

Cultural Landscape Report

for

Evergreen Cemetery
Owego, New York



*prepared for the
Village of Owego
Evergreen Cemetery Committee*

by

Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC

2020

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Historical Development of Evergreen Cemetery.....	5
Landscape Assessment.....	17
Recommendations.....	29
Management	37
Appendices	
A: Historical Chronology	A-1
B: Bibliography	B-1

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Evergreen Cemetery Committee:

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Coburn Free Library

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1851 as a non-denominational burial ground accessible to all citizens, Evergreen Cemetery covers 60.85 acres in the Village of Owego, part of the Town of Owego, in Tioga County, New York. The property lies along the south slope of East Beecher Hill and overlooks the village, Owego Creek, and the Susquehanna River. Designed in the rural cemetery style, its features include gently rolling, tiered topography, an array of tree and shrub species, and monuments and markers of many different materials, sizes and styles. The graves of many of Owego's citizens, both prominent and lesser-known, appear throughout and help to document over 150 years of town history. To officially recognize its importance, the village nominated Evergreen Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places and achieved the honor in 2002.



Evergreen Cemetery lies along the south-facing slope East Beecher Hill, on the north side of the Village of Owego. Established in the early 1850s, the 60-acre landscape contains over 900 graves, including both prominent and lesser-known citizens.

Over the past twenty years, the citizens in the village have become increasingly concerned about the cemetery's condition. While crews have continued to mow lawns, the property's age, combined with ongoing exposure to harsh weather, has led to deterioration. Complicating this condition is the lack of funds to develop existing cemetery land for new interments. This has prompted the village to create more space by closing historic roads, further compromising the property's historical integrity.

To address these concerns, the village established an Evergreen Cemetery Committee (ECC), a group of residents tasked with planning for the property's long-term preservation and care. Formed in 2017, the ECC identified the need for a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) – a comprehensive document that would establish priorities for preserving the landscape over the long-term. The committee applied for and received funds to support the effort through the Preserve New York grant program of the Preservation League of New York State, and the village matched the award. The foregoing document is the product of the Preserve New York grant.

Goal of the Cultural Landscape Report

The goal of the CLR is to provide a practical guide to preserving the Evergreen Cemetery landscape so that it can remain a destination for visitors to Owego, a resource for teaching about Tioga County history, and a valued passive recreation spot for residents of the village.

Challenges and Opportunities

At the beginning of the project, the Evergreen Cemetery Committee outlined the following opportunities to consider in future preservation plans, as well as the challenges faced by the village and committee in seizing these opportunities:

- An opportunity exists to view the cemetery as an asset and make the cemetery part of Owego as a destination. The village is in the midst of an economic revival, and heritage tourism is integral to the success of this effort.
- There is a need to preserve the memory of the people interred within, to view Evergreen Cemetery as a living history museum. Of particular note are the many regionally and locally prominent families represented, as well as the oldest known monument standing in New York State memorializing a Native American individual, SaSaNa Loft.
- Opportunity exists to make the cemetery more welcoming, by upgrading the approach (including the 1920 chapel and its grounds), improving the entry gates, replacing the entry drive railing. Directional signs, leading visitors to East Beecher Hill from the village, would contribute to this sense of welcoming.
- By addressing cemetery-wide hydrology issues, many landscape-related issues can be mitigated. Included in this are the management of drainage swales, stability of retaining walls, stability of slopes (erosion-control) and condition of roadway surfaces.
- The mausoleums, monuments, tombs and gravestones contribute substantially to the historical integrity of the property. Opportunity exists to conduct an assessment of these and set priorities for conservation treatment. Opportunity also exists to involve volunteers in simple conservation tasks.
- The trees growing throughout the cemetery similarly add to the historical integrity and landscape character. Opportunity exists to provide better care for existing mature trees, remove dead or diseased trees, and introduce new species to help diversify the tree population.
- The cemetery's location atop East Beecher Hill is one of its greatest visual assets. By clearing vegetation and opening long views, this asset can be significantly enhanced.



The 1920 cemetery gate replaced an early structure made of wood. Opportunity exists to increase its visibility, as well as enhance its environs, making it more welcoming to visitors.

- Evergreen's most significant monument, the obelisk marking the grave of SaSaNa Loft, stands at the most desirable spot in the cemetery. Opportunity exists to enhance the setting for the monument and at the same time provide a more desirable resting spot for visitors seeking a south-facing view.

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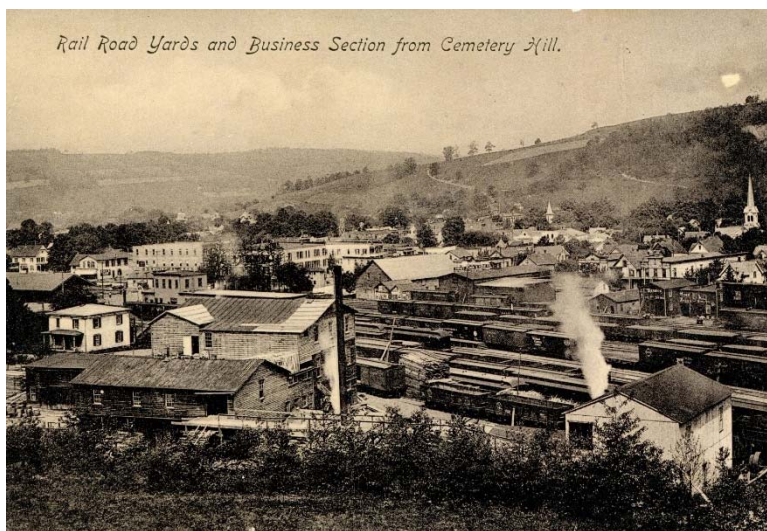
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT of EVERGREEN CEMETERY

Beginnings (Before 1851).

The earliest known human inhabitants of lands near the confluence of the Susquehanna River and Owego Creek were members of the Cayuga and Onondaga tribes of the Iroquois. These indigenous people established trails along the river and creek banks northward to Cayuga Lake, taking advantage of the fertile floodplains for growing food.¹ The name “Owego” is derived from Ahwaga, the Iroquois word meaning “where the valley widens.” During the American Revolution, the Continental Army entered the area, burning natives’ homes and destroying crops.² Following the war, migrants from New England, New Jersey and Pennsylvania came and built permanent settlements. Among the newcomers was Amos Draper, who brought his family from Pennsylvania in 1781. Several other settlers came in the following years, and by 1788, the area had been surveyed. In 1827 the Village of Owego incorporated with a population of 750, and citizens appointed a board of trustees to oversee village affairs.³

Between the time of its earliest European-American settlement and the 1850s, the village operated as many as five small burial grounds, including sites at the southwest corner of Main and Lake Streets and near the southeast corner of Main and Academy Streets. Villagers established an official “burying ground” at the southeast corner of Main and Court Streets, site of today’s old academy and Tioga County Clerk’s office, disinterring the graves from the earlier grounds, and reintering them at the Main and Court Street site. When a burying ground was developed in association with the Presbyterian Church, villagers again disinterred graves and moved them to the new site, abandoning the Court Street site.⁴

Owego’s location along the Susquehanna made the village an ideal transportation hub. In 1834, the Ithaca and Owego Railroad began operation, transporting both passengers and freight, and in 1849, the New York and Erie Railroad extended to Owego along the north



Owego’s location along the Susquehanna made the village an ideal transportation hub. Early transport was by river, but in 1834 the railroad began operation and the population quickly grew, resulting in the need for a large, modern cemetery. (Postcard image courtesy of the Tioga County Historical Society)

¹ McEnteer, Thomas C., ed., Seasons of Change: An Updated History of Tioga County New York by Tioga County Authors, 53

² Quest, Richard, Images of America, Tioga County, NY, 7

³ Sedore, Emma M., Images of America, Town of Owego, 7

⁴ Kingman, Leroy W., Early Owego, 664

side of the Susquehanna.⁵ In 1849, a fire swept through the downtown, destroying many buildings and creating a need for urban planning and renewal, including the development of a new, modern place for interment.

Establishment (1851-1864)

In 1851, citizens directed the board of trustees to purchase suitable land for a new burying ground and authorized a \$1,500 tax, levied over three years, to pay for the site, enclose it with a fence, and upgrade it to make it suitable for burials. After reviewing alternative sites, the trustees chose a 11 1/5-acre hilltop at the edge of the village. The location would not interfere with future expansion of the village and the site's steep topography made the land less desirable for development. Stephen Dexter surveyed the property, and the trustees purchased the land, along with a right-of-way, from George Talcott for \$952 (or \$85/acre). Villagers ordered that the road to the cemetery, approximately 2,016 feet in length, be 11 ½ feet in width, and also prescribed that a fence be "constructed as far as is necessary not to be less than 4' in height, 4 boards high, bottom board not to be less than 6" in width"



The 1853 map of the Village of Owego included the new cemetery, with the lots defined. It covered 11 1/5 acres, and the layout of its roads and lots responded to the natural contours of the steep hillside topography. (Office of the Tioga County Clerk)

⁵ McEnteer, 16-17; Sedore, 7

and the posts, “sufficient to make a good substantial fence.”⁶ Further orders included cutting and removing trees and brush from the main road and throughout the cemetery grounds.

During the winter of 1851-1852, Stephen Dexter worked on a plan for the new cemetery. He laid out the property in 20-foot squares of four lots, with walks on two sides of each lot. He designed the avenues to be 20 feet in width, and the grassy paths, six feet. He named the avenues and created a circular open space at the summit. His final drawing, entitled “Plan of Evergreen Cemetery,” was completed on March 8, 1852, and shortly thereafter, the villagers accepted the plan and formally adopted the name.⁷

Over the next dozen years, the villagers worked to implement Dexter’s plan. They procured stone blocks, 3” to 4” square, to set the corners of the lots, with 4” of stone protruding above the grade.⁸ They hired Dexter to survey the road and secured a right-of-way from the property owner, Abraham Brown. In 1858, they petitioned the trustees to build a public vault by raising \$150 through taxation. In 1859 A. H. Keeler completed the vault, furnishing the front wall with a capstone provided by an Ithaca quarry.⁹ In 1862, David Slater was hired to build a sidewalk from the intersection of North Avenue and the Mountain Road, on the south side of Mountain Road (East Avenue) to the cemetery’s gate. Several of these improvements were overseen by a “cemetery committee,” which formed sometime between 1851 and 1858 and operated until 1910.¹⁰

Among the many interments that took place at the new cemetery in its formative years was the that of young musician SaSaNa Loft, a Mohawk and direct descendent of Thayendanegea Chief Brant. In 1852, she was killed by a train in Deposit, New York. After her death, Owego Judge C. B. Avery requested a lot for the purposes of interment and commemoration. A monument, costing just over \$200, was placed at the cemetery’s summit in 1855. Historian Leroy Kingman described the monument:

“It is a pure white marble obelisk, standing seventeen feet above the surface of the ground, with bases of



The SaSaNa obelisk, standing near the cemetery’s summit, was placed in 1855 to honor the Native American woman who had been killed in a train accident. Its original setting was modest. (Tioga County Historical Society)

⁶ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 1851-1911, 3

⁷ Ibid., 4

⁸ The Records of Evergreen Cemetery state that a proposal was made by John Penney to procure the stone (5), but the records do not include written confirmation that this task was completed.

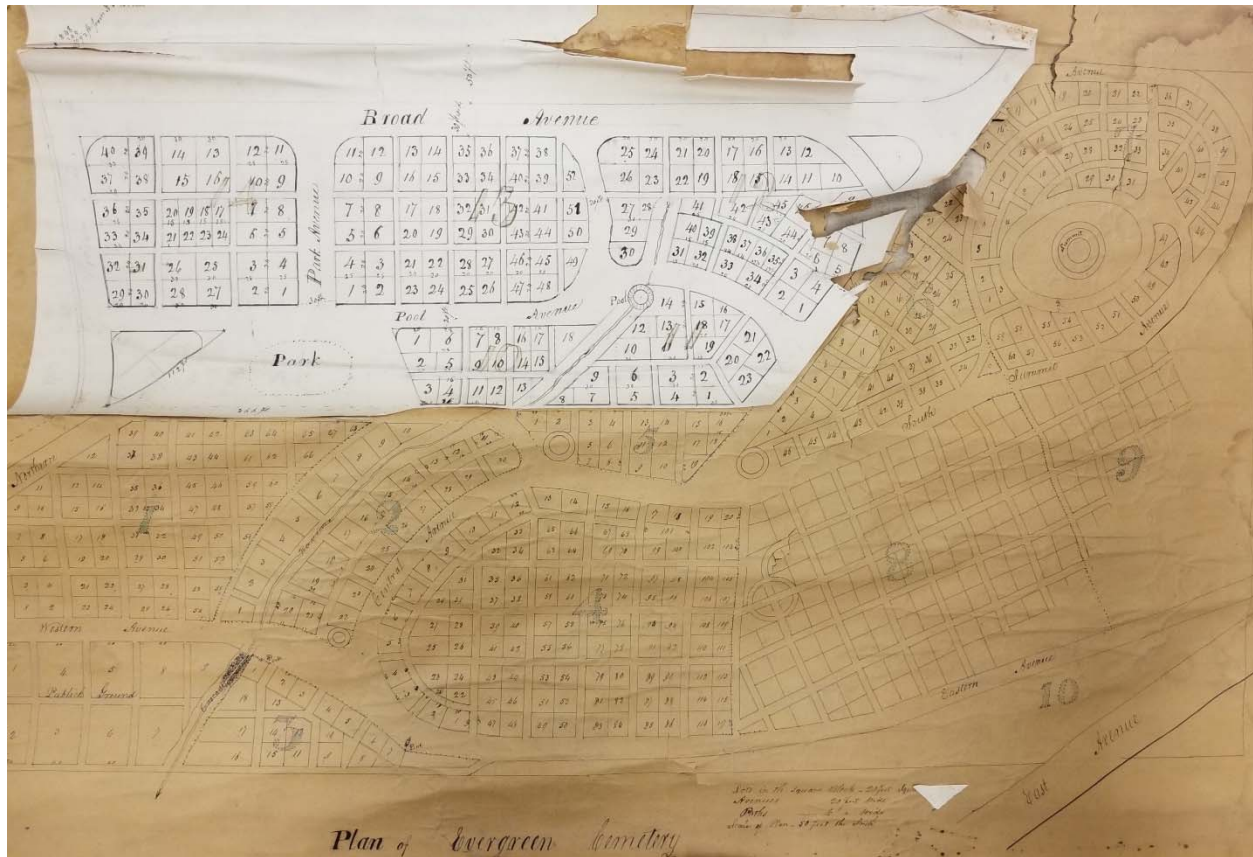
⁹ This structure is believed to have stood to the east of the cemetery entry gate, built into the slope. It is no longer extant.

