

Union Cemetery Information

ATTACHMENT

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic UNION CEMETERY

and/or common UNION CEMETERY

2. Location

street & number 316 Woodside Road n/a not for publication

city, town Redwood City n/a vicinity of congressional district 11

state California code 06 county San Mateo code 081

3. Classification

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name CITY OF REDWOOD CITY

street & number P.O. Box 391

city, town Redwood City n/a vicinity of state California 94061

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Mateo County Courthouse, Recorder's Office

street & number Marshall at Hamilton St., Redwood City, CA 94061

city, town Redwood City state CA 94061

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title California Historical Landmark No. 816 has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1966 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Department of Parks & Recreation, State of California

city, town Sacramento state CA 95811

(Also on Calif. Inventory of Historic Resources (1976))

7. Description

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | date _____ |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Redwood City had been settled for six or seven years before the throng of those that journey to the realms of shade had sufficiently increased to attract attention of citizen's to the necessity of a permanent burial place."1 Until 1859, a make-shift cemetery had sufficed, but when that property changed hands, the new owner declared that a different site must be established, and donated matching funds to that end. Subsequently, 6.4 acres were purchased, surveyed and fenced. The site then, as now, is a near-perfect triangle, with sides approximately measuring 972', 1131', and 672'. These boundaries correspond to a map(enclosed) dating to 1900, and are presumed to be the original dimensions.

Union Cemetery, rural at the time of its founding, is now enclosed by aspects of the modern community of Redwood City. Along the cemetery's "Southern Avenue" (please refer to map), a four foot high hedge (trimmed but suffering from lack of water) and a swath of iceplant separate the site from Woodside Road, a four-lane divided highway and major business route. Along "Northern Avenue", the cemetery is bordered by a wooden fence, on the other side of which are the backyards of several small houses and two apartment complexes. A cyclone fence borders "Western Avenue" and separates the cemetery from the back of an apartment complex and a plant nursery and its parking lot. The original entrance was at the north end, where Southern and Northern Avenues intersect. The building of an overpass in 1965 caused the entrance to be changed to the intersection of Western and Southern Avenues. The only available parking is at the adjacent nursery, and access is possible only via southbound Woodside Road. The cemetery was well-planned, with a fifteen-foot wide avenue on each perimeter, as well as a central avenue. Two hundred thirty plots of varying shape and size were mapped out, averaging approximately 64 square feet each.

The exact numbers of burials and headstones is unknown, but a review of existing cemetery records indicate between 1700 and 2000 burials. Grave markers are of various materials, including: stone and brick cairns; small and elaborate, though disintegrated, marble paved patios; marble statues; granite slabs; and painted wood markers. Many of the early markers of wood have long since disappeared. Some family plots are enclosed by clipped hedges and other plantings, wrought-iron railings and picket fences. At the original entrance, a plot of approximately 460 square feet was established for the G.A.R. (Union Civil War Veterans). This is the site of an annual Memorial Day ceremony, one of San Mateo County's oldest ongoing traditions. Across the Central Avenue, a plot of approximately 840 square feet was established for the Masonic order. At the intersection of Northern and Western Avenues, a plot of approximately 1400 square feet was established for the I.O.O.F. In the 1880's, a life-sized pot-metal statue of a Civil War soldier was erected. This was the prime feature of the cemetery, and the focal point of the Memorial Day ceremony. Three times this statue has been destroyed. Vandals demolished it in 1957, after which it was restored. In 1968, on Halloween, it was again destroyed, after which a fund-raising made restoration again possible. Within days of its resurrection, vandals destroyed it a third time. The pieces now reside in the San Mateo County Historical Museum. The saga of the statue has been the subject of numerous newspaper articles. 1a

1. Appendix, Item 2.

1a. Appendix, Items 5 through 18.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

Union Cemetery has been the victim of a great deal of vandalism. Besides the above mentioned destruction, numerous headstones have been knocked down or destroyed, cairns have been broken into, statues de-capitated, and headstones spray-painted. This vandalism is an unworthy encroachment upon the otherwise graceful natural ageing of Union Cemetery.

The plantings in the cemetery are dominated by scores of mature trees, eloquently testifying to the age of the cemetery. Species include: pistache, poplar, willow, aborvitae, oak, cedar, palm and pine (i.e. Pistacia chinensis; Populus nigra; Salix matsudana; Thuja occidentalis; Quercus agrifolia and Q. ilex; Cedrus deodora; Phoenix canariensis; Chamaerops excelsa; and several species of Pinus. Mature hedges of viburnum and berberus remain well-clipped, and a number of Echium fastuosum were recently planted in the Masonic plot. The above species survive despite a lack of extensive irrigation. Occasional volunteer shrubs and weeds occur, but the site is relatively weed-free.

Union Cemetery dates to the early years of Redwood City. Founders of the local towns of Woodside and Searsville are buried there, along with the "first white child born in Redwood City". Individuals referred to in cemetery records as "Chinaman" and "unknown man found hung" are also interred there, evidencing the cemetery's function on many levels of society. Local residents have demonstrated their interest in personal, local and national history via the medium of Union Cemetery. "Affection clings to that spot of earth where loved ones sleep in the windowless mansion of the dead." Such affection remains today. The traditions, ethnic affiliations and current interest associated with Union Cemetery are discussed in the Statement of Significance.

2. Appendix, Item 19.

3. Appendix, Item 2.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1859 to - Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Union Cemetery can be shown to be of importance regarding historic archaeology, settlement patterns, and social considerations. Cemetery records exist which indicate a variety of backgrounds among those interred. These provide ethnic, occupational and geographic information about the nature of the new settlements of the mid-19th century. The historic archaeological value of these records is enhanced by a wealth of information possessed by descendants of both those interred and of later settlers, much of which has been recorded. For decades, the cemetery has been used as the site where an annual Memorial Day celebration culminates. The social importance of the cemetery is underscored by dozens of informants who describe this ongoing traditional event, and also emphasize their concern for the well-being of Union Cemetery. The subject of the state's first cemetery legislation, it is a unique link to the American past for the modern community of Redwood City and the State of California.

