POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY HISTORY

Prepared by: Herbert Olsen
Historian
Petersburg National Military Park

May 31, 1958

ON MICROFILM

PLEASE RETURN TO:
TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTER
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</th>
<th>4v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION: Origins of the National Cemetery System</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

### I ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

1. The Petersburg Campaign
   - Description | 11 |
   - Burial practices of the Army of the Potomac | 13 |
2. The Site
   - Selection | 18 |
   - History | 19 |
   - Reasons for its choice | 25 |
3. The Search and Recovery Program, 1865-1869
   - Methods | 27 |
   - Results | 29 |
4. The Maintenance and Construction Program, 1865-1869 | 34 |

### II ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE

1. Administration
   - War Department, 1866-1933 | 41 |
   - National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1933 to the present | 43 |
   - Significant administrative problems, 1866 to the present | 43 |
   - Expansion of the National Cemetery System | 43 |
   - Eligibility for interment in a national cemetery
     - Primary Eligibility | 50 |
     - "Secondary" Eligibility | 52 |
   - Summary | 53 |
   - Headstones | 54 |
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

#### Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Location of Poplar Grove National Cemetery With Respect to the Petersburg Battlefields</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Grave Flat, Poplar Grove National Cemetery</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Historical Land Status Map, Poplar Grove National Cemetery</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Photographs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plate</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Poplar Grove Church, February 1865</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Poplar Grove Church, c. April 1865</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Graves at Warren Station, Petersburg Lines</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Graves near City Point, Virginia</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Origins of the National Cemetery System

The advent of the Civil War found the people of the North wholly unprepared for war. No less unprepared were the civilian and military authorities of the Union Army. The rapid expansion of the United States Army—a mere frontier constabulary of about 16,000 men prior to 1861—and the mobilization of a vast "citizen's" army to meet the demands of "total" war created unprecedented problems of organization and administration. Confronted with these problems, the civilian and military authorities of the Union Army attempted to resolve them largely by accommodating them to existing organizational forms. Frequently this method of solving the organizational problems and needs of the Union Army proved wholly inadequate. A case in point is the effort made to provide for the proper care, identification, and burial of those "who died in defense of the Union." Precedent was not entirely lacking with respect to this problem, but it was scarcely adequate as a guide to the burial needs of the Union Army of 1861-65.

Between the end of the War of 1812 and the outbreak of the Civil War, a satisfactory burial policy was evolved for a small regular army acting as a frontier constabulary. Responsibility for the identification, burial, and proper registration of graves of soldiers who died at frontier posts or were killed in frontier actions, as well as care of the resulting cemeteries, devolved upon
the Quartermaster General. While this policy proved sufficiently
desirable in time of peace, the Mexican War of 1846-47 proved that
it would scarcely suffice in time of war. The field campaigns of the
the Mexican War did not approach in severity or magnitude those of the
Civil War, yet few or no identifications of remains were made during
or after the war.¹ The national cemetery at Mexico City—provided
for by a Congressional appropriation in 1850, some twelve years
before similar legislation was enacted for the homeland—contains
the remains of seven hundred and fifty "unknown" soldiers of the
Mexican War which could not be identified upon their exhumation
from battlefield graves and reinterment in the cemetery.

But the lesson learned in time of war some fourteen years
before seems to have been completely forgotten in the hasty mobiliza-
tion which took place at the outbreak of the Civil War. And when
the first flurry of unplanned mobilization had subsided and some
attention could be given to "secondary" problems, the War Department
could devise no better solution than a reversion to a burial policy
which had proved adequate only in time of peace.

¹Edward Steere, "Genesis of American Graves Registration,
1861-1870," Military Affairs, XII (No. 2; Fall 1948), 150. Mr. Steere
is on the staff of the Historical Section, OCMH, which is preparing
a history of graves registration. For the purpose of this intro-
duction, the writer has been obliged to rely heavily upon the work
of Mr. Steere, which also includes the following articles: "Origins
of the National Cemetery System," The Quartermaster Review, XXII
(No. 4; Jun.-Aug. 1950), 12-21, 30-39; "Early Growth of the National
Cemetery System," The Quartermaster Review, XXII (No. 5; Nov.-Dec.
1950), 20-26, 120-25; and the "Evolvetion of the National Cemetery
System, 1865-1890," The Quartermaster Review, XXIII (No. 5; Nov.-Dec.
1953), 32-41, 126-128.
In General Orders, No. 75 of September 11, 1861, the War Department ordered the Quartermaster General to supply all general and post hospitals with blank books and forms for the preservation of accurate mortuary records, and to provide materials for the registered headboards which were to be placed over soldiers' graves. Special Order No. 75 of the same date entrusted departmental and corps commanders with a similar responsibility for the execution of these burial regulations.

The limitations of these burial regulations were soon apparent. General Orders, No. 75 presupposed a system of national cemeteries and yet no provision was made for the acquisition of burial sites. Public sentiment and indignation in the North at the failure of the government to provide sites for the proper burial of war dead led to the formation of private cemetery associations which set aside plots for this purpose. Within a year from the First Battle of Manassas, however, Congress responded to public sentiment, when, in the Act of July 17, 1862, it gave the President the authority, "whenever in his opinion it shall be expedient to purchase cemetery grounds, and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national

---


3Ibid.

4Alice Stone, "National Cemeteries" (typescript study prepared for the Director, General Division, Office of the Quartermaster General), pp. 323; cited in Stone, Military Affairs, 311, 191.
cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country."  

An equally serious limitation of General Orders, No. 75 was the fact that these regulations could only be carried out in the rear zone. At the beginning of the war, moreover, these regulations could not even be carried out fully in the rear zone because facilities were lacking or wholly inadequate. But no effort was made to apply the provisions of General Orders, No. 75 to the combat zone; they were construed to apply only to the rear zone or zone of the interior. The War Department attempted to overcome this serious shortcoming six months later in General Order No. 33, April 3, 1862, which directed that:

Section II  In order to secure, as far as possible, the decent interment of those who have fallen, or may fall, in battle, it is made the duty of commanding generals to lay off lots of ground in some suitable spot near every battle-field, so soon as it may be in their power and to cause the remains of those killed to be interred, with headboards to the graves bearing numbers, and where practicable, the names of the persons buried in them. A register of each burial ground will be preserved, in which will be noted the marks corresponding with the headboards.

In issuing General Order No. 33 the War Department recognized the desirability and need to provide for the proper identification and burial of those soldiers who died in combat and yet utterly failed to recognize that no revolutionary a burial policy required

Section 12, of "An act to define the Pay and Emoluments of Certain Officers of the Army, and for other purposes," U. S. Statutes at Large, XII, 526.

the organization of a special service unit capable of carrying it out. Effective implementation of General Order No. 33 in the combat zone required the organization of a service unit whose sole functions would be the prompt recovery and identification of remains, registration of graves, and the maintenance of temporary cemeteries. Such a unit was momentarily improvised under Captain James M. Moore at the Battle of Fort Stevens, July 11-12, 1864, and showed its value by recovering, identifying, and interring in registered graves the bodies of forty Union soldiers killed in the battle.\(^7\) But the War Department drew no lesson from the successful accomplishment of this embryo theater graves registration unit. In fact, it was not until the issuance of General Orders, No. 104 in 1917 that the War Department authorized the organization of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Company—the operating unit of a theater graves registration service—as part of the military establishment.\(^8\) Lacking a theater graves registration service, army commanders were compelled to continue the obsolete and inadequate practice of detailing burial parties from the line.

The Union army and corps commanders did their best, it would appear, to implement General Order No. 33, hampered though they were by: (1) the lack of graves registration units and the necessity to detail combat troops to burial parties; (2) the

\(^7\) Moore, Military Affairs, VII, 156.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 149.
official failure to provide soldiers with any means of identification; and, (3) the requirements of combat, which frequently involved continuous action, maneuver, and often hasty abandonment of a battlefield, as in the spring campaign of 1864 in Virginia. That their best efforts were often not good enough is apparent from the fact that forty-two percent of the Union dead of the Civil War remain "unknown."  

While the shortcomings and defects of General Orders, Nos. 75 and 33 were as significant as the provisions of these regulations, nevertheless they, in conjunction with the Act of July 17, 1862, formed the basis for the growth of a national cemetery system. Subsequent to the passage of the Act of July 17, 1862, and prior to the end of that year, fourteen national cemeteries were established, among them two pioneer post cemeteries, several at troop concentration centers, and one on the burial sites of the Battle of Antietam. The establishment of a national cemetery at Sharpsburg, Maryland, resulted from a decision to "transform the burial sites of major battles into national cemeteries." Only five national cemeteries were established

9This is the conclusion of Francis J. Lord, who discusses commercial identification discs available to Union soldiers in: "Federal Army Identification Discs of the Civil War," Journal of the Society of Military Historians, 17 (No. 1: March 1958), 7-9. Lord also cites an unsuccessful effort made "by a civilian to interest the War Department in issuing identification discs as an official item of equipment"; in Journal of American Military Institute, XII (Spring 1939), 61-63.

10Ibid., p. 161.  
11Ibid., p. 152.
on battlefield burial sites during the war, of which the most notable
was that established at Gettysburg in 1863 under the auspices of
private citizens and states. After the war was over, however, this
was to be the most important criterion in the selection of sites for
the establishment of new national cemeteries.

Within two months of the surrender of the Army of Northern
Virginia at Appomattox Court House, the process of exhuming remains
from the battlefields and concentrating them in national cemeteries
was begun. Captain James N. Moore, who had supervised cemeterial
operations in the Washington area during the war as Assistant
Quartermaster of the Washington Depot, was ordered by the Secretary
of War to supervise the recovery and decent interment of the Union
dead at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House in June 1865. Following the completion of this assignment, Captain Moore was
ordered to proceed to Andersonville, Georgia, to perform a similar
service in behalf of the Union soldiers who had died in the Confederate
prison there. Captain Moore and the "burial" corps under his

12 In addition to those at Sharpsburg and Gettysburg in the
East, battlefield national cemeteries were established during the
war at Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Stones River in the West.

13 Special Orders, No. 122, Headquarters, Middle Military
Division, Washington, D. C., June 7, 1865; Records of Regular Officers,
Quartermaster Department, Record Group 92, File Records Office,
National Archives.

14 Special Orders, No. 13, 1865, June 20, 1865, 1866. The
results of Captain Moore's work at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania
supervision succeeded in identifying about 96 per cent of the 12,912 Union remains recovered at Andersonville, in contrast to the identification of only 26 per cent of the 5,250 remains recovered at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House.\(^{15}\) This contrast was indicative of the difficulty which was to be encountered in the identification of remains recovered in the combat zone.

Central direction of the burial program was entrusted to the Quartermaster Department and was assumed by Quartermaster General Neliga, then, on July 2, 1865, he issued General Orders, No. 40.

 Officers of the Quartermaster's Department on duty in charge of the several principal posts will report to this office without delay the numbers of interments registered during the war, white and black, loyal and disloyal, to be separately enumerated.

 All officers of the Quartermaster's Department who have made interments on battlefields during the war will report the number of the same, giving the localities, dates of battle, and dates of interments.\(^{16}\)

 In response to this general order, quartermaster officers submitted reports which listed only 101,736 recorded interments, or less than 30 per cent of a total of 359,528 Union soldiers killed in action, died of wounds, and from sickness and other causes during the

---

\(^{15}\)J. R. Smith, in his "Annual Report the year ending June 30, 1865"; and at Andersonville, Georgia, in a "Special Report," September 29, 1865; to be found in /22. Series XII, V, 218, 329-33.

war. Analysis of these recorded interments showed that they were predominantly those of soldiers who had died in the rear zone—at hospitals and troop concentration centers—and included few of the burials in the combat zone. Consequently, it was necessary to collect and analyze wartime casualty reports for information concerning the more than 250,000 unrecorded interments. This function was performed under the direction of Colonel G. W. Folsom of the Sixth Division, Quartermaster General’s Office; and the information gleamed from the casualty reports, as well as from the reports of recorded interments, proved invaluable to the planning of search and recovery programs and in determining the sites of new cemeteries.

To further facilitate the function of Colonel Folsom’s office, Quartermaster General Kellogg issued General Orders, No. 65 on October 30, 1865. This order required quartermaster officers to submit special reports on the “location and condition of cemeteries known to them” and “recommendations of the means necessary to provide for the preservation of the remains interred therein from desecration.”

Congressional approval of and stimulus to the reburial program was expressed in the Joint Resolution of April 21, 1866.

Resolved: . . . That the Secretary of War be, and he is hereby authorized and required to take immediate measures to

17 Steele, The Quartermaster Review, XXXII(No. 6), 22.
19 Steele, The Quartermaster Review, XXXII(No. 6), 122.
preserve from desecration the graves of the soldiers of the United States who fell in battle or died of disease in the field and in hospital during the war of the rebellion; to secure suitable burial places in which they may be properly interred; and to have the grounds enclosed, so that the resting-places of the honored dead may be kept sacred forever.21

While not fully spelled out until the Act of February 22, 1867, this joint resolution foreshadowed the transfer of authority to purchase land for national cemeteries from the President to the Secretary of War, a measure required by administrative expediency.

From the passage of the Act of July 17, 1862, until June 30, 1866, forty-three national cemeteries were established.22 Of these, ten were located in Virginia and had been established by Lt. Colonel James M. Moore who had been promoted and appointed to supervise the reburial program in Virginia as well as in the District of Columbia. It is at this point, with some conception of the origins of the national cemeterial system, that we must turn to the establishment of Poplar Grove National Cemetery.

