

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 17 1976

DATE ENTERED JUL 13 1977

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
* * * Oak Hill Cemetery
AND/OR COMMON
Oak Hill Cemetery

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1120 North 19th Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Birmingham

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama

CODE

01

COUNTY

Jefferson

CODE

073

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

___ BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

___ PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

OTHER: Cemetery

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Birmingham

STREET & NUMBER

710 North 20th Street

CITY, TOWN

Birmingham

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama 35203

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Birmingham

STATE

Alabama

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Encompassing 26 acres, Oak Hill Cemetery is located in the heart of Birmingham, only one-half mile northwest of City Hall. The well-landscaped tree-shaded burial ground is bounded on the northeast by 19th Street North and on the southeast by 11th Avenue between 17th Street North and 19th Street North. The western boundary is a diagonal line from 17th Street North to 13th Court. Although distinguished primarily by the fine architectural quality of its mausoleums, the grounds also include the well-designed Pioneer Memorial Building constructed in 1928, and a small frame caretaker's cottage probably built c. 1880.

The Pioneer Memorial Building (1), located at the terminus of the entrance drive in block 6, reflects a simple application of the Jacobean Revival style with ecclesiastical elements. Constructed of ashlar Indiana limestone set in broken course, the building is a one-story structure over a full basement. The modified cruciform plan features a larger north transept accommodating the office, and a shorter southern transept creating a two-foot bay window within the chapel which extends to four feet on the exterior from ground level to roofline. This creates a steep cross-gabled roof which is covered with slate.

The main facade of the building is dominated by the end gable with its long rectangular casement, leaded glass windows divided by Tudor arched transoms. This entire window bay is delineated by stone label molding which continues horizontally as a belt course across the facade to line the centrally crested parapet of the porch roof and terminates at the corner buttress on the south wall. A small rectangular wood louvered ventilator, also with label, is situated in the center of the roof gable above the central window. This same window and ventilator treatment with two rather than three units and terminated label is utilized on the three remaining end gables. All gables are stepped once at the base and lined with stone coping.

A partially enclosed porch adjoins the north wall of the chapel and terminates at the east wall of the office. Quarter-turn stairs with landing lead to a Tudor-arched entrance that provides access to the separate entrances for chapel and office. The north wall of the porch features similarly arched openings with radiating voussoirs above and recessed panels below. Buttresses separate the opening and mark the corner. A six inch belt course interrupts the otherwise smooth face of the stone and extends around the entire structure varying in height from five to eight feet above ground level.

Furnished as recently as 1974, using oak pews and ecclesiastical fittings on loan from St. Mary's Chapel, the Oak Hill Chapel now occupies its entire intended dimension of 16 x 27 feet. This area was used as an office from 1928 until 1974. Apparently the depression prevented the completion of the chapel at that time.

The building has a full basement which is currently used for storage. However, a separate maintenance shed now under construction will free this space for the proposed pioneer history museum.

Of the many fine examples of sculpture found throughout the cemetery, seven mausoleums of fine architectural quality dominate. Although primarily influenced by classical proportions, the seven family vaults provide an interesting variety in

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texture and materials. Both the Bates (3) and Zinszer (2) mausoleums date from 1896 and both follow a Roman design. Built entirely of marble, and located on block 7, Peter Zinszer's mausoleum is set on an urn decorated platform that extends over nine feet to the front of the structure. The base consists of four courses of rough cut masonry forming a sloping faced die four feet in depth. Smooth, large cut stones complete the structure. Unlike the other mausoleums, the Zinszer vault features crypts which extend from the main central body, but do not reach full height. An arched entrance with the family name in raised block letters surmounts double bronze doors, the upper panels of which are glazed behind a well detailed grill. Lower door panels are decorated with the Masonic emblem. Stone coping with simple corner finials lines the two-level roof and a keystone shaped finial with the Christian symbol of cross and crown marks the center front ridge of the roof. Overall dimensions of the mausoelum, excluding the splayed die, are twelve feet wide and thirteen feet deep.

The Roman designed Bates (3) Mausoleum, located in block 23, is a simple rectangular structure of smooth cut limestone with four pilasters on each side capped by a narrow cornice and resting on a splayed base of rough cut random ashlar stone approximately four feet deep. The pitched roof of two slabs of stone features double ridge strips. The name G. B. Bates and the date, 1896, are inscribed in the pediment above the round arched entrance with two panel iron door, the upper panel of which is an open decorative grill. Measuring ten feet wide by twelve feet deep, the mausoleum contains eight crypts.

One of the simplest but most impressive mausoleums in terms of stone-masonry is that of Charles Linn (4), built in 1880, two years before his death. The rectangular structure located in block 8 is seven feet by nine feet eight inches with a slightly pitched roof of two four inch slabs of limestone forming a center ridge. Constructed of solid brownstone, the mausoleum includes stone blocks of exceptionally large size for the period. Several stones are seven feet long, sixteen inches high and ten inches thick, but are scored to appear smaller. The rusticated cornerstones that dominate the smooth east facade are actually carved from two single blocks over eight feet long, but each gives the overall appearance of a series of twelve eight-inch quoins. A single cast iron door, believed to have been specially made for Linn in Sweden, is decorated with a center rosette in each of its four panels.

