

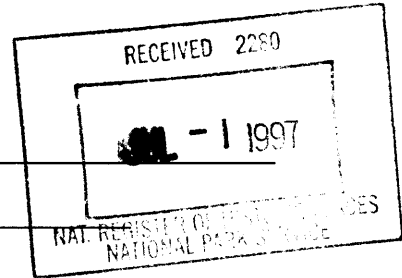
PROPERTY NAME

Center Street Cemetery, Wallingford, CT

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United States Department of the Interior

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Center Street Cemetery

Other Name/Site Number: NA

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2 Center Street Not for publication: NA

City/Town: Wallingford Vicinity: NA

State: CT County: New Haven Code: 009 Zip Code: 06492

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:

Public-local: x

Public-State:

Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):

District:

Site: x

Structure:

Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

 3

 16

 19

Noncontributing

 1 buildings

 sites

 structures

 1 objects

 2 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: NA

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

John W. Shannahan 06/27/97
Signature of Certifying Official Date

John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

bor 8/1/97
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: FUNERARY Sub: cemetery

Current: FUNERARY Sub: cemetery

7. DESCRIPTION

Classification: Cemetery

Materials: Sandstone, slate, marble, gneiss, brownstone, granite, zinc

Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Center Street Cemetery comprises 9.69 acres of flat land in the center of downtown Wallingford, Connecticut (Figure 1). Established in 1670 (Phelan, p. 1), the cemetery has been an active public burial ground over the centuries to the present time. Accordingly, its monuments reflect 300 years of changing tastes in funerary art. The ceremonial gateways and circumferential wall, dating from 1911, are in the second Egyptian Revival style (Whiffen, p. 51), a mode often considered suitable for cemetery use.

The principal gateway at the west end of the Center Street frontage opens to a roadway leading south which is lined with large sycamore trees (Photograph 1). Other unpaved roadways run east-west, connecting to the second gate at the northwest end of Orchard Street. Additional *grande allees* of sycamores line several of these secondary routes (see Site Plan and Photographs 3, 4). Earliest graves are in the eastern one-third of the site arranged without apparent plan, while in the later western two-thirds roadways establish a grid pattern for the layout.

The cemetery follows an open lawn plan, that is, there are no walls, curbs, or iron fences setting off individual plots. The acreage is free of any impediments to visual openness of the terrain and its monuments (Photograph 5). While there is some mixture of monuments from different eras, the general scheme of development was 17th- and early-18th-century interments at the east corner, near the intersection of Center and South Orchard Streets, more 18th-century stones along the Center Street wall, 19th-century burials in the central section, and 20th-century activity to the southwest. The most commonly used materials for monuments over this span of time, as seen in Center Street Cemetery, were slate and sandstone for 17th and 18th centuries, marble in early 19th century, brownstone in late 19th century, and granite in 20th century.

The Elizabethan winged death's-head with its blank eyes and toothsome grin appears in the earliest existing monuments of the early 18th century, now somewhat deteriorated, but many of Center Street Cemetery's late-18th-century slate and sandstone monuments are in good condition. The Puritanical image had been softened somewhat by the time it was used for the Abraham Hall (d. 1761) sandstone monument, executed in carving that is sharp and crisp today (Photograph 6). In further evolution paralleling the decline of harsh Puritan orthodoxy, the death's-head became a cherub, still winged, in the well-preserved Caleb Merriman (d. 1770) slate stone (Photograph 7). Both of these stones show the rounded top, narrow foliate vertical borders, and rows of lettering that remained standard into the 19th century.

Another example of incised lettering that is remarkably sharp 200 years after being carved, considering that the material is relatively soft sandstone, is the Mr. Abraham Stanley stone (d. 1788). This monument, while continuing use of the winged cherub, is different from many of its predecessors because its top is almost flat, and it carries verse: "He sleeps no longer on / the brink of fate, nor / leaves one x(?)ering / wish beneath the starrs [sic]." The stone of his consort Prudence (d. 1793) adjoins; it is equally well-preserved (Photograph 8).

Portrait-carving came into favor as well toward the end of the 18th century. Center Street Cemetery has several examples, one of which is unusual because it has two portraits on a single stone, Hannah Hall (d. 1796) and her daughter Meria (see Photograph 9 and rubbing). Mr. Charles Dutton's likeness is another excellent specimen (d. 1788, Photograph 10).