21U.S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 350.

22Steers, Military Affairs, XII, 161.
CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

The Petersburg Campaign

Description: - The Battle of June 15 - 18, 1864, marked the begin-
nning of an episode unique in the annals of American warfare. For
almost ten long and weary months the Confederate Army of Northern
Virginia successfully defended the city of Petersburg, key to the
Confederate capital of Richmond, against the frontal assaults and
the siege tactics of encirclement and attrition waged by the Union
Army of the Potomac. When, on April 2, 1865, encirclement became
an imminent reality, the Confederate Army abandoned Petersburg and
Richmond in an effort to avoid destruction or capture by the Union
Army. Within one week of the evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond,
however, the Army of the Potomac succeeded in getting astride the
Confederate route of retreat at Appomattox Court House; and there
the Army of Northern Virginia was compelled to surrender.

The meeting between Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S.
Grant on April 9, 1865, brought to a close a campaign which had its
inception at the Wilderness on May 5, 1864. In this campaign (the
Virginia Campaign), as well as in the other campaigns of 1864 - 65
in the remainder of the Confederacy, General Grant — General-in-
Chief of the Union Armies — was determined to bring the Civil War
to a victorious end by crushing all Confederate resistance.

In the Eastern theater, the Army of the Potomac was assigned the hitherto impossible task of destroying the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and capturing the Confederate capital – Richmond. This the Union Army failed to do in the Battles of: (1) the Wilderness, May 5 – 7, 1864; (2) Spotsylvania Court House, May 8 – 19, 1864; and, (3) Cold Harbor, June 3 – 12, 1864. Though its ranks were seriously depleted in these three engagements, the Army of Northern Virginia remained intact and retained possession of the Confederate capital and its defenses.

Having failed to achieve his objectives north of the James River, General Grant realized that they might be attained south of this river by the capture of Petersburg. As a strategic rail and road center through which war materiel from the lower South flowed to the defenders of Richmond, Petersburg was the key to the Confederate capital. Capture of Petersburg would compel the Army of Northern Virginia to abandon the defenses of Richmond and to move into the field where it would not have the benefit of strong defense works to nullify the numerical superiority of the Union Army.

But the initial attempt to capture Petersburg by a frontal assault on June 15 – 16, 1864, failed. With the exception of the Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864, therefore, General Grant largely abandoned efforts to capture Petersburg in this manner after June 18. Instead he adopted the tactics of siege warfare – entrenchment and attrition – to effect the fall of this city.
Holding to siege fortifications east of Petersburg, General Grant employed his left flank in a gradual enveloping movement to the south and west of the Confederate defenses of the city. After almost ten months of both victory and defeat, the left flank of the Army of the Potomac was brought to rest on the Appomattox River west of Petersburg. Confronted with the threat of encirclement, the Army of Northern Virginia hastily evacuated Petersburg, and Richmond as well, on the night of April 2, 1865. The Confederate withdrawal and retreat was to no avail, however, for within one week the Union Army had cut the Army of Northern Virginia off from further escape at Appomattox Court House. In that small village on the afternoon of April 9, 1865, therefore, General Lee met General Grant in the McLean House and surrendered his exhausted and demoralized army to the Union commander.

Burial Practices of the Army of the Potomac. — The nature of the Petersburg Campaign was such that it both facilitated and hindered an improvement in the burial practices of the Army of the Potomac. Trench warfare and the hills between the major engagements of the siege facilitated recovery and proper interment of those Union soldiers killed in action. Moreover, the practice of forwarding the most seriously wounded from the field hospitals to the depot hospital in the rear zone at City Point — where more men and time were available to establish cemeteries and to give proper burial to those soldiers who died of their wounds — decreased the number of
burials on the field of combat. On the other hand, recovery and identification of the combat dead during the Petersburg Campaign was primarily hindered by the failure of the Union Army to retain the field of combat after several major engagements and far-ranging cavalry raids.

Under these circumstances it would appear that the commanders of the Army of the Potomac made every effort to recover the remains of the combat dead. But even where recovery was affected, usually as a result of a short truce between the combatants, the standard practice of burial of the dead where they had fallen predominated. General Order No. 33 received only nominal compliance from the Union commanders during the campaign. The only significant attempt to collect the scattered remains of the combat dead occurred early in 1865 when the II and IX Army Corps established cemeteries.

---

1 Comparison of the photographs of graves at Warren's Station and City Point illustrates the contrast between burial practices in the combat and rear zones respectively; see Plates XIII and XIV in Appendix IV.

2 Notably the following battles and cavalry raids:
   (1)eldon Railroad, June 22-23, 1864; (2) Crater, July 30, 1864; (3) Ream's Station, August 25, 1864; and (4) First Katcher's Run, October 27, 1864.

at, and in the vicinity of, Meade's Station. The practice and the results were described by a soldier of the IX Corps in the following words:

February 26, 1865 I was ordered to dig up the dead that have fallen before Petersburg this summer. All are to be buried in one burying ground.

March 6, 1865 I visited the division cemetery. They have a good fence around it, and it is filling up fast. They keep taking up the bodies that are scattered along the line. There are six of my regiment there now, and a number more to remove yet. A few are within the rebel lines on the left and cannot be gotten now.

But the 1,214 Union soldiers buried in the cemetery at, and in the vicinity of, Meade's Station were only a fraction of the total number killed in combat during the Petersburg Campaign. In the absence of complete casualty reports it is difficult to arrive at an

---

4 A cemetery was established near Peebles' House in October 1864 by the IX Army Corps, Army of the Potomac, but this cemetery contained only thirty-one graves; see "Register of the Burial Ground of the 9th A. C. at west of Peebles' House before Petersburg, Va. Dead of Sept. Oct. 6 Nov. 1864," in Box 179, Records Group 92 (O.6C), War Records Office, National Archives.


accurate figure for the total number of combat dead. Analysis of
existing reports, however, indicates that at least 5,114 Union soldiers
were killed in action in this campaign. Based on this figure, which
must be considered low, the Union soldiers interred at, and in the
vicinity of, Meade's Station represent only 23.7 per cent of the
combat dead of the Petersburg Campaign. The Union soldiers who were
killed in action at Petersburg, therefore, were buried predominantly
in scattered graves on the battlefield.

The burial practices described above were revealed in
substance by Colonel C. P. Folsom to Quartermaster General Heigs on
November 23, 1865. In a special report, submitted in accordance
with the requirements of General Orders, No. 65, C. P. Folsom —

---

U.S. Series I, Vols. XI, XII, XVI, Part 1, passim.
Statistical analyses of casualties in the Civil War give varying
estimates of the number of Union soldiers killed in action in the
Petersburg Campaign. Frederick Phisterer, Statistical Record of
the Armies of the United States (New York: Charles Scribner's
Sons, 1907), pp. 217ff., gives the number as 4,997. William F. Fox,
Residential Losses in the American Civil War 1861-1865. A Treatise on
the Extent and Nature of the Mortuary Losses in the Union Regiments
with Full and Exhaustive Statistics Compiled from the Official Records
on File in the State Military Bureaus and at Washington (Albany:
Albany Publishing Co., 1889), pp. 547ff., gives the number as 5,233.
As for the work of Thomas L. Livermore, Numbers and Losses in the
Civil War in America, 1861-65 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company,
1909), pp. 115 - 137, it is of little value since some losses are
omitted and the author does not always separate those killed in
action from the wounded.

Soldier's Roy.

26
who had been attached to the Quartermaster Department, Army of the Potomac, during the Petersburg Campaign — reported the existence of the II and IX Army Corps cemeteries at, and in the vicinity of, Keade's Station. Though these cemeteries had been established a scant ten or eleven months earlier, Colonel Folsom reported that the fences enclosing them and the headboards marking the graves were already decaying. Straying cattle would soon break through and complete the destruction of the fences, in Colonel Folsom's opinion, if they were not first torn down by neighboring farmers to alleviate the fuel shortage. As for the "sympathies" of the farmers, Colonel Folsom feared that they "would not lead them to the side of preservation"; consequently, they would soon begin "to fence in and plough the fields which were deserted." Not only would the cemeteries be partially destroyed, but — equally, if not more important — the more numerous "scattered graves would be obliterated" unless some action was soon taken. To prevent such desecration from taking place, Colonel Folsom recommended that

an officer or officers should be detailed or commissioned to select suitable grounds, and purchase them for a permanent military cemetery or cemeteries, having regard of course to those now established and making them the nuclei of any needed enlargements /all scattered remains to be removed to those grounds/.

---

9Colonel C. W. Folsom to quartermaster General M. C. Meigs, November 23, 1865; Box 179, Records Groups 92 (O183), War Records Office, National Archives.

10Ibid.
THE SITE

Selection. — No action was taken by the Quartermaster Department on the recommendations of Colonel Folson until the following spring.

On April 17, 1866, Lt. Colonel James H. Moore, who had been supervising the reburial program and the establishment of new national cemeteries in Virginia since the preceding fall, forwarded a request to the Secretary of War for authority to select sites for the establishment of national cemeteries in the vicinity of Petersburg and Richmond.11 Within two weeks Lt. Colonel Moore was informed that his request had been approved, and he was ordered to "proceed to carry out the instructions of the Secretary of War" to

cause eligible sites to be selected and report the same with proper estimates to the Secretary of War for his approval. The report to be accompanied by proper descriptions of the quantity of land, its value & a survey with an abstract of title.12

Acting on these instructions and orders Lt. Colonel Moore apparently surveyed the battlefields at Petersburg in the following month and chose the wartime campgrounds of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers on the Flosar’s farm as the site for a national cemetery.

11 Brigadier General J. J. Dana to Lt. Colonel H. M. Moore, April 30, /1866/, Papers, Copies, Letters Sent, O.M.I., Cemetery affairs, April 23 to August 24, 1866, Records Group 92 (O.M.I.), War Records Office, National Archives.

12 Ibid.
History. - Located between the Halifax and Vaughan Roads, some six miles southwest of Petersburg, the Flower's farm had been purchased by John Flower on March 21, 1853, shortly after his arrival in Virginia from Delaware County, Pennsylvania. On April 23, 1856, John Flower sold this 450 acre tract of land, for which he had paid $6,750, to the Reverend Mr. Thomas Brinton Flower for the sum of $7,585.42. Nothing is known of the history of the Flower's farm from 1855 to 1864, but little distinction appears to have come to it until the advent of its occupation by the 50th New York Engineers in the fall of 1864.

As a result of the Union victory in the Battle of theeldon Railroad, August 15 - 21, 1864, the left flank of the Army of the Potomac came to rest on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. Subsequently, Union siege fortifications were extended to this railroad from the Jerusalem Plank Road. When these fortifications had been

13 Deed Book, VIII, 270, Dinwiddie County Records, Dinwiddie Court House, Dinwiddie, Virginia. For the location of the Flower's farm see the map in Appendix I.

14 Ibid., pp 270, 522f. It has been impossible to determine the relationship between John and Thomas Brinton Flower. It may have been that of father and son or brothers, since the records indicate that Thomas Brinton Flower lent John Flower $5,000 on February 21, 1855; apparently for the purpose of purchasing the farm one month later; Ibid., p 273.

15 See location map in Appendix I
completed and the newly won positions consolidated, the Union Army
once again thrust its left flank westward. Emerging as the victor
of the Battle of Peabody’s Farm or Fowler Springs Church, September 29
to October 1, 1864, the Army of the Potomac had now established its
left flank some three miles west of the Weldon Railroad. Throughout
the remainder of October, therefore, the Union siege fortifications
were extended from Fort Wadsworth on the Weldon Railroad to Fort
Fisher, almost two miles beyond the Flower’s Farm.16

Much of the work of building the fortifications from Fort
Wadsworth to Fort Fisher was performed by or under the direction of
the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers.17 For convenience, therefore,
the camp of the engineers was moved to the Flower’s farm in the latter
half of October 1864.18 This campsite was occupied by the 50th New
York Engineers from late October 1864 to March 29, 1865.19 On the
latter date, the engineers broke camp to take part in the final thrust
against the Confederate defenses of Petersburg and, following the
Confederate evacuation of the city, in the Appomattox Campaign.

---

16 See location map in Appendix I.
17 U.S. Series I, Vol. XXI, Part I, Records and Volunteer
Organizations, Civil War, 50th New York Engineers, Records Group
94 (Office of the Adjutant General), War Records Office, National
Archives.
18 ibid.
19 ibid., Series I, XLVI, Part I, 642.
In the little more than five months during which they occupied a portion of the Flower's farm, the 50th New York Engineers radically altered the appearance of this area. The intensive work required on the building and strengthening of the siege fortifications during October and November 1864 prevented the engineers from doing very much to improve their camp. A period of relative inactivity followed from December 1864 to March 1865, however, and the engineers did their best to make their quarters as comfortable as possible for the winter.\(^{20}\) Previous experience had made the engineers adept at the construction of log huts; consequently, during the winter of 1864-65 they transformed their camp into a small village of semi-permanent quarters.\(^{21}\)

Most significant from the standpoint of this study, however, was the erection of Poplar Grove Church by the 50th New York Engineers

\(^{20}\) Volunteer Organisations, Civil War, 50th New York Engineers, Records Group 94 (OAC), War Records Office, National Archives.

