

United States Department of the Interior  
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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Helena Public Cemetery

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A



2. Location

Street & number: 2461 Spring Street

City or town: St. Helena State: CA County: Napa

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 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    local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  A   B   C   D

Signature of certifying official/Title: _____	Date _____
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

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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:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	district
<u>5</u>	_____	sites
<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	_____	objects
<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

   FUNERARY/cemetery, graves/burials

   LANDSCAPE/recreation/culture/monument

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

   FUNERARY/cemetery, graves/burials

   LANDSCAPE/recreation/culture/monument

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

\_No Style

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundations: Concrete

Walls: Concrete Masonry Units

Roofs: Asphalt shingle

Other: Stone – granite, marble, trachytic tuff; Concrete; Metal –iron, zinc; Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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**Summary Paragraph**

St. Helena Public Cemetery is located roughly one mile west of Downtown St. Helena, California. The Hudson family, one of the first American families to settle in the St. Helena area, established the cemetery as a private family burial ground in 1856 with the interment of Sarah Hudson on property that was part of their home farm. For the next four decades, it was the only burying-ground in St. Helena, and was closely associated with the establishment and growth of the town. In 1868, the Hudson family deeded a five-acre parcel including the Hudson family lot to three local residents who became the first trustees of the St. Helena Cemetery Association when it formed in 1872. The Hudsons donated additional land in 1879, and during the late 1870s and 1880s the cemetery took on its current appearance as the trustees and individual lot owners improved the site with plantings, monuments and coping around lots. By 1882, trustees had constructed an office, laid out lot blocks in a semi-radial pattern near the creek and a grid pattern near Spring Street, and named the internal “roadways” separating the blocks. They purchased additional land from the Kroeber family in 1889, bringing the cemetery to a size of roughly eighteen acres. In 1931, local contractor Henry Thorsen installed a second set of iron gates with stone pillars along Spring Street. The original office was destroyed in a fire in 1948, and a replacement (the current maintenance building) constructed in 1954. The trustees constructed the present office in 1965, and added a second story to the building in the 1990s. In 1973, they purchased additional land east of the historic area, which, along with subsequent land additions has allowed it to remain in continuous use as a public cemetery through 2018.

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**Elaboration**

Setting

St. Helena Public Cemetery is located roughly one mile west of Downtown St. Helena, California. It is located southeast of Spring Street at the transition between St. Helena's residential neighborhoods and the surrounding vineyards and open hills. The cemetery, which was established during the period St. Helena formed as an agricultural town, was part of the Hudson family home farm when the first interments occurred, in an area characterized by open fields and nearby hills wooded with oaks and other native trees. The natural setting allowed for St. Helena Public Cemetery's development according to the principles of the "rural" cemetery movement. Although the City of St. Helena has expanded across Spring Street from the cemetery, the Sulphur Springs Creek and agricultural fields remain at its southeast border and the wooded hills are still a short distance to the west.

Site Boundaries

The roughly-triangular 25-acre St. Helena Public Cemetery property is bounded by Spring Street on the northwest, Sulphur Springs Creek on the south/southeast, and Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery on the northeast. The area northeast of the present office (between the Catholic Cemetery and the roadway named Vine Road) was added to the property after 1972, and is outside the boundaries of the historic district.

The boundary of significance includes the approximately 18 acres that comprised the cemetery by 1889. It is bounded by Spring Street on the northwest, Sulphur Springs Creek on the south/southeast, and Vine Road at the east. The five acres along the creek that formed the initial Hudson donation are the site of Blocks 1-9 and 11-12, which are laid out in a semi-radial pattern (almost all of the land along the creek where Blocks 10 and 13-18 were sited has been lost to erosion). Blocks D-F and G are part of the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Cemetery, a section northwest of the original cemetery which opened by 1871. Blocks A-C and H along Spring Street are laid out in a grid and were incorporated into the cemetery prior to 1882, and laid out in a grid pattern. The area to the east of the oldest part of the cemetery bounded by Spring Street and internal roadways named Vine Road and Acacia, Magnolia avenues. This area had been added to the cemetery by 1892.<sup>1</sup>

Physical Description

The approximately 25-acre cemetery property forms a rough triangle, with the Holy Cross Cemetery and Spring Street defining a right angle at the parcel's northern corner. Marked by paths and plantings, the border between the two cemeteries is somewhat obscure to the casual

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<sup>1</sup> Maps dated 1882 and 1892 are the sources for these boundaries. Some of the property may have been used for burials and included in the historic maps prior to the trustees actually acquiring the deeds.

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observer, and can easily be crossed by pedestrians. A small section at the south end of St. Helena Public Cemetery along Spring Street is enclosed by a high chain-link fence, but most of the border between sidewalk and cemetery is defined only by a low hedge. The cemetery's southeastern boundary is irregular since it follows the meanders of Sulphur Springs Creek and there are no physical barriers between cemetery and creek. Although there is a residential neighborhood across Spring Street from the cemetery's northwest boundary, the area retains a rural feel, with the Catholic cemetery on its northeast border and hills visible beyond the creek and open fields to the south and southwest.

The cemetery has three entry gates along Spring Street (although it is also easily accessible on foot at multiple additional points including breaks in the hedge, the Catholic cemetery, and the creek bed). The oldest gate is located at the interior roadway named Center Avenue, which divides the IOOF area at the south end of the property from the general cemetery. Constructed of ornamental wrought iron and supported by tall iron posts, the entry features wide swinging gates at the center designed to accommodate carriages, which are flanked by narrow pedestrian gates.

The second gate is located at Vine Road (the interior roadway that forms the boundary of significance between the historic district and the newer sections of the cemetery). This entryway is also constructed of wrought iron and features wide gates designed to accommodate vehicles. They are mounted to iron posts and flanked by heavy decorative columns of locally-quarried trachytic tuff. A marble sign reading "St. Helena Public Cemetery" is affixed to the north column, while the south column bears a similar sign reading "Established 1856." A narrow pedestrian gate is between the northeast column and the adjacent office. The third gate is near the north end of the cemetery and is outside the boundary of significance.

The cemetery is characterized by its blend of natural, formal, and informal landscape elements that demonstrate its transition from a rural family burying ground to a cemetery with many features inspired by the "rural" cemetery movement. The southeastern border of the site opens to the meanders of the creek, with native plants and views of the valley and nearby hills. Mature trees, a blend of natives and exotics, form an extensive canopy over almost the entire cemetery property. Species include Napa Valley natives such as coast redwoods, coast live oaks, blue oaks, and California laurel; flowering trees like the dogwood and magnolia; and rare varieties like the deciduous dawn redwood. Mature native oaks and redwoods predate the establishment of the cemetery, and many younger trees have been placed informally so that the overall impression is a naturalistic forest-like canopy. In certain areas, rows of a single tree variety have been planted on either side of a roadway to create formal allées (for example Lebanon Avenue between blocks B and C).

Interior roadways between blocks are paved with asphalt and laid out according to two intersecting patterns: a semi-radial pattern which grew organically toward the creek from the initial 1856-66 family burials in Block 1, and the grid pattern established along Spring Street and

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to the northwest of Block 1. The southeastern part of the cemetery, including the oldest area adjacent to the creek, has avenues named after trees (Laurel, Cypress, Magnolia, Cedar, Acacia, etc.), while the section near Spring Street has simple locational (Central) and inspirational avenue names (Eden, Mt. Calvary, Mt. Auburn). Smaller paths between lots and within blocks are grass, dirt, or gravel.

Most blocks are rectangular or trapezoidal, except in the area nearest the creek where roadways curve to follow the irregular topography. The lots within the blocks are, with few exceptions, strictly rectangular, and as a rule are not located in the odd-shaped areas formed by curving roadways. The majority of lots are enclosed in decorative granite or cement coping. (Occasionally smaller blocks rather than individual lots are enclosed in coping.) The lot owner's family name is frequently inscribed on the upper of two steps leading into lots from the avenues. Most coping includes decorative finials at the lot corners and flanking the steps. Although finial style and details vary widely from lot to lot, the coping is fairly standardized in width and height. Lawn grows on most lots, although a few are completely paved. Areas outside lots are typically bare dirt below mature trees. Trees and plantings follow a naturalistic pattern in areas within and outside lots, and along with many volunteer trees and trees that predate the cemetery, create a widely varying landscape throughout the cemetery.

Markers are oriented to the rectangular lot boundaries and the roadways. They are remarkably diverse in style and material, but Victorian funerary motifs and marker types dominate visually. Granite and marble are most commonly used for the more elaborate markers, while the potter's field devoted to indigent burials features simple cement slabs. There are also a handful of wooden markers. Markers include mausoleums, life-size sculpture, obelisks, highly ornamented headstones, and simple monoliths. Because St. Helena Public Cemetery has remained in continuous use, more contemporary marker styles are incorporated into many lots. Typically smaller, simpler, and less vertical than their nineteenth- and early twentieth-century counterparts, newer markers lack visual prominence.