¹⁰ The first reference to the cemetery committee appears in the Records of Evergreen Cemetery in 1858, but the entity may have been established before that year.

veined marble, on a subbase of blue granite fourteen inches thick and three feet square, resting on a pier of solid masonry, carried up five feet from a rock foundation and laid in cement. It overlooks the Susquehanna Valley, standing in full view of the village on the highest point in Evergreen Cemetery.”¹¹

The original setting for the monument appeared to be a simple berm or rise in the earth. Additional embellishments, made by the village in the future, are discussed later in this section of the report.

Expansion (1865-1910)



Dexter's original 1852 plan (sepia tone) with the additional 11 acres appended to the northwest side in 1864. The addition contained a park and pool, along with more avenues, paths, and burial lots. (Office of the Tioga County Clerk)

During the forty-five years between 1864 and 1910, the village acquired several additional parcels of land, more than quadrupling the size of Evergreen Cemetery. The first addition consisted of approximately eleven acres, purchased in 1864, again from George Talcott, for \$1,500. As part of the agreement, the village also purchased the trees growing on Talcott's parcel for \$200. Dexter prepared a survey of the new addition and drew up a new plan. He incorporated the ravine and stream traversing the property into the overall design, allowing the water to cascade into a pool at the geographic center. To the west of the pool, he reserved space for a “park.”

¹¹ Kingman, 670

A second addition of approximately 10.5 acres along the cemetery's northern edges came in 1888, at a price of \$135 per acre. The landowner, Mrs. Mary H. Thurston, reserved all the timber and wood on the land except for two acres on the west side. The village made a third purchase in 1897, a trapezoidal-shaped parcel of approximately 2 ¾ acre to provide better access for residents living near the cemetery. The fourth purchase, made in 1902, consisted of approximately 16 acres at the cost of \$910.00.¹²

The village added several new features in conjunction with this series of expansions. In 1865, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) opened a section to accommodate Civil War soldiers. This section was expanded in 1891. In 1892, the cemetery committee reported having constructed a new archway at the entrance, describing it as a "piece of architecture, which is appropriately painted and ornamented," adding "great to the beauty of the spot," and comparing "favorably with any erected for the same uses in this section."¹³ Eighteen years later, the committee replaced this archway with two stone columns topped by large urns and secured by a single-leaf wrought iron gate. An old tool-house¹⁴ was moved to the upper part of the cemetery, and near its former site, a new building constructed described by the committee:



The original cemetery gate was painted and ornamental. It was replaced 1910 with the stone columns which still stand today. (Photo courtesy of the Tioga County Historical Society)

"...it is of cottage design, is handsomely painted, and has a basement or cellar, which may be used for the storage of workmen's implements, the main floor concrete and one large room, ease of access, well lighted and ventilated, finished in hard wood and furnished with a desk, table, and chairs. This place adds in no small degree to the comfort of persons – especially ladies – visiting the cemetery; it affords them in storm a safe refuge and in fair weather a pleasant resting-place; it supplies a want long complained of by visitors and is therefore, a useful as well as ornamental structure."¹⁵

Near this building, the village built two "closets" for the convenience of visitors. Other improvements included repairs to the receiving vault; upgrades to the stone wall supporting the road leading to the cemetery; 270 feet of iron fence¹⁶ along the entry road intended to secure "greater safety to teams

¹² Kingman, 666. The 2007 boundary survey of Evergreen Cemetery shows that a total of 10 parcels were acquired by the village between 1853 and 1938 to make up the "old section" of the cemetery, several of which were small along the south boundary.

¹³ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 56, 58-59

¹⁴ The date of construction of this early tool house is unknown.

¹⁵ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 58-59

¹⁶ The 1921 Cemetery Record indicates that this fence was made of iron.

passing up or down the hill, and giving a neater appearance to the approach;" paving of gutters to insure better drainage; repairs to steps and installation of new steps.¹⁷ In 1909, the village installed a series of cast iron hitching posts fabricated by the J. W. Fisk Iron Works in the cemetery,¹⁸ and the cemetery committee was given the power to act on "the matter of building a fence around the Indian Girl's Monument."¹⁹ The next year, the committee arranged for the construction of a four foot concrete walk from the receiving vault to the cemetery entrance, as well as steps to the receiving vault.²⁰

In the first decade of the 1900s, several prominent citizens constructed substantial memorials, adding grandeur to the cemetery landscape. In 1903, Thomas Platt commissioned a box-tomb style monument for his family plot located in the southern end of Section 4. The Elmira Star-Gazette reported on its completion:

"The monument...has been finished after several weeks' hard work. The monument and base weighs fifty tons, and is of pink Westerly granite. At each side of the monument there is a flight of steps leading to the lot. The total height from base to top is seven feet four inches; length, ten feet six inches; and width six feet...The total cost of the monument, which was erected by Haywood and Baldwin, of Owego, was \$5,000. It is said to be the handsomest monument in the Southern Tier."²¹

Four years later, Fred M. Curtis commissioned an \$11,000 mausoleum for Section 20, and



The monument constructed for Thomas Platt was one of the cemetery's most prominent and said to be the handsomest monument in the Southern Tier. (Photo courtesy of the Tioga County Historical Society)



The procession of Platt's 1910 traversed the sloping cemetery entry drive. The iron rail appears on the outside edge of the drive. (Photo courtesy of the Tioga County Historical Society)

¹⁷ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 58-59

¹⁸ "Walking Tour, Evergreen Cemetery, Owego, New York"

¹⁹ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 114

²⁰ Ibid, 118

²¹ Elmira Star-Gazette, July 10, 1903

again the Elmira paper detailed its construction:

“John T. Corchran, a contractor and builder of Owego, constructed a concrete foundation, between six and eight feet deep. The mausoleum, of Barre granite, on a plot with a commanding view of the river valley, would be the resting place for a son who had died of typhoid earlier in the year. Three crypts were provided. The roof stone of the structure, 14 feet long, 11 feet wide and 12 inches thick, weighed 18 tons. The granite was too heavy for horse teams so a truck, used for transporting bridges, would be rented from Owego Bridge to haul it, with the use of tackle, up the hill.”²²

Although many improvements were made during this 55-year period, record-keeping pertaining to the ownership of cemetery deeds was poor. In response, the village attorney, at the direction of the cemetery committee, prepared an amendment to the Village of Owego charter, providing for a three-member, non-partisan commission to assume the entire control and management of the affairs of the cemetery. The amendment was introduced in the New York State Legislature and adopted with an increase in commission membership to four. The Cemetery Commission of the Village of Owego, New York went into effect on July 1, 1911.²³

Enhancement (1911-1945)

The Cemetery Commissioners operated for thirty-five years, and during this time, managed several upgrades to the landscape, including grading of new burial lots, installation of drain and water pipes, “ditching” and “rounding” of roads, construction of concrete steps (to replace wood), and planting evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, including California privet and rhododendrons. They oversaw the grading of the “Free Ground,” and placed terra cotta markers on the graves.²⁴ The “chapel”



W. H. Ripley's map of the cemetery, prepared in 1944, showed the build-out of burial lots across 51.5 acres.

²² Ibid, October 10, 1907

²³ Records of Evergreen Cemetery, 121-122, 124

²⁴ “Free Ground” is also referred to as the “Public Ground,” “Pauper’s Area,” or “Potter’s Field.”

grounds were graded, seeded and outfitted with a fountain and four feet wide concrete walk.²⁵ In 1917, a 50-foot flagpole, visible by people approaching Owego by train, was installed at the cemetery and outfitted with a large American flag.

Beginning in 1919, the commissioners discussed constructing a new chapel and receiving vault, to be located near the southern edge of cemetery property, outside the gate and facing East Avenue. The Gothic style structure was to measure 16' x 24' in size with a 15' x 10' (inside measurement) concrete block receiving vault joined to the north side. A concrete platform was proposed to extend from the chapel doors to the street. Building details included leaded windows and framing of pine harvested from the cemetery grounds. Owego-based Randall Brothers constructed the chapel and vault.

In 1944, W. H. Ripley prepared a map of the property illustrating a build-out of burial lots across the cemetery and using an 1898 map as a reference. The later additions to the cemetery (1888, 1897 and 1902) reflect a more rectangular, grid-like layout, in contrast to the more curvilinear style of those laid out in the mid 1800s by Stephen Dexter.

Decline (1946-1999)

The latter half of the 20th century brought a period of decline in the health of Evergreen Cemetery. In 1946, the Cemetery Commission was abolished through an act of the New York State Legislature, leaving oversight of the property in limbo.²⁶ In the 1950s, the Binghamton Press-Bulletin reported that the cemetery had been a financial “problem” for the Village of Owego for years. In an attempt to address this, the village trustees increased the price of six-grave lots.²⁷ In the 1970s, vandals attacked the cemetery, damaging at least 36 gravestones.²⁸ The caretaker’s cottage burned in 1980 and was replaced with a new structure on the original foundation.²⁹

Throughout this period, however, the village sustained its commitment to maintaining the SaSaNa monument. In October 1972, a bronze plaque was placed at the obelisk’s base and formally dedicated.³⁰ Fifteen years later, the



*In 1972, a bronze plaque was placed at the base of the SaSaNa monument, further honoring the memory of the Native American woman who lost her life in 1852.
(Binghamton Press-Bulletin)*

²⁵ It is unclear, from the Cemetery Commissioners’ records, if this “chapel” building was the “cottage” built in 1892, or another structure, however it appears to have stood somewhere on the cemetery grounds, and to have predated the 1920 chapel that is extant today.

²⁶ Martin, Josh, WBNG Connect, March 9, 2017

²⁷ Binghamton Press-Bulletin, April 20, 1954

²⁸ Ibid, January 28, 1973

²⁹ Walking Tour, Evergreen Cemetery, Owego, NY

³⁰ Binghamton Press-Bulletin, October 13, 1972

American Legion raised over \$200 to light the monument, and an official ceremony, visible from the village below, took place in June (1987).³¹

Revival (2000-Present)

In January of 2000, the village mayor formed the Evergreen Cemetery Preservation Commission, a mayoral advisory committee tasked with addressing the decline in the cemetery's condition and planning for its long-term care. The commission operated for fifteen years, and during that time, steered the village towards many improvement efforts. To once again address the dwindling supply of interment space, the village purchased an additional 10.16 acres along the east side from Stephen Baker [et. al.] in 2000, bringing the total cemetery acreage to 60.85. In 2001, the village installed a gazebo near the cemetery summit and in 2002 obtained listing for the cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2007, 80 Civil War headstones were conserved, including those of members of the 26th regiment of New York State Colored Volunteers. The village made an application to the New York State Environmental Protection Fund for restoration of the cemetery's stone retaining walls and secured \$326,560 in matching grant funds as a result. However, shifting priorities, as a result of a 2011 flood, forced a return of the grant to the state. The commission was abolished as part of a failed effort to dissolve the village and abandon the cemetery.



Work on restoration of the 1920 chapel began in 2019 through the efforts of the Evergreen Cemetery Committee.

In 2017 the Owego Board of Trustees formed a five-person Evergreen Cemetery Committee (ECC) to function in place of the mayoral committee to advise the Owego Department of Public Works (DPW) and report to the trustees.³²

The committee began meeting in 2018. One of the initial efforts was to make a successful application to the Preservation League of New York State for a Preserve New York Grant to complete this Cultural Landscape Report. In 2018, the ECC began organizing regular volunteer workdays to help maintain the cemetery grounds. The DPW, with support of the new mayor and village trustees began a series of major (delayed) improvements and repairs to the drainage infrastructure, support walls, roadside swales, chapel roof (replacement) and more. The ECC is in the process of writing additional grant proposals. The Friends of Owego Evergreen Cemetery, a support and fundraising group, was recently incorporated and is applying for 501(c) 3 tax-exempt status.

³¹ Ibid, June 26, 1987

³² The mayoral committee had become a standing committee after the mayor left office in 2004.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STYLES

As summarized above, the Evergreen Cemetery landscape as it appears today developed over the course of approximately fifty years, beginning in 1852-1853 with the initial purchase of 11.2 acres and expanding to just over sixty acres. Roughly one-half of the cemetery land has been developed, and this approximately 32.7-acre area reflects two distinct historic landscape styles, as follows:

Rural or Garden Cemetery – Approximately 22.2 Acres.

Stephen Dexter surveyed and designed the two earliest parts of the cemetery, acquired by the village in 1853 and 1864. Both sections reflect the mid-19th century style of American cemetery design, known as “rural” or “garden.” Before the 1830s, interments filled burial grounds or burying yards -- unplotted sites without roads or paths that held single graves arranged in random rows. Owego’s first burial grounds, located in the middle of the village, likely reflected this style. By the early to mid-19th century, modern “cemeteries” developed with designed landscapes including formal entrances, roads, paths, and plotted burial sections. At Evergreen, Sections 1 through 14 reflect this style. Dexter laid out a system of roads that followed the natural contours of the land and made the stream-filled ravine a focal point. Family plots, surrounded by hefty enclosures and marked with central monuments, also features of the rural or garden style, dominate these sections.



A view eastward along Pool Avenue shows family plots in Section 14 with central obelisk style markers.

Lawn Cemetery – Approximately 10.5 Acres.

