

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instruction in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
other names/site number Sharon Presbyterian Church and Cemetery

## 2. Location

street & number County Road J40 [ ] not for publication  
city, town Lee [X] vicinity Farmington  
state Iowa code IA county Lee code 111 zip code 52626

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>14</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

## 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 sets forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheets.

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official  
State Historical Society of Iowa

11/29/90  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

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.

[ ] See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Removed from National Register.

Other, (explain):

Entered in the  
National Register

[Signature]

1/11/91

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Designed Historic Landscape

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete blockwalls clapboard, vinyl & asbestos siding

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roof asphalt shinglesother granite, iron, stone, tile, concrete,plant material

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SITE**

The Sharon Presbyterian Church and Cemetery are located in a rural area in the western part of Lee County, Iowa. The Mississippi River bounds Lee County on the east and the Des Moines River bounds the county on the south. These boundaries are also form Iowa's southeast boundaries with Illinois and Missouri.

The property is situated in Harrison Township, about three miles east of the Van Buren County line and on Lee County Road J40. This blacktop highway runs along the township line between Cedar and Harrison Townships. A county gravel road divides the site, north to south, into two parts. The closest municipal incorporations, Bonaparte and Farmington (Van Buren County) Iowa, are about eight and nine miles to the south and southwest respectively. Donnellson (Lee County) Iowa is 11 miles to the southeast.

Located between the valley of the Des Moines River and the upland prairie, the land surrounding the historic district is generally rolling. It is extensively farmed. Sugar Creek and Little Sugar Creek provide drainage to the immediate area. The land on which the cemetery is situated gently slopes to the south. A swale runs north to south within the cemetery about midway between its east and west boundaries.

The Sharon Cemetery Historic District comprises approximately 9.5 acres. It consists of two areas, one enclosed within a fence and another outside the fence. The fenced area comprises approximately eight acres and forms the cemetery and church yard proper. The cemetery is made up of two sections: the old section dates from the 1860s and comprises 4-acres. The new section of the cemetery dates from 1899 and comprises 4 additional acres. The church sanctuary and a storage shed are located within the old cemetery area. The fence surrounds all eight acres so that they appear to be one unit from the outside. The 1.5 acre unfenced area is situated to the east and across the gravel road mentioned above. This is the service area of the historic district and the Manse and the Sexton's House are located here.

[X] See continuation sheet

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally       statewide       locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE/Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1899-1903; 1918

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person    N/A

Architect/Builder

O. C. SIMONDS, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

### SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sharon Cemetery Historic District is an unusual example of late Nineteenth Century rural cemetery design because it was laid out by a landscape architect and followed the precepts of the naturalistic school of cemetery design, a type more often found in urban areas. Its designer, O. C. Simonds, had a national reputation as a landscape architect and was a major figure in cemetery design. To date, Sharon Cemetery is the only known example of his funerary work identified in Iowa.

Constructed from Simonds' design, the Sharon Cemetery Historic District is an outstanding local example in Lee County, Iowa of a designed historic landscape. Significant under Criterion C, the historic district is directly associated with the productive career of Simonds, landscape architect of Chicago, Illinois. Simonds played an important early role in the development of landscape architecture as a discipline in the United States and is particularly remembered for cemetery design. The historic district has additional significance because plans signed by Simonds remain extant as documentation of his design at Sharon.

The Sharon Presbyterian Church established this cemetery in 1863. Initially laid out on a grid system, the cemetery's acreage was doubled in 1898 through a large bequest from George Lincoln Seeley. Simonds was also employed at this time to redesign the site. His plan incorporated the old cemetery *in situ* and surrounded it with a more naturalistic setting. His plan strongly separated the entire cemetery from the surrounding countryside by means of a coping and fence. These components strongly define visually the cemetery. Inside the boundaries, Simonds radically broke with the grid system by laying out curving driveways and a pedestrian walk, but he respected the grid design within the old cemetery by laying out pedestrian walks here on points of the compass. Other notable components of Simonds' design within the cemetery proper include pedestrian and vehicular entry-gates, a drainage system for the cemetery, and manipulation of the site to make use of its topographic features. Simonds' plan reserved a service area for the caretaker's residence, water systems, and the Manse. The service area is outside the bounds of the cemetery proper but within the boundaries of the historic district.

[X] See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

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 Report # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
 Specify repository:  
Sharon Presbyterian Church

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 9.5 acres

UTM References

A	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning 694 feet west of the northeast corner of Section 4 of Township 68 North of Range 7 West, thence south 585 feet, thence east 1,014 feet, thence north 585 feet, thence west to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of this nomination contain all the land historically associated with the resource as well as all extant buildings, structures, and objects historically associated with it. The boundaries exclude a modern machine shed located behind the Sexton's House. Many acres of farmland owned by the church and contiguous to the historic district are also excluded. Some of this farmland is historically associated with the cemetery grounds because of its bequest to the parish in 1897. The income from farming this land helps underwrite the costs of the grounds' maintenance, but this was deemed insufficient reason for its inclusion in the National Register boundary.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title W. C. Page, Public Historian; Geraldine Watkins & Ruby M. Brewer, Researchers  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 10, 1989  
street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue telephone 515/243-5740  
city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50313

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**CEMETERY**

The cemetery consists of two parts. The old cemetery which comprises 4 acres and the new cemetery which also comprises 4 acres. The additional 1.5 acres in the historic district comprise the service area to the east of the cemetery. The cemetery is located at the southwest corner of the two roads mentioned above. A coping and galvanized fence surround the entire cemetery. The foundation of this element consists of an underground stonewall wall 18" wide and 3-1/2' deep laid in cement. On this foundation is a coping of Barre granite in uniform 6' lengths, 18" high by 16" thick. Coping is topped by a galvanized iron fence specially made to the cemetery's order. The posts of this fence are leaded into the granite and are 6" deep. Each corner of the cemetery has granite posts, all in one piece and set 4' in the ground on concrete foundations.

The main entry-gate is at the northeast corner of the cemetery. This gate is an impressive element of the site and its height arrests the eye of passing motorists. The gate is constructed at a 135 degree angle to the coping and fence which further accentuates it. The gate consists of four stone columns 22" square and standing 10' above grade. One history of the cemetery estimated the weight of these columns at 6 tons each. Each column is capped with a stone capital featuring a ball at the top. A curbing of cut Bedford stone stands in front of the main-entry gate and stretches partway to the highway. This curb is 2' wide and 6" thick. It has settled into the ground over the years so that it remains only partially visible.

The interior driveways are 15' wide. They originally were described as "made of...crushed stone, on a base of larger stone, the whole ten inches deep with a top dressing of stone dust." Although this surface has considerably settled over the years and additional gravel has been applied at intervals, the surface remains of the same material as constructed.

The interior driveways consist of 2-elements, a entry-drive about 335' long and a curvilinear loop driveway about 1,105' long. One enters through the main entry-gate at the northeast of the cemetery. The entry-drive curves 45-degrees within 280' as it runs to the south. At about 335' from the main entry-gate, the drive forks into the curvilinear loop. This loop curves 45-degrees to the west, proceeds to make another gentle 45-degree curve to the north, runs about 160' on a north-south axis and then makes a backward "S" before rejoining the entry-drive at the point mentioned above. The entry-drive abuts the old cemetery which is situated to the west and the loop driveway is situated so that the old cemetery is surrounded by the new driveway system.

Pedestrian walks within the cemetery are constructed of cut stone 4' wide and 5" inches thick. Within the old cemetery, the walks are laid out to points of the compass. One north-south walk acts as an axis by running about 195' the length of the old cemetery. There are two secondary walks in the old cemetery, each running at right angles to the axis, one running to the west and the other to the east. The western walk gives access to the Seeley family plots. In the new cemetery there is a pedestrian walk which runs between the east pedestrian entrance and the entry-drive, a distance about 110'. This walk is curvilinear and radically breaks with the grid layout of the old cemetery.

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The cemetery features a water fountain. This feature is located at the junction of the entry-drive and the loop driveway. The fountain consists of a galvanized iron basin and is 2' deep and 16' in diameter. The basis is of "boiler iron" (as described in the circa 1903 history) and 5/8" thick. A stone coping runs around the top of the basin. The basin is also now painted blue. The fountain itself consists of a galvanized cast iron pedestal with a cast iron statuette featuring sea motifs. These elements are now painted white.

Two pedestrian entrances to the cemetery are provided, one on the north side and one on the east side. The former also serves the front door to the sanctuary. These entrance gates are fashioned of galvanized iron and swing on iron pivots fastened to Barre granite posts.

A "Planting Plan," prepared by O. C. Simonds, survives as documentation of his landscape architecture. The extent to which Simonds' plantings were implemented is unclear. Few if any plantings indicated in this 1899 plan remain extant in the cemetery today. The most impressive elements of great age, the elm trees which predated Simonds' plan and are shown on it, fell to Dutch Elm Disease in the 1960s. They stood mostly on the north boundary of the cemetery. Some cedar trees remain in the old cemetery and also predate Simonds. A stand of oak trees lines the loop driveway in the west portion of the new cemetery. This stand forms a corridor which emphasizes the curvilinear design of the drive in this area. A plan for this corridor is not indicated on Simonds' plan.

Drainage is provided to the cemetery by a system of tile drainage pipes. Installed contemporary with the 1899-construction, this system has no surviving plan to indicate its design or layout. Its presence is attested to by oral informants and this description in the circa 1903 history of the cemetery: "the grounds are thoroughly under-drained."

The grave markers in the cemetery date from the 1860s through the 1980s. They comprise a wide range of styles, shapes, colors, and sizes. Materials consist of stone in a variety of types and of cast iron. Many monuments in the old part of the cemetery have a feeling of verticality to them while those in the new part generally convey a more massive feeling. In the new cemetery, monuments are placed in north-south rows, the rows being divided by about 20 feet. In the old cemetery, there is less regularity of placement. Sharon Cemetery includes the grave marker of an American Revolutionary War soldier who died in Lee County, Iowa, and was reburied at Sharon. This marker was erected in 1907 by an act of the Iowa legislature.

The sanctuary is a 1-story, frame building, rectangular in shape with narrow side as facade. It was constructed in 1885 and stands in the 4 acres of the old cemetery. The facade faces north. Roof is facade-gabled. Foundation is poured concrete constructed in 1977. South elevation has a shallow albeit wide projection from the main block of the sanctuary. This provides additional interior space for the nave. There is an entry wing, constructed in 1978, which extends full width of the facade. Roof of this wing is also facade-gabled and somewhat lower than that of main roof. Door frame to new entrance is original to the 1885 building. It was removed and replaced in the same central position in the new entryway as in the original. Door frame features a gable with anchor and vined millwork over an arched stained glass window. New entry steps replaced the older steps at the time of the new entryway's construction. Another entryway at southwest corner of main block provides alternate entrance to the sanctuary. There is a handicap ramp to this entrance, built in 1978. A small wing

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extends beyond the main block of the church and provides an entrance to the basement. This was constructed in 1977. White vinyl siding now covers the sanctuary.

In 1923 extensive improvements were undertaken in preparation for the Golden Anniversary of the parish's establishment. A basement was constructed under the sanctuary at a cost exceeding \$4,400, the auditorium was replastered, redecorated, and the entire building was rededicated. In 1930 a rostrum was constructed at the front of the auditorium, and the church was repainted. In 1935 prior to the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the present sanctuary, the auditorium was repainted. In 1950-1951 improvements were undertaken in the sanctuary in preparation for the congregation's celebration of its centennial. These improvements included installation of stained glass windows in 1951, donated as memorials. In early 1951, the sanctuary and basement received new ceilings and were completely repainted. In honor of the centennial, the Iowa Presbytery met at Sharon in April 1951 for their Stated Spring Meeting.