Union Cemetery fulfills National Register criteria for cemeteries due to its outstanding attributes of age, association with an historic event and being possessed of considerable local tradition. Founded in 1859, it dates back to the years of the early settling of the area, and it was the subject of California's first cemetery legislation. Demonstrating its founders' beliefs regarding the great national civil strife, it was named "Union" prior to the Civil War, and is a unique frontier symbol of the struggle in the distant East. Redwood City's annual Memorial Day celebration was a substantial enough tradition to have achieved minor historical importance for the community. In this ceremony, citizens, school children, and representatives of the armed forces would watch or participate in a parade through downtown Redwood City, which culminated with a gathering and memorial service at the G.A.R. plot in Union Cemetery. There is no longer a parade, and participation in the event is much reduced, but the American Legion still spearheads an annual Memorial Day gathering.

Redwood City, in the 1850's, was a growing, unincorporated village dependant upon the lumber trade. A local citizen, who wanted the community's improvised burying ground moved off his property, agreed to contribute matching funds toward land to be used for a new cemetery. On March 15, 1859, six acres were purchased for \$500.00 by the newly formed Union Cemetery Association which, not being a corporate body, deeded the title to "John B. Weller, Governor of California and his successors in office... in trust for the use and benefit of the Union Cemetery Association of San Mateo County." At the same time, a bill was introduced into the Assembly of the State Legislature for "An act to authorize the incorporation of Rural Cemetery Associations." This legislation apparently had Union Cemetery as its subject, and was the state's first legislation regarding cemeteries. In 1947, the title was transferred from the Governor's office to the state of California, and in 1962, to the municipality of Redwood City.

continued...

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

From 1859 and for the next sixty years, burials averaged between twenty and thirty per year. Plots were at first sold for \$10.00, \$15.00 or \$25.00, depending on size, and then gradually increased in price. A prime feature of the cemetery, a Pot-metal statue of a Civil War statue, was installed in the 1880's. While no persons of transcendent importance are buried there, many of San Mateo county's pioneer settlers, rich and poor alike, are interred there, and are very much alive in the minds of local citizens, as is discussed below. The last meeting of Union Cemetery Association was held in 1918, after which the cemetery slid into a period of almost complete neglect. Burials there tended to be those who could not afford to go elsewhere, or who were tied by strong family traditions to plots in this historic burial ground. There have been only scattered burials over the last forty years, the last one being in 1959. 4

The melting pot nature of early northern California communities of Redwood City and San Mateo County is demonstrated by the existing cemetery records. An incomplete survey of the places of birth of those interred shows at least seventeen foreign countries and twenty-six American states. The records also indicate occupations and ages at death. A preliminary study of these records was started at UC Berkeley, and further demographic and mortality studies of the early community are possible. Further archaeological potential resides in the minds of the descendants of Redwood City's pioneers. A general request for historic information and statements of public interest yielded close to 100 pages of response. Among the information received were accounts of migration to the area, via such means as mule across the Isthmus of Panama, ship around the Cape Horn, and covered wagon along the Oregon Trail. For some, it was a secondary migration to California, after life on Hawaiian plantations proved unpleasant. Problems with anti-Semitism in the new community are also discussed as are other ethnic and financial hardships. Personal interviews of the (mostly aged) informants should yield much more information about the settling of the area, and in greater detail.

Along with its stated historic and archaeological value, Union Cemetery possesses substantial current social value. It is Redwood City's first California Historic Landmark, and it is the site of the well-renowned annual Memorial Day ceremony, as it has been for the last century. There have recently been voluntary offers for donations to help preserve the cemetery and it has been the subject of an untold number of newspaper articles (of which 14 are included).⁵ The following is a sampling of statements from local citizens and quotes from local papers, evidencing public interest and concern:

Although we do not believe we have any relatives or friends who are interred in the Union Cemetery in Redwood City, California, We strongly believe that this site should be preserved. Not only are the grounds sacred as the resting place of many, but as a historical site it is important to protect this area...We most strongly urge the inclusion of the Union Cemetery in Redwood City, California in the National Register of Historic Places...

*See letters, page 32.

continued...

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

I am really hoping that the Union Cemetery can gain acceptance to the National Register of Historic Places. I think too much history would be lost if this did not happen.

*Letters, page 33.

We feel that it is of utmost importance that the cemetery be preserved, cleaned up and new grave markers erected where none exist. Union Cemetery should be accepted into the National Register of Historical Places. As a City Councilman and former Mayor, I am familiar with the procedure and believe it a truly appropriate classification for land of much important historical significance.

*Letters, page 36.

Historical sites such as the Union Cemetery must be preserved as part of our heritage. It is the final resting place of many of Californias original 49ers.

*Letters, page 44.

Your efforts to have Union Cemetery accepted in the National Register of Historic Places are encouraging to us... It is my understanding that the legal history of the Cemetery is unique in California, if not in the United States, and on that basis alone should be worthy of preservation.

*Letters, page 76.

I have never visited Union Cemetery but I feel that these early pioneers should be remebered. Graveyards have no tongue and we can only hope.

*Letters, page 78.

I would like to see the Cemetery preserved for Historic reasons. There are quite a few Civil War Vets buried there and we need places like that so the future generation can see who fought for our country.

*Letters, page 81.

I feel very strongly that the Union Cemetery must be preserved. It is a vital part of San Mateo County history.

*Letters, page 94.

Preserving our country's heritage is very important. We have a responsibility to preserve, not only our roots but our country's roots as well. Because these early settlers were the backbone of our country's expansion. Through their efforts and sacrifices, they enabled us to progress to the great country that we are. It is important to keep our ties with the past so that we do not forget the hardships and struggles that have enabled this generation to enjoy the freedoms and comforts of today. I hope that this important part of our San Mateo County heritage is saved and can be kept for future generations.

*Letters, page 93.

continued...

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

Redwood City's Union Cemetery is the granddaddy of all "official" cemeteries in San Mateo County and probably in all of California.

*See Newspaper article, Appendix, Item 10.

