

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100002541

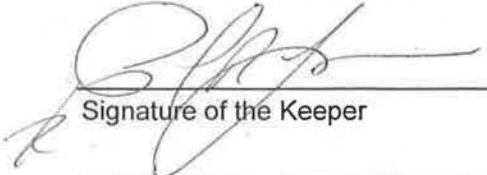
Date Listed: 06/07/2018

Property Name: Elmwood--St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

County: Cerro Gordo

State: IA

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation



Signature of the Keeper

6/7/2018

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

**Significance:**

Criteria Consideration A should be checked. [Sections of the current district (St. Joseph Cemetery) were owned by the Catholic Church. The property meets the Criteria Consideration as a resource owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes during its Period of Significance that is directly associated with the broad patterns of history in a historic context other than religion. The cemetery is significant for its associations with the social, cultural, and architectural history of the area.]

The Iowa SHPO was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

SG 2541



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Nomination Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

other names/site number Mason City Cemetery, Elmwood Cemetery, St. Joseph's Cemetery

2. Location

street & number 1224 S. Washington Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Mason City vicinity N/A

state Iowa code IA county Cerro Gordo code 033 zip code 50401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

23 APR 2018  
Date

State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

6/7/2013  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

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

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/cemetery

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN

MOVEMENTS/Prairie School

MODERN MOVEMENT/Wrightian/Usonian

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

BRICK

roof STONE

other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- ETHNIC HERITAGE
- SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1867-1968

**Significant Dates**

1867  
1908  
1910

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Cleveland, Horace William Shaler  
Wyrick, Raymond

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

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

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

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

Name of repository:

Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Office

Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District  
Name of Property

Cerro Gordo, IA  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 67 ac

### LAT/LON References

(Place additional LAT/LON references on a continuation sheet) **NAD83**

	Zone	Latitude	Longitude	Zone	Latitude	Longitude
1	<u>15</u>	<u>43.14271</u>	<u>-93.20488</u>	3	<u>15</u>	<u>43.14019</u>
2	<u>15</u>	<u>43.14058</u>	<u>-93.20448</u>	4	<u>15</u>	<u>43.13916</u>

See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

### Boundary Justification

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

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Leah D. Rogers/Principal Investigator

organization Tallgrass Archaeology LLC date April 18, 2018

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319-354-6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

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

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

**Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

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

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## Property Owner

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

name Bill Schickel, Mayor, City of Mason City

street & number 10 First Street NW telephone 641-421-3600

city or town Mason City state IA zip code 50401

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

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

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**County and State** Cerro Gordo County, IA

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**7. Narrative Description**

The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is in the southwest quadrant of the City of Mason City in Cerro Gordo County, which is in north-central Iowa (Figure 1). The boundary of this L-shaped historic district encompasses the entirety of the current cemetery boundary (Figure 2). The district is roughly bounded by S. Federal Avenue and S. Adams Avenue on the east, the railroad right of way on the north, S. Monroe Avenue on the west, and 15<sup>th</sup> Street SW on the south (Figures 1 and 2). Contained within this boundary are the original plats and earliest additions for both the St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery and the Mason City Cemetery (later renamed Elmwood). The Second Addition to Elmwood Cemetery, on the east side of the original Mason City Cemetery plat, was designed by noted landscape architect, H.W.S. Cleveland Also within the boundary, is the entirety of the south-side addition platted in the early twentieth century and designed by landscape architects, Ray Wyrick and Donald W. Drewes. Among the significant features of the cemetery district are the 10<sup>th</sup> Street gateway entrance and the stone wall and gatepost structures along the South Federal Avenue entrance and frontage and the four free-standing mausoleums. Other features of note include: the monument marking the Adas Israel section, the Ascension monument structure, the grave site of “Music Man” Meredith Willson, and the cemetery office and two maintenance buildings. Non-extant features include: the former locations of the 1895 chapel, the small pond structure, and the northwest maintenance building.

Every cemetery is a microcosm of its associated community, neighborhood, and society in general. Who is buried where and with whom, how their graves are marked, and who is allowed to be buried at all, speak to the larger issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class in American society and how these evolved in each community. The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery had no official restrictions on who could be buried here, but there were some areas of the cemetery where certain ethnic/immigrant groups and persons of color were buried. The aspects of religion, race, ethnicity, economic class, and the treatment of infant burials are notable components of this cemetery. The clustering of burials by religious preference is perhaps more prevalent than by race, ethnicity, or social standing. In large part, this reflects the fact that St. Joseph Cemetery was established as a Catholic burying ground. Two later additions to Elmwood Cemetery, the Oakland and Edgewood section were also reserved for St. Joseph-affiliated burials but are not specifically identified as such in the cemetery. There are other locations within Elmwood Cemetery that represent specific religious affiliations, such as the Jewish Adas Israel section in the south addition to the cemetery.

There are three distinct immigrant sections in the cemetery including: a Hispanic section on the west side of St. Joseph Cemetery; a Greek Orthodox section in the Hillside Section of Elmwood Cemetery; and an area of Serbs and Slavs buried in Blocks 2 and 3 of the Third Addition to Elmwood Cemetery. Many of these immigrants were workers who settled in Mason City to work in the cement, brick, and tile plants in the early twentieth century. The earliest burial date in the Block 2 and 3 sections of the Third Addition date from 1903-04, while the earliest burial date in the Hispanic section of St. Joseph Cemetery date is 1924.

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County and State Cerro Gordo County, IA

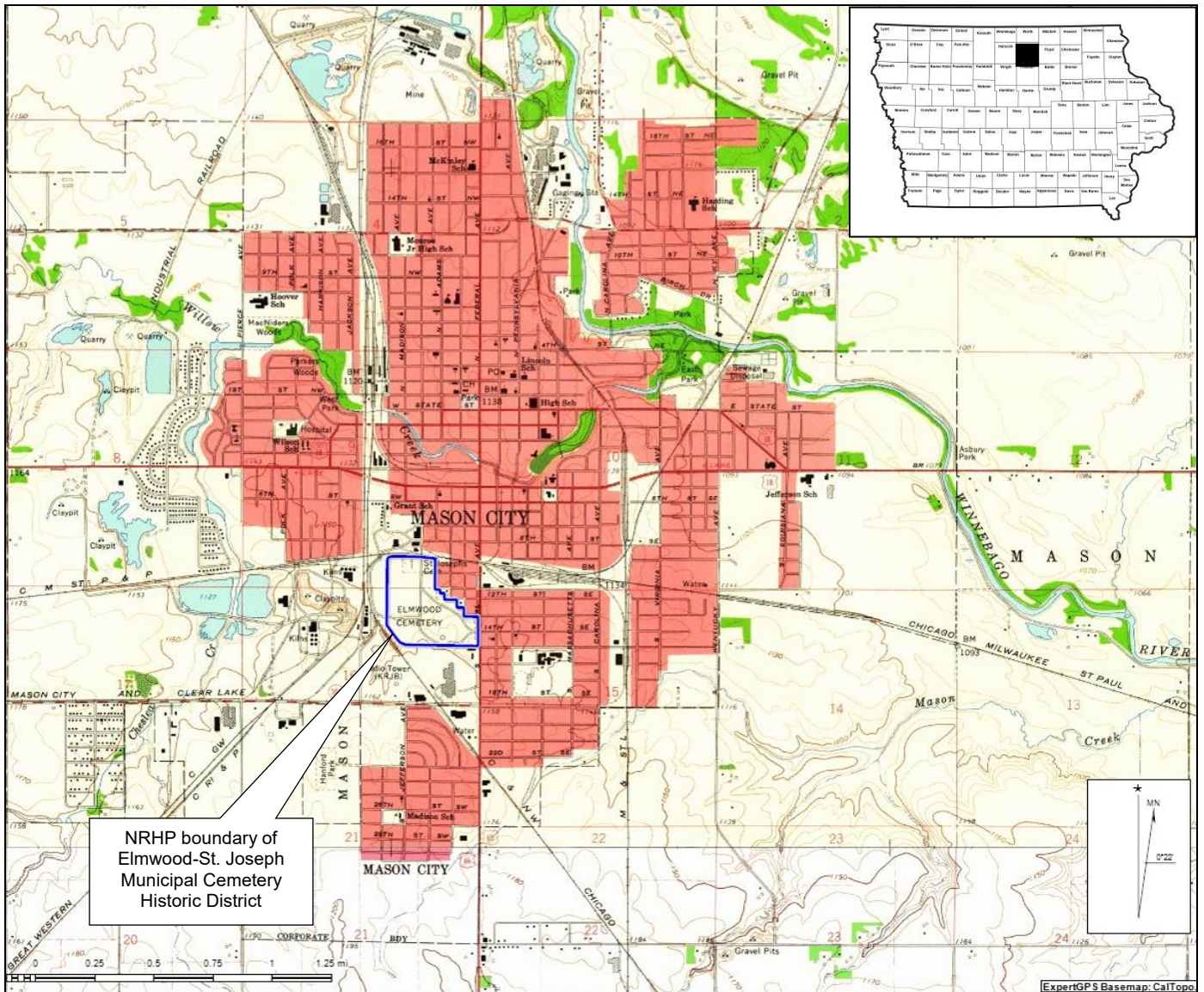


Figure 1. Topographic map showing location of Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District (blue outline) in the City of Mason City, Cerro Gordo County, Iowa. Source: USGS Mason City, IA Quadrangle Map, 7.5' Series, 1959 obtained from ExpertGPS mapping software, 2017.

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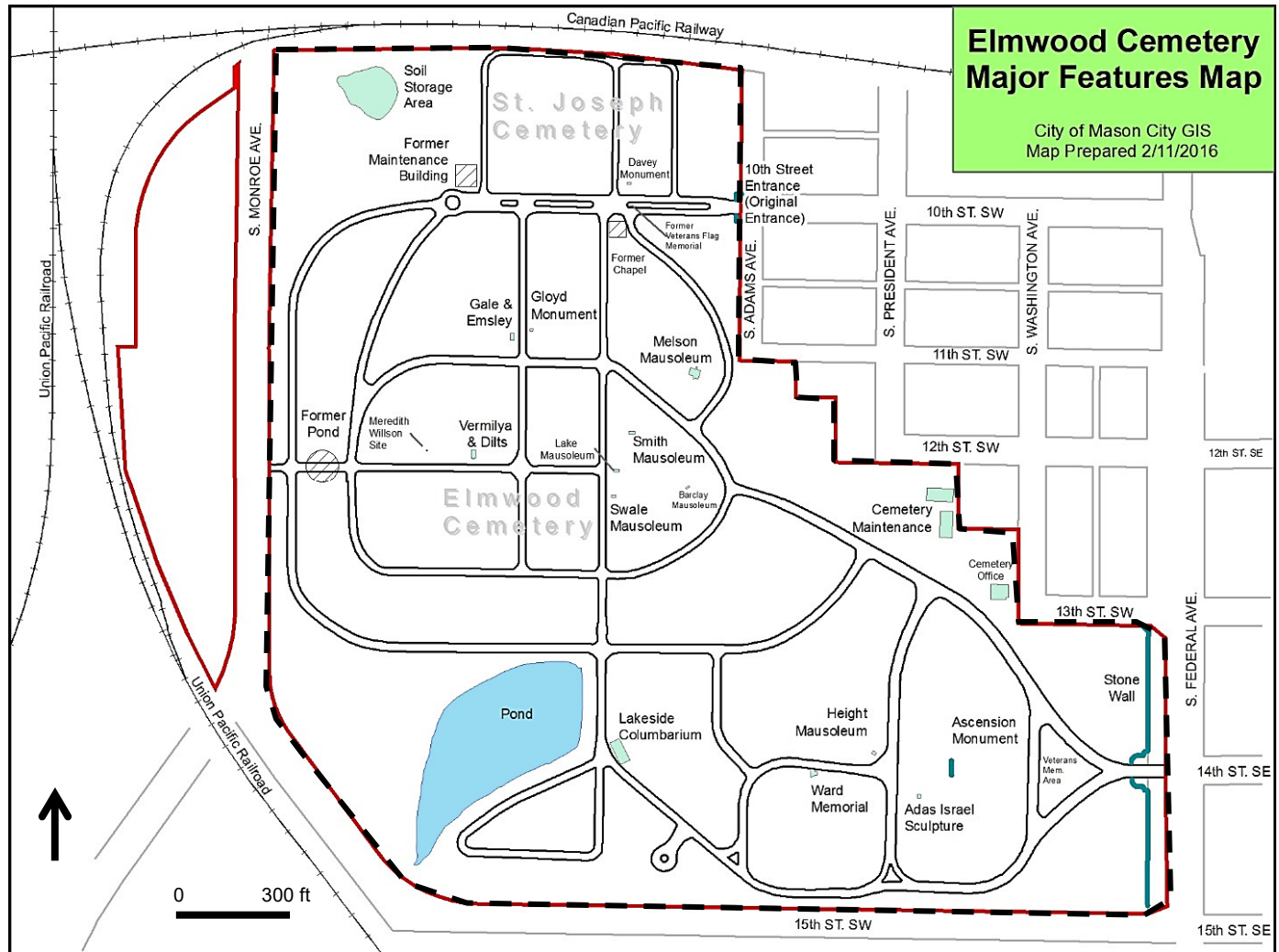


Figure 2. GIS map showing location of major features, mausoleums, and non-extant structures within the NRHP boundary (black dashed outline) of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District.

Map compiled by City of Mason City GIS, 02/22/2016.

As for economic factors, the so-called “potter’s fields” where the indigent were buried were typically located around the margins of a cemetery. Part of the reason for being so-located was that the margin areas were often the last to be filled by persons purchasing lots and were thus open for designation by the cemetery board for those who could not pay for their burial plots. The “Free Ground” section (part of Block 4) of the original Mason City Cemetery was the original area dedicated for indigent burials. In later years, the Free Ground was re-platted to include designated rows for infant burials, one of several such areas in the cemetery. The infant burials date from 1934-1944 in the first two rows of the Free Ground and 1945-1951 in the third row.



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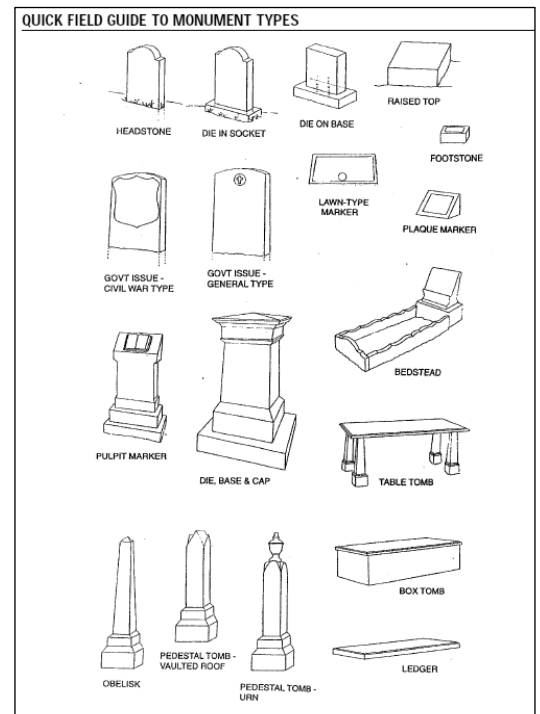
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Another indigent section is the County burial ground located just south of the Second Addition to Elmwood Cemetery. When plotted, this section was on the outer edge of the cemetery; however, as the cemetery expanded in the twentieth century, this area came to be near the center of the larger cemetery. The county plot was so-designated because the Cerro Gordo County Poor Farm (later known as the County Home) had no cemetery on that property, and a place was needed where the County Poor Farm residents could be buried. A second linear plot perpendicular to the county plot on the latter's west end may also have been dedicated for County Home indigents. In practice, the first five to six rows on the west end of the county burial ground were used for infant burials.

One of the seemingly unusual features of Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery is that it has more than one "infant cemetery," with no fewer than five such locations in the older sections of Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries. These are in addition to the modern Lullaby Land plot for infant burials in the newer south section of the cemetery. The more typical cemetery in Iowa came to have dedicated infant burial sections in the modern era, with infants historically buried in their respective family plots.

A guide for historic cemetery monument types one typically finds in American cemeteries is presented in Figure 3. Nearly all these types are represented in the monuments in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery except for the "table tomb" and the "bedstead" types (see Figure 3). However, there are also types present in this cemetery that are not represented in Figure 3. These include: cruciforms, round columns or pillars, bolsters (stone cylinders) on footings, bolsters on upright slabs, and one example of polished granite "ledger" slabs covering the tops of two graves separated at the head of each grave by an upright polished granite die-on-base headstone. Other more unique types in the cemetery include: stones carved to look like logs including one example that has matching "log" footstones; handmade concrete markers in the Hispanic section of St. Joseph Cemetery; and markers in the Serb/Slav section and in the Adas Israel section that bear inscriptions in the Serbian/Slavic and Hebrew languages. The grave site for Meredith Willson originally included a sundial and bird bath that are no longer in place. Markers in the indigent sections are few and are primarily simple, flat-to-the-ground stone markers where present.



**Figure 3. Monument Type Guide for Historic Cemetery Inventories.**  
Source: Chicora Foundation as reproduced in King et al. 2004

Most of grave markers in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery are of limestone, marble, and granite, with smooth and rough quarry-faced surface treatments. Other notable markers are the so-called "white bronze" markers, which are metal

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grave markers that replicate the elaborate styles of Late Victorian markers including obelisks and upright slab-with-capstone markers seen executed in stone in the older sections of the cemetery. Historically, there was a white bronze monument manufactory in Des Moines known as the Western White Bronze Company, which operated from 1884 to 1908. The zinc carbonate used in the process gave the monuments their distinctive bluish gray, stone-like color and created a hard, protective skin so that the moldings remained sharp and clear. However, the brittle qualities of zinc made the monuments vulnerable to breakage. They also are prone to sagging, bowing and cracking because of the effect of gravity on the essentially unsupported weight of these monuments' various parts (People's Publishing & Adv. Co. 1888:70-71; Thoresen and Thoresen 2004:33). The short production run of white bronze markers was largely due to the inability of the American public to fully accept them as an alternative to stone.

In addition to these monuments are four above-ground crypts that were built between 1915 and 2004. These structures differ from the larger mausoleums in the cemetery (see below) in that they typically contain a single burial per structure and do not provide for exterior access once the bodies are interred. Mausoleums are walk-in structures that are usually meant to contain more than one burial, with the burials interred in crypts or under the floor inside of the structure. The mausoleums could continue to be accessed from the exterior even after the bodies were interred. The four above-ground crypts in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery includes those of the Swale, Height, Lake, and Barclay families.

The four free-standing, walk-in mausoleums in the cemetery were built between 1908 and 1915. The designs of these mausoleums reflect the Classical, Romanesque, and Prairie School architectural styles, with one designed by a well-known Prairie School/Wrightian architect, Barry Byrne. The first mausoleum in Elmwood Cemetery was built in 1908 for William Smith of Marshalltown and members of his family. This 9x7-foot, 11½-foot-high structure was designed to resemble a small temple and has double bronze doors flanked by Tuscan pilasters with evergreens planted to either side of the door (Figure 4). It was built using Bedford Stone and could hold six bodies (04/02/1908 *Mason City Globe Gazette*, Reel 142). William Smith was buried here in 1908, as well as his daughter Inez Elizabeth Mills interred in 1918, his wife Elizabeth C. Smith in 1928, his son Charles E. Smith in 1932, and his daughter-in-law Dott Smith in 1976.



**Figure 4. Wm. Smith mausoleum in Elmwood Cemetery looking NE.**  
Photograph taken on April 10, 2017

The second mausoleum was built in 1910 for the Gale and Emsley families of Mason City (Figure 5). Thomas G. Emsley was founder and president of the City National Bank. Upon his death in 1904, his widow Mary Ann assumed his job as bank

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president. Mrs. Emsley also worked to establish a free library in Mason City and was an active suffragette. She later married Charles A. Adams, a Mason City court reporter. Mary Ann Emsley died in 1931. Mabel Emsley, daughter of Thomas and Mary Ann Emsley, and her husband Absalom H. Gale (vice president of City National Bank and State senator) are also interred in the mausoleum. Gale also had an interest in one of the cement plants and owned valuable real estate in Mason City and the surrounding area. He died in 1923. Cecil Emsley Gale, son of A.H. and Mabel Emsley Gale, died in 1933 at the age of 38. Blind since birth, he was said to be an excellent pianist. The family mausoleum is an elaborate design of brick, stone and marble with polished granite columns having Corinthian details and a door with a bronze gate. The façade features a round arch above the centered door, with the door flanked by the granite columns. The walls of the structure are brick, with the four corners of rusticated stone blocks and the archway having an exaggerated arch and keystone made of dressed, smooth stone. The gabled roof of the vault is covered with stone slabs. The design of the mausoleum has elements of the Romanesque Revival in the use of round arches and in the mix of smooth brick and stone and rusticated stone elements.

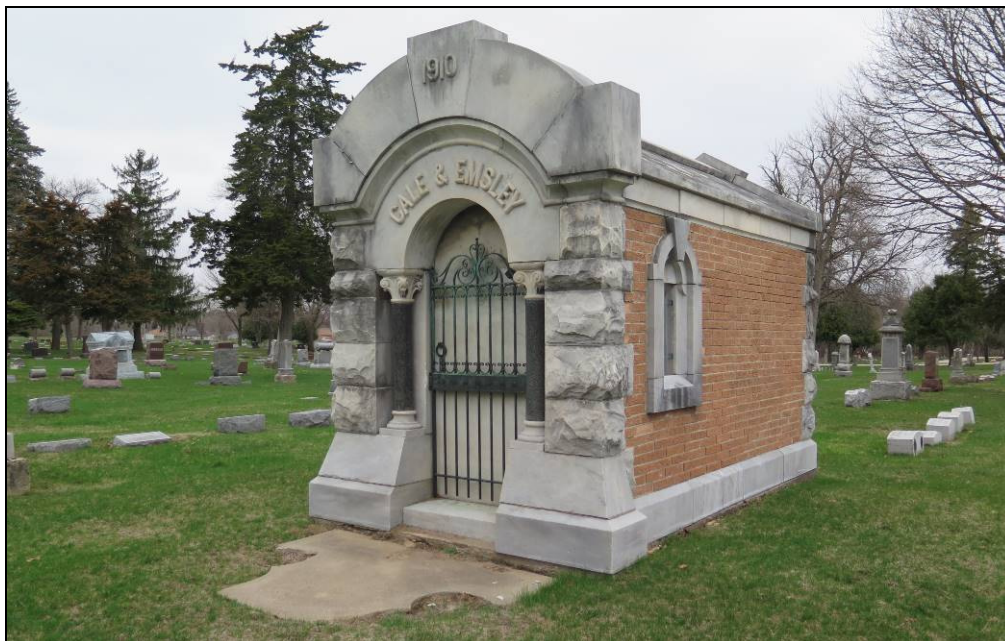


Figure 5. Photograph of the Gale & Emsley mausoleum looking NNW.  
Photograph taken on April 10, 2017.

