

ESTABLISHMENT AND INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY, 1866-1869

In the spring of 1866, the camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers was appropriated by the United States as the site of permanent burial grounds for Union soldiers who had fallen in the Petersburg Campaign and at other battlefields in the region. The camp became part of the nation's new system of national cemeteries, created out of the tragedy of the Civil War. The graves followed a circular plan with a flagstaff at the center, set in front of the engineers' Poplar Grove Church—the rustic building that became the namesake of the new national cemetery. By June 1869, the burial corps completed its work, having interred a total of 6,183 bodies that took up most of the available space in the cemetery.

FOUNDING OF THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

Although the creation of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was a result of the unique circumstances of its location, it was also established as a result of an unprecedented, systematic federal effort to provide all soldiers who died in war a proper burial. The only cemeteries established by the United States military prior to the Civil War were small plots within post reservations. Elsewhere, military burials were generally made in civilian cemeteries. The one exception to these procedures came about after the Mexican War, when Congress approved the establishment of a national cemetery at Mexico City in 1850 to inter the remains of 750 Americans who fell in that war. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, the old burial procedures quickly proved inadequate, but the establishment of the national cemetery at Mexico City served as precedent for handling large-scale burials.¹

The first burial regulation of the Civil War, General Orders No. 75 issued on September 11, 1861, intended to improve the burial process in the face of rising casualties. It made Commanding Officers responsible for burials, and also gave the Quartermaster General (Quartermaster Department)—traditionally the branch of the army that administered supplies—the responsibility of overseeing the registration of burials and providing headboards. General Orders No. 75 did not, however, provide authority for acquisition of land for burials. This was provided eight months later in General Orders No. 33, April 3, 1862, which gave generals the authority to lay out burial grounds near the battlefields. Together, these two General Orders resulted in the establishment of military cemeteries near hospitals, on battlefields, at Army posts, and in plots provided by private

cemeteries associations. On July 17, 1862, with escalation of the war and increasing casualties, Congress passed an act giving the President authority "...to purchase cemetery grounds...to be used as a National Cemetery for soldiers who shall have died in the service of the country."² This legislation, together with the General Orders, formed the basis for a system of national cemeteries. By the end of 1862, fourteen national cemeteries had been established near battlefields and in private cemeteries, primarily to relieve crowding at pre-existing military installations.³ These ranged from Alexandria National Cemetery at the wartime encampment surrounding the nation's capital, to Cypress Hills National Cemetery in the private Cypress Hills Cemetery near New York City, and Fort Leavenworth (Kansas) National Cemetery at that fort's old post cemetery. Only two battlefield cemeteries were established in the East—Antietam and Gettysburg—and these were established by private associations under state law. Ten additional national cemeteries were established before the war was over.⁴

Although these war-time cemeteries formed the basis of a national cemetery system, they were for the most part hastily developed, lacked uniformity, and embraced only a small percentage of Union soldiers killed in action. By the end of the war, only 101,736 of the total 359,520 total Union dead had been buried in permanent graves according to the wartime procedures; the majority still lay on the battlefields in temporary graves or on the ground.⁵ In June 1865, as troops were being sent home, the War Department (Army) began the enormous task of recovering more than 250,000 bodies from the battlefields and temporary cemeteries, and moving them to permanent burial sites within national cemeteries, an effort coordinated within the War Department by the Quartermaster General. Congress authorized this effort through a Joint Resolution issued on April 31, 1866:

*Resolved...That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby authorized and required to take immediate measures to preserve from desecration the graves of the soldiers of the United States who fell in battle or died of disease in the field and in hospital during the war of the rebellion; to secure suitable burial places in which they may be properly interred; and to have the grounds enclosed, so that the resting-places of the honored dead may be kept sacred forever.*⁶

In order to accommodate the enormous number of burials, the War Department established fifty new national cemeteries over the course of the search and recovery program, for a total of seventy-three national cemeteries established by 1869. Thirteen were reconstructed from battlefield burial plots.⁷ These national cemeteries were developed and administered through various geographic

departments within the Cemeterial division of the Office of the Quartermaster General. Virginia formed one such department but was administered through the Depot of Washington, under the charge of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore. Moore had prior experience in Cemeterial affairs through his work in founding Arlington and Battleground National Cemeteries in 1864, both located at the nation's capital.⁸ By June 30, 1866, the Quartermaster General reported that Colonel Moore had had established the National Cemeteries at Hampton, Richmond, Cold Harbor, Seven Pines, Glendale, Fort Harrison, Fredericksburg, Ball's Bluff, and Winchester, plus national cemetery plots within the private Hollywood and Oakwood Cemeteries near Richmond. At the time of the report, Moore was also beginning work on two cemeteries near the Petersburg battlefields—City Point and Poplar Grove.⁹

While the initial regulations and legislation established the largely unprecedented effort at providing suitable burial sites for all who died in the war, there were few regulations about how the cemeteries should be developed and administered. This was corrected while the reburial process was underway in the years immediately following the war. On February 22, 1867, Congress passed “An Act to Establish and Protect National Cemeteries,” legislation that provided uniform standards for the development of the national cemetery system. This act directed the Secretary of War to have, at each national cemetery, standard facilities and improvements such as superintendent's lodges, grave markers, and enclosing fences; a burial register; to hire a veteran to serve as superintendent; to undertake annual inspections and reports to Congress with estimates of necessary appropriations; and to secure title in all cemetery lands in fee simple. The act also provided \$750,000 for carrying out the act in addition to funds previously appropriated. The act, interpreted and expanded through regulations issued by the Quartermaster General, would remain the basis for the development, maintenance, and administration of national cemeteries for many subsequent decades.¹⁰

ESTABLISHMENT OF POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY, 1866

For nearly a year after the Civil War ended on April 3, 1865, a majority of the Union dead still lay on the battlefields of Petersburg, many buried where they had fallen. [Figure 1.21] There had been just two known attempts during the war to collect the bodies at Petersburg into cemeteries. In 1864, the Union Army established two temporary battlefield cemeteries in the vicinity of Meade Station, along the military railroad near Fort Stedman in the eastern front. By March 1865, 1,214 Union soldiers had been buried in these two cemeteries, but this number accounted for only a fraction of the soldiers who died in battle. Another two cemeteries were established in 1864 near the depot hospitals at City Point and

Point-of-Rocks (west of Petersburg), where wounded soldiers who died there were given a proper burial.¹¹ The City Point hospital cemetery was an unadorned field, marked by grave mounds and white-painted headboards, and enclosed by a wood fence. [Figure 1.22]

On November 23, 1865, Colonel C. H. Folson of the Quartermaster Department issued a report to Montgomery Meigs, Quartermaster General of the U. S. Army, recommending that permanent military cemeteries be established at Petersburg to secure the numerous scattered graves on the battlefield, which Folson believed were in danger of being destroyed as local farmers returned the land to agriculture. In his report to Meigs, Folson recommended that the two cemeteries in the vicinity of Meade Station serve as the nuclei of the permanent cemeteries. The Office of the Quartermaster General apparently took no action on Colonel Folson's recommendation regarding the Meade Station cemeteries.¹²

At the time of Folson's November 23rd report, Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore was in the process of selecting sites for national cemeteries in Virginia as part of his work in supervising the reburial program for the Office of the Quartermaster General. Not until April 17, 1866, more than a year after the end of the Petersburg Campaign, did Moore request authority to select sites for national cemeteries in the vicinity of Petersburg, having previously concentrated on commencing cemeteries in the vicinity of Richmond. On April 30th, Moore received authority to carry out the following instructions of the Secretary of War:

...[to] cause eligible Sites to be Selected and report the Same with proper estimates to the Secretary of War for his approval. The report to be accompanied by proper descriptions of the quantity of land, its value & a survey with an abstract of title.¹³

By early May of 1866, Lieutenant Colonel Moore had selected the cemetery sites at Petersburg. Rather than the ones recommended by Colonel Folson, Moore selected one at City Point and a second—Poplar Grove—at the camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers in Dinwiddie County. Moore selected these two sites for their proximity to the major battlefields: the City Point site apparently because it covered the eastern front and was near to the hospital cemetery, from which bodies were to be reinterred; and the engineers' camp site because it was near the battlefields of the Federal western front. Centrality of location was not, however, Moore's only reason, because both cemeteries were to receive bodies from far afield. For the engineers' site, Moore considered it well adapted for burial purposes—probably on account of its relatively level ground and deep soils—and also because he believed the property was going to be donated to the

federal government. On June 12, 1866, Moore outlined his reasons for selecting the engineers' camp to Quartermaster General Major Montgomery Meigs, in response to a request made by a Mr. Colfax, (a local resident) who supported the Meade Station location:

*...The site[engineers' camp] is a more central one, and is in every respect superior and better adapted for burial purposes, than the one referred to by Hon. Mr. Colfax. The ground is owned by a gentleman from Philadelphia, who kindly offered to deed the same gratuitously [sic] to the United States. The necessity for purchasing the land is therefore obviated. The site at Poplar Grove is a most excellent one, and the cemetery, when completed, will be one of the finest in the country...*¹⁴

Although in his letter Moore did not make specific reference to the engineers' camp as a reason for selecting the site, the refinement of the buildings and grounds, and in particular the pine woods and existence of Poplar Grove Church, undoubtedly influenced his decision. Perhaps he felt the church gave the site a feeling of sanctity, and that it would serve as a memento of the war. His reference to the site as "Poplar Grove," however, clearly indicates that Moore felt the church provided the essential identity for the new cemetery.¹⁵

