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PINE GROVE CEMETERY, LYNN, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission recently approved Pine Grove Cemetery in Lynn for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination has been submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of Pine Grove Cemetery in the National Register will help to preserve the final resting place of thousands of Lynn residents, from day laborers to wealthy industrialists, as well as its significant collection of funerary art, architecture, and landscape design.”

Pine Grove Cemetery has served as the city’s principal place of burial since its establishment as a private cemetery in 1850. In 1854, the city took over ownership of the cemetery, which encompasses 152 acres and includes more than 80,000 headstones, monuments, mausoleums, and footstones. Among those buried here are Lydia Pinkham (d. 1883), nationally known purveyor of patent medicines for women’s complaints; Jan Ernst Matzeliger (d. 1889), the son of a Surinamese slave whose invention of a shoe-lasting machine revolutionized the industry; and New England landscape painter Charles Herbert Woodbury (d. 1940).

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The southern, oldest part of Pine Grove, laid out by Henry A. S. Dearborn, possesses many characteristics of the Rural Cemetery movement, such as hilly topography and curvilinear roads. Dearborn had also been one of the designers of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge and Watertown, MA, which set the precedent for Rural Cemetery design (listed in the National Register in 1975 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2003). Prominent landscape gardener Ernest Bowditch laid out the middle sections of Pine Grove, which date to the late 19th century. These sections reflect Victorian-era burial ideals, characterized by family lots and funeral monuments with motifs such as torches, wreaths, and floral imagery, as well as lambs and cherubs for children's graves.

Late 19th-century funerary monuments at Oak Grove include the work of major sculptors such as John A. Jackson and Theodora Kitson. Another improvement made to Pine Grove in the late 19th century was a garden near the main entrance, designed by Robert Morris Copeland. The cemetery's newest section, laid out in the 20th century, features more compact burial lots, smaller, more uniform headstones, and five special lots set aside for veterans of American wars, including the Civil War, Spanish American War, World Wars I and II, and a lot for veterans of the Korean, Vietnam, and subsequent wars.

Buildings and structures at the cemetery include the Second Empire-style Keeper's House constructed in 1869 near the main entrance, a granite 1869 receiving tomb, and the Rhodes Memorial Chapel, constructed in 1891 and designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style by the prominent Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. Pine Grove also features a rustic fieldstone perimeter wall built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Lynn's Department of Public Works manages Pine Grove Cemetery, which remains in active use for burials.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

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The National Register is the nation's official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission's programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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