington, D.C., and 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, multi-story brick District of Columbia correctional facility just beyond the cemetery's walls. To the north and west, the views are of neighborhood streets and early-twentieth-century row houses. South of the cemetery, much of the view is blocked by trees, but the visible section presents only the large traffic interchange, Commodore Barney Circle. This change in views reflects 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, has assumed the role of an urban park linked to the daily routines of the surrounding community.

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

For the purposes of this nomination, the cemetery site itself is treated as an historic district that is a distinctive cultural landscape. All of the buildings, mausolea, tombs, and monuments constructed during the period of significance contribute to the historic character of Congressional Cemetery.[8] Of the 195 contributing resources itemized here, eight are structures and 186 are objects, of which 168 of these are nearly identical Congressional cenotaphs. The earliest contributing resource, the Thomas Tingey family plot, dates from 1807, the year the cemetery was founded. The latest resources listed as contributing are cenotaphs dating from the 1870s. The boundaries encompass the entire present cemetery. This corresponds to the historical boundaries attained before the end of the period of significance. Much of the cemetery was developed after 1876. However, most of this development was in sections adjacent to the historic core and the plots and monuments. Although non-contributing because they date from outside the period of significance, these sections follow the historic gridded layout of the sections and plots and do not detract from the integrity of the cemetery. The non-contributing Gatehouse was also constructed on the site of an earlier, similarly scaled one, thus maintaining functional and visual continuity.

Structures:

Public vault (Early Classical Revival; 1832-34). The government appropriated funds to construct a public burial vault because it lacked an appropriate place for storing the bodies of officials after their funerals, before graves were made ready. The mostly subterranean vault has an ornate marble facade with baroque scrolls enlivening the classical facade. A round-headed doorway contains doubled iron doors with "PUBLIC VAULT" spelled out by means of small holes punched through the iron.

Gateway and fencing (E Street, ca. 1856-57). In 1856, the Federal government helped to fund the construction of an iron gateway and fencing on the north side of the burial ground. The pathway from this gate to the public receiving vault was also laid in flagstone at this time. Decorative wrought-iron "piers" visually set off the opening from its flanking fence while providing a place on which to hang the gates. The iron piers are

[8] The cemetery is still owned by Christ Church Episcopal, Washington Parish, and presently leased and managed under a contract expiring in 2019 by the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery. Within the cemetery, the Federal government (Veterans Administration) owns/manages 806 lots containing 350 interments marked with cenotaphs and traditional government headstones and markers.

not solid, but rather composed of four iron poles that create a frame for decorative iron scrollwork; the piers are topped by ornamental iron capping. This gate is integrated seamlessly into fencing along the cemetery's northern boundary constructed at the same time. The iron fencing sits atop a stone base and consists of vertical poles with spear-shaped caps. Two horizontal bars near the top of the poles hold the shafts together. Approximately every fifteenth pole is buttressed by scrolled supports and topped by an inverted acorn. This fencing survives along most of the cemetery's northern boundary on both sides of the later gatehouse and associated gateway.

17th Street SE gateway and wall (ca. 1870). The cemetery's western wall along 17th Street SE is brick and contains a gateway on an axis with the front of the chapel. The gates are of wrought iron and more simply rendered than those used for the northern gateways. The brick wall dates to the 1860s/70s and has been repaired in a number of places since construction.

The **family vaults** considered to be contributing structures comprise a group of **free-standing or nearly free-standing** vaults. Although some back up to retaining walls, these vaults are not considered subterranean. They tend to have substantial, ornate stone fronts and usually date from later in the cemetery's history.

White Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1837)
Gadsby Family Vault (Egyptian Revival; ca. 1840)
Ulrich Family Vault (Neo-Classical; ca. 1843)
Winter Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1859)
Wainwright Family Vault (Early Republic Style; ca. 1863)

Objects:

Congressional cenotaphs (168 nearly identical monuments; Early Classical Revival; ca. 1816-1876)
Attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the cenotaphs are the longest-lived tradition at Congressional Cemetery and the clearest representation of the site's Federal associations. Most of the cenotaphs are constructed of Aquia sandstone and composed in a simple geometric form—consisting of a foundation and base topped by a cube with a conical cap. A marble panel with engraved inscriptions is inset on one side of the die. The monument is approximately 5'-6" in height and the foundation has a square footprint with sides that are 5'-6". The cube has sides that are 2'-6" and the conical cap is 2′-0″ in diameter at its base. These markers memorialize members of Congress who died in Washington while in office as well as other important persons, regardless of whether they were actually buried in the cemetery. The cenotaphs are grouped together in two sections of the burial grounds and organized in ranges. They were whitewashed and would have presented a strong contrast to the simple grey sandstone and slate head stones that were present throughout the cemetery. These monuments broke with tradition and their presence is the most strikingly original feature of the landscape.

The **family vaults** considered to be contributing objects comprise a group of **partially below-grade, earth-covered masonry** vaults generally faced in brick with stone trim. For the most part, these vaults date from earlier in the cemetery's history and, although they constitute a more conspicuous burial site than a family plot, they are comparatively simple relative to later vaults. Their construction initiated a process of greater manipulation of the landscape. Along with the Federal ceremonial axis and the cenotaphs, these vaults elaborated on the visual appearance of the cemetery.

Blagden Family Vault (Early Republic; pre-1826)
Wirt Family Vault (Early Classical Revival; ca. 1835)
Lambell Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1836)

Miller Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1836)
Hyatt Family Vault (Early Classical Revival; ca. 1837)
Keyworth Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1838)
Coombe Family Vault (Early Republic; pre-1845)
Labbe Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1848)
Causten Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1852)
Havenner Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1854)
Watterston Family Vault (Early Republic; ca. 1854)
Rives Family Vault (Mid-19th Century, Early Classical Revival; ca. 1864)
Purdy Family Vault (Beaux Arts Classicism; original ca. 1830, redesigned ca. 1869?)

Thomas Tingey family plot (1807-29). This plot was the first such family plot in the cemetery and its design is subdued compared to later plots. Three slate markers of varying heights are arranged in a single row. The markers' form is simple, having vertical sides and rounded tops.

Elbridge Gerry tomb (Eclectic Classical Revival; 1823). In 1814, Vice President Elbridge Gerry unexpectedly died while in office. He was buried in Congressional Cemetery, but Congress did not appropriate funds for a memorial until 1823. The white marble monument is composed of a base with battered sides surmounted by an urn holding a flame—both of the latter elements are raised up on their own low pedestal. The monument was a perennially popular one for nineteenth-century visitors.

William Thornton (Egyptian Revival; 1828). This is one of two civilian burial sites marked with the Congressional cenotaph form. The other cenotaph marks the burial site of Benjamin Lincoln Lear, a highly-regarded attorney and godson of George Washington, who died in an 1832 cholera epidemic.

Frederick Rodgers (Egyptian Revival; ca. 1839). John Rodgers, an officer in the U. S. Navy memorialized his son, Frederick, with this monument after his untimely drowning at seventeen while serving in the U. S. Navy. This monument takes the form of a square base with two steps topped by a pyramidal cap.

Major General Alexander Macomb (Greek Revival; ca. 1841). A marble obelisk topped by a draped flag and Greek/Roman helmet, the obelisk is supported by clawed feet and rests atop a pedestal and base. Beneath the maker, Macomb and the remains of his first wife are interred in a brick vault.

