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National Park Service

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Glenwood Cemetery  
Maynard, Middlesex County, MA

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Glenwood Cemetery was one of the first civic improvements made by the town of Maynard after it was established in 1871 and is intimately linked with the history of the community. It is a well-preserved municipal cemetery that retains strong historical associations and distinctive landscape features and monuments dating from the 1870s to the present. It is the burial place of many of the town's notable citizens, including its founder Amory Maynard, and also provides important documentation of the social history of the ethnically diverse mill town.

The cemetery is located about 1/2 mile south of Maynard Center at the northeast corner of Parker Street (MA Route 27) and Great Road (MA Route 117). The surrounding neighborhood is primarily late 20<sup>th</sup> century residential. St Bridget's Catholic Cemetery abuts the cemetery on the east; the Assabet Boys and Girls Club lies across Parker Street to the west; and Maynard High School is to the southwest. The Assabet River Wildlife Sanctuary and the US Federal Center (an operational base for FEMA) are about 1/2 mile to the southwest.

The 23-acre cemetery is in three distinct parts: the old cemetery (NR Map #1) laid out in 1871; the new cemetery (NR Map #2) laid out in the 1930s; and the pond (NR Map #8) improved in the 1930s. All three of these areas, which comprise the developed portion of the cemetery, are included in this nomination. The town also owns wooded land to the north of the cemetery, which has not been laid out for cemetery use and is excluded from the nomination.

**Old Cemetery**

The original section of Glenwood Cemetery is on Parker Street. A 3' iron fence (NR Map #3) along the street frontage was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s. It is a simple fence, consisting of round pickets and two horizontal rails. The bottom rail is buried in some areas and the fence shows signs of deterioration. The two pedestrian entrances are located near the Maynard tomb and the receiving tomb. There is a secondary vehicular gate in the same style as the fence located near the corner of Parker Street and Great Road which is usually kept locked. The main vehicular entrance is marked by an imposing flat-arched granite entry gate (NR Map #5, photo #1) with central keystone, a gift from Maynard businessman William F. Litchfield in 1928.

The receiving tomb (NR Map #10) located on Parker Street south of the main entrance is an earthen structure about 8' tall with a granite block front flanked by low wing walls and topped by a marble urn. It faces the street rather than the cemetery, is set back slightly from the sidewalk, and framed with plantings of yews. The iron door is kept locked and the tomb is no longer used. The only building in the cemetery is the maintenance building (NR Map #11), a one-story utilitarian concrete block structure (non-contributing) located at the eastern edge of the old cemetery on axis with the entry gate. A metal overhead door dominates its main façade. It is surrounded by a stockade fence that encloses cemetery work areas.

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The old cemetery is a relatively level area that was laid out in a geometric pattern with a large circular garden located just inside the main entrance. The geometric road system (NR MAP #6, photo #6) which divides the cemetery into long narrow sections is the primary organizing feature of the cemetery. Major roads are paved with asphalt while others have been allowed to revert to gravel or grass. Since the roads are spaced close together, there is no path system. Along Parker Street, there are three parallel roadways, the easternmost of which is bisected by the circle. The main road leading east from the entrance is also bisected by the circle and continues around it to the east. The middle section is arranged in a series of concentric roads, while in the eastern portion the roads run parallel to Parker Street. Several additional roads at the southwestern and southeastern section of the old cemetery were added in the 1930s and 40s (at Sections 27, 31 and 32 and connecting with the new cemetery).

The spatial organization established by the roads is reinforced by rows of deciduous trees, primarily maples, which are planted along the roadways. Most of these were planted after the 1938 hurricane. In areas where many trees remain they create a strong sense of space, while in other areas where trees have been lost there is a more open and less defined landscape. There are also shrub plantings, including scattered mountain laurels along Parker Street, as well as a few yews and other evergreens associated with some of the newer lots. A row of hemlocks, located on the adjacent private property, screens the old cemetery from residential areas to the north. Woods lying to the east separate the old cemetery from the new cemetery.