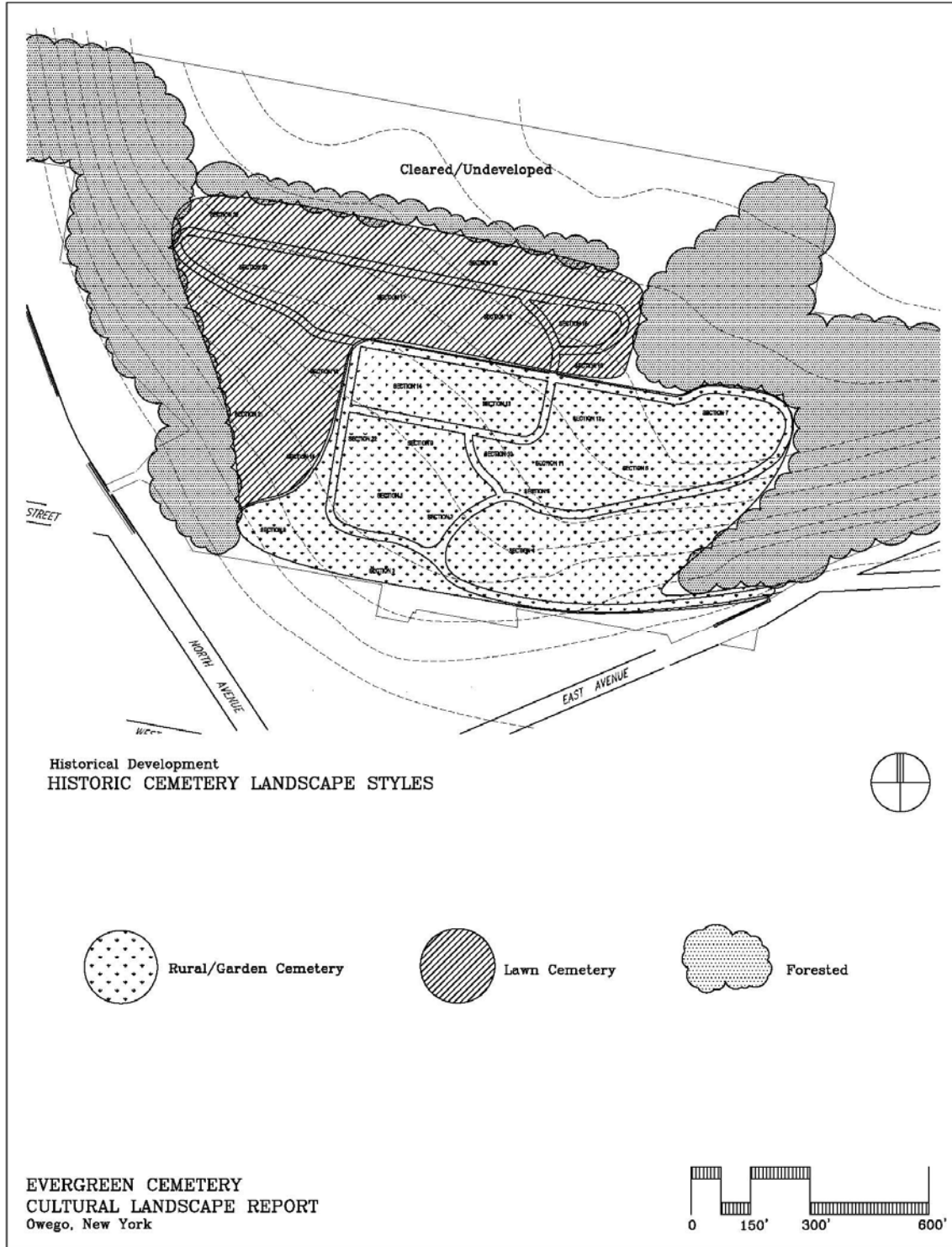
By 1888, when the village purchased 10.5 acres abutting Evergreen’s north edge, attitudes toward burial had shifted in America. The landscape continued to be planned and plots sold to families, however interest in plot embellishment in the form of large monuments and prominent enclosures began to wane. This new, more democratic style became known as the “lawn cemetery,” one typified by straight roads, standard 30” height monuments, and gravesite plantings. Sections 16 through 22, designed after 1888, reflect the lawn cemetery style.



The view westward across Section 21 shows individual graves with mostly uniform height markers and plantings of hydrangea shrubs at gravesites.

Period of Historical Significance

The period of significance for Evergreen Cemetery spans the years 1853 to 1970. During this time, the village purchased the initial 11.2 acres and engaged Stephen Dexter to design a rural or garden style modern cemetery. Dexter continued this style with his design of the 11 additional acres purchased in



1864. The third large addition of land, acquired in 1888, was designed in the lawn cemetery style, and provided a contrast to Dexter's vision. Much of Evergreen's acreage has yet to be developed, and future expansion of burial sites, as well as efforts to preserve the historic landscape, should meld, as closely as possible, with the existing rural/garden and lawn cemetery styles. Locations of the two styles appear on the Historic Cemetery Landscape Styles map (see previous page).

ASSESSMENT

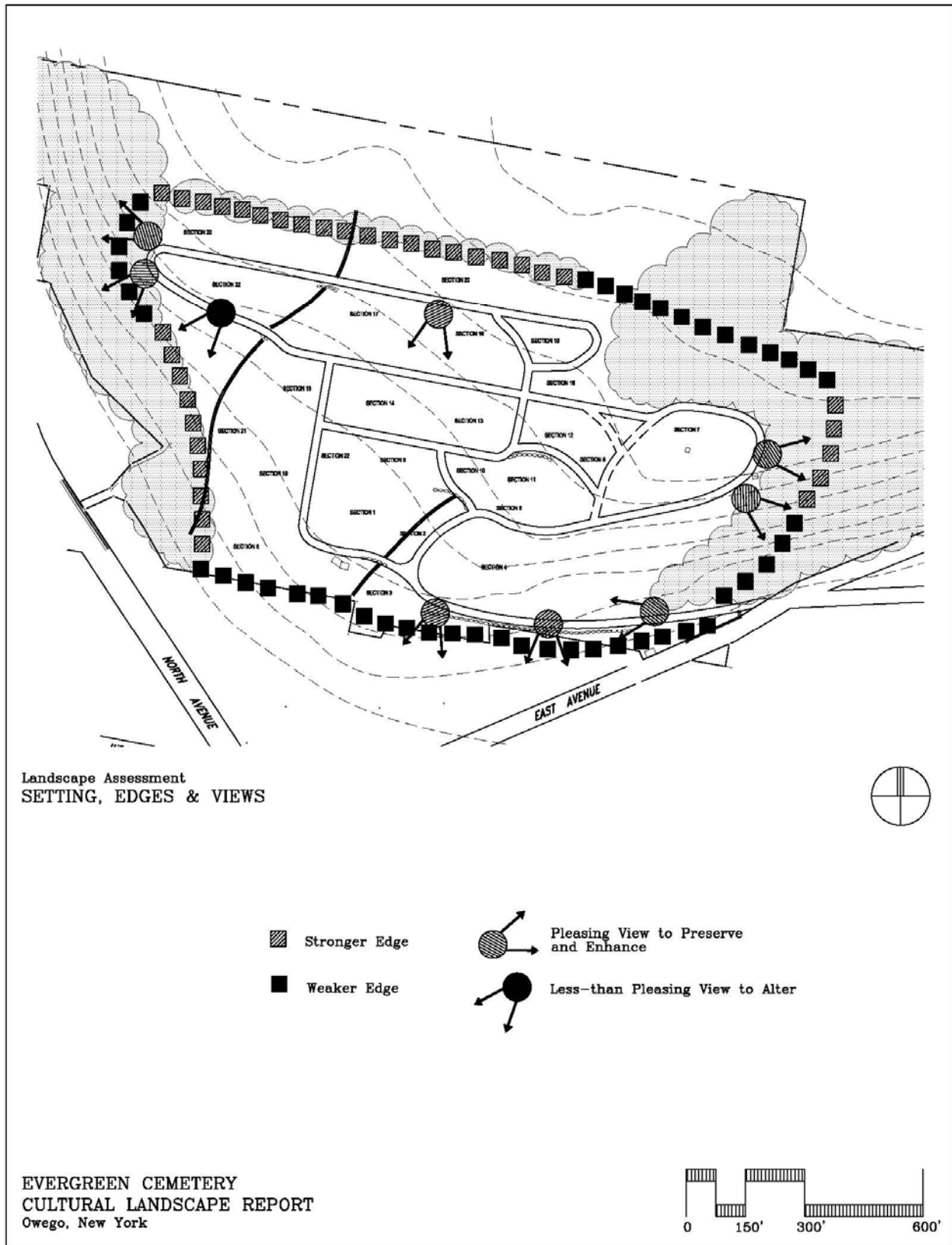
The following is an assessment of the landscape conditions at Evergreen Cemetery. Its purpose is to document the cemetery's existing natural, built and functional features; to analyze their condition; and to outline preliminary recommendations for preservation treatment. Together with the information compiled about the historical development of the cemetery, the assessment provides a foundation for the Cultural Landscape Report.

Setting, Edges & Views

- The 60.85-acre cemetery lies along the south-facing slope of East Beecher Hill, overlooking the Village of Owego, Owego Creek and Susquehanna River. This location makes Evergreen an ideal spot for taking in scenic vistas to the east, south and west.
- Woodlands, consisting largely of mixed hardwoods and woody understory, edge the property's east, south, west, and portions of the north sides and nearly enclose the entire cemetery. These woodlands have been left unmanaged and as a result form dense, leafy, and visually impenetrable walls, enclosing the cemetery, and at the same time blocking potential long views. Management of woodlands includes but is not limited to removal of diseased/dead trees, clearing of invasive species (trees and shrubs), and selective tree removal to encourage healthy growth of remaining trees and groundcover.
- A hedgerow of deciduous trees lines most of the north edge, dividing the developed portions of the cemetery from undeveloped areas to the north. Similar to the wooded stands, this hedgerow forms a dense, leafy barrier.
- The village has launched a clearing effort on the southeast slope below the SaSaNa monument, removing volunteer growth and opening long views of the Susquehanna Valley and village.
- The village has established a refuse disposal area to the south of Section 22. The gravespoil, leaves, brush and other debris lie in the foreground of a long view to the south and west.



The Village of Owego, as seen from the cemetery, is partially obscured by growth of unmanage woodlands on the west, south and east-facing slopes.



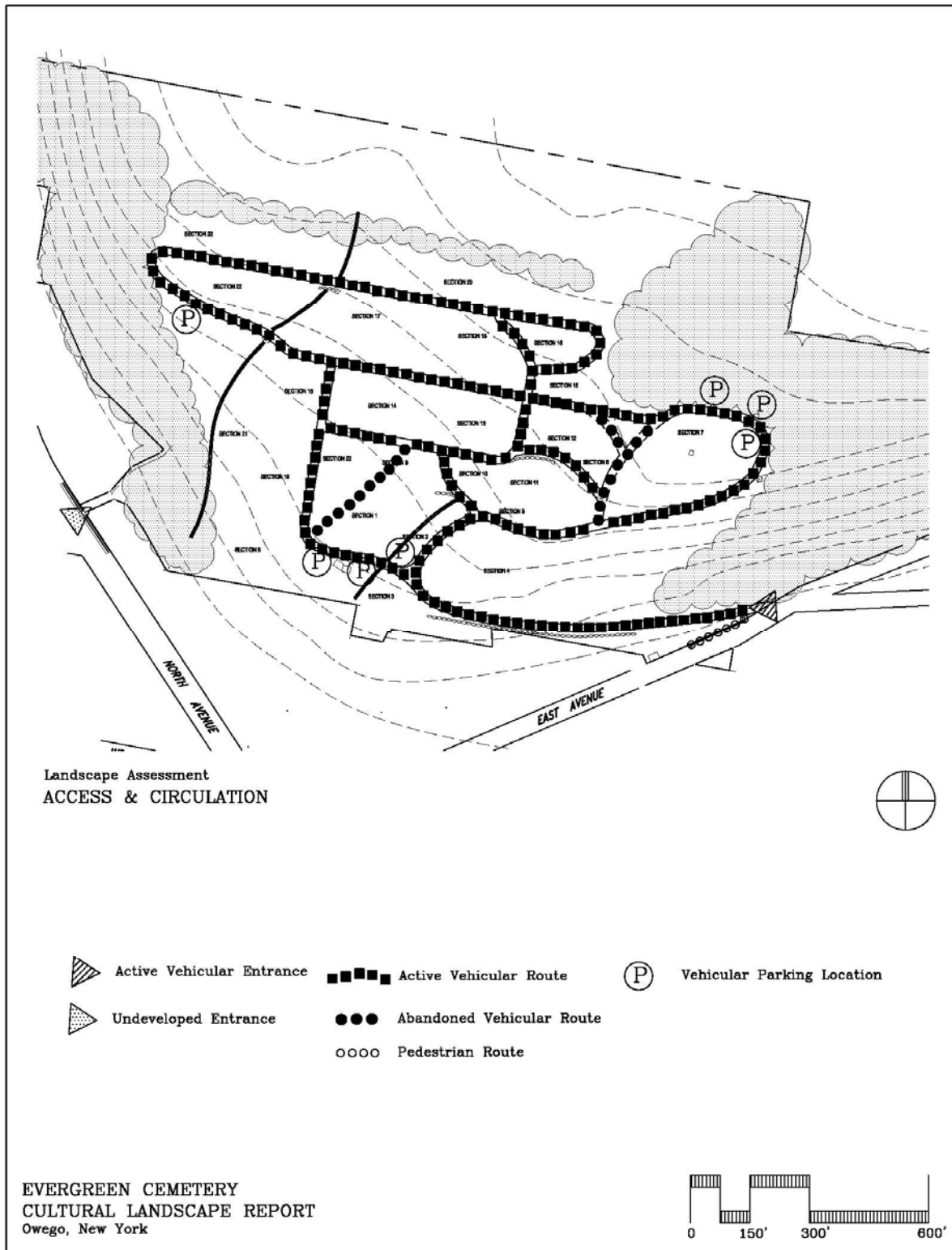
- Dense tree growth, located largely within each burial section amongst the graves, obstructs many potential long views through and across the cemetery landscape.

Entrances & Circulation

- Visitors arriving by either vehicle or on foot enter and exit the cemetery via one gate, located along East Avenue near the property's southeastern corner. A concrete sidewalk extends along a portion of East Avenue's north edge to cemetery's entry drive. This sidewalk does not extend far enough to the west to connect to the chapel, but rather crosses East Avenue and continues along the south side to North Avenue. A set of concrete steps at the east end of the sidewalk ascends to the cemetery's entry drive. Pedestrians must walk along the entry drive to reach the cemetery grounds (no separate pedestrian walk or path is provided))
- A secondary entrance, located off North Avenue across from Talcott Street (near the cemetery's southwest corner), was planned in 1897 when the Village purchased a small piece of land to provide access at the southwest corner. This land does not appear to have been improved into an entrance.
- Evergreen's 1.3-mile road network is one of the property's most distinctive historic features; many of the roads were laid out by the original designer, Stephen Dexter. Paved throughout with asphalt, the roads skim along the natural contours of the land, crossing streams and moving northward up the slopes via switchbacks. The condition of asphalt ranges from stable (few visible cracks or spalls) to poor (extensive cracking and spalling).
- The Village has closed several former roads and covered them with turf. These include Northern Avenue (led from Grove Avenue northward to Pool Avenue), as several short roads (not named) on the west slope of the summit. Northern Avenue has been converted to burial space.
- The existing road network bypasses one of Evergreen's notable features – the public ground or "paupers' graves." Located at the cemetery's lowest point, this small area can only be reached by descending the grass lawns of the adjacent burial section. As a result, the graves are not seen by many visitors.