Arsenal Disaster Monument (Eclectic; 1864, carved by the Flaherty Brothers). This is a tall marble monument consisting of a base and shaft with a sculpture poised atop the shaft. The base, which sits on a foundation of two square blocks, has four faces, all of which are carved, mostly with inscriptions. The four-sided shaft tapers as it rises and is embellished with abstracted ornamental decoration on all corners. The statue at the top of the monument shows a young woman, standing, with her hands clasped in front of her, and glancing in a demur fashion toward the ground below. The south face is of particular note, although badly damaged by time, weather, and environmental causes, it contains a vignette depicting the Arsenal explosion, which killed the twenty-two women commemorated by this marker (sixteen are buried below the monument).

DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Within the NHL district boundaries are a number of non-contributing resources, including four buildings, and twenty-two structures, and three objects of note.

Buildings:

Funerary chapel (1903, Arthur M. Poynton). In 1899, the Christ Church vestry called for subscriptions to build a chapel in the middle of the carriage turnaround; the location had contained a fountain since 1870. Three years later, they hired Arthur M. Poynton, a local Washington architect/builder, to devise plans for the building. The Gothic Revival chapel, sheathed in pebble-dashed stucco, is composed of a nave with four bays, each framed by engaged buttresses and containing a double-hung window with a pointed head and a simple Gothic muntin pattern. A small entrance vestibule protrudes from the back of the nave with a round, stained glass window inset in the gable above. A chancel extends out from the front of the nave and is flanked on either side by shed-roofed structures, each featuring three coffin-sized openings that allowed for the simultaneous storage of six caskets.

Gatehouse, located at 1801 E St, SE (1923, H. V. O'Brien). Built as a replacement for its 1832 predecessor on the same site, the two-story gatehouse is constructed of buff-colored brick and topped by an expansive hip roof. The design, materials, and detailing of the gatehouse is typical of detached, single-family dwellings of its age. While it lacks a signature front porch, the building might be described as "four-square" in general form. The most peculiar feature of the gatehouse is a small, one-story extension from the east wall, which contains the business vault and appears almost as an afterthought. The vault opens onto the office that doubled as the living room in a building arranged like a standard house with living room, dining room, and rear-facing kitchen downstairs and four bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.

Gatehouse garage (1923). Located to the rear of the gatehouse, the garage is faced in the same buff-colored brick as the gatehouse. It is a single story building topped by a hip roof.

Garage (1949). This building is situated on the cemetery's eastern boundary, close to the fence and well removed from the rest of the landscape. It is a prefabricated unit with white siding and a gable roof

Structures:

Main entrance gateway. When the original gatehouse was replaced in 1923, a new entrance gateway was also constructed. It was composed of two pairs of squared brick piers constructed of the same buff-colored brick used for the gatehouse and its garage that flank either side of the main entrance drive. A wrought-iron arch across the drive is between the two middle (taller) piers. The words "Congressional Cemetery" were written within the arch and an organic ornamental form adds decorative flare to the feature's apex. On October 15, 2008, a dump truck entering the cemetery struck and split one of the brick piers. A decision was made at that time to replace the gateway. Historic photos of the 1832 gatehouse document adjacent fencing and a gate identical to the ceremonial entrance further east along E Street. An architect has been hired to "design a new gate in the style of the original;" plans and specifications for the new gateway will be completed sometime in 2009.[9]

Ward 2, September 11 Monument (2005). This is essentially a landscape intervention that included the re-gravelling of a path in the cemetery and the planting of a commemorative grove of trees along the path. It is intended to be linked to a series of such memorial groves across the city. At the north end of the monument is a memorial totem gateway, which is supposed to be temporary as it is merely "on loan" from the indigenous group that carved it. At the south end is a small area with a brick pathway and wooden benches on either side.

[9] Cindy Hays, Executive Director, Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, "Status of Changes to Vehicle Entrances to Congressional Cemetery," 8 Dec. 2008. Statement included with photographs in electronic correspondence with James A. Jacobs, historian, National Historic Landmarks, December 2008.

Underneath these benches are small, weather-proof books, for visitors to write their reflections about visiting this commemorative site.

Although marking nationally significant persons, the memorials for **John Philip Sousa** (Beaux Arts Classicism; ca. 1932) and **John Edgar Hoover** (Modern; 1972) are non-contributing because they were not constructed during the period of significance.

The **family vaults** considered to be non-contributing structures comprise a group of **free-standing or nearly free-standing** vaults. A majority of these vaults are located in a row that is slightly lower in grade than the rest of the cemetery in its southernmost reaches.

McCathran Family Vault (Neo-Classical Revival; ca. 1890)
Shelton Family Vault (Classical Revival; ca. 1891)
Hodges Family Vault (Romanesque Revival; ca. 1891)
Garden Family Vault (Romanesque; ca. 1892)
Williams/Steele Family Vault (Egyptian Revival; ca. 1893)
Danenhower Family Vault (Egyptian Revival; ca. 1894)
Graham Family Vault (Romanesque Revival; ca. 1894)
Thompson Family Vault I (Egyptian Revival; ca. 1894)
Dr. William Lee White Vault (Classical Revival; ca. 1894)
Berret Family Vault (Classical Revival; 1895)
McCauley Family Vault I (Renaissance Revival; 1896)
O'Neill Family Vault (Eclectic; ca. 1897)
Collins Family Vault (Romanesque; ca. 1900)
Thompson Family Vault II (Eclectic/Romanesque; 1901)
Wilson Family Vault (Romanesque Revival; 1902)
McCauley Family Vault II (Renaissance Revival; 1910)
Taylor Family Vault (Classical Revival; ca. 1920)
A. P. White Family Vault (Sullivanesque; Early 20th Century)

Objects:

The **family vaults** considered to be non-contributing objects comprise a group of **partially below-grade, earth-covered masonry** vaults generally faced in brick with stone trim.

Jesse Williams Vault (Early Republic Style; ca. 1877)
Rose Family Vault (Romanesque Revival; ca. 1881)
Richards Family Vault (Romanesque Revival; redesigned ca. 1888?)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B__ C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A X B__ C__ D X E__ F X G

NHL Criteria: 1, 4, Exception 5

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Art
Commemoration
Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance: 1816-1876

Significant Dates:
1816 Christ Church Episcopal Church on Capitol Hill sets aside plots in their Washington Parish Burial Ground (est. 1807) for members of Congress
1823 First funds appropriated to the cemetery by Congress
1874 Last major land acquisitions by the cemetery
1875 Last Federal appropriation for Congressional cenotaphs
1876 Act of Congress officially eliminates "the custom of erecting cenotaphs" for deceased congressmen buried elsewhere

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Benjamin Henry Latrobe
John Lenthall
Henry Ingle
Griffith Coombe
George Blagden

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
W. Regional and Urban Planning
4. Cemeteries
XVII. Landscape Architecture

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

INTRODUCTION

Congressional Cemetery is a unique site whose national significance rests on its status as America's first cemetery with national memorial aspirations. A private corporation of citizens allied with Christ Church Episcopal created the Washington Parish Burial Ground in 1807 with the intent of establishing a cemetery merging the tradition of churchyard burial grounds with contemporary trends toward more civic-oriented burial grounds. The 1816 decision to provide burial plots to United States congressmen caused rapid change in the landscape as it was refashioned to be a site of national memory. Over the next half century, this function and related meaning would be further strengthened. The graves of congressmen were uniformly marked by monuments whose design is attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the Surveyor of Public Works for the national capital after 1803. Over time, 168 cenotaphs were constructed and the site became integrally linked to the nation's and its capital's history from the War of 1812 through the Civil War. The Federal government regularly appropriated funds to the cemetery, which came to be known as the "National Burying Ground" or, more commonly, the "Congressional Cemetery." The funds were not only for the erection of cenotaphs, but also for an array of improvements to the landscape that visually reiterated the close ties between the cemetery and the Federal city. Most notably, the cenotaphs were grouped along a ceremonial entranceway, which was once connected to the Capitol by a direct, graded route. This roadway not only physically tied the burial ground to a key center of government, but also played an integral role in developing early expressions of national mourning and public memorialization of national and civic leaders. Despite a long period of decline, the character-defining features of Congressional Cemetery as the first cemetery with a national presence endure. Efforts toward the preservation, rehabilitation, and interpretation expected of a site bearing much significance to the nation have also shaped its recent history.

BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY (1807-1815)

Congressional Cemetery's eight-year history prior to its association with the Federal government set the stage for this eventual association. On April 4, 1807, well-known cabinetmaker Henry Ingle and the rest of the vestry of the newly-formed Christ Church Episcopal (Washington Parish) wrote the "preamble and articles of subscription" for a new cemetery.[10] The cemetery was known as the "Washington Parish Burial Ground." 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 went on to say: "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."[11] The authors of the document noted that square 1115, located near the Marine Barracks in the southeastern quadrant of the city, had been purchased for the location of a new burial ground and declared that "this piece of ground is thought equal to any that can be had in the city for that purpose."[12]

[10] 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* (17 Dec. 1806: 3) calling together all the "subscribers for 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.

[11] The original document is in the vestry minutes at the archives of Christ Church. See United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906), for transcribed document. For complete text of the cemetery's preamble and articles, see transcription in Julia A. Sienkewicz, "Congressional Cemetery," HALS No. DC–1, Historic American Landscapes Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2005, Appendix II.

[12] Ibid.

Prior to the founding of Washington Parish Burial Ground the young Federal city already had experienced a troubled history with burial grounds. Pierre Charles L'Enfant omitted them entirely from his plan, leaving the new city without any designated cemeteries. The early history of the capital's cemeteries has not been extensively researched, and contemporary published sources offer only hints at the city's early burial practices.[13] Churchyard burials were a ubiquitous tradition for the area. The establishment of the parish burial ground of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, referred to in its early days as "Rock Creek Cemetery," preceded the arrival of the Federal capital by more than seventy years. Local families also continued the custom of using private family grounds well into the nineteenth century. The city's slow growth after 1800 meant that much of the District of Columbia remained relatively rural until long after its establishment, a situation that also contributed to the casual manner of burying its citizens. Washington's status as a city in which Federal, local, and religious organizations held frequently overlapping administrative power over burials exacerbates problems in tracing burial histories and drawing general conclusions.[14]

In a declaration that seemed to acknowledge the jurisdiction's casual burial system as well as indicate familiarity with contemporary cemetery reform movements, the City of Washington created its first public burial grounds in 1798. The sites selected were approximately one mile from the city's planned civic core and located in the northern quadrants of the city. The city commissioners ordered enclosures for the sites, suggesting that the city would, at least minimally, tend to the sites. The act legislating their existence also stipulated that they serve "all denominations of people."[15] Since family and churchyard burial grounds could restrict access to burials, it is particularly important that these regulations called for reflection of civic mores in public burial grounds. Reflecting the new republic's ideals, these burial grounds were, at least nominally, to be used by all races and classes. They were also to be kept clean, maintained, and democratically accessible to the capital's residents. Evidence suggests that these sites were indeed used for burial; however, there is no record that they were properly enclosed or generally attended. A later act from 1807 suggests that they were simple and unmanaged spaces used for the burial of the city's least privileged citizens.

The history of Washington Parish Burial Ground originates, then, at a point in Washington's history when a critical public eye was first turned to the capital's civic burial grounds. This movement was part of a larger national movement that offered an alternative to churchyard or family plot burials. Such cemetery landscapes, which have come to be known as "reform cemeteries," were significantly different from the churchyard traditions in a number of ways: first, the organization was private/civic, not religious; second, attention was given to the physical appearance of the cemetery as a site; and, finally, a notion developed that the site would be considered a permanent resting place and exist in perpetuity as a landscape of memory for the dead.[16] The establishment of the Washington Parish Burial Ground was part of this reform cemetery movement, paralleling the development of such similar ventures as the New Haven Burial Ground, New Haven, Connecticut (Grove

[13] The most wide-ranging studies of Washington, D.C.'s cemeteries have been carried out by Paul Sluby for the Columbian Harmony Society. 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.

[14] A useful article discussing the early disputes over legislative power between district and federal governance is William C. diGiacomantonio's, " 'To Sell Their Birthright for a Mess of Potage': The Origins of D. C. Governance and the Organic Act of 1801," in *Coming into the City: Essays on Early Washington, D. C. Commemorating the Bicentennial of The Federal Government's Arrival in 1800*, ed. Kenneth R. Bowling, special issue of *Washington History* 12 (Spring/Summer 2000), 30-48.

[15] As quoted in United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[16] For more information on reform cemeteries, see Bruce Clouette, "Grove Street Cemetery," National Historic Landmarks nomination, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 2000; Aaron V. Wunsch, "Laurel Hill Cemetery," National Historic Landmarks nomination, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1998, 20-21; David Schuyler, "The Evolution of the Anglo-American Rural Cemetery: Landscape Architecture as Social and Cultural History," *Journal of Garden History* 4 (Jul.-Sep. 1984): 292-94; and David C. Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 28-34.

Street Cemetery, incorporated 1797; NHL, 2000) and the Franklin Square Cemetery in Buffalo, New York (established 1804).

The deed for the purchase of the cemetery's land from the City of Washington, recorded March 25, 1808, also documents the civic impulses present at the founding of what was, essentially, a denominational cemetery.[17] While the burial ground was to be operated by a private group of subscribers, the deed stated that the organization would be "subject also to such regulations as the vestry of Washington parish in the Territory of Columbia shall ordain and establish." This statement reflected the venture's intermediate status between both a civic cemetery and a typical parish-run burial ground. The deed added civic stipulations to the cemetery's existence. In the deed, the city official claimed that this private, church-related cemetery was also subject to the needs of the city, and, *ipso facto*, one quarter of the site's area was to be devoted to the burial of those who could not afford the interment fee. This document suggests that even at the time of its founding, Congressional Cemetery was not easy to categorize. In a rapidly developing society, the creation of this cemetery was, in some ways, as experimental as the country in which it was founded. Certainly, the declaration of a civic purpose for the Washington Parish Burial Ground provided a conceptual base for its transformation into a landscape further overlaid with national meanings and associations.

BECOMING THE CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY (1816-ca. 1832)

In an April 1816 vestry meeting, Christ Church Episcopal decided to set aside 100 of the cemetery's best sites for the burial of members of Congress.[18] It is unclear what motivated the vestry to make this decision, but it was probably not a casual one as it deviated strongly from any historical precedent. In the aftermath of the War of 1812, the White House, the Capitol, and the Navy Yard—the latter being the closet urban neighbor to the Washington Parish Burial Ground—were severely damaged. The cemetery's trustees may have wanted to help in the rebuilding of the capital city's identity and reputation by contributing a memorial site honoring the nation's early leaders and dignitaries.[19] Another possibility is that this decision was made in order to provide greater weight for a government recommitment to keeping the capital in Washington.

The Federal burial plots 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 was paralleled by the plots of prominent local families like the Coombes and the Blagdens, which ran close to the western boundary of the burial ground along a north-south axis. The decision to designate land specifically for use by the Federal government shaped the ultimate form and history of this cemetery. Officially a privately-owned, church-related burial ground overlaid with a civic purpose, the 1816 vestry decision permanently altered the cemetery's identity; from this point until the mid-nineteenth century, the burial ground's most prominent character was that of a Federal institution.

