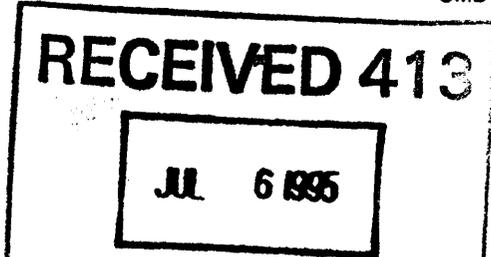


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1302 North Court N/A not for publication

city or town Ottumwa N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Wapello code 179 zip code 52502

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Patricia Orlinski, SHPO 6-27-95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Clara  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action 8.11.95  
National Register of Historic Places

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District

Name of Property

Wapello County, Iowa

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
		sites
2	0	structures
		objects
4	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

Architectural/Historical Resources of Ottumwa, IA

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: High Victorian Gothic

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals:

Late Gothic Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

Limestone

roof Asphalt

other Metal

Terra cotta

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1887-1906

**Significant Dates**

1887

1896

1905/06

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

T.C. Link

George M. Kerns of Ottumwa

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	549720	4542370
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant (515) 682-2743

organization Ottumwa Historic Preservation Commission date February 1995

street & number 105 East Third telephone (515) 683-0606

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ottumwa Cemetery

street & number c/o City Hall, 105 East Third telephone (515) 683-0687

city or town Ottumwa state IA zip code 52501

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### DESCRIPTION:

The Ottumwa Cemetery is located high above the Des Moines River valley in the northern part of the community, in an area of gently rolling hills. At the time that it was established this was on the outskirts of the town. It is located on Court Street which has been an important north/south thoroughfare from the time the town was settled, leading up the hill from the business district. Although the cemetery now encompasses over 50 acres, the original part was the 10 acres located at the SW corner.

The portion of the cemetery included in the Historic District is less than one acre of the original 10 acre plot and includes four resources, all considered to be key structures: #1, the iron fence which runs along the Court Street perimeter from Park Avenue north to the corner near Mistletoe; #2 the stone gateway located on Court just north of Park; #3, the stone chapel/office just inside the gateway; and, #4, the red brick and terra cotta receiving vault due east of the gateway.

The Articles of Incorporation of the Ottumwa Cemetery Association were filed on April 1, 1857 and the original ten acres purchased the following week. It appears that the "laying out of the grounds" was performed by a Mr. Garner. This cemetery replaced an earlier graveyard that had been located not far from downtown, on top of the bluff at what is now the corner of Market and East Court streets. No specific reason has been found for the abandonment of this burying place, but it was probably a combination of being too small and too close to the center of the community. In 1860 the Ottumwa Cemetery Board of Trustees petitioned the City Council to vacate the old cemetery grounds and vest the title in the new Cemetery Association. This was accomplished and the remains were removed from the old cemetery to the new (one area of the cemetery is devoted to the graves of those who were moved). The Board of Trustees minutes give a picture of the development of the site, with notes about whitewashing the "graveyard" fence, building a bridge across a low spot, and "grading the avenues of the cemetery". By 1874 there was discussion of enlarging the cemetery grounds, and 22 acres on the east were purchased. At the same time it was agreed to sell two acres off the east end of the cemetery grounds at \$100 per acre "to the Jewish people" for a cemetery. (Today the two cemeteries are not contiguous, being separated by Jefferson Street and two residential lots.) Another eight acres was added in 1877. In 1879 "a general expression of opinion in regard to Beautifying the grounds was had" by the Trustees which led to talk of building a "neat substantial wire fence in front of the cemetery" and by 1881 the Trustees were laying out the "new" grounds, planting shade trees, and considering installing a telephone if they could do so at a reasonable expense. The new fence was considered necessary because the Sexton reported that people were pulling pickets off the old fence.

In March 1886 the Trustees held a general discussion about putting a receiving vault in the cemetery and making certain other improvements. All agreed on the need for a receiving vault and the president and executive committee were directed to procure plans and specifications for one and to submit these with probable expense at the next (May) meeting. (The receiving vault was necessary because the severe Iowa winters would often prohibit the digging of graves for several months and storage was needed for the caskets.) It was stated that "it (the vault) should be of such

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### DESCRIPTION (Continued):

ornamental and substantial character as to be a credit to the cemetery". In May the Trustees met at the cemetery to determine the location of the vault and arranged for a road to get to it. The vault was "to be located on the east side of the deep ravine near the south fence." (The Trustees granted a quit claim deed to the City for a 60' street along the south side of the cemetery, now known as Park Avenue. A cemetery road north from Park led directly to the vault site.) The minutes do not contain the information about who was selected to design and build the vault, or even when it was completed, but a news article from February 9, 1887 said "The funeral of Mrs. Eliza Ennis occurred at 2:00 P.M. Saturday. Her remains were the first to be deposited in the new vault at Ottumwa Cemetery." The annual financial report was filed by Cemetery Board Treasurer Samuel Mahon on May 9, 1887 and included:

Melsher Tile	\$43.80
T.C. Link-Plan & Spc	50.00
Tile vault floor (not in contract)	50.00
Vault contract	1541.98

From this it appears that T.C. Link was the architect/designer, but no information about him has been located.

