NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

183
OMB No. 1024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Union Cemetery

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 227 East 28th Terrace | N/A | not for publication

City or town Kansas City | N/A | vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64108

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _x_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _x_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide _x_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: _x_ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Toni M. Prawl 02/29/16
Signature of certifying official/Title Toni M. Prawl, Ph.D., Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register ____ determined eligible for the National Register

____ determined not eligible for the National Register ____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain:)

for Edson W. Beall 4.19.16
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
X	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

	building(s)
	district
X	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	buildings
1		sites
4	2	structures
		objects
5	3	**Total**

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary: Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary: Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Cemetery

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A
walls: Stone
Concrete
roof: N/A
other: N/A

X **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUTATION PAGES**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

[ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C a birthplace or grave.

[X] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property.

[ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
Exploration and Settlement

Period of Significance
1857-1937

Significant Dates
1857, 1916

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

[X] **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUTATION PAGES**

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
_X_Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **Kansas City Landmarks Commission**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 27 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	39.0772	-94.5835	3	39.0732	-94.5805
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:
2	39.0773	-94.5807	4	39.0732	-94.5823
	Latitude:	Longitude:		Latitude:	Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Jezak Ford

organization Citysearch Preservation date November 15, 2015

street & number 3629 Holmes Street telephone 816-531-2489

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64109

e-mail citysusan@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Union Cemetery**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson** State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **Bruce Mathews, unless noted**

Date Photographed: **15 October 2015**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17: NW portion of cemetery. Camera facing SE.
2 of 17: 1885 child's grave. Camera facing W.
3 of 17: SW portion of cemetery. Camera facing NE.
4 of 17: Campbell family plot. Camera facing SE.
5 of 17: Tree trunk markers. Camera facing SE.
6 of 17: Mausoleums. Camera facing SW.
7 of 17: Former grass road and receiving vault. Camera facing S.
8 of 17: West markers and Sexton's Cottage. Camera facing NW.
9 of 17: McCoy marker. Camera facing SW.
10 of 17: Bingham marker. Camera facing SSW.
11 of 17: Entrance gate. Camera facing NNE.
12 of 17: East portion of cemetery. Camera facing NW.
13 of 17: SE portion of cemetery. Camera facing NE.
14 of 17: Central portion of cemetery. Camera facing NE.
15 of 17: Central portion of cemetery. Camera facing NW.
16 of 17: Central portion of cemetery. Camera facing SW.
17 of 17: NE portion of cemetery. Camera facing E.

Figure Log:
Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1 of 5. Union Cemetery's location within Kansas City.
Figure 2 of 5. Union Cemetery site plan with nomination boundary, latitude and longitude coordinates.
Figure 3 of 5. Map with boundaries and photo locations.
Figure 4 of 5. 1858 plat of Union Cemetery.
Figure 5 of 5. 1925 Atlas view of Union Cemetery.

Summary
Union Cemetery, Kansas City's oldest extant cemetery, fills 27 rolling acres in midtown Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The roughly rectangular cemetery is bordered by East 27th Street on the north, Warwick Trafficway on the west, East 30th Street on the south and McGee Trafficway and Oak Street on the east in the Union Hill neighborhood (Figure 1.) The nominated property includes the contributing grounds of the cemetery, three mausoleums, and one receiving vault. Non-contributing elements include a mid-1980s sexton's cottage and two storage sheds. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Exploration and Settlement, locally significant as the oldest extant cemetery in Kansas City. The cemetery was founded in 1857 as a united project of the City of Kansas[1] and Westport. The original entrance was located on a toll road that joined both towns.

The cemetery site, consisting of the landscape of monuments and internments, is intersected with asphalt paths and roads, is surrounded by a modern wrought iron fence that defines the grounds from the bordering residential and commercial neighborhoods. The site slopes from a high point on the southeast down to the northwest. The cemetery's entrance is located near the center of the west side. The cemetery retains its integrity in location, setting, feeling, design and materials.

Setting
Union Cemetery, once located outside of city limits, is now in the heart of Kansas City. Busy streets and commercial buildings surround the west, north and east edges. The Union Hill neighborhood containing historic and modern single- and multi-family dwellings overlooks the cemetery from its south edge. The cemetery is frequently visited by local residents and employees of nearby businesses. The grounds are open 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and on weekends by appointment.