Affluent individuals of the colonial era were remembered by heavy table stones, which are flat slabs of brownstone supported by six ponderous piers. Memorial lettering was cut into a tablet inset into the top. The tablet often is missing (Photograph 11).

The early 19th century brought a new material, marble, and a new motif, the urn and willow, into use. Marble is an attractive stone when new but tends to develop a granular surface upon weathering, with the consequence that the lettering and motif often are difficult to discern on many of Center Street Cemetery's marble monuments. The urn, symbolically, contained the remains of human life from which arise the soul to heaven, while the willow denoted both mourning for the loss of earthly life and the joy of celestial life, moving funerary art even further away from the original religious emphasis on life's brevity and the awesome power of death. The urn and willow design was one of the last of the series of motifs which had developed from colonial times (Photograph 12).

As the 19th century progressed into its second quarter and the use of symbols and motifs declined, marble stones of standard size displaying lettering only, often nothing more than names and dates, became the norm. These stones with their rounded tops tended to be arranged in rows, foretelling the standard government-issue stones provided for Civil War soldiers. The marble material, segmental-shaped top, and simple lettering of pre-Civil War monuments became the standard for rows of Civil War gravestones. Several examples are present. In addition, a Center Street Cemetery memorial for 18 Civil War soldiers who died in service assumed a different form in a non-standard arrangement of a circle using stones of gneiss, not marble, of smaller than usual size. Moreover, the stones are carved with a recessed field in the shape of a shield on which the letters are raised rather than being incised in a plain surface, as was common practice. The circular memorial to Civil War dead is well-maintained, each stone having an accompanying flag and metal Grand Army of the Republic standard (Photograph 13).

Another 19th-century symbol of broken life was the truncated column. Eugenia H. Heckman (d. 1871) is memorialized by a classical column, truncated, in sugared marble saying, in a softened phrase, that she was "called home" at the age of 31. Verse continued in use, in this instance more severe than "called home" in the words "Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke" (Photograph 14).

After the Civil War, which created an unprecedented demand for cemetery monuments, the monument-producing industry grew and offered new and more elaborate products. Obelisks, a funeral form dating from the Egyptians, came to the forefront of fashion with the help of extensive carving, as demonstrated by several in Center Street Cemetery. The top of the Talcott obelisk, marble on a brownstone base, is adorned with carved drapery in many folds and the Masonic symbol (Photograph 15), while in the Francis brownstone obelisk the dado cornice carries a course of bosses and its finial is carved in a tiered foliate design, both typical of Victorian-era ornament (Photographs 16, 17). Such large monuments often were the central feature of a family plot of many graves, each grave marked by a headstone, as seen in Photograph 16. In some cemeteries the custom was to surround such a family grouping with iron fence or stone curbing, establishing a series of discrete units, but such practice was not followed at Center Street Cemetery. Large monuments well-spaced from one another contribute to the sense of openness.

The growing influence of classicism as the 19th century progressed found expression in other round columns in addition to the truncated-life example. For Moses Y. Beach (d. 1868) the shaft of the tall column is embellished with a spiral, after Hadrian's Column erected in Rome in the second century (Photograph 18). The Beach monument is signed N. Swezey.

Introduction of steampower during the 19th-century industrial revolution had an impact on funerary art because it facilitated the working of granite to an extent theretofore not possible. Granite is the best stone for monuments because it is the hardest, giving longer life, less deterioration, and less need for maintenance, but being the hardest could not be economically worked by hand. The advent of steampower made it feasible to shape and polish granite and to carve with pneumatic tools as never before. A new type of monument took its place in Center Street Cemetery, for example, the Bartholomew obelisk, where the lettering of the base is raised and polished, the entire die is polished, and decoration at the top includes foliate and star motifs with gablet and urn, all embellished and polished, and all far too labor-intensive prior to steampower (Photograph 19).

Another late-19th-century technological development in fabrication of cemetery monuments was the use of cast zinc, called "white bronze." The technique was developed and the monuments produced by Monumental Bronze Company, Bridgeport, Connecticut. In shape and design they often mimicked steam-powered granite monuments, but at a much lower cost. Center Street Cemetery has four examples of zinc, of which the Williams monument is one (Photograph 20).

