

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

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| Inventory No: | SBR.802 |
| Historic Name: | Rural Cemetery |
| Common Name: | |
| Address: | Cordaville Rd |
| City/Town: | Southborough |
| Village/Neighborhood: | Southborough |
| Local No: | 44 |
| Year Constructed: | |
| Architect(s): | |
| Architectural Style(s): | |
| Use(s): | Burial Ground |
| Significance: | Art; Community Planning; Religion |
| Area(s): | |
| Designation(s): | |
| Building Materials(s): | |



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM E- BURIAL GROUND

Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

44

Marlboro

802

947, 948, 313

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING



Town SOUTHBOROUGH

Place (neighborhood or village) Southborough Center

Address or Location Cordaville Road

Name Rural Cemetery

Ownership ☒ Public ☐ Private

Approximate Number of Stones unknown, less than 5,000

Earliest Death Date 1842

Latest Death Date 2000

Landscape Architect none

Condition good

Acreage 16.8 acres

Setting On main north-south route near center of town, next to part of Sudbury Reservoir, opposite St. Mark's Golf Club, narrow auto roads, tree lined with mature plantings

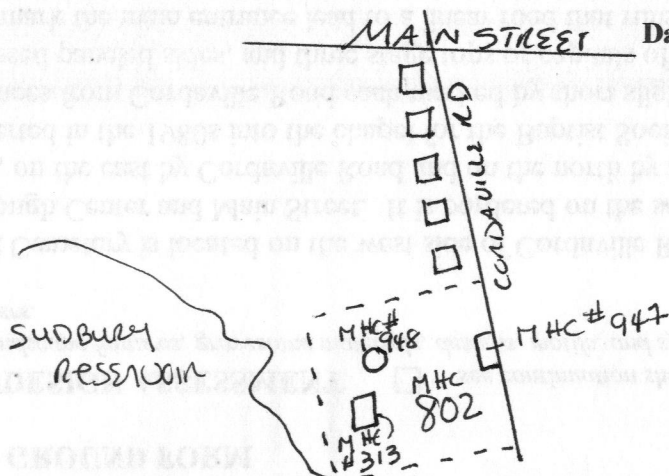
Sketch Map

Draw or duplicate a map of the burial ground showing its location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings or major features within the burial ground, and between the burial ground and the nearest intersection. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Indicate north.

Recorded by Schuler/Forbes

Organization Southborough Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 5/00



RECEIVED

JUL 03 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form

BURIAL GROUND FORM**VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT** ☐ *see continuation sheet*

Describe landscape features, gravestone materials, designs, motifs, and symbols that are either common or unusual. Note any known carvers.

The Rural Cemetery is located on the west side of Cordaville Road, north of Turnpike Road and near Southborough Center and Main Street. It is bordered on the south and west by parts of the 1897 Sudbury Reservoir, on the east by Cordaville Road and on the north by the Chapel of the Cross, a former dwelling that was converted in the 1980s into the chapel for the Baptist Society in Southborough. The Rural Cemetery has two entrances from Cordaville Road each marked by short slightly tapered granite piers that sit on square bases, have recessed paneled sides, and three stage tops or capitals of two squares sitting on a rounded piece. These piers that mark the main entrance lead to a linear road that runs the length of the Cemetery and has other narrow maple tree lined roads branching off the main road to the west. The Cemetery is bordered by a low stone wall along Cordaville Road. The receiving tomb (MHC #947) is built into the stone wall facing Cordaville Road, a main north-south route. The tomb has long random ashlar sides with a low iron door centered and granite piers carrying a segmental arched granite name band with Southborough Cemetery etched into the band. Over the iron door is the date "1842" carved into the lintel of the plain linear door surround. The top of the tomb is squared off with field stone and a ground cover is growing over the edges from the horizontal top surface. If one approaches the top of the receiving tomb from within the Rural Cemetery one finds a terraced rock garden with six low stone steps leading to planted beds and random field stone walls forming the edge of this raised garden. The bronze plaque placed on the wall next to the steps states "In recognition of Leo Bertozzi Superintendent of Cemeteries 1962-1986 and Designer of Southborough Town Flag." Stones are randomly placed throughout the Cemetery and are of slate, marble, and granite. Most are modest in size and design. There are several obelisks of varying size and ornamentation scattered throughout the Cemetery marking family burial sites. At the rear of the Cemetery near the 1976 brick office building (MHC #313) is a round rubble stone tower (MHC #948) with a flared polygonal top. Double doors are made of wood and have a defined stone surround. There are narrow lancet like windows at the second story level and a band of rectangular stones surrounding the tower above the narrow windows. A low raised bed with a memorial marker extends from the tower and marks the location of a former superintendent's office. It is not related to the tower. The low one-story, side gabled, brick building with a centered chimney, low on the facade roof slope has two off-centered entrances.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ *see continuation sheet*

Explain religious affiliations, major period of use, and evaluate historical association of this burial ground with the community.

