



Swan Point Cemetery

# **An Historical Walking Tour**



## Introduction

For more than a century and a half, Swan Point Cemetery has consoled, pleased, inspired, and enchanted Rhode Islanders, their families, their friends, and their guests. Even those with no specific ties to the cemetery feel an almost-proprietary interest here. It is one of the state's most compelling places, and this guidebook attempts, by example, to explain why.

One of the country's first garden cemeteries, Swan Point owes its origins to the vivid intellectual community composed predominantly of Providence's emerging middle class in the mid-nineteenth century. Founded by Thomas C. Hartshorn in 1846, it claimed Providence's most commanding natural landscape, picturesquely rolling land above the broadest stretch of the Seekonk River. Expanded almost fourfold from its original approximately sixty acres, Swan Point continues to make the most of its varying topography through thoughtful site work and judicious planting.

Throughout its history, Swan Point has always enjoyed the mindful attention of employees and volunteers who guided its development. Architect Thomas A. Tefft established a design vocabulary for largely architectural funerary sculpture that continues to inform the cemetery's aesthetic. Surveyors Atwater & Schubarth, who organized the original grounds, set the tone for development still followed today. In the late nineteenth century, long-time Director Alfred Stone and Superintendent Timothy McCarthy continued to implement the vision shared by founders Hartshorn, Tefft, and Atwater & Schubarth. But what keeps Swan Point fresh and vital as landscape and sculpture is not imitation of what went before. Its secret lies in understanding and continually reinventing the delicate relationship between the natural and the created.



## Historical Tour Index



1. Swan Point Cemetery's Entrance	H 6
2. The Office and Chapel	H 5
3. Alfred Stone Memorial Seat	F 6
4. Barnaby Monument	E 6
5. Bates Family Lot	E 5
6. Sprague Family Lot	E 7
7. Hope Memorial	F 9
8. Lippitt Family Triangle	D 10
9. George H. Corliss Monument	B 11
10. Edward B. Bohuszewicz	B 11
11. Alfred Stone Naturalistic Stone	B 10
12. Grosvenor Family Lot	B 10
13. Joseph R. Brown Pyramid	B 10
14. Colonel John Stanton Slocum	B 10
15. Thomas Coles Hartshorn	B 10
16. Thomas Alexander Tefft	B 10
17. The Forty Steps	C 9
18. Briggs & Vose Monuments	C 9
19. Original Receiving Tomb	E 8
20. Major John Rogers Vinton	E 8
21. W. Tibbetts Pearce	D 8
22. Pastor's Rest	D 7
23. Metcalf Family Lot	D 7
24. Alice Winsor Hunt	E 7
25. Burleigh Family Stones	D 6
26. Thomas Wilson Dorr	D 6
27. Dyer Family Tomb	C 6
28. Dyer Family Lot	C 6
29. Sharpe Family Sarcophagus	D 6
30. The Rock Pond	E 5
31. Timothy McCarthy Stone	E 5
32. Governor William Sprague	D 5
33. Howard Phillips Lovecraft	D 5
34. General Ambrose Burnside	D 4
35. Sarah Elizabeth Doyle	D 3
36. Elizabeth Buffum Chace	D 4
37. Nightingale Monument	C 3
38. Aldrich Family Lot	C 2
39. Marsden J. Perry Tomb	C 2
40. Lownes Family Monument	C 2
41. Lyman Bullock Goff	D 2
42. Paul Krot Monument	F 2
43. Sayles Family Lot	E 3

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Perhaps more than any other garden cemetery, Swan Point presents a comfortable amplitude to any visitor's experience. The land undulates easily, seemingly spontaneously, and delightfully. The variety of specimen trees and shrubbery, both planted and native to the landscape (including a more-than-two-hundred-year-old Sassafras) makes this a tree-lover's dream. Monuments enjoy spacious placement rarely seen in cemeteries of its age and type. The simplicity of most monuments is refreshingly striking, especially in the context of elaborate sculptural compositions typically found in the cemetery's peers. And the predominance of architectural monuments here only serves as a fine foil for the relatively few, fine figural sculptures found here.

From its inception, Swan Point Cemetery has been a place for both the living and the dead. It is one of those rare places where both have always comfortably inhabited the same space. Remarkably few of those remain today. This guide is dedicated to you, the visitor, who, in the words of founder Thomas Hartshorn, want to understand how "...its monuments will be local histories teaching the value of life and the nature of true worth."

