

NRHP # 04001117

NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery

other name/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Walnut and Davis Streets, West Hill and Bancroft Roads not for publication

city or town Elmira N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Chemung code 015 zip code 14901

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 nationally, statewide, locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mike Carter, SRPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/5/04
Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10/6/2004

Woodlawn Cemetery & Woodlawn National Cemetery
Name of Property

Chemung County, New York
County and State

Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	2	buildings
3	0	sites
15	0	structures
0	0	objects
21	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation _____
- walls _____
- roof _____
- other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery
Chemung County, New YorkNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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DESCRIPTION

Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery are located in the northwest section of the city of Elmira, just south of the city line and the Elmira Correctional Facility. Elmira is a small city with a population of approximately 30,000 in Chemung County in the Southern Tier Region of New York State. The Chemung River runs through the city and the surrounding terrain is generally flat but includes a number of natural ridges as the ground increases in elevation in its approach to the surrounding hills. Woodlawn Cemetery incorporates one of these natural ridges. When it was founded in 1858, the founders of the cemetery took advantage of this geologic formation to provide overlooks and scenic vistas to create a picturesque setting following the practices of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Woodlawn National Cemetery is located near the north end of the cemetery property where the ground is fairly level and is visible from the higher city cemetery grounds to the north. Although the national cemetery is contained within the city cemetery, the two properties are distinct entities and can only be accessed by each property's main entrance.

Woodlawn Cemetery originally began with fifty acres of land and currently contains 104.2 acres that are bounded by West Hill, Walnut and Davis Streets and Bancroft Road. There are also two residential areas along the edge of the property, one along Tompkins Street on the south and the other on the northeast along the west side of Davis Street. Woodlawn Cemetery is owned by the City of Elmira and is administered by three commissioners appointed by the mayor. The city cemetery contains approximately 80,000 burials and is still active with an average of 300 interments each year. The boundary also encompasses Woodlawn National Cemetery, located in the northeast portion of the property and is completely surrounded by the grounds of the city cemetery and part of Davis Street. The national cemetery contains ten and one-half acres and over 8,000 burials and is maintained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Physical Description of Woodlawn (City) Cemetery:

Established in 1858, Woodlawn Cemetery began with the purchase of fifty acres that was augmented by additional land acquisitions until it attained its present 104.2 acres. The grounds of the cemetery follow two distinct, historic design patterns. The older part of the cemetery clearly follows the picturesque landscaping common to garden or rural cemeteries of the mid-nineteenth century. This portion's picturesque character is evident in its curving roadways, large (undetermined) number of trees, extensive plantings of shrubbery and use of the natural topography of hills and ridges that offer scenic views of the grounds and the surrounding hills. The second distinct pattern reflects the practice of the memorial park that became the dominant trend in cemetery design in the early twentieth century that featured a more open, streamlined appearance with burials grouped in garden-like settings. Currently, there are 15 miles of roadways that allow access to the numerous sections of Woodlawn Cemetery. The roads and paths were originally named after trees such as Linden, Elm, Sycamore and Hickory but the practice has since been discontinued. Many of the existing roadways in the more historic sections are still covered with gravel and are quite narrow as opposed to the wider roads with modern paving materials that are found in the more recent portions of the cemetery.

Woodlawn Cemetery contains one non-contributing and three contributing buildings, two designated memorials, two historic gates, six private vaults, three private mausoleums, one freestanding receiving vault that is no longer in use and twenty-four memorial gardens. Most of these gardens are located in a section of the

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grounds to the north just below the ridge on ground that is generally flat. The ridge acts as a natural boundary between the rural cemetery and the memorial park segments. The sections immediately accessible from the Walnut Street gate to the ridge contain a mixture of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century grave markers that are clustered around large family monuments. Sections along the outer fence and in the northern portion contain mostly mid to late-twentieth century markers. The majority of the grave markers and memorials are made of granite, but there are also a large number of marble markers and sculptures, several reported to have been produced by local artisans. There are also several white bronze monuments in the more historic sections. The entrance gates, chapel and mausoleums are all constructed of stone. Markers in the memorial park section are mostly polished granite that are typical of mid-to late-twentieth century designs and are grouped by garden sections rather by families. There are also fewer trees and plantings in these sections, although some sections are outlined by hedge rows.

