

## CASE STUDY 2

### Greenwood Cemetery (Fulton County)

**Plan:** Curvilinear

**Type:** Corporate

**Style:** Lawn Park

**Date Established:** 1904

328



Source: Google Earth Maps 3/14/2018.

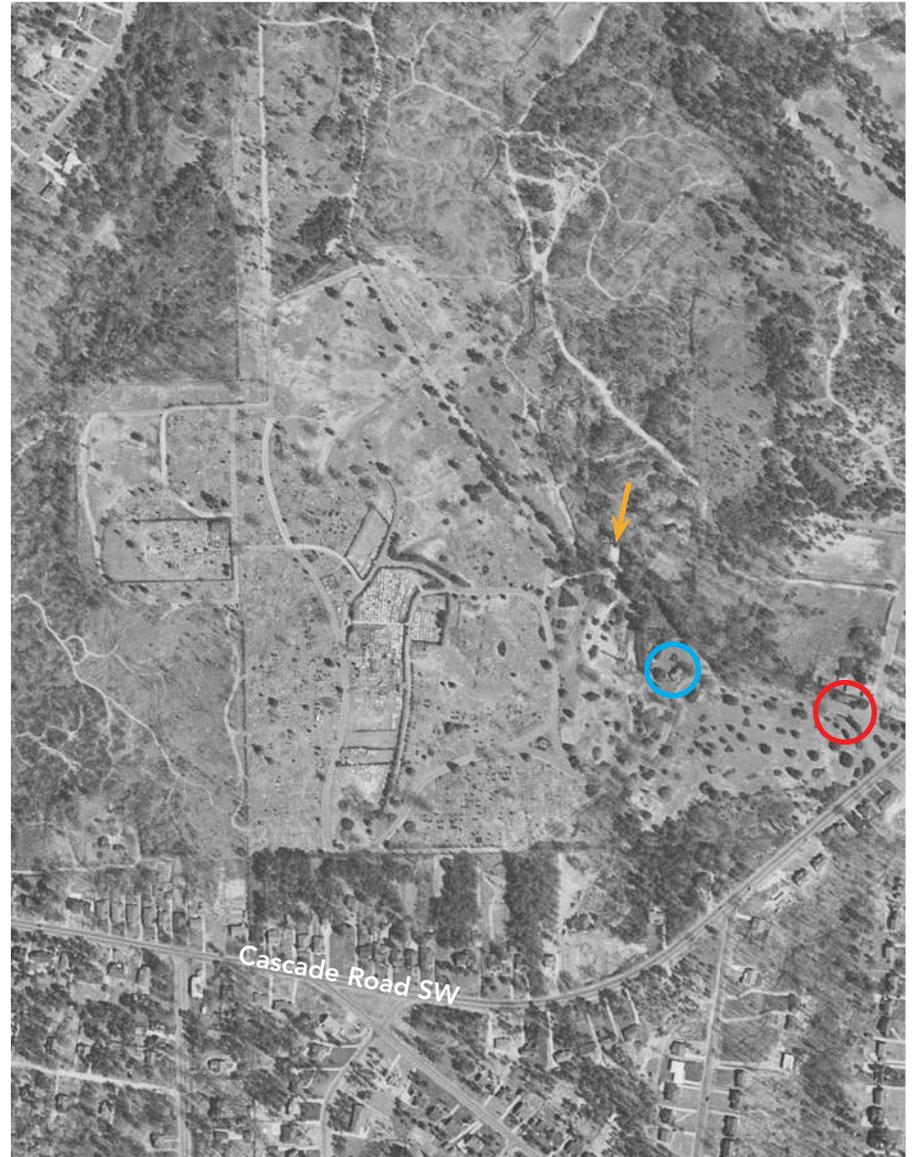


Source: Google Earth Maps 3/14/2018.