Although Noble accounts for the Old Burying Ground off Main Street closing in 1843 and the Rural Cemetery opening in 1844, the date on the prominent receiving tomb (MHC #947) on Cordaville Road, that names the location as "Southborough Cemetery", is 1842. The Old Burying Ground had no more room by the 1840s and the Town closed the original burying ground except to spouses of those already buried there. In 1861 according to the Town Report Jonas Goodnow was paid for 3 1/2 acres of land to be added to the "new burying ground." In the same year Dexter Newton was surveying the new burying ground. Because this burying ground was an extension of the former burying ground, there was a strong tie with the early congregations and until 1862 no Catholics had been buried here, nor had they been allowed. One of Southborough's sons died while enlisted in Company K of the 13th Massachusetts Regiment. Patrick Cleary had volunteered and was in Virginia where he died of food poisoning. At first he was buried in the pauper's section of the Rural Cemetery, however, there was protest and the Board of Selectman established an unwritten policy to bury with honors any one who died in service, thus Cleary was re-interred. Following the Civil War the old policy of no Catholics worked its way back

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
SOUTHBOROUGH

Property Address
RURAL CEMETERY
Area(s) Form No.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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into the unwritten policy and remained that way until challenged by two Catholics in the early 1900s. Dennis Bagley and Patrick Salmon asked the Town Moderator before the start of a Town Meeting why Catholics were not allowed in the Rural Cemetery. The Moderator conferred with the Cemetery Commissioners and responded that there was no policy barring Catholics it was their choice to go to Hopkington or Westborough because the fee for the Rural Cemetery was steep and not affordable to the large Catholic families. The two men immediately paid the fee of \$15, only to learn that it had just been raised to \$30, which they willingly and ably paid on the spot. This exchange ended the ban on Catholic burials at the Rural Cemetery.

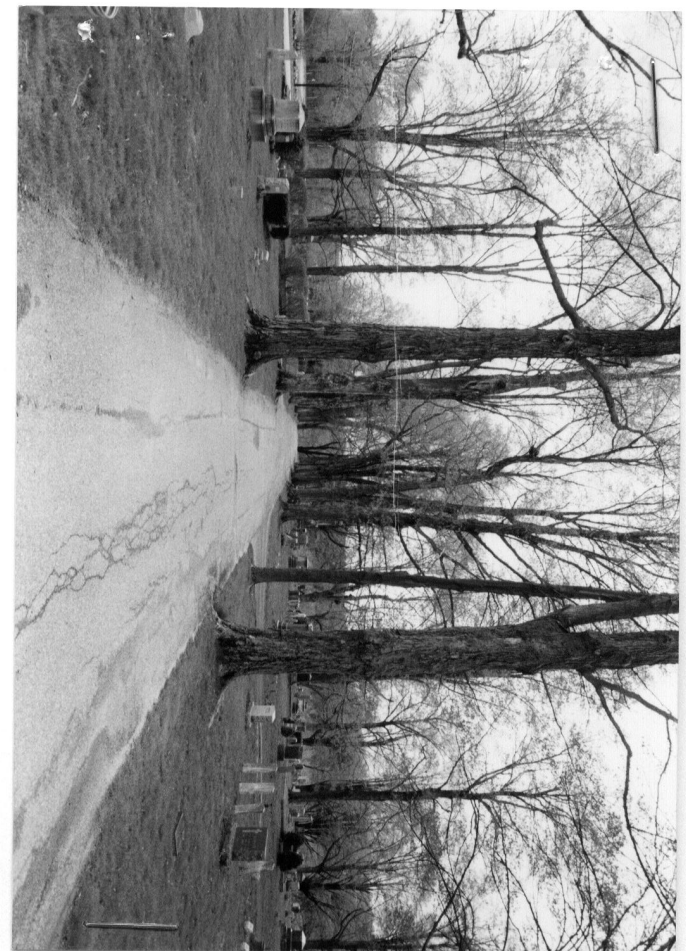
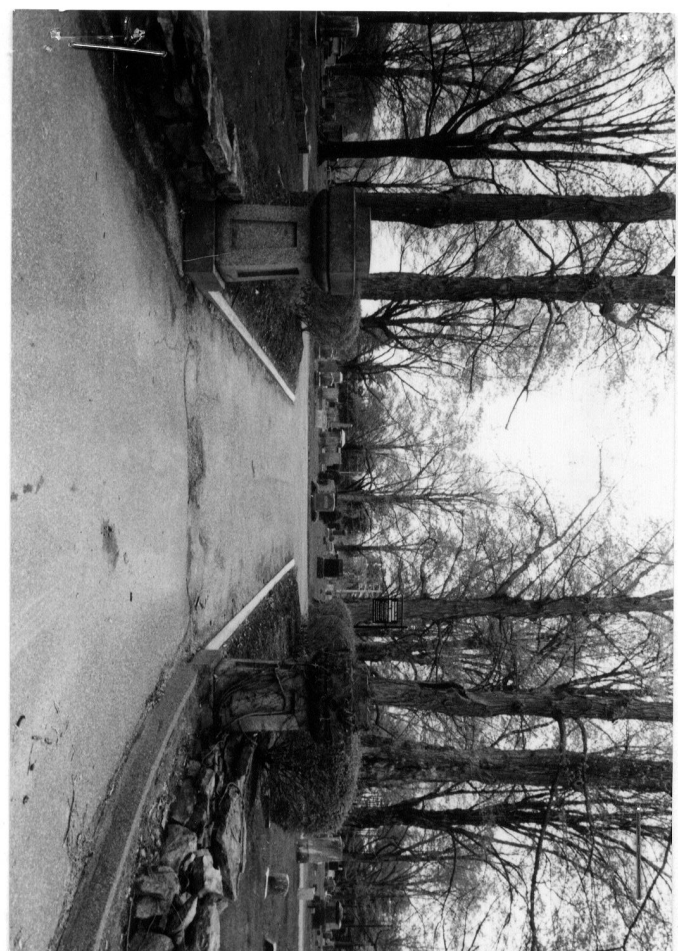
In 1900 the Town Annual Report showed funding allocated to build a water supply for the cemetery. The Cemetery Committee's report stated that the dry seasons made it impossible to keep grass and shrubbery in good condition. The Committee suggested the construction of a wind mill and tank with piping which would cost \$600. By 1901 due to the high cost of iron piping this proposed water system had not been completed. The well had been dug and the wind mill erected but the erection of the tower to hold the tank would not occur until 1903 when additional funding was allocated to lay the pipe and erect the rubblestone tower. The stone structure was recommended for durability and cost savings on repairs and maintenance. George Cantello was paid \$197.31 to build the tower (MHC #948) and the surveyor was James F. Bigelow.