The excessive vandalism suffered by Union Cemetery is painfully obvious, and the deterioration heightens the sense of its being a part of the ever more distant past. But its function as a memorial to that past remains unimpaired, and may take on ever greater significance with the increasing modernization of the city and culture surrounding it.

4. See detailed history of Union Cemetery. Appendix, Item 4.
5. See Appendix, Items 5 through 18.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE APPENDIX TO APPLICATION

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6.5

Quadrangle name Palo Alto Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 15'

UMT References

A

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Zone Easting Northing

B

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Zone Easting Northing

C

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

D

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

E

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

F

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

G

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

H

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Verbal boundary description and justification

Union Cemetery's boundaries are defined by: a hedge along Woodside Road, running from the north to the south; turning northwest to follow a cyclone fence; turning northeast to follow a wooden fence, to complete a triangle.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| state | code | county | code |

11. Form Prepared By

name/title JAMES A. MORRISON AND PAMELA L. BLAUFARB/ Researchers.

organization U.C. BERKELEY ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT date December 28, 1981

street & number 2242 Carleton Street telephone (415) 843-9100

city or town Berkeley state California

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For HCRS use only

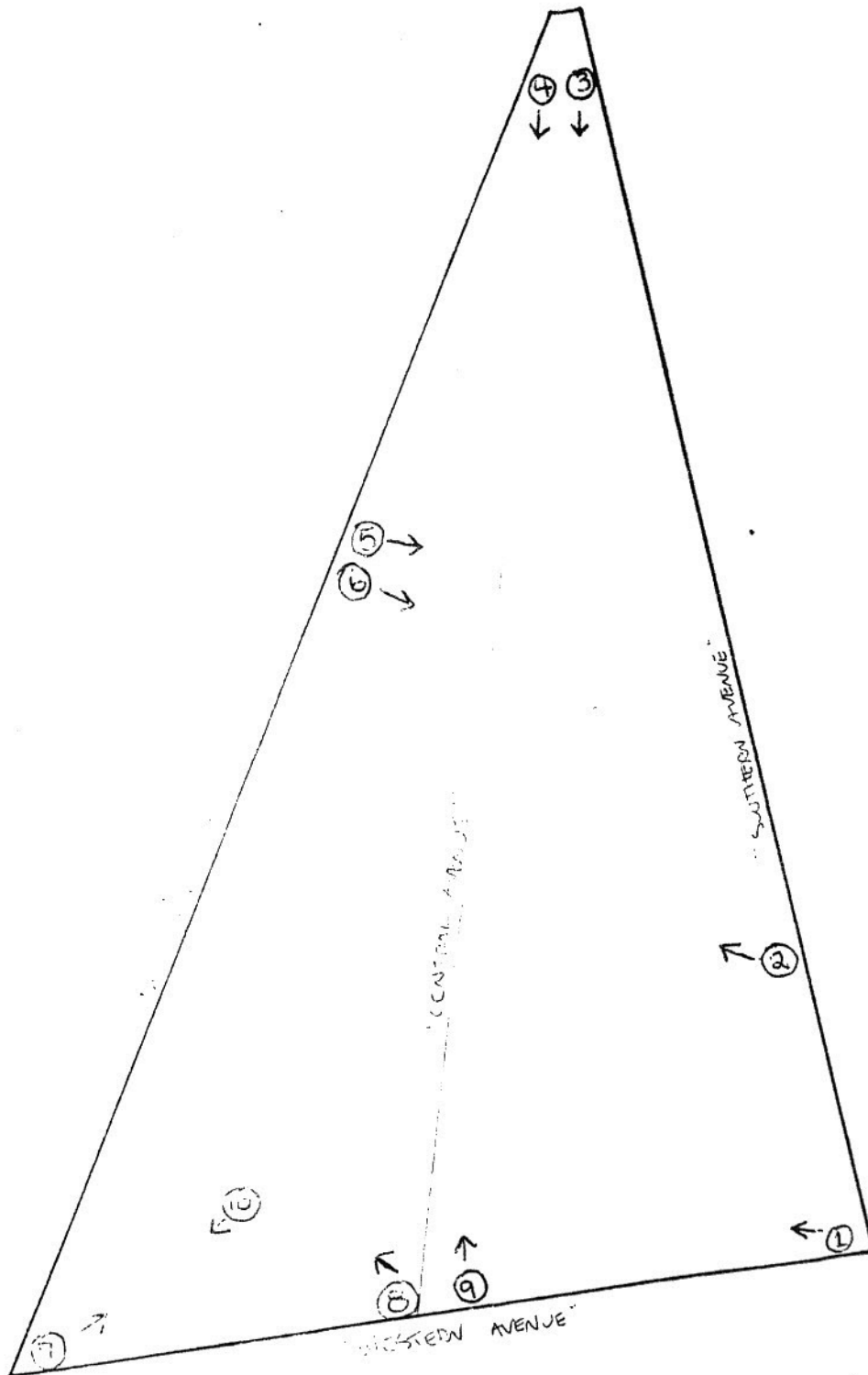
I hereby certify that this property is included in the

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

UNION CEMETERY



LEGEND FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

SHOWS NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPH

AND DIRECTION FROM WHICH IT WAS TAKEN



UNION CEMETERY

310 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/61

SET A
NUMBER 1 of 10

Taken from Junction of
Southern and Western Ave.
facing NW.

NOTE: Shows view at
entrance.

UNION CEMETERY

310 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/61

SET A
NUMBER 2 of 10

Taken from Western Ave.,
facing NW.

NOTE: Apartments and
vandalized cairn
(at left).



UNION CEMETERY

716 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 3 of 10

Taken at junction of
Northern, Southern and
Central Aves., facing S.

NOTE: Woodside Road (at
left), Masonic plot (at
center), G.A.R. plot (at
right), plantings.

UNION CEMETERY
716 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 4 of 10

Taken at junction of
Northern, Southern and
Central Aves., facing S.

NOTE: G.A.R. plot and
statue pedestal (at cen-
ter), houses (at right),
plantings.



UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

11/15/1981

SET A
NUMBER 5 of 10

Taken from Northern Ave.,
facing SE.

NOTE: vandalized cairn
(at right), general de-
tail.

UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 6 of 10

Taken from Northern Ave.,
facing SSE.

NOTE: general detail.



UNION
316
Redwood
San M
Taken
James
3242
Berke
on



UNION
316
Redwood
San M
Taken
James
3242
Berke
on

UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA
94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 7 of 10

Taken from junction of
Northern and Western Ave.
facing E.

NOTE: plantings, general
detail.

UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

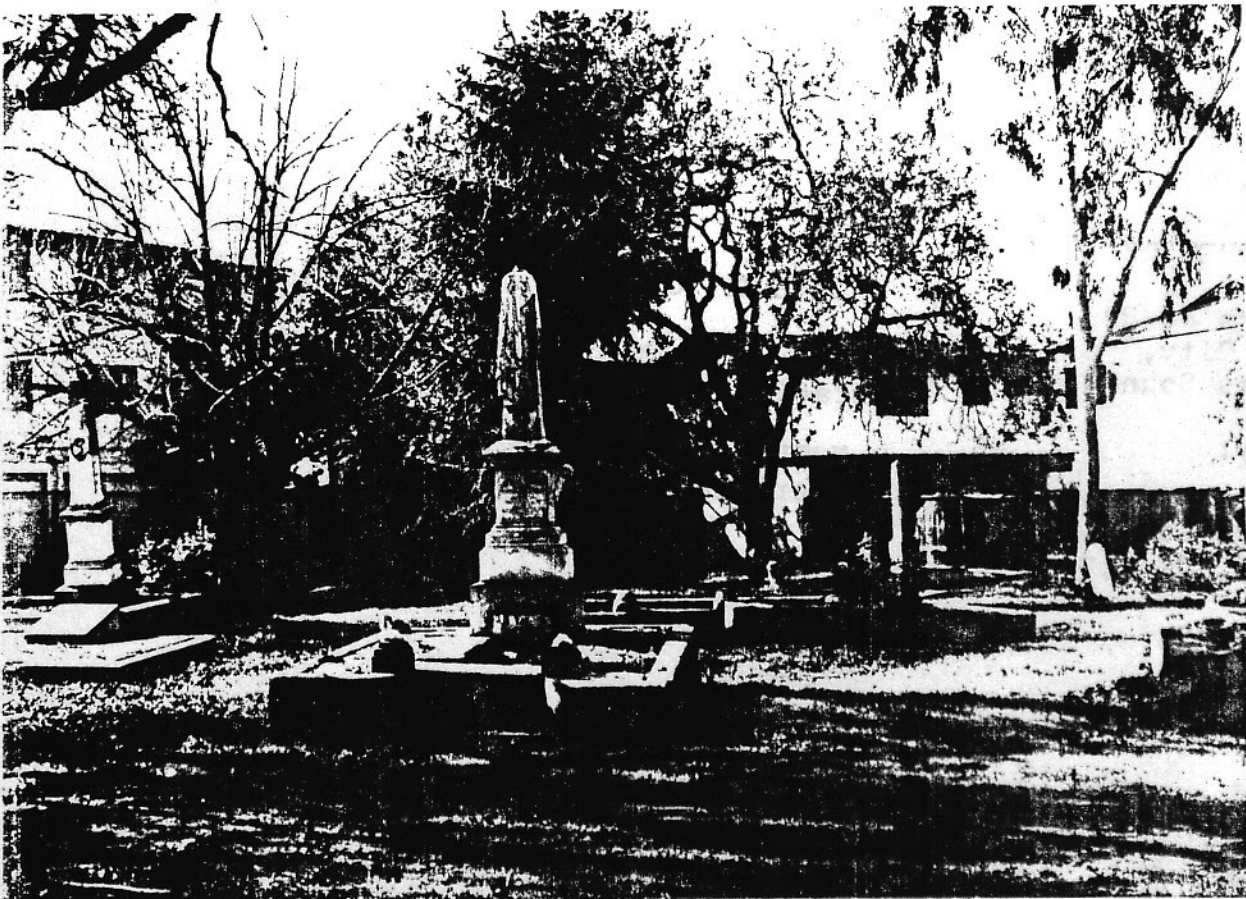
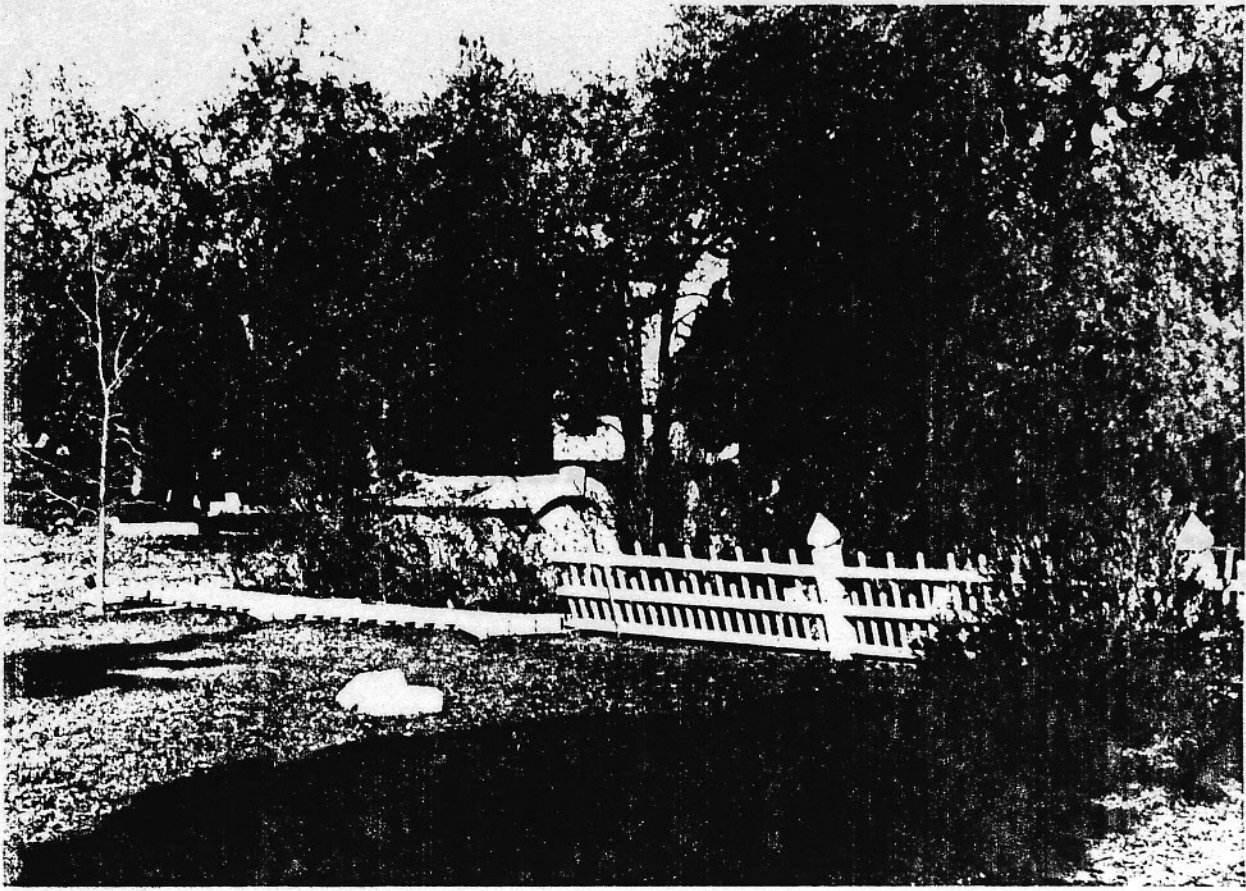
James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 8 of 10