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## The Tour



**1. Swan Point Cemetery's principal entrance** strategically occurs on a picturesque curve of Blackstone Boulevard as a recessed crescendo in the stone wall that forms the cemetery's western and northern borders. It enhances the experience of arrival, especially important for the many funerary

processions that pass through these gates. Here is landscape design at its most effective in setting mood and tone. The simplest of elements, large granite boulders so common in the southern New England soils, are naturalistically arranged in a composition that is monumental, dignified, and impressive, yet understated and inviting. The bronze dates on the walls flanking the gates indicate the year of the cemetery's opening. Visible beyond the gates is oak-canopied Holly Avenue, one of only two perfectly straight roads in the grounds, leading to its heart and focusing on the emphatic verticality of the Barnaby monument (4).



the southwest end of the cemetery, complements the style of the existing administrative and service buildings. It contains a chapel with seating for 100 people, a family room, indoor columbarium and mausoleum with an array of interior and exterior crypts.

2. Immediately inside the gates is a random-course granite-ashlar complex including **office, chapel, reception room, mausoleum, crematory, and columbarium.** The original office-and-chapel building (1906), designed by Stone, Carpenter & Willson (while Stone was cemetery President; see 3 below) in the manner of late Gothic vernacular buildings of the English countryside, established a design vocabulary for this complex appropriate to a rural cemetery. Additions to this building include those by John Hutchins Cady in 1947 (also a cemetery President) and Architectural firm Haynes de Boer Associates in 2002. The Crematory, just north of the Chapel and Office, was designed by Donald Prout Associates and completed in 1991.

In 2006, Swan Point Cemetery opened the **Redwood Mausoleum/Columbarium/Chapel.** The building, located in

In 2014, the crematory was renovated and expanded. It houses a larger committal chapel, and a viewing room for cremation committal. Also constructed was a new reception hall that has comfortable seating for 80. This room is a popular choice for post funeral gatherings. A new freestanding columbarium offers interior and exterior niches to accommodate the rising trend of inurnment.

Both units were designed and constructed under the direction of Haynes de Boer Associates.





3. Designed by Norman M. Isham, who began his career in Stone's office, the **Alfred Stone Memorial**, pays tribute to the architect who served as a cemetery Director from 1876 until his death, the last twelve as President. Stone (1834-1908), among the first generation of professional architects as we understand them today, took a keen interest in planning and land use issues. He played a key role in guiding the cemetery's late nineteenth-century expansion continuing the precepts of the original design. His burial site is also included in this guide (11).



4. Located at the eastern terminus of Holly Avenue and at what is now the center of the grounds, this statue-topped obelisk marks the burial site of **Jerothmul B. Barnaby** (1830-1889), a highly successful dry-goods merchant, his immediate family, and descendant Barnaby Keeney (1914-1980), Brown University President (1955-66). Stylish Romanesque columns girdle the plinth, and the base and cap of the smooth obelisk are embellished with Néo-Grec friezes. The statue at top is a standard allegorical figure of mourning, (compare with that in the Lippitt plot, 8), a female figure holding a wreath. The monument's orientation toward the east, facing the pond and not the entrance, from what was then the western edge of the grounds, recalls the cemetery's expansion and reorientation.



5. In the Bates family plot seven very fine Colonial Revival monuments, erected in the early years of the twentieth century, create an exceptionally subtle visual fugue of form, decorative vocabulary, and color. **Isaac Comstock Bates** (1843-1913) was a wealthy meat provisioner who played significant roles in Providence's burgeoning art community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as a Director of both Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), President from 1910 until his death, and The Providence Art Club, as well as a major collector of paintings and etchings, many of which were bequeathed to RISD. Bates's highly developed taste is probably central to understanding this grouping, which includes markers for his wife, parents, sister and brother-in-law, and nephew and his wife. Bates's own angular, dark-grey stone, by far the most severe, becomes the focal point of the group, with other stones playing off blue, tan, and green variations of grey slate and granite, modulations of early eighteenth-century tombstone shapes, and the-best-quality carved decoration, distinguishable by depth and elaboration. The Grosvenor family plot (12) presents a grouping similar in quality but visually quite different.



6. One of the cemetery's most compelling plots, the **Sprague** lot blends landscape design, funerary sculpture, and industrial, political, and social history into a mutually reinforcing ensemble seldom paralleled, here or elsewhere. This circular lot at one of the cemetery's most eminent promontories (albeit now bereft of views downhill to the south and east because of large-scale coniferous vegetation) marvelously exploits circular organization to crown the site. Holding the center is a marble monument based on the Greek fourth-century B.C.E. Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, designed by James Bucklin (who used the same source for the lantern atop Downtown Providence's Beneficent Congregational Church, which

maintains a plot in the cemetery for the burial of its ministers).