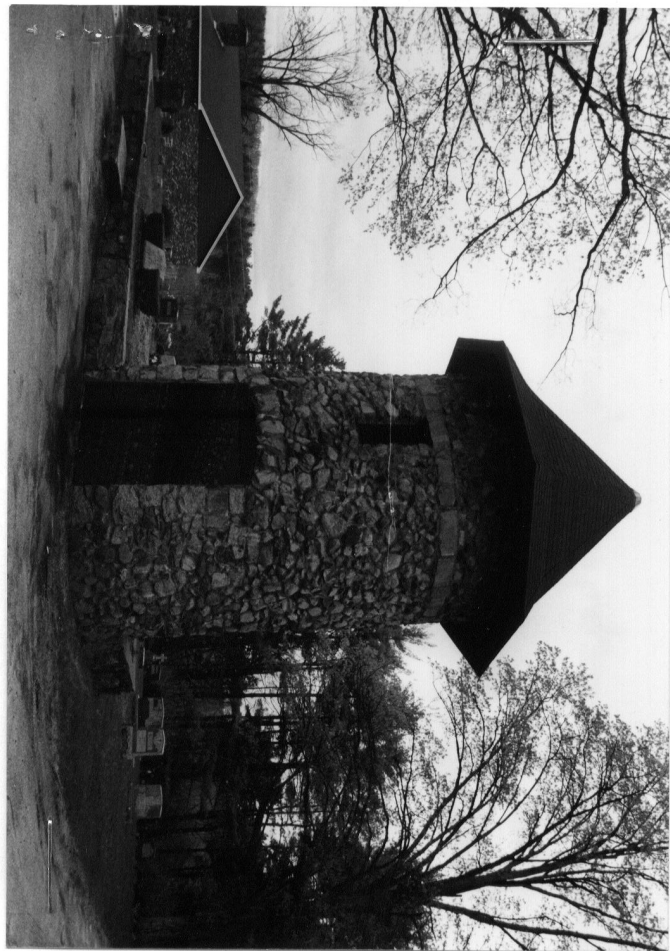
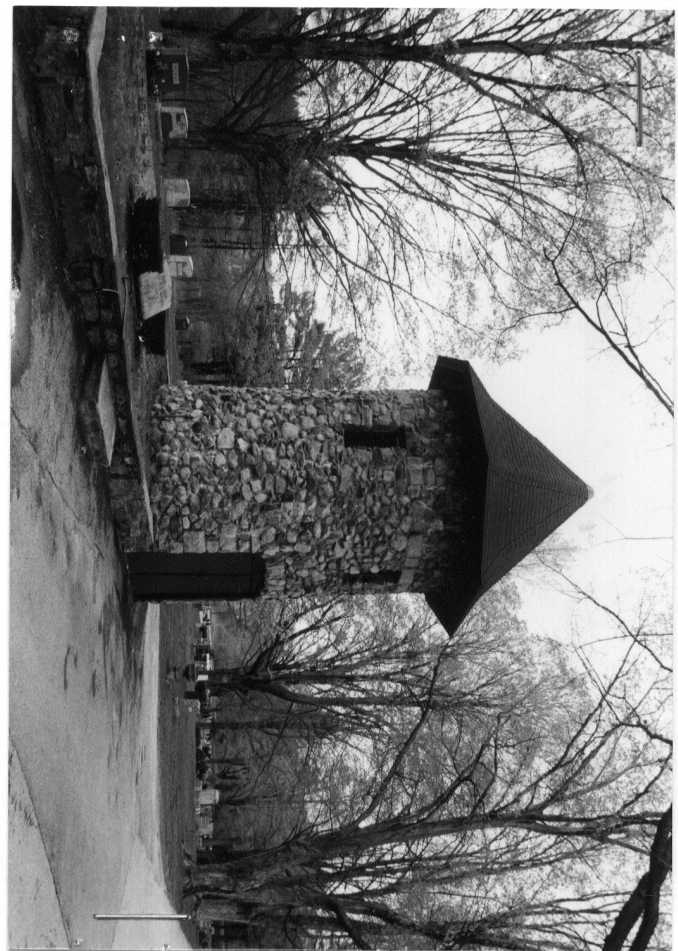
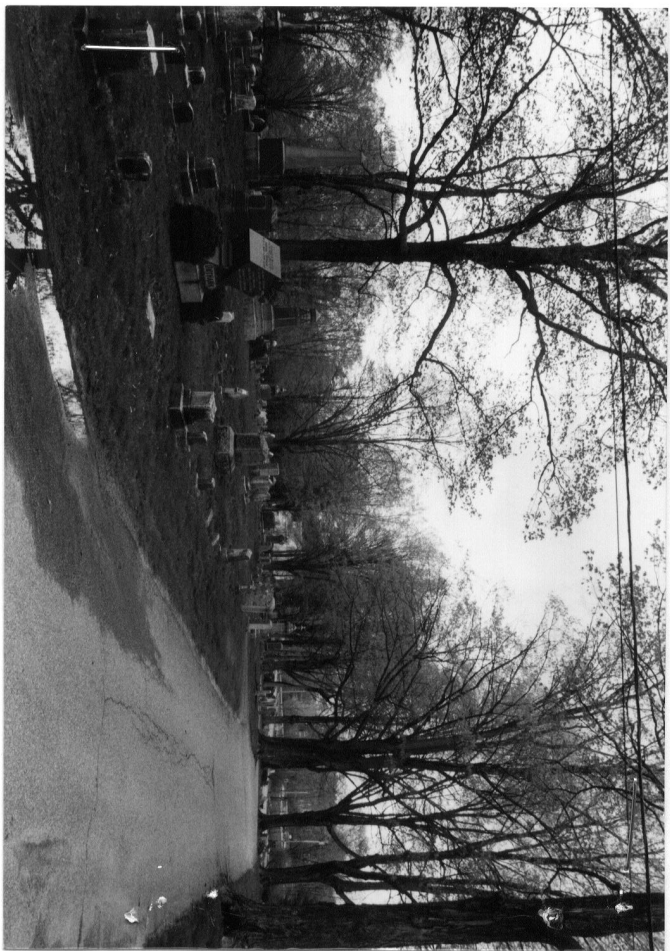
Today the Rural Cemetery has approximately 5500 persons interred there. The number of markers is less. The Stone Tower, which formerly stored a water tank, is now is used for storage. The low brick office building (MHC #313) was designed and constructed in 1976-77 by students at the Assabet Valley Vocational School at a cost of only \$38,921 to the Town of Southborough. It was constructed to replace an equipment building that burned in 1975 and that had been located in the same place in the Cemetery. The 1977 brick building serves as an office and equipment building.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Noble. Fences of Stone, 1990
Southborough Town Reports
Oral History. Bridgett Gilleney, Superintendent of Rural Cemetery

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*





MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
ROAD
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Community Property Address
SOUTHBOROUGH CORDAVILLE ROAD

Area(s) Form No.

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National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
☒ Contributing to a potential historic district ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Schuler/Forbes, Consultants

The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The Rural Cemetery is eligible for listing on the National Register as part of a potential Main Street Historic District and individually as well. The design, the location, and the setting all have important implications about the development of Southborough. The association with residents of Southborough and the information that can be gained about the broad patterns of development makes this an important resource. The Cemetery would be a contributing resource to a district that features the many institutions along Main Street as well as the nineteenth century residential development. The Cemetery retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.