Elaboration
Looping asphalt roads cross Union Cemetery, which measures approximately 1638 feet north-south and 1196 feet at its widest east-west point (Figure 2.) Grave markers are located within the loops formed by the roads, as well as between the roads and the cemetery's outer walls. Dozens of varieties of mature trees are planted throughout the cemetery, including native white oak, hackberry and sassafras trees (photos 12-13 and 16-17.)

The cemetery contains approximately 55,000 graves dating from 1857 to the mid-1980s, including unmarked Civil War-era graves. According to the Union Cemetery Historical Society, most of the oldest graves are located in the east and northeast portions of the site, but many of these are not marked. The northeast portion of the cemetery may also include mass graves

[1] The town carried this name until the adoption of a new City Charter in 1889 changed its name to Kansas City.

from the Civil War and reinterred graves from previous cemeteries in Kansas City and Westport.

Markers of varying dates are scattered throughout the cemetery, placed individually or within family plots. Gravestones are primarily marble, granite or concrete. They range from very early, simply carved stones (photo 1) to elaborate Victorian-era markers that carry the iconography of urns, hands, hearts, books, leaves, trees and figures (photo 2.) Obelisks mark several individual graves and family plots throughout the cemetery (photo 3.) Concrete borders also surround some family plots, such as the plots of the Campbell and Watkins families (photo 4.) Several markers are designed to mimic tree trunks or stumps (photo 5.) These date to the late 1800s and early 1900s, associated with the Modern Woodmen of America or Woodmen of the World, two member-owned insurance and financial services organizations. A few areas of the cemetery contain groupings of similar markers and some areas likely contain mass graves.[2] An area in the southeast portion contains numerous graves of infants and children, most dating from 1899 to 1901. Another area south of the sexton's cottage also has several children's graves dating 1908 to 1911 (photo 15.) One corner in the west portion of the cemetery contains four tombstones with Chinese inscriptions, representing Kansas City's early Chinese population.

Markers are placed to face the historic paths throughout Union Cemetery rather than directionally (photo 14.)[3] The configuration fits well with descriptions of rural or garden cemeteries, a 19th century movement that encouraged the design of cemeteries to resemble parks. Garden cemeteries were planned with abundant foliage and meandering paths, providing places of rest and recreation.

Union Cemetery contains a few structures. Three mausoleums—all contributing structures—are built into a hill in the south end of the cemetery, two representing the Gregg and McGee families (photo 6). The east Gregg mausoleum has a peaked gable of cut stones radiating from an arched doorway. Carved finials sit atop ledges on either side of the gable. "GREGG" is carved into the arch supported by simple columns on either side of the entrance. Concrete sidewalls curve from the center portion of the structure to ground level. The center McGee mausoleum also has a gable peak above an arched entrance. Horizontal carved stones front the McGee structure. Short Corinthian columns support the entrance arch carved with "MCGEE". Stone sidewalls curve from the upper portion of the structure to ground level, ending in short piers. The unfinished west mausoleum, presumably unused, consists of a brick barrel vault fronted by

[2] An 1889 fire that destroyed the sexton's cottage also destroyed all of the cemetery's records.
[3] The Kansas City Park Department paved several of the roads in 1943 and placed sod over those roads that were not used.

plywood.[4] A receiving vault (photo 7) is built into a hill near the west entrance. The vault, also a contributing structure, is fronted with a peaked wall of radiating stone. Piers are located on either side of the peak, surrounding a wood door located within a stone arch. Carved stone sidewalls step down to ground level.

Non-contributing elements include a frame sexton's cottage, rebuilt in the mid-1980s and located just inside the west entrance (photo 8.) The one-story cottage resembles an L-shaped Queen Anne house with an entrance porch located in the northeast juncture. The cottage has clapboard siding, a wood shingle roof, one-over-one double-hung windows and a south brick chimney. Two non-contributing storage sheds are located on the northwest edge of the cemetery. The frame sheds are modern utilitarian buildings with asphalt shingle roofs that sit on concrete pads. The location of the sheds at the northwest end of the cemetery, away from many of the markers, and their size, minimally disturbs the landscape and are easily removable as they sit on concrete pads.

Integrity

After decades of neglect and many incidents of vandalism, volunteers and the Kansas City Parks Department have returned Union Cemetery to its pastoral appearance. The grounds retain much of their original feeling conveyed by the organic paths, view corridors within the cemetery and mature landscaping. Despite the selling of portions of the original grounds for roads and development, the site retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, design and materials. Union Cemetery's extant 27 acres of gravesites, markers, walkways and roads remain intact. The historic spatial relationship between burial areas, plantings, buildings and structures are still present, demonstrating the cemetery's integrity. Additional interments after 1937, the end of the period of significance, followed patterns previously established within the cemetery and do not detract from the cemetery's historic significance.