Taken from junction of
Central and Western Aves.,
facing N.

NOTE: plantings, general
detail.



UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 9 of 10

Taken from junction of
Central and Western Aves.,
facing NNW.

NOTE: deterioration,
general detail.

UNION CEMETERY

316 Woodside Rd.
Redwood City, CA
San Mateo County

Taken by:

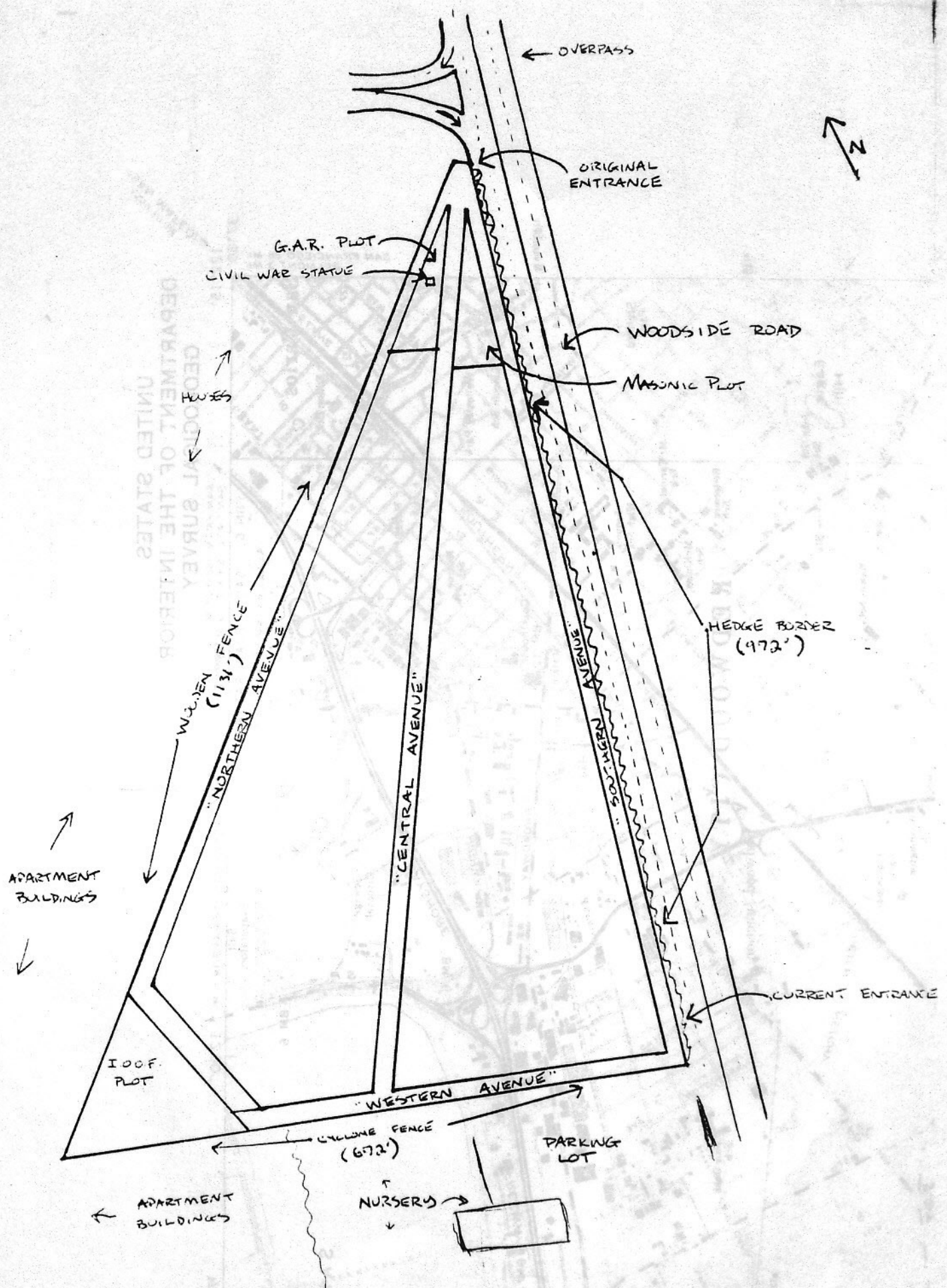
James Morrison
2242 Carleton St.
Berkeley, CA 94704

on 11/15/81

SET A
NUMBER 10 of 10

Taken by IOOF plot,
facing W.