The third mausoleum was added in 1912 for the Vermilya and Dilts families. This structure was built by the Dayton Granite Works and is an eight-crypt vault, 10 x 14 feet-4 inches in size (Figure 6). The design is very similar to the Gale and Emsley mausoleum (see Figure 5) but differs in the use of all-stone cladding for the walls, its larger in size and massing, and the lack of side windows. It was built for Judge George Vermilya and his family. Judge Vermilya was an early Mason City pioneer and the uncle of architect E.R. Bogardus. He was active in county public affairs and prospered in real estate. His sister, Grace, married W.H. Dilts. The mausoleum houses George Vermilya, his wife Helen, who died in 1898, and their four children: daughter Lida, or Lidya, who died in 1892; daughter Grace V. Dilts, 1924; son Theron Vermilya, owner of the

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Vermilya Cafe in Mason City and who died in 1933, and his wife, Belle, who died in 1949; and daughter Jessie Vermilya Decker and her husband, Frank Decker, both of whom died in 1943.



**Figure 6. Vermilya and Dilts mausoleum looking NNW.**  
Photograph taken on April 10, 2017.

The fourth mausoleum at Elmwood Cemetery was built in 1915 for Minnie Melson by her husband, Joshua G. Melson (Figures 7-8).<sup>1</sup> Four years older than her husband, Minnie was a popular Mason City school teacher. When she died at age 54, her husband hired architect Barry Byrne to design a Prairie School style meditation/prayer room structure in the same vein as the home Melson had built for his wife in Rock Crest, called “The Castle.” Built of rough-hewn purplish stone, the structure is massive but simple and exhibits the strong horizontal emphasis characteristic of the Prairie style. It has a door and a window, through which a bench inside the structure can be viewed. Joshua Melson was a Mason City building contractor-developer, who purchased and platted the River Heights area and helped develop Rock Glen-Rock Crest. He built Lincoln School, the Congregational Church, and the first footbridge over Willow Creek. Melson was among the first Mason City residents to own an automobile and the first to own an airplane. He died in 1946 in Los Angeles at the age of 81. He and his second wife, Julia, who died in 1956, are buried outside the Melson Mausoleum underneath the flower bed outlined by a low rough-faced rock wall. Byrne, who trained and worked with Frank Lloyd Wright, developed his own style and became a prominent architect in his own right. Mason City is well-known for the collection of Wrightian and Prairie School style buildings constructed here in the early-to-mid-twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Technically, this structure was built as a meditation/prayer room rather than a traditional family mausoleum. However, Minnie Melson is interred in a crypt underneath the floor; therefore, for the purposes of this narrative description, this structure is being categorized as a “mausoleum.”

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Figure 7. Melson mausoleum in the Elmwood Cemetery looking West.



Figure 8. Melson mausoleum looking South showing bricked-in door.  
Photographs in Figures 7 and 8 taken April 10, 2017.

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In addition to the four mausoleum structures are two other structures of note: the stone wall and gateway entry along South Federal Avenue and the stone wall and gateway entry along 10th Street SW. The structure at the 10th Street SW entrance is at the original entrance to Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries. However, the entry was originally marked by wrought-iron gates and iron gate posts, which were replaced by stone posts by the 1920s. The extant stone posts actually date from 1950 when the entrance was widened and the stone posts redone. This entrance structure was restored in 2011, which involved repairing the gateposts and the low connecting stone walls and installing new decorative wrought-iron gates (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Stone wall and gateway entry structure at the 10th Street SW entrance to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking West. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

The stone wall and gateway entry structure along South Federal Avenue was built in 1935 using stone salvaged from a building that had been torn down in downtown Mason City. This entrance now serves as the main formal entry to the cemetery. Included in the structure are stone posts and long sections of stone walls as well as one wrought-iron gate (Figures 10-14). A new stone signpost structure was added in recent years just southeast of the entrance (see Figure 13). When originally built, the entrance was a single-lane wide, with the stone posts much closer together and an iron gate in place between the two posts. When the entrance was widened to its current width circa 1955, the posts were relocated farther apart and rebuilt to about half their original height. The curving wall that extended down from the top of the posts was also shortened and cut back (see Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 10. South Federal Avenue entrance to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking West. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

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**Figure 11. Original South Federal Avenue entrance before it was widened.**

Digital copy of photograph taken post-1935 provided by Lee P. Loomis Archive, Mason City, Iowa



**Figure 12. Stone wall entrance structure along South Federal Avenue entrance to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking NW. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.**

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**Figure 13. Stone wall and wrought-iron gate at NE corner of the South Federal Avenue stone entrance structure looking SW. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.**



**Figure 14. New stone signpost with historic stone wall structure behind it at the South Federal Avenue entrance to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking SSW. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.**

Three buildings are present within the cemetery historic district boundaries including the cemetery office and two maintenance buildings. In 1958, the office building was erected on the cemetery grounds in the southeast portion of the cemetery. This building is still used as the cemetery office. Prior to the building of this dedicated office building, the City had leased office space for the cemetery along South Federal Avenue. The cemetery office is a small, one-story building that has a very low-pitched, front-gabled roofline (Figure 15). The door is slightly off-center, with a double window to the left of the door. In 1997, the exterior walls were clad with vinyl siding. When the siding was installed, the windows in the back room of the office were closed in; however, the rest of the windows appear to be original. The foundation is a concrete slab. There is a wide wrap-around porch that also serves as a carport on the side of the building. This porch/carport appears to be original to this building according to available aerial photographs. Having been built in 1958, this may have been a pre-fabricated or pre-assembled building, and except for the modern application of vinyl siding, appears to retain good integrity.



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It is considered contributing to the district as a representation of the later evolution of the cemetery as a business and likely improved the efficiency of the operation by having the office on site. The on-site office also added a level of safety and oversight to the happenings in the cemetery during the day.



**Figure 15. Cemetery Office building in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery.** Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

In 1962 and 1968 the two tile block buildings were constructed in the south section of the cemetery. These two maintenance buildings still stand and were built of clay tile blocks likely manufactured at one of the nearby plants (Figure 16). These two buildings have moderately-pitched, side-gabled rooflines. The walls are unpainted. The foundations are poured concrete slabs or form foundations. Both buildings have overhead garage doors, with all of these doors being replacements; the most recent of which was installed in 2002 on the southern building to accommodate the height of a new backhoe. The southernmost building has one window reduced in size and partially filled with concrete blocks and another window opening now filled in with concrete blocks. Vinyl replacement siding has been added to the gable ends of both buildings. It is not certain when these changes were made to these buildings other than the 2002 garage door installation. Given that the office building was clad with vinyl siding in 1997, it is possible that the vinyl siding was added to the gable ends of the tile block buildings at the same time. Both buildings are considered contributing to the district as representations of the later evolution of the cemetery as a business. These buildings likely improved the efficiency of the increasingly mechanized operation, which needed larger machines and places to house and repair those machines. The construction material used in these buildings also represents the clay tile industry that was important in Mason City in the twentieth century, with tile plants located near the cemetery. One of the buildings has two different shades of tile block colors that may indicate the use of left-overs from two different batches or were salvaged blocks from other buildings.



**Figure 16. Tile block maintenance buildings in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking NNE.** Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

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One substantial object of note within the cemetery historic district boundaries is the bas-relief sculpture of the Ascension in the south addition to Elmwood Cemetery. The Cemetery Board commissioned Louis J. Motto, a sculptor and Italian bronze foundry representative, to execute a bronze bas-relief showing the figure of Christ in ascension. This was to be a central feature of the planned "Garden of Ascension" in the south-side addition to the cemetery in the 1950s. Motto was a sculptor in Miami, Florida at the time, but the bas-relief was cast in Florence, Italy (News article included in the Cemetery's Annual Report from April 15, 1958). The commission was executed in 1955, with Motto paid for the sculpture in May of that year. Foundation work for the placement of the sculpture was done in 1957, with the completion and final installation believed to have occurred in 1958. Figure 17 shows the bronze bas-relief set into an upright stone slab with cast bronze letters below the bas-relief reading "Garden of the Ascension." The stone slab is flanked by two stone pillars, with the whole set into a stone-lined base flanked by stone planter boxes and low stone walls (see Figure 17). The evergreens behind the monument were planted in 1957.



Figure 17. Garden of the Ascension bas-relief sculpture. Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

Summary of Contributing Resources in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

Only those buildings, structures, and objects of substantial size are counted apart from the contributing site of the cemetery district.

*Contributing Site (1)*- This includes the landscape, the network of driveways, the cemetery plats, the planted vegetation of the cemetery, the lake, and all the gravestones, monuments, and above-ground crypts other than the four large, walk-in mausoleums, which are counted individually as contributing structures.

*Contributing Buildings (3)* - These include the cemetery office building built in 1958 and the two tile block maintenance buildings built in 1962 and 1968.

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*Contributing Structures (6)* - These include: the stone wall and gateway entry along South Federal Avenue built in the 1930s (widened and remodeled c.1955); the stone wall and gateway entry along 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW (built in 1950 and restored in 2011); and the four large walk-in mausoleums for the Smith (1908), Gale & Emsley (1910), Vermilya and Dilts (1912), and Melson (1915) families.

*Contributing Object (1)* - The one contributing object in the district is the Ascension bas-relief sculpture added to the south addition of the cemetery in 1958.

*Non-Contributing Structure (1)* - The one non-contributing structure is the Lakeside Columbarium built in the modern era outside of the period of significance for the cemetery. The Columbarium consists of three above-ground structures for the reposing of cremains. They are counted as one structure because they are placed next to one another, are tied together by a surrounding sidewalk system, and are identified by a single name - the Lakeside Columbarium.

Seven Aspects of Integrity

The cemetery retains good integrity for all seven aspects of integrity having lost only one major building in its history—the 1895 stone chapel. While the loss of that chapel is an impact, overall the cemetery retains other significant buildings and structures that mitigate some of the loss. Notably these include the four architect-designed mausoleums dating from the early twentieth century including one unique Prairie School/Wrightian-style mausoleum designed by noted architect, Barry Byrne.

*Location* - The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery retains integrity of location because it encompasses the original location of the Mason City Cemetery (aka Elmwood Cemetery) and St. Joseph Cemetery and all the subsequent additions on the east, west, and south sides of the original Mason City Cemetery plat. Some of the burials in the Mason City Cemetery were moved here from an older cemetery.

*Design* - The cemetery also retains integrity of design because it contains the original plats of both the Elmwood (then the Mason City Cemetery) and St. Joseph Catholic cemeteries. It also contains the Second Addition as designed by H.W.S. Cleveland, noted late nineteenth century landscape architect, and the subsequent twentieth century additions designed by landscape architects, Raymond Wyrick and Donald W. Drewes.

*Setting* - The cemetery retains integrity of setting. The setting remains intact other than the loss of some trees; changes in plantings through the years, such as at the 10th Street SW entrance; and the loss of a small lily pond when the South Monroe Street entrance was added. However, the setting has also been enhanced through the years with a modern pond in the southwest addition to the cemetery and with continued maintenance of the grounds. The cemetery still has a park-like setting featuring mature shade and evergreen trees, curvilinear drives, and scenic vistas.

*Materials* - The cemetery retains integrity of materials because the gravestones, monuments, mausoleums, buildings, and objects are the original materials, except for the residing of the cemetery office building with vinyl siding, replacement of the wrought-iron gates at the 10th Street SW entrance, and the loss of the 1895 stone chapel and small pond structure.

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*Workmanship* - The cemetery retains integrity of workmanship because the original design of the cemetery plat and its historic additions are preserved. The gravestones, monuments, mausoleums, and stone walls and gateways all survive even though repairs and improvements have been needed through the years. Local building materials and the skills of local masons are also present in the tile block buildings, the stone and brick in the mausoleums, and the stone in the entrance walls and gateway structures. The Ascension bas-relief also reflects the artistic skills of a noted bronze sculptor. The landscape plans of Cleveland, Wyrick, and Drewes are still evident in the layout of the curving driveways and the use of the natural terrain in the cemetery design.

*Feeling* - The cemetery retains integrity of feeling because it evokes a sense of time and place as a rural cemetery on the edge of Mason City and as it developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to include lawn-park and memorial park sections and elements. The cemetery can still be experienced by visitors much as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with daily visitors coming not just to pay respects at grave sites but to walk and jog through the cemetery as if it were a city park. While it is now surrounded by residential and commercial development and busy roadways, one can still find places of quiet beauty and reflection within the cemetery.

*Association* - Finally, the cemetery retains integrity of association because it is still the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery and remains an active burial ground to the present day. It is also recognizable as a significant designed landscape.

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**Significant Dates (continued)**

1912  
1915  
1935  
1950  
1958  
1962  
1968

**H) Architect/Building**

*Architect (continued)*

Drewes, Donald W.

Byrne, Barry

**8. Narrative Statement of Significance**

Summary Statement of Significance

The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with social history and ethnic heritage represented by the cemetery's association with families and individuals, who played an important role in the settlement and commercial/industrial growth of the city, and in its social history, particularly in its reflection of the role that immigrants and religious groups played in Mason City's history. The cemetery is also locally significant under Criterion C for the architectural significance of its cemetery design by noted landscape architects, H.W.S. Cleveland, Ray Wyrick, and Donald W. Drewes in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and in the design of the cemetery's mausoleums and other structures, such as the Ascension sculpture, by noted architects and artists, including: Barry Byrne and Louis J. Motto. The cemetery design reflects the influence of national movements and design trends in cemetery design. It originated in the late nineteenth century as a formal grid pattern design reminiscent of the Old Burial Ground tradition. It then evolved into a rural, scenic cemetery influenced by the Rural Cemetery and the American Picturesque landscape design movements of the nineteenth century. In the early to mid-twentieth century, new additions to the cemetery were designed in the more open and less elaborate "lawn-park" and "memorial park" cemetery designs that became popular during this period. The period of significance for the historic district is from 1867 to 1968. The beginning date is the incorporation and establishment of the Mason City Cemetery, with the end date being the year that the last major building was constructed in the cemetery reflecting the evolution of the cemetery as a business. Significant dates include: 1867 when the Mason City Cemetery was first established; 1908, 1910, 1912, 1915 when the four mausoleum structures were added to Elmwood Cemetery; 1935 when the South Federal Avenue stone walls and gateway were built; 1950 when the 10th Street SW stone walls and gateway were built; 1958 when the Ascension bas-relief sculpture was installed and the cemetery office building was constructed; and 1962 and 1968 when the two cemetery maintenance tile-block buildings were added.

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*Criteria Consideration D* - The district is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because it meets Criteria Consideration D as a cemetery that derives its primary significance from its distinctive design features and its association with the various cemetery design movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

*Archaeological Potential* - There may be some significance under Criterion D for potential archaeological evidence of non-extant buildings and structures such as the 1895 stone chapel, the early twentieth century kidney-shaped lily pond, and the original tile block maintenance shed. Any evidence of the pond may have been destroyed when the South Monroe Street entrance was built in the 1960s; however, the location of the chapel and the maintenance shed seem to be relatively intact and have not been reused for burials. However, for the present nomination, significance under Criterion D is not claimed.

Historical Development and Significance (Criterion A)

*Early Settlement and Development of Mason City, Iowa*

Cerro Gordo County was first settled in the early 1850s around Clear Lake. The earliest settlement in the Mason City vicinity was made in 1852 along the banks of Lime Creek approximately three miles northeast of the future site of Mason City. Soon after, John B. Long and John Biford migrated from Winnebago County, Illinois, and made “extensive claims on Lime creek, in the vicinity of what is now Mason City” in June 1853 (Wheeler 1910:312). A large grove of timber on Lime Creek was named “Masonic Grove” by Long in honor of the order of Free Masons, of which he was a member. The grove also went by the name of “Mason Grove” (Union Publishing 1883:969). Reportedly, in 1854, a town was laid out “on part of the present site of Mason City by John B. Long, George Brentner, and Joseph Hewitt, each proprietor and owner of one-third interest, although the land on which it was laid out yet belonged to the government” (Wheeler 1910:312). This early town plat was named “Shiboleth.” Official land sales in the county began in September 1854.

Settlement after 1854 steadily increased. The town of Shiboleth “was purchased by John B. Long, who changed the name to Masonville in honor of a son of his named Mason, who died a short time previous to his leaving Illinois” (Wheeler 1910). “Either soon after this, or early the next year, a post office was established, and as there was already an office in the state called Masonville, both the post office and the name of the town was changed to Mason City” (Wheeler 1910). Among the other early settlers of Mason City were J.S. Church, N.M. Adams, Silas Card, I.W. Card, E. Randall, Thomas Drummond, A.B. Miller, F.J. Turnure, and S. Zuver. E. Randall and his brother built a saw mill at Mason City, which was the first such mill in the county. Figure 18 shows the location of Mason City in Cerro Gordo County.

The 1883 county history book has a somewhat different account stating that the town had been “laid out June 28, 1855, by John B. Long and George Brentner” (Union Publishing 1883:955). That history further noted that “Mason City has many natural advantages, among which are timber, fine building stone, potter’s clay and good water power” (Union Publishing 1883:956). Irving W. Card was the surveyor and Long and Brentner were the proprietors of the 1855 town plat. The railroad addition to Mason City was made to the south side of the original plat on December 13, 1856. That survey was also made by I.W. Card but was done for George E. and E.B.D. Woodward (Union Publishing 1883:956). The railroad addition was made in speculation of a rail line coming to Mason City. However, it would be 1869 before a railroad was built into the county. By that time, Mason City had become the county seat.

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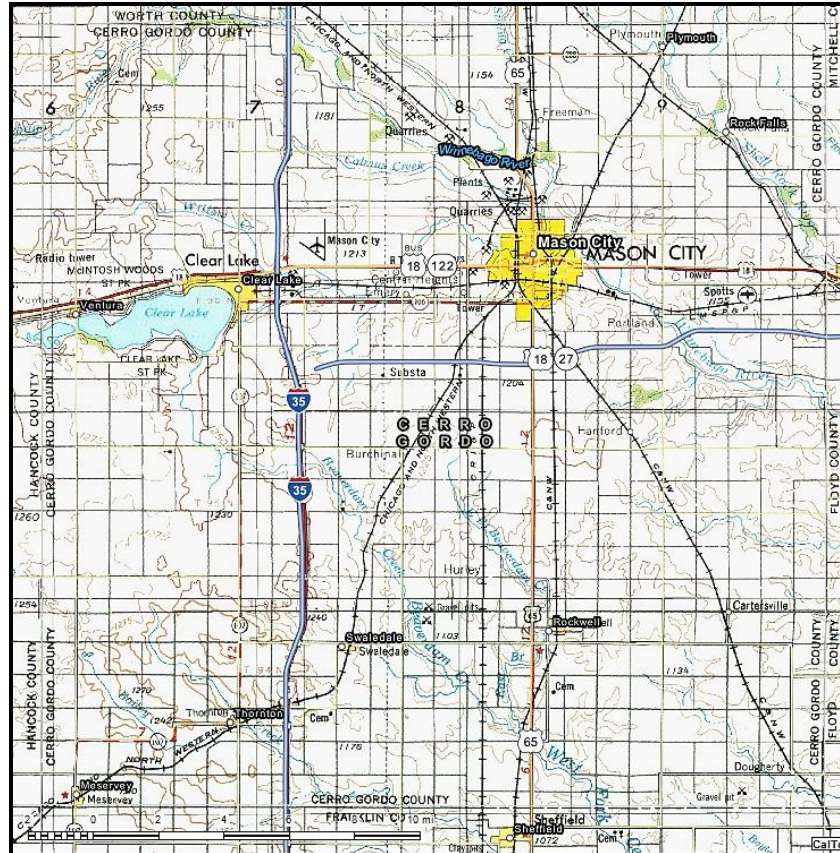


Figure 18. Location of Mason City in Cerro Gordo County.

Source: USGS Cerro Gordo County topo obtained from ExpertGPS mapping software, 2017.

In 1865, Mason City was connected to Cedar Falls by a stage line and could boast of three churches (Congregational, Methodist, and United Brethren), a Masonic lodge, the Cerro Gordo Republic newspaper, four general stores, one flour mill, one saw mill, one drug store, one hotel, one lumber yard, one cabinet shop, one wagon shop, and two blacksmith shops. Mason City's population in 1865 was around 300 (Iowa State Gazetteer 1865, transcript accessed at [http://genealogytrails.com/iowa/cerrogordo/towns.htm#Mason\\_City](http://genealogytrails.com/iowa/cerrogordo/towns.htm#Mason_City), January 2016).

By 1875, Mason City was noted to have “been favored with excellent railroad facilities” (Andreas 1875:470). The town had been improved with “many elegant, substantial and architecturally handsome business houses and residences” and had been settled largely by persons hailing from the Eastern and New England states. Schools and churches had been established along with hotels and other business houses. It was further noted that the “excellent hotel facilities” reflected that fact that Mason City had also become a summer resort because it was located only nine miles from Clear Lake (Andreas 1875:470).

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The railroads that had entered the county by 1875 included: the Iowa & Dakota Division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad; the Central Railroad of Iowa; the Mason City & Minnesota; and the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, & Minnesota (Andreas 1875:470). The Iowa & Dakota line of the Milwaukee Railroad extended east-west through the northern portion of the county and through the southern end of the Mason City town plat in 1875 (Figure 19). The Central Railroad extended north-south through the northeast portion of the town plat and intersected with the Milwaukee line and that of the Mason City and Minnesota Railroad just southeast of town (see Figure 18). The Mason City & Minnesota line converged with the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Minnesota Railroad just south of Plymouth in the northeast corner of the county. Thus, Mason City was the railroad hub in the county at the time. In subsequent years, the Chicago & North Western Railroad had two additional lines converge in Mason City.