The receiving vault (#4) is built into the side of the hill with the facade facing due west toward Court Street. It is visible from Court, but is seen more easily from Park Avenue. Best described as High Victorian Gothic in design, it is constructed of deep red brick with terra cotta decorative details of the same color. The facade measures 31' from north to south and features a finial atop a broad gable which extends almost to ground level. In the center a round arch (10' wide) surmounted by 5" square terra cotta panels rises from short, heavy columns measuring 4'7" tall. A beltcourse of rusticated stone separates the column capitols from the base of the arch. Recessed within the arch is a double wooden entry door with decorative iron hardware. Above the doorway is a stone lintel, with the semicircular area above filled with decorative 7 1/2" square terra cotta panels. The symmetry of the facade is broken by chimney which is located to the north of the arch. It rises in stages to a pointed top capped by three finials, one on each side and one in the center. A Gothic arched opening is located just below the top. Larger (12"x12") terra cotta panels are located on the chimney. Areas of repointing and repair are apparent at both the north and south ends of the facade. A side view illustrates how the vault is built into the hill, with an arched interior ceiling (actually very much like a storm or cyclone cellar). The interior measures approximately 14'x20' and is finished in glazed tile and terra cotta. It is said that the interior had room for twenty caskets. No photographs of the interior are included because it is the winter habitat of an endangered species, the Missouri brown bat, and it was decided not to disturb them.

Throughout the rest of the 1880s and early '90s the Trustees continued to discuss the need for a new fence. It was decided to build a barbed wire fence along the south side of the grounds. Exactly when the new fence along Court Street (#1) was authorized has not been determined, but in May 1896 "the Executive Committee was instructed to put moulding on the joints on the posts

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### DESCRIPTION (Continued):

of the new iron fence." This moulding is still apparent on these square posts today. The iron fence is composed of sections 63" long by 44" high, with the individual iron pickets being spaced 4" apart. The top of each picket features a stylized trefoil design. Each section features three horizontal iron bars for stability with the pickets attached and reinforced with a simple pattern of arches. Some sections are shorter than 63" to fit a particular space. It is known that a number of sections have been damaged and removed over the years, but it has not been determined exactly how far north along Court and east along Park the fence extended. Records show that in 1896 the Executive Committee talked with the City Council about having the Court Street paving extended 27' north to the upper corner of the cemetery grounds above the upper gates, so the fence probably extended that far. Today the fence starts immediately south of the upper gates and continues to the corner of Park where a single pedestrian gate is located and one section of the fence extends along Park Avenue. There is a total of 521' of extant fencing. The original manufacturer has not been identified, but about ten years ago the Superintendent had a new mold made of one section of fence at Iowa Malleable in Fairfield, Iowa so new sections could be cast as others deteriorate or are damaged. Nine sections of fence have been made from this mold, six of which are presently in use.

The elegant brick receiving vault and iron fence were the first improvements made to the cemetery to give it a sense of permanence and to express the taste of the times. Just as public buildings downtown such as the new (1893) Wapello County Courthouse at the foot of Court Street hill demonstrated the pride and prosperity of the community, so the Ottumwa Cemetery fence and vault spoke to the refinement of the relatively young town.

In 1894 the Trustees had received a \$1000 bequest from the estate of prominent Ottumwa businessman J.W. Egerly. Egerly had originally come to Ottumwa with the Burlington and Missouri River railroad in 1859. Deciding to stay in the community, he engaged in the hardware business and joined the Ottumwa Iron Works in 1873. In 1888 he became involved with the wholesale drug and stationery business which continued under the firm name of J.W. Egerly & Co. until 1975. He had served as vice president and cashier of the Iowa National Bank, was president of the school board for many years, and "always took an active interest in politics and public affairs and was prominently identified with the progress, growth and development of Ottumwa." During a European trip with his son in the summer of 1894 he died suddenly in Paris. The Egerly bequest was to be used for the construction of a stone gateway and a lodge/office at the Court Street entrance to the cemetery. Plans for both structures became available for public review in 1904, and the gateway was constructed the following year. Ottumwa architect George M. Kerns was responsible for the both designs.