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## **Contributing Features**

### Site

The site's layout, topography and some plantings date from its first decades of use or even predate the establishment of the cemetery. Long-lived varieties of native trees were present prior to the first burial, as were the creek and rural setting. There are intentionally planted trees that date from the efforts to beautify the site with plantings during the 1880s and 1890s. The circulation pattern of the interior roads between lots was laid out in the cemetery's first years of use, and many roadways had received their current names by 1882. Narrower paths through blocks located between lots were also named and mapped by 1882. Some have disappeared and been used for later burials or were never established as mapped, but many remain. They are unpaved, often covered in grass like adjacent lots, and lack the "street signs" which label the wider roadways, but are visible upon close observation, particularly where they are demarcated

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by the coping of adjacent lots. Clearly marked examples are found throughout the cemetery: Marigold Path passes between lots 3 and 5 in Block 19, an unnamed path passes between lots 3 and 4 in Block E and continues between lots 36 and 37 in Block D, and Hollyhock Path passes along the southwest border of the Anderson-Vance family lot. Two “parks” that appear on the nineteenth-century maps have been converted to burial lots, and the original office near the intersection of Cedar and Central Avenues was destroyed in a 1948 fire.

The lots themselves strongly evoke the cemetery’s first decades of use. Lot size at the St. Helena Public Cemetery was standardized by the early 1870s. Lots were set at 18' x 22' (16' x 22' adjacent to paths through blocks), and this standardization is reflected in ubiquitous lot coping and thus remains visible throughout the site. In practice, lots never conformed exactly to the ideal of standardization; like real estate for the living they were subdivided, combined, or shaped slightly differently to conform to the topographical features of the site. A typical lot features a large and prominent family monument, with individual headstones grouped informally around the monument and oriented toward roadways. The family monument is usually the oldest marker in the lot, commissioned and carved at the time of the first death in the family or before any deaths had occurred. The individual stones around it would then have been commissioned when a family member died. This meant that family lots developed gradually, sometimes over a period of 70 or 80 years. Gravestones reflect this gradual development, with smaller bevel markers and flush markers becoming more common as the twentieth century progressed.

Monuments are most often obelisks or pillars with the family name inscribed in heavy letters on the base, and like individual grave markers feature symbolic Victorian funerary motifs. There are examples of plain obelisks, but an urn or shrouded urn (referencing Greek and Roman funerary practices and thus the lot owner’s familiarity with the Classical world) is by far the most common. In addition to epitaphs and demographic information, individual gravestones frequently feature elaborate carving. Although there are examples of monuments topped with crosses, such explicitly Christian iconography is much less common than Classical motifs.

The range of marker motifs is broad, and each had specific symbolism that would have been known to Victorian-period and early twentieth century cemetery visitors. Hands pointing upward to symbolize the soul’s ascent to heaven are widely used, as are the clasped hands that represent marriage or another close relationship. Scrolls (time unfolding), doves (purity and ascent to heaven), broken buds (life cut short), lambs (innocence), sheaves of wheat (long and fruitful life), and ferns (humility) are also represented throughout the cemetery. Lodge symbols are also common. The three chain links associated with IOOF is seen on many markers at the south end of the cemetery, which was originally set aside for members of that fraternal order. Masonic symbols are also represented, and a few markers feature the elaborate iconography of Woodmen of the World, with detailed carvings of logs and woodworking tools. Various colors of granite are seen on markers throughout the cemetery, with marble and other types of stone also used.



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Occasionally markers feature more unusual materials, such as the ornate decorative wrought-iron fences with IOOF emblem adorning the three graves in the Simmons Family Lot.

Plain headstones without decorative motifs are found throughout the cemetery. They feature only basic information about the deceased, and were used alongside the more elaborate markers beginning with the site's earliest use as a burial place. There are also folk markers made of wood. Most inscriptions on wooden markers have worn away over time. The potter's field, which was used for indigent burials, features plain cement headstones incised only with identifying numbers. The variety of marker styles demonstrates the class diversity of the people served by the St. Helena cemetery, as well as the use of markers to convey information about personal style and taste.

#### Original Gate

The oldest gate is located at the interior roadway named Central Avenue, which was the main entryway to the cemetery and nearly twice as wide as other interior roadways. It led toward a T-shaped intersection with Cedar Avenue, which was widened to allow carriages to turn around. The gate is constructed of ornamental wrought iron and supported by tall iron posts, and features wide swinging gates at the center designed to accommodate carriages. They are flanked by narrow pedestrian gates. Its original installation date is unknown, but it is likely to have been constructed in the 1870s when many early improvements were undertaken. It is referenced in newspaper stories by 1885, and is documented in an 1897 photograph. For many decades it would have been the cemetery's primary gateway.

#### Vine Road Gate

The gate at Vine Road is also constructed of wrought iron and features wide gates designed to accommodate vehicles. They are mounted to iron posts and flanked by heavy decorative square columns of locally-quarried trachytic tuff. The massive freestanding columns feature a heavy rectangular column of smooth ashlar masonry with carved capital and base. Square pilasters project from column, and are supported by rough-cut masonry bases. A marble sign reading "St. Helena Public Cemetery" is affixed to the north column, while the south column bears a similar sign reading "Established 1856." A narrow pedestrian gate is between the northeast column and the adjacent office. The columns were originally part of St. Helena Grammar School, designed by renowned local architect in 1901 and a symbol of community pride. They were repurposed for the cemetery when the school was demolished for seismic reasons in 1931. The gates themselves were installed later, after 1965.

#### Maintenance Building

The Maintenance Building is located near the southern edge of the cemetery between Sulphur Creek and Blocks 5 and 6. It was constructed as an office in 1954, and replaced St. Helena Public Cemetery's original office, which had been destroyed in a fire. The rectangular-plan building is single-story and is constructed of concrete masonry units with roof of composition

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asphalt shingles. Fenestration consists of steel casement windows. It has a garage area for equipment as well as the rooms used as the office between 1954 and 1965. It lacks decorative features or references to particular architectural styles. It qualifies as a district contributor because it demonstrates the development and use of the cemetery during the last decades of its Period of Significance.

#### Grattan Mausoleum

The Grattan Mausoleum is located along the creek outside the mapped blocks. Constructed in 1895 of trachytic tuff, it features grey granite crypt fronts.<sup>2</sup> Its roof is granite with copper drain pipes. Four of its twelve crypt spaces are occupied by members of the Grattan family. It faces toward the winery estate south of Sulphur Creek, which the family owned from 1888 to 1908. "Edge Hill" still exists in 2018. It is said the mausoleum was designed to reflect a distillery building on the estate. Bessie Grattan Dichman had the mausoleum constructed close to Sulphur Creek. In February 1896 the remains of William H. Grattan and sons Eugene I. and William S. Grattan were moved from Lone Mountain Cemetery in San Francisco.

#### Swortfiguer Memorial

The Swortfiguer Memorial is located on Lots 45-47 in Block A Extension. Constructed in 1912 by Thomas Q. Swortfiguer for his family's use, this marker is striking as the first lot seen upon entering the St. Helena Public Cemetery through its main gate. The lot is enclosed by a wide cement curb with a metal flagpole on the south. The altar tomb is rectangular with a slanted roof, on which the oversize name "SWORTFIGUER" is cast. It is constructed of a poured-concrete base with a granite roof. The northwest corner of the lot features a Giant Sequoia tree. Esther and George Swortfiguer both died in 1910, and were interred in this crypt after its completion in 1912. Their son Thomas was interred here in 1949.

#### Darling-Hastings Family Plot

The lot devoted to the related Darling and Hastings families is located in several lots of Block 9. The oversize Hastings lot is trimmed with granite coping, with the name "Hastings" carved on the entrance step. Muldoon & Serigni (designer and importers of monuments and statuary of San Francisco) won the contract for the adornment of Judge Hastings lot in 1879, after the death of Azalea Hastings (1822-1876). Serranus & Azalea Hastings and their children and grandchildren are buried here, including daughter Clara Hastings Catherwood Darling (1845-1929). Serranus Hastings (1814-1893) was a US Congressman, California State Attorney General, the first Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, and founder of Hastings Law School. The Serranus and Azalea Hastings memorial is a red-granite obelisk adorned with angels' wings and topped with a globe. The unique Darling Memorial is a chest tomb executed in poured concrete, stopped by an

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<sup>2</sup> St. Helena Star 28 February 1896.

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asymmetrical scroll listing the names of the honored. There are two more obelisks and a number of smaller markers memorializing members of the Hastings family in the lot.<sup>3</sup>

#### Grand Army of the Republic Plot

The plot for Civil War veterans is in Block H, lots 13 and 14, located at the northern border adjacent to Spring Street. The lot is a flat rectangle shape with a green lawn, and was donated by the St. Helena Cemetery Association in 1882, and burials began in the lot shortly thereafter. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was founded in 1866 to unite veterans of the Union Army. The graves in the GAR lot are marked by 11 military-issue markers in orderly rows. In 1882 the GAR installed a flagpole in the center of the lot, and defined its boundary with a concrete curb. They decorated the coping with elaborate finials made of "frear stone" (pre-cast concrete), shaped to resemble upturned cannon barrels. Ten of these were positioned around the lot: Four at the corners, two along the curbing facing Spring Street, two on the sides, and two flanking the entrance step. Completing the decoration were the initials GAR, which were cast into the entry step.

#### Anderson-Vance Family Plot

The Anderson-Vance Family Plot is located in lots 45-47 of Block B Extension, a prominent location near the main gate. Its dominant feature is a life-sized carved angel. The statue was created by Edward Brown, and stands on a three-tiered granite pedestal. On one side of the middle pedestal is carved "ANDERSON", and the adjacent side is carved "VANCE" and on a third side "HYATT." She faces the cemetery entrance and her flowing robe drapes over the top pedestal. The statue is 6.5' tall, and carries a single flower in her right hand and a stem with several flowers in her left. The carving is realistic and finely detailed. Around her are 5 pillow markers and 2 flat markers with the graves of Anderson, Vance and Hyatt family members.