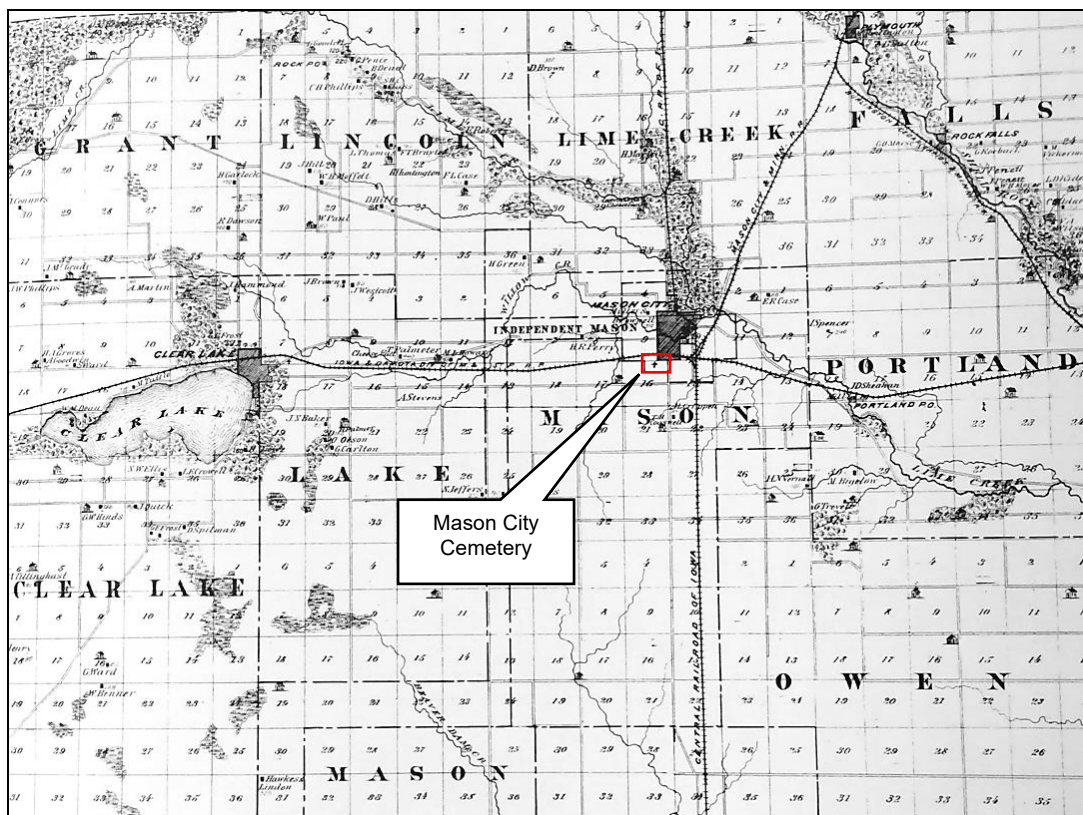


Figure 19. 1875 map of the Mason City vicinity showing railroad lines in relation to the Mason City Cemetery (red outlined). Source: Andreas 1875

The 1875 map also shows the location of what was then the Mason City Cemetery just southwest of the town plat and just south of the Milwaukee rail line (see Figure 19). At the time, the cemetery abutted the “South Mason City” plat, which had been added to the south side of the “Original Town” plat to incorporate the Milwaukee rail line into the city. The arrival of the railroad stimulated both the economy and population growth of Mason City, with “the population of this place nearly doubled, and in wealth it quadrupled” (Union Publishing 1883:970).



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Additions to the original city plat included: Felt's Plat (1857); Bright's Addition (1869), the above-noted South Mason City plat (1869), Stanbery Addition (1870), B. Randall's Addition (1870), North Mason City (1872), Mumford's Addition (1873), James Foster's addition to South Mason City (1882), Parker & Foster's Addition (1882), Foster's Second Addition (1882), and Horace Parker's Addition (1882) (Union Publishing 1883:957). The South Mason City addition was platted to facilitate the location of the depot for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.

Figure 20 is a panoramic "bird's-eye" illustration of Mason City in 1884 and shows the Mason City Cemetery in the distance south of the railroad tracks. This illustration depicts the cemetery in two sections, the north one being the Catholic cemetery and the south one being the Mason City Cemetery separated by an east-west drive. Both sections were shown as rectangular except where the Catholic cemetery abuts the angled right of way of the railroad tracks. The cemetery plats are depicted as outlined by trees or shrubs with scattered trees in the northern portion of each section (see Figure 20).

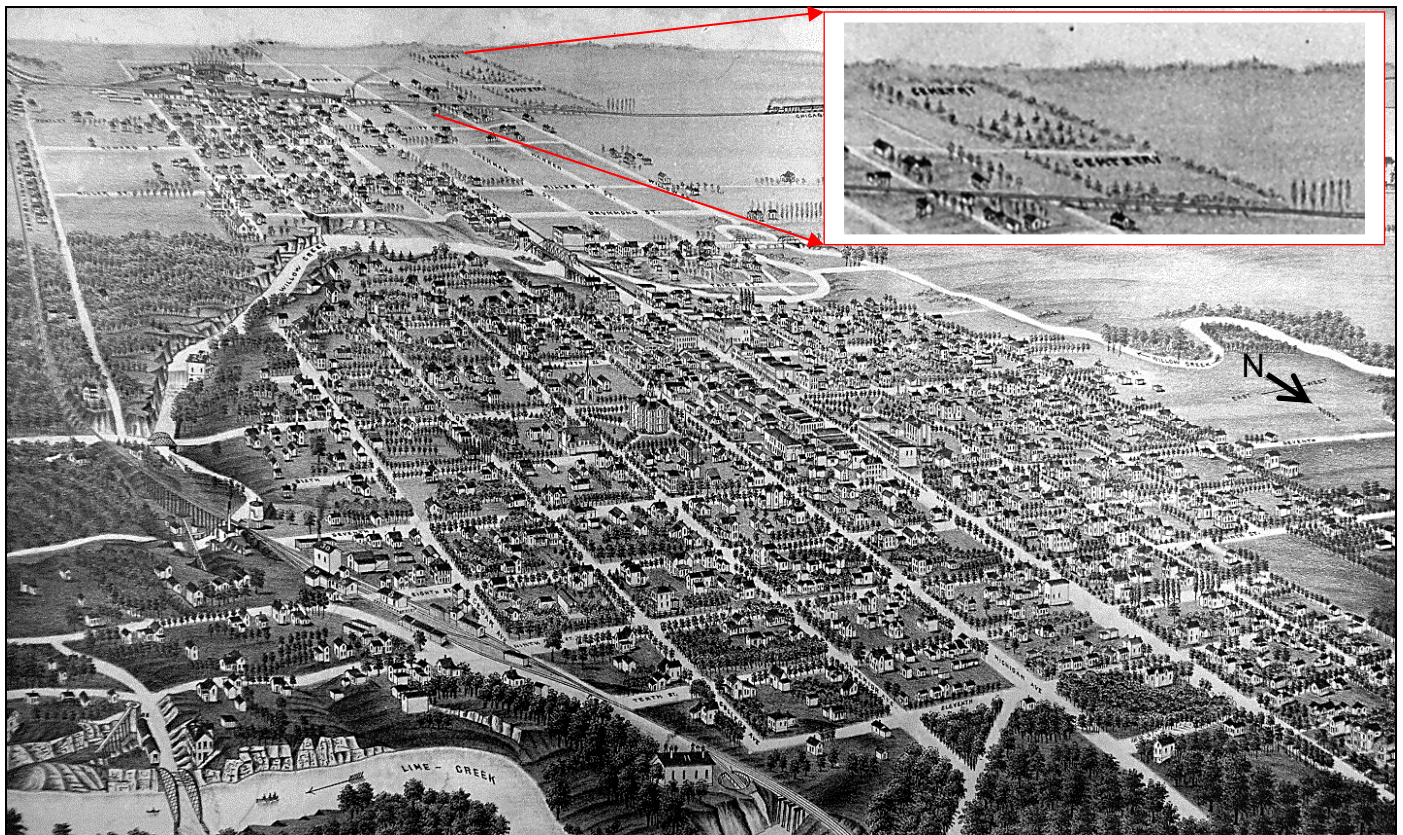


Figure 20. 1884 Bird's-eye illustration of Mason City, Iowa, showing inset detail of the Mason City Cemetery shown in two sections both labeled "cemetery." Source: Stoner 1884; digital copy provided by Lee P. Loomis Archive, Mason City, Iowa.

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Mason City achieved incorporation as a town in 1870 and as a city in 1881. Early mayors included: W.C. Stanbery, W.W. Knapp, A.B. Tuttle, D.B. Mason, J.B. Dakin, B.F. Hartshorn, R. Wilber, John D. Glass, W.V. Lucas, and John Cliggett (Union Publishing 1883:968). As the city grew, important industries came to include the brick, tile, and sewer pipe industries. By 1912, four major plants were located around the junction of the railroads just to the west and northwest of the Mason City Cemetery, which by then was known as the Elmwood Cemetery (Figure 21).

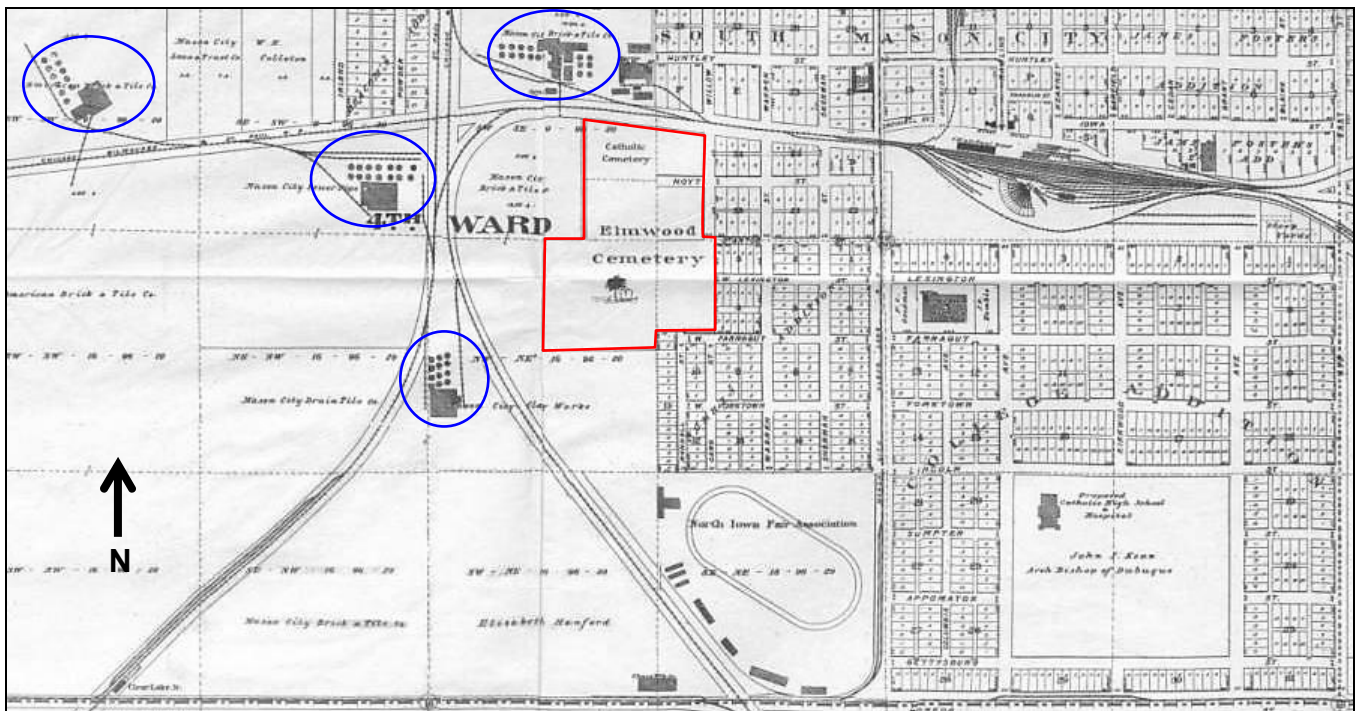


Figure 21. 1912 map of the southwest portion of Mason City showing the brick, tile, and sewer pipe plants (blue circled) around the railroads just west and northwest of Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries (red outline) at that time.

Note that St. Joseph is labeled simply as “Catholic Cemetery” on the north side of “Elmwood Cemetery.” Source: Anderson 1912.

Cement plants were added in the city in the early twentieth century and played an important role in Mason City’s later industrial development. At the peak, there were nine brick and tile plants and two cement factories in Mason City. Reportedly, these industries “manufactured more brick and tile and more Portland cement than any other city of any size in the world” (Anonymous c.1911-16).

### Establishment of the Cemetery

The earliest burial ground in Mason City was owned by early pioneers and located near what is now Elm Drive and 9th Street NE in the 1850s. At the time, this location was “about a half-mile northeast of the city, on Section 3 on Lime Creek” (Union Publishing 1883:976). In April 1867, the Mason City Cemetery Association was formed by early settlers (04/25/1867, *Cerro Gordo Republican*). The Rev. Zelotes, R. Ward, C.H. Day, and John V. Mumford are credited with the

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cemetery's organization. The May 2, 1867 issue of the *Cerro Gordo Republican* reported that at an Association meeting, members were examining sites, with some in favor of selecting a new site but others were satisfied with the old one.

The Mason City Cemetery Association was incorporated May 4, 1867. The original officers included: Irving W. Card, president; Robert Hickling, secretary; John V. Mumford, vice president; George Vermilya, treasurer; and A. Hulet, John Dexter, Alfonzo Garner, trustees. At their May 11, 1867 meeting, the Association decided to purchase five acres of property "to the southwest of the city" from John Dexter. The 1883 county history described the location as "a beautiful, well drained plateau, descending [sic] towards the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. Being somewhat higher than the town, the view in either direction presents a charming sight" (Union Publishing 1883:976). An article in the July 18, 1894 edition of *Cerro Gordo Republican* credits Rev. Zelotes R. Ward with locating the present site and further noted "[b]ut for the Generosity and kindness of Judge Randall and some other person who have allowed burials to be made on their land, the dead must have been scattered like beasts."

At the Association meeting on May 15, 1867 it was decided to use stockholders' funds to pay \$50 to John Dexter. Stockholders were to have lot preference but could initially purchase no more than two lots (05/18/1867, *Cerro Gordo Republican*). Samuel B. Waughtal was among the first to subscribe for a share of stock in the newly-formed Mason City Cemetery Association, entitling him to one vote. The deed for purchase of the property was dated August 30, 1867. In a commemorative edition in 1953, the *Mason City Globe Gazette* (06/01/1953) noted the purchase of the future cemetery land by the Dexters and the beginning of the cemetery as follows:

BOUGHT ELMWOOD CEMETERY LAND FOR \$3 AN ACRE

The land on which the Elmwood Cemetery is now situated was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Dexter, who came to Mason City at the close of the Civil War. The purchase involved an 80-acre tract. The Dexters also purchased the lot on which the K. of C. building stands at 2nd and S. Federal. The lot extended south to Willow Creek. The consideration was \$60.

1867: START ELMWOOD CEMETERY

Elmwood Cemetery had its genesis as the Mason City Cemetery Association on May 11, 1867, when the group voted to buy five acres from John Dexter southwest of the city. As time went on additional tracts were acquired.

The first officers of the association, which was incorporated the year it was organized, were I. W. Card, president; J. V. Mumford, vice president; R. Hickling, secretary, and George Vermilya, treasurer.

Had Civic Pride

In order to create some civic pride in keeping up the appearance of the cemetery in those days, the pioneer Cerro Gordo Republican ran this notice:

"Fellow citizens, come out in the name of humanity and common decency and let not the place where we inter our dead be a wilderness and a stigma upon the town. Let it rather be an ornament and a place wherein we shall not be ashamed to show a friend the last resting place of those that were once dear to us."

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That exhortation seemed to ring down through the decades. Elmwood Cemetery has been kept in fitting tribute to its dead.

It appears that the Original plat and First Addition of the cemetery were laid out by the Association (not verified) with the first documented burial in 1867. The remains of those buried in the original grounds were exhumed and re-interred in the new cemetery.<sup>2</sup> The first documented burial in Mason City Cemetery was Willie Doolittle, the son of J.B. Doolittle, in July 1867. When J.B. Doolittle passed away on October 26, 1867, his will directed that a marker be placed in the memory of Willie and himself (Randy Opheim, personal communication 2015).

St. Joseph Cemetery was established in 1875 by the Archdiocese of Dubuque. The four acres of land was purchased in 1873 in Bishop Hennesy's name for St. Joseph's parish. It was located immediately north of, and adjacent to, the Mason City Cemetery. In 1931, the Mason City Cemetery Association entered into a formal agreement with "St. Joseph's, Incorporated" to set aside the Oakland and Edgewood sections (approximately 75,000 square feet) exclusively for the burial of members of the Catholic faith. Lots would be sold by the Mason City Cemetery Association with the approval of St. Joseph's, Incorporated. About this time the Association began to care for St. Joseph's Cemetery for an annual fee of \$750; although, during lean years only the actual costs of care were invoiced to St. Joseph's.

In May 1875, it was noted that "200 more trees" were being planted in the Mason City Cemetery (05/1875, *Mason City Express*). In 1883, the "History of Cerro Gordo County" noted the following:

CEMETERY.

The first cemetery in the neighborhood of Mason City, and the one in use until 1867, was situated about a half mile northeast of the city, on section 3, on Lime creek. But as the country further developed, it was deemed necessary to procure other grounds, consequently, in 1867, an incorporated organization was perfected, known as the Mason City Cemetery Association, which purchased the present grounds [Elmwood Cemetery] laying a half mile to the southwest of the city, on a beautiful, well-drained plateau, descending[sic] towards the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. Being somewhat higher than the town, the view in either direction presents a charming sight. The society, after purchasing the land, platted it and thus the present cemetery was opened; but not until 1871, was there much improvement made upon the grounds. At that date the grounds were fenced, lots staked off and systematically numbered. The Catholic

<sup>2</sup> The exhumations were not completed all at once given an item in the August 3, 1882 *Cerro Gordo Republican* that reported the body of Leonard Warner was "taken up from the old grave yard, where it had lain for 18 years, and transferred to the new cemetery. He was a soldier of Co. B, 32d Iowa, and died from disease contracted in the army (08/03/1882, *Cerro Gordo Republican*, Reel 17). In 1885, workers digging a water main behind a store in Mason City uncovered a coffin that was presumed to contain the remains of Mrs. James L. Stewart, who had died of consumption in October 1855. She had been buried when this location was part of John B. Long's field. Her remains were also exhumed and reinterred in the new cemetery (12/23/1885, *Mason City Times*; 12/24/1885, *Mason City Republican*). However, in 1903 a black walnut coffin was uncovered during a cellar excavation for a new addition to the Ensign building, and this burial was also identified as having been that of Mrs. Stewart (05/20/1903 and 05/21/1903, *Mason City Globe Gazette*; 05/21/1903, *Cerro Gordo Republican*). This burial was also reburied at Elmwood Cemetery. Then in 1917, yet another skeleton was unearthed by workmen digging a sewer in the Cummings Addition. Charles H. MacNider, president of the Elmwood Cemetery instructed city authorities to rebury the bones in the cemetery (07/06/1917, *Mason City Times-Herald*).

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portion [St. Joseph Cemetery] of this cemetery is in an enclosure just north of the other. Among the fine monuments in this cemetery are two of an imposing character, that of Leonard HILL and Mrs. A. T. PARKER. The people of Mason City are public spirited, and in the matter of caring for the city of the dead, they are not found wanting. Each recurring springtime these grounds are almost daily visited, the green carpeting about the graves smoothed down and a floral offering left upon the sacred mounds. A sidewalk runs from the city nearly to the grounds. The citizens of the place take interest in the annual Decoration Day of the soldier's graves, always having befitting ceremonies upon that occasion (Union Publishing 1883:976).

By 1887, there were 773 burials in the Mason City Cemetery (06/11/1887, *Saturday Gazette*).

On June 22, 1891, it was recorded in the minutes that the Mason City Cemetery Association had held a special meeting to hear a report from Mrs. I.W. Card of the Ladies Cemetery Improvement Society. The Improvement Society had travelled to Minneapolis to confer with H.W.S. Cleveland, a well-known landscape architect, regarding the replatting of the new cemetery grounds (i.e., the Second Addition). The Trustees authorized the Ladies Cemetery Improvement Society to hire "Professor" Cleveland to design the replat of 6-1/2 acres but "at their own expense" and that the plan and the plat were "to be submitted to this board for approval."

H.W.S. Cleveland was a pioneer in landscape architecture who had built his reputation designing cemeteries and parks throughout the Midwest. He rose to prominence through the influence of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's most famous landscape architect in the nineteenth century, with whom he had worked for a time. Cleveland designed much of the park system in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

It was reported in the *Mason City Globe Gazette* on September 5, 1891 that plans for the new addition to the Mason City Cemetery had been prepared by "Cleveland & Son of Minneapolis" and the plans were on exhibit "at Randall's Furniture store" (09/05/1891, *Mason City Gazette*). Specifically, the article noted the following:

The plans for the new addition to the Mason City Cemetery, prepared by Cleveland & Son, of Minneapolis, are on exhibition at Randall's Furniture store. We have examined them and it seems to us that as far as beauty in arrangement and convenience are concerned they could not be bettered. Mason City owes a debt of gratitude to the ladies who have taken this matter in hand and are carrying it on so successfully (09/05/1891, *Mason City Gazette*).

The cemetery trustees had officially approved the replat "as submitted by Architect Cleveland" on July 7, 1891 (Mason City Cemetery Board Minutes). On November 13, 1891, O.C. Burdick of Mason City received a letter from R.D. Cleveland<sup>3</sup> on the letterhead of H.W.S. Cleveland, "Landscape Gardener," Minneapolis, Minnesota, that discussing the best way to number the lots and keep track of who was buried where. He also recommended keeping other data such as age and date of death as the Board wished and that he had lot posts from a company in Minneapolis who could furnish posts for the Elmwood Cemetery if desired. He ended his letter by asking "how did the plan suit and have you done anything yet on the grounds?"

On May 7, 1892, the Board's Annual Meeting Minutes praised the replat as designed by H.W.S. Cleveland, noting that the plans would not only provide more lots than their "old survey" but "would add greatly to the beauty of the grounds." The

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Dwinel Cleveland was H.W.S. Cleveland's son and business partner.

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records indicated that the newly-platted area had been seeded and arrangements had been made to mark the lots with iron rods. The minutes also reported that 32 lots had been sold for a total of \$740.50, or an average of \$23.14 per lot. For comparison, the cost of a lot in 2014 was \$450. The plat for the second addition was officially filed in May 1893 (05/18/1893, *Cerro Gordo Republican*). Figure 22 shows that portion of the cemetery that is known to have been designed by Cleveland.

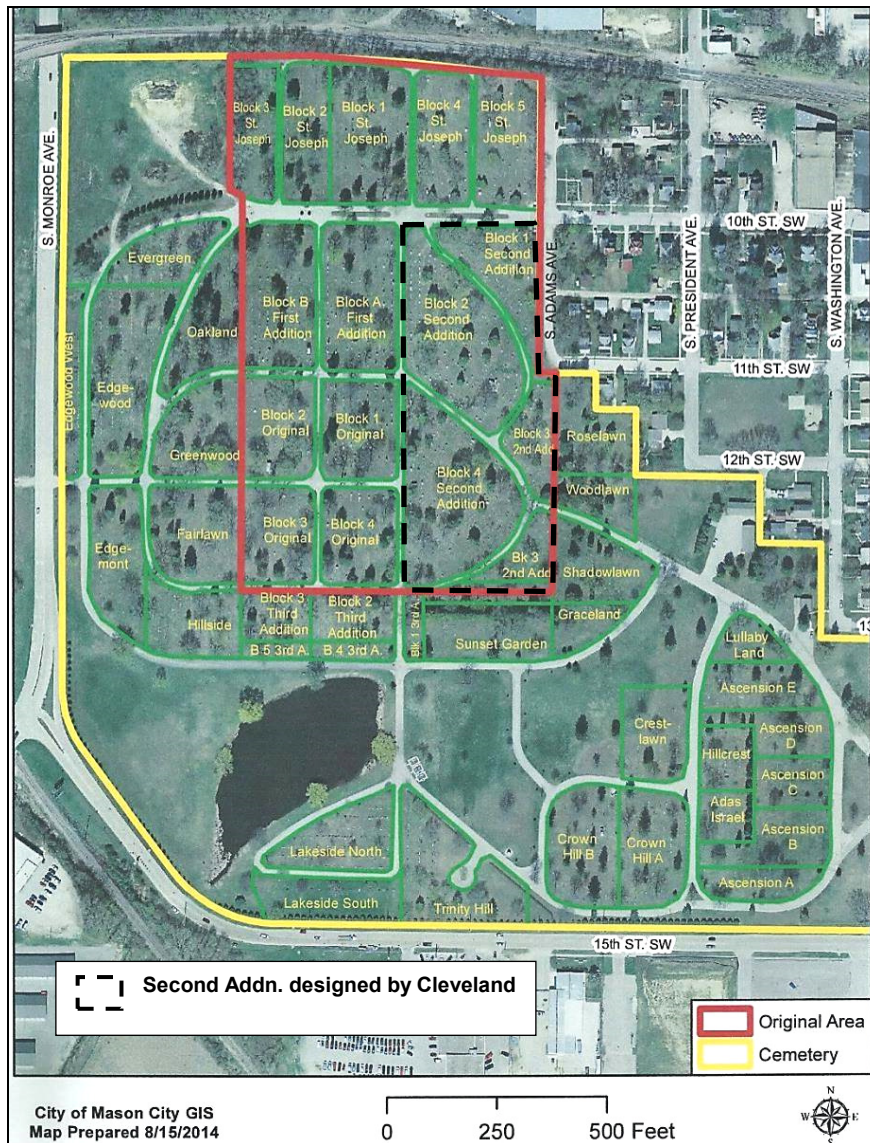


Figure 22. GIS aerial map of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery showing the area designed by H.W.S. Cleveland. Source: City of Mason City GIS, 2014.