The gateway (#2) is of Bedford limestone with a rusticated surface, and measures 41' from north to south. It follows the pattern of Roman triumphal arches with a large central arched opening flanked by a smaller arch on each side. The central, or carriage gateway, measures 11'9" wide by 12' high, while the pedestrian gateways are 3'7" wide by 7'6" high. Smooth ashlar blocks are used for the base, and for the entablature. The arch features a denticulated cornice. A curving buttress is located on the outside edge of each pedestrian gateway. The walls of the gate are 34" deep.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

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Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### DESCRIPTION (Continued):

Iron gates were part of the original design for each of the three openings. Although the iron gates (39"x74") remain in the side arches, the double carriage gates were removed some years ago. A bronze plaque to the right of the carriage entrance reads:

BUILT WITH A FUND  
FOUNDED BY  
JOHN W. EDGERLY  
A FAITHFUL CITIZEN  
A TRUE FRIEND  
AN HONEST MAN

Lettering above the central opening identifies this as "EDGERLY GATEWAY". This lettering was carved during the summer of 1929 when the practice of naming the cemetery entrances was adopted. The "upper gates" on Court Street have not yet been named, but the Powell Gate (1929) provides an entrance off Vanness, and the 1993 Manning Gate provides access from Jefferson.

From the establishment of the cemetery until 1905 the cemetery had functioned with a Board of Trustees, plus a secretary and a sexton to oversee actual operations. In 1905 the Trustees combined these two positions into the Superintendent of the Cemetery, and hired Leroy Christie to fill this position. With the employment of Christie came rapid changes to the cemetery operations. No longer did the Trustees meet only once or twice a year. The meetings became more regular, and much more business was accomplished.

While the entrance gateway was under construction the Cemetery Trustees began working with the Trustees of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association "to erect a chapel in Ottumwa Cemetery as a memorial to the soldiers and sailors of the Civil War". This "chapel" was the same building earlier referred to as the "lodge" or "office". The Edgerly bequest of \$1000 had not covered the entire cost of the gateway alone (nearly \$2000 when completed) and additional funding was necessary to build the chapel/office. The cooperation of the two Boards of Trustees made possible the construction of the chapel/office (#3).

In May 1906 the location of the proposed building was discussed and it "was decided to have architect Kerns draw plans to be submitted at the next meeting." This seems to indicate that the original plans by Kerns for the building were no longer being considered. The June 1906 minutes described Kerns' plans, "The building is to be of rough ashlar with Battlement on top, to be finished inside with glazed brick and either oak or cyprus". When bids were opened all were too high and the architect was instructed to revise the plans to accommodate a not-to-exceed figure of \$4000. Following changes in plan and some materials (it was decided to use plaster instead of glazed brick on the interior), the second round produced acceptable bids, and contracts were let to Ottumwa Mill and Construction, and to Ottumwa Cut Stone Company. The Ottumwa Courier noted "The new chapel will be built just south and east of the arch which stands at the entrance to the cemetery. When completed it will be modern in every particular and will be a credit, not only to the Cemetery Association, but to the City of Ottumwa."

The chapel/office of rusticated Bedford limestone (matching the nearby gateway) is a single

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

## DESCRIPTION (Continued):

story L-shaped building on a high foundation. It measures 31'3" from east to west, and 20'3" north/south. The building contains two rooms on the main floor, an Office that might double as a chapel along the east side, and a smaller room on the west which continues to serve as the Superintendent's office. The basement is reached by an outside stairway and originally housed the heating system, workshop for cemetery employees, and "the gentlemen's toilet rooms". Only the workshop has been removed from that location. A smooth ashlar watertable, beltcourse at sill level, and a second beltcourse just above the windows add contrast to the rough stone. The roofline is crenelated and features caps of smooth stone. A single chimney rises in the center of the building. All doors and windows have a surround of smooth of stone and a slightly pointed Gothic arched top. A single door near the west end of the north elevation opens into the Superintendent's office. Gold lettering "Superintendent" can still be read on the window of this door, but it is not known when this was applied. The entrance to the east half of the building is through a larger door (also located on the north elevation) which is flanked by sidelights. Above this door is a smooth stone panel cared with the word "OFFICE". This lettering matches that on the Edgerly Gateway and was probably done at the same time (1929). Cast concrete steps lead up to both entrances, and one set leads down to the basement. Iron railings along the steps do not appear to be original. To the right of the main entrance is a stone plaque which reads,

DEDICATED TO  
THE UNION SOLDIERS  
AND SAILORS OF THE  
CIVIL WAR.

In 1923 a vault was added to this building at basement level on the west side. This vault is of concrete, measures 6'x8' on the interior, and features an arched roof. This vault was for the storage of records, not coffins. It was built by Ottumwa Mill And Construction Co. at a cost of \$391.00. This vault appears to be the last major change made to the building.

Leroy Christie continued to serve as Superintendent of the Ottumwa Cemetery until his death in 1942. He took his responsibilities very seriously and shortly after being named Superintendent he joined the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents (later serving as its president). He was one of the organizers of the Iowa Cemetery Officials and also held major offices in that organization. The period of time covered by Christie's administration was one that saw growth and change in cemeteries across the country. He took pride in bringing a recognized landscape designer (Ray F. Wyrick) to Ottumwa to lay out the new areas of the cemetery.