Taking advantage of a hillside site in block 6, the Erswell (5) family constructed a partially buried eighteen foot barrel vault mausoleum in c. 1885. The fourteen foot wide limestone block front is topped with carved crown molding and a finial at the peaked coping. Massive construction, large blocks, and a peaked rather than arched entrance with keystone give the structure a feeling of a Cretan design. The pilasters with heavy capitals which flank the entrance have been badly eroded by the rust from the unusual wrought iron gates. Carved panels on either side of the entrance bare the inscription, "Family Vault--of E. Erswell."

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The Westbrook family built their large barrel vault mausoleum completely above ground in block 3 and shortly after the Erswell structure in 1888. Very rough cut limestone blocks set in courses of varying heights are used throughout this thirty foot by 15 foot structure. Two short smooth obelisks at each front corner and a stone name marker were the only decoration added to the otherwise rough stone work. A single iron gate covers the entrance on the thirty foot front and leads to the eleven crypts which are arranged in a fan shape manner on two levels of five over six.

The Cefalu (7) family mausoleum is a severe marble structure following a temple form on a fifteen inch limestone base. Classical influence is evident in the pilaster and pediment treatment as well. The ridged roof of four limestone slabs features a stone Latin cross above the family name and narrow gates which lead to the entrance. Located in block 1 near the center of the cemetery, the Cefalu Mausoleum was built in 1912, contains four crypts and is approximately 10 feet square.

An interesting departure from the predominant classical influences in Oak Hill is the Kelley Mausoleum (8) in the Spanish Mission style. The all brick structure built in 1885 is covered with stucco and utilizes limestone trim only in the coping, lintel and unusual paired doors. The latter are made from six-foot solid limestone slabs with an incised three panel design. A slightly rounded barrel vault roof covers the rectangular structure which is nine feet wide and ten feet deep. The Kelley Mausoleum is located in block 5 under a large magnolia tree.

The all limestone Due Mausoleum (9) is a simple, almost square structure nine and one-half feet wide by nine feet deep. The Greek proportioned vault combines rough cut walls with a smooth base, cornice and roof. A pair of iron gates cover the entrance. Only three crypts were included in this structure which was built by the Oak Hill Marble Works in 1907. The Due Mausoleum is located near the cemetery entrance in lot 25.

The Caretaker's Cottage (10), now located in block 18 in the southwest corner of the cemetery over what used to be the Potter's Field and facing 11th Avenue North, was moved to its present location January 15, 1928, to make way for the new Pioneer Memorial Building at the head of the 19th Street entrance driveway. Originally this one-story frame Victorian cottage with steeply pitched roof had wide porches on three sides with carved and bracketed posts and plain wooden balustrades. Two gable end projecting sections on the porch featured shingle siding and gingerbread trim in the apex of the gables. After the move the two-room cottage was altered for use as a residence. The smaller rear porch was enclosed and converted to a kitchen.

The only other alterations to the cottage were made in 1937. The longer side porch was enlarged and enclosed to add two rooms and a modern bath. To accommodate the addition, the roof was extended. Brackets and gingerbread were removed at this

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time and the structure was covered with asbestos siding. The cottage now presents a three-bay main facade with one double window on the west side where the addition was made. Original shingle siding remains intact on the now three-quarter front porch.

The cottage is now undergoing a partial restoration as a separate project of the Birmingham Historical Society and will be occupied in November 1976. Exterior and interior painting has been completed. Future plans call for the removal of the asbestos siding and exterior woodwork on the porch will be replaced as it can be found or duplicated.

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in 1873, which almost brought an end to the developers dream of creating Alabama's largest city in Jones Valley.

When economic recovery did follow, the city was able to build a two-room caretaker's cottage and office near the main entrance to the cemetery. The small frame house with elaborate shingling and turned porch columns was built c. 1880 to replace an earlier structure that was moved from the grounds.

By 1902, Birmingham had completed a major portion of the downtown street paving, curbing and trolley lines which did affect the size of Oak Hill. A 100 foot section along 17th Street and 11th Avenue, which was part of Potter's Field, was cut off and covered with paving. However three additional lots were added on the 19th Street side, two on the north end and one on the south end, before the work on 19th Street was completed. These additions brought Oak Hill to its present size of twenty-six acres.

Unfortunately, the cemetery succumbed to a period of neglect in the first decades of the 20th Century. This prompted the formation of the Oak Hill Memorial Association, composed of descendants of those interred in the cemetery as well as owners of family plots. Organized in May 1913, the group negotiated a contract with the City to perpetually care for the property. In 1927 the group was able to sponsor a fund-raising drive that resulted in sufficient monies for a Pioneer Memorial Building to replace the frame cottage which was removed to the Potter's Field on January 15, 1928.

Miller and Martin, the architects for the Association designed a one-story over full basement building of Indiana limestone in the then popular Jacobean Revival style. The structure was to serve as an office, records repository and chapel. However, it was not until 1974 that the chapel was furnished and dedicated. Future plans call for a museum on the ground floor chronicling the history of Birmingham during its earlier pioneer period, 1870-98.