The concrete sidewalk along East Avenue's north edge provides a partial route between the chapel and cemetery gate. It crosses to the south side of East Avenue before it reaches the chapel.



- The cemetery does not contain designated parking spaces and visitors park wherever they wish. The most popular spots are near the office and atop the summit, where vehicles sometimes park on the lawn, near gravesites.

Topography

- In keeping with mid-19th century trends in cemetery design, the Village chose to place Evergreen Cemetery on a relatively steep slope, emphasizing the natural topography with layout of roads, and providing many spots for long views of the Village and Valley.
- Development of erosion has offset many of the advantages afforded by these slopes.
- Runoff from roadways has eroded natural swales, and to stabilize these, village crews have installed course stone rip-rap. The ashlar stone retaining walls, culverts and parapets have begun to collapse and crews have altogether removed the parapet along Central Avenue.
- The steepest slopes within the cemetery – some as great as 17% - lie along the north side of the entry drive and within Section 4. Relatively flat areas (under 5%) are at the summit and around the office area.
- Most of the roadways slope gently (less than 5%), except on switchbacks and along a portion of South Summit Avenue.

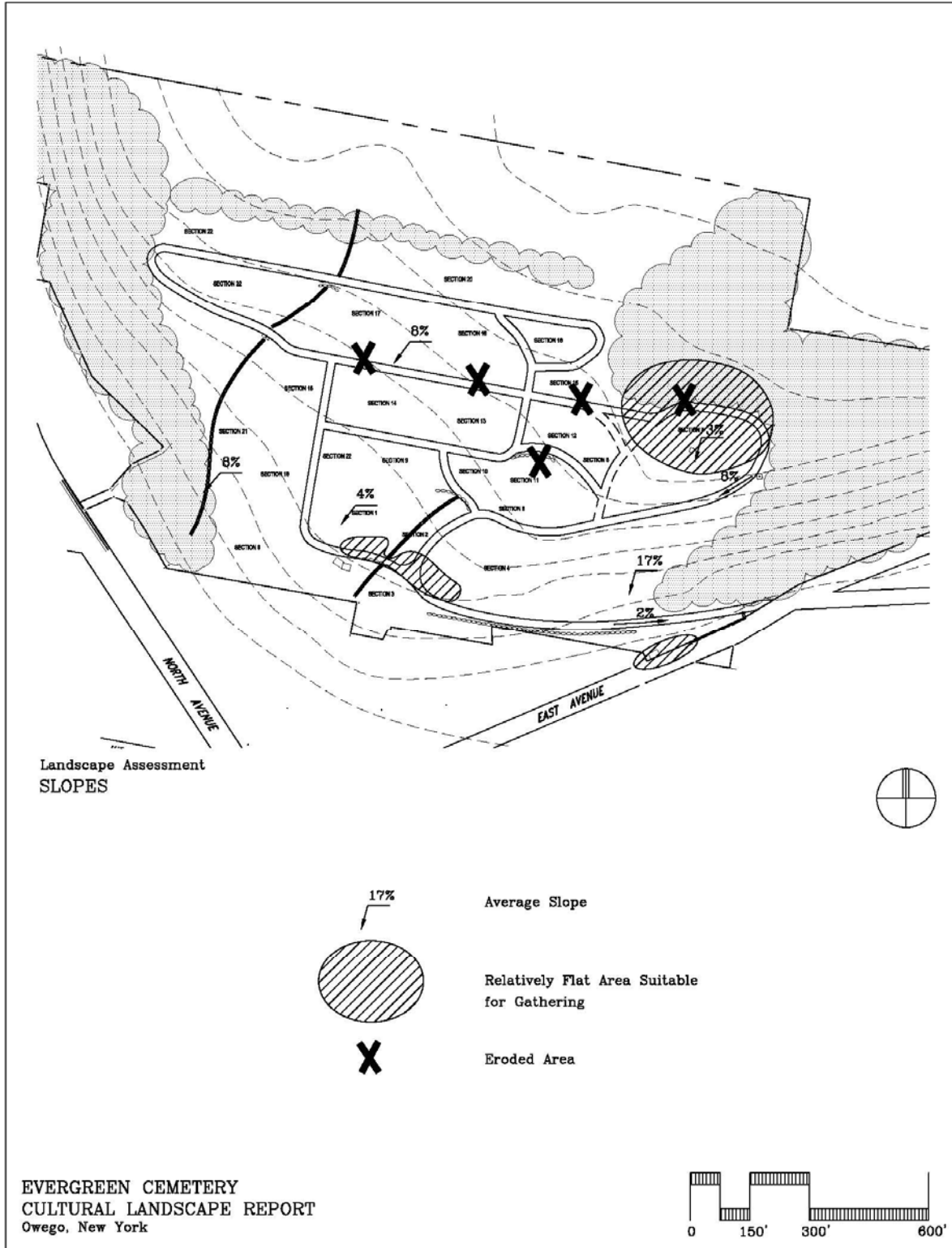


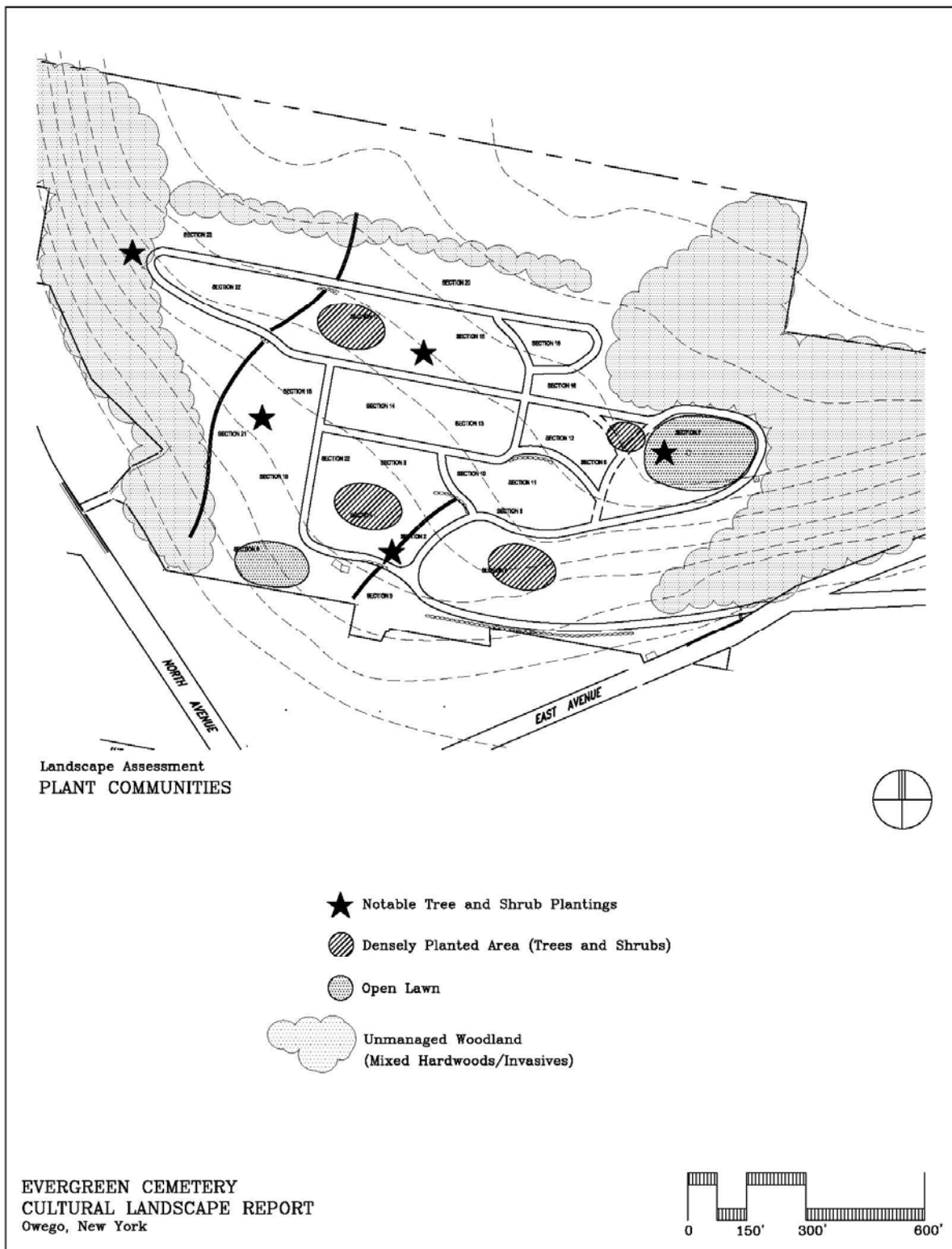
Stone rip-rap has been installed in the grass swales to help intercept runoff from the cemetery's upper slopes.

Plant Communities

- Evergreen Cemetery contains approximately 13 species of trees and shrubs planted densely throughout most sections in and amongst the gravesites, rather than the edges of the roadways. As a result, long views across the cemetery landscape are largely obstructed as are views of individual monuments and markers.
- Dominant tree and shrub species include spruce, cedar, pine, hydrangea; secondary species include oak and barberry. Tertiary species are hickory, maple, birch, fir, larch and hemlock.
- The cemetery does not contain any specimen trees that stand out for their unusual character and/or serve as focal points in the landscape.

Evergreen Cemetery, Owego, New York
Cultural Landscape Report





- Many of the trees appear to have been planted in the early 20th century (approximately 75 years ago), and several show signs of decline.
- Plant communities within the cemetery fall into one of four general categories, as follows:

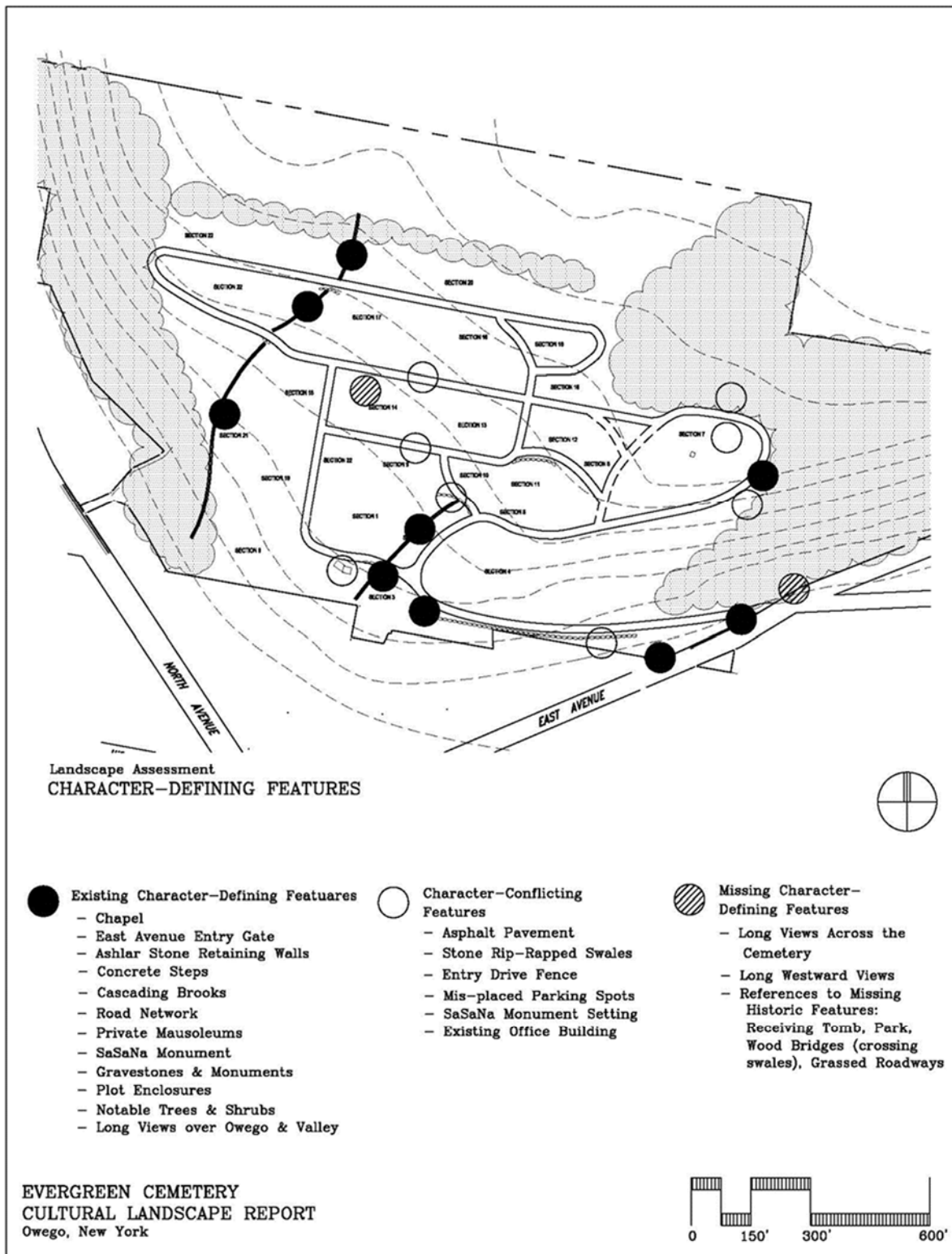
- **Notable Trees/Shrubs.** Notable tree and shrub plantings include arranged plantings or distinctive plant groups. Sections 2, 14 and 18 contain arranged clusters of Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), standing in allees (even rows) at the edges of Sections 2 and 14, and outlining the W. Pumpelly plot on Broad Avenue. A group of mature shagbark hickory trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) stands atop the cemetery's highest point (Section 7) to the west of the SaSaNa monument. Forsythia (*Forsythia x intermedia*) shrubs line the top of the far western slope. These appear to have been planted as a



Plantings of tree hydrangeas appear throughout, with a large concentration in Sections 18, 19, and 21.

- hedge to rim the cemetery roadway, and what was likely a neat border has spread into an unruly mass. Tree hydrangeas (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'grandifolia') appear throughout the cemetery with the largest concentrations in Sections 18, 19 and 21. These medium-size upright shrubs produce terminal panicle flowers that dry and persist throughout the winter, adding color and texture to the landscape throughout the year.
- **Densely Planted Sections.** As previously noted, trees fill most burial sections. The most densely planted sections include portions of Sections 1, 4, 12 and 17, where trees and shrubs obstruct views, crowd gravesites and encroach on monuments and markers.
- **Open Lawns.** Small grassy areas have been maintained at the cemetery's summit (Section 7) and in the public (pauper's) area (Section 8). A former grassy "park" area, designed by Stephen Dexter as part of his original Evergreen Cemetery plan, is now part of Section 9 and is no longer an open lawn.
- **Unmanaged Woodlands/Invasives.** As discussed under "Edges," mixed hardwoods and woody understory surround much of the cemetery, covering the lower slopes and blocking long views of the Village, Susquehanna River and Owego Creek. Invasive growth, including Japanese Knotweed, has infiltrated these unmanaged woodlands, adding to their density.