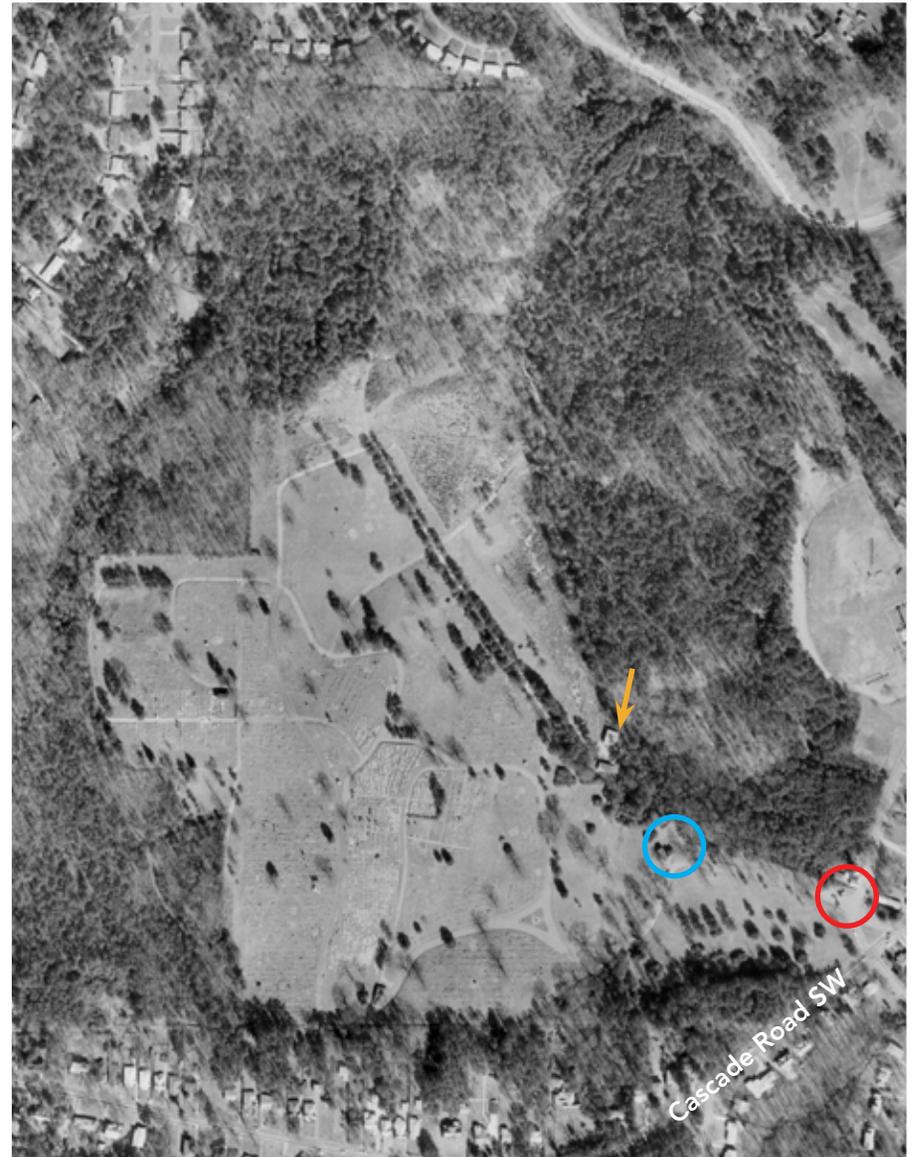
1938 Historic Aerial Showing Cemetery Entrance (Red Circle).



1952 Historic Aerial Showing Historic Cemetery Office (Blue Circle), Entrance (Red Circle), and Maintenance Buildings (Orange Arrow). Use of hedges to delineate sections is clear in this aerial.



1968 Historic Aerial Showing Historic Cemetery Office (Blue Circle), Entrance (Red Circle), and Maintenance Buildings (Orange Arrow).



1972 Historic Aerial Showing Historic Cemetery Office (Blue Circle), Entrance (Red Circle), and Maintenance Buildings (Orange Arrow). By 1972, any vegetation borders around sections were removed.