\(^{21}\) While the only photographs included in this study illustrating the skill of the 50th N. Y. Engineers are those of Poplar Grove Church, many photographs of the huts and quarters built by these engineers at their camp on the Flower's farm are available in the Library of Congress. For a descriptive list of these photographs see Appendix XIII.
in February 1865. Having completed their winter quarters, the engineers turned to the construction of a church to while away their many leisure hours. "With abundant timber at hand, Captain Michael H. McGrath, commanding Company F, designed and the men of the 50th New York Engineers built a small Gothic church of unarked logs. Upon completion the engineer named this edifice Poplar Grove Church in honor of the Poplar Springs Church, which stood about eight-tenths of a mile northwest of their camp and was apparently destroyed.

22 The records of the 50th New York Engineers in the National Archives fail to reveal any information on the construction of the church. Exact date of the construction of the church are difficult to arrive at, therefore, but the negative of a photograph of the completed church is dated February 1865. Moreover, the information that an informal dedication service was held on Sunday, March 3, 1865 — contained in the text accompanying this particular "View of Poplar Grove Church" in Alexander Gardner's, Photographic Sketch Book of the War (2 vols., Washington: Philip & Solomon, N.D.), Vol. II, No. 74, — would seem to lend added credence to the negative date. The first recorded instance of the use of the church occurred on March 5, 1865; see infra, p. 23. For two views of the church see Appendix II.

23 Gardner, Photographic Sketch Book, Vol. II, No. 74 (text to accompany this photograph).

24 This is implied in, held, and explicitly stated by a contemporary, James L. Aben, in History of the Thirty-Seventh Regiment Mass. Volunteers, in the Civil War of 1861-1865, A Comprehensive Sketch of the Trials of Massachusetts As a State, and of the Principal Campaigns of the War (Holyoke, Mass: Clark & Bryan Company, 1894), p. 60.

The photograph of the church in Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book, Vol. II, No. 74, also reveals the following inscription on the sign over the entrance to the church: "Presented to the Trustees of the Poplar Grove Church by the 50th New York Engineers." According to Gardner, this sign was erected by the engineers when they abandoned their camp late in March 1865, and, therefore, it tends to remove any doubt as to the exact name given to the church by the engineers.
in the Battle of Poplar Springs Church, September 29 to October 1, 1864.25

The church, capable of seating an estimated two hundred and twenty-five men,26 was used by the 50th New York Engineers for both recreational and religious purposes. In fact, it seems that its first use was as a recreational hall for the performance of a minstrel show on the evening of Saturday, March 4, 1865.27 Apparently it was not

25 Various Union reports of the Battle of Peck's Farm or of Poplar Springs Church, September 29 to October 1, 1864, fail to mention anything about the destruction of this church; see G.A., Series 1, Vol. XIII, Part 1, making. Several post-war descriptions of the Petersburg battlefields state that Poplar Springs Church was destroyed in this engagement but differ as to whether it was destroyed by the Union or Confederate Army; see The Petersburg Advertiser, July 2, 1865, 3:15, and a letter entitled "Visit to a Petersburg Battle Field, June 7, 1865. A Guide to the Chief Points of Interest" in: A Guide to the Fortifications Around Petersburg (Petersburg: Daily Index Job Print., 1865), p. 25.

26 The Petersburg Advertiser, July 2, 1865, 3:15.


Colonel Lyman -- aide-de-camp to General George G. Meade, who commanded the Army of the Potomac -- described the church on this occasion in a letter to his wife, written on March 5, 1865:

"... No where do you suppose I went last night? Why, to the theatre! ... To explain you must understand that good Colonel Spaulding commands a regiment of engineers, a fine command of some 1600 men. As they are nearly all mechanics, they are very handy at building and have erected, among other things, a large building, which is a church on Sundays, and a theatre on secular occasions. Neither the goody Flint nor I was with you. On the outside was half the regiment, each man armed with a three-legged stool, and all waiting to march into the theatre. We found the edifice quite a racket gal.

Everything, except the nails, is furnished by the surrounding woods and made by the men themselves. The building has the form of a sketch cross and is all of rustic work; the walls and floors of hewn shafts and the roof covered with shingles nailed on bosom, made with the bark on.
until the following day, Sunday, March 5, that the first religious service was held in the church, when the Reverend Mr. Duryea of New York conducted an informal dedicatory service.23

During the scant month in which it was used, religious services were held in the church on Sundays and on many weekday evenings by army chaplins and visiting clergymen. Another recorded instance of its use for recreational purposes occurred on March 9, 1865, when Captain Halsted — aide-de-camp to General Wright, who commanded the VI Army Corps — conducted the band of a New Jersey brigade in a well-received concert.29 In addition to its religious and recreational functions, the church also served as a major tourist attraction for many of the dignitaries or their wives who visited the Army of the Potomac in March 1865. Among the known visitors to the church were Mrs. Grant, Miss Stanton, Mrs. Heade, Mrs. Lynch, and Mr. and Mrs. George Harding.30 Lastly, the church was used as a

What corresponds to the left-side aisle was rolled off for officers only, while the rest was cram-full of men. The illumination of the hall was furnished by a rustic chandelier, that of the stage by army lanterns, and by the candles whose rays were elegantly reflected by tin plates bought from the sutler.31

23Gardner, Photographic Sketch Book, Vol. II, No. 74 (text to accompany this photograph).

29Lynn, Household Handwriting 1863-1865, p. 317.

30Ibid., pp. 314ff., 322ff.
hospital in the final movement of the Union Army against Petersburg. 31

Reasons for Its Choice. — When Lt. Colonel Moore conducted his survey of the Petersburg Battlefields to select a site for a national cemetery, he must have known of Colonel Felton's recommendations concerning the cemeteries at, and in the vicinity of, Meade's Station. Even if he were unaware of these recommendations, Lt. Colonel Moore's survey should have revealed the location and comparative size of these cemeteries to him. Moreover, he must have had some inkling that the remains of many Union soldiers were to be found in the Crater area, only a mile and three-fourths from Meade's Station. Despite the fact that Lt. Colonel Moore could not have known exactly how many remains were to be found in this region east of Petersburg, it would still appear to have been logical to select the existing cemeteries at, and in the vicinity of, Meade's Station as the nucleus for a national cemetery. Instead Lt. Colonel Moore chose a seven-acre tract of land surrounding Poplar Grove Church, some six and one-half miles from Meade's Station, as the site for such a cemetery. 32

31 Gardner, Photographic Sketch Book, Vol. II, No. 74 (text to accompany this photograph).

32 Report from Lt. Colonel James M. Moore to Major General M. G. Meigs, D.C., June 12, 1866; Records Group 92 (OMS), NARA Records Office, National Archives. This report was occasioned by the offer of William Griffith — communicated to the Secretary of War by the Honorable Schuyler Colfax, member of the House of Representatives — to donate a tract of land at the Crater for a national cemetery. In his report to Major General Meigs, Lt. Colonel Moore explained that he had already chosen the site at Poplar Grove Church and explained why he preferred this site to the Crater area. See also: Letter from Major General M. G. Meigs to the Honorable Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, June 15, 1866; Adj.
Several reasons for Lt. Colonel Moore's selection of the site at Poplar Grove Church are known. He believed: (1) that the site was to be donated to the government; and, (2) that the site was more centrally located with respect to the battlefields of the Petersburg Campaign than either the Meade's Station or Crater area. But it would appear that his principal reason for choosing the site on the Moore's farm was undoubtedly the presence of Poplar Grove Church.

Upon completion of the reburial program at Andersonville, Georgia, in August 1865, Lt. Colonel Moore had instructed the newly appointed superintendent of the cemetery "to allow no buildings or structures of whatever nature to be destroyed - particularly the stockade surrounding the prison pen." Would not the principle inherent in these instructions - that of preserving the physical remains of the war - apply equally as well at Petersburg? Photographs of Poplar Grove Church show it to be an impressive looking structure, and it is not inconceivable that Lt. Colonel Moore considered it fitting to establish a national cemetery around it. Not...

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{26, 27.} \]

\[\text{28.} \]

33 That the presence of the church was Lt. Colonel Moore's primary reason for selecting the site on the Moore's farm for a national cemetery was the prevailing opinion of his contemporaries. See the Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries for the Year 1874 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), p. 48 and several brief histories of the cemetery compiled by its first Superintendent, August Miller, among the Records of Poplar Grove National Cemetery. Hereafter the
only would the church lend an air of sanctity to the cemetery, but, located within the protecting confines of the cemetery, it would be preserved as a memorial of the war.

The presence of Poplar Grove Church on the site selected by Lt. Colonel Moore leaves little doubt, of course, as to the origin of the cemetery's name.

The Search and Recovery Program, 1866-1869

Methods 36 - While the site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was apparently selected in May or early June 1866, the search and recovery program was not begun until July 1866 — probably July 18.37 At that time a "burial corps"38 numbering about one hundred men — equipped with twelve saddle horses, forty mules, and ten army wagons — established a base of operations on the cemetery site at Poplar Grove Church.

records of the cemetery will be cited as Records, PGR.

36the discussion of the methods employed in the search and recovery program which follows is based on material to be found in: Records, PGR.

37since the date of the establishment of the cemetery is somewhat controversial, a more complete discussion of this problem is to be found in Appendix I.

38the term "burial corps" is a descriptive phrase used by the first superintendent of the cemetery, August Miller, for the search, recovery, and reburial unit employed at Poplar Grove; Records, PGR. No evidence has been found to indicate that these units were ever named officially by the quartermaster department. Henceafter the term will be employed in the sense used by Miller.
The burial corps was under the immediate supervision of a superintendent who, in turn, was directly responsible to Lt. Colonel Moore for the work of his corps. The supplies, equipment, and transportation facilities of the burial corps, as well as the pay and rations of the employees, were furnished by the Quartermaster Department. As for the organization of the burial corps, it was subdivided into several search and recovery teams, each of which was under the immediate supervision of a scout. The functions of these scouts were fourfold: (1) the location of battlefield graves; (2) supervision of the disinterment and the proper identification, if possible, of remains; (3) supervision of the transportation to, and the interment in, the cemetery of the remains recovered; (4) the recording of all information and facts pertaining to the recovery of the remains and their reinterment in the cemetery.

The greatest difficulties encountered by the search and recovery teams occurred in locating the scattered graves of the dead and in identifying the remains recovered. In the case of graves marked by headboards the process of recovery and identification were simplified, though the inscriptions on such headboards were not always legible. Laborers of the search and recovery teams would disinter the remains from a grave of this type, place them in a plain wooden coffin, nail the identifying headboard on the coffin, and then place the coffin on one of the wagons for transport to the cemetery. Unmarked graves were more difficult to locate and then opened required careful examination to determine: (1) whether the remains were those of a Union or
Confederate soldier, and (2) the exact identity of the remains. The
color of the uniform material, buttons and belt buckles, and letters
found with the remains, as well as information obtained from local
inhabitants, were important to the success of identification efforts.
Records were kept to show the location from which the remains of each
unknown soldier were disinterred, moreover, in the hope that other
sources of information would be found to make identification possible.

The search and recovery procedures outlined above were evolved
not only at Petersburg, but by the operations of search and recovery
teams throughout the south from the inception of the program in June 1865.
And these procedures were finally standardized by the issuance of General
Orders, No. 26 on March 25, 1867, by the Quartermaster General.39

Results.40 From July 1866 to June 30, 1869, the burial corps
searched the battlefields around Petersburg and as far west as Lynchburg,
Virginia, for the remains of the Union dead. The scene of every major
battle of the Petersburg and Appomattox Campaigns and the roads traversed
course by the Union Army -- involving, in all, nine Virginia counties41 --
were thoroughly searched.

39 General Orders, Quartermaster General's Office, 1867 (Washington:
Government Printing Office, 1869). Each General Order is separately
paged.

40 Unless otherwise indicated, all statistics which follow in this
section are compiled from the Burial Records, RG16.

41 The counties are: Appomattox, Appomattox, Campbell, Chesterfield,
 Dinwiddie, King and Prince Edward, Prince George, and Sussex.
By December 1, 1867, the burial corps had succeeded in locating, disinterring, and removing the remains of 5,544 soldiers to Poplar Grove for reburial.\textsuperscript{42} Shortly before this it was thought that the concentration program at Poplar Grove was complete and that the burial corps could be disbanded. Within several weeks of the order to disband the burial corps\textsuperscript{43} information was received that several hundred more graves were to be found west of Petersburg, however, and the order was rescinded.\textsuperscript{44} The burial corps was to continue its search and recovery efforts for almost two years more, but during this period only an additional 634 remains were to be found, recovered, and reinterred at Poplar Grove.

During the three years of its existence, therefore, the burial corps recovered the remains of 6,172 Union and 36 Confederate soldiers.\textsuperscript{45} In addition the bodies of five civilians -- most of them were employees or children of employees of the burial corps, who died from 1866 to 1868 -- were also interred in the cemetery.\textsuperscript{46} Of

\textsuperscript{42}Statement of the Disposition of Some of the Bodies of Deceased Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War whose Remains Have Been Removed to National Cemeteries in the Southern and Western States (4 vols., Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868-1869), IV, 18. The figure given in this source, 5,547, has been corrected for the three civilians who were interred in the cemetery during this period.

\textsuperscript{43}Lt. Colonel James N. Moore to August Miller, September 5, 1867; Records, PMo.

\textsuperscript{44}Lt. Colonel James N. Moore to August Miller, October 15, 1867; ibid.

\textsuperscript{45}(Records, PMo.) No satisfactory explanation has been found in those records for the interment of the 36 Confederate soldiers in the cemetery.

