

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Machpelah Cemetery
other names/site number MM-MS-162

2. Location

street & number East Main/ eastern City Limits not for publication
city, town Mount Sterling vicinity
state Kentucky code KY county Montgomery code 173 zip code 40353

3. Classification

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

Name of related multiple property listing: Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan Date 3-6-91
State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrews 4/23/91
 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 of the Keeper Date of Action

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)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls _____

roof _____
other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1855

Significant Dates

1855

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Boyd, Carl B. and Hazel M. Boyd. A History of Mt. Sterling, Kentucky 1792-1918. Mt. Sterling: privately printed, 1984.

Deeds Montgomery County Courthouse.

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Kentucky Heritage Council

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property _____

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helen Powell
organization H. Powell & Co., Inc. date 12/1/90
street & number 2230 Idle Hour Center telephone (606) 266-5351
city or town Lexington state Kentucky zip code 40502

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

The Machpelah Cemetery is located on a steep hill with a rounded top which dominates the rolling terrain near the eastern city limits of Mt. Sterling, Montgomery County, Kentucky. It overlooks residential neighborhoods and strip commercial development leading into Mt. Sterling's commercial district to the west and scattered residences on agricultural land to the east outside the city limits. The grassy slopes of the cemetery are open with few trees because most of the grave sites are clustered at the top third of the hill. The overall plan is curvilinear with the roads curving to conform to the topography. Most of the roads in the cemetery are narrow with small turning radii, designed more for horse-drawn vehicles than for cars.

The design incorporates nature through the curvilinear layout. The groupings of mature deciduous and evergreen trees result from the nineteenth century concept that rural cemeteries were to have a park-like atmosphere and be a place of repose and contemplation. Machpelah has mature specimens of trees including spruce, cedar, cherry mulberry, maple, walnut, sweet gum, ash and a few dogwoods.

Few buildings or crypts populate the cemetery and the landscape is punctuated with stone funerary sculptures from the late nineteenth century including obelisks, draped urns atop ornamented pedestals, figures of people, angels, and dogs. Much information and sentiment about the people buried here can be gained from the dramatic monuments and the inscriptions. Many monuments use motifs from nature to illustrate the death of someone "cut down in the prime of life" such as the one dedicated to W.R. Patterson, a lawyer who died in 1887. The top of the eight-foot tree trunk has been violently removed and its limbs wrenched off. The bark is deeply grooved with ivy winding around the base and books laid against the tree.

There are also examples of figurative sculpture including the monument to Mattie Lee Mitchell placed in 1881. Mattie Lee Mitchell is depicted carrying a small child. The subdivision which includes a part of North Queen Street was named for her after her death by her husband the developer. Other sculptures include the bronze figure of Richard Reid, a significant local lawyer who was murdered in 1884.

Members of many prominent Montgomery families are buried in the cemetery. The earliest date found on a gravestone was 1854 and the majority of the interments date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The interments which date after 1940 are in the minority and most of these are noted by small headstones in family plots where the major monument was placed prior to 1940 and reflects the artistic values of the period of significance.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

Similar designs are found for the Frankfort Cemetery (1844),
Richmond Cemetery (1848), Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville (1848),
Lexington Cemetery (1848), and Georgetown Cemetery (1850).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

The Machpelah Cemetery is significant under Criterion consideration D for possessing distinctive design features within the theme of landscape architecture for the years from 1855 to 1940. The design traditions which led to the layout of Machpelah Cemetery have their roots in late 18th century "naturalistic" design.

Gardens designed by the first settlers in America reflected the Dutch-English style of gardening which had been developed during the reign of William and Mary from 1689 to 1702. The English gardens of this era were enclosed with no distant vistas and had a symmetrical layout. The garden's axis was an extension of the hallway of the house, with other walkways connecting at right angles. The layout was often bilaterally symmetrical with the two sides of the walk reflecting one another. Plants were used in a geometric fashion and often were shaped into cylinders or squares.

During the American settlement period, however, gardeners in Great Britain abandoned the concepts of enclosure and symmetry, characteristic of the Dutch-English style, to pursue an asymmetrical style of sweeping lawns, clumps of naturalized trees, and artificial lakes. Plants were not trimmed, but allowed to take their natural form. The new naturalistic style was not readily adopted by the American colonists because the natural American landscape was associated with the wild and unknown. They preferred a landscape style which demonstrated man's control over nature, and one reminiscent of the Dutch-English style gardens that they remembered from home.