The decision to encourage the burial of any congressmen who died while in office set the stage for the design of the cemetery's unique landscape elements. Identical cenotaphs marked the burial site of each congressman who died in the city. In later years, the cenotaphs commemorated their deaths after their bodies were returned to home states. These geometrical monuments are composed of a double base, topped by a cube with 2'-6" sides, which is then capped by a simple conical top. At approximately 5'-6" tall overall and 5'-6" square at the base,

[17] Liber T, No. 19, folio 219. An original copy is also in the archives of Christ Church. See United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906), and Sienkewicz, Appendix III, for transcriptions.

[18] 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.

[19] This seems 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 Thomas Tingey, personally involved in the military events of the period, was also a trustee of the cemetery. It is unlikely that conclusive evidence will ever be found to support or negate this possibility.

the cenotaphs occupy double, triple, and quadruple plots. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, George Blagden, and Latrobe's assistant, John Lenthall, selected the stone for the cenotaphs.[20] These monuments are fashioned from Aquia sandstone, the material of choice for the construction of period Federal buildings. A marble panel with brief carved inscriptions is inset on each side of the cubic form.[21] Authorship of the cenotaphs has long been attributed to Benjamin Henry Latrobe—who, during his Federal service, was also at times in private practice in Washington—yet concrete evidence for this plausible attribution and the date of their design and initial construction has remained elusive. While the oldest of these monuments is marked 1807, this attribution raises questions. At that time, the cemetery was extremely rural—it was only just being cleared and fenced. Given that the capital city had as yet no substantive iconographic program, such a monumental effort as constructing Latrobe's large cenotaphs within the first year of the cemetery's existence would have been truly exceptional.[22] It seems far more likely that a uniform design was not formulated until after the cemetery's decision to offer land directly to Congress for burial sites in 1816. The possibility that these cenotaphs date to a slightly later point in the cemetery's history is also corroborated by the fact that it was not until 1819 that a sketch of the cenotaphs, showing the brick vaulted tomb beneath, appeared in Latrobe's journals.[23] A famous 1812 Latrobe sketch, delineating a monument for Vice President George Clinton, depicts a similar cenotaph in the foreground and three cenotaphs in the background nearly identical to those that are still standing in Congressional Cemetery. The monument to George Clinton was not constructed and there is no evidence that the three cenotaphs in the background of the image had already been constructed. It is reasonable to hypothesize that Latrobe envisioned the cenotaph form while working on a commission for Clinton's monument, but did not actually design and erect an example until sometime between 1816 and 1819.[24]

Since this chronology also coincides with Latrobe's return to Washington D.C., and resumption of his duties as Architect of the Capitol in the post-War of 1812 era, it also makes a great deal of sense for connecting the cemetery to contemporary nation-building and commemorative efforts. After the Federal plots were allotted, Latrobe may have been selected to create a vision for these governmental memorials. He was in the government's employ, and was working closely with Commodore Thomas Tingey, director of the Washington Navy Yard and vestryman of Christ Church parish, and directly with George Blagden at the Capitol.[25] Having identical cenotaphs over the gravesites of each congressman buried there created a unique and significant designed element for the cemetery landscape. This program consciously claimed the site for national memory and dominated the cemetery's visual presence by means of a repeated, ritualized governmental iconography. Whether Latrobe acted as the sole designer of the cenotaphs or whether the form was devised for the purpose of creating a new, unique commemorative grave marker, the designation of the Federal plots by the vestry and the

[20] 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, DC.

[21] 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.

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

[23] 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.

[24] 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 Jun. 1820: 364.

[25] 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 his other 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.

construction of these monuments helped reinvent Washington Parish Burial Ground as a cemetery with a national presence.

Physical changes to the cemetery landscape provided the primary visual links in the Washington Parish Burial Ground's transformation into a cemetery for national memory. By the end of the 1820s, information about the cemetery that circulated in newspapers across the country conveyed the significance of the site to the greater nation. The cemetery's trustees took full advantage of their new association with the Federal government and continually attempted to draw closer ties, both physical and financial, between the cemetery and the Federal government. The first example of this occurred in 1823 when a committee from Christ Church asked Congress for funds to construct a brick wall around the cemetery. In exchange for this funding, the cemetery's officials offered an additional 300 burial sites. The petition was successful and Congress appropriated $2,000 for the brick enclosure wall, which was completed in 1825.[26] Other government-sponsored improvements may have been made to the cemetery around this time in the form of plantings and the careful detailing of paths, but there is little record of these efforts, which probably would have been carried out on an ad hoc basis. Although the Federal government offered this single instance of major assistance during the first decade of alliance between the cemetery and the government, evidence that it took other actions to claim the cemetery as its own beyond the construction of the cenotaphs and the cemetery walls is scarce. In an 1824 appropriation 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.

Popular sentiment, however, drew closer links between the burial ground and the nation. In the eyes of increasing numbers of United States citizens, the cemetery had become the official governmental burial ground. An article published in 1820 and circulated between a number of the nation's newspapers appears to be the first source to refer to the cemetery publicly as "Congressional Cemetery."[27] Although quite brief and focused predominantly on publicizing the prominent governmental officials buried on the site, this article acknowledges two of the most identifiable features of the cemetery's landscape. First, the article discusses the qualities of the location of the cemetery—near 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.[28]

This description highlights two seemingly contradictory aspects of the cemetery. One comes upon it almost by chance, discovering it in a natural site within the national capital. But the cemetery was also a formally constructed burial ground on the outskirts of an inhabited area, one in harmony with nature, but still within the vicinity of the Federal center in which the congressmen had served. Second, 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."[29] The distinctive element of the cemetery's landscape is the group of Congressional monuments. With their simple

[26] See 6 Stat. L., 294, or the 1906 Senate *History of Congressional Cemetery*. For further details about the process of construction and design of the wall see the Vestry Record, Book 1 page 191. The four vestrymen to oversee the construction of the boundary wall were Reverend Allen, Samuel Smallwood, Thomas Tingey, and Henry Ingle.

[27] 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.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

and durable design, they offered visitors the opportunity to meditate on both the simple moral principles for which the nation's leaders had offered their services as well as the lasting nature of these principles within the nation's identity. In a young country recovering from a war that had challenged its sovereignty, and in a capital city that had been burned and ridiculed as unsubstantial, these monuments created a stable landscape in which one could admire national leaders as a group and reinstate belief in the national cause. For this anonymous/unknown writer, 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 or her own national loyalties.

Similarly, an 1823 article entitled "National Burying Ground" furthered the popular knowledge of and sentiment for the cemetery. It also offered valuable information about the appearance of the cemetery in its early years and the manner in which visitors to the capital perceived it.[30] The author of this article was an unidentified New York journalist who had visited the nation's capital for the first time. He wrote:

> 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.[31]

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 city's civility. More broadly, his reference to it as *the* national burial ground indicates that he considered it an index of the refinement of the whole nation. Perhaps due to the publicity that the cemetery began to receive, or because of the increased interest and investment of the government in the idea of creating a Federal cemetery, the next decade of government involvement would bring about significant changes to the cemetery's appearance. The new brick wall replacing the wooden fence only hinted at the changes to come.

BEAUTIFYING AND EXPANDING THE CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY (1832-1876)

From 1832 until 1876, the church vestry worked in tandem with Federal legislators to update and expand Congressional Cemetery. During this period the cemetery grew to the full extent of its landholdings and a great deal of money was spent on landscaping. The cemetery moved from an identity born of a combination of republican ideals and traditional churchyard form to one shaped by national aspirations for a place of collective American memory. Much of the physical change during this period was due to improvements funded by the Federal government. Over $25,000 in Federal funds were used in key projects such as the construction of a gatekeeper's house and public receiving vault, a graded roadway between the Capitol and the cemetery, fencing, flagging, and money for general upkeep. These improvements established the infrastructure necessary for public funeral processions for congressmen, which, along with the cenotaphs, were paid for by the government.[32]

In May 1832, 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

[30] 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 Jan. 1823): 206.