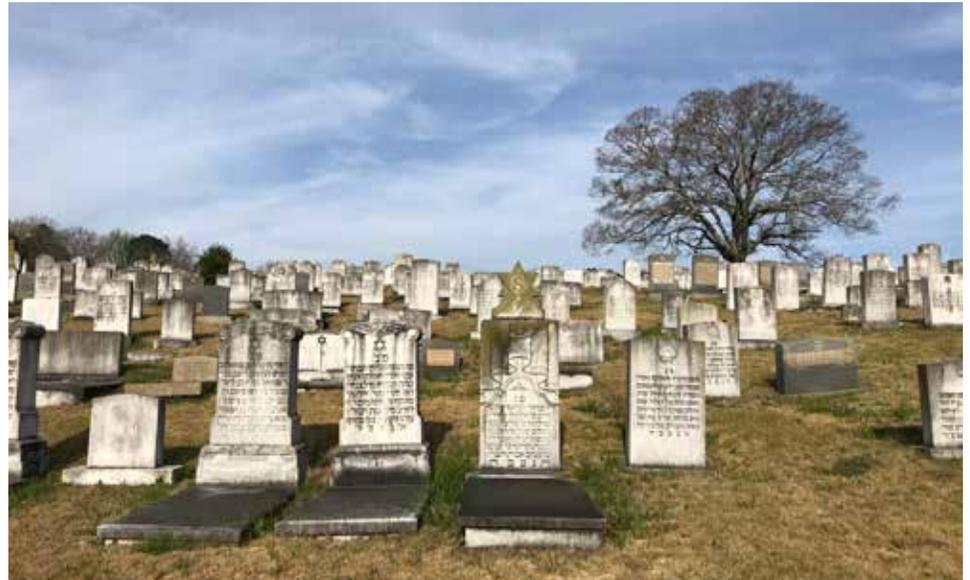
There appear to have been several buildings present in the 1938 aerial, including an office with a neighboring structure at the entrance and a potential caretaker's residence near a bend at the entrance. The office building appears as a compact plan with a hipped roof on historic aerials. This building was destroyed by fire in 1973 and was replaced with the present side-gabled office in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> A maintenance lot appears to have been present along the northern tree line in 1938; a maintenance building was built between 1955 and 1960 and another maintenance building between 1960 and 1968.

The Jewish sections comprise most of the burial space at Greenwood. Each section represents a different congregation and is marked by a prominent gate. In 1965, the *Memorial to the Six Million* was constructed; it was the first Holocaust memorial in Georgia. The memorial has been the site of an annual Holocaust Commemoration Day for the past 52 years. It was listed in the NRHP in 2008.

In addition to the prominent Jewish presence, Greenwood features distinct sections for Greek Orthodox and Chinese burials. A Greek Orthodox section was built in 1911 in response to limited offerings for the Greek community at nearby Westview Cemetery.<sup>2</sup> This section is separated from other areas of the cemetery visually by a stone wall and roads, and it features a Greek Revival style chapel. There is a small Chinese section with burials dating to the 1910s. The cemetery was not open to African Americans until 1987, when C.R. Jones, Atlanta's first black council member, was interred there. Hank Ballard, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted singer/songwriter and famed (among other accomplishments) as the writer of "The Twist," was buried there in 2003.

<sup>1</sup> Personal Communication Greenwood Cemetery Manager, 2018

<sup>2</sup> *Atlanta Greeks and Early History*. Stephen Georgeson, 2015. Arcadia Publishing, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina.



(Above) Wide Variety of Jewish Grave Markers. (Below) NRHP-Listed *Memorial to the Six Million*.

## LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION:

Greenwood Cemetery consists of approximately 134 acres in Fulton County. It is located in the Cascade Heights neighborhood, lying north and west of Cascade Avenue SW. Greenwood Cemetery is surrounded by a band of dense forest, which screens views of the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The combination of wooded lands and rolling fields gives the cemetery a park-like feel. The entrance is set back from Cascade Avenue SW, which the narrow entrance drive intersects at a sharp angle. Greenwood has a formal entrance marked by random ashlar granite pillars and low, curved walls adorned with urns and pyramidal capitals.

The cemetery has a formal curvilinear plan. A winding single-lane entrance road leads from the gate into the cemetery, concealing the burial spaces within. In the cemetery, the road forks around a prominent fountain before branching in opposite directions along a curvilinear path through the cemetery. The drives wind through the cemetery, following the terrain, separating and delineating burial sections.