The "naturalistic style" gradually became accepted by designers such as Thomas Jefferson who toured English estates during the 1780's and became convinced that the naturalistic approach to gardening was more appropriate for the American landscape than the Dutch-English or geometric style. He introduced a roundabout or curvilinear walks accented by groups of trees and shrubs in the garden at Monticello.

The "naturalistic style" was not applied to cemeteries until the early nineteenth century. Late 18th century American cemeteries in church yards reflect the Dutch-English ideas of enclosure and geometry. The graveyard is enclosed by a wall which blocks the view. The graves and paths are laid out on a grid which has a symmetrical relationship with the church building.

In 1831, Dr. Jacob Bigelow designed Mt. Auburn, a park-like cemetery, near Boston, and initiated the rural cemetery movement. Symmetry and grids were abandoned for a road system which was composed of a loose net of curvilinear avenues and paths. Family

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

plots are separated by irregular groupings of trees and shrubbery. Mt. Auburn Cemetery was not enclosed, but located on a hill with a view of Boston and the Charles River. The plants were chosen by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for their diversity and picturesque natural shapes. By 1839, Mt. Auburn Cemetery had its own guidebook to enable people to tour it in their carriages.

The rural cemetery movement reached Kentucky in 1840's and 50's with development of the Frankfort Cemetery (1844), Paris Cemetery (1847), Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville (1848), the Lexington Cemetery (1848), Richmond Cemetery (1848), Harrodsburg Cemetery (1849), Georgetown Cemetery (1850), and Machpelah Cemetery in Mt. Sterling (1855). Like Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Machpelah is located on a hill with a view of the commercial and residential areas of the city. Machpelah's site is not as spectacular, however, as that of the Frankfort Cemetery, which overlooks the state capitol buildings and the Kentucky River. Machpelah's site also does not offer the diversity of environments found at Mt. Auburn, Lexington, or Cave Hill cemeteries which have several ponds.

In 1855, the International Organization of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F) Watson Lodge #32, which was established in Mt. Sterling in 1846, purchased the tract of land at the east end of East Main Street on which they developed Machpelah Cemetery. The cemetery originally was a joint venture with the Masons, but soon the I.O.O.F. became the sole trustee and continues to manage and maintain the cemetery. The name "Machpelah" has a Biblical origin as a burial ground described the Old Testament.

The roadways and pathways in Machpelah are asymmetrical and curvilinear. The plant material on the site represents approximately 10 different varieties of trees which are not trimmed into geometric forms, but allowed to grow in their natural shape.

The changes which have occurred at Machpelah since 1940 include the pavement and a slight widening of the main roads, an action which has occurred in all of the cemeteries of the period due to desirability of asphalt paving. As in the other cemeteries listed above, secondary roads which were not paved are still visible, but have through disuse become grass-covered. Since there are no records of the original planting at Machpelah, it is difficult to know what was included in the original landscaping. Compared to the other extant community cemeteries, the Machpelah Cemetery today has less of a landscaped appearance and exhibits less diversity of plant species.

The monuments and headstones in the Machpelah Cemetery from the late nineteenth century express the naturalistic motif with

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

carvings of leaves, branches, and tree trunks. Since most significant Mt. Sterling families bought sections during the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century burials are mixed with those from the late nineteenth century, as families continued to fill up their space. These later burials, often indicated by low, unobtrusive headstones, are clustered around the nineteenth century monument with the family name.

In the section of the cemetery south of East Main excluded from the boundary, the roads are wider and the design is rectilinear. The landscaping is limited and the plots are laid out on a grid for the most efficient use of the space and ease of maintenance.

The majority of the post-1940 burials are located in the part of the cemetery located south of East Main Street and outside of the area proposed for listing.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky. MRA

Acreage of Property: 12.3 acres

UTM References

<u>Point</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	16	242700	4216000
B	16	242640	4216260
C	16	242800	4216300
D	16	242840	4216060