[31] Ibid.

[32] The average cost of the cenotaphs was $115 per memorial, amounting to about another $19,000 in total government investment. See United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906), 45.

of members of Congress and other officers of the General Government."[33] A site was selected for the gatehouse in the northwestern corner of the cemetery, outside of the walls of the burying ground, and a committee of vestrymen oversaw its construction.[34]

Between 1832 and 1834, the government appropriated additional funds to construct a public burial vault on the grounds of the cemetery. This was an important structure to the Federal officials as 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.[35] The construction of the vault at Congressional is particularly vital to the cemetery's national significance because it became the endpoint of all Federal funerary services. Its construction also led to subsequent improvements that further emphasized the site's ceremonial function.[36] Reflecting its increased commitment to this site, the government paid in 1832 to move the bodies of congressmen who had been buried in Rock Creek Cemetery to Congressional Cemetery.[37]

The construction of a graded and graveled road between the Capitol and the cemetery was, perhaps, the most significant of these changes.[38] This path probably followed the approximate route of present-day Pennsylvania Avenue SE to Potomac Avenue SE, allowing Federal funeral processions to travel directly between the two without the significant discomfort caused by dirt roads. It also linked the cemetery and the nation's Capitol through a strong physical connection. The Capitol was the center of Federal activity and the cemetery was becoming the ceremonial locus of national memory. Funerals could now begin at the Capitol, where the body would lie in state. They would end with the deposition of the body in Congressional Cemetery's public vault prior to burial.[39]

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.[40] In the following year, the government appropriated money to put flagstones along the path that connected the public receiving vault to the cemetery entrance.[41] All of these improvements solidified the cemetery's ritual role in public memory. The cemetery now served a dignified public function in Federal funerary services. Its landscape also reflected the constant memory of these services, and re-inscribed feelings of nationalism and public memory onto visitors to the cemetery. Such improvements were made until 1875 when the cemetery received its final allotment of Federal money toward the construction of cenotaphs.[42]

When taken individually, these changes to the cemetery's landscape may seem relatively minor; however, they represent a significant shift in the manner in which the cemetery was being handled. The Federal government

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[33] 4 Stat. L., 520. See also United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[34] 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.

[35] Three separate statutes appropriated money for the vault: 4 Stat. L, 581 (14 Jul. 1832), 4 Stat. L., 659 (2 Mar. 1833), and 4 Stat. L., 722 (30 Jun. 1834). In United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[36] For details see 4 Stat. L., 722 (30 Jun. 1834), 4 Stat L., 770 (3 Mar. 1835). In United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[37] 4 Stat. L, 580. In United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[38] United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[39] See the Congressional Cemetery website (http://www.congressionalcemetery.org) for a number of newspaper article transcriptions from the *National Intelligencer* and other publications describing the funeral processions of congressmen buried at the cemetery.

[40] 11 Stat. L. 88 (15 Aug. 1856). In United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[41] 11 Stat. L., 226 (3 Mar. 1857). In United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[42] 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 United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

was now funding projects to improve the cemetery and actively investing in its appearance. Prior to these interventions, relatively few direct changes in the overarching landscape of the site reflected its Federal role.

These changes did not occur in isolation. The rural cemetery movement transformed the nation's burial practices. Launched with Mount Auburn Cemetery (established 1831; NHL, 2003) and the movement swept the country in the 1830s and 1840s, resulting in such noted examples as Philadelphia's Laurel Hill (established 1836; NHL, 1998) and Brooklyn's Green-Wood (established 1838; NHL, 2006). The directors of Congressional Cemetery were not on the cutting-edge of these reforms, but they gradually espoused the precepts of the movement, although in a piecemeal fashion. The government could have taken more radical steps to expand and improve the landscape, but a certain level of ambivalence about the national identity of the cemetery predominated. Yet, in general, the public praised the appearance of the cemetery. In an 1839 letter to the editor of *The National Intelligencer*, an anonymous writer noted 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."[43] Another observer admired both the order of the cemetery as well as its ornamentation, stating "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."[44]

While the cemetery grew to nearly eight times its original size between 1849 and 1874, and elements of the rural cemetery movement were adopted, most aspects of its early form and character were maintained. The quintessential winding paths so loved in the rural cemetery movement were never adopted at 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 development. Perhaps the sexton and vestry simply continued out of habit to draft the lines shaping the cemetery in the same manner. Alternately, they may have been 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 parish 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. This conservatism may have kept the cemetery's directors from espousing a more fully-developed rural cemetery plan.[45]

Another important improvement during this period was the construction of a new major entryway to the west of the gatehouse, which divided the cemetery equally across its east-west axis.[46] 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.[47] No visual records of this turnabout exist, but the site would have offered an ideal look-out point to the river panorama below. Located at a corner of the cemetery, with a view to the southwest, this point offered an excellent vista of the wooded hills and river beyond. After the vestry constructed a new brick fence on the western boundary of the cemetery, it received funding from the Federal government to erect an iron fence along the northern line of the cemetery. In roughly the same period, the government also provided funds to pave the path from the entrance of the cemetery to the public vault with

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

[44] Anonymous, "The Congress Burial Ground," *The National Intelligencer* 5 Nov. 1841.

[45] This hypothesis is bolstered by a lengthy article by an anonymous author "Cemeteries and Monuments," *New Englander* 7 (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.

[46] See the Boschke map from 1857 (reproduced on Breitkreutz: 25) for a representation. This road is now the main entryway to the cemetery.

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

flagstones. The cemetery had two primary entrances in this period, the western allée for regular visitors and everyday usage of the cemetery, and the flag-stoned entryway just to the east for Federal funeral ceremonies. During this period, the cemetery's officials tried to improve the overall dignity of the site's appearance. The cenotaphs were regularly painted white. In 1869, the vestry funded the construction of a fountain at the center of the carriageway turnabout. This fountain, set on a grassy knoll, overlooked the Anacostia and the hillside. With the crisp, white cenotaphs and military monuments flanking it on two sides, it must have offered a picturesque visual focus to the cemetery. The base of the fountain was circular, with a central sculpture from which the water spewed. The sculpture was three-tiered, tapering toward the top, with each tier consisting of a goblet-shaped form set on 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 casual plantings of the trees meld with the classical pretensions of the cenotaphs and central fountain. This circulation pattern is still extant, now with the 1903 chapel replacing the fountain.

The years of the Civil War brought the cemetery into the urban core for the first time. It was surrounded by soldiers' barracks and service facilities. This complex of temporary constructions surrounding the cemetery probably provided a fitting complement to the cemetery's own ever-evolving appearance. The events of the war also brought the cemetery closer to the national consciousness. 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 war, twenty-one were installed in 1870 to atone for the lag in construction.[48] When an explosion at the Washington Arsenal killed fifteen young female workers in 1864, their bodies were brought for burial to Congressional Cemetery. As the president and residents of Washington alike attended the graveside ceremonies, the funeral ceremonies accompanying the event demonstrated that the cemetery was central to national memory.[49] Further evidence that the cemetery was at the forefront of the nation's identity is provided by articles that discussed the death of President Abraham Lincoln. These assumed that his body would be held in the public vault at the cemetery before being sent by train to Illinois.[50]

In this period of transition, the cemetery reached the greatest heights of its national identity but failed to attain a level of landscaping and beautification sufficient to cement it permanently as the nation's 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, the reality was not quite as perfect as promoters claimed. Other sites had gained importance to the national memory during the Civil War. The Federal government shifted its attention to Arlington National Cemetery at this time. At Arlington, the government could invest in the design of a purpose-built military cemetery for national memory, establishing it as a national cemetery in 1864. Congressional Cemetery, with its layered historic landscape, its civic tradition of burials, and its church affiliation, could not offer such commemorative freedom. Unbeknownst to contemporaries, the site was beginning to shift from an active space of inscribing national memory to a site of historic memorialization.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Congressional Cemetery was the first burial ground to be considered a Federal institution in the eyes of U. S. citizens and was the recipient of congressional appropriations for improvements. However, there was never any formal or legislated affiliation between the site and the modern organized system of national cemeteries. Unlike Civil War cemeteries and later sites designated as "national cemeteries," Congressional was

[48] See Breitkreutz: 29, as well as United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906).