## 6. (Sprague Lot continued)

Family burials extend concentrically from the center, albeit here with none of the calculated egotism of the most famous circular American plot, the Sedgwick Pie in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. There, the interments are arranged such that on the Day of Resurrection, each family member is to rise facing inward, and thus seeing only other Sedgwicks. The **Spragues**, made rich by cotton manufacturing at the Cranston Print Works, produced two nineteenth-century **Rhode Island Governors**, both named **William**, uncle (1799-1856; Governor 1838-39), buried here, and nephew, buried at (32). The predominance of white marble reinforces the lot's presence. By far the most engaging monument here, however, is the sarcophagus with the *gisant* figures memorializing the two elder children of Byron and Harriet Sprague, **Mary** (1850-1860) and **William Comstock** (1857-1860), by Charles Hemenway, which reminds of the pervasive incidence of infant mortality in the nineteenth-century. (Compare with the Lippitt plot, 8.)



7. The **Hope Memorial** Garden perhaps best illustrates the cemetery's continuing attention to accommodating burial needs in modern yet visually and emotionally fulfilling settings. The focal point of the garden is a mixed-medium sculpture, two triangular pink-granite monoliths as backdrop for an eighteenth-century anchor, a symbol both of hope and of the State of Rhode Island, whose flag and seal it graces. The stone sculpture, designed by Brown University art professor Richard Fishman and originally installed at an outdoor chapel on Providence's Killingly Street in 1972, was moved here in October 1976.

Burial plots are arranged in gentle arcs facing the sculpture, an outdoor and non-denominational simulacrum of a worship space. The variety of stones here reflects both the diversity of Rhode Island's population and the cemetery's historically inclusive attitude.



8. Dramatically sited amid a three-way intersection at South Avenue and Ridge Way, the **Lippitt** triangle was long the cemetery's most prominent and immediately distinguishable plot, highly visible from the original entrance when it was located less than a quarter of a mile to the northwest. Dominating the granite-coping-walled plot is an elaborate and beautifully site-specific plinth supporting an allegorical mourning figure, similar to that at Barnaby (4). **Henry Lippitt** (1816-1881), a textile manufacturer, served as Rhode Island Governor from 1875 to 1877. **Mary Ann Balch Lippitt** (1823-1889), his wife, became an important advocate for the deaf, following their daughter Jeanie's (1852-1940) affliction during a bout at the age of four with scarlet fever. The disease claimed the lives of her three brothers, memorialized in the low-relief white-marble monument just to the right of the entrance. To the left of the entrance is the monument for **Robert Lincoln Lippitt** (1823-1858), Henry's brother, whose house on Hope Street stands next to his brother's; seldom does the symmetry of proximity in life and death occur so vividly as here. Governor Lippitt

was the first in the family of a number of important politicians, including his grandson State House of Representatives Minority Leader Frederick Lippitt, great-grandson United States Senator John H. Chafee, and great-great grandson U.S. Senator and Governor Lincoln Chafee.

9. A strong, simple granite obelisk, emerging from a faceted base and ornamented only with floral and ivy garlands, marks the burial site of one of the most important industrialists of the nineteenth century, **George H. Corliss** (1817-1888). Corliss developed and manufactured the world's most powerful and almost universally employed steam engines, including those at the machine-tool company of his neighbor Joseph R. Brown (13). Obelisks, a form advocated by sculptor Horatio Greenough and found throughout the cemetery, became popular in the first half of the nineteenth century; the Washington Monument, begun in the 1840s, is the best known. The form and material of the



monument and the substance of Corliss's life forcefully coalesce into a memorial laden with meaning.

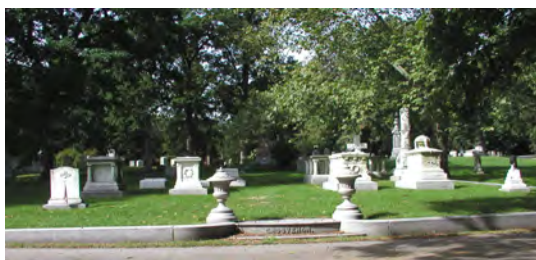


**10.** Little is known of **Edward B. Bohuszewicz** (ca 1813-1848) beyond his interest in music, to which alludes the low-relief carved lyre on the front of the small brownstone sarcophagus atop a plinth that marks his grave. The monument, designed by Thomas Tefft (16), follows a form that refers to burial practices found in ancient Rome and in Renaissance Italy. It is a sculptural parallel to the architectural trends of the late 1840s, when the same sources were used for buildings.



