

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Benicia City Cemetery DRAFT

Other names/site number: Benicia Pioneer Cemetery; Bridgeview Heights Cemetery; Cemetery Hill

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Bounded by Riverhill Drive (to the east), Riverview Terrace (to the north), Shirley Drive (to the west), and Incline Place (to the south).

City or town: Benicia City State: CA County: Solano (095)

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>10</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/ Cemetery

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/ Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

No Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
 Principal exterior materials of the property:

CONCRETE
STONE - sandstone, marble, granite
METAL – wrought iron

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Established in 1847 as part of the city's original plan, the Benicia City Cemetery is a 20.12-acre burial ground in Benicia, Solano County, California. The active cemetery is home to over 4,000 interments, representing people of various faiths, diverse backgrounds, multiple countries of origin, and over 1,200 unique family surnames. Prior to the establishment of other local cemeteries associated with specific groups, the secular Benicia City Cemetery was the only burial place, and it provided for people of all backgrounds. The cemetery was sited upon a hill outside the primary business corridor, creating sweeping views of the community below and of the Carquinez Strait. Vegetation at the property has slowly increased over the decades from a bare landscape to one punctuated with trees and shrubbery. There are no dramatic landscape features; however, the mature trees lining the perimeter of the property, as well as other vegetation, are a character-defining feature. Other character-defining features include the plot grid pattern, the collection of grave markers, monuments, and vaults, the circulation pattern (roadway), and the larger plots that are delineated with fencing or curbs. The Benicia City Cemetery has 10 contributing features, including selected notable grave markers and monuments, and 1 noncontributing feature. The cemetery retains sufficient historic integrity to convey its historic significance.

Narrative Description

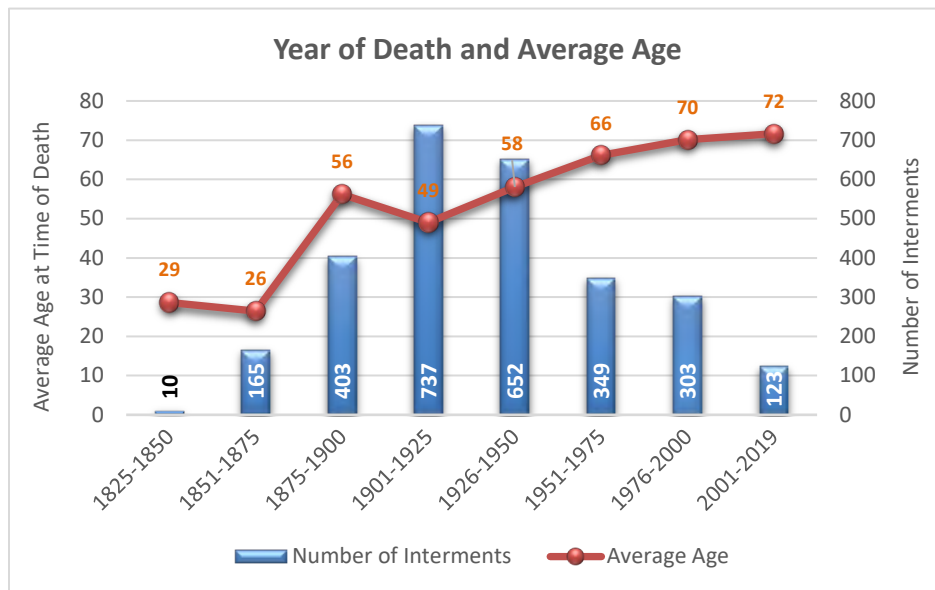
Established in 1847, the Benicia City Cemetery is a 20.12-acre burial ground in Benicia, Solano County, California. It contains over 4,000 interments (the exact number is not known) and continues to operate as an active cemetery. The cemetery is maintained by the Benicia City Parks and Community Services Department. The cemetery is nearly rectangular in plan, with slight property-line accommodations for adjacent streets and developments. It is bounded on all sides with residential subdivisions that date primarily to the 1970s and 1980s. Riverview Terrace bounds the cemetery to the north, and Riverhill Drive to the east. The south edge of the cemetery abuts the rear property line of houses fronting Incline Place, while the west side of the cemetery adjoins the rear property line of residential properties fronting Shirley Drive. The cemetery district is located approximately 1-mile northeast of Benicia Point, the convergence of First Street, city wharf, and the former terminus of the Southern Pacific Railroad branch line. The city's founders sited the cemetery on blocks 113 and 114 of the original city plan, well outside of the downtown commercial and wharf areas.

Population: The following statistical information provides a brief snapshot of the approximately 3,250 known burials, which helps to provide a better understanding of the cemetery's history and development. For example, the cemetery was most active at the beginning of the twentieth century, between 1900 and

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1925. Burials spiked in 1918 (47 known interments), likely due to World War I casualties and the influenza epidemic of that year. In general, the average age at the time of death increased over the decades.



The most common surname in the Benicia City Cemetery is Silva (30 interments), which is of Portuguese/Galician/Jewish origin. Other common surnames are as follows:

Surname	Count	Common Locations in the 1840s	Surname Origin
Silva	30	LA, NY, OH	Portuguese, Galician, and Jewish (Sephardic)
Smith	24	NY, PA, others	English
Clark	23	NY, others	English
Hansen	23	NY	Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, and North German
Wilson	23	NY, OH, PA	English, Scottish, and northern Irish
Brown	22	NY, OH, PA	English, Scottish, and Irish
Johnson	21	NY, OH, others	English and Scottish
Williams	19	NY, OH, PA	English (also very common in Wales)
Martin	16	NY, OH, PA, VA	English, Scottish, Irish, French, Dutch, German, Czech, Slovak, Spanish (Martín), Italian (Venice), etc.
Borges	15	NY, IL	Catalan, Portuguese, German, Danish
Walsh	15	NY, others	Irish
White	15	NY, OH, PA	English, Scottish, and Irish
Anderson	14	NY, OH, PA, IN, KY, VA, TN	Scottish and northern English
Costa	14	LA, NY	Greek origin
Dalton	14	NY, OH, KY, VA, TN, NC	English

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Surname	Count	Common Locations in the 1840s	Surname Origin
Barry	13	NY, MD	Irish
Duvall	13	MD, KY	English
Jensen	12	N/A	Danish, Norwegian, and North German
Johnston	12	OH, PA	English and Scottish
Peters	12	NY, PA, OH, VA	English, Scottish, Dutch, and North German
Sanborn	12	NH	English
Wade	12	NY, OH, VA, TN, GA	English
Allen	11	NY, others	English and Scottish
Dondrado	11	N/A	N/A
Freeman	11	NY, MD	English
Gray	11	NY, OH, PA, ME	English
McKay	11	NY, NC	Scottish and northern Irish
Miller	11	NY, OH, PA	English and Scottish
O'Dell	11	N/A	English and Irish
Perry	11	NY, MD	Welsh
Weinmann	11	N/A	German and Jewish (Ashkenazic)
Clarke	10	NY, MD, TN, VA	English
Kelly	10	NY, PA	Irish
Lewis	10	NY, PA	English and Welsh
Malone	10	TN, AL	Irish
McSweeney	10	NY	Irish
Sweeney	10	NY, PA, KY	Irish
Wright	10	NY, OH	English, Scottish, and northern Irish

Topography and Views: Strategically situated upon a hillside nearly 200 feet above sea level (see Figure 1) (referenced on early maps as “Monument Hill”; see Figure 9), the cemetery took advantage of scenic vistas, quietude, and terrain that otherwise may have been unusable to the city’s early pioneers. To the south, southwest, and southeast, the hillside provides expansive views of the Carquinez Strait and its northern and southern headlands (see Figures 26-28). Also visible are downtown Benicia and the rolling hills that surround the towns of Crockett, Port Costa, and Martinez in Contra Costa County, as well as the double peaks of Mount Diablo. The views to the north are through a dense row of eucalyptus trees into a residential neighborhood. Views to the west and east are toward residential developments. Until recently (1970s-1980s), the Benicia City Cemetery was set apart from the surrounding community; hillsides and open space predominated the adjacent landscape for most of the cemetery’s existence (see historic maps and aerial photographs, Figures 9-18).

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Figure 1. Section view showing topography of the hillside along First Street. The waterfront is located at far left, while the southeast corner of the cemetery is depicted at the high point, far right.

Layout of Cemetery Plots: The Benicia City Cemetery was subdivided into rectilinear plats similar to those of the surrounding town. From west to east, the property is divided into sections A through P. Various sizes of lots were available for purchase, ranging from 14 x 20 feet to 4 x 8 feet, and several sizes in between. Family plots provided space for multiple family members, though room for individual interments was also available. The earliest pioneer graves were clustered on the upper hillside, prior to the implementation of the grid system, and arranged in an orderly fashion along the central roadway. Subsequent burials took place following the grid pattern. In American Western history, grid plans were a common method of imposing order over chaos and are suggestive of settlers' attempts to tame the wilderness.

The Benicia City Cemetery is divided into groupings for various burial populations. The oldest area includes the "Pioneer Section" where the earliest pioneers (beginning in 1847) are buried at the very top of the hill; the "Catholic Section" in the northwest corner served as the only cemetery in Benicia for Catholics from 1847 until the late 1890s; the "Central Section" to the west was multiethnic; the "St. Paul's Episcopal Church Section" in the south-central area began use in 1850; and the "Fraternal Organization Section" on the southeast side of the cemetery near the entrance gate was for members of the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Eagles, and Redmen. Many of the founders of Benicia's branches of these organizations are buried in this section. Within this section, there is some subdivision for the Grand Army of the Republic and an "Urn Section." Finally, an area called "Carquinez Gardens" is the newest portion of the cemetery, dating to the 1950s, and located at the north-central portion of the cemetery; here, the headstones lay flat on the surface of the ground (see Figure 3 for a sketch plan of the property).

Circulation System: The cemetery is accessible via Riverhill Drive at the southeast side of the cemetery parcel, where the entrance is located. Three one-lane, asphalt roads loop through the cemetery, forming a bisected oval. There are no structural features to the roadway and no bridges, drainage systems, or similar structures. There is, however, a parking area at the west side of the property.

Vegetation: At the time the Benicia City Cemetery was platted, there was relatively little to define the cemetery boundary or location; there were few trees and little vegetation, and a limited number of burials during the first few years (see Figure 22, historical photograph showing typical hillside vegetation). While these two features have changed over the past 172 years, other aspects of the cemetery remain much the same as what town founder Robert Semple envisioned. Today, the cemetery parcel is sporadically populated with mature trees and vegetation. Lines of trees are visible along the four edges of the property,

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an intentional landscape effort that likely occurred near the turn of the twentieth century. The row of trees planted along the central street, however, did not appear until ca. 1980. Other plantings are less methodical, occurring in random places throughout the property. It is possible these were volunteer trees, but also probable that some trees were planted as part of family memorial sites. There is some indication that trees may have been planted to mark early graves in lieu of (or in conjunction with) headstones. The trees include deciduous and coniferous varieties, including palms. The ground cover is primarily dirt and organic debris with patches of grass and occasional shrubbery.

Gateways and Fences: The Benicia City Cemetery is accessible via Riverhill Drive to the east through a wrought-iron entrance gate. A chain-link fence surrounds the property on all sides, adjoining the gate at the east entrance. There are no other entrances, gates, or fences at this cemetery. Historically, the cemetery was also accessible from the south, from an entrance aligning with W Second Street. This entrance is clearly visible in the 1958 aerial photograph (Figure 14) but disappears by 1968 (Figure 15).

Typical Plot Features: The plots at the Benicia City Cemetery are varied, but a commonality among the plots is the tendency for plot owners to outline or demark the boundary of their plots with fences or masonry curbs. In this way, there are rows of square outlines dotting the landscape. Many of the family plots have concrete or stone curbing, approximately 8–12 inches high and 6–10 inches wide. The stone curbing in the Pioneer Section of the cemetery is comprised of local sandstone and limestone. In some places, where the plots are situated on sloping terrain, the curbing acts as a retaining wall, leveling out the ground inside the plots. In some cases, concrete has been poured inside the curbing, creating a flush concrete surface covering the entirety of the space. In some places, matching obelisks rise from the corners of the outline or occur more frequently along the curbing.

In place of curbing, some individual and family lots are enclosed with metal fencing; the earliest wrought iron fencing was hand-forged in Benicia. A few plots have both curbing and fencing (see Photo 10). In some cases, fence railing was threaded through the obelisks, which act as posts to the rails.

Notable Grave Markers: A fire at the turn of the twentieth century destroyed many of the Benicia City Cemetery's earliest wood burial plot fences and wood grave markers; however, the majority of the graves are identified through existing documentation. Of the existing gravestones, most are of unremarkable size, shape, and design. However, there are a handful that are worth mentioning individually.

- Cocks Family Burial Vault: This vault houses the remains of multiple members of the Cocks family, including Neva (unknown–1852), Nelson (1854–1856), Fanny (1867–1869), Louis (unknown–1874), Barzilla (1824–1903), Walter (1859–1912), Mary (1829–unknown), and Louia (unknown dates). The vault is simplistic in design, with a poured concrete wall built into the hillside and two poured-concrete, angled side-walls creating a pathway to the vault door. The padlocked door is a single steel security door, with holes for ventilation. This vault is notable because it is one of two in place at the Benicia City Cemetery (see Photo 5).
- Hooper Family Burial Vault: This vault houses the remains of multiple members of the Hooper family, including Lydia L. Harvey (unknown–1933) and Minnie Newcum (unknown–1936). (Minnie's

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casket and remains were stolen in 1945; it is unclear whether they were recovered). Reportedly, the vault was constructed in ca. 1865, presumably for Lovina F. Hooper (1864–1865). Other members of the Hooper family include Thomas F. Hooper (1811–1892), Augusta Hooper (1816–1886), and Infant Hooper (1908–1911). It is not clear how many people are buried in the vault. The austere vault is situated on a family cemetery plot with a poured concrete end-wall and a stepped parapet. The metal security entrance door is perforated with ventilation holes (see Photo 11).

- Juan Felipe Peña Grave Marker: This grave marker identifies the burial place of Juan Felipe Peña (1790–1863). The white marble headstone is one of the more interesting designs at the Benicia City Cemetery. Though the headstone is of average size, the material, detail of carving, design, and Gothic style create a composition that stands apart from the adjacent grave markers. The smooth rectangular base and slab provide a frame for a simple ogee arch, which culminates above Peña's name and dates of birth and death. Above the arch, a triangular pediment seemingly provides shelter for a kneeling angel relief carving. The grave has a simplistic footstone inscribed "J.F.P." (see Photo 8).
- Ada Hook Bowie Grave Marker: This grave marker commemorates Ada Bowie, the wife of General George Washington Bowie, a lawyer, military veteran, and author of the Iowa State Constitution. Ada was born on March 31, 1845 in Missouri. She had travelled to California with her family during the Gold Rush. Ada Hook and George W. Bowie were married on March 30, 1865 in Contra Costa County, California. She died on February 27, 1870 in San Francisco at age 24. Bowie's grave marker features a raised granite pedestal base, capped with a cross-gabled capital. At the top of the pedestal, a carved granite statue of a pensive woman carrying a basket looks down with sorrow. The figure's head was destroyed in the 1980s; a new head was designed and replaced in 2005 (see Photo 18).
- Johnson Family Monument: The Johnson family monument is a large grave marker, situated prominently in the center of the Johnson family plot. It commemorates Joseph Green Johnson (1831-1909) and his wife Agnes Dodd Johnson (1845-1903). Their children, also memorialized on the monument, include Baby Boy Johnson (1863-1863, 3 days old), Alfred Joseph Johnson (-1864), Albert J. Johnson (1875-1878), and Walter Poole Johnson (1868-1893). The plot is surrounded with concrete curbing, topped with a short cast iron fence. There are several graves within this plot; however, the towering monument draws the visual attention. It is a four-sided stone, oriented upon a heavy granite base. The marker is labeled "Johnson" at the base and inscribed with family member names on multiple sides of the central stone. The top of the monument is capped with a cross-gabled, Gothic-style "roof," upon which rests a carved stone urn (see Photo 10 and Figure 21).
- Mullaney Family Monument: This large obelisk commemorates members of the Mullaney family, including Irish immigrants Rose Shearan (unknown dates), her husband Patrick (1820–1884), and five of their children: Charles (1860–1860), John (1859–1863), Rose Ellen (1862–1866), Michael (1865–1867), and Martin (1854–1888). Patrick worked as a stone mason in Benicia, perhaps

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bearing influence on the family's monument. One of the tallest monuments in the cemetery, the obelisk culminates in a sturdy, Roman Catholic cross with the "IHS" monogram inscribed, symbolizing Jesus Christ (see Photo 9).

- Mary Atkins Lynch Monument: This monument is a memorial to Mary Atkins Lynch (1819–1882), an influential woman in the area of education. The unusual edifice is a series of four stacked, progressively smaller stone cubes, telescoping skyward. The simple monolithic memorial is the largest in the Benicia City Cemetery (see Photo 13).

Buildings: A modern maintenance shed is located at the northwestern corner of the cemetery property. There are no other maintenance and service features and no other buildings.

Contributing Resources: The historic district has 10 contributing resources:

Landscape Features

1. Tree lines around the perimeter of the property and trees marking grave sites
2. Wrought-iron entrance gate

Circulation Pattern

3. Loop drive and central drive through property

Monuments and Vaults

4. Cocks Family Burial Vault
5. Hooper Family Burial Vault
6. Juan Felipe Peña Headstone
7. Johnson Family Monument
8. Mullaney Family Monument
9. Mary Atkins Lynch Monument
10. Ada Hook Bowie Headstone

Noncontributing Features: The historic district has 1 noncontributing resource:

11. Modern maintenance shed

Historic Integrity

The integrity of the Benicia City Cemetery is moderate to high. Though several of the grave markers and monuments have been vandalized, overall the collection is intact; the cemetery maintains its ability to convey its historic significance. Overall, the cemetery appears much the same as it did in the decades after its mid-nineteenth century pioneer period.

- 1) **Location**: The Benicia City Cemetery retains integrity of location. The cemetery is located in the same place where it was originally planned in Dr. Robert Semple's 1847 plan of lots. Today, the parcel outline is not completely rectangular due to the development of adjacent streets; however, the boundary is largely the same as originally designated.