By the latter part of May 1866, soon after Lieutenant Colonel Moore had selected the site at the New York Engineers' camp but before the cemetery was officially established, work apparently began on moving bodies to what was initially called "U. S. National Cemetery at Poplar Grove, Virginia."¹⁶ In accordance with the April 30, 1866 orders from the Secretary of War, Moore had an Army surveyor prepare an abstract of title and a survey of the property, plus an illustrated map showing the setting of the site between Halifax Road to the east and Vaughan Road to the west.¹⁷ [Figures 1.23, 1.24; abstract of title in Appendix B] Although the abstract and maps were not dated, they were probably made soon after Moore had selected the site in early May 1866, and before June 1, 1866, when work was begun on the cemetery along with the one at City Point. This work was probably of a preparatory nature, rather than actual burials. In its annual report for the period ending June 30, 1866, the Office of the Quartermaster General did not list Poplar Grove as one of the cemeteries in the Virginia District (Washington Depot) as having commenced, apparently because actual burials did not begin until July.¹⁸

The area surveyed for the new cemetery was a rectangular parcel surveyed at 7.2 acres and centered at the middle of the camp's parade ground. With space for over 5,000 graves, Poplar Grove was one of the larger national cemeteries

established in the Virginia district.¹⁹ The parcel measured approximately 645 feet on the north and south, and 475 feet on the east and west sides, and was accessed by a drive at the southwest corner, probably following a pre-existing entry to the camp from Vaughan Road [see Figures 1.23, 1.24]. The parcel was situated entirely within the property belonging to Thomas B. Flower and apparently occupied by John and Mary Ann Flower, but it shared about three-quarters of its south boundary with the farm belonging to Helen Farley. While work on the cemetery commenced in 1866, it would be nearly two years before the federal government actually secured title to the property from Thomas B. Flower, in keeping with the Act of February 22, 1867.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN CIVIL WAR-ERA NATIONAL CEMETERIES

The national cemeteries established by the federal government for the Civil War dead were initially intended as places to provide soldiers with a decent burial, and as distinct places that clearly evoked military associations and federal authority.²⁰ Although each cemetery varied in its overall plan, together they were visually united through common design elements, especially as regulations were standardized in the years after the Civil War. [See Appendix D for list of standard Civil War-era national cemetery features] Although distinct in style, the Civil War-era national cemeteries drew upon both vernacular and high-style cemetery precedent, from the traditional graveyard to the high-style picturesque rural cemetery.

Throughout the nineteenth century, small, vernacular cemeteries in rural areas were typically graveyards characterized by tablet (slab) gravestones, grave placement in rows, lack of ornamental plantings, and an enclosing wall or fence. [Figure 1.25] The cemeteries established by the Army at frontier posts prior to the Civil War generally followed these same patterns, using wooden headboards with a rounded top and bearing a registration number and name.²¹

In the 1830s, the old graveyard model began to give way in cities and large villages where there was greater wealth and changing attitudes toward death and nature. The new model, known as a rural cemetery for its suburban location and expansive grounds, followed the style of eighteenth-century English landscape gardens. Rural cemeteries were characterized by idealized natural and rural characteristics, with curving drives, open lawn with scattered groves, lakes, picturesque views, and architectural follies—executed in the rural cemeteries as grave markers, mausoleums, and chapels, often in Gothic and Egyptian styles. Traditional tablet gravestones characteristic of graveyards were generally forbidden. The rural cemetery was designed for aesthetic, recreational, and

sanitary purposes in addition to mortuary functions—both to dignify the dead as well as console the living. They were often used to picnic, stroll, and appreciate art and nature. The prototype was Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, established in 1831. [Figure 1.26] Other notable examples established prior to the Civil War included Brooklyn’s Green-Wood (1838), Cincinnati’s Spring Grove (1845), and Richmond’s Holly-Wood (1848).²²

By the 1840s, the design of rural cemeteries began to shift in response to Victorian interest in ornament, eclecticism, and horticultural diversity in what became known as garden cemeteries. In keeping with the broader Gardenesque style of landscape design, garden cemeteries typically featured geometric forms within the overall naturalistic plan, beds of colorful flowering annuals, clipped shrubs, exotic ornamental plants, and walls and fences around family burial plots.²³ [Figure 1.27, forthcoming] In response to this increasingly costly and ornate trend in cemetery design, another variation of the rural cemetery emerged just prior to the Civil War. Known as the lawn cemetery or lawn style, the change originated in a 1855 plan by landscape gardener Adolph Strauch for Cincinnati’s Spring Grove Cemetery. In his plan, Strauch eliminated clutter from the landscape to emphasize the overall picturesque landscape effect, eliminating such things as plot fences, curbing, and ornamental plantings to create broad areas of open lawn marked by monuments, specimen trees, and views of distant prospects.²⁴

The design of the first national cemeteries laid out following the Congressional act of July 17, 1862 reflected the precedent of military post cemeteries, traditional graveyards, and high-style rural cemeteries. Perhaps the single most important precedent for the initial development of the Civil War-era national cemeteries was Gettysburg National Cemetery, which became well known as the site of President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.²⁵ The plan for the cemetery, near the battlefield and adjoining a decade-old rural cemetery outside the village of Gettysburg, was designed in 1863 by landscape gardener William Saunders, who was employed with the United States Department of Agriculture. Saunders’ design featured an overall informal, picturesque landscape much like the style found in rural cemeteries, but with the burial plots at the center of the cemetery arranged in a stark geometric form consisting of concentric half circles facing a central monument. [Figures 1.28, 1.29] Saunders’ design was in keeping with the recently introduced lawn style, with its overall simplicity, winding approach drives, and broad sweep of lawn framed by naturalistic plantings of trees. Also in keeping with the purpose of the lawn style, Saunders’ design was intended as a measure of economy, both in construction and future maintenance, an aspect that would be an important consideration in development of national cemeteries after the war.²⁶ Yet the stark geometry of the burials, perimeter stone wall, and uniform design of the gravestones for soldiers and officers alike (continuous

curb-like monuments) clearly set the cemetery apart from the surrounding civilian rural cemetery. Its circular plan evoked not only traditional mortuary associations with religion and eternity, but also the strict structure of military formation.²⁷ Saunders may have gotten his concept for a circular burial plan set within a picturesque landscape from Woodlawn Cemetery, a rural cemetery in Philadelphia. The initial design for the cemetery by Phillip Price in c.1842 featured two circular burial sections surrounded by picturesque curving drives, similar to Saunders' concept for Gettysburg.²⁸

Other national cemeteries established during and immediately after the war, notably Antietam National Cemetery near Sharpsburg, Maryland, established in 1865, owed much to Saunders' plan for Gettysburg. Much like Gettysburg, Antietam was created through state and private efforts, using a modified circular plan with the graves arranged in section by state.²⁹ In contrast to Gettysburg and Antietam, other early national cemeteries established by the War Department (then often called soldiers' cemeteries), such as Alexandria National Cemetery established in 1863, featured a simple linear plan and slab-style wooden headboards without any picturesque landscape effect, evoking the character of traditional graveyards and post cemeteries much more so than high-style rural cemeteries. [Figure 1.30]

Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore certainly knew about the plans of Gettysburg and Alexandria National Cemeteries when he began work establishing and supervising several national cemeteries in Washington during the war, and the new cemeteries in Virginia including Poplar Grove, after the war. Little is known about Moore's professional training or whether he was personally responsible for designing the plans for the cemeteries under his supervision. The cemeteries that he oversaw generally followed either a circular plan or a rectilinear plan with circular elements, but unlike Gettysburg, were defined by the burial area without any surrounding landscape for picturesque effect. In the Virginia district, the cemeteries Moore oversaw ranged from just over one acre to ten acres. Those categorized as small, from generally one to four acres (later as third and fourth-class cemeteries) included Glendale, Fort Harrison, Seven Pines, and Yorktown National Cemeteries. Large cemeteries (later classified as first and second-class cemeteries) included Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Poplar Grove, and Richmond.³⁰ The plan and program of improvements at each cemetery was generally closely related to its size and number of burials.

The small Glendale National Cemetery, established in 1866 and located east of Richmond, consisted of a two-acre rectangular parcel with a circular burial plan, an outside circular drive, two cross-axis drives, and a central flagstaff. [Figure 1.31]

In contrast, the larger City Point National Cemetery located east of Petersburg, established in 1866, consisted of a seven-acre parcel with a rectangular burial plan, two small circular elements in the center for a flagstaff and monument, and a distinctive circular entrance area. [Figure 1.32] In keeping with General Orders Nos. 33 and 75, and with the Congressional act of July 17, 1862, these and all other national cemeteries were initially developed with uniform white-painted headboards with black lettering, and white-painted wood paling fences around the perimeter, similar to Alexandria National Cemetery [see Figure 1.30]. The graves were generally mounded to allow for settling, the grounds were sodded, and the drives surfaced in gravel. A central flagstaff, often placed upon a circular mound, was part of the initial development as well.

INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF POPLAR GROVE BY THE BURIAL CORPS, 1866-1869

When Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore selected the site for Poplar Grove National Cemetery in late April or May of 1866, the camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers had been inactive, at least militarily, for at least a year since the engineers had broken camp with General Lee's retreat on April 3, 1865. Since John Trowbridge's visit in late September 1865 when he described the camp as "one of the most beautiful villages ever seen," all of the buildings except for Poplar Grove Church and several log barracks had probably been moved to new locations or salvaged by local residents in dire need of building materials and fuel. The survey of the environs of the cemetery made by the Office of the Quartermaster General in circa May 1866 indicated fourteen buildings around the periphery of the parcel [Figure 1.33]. Since none of these buildings are shown on subsequent maps of the area, it seems likely these may have been camp buildings used perhaps by the burial corps, temporarily moved outside of the area being prepared as the site of the cemetery.³¹

The Plan of Poplar Grove National Cemetery

Prior to the start of burials in the summer of 1866, the Office of the Quartermaster General had decided upon a circular plan for Poplar Grove National Cemetery. While this was among the most important decisions in determining the character of the cemetery, no known record survives of how the circular plan was chosen. Since the Quartermaster General apparently had no set design requirements for cemetery plans, the person responsible for selecting the cemetery site and approving its development—Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore—was most likely influential, if not responsible, for the circular design. Moore had overseen the development of other cemeteries with circular plans, notably Battleground (1864) and Glendale (1866), although it is not known if he personally designed those plans. Most of the cemeteries under his jurisdiction did, however, feature circular elements and shared a simple layout organized around a central flagstaff.

Aside from traditional mortuary and religious associations symbolizing life everlasting, the inspiration for the circular plan at Poplar Grove may have been the symmetrical layout of the engineers' camp. [Drawing 2]

The circular plan, which had room for approximately 5,000 graves, was centered at a point on axis with the entrance to Poplar Grove Church and the center of the officer quarters courtyard. The circle was slightly off-center within the entire cemetery parcel, creating a larger area for burials along the west side. [Figure 1.34] The center of the cemetery was planned as an open circle for a flagstaff, with the church building located to its north.³² Extending out from the center, the plan was divided in eight radiating segments organized into four larger areas known as "divisions" and lettered A through D; each division was in turn subdivided into smaller areas known as "sections." Graves were planned in concentric circles radiating out from the center, with rows ten feet apart and individual graves spaced at five feet.³³ All grave markers were intended to face the flagstaff, with the inscriptions visible when viewed from the center.³⁴ On the east and west sides, the graves transitioned to parallel rows, following the rectangular property boundaries.

The divisions and sections of the cemetery were defined by drives, which were the wider routes of circulation, measuring twelve feet wide. Walks were the narrower passages between individual rows, measuring between eight and ten feet wide.³⁵ Within the main circular part of the cemetery, the walks and drives all followed either a circular or cross-axis layout with a few exceptions. The main drive extending from the cemetery entrance followed a slightly curving alignment at the outer edge of the circle, perhaps because it followed the alignment of a pre-existing entrance into the engineers' camp. In addition, at the rear of Poplar Grove Church in Division C, two short drives dividing sections C-c and C-d curved toward the center, a layout that may have been designed in response to the church [see Figure 1.34].³⁶ The drives in the outer areas reflected the irregular boundaries of the sections that resulted from the transition to parallel rows and the off-center placement of the main circular area.

Burials and Initial Cemetery Development

By May 1866, according to Lieutenant General Moore's account, work had begun on searching, recovering, and removing Union remains to the camp of the 50th New York Engineers.³⁷ The workforce responsible for this effort, referred to unofficially as the "burial corps," concentrated over the next three years on burial work, but also undertook initial improvements to the cemetery landscape.³⁸ For its first fifteen months of work, the burial corps was under the supervision of an acting superintendent, Major William S. Johnson, who was a discharged officer

of the 1st Arkansas Cavalry. He in turn was responsible to Lieutenant Colonel James Moore in the Office of the Quartermaster General, which provided pay and supplies. In June 1867, a year into its work, the burial corps was reported as employing ninety-six men, and had thirteen wagons, one ambulance, four carts, eighty-seven mules, and twenty-eight horses.³⁹ These numbers probably reflected typical conditions during the first year of the burial corps when the bulk of the burials were made.

Between May and July of 1866, the burial corps was most likely busy with initial site preparation. Although the engineers' camp, as Lieutenant General Moore had noted in his initial survey, was well suited for a cemetery, it nonetheless required substantial preparation before burials could begin. The flat, treeless parade grounds at the center of the site required little work, but beyond it the officers' quarters, log barracks, fences, and walks had to be removed, if they had not been removed already, and their sites leveled. The most intensive work occurred beyond the limits of the engineers' camp—the cemetery parcel extended approximately 150 feet west and north of the fence that enclosed the camp. Here, to create suitable land for burials, the loblolly pine woods were thinned, leaving approximately 180 trees as specimens and creating what was likely a shady setting on the west and north sides [see Drawing 2]. Although the center and southern half of the cemetery were relatively level, the land dropped noticeable to the northwest corner by approximately fifteen feet due to a shallow ravine that fed into wetlands northwest of the cemetery [see Figure 1.33]. Although this ravine was too large to fill, its bottom grade may have been raised. A smaller ravine extended into the northeastern corner was apparently filled.⁴⁰

Actual burials in permanent graves began by July 18, 1866.⁴¹ The bodies that had been brought to the cemetery since May were apparently stored in their wooden caskets within or near the cemetery parcel before this time. The burial corps was working full-speed by the summer of 1866, as Jennie Friend, who lived near the cemetery, described:

*The summer of 1866 was a time of searching through the country for the Union dead, to place in the cemetery. Five dollars was given [to civilians] for every collection of bones with a skull...The many dead lying about, with partially covered bodies, and worse yet the un-earthing of these bodies, made the whole country sickly...*⁴²

Over the course of the following year, the burial corps recovered bodies from most of the battlefields at Petersburg, including The Crater, Five Forks, Fort Stedman, Fort Gregg, Fort Hell, Weldon Railroad, Dinwiddie Court House, Hatcher's Run, Meade Station, and Ream's Station, and from several field

hospital graveyards. Other bodies were recovered from battlefields at Lynchburg, Appomattox Station, and Harrison's Landing.⁴³ A sampling of the fallen reinterred at Poplar Grove include:

William Montgomery: Mortally wounded at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, Montgomery is believed to be the last enlisted man killed in Virginia. He was just eighteen years old when he died. (Burial #4841, Private, Company I, 155th Pennsylvania Infantry)

Hiram W. Clark: Clark was twenty-six years old when he was killed on April 9, 1865, just before the Confederate surrender. He is believed to be the last Union officer killed in Virginia. (Burial #4800, Lieutenant, Company G, 185th New York Infantry)

Maroot Bower: Bower was taken prisoner in Lynchburg in 1862 and transferred to a prison camp. When he stepped a few feet beyond the confines of the prison to obtain a bucket of water, he was shot dead by a guard. He was thirty-six years old. (Burial #4607, Private, Company E, 66th Ohio Infantry)

Edwin Keys: Wounded in the battle of Lynchburg, Keys had his arm and leg amputated at the Union field hospital. He and several other men were left behind when their unit fled the city, but was then captured and he died the following day. He was 35 years old and left behind his wife of 10 years, Sybil. (Burial #4950, Captain, Company B, 116th Ohio Infantry)⁴⁴

The process of burial began at the center in division A, section A, in the south half of the cemetery across from Poplar Grove Church. Burials followed a sequential grave numbering system that proceeded by row through each section, filling in the division before moving to the next division in a counterclockwise fashion. The only exception to this process apparently occurred in Division C where Poplar Grove Church stood (the gravesites here were still numbered sequentially in line with the adjoining sections, in anticipation of the removal of the church).⁴⁵ The graves were arranged according to how they were brought to the cemetery. Known and unknown graves were generally clustered, but without formal arrangement. Each grave was covered with a foot-high earthen mound intended to provide fill as the grave sunk with the decomposition of the body and wooden coffin. In order to stabilize the soil, the grave mounds were covered in sod brought in from various locations in the vicinity.⁴⁶ Each grave was marked by a typical white-painted headboard, similar to those used on the battlefields and the cemeteries established during the war, such as Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C. [Figure 1.35] They were made of "hard pine," with black lettering noting the

name and rank of the soldier, if known, and, unlike those at Soldiers' Home, also noting the place from where the body was taken.⁴⁷ Most of the graves contained one body, but some of the unidentified graves had the remains of more than one soldier, some with up to six.⁴⁸

On June 10, 1867, an Army inspection reported that most of the cemetery had been filled with burials. By this time, the burial corps had interred 5,196 Union remains including two sailors, one citizen, eighty-four officers, and 306 African-Americans. In addition, the corps buried twenty-three bodies believed to be Confederates, although they were later determined to be Federal West Virginia soldiers. [source?] Of the total, 2,126 of the remains were positively identified, and 3,070 were unidentified. At the time of the Army report, the burial corps anticipated only three hundred additional burials.⁴⁹ Orders for disbanding the burial corps were issued in September, only to be revoked within several weeks due to the discovery of additional bodies. Over the course of the two years following the order to disband, the burial corps remained active at Poplar Grove, although in much reduced number, averaging probably thirty-five men. On June 30, 1869, the burial corps was finally disbanded. During these last two years, the burial corps reinterred an additional 923 remains at the cemetery, bringing the total to 6,182 bodies. Thirty-five percent, or approximately 2,164 remains, were positively identified.⁵⁰