The sections are primarily based on distinct ethnic and religious groups. The largest area of the cemetery is devoted to Atlanta's Jewish congregations, followed by a Greek Orthodox section and a small Chinese section. The Jewish and Greek Orthodox sections feature prominent stone entrances. The markers reflect ethnic and religious symbolism, distinct to those groups, including the Hebrew Peh Nun for "Here lies," the Star of David, Cohanim hands, engraved tablets, menorahs, and scrolls, as well as Greek Orthodox Crosses (see Appendix A, *Symbols*). Within each section, the graves appear in orderly rows with fairly consistent spacing (within the specific section). Graves within the Jewish sections are densely spaced, leaving minimal space for movement between them. Graves in other sections are much wider in comparison.



Arches and pillars mark the entrances to the various sections devoted to specific congregations in the Jewish section.

Within the older sections of the cemetery, including the Jewish, Greek, and Chinese sections, graves and plots are generally oriented east-west; however within the newer sections, particularly the northern sections, grave orientation is sometimes north-south, or even northwest-southeast. Grave orientation appears to be generally uniform within each section, which is laid out in orderly rows following the shape of the section and the terrain therein.

The internments exhibit a wide variety of formal, professionally-manufactured marker types. Though appearing in different shapes and featuring a variety of design motifs and symbols, the majority of the markers in the cemetery consist of robust granite tablets, set on bases. Composite forms and flush bronze placards are also present.

There are a few operational buildings in the cemetery. A non-historic office is located at the entrance. An historic stone chimney stands at the location of the original cemetery office. Maintenance buildings are located within the eastern tree line of the cemetery, beyond the view of the burial spaces. Additional features include a cylindrical stone structure, a granite staircase near the entrance, and a spoil yard near the northern limit of the cemetery.

### ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES:

The identification of a cemetery's plan, type, and style is based on the recognition of its character-defining features. By identifying the common features that stand out in this landscape, the cemetery's development and place within its historic context can be better understood. The feature classes that stood out in this landscape are its natural setting and topography, plan, prominent entrance, ethnic and religious representations, and the markers.



(Above) Unique Marker in the Orthodox Greek Section. (Below) The Orthodox Greek Section.

## LANDSCAPE AND SETTING



### Views, Vistas, & Vegetation

The entrance to the cemetery is recessed; the narrow drive retreats further back into the cemetery before curving to reach the first burial spaces. This was a deliberate element of the design that was meant to limit visibility between the burial spaces and the areas outside of the cemetery. The paved drives follow the terrain around cascading hills, which create impressive views from within the cemetery to other sections.

The existence and placement of trees within the cemetery is important to the setting. The periphery of the cemetery is densely wooded, screening the areas beyond the cemetery from sight and fostering a park-like environment in an otherwise developed area (even at the time of the cemetery's establishment). Existing trees and the natural terrain have been utilized to hide the maintenance facilities, cemetery office, and the surrounding community.

Within the cemetery, trees appear sparsely spaced and few in number among burial sections. Aerial photography confirms that the number and size has been consistent throughout the cemetery's history, suggesting the landscape has been carefully maintained throughout its life with the effort to maintain a similar setting. In later sections to the north, trees were planted along drives, forming a long alley.

## ORGANIZATION AND LAYOUT



### Formal Entrance

The entrance features a prominent gate, consisting of granite pillars topped with draped urns and flanked by curved granite walls defining the main entrance of the cemetery.



### Arrangement

The cemetery is organized by burial section. Many sections were established for specific ethnic or religious groups.



### Circulation

The paved drives follow the natural terrain; however, they also define and separate burial sections. Unpaved paths are limited. Instead of following defined walkways, the linear placement of the graves fosters natural movement through the landscape without direction.



### Graves

Jewish tradition is explicit in how burials are to be arranged, including the spacing between burials, which is quite close compared to other areas of the cemetery (Section Two, Protestant Cemeteries). Despite the presence of prominent and distinct entrances for each section, the line between them is not distinct among the graves. In other burial sections, spacing between standing markers seems to increase over time, which is likely due to an increase in the use of family markers and individual flush stones as the 20th century progressed.



