

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 25 1980

DATE ENTERED AUG 11 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Wooldridge Monuments

AND/OR COMMON

Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Maplewood Cemetery

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mayfield

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Graves

CODE

83

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**

DISTRICT  
 BUILDING(S)  
 STRUCTURE  
 SITE  
 OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC  
 PRIVATE  
 BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
 IN PROCESS  
 BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED  
 UNOCCUPIED  
 WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
 YES: RESTRICTED  
 YES: UNRESTRICTED  
 NO

**PRESENT USE**

AGRICULTURE  
 COMMERCIAL  
 EDUCATIONAL  
 ENTERTAINMENT  
 GOVERNMENT  
 INDUSTRIAL  
 MILITARY  
 MUSEUM  
 PARK  
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
 RELIGIOUS  
 SCIENTIFIC  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

City of Mayfield

C/O Ransey Joiner, Jr., Superintendent

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Mayfield

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Graves County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Mayfield

STATE

Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1971

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in the Maplewood Cemetery of Mayfield, Kentucky are the Wooldridge Monuments, a group of eighteen stone sculptures that commemorate the life, interests, and closest relatives of Henry G. Wooldridge. The monuments were executed over a period of seven years, between 1892 when Wooldridge bought the cemetery lot, and 1899 when he died. Wooldridge is the only one whose remains are entombed in the crowded enclosure.

The Wooldridge Monuments are sited on a hillside that is immediately visible from the cemetery entrance. Like most of the other gravestones in Maplewood Cemetery, the Wooldridge figures are oriented toward the east, (Fig. 1). They are arranged in a family-sized plot that measures about thirty-three by seventeen feet, (Fig. 2).

Set in an approximate cross form at the center of the group are the four largest monuments, all memorializing Henry G. Wooldridge. The first of these is a marble obelisk that is embellished with the relief carving of a horse and a Masonic emblem. An inscription reads: "Faith Points to hope above the skies/Where Virtue Friendship never dies."

In front, or to the southeast of the obelisk is Wooldridge's vault. The only embellishment on the formidable limestone structure is the image of a rifle, executed in relief across the marble top, (Fig. 3).

A life-sized statue of Henry Wooldridge is situated to the southwest of the sarcophagus. Set on a six-foot base, this Italian marble sculpture is presumably an individualized portrait of Wooldridge: an elderly man with moustache and goatee, well dressed in the style of his day, (Fig. 4). In contrast to the vertical rigidity of the other statues is the relaxed pose and countenance of this figure. To the northwest of the marble statue is the largest of the limestone sculptures, a full-sized likeness of Wooldridge astride a horse, (Fig. 5). Dressed in riding clothes and with a broad-brimmed hat, this version of Henry Wooldridge has a startling, staring visage. There is no inscription on this monument other than the horse's name, "Fop."

Around this nucleus are fourteen other statues, all carved of local limestone. At the northeast corner of the plot is a row of three identical figures that represent three of the Wooldridge brothers, all standing about five feet tall above three-foot bases, (Fig. 6). Although they appear to be younger than Wooldridge himself, their moustached faces indicate no particular age. Each left hand grasps each cutaway coat edge in a formal stance. Arranged from east to west according to age, they are identified as: John H., W. F., and Alfred N. Wooldridge. Directly behind the three brothers is a monument carved in the likeness of a fox, (Fig. 7). Positioned as if in pursuit is the statue of a hound, (Fig. 8). Another hound, and the figure of a deer that it seems to chase are situated in the southeast corner of the lot, (Fig. 9). Although none of these animal statues is inscribed, a contemporary source identified the dogs as pets of Wooldridge named "Towhead" and "Bob." The wild animals, taken with the horse, dog, and gun images are traditionally presumed to represent Wooldridge's interest in horsemanship and hunting.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1892-1899 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Paducah Marble Works, Paducah, Ky.  
 Pryor and Radford Monument Works,  
 Mayfield, Kentucky

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wooldridge Monuments are both the unique product of one man's imagination and elaborate embodiments of late nineteenth-century trends in cemetery sculpture. They represent the best work of local craftsmen and they memorialize a notable Tennessee-Kentucky family. An interesting body of folklore is associated with the Wooldridge group which has become an important landmark in Mayfield and Western Kentucky.

