

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE MAY 1 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Common Burying Ground and Island Cemetery

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Farewell and Warner Streets

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
1: Ferdinand St. Germain

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

COUNTY:
Newport

CODE:
005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Cemetery

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Newport (See Continuation Sheet 1)

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall, Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Newport City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Map of Old Burial Ground

DATE OF SURVEY: 1903
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Newport Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
82 Touro Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Rhode Island	COUNTY: Newport	ENTRY NUMBER 1000	DATE
FOR NPS USE ONLY			

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery are located at the northern end of Farewell Street beyond the center of 18th and early 19th century Newport. Island Cemetery surrounds the Common Burying-Ground on the north and east. Beyond the two cemeteries, to the west of Farewell Street, are the Braman Cemetery, which is a private Jewish Cemetery, and the public North Ground Cemetery. To the north, across Van Zandt Avenue, there is a 20th century addition to the Island Cemetery and to the east, a mid-19th century Catholic cemetery. The crowded and seemingly haphazard layout of the Common Burying-Ground with its modest, low headstones stands in marked contrast to the park-like layout in the Island Cemetery with its individualistic and frequently grandiose monuments.

The Common Burying-Ground, founded in the mid 17th century, is divided into two sections: one for freemen and one for slaves. Two roads curve across the cemetery; the northern road serves as a boundary between the two areas. (See site plan) The freemen section to the south contains the greatest number of stones, many of them grouped in family plots, as well as the oldest stones in the Burying-Ground. In the northern slave section there are fewer stones with more space surrounding each.

The Common Burying-Ground contains three thousand memorial monuments; of these, eight hundred date prior to 1800. The earliest extant markers are from the 1660's. The most common late 17th and 18th century marker form is blue slate with a central broad crest and subordinate flanking crests. The John Ward head stone carved by William Mumford in 1698 exemplifies late 17th and early 18th century gravestone ornamentation. Within the central arched crest is a round-eyed death figure with wings. The lateral arches each contain a blank circle within a circle at the top of the crest and four circular leaf designs below. The inscription carved entirely in capitals beneath the central arch states:

"HERE LYETH INTERRED
 e
 Y BODY OF
 JOHN WARD
 AGED 79 YEARS
 DEPARTED THIS LIFE
 APRILL 1698"

Beginning in the mid 18th century a second monument form, the ledger stone, became stylish. The ledger stones in the Common Burying-Ground measure approximately three feet by six feet and rest horizontally on a three or four inch foundation. The Hon. Richard Ward monument carved by John Stevens II in 1767 typifies the ledger stones. Centered at the head of the stone is the Ward coat-of-arms which is a cross flory with a crudely drawn griffin's head for a crest. A geometric rosette is carved on each corner of the stone. The epitaph fills the remaining space. It discusses Governor and Mrs. Ward's virtues, their religious affiliations and his life as a public servant. The lettering is both upper and lower case.

See continuation sheet 1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1640 and 1836

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Newport's Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery present this nation's social and artistic development in microcosm. They contain not only the graves of our political, religious and commercial leaders but also sailors, shopkeepers, farmers and the slaves. As a resting place for everyman and anyman, the two cemeteries reflect Roger Williams concept of brotherhood.

The Common Burying-Ground was given to the city in 1640 by the Reverend John Clarke. Clarke was one of the founders of Aquidneck Island and served as its first medical doctor. Reverend Clarke organized the first Baptist Church in Newport and in 1663 he obtained the colony's charter from Charles II. After 1836 the Burying-Ground included a small cemetery to the southeast known as the Duck Factory Cemetery. The cemetery was established on the site of the post-revolutionary textile factory for its former employees by funds obtained from the sale and demolition of the factory.

By the early 19th century land for family plots was scarce in the Common Burying-Ground and there was a need for a new cemetery. In 1836 the town of Newport purchased a tract of land which was the beginning of the Island Cemetery. The following year, Henry Bull and William W. Freeborn were appointed to lay out the new cemetery. In 1848 the town conveyed the lands, their care and development to the Island Cemetery Company. Several additions have been made to the original purchase including Willow Cemetery, a small, private burial ground to the southeast.