With the formation of the Union Cemetery Historical Society, a fence now protects the site, the sexton's cottage has been rebuilt and weathered markers have been cleaned and reset. All of these accomplishments help convey the property's feeling of history. The cemetery is well cared for and retains its integrity.

[4] Original ownership records were destroyed in an 1889 fire of the sexton's cottage that destroyed all of the cemetery records. The Kansas City Parks Department has sealed the entrance.

Summary
Union Cemetery, located between East 27th and East 30th Streets, Warwick and McGee Trafficways in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for local significance in the area of Exploration and Settlement. As Kansas City's oldest extant public cemetery, the cemetery also meets special requirements for Criterion Consideration D due to the interment of several early city leaders—John Calvin McCoy, Alexander Majors and George Caleb Bingham.[5] This nomination includes five contributing resources—one site (cemetery) and four structures (mausoleums and receiving vault)—and three non-contributing resources—one building and two structures (sheds). The cemetery was founded in 1857 between the City of Kansas and Westport. The cemetery's name established it as a joint venture between the two growing municipalities. Kansas City's population and boundaries grew to surround Union Cemetery and absorb Westport by 1897. The cemetery was developed as the result of earlier cemeteries becoming full due to urban development and a cholera epidemic. The site was designed as a quiet, rural spot to contemplate nature while honoring the deceased. Despite its urban location, it still offers the peaceful refuge for which it was designed.

Union Cemetery's period of significance is 1857 to 1937. In 1916, about 19 acres on the north and east edges were sold by the Union Cemetery Association to the Evergreen Land Company. The period includes the initial platting of the cemetery until the year that the first owner, the Union Cemetery Association, deeded the property to Kansas City.

History
The roots of Westport and Kansas City are tied to the enterpreneurship of John Calvin McCoy, the son of missionary Isaac McCoy, who opened a Baptist mission near today's 49th Street and Nall Avenue in Roeland Park, Kansas. Calvin McCoy, a college-educated surveyor, purchased land four miles south of a rock landing on the Missouri River in 1833. He built a structure there that served as his residence and as an outfitting station for pioneers heading west on the California, Oregon or Santa Fe Trails. In 1834, he platted the town of "West Port," aligning the roads with the public road that ran from Independence, Missouri southwest to Indian territory. McCoy needed merchandise to stock his store, so he widened the road that ran from the river, through rock bluffs and to the public road near his store in Westport. By the mid-1850s, Westport had 13 stores, five wagon shops, three hotels, one slaughterhouse, several schools and many saloons.[6]

[5] National Register Bulletin, "Guidelines for Evaluation and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places." A cemetery is eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
[6] Rick Montgomery and Shirl Kasper, *Kansas City: An American Story* (Kansas City: Kansas City Star Books, 1999), 27-28.

The area near the Missouri River landing was sold to a group of 14 investors—known as the Historic Fourteen—in 1838 and named "The Town of Kansas." The town was platted and became a municipality in 1850. McCoy's road to Westport led to development along today's Grand Boulevard in Kansas City, Missouri. In 1853, the City of Kansas was incorporated by the State of Missouri to include an area of .98 square mile and a population of about 2500. By 1859, the city's south boundary extended to 20th Street, encompassing approximately 3000 additional citizens.[7]

Kansas City grew little during the Civil War. The citizens and businesses of Westport and Kansas City were caught between the north and south during the Civil War, with conflict taking place between the city and the free-state town of Quindaro across the river in Kansas. Settlers from the east passed through Kansas City to remain or to travel on their way to populate Kansas as a free state. The pro-slavery towns of Westport, Weston, Platte City and Liberty were all within close proximity to Kansas City, their citizens determined to protect the state's status as a slave state.[8] The arrival of the railroads in Kansas City between 1865 and 1866 began a significant development boom. The completion of the Hannibal Bridge in 1869, the first bridge across the Missouri River, sealed the fate of the city as the largest on the west side of the state.

