
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2010

Revised: 3/2025



Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Poplar Grove National Cemetery

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Resource Classification:	Cultural Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	300216
Parent Landscape:	300216
Inventory Status:	Complete

Park Information

Park Name:	Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Alpha Code:	POGR
Park Organization Code:	4779
Park District:	POGR
Region:	Northeast
Restricted:	Yes

Landscape Description:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery, located south of Petersburg in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, was established in 1866 to inter the thousands of fallen Union soldiers from the Petersburg Campaign (1864-1865) and other nearby Civil War battles in southeastern Virginia. Built on the site of the wartime camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers, the cemetery takes its name from the camp's central feature, a rustic timber building called Poplar Grove Church. The federal government established the cemetery as part of the first systematic national effort to provide burial grounds for those who died in service to the country. The U.S. War Department administered the cemetery and nearby Petersburg National Military Park until 1933, when it transferred both properties to the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior. Poplar Grove is today one of fourteen of the nation's 142 national cemeteries within the National Park System.

Accessed along a 1,000-foot long approach road flanked by working agricultural fields, Poplar Grove National Cemetery contains approximately 6,188 Civil War burials in its brick-wall enclosed eight-acre site. Approximately thirty-five percent of the burials are marked by white marble headstones inscribed with grave number and the name and company of the soldier. Most of the graves at Poplar Grove contain the remains of unidentified soldiers and are marked by simple square posts inscribed only with the grave number. Poplar Grove remains predominantly a Civil War cemetery with only sixty graves containing veterans of later wars. Closed to new burials in 1957, Poplar Grove still receives reinterment of Civil War remains, the most recent occurring in 2003.

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is located on the western edge of the Virginia Tidewater region between Richmond and the North Carolina border, approximately 135 miles south of Washington, D.C. and seventy-five miles west of the Chesapeake Bay. The cemetery is five miles southwest of downtown Petersburg in a transitional rural-suburban area surrounded by second-growth woods, farm fields, and residential development. Poplar Grove is administered as part of Petersburg National Battlefield, a park with multiple components on the outskirts of the city. The cemetery is stop 11 on the park's Siege Line Tour, which begins at the park's main area on the east side of Petersburg and extends south and west along the line of Union fortifications that encircled the city. The cemetery is accessed from an approach road that leads across farm fields to the main gates. Within its rectangular boundaries, Poplar Grove features a circular plan with graves and drives radiating out from a central point marked by a flagstaff. This plan is

today not readily visible because the National Park Service transformed the marble headstones and blocks into flat markers in 1934. Despite this, many other historic features remain intact, including a stone Second Empire-style superintendent's lodge, iron rostrum (bandstand), Colonial Revival-style restroom building and garage, a gun monument (upright cannon), central flagstaff, and a brick inclosure (perimeter) wall with granite and iron entrance gates. The cemetery includes boxwood, magnolia, holly, oak, and loblolly pine that are remnants of a once richly planted landscape.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Pre-Cemetery Period, To 1866:

The site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, situated south of the Appomattox River near the Fall Line dividing Virginia's plateau and tidewater regions, was part of what European explorers called "Apamatica Country." At the time of European contact in the seventeenth century, the region was a border area for several Native peoples, including the Eastern Siouan, Southern Iroquois, and the Appomattox. European settlement in the region began in the late eighteenth century based on the plantation system with Petersburg as the central commercial and industrial center. On the eve of the Civil War, the site of the cemetery, covered in second-growth loblolly pine forest, was part of a ninety-acre farm owned by the Flower family.

In 1864 during the closing years of the Civil War, the Union Army built an extensive line of earthen fortifications as part of its siege on the city of Petersburg. In late October 1864 following Union victory at the nearby Battle of Peeble's Farm, the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers, who were responsible for construction of the fortifications, established their camp on the Flower farm. Here at the future site of the cemetery, the engineers built an elaborate camp organized around a central parade grounds that included rustic wooden officers' quarters, barracks, and a meeting hall named Poplar Grove Church in honor of the church lost in the Battle of Peeble's Farm. The engineers occupied the camp until March 29, 1865. The camp buildings remained on the site for at least a year following the end of the Civil War on April 9, 1865.

Establishment Period, 1866-1869:

In May 1866, the Army selected the engineers' camp on the Flower farm as the site for a national cemetery, one of eleven national cemeteries in the Virginia district. The cemetery was named Poplar Grove after the engineers' Poplar Grove Church, which initially served as the focal point of the cemetery. The plan for the seven-acre cemetery, connected to the public highway (Vaughan Road) by a 1,052-foot long approach road through the fields of the Flower farm, consisted of graves in concentric circles around a central flagstaff, positioned on axis with Poplar Grove Church. By June 1, 1866, the cemetery was officially established as bodies were brought to the site from nearby battlefields by a force of upwards of one hundred men who were together known as the burial corps. The burial corps removed most of the old camp buildings by June 1, 1866, but kept many of the loblolly pines that surrounded the camp. By June 1867, most of the grave sites in the cemetery had been filled, with total reinterments numbering 5,196.

For the following three years that it worked at Poplar Grove, the burial corps continued to reinter a small number of remains while developing the cemetery landscape. This work included building a wood perimeter fence, sodding grave mounds, putting up wooden headboards, erecting a central flagstaff on a six-foot high mound encircled by four gun monuments, planting red cedar trees, and building drives, walks, drains, and a frame lodge for the superintendent. In the spring of 1868, the burial corps removed the namesake of the cemetery, Poplar Grove Church, which had become deteriorated beyond repair. One acre was added to the cemetery at its southwest corner, and on December 15, 1868, the government completed its acquisition of the 8.13-acre parcel from the Flower family. On June 30, 1869, the burial corps at Poplar Grove National Cemetery was officially disbanded, having interred a total of 6,178 Union soldiers and five civilians; only thirty-five percent of these remains were positively identified.

War Department Period, 1869-1933:

After the burial corps was disbanded, administration was assumed by the U.S. War Department, which continued to develop the cemetery landscape through the Office of the Quartermaster General and on-site supervision of a cemetery superintendent. The development of the landscape and buildings was standardized throughout the national cemetery system and adapted to local conditions as necessary. Standard improvements at Poplar Grove included a stone Second Empire-style lodge (1871-72) based on a prototype designed by Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, elm trees planted in the form of a cross (1871), perimeter hedge of Osage orange and boxwood hedge in the shape of a Maltese cross (1871), brick inclosure wall with granite and iron gateway (1876), marble headstones for known graves and marble blocks for unknown graves (1877), settees (c.1878), approach road allee (1878), brick toolshed-stable and kitchen buildings (1879), and iron tablets (c.1881). Some changes had been made to features

built by the burial corps between 1866 and 1869, including moving of the frame lodge to the rear of the new lodge in 1872, changing the surface of the drives and walks from gravel to turf in c.1872-74, and filling of brick gutters in 1877. By 1881, the War Department completed its program of major improvements for Poplar Grove.

For the following four decades, the War Department made few improvements to the landscape, with the exception of an iron rostrum added in 1897. Some landscape features were changed during this time, including removal of the Osage orange hedge in c.1888 and replacement with English ivy, graveling of the main drive in c.1900, and installation of an iron flagstaff and removal of the flagstaff mound in 1913. In 1915, a tornado swept across the cemetery, resulting in the loss of 139 trees. With the establishment of Petersburg National Military Park in 1926, the War Department began to plan for a series of improvements at Poplar Grove. This program resulted in the building of a Colonial Revival-style public restroom building and new garage in 1929; and in 1931, modernization of the lodge with a metal roof, planting of 101 trees, paving of the approach road and main drive, and installation of a new iron flagstaff.

National Park Service Period, 1933-Present:

On August 10, 1933, administration of Poplar Grove National Cemetery and Petersburg National Battlefield was transferred from the Quartermaster Corps in the War Department to the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior. Administration was initially carried out through the Superintendent of Colonial National Monument until December 1935, when the cemetery was placed under the newly appointed Superintendent of Petersburg National Military Park. From 1933 through c.1942, maintenance and improvement of the cemetery was aided by labor from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). During this time, the landscape was radically changed when, in February and March 1934, the park transformed the upright grave markers into flat markers to facilitate mowing and to enhance the appearance of the cemetery. The park received public criticism over the change, which did not ease maintenance as anticipated. In 1937, CCC crews planted 115 red cedars, mostly as screening along the perimeter of the cemetery, and repaired the inclosure wall.

After World War II, maintenance at the cemetery declined following the park's decision to abolish the position of cemetery superintendent in 1949. Maintenance of the cemetery fell to the small staff of Petersburg National Battlefield. Without an on-site superintendent and CCC laborers, the condition of the cemetery deteriorated, and by the 1950s, the park was again facing public criticism over the grave markers, many of which were not visible because they had sunken and become covered with grass. In 1957, as part of its Mission 66 program, the park made modest improvements to the cemetery by raising the headstones above grade level and installing two new signs to either side of the flagstaff that showed the burial register and the plan of the cemetery. That same year, the last new burial was made and the cemetery was official closed. No additional improvements were made to the landscape, which continued to erode through the loss of small-scale features and vegetation. In c.1974, the park removed the settees, boxwood Maltese cross hedge, and three of the four gun monuments, and cut the height of the flagstaff in half.

By the early 1970s, suburban development had begun to encroach on the setting of Poplar Grove. In c.1972, a drive was built from the approach road along the northern boundary of the cemetery to two houses constructed within seventy-five feet of the east wall. Four years later, the park began to plan for a program of improvements to the buildings and landscape, including the acquisition of eighteen surrounding acres to protect the setting of the cemetery and place the approach road in federal ownership. Apparently due to lack of funds, these plans were not implemented, although the property acquisition was eventually advanced. In 1987, a plan for acquiring a smaller amount of land—3.7 wooded acres to the west of the cemetery along with a section of the approach road—was proposed by the park. The National Park Foundation, a not-for-profit advocacy group, acquired this land in 1991 with the intent of transferring ownership to the National Park Service. Although this transfer did not occur as planned, the park went ahead with construction of a visitor parking lot on the parcel in c.1995, adjoining the cemetery entrance gates. In recent years, the park has maintained the landscape, but without an infusion of resources, the grave markers, vegetation, and visitor facilities have continued to deteriorate.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Based on review of the draft "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery" by the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office on July 16, 2009, Poplar Grove is significant under Criterion A in the area of military history and Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture. In the area of military history, Poplar Grove is significant for its intimate association with the Civil War and as a component of the National Cemetery System. In the area of landscape architecture, Poplar Grove is significant for illustrating the initial development of the National Cemetery System through the early 1880s and its subsequent development through the 1930s under War Department administration. Poplar Grove National Cemetery also meets Criteria Consideration D – Cemeteries, because as a

national cemetery, it has been designated by Congress as a primary memorial to the military history of the United States.

Under Criterion A, the cemetery has an overall period of significance dating from its founding in 1866 through the last burial in 2003; this period may be extended if reinterment of Civil War remains occurs in the future. The period of significance for the landscape extends from 1866 through the end of the War Department period in 1933 under National Register Criterion C.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is defined by ten important landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological features. The landscape is characterized by the geometrically designed open space bounded by the hard edge of the rectangular inclosure wall. Inside the brick wall, the predominant view is of mowed turf with specimen trees and shrubs scattered throughout the landscape. Many of the trees are concentrated along the inclosure wall, the main drive, and around the loop at the terminus of the main drive. The headstones were altered from their upright position to the current configuration of flush with the ground in the 1930s. This creates a pastoral appearance due to the scant visual impact of the flush and partially grass-covered grave markers. Four major structures exist in the cemetery, three of which are clustered at the cemetery entrance, a square shaped bump-out on the southwest corner of the larger rectangular burial grounds landscape. These historic buildings include the Lodge, the Garage, and the Public Restroom. The rostrum, a gazebo-like pavilion at the eastern edge of the site, is the only structure within the burial grounds. Formal circulation systems are few. The main drive to the flagstaff is the only paved route in the burial grounds. Grass walkways that were once well defined by the radial pattern of the grave stones have been obscured by the lowering of the stones.

While many historic characteristics remain at Poplar Grove, there have been substantial changes since 1933. Historic character has been lost in the landscape's spatial organization through the growth of forest trees on fields in the cemetery's setting; in vegetation through the loss of most of the trees along the approach road allée, Maltese cross hedge, specimen trees, and shrubs; in views and vistas through growth of woods and specimen trees that block views upon approach to the cemetery and of the central flagstaff from within the burial grounds; and most notably, in small-scale features through removal of iron tablets, gun monuments, and upright grave markers.

Poplar Grove National Cemetery retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association, but lacks integrity of feeling. As a whole, the cemetery landscape conveys its significance for association with the Civil War and as a component of the National Cemetery System as initially developed during the post-Civil War period through the early twentieth century under War Department administration. While the diminished aspects of integrity detract from the historic details of the property, Poplar Grove National Cemetery retains its overall historic physical form. The individual graves interred after 1933 also remain intact during the overall historic period associated with the National Cemetery System that extends until the last new burial was interred in 2003.

The landscape of Poplar Grove National Cemetery is in fair condition. The poor condition of the turf, ongoing drainage concerns, and repointing needed on the perimeter wall require corrective action within three to five years to prevent further harm to the cultural landscape. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is one of six cultural landscapes identified at Petersburg National Battlefield. The others are Eastern Front, Five Forks, Grant's Headquarters at City Point, Petersburg Battlefield landscape, and Western Front. The Eastern Front landscape includes three component landscapes: Crater, Fort Stedman, and Initial Assault Battlefield.

Landscape Type:

Historic Designed Landscape

Other Names:

Other Name:	Poplar Grove National Cemetery	Other Name Type:	Both Current And Historic
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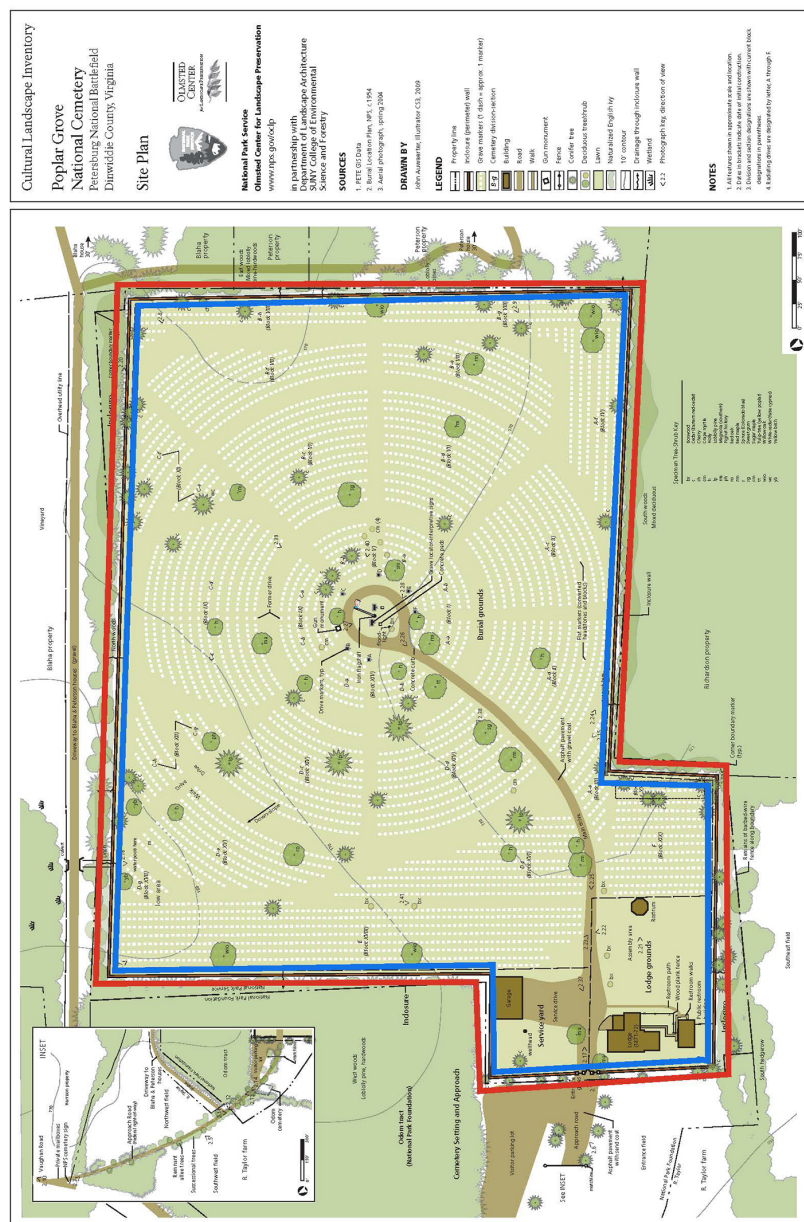
Site Plan



Site plan for Poplar Grove National Cemetery (SUNY ESF, 2009).

Poplar Grove National Cemetery

Poplar Grove National Cemetery



The red polygon indicates the area impacted by the visual intrusions of dead and dying trees along the perimeter of the cemetery. The blue polygon indicates the area impacted by the following agents: deferred maintenance, improper drainage, planting practices, and pruning practices.

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/09/2010

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Level 0 establishes the park in the CLAIMS database. Further information will be added as the Cultural Landscapes Inventory is completed at Level I and II.

Historical documentation and field work were conducted for the project, "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery," which was completed in 2009. Julia Steele, Cultural Resource Manager, is the contact at Petersburg National Battlefield (804-732-0171 x 305).

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Petersburg National Battlefield

Petersburg National Battlefield concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Poplar Grove National Cemetery including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

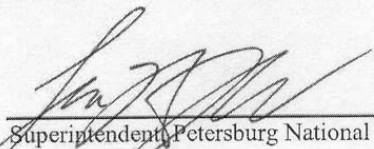
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Poplar Grove National Cemetery is hereby approved and accepted.



Superintendent, Petersburg National Battlefield

9/9/10

Date

Park concurrence on the findings of this CLI was received on September 9, 2010.

Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Poplar Grove National Cemetery



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

L. Preston Bryant, Jr.
Secretary of Natural Resources

Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221-0311

Kathleen S. Kilpatrick
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
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www.dhr.virginia.gov

July 16, 2009

Julia Steele
Cultural Resource Manager
Petersburg National Battlefield
5001 Siege Road
Petersburg, VA 23803

Re: Draft Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery
Dinwiddie County
DHR File No. 2007-1072

Dear Ms. Steele,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and with Ethel Eaton on April 3 and for providing us with a 95% draft copy of the *Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Petersburg National Battlefield* (CLR) dated October 2006 for our review and comment pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. DHR apologizes for the delay in our response.

We understand that this information was provided in order to obtain our concurrence on the categorization of contributing and non-contributing landscape characteristics and associated features of Poplar Grove National Cemetery. The report also has the objective of assisting in planning for the upcoming line item construction project 'Restore Facilities, Resources & Character Defining Elements to National Cemetery Standards.' The proposed construction project, which the CLR will guide, is intended to restore the property's historic character and improve visitor safety, orientation, and interpretation.

As you know, the Petersburg National Battlefield (DHR ID# 123-0071) was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, and Poplar Grove National Cemetery is a contributing resource. As such the cemetery must therefore be considered an historic property for the purposes of Section 106.

According to the *Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Petersburg National Battlefield*, the National Park Service (NPS) recommends that Poplar Grove National Cemetery is eligible under Criterion A in the area of military history for its intimate association with the Civil War, 1861-1865, and as a component of the National Cemetery System and is eligible also under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture. NPS

Administrative Services
10 Courthouse Avenue
Petersburg, VA 23803
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Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

SHPO concurrence letter, July 16, 2009 (3 pages).

recommends that the overall period of significance for Poplar Grove National Cemetery under Criterion A is identified as 1866-2003, and the period of significance for the landscape is 1866-1933. The CLR identified a total of fifty-six (56) features. Thirty-three (33) were evaluated as contributing; twenty-two (22) were evaluated as non-contributing, and one (1) feature was identified but not evaluated. (*See attached list.*) Based upon a review of the information provided, DHR concurs.

We look forward to receiving the final CLI report to include the Treatment section once it is available and continuing consultation on the proposed rehabilitation and restoration of Poplar Grove National Cemetery. We would appreciate receiving two (2) bound copies of the CLI for our review in accordance with our state survey guidelines. If we may provide any further assistance or if you have any questions about our comments, I may be reached via email at amanda.lee@dhr.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



M. Amanda Lee, Historic Preservationist
Office of Review and Compliance

C: Ethel Eaton, DHR

Contributing landscape features –
thirty (33)

- Natural Systems and Features
 - north inclosure woods
 - east inclosure woods
 - south inclosure woods
- Spatial Organization
 - cemetery approach
 - north field
 - south field
 - Odom Tract field
 - south pasture
 - cemetery inclosure space
 - lodge grounds
 - burial grounds
- Circulation
 - approach road
 - main drive
 - burial grounds drive
 - burial grounds walks
 - walk from lodge to restrooms
- Vegetation
 - specimen trees
 - specimen shrubs
 - cemetery lawn
- Buildings and Structures
 - inclosure and gateway
 - lodge
 - garage
 - public restroom building
 - rostrum
- Views and Vistas
 - vista of gateway from approach road
 - view of grave markers from flagstaff
 - vista of flagstaff from main drive
- Small-scale Features
 - stone-post corner boundary markers
 - Civil War-type grave markers
 - private/other grave markers
 - rectangular flat grave marker
 - gun monument

- Archaeological Sites
 - graves

Non-contributing landscape features –
twenty-two (22)

- Natural Systems and Features
 - triangular woodlot
 - Odom Tract woods
 - south inclosure hedgerow
- Spatial Organization
 - Odom cemetery and service yard
- Circulation
 - private driveway
 - visitor parking area
 - service drive
 - dirt path
- Vegetation
 - approach road allée
 - inclosure ivy groundcover
 - inclosure red cedars
- Buildings and Structures
 - flagstaff
- Small-Scale Features
 - entrance sign
 - barbed-wire fence
 - wood privacy fence between public restrooms and lodge
 - rectangular flat grave marker
 - general-type grave marker
 - radial drive markers
 - flagstaff floodlight
 - grave locator interpretive signs
 - miscellaneous contemporary small-scale features

Not evaluated landscape feature – one
(1)

- Small-scale Features
 - concrete square pads near flagstaff

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Update Certification Form
2025

Petersburg National Battlefield
Poplar Grove National Cemetery Cultural Landscape

Petersburg National Battlefield concurs with the update for the following CLI, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Fair – Poplar Grove National Cemetery Cultural Landscape

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI Update at Petersburg National Battlefield are hereby approved and accepted.