Although architecture dominates this cemetery, it would be difficult to ignore the fact that it is the burial ground for those responsible for Birmingham's phenomenal growth. Mayors, governors, industrialists, manufacturers, black leaders and veterans all rest here. Theirs, and other graves, are marked by a variety of sculptured monuments including classic draped figures, stone scrolls, and small biers. In many cases these markers and mausoleums are the only physical evidence remaining of this city's commercial and industrial leaders.

The Oak Hill Memorial Association continues to maintain the cemetery, which is now in the heart of the city, and the Birmingham Historical Society is gradually restoring the frame caretaker's cottage for use as a permanent residence for a retired minister.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oak Hill Cemetery, Birmingham's oldest burial ground, is significant for the fine architectural quality of its mausoleums as well as that of the centrally located Pioneer Memorial Building. Although influenced primarily by classical styles and proportions, these mausoleums do reveal some variety and sophistication of style, construction and materials reflecting a rapidly developing industrial city in the heart of a mineral rich area.

The seven outbuilding mausoleums were built between 1880 and 1912 by several of Birmingham's leading commercial families. The Linn Mausoleum, the first erected in the city, was built by Charles Linn several years before his death in 1882. Linn, one of the founder's of Birmingham, built the National Bank of Birmingham, the city's first, and also founded the Linn Iron Works. His mausoleum blends classical proportions and Renaissance elements in a simple style featuring massive brownstone corner blocks carved to resemble quoins. Both the Zinszer and Bates mausoleums, erected in 1896, show strong Roman influence with splayed bases in rusticated stone. Zinszer's vault, in particular, resembles those which line the Appian Way in Rome. Both Peter Zinszer and Charles Bates were prominent in the furniture business. Two barrel vault type crypts are also included in the cemetery. The unusual Erswell Mausoleum built in c. 1885, is actually partially buried in the hillside and features a flat limestone facade of Cretan design with iron grill work gates. Rusticated limestone blocks are used throughout the barrel vault mausoleum built by John Westbrook in 1888. The only decoration here is the short flanking obelisks reminiscent of the Egyptian style. Westbrook was involved in many commercial aspects of Birmingham, including a mercantile store, real estate, several corporations and the Western Valley Street Railway Company. The Kelley Mausoleum is of interest because it is unique in the use of the Mission Revival style and was constructed of stucco over brick to resemble adobe. Kelley, a prominent merchant and manufacturer, built his family vault in 1885 after the death of his two month old child. The Due and Cefalu mausoleums, both built in the 20th Century, are noted for their classically well-proportioned simplicity. Dr. Malvern Due's widow had his mausoleum constructed in 1907, a year after her husband's death, using rusticated limestone on a smooth base. Rosario Cefalu built his family vault of marble and limestone in 1912, using a simple pilaster treatment.

Oak Hill Cemetery, or City Cemetery, as it was first called, was originally created by the Elyton Land Company, developers of Birmingham. Captain Barker, a civil engineer who platted the city, also laid out Oak Hill. Before Birmingham was incorporated in December, 1871, the Mayor and City Alderman purchased this twenty-one and one-half acres from Elyton for \$1,073.50. As the only burial ground in the new city, it soon became the final resting place for most of the 128 victims of the devastating cholera epidemic

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Personal family records of Bates, Due, Zinszer and Cefalu descendants.

Records - Oak Hill Cemetery.

Teeple, F. W., and Smith, A. Davis, History of Jefferson County and Birmingham, Alabama.
Birmingham: Teeple and Smith, 1887.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 22.3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

E. 16/516920/3709640

A 16 | 516980 | 3709670
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 16 | 517200 | 3709300
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 16 | 516960 | 3709160

D 16 | 516910 | 3709260

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northwest corner of 11th Avenue North and 19th Street proceed southeasterly along 11th Avenue North to 17th Street, then proceed northeasterly along 17th Street for approximately 307 feet, then north for 1228 feet to 13th Court, then northeasterly for 278 feet along 13th Court to 19th Street, then southeasterly along 19th Street to the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donna C. Hole

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

DATE

November 8, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

STATE

Alabama 36130

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Wils B. Howard Jr.

TITLE

SAPO Ala.

DATE

Nov. 9, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Wm. D. Smith
Charles [Signature]

DATE

7-13-77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3-18-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

RECEIVED

NOTATION
REGISTER
DOC 18-22

MAP OF OAKHILL CEMETERY

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

SHADED PLOTS INDICATES LOTS FOR SALE
OAK HILL MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
1" = 131'



- 1 PIONEER MEMORIAL BUILDING
- 2 ZINSZER MAUSOLEUM
- 3 BATES MAUSOLEUM
- 4 LINN MAUSOLEUM
- 5 ERSWELL MAUSOLEUM
- 6 WESTBROOK MAUSOLEUM
- 7 CEFALU MAUSOLEUM
- 8 KELLEY MAUSOLEUM
- 9 DUE MAUSOLEUM
- 10 CARE TAKER'S COTTAGE

17th STREET

11th AVENUE NORTH

13th COURT

19th STREET

19th STREET