\textsuperscript{46}ibid.
the 6,178 remains recovered from the battlefields of the Petersburg
and Appomattox Campaigns, only 2,139, or approximately 35 per cent,
were positively identified.\textsuperscript{47} This compares favorably with the
identification of only 26 per cent of the remains recovered in another
combat zone — that of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House.
Both of these instances compare rather unfavorably with the post war
results achieved in a rear zone such as City Point, Virginia, however,
where 73 per cent of the 5,142 remains recovered were identified.\textsuperscript{48}
Only in the five instances where national cemeteries were established
shortly after a major battle\textsuperscript{49} can identification of the dead in a
combat zone equal the record achieved in a rear zone.

Some of the reasons for this contrast have already been
suggested in connection with the distinction between the wartime burial
practices in these different zones. Analysis of the burial records
of Poplar Grove National Cemetery lends further support to these
conclusions. The records of the cemetery indicate that the small
percentage of remains which could be identified by the burial corps

\textsuperscript{47} The figure given in ibid. is 2,196. This is in error due to
the classification of the remains of those whose surname had been
partially learned among the known dead.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Hall of Honor, Names of Soldiers Who Died in Defense of the
American Union, Interred in the National Cemeteries and Other Burial
Places at ..., City Point (Additional), ..., Virginia (Washington:

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{ibid.,} p. 7.
is attributable to the following factors:

(1) Where the demands of combat were heavy and sustained, the burial fatigue detailed from the line could not devote adequate time or effort to the proper interment and identification of their dead comrades. This was particularly true of the initial (June 15 - 18, 1864) and final (March 29 to April 2, 1865) assaults on the defenses of Petersburg and, to a lesser extent, of the Appomattox Campaign.

(2) Failure of the Union Army to retain the field of combat after a major engagement prevented the recovery of the bodies of those soldiers killed in action. This sharply reduced the number of dead who could be identified in the postwar era. Not one of the 646 remains recovered from the Crater could be identified by the burial corps; and of the 139 remains recovered at Beams' Station, only 5 per cent could be identified.

(3) War-time compliance with the requirements of General Order No. 33 was not always possible, but, when concentration of the combat dead was effected, it led to an increase in the percentage of dead who could be identified. Of the 1,214 remains recovered from the cemeteries at, and in the vicinity of, Foods' Station, the burial corps succeeded in identifying those of 760 Union soldiers, or about 64 per cent.
(4) A lengthening time lag between original burial and recovery of remains diminished the chances of identification. From the spring of 1868 to June 30, 1869, the burial corps recovered the remains of 544 soldiers but only 56, or roughly 11 per cent, of them could be identified. This is in contrast to the identification of 37 per cent of the 5,634 remains recovered from July 1866 to the spring of 1868.

The inability to identify more than 35 per cent of the combat dead of the Petersburg and Appomattox Campaigns illustrates the inadequacy of the attempts made by the Union authorities to meet the burial needs of the Civil War. The conclusions reached above were ultimately to prove ample reason and justification for the organization of the theater graves registration service so sadly lacking during the Civil War. But even the experience of the Civil War was not able to overcome the weight of tradition immediately. It was not until World War I, some fifty-two years and an intervening war later, that the Quartermaster Graves Registration Company — the operating unit of a theater graves registration service — was organized as part of the military establishment.50

The Reinterment and Construction Program, 1866-1869

The burial corps was not only responsible for the search and recovery program but also for the reinterment in the cemetery of the remains recovered from the battlefields. The process of reinterment, moreover, entailed a certain amount of construction which likewise devolved upon the burial corps.

One of the first acts of the burial corps was to erect a flagpole in the center of the cemetery, a short distance south of the church.51 As the remains recovered by the burial corps were brought to the cemetery in plain coffins, they were reinterred in graves to form concentric circles around and facing the flagpole.52 This pattern was altered only near the boundaries of the cemetery, where the graves were arranged in parallel rows. Each grave was neatly rounded to a height of 10 or 12 inches53 and marked with a white headboard on which the proper inscription had been lettered in black.

While the reinterment program was being carried out, the burial corps also turned its attention to the construction of: (1) a fence to enclose the cemetery; (2) walks and avenues for access to

51 Records, RG30.
52 Consult grave plot in Appendix II.
the graves; and (3) gutters to drain the grounds. By February 8, 1866, the cemetery had been completely enclosed with a white wooden fence consisting of cedar posts and pine palings. Almost 12,000 feet of brick gutters had been laid by October 19, 1867, and three days later the graveling of the walks and avenues was completed.

Passage of the Act of February 22, 1867, by Congress placed an additional burden of construction upon the burial corps. Among other things, this act established the position of cemetery superintendent and provided that a lodge should be erected at each national cemetery for the use of this official. Construction of the lodge at Poplar Grove was delayed for more than a year, well after the arrival of August Miller who had been appointed superintendent of the cemetery on August 6, 1867. Miller found the original seven acre cemetery tract too small to accommodate existing and anticipated burials, as well as the projected lodge; consequently, he requested and received authority to add an additional acre of land to the cemetery on the right hand approaching the entrance gate. When

56 Records, FONC.
57 Ibid.
58 An Act to establish and to protect National Cemeteries, approved February 22, 1867, U. S. Statutes at Large, XLIV, 3991ff.
59 Ibid, FONC.
60 Lt. Colonel J. H. Moore to August Miller, November 23, 1867; Ibid.
this tract had been cleared, the burial corps began the construction of a wooden lodge which was ultimately completed in September 1868.\textsuperscript{59}

The Act of February 22, 1867, also vested authority for the purchase of land for national cemeteries in the Secretary of War; and it provided that if the owner and the Secretary of War could not agree on a purchase price, application for appraisal could be made by the owner to the U. S. District Court having jurisdiction over the district within which the land in question lay; upon payment of the appraised value of such land, title in fee simple would be vested in the United States of America.\textsuperscript{60} When Lt. Colonel Moore appropriated a portion of the Flower's farm for the site of Poplar Grove in 1866, it was apparently with the understanding that the owner was going to donate the land to the government.\textsuperscript{61} Whether Thomas E. Flower had actually agreed to do so is relatively unimportant, for, subsequent to the passage of the Act of 1867, his widow, Rebecca T. Flower, applied to the U. S. District Court of Virginia for appraisal of the cemetery land.\textsuperscript{62} Upon payment of the $1,500 appraised value on April 3, 1868, title in fee simple was obtained by the United States

\begin{footnotes}
\item[59]August Miller to Lt. Colonel J. M. Moore, March 9, 1868; and the "Monthly Report for September 1868, Poplar Grove National Cemetery"; \textit{ibid}.
\item[60]U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 399ff.
\item[61]\textit{ibid}, p. 38.
\item[62]The date of death of Thomas E. Flower is unknown.
\end{footnotes}
of America to the 8.13 acre tract of the Flower's farm occupied by Poplar Grove National Cemetery. 63

Within little more than three years of its construction, the most significant feature of the cemetery, Poplar Grove Church, had to be removed from the grounds by the burial corps. After the 50th New York Engineers abandoned their camp on March 29, 1865, the church was appropriated for use as a meeting house by local negroes. This use was continued until October 1867, when, on the complaint of August Miller that the negroes were creating frequent disturbances around the church after dark and desecrating the cemetery thereby, Lt. Colonel Moore ordered that the church be kept locked and visitors only be permitted to enter the cemetery. 64 Even this measure was insufficient to preserve the church, however, for the entire structure had begun to decay. And once begun, the process of decay continued so rapidly that by the following March only minor repairs could save the church from ruin. The Quartermaster Department was unwilling to provide the funds required for rehabilitation, however, and the church was, therefore, torn down and removed from the cemetery between March 20 and April 23, 1868. 65 Subsequently, the ground on which the church had stood was used for burial purposes.

63 The deed in question is reproduced in Appendix VII.

64 August Miller to Lt. Colonel J. H. Moore, October 13, 1867; and Lt. Colonel J. H. Moore to August Miller, October 13, 1867; Records, P303.

65 For a fuller discussion of the location and the date of the removal of Poplar Grove Church, see Appendix II.
The Reverend Mr. David Macrae, a Scotman who toured the eastern United States in 1866, has left a touching description of his visit to Poplar Grove and the thoughts which it inspired:

We rode out to the Federal Soldiers' Cemetery at Poplar Grove, and tying our horses in the pine wood outside went in to wander for a while among the graves. The place is laid out in sections, each section with its melancholy forest of white head-boards on which are painted the names and regiments of the dead men below. One of the first head-boards I stopped to read was marked

UNKNOWN
U. S. SOLDIER
REMOVED FROM
FORT DREAD

I wondered who the man was who lay beneath -- where his home was -- whether his mother was still alive, away, perhaps, in some far-off part of the world, wondering what had become of her boy, that she had not heard from him for so long, but still hoping that one day he would return to gladden her heart in her declining years. Here he lay, alas! sleeping his long sleep among the unknown dead. There were long rows of these "Unknown," Altogether 7000 dead men -- soldiers of the Union -- lay buried in this one cemetery. It was strange to walk through it with one before whom perhaps many of them had fallen.

Before the burial corps was disbanded on June 30, 1869, some effort was also made to decorate and landscape the grounds. In the fall of 1868, four 32-pounder cannon were transferred to the cemetery from Fort Monroe, Virginia; and, in the following February, they were

---

6David Macrae, The Americans at Home (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1952), p. 173. Macrae was conducted on a tour of the Petersburg Battlefields by Major Giles Cook, of Petersburg. He was in error on the number of Union dead interred in the cemetery, and the Fort Dread mentioned on the headboard of the Unknown soldier cannot be identified.
placed upright on the outer edge of the drive encircling the flagpole.\textsuperscript{67}

During the winter and spring of 1866-67, moreover, the graves were sodded and about 1,200 small cedar trees were transplanted to the cemetery from the neighboring woods.\textsuperscript{68}

The total cost of the three-year search, recovery, reinforcement, and construction program at Poplar Grove was some $107,000, or almost $32,000 more than the estimated cost of completion as foreseen in October 1867.\textsuperscript{69} A further breakdown of this figure reveals that the cost of this program per body was a little more than $17, as opposed to an earlier estimated cost of $9 per body in the Department of Virginia.\textsuperscript{70} The latter figure, however, did not take the cost of gutters, a lodge, land acquisition, landscaping, and numerous additional

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{67}Records, FGNC.
  \item \textsuperscript{68}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{70}"Schedule of actual or contracted, or estimated cost of the various items connected with the disinterment and removal of the remains of deceased soldiers in the various sections of the United States, July 1866," Records Group 92 (G-23), War Records Office, National Archives. The costs are listed as follows: fencing, $2.25; digging and filling grave, $1.00; coffin, $2.50; clerk-hire, maintenance of animals, $2.75; transportation by wagons, $1.25; grading roads; paths, $0.50; headboards, $1.25.
\end{itemize}
expenses into consideration.

With the completion of the work of the burial corps, Poplar Grove National Cemetery entered on a period of relative inactivity which has continued to the present day. The history of the cemetery since 1867, therefore, is a comparatively routine account of administration and maintenance under the War Department until 1933 and the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, since that time.
CHAPTER II
ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE

Administration

War Department, 1866-1933

Expansion of the national cemetery system to include forty-three cemeteries by June 30, 1866, and the further anticipated growth of the system in the postwar period required additional legislative regulation to supplement the inadequate provisions of the Act of July 17, 1862. The Joint Resolution of April 13, 1866, which authorized and required the Secretary of War to preserve the graves of Union soldiers from desecration and to secure suitable burial places for their proper interment, was little more than a stop gap measure. Comprehensive legislation -- which "not only provided a legal basis for the system in process of development, but compelled Congress to a constructive fiscal policy"1 -- for the national cemetery system was finally enacted by Congress, however, in the Act to Establish and to Protect National Cemeteries, approved February 22, 1867.

As we have seen, the Act of 1867 vested authority for the acquisition of land for national cemeteries in the Secretary of War

---

and, in case of dispute, defined the legal process by which acquisition was to be effected; and it established the position of cemetery superintendent, with the additional proviso that a lodge was to be created at each national cemetery for the use of this official.

Moreover, the Act of 1867 provided: (1) specific penalties and punishment for defacement of national cemeteries; (2) that the national cemeteries were to be enclosed with a stone or iron fence; (3) that graves were to be marked with a small headstone or block; (4) that an annual inspection was to be made by an "Inspector of National Cemeteries," whose report was to be forwarded to Congress through the Secretary of War at the beginning of each session "along with an appropriation estimate"; and, (5) an appropriation of $750,000 to carry out its provisions.²

In pursuance of the Acts of 1862 and 1867 and the Joint Resolution of 1866, the War Department created a national cemetery system by 1870, when the recovery and reinterment program was considered complete, which included seventy-three cemeteries.

Administrative control of this system was vested in the Quartermaster General, as it had been since 1862. A further sub-delegation of administrative authority within the War Department made departmental, corps, or army commanders directly responsible for the supervision and control of all national cemeteries within the territorial limits

²U. S. Statutes at Large, XIV, 399 ff.
of their commands. Initial responsibility for the protection, maintenance, and administration of each national cemetery was, of course, vested in the cemetery superintendent by the Act of 1867. In practice, however, the detailed administrative control exercised by the Quartermaster General, as outlined in the Regulations for the Government of National Cemeteries, left little discretion to the cemetery superintendent in the performance of his functions.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Department of the Interior
1933 to the Present

For sixty-seven years, under twenty-nine superintendents, Poplar Grove functioned as a unit of the national cemeterial system administered by the Quartermaster General. Then, when the nation was in the midst of an economic depression in 1933, Congress sought to effect widespread economies in governmental expenditures by the reorganization of the executive branch of the government.