ALEXA VIETS Digitally signed by ALEXA VIETS
Date: 2025.03.25 14:17:30 -04'00'

Superintendent, Petersburg National Battlefield Date

Park concurrence form, March 25, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	03/25/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Poplar Grove National Cemetery CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Virginia	Dinwiddie County
Virginia	Petersburg City

Size (Acres): 8.7

Land Tract Number(s)

Boundary Description:

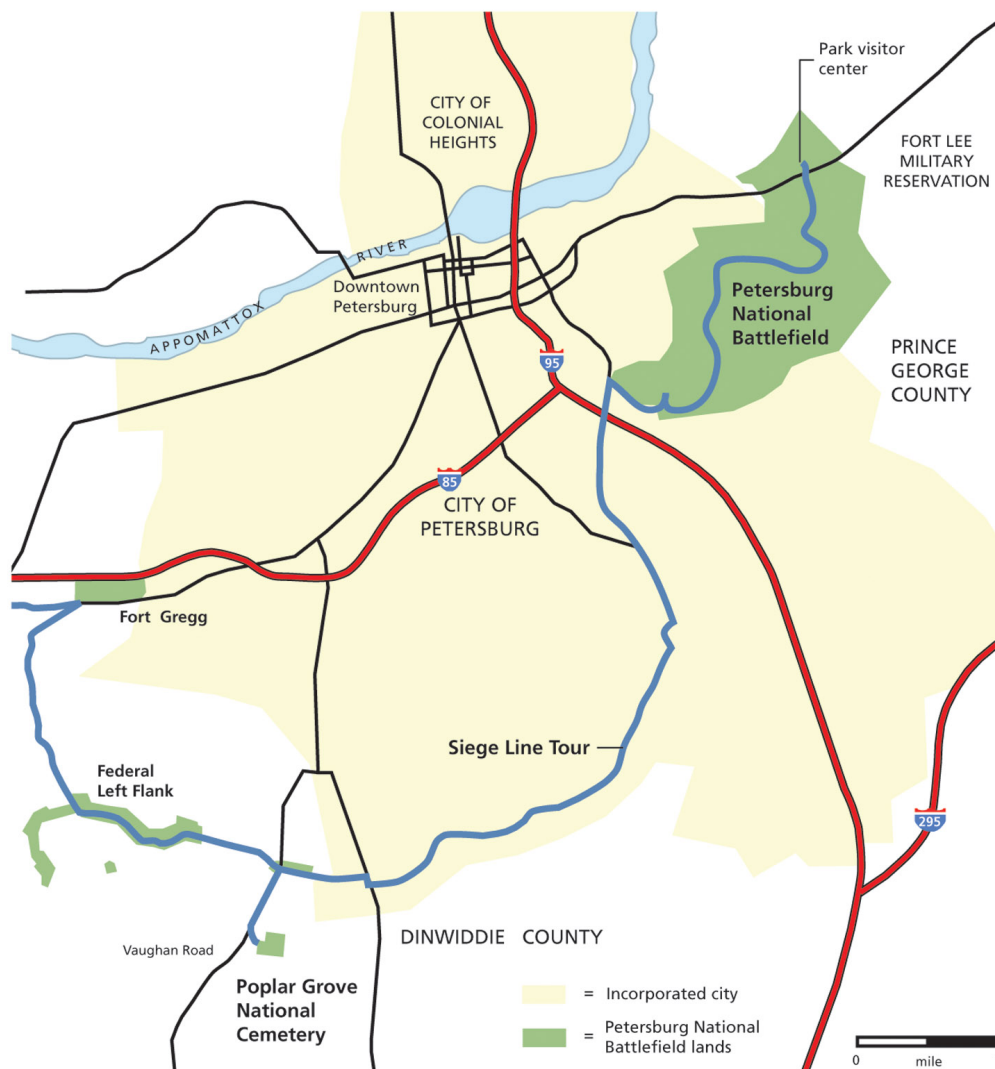
The Poplar Grove National Cemetery is rectangular in shape with a smaller rectangular bump-out at its southwest corner. Around the entire parcel, the property line sits several feet outside of the brick perimeter wall. Beginning at the entrance gates along the western side of the inclosure wall, the property boundary travels northwest and turns ninety degrees southeast to encompass the corner of the cemetery that is the location of the service yard. The boundary then turns ninety degrees northeast to create the straight northwestern side of the larger rectangular property, adjacent to the Odom tract. After another ninety-degree turn, the boundary runs southeast along the longest straight stretch of inclosure wall, bordering the driveway to the adjacent Blaha and Peterson properties. The geometric boundary turns ninety degrees and travels southwest as it borders the Blaha and Peterson properties. The boundary then turns ninety degrees at the Richardson property and travels in a straight line to the juncture of the bump-out at the western extents of the property. Block XIX and the Lodge Grounds are included in the portion of the property that extends west from the main rectangular parcel as the property borders the Richardson and Taylor properties. A ninety-degree turn northeast at the Taylor farm returns to the point of beginning.

For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory, the study boundary does not include lands that are not owned by the National Park Service. For this project, this includes adjacent National Park Foundation lands and privately-owned lands (R. Taylor, Blaha, Peterson, and Harrison).

Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
	Area	-77.428318268831	37.1607934019221	
	Area	-77.4269004579999	37.1604709946207	
	Area	-77.4273737032012	37.1590734516695	
	Area	-77.428896220416	37.1595018503087	
	Area	-77.4290338519062	37.1592286684694	
	Area	-77.4300081883329	37.1594159581571	
	Area	-77.4298166013585	37.1601138108628	
	Area	-77.4294871070644	37.1600214381926	

Location Map:



Location Map Information. Map of Petersburg National Battlefield, including Poplar Grove National Cemetery, Dinwiddie County, Virginia (PETE files).

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery was built on the site of a Union Army encampment that had been cleared of trees. The cemetery designers made use of this relatively flat, cleared land with soft soil. For much of the historic period, the site was surrounded on three sides by forests dominated by loblolly pine. The site is still largely surrounded by woods, although hardwoods now predominate. Some of the forest has been removed for suburban development.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Before the Civil War, the area now known as Poplar Grove National Cemetery was used for agriculture. The area was taken over by the Union Army during 1864 and 1865 for use as an engineers' camp. After the cessation of fighting, the War Department selected the site for a cemetery for deceased Union soldiers. It was administered by the War Department between 1869 and 1933 after which point it was transferred to the National Park Service for inclusion into Petersburg National Battlefield.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is a unit of Petersburg National Battlefield. It is located in Dinwiddie County, Virginia.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/09/2010

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery meets the management category, "Must be Preserved and Maintained" because it relates to the park's legislated significance of military history, specifically the Civil War.

Management Agreements:

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is bounded by several different landowners, who own land that is not included in the park boundary but contributes to the historic rural setting by providing bucolic views of surrounding agricultural context. The suburban properties of the Blaha and Richardson tracts, with their maintained turf and residential dwellings, do not contribute to the historic rural viewshed. However, the farm fields and forests that are adjacent to the driveway and along the south and west side of the property contribute to the historic context.

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: SHPO Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 as part of Petersburg National Battlefield. While this listing established the significance of the cemetery in the larger context of the Civil War and Petersburg Campaign, it did not address the cemetery's own intrinsic significance due to its designation by Congress as a primary memorial to the military history of the United States.

The current National Register listing for the Petersburg National Battlefield includes approximately 2,659 acres, four buildings, fifty-four structures, and two objects significant under the area of military history for association with the Civil War. The currently documented period of significance is 1850-1874, with key dates of 1864-1865 identified. The historic functions of battle site and cemetery are cited. The 1966 listing was made administratively and did not include adequate documentation. In 2006, National Register documentation for the entire park was advanced to an internal eighty percent draft. This draft proposed the extension of the park-wide period of significance to 1962, but did not specify a specific period of significance for Poplar Grove National Cemetery. The draft identified the cemetery as a contributing site with three buildings (lodge, restroom building, and garage), four structures (rostrum, inclosure wall, main drive, and flagstaff), and three objects (gun monument, radial avenue signs, and grave markers). In addition to significance in the area of military history under Criterion A, the draft also identified Poplar Grove as significant under Criterion C for its architecture and landscape architecture.

Aside from its listing as part of Petersburg National Battlefield, Poplar Grove National Cemetery meets the registration requirements of the National Register Multiple Property Listing "Civil War Era National Cemeteries" submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs and approved by the National Register in 1994. Since that time, fifty-four related Civil War-era national cemeteries administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs have been listed in the National Register according to the requirements of the Multiple Property Documentation. These include City Point, Cold Harbor, Culpeper, Fort Harrison, Glendale, Richmond, and Seven Pines National Cemeteries, which were developed at the same time as Poplar Grove and with many of the same standardized features. Because Poplar Grove is administered by the National Park Service, it has not been included as part of this Multiple Property Listing.

On July 16, 2009, the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed and commented on a October 2006 draft of the "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove Cemetery, Petersburg National Battlefield" (CLR), to assist in planning for a line item construction project, "Restore Facilities, Resources, and Character Defining Elements to National Cemetery Standards." The SHPO concurred with the findings of the CLR: that the Poplar Grove National Cemetery is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A in the area of military history for its intimate association with the Civil War (1861-1865) and as a component of the National Cemetery System, and under Criteria C in the area of landscape architecture. The SHPO also concurred with the overall period of significance for Poplar Grove National Cemetery under Criteria A as 1866-2003, and the period of significance for the landscape under Criteria C as 1866-1933, the end date of the War Department's administration of the cemetery. Additionally, the SHPO concurred with a list of 33 contributing features, 22 noncontributing features, and 1 undetermined feature.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the Poplar Grove National Cemetery is adequately documented based on the SHPO correspondence from July 16, 2009. The areas and periods of significance described in the SHPO letter are unchanged. Although the evaluation of five features has changed since the SHPO's review of the CLR, the site's other historic resources are adequately documented. A brief letter will be sent to the SHPO regarding the revised status of the seven features.

Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 07/16/2009

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Individual

Classification: Site

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

Based on review of the draft "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery" by the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office on July 16, 2009, Poplar Grove is significant under Criterion A in the area of military history and Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture. In the area of military history, Poplar Grove is significant for its intimate association with the Civil War and as a component of the National Cemetery System. In the area of landscape architecture, Poplar Grove is significant for illustrating the initial development of the National Cemetery System through the early 1880s and its subsequent development through the 1930s under War Department administration. Poplar Grove National Cemetery also meets Criteria Consideration D – Cemeteries, because as a national cemetery, it has been designated by Congress as a primary memorial to the military history of the United States.

Under Criterion A, the cemetery has an overall period of significance dating from its founding in 1866 through the last burial in 2003; this period may be extended if reinterment of Civil War remains occurs in the future. The period of significance for the landscape extends from 1866 through the end of the War Department period in 1933 under National Register Criterion C.

The following statement of significance has been extracted from the final draft of the "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery," dated 2009, pages 158-162.

CRITERION A

Military History:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery derives its primary significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of military history for its intimate association with the Civil War and as a component of the National Cemetery System. This area of significance is presently documented in the Multiple Property Documentation, "Civil War Era National Cemeteries":

"The Civil War-era national cemeteries were created originally to afford a decent resting place for those who fell in the defense of the Union. These cemeteries began the ongoing effort to honor and memorialize eternally the fighting forces who have and continue to defend our nation. Today, the entire national cemetery system symbolizes, in its gracious landscapes and marble headstones, both the violence of the struggle and the healing aftermath. The Civil War era national cemeteries are nationally significant under Criterion A, both for their symbolic and physical representation of that war, and for representing the origins of the National Cemetery System (Sammartino, 1994:3)."

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is associated with the Civil War, particularly the Petersburg Campaign, through its interment of approximately 6,188 soldiers who died in the war. The majority of these soldiers were reinterred at the cemetery from nearby battlefields and hospital cemeteries in the years between 1866 and 1869. The cemetery site, located in the rear zone of the Federal Left Flank, was the wartime camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers who were responsible for construction of Union fortifications. The cemetery was named in honor of the central feature of this camp, Poplar Grove Church, which in turn was named for a nearby church damaged in the Battle of Poplar Springs Church. Although the church and most all other camp structures were removed during the initial development of the cemetery between 1866 and 1869, the association of the cemetery with the camp remains through its name and location. Loblolly pines, although few in number today, were a prominent feature in the landscape of the engineers' camp (CLR 2009:158-159).

In addition to its direct association with the Civil War, Poplar Grove derives military significance from association with the National Cemetery System, and in particular as a component of the system's initial

development in the years following the Civil War. Poplar Grove was one of twenty-one national cemeteries established in 1866, which together with several established during the war formed the basis of the National Cemetery System. Poplar Grove is also significant for its continued use as a national cemetery for veterans through 1957, and its continued use for reinterment of Civil War remains discovered in the battlefields surrounding Petersburg, most recently in 2003. Although post-Civil War interments, numbering approximately sixty, constitute less than one percent of all burials, these later burials are significant according to the National Register Criteria. Poplar Grove reflects its association with the National Cemetery System through its landscape, with its standardized features, although the conversion of the headstones and blocks to flat markers in 1934 detracts from the landscape's historic integrity under Criterion A (CLR 2009:159-160).

Overall Period of Significance, 1866-2003:

The overall period of significance for Poplar Grove extends from its establishment in 1866 through its most recent burial—reinterment of three Civil War remains—in 2003. Poplar Grove was closed to new burials in 1957, but remains open for the reinterment of Civil War remains discovered in the battlefields of Petersburg. According to the National Register Criteria, the fifty-year threshold for significance does not apply to National Cemeteries: "...Because these cemeteries draw their significance from the presence of remains of military personnel who have served the country throughout its history, the age of the cemetery is not a factor in judging eligibility, although integrity must be present." The Keeper of the National Register has interpreted this statement to mean that the period of significance for National Cemeteries extends until the last burial, including reinterments. The overall period of significance for Poplar Grove (1866-2003) applies to its significance under Criterion A (CLR 2009:162).

The years prior to the establishment of the cemetery in 1866, encompassing development of the site as the camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers in 1865-1865 is not included in the period of significance because the property does not retain integrity from that time (CLR 2009:162).

CRITERION C

Landscape Architecture:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture for illustrating the initial development of the National Cemetery System through the early 1880s and its subsequent development through the early 1930s under continued War Department administration. This area of significance is documented in the Multiple Property Listing, "Civil War-Era National Cemeteries," which identifies significance derived from the role of Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs in the design of built features; rostrums as a manifestation of the beginnings of Memorial Day observances; and the lodges, headstones, and inclosure walls as characteristic features. With regard to the landscape, the Multiple Property Documentation states: "The Civil War era national cemeteries are...nationally significant under Criterion C for embodying an important and commonly recognized landscape design and for establishing certain landscape features that have been retained for over 100 years...The serene national cemeteries offer perpetual testimony of the concern of a grateful nation that the lives and services of members of the Armed Forces, who served their nation well, will be appropriately commemorated (Sammaritino, 1994:3)."

Poplar Grove National Cemetery was laid out in a circular plan in 1866, and by 1869, the vast majority of the grave sites were filled and marked by wooden headboards. A mounded flagstaff, four gun monuments, and a circulation system of gravel and brick-gutter lined drives was completed by this time. Under the direction of the cemetery superintendent, a number of flowerbeds were also established. The cemetery was shaded by loblolly pine and was set back from the public road across agricultural fields and accessed by a thousand-foot long approach road. Over the course of the next decade into the early 1880s, the War Department implemented a program of development and beautification that resulted in the addition of a Second Empire-style stone lodge and brick inclosure wall designed according to prototypes by Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs; a fifty-six foot tall wooden flagstaff; a series of outbuildings; white marble grave markers with headstones for known burials and blocks for unknown burials; settees; iron tablets citing regulations and four-line verses from the poem "The Bivouac of the Dead;" and a planting program that included hundreds of specimen trees and shrubs, mostly placed informally as specimens, but also as an allee along the approach road, a sylvan hall of elms, an allee of boxwood, a perimeter Osage orange hedge, and a boxwood Maltese cross. Although the plantings and building materials reflected local

conditions, overall these improvements reflected standardization intended to create uniformity among units of the National Cemetery System, and to provide a recognizable federal presence. In overall effect, the national cemeteries had a military feeling in their simplicity, symmetry, and repetition that set them apart from their contemporary high-style civilian cemeteries in the picturesque rural cemetery mode (CLR 2009:160-161).

While most of the Poplar Grove landscape was developed by c.1881, there had already been several substantial changes made to its initial design by this date. Between c.1872 and 1874, the drives within the burial grounds were changed from gravel to turf, and in 1877, the brick gutters were covered, creating an expansive area of lawn. These changes, apparently also instituted system-wide, reflected ongoing efforts to reduce maintenance costs. Into the 1920s, the landscape remained fairly consistent, with the exception of the addition of an iron rostrum, built in 1897 within the cemetery's assembly area near the lodge; elimination of the flagstaff mound with the installation of an iron flagstaff in 1913; and the return of the main drive to gravel in c.1900. The most notable change to the landscape during this time was the gradual reduction in plant materials, apparently in an effort to simplify maintenance, as well as from two wind storms in 1915. It was not until the late 1920s, coinciding with the establishment of Petersburg National Military Park in 1926, that the War Department charted a plan for improvements at Poplar Grove. This plan resulted in the addition of the Colonial Revival-style public restroom building and garage in 1929, replacement of the flagstaff with a taller eighty-foot iron pole in 1930, and in 1931 replacement of the lodge roof, paving of the approach road and main drive, and planting of 101 specimen trees. These improvements reflected the War Department's preference for low maintenance and simplicity in the national cemeteries. Although these later improvements changed some details in the landscape, overall they continued the military feeling to the landscape and the overall intent of the initial design and development (CLR 2009:161).

After the transfer of Poplar Grove to the National Park Service in August 1933, the landscape underwent several significant changes to its original design and development. Most notable was the dramatic change made by the park service in 1934 when it transformed the upright headstones and blocks to flat markers, using Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) labor. This change was intended to ease maintenance and to improve the aesthetics of the landscape. This project, also implemented at the National Park Service-administered Yorktown National Cemetery, was the first major change at Poplar Grove that was inconsistent with the development of other units of the National Cemetery System. Aside from this change, the National Park Service retained most of the features in the cemetery during its initial years of administration, but following World War II, began to make changes that further eroded the cemetery's historic character. The changes resulted largely from a lack of maintenance and loss of small-scale features and plantings, including three of the four gun monuments, iron tablets, and settees. Notable plantings lost during this time, aside from specimen trees, included the boxwood Maltese cross, boxwood allée, arborvitae hedge around the service yard, and approach road allée. This allée was lost to natural succession, as was an open field on the cemetery's west side, which had permitted views of the cemetery from the approach road (CLR 2009:161-162).

Because these changes are not reflective of the historic design and development of national cemeteries nor associated with the Civil War, the history of Poplar Grove after 1933 under National Park Service administration is not significant under National Register Criterion C. This period, including the limited improvements made under Mission 66, also does not contain any particular significance under Criterion C with the early development of Petersburg National Military Park. While involvement of the CCC is often considered a basis for significance under Criteria A and C, its involvement at Poplar Grove was limited and did not attest to any particular craftsmanship or design (CLR 2009:162).

Period of Significance for the Landscape, 1866-1933:

In addition to its overall period of significance, Poplar Grove has a more limited period of significance under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture that ends in 1933 with the transfer of administration from the War Department to the National Park Service. This end date reflects the height of development under the War Department following the improvement program executed between 1929 and 1931 that resulted, among other things, in the addition of major features in the landscape, including the garage, public restroom building, and flagstaff (CLR 2009:163).

CRITERION CONSIDERATION D

Poplar Grove National Cemetery also meets Criteria Consideration D – Cemeteries, because it has been designated by Congress as a primary memorial to the military history of the United States.

National Register Significance Criteria:

- A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
- C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Landscape Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Military

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

National Register Criteria Consideration:

D -- A cemetery

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: CE 1866 - CE 2003

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Expressing Cultural Values	Landscape Architecture	Rural Cemeteries	
Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs 1865-1939	The Reconstruction Era, 1865-1877	

NRIS Information:

Other Name: Petersburg NB (66000831)
Primary Certification Date: 10/15/1966
Other Certifications and Date: MM/dd/yyyy

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number: 123-0071
Name: Petersburg National Battlefield
Listed Date: 10/18/1983

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1639	Platted	The British grant the first colonial patent within the present city of Petersburg.
CE 1748	Established	The city of Petersburg is laid out and becomes the market center of the local agricultural economy.
CE 1752	Established	Dinwiddie County is formed May 1, 1752 from Prince George County. It includes the future site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery.
CE 1850	Established	The city of Petersburg is incorporated and has grown to one of Virginia's most populated and prosperous cities.
CE 1835 - 1838	Purchased/Sold	The future Poplar Grove National Cemetery is included in a tract of land known as the Clifford Tract, belonging to Jordan and Francis Floyd.
CE 1838 - 1856	Purchased/Sold	The land on which the future cemetery resides is sold numerous times, until being purchased by Reverend Thomas B. Flower, whose relation, John and Mary Ann Flower resided on the land through the Civil War.
CE 1840 - 1850	Built	The Poplar Spring Church is built southwest of the cemetery site.
CE 1856 - 1864	Cultivated	The cemetery site is cultivated by the Flowers family. The field is surrounded by second-growth loblolly pines.
CE 1864 - 1865	Built	The Union Army 50th New York Engineers relocate a camp to the Flower farm during the siege of Petersburg. The camp is built in a rectilinear configuration with officers quarters on the west, barracks on the east, and a parade ground in the middle. Buildings are connected with plank walks.
CE 1865	Built	Poplar Grove Church, a Gothic, rustic log structure, is added to the camp.
CE 1865	Removed	The engineers' camp is disassembled, except for the church, in the months after the conclusion of the Civil War.
CE 1866	Established	The federal government designates the camp of the 50th New York Engineers as the site of permanent burial grounds for Union soldiers who died during the Petersburg Campaign and other battles in the region. The cemetery is named Poplar Grove after the existing church.
CE 1866	Designed	Poplar Grove is designed in a circular pattern with a flagstaff in the center. The area is prepared for the burials, with land being leveled, and woods being thinned to leave several specimen trees to provide shade on the west and north sides.
CE 1866	Built	The first burials at Poplar Grove begin in May 1866, starting in the center of the space near the flagstaff. Graves are mounded a foot above grade to accommodate sinking soil and marked with a white-painted wood headboard.
CE 1866 - 1869	Built	The burial corps build walks and drives and erect fencing around the perimeter.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1867	Built	A small, rectangular wood frame building is completed on the north side of the entry drive to serve as the superintendent's quarters.
CE 1867 - 1876	Land Transfer	A one-acre tract at the southwest corner of the cemetery is added to the boundary.
CE 1868	Land Transfer	The heirs to the Flower farm sign the deed, transferring the cemetery land to the federal government.
CE 1868	Removed	The burial corps removes the Poplar Grove Church which has fallen into disrepair.
CE 1869	Moved	Four cannon are positioned upright around the flagstaff.
CE 1869	Planted	The burial corps transfer 1,000 small cedar trees from nearby woods, although all but eighty do not survive.
CE 1869	Abandoned	The burial corps disbands after interring 6,183 bodies.
CE 1869 - 1873	Built	The grounds across from the superintendent's quarters are developed into a service yard. A stable, tool shed, well, and pump are added to meet the maintenance needs. A six foot tall lattice fence screens the service area from the rest of the cemetery.
CE 1871	Built	A new Lodge replaces the small wood frame superintendent's residence.
CE 1871	Planted	A hedge of Osage oranges are planted around the perimeter of the cemetery.
CE 1871	Planted	183 specimen trees are planted informally throughout the cemetery.
CE 1871	Planted	American elms are planted in formal allées along the drives.
CE 1874	Altered	Gravel drives are planted with turf to reduce maintenance. They continue to be edged with brick gutters which helps define the routes.
CE 1874	Built	A new flagstaff replaces the original that had deteriorated.
CE 1876	Built	A brick perimeter wall, called the inclosure wall, is built around the cemetery. Entrance gates of granite posts and iron rails complete the enclosure.
CE 1876	Altered	In a display of Victorian design sensibility, the superintendent clipped some of the shrubs and hedges into geometric shapes.
CE 1877	Altered	The wood headboards are replaced by granite headstones and granite blocks.
CE 1878	Planted	The brick gutters are filled in and planted with turf when they become a hindrance to the new mechanized lawn mowing equipment.
CE 1878	Planted	An allée is planted along the approach road.
CE 1878	Altered	The approach road is improved through a gravel surface and shade tree plantings.
CE 1878	Altered	Twenty wood and iron benches, or settees, are installed at Poplar Grove.
CE 1882	Designed	The War Department erects informational and directional cast iron tablets in the cemetery.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1896 - 1925	Expanded	Approximately twenty new burials are made.
CE 1897 - 1879	Built	A bandstand, called the rostrum, is added to the cemetery in an open area southeast of the Lodge. It is a decorative cast iron, open air structure on a raised brick foundation.
CE 1913	Built	A new white-painted iron flagstaff is erected, without a raised mound at the base like in earlier years.
CE 1914	Built	A new kitchen wing is added to the Lodge.
CE 1915	Built	An addition is added to the rear of the toolshed/stable building.
CE 1915	Destroyed	A tornado fells half the trees in the cemetery and numerous headstones are damaged.
CE 1926	Established	Petersburg National Military Park is established.
CE 1929	Built	A public restroom and stable-garage are added to the service area.
CE 1930	Built	A new eighty foot tall flagstaff replaces the one erected in 1913. The tall flagstaff uses guy wires to stabilize it.
CE 1931	Planted	Scores of trees are added to the walks between the rows of headstones.
CE 1931	Paved	The approach road and path to the flagstaff are paved with asphalt.
CE 1933	Land Transfer	Poplar Grove National Cemetery is transferred from the War Department to the National Park Service and incorporated into the newly established Petersburg National Military Park that was being temporarily administered by Colonial National Monument.
CE 1934	Altered	In an effort to ease maintenance and create a park-like appearance at the cemetery, National Park Service crews reset the 3,355 blocks and headstones as flush, ledger stones.
CE 1936	Planted	115 eastern red cedar trees are planted in the cemetery on both sides of the inclosure wall near the entrance to the Lodge and restroom building as a screen. Some others are scattered throughout the burial grounds as specimens.
CE 1950 - 1957	Altered	Twenty-one new burials are added to the cemetery.
CE 1950 - 1957	Neglected	The cemetery is in poor condition due to years of deferred maintenance.
CE 1957	Maintained	Park staff engages in general improvements after complaints about the condition of the cemetery, resetting many graves a few inches above grade, trimming trees, and cleaning and painting the entry gate.
CE 1962	Established	Petersburg National Military Park is renamed Petersburg National Battlefield.
CE 1971	Built	A small family cemetery is added on the south side of the Poplar Grove National Cemetery approach road.
CE 1972	Built	Two residential homes are built outside the east inclosure wall, altering the rural context of the cemetery. A driveway to the two houses is built on the north side of the cemetery.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1972 - 1975	Altered	The park removes three of the four gun monuments. The settees are removed and replaced with two new park benches on concrete pads at the flagstaff. The flagstaff is lowered and the guy wires are removed, leaving it well below the height of the surrounding tree canopy.
CE 1987	Expanded	The National Park Foundation purchases a 3.7 acre parcel from neighbor Roberta Odom that includes land between the west inclosure wall and the private driveway to the Blaha and Peterson houses and a strip along the approach road including the Odom cemetery. The park manages the land.
CE 1995	Built	The park builds a small visitor parking lot near the cemetery entrance.