Born in 1822 in Williamson County, Tennessee, Henry G. Wooldridge was the youngest son of a well-to-do farming family. His parents, Josiah Wooldridge (1788-1825) and Keziah Nichols (1790-1846), owned some five hundred acres of land in Williamson and Maury counties, Tennessee.<sup>1</sup> They had eight children: John H. (1807-1844), Narcissa (1809-1892), William F. (1811-1879), Alfred N. (1813-1850s), Susan H. (1815-c. 1845), Josiah, Jr. (1818-1852), Minerva E. (1820-?), and Henry G. (1822-1899).<sup>2</sup>

Around 1840, the Wooldridge brothers and sisters began to sell their Tennessee lands and move to Graves County in the Jackson Purchase region of Kentucky. A decade later, five of them were settled alone or with young families in the vicinity of Mayfield. Their mother, Keziah N. Wooldridge, had joined them. Henry Wooldridge acquired a substantial tract of land in Graves County<sup>4</sup> where he established a horse breeding and trading business. He apparently never married.

In 1892, the last of Wooldridge's sisters died, leaving him with no immediate family. Possibly it was this event that prompted him to buy his lot at Maplewood Cemetery.<sup>5</sup> According to a contemporary account, the marble obelisk was the first monument to be erected.<sup>6</sup> In 1892, Wooldridge also ordered the tomb from Pryor and Radford Monument Works in Mayfield.<sup>7</sup> At this early stage of his project, Wooldridge commissioned, through a Paducah monument firm, the Italian<sup>8</sup> marble figure of himself.

There followed the commission of the local limestone statues. Wooldridge contacted Will Lydon, then a stonemason with the Paducah Marble Works. Lydon, who was interviewed about the monuments during the 1930s, claimed responsibility for twelve of them.<sup>9</sup> Wooldridge ordered likenesses of his mother, Keziah Wooldridge, and his two great-neices, Minnie Neely and Maud Reeds.<sup>10</sup> He wanted a full-sized statue of himself astride his horse Fop, for which the overwhelmed Lydon was obliged to find a model at a Paducah livery stable. Other live models served the stonemason for Wooldridge's dog, deer, and fox monuments. In the case of the Wooldridge brothers, Lydon was instructed to carve men of "ordinary appearance and all alike."<sup>11</sup>

Similar instructions were probably made for the sculpting of the three Wooldridge sisters, all executed by Pryor and Radford. These figures are saved from duplication principally by distinction of detail among their costumes, implying that

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atlas of Graves County, Kentucky. Philadelphia: D. J. Lake and Company, Publishers, 1880.  
 Battle, J. H.; Perrin, W. H.; and Kniffin; G. C. Histories and Biographies of Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky.  
 Louisville: F. A. Battey Publishing Company, 1885.  
 Beasley, W. L. Interview, August 24, 1979.

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .01 acre  
 QUADRANGLE NAME Mayfield QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	3 5 3	9 60	4 0 6 8 1 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C					D			
E					F			
G					H			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Woolldridge Monuments occupy a cemetery plot measuring about 33' x 17' and including about 560 square feet. The enclosure, located in the southwest section of Maplewood Cemetery is designated as Block A, Lot 9 by the cemetery superintendent's office.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Camille Wells, Architectural Historian  
 ORGANIZATION Kentucky Heritage Commission DATE June 10, 1980  
 STREET & NUMBER 104 Bridge Street TELEPHONE (502) 564-3741  
 CITY OR TOWN Frankfort STATE Kentucky

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Jonna C. Hopkins  
 TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 6-12-80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8/11/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER W. R. Ray  
 ATTEST: Kristina O'Connell DATE 7/24/80

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Wooldridge Monuments

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The representation of a fourth brother, Josiah Wooldridge is set to the west of the deer and hound. This statue is an exact mirror image of the monuments to the other three brothers, (Fig. 10). It is also set on a smaller, lower base, suggesting that it was executed as part of a separate commission.

The figure of Keziah Wooldridge, situated just behind the Josiah Wooldridge monument, has a serenity appropriate to the mother of this family, (Fig. 10). In contrast to the circa 1890s attire of the other statues, her V-lined bodice and full skirt are typical of the styles of the 1840s.

Behind Keziah Wooldridge are two small figures, both representing great-nieces of Henry Wooldridge, (Fig. 11). The first is identified simply as "Minnie," an adolescent wearing a sashed and beribboned ankle-length dress. "Maud" wears the calf-length skirt of a younger girl. She is looking at a scroll in her left hand that bears the initials "H.G.W."