**11.** Discussed above (2 and 3) as architect, planner, and cemetery Director, **Alfred Stone** planned well for the final resting place for his family, on a gentle slope with a panoramic view of the Seekonk River. The view was much better until recently, since environmental regulations now require the maintenance of volunteer trees at water's edge to prevent erosion. Stone's stone is just that, a large stone, embellished only with a bronze ribbon bearing his and his wife's names and dates. This sort of naturalistic monument was just coming into fashion at the end of the nineteenth century, like the wall that presents the public face of the cemetery (see 1), and both this stone, used individually, and those of the wall no doubt reflect Stone's aesthetic attitudes toward the development of a garden cemetery. Probably not coincidentally, they parallel those of cemetery Superintendent Timothy McCarthy (31), whose own contemporary monument is similar. Stone's daughters, unlike many of their era, became professionals: Ellen (1870-1952) became a physician, while Esther (1872-1950) followed in her father's footsteps and became one of the state's first female architects.

**12. The Grosvenor** plot is probably overall the most visually stunning sculptural ensemble in the cemetery, thanks to the exclusive use of white marble for an almost-textbook collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century funerary-sculpture examples, many with highly charged symbolism. Two sarcophagi, larger than the smaller symbolic ones by Tefft (10, 16), recall Roman and Italian Renaissance sources. That for **William Grosvenor** (1810-1888) represents the former, but here overlaid with nineteenth-century symbolism, a cross atop it swathed in ivy (symbolic of eternity).



powerful floral symbol of love, places it firmly in the late nineteenth century. Adjacent are tributes to several of their children who died young. Immediately to the north of Rosa's grave are those of two children who died very young, both in the nineteenth-century diminutive-monument tradition, Amasa Mason, who

died at age three months in 1842, and Eliza Howe (1848-1853), whose small slab is crowned by a dove. West of the parents is the grave of **Robert Grosvenor** (1848-1879), marked by a broken

column, symbol of a life cut short, engirdled with eternal ivy. Other monuments in this family's plot are variations on these themes.

Adjacent is that of his wife, **Rosa Ann** (1817-1872), no doubt prescribed by her husband, who survived her; created by Casoni & Isola of New York, it is more Italian Renaissance in form, but its urned top filled with the ivy and roses, the most



**13.** Nineteenth-century funerary-sculpture designers often looked to historic burial references, and no culture was more associated with burial practices than ancient Egypt. The pyramid is perhaps the best world-wide known symbol of burial practices, and what better symbol for one of the emperors of industry, **Joseph R. Brown** (1810-1876), than that of an immortal pharaoh? Brown was a founder and the creative genius of the country's most important precision-tool company, Brown & Sharpe (for the Sharpes, see 29), without which mass production of identical products would have been inconceivable. His only daughter, **Lyra** (1845-1907), married architect **Edward Irving Nickerson** (1845-1908), and their adjacent Colonial Revival stone is a peer with those found in the Bates plot (5). Their only child, the sophisticated, world-traveling **Lyra Brown Nickerson** (1885-1916), inherited the family fortune, which, after her early sudden death from typhoid, splendidly endowed both the Providence Public Library and the Rhode Island School of Design.



**14. Colonel John Stanton Slocum** (1824-1861) was a dedicated soldier whose career began when he obtained a commission as First Lieutenant in the United States Army from President James Knox Polk in February 1847, during the Mexican-American War. Governor William Sprague (32) gave Slocum the colonelcy of the Second Rhode Island Regiment in the spring of 1861. Slocum led the regiment in the Battle of Bull Run, in northern Virginia, where he fell on 21 July 1861. His finely carved granite monument is highly personal. Based on the ancient sarcophagus form, it is embellished with the names of battles in which he participated, Contreras and Chapultepec in the Mexican War as well as the fatal Bull Run, and capped with military accoutrements, sword, epaulets, cape, cap. The finely detailed carving in granite, carried out by Westerly's Smith Granite Co., one of the nation's best and most prolific firms, was not possible before nineteenth-century industrialization, when power drills made possible the subtle manipulation of hard stone, like this granite.

**14. (Colonel Slocum continued)**

Slocum's burial here, far from the site of his death, reminds that the Civil War, when so many men perished on what was then foreign soil because of the secession of the southern states, was the event that changed American burial practices. Embalming became a standard procedure, necessary then to enable the sanitary transport of hundreds of thousands back to their native land.

**15. Thomas Coles Hartshorn** (1800-1854), the founder of Swan Point Cemetery, left remarkably little trace of his life and work beyond the legacy of this cemetery. His early career was as a preceptor at a private school once located in what is today's Downtown. By the early 1850s, and until his death, he was a clerk here at the cemetery.

In a poem titled "Time," Hartshorn prophetically wrote three years before his death, "Even they who led the van[guard]/... have missed the fame which they contended for,/ Obscured and buried in the lapse of years...."