While the main entrance to the cemetery is through the gate at Walnut Street, another entrance is located on Davis Street across from Woodlawn Avenue and the John W. Jones House (listed in 2003). Both of these entrances are historic, designed in 1890 by the local architectural firm of Pierce and Bickford and consist of rusticated stone with ornamental ironwork gates. The Davis Street entrance has plain pyramidal caps on the post sections. The Walnut Street entrance has a variation of the pyramidal caps that feature rounded finial-type adornments. A plain, iron fence extends from the Davis and Walnut Street entrances and surrounds most of the cemetery. This fencing was installed in 1942 and also outlines the boundary of the national cemetery property. A modern chain-link fence marks the part of the boundary between the cemetery and the adjacent residences on Tompkins Street.

Several family plots in the more historic portions are outlined with decorative ironwork fencing or low curbstome boundary markers that were also characteristic of garden or rural cemeteries. One of the best preserved examples of decorative ironwork surrounds the markers for the Arnot family, which consists of a gate stamped "Arnot, 1869", decorative gate and corner posts, and leaf and scroll decorations evenly spaced along a double set of rails. Other examples of metal fencing can be found in the cemetery, but most of the outlined plots have low stone curbstome boundary markings. This type of fencing became increasingly fashionable in the late-nineteenth century, replacing much of the earlier ironwork. In addition to the fencing, several family groups feature a variety of sculptures that have religious themes or sentimental representations of death and mourning. Two notable examples are found with the Diven and Eldridge/Stanciff family burials. A statue of the St. John the Divine towers over the Diven family and two finely carved angels and two statues of women in flowing robes mark four of the burials for the Eldridge/Stanciff families.

There are also two non-family related memorials in Woodlawn Cemetery: a monument to Elmira firefighters and a statue of an elk representing the Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks. The firefighter monument is surrounded by twelve graves of Elmira firefighters who lost their lives in the course of duty between the years 1862 and 1926. The monument is located in section *F* and has a tall, granite base with a bronze statue of a turn-of-the-twentieth century firefighter holding a child in his left arm and a lantern in his right hand.* Dedicated in 1936, the elk statue is also bronze with a low granite base that resembles a rocky ledge and marks the grounds where members of the BPOE are buried in section *TT*.

* This statue has been temporarily removed after being damaged by a falling tree-limb.

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Woodlawn Cemetery also contains three contributing buildings that are located in the older portion of the grounds. When approaching the main entrance, the first of these buildings encountered is the cemetery office located immediately before the gates on Walnut Street. Built originally as a Gothic Revival-style mortuary chapel, the building was designed by Pierce and Bickford in 1905 and constructed of stone similar to the entrance gates on Walnut Street and Davis Avenue. The chapel is sited facing Walnut Street on the west side of the street. The building is rectangular shaped with a projecting entrance and a steep-pitched roof. Both the north and south elevations have three window openings with buttresses between the windows. The south elevation has a door below the center window that allows access to the area beneath main level of the building. The rear of the building features a stone porte cochère between a rear chapel entrance and small, square area that was originally a receiving vault. The interior of the chapel still retains its historic tile floor but the interior was partitioned into office space in 1960. The original stained glass windows were also removed when the chapel was renovated.

The next contributing building is the caretaker's residence located inside the Walnut Street entrance, immediately to the east. According to photographic evidence, the caretaker's residence was built some time after 1917 and is a single-story, three-bay structure with a low, overhanging roof that has an accentuated horizontal band below the roofline, reminiscent of the twentieth century Prairie style. The house has a recessed entrance protected by a porch with a flat roof. The rear of building has a small projecting entryway in the center that connects to a two-bay non-contributing garage. There are also two small square windows on this side in the space between the horizontal band and the roof. The exterior of the house appears to be stucco.

Located near cemetery sections *S* and *SS*, the third contributing building is a one and one-half-story, rough stone neoclassical style mausoleum, built in 1910. The building consists of a slightly projecting center section flanked by two long, narrow wings that allowed space for 300 crypts. The walls are coarse stone that project slightly at the north and south ends. Except for the entrances, any details or decorations on the building are kept to a minimum, such as the blind arch in the center of each end wall projection and the cast stone banding at the roofline. The center sections of both the east and west elevations allow access to the building through a set of metal doors that have a large transom consisting of alternating strips of metal and glass. The wall projections also contain a narrow window on each side of the entrance that allow light to penetrate the structure. Four tall Doric order columns mark each entrance and also appear to support a plain lintel with a slightly overhanging cornice. The design of the entrance is identical on both the east and west elevations of the building.