Establishment of Union Cemetery

Union Cemetery was established in 1857 when the populations of the City of Kansas, now Kansas City, and Westport, now a midtown neighborhood, were increasing dramatically. Kansas City's first public cemetery, the Town Company Cemetery, was located at 5th and Oak Streets. Commercial buildings soon encroached on the site, preventing expansion of the burial ground. Waves of cholera hit the city between 1849 and 1851, filling all available plots in the Town Company Cemetery and in other family-owned burial grounds.[9]

James Hunter, a Westport merchant, offered 49 acres near his home for sale as a cemetery. Leaders of both towns agreed to purchase the land, naming it Union Cemetery in honor of the agreement between the two towns.[10] Hunter deeded the farmland to the Union Cemetery Association, organized by a special act of the Missouri General Assembly on November 9, 1857. It was thought that the 49 acres would provide enough burial space to both communities for the foreseeable future. The Town Company Cemetery was vacated, with many of the exhumed bodies likely moved to the new Union Cemetery.[11]

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[7] George Fuller Green, *A Condensed History of the Kansas City Area* (Kansas City: The Lowell Press, 1968), 30-31.
[8] Montgomery and Kasper, 46-50.
[9] Kevin Fewell, "Kansas City's Oldest Public Cemetery," in *Kansas City's Historic Union Cemetery*, ed. Judith King and Bruce Mathews (Kansas City: The Union Cemetery Historical Society, 2014), 17.
[10] Kansas City's south boundary in 1857 was 12th Street.
[11] Fewell, 18. Transfer records of the interred to Union Cemetery are not available due to a fire that destroyed the sexton's cottage in 1986.

Articles promoting the new Union Cemetery ran in the *Kansas City Enterprise* during the summer of 1857. An article in the May 20, 1857 newspaper noted:

> A company composed of citizens of Kansas City and Westport (MO) have bought cemetery grounds between the two places which they propose improving the present summer.
> We are glad of this—the grounds are beautiful and will make a pleasant and quiet resting place for those who emigrated to the city of the dead.[12]

Plans for the beautification of the grounds were noted in June:

> The Association is composed of men of liberal views and enterprise, who will, in a few days have the grounds surveyed and offered for sale.
> It is the intention of the gentlemen having the cemetery in charge, to appropriate the first receipts from sales to the improvement and embellishment of the grounds, so as to make them in every respect, attractive and desirable for the interment of the dead.[13]

Plans were well underway by the end of July 1857, when the newspaper reported:

> The Union Cemetery grounds being now enclosed, and platted. Purchases of family or single lots may be made at any time, by making application to M.J. PAYNE, at Kansas City, or W.R. BERNARD, at Town of Westport.
> An attentive and competent Sexton will always be found at the cemetery, who is employed by the Association to take care of the ground, graves, monuments, shrubbery, etc.[14]

The cemetery's original boundaries were 27th Street on the north, 30th Street on the south, Main Street on the west and today's Gillham Road on the east. An entrance was located at 27th and Main Streets, the toll road between the City of Kansas and Westport. The cemetery was initially maintained by burial fees collected by the Union Cemetery Association, but the fees became inadequate over time. The cemetery decreased in size with the widening of Main Street in the 1880s. The sexton's cottage was moved east to Walnut Street, but caught fire in 1889 and burned, along with all of the cemetery records. The cottage was rebuilt but the records were lost forever (Figure 2).[15]

Union Cemetery served the early communities of Westport and Kansas City during periods of war and peace. The burial ground includes approximately 500 identified graves of soldiers and

[12] *Kansas City Enterprise*, 20 May 1857. *The Epitaph*, Feb/Mar 1995, 4-6.
[13] *Kansas City Enterprise*, 6 June 1857. *The Epitaph*, Feb/Mar 1995, 4-6.
[14] *Kansas City Enterprise*, 31 July 1857. *The Epitaph*, Feb/Mar 1995, 4-6.
[15] Fewell, 19.

veterans from the War of 1812, both World Wars and the Korean War. It is believed that at least 1000 Civil War soldiers were buried there in unmarked graves, represented by the Union Confederate Monument.[16] Family plots contain the remains of some of Kansas City's founding fathers and most important citizens. John Calvin McCoy, 1811-1884, was a surveyor, businessman, early Kansas City landowner and is credited with founding Westport (photo 9.)[17] Alexander Majors, 1814-1900, owned a huge freighting operation on the Santa Fe Trail and founded the Pony Express.[18] George Caleb Bingham, 1811-1879, was a politician, Civil War veteran and perhaps Missouri's best-known artist who painted "Martial Law" (photo 10.)[19] Johnston Lykins, 1800-1876, was one of Kansas City's "Historic Fourteen" founders, established the town's first post office, built the first public school, was the first legal mayor and served as the first president of Mechanics Bank, the town's first bank.[20] The cemetery also includes unidentified graves, including side-by-side burials of five unknown teenagers killed in an 1879 factory fire and school children killed when an 1886 tornado hit the Lathrop Elementary School.[21] Early maps designate the east edge of the cemetery for the "Colored" and as "Potter's Field." Four tombstones with Chinese inscriptions are located in the southwest corner of the cemetery.