NOTE: general detail,
apartments, vandalism.



UNION CEMETERY

REDWOOD CITY, CA

1559 III SE
SAN MATEO



APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF HISTORICAL LANDMARK

Name of Proposed Landmark Union Cemetery

Location Redwood City, California

County San Mateo

Name of Owner City of Redwood City

Street Middlefield & Jefferson

City Redwood City

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

See Attached.

*This is a copy of
Landmark #816 application -
registered June 1, 1967.
This is background information -
Sandy & Ann*

UNION CEMETERY

A History Compiled by F. M. Stanger

Redwood City's Union Cemetery looks like most other graveyards that are a hundred years old, but its history is unlike any other. Here are the principal events that make it unique:

1. Its name was derived from the bitter national controversy that brought on the Civil War.
2. The movement for its founding (1859) triggered California's first state legislation on the subject of cemeteries.
3. Ownership of the cemetery was held for more than a hundred years by the State of California, first in trust for a local Association, then in outright proprietorship.
4. Because it was "state-owned", the state contributed for fifteen years to its care and maintenance.
5. In 1947 it became a matter for special state legislation.
6. In 1962 it was deeded by the state to the municipality of Redwood City.
7. It is presently maintained, as a public service, by a large cemetery company. Burials are no longer permitted, and plans are afoot to maintain it as a permanent "memorial park" in honor of this Peninsula's pioneer citizens who lie buried there.

Other cemeteries have been named "Union" because they provided burial space for Civil War veterans, but this one was named before the Civil War (1859). By giving it this name, its founders announced to the world that they were supporters of Daniel Webster's doctrine of "Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable", as opposed to a loose confederation from which states might secede. Secession was already being threatened in the South and a good many of the settlers in California supported the idea.

The chain of events in connection with this cemetery's founding is unusual, to say the least, and in some respects puzzling. Only by first outlining the events in sequence can we reach any explanation of their meaning.

On January 15, 1859, a group of citizens met, "pursuant to public notice", as their minutes declare, to consider "our right and our wants" in the matter of a "suitable place for the burial of the dead".

The meeting was held in response to a minor local crisis. The bustling, unincorporated village of Redwood City had sprung up suddenly around the business of shipping lumber. For the few deaths that had already occurred there, a burying ground had been improvised on land owned by William Carey Jones, a prominent personage and member of the United States Land Commission, with his cooperation and consent. However, his land had now passed into the hands of a new owner, Horace Hawes, and Mr. Hawes did not want the cemetery on his property. He had made this known and was pressing for its removal.

This and other meetings were held to consider the matter, and by February 28 things had developed to the point where Articles of Association and By Laws for a Union Cemetery Association were adopted. The plan was to purchase land adjoining the property owned by Mr. Hawes. Money had been raised for the purpose, and Mr. Hawes agreed to contribute an amount equal to whatever other moneys were subscribed, up to \$500.

On March 16, 1859, the purchase was consummated in the recording of a deed to six acres of land. The Cemetery Association, however, not being a corporate body, did not take title to the property; it was deeded instead by the sellers - (James Berry and Curtis Baird) "to John B. Weller, Governor of California and his successors in office ----- in trust for the use and benefit of the Union Cemetery Association of San Mateo County". The Association, said the deed, was to have the "control and management" of the cemetery, and was authorized to "sell burial rights therein and to use and expend the moneys arising from such sales in the improvement of said cemetery".

Things were still very new in California, and in the absence of any local government with legal powers in such matters, the Association found a way to bridge the legislative gap by using the governor's office as the holder of their trust and by writing their own powers into the deed. Who their legal advisor in this maneuver was we do not know, but a good guess would be Andrew Teague, a young frontier "lawyer" who became one of Redwood City's leading citizens and, in 1884, was buried in this same cemetery.

In the meantime, unknown to the members of the Union Cemetery Association, another approach to this legal problem had been undertaken. A bill had been introduced into the Assembly of the State Legislature for "An Act to authorize the incorporation of Rural Cemetery Associations". Strange as it seems, this bill was not introduced by a member from San Mateo County (though this county was then represented in both houses of the Legislature) but by Assemblyman James Banks of San Francisco!

It encountered no opposition and apparently had no publicity. It went through the normal routine in both chambers of the Legislature, and on April 18, 1859, it became California's first law relative to cemeteries. It laid down in great detail the procedures for the organization of "rural" cemetery associations and listed their powers, including the right to own property and to sell burial rights to "lot-proprietors".

However, the Union Cemetery Association of San Mateo County had already formed its organization, which was much simpler and quite different from the pattern laid down in this law. There is nothing in the minutes of the Association to indicate that its members took any cognizance of the law or even knew of its existence. Their property had already been deeded in trust to the Governor, and so it remained for more than a hundred years.

How could this duplication of effort occur - two lines of endeavor toward a single goal, each unknown to the other interested party? Also, why should a bill for "rural" cemeteries be sponsored by a representative of metropolitan San Francisco who was interested in such a law to the extent of promoting it in the Legislature, and why was this not done through San Mateo County's own representatives?

A study of the personalities involved suggests an explanation which, though not conclusive in the absolute sense, is altogether likely - indeed it furnishes about the only possible answer to the puzzle.

If the Cemetery Association men in Redwood City, instead of their short-cut deed to the Governor, had been willing to wait for legislation, there is no doubt they could have obtained it through their own representatives in Sacramento. Possibly their Assemblyman at the time might not have been too cooperative. He was D. W. Connelly, a Coastside farmer and owner of a sawmill in Purissima Canyon, who was probably a stranger to most of the people in Redwood City. He was also an "Administration Democrat", which would indicate that he was at least tolerant of the slave-holding South, and probably had little or no political rapport with the "Union" men of Redwood City.