Following Christie's tenure other changes were made to the cemetery. To facilitate the use of larger modern mowers and other equipment, stone curbs and gutters were removed from the cemetery avenues, and the stone walls and iron fences around many of the family plots were removed. The loss of these original elements impairs the design integrity of the rest of the original 10 acres. For that reason, only the area immediately adjacent to the four key structures is included in this nomination.

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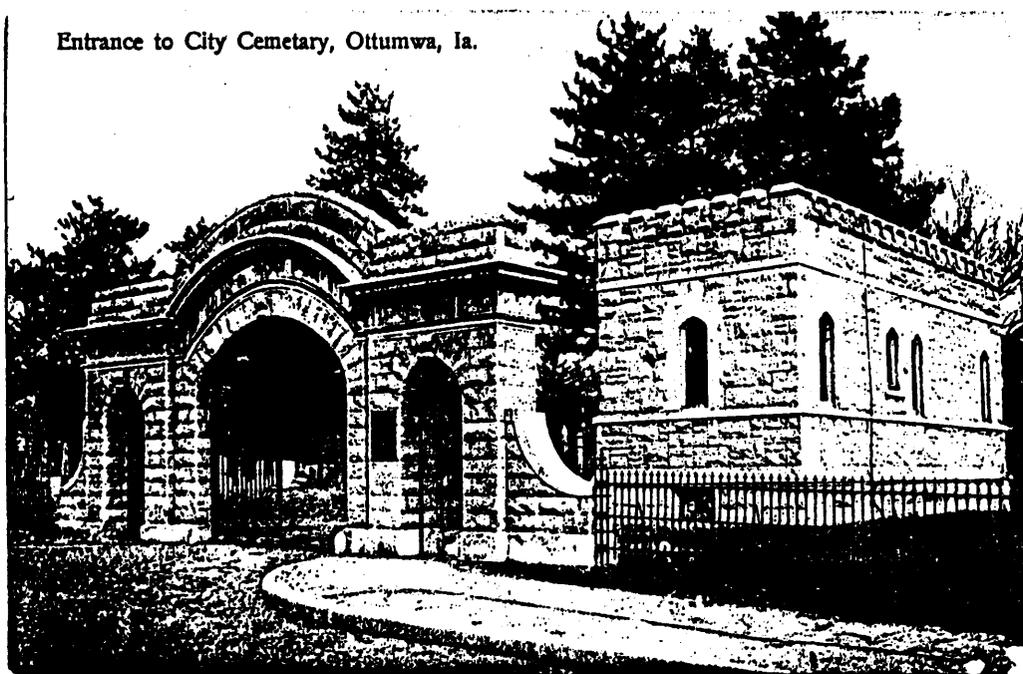
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

**DESCRIPTION (Continued):**



Historic view, taken between 1907 and 1923.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