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Graphics associated with this section are located at the end of this report. The following narrative has been condensed from the site history in the 2009 "Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Battlefield."

PRE-CEMETERY PERIOD, TO 1866

At the time of European contact, the site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was at the western edge of the homeland of the Appomattox (or Appamatuck) people, neighboring Eastern Siouan Indians (a branch of the Western Sioux) to the west and Southern Iroquois to the south. The Appomattox built bark-covered houses in villages enclosed by palisades, and in surrounding fields farmed corn, beans, melons, pumpkins, root vegetables, and fruit trees. It is not known whether the Appomattox or any other earlier Native peoples had any specific use or association with the cemetery site, which was most likely part of larger forested hunting grounds.

The earliest European settlement near the cemetery dates back to the early seventeenth century, when the British granted the colonial patents at the falls of the Appomattox River within the present city of Petersburg. In 1644, the Powhatan Confederation, a federation of more than thirty Algonquian tribes, signed a treaty agreeing that all land east of the Fall Line belonged to the English, and all land to the west was Indian territory. By 1702, settlement had advanced sufficiently to warrant creation of Prince George County that took in Petersburg and miles of country to the east and west across the former Indian Line (Figure 1). Between 1715 and 1730, most of the county was granted to European settlers who transformed the forest into large farms known as plantations. Settlement had become sufficiently advanced by 1752 to warrant division of the western part of Prince George, including the site of Poplar Grove, as Dinwiddie County.

Dinwiddie County and the surrounding region remained predominantly rural and sparsely inhabited through the mid nineteenth century. Roads, usually little more than dirt tracks, were far between and generally extended perpendicular to streams and oriented in a radial pattern toward Petersburg. As was typical of most of Tidewater Virginia, the county was dominated by plantation agriculture dependent on tobacco with wheat and corn as secondary crops. Petersburg, laid out in 1748 along the banks of the Appomattox River, developed as the primary trade and market center for the region.

By the early nineteenth century, years of tobacco growing was resulting in decreased productivity due to soil depletion, with second-growth loblolly pine woods on abandoned fields common throughout the rural landscape. Improved transportation and agricultural practices, however, led to increasing farm prosperity by the eve of the Civil War. The antebellum years were also prosperous ones for Petersburg, which was incorporated as a city in 1850 and by the eve of the Civil War was ranked only behind Richmond among Virginia cities in its size, industry, and cultural life. On the eve of the Civil War, five railroads and six major roads converged on Petersburg from all directions.

The site of Poplar Grove National Cemetery during the antebellum years was within a small farm approximately five miles southwest of Petersburg and east of Halifax Road, the primary road leading south from the city. Southwest of the cemetery site along a crossroad was a small chapel named Poplar Spring Church. The farm that included the cemetery site was located along Vaughan Road, a minor road running southwest from Halifax Road. After changing ownership a number of times, this farm was acquired in 1855 by John and Mary Ann Flower of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, who farmed the land through the Civil War. The site of the cemetery was a field at the east side of the farm surrounded on three sides by woods of loblolly pine, second-growth trees that had seeded in over the past two or three decades on former agricultural land.

The Civil War:

The transformation of a corner of the Flower farm to a military camp and ultimately the resting place for thousands of fallen soldiers resulted from the strategic place that Petersburg held in the latter years of the Civil War. The area around the city was the site of the terrible ten-month Petersburg Campaign that began in June 1864 and continued into April 1865—one of the longest sieges in American warfare (Figure 2). The war had a devastating impact on a broad swath of landscape. Fields were destroyed, forests slashed, and extensive areas were excavated for the construction of a wide variety of military structures built of earth and timber. The soft, deep soils proved easily workable and helped speed construction of the fortifications. Camps for the troops were set up within the occupied zones, with canvas tents as well as more permanent structures built of logs harvested

from the extensive slashing operations.

Aside from the loss of life, the aspect of the Petersburg Campaign that directly influenced development of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was construction of the western part of the Union siege-line fortifications known as the Federal Left Flank under the charge of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers. Originally organized in Elmira, New York in 1861 as an infantry unit drawing recruits primarily from central and western parts of upstate New York and northern Pennsylvania, the unit was soon reorganized as an engineer battalion under the Army of the Potomac Engineers. In late October 1864, the engineers relocated their camp to the Flower farm, roughly a mile and a half east of the main Union camp. The engineers developed their camp through March 29, 1865, when they left to take part in the final offensive against the Confederate defense of Petersburg, four days before General Lee fled the city.

The engineers built their camp in a rectilinear plan with the main officers' quarters and hospital on the west, officers' quarters and barracks on the east, and parade grounds in the middle with its center near the existing cemetery flagstaff (Figure 3). Buildings were connected by plank walks, and the camp was enclosed by a rail fence. The engineers initially erected elaborate tents that they replaced with timber buildings, many ornamented in a rustic style then fashionable in public parks and pleasure grounds of country estates in the engineers' Northern home states. Purportedly to keep the men occupied during the quiet winter months, the engineers began construction of an elaborate central meeting hall on the north side of the parade grounds in January 1865 (Figure 4). They named the building Poplar Grove Church in honor of the congregation of nearby Poplar Spring Chapel, which had been occupied by the Union Army since its victory at the Battle of Peebles Farm the previous year ("Grove" was substituted for "Spring" probably to distinguish the new building from the old). Dedicated on March 4, 1865, the building served both recreational and religious purposes, hosting Sunday services as well as minstrel shows and concerts attended by visiting dignitaries.

On the morning of April 3, 1865, Union troops entered Petersburg in the wake of General Lee's retreat toward Appomattox the previous night. By 10:00 a.m., President Lincoln arrived on the battlefield, touring the ravaged Union siege lines south of the city, but not visiting the engineers' camp. The combination of fortification construction and battle scars devastated the landscape around Petersburg. For many months following Lee's retreat, the Union siege-line fortifications lay abandoned. Local residents, strapped for building materials and income, scoured the battlefield, retrieving lead from bullets, timber from the fortifications, and iron from the military railroad. Some began to return the battlefields, where thousands of remains lay buried, to agriculture.

Until the early fall of 1865, at least five months after General Lee's surrender in April 1865, the engineers' camp remained intact. The camp was disassembled by May 1866 except for some log barracks and Poplar Grove Church, which became a refuge for freed slaves who held meetings in the building. Little is known about the fate of the ornate officers' quarters or any of the other camp features. Some buildings may have been temporarily moved to the adjoining woods and fields while plans were being developed for the camp's new use—as a cemetery for Union soldiers.



Figure 1. "Map of the Most Inhabited Part of Virginia" (Fry and Jefferson, 1751), showing main settlements, waterways, and roads (Poplar Grove CLR:15, Library of Congress, American Memory Collection, digital image g3880 ct000370).

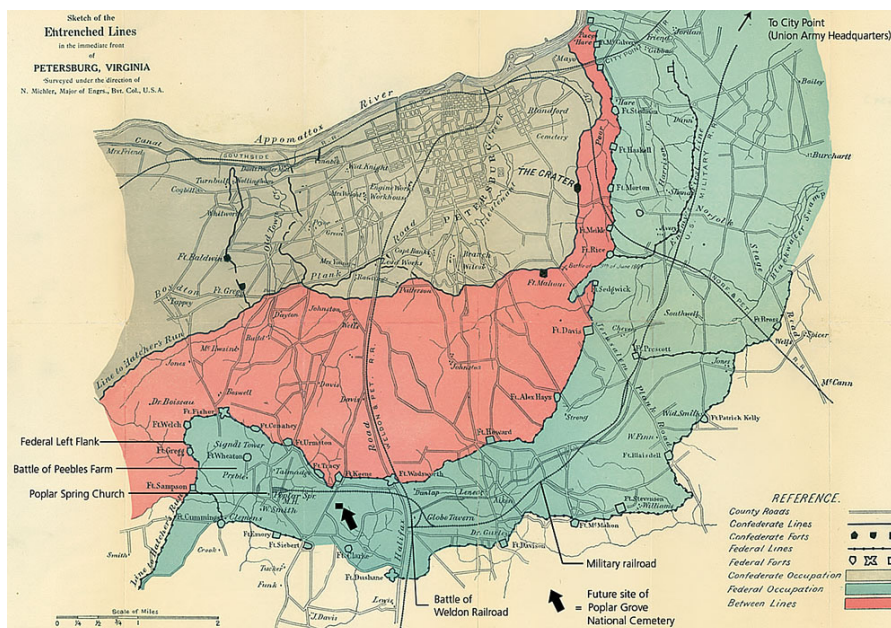


Figure 2. "Map of the Entrenched Lines" in Petersburg Campaign redrawn from Brevet Colonel N. Michler survey, 1864-65. Petersburg: T.S. Beckwith c.1890 (Poplar Grove CLR:19, Library of Congress, American Memory Collection, digital image glva01 lva0065).

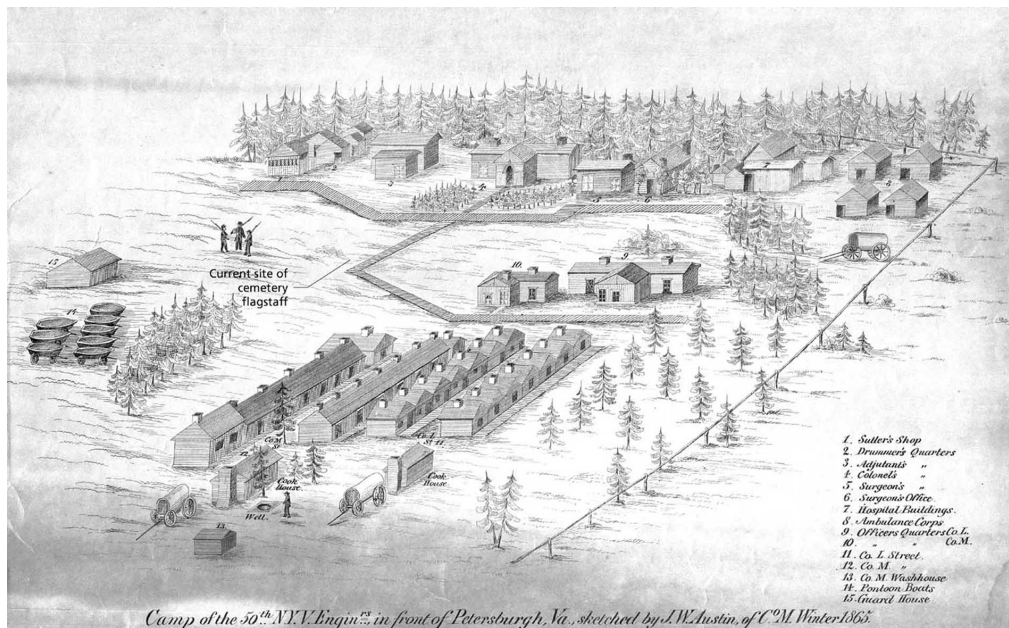


Figure 3. Drawing of the engineers' camp looking southwest toward Vaughan Road, circa January 1865. The camp at the time was under improvement and more buildings would be added later (Poplar Grove CLR:22, Virginia Historical Society, image 1999.161.535).



Figure 4. Poplar Grove Church looking north across the parade ground, March 1865, and log fence, corduroy walk, and pine hedge along the barracks area (Poplar Grove CLR:25, Library of Congress American Memory Collection, digital image LC-DIG-cwppb-04329).

ESTABLISHMENT PERIOD, 1866-1869

In the late fall of 1865, Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore was in the process of selecting sites for national cemeteries in his role of supervising the reburial program in Virginia. On April 17, 1866,

more than a year after the end of the Petersburg Campaign, Moore requested authority to select sites for national cemeteries near Petersburg. By early May of 1866, he had selected one at City Point and a second at the camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers. Moore selected these two sites for their proximity to the major battlefields: the City Point site apparently because it covered the eastern front and was near to the hospital cemetery, from which bodies were to be reinterred; and the engineers' camp because it was near the battlefields of the Federal western front. The refinement of the camp with its serene, pine-woods setting and rustic church undoubtedly also influenced Moore's selection.

By the latter part of May 1866, soon after Lieutenant Colonel Moore had selected the site but before the cemetery was officially established, work apparently began on moving bodies to what was initially called "U.S. National Cemetery at Poplar Grove, Virginia." In accordance with the April 30, 1866 orders from the Secretary of War, Moore had an Army surveyor prepare an abstract of title and a survey of the property, plus an illustrated map showing the larger setting (Figure 5). Although the abstract and maps were not dated, they were probably made soon after Moore had selected the site in early May 1866, and before June 1, 1866, when work was begun on the cemetery along with the one at City Point. This work was probably of a preparatory nature, rather than actual burials that most likely began in June.

The site for the new cemetery was a rectangular parcel surveyed at 7.2 acres and centered at the middle of the camp's parade grounds. Initially designed to accommodate 5,000 graves, Poplar Grove ranked among the larger national cemeteries established in the Virginia district. The parcel measured approximately 645 feet on the north and south, and 475 feet on the east and west sides, and was accessed by a drive at the southwest corner, probably following a pre-existing entry to the camp from Vaughan Road (see Figure 5). The parcel was situated entirely within the property belonging to Thomas B. Flower and probably occupied by John and Mary Ann Flower, but it shared about three-quarters of its south boundary with a farm belonging to Helen Farley. While work on the cemetery commenced in 1866, it would be nearly two years before the federal government actually secured title to the property from Thomas B. Flower.

Prior to the start of burials in the summer of 1866, the Army Quartermaster had decided upon a circular plan for Poplar Grove National Cemetery. While this was among the most important decisions in determining the character of the cemetery, no known record survives of how the circular plan was chosen. Since the Quartermaster apparently had no set design requirements for cemetery plans, the person responsible for selecting the cemetery site and approving its development—Lieutenant Colonel James M. Moore—was most likely influential, if not responsible, for the circular design. Moore had overseen the development of other cemeteries with circular plans, notably Battleground (1864) and Glendale (1866), although it is not known if he personally designed those plans. Most of the cemeteries under his jurisdiction did, however, feature circular elements and shared a simple layout organized around a central flagstaff. Aside from traditional mortuary and religious associations symbolizing life everlasting, the inspiration for the circular plan at Poplar Grove may have been the symmetrical layout of the engineers' camp.

The circular plan with room for approximately 5,000 graves was centered at a point on axis with the entrance to Poplar Grove Church and the center of the officers' quarters courtyard. The circle was slightly off-center within the entire cemetery parcel, creating a larger area for burials along the west side. The center of the cemetery was planned as an open circle for a flagstaff, with the church building located to its north. Extending out from the center, the plan was divided in eight radiating segments organized into four larger areas known as divisions and lettered A through D; each division was in turn subdivided into smaller areas known as sections. Graves were planned in concentric circles radiating out from the center, with rows ten feet apart and individual graves generally spaced at five feet. All grave markers were intended to face the flagstaff, with the inscriptions visible when viewed from the center. On the east and west sides, the graves transitioned to parallel rows, following the rectangular property boundaries.

The divisions and sections of the cemetery were defined by drives, which were the wider routes of circulation, measuring twelve feet wide. Walks were the narrower passages between individual rows, measuring between eight and ten feet wide. Within the main circular part of the cemetery, the walks

and drives all followed either a circular or cross-axis layout with a few exceptions. The main drive extending from the cemetery entrance followed a slightly curving alignment at the outer edge of the circle, probably because it followed the alignment of a pre-existing entrance into the engineers' camp. In addition, at the rear of Poplar Grove Church in Division C, two short drives curved toward the center, a layout that may have been designed in response to the church. The drives in the outer areas reflected the irregular boundaries of the sections that resulted from the transition to parallel rows and the off-center placement of the main circular area.

According to Lieutenant General Moore's account, the burial corps began work by May of 1866 on searching, recovering, and removing Union remains to the camp of the 50th New York Engineers. In June 1867, a year into its work, the Poplar Grove burial corps reportedly employed ninety-six men, and had thirteen wagons, one ambulance, four carts, eighty-seven mules, and twenty-eight horses. These numbers probably reflected typical conditions during the first year of the burial corps when the bulk of the burials were made.

Between May and July of 1866, the burial corps was most likely busy with initial site preparation. Although the engineers' camp, as Lieutenant General Moore had noted in his initial survey, was well suited for a cemetery, it nonetheless required substantial preparation before burials could begin. The flat, treeless parade ground at the center of the site required little work, but beyond it the officers' quarters, log barracks, fences, and walks had to be removed, if they had not been removed already, and their sites leveled. The most intensive work occurred beyond the limits of the engineers' camp—the cemetery parcel extended approximately 150 feet west and north of the fence that enclosed the camp. Here, to create suitable land for burials, the loblolly pine woods were thinned, leaving approximately 180 trees as specimens and creating what was likely a shady setting on the west and north sides. Although the center and southern parts of the cemetery were relatively level, the land dropped to the northwest corner by approximately fifteen feet due to a shallow ravine that fed into wetlands northwest of the cemetery. Although this ravine was too large to fill, its bottom grade may have been raised. A smaller ravine at the northeastern corner was apparently filled.

Burials in permanent graves within the cemetery most likely began on June 18, 1866. Work included burying the wooden caskets that were stacking up outside of the cemetery since the recovery effort began in May, and accommodating a steady stream of new arrivals. Over the course of the following year, the burial corps recovered bodies from most of the battlefields at Petersburg, including The Crater, Five Forks, Fort Stedman, Fort Gregg, Fort Hell, Weldon Railroad, Dinwiddie Court House, Hatcher's Run, Meade Station, and Ream's Station, and from several field hospital graveyards. Other bodies were recovered from battlefields at Lynchburg, Appomattox Station, and Harrison's Landing. The burials began at the center in Division A, Section A, in the south half of the cemetery across from Poplar Grove Church. Burials followed a sequential grave numbering system that proceeded by row through each section, filling in the division before moving to the next division in a counterclockwise fashion. The only major exception to this process occurred in Division C where Poplar Grove Church stood (the gravesites here were still numbered sequentially in line with the adjoining sections, in anticipation of the removal of the church). Known and unknown graves were generally clustered according to how they were brought to the cemetery, without formal arrangement. Each grave was covered with a foot-high earthen mound intended to provide fill as the grave sunk with the decomposition of the body and wooden coffin. In order to stabilize the soil, the grave mounds were covered in sod brought in from various locations in the vicinity. Each grave was marked by a typical white-painted pine headboard with black lettering noting the name and rank of the soldier, if known, and the place from where the body was taken. Most of the graves contained one body, but some of the unidentified graves had the remains of more than one soldier, some with up to six.

By June 10, 1867, the burial corps had interred 5,196 Union remains, including two sailors, one citizen, eighty-four officers, and 306 African Americans. Of the total, 2,126 of the remains were positively identified, and 3,070 were unidentified. At the time, the burial corps anticipated only three hundred additional burials. Orders for disbanding the burial corps were issued in September 1867, only to be revoked within several weeks due to the discovery of additional bodies. Over the two years following the order to disband, the burial corps reinterred an additional 923 remains at the cemetery, bringing the total to 6,182 bodies. Only thirty-five percent, or approximately 2,164 remains,

were positively identified. On June 30, 1869, the burial corps finally disbanded.

While burials were the focus of the burial corps, some of the men also worked on landscape improvements. In addition to mounding and sodding the graves, and erecting the headboards, the burial corps built the walks and drives; erected a central wooden flagstaff on a six-foot high, forty-foot wide circular mound; and, as required by War Department regulations and Congressional legislation, erected a fence around the perimeter of the cemetery to protect the graves, notably from livestock. This was a five-foot high, white-washed paling (picket) fence supported by cedar posts with black-painted tops.

On August 20, 1867, as burial work was slowing, the cemetery's first superintendent, August Miller, arrived for duty. A thirty-eight year-old disabled Civil War veteran born in Baden, Germany, Miller served as superintendent of Poplar Grove until 1876. He supervised five laborers who were separate from the burial corps, which remained under the command of its own acting superintendent. The burial corps generally continued work on construction projects and burials, while Miller and his crew were responsible for maintenance work, such as mowing and weeding.