The Toilet Rooms and Lavatory (an historic name) were constructed as men's and women's toilets but this building has since been converted to store maintenance equipment. It is a 1-story, frame rectangle with side-gabled roof. East elevation has two doorways. Gable ends feature millworked tracery. This building was constructed somewhat after the Sexton's House but is probably contemporary with it about 1902-1903. A circa 1901 newspaper account states that "closets and toilet rooms [will be] built."

#### SERVICE AREA

The service area comprises 1.5 acres in the historic district, is located outside the fencing, and features elements planned by Simonds. County J40 runs adjacent to this area and both sides of this road feature stone curbs. The road continues south to the southern boundary of the historic district.

There is a row of hitching posts located on the east side of the county gravel road. This feature consists of rectangular stone posts with holes in them through which chain links run. These hitching posts begin about 135' feet south of the center of Lee County J40 and run about south to the southern boundary line of the historic district. There are two stone gate posts that mark a former entry-way to the water tower. The hitching posts south of this entry-way are without chain links. A circa 1903 brochure about the cemetery says this: "A line of hitching posts eight inches square and six feet long, through which extends a galvanized chain, stretches along two sides of the cemetery. The stone for these was also furnished by the well known Bedford quarries."

There are two buildings located in the service area. These buildings are the Sexton's House and the Manse with its attached garage.

The Sexton's House, constructed about 1899, is a 1-1/2 story, frame building. Shape is rectangular, long-side as facade, with a wing at the rear. Roof is side-gabled. A second gable covers the wing and ties into main roof at right angles. Foundation is stone. There is a facade porch having a hipped roof and a center gable. South elevation features a bay window on first floor and a side porch now enclosed but probably open originally. Steel siding now covers the house. Gable ends of main

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block feature millworked tracery. A newspaper account, contemporary with this building's construction, described it as "a modern cottage of six rooms."

A non-extant summer kitchen stood near the southeast corner of the Sexton's House. Historic photographs survive and suggest its construction was probably contemporaneous with the house itself. A smoke house was also located nearby and was moved in the early 1980s to the Joe Haffner farm. A barn associated with the Sexton's House remained extant at least into the late 1970s when it was razed.

The Sexton's House is situated so that an entrance to the cemetery is directly across the road to the west.

The Manse, constructed in 1917-1918, is 2-story, frame building. Shape is square with a hipped roof and dormer window with hipped roof on facade. Foundation is concrete block parged with cement. There is a full length, 1-story front porch with hipped roof on facade. Late in 1952, the Manse received some modernization at which time the garage might have been constructed. The garage is attached to the southeast corner of the Manse. Built in the early 1970s, the garage is a 1-story, frame rectangle covered by a hipped roof.

A Delco light plant which provided service to the Manse, the Sexton's House, and reportedly the sanctuary. The plant was located in the basement of the Manse and it was larger than most farmstead systems. There were poles for the power lines which ran across the road and to the sanctuary. In

1935 a new machine and batteries were purchased. The Rural Electric Cooperative replaced this system in the late 1940s.

The Manse is situated so that access to the main entryway to the cemetery and the front entrance to the sanctuary are immediately to the west across the gravel road.



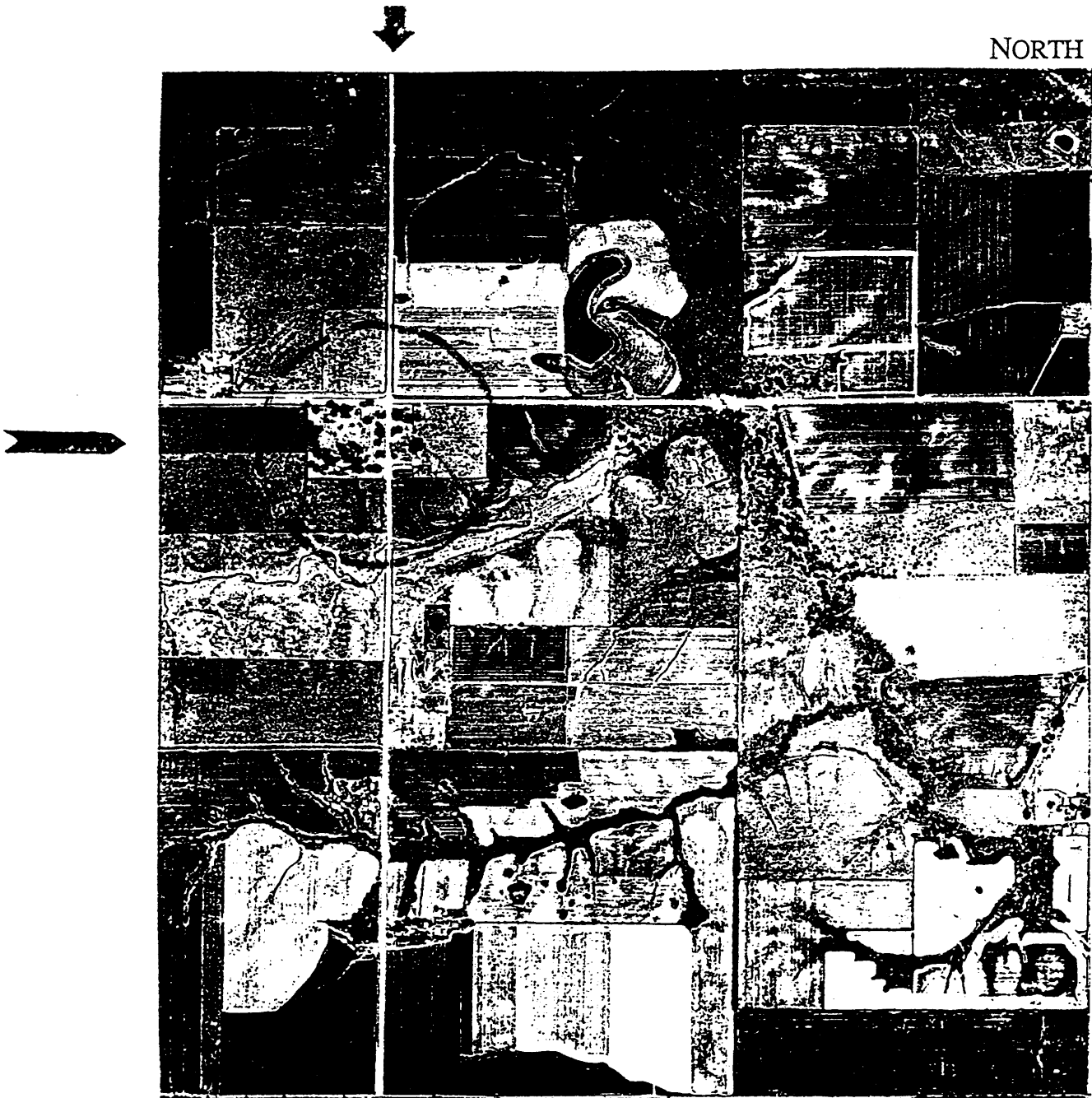
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4-3/8"=5280'

Aerial Photograph showing Sharon Historic District circled.

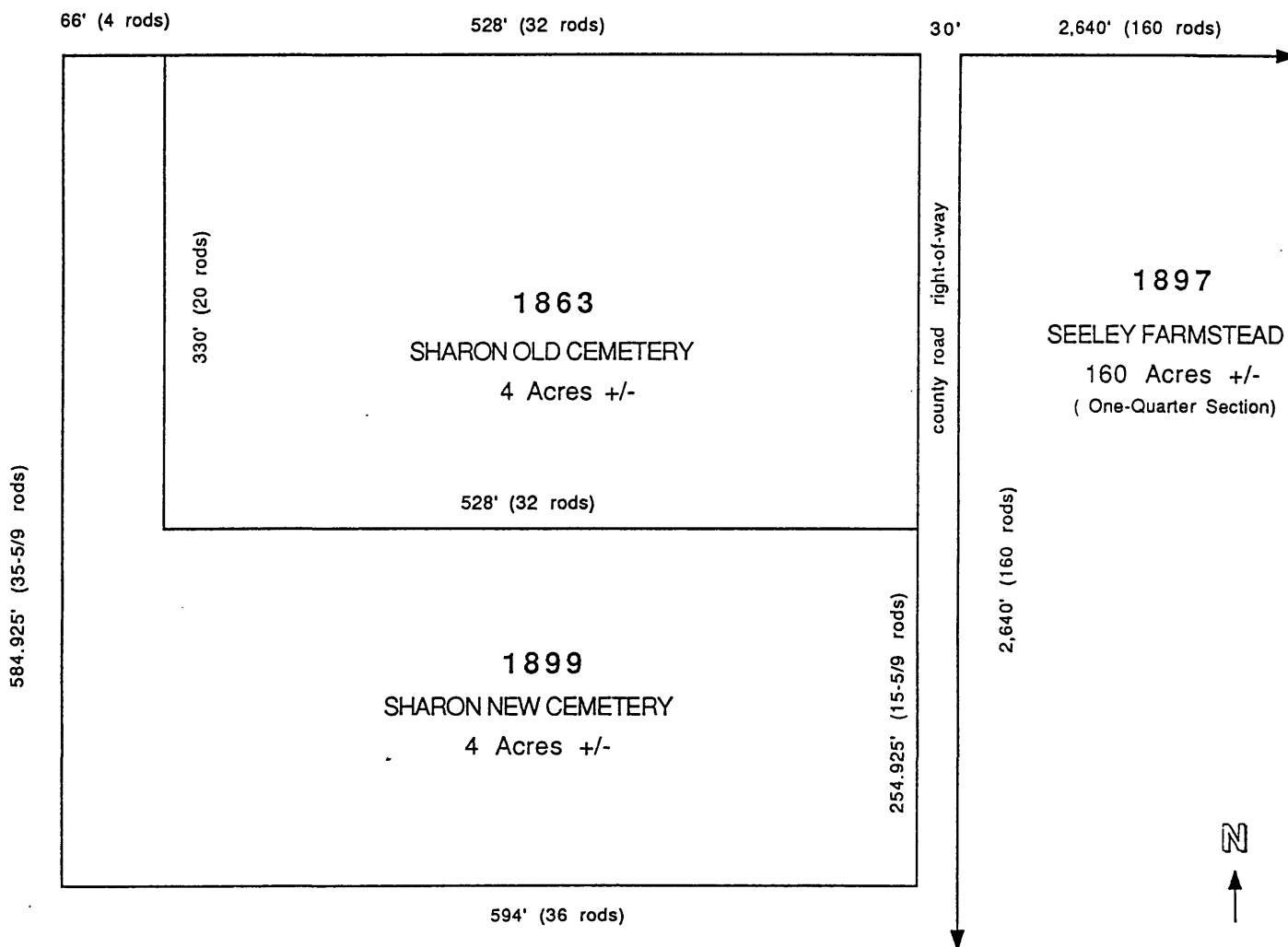
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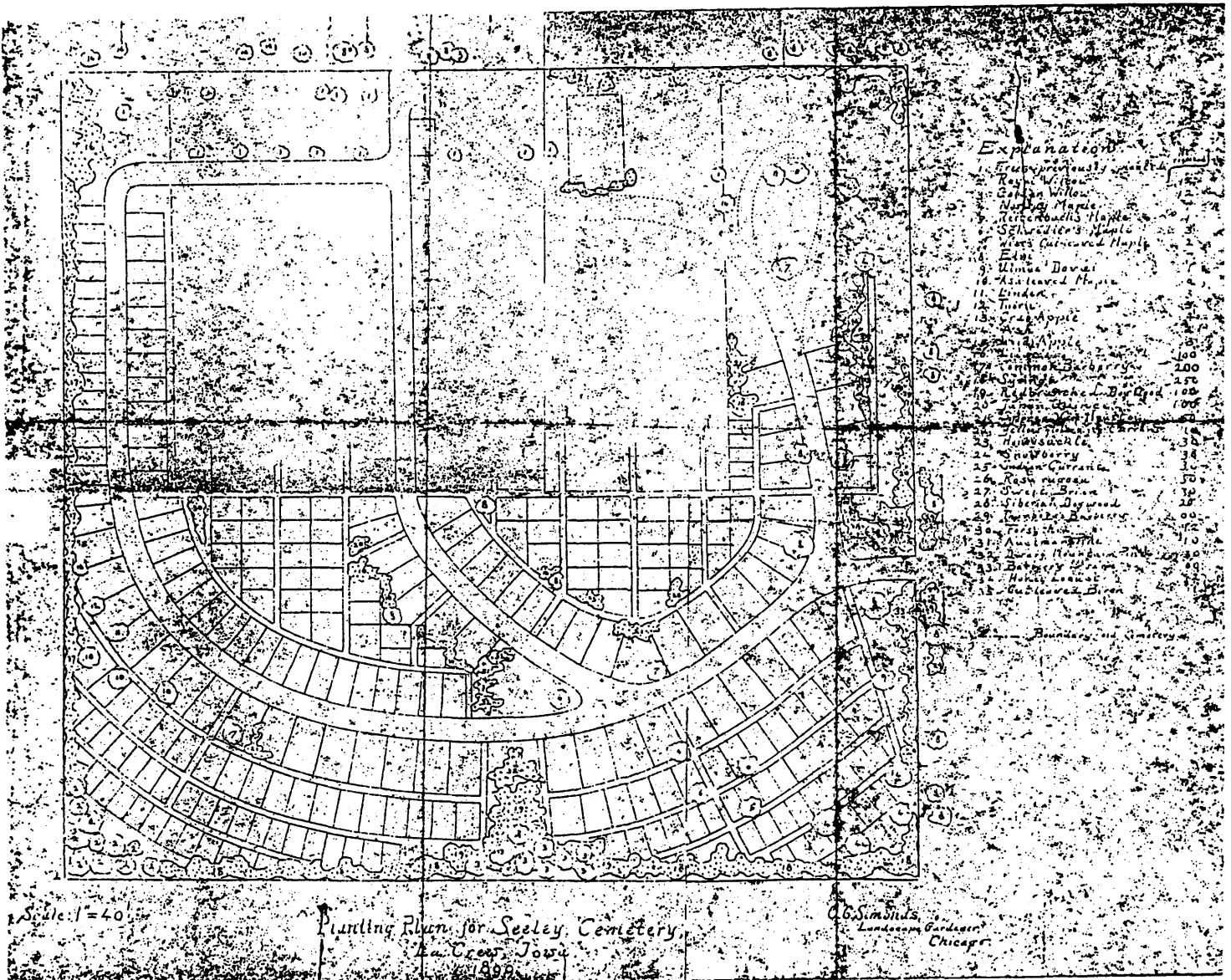
## Chronology of Property Acquisition.