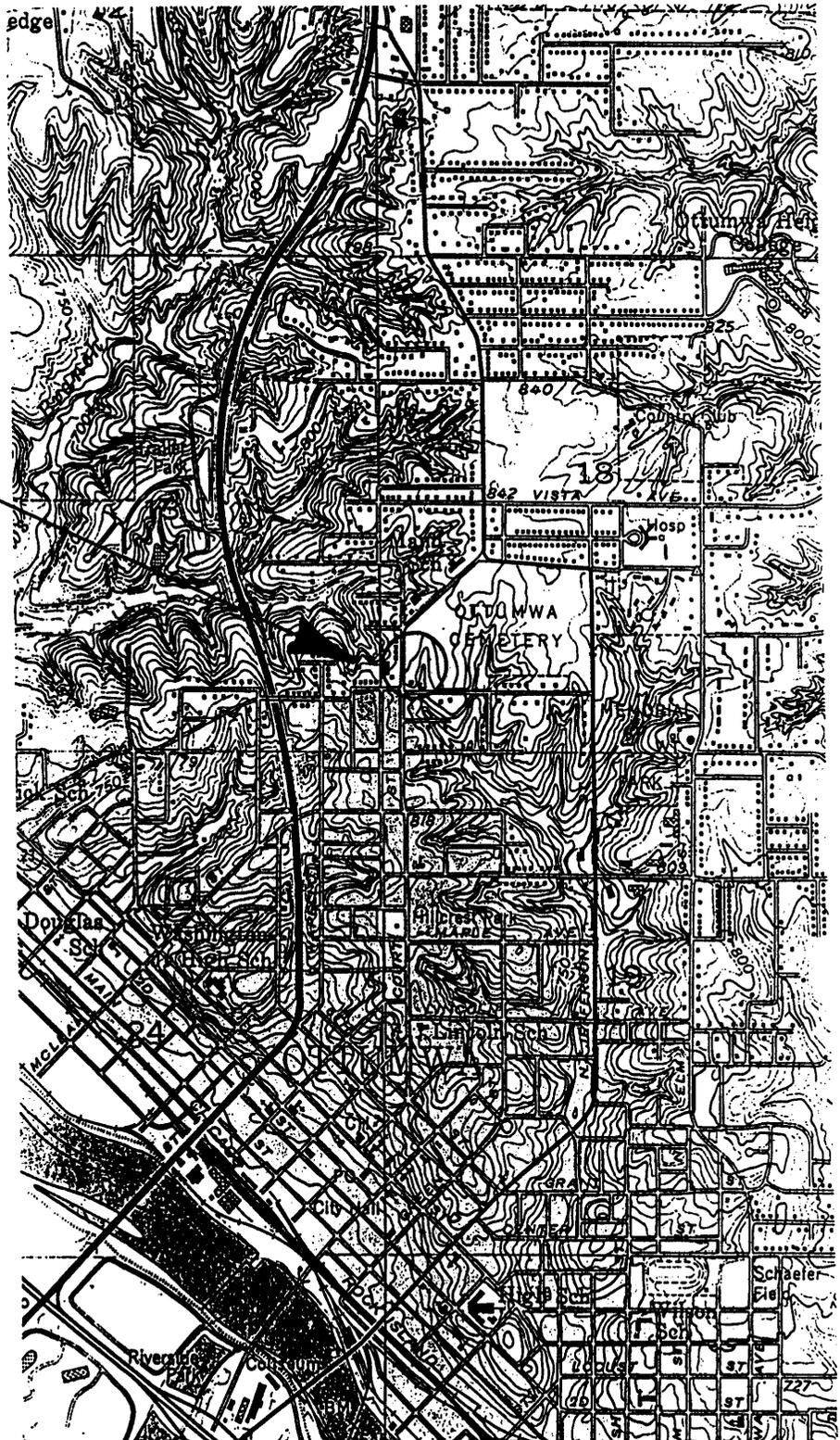
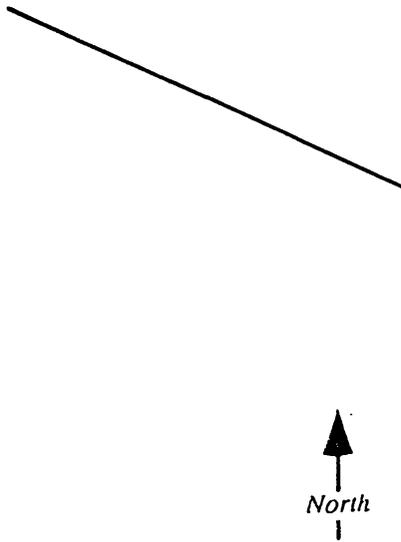
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Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

DESCRIPTION (Continued):

U.S.G.S Map: Ottumwa North  
(reduced)

Location of historic district.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

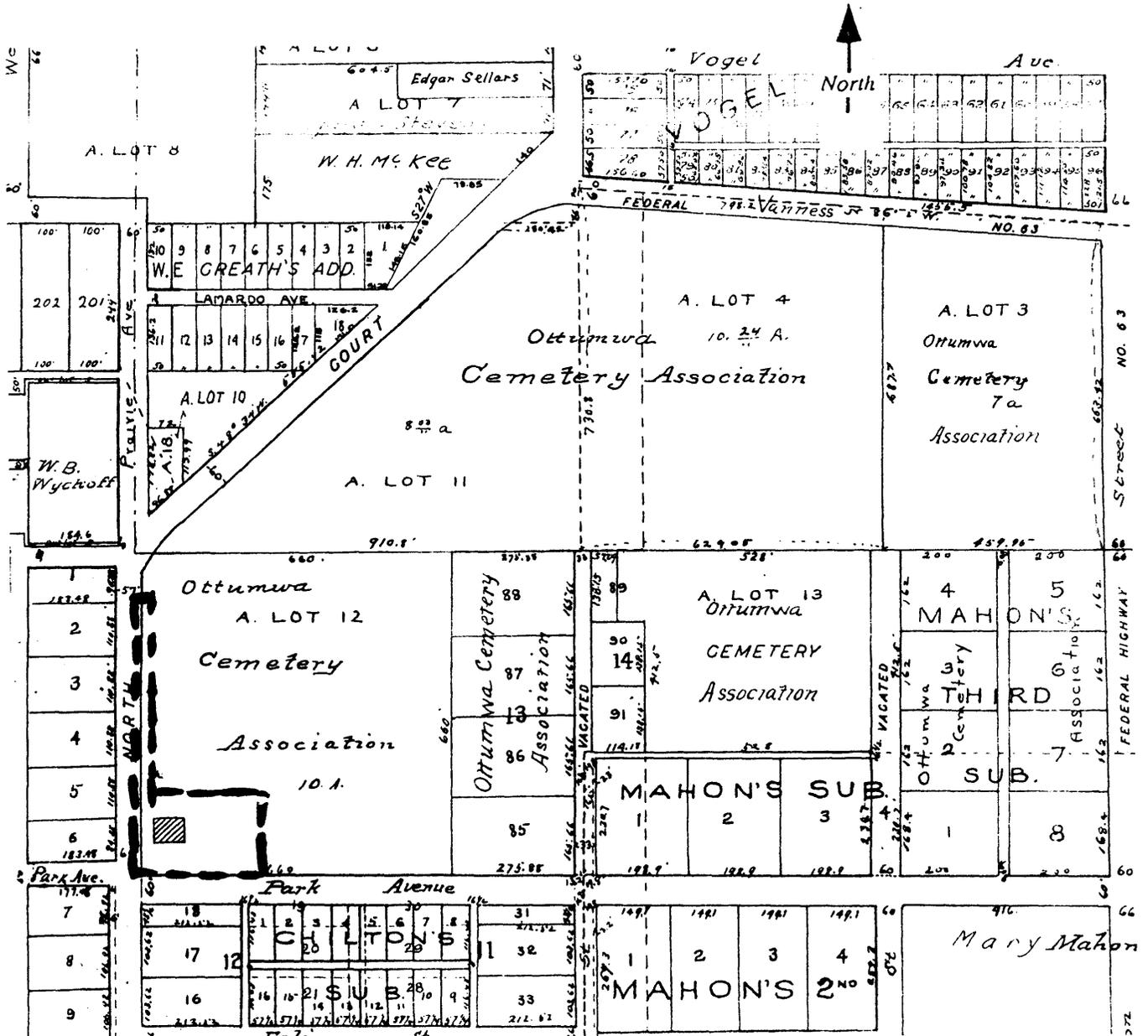
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