Evergreen Cemetery, Owego, New York
Cultural Landscape Report



Note: all character-defining features are not symbolized on this map.

Character-Defining Features

In addition to those discussed above, Evergreen Cemetery contains many other features that define, or in some cases detract from the property's historic character.

- Features contributing to the character include the 1922 Chapel, entry posts and gates, Pumpelly, Curtis and Cheney mausoleums, ashlar stone retaining walls and culvert abutments, stone-lined stream channels, concrete steps, cast iron hitching posts, and the many monuments and grave markers. The public ground or "pauper's graves," located near the cemetery's lowest point, is also an important contributing feature.
- Features detracting from the character include the entry drive fence, overhead utility lines (along the entry drive), cemetery office structure, rip-rap swales, cracked/spalled asphalt pavement and unmanaged woodlands/invasive species. The iron fencing surrounding the SaSaNa monument, as well as the concrete bench, detract from the simplicity of this commemorative area, and the gazebo, while functional, attracts unwanted vehicles and conflicts with the adjacent interment area.
- Missing features that once contributed to the cemetery's character include the long views to the east, south and west, views across the cemetery's interior, and references to features that have been removed, including the receiving tomb, original chapel, tool house, park, wood bridges, and a portion of the eastern brook (now impounded).



Flat stones have replaced an historic stone parapet-topped culvert.

Preliminary Recommendations

Future preservation efforts at Evergreen Cemetery will involve each of the four treatment methods defined by the United State Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (1996). They include:

- *Preservation*, where existing form, integrity and materials of the landscape will be sustained;
- *Rehabilitation*, where features in the landscape will be repaired or altered to make their use compatible with the landscape's historical value;
- *Restoration*, where landscape features will be returned to their original form; and
- *Reconstruction*, where landscape features no longer extant will be recreated.

Based on the preceding assessment, the following preliminary recommendations should be considered:

- Develop a tree management plan for the entire cemetery property to include directives for selective clearing, establishing long views, caring for existing trees (including removing lower limbs to open views), controlling/eradicating invasive species, and introducing new species;
- Restore and expand pedestrian access to the cemetery by extending the East Avenue sidewalk to the Chapel and future parking area and upgrading the steps. Consider establishing a 4' width walking lane along the cemetery drive;
- Evaluate the structural integrity of the existing roadway and upgrade sections of roadway requiring improved drainage;
- Establish a hierarchy of roadways within the cemetery, including a primary vehicular loop road and designated secondary roadways and parking spots; install signage and separate paving surfaces to distinguish between the two roadway levels and parking spots;
- Preserve the memory of the historic abandoned sections of roadway; at a minimum install roadway signs;
- Commission a licensed civil engineer to conduct a drainage study of the cemetery and make recommendations for preserving historic features (brooks, culverts, parapet walls) while at the same time controlling and re-directing stormwater;
- Work to preserve the existing historic features that remain, including the many structures: the chapel, entrance structures, private mausoleums, stone retaining walls, stone-lined stream channels, steps, family plot enclosures, and public ground;
- Redesign the setting for the SaSaNa monument, creating a more dignified commemorative space for visitors to pause, reflect, and take in the long view.
- Institute a plan to remove and reconstruct, as needed, features that detract from the cemetery's historic character, including the entry drive fence, overhead utility lines, and cemetery office;
- Restore or make reference to missing historic features including the receiving tomb, park, wood bridges and impounded brook; and
- When planning for the development of additional interment space, consider making enhancements to the landscape at the same time; for example, consider constructing of columbarium walls for cremation niches as a means of stabilizing slopes.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

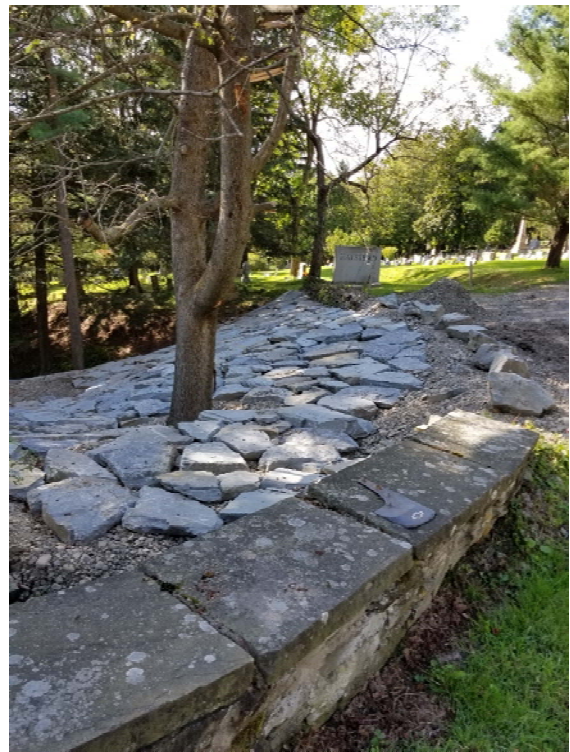
The following section of the Cultural Landscape Report organizes the “preliminary recommendations” of the “Assessment” section into a series of twelve preservation projects, and places them in order of priority. The highest priority projects include urgently needed treatments, while the lower priority project include aesthetic enhancements. Medium priority projects fall somewhere in between. *Before any work on the following efforts begins, inquiry should be made about the preservation restriction placed on the cemetery by the State of New York, as part of the EPF grant. If this is still in effect, it could dramatically restrict (not necessarily in a bad way) the type of improvements that can be made.*

Project 1: Drainage Study

Project 1 involves commissioning a team of engineers to prepare a comprehensive drainage study of the cemetery. As noted in the assessment, control of surface and ground water is one of the major issues facing the cemetery. It has caused significant slope erosion, and has undermined the roadways, swales, culverts and stone parapet walls, and retaining walls. Each of these features is a significant contributor to the historic landscape. The best and most appropriate way to evaluate the source(s) of these problems and devise historically-compatible long-term solutions, is to seek professional civil and structural engineering expertise. In the meantime, no original landscape fabric, such as retaining walls, should be removed.

Project 2: Tree Assessment, Management and Replanting Plan

Project 2 involves a hiring a New York State-certified arborist to inventory and assess the condition of the cemetery’s very large tree population, and make recommendations for ongoing management. This should include instructions for identifying, controlling and removing invasive species, and removing any dead, diseased and/or dying trees as well as smaller gravesite plantings. The assessment should take into account notable plantings, such as the tree hydrangeas, located mostly In Sections 18, 19, and 21. The assessment should also include a plan to replant trees where others have been removed and/or are desired. New trees should reflect the cemetery’s period of significance, and should represent a diversity of species, including disease-resistant species.



A comprehensive drainage study will study and make recommendations for upgrading the cemetery’s stormwater management system including the historic stone culverts and parapet walls.

Project 3: Entrance and Entry Drive

Project 3 addresses the cemetery entrance and entry drive, both of which contribute to the visitor’s first impression of the site. The project will require the expertise of a landscape architect and electrical

engineer/electrician to design the improvements, and a landscape contractor to construction them. Tasks would include:

- Repointing and repainting, as needed the existing entry columns, urns, and gates;
- Placing the existing overhead electrical line in underground conduit along the outer edge of the drive and reconnecting the service to the office;
- Removing the existing rail and replacing it with a more substantial rail, such as a low-height wood timber guard rail;
- Installing a 4' width pedestrian path would be installed between the rail and drive;
- Selectively clearing vegetation along the south side of the roadway to open periodic views to the valley below, and adding a woody understory of flowering species such as kalmia and/or viburnum; and
- Clearing the stone ledges on the north side of volunteer trees and woody shrubs, and replanting them with herbaceous perennials, suitable for shady rock gardens.

Project 4: Cemetery Roads and Parking Areas

Project 4 will evaluate the road network and design a circulation hierarchy, consisting of a primary paved loop road (asphalt or oil/stone surface) and smaller secondary roads (surfaced with reinforced turf, gravel, or stabilized aggregate). It will also devise a plan to accommodate parked vehicles, including locations and surface treatments. Work on this project will require the expertise of a civil engineer and/or landscape architect, and design will need to be coordinated with the recommendations of the drainage study.

Project 5: SaSaNa Monument Setting

Project 5 involves redesign of the SaSaNa monument setting as well as conservation treatment of the obelisk. As discussed in the Assessment, potential exists to make this area into more of a commemorative space, while at the same time retaining its historical integrity. The work will require the expertise of a landscape architect to prepare and detail a design, and the effort of a landscape contractor to build the design. Interpretive signage will be included in the project, in coordination with the sign program (discussed in Project 11, below).



A decorative iron fence currently surrounds the SaSaNa monument, blocking views of the obelisk and accompanying interpretive plaque. Project 5 will involve redesigning the monument's setting to create a more dignified commemorative space.

Project 6: Summit

The summit should be redeveloped into an interment area, building on the existing burial pattern. The gazebo should be removed and barriers (bollards) installed to prohibit cars from driving on the grass and existing burial areas.

Project 7: Office

Project 7 addresses the aesthetics of the cemetery office. An architect would be hired to assess the building's conditions and determine structural soundness. If the architect finds it to be stable, he/she would then develop drawings, specifications and a budget projection for enhancements that would help the structure better reflect the cemetery's late Victorian period character.

Project 8: Public Ground

Project 8 will improve access to and interpretation of the "public ground," or "paupers' area" which now lies hidden on a slope below the office. It is hard to find, and is not accessible to persons with disabilities. Tasks will include creating an accessible pathway leading from the office area down to the public ground; unearthing and if missing, replacing the terra cotta markers that were made and placed on the gravesites (see historical narrative); installing interpretive signs in coordination with the cemetery-wide sign program (see Project 11, below).

Project 9: Chapel Grounds

As of the writing of this Cultural Landscape Report, restoration of the 1920 chapel structure is underway, and an adjacent dilapidated house has been removed. Project 9 will address the aesthetics of the chapel setting, and the chapel's connection to the entry gate. Work should be directed by a landscape architect, and should include:

- Designing upgrades to the landscape surrounding the chapel, including a parking area on the adjacent lot;
- Extending and reconstructing the sidewalk leading from the chapel to the entry gate; and
- Clearing the slopes above the chapel and walkway of volunteer growth and invasive species.



Project 9 will propose improvements to the grounds of the 1920 chapel, including adjacent slopes, parking, and the pedestrian connection between the chapel and cemetery entry gate.

Project 10: Monument and Gravestone Assessment

Project 10 will evaluate the condition of the cemetery's five private mausoleums, dozens of large monuments and hundreds of gravestones. It will require the expertise of a professional stone conservator, working where needed with a structural engineer, will include a comprehensive conditions assessment of those structures and stones at risk, as well as recommendations and a phased plan for preservation treatment. This assessment should be undertaken by conservator trained according to the standards of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), only.

Project 11: Sign and Site Amenities Program

Project 11 involves developing a coordinated sign program as well as a selection of site amenities to be installed through the cemetery. The work will require the expertise of a graphic designer who will propose a palette of materials, colors, and styles to be used consistently on all signs. Signs will be designed to complement the historic character of Evergreen, and will include:

- A welcome sign, providing an overview of Evergreen's history, noting its status on the National Register of Historic Places, and listing hours of operation and rules of conduct;
- Avenue signs, placed at the beginning and end of each avenue;
- Loop road signs (if a primary loop is established) placed along the route;
- Parking signs, located at designated areas (addressed in Project 4); and
- Interpretive signs, located in few notable sites, such as near the SaSaNa monument and at the public ground.

Project 12: Expansion of Interment Space

Project 12 will identify and provide designs for additional interment spaces within the fabric of the existing cemetery landscape. The work will involve:

- Assessing the projected need for interment space types, i.e. cremation niches vs. full-casket burials (lawn crypts);
- If cremation is more desired, designing new burial space(s) within the fabric of the existing landscape, such as the terraced slopes and former roadway; and
- If traditional burials are desired, exploring locations for lawn crypts, including double-depth crypts (if soil conditions permit).

Preservation Costs

The following are preliminary budgets for each of the preservation projects described above. *Note that the figures are merely projections, intended as guidelines for the Village of Owego to use in setting fundraising goals.* The work involved in some of the projects may be completed by Village Department of Public Works crews, depending on their capability.

Project 1: Drainage Study - \$25,000 - \$30,000

Costs for Project 1 include fees for a professional engineer to determine the source(s), estimate volumes, and design a drainage system to handle water flow and discharge for a minimum fifty-year window.

Project 2: Tree Assessment, Management and Replanting Plan - \$5,000 - \$10,000

Costs for Project 2 include fees for a New York State-certified arborist to map the cemetery trees, identify species, assess condition, recommend a treatment plan, and develop a plan to re-plant the cemetery as the existing tree population declines.

Project 3: Entrance and Entry Drive - \$10,000 - \$15,000 (design only)

Costs for Project 3 include professional fees to design a new guardrail system, slope planting plan, pedestrian walkway (if possible) and to engineer the electrical service feeding the cemetery office. Costs for construction will depend on the results of the design work.

Project 4: Cemetery Roads and Parking Areas - \$10,000 - \$15,000 (design only)

Costs for Project 4 include professional fees to evaluate the condition of existing roads, establish a roadway hierarchy, design surface treatments for main and lesser-used roads, and identify/design parking locations, all in conjunction with the drainage study (Project 1).

Projects 5 and 6: Summit and SaSaNa Monument Setting - \$25,000 - \$30,000 (design only)

Costs for Projects 5 and 6 can be combined into one design fee that would pay for a landscape architect to develop a concept plan for upgrading the summit and creating new environs for the monument. Included in this would be the cost of preparing a topographical survey of the project area (needed for design and construction).

Project 7: Office - \$10,000 (design only)

Costs for Project 7 include architectural fees associated with design cosmetic upgrades to the building exterior (this fee does not include costs of a structural assessment to determine soundness; this task may be handled by the Village's building inspector).

Project 8: Public Ground: \$10,000 - \$15,000

Costs for Project 8 include constructing an accessible pathway (approximately 250' +/-) leading from the cemetery roadway to the public ground, placing an interpretive sign near the edge of the public ground lot. Cost of designing the interpretive sign is addressed in Project 11.