### Plots

Family plots were observed in all historic sections, throughout much of the 20th century. Few enclosures or boundaries were observed (only low curbing in older sections). The large family surname marker surrounded by individual low or flush stone markers was the predominant preference in this cemetery, historically. This practice was popularized during the earlier rural cemetery stylistic movement, when such plots would typically be fenced or enclosed by similar means (Section One, Chapter 4, *Rural Garden Cemeteries* and Section Two, *Fencing*). The practice observed in Greenwood, lacking enclosures, is a characteristic of the Lawn Park style.

## Sections



There appear to be approximately 46 separate sections – most were part of the original layout of the cemetery. A number of Jewish congregations are represented by separate, distinct sections in the cemetery; together, they make up most of the historic burial space. Other distinct, historic sections include a large section for Orthodox Greeks and the smaller Chinese Association Cemetery. The older Jewish and Greek sections feature prominent gates identifying specific congregations. The prominence of specific groups (and the absence of others) reflects the heightened segregation of distinct cultural and religious groups that characterized this period between the reconstruction era and the Civil Rights Movement.

### ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



## Markers

The approximately 3,000 internments exhibit a wide variety of formal, professionally-manufactured marker types. Granite, slate, marble, concrete, and bronze types are present. Four distinct periods of marker traditions were observed. The earlier Jewish sections at the core of the cemetery feature a mix of marker forms, with the most abundant consisting of tablet on ledger and cradle types (A-10, A-12, A-14). These are common forms in Jewish cemeteries. Through all sections, dating from the founding through the 1950s, more robust markers exhibit classical themes with a range of religious motifs. Modernist forms dating from the 1930s to the 1950s are also present. In the larger public sections, robust granite tablets set on bases are the most common, spaced evenly with minimal distinctions, such as color, motif, or crown shape. In the newer sections to the north, flush stone or bronze plaques with integrated planters, characteristic of the Memorial Park style, are the only forms present (A-4).

The cemetery possesses a substantial collection of porcelain portraits; the markers that exhibit them date from the first burials through the present.



Porcelain portraits on markers at Greenwood cemetery

## Buildings and Structures

The cemetery features several standing burial structures. A small Greek Revival chapel within the Greek Orthodox section is the only non-utilitarian building within the cemetery. A non-historic office is located at the entrance, on the site of an historic office that was removed. A small maintenance yard features a historic stone rubble service building and shed structure.

Two ruins stand near the entrance of the cemetery. A stone chimney is suspected to have once been part of the original office building. A round, stone rubble structure stands near the base of a granite staircase along the entrance drive. The nature and use of the latter structure is unknown.

## Memorial/Statuary

The *Memorial to the Six Million*, constructed in 1965, is an open-air granite structure featuring six torches symbolizing the six million victims of the holocaust. The memorial, designed by architect Benjamin Hirsch, is individually listed in the NRHP.

### CULTURAL TRADITIONS

## Grave Goods

Throughout the cemetery, the placement of tokens consisting of pebbles, stones, beads, glass shards, shells, and coins was abundantly observed. This reflects the Jewish tradition of leaving a token in remembrance of a loved one (Section Two, *Offerings*).

## Archaeological Features

There were no archaeological features observed that indicate unmarked graves in any location at Greenwood. This may be an indication that an active Corporate-type cemetery maintains more control of grave placement and their markings.

## APPLYING THE NRHP CRITERIA:

Greenwood Cemetery is considered significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History and Ethnic Heritage at the local level. Greenwood represents a period that this context describes as “Two Georgia’s” (Section One, Chapter 6). This period (1900-1945) was characterized by urban growth, industrialization, progressive reform (with social and aesthetic implications to cemeteries), and community building for disadvantaged groups. This period witnessed the establishment of new cemeteries in urban centers; the strengthening of segregation along racial, ethnic, and religious lines; and the growth of mutual interest groups. Greenwood was important to ethnic and religious minorities in Atlanta during the early 20th century. Greenwood was among the earliest Corporate-type cemeteries built in the city to serve specific ethnic and religious groups. Unlike Oakland and Westview, which were public cemeteries that set aside specific spaces for distinct groups, Greenwood was established specifically to serve those groups. Other examples, like Crest Lawn, would follow this model. Its importance to Atlanta’s Jewish community grew with the construction of the Holocaust Memorial. The cemetery has been the location of an annual



(Left) A Marker in the Chinese Section Exhibiting Chinese Characters. (Right) A Marker Denoting the Chinese Association Cemetery.

