

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**  
**Report for the Village Council Meeting**  
**4/9/2019**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
Historic Landmark – 5158 Main Street – Main Street Cemetery	Stan Popovich Director, Community Development

**SYNOPSIS**

A Historic Landmark Designation Resolution has been prepared to designate the Main Street Cemetery at 5158 Main Street a historic landmark.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The Goals for 2017-2019 include *Steward of Financial, Environmental and Neighborhood Sustainability*.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval on the April 16, 2019 Active Agenda per the unanimous recommendation of the Architectural Design Review Board (ADRB). The ADRB found that the site meets the landmark designation criteria found in Section 12.302 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**BACKGROUND**

The Village is seeking a Historic Landmark Designation for their property at 5158 Main Street under the following criteria: the property has significant value as part of the historic characteristics of the community (Section 12.302.B.1) and the property is a source of civic pride for the community (Section 12.302.B.6).

Existing Site

The cemetery is a notable local landmark due to its location and association with the history of Downers Grove. As one of the very few cemeteries in the country remaining in a downtown business district, the Main Street Cemetery is the final resting place for many of the Village's founding families, including the Curtiss, Blodgett and Carpenter families. Samuel Curtiss donated part of his sheep pasture for the burial ground, which served the community from 1856 until the last interment in 1939. The cemetery hosts many war veterans, abolitionists and Isrel Blackburn, a freed slave and Civil War veteran.

Though several of its features are not historic, such as the landscaping and architectural features (i.e. Main Street entrance, rear fence and pergola), the Village is requesting landmark status for the site itself in addition to identifying several significant historic grave markers located on the site. The Downers Grove Historical Society identified 28 specific markers, out of 95, that are deemed appropriate for requiring a certificate of appropriateness in the event the markers are proposed for relocation or replaced with a design or a material

that is not considered in-kind. Should this site be given landmark status, a certificate of appropriateness would only be required for alterations or repairs to the 28 identified grave markers as described in the following table:

Table 1: Approval Type

	Approval Type
Removal or replacement of one of the 28 identified historic grave markers (not in kind material or not consistent with the original design)	COA - Major
Replacement of one of the 28 identified historic grave markers (in kind replacement with concrete or original material and similar design)	COA – Minor
Landscaping, lighting, fence improvements, pergola improvements, painting, Main Street entrance maintenance, parking lot or drive aisle maintenance or improvements, sidewalk placement and maintenance, commemorative stone placement, general routine maintenance and cleaning, movement or replacement of non-historic grave markers and grave marker repair for all markers.	No COA

### Analysis of Significance

The cemetery was constructed in 1856 and is thus over 50 years of age as required by Section 12.302.A. The proposal complies with the following criteria for Landmark Designation: 12.302.B.1 and 12.301.B6. It meets criteria 12.302.B.1 because the cemetery has significant historical value relating to the heritage of the Village. Members of several founding families, including the Curtiss, Blodgett, and Carpenter families, and several Civil War veterans are buried here. Criteria 12.302.B.6 is also met as the cemetery is one of the few remaining in a downtown business district in the nation and hosts many community events throughout the year that highlight the Village's history.

### Public Comment

Five members of the public spoke in support of the petition at the March 20, 2019 ADRB meeting.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution  
 Location Map  
 Updated Monument Document  
 Staff Report  
 ADRB Minutes from March 20, 2019

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_****A RESOLUTION GRANTING HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION  
FOR 5158 MAIN STREET**

WHEREAS, the Village of Downers Grove has adopted an Ordinance entitled the "Historic Preservation Ordinance"; and

WHEREAS, Section 12-301 of the Municipal Code sets forth landmark designation procedures for areas, properties, buildings, structures, objects and sites; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Downers Grove ("Applicant") is the owner of a cemetery on the property legally described as follows:

Lot 51 of the Assessor's Subdivision of Sections 7 and 8, Township 38 North, Range 11, East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the plat thereof recorded October 2, 1871 in Book 2 of Plats, pages 29 and 30, as Document No. 14481, excepting therefrom these parts described as follows:

- (1) Commencing at the northwest corner of Lot 51 (also known as the cemetery lot): thence east along the north line of said Lot 51, a distance of 16.00 feet to the Place of Beginning: thence continuing east along said north line of Lot 51, a distance of 182 feet, more or less, to the westerly right-of-way line of Main Street as dedicated; thence south along said westerly right-of-way line, a distance of 58 feet, more or less; thence west along a line 58.00 feet south of and parallel with the said north line of Lot 51, a distance of 182 feet, more or less: thence north, a distance of 58.00 feet to the Place of Beginning; also excepting that part of said Lot 51 as dedicated and used for Main Street; all in the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois.
- (2) Commencing at the northwest corner of said Lot 51: thence easterly along the north line of said Lot 51, a distance of 16.0 feet: thence southerly along a line parallel with the west right-of-way line of Main Street as presently occupied, a distance of 60.97 feet; thence westerly 90 degrees 53 minutes to the right of the last-described course extended, a distance of 18.23 feet to a point on the west line of said Lot 51: thence northerly along said west line of Lot 51, a distance of 61.29 feet to the Place of Beginning: all in the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois.
- (3) Commencing at the southwest corner of said Lot 51 (also known as the cemetery lot): thence northerly along west line of said Lot 51, a distance of 140.67 feet; thence easterly, a distance of 18.23 feet, more or less; thence south parallel with said west line of Lot 51, a distance of 140.67 feet to the south line of Lot 51; thence west to the Place of Beginning: all in the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois.

Commonly known as: 5158 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515  
(PIN: 09-08-305-015)

WHEREAS, a cemetery (circa 1856) is on the property; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2019, the Architectural Design Review Board conducted a public hearing in connection with the aforesaid application, after notice of said hearing was duly given; and

WHEREAS, the Board rendered its decision on the aforesaid application, recommending that the cemetery located at 5158 Main Street, Downers Grove, Illinois, be granted Historic Landmark Designation; and

WHEREAS, certain applicable requirements of Section 12-302, Landmark Designation Criteria, of the Historic Preservation Ordinance relating to the granting of Historic Landmark Designation have been met.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1. That the recitals contained in the Preamble hereto are incorporated as part of this Resolution.

Section 2. That the cemetery located on the property located at 5158 Main Street is hereby granted Historic Landmark Designation subject to the following conditions:

1. Removal or replacement of one or more of the twenty-eight (28) historic grave markers identified in the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery Monuments Proposed for Landmark Status Report dated April 1, 2019, with material that is not in-kind or consistent with the original design shall require a Major Certificate of Appropriateness.
2. Removal or replacement of one or more of the twenty-eight (28) historic grave markers identified in the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery Monuments Proposed for Landmark Status Report dated April 1, 2019, with in-kind material and similar design shall require a Minor Certificate of Appropriateness.
3. The following improvements shall not require any Certificates of Appropriateness: landscaping, lighting, fence improvements, pergola improvements, painting, Main Street entrance maintenance, parking lot or drive aisle maintenance or improvements, sidewalk placement and maintenance, commemorative stone placement, general routine maintenance and cleaning, movement or replacement of non-historic grave markers and grave marker repair for all markers.

Section 3. That the Village Clerk is hereby directed to file a certified copy of this Resolution in the Office of the DuPage County Recorder of Deeds and is further directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Downers Grove Historical Society and the Applicant.

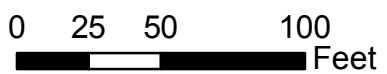
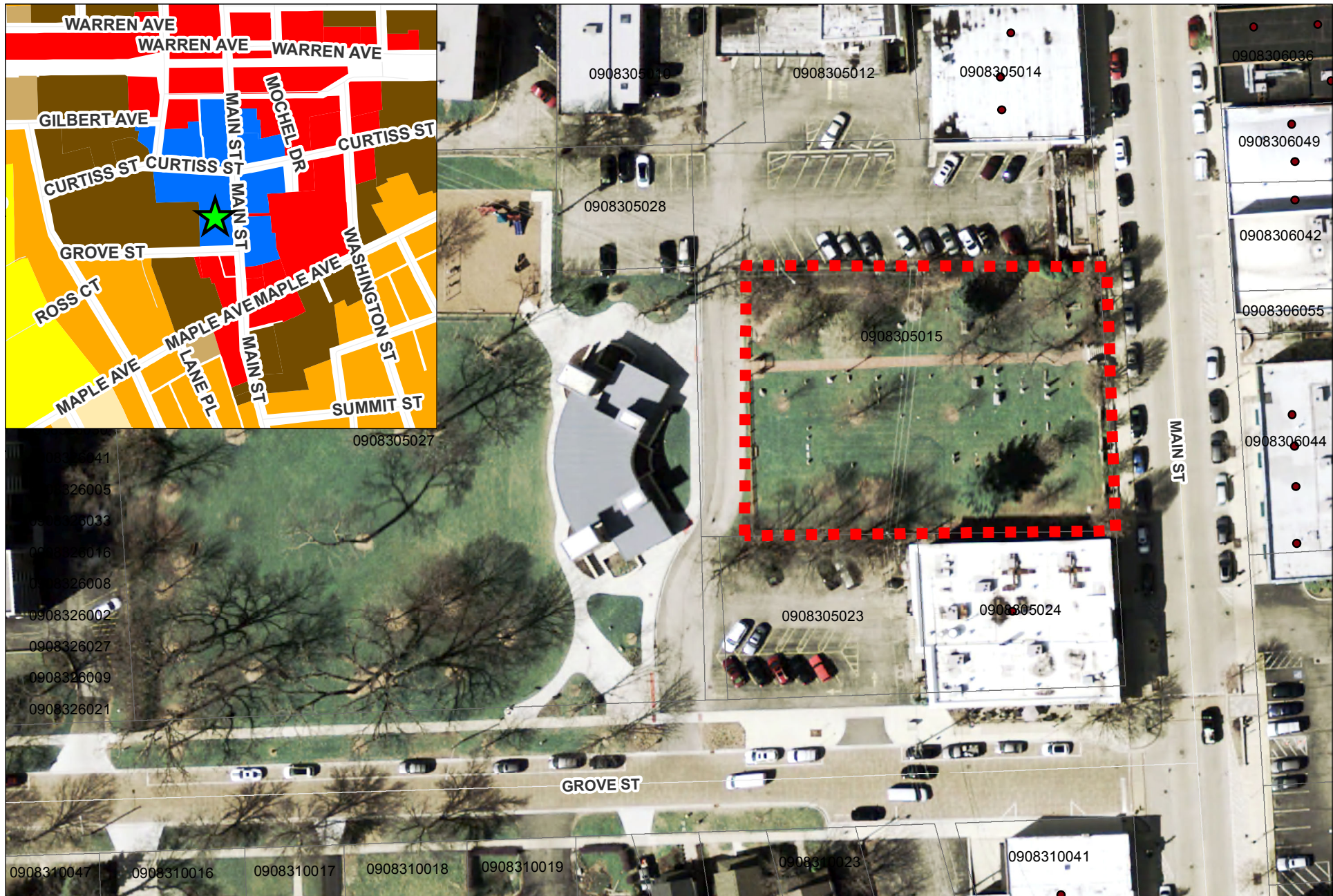
Section 4. That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict with the provisions of this Resolution are hereby repealed.