Defining the rear of this assemblage are monuments to the three Wooldridge sisters, (Fig. 12). Of identical size and proportion with similar beneficent faces, these statues were obviously carved as a group. The most striking variance among them is in costume. All three are dressed in the 1890s style with fitted jackets, leg-o-mutton sleeves, and A-line skirts, (Fig. 13). Like the row of brothers, the Wooldridge sisters are arranged according to age, from north to south. They are identified by their married names: Narcissa Berryman, Susan Neely, and Minerva Nichols.

The original low cast and wrought iron fence surrounded the Wooldridge lot until the mid-twentieth century. During the 1950s, a more protective fence was erected by the Masonic Lodge in Mayfield. Recently, a chain link fence has been provided by the Lions Club of Mayfield.

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Wooldridge Monuments

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

published fashion designs were consulted by the sculptor.<sup>12</sup> The circa 1890 style of the sisters' attire is notably incongruous in the case of Susan Neely, who died about 1845.

Henry G. Wooldridge died in 1899, leaving instructions that he be entombed in his stone vault. Though it was supposed he was a wealthy man, Wooldridge's will shows that his assets and debts nearly balanced.<sup>13</sup> He made no direct mention of his statues, the unique results of his monument-building eccentricities, and the most complex, ambitious work ever executed by the stonemasons of Mayfield and Paducah.<sup>14</sup>

The Wooldridges themselves were a family whose lives and choices illustrate trends in the history of the Upland South. Wooldridge ancestors were emigrants from Virginia and North Carolina who had acquired their Tennessee land through Revolutionary War service. In the 1840's, this tiring land was gradually sold off as members of the family moved into Kentucky's Jackson Purchase, a region that has been historically and economically tied to Tennessee. Once there, some of the Wooldridges resumed farming while others became associated with the channels of trade between Western Kentucky and the Deep South. Especially after the completion of the north-south railways,<sup>15</sup> the Jackson Purchase became the supplier of livestock, processed foodstuffs, and agricultural equipment for other less diversified parts of the South. Henry Wooldridge participated in this trade network with his horse business. His brother, W. F. Wooldridge was involved as the proprietor of dry-goods stores, a commissary, and a hotel.

The Wooldridge Monuments are also exaggerated embodiments of Victorian ideas about commemoration, which encouraged elaborate funeral practices and cemetery ornamentation. In addition, late nineteenth-century mourning and burial practices emphasized the social hierarchies that were maintained, or at least desired during life.<sup>16</sup> Such notions are perceptible in the varied size and placement of the Wooldridge statues.

The significance of the Wooldridge Monuments as a local referent or landmark was established almost from the first. The earliest known article about the sculptures was published while Wooldridge was still alive and the group was still incomplete.<sup>17</sup> The attention that has continued to the present<sup>18</sup> has made their execution, unlike that of most cemetery sculpture, notably easy to document.

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DATE ENTERED	

Wooldridge Monuments

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

Finally, the Monuments are the subject of a substantial body of local folklore. Despite the relative accessibility of the facts, a variety of fantastic stories continues to surround the group. One tale maintains that the statue of Minnie is actually that of a childhood sweetheart whose tragic death, caused by a fall from a horse, induced Wooldridge to vow never to marry. Another version claims that Minnie was killed by a falling tree. When the statue of Fop was brought by railroad flatcar from Paducah, it is said that a local indigent "hitched a ride" on his back. Associated with Wooldridge's death is one story that his stone vault had to be cut and lengthened to accommodate his ornate casket. Yet another story claims that the miserly Wooldridge had large sums of money bagged and tied to his body when he died.<sup>19</sup> Such persistent legends are as important as the actual history of the Wooldridge Monuments, and in many ways, the group's most important function is to induce these imaginative stories, a purpose beyond Henry Wooldridge's elaborate intentions to memorialize himself and his kin.

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	AUG 11 1980
DATE ENTERED	

Wooldridge Monuments

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Wright W. Frost, The Descendants of Josiah and Keziah Nichols Wooldridge and Their Ancestors (Kingsport, Tennessee: by the author, 1973), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>The children are enumerated in the settlement of their father's affairs. Will Book 4, p. 452, Williamson County, Tennessee. The dates are provided by Frost, pp. 43-65.