Holocaust Commemoration Day for the past 52 years. With this annual event and its many Jewish sections, the cemetery has served as a cultural center for the Jewish community. The Chinese Association Cemetery was established by a benevolent society, which reflects a significant trend during this time as noted in Section One, Chapter 6, *Mutual Aid Societies*. At the time of its founding and for much of its history, Greenwood Cemetery reflected popular trends of identity reinforcement and solidarity among diverse groups; it reflected an effort to strengthen the lines between diverse groups and the identity within them. As a result, the cemetery is an important part of Atlanta's multi-cultural history.

The cemetery is not considered significant under Criterion B as it is not known to contain an individual of transcendent importance or that has had a significant impact on the community, state, or nation.

Greenwood Cemetery was determined to be significant under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Art at the local level. Greenwood Cemetery embodies characteristic features of the Lawn Park style, as defined in Section Two of this context. The Lawn Park style was developed by Adolph Strauch in 1855 (Section One, Chapter 6, Advent of Lawn Park Cemetery) in a direct response to the popular Rural Garden style of the period. Strauch's design departed from earlier styles by attempting to reduce the scale and abundance of architecture in order to emphasize grassed lawns and open spaces, fostering an orderly and easily-maintained, park-like setting. The careful use of the natural setting reflected the next evolution of Romanticism in cemeteries; where the Rural Garden-style cemeteries were crowded with diverse vegetation, trees, and flowering plants, Lawn Park-style cemeteries would feature far fewer trees and plantings. Lawn Park-style cemeteries emphasized the importance of the grassed terrain, and trees were retained or strategically planted to maintain the park-like setting while creating open, uninterrupted views within the cemetery.

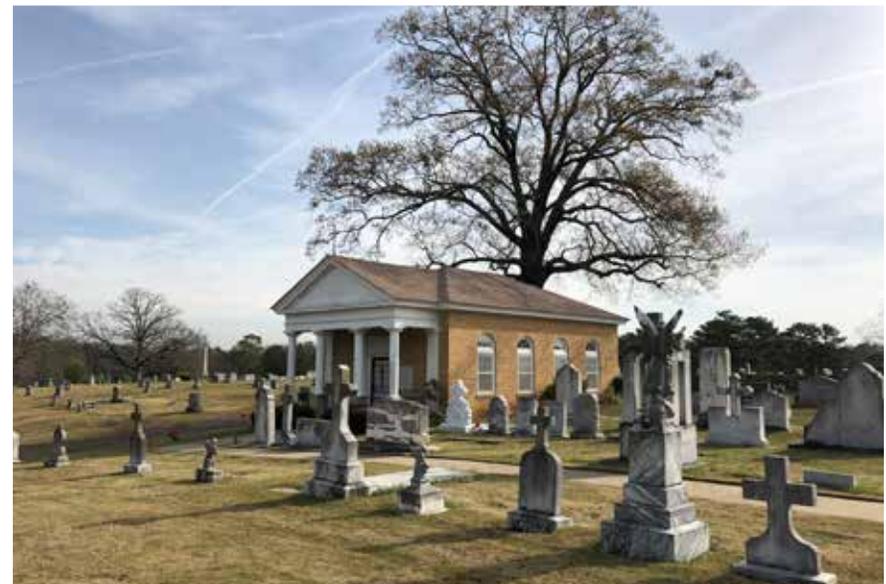


(Above) A newer Memorial Park-style section is also present at Greenwood cemetery. (middle) Lawn Park style can be seen in the lower, more uniform nature of the markers, which lie in neat rows with grass lawn. (Below) After passing through the formal entrance gates, visitors wind their way into the cemetery. The park-like setting indicative of Lawn Park style is evident.