Section 5. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage as provided by law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Passed:  
Published:

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Village Clerk



Main Street Cemetery - 5158 Main St - Location Map



**Updated 4/1/2019**

**Downers Grove  
Main Street Cemetery Monuments  
Proposed for Landmark Status**



Photography courtesy of Slav Polinski of Slav Polinski Homes

**The Downers Grove Historical Society recommends the following monuments in the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery be included in the landmark application due to their overall contribution to the historic character of the cemetery.**

Entire inventory of monuments at [www.mainstreetcemetery.com](http://www.mainstreetcemetery.com)

# List of Monuments

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(Front of (1))

## (1) Martin Root and Family

Born: 1784  
Died: 1865

### Biography



(Back of (1))

Martin Root was born in Massachusetts in 1784. He moved to Benson, Vermont where he met Abigail. They married in 1814. By 1821 they had six children, Emily, Maria, James, Amos, and twins Elijah and Elisha. By 1843, the family decided to move west to Lisle where land was still available for a good price. Buried here in the Main Street Cemetery along with Martin are his wife Abigail Stearns Root, son Amos and three grandchildren, Albert, James, and Helen. The grandchildren were the children of Elijah.



## (2) Sarah Wells

Born: 1811  
Died: October 20, 1883

### Biography

Sara Wells was the mother of John Manning Wells. In 1883 she passed away at the age of 72. She died just a few days after her granddaughter Gracie who is also buried near her in the Main Street Cemetery.



### (3) Gracie Wells

Born: 1877

Died: January 5, 1883

#### Biography

Gracie Wells was the daughter of Arvilla Bond and John Manning Wells. Gracie passed away in 1883 at the tender young age of age of 5. In her memory, her father worked with the local officials to see that a cabin for the Girl Scouts was erected in the Maple Grove Forest Preserve just west of downtown Downers Grove. It was known as the Daddy Wells cabin. The cabin is no longer in existence.



### (4) John S. Cotes

Born: 1836

Died: 1857

#### Biography

John S Cotes was the son of John P and Mary Chapin Cotes. John served in Company B, Illinois 105th Infantry. He died while in service to his county at Murfreesboro, Tennessee in 1863.



## (5) Mary R. Puffer

Born: 1838

Died: 1864

### Biography

Mary Cotes Puffer was the daughter of John P and Mary Chapin Cotes. She died just a few months after her brother in 1864. Mary married Henry Puffer, Jr. Mary is buried with her parents, while her husband who remarried is buried elsewhere in the cemetery with his parents and second wife.



## (6) Flora Morgan

Born: 1864

Died: 1880

### Biography

Flora A. Morgan died at the young age of 16. She is the first of the family to be buried in the family plot in the Main Street Cemetery. She was the daughter of Benjamin and Julia Morgan.



## (7) Henry Carpenter

Born: 1810

Died: 1891

Family

[Martha Blanchard Carpenter](#)

### Biography

Henry and Martha Blanchard Carpenter were from New York where they married in 1832. Henry worked as a saddler and harness maker but after letters from Walter Blanchard, brother of Martha, who had moved

to Illinois in 1836, he decided to come west and farm. Walter sold him a piece of his land and the family moved here in 1839 when there were only 6 families in the settlement. Henry did not like farming so he decided to open a general store as there was none here. After obtaining a load of goods for \$600.00 from Chicago brought in by Elisha Root the store opened in 1845. Located on the trail a little west of the Blodgetts the store soon became a meeting place for those who lived here. No one had much money so Henry gave credit and joked "That anyone who could tie his own shoes could have credit in his store." Henry shared the same dislike for slavery as the Blodgetts. Martha and Henry had 3 children, 2 boys and one girl. One son died at the age of 5 in 1848 and an accident in 1857 took the life of their son Walter. Not having a real cemetery in the village when someone died they were just buried on family land. So, Henry talked his friend Samuel Curtiss into selling part of his cow pasture near the Carpenter home to be used for a cemetery. In 1856 the Main Street Cemetery was established as the burial place for the village and Henry became the President of the Burying Ground Association. The death of Walter, son of Henry, was a hard blow for the family so Henry decided to sell the store and he worked as a shoemaker. He also sold part of his land to the Methodist Church for a site for their building. Keeping up with local affairs he signed the Incorporation Papers in 1873, supported the coming of the railroad through town and served as postmaster and village trustee. Henry and Martha saw their daughter marry Eugene Farrar in 1864. He was the grandson of the Stanleys and first pioneer child born in Downers Grove. Martha lived to see her 6 grandchildren before she died in 1882 at the age of 69 and Henry died nine years later when he was 81 years old.



## (8) Samuel Curtiss

Born: 1789

Died: 1867

### Biography

Samuel and Mary Hatch Curtiss began their life together in 1813 in Royalton, Vermont. Samuel was born 1789, the year George Washington became our first President and Mary was born 4 years later. Sam volunteered during the War of 1812. By 1830 they had a family of 5 sons and like many others they wanted to provide a better future for them. So, with \$1000 they came to Illinois in 1836 and purchased part of the Israel Blodgett claim in Downers Grove, some 400 acres. The land here was a wild frontier and some Native Americans were still in the area. Having land in the center of the village Samuel established a tavern, stable, and early post office. Along with Israel Blodgett he improved the trail through town that is now Maple Avenue including planting many Maple trees along the roadway. As others, here he opposed slavery and helped with the activities of the Underground Railroad. Some of the land he owned became the Main Street Cemetery in 1856 and another piece was sold to the Baptist Church. When former slave Isrel Blackburn came to town after the Civil War, Samuel gave him land to farm. By 1864 Samuel sold a portion of his land for the first subdivision here.

Samuel was a very generous man and tried to use his money for the betterment of the community. He died a few years after the Civil War at the age of 78. Mary died in 1883.



## (9) Mary Hatch Curtiss

Born: 1793

Died: February 23, 1883

### Biography

Mary Hatch was born in Vermont and married her husband Samuel Curtiss in 1813. In 1836 she helped move their family to Downers Grove when the land here was still a wild frontier. Mary lived here almost 50 years before she died in 1883.

## (10-13) Blodgett Corner Markers



(Left to right)

(10) Blodgett northeast corner marker

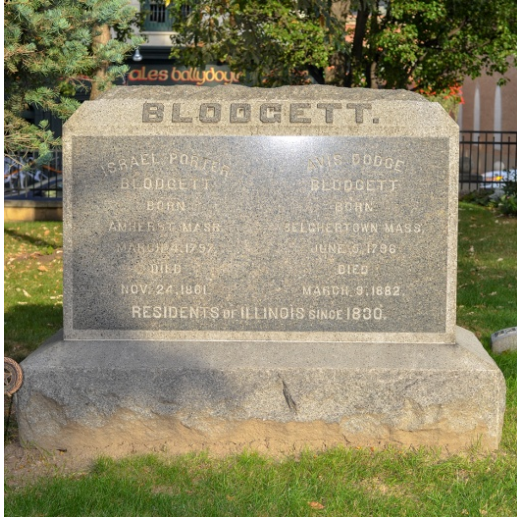
(11) Blodgett southeast corner marker

(12) Blodgett southwest corner marker

(13) Blodgett northwest corner marker

### Information

These four small, similar stones block off the Blodgett section of the cemetery.



## (14) Blodgett Family Monument

### Biography

Israel and Avis Blodgett were married in Amherst Massachusetts in 1820. Israel was born the day John Adams was inaugurated as the second President of the United States, March 4, 1797. He was a machinist and blacksmith like his father and Avis was the daughter of a farmer. As they began their family, Israel felt moving west would be best. So, in 1830 Israel joined a group that set out to find land in Illinois leaving Avis in Massachusetts with several small children. By 1832 he had found land near Naperville and sent for the family. Arriving the year of the Black Hawk War, the Blodgett's joined other pioneer families who traveled to Ft. Dearborn in Chicago for safety. Israel stayed behind and served as a Corporal in the company led by Captain Naper to defend against Black Hawk if he arrived. Soon the threat was over and the families returned. By 1836 the family made another move, this time to the settlement of Downers Grove where Israel bought about 500 acres of land. They built a cabin on an Indian Trail now called Maple Avenue and raised their family of 7 boys and one girl. Israel farmed and operated a blacksmith shop while Avis kept house and saw to the education of her children. She believed it was important for them to have a good education and she taught her daughter Mary so she could also teach. With the help of neighbor Sam Curtiss, they improved Maple Avenue and planted trees along the road. By 1846 they were able to build a second home that was much bigger than the one room cabin they lived in for 10 years. Israel and Avis were against slavery and their home would become a stop on the secret underground railroad network in DuPage County. Often the lantern in their window signaled their house was a safe place for runaway slaves to find food, clothes and transportation to Chicago on their way to Canada. The family was saddened at the death of son Daniel in 1849 and then daughter Mary in 1856. Six of their sons reached adulthood and become valued citizens of the state. Three fought in the Civil War, one became a judge another a lawyer and one was Mayor of Waukegan, Illinois. Their youngest son Charles remained on the family land here and ran the farm when his father died in 1861. Avis lived to be 86 and died in 1882. The Blodgett land would eventually pass to Will, the son of Charles, who lived in Downers Grove until his death in 1933.



## (15) Wheeler Family Monument

Allen and Elizabeth Wheeler were early settlers of Downers Grove. Of their ten children, three are buried in the Main Street Cemetery. Two daughters, Nora (age 11) and Myrtle (age 3), died of Scarlet Fever in 1880. Their son Schuyler died in 1890 at the age of 23 and was the final member of the Wheeler family buried in the cemetery.



## (16) Alexander French Foster

Born: 1815  
Died: 1903

### Biography

Alexander French Foster married his wife Nancy Olivia Adams in 1839. After several moves, the family finally settled on a house on Maple Avenue. Alexander worked as a carpenter often spending much time in Chicago while Nancy took care of the family that now numbered 8 children. Their lives, like many in Downers Grove, were touched by the Civil War. Even though Alexander was in his 40's, he enlisted in Company B of the 105<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry. Following the example of his father and father-in-law, he wanted to serve his country. His service lasted about a year as he was injured, sick with typhoid, and spent some time in Andersonville Prison before being discharged in 1863. His life after discharge was full of illness, but he resumed his trade life as a carpenter, helping to build the Methodist Church on Maple Avenue. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic Naper Post and live to the age of 88.