DESCRIPTION (continued): Map showing district boundaries



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

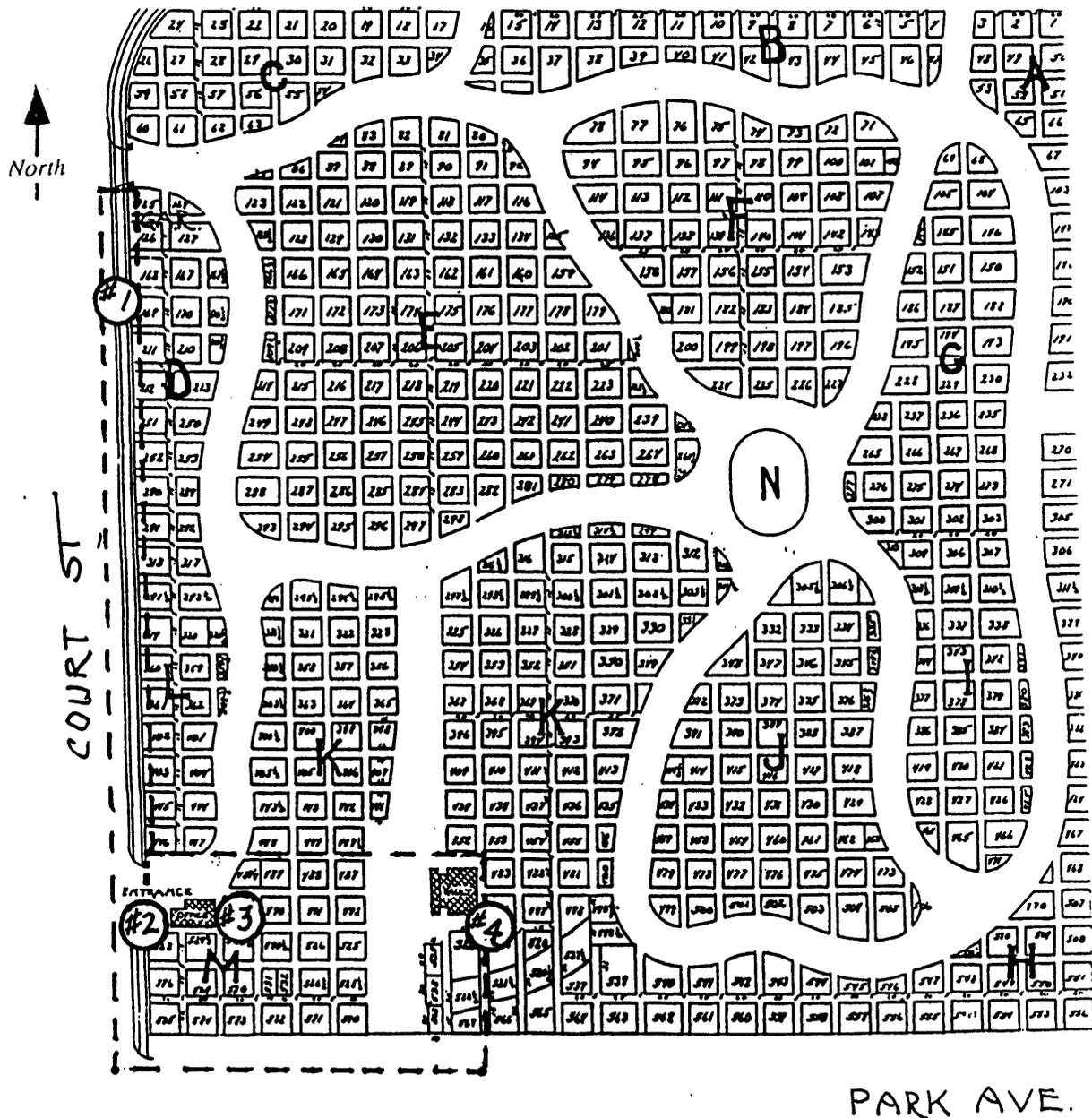
Section number 7 Page 9

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Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