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Unfortunately, Cleveland's original plans do not appear to have survived; therefore, what is known of his design can only be gleaned from the current plan and layout of this area (see Figure 22). The curvilinear driveways that follow the natural contours of the terrain are typical of Cleveland's cemetery designs. It remains unknown whether the stone chapel that would be built in 1895 in the northwest corner of the Second Addition and the boulevard that separates St. Joseph Cemetery from Elmwood that once had ornate and decorative plantings (installed in 1893) were part of Cleveland's plans and were simply delayed in their execution. It is interesting to note the influence that Cleveland's plan for the Second Addition must have had on the curvilinear driveway design of the west-side additions (including the Oakland, Greenwood, and Fairlawn plots) (see Figure 22). The west-side plan certainly complements Cleveland's design on the east side and helps to balance the overall design of the areas flanking the simple rectangular grid pattern of the Original Plat and its First Addition (see Figure 22).

Some additional happenings in the cemetery in 1893 included a Memorial parade and the decorating of the graves of 37 veterans in the Mason City Cemetery. There was also a request for people to "leave the flowers alone" in the cemetery indicating some of the personal conduct issues that plague every cemetery into the present day (05/30/1893, *Mason City Saturday Times*; 06/17/1893, *Mason City Gazette*). In July 1893, a section of Hoyt Street (now 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW) was given to Cemetery Association to be used as an entrance into the cemetery. The Association planned to build stone pillars and install a swing gate. There was also to be a flower bed placed in the center of the entrance lane, with drives on each side (07/12/1893, *Mason City Times-Herald*,). In August 1893, it was reported that the iron entrance gate had been purchased for \$240 (08/23/93, *Mason City Times-Herald*). By December 1893, it was reported that the gate and posts had been installed as an entrance to both cemeteries (i.e., St. Joseph and Mason City cemeteries) (12/06/1893, *Mason City Times-Herald*). Figure 23 confirms that the 1893 entrance gate and fences were iron with no indication, at least in this photograph, of stone walls or pillars having yet been built.



**Figure 23. Photograph of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance with the original metal gates and fence in place.**

Date unknown but appears to post-date 1922 when the flag pole (seen in the background) was reportedly installed by the VFW at the 10th Street entrance. Source: Lee P. Loomis Archive, Mason City, IA.

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In 1894, a new road to the cemetery had been built, with the “old road to the cemeteries on the south side” to be soon abandoned.

The new route will be via the new road built during the winter which will lead straight down Main street under the Milwaukee tracks and thence across the slough to the cemeteries. The road has been filled in with rock and only needs a covering of earth to induce travel. The old way across the Brown forty necessitated crossing the railroad at a particularly dangerous place. Considerable improvement has also been made in and about the burying grounds. The cemetery associations have their new iron fence and gate erected and the property owners on the hill have enclosed their lots, necessitating following the road. When once traveled the new route out Main street will always be used. It is a much needed and desirable improvement (04/25/1894, *Mason City Daily Times and Mason City Weekly Times Herald*).

Other notable happenings in 1894 included the receipt of eight headstones for Civil War soldiers and put in place by the old sexton, George Wilson (06/13/1894, *Mason City Daily Times and Mason City Weekly Times Herald*). The Rev. Ward died in July 1894 but was interred in Shell Rock, Iowa (07/18/1894, *Mason City Gazette*). The only cemetery founders documented to be buried at the Elmwood-St Joseph Cemetery are Judge Elisha Randall, who died in 1897, Irving W. Card (died 1887), and C.H. Day (died 1903).

Most notably in 1894, it was reported that a “stone chapel” was to be built in the cemetery (08/29/1894, *Mason City Daily Times and Weekly Times Herald*; 08/23/1894, *Mason City Daily Times*; 08/29/1894, *Mason City Daily Times*). Specifically, it was proposed that the chapel would function as a receiving vault and waiting room and was to be “of architecture appropriate to surroundings” and estimated to cost \$2,000. The cemetery records were also now to include the age of the individual, their nativity, date of death, and the nature of their fatal malady—the last being a new addition to their record keeping.

Bids for building the stone chapel were being requested in May 1895. The architect was F.A. Clark, who practiced in Minneapolis in the 1890s-1910s but had also become an osteopathic physician and was no longer based in Minneapolis by 1902 (*The Improvement Bulletin* 1902:11). The building was to be built of stone and two stories in height with a large basement. In addition, were the chapel room and two waiting rooms for funeral attendants on the upper floor. The building was to be located near the first turn in the main driveway (now 10th Street SW) and was to face east (05/31/1895, *Mason City Weekly Times Herald*). The low bid for the chapel construction was \$1,550 submitted by W.E. Barber, a contractor from Mason City (06/8/1895, *Mason City Daily Times*). Barber was contracted to build the chapel; however, a 1931 advertisement for Rye Construction Co. of Mason City listed the chapel at Elmwood Cemetery among buildings built by that company (06/13/1895, *Cerro Gordo Times*; 05/07/1931, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*). Another news article in the same edition noted that the “elder Mr. Rye joined with Dan Farrell and George White” in the construction of “the chapel in Elmwood cemetery” (05/07/1931, *Mason City Globe*). The “elder Mr. Rye” was Chris Rye.

This chapel was a high-style design that combined elements of the Gothic Revival (including a pointed-arched, stained glass window centered on the façade and a steeply-pitched roofline with wide overhang and flaring at the eaves) and the Romanesque Revival (seen in the used of rough-faced stone blocks in the wall construction). The ground plan of the building appears to have been cross or T-shaped with a very steep pyramidal-hipped roof over the front ell and a steeply-pitched, cross-gabled roof over the rear section of the building. The front ell had two canted corners where entry doors were recessed



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and reached by sets of stone stairs. These doors flanked the Gothic-arched window. Decorative flowerbeds were planted below the window (Figure 24). The stone chapel is no longer standing. It was still in use in 1914 when the funeral of H.N. Wass was held in the chapel (04/21/1914, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). In 1946, it was proposed to convert the chapel into the cemetery office building, which would require “getting the chapel into shape” (Cemetery Association Minutes, 10/21/1946). It does not appear that it was ever used as the office, with the extant office building constructed in 1958 for that purpose. By 1965 the chapel was no longer in use and was demolished (Cemetery Board Minutes 7/16/1965). The stained-glass windows were salvaged from the chapel and were housed in the current cemetery office building for a time but their whereabouts are currently unknown. Ideas had been set forth to use them elsewhere in Mason City or sell them as antiques. The Cemetery Board minutes do not mention their final disposition.



**Figure 24. Photograph of the stone chapel at Elmwood Cemetery built in 1895.**

This stylish building is no longer standing. It stood just southwest of the cemetery entrance that is along 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW. Digital copy of c.1900 photograph provided by Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa.

In 1896, a proposal was made to move the town’s Civil War monument into the cemetery; however, the proposal was not approved (05/28/1896, *Cerro Gordo Republican*). There were 52 veterans buried in the St. Joseph and Mason City cemeteries, with 50 from the Civil War and two from the War of 1812 (06/03/1896, *Mason City Express*). By 1905, there were 93 Civil War vets buried at Elmwood, with two Spanish-American War vets now interred (05/31/1905, *Mason City Times-Herald*).

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The biggest event in 1896 was the changing of the name of the Mason City Cemetery to “Elmwood Cemetery” at the request of the Ladies Improvement Society, who had been encouraged by the Cemetery Association to suggest a new name (05/05/1896, Cemetery Association Minutes).

In 1900, an additional five acres of land was purchased and was platted in 1901. In 1904, a 20 x 30-foot area of the existing cemetery was purchased by the C.H. Huntley Post (through the County Board of Supervisors) to accommodate 20 graves to bury soldiers too poor to purchase a grave site. This was accomplished so that these soldiers would not have to be buried in the Free Ground section (11/18/1904, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). The Cemetery Association originally reduced the cost of the plot of land to half the regular price, but later the Association covered the entire bill for the land (11/18/1904, *Mason City Globe Gazette*).

Cemetery improvements in 1905 included the laying out of new drives and walks. “The roadways that will be built are 16 feet wide and there will be a walk on each side six feet in width” (04/11/1905, *Mason City Times-Herald*). The City Engineer laid out the road. It was further noted that “This new idea of the [cemetery] association will make an already pretty spot beautiful” (04/11/1905, *Mason City Times-Herald*).

In 1908, the first of four stylish, free-standing mausoleums was built in the Elmwood Cemetery. It was built for William Smith and his family (see Figure 4). In 1909, the Cemetery Association was requesting bids for a receiving vault. This structure was to hold up to 36 bodies awaiting burial when the ground was frozen ground or weather conditions otherwise precluded immediate burial. The cost of the vault was estimated at \$2,000 (01/14/1909, *Mason City Republican*). For some reason, this vault was never built.

In 1920, a new cemetery was established about one-half mile west of the current city limits on Highway 122 West. This is known as the Memorial Park Cemetery, with the first burial in 1928. Memorial Park Cemetery reflects the evolution of cemetery design in the early twentieth century towards more open lawn spaces, fewer trees, and less dramatic grave markers set close to the ground surface. In the 1930s, Elmwood Cemetery also evolved towards this type in the design of its newer south-side additions.

In 1922, the Mason City Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Association erected a flagpole and plaque near the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance (see Figure 23). It was dedicated to their heroic dead. In 2011, the plaque was restored and relocated to the main entrance off South Federal Avenue. Figure 25 is a second historical photograph of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance showing the flagpole in the center median along with flowerbeds, but by this time, the entrance flanked by stone piers with flower urns on top has been built. The stone piers in this photograph are not the same stone piers that now flank this entrance being closer together, having different cap stones, and having carved name plates—one for Elmwood and one for St. Joseph cemeteries (see Figure 25).

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Figure 25. Post-1922 photograph of the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance with the flagpole in the median and the stone entrance then in place. Source: Lee P. Loomis Archive, Mason City, IA.

On May 14, 1929, the Cemetery Association hired Samuel W. Rubee, to compile a map of the cemetery as it then existed. Rubee was a prominent landscape architect from Marshalltown, Iowa (Map on file in City Engineering Department, Mason City, Iowa). The 1929 map shows the Third Addition and the 1895 chapel (Figure 26). The cemetery border at the time stopped at Adams Avenue. It is uncertain whether the 1929 map of the Second Addition was taken from H.W.S. Cleveland's original 1891 design plans or if the detailing of this area was added later, such as the 1895 chapel (see Figure 26). This map shows the Free Ground platted section of the original Mason City Cemetery. However, it is suspected that the 1929 map depiction of the Free Ground plat was later altered to show the replatting of the Free Ground in the 1930s when the original alleys or aisles were platted as rows of plots, including plots for infant burials (see Figure 26) (Randy Opheim, personal communication with Leah Rogers, 12/28/2017). [A map executed in 1931 and shown in Figure 27 shows the original platting of the Free Ground.] The 1929 map also shows the plat for the County burial ground just south of the Second Addition.

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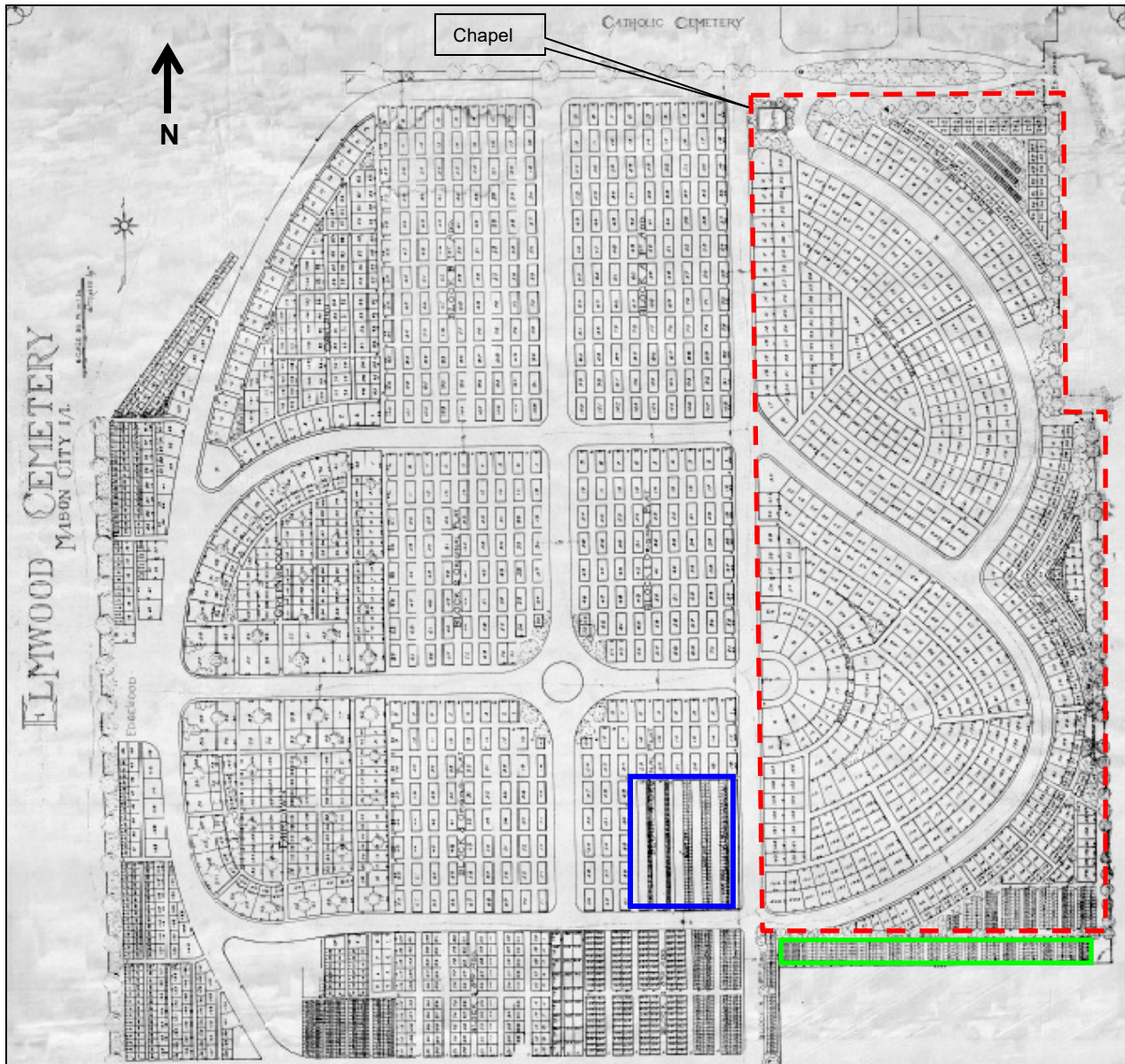


Figure 26. 1929 map of Elmwood Cemetery drawn by S.W. Rubee.

Red dashed outline is the Second Addition designed by H.W.S. Cleveland; Green outline is the County burial ground; and Blue outline is the Free Ground, but as noted above, this plat configuration appears to have been added to the 1929 map after the Free Ground was replatted in the 1930s. Note that not all of the St. Joseph (Catholic) Cemetery was represented on this map.

Map on file City Engineering Department, Mason City, Iowa.

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Another set of plans was prepared by Rubee and was specifically dated 1931 (see Figure 27). This map shows Rubee's design for 26 acres of new ground acquired in 1929, formerly the Norris Addition, which had been originally platted for residential housing. Rubee's design included curvilinear driveways with a pond and large sections for burials with a new entrance off South Federal Avenue (see Figure 27). This plan tied the new driveways into the older sections of Elmwood Cemetery. *However*, Rubee's plan was never executed and was one of several submitted in the early 1930s to the Cemetery Association. It appears that the landscape architect selected for the final design was Ray Wyrick of Des Moines, with the execution of his plan begun in 1935 (01/12/1935, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*).

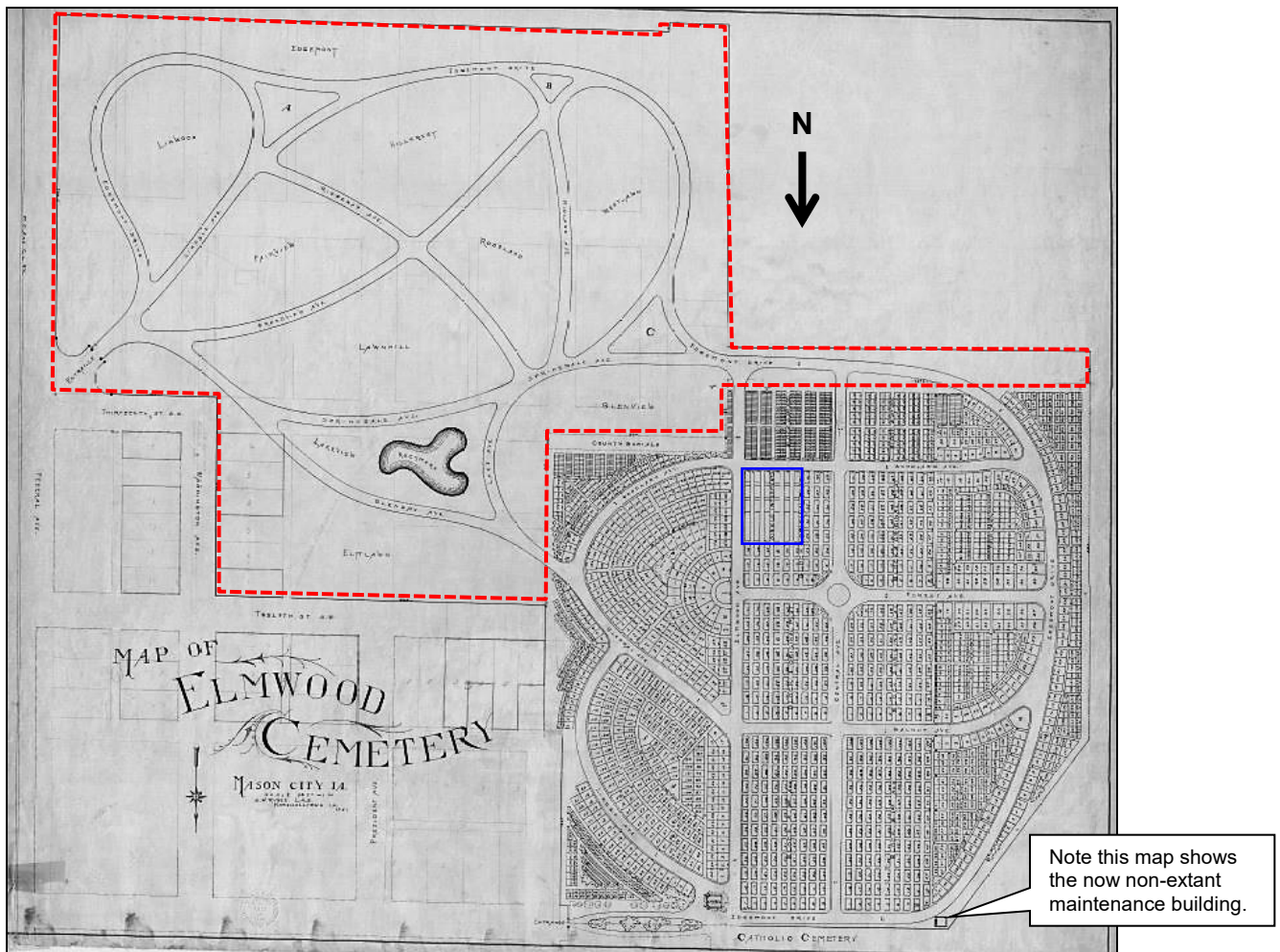


Figure 27. 1931 Map of Elmwood Cemetery drawn by S.W. Rubee, L.A.E., Marshalltown, IA showing Rubee's design for the new south-side addition (red dashed outline). This map shows a depiction, but not exact reproduction of, the 1929 map of the cemetery by Rubee (see Figure 26) in the lower right-hand quadrant. This depiction shows the original plat configuration of the Free Ground (blue outlined). Map on file City Engineering Department, Mason City, Iowa.

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There were delays in development of the new section acquired in 1929 because of lawsuits regarding the City vacating streets to the Cemetery Association. On April 4, 1931, Ralph Stanberry, representing the Cemetery Association, went before the City Council to support vacation of streets and alleys to facilitate the addition to Elmwood Cemetery. Then in May 1931, it was reported that a "Gothic" entrance for Elmwood was soon to be built.

A Gothic entrance of iron grill work and native split boulders in shades of red, gray and green interlined with black concrete will be built at South Federal avenue and Thirteenth street as an entrance to Elmwood cemetery, according to Ralph Stanberry, for 21 years secretary of the cemetery association. Other development plans including the building of two major drives to wind thru the valleys of the new portion of the cemetery to be developed.

Landscape work is under the direction of Frank Goodman and will be done entirely with natural material. More than two miles of drives will be included in the cemetery.

Blueprints and further plans will be completed in about 30 days.

"When development is completed everyone in Mason City should be glad because of its beauty," said Mr. Stanberry. "There is nothing more beautiful than nature and it will all be native. It will be a fitting memorial for the dead" (05/07/1931 *Mason City Globe-Gazette*).<sup>4</sup>

However, as with Rubee's submitted 1931, the proposed "Gothic" entrance was also not built as originally proposed. In 1934, Allen G. Patton produced an illustration of a "proposed development" for Elmwood Cemetery that showed an iron grillwork front gate and stone piers and walls along a new South Federal Avenue entrance (Figure 28). The design of the new entrance was more Rustic-inspired than "Gothic." Furthermore, an advertisement in the local newspaper in 1935 reproduced Patton's illustration as the "new addition to Elmwood," with the accompanying article identifying the landscape architect as Ray Wyrick of Des Moines, Iowa (01/12/1935, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*) (Figure 29). Patton was a commercial artist in Mason City, and it appears that he was hired by the Cemetery Association to produce an artist's rendering of Wyrick's proposed plan for the cemetery to use in advertisements such as reproduced in Figure 29. The 1935 news item accompanying the ad in Figure 29 also identified F.B. Raymond as the head of the newly-created sales department for Elmwood Cemetery.