Every town's cemetery contains the remains of its citizens and reflects its local history. The Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery are the resting place of people important in the history of the city, state and nation. Some of our early political leaders buried in the Common Burying-Ground are William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Henry Marchant, who first introduced the concept of separation of church and state at the Continental Congress. There are four colonial governors: Richard and Samuel Ward, also Samuel and John Cranston. In the Island Cemetery there are four 19th century governors buried: William C. Gibbs, William C. Cozzens, Charles C. VanZandt and George Peabody Wetmore. Two of our

See continuation sheet 3

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

An Historical Sketch of the Island Cemetery (Boston, Mass., 1872).
 Forbes, Harriette M.: Gravestones of Early New England (Boston, Mass., 1927) pp. 90-97.
 Ludwig, Allan I.: Graven Images (Middletown, Conn., 1966), pp. 325-331.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41 ° 29 ' 57.69"	71 ° 19 ' 3.42"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	41 ° 29 ' 58.35"	71 ° 18 ' 48.51"				
SE	41 ° 29 ' 39.89"	71 ° 18 ' 47.19"				
SW	41 ° 29 ' 39.23"	71 ° 19 ' 2.10"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 31

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Patricia Adams, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE: March 29, 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
 52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 44

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: <u>Frederick Williams</u></p> <p>Title: <u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u></p> <p>Date: <u>APR 12 1974</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>A. P. Martese</u> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date: <u>5/1/74</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>W. H. [Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>5.1.74</u></p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE	Rhode Island
COUNTY	Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
DAY 1	1974

(Number all entries)

4. Island Cemetery Company
Warner Street
Newport, Rhode Island

Code
44

7. Description cont.

During the late 18th century, the variety of ornamentation increased. Often the symbols were more personal and the decorative detail more stylistic. The stone signed by John Stevens III in 1779 for Pompey Brenton, a slave, is representative of this ornamental evolution. Within the central arch is the picture of a curly-headed, broad-nosed angel with fluffy clouds to either side. A baroque border surrounds the crest and epitaph. The calligraphy is upper and lower case.

The gravestones of the 19th and 20th centuries generally continue to be of the same modest proportions as the earlier stones. Marble and granite are used as well as slate. A notable exception to the modest profile of the Burying-Ground headstones is the tall, marble column erected in 1870 in memory of the Honorable Joseph Anthony and his wife Anne. The column rests on a large, rectangular base with an inscription on each facade. Above the corinthian capital is a statue of a man with a hand over his heart and the other resting on a cane.

In recent years the Common Burying-Ground has been overgrown with brush; neglect and vandalism has resulted in stones being overturned. However, the early stonecutters chose their materials carefully and worked the stone with such skill that their artistry remains in excellent condition. A program has begun to record, catalogue and research the cemetery stones.

The avenues of the Island Cemetery were laid out during the 1830's in a regular grid system in line with the Common Burying-Ground and Warner Street boundaries. Plots purchased later to the north and east were designed according to a grid system which parallels Van Zandt Avenue. The latter section includes four circles which adds to the scenic quality of the cemetery. (See aerial view) The cemetery is located on a hill overlooking the Common Burying Ground to the west with the Point section of Newport and the harbor in the distance.

There are three late Victorian buildings in the Island Cemetery. The cemetery office (1901-1902) on Warner Street was designed by Herbert Wilson. It is a one-and-a-half story brick structure with a broad arched entrance and a central clock tower. The temple form receiving vault was designed by Edwin Wilbar in 1894. The Richardsonian-Romanesque Belmont Memorial Chapel, 1886-1888, is the work of George C. Mason and Son. The Chapel is constructed of rock-faced brownstone. Its picturesque massing of tall dormers, entrance portico and belfry make it a focal point of the cemetery.

See continuation sheet 2

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 1 1974

(Number all entries)

7. Description cont.

Before the Belmont chapel stands a bronze statue of August Belmont by J. Q. A. Ward. Given to the city by Belmont's son Perry, it formerly stood in Eisenhower Park. The circular Belmont lot includes an exedra and sarcophagus executed in marble. This 1891 Beaux-Arts monument is the work of Richard Morris Hunt. A second sarcophagus stands in the center of the lot and is the tomb of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, August Belmont's father-in-law. Other family monuments surround it.

Several family lots are noteworthy for the landscape architecture that defines the area as a private sanctuary. A squarely trimmed privet hedge borders the turn of the century Wetmore family lot and divides it in half. Cypress trees mark the entrance. The back edge of the east section is lined with evergreens. In front of the trees is a large tablet with the inscription "Wetmore." The gravesites are defined by a bed of pachysandra and small headstones. The west half of the lot contains a ledger on a high base marking the grave of Anne Derby Rogers Wetmore Sherman, the wife of William Watts Sherman. Granite curbing surrounds the entire lot. The setting is serene and simple.