**16. Thomas Alexander Tefft** (1826-1859) was an extraordinarily gifted architect, educated at Brown University (Class of 1851) and trained in the

office of Tallman & Bucklin. Tefft was the architect most closely associated with the cemetery's early years, and his work in both architecture and sculpture (10, 18, 19) consummately complemented the cemetery's landscape development in its earliest years. After his sudden death in Italy, his body was returned home for burial in the plot of his mentor, **James Bucklin** (1801-1890). Bucklin's early masterpiece is Downtown Providence's Arcade; his firm designed the cemetery's original entrance complex (keeper's house, barn, fence, and gate), and he remained active professionally well into the 1870s. The design of Tefft's small brownstone

sarcophagus is similar to many designs found in the extensive collection of architectural drawings he left behind. The marker for Bucklin, his wife, **Lucy Daley Bucklin** (1814-1889), and daughter, **Loraine P. Bucklin** (1836-1917) seems rather unremarkable, a thick granite slab, but it suggests an intentional artistic direction.





17. Naturalistic landscape features have been an important component of the cemetery's design since its inception. **The Forty Steps**, rising southwest from Forest Avenue up the hill capped by Ridge Way, undulates across its rise, framed immediately by laurel and rhododendron, a superb understory planting for the tall oaks and maples in the background. The appeal of this landscape feature is only enhanced by understanding the unobtrusiveness of its highly calculated design.



18. **The Briggs and Vose monuments** offer a fortuitous juxtaposition of two trends in nineteenth-century funerary monuments, architectural and sculptural. Thomas Tefft's marble monument for **John** (1811-1847) and **Carolyn** (ca 1811-1850) **Vose** is highly architectural; its juxtaposition of forms not specifically evocative of historic burial practices (compare 10, 13, 16) lends an aspect of abstraction previously not much seen in grave markers but seems somehow to have inspired the overall tone of monuments in the cemetery. The monument for **William O.** (ca 1805-1887) and **Emily L. Briggs** (ca 1817-1898), on the other hand, is charged with meaning and sentiment: an angel carries heavenward the soul though still embodied in earthly form), a

powerful response toward the transcendence of the human spirit. Of the relatively small number of figural sculptures in the cemetery, this is one of the most vivid.



19. Emerging from a hillock above Cedar Avenue, the original **receiving tomb**, designed by Thomas Tefft (16) shows the round-arch, Lombard Romanesque style that Tefft favored and used for the original building at Butler Hospital, immediately south of the cemetery, and in his landmark Union Station complex (1848), formerly in the middle of today's Kennedy Plaza in Downtown Providence. Receiving tombs were far more often used in the nineteenth century, before the development of powered earth-moving tools that now make possible the year-round preparation of burial plots.

20. Just above the receiving tomb is the brownstone sarcophagus of **John Rogers Vinton** (1827-1848), a fatality of the Mexican American War's Battle of Vera Cruz. The cannonball that felled him rests atop the monument, and bollards shaped like cannon barrels surround the sarcophagus. Siting, historic burial reference, and life-and-death-specific imagery combine in one of the cemetery's most gripping ensembles.





**21. The W. Tibbets Pearce** plot holds interest for at least two reasons: its enclosure and its monument. Many of the earliest family plots in Swan Point were enclosed by low fencing, like the low brownstone balustrade seen here. Weathering and deterioration over the years claimed many, and today's more efficient, mechanized means of groundskeeping preclude their use. This charming example, dated 1849, remains a good touchstone to earlier practices. Captain Pearce (1807-1863) was a mariner, as attests the low-relief ship carved on the marble plinth at the lot's center.

**22. The First Unitarian Society Grounds** occupies a large, five-acre ellipse whose principal axis runs northwest to southeast.

The picturesquely irregular paths within are loosely concentric, breaking from even casual regularity at the north and south

ends. The Unitarians' previous burial ground in the West Burial Ground, near the intersection of Interstate Highways 95 and 195, was vacated beginning in 1848, when the remains and their stones were moved here. While remains from other portions of the West Burial Ground were also removed to Swan Point, nowhere else in the cemetery are fine, Federal-era slate markers found in such abundance. Just north of Monument Avenue is **Pastor's Rest**, the burial site of ministers at the First Unitarian Church. A large circular monument marks the middle of a slight rise, around which are ringed the burial sites.





23. Located deep in the heart of the Unitarian Grounds is the burial place of two of the state's, if not the region's, most significant individuals. **Jesse Metcalf** (1827-1899), founder of the Wanskuck Mills, was one of the state's leading industrialists. **Helen Adelia Rowe Metcalf** (1830-1895), his wife, founded the Rhode Island School of Design; much praised as a benefactor of the poor, she extended generosity even to striking workers of her husband's company. Their descendants included a United States Senator, individuals who saw the growth of RISD as an educational and cultural landmark, and publishers of the *Providence Journal*. The sarcophagus that marks their burial site is less generic than Tefft's designs (10, 16) and resembles more specific sources like fifteenth-century Italian prototypes, similar to that of the Sharpes (29).