#### Hudson Family Plot

The Hudson Family Plot (the oldest in the cemetery) is located in lot 1 of Block 1 and is the nucleus of St. Helena Public Cemetery. The cemetery began as a private family burial ground on William & Sarah Hudson's land. On the 1882 map, this plot was labeled "HUDSON PARK." The family intermarried with the York family, whose plot is adjacent. The Hudson plot is outlined with granite coping, with "HUDSON" carved into the entrance step. The Hudson monument is dedicated to the cemetery's first burial, Sarah Ann Smith Hudson (1814-1856), her husband William Pink Hudson (1813-1866), and their descendants. This obelisk is of striated white marble and is nine feet tall, topped by an urn and mourning shroud. It is a rare obelisk of marble, as most in the cemetery are granite. It sits on a square granite base. The sculptor carved his name in the far lower right corner "SHAFER, NAPA CITY." Shafer also produced the marble markers for John F. Hudson (1849-1870) and Sarah Hudson (1851-1867), his featuring a weeping willow tree and hers hand pointing to heaven. Peteos Hudson (1835-1857), Martin

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<sup>3</sup> St. Helena Star 21 March 1879.

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Smith Hudson (1839-1920), Josephine Mills Hudson (1844-1926), Ralph C. Hudson (1869-1938), Carrie A. Hudson (1874-1936), William Henry Hudson (1884-1970), and Leland Frank Hudson (1888-1968) are also interred in the lot.

#### York Family Plot

York Family Plot is located in Block 1, lots 15 and 17, adjacent to the related Hudson family. The plot is enclosed by granite coping, with a step in one corner. The pillar family monument of white marble is carved with the names of John York (1820-1910), Lucinda Hudson York (1823-1905), David York (1845-1871), Nellie York (1867-1884), Caswell York (1860-1894), and Frank York (1863-1889). John and Lucinda York were members of the Grigsby-Ide party along with the Hudsons, one of the first groups to come to travel overland to California. John was a member of the Bear Flag group, and Sarah is credited by various sources with having sewn or contributed material for the original Bear Flag.

The plot also features three finely-wrought individual grave markers for John and Lucinda's descendants, which display many of the motifs seen throughout the cemetery. William E. York (1842-1922) was the eldest of Lucinda and John's ten children. He married Frances E. York (1843-1923). Their cast concrete marker features a scroll-shaped tablet, a shroud draped over the top, and a hand holding a bouquet of flowers. A precisely articulated fern branch and the name "YORK" are cast into the bottom above a granite base. Two older gravestones mark the burials of three of Frances and William's young children. A double tablet of marble atop a granite base marks the graves of twins named Lillie (1875-1877) and Lettie (1875). Signed by J.O. Shafer, it is adorned with carvings of a dove flying upward and a feminine hand pointing up with a ribbon reading "gone home." Guy York's (1873) burial is marked by a small marble tablet, which though unsigned is also likely the work of Shafer. It is carved with a broken bud to symbolize the life of the three-month-old infant cut short.

There is also a simple bevel marker for the graves of Clara York Palmer (1867-1938) and her husband Charles Edward Palmer (1867-1946). The plot typifies themes seen throughout St. Helena Public Cemetery: a concentration of markers for members of a single extended family, development over a period of many decades as family members died, and markers that display a variety of materials, decorative features, and symbolic motifs. The names on the grave markers and their dates of death also illustrate the omnipresence of death for nineteenth-century Americans. Seven members of the York family died between 1871 and 1894, the oldest in their thirties and three of whom were infants.

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#### **Non-contributing Features**

##### Draghi Mausoleum

The Draghi Mausoleum is located in Block G of the IOOF section of the cemetery. It was constructed in 1983, outside the Period of Significance, for Angelina Draghi and her husband Louis.

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Forni Mausoleum

The Forni Mausoleum is located in Block H. It was constructed in the early 1980s, outside the period of significance, for Teresa Forni and her family.

Palmer Mausoleum

The Palmer Mausoleum is located in Block 2, the oldest section of the cemetery. It was constructed in 1970, outside the period of significance, for Charles and Elsie Palmer.

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**District Integrity**

The integrity of the St. Helena Public Cemetery Historic District is assessed below by assessing the seven principal aspects of integrity that affect its significance.

Location

The Historic District has not been moved since its 1856 establishment and thus retains integrity of location.

Design

The Historic District's design is strongly expressed through the site itself: intentionally planted trees, the interior circulation plan including street names, and coping around lots all date from the St. Helena Public Cemetery's first decades of use, when its trustees were making improvements to the site that conformed to the principles of the popular "rural" cemetery movement. Many individual monuments and grave markers also date from and evoke this period. Although there are more recent burials throughout the cemetery, their markers are generally smaller and less visually prominent than nineteenth- and early twentieth-century features. Therefore, the cemetery retains integrity of design despite alterations over the years as it has continued in use as a cemetery.

Setting

Portions of the neighborhood around the Historic District gradually developed as a residential neighborhood during the twentieth century. Overall, however, the setting continues to be characterized by the open fields and nearby wooded hills that the cemetery's nineteenth-century founders would have encountered. Sulphur Springs Creek and agricultural fields remain at its southeast border and the wooded hills are still a short distance to the west. The Historic District therefore retains integrity of setting.

Materials

The Historic District retains integrity of materials. Most mausoleums and monuments of granite, marble, and cast concrete dating from the cemetery's earliest decades of use remain unaltered, although some exhibit wear or breakage and many have accumulated organic materials. Almost all plots are enclosed with original granite or cement coping. Likewise, the original wrought iron

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gates remain unaltered. The district strongly conveys its historic identity as a “rural” cemetery through its materials.

#### Workmanship

The Historic District retains integrity of workmanship across periods and styles of grave markers. There are numerous examples of markers that display the fine workmanship associated with Victorian-period burial grounds (though a substantial portion were created during the early twentieth century). Many feature intricate carvings or castings of symbolic funerary iconography, while others are simple and plain, reflecting either the modest means or humble taste of the deceased. As the twentieth century progressed, more bevel markers and flat markers were installed, and fewer markers featured decorative elements, reflecting changing funerary styles over the period of significance. The periods of workmanship exhibited in these markers express the span of the site’s heritage.

#### Feeling

The Historic District strongly evokes the feeling of a historic “rural” cemetery. The oldest surviving features include the layout of interior roadways, natural site features such as the creek and native trees, intentionally planted trees and vegetation, and large ornate markers. These features are visually dominant and determine the site’s feeling. The Historic District’s integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship combine to express the site’s theme of a “rural” cemetery.

#### Association

The Historic District retains integrity of association as a cemetery. It has operated continuously as a community cemetery from 1856 through 2018. Contributing resources on the site are associated with its earliest development as well as subsequent important periods of change and expansion that marked its history through the middle of the twentieth century.

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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.)

- 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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- 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**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

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EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance  
1856 – 1965  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
1856  
1872  
1880  
1965

**Significant Person**  
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Helena Public Cemetery Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. St. Helena Public Cemetery is significant under Criterion A at the local level for its association with the foundation of the town of St. Helena in the 1850s and the town's subsequent growth as the Upper Napa Valley developed into a center of agriculture. The period of significance begins in 1856 with the burial of Sarah Hudson (the first at the site) and ends in 1965, when the cemetery trustees constructed the current office just outside the Historic



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District boundaries. Markers constructed after 1965 were more often lawn-style headstones installed flush with the ground, and the few monuments built outside the Period of Significance were no longer in the style of the “rural” cemetery movement and did not feature Victorian or early twentieth-century funerary motifs. The trustees expanded the cemetery with new additions of property near the new offices that lack the character of older sections of the cemetery. The Historic District is also eligible under Criterion C as a unique expression of the “rural” cemetery movement. Begun as a private burial ground, its trustees transformed the site in during the 1870s and 1880s into a typical example of a “rural” cemetery without the formal assistance of a professional designer, demonstrating the movement’s wide reach throughout American society.

Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries

St. Helena Public Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D for cemeteries. Founded in 1856, it is the oldest cemetery of substance in in Napa Valley, and therefore is eligible for its great age relative to the local historic context. It is associated with important local events, most notably American settlement in the St. Helena area in the 1850s and the town’s foundation and expansion during the next several decades as upper Napa Valley became an agricultural center. It is also eligible for its design, qualifying as a unique example of a “rural” cemetery established by local residents without a professional designer. For these reasons, the cemetery meets the requirements of listing under Criteria Consideration D for cemeteries.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Background:

City of St. Helena

St. Helena was originally home to a group of Native Americans known to Spanish missionaries as the Wappo. Although Napa Valley was within the Sonoma Mission’s sphere of influence, the Spanish did not permanently settle in the vicinity. The first European to settle in the St. Helena area was Dr. Edward Bale, an English physician who converted to Catholicism and married Maria Ygnacia Soberanes (a niece of Mariano Vallejo). After becoming a Mexican citizen he received Rancho Carne Humana as a grant from the Mexican government in 1839. The huge land grant encompassed much of northern Napa Valley including the future town sites of Calistoga and St. Helena. Americans began to travel overland to California in the 1840s, and one of the first groups to complete the arduous trek was the Grigsby-Ide Party: at least 20 members of this group reached the Napa-Sonoma area by the end of 1845.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lyman L. Palmer, *History of Napa and Lake Counties, California*, San Francisco: Slocum, Bowen, & Company, 1881, 55-333; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California: 1841-1845*, San Francisco: The History Company, 1886, 578-581.