Greenwood was designed to emulate Strauch's ideal of a landscape that balances architecture with a nature. The cemetery is surrounded by a thick buffer, and the only entry is recessed to obstruct any views of the surrounding community. Within its borders, any utilitarian buildings or structures are concealed by vegetation. Burial spaces are largely devoid of plantings. Throughout its history, a limited number of trees have been maintained within the landscape, which has helped maintain the park-like setting without compromising the views. The Lawn Park style features fewer markers with more consistent spacing than earlier cemeteries; plot enclosures are less prevalent; curvilinear roads are typical. With its pastoral landscape, orderly layout, geometrically-shaped sections, and lower-profile headstones, Greenwood is an excellent example of an early 20th-century Lawn Park-style cemetery. It exhibits an emphasis on grassed lawns, family monuments with smaller individual markers, and a more streamlined appearance. The Lawn Park style became popular in Georgia toward the end of the 19th century with prominent examples appearing in the 1880s-1890s, including Atlanta's Westview Cemetery in 1884. Laid out in 1904, Greenwood Cemetery would have been an early example of this style, especially on this scale, as the Lawn Park style remained prominent throughout the 20th century in Georgia.

Greenwood Cemetery is also significant for the NRHP-listed *Memorial to the Six Million*. A small Greek Revival chapel stands within the Greek Orthodox section of the cemetery. Chapels were popular in larger Lawn Park-style cemeteries to provide locations for services or quiet reflection. The chapel is a good example of the Greek Revival as it features a prominent temple front portico with full-height Doric columns atop brick pedestals.

In the area of Art, Greenwood Cemetery contains one of the state's largest collections of early to mid-20th-century Jewish and Greek Orthodox grave markers, as well as a small section of Chinese markers, all with a wide variety of cultural and religious symbology. The cemetery possesses a substantial collection of porcelain portraits; the markers that exhibit them date from the earliest burials through the present. The placement of photographs on markers has been available since the late 19th century and has evolved into



(Above) Marker on the *Memorial to the Six Million*. Visitors have left tokens and offerings at the memorial (see Section Two, *Offerings and Visitor Tokens*). (Below) Greek Revival chapel at Greenwood cemetery.

many alternative forms in recent years. The number and variety of examples in this cemetery span more than a century. The earliest forms include black and white, circular or oval insets, heart-shaped, colored portraits, and portraits within bronze enclosures.

In evaluating Greenwood Cemetery under Criterion D, consideration must be given to the cemetery's history and its place within the larger historical and social context. By developing research questions related to the significant data potential, it can help answer questions about the ethnic and social history of Jewish and Greek Orthodox congregations as well as Atlanta's Chinese American population. It is then possible to evaluate the various data sets that are present and whether they have the potential to help answer these questions. By examining the cemetery's history within its larger social and historical context, the list of research questions can be used to evaluate the available data sets and their integrity, as well as their ability to yield new and significant information.

Section One of this context demonstrates that Greenwood Cemetery's development was very much a product of its time and the social movements that structured American culture between 1900-1945. As discussed above, it was part of a new wave of urban cemeteries that were established to take advantage of a new market afforded by the presence and the increasingly affluent urban religious and ethnic minorities. As noted, Greenwood was among the earliest Corporate-type cemeteries built in the city to serve specific ethnic and religious groups that were previously marginalized, if served at all.

Knowing the cemetery's history within its historical context helps in developing a list of research questions for both the aboveground and below ground data sets.

Using the historical context of Greenwood Cemetery as the foundation for significance, research questions may include:

- In addition to ethnic and religious heritage, are socio-economic status or social status evident in the layout of the individual sections and the design and form of the markers?
- Is the artistic expression inherent in the inscriptions, and are the marker types and decorations important in creating and maintaining social identity as members of a specific ethnic or religious community?
- Is there a decrease in ethnic burials over time as Georgia's population became more homogenized? Additionally, as the population becomes more integrated, do expressions of ethnic and religious identity become more prominently featured in order to maintain membership in a group?
- How does this cemetery and its varying social groups reflect the changing economic landscape and rising consumerism for funerary goods and services?
- The Chinese Association Cemetery section is small in comparison to the Jewish and Greek Orthodox sections. Could this reflect a change in cultural mindset that the United States was now home to those of Chinese ethnicity, and it was no longer culturally necessary to send their deceased family members back to their ancestral homeland in China for burial?