In 1910, the city council passed an ordinance stating that Union Cemetery would no longer accept burials for health and sanitation reasons. The ordinance was nullified in court, but Kansas City built a "Potter's Field" cemetery at the municipal farm in the eastern Leeds neighborhood for future interment of the "pauper dead."[22] In 1916, about 19 acres on the north and east edges were sold by the Union Cemetery Association to the Evergreen Land Company. The sale was supposedly initiated to raise funds for maintenance, but it was discovered that several members of the cemetery association were also founders of the Evergreen Company and schemed to sell the property for development. The cemetery won a settlement from Evergreen in 1928 but businesses and roads had already been built on the sold land.[23]

[16] "A Green Slope…Near the City's Heart," *Kansas City Star*, 21 October 1963, D1. "Union Confederate Monument Site," http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Missouri/Union_Confederate_Monument_Site.html.
[17] R. Crosby Kemper III, "The Founding of a City," in *Kansas City's Historic Union Cemetery*, ed. Judith King and Bruce Mathews (Kansas City: The Union Cemetery Historical Society, 2014), 54.
[18] Kemper, 52.
[19] Rachael Blackburn Cozad, "George Caleb Bingham," in *Kansas City's Historic Union Cemetery*, ed. Judith King and Bruce Mathews (Kansas City: The Union Cemetery Historical Society, 2014), 82.
[20] Kemper, 51.
[21] Lynn Mackle, "That they not be Forgotten," in *Kansas City's Historic Union Cemetery*, ed. Judith King and Bruce Mathews (Kansas City: The Union Cemetery Historical Society, 2014), 107, 109. These locations are unknown.
[22] "City Cemetery At Farm" *Kansas City Journal*, 16 May 1911, 7.
[23] Fewell, 19.

The condition of the cemetery deteriorated during the 1920s and 1930s. The property was surrounded with a few residential areas but also several light industrial developments. The cemetery transitioned from a private association to a public entity when Kansas City agreed to purchase and maintain the remaining 27 acres in 1937.[24] The Kansas City Park Department paved several of the roads in 1943 and placed sod over those that were not used but vandalism continued.[25]

The brick entrance at 28th Street and Warwick Trafficway was built in 1954 (photo 3.)[26] In 1957, the Native Sons organization dedicated a $40,000 brick wall, patio and gate (photo 11.)[27] In 1986, the sexton's cottage burned to the ground, likely the result of arson. The city rebuilt the cottage on the previous footprint (photo 8.) A wrought iron fence built around the cemetery in the mid-1990s significantly reduced vandalism (photo 13.)

Burials in Union Cemetery decreased after the 1950s. Interments are allowed today only within an established family plot. Today the cemetery serves primarily as a green space within midtown Kansas City. Visitors wander the property during the day. Workers from adjacent Hallmark Cards and Crown Center frequent the cemetery during their lunch hours. The property continues to be well maintained by the Kansas City Park Department.

Garden Cemetery Design

Union Cemetery was planned to provide a quiet and pleasant and resting place for the dead, likely influenced by the Victorian-era garden cemetery movement. Before the 19th century, most burials took place in church yards, urban squares or in country family plots. During the 1800s, attitudes toward death began to change. Man was presented as a part of nature, destined to join nature after death. Death was described by writers such as William Cullen Bryant as part of the cycle of nature. During this era, the realization also arose that corpses could be a source of contagion and should be buried as far as possible from dwellings. Inspired by the writings of the era, civic leaders in the early 19th century strove to create idyllic settings for cemeteries away from town centers. This movement replaced cramped urban plots with rural verdant gardens. Instead of rigid grounds marked with rows of markers, the new cemeteries would have park-like settings with lush foliage, mature trees and plantings that surrounded the headstones and statues.[28]

[24] Kansas City Ordinance #4495, 20 February 1937. (On file at Kansas City Landmarks Commission.)
[25] "Emerging As A Shrine Of Beauty," *Kansas City Star*, 31 October 1943, 5A.
[26] "History Behind A Gate," *Kansas City Times*, 31 May 1954, 6.
[27] "A Green Slope…Near the City's Heart," *Kansas City Star*, 21 October 1963, D1.
[28] Marilyn Yalom, *The American Resting Place: 400 Years of History Through Our Cemeteries and Burial Grounds* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2008), 44-45.