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- 2) **Design:** While the cemetery was not intended to be a “designed” landscape, it retains integrity of design because the interments followed a distinctive grid pattern for most of the cemetery’s use. The Pioneer Section is the oldest part of the cemetery; there, graves are evenly spaced but do not follow the same grid pattern as the rest of the cemetery. The layout of roads, paths, and nineteenth-century curbing and fencing around the rectangular plots all remain with a few missing or damaged individual elements. Design has been compromised through the planting of a row of trees along the central roadway in the 1980s.
- 3) **Setting:** The Benicia City Cemetery’s integrity of setting is moderate. The cemetery was originally designed within the town limits but outside of the populated areas. For over a century, the cemetery remained semi-isolated and surrounded by open space. Construction of I-780 to the north of the cemetery, followed by residential developments in the 1970s–1990s, filled the open space, dramatically changing the setting of the cemetery. However, the cemetery does continue to exhibit integrity of setting through its hillside topography and through the sweeping views toward downtown and the waterfront.
- 4) **Materials:** The cemetery retains integrity of materials. The materials used in the construction of the cemetery, many of which are original and date to the mid- to late-nineteenth century, reflect California’s transitional period from a territory into a state during which time Benicians relied on local materials and knowledge of building practices in a frontier setting. A fire destroyed much of the early wood fencing and wood grave markers; however, wood continues to be used in the cemetery today, though possibly to a lesser degree than in 1847–1878.
- 5) **Workmanship:** Integrity of workmanship is evident in the construction of many of the monuments, in the attention to detail in the carvings, and through the cohesiveness of the site.
- 6) **Feeling:** The feeling of the cemetery as a historic burial ground remains intact.
- 7) **Association:** The cemetery’s association with the exploration and settlement of a fledgling waterfront community on the western margins of the United States and with the early entrepreneurs who laid the foundation for this early community remains intact.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development
Exploration/Settlement

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Period of Significance

1847-1878

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Dates

1847 (earliest burial)

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Benicia City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its local significance in the areas of exploration and settlement and community planning. Founded in 1847, Benicia is one of the oldest towns in California, and the Benicia City Cemetery is one of the oldest municipal cemeteries in the state. The cemetery contains the graves of numerous persons who made outstanding contributions to the history of the city and region; it is the final resting place of not only Benicia's early settlers, but also several of the earliest settlers of other Solano County communities, many of whom were of outstanding importance to Benicia. The period of significance is 1847 to 1878. The Benicia City Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D, as it derives its primary significance from its age and from its association with historic events.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Exploration and Settlement (1846)

The Mexican-American War, a conflict between the United States and Mexico, took place between 1846 and 1848. The United States declared war as tensions escalated over the ownership of Mexico's Alta California and Santa Fe de Nuevo México territories (though Texas was admitted to American statehood in 1845). Soon, American forces occupied portions of what later became New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada. In Northern California, the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846 played a part early in the war, precipitated by events occurring in 1845–46. Alta California was still part of Mexico, though neglected, and operating autonomously. Californians considered options to remain with Mexico, become independent, or to annex to the United Kingdom, France, or the United States. At this time, Mexican legislation began to prevent American naturalization or immigration into California and to prohibit land grants to noncitizens.

In June and July 1846, American settlers living in the Sacramento Valley revolted against the Mexican government in what became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. At the time, there were only approximately 500 Americans living in California while there were between 8,000 and 12,000 Mexicans. The rebellion proceeded to occupy Sonoma, the primary settlement north of San Francisco, and issued a declaration of independence claiming the "Republic of California" as sovereign under the Bear Flag. This republic fell shortly thereafter as the United States claimed California, replacing the Bear Flag with the Stars and Stripes on July 9, 1846.¹ The Mexican-American War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, as Mexico relinquished its territorial claims in February 1848.

During the Bear Flag Revolt, Lieutenant **Robert Baylor Semple** (a dentist from Kentucky and one of the leaders of the insurrection) escorted Mexican General Mariano C. Vallejo to Sutter's Fort, Sacramento. The pair traveled near the present-day site of Benicia observing the Straits of Carquinez, which connects San Pablo Bay and Suisun Bay. Vallejo owned much of the land north of the straits, including the future site of Benicia, which he received as part of the "Suscol Grant" from the Mexican government in 1840. On the return trip to Sonoma, Semple asked Vallejo about the possibility of founding a new community on his land. Vallejo agreed on the condition that the town would be named after Vallejo's wife, Francisca Benicia Carillo de Vallejo. On December 22, 1846, he granted Semple half interest in a large tract of land in hopes of increasing his own interest and property value. However, by May 1847, Vallejo had relinquished his half interest to Thomas O. Larkin in exchange for \$100 and 100 lots.²

¹ "Bear Flag Revolt," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed September 3, 2019.

² Robert Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait of an Early California Town – An Architectural History* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1980), 3.

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Criterion A: Benicia Community Planning (1847)

Semple and Larkin began planning the town in earnest; each agreed to donate lots for city parks, gardens, public spaces, and educational facilities. Larkin, however, was not fully vested in Benicia and spent much of his resources developing the young town of San Francisco instead. This is one of the reasons why many of the town's early civic spaces (such as parks and public squares) did not come to fruition. Jasper O'Farrell was commissioned to plat Benicia, which he completed with the help of Army engineer Captain William H. Warner in July 1847. The earliest town survey included a rectilinear pattern of blocks, lots, four city squares, and Pacific Park. The grid plan was common in early California town planning, as "it was quick and made land speculation easy," but it did not provide any imaginative design elements, nor did it account for hillside topography or marshlands.³ The Benicia City Cemetery was depicted on one rendition of this early map (Figure 6) though not on another comparable version published in 1851 (Figure 5). Due to its location adjacent to Pacific Park (blocks 114 and 115) and irregularly spaced in reference to the four city squares, it is possible that the City Cemetery was amended to the original city plan in late 1847 or 1848. Regardless, it is clear that the Benicia City Cemetery has been in continuous use since 1847.

Benicia was founded in 1847 before the California Gold Rush of 1849. At the time, the small town was poised to compete with San Francisco (then known as Yerba Buena until the name was officially changed in 1847) for dominance on the waterfront due to its strategic location and proximity to resources, especially because of its deep-water port at the shoreline for ease of unloading and loading the goods and passengers of ships. Yerba Buena, however, had been the site of the Spanish Mission San Francisco de Asis since 1775, giving the older community some advantages, though not in terms of providing for the deceased. At the mission, Native Americans and missionaries were buried on the property, sometimes in mass graves. Elsewhere in Yerba Buena, residents were buried at churches, in informal graveyards, or in private family lots. As there was no public cemetery in town, the haphazard nature of internment became a public health issue. After the Gold Rush began, "the 49ers often buried the dead in a field or sand dune close to where they had died ... corpses lay unburied on the beach" and the stench of decaying flesh was persistent. In 1850, after public outcry, a community cemetery site was chosen, though it only provided a temporary solution due to population increase and rapid town expansion.⁴

Prior to the Gold Rush, missions had been California's primary sites of European settlement. Those closest to Benicia included Mission San Francisco Solano (Sonoma), San Francisco de Asis (outside Yerba Buena), Mission Santa Clara (south of the Bay of San Francisco), and Mission San Jose (to the southeast of the Bay). Other settlements near Benicia were scattered and small, and included distinct ranches and sawmills and Sutter's Fort, but no significant towns or cemeteries (Figures 7-8). In fact, Benicia became one of the first incorporated cities under California State law in March 1850, shortly after statehood was granted (other towns incorporated at or around this time included San Diego, San Jose, Sacramento, and San Francisco).

³ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 5.

⁴ Gary Kamiya, "Deadly serious: Early SF's shortage of decent graveyards," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 2016, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Deadly-serious-Early-SF-s-shortage-of-decent-6871280.php?psid=lk5vq.2016>.

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Sacramento had built an early municipal cemetery in 1849, after the need became evident, though this was not part of the original town plan. By providing a municipal cemetery in the Benicia town plan, Semple and Larkin made an unprecedented statement regarding progressive nature of their community. The city cemetery was made available to people of all backgrounds, faiths, and ethnicities.

The Rural Cemetery Movement

It is possible Semple was influenced by the "Rural Cemetery Movement," which gained popularity between 1803 and 1855. Following trends in burial ground and park design in England and France, the "rural" cemetery design was inspired by "romantic perceptions of nature, art, national identity, and the melancholy theme of death." Cemeteries following this movement were sited at the outskirts of town, on elevated hillsides, and often with scenic views of their surrounding communities (Figures 26-28).⁵ Until this point, as noted above, urban cemeteries were often sectarian in nature and located on small plots or in churchyards. In established cities, they often became overcrowded as cities boomed in response to the Industrial Revolution. Health issues, particularly from neglected cemeteries, were also cause for concern in light of grave robbers, exposed bodies, polluted air and groundwater, foul smells, and diseases. As a result, Americans grew nostalgic for the simpler, peacefulness of the countrysides they had left. In response to both issues, the Rural Cemetery Movement was born.

The concept involved citing cemeteries one to five miles away from towns to avoid the spread of diseases such as yellow fever. While families were not accustomed to burying their dead this distance away from home, they were encouraged to buy lots with the incentives of hired upkeep, park-like settings, and tranquil destinations. The rural cemeteries became the first, large open public spaces in the United States. Urbanites began to view the cemeteries as public gardens, complete with paved roads, lakes, grand entry gates, paths, trees, sculptures, monuments, and manicured landscaping. These cemeteries provided a setting for recreation and tourism, while simultaneously elevating the common burial perception from one of "gloomy pessimism" to that of hopeful resurrection.⁶

It seems unlikely that Semple and Larkin were concerned with developing a "rural" setting in Benicia's first cemetery; however, the ideas of sanitation, recreation, and health were clearly not lost upon the town's early leaders. That the city plan called for a large public park and open public squares reinforces the concepts of the Rural Cemetery Movement. In practice, the Benicia City Cemetery may have evolved from necessity in a western frontier town. Its premeditated location (with a view on a hillside, away from the downtown center), encircling roadway, and intentional plan associate it with this broader movement.

As Benicia developed, the City Cemetery was subdivided into rectilinear plats similar to that of the town itself. While the earliest pioneer graves were irregularly clustered on the upper hillside, subsequent burials took place following the grid pattern. In American Western history, grid plans were a common method of imposing order over chaos and are suggestive of settlers' attempts to tame the wilderness.

⁵ Elisabeth Potter and Beth Boland, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places." National Register Bulletin 41 (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992).

⁶ Meg Greene, *Rest in Peace: A History of American Cemeteries* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008), 29-36.

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The Benicia City Cemetery is significant under Criterion A in the area of community planning for its association with Benicia's earliest town plan, ca. 1847. At a time when California was still part of Mexico and the region's primary human habitations were Native American settlements and Spanish missions, Semple's vision for Benicia was pioneering and innovative, if not overly optimistic. While other established populations were just beginning to realize problems stemming from disorganized burial practices, Semple had the foresight to plan for a healthy, hygienic, and scenic public cemetery. In addition, whether intentional or not, the nonsecular city cemetery also touted several other aspects of the Rural Cemetery Movement. It was platted with the same hierarchy as the public parks and public squares (that were never fully realized); it was situated upon a hillside away from downtown; and it provided beneficial open space. Thus, Benicia is not only one of the oldest towns in the region, but also contains one of California's oldest municipal cemeteries.

Criterion A: Exploration and Settlement (1847–1878)

There is no better community resource to represent the various important facets of Benicia's early settlement and evolving sense of community than the City Cemetery. The evolution of the City Cemetery relays the story of Benicia's formative years, from the town's first death (in 1847), to its growth during the Gold Rush, its attainment of the status as state capital and hopeful years of progress, to its transformation into a quiet industrial hub, "firmly engaged with commerce moving across and through the Carquinez Strait."⁷ The Benicia City Cemetery is also one of the only surviving public-amenity elements of Semple's master plan.

The years associated with this period of significance, 1847–1878, align with those identified in Benicia's broader historic context for this theme.⁸ The following text describes significant contributions to California and Benicia's exploration and settlement, as related to individuals interred at the Benicia City Cemetery (highlighted in **bold font**).

— 1847 —

Dr. Robert Baylor Semple (1806–1872) envisioned Benicia to become a thriving metropolis, one that would surpass the expectations of nearby San Francisco. He strived to build his town into greatness, planning ahead for the commercial district, public spaces, wharves, and even a university. Semple promoted Benicia in his newspaper, the *Californian*, which was published in Monterey. One article boasted that "beautiful girls reside there, and invigorating airs give health and animation to their mental faculties as well as their physical systems." In addition, the paper reported "a noble spring, impregnated with great medicinal properties," suitable for a resort destination. Semple even told the U.S. Navy that Benicia was the "head of navigation ... land locked at either extremity."⁹ Indeed, Benicia did benefit from artesian springs located upstream of Lake Herman, and it was situated advantageously along the Carquinez Strait. However, when

⁷ Page and Turnbull, Inc., "Historic Context Statement: City of Benicia" (prepared for the City of Benicia Department of Public Works and Community Planning, 2010), 45.

⁸ Page and Turnbull, "Historic Context Statement," 45.

⁹ San Francisco Examiner, "Robert Semple and Benicia Again," December 4, 1868, newspapers.com.

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the first settlers arrived in Benicia (William I. Tustin from Illinois, along with his wife and son) in late June, they found “nothing but the surveyors’ stakes and waving fields of grass.” By November, there were approximately 15 buildings in town, which popped up along the First Street corridor.¹⁰

This scene may have appeared a strange sight to Thomas Rhoads, who was on his way to San Francisco seeking medical care for his wife **Elizabeth Rhoads (1800–1847)** when she passed away on September 23, 1847. As their boat was close to Benicia, they stopped to bury her there only two months after O’Farrell and Warner completed the town survey and plat map. Elizabeth became the first burial in the Benicia City Cemetery.

Elizabeth and her husband Thomas had recently settled along Dry Creek in the Cosumnes River Valley in Northern California, about 18 miles from Sutter’s Fort. To escape religious persecution, they traveled west from their Illinois farmstead to join the ill-fated Donner-Reed Party. In 1846, a mob angry at the Mormon Church elders had burned the Rhoads’ home, ruined their crops, and contaminated their drinking water. Along with their 19 children (and additional grandchildren), Thomas and Elizabeth joined a wagon train of about 300 persons, a portion of which included the Donner-Reed Party, heading west to the Oregon Territory and to California. The Rhoads’ party took the more conservative middle route from Utah to California, while the Donner-Reed Party chose to follow the untested and ill-fated Hastings cut-off. The Rhoads family reached Sutter’s Fort on October 5, 1846. After their difficult journey, Elizabeth’s health began to decline.¹¹

As Elizabeth’s health deteriorated, Thomas decided to seek medical aid for his wife in San Francisco. The couple boarded a launch owned by John Sutter on the Sacramento River. As she was unable to sit, Elizabeth was made as comfortable as possible across a row of John Sutter’s bushels of wheat heading to market. Elizabeth died before docking at Benicia less than a year after arriving in California. Thomas buried his wife on the hilltop above town designated for burials and contracted with a man who lived at Benicia to mark his wife’s grave with a suitable headboard and fence around the gravesite. When Thomas later returned to Benicia, he could not find the gravesite on the hilltop or its headboard. The earliest pioneers used wooden headboards to mark gravesites, which have not survived weathering and windy conditions on the Carquinez Strait over time. The exact location of Elizabeth Rhoads’ gravesite on the hilltop burying grounds remains unknown, though it is probable she was buried in the oldest section of the cemetery, now referenced as the Pioneer Section.¹²

————— 1848–1850 —————

While Semple’s embellished descriptions of Benicia drew a fair number of pioneers to the new town in 1847, the real draw came the following year, 1848, as news of the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill reached Benicia. In April, news of the gold strike on the American River near Coloma was leaked in front of **Edward Horatio Von Pfister’s (1813–1886)** general store. Almost immediately, the majority of men in Benicia and

¹⁰ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 5.

¹¹ BCHC (Benicia Cemetery History Committee), “Elizabeth Rhoads,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

¹² BCHC, “Elizabeth Rhoads.”

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San Francisco caught gold fever (including Von Pfister) and headed to the hills. In Benicia, only about a dozen families remained. Semple remained optimistic, however, believing that the impending Gold Rush would elevate his city to the splendor he had envisioned: “there can be no doubt that the mines are very rich—if so, Benicia will be no small business in a very short time.”¹³

Soon, hundreds of “49ers” came to the Sierra Nevada foothills, and many passed through Benicia on their way to and from San Francisco. Due to its strategic geographic location, Benicia had become an important transit point for travelers and commerce moving between the two locales. Benicia flourished, but ultimately the Gold Rush bolstered San Francisco to a point Benicia could never surpass.¹⁴

During the winters of 1849 and 1850, hundreds of miners came out of the mountains to spend the colder months in tents in Benicia. Saloons, gambling facilities, hotels, and stores were highly successful during this period. Captain Von Pfister was one such entrepreneur who established a thriving general store off First Street. Prior to settling in Benicia, Von Pfister had been a ship captain who helped Benicia’s founder, Dr. Semple, verify that the Strait of Carquinez channel was suitable for deep sea vessels and could become a successful port city. At the time his store opened, it was the only general store in Solano County. It provided essential supplies and commodities for frontier settlers, facilitated the establishment and operation of early homes and businesses, and served as a waterfront meeting place for residents and travelers in the area to exchange news and goods. The store operated between 1847 and 1937. Von Pfister also operated various hotels, restaurants, and saloons during his career, in addition to conducting his own gold prospecting endeavors. In various years, he served as a Solano County justice of the peace, a member of the town’s Board of Trustees, City clerk, chief of the Volunteer Fire Department, Solano County assessor, and City trustee. Socially, he was a Masonic officer, a Freemason, Master of the 3rd Veil of Benicia Chapter #7, and a member of the Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons of California. He was also instrumental in securing property rights for over 200 residents during an 1867 dispute over the ownership of General Vallejo’s Soscol Land Grant property.¹⁵ Von Pfister and his contributions to Benicia made lasting impacts on the development of the community. Von Pfister and his wife are buried in the Pioneer Section of the Benicia City Cemetery.

Many other ‘49ers came to California because of the gold and stayed in Benicia as early pioneers, many of whom made lasting impacts on the community, county, and state. Records from the Benicia City Cemetery indicate only one burial in 1848, that of **John O’Brien (unknown–1848)**. A fire at the turn of the twentieth century destroyed many of the Benicia City Cemetery’s earliest wood burial plot fences and wood grave markers; however, most of the graves are identifiable through existing documentation. In 1849, there were four more burials, one of whom was 32-year-old **Miles Goodyear (1817–1849)**, a well-respected mountain man and gold miner. In the course of his life, Goodyear was instrumental in the settlement of at least six western states¹⁶ (see Selected Benicia Pioneers for more information).

¹³ BCHC, “National Register Documentation Info for Benicia City Cemetery Listing,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

¹⁴ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 7.

¹⁵ BCHC, “Von Pfister Family,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

¹⁶ BCHC, “Miles Goodyear,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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At least 16 more prominent Benicia pioneers were also '49ers, and likely many others who have yet to be researched and enumerated. These include **James Barry (1822–1897)**, a merchant, commissioner of the common schools, and justice of the peace; **George Dimpfel (1806–1876)**, an inventor, machinist, and manufacturer; **Joseph Fischer (1823–1884)**, butcher shop owner; **Andrew Goodyear (1819–1892)**, California town founder and politician; **Samuel Gray (1816–1892)**, merchant, trustee for the City of Benicia, justice of the peace, treasurer of Solano County, and founder of the Benicia waterworks; **Daniel Hastings (1821–1893)**, a member of the Solano County Commission of Common Schools, Solano County supervisor, and trustee for the City of Benicia; **Paul Hubbs (1800–1874)**, United States diplomat, California legislator, lawyer, and superintendent of public schools; **John Johnson (1836–1864)**, Civil War veteran; **Alexander Riddell (1802–1855)**, merchant sea captain and politician; **George Riddell (1810–1884)**, merchant and politician; **Timothy Sage (1813–1890)**, businessman; **Charles Spalding (1819–1902)**, merchant and industrialist; **Major Joseph P. Vaughn (1830–1862)**, Mexican-American War veteran, Civil War casualty; **Singleton Vaughn (1801–1891)**, Benicia City politician; **Captain John Walsh (1797–1884)**, commissioner of public schools and community leader; and **John Semple (1830–1850)**. John W. Semple, the son of Benicia's founder Dr. Robert Semple, was another local who profited from the town's growth during this period. John Semple spent the last year of his life working as a clerk at one of the town's establishments and showing his father's real estate to prospective buyers. He died of a lung infection in 1850 and is buried in the Pioneer Section of the City Cemetery.¹⁷

Lansing Bond Mizner (1825–1893) also arrived at Benicia during this period, at the request of Robert Semple, his distant relative. Mizner was a California pioneering lawyer, soldier, community leader, and politician. After arriving at Benicia in 1849, Mizner purchased real estate, and a quarter interest in the mercantile firm of Semple, Robinson & Co., which owned the ship "Confederacion" and its East India cargo of goods. This business was so profitable during the California Gold Rush that the owners built a two-story warehouse in Benicia near the Benicia port in 1850. In September 1849, Mizner started a four-mule stage line with S.K. Nurse to take passengers between Benicia and Sacramento three times per week, connecting with the sloops from San Francisco at the Port of Benicia.

