

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Glenwood Cemetery
Maynard, Middlesex County, MA

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Glenwood Cemetery qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, with significance at the local level. The site may also have archaeological significance associated with unmarked graves and buried headstones. The period of significance extends from 1820 to 1954. The site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The cemetery qualifies for listing under Criterion A due to its strong association with the history of Maynard. It is one of the original civic improvements undertaken after the town was established in 1871 and is the only municipal cemetery. It contains the graves of 54 Civil War veterans. The cemetery also documents the social structure of the community, which became ethnically diverse as immigrants came to Maynard to work in the mills.

The cemetery meets Criterion C as a well-preserved 19th and 20th century municipal cemetery that reflects the evolving design of burial grounds and funerary monuments in New England during this period. Its geometric layout and embellishments such as the entry arch, circular garden and pond, are a reflection of the 19th century rural cemetery movement as adapted to a municipal cemetery. Glenwood Cemetery's earlier burial monuments reflect the sentimentality of the Victorian era in their expression of natural and classical forms, choice of marble as a primary material, flowery epitaphs and curbed lots. The later lots with their more uniform granite monuments reflect changing technology and more impersonal times associated with the machine age.

The cemetery meets Criteria Exception D because it served as the primary burying ground in Maynard from 1871 until the present. It includes the graves of approximately 6,000 residents of Maynard and contains information that is not readily available elsewhere. The 1820 beginning date for the period of significance corresponds with the first burial, that of John Marble, who with members of his family, was buried here half a century before the cemetery was formally established. The 1954 termination date reflects National Register policy that properties with ongoing significance use a 50-year cut-off date unless events of unusual significance have occurred within the past 50 years.

The area known today as Maynard, located approximately 25 miles northwest of Boston, was initially part of the towns of Sudbury and Stow. It remained a relatively quiet agricultural area until 1846 when Amory Maynard began acquiring land and water rights to establish his carpet manufacturing business along the Assabet River. By 1849 the Marlboro Branch Railroad had been constructed to serve the mill and a new village began to take shape. In 1862 the Maynard business was reorganized as the Assabet Manufacturing Company. By this time larger buildings had been constructed to accommodate the growing enterprise. During the Civil War, the business began making blankets, flannels, and cloth, including large orders to supply the Union Army.

By the late 1860s Assabet Village, as Maynard was previously known, was bigger than either of its parent communities. It was also a substantial distance from the centers of both towns, which were more oriented

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towards farming, while Assabet was primarily involved with manufacturing and sought advantages that neither of the parent towns were willing to provide. On April 19, 1871, Maynard was formally established as a separate town, named in honor the man who transformed it from a rural farming district to a manufacturing community. As soon as the new town was established, it began to undertake civic improvements, including construction of a new cemetery.

The town acquired about eight acres of land at the corner of Parker Street and Great Road as the site for the new cemetery. A portion of the land had previously been used as a small family burial ground and already contained the graves of John Marble (1750-1820), his wife Lois (1758-1848) and several other family members (buried in what is now the Daniel Whitney lot in Section 18). The town began to make improvements to transform the area into a cemetery. They hired a surveyor to lay out roads and lots, appointed a sexton, built a perimeter fence, purchased a hearse, and constructed a hearse house. The design of the new cemetery borrowed from the ideas of the 19th rural cemetery movement, which advocated for burial places that would provide a permanent resting place for the dead and offer solace to the living. The focal point of the cemetery was the Victorian summerhouse (1872) located in the central circle near the main entrance. It was described as described as a "neat artistic summer house near the well." Trees and flowering shrubs around the summerhouse were planted by the ladies of Maynard.

The first burial in the newly established cemetery, that of Thomas H. Brooks, took place in May 1872. In addition to the lots purchased by individual families, in 1876 the town also granted a lot to the GAR, Henry Wilson Post #86, to be selected by the post and used at their discretion for the burial of deceased soldiers.

The Maynard family tomb, the most prominent burial monument at Glenwood Cemetery, was erected in 1880 by Amory Maynard (1804 – 1890), who was one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Maynard during the late 19th century. Various other family members are buried there as well.

By 1881 the town was ready to lay out additional lots (probably Sections 8-11 and 22-25). Other early improvements included construction of a stone wall around the adjacent school (wall built 1887, school site later added to cemetery); construction of a receiving tomb by North Acton Granite (1888) and later a wall near the receiving tomb (1891). Clearing of the wooded site was ongoing during the 1890s, as town records indicate sale of wood from the cemetery grounds.

A smallpox epidemic in 1885 wrecked havoc in the community and reports from the Board of Health urged better sanitation to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Victims of the epidemic were buried in mass graves, primarily in Section 7.

In 1887 the town's annual report included a narrative for the first time describing the state of the cemetery.

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"There has been a considerable amount of money expended in and around Glenwood Cemetery during the past year, and we are satisfied that it was money well spent. A substantial stone wall has been laid around the old Turnpike school grounds, enclosing them with the cemetery proper, thus enlarging and improving the appearance of the cemetery and surroundings. In the yard, wheel guards have been set at all corners where the avenues intersect, thereby protecting the edges and banks of corner lots. The Public Statutes provide that income from cemeteries shall be expended on the same. We are gratified to know that there is a small amount in favor of the cemetery, notwithstanding the extensive improvements of the past year." (1887 Annual Report)

A few years after the death of Amory Maynard in 1890, the Maynard business was bought out by the American Woolen Company. At that time it was the largest woolen mill in the country with 66 sets of cards and 350 broad looms. The company had brought prosperity to Maynard and also attracted many immigrants to operate the mills. Among the first were the English, Scottish, and Irish who came to work at the Assabet Mill soon after it was founded. By 1871 the population of Maynard was 1,820 with about 1/3 foreign born, primarily Irish. By 1915 half the population of 6,774 was foreign born including 1,022 Finns, 498 Poles and 487 Russians. There were also Greeks and Lithuanians in smaller numbers. All of these ethnic groups are reflected in the burials at Glenwood Cemetery, although there are fewer Irish and Italians than might be expected, as many were buried in the adjacent St. Bridget's Catholic Cemetery established in 1869.