Mr. Raymond has been instrumental in development and sale of some of the largest cemetery projects in the country. He was associated for some time with a cemetery association in southern California, after the association of which he moved to Detroit, Mich. to organize and direct the sale of a cemetery that is recognized as one of the most beautiful burial grounds in the country.

Pleased with Plans.

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<sup>4</sup> The 1931 news article also noted that at a meeting of the board of trustees earlier that week that Carl A. Parker had been elected president of the cemetery board of trustees, with A.R. Sale elected treasurer, Ralph Stanberry was elected secretary, and Dan Durkin as superintendent. Other trustees included Dr. H.F. Pool, Jay Decker, Willis G.C. Bagley, and Frank Goodman. The article also listed the following as "names of prominent citizens who have served the cemetery in the past"—I.R. Kirk, C.H. McNider, O.T. Denison, M.S. Schermerhorn, W.G. Harding, W.J. Stewart, Mrs. T.G. Emsley, Ben Randall, James Rule, and D.J. Stewart (05/07/1931, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*).

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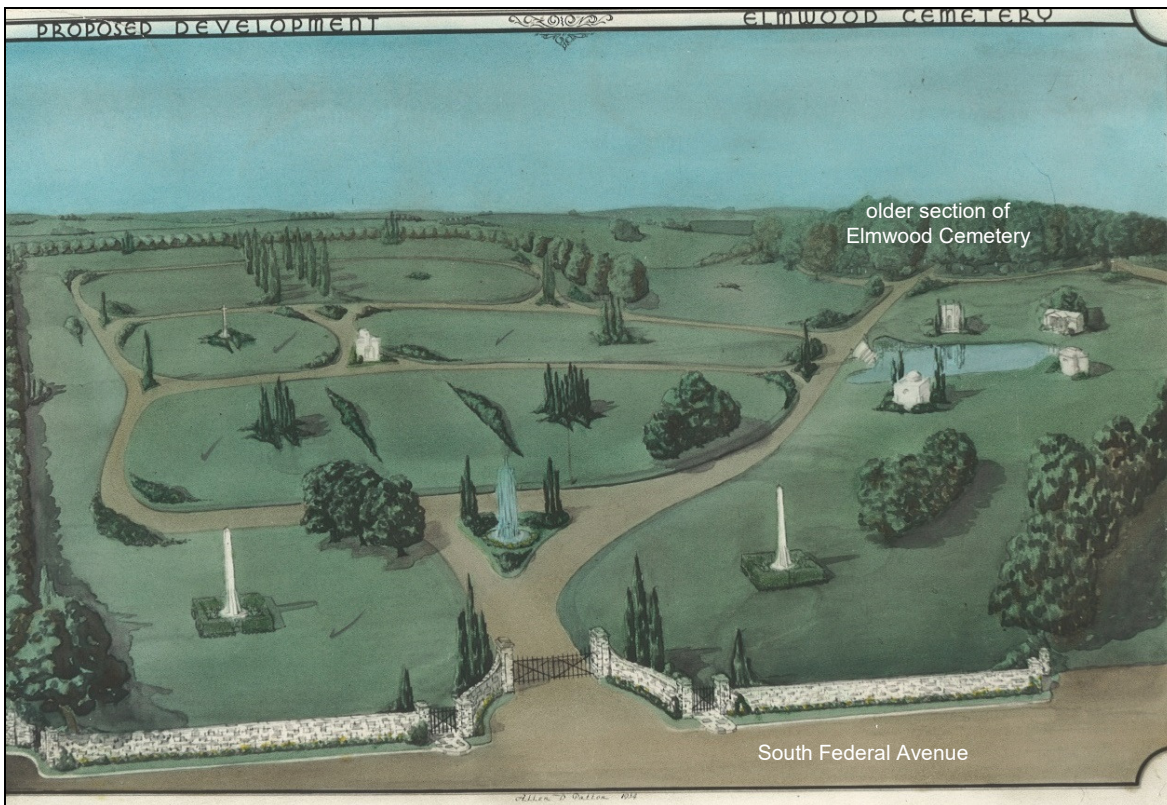
The new sales director is particularly pleased with the possibilities of the development and beautification of the addition to Elmwood and is working in co-operation with Ray Wyrick, Des Moines, nationally known landscape architect, in the development of this new area.

Certain exclusive areas are being developed on the park plan being no monuments are permitted while in other locations they may be erected, Mr. Raymond pointed out. The landscaping will include a mirror lake by private mausoleum sites.

**To Build Rock Wall.**

The rock from the Lloyd and Tuttle hall, being torn down to make room for the new Montgomery, Ward and company building, is being hauled to the Elmwood section for the erection of a stone wall and entrance on Federal avenue.

Mr. Raymond is no stranger in Mason City. Twenty-five years ago when he was a salesman for a coal company he made his headquarters here. Mrs. Raymond is a former resident of Mason City (01/12/1935, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*).



**Figure 28. Allen Patton’s 1934 illustration for “proposed development” at Elmwood Cemetery.**  
View is looking WNW. Source: Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City, Iowa.

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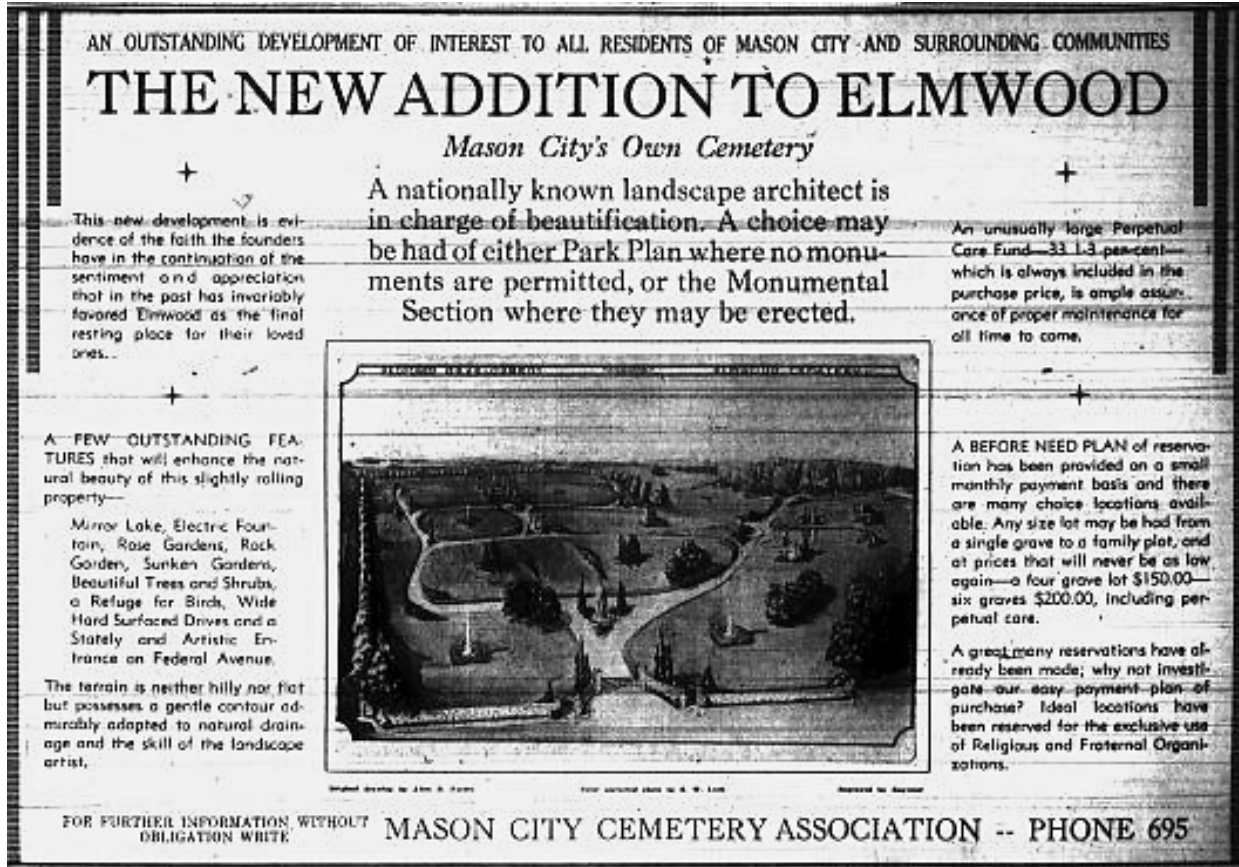


Figure 29. 1935 Advertisement for “The New Addition to Elmwood” using Patton’s 1934 illustration.

An accompanying news article identified the “nationally known landscape architect” as Ray Wyrick of Des Moines, Iowa.

Source: 01/12/1935, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*

The article further noted that this was the first time in the Cemetery Association’s incorporation history that a sales department had been created. Obviously, the Cemetery Association was responding to the need to compete in the Mason City market for burial site purchases in the new addition. Their competitor was likely the newer Memorial Park Cemetery, with the news item referring to the design of Elmwood’s new addition to being on the “park plan.”

The rock wall in the design was built in 1935 and still stands along the South Federal Avenue frontage of Elmwood Cemetery, although as noted previously the entrance was later widened and the stone posts moved farther apart and reduced in size in the process (see Figures 10-11). However, other elements of the design illustrated in Figure 28 were not executed including the “mirror lake” surrounded by “private mausoleum sites.” Figure 30 is a modern aerial showing the area depicted in the 1931 illustration. Figure 31 is a 1948 aerial view of the cemetery showing the rock wall entrance structure along South Federal Avenue. It also shows initial development of some of the curving driveways in the south addition, with this area still very much under development and not yet complete. It is likely that the economic difficulties of the Great Depression and the



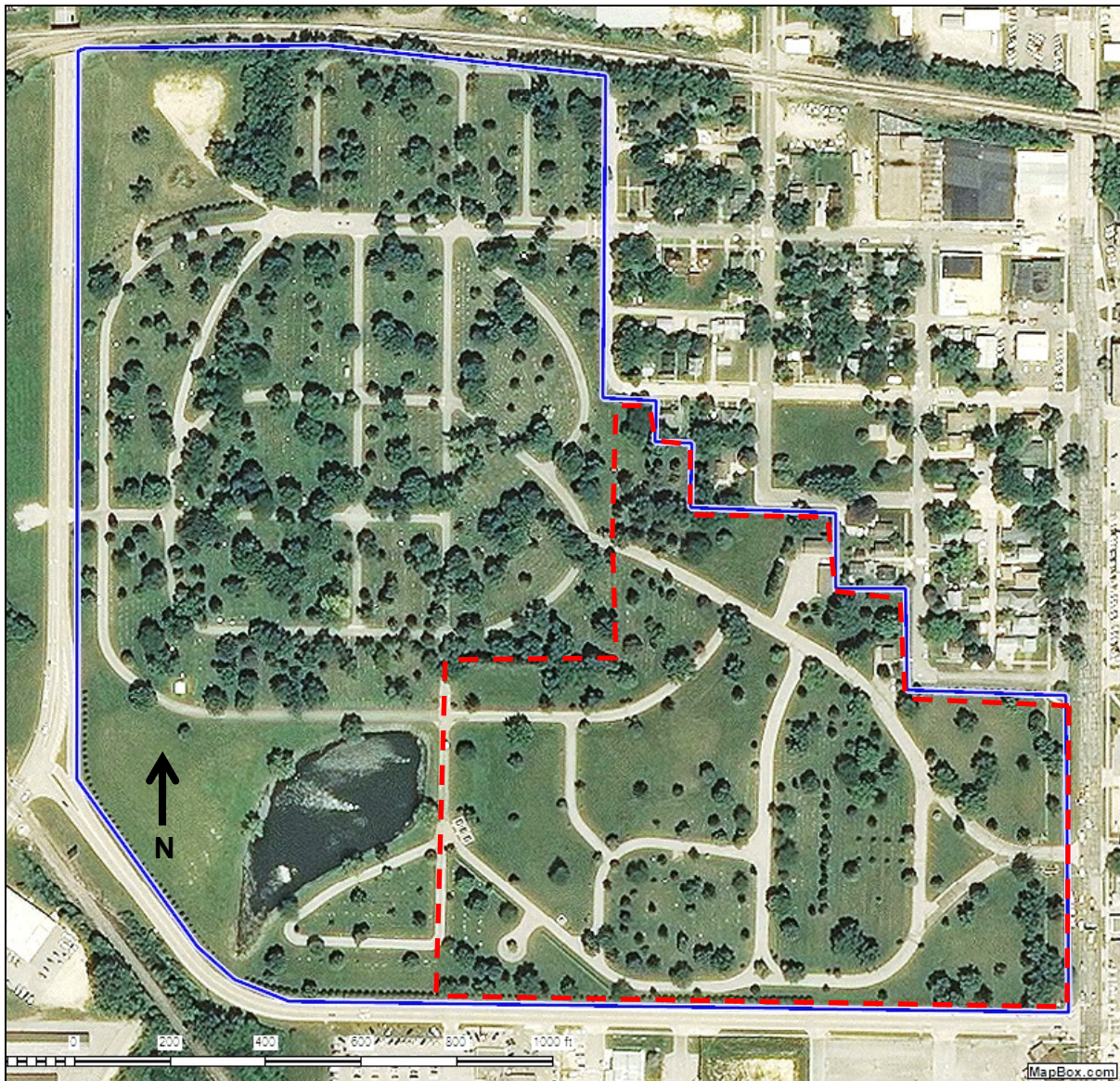
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reduction of materials and manpower during World War II stalled development of the south-side addition until the post-war years.



**Figure 30. 2013 Aerial view of Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery (blue outline) showing area that appears similar in plan to the illustration in Figure 28 (red dashed outline).**

Source: 2013 Aerial photo obtained from ExpertGPS mapping software, 2016

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**Figure 31. 1948 Aerial view of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery looking to the WNW showing area under construction (red shaded).** South Federal Avenue is in the foreground. The older sections of Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries are in the upper right corner and the newer south addition to Elmwood is in the lower left corner. Copy provided by the Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa (Safford W. Lock Collection SL18142).

Another note in the 1930s history of the cemetery is a report in 1932 that St. Joseph Cemetery was being expanded (06/01/1953, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). This may have involved the known reservation in 1931 of the Oakland and Edgewood sections of Elmwood for Catholic burials rather than purchase of new property since St. Joseph's platting as it stands today was in place before 1932. The "sales plat" map showing the "reservation for Roman Catholic burials" was compiled by Ray Wyrick "Landscape Engineer" (Map on file Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City). Within the area designated as St. Joseph Cemetery, the earliest burial in Block 1 is 1875; the earliest in Block 2 is 1903; the earliest in Block 3 is 1924, the earliest in Block 4 is 1885, and the earliest in Block 5 is 1873. Therefore, the 1932 "expansion" does not appear to have involved the addition of new land but rather refers to the reservation of sections in the Elmwood Cemetery for Catholic burials.

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An interesting aside, Block 3, which is the westernmost block in St. Joseph Cemetery, contains many Hispanic graves. These immigrants were drawn to Mason City in the early twentieth century to work in the cement and brick and tile plants located not far from this burial ground. Their grave markers are modest in size, and a number are distinctive hand-made concrete markers (Figure 32). The location in Block 3 on the far west edge of the cemetery may simply have been the only area where many plots were still open for burials in the 1920s-1930s, but the location at the edge of the cemetery, very near the brick and tile plants, suggests that it had remained open because it was the least desirable area of St. Joseph's Cemetery. However, there is no indication that the Hispanic burials were restricted to this area.



**Figure 32. Example of one of the hand-made concrete markers in the Hispanic section of St. Joseph's Cemetery.** Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

In 1947, the Cemetery Association re-incorporated. The following year, the Association President made a request to the City Council to take over operation of Elmwood Cemetery. In 1949, a City Resolution was made to accept the deeds to both Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries. In April that year, the City appointed A.J. Marshall, Mabel Bruns, Fred Wagner, Charles Setterberg, and Ralph S. Stanbery as the first Board of Cemetery Trustees to oversee the now-joined Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery (1947-1949 Cemetery Association Minutes; 01/12/1951 Cemetery Board of Trustees Minutes). The Cemetery Board remains somewhat autonomous from the City in that they make all decisions for the Cemetery without having to get approval from the City Council, except for the budget.

In 1951, 23 acres were purchased by the cemetery from the Mason City Brick & Tile Company. This land was south and west of the cemetery property at that time (07/27/1951, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). The addition of this area allowed for cemetery expansion and would eventually feature a pond or lake feature. The cemetery also planted 150 trees, widened the 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance, and remodeled the office at 1417 S. Federal Avenue (*Mason City Globe Gazette* 1951).

Plans were initiated in 1954 for a series of religious gardens fronting South Federal Avenue and designed by Donald W. Drewes, Landscape Architect from Kansas City, Missouri (March 1955, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). Figure 33 shows two drawings believed to have been drawn by Drewes for this project. In 1960, Drewes also designed the Shadowlawn Addition to the cemetery. Shadowlawn is located just off the southeast corner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition, which had been designed by H.W.S. Cleveland. Figure 34 is a map of Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery drawn by Drewes in 1954. The executed plan was very close to Drewes' original designs.

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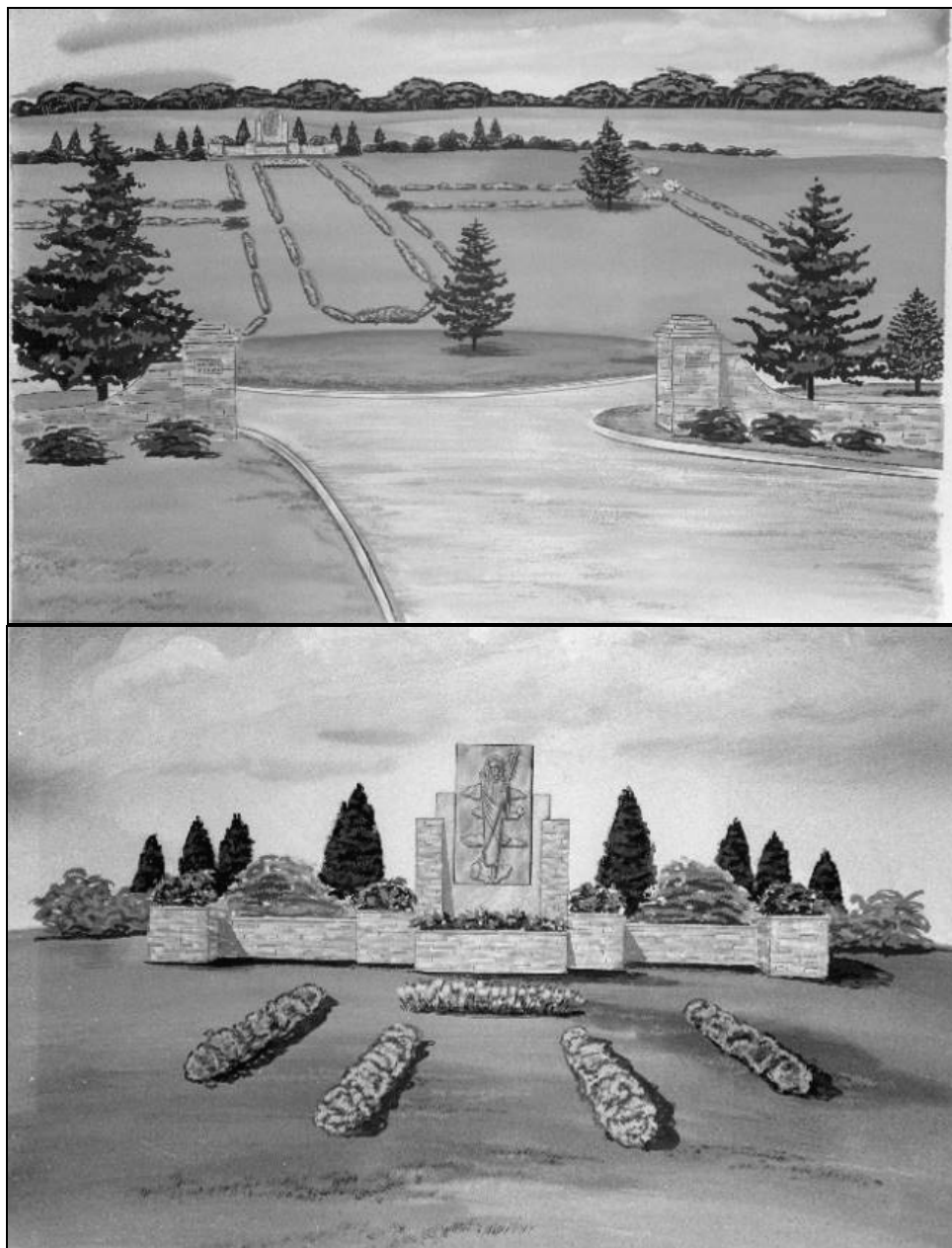


Figure 33. Drewes' drawing for proposed religious gardens in 1954 (top) with detail view of proposed Ascension monument (bottom). The top view is looking west from the South Federal Avenue entrance and shows a wider entrance drive and remodeled stone posts at this entrance. Source: Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa (Umberger Collection).