In addition to this large mausoleum, there are six private vaults that are partially embedded into the ridge that outlines sections *C*, *F* and *H*. Three vaults are made of irregular red sandstone blocks with low-pitched roofs and are found in section *H* with one structure for the Bundy family and the others being the Flood and Thompkins vaults in section *F*. These three are in close proximity to each other and are opposite a former receiving vault in section *K*. This receiving vault is directly across from the Davis Street gate and is a small, square, stucco-covered brick building with a high pitched roof. The remaining vaults in section *C* are two Gothic-style structures built for the Brooks and Elston families and are made of narrow rusticated granite blocks. The Brooks Mausoleum has smooth sandstone quoins and an arch framing the entrance. A low wall of sandstone blocks also connects both vaults. The Arnot vault in section *H* is also a Gothic style structure constructed of the small, gray granite blocks with bands of pink granite at regular intervals. The slate roof is

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steeply pitched with granite at the crest and edge bands. There are also smooth granite stones forming quoins and buttresses at the edge of the façade. The entrance resembles a tabernacle and projects slightly from the façade. It has Alpha and Omega symbols carved within a trefoil below the peak of the gable and an arch below that bears the Arnot name. Two polished granite columns flank the opening. Above the entrance and tabernacle is an equilateral cross symbol in the façade done in pink granite.

There are also three granite individual family mausoleums that contain a high degree of design and attention to detail. The Rathbun Mausoleum in section *Y* is a temple-fronted structure with a double set of pillars flanking the door. The body of the vault is made of rusticated granite blocks. The Richardson Vault in section *D* also has a band of large rusticated granite blocks comprising the main body, which rest upon a single band of smooth granite blocks supported by a layer of narrower, granite foundation stones. The roof is moderately pitched and made of smooth granite. The entrance is flanked by two buttresses and has the name and date carved above. The name "Smith Granite Co, Westerly RI" is faintly visible, stamped into the southwest band between the smooth and rough blocks. The Stephens Mausoleum next to the caretaker's house is a freestanding, square Romanesque style building made of various sizes of rusticated granite blocks. The main body of the structures is of narrow stones with larger blocks forming the base, decorative quoins and cornice. The entrance is flanked by a double set of highly polished granite pillars that give the appearance of supporting the curved, stone arch over the door. There are also four art-glass windows on the north and south sides. There is also a statue of a woman standing on a sphere that represents one of the Stephens family members, affectionately known as "Tut".

Sections that constitute the memorial park area of the cemetery seem to be oriented toward the Davis Street gate, that is, the main access road from the gate leads directly to the gardens. The largest of the gardens are named *Sunset and Rainbow*, and the most unusual is the *Companion Garden*, so named since each marker contains two names. This garden dates from the mid-twentieth century and consists of three long, *I*-shaped hedgerows with gray polished granite markers set into the hedge at regular intervals. All of the markers are of the same design. There are approximately 120 markers in this garden with eighteen set into each side of the hedgerows and two markers in each in the end sections.

Woodlawn Cemetery's is a physical document of how a community responded to meet the final needs of its citizens and how the local topography was used to enhance the design and subsequent expansions. The citizen's of Elmira at first responded with a rural setting that would provide a proper, respectful place for the deceased as well as a picturesque, park-like atmosphere for the living. As the picturesque, rural sections of the cemetery that were located above the ridge became crowded, the low, rolling open expanses and hills beyond the ridge were put to use to create a contemplative, uncluttered garden like setting that still serves the Elmira community. In addition to being a necessary part of the community, the cemetery is a physical document of cemetery trends as well as being an important component of Elmira's history.