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"PLANTING PLAN FOR SEELEY [sic] CEMETERY, LA CREWE, IOWA, 1899"

"O. C. SIMONDS, LANDSCAPE GARDENER, CHICAGO"

REDUCED PHOTOCOPY

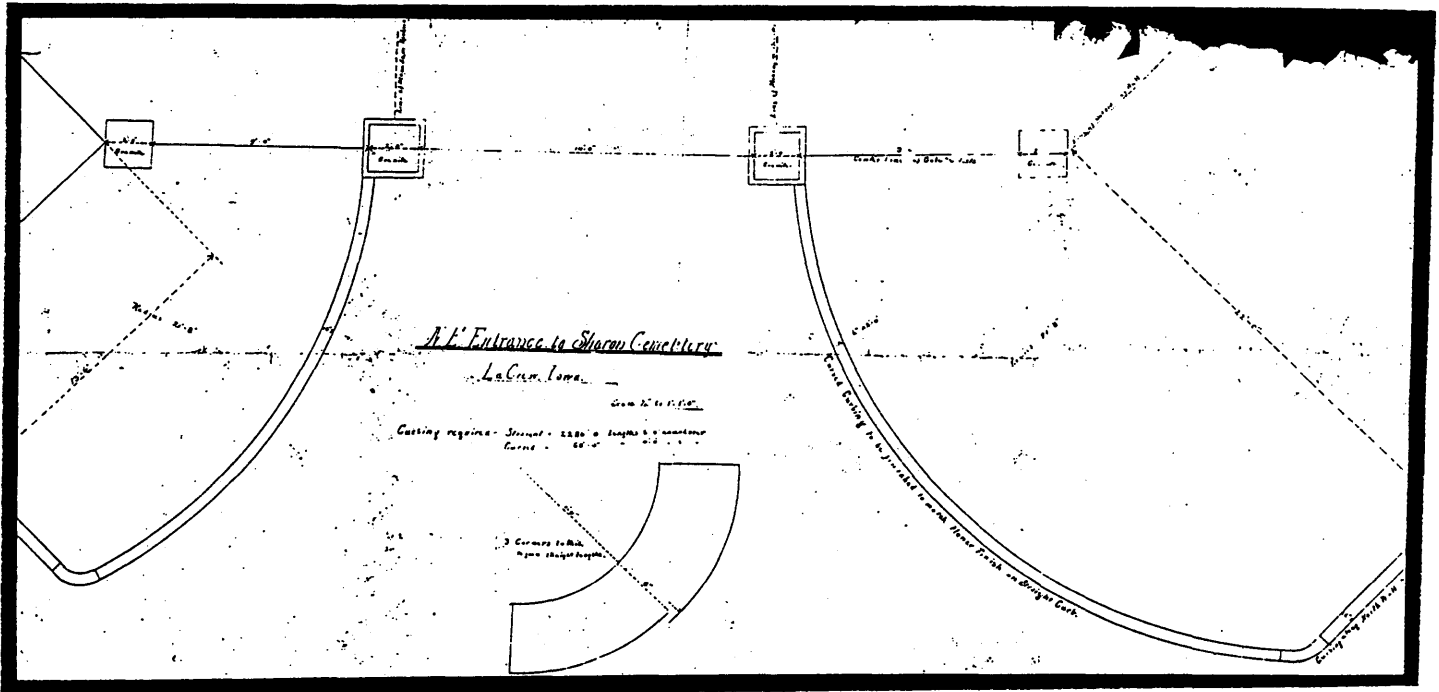
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**"N. E. ENTRANCE TO SHARON CEMETERY"  
SIMONDS' CONSTRUCTION DRAWING.  
ORIGINAL MEASURES 13.5" X 29"**

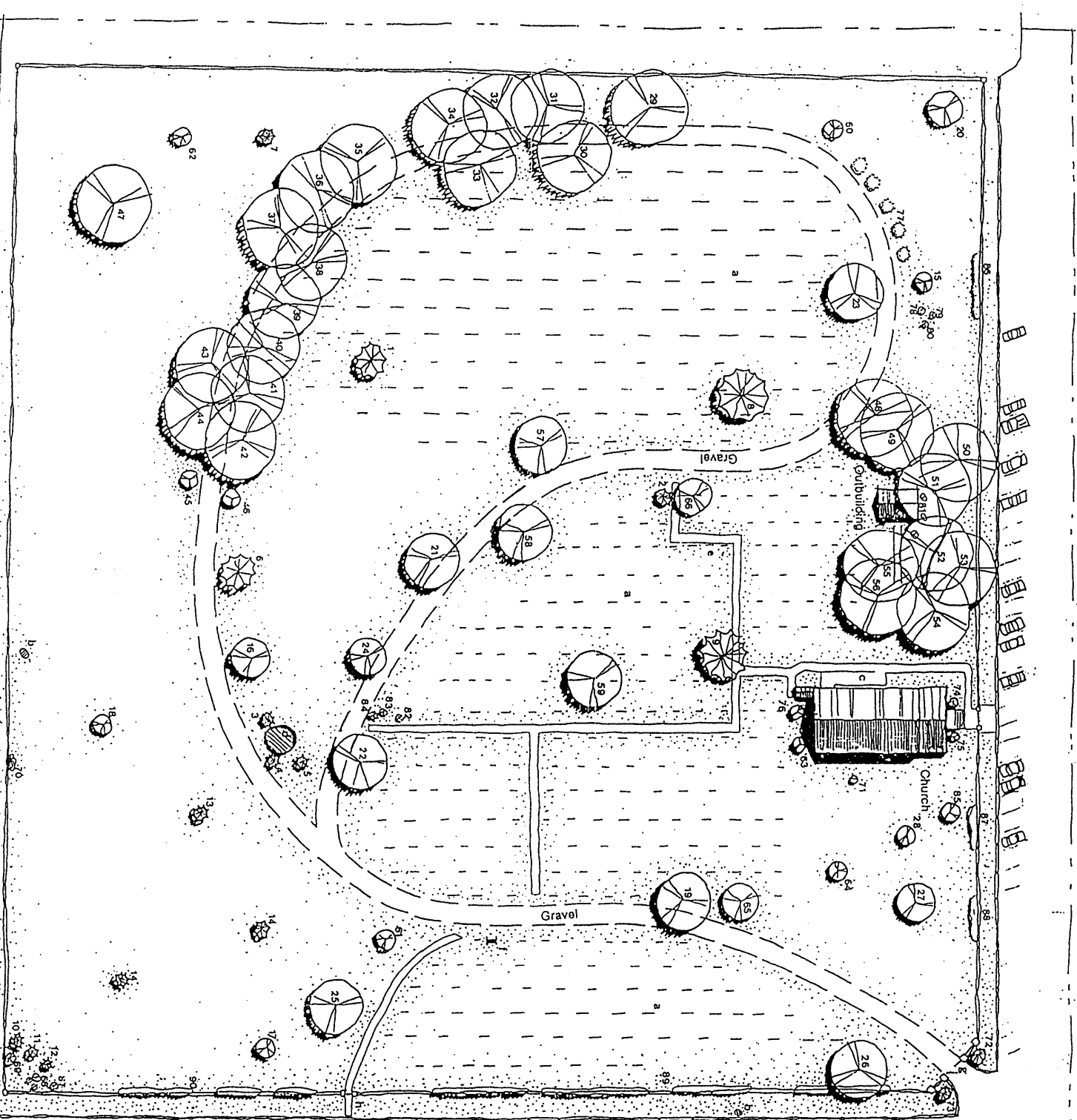
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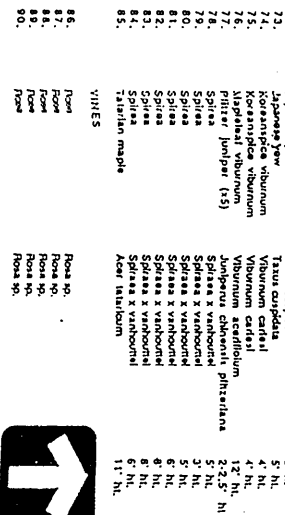
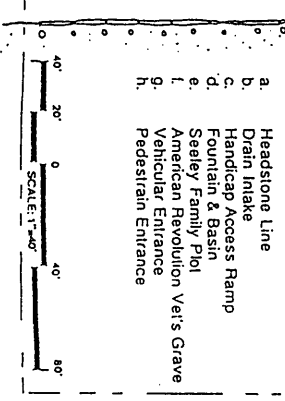
CEN-259-1116

County Highway J40



PLANT MATERIAL LIST

KEY	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE
1.	EVERGREEN TREES		
2.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	16' cal.
3.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	9' cal.
4.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
5.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
6.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
7.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
8.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
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10.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
11.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
12.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
13.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
14.	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	Thuja occidentalis, 'pyramidal'	4' cal.
15.	OVERSTORY TREES		
16.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	5' cal.
17.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
18.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
19.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
20.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
21.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
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25.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
26.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
27.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
28.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
29.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
30.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
31.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
32.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
33.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
34.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
35.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
36.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
37.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
38.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
39.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
40.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
41.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
42.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
43.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
44.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
45.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
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47.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
48.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
49.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
50.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
51.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
52.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
53.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
54.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
55.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
56.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
57.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
58.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
59.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
60.	Thuja occidentalis	Thuja occidentalis	1' cal.
61.	UNDERSTORY TREES		
62.	European mountain ash	Sorbus aucuparia	3' cal.
63.	Flowering crabapple	Malus sp.	4' cal.
64.	Flowering crabapple	Malus sp.	1' cal.
65.	Flowering crabapple	Malus sp.	10' cal.
66.	Flowering crabapple	Malus sp.	15' cal.
67.	SHRUBS		
68.	Barberry	Barberry	3' ht.
69.	Barberry (s3)	Barberry	3' ht.
70.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
71.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
72.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
73.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
74.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
75.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
76.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
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85.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
86.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
87.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
88.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
89.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.
90.	Barberry	Barberry	4' ht.