## (17) Charles Curtiss

Born: 1828

Died: 1897

### Biography

Charles came to Downers Grove in 1836 with his family and parents Samuel and Mary Curtiss. In the 1850's he followed the gold rush to California with his brother Henry but returned no richer. He was a Village Trustee in 1873 and served in the Illinois General Assembly in 1887-1888. By 1892 he was president of the Farmers and Merchant Bank (located at 5135 Main Street) and was publisher of the Downers Grove Reporter by 1895. He served three terms as village president, for a total of 6 years. It is said Charles installed the first street sign in Downers Grove near his home at the corner of Curtiss and Washington Streets.

He is buried with his wife Laura Thatcher Curtiss whom he married in 1856. Her parents, Harriet and Eldred Thatcher, are also buried in the separate section of the cemetery.



## (18) Walter Sucher

Born: 1854

Died: 1863

## Michael Sucher

Born: 1843

Died: 1844

### Biography

Walter and Michael are two of three young children of Michael Sucher and Catherine Wolf buried in this cemetery. Though they died nearly 20 years apart they share a headstone.

Their parents were born in Alsace, France. They immigrated to America and came to Downers Grove in the early 1840s. Michael bought 200 acres in the Downers Grove area where they raised 11 children. In addition to farming, Michael was also the postmaster and commissioner of highways for Downers Grove Township. Michael also was a horse breeder. In 1882 Michael and Catherine sold their land in Downers Grove and moved to Ogden, Iowa.



## (19) Kate Dixon Oldfield

Born: March 11, 1840  
Died: September 22, 1865

## Alice Kate Oldfield

Born: 1862  
Died: August 26, 1865

### Biography

Kate Dixon Oldfield and daughter Alice Kate Oldfield share this same headstone as they died about one month apart from each other. Kate's inscription is on the east side of the stone and daughter Alice Kate's inscription is on the west side. Kate's husband Richard, who died two decades later, is buried next to them.

Richard Oldfield came to Downers Grove in 1847. As a young man he farmed and was in the butchering business. It was said he lost an arm when he was accidentally shot as a result of two men fighting over a gun. He also served as a tax collector for the township. After the death of his wife he married Emma Ambrose. They lived in Downers Grove until Richard died of mysterious causes in 1884. An inquest into his passing was held with leading citizens of Downers Grove serving on the jury. His cause of death was ruled to be congestion of the brain.



## 20) Dr. George S Otis

Born: 1844  
Died: October 22, 1881

### Biography

Dr. George S. Otis was born in Wisconsin in 1846. He graduated from the Boston Veterinary College about 1861 and came to Chicago about 1867 to open his practice. He was renowned for his expertise in all the diseases and injuries of horses. His first office was located on 12th Street in Chicago and by 1874 he had moved his home to Downers Grove. The Burlington train, now

Burlington Northern, made it practical to work in the city and live in the western suburbs, a practice that continues to this day. In November 1875, Dr. Otis joined the Chicago Veterinary College on Wabash avenue in Chicago. He worked there only for 6 year as he died at the young age of 35 from heart disease. Otis Avenue in Downers Grove is named in his honor. Dr. Otis was married to Ellen Goeway from New York. They had one son, Robert Roy Otis. After the death of their husband and father, the family moved to Minnesota to live with Ellen's mother.



(21 - 24)

## (21) Pye Family Monument

### (22) William Bradford Pye

Born: 1843  
Died: 1904

### (23) Emily Atwood Pye (1<sup>st</sup> wife)

Born: 1847  
Died: 1869

### (24) Mary Jane Thomas Pye (2<sup>nd</sup> wife)

Born: 1849  
Died: 1888

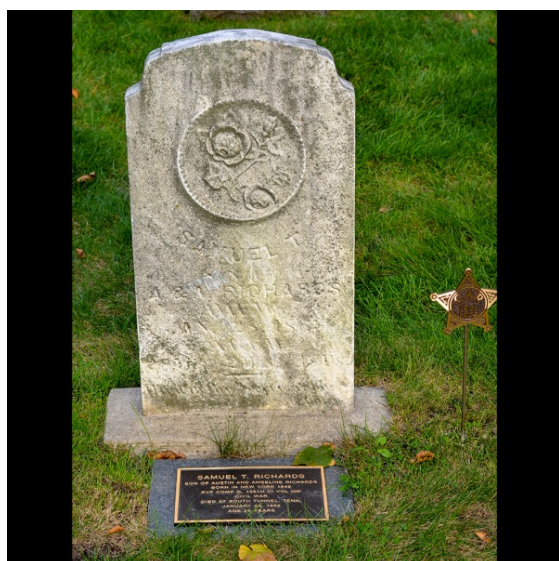
### Biography

William Pye and his family are honored with an obelisk style monument that is the tallest monument in the Main Street Cemetery. William is buried between his two wives near the monument. Louisa Thomas, the sister of his second wife, is also buried nearby.

William was born in England in 1843 and came to America when he was 14 years old around 1857. Several other members of his family lived in area, so he probably lived with them in his childhood.

When William was 23, he married his first wife Emily Atwood. Her family was also from England. They were only married for 3 years until she died at the age of 22. There is no record of children from this marriage.

William's second wife was Mary Jane (Jenny) Thomas. Jenny was 21 years old when they wed in 1870. William and Jenny probably lived near her parents in Chicago. They had three children Florence, John, and William. Jenny died at the young at the age 39. In 1900, Jenny's sister Louisa Thomas came to live with them to assist with raising the children, she was last to be buried in the Pye plot in 1933.



## (25) Samuel T. Richards

Born: 1842

Died: January 26, 1863

### Biography

Samuel Richards was the oldest son of Austin and Angeline Trusdell Richards. When he was 20, Samuel decided to enlist in the Union Army. On September 2, 1862 he enlisted in Company D of the 105<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry. Fellow Downers Grove residents John Cotes and Alexander Foster joined company B. Only Alexander survived the war. John

Cotes died after the battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee on July 25, 1863 and Samuel Richards died on January 28, 1863 in Tunnel, Tennessee.

Note: the plaque at the base of the stone has the incorrect year of death.

Four members of the Richards family are buried in the Main Street Cemetery. In addition to Samuel, his parents and one of his sisters are buried here. Samuel's parents, Austin and Angeline, came to Downers Grove in 1855 from New York. Of their 5 children only 3 were living when they arrived. The Richards bought a farm on the north side of the village. Austin being a trustee of the Main Street Cemetery had his son Samuel brought back to be buried here. The loss of their son in the Civil War may have been too much for Angeline as she died 1864. After her death Austin sold the farm and moved to a home on Maple and remarried. He was interested in village affairs and signed the Incorporation Papers of 1873. Austin and his second wife Elizabeth Cole had 3 children. In 1885 their daughter Irene died of typhoid fever. She was only 16 and her death was very sudden. She was buried next to her brother Samuel who died in the Civil War, a brother she never knew. Austin died in 1903 and is buried with his family.



## (26) Walter Blanchard

Born: 1807

Died: November 18, 1863

### Biography

Walter Blanchard was born in New Hampshire in 1807, arrived in Downers Grove in 1836, just 4 years after Pierce Downer. Here he raised a family of 5 children while he practiced law and eventually served as a DuPage County judge for 7 years. Interested in politics he was present at the Wigwam in Chicago when Lincoln was nominated for President in 1860. As the Civil War approached, Walter could not ignore the call to help. He organized a company of the 13th Illinois Infantry, even enlisting himself at the age of 54. His sons William and Franklin also joined. As Captain of this company he fought alongside his men and sadly he was wounded on November 27, 1863 at Ringgold Gap. His leg wound caused a great loss of blood and the best efforts of the doctors could not save his life. His body was escorted back to Downers Grove for burial. His service and sacrifice for DuPage County was remembered for years after his death. Major Edward Blodgett, son of Israel Blodgett, remembered the Captain as "a man like no other and whose memory may be an inspiring force for all as the years go by."



## (27) Isrel L Blackburn

Born: May 3, 1818

Died: March 15, 1903

### Biography

Sergeant Isrel L. Blackburn was born into slavery on May 3, 1818. For the first 48 years of his life he was the property of John Bowman of Mercer County Kentucky. His life changed in 1864 when his owner sold him to the Union Army at Camp Nelson, Kentucky. Isrel became a member of Company C of the 124th Colored Infantry, just one of the 175 colored regiments formed during the Civil War. When the War was over Blackburn made his way north and found a new home here. He was given a piece of land owned by Samuel Curtiss to farm and raise his family of 5 children. Proud of his new home he was one of the signers of the Incorporation Papers in 1873 and a member of the Naper Post of the Grand Army of the Republic that held meetings in Downers Grove. Every Decoration Day,

now called Memorial Day, he could be seen walking along in the cemetery to honor the veterans buried here. Blackburn who was called Uncle Larry by many died in 1902 at the age of 90.