Garden cemeteries were deliberately located outside of cities, so burial plots could be larger. In turn, markers could be larger and more elaborate than ever before. The country's first rural cemetery, Mount Auburn in Boston, Massachusetts, was founded in 1832. Following its development were Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1836), Greenwood Cemetery in New York City (1838), Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio (1845), and Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina (1850). These cemeteries became the prototypes for others, such as Union Cemetery. The settings and scenery made the cemeteries popular destinations for weekend outings.[29]

Elmwood Cemetery (National Register, 28 July 1983), founded in 1872, is acknowledged as Kansas City's first planned garden cemetery. Union Cemetery, planned 15 years earlier, was a simpler example of the exuberant style seen in Elmwood Cemetery. Later examples of planned garden cemeteries in Kansas City include Forest Hill Calvary Cemetery, 1888, 6901 Troost Avenue; Mount St. Mary's Cemetery, 1877, 2201 Cleveland Avenue; and Scheffield Cemetery, 1901, 6200 Wilson Avenue. An 1858 plat of Union Cemetery (figure 4) shows meandering paths, several still extant in 1925 (figure 5) and today (figure 2.)[30]From the beginning, markers faced the cemetery's roads rather than in one direction. Funds collected from burials were designated for the embellishment and care of the grounds in order to preserve the verdant scenery.

Conclusion

Union Cemetery, located between 27th and 30th Streets, Warwick and McGee Trafficways in Jackson County, Missouri, is locally significant as Kansas City's oldest extant public cemetery and as a joint venture between Westport and the City of Kansas (Criterion A—Exploration and Settlement.) The cemetery also meets special requirements for Criterion Consideration D due to the interment of several early city leaders—John Calvin McCoy, Alexander Majors and George Caleb Bingham—as well as the site of transferred earlier urban interments and a Potter's Field location. The acres that remain were part of the original plat located between the two growing towns in the mid-nineteenth century. The landscape and headstones continue to convey associations with the settlement of Kansas City. Union Cemetery retains its integrity, especially in setting, feeling and association. It retains much of its original layout and a density of historic markers that range from simple gravestones to elaborate Victorian-era monuments. Areas containing unmarked graves contribute to the historic pastoral scenery and overall history and development of the city from 1857 to 1937.

[29] Sherry Piland, "Elmwood Cemetery" *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form*, 17 February 1983, 7-8

[30] The 1858 plat also show burials sites only platted in the south portion of the cemetery.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The cemetery is roughly bound by East 27th Street on the north, Warwick Trafficway on the west, East 30th Street on the south and McGee Trafficway on the east in Kansas City, Missouri.

Legal Description: UNION TERMINAL ADD LOTS 61-74 & PT OF E 1/2 OF NW 1/4 & PT OF N 1/2 OF NE 1/4 SEC 17-49-33 DAF: BEG SE COR LOT 60 UNION TERMINAL ADD TH N 329' TH SELY ALG A CURV TO RI 217.06' TH SELY ALG A CURV TO LF 108.53' TH E 82' TH NE 78.5' TH NLY 99' TH NELY ALG A CURV TO RI 80.35' TH NELY 107.23' TH SELY ALG A CURV TO RI 193.73' TH SELY 156' TH SWLY 30' TH SELY 43.26' TH ELY 40' TH SELY ALG A CURV TO LF 446.22' TH SELY 250' TH SLY 310' TH W 200' TH S 500' TH W 525' TH N 490' TH W 114.88' TH N 30' TH W 45' TH N 260' TH E 100' TH N 107.69' TH W 62' TH N 80' TH W 50' TH S 80' TH W 145.85' TH N 83' TH W 36.8' TH N 175' TH W 32.7' & VAC ST & VAC ALLEY.

The Parcel Identification Number is 29-820-01-53-00-0-00-000.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the extant grounds originally platted as Union Cemetery (figures 2 and 3.)