While burials were underway, some of the burial corps worked on landscape improvements. In addition to mounding and sodding the graves, and erecting the headboards, the burial corps graveled the approach road (road from Vaughan Road), walks, and drives; erected a central wooden flagstaff on a six-foot high, forty-foot wide circular mound; and, as required by War Department regulations and Congressional legislation, erected a fence around the perimeter of the cemetery to protect the graves, notably from livestock [see Drawing 2]. This was a five-foot high, white-washed paling (picket) fence supported by cedar posts with black-painted tops.⁵¹

On August 20, 1867, as burial work was slowing and the ranks of the burial corps were declining, the first superintendent of Poplar Grove, August Miller, arrived for duty. A thirty-eight year-old disabled Civil War veteran born in Baden, Germany, Miller served as superintendent of Poplar Grove until 1876. He was directly responsible to the Office of the Quartermaster General (Washington Depot) and supervised five laborers who were separate from the burial corps, which remained under the command of its own acting superintendent.⁵² The acting superintendent of the burial corps was to remain in charge of Poplar Grove until the cemetery was deemed officially complete by meeting the requirements of the Act of February 22, 1867.⁵³ The burial corps generally

continued work on construction projects and burials, while Miller and his crew became responsible for maintenance, such as cutting the grass and weeding. Miller also served as clerk to the superintendent of the burial corps, keeping the burial record, and making weekly and monthly reports.⁵⁴

By October 1867, the burial corps had completed the drives, which were surfaced in gravel and edged by 12,000 linear feet of brick-lined gutters that replaced grass swales. These gutters, recommended by Major General Lorenzo Thomas in his June 10, 1867 inspection report, fed into wooden culverts (sewer boxes) that carried drainage under the drives and walks and outside of the cemetery. The boxes varied in length from twenty-four to 210 feet for a total aggregate of 768 lineal feet, and were from one to two-and-one-half feet below grade. Superintendent Miller and his crew had to carry out repairs on the gutters through the winter due to faulty masonry and damage from the freeze/thaw cycle.⁵⁵

One of the main projects required of the burial corps to complete the cemetery was the building of a lodge for the superintendent. At the time of Miller's arrival at Poplar Grove on August 20, 1867, work had not yet begun on this building, so he took up temporary quarters in a wall tent. Miller was informed that plans were to build a frame lodge at the southwest corner of the cemetery, on the north side of the main entry drive in Division E. In order to build here, approximately twenty graves had to be relocated. Miller felt that the planned lodge was too small, and that there was insufficient space around it for a flower garden, and so wrote to the Quartermaster General requesting that the cemetery be expanded to allow for the lodge to be built on the south side of the approach road, outside of what was then the main entrance gate.⁵⁶ Despite Miller's request, the burial corps began work in late August on relocating the graves and building the lodge at the initial site it had selected, probably on the assumption that the building would be temporary and that it would take some time to acquire the additional land [see Drawing 2]. The lodge was a small, rectangular frame building with board-and-batten siding and without an office or porch. In September 1867, the lodge was completed.⁵⁷

In keeping with the Act of February 22, 1867, the federal government was required to obtain title to the cemetery land—as of the completion of the frame lodge, the property still belonged to Thomas Britton Flower. On November 25, 1867, August Miller received instruction from Lieutenant Colonel James Moore to add the one-acre parcel to the property to be acquired. At the time, the configuration of the addition had not been determined, but within a few months, the cemetery was resurveyed with an 'L'-shaped extension that wrapped around

the southwest corner of the original cemetery land. This new parcel added a 101 by 92-foot rectangular area to the north of the approach road, and a 110 by 238-foot rectangular area to the south [see Figure 1.23, Drawing 2]. The total acreage of the cemetery with the addition was surveyed at 8.13 acres.

The Office of the Quartermaster General had some trouble in securing title to the cemetery due in part to the death of Reverend Thomas Britton Flower, who had purportedly told Lieutenant General James Moore back in May 1866 that he would gift the property to the government. Flower left title for the farm to his widow, Rebecca, and their infant children—James T. Flower, Archibald Flower, and Joseph Flower, represented by George Vickers, guardian. The Flower heirs did not agree to give the property to the government, and turned to the federal District Court in Virginia to request an appraisal of the property, according to the Act of February 22, 1867. On March 18, 1868, Moore reported that title papers for the 8.13-acre property were nearly complete, and then on April 3, 1868, the District Court issued an appraisal of \$1,500. On the same date, Bradley T. Johnson, the court-appointed special commissioner for the Flower heirs, conveyed the deed, and eight months later on December 15, 1868 the deed was officially recorded at the Dinwiddie County Courthouse.⁵⁸ The deed was supposed to include a thirty-foot wide right-of-way along the approach road that ran across the Flower farm, but this was apparently left out of the final deed.⁵⁹

By the time the deed to the cemetery had been recorded in the spring of 1868, Poplar Grove National Cemetery was taking on the appearance of completion, with its thousands of white headboards and grave mounds radiating out from the mounded central white flagstaff, drives neatly surfaced in gravel and lined by brick gutters, a small frame lodge marking the entrance, and a perimeter white-painted paling fence around the original cemetery parcel. The numerous loblolly pines in the cemetery made much of it shady, although many were probably declining due to root disturbance from the grave construction. Visible across open fields from Vaughan Road and framed by a background of pine woods to its east and north, the stark whiteness and geometry of the cemetery probably stood out even from afar. Its appearance would have been a marked contrast with the rustic architecture of the engineers' camp that had visually receded in the landscape. Areas of the cemetery that were still raw included the lawn, which was a patchwork of sodded mounds and bare ground, and the one-acre addition at the main entrance, which Miller had cleared of stumps and rubbish by early March 1868, but which remained otherwise unimproved aside from the addition of burials.⁶⁰

The one feature that had stood in stark contrast to the rest of the white and geometric cemetery landscape—Poplar Grove Church—had disappeared by the

time that the deed was recorded in April 1868. As late as the fall of 1867, the church was still being used by local African Americans to hold their meetings, a use that had continued from the time before the cemetery had been established. Finding this problematic, Superintendent Miller had requested permission in October 1867 to cease this use once the cemetery was completed: "...I would state that after dark those people commit nuisance around, and about the Building, and it is impossible to detect the perpetrators. To preserve the Graves from desecration, it is necessary that the Church will be locked, and the Meetings discontinued."⁶¹ Within a short time after its closing, the wooden building began to show signs of advanced deterioration. Miller recommended by midwinter that that the entire building be removed from the cemetery. In February 1868, he wrote to the Assistant Quartermaster General: "...This building is now fast decaying, the Timber beginning to rot, the Window Lights are broken, and the Roof is in a leaky condition..."⁶² The burial corps and Miller's laborers had apparently put no effort into maintaining the building over the previous eight months since construction of the cemetery had commenced; indeed, the grave numbering system suggests that from the beginning, the Quartermaster General had not intended the church to be a permanent feature of the cemetery. At some point between March 20 and April 28, 1868, the burial corps removed Poplar Grove Church, and subsequently filled its site in sections A and B of division C with graves [see Drawing 2].⁶³ The church was purportedly acquired by a private citizen from New York City and erected for a time in Central Park, where it was exhibited as a war relic.⁶⁴

Following the removal of Poplar Grove Church, the burial corps, which numbered about thirty men by December 1868, continued to work on the cemetery landscape during its final year that ended on June 30, 1869.⁶⁵ Superintendent Miller was reporting his frustration with their progress, reporting "...that the object of the burial Corps is not to complete the Cemetery as soon as practicable, but to make the work last as long as possible."⁶⁶ The corps continued to bury the small number of bodies that were discovered during this time, and erect headboards and sod the grave mounds. From the time Poplar Grove Church was removed through June 30, 1869, the burial corps had interred an additional 278 bodies in 270 graves. Due to lack of space, in the winter of 1869 the corps had to bury twenty-three bodies outside of the cemetery, but these were apparently relocated to inside the cemetery, probably in Division F within the one-acre expansion. This Division was opened in the spring of 1869 and contained eighty-two burials by May 24, 1869. One hundred and forty-two additional bodies were reinterred to the cemetery in June 1869, most going into Division F.⁶⁷

In addition to grave work, the burial corps also made some landscape improvements during its final year. In February 1869, four upright cannons, known as gun monuments, were positioned symmetrically around the outer edge of the innermost circular drive, requiring the relocation of five graves [see Drawing 2]. Gun monuments were a standard feature in National Cemeteries in Virginia, with the large cemeteries such as Poplar Grove and Richmond receiving four, and the smaller cemeteries, such as Glendale, Cold Harbor, and Seven Pines, one. The Poplar Grove gun monuments were thirty-two pounder Columbiad canons acquired from Fort Monroe, a federal fort on the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton, Virginia, and brought to Poplar Grove in the fall of 1868. [Figure 1.37] As installed, the guns were six feet-seven inches tall and topped by a ball cap, and were surrounded by a concrete platform on which were set pyramidal stacks of shot (cannon balls). The gun monument located north of the circle, in front of the site of Poplar Grove Church, was ornamented with a standard bronze shield that listed the name of the cemetery and a summary of the burial record.⁶⁸ [Figure 1.38] Other landscape enhancements undertaken by the burial corps included planting of approximately one thousand small cedar trees, which were transplanted from nearby woods during the winter of 1868-1869. All but about eighty failed to take root.⁶⁹