In the Legislative Appropriation Act of 1933, as amended by Section 16 of the Act of March 3, 1933, Congress instructed the President to conduct an investigation of the organization of the executive branch of the government to determine what changes were

---


4 A list of the cemetery superintendents and the dates of their tenures at Poplar Grove is to found in Appendix V.
necessary to "eliminate overlapping and duplication of effort." In particular, Congress stressed that reorganization of the executive branch of the government was intended "to reduce the number of such agencies by consolidating those having similar functions under a single head, and by abolishing such agencies and/or such functions thereof as may not be necessary for the efficient conduct of the Government." Under the authority of these statutory provisions, the President issued Executive Order No. 6166 on June 10, 1933, which provided, in part, that:

All functions of administration of public buildings, reservations, national parks, national monuments, and national cemeteries are consolidated in an Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the Department of the Interior, at the head of which shall be a Director of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations; except that where deemed desirable there may be excluded from this provision any public building or reservation which is chiefly employed as a facility in the work of a particular agency. This transfer and consolidation of functions shall include, among others, those of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior and the National Cemeteries and Parks of the War Department which are located within the continental limits of the United States.

Executive Order No. 6166 was interpreted by Executive Order No. 6228, July 28, 1933, however, as transferring only eleven national cemeteries to the National Park Service; the transfer of the other national cemeteries "located within the continental limits of the

5Quoted by Felix S. Cohen, Acting Solicitor, Department of the Interior, in Order No. 31633, July 3, 1942, addressed to The Secretary of the Interior; a copy of this order is to be found in the files (631-39: Cemetery Sites) of Petersburg National Military Park.

6Ibid. 7v United States Code 76 (1940 edition).
United States6 was postponed until further order. The eleven national cemeteries enumerated in Executive Order No. 6223 were either adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of, a national park or battlefield site already under—or transferred by Executive Orders, Nos. 6166 and 6223 to—the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Apparently, therefore, the eleven cemeteries transferred to the National Park Service were chosen with the view that their administration could be consolidated with that of adjacent national parks or battlefield sites under a single head.

Within a week of the issuance of Executive Order No. 6223, a conference was held between a representative of the Director, National Park Service, and the Quartermaster General, General DeWitt, to determine what functions the quartermaster General would retain with respect to the national cemeteries to be transferred to the National Park Service. The policy determined upon at the conference of August 4, 1933, agreed that the Office of the quartermaster General would continue to perform seven specific activities in connection with the administration of these eleven national cemeteries:

1. Telegraphic requests from superintendents for authority to inter remains in the National cemeteries—verify service and authorize interments, action direct to and from Q.M.G.
2. Have monthly reports of interment submitted by superintendents and take action thereon to supply headstones.
3. Take action on requests for the erection of private monuments—determine if private monuments may be erected and give approval of design, material, inscription, etc.
4. Take action on quarterly condition reports submitted by superintendents.
(5) Maintain record of interments in the national cemeteries.
(6) Filling positions of cemetery superintendents (according to law).
(7) Apply to inquiries re eligibility to burial, location of graves, inscription on headstones and monuments, establishment of the cemeteries and historical incidents pertaining thereto. 9

As one of the eleven cemeteries enumerated in Executive Order No. 6238, Poplar Grove National Cemetery was subsequently transferred to the National Park Service by the War Department on August 10, 1933. 10

On the same day—and also in accordance with Executive Orders, Nos. 6166 and 6238—Petersburg National Military Park was transferred to the National Park Service by the War Department. 11

Subject to the conditions agreed upon by the National Park Service and the Office of the Quartermaster General in the conference of August 4, 1933, administrative control of Poplar Grove National Cemetery has been vested in the following officials, in ascending order, since 1933:

(1) The cemetery superintendent, until this position was abolished in 1949.
(2) The Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park,
From August 23, 1933 to December 16, 1935; on the

9Mr. Chatelain represented the Director, National Park Service, at this conference: Letter from Secretary of War George M. Bahr to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, September 1, 1933; copy to be found in the Records, FCNS. Official confirmation and approval of the agreement reached between the War Department and the National Park Service was expressed by Mr. A. L. Demaree, Acting Director, National Park Service, in a letter to the Quartermaster General, August 10, 1933; and by the Secretary of the Interior to The Secretary of War, September 9, 1933; ibid.

10Records, FCNS.
latter date, supervisory control of the cemetery was
made the responsibility of a newly created Superinten-
dent, Petersburg National Military Park, since the
cemetery was immediately adjacent to the park adminis-
tered by this official. 12

(3) The Regional Director, Region One, National Park Service.

(4) The Director, National Park Service.

(5) The Secretary of the Interior, as the administrative
head of the executive department in which the National
Park Service is a bureau.

Significant Administrative Problems

1866 to the present

In the decade which followed the close of the Civil War,
several administrative problems of major significance for the future of
the national cemetery system arose to confront the War Department. 13
And as a unit of this system, the administrative decisions of the War
Department and the legislative regulation of Congress with respect to

12 Records, FNP.

13 The discussion of the expansion of the national cemetery
system and the question of eligibility which follows in this section
is largely based on Edward Steere, "Expansion of the National Cemeter-
ial System, 1860-1903," The Quartermaster Review, XXIII (September-
October, 1953), 201, 131-137. Hereafter The Quartermaster Review
will be cited as QRM.
these problems affected the evolution and development of Poplar Grove National Cemetery.

Expansion of the National Cemetery System

The Congressional acts and resolution which established the national cemetery system left the question of whether the system could be expanded open to administrative interpretation. The Act of July 17, 1862, had authorized the President to secure cemetery lands "for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." ℹ️

The Joint Resolution of April 13, 1866, however, appeared to restrict the authority given to the Secretary of War to purchase land for national cemeteries solely for the burial of the Union soldiers "who fell in battle or died of disease in the field and in hospitals during the war of the rebellion." ℹ️ As for the Act to Establish and to Protect National Cemeteries, approved February 22, 1867, the Secretary of War was given authority to purchase cemetery lands without restriction. ℹ️

By the incorporation of the post cemetery at Fort Smith, Arkansas, into the national cemetery system in 1867, ℹ️ the

17K. S. Statutes at Large, XII, 596. (Emphasis added)
15Ibid., XIV, 352. (Emphasis added)
16Ibid., pp. 399ff.
17Steurer, "Expansion of the National Cemetery System, 1860-1930," YUL, XXXIX (September-October 1933), 132.
Secretary of War indicated that he adhered to a literal interpretation of the Act of 1867, regardless of the conflicting provisions of the earlier Congressional enactments. While many Civil War dead had been reinterred in the Fort Smith cemetery during the postwar reinterment program, it had originally been established as a post cemetery in 1819 and contained the remains of many soldiers and their families interred prior to 1861.18

In the twelve years following this precedent, the national cemetery system was further expanded by the War Department to include: (1) other post cemeteries containing both Civil War and pre Civil War dead — i.e., Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, in 1868; (2) cemeteries of the pre Civil War period containing the dead of the Indian frontier or Mexican War exclusively — i.e., Fort H Pherson, Nebraska, and Mexico City in 1873; and (3) post and other cemeteries containing the dead of the post Civil War Indian frontier — i.e., Custer Battlefield in 1879.19

While the Secretary of War acted on his own initiative at first in expanding the national cemetery system, his administrative interpretation of existing legislation was soon sanctioned by Congress. In approving the Act of June 1, 1872, Congress authorized the interment

18Ibid.,

19Ibid., pp. 157 ff.
of the "current dead" of the Army in the national cemeteries,\textsuperscript{20} and thereby approved the administrative policy of incorporating new cemeteries into the system or expanding existing cemeteries to meet current needs.

Eligibility for Interment in a National Cemetery

Primary eligibility. - One of the effects of the expansion of the national cemeterial system was to extend eligibility for interment in a national cemetery to a new category of persons -- that is, the "current dead" of the Army. But whereas eligibility was first extended to the "current dead" by the administrative decision of the War Department, and only later granted as a right by Congress, the War Department refused to extend the privilege of interment in a national cemetery to deceased veterans of the Civil War on its own initiative.

Foremost among the advocates in the War Department of the policy which would have restricted interment in the national cemeteries to the Civil War dead was Quartermaster General Edige.\textsuperscript{21} When he learned, in December 1868, that Major General George H. Thomas, Commanding General of the Department of the Cumberland, had permitted burial in the Chattanooga National Cemetery to deceased veterans and members of their families by a departmental order, Quartermaster

\textsuperscript{20} ibid., p. 134

\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p. 21
General Meigs ordered the practice prohibited.\(^{22}\) Subsequently, the refusal to permit burial of the remains of a deceased veteran in Chattanooga National Cemetery brought forth a storm of protest and a petition addressed to Major General Thomas by a group of Union veterans who were residing in Chattanooga. This petition was forwarded by Major General Thomas to the General-in-Chief and then to the Secretary of War, who, in turn, referred it to the Quartermaster General and the Judge Advocate General for consideration.

Quartermaster General Meigs justified his action in denying burial to deceased veterans by citing Statutes at Large, particularly the Joint Resolution of April 13, 1866, from which he quoted and underlined the phrase "during the war of the rebellion."\(^{23}\) General-in-Chief Sherman vigorously opposed the opinion of Quartermaster General Meigs, contending that the national cemeteries should be devoted to the burial of soldiers for all time to come.\(^{24}\) The brief of Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt supported the administrative interpretation that existing Congressional legislation, despite seeming conflicts, extended the privilege of interment in the national cemeteries to the

\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 131.

\(^{24}\) See note at end, p. 416.
"current dead" of the Army; but it found no legislative justification for the extension of the privilege to deceased veterans of the late war. 25 Judge Advocate General Holt recommended that the matter be left to Congress to decide by additional legislation, therefore, and the Secretary of War accepted his opinion.

Thus, matters remained until mounting pressure and protests from the Grand Army of the Republic, the powerful veterans' organization of its day, ultimately forced Congress to act. By approving the Act of March 3, 1873, Congress granted the right of interment in the national cemeteries to any deceased veteran of the Civil War who died subsequent to the passage of the act. 26

"Secondary" eligibility. — Army tradition, moreover, had also permitted interment in post cemeteries to certain members of a soldier's family — that is, a wife or dependent child. This tradition, sustained by the decisions of the Judge Advocate General, ultimately led the Secretary of War to extend "secondary" eligibility for interment in the national cemeteries to wives in 1900, and to minor children and unmarried adult daughters in 1904 and 1908 respectively. 27

25 Ibid.

26 The provisions of the Act of March 3, 1873, are quoted by Storee, Ibid., p. 194.

Summary: - The administrative decisions of the War Department and
the legislative regulations of Congress, as traced above, soon de-
stroyed any identity of the national cenotaphic system with the Civil
War alone. Moreover, extension of eligibility to categories of persons
other than the dead of the Civil War from 1861-1865 had far reaching
consequences, for:

(1) The extension of eligibility to the "current dead" of
the Army established a precedent which later admitted
the war dead of the Spanish-American and subsequent
wars to interment in the national cemeteries without
question. 23

(2) The Act of March 3, 1873, established a precedent
which led the Secretary of War to grant eligibility
for interment in the national cemeteries to deceased
veterans of the Spanish-American War. 29 Subsequently,
in the Act of April 15, 1923, Congress granted the
right of interment to honorably discharged veterans
of all past and future wars. 30

23 Stearns, "Expansion of the National Cenotaphic System,
1860-1930," JWA, XXIII (September-October 1933), 134.
29 Stearns, "National Cemeteries and Public Policy," JWA,
(January-February 1934), 9, 13.
30 Ibid.
(3) "Secondary" eligibility, first extended by administrative interpretation, was granted as a legal right by the Act of May 11, 1918.\(^{31}\)

In the eighty-eight year history of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, only fifty non-Civil War dead had been interred in the cemetery in pursuance of the administrative interpretations and legislative regulations liberalizing the requirements for interment in a national cemetery.\(^{32}\) Poplar Grove, therefore, has essentially retained its identity with the Civil War.

Headstones

An administrative problem of lesser consequence, but one which remained unresolved for five years, arose to plague the War Department from that section of the Act of 1867 which provided that a headstone or block should be erected over the grave of each soldier.

Following approval of the Act of 1867, the Secretary of War appointed a board of officers on May 7, 1867, to consider the questions of the type of material and the design of such a headstone or block.\(^{33}\)

---


\(^{32}\) Records, RG 106.

After two days of deliberation, the board submitted a recommendation for the adoption of a single, cast iron headblock (square and hollow) as the most durable and economical marker.24

Public opinion, supported by an Inspector of National Cemeteries and other officers of the War Department, opposed the adoption of this type marker, however, and, instead, preferred that a solid headstone of marble or granite be adopted.25 But Quartermaster General Beige, who favored the adoption of the galvanized iron block, would not concede to public opinion, and his opposition continued to delay a decision by the War Department.26

Congress finally settled the dispute by passage of the Act of June 3, 1872, which amended Section 1 of the Act of February 22, 1867, to require that "each grave be marked with a small headstone," thereby ruling out the adoption of the headblock.27 Subsequently,

24Ibid.