24. The modest flush-mounted marker for **Alice Winsor Hunt** (1872-1968), at the edge of the Hunt family plot and bearing only her initials and dates, belies her importance as a leader for social change but very much reflects the attitude of one whose obituary was headlined,

"She Lived for Others." A graduate of Classical High School and Wellesley College (in an era when very few women enjoyed higher education), she devoted her life, after ten years of teaching, to reform. Her pet project was children's welfare, and the results of her efforts brought about child-labor laws and the state juvenile-court system.





25. Just north of Pastor's Rest are four very fine stones, marking the grave sites of artist **Sydney Burleigh** (1853-1931); his wife, **Sarah Drew Burleigh** (1851-1952); and his parents, **Ruth Burgess Burleigh** (1820-1909) and **George Shepard Burleigh** (1821-1903). Simple Colonial/Federal-era-inspired stones in varying hues of grey and green slate (the dash of color that stripes across Burleigh's own stone has an artistic flair appropriate to an individual so dashing in life) are distinguished by exceptionally fine carving.



26. A small, simple marble stone, similar to those of adjacent family members, marks the grave of **Thomas Wilson Dorr** (1805-1854). Scion of a rich China-Trade and textile manufacturing family, Dorr took up the liberal cause of extended suffrage and, in an alternative election, became "People's

Governor" in 1842, an event which prompted an open rebellion, known as the Dorr War, between the suffrage movement and the regularly elected governor. Dorr was captured, convicted of treason, and sentenced to life in prison in 1844. Dorr's efforts brought about the adoption of the state's first constitution, effective in 1843 and replacing the royal Charter of 1663, which extended male suffrage. Dorr, broken in body and spirit, was released from prison in 1845.



27. Emerging below the hill that crests at the top of Cedar Avenue and commanding a fine view of the Seekonk River is the Egyptian Revival tomb for the **Dyer** family. Designed by Russell Warren and originally installed in 1839 at the Beneficent Congregational Society Burial Ground, it came here in 1863. The broad, geometric forms, rendered in brownstone, very much recall the Egyptian Revival gate that had just been placed at the entrance to Cambridge's Mount Auburn Cemetery when this was first constructed.



28. Two related Rhode Island governors (confusingly, like the Governors Sprague, with the same name) lie in the **Dyer** lot, which resembles Grosvenor, though not quite so exclusively, (12) in its use of white marble. But what captivates here is the hierarchy of family relationships, the uses of symbolism, and its reverberation across generations. Visually first and foremost here are the ledger-on-column markers for progenitors **Frances** (1782-1873) and **Elisha** (1772-1854) **Dyer**, immediately south of the entrance path to the raised plot.



**28.** (Dyer lot continued)

Adjacent to the south of them is the grave of their son **George Rathbone Dyer** (1813-1833), whose broken-column monument, like that of Robert Grosvenor (12), symbolizes young death. To the north of the entrance path are the monuments for the first **Governor Elisha Dyer** (1811-1890), son of Frances and Elisha, and his wife, Ann Frances (1814-1884), both simple, sculptural interpretations of ground-level ledger stones. Just to their north is the grave of their son George Rathbone (1834-1851), born the year after the death of his namesake, his father's brother, buried at the plot's south end; his marker, an ironic coda to that of his uncle at the other end of the plot, is a broken vase, toppled on its side, yet another nineteenth-century symbol of early death. At rear is the trefoil-cusped cross of the second **Governor Elisha Dyer** (1839-1906), son of the first Governor Dyer, historically one of remarkably few cruciform-shaped monuments in the cemetery.



**29.** The impressive granite sarcophagus for the **Sharpe** family recalls with great specificity Italian Renaissance sources. Boston architect William C. Peters, a Sharpe relative, modeled this monument on the design by Antonio and Bernardo Rossellino for the tomb (1460-61) in the Chapel of the Cardinal of

Portugal at Florence's San Miniato al Monte. The plot includes three generations of the Sharpes, beginning with the parents of Brown & Sharpe precision-tool-company-founder **Lucien Sharpe** (1830-1899) and including his wife and several of his children. His son **Henry Dexter Sharpe** (1872-1954)

carried on the family business. Henry's wife, **Mary Elizabeth Sharpe** (1884-1985), played an important role locally in landscape architecture, including creation of the grounds (still beautifully extant) of the family house at 84 Prospect Street, consultation with Brown University on its grounds, and establishment of the Sharpe Tree Fund, which continues to fund and oversee the planting of street trees across the city.