While the burial corps was occupied with its work, Superintendent Miller and his crew of five worked on sodding remaining bare grave mounds and the space between the graves; hoeing the gravel drives to remove grass; cleaning out the brick gutters; painting and numbering new headboards; planting trees, flowering shrubs, and annuals; and cutting the grass. Miller established flowerbeds around the lodge representing the “Corps badges,” probably in the style of Victorian carpet beds. He also maintained a hotbed for starting flowering annuals, and made cuttings of weeping willow trees—a species with long-standing mortuary associations.⁷⁰ In his correspondence to the Office of Quartermaster General during the spring of 1869, Miller noted several maintenance problems, notably grass growing in the joints of the brick gutters and in the gravel drives; settling of the ground; and deterioration of the wooden headboards. Miller also reported on the inadequacy of the frame lodge, and the need for a woodshed, tool room, and privy. He complained about the bad condition of the water supply, which was via a tube well—a rudimentary well made by driving a tube or pipe into the ground and usually outfitted with a hand pump.⁷¹

With the disbanding of the burial corps at Poplar Grove National Cemetery on June 30, 1869, the cemetery was officially complete. The total cost of the search, recovery, reinterment, and construction program at Poplar Grover amounted to approximately \$107,000, \$33,000 more than earlier estimated.⁷² Despite the substantial cost, there remained much outstanding work. Two hundred and

seventy new graves in Division F—the new division within the added acre—had not been mounded or marked with headboards. The perimeter fence had not been extended around the one-acre addition, and there remained log cabins from the engineer’s camp across from the lodge, south of the approach roadway.⁷³ There were also several things left undone that Major General Lorenzo Thomas had identified in his inspection report of June 10, 1869, in keeping with the Act of February 22, 1867. These included the addition of an iron fence to enclose the grounds, a gateway, and permanent grave markers.⁷⁴

ENDNOTES

¹ Edward Steele, “Shrines of the Honored Dead” (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, c.1954), 3; Monro MacCloskey, *Hallowed Ground: Our National Cemeteries* (New York: Richards Rosen Press, 1968), 18-20.

² Quoted in Steele, 1.

³ MacCloskey, 24.

⁴ Herbert Olsen, “Poplar Grove National Cemetery History” (Unpublished report prepared for the National Park Service, 31 May 1954), 3-6; Therese Sammartino, “National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Civil War Era National Cemeteries” (United States Department of Veterans Affairs, 1994), Section E, pages 2-4, 6.

⁵ Catherine Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South, The Construction of the National Cemetery System,” in Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, editors, *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 29.

⁶ *U. S. Statues at Large*, XIV, 353, quoted in Olsen, 9-10.

⁷ Sammartino, National Register documentation, Section E, pages 2-4; MacCloskey, 24, 35.

⁸ Sammartino, National Register documentation, Section E, page 11.

⁹ United States War Department, Quartermaster General’s Office. *Annual Reports of the Quartermaster-General from 1861 to 1866* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 222-223.

¹⁰ Steele, 16.

¹¹ Olsen, 13-16.

¹² Olsen, 17.

¹³ Letter, Brigadier General J. J. Dana to Lt. Colonel J. M. Moore, 30 April 1866, quoted in Olsen, 18.

¹⁴ Letter, Lt. Col. James Moore to Major General M. C. Meigs, 12 June 1866, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General, Entry 576, Poplar Grove National Cemetery Records, National Archives I, Washington, D.C. [hereafter, "Poplar Grove Records, NARA I"], box 57.

¹⁵ Olsen, 27; "Inspection Report of National Cemeteries in the Dept. of Va. By Bvt. [Brevet]. Maj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, June 10, 1867," RG 92, Entry 648, Inspection Report of National Cemeteries in Virginia, National Archives I, Washington, D. C. [hereafter, "Inspector General Records, NARA I"]. In this report, Thomas states: "This chapel [Poplar Grove Church] and the small groves of pines in which it is situated may have fixed the site—Also the final conflict took place near the position, the capture of the Rebel work Fort Greg, which caused the Retreat of Gen'l Lee. I should have selected a position on the right-of the line over-looking the city—where the ground is more undulating, say at Fort Stedman, or Morton, or Friends House, the Hd Quarters of Major Gen'l Meade..."

¹⁶ G. H. Thomas, C. E., "Land Plan of U. S. Nat. Cemetery at Poplar Grove Va." and "Plan of the Locality of U. S. Nat. Cemetery at Poplar Grove Va., (Quartermaster's Office, c.1866), Poplar Grove Records, NARA I, box 57. In Moore's letter to Meigs of June 12, 1866, he states that prior to his receipt of Mr. Colfax's letter dated May 21, 1866, "...a site had already been selected by me at Poplar Grove, and the work of removing bodies to same had commenced."

¹⁷ No accompanying report or cost estimates were located along with the two survey maps in the Poplar Grove Records at NARA I.

¹⁸ *Annual Reports of the Quartermaster-General from 1861 to 1866*, 222-223, 242. In his 1954 history of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Herbert Olsen does not confirm a date in which Poplar Grove was established: he notes the site was probably selected in May or June, and that burials probably commenced on July 18, 1866. The date of June 1, 1866 cited as the beginning of work on the cemetery is taken from Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867. Lieutenant Colonel Moore's reference to burials having commenced by May 21, 1866 may not reflect the official beginning of the cemetery and institution of the burial corps, but most likely reflects some initial work at bringing bodies to the site of Poplar Grove.

¹⁹ Lieutenant Colonel James Moore, "Consolidated Monthly Report of Progress Made on the National Cemeteries in the 1st Military District of Virginia," December 1868, Inspector General records, NARA I, box 1.

²⁰ Zipf, 30.

²¹ U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "History of Government Furnished Headstones and Markers," Burials & Memorials website, <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hist/hmhists.asp> (accessed 29 September 2006).

²² Blanche Linden-Ward, "Cemeteries," in William H. Tishler, editor, *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1989), 121-122; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 334-336.

²³ Linden-Ward,, 121.

²⁴ Linen-Ward, 121-122.

²⁵ National Park Service, "Gettysburg National Military Park Virtual Tour—The National Cemetery," online article at www.nps.gov/gett/getttour/tstops/tstd4-23.htm. Gettysburg, as with several of the first national cemeteries, was not developed by the War Department but was rather a joint effort by numerous states and

private citizens. It was initially called the Soldier's National Cemetery and was incorporated into the National Cemetery System in 1872.

²⁶ "National Cemeteries," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 33, issue 195, August 1866, 314.

²⁷ "Circle" in "Glossary of Victorian Cemetery Symbolism, "Rochester's History: An Illustrated Timeline" webpage, http://www.vintageviews.org/vv-tl/pages/Cem_Symbolism.html, accessed 7/24/2006; MacCloskey, 30. Only the national cemetery at Chattanooga, Tennessee (1863) did not incorporate a geometric plan for its burial plots, instead relying on an overall picturesque and informal arrangement more typical of civilian "rural" cemeteries.

²⁸ Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS), "Evolution of the Woodlands Landscape" (Courtney L. Gunderson, Drawing PA-05, 2004), in Paul Dolinsky, "Historic American Landscapes Survey," *Vineyard: An Occasional Record of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative*, volume VII, issue 1, 2006, 11. Below is Price's c.1842 plan for Woodlands Cemetery, from the HALS drawing (the circular burial plots and some of the curving drives were built):



²⁹ Antietam National Battlefield, "Ranger Notebook: Antietam National Cemetery," <http://www.nps.gov/archive/anti/cemetery.htm> (accessed 22 September 2006).

³⁰ United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Facilities Management website, pages for individual national cemeteries, www.cem.va.gov/nchp; War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General, *Regulations for the Government of National Cemeteries* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 3-4. Some of the cemeteries, such as Hampton (originally four acres, later expanded to twenty-seven acres), were raised in classification due to expansion in late 19th and early 20th centuries.

³¹ T. R. Rives, "Map of Dinwiddie County VA 1878," (traced by F. M. Lundahl, 1935), republished in Richard L. Jones, *Dinwiddie County: Carrefour of the Commonwealth* (Dinwiddie, Virginia: Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors, 1976), inside back cover.

³² Superintendent Arthur Miller wrote in February 1868 regarding available space for burials: "...I found, that room can be made for 140 additional Graves, exclusive of the vacant space in front of the Church." Arthur Miller to Lieutenant Colonel James Moore, 14 February 1868, transcription of Poplar Grove archives at Petersburg National Battlefield by park ranger Betsy Dinger-Glisan [hereafter, "POGR database"].

³³ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867.

³⁴ Superintendent Arthur Miller to Brevet Major General D. H. Rucker, Assistant Quartermaster General, 29 February 1868, POGR database.

³⁵ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867.

³⁶ No documentation was found on why the short drives were added between Sections D & E and C & G in Division C.

³⁷ A full account of the work of the burial corps is found in Olsen, 27-40.

³⁸ Olsen, 27.

³⁹ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867; Olsen, 28.

⁴⁰ Superintendent Arthur Miller reported trouble in establishing grass beneath "Pine-trees," suggesting that these were mature pines. Arthur Miller to Quartermaster General U. S. A., 27 May 1869, Poplar Grove Correspondence database (1867), Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Petersburg National Battlefield [hereafter, "POGR database"]. There is no detailed topographic survey available of the cemetery (most detailed are ten-foot contours on U.S.G.S. quadrangle maps). The existence of the ravines extending into the cemetery is illustrated on the c.1866 Quartermaster General survey, "Plan of the Locality of U. S. National Cemetery at Poplar Grove" (see Figure 1.23). A Quartermaster survey of the cemetery made in 1892 noted that the maximum difference in elevation was approximately fifteen feet.