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California statehood in 1850 drew more American farmers and land speculators to Napa Valley, and about 1853, Henry Still purchased 100 acres on the north side of Sulphur Creek from the Bale estate. The property was at the intersection of Napa Valley's main north-south road and the route to White Sulphur Springs (a natural hot spring that was already an attraction), and Still recognized the potential for a town site centered on the rich agricultural region. In partnership with Charles Walter, Still erected the first building in town, and by the middle of the decade Still and Walter were donating Main Street lots to anyone who would agree to open a business. Upper Napa Valley was at first called Hot Springs Township, and the new town was not named St. Helena until the mid-1850s, when it adopted the name of the recently-founded local Sons of Temperance lodge.<sup>5</sup>

Early agricultural activities in Napa Valley focused on cattle-grazing and grain production, but beginning in the late 1850s farmers began experimenting with wine grapes. St. Helena's position as a center of agriculture was consolidated when the railroad arrived in 1868. By the 1870s, much of the land surrounding the growing village had been converted to wine production. St. Helena was incorporated as a city in 1876, and reincorporated in 1889. By 1873, it had a school and several churches as well as a thriving commercial district.<sup>6</sup>

The population of Napa Valley doubled between 1870 and 1880, and by 1880, St. Helena was home to 1,500 residents. The St. Helena district (the area between Yountville and St. Helena) had 7,000 acres of grapevines by this time. As the nineteenth century progressed, St. Helena became the upper valley's most important shipping and commercial center. It also became more diverse as Chinese and then German and Italian immigrants arrived to work in the vineyards.<sup>7</sup> Napa Valley was America's premier wine region by 1890, but a downturn in prices and an infestation of the phylloxera root louse nearly destroyed the wine industry at the turn of the century. Many growers pulled out wine grapes in the early decades of the twentieth century, replacing them with prunes and walnuts. In 1919, the wine business suffered a further blow when the Volstead Act outlawed the production of alcohol. Only a few local wineries were able to survive Prohibition by producing sacramental wine, and the industry did not begin to recover until after World War II.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> C. A. Menefee, *Historical and Descriptive Sketchbook of Napa, Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino*, Napa: Reporter Publishing House, 1873, 186; Lin Weber, *Old Napa Valley: The History to 1900*, St. Helena: Wine Ventures Publishing, 1998, 159.

<sup>6</sup> City of St. Helena, *Historic Resources Inventory*, Prepared by Page & Turnbull, Inc., August, 2006, 7; Palmer, 335; Menefee, 187.

<sup>7</sup> William F. Heinz, *Wine Country: A History of Napa Valley*, Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1990, 162; City of St. Helena, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Marian Hansen, *Images of America, St. Helena*, Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2010, 96.

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Ironically, the modern wine tourism industry was born during Prohibition, when Bay Area residents began driving up to Napa to buy illegal wine. Efforts to preserve agricultural land beginning in the second half of the twentieth century have allowed the town to grow slowly and retain much of its rural nineteenth-century character. Modern St. Helena is a center of both the Napa Valley wine business and the local wine tourism industry.<sup>9</sup>

#### Hudson Family and Establishment of St. Helena Cemetery

William (1813-1866) and Sarah (1814-1856) travelled overland with their children and members of their extended family from Missouri to California in 1845 with the Grigsby-Ide Party. William's brother David Hudson, his family and John and Lucinda Hudson York settled north of the St. Helena area. William and Sarah Hudson initially settled in Sonoma County, where they operated a ranch with dairy and beef cattle as well as hogs near William's brothers Martin and Thomas and their families. Tennessee natives Sarah and William had married in Missouri about 1832, where they were farmers. Children Spencer (1835), Andrew (1837), Martin (1838), Julia (1840), and Elizabeth (1843) were born in Missouri. Mary (1845), Jonathan (1847), and Sarah (1851) were born after the family relocated to California. California was still part of Mexico when the Hudsons arrived, although the steady trickle of American settlers was creating instability. In the summer of 1846, rumors and fears prompted the so-called Bear Flag Revolt in which a disorganized band of American settlers (mostly members of the Grigsby-Ide party) imprisoned General Vallejo. William and David Hudson were part of this group, and Sarah Hudson may have provided the material for the Bear Flag.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1850s, William Hudson purchased land on the north side of Sulphur Creek from Edward Bale and relocated his family to the area near where St. Helena would soon be founded (known at the time as Hot Springs Township). They farmed and lived on the property, running cattle and planting an orchard and vineyard. When local Baptists formed a new church, William became a trustee. William and David Hudson were also founders of the local division of an anti-alcohol fraternal society called the Sons of Temperance. When Sarah Hudson died in 1856, William created a family burying ground between Sulphur Creek and Spring Street. William married Martha Potts the following year, and was buried in the family lot when he died in 1866. In 1872, Mary Hudson McCormick donated several acres around the family lot to serve as a public cemetery, and local citizens formed an association to manage it.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lin Weber, *Roots of the Present: Napa Valley 1900 to 1950*, St. Helena: Wine Ventures Publishing, 2001, 148- 175.

<sup>10</sup> Bancroft, 1886, 578-579; US Census Records, Sonoma, California, 1850; US Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, Agriculture, Sonoma, California, 1850; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California: 1846-1848*, San Francisco: The History Company, 1890, 148.

<sup>11</sup> Weber, 1998, 117; California Wills and Probate Records, Napa, William Hudson, 14 June 1866; Palmer, 337; St. Helena Cemetery Association, History, <http://www.sainthelenacemetery.com/history.html>, accessed 28 November 2017.

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American Burial Customs and the “Rural” Cemetery Movement

The Christian tradition of churchyard burial was well-established by the Middle Ages, having replaced indigenous pagan burial traditions as Christian clerics throughout Europe required interments to be on consecrated ground adjacent churches. Sited in urban locations, space was limited and most corpses were consigned to common graves. Over time, massive quantities of human bones accumulated around and beneath churches. Early European settlers in the United States brought these traditions with them, and until about 1860 churchyard burial remained the rule. If headstones were used, they featured simple motifs such as skulls, and were crowded together like the graves they marked. These church burial grounds had little room for vegetation, and were generally dreary environments intended to remind churchgoers of life’s brevity as they passed.<sup>12</sup>

In regions like the South where settlement was dispersed, a secondary tradition of private burial grounds was established. Where plantations were located far from churches, owners created family burial grounds near their homes. Yeomen farmers moving west in search of land during the nineteenth century carried this tradition with them, pragmatically establishing graveyards on their homesteads where small populations did not allow for the formation of community burial grounds.<sup>13</sup>

Rapid urbanization and mechanization in nineteenth-century America led to something of an identity crisis for a nation founded on the ideal of the yeoman farmer. Meanwhile, population growth led to gross overcrowding of burial grounds and concern that churchyard burials were a threat to public health. The solution to both the practical problem of disposing of dead bodies with a growing population and the anxieties caused by industrialization was found in the ideals of the “rural” cemetery movement. Somewhat misnamed, the ideal was not to place cemeteries in agricultural or wildland areas, but rather called for the establishment of city cemeteries on open land that could be shaped according to the principles of romantic landscape gardening. This new form of burial began in 1831 with the establishment of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Boston, the movement quickly spread to other cities on the East Coast and then across the country. This new type of cemetery was inspired by the English tradition of picturesque landscape design and the

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<sup>12</sup> Blanche M.G. Linden, *Silent City on a Hill*, Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007, 18-19; Patrick J. Finney, “Landscape Architecture and the ‘Rural’ Cemetery Movement,” *Focus on Global Resources*, Vol. 31 Num. 4, Summer 2012, Center for Research Libraries Global Resources Network, <https://www.crl.edu/focus/article/8246>, Accessed 15 January 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Walton Potter and Beth M. Boland, “Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places,” US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992, [https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41/nrb41\\_5.html](https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41/nrb41_5.html).

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1804 establishment of Père Lachaise Cemetery near Paris. The picturesque ideal was a naturalistic landscape punctuated by classically-inspired monuments. In contrast to the moralizing tradition of the church graveyard, this designed romantic landscape was intended to foster spiritual contemplation and melancholy commemoration. Perhaps even more importantly, the parklike cemetery landscape provided a counterpoint to the pavement and machines beginning to dominate American life.<sup>14</sup>

The new “rural” cemeteries were seen as places for recreation as well as contemplation, and were widely utilized as picnic grounds, tourist destinations, and places for family outings (and indeed strongly influenced the late nineteenth-century urban park-planning movement). Plantings were important to creation of a “pleasant, cultivated scene” in contrast to the old-fashioned “naked and desolate” churchyards. Widely adopted features included hilly sites with curving roadways; woods managed by thinning and planting; massed flowering shrubs and plants; and boundaries marked physically and symbolically by hedges, fences, and gates. As the nineteenth century progressed, consumerism expanded into many facets of American life, including the cemetery. Cemetery lots are real estate that can be purchased, and “neighborhoods” divide different ethnic groups and social classes in death as in life. Mausoleums and monuments began to be seen as items that could be purchased in order to permanently display one’s taste, wealth, and social status, as well as religious beliefs and fraternal associations. By the turn of the twentieth century, with cities blurring into suburbs and urban parks being established as places of outdoor recreation, society no longer craved the picturesque cemetery as a counterbalance to urban life. As the century progressed the memorial park concept streamlined public burial places and lawn-style cemeteries replaced the romantic landscape of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

Criterion A: St. Helena Public Cemetery and Development of St. Helena

In 1868, David and Sarah Hudson’s Daughter Mary McCormick deeded the five acres of the original cemetery to three local residents who would serve on its first board of trustees. The Cemetery was officially established in 1872, and the first St. Helena Cemetery Association was formed that year, with A. Lafley elected first president and J. I. Logan serving as chairman and secretary. Founding trustees included Charles Krug, Seneca Ewer, William A. Elgin, Hiram H. Dixon, M. Vann, and Royal A. Haskin. The trustees adopted a constitution and bylaws and filed incorporation papers with the state. These legal actions formalized a process that was already well underway: use of the site as a burying ground for the entire community. Although the first two burials were members of the Hudson family, by 1861 unrelated local residents were being

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<sup>14</sup> Finney; Linden, 32; Thomas Bender, “The ‘Rural’ Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature,” *The New England Quarterly*, Vol 47, No. 2, June 1974, 196, 207.