[49] The explosion occurred on 17 June 1864, and the funeral on 20 June. 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.

[50] 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 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.

not specifically designed to serve veterans nor was it administered directly by the Federal government. Yet, similarities do exist between Congressional and later national cemeteries, most clearly in the role that the sites play in memorializing the nation's prominent dead and creating a nationally-charged space of remembrance. Particularly important among these similarities is the ceremonial role that the sites play in times of national mourning.

The history of the U. S. national cemetery system finds its origin in the Civil War. The devastating number of wartime casualties, coupled with an inability to transport these bodies across the long distances required for hometown burial, necessitated a systemic solution to give proper burial to the military dead. In July 1862, Congress passed an act, signed into law by Abraham Lincoln, authorizing the president to "purchase cemetery grounds…to be used as a national cemetery for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country."[51] This act enabled the military to create "burial grounds…at troop concentration points, where mortalities in general hospitals first posed the problem of military burial" and also establish ones "in the combat zone as memorials to those who gave their lives in battle."[52] While some variations existed, the first Federally-mandated national cemeteries mainly fell into one of these defined categories.

The problem of burying the war dead was especially acute in the area surrounding Washington, D.C. The city's large military camps, numerous hospitals, strategic importance, and geographic location on the border of the conflict all led to it being overwhelmed by an unusually high number of the war dead. After the 1862 law came into effect, a national cemetery was established in Alexandria, Virginia. This cemetery was initially sufficient, but soon the number of dead necessitated the foundation of the Soldiers' Home National Cemetery. Within a few years, though, this cemetery also was filled, and "by the spring of 1864, the available space in the cemetery at the Soldiers' Home was nearly exhausted (more than 5,000 soldiers having been interred there), and meanwhile the frightful mortality continued unabated."[53] In 1864, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs decided to turn the Custis-Lee family estate, which had long been a Union military camp, into a third and final national cemetery for the Federal city. The first Civil War burials were made at Arlington National Cemetery in May or June 1864.[54] Although Arlington may not necessarily "occupy an extraordinary position" within the national cemetery system, over time it has become, without question, the foremost national cemetery.[55]

The newly established national cemetery system became even more structured after the end of the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1870, the Federal government conducted a "massive search of every battlefield, isolated churchyard, farm, plantation, railroad siding, or any other place combat operations had occurred and where Union dead might lie in temporary graves."[56] Through these efforts approximately 300,000 soldiers were reburied in seventy-three national cemeteries across the country.[57]

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[51] As transcribed in Edward Steere, "Early Growth of the National Cemetery System," one of six articles on the history of the national cemetery system that appeared in *The Quartermaster Review* in 1953-54. The articles were subsequently reissued as a group by the Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General under the title *Shrines of the Honored Dead: A Study of the National Cemetery System*, which is available online at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website, http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hist_histhome.asp. See also Dean W. Holt in *American Military Cemeteries: A Comprehensive Illustrated Guide to the Hallowed Grounds of the United States, Including Cemeteries Overseas* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1992).

[52] Steere, *Shrines*, 7.

[53] John Ball Osborne, *The Story of Arlington: A History and Description of the Estate and National Cemetery, [etc.]* (Washington, D.C., 1899), 29.

[54] While the decision to make Arlington into a national cemetery was officially ratified in June 1864, several sources attest to burials having been made there at Meigs' request prior to that month.

[55] Steere, *Shrines*, 7.

[56] Osborne, *Story of Arlington*, 3.

[57] Ibid.

Since the Civil War era, the national cemeteries have continued to play a role that is anchored in military service, providing burial sites for military personnel and eligible family members. The importance of these cemeteries has been re-inscribed with each generation, as bereaved families and citizens alike memorialize the dead of their era's military conflicts. Military burial rituals are an integral element of the experience of these sites. Ritual funerary actions such as flag-folding, the playing of Taps, and the salute of a rifle squad direct the thoughts of mourners toward the service of the dead, while reinforcing the solemnity of the occasion. Memorial Day, derived from Decoration Day of the post-bellum years, also brings national cemeteries to the forefront of civic memory. Annually, a flag is placed beside each soldier's grave at many cemeteries on Memorial Day. This practice occurs at national cemeteries, reinforcing the connection between the honorable service of the dead and nation that they worked to uphold.

As of 2009, there are 144 national cemeteries managed by three government entities: the National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, which manages 128; the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, which manages 14; and the U. S. Army, Department of Defense, which manages 2. Of the national cemeteries, Arlington, just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., has come to play a particularly high-profile role. Buried within its confines are many prominent veterans. The grave of President John F. Kennedy further elevated the cemetery; it many ways, it is a modern pilgrimage site. Perhaps more important than individual burial sites within its boundaries, though, are the larger memorials that commemorate the nation's great tragedies, including: the mast of the USS MAINE, Tomb of the Unknowns, Iranian Rescue Mission Memorial, and Challenger Memorial, among others. Like the Civil War-era Arsenal Monument in Congressional Cemetery, these memorials serve as monuments to national memory, as well as loci for mourning and remembrance.

Yet, Arlington was of particular national importance even before it accumulated its century and a half of cemetery history. As the family home of Robert E. Lee, the burial of the Union dead at the site was especially symbolic to Civil War-era northerners. Several historians argue that Lee's connection to the site fueled Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs' eagerness to "desecrate" the family's beloved estate with the bodies of Union soldiers.[58] The estate also had important ties to the nation's early history. George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of the nation's first president, had developed the Arlington estate in memory of George Washington. To that end, he amassed a large collection of Washington memorabilia in the family home, much of which was seized by the Federal government during the Civil War.[59] By transforming Arlington into a national cemetery, the Federal government made a powerful political statement, while simultaneously transcending the political issues of the day by connecting this new space of national memory to the first president of the union. The dual nature of the site helped to cement its importance in the years following the Civil War, and to create an enduring affiliation of national memory and national cemetery.

The unique context behind the establishment of Congressional Cemetery was distinct from Arlington (and the other national cemeteries) although both cemeteries existed to honor those who served the country. Congressional Cemetery grew to importance in national funerary memory in the wake of the War of 1812, an era when the Federal government itself stood on unstable footing. While the site did serve as a burial ground for some military dead from the war, its importance to the nation came with the construction of the cenotaphs. The rows of white-washed cenotaphs reinforced notions of nationhood and American pride in a young country shaken by its near annihilation. To the citizens of this young republic, civic leaders had been instrumental in

[58] See, for example, Peter Andrews, *In Honored Glory: The Story of Arlington* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), 20-21.

[59] See, among other sources, James Edward Peters, *Arlington National Cemetery: Shrine to America's Heroes* (Washington, DC: Woodbine House, 1986), 5.

bringing the nation into being as an entity distinct from its European predecessors, and it was their leadership that would continue to hold the nation together during periods of national trauma like the War of 1812.