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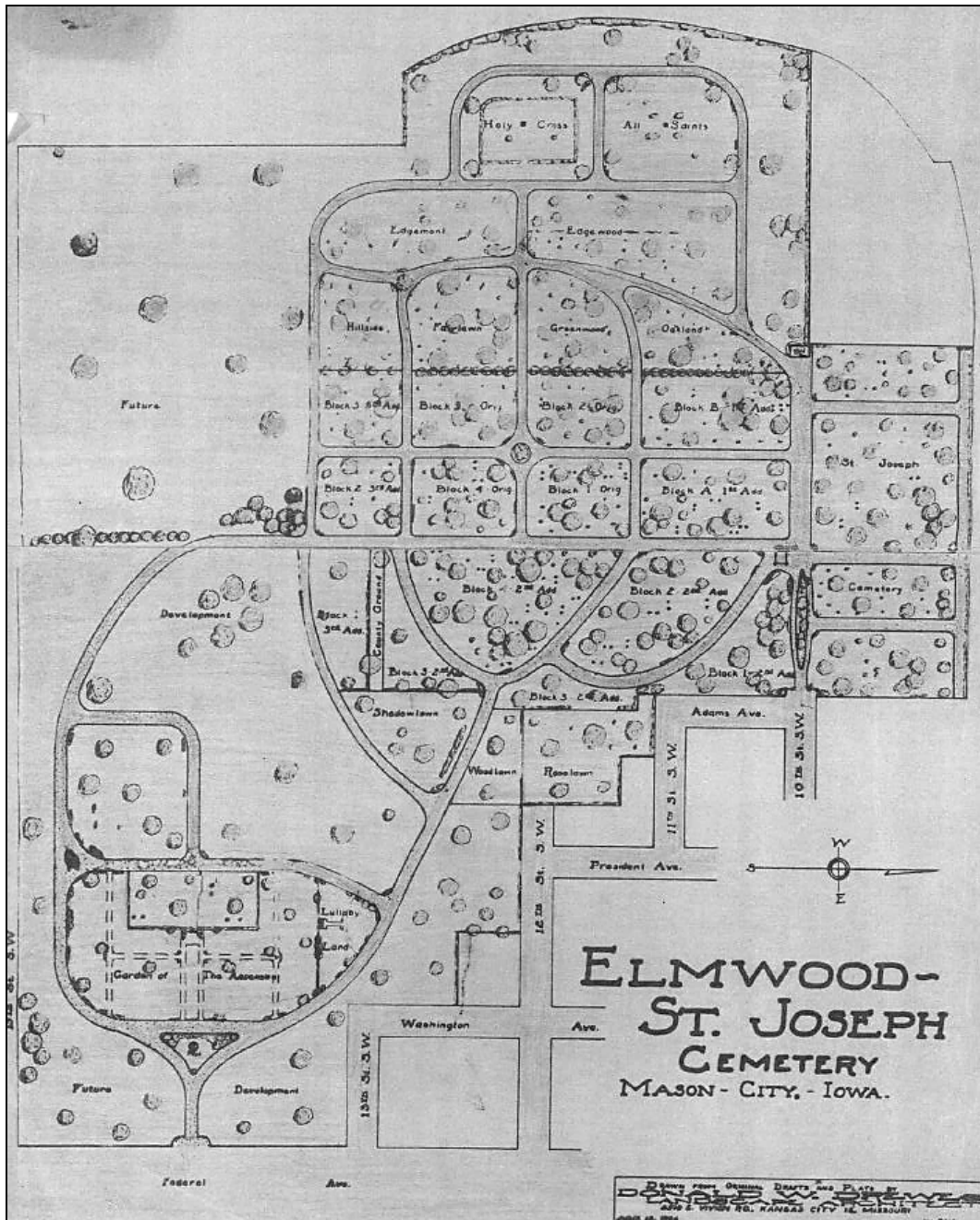


Figure 34. 1954 Drawing Plan of Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery by Donald W. Drewes.  
Source: Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City, Iowa.

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The monument design in Figure 33 is where the first garden, called the “Garden of the Ascension,” was installed. The Cemetery Board commissioned Louis J. Motto, an Italian bronze foundry representative to execute a bronze bas-relief figure of Christ in ascension as a central feature of the garden. It was cast in Florence, Italy. The commission was executed in 1955, with Motto paid for the sculpture in May of that year. It should also be noted that the illustration that shows the South Federal Avenue entrance in Figure 33 depicts the wider entrance and reduced stone gate posts as they now exist. Therefore, this modification to the front entrance appears to have been designed in 1954 and was probably executed in 1955. Thus, the current configuration of the South Federal Avenue entrance can probably be attributed to Donald W. Drewes in its redesign.

Foundation work for the placement of Ascension sculpture was done in 1957, with the completion and final installation believed to have occurred in 1958. The second religious garden was that of Adas Israel, which was a burial place for those of the Jewish faith established at the request of the local Adas Israel Synagogue (09/26/1954, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*). On September 26, 1954, 13,300 square feet was designated for this purpose. Both Adas Israel and the Garden of Ascension were open for the sale of lots by April 1954. The Adas Israel section in the southeast portion of the cemetery is just west of the Garden of the Ascension. It is marked by a monument that has an open Tanach, or Hebrew Bible (with verses from Ecclesiastes 3:20 and 12:7) of cast bronze mounted on a pedestal of native stone (Figure 35).



**Figure 35. Monument marking the Adas Israel section of Elmwood Cemetery looking East.**  
Photograph taken April 10, 2017.

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The Lullaby Land for infant burials was also shown on the 1954 plans with an area for a feature, but none was built (see Figure 34). Also in 1954, the board adopted rules restricting plantings and calling for the removal of all urns and containers by November 1, 1955 (Board minutes, 5/26/1954). Figure 36 is an April 1954 photograph of a section in Elmwood where one of the small free-standing urns of the type the Board wanted removed are visible. Photographs of other areas of the cemetery show that these added urns were quite popular. The reason for their restriction was likely an attempt to make the cemetery easier to maintain, particularly for lawn mowing. However, it might also have been enacted to ensure such objects were not added to the new addition in conflict with planned design of that addition.



**Figure 36. Photograph of a section of Elmwood Cemetery taken in 1954 showing one of the small urns (red circled) that the Cemetery Board wanted to restrict and called for their removal in November of that same year.**

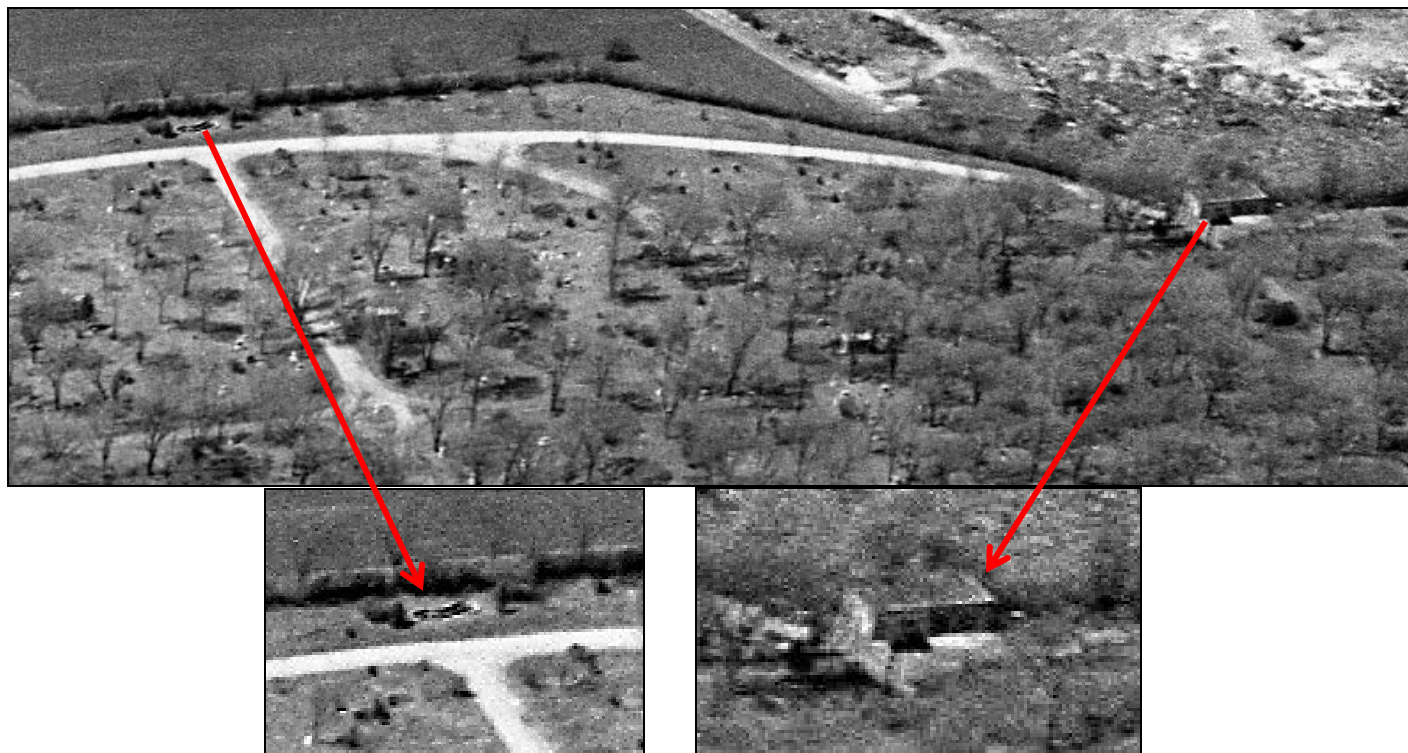
Copy provided by the Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa  
(Safford W. Lock Collection SL26517, dated April 9, 1954).

Other projects completed in the 1950s included: the above-noted widening of the South Federal Avenue entrance from 18 to 36 feet, with curb installation started in that area; planting new trees throughout the grounds; and transplanting a portion of the hedge border on the former western property line to make room for the Oakland and Edgewood additions to Elmwood, which were reserved for Catholic burials. Still standing in the 1950s was an earlier maintenance shed or shop located at the west end of Hoyt/10<sup>th</sup> Street next to St. Joseph Cemetery. This flat-roofed building had at least one garage door opening and is visible on some aerial photographs (Figure 37). A historical photograph shows this building to have been a partially stuccoed, tile block building with windows and a chimney (Figure 38). This building is no longer standing.

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**Figure 37. 1948 Aerial photograph of the west side of Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery looking NW.**

Red arrows point to closer detail views of the now non-extant kidney-shaped lily pond (bottom left) and the maintenance building (bottom right). Copy provided by the Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa (Safford W. Lock Collection SL18142).



**Figure 38. Circa 1950(?) photograph of the Oakland Section looking NNE, with the flat-roofed stucco and tile block maintenance building in the background (red arrow).** Copy provided by the Lee P. Loomis Archive of Mason City, Iowa (Safford W. Lock Collection Photo #26517-A).

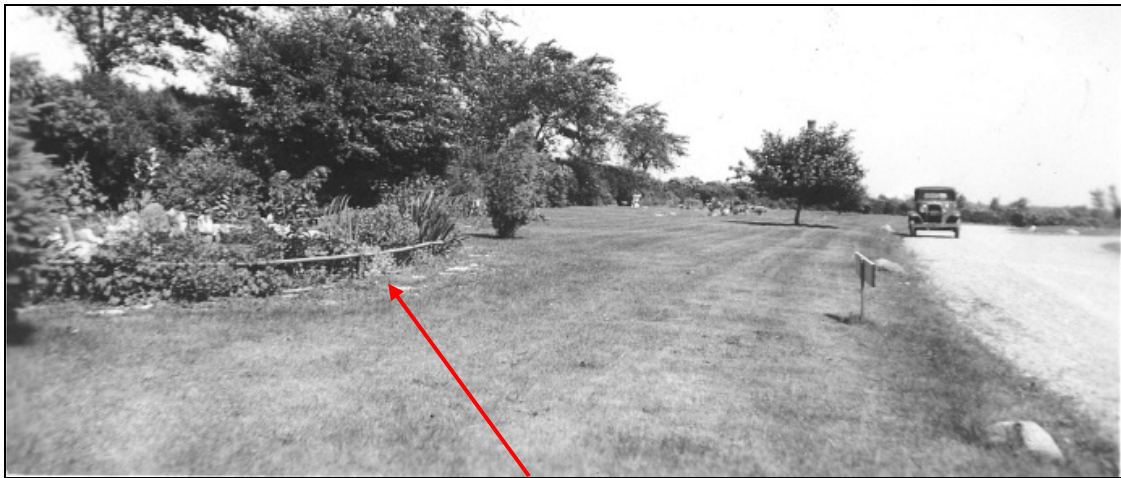


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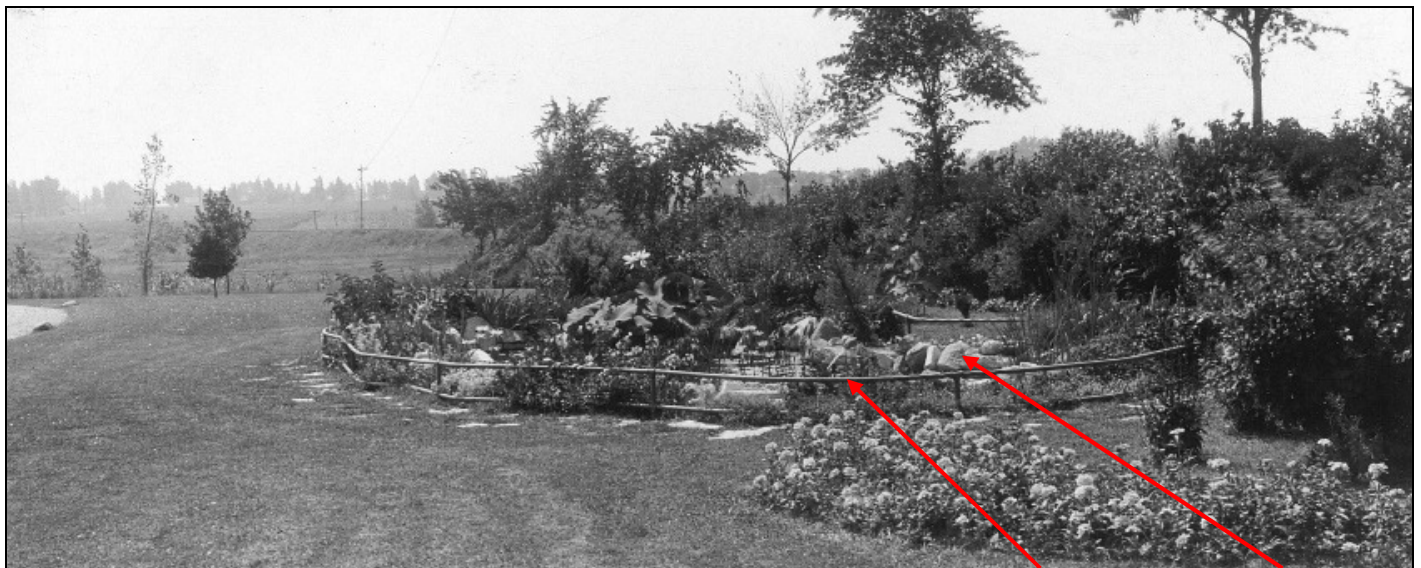
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Another now non-extant feature of note that is visible in the 1948 aerial is a kidney-shaped lily pond structure that was located where the South Monroe Street entrance drive is now (see Figure 37). Two circa 1920s-30s photographs of this pond structure show a Rustic-style concrete basin with stone walls and decorative plantings (Figures 39-40). This lily pond feature was added in 1928 (05-05-1928, *Globe Gazette*). These photos also show small boulders placed at intervals along the edges of the driveways probably to keep cars from driving on the grass (see Figures 39-40). Some of these remain in the cemetery.



**Figure 39. 1920s-30s Photograph looking NNW at the kidney-shaped pond feature where the South Monroe Street driveway is now (red arrow). Source: Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City, Iowa.**



**Figure 40. Another view of the kidney-shaped pond feature looking south and showing a metal pipe railing and rock walls around the pond (red arrow). Source: Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City, Iowa.**

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In 1954, organized sale of pre-needs was begun, with a staff of family counselors added to the cemetery operation. Between April 1 and December 21, 1954, 231 pre-needs sales contracts were written totaling \$66,455. The total interments for 1954 was 176, with the cemetery's total budget for the year having been \$55,000 (Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Records).

In 1955, a triangular area at the South Federal Avenue entrance was set aside for a Veterans Memorial area. This is where the new flagpole was installed and the restored 1922 plaque from the old flagpole at the 10th Street SW entrance was placed. This area is still used for Memorial Day ceremonies (Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Records).

In 1956, the rerouting of Highway 18 (now Highway 122) provided earth that was used along the southwest quadrant of the cemetery to fill a low area (09/18/1956, Cemetery Board Minutes). This fill area was on the west side of what is now the large pond or lake in that section of the cemetery.

In 1957, the cemetery added flower beds and planted 150 evergreen trees. A new filing system was purchased, and over 6,000 lot cards were transferred into the new system. That year, there were 164 interments (Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Records).

While the need for a new office and equipment building was discussed in 1955, it was not until 1958, that an office building was erected on the cemetery grounds in the southeast portion of the cemetery (10/11/1955 and 06/05/1958, Cemetery Board Minutes; *Mason City Globe Gazette* 1959). This building is extant and is still used as the cemetery office. Prior to the building of this dedicated office building, the cemetery had leased office space along South Federal Avenue. In 1958, a shopping center was constructed south of the cemetery which benefited the cemetery by providing 40,000 cubic yards of earthen material to fill low-lying areas and allow for additional cemetery space.

In 1962, the first of two new tile block maintenance buildings was built on the cemetery grounds (12/16/1960 and 01/19/1962, Cemetery Board Minutes). It is assumed that the old stucco and tile block maintenance building was removed around this time. The second new tile block maintenance building was added in 1968 next to the 1962 building, with the 1962 building oriented lengthwise north-south and the 1968 building oriented east-west and just north of the 1962 building (06/22/1967 and 05/15/1968 aerial photographs of Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery). These two maintenance buildings are still in use and were built of clay tile blocks likely obtained from one of the nearby plants (see Figure 15).

In 1963, plans were unveiled for the construction of South Monroe Avenue along the west side of the cemetery property (02/05/1963, *Globe Gazette*). This would result in the construction of a third entrance into the cemetery cutting through the location of the kidney-shaped lily pond feature. As part of the deal between the City and the Cemetery to use cemetery property for South Monroe Avenue, a lake was to be built in the southwest corner of the cemetery property. This is the existing pond or lake (also referred to as a lagoon) (Figure 41) (01/19/1963, Cemetery Board Minutes).<sup>5</sup> The construction of the lake was completed in 1965 (09/17/1965, Cemetery Board Minutes). This location had been a clay pit for a brick and tile plant and was considered an eyesore for many years. As noted previously, the Cemetery had purchased this property from the Mason City Brick & Tile Company in 1951 (07/27/1951, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). With the construction of this lake, the

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<sup>5</sup> Additional reasons for the construction of the lake were "to develop extra usable cemetery land and correct a drainage problem" (02/02/1963, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*).

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area became one of the most scenic and beautiful spots in the cemetery. In 1966, the Board approved use of the lake for a skating rink under the supervision of the city's park department (12/16/1966, Cemetery Board Minutes).



**Figure 41. Lake in the southwest section of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking WSW.**  
Photograph taken July 2015.

In 1984, Meredith Willson, Mason City-native and famous author and composer of “The Music Man,” was interred in the family plot. He is buried in the Greenwood plat of Elmwood Cemetery on the west side of the original Mason City Cemetery plat. In addition to his grave marker, his plot originally included a stoneware sundial and bird bath; however, both objects are now removed because they were damaged by many years of Iowa winters (Figures 42-43).<sup>6</sup> The marker is a granite upright die-on-slab, with bronze flat-to-the ground markers set to the front. The bird bath is now housed in the cemetery office (see Figure 43). The local and state Questers are funding the granite versions of the sundial and birdbath, with proposed installation in 2018. The Music Man Foundation is funding the landscaping enhancements around the grave site.

Since 2004, enhancements to the cemetery have included the establishment of the Mary Ellen Ward Meditation Area and the Leo Gribben Viewing Area. The Ward Meditation area was funded through a bequest to the cemetery from Eunice Park to honor her mother. The feature reflects the pride in her Irish heritage, passionate interest in reading, and fondness for gladiolas. The Gribben Viewing Area overlooks the historic sections of the cemetery. Leo Gribben was a loving uncle of Eunice Park and took care of her during childhood. This area, and most of the restoration of the historic 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW entrance in 2011, was funded by the Eunice Park bequest.

<sup>6</sup> It is uncertain whether the restriction on urns and other objects being placed in the cemetery was simply not enforced in 1984 or whether an exception was made for Willson's grave site.

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Figure 42. Photograph of Meredith Willson's gravesite when the sundial and birdbath were still in place. Photograph obtained from <https://www.findagrave.com>, added by Gary Thelen in 2001.



Figure 43. Meredith Willson's grave site in 2017 (left) and the original stoneware pottery bird bath (right) that once graced Willson's grave along with a sundial. Photographs taken April 10, 2017.

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The Lakeside Columbarium is one of the newest additions to the cemetery being a row of three above-ground structures for the reposing of cremains. These structures were installed in 1995, 2000, and 2003. This section is located just east of the large pond. Each structure is built with polished light gray granite slabs for the walls and capstone, with each cremains repository having a polished dark gray granite name/date plaque (Figure 44).



**Figure 44. Lakeside Columbarium looking SSE. Photograph taken July 24, 2015.**

*Notable Persons Buried in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery*

Among the notable individuals buried in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery are: Mason City founders George Brentner, James Jenkinson, John McMillin and Elisha Randall; Horace G. Parker, owner of the *Cerro Gordo Republican* newspaper and builder in 1870 of the flour mill on Willow Creek and the Parker Opera House; Eberhard Cimijotti, who trained horses and sold them to the Ringling Brothers Circus; E.R. Bogardus, local architect; O.T. Denison, mayor and successful businessman (brick and tile plant); William McArthur, who served under President Roosevelt in the Department of Agriculture; Jacob Decker, who started the meat packing plant; Betsy (Spear) Hartshorn, mid-wife for General Custer; Martha Jane Parker who taught the Ringling brothers; Elizabeth Muse Norris, who worked as a reporter on her father's paper, the *Globe Gazette*, traveled around the world, and in whose honor a charitable fund was established in 1983; Capt. Henry I. Smith, who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in the Civil War; and Meredith Willson, who wrote and composed *The Music Man*, a hugely successful Broadway play and Hollywood film. The Music Man brought fame to both Willson and Mason City, which was inspiration for the story's setting in "River City, Iowa." However, as with any cemetery, not all of those interred here were known for their good accomplishments, with the notorious buried here including murderers and murder victims. Others ran businesses of dubious reputations. Figure 45 is a map of the older portions of Elmwood and St. Joseph's Cemetery nothing the location of some of the grave sites and mausoleums of persons of interest.

