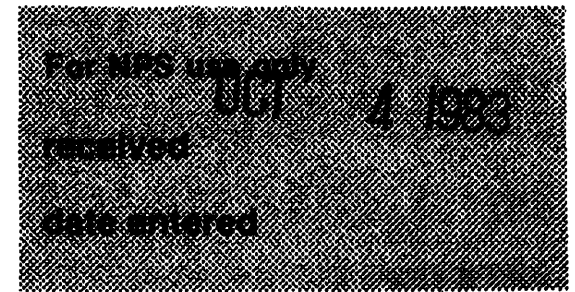


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NAME: Riverside Cemetery

LOCATION: between Pleasant Street and the Seekonk River from a point near Raleigh Avenue to the Providence city line. The Gov. John W. Davis House, which is located on the cemetery grounds, is numbered 724 Pleasant Street

OWNER: The Riverside Burial Society of Pawtucket
724 Pleasant Street
Pawtucket, RI

CONDITION: Good; altered; original site

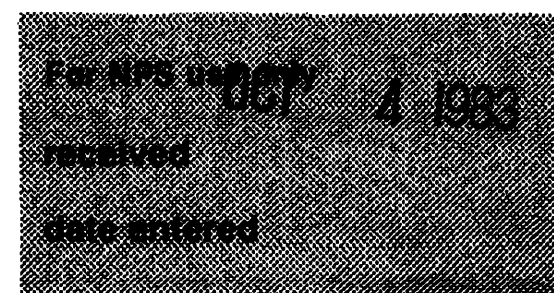
DESCRIPTION:

Riverside Cemetery, a picturesquely landscaped nineteenth-century graveyard in the "rural cemetery" mode, is located between Pleasant Street and the Seekonk River in south-central Pawtucket, with the developed portion of the cemetery extending from a point near Raleigh Avenue southerly to the Providence city line. Providence's magnificent Swan Point Cemetery is Riverside's neighbor to the south; a turn-of-the-century residential neighborhood extends along the opposite (western) side of Pleasant Street; and an open stretch of sandy barren land (located, in fact, upon the northerly third of lot which contains the cemetery) abuts the cemetery to the north. A dramatic stone wall of massive boulders separates Riverside from its Providence counterpart; sections of iron fencing, granite wall (in front of the Davis House only), and chain link fence line the cemetery's Pleasant Street frontage; the northern boundary, along an imaginary line separating the cemetery from the undeveloped northern portion of the same lot, is open. The main entrance into the cemetery is near its southwestern corner, at the junction of Pleasant Street and Alfred Stone Road. The present gateway was presented to the cemetery as a memorial to Leroy Fales in 1921; it consists of four yellow brick piers capped by granite spheres separating a central automobile gate from a pair of flanking pedestrian entries.

Riverside's topography varies considerably. The rolling hillocks of its southern end gradually subside into a northward-sloping plain which stretches to the cemetery's boundary; the plains and hillocks are terminated by a ragged line of steeply pitched bluffs and ravines. These tumble down to a narrow, undulating terrace on the Seekonk's western bank.

Riverside's most picturesque, southernmost section was initially developed in the 1870s and '80s in the artfully naturalistic "rural cemetery" manner first made popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Here, paved drives artfully meander through shady groves and between the lush banks of ornamental shrubbery which separate one cluster of lots from the

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next. Although the markers are spaced rather closely, the absence of fences, the verdant backdrop of trees and shrubs, and the naturalistic layout of the drives has carefully preserved the image of a picturesque natural landscape in the best of the "rural cemetery" tradition.

A rather more regular layout has been resorted to in Riverside's flatter, central and northern sections, where winding drives are chiefly confined to the area along the riverbank bluffs. A focal point within this section is the terraced, circular Fales family plot whose shape is reflected in the pair of circular drives which surround it. A less obvious but equally impressive feature of this central section is the secluded group of plots found perched atop a riverbank bluff a bit to the north of the Fales lot. Cut off from the rest of the cemetery by a thick cedar hedge, and set within their own hilltop grove, are a cluster of some twenty or thirty rustic plots dating from the 1930s. Each is marked by a single boulder left in an almost natural state--only a single family name is inscribed upon each.

As in the southern portion of the cemetery, mature shade trees abound in Riverside's central section (oaks and spruces being particularly numerous), but the ornamental shrubbery begins to thin out as the northern end is approached. The northernmost section of the cemetery is, in fact, only thinly and rather recently developed.