Figure 1. Union Cemetery's location in Kansas City, Missouri. (Bing.com, June 2015.)

Figure 2. Union Cemetery site plan with nomination boundary, latitude and longitude coordinates, not to scale. (Google Maps accessed May 2015.) Coordinates are 1: 39.0072, -94.5835; 2: 39.0773, -94.5807; 3: 39.0732, -94.5805, 4: 39.0732, -94.5823.

Figure 3. Map with property boundaries and photo locations, not to scale. Google Maps accessed May 2015.)

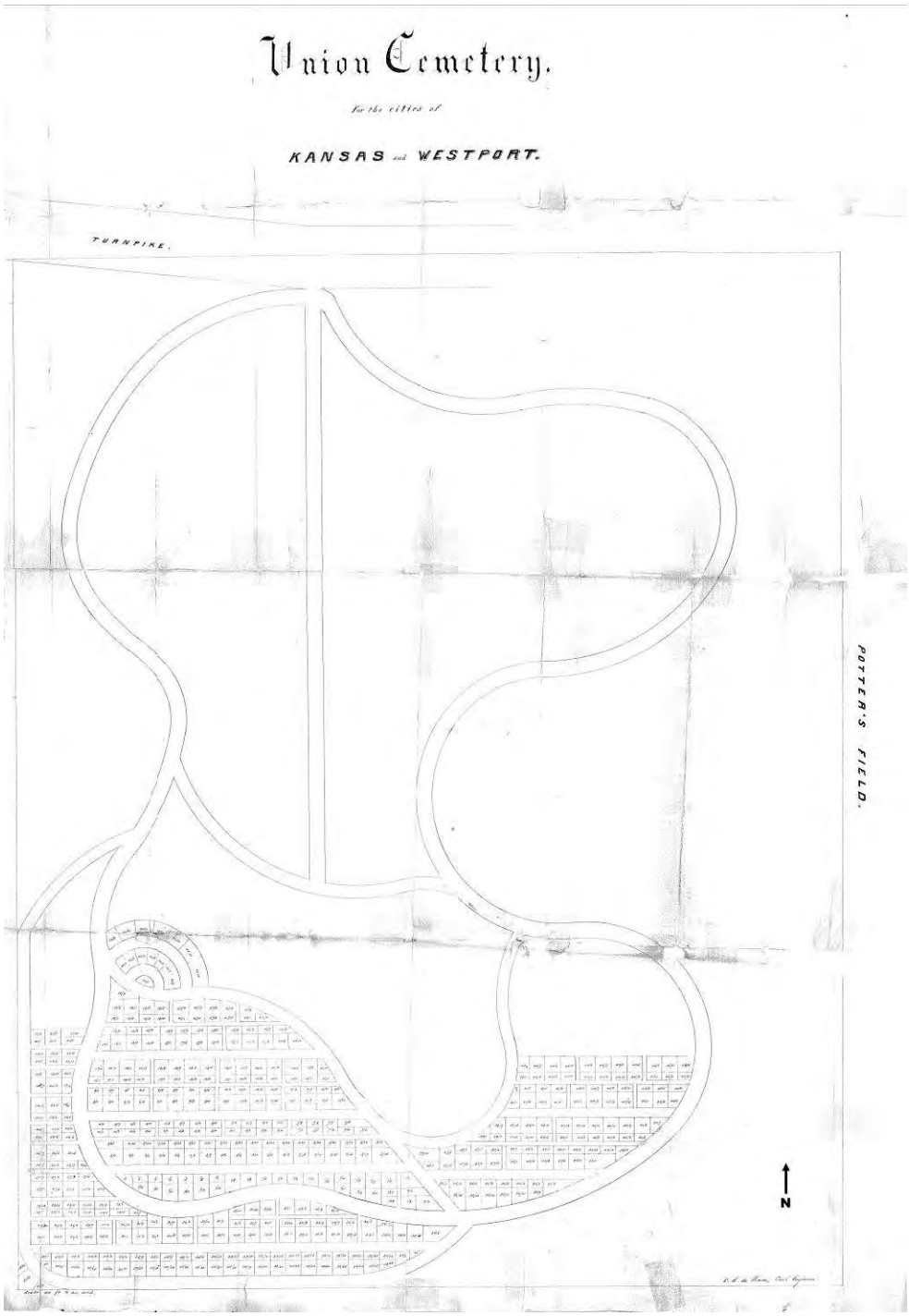

Figure 4. 1858 plat of Union Cemetery with North arrow added by author, not to scale. (Kansas City Landmarks Commission archives)