<sup>15</sup> Finney; Potter and Boland; Keith Eggenter, “Building on Burial Ground,” *Places Journal*, December 2010, <https://placesjournal.org/article/building-on-burial-ground/>, Accessed 15 January 2018; Benter, 209.

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laid to rest at St. Helena Public Cemetery. Each year there were only a few burials in the tiny pioneer community, but by the time the Hudson heirs donated the property there were about two dozen people buried there. Yearly burials almost doubled after the official establishment to 23 in 1973. In all likelihood the increase in numbers were due to local population growth, and it was this growth that spurred the formalization of the cemetery's status.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the cemetery's first trustees were St. Helena pioneers who knew that a local cemetery was an essential amenity for the growing town, and some names remain recognizable today. Many broke ground in the nascent local wine-growing business or helped establish the town as a commercial center: Charles Krug married into the Mariano Vallejo family and established the first St. Helena-area winery about 1851; Seneca Ewer was a Gold Rush miner who served in the state assembly before establishing a Napa Valley winery; Mathew Vann came to California during the Gold Rush and also became a local grape-grower. Others, often similarly prominent, owned businesses related to the funeral industry. William Anderson Elgin and family moved to St. Helena from a nearby farm in 1857 and opened St. Helena's second general store. In 1866, Elgin began operating a livery stable, running a successful business that his sons Clarence and Ira took over in 1890. The livery stable advertised a hearse for funerals among its services. Elgin had a long career in state and local politics, including stints as state senator, Napa County supervisor, justice of the peace, a St. Helena trustee (a position equivalent to city council), St. Helena postmaster, deputy county assessor, St. Helena treasurer, and a school district trustee for 15 years.<sup>17</sup>

Chairman and secretary James Ignatius Logan was even more intimately connected with the funerary arts. In 1865, he moved to St. Helena and began farming. He was familiar with embalming, and during the Civil War led a commission to recover soldiers' remains from the battlefield. In 1878, he opened a furniture store and undertaking business in St. Helena, and within the decade was considered a state- and even world-wide authority in embalming practices.<sup>18</sup>

The first board of trustees set about improving their cemetery soon after forming. They began pressuring lot-holders to pay for their cemetery lots in order to fund these projects, and within a few years appointed a sexton. Martin Braughler was named sexton in 1876, with C. C. Maguire possibly acting as an assistant. Maguire succeeded him in 1884, with a Mr. King taking over the

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<sup>16</sup> The St. Helena Star, "The St. Helena Public Cemetery," 26 September 1974, 20 March 1883, 1881, 17 April 1883; US Census, 1880.

<sup>17</sup> The St. Helena Star, Kathy Kernberger and Shirley Penland, "William A. Elgin: Pioneer, Prominent Citizen and Public Servant," 8 March 2001; Thomas Jefferson Gregory, *History of Solano and Napa County California*, Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1912, 786.

<sup>18</sup> Palmer, 1881, 513-14.

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position of sexton in 1887. The sexton was chosen by the trustees, and compensated during the nineteenth century by collecting fees for burials and plantings in family lots. Sextons were generally in charge of a cemetery's prosaic tasks during this period, primarily digging graves and caring for plants. The early sextons reported their occupations as "laborer" on census forms, and it has likely to have been part-time work in the early years. John Mavity was sexton by 1892, when one of the duties of the position was to sell ornamental trees and shrubs for funeral plantings. The sexton personally performed many of the improvements to the cemetery (such as planting trees and flowers) that began in the 1870s.<sup>19</sup>

In May 1877, the St Helena Star published an article describing the funeral of 16-year-old Laura Carver. For nineteenth-century Californians the death of a young person was far more common than it is today (though no less traumatic), and the article dwells on the tragedy experienced by her family and school mates. Its unnamed author suffuses the short piece with motifs of Victorian mourning including heartfelt sympathy for the bereaved, poetic grief, and faith in a Christian afterlife. Although only a decade old in its form as a public cemetery, he describes the site in terms of the ideal "rural" cemetery: a procession of 94 vehicles and assorted individual horsemen "wended its sad way to our beautiful cemetery, where, in the grandeur and beauty of Nature's most endearing scenes, the loved form was tearfully returned to the hands of Him who gave it." The Star frequently published articles praising the cemetery's appearance over the years, which was a point of booster pride for the growing community, frequently emphasizing the tidiness and beauty of flowers and monuments. In 1883, for example, the paper reported glowingly on the cemetery's condition, noting that its attractiveness was evidence "that our citizens take a just pride in having the last resting place of the dead suitably cared for." The Star noted the granite coping by Jonathan Carlaw of Sacramento trimming specific plots, "choice flowers and shrubs" in several plots, notable new monuments, and well-graveled paths.<sup>20</sup>

By 1877, 354 people had been buried in St. Helena Public Cemetery. For several decades, coffins were usually made out of pine; later, redwood became common. When the ground began to sink as the wooden coffins rotted away, the cemetery began requiring a concrete liner or vault. By 1879, local farmer David Edwards (buried there in 1882) was president of the Cemetery Association, and invited members of the public to turn out with packed lunches and shovels in order to help the trustees improve the cemetery grounds. In 1880, the Cemetery Association set and printed rules for use of the cemetery grounds, including limits on driving speed, a ban on trapping and hunting, a requirement to supervise children, and a strict prohibitions on the destruction of both monuments and plants. The trustees also began discouraging members of the public from making changes to the grounds with rules like a requirement that the sexton supervise grave-digging. The construction of the original office and waiting room adjacent to

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<sup>19</sup> The St. Helena Star, 25 September 1874, 2:2, 20 March 1883, 1:6.

<sup>20</sup> The St. Helena Star, "Passed Away," 11 May 1877, 20 March 1883, 1:5.

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Central Avenue in Block 2 also began in this year. In 1882, the trustees had the cemetery surveyed and commissioned a map of the drives and walks. J.I. Logan continued in the role of secretary until at least 1884.<sup>21</sup>

The cemetery association donated two adjacent lots for use as a soldiers' burial ground in 1882, entrusting it to the local G.A.R. post (a Civil War Union veterans' organization) for care. By Decoration Day (Memorial Day) the same year, the G.A.R. plot had been improved with decorative coping and a flagpole. The dozens of members of the post marched in procession from Main Street to the plot. Decoration Day was an extraordinarily important holiday during the late nineteenth century, when most people remembered loved ones who had died in the Civil War. Yearly remembrances included not only the parade (with sons of veterans joining their fathers as the years passed), but orations, community luncheons, and musical programs. Although the G.A.R. eventually died out with its members, new fraternal organizations kept up the tradition during the twentieth century, firing salutes, laying wreaths, and honoring soldiers killed in later conflicts.<sup>22</sup>

J. H. McCord was elected president of the Association in 1883; by this time, the Cemetery was burying almost 50 bodies a year. Carlaw returned in 1884 to put in granite coping around the Crane lot and complete more headstones and monuments. In the year leading up to April 1884, 48 people were buried in the cemetery, and it took in more than its expenses. Trustees voted to put up a new fence (possibly the wrought iron gate), and to raise the price of lots from \$20 to \$30.<sup>23</sup>

In 1889, faced with a need for more land, the Association bought an adjacent parcel from the neighboring property of a Mr. Kreuber. Elgin was elected president and hardware store owner J. H. Steves secretary in 1908. The cemetery expanded again in 1917, purchasing more land from the by then-widowed Mrs. Kreuber. Henry Syfrig was appointed sexton in 1927, and the next year, he planted 20,000 narcissus bulbs on the grounds.<sup>24</sup>

Harry Thorson installed two twelve-foot pillars flanking the main entrance of the cemetery in 1931, repurposing them from the demolished stone schoolhouse. F. D. Mackinder was elected

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<sup>21</sup> The St. Helena Star, "The St. Helena Public Cemetery," 26 September 1974, 18 April 1879, 9 April 1880.

<sup>22</sup> St. Helena Cemetery Association minutes, 1 April 1882; The St. Helena Star, 2 June 1882, 28 May 1885, 1 June 1934.

<sup>23</sup> The St. Helena Star, 20 March 1883, 17 April 1883, 15 June 1883, 7 April 1884.

<sup>24</sup> The St. Helena Star, 17 January 1908, 24 February 1928, 7 April 1884; Carolyn Younger, "Upvalley Cemeteries Hold Dark Mysteries of Pioneers: Headstones Belie the Tragic and Heroic Tales of Early Settlers," Discover St. Helena, Spring/Summer 2000.