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PREPARED BY:  
 Arthur Tinkelenberg  
 Delineator

**W.C. PAGE**  
 PUBLIC HISTORIAN  
 110 SW 5th Street Des Moines, Iowa 50309 515/280-8026

PROPERTY:  
 Current Plant Material

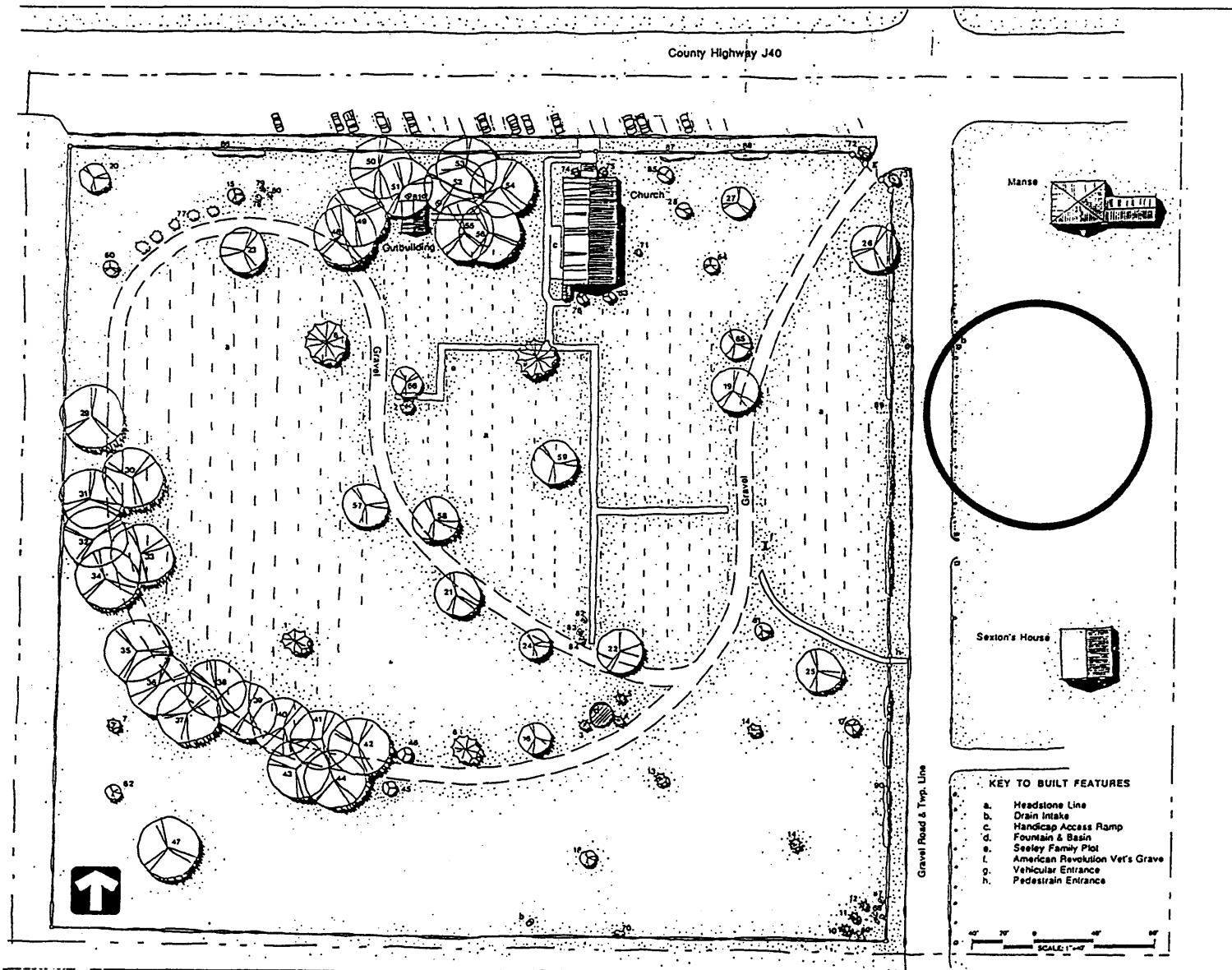
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AREAS OF POTENTIAL HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN CIRCLE.

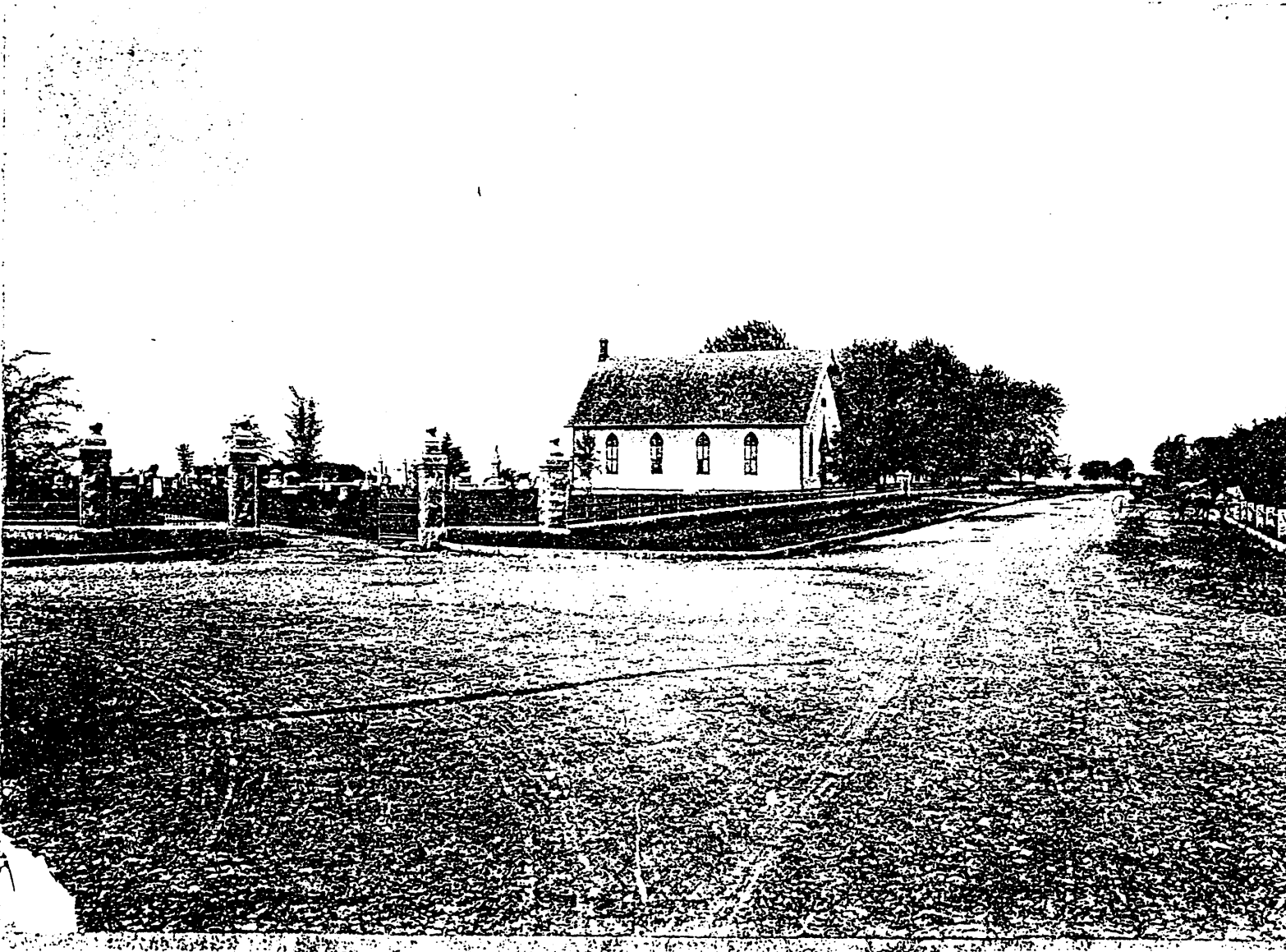
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**Main Entry-gate.  
Photograph Circa 1903.  
Looking southwest showing non-extant curbs & line of hitching  
posts north of road.**