⁴¹ Olsen, Appendix 1, 69.

⁴² Jennie Friend Stephenson, "My Father's Household, Before, During and After the War," cited on Poplar Grove National Cemetery interpretive brochure (National Park Service, not dated). Original at Petersburg National Battlefield Library.

⁴³ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867; Superintendent August Miller, "History of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, 24 April 1871, POGR database.

⁴⁴ Records compiled by Betsy Dinger-Glisan, Park Ranger, "Poplar Grove National Cemetery Program" (Unpublished interpretive presentation transcript, c.2004), Petersburg National Battlefield.

⁴⁵ Olsen, 77.

⁴⁶ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867. In one instance, the sod was taken without the consent of the property owner. See James Lufsey, Petersburg, to General Lorenzo Thomas, Inspector of Cemeteries, 13 January 1868, Poplar Grove Records, NARA I, box 57. Lufsey wrote asking for compensation: "When the National Cemetery at this place was being completed Mr Clarke the Supt [probably not a superintendent] procured turf from my land for the purpose of turfing the graves..." Lieutenant Colonel James Moore wrote to Major General D. H. Rucker about this: "The premises of claimant are situated in the suburbs of Petersburg, Va., they are not enclosed or improved—in fact more a common. Some sod was taken therefrom but only in small quantities... The turf was used to sod the graves in the Poplar Grove National Cemetery. In all other instances the small quantity required for [cemetery?] purposes, has been cheerfully furnished by different parties..."

⁴⁷ Superintendent August Miller to Brevet Major General D. H. Rucker, 29 February 1868, POGR database. No photographs of the headboards have been found.

⁴⁸ Poplar Grove burial register, Poplar Grove Records, NARA I, box 58.

⁴⁹ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867.

⁵⁰ Olsen, 30.

⁵¹ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867; Moore, "Consolidated Monthly Report of Progress Made on the National Cemeteries in the 1st Military District of Virginia," December 1868.

⁵² Descriptive record of August Miller submitted to Henry Hodges, 16 February 1871, POGR database.

⁵³ August Miller to Major General D. H. Rucker, Acting Quartermaster General, 31 August 1867, POGR database.

⁵⁴ August Miller to Lieutenant Colonel James Moore, 15 October 1867, POGR database; August Miller to Major General Lorenzo Thomas, 31 March 1869, POGR database; August Miller to Colonel J. G. Chandler, 27 May 1869, POGR database.

⁵⁵ Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867; August Miller to Lieutenant Colonel James Moore, 15 October 1867; August Miller to Major General D. H. Rucker, 29 February 1868; August Miller to Captain Carling, 28 August 1871, POGR database. No drawings, photographs, or specifications for these brick gutters have been found. They were buried in 1878 and remain at least in part today, as found in 2003 during excavation work (NPS historian Jimmy Blankenship, communication to author, June 5, 2006).

⁵⁶ Miller was probably following the recommendation made by Major General Lorenzo Thomas in his June 10, 1867 inspection report, in which he recommended that the cemetery be expanded on the south side by one acre to accommodate a lodge. Thomas, "Inspection Report," June 10, 1867; August Miller to Lieutenant Colonel A. P. Blunt, 22 August 1867, POGR database; Miller to Rucker, 31 August 1867.

⁵⁷ Miller to Rucker, 31 August 1867; Miller to Chandler, 27 May 1869; August Miller to Quartermaster General, 30 September 1869, POGR database.

⁵⁸ Olsen, 36-37; copy of deed, 90-91; Lieutenant General James Moore to Major General D. A. Rucker, 18 March 1868, Poplar Grove Records, NARA I; United States War Department, *Military Reservations, National Cemeteries and Military Parks Title Jurisdiction Etc.* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, Revised Edition, 1916), 433-434.

⁵⁹ Charles Pickett, National Cemetery, Poplar Grove, to M. L. Higgins, Chief Clerk Quartermaster Department, 12 May 1869, Poplar Grove Records, NARA I. Pickett, apparently a cemetery employee, wrote: "I would respectfully state that I have been to Dinwiddie Court House, and have ascertained the following facts in reference to land purchased for this Cemetery. Viz: A deed has been duly recorded, which specifies that eight (8) acres and 13/100 has been purchased and the sum of fifteen hundred dollars has been paid for the same, which includes the additional acre recently surveyed and gives a "right of way" 30 feet in width-extending to the main road." The deed, as transcribed in Olsen (90-91) does not include reference to the right-of-way.

⁶⁰ August Miller to Major General D. H. Rucker, 29 February 1868, POGR database; Miller to Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore, 9 March 1868, POGR database.

⁶¹ Miller to Moore, 15 October 1867.

⁶² Miller to Rucker, 29 February 1868.

⁶³ Olsen, 37, 80. The graves at the site of the church were filled at some point between April 28 and June 30, 1869. These graves included all of Sections A and B, plus seven graves in each row along the eastern edge of Section C and the western edge of Section D. This area in Sections C and D had apparently served as a broad walk extending to the rear of the church. The walk was subsequently filled with burials at an undetermined date.

⁶⁴ “The Right Hand of Fellowship—The Fruits of the Reconciliation Policy, as Exhibited at Poplar Grove Cemetery Yesterday,” Petersburg *Daily Post*, 10 July 1877, page 1, column 2. This article, written on the occasion of a ceremony marking the installation of headstones, stated: “The chapel was taken down and carried to Central Park, New York, where it wa for some time exhibited as a curiosity and relic of war.”

⁶⁵ Moore, “Consolidated Monthly Report of Progress Made on the National Cemeteries in the 1st Military District of Virginia,” December 1868. This report listed 35 employees at the cemetery.

⁶⁶ August Miller to Major General Lorenzo Thomas, 31 March 1869, POGR database.

⁶⁷ Olsen, 29-31; Miller to Thomas, 31 March 1869; August Miller to Colonel J. G. Chandler, 27 May 1869, POGR database; August Miller to Adjunct General U. S. A., 30 June 1869, POGR database.

⁶⁸ Miller to Thomas, 31 March 1869; Olsen, 38; August Miller to Colonel J. G. Chandler, 27 May 1869, POGR database.

⁶⁹ Miller to Adjunct General, 30 June 1869.

⁷⁰ August Miller to Major General Lorenzo Thomas, 31 March 1869 and 30 April 1869, POGR database; August Miller to Quartermaster General U. S. A., 31 August 1869, POGR database. No documentation was found on the location of the tube well.

⁷¹ Miller to Thomas, 31 March 1869; Miller to Chandler, 27 May 1869.

⁷² Olsen, 30-31, 39.

⁷³ August Miller to Adjunct General U. S. A., 31 July 1869, POGR database; Miller letter of 30 November 1869, POGR database. Miller noted in this last letter that “...old Army log cabins opposite the lodge were taken down and the ground leveled.”

⁷⁴ Thomas, “Inspection Report,” June 10, 1867. Thomas had specified “iron blocks” —the type of grave marker initially stipulated by General Montgomery Meigs for National Cemeteries.



Figure 1.21: Battlefield burials at Warren Station near the Globe Tavern and future site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery (burial mounds visible below railing at left), c.1864. It was from such sites that many of the bodies at Poplar Grove were removed. Petersburg National Battlefield.



Figure 1.22: Union Army hospital cemetery at City Point, Virginia, c.1865. Note grave mounds, white-painted headboards, and enclosing fence. From a stereograph by Mathew B. Brady, New-York Historical Society, reproduced on Library of Congress American Memory website, nhnycw/ad_ad35012. [need copyright permission]