As a prominent attorney, Mizner was later appointed collector of customs for the Northern District of California, between the San Francisco Bay and the Oregon border. He was also elected to the state senate in 1865 and served as the chairman of the Commerce and Navigation and the Swamp Land Committees. In 1888, he worked for Benjamin Harrison's presidential campaign. Under the administration of President Harrison, Mizner, who was fluent in Spanish, was appointed as the highest-ranking diplomat in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (see Selected Benicia Pioneers for more information).

The year 1849 also brought the United States military to Benicia, representatives of which evaluated sites for a new military installation. Semple and Larkin agreed to deed the government 345 acres of land for a military post, situated at the easternmost side of town, along the waterfront. The U.S. Army established the California Ordnance Depot at Benicia in March 1849, the first U.S. arsenal on the Pacific Coast. The Benicia barracks was moved from Sonoma to Benicia on April 30, 1849, after the Bear Flag Rebellion. The

¹⁷ BCHC, "John Walker Semple," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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post hospital was built in 1856 and is the only remaining structure associated with the original barracks. The Benicia Arsenal, as it came to be called, included barracks, supply depots, and the Arsenal buildings for ordnance. There was also a cemetery on site. **John E. Glendon Sr. (1828–1898)** was an Irish potato famine refugee, who was employed by the U.S. War Department at the Benicia Arsenal. Beginning in 1857, Glendon worked in the engineering department as a laborer constructing the Arsenal buildings.¹⁸

The Benicia Arsenal remained a garrison installation until 1898, with buildings added through World War II. It closed in 1964 and ownership was transferred to the City of Benicia in 1965.

By 1850, within two years of its founding, Benicia's population had increased to 580¹⁹ and there were over 100 houses in town.²⁰ These numbers were destined to increase, as Benicia was poised for continued growth in the following decade. On March 27, 1850, Benicia was incorporated (concurrent with San Diego and San Jose). On September 9, 1850, California was granted statehood. That year, Benicia also became the Solano County seat and was designated an official port of entry into the United States.²¹

Another boon to the economy was the arrival of the Pacific Mail and Steamship Company in 1850, a federally contracted company that carried and processed freight between California and the Isthmus of Panama. At Benicia, the company established a depot and repair shop, with coaling steamers stationed at Benicia. The company employed 100 men, giving Benicia the distinction as the home of California's first large industrial plant.²² **John Ryan (1825–1889)** was a skilled blacksmith who was employed by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company on its Benicia dock. He was later made foreman of the blacksmith shop at the Benicia Arsenal and worked for the United States government, a position of responsibility he long maintained.

In total, there are nine burials documented at the Benicia City Cemetery dating from 1848 to 1850, three of which are "unknown" grave sites. The average age of the known burial records for this period is 29.

1851–1860

Benicia's story leading up to the Civil War is one of both growth and inactivity, or of maintaining the status quo. In 1852, under the leadership of Thomas Larkin, Benicia vied for being the location of California's state capital. However, after only one session, the capital was moved to Sacramento. Despite this loss, the city's population continued to grow due to the Gold Rush, the demands of gold-searching pioneers, and the commercial infrastructure that developed as a result. Between 1850 and 1860, the population increased at a rate of 1136%, to 7,169.²³

¹⁸ BCHC, "John E. Glendon Sr.," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

¹⁹ World Population Review, search on Benicia, accessed September 4, 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ca/solano-county-population>.

²⁰ Page and Turnbull, "Historic Context Statement," 32.

²¹ Page and Turnbull, "Historic Context Statement," 33.

²² Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 8.

²³ World Population Review, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ca/solano-county-population>.

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Benicia's population growth spurred the development of educational facilities in the so-called "Athens of California," including Blake's School for Boys and the Benicia Young Ladies' Seminary, both founded in 1852. Charles M. Blake founded the boys' school on land donated by Semple and Larkin; it later became the Benicia Collegiate Institute and Law School, operating until 1867, at which point it became the College of St. Augustine. The Young Ladies' Seminary flourished under the direction of pioneer educator **Mary Atkins [Lynch] (1819–1882)** between 1852 and 1866. Atkins then returned to her native Ohio where she married the honorable **Judge John Lynch (1825–1900)** in 1869. In 1878, the couple returned to Benicia to restore the deteriorating school.

During this time, Judge **Samuel Cotton Gray (1816–1892)**, a pioneer settler, merchant, politician, and founder of the city's waterworks, donated land for construction of another of Benicia's educational facilities, St. Catherine's Academy, founded in 1854. The school included a boarding academy and convent, and enrolled 200 students, many of whom were daughters of Benicia's Irish immigrants.²⁴

Several of Benicia's pioneer settlers were Irish immigrants, some of whom left Ireland to escape the Potato Famine (1845–1849). Benicia's notable Irish include **John Barry (1819–1878)**; **James Barry (1822–1897)**; **John Glendon Sr. (1828–1898)**; **John Lynch (1825–1900)**; **Anne Mallon (1848–1877)**; **James McLaughlin (1835–1886)**; **John Ryan (1825–1889)**; and **Mary von Pfister (1828–1901)** (see Selected Benicia Pioneers section, below, for more information). Other common Irish surnames in the Benicia City Cemetery include Walsh, Kelly, Malone, McSweeney, and Sweeney.

In addition to the Irish, other prominent ethnic groups included English, Scottish, Belgian, Polish, Mexican, French, German, Canadian, Spanish, and Danish pioneers. Of the notable pioneer settlers, "**Joe**" (1840–1856) was a Native American; **Walter Z. Rankin (1861–1953)**, **John Walsh (1797–1884)**, and **Alexander Chisholm (1845–1904)** were born in Canada; **George Alfred Johnson (1856–1927)**, **James W. Ewing (1830–1886)**, and **Alfred Dalton (1830–1916)** were born in England; **George L. Dimpfel (1806–1876)** was born in France; **Anthony J. Pine (1855–1930)** was born in the Portuguese Azores; **Frederick P. Weinmann (1814–1864)** was born in Prussia; and **Joseph Edward Fischer (1823–1884)** and **John Rueger (1817–1901)** were born in Switzerland. Of those born within the United States, early pioneers hailed from many states and territories, including California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Utah.

Another loss to Benicia's development occurred in 1859, when the county seat was moved from Benicia to Fairfield (a more agrarian community). Thus, the end of the decade brought a period of inactivity, as the Gold Rush tapered off, the political centers moved away, and developers turned elsewhere.

Between 1851 and 1860, there were 40 known burials at the Benicia City Cemetery, one of which was Captain **Alexander Hussey Riddell (circa 1802–1855)**. Riddell was one of Benicia's earliest residents. He made his career as a merchant, and also participated as the jury foreman in local government. In later years he

²⁴ Page and Turnbull, "Historic Context Statement," 39.

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served as the first justice of the peace, public administrator, and as a mayor of Benicia.²⁵ The average age of the known burial records for this period is 21; it includes 12 children under the age of 10.

— 1861–1878 —

The Benicia City Cemetery saw an increase in burials between 1861 and 1878, likely due to the increased population from the previous decade. While Solano County continued to grow during this period, its rate of growth leveled out to 135 percent between 1860 and 1870, and only 9.5 percent between 1870 and 1880. By 1870, the county population had increased to 16,871, and by 1880, it had reached 18,475.²⁶ In 1870, Benicia's population was only 1,656.²⁷ The community experienced a period of uneventful tranquility, compared with earlier decades. By this time, it had become clear that the original town plan would never come to fruition—the original central park and public city squares had, apparently, been sold to private developers.²⁸ In addition, many of the fine educational facilities were either closed or relocated during this time; it became increasingly clear that Benicia was no longer a major educational center.²⁹

A few of the burials at the Benicia City Cemetery during this period were Civil War veterans killed in action. **John Henry Johnson (1836–1864)** was a miner and early pioneer at Benicia, first appearing in the records of California on September 26, 1852, in the first California State Census, at the gold fields in the vicinity of Auburn, Sutter County. He joined his older brother, Joseph G. Johnson at Benicia in the winter of 1852. John Henry Johnson enlisted as a U.S. Union Army soldier at the Army's Benicia Arsenal in 1861. He first served in the Second California Cavalry Regiment, in the western states at various posts where Indian uprisings were creating problems for settlers between 1861 and 1862. He then served in the Massachusetts 13th Infantry during the Civil War from 1862–1863. Afterwards, Johnson worked for a short time as a boot maker, but died at Napa Springs, Napa County, on February 19, 1864. Napa Springs was a resort for healing in the 1860s. He was 27 years old.³⁰

Major Joseph P. Vaughn (1830–1862) was another Civil War casualty. He had been a California '49er, pioneer, and politician, and was the son of Singleton Vaughn, one of Benicia's earliest residents. In 1846, at age 16, he volunteered to fight in the Mexican-American War, and in 1861, he enlisted in the Confederate Army. Vaughn was killed in the second Battle of Corinth, a railroad hub in northern Mississippi, on October 3, 1862.³¹

There are several other young men buried in the Benicia City Cemetery during the Civil War period, though more research is needed to determine their specific stories and causes of death. These include **James Scanton (1824–1861)**; **Charles Tripp (1833–1861)**; **Jacob Daniel (1824–1862)**; **Patrick Meligan (1831–1862)**; **Captain John C. Paladini (1829–1862)**; **Thomas Johnson (1836–1863)**; **John Lawler (1835–1863)**; and **Patrick**

²⁵ BCHC, "Alexander Hussey Riddell," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

²⁶ World Population Review, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ca/solano-county-population>.

²⁷ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 29.

²⁸ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 31.

²⁹ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, xi-xii.

³⁰ BCHC, "John Henry Johnson," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

³¹ BCHC, "Joseph P. Vaughn," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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McGee (1842–1863). Several of Benicia’s early pioneers fought in the Civil War and returned to Benicia. These include **Albion P. Whitman (1824–1891), Captain William Wallace Dillingham (1835–1894), and Charles J. Moore (1842–1923).**

Charles J. Moore was a Civil War Union soldier, and co-owner of the award-winning Benicia Tannery. After fighting with the Massachusetts infantry, Moore settled in Benicia with his wife, where he co-founded the Benicia Tannery with Frank Cummings. The company produced eighteen different kinds of leather. The business employed between thirty and forty workers and had between \$15,000 and \$20,000 invested in its stock all the time. The business was manufacturing about 3,000 sides of leather each month. The tannery made all the finer grades of leather, such as glove, kid, Russian, pebble, goat, shoe, buff, and leather hand satchels and bags. The manufacturing and wealth generated from this enterprise added to the state’s abundance of California manufacturers at the time. The manufacture of the handbag leather led to a high demand of those articles in San Francisco, which resulted in increased orders for the leather from Moore & Cummings. The Benicia Tannery had large amounts of its leather made up into boots and shoes for San Francisco.³² There were several other important tanneries in town, including the Pioneer Tanning Company and Kullman, Salz, and Company. In this way, Benicia became the “center of the West Coast tanning industry.”³³

By 1868, it was clear that Robert Semple’s hopes for a prosperous metropolis had not been realized:

“Poor Robert Semple! How fallacious were his fond hopes! Capitalists in San Francisco went to work and built wharves, ships came from Val(indecipherable) and other ports and landed there, buildings arose of a spacious magnitude, people teamed from all the corners of the earth – San Francisco! San Francisco! Was the cry; and Benicia was only heard of in whispers.”³⁴

While Benicia did not become the city Semple had envisioned, it maintained “a certain amount of prestige and cultural importance, because many of the people that had been attracted to the city in its promising first years remained there. The town boasted a large number of eminent men, especially lawyers.”³⁵ Benicia’s continued growth reflected a rise in industrial and agricultural pursuits which propelled the local economy. Between 1862-1867, the Solano County assessor reported the county had produced 14,256 acres of commercial wheat, which was transported by ship from the Carquinez Strait to international markets. By 1867, the Solano County assessor reported the county had produced 160,000 acres of commercial wheat as shortages elsewhere had increased prices.³⁶

In addition, nearby railroad construction brought energy and activity to Benicia. In 1863, the Central Pacific Railroad built a branch line through Solano County from Vallejo to Suisun, connecting the community to Sacramento, and eastward to the Transcontinental Railroad by 1869. The railroad opened markets for

³² BCHC, “Charles J. Moore,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

³³ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 31.

³⁴ San Francisco Examiner, “Robert Semple.”

³⁵ Bruegmann, *Benicia: Portrait*, 13.

³⁶ Peter Kaplan, *History of Solano County California*, Central Solano County Heritage Commission, 1977:9.

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Benicia's commercial interests, including the Pacific Cement Company (established 1864) and the Carquinez Packing Company (established 1870).

Between 1861 and 1878, there were 155 known burials at the Benicia City Cemetery. The average age of the known burial records for this period is 30; it includes 39 children aged 10 and under.

Selected Benicia "Pioneers"

The Benicia City Cemetery represents a variety of important aspects of the area's early settlement and evolving sense of community and is the final resting place of many people of importance to the community, region, state, and nation. The names enumerated below were researched by the Benicia Cemetery History Committee (BCHC) as significant early pioneers in Benicia's history.

Goodyear, Miles Morris (1817-1849)

Miles Goodyear was a mountaineer who, in 1836, traveled with the Whitman-Spalding missionary party, the first pioneer wagon train overland to travel into the Oregon Territory. He labored for the party, helping to clear the route of boulders and brush for the group, and helped to open the Oregon Trail to hundreds of wagon trains to follow. In 1837, Goodyear ventured into Mexico's Ute Territory (present day Utah), where he spent several years hunting buffalo, deer and elk, trapping, and selling beaver pelts. He gained a reputation as a respected mountain man during those years. In 1841, Goodyear settled on the Weber River, northeast of the Great Salt Lake, and at the base of the Wasatch Mountains (present day Ogden, Utah). He married the daughter of Ute Chief Pe-teet-neet, and they had two children by 1843 (William Miles Goodyear and Mary Eliza Goodyear) at their home on the Weber River. This settlement eventually developed into Fort Buenaventura, which became an important location for supplying provisions (smoked meats, livestock, fruits and vegetables grown there) and providing protection to fur trappers, pioneers heading west, and to the United States military passing through Utah on the California Trail. Between 1844 and 1846, Goodyear assisted U.S. Army Captain John C. Frémont's topographic expeditions exploring and mapping the west and provided advice for suitable routes to California. The following year he brought Frémont's troops provisions of deer and elk during the Mexican-American War, the proceeds of which were used to purchase two town lots in Benicia, as well as several horses. In 1847, Goodyear sold Fort Buenaventura to the Mormons before taking his horse herd to Missouri to sell to pioneers needing horses to cross the plains and mountains into the west. He traveled back and forth several times with horses, taking the route through the northern part of Nevada and on through the mountains.

Goodyear's trail into California traveled north of the Great Salt Lake, then west along the Humboldt River, through what later became northern Nevada State into the Sierra Mountain passes of California. On one of his return trips, he guided a large group of Gold Rush travelers to California in record time. Would-be gold miners continued to follow Goodyear's path, in what became known as the California Trail. American westward expansion was intensified by the California Gold Rush, bringing into California roughly 250,000 new people along the California Trail.

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Goodyear and his younger brother went into the Sierra Mountains along the Yuba River to prospect in 1849. The Goodyear brothers struck it rich, finding large nuggets of gold at a river bar now known as Goodyear's Bar. Reports of their rich strike created a town of thousands of miners rushing into Goodyear's Bar. The winter of 1849–1850 was especially cold, with deep snow obscuring the trails out of the mountains. Goodyear took ill and never recovered. His brother Andrew buried Miles at Benicia City Cemetery once weather permitted; his epitaph reads, "The Mountaineer's Grave / Here sleeps, near the Western Ocean's Wave/ Miles M. Goodyear."

Miles Goodyear was a mountaineer, trail blazer, trail guide, gold miner, and town founder. His pioneering work made possible the Oregon Trail, which was traversed by over 400,000 settlers between the mid-1830s and 1869 (and was also used by travelers on the Mormon Trail, Bozeman Trail, and California Trail). Fort Buenaventura was one of the first white settlements in Utah, which helped the United States claim the area as a territory, and eventually as a state. Goodyear's part in promoting the California Trail, not to mention his gold discovery at Goodyear's Bar, led to the settlement of 250,000 businessmen, farmers, pioneers and miners between 1848 and 1869, which made California eligible for statehood in 1850. Goodyear's work assisted in the settlement of at least six western states.³⁷

Mizner, Lansing Bond (1825–1893)

Lansing Bond Mizner was a California pioneering lawyer, soldier, community leader, and politician. In 1846, Mizner joined the Third Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, during the Mexican-American War. Fluent in Spanish, Mizner was detailed as an interpreter for the staff of General Shields, and later General Wool, who invaded Mexico from Texas. Returning to Illinois in July 1847, Mizner completed his law studies. Robert Semple, who was Lansing Mizner's stepfather's brother, sent Mizner a letter enticing him to come to California. He travelled via ship from New Orleans, Louisiana, crossing the Panama Isthmus, and again by ship to San Francisco, San Francisco County, California. He arrived in California on May 20, 1849, and settled only days later in Benicia. At Benicia Mizner purchased real estate, and a quarter interest in the mercantile firm of Semple, Robinson & Co., which owned the ship "Confederacion" and its East India cargo of goods in 1849. Mizner's partners were William Robinson, John S. Bradford and Dr. Robert Semple. This business was so profitable during the California Gold Rush that the owners built a two-story warehouse in Benicia near the Benicia port in 1850. In September of 1849, Mizner started a four mule stage line with S.K. Nurse to take passengers between Benicia and Sacramento three times per week, connecting with the sloops from San Francisco at the Port of Benicia.

Lansing Mizner was admitted to practice law in the 7th District Court of California on November 5, 1850; to the Supreme Court of California on March 9, 1860; and to the Supreme Court of the United States, December 6, 1866. He took an active part in electing the delegates (including his step-uncle Robert Semple) to the Monterey Convention, which wrote the first Constitution of California to form the State government. Mizner also served several elected positions.

As early as 1852, Lansing Mizner began to take a deep interest in connecting Benicia, Solano County, California, by rail with the interior of the State, and was a Delegate to the Convention, held in San Francisco in that year on the subject of railroads. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Lansing Mizner took a strong stand for the preservation of the Union and was ever since a Lincoln Republican. Mizner was elected and reelected to the State Senate in 1865 and 1867, from Solano and Yolo Counties,

³⁷ BCHC, "Miles Goodyear," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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California. At the California Legislative Session of 1867-1868, Mizner was chosen President pro tempore of the State Senate, and was Chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Navigation, and also of the Committee on Swamp Lands.