Physical Description of Woodlawn National Cemetery:

Woodlawn National Cemetery is a rectangular shaped 10.5-acre space surrounded by Woodlawn (city) Cemetery and Davis Street. The main entrance to the cemetery through a gate on Davis Street past an administration building on the south side of the entry road. The road is outlined by a low granite curbstone that

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runs the perimeter and ends at a circular section that has a covered area for services and a large flagpole. Six additional flagpoles are located on the north side of the road for the display of flags of each of the branches of the armed services and a Viet Nam era *POW/MIA* flag. There are 8,570 burials in the cemetery that appear to radiate from the road in neat rows and are each marked with the standard military-style stones provided by the federal government. The cemetery is divided into sixteen sections, although when viewed from a distance, the divisions are largely indistinguishable. There are also gravel footpaths that allow visitors access to separate sections of the cemetery. The oldest sections of the cemetery are to the south and contain the burials of Veterans of the Spanish American War and nearly 3000 Confederate soldiers who died in the Elmira prison camp in 1864-65. With the exception of the entrance, the cemetery's perimeter is marked with a plain iron fence, installed in 1942 when the adjacent city cemetery had the fencing built for both properties

In addition to the over 8,000 burials, the cemetery contains one contributing building with an addition, three non-contributing structures, three monuments and two commemorative markers. The administration building is a contributing, L-shaped one-story brick building with a hipped roof built in 1949 with an attached brick garage that appears to be a later addition. There are also three additional non-contributing structures: a wooden shed near the garage, a concrete-block tool house and a wood frame information booth across from the entrance to the Administration Building, next to the access road.

The monuments in the cemetery include a ten-foot high granite with a bronze bas-relief Confederate soldier, donated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1937. Another monument stands at the north edge of the section and dedicated to the memory of forty-nine Confederate soldiers and their Union guards who died in a railroad accident near Shohola, Pennsylvania, in 1864. Their remains were later interred at Woodlawn National Cemetery. The cemetery contains an additional monument on the north side of the circular drive that contains the text of the Gettysburg Address. The monument was a 1998 gift to the cemetery from Chemung County, the City of Elmira and the Commission of the Bicentennial of the U. S. Constitution. A small memorial marker is located in section K that was dedicated to the veterans from New York and Pennsylvania and donated by the Chemung County Veterans Council. Another marker is located at the north edge of the Civil War section and is dedicated to John W. Jones, the sexton of Woodlawn Cemetery who oversaw the burials of the deceased Confederate soldiers who died at the Elmira Prison Camp.

Woodlawn Cemetery & Woodlawn National Cemetery
Name of Property

Chemung County, New York
County and State

8. 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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See Continuation Sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning & Development

Landscape Architecture

Military

Period of Significance

1858-1954

Significant Dates

1864, 1874

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

gates (1890) and Chapel (1905)--Pierce and Bickford

Mr. Daniels (1858) and Rav F. Wyrick (1949-1967)

Primary location of additional data:

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

Woodlawn Cemetery Archives; Office of Facilities Management--U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery are located in the City of Elmira in Chemung County in the Southern Tier Region of New York State. Both cemeteries are significant under Criterion A for being associated with the history of the city, one serving as a place to bury the deceased citizens of Elmira and the other that began as a burial ground for Confederate soldiers who died at the Elmira prison camp during the Civil War. Over the years, the national cemetery included burials of those who fought in subsequent conflicts. Woodlawn (city) Cemetery is also significant under Criterion Consideration D for containing graves of persons of transcendent importance, most notably the grave of Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain, an author and humorist who was important in shaping American taste and culture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Both cemeteries are significant under Criterion C as particular styles of landscape design. Woodlawn Cemetery reflects two major trends of cemetery design, specifically the rural cemetery movement of the mid-nineteenth century and the memorial garden era of the mid-twentieth century. Woodlawn National Cemetery is a classic example of the military cemeteries maintained by the federal government with its orderly arrangement of burials and standardized markers.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Elmira began as the union of three villages in 1792 that were located along the Chemung River near the confluence of Newtown Creek. This location gave it an advantage as a transportation center, first by the river and later by canal when the Chemung Canal linked Elmira to the Erie Canal in 1833. In addition to shipping goods to markets across New York State, the transportation network brought additional settlers to the village. As the population steadily increased, the village found it necessary to provide services such as burial grounds, one of the earliest being located on Main Street near the Baptist Church that was active until 1838 when the Second Street Cemetery opened. By the 1850s, space in the latter cemetery was nearly depleted, requiring the village to initiate a search for land that would be suitable for burials. The matter was put to a public vote that was narrowly approved, authorizing the village to spend \$10,000 to complete the task. Francis Hall, the village president, appointed a three-member cemetery committee who made the final site selection with Hall and chose the name Woodlawn.