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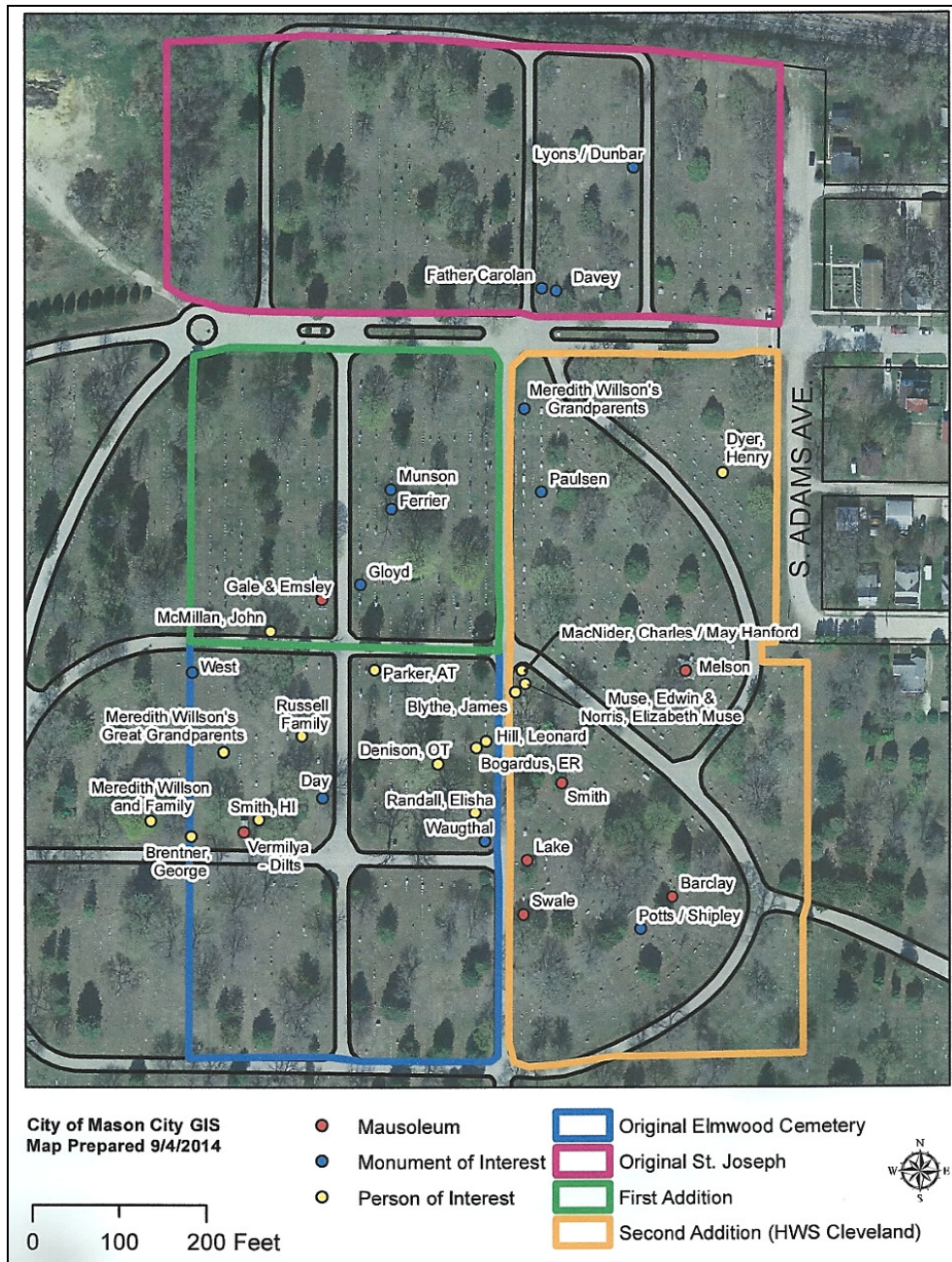


Figure 45. Aerial map showing the older sections of Elmwood and St. Joseph's cemeteries and the location of some of the grave sites and mausoleums of interest. Source: City of Mason City GIS, 09/04/2014.

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*Social History of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery*

The industrial growth of Mason City spurred by the railroads drew immigrants to Mason City for the jobs that were available in the cement and brick and tile plants and other industries in town. The nine brick and tile plants that operated from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries employed many southern Europeans from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The Decker/Armor meat packing plant, established in 1899 and operating until 1975, had 1,300 workers at its peak, many of whom were Hispanic and African American. The Northern Crystal Sugar/American Crystal Sugar plant (1916-1973) employed many Hispanics. The Northwestern Cement Plant (1906-2009) and the Lehigh Cement Plant (1910 to the present) employed Greeks and some Hispanic workers.

By 1912, Mason City was shipping the largest freight tonnage in the state of Iowa and producing more brick and tile and more Portland cement than any city in the world. With the cement, brick and tile companies locating in Mason City, many immigrants from the southern and eastern part of Europe came to find work here ([visitmasoncityiowa.com/html/history.htm](http://visitmasoncityiowa.com/html/history.htm), accessed 2017).

The number of African Americans began to increase after 1880, with Hispanics arriving in the 1910s. Between 1910 and 1920 there was an influx of Greeks and other Europeans including Serbs, Russians, Yugoslavians, Lithuanians, Croatians, Romanians, and Bulgarians. By 1913, there were 3,000 Greek immigrants living in Mason City, some who owned restaurants or grocery stores. Census data show that the number of Jewish families in Mason City grew from 10 in 1910 to 80 in the 1940s having immigrated from Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Bohemia, and Bulgaria, most likely fleeing from persecution and The Holocaust. The 1920 Federal Population Census indicated that 15% of Mason City residents were foreign-born including: German (769), Mexican (455), Danish (442), Norwegian (333), Russian (311), Greek (310), Swedish (256), Canadian (241), and Irish (164).

The immigrant population of Mason City is also reflected in the cemetery. The immigrants who are buried in the Third Addition to the Elmwood Cemetery are mostly single burials and not family lots, although there were some couples buried in this section. This may reflect an early pattern of immigrant workers being primarily young men who came here to work. Those who died and were buried here had not yet established families of their own or their families moved elsewhere after their deaths. There were many first-generation immigrants from various countries including Russia, Greece, Poland, German, Bohemia, Bulgaria, Denmark, and England. Those of Greek descent were buried primarily in the Hillside and Hillside Singles blocks on the south side of Elmwood Cemetery beginning in the late 1920s. It is reported that the Greek section was located near the old slough of the brickyard property because it was generally an undesirable area, reflecting the conflicted attitudes towards new immigrants in the Mason City community, even the community of the dead. Some African American burials were also consigned to a "collard" [sic] section in Hillside, while others are buried in the Old Age Benefit and old County burial ground sections (Handwritten index in Burial Record Book, Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Archive, Mason City). Ironically, as the southwest corner of the cemetery evolved, the area was enhanced with the creation of a large pond, which has made the Hillside section, which overlooks this pond, one of the more scenic areas in the cemetery where before it had been the least desirable.

One notable African American buried in Elmwood Cemetery is Henry Boone, who was born into slavery in Virginia. Upon gaining his freedom, he headed north eventually settling in Mason City in the 1890s (11/07/1899, *Marshalltown Evening*

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*Times Republican*). He died at the grand age of 114. He is listed in the burial records of Elmwood Cemetery, but the exact location of his grave site is unknown.

The largest concentration of Hispanic burials is along the west side of St. Joseph Cemetery. This reflects their Catholic heritage. The location suggests that this immigrant population might have been consigned to the margin of St. Joseph's in what would have been a less desirable area of St. Joseph's given the proximity to one of the brick and tile plants and next to the cemetery maintenance shed (non-extant). However, it may have simply have been the one block of St. Joseph Cemetery that still had many burial lots available in the early twentieth century because it was located in the less desirable section of that cemetery.

In 1908, Mier Wolf, a department store owner in Mason City and a member of the Jewish faith, approached the Cemetery Association, along with others to apply for a reservation for a Jewish Cemetery in Elmwood. This reservation consisted of 40-50 lots in the southeast part of Block 2 in the Third Addition. The Association resolved to sell lots for \$7.50 each, or \$600 for the entire tract (Annual Meeting Minutes, 05/02/1908). Then, in 1954, the Adas Israel Synagogue of Mason City negotiated to set aside a burial site for their members in the south-side addition to the cemetery. On September 26, 1954, 13,300 square feet were dedicated as the Adas Israel Jewish Cemetery section. Mier Wolf was again among the first to approach the Cemetery Board with this request in 1952. The Board minutes from April 11, 1952, noted that Stanbery, Hanes & Zach were to "work with the Jewish people on their proposed cemetery." The first lot in Adas Israel was sold on September 15, 1954.

Therefore, the patterns of burials and the persons buried in certain sections reflect not only the socio-economic and class levels throughout Mason City's history but also the social history of race, ethnicity, and religion in this community. While there were areas of the cemetery where certain ethnic groups and races were at times consigned, the cemetery was never officially segregated. Avenues for future research include whether the immigrant groups buried in this cemetery identified more with their religion, such as the Catholic Hispanics, or with their ethnicity, and whether that had more to do with where they were buried in the cemetery. It may be that religion mattered more with some groups and ethnicity or simply shared life and work experiences with others.

Architectural Significance - Criterion C

*The American Rural Cemetery and Picturesque Movements*

Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery's distinctive design features—its curving driveways and general park-like setting—are rooted in the American rural cemetery movement that began in the northeastern states in the 1830s. Three early rural cemeteries became models for countless others throughout the country: Mount Auburn in Cambridge (1831); Laurel Hill in Philadelphia (1836); and Greenwood in Brooklyn (1837). One observer described their proliferation in 1849:

Already, not only the larger towns, . . . but smaller ones, . . . and we know not how many others, have large areas in their neighborhood laid out for the mansions of the dead, where beauty of scenery, taste in landscape gardening, elegance and costliness of monuments awaken wide curiosity... (Thomas Woolsey quoted in Sears 1989:99-100).



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The popularity of these cemeteries stemmed from widespread anti-urban sentiment and an attraction to “the picturesque.” This was a Romantic aesthetic which, in the English garden and landscape tradition, evoked a “‘natural’ landscape appearance of rougher terrain and dramatic asymmetric composition in contrast to the axial geometry of earlier Renaissance and Baroque landscapes, such as Versailles” (Cultural Landscape Foundation 2012). Unlike their British counterparts who “distinguished the ‘Beautiful’ aesthetic (as seen in the rolling pastoral landscape designs of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown) from the wildly dramatic ‘Picturesque’ (replete with ravines, dead trees and artificial ruins),” American landscape architects combined the two approaches into the “natural” landscape aesthetic (Cultural Landscape Foundation 2012). They often employed both approaches on a single site.

In the early nineteenth century, people were still being buried in burial grounds and churchyards where there was a “confused medley of graves” often in poorly kept locations and symbolizing sorrowful places of death where one would rarely want to linger (Sloane 1991:13). Other established burial grounds followed the formal English garden model that imposed formality and order on the landscape with little regard for the natural terrain or vegetation. The isolation of pioneer life on the frontier also led to family burial grounds away from church and closer to home. Churchyard burials were an alternative and followed a European tradition. This often resulted in a social hierarchy, with the wealthiest buried closest to the church or in vaults within the church itself, those locations being the safest locations from vandalism and grave robbing. It also put the higher social order closer to God. Space in urban churchyards quickly became a premium (Sloane 1991:13-19).

So-called “Potter’s Fields” also became part of the American burial tradition at an early date, being a location where those who could not afford a vault or grave in an established burial ground could be buried at the community or church’s expense (Sloane 1991:24-25). There were several “potter’s fields” in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery including the original Mason City Cemetery Free Ground plot, the later County burial ground just south of the Second Addition, and along the northern edge of Block 2 in St. Joseph’s Cemetery.

In the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, the customs surrounding burials and burying grounds evolved into one having a stronger family orientation, a formalized funeral ceremony, and the establishment of “cemeteries” rather than “burial grounds.” There was also a change in emphasis from “in-city” burial grounds to “rural cemeteries,” in part in response to growing fears of contagious disease but also to overcrowding in the city and new attitudes and aesthetics concerning burial places in general (Sloane 1991).

Americans were searching for a burial place that did not evoke the city’s fast pace or commercial life. “Only when cemeteries...abandoned traditional urban forms and took on aspects of the country, did they become...‘rural.’” Only when Americans embraced mid-nineteenth-century rural values did they discover a new burial place (Sloane 1991:43 quoting in part Schuyler 1986:41).

The new burial place became a “cemetery” located in a rural setting. The rural cemetery was also the garden cemetery due to its growing horticultural orientation. However, the cultural significance of the “rural cemetery” was in its reflection of “city dwellers’ growing isolation from rural life and their attempts—through first the *rural cemetery*, then the *rural park*—to reestablish some of the virtues of country life in the cities” (Sloane 1991:94). While Mason City would not qualify as a “city” in this description, there is a parallel in how the location of the Mason City Cemetery evolved. When first established

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in 1867, the new cemetery was located in what was then the rural outskirts of town on a higher elevation having a scenic view of the countryside. Mason City eventually spread out to the cemetery and surrounded it, but even now this cemetery retains more of a rural than an urban feeling to it.

The new cemeteries reversed the priorities predominant in urban life. The visitor was immersed in nature and cut off from urban civilization. The cemetery's landscape integrated various aspects of the ideal picturesque landscape: wild scenery, rolling or sharper terrains, and water. Roads and paths were serpentine, to ensure that the "garden of graves" would not remind the mourner and visitor of life in the geometrically ordered city.

Within these picturesque grounds, lot-holders wished to celebrate their heritage and success. Family lots became means through which middle- and upper-class Americans could commemorate their families, their ancestors, their community, and themselves. Large, artistically styled monuments dotted the sections, and smaller, more standardized monuments filled the spaces between. Even as critics complained about the loss of naturalism, the growing ostentation of the monuments, and the crowding of sections, Americans proud of their success continued to erect monuments to their past.

As much as the founders tried to establish rural cemeteries as burial places for the whole community, the institution embraced the values and goals of only part of the diversified urban community. The number of cemeteries grew because Catholic, Jewish, and other religious groups desired their own communal burial places and further diminished the centrality of the rural cemetery. Antebellum Protestant leaders had tried to impose their culture on American society. They were successful in altering the burial habits of the community, but not in fostering all their values and symbols.

The rural-cemetery movement had begun to evolve as soon as the first cemetery was organized. By the 1850s, a new generation of landscape designers was experimenting with a simpler and cleaner landscape, and Americans began to retreat from their close relationship with death (Sloane 1991:94-95).

This "retreat from sentimentality" and the evolution of the rural cemetery from picturesque natural gardens to pastoral, park-like landscape-lawn plans designed by a new profession of trained landscape architects and landscape gardeners is also reflected in the progression of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery. The original Mason City Cemetery was a rural cemetery, located away from the city center in the adjacent countryside but situated on a scenic, natural location. However, its original design was the formal grid pattern of the old burial ground tradition. In 1891, the Ladies Cemetery Improvement Society took an interest in landscape design and traveled to Minneapolis to visit with well-known landscape architect, Horace W.S. Cleveland to design a proposed new addition to the Mason City Cemetery. The Improvement Society was given approval to hire Cleveland but had to do so at their "own expense." While the Second Addition design was likely among the smaller of Cleveland's commissions at this point in his career, his firm took it on and, in doing so, imparted his vision of the picturesque rural cemetery design aesthetics to the new addition's design. While his original plans have not survived, it is suspected that he made recommendations that went beyond this addition. For example, it may be that he recommended the placement of a chapel in the northwest corner of his plat, but the chapel was not built until 1895. His design of curvilinear driveways following the natural terrain also appear to have inspired similar design elements in subsequent additions to the west and south sides of the original cemetery.

American picturesque landscapes featured "open meadows of irregular outline, uneven stands of trees, naturalistic lakes, accents of specimen plants and, here and there, incidental objects such as an antique statue or urn on a pedestal to lend

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interest and variety to the scene” (Potter and Boland 1992:6). Such scenery imparted to viewers, moral inspiration, spiritual awakening, and an appreciation of nature. Frederick Law Olmsted, Andrew Jackson Downing, and Horace W.S. Cleveland all created American picturesque landscapes, which included many rural cemeteries and public parks. The style remained popular from the 1840s well into the early twentieth century (Cultural Landscape Foundation 2012). Plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowerbeds and urns were used throughout the cemetery from an early day.

Rural cemeteries were designed to be picturesque landscapes, with “serene and spacious grounds, where the combination of nature and monuments would be spiritually uplifting” (Potter and Boland 1992:6). Located on the outskirts of towns and cities, rural cemeteries stood apart from the communities they served, while providing retreats within easy reach of residents. An elaborate cemetery gateway physically established for visitors this separation from the everyday world. The cemetery grounds consisted of a hilly, wooded site further “enhanced by grading, selective thinning of trees, and massing of plant materials which directed views opening onto broad vistas” (Potter and Boland 1992:6). Winding paths and circuitous avenues adapted to the contours of the land encouraged leisurely promenades and carriage rides among ornamental monuments, headstones, and statuary, and provided visitors with attractive scenic views (Sears 1989:100, 102, 104). In this way, rural cemeteries served as early recreational parks, civic amenities intended for the enjoyment of the living.

The Elmwood and St. Joseph cemeteries were no exception and where it was noted that every spring people would turn out to “smooth down the green carpet of grass” and leave floral offerings on the graves (Union Publishing 1883:976). The annual Decoration Day found visitors leaving flowers on the soldier’s graves and held “befitting ceremonies upon that occasion” (Union Publishing 1883:976). Not surprisingly, the popularity of rural cemetery grounds led to the urban park movement of the mid-nineteenth century, which produced, among others, New York City’s Central Park, Boston’s Franklin Park, and Chicago’s Washington Park (Potter and Boland 1992:6). However, the ideal was not always the reality in any cemetery, rural or urban. Cemetery boards had to increasingly regulate visitor activities establishing rules for conduct. Even in Mason City, citizens were being admonished to “leave the flowers alone” in the cemetery in 1893 (05/30/1893, *Mason City Saturday Times*; 06/17/1893, *Mason City Globe Gazette*).

*Garden-Park or Lawn-Park Cemetery Movement*

Adolph Strauch was influential in the later evolution of the rural cemetery movement beginning with his transformation of Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati into a garden-park cemetery. This was “three years before the success of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux’s Greensward plan for Central Park would start a generation of ‘rural’ parks” (Sloane 1991:99).

Using what he termed the “landscape lawn plan,” Strauch, the cemetery’s new landscape gardener, proclaimed in his design for Spring Grove an age of new professionalism and renewed accessibility, both physical and psychological.

The sections that Strauch laid out, as well as those he redesigned, were simpler, more spacious, and more pastoral landscapes, in which management’s control was increasingly extended over monuments and plantings. Lot-holder’s responsibility for molding the landscape was restricted. The foal of melding nature and art into a comfortable balance that could be maintained as the cemetery matured was embedded through the entire design and maintenance plan (Sloane 1991:99).

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Strauch would influence “generations of cemetery designers and managers, through both his published reports for Spring Grove and his designs for several cemeteries, including Mount Hope in Chicago and Forest Lawn in Buffalo” (Sloane 1991:99). Among those so-influenced was O.C. Simonds, who met Adolph Strauch on a visit to see Spring Grove where Simonds remarked that “the charm of Spring Grove...was due to its beautiful graded surfaces, its broad open spaces, its simple groups of trees, often with branches sweeping to the ground, its border plantations of shrubbery and its lakes margined with foliage” (Bachrach 2000:83). Simonds even received instruction from Strauch “on ingenious methods to achieve gently curving grades and drives” and in “the importance of making finishing touches ‘on the ground,’ in a manner like ‘that of the sculptor’” (Bachrach 2000:83).

During the late nineteenth century, “many cemetery designers, managers, and lot-holders would turn towards Strauch’s ideas” (Sloane 1991:107).

In their cemeteries, the pastoral would replace the picturesque. The lawn would expand, and the grouped trees were thinned. Cemeteries would become more parklike. Monuments would be more formalized and standardized. The artfulness of the landscape would become more obvious and more celebrated.

Strauch’s ideas and innovations were central to the development of the lawn-park cemetery and the modern cemetery in general. Jacob Weidenmann, a landscape architect who wrote the first manual of cemetery management and designed several cemeteries, considered Strauch the founder of the modern cemetery. Ossian Cole Simonds, America’s most influential cemetery designer at the turn of the twentieth century, called Spring Grove, a “Mecca for those interested in cemeteries” (Sloane 1991:107).

Both Olmsted and Strauch “accepted the role of art in the landscape and the cemetery” and “both recognized that the cemetery was not a park, a playground, or a garden” (Sloane 1991:109). They “encouraged lot-holders to honor their dead through simple, stylish, and artistic monuments,” with Strauch placing the cemetery management on a professional basis. He encouraged rules and regulations and “set the stage for the emergence of the superintendent as the overseer of the cemetery landscape” (Sloane 1991:109). Near the end of the nineteenth century, “lawn-park” cemeteries had become commonplace and worked well with the rise of the City Beautiful Movement of the 1890s to early 1900s (Sloane 1991:121).

Family mausoleums designed in classical and other popular styles of the day became popular during this same period.<sup>7</sup> Mausoleums placed a new level of concern for cemetery maintenance and who would pay for their upkeep and perpetual care because mausoleums were essentially buildings constructed within the cemeteries. This has been a problem for many cemeteries, including Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery where most of the mausoleums failed to be maintained properly through the years and are now exhibiting major structural issues. Often there are no family members surviving able or willing to take financial responsibility.

Those portions of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery that reflect this period of cemetery development include: the construction of the four mausoleums in the original Mason City Cemetery and the 1891 Second Addition and in the design of the west and south additions to Elmwood. In particular, the design of the south addition shows the influence of the

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<sup>7</sup> This popularity was spurred in part by the theft of A.T. Stewart’s remains from a Manhattan churchyard in 1878 and held for ransom, but also by a desire by wealthy families to display their success even in death (Sloane 1991:122)

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garden-park or lawn-park movement, while the design of the west additions complemented the older picturesque design of the 1891 Second Addition but was an area that had less elaborate gravestones and no mausoleums. However, the design of the whole continued the use of curvilinear driveways and scenic moments throughout the cemetery.

*The Memorial Park Movement/The Cemetery as Business*

As the twentieth century progressed, American attitudes towards death and burial places evolved once again. Cemeteries became professionalized and commercialized and increasingly less family oriented. As a result, “the business of death was becoming complex” (Sloane 1991:126).

The new cemetery with its less dramatic appearance, was in keeping with the withdrawal of most Americans from a close relationship of death, which had characterized the antebellum period. Sanitarians and medical scientists had jointly lowered the risk of living in the cities. Professionals managed the process of death and burial. Consolation poetry and prose became less prevalent. Death continued to be a powerful social issue but did not engage the attention of Americans as it had earlier.

Because of all these factors, not only the appearance but also the character of the cemetery changed. Entrepreneurs, who assumed responsibility for so much of the American economy and culture during this period, commercialized the burial ground. Whereas rural cemeteries and ethnic and religious lawn-park cemeteries retained loyal lot-holders, for-profit cemeteries attracted other Americans. Americans began to recognize the commercialization of the cemetery, and such commercialism evoked a storm of anger and ignited a movement of reform, which eventually led to the redesign of the cemetery into the memorial park (Sloane 1991:127).

Cremation also rose in popularity, with a whole new set of issues arising related to the interment or scattering of cremains.

Some cemeteries adapted to the new trends by incorporating the memorial park idea into new additions to the older cemeteries, as was the case in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery. In this cemetery, the newer memorial park type of plan along with specific locations and structures for the interment of cremains were established in the newest section of the cemetery in its southwest quadrant. In some cities, however, entirely new cemeteries were established based on the memorial park plan. These cemeteries feature grave markers flush with the ground instead of large above-ground monuments and often feature designated burial locations for infants.<sup>8</sup>

As noted previously, there were many sections in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery designated for infant burials in both the older and newer areas of the cemetery. These locations included: three rows in the original Free Ground when it was replatted in the 1930s; five to six rows designated for infant burials on the west end of the County plat (also in the 1930s); one in the southeast corner of the Oakland section, the southeast corner of Block 1 of the Second Addition (1952-1972), and another in the northeast corner of the Edgewood section (1961-1997). There are also infant plots in Block 2 (1917-1926) and Block 3 (1951-1972) of St. Joseph Cemetery. The newest infant section is in the south addition to Elmwood and is called Lullaby Land (1971-2008), following the modern trend. It should be noted that some of the infant burials were subsequently moved in recent years to family plots in the cemetery.

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<sup>8</sup> The requirement for flush-with-the-ground monuments was also a practical one because of the increasing use of large mowing machines in the twentieth century.