## (28) Alvin R. Porter



Born: January 12, 1858  
Died: November 28, 1858

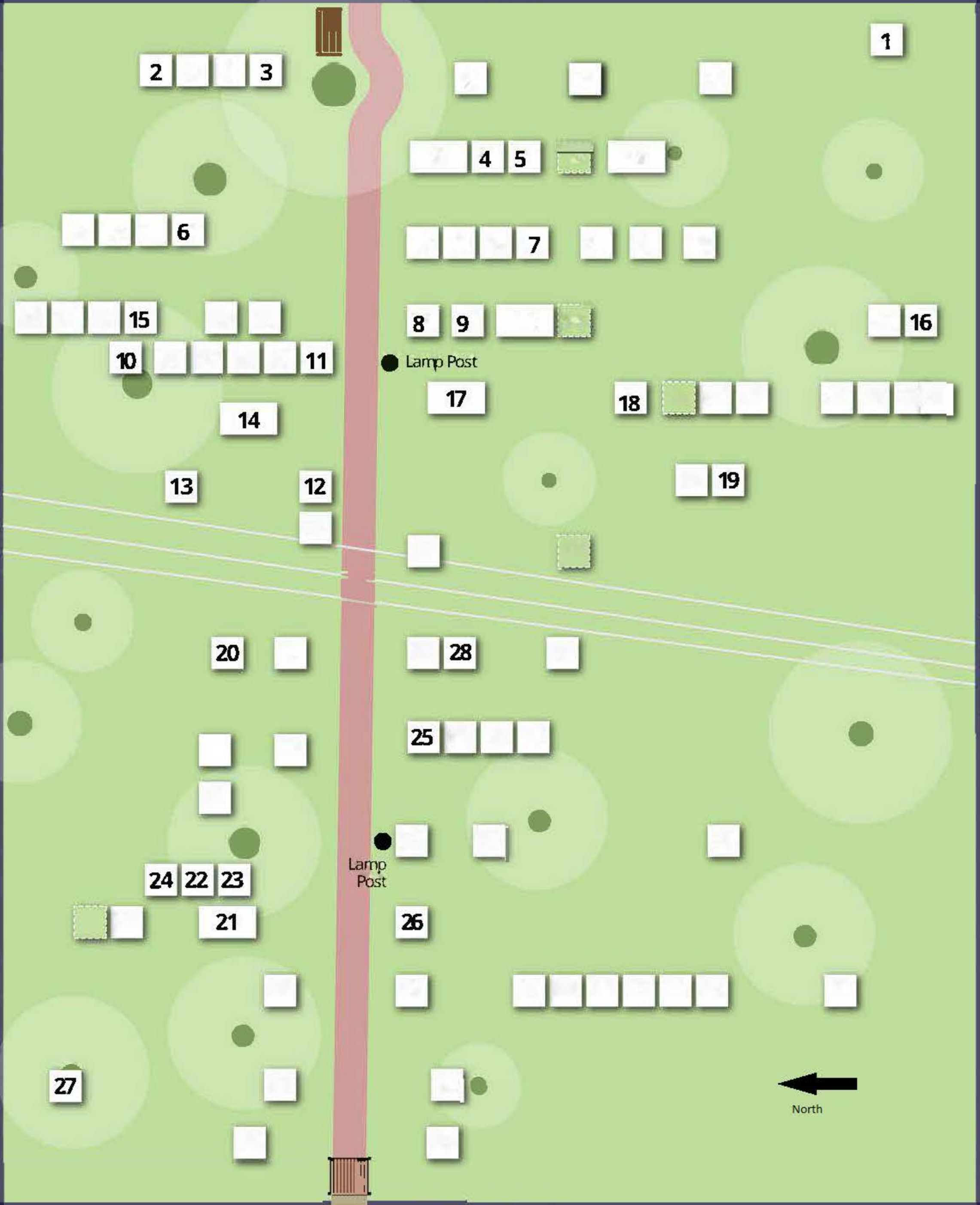
### Biography

Alvin was the son of Avah and Abigail Andrews Porter. His parents moved to York Township having come from the east. Upon his marriage to Abigail, they purchase 100 acres of land in Downers Grove township near Cass. Baby Alvin was born a short time later and died when he was less than a year old. He is the only member of the family to buried in Main Street Cemetery.

# Main St

Cellar Door

Emmett's Brewing



# Fishel Park



**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MARCH 20, 2019 AGENDA**

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>TYPE:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
19-ADR-0001 5158 Main Street	Designation of a Historic Landmark	Devin Kamperschroer Planning Intern

### REQUEST

The Village of Downers Grove is seeking Historic Landmark Designation for the Main Street Cemetery located at 5158 Main Street based on the criteria that the property has significant value as part of the historic, heritage and cultural characteristics of the community and is a source of civic pride and identity for the community.

### NOTICE

The application has been filed in conformance with applicable procedural and public notice requirements.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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**OWNER/  
APPLICANT** Village of Downers Grove  
801 Burlington Avenue  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

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**BUILDING DATE:** Circa 1856  
**HISTORICAL BUILDING USE:** Main Street Cemetery  
**EXISTING BUILDING USE:** Main Street Cemetery  
**PROPERTY SIZE:** 0.93 Acres  
**PIN:** 09-08-305-015

### ANALYSIS

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#### SUBMITTALS

This report is based on the following documents, which are on file with the Department of Community Development:

1. Application/Petition for Public Hearing
2. Certificate of Acknowledgement Form
3. Historic Landmark Information Form
4. Project Narrative
5. Correspondence from the Downers Grove Historical Society

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Village of Downers Grove is seeking Historic Landmark Designation for the Main Street Cemetery located at 5158 Main Street under criteria 12.302.B.1 and 12.302.B.6 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The cemetery is a notable local landmark due to its location and association with the history

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March 20, 2019

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of Downers Grove. As one of the very few cemeteries in the country remaining in a downtown business district, the Main Street Cemetery is the final resting place for many of the Village's founding families, including the Curtiss, Blodgett and Carpenter families. Samuel Curtiss donated part of his sheep pasture for the burial ground, which served the community from 1856 until the last interment in 1939. The cemetery hosts many war veterans, abolitionists and Isrel Blackburn, a freed slave and Civil War veteran.

In 1981 the Village assumed control of the cemetery, with the Downers Grove Historical Society acting as steward. With this partnership the cemetery has seen several renovation and maintenance efforts including monument restoration, new sidewalks, a new pergola and as part of a downtown revitalization project in 2000, the Village completed the construction of a more elaborate stone wall and landscaping between the cemetery and sidewalk (i.e. the Main Street entrance).

In 2017, the Downers Grove Historical Society sought feedback from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) about the potential to designate the cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places. It should be noted that cemeteries and graves are among those properties that ordinarily are not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places unless they meet special requirements. Namely, the cemetery has to retain enough historic features from their period of significance or the grave of a historical figure is eligible if the person is of outstanding importance and there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with their protective life.

Citing several of the upgrades that have occurred at the cemetery, including the Main Street entrance, the IHPA made the determination that the cumulative effects of the improvements is such that the cemetery no longer retains the historic integrity in terms of design, materials and feeling and the site would not be eligible for the National Register. The IHPA noted that the site could be considered for local landmark status through the Downers Grove Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Though several of its features are not historic, such as the landscaping and architectural features (i.e. Main Street entrance, rear fence and pergola), the Village is requesting landmark status for the site itself in addition to several historic grave markers located on the site. The site is home to 95 grave markers. The Downers Grove Historical Society identified 27 specific markers (attached) deemed appropriate for requiring a certificate of appropriateness in the event the markers are proposed for relocation or replaced with a design or a material that is not considered in-kind. Should this site be given landmark status, a certificate of appropriateness would only be required for alterations or repairs to the 27 identified grave markers as described in the following table:

	<b>Approval Type</b>
Removal or replacement of one of the 27 identified historic grave markers (not in kind material or not consistent with the original design)	COA - Major
Replacement of one of the 27 identified historic grave markers (in kind replacement with concrete or original material and similar design)	COA – Minor
Landscaping, lighting, fence improvements, pergola improvements, painting, Main Street entrance maintenance, sidewalk placement and maintenance, commemorative stone placement, general routine maintenance and cleaning, movement or replacement of non-historic grave markers and grave marker repair for all markers.	No COA

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

Additional information regarding the request is outlined in the attached list of recommended historic markers and photographs. The Village would like to thank the Downers Grove Historical Society for

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March 20, 2019

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their assistance in preparing this application.

Landmark designations require evaluation based on Section 12.302 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Landmark Designation Criteria*. Staff finds the request complies with Section 12.302A and Section 12.302.B, *Landmark Designation Criteria #1 and #6* as described below.

**Section 12.302.A.**

**The proposed landmark is either over fifty (50) years old; in whole or in part or is under fifty (50) years of age and possesses exceptional importance such as might be recognized immediately for its reflection of an extraordinary political event or architectural innovation; and**

The cemetery was established in 1856. This standard is met.

**Section 12.302.B**

**That one or more of the following conditions exist:**

- 1. The property has significant value as part of the historic, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, State or Nation;**

The Main Street Cemetery, primarily active from 1856 to 1939, is one of Downer's Grove's oldest cemeteries. Although several upgrades have occurred since the mid-1900s, there are still numerous grave markers that have significant value as part of the historic heritage and cultural characteristics of the community. Several founding families of the Village of Downers Grove are buried in the cemetery, including members of the Curtiss, Blodgett, and Carpenter families. Other notable individuals such as freed slave Isrel Blackburn are buried here as well. This criteria is met.

- 2. The property was owned by a person or persons of historic significance to the community, county, State or Nation;**

This criteria does not apply.

- 3. The property represents the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural period, style, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;**

This criteria does not apply.

- 4. The property represents notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, State or Nation;**

This criteria does not apply.

- 5. An area that has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.**

This criteria does not apply.

- 6. A source of civic pride or identity for the community.**

The cemetery is one of the few remaining in a downtown business district in the nation. The cemetery is a visible reminder of the history of the Village of Downers Grove. The cemetery is the final resting place for many of the members of the Village's founding families, mothers and fathers, babies and children, Civil War soldiers, a veteran of the War of 1812 and a former slave. It is a source of civic pride. The site is also home to numerous events and programming throughout the year including the annual Living Cemetery Event and many others as identified in the attached list. This criteria is met.

- 7. The property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.**

This criteria does not apply.

**NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENT**

Staff has not received any neighborhood comments regarding the proposal at this time.

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March 20, 2019

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Staff finds the petition complies with the criteria in Section 12.302 for Landmark Designation. Based on the findings above, staff recommends the Architectural Design Review Board make a positive recommendation to the Village Council for landmark status of the Main Street Cemetery located at 5158 Main Street.

Staff Report Approved By:



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Stan Popovich, AICP  
Director of Community Development

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**HISTORIC LANDMARK  
DESIGNATION APPLICATION**  
Department of Community Development  
801 Burlington Avenue – Downers Grove, IL 60515  
Phone: 630.434.5515 Fax: 630.434.6873

*Office Use Only*

File No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date Filed \_\_\_\_\_

1. Applicant Village of Downers Grove Daytime Phone 630-434-5520  
Mailing Address 801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60515  
E-Mail Address jzawila@downers.us
2. Owner(s) of Record Village of Downers Grove Daytime Phone 630-434-5520  
Mailing Address 801 Burlington Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60515  
E-mail Address jzawila@downers.us
3. Owner Consent Required:

I, Stan Popovich, hereby consent, as the owner of the property located at 5158 Main Street (PIN # 09-08-305-015), that the Village of Downers Grove may designate my property as a Historic Landmark subject to the rules and regulations of the Downers Grove Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Stanley J. Popovich  
on behalf of Village of Downers Grove  
Printed Name of Owner(s)

[Signature]  
Signature of Owner(s)

2-15-19  
Date

4. Applicant is:  Owner  Attorney  Other Agent (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: A letter of authorization from the owner(s) of record must be attached if the owner is not the applicant)
5. Address/Location of Subject Property 5158 Main Street
6. Property Index Number(s) of Subject Property 09-08-305-015

I hereby certify that the above statements and all accompanying statements and drawings are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby consent to the entry in or upon the premises described in this application by any authorized official of the Village of Downers Grove for the purpose of securing information, posting, maintaining and removing such notices as may be required by law.