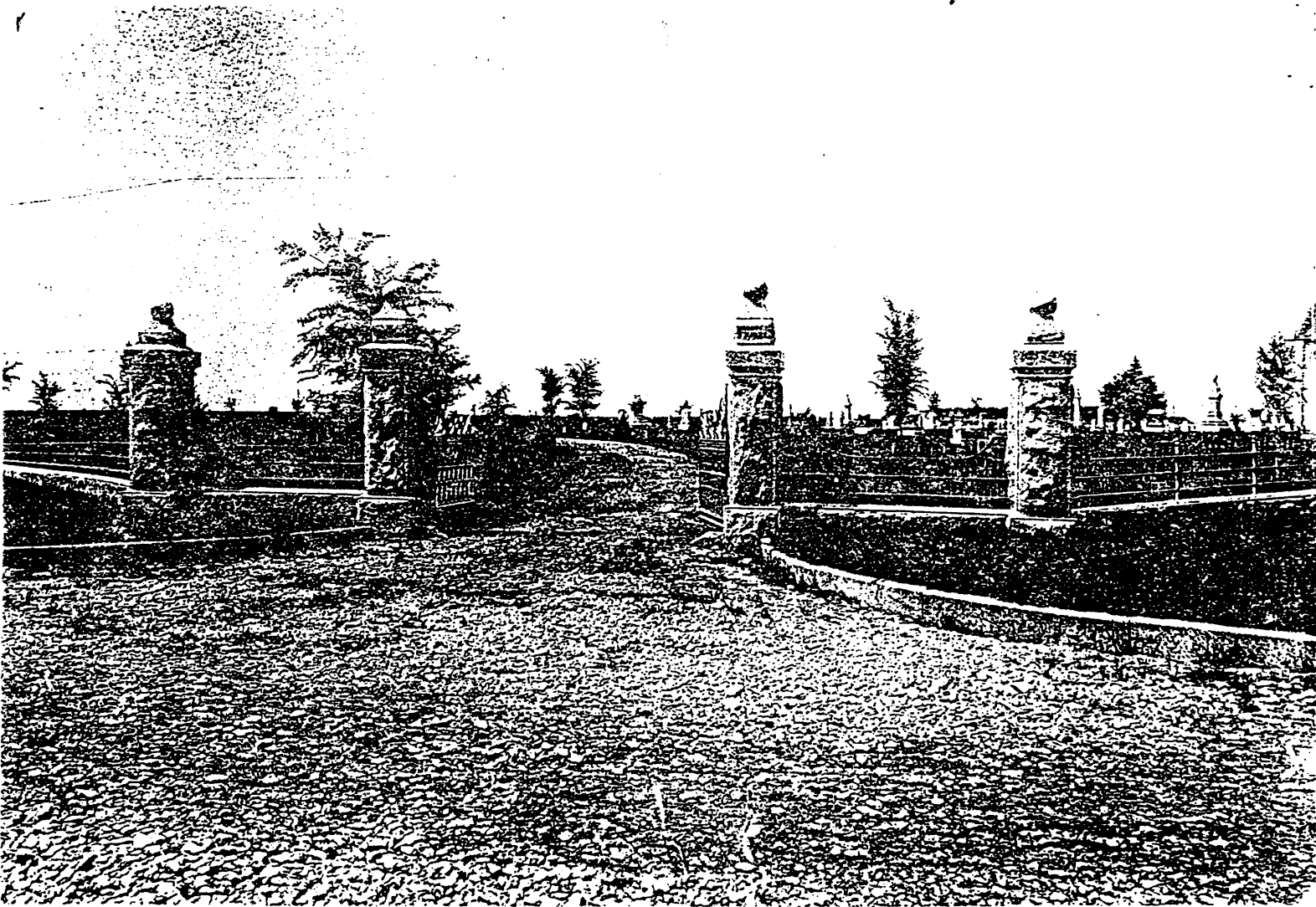
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**Main Entry-gate.  
Photograph Circa 1903.  
Looking southwest showing curbs.**



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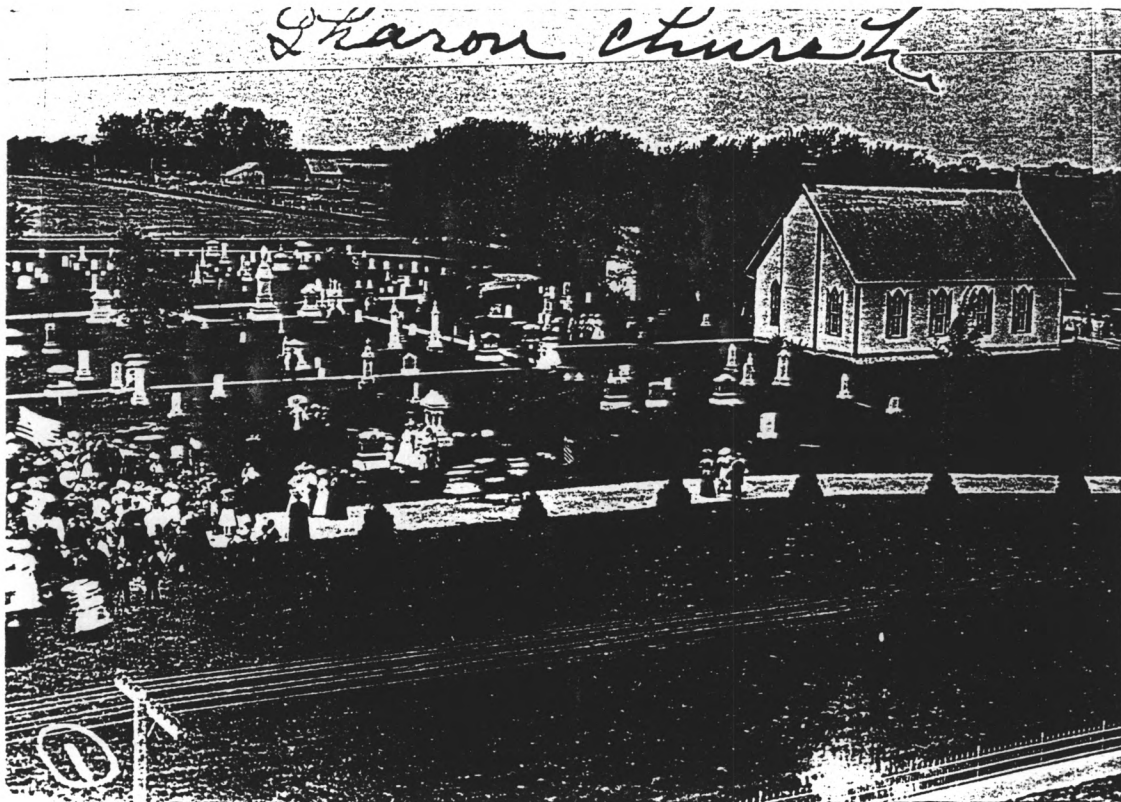
Facade of Sanctuary.  
Undated Photograph [circa 1903].  
Looking southeast, showing original facade & non-extant  
mounting step.

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Dedication of American Revolution Memorial (by flag).  
1907 Photograph.  
Looking west from windmill or watertower.

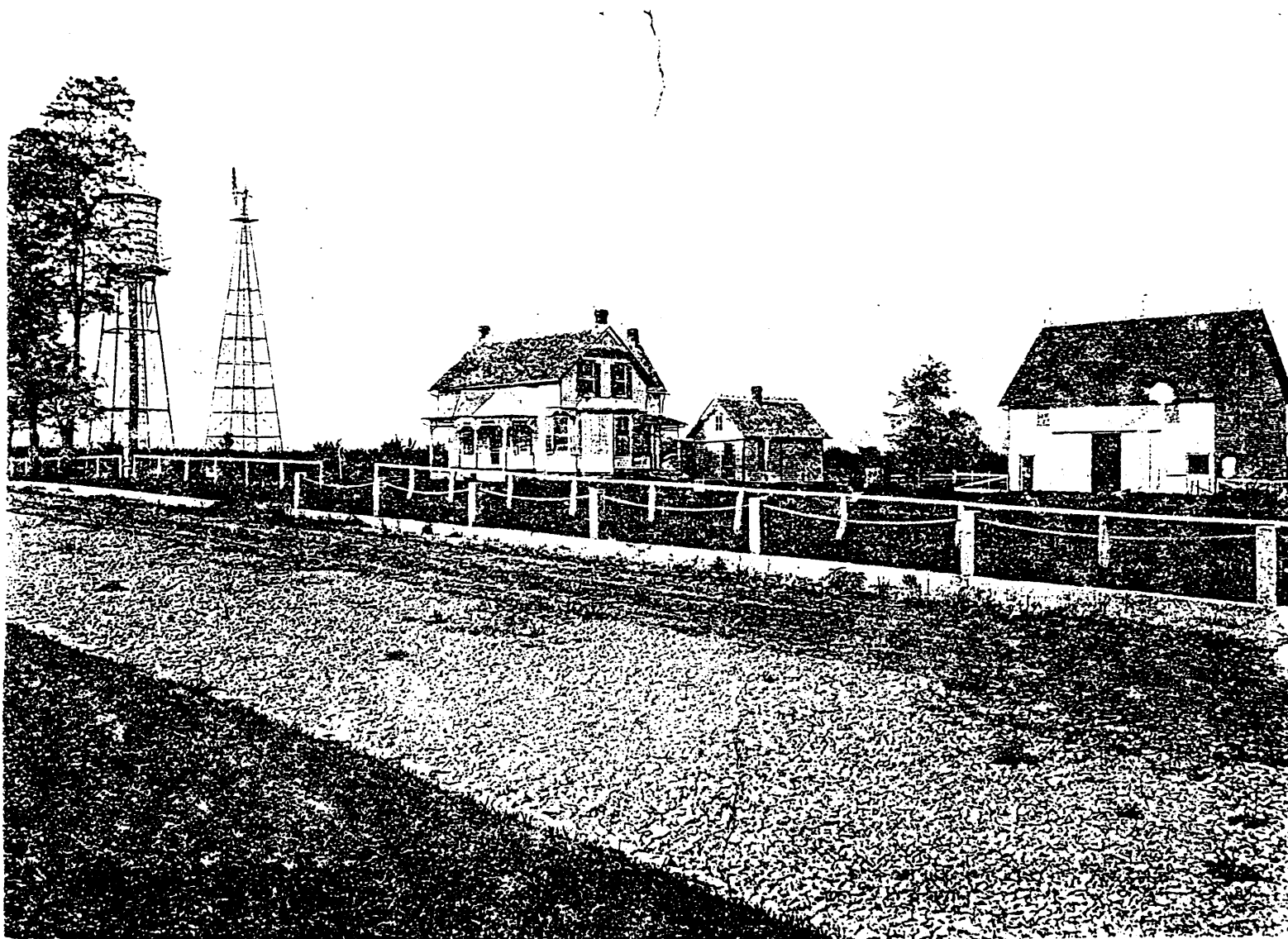
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Service Area.

Photograph Circa 1903.

Looking northeast showing Sexton's House & non-extant  
windmill, watertower, summer kitchen, & barn.

Note stone curbs and line of hitching posts.

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The cemetery is well documented by Simonds' plans, historic photographs, and print sources, another point of significance for this historic district, and witnessed by the following newspaper article from 6 June 1935:

The cemetery improvements extended over a period of four years and included sidewalks, surfaced driveways, and a surfaced and curbed highway adjacent thereto... Scott Troutman and John Young of Bonaparte were employed many months in building the stone foundation three and a half feet in depth for the granite coping for the fence which is entirely around the eight acre cemetery. They also crushed the stone for the road and driveways. This stone was secured near Reed's creek, most of it on the Hill Williamson farm. At one time fifty-two teams were engaged in hauling stone from quarry to cemetery. Messrs. Troutman and Young bought a stone crusher and crushed the stone after it was hauled to the cemetery."

The typology of this historic district is, as its name indicates and National Register Bulletin 18 prescribes, a cemetery. Although cemeteries are usually ineligible for nomination to the National Register, an exception to criteria considerations obtains in this instance and qualifies the Sharon Cemetery District for nomination. This special justification derives from the cemetery's designed historic landscape as planned by O. C. Simonds and discussed in this Statement of Significance.

The Sharon Cemetery Historic District comprises 15 resources, 14 contributing and 1 non-contributing.

<u>Name of Contributing Resource</u>	<u>Category of Resource</u>
Site	Site
Coping, Fence, and Pedestrian Gates	Structure
Main Entry-Gate	Structure
Interior Driveways	Structure
Old Cemetery Pedestrian Walks	Structure
New Cemetery Pedestrian Walk	Structure
Water Fountain	Object
Tile Drainage System	Structure
Toilet Rooms and Lavatory	Building
Stone Curbs	Structure
Hitching Posts	Structure
The Manse	Building
Sanctuary	Building
Sexton's House	Building

<u>Name of Non-Contributing Resource</u>	<u>Category of Resource</u>
Plantings	Object

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There is one non-contributing resource. The plantings are evaluated as non-contributing because they do not conform to the plant material and locations as indicated on Simonds' 1899 "Planting Plan." The

The 1899-1918 period of significance for the Sharon Cemetery Historic District represents the time span in which the cemetery was designed and the design implemented. Records indicate Simonds designed the landscape in 1899. Work appears to have begun immediately on construction and one history of the cemetery reports that "the work of improving Sharon Cemetery covered a period of about four years," or from 1899 to 1903. The Manse, constructed in 1917-1918, marks the final new construction effort. A significant date for the district is 1899, the year dated on Simonds' extant plan and, presumed, when he worked on the project.