There are many forms of monuments in the Island Cemetery. Besides the traditional segmental arch stone there are elaborate sarcophagi, religious statues, crosses and obelisks. The most prominent obelisk is the Oliver Hazard Perry monument erected by the city of Newport in 1826. The tall, slender monument is located on top of an artificial mound. Perry's family is buried on the slope around him. An iron fence surrounds the plot which borders the Common Burying-Ground. One of the largest obelisks in the cemetery was built in memory of Major General Isaac Incalls who was killed "while rallying his command" during the Civil War. The 1862 obelisk is tall and unusually broad.

Among the many sculptural monuments, the St. Gaudens angel executed in granite over the 1884 grave of Alfred Smith is the most outstanding. The angel stands holding a tablet inscribed with a Biblical verse above its head. The wings extend upward and curl along the edge of the tablet. The angel's robes fall in heavy folds to its feet. The grave extends forward and a large scallop shell rises from the base.

The 20th century portion of the cemetery is concentrated at the northern end behind the Belmont Chapel. The stones here are more uniform in size and spacing than anywhere else in either cemetery. The manner in which the cemetery has been developed and maintained perpetuates the park-like atmosphere intended by the 19th century designers.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 3

STATE		Rhode Island
COUNTY		Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
	MAY 1	1976

(Number all entries)

8. Significance cont.

nation's distinguished military leaders are buried here. They are Oliver Hazard Perry and his brother, Commodore Matthew C. Perry. The Island Cemetery is also the burial place of Richard Morris Hunt, one of the outstanding architects of the Victorian period.

The Burying-Ground is also distinguished for the excellence of its stonework. The stonecutters William Mumford, John Stevens I, II, and III and John Bull are among the first American sculptors; their works are considered masterpieces of colonial art. The craft and art of stonecutting was introduced to Newport during the late 17th century by William Mumford, a Boston stonecutter.

By 1705 Newport had a stonecutter of its own, John Stevens, the founder of a large family of craftsmen. Mumford's influence on John Stevens I is evident in the skull with hanging teeth design and later the tall wings on many of the stones attributed to him. His son, John Stevens II, developed designs of his own. He frequently carved a small cherub with wings. His work is outstanding for its masterful carving and calligraphy. The combination of upper and lower case lettering first appears in the Common Burying-Ground on the stones carved by John Stevens II. The third John Stevens' work is characterized by a bold, provincial, baroque style. According to Allan Ludwig, a noted scholar of New England gravestones, John Stevens III's stone-clad figures on the border panels of the Captain Nathaniel Waldron stone, 1769, are the "earliest in New England to bear the unmistakable imprint of the neoclassical style." The Stevens stonecutting shop was run by descendants of the Stevens family until the early 20th century. John Howard Benson purchased the shop and today his son carries on the tradition. It is one of the oldest continuous businesses in the country.

The work of John Bull, a contemporary of John Stevens II, is similar to the Stevens work but is distinguishable by its spatial quality and figures of greater artistic sensitivity. The stone cut by Bull for Charles Bardin in 1773 contains the image of a god-like figure rising over turbulent waters. Ludwig states that this is the "only extant representation of God in New England." The gravestone art of the Common Burying-Ground is not only beautiful but it is also extremely important historically to enable study of the entire configuration of 17th and 18th century stonecarving.

The Common Burying-Ground and the Island Cemetery, when considered together, reflect the history of Newport and the part it has played in our state and nation's history for three centuries. As early as the mid 19th century, Newporters recognized their cemeteries as historic sites. In 1840 the town voted to spend \$500 of the Island Cemetery profits for the care of the Burying-Ground. Two years later undertakers were first appointed to be responsible for the graves in the old cemetery.