[Signature]  
Applicant Signature

2-14-19  
Date

Please note that advertisement of proposed projects prior to Village approval in no way creates an obligation for Village approval. Any advance promotion of a project is done at the risk of the petitioner.



# Historic Landmark Designation Petitioner's Submittal Checklist

Property Address: 5158 Main Street

Applicant: Village of Downers Grove

Phone: 630-434-5520

## **Submittal Guidelines:**

This is a general checklist. Other items pertaining to your case may be necessary. The Architectural Design Review Board and/or Village Council may request additional information. ALL PETITIONERS ARE URGED TO REVIEW THE MATERIAL IN THIS PACKET AND CHAPTER 12 (HISTORIC PRESERVATION) AND CHAPTER 28 (ZONING) OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE.

- Two (2) hard copies and one (1) digital copy of applicable materials shall be submitted for staff review at least six (6) weeks prior to the anticipated public hearing with the petition and other required documents.

## **Attach the following for all Historic Landmark designation petitions:**

### **1. PETITION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION REVIEW**

The Petition for Historic Landmark Review must be completed, including an original signature.

### **2. PROOF OF OWNERSHIP**

A Letter of Authorization from the Owner of Record is required if an agent is designated or if the Owner's signature is not on the petition. A Land Trust Disclosure form must be included if applicable.

### **3. PROJECT SUMMARY/NARRATIVE LETTER**

A written overview of the project and summary of evidence must be submitted in the form of a narrative letter that makes reference to submitted plans and exhibits. The narrative letter should include a description of the historically significant architectural features or historical significance of the property. The narrative letter shall also address how the proposed designation meets the Landmark Designation Criteria within the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 12.302).

### **4. PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs shall be submitted. Each photograph shall be printed no smaller than 4" x 6". A photo key shall be provided which identifies where the picture was taken. A list of photographs shall be provided which lists the photograph number, description (e.g. East elevation) and the date of the photograph.

### **5. HISTORIC LANDMARK INFORMATION FORM**

A form has been included in the back of this packet which identifies the key features of buildings. Applicants are encouraged to use this form to provide information on the subject property. The form provides a comprehensive list of physical building features that the Village and the ADRB need to assess the historic significance of the property.

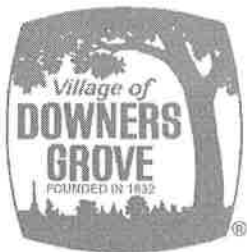
**6. CERTIFICATE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To ensure that the property owner understands the requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, all applicants are encouraged to read this document and the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Certificate of Acknowledgement states that the property owners are aware of and understand the Village's Historic Preservation requirements. This Certificate must be completed and signed by *ALL* Owners of Record for Historic Landmark applications.

**7. LEGAL REGISTERED SURVEYOR'S PLAT OF SURVEY**

A current plat of survey prepared by a surveyor. A plat is considered current if it identifies all the improvements that are currently located on the site and provides an accurate legal description.

*If after reviewing this checklist you have additional questions about the Historic Preservation process, please call the Department of Community Development at (630) 434-5515.*



## Landmark Designation Criteria Section 12.302

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To be designated a Historic Landmark, the property must meet certain criteria. The criteria, shown in the Downers Grove Municipal Code Chapter 12 – Historic Preservation, Section 12.302 (Landmark Designation Criteria) is shown below:

### **Section 12.302. Landmark Designation Criteria.**

The following criteria shall be utilized by the Board in determining the designation of landmarks:

- A. The proposed landmark is either over fifty (50) years old, in whole or in part *or* is under fifty (50) years of age and possesses exceptional importance such as might be recognized immediately for its reflection of an extraordinary political event or architectural innovation; *and*
  
- B. That one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - 1. The property is a significant value as part of the historic, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, county, State or Nation;
  - 2. The property was owned or occupied by a person or persons of historic significance to the community, county, State or Nation;
  - 3. The property represents the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural period, style, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials;
  - 4. The property represents notable work of a master builder, designer, architect or artist whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, State or Nation;
  - 5. An area that has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory;
  - 6. A source of civic pride or identity for the community; or
  - 7. The property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.



## Historic Landmark Information Form

Property Address 5158 Main Street

Date of Construction Circa 1856

Architectural Style N/A

Architect (if known) N/A

Number of Stories N/A Basement (Y/N) N/A

Foundation Materials (Concrete, Concrete Block, Wood, Stone, Brick, N/A)  
N/A

Exterior Wall Materials (Concrete, Wood, Stone, Brick, Vinyl, Other, N/A)  
N/A

Roof Type (Gabled, Cross-Gabled, Hipped, Hipped-Gable, Shed, Gambrel, Flat, Other, N/A)  
N/A

Roof Materials (Metal, Wood Shingle, Wood Shake, Composition, Slate, Tile, Other, N/A)  
N/A

Window Type (Double-Hung, Awning, Casement, Hopper, Other, N/A)  
N/A

Window Materials (Wood, Aluminum, Vinyl, Other, N/A)  
N/A

Door Type (Panel, Flush, Transom, N/A) and Materials (Wood, Metal, Glass, N/A)  
N/A

Other significant exterior architectural features (Accessory Structures, Arches, Porches, Towers, Brick Course, etc.)  
The Main Street Cemetery, primarily active from 1856 to 1939, is one of Downers Grove's oldest cemeteries. Although several upgrades have occurred since the 1900s, there are still numerous original grave markers and the site has significant value as part of the historic, heritage and cultural characteristics, in addition to a source of civic pride and identity for the community.



# Certificate of Acknowledgement Form

I, Stan Popovich, attest, as the owner(s) of the property located at 5158 MAIN (PIN # 09-08-305-015), that I have received a copy of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and understand its requirements. I understand that if my property is designated a Historic Landmark, the property will be recorded as such with the County Recorder. I understand that I, or any future owners of the property, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness in order to undertake any minor or major exterior modifications as listed under Section 12.502 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Attest:

Stan Popovich acting on behalf of the Village of Downers Grove  
 Printed Name of Owner

[Handwritten Signature]  
 Signature of Owner

2-14-19  
 Date

19-ADR-0001  
 File Number (Village Use Only)

the **Downers Grove**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



9/20/2018

Liz Chalberg  
Downers Grove Historical Society  
P.O. Box 663

Mayor Martin Tully  
Village of Downers Grove  
801 Burlington Ave.  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

Dear Mayor Tully,

During the September 10 Downers Grove Plan Commission meeting (regarding the rezoning of Downtown properties) a member of the public expressed concern for the Main Street Cemetery and the fact that it currently lacks any type of protection. Although this was not relevant to the rezoning issue, it brought to light a potential opportunity. As the organization that helps manage, maintain, and care for the Cemetery; the Downers Grove Historical Society Board feels that the Village should consider designating it a local historic landmark. Although it's unlikely that the Cemetery would ever be a candidate for redevelopment, we feel that landmarking it would not only provide it with official protection but it would also be a way to honor its historic significance and acknowledge its importance to the community.

As you may remember, in April of 2017 the Historical Society submitted a Preliminary National Register Evaluation Form for the Cemetery. Although the State Historic Preservation Office did not believe it was a good candidate (due to the extent of changes that have been made over the years) they suggested local landmark designation as an alternative way to commemorate the property (see attached letter).

It is our opinion that the Main Street Cemetery meets the following landmarking criteria as described in the Downers Grove Municipal Code Section 12.302:

- A. The proposed landmark is over 50 years old
- B.
  1. The property has significant value as part of the historic, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the community
  6. A source of civic pride or identity for the community

We understand that as owner of the Cemetery, the Village of Downers Grove would need to consent to the landmark designation request. If the Village is supportive of moving forward with landmarking, the Historical Society would offer to act as the applicant and complete all necessary parts of the application since we already have the documentation that was required for the Preliminary National Register Evaluation.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support of historic preservation. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you'd like to schedule a meeting to discuss. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Liz Chalberg  
President  
Downers Grove Historical Society  
630-660-6767  
lchalberg@att.net

cc: Dave Fieldman, Stan Popovich

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Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/downersgrovehistoricalsociety>  
Or check out our web page at [www.downersgrovehistory.org](http://www.downersgrovehistory.org)  
P.O. Box 663 Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

Questions? call 630-660-6767



July 14, 2017

Amy Gassen  
Downers Grove Historical Society  
PO Box 663  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

RE: Main Street Cemetery  
5158 Main Street  
Downers Grove – DuPage County

Dear Ms. Gassen:

Thank you for your interest in the National Register of Historic Places. Because cemeteries have special sentimental value, they are not eligible for inclusion in the National Register unless they meet special criteria. Cemeteries must also retain enough historic features from their period of significance in order to convey their importance. These historic features would include gravesites, grave markers, boundary enclosures, walkways, gateways, road systems or pathways, landscaping, buildings, structures, and the spatial relationship among all of these.

The Main Street Cemetery, which was primarily active from 1856 to 1939, is one of Downers Grove's oldest cemeteries. For it to reflect its association with the early settlers of Downers Grove, the cemetery would have to appear much like it did when those settlers were buried there. Since the mid-1900s, the cemetery has received several new grave markers, a new sidewalk, a new retaining wall, a new fence, and a new pergola. The cumulative effect of the new material is such that the cemetery no longer retains its historic integrity in terms of design, materials, and feeling.

The staff opinion would not be positive for listing this property in the National Register. It is clear that the society is concerned with the history of the cemetery and I wish I had better news. However, there are other ways to commemorate the cemetery. Downers Grove has a designation program for local landmarks and districts. Another option would be through the Illinois State Historical Society, which manages the state's historical markers program. For more information, contact Mary Lou Johnsrud Operations Management Illinois State Historical Society 5255 Shepherd Road Springfield IL 62703, [marylouishs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marylouishs@sbcglobal.net), or call 217-525-2781.

Please feel free to contact me at 217/782-8588 if you have any questions. I would be happy to assist you.