### 30. The Rock Pond

was established by the late nineteenth century and offered a much-desirable water feature on the inland side of these riverside grounds. In the twentieth century it became the venue for the cemetery's most significant collection of mausoleums, a form rarely seen elsewhere in Swan Point but found here in rare abundance. Private family mausoleums became fashionable shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, no doubt a phenomenon related to the privatization of almost every activity at that time that infected the country's upper-income population.



**31. Timothy McCarthy** (1846-1911), born the year of the cemetery's organization, became its third Superintendent in 1876 and served until his death.



His naturalistic stone monument, similar to that of cemetery President Alfred Stone (11), reveals their shared vision of an aesthetic appropriate to a garden cemetery at the turn of the twentieth century. Their choices are eminently appropriate reflections of the cemetery's development at the turn of the twentieth century, when the stone wall first began to circumscribe its public edges.





**32.** The tomb of **William Sprague** (1830-1915), the largest in the cemetery and commanding the most prominent site, expresses the egotism of this prominent scion of the largest mid-nineteenth-century textile-manufacturing family and Civil-War Governor of Rhode Island. The large circular-monument form harks back to tombs used by the ancient Etruscans and even more by their Italian-peninsula successors during the Roman Empire. Probably the best known of these is the former mausoleum of Emperor Hadrian in Rome, on the banks of the Tiber, now known as the Castel Sant' Angelo. Sprague led Rhode Island into the Civil War, then married beautiful, ambitious Kate Chase (1840-1899), daughter of President Lincoln's first-term Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. Gore Vidal parallels the sparkle of glamorous Kate and William Sprague in early 1860s Washington to that of John and Jacqueline Kennedy there exactly a century later.



**33.** The small granite stone installed more than thirty years after his death marks the grave of writer **Howard Phillips Lovecraft** (1890-1937). Little known, only rarely and obscurely published in his lifetime, and yet object of cult-like adoration by fans world wide, Lovecraft has enjoyed considerable scholarly attention in the last twenty years and is undoubtedly Providence's most important literary figure. Much of his work is set locally, and his stories are enriched by his use of Providence places and buildings. A native and life-long resident, he wrote the words "I AM PROVIDENCE" to a friend in 1927 upon return from a brief, unhappy sojourn in New York, hence the epitaph.



**34. Ambrose Burnside** (1824-1881) entered the English lexicon because of the flamboyant whiskers that extended down his face in front of his ears. Sideburns, as they became known, have gone in and out of fashion many times since his life. Burnside served as a Union General in the Civil War, came home to be elected Governor, followed by a career in the United States Senate. The ledger stones of Burnside and his wife, in the plot of her family, the Bishops, are simple marble stones, each with short Biblical quotations appropriate to each.



**35. The modest stone of Sarah Elizabeth Doyle** (1830-1922), similar to those of adjacent family members, including long-time Providence mayor Thomas A. Doyle (1827-1886), doesn't even begin to hint at the significant contributions she made to women's education and suffrage. Long-time teacher and principal in Providence schools, she was a charter member of the corporation of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD); the leader of the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women, which sponsored the establishment of Pembroke College at Brown University; and an early, ardent supporter of women's suffrage. Upon return from her only Grand Tour of Europe, at the age of seventy six, she offered the opinion, "I believe more than ever in the power of women to elevate this country if they would feel their responsibility and exert their influence." Following her death at ninety-two, L. Earle Rowe, Director of RISD



recalled her "... as a leader in the higher education of women...one of the five or six most prominent women in the country."



**36.** Appropriately close in death as in life, just around the corner from Sarah Doyle's grave is that of **Elizabeth Buffum Chace** (1806-1899), another long-lived, aggressive, and highly principled woman. Chace, a Quaker, was the daughter of abolitionist Arnold Buffum, friend and colleague of William Lloyd Garrison, whose fiery speeches in the 1830s led her and her sister to form the Fall River Anti-Slavery Society. Her house in Central Falls, since demolished, was one of Rhode Island's few documented stops on the underground railroad. After the Civil War, she occupied herself with temperance, and women's voting rights and higher education. Like Doyle, she was active in securing admission of women to Brown University. In the year preceding her death she was still active, penning an article in support of women's suffrage for *The Woman's Journal*.



**37.** One of the most striking and poignant monuments in the cemetery is the one of realtor **Samuel A. Nightingale** (1828-1906) erected in the memory of his only child, Nina (1875) and his wife, also named

Nina, who died the following year. The larger-than-life-scale bronze monument of an angel rising heavenward bearing an infant in her arms set on an oval-plan plinth was cast by A. Rolland. After his wife's death, in the year after their daughter, Nightingale left the family home on Hope Street and boarded at a Downtown hotel.