Project 9: Chapel Grounds: \$25,000 - \$30,000

Costs for Project 9 include constructing a bituminous asphalt (or chip seal) parking lot to the west of the chapel, reconstructing the concrete walkway leading from the chapel to the entry gates (approximately 240' +/-), and clearing slopes adjacent to the walkway. *Note: this work should be completed at the direction of a landscape architect but may be undertaken by Village of Owego DPW crews.*

Project 10: Monument and Gravestone Assessment - \$10,000

Costs for Project 10 include fees for a professional stone conservator to conduct a walk-through of the cemetery, to identify monuments and stones requiring conservation treatment, and to recommend the appropriate treatment for each.

Project 11: Sign and Site Amenities Program - \$5,000 - \$10,000

Costs for Project 11 include fees for a professional graphic designer to create and detail designs for welcome, directional, and interpretive signs in the cemetery, and to recommend a bench style and model to be used consistently throughout. *Note: costs for fabricating and installing signs as well as purchasing and installing benches have not been included in this budget.*

Project 12: Expansion of Interment Space - \$20,000 (study only)

The budget for Project 12 includes fees for a team of professionals to identify, propose and evaluate options for incorporating new interments within the existing historic landscape, and to estimate the revenue potential for each new interment site. *Note: a detailed topographical survey of the cemetery will likely be required for the project; the survey cost has not been included in the budget.*

Preservation Resources

The following organizations can supply advice, guidance and technical assistance for preservation efforts in historic cemeteries. Those marked with an asterisk (*) provide financial assistance for preservation activities. Note that funding priorities, award levels and application requirements for the various funding organizations can frequently shift. The county, village and Evergreen Cemetery Committee should contact each resource for up-to-date information, prior to making applications.

Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation (www.ahlp.org)

The Alliance is an organization of professionals dedicated to the preservation and conservation of historic landscapes in all their variety from formal gardens to public parks to rural and natural expanses. The organization provides a forum for communication and exchange among its members.

American Association for State and Local History (www.aaslh.org)

This national organization provides leadership, service and support for preservation and interpretation of state and local history, making the past more meaningful in American society. The organization's bookstore offers dozens of titles pertaining to historic preservation.

Association for Gravestone Studies (www.gravestonestudies.org)

AGS is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of cemeteries and gravestones. Services include publications, a monthly e-newsletter, a quarterly journal, and an annual conference. The organization maintains an international membership, however, regional chapters, including a New York Chapter, serve member subsets.

Association for Preservation Technology International (www.apti.org)

The Association for Preservation Technology International is a cross-disciplinary membership organization dedicated to promoting the best technology for conserving historic structures and their settings. Its Northeast Chapter services New York members.

Cultural Landscape Foundation (www.tclf.org)

The Cultural Landscape Foundation seeks donations and gifts from corporations, individuals, private foundations and government agencies to increase awareness and public benefit for cultural landscapes listed on, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Project support emphasizes interpretation, education, outreach and public awareness.

Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation* (<http://mftf.net/>)

A private foundation based in and serving Tioga County, the Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation supports organizations that "enhance and benefit the residents of Tioga County" through the financing of capital projects, critical needs and seed money for projects or programs.

National Center for Preservation Technology & Training* (www.ncptt.nps.gov)

A program of the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, the NCPTT awards grants for information management, training and research on technical issues in preservation, with an emphasis on archaeology, historic architecture, historic landscapes, objects and materials conservation and interpretation.

National Trust for Historic Preservation* (<https://savingplaces.org/>)

A nonprofit membership organization, The Trust is the leading national advocate for historic preservation, providing support for preservation-related activities through conferences, publications, and annual designations of American's Most Endangered Historic Places.

New York State Council on the Arts* (<https://arts.ny.gov/>)

A state agency, NYSCA is dedicated to "preserving and expanding the rich and diverse cultural resources that are and will become the heritage of New York's citizens." NYSCA's Architecture + Design grant program supports the preservation and interpretation of New York State's architectural and design heritage, and the development of design literacy for all New Yorkers.

New York State Humanities Council* (<https://humanitiesny.org/>)

A state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, this organization provides grants of up to \$5,000 for projects that promote public involvement in the Humanities.

New York State Environmental Protection Fund* (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/92815.html>)

New York State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) supports capital projects that protect the environment and enhance communities, including purchases of land and construction of facilities. Among the types of projects funded through EPF are historic preservation-related efforts.

Preservation League of New York State* (<https://www.preservenys.org>)

PLNYS is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving New York's cultural and historic resources, including buildings and landscapes, through advocacy, education and community revitalization. The League supports preservation through grant programs, an annual conference and awards program, scholarships, technical assistance, and more. A PreserveNY grant from the League provided partial support for this Cultural Landscape Report.

Tioga Downs Regional Community Foundation* (<https://www.tiogadowns.com/about-us/foundation/>)

TDRCF promotes economic and community development in Broome, Tioga, Chemung and Bradford Counties by awarding funds to organizations that combat local poverty and community deterioration, with a focus on charity, religion, literature, science and education.

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MANAGEMENT

The final section of the Cultural Landscape Report will help the Village of Owego and Evergreen Cemetery Committee care for the cemetery landscape. It includes strategies for care of plants (trees and ground cover), structures, gravestones, monuments and mausoleums, and provides a maintenance schedule. By following this guide, village crews and volunteers will help ensure the long-term health of the historic landscape.

Management Log

Before beginning to care for the landscape, the village should set up a “management log,” or ongoing written record of inspections, repairs, and introduction of new features, listed by date. The log should include methods and materials employed, as well as names and contact information for any specialists involved in the cemetery’s care. The log should be stored, in both electronic and manual (hard copy) formats, in a secure location.

Plants

Existing Plants: Trees

Before the village undertakes any measure to treat the property’s trees, the trustees should consult a New York State-certified arborist. This individual is trained to assess the health of aging plants and prescribe appropriate care. General guidelines for tree care are as follows:

- Once per year in late winter, consult an arborist about the general health of the trees. Ask the arborist:
 - If any of the trees or branches are dead, broken or in any way hazardous. These need to be removed as soon as possible for safety;
 - If the trees are free of disease, and if not, how the disease should be treated;
 - If the diseased branches/sections of the tree should be removed, or if the entire tree should be removed to protect the health of neighboring trees;
 - If the trees need fertilizing, and if so, what they should be fed, how they should be fed, and how often they should be fed;
 - If root suckers or other growth (such as limbs branching below 12 feet) should be removed to ensure the health and beauty of the tree.
- Test the cemetery’s soil for quality in relationship to the tree population. The test will detect any soil deficiencies and determine a remedy for correcting them. Soil can be tested by a soils professional, or through the Cornell University Extension Program, located in Ithaca.
- Provide and install cables to help any weakly-joined limbs.

- Treat trees with a systemic insecticide to minimize stress caused by leaf feeding pests.
- Prune trees, removing all dead wood greater than ½" in diameter.
- Where possible, create mulch rings around the bases of trees, as wide as possible and up to the diameter of the tree crown. Shape the rings into saucers (with the low point at the center), rather than volcano-like mounds. In places where gravestones lie near or adjacent to trees, avoid accumulating mulch around the stones.
- Where soil has built up at the base of trees, remove enough to expose the root collar.
- Remove any dead or dying trees.

Existing Plants: Ground Covers & Turf

The village should make an effort to retain existing ground covers, as opposed to turfgrass, and encourage their growth, as they minimize the need for mowing, thus easing maintenance requirements. Each ground cover should be allowed to bloom, wither, and cast their seeds before they are mown, allowing them to multiply. Weed killers and other such herbicides should not be used where these plants are growing (some may be classified as "weeds").

Where grass lawns are desirable, the village can sustain their health by following these mowing and fertilizing guidelines:

- Fertilize sparingly, as too much fertilizer can cause grass to grow too rapidly, requiring more mowing and making the plants more susceptible to disease. Not enough fertilizer can result in weaker plants that are more prone to disease of stress brought on by drought (including allowing the infiltration of crabgrass).
- Apply fertilizer three times per year – around Memorial Day and Labor Day, and finally, around Halloween.
- Do NOT fertilize in mid-summer. At this time of year, roots have become dormant. Fertilizer will cause the leaves to grow, making the plants less tolerant of drought, heat and disease.
- Follow these fertilizing instructions:
 - *Memorial Day* – apply 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 SF (with 50% of Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 14-14-14
 - *Labor Day* – apply 2 pounds of Nitrogen per 1,000 SF (with 50% Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 14-14-14
 - *Halloween* – apply 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 SF (with 75% of Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 28-3-9

- When mowing, remove no more than one-third of the height of the turf at one time, always leaving twice as much leaf height as is cut.

The best level for mown grass is 2 ½ inches, with 2 to 3 ½ inches the range. It is best to mow lawns on an as-needed basis, not on a regular schedule, such as once per week.

Existing Plants: Invasive Species

As noted in the *Assessment* section of this report, a colony of Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*/*Fallopia japonica*) has taken root in portions of the perimeter unmanaged woodlands. Aggressive management of this plant is needed to control its spread. Its location along the riverbank may limit the options available for control, as state and federal regulatory bodies may not permit the use of herbicides (such as Glyphosate) and the village may further object to its application. Non-chemical control measures include the following and can be used in combination:

- Regular cutting of plant stems, beginning in early spring, to retard photosynthesis (needed to fuel growth)
- Covering the cut stems with heavy black plastic to block sunlight
- Physically removing (through excavation) the root systems

New Plants: Trees

The *Recommendations* section of this plan included an effort to plant new trees within the cemetery. In selecting new trees to plant, the village should aim to diversify the tree species within the cemetery while, at the same time, choosing species appropriate for each historic cemetery style (refer to *Historical Development of Evergreen Cemetery* for a description and location of each style).

Victorian Style

Cercidiphyllum japonica	Katsuratree
Ginkgo biloba	Ginkgo
Magnolia acuminata	Cucumbertree Magnolia
Tilia cordata	Littleleaf Linden
Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry Viburnum

Modern Style

Cedrus libani	Cedar of Lebanon
Metasequoia glyptostroboides	Dawn Redwood
Sophora japonica	Scholar-Tree
Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova

Additional Native Species Appropriate to All Styles

Amelanchier canadensis	Shadblow Serviceberry
Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
Cladrastus kentuckea	Kentucky Coffeetree
Franklinia alatamaha	Franklin Tree
Larix laricina	Tamarack
Liquidambar styraciflua	Sweetgum
Nyssa sylvatica	Northern Black Tupelo
Platanus occidentalis	American Sycamore

Newly planted trees are unlikely to survive if they do not receive special care and attention, particularly in the first few years after planting. In general, adhere to the following care guidelines:

- Plant in the spring or fall, and never during the heat of summer.
- Utilize crews working under the supervision of a New York State-certified arborist, or hire a landscape contracting company to plant trees. Trees that are planted correctly will be far more likely to survive and thrive, and the arborist/landscape company should exercise the best tree planting practices. Landscape contractors should guarantee all trees for one year after planting. However, *the guarantee is valid only if the plants have been properly cared for.*
- If staking new trees is necessary, be sure to remove stakes and guy-wires within one year of planting. If the trees appear to need some kind of individual protection because of their location, build a simple fence rather than leaving the guy-wires on. Wires can damage and will eventually kill the tree if left in place too long.
- Provide the trees with at least one inch of water each week. This water can be supplied by rainfall or by supplemental watering. Spreading one inch of water using a hose attached to an exterior water spigot takes approximately two-three hours. Water must soak deep into the soil to encourage good root growth and overall plant health. Adjust the flow of water so it has time to sink into the ground, reducing the pressure if small “rivers” develop. The water should sink into the ground around the tree or shrub, rather than flowing away. Tree “gator” bags may also be installed so that watering will be required every five to seven days.
- If drought dominates the fall, be sure to water trees well before the ground freezes, protecting the plants from entering winter in dry soil.
- Mulch plants to help control weeds and keep moisture in the soil (and maintain a neat appearance in the landscape). Use composted pine bark mulch that has been aged a minimum of three months. Apply the mulch to a depth no greater than three inches. Each spring, fluff the existing mulch and add more, as needed. Keep mulch away from the stems or trunks of trees (to minimize decay and prevent insect infestations).
- Prune trees to enhance their natural form and appearance, and to help maintain their health. Enlist the expertise of a professional or person trained in proper pruning practices. Prune only by hand (never use electric pruners). Prune broken branches immediately to prevent disease.

New Plants: Ground Covers

As previously mentioned, ground covers add beauty to the cemetery landscape and minimize the need for mowing. In shady areas, the trustees should select shade-tolerant species, indicated by asterisks (“*”), below.

<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugleweed
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry
<i>Asarum canadense</i> *	Wild Ginger
<i>Cornus canadensis</i> *	Bunchberry
<i>Erythronium albidum</i> *	White Trout Lily
<i>Fern spp.</i> *	Ferns

<i>Gallium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Housatonia caerulea</i>	Bluets
<i>Lamium spp.</i>	Dead Nettle
<i>Phlox stolonifera</i>	Creeping Phlox
<i>Phlox subulata</i>	Moss Pink
<i>Sedum</i>	Stonecrop
<i>sp. reflexum, sp. cauticola,</i>	
<i>sp. anglicum, sp. brevifolium</i>	
<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>	Creeping Thyme
<i>Viola canadensis*</i>	Canadian Violet
<i>Waldsteinia ternate</i>	Barren Strawberry

No- Shrub Policy

Shrubs in the cemetery largely lie alongside individual gravesites, providing families an opportunity for individual expression and personal commemoration. Unfortunately, gravesite shrub plantings are inconsistent with the cemetery's predominantly 19th century design (a concept introduced in the 20th century). Furthermore, they present long-term maintenance problems by becoming quickly become overgrown, obscuring grave markers and complicating lawn mowing. For the most part, families do not maintain shrub plantings, leaving the arduous pruning, shaping, and feeding tasks to cemetery maintenance crews.

As part of the planting policy for the cemetery, the village should adopt a "no new shrub" rule. As existing shrubs mature and die, they should be removed and replaced. Instead, the village should ask families to donate trees to the cemetery allowing for the replacement of dead trees with new, needed species.

Historic Structures

The village should regularly inspect the gravestones, monuments, mausoleums and other stone structures for signs of damage or decay, and if found, consult a conservation professional. Under no circumstances should untrained individuals attempt to repair these structures, as improper treatment of stones can lead to further deterioration. Conservation professionals will employ treatments that help stabilize the structures for many, many years, however because gravestones, monuments, mausoleums, walls, etc. lie exposed to weather and are vulnerable to vandalism, further deterioration is always possible.