In conclusion, Simonds' design for the site and the resources as implemented combine to illustrate a designed historic landscape influenced by naturalistic concepts popular in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. Although Simonds' plan for the planting of vegetation was only partially implemented (and little, if any, remains), many of Simonds' components for the site were constructed, remain extant today, and call direct attention to his design.

#### NINETEENTH CENTURY CEMETERY MOVEMENT

Cemeteries in the United States illustrate a potentially three-fold significance. They portray the stylistic development of objects of art; they call attention to important individuals and families of the local community buried there; and, beginning in the Nineteenth Century, they illustrate the designs of a new professional discipline, landscape architecture.

Burial customs have and continue to play an important role in society throughout history. Prior to the Eighteenth Century, these customs in the United States centered on the church graveyard. Graves were laid out on church property, in an orderly grid plan, and headstones were marked by regularity of shape and placement. Beginning in the Nineteenth Century, the Romantic Movement introduced new attitudes toward death characterized by sentiments that the natural environment was benign. These feelings found expression in burial practices. The cemetery became park-like where the deceased's friends and family could come, contemplate, and leave refreshed. Cemetery designs began to emphasize natural settings including contoured plats and roadways, water features, plantings, and picturesque vistas. This cemetery movement also received momentum from new ideas about public health. Sanitary considerations recommended burial of the dead away from the congestion of the inner city. These notions helped break the tradition that the dead should be buried next to their place of worship and helped open up the possibility that tracts of land could be developed as community cemeteries.

In Iowa, as elsewhere in the nation, the ordered regularity of Eighteenth Century design long obtained. Only in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century did Iowa cemeteries begin to show more naturalistic designs. Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines is one example. These cemeteries are almost exclusively

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urban. Rural cemeteries continued to adhere to more traditional design and exceptions are very unusual.

### O. C. SIMONDS

O[ssian] C[ole] Simonds is recognized as one of the early leaders of landscape architecture in the United States. He was born on November 11, 1855 on a farm in Michigan. After graduating from the University of Michigan with a degree in civil engineering, Simonds joined an architectural firm in Chicago, Illinois. He remained in Chicago for the rest of his life. In 1883 Simonds established his own firm which specialized in landscape architecture. Although his work included municipal parks in Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, residential plans, and layout of the Fort Sheridan military post, Simonds' practice focused on the design of cemeteries. Graceland Cemetery in Chicago is generally accepted as his greatest accomplishment (his superintendency of which the Sharon Church circa 1903 history proudly stated). Simonds was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. He was the only founder from the Midwest. Simonds published *Landscape Gardening* in 1920, a book which discussed a wide range of subjects including a chapter on "Country Cemeteries." Simonds' discussion of rural cemeteries shows great concern for designed landscapes to relieve the monotony of the prairie. During his career, Simonds served as president of the American Society of Landscape Architects (its first non-Easterner) and was also active in the American Civic Association, serving as chairman of its Rural Improvements Department. Simonds earned the reputation as the dean of American cemetery design. His designs were influenced by Adolph Strauch who advocated a landscape lawn plan. Under Simonds, this design became known as the "American system" of cemetery design. The concept minimized elements within the cemetery which impeded vistas and introduced ornamental plantings to frame major natural elements on the site like lakes and spreading lawns. Simonds died in 1931.

Simonds worked in Iowa on several commissions. These included work at Iowa State University at Ames, the Iowa State Fair and Exposition Grounds in Des Moines, and some residential landscape plans. No cemetery plans in Iowa are known other than at Sharon.

### RESOURCES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

#### Site

The Sharon Cemetery Historic District is significant as the only designed historic landscape presently known in Iowa calling attention to O.C. Simonds' planning for a rural cemetery. Conceived in a naturalistic design, the historic district obtains additional significance because it illustrates Simonds' skill in integrating a newer concept onto an older, rectilinear layout. Simonds achieved a harmony of design by respecting the grid of the old cemetery while introducing strong definitional elements to separate it from the new one. The total effect is of a naturalistic design overlaid on a rectilinear one.

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The site (defined as everything within the boundaries of the historic district) is counted as one resource because it illustrates the total composition of Simonds's design. This plan called for the construction of elements to define strongly this site as distinct from the surrounding countryside. These elements constituted a wide range of improvements to the property which transformed it from an ordinary rural church cemetery. Improvements included landscaping the surrounding public roads, a private water system, land drainage, the strong definition of the site through granite coping and fence, interior driveways, a contoured platting of grave lots, hitching posts, and a planting plan. Many, but not all, of these improvements were implemented. Of those implemented, most remain extant but there are some, like the plantings, which remain as remnants with some question to the extent they were ever implemented.

Simonds overlaid his new design on the earlier cemetery. The boundaries of the old cemetery are clearly indicated on his surviving planting plan. While his improvements were not restricted to the newly purchased 4-acres bought with funds from the Seeley bequest, Simonds broke with the grid design of this older cemetery and introduced curvilinear motives in the new one.

The porous soil and topography of the site are appropriate for a cemetery according to the criteria laid down in Simonds' book Landscape-Gardening: "The ideal location is one where the ground is somewhat undulating and thoroughly drained by having a porous subsoil, while the surface soil is sufficiently rich and deep to support a good growth of vegetation" (page 292).

In his chapter on cemeteries in this book, Simonds includes a subsection discussion of "Country Cemeteries." This section is included below in its entirety. It will be seen that the Sharon Historic District is distinctly different from Simonds' description of the typical country cemetery.

Often a country cemetery has a most forlorn and neglected appearance, being merely a combination of monuments and headstones, uncut grass, Irish junipers and spruces. This appearance is not due so much to lack of money as to sparsity of ideas. The cost of the monuments shows there has been money to spend, but there has not been an appreciation of beauty. In one neglected country cemetery, a beautiful ground-covering of a little euphorbia had killed out the grass. It was far better-looking than the uncut grass-covered areas, yet a farmer regretted its existence. Other areas are covered with myrtle (*Vinca minor*) and were always green and beautiful. Where it is not feasible to mow and water grass, the selection of various ground-covering plants, like those named, would serve well in its place. Partridge-berry, trailing juniper, bugle, Japanese spruce, lily-of-the-valley, two-leaved Solomon's seal, butter-and-eggs, wild violets, erthroniums, hepaticas, and many other plants, serve well for a ground cover, some thriving in shade and others in the sun (Fig. 59).

With the growth of an appreciation of beautiful landscapes and planting effects in connection with homes, school grounds and highways, it is but natural that there should develop a country cemetery far more beautiful than any seen at present. (Pages 307-308).

This resource is contributing as a site.

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Coping, Fence, and Pedestrian Gates

The granite coping and cast-iron fence are significant because illustrate a basic element of Simonds' plan: the need strongly to define the church yard and cemetery as a distinct area set apart from the surrounding countryside. The coping, fence and pedestrian gates are also significant because of the

quality of the building materials used in their construction. No expense was spared to enclose the church yard and cemetery and this is particularly evident because the entire area is encompassed, not just the frontage and perhaps a portion of the sides. Few rural cemeteries in Lee County have such an elaborately developed definition of space. The coping and fence derive special significance because the concept for them is Simonds' creation and plans for their construction survive at Sharon. Simonds' book *Landscape-Gardening* states the importance of fencing for his designs: "To prevent intrusion, a fence along the boundary of a cemetery is necessary. This can be of wire hidden by a belt of trees and shrubbery, or it can be a substantial wall" (page 299).

This resource is contributing as a structure.

Main Entry-Gate

Standing at the northeast corner of the fenced area, the main entry-gate is significant part of the site's overall design because of the height of its massive columns, iron gate, and location strongly signal to the passerby the main entrance to the cemetery. In this regard, the main entry-gate has only the sanctuary itself as a visual rival for the passerby's attention when approaching the site.

Simonds' plan called for location of the main entry-gate along the east side of the cemetery. As implemented it stands at the northeast corner of the cemetery. The reason for this change of plan remains unknown. It seems likely, however, that since the northeast loop was not implemented, the decision was made to reroute the main entry-gate to a more prominent location. An analysis of Simonds' planting plan also revealed an error of fact concerning this subject. Simonds outlined by a dash-dot-dash line the boundary of the old and new cemeteries. The eastern boundary is incorrectly drawn on the plan. The old cemetery actually extended to the present eastern boundary of the cemetery (see attached "Chronology of Property Acquisition" map). Simonds' plan indicates the eastern 120 feet of this area within the new cemetery.

There is an additional point of interest concerning the stone for the main entry-gate and for the coping which surrounds the cemetery. All these materials were shipped by railroad to LaCrew, Iowa, a non-extant town then located about three miles east of Sharon. The stone was then drayed by animal power to the site. The effort to convey these tons of stone to the cemetery was borne by local church parishioners. Their descendants still tell stories about it.

This resource is contributing as a structure.



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Interior Driveways

Comprised of 2-elements, an entry driveway and a loop driveway, the interior driveways are significant because they introduce strong curvilinear elements into the cemetery and illustrate naturalism as a style in this designed historic landscape. Simonds laid the driveways out to encircle the old cemetery and separate it from the new cemetery. Although the interior driveways as constructed vary somewhat from Simond's 1899 plan, the sections where variations occur are drawn with dotted lines, suggesting them as optional. The interior driveways illustrate Simonds' design principles as laid down in *Landscape-Gardening*:

They should nearly always be curved to produce the most pleasing result, a curved drive-way being advisable because: (1) when the margins are properly planted, certain portions of the ground are always hidden, thus becoming more interesting; (2) they insure varied effects of light and shade; (3) they make the average distance from the cemetery entrance to the lots shorter than if one follows straight lines and turns right angles. (Pages 296-296).

The interior driveway system as shown on Simonds' 1899 plan was implemented where he indicated drives by bold lines. Although the northeast loop and a second entry-way, located west of the sanctuary, were not built, these are indicated on the 1899 plan with dotted lines, strongly suggesting that they were optional features.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

Old Cemetery Pedestrian Walks

Laid in a rectilinear format, the pedestrian walks within the old cemetery are of Simonds' design and significant because they show how he respected the earlier grid design of this area. These walks are constructed of the same materials as in the new cemetery.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

New Cemetery Pedestrian Walk

The pedestrian walk within the new cemetery is significant because it calls attention to Simonds' designed historic landscape. The walk which stretches between the east pedestrian gate and the entry-driveway illustrates an important element of Simonds' naturalistic concept. Curvilinear in design, this walk acts in rhythm with the curvilinear driveway system. This walk radically breaks with the rectilinear design Simonds used in the old cemetery for pedestrian walks.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

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Water Fountain

The water fountain is significant for the historic district because it calls attention to Simonds as a civil engineer and his planning for the site's water system. A water fountain is an unusual element in a rural cemetery and this one adds an important decorative element to the site.

This resource is contributing as an object.

Tile Drainage System

Underlying the cemetery grounds, the tile drainage system is significant because it calls attention to the quality design of the site, little expense being spared in the planning and construction of the resource and adequate drainage being deemed important to the well-being of the grounds and the congregation's health. O. C. Simonds was particularly qualified to design such a system, trained, as he was, as a civil engineer. Built circa 1898-1899, this drainage system is unseen. Oral informants among the Sharon congregation remember a blueprint drawing for the tile lines at Sharon Cemetery although the location of this document is uncertain. This resource is presumed to remain intact because no oral informant can remember alterations to this system and many oral informants were interviewed.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

Toilet Rooms and Lavatory

Constructed in a standard popular design about 1902, the Toilet Rooms and Lavatory are significant because they are built to the location recommended on Simonds' 1899 plan. This resource had running water, a luxury in its time and place, supplied to it by the site's water system. Although this building is presently used as a storage shed for maintenance equipment, it retains its two entry-doors, original siding material, site location, and exterior integrity.