26Ibid.

in the Army appropriations Act of March 3, 1873, Congress appropriated $1,000,000 for the erection of headstones and specified that they "be of durable stone . . ." 38

In accordance with the provisions of the above acts, therefore, the Secretary of War established standards for the type of material, color, dimensions, and quality of the headstone and advertised nationally for proposals. Contract awards were subsequently made by the War Department in December 1873, 39 and the erection of an upright, white marble headstone over each grave was begun at several of the national cemeteries in 1874. Setting of the headstones at Poplar Grove was delayed until June 1877, but the work was then completed within a few months. 40 The cost of erecting the headstones at Poplar Grove amounted to about $15,500, 41 while the total cost of the project throughout the national cemeterial system came to $786,360. 42

38 Ibid., p. 545
39 Records Group 92 (O RG), War Records Office, National Archives and Records, RG59.
40 Ibid.
41 Estimated on the basis of the following contractual rates:
(1) for a "known" stone, $3.39; and, (2) for an "unknown" stone, $2.42; Records, RG59.
42 Stearns, "Evolution of the National Cemetery System, 1865-1890," DCC, XXIII (May-June 1953), 125.
The seventy-three national cemeteries established by 1870 had been laid out without adequate planning by the Quartermaster Department; no master plans were drawn up in advance to govern construction, development, or landscaping. It is true, however, that certain general instructions were issued and standards set, particularly after 1870, which established a considerable degree of uniformity among the units of the system.

In setting aside $20,000 of the Army appropriation of 1870 for landscaping purposes, Congress gave financial support to the desire to improve the appearance of the national cemeteries. In pursuance of this provision, the Quartermaster Department devised a plan for a "sylvan hall" of elm trees to be set out in each of the national cemeteries. One hundred and ten elm trees were provided

---

42 The discussion of the maintenance of Poplar Groves, both under the War Department and the National Park Service, which follows, is based primarily on the records, NHO. Citations for the facts appearing in this section will be generally omitted, therefore, except where other sources have been consulted.


44Ibid., p. 70; Records, NHO; and the actual plan is to be found in: Records Group 92 (O.M.), War Records Office, National Archives.
for the purpose at Poplar Grove, and they were planted to form the outline of a cross or gothic church in May 1871.

This was to be only the first step in a constant and continuous yearly effort to improve the landscaping of Poplar Grove. The cemetery soil was poor in many places and marshy in others, and constant effort was required on the part of the superintendent and laborers to encourage the growth of trees, shrubs, and grass. A severe blow was dealt these efforts in 1915 when a storm on July 30 was followed by a tornado on August 2, which struck the cemetery at approximately 6 p. m. Together, these two storms destroyed a total of 139 trees aside from the damage which was done to headstones, the wall, and several buildings of the cemetery. Replacement of these trees was not affected by the Quartermaster Department until the spring of 1931, when 101 trees were planted in the cemetery and along the entrance road.

During the first decade of the cemetery's existence, a great deal of effort and money was required to maintain the wooden fence which enclosed the cemetery. Within three years of its erection, the posts and railings of the fence were rotting badly and only constant effort by the superintendent kept the fence from falling down. In 1879 the Quartermaster Department decided to plant an osage orange hedge inside the fence which, as it grew, would gradually hide and replace the latter; consequently, from September 14, 1879, to March 6, 1871, about four thousand separate osage orange plants were set out.
A few years later the War Department began to implement that section of the Act of 1867 which provided that the national cemeteries were to be enclosed with a stone or iron fence. Since native stone was unobtainable in the vicinity, an award was made in 1873 to a local contractor, Mr. Childrey, for the erection of a brick wall to enclose Peeples Grove. While Mr. Childrey manufactured about 140,000 bricks near the cemetery in the fall of 1873 and the spring of 1874, he defaulted on his contract before beginning the actual construction of the wall.

Two years were to elapse before a new contract for the wall was awarded by the Quartermaster Department. And preparatory to a second attempt to build the wall, and primarily because the wall would be too near the cemetery boundary and the graves, a resurvey of the cemetery was made in 1876. This survey disclosed that the original deed of 1860 did not fully convey title to the land on which the cemetery was actually situated. In order to correct these discrepancies, to provide title to the access road, and to secure an additional ten-foot strip of land around the cemetery for the erection of the wall, the government purchased several additional strips of land from the heirs of Thomas B. Flower and Francis Fairley in 1877.

---

46 National and Post Cemeteries, General Correspondence - Peeples Grove; Records Group 92 (W43), War Records Office, National Archives.
47 Copies of the deeds are to be found in Appendix VIII.
These additional purchases brought the total acreage of Poplar Grove up to 2,5019 acres, at a total acquisition cost of $1,400.

Upon completion of the survey, a contract for the erection of the wall was awarded to Mr. A. L. Hutton of Washington, D.C. Work was begun by this contractor on June 22, 1876, and the enclosing wall — consisting of some 400,000 bricks, shipped by schooner from Alexandria, Virginia — was completed on September 31, 1876, at a total cost of $10,187.

Within less than a year of its erection by the burial corps in 1868, Superintendent Miller began to complain about the dampness, unhealthiness, and general unfitness of the wooden lodge erected for his occupancy. Meanwhile, the quartermaster Department had been engaged in preparing plans for a standard type lodge to be erected at each of the national cemeteries.46 Upon completion and approval of these plans, a contract was awarded and work was begun on a new lodge at Poplar Grove in August 1870. As in the case of the wall, however, the first contractor defaulted before he had done more than excavate a foundation for the building. In the following year, a new contractor undertook the job and began work on the present building on October 24, 1871. The site chosen for the lodge in the previous

46 Records Group 92 (9), War Records Office, National Archives.
year was abandoned, and a one and one-half story stone building was erected to the right of the entrance gate. On March 30, 1872, this lodge was completed and ready for occupancy.

Perhaps no single feature of the cemetery has required as much or more maintenance and expenditure than the lodge. The building was neither aesthetically pleasing nor architecturally sound. In its original design, it consisted of three rooms on the ground floor, one of which was to be used as a public office, and an unfinished upper half-story whose exterior walls were formed by the copper roof. So cramped were the living quarters of the superintendent that, within seven years, the Quartermaster Department was forced to convert the attic into sleeping quarters, a wholly unsatisfactory solution considering the heat of Virginia summers. But it was not until 1911 that a kitchen was added to the rear of the lodge; prior to that time, a temporary wooden shack behind the lodge served as a kitchen.

Structural defects also added to the problem of maintaining the lodge. When it was built, the plaster was applied directly to the exterior walls. Until this condition was corrected by tearing the old plaster off and inserting lathing between the exterior and interior walls, the wallpaper or paint continually peeled from the interior walls of the first floor because of the excessive dampness. Indeed, the demise of the lodge appears to have been accelerated by the health of many of its inhabitants, if we are to believe the complaints of various superintendents.
In 1873, a combination wooden toolshed and stable was erected directly across the road from the lodge. And though the toolshed-stable was unroofed by the tornado of August 2, 1915, it was not until the fall of 1929 that it was replaced by a new concrete building. During the latter year, moreover, a small concrete building was erected behind the lodge to house the water pump, coal bin, and rest rooms.

Efforts were made as early as 1891, by Superintendant E. L. Grant, to secure the erection of a rostrum at Poplar Grove for use on Memorial Day and other commemorative occasions. It was not until the summer of 1896, however, that the approval of the Quartermaster Department was given and work was begun; the rostrum was subsequently completed on January 2, 1897. In reality, it would appear that the rostrum has been little used for the purpose for which it was originally intended, since observance of Memorial Day at Poplar Grove has never received very much support from the people of the nearby community.49

No discussion of the history of Poplar Grove would be complete without some reference to its central feature, the flagpole, from which the walks and avenues radiate and toward which the graves face. The first flagpole, erected in 1866 by the burial corps, was torn down in July 1873 because it was decayed. More than half a year elapsed before a new wooden flagpole was erected on March 13, 1874.

49 According to Superintendant Miller, May 30, 1871, was the first time the graves at Poplar Grove were "generally decorated by the people of Petersburg." Record, Pam.
and the surrounding mound reduced from forty to twenty-three feet in diameter. In 1913, this flagpole was torn down and replaced by an iron one which stands to the present day.

National Park Service
1933 to the Present

Transfer of Poplar Grove National Cemetery to the National Park Service on August 10, 1933, in no way altered the obligation to maintain the cemetery in accordance with legislative regulations; it merely transferred the obligation to administer and maintain the cemetery to the National Park Service.50

50 This is the opinion of Felix S. Cohen, Acting Solicitor, Department of the Interior, given in Order M-31633, July 3, 1942, to the Secretary of the Interior; a copy of this brief is to be found in the files (631-69; Cemetery Sites) of Petersburg National Military Park. The principal question involved in Order M-31633 was whether the National Park Service was obligated to maintain a porter’s lodge at each of the National Cemeteries transferred to its jurisdiction in 1933.

On the basis of an examination of the provisions of: (1) the Legislative Appropriation Act of 1933, as amended by section 16 of the Act of March 3, 1933; (2) Executive Order No. 6166 of June 10, 1933; and (3) Executive Order No. 6223 of July 23, 1933, Solicitor Cohen came to the following conclusion:

"In my opinion, therefore, the Director of the National Park Service is not required to maintain a porter’s lodge and to employ a superintendent at each of the national cemeteries under his jurisdiction when, in his judgment the continuance of the office of a cemetery superintendent and the maintenance of a porter’s lodge at certain cemeteries is no longer justified. He may assign the duties of such superintendents to other qualified personnel and he may allocate porters’ lodges to other appropriate uses."
Since 1933, therefore, the pattern of maintenance has not been altered to any considerable extent though the details have. Until the position was abolished in 1949, a portion of the maintenance work at the cemetery continued to be the responsibility of the superintendent. Since this official was, by law, a disabled veteran and the work could not be performed by one man alone during the growing season, additional labor was required. From 1933 to 1941, in an era of varying degrees of economic depression, the labor supply was plentiful, and additional labor was furnished the cemetery superintendent by the nearby camps of the Civilian Conservation Corps and other public works agencies. But with the demise of the public works agencies in 1941 — and, to a further degree, with the abolishment of the cemetery superintendent's position in 1949 — maintenance of Poplar Grove became the added responsibility of the maintenance staff of Petersburg National Military Park.

Only one significant alteration has been made in the physical appearance of Poplar Grove since 1933, and that occurred early in 1934 when the upright headstones were cut off and placed flush with the ground. This step was taken in an effort to reduce the amount of time required to maintain the cemetery in a presentable manner, thereby effecting an economy in labor costs.

Indeed, economy of operation has been, and has had to be, formally stressed ever since the transfer of Poplar Grove to the National Park Service in 1933. The legislative mandate contained in the Appropriation Act of 1933 to "reduce the number of such"
agencies by consolidating those having similar functions under a single head. . . .51 has been achieved. Poplar Grove National Cemetery is now administered and maintained under the direction of the Superintendent, Petersburg National Military Park. But there is some reason to think that the National Park Service has been forced to absorb the economic consequences of the unification. It would appear that the appropriation allotted to the National Park Service for the administration and maintenance of Poplar Grove, and for the other national cemeteries transferred to this agency as well, is not comparable to the Congressional appropriation and allotment for equivalent units of the national cemetery system which remain under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Army.

51 quoted by Cohen, ibid.
CONCLUSION

With only fifty non-Civil War interments since its establishment in July 1866, Poplar Grove has essentially remained a memorial to those soldiers who died "in defence of the American Union" in the Petersburg and Appomattox Campaigns. In addition, and as a result of its location on the Civil War campsite of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers, Poplar Grove has served to commemorate, but largely in name only, the unusual war development of the cemetery site which reached its apex in the construction of Poplar Grove Church.

In the past this memorial aspect of Poplar Grove has received little public recognition, however, even on the day traditionally set aside for this purpose -- Memorial Day. Only one commemorative ceremony worthy of note is recorded in the annals of Poplar Grove; that occurred on April 16, 1921, when the remains of twenty-nine Union soldiers, which were recovered from the Crater Battlefield on March 29-29, were reinterred in the cemetery with full military honors.

Greater emphasis should be placed on the memorial aspect of Poplar Grove in the future, for therein lies the only justification for the integration of this national cemetery with Petersburg National Military Park. The role of the cemetery grounds as the campsite of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers and, more particularly, the
construction and use of Poplar Grove Church should be fully interpreted.

It is even more imperative, however, that Poplar Grove be closed after
the remaining dozen gravesites are filled. Closure of the cemetery
at that time will restrict non-Civil War interments to about 1 per
cent of a total of slightly more than 6,300 burials, and thereby
serve to preserve the identity of Poplar Grove as a memorial to the
Civil War dead.
APPENDIX I

DATE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF

POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

It is difficult to reconcile the conflicting dates given for the establishment of the cemetery in the cemetery records. These records indicate both the dates June 13 and July 13, 1866, and there are references as well to unspecified dates in the months of April and May 1866.¹

Recourse to other sources provides similarly conflicting information. In his report of June 12, 1866, to Major General Meigs, Lt. Colonel Moore states that "previous to the receipt of this communication [an offer by William Griffith to donate land at the Crater for a national cemetery], a site had already been selected by no at Poplar Grove, and the work of removing bodies to same had commenced."² In his "Annual Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1866," however, Brigadier General J. J. Dana — in charge of the Sixth Division (Cemeterial Affairs) Office of the Quartermaster General, states that:

There still remains very much to be done in this department [Virginia], both in finishing the national cemeteries commenced by the above officers [Colonels Moore and Judington],

¹Records, RG36,
²Records Group 92 (OMO), War Records Office, National Archives.
and also in collecting and enclosing the remains at many
points where national cemeteries are not yet established,
such as Petersburg . . . . 3

It is also intended to establish a very considerable
cemetery at "Poplar Grove church," near Petersburg, Virginia,
to contain all the bodies from some twenty miles around that city,
with the exception of those in the cemeteries at City Point and
Point of Rocks. 4

What conclusions can be drawn from the above information as
to the date of the establishment of Poplar Grove National Cemetery?