See continuation sheet 4

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

(Continuation Sheet) 4

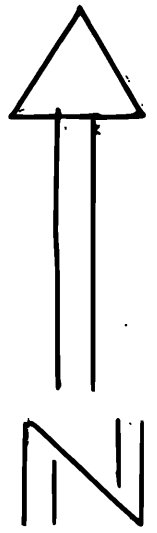
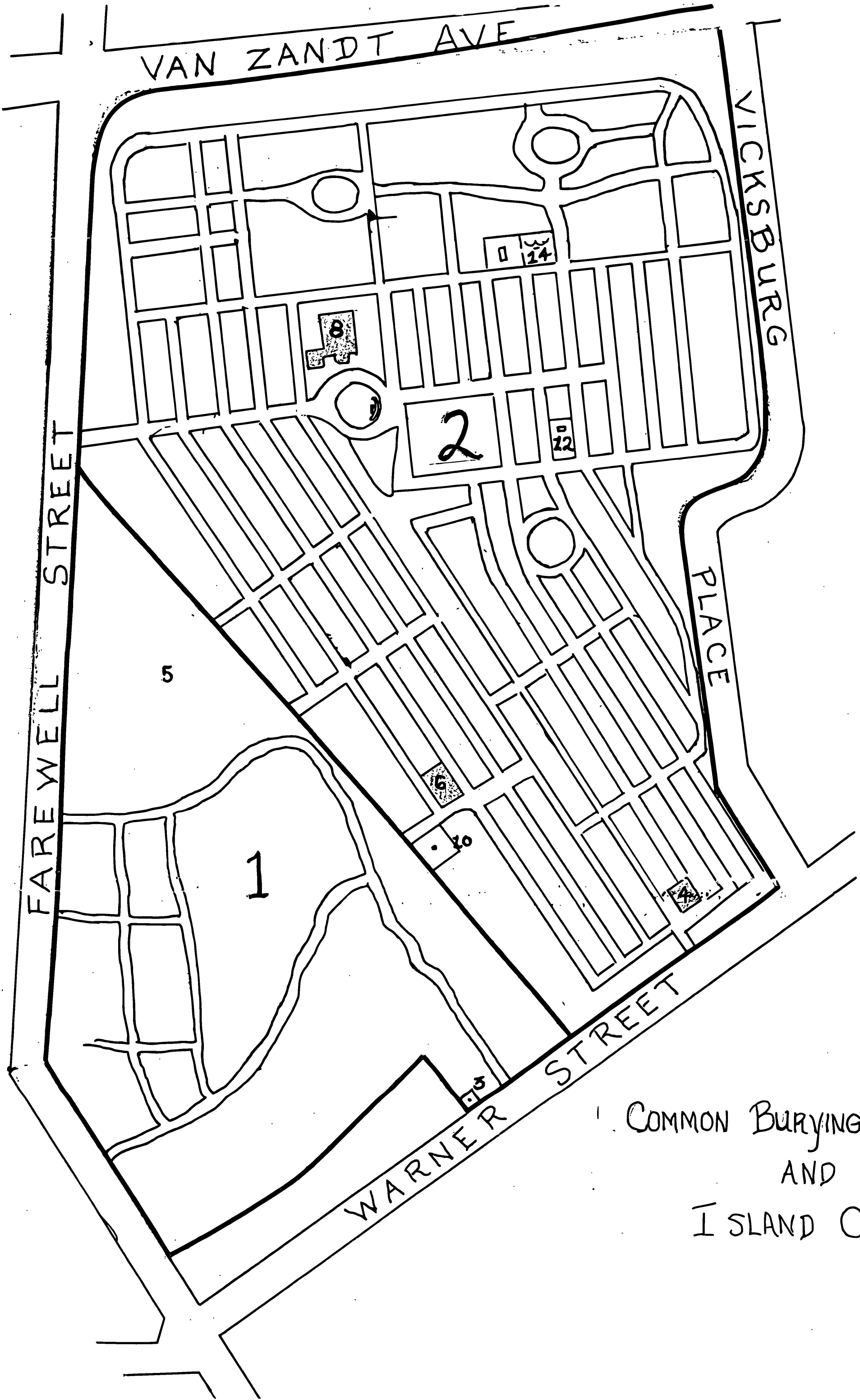
STATE		Rhode Island
COUNTY		Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
	MAY 1 1974	

(Number all entries) 8. Significance cont.

Benches were placed on the grounds of the Island Cemetery for the many who visited frequently. The early stones are historically significant as documents from a period with relatively little extant written material. The cemeteries can expand peoples' knowledge in many fields: sociology, philosophy, genealogy and art.

Site Plan Identification:

1. Common Burying-Ground ↵
3. Joseph Anthony Monument, 1870
5. Slave section of the Common Burying-Ground ↵
2. Island Cemetery ↵
4. Cemetery Office, 1901-1902
6. Receiving Vault, 1894
8. Belmont Memorial Chapel, 1886-1888
10. Oliver Hazard Perry Monument, 1826
12. St. Gaudens Angel, 1884
14. Wetmore Family Plot ↵



COMMON BURYING-GROUND
AND
ISLAND CEMETERY

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Rhode Island	
COUNTY	
Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 1 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME		
COMMON: Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery		
AND/OR HISTORIC:		
2. LOCATION		
STREET AND NUMBER: Farewell and Warner Streets		
CITY OR TOWN: Newport		
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Newport
3. MAP REFERENCE		
SOURCE: Patricia Adams, Research Assistant, R.I. Historical Preservation Commission		
SCALE: not to scale		
DATE: March, 1974		
4. REQUIREMENTS		
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS		
1. Property boundaries where required.		
2. North arrow.		
3. Latitude and longitude reference.		