In 1866, Lansing Mizner was sent as a special agent to Washington D.C., to procure Congressional aid for a railroad from Benicia to Marysville and succeeded in having a bill passed through the U.S. Senate making the usual land grant for that purpose. However, for lack of time, the bill failed to pass Congress. Afterward, Mizner had been the active leader in securing the completion of an overland railroad through Benicia during the 1860s. California State Senator Lansing Mizner, along with State Assemblyman J.B. Frisbee were successful in getting passed an amended Railroad Act, approved March 20, 1868, by which the California Pacific Railroad Company, started and incorporated under the laws of California, was to have assigned and transferred to it all stock subscribed for the San Francisco and Marysville Railroad Company in order to develop the railroad from Vallejo Bay on the Carquinez Strait to the northern boundary of Solano County, bringing through Solano County an important leg of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Following the arrival of the Transcontinental Railroad, Benicia's industries grew with the expanding markets. Industries required reliable water resources. Lansing Mizner, Andrew Goodyear and Samuel Gray pooled their resources to create a waterworks company to supply water to Benicia, Solano County, California. By June of 1880, they had developed a pumping station at Sulphur Spring Valley Creek, which pumped water to two storage reservoirs along Lake Herman Road, and the piping for delivery into town.

Lansing Mizner worked for Benjamin Harrison's 1888 presidential campaign. Under the administration of President Harrison, Mizner, who was fluent in Spanish, was appointed in 1889 as Minister to Central America, in essence the ambassador to Guatemala (where he was based), Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. He was accompanied by his sons, the future architect Addison Mizner and future playwright Wilson Mizner. He lasted in the position just over a year. Mizner's first rebuke, from an Acting Secretary of State, was for calling for a union of the five Central American republics for protection from the more powerful Mexico to the north and Colombia to the south. Mexico and Colombia both protested. There was a complicated incident in which American arms were being shipped to El Salvador (which just had a coup d'état) and Guatemala, then under martial law, objected to the arms sale. In July of 1890, exiled Guatemalan General Juan Martin Barrundia was on an American ship scheduled to stop at Guatemalan ports. Mizner was unable to communicate with Washington and agreed to the Guatemalan government's request that Barrundia be seized. Resisting arrest, Barrundia was killed on this American ship by a bullet from one of the Guatemalan policemen who boarded the American ship. This international incident was too much for Washington, and Mizner was recalled from his post in November of 1890, by Secretary of State James G. Blaine. President Harrison justified Mizner's recall in his 1890 Annual Message. Barrundia left a widow and several daughters, one of whom visited Mizner's office before his removal and attempted to assassinate him.

Lansing Mizner passed away on December 9, 1893, at the age of 68 of heart disease, and is buried in the Benicia City Cemetery along with his wife Ella W. Mizner (1836-1915), and 3 children, Edgar A. Mizner (1863-1918), Lansing B. Mizner, Junior (1858-1920), and Murray M. Mizner (1857-1874).³⁸

³⁸ BCHC, "Lansing Bond Mizner," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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Peña, Juan Felipe (circa 1790–1863)

Early pioneer Juan Felipe Peña was born about 1790 in New Mexico (1850 U.S. Census, Vacaville, Solano County, CA) and died March 15, 1863, in the Vaca Valley of Solano County, California, at about 73 years of age. Peña came to Solano County in 1842 as a pioneer settler in the Vaca Valley, Lagoon Valley, and Pleasant Valley area of Solano County. Peña's first wife died in Santa Fe in 1839. Peña left Santa Fe, New Mexico (then part of Mexico) in 1841, with the Workman-Rowland Party, according to Wikipedia.org, fleeing political turbulence there and heading for California with his second wife Maria Ysabella Gonsalves Peña, six children, and his father in law from his first marriage, Juan Manuel Cabeza Vaca, a widower with eight children. The Vaca and Peña families traveled from the New Mexico region to California following the Old Spanish Trail which terminated at Pueblo de Los Angeles, arriving there after a two-month journey on November 15, 1841. They stopped for about a year in Los Angeles, before heading north up the California coast along the El Camino Real (Royal Highway) through the Spanish mission towns of Santa Barbara, Monterey, and Sonoma. They hoped to find a safe place to raise their families. At Sonoma they met with the Mexican Alcalde, General Vallejo, who suggested they settle in the area of Solano County then known as Laguna Valley.³⁹

Juan Felipe Peña and Juan Manuel Vaca received a Mexican Land Grant, the 44,380 acre "Rancho Los Putos" named after its Putah Creek (sometimes called "Rancho Lihuaytos" after an earlier name for the creek) awarded by General Vallejo in June of 1842 and was the second land grant in Solano County approved by Mexican Governor Juan Alvarado in 1843 after they had built adobe homes, planted trees and pastured livestock, proving they intended to remain there and work the land.⁴⁰ The Land Grant was found to overlap the Wolfskill Land Grant and was amended by Mexico's Governor Pio Pico in 1845.

The California Gold Rush began in January of 1848 along a gold vein called the "Mother Lode" in the Sierra foothills. The Gold Rush brought tens of thousands of miners to California. Vaca and Peña sold cattle, fruit, and vegetables to the hungry Gold miners and became the first commercial agriculture in Solano County. They mainly raised cattle on their open range land and therefore needed to dig ditches several feet deep around their fruit and vegetable crops to keep cattle out of those areas. Hides and tallow were major trade items in the earliest days of the Rancho. The growing leather business at Benicia, Solano County, California, purchased or traded goods for hides during the mid-1800s. Grizzly bears, wolves (both now extirpated from California) and mountain lions threatened their cattle.⁴¹

Vaughn, Singleton (1801–1891)

Singleton Vaughn was politically active in Missouri and in California. He was a '49er, a California pioneer arriving before California statehood. Vaughn was elected to Benicia City offices and Solano County offices in the 1850s.

Singleton Vaughn was born in Kentucky in 1801. As an adult, Singleton Vaughn moved to Missouri, where he married, had children, and farmed. In 1838, when Singleton Vaughn was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of a volunteer Missouri Militia, he led an attack on a Mormon settlement in Howard County, Missouri Territory. The Mormon population, members of the Church of Latter-Day Saints, was growing quickly in the 1830s in Missouri where they hoped to establish their "Zion," a place where they would be free to practice their religion. The non-Mormon population in Missouri at that time was angered by the Mormon practice of polygamy, by their Evening Star newspaper that derided non-Mormons, by their missionary

³⁹ BCHC, "Juan Peña," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁰ Peter Kaplan, *History of Solano County California*, Central Solano County Heritage Commission, 1977:9.

⁴¹ Ibid.

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zeal, by their growing political power, and by charges of poaching livestock from local farmers to feed their growing numbers. Hostilities in Missouri started in October of 1833, with killings on both sides in Jackson County, Missouri. The Mormons moved out of Jackson County, farther west in Missouri to avoid the violence. The Mormon troops numbered about 1,000 men by 1838. About two dozen Mormons were killed during the Missouri skirmishes of 1838 and some Mormons were killed after they surrendered to the Missouri State Militia of about 2,500 men. On October 27, 1838, Governor Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order #44 "the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for public peace ..." The skirmishes ended when the Mormons agreed to move out of Howard County and Missouri. The Mormon Leader, Joseph Smith, was arrested on charges of treason, but escaped to Nauvoo, Illinois with about 10,000 Mormons. Many Mormons perished that winter from exposure to the elements.

It took the Vaughn family five months to travel to California from Missouri by wagon. The family included Singleton, his wife Susan, their children Joseph P., Cynthia, Ruth, Stephen, Sarshel, and a slave named Adam. The Vaughns were several of Benicia's earliest residents, though Susan passed away shortly after their arrival; she was buried in the Benicia City Cemetery in 1849.

Singleton Vaughn was elected to serve both Solano County offices and Benicia City offices in the 1850s. The second Solano County election of officers after California Statehood was held September 3, 1851, and elected as Solano County Assessor from Benicia was Singleton Vaughn. The third Solano County election of officers was November 2, 1852, and Singleton Vaughn was reelected Solano County Assessor. Singleton Vaughn was also elected to the Benicia City Assessors Office from 1851-1853. Vaughn established the protocols and procedures for the Solano County Assessors Office and the Benicia City Assessors Office in those earliest years.

Singleton Vaughn died at the Andrew Goodyear home on December 20, 1891 at Benicia, nearly 90 years old.⁴²

Allen, Grant L. (1879-1941)

Grant L. Allen was a member of the Board of Trustees of the City of Benicia, a proprietor of a well-established bottling works in Benicia, a manufacturer of popular beverages, and dealer in spring water and ice. He was a native of California and spent all his life near the San Francisco Bay.⁴³

Barkley, James Madison (1886-1967)

James M. Barkley was elected to the Board of Trustees of the City of Benicia and was one of the best-known educators in this section of California at the time. He rendered effective service in the industrial field in Benicia during the period of World War I to support the war effort.⁴⁴

Barry, James (1822-1897)

James Barry was a California '49er pioneer, merchant, and politician. He was elected commissioner of the common schools for Benicia in 1854 and served as justice of the peace for Benicia from 1867 through 1878.⁴⁵

⁴² BCHC, "Singleton Vaughn," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴³ BCHC, "Grant L. Allen," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁴ BCHC, "James M. Barkley," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁵ BCHC, "James Barry," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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Barry, John J. (1819–1878)

John J. Barry was an early California pioneer and politician who held several elected positions. Barry helped decide the future of government in Solano County in its formative years. He was elected county supervisor from 1859 through 1861, representing Benicia. Barry was then elected a Benicia City trustee in 1861, which is now known as a City councilman. He was also elected justice of the peace for Benicia in 1864. He was reelected Benicia City trustee from 1873 through 1878.⁴⁶

Burch, Fredrick Pendelton (1820–1880)

Fredrick P. Burch was an early California pioneer, miner, and a steamboat builder in the 1850s in Benicia. Dr. Robert Semple, the founder of Benicia, promoted the idea of using steamboats in the Carquinez Strait at the north end of San Francisco Bay and on the Sacramento River in California.⁴⁷

Chisholm, Alexander (1845–1904)

Alexander Chisholm was a pioneer industrialist in Benicia. He was one of the founders of the Benicia Water Company and, for years, a partner of the leather tannery firm of McKay & Chisholm. The leather industry in Benicia was one of California's largest by the 1870s, which contributed to the progress and development of the city.⁴⁸

Colby, Caroline (Carrie) Ameilia Smith (1837–1879)

Carrie Colby was one of the rare women to be an author and writer of a newspaper column in the 1800s in California. Colby was the author of "First Rank" and wrote newspaper columns for West Coast papers. She was a pioneer educator in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties in California where she taught at seminaries for young ladies and later, in 1863, at the Young Ladies' Seminary in Benicia.⁴⁹

Colby, Gilbert Winslow (1825–1881)

Gilbert W. Colby was a '49er California pioneer, a civil engineer who surveyed the route for the Transcontinental Railroad through the Sierra Mountains and attended the driving of the last spike in that cross-country railroad (the "Golden Spike" ceremony at Promontory Point, north of the Great Salt Lake in Utah). Colby was also a California State legislator from 1852 to 1858, first in the California State Assembly and then in the California State Senate. He was an early settler in Butte County, Sacramento County, and in Benicia, Solano County. He also was a lawyer, banker, granger, farmer, and town founder.⁵⁰

Dalton, Alfred (1830–1916)

Alfred Dalton was a pioneer resident, Solano County supervisor, businessman, education leader, and community leader in Benicia. Dalton became the Benicia School director and a clerk of the Solano County Board of Supervisors before being elected Solano County supervisor. He was also instrumental in bringing the first piped water into the City of Benicia.⁵¹

Dillingham, William Wallace (1835–1894)

Captain William W. Dillingham was born Massachusetts in 1835. Dillingham served in the U.S. Army in the Civil War, enlisting at Massachusetts, October 1, 1862. He served as a musician in Company A of the Massachusetts 50th Infantry Regiment and mustered out on August 24, 1863, at Wenham,

⁴⁶ BCHC, "John J. Barry," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁷ BCHC, "Frederick P. Burch," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁸ BCHC, "Alexander Chisholm," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁴⁹ BCHC, "Carolyn Colby," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁰ BCHC, "Gilbert Colby," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵¹ BCHC, "Alfred Dalton," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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Massachusetts. Dillingham and his wife Jane C. Paladini Dillingham (1838–1896) were early pioneers of Benicia. There, Dillingham worked as a mariner, working his way up to captain.⁵²

Dimpfel, George Lewis (1806–1876)

George Lewis Dimpfel was a '49er miner, an inventor, a manufacturer, machinist, and Benicia pioneer. Dimpfel was born in France on October 19, 1806. When he arrived in the United States, he first settled in New York City, New York, and worked as a machinist. In 1845 he relocated to Nyack, New York, on the Hudson River. At Nyack, Dimpfel began the manufacture of matches, becoming one of the pioneer developers of that product in the world. He also developed and patented a music half-turner device.⁵³

Ewing, James W. (1830–1886)

James W. Ewing was a California pioneer from England, a saloon keeper, a grocery merchant, and was elected Solano County Road Master for County District No. 2 in 1863, representing the Vacaville area of Solano County, California.⁵⁴

Fischer, Joseph E. (1823–1884)

Joseph E. Fischer was a California '49er, pioneer, and butcher shop owner in Benicia. He appears in California's earliest U.S. Census of 1850, at Benicia.⁵⁵

Gerrish, P. Patrick (1836–1898)

P. Patrick Gerrish was an early settler of California and a Benicia community builder in Solano County, California. A native of the old Pine Tree State, Maine, he came to California as a captain of a schooner around Cape Horn at the tip of South America. He became engaged as a building contractor first in Los Angeles, and then in the development of Benicia, including building the original schools, many early homes, and Benicia's Southern Pacific Railway Station.⁵⁶

Glendon, John E. Jr. (1871–1929)

John E. Glendon Jr. was one of Benicia's youngest and most successful politicians, merchants, and a promoter of much that established the Benicia community as one of Northern California's progressive cities in the late 1800s. Glendon was also Benicia City treasurer at the age of 21, and later was elected a Solano County supervisor.⁵⁷

Glendon, John E. Sr. (1828–1898)

John E. Glendon Sr. was an Irish potato famine refugee, California pioneer, United States soldier, and Benicia Arsenal builder. He is on the list of Irish potato famine refugees departing from Waterford, Ireland, in 1851, and arriving on the sailing vessel Oronoco, in New York, New York, on May 1, 1851. He was 22 years old and entered the United States as a laborer. He was variously employed in the eastern United States until the mid-1850s, when he enlisted as a soldier in the Indian Campaign of General Crook in Arizona and New Mexico. Glendon arrived in California in 1857 and settled in Benicia where he was employed by the U.S. War Department, at the Benicia Arsenal, in the engineering department as a laborer constructing the Arsenal buildings. He continued this work until his death in 1898.⁵⁸

⁵² BCHC, "William W. Dillingham," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵³ BCHC, "George L. Dimpfel," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁴ BCHC, "James W. Ewing," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁵ BCHC, "Joseph Fischer," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁶ BCHC, "P. Patrick Gerrish," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁷ BCHC, "John E. Glendon Jr.," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁵⁸ BCHC, "John E. Glendon Sr."

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Goodyear, Andrew (1819–1892)

Andrew Goodyear built a large New England wholesale oyster business before becoming a '49er, a California Gold Rush pioneer, gold miner, California town founder, and politician.⁵⁹

Gray, Samuel C. (1816–1892)

Samuel C. Gray was a '49er pioneer settler, merchant in Benicia, and politician. He was a trustee (City councilman) for the City of Benicia. He was elected justice of the peace for Benicia and was elected twice as treasurer of Solano County. He was also a founder of the Benicia waterworks.⁶⁰

Hastings, Daniel Neuman (1821–1893)

Daniel Neuman Hastings was a '49er pioneer, miner, education leader, politician, and businessman in 1850 in Benicia. He came from humble beginnings, worked hard, and amassed a large amount of stock and land, built a mansion, and was elected to the Solano County Commission of Common Schools, as Solano County supervisor, and as a trustee for the City of Benicia.⁶¹

Hilton, Ebenezer (circa 1827–1879)

Ebenezer (Eben) Hilton was a California pioneering politician, merchant, and prominent banker in the earliest days of the City of Vallejo, Solano County, California. Hilton served in several elected positions. He was first elected Solano County supervisor for District No. 1 in 1862, and then reelected in 1863 and 1864. Hilton was also elected in July 1866 as the first Vallejo City treasurer, part of the first Vallejo government, that shepherded Vallejo to its incorporation as a California city in 1868. In 1869, Hilton was elected a Vallejo City trustee (now City councilman) for a two-year term. In 1867, he was a registered voter living at Georgia Street in Vallejo.⁶²

Hubbs, Paul Kinsey (1800–1874)

Paul Kinsey Hubbs was a U.S. diplomat, a Pennsylvania public schools comptroller, a '49er pioneer, California politician, lawyer, and prominent member of several California communities. His occupations, in addition to farmer in his earliest years, included clerk, cashier, bookkeeper, stockbroker, textile manufacturer, public schools comptroller, Foreign Service diplomat, California legislator, lawyer, California superintendent of public schools, and City office holder in his later life.⁶³

Joe, Native American Indian (circa 1840–1856)

Joe was a young Native American Indian known by only this name. He was born about 1840 and died in 1856 at about 16 years old. Joe was likely from Chief Francisco Solano's tribe of Suisunes. The Suisunes tribe was descended from the earlier Patwin California tribe that had succumbed to an 1828 smallpox outbreak in Solano County; it is likely that Joe's relatives were decimated by the 1838 and 1839 smallpox outbreak in Solano County and much of Northern California. He was given a Christian burial in the Benicia City Cemetery in 1856, instead of a traditional burial used by his tribe. Many Native American Indians were converted to Christianity during the Spanish colonial period, which ended with the Mexican War of Independence from Spain in 1821. Many Christianized native people passed their faith on to their children.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ BCHC, "Andrew Goodyear," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁰ BCHC, "Samuel C. Gray," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶¹ BCHC, "Daniel Hastings," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶² BCHC, "Ebenezer Hilton," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶³ BCHC, "Col. Paul K. Hubbs," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁴ BCHC, "Joe," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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Johnson, John Henry (1836–1864)

John Henry Johnson was a miner and an early pioneer in Benicia. John Henry was born on July 7, 1836, at Lynn, Essex County, Massachusetts, and was enumerated with his family in Essex County in the U.S. Census of 1850. His ancestors arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony from England on the ship “Abigail” in 1635. Johnson died while trying to recover from his injuries sustained during his service in the Civil War.⁶⁵

Johnson, Joseph Green (J.G.) (1831–1909)

J.G. Johnson was a California pioneer, early businessman, and elected official. His wife Agnes Dodds Johnson (1845–1903) was also an early pioneer in Benicia, appearing in the California State Census in 1852 at Benicia, in the home of Captain John Walsh.⁶⁶

Jones, John Wesley (1822–1896)

John Wesley Jones was elected to Benicia City and Solano County, California, offices. Jones was a druggist, partner and the head of the hospital at Benicia. He was a pioneering merchant and a judge in Benicia.⁶⁷

Lane, Mary Ann (aka: Mary A. Lowe) (1830–1932)