First, Brigadier General Dana's statement that "it is also
intended to establish a very considerable cemetery at "Poplar Grove
church," near Petersburg, Virginia . . . ." substantially confirms the
fact that this site had been selected for a national cemetery prior
at least, to June 30, 1865. It. Colonel Moore indicates that the
selection of this site was actually made prior to June 12, in purs-
suance of the orders and authorization which he had received from the
Secretary of War almost a month and a half before. 5

---

3 In "Annual Report of the Quartermaster-General for the Fiscal
Year Ending June 30, 1865," which is to be found in: Annual Reports of
the Quartermaster General 1861 to 1866 (Washington: Government Printing
Office, 1865), p. 221 (each report is separately paginated).

4 Ibid., p. 223

5 Communicated to It. Colonel Moore by Brigadier General J. J.
Dana in a letter dated April 30, 1866, Pokey Papers, Letters Copy,
OORR, Caswell, Letters, June 25 to August 25, 1866, Records Group
92 (9:83), War Records Office, National Archives.
Secondly, Lt. Colonel Moore's statement that "the work of removing bodies to same [Poplar Grove] had commenced" prior to June 12 cannot be fully accepted. Aside from the implication in Brigadier General Dana's report, the records of the cemetery and a wholly independent source indicate that the recovery and reinterment program was not begun at Poplar Grove until July 1866. Perhaps an effort was made to get the recovery program under way prior to June 12, as Lt. Colonel Moore contends; but there is little reason to think that this was more than a token beginning which must have been suspended almost immediately.

Thirdly, if the conclusion that the recovery and reinterment program was not actually begun at Poplar Grove until July 1866 is accepted, it becomes clear that the criterion in dating the establishment of the cemetery is not the date on which the selection of the site was made but rather the date on which the recovery and reinterment program was begun. This is implicit in Brigadier General Dana's statement, and it explains why he categorically states that no cemetery had been established at Petersburg as of June 30, 1866.

Fourthly, of the several dates given for the establishment

---

6 Statement of the Disposition of Sera of the Bodies of Released Union Soldiers and Prisoners of War Whose Remains Have Been Removed to National Cemeteries in the Southern and Western States (4 vols., Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866-69), IV, 13-19. This source fails to indicate the specific date in July on which the recovery and reinterment program had its inception.
of the cemetery in the cadastral records, only one occurs in July — July 18. Though it cannot be fully confirmed, this date probably marks the beginning of the recovery and reinterment program and, therefore, the establishment of the cemetery.

\[7\text{Did.}\]
APPENDIX II

POPLAR GROVE CHURCH

Date of Removal from and Location in the Cemetery

A thorough search of the records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, in the War Records Office, National Archives and the Records of Poplar Grove National Cemetery has failed to reveal the exact date of the removal of Poplar Grove Church from the cemetery grounds. Collateral evidence found in these records, however, indicates that the church was razed subsequent to March 20 and prior to April 23, 1862.

August Miller, superintendent of the cemetery, first indicated that the church was beginning to decay when he reported on September 30, 1867, that "to preserve the Church, its Roof and Windows require repairing." On February 8, 1868, Miller reiterated his earlier warning, pointing out that "the Church, located in the

2August Miller to Major General A. H. Ayer, Acting Quartermaster General; Records, 1905. Since Miller’s reports to the Quartermaster General were forwarded through the Chief Quartermaster, First Military District, Richmond, Virginia, Lt. Colonel Moore, who held this post in addition to that of supervising cemetery operations in Virginia, was also a recipient of this and other information conveyed to the Quartermaster General by Miller.
Con[orary] . . . is fast decaying; the roof is leaking in several places.² In his monthly report for February 1863, moreover, Miller devoted a special section to the subject of the church in which he stressed the fact that "this building is now fast decaying, the Timber began October to rot; the roof is leaking in several places, and Windows are broken."³

Miller's reports apparently stimulated Lt. Colonel Moore to seek the advice of his superior, for on March 17, 1863, he penned the following letter to Major General O. H. Bucker:

... I propose that the church be preserved as a memento as long as practicable.

In reference to the latter subject I would respectfully inquire whether it is the intention of the Quartermaster General to authorize the necessary expenditures to carry out these instructions.

The church alluded to is a rude log structure, erected by the 50th N. Y. Eng.[Lineary] during the siege of Petersburg. The logs are entirely worm-eaten, and the whole building is in an advanced state of decay. Even the most thorough repairs will not preserve it for a longer period than one or two years.

... In view of these facts I would respectfully suggest, that no further repairs be made in the premises, but that the church be torn down and the ground appropriated [for a flour garden]²⁸

Major General Bucker apparently sanctioned Lt. Colonel Moore's

³Letter Miller to Lt. Colonel James M. Moore, April 3, 1863.
³⁴Records Group 92 (G.J.V.), War Records Office, National Archives.
suggestion that the church be torn down, primarily on grounds of economy:

As to the church it was not intended that any expense of consequence should be incurred.

It was desired to leave it as a well known object of interest to all soldiers & officers who were at Petersburg; and that it should not be destroyed until the effects of time had rendered it run rous & unsightly; as it was thought to be almost the only relic of the Siege now standing in the vicinity.

The space of ground it covers is supposed to be small, & therefore not very useful for any other purpose; but it is not worth any great outlay to preserve the church; and, therefore, whenever such expense is needed to preserve it - it must be torn down. 

In the light of the above correspondence, it seems certain that Lt. Colonel Moore accepted Major General Hooker's reply as sufficient authority to order the church torn down.

That the church was torn down and removed from the cemetery by April 28, 1866, seems clear from a careful analysis of the burial records. This analysis also establishes the location of the church, within narrow limits, on the cemetery grounds.

It is known that the church was located "north of and near the Flag-Staff," and that the present flagpole remains on the same

---

5Ibid. This is a penciled memorandum dated May 7th, 1866. It is not known whether this note formed the basis of an official order to Lt. Colonel Moore or whether it was simply forwarded to the letter in its original form. It was found together with Lt. Colonel Moore's letter of March 17, 1866.

6August Miller to Major General W. H. Winder, February 29, 1868; Records, 1868.
site as the one originally erected by the Union burial corps in 1866.\(^7\)

To the north of the flagpole was laid out Division C, containing eight sections ranging from A to G inclusive. Of the six divisions into which the cemetery was divided, it was only in Division C that burial did not begin in Section A of that division and proceed in alphabetical order through the remaining sections in that division.\(^8\)

In Division C, burials were first begun in Section C, and it was not until April 22, 1863, that the first interments were made in Sections A and B.\(^9\) From April 22, 1863, to June 30, 1869, when the Union burial corps ceased its concentration and reburial efforts at Peck's Grove, 275 new graves were opened in Division C as follows: Section A, 55 graves; Section B, 63 graves; Section C, 72 graves; and Section D, 63 graves.\(^{10}\) A careful plotting of these graves reveals that only the new graves in Sections A and B of Division C are of major significance from the standpoint of the location of the church.\(^{11}\) The 55 graves in Section A and the 63 graves in Section B opened during this period filled all of the burial space comprised in these two sections of Division C.

\(^7\) Records, PUC.

\(^8\) Burial Records, PUC.

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid. A list of these graves by number appears on p. 80 of this Appendix.

\(^11\) See map accompanying this Appendix.
Together with the fifteen foot wide drive lying immediately behind them, these two sections form a broad wedge-shaped area about 63 feet long and 135 feet wide and 40 feet wide at its maximum and minimum widths respectively. While no verbal descriptions of the exterior dimensions of the church are to be found, available pictures would seem to indicate that it was certainly not any larger than this plot of ground and probably was even somewhat smaller.

The conclusion, then, is that the church stood north of and between the flagpole and the row of graves in Division C bearing grave numbers 2634 to 2663, inclusive; and that it was torn down and removed from the cemetery, because it was in an advanced stage of decay, between March 29 and April 28, 1863. Subsequently, the ground which the church had occupied was used for burial purposes and not for a flower garden, as Lt. Colonel Moore had suggested. Undoubtedly this use was prompted by the finding of more remains of Union soldiers then had been expected, at a time when burial space in the cemetery had almost been exhausted.

12 This. The average distance between graves is 4'6" and between rows of graves is 8'.

13 See the two photographs of the church accompanying this Appendix on pp. Elf.

14 As indicated by the shaded area on the map accompanying this Appendix.

15 Records, 1860.
The conclusions arrived at in the above would appear to be confirmed by at least one other fact. While the subject of the condition of the church was an important part of the reports and correspondence relating to the cemetery between September 30, 1867, and March 20, 1868, there is an absence of any reference to the church in such reports and correspondence after the latter date. 16

It is known with certainty that the church had been torn down and removed from the cemetery by the fall of 1868. Major General L. Thomas, in his capacity of Inspector of National Cemeteries, inspected the cemetery on October 27, 1868, and subsequently reported that the church had been “taken down.” 17

16 Held, and Records Group 92, (O.J.O.), War Records Office, National Archives.
List of the Graves Opened
in Division C from
April 26, 1863, to June 30, 1869

Sections A & B (combined)
Grave Nos. 2512 to 2633 inclusive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section C</th>
<th>Section D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grave Nos. 2641-2647 inclusive</td>
<td>Grave Nos. 2648-2654 inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2641-2642</td>
<td>n  n  2648-2649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2705-2706</td>
<td>n  n  2711-2712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2753-2754</td>
<td>n  n  2741-2742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2783-2784</td>
<td>n  n  2753-2754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2831-2832</td>
<td>n  n  2823-2824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2864-2865</td>
<td>n  n  2869-2870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2911-2912</td>
<td>n  n  2905-2906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2917-2918</td>
<td>n  n  2946-2947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2917-2918</td>
<td>n  n  2931-2932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2936-2937</td>
<td>n  n  3014-3015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2936-2937</td>
<td>n  n  3047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n  n  2936-2937</td>
<td>n  n  3066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POPLAR GROVE CHURCH, FEBRUARY 1865

Captain Michael M. McGrath, who designed the church, is standing in the left foreground with his hand in his coat.

(Courtesy National Archives)
POPLAR GROVE CHURCH, c. APRIL 1865

(Courtesy National Archives)
# APPENDIX III

**DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CAMP OF THE 50th NEW YORK VOLUNTEER ENGINEERS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC DIVISION LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC-B811-345</td>
<td>Views in the camp of the 50th New York Engineers in front of Petersburg, Virginia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-B811-3340</td>
<td>Commissary Department, 50th New York Engineers in front of Petersburg, Virginia, March 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-B817-7059</td>
<td>Headquarters, 50th New York Engineers in front of Petersburg, Virginia, November 1864.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-B817-7213</td>
<td>Officers' Quarters and Church, Camp of the 50th New York Engineers in front of Petersburg, Virginia, March 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC-B817-7167</td>
<td>Headquarters (Officers' quarters on left of church), 50th New York Engineers, March 1865.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No negative number: Surgeon's Quarters, Camp of the 50th New York Engineers in front of Petersburg, Virginia, November 1864.
APPENDIX IV

A PICTORIAL CONTRAST BETWEEN THE BURIAL PRACTICES
OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC IN THE COMBAT
AND REAR ZONES OF THE
PETERSBURG CAMPAIGN

PLATE LII

Burial Practices in the Combat Zone: Some Graves at Harrison
Station, Petersburg Lines, c. 1864-65. (Courtesy National Archives).
Burial Practices in the Rear Zone: Some Graves near City Point, Virginia, c. 1864-65. (Courtesy National Archives)
APPENDIX V
A LIST OF THE SUPERINTENDENTS
OF POPULAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superintendant</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Miller, August 1</td>
<td>August 20, 1867</td>
<td>October 5, 1876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lacy, H. C.</td>
<td>October 6, 1876</td>
<td>April 30, 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grant, B. L.</td>
<td>May 1, 1890</td>
<td>January 31, 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Baldwin, H. S. (Acting)</td>
<td>February 1, 1893</td>
<td>April 6, 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sullivan, A. D. (Acting)</td>
<td>April 7, 1893</td>
<td>December 11, 1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hill, Richard E.</td>
<td>December 12, 1893</td>
<td>November 5, 1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Leun, John</td>
<td>November 5, 1895</td>
<td>July 31, 1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Savage, T. H.</td>
<td>August 1, 1903</td>
<td>July 26, 1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hill, Richard E.</td>
<td>December 1, 1904</td>
<td>April 16, 1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Parkinson, H. L. (Acting)</td>
<td>April 17, 1905</td>
<td>May 17, 1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Hess, George</td>
<td>May 16, 1908</td>
<td>June 11, 1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ely, Robert E.</td>
<td>August 4, 1910</td>
<td>May 29, 1913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miller acted as clerk to the superintendent of the burial corps from April 1867 to July 1869.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Kinter, W. F.</td>
<td>July 17, 1917</td>
<td>December 15, 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Davis, William</td>
<td>February 1, 1919</td>
<td>September 2, 1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Lovelace, J. B.</td>
<td>September 3, 1919</td>
<td>September 7, 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Bieha, J. J., Jr. (Acting)</td>
<td>September 6, 1922</td>
<td>January 26, 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Tallman, John F.</td>
<td>January 27, 1923</td>
<td>April 10, 1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Bobbé, Joseph A.</td>
<td>April 11, 1926</td>
<td>August 5, 1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Jackson, Charles E.</td>
<td>November 17, 1927</td>
<td>December 11, 1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Green, William H. (Acting)</td>
<td>December 12, 1931</td>
<td>January 6, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Kavanagh, Felix E. (In charge)</td>
<td>August 4, 1933</td>
<td>August 9, 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Green, William H. (Acting)</td>
<td>August 10, 1933</td>
<td>September 4, 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Moore, Benjamin F.</td>
<td>September 5, 1933</td>
<td>September 30, 1949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 On August 10, 1933 Poplar Grove National Cemetery was transferred from the War Department to the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

3 The position of superintendent at Poplar Grove was abolished upon the retirement of Mr. Moore.
## APPENDIX VI

### A LIST OF THE KNOWN CONFEDERATE DEAD INTERRED IN POPULAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Co.</th>
<th>Regiment</th>
<th>Grave No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boyce, J.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1st Va. Inf.</td>
<td>1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdett, H. P.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>11th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decen, John</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>12th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatten, George</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1st Va. Cav.</td>
<td>4592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green, W. H.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, James M.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>5th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly, J.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>3rd Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parker, James</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>5th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rand, J.</td>
<td>Pvt.</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>11th Va. Inf.</td>
<td>4617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above, there are twenty-three unknown Confederate dead interred in Popular Grove National Cemetery.
APPENDIX VII

LAND STATUS OF

POPLAR GROVE NATIONAL CEMETERY

Deed of April 3, 1868

This Deed made this third day of April in the year, eighteen hundred & sixty eight by reddly T. Johnson, Special Commissioner of one part, to the United States of America of the other part.