If one wonders what these political issues on the national level had to do with a rural cemetery in California, it will be remembered that this was 1859; that in 1860 secession began and

war followed. Feelings were bitter even in California, which was demonstrated by an incident in the State Legislature. Assemblyman James Banks of San Francisco, while sitting quietly in his seat, was struck over the head with a heavy hickory cane by the Assemblyman from Yuba (a well-known secessionist), laying open a gash more than an inch long.

But the Southern sympathisers were a minority, and the state senator from San Mateo County, Timothy Guy Phelps, who lived on his dairy farm which later became the site of San Carlos, was a strong anti-slavery leader. He was then on his way to becoming the chief founder of the new Republican Party in San Mateo County, and even in California as a whole. He was later a member of Congress and a personal friend of President Lincoln. He would have been most happy to oblige his like-minded constituents in Redwood City, but they didn't bother him with their problem because they had already found a simpler and more immediate solution.

Who, then, was responsible for introducing into the Legislature a bill for a rural cemetery law? The only other man on the scene with an inherent interest in such a law was Horace Hawes, who wanted to get the existing cemetery off his property. Hawes was also the type of man who quickly saw the need for legislation and knew how to get it; and his roots were, at that time, deeper in San Francisco than in San Mateo County.

Hawes was a brilliant and skillful attorney with connections in high places. He had come to California in 1849 as the appointed "Prefect" of the San Francisco area. This appointment did not mean much, however, and he opened a law office in San Francisco. He enjoyed spectacular success in the practice of law and in 1855 was elected to the State Assembly. In 1856 he devised and put through the Assembly the bill for a new San Francisco charter which, hopefully, would rid the city of its hoodlum politicians. This bill also, through an accident of politics, turned out to be the law that created San Mateo County by separating it from the City and County of San Francisco.

Shortly after this time, Hawes acquired the Jones property (through foreclosure of a mortgage) - more than two thousand acres lying west of the County Road (El Camino Real) and extending from Five Points to Cordilleras Creek. He had built a house on the property and was living there, but was still a somewhat austere stranger down the Peninsula.

He was, however, well known in San Francisco, and he undoubtedly knew James Banks (later of the incident mentioned above), then a San Francisco contractor and builder who had taken over Hawes' seat in the State Assembly. Banks was the kind of man (a community leader, president of the YMCA, etc.) who would gladly do a little chore for his predecessor, even though it did not concern his own constituency. Hawes undoubtedly wrote the bill himself, leaving for Mr. Banks only the matter of dropping it in the Assembly "hopper".

In fact, so little did it concern the San Francisco populous that their Daily Alta California, which printed legislative news every day from its Sacramento reporter, did not even mention Mr. Banks' bill for a rural cemetery law. After all, who cared to read about cemeteries, least of all, rural ones?

So the first cemetery in San Mateo County to be officially established with legal formalities (perhaps even the first in California) began to function in 1859, as soon as the Governor's office accepted the trusteeship assigned to it by the Union Cemetery Association. Other cemeteries in the county came into being in these early years, some earlier than 1859, but none of them, whether religiously dedicated as cemeteries or improvised on private property, took on legal status, despite the law passed for that purpose in 1859. Not until the 1870's did any other so incorporate.

For forty years, or until the turn of the century, the Union Cemetery Association kept up an active organization as owner and manager of Union Cemetery. There was sometimes a difficulty mustering a quorum for the annual meeting, and occasionally a meeting went by default. In such cases the officers continued to function without formal re-election. Three officers, as provided in the Articles of Association and By Laws, constituted the Board of Directors and did the routine work. They were the President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Superintendent - the latter being the actual manager of the cemetery.

Burial plots were first sold for \$10, \$15, and \$25, according to size, but these prices were, from time to time, increased. In 1831, for instance, all prices were raised 25%, and that same year a new area was surveyed and subdivided into lots. Money was appropriated at the same time to pipe water into the cemetery and, when completed, water service was sold to lot holders who wished to use it to beautify their family graves.

An annual event each May was the hiring of a farmer to cut the grass in the unoccupied parts of the property. The cost was usually recovered, in part, by selling the cuttings for hay.

Entrance to the grounds was then at the corner of El Camino Real and Woodside Road, and just inside the gate were sections reserved for the G.A.R. (Civil War veterans) and the Masonic Lodge. In the southwesterly corner another section was reserved by the Odd Fellows.

In the 1890's, burials were averaging between twenty and thirty a year, though the year 1892 saw as many as thirty-eight. Yet the last recorded annual meeting of the Association was held April 10, 1900. The officers at that time were George H. Rice, President; P. P. Chamberlain, Secretary-Treasurer; and James Crowe, Superintendent. Mr. Crowe, who had held his position since 1876, was also Redwood City's first "undertaker".

There was an attempt in 1911 to revive and re-vitalize the Association, but the revival itself was short-lived. Its last meeting was in 1918, and after that the cemetery slid into a period of almost complete neglect. The Association that founded it had ceased to function, and other burial places were now available; although they were some distance away. The development of motor cars, however, made them easily available. Burials in Union Cemetery tended to be by those who could not afford to go elsewhere or who were tied by strong family traditions to plots in this historic burial ground.

It took some time for Redwood City as a community to acquire a sense of responsibility for the cemetery. The nature of its origin, and its management by a Cemetery Association had made it, both in law and in the public mind, a "private" institution; although it had always been available for any and all people who desired to make use of it.

But in time (1954) a legal opinion was obtained to the effect that the Union Cemetery Association had in fact abandoned whatever rights it had retained under the trusteeship held by the Governor, and that a dedication to public use could be presumed from long acquiescence in its actual use by the public.

Some time before this opinion was obtained, however, the municipality had actually taken over responsibility for it. The American Legion took the initiative (1937) in bringing the problem to public attention and the city officials

accepted responsibility for it. First, a title search revealed the peculiar relationship of the cemetery to the State of California - a connection that was long forgotten or, by most people, never understood.

Following the discovery that it was "state-owned", a campaign was begun to persuade the State Government that it should assume a share of the responsibility for its maintenance. This took time and much "politicking". Governors Frank Merriam and Culbert L. Olson withstood the pressure, but Earl Warren, who was invited to give a Memorial Day address in Redwood City soon after his first inauguration, was vulnerable. When City Councilman Floyd Granger took him out to see "his cemetery", he was at least willing to look into the matter.