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president of the Cemetery Association in 1932. In 1934, the St. Helena Post No. 199 dedicated a new plot for ex-service men as part of Memorial Day ceremonies with other local fraternal organizations; the Legion plot was already established by this time, and Memorial Day traditions continued to be observed with little change for decades. Leslie Shurk took over as sexton from Syfrig in 1935; Albert L. Volper succeeded Shurk in 1941. In 1948, a fire destroyed the original office and maintenance building on the grounds and almost all the tools, and damaged or destroyed several maintenance vehicles, including a truck, a tractor, and mowers. James McClellan was appointed sexton in 1953 after Volper's death. The County began purchasing gravel from the Cemetery Association's property in the creek bed the same year.<sup>25</sup>

By 1954, Gilman Clark was president of the Association, and a new office was completed. In January, unusually high water in Sulfur Creek eroded the bank, threatening to wash away graves in the old Chinese section at the edge of the cemetery. While there was once a considerable Chinese population in St. Helena – over 600 at one point – it had declined as a result of legal and unofficial discrimination in the nineteenth century, and after the St. Helena Chinatown burned down in 1898, it was never rebuilt. The Association expected the County to respond to the threat and prevent erosion, arguing that it was the County's responsibility in the terms of their lease of the cemetery gravel pit. (Removal of gravel from the creek must have been considered a cause of the erosion.) It is unclear whether or how the County responded to the issue, but whatever attempts may have been undertaken to save the graves failed, as the Chinese area of the cemetery is gone today. Decades later, the St. Helena Star would report that it was in fact washed away as early as the 1920s or 1930s, but this is unlikely. In 1955, the Cemetery Association began considering the construction of a mausoleum. In 1956, with land once again becoming scarce, the Cemetery Association raised prices in anticipation of needing to either buy more land or fund a mausoleum. Within several months, the board approved a plan for a "garden type" mausoleum that would include 180 crypts. E. R. Palmer was also appointed as sexton this year, and would remain in the position until 1965, when it was given to J. Richardson.<sup>26</sup>

By the 1970s, yearly interments were surpassing 200. In 1973, the Cemetery Association purchased five acres of adjacent vineyard land from Herald Smith, creating space for 5,000 more graves, and began drilling a well. In 1974, a "massive" act of vandalism, described by the Star as "vandalism in its sickest form," targeted the cemetery, toppling 35 marble headstones that had

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<sup>25</sup> The St. Helena Star, 31 July 1931, "Fraternal Organizations Observe Memorial Day at the Cemeteries", 1 June 1934, "Traditional Memorial Day Rites at Cemeteries Here", 29 May 1975, 3 September 1948, "New Cemetery Head Appointed," 13 August 1953, 20 August 1953.

<sup>26</sup> The St. Helena Star, "Cemetery Association Adopts Revised Cost List", 15 April 1954, "Graves Threatened", 21 January 1954, "Coolies: The Wine Industry Grew From Their Bitter Strength", 8 October 1981, "Cemetery Association Considers Mausoleum", 11 August 1955, "Cemetery Association Forced to Raise Prices," 12 January 1956, 29 March 1956.

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been erected in 1876 as well as smashing windows and deflating tires. By 1976, the cemetery had reached 30 acres and was interring 250 bodies a year. The mausoleum had been recently completed, selling about a third of its crypts almost immediately, and there was a new office as well; graves numbered close to 10,000. A little over a decade later, in 1989, the number of people buried in the cemetery had climbed to 50,000, and it occupied 35 acres. Gilman Clark, who served as vice president beginning in 1951 before being elected president three years later, served in the position until his death at age 81 in 1993.<sup>27</sup>

#### Criterion A: Conclusion

St. Helena Public Cemetery is significant at the local level for its role in the establishment and growth of St. Helena and the rural area surrounding it. Its earliest burials date to 1856, and are associated with upper Napa Valley's pioneer era and the family burial grounds that were typical when the only a handful of American settlers lived in the region. It quickly became the main community cemetery for the whole upper Napa Valley. By the time the Hudson family donated the land in 1868, roughly two dozen unrelated individuals had been interred there. The establishment of a legal charter and a board of trustees in 1872 formalized the cemetery's existing role in the community, and spurred its transformation to an example of the era's "rural" cemetery movement. The community's first school and churches, which like the cemetery were institutions required for a town to thrive, formed about the same time. Upper Napa Valley transitioned to wine production during the 1870s, when St. Helena was named and chartered. St. Helena's population doubled during this decade, which both spurred demand for the cemetery's services and created a broad enough base of financial support to ensure its success. Its early trustees were members of the local elite including large landowners, businessmen, and wine industry pioneers, and saw the success of the cemetery as both a point of community pride and essential to St. Helena's growth and development. The cemetery was effectively the town's first park, and was the site of important communal events such as Decoration Day/Memorial Day ceremonies. The site conveys its significance as a public cemetery that has been in use for over 170 years.

#### Criterion C: Conclusion

St. Helena cemetery is eligible at the local level because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the "rural" cemetery movement. Within a decade of its establishment in 1856, St. Helena Public Cemetery had become the main burial place for American settlers in the upper Napa Valley and a de facto public cemetery. It is not known when the first monuments were installed, but local families in all likelihood had commissioned plot and grave markers by the

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<sup>27</sup> The St. Helena Star, "St. Helena Cemetery Looks to the Future, Buys More Land", 8 February 1973.

"Massive Vandalism at St. Helena Cemetery," 14 November 1974, "The St. Helena Public Cemetery," 26 September 1974, David Turin, "Place of Rest a Reflection of St. Helena Past," 2 November 1989, "Gilman Clark Dies", 14 October 1993.

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1860s. Formalization of the cemetery's existing role in the early 1870s spurred its transformation from a private burying ground to an example of the era's "rural" cemetery movement. It is unlikely that St. Helena Public Cemetery had a professional designer during its most important period of development between the mid-1870s and the turn of the century. Rather, its development appears to have been directed by the trustees acting with input from the community. A few early improvements were executed by community members, but most of the planting and landscaping was performed by the sexton, while monuments and plot coping were designed and constructed by professional stone carvers, who were often based in larger towns like Napa or Sacramento. The trustees were aware of the "rural" cemetery movement and consciously emulated its defining features: areas were set aside as parks; the circulation pattern followed the curve of the creek; fences, borders, and gates were installed to offset the cemetery from the everyday world; and paths were given names referencing trees, flowers, Christian themes, and the famed Mt. Auburn cemetery. There is also substantial evidence of the community's familiarity with the principles of the "rural" cemetery movement. Local newspaper descriptions of the era laud the experience of natural beauty and melancholy available at the cemetery, and approvingly recount the improvements made by the sexton, trustees, and public. Urns, obelisks, and other classically-themed monuments are nearly ubiquitous, and there are many intentionally-planted trees that date to the late nineteenth century. St. Helena's growing prosperity in the last decades of the nineteenth century allowed for conspicuous consumption in death, and there are many examples of families who displayed their taste and success by commissioning stone carvers to create ornate family monuments and headstones, as well as obelisks of 20-30 feet and other monuments of impressive size.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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9 April 1880.

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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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 30

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.492633

Longitude: -122.475726

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927

or

NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting:

Northing:

2. Zone: Easting:

Northing:

3. Zone: Easting:

Northing:

4. Zone: Easting :

Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of significance includes the approximately 18 acres that comprised the cemetery by 1892. It is bounded by Spring Street on the northwest, Sulphur Springs Creek on the south/southeast, and Vine Road at the east.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Historic District boundaries encompass the area that includes the original five acres along the creek that was part of the initial Hudson donation and Blocks A-H along Spring Street, a

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section incorporated prior to 1882. In addition, twelve blocks and the “Potters Field” to the northeast of the oldest part of the cemetery are within the historic district boundaries. This area is bounded by Spring Street and the interior roadways named Acacia, Magnolia, and Vine Avenue, and had been incorporated into the cemetery by 1892. The area northeast of Vine Avenue was added to the cemetery during the twentieth century and features a higher concentration of non-contributors (such as the current office).

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kara Brunzell, Historian and Architectural Historian  
organization: Brunzell Historical  
street & number: 1613 B Street  
city or town: Napa state: California zip code: 94559  
e-mail: kara.brunzell@yahoo.com  
telephone: 707/290-2918  
date: 5 September 2017

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
- **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: St. Helena Public Cemetery  
City or Vicinity: St. Helena



St. Helena Public Cemetery Historic District  
Name of Property

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County: Napa  
State: California  
Photographer: Kara Brunzell  
Date of Photographs: October & December 2017  
Location of Original Digital File:  
Brunzell Historical  
1613 B Street  
Napa, California

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

Photo #1 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_001)  
Main cemetery gates from Spring Street, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 1 of 30

Photo #2 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_002)  
Cemetery gates from Spring Street, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 2 of 30

Photo #3 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_003)  
View of Mt. Calvary Avenue, camera facing southwest  
Photograph 3 of 30

Photo #4 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_004)  
View toward hedge along Spring Street from Mt. Calvary Avenue, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 4 of 30

Photo #5 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_005)  
View of Block D, camera facing northeast  
Photograph 5 of 30

Photo #6 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_006)  
Intersection of Central Avenue and Mt. Auburn Avenue, camera facing east  
Photograph 6 of 30

Photo #7 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_007)  
Crane lot, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 7 of 30

Photo #8 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_008)

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Krug lot, camera facing east  
Photograph 8 of 30

Photo #9 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_009)  
View of Lebanon Avenue, camera facing southwest  
Photograph 9 of 30

Photo #10 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0010)  
View toward Cedar Avenue from Lebanon Avenue, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 10 of 30

Photo #11 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0011)  
View toward garage and Cedar Avenue from Lebanon Avenue, camera facing south  
Photograph 11 of 30