Maynard celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1921 with a population of 7,200. Local historian William H. Gutteridge described it as,

"... a very cosmopolitan community, twenty-eight different nationalities are represented, the English language being an unknown "quantity" to many. . . The most numerous of our European friends are the Finns, Poles, Italians and Russians in the order named."

The last major embellishment was added to the old cemetery with the gift of a new granite entry arch from Maynard businessman William F. Litchfield in 1928 to replace an earlier entry gate. By the late 1920s there was clear need for expansion, as the old cemetery was nearly full. Several new areas, including Sections 31 and 32, were added in the old cemetery but this was only a stopgap measure. In 1927 the town purchased eleven acres between the old cemetery and St. Bridget's for expansion.

The land for the new cemetery was cleared and graded over the next several years and a road built between the two sections. During the 1930s construction of the new cemetery was undertaken by several Depression-era relief programs, most notably the Work Projects Administration (WPA). Improvements included building of a new iron fence along the Parker Street in front of the old cemetery; laying out the new cemetery and constructing a rubble entrance wall along Great Road; and dredging the swampy area at the corner of Parker Street and Great Road to transform it from an unsightly area into a miniature lake surrounded by a wide pathway.

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By the mid-1930s the cemetery had doubled in size. A full-time superintendent was hired to oversee it and new by-laws were enacted. Provision made in the new section for providing separate areas for those of different nationalities who wish to be buried together. No sooner was this work completed than a 1938 hurricane destroyed 78 trees including the spruces around the summerhouse, which had to be removed because it was so badly damaged. The following year the spruce at the circle were replaced by shrubs, with evergreens at the outer circle, flowering shrubs in center. Plants were also added at the receiving tomb and at the entrance to the new cemetery.

In 1953 care of the cemetery was placed under a newly established Department of Public Works, which continues to care for the cemetery today. There have been relatively few changes since that time other paving the main cemetery roads. Most recently the town received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management to undertake a preservation master plan for the cemetery, which was completed in 2001.

Archaeological Significance

Although numerous prehistoric sites have been recorded in the Concord, Sudbury and Assabet River drainages (which converge less than five miles northwest of the cemetery), few sites have been systematically excavated in the area limiting their interpretative value and making surviving sites in the area potentially significant. Much of our information relating to Native American site locations in the Maynard area dates from the 19th century or later and results from information compiled by artifact collectors and avocational archaeologists in neighboring towns. Recent cultural resource management studies conducted by professional archaeologists in the Concord River drainage have added to these early efforts and provided a systematic body of data which forms the basis for Native American subsistence and settlement models available for the Concord River drainage including the Assabet River. Any prehistoric sites in the nominated area have the potential to further define the variability within these models and how they changed during the last 12,500 years of demonstrated settlement in this area. Recent professional archaeological studies in the cemetery expansion area northeast of the nominated area have identified Native American use of that area dating from the Middle Archaic through Woodland Periods. Those excavations produced projectile points, bifaces, chipping debris, pottery, and features indicating the probable presence of a habitation site and the survivability of these deposits even after intense farming activities. Similar Native American resources may be present in the nominated area indicating the potential for a wide variety of additional research topics including lithic and ceramic technologies, changing resource use and procurement and possibly exchange patterns.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to contribute important information relating to the evolution and internal configuration of the Glenwood Cemetery and the social, cultural, and economic aspects of Maynard's population from the early 19th through 20th century. Additional documentary research

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combined with archaeological survey and testing may help identify changes that occurred as the cemetery evolved from a family burial ground in 1820 to a municipal cemetery in 1871. Identification and careful mapping of post-holes may help reconstruct fence line boundaries during different periods of the cemetery's evolution and ownership. Archaeological testing may also help identify the location of unmarked graves, which when combined with known graves will also help reconstruct boundaries and burial patterns throughout the cemetery's use. Paupers, other indigent persons and body parts were often buried outside or at the periphery of marked cemetery boundaries, often without markers or marked with wood that has since deteriorated.

Documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing may also identify the locations of outbuildings used for cemetery activities and/or maintenance. Structural features and artifacts related to the hearst house (1871) may contain information associated with mortuary related transportation activities and architectural details of the structure. Other outbuildings and associated remains may contribute information related to landscaping activities and other types of maintenance. Occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) and utilities may also exist related to cemetery maintenance activities.

Identification and detailed analysis of the context and contents of marked and unmarked graves may also contribute a wealth of information relating to the operation of the cemetery and various social groups that inhabited Maynard. Actual burial shafts may contribute information related to methods of excavation, especially when grave diggers changed from manual to power-assisted excavation. Funerary artifacts including coffins, coffin hardware and personal grave goods may also contribute important social, cultural, and economic information related to individuals, family groups, ethnic groups, religious groups, and class groupings. Funerary related artifacts associated with memorial services may also contribute important information related to the social groupings listed above.

Osteological analysis of skeletal remains in graves may also contribute a wealth of information related to Maynard's population. Skeletal remains can contribute information that identifies the stature, general health, and other physical characteristics associated with individuals and many of the social groups identified above. Osteological studies can also identify many of the pathologies that effected specific individuals and groups.

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