<sup>3</sup>Of the three remaining Wooldridges, two, John and Susan, were dead. Susan Wooldridge Neely and her husband had been preparing to move to Kentucky. Both of them died around 1845, and their children were sent to Graves County to live among their aunts and uncles. Frost, p. 77. Alfred N. Wooldridge had immigrated alone to Alabama. Frost, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup>Atlas of Graves County, Kentucky (Philadelphia: D. J. Lake and Company, Publishers, 1880), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Ransey Joiner, Superintendent at Maplewood Cemetery, says that the lot Wooldridge bought is the size normally purchased for use by a number of family members. He takes this as evidence that Wooldridge intended to fill the lot with his peculiar monuments from the outset. Interview, Ransey Joiner, Jr., August 23, 1979.

<sup>6</sup>"Wooldridge Monuments: This Interesting Yard Full of Statues Was Begun, Developed, and Maintained by One Man Who Felt an Interest in the Subject," St. Louis Republic, November 7, 1897.

<sup>7</sup>Pryor and Radford had the only marble shop in Graves County. J. H. Battle, W. H. Perrin, G. C. Kniffin, Histories and Biographies of Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky (Louisville: F. A. Battey Publishing Company, 1885), p. 58.

<sup>8</sup>W. L. Beasley of Beasley Monument Company in Paducah has corroborated the long-standing tradition that the marble statue of Wooldridge was executed in Italy. Interview, W. L. Beasley, August 24, 1979.

<sup>9</sup>Henry Ward, "Sculptor of Strange Statues at Mayfield is a Paducah Man," Kentucky Progress Magazine, 4 (March, 1932), pp. 21, 47-48.

<sup>10</sup>"Minnie" Neely was the granddaughter of Susan Wooldridge Neely. "Maud" Reeds was the granddaughter of William F. Wooldridge. Both were still alive when their statues were carved. Frost, p. 100.

<sup>11</sup>Ward, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup>The costume analysis in this and the previous essay were generously provided by Grace Wells, Curator of Textiles, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia. Personal communication, February 6, 1980.



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Wooldridge Monuments

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

NOTES (continued)

<sup>13</sup>Will Book A, pp. 299-300, Graves County, Kentucky.

<sup>14</sup>Lydon had a photograph of his carving of Wooldridge and Fop for which he said he "wouldn't take \$100." Ward, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup>Mayfield had a rail line as early as 1858. D. Trabue Davis, The Story of Mayfield Through a Century (Paducah: Billings Printing Company, 1923).

<sup>16</sup>Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, "The Pattern of Late Nineteenth-Century Funerals," in Charles O. Jackson, editor, Passing: The Vision of Death in America (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 92.

<sup>17</sup>"Wooldridge Monuments," Republic, November 7, 1897.

<sup>18</sup>Most recently, photographs of the Wooldridge Monuments were included in an exhibit and associated catalog of Kentucky folk art. Ellsworth Taylor, Folk Art of Kentucky (Lexington: University of Kentucky Fine Arts Gallery, 1975).

<sup>19</sup>A representative sample of these stories are included in Nathan Yates, The World Famous Wooldridge Monuments: Strange Procession Which Never Moves (Mayfield: Messenger Publishing Company).

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Wooldridge Monuments

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

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Graves County, Kentucky. Will Book A, pp. 299-300.

Habenstein, Robert W., and Lamers, William M. "The Pattern of Late Nineteenth-Century Funerals," in Passing: The Vision of Death in America. Edited by Charles O. Jackson. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977.

Joiner, Jr., Ransey. Interview, August 23, 1979.

St. Louis Republic, November 7, 1897.

Taylor, Ellsworth. Folk Art of Kentucky. Lexington: University of Kentucky Fine Arts Gallery, 1975.

Ward, Henry. "Sculptor of Strange Statues of Mayfield is a Paducah Man." Kentucky Progress Magazine, 4 (March, 1932), 21, 47-48.