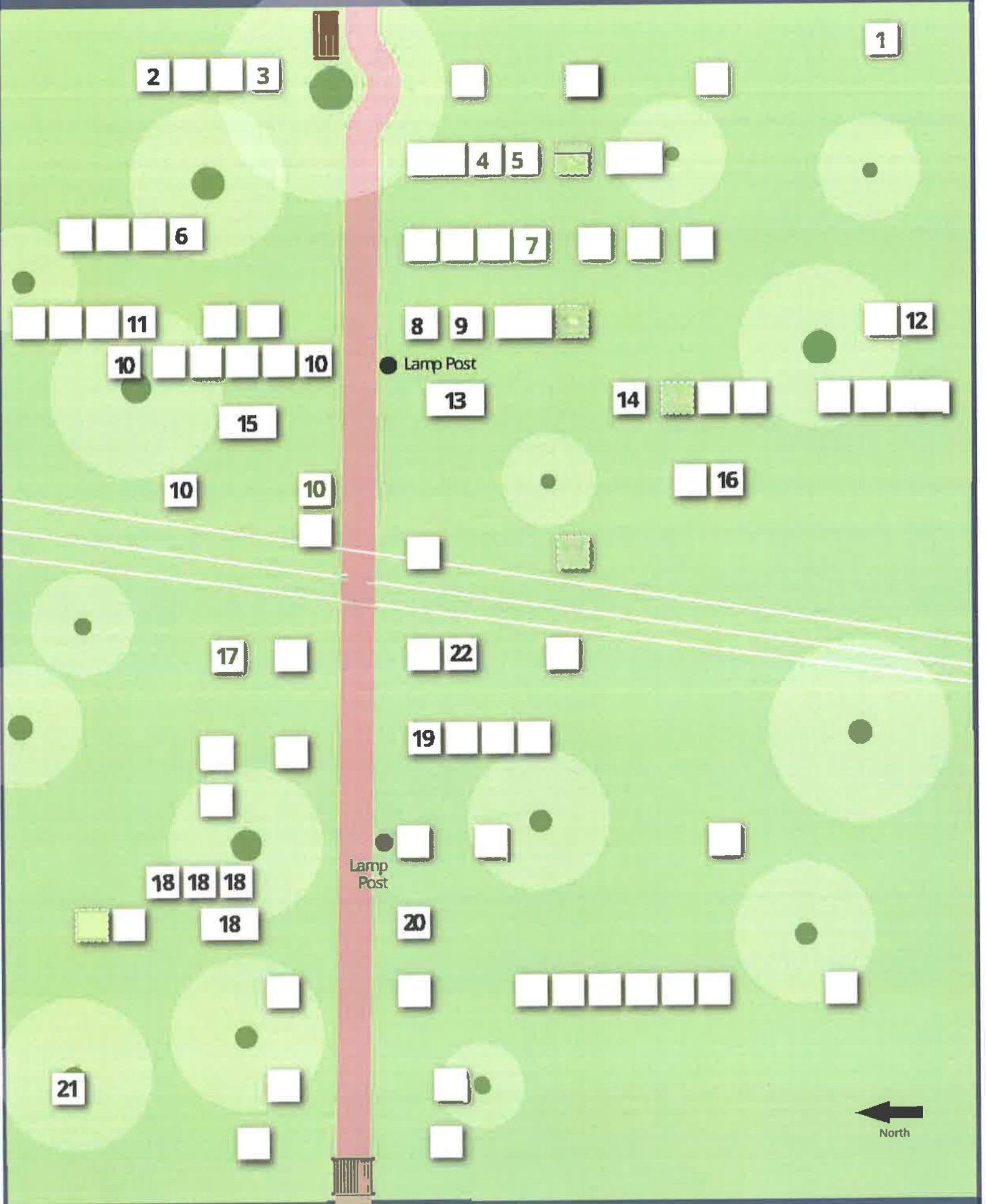
Sincerely,

Amy Hathaway, National Register and Survey Specialist

1 Old State Capital Plaza  
Springfield IL 62701

ILLINOISHISTORY.GOV

# Main St



Lamp Post

Lamp Post



# Fishel Park

# **Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery Monuments Proposed for Landmark Status**



Photography courtesy of Slav Polinski of Slav Polinski Homes

**The Downers Grove Historical Society recommends the following monuments in the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery be included in the landmark application due to their overall contribution to the historic character of the cemetery.**

Entire inventory of monuments at [www.mainstreetcemetery.com](http://www.mainstreetcemetery.com)

# List of Monuments

<b>(1) Martin Root and Family (2 stones)</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>2) Sarah Wells</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>(3) Gracie Wells</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>(4) John S. Cotes</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>(5) Mary R Puffer</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>(6) Flora Morgan</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>(7) Henry Carpenter</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>(8) Samuel Curtiss</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>(9) Mary Hatch Curtiss</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>(10) Blodgett Corner Markers (4 stones)</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>(11) Wheeler Family Monument</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>(12) Alexander French Foster</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>(13) Charles Curtiss</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>(14) Walter Sucher/Michael Sucher</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>(15) Blodgett Family Monument</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>(16) Kate Dixon Oldfield/Alice Kate Oldfield</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>(17) Dr. George S. Otis</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>(18) William Bradford Pye Family</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
<b>(19) Samuel T. Richards</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>(20) Walter Blanchard</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>(21) Isrel L. Blackburn</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
<b>(22) Alvin Porter</b>	<b>Page 16</b>



## (1) Martin Root and Family

Born: 1784  
Died: 1865

### Biography

Martin Root was born in Massachusetts in



1784. He moved to Benson, Vermont where he met Abigail. They married in 1814. By 1821 they had six children, Emily, Maria, James, Amos, and twins Elijah and Elisha. By 1843, the family decided to move west to Lisle where land was still available for a good price. Buried here in the Main Street Cemetery along with Martin are his wife Abigail Stearns Root, son Amos and three grandchildren, Albert, James, and Helen. The grandchildren were the children of Elijah.



## (2) Sarah Wells

Born: 1811  
Died: October 20, 1883

### Biography

Sara Wells was the mother of John Manning Wells. In 1883 she passed away at the age of 72. She died just a few days after her granddaughter Gracie who is also buried near her in the Main Street Cemetery.



### (3) Gracie Wells

Born: 1877

Died: January 5, 1883

#### Biography

Gracie Wells was the daughter of Arvilla Bond and John Manning Wells. Gracie passed away in 1883 at the tender young age of 5. In her memory, her father worked with the local officials to see that a cabin for the Girl Scouts was erected in the Maple Grove Forest Preserve just west of downtown Downers Grove. It was

known as the Daddy Wells cabin. The cabin is no longer in existence.



### (4) John S. Cotes

Born: 1836

Died: 1857

#### Biography

John S Cotes was the son of John P and Mary Chapin Cotes. John served in Company B, Illinois 105th Infantry. He died while in service to his county at Murfreesboro, Tennessee in 1863.



### (5) Mary R. Puffer

Born: 1838

Died: 1864

#### Biography

Mary Cotes Puffer was the daughter of John P and Mary Chapin Cotes. She died just a few months after her brother in 1864. Mary married Henry Puffer, Jr. Mary is buried with her parents, while her husband who remarried is buried elsewhere in the cemetery with his parents and second wife.



## (6) Flora Morgan

Born: 1864

Died: 1880

### Biography

Flora A. Morgan died at the young age of 16. She is the first of the family to be buried in the family plot in the Main Street Cemetery. She was the daughter of Benjamin and Julia Morgan.



## (7) Henry Carpenter

Born: 1810

Died: 1891

### Family

[Martha Blanchard Carpenter](#)

### Biography

Henry and Martha Blanchard Carpenter were from New York where they married in 1832. Henry worked as a saddler and harness maker but after letters from Walter Blanchard, brother of Martha, who had moved to Illinois in 1836, he decided to come west and farm. Walter sold him a piece of his land and the family moved here in 1839 when there were only 6 families in the settlement. Henry did not like farming so he decided to open a general store as there was none here. After obtaining a load of goods for \$600.00 from Chicago brought in by Elisha Root the store opened in 1845. Located on the trail a little west of the Blodgetts the store soon became a meeting place for those who lived here. No one had much money so Henry gave credit and joked "That anyone who could tie his own shoes could have credit in his store." Henry shared the same dislike for slavery as the Blodgetts. Martha and Henry had 3 children, 2 boys and one girl. One son died at the age of 5 in 1848 and an accident in 1857 took the life of their son Walter. Not having a real cemetery in the village when someone died they were just buried on family land. So, Henry talked his friend Samuel Curtiss into selling part of his cow pasture near the Carpenter home to be used for a cemetery. In 1856 the Main Street Cemetery was established as the burial place for the village and Henry became the President of the Burying Ground Association. The death of Walter, son of

Henry, was a hard blow for the family so Henry decided to sell the store and he worked as a shoemaker. He also sold part of his land to the Methodist Church for a site for their building. Keeping up with local affairs he signed the Incorporation Papers in 1873, supported the coming of the railroad through town and served as postmaster and village trustee. Henry and Martha saw their daughter marry Eugene Farrar in 1864. He was the grandson of the Stanleys and first pioneer child born in Downers Grove. Martha lived to see her 6 grandchildren before she died in 1882 at the age of 69 and Henry died nine years later when he was 81 years old.



## (8) Samuel Curtiss

Born: 1789

Died: 1867

### Biography

Samuel and Mary Hatch Curtiss began their life together in 1813 in Royalton, Vermont. Samuel was born 1789, the year George Washington became our first President and Mary was born 4 years later. Sam volunteered during the War of 1812. By 1830 they had a family of 5 sons and like many others they wanted to provide a better future for them. So, with \$1000 they came to Illinois in 1836 and purchased part of the Israel Blodgett claim in Downers Grove, some 400 acres. The land here was a wild frontier and some Native Americans were still in the area. Having land in the center of the village Samuel established a tavern, stable, and early post office. Along with Israel Blodgett he improved the trail through town that is now Maple Avenue including planting many Maple trees along the roadway. As others, here he opposed slavery and helped with the activities of the Underground Railroad. Some of the land he owned became the Main Street Cemetery in 1856 and another piece was sold to the Baptist Church. When former slave Isrel Blackburn came to town after the Civil War, Samuel gave him land to farm. By 1864 Samuel sold a portion of his land for the first subdivision here.

Samuel was a very generous man and tried to use his money for the betterment of the community. He died a few years after the Civil War at the age of 78. Mary died in 1883.



## (9) Mary Hatch Curtiss

Born: 1793

Died: February 23, 1883

### Biography

Mary Hatch was born in Vermont and married her husband Samuel Curtiss in 1813. In 1836 she helped move their family to Downers Grove when the land here was still a wild frontier. Mary lived here almost 50 years before she died in 1883.

## (10) Blodgett Corner Markers



(Left to right)

**Blodgett northeast corner marker**

**Blodgett southeast corner marker**

**Blodgett southwest corner marker**

**Blodgett northwest corner marker**

### Information

These four small, similar stones block off the Blodgett section of the cemetery.