Mary Ann Lane was an enslaved woman of African American descent, born February 14, 1830 or 1833, in Kentucky and later lived in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. The U.S. Censuses of 1900 and of 1930 have differing ages for Lane. She lived as an enslaved person for 35 years and as a free woman for 72 years. Lane was last owned by William Hall of Clay County, Missouri. President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1865, freed all slaves in the United States, which allowed freed slaves like Lane and their children to migrate to California. The issue of slavery was unsettled in California until the State Constitution was drafted in English and in Spanish, which prohibited slavery, and was ratified by the voters on November 13, 1849. The U.S. Congress approved the “Missouri Compromise of 1850” on January 29, 1850, allowing California to enter the United States as a “free state” on September 9, 1850, while Missouri remained a “slave state.” Slavery was never legal in California after adoption of the California State Constitution.⁶⁸

Lynch, John (1825–1900)

The Honorable John Lynch was the U.S. Surveyor General for the state of Louisiana. Lynch was trained as a civil engineer. In Louisiana, he studied the law, became a lawyer and then a judge. He was also an educator earlier in Ohio and again in California. In 1877, Lynch made his home with his wife Mary Atkins Lynch in Benicia, where he used his prior experience as an educator in Ohio to help his wife reestablish the Young Ladies’ Seminary. Lynch also worked as a lawyer in Benicia.⁶⁹

Lynch, Mary Atkins (1819–1882)

Mary Atkins Lynch has one of the largest monuments in the Benicia City Cemetery; it acknowledges the contributions that she made to the education system not only of Benicia, but contribution to the earliest education for young ladies in the new state of California. She received her higher education at Oberlin College, in northeastern Ohio, and graduated in 1845. She patterned the Young Ladies’ Seminary after the system of education she learned at Oberlin College.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ BCHC, “John Henry Johnson,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁶ BCHC, “Joseph Green Johnson,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁷ BCHC, “John Wesley Jones,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁸ BCHC, “Mary Ann Lane,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁶⁹ BCHC, “John Lynch,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷⁰ BCHC, “Mary Atkins Lynch,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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McLaughlin, James C. (1835–1886)

James C. McLaughlin was a native of Ireland, naturalized as a citizen of the United States on October 1, 1868, by Solano County District Court in California. He registered to vote in Benicia, Solano County, California, for the first time the year he was naturalized, 1868, and for the last time in 1876. He worked as a laborer.⁷¹

Mizner, Ella Watson (1836–1915)

Ella Watson Mizner was a California pioneer and a disaster survivor. Mizner, along with her prominent husband Lansing B. Mizner, was an early settler in the City of Benicia in 1856. As a young girl on her voyage to California, she survived the disastrous sinking of the ship *Independence*.⁷²

Moore, Charles J. (1842–1923)

Charles J. Moore was a Civil War Union soldier, and co-owner of an award-winning California tannery, the Benicia Tannery. The Benicia Tannery, which he co-owned with Frank Cummings, made eighteen different kinds of leather. The business employed between thirty and forty workers and had between \$15,000 and \$20,000 invested in its stock all the time. Moore handled the business end and Cummings the manufacturing end.⁷³

Rhoads, Elizabeth (circa 1800–1847)

Mrs. Elizabeth Rhoads was reported as the first person buried in the Benicia City Cemetery. She had travelled west with a caravan including members of the Donner-Reed Party, an American pioneer who came to California before the California Gold Rush began.⁷⁴

Riddell, Alexander Hussey (circa 1802–1855)

Captain Alexander H. Riddell was a California '49er, pioneer, merchant sea captain, politician, and the brother of pioneering politician George Hussey Riddell. Captain Riddell was one of Benicia's earliest residents.⁷⁵

Riddell, George Hussey (circa 1810–1884)

George H. Riddell was a '49er, politician, and one of the earliest pioneering merchants to settle in Benicia. In 1849, like so many other '49ers, he decided to travel to California, leaving New York City, New York, and arriving in San Francisco on December 1, 1849. He then traveled to Benicia on December 8, 1849, where he again started a general merchandise business.⁷⁶

Rivera, Nestora Peña (1837-1922)

Nestora Peña Rivera was one of California's early pioneers, and first settlers in Solano County, California, arriving in 1842. She traveled as a small child with her father, Juan F. Peña, and siblings to settle the Vaca Valley, Solano County, California. The Vaca and Peña families traveled from the New Mexico region to California following the Old Spanish Trail which terminated at Pueblo de Los Angeles, arriving there after a two-month journey on November 15, 1841. They stopped for about a year in Los Angeles, before heading north up the California coast along the El Camino Real (Royal Highway) through the Spanish mission towns of Santa Barbara, Monterey, and Sonoma. They hoped to find a safe place to raise their

⁷¹ BCHC, "James C. McLaughlin," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷² BCHC, "Ella Watson Mizner," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷³ BCHC, "Charles J. Moore," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷⁴ BCHC, "Elizabeth Rhoads."

⁷⁵ BCHC, "Alexander H. Riddell," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷⁶ BCHC, "George H. Riddell," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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families. At Sonoma they met with the Mexican Alcalde, General Vallejo, who suggested they settle in the area of Solano County then known as Laguna Valley.⁷⁷

Rueger, John (1817–1901)

John Rueger was a '49er pioneer businessman in Yuba County, California, and in Benicia. Rueger built the first brewery in the state outside of San Francisco, in Yuba County in 1850. He was elected City treasurer of Benicia, and treasurer for the Benicia Masonic Lodge.⁷⁸

Ryan, John H. (1825–1889)

John H. Ryan was one of the first permanent settlers in Benicia. His blacksmith work helped the early development of Benicia.⁷⁹

Sage, Timothy (1813–1890)

Timothy Sage was a California Gold Rush miner, an early settler of Solano County, and businessman in Benicia.⁸⁰

Sanborn, Lewis Decatur (1813–1890)

Lewis D. Sanborn was a soldier, shipwreck survivor, and politician. Sanborn was a carpenter by trade most of his life, when he wasn't serving in political office. Before traveling to California in 1853, Sanborn served with the U.S. Army, 9th Infantry in the Mexican-American War during 1847 and 1848 and was with the American forces making their triumphal entry into Mexico City. On March 6, 1853, Sanborn was aboard the steamship *Tennessee* when it was run aground in heavy fog on a beach near the San Francisco Bay. After the shipwreck, he made his way to Benicia. He held elected offices in Solano County, California. He was elected Benicia justice of the peace first in 1863 and again in 1864. He was elected Solano County coroner in 1867.⁸¹

Sidwell, Robert Carithers (1833-unknown)

Robert C. Sidwell (born circa 1833) was elected justice of the peace in 1871, serving Rio Vista, Solano County, California.⁸²

Spalding, Charles (1819–1902)

Charles Spalding was a '49er, miner, pioneer, business man and industrialist, born in Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts. Spalding left New England for California via ship around Cape Horn. He arrived in San Francisco in September 1849, and headed for the Gold Rush mines of Shasta County, California.⁸³

Vaca, Magdalena (1813–1869)

Magdalena Vaca was a member of the pioneering Vaca family, the first family to settle in the Vaca Valley, Lagoon Valley, and Pleasant Valley area in 1842 in what is now Solano County, California. Vaca was born about 1813 in Santa Fe, New Mexico (then part of Mexico). She and her family left Santa Fe in 1841, with the Workman-Rowland Party fleeing political turbulence there. The Vaca family headed for California on a long journey with the Juan F. Peña family. At Sonoma they met with the Mexican Alcalde, General Mariano Vallejo, who suggested they settle in the area of Solano County then known as Laguna Valley.

⁷⁷ BCHC, "Nestora Peña Rivera," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷⁸ BCHC, "John Rueger," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁷⁹ BCHC, "John H. Ryan," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸⁰ BCHC, "Timothy Sage," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸¹ BCHC, "Lewis D. Sanborn," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸² BCHC, "Robert Carithers Sidwell, unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC."

⁸³ BCHC, "Charles Spalding," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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Juan Manuel Vaca and Juan Felipe Peña received a Mexican Land Grant, the 44,380-acre “Rancho Los Putos” named after its Putah Creek (sometimes called “Rancho Lihuaytos” after an earlier name for the creek) awarded by General Vallejo in June 1842; this was the second land grant in Solano County approved by Mexican Governor Juan Alvarado in 1843 after the families had built homes, planted trees, and pastured livestock, proving they intended to remain there and work the land. During the Gold Rush, the Vaca and Peña families sold cattle, fruit, and vegetables to the hungry gold miners; this became the first commercial agriculture in Solano. Vaca never married but raised most of her siblings in early California. She died on September 20, 1869, when she was 56, and is buried in the Benicia City Cemetery.⁸⁴

Vaughn, Joseph P. (1830–1862)

Joseph P. Vaughn was a California ‘49er, pioneer, soldier, and politician, the son of Singleton Vaughn, and one of Benicia’s earliest residents, appearing with his family in California’s first State Census of 1852. Vaughn was listed in that State Census as age 22, then deputy county clerk, and a citizen of the United States born in Missouri. Vaughn appeared earlier in 1850 in the U.S. Census at Placerville, El Dorado County, California, as a 21-year-old miner for gold born in Missouri.

In 1846, at age 16, he volunteered to fight in the Mexican-American War, serving in Captain John W. Reid’s troop and Colonel Doniphan’s regiment, under U.S. Army Brigadier General Sterling Price, a former governor of Missouri. In 1861, he enlisted in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Vaughn was killed in the second Battle of Corinth, a railroad hub in northern Mississippi, on October 3, 1862. Although Vaughn served with honor and distinction, his remains were reported to have been buried in a mass grave among 30-plus other Confederate soldiers with unmarked graves at Corinth, Adams County, Mississippi. His commemorative monument at the Benicia City Cemetery marks Vaughn’s life in the community in which he lived and worked.⁸⁵

Von Pfister, Edward Horatio (1813–1886)

Captain Edward Horatio Von Pfister was a successful sea captain, pioneering merchant and influential political figure in early California, Solano County, and Benicia history during their transformative period from Mexican rule, through the California Gold Rush, to early American statehood. Von Pfister was among Benicia’s, Solano County’s, and California’s earliest American residents. As a young mariner, Von Pfister crossed the Atlantic Ocean dozens of times transporting goods between Europe and America. He became a California coastal trader in 1846 and 1847. In 1846, Captain Von Pfister and Robert Semple traveled by whaleboat from San Francisco to Benicia to make soundings in San Francisco Bay and the Carquinez Strait in order to induce seagoing ships to embark at Benicia’s deep-water port rather than at San Francisco. They verified that the Carquinez Strait channel was suitable for deep sea vessels and Von Pfister hand-wrote documents establishing Benicia as a port city. This aided in Benicia being named as a United States Port of Entry before California statehood.

Captain Von Pfister bought an unfinished adobe building in Benicia from its builders, William McDonald and Benjamin McDonald. He finished the interior of the adobe building and established the first store in Solano County, California, located in Benicia. It was the third structure in Benicia. Von Pfister’s adobe was used as a commercial structure on Benicia’s historic waterfront from 1847 until 1937. As the earliest store in Solano County, the Von Pfister general store provided essential supplies and commodities for frontier settlers, facilitating the establishment and operation of early homes and businesses, and serving

⁸⁴ BCHC, “Magdalena Vaca,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸⁵ BCHC, “Joseph P. Vaughn,” unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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as a waterfront meeting place for residents and travelers in the area to exchange news and goods. It was in the Von Pfister general store on the Benicia waterfront that the news of the gold strike at Sutter's Mill was "leaked" by John Bennett. In February 1848 a small group from Sutter's Mill stopped at Benicia on their way to Monterey to verify their strike was gold. One of Marshall's fellow workers at Sutter's Coloma Mill, John Bennett, announced the gold strike to a group gathered at Von Pfister's general store in Benicia. Von Pfister's store was later used as a courtroom, office as justice of the peace, and a residence. Von Pfister also operated several hotels, restaurants, and saloons during various years.

Von Pfister served his community in several elected positions. At various times, he was one of the first Solano County justices of the peace, served on the first City Board of Trustees, acted as Benicia City Clerk, and was chief of the Benicia Volunteer Fire Department. He also was a Masonic Officer, a Freemason, and Master of the 3rd Veil of Benicia Chapter #7, within the Grand Chapter of the Royal Arch Masons of California in 1879.⁸⁶

Walsh, John (1797-1884)

Captain John Walsh was a sea captain, California '49er, Benicia's first commissioner of public schools, a community leader, and among the earliest of settlers in Benicia. Captain John Walsh arrived with his wife Eleanor Adams Walsh (1806-1876) and daughter Emily Walsh (1840-) from Valparaiso, Chile, in November of 1849 at San Francisco. He was born on October 25, 1797, on Prince Edward's Island, Canada, of Irish parents. John Walsh became a Naturalized Citizen at the U.S. District in Boston, Massachusetts in November 1830.

John Walsh went to sea at the early age of twelve, in the year 1809, as a "sailor boy" with his uncle on the ship "Partheon." His uncle was harsh and young Walsh went ashore at Liverpool, England. In 1818, Walsh had earned the position of first officer of the ship "Honqua" sailing to China. On that ship Walsh first came into San Francisco Bay in 1818 and stopped at the Presidio (now Fort Point) and at Goat Island (now Treasure Island). During his career, Walsh sailed both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In 1825, Walsh was sent by the owners of Perkins & Co. of Boston, Massachusetts to the Pacific Ocean, in command of the ship "John Gilpin" where he commanded that vessel on a regular route from Valparaiso, Chile to Canton, China for more than twenty years.

He and his family lived many years in Chile. The Walsh family left Chile after the death of six of their seven children and arrived in Benicia, before statehood. The last surviving child to reach Benicia was Emily Amelia Walsh. Emily was one of the earliest of graduates from the Young Ladies Seminary of Benicia. The Walsh's took in several orphaned children over the years, including Agnes Dodd according to the first California State Census in 1852, at Benicia, Solano County, California. In that 1852 California Census, the Walsh household included: John Walsh, a 53 year old Irish mariner; his wife Ellen (Eleanor) Walsh, age 42, born in Massachusetts; his daughter Emily Walsh, age 12, born in Chili; his sister-in-law Clarissa (Clara) Hyde Adams, age 39(49), born on January 18, 1804 in Massachusetts; Agnes Dodd, age 8 born in New South Wales; and a Chinese steward, Attiri, age 30, born in China. Agnes grew up in the Walsh home and married Benicia pioneer Joseph G. Johnson.

Captain Walsh was the Deputy Collector of the U.S. Custom House at the Benicia Port and U.S. Port Inspector or many years. Records at Washington D. C. show that he was a faithful and trustworthy official in the employ of the Government. Captain Walsh was an active community member: he served on the

⁸⁶ BCHC, "Edward H. Von Pfister," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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first Board of Trustees for the Young Ladies Seminary and as a Solano County Commissioner of Common Schools.

Walsh's wife, Eleanor, his companion for nearly forty-six years died in 1876, leaving him as an old man, eighty years of age, alone and at that time, the oldest inhabitant of Benicia. Captain Walsh passed away December 1, 1884 at Benicia, at the age of 87 years, and is buried with his wife.⁸⁷

Wassmann, Frank Henry (1883–1966)

Frank H. Wassman was a native of Oregon, a well-established contracting plumber in Benicia, and one of the best-known businessmen in Benicia. He was nine years old when, in 1892, his parents moved with their family from Portland, Oregon, to Benicia. Wassman finished his education in Benicia. Attracted to the business of plumbing at an early age, he completed his apprenticeship in the plumbing shop of W.G. Ross in Benicia. As a journeyman plumber, he worked in various West Coast cities, including Benicia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino, all in California, as well as Portland and Astoria in Oregon. In 1906, at the age of 23, he returned to Benicia, and established his own business as a contracting plumber. Wassmann was a member of the local lodge of the Knights of Pythias at Benicia.⁸⁸

Weinmann, Frederick P. (1814–1864)

Frederick P. Weinmann was a pioneer hotel owner, born in Prussia in 1814. Weinmann was one of Benicia's earliest residents, arriving from New York, New York, in 1854, with his wife Juliet (Julia) Weinmann (1816–1891), born in Bavaria. Circa 1855 he purchased Benicia's famed Solano Hotel. Weinmann and his family ran the hotel for many years during a period of dramatic change in the history of Benicia, from a pioneer western town to an industrial center.⁸⁹

Weinmann, Frederick P. Jr. (1848–1908)

Frederick P. Weinmann Jr. managed the pioneer hotel that his father, Frederick P. Weinmann Sr., had started circa 1855. He was elected Solano County recorder, serving Solano County, California, and was appointed postmaster of Benicia.⁹⁰

Whitman, Albion Paris (1824–1891)

Albion Paris Whitman first appears in the 1860 U.S. Census at Benicia as a brick mason living in the Benicia Barracks at the U.S. Army's Benicia Armory. By the U.S. Censuses of 1870 and 1880, A.P. Whitman was living in a house in Benicia, single, and still working as a brick mason.⁹¹

Significance

The Benicia City Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its local significance in the areas of exploration and settlement and community planning. The Benicia City Cemetery is significant in the area of exploration and settlement, as it represents a variety of important aspects of the area's early history, its pioneers, and its evolving sense of community. Founded in 1847, Benicia is one of the oldest towns in California founded by people of Anglo-American and Hispanic descent and one of the oldest incorporated towns in the state. In turn, the Benicia City Cemetery is one of the oldest

⁸⁷ BCHC, "John Walsh," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸⁸ BCHC, "Frank H. Wassmann," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁸⁹ BCHC, "Frederick Weinmann Sr.," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁹⁰ BCHC, "Frederick Weinmann Jr.," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

⁹¹ BCHC, "Albion P Whitman.," unpublished, n.d., on file with the BCHC.

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municipal cemeteries in the state and is the final resting place to many of the area's earliest pioneers. In this way, the cemetery provides a physical link that connects Benicia to its earliest history.

The Benicia City Cemetery is also significant in the area of community planning. When its founder, Dr. Robert Semple, envisioned his "Pacific Metropolis," he sought to plan for public amenities that would give the town an advantage over neighboring Yerba Buena (San Francisco). He planned for parks, public squares, educational facilities, public wharves, and industrial complexes. In addition, his city plan was unusual in that it planned for and set aside land for a public cemetery. While other aspects of the first city plan were never realized (including the large central park and public squares), the cemetery remains as an homage to Semple's original vision.

Justification of Period of Significance

The period of significance is 1847 to 1878. The opening date represents the founding of the town of Benicia and the platting of the cemetery, as well as the year of the first burial. The closing date represents the end of the settlement period, the end of the town's rapid growth associated with the Gold Rush, the last year prior to the arrival of the railroad, and the last year prior to a period of industrial expansion.

Criteria Consideration D, Eligibility on the Basis of Age; Association with Events

The Benicia City Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D, as it derives its primary significance from its age and from its association with historic events. The Benicia City Cemetery is one of the oldest known municipal cemeteries in California—its first burial occurred prior to statehood (1850) and prior to the formal incorporation of any communities in California. It is also associated with historic events, specifically for its association with the Benicia's early settlement and development as it transformed from a wilderness to a Gold Rush-era boomtown.