During and after the Civil War, however, the situation shifted, and the national memorial functions of Congressional Cemetery were distanced from the new needs of a country divided by war. The Federal relationship with Congressional Cemetery focused on commemorating those serving the nation and dedicated to strengthening the young republic whereas the national cemeteries of the Civil War-era were largely a declaration of victory over those who attempted to divide the nation. While Congressional Cemetery did not immediately lose its de facto status as a Federal institution, the government's formation of a national military cemetery system probably clarified the differences between the burial landscapes. Despite the clear distinctions in purpose—one landscape that paid tribute to civic duty and service while others individually and collectively reflected an ongoing mission to honor those who served in the military—Congressional Cemetery and the national cemeteries were a means of channeling national identity and memory. As the country's first Federally supported cemetery and as home to the first government-provided markers for the republic's early legislators and other notables, Congressional Cemetery is a unique site of national funerary memory in the United States.

CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY AFTER 1876

Congressional Cemetery did not lose its name after Federal funding ceased in 1875. Although the program of erecting cenotaphs disappeared the following year, the cemetery came to be regarded as the "historic congressional burying ground" rather than a current national memorial landscape. The vestry did their best to capitalize on the national heritage of the cemetery, while maintaining an image of the cemetery that was both historic and contemporaneously attractive. The cemetery's directors had worked to accommodate the trends of the rural cemetery movement in the mid-nineteenth century, but this method of designing cemeteries lost popularity in the 1870s as landscape-lawn design concepts, driven by Adolph Strauch's ground-breaking reconsideration of Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery (NHL, 2007), began to dominate. Instead of the romantic tableau thick with plantings, fencing, and grave markers and mausolea that characterized the earlier and vastly popular rural cemetery movement, Strauch reduced the number and variety of monuments, arraying them on an open, grassy lawn that lacked emphatic lot divisions and was enlivened by grouped stands of trees and shrubs.[60] Washington Parish Burial Ground followed the contemporary trend by adopting the landscape-lawn cemetery model for its final addition of land in 1874. The directors may still 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 [Anacostia River], 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."[61]

This period was also devoted to sorting through the interwoven Federal and ecclesiastical involvement and ownership at the site. Even as it was withdrawing monetary support, the Federal government underscored its long-time investment at the site. In seeking to establish the exact status of the old cemetery, the Senate commissioned a *History of Congressional Cemetery* in 1906. This reviewed all the legislation passed by Congress about the cemetery over the past century in an attempt both to establish which gravesites were owned by the government, as well as to document the history of interments there and government monuments.[62]

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[60] See Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, and Bruce Clouette, "Spring Grove Cemetery," National Historic Landmarks nomination, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 2006, for discussions of the landscape-lawn concept and its national implications.

[61] *Rules and Regulations of the Washington (Congressional) Cemetery Adopted by the Vestry of Christ Church (Protestant Episcopal)* (Washington, DC, 1897), 5.

[62] United States Senate, *History of Congressional Cemetery* (1906). 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

Likewise, the government and cemetery negotiated 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.[63] 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 was also charged with considering what changes to the cemetery's regulations might help to increase its annual revenue.[64] The vestry's reinvestment in the cemetery and their attempt to promote its historic identity sparked the 1913 publication of a small booklet entitled *Washington Parish Burial Ground*, which discussed the history and appearance of the site, and illustrated its major monuments and picturesque vistas.[65] For the remainder of the twentieth century, Washington, D.C. dealt with the decline universally plaguing American cities during an unprecedented period of suburban development and Congressional Cemetery remained largely on the decline and increasingly forgotten.

Congressional Cemetery's listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 increased its visibility to a certain extent. Certainly, it was more frequently recognized as an historic landscape in need of preservation and the Federal government began to pay attention to its deteriorating condition. In 1972, a bill was introduced to the House of Representatives calling for the cemetery to be added to the National Park Service.[66] At this time a proposal was drawn up detailing a development plan and creating a vision for it as a national historic site.[67] The decision-making process dragged on for several years, during which time 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 declined to incorporate the cemetery within the National Park Service, and recommended instead that the church weigh other options.[68] After considering closing the cemetery entirely and relocating all the burials, the church became determined to create a volunteer association to maintain the cemetery. Congressional remained on the periphery of Federal consciousness. A modern cenotaph was constructed in 1981 for Representative Thomas Hale Boggs, the first cenotaph built in more than one hundred years. However, the cemetery's future was uncertain and no major renovation or rehabilitation efforts were carried out for well over a decade. 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.[69] Over the past decade, Congressional Cemetery has not only continued to survive, but also begin to thrive within a revitalized neighborhood. The cemetery's survival has reenergized awareness of its importance to the nation.

CONCLUSION

Understood as a Federal institution and landscape of national commemoration Congressional Cemetery is a nationally-significant landscape. Founded during the Early National period and in tandem with the nation's first "reformed" cemeteries, Congressional Cemetery initially blended the traditional churchyard landscape with forms that reflected the young nation's republican ideals. A grid plan layout and the site's distinctive cenotaphs were crucial defining elements of the cemetery's transformation into the country's first cemetery of national

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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 place 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).

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

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

[65] Vestry of Christ Church, Washington Parish, *Washington Parish Burial Ground* [Washington, DC.], 1913.

[66] HR 14339, 12 Apr. 1972, S.3580, 4 May 1972; HR 15039, 17 May 1972; HR 1891, 11 Jan. 1973; and HR 8883, 21 Jun. 1973.

[67] Richard L. Stanton and Russell E. Dickenson, "Draft Environmental Statement, Proposed Legislation for the Acquiring of the Congressional Cemetery," nd, from archives in the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, Washington, DC.

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

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

memory. Congressional Cemetery maintains a high degree of physical integrity with the key elements reflecting its period of national prominence remaining intact and wholly visible within the landscape.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register: 1969
__ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
_X_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No. DC-424 (cenotaphs only), 1976

__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record:
_X Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No. DC-1, 2005

Primary Location of Additional Data:

__ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC) Archive, 1801 E Street, SE, Washington, DC; Christ Church, Washington Parish Archive.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 33 acres

UTM References:	**Zone**	**Easting**	**Northing**
A	18	328162	4305634
B		328789	4305621
C		328780	4305190
D		328153	4305203

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary for the nomination is shown on the enclosed map, entitled: "Boundaries for Congressional Cemetery, Washington, DC."