At first, five sites were considered, all of them outside of the village and some with features such as ponds, streams and large tracts of open land. The village was searching for a large, open space away from the village center and planned to establish a rural or garden cemetery, following a trend in America that began in the 1830s when communities began to develop these types of cemeteries away from populated areas. Older, crowded burial grounds were viewed as sources of disease and often suffered from neglect as people avoided the grounds of out fear.

The rural cemetery altered America's attitude towards spaces reserved from burials. Areas once thought of as melancholy, neglected and disease-ridden crowded lots became places where one could reflect on nature and death, and show proper respect for the deceased. This type of cemetery transformed the graveyard from a place of horror to a place of comfort, with the surroundings of nature allowing people to see death as part of the

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natural circle of creation.¹ The land purchased for the new cemetery in Elmira was part of the Heller Farm and three additional surrounding properties that totaled fifty acres in the northwest section of the city. The land had a natural ridge that provided a scenic view of the surrounding hills and countryside and was utilized by the cemetery planners to enhance the picturesque character of the rural cemetery.

Once the land was secured, a Mr. Daniels laid out the grounds to include curving roadways, large expanses of lawns and scenic vistas. The cemetery was described in an 1861 news article as having well placed trees and plantings that "increase the beauties of slightly elevations, or screen the concealment of glens and dells...Most of the avenues and paths wind or curve gracefully along over lawns, through glens, down declivities, giving full illustration that the course is truly the line of beauty."² The cemetery was formally dedicated on October 9, 1858, an event witnessed by most of the village who turned out to honor Colonel John Hendy, Elmira's first settler, whose remains were removed from the Main Street cemetery in order to have the honor of being the first interment in Woodlawn. In 1877, all of the Main Street Cemetery burials were moved to Woodlawn and reinterred in a section to the immediate east of the Walnut Street entrance.

As plots were sold off in the new cemetery, the city found it necessary to acquire additional acreage to satisfy growing demands. Land purchases in 1874, 1892, 1899 and 1920 increased the size of Woodlawn Cemetery to over 100 acres, extending it beyond the natural ridge into a lower, more level area to the east and higher ground to the west. This growth also expanded the grounds to surround a portion of land further north along Davis Street that had been reserved for military burials.³ This section initially began as a two-acre plot that was leased to the federal government in 1864 as a Confederate cemetery. The land was eventually sold to the government in 1877, who continued to purchase additional land from the City of Elmira to accommodate growing numbers of military burials. The last sale in 1987 increased the size of the military cemetery to ten and one-half acres. A local veteran's council made the most recent expansion possible when they purchased land on the national cemetery's behalf.

Expansion and subsequent development of Woodlawn Cemetery coincided with the growing professionalization movement of the late-nineteenth century and a redefinition of the cemetery that emerged in the early-twentieth century. For Elmira, the result was a cemetery with two visibly distinct areas, one indicative of a nineteenth century rural cemetery and the other reflecting the memorial park philosophy of the early-twentieth century. Professionals, or at least those versed in design trends, were responsible for planning cemeteries and by the twentieth century, professional services became standard in all aspects of cemetery management. Undertakers made arrangements for preparing remains for viewing and interment rather than the family.⁴ Chapels were built in or near cemeteries to provide places for receiving remains and for funeral services. Woodlawn Cemetery commissioned the local architectural firm of Pierce and Bickford to design a mortuary chapel that was built near

¹ Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the Rural Cemetery Movement," *American Quarterly*, Volume 26, No. 1 (March 1974) 45-47.

² "Woodlawn Cemetery," *Advertiser and Republican*, 9 November, 1861.

³ Elmira officially became a city in 1864.

⁴ David Charles Sloane, *The Last great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 166.

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the Walnut Street gate in 1905. By the mid-twentieth century, most services took place in churches or funeral parlors, eliminating the need for cemetery chapels. By 1960, Woodlawn Cemetery's was rarely used and consequently converted into office space.