Management Schedule

January - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enjoy the snow!
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inspect the structures for damage that may have occurred over the winter; consult a specialist about repairing any major damage.▪ Remove leaves from inside the cemetery
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inspect trees for damage that may have occurred over the winter and note any needs for pruning and removals▪ Begin mowing turf on an as-needed basis to a height no less than 2-1/2 inches▪ Around Memorial Day, fertilize turf areas (14-14-14)▪ Plant new trees and groundcovers, as required
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conduct pruning and removals of trees▪ Continue mowing turf on an as-needed basis to a height no less than 2-1/2 inches▪ Continue to plant new trees and groundcovers, and grassy areas, as required
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continue mowing turf on an as-needed basis to a height no less than 2-1/2 inches; suspend mowing during hot, dry periods
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continue mowing turf on an as-needed basis to a height no less than 2-1/2 inches; suspend mowing during hot, dry periods▪ Around Labor Day, fertilize turf areas (14-14-14)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continue mowing turf on an as-needed basis to a height no less than 2-1/2 inches▪ Resume planting of new trees and groundcovers, and lawns, as required▪ Inspect structures for damage that may have occurred over the summer; consult a specialist about repairing any major damage
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Around Halloween, fertilize lawn areas (28-3-9)
November - December	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enjoy your break!

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Beginnings – Before 1851

Native Americans, specifically the Cayuga and Onondaga tribes of Iroquois, were the earliest known inhabitants of Owego. They established trails along the riverfront and from the Susquehanna north to Cayuga Lake. (McEnteer, 53)

During the American Revolution, some natives allied with the British. In 1779, the Continental Army arrived in Owego, burning Iroquois homes (20 log structures) and destroying crops. They also noted the beauty and fertility of the area. (Quest, 7). Following the American Revolution, settlers came from New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

1781. Amos Draper first settled the area that would become the Village of Owego.
1791. Tioga County was formed. Lumbering was the major industry. (Sedore, inside cover)
1800. Originally known as the Town of Tioga, the Village of Owego was formed on the east side of the Susquehanna River. (Sedore, 7)
1813. The Towns of Tioga and Owego, switched names with the Village of Owego. The former town of Owego, located on the west side of the Susquehanna, became the Town of Tioga. The Village of Owego was not located in the town of the same name. (Sedore, 7)
1823. The first courthouse was built in the village.
1827. The Village of Owego was incorporated, with a population of 750. Its location along the Susquehanna made it a desirable port for shipping from Ithaca to ports in Pennsylvania and Maryland. (Sedore, 7)

The first burial grounds were located at the southwest corner of Main and Lake Streets and near the south east corner of Main and Academy streets. They were disinterred and moved to a “burying ground.” This first burying ground in Owego stood at the southeast corner of Main and Court streets, on land that now (as of Kingman’s writing) holds the sheriff’s residence and jail, old academy, and county clerk’s office. (Kingman, 664)

When the Presbyterian church property was purchased, a burying ground was laid out at its east end in Temple Street. Burials from the Court Street ground were disinterred and moved to this new site. The Court Street site was then abandoned. (Kingman, 664)

- The village had a total of five small burial grounds before 1852. (TCHS Brochure)
1828. The first bridge was constructed over the Susquehanna to Owego. Subsequent bridges were built in 1868, 1893, 1933, and today's 200?. (McEnteer, 16-17)
1834. The Ithaca and Owego Railroad began operation, transporting both passengers and freight. Trains were hauled by horses. (McEnteer, 24)
1849. The New York and Erie Railroad was extended to Owego along the north side of the Susquehanna. (Sedore, 7) In the late 1840s, the first Erie Railroad depot at Owego was built (burned in 1879). Also in this year, a fire (known as the "Great Fire") burned 104 buildings in central Owego.

Establishment – 1851-1863

1851. Owego's clerk of the village board of trustees, William F. Warner, began advocating for a village cemetery. On March 8 of this year, citizens resolved to direct the village trustees to purchase suitable land for a village burying ground, and authorized a tax of \$1,500 to be levied within three years to pay for the land, erect a fence around it, and put it in proper condition. (Kingman, 665)

Initially, people did not agree on location. Some preferred level ground, but others thought a hilltop would be best, on land that would not be desirable for other purposes, should the village expand in size. The latter site was chosen, 11 1/5 acres owned by George Talcott. Land for a right of way was also purchased. The total cost was \$952. The right of way held the "mountain road," and became the entry road to the cemetery. The total length from North Avenue to the cemetery was 130 rods, or 2,016 feet (approximately 4/10 mile). The village laid out a 16-foot width roadway. (Kingman, 665-666)

On May 2, a meeting of the citizens of the village took place, to consider "subject of selecting suitable grade for the cemetery." (1)

On May 5, citizens resolved that the [village] trustees purchase land for a cemetery of G. W. Hollenback, laying at back of the Village at the base of a hill containing about seven acres. (The lot was considered but later rejected). The citizens also resolved that the trustees cause surveys to be made of the Talcott lot, and estimate the expense of making roads thereto with expense of fencing and putting it in suitable order for the purpose of a cemetery, not to exceed \$1,500. Stephen Dexter's survey was received and filed. (1)

On June 2, citizens ordered the trustees to contract for the purchase of 11-1/5 acres of land of G. L. Talcott, situated on the hill to the north of

the Village, as surveyed by Stephen Dexter, and a price of \$85 per acre. Citizens ordered the road to the cemetery be 11.5' in width. (2)

On September 18th, citizens ordered that a fence around said cemetery be constructed as far as is necessary not to be less than 4' in height, 4 boards high, bottom board not to be less than 6" in width and one inch thick with a cap 6" wide. Post to be sufficient size to make a good substantial fence...and to be completed by the first day in November next. Price: \$1.00 per rod, and trees and brush to be cut and removed from the main road through said grounds. (3)

1852.

During this winter, Stephen Dexter laid out the cemetery into squares of four lots, with a walk on two sides of each lot. In his "Plan of Evergreen Cemetery" (dated March 8, 1852) Dexter named all of the avenues and created a circular un-plotted space at the summit. The avenues measured 20 feet in width, and the paths 6 feet. Each burial plot measured 20 feet square. (Dexter plan)

It was named Evergreen Cemetery in March, 1852. (Kingman, 666) The first burial was that of Frances Chase, wife of Dan Swift and daughter of Gideon Chase (corrected from Kingman). Mr. Chase allegedly went to the cemetery in the snow and marked the burial spot where the grave was to be dug with his cane. Gideon Chase was editor of the *Gazette* and also editor from 1845-1846 of the *Tioga County Freeman*, an anti-slavery publication. His daughter, Frances, helped him edit the paper. (Watrous 1887, 64)

In March, Thomas P. Hall was appointed the first keeper or sexton. (Kingman, 666)

Also in this year, a young girl and member of the Mohawk tribe, SaSaNa Loft, was killed in a railroad accident in Deposit, NY. A local judge and Native American History enthusiast, Charles Avery, arranged for her body to be transported to Owego and her funeral to be held at St. Paul's church. She was originally interred in the Presbyterian churchyard, in the Avery family vault, but the residents of Owego asked her family if she could be interred at Evergreen. The monument erected in 1855 to mark her grave was initiated by citizens of Owego, and funds to pay for the monument came from several towns in Upstate NYS. (Kingman, 667-669)

On January 18th, citizens resolved that "John McDonald be permitted to take stone from the upper side of the road to the cemetery for the purpose of straightening and widening the road, providing he leaves the grade the same as at present and the road smooth. He is to throw small stones and earth over the embankment and leave the road in good order." (3-4)

On March 8, citizens resolved that the map made by Stephen Dexter of the cemetery grounds divided into sections, lots and roads, and the lots numbered...be adopted as the map of said cemetery. On April 8, the map was adopted and filed with the County Clerk. (4)

On March 22, the citizens adopted "Evergreen Cemetery" as the style or name, and on May 1, set the price of lots at \$10.00. (4-5)

On April 12, John Penney made a proposition to procure stone and set the same at the corners of the lots in cemetery at 4 cents [per] stone – the stone to be not less than 3 by 4 and not less than 15" in length and to be set at least 12 inches in the ground and not more than 4 inches to be left out of the ground. (5)

1853. Prince VanNess replaced Thomas Hall as sexton and continued in this role until 1867. (Kingman, 666)

On October 4, the survey of the road to the cemetery made by S. Dexter dated Sept. 1853 was adopted providing Abraham Brown shall give a written release of the right of way through his premises and of sufficient width. (6)

1855. On April 9, 1955, C. B. Avery requested a lot for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of SaSaNa Loft.

The SaSaNa Loft monument was erected for a cost of just over \$200.00. "It is a pure white marble obelisk, standing seventeen feet above the surface of the ground, with bases of veined marble, on a subbase of blue granite fourteen inches thick and three feet square, resting on a pier of solid masonry, carried up five feet from a rock foundation and laid in cement. It overlooks the Susquehanna Valley, standing in full view of the village on the highest point in Evergreen Cemetery." (Kingman, 670) This monument may be the oldest marker in New York State commemorating a Native American burial.

On April 16, a motion was made to have the fence around the cemetery rebuilt (the first fence having been destroyed by fire).

1858. Citizens petitioned the trustees to build a public vault. Funds for this project, totaling \$150.00, were to be raised through taxation, and vault construction was proposed for 1859. (9) Also in this year, the first reference to a "Cemetery Committee" appeared in public records.

1859. On September 26, it was resolved that Mr. Slater be instructed to prepare specifications for the building of a reception vault. On October 10, sealed proposal for building the vault were received from two bidders, and on October 17, A. H. Keeler was employed to build the reception vault according to specifications for the sum of \$280.00. In

December, Keeler was asked to furnish the front wall of the vault with a capstone, to measure 8 ½ feet long, 2 ½ feet wide, and not less than 5 inches thick, to be procured at Ithaca. (10)

1860. 500 men from the town and village enlisted in the army and navy for the Civil War. (Sedore, 8)

In January, J. M. Parker requested that he draw wood through the cemetery from the hill above, while the ground was frozen and covered with snow. (10)

1862. On March 10, the Cemetery Committee resolved that non-residents could be allowed to have lots at the cemetery, for \$15/lot. (13)

On June 23, the Cemetery Committee (CC) resolved that “Mr. Stephen Dexter be employed to make a new map of Evergreen Cemetery. On August 25, the CC ordered David Slater to “build a sidewalk from the intersection of North Avenue and the Mountain Road, on the south side of said road to the cemetery Gate.” (14)

Expansion – 1864-1910

1864. On August 8, the village resolved to purchase an additional 11 acres from Mr. Talcott for \$1,500. (Kingman, 666) On March 17, the CC directed Stephen Dexter to survey the proposed addition to the cemetery. (17) Dexter updated his 1852 plan, incorporating the stream traversing the property into the overall design and allowing the water to cascade into a pool at the geographic center. To the west of the pool, Dexter reserved space for a “park.”

1865. The Civil War section of the cemetery was opened by the GAR. (2017 video)

1869. In January, the CC reported that the balance of trees remaining on the cemetery grounds had been purchased from George Talcott for the sum of \$200. (26)

1872. The CC resolved that, “the Board will furnish sufficient ground in Evergreen Cemetery if desired by the Presbyterian Church Society for the burial of the few bodies in the way of building sheds for the accommodation of teams of those attending that church.” (29)

1874. Steamboat production took place in the village along the banks of the river (until 1888). (Sedore, 8)

1875. The CC ordered that “the lot in Evergreen Cemetery No. 50, Section 12, formerly occupied by the Grand Army of the Republic be and now is set apart for the use of the Fire Department of the Village of Owego.” (32)

1882. The CC adopted an ordinance “to regulate the burial of the dead and for the protection of Evergreen Cemetery.” (43)
1884. On March 31, the CC revised the ordinance and adopted the revisions. (45)
1887. “A local resident urged the village trustees, through the columns of the Owego Times, August 11, to purchase additional land for burial purposed, rather than sell lots of vacant land in Evergreen Cemetery. He declared the Cemetery, with an excellent view, appeared in its present state, to be composed of beautiful little parks.” (Watrous 1887, 37)
1888. On December 4th, the CC resolved that “we purchase of Mrs. Mary H. Thurston the piece of land lying alongside of Evergreen Cemetery, 240 ft. wide containing about 10.5 acres of land, as lately surveyed by David Goodrich, at \$135 per acre, one-half of the purchase money to be paid in 1889, and the balance in 1890. The said Mary H. Thurston reserves all the timber and wood on the land but two acres on west side of said land, and is to clear off the same within two years.” (52)
1891. The first memorial exercises held at the completed war memorial monument were erected on Courthouse Square on Memorial Day, May 30, 1891, and described in the *Gazette*, June 4. The commemoration began at Evergreen Cemetery where flowers were placed in the soldiers’ plot, decorating their graves. (Watrous, 1887, 42)
- The CC mentioned that the cemetery keeper’s office was to be established at the tool house on the cemetery. Also, an order was made to the CC to “prepare and submit plans and estimate for a suitable building to be erected on the cemetery and to be used as an office, waiting room, etc.” (55) The plans and estimate were subsequently submitted.
- Also in this year, the Hon. William Smyth addressed the Board recommending “the desirability of opening a new road through the cemetery to the newly-purchased addition thereto.” The CC set up a subcommittee to explore. (56) A request was made by the GAR post of the village to make an addition to the present “Soldiers’ Lot,” to be laid out in the recently purchased extension. (56) This addition was granted (measuring 80 feet by 30 feet) later in 1891. (57)
1892. The CC reported that in this year, the usual maintenance, including clearing paths, avenues and gutters, caring for flower beds and grass plots, and mowing the entire cemetery five times, was carried out. In addition, several permanent improvements were made:

- A new and substantial archway was built at the entrance to the cemetery, taking the place of the old gate which had long before fallen into decay and disuse. This piece of architecture, which is appropriately painted and ornamented, adds greatly to the beauty of the spot, and may compare favorably with any erected for the same uses in this section.
- The old tool-house was removed to the upper part of the cemetery and near its former site a new and commodious building has been erected; it is of cottage design, is handsomely painted, and has a basement or cellar, which may be used for the storage of workmen's implements, the main floor concrete and one large room, ease of access, well lighted and ventilated, finished in hard wood and furnished with a desk, table, and chairs. This place adds in no small degree to the comfort of persons – especially ladies – visiting the cemetery; it affords them in storm a safe refuge and in fair weather a pleasant resting-place; it supplies a want long complained of by visitors and is therefore, an useful as well as ornamental structure.
- In a secluded spot, near to this building, two closets which contribute largely to the convenience of visitors, have been constructed.
- The receiving vault has undergone needed repairs.
- The stone wall on the road leading to the cemetery has been repaired.
- Along the road, 270 feet of fence have been built, thus securing greater safety to teams passing up or down the hill, and giving a neater appearance to the approach.
- Gutters on the avenues have been paved, thus insuring better drainage
- Steps have been repaired, and new steps build in various parts of the cemetery where such were needed
- Stumps have been pulled on about three acres of the new part, so-called, of the cemetery, and brush has been cut and burned on about four acres.
- Section 4 has been extended easterly, and several fine lots have been sold.