Photo #12 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0012)  
Simmons lot and garage from Lebanon Avenue, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 12 of 30

Photo #13 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0013)  
Garage from Eden Avenue, camera facing east  
Photograph 13 of 30

Photo #14 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0014)  
Intersection of Vine Road and Cedar Avenue, camera facing south  
Photograph 14 of 30

Photo #15 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0015)  
Intersection of Vine Road and Eden Avenue, camera facing west  
Photograph 15 of 30

Photo #16 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0016)  
View of Laurel Avenue, camera facing east  
Photograph 16 of 30

Photo #17 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0017)  
View of Laurel Avenue, camera facing west  
Photograph 17 of 30

Photo #18 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0018)  
York family lot, camera facing west

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Photograph 18 of 30

Photo #19 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0019)  
Detail, headstones in York family lot, camera facing west  
Photograph 19 of 30

Photo #20 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0020)  
View of Acacia Avenue, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 20 of 30

Photo #21 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0021)  
Block 12 viewed from Acacia Avenue, camera facing west  
Photograph 21 of 30

Photo #22 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0022)  
Potters Field, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 22 of 30

Photo #23 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0023)  
Detail, Swortfiguer Memorial, camera facing south  
Photograph 23 of 30

Photo #24 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0024)  
Detail, monument, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 24 of 30

Photo #25 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0025)  
Detail, gravestone, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 25 of 30

Photo #26 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0026)  
Detail, angel statue on Anderson-Vance family lot, camera facing south  
Photograph 26 of 30

Photo #27 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0027)  
Detail, Hudson monument, camera facing east  
Photograph 27 of 30

Photo #28 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0028)  
Detail, wooden grave marker, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 28 of 30

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Photo #29 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0029)  
Detail, headstone, camera facing south  
Photograph 29 of 30

Photo #30 (CA\_Napa County\_St Helena Public Cemetery\_0030)  
Monument, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 30 of 30



Figure 1: Location Map with Latitude and Longitude (rough center of district).

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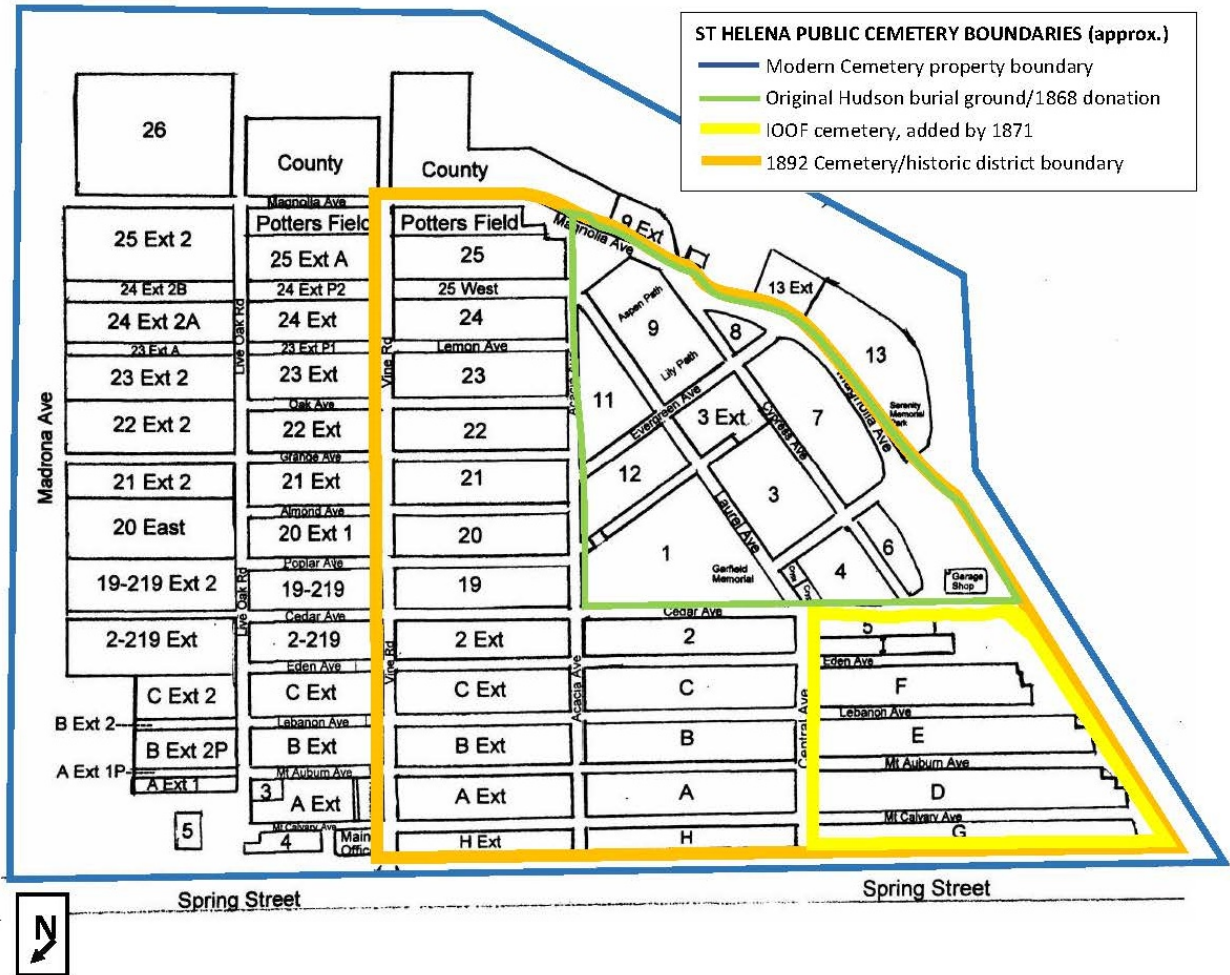


Figure 2: Boundary Map.

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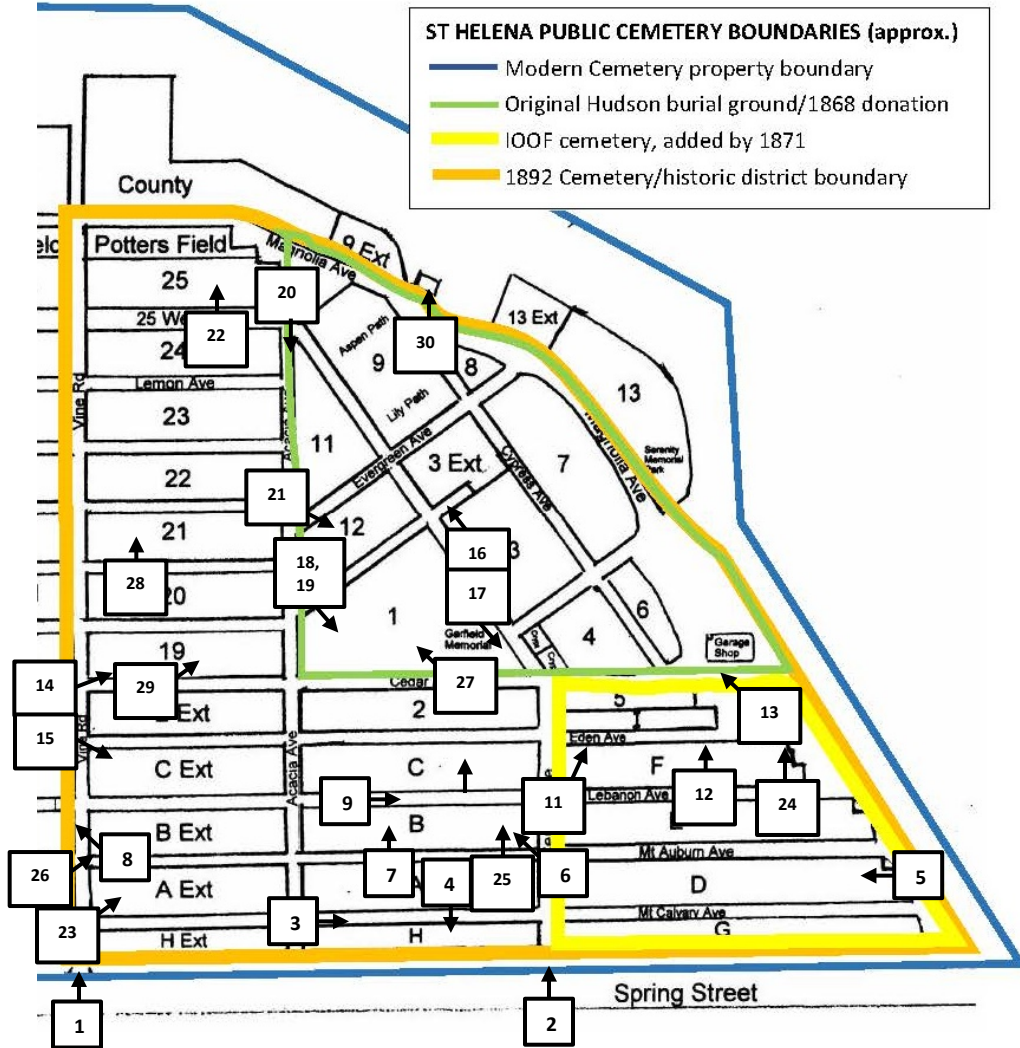


Figure 3: Photo Key.