DESCRIPTION (Continued):

Cemetery map with district boundaries & location of four key structures.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District is locally significant under Criterion C because it illustrates the evolution in cemetery design that took place during the late 19th and very early 20th centuries (1887-1906) leading to the influence of the "City Beautiful" movement. It is significant under Criteria Consideration D because it contains distinctive examples of public building design.

Of the five cemeteries in the community (the other four are the Hebrew Cemetery, Calvary Cemetery, Shaul Cemetery, and Memorial Lawn), the Ottumwa Cemetery retains the strongest sense of the "rural" cemetery concept. "Rural" cemetery design began in this country in the 1830s with the establishment of such cemeteries as Mount Auburn in Cambridge, MA, Laurel Hill in Philadelphia, and Mount Hope in Rochester, NY. Basically these were community cemeteries located on the outskirts of the town or village. Usually these were sited on a hillside or hilltop with a view of the community. These cemeteries were different in concept from the earlier ones which were often located adjacent to a church, or the family cemeteries found in many rural areas. The "rural" cemetery movement took into consideration not only the need for burial space, but placed it within a romantic landscape. The cemeteries often were located in areas of natural beauty with hills, valleys, trees, and streams or ponds. As the cemeteries developed, man-made streams and ponds were created where natural ones were lacking. The hillsides were climbed by curving roads or "avenues", and clumps of trees and shrubbery were planted to create pleasant vistas. Sometimes benches were placed strategically to provide a place for quiet meditation in a particularly beautiful site. Although individual lots or lots in pairs were the norm, large family plots developed with elaborate marble or metal monuments. Often these family plots were defined by a stone wall or decorative iron fence. Some areas of the cemetery were laid out with more formal landscaping or flower gardens. These cemeteries were usually separated from the rest of the community, the "real world", by some type of fencing or hedge which provided a transition into the spacious open areas. As these "rural" cemeteries developed, so too did the American public park movement. There was an increasing interest in public green space. The writings and designs of such men as Andrew Jackson Downing, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmstead changed the public landscape of America. Many of the late 19th century cemeteries and parks throughout the country evolved from this romantic naturalistic type of design. Toward the end of the century, the more formal design of the buildings of the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago brought about a renewed interest in more formal design for public buildings and spaces. This interest carried over into the planning of cemetery structures as well. The classic formality of entrance gates and central drives existed side by side with the tree lined romantic vistas of earlier decades.

The Ottumwa Cemetery is a very simple example of both views of cemetery planning. The original 10 acres purchased in 1857 were laid out with roads curving gently around the hillsides, a pleasantly meandering design. The lots themselves were arranged on a rigid grid plan. Although there was talk of beautifying the grounds, little was actually accomplished in the early years. A fence along the Court Street perimeter appears to have been the most important "beautification" project. As new land was acquired it was laid out into lots by a local surveyor. When the need for

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

CFN-259-1116

Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District  
Wapello County, IA

### SIGNIFICANCE (Continued):

a receiving vault was recognized, it was logical that the "ornamental and substantial" vault was placed in such a way that it could be seen from the main entrance to the cemetery. Court Street was not only the main approach to the cemetery, it was the major north/south thoroughfare in the community. An 1887 advertisement for the Court Street Railway said you could ride a street car from the Star School (corner of Milner and Mary on the far south side of Ottumwa) to the Ottumwa Cemetery for a nickel. With the decision made to build the vault, another decision of major importance was also made, to hire someone from outside the cemetery staff to design the new vault. Although no information has been located about T.C. Link, he obviously was familiar with not only the physical requirements of the building type, but also the popular styles and materials of the period. High Victorian Gothic was a particularly appropriate style for a receiving vault and continued the romantic concept of the "rural" cemetery. The use of deep red brick and matching terra cotta panels was typical of the period and is seen in several architect designed Ottumwa residences from the 1880s. Following the construction of the receiving vault the Trustees appeared to be more aware of the need for additional tangible or material improvements to be made. As the town was growing and developing, there was a perceived need for culture and refinement. The cemetery, as a public entity, could be expected to reflect this.

The next improvement to be made was to the boundary that separated the cemetery from the "real world". An ornamental iron fence was erected along the "front" of the cemetery, the part that paralleled Court Street. No source has been identified for this fence, but it is possible that it was the product of the Ottumwa Iron Works, a major industry in the community. Like the receiving vault, the design of the fence reflected 19th century romanticism. With the installation of this fence, the cemetery presented a more dignified face to the community. It was only a matter of time until the decision would be made to build an impressive entrance gate.