In closing out the report, the chairman of the CC said, “only care will be required to keep [Evergreen Cemetery] one of the most beautiful places of its kind in the Southern Tier, if not in the State of New York, during the ensuing year.” (58-59)

1894. The Village passed an ordinance that contained “Provisions Relating to Cemeteries,” Article II of the Village of Owego Charter. (66-67)
1897. The village purchased a trapezoidal-shaped parcel measuring 50 feet by 300 – 400 feet (300 feet on the cemetery line and 400 feet deep), with the purpose of providing access to the cemetery for people living in that part of the village. (Kingman, 666)
- The CC was authorized to purchase a certain piece of land of the George Talcott estate for cemetery purposes, for the sum of \$200. (79)
1902. The village purchased approximately 16 acres through a partition sale of the property of George Brown, for \$910.00. (Kingman, 667) This brought the total acreage to 51.2.
1903. In July, the Elmira Star-Gazette reported on the completion of the Thomas Platt monument:
- “The monument...has been finished after several weeks’ hard work. The monument and base weighs fifty tons, and is of pink Westerly granite. At each side of the monument there is a flight of steps leading to the lot. The total height from base to top is seven feet four inches; length, ten feet six inches; and width six feet...The total cost of the monument, which was erected by Owego contractor Haywood and Baldwin, was \$5,000. It is said to be the handsomest monument in the Southern Tier. (Elmira Star-Gazette, July 10, 1903)
1907. The Keeper’s records indicate that in February, the Cemetery Committee moved to employ a surveyor and have a proper map made, with duplicates, of all cemetery property.
- “The Gazette, October 10, reported in detail on the mausoleum being constructed in Evergreen Cemetery for Fred M. Curtis of Indiana, a former Owego resident, for \$11,000. His wife, the former Ella Chitry, was also from Owego. John T. Corchran, an Owego contractor, constructed a concrete foundation, between six and eight feet deep. The mausoleum, of Barre granite, on a plot with a commanding view of the river valley, would be the resting place for a son who had died of typhoid earlier in the year. Three crypts were provided. The roof stone of the structure, 14 feet long, 11 feet wide and 12 inches thick, weighed 18 tons. The granite was too heavy for horse teams so a truck, used for transporting bridges, would be rented from Owego Bridge to haul it, with the use of tackle, up the hill.” (Watrous 1907, 181)

1908. The CC resolved that “the Village Clerk forthwith prepare a statement from the proper books of the village showing the names of persons who have heretofore paid to the Village trust fund to be invested by said village, the income of which is to be used for the care and maintenance of lots in Evergreen Cemetery, the amount of such trust fund credited to the respective parties; the several dates that said trust funds have been received by the village, and that he file said statement with the Clerk of the County of Tioga.” The CC further resolved “that during the month of January in each and every year hereafter a similar statement showing the date, name of donor, and the amount received from each donor during the preceding year shall be prepared by the Clerk of the Village and filed with the Clerk of the County of Tioga.” (109)
1909. A series of cast iron hitching posts, fabricated by the J. W. Fisk Iron Works (NYC) were installed in the cemetery. (Brochure)
- The treasurer of the CC was authorized to “Withdraw balance in permanent cemetery fund in Binghamton Trust Co., and deposit same and open account with Tioga National Bank for said permanent Cemetery fund. (113)
- Also in this year, the CC was given the power to act on “the matter of building a fence around the Indian Girl’s Monument.” (Keeper’s Records, 114)
- 1909-1910. Frank M. Baker, a state railroad commissioner, was elected president of the Village Board of Trustees, and during his tenure, effected passage of local legislation forming a cemetery commission to operate Evergreen Cemetery. (Watrous, 130) The commission was officially formed in July of 1911.
1910. The cemetery entrance gate, located on East Avenue, was constructed. It consists of two stone columns topped by large urns, flanking a single-leaf wrought iron gate. (Brochure, CC 118)
- The CC’s Street Committee was instructed by the CC to enter into a contract with Smith & Son to build a four foot concrete walk from the receiving vault to the entrance to Cemetery, also steps to receiving vault. (118)
- Also in this year, the CC resolved that the Village Attorney be directed to prepare an amendment to the Village Charter that provides for a three-member, non-partisan commission to assume the entire control and management of the affairs of Evergreen Cemetery, and that this amendment be introduced in the Legislature. (Note: this was done in response to many years of confusion over poor-record keeping pertaining to the ownership of deeds) (121-122) The number of

commissioners was increased to four in a revision to the amendment. (124)

Enhancement – 1911-1946

1911.

The Cemetery Commissioners (ECC) of the Village of Owego, NY went into effect July 1.

In October of 1911, the sexton reported that the roof on the chapel was in bad leaky condition and needed a new roof put on. The ECC accepted a motion to replace the roof.

In January 1912, an annual report of the ECC for 1911 appeared in the local newspaper:

- Owners were located to take care of lots, including putting monuments on proper foundations
- Steps made of wood were replaced with concrete
- Hedges were allowed if maintained at a low height, and the must be kept trimmed
- Trash cans were placed throughout the cemetery
- Iron fences had become dilapidated and owner were asked to remove them
- Many trees had died and plans were underway for removing and replacing them
- Plans were made to plant vines above the rocks near the cemetery entrance
- Plans were made to plant a hedge between the vault and the entrance

1912.

The ECC discussed purchasing a tent for use at funerals during stormy weather.

In April, the cemetery sexton (superintendent) reported that single grave lots were nearly full, and asked the commissioners to decide what lots should be used for burials (87, 88, 93, 94 in Section 20). A vote was also made in April to have the cemetery boundary surveyed, and 150 California privet were ordered for planting in the cemetery.

In May, the superintendent requested 100 more perpetual care “posts.”

In July, the ECC instructed the superintendent to build the “new lots” on the northwest corner, across from the ravine.

In January of 1913, an annual report of 1912 appeared in the local newspaper, noting that improvements included 150 feet of hedge, 8 sets of concrete steps, 3 new drains, 8 trees set out, 10 old lots graded, and all roads “ditched and rounded.”

1913. In August, the ECC reported that water pipe had been laid from the spring to near the chapel on the south side of the road. A platform was built and the fountain was placed in position and the water was turned on. The ECC also noted that "100 feet of tile pipe 16 or 20 inches in diameter ought to be laid in the ravine on the west side of the cemetery extending from the north culvert to near the spring and then fill in the ravine with waste material."
- An annual report of the ECC for 1913 appeared in the local paper in January 1914, noting that improvements included:
- 5,000 feet of pine lumber in stock
 - 600' of drain pipe was laid on the north side
 - 900' of water pipe was laid
 - 7 hydrants were installed
 - The fountain was set at the chapel
 - 56 lots were opened in Section 22, 9 were finished and seeded
 - 12 purple maples were planted
 - 10 rhododendrons were planted
 - 2 sets of concrete steps were installed
 - 1 fire extinguisher was purchased for the chapel
1914. In January 1915, an annual report of the ECC for 1914 appeared in the local paper, noting the following improvements:
- 200' of retaining wall re-laid along the entrance road
 - 12 new lots made
 - 6 sets of concrete steps installed
 - 150 evergreen trees planted
 - 20 perpetual care lots graded and seeded
 - The "Free Ground" graded and terra cotta markers placed on the graves
 - A new 16' x 18' shed built at the west end of the chapel
 - The chapel yard graded and seeded
 - A 4' wide concrete walk laid to the chapel entrance
1915. The ECC instructed the superintendent to purchase 100 seedling trees and some vines, and also resolved not to allow automobiles in the cemetery when the roads are in bad condition by placing a temporary sign at the entrance.
1917. "A large American flag was raised on a 50-foot pole at Evergreen Cemetery. Visible to people approaching Owego by train or car, it would be raised 'every fair day during the existence of the war with Germany.'" (Watrous 1917, 202)
1919. The ECC held a special meeting for the purpose of letting a contract for building the chapel and vault, just west of the old receiving vault on land

purchased from Jane and Isabel Bailey. Specifics for the building included:

- Chapel to be faced with brick veneer at the choosing of the Committee
- 16' x 24' in size with a concrete [block] receiving vault joined to the chapel's north side
- Vault to measure 15' x 10' inside
- Concrete platform 10' to extend from the chapel doors to the street
- Leaded windows not to exceed \$3200.00
- Pine lumber saved and piled in cemetery to be used in construction of the building
- Building to be completed 11/1/1919
- Randall Brothers to be the contractor for the building

1920. The Gothic style memorial chapel was built by the Randall Brothers, of Owego. (Brochure)

1921. On August 2, the ECC adopted "Ordinance for Protection of Evergreen Cemetery." Also in this year, the iron fencing along the entry drive was painted; 10 new lots were finished; 8 sets of concrete steps were put in; 25 trees planted.

1922. The ECC's annual report stated that 10 perpetual care lots had been graded and seeded; 10 shade trees had been planted; 3 new lots furnished.

1944. W. H. Ripley prepared a map of Evergreen Cemetery, that reflected a build-out of the full 51.2 acres. An "original map," drawn in 1898, was used by Ripley as a reference. In contrast to Dexter's original Rural Cemetery style plan, the newer portions of the cemetery were laid out on a simple rectangular grid.

1946. The Cemetery Commission was abolished through an act of the state's legislature. (Josh Martin, WBNG Connect, March 9, 2017)

Decline – 1947-1999

1954. The Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin reported that the cemetery had been a financial "problem" for the Village of Owego for years, and because of this, the trustees were increasing the price of six-grave lots for the new sites located in the upper portion of the cemetery. (April 20, 1954)

1972. A bronze plaque was placed at the SaSaNa gravesite, and dedicated on October 12. (Press Sun-Bulletin, October 13, 1972)

1973. In January, no less than 36 gravestones were vandalized at Evergreen, at a cost of at least \$200. (Press and Sun-Bulletin, January 28, 1973)
1980. The caretaker's cottage burned, and was replaced in 1986 with a new structure built on the original foundation. (Brochure)
1987. "The official lighting ceremony of the white marble SaSaNa Loft Monument overlooking Owego and the picturesque Susquehanna River, was announced for the evening on July 26." (Watrous 1987, 496) Funding for the project (amounting to \$201.58) was raised by the American Legion Auxiliary. The lighting ceremony, which took place in June, could be viewed from the Village below. (Press and Sun-Bulletin, June 26, 1987)

Revival – 2000-Present

2000. In January, Mayor Barbara Fink formed the Evergreen Cemetery Preservation Commission (mayoral advisory committee) and tasked it with planning for the cemetery's long term preservation. (Press and Sun-Bulletin, August 16, 2000) The village purchased 10.16 acres abutting the east side of the cemetery from Stephen Baker. (Book 642, Page 49)
2001. A gazebo was installed near the summit of the hill. (Brochure)
2002. Evergreen Cemetery was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
2006. A juvenile vandalized the gazebo, causing several hundred dollars-worth of property damage. (Press and Sun-Bulletin, May 23, 2006)
2007. 80 Civil War headstones, including those of members of the 26th Regiment of New York State Colored Volunteers, were restored. (Press Sun-Bulletin, May 26, 2007)
- Also in this year, the Village of Owego received a \$326,560 matching grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund for restoration and preservation of the cemetery landscape. As part of the grant agreement, a preservation restriction was placed on the cemetery (held by the State of New York). A flood in 2011 diverted attention from the cemetery to the Village itself, and the grant expired. In 2015 the grant was renewed (with expiration of October 2017), and the Village issued a Request for Proposals to repair and replace four culverts and stone parapet walls within the cemetery.
2017. The Owego Village Board formed a five-person Evergreen Cemetery Committee (to replace the mayoral committee which became a standing committee after Mayor Fink left office). The ECC reports to the Village board.

2018-2019.

The Evergreen Cemetery Committee applied for and received a Preserve New York grant to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report for the cemetery. In addition to documenting the historical development of the cemetery landscape, this report will outline recommendations for preserving the property over the long term. Work on the project began in September 2019 and will conclude in June of 2020.

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Maps (arranged chronologically)

1852. *Plan of Evergreen Cemetery*, surveyed and drawn by Stephen Dexter.

1853. *Village of Owego*.

1855. *Map of Tioga County, New York: from actual surveys*, E. D. Marsh, Samuel Geil, Robert Pearsall Smith.

1864. Update to *Plan of Evergreen Cemetery*, surveyed and drawn by Stephen Dexter.

1869. *Atlas of Tioga County, New York*, F. W. Beers & Co.

1889. *Owego*.

1944. *Plan of Evergreen Cemetery*, W. H. Ripley, July 19, 1944.

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2009. Survey for Village of Owego of Evergreen Cemetery, Village of Owego, Tioga County, New York, Williams & Edsall Land Surveyors, PC.

ND. Walking Tour Evergreen Cemetery.

ND. Sedore-Swinarski Plan for New Section.

Deeds (Office of the Tioga County Clerk)

1853 - Book 52, Page 534

1864 – Book 72, Page 17

1888 – Book 121, Page 155

1897 – Book 134, Page 383

1897 – Book 126, Page 478

1902 – Book 150, Page 98

1909 – Book 148, Page 579

1926 – Book 191, Page 98

1938 – Book 209, Page 362

1938 – Book 209, Page 363

2000 – Book 642, Page 49

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“Owego Boosts Village Cemetery Rates.” Press and Sun-Bulletin, 4/20/1954.

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“Couple Will Place U. S. Flags on Restored Owego Gravestones.” Press and Sun-Bulletin, 5/26/2007

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Photographs (arranged chronologically)

1895. Owego, NY from Cemetery Hill

1901. Entrance to Cemetery

1901. View of Cemetery from entry drive

ca. 1901. Indian girl monument

ca. 1903. Sen. T. C. Platt monument

1910. T. C. Platt funeral

ND. Cheney mausoleum

Videos (YouTube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FinRPeTFnM&t=62s>, 2017 flyover

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnrz43eyG74>, un-narrated walk through Section 2 by Michael Roberts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLomerLbYZ0>, WSKG and “Path Through History”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wNlXKSqb8s&t=15s>, WSKG Haunted History on Evergreen Ghost of SaSaNa Loft

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