Whereas the REV. Thomas B. Flower heretofore in his life time was seized and possessed of a certain tract of land in Dinwiddie County Virginia, which tract was conveyed to him by Deed of John Flower and wife, dated April 25, 1856, and duly recorded among the Land Records of Dinwiddie County; And whereas the said Thomas B. departed this life intestate leaving a widow Rebecca T. Flower – and James T. Flower – Archibald Flower – and Joseph Flower, heirs at law and who are infants:

And whereas the Secretary of War did enter upon and take possession of a portion of said tract for a National Cemetery, according to the provisions of an Act of Congress, entitled an Act to establish & protect National Cemeteries, approved Febry 22, 1867, he being unable to agree with the said executors of said land upon the price to be paid therefor, which parcel of land lies near Petersburg, Virginia and is now occupied and known as Poplar Grove Cemetery.

And whereas the said Rebecca T. Flower and the said infant heirs at Law by George Wickes their Guardian did apply to the District Court of the United States for the District of Virginia, to have the said land so appropriated appraised, according to the provisions of said Act of Congress, which the said Court then and there did. And whereas the appraisers so appointed did appraise said property so taken & appropriated to be worth fifteen hundred Dollars, which appraisal was duly ratified by the Court on the third day of April 1868.

And whereas the said Court by its decree passed on the said third day of April 1868 – did appoint reddly T. Johnson Special Commissioner to convey all the right title and interest of the said Rebecca T. Flower, James T. Flower, Archibald Flower, and Joseph L. Flower, of in or out of said parcel of land, so taken, appropriated and appraised to the United States of America, to be used for a National Cemetery and that their Secretary of War should pay over to said reddly T. Johnson the sum of Fifteen Hundred Dollars, the appraised value of said parcel of land, which said reddly Johnson should bring

---

1From Rock, XIII, 129, Dinwiddie County Records. Dinwiddie Court House, Dinwiddie, Virginia.
into Court to be distributed according to the orders of said Court.

Now therefore the said Bradley T. Johnson, in consideration of the premises, and the payment to him of said sum of fifteen hundred dollars as aforesaid doth grant unto the United States of America all that piece or parcel of land near Petersburg, Virginia, being part of the tract conveyed by John Flower to Thomas B. Flower, lying in Dinwiddie County, occupied as a National Cemetery, and known as "Poplar Grove Cemetery", as described marked out and surveyed on a plat of the same, filed as part of the report of the appraisers in the District Court of the United States, in the Petition of Rebecca T. Flower & others for Appraisers, as by reference thereto will fully appear, and which is to be considered part of this instrument of writing.

Beginning at a point A, and running South, twenty one degrees ten minutes west, one hundred & ten & three tenth feet; Thence North seventy six degrees, twenty four minutes west, two hundred and ninety four and one half feet; Thence North, seventeen degrees twenty minutes East, two hundred and ten feet; Thence South seventy six degrees twenty four minutes East, a distance of one hundred feet; Thence North seventeen degrees twenty minutes East, three hundred and seventy two and six tenths feet, Thence South seventy five degrees fifty minutes East, six hundred and fifty nine, and six tenths feet; Thence South, sixteen degrees thirty three minutes West, four hundred and seventy eight feet; Thence North, seventy six degrees, twenty four minutes west, a distance of four hundred and fifty one and seven tenths feet to the place of beginning. Enclosing eight acres and thirteen hundredths of an acre.

And the said Bradley T. Johnson as Special Commissioner appointed by above recited decree doth hereby grant all the rights, title and interest of the said parties of & in account of said parcel of land to the United States of America to be used as a National Cemetery forever.

Witness my hand & seal
this third day of April 1869.

(sig) Bradley T. Johnson. (sscl)

Witness

(sig) Geo H. Boway.

91
State of Virginia

City of Richmond

Set on this third day of April 1868 before me, a Notary Public of
said City & State personally appeared said Bradley T. Johnson in
my said City and whose name is signed to the writing above bearing
date of April third 1868 — and acknowledged the same before me in
my City aforesaid.

Certified & given under my hand this day & year above
written.

(sig) John Jones, Sr. —
Notary Public

In the Clerk's Office of Dinwiddie County Court.
Dec 15 1868.
This Deed from Bradley T. Johnson to Special Com., to the United States
was this day lodged in said office and with the certificate annexed
admitted to record.

Test.

(sign) A. Milligan, C.J.

____________________

Deed of April 30, 1877
(Farley Purchase)

This deed made this 30th day of April in the year Eighteen
Hundred and Seventy seven, between J. Wesley Friend, Commissioner,
appointed for the purpose hereinafter mentioned, of the one part,
and the United States of America of the other part,

WITNESSETH, that whereas at the April term of the Circuit
Court of Dinwiddie County in the State of Virginia in the year 1877,
it was among other things adjudged ordered and decreed in the suit in
Chancery therein pending styled "Friend, guardian vs. Farleys &
others," that J. Wesley Friend who was thereby appointed a Special
Commissioner for the purpose, be, and thereby was authorized to make
sale of the trust of Land in the bill in said suit mentioned (which
is the same hereinafter described and mentioned) at the price of
thirty dollars, and upon receipt of the purchase money to make a deed
with Special Warranty conveying the said trust of land to the pur-
chaser, and


2Deed Book, 437, 428, Dinwiddie County Records, Dinwiddie
Court House, Dinwiddie, Virginia.
WHEREAS the United States of America has become the purchaser thereof at the said sum of Thirty Dollars,

NOW, THEREFORE in consideration of the premises, and of the said sum of Thirty Dollars cash in hand paid by the said United States of America, to the said J. Wesley Friend, Special Commissioner as aforesaid, doth grant and convey with special warranty unto the said United States of America the following property, to wit:

A certain tract, piece or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Prince Edward in the State of Virginia adjoining the Poplar Grove National Cemetery, being a part of the lands thereof Francis B. Farley died seized and possessed, and bounded as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a pine tree, a proved and marked corner to this and the Flowers tract; thence with the dividing line between this and the Flowers tract S 21°30' E 10 feet to a stake, a corner to the land to be conveyed; thence S 68°45' E, 475 feet to a stake; thence N 16°30' E, 10 feet to a stake in the dividing line between this and the Flowers tract; thence with the said dividing line and with the South East side of the National Cemetery N 68°45' W, 475 feet to the place of beginning and containing 0.3919 of an acre.

WITNES: the following signature and seal.

(egl) J. Wesley Friend (seal)
Special Commissioner

STATE OF VIRGINIA
City of Petersburg

I, Ro. Gillian Jr., a Notary Public in and for the City of Petersburg in the State of Virginia do hereby certify that J. Wesley Friend, Special Commissioner whose name is signed to the foregoing writing bearing date on the 30th day of April 1877, has acknowledged the same before me in my City aforesaid.

Given under my hand this 30th day of April 1877.

(egl) Ro. Gillian, Jr.
Notary Public
Deed of April 30, 1877

(Fower Purchase)

This Deed was this 30th day of April in the year Eighteen hundred and seventy seven between J. Wesley Friend, Commissioner appointed for the purposes hereinafter mentioned of the one part, and the United States of America of the other part,

WITNESSETH, that whereas, at the October term of the Circuit Court of the County of Dinwiddie in the State of Virginia, in the year 1877, it was seen, other things adjured, ordered and decreed, in the suit in Chancery, therein pending styled, Friend, guardian & others v. Flowers & others, that said J. Wesley Friend, who was thereby appointed a special Commissioner for the purpose, make sale of the portion of land in the Bill in said suit mentioned (which is the same hereinafter described and conveyed) at the price of seventy dollars, to the said United States of America, and upon receipt of the purchase money make a deed with special warranty, conveying the said tract of land by metes and bounds, as in the Bill specified to the purchaser thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and of the said sum of seventy dollars, cash in hand paid by the said United States of America, to the said J. Wesley Friend, special Commissioner as aforesaid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, the said J. Wesley Friend, special Commissioner as aforesaid, doth grant and convey with special warranty unto the said United States of America, the following property, to wit: a certain tract, piece or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Dinwiddie, in the State of Virginia, adjoining the Poplar Grove National Cemetery, being a part of the land thereof Thomas F. Flower, died, seized and possessed, and bounded as follows to wit, beginning at a stake in the dividing line between this and the Fairley's tract, and bearing N 21° 30' E, 120.3 feet from a small tree, it being the original corner to the two tracts of land owned by Fower's and Fairley's, and running thence N 65° 45' W 300 feet to a stake, thence N 17° 45' E 230 feet to a stake, thence S 68° 45' E 189 feet to a stake, thence N 17° 45' W 374 feet to a stake, thence S 69° 3 673.5 feet to a stake, thence S 18° 30' W 490.3 feet to a stake in the dividing line between this and the Fairley's tract, thence with the said dividing line N 65° 45' W 10 feet to a stake, it being the south east corner of the enclosing fence of the National Cemetery, thence with the several sides of the National Cemetery designated by the enclosing picket fence, the bearings and distances being as follows: N 18° 30' W 654.3 feet, S 69° 3 673.5 feet, S 17° 45' W 374.3 feet, N 65° 45' W 

3 Deed Book XIV, 459, Dinwiddie County Records, Dinwiddie County Court House, Dinwiddie, Virginia.
100 feet, S 17°45' W 210 feet, S 65°45' E 296.5 feet to the place of beginning, and containing 0.5019 of an acre, together with a right of way over and along the road as at present used from the public road to the said National Cemetery, and running over the land belonging to the said Flowers.

Witness the following signature and seal:

J. Wesley Friend (seal)
Special Commissioner

STATE OF VIRGINIA
City of Petersburg, to wit:

I, Ro. Gilliam, Jr., a Notary Public, in and for the City of Petersburg, in the State of Virginia, do hereby certify that J. Wesley Friend, Special Commissioner, whose name is signed to the foregoing writing, bearing date on the 30th day of April 1877, has acknowledged the same before me in my city aforesaid.

Given under my hand this 30th day of April 1877.

(rgd) Ro. Gilliam, Jr.
Notary Public

Virginia: In the clerk’s office of Dinwiddie County Court,
October 15th 1877.

This deed of bargain and sale from J. Wesley Friend,
Special Commissioner, to the United States of America, was this day lodged in the said office and with the certificate and plat annexed admitted to record.

Test: A. M. Orgain, C.C.

MAP
Describing the Outlines of the Land Obtained
by the U. S. for the Poplar Grove
National Cemetery by Three
several deeds of conveyance.4

4The Map described appears on the "Final Boundary 1877" on the Historical Land States Map accompanying this Appendix.
Beginning at "A" a stone set in the dividing line between the Parley's and the Flower's lots and 10 ft from a cotton tree, the acknowledged corner to the two lots; thence S 21°30' W 110.3' to "B", a stone; thence N 68°45' E 95' to "C" a stone; thence N 76°24' W 175' to "D" a stone; thence N 17°20' E 223' to "E" a stone; thence N 68°45' W 17' to "F" a stone; thence N 17°45' E 230' to "G" a stone; thence S 63°45' E 100' to "H" a stone; thence N 17°45' E 375' to "I" a stone; thence S 69° E 419' to "K" a stone; thence S 75°50' E 258' to "L" a stone; thence S 16°33' W 30' to "M" a stone; thence S 69° E 20' to "N" a stone; thence S 18°30' W 500.3' to "O" a stone; thence S 68° 45' S 173.5' to "A", the beginning.

Survey of road. Beginning at a point in the northern boundary line of the Cemetery land distant from the corner post marked "F" 134'; thence N 58° W 165'; thence N 35°20' W 65.4'; thence N 22°50' W 188.5'; thence N 15°30' W 182.8'; thence N 11°30' W 86.8'; thence N 5° W 196.4'; thence N 2° S 196.6'; thence N 12° E 138' more or less to the county road.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Manuscript Materials

- Dinwiddie Court House, Dinwiddie, Virginia, Dinwiddie County Records, Deed Book, Vols. VIII, XII, & XIV.
- Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Dinwiddie County, Virginia. Records.

Government Publications


United States Statutes at Large. Vols. XII, XIV, & XVII.


Newspapers

The Petersburg Advertiser, 1865.

The Petersburg Index, 1868-70.
Diaries and Letters


SECONDARY SOURCES

Books


Articles


"Expansion of the National Cemetery System, 1890-1930," The Quartermaster Review, XXXII (September-October 1953), 29-21, 131-137.