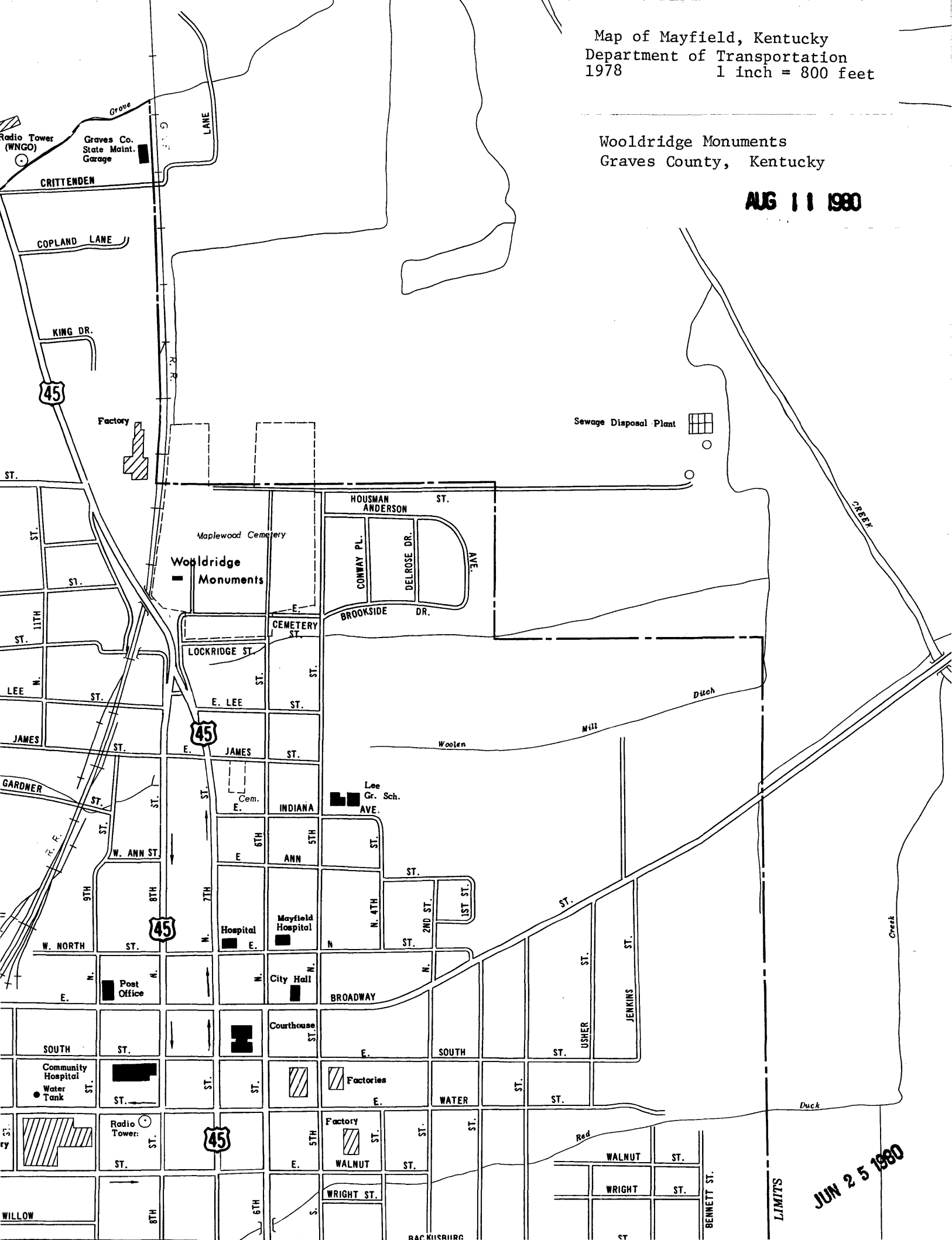
Wells, Grace. Personal communication, February 6, 1980.

Williamson County, Tennessee. Will Book 4, p. 452.

Yates, Nathan. The World Famous Wooldridge Monuments: Strange Procession Which Never Moves. Mayfield: Messenger Publishing Company.