## (11) Wheeler Family Monument

Allen and Elizabeth Wheeler were early settlers of Downers Grove. Of their ten children, three are buried in the Main Street Cemetery. Two daughters, Nora (age 11) and Myrtle (age 3), died of Scarlet Fever in 1880. Their son Schuyler died in 1890 at the age of 23 and was the final member of the Wheeler family buried in the cemetery.



## (12) Alexander French Foster

Born: 1815

Died: 1903

### Biography

Alexander French Foster married his wife Nancy Olivia Adams in 1839. After several moves, the family finally settled on a house on Maple Avenue. Alexander worked as a carpenter often spending much time in Chicago while Nancy took care of the family that now numbered 8 children. Their lives, like many in Downers Grove, were touched by the Civil War. Even though Alexander was in his 40's, he enlisted in Company B of the 105<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry. Following the example of his father and father-in-law, he wanted to serve his country. His service lasted about a year as he was injured, sick with typhoid, and spent some time in Andersonville Prison before being discharged in 1863. His life after discharge was full of illness, but he resumed his trade life as a carpenter, helping to build the Methodist Church on Maple Avenue. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic Naper Post and live to the age of 88.



## (13) Charles Curtiss

Born: 1828

Died: 1897

### Biography

Charles came to Downers Grove in 1836 with his family and parents Samuel and Mary Curtiss. In the 1850's he followed the gold rush to California with his brother Henry but returned no richer. He was a Village Trustee in 1873 and served in the Illinois General Assembly in 1887-1888. By 1892 he was president of the Farmers and Merchant Bank (located at 5135 Main Street) and was publisher of the Downers Grove Reporter by 1895. He served three terms as village president, for a total of 6 years. It is said Charles installed the first street sign in Downers Grove near his home at the corner of Curtiss and Washington Streets.

He is buried with his wife Laura Thatcher Curtiss whom he married in 1856. Her parents, Harriet and Eldred Thatcher, are also buried in the separate section of the cemetery.



## (14) Walter Sucher

Born: 1854

Died: 1863

## Michael Sucher

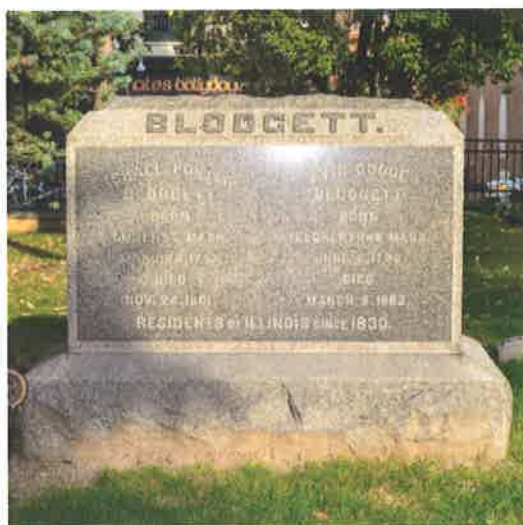
Born: 1843

Died: 1844

### Biography

Walter and Michael are two of three young children of Michael Sucher and Catherine Wolf buried in this cemetery. Though they died nearly 20 years apart they share a headstone.

Their parents were born in Alsace, France. They immigrated to America and came to Downers Grove in the early 1840s. Michael bought 200 acres in the Downers Grove area where they raised 11 children. In addition to farming, Michael was also the postmaster and commissioner of highways for Downers Grove Township. Michael also was a horse breeder. In 1882 Michael and Catherine sold their land in Downers Grove and moved to Ogden, Iowa.



## (15) Blodgett Family Monument

### Biography

Israel and Avis Blodgett were married in Amherst Massachusetts in 1820. Israel was born the day John Adams was inaugurated as the second President of the United States, March 4, 1797. He was a machinist and blacksmith like his father and Avis was the daughter of a farmer. As they began their family, Israel felt moving west would be best. So, in 1830 Israel joined a group

that set out to find land in Illinois leaving Avis in Massachusetts with several small children. By 1832 he had found land near Naperville and sent for the family. Arriving the year of the Black Hawk War, the Blodgett's joined other pioneer families who traveled to Ft. Dearborn in Chicago for safety. Israel stayed behind and served as a Corporal in the company led by Captain Naper to defend against Black Hawk if he arrived. Soon the threat was over and the families returned. By 1836 the family made another move, this time to the settlement of Downers Grove where Israel bought about 500 acres of land. They built a cabin on an Indian Trail now called Maple Avenue and raised their family of 7 boys and one girl. Israel farmed and operated a blacksmith shop while Avis kept house and saw to the education of her children. She believed it was important for them to have a good education and she taught her daughter Mary so she could also teach. With the help of neighbor Sam Curtiss, they improved Maple Avenue and planted trees along the road. By 1846 they were able to build a second home that was much bigger than the one room cabin they lived in for 10 years. Israel and Avis were against slavery and their home would become a stop on the secret underground railroad network in DuPage County. Often the lantern in their window signaled their house was a safe place for runaway slaves to find food, clothes and transportation to Chicago on their way to Canada. The family was saddened at the death of son Daniel in 1849 and then daughter Mary in 1856. Six of their sons reached adulthood and become valued citizens of the state. Three fought in the Civil War, one became a judge another a lawyer and one was Mayor of Waukegan, Illinois. Their youngest son Charles remained on the family land here and ran the farm when his father died in 1861. Avis lived to be 86 and died in 1882. The Blodgett land would eventually pass to Will, the son of Charles, who lived in Downers Grove until his death in 1933.



## (16) Kate Dixon Oldfield

Born: March 11, 1840  
Died: September 22, 1865

## Alice Kate Oldfield

Born: 1862  
Died: August 26, 1865

### Biography

Kate Dixon Oldfield and daughter Alice Kate Oldfield share this same headstone as they died about one month apart from each other. Kate's inscription is on the east side of the stone and daughter Alice Kate's inscription is on the west side. Kate's husband Richard, who died two decades later, is buried next to them.

Richard Oldfield came to Downers Grove in 1847. As a young man he farmed and was in the butchering business. It was said he lost an arm when he was accidently shot as a result of two men fighting over a gun. He also served as a tax collector for the township. After the death of his wife he married Emma Ambrose. They lived in Downers Grove until Richard died of mysterious causes in 1884. An inquest into his passing was held with leading citizens of Downers Grove serving on the jury. His cause of death was ruled to be congestion of the brain.



## (17) Dr. George S Otis

Born: 1844

Died: October 22, 1881

### Biography

Dr. George S. Otis was born in Wisconsin in 1846. He graduated from the Boston Veterinary College about 1861 and came to Chicago about 1867 to open his practice. He was renowned for his expertise in all the diseases and injuries of horses. His first office was located on 12th Street in Chicago and by 1874 he had moved his home to

Downers Grove. The Burlington train, now Burlington Northern, made it practical to work in the city and live in the western suburbs, a practice that continues to this day. In November 1875, Dr. Otis joined the Chicago Veterinary College on Wabash avenue in Chicago. He worked there only for 6 year as he died at the young age of 35 from heart disease. Otis Avenue in Downers Grove is named in his honor. Dr. Otis was married to Ellen Goeway from New York. They had one son, Robert Roy Otis. After the death of their husband and father, the family moved to Minnesota to live with Ellen's mother.



## (18) William Bradford Pye

Born: 1843

Died: 1904

### Emily Atwood Pye (1<sup>st</sup> wife)

Born: 1847

Died: 1869

### Mary Jane Thomas Pye (2<sup>nd</sup> wife)

Born: 1849

Died: 1888

### Biography

William Pye and his family are honored with an obelisk style monument that is the tallest monument in the Main Street Cemetery. William is buried between his two wives near the monument. Louisa Thomas, the sister of his second wife, is also buried nearby.

William was born in England in 1843 and came to America when he was 14 years old around 1857. Several other members of his family lived in area, so he probably lived with them in his childhood.

When William was 23, he married his first wife Emily Atwood. Her family was also from England. They were only married for 3 years until she died at the age of 22. There is no record of children from this marriage.

William's second wife was Mary Jane (Jenny) Thomas. Jenny was 21 years old when they wed in 1870. William and Jenny probably lived near her parents in Chicago. They had three children Florence, John, and William. Jenny died at the young at the age 39. In 1900, Jenny's sister Louisa Thomas came to live with them to assist with raising the children, she was last to be buried in the Pye plot in 1933.



## (19) Samuel T. Richards

Born: 1842

Died: January 26, 1863

### Biography

Samuel Richards was the oldest son of Austin and Angeline Trusdell Richards. When he was 20, Samuel decided to enlist in the Union Army. On September 2, 1862 he enlisted in Company D of the 105<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry. Fellow Downers Grove residents John Cotes and Alexander Foster joined company B. Only Alexander survived the war. John Cotes died after the battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee on July 25, 1863 and Samuel

Richards died on January 28, 1863 in Tunnel, Tennessee.

Note: the plaque at the base of the stone has the incorrect year of death.

Four members of the Richards family are buried in the Main Street Cemetery. In addition to Samuel, his parents and one of his sisters are buried here. Samuel's parents, Austin and Angeline, came to Downers Grove in 1855 from New York. Of their 5 children only 3 were living when they arrived. The Richards bought a farm on the north side of the village. Austin being a trustee of the Main Street Cemetery had his son Samuel brought back to be buried here. The loss of their son in the Civil War may have been too much for Angeline as she died 1864. After her death Austin sold the farm and moved to a home on Maple and remarried. He was interested in village affairs and signed the Incorporation Papers of 1873. Austin and his second wife Elizabeth Cole had 3 children. In 1885 their daughter Irene died of typhoid fever. She was only 16 and her death was very sudden. She was buried next to her brother Samuel who died in the Civil War, a brother she never knew. Austin died in 1903 and is buried with his family.



## (20) Walter Blanchard

Born: 1807

Died: November 18, 1863

### Biography

Walter Blanchard was born in New Hampshire in 1807, arrived in Downers Grove in 1836, just 4 years after



Pierce Downer. Here he raised a family of 5 children while he practiced law and eventually served as a DuPage County judge for 7 years. Interested in politics he was present at the Wigwam in Chicago when Lincoln was nominated for President in 1860. As the Civil War approached, Walter could not ignore the call to help. He organized a company of the 13th Illinois Infantry, even enlisting himself at the age of 54. His sons William and Franklin also joined. As Captain of this company he fought alongside his men and sadly he was wounded on November 27, 1863 at Ringgold Gap. His leg wound caused a great loss of blood and the best efforts of the doctors could not save his life. His body was escorted back to Downers Grove for burial. His service and sacrifice for DuPage County was remembered for years after his death. Major Edward Blodgett, son of Israel Blodgett, remembered the Captain as "a man like no other and whose memory may be an inspiring force for all as the years go by."