The other major planting feature is the circular garden (NR Map #7) located just inside the entry gate, which was intended to serve as a focal point for the cemetery. It was originally occupied by the summerhouse, a Victorian gazebo that was destroyed by the 1938 hurricane (see attached copy of historic photo). It is presently overgrown but retains the planting concept established in the late 1930s of evergreen shrubs at the perimeter with deciduous plantings inside. The four entrances are marked by arborvitae, while the perimeter is enclosed by a yew hedge.

The largest and most impressive burial structure is the Maynard tomb (NR Map #9, photo #2) at the northwest corner of the cemetery. It is an imposing earthen structure roughly 15' tall retained by a granite façade made up of large blocks of Chelmsford granite, flanked by stepped wing walls, and topped by a granite urn. A pair of marble doors with carved latticework provide access to a circular space with eight separate burial vaults in which Amory Maynard and other family members are buried. The Maynard lot, which is considered part of the old cemetery, is enclosed on three sides by an iron fence (NR Map #4) which is similar in style to that along Parker Street but slightly more elaborate. It is 4' tall with 4' beveled decorative granite pillars at the corners of the lot and on either side of the two pedestrian entrances. The recessed vehicular entrance to the Maynard lot, located on axis with the front of the Maynard tomb, has double iron gates and is flanked by 6' beveled decorative granite pillars. The Maynard lot also has three mature maples around the tomb which appear to be remnants of earlier formal plantings, and a large spruce near the gate.

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The old cemetery is divided into 31 sections laid out between 1871 and 1948, which include additions made at the southern and eastern ends (sections 26-31). There are approximately 700 burial lots in the old cemetery, each of which accommodates from 4 to 20 graves. Most of the lots are laid out as family burial plots, with the older areas near the front of the cemetery typically larger than the newer lots. There are also areas set aside for single and double graves, including Section 12, along the northern edge, where many veterans are buried. Section 7, which contains only three burial markers, was used for mass graves during a smallpox epidemic in the 1880s. Several civic and social organizations also have lots. These include the Grand Army of the Republic [Section 2]; the Assabet Lodge of the International Order of Oddfellows [Section 13]; the Charles Welch AF & AM Freemasons [Section 19]; and the Knights of Pithias [Section 28].

According to a database compiled by the Maynard Historical Society, there are 846 headstones, 1,571 flat markers, and 54 footstones in the old cemetery that exemplify a range of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century funerary styles. Approximately 2/3 of the headstones and family monuments are granite and 1/4 are marble. The remainder include two zinc monuments, several boulders, and several concrete monuments. The most noteworthy monumentation is that associated with the earliest years of the cemetery, which includes lot enclosures and monuments characteristic of the Victorian era when burial markers were created in a variety of styles and materials expressive of romantic and sentimental notions of death. The family monuments in the rear section of the cemetery, most of which date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, are more uniform in size, shape, and style, typically upright granite slabs on a granite base, often used in association with small flat markers for individual family members.

The most distinctive lots and monuments are concentrated in Sections 1-4 and 13-17. Section 1, located adjacent to Parker Street near the Maynard tomb, includes three curbed lots, each of which contains a large family monument and smaller headstones for individual family members. The Willard lot, enclosed by marble curbing and slightly raised above the surrounding area, includes a marble pillar with architectural motifs and three smaller marble headstones for Reubens Willis (d. 1881, age 71); his wife Mary (d. 1904, age 94) and Iantha (d. 1880, age 29), whose marble headstone is decorated with well-carved scroll and floral motifs.

The second marble curbed lot in Section 1 is that of the Turner family, which also has a central marble pillar with architectural motifs, this one topped by a half-draped urn. It indicates that John Turner was born in Lancashire, England in 1827 and died in Maynard in 1893 at age 65. His wife Martha died in 1883 at 56. Their son Moses (d. 1868, age 6 years, 4 months) was commemorated on the side of the family monument with the epitaph, "Safe in the arms of Jesus" and a skilled carving of a hand with the index finger pointing down. There are also five small marble headstones for individual family members. Those marked "Father" and "Mother" are decorated with oak leaves and floral patterns respectively, which were typical male and female motifs of the period.