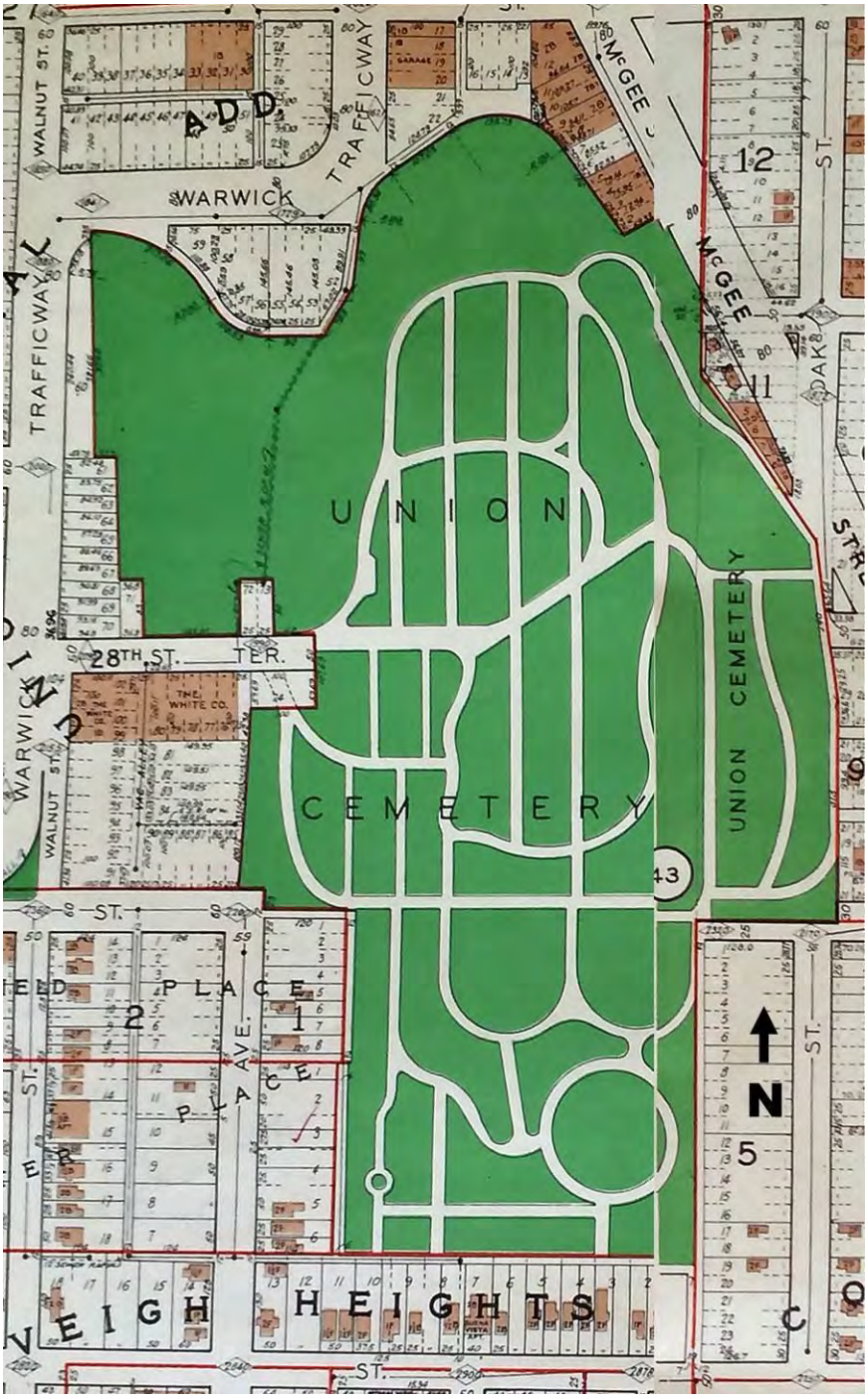

Figure 5. 1925 Atlas view of Union Cemetery, not to scale.
(Tuttle-Ayers-Woodward 1925 Atlas)

ANDERSON

McCOY

BINGHA

NO BUSSES
BEYOND
THIS POINT
UNION
CEMETERY

WHITE

WEST

LITTLE FRANK