The Benicia City Cemetery is the final resting place of many of Benicia's early settlers, many of whom were of importance to the community, region, and state. There were at least 1,400 known interments at Benicia City Cemetery between 1847 and 1932 (the burial date of the last "pioneer"), many of whom were associated with the town's founding, early growth, education, politics, or Gold Rush. Within two years of the city's founding, the Gold Rush caused a dramatic increase in Benicia's population, which in turn prompted the development of businesses, hotels, restaurants, and saloons. Some early settlers were veterans of the Mexican-American War, and many later fought in the Civil War. Others escaped persecution in their native lands, while others traveled north from Mexico to "prove-up" on promised land grants. At least three were formerly enslaved persons from Kentucky who settled in the new community after emancipation. Many settlers were immigrants, some of whom fled the Irish Potato Famine, seeking better lives in the American West. Other pioneers had spent previous lives as mountain men, ship captains, gold miners, and explorers, but settled in Benicia after hearing of its promise. These pioneers built Benicia: They encouraged education and built schools, they constructed the Benicia Arsenal, they raised houses and commercial buildings. Their enterprising spirits made possible the city waterworks, tanneries, the Pacific Mail and Steamship Company, and many other businesses. Others left their mark as influential women in a time prior to suffrage, as artists, educators, writers, and musicians. Finally, many of the early settlers made

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lasting impacts on the state and community through public service, as clerks, mayors, attorneys, commissioners, treasurers, justices of the peace, supervisors, trustees, state legislators, and United States diplomats. These pioneers built the Benicia city and Solano County governments. Many pioneering Solano County office holders and California State office holders whose regional contributions were to establish those governments in the earliest years are buried in the Benicia City Cemetery. These stories, and many more, are reflected in the legacies of the pioneers buried at Benicia City Cemetery.

Related Resources in California

Benicia City Cemetery is one of the oldest municipal cemeteries in the state. It is difficult to qualify, “the oldest,” because several other towns were incorporated on the same day as Benicia, and several towns had municipal cemeteries prior to statehood. In San Jose, for example, the municipality gave permission for people to bury their dead “under the oak trees at the south end of town,” as early as 1839.⁹² The following text discusses two, similar, municipal cemeteries in California, and two local cemeteries in Benicia.

Sacramento City Cemetery, Sacramento: this municipal cemetery was founded in 1849; it is one of the most comparable cemeteries to the Benicia City Cemetery due to its age of founding, and significance related to the community’s early settlement and its pioneers. The Sacramento City Cemetery is slightly larger than Benicia’s cemetery, at 32 acres; it also houses significantly more burials (25,000-40,000). One of the primary differences between the two cemeteries is that Sacramento’s evolved in keeping with the Rural Cemetery Movement – its landscaping is more intentionally designed and curated.

Oak Hill Memorial Park, San Jose: the first informal burials at “the Graveyard” date to 1839, though the cemetery was not formally platted until 1848. The first recorded burial took place in 1849 and was marked with a wooden marker that has since deteriorated. Benicia’s plat map dates one year earlier than Oak Hill Memorial Park’s, however, Oak Hill may claim to have earlier burials. Oak Hill differs from the Benicia City Cemetery in that it has grown substantially during the twentieth century, and no longer conveys the feeling and association of the themes surrounding early exploration, settlement, and city planning. Today, Oak Hill Memorial Park has over 15,000 interments, situated on carefully curated landscaping featuring waterfalls, flower displays, fountains, benches, and other modern amenities.

Benicia Arsenal Post Cemetery, Benicia: this military cemetery was founded in 1849, at the same time as the Benicia Barracks, which served as the headquarters for the United States Army Pacific Division from 1849 to 1857. This cemetery was never open to the public, though it does contain the remains of civilians, unknowns, foreign prisoners of war, and service dogs, in addition to the buried military personnel. The cemetery is vastly different from the Benicia City Cemetery in terms of design: it is smaller, containing only approximately 212 interments; the graves are laid out in even rows with standardized headstones; and the landscaping is curated (mowed grass), with a decorative walking path converging at a central landscape feature. This cemetery is listed on the National Register as a contributing feature to the Benicia Arsenal Historic District.

⁹² Eric Carlson, “San Jose’s Graveyard,” *Notes from the Underbelly*. Metro Publishing, Inc. 2003. <http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/10.09.03/underbelly-0341.html>, accessed September 3, 2019.

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Saint Dominic's Catholic Cemetery, Benicia: this cemetery was built in 1894 as a private alternative to the Catholic Section of the Benicia City Cemetery. When it opened, eleven friars were moved from the Benicia City Cemetery to the new Catholic cemetery. Soon, the cemetery became the preferred resting place for Benicia's Catholic population. This juncture represents a shift in the community's mindset- from the cohesion and unity of a common burial ground for all people (pioneers), to the specialization of individual groups (religious groups, educational groups, fraternal groups, etc.) with the ability to choose segregated burial spaces. St. Dominic's Catholic Cemetery is highly landscaped with rows of Cyprus trees, grassy lawns, paved roadways, and carefully organized grave plots.

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— — —. *Benicia, CA*. 1959; photorevised 1968; photoinspected 1973. 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Benicia (Camel Barn) Historical Museum, Solano County Genealogical Society, Inc., and Genealogical Society of Vallejo-Benicia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 20.12 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.060447° Longitude: -122.156095°
2. Latitude: 38.058642° Longitude: -122.152455°
3. Latitude: 38.057135° Longitude: -122.153422°
4. Latitude: 38.058893° Longitude: -122.157182°

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundaries for the Benicia City Cemetery match that of the existing tax parcel (APN 0087021160). Riverview Terrace bounds the cemetery to the north, and Riverhill Drive to the east. The south edge of the cemetery abuts the rear property line of houses fronting Incline Place, while the west side of the cemetery adjoins the rear property line of residential properties fronting Shirley Drive.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The parcel boundary is based on, and very similar to, the area which was historically blocks 113 and 114 of Dr. Robert Semple's 1847 community plan. This parcel has always been used as the municipal burial ground.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Katherine J. Molnar, Architectural Historian
organization: Michael Baker International, Inc.
street & number: 2729 Prospect Park Dr. Suite 220
city or town: Rancho Cordova state: CA zip code: 95670
e-mail: Katherine.molnar@mbakerintl.com
telephone: 602-294-2250
date: September 15, 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
 - *Historical Maps* – See Continuation Sheets
 - *Historical Photographs* – See Continuation Sheets

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Benicia City Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Benicia County: Solano (095) State: California (CA)
Photographer: Margo Nayyar
Date Photographed: August 30, 2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: See Continuation Sheets

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460

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et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours; Tier 2 – 120 hours; Tier 3 – 230 hours; Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Figure 2. Location Map, showing the Benicia City Cemetery as depicted on a 2019 aerial photograph. The points on the map correspond with the latitude/longitude reference points in Section 10.

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Figure 3. Sketch plan of the Benicia City Cemetery, showing the National Register boundary, contributing, and non-contributing features.

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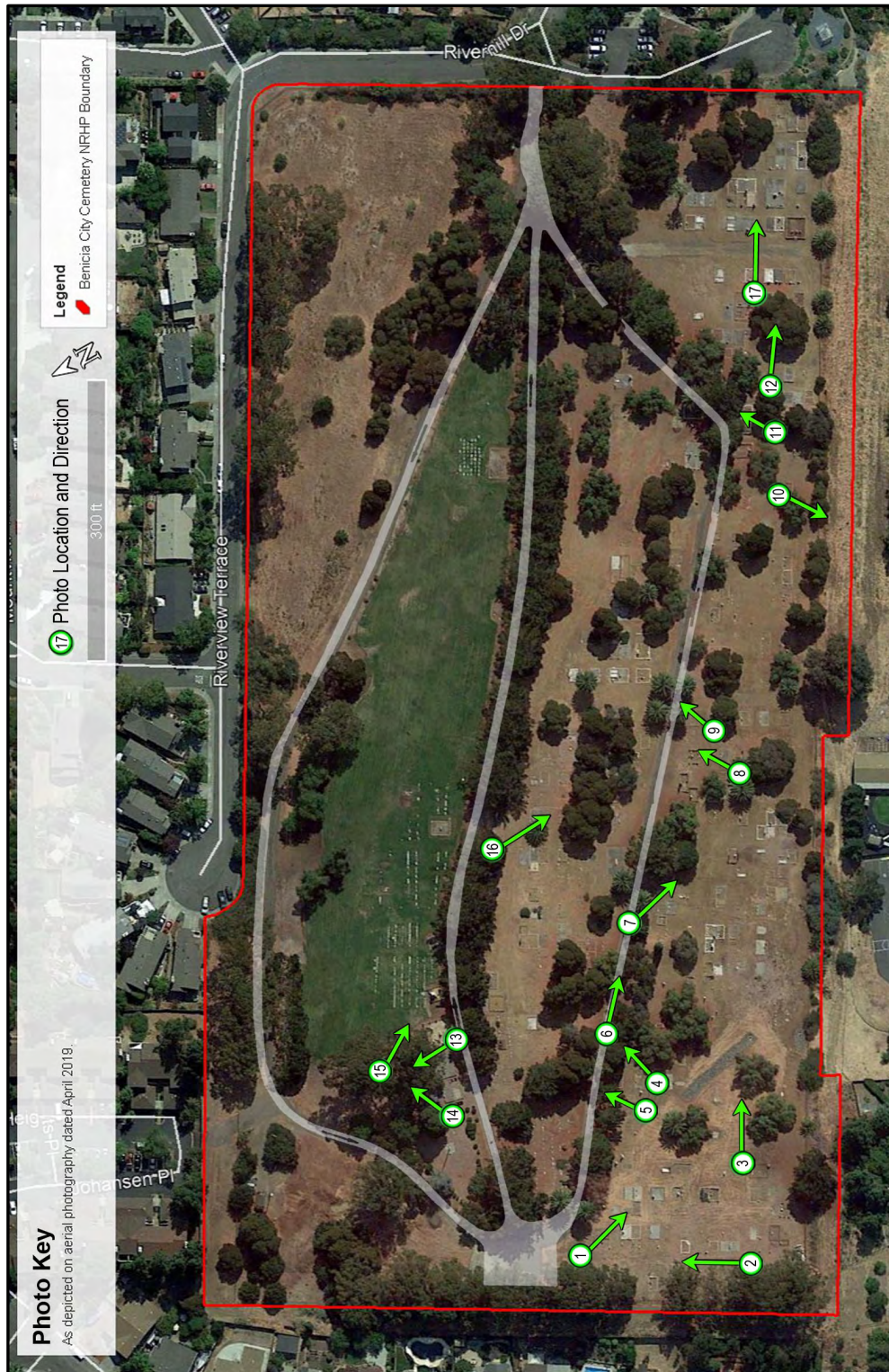


Figure 4. Photo key, as depicted on aerial photography.

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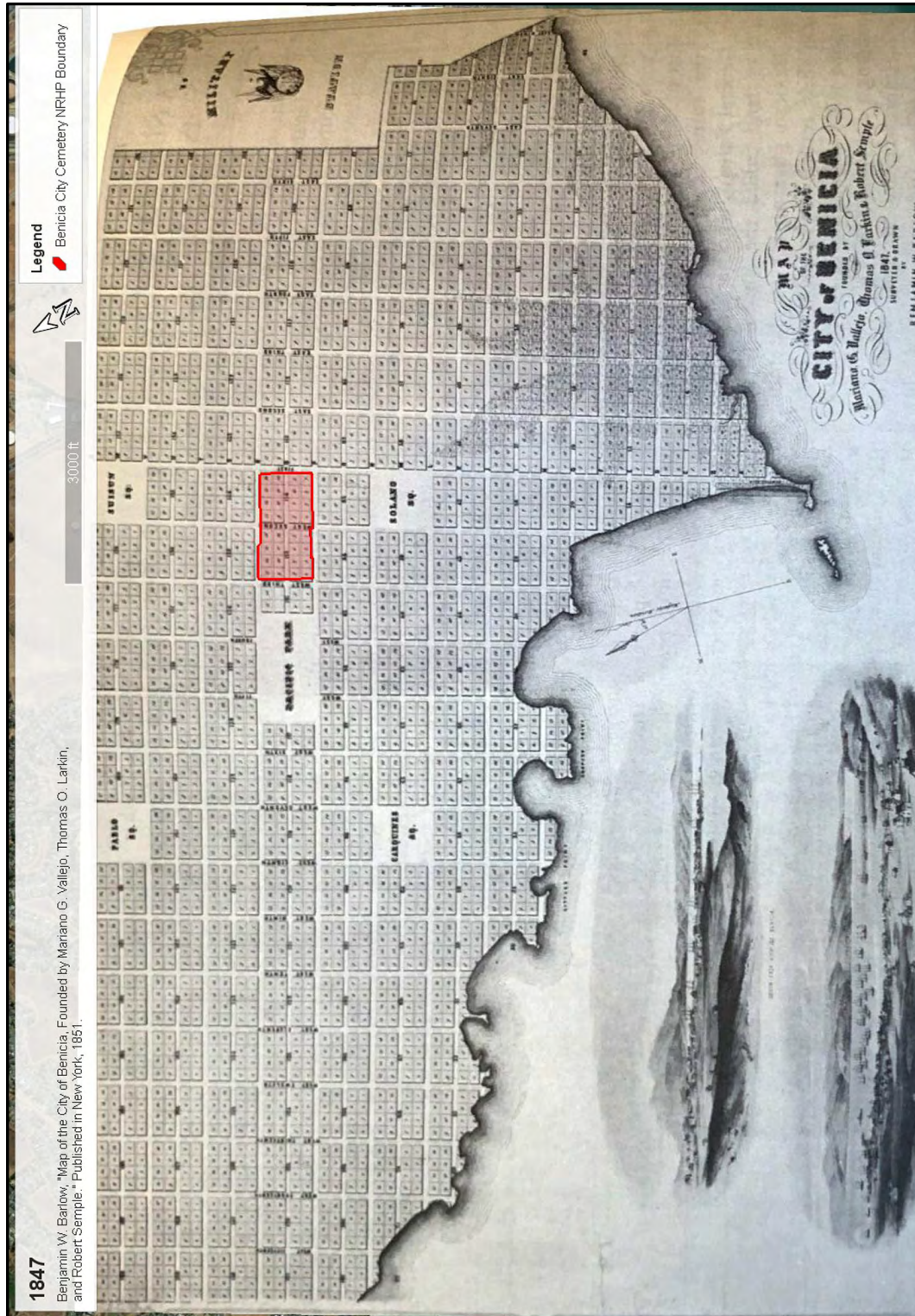


Figure 5. 1847 "Map of the City of Benicia..." lithograph printed in New York, 1951. Note that the City Cemetery is missing from this map.

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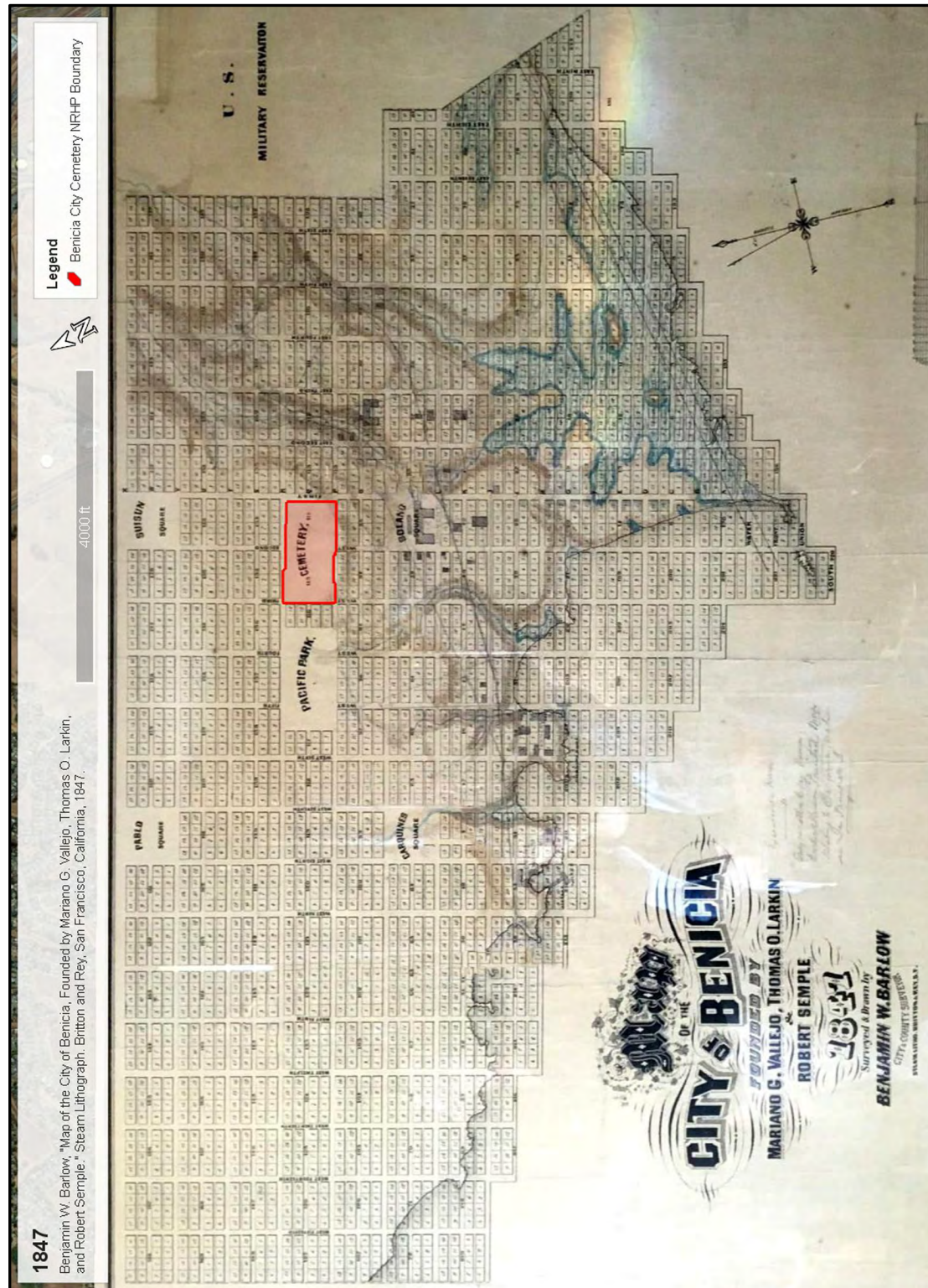


Figure 6. 1847 "Map of the City of Benicia..." lithograph printed in San Francisco. Note the addition of the City Cemetery to the map.