The third curbed lot in Section 1 is that of James Redfearn (d. 1880, age 41), whose marble monument is similar

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in style to others in the area but taller and more elaborate, consisting of an 8' octagonal column with square top, surmounted by an urn. The marble headstones in this lot for Lydia and Lavinia are unusually detailed and skillfully carved. Lydia's is one of the best-preserved marbles in the cemetery. Additional marble headstones commemorate John Redfearn of West Concord (1835-1929) and his wife Mary (1856-1948), as well as her sister Sarah J. Harrison (1853-1920).

Another noteworthy monument in Section 1 is that of the Robertson family, James (d. 1880, age 68) and Flora, his wife (d. 1897, age 80). It is similar in style to others in Section 1 but with larger component parts, consisting of a granite base, topped by a marble block inscribed with the family name, a 6' tall square pillar with architectural motifs and gabled top, surmounted by 4' tall round column with floral motifs topped by a marble urn.

Section 2, which lies to the east of Section 1, contains one curbed lot, that of the Brigham family, dominated by a central marble monument. This one consists of a granite base on which is a 4' marble pillar with raised panel surmounted by a marble obelisk with a recessed panel depicting a shaft of wheat. It commemorates Lewis Brigham (1797-1875) and Almira Brigham (1810-1873). The inscription reads, "Rest! Parents rest, In quiet sleep, Thy children in sorrow, O'er you weep." There are four small headstones for Mother, Father, Nancy, and Luther, as well as for Esther Brigham (1846-1902) and Lewis A. Brigham, the infant son of Lewis and Almira (who died at age two weeks in 1850). Also in Section 2 is the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) lot, marked by corner posts and containing the only flagpole in the cemetery.

The most elaborate of the curbed lots is the double lot of the Whitney and Brooks families (photo #3) in Section 3 with curvilinear planting panels in front. Like the other curbed lots, each of these has a central family monument made of marble. The Brooks lot also contains three small marble headstones, four granite headstones and one flat marker. This lot is also noteworthy as it contains the grave of Thomas H. Brooks (d. 1872); the first person to be interred after the cemetery was established. The Brooks monument, consisting of granite base and pedestal surmounted by an octagonal column with square top and decorative motif, is of a style that was popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, so it was probably erected some time after his death.

The other curbed lots in Section 3 are those of the Greer and Maynard families (photo #4). The Greer monument is a squat pillar with architectural motifs and the Maynard monument is a buff colored granite block on gray granite base, simpler than most of the other monuments in the curbed lots. Section 3 also contains an unusual vine-covered boulder that commemorates Sidney B. Shattuck (1844-1919). In Section 4 is the marble headstone of Nellie N. Fletcher (d. March 19, 1872, age 21), illustrated with an open book and inscribed, "Brothers and sisters, I must go."

The older lots south of the circular garden, Sections 13-17, also contain expressive monuments, although they are typically smaller and less elaborate than those in Sections 1-4. There is generally a mix of older marble headstones, typically associated with the burial of an individual, later granite family markers, and some small flat

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markers. The diversity is visually interesting and reflects the changing social and artistic styles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly touching are the smaller marble markers commemorating the death of a child. The Taylor lot in Section 14 has a tiny eroding marble lamb for "Georgie" with the epitaph "At Rest." Section 15 (photo #5) contains a tiny marble headstone less than a foot high marked "Our Baby." Next to it is the Cheney Smith monument, one of two white zinc monuments found in the cemetery. The other is the Parkinson monument in Section 17.

The eastern third of the old cemetery generally contains smaller and more uniform monuments typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most are polished granite slabs on a granite base but there are exceptions, such as several Russian Orthodox crosses, and a concrete planter adjacent to the maintenance building. Some display elements of Art Deco style or combine stock components in innovative ways, such as the Alasaari monument in Section 25, which is a standard polished granite slab on an oversized base flanked by granite planters.

However, what is most noteworthy about the eastern section of the old cemetery is the diversity of the ethnic backgrounds of Maynard's inhabitants. While names on the oldest monuments are typically of English origin, later monuments include people of English, Scottish, Irish, Russian, Polish, Finnish, Swedish, and Greek extraction, among others, many of whom came to Maynard to work in the mills. Some sections of the cemetery could even be considered ethnic neighborhoods, as in Sections 8-11, which contain primarily the graves of Russians and Finns. The one group not well represented is the Irish, most of whom are buried in the adjacent St. Bridget's Catholic Cemetery.