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It was also during this period that the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery became a more professionalized and commercialized business. This was reflected in the creation of a sales department in 1935 and the hire of F.B. Raymond as the sales director. At that time, the new south addition to Elmwood was being advertised as having two parts, one in the "Park Plan" where no monuments would be permitted and one a "Monumental Section" where they would be permitted (01/12/1935, *Mason City Globe-Gazette*). However, in 1956, this area was described as having a "garden lawn" design because some of the monumental aspects of the original 1930s plan were eliminated from the final design plans (10/19/1956, *Mason City Globe Gazette*). The addition of an office on site in the late 1950s followed by the construction of new maintenance sheds in the 1960s reflected the increase in professionalism in the cemetery's operation. The large, multiple maintenance sheds also reflected the increasing mechanization of cemetery grounds care, with these buildings used to both house and repair the machines needed for lawn mowing, snow plowing, and grave excavating. Also notable was the hire in the late 1950s of Donald W. Drewes on an annual retainer for general design consulting services.

*Horace William Shaler Cleveland (1814-1900) - Landscape Architect*

Horace William Shaler Cleveland was born in 1814 in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and educated at the Lancaster School, a Unitarian Universalist school founded by his parents on the theories of Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. The school's unique curriculum emphasized nature excursions, landscape study, and observation as its dominant learning tools.<sup>9</sup> His family moved in social circles that included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, and Horatio Greenough. Thus, Cleveland grew up surrounded by Transcendentalism, a philosophy that espoused communing with nature to understand both reality and the Divine. After moving with his diplomat father to Cuba in the 1820s, Cleveland returned to America and worked as a surveyor and engineer for the railroads in Illinois and out west throughout the 1830s. In the early 1840s, he bought a farm near Burlington, New Jersey, and practiced scientific farming. He began writing for the *Horticulturist*, the periodical of renowned landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing (Wilson 2003).

Translating this background into a philosophy of landscape design aesthetics, Cleveland disdained the superfluous and merely decorative in favor of the simple and natural. His vision of landscape design "was rooted in principles of conservation and wise land use" and was a "vision for orderly growth" (Tishler 1989:24, 2000:27). He would come to believe that landscape architecture was the "art of arranging land so as to adapt it most conveniently, economically and gracefully to any of the varied wants of civilization" (Tishler 1989:24).

In 1854, Cleveland joined with Robert Morris Copeland in the practice of landscape and ornamental gardening. Together they created the design of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts. The plan for Sleepy Hollow "avoided the imposition of a geometric grid of lots over the terrain" (Wilson 2003). Instead, the plan respected native trees and plants and featured cemetery lots lined with paths and drives that followed the natural outlines of the land (Wilson 2003).

After the Civil War, Cleveland became a consulting field employee for the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. In 1869, he traveled to Chicago to work on South (Washington) Park and possibly Riverside. He opened his own

<sup>9</sup> Pestalozzi's learning by looking approach to education was an early expression of the 1870s kindergarten movement and the early twentieth-century Nature Study movement, which emphasized field trips, gardening, manual training, and other experiential learning opportunities as part of the public school curriculum.

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landscaping firm in Chicago and soon formed a consulting partnership with civil engineer William Merchant Richardson French (Neckar 1995:77). Some of the firm's early picturesque landscape designs included Highland Park in Illinois and Oak Hill Cemetery in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. By 1870, Cleveland was appointed consulting landscape gardener to the General Officers of Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. Cleveland's design for Graceland Cemetery "marked an important point in the evolution of Cleveland's design vision for the Midwestern garden...[He] transformed it to meet the conditions of a broad, flat ridged western savannah." In so doing, Cleveland made Graceland "a country cemetery, laced with curving drives and dotted here and there with limestone markers and low curbs among oak groves and wild shrubs" (Neckar 1995:78).

Cleveland's years in Chicago were marked by tragedy, with the first coming during the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, when most of his office records were destroyed.<sup>10</sup> The economic Panic of 1873 further impacted the business and brought a halt to Cleveland's South Park commission. His wife became critically ill in 1874, and in 1880, their son Richard died unexpectedly. His personal and professional setbacks prompted him to move from Chicago, settling in Minneapolis where he would achieve his greatest success. However, the 1870s were not without notable achievements for Cleveland including, in 1873, the writing of his landscaping guide, *Landscape Architecture as Applied to the Wants of the West*, and his subsequent hire by William Rainey Marshall to design Saint Anthony Park, a neighborhood in Saint Paul, Minnesota. In 1881, Cleveland composed a publication entitled *A Few Words on the Arrangement of Rural Cemeteries*. It was in Minnesota that Cleveland began work on his life's crowning achievement, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Park System, recognized today as one of the most significant open space systems in the United States. Cleveland completed his last major project, the landscaping for the campus at the University of Minnesota, in 1892. Therefore, his design for the Second Addition to the Mason City Cemetery completed in 1891 was among the last projects undertaken in his career. He died on December 5, 1900, in Hinsdale, Illinois. His body was returned to Minneapolis and is buried in Lakewood Cemetery (Cultural Landscape Foundation 2012; Tishler 2000:33-36).

*Other Landscape Architects Associated with the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery*

At least three other landscape "engineers" or architects were involved in the evolution of the design of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery in the early to mid-twentieth century. These included Ray Wyrick of Des Moines, Donald W. Drewes of Kansas City, Missouri, and Samuel W. Rubee of Marshalltown, Iowa. Wyrick set forth the initial accepted plan for the design of the south-side addition; however, some aspects of his plan were never implemented such as the mirror lake surrounded by mausoleums (see Figure 28). The overall layout of the driveways and platted burial areas and the original stone fence and gateway along the South Federal Avenue entrance were aspects of Wyrick's mid-1930s design plans. He was responsible for the design of the Woodlawn, Edgewood, and a portion of the Block 3, Second Addition sections in Elmwood Cemetery and also drew up plans for the Edgemont section that were never implemented.

Ray Floyd Wyrick was born in Atlantic, Iowa, with his surname originally spelled "Weirick" until he became a professional landscape engineer in Des Moines in 1910 and began spelling his name "Wyrick." During his career, he would be referred to as a landscape architect and a cemetery engineer. Wyrick's Iowa commissions included: Edmundson Memorial Park Recreational Center in Oskaloosa (1920); Oakland Cemetery in Iowa City (1926); Forest Lawn and Oakwood plats to the cemetery in Ames (1931); two tracts in the Carroll Cemetery (1943); Emmetsburg Cemetery (1951); and Forest Cemetery in

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<sup>10</sup> "Only two rolls of plans, the contents of a trunk, and a few mementos escaped destruction" during the fire (Tishler 2000:32).

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Oskaloosa - new addition (1960). Commissions outside of Iowa included the St. Joseph Cemetery in Manchester, New Hampshire, and the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo, New York (designed in the rural and memorial park designs). Wyrick also worked on WPA projects in Iowa during the Great Depression including what is now the Edmondson Park Historic District in Oskaloosa (1936-38; listed in the NRHP) and the Chariton Cemetery main entrance gateway (1937).

Donald W. Drewes was a landscape architect who lived in Kansas City and specialized in cemetery design. Among his commissions were a new addition to the Prairie View Cemetery in Eau Claire, Wisconsin (1962) and the replating of three sections of the Memorial Lawn Cemetery in Emporia, Kansas. Drewes was hired initially by the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery Board in 1954 to design a series of religious gardens that resulted in the Garden of the Ascension in the south-side addition. His plans for the Garden of the Ascension and the Ascension monument appear to have been fully implemented (see Figures 33-34). His plan also included Lullaby Land, which was completed; however, his plans for the Holy Cross and All Saints sections on the west side of Elmwood Cemetery were not completed (see Figure 34).

In 1957, the cemetery board hired Drewes on an annual retainer for general consulting services. He was retained for three years and most likely lent his expertise to the design of the Adas Israel section as well as other areas of the cemetery. Over the three years, Drewes was paid several large payments indicating his involvement in the improvements to the cemetery during that period. His agreement with the cemetery board included one trip per year to Mason City for the purpose of making "a general survey" of the property and making recommendations "as seem advisable on any phase of landscaping, engineering or related problems" that might arise (Letter dated November 6, 1957 from Donald W. Drewes to Guy F. Zach, Manager of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery, Mason City, Iowa). Drewes was also available for telephone or mail consultations as needed. Drewes expected that his consulting work would include: "drawings and recommendations for any minor structures such as feature settings, gateways, and other minor structures except that for working drawings of such structures [he] would charge a small fee to cover the cost of materials and blueprints" but that he would not charge for his time spent on any working drawings (Letter dated November 6, 1957 from Donald W. Drewes to Guy F. Zach, Manager of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery, Mason City, Iowa). However his retainer did not include planning lot plats or planting plans, grading plans, "or general plans of undeveloped areas, major drafting orders, major land surveying within the cemetery, ... or other major engineering or rehabilitation projects" (Letter dated November 6, 1957 from Donald W. Drewes to Guy F. Zach, Manager of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery, Mason City, Iowa). Any additional trips to Mason City during the course of a year were also to be charged extra of the retainer fee, which was \$150.00, which Drewes recommended to be paid in quarterly payments.

Samuel M. Rubee was another engineer who made some contributions to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Cemetery but whose plans were never fully executed. In 1894, Rubee was hired as the first superintendent of Riverside Cemetery in Marshalltown, Iowa. He developed that cemetery with modern ideas for the time and implemented beautification efforts in Marshalltown including Riverview Park. He earned acclaim among landscape architects for his design and his activities in the National Cemetery Superintendents Association. On May 14, 1929, the Mason City Cemetery Association sought Rubee's landscape design services, the first result of which was his submission of the 1929 map showing the configuration of the cemetery at that time (see Figure 26). His second submission was the 1931 map that showed his design for the newly-acquired "Norris Addition" (aka, the South Addition), which would include a South Federal Avenue entrance and the Roselawn, Woodlawn, and Shadowlawn sections of the cemetery (see Figure 27). News articles and advertisements indicate some work was completed in 1929; however, the street vacations to the Association were not granted until spring 1931. The May 7, 1931,



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news article stating that a “gothic entrance” was to be built of native limestone at the South Federal Avenue entrance may have been Rubee’s 1931 design; however, his plan as seen in Figure 27 called for a corner entrance to the south-side addition off South Federal Avenue, not the centered entrance parallel to the avenue that would actually be built. It would appear instead that Ray Wyrick was responsible for the final design of the Rustic stone gateway and walls built at this location (see Figure 28). However, Rubee’s plans for the Oakland, Greenwood, and Fairlawn sections were completed as he had drawn in 1931 (see Figure 27).

Therefore, the overall design of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery was a combination of sections designed by several landscape architects over a sixty-year period or more from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries. The earliest involvement of a professional landscape architect was H.W.S Cleveland in 1891 followed by Samuel Rubee, Ray Wyrick, and Donald W. Drewes, all of whom left their mark on the cemetery’s design. They all had grander designs than were executed likely because of financial constraints but also influenced by the need for consensus of the Cemetery Association to construct. The influence of persons, such as Frank Goodman, who was a Trustee of the Cemetery Association and owned a local greenhouse, is also not entirely clear. Goodman directed the construction of the stone gateway and walls the South Federal Avenue entrance in the 1930s, and the final design may have been more attributable to Goodman than Wyrick. However, it can be stated that all the designs were strongly influenced by national trends in cemetery design at the time they were built.

Project Purpose and Future Plans

This nomination is being set forth through the efforts of the City of Mason City, the Mason City Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Board of Directors. The purpose is to recognize the significance of this historic property, better understand its history and design, and assist in future preservation efforts. There is a critical need for historic rehabilitation of the four mausoleum structures in the cemetery district.

The nomination was made possible through the efforts of volunteers including: Cemetery Manager Randy Opheim, Grant Administrator Beth Enright of the City of Mason City, and Katrina Bowen of the Mason City Public Library; members of the Historic Preservation Commission: Craig Binnebose, Chair, Mark Barthelme, Vice Chair, Terry Harrison, David Hinton, Jr., Laura Little, and Scott Smed; and the Cemetery Board: Fred Fenchel, Chair, Jamie Brundage, Michael Walker, A. Carlene Davis, and Jenny Thada; and Volunteers: Rita Goranson and Lea Norlinger. Volunteers assisted with photography, historical research, and review of the draft nomination. The Cemetery History Walk volunteer group also raised money for matching funds for this project and for historic preservation projects over the past eight years.

The activity that is the subject of this National Register nomination has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Certified Local Government grants program. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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An effort was made to locate any collections or papers associated with H.W.S Cleveland in the hopes of finding a copy of his original design for the Second Addition to Elmwood Cemetery. However, no such collections were found in Minnesota, with one source even noting that Cleveland "left no known papers of his own" (<https://hwsccleveland.com>, accessed May 2017). Searches of local Mason City repositories have also turned up no plat or plans other than what has been referenced in this nomination.

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**Section** 10 **Page** 63 **Property name** Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

**County and State** Cerro Gordo County, IA

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**10. Geographical Data**

**LAT/LON References (Continued) NAD83**

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
#5	15	43.13914	-93.20132
#6	15	43.13735	-93.20131
#7	15	43.13744	-93.20743
#8	15	43.13860	-93.20891
#9	15	43.14261	-93.20889
#10	15	43.14285	-93.20850

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is shown as the black dashed outline on Figure 2, page 3. The district is roughly bounded by S. Federal Avenue and S. Adams Avenue on the east, the railroad right of way on the north, S. Monroe Avenue on the west, and 15<sup>th</sup> Street SW on the south.

**Boundary Justification**

The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is the current boundary of the cemetery and encompasses the original plat of the Mason City Cemetery (later named Elmwood Cemetery) and St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery as well as all subsequent additions to the joined Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery. This boundary contains the significant landscape, buildings, structures, and features that reflect the evolution of this cemetery from a rural picturesque cemetery to a lawn-park or garden-park and then a memorial park cemetery.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

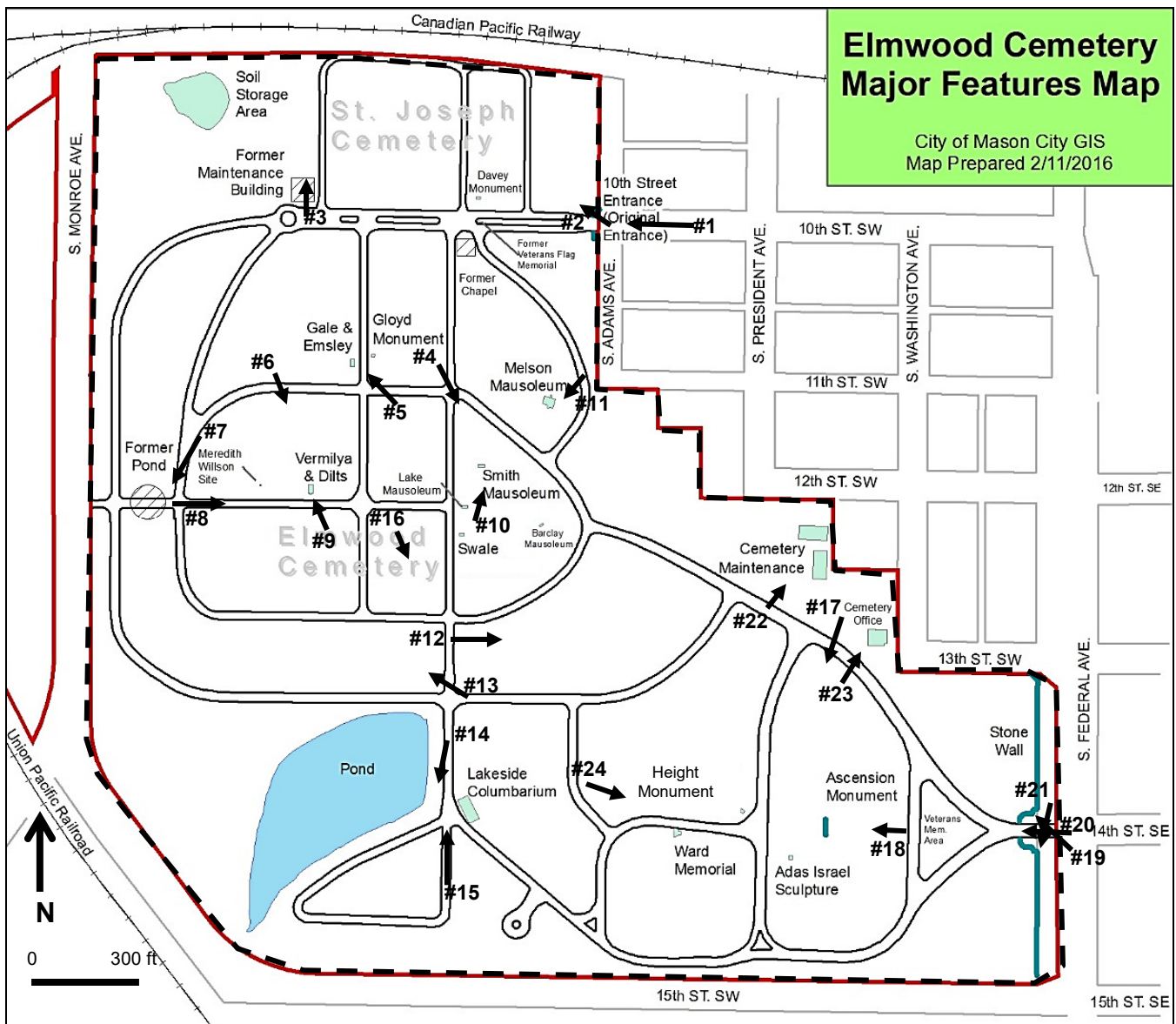
Additional

Section Documentation Page 64 Property name Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

County and State Cerro Gordo County, IA

Additional Documentation

Map showing direction of photographs (keyed to list of photographs on page 65).



GIS map showing location of major features, mausoleums, and non-extant structures within the NRHP boundary (black dashed outline) of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District.

Map compiled by City of Mason City GIS, 02/22/2016.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Additional

**Section** Documentation **Page** 65 **Property name** Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

**County and State** Cerro Gordo County, IA

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**List of Photographs (keyed to map on page 64).**

**Name of Photographer:** Leah D. Rogers

**Date of Photographs:** April 10, 2017

**Location of Original Digital Files:** Tallgrass Archaeology LLC, 2460 S. Riverside Drive, Iowa City, IA

**Number:**

- #1 10th Street SW Entrance to Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking West
- #2 St. Joseph Cemetery section looking NW
- #3 Hispanic burial section on west side of St. Joseph Cemetery looking North
- #4 Second Addition to Elmwood Cemetery looking SE at mid-section of addition
- #5 First Addition to Elmwood Cemetery looking NW at Gale & Emsley Mausoleum
- #6 Intersection of Greenwood Addition and original Elmwood Cemetery Block 2 looking SE
- #7 Monroe Street entrance to Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery in vicinity of former lily pond looking SSW
- #8 Driveway at mid-section of original Elmwood Cemetery looking East
- #9 Vermilya and Dilts Mausoleum in original Elmwood Cemetery looking NNW
- #10 South half of Second Addition to the Elmwood Cemetery looking NNE at the Smith Mausoleum
- #11 North half of Section Addition to the Elmwood Cemetery looking SW at Melson Mausoleum
- #12 County Burial Grounds on south side of Second Addition to Elmwood Cemetery looking East
- #13 Third Addition to Elmwood Cemetery looking WNW at immigrant burial ground
- #14 Lake and Lakeside Addition to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking SSW
- #15 Looking north along main north-south driveway through the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery with the lake to the left and the Columbarium to the right
- #16 Section of Free Ground containing rows of infant burials in the original Elmwood Cemetery looking SSE
- #17 Modern Lullaby Land section for infant burials in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery looking SSW
- #18 Garden of the Ascension looking West towards the bas-relief monument in the south-side addition to the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery
- #19 South Federal Avenue entrance looking NW at the stone wall and gatepost in the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery
- #20 South Federal Avenue entrance looking West at the flagpole and stone gateposts
- #21 South Federal Avenue entrance looking SSW at new stone signpost structure and the historic stone wall to the south of the entrance
- #22 Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery tile block maintenance sheds looking NW
- #23 Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery office building looking NW
- #24 Looking ESE towards the Crestlawn, Hillcrest, and Adas Israel sections of the Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery















ORIGINAL  
BLOCK 2

GREENWOOD

DOUGLASS

SQUIER

ELIZABETH HEARMAN  
BORN 1840  
DIED 1910  
WALTER J. HEARMAN  
BORN 1845  
DIED 1915  
MEACHAM

1857

B

JOHN W. MEACHAM  
BORN 1840  
DIED 1910

JOHN W. MEACHAM  
BORN 1840  
DIED 1910







1912

VERMILYA AND DILTS



AVERY

LINDSAY

GUILD

JONES

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS





SWITZER

JENKINS

HO

L. SWITZER  
BORN MAR. 26 1881  
DIED NOV. 29 1964

BORNE  
BORN MAR. 25 1889  
DIED MAR. 15 1915

ELMER GARAGE  
DIED 1912





















A stone wall with two pillars and a sign for Elmwood - St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery. The wall is constructed from light-colored, irregularly shaped stones. The sign is a dark, rectangular plaque with white text. The background features a grassy area, trees, and a building in the distance.

Elmwood - St. Joseph  
Municipal Cemetery





Community OFFICE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Elmwood--St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: IOWA, Cerro Gordo

Date Received: 4/25/2018      Date of Pending List: 5/16/2018      Date of 16th Day: 5/31/2018      Date of 45th Day: 6/11/2018      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100002541

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

X Accept       Return       Reject      6/7/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Elmwood--St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of Social History, Ethnic Heritage, Architecture and Landscape Architecture. First established in 1867, the cemetery served as the city's main burial site through much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The cemetery's design reflects the evolving nature of period cemetery architecture and landscape design, with handsome mausoleums and decorative monuments and well planned grounds. The cemetery contains numerous burials associated with the diverse ethnic and cultural groups that historically settled in Mason City, with distinctive treatments based on ethnicity often resulting in conspicuous monument design, layout, plan, and distribution. Burial dates and locations also often reflect ethnic settlement patterns within the larger community.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept NR Criteria A and C.

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 6/7/2018

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : **Yes**

CHRIS KRAMER, ACTING DIRECTOR

April 23, 2018

IOWA ARTS  
COUNCIL

PRODUCE  
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
MUSEUM OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

STATE HISTORIC SITES

STATE HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA HISTORICAL  
FOUNDATION

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Loether:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

**Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District**

The Elmwood-St. Joseph Municipal Cemetery Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with social history and ethnic heritage represented by its association with families and individuals that played an important role in the settlement and growth of the city, and in its social history. The cemetery is also locally significant under Criterion C for the architectural significance of its cemetery design by noted landscape architects in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries and in the design of the cemetery's mausoleums and other structures. The cemetery design reflects the influence of national movements and design trends in cemetery design. The period of significance for the historic district is from 1867 to 1968. The beginning date is the incorporation and establishment of the Mason City Cemetery, with the end date being the year that the last major building was constructed in the cemetery reflecting the evolution of the cemetery as a business. The district is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because it meets Criteria Consideration D as a cemetery that derives its primary significance from its distinctive design features and its association with the various cemetery design movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Sadowsky  
State Historian and National Register Coordinator  
State Historical Society of Iowa

Enclosures.