By the late nineteenth century, the introduction of the community mausoleum was another service that could be offered by the cemetery. Many of these community mausoleums were advertised as profit-making ventures for cemeteries by selling crypt space, then hiring a mausoleum company to construct the building with a portion of the profits.⁵ In 1910, Woodlawn Cemetery attempted to meet increasing demands for space with a community mausoleum built in the western portion of the grounds. The designer and builder of the 300-crypt building are unknown and the building was closed to the public in the late-twentieth century due to structural problems.

As the cemetery continued to expand, new portions of Woodlawn Cemetery took on the appearance of a park with open spaces and minimal amounts of statuary and elaborate monuments that made the older section of the cemetery look crowded. This was a result of the development of the memorial park that began in 1913 with Forest Lawn in California and gained momentum in the 1930s with the adoption of the memorial garden.⁶ The memorial park emphasized community over the individual family, resulting in the option for individuals and families to share space in a garden of their choosing. Death became memorialized rather than sentimentalized and monuments that evoked death common in older cemeteries were banished from the memorial garden.⁷ Cemetery managers insisted on grave markers that were more uniform in appearance and statuary was relegated to the role of decorative artwork. Ray F. Wyrick designed Woodlawn Cemetery's first memorial garden in 1945 known as the Companion Garden that contained evenly spaced granite markers with two names set into long hedgerows. He designed additional gardens for the cemetery: the Cloister Garden (1952), Fairview (1954), Rainbow (1955), East and West Evergreen gardens (1958), Evening Star (1960), and the Garden of Peace and Memories (1967).

In addition to the two very evident styles of cemetery design, Woodlawn Cemetery contains the burials of a number of individuals who were significant to national and local history. Individuals of national significance are:

- Samuel Clemens (1835-1910), the author and humorist known as Mark Twain who wrote the novels *Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and other works that became icons of American literature. Clemens married Olivia Langdon of Elmira before the couple moved to Buffalo, New York in 1869. Clemens is buried in the Langdon Family plot in section G.
- Catherine Beecher (1800-1878), educator who promoted female education, founder of the Western Female Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio and author of the *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1836) that

⁵ Ibid., 222.

⁶ Ibid., 159.

Ibid., 160.

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recast the traditional domestic role of women in American society from being submissive into a sign of superior moral sensibility.⁸ The Beechers are located in section H.

- Thomas K. Beecher (1824-1886), brother of Catherine Beecher, founder and minister of the Park Church in Elmira and active in the Underground Railroad. Thomas and Catherine were the children of Lyman Beecher and members of a family that achieved national prominence in the nineteenth century.
- Hal Roach (1892-1992), film pioneer and creator of the *Our Gang* comedy series and the films of comedians Laurel and Hardy. He was also influential in fostering the careers of several well-known people in the film industry such as actor Mickey Rooney and director George Stevens. Roach is buried in section DD.
- Ernie Davis (1939-1963), athlete who began playing football with Elmira's Small Fry Football League in the 1950s. In 1961, Davis was the first African American to win the Heisman Trophy during his college career at Syracuse University. Davis was drafted by the Cleveland Browns in 1962 but died of leukemia at age 23 before he could begin his professional career. Davis is buried in the East Evergreen garden.

Other prominent burials in Woodlawn Cemetery include:

- Harriet Maxwell Converse (1893-1903), section BB, journalist, crusader for Native American rights and an adopted member of the Seneca Nation who published stories collected from the Seneca oral tradition.
- Ossip Gabrilowitsch (1878-1936), section G, pianist and conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra 1918-1936. He was married to Clara Clemens, daughter of Samuel Clemens and both are buried in the Langdon family plot.
- Lucius Robinson (1810-1886), section A, member of the New York State Assembly in 1860 and Governor of New York 1877-1879.
- Colonel John Hendy (1757-1840), section E, first settler in the Elmira vicinity and veteran of the Continental Army, seeing action at Princeton, Trenton, and Monmouth during the American Revolution. He was reinterred in Woodlawn when it opened in 1858.
- Leon D. Smith (1889-1960), section XXX, also known as Windy Smith, proprietor of "Windy Smith's Air Circus." He graduated from the Glenn Curtiss Flight School in 1913 and later served as an airmail pilot and flight instructor in the First and Second World Wars.