By October 1867, the burial corps had completed the drives, which were surfaced in gravel and edged by 12,000 linear feet of brick-lined gutters. These gutters fed into wooden culverts (sewer boxes) that carried drainage outside of the cemetery and under drives and walks. The boxes varied in length from twenty-four to 210 feet for a total of 768 lineal feet, and were from one to two-and-one-half feet below grade. The gutters proved to be a maintenance problem for Superintendent Miller and his crew, who spent considerable time repairing faulty masonry and damage from the freeze-thaw cycle. The burial corps also built a lodge for superintendent Miller at the southwest corner of the cemetery. In late August 1867, they began relocating the graves and building the lodge, completing the small frame building with board-and-batten siding in September.

On November 25, 1867, Superintendent Miller received direction to plan for a one-acre extension to the cemetery's southwest corner to provide additional burial space and space for a larger lodge. At the time, the configuration of the addition had not been determined, but within a few months, a new survey was completed showing an 'L'-shaped one-acre extension at the southwest corner of the original cemetery plot. The size of the cemetery with the addition was 8.13 acres. By the spring of 1868, the federal government was continuing its efforts to purchase the cemetery property from the Flower family. On April 3 of that year, the the Flower family signed the deed, and eight months later on December 15, 1868 it was officially recorded at the Dinwiddie County Courthouse. An intended thirty-foot wide right-of-way along the approach road that ran across the Flower farm was apparently left out of the final deed.

By the time of the deed's recording in the spring of 1868, Poplar Grove National Cemetery was taking on the appearance of completion, with its thousands of white headboards and grave mounds radiating out from the mounded central white flagstaff, gravel and brick gutter-lined drives, a small frame lodge marking the entrance, and a perimeter white-painted fence. The numerous loblolly pines in the cemetery made much of it shady, although many were probably declining due to root disturbance from the burials. Visible across open fields from Vaughan Road and framed by a background of pine woods to its east, the stark whiteness and geometry of the cemetery probably stood out even from afar. Its appearance would have been a marked contrast with the rustic architecture of the engineers' camp that blended in with its wooded surroundings. The one-acre addition at the main entrance, which Superintendent Miller had cleared of stumps and rubbish by early March 1868, remained outside of the perimeter fence and was otherwise unimproved.

The one feature that had stood in stark contrast to the rest of the white and geometric cemetery landscape—Poplar Grove Church—had disappeared by the time that the deed was recorded in April 1868. As late as the fall of 1867, local African Americans were using the church as a meeting place as they had even before the cemetery was established. Finding this problematic, Superintendent Miller had requested permission in October 1867 to cease this use once the cemetery was completed. At the time, the wooden building was deteriorating, and by midwinter, Miller recommended that the entire building be removed. At some point between March 20 and April 28, 1868, the burial corps removed Poplar Grove Church, and subsequently filled its site in Sections a

and b of Division C with graves. The church was purportedly acquired by a private citizen from New York City and erected for a time in Central Park, where it was exhibited as a war relic.

Following the removal of Poplar Grove Church, the burial corps, which numbered about thirty men by December 1868, continued to work on the cemetery landscape during its final year that ended on June 30, 1869. They continued to bury the small number of bodies that were discovered during this time, and erect headboards and sod the grave mounds. From the time Poplar Grove Church was removed through June 30, 1869, the burial corps had interred an additional 278 bodies in 270 graves.

Division F in the one-acre extension was opened in the spring of 1869 and contained eighty-two burials by May 24, 1869. One hundred and forty-two additional bodies were reinterred in the cemetery in June 1869, most going into Division F.

In addition to grave work, the burial corps also made some landscape improvements during its final year. In February 1869, four upright cannons known as gun monuments were positioned symmetrically around the flagstaff at the outer edge of the innermost circular drive, requiring the relocation of five graves. These were thirty-two pounder Columbiad canons acquired from Fort Monroe, a federal fort on the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton, Virginia, and brought to Poplar Grove in the fall of 1868. As installed, the guns were six feet-seven inches tall and topped by a cannon-ball cap; they were surrounded by a masonry platform on which were set pyramidal stacks of cannon balls (a total of eighty-four). Other landscape enhancements undertaken by the burial corps included planting of approximately 1,000 small cedar trees, which were transplanted from nearby woods during the winter of 1868-1869. All but about eighty failed to take root.

While the burial corps was occupied with its work, Superintendent Miller and his crew of five worked on sodding remaining bare grave mounds and the space between the graves; hoeing the gravel drives to remove grass; cleaning out the brick gutters; painting and numbering new headboards; planting trees, flowering shrubs, and annuals; and mowing. In March 1869, Miller established four flowerbeds around the frame lodge representing the "Corps badges," probably in the style of Victorian carpet beds. He also maintained a hotbed for starting flowering annuals, and made cuttings of weeping willow trees—a species with long-standing mortuary associations.

With the disbanding of the burial corps at Poplar Grove National Cemetery on June 30, 1869, the cemetery with its 6,136 interments was officially complete. It was probably at this time that the gun monument located north of the circle, in front of the site of Poplar Grove Church, was ornamented with a standard eagle-emblazoned bronze shield providing the name of the cemetery, its date of establishment, and a tally of the burial record. Despite its official completion, there remained much work to be done. Two hundred and seventy new graves in Division F had not been mounded or marked with headboards, and the perimeter fence had not been extended around the one-acre addition. Planned improvement called for a perimeter iron fence, a gateway, and permanent grave markers. These features would be addressed in the refinement of the landscape over the course of the next decade.

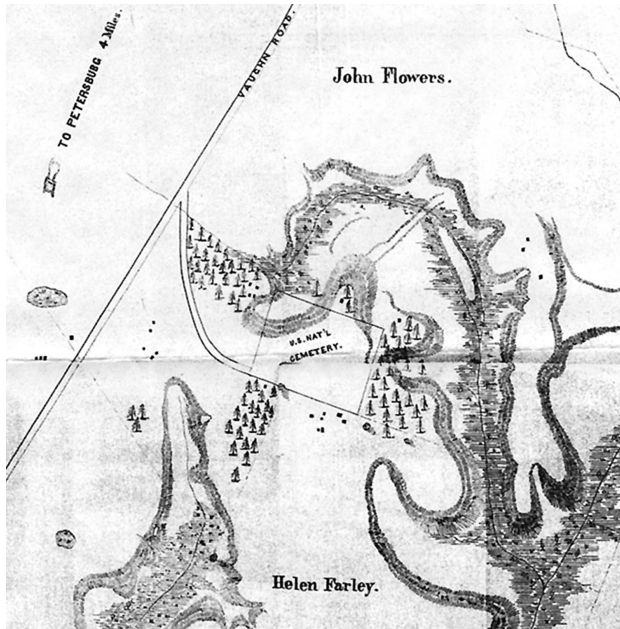


Figure 5. Detail, Quartermaster General map surveyed by G. H. Thomson circa May 1866 showing the cemetery context (Poplar Grove CLR:37, Records of the Quartermaster General, Entry 576, Poplar Grove National Cemetery Records, box 56, National Archives 1).

WAR DEPARTMENT PERIOD, 1869-1933

The landscape of the cemetery, although fixed in overall plan, was considerably improved in the years after 1869 in keeping with the War Department's changing regulations for national cemeteries. In general, these regulations led to a standardized landscape that accommodated local materials and growing conditions, and minimized maintenance through an overall simplified scheme.

Throughout its history under the War Department, Poplar Grove was in a rural district of farm fields and pine woods with little surrounding development. The Flower family owned the farm that surrounded the cemetery on three sides through the 1870s, and thereafter it passed to the Blaha family, who built a new farmstead on the east side of Vaughan Road, southwest of the cemetery. Throughout this period, the cemetery was visible from Vaughan Road across farm fields, with the flagstaff rising above the tree canopy, framed in the background by woods of loblolly pine. The limits of the City of Petersburg, which saw little growth from its pre-Civil War prosperity until the early twentieth century, remained well to the north.

During its early years, Poplar Grove National Cemetery received "a large number of visitors," according to Superintendent Miller, probably mostly Northerners searching for the graves of their family and friends. Decoration Day (Memorial Day) became the main public occasion at the cemetery, a date that generally saw the greatest visitation and the best level of maintenance in the landscape.

Miller remained superintendent until 1876, when he was replaced for health reasons by H. C. Lacy, who remained in the position until 1890. The superintendents lived with their families in the cemetery lodge. Due to the remote location far from stores, the superintendents maintained a hedge-enclosed garden plot and chicken yard outside of cemetery gate, on the north side of the entrance drive (current site of parking lot), apparently with the consent of the Flower and later Blaha families who owned the property.

Landscape Development and Beautification, 1869-1882:

During the 1870s and into the early 1880s, the War Department made many improvements to the Poplar Grove landscape, beginning with a new lodge. In 1870, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, who was an architect and engineer best known for his work on the dome and extension of the United States Capitol, was developing plans for substantial stone lodges to be built at each national cemetery. Meigs' prototype, first produced in 1870, was a small, one and one-half story building in the fashionable Second Empire Style. On May 27, 1870, the Office of the Quartermaster General finalized plans for the new lodge at Poplar Grove, and on August 16, 1870, papers were signed awarding construction to James R. Dobbyn. The site selected for the lodge was in the one-acre addition on the north side of the main drive adjacent to the old lodge. By August 31, 1870, Dobbyn commenced work on the project, but within a short time defaulted on the project, leaving a cellar hole, mounded earth, and lumber. In April 1871, the Quartermaster's office advertised for new bids using the same plan. The low bid for the plan as specified, using brick, came in at \$2,892.00, but a bid by Kyran A. Murphy substituted stone for brick at a lower cost of \$2,700.00. Murphy was most likely working at the time on the new lodge at City Point National Cemetery, which used the same stone. Because of Murphy's low bid, he was awarded the contract for Poplar Grove and plans were changed to stone. On August 3, Stark Frank, an agent with the Quartermaster's office, inspected the existing cellar hole, which had filled with water, and determined that the lodge should be instead built on the opposite side of the entrance drive.

On October 24, 1871, Murphy began construction of the stone lodge, and by the end of the year, had substantially completed the work. The lodge featured the standard Meigs plan, with a concave mansard roof sheathed in diamond-shaped monochrome gray slate, six-over-six double-hung sash windows, a front porch with simple squared posts, overhanging eaves ornamented by dentils, and rough-faced ashlar with varying shades of grays and browns. Work on finishing the interior lasted into the spring, and in April 1872, Miller moved into the lodge. Soon after this, he moved the old frame lodge to the rear of the new lodge for use as a kitchen and storage room. The grounds surrounding the lodge were probably improved soon after the building's completion. Chief among these was the addition of a circular turn-around measuring ninety feet across, with a planted island and a straight east side that aligned with the grave rows in Division F. The turn-around was most likely intended for parking carriages that did not enter the cemetery proper, and probably also as a public gathering area. A walk branched off the south side of the circle, passing the rear and west sides of the lodge.

The grounds across the main drive from the lodge, where the original cellar hole was located, were developed into the cemetery's service yard, initially known as the wood yard. Here, the cemetery horse (used for lawn mowing) was stabled, and fuel wood, building materials, and equipment, such as lawn mowers, scythes, and wheelbarrows, were kept. The first structure in the yard was probably the toolshed built by Superintendent Miller in 1869, followed by a twenty-foot deep well with a lattice well house and pump, probably built together with the lodge in 1871. In 1873, a frame building known as the tool house, with stable and privy under one roof, was constructed in the yard, and additional small shacks were also added over the years. Shortly after the addition of the tool house (also known as the barn), the service yard was screened off from the rest of the cemetery by a six-foot high wooden lattice fence, inside of which was planted a boxwood hedge. In 1879, the numerous wooden buildings in the service yard were replaced with a three-bay brick tool house with an open central bay flanked by sets of swinging doors, and a privy at the side.

In the early 1870s, the Quartermaster's office was developing plans for building permanent inclosure walls at the national cemeteries. Perhaps as an interim measure to enhance the deteriorating wood fence, the Quartermaster had Osage orange hedges along the interior of the fences at many national cemeteries. Osage orange (*Maclura* sp., native to Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma), was a very popular hedge plant before the advent of wire fences due to its dense habit and spiky thorns. In August 1870, Superintendent Miller provided the Quartermaster's office with total linear footage for the hedge at Poplar Grove—just over a half mile. A trench for the hedge was completed on October 25, 1870. The contract for planting the hedge was awarded to J. E. Bailey of Georgetown, District of Columbia, who completed the project in early March 1871 after setting out 4,042 Osage orange saplings.

Two years after the hedge was planted, the Quartermaster's office awarded the wall project to B. F. Childrey & Company, which began work at Poplar Grove in the fall of 1873 with the production of bricks made in two kilns built just outside the cemetery. By mid-December, the contractor had made about 100,000 bricks, but had not begun construction of the wall. The Quartermaster's office subsequently rejected the work, and Childrey stopped the project and tried to sell his contract. The project stalled for two years and in the meantime the old fence deteriorated, although it was hidden in part by the Osage orange hedge. A cemetery inspection on August 11, 1875—two years after the wall contract had been awarded—reported that the fence was in very bad condition and gave the cemetery a poor appearance.

It was not until February 1, 1876 that the Quartermaster's office solicited new bids on the Poplar Grove wall. In running the lines for the new wall in February 1876, the Quartermaster's office found that the northeast and southwest corners of the cemetery were actually not on government land. To rectify the situation, the government planned to acquire a ten-foot strip around the actual perimeter of the cemetery that would also provide a buffer strip for the graves (some of which were less than a foot from the fence), allow for proper drainage, and provide space for an embankment needed for the new wall. It would be more than a year before acquisition of the ten-foot buffer strip, but in the meantime, the Quartermaster's office continued to develop plans for constructing the brick inclosure wall. On May 22, 1876, the Quartermaster awarded the contract to John Brennon and Archibald L. Hutton of Washington. Specifications were changed to substitute Ohio sandstone for brick on the pilaster caps. Brennon and Hutton began work in June 1876 using new bricks made in Alexandria, Virginia, and completed the project by September 20, 1876. By May 14, 1877, the government acquired the ten-foot buffer strip, consisting of 0.919 of an acre (strip along the south boundary) from the Farley farm, and 0.5019 of an acre (strips along east, north, and west boundaries) from the Flower family. The acquisition also included a right-of-way of unspecified width along the approach road through the Flower farm, something that had been left out of the original 1868 deed.

With the wall complete and the property boundaries corrected, there still remained many refuse bricks outside of the cemetery left from the first contractor. Superintendent Lacy, who was appointed soon after the wall was completed in 1876, made plans to use at least some of these bricks for a new kitchen. In 1879, he was granted authority to remove the wooden kitchen at the rear of the lodge—the old frame lodge that Superintendent Miller had moved. At his own expense, Lacy built the new kitchen out of the refuse bricks, set back from the lodge near the inclosure wall. The new toolshed in the service yard, built in 1879, was probably also constructed out of the same refuse bricks.

At Poplar Grove and nearly every other national cemetery, improvement of the wood grave markers was one of the most pressing issues of the 1870s. In an Act of June 8, 1872, Congress specified that each grave be identified by a stone marker. Congress appropriated one million dollars for the project, specifying that the markers be of "durable stone." The War Department developed two specifications in 1873: one for a small upright headstone for known graves, the other for a block—a low square post—for unknown graves. The headstones were specified to be polished white marble with a curved top, and an inscription of raised letters inside a recessed shield indicating the name, state regiment, and grave number. Each headstone measured ten inches wide, four inches thick, and thirty-six inches long, with an intended installation height of twelve inches. The white marble blocks for the unknown graves only included the grave number inscribed on the top surface, and another number noting the number of interments if more than one. The blocks measured six inches square and thirty-six inches long, and were intended for an above-ground installed height of four inches. The contract to supply the new markers to all national cemeteries, totaling 265,000 headstones and blocks, was awarded to Captain Samuel G. Bridges in December 1873. The supplier and finisher for the headstones, made of Vermont marble, was Sheldon & Slason of West Rutland, Vermont. The company used the recently developed sand-blast method for inscribing the stones.

The stones for Poplar Grove were shipped to Petersburg on June 28, 1877, and the next day, Captain Bridges and his crew of between 150 and 160 men began work at the cemetery by distributing the stones to each grave. In just one week, Bridges completed the project, encompassing approximately 2,200 headstones and 3,355 blocks. A ceremony, attended by 150 people assembled around the flagstaff with speakers seated on top of the flagstaff mound, took place the Monday after

the work was completed. Although the new headstones continued the same white tablet form in the landscape, the substitution of blocks for the headstones at the unknown graves—amounting to over sixty percent of all grave markers—changed the uniformity of the circular plan (Figure 6). The new stones made clearly visible the enormous number of soldiers who died on the battlefield without proper identification and registration.

By the time that the new headstones were installed in 1877, the character of the gravel and brick gutter-lined drives had been altered due to maintenance concerns. Already in July 1869, Superintendent Miller was reporting that they required a high level of maintenance due to growth of weeds, clogging of the brick gutters, deterioration of the brick, and rotting of the wood culverts. Over the next few years, Miller changed the smaller culverts to brick box culverts, and replaced the larger culverts—ranging from twenty-four to 210 feet in length—with grass swales that had gravel French drains at drive and walk crossings. Superintendent Miller received concurrence that the gravel surface of the drives was simply too difficult to maintain and could be changed to a grass surface, to match the grass surface of the walks. By August 1874, the drives were overgrown with grass kept close cut with the lawn mower. This new turf on the drives was a Bermuda grass that was rolled to maintain an even surface. Despite the turf surface, the drives at the time remained visually distinct by the edging of brick gutters. Where there were no brick gutters—along the circular turn-around and the walk that ran from the lodge around the perimeter of Division G—a low hedge or border was planted to define the edge.

The brick gutters would soon, however, meet their demise due to a technological improvement in lawn mowing—the acquisition of a horse-drawn lawn mower in the spring of 1878. The brick gutters proved to be an impediment to the operation of the new lawn mower. By October 1878, all of the gutters, including those along the main drive, were filled with earth and turfed to facilitate mowing. With the covering of the brick gutters, the cemetery lawn extended over the entire cemetery landscape. As a result, the drives largely became undefined areas of open lawn between the cemetery divisions and sections. In contrast to the roads within the cemetery, the 1,025-foot long approach road was improved in 1878 into a more formal and defined circulation feature. Up until this time, it was an earthen track through the open fields of the Flower farm. By the fall of 1878, a year after the government had secured the right-of-way along the road, a gravel surface had been laid down and plans were made for planting an allee of shade trees.

Aside from the major structural elements in the landscape—the wall, buildings, drives and walks, and gravestones—the landscape of Poplar Grove was enhanced during the 1870s and early 1880s through replacement of the flagstaff, and the addition of ornamental plantings, benches, and signs. The flagstaff together with the six-foot high flagstaff mound and encircling drive and gun monuments comprised the visual and symbolic center of the cemetery. The original wooden flagstaff, erected in 1866 by the burial corps, began to rot after several years and plans were made in the early 1870s for its replacement. In the spring of 1874, John C. Comfort of Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania, erected a new copper-sheathed flagstaff, fifty-six feet high and twelve inches in diameter, painted white and set in a black-painted iron socket. Although the new flagstaff was an improvement, an inspection of the cemetery the following August remarked that it was small for the size of the cemetery and its tall pines. As part of the project, the flagstaff mound, which earlier inspections found was too large for the cemetery, was reduced to four feet in height from six, and to twenty feet in diameter at the base from approximately forty. The mound was ascended by a flight of unpainted wooden steps, and was planted with shrubs and beds of flowering annuals. Around the central flagstaff, and probably scattered along the main drive and throughout the cemetery, were twenty settees installed by the fall of 1878. These were four feet long and had a slender cast-iron frame with a tie rod between the legs, and wood-slat back and seat, painted dark green.

Most national cemeteries established flowerbeds and ornamental shrubs as part of the beautification program of the 1870s. Superintendent Miller's flowerbeds were most likely in the style of carpet beds, consisting of flowering annuals arranged in patterns and in a low, uniform height, perhaps with a vertical feature, such as cannas or grasses, and bordered by boxwood. With completion of the new stone lodge in 1872, a Maltese cross (the 5th Corps Badge) was established in front of the building, near the main gate. It was probably a flowerbed edged by boxwoods. Although the exact location and dimensions of the other flowerbeds is not known, several were probably located around the gun

monuments and on or surrounding the flagstaff mound. Miller also maintained 50 rose bushes scattered throughout the cemetery. Up until 1870, the cemetery trees were mostly cedars planted by the burial corps, some willows and fruit trees, and loblolly pines that the burial corps had retained from the pre-existing woods. In January 1871, the cemetery received a shipment of 183 trees, including horse chestnut, silver and sugar maples, box elder, linden, silver poplar, oak, ash, willow, Kentucky coffee tree, Norway and white spruce, Balsam fir, cedar, magnolia, purple beech, English hornbeam, and American larch. These were planted in an informal arrangement across the cemetery. In May 1871, 101 American elms arrived for planting in a so-called sylvan hall, two allees that formed a cross most likely along the north-south and east-west axis drives. The elms were planted three or four graves in from the drives, with an understory border of boxwood and an undetermined conifer directly along the drives.

In addition to the trees within the cemetery, the Quartermaster's office also oversaw the planting of the allee of trees along the approach road in 1878. The trees were saplings dug up from surrounding woods. Many did not survive, and few except for some of the tulip trees promised to grow into healthy specimens. In the spring of 1882, the allee was replanted with red maple, elm, pin oak, and linden, spaced at twenty-five feet. At the same time, the cemetery received commemorative and information signs known as tablets, which were installed systematically at all national cemeteries. The War Department intended these to provide a durable replacement for deteriorated painted signboards. The tablets, made by the Army's Rock Island Arsenal, consisted of cast-iron rectangular placards of various sizes set at an angle, approximately two to three feet in height. The tablets were painted black with the lettering highlighted in silver, and were mounted on square white-painted wooden posts. At Poplar Grove, there were sixteen tablets including one large table near the main gate stating cemetery use regulations; one tablet on the circular drive adjoining the lodge stating "Visitors Notice, Invitation to Register;" four tablets containing the text of the "Act to Establish & Protect National Cemeteries Approved February 22, 1867," located near the main entrance, two along the outer drives, and one near the flagstaff; and ten small tablets scattered throughout the cemetery containing a four-line verse from Theodore O'Hara's poem, "The Bivouac of the Dead."

Landscape Maintenance, 1882-1925:

The installation of the iron tablets was the last significant addition to the landscape of Poplar Grove National Cemetery in its initial period of development and beautification. In 1892, this landscape, little changed over the previous decade, was documented on a plan drawn by the Quartermaster's office as part of a systematic documentation of the national cemetery system. The plan showed the local context, drives and walks, inclosure walls, central flagstaff and flagstaff mound, buildings, and trees and shrubs (Figure 7).

Although Poplar Grove had few open plots, there were approximately twenty new burials made between 1896 and 1925, including the first Civil War veteran burial in 1896 (earlier burials were reinterred Civil War remains). The most active year for burials was 1918, when seven new graves were dug for Civil War veterans and casualties of World War I. Most of these burials were made in the walk north of the flagstaff in Division C or at the ends of grave rows. For these later burials and replacement of broken markers, the Quartermaster continued to use the same headstone specifications until shortly after the turn of the century. In 1903, after studying the durability of the original headstones, the specifications were changed to make them slightly bigger (two inches taller and wider) and the inscription font larger. At the same time, the War Department abandoned the use of the block for unknown graves and instead used headstones with the inscription "Unknown U.S. Soldier," along with the grave number.