#### New Cemetery

The new cemetery, constructed in the 1930s by the WPA, is similar in size to the old cemetery and also has a geometric layout, in the shape of an elongated egg, with more or less concentric roads organized around a central circle and a smaller secondary circle. The topography of the new cemetery is about 20' lower in elevation than the old cemetery and gently sloping towards the center. Plantings are similar to those in the old cemetery, with deciduous trees, primarily maples, planted along some of the roadways. The central circle is planted with tall evergreens, surrounded by smaller broad-leaved evergreens. The smaller circle has an ornamental tree and some shrub plantings. There are far more evergreens used as lot plantings in the new cemetery than the old cemetery. Woods to the northwest separate the old and new cemeteries and to the north where the maintenance pit is located. Volunteer trees along the east side of the new cemetery provide a partial screen from the adjacent St. Bridget's Catholic Cemetery. The new cemetery is oriented towards Great Road. However there is limited frontage because three house lots have been carved out to the west of the cemetery entrance. The rubble wall along Great Road constructed by the WPA has been removed and replaced with a 6' tall chain link fence. A steep paved road leads connects the old and new cemeteries.

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Lots in the new cemetery are typically smaller than those in the old cemetery and most are marked by a single-family monument. The Maynard Historical Society database indicates that in 2001 there were 671 headstones and 571 flat markers in the new cemetery. Most of the monuments are polished granite slabs on granite bases and are less artistically distinguished than those in the old cemetery. However, there are subtle differences that reveal much about the ethnic and cultural diversity of Maynard's residents. Ethnic groups are similar to those found in the old cemetery, with a particularly large number of Finns and Russians. Religious beliefs are expressed by Christian and Russian Orthodox crosses. Several double hearts reflect the strength of the bond between two people. Imagery on the monuments, epitaphs and variations in plantings are other ways that families have chosen to personalize their lots.

#### Pond

The third section of Glenwood Cemetery is the pond (NR Map #8), located on Great Road near Parker Street. It was initially a swampy area that was improved in the 1930s by the WPA and is currently about one acre in size, with adjacent wetland areas on the south and east. It is unusual in that it is a pond, with an island that also contains a tiny pool on it. Photographs from the 1930s reveal a well-manicured landscape with a broad road around the pond but today it is overgrown with emergent vegetation taking over the pond and with access possible to only a portion of the perimeter. It has been designated a vernal pool and is of interest to the local conservation commission as a wetland and wildlife habitat.

#### Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are located on cemetery property, sites may be present. Eleven sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the cemetery represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native American sites. The cemetery occupies a well-drained landscape with several level to moderately sloping areas within 1,000 feet of wetlands. Swampy wetlands are located north of the cemetery and small ponds to the west. A pond, originally a swampy area until improved by the WPA in the 1930s, is located in the central part of the cemetery north of Great Road. The cemetery is located within the Assabet/Concord/Merrimack River drainage. Given the above information, regional Native American settlement patterns, and soil disturbance resulting from landscaping and the excavation of graves, a moderate to high potential exists for locating significant ancient Native American resources in the cemetery.

A high potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources in the cemetery. Structural evidence may exist from outbuildings associated with cemetery operations and maintenance activities. A hearse house was built in ca. 1871 about the time the town purchased land for the new cemetery. Post holes and refuse areas may

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also exist within the cemetery. Refuse deposits may include well defined dumping areas associated with the overall cemetery and more localized refuse deposits associated with memorial activities in individual graves and larger social units. Stratigraphic evidence of filling and grading associated with landscaping activities may also be present.

Unmarked graves also represent an important potential resource type in the Glenwood Cemetery. Unmarked graves may exist from the cemetery's use as the Marble Family burial ground from 1820 and its municipal use after 1871. Unmarked graves might result from lost markers anywhere in the cemetery or from graves intentionally unmarked such as paupers in peripheral area of the cemetery or outside the cemetery boundary. Unmarked graves may include stratigraphic evidence of a burial shaft and the remains of coffin, skeleton, and other funerary related artifacts. Graves may include individual and multiple interments.

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