## (21) Isrel L Blackburn

Born: May 3, 1818

Died: March 15, 1903

### Biography

Sergeant Isrel L. Blackburn was born into slavery on May 3, 1818. For the first 48 years of his life he was the property of John Bowman of Mercer County Kentucky. His life changed in 1864 when his owner sold him to the Union Army at Camp Nelson, Kentucky. Isrel became a member of Company C of the 124th Colored

Infantry, just one of the 175 colored regiments formed during the Civil War. When the War was over Blackburn made his way north and found a new home here. He was given a piece of land owned by Samuel Curtiss to farm and raise his family of 5 children. Proud of his new home he

was one of the signers of the Incorporation Papers in 1873 and a member of the Naper Post of the Grand Army of the Republic that held meetings in Downers Grove. Every Decoration Day, now called Memorial Day, he could be seen walking along in the cemetery to honor the veterans buried here. Blackburn who was called Uncle Larry by many died in 1902 at the age of 90.



## (22) Alvin R. Porter

Born: January 12, 1858

Died: November 28, 1858

### Biography

Alvin was the son of Avah and Abigail Andrews Porter. His parents moved to York Township having come from the east. Upon his marriage to Abigail, they purchase 100 acres of land in Downers Grove township near Cass. Baby Alvin was born a short time later and died when he was less than a year old. He is the only member of the family to buried in Main Street Cemetery.

Main Street Cemetery – Downers Grove, IL  
List of Events and Programs

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- Downers Grove Historical Society programming
  - Founders Day
    - Dedication of one of our important founders of the community
    - First Saturday in May
- Living Cemetery
  - Local volunteers portray our early pioneers, including scripted biographies and period dress
  - Herrick Middle School drama students participate for many of the roles
  - Saturday before Halloween (varies in sync with Rotary window painting event)
- Downers Grove Museum (Park District) programming
  - Museum scheduled tours
    - Scheduled through the Park District
    - A museum docent walks participants through the cemetery
- Museum Day Camp program
  - Introduction of campers to the Cemetery and its importance in the community (planned for 2019)
- Scouting
  - Boy Scouts
    - Genealogy Merit Badge, which involves a tour of cemetery and assign each child a grave to do research on and answer questions, including map reading skills of the cemetery
- Flag installations - Memorial Day and Veteran's Day
- Flag installations - Veterans Day
  - Girl Scouts
    - § Celebrating Community Badge
- Cemetery Tour with specific requirements for understanding where early important people are buried and what their contributions were to build Downers Grove.
- District 58
  - Part of their curriculum for teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade local history
    - Cemetery tours
    - Downtown tours
- Garden Club
  - Participates by taking care of the flowers there
  - Sponsored the Blue Star Veterans Boulder
  - Provided the bench and garden at the front entry

DRAFT

**PUBLIC HEARING FILE 19-ADR-0001: A petition seeking an Historic Landmark Designation for the Downers Grove Main Street Cemetery, with the common address of 5158 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-305-015). Village of Downers Grove, Petitioner and Owner.**

Director of Community Development, Stan Popovich stated that Village Staff would be making the presentation this evening on behalf of the Petitioner and the Owner.

Mr. Devin Kamperschroer, Planning Intern with the Village of Downers Grove, presented a video to provide background on the site located southwest of Main and Curtiss in the downtown business district. The video presented a tour of the Main Street Cemetery including information on many of the people buried there whose lives played a part in the historic, heritage and cultural characteristics of the Village.

Mr. Kamperschroer also showed photographs of various parts of the Cemetery. He explained that the Village is seeking landmark status for the Cemetery and the 27 specified markers deemed appropriate for requiring a certificate of appropriateness in the event the markers are proposed for relocation or replaced with a design or a material that is not considered in-kind. If the site is given landmark status, a certificate of appropriateness would only be required for alterations or repairs to the 27 identified grave markers.

Mr. Kamperschroer stated that Staff finds the petition complies with the criteria in Section 12.302 for Landmark Designation, and based on its findings Staff recommends that the Architectural Design Review Board makes a positive recommendation to the Village Council for landmark status of the Main Street Cemetery located at 5158 Main Street.

Ms. Chalberg said she definitely is in favor of voting for this landmark status. She said they cannot always hope for future Village Councils that are as conscientious about preservation as this Village Council. She commented that the Historical Society does ongoing research about who is buried there, and sometimes finds disparity in some of the research information. She asked if a change in the biography was necessary, whether that would affect the landmark status of the Cemetery in any way. Ch. Davenport replied that the designation would be made on the grave markers, and should not be affected by any additional information found about the individual buried there.

Mr. Lerner then asked if a new marker was proposed if a COA would be required. Mr. Popovich explained that the Historic Preservation Ordinance was amended to allow an individual who wanted to add to a previously landmarked home to simply come back to the Board without having to go back before Council with their change. The same would hold true for the Cemetery.

Mr. Popovich said as long as the 27 markers already there are not changed, a marker could be added without having to go through a COA process.

## DRAFT

Ch. Davenport raised a question as to whether there is anything in the Ordinance that addresses a site such as the Cemetery. Mr. Popovich said you can landmark a site or an archeological site. Cemeteries are unique in terms of the national requirements. That is why staff has really explained in detail the COA requirements to identify what has to come back before the Board for approval. For example, the split rail fence in the back could be replaced if necessary. They want to preserve the Cemetery but don't want to burden the Board with in kind replacement of markers or landscape changes, etc. The protection goes to the site.

Mr. Popovich explained that the Village is the owner of the Cemetery, and the Historical Society acts as steward. Ms. Chalberg added that if the Historical Society felt that some replacement work was needed they would contact Public Works to get recommendations for general maintenance, including landscaping, tree trimming, etc. She noted that recently they had to have a stone replaced which had been misspelled long ago. They went through the Village to have that error corrected.

Mr. Riemer asked if the 27 stones were all original, or of a certain age. He was told that the majority of them are original or were replaced or repaired at a time when the integrity of the vintage look of them was retained. Some cannot even be read because they are so weathered. Mr. Riemer then asked if additional monuments would "age" into protection as they got older. The consensus was that it could occur, and the issue could be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Popovich addressed the Board re amendments to the landmark designation as stated in the Ordinance:

*"A landmark designation or nomination may be amended or added to by submitting a supplementary listing record. An additional public hearing is not required before the Board nor Council and at the next regularly scheduled meeting the Board will evaluate the record according to the same criteria set forth herein for designation and any determining criteria shall be added to the original designation or nomination."*

Mr. Reimer raised the question as to what would govern any changes to the Cemetery. Are there State rules or laws if the Village wanted to sell the Cemetery. Mr. Popovich replied there are requirements regarding the burials, the process of how to handle the remains, finding relatives for re-internment, etc. It was noted that a future Council could choose to override a decision made by the Board if it wanted to do so.

Ms. Chalberg said that they have been told that this location of a commercial district area cemetery may be one of two in the nation. As towns grew cemeteries were set outside of the towns. Downers Grove never moved this cemetery's location, which is unique.

Mr. Lerner asked whether landmarking a cemetery would change how the monuments are managed. It was noted that some monuments in the Cemetery have been changed, or reinforced in some way, including placing a plaque for clarification near a stone that is unreadable. Mr. Popovich said he didn't think this would change the management of the monuments.

## DRAFT

Mr. Lerner asked which monuments are included in the designation. He said if you look at the map provided in their packet there appear to be 28 monuments in one part of the application and 26 in another. He thinks it is important that they are sure which stones are covered. He referenced a listing provided by Staff where it appears to be two stones, when actually it is the front and back of one stone. There was some question as to using the word "monument" versus "marker." The consensus was to work off the map as provided by Staff, which lists 28 "markers."

Another possible discrepancy occurs in the map's description for Walter Blanchard (#20). On page 15 it shows two Blanchard stones. Only one is shown on the map. Staff replied that the one to be preserved was the taller one of the two stones shown. Staff would recommend keeping #20, and noted that the one to the right of #20 is a non-historic marker. Mr. Popovich explained the map would run with the monuments to be protected. The consensus after discussion is that the map as shown is correct, although it has 28 total designations on it. Wherever there are deviations, Staff will make the proper adjustments to the map.

In the non-COA items, it was asked if they should include the parking lot that is identified as part of the site. Mr. Kamperschroer said the landmark would be recorded based on the legal description of the Cemetery itself. The parking lot is not included. The legal description only identifies the Cemetery itself.

There being no additional discussion at this time, Ch. Davenport opened the meeting for public comment.

1. Chuck Holtzen of 5226 Carpenter Street said she is in favor of this landmark designation. It is located a block from her house and she loves walking through there.
2. Byron Holtzen of 5226 Carpenter Street said he is also looking forward to having this landmarked, as it is long overdue. He agrees that it is important for the documentation to be accurate because once this is placed on the Village website, people will see it as gospel and will use it for research, etc.
3. Marty Acks of 5217 Fairmount Avenue said he thinks the changes that clarify the intent would be important. He is also a member of the Downers Grove Historical Society Board and favors this designation.
4. Rich Kulovany of 6825 Camden said he stands in support of this. This is one of the things that make this town the best in the nation. He said as this gets more publicity, people will be surprised to learn that it wasn't protected already.
5. Amy Gassen, 5320 Benton Avenue expressed her support and thanked the Village for bringing this forward. The Historical Society appreciates the relationship it has with the Village and this is near and dear to all their hearts. She pointed out that the creator of the map they have been referring to was one of the Historical Society's Board members.

DRAFT

There being no further public comments, Ch. Davenport closed the public portion of the hearing.

**Board Deliberation:**

Mr. Lerner thanked Staff, the Historical Society and everyone involved in preparing this application. He is pleased to see they are landmarking using different criteria than usual, with this property being a source of civic pride and identity, and having significant value as part of community heritage. He is in favor of this request.

Ch. Davenport thanked everyone for their work and the Village for showing the way to having this property recognized.

Ms. Chalberg said a resident made a comment in a public hearing at a Council meeting and that comment made this landmark designation happen.

**Mr. Lerner moved that a positive recommendation be made to the Village Council to landmark this property taking into account the modifications to the application as discussed. Ms. Acks seconded the Motion.**

Mr. Popovich clarified that the modifications include confirmation of the number of monuments, clarify those monuments on the map and in the photographs, and eliminate the photograph that showed a non-historical monument. In addition, a description for not requiring a COA for parking lot or drive aisle improvements or maintenance should be included.

**AYES: Acks, Chalberg, Lerner, Riemer, Davenport**

**NAYS: None**

**The Motion carried 5:0**