By the 1890s, with the Civil War growing more distant, relatives and friends of the Union soldiers visited less frequently. Poplar Grove, as was typical of older or inactive cemeteries, became a sleepy place without many new burials to infuse visitation for the recently departed. Even Decoration Day at Poplar Grove apparently received little attention after the 1880s—as a Union burial place, the cemetery did not share the same attraction for local residents as the Confederate burials at Blanford Cemetery in Petersburg. Perhaps due to the relatively low number of new burials or to its remote location, no commemorative monuments were added to Poplar Grove.

Despite its relative lack of attention, Poplar Grove remained well tended and received standard

improvements. Quartermaster inspection reports from the 1880s through the first decade of the twentieth century remarked on the generally good condition of the cemetery. The most notable standard Quartermaster improvement during this time was the addition of a rostrum (bandstand) where speakers gave memorial addresses. The Poplar Grove rostrum, an iron structure completed on January 2, 1897, was a standard design sited in the open area between the graves in Division F and the circular turn-around. It was an octagonal pavilion with cast-iron posts and wrought-iron ornamentation, set on a raised brick foundation, measuring fourteen feet in diameter with a ceiling height of ten and one-half feet (Figure 8).

Notable additions and changes to the cemetery plantings included the replacement of the boxwood hedge around the service yard with an arborvitae hedge in 1888, and replacement of the Osage orange hedge with a bed of English ivy in c.1891. At the same time, the sylvan hall of American elms was removed. Several years earlier in an 1888 report, the Quartermaster inspector had found that the trees were in the way of the mower and planted on the graves. Most of the elms were removed within a few years, leaving just scattered trees. Another change by the turn of the century was replacement of the turf from the main drive with gravel to match the surface of the approach road. The new surface included the circle around the flagstaff, but not the circular turn-around adjacent to the lodge. The new drive surface existed at the time of a 1904 photograph looking into the cemetery from the entrance gate (Figure 9).

During the decade following this photograph, there were a number of improvements to the buildings at Poplar Grove. Within the service yard, a frame privy, with a footprint of approximately four feet by five feet and two holes, was built in c.1905 on the west side of the forage shed, apparently to supplement the pre-existing privy within the toolshed-stable. In c.1915, the forage shed was torn down and replaced by a frame addition housing a feed room at the rear of the brick toolshed-stable. In c.1925, the gap between the rear of the feed room and the brick inclosing wall was covered by a tin-roof for use as a shed. Across the main drive, a new kitchen wing, built of brick and surfaced in stucco, was built at the rear of the lodge and completed in November 1914. First recommended by inspectors in 1910, the new wing was built as a modern replacement for the kitchen outbuilding built in c.1879. To the rear of the old kitchen outbuilding against the brick inclosure wall was a small brick building, partially below grade, known as "the cave." This building, measuring five feet by six feet and four feet deep, was constructed in c.1900, perhaps as a root cellar.

Other changes during the first two decades of the twentieth century occurred at the center of the cemetery. The fifty-six foot tall wooden flagstaff had been identified as being insufficiently tall for the size of Poplar Grove since the time it was installed in 1873, and as far back as 1888, an inspector had reported that it was warped and ugly. In 1910, the Quartermaster inspector raised the height issue again, recommending the installation of a taller pole, and three years later in 1913, a new white-painted iron flagstaff was erected and the old mound, which had lost its regular profile by the 1890s, was removed. Flagstaff mounds had also fallen out of favor by this time: the Quartermaster regulations for national cemeteries issued in 1911 forbade building of mounds around flagstaffs.

A photograph of Poplar Grove taken in c.1914 shortly after the new flagstaff was installed captured the cemetery at what was most likely the height of its development, although the cemetery lacked some features and ornamental plantings it once had during Superintendent Miller's tenure in the 1870s (Figure 10). One year after this photograph was taken on August 2, 1915, a tornado swept across the cemetery, ripping down 110 trees (approximately half of the trees in the cemetery), breaking forty-seven headstones, and damaging the roof on the forage room addition on the toolshed-stable. Plans were soon underway to correct the broken headstones, and during the summer of the following year, the Quartermaster office installed replacements using the more durable specifications introduced in 1904. While the grave markers were fixed, no plans for replacing the trees or repairing the damaged building were developed for more than a decade following the storm. Despite this, Quartermaster inspectors found the cemetery during this time to be in excellent condition.

Final War Department Improvements, 1925-1933:

Visitation to Poplar Grove was beginning to revive by the 1920s due in part to the establishment of Petersburg National Military Park and easier access made possible by automobiles. Despite this, the

numbers remained small. Between August and December of 1928, Poplar Grove received seventy-eight visitors; and from January through June of 1929, sixty-six (including fourteen on Memorial Day).

In February 1925, the same month that Congress approved a feasibility study for establishing a national military park at Petersburg, the Quartermaster issued a report of repairs required at Poplar Grove, mapping out a five-year improvement program. With plans for a neighboring national military park, the Quartermaster undoubtedly saw the need to spruce up the sleepy cemetery. Initial plans called for modernization of the lodge, removal of the frame building at the rear of the toolshed-stable, construction of a new public toilet and a new well house, repairs to the rostrum, replacement of brick pavement around the lodge with concrete, paving of the main drive, and planting 250 trees to replace those lost in the 1915 tornado. Planning for these improvements progressed over the following few years. A new well was proposed in 1926 (it is not known if it was built), and in 1927, the Quartermaster revised plans to include construction of a new service building to replace the entire toolshed-stable and its additions, and construction of a "standard brick toilet building" with separate facilities for men and women.

In the summer of 1929, building plans were finalized for the new stable-garage (officially called the "Outbuilding") and public restroom ("Utility Building"). These plans called for simple, Colonial Revival-style buildings with stucco exteriors (unpainted, probably to relate to the stone of the lodge), gable roofs with eaves returns, metal roof sheathing, and multi-paned windows. The contract for the construction of both buildings was awarded to the firm of H. Herfurth Jr., of Washington D. C. The public restroom building was the first to be completed on August 10, 1929. Built of hollow tile, the one-story building housed separate restrooms for men and women, a fuel storage room, and an electric generating motor and water storage room. Construction required the demolition of the c.1879 brick kitchen, which had been used as a woodshed since the kitchen wing was built on the lodge in 1914. The brick cave along the inclosure wall was probably removed at the same time. The septic tank for the new restrooms was built to the east, and two years later in spring 1931, it was apparently retrofitted with a septic field, that required removal of trees and shrubs in the lodge grounds, some of which had been planted around the former turn-around that probably fell out of use around 1900. As part of the restroom building construction, the old brick and grass walks were removed from the lodge grounds and a new concrete walk was laid down between the lodge and the new building.

In the service yard, the 1879 toolshed-stable and adjoining forage shed and tin-roofed shed were demolished in 1929 for construction of the new stable-garage. Completed on October 10, 1929, the one and one-half story stuccoed building featured a workroom and stall, and a loft for storage. Following the completion of the two new buildings, the lodge was modernized through several projects completed between 1930 and 1932 that included new utilities, removal of the slate roof and replacement with tin (matching the two new buildings), reconstruction of the front porch floor in concrete, and replacement of brick front walk with concrete. It was probably also at this time that the trim was changed from a dark color to white, matching the trim on the garage and public restroom building.

In the landscape, the Quartermaster developed plans in the fall of 1930 for the replacement of the iron flagstaff erected in 1913. Although a new flagstaff had not been identified as part of the five-year improvement plan outlined in 1925, there must have been some flaw to the existing iron flagstaff, which in 1930 was just seventeen years old. In October 1930, crews installed the new flagstaff, which towered above the trees at upwards of eighty feet tall (Figure 11). It was built of iron sections fitted by bolted flanges, set on a concrete pad. The height of the flagstaff required support by guy wires fastened to the midsection of the flagstaff and anchored on the ground by turnbuckles. The flagstaff and guy wires were painted white, and the iron base and turnbuckles were painted black.

The spring following the installation of the flagstaff, the Quartermaster Third Corps in Baltimore finalized a tree planting plan for the cemetery, the first since the tornado of 1915 resulted in the loss of 110 trees. Dated March 31, 1931, the plan called for planting of 101 new trees that would reestablish an even distribution across the landscape and a continuous allee along the approach road using European mountain ash, pin oak, Norway spruce, Austrian pine, American holly, American elm, American linden, and Norway maple. The contract for the trees was awarded to the nursery of

Henkels & McCoy of Germantown, Pennsylvania, who completed the planting on May 18, 1931. Other landscape improvements undertaken at this time included paving of the approach road and main drive in asphalt macadam. Completed in June 1931, the project included realignment of the circular drive around the flagstaff into a teardrop shape.

In February 1932, a forester with the Office of the Inspector General visited Poplar Grove in its last year under War Department administration. The report focused on plans for improving vegetation and caring for eighty of the 101 trees that had survived from the new plantings the previous year. The report also documented general conditions, including a photograph looking east from near the rostrum (Figure 12). Although generally well maintained, upon closer inspection the photograph reveals that the tablets and blocks were stained, some were leaning or sunken, and the surrounding grass was not closely trimmed. Over the course of the next year, cemetery laborers worked on aligning and cleaning the stones, although the work remained incomplete.



Figure 6. Circa 1930 photograph of the two types of grave markers installed in 1877 (Poplar Grove CLR:69, Metropolitan Engraving Company, reproduced from the City of Petersburg, Metropolis of Southside Virginia, Louise Studio, c.1930).

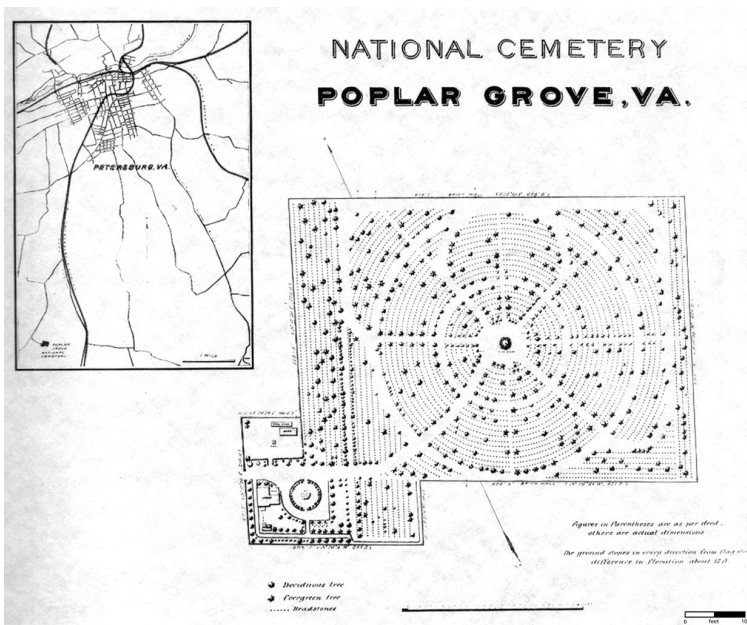


Figure 7. Office of the Quartermaster General plan from bound document of similar plans made for all national cemeteries in 1892-1893 (Poplar Grove CLR:76, National Archives, RG 92, Records of the Quartermaster General Entry 691, National Archives I).



Figure 8. The Poplar Grove rostrum completed in 1897, looking east from a 1967 photograph by Fred Bell (Poplar Grove CLR:79, Poplar Grove administrative files, Petersburg National Battlefield).



Figure 9. Photograph of Poplar Grove National Cemetery looking east into the cemetery at the entrance gate, 1904 (Poplar Grove CLR:80, National Archives II, Records of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, Still Pictures Division).

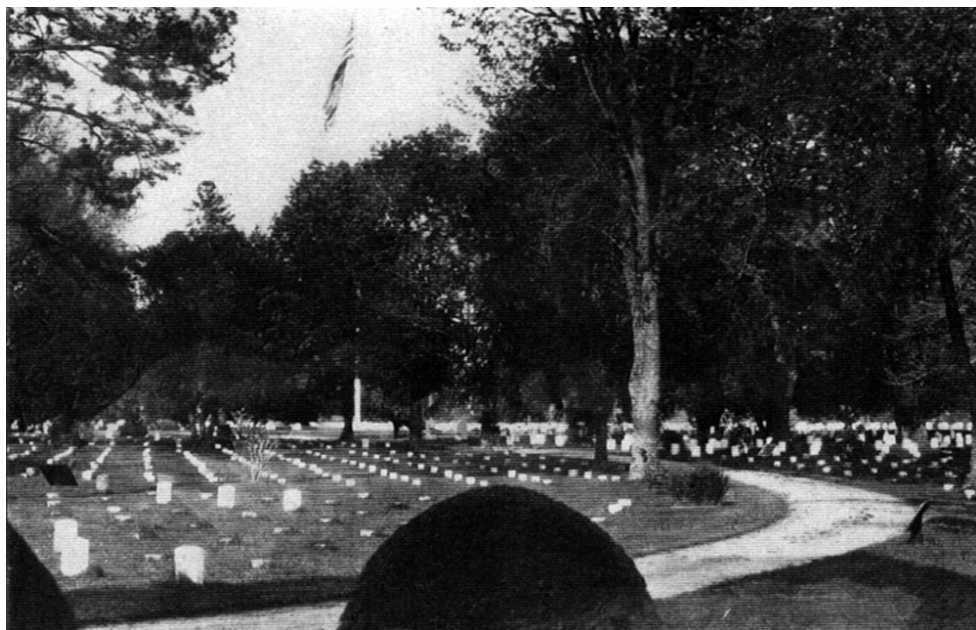


Figure 10. View from the rostrum looking northeast along the main drive toward the new iron flagstaff, c.1914 (Poplar Grove CLR:82, War Diary of Luman Harris Tenney, 1861-1865, 1914).



Figure 11. The new iron flagstaff installed in October 1930, from a detail of a 1930 photograph (Poplar Grove CLR:86, The Library of Virginia, from Virginia Room Exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair, image/WF/05/06/017).



Figure 12. View near the rostrum looking east along the inclosure wall, from Feb. 1932 tree report (Poplar Grove CLR:89, National Archives II, RG 92, Entry 1891, Officer of the Quartermaster General, Correspondence, Geographic File, 1922-1935, box 1773.)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERIOD, 1933-PRESENT

Through the 1930s, the setting of Poplar Grove remained predominantly rural, largely unchanged since the founding of the cemetery eight decades earlier. Increasing automobile ownership during this time was evident in the development of park roads along the siege lines and improvement of Vaughan Road into a state route. Suburban development around the fringes of Petersburg had begun after World War I, but by the time of World War II had not extended far from the city limits. The major physical changes in the region occurred mostly in the decades following World War II as the city center declined and suburban development reached into the countryside. Suburban growth extended into Dinwiddie County, with houses often developed in strips along existing roads, including Vaughan Road. Several large industrial plants were built north of the cemetery, and in 1970, the Collier Yard was enlarged on the Atlantic Coast (former Weldon & Petersburg) Railroad located east of the cemetery. Despite this development over the past four decades, the area immediately surrounding Poplar Grove retained large tracts of wooded land and farms growing crops such as soybeans, grapes, and hay.

Early National Park Service Stewardship, 1933-1949:

On June 10, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 6166, which called for an extensive reorganization of Executive Agencies. Section 2 of this order specified the transfer and consolidation of all functions of military parks and national cemeteries under the War Department to the Department of the Interior for management by the National Park Service. The list of parks and cemeteries to be transferred, including Petersburg National Military Park and Poplar Grove National Cemetery, was approved on July 28, 1933 under Executive Order No. 6228. Cemeteries selected for transfer were considered to be more significant for their history than for their use as active burial grounds, and were located near national park units, usually battlefields.

The administrative transfer of Petersburg National Military Park and Poplar Grove National Cemetery took effect on August 10, 1933. Both the park and cemetery were placed under the temporary administration of Colonial National Monument, located in the vicinity of Williamsburg approximately sixty miles to the east. Poplar Grove remained under the administration of Colonial's Acting Superintendent B. Floyd Flickinger until December 1935, when administration was transferred to Petersburg National Military Park, which had been supplied with its first superintendent the previous

September. Poplar Grove retained its own superintendent, who reported to the park superintendent but also retained some autonomy. On September 5, 1933, Benjamin F. Moore was appointed the first cemetery superintendent under the National Park Service. As with War Department cemetery superintendents, Moore continued to be responsible for maintenance, cemetery staff, the burial record, and reporting.

Although the significance of Poplar Grove to the rest of park was its association with the Civil War, the cemetery remained open to new burials of veterans of other wars. Burials continued in the earlier pattern of one or two per year with a few exceptions. Between 1933 and 1949, nineteen new graves were dug, with 1940 the most active year when there were five new burials. In contrast to the burial rate, visitation to Poplar Grove rose dramatically, with ten times the number of visitors during the mid-1930s as there were in the late 1920s. For the fiscal year from October 1934 to September 1935, 1,675 visitors were reported, in contrast to the 142 visitors recorded during the fiscal year of 1928-1929. This increase in visitation was most likely a result of increases in park visitation to the federal fortifications south and west of Petersburg that were linked by Flank Road, which was completed to Halifax Road and Fort Wadsworth in 1934. Poplar Grove was identified as a stop on the tour, but visitors had to drive north on Halifax Road and then south on Vaughan Road to reach the cemetery. It was not until the completion of the Flank Road railroad underpass and extension of Flank Road to Vaughan Road in 1944 that the cemetery had a relatively direct connection to the route of the Siege Line Tour.

Upon its transfer to the National Park Service in 1933, Poplar Grove was in overall good condition because of the War Department improvements made during the previous five years. As park service personnel began to inspect the cemetery in the ensuing months, however, they identified a number of problems. A report to the Chief Forester of the National Park Service in 1934 identified that the most of the trees in the cemetery were in poor condition and that a large percentage would continue to be lost annually. The second major problem was maintenance of the grave markers and the lawn. Park administrators apparently felt that the significant amount of labor required for mowing the eight acres of cemetery lawn and trimming around the nearly 5,600 grave markers was a problem, despite advances provided by a power mower acquired just two years earlier in 1931 and the availability of cheap labor through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). With a new superintendent and a new agency, there was no institutional memory with which to judge the relative effort needed to mow the lawn. In addition to the mowing, many of the markers still required cleaning and alignment that had begun in 1932.

Instead of completing this work, the National Park Service decided to pursue a much different treatment—to convert the headstones and blocks into flat markers, a plan developed to ease the maintenance of lawn mowing and create more of a park-like appearance. Planning for the alteration of the Poplar Grove grave markers began shortly after the administrative transfer, and by January 1934, Colonial Acting Superintendent Flickinger had received approval to make the headstones and blocks into flat markers. During February and March of 1934, CCC crews sunk Poplar Grove's 3,355 blocks and transformed the approximately 2,320 headstones into flat markers, laying the above-ground sections flush in the ground as ledger stones. The CCC crews cut or broke off the headstone bases, often leaving jagged edges, and simply dug the upper sections into the ground rather than setting them on a firm footing. The small government headstones and even smaller blocks were inconspicuous in the lawn as flat markers, creating a dramatic change to the landscape that made the cemetery's circular plan largely invisible (Figure 13). CCC crews temporarily stacked the cut-off headstone bases in the cemetery, and in the following summer the park sold them to local resident Oswald E. Young, who purchased the two-foot slabs for \$45 to construct a house nearby.

The National Park Service did not alter Poplar Grove's headstones and blocks as part of any planned program of improvements. It was only in June 1934, after the stones were laid flat, that a plan was outlined, entitled "Six-Year Advance Program of Federal Construction for Poplar Grove National Cemetery." This plan recommended tree surgery and protection, repair of the lodge and inclosure wall, construction of a concrete basement for a water tank, repair of the driveways, and various other landscape improvements. In 1936, the park proposed an ECW (CCC) project for seeding and sodding, and the following spring, CCC crews planted 115 Eastern red-cedar trees according to a January 1937 plan by the National Park Service Branch of Plans and Design. This plan documented

existing mature trees (the young trees planted in 1931 were not shown) and specified planting native red-cedars on both sides of the inclosure wall near the entrance and lodge to screen a nearby barnyard and chicken house. A wood post and barbed-wire fence was built along the property line to protect the new trees from livestock. Another grouping of red-cedars was planted alongside the lodge and utility (restroom) building to screen the view of this utilitarian area from the assembly area adjoining the rostrum. Other red-cedars were scattered across the cemetery lawn as specimens. After the planting, CCC crews worked through the summer of 1937 on repairing and repointing the inclosure wall with flush joints. Plans had called for replacing the sandstone pilaster caps with new concrete caps, but this work was not included in the project. Finally, in 1939 the old well house in the service yard was removed and a new cover installed, and an overhead utility line was brought in from the Blaha farmhouse (southwest of the cemetery) to provide electrical power to the lodge.

Several maintenance projects were completed during World War II, including removal of diseased and dead trees in 1942, and replacement of drain pipes in 1943. There were few other changes to Poplar Grove's landscape through Benjamin Moore's retirement as the last cemetery superintendent in 1949.

Mission 66 Era, 1949-1975:

Upon Benjamin Moore's retirement in 1949, Petersburg National Military Park decided to abolish the position of cemetery superintendent. Maintenance of the cemetery was subsequently absorbed by the three full-time maintenance staff of Petersburg National Military Park.

The years between 1950 and 1957 witnessed a record number of burials since the first new veteran graves were dug in 1896. During this eight-year period, there were twenty-one new burials, with a high of five burials in 1956, each of which included a standard government flat marker. These new burials were concentrated in the row at the east end of Division F, and were also scattered throughout the cemetery, apparently in extra spaces within the rows that had been occupied by trees, but not filling in drives as detailed in the 1941 master plan. In 1957, Poplar Grove received its final burial at grave 3430A. After this point, the park closed the cemetery to burials (although a spouse was subsequently buried within an existing grave), but remained open for the reinterment of Civil War remains. In May 1957, the War Department concurred with the park's decision on burials, and Poplar Grove was removed from the list of active national cemeteries. Despite its closed status, Poplar Grove continued to receive relatively high visitation, reaching upwards of 7,000 annually, mostly tourists rather than visitors to graves.

By the mid-1950s, Poplar Grove had fallen into very poor condition resulting from staff cuts and a long period of deferred maintenance stretching back to World War II. Many of the grave markers had sunk below grade and become covered by grass. As part of its MISSION 66 improvement program, the park began work at the cemetery in 1957, installing a new entrance sign, cleaning and painting the entrance gate, trimming the trees, and raising the headstones and blocks about two inches above grade. Despite previous problems with settling, the headstones were just set on the ground. Around this time, the park replaced a number of broken stones and blocks with government flat markers. As part of this rehabilitation work, the park also installed new visitor information signs and revised the designation of the cemetery plan. Three new signs were installed at the flagstaff, each made of brushed aluminum frames: a small sign probably with a visitor registry, flanked by two larger signs, one with the burial register, the other with the revised plan with interpretive text and a rendering of Poplar Grove Church (Figure 14). The old iron tablets, with the four-line verses, cemetery regulations, and other notices, were most likely removed at the same time and stored in the loft of the garage. In revising the cemetery organization, the park was apparently trying to make it easier for visitors to locate graves, an effort that had been difficult even with the headstones in their upright position. The new organization did away with the division and section designations and reordered the cemetery into twenty "Blocks" identified by Roman numerals. Small iron tablets with the letter designation were installed at the head of the drives on the innermost circular drive.