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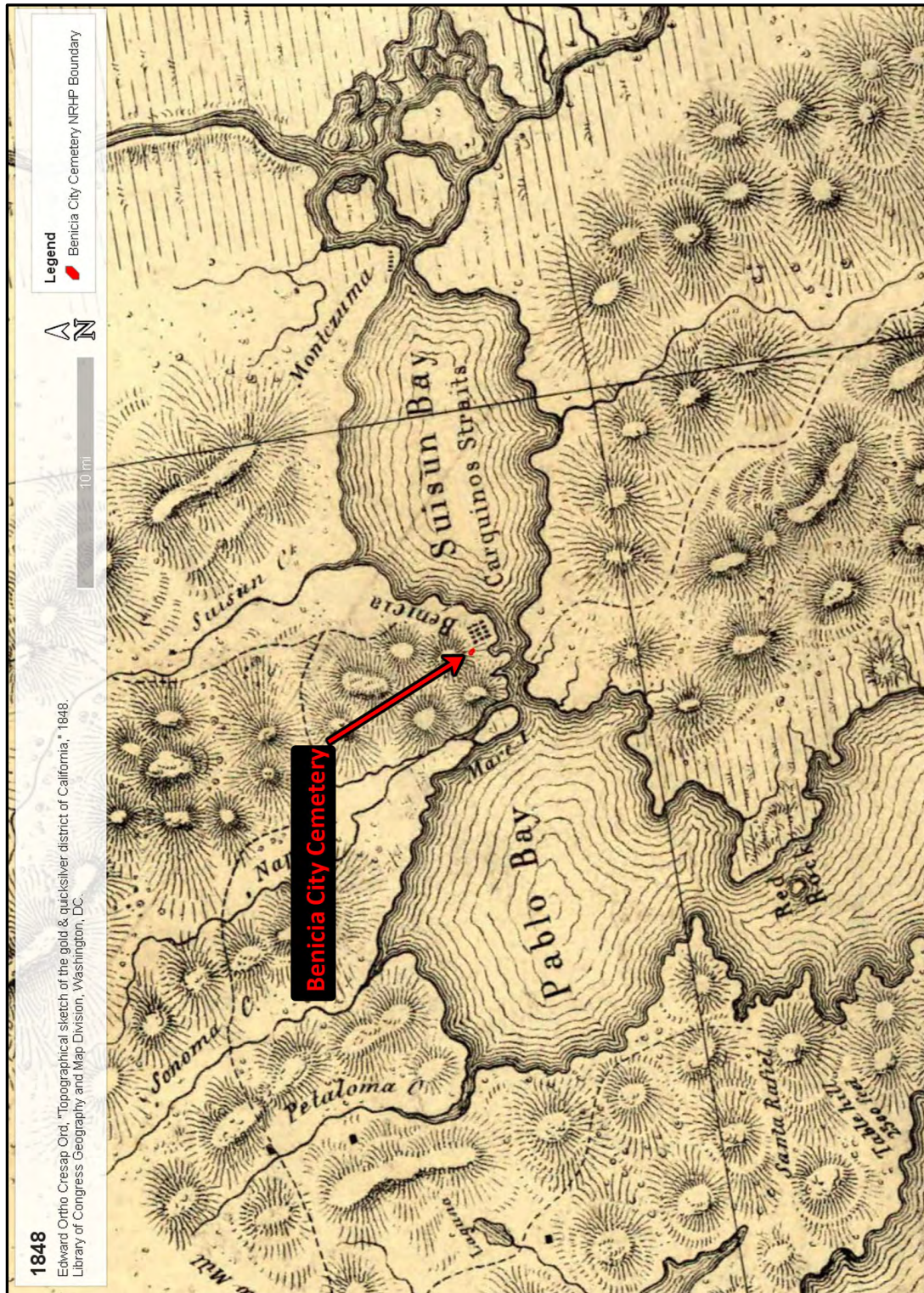


Figure 7. 1848 "Topographical sketch of the gold and quicksilver district of California," showing Benicia and its surrounding hills.

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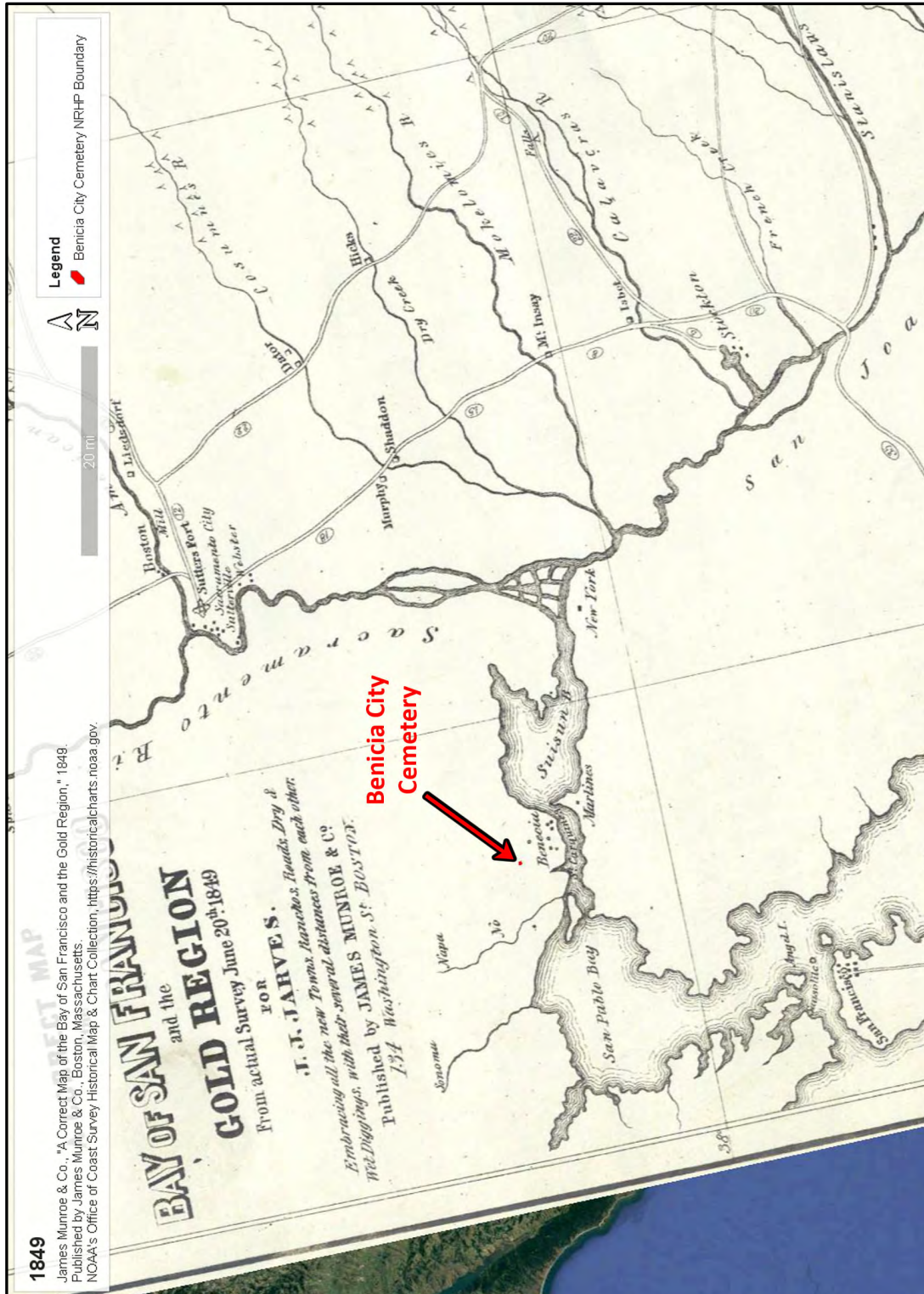


Figure 8. 1849 "Map of the Bay of San Francisco and the Gold Region," illustrating Benicia's proximity to other early settlements and towns prior to California's statehood.

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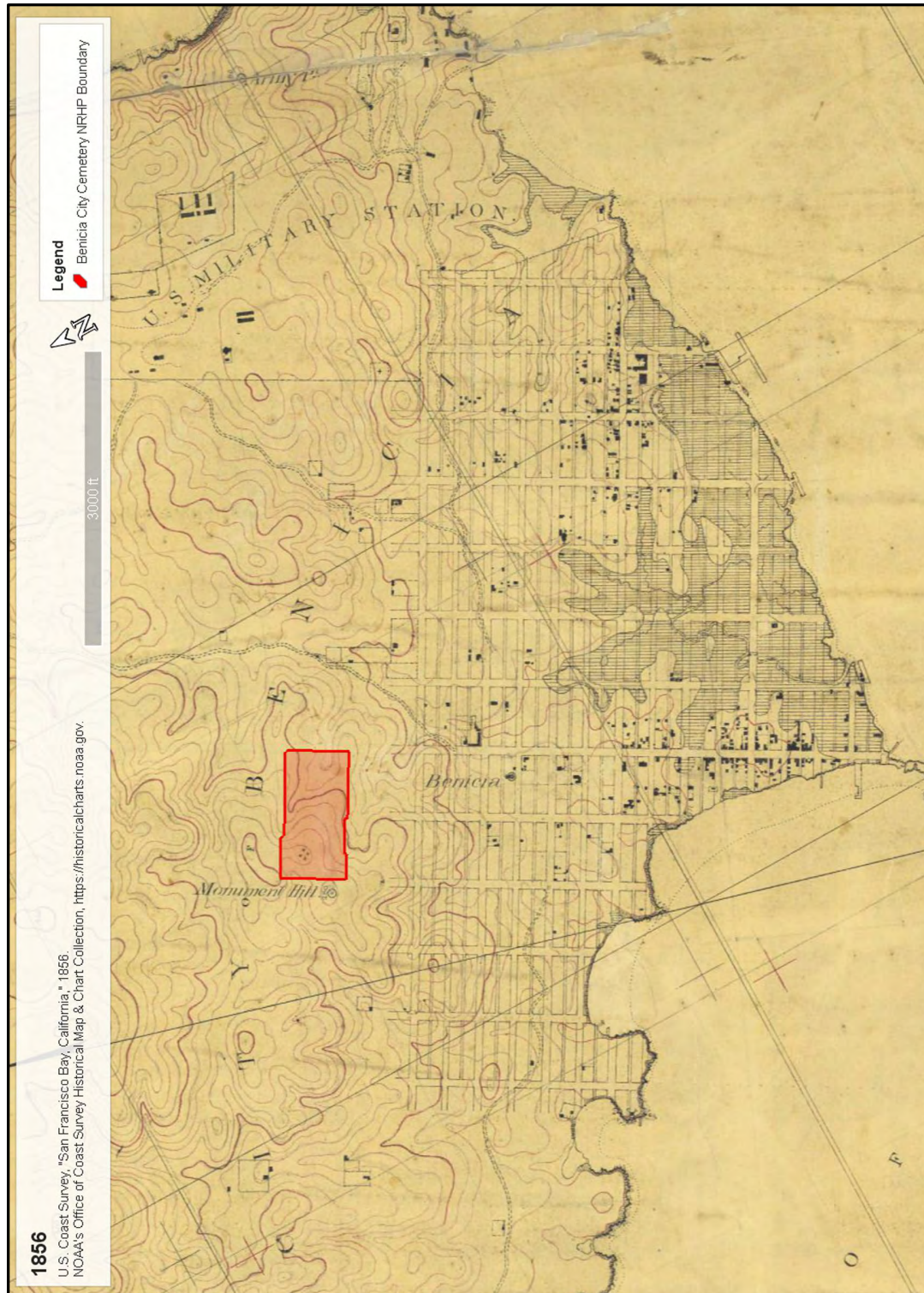


Figure 9. 1856 "San Francisco Bay, California" detail map, showing the location of the City Cemetery, with burials marked as "X's," and

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Figure 10. 1878 "Map #7 - Vallejo, Benicia," illustrating that the public land reserved for city squares and city park were under private ownership at this time.

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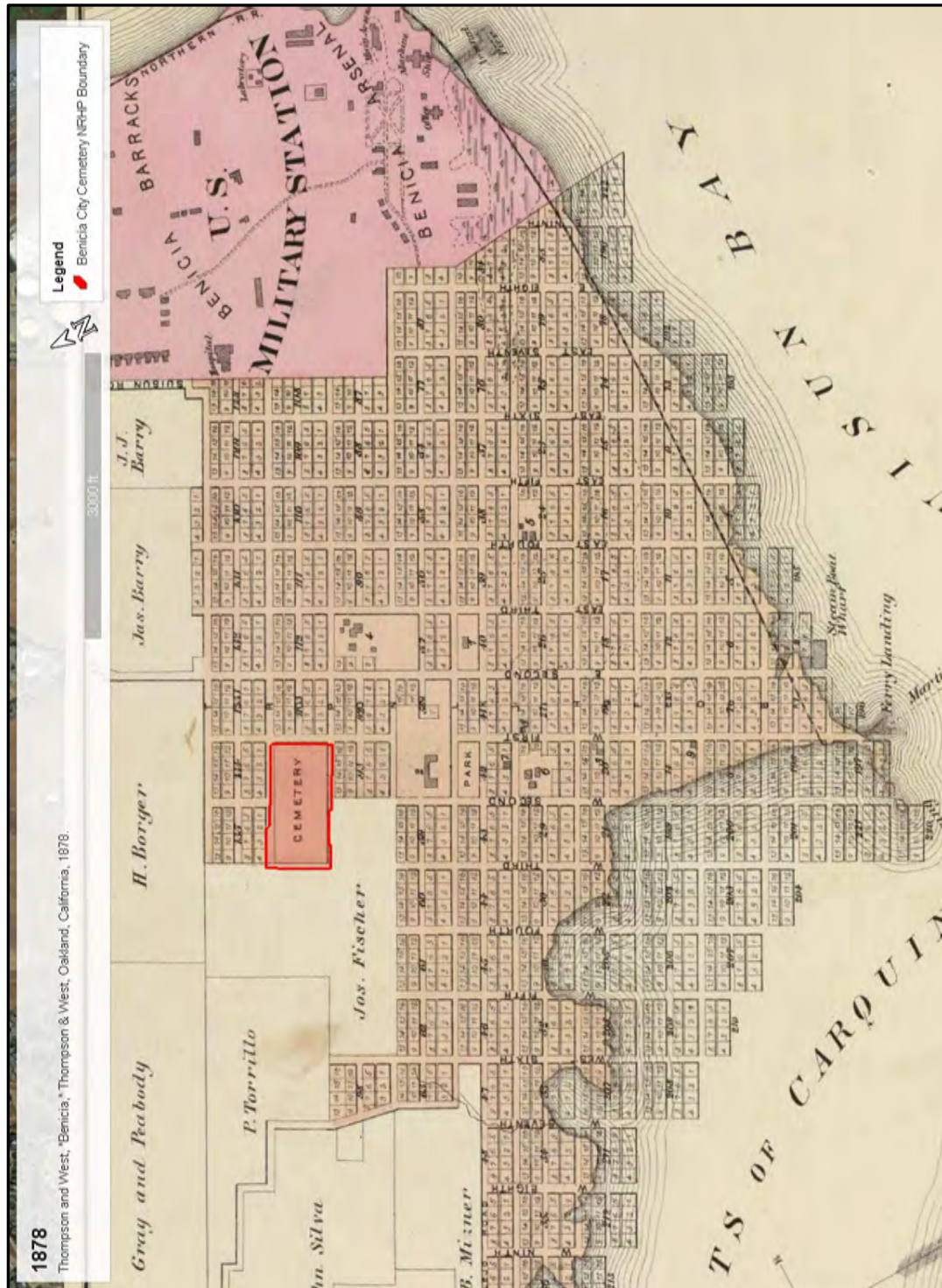


Figure 11. 1878 "Benicia," detailed map illustrating that the public land reserved for city squares and city park were under private ownership at this time.

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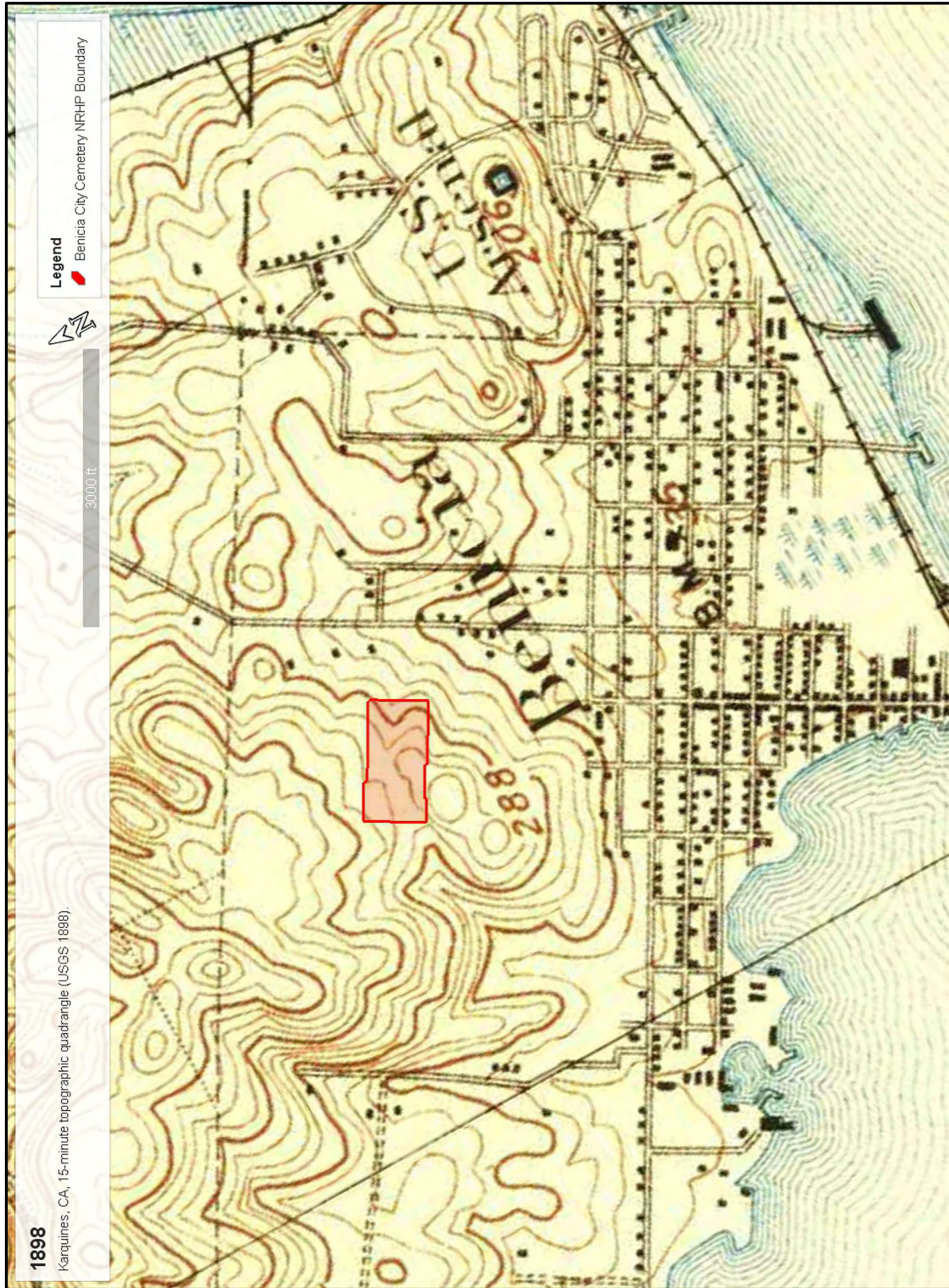


Figure 12. 1898 USGS topographical quadrangle map showing the location of the cemetery in proximity to the town and its relative growth.

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Figure 13. 1948 aerial photograph showing the cemetery, its circulation pattern, and its landscaping.