The next step is to evaluate available data sets above and below ground. For aboveground resources, Appendix A of this context helps in identifying the formal headstones within the Greenwood Cemetery. Four distinct periods of marker traditions were observed, including: tablet on ledger and cradle types, which are classically themed and contain religious motifs; Modernist forms dating from the 1930s to the 1950s; robust granite tablets set on bases; and flush stone or bronze plaques with integrated planters typical of the Memorial Park style. Perhaps most notably, the cemetery holds a large collection of porcelain portraits on markers from the founding of the cemetery to the present. Basic information contained

on the markers themselves generally include inscriptions of the name of the deceased, age at the time of death, birth and death dates, and quotes that reflect the individual's cultural views on death. Additionally, many possess images of the deceased. While archival resources such as religious affiliation, population within the community, and military associations, are largely available within the historical record, Greenwood's cemetery's markers provide an additional dimension to our understanding of how Atlanta became a multi-cultural city. This added data stems from the combination of placement of individuals not only within their families, but also within their congregations.

Chronological, cultural, and socioeconomic relationships between individuals, families, and congregations can be inferred by locational information. Based on analysis of the available aboveground data sets, Greenwood Cemetery possesses significant data potential as it relates to eligibility under Criterion D.

The research potential for below ground data in terms of religious and cultural mortuary practices, health, and nutrition of those in the community may be present; nevertheless, it is difficult to assess whether or not subsurface data is present because excavation of cemeteries should not occur for the sole purpose of developing data potential. The effects of soil chemistry and other environmental factors on the preservation state of burial deposits can affect the ability of deposits to provide certain types of significant data. Without below ground investigations, the preservation status and integrity of deposits is unknown, and, therefore, their ability to address significant research questions is unknown.

Greenwood Cemetery holds significance under Criteria A and C; thus, it must meet Criteria Consideration D for cemeteries as well (Section Three). Greenwood Cemetery satisfies Criteria Consideration D: it is significant for ethnic heritage and social history as it exhibits distinctive design features and a rich collection of early 20th-century funerary art associated with

Atlanta's Jewish, Greek Orthodox, and Chinese-American cultural groups. Based on the archaeological considerations for the below ground data set, the eligibility of the Greenwood Cemetery under Criterion D is unknown.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF INTEGRITY:**

Greenwood Cemetery retains a high degree of integrity of all aspects. The cemetery remains in its original location. The historic plan, sections, and drives remain intact; the later growth and layout of new burial spaces to the north have not impacted any elements of the historic design. Historic built features, including the formal entrance gate, fountain, section gates, grave markers, hardscape (i.e. granite and concrete curbing along the historic roads), and historic buildings and structures, remain intact and largely unaltered by inappropriate repairs or the intrusion of non-historic materials; therefore, the cemetery retains integrity of materials. The same components of the built environment are able to convey methods of production and installation of markers, construction of the historic buildings and structures, and historic hardscaping at different stages throughout the 20th century; thus, it retains integrity of workmanship. A comparison of aerial photography since 1938 illustrates how the cemetery has maintained a thick, natural buffer from the surrounding community, sparsely placed trees within the interior, and an open, grassy terrain that is consistent today with the historic setting. The active use and careful maintenance of the cemetery has helped foster a strong connection between the historic landscape and the cemetery today, maintaining integrity of feeling and association.

#### **NRHP RECOMMENDATION:**

Greenwood Cemetery is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage and Social History, and Criterion C for Landscape Architecture and Art. The cemetery exhibits excellent integrity. It is also recommended eligible under Criterion D for the research potential of its aboveground data sets. The cemetery's eligibility under Criterion D based on evaluation of below ground data sets could not be determined and is, therefore, unknown.