Over the course of the two decades following the 1957 improvements, little additional work was undertaken at the cemetery. The park continued to maintain most of the features remaining from the War Department era, including the four gun monuments, settees, and flagstaff anchored by guy wires. The park maintained the arborvitae hedge around the service yard, and the boxwood Maltese

cross hedge in front of the lodge (Figure 15). New trees were planted in keeping with the existing informal arrangement, and included mostly holly, red maple, yellow birch, and willow oak. The gravestones, despite the work done in 1957, continued to sink and heave, and by the early 1970s, many had once again become obscured by grass. Cars drove over the graves along the main entrance drive when passing in opposite directions, and mowers continued to batter the edges of the stones.

While there were few built changes within the cemetery walls, the situation was different outside on the former Flower farm that surrounded the cemetery. The land was owned by the Odom family and known by the 1970s as "Beau Vista Farms." Lester G. and Roberta E. Odom had acquired the ninety-acre farm from Russell and Audrey Garner in 1954. A 1969 aerial photograph of the farm documented the acreage of the farm's fields surrounding the cemetery (Figure 16). Two years later in 1971, Lester Odom died, and he was buried in a small cyclone-fence enclosed family plot established on the south side of the cemetery approach road. That same year, a second burial was made in the family plot for Nellie E. Jones.

Following the death of her husband, Roberta Odom began to subdivide rear portions of the farm, while retaining the prime agricultural land along Vaughan Road in production. In July 1972, she conveyed to other family members the small cemetery along the approach road, and subdivided two lots along the north and east sides of the national cemetery and sold them to Anthony Blaha and Ronald Peterson, each of whom built single-family houses on the property, within seventy-five feet of the east wall. To access these houses, a driveway was built off the cemetery approach road, along the edge of an old field bordering the west side of the cemetery, extending along the full length of the cemetery's north side, and turning south to follow the cemetery's east wall. The construction of the Blaha and Peterson houses, along with the access drive, changed the rural setting of Poplar Grove. Along the north side of the cemetery, most of the woods were cleared for the access drive, leaving a thin hedgerow that opened up views of the drive, power line, and wetlands and fields to the north. Trees were also cleared around the two houses, which broke up the wooded enclosure and made the houses visible from within the cemetery. Despite this development, the rural setting of the cemetery, visible from Vaughan Road across the fields of the Odom farm, remained largely intact.

During the early 1970s, the National Park Service completed work at the cemetery that effectively stripped the landscape of most of its remaining small-scale features from the War Department period. The park removed three of the four gun monuments and purportedly gave them to Fort Donelson National Battlefield in Tennessee. The settees were removed and replaced with two new benches on concrete pads at the flagstaff. The flagstaff's upper sections and guy wires were removed, leaving it well below the tree canopy at half its original eighty-foot height. At the time, the park was also reassessing its responsibility for the approach road, which remained in private ownership subject to a federal right-of-way as provided in the 1877 cemetery deed. The park's concern with maintaining the approach road was probably due to budget limitations and uncertainty over liability given increased private use of the road to access the Blaha and Peterson houses and the potential for similar new development in the adjoining fields of the Odom farm. The approach road by this time had lost most of its formal allee to a border of scrubby successional woods.

1975 to the Present:

Following the appointment of Wallace B. Elms as the new superintendent of Petersburg National Battlefield in August 1975, the park began to take interest in preserving Poplar Grove's buildings, landscape, and rural setting. By November 1977, the park's regional office supported a proposal to acquire the approach road, prevent construction of additional houses next to the inclosure wall, and provide an appropriate open space setting for the cemetery. The acquisition stalled for a number of years, apparently due in part to a proposal for a housing development on the land and lack of funds. By 1987, the park's new superintendent, Frank J. Deckert, settled with Roberta Odom on a much reduced proposal for acquisition of a 3.7-acre parcel that included the land between the west wall of the cemetery and the private driveway to the Blaha and Peterson houses, and a strip along and including a section of the approach road and Odom cemetery, extending one hundred feet south of the road. The remainder of the approach road extending out to Vaughan Road was not included in the proposal. Roberta Odom offered the property as a donation, in return for the park's commitment to maintain her family's small cemetery plot. The regional office agreed with the proposal, and

following completion of a survey in January 1990, a contract for donation between Roberta Odom and the National Park Foundation (a charitable organization working in partnership with the National Park Service) was finalized on September 5, 1990. The contract reserved forever the right of family members to access the cemetery, but did not specify how the cemetery would be maintained. The park assured Mrs. Odom that it was the intent of the National Park Service to maintain the cemetery to National Park Service standards. On April 24, 1991, Roberta Odom signed the deed for donation of the property to the National Park Foundation. However, because the land was outside of the park's acquisition boundary that coincided with the cemetery property line, the National Park Foundation did not convey the property to the National Park Service.

Despite this, the park managed the 3.7-acre parcel as park land. In c.1995, the park built a small visitor parking lot on the parcel along the north side of the approach road, adjoining the cemetery gates (Figure 17). Beyond the parking lot were young, dense woods of loblolly pine that had grown up since the driveway to the Blaha and Peterson houses had been built in c.1972. The growth of these woods obscured the views of the cemetery and approach road from the west that had characterized the landscape since the Civil War. Additional successional vegetation outside the southwestern wall had grown up around the scattered red-cedars planted in 1937, further changing the once open views looking out from the cemetery west and south to the surrounding farmland. Park managers probably viewed this vegetation as beneficial to screening potential new development in the adjoining fields.

Within the cemetery walls, the landscape continued to lose features as planning was underway for improvements and land acquisition from the 1970s through the 1990s. Losses included specimen trees and a part of the narrow band of woods along the north side due to a blow-down in 1994. The Maltese cross hedge, planted in front of the lodge in c.1872, was removed along with a sole remaining settee in c.1985. Built changes during this time included addition of a frame storage shed behind the garage in c.1982, addition of a steel exterior staircase on the west side of the garage in c.1990 that replaced the earlier pulley system used to access the garage loft; and repavement of the approach road and main drive in 2003, using a sand and pea-gravel topcoat to provide the character of gravel. The park maintained the grave markers by periodic cleaning, leveling, and trimming the surrounding grass, although cutbacks in maintenance staff resulted in a backlog of work.

Recognizing the long-standing problems with the grave markers and the deteriorated condition of the rest of the landscape, the park received preliminary approval in 2002 for a comprehensive rehabilitation project that included installation of new upright headstones and blocks, rehabilitation of the lodge and restroom building, and new plantings. Planning for this project continues as of 2010 and is anticipated for construction in the near future.



Figure 13. 1939 view looking northeast toward the flagstaff from the rostrum and change of headstones and blocks into flat markers (Poplar Grove CLR:107, Library of Virginia, from Virginia Room Exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair, image /WF/05/06/017.jpg.)



Figure 14. July 1968 view northeast across the center of the cemetery. Note signs near the flagstaff installed in c.1957 (Poplar Grove CLR:115, Photograph by Fred Bell, June 2, 1968, Poplar Grove administrative records, Petersburg National Battlefield).

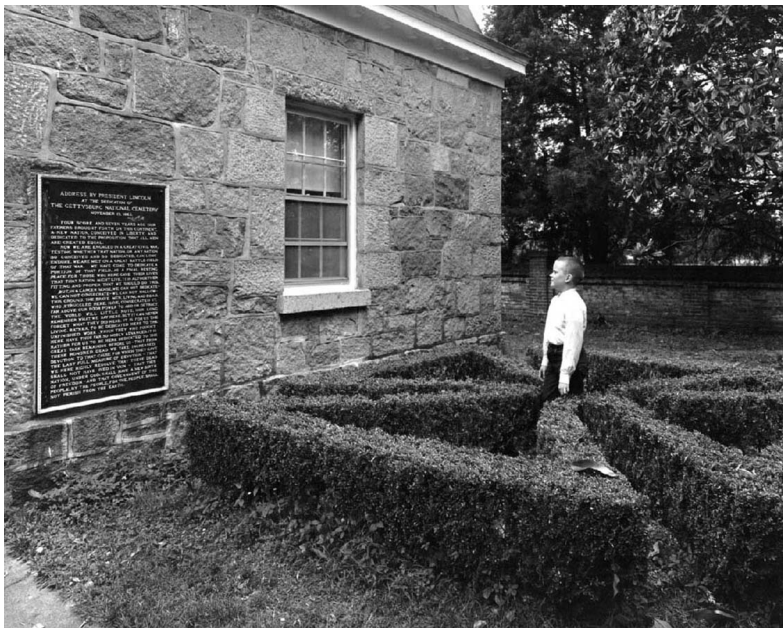


Figure 15. 1968 view looking southwest at the Maltese cross hedge (c.1871) and Gettysburg Address on lodge wall (c.1903) (Poplar Grove CLR:116, Photograph by Fred Bell, June 2, 1968, Poplar Grove administrative records, Petersburg National Battlefield).

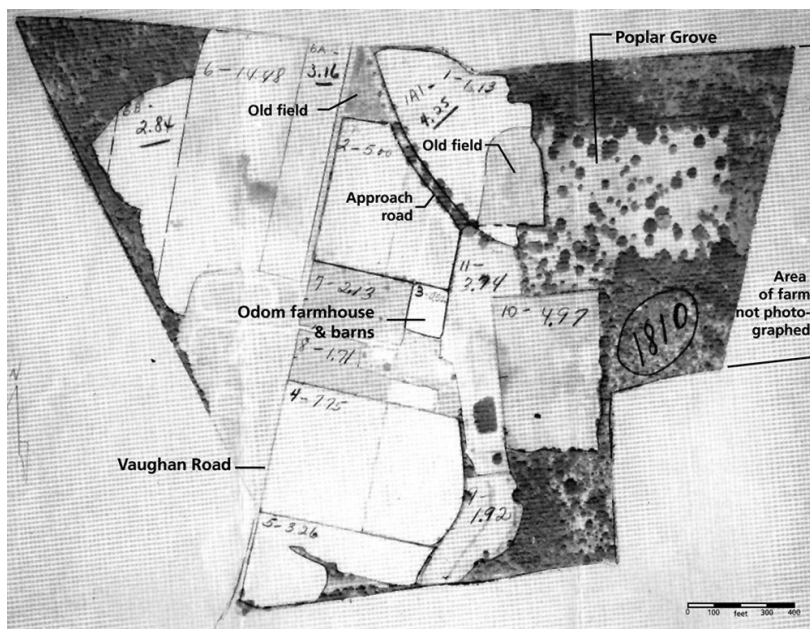


Figure 16. A 1969 aerial photograph of the Odom Farm that surrounded the national cemetery (Poplar Grove CLR:117, Poplar Grove administrative records, Petersburg National Battlefield).



Figure 17. Aerial photograph of Poplar Grove National Cemetery and its setting, spring 2004 A 1969 aerial photograph of the Odom Farm that surrounded the national cemetery (Poplar Grove CLR:121, Poplar Grove GIS database, Petersburg National Battlefield).

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Funerary	Cemetery	Cemetery	No	Yes	Yes
Funerary	Cemetery	Cemetery	Yes	No	Yes

Public Access:

Public Access: Unrestricted

Public Access Narrative:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is open to visitors year round from dawn to dusk.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery is defined by ten important landscape characteristics: natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological features. The landscape is characterized by the geometrically designed open space bounded by the hard edge of the rectangular inclosure wall. Inside the brick wall, the predominant view is of mowed turf with specimen trees and shrubs scattered throughout the landscape. Many of the trees area concentrated along the inclosure wall, the main drive, and around the central loop. The headstones were altered from their upright position to the current configuration of flush with the ground in the 1930s. This creates a pastoral appearance due to the scant visual impact of the flush and partially grass-covered grave markers. Four major buildings and structures exist in the cemetery, three of which are clustered at the cemetery entrance, a square shaped bump-out on the southwest corner of the larger rectangular burial grounds landscape. These historic buildings include the Lodge, the Garage, and the Public Restroom. The rostrum, a gazebo-like pavilion at the eastern edge of the site is the only structure within the burial grounds. Formal circulation systems are few. The main drive to the flagstaff is the only paved route in the burial grounds. Grass walkways that were once well defined by the radial pattern of the grave stones have been obscured by the lowering of the stones.

While many historic characteristics remain at Poplar Grove, there have been substantial changes since 1933. Historic character has been lost in the landscape's spatial organization through growth of woods on fields in the cemetery's setting; in vegetation through the loss of the approach road allée, Maltese cross hedge, specimen trees, and shrubs; in views and vistas through growth of woods and specimen trees that block views upon approach to the cemetery and of the central flagstaff from within the burial grounds; and most notably, in small-scale features through removal of iron tablets, gun monuments, and upright grave markers.

Poplar Grove National Cemetery retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association, but lacks integrity of feeling. As a whole, the cemetery landscape conveys its significance for association with the Civil War and as a component of the National Cemetery System as initially developed during the post-Civil War period through the early twentieth century under War Department administration. While the diminished aspects of integrity detract from the historic details of the property, Poplar Grove National Cemetery retains its overall historic physical form. The individual graves interred after 1933 also remain intact during the overall historic period associated with the National Cemetery System that extends until the last new burial was interred in 2003.

The landscape of Poplar Grove National Cemetery is in fair condition. The poor condition of the turf, ongoing drainage concerns, and repointing needed on the perimeter wall require corrective action within three to five years to prevent further harm to the cultural landscape. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period of the landscape (1866-1933), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

The cultural landscape report for Poplar Grove National Cemetery discussed numerous features outside of the property boundary to evaluate their contribution to the landscape context. These include: the woods and farm fields surrounding the cemetery, the approach road, the Odom Cemetery, the driveway to the Blaha and Peterson houses, and the visitor parking area. These features will not be evaluated in the CLI because they reside outside of the national cemetery boundary.

Landscape Characteristic: Natural Systems and Features

The cemetery was developed on this site in part due to its natural features, including relatively level surface and deep, soft soils. A broad depression extends from the northwest corner of the cemetery, with a change in elevation of approximately fifteen feet from the central flagstaff. The low point of this depression along the north inclosure wall has remained a wet area since the cemetery was established (Figure 18). Throughout much of the historic period, the cemetery landscape was enclosed on three sides by woods dominated by loblolly pine. Today, the woods outside the cemetery remain, although much of the loblolly pine has been succeeded by hardwoods, and portions of the woods have been removed for suburban development. Natural succession has led to a greater amount of wooded land in the cemetery's western setting and along the approach road.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 18. View of the inclosure wall at the south side of the cemetery where a low area creates drainage issues (SUNY ESF, 2006).

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

As initially developed, circulation was a conspicuous characteristic of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, but as the landscape was developed through the late nineteenth century, the circulation system within the burial grounds became less visible with the change from gravel to turf surfaces and removal of brick gutters. The alteration of the grave markers in 1934 after the historic period further eroded the definition of the drives and walks. With the exception of the service drive, circulation in the cemetery retains the general character present at the end of the historic period following improvements made by the War Department between 1929 and 1931.

Two circulation features lost during the historic period included the circular turn-around and adjoining walk in the lodge grounds. The circular turn-around drive was built in c.1871 and featured a central island ringed by boxwoods and annual plantings or a low hedge, with a horsechestnut tree in the center. The walks, also built in c.1871 and defined by low hedges or planted borders, extended from the main drive on the west side of the lodge along the inclosure wall and to the turn-around and Division F. It is not known if these features were initially surfaced in gravel or turf; after c.1874, they were probably turf to match the cemetery drives and walks. The turn-around fell out of use by c.1900 and the walks were removed with construction of the public restroom building in 1929 and expansion of the septic system in 1931.

Cemetery Inclosure Space:

The cemetery inclosure is the space on the perimeter of the cemetery, from the inclosure (perimeter) wall to the outside property boundary. During the historic period, the inclosure space was framed by woods on the north, east, and south sides, and was open to fields on the west side and a portion of the south side. The inclosure was initially defined by a wood paling fence that was replaced in 1876 by the existing brick inclosure wall. A hedge of Osage orange lined the interior of the wall until it was removed in c.1888. By the end of the historic period, a wagon road was maintained along the outside of the wall for access. Since the end of the historic period, the spatial character of the inclosure has changed from open to closed on the west and south sides, and on the north and east sides has become less enclosed through openings created in the woods for suburban development. The cemetery inclosure space remains a character-defining feature of the cemetery landscape, although the change in the adjoining woods and fields detracts from its historic character (Figure 19).

Service Yard:

The service yard, developed beginning in c.1871 as the cemetery's maintenance area, is defined by the inclosure wall, main drive, and burial grounds. It occupies the portion of the one-acre addition (1868) north of the main drive. During the historic period, the service yard was initially enclosed on the south and east sides by a boxwood hedge and lattice fence, which were replaced in c.1888 by an arborvitae hedge. Inside of the hedge, the yard contained several service buildings and a privy at the northeast corner that were replaced in 1929 by the present garage. There was also a well house in the center of the yard, which was removed in c.1939 and replaced by a new well with an inconspicuous wellhead in c.1974. In c.1974, the arborvitae hedge was removed and the limits of the service drive were expanded. Although the historic enclosure provided by the arborvitae hedge has been lost and the drive is much larger than it was historically, the service yard remains a character-defining space in the cemetery landscape (Figure 20).

Lodge Grounds:

The lodge grounds, developed beginning in c.1871 as the cemetery's assembly area, is defined by the inclosure wall, main drive, and burial grounds (Division F/Block XIX). It occupies the portion of the one-acre addition (1868) south of the main drive. During the historic period, the lodge grounds included the lodge completed in 1872, the public restroom building that replaced several earlier outbuildings in 1929 on the west, and the rostrum, completed in 1897, on the east. Between these buildings was the cemetery's assembly area, which was defined by a circular turn-around that branched off the main drive. This feature existed until c.1900. Internally, the space by the early twentieth century was framed by fruit trees and a walk along the south inclosure wall and by

boxwood shrubs ringing the turn-around, as well as by scattered specimen trees. Today, the lodge grounds remain defined by the three major buildings and the inclosure wall, but the loss of the plant materials and circulation features has altered the internal organization of the space. Despite these changes, the lodge grounds remain a character-defining space in the cemetery landscape.

Burial Grounds:

The burial grounds, laid out between 1866 and 1869, comprise the primary space of the cemetery, defined externally by the inclosure, service yard, and lodge grounds, and internally by the radial burial plan and plantings. During the historic period, the internal spatial organization was characterized by scattered specimen trees that did not define any particular space and an allee of boxwoods between Divisions E (Block XVIII) and D (Block XVI). The sylvan hall, a standard national cemetery planting consisting of a cross-shaped space defined by rows of American elms with boxwood shrubs, was removed by c.1890, although the boxwoods were retained. Since the end of the historic period, the interior spatial organization of the burial grounds has been altered by the transformation of the headstones and blocks to flat markers, and the loss of the boxwood allee and specimen trees, which have created an expansiveness to the landscape that did not exist historically. In contrast, trees added around the central circle after 1933 have created greater enclosure and block views of the cemetery flagstaff from the graves. The external organization remains largely intact with the exception of changes to the adjoining inclosure woods. Despite these changes, the burial grounds remain a character-defining space in the cemetery landscape.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Cemetery Inclosure Space	147601	Contributing					No
Lodge Grounds	147603	Contributing					No
Burial Grounds	147605	Contributing					No
Service Yard	147607	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

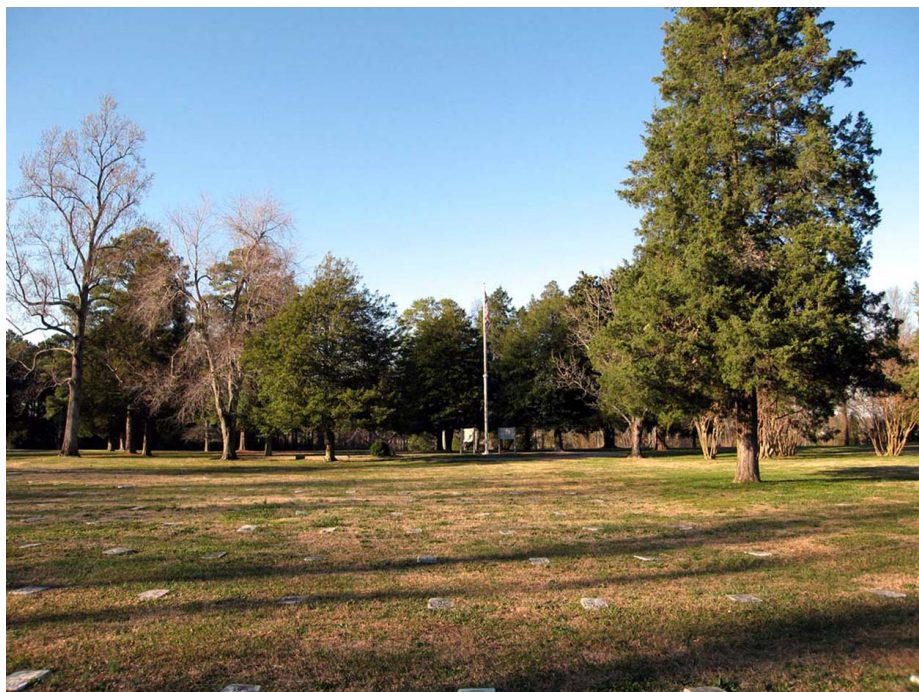


Figure 19. The burial grounds space comprises most of the national cemetery acreage. The rectangular open space is enclosed by a brick perimeter wall (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 20. The garage and service yard, looking west from the burial grounds toward the cemetery entrance gate (SUNY ESF, 2006).

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

During the historic period, Poplar Grove National Cemetery was characterized by funerary and commemorative land uses. While the vast majority of the burials were made as reinterments between 1866 and 1869, new burials continued through the historic period, but were few in number. New burials ceased after 1957, except for reinterment of Civil War remains, the last of which occurred in 2003. The cemetery remains open for the reinterment of Civil War remains discovered in the battlefields surrounding Petersburg. Unlike some national cemeteries, Poplar Grove never received a major commemorative monument, but the gun monument installed in 1869 and the rostrum completed in 1897 reflect commemorative uses. In addition to visitation to individual gravesites, the cemetery hosted public ceremonies, in particular on Memorial Day, although visitation with few exceptions tended to be sparse. With the establishment of Petersburg National Military Park in 1926, the cemetery began to be used formally for interpretive purposes. Historic agricultural land uses in the cemetery's setting remain in the fields to the west, but suburban residential uses have been introduced in the historically wooded areas to the north and east.

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

As initially developed, circulation was a conspicuous characteristic of Poplar Grove National Cemetery, but as the landscape was developed through the late nineteenth century, the circulation system within the burial grounds became less visible with the change from gravel to turf surfaces and removal of brick gutters. The alteration of the grave markers in 1934 after the historic period further eroded the definition of the drives and walks. With the exception of the service drive, circulation in the cemetery retains the general character present at the end of the historic period following improvements made by the War Department between 1929 and 1931.

Two circulation features lost during the historic period included the circular turn-around and adjoining walk in the lodge grounds. The circular turn-around drive was built in c.1871 and featured a central island ringed by boxwoods and annual plantings or a low hedge, with a horsechestnut tree in the center. The walks, also built in c.1871 and defined by low hedges or planted borders, extended from the main drive on the west side of the lodge along the inclosure wall and to the turn-around and Division F. It is not known if these features were initially surfaced in gravel or turf; after c.1874, they were probably turf to match the cemetery drives and walks. The turn-around fell out of use by c.1900 and the walks were removed with construction of the public restroom building in 1929 and expansion of the septic system in 1931.