Boundary Justification: The boundary has been drawn to correspond with the historic extent of the property, attained by 1874.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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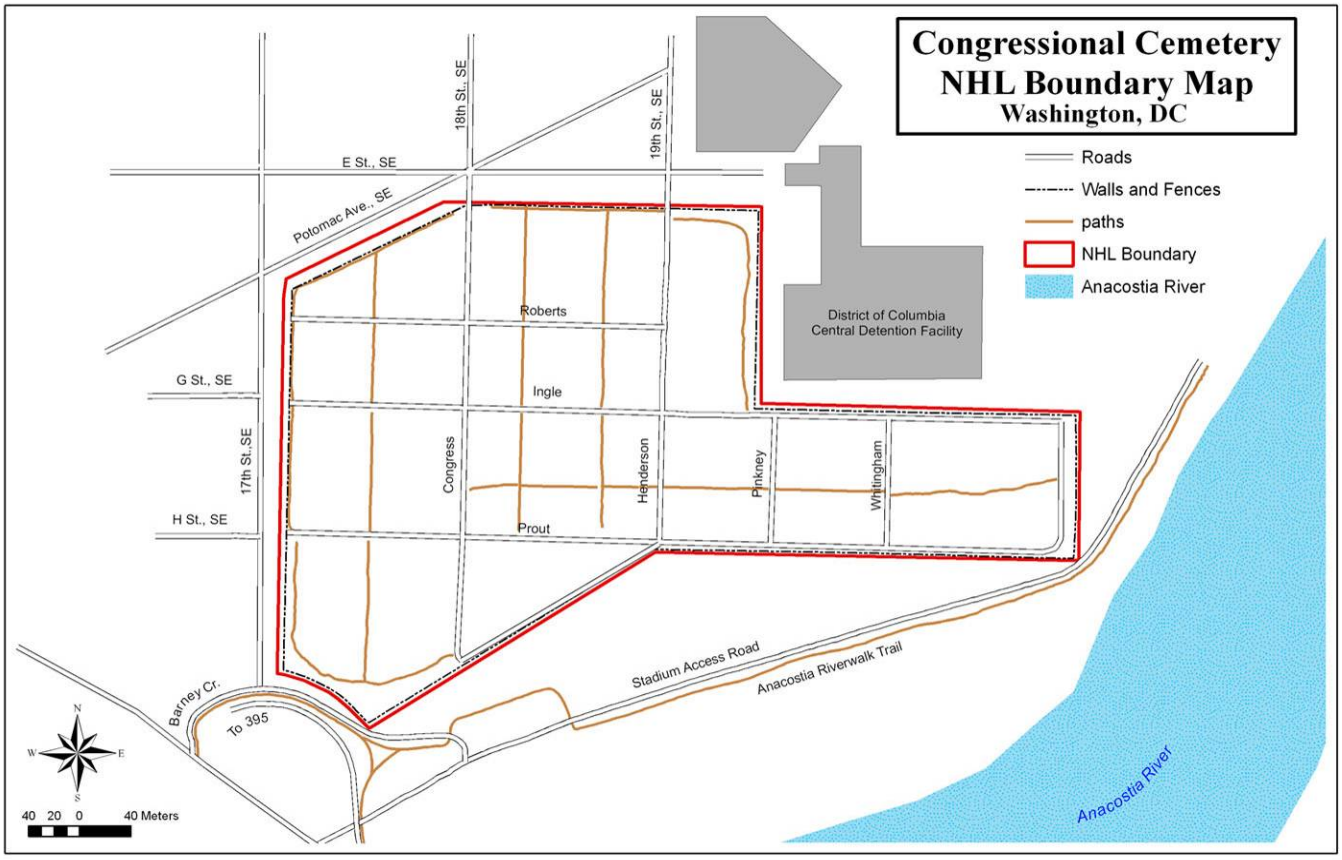
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM
November 18, 2010



James Stein, NPS CRGIS, 2009

Ceremonial gateway and historic fence along E Street SE on the northern boundary of the cemetery, looking southwest
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Grouping of the oldest cenotaphs near ceremonial gateway
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Ceremonial path with Public Vault at center
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Public Vault, east façade
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Congressional cenotaphs, looking southwest
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Tomb of Vice-President Elbridge Gerry with Congressional cenotaphs behind
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Monument to the twenty-one women killed in the U.S. Arsenal explosion in 1864
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

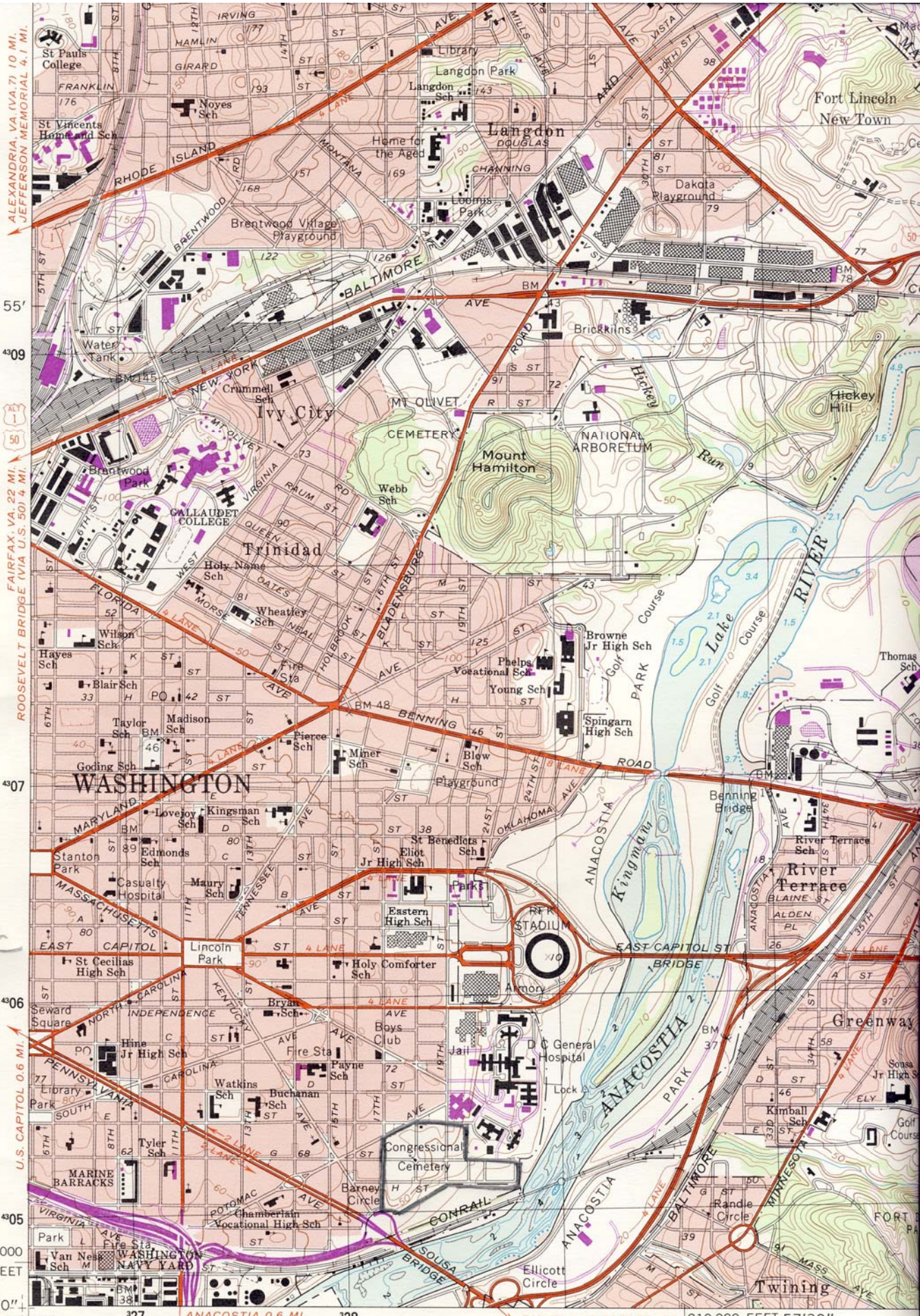
View looking north along ceremonial path with monument
to Attorney General William Wirt on the left
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

View looking southwest with the “Graves of the Victims of the burning of the steamer Wawaset, Potomac River,” 1873, in the foreground
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

View looking southwest over western boundary wall
with row houses along 17th St SE in the background
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

General view, looking southwest with J. Edgar Hoover gravesite in the foreground
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005

Main entrance gate and gatehouse (now cemetery offices), constructed ca. 1923,
located on the site of the original gatehouse constructed in 1832
James Rosenthal, HABS, 2005



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, NCPS, and WSSC

NATIONAL OCEAN SURVEY HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX

Congressional Cemetery Washington, DC

Easting Northing
328162 4305634
328789 4305021
328780 4305190
328153 4305203

Zone 18