⁸Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973), 136.

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- Alexander Diven (1809-1896), section G, member of the New York State Senate from 1858-1859 and a member of the U. S. House of Representatives from 1861-1863.
- Edwin Eldridge (1811-1876), section G, president of the Elmira Iron and Steel Company and involved with the Erie Railroad. He is best known to the citizens of Elmira as the donor of the land that became Eldridge Park.
- Joseph Hart Pierce (1855-1932), section G, local architect and co-founder of the Elmira firm of Pierce and Bickford who designed Woodlawn Cemetery's chapel and the Walnut and Davis Street gates.
- John W. Jones (d. 1900), section B, sexton of Woodlawn Cemetery and an active member of the Underground Railroad, credited with assisting 800 enslaved people in their escape to freedom. Jones made arrangements with conductors and baggage masters on the railroads to conceal the runaways in what became known as the four a.m. Freedom Baggage Car. Jones's house sits across from the Woodlawn Cemetery Davis Street gate and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

John W. Jones was also directly connected to both Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery. During his tenure as sexton of the city cemetery, Jones was in charge of burying the dead from the Elmira Confederate Prison Camp during the years 1864 and 1865. To accommodate this, the U.S. government leased a one-half acre lot from the City of Elmira in 1864 that was located within Woodlawn Cemetery. By the end of the war, nearly 3,000 Confederate Prisoners died as well as 128 Union soldiers who served as prison guards, mostly from disease. The government lot within the city cemetery was officially designated a National Cemetery on June 23, 1874.

Shortly after the designation, the matter of properly marking the Confederate graves became a politically contentious issue. According to correspondence between two high-ranking Army officials, Major Oscar A. Mack and Secretary of War, W. W. Belknap, "the Honorable H. Boardman Smith, the representative of the Elmira District. . . expected the Union and Confederate graves to be treated alike—and that his object was to have headstones placed at the graves of the latter as well as the former—to 'blend the blue and the gray' as he expressed it."⁹ This sentiment was shared earlier by a director at the Woodlawn (city) Cemetery who remarked in 1870, "that he hoped the Government would not make any distinction between the graves of the Federal and Confederate dead—although he did not expect this consideration for rebels from the present administration."¹⁰ Congress eventually approved of new government markers for the Confederate soldiers in 1906 and placed the markers were placed the following spring. Due to Jones's meticulous records and careful treatment of the burials, all but a handful of Confederates could not be properly identified and were marked as unknown. A monument was placed in the national cemetery in 1997 commemorating the work done by John W. Jones.

⁹Letter, Secretary of War W. W. Belknap to Maj. Oscar A. Mack, 23 September 1874. NARA, RG 92, Box 28, Entry 576.
¹⁰Unsigned letter, September 30, 1870.

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Due to its location adjacent to the city cemetery, the Army contracted with the city cemetery's superintendents to maintain and care for the national cemetery grounds. In 1870, the sexton of Woodlawn Cemetery was paid an annual salary of \$50 to keep the grass cut and the grave markers standing. At this time, the national cemetery consisted of a rectangular tract of approximately two-and one-half acres with entrances in the southeast and northwest corners.¹¹ In 1877, James Gall, Jr., a civil engineer with the U. S. Quartermaster Department, oversaw the construction of a stone wall and entrance gate. Deciduous trees were planted about 10-15 feet apart to line the national cemetery inside the wall. There were no subdivided burial sections at this time, and graves ran in north-to-south parallel rows.¹² The stone wall was removed in 1936 and replaced with iron fencing in 1942.

On July 30, 1888, members of the Grand Army of the Republic, Post No. 6, signed a petition urging the Army to construct a rostrum and tool-house at Woodlawn National Cemetery. The group felt the cemetery deserved these structures because "The City of Elmira, during the war, was one of the largest military rendezvous for the enlistment, drilling, informing (sic), and organizing of troops from the Empire State, and also contained, near the close of the war, a very large prison."¹³ According to available records, no rostrum was ever constructed but later additions included a simple one-bay, concrete-block tool house built in September 1931 and a new flagstaff in 1941. Due to maintenance agreements with the city of Elmira, there was no need for a lodge until 1949, when a combination lodge-office building was constructed at the national cemetery.