Main Drive:

The main drive, a continuation of the approach road within the cemetery, extends from the entrance gates and loops around the flagstaff. It is one of eight radiating drives, and may have originated in part as an entrance into the Civil War camp of the 50th New York Volunteer Engineers. It was part of the initial development of the cemetery in 1866, and was surfaced in gravel and lined by brick gutters. In c.1871, a circular turn-around was built off the drive within the lodge grounds. In c.1872-1874, the surface of the main drive was changed to turf along with all other drives in the burial grounds, and in 1877 all of the brick gutters were filled and covered in turf. In c.1900, the main drive was set apart as a distinct drive in the burial grounds when its surface was changed back to gravel (the gutters were not uncovered). In 1931, the main drive was paved in asphalt with a three-quarter inch grave top coat. As part of the paving project, the alignment of the central circle was changed into a teardrop shape to provide an easier turning radius for vehicles. This change required the addition of a concrete curb on the south side to avoid grading over the adjoining headstones. This change in alignment, although made during the historic period, detracts from the circular symmetry of the cemetery. Since the end of the historic period, the drive has been widened in front of the lodge and service yard, and in 2003 was repaved with a pea gravel top coat (Figure 21). Overall, the main drive retains its character from the end of the historic period.

Service Drive:

The service drive was initially laid out in c.1873 as a short access from the main drive into the service yard, passing through a lattice fence and boxwood hedge (later arborvitae hedge) that screened the service yard. With the construction of the garage in 1929, the drive was extended to the width of the building, wrapping around the well house that stood in front. After the historic period, the drive was widened from the main drive to the garage for the width of the building, probably when the arborvitae hedge was removed in c.1974. In 2003, the drive was paved in asphalt with a pea gravel top coat. An aged magnolia marks the original southwestern corner of the original narrow drive entrance; a companion magnolia historically marked the other corner. The expansion of the drive and resulting loss of the narrow entrance detract from the historic character of the service drive.

Burial Grounds Drives:

The drives within the burial grounds (today generally known as walks, and historically also known as avenues) are the primary, wider circulation routes between burial sections, averaging twelve to fifteen feet wide. The drives were constructed between 1866 and 1869 with gravel surfaces and brick gutters. Between c.1872 and 1874, the drives were changed to turf due primarily to maintenance concerns (difficulty in keeping grass from growing in the gravel). The turf was a Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) rolled to create an even surface. In 1877, the brick gutters were filled and covered with turf as another maintenance economy. With these changes, the drives became subtle features in the landscape, defined only by the voids between grave sections. The main drive remained visually consistent with the other drives until c.1900, when it was changed to a gravel surface; the other drives were kept in turf. After the historic period, the alteration of the grave markers in 1934 further eroded the definition of the drives, and they became largely indiscernible. In c.1957, the radial drives, except for the main drive and the drive due north of the flagstaff that had been filled with graves between 1896 and 1918, were identified by letters A through F (the drives were historically not named). All of the drives remain as circulation corridors, except for the drive north of the flagstaff that was filled with graves. Aside from the change in setting resulting from the alteration of the grave markers, the drives remain largely intact, reflecting conditions in the latter historic period (Figure 22).

Burial Grounds Walks:

The walks within the burial grounds are the secondary, narrower circulation routes between the grave rows, averaging seven feet wide. They were created between 1866 and 1869, and were surfaced in turf as part of the cemetery lawn. Trees were planted in many of the walks. After the historic period, the alteration of the grave markers eroded the definition of the walks. Despite this, they remain largely intact as circulation corridors and with the same surface that they have had throughout the historic period.

Restroom Walks:

Three-foot wide concrete walks were constructed in c.1929 to access the public restroom (utility) building constructed at the same time. The walk was built from the east wing of the lodge and back to the restroom building, where it accessed both restrooms and the utility room. In c.1970, the walk was closed off from the public by a wood plank fence enclosing the rear yard of the lodge. Although in part no longer used as the main public access to the restrooms, the concrete walks remain intact and are minor details in the historic landscape.

Restroom Path:

An earthen path was built in 2003 to provide access to the restrooms from the main drive. It was built on fill that interfered with the drainage swale from the lodge southeast to an opening in the inclosure wall. The path is surfaced in earth and turf. Due to its design and recent origin, it detracts from the historic character of the landscape.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Main Drive	147609	Contributing			Location	22766	Yes
Service Drive	147611	Contributing					No
Burial Grounds Drives	147613	Contributing			Asset	1059897	No
Burial Grounds Walks	147615	Contributing			Asset	1059897	No
Restroom Walks	147617	Contributing			Asset	1169880	No
Restroom Path	147619	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 21. The main drive, looking east from near the rostrum showing asphalt paving with gravel surface coat (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 22. Characteristic turf drive and walks, looking northwest toward the main drive. The wider space is a drive, the narrower space between the rows of grave markers are walks (SUNY ESF, 2006).

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

This characteristic is defined as the built, three-dimensional configuration of the landscape (natural landforms are addressed under the natural systems and features characteristic). In the initial development of the cemetery, the natural contours were probably manipulated to provide even, level surfaces adequate for burials. Topography was a conspicuous characteristic of the early cemetery landscape due to the mounds built over each grave, intended to provide fill as the coffin disintegrated. These grave mounds were gradually removed until the last were leveled in 1877 with the installation of the marble grave markers. The only other topographic features within the landscape were a drainage ditch off the northwest corner of the cemetery built in c.1869, and the flagstaff mound that was initially built in c.1866 as a six-foot high, forty-foot wide earthen mound. With replacement of the original flagstaff in 1874, the mound was reduced to four feet high and approximately twenty feet wide. With the replacement of the flagstaff in 1913, the mound was eliminated. The only remaining topographic feature in the landscape is the drainage ditch.

Drainage Ditch:

In c.1869 during the initial development of the cemetery, a ditch was built to drain the topographical low point at the northwestern side of the cemetery. This ditch drained north onto the Flower farm. The ditch was probably rebuilt with the construction of the inclosure wall in 1876, and most likely several times after that. The most recent reconstruction, in c.1957, included a concrete spillway that extends beyond the NPS property line. In c.1972, a concrete culvert was built over the ditch to carry the driveway to the Blaha and Peterson houses. This construction may have led to the present failure of the ditch to adequately drain the burial grounds. Although functionally important, the drainage ditch not does contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Drainage Ditch	147623	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

This characteristic describes the managed trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, and herbaceous materials in the landscape (but not the natural unmanaged vegetation, which is part of the natural systems and features characteristic). The vegetation of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was characterized historically by an allee along the approach road, and lawn and specimen trees within the cemetery. There was historically a preponderance of evergreens (loblolly pine and cedars), which traditionally have a funerary association with eternal life. Shrubs, hedges, vines, and flowerbeds were generally secondary features. The amount of vegetation was at its greatest from the initial beautification of the cemetery during the 1870s through the 1890s. After this time, the War Department reduced the amount of vegetation, especially flowerbeds and shrubs, in response to natural decline and disaster, lack of replacement, and efforts to decrease maintenance. The last major planting during the historic period occurred in 1931. After the historic period, the National Park Service made additional plantings in the burial grounds, but did not alter the overall character of evenly spaced trees and lawn aside from the planting of Eastern red-cedars clustered along the inclosure wall. Although the amount of vegetation has declined and several new species have been introduced since the end of the historic period, the overall character of the vegetation within the cemetery created by collection of specimen trees informally distributed across the landscape

remains largely intact. The approach road allée does not remain intact.

Character-defining vegetation features that have been lost since the end of the historic period, aside from individual specimens, include the boxwood allée between Divisions E (Block XVIII) and D (Block XVI) (c.1871-c.1974), the arborvitae hedge around the service yard (c.1888-c.1974), fruit trees in the lodge grounds (c.1871-c.1970), a boxwood hedge in the shape of a Maltese cross in front of the lodge (c.1871-c.1985), and English ivy on the inclosure wall (c.1888-c.1957). There was also a grape arbor extending back from the southeast corner of the lodge (c.1872-c.1934).

Cemetery Specimen Trees:

In the initial establishment of Poplar Grove, specimen trees included fruit trees (purportedly planted by the engineers) and second-growth loblolly pines, which were thinned from the woods surrounding the engineers' camp and retained as specimens. Spaces within the grave rows most likely reflect planting around these trees. In 1868, there were approximately 180 specimen loblolly pines and that same year, the burial corps planted approximately 1,000 red-cedars transplanted from nearby woods, most of which died. In 1871, the Quartermaster General undertook a major planting program at the national cemeteries that included approximately 200 specimens at Poplar Grove. Species included ash (probably European mountain ash), purple beech, cedar (probably false cypress/white cedar), hornbeam (hop hornbeam), horsechestnut, balsam fir, elm, Kentucky coffee-tree, larch, linden, magnolia, box elder, silver maple, sugar maple, oak (probably pin, water, and willow), silver poplar, Norway spruce, white spruce, and weeping willow. Other trees planted after 1871 included dwarf black spruce, mugho pine, red maple, sweet-gum, and tulip-tree. Also in 1871, 101 elms were established as two allees in the shape of cross to create a so-called sylvan hall, a feature introduced at the time in many national cemeteries. Most of the elms in the sylvan hall were removed in c.1890 apparently because their heavy surface roots were interfering with the graves and mowing. Many trees were lost in two storms during the summer of 1915, which destroyed approximately 139 specimens. These trees were not replaced until 1931, when the first major planting program since 1871 was undertaken. It specified approximately seventy trees within the cemetery walls, including elm, holly, linden, Austrian pine, European mountain ash, Norway maple, Norway spruce, and pin oak. By the end of the historic period, there were 169 trees in the cemetery, generally evenly and informally distributed across the landscape, with elm, loblolly pine, holly, cedars, magnolia, and oaks the most numerous species.

After the end of the historic period, the National Park Service removed many specimen trees due to decline and made new plantings. These included approximately one hundred Eastern red-cedar trees planted in 1937, primarily along the inclosure wall. By 1941, there were 137 deciduous and 156 evergreen trees (including eighty deciduous trees in the approach road allée). By 1962, the number of evergreen trees within the cemetery had decreased to twenty, and the deciduous trees to thirty-seven. The park made some new plantings after World War II using red oak, yellow birch, scrub pine, pignut hickory, willow oak, sweet-gum, cherry, and Colorado blue spruce. While there are approximately eighty specimen trees in the cemetery today, only twenty likely date to the historic period (Figure 23). The loss of trees and changes in species, particularly the loss of evergreens with their funerary association, detracts from the historic character of the landscape. The trees planted after 1934 are generally compatible with the historic character, although the hollies along the central circle interfere with views from the flagstaff out to the graves due to their heavy canopy and low branching.

The oldest specimen trees (including those in the approach road allée) are identified by circular metal tags imprinted with an inventory number affixed to the trunk. These tags most likely date to an inventory system created by the park service prior to World War II. This system was discontinued at an unknown time after the war, so the younger trees in the cemetery do not have the identification tags.

Cemetery Shrubs:

During the early history of the cemetery, the landscape was characterized by many shrubs. The 1871 planting program included 100 boxwoods (planted in an allée between Divisions D and E, along the drives, as edging for the Maltese cross in front of the lodge, and as a hedge around the service area) and 4,042 Osage orange (as a perimeter hedge), and during the 1870s there were

unspecified shrubs planted on the flagstaff mound that were removed by c.1895. The boxwoods along the drives were clipped into mounds. In 1888, the boxwood hedge around the service yard was replaced with an arborvitae hedge. Crape myrtles were planted prior to 1932. Most of the shrubs remained intact by the end of the historic period, except for those around the circular turn-around in the lodge grounds that were probably removed for a septic field. After the historic period, the number of shrubs declined with the notable loss of the boxwood allée, sheared boxwoods along the drives, service yard arborvitae hedge, and Maltese cross hedge. The remaining boxwoods were not clipped but allowed to grow naturally. New plantings were probably limited to a cluster of crape myrtle east of the flagstaff. Today, shrubs that probably date to the historic period are limited to six aged boxwoods in the lodge grounds and in the former allée, and a crape myrtle in Division D. Post-1933 shrubs include a group of crape myrtle in the drive east of the flagstaff. Due to their overgrown size, origin after 1933, and remnants of once larger plantings, the existing shrubs as a whole do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape (Figure 24). Clipped shrubs were historically a character-defining feature of Poplar Grove.

Cemetery Lawn:

The cemetery lawn dates back to the initial development of the cemetery in 1866-1869. It was initially a discontinuous and uneven lawn due to the presence of grave mounds. By 1877, the last of the grave mounds was leveled, and together with change from gravel to turf on the drives by 1874 and removal of the brick gutters in 1877, the lawn became an expansive and unifying feature of the landscape. Mowing was done by hand mowers, with trimming done by sickle or scythe. In 1878, the cemetery acquired a horse-drawn lawn mower, and in 1931, a gasoline powered mower. The cemetery lawn, primarily Bermuda grass with wild onion, sorrel, and other weeds, was often cited as being difficult to maintain due to clayey soils. After the historic period, the park maintained the cemetery lawn much as it had been during the historic period, although the alteration of the grave markers had a marked visual impact on the lawn, creating a single expanse of lawn where historically it had been punctuated by the rows of upright grave markers. In addition, the lawn has at times been in poor condition. Despite this visual change and conditions problems, the lawn remains a character-defining feature of the cemetery landscape.

Inclosure Ivy Groundcover:

Around the outside of the inclosure wall on portions of the south, east, and north sides, there is English ivy that has become naturalized within the inclosure woods. This ivy escaped from the ivy planted in 1888 along the inside of the inclosure wall in a bed cut into the lawn. The ivy was kept trimmed in a line below the top of the wall, and was maintained through the end of the historic period and into the late 1930s. During the war and post-war years when maintenance was curtailed, the ivy grew over the wall and into the adjoining woods. It was most likely removed from the inside of the wall as part of a general cemetery improvement undertaken in 1957. Although the existing ivy is an interesting remnant, it most likely did not exist historically in its current location and therefore does not contribute to the historic character of the landscape. The loss of the ivy on the inclosure wall detracts from the historic character of the cemetery.

Inclosure Red-Cedar Trees:

Along the outside of the south and west sides of the inclosure wall are Eastern red-cedar trees planted in 1937. These cedars were planted for visual interest and screening along the sides of the cemetery open to adjoining fields. Those south of the lodge grounds and west of the burial grounds are today surrounded by successional woods, while those to either side of the entrance gates remain as specimens. Because they were planted after the historic period, as individual trees these cedars do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape. However, given their limited extent and relationship to plants used historically, they do not detract from the historic character of the landscape.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Cemetery Specimen Trees	147625	Contributing					No
Cemetery Lawn	147627	Contributing			Asset	1059897	No
Cemetery Shrubs	147629	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Inclosure Ivy Groundcover	147631	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Inclosure Red Cedar Trees	147633	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 23. Eighty specimen trees are located in the cemetery, twenty of which date to the historic period (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 24. Many shrubs in the cemetery post-date the period of significance or are over-mature historic specimens (SUNY ESF, 2006).

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures at Poplar Grove are clustered at the entrance to the cemetery and frame the perimeter. Buildings that were removed during the historic period included Poplar Grove Church (1865-1868), the first lodge (1867-c.1879), the brick kitchen (1879-1929) and “cave” (c.1900-1929, use not known) to the rear of the lodge; and in the service yard, the well house (c.1871-c.1939), brick toolshed-stable (1879-c.1929), forage shed, (1879-c.1915), service yard privy (c.1905-1929), and frame shed (c.1925-c.1929). Notable lost structures include the system of brick gutters that lined the drives in the burial grounds (1866-1869), which were covered in 1877 and may still remain below the surface. While there was substantial change during the historic period, buildings and structures remain largely unchanged since the end of the historic period in 1933.

Two buildings—the Blaha and Peterson houses—have been introduced into the immediate setting of the cemetery since the historic period. Built in c.1972, both are visible from within the cemetery and detract from the historic setting of Poplar Grove.

Inclosure Wall and Entrance Gate:

The inclosure wall and entrance gate delineate the perimeter of the cemetery and were built based on a prototype plan made in 1870 by Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs. Initially begun in 1873 to replace a white-painted wood paling fence erected in 1866, the Poplar Grove inclosure wall and entrance gates were built in 1876 by John Brennon and Archibald L. Hutton of Washington. The wall, measuring 2,700 feet long and four feet tall, was constructed of red brick with pilasters capped by Ohio sandstone blocks dividing each of the 132 sections. At approximately eight locations, openings in the brick wall were made for drainage, originally from the system of brick gutters and wooden sewer boxes that drained the cemetery (Figures 25-26). As first constructed, the wall remained obscured from inside the cemetery by a perimeter hedge of Osage orange, which was replaced in c.1888 by a planting of English ivy that climbed the wall. The ivy remained until c.1957. The entrance gate, built of granite posts with iron gates, was characteristic of larger national cemeteries with two pedestrian passages flanking a central vehicular way (Figure 27). In c.1935, the park added two metal plaques in the shape of a shield with the words “U.S. National Cemetery” to the granite posts. The inclosure wall and entrance gates remain intact and are character-defining features of Civil War-era national cemeteries. The wall and gates are similar to those at Yorktown, Seven Pines, Richmond, Culpeper, and Fort Harrison National Cemeteries, among others, all built around the same time according to the Meigs prototype. Removal of English ivy along the interior of the wall, probably done to conserve the brick masonry, has altered the historic character of the landscape.

Lodge:

The lodge, located at the cemetery entrance gates, is a small one and one-half story house with a Mansard roof that historically functioned as the residence of the cemetery superintendent and his family (Figure 28). It replaced a frame lodge built in 1867 on the north side of the drive, and was designed according to a prototype plan in the Second Empire style by Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs. Work on the building, initially designed to be brick, began in 1870 on the north side of the main drive. This site was abandoned and the following year the project was rebid and awarded to Kyran A. Murphy, this time using stone construction and a site on the south side of the main drive. The old frame lodge was moved to the rear of the lodge for use as a kitchen wing, and was removed with the construction of a separate brick kitchen to the rear of the lodge in c.1879. In 1914, a stucco-finished one-story kitchen wing was added at the rear of the lodge. The final exterior modifications to the Lodge were made at the end of the historic period as part of the War Department’s program of improvements that included the building of the garage and public restroom building. In 1931, the floor of the porch was replaced in concrete and the lower slope of the slate Mansard roof was replaced with standing-seam metal, matching the roofs on the stable and restroom building. In c.1903, a standard iron tablet with Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, known as the Lincoln Memorial tablet, was affixed to the front of the lodge. While the paint scheme at the end of the historic period in 1933 is not known, the 1931 National Cemetery regulations called for tin roofs to be painted red, trim white, doors bronze green, porch ceiling light blue, and borders and

letters of the Lincoln Memorial tablet, copper-bronze.

Since the end of the historic period, there have been no substantial changes to the exterior of the lodge aside from the addition of aluminum triple-track storm windows and painting of the stucco kitchen wing in white. The lodge remains a character-defining feature of the landscape that identifies Poplar Grove as a Civil War-era National Cemetery. The lodge is similar in style and overall plan and details to the lodges at Richmond, Fort Harrison, Cold Harbor, Seven Pines, Yorktown, and Culpeper National Cemeteries, among others.

Garage:

The garage, historically known as the stable-garage or the outbuilding, is a one and one-half story building with a metal gable roof located in the service yard along the inclosure wall. The Colonial Revival-style building was constructed in 1929 by the firm of H. Herfurth Jr., of Washington D.C. according to the design of the Quartermaster Supply Officer, Washington General Depot. It replaced the 1879 brick toolshed-stable and adjoining frame outbuildings. The garage was built to house the cemetery horse that pulled the lawn mower at the time, and to provide a tool room and privy. It was sided in unpainted stucco probably to match the general character of the stone lodge. While the historic paint colors are not known, the 1931 National Cemetery regulations called for tin roofs to be painted red, the trim white, and the doors bronze-green. Historically screened in part by an arborvitae hedge, the building is today clearly visible upon entrance to the cemetery. Aside from installation of a new garage door on the front façade and an exterior steel stairway on the west (facing the cemetery entrance), the exterior of the building has undergone little change since the historic period. It is characteristic, along with its companion public restroom building, of the style of buildings constructed by the War Department at national cemeteries during the early twentieth century.

Public Restroom Building:

The public restroom building, historically known as the utility building, is a small one-story building with a metal gable roof located at the rear of the lodge. The Colonial Revival-style building was constructed in 1929 by the firm of H. Herfurth Jr., of Washington, D.C. according to the design of the Quartermaster Supply Officer, Washington General Depot, with unpainted stucco siding probably to match the general character of the stone lodge. While the historic paint colors are not known, the 1931 National Cemetery regulations called for tin roofs to be painted red, the trim white, and the doors bronze-green. The building was constructed on the site of the c.1879 brick kitchen, which had last been used as a woodshed. The building was constructed to provide public restrooms, and to provide space for fuel storage, an electric generating motor, and a water tank. The restrooms were serviced by a septic tank and septic field in the lodge grounds completed in 1931. Aside from painting of the stucco, there have been no substantial changes to the building since the historic period. It is characteristic, along with its companion garage, of the style of buildings constructed by the War Department at national cemeteries during the early twentieth century.

Rostrum:

The rostrum is an open-air eight-sided iron pavilion on a raised brick base located on the eastern side of the lodge grounds (Figure 29). The building, reflecting the Aesthetic Movement in its decoration, was completed in 1897 and was a standard design matching the rostrums at Richmond and Yorktown National Cemeteries, among others. The War Department began building rostrums at national cemeteries in a systematic way during the 1890s. National Cemetery regulations called for the ironwork to be painted black, the top of the roof red, and the underside of the roof ceiling light blue; it is not known if this rostrum was painted in these colors. By 1925, ivy grew on the brick foundation, and the vine persisted at least until 1968. Aside from possible changes in paint color and loss of the ivy, the rostrum remains intact. It is a rare-surviving example of its type, reflecting the growing national importance of commemoration and Memorial Day services in particular during the late nineteenth century. The only rostrums that remain from this period are at Cave Hill (Kentucky) and San Antonio (Texas) National Cemeteries. Only the base of the rostrum at Richmond National Cemetery survives.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Inclosure Wall and Entrance Gate	147635	Contributing			Asset	298728	No
Lodge	147637	Contributing			Location	22737	Yes
Garage	147639	Contributing			Location	22741	Yes
Public Restroom Building	147641	Contributing			Location	22740	Yes
Rostrum	147643	Contributing			Location	22738	Yes

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 25. The brick inclosure wall, showing one of the eight drainage holes (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 26. The woods along the north side of the cemetery, looking west showing English ivy groundcover and high canopy (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 27. Entrance Gate, looking east into the burial grounds. The garage is at image left (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 28. The east side of the lodge with its rear kitchen wing addition and the restroom building at image left (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 29. The rostrum, looking southeast from the main drive during a Memorial Day Ceremony (Betsy Dinger, Petersburg National Battlefield, 2005).

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

During the historic period, the view of the cemetery across open fields from Vaughan Road, with the flagstaff rising above the tree canopy, was a character-defining feature of the landscape, and surely a stirring scene for visitors. Such a view remains at several Civil War-era national cemeteries, notably Glendale near Richmond. Since the historic period, this view at Poplar Grove has been lost due to the growth of successional woods along the west side of the cemetery and along the approach road. The cemetery does not come into view until visitors reach the parking lot, where there is no broad prospect. The landscape retains a view and two vistas, although they have been altered since the historic period.