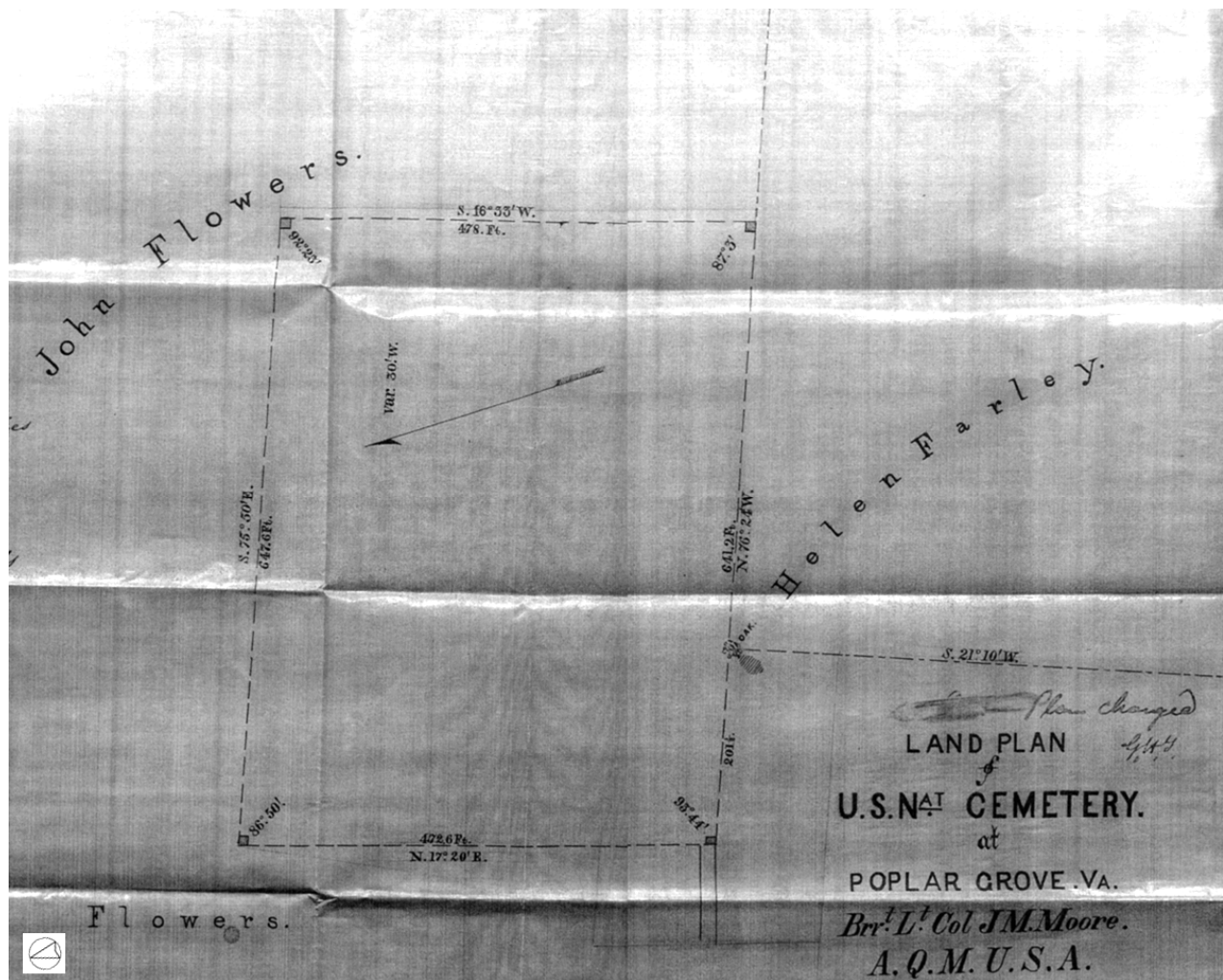


Figure 1.23: Detail, original Quartermaster survey of Poplar Grove National Cemetery by G. H. Thomson, made soon after the site was selected by Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore, circa May 1866. The property at the time was owned by Reverend Thomas Britton Flower, not "John Flowers" (sic--John Flower), who was most likely the resident of the farm at the time. Note original boundary of cemetery without additional acre at southeast corner (plan shows annotation indicating addition made in 1867). Records of the Quartermaster General, Entry 576, Poplar Grove National Cemetery Records, box 56, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

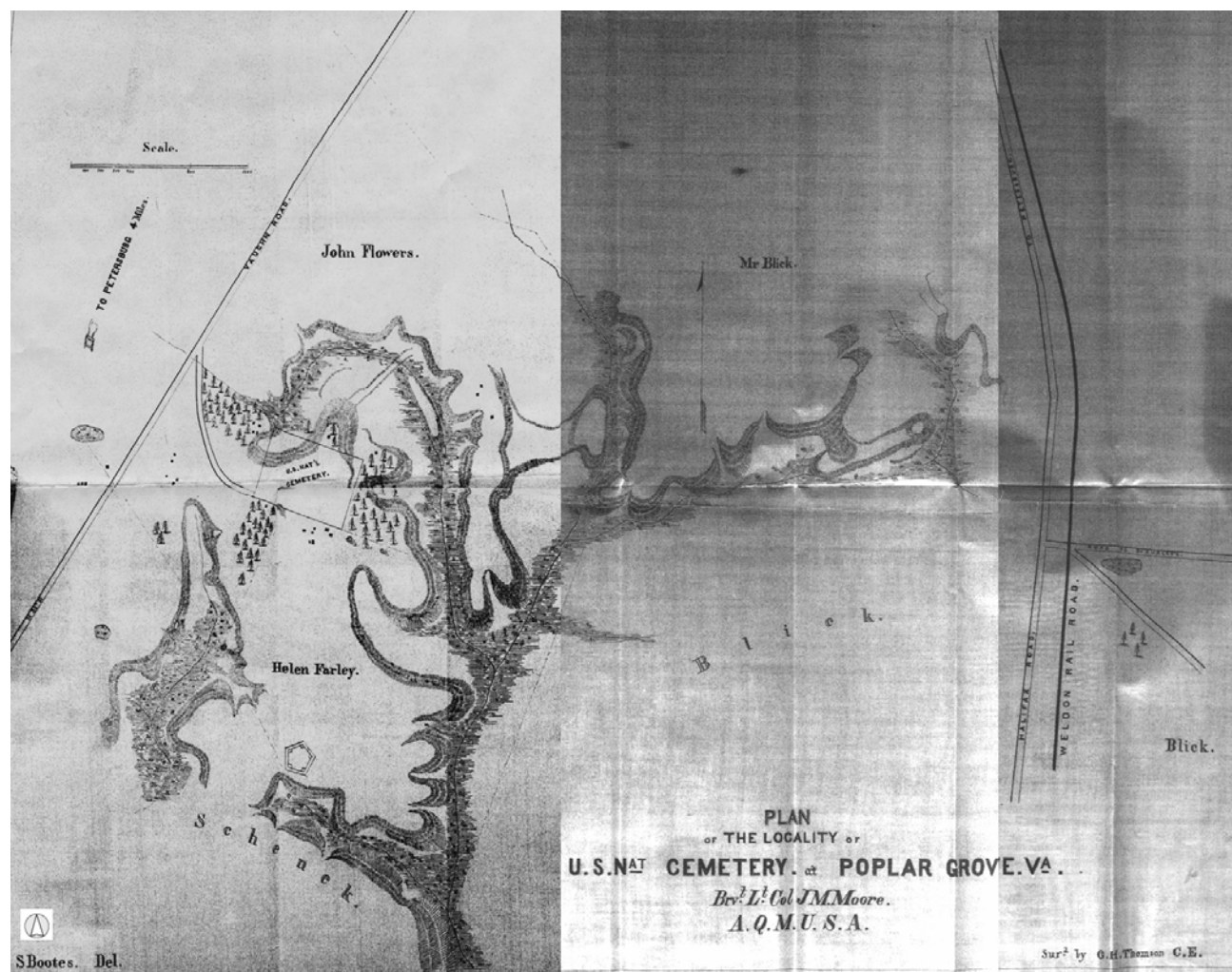


Figure 1.24: Quartermaster General map surveyed by G. H. Thomson and commissioned by Lieutenant Colonel Moore in circa May 1866 to illustrate the context of the cemetery at Poplar Grove, showing area between Halifax Road and the Weldon Railroad (at right) and Vaughan Road (at left). Poplar Grove is listed as "U. S. Nat'l. Cemetery" at left side of map, showing original rectangular boundary. Buildings within the cemetery parcel, including Poplar Grove Church, are not shown. Note causeway in ravine north of the cemetery, probably a remnant of the entrance road into the engineers' camp. Records of the Quartermaster General, Entry 576, Poplar Grove National Cemetery Records, box 56, National Archives, Washington, D. C. For a detail of this plan, see Figure 1.32.



Figure 1.25: Example of a traditional eighteenth-century graveyard (Ephrata, Pennsylvania) with characteristic slab headstones, row arrangement, lack of ornamental plantings, and perimeter wall, photographed 1936. Historic American Building Survey, HABS PA 36-EPH, Library of Congress American Memory website.

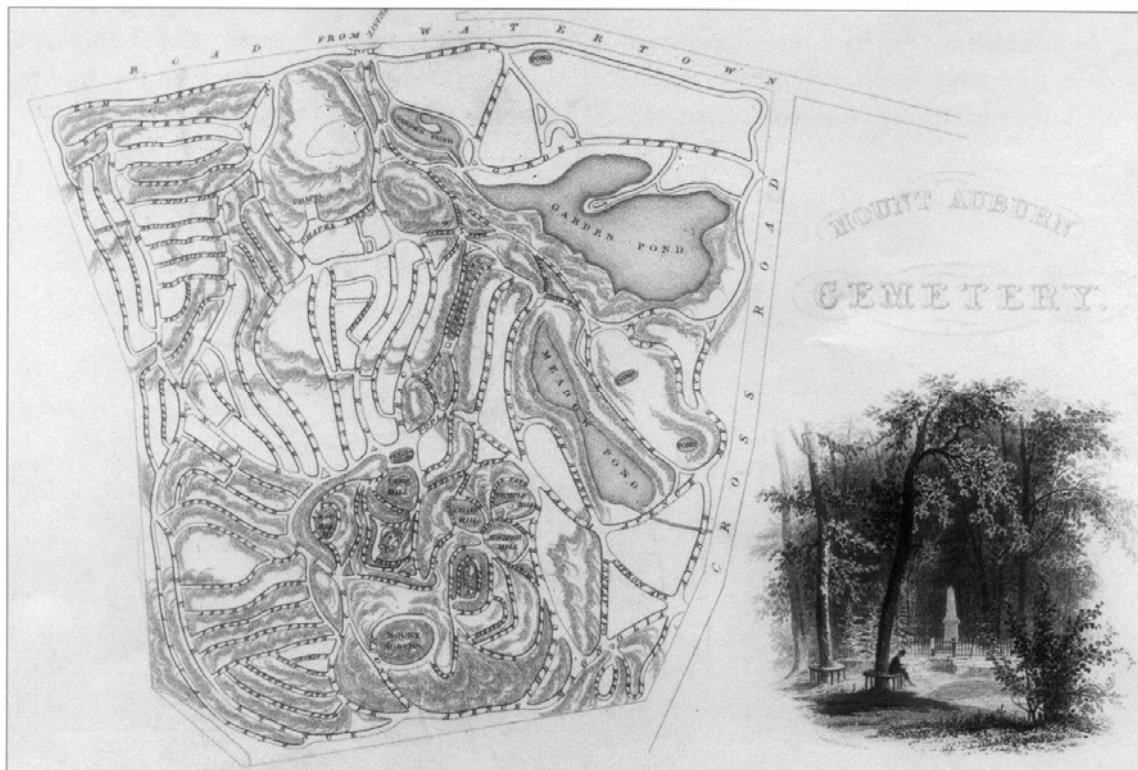


Figure 1.26: Engraving made in 1847 by James Smillie of Mount Auburn Cemetery, the prototype rural cemetery designed in 1831. Courtesy Mount Auburn Cemetery (from reproduction in *View LALH*, summer 2006).