The Edgerly bequest provided the opportunity to build such an entrance and adjacent building. Although the bequest was specifically given for that purpose, it was a decade before the gate was actually designed and built. For this project the Trustees turned to an Ottumwa architect, George M. Kerns. Kerns was responsible for a number of residences, commercial, and public buildings built in Ottumwa during the first four decades of the 20th century. Exactly when he arrived in Ottumwa, and from where, has not been determined. The designs for the cemetery are among his earliest documented work in the community, but in the following years he was exceedingly active. The construction of the gateway and chapel/office in 1905-06 can be viewed as part an effort to create a new public image of the community with new, architect designed structures. The effort began in 1888 with the construction of a new Federal Building on Central Park at Third and Court streets. The Wapello County Courthouse, also located on Central Park, followed in 1893 and the Ottumwa Public Library was built across the street in 1902. The first two of these buildings shared some design characteristics with the cemetery receiving vault: round arched openings, short heavy columns, and terra cotta decorative panels. The library reflected the changing taste of the period and was of classical design executed in Bedford limestone (both style and material reflecting the influence of the Columbian Exposition). Kerns used the popular Bedford stone for his two designs.

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### SIGNIFICANCE (Continued):

For the entrance gateway he adopted a classical approach using the tripartite form of the Roman triumphal arch. This symmetrical, formal design is typical of the "City Beautiful" movement. For the chapel/office however, he relied on a more romantic style and featured the arched windows and the crenelated roofline of the Gothic. Both the gateway and the chapel/office are representative of the many public improvements taking place around the turn of the century, not just in Ottumwa, but in other communities across the country. Public buildings presented the image that people wanted others to have of their town. Planned and built over a period of twenty years the Ottumwa Cemetery gateway, chapel/office, iron fence, and brick receiving vault created an impressive entrance to the cemetery grounds.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Interviews with Bob Swanson, Superintendent of the Ottumwa Cemetery, conducted by Molly Myers Naumann, a series taking place between Sept 1992 and Dec 1994.

The Modern Cemetery (formerly Park and Cemetery). "Death of Leroy Christie." Vol 52, No 9, Nov 1942, pp 100-1.

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Ottumwa Daily Courier. 27 Aug 1904, 23 May 1905, 30 June 1905, 30 Oct 1905, 4 Nov 1929.

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Ottumwa Mill and Construction Company. Invoice for cement vault, 28 May 1923.

Potter, Elisabeth Walton and Boland, Beth M. National Register Bulletin #41, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992.

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

A parcel of land located in A.L. 12 of the Auditor's Sub-division of T72N R13W Sec 18 SW 1/4 in the City of Ottumwa. The parcel is irregular in shape, beginning at the SW corner of A.L. 12, then north along the right of way 563' to a point directly west of the NW corner of cemetery lot 125 in section D, thence east to the NW corner of said lot, thence south along the west edge of cemetery lots 451' to the SW corner of cemetery lot 146 in section L, thence east 222' to the SE corner of cemetery lot 152 in section K, thence south 112' to the right of way along Park Avenue, thence west along right of way to the point of beginning.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

This is the area of the Ottumwa Cemetery which contains the publicly owned structures historically associated with the resource.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: Ottumwa Cemetery  
1302 N. Court St.  
Ottumwa (Wapello county), Iowa

All photographs of the Ottumwa Cemetery Historic District were taken by Molly Myers Naumann in November, 1994, and all negatives are located in the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI), Des Moines, IA.

- #1 Edgerly Gateway, looking east.
- #2 Detail: south pedestrian gate of Edgerly Gateway, and fence along Court St., looking SE.
- #3 Detail: central gate for carriages/autos, Edgerly Gateway, looking east.
- #4 Detail: bronze plaque on Edgerly Gateway.
- #5 Iron fence and gate at corner of Court and Park streets, looking NE.
- #6 Detail: three sections of iron fence along Court St., looking NE.
- #7 Iron fence extending north along Court St. from the Edgerly Gateway, looking NE.
- #8 Chapel/Office, 3/4 view of facade, looking SE.
- #9 Chapel/Office, 3/4 view of main entrance, looking SE.
- #10 Chapel/Office, door to Superintendent's Office, looking south.
- #11 Chapel/Office, 3/4 view of side and rear, looking NW.
- #12 Chapel/Office, rear (south) elevation, looking north.
- #13 Receiving vault, looking due east from in front of Chapel/Office.
- #14 Receiving vault, 3/4 view showing how it is built into the hillside, looking NE.
- #15 Detail: receiving vault arched entrance with columns, looking SE.
- #16 Detail: terra cotta panels above receiving vault entry, looking east.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS (Continued):**

- #17 Receiving vault as seen from Park, looking north.
- #18 View from east end of receiving vault looking west toward Court St., receiving vault in foreground, with Chapel/Office and Ederly Gateway in background.

