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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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WOODLAWN CEMETERY, CLINTON, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved Woodlawn Cemetery in Clinton for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 20, 2013, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of Woodlawn Cemetery in the National Register will help to preserve this significant resource of Clinton’s early history that still remains vital to the town today.”

Woodlawn Cemetery, 2 Woodlawn Street, contains approximately 2,500 burial lots, many of which have multiple gravestones. Although the cemetery is situated among residential and industrial development, its location was originally on the outskirts of town. Civil engineer and architect Joshua Thissell designed the earliest section of the cemetery in 1853 according to the principles of the rural cemetery movement, which began in 1831 with the creation of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge and Watertown. Character-defining features of the rural cemetery movement displayed at Woodlawn Cemetery include curvilinear paths, gentle hillsides, a naturalistic landscape, and panoramic views and vistas. The cemetery was among the first projects funded by the newly established town of Clinton, which became a separate municipality in 1850. In 1894, an ornate stone gateway with iron gates was installed at the cemetery’s main entrance. Around the same time, a Shingle Style building housing a chapel and cemetery office was constructed near the main gate. The burial place was expanded ca. 1900 and again in the 1920s. Woodlawn Cemetery holds a variety of war, fraternal, and ethnic memorials, including a Civil War memorial that consists of a small semicircle of veterans’ graves placed around a cannon with cannonballs at its base. Also included in the cemetery are a paupers’ lot, for those who could not pay burial expenses, and the St. Andrew’s Boys’ lot, which holds the unmarked graves of orphans from the St. Andrew’s Mutual Benefit Society orphanage. Still in active use as a burial place, Woodlawn Cemetery is maintained with a careful eye toward its history, and remains a commemorative site for citizens who have made contributions to and sacrifices for the town and nation.

Woodlawn Cemetery is one of 6 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

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

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

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

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