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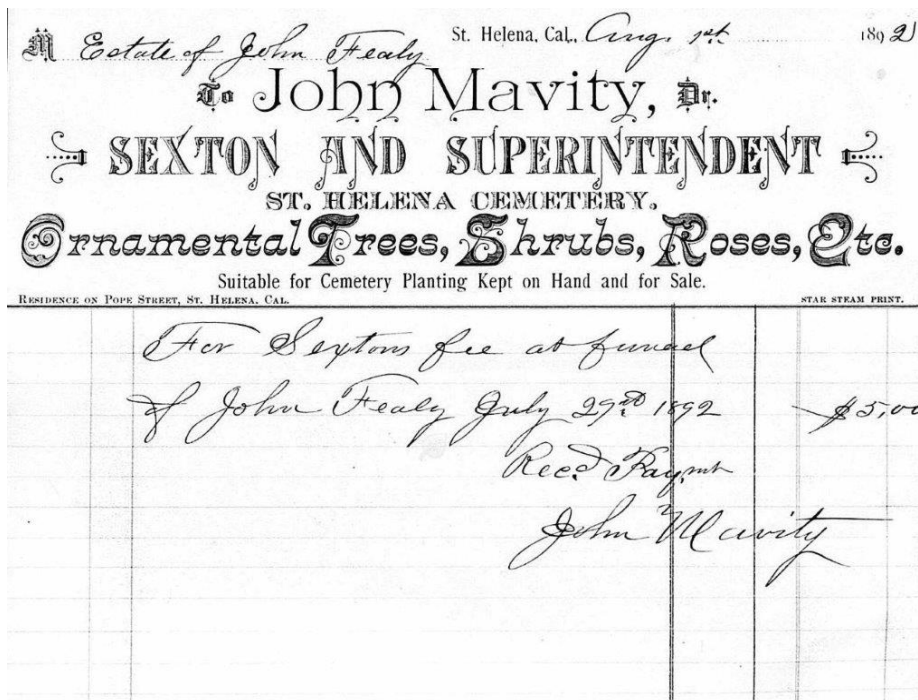
Figure 4: W.A. Pierce, Map of the St. Helena Public Cemetery, 1882.

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Figure 5: St. Helena Star, 10 April 1883, advertisement for cemetery trustee's hearse rental business.





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Figure 6: Sexton's Invoice, St. Helena Public Cemetery, 1 August 1892.



Figure 6: View of Mt. Calvary Avenue looking northeast from Klubescheidt family lot, Central Avenue and original gates in background, 1897.

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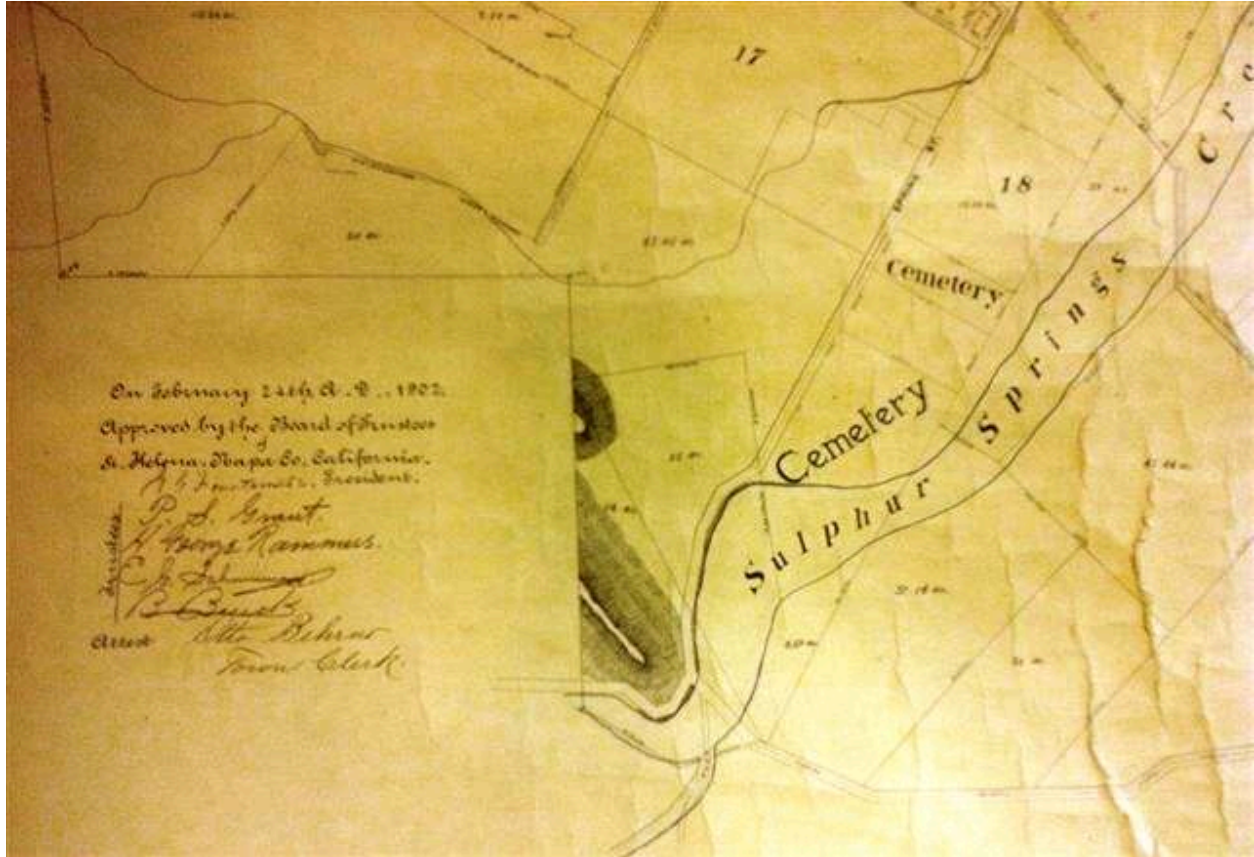


Figure 7: St. Helena Map showing cemetery, creek, and vicinity, 1902.

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Figure 8: View along unnamed path northeast of Klubescheidt lot from Mt. Calvary Avenue, looking southwest, 1934.

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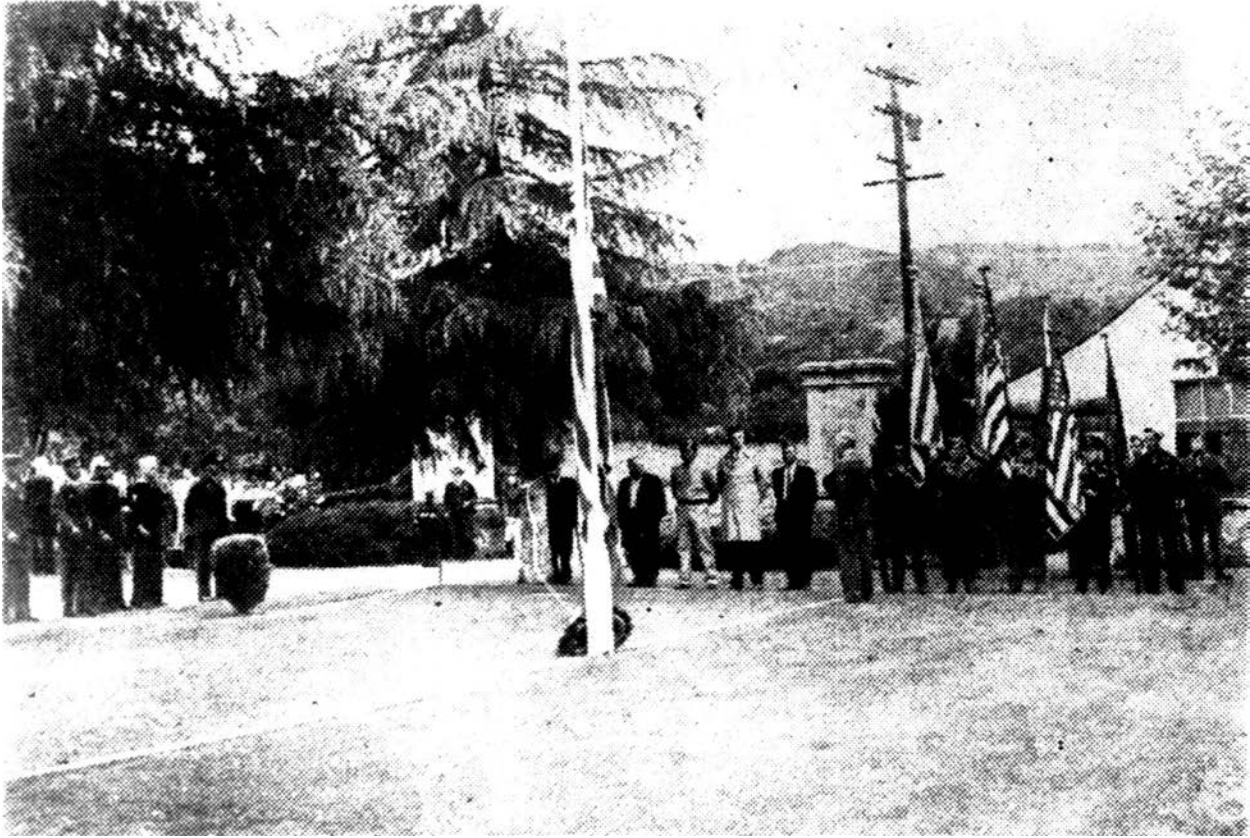


Figure 9: Memorial Day services, Corlett entrance pillars in background, St. Helena Star, 4 June 1948.