View of Flagstaff from Graves:

The cemetery plan, of graves facing the center in radiating circles, was devised so that the central flagstaff was visible from all graves. The lowering of the grave markers in 1934 after the historic period greatly diminished this aspect of the plan. In addition, low branching of specimen trees along the central circle has obstructed the view of the flagstaff. Although diminished, this view remains a character-defining feature of the landscape.

Vista of Flagstaff from Main Drive:

The vista of the flagstaff upon approach along the main drive historically directed visitors to the center, from where the individual graves could be accessed via the radiating drives. Trees were apparently kept back from the main drive and central circle to maintain this vista. Since the end of the historic period, this vista has been partly obstructed due to the decrease in height of the flagstaff, and encroachment by trees.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
View of Flagstaff from Graves	147645	Contributing					No
Vista of Flagstaff from Main Drive	147647	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features

This characteristic describes elements that provide detail and diversity in the landscape for utility or aesthetics, including such things as benches, monuments, signs, and monuments. Historically, the landscape of Poplar Grove National Cemetery was dominated by small-scale features that were standard elements in Civil War-era national cemeteries. Most important were the grave markers (1866-c.1933), along with four gun monuments (1869), placed symmetrically around the central flagstaff; wrought-iron and wood-slat settees (c.1879) along the drives; sixteen cast-iron signs known as tablets (c.1881) on which were cast the legislation establishing the national cemeteries, an invitation to register, and four-line verses from the poem, "The Bivouac of the Dead." All but one of these small-scale features have been removed or extensively altered since the end of the historic period. The tablets are presently stored in the loft of the garage. Conversion of the headstones and blocks to flat markers has been the most extensive change to the cemetery landscape since the end of the historic period. Small-scale features, although historically a defining characteristic, are today a minor aspect of the landscape.

Corner Boundary Markers:

The corners of the federally owned cemetery property are marked by low stone posts (Figure 30). These posts were installed in 1877 as part of the resurvey and expansion of the cemetery property undertaken for construction of the inclosure wall. The irregular lines of the boundary are a result of the inaccurate original (c.1868) survey overlaid by the 1877 expansion that added a buffer strip between zero and ten feet to the perimeter of the cemetery. Although the corner boundary markers are not conspicuous in the landscape, they convey the historic limits of the federal property. Pipe posts located next to the stone posts (along with contemporary orange stakes), probably added after 1934, do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Barbed-Wire Fence:

Along the National Park Service property line south of the lodge grounds are remnants of a wood post and barbed-wire fence. This fence was installed in 1937 to protect the red-cedars planted between the property line and the inclosure wall from livestock in the adjoining cow pasture. The fence has not been maintained and is in poor condition. It has been replaced by the private property owner with an electric livestock fence. Because it was added after the historic period, the barbed-wire fence does not contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Wood Privacy Fence:

An unfinished wood-plank fence extends from the southeast corner of the lodge and jogs back to the public restroom building, defining a rear yard for the lodge. The fence, installed after 1970, crosses the walk from the lodge to the public restroom building. A grape arbor, built in c.1871 and removed in c.1934, historically existed in this location. Red-cedars were planted in this area in 1937 to screen the rear yard, but no longer exist. The wood privacy fence detracts from the historic character of the landscape through its materials and location.

Grave Markers:

The grave markers at Poplar Grove, which currently number approximately 5,615, were installed between c.1866 and 2003, with the vast majority installed in 1877 as upright headstones and square posts known as blocks. In 1934, the headstones and blocks were transformed into flat markers, giving Poplar Grove the character of a lawn-style cemetery. The park did this to ease lawn maintenance and improve the aesthetics of the landscape. After this time, only flat markers were installed on new graves and as replacement markers. As a whole, the grave markers therefore do not contribute to the historic character of the Poplar Grove cultural landscape as it relates to National Register Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture within the period of significance from 1866 through 1933. Aside from alteration to the historic design and setting, most of the grave markers are in poor condition marked by chipping, cracking, staining, and erosion (Figure 31). The deteriorated and irreparably altered conditions of the existing grave markers are not in keeping with historic National Cemetery standards and convey disrespect to the veterans.

The following is an evaluation of the five types of grave markers at Poplar Grove National Cemetery based on significance under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture, and follows the classification used by the National Cemetery Administration.

--Recessed-Shield Headstones

Recessed-shield headstones are the most numerous type at Poplar Grove. Most were installed at known graves in 1877 as part of a national cemetery system project begun in 1873 to replace all wood painted headboards initially used to mark graves. Poplar Grove was the last cemetery in the system to receive the new grave markers, which are also referred to as Civil War-style headstones. There were originally 2,200 headstones installed, each a Vermont white-marble cambered-profile tablet measuring ten inches wide, four inches thick, and thirty-six inches tall. The original specifications called for an above-ground height of twelve inches, but the headstones may have been installed or later raised to a height of eighteen inches. The inscription was set within a recessed six-point shield, within which was the grave number at the top, the name in the middle, and the state regiment at the bottom. The headstones were installed under contract by Captain Samuel G. Bridges, and were supplied and finished by Sheldon & Slason of West Rutland, Vermont. The company used a sand-blast method for inscribing the stones. The headstones were set directly in the ground. There are approximately 2,046 of these first-generation recessed-shield headstones remaining at Poplar Grove.

In 1903, the War Department revised its specifications for the recessed-shield headstone to make them more durable. Also known as Spanish-American War type, the revised headstones were slightly larger at twelve inches wide and thirty-nine inches tall. These headstones were probably installed at an above-ground height of 18 inches. The thickness remained the same at four inches. The inscriptions were hammered rather than sand-blasted, and featured two different font styles, probably representing a subsequent change in the specifications. Style A (as categorized by the park) had a larger font than the first generation headstones; style B had a cambered font. These headstones were used for veterans of the Spanish-American War and Civil War reinterments, and to replace broken grave markers (notably for the summer storms of 1915 that broke forty-seven markers). The last graves marked by this style of stone were probably the reinterments from the Crater battlefield made in 1931. Today there are approximately fifty-nine of these second-generation recessed-shield headstones at Poplar Grove.

In 1934, workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) transformed all recessed-shield headstones into flat markers by cutting or breaking off the bases and laying the upper parts flush within the ground. The park subsequently sold the bases to a private individual, who built a nearby residence known today as the Tombstone House. Since the end of the historic period, approximately ninety-five of the recessed-shield headstones have been replaced with government flat markers.

--Unknown Blocks

The blocks marking unknown graves of Civil War casualties were installed along with the recessed-shield headstones in 1877 as part of a system-wide project begun in 1873 to replace wood painted headboards initially used to mark the graves. Poplar Grove was the last cemetery in the system to receive the new grave markers. There were originally 3,555 blocks at Poplar Grove, each a post of Vermont white marble measuring six inches square and thirty inches long, specified for installation of four inches above grade; these were probably later raised to six inches above grade. The blocks were installed under contract by Captain Samuel G. Bridges, and were supplied and finished by Sheldon & Slason of West Rutland, Vermont. The company used the sand-blast method for inscribing the blocks, which just contained the grave number on the top surface, and if applicable, the number of remains in the grave. The blocks were set directly in the ground. Use of the blocks instead of headstones changed the uniformity of the landscape, but made visible the large percentage of soldiers who could not be identified. In 1903, the War Department abandoned the use of blocks for marking unknown graves. In 1934, the blocks were transformed when workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) sunk them flush with the ground. Today, the blocks are barely visible in the landscape. There are roughly 3,477 blocks remaining at Poplar Grove; approximately seventy-eight blocks have been replaced with different markers, most after 1933 with flat markers inscribed "Unknown U.S. Soldier."

--General Headstones

The General headstone, developed by the War Department in 1922 for veterans of World War I in place of the recessed-shield headstone, is a white-marble cambered-profile tablet headstone measuring twelve inches wide, four inches thick, with an above-ground height of twenty-four inches. The inscription, without a recessed shield, includes a symbol of faith. There are thirteen of these headstones at Poplar Grove, most installed as replacement markers for Civil War graves and reinterments through 2003. Those installed prior to 1934 were originally upright headstones that were transformed to flat markers in 1934; later General headstones were installed as flat markers with their bases cut off. Those installed prior to World War II have a different font and size than those used after the war. There are approximately thirteen of these markers at Poplar Grove.

--Government Flat Markers

In 1936, the War Department introduced a rectangular marble flat marker, twenty-four inches long by twelve-inches wide, for use in lawn-style cemeteries. In 1939, the same markers were offered in granite. In 1939, the National Park Service began to install flat markers at Poplar Grove instead of cut-off General headstones. Over the course of the next two decades, the park installed approximately 216 flat markers for both new burials (last in 1957) and as replacements. The flat markers installed through World War II featured a different font than those used after the war. The

flat markers are scattered around the cemetery, with a concentration of new burials in Block XX (Division F).

--Government Medal of Honor Flat Markers

In 1940, the War Department adopted a bronze flat marker, twenty-four inches long by twelve inches wide, as a standard marker for Medal of Honor recipients. At some point after this time, two Civil War-style headstones at Poplar Grove were replaced with Medal of Honor bronze markers.

--Non-Government Headstones

There are five large tablet headstones at Poplar Grove that were privately commissioned and installed during the initial development of the cemetery between c.1866 and 1869, when wood headboards were being used to mark the graves. As with all other grave markers at Poplar Grove, these headstones were transformed into flat markers in 1934. While these grave markers do not presently contribute to the historic character of the landscape, they remain largely intact and could be readily returned to their historic upright position.

In addition to these four headstones, there are approximately twenty-one other non-government headstones at Poplar Grove. All appear to have been installed prior to 1934. Some mark civilian graves (including two infants of the cemetery superintendents), but most are replacement markers on veteran graves. They are all marble tablet headstones, with either cambered, square, or gabled profiles. None contain the six-point shield. These non-government headstones were transformed into flat markers in 1934 along with the rest of the cemetery grave markers. Because of their non-standard design and workmanship, including some that are crudely inscribed, these markers could be perceived as conveying dishonor upon the veteran graves.

Flagstaff:

The flagstaff, located within a circular island defined by a loop in the main entrance drive, is the physical and symbolic center of the cemetery (Figure 32). The first flagstaff (height not known) was erected at the start of the cemetery's development in 1866, and was positioned on a six-foot high mound in the shape of frustum of a cone. By 1874, this wooden pole had deteriorated and was replaced under contract to J.C. Comfort of Shiremanstown, Pennsylvania, with a fifty-six foot tall wood flagstaff. At this time, the flagstaff mound was reduced in size to four feet tall and twenty-three feet wide. In 1913, the wood flagstaff, which cemetery inspectors had found to be too short, was again replaced with an iron pole (height not known). This iron pole was replaced in 1930 with a taller pole. It was constructed of sections bolted together with flanges, anchored by four guy wires, and surmounted by a ball finial. National Cemetery regulations called for the flagstaff to be white with the base and guy wire turnbuckles painted black. At approximately eighty feet high, the flagstaff reached above the tree canopy and was visible from Vaughan Road. This same style of flagstaff was installed at Fredericksburg National Cemetery. After the historic period, the pole was reduced in height by roughly half and the guy wires were removed. Due to this extensive change, the flagstaff does not contribute to the historic character of the landscape. It was historically a defining feature.

Flagstaff Floodlight:

The flagstaff is illuminated by a contemporary floodlight mounted at ground level at the head of the main drive and screened by a young boxwood shrub. A floodlight for the flagstaff may have initially been installed in 1976, when the National Cemetery System instituted a program of lighting for flagstaffs. The existing floodlight does not contribute to the character of the landscape due to its recent origin and inconspicuous design.

Gun Monument:

The gun monument, consisting of an upright cannon tube with a pyramidal stack of cannon balls set on a concrete pad, is located to the north of the flagstaff along the outer edge of the main drive loop (Figure 33). The cannon is one of four, thirty-two pounder Columbiad guns acquired from Fort Monroe, a federal fort on the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton, Virginia, and brought to Poplar Grove in the fall of 1868. The existing gun was the primary monument among the four, distinguished by a bronze shield with the burial tally and name of the cemetery. Gun monuments were a standard feature in national cemeteries in Virginia, with the large cemeteries such as Poplar Grove and

Richmond receiving four each, and the smaller cemeteries, such as Glendale, Cold Harbor, and Seven Pines, one each. The existing gun monument—the only monument in the cemetery—remains intact except for its cannon-ball top. Its bronze shield has been painted black and is difficult to read. The existing concrete pad, which is cracked, dates to 1924 (the original type of pad is not known). The loss of the three other gun monuments, removed in c.1974, detracts from the historic character of the landscape.

Drive Markers:

There are six small iron signs (also referred to as section markers) that designate each of the radiating drives with the letters A through F, except for the main drive and the drive north of the flagstaff that was filled with graves between 1896 and 1918 (Figure 34). These cast metal signs, painted black and measuring four by five inches and affixed to an iron pipe, were most likely installed in c.1957 as part of the redesignation of the cemetery plan from divisions and sections to blocks. Because they were added after the historic period, the drive markers do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Grave Locator-Interpretive Signs:

The two aluminum-frame signs to either side of the flagstaff, showing the burial register for known graves, a plan of the cemetery, and an illustrated history of the cemetery, were installed in c.1957. The signs were most likely part of a general grounds improvement project included in the park's Mission 66 prospectus. The plan of the cemetery shows a reclassification of the divisions and sections into twenty blocks, and naming of the radial avenues by the letters A through F. These signs do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape because they were installed after the historic period for the landscape. They detract from the historic character of the landscape due to their design, materials, and location that are incongruous with the formality of the center of the cemetery. The burial register is also worn and difficult to read.

Concrete Pads:

There are two concrete pads to the west of the flagstaff that were probably installed in 1957 as the bases for benches. Each measures approximately three feet square. It is not known when the benches or other above-ground components were removed. These pads do not contribute to the historic character because they were added after the historic period for the landscape.

Utilities, Signs, and Furnishings:

Scattered along the approach road, parking lot, and within the cemetery are small informational signs, trash containers, utility components, and a picnic table installed by the National Park Service since c.1990. These features are of recent origin and therefore do not contribute to the historic character of the landscape. Overall, they are inconspicuous.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Corner Boundary Markers	147649	Contributing			Asset	298729	Yes
Gun Monument	147651	Contributing			Location	22764	Yes
Recessed-Shield Headstones	147653	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Unknown Blocks	147655	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
General Headstones	147657	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Government Flat Markers	147659	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Government Medal of Honor Flat Markers	147661	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Non-Government Headstones	147663	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Barbed Wire Fence	147665	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Wood Privacy Fence	147667	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Flagstaff Floodlight	147669	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Flagstaff	147671	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Drive Markers	147673	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Grave Locator Interpretive Signs	147675	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Utilities, Signs, and Furnishings	147677	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Concrete Pads	147679	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 30. A typical stone boundary marking a corner of the federal property (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 31. Examples of headstones installed in 1877 and transformed into flat markers in 1934. These photographs illustrate characteristic chipping, cracking, weathering, and staining Petersburg National Battlefield).



Figure 32. The center of the cemetery, looking northeast from the main drive showing the flagstaff, teardrop-shaped loop in the main drive, and interpretive signs. The boxwood shrub in the foreground conceals a contemporary floodlight (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 33. The remnant gun monument with its painted over bronze plaque and missing cannonball cap, looking northwest (SUNY ESF, 2006).



Figure 34. One of the metal signs along the central circular loop of the main drive identifying radial drive “E” (SUNY ESF, 2006).

Landscape Characteristic: Archeological Sites

The primary archeological resources at Poplar Grove National Cemetery are its burials. There may be additional archeological resources within the cemetery, such as remains from removed built features. Archeological investigation could add to the historic documentation on the landscape, informing such questions as the function of the “cave” (c.1900-1929), a structure located south of the lodge, or the extent and exact location of the system of brick gutters (c.1866, covered in 1877). A comprehensive archeological investigation has not been undertaken to date to determine the existence and significance of potential resources.

Graves:

There are currently 5,613 individual graves, and approximately 6,238 interments (the higher number is due to multiple unknown remains in single graves). The number of Civil War interments in 1954 was 6,178, and since that time three additional Civil War remains have been reinterred (in 2003). Recent geophysical and archeological testing by the park (2008) identified that in some places existing grave markers do not align with the head of the graves. Markers were found in positions between two graves, several feet above the head of the grave shaft, off-center from the grave shaft, or even on top of the grave shaft. A few graves are located within drives. The testing did not reveal evidence of the original 1877 placement of the upright headstones. All graves at Poplar Grove National Cemetery are considered historically significant within the overall period of significance extending from the first interments in 1866 through the last in 2003 (reinterment of Civil War remains).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Graves	147681	Contributing					No

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 4

Next Assessment Due Date: 03/25/2029

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 03/25/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained. Replacement and repair of grave markers and rehabilitation efforts on buildings, structures, and vegetation have improved the character and condition of landscape features. However, the presence of invasive species (e.g., Japanese stiltgrass, Virginia buttonweed, and English ivy) pose significant risks. Drainage of surface water poses risk to wall. A large tree branch fell onto the wall in FY2024 and at the present time there are no funds to repair it. Cemetery wall has additional selected bricks that need replacement. Septic system drain field needs to be upgraded and relocated to outside of the perimeter wall. A preservation maintenance plan is in development to improve and maintain the cemetery.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/21/2021

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed as part of a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update will occur in FY 2022.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/09/2010

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Poplar Grove National Cemetery shows clear evidence of minor disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. The poor condition of the turf, deteriorated condition of the flush-laid headstones, outstanding drainage concerns, and repointing needed on the perimeter wall require corrective action. If left to continue, the cumulative effect of the deterioration will cause the property to degrade to a poor condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deterioration as a result of lack of required maintenance (e.g., row of trees that was formerly a hedge that was left unpruned).

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Type of Impact: Planting Practices

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deterioration as a result of improper planting of vegetation, including inappropriate plant pits, bed preparation, soil amendments, staking, mulching and watering and post-planting care.

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Type of Impact: Pruning Practices

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deterioration because of inappropriate techniques for shaping of woody plants, including those contrary to professional pruning standards, or the use of improper tools and equipment.

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Type of Impact: Improper Drainage

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deterioration as a result of water saturation due to increased impermeability, blocked hydrologic flow or deteriorated drainage infrastructure and added septic system drainage inside of perimeter wall.

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: Deterioration by historic character-altering plants, as a result of inappropriate plant introduction or colonization.

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Dead Trees and Septic System

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: “Other” refers to the presence of dead trees along the outside of the cemetery wall creating an improper visual appearance. The outdated septic system under the assembly area is another impact to visitors and staff as it is insufficient to handle use particularly after precipitation events.

Date Identified: 03/25/2025

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type:	Rehabilitation
Treatment Completed:	No
Document Type:	Cultural Landscape Report
Document Date:	2009-01-01
Title:	Poplar Grove National Cemetery: Cultural Landscape Report, Petersburg National Battlefield, National Park Service
IRMA Link:	https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2185526
Narrative:	

The framework for treatment of Poplar Grove National Cemetery is also derived in part from park planning through the recently completed General Management Plan for Petersburg National Battlefield in 2004. While not offering any specific details on landscape treatment (except to a reference about replacing headstones), the preferred alternative in the General Management Plan calls for the rehabilitation of Poplar Grove to reflect the original sense of contemplation, quiet, and solemnity as part of the park's "Historic Interpretive Zone." The preferred alternative, entitled "The Landscape Tells the Stories," calls for returning to the early character of the landscape with upright headstones: "Visitors to the cemetery will experience a place much closer in design and atmosphere to the original cemetery, established in 1868 [sic]. The replaced headstones will evoke the original intentions of the designer." In addition, the preferred alternative calls for National Park Service acquisition of the land adjoining the cemetery to protect the setting and the adjoining battlefield, and for rehabilitating the cemetery lodge into a visitor contact station for Poplar Grove and other areas within the park's Western Front (CLR 2009:209, citing General Management Plan 2004:53,55).

The recommended treatment philosophy for the Poplar Grove landscape is derived from the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties." The recommended primary (overall) treatment for Poplar Grove National Cemetery is Rehabilitation in keeping with the preferred alternative of the Petersburg Battlefield General Management Plan and the scope of work in the upcoming line-item construction project (CLR 2009:209-210).

Rehabilitation is the most appropriate treatment for Poplar Grove National Cemetery because of the need to provide for contemporary park functions, visitor services, and environmental sustainability. This treatment focuses on managing the landscape for its historic character by preserving defining features, returning key features that have been lost, and allowing for change inherent in vegetation and necessary for contemporary uses. Contemporary changes will be in keeping with the historic character of the landscape and represent a minor component in the overall treatment. Within Rehabilitation as the primary treatment, much of the feature-level treatment will involve Preservation, Restoration, and Reconstruction in order to retain and enhance the historic character of the landscape (CLR 2009:211).

The recommended treatment for Poplar Grove is to rehabilitate the landscape to its character at the end of the War Department administration in 1933, prior to its transfer to the National Park Service and subsequent alteration of the upright grave markers. This date, which serves as a benchmark for treatment, incorporates the development of the cemetery landscape from its founding in 1866 through the course of nearly seven decades of military administration when the majority of burials took place (CLR 2009:212).

Treatment of the Poplar Grove landscape to the end of the War Department administration in 1933 corresponds with the final years of the recommended period of significance for the landscape under National Register Criterion C. This date recognizes the continued use of the cemetery for burials after 1933, and preserves these later graves as part of the significance of the cemetery under National Register Criterion A. Where post-1933 features or alterations (aside from graves) conflict with the historic character of the cemetery, they will be recommended for removal; where they are compatible with the historic character, they may be retained for aesthetic or functional values, or simply as testimony to the continued evolution of the cemetery landscape (CLR 2009:212).

Key treatment tasks for the rehabilitation of the cemetery landscape include installation of new grave markers that, with a few exceptions, replicate the existing altered and deteriorated stones, and removal of the existing grave markers; planting of trees and shrubs; replacement of the central flagstaff to return it to its historic height above the tree canopy; resurfacing the main drive; reinstallation of the iron tablets presently in storage; rehabilitation of the lodge, garage, and restroom building to enhance their historic character and contemporary function, and installation of a new grave locator system, including section markers and a wayside near the cemetery entrance. Outside of the cemetery walls, key treatment tasks include reestablishment of the approach road alley; installation of new signage; relocation of the visitor parking lot to a less conspicuous location; and removal of the non-historic woods west of the cemetery to reestablish the open field and views of the cemetery from the approach road. Treatment also includes preservation of the existing agricultural fields and woods along the approach road and adjoining the cemetery, and screening of incompatible modern development. Most of these tasks for the setting are contingent upon the park gaining interest in the privately owned land.

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography:

Citation Author	Citation Title	Year of Publication	Citation Publisher	Citation Type	Citation Location	Citation Number
Sammartino, Therese T.	National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Civil War Era National Cemeteries	1994	Department of Veterans Affairs			
John Milner Associates	Petersburg National Battlefield National Register Nomination, 80% draft submission	2006	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Region			
Auwaerter, John	Cultural Landscape Report for Poplar Grove National Monument	2009	U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Land			

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
CL-FMSS_crosswalk-PETE-POGR_CLIUpload.xlsx		Other Report

Source