This resource is contributing as a building.

Stone Curbs

Lining both sides of the county gravel road from the main highway south to the boundary of the historic district, these curbs are significant because they define the boundaries between the public right-of-way and the property belonging to the church. The stone curbs also elevate the importance of this gravel road by giving its users a visual sense of place.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

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Hitching Posts

Located directly adjacent to the stone curbs on the east side of the county gravel road, these hitching posts and chains are important landscaping elements because they help define the road from the service area. Hitching posts were also originally located on both sides of the road in front of the sanctuary as well. Because these are non-extant, the remaining ones have the additional value of surviving elements of Simonds' design. They also call attention to an early mode of transportation, the need to plan for sanitation, and Simonds' solution to the problem by isolating horses to the fringes of the site.

This resource is contributing as a structure.

The Manse

Located in the service area of the designed historic landscape, The Manse shares a facade line with the Sexton's House. Location of the Manse illustrates the care with which elements were sited in this historic district. Constructed in 1917-1918, the building employs an American Four-Square design. Its facade faces to the west. Entrance to the cemetery grounds and the sanctuary and are easily accessible because of the Manse's convenient location.

This resource is contributing as a building.

Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is significant as a major visual element in the historic district and for its important role in planning of this designed historic landscape. Constructed in 1885 prior the period of significance of the district, the sanctuary formed the core around which the old cemetery was situated. Simonds' plan reaffirmed this role. He constructed, for example, a pedestrian walk in the old cemetery on a north-south axis. The Sanctuary stands as the north terminus to this axis. Simonds' design also emphasized the building on the north by constructing an entrance to the grounds at the Sanctuary's front door.

Although a facade addition was constructed to the Sanctuary in 1978, this vestibule used the original doorway from the building, repeated the facade gable in its design, and conformed to the building's simplicity.

Sexton's House

Built according to a standard popular design and located in an area set aside by Simonds as a service area, the Sexton's House originally and presently provides a home for the sexton, the caretaker of the church and cemetery. The building is significant both for its location and for its purpose. The building also calls attention to the importance the congregation has placed on the maintenance and

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beauty of the grounds. B. F. Paschal, a local building contractor, constructed the Sexton's House about 1899. The Sexton's House predates the Manse, home of the Sharon minister, by about two decades. This fact reinforces the significance of the grounds and their beauty for the congregation.

The Sexton's House is compatible in scale to other buildings on the site. Although steel siding presently covers the Sexton's House, its original wood clapboard remains beneath this siding.

This resource is contributing as a building.

Plantings

Plant material is the most fragile element of a designed historic landscape. A relatively low threshold of integrity could be expected for these resources. A "Planting Plan" designed by Simonds' survives and is dated "1899." The major element of this plan was to define strongly the edge of the cemetery with plant material. A stand of willow and associated trees along with numerous shrubs was to be planted by the south fence midway along its run. Another grouping of willows was to stand at the southwest corner. The western edge was to be planted with barberry. These plantings were to provide a frame for the designed landscape within the cemetery. According to historic photographs, none of these plantings was implemented.

The cemetery features a fine corridor of oak trees along the loop-driveway on the west, a magnificent row of roses has for many years grown along the east edge of the cemetery and helps define this boundary, and a cluster of cedar trees stands where the loop-driveway and entrance drive meet. Although this plant material might date from the construction of the new cemetery, they are not indicated on Simonds' planting plan and have been evaluated as non-contributing for this reason. The congregation is encouraged to study, review and evaluate Simonds' planting plan for its implementation.

This resource is non-contributing.

**SIGNIFICANCE IN RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SIMILAR PROPERTIES**

There have been no surveys of cemetery plans and landscape designers in Iowa to date. We do know that Simonds was a major figure in landscape design and that he undertook a number of projects in Iowa. What we know about him relates only to his residential work, work at Iowa State University in Ames, and on the Iowa State Fair and Exposition Grounds in Des Moines. The Sharon Cemetery is the only one on which we know, to date, he worked in Iowa. We also know from his book that cemeteries were a major concern for him, urban examples in particular, although the book also includes a chapter on rural cemeteries. Based on our limited data, it would appear that the Sharon Cemetery Historic District is unusual as a rural example because of the use of a landscape architect in laying it out and the large sum expended in developing it. The influence, if any, of this design on other cemeteries in Iowa remains an unanswered question.

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### CHURCH HISTORY

Although the period of significance for this nomination is the turn of the Twentieth Century, the Sharon congregation had already been in existence for almost half a century. This backdrop of history explains the configuration of the resources at the time of the cemetery's transformation.

The original Sharon congregation was established in 1853 through Articles of Incorporation under the auspices of Reverend James Culbertson Sharon whose name the congregation later took as its own. The Sharon Church building, probably constructed in 1854, was located about two and one-half miles east of LaCrew, Iowa, a town no longer in existence which was situated about three miles east of the present Sharon Church. This rural site consisted of four acres of land and included a burial ground as well as the church building. In 1860 the congregation decided that the church building should be moved farther west to locate it more centrally to the homes of the congregation. This move required considerable work which was undertaken by members of the congregation and their neighbors using horse and oxen. The building was relocated about 100 yards west of the present sanctuary. The facade faced east. Women sat on one side of the aisle and men on the other. This custom obtained at Sharon well into the 1880s, its practice retained for a while in the new sanctuary built in 1885. Construction of the present sanctuary began in 1885 and was completed the following year. The building is a standard popular design. Henry Hathaway and Henry Breitenstein superintended construction. Sometime later the original church sanctuary was razed.

### CEMETERY HISTORY

The congregation had secured land at the present site before relocation of the original church building began. After placing the sanctuary on this property, a rail fence was constructed around it. In 1863, during the American Civil War, additional land was purchased from William and Anna Todd to be used for cemetery purposes. The cemetery then totaled four acres. The cost of purchase was \$100. The Warranty Deed was legally filed for record in 1867. Seventeen Civil War soldiers are buried today at Sharon. It seems probably that the Civil War influenced the Sharon congregation to enlarge the parish cemetery.

Late in the Nineteenth Century, the Sharon Cemetery Association received a major bequest from the estate of George Lincoln Seeley (1865-1897). Seeley was a member of a prominent local family and of the church. He died in Texas but expressed the wish to be buried at Sharon near his father and two sisters. Additionally, "it being the dying wish and desire...of said G. L. Seeley that said cemetery be made a 'garden spot on earth' and that it be beautified and so improved that it would be a sacred and peaceful resting place for those that now lie buried there, and that above all that it be well cared for for generations yet to come" (Seeley Deed to Sharon Cemetery). In 1899 the Cemetery Association acquired, through funds from Seeley's bequest, four additional acres of property contiguous to the cemetery. The cemetery then comprised eight acres (the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 4). The Seeley gift also included 280 acres of farmland deeded to the association for the

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continued maintenance of the cemetery. Some of this farmland was adjacent to the cemetery. The church and the cemetery are now incorporated under the laws of Iowa as one corporation although each has its own treasurer and each maintains separate financial accounts. The cemetery association provides free burying for members of the congregation and for others with the approval by the Board of Trustees.

Maintenance of the cemetery grounds have occupied considerable attention over the years. Robert H. Knedler, Assistant Superintendent of Grounds, used a horse drawn mower to cut grass. This was a reel type mower. He supplemented this work with a lighter hand mower. (Superintendent of Grounds, the title, constitutes a Member of the Board of the Cemetery Association. Assistant Superintendent of Grounds or Sexton (which seem to have been used interchangeably) was the title of the grounds caretaker. From an early time, leaves were raked in the church grounds. Later a leaf pulverizer was purchased and the mulch produced was composted.

#### POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

##### Water System

Although largely non-extant, the cemetery had an early private water system constructed on a large scale. This system was made possible through the Seeley bequest. J. B. Towbridge of Denmark, Iowa, constructed the main well for the system about 1898. The well was located near the Sexton's House. It was variously said to be 300 or 400 feet deep. "This water is pumped by wind power into an elevated tank the under structure supporting which is of galvanized iron and forty feet high" according to the 1903 history. This system supplied water for the cemetery grounds and for the sexton and his family. A windmill was constructed at the well and pumped water to a water tower which also stood nearby. This water tower supplied pressure for the water which gravity drove through a system of underground pipes to the cemetery. Water pressure also drove the water fountain in the cemetery grounds and provided a source for the hand watering of plant material when needed. The windmill and the water tower are non-extant. Their locations are indicated on a map on a continuation sheet.

The sites of these resources should be respected for their potential to yield historical archaeological data. Excavation and other construction in these areas should carefully document such data.

##### Tile Drainage System

Excavations within the cemetery should be aware of the potential to unearth the tile drainage system. Such excavations might prove valuable information in understanding the system's design and importance to the site.

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**METHODOLOGY**

Proven Integrity of Design

Planning for landscape architectural is extensive in scope. It is common in this discipline for numerous elements within a plan to remain unimplemented (even to a greater degree than, for example, in architectural design). Three O. C. Simonds' plans for the Sharon Cemetery survive and document his concept for this designed historic landscape. As this report has shown, although not all the elements indicated on Simonds' plans were implemented, the substance of this design was built and remains extant.

Research Design

This project began with the intention of nominating the cemetery as an individual structure to the National Register. As the project developed, it became clear that there were sufficient resources within the property to constitute an historic district and that this category was more appropriate for it as a designed historic landscape.

Thorough archival research was undertaken of Sharon Church records, oral histories of members, local newspapers, and state historic preservation offices in Iowa and Illinois. Four nationally recognized experts in designed historic landscapes were consulted. Important depositories of Simonds' papers were canvased. This research yielded a wealth of information. Although the experts believed other plans (drainage, construction details, and water system, for example) might have been prepared, none unfortunately were found. An excellent collection of historic photographs remains in the possession of the congregation. No church committee minutes remain extant regarding the planning and construction of the site. The bibliography section of this report details this research.

In 1988 Arthur Tinkelenberg, a senior majoring in biology at Grinnell College, interned for four months with W. C. Page, Public Historian. Tinkelenberg made four site inspections to Sharon Cemetery, located and measured the resources, identified the plant material, and prepared a base map showing this information. His map is included in this report.

An ad hoc committee of the congregation provided valuable support for this project at various critical points. Draft copies of the nomination were distributed to a group of knowledgeable people who carefully reviewed the document, made corrections, and undertook yet another search of bank lock boxes and church depositories. This resulted in the discovery of additional Simonds' plans.

Recommendations for Further Research

In 1907 the State of Iowa erected in the Sharon Cemetery a grave marker in memory of George Perkins (1752-1840). Perkins was a soldier of the American Revolution and died in Lee County, Iowa. Dedication of this monument took place 28 May 1907, and was the occasion of a big ceremony

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and social gathering. Local chapters of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Daughters of the American Revolution were responsible for this project.

The monument is a fine example of a commemorative object with historic significance. The turn of the Twentieth Century saw considerable interest on the national and local scene in historicism, a revival of interest in America's past partly engendered by the 1876 centennial of the American Revolution. The preservation of log cabins, marking of Revolutionary War graves, and Colonial Revival style in architecture are other indications of this movement. Research about this monument at Sharon could be tell a lot about how this national movement took shape in the neighborhood surrounding Sharon. (See "Old Settlers' Park and Rhodham Bonnifield House" cited in bibliography for another local example in Iowa).