Wooldridge Monuments  
Graves County, Kentucky

AUG 11 1980



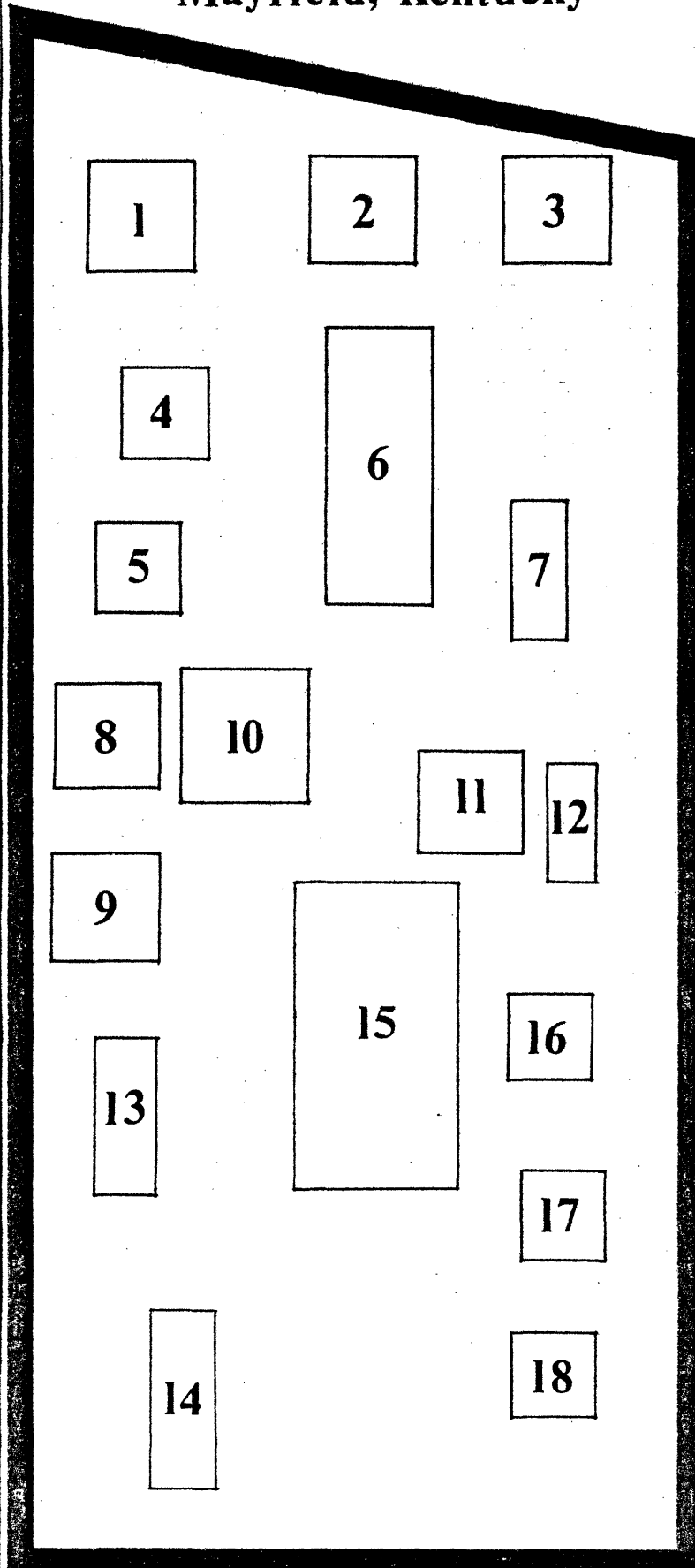
JUN 25 1980

# Wooldridge Monuments

## Mayfield, Kentucky

AUG 11 1980  
JUN 25 1980

1. Minerva Nichols, born 1820.
2. Susan Neely, born 1815.
3. Narcissa Berryman, born 1809.
4. Maud.
5. Minnie.
6. Fop.
7. hound statue (no inscription).
8. Keziah Wooldridge, born in Davidson County, Tennessee, July 6, 1790, died January 7, 1846, aged 56 years.
9. Josiah Wooldridge, born in Williamson County, Tennessee, died August 8, 1859, aged 35 years.
10. H. G. Wooldridge, born in Williamson County, Tennessee, January 29, 1822, died May 30, 1899.
11. H. G. Wooldridge, born January 29, 1822, died \_\_\_\_\_.
12. fox (no inscription).
13. hound (no inscription).
14. deer (no inscription).
15. vault (no inscription).
16. Alfred N. Wooldridge, born 1813, died in Alabama.
17. W. F. Wooldridge, born October 1, 1811, died in Graves County, Kentucky, November 1, 1879.
18. John H. Wooldridge, born in Williamson County, Tennessee, 1807, died in Murray [Maury] County, Tennessee.



1 5 10ft



Figure 2.  
Plan of the Wooldridge Plot  
1" = 5'  
Camille Wells 1979

Wooldridge Monuments  
Graves County, Kentucky