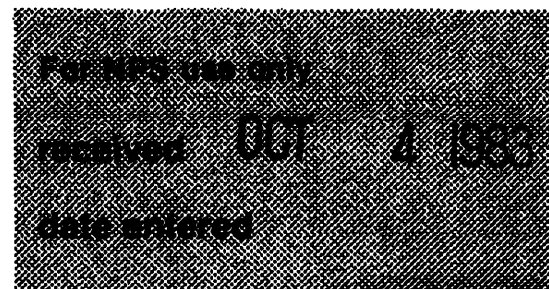
The monuments within the cemetery range in date from the late nineteenth century through the present. In terms of sheer numbers, granite slabs, obelisks, and sarcophagi constitute the norm, but a notable collection of more interesting monuments can be found as well. Marble markers appear occasionally and there are a handful of striking, blue-gray monuments of zinc. One of these zinc monuments, that of the Devereaux family, features a life-sized, classically draped mourning figure standing atop a Victorian Gothic pedestal. The most impressive single monument in the cemetery, however, is that which stands on John R. Fales' terraced, circular lot. A six-foot high, pilastered granite pedestal at the center of this lot bears aloft a life-sized, classically draped figure in mourning, sheltered in a six-sided classical temple.

Two significant late nineteenth-century buildings are also located within the cemetery's grounds: a one-and-a-half-story cemetery manager's house (with outbuildings) stands at 724 Pleasant Street, and a small, octagonal gatehouse with a connecting shed is located at the cemetery entrance. Both buildings are clapboarded wooden structures with intact Late Victorian trim; both were presumably erected at the cemetery's behest in the 1870s. Specifically, the manager's house is a T-shaped

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variant of the standard, three-bay, side-hall form, with a single-story bay window on the front facade. Elaborate, gabled windowheads and triangular brackets under wide eaves are the principal exterior embellishments. The single-story gatehouse, in contrast, features projecting, heavily proportioned label moldings over each opening as its major exterior ornament.

PERIOD: 1800-1899

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Landscape Architecture, Social/Humanitarian; Sculpture

SPECIFIC DATES: 1874, c. 1877, 1881, 1891

ARCHITECT: Edward & Walter Dexter, R. Smith Mowry

SIGNIFICANCE:

Although graveyards are not ordinarily considered eligible for listing in the National Register, Riverside Cemetery derives its primary significance from its outstanding design features and its important historical associations. As a well-preserved exemplar of the rural cemetery movement of the nineteenth century and as a virtual extension of Providence's outstanding Swan Point Cemetery (already listed in the National Register of Historic Places), which lies adjacent to it, Riverside Cemetery is significant in the history both of landscape architecture and of social attitudes. Its cast and carved stone and metal monuments are significant, as well, in the history of Rhode Island sculpture. Finally, Riverside holds a significant place in Rhode Island political history as the home of Governor John W. Davis. Davis, a prime mover in the Riverside Burial Society and the cemetery's long-time resident manager, capped a long and active political career with two terms as Governor of Rhode Island, in 1887 and 1890.

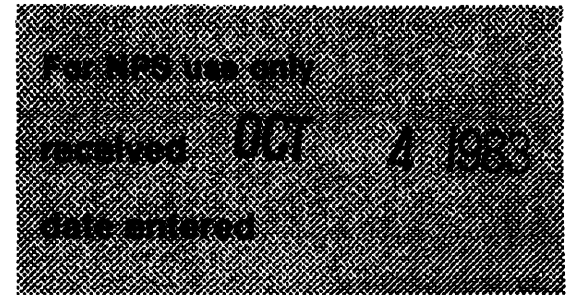
Riverside Cemetery was initially laid out in 1874 by Edward and Walter Dexter, civil engineers, under the supervision of one of the cemetery's Trustees, W.D. Bullock, who was himself a civil engineer. The octagonal wooden gatehouse was likely erected at the same time; the resident manager's house was finished by 1877, when John W. Davis and his family moved from Providence to occupy it. Four years later, R. Smith Mowry was called in to replat at least a portion of the grounds.

John W. Davis, the proprietor of a Providence grain and provisions business from 1850 until 1890, first entered politics as a member of the Democratic City Committee of Providence in 1854. After moving to Pawtucket, Davis was elected to a number of state and local offices--town councilman in 1882 and 1885; state senator in 1855, 1886, and 1893; Mayor of Pawtucket in 1896--in addition to serving the two terms as governor.

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The first Democrat elected to the governor's office since the 1850s and the first Pawtucket resident since Joseph Jenks, Jr., served in the 1720s and 1730s, Davis' administration was a relatively progressive one; its major achievements included an amendment to the state constitution allowing foreign-born citizens the same voting rights as native-born citizens, a ballot reform law on the Australian (secret ballot) system, and the establishment of a state College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The property owned by the Riverside Burial Society includes all of Pawtucket Assessor's Plat 67A, lot 15. The grounds actually occupied and developed for cemetery use, though, cover only the southern two-thirds of this lot--the northern third of lot 15 (a sandy waste) is therefore excluded from this nomination. Specifically, the nominated property is that portion of Pawtucket Assessor's Plat 67A, lot 15 lying south of a line drawn parallel to, and 650 feet southerly from, the north boundary line of lot 15.

ACREAGE: c. 34 acres
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local
UTM: A 19 302400 4636920
B 19 302480 4636440
C 19 302100 4636400
D 19 302110 4636940

(See Continuation Sheet #141)