#### CONCLUSIONS

Landscape architecture is a small profession with a limited number of practitioners. The number of landscape architectural historians is even smaller. As a result, the history of landscape architecture remains largely unwritten. As more information and interpretation about O. C. Simonds becomes available, the Sharon Cemetery Historic District should be reevaluated. This resource might obtain state or national significance if placed in its appropriate historic context.



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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- "Ministers who have served the Church of Sharon--;" Typewritten list of 42 ministers and the years of their tenure at Sharon beginning in 1851.
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- fifty-two teams were engaged in hauling stone from quarry to cemetery. Messrs. Troutman and Young bought a stone crusher and crushed the stone after it was hauled to the cemetery."
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### PLANS, MAPS & PHOTOGRAPHS

#### PLANS & MAPS

- "Planting Plan for Seeley (*sic*) Cemetery, La Crew, Iowa./ 1899. O. C. Simonds,/Landscape Gardener, Chicago." Scale: 1"=40'. Shows boundary of old cemetery and boundary of new cemetery, location of trees previously planted, and recommendations & locations for 34 different plant & trees varieties totaling approximately 1,268 individuals. Document property Sharon Presbyterian Church.
- Drainage Tile Lines. This document cannot currently be found and was last seen by church officials in the mid-1970s. The document was a blueprint like the "Planting Plan." It showed the tile lines in a grid system.
- "Profile of fence and tile lines of Sharon Cemetery." This document has cracked and separated into many pieces. The title can be read as well as "J. Ross Robinson, Co. Sup." The document is undated. It appears to be contemporary with the "Planting Plan" cited above and may be a copy of Simonds' original. Document property Sharon Presbyterian Church.
- Curb and Granite Posts Details for Main Entry-gate; Blueprint w/o date or signature. These appears to be contemporary with the "Planting Plan" cited above. Document property Sharon Presbyterian Church.
- "Sharon Cemetery;" Burial plat showing lots. "The numbers in ink indicate the lot numbers. The numbers in pencil indicate the number of burials in each individual lot up to the date of December 31, 1963." Document property Sharon Presbyterian Church.
- "Farmington (Iowa) Quadrangle;" 7.5 Minute Series Topographic Map; US Department of the Interior; Geological Survey; Photo revised 1982; DMA 7665 II NW; Series V876. Locates spot elevation for nomination application base map.

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### PHOTOGRAPHS

- Vehicular Entry-gate under Construction looking southwest; 8"x9-3/4"; Rinard, Photographer, Clearfield, Iowa. Shows horse-drawn earth compaction machine & cut stone loosely laid along driveway waiting installation.
- Vehicular Entry-gate completed looking southwest; 8"x5-3/4."  
"Picnic Party Sunday June 21, 1908;" Photo postcard showing church facade and foot entry gate looking southwest.
- "Sharon, Ia Cemetery;" Photo postcard showing west drive & looking at church to northeast.
- Aerial view from top of water-tower or windmill looking west-northwest. Churchyard and ceremony marking dedication of Revolutionary War gravestone; 1907. "Earl Smith" on back. Postcard, 6-1/2"x4-1/4".
- Revolutionary War gravestone dedication showing large group of people; 1907 looking northwest; 4-3/4"x3".
- Interior of church looking from rear toward communion table, circa 1907 during clement weather as stoves & stovepipes removed. Photo postcard, 6-1/2"x4-1/4".
- Vehicular Entry-gate, church, east-west county road, hitching posts, chains & parking on north side of county road circa 1906 [?] looking southwest. 9-1/4"x7". "B. E. Seeley" on reverse.
- "1857...1901/Taken May 31, 1901/50th Anniversary of Sharon Church/C. R. Brownlee." Shows parish gathered at southwest corner of church and church building looking north-northeast.
- Water fountain & landscaping circa 1907 looking southwest. 9"x7".
- Church facade looking southeast with group of people in "Sunday Best;" labeled "Picnic Party June 21 [?], 1908[?]. 3-5/8"x3-3/8."
- Church facade looking southeast with large group of people. Dated "1896" in ink.
- Sexton's House, summer kitchen, barn, windmill, water tower, fence, hitching rails, and county road circa 1905 looking to the northeast. 8"x6".
- Sexton's House, summer kitchen, barn, fence, hitching posts & chains; similar to above view but nearer view looking northeast. 9-1/4"x7". "B. E. Seeley" on reverse.
- Man sitting on grounds-keeping machine and petting dog. Handwriting on back of snapshot reads: "This is the picture of Clarence House taken with the new leaf pulverizer in Nov 1953. The dog 'Buttons' belongs to Rev. [name obscured]."
- Rev. Edward I. Roberts (1884-1920) and family who served Sharon as pastor 1915-1920. Photo postcard.
- Rev. William A. Cook and wife. "Aug. 8. 1920" written in ink on photo postcard.
- Rev. Sharon's grave marker in cemetery at Bloomfield, IA. Typewritten on a scrapbook page under photograph: "The church he founded at Bloomfield has been disbanded and the building remodeled into a funeral home."

### CONSULTANT INTERVIEWS

- Dyas, Robert W. (Distinguished Professor of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa) w/W. C. Page, Public Historian; 5 August 1987. Prof. Dyas rendered into current nomenclature numerous plants & trees as indicated on O. C. Simonds' 1899 planting plan for the Sharon Cemetery.
- Harvey, Robert R. (Professor of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa) w/W. C. Page, Public Historian; 25 August 1987. Landscape architecture in late 19th & early 20th Century Iowa practiced on an extremely limited scale. A planned, rural landscape is even more unusual.

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- Grundmann, William J. (Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa) w/W. C. Page; 6 August 1987. Discussed palette of plant materials available through nurseries at turn of Twentieth Century.
- Members of the Sharon Congregation including Wendell Watkins, Paul Grossman, Ruby M. Brewer, Gilbert Bargar, Ruby Bargar, Erma Folker, Verna Knedler, and Geraldine Watkins w/W. C. Page, Public Historian; 20 August 1989.
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- Keller, J. Timothy (Historic Preservation Landscape Architect; Charlottesville, VA) w/W. C. Page, Public Historian; December 1989. Keller provided sources for potential research concerning O. C. Simonds and discussed Simonds' planting plan for Sharon.

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- Moore, Larry L. [former Trustee, Sharon Cemetery] to W. C. Page; 4 June 1990. This is a cover letter which accompanied comments on a draft copy of this nomination. The letter says, in part, "Several of us remember seeing a blueprint of the tile lines in the cemetery. We think it was signed as the original [planting plan which remains extant]. At the time we saw this was in 1977-78 during the church remodeling. I had all officers search all bank lock boxes and records, and we did not come up with it; however, in our search we did find blueprints of the curb and granite posts to the N. E. entrance to the cemetery. I think they are the Simonds' original blueprints, but there is no signature nor date. I feel the original consisted of many pages and most have been lost down through the years. We also found a lay-out labeled 'Profile of fence and tile lines of Sharon Cemetery,' however due to its great age, the paper is cracked & separated into many pieces. We pieced enough together to obtain the name 'J. Ross Robinson, Co. Sup.' with no date."

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### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Entry-drive, Main Entry-gate  
Looking northeast  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989
  
2. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Interior Driveways & Water Fountain  
Looking west  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989
  
3. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Coping & Fence in Southern Portion of New Cemetery  
Looking southwest  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989
  
4. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Water Fountain, Old Cemetery Pedestrian Walk, Sanctuary,  
Toilet Rooms & Lavatory  
Looking north  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989
  
5. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Toilet Rooms & Lavatory Building  
Looking northwest  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
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### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

6. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Sexton's House  
Looking northeast  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
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7. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
Stone Curbs, Hitching Posts & the Manse  
Looking north  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989
  
8. Sharon Cemetery Historic District  
Vicinity Farmington, IA 52626  
The Manse  
Looking northeast  
W. C. Page, Photographer  
April 1989



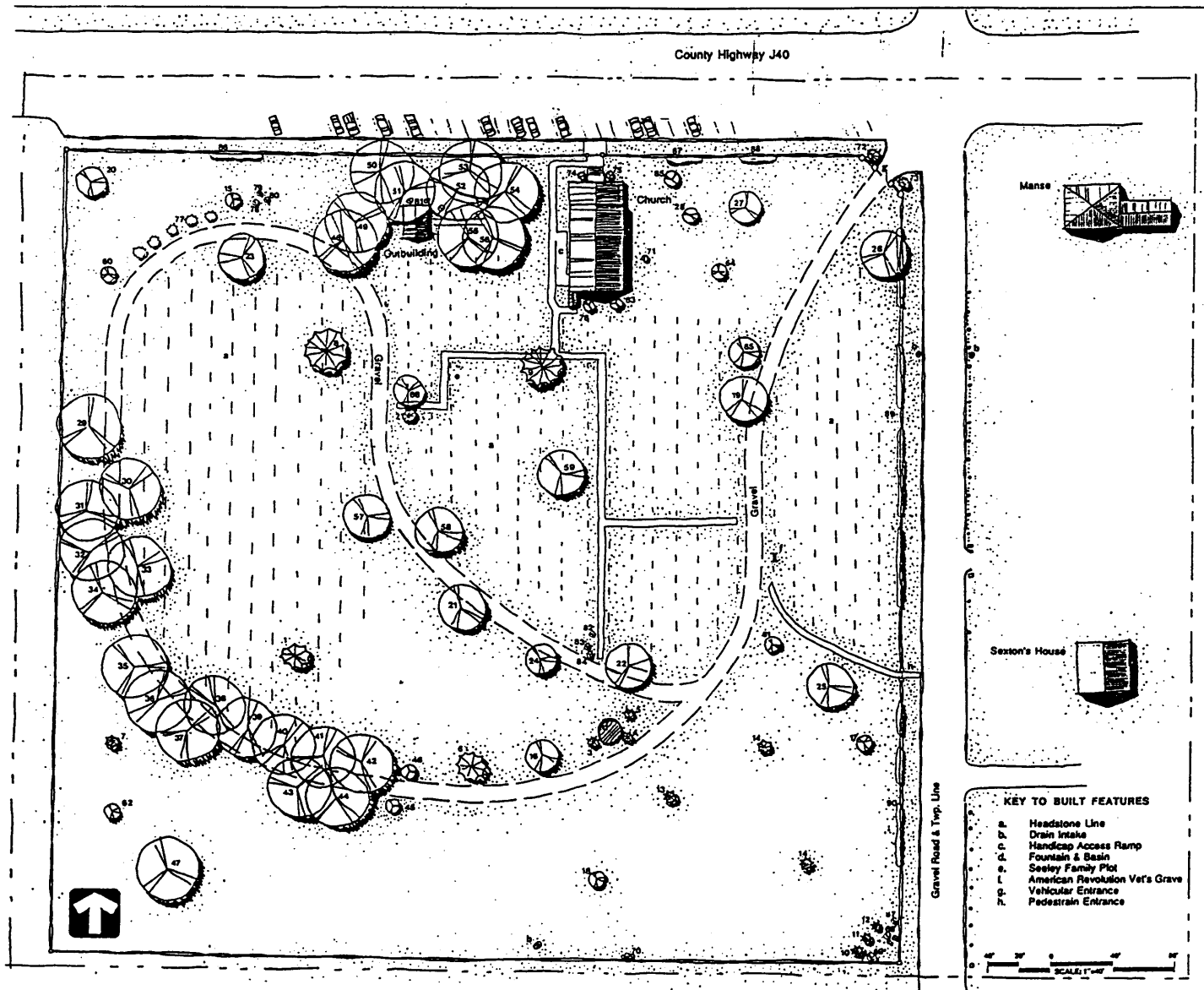
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SHARON CEMETERY DISTRICT BOUNDARIES  
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