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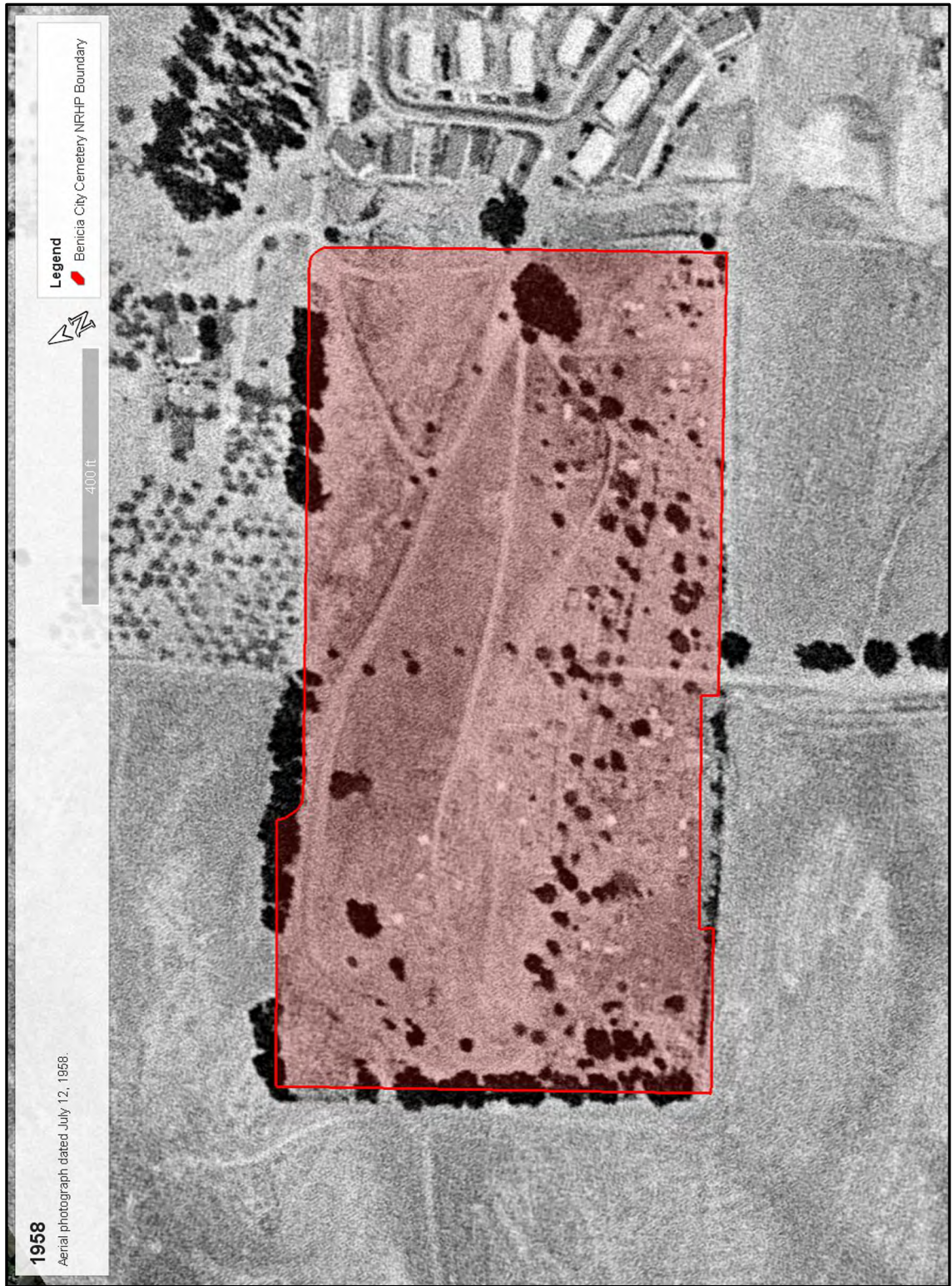


Figure 14. 1958 aerial photograph showing the cemetery, its circulation pattern, and its landscaping. Note the drive from the south, accessing the cemetery from Second Street.

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Figure 15. 1968 aerial photograph showing the cemetery, its circulation pattern, and its landscaping. Note the apparent closure of the roadway access along Second Street, at the south side of the property.

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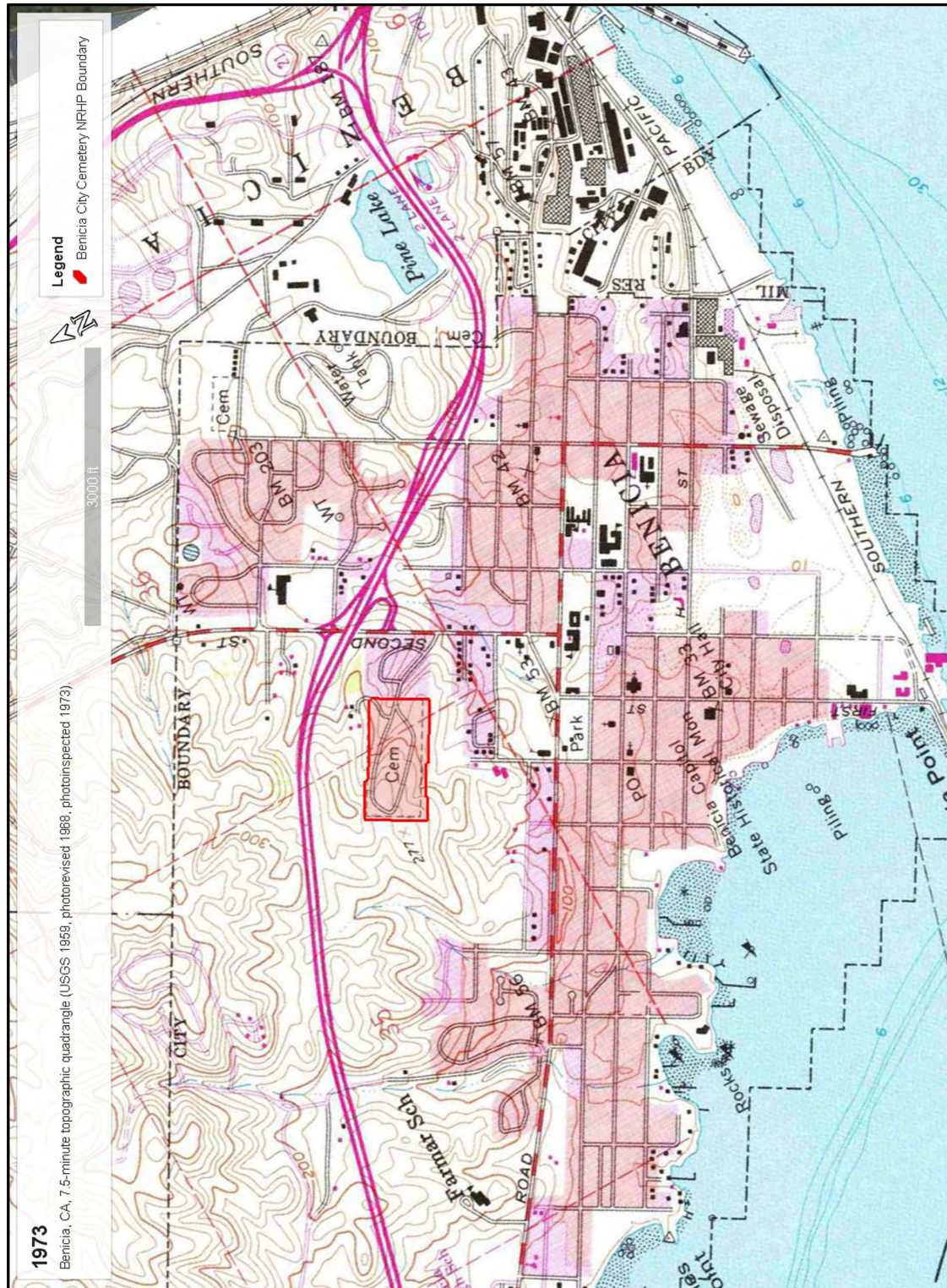


Figure 16. 1973 USGS topographical quadrangle map showing the location of the cemetery in proximity to the town and its relative growth. Note the relatively minor housing growth to the north, west, and south of the cemetery.

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Figure 17. 1974 aerial photograph showing the cemetery, its circulation pattern, and its landscaping. Here, the vegetation has matured, but otherwise is relatively unchanged.

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Figure 18. 1980 aerial photograph showing the cemetery, its circulation pattern, and its landscaping. Note the addition of trees along the roadways, particularly along the center street.

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Historical Photographs

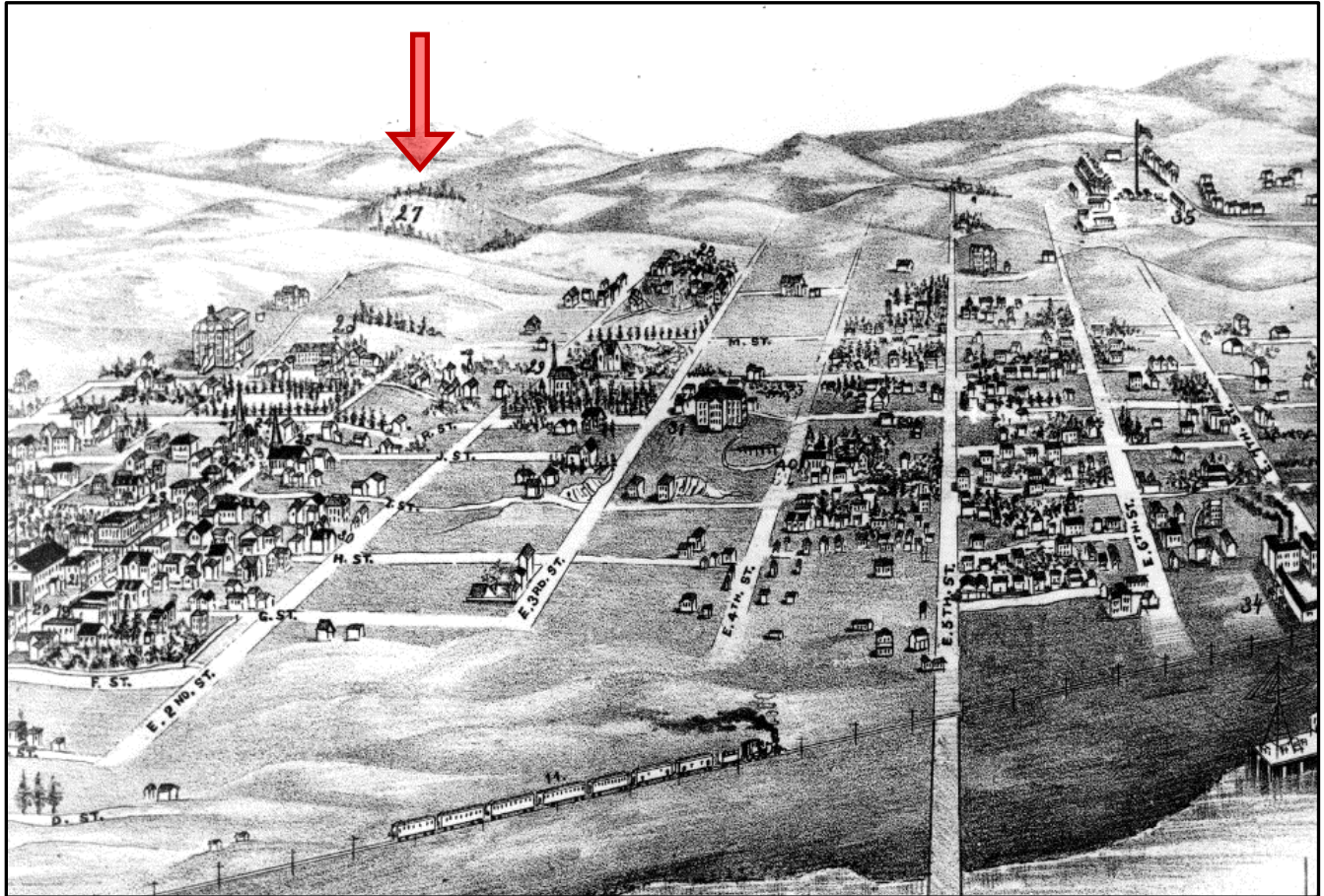


Figure 19. Historical image, 1885, detail from W.W. Elliot's 1885 Birds'-eye view of Benicia. Source: Benicia Historical Museum.

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Figure 20. Historical photograph, 1858, “daguerreotype of one of the Gulick brothers standing next to the grave of his brother in the Benicia cemetery circa 1858. The photos were taken for the Gulick brothers who were early Benicia businessmen.” The bodies of both brothers were reinterred at a cemetery in New York. Photographer: George Howard Johnson. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.



Figure 21. Historical photograph, 1893, depicting the Johnson Family plot and memorial (circa 1893 photo colorized), looking south toward the Benicia waterfront. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.

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Figure 22. Historical photograph, 1866, "Benicia, Solano County." Lawrence & Houseworth, publisher. Note the lack of vegetation on the hillside in the proximity of the Benicia City Cemetery. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

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Figure 23. Historical photograph, circa 1895, “view of Benicia looking down First Street across Carquinez Strait to Port Costa. Photo dated 1895 but appears to be much earlier.” Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.

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Figure 24. Historical photograph, early twentieth century, looking southwest, from the Benicia City Cemetery hill. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.



Figure 25. Historical photograph, no date. Showing a portion of the Benicia City Cemetery. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.

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Figure 26. Historical photograph, 1906, view of town of Benicia looking south toward Carquinez Strait. Note the headstones in the lower left corner. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.



Figure 27. Historical photograph, no date. Looking southeast from the top of the cemetery hill. Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.

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Figure 28. Historical photograph, 1920, "City of Benicia as seen from the City Cemetery Hill located at West 2nd and P streets, looking southeast." Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.



Figure 29. Historical photograph, 1950s, "Old Timers' celebration people at the grave of Mary Atkins Lynch in the Benicia City Cemetery." Source: Benicia Historical Museum Collection.

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- Photo 3. Catholic and Central Sections, facing east.
- Photo 4. Catholic Section, McSweeney plot, facing northeast.
- Photo 5. Central Section, Cocks Vault, facing north.
- Photo 6. Lower road, showing trees and vegetation, facing southeast.
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- Photo 8. Central Section, Pena plot, facing northeast.
- Photo 9. Central Section, Hurley and Mullaney plots, facing northeast.
- Photo 10. Central Section, Johnson plot, facing southwest.
- Photo 11. Central Section, Thomas T. Hooper vault, facing northeast.
- Photo 12. Masonic Section, facing southeast.
- Photo 13. Pioneer Section, Lynch plot, facing northwest.
- Photo 14. Pioneer Section, facing northeast.
- Photo 15. Pioneer Section, unreadable stones, facing southeast.
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- Photo 18. Ada Hook Bowie gravestone, facing west.

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Photo 1. Catholic Section and Central Section overlooking the Bay, facing southeast.

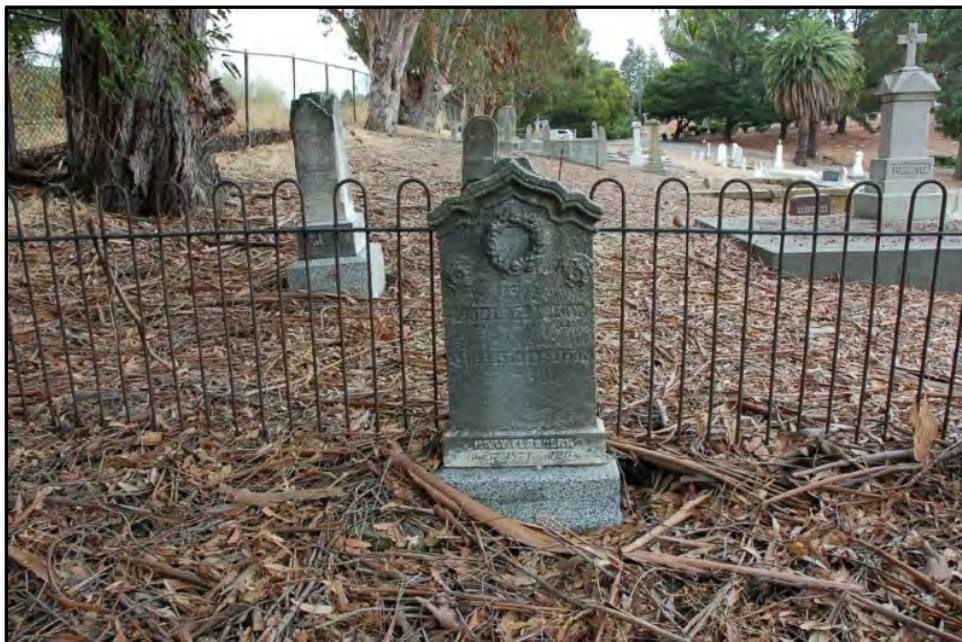


Photo 2. Catholic Section, showing multiple headstones, facing north.

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Photo 3. Catholic and Central Sections, facing east.



Photo 4. Catholic Section, McSweeney plot, facing northeast.

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Photo 5. Central Section, Cocks Vault, facing north.



Photo 6. Lower road, showing trees and vegetation, facing southeast.

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Photo 7. Central Section, looking toward the Bay, facing southeast.

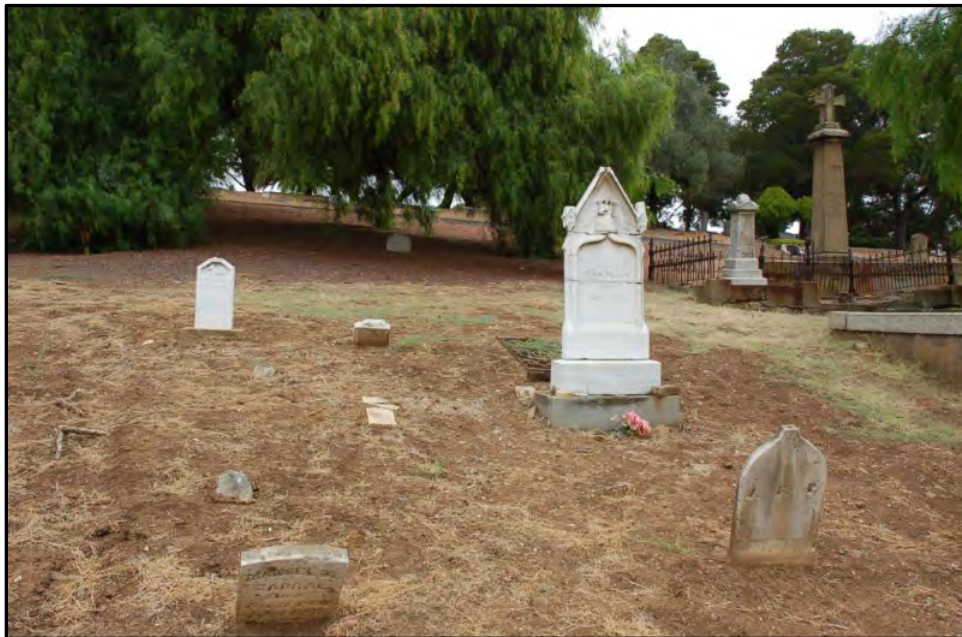


Photo 8. Central Section, Pena plot, facing northeast.

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Photo 9. Central Section, Hurley and Mullaney plots, facing northeast.



Photo 10. Central Section, Johnson plot, facing southwest.

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Photo 11. Central Section, Thomas T. Hooper vault, facing northeast.



Photo 12. Masonic Section, facing southeast.

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Photo 13. Pioneer Section, Lynch plot, facing northwest.



Photo 14. Pioneer Section, facing northeast.

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Photo 15. Pioneer Section, unreadable stones, facing southeast.



Photo 16. Central Section, facing southwest.

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Photo 17. Masonic Section, facing southeast.