But to get the Legislature to appropriate funds took more time, as well as the persistent efforts of Senator Harry Parkman and Assemblyman Harrison Call, assisted by City Attorneys Albert Mansfield and Paul McCarthy. Finally, in 1947, a bill got through the Legislature appropriating \$1500 for the maintenance of Union Cemetery in San Mateo County.

However, legal minds in the Legislature evidently felt that the deed to the Governors "in trust for the Union Cemetery Association" (which now no longer existed) was an unstable legal basis for the expenditure of public funds; hence a companion bill was put through to strengthen this foundation. It is a very interesting law, both for what it did and for

its round-about wording - in an apparent attempt to disguise its true purpose by couching it in general terms. Yet a clause in the appropriation bill specifically stated that the appropriation would not be effective unless this companion bill was also enacted into law.

The wording (abbreviated) was on this wise: "Any indenture, --- deed of conveyance or other instrument --- executed prior to the year 1860 --- which purports to convey to any Governor of the State or his successors in office not more than seven acres of land to be used for cemetery purposes --- is hereby ratified and authorized, and shall be deemed sufficient --- to vest the fee of the property --- in the people of the State from the date of acceptance" (Statutes of 1947, p. 2513).

Thus, by the magic of legislation, a deed of trust 80 years old with the Governors as trustees, was transformed, retroactively, into a grant deed in fee simple vesting the title in the "people of California"! There was no longer any question about it - the State of California now owned Union Cemetery.

The state appropriation of \$1500 a year was later increased to \$2000. Before state aid was received, Redwood City had been spending (since 1937) from \$700 to \$1000 a year in an effort to keep the cemetery in an acceptable state of repair, but much more was needed.

In time it became evident that state ownership and support was not an arrangement that could go on indefinitely. Other communities also had cemetery problems. In 1954 the state gardener visited Redwood City and after a thorough and unbiased study of the situation, urged state officials, because of "complications the state could get into", to find some way of ending this responsibility. Hints of trouble that might arise began to appear in newspaper stories. In 1961 the San Jose Mercury ran a feature article, reviewing the unique phases of Union Cemetery's history, and dubbing it a "white elephant to state officials".

Finally, direct negotiations began between officials in Sacramento and those in Redwood City, which resulted in a simple settlement. Agreement on details having been reached, the State Department of Finance issued a quit-claim deed releasing the property to the municipality of Redwood City. The City Council voted an acceptance, and on February 19, 1962, the two instruments were recorded, thus ending a unique episode in California history that had lasted 103 years.

This action, however, by no means solved all of the problems. An important condition was, by prior agreement, written into the quit-claim deed that the city is obligated to maintain the property as a "cemetery or public park". In this phrase is epitomized the dilemma that the city has faced ever since 1857.

The "public park" idea has been studied. To make it a park for recreation or amusement would entail the removal of all of the bodies interred. This would not only be very expensive but, as many feared, would shock the public. An inquiry sent out to various interested persons proved, by numerous and unanimous protests, that this was indeed the case. The replies showed also that the cemetery is still, humanly speaking, a part of the community.

A brief survey of the somewhat confused records indicates that somewhere between 1700 and 2000 bodies still lie in Union Cemetery. There have been some removals but the exact number is also unknown.

Among the "occupants" of this historic resting place are, for example, William Littlejohn, builder (among many other things) of Redwood City's first bridge across the creek (ca. 1854), his wife Emma, and their son William F. who, at age 17, was "drowned in San Francisco Bay". Another son, Chase, known to many people still living as a scientist of note, and "the first white boy born in Redwood City" (1855). He passed away in 1943, but he was not buried here. A measure of the abandonment and total neglect of Union Cemetery at that time is the fact that Chase Littlejohn, so much a part of Redwood City's history, was taken to Colma for burial instead of being laid beside his family.

Also, there is Simon Monserrate Mezes, who might be called Redwood City's first city planner, for his map shaped

the downtown section as it is today. Horace Templeton, the first to serve as County Judge under the new San Mateo County government when the county was formed, and George H. Buck, a judge of recent memory who was for many years the dominant figure in the county government, are also buried there.

Other pioneers from places over the county are Captain John Greer, a founder of Woodside; Sheldon Purdy Pharis of Kings Mountain, known widely as the Peninsula's "shingle king"; James Pease who came to the Peninsula in Mexican times and became the progenitor of a large number of descendants who still live here; and John Sears, a founder of Searsville and later of La Honda. Many more could be named.

These names suggest the reasonableness of another "park" proposal that has been made - a "Memorial Park" in honor of the founders and other worthy citizens of Redwood City, and of the County of San Mateo, who lie buried there.

Burials are no longer permitted in Union Cemetery, but it is being presently maintained, as a public service, by the Skylawn company, without cost to the city or the public. This, however, is not a permanent solution to the problem. It neither restores nor removes the delapidated crypts and fallen monuments, and does nothing to make the cemetery a landmark of historic interest and community pride.

The time seems ripe for a detailed and comprehensive study of the problem in all its aspects, for the purpose of

presenting to the City Government and the public all feasible alternative plans for restoration - with their relative costs. Only with this study in hand, made by competent technicians, can an intelligent decision be made regarding this complex and important dilemma.

ARE PICTURES ATTACHED? Yes

IS STATEMENT OF OWNER ATTACHED? Yes - See City Manager's letter.

Signed 
Henry V. Burger, Asst. City Mgr.
City Redwood City

Date October 31, 1966


REFERENCES

TO BOOKS, RECORDS, AND OTHER AUTHORITIES SUSTAINING THESE FACTS

To be supplied at a later date.

ARE PICTURES ATTACHED? Yes

IS STATEMENT OF OWNER ATTACHED? Yes - See City Manager's letter.

Signed 
Henry V. Burget, Asst. City Mgr.
City Redwood City

Date October 21, 1966

(This form when filled out completely is to be sent to the California Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California, 95811.)