Verbal Boundary Description

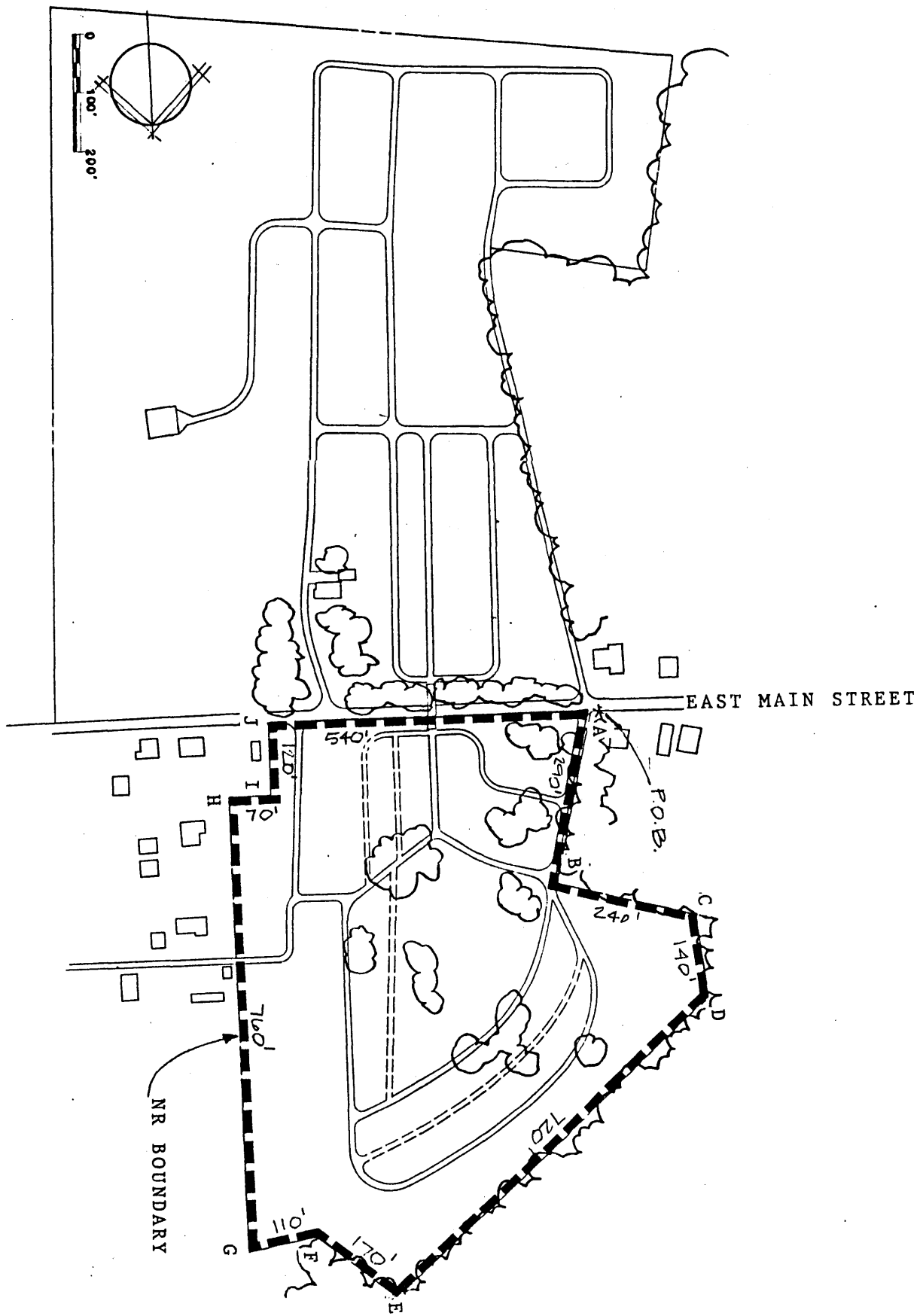
(See attached scaled map)

Beginning at point A which is at the intersection of East Main Street and Cemetery Road, then proceed northerly 290 feet along cemetery road to point B; at B proceed 240 feet along the boundary trees west to point C; from point C proceed 140 feet north to point D; at point D proceed 720 feet northeast to point E; at point E proceed 170 feet southeast to point F; at point F proceed 110 feet northeast to point G; at point G proceed 760 feet south to point H; at point H proceed 70 feet west to point I; at point I proceed 120 feet south to point J; at J proceed 540 feet west to point A, the point of beginning. The boundary includes 12.3 acres and coincides with the cemetery's property lines for the section of the cemetery on the north side of East Main Street.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include all of the historic resources contributing to the understanding of the theme of landscape design for the period from 1855 to 1940. The boundary includes one contributing resource, a cemetery site.

The boundary excludes the following areas which are not associated with landscape design during the period of significance: the modern part of the cemetery south of East Main; on the east, a modern residential development; on the west and north vacant land and modern highway commercial development.



MACHPELAH CEMETERY
(MM-MS-162)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 1 Machpelah Cemetery
Mt. Sterling, Ky., MRA

For All Photos:

Property Location: East Main/eastern City Limits
Mount Sterling, Montgomery County, Kentucky
Photographer: Helen Powell
Negative Location: Kentucky Heritage Council
Frankfort, Kentucky
Date Taken: 1990

Photo Nos.

1 - 7 Various unidentified view of cemetery markers