**38.** The most impressively landscaped lot in the cemetery is that of the Aldrich family. It rises in modern terraces, all framed by dry-laid flat-cut granite walls, above Beach Avenue on a hill overlooking the Seekonk River. The central section is devoted to the progenitors of this powerful, influential family. **Abby Pierce** (1845-1917) and **Nelson W. Aldrich** (1841-1915), United States Senator (1881-1911); elected to fill the seat of Ambrose Burnside (34), following the latter's death); on the same terrace are three of their children who died young. Up the hill to the south is the grave of **Lucy Truman Aldrich** (1869-1955), a major collector of Orientalia, now housed in the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design; down the hill to the north is that of **William T. Aldrich** (1880-1966), one of the best and most overlooked early twentieth-century East Coast architects. The terracing of the lot was executed by Forest Hills Nursery in Cranston during the early 1970s, and most of the stones were carved by the John Stevens Shop in Newport, the country's oldest continuing stone-cutting shop, responsible for the best carving in the country, including the Vietnam Memorial on the Mall in Washington. The consistency, not identity, of the granite markers, subtly varied and carefully placed, enhance the power of the



overall design. Moreover, the play between asymmetry and carefully established axes establish a vigorous, yet always pleasing and comfortable organization, gentled by the varied vegetation.

**39.** Appropriately adjacent to the Aldrich lot is that of **Marsden J. Perry** (1850-1935), Nelson Aldrich's political and business ally. Perry lived in the John Brown House (1786-88) from 1902 until his death, and his tomb, with the cemetery's best view of the Seekonk River, reproduces full-scale the principal entrance of his house.



**40.** The compositionally striking and commandingly sited **Lownes** monument features a fine bronze sculpture by Isidore Konti (1862-1938), a Viennese-born artist who studied at that city's Imperial Academy. He came to the United States in 1890 to work on decorations at Chicago's World Columbian Exposition (1893), established a studio in New York, and regularly exhibited at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts; his work is in the collection of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. **Edgar John Lownes** (1870-1924) was a textile manufacturer with strong ties to the design and music communities. His wife, **Therèse Kaffenburg** (1877-1970), presented at court before Queen Victoria, became an early advocate for women's suffrage; an accomplished pianist and soprano, she married, after Lownes's death, Dr Eugene A. Noble, the first president of New York's Juilliard School of Music. Given the Lownes' interest in cultural activity, their selection of a well-known sculptor is not surprising.



**41.** Frank Foster Tingley (1844-1921) was a third-generation member of Providence's most prominent and long-lived stone-carving firm, Tingley Brothers, established in 1811 by Frank's grandfather Sylvanus and his brother Samuel Tingley. Frank trained with, among others, architect Alfred Stone (2, 3, 11), and the family-firm's monuments within the cemetery are numerous, and often signed. The curved bench Tingley designed for textile manufacturer **Lyman Bullock Goff** (1841-1927), probably following the early death of his only child, Lyman Thornton Goff (1868-1900), is reminiscent in form of the monument designed by Richard Morris Hunt for August Belmont in Newport's Island Cemetery, then repeated for the memorial to Hunt built in 1898 on New York's Fifth Avenue between 70<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> Streets. The highly architectural quality of this monument, very much in the tradition established by Tefft half a century earlier (10,18), works especially well here, with vegetation and stone wall of the cemetery's northern edge just behind.



**42.** One of the more intriguing monuments in the cemetery is this minimalist circular form, a testimony to the ability in the late twentieth century of the funerary-sculpture tradition to retain a fresh and vivid focus, beyond standard monumental types. Erected to mark the grave of **Paul Krot** (1919-1992), a professor of photography at Rhode Island School of Design. Its form and materials respect the size and materials of those surrounding it, but its form invests an area filled with otherwise traditional monuments.



**43.** Dramatically located in the middle of a triangulated intersection, like Lippitt (8), the **Sayles Lot** features a wonderful small temple-like structure at its south end, but most remarkable is the bronze sculpture created as a memorial for **William Clark Sayles** (1855-1876), who died while a student at Brown University. His parents employed German-born sculptor Henry Baerer (1837-1908), who exhibited at the National Academy of Design and whose works fill New York City's parks, to design a pensive monument highly reminiscent of that by Michelangelo for the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo in Florence.

Like Lorenzo, Sayles died young, and his mortuary monument is undoubtedly the most sublime of those to the many young women and men who died far too young and far too often.





**Swan Point Cemetery**

**585 Blackstone Boulevard**

**Providence, Rhode Island 02906**

**[www.swanpointcemetery.com](http://www.swanpointcemetery.com)**