Figure 1.27: [Image of garden cemetery, forthcoming]

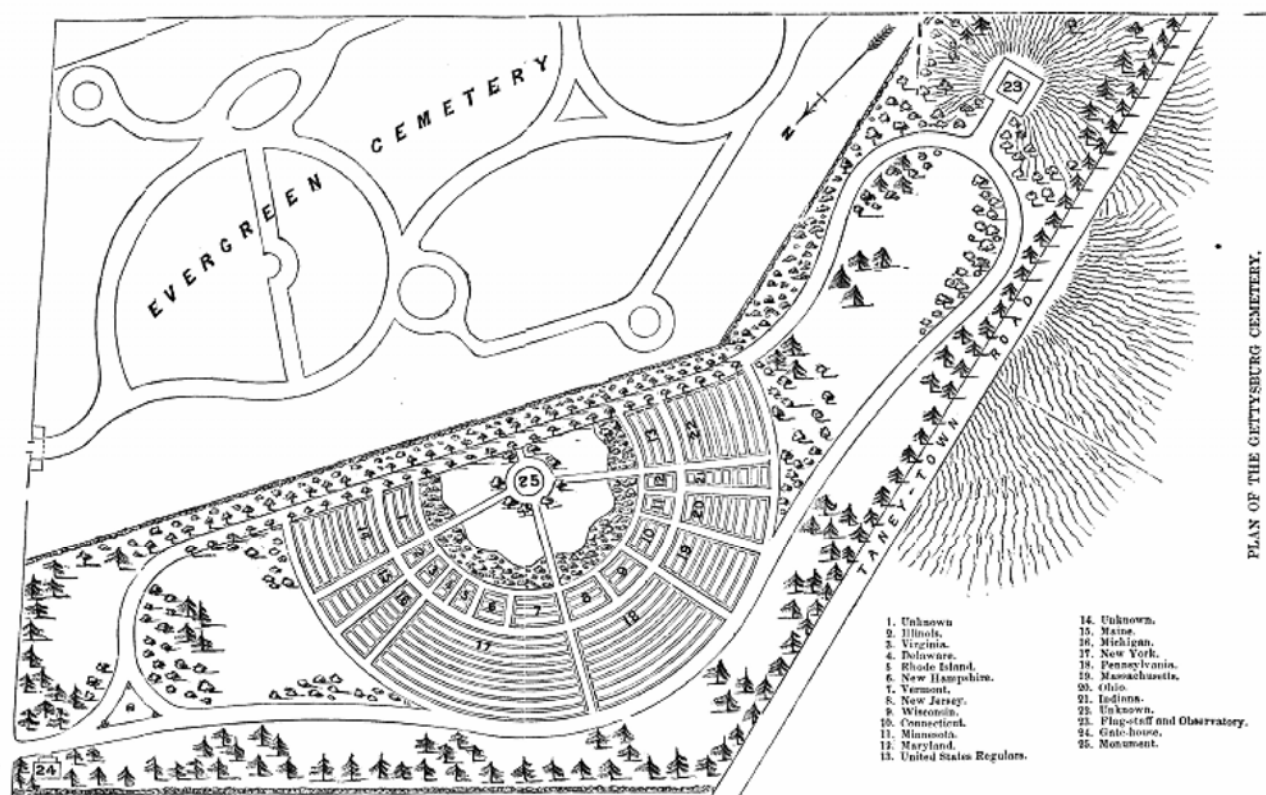


Figure 1.28: Plan of Gettysburg National Cemetery, designed by William Saunders in 1863, published in *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, volume 33, issue 195 (August 1866), 310. Gravesites are organized by state within the concentric circles, facing the central monument (25); adjoining Evergreen Cemetery was a pre-existing rural cemetery.



Figure 1.29: General view at Gettysburg National Cemetery in original section designed by William Saunders in 1863 showing simplicity of landscape design, c.1913. The unusual curb-type grave markers were not widely imitated in other national cemeteries. Detroit Publishing Company, in Library of Congress American Memory website, pan 6a09510.



Figure 1.30: Photograph of Alexandria (Virginia) National Cemetery, begun at the same time as Gettysburg in 1863, photographed c.1865. Note simple wooden headboards in linear arrangement, tall flagstaff, lodge, and perimeter picket fence. Library of Congress, American Memory website, LC-DIG-cwpob-03928DLC.

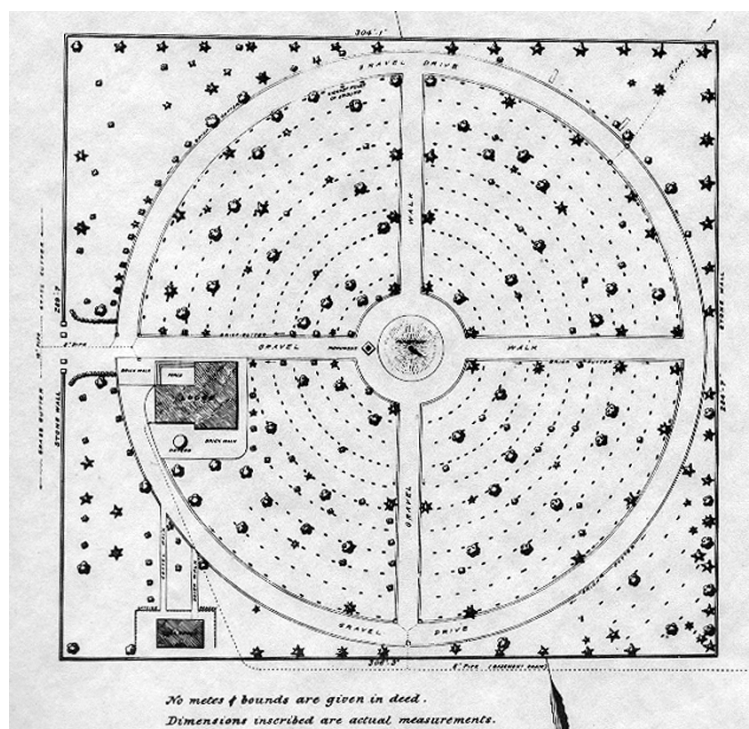


Figure 1.31: Plan of Glendale National Cemetery (near Richmond, Virginia), established in 1866 just prior to Poplar Grove, showing circular burial plan, from an 1892 survey. Dashed lines indicate graves, which numbered approximately 1,200. Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, Entry 691, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

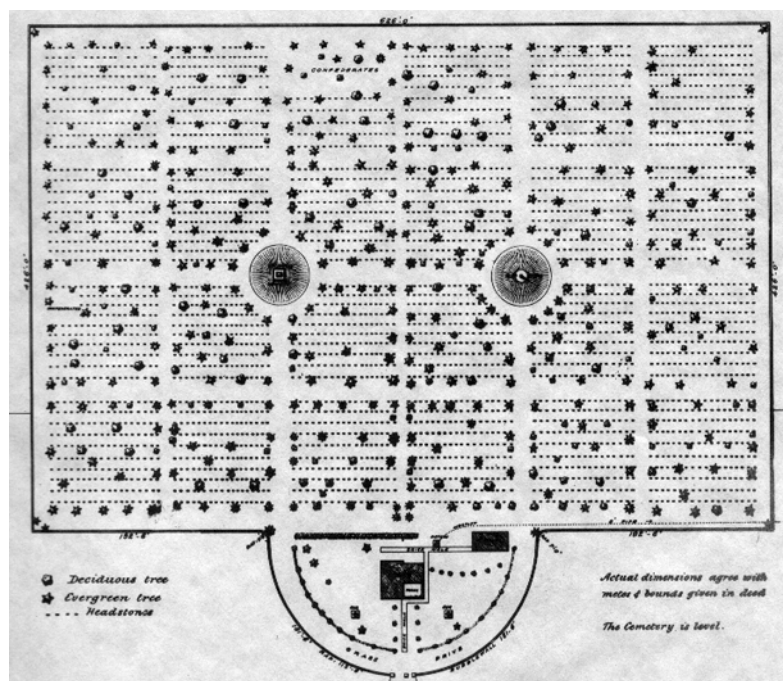


Figure 1.32: Plan of City Point National Cemetery (near Petersburg, Virginia), commenced at the same time as Poplar Grove in 1866, showing a linear burial plan with central circular elements for a flagstaff and a monument, from an 1892 survey. Dashed lines indicate graves, which numbered just over 4,000. Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, Entry 691, National Archives, Washington, D. C.