The U.S. Army administered Woodlawn National Cemetery until September 1973 when the ownership of most national cemeteries were transferred to the U. S. Veterans' Administration, later known as the Department of Veteran's Affairs when it became a cabinet level department in 1989. Under the Veterans' Administration, the national cemeteries were managed by the Department of Memorial Affairs until 1998 when it was re-named the National Cemetery Administration. It is this organization that currently maintains and administers Woodlawn National Cemetery in the City of Elmira.

Since history and physical space connect both Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery, it seemed fitting to present these properties together for nominating to the National Register of Historic Places. Listing the cemeteries would bring recognition to the role each had in shaping history and serve as a reminder that the two properties share more than just the same section of the City of Elmira. Important historical events and persons connect both Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery and bring recognition to the City of Elmira's role in the shaping the past.

¹¹ The national cemetery was expanded to almost eight acres with the purchase of additional land in 1939 and 1940.

¹² Site plan, "Woodlawn, N.Y.," *Plans of National Cemeteries in the United States, 1892-93*. NARA, RG 92, Entry 691, NM-81, Box 1.

Petition, 30 June 1888. NARA, RG 92, Entry 576, Box 28.

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Woodlawn Cemetery & Woodlawn National Cemetery
Name of Property

Chemung County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property see continuation sheet

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 348874 4663976
Zone Easting Northing

2 18 349219 4663062
Zone Easting Northing

3 18 348986 4662843
Zone Easting Northing

4 18 348412 4663138
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia L. Bartos, Historic Preservation Program Analyst (See Continuation Sheet)

organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

date May 21, 2004

street & number PO Box 189

telephone 518-237-8643

city or town Waterford

state NY zip code 12188-0189

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title See attached sheet.

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____

state _____

zip code _____

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Chemung County, New York

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Section number Page 1

Property Owners:

Woodlawn Cemetery
City of Elmira
317 E. Church Street
Elmira NY 14901
(607) 737-5695

Woodlawn National Cemetery
U S Department of Veteran's Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington DC 20420

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Woodlawn Cemetery contains 104.2 acres in the city of Elmira and is bounded by West Hill, Bancroft, Davis and Walnut Streets. Woodlawn National Cemetery contains 10.5 acres and is bounded by Woodlawn Cemetery on the north, south, and west and Davis Street on the east.

See attached map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary is the same as for the period of significance.

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National Park Service

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Research and original texts prepared by:

Rebecca Wheeler
City of Elmira
Dept. of Business and Housing
317 East Church St.
Elmira NY 14901
(607) 737-5695

Sara Amy Leach
Senior Historian
U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave NW
Washington DC 20420
(202) 565-6326

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Photograph List

**Woodlawn Cemetery and Woodlawn National Cemetery
City of Elmira, Chemung County, NY**

Photographs taken by Virginia L. Bartos, Historic Preservation Program Analyst with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP) 25 March and 12 May 2004. Negatives are on file with the NYS OPRHP, Peebles Island State Park, P O Box 189, Waterford NY 12188.

- Photo # 1--View of Woodlawn Cemetery "Rural Cemetery" portion looking south
- Photo # 2--View of Eldridge/Stanciliff family burials looking west in Woodlawn Cemetery
- Photo #3--View of Clemens-Gabrilowitsch Monument in Woodlawn Cemetery looking north. Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain grave marker is bottom right.
- Photo #4--View of Companion Garden in Woodlawn Cemetery, looking south west, with ridge in the distance
- Photo #5--View of Elks monument and burial section in Woodlawn Cemetery, looking south
- Photo #6--View of Woodlawn Cemetery Chapel/Cemetery Offices from Walnut Street looking north west
- Photo #7--View of Stephens Mausoleum and Caretakers house from Woodlawn Cemetery main entrance, looking east
- Photo #8--View of Woodlawn Cemetery community mausoleum, looking west
- Photo #9--Overview of Woodlawn National Cemetery from Woodlawn Cemetery looking east
- Photo #10--View of a portion of Woodlawn National Cemetery looking northwest from center road

Woodlawn Cemefery and Woodlawn National Cemetery
City of Elmira, Chemung County NY
1" = 350'±
NR Boundary: 