In the 20th century, granite has continued to be the stone of choice, often in a shaped slab two or three feet high by three or four feet long. Decoration often is accomplished by yet another technological development, sandblasting, which provides a further reduction in amount of labor required, especially to make letters.

The late 19th century and 20th century have brought a new look to Center Street Cemetery through the appearance of names from diverse ethnic backgrounds and their associated funerary art, as the cemetery has continued to serve the changing nature of the community. The stone for Edward Janisck identifies the country of his birth as Bohemia (Photograph 21). Mary Dziubiel's, with roses, pierced heart, and cross, is nearby (Photograph 22). Monuments such as that of Roberto Orozco introduced the Crucifixion, adding to the broad spectrum of funerary art exhibited by the cemetery's manifold collection of monuments (Photograph 23).

The Egyptian Revival gateways and wall of 1911 have battered piers, characteristic of the style, at the gates and periodically along the wall. Capitals of the piers at the gateways have a finer texture of cast stone than the balance of the piers and the wall. The capitals are ogee-shaped, decorated with bands of small raised hemispheres over three vertical lines terminating in larger hemispheres (Photograph 2). The tops of the capitals are coved in a manner designated by Whiffen as "gorge and roll" (Whiffen, p. 48), as is the top of the entire length of the wall.

The cemetery grounds receive care on a regularly scheduled basis. Grass is systematically cut and in general the premises are neatly maintained. A significant number of stones, encrusted with biological growth or broken, are in need of cleaning and repair.

Inventory

<u>C/NC</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
C	late 17C	Sandstone and slate monuments carved with winged death's head, deteriorated.
C	early 18C	Sandstone and slate monuments carved with winged death's head, deteriorated.
C	late 18C	Softened winged death's head (winged cherub) in slate and sandstone, as Mr. Abraham Hall, Caleb Merriam.
C	late 18C	Segmental brownstone monuments with verse, as Mr. Abraham Stanley, Prudence Stanley.
C	late 18C	Portrait-carved brownstone monuments, as Hannah Hall, Mr. Charles Dutton.
C	18C	Table stones.
C	early 19C	Marble monuments carved with urn and willow, sugared, unreadable.
C	1852	Rev. Samuel Street monument.
C	1857	Lyman Hall monument.
C	ca. 1870	Civil War soldiers' monuments.
C	late 19C	"Broken life" truncated column, Eugenia H. Heckman.

C	late 19C	Obelisks, as Talcott, Francis.
C	late 19C	Monuments in classical tradition, as Moses Y. Beach.
C	late 19C	Granite monuments processed by steampower, as Bartholomew.
C	late 19C	Cast-zinc monuments, as Williams.
C	19th/20thCs	Monuments reflecting ethnic backgrounds, as Janisck, Dziubiel.
C	1911	Egyptian Revival cast-stone gateways and wall.
NC	ca.1940s	Maintenance building.
NC	post-1946	Monuments reflecting ethnic backgrounds, as Orozco.

Following instructions given in the section headed "Contributing Features," page 24, National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places*, individual monuments are not counted as separate features. Each class or category listed above is counted, giving 16 contributing objects, one non-contributing object (less than 50 years old), three contributing structures (two gates, one wall), and one non-contributing building (small office and storage facility).

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide: x Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A x B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D x E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance:	Period(s) of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Social history</u>	<u>1670 1946</u>	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Significant Person(s): See below

Cultural Affiliation: None

Architect/Builder: _____

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

Center Street Cemetery is significant artistically because it is a distinguishable entity made up of a significant array of grave markers and monuments representing the commonly held artistic values of historic periods from colonial times to the present. It is significant historically because the centuries-long record of the town is summarized in the accomplishments of the people who are buried there.

History

The Town of Wallingford was set off from New Haven in 1670. In the same year "provision was made for a 'town burying ground'" (Phelan, p. 1). It was reached by a narrow lane leading west from the highway on the ridge (Main Street) and extended north to include land now occupied by Center Street and buildings on the north side of the street. The burying ground was destined to be the final resting place for many of those who governed the town's affairs and for those who were governed for more than three centuries.

The first recorded death in Wallingford occurred in 1673, that of an infant, Elizur Peck, whose remains presumably became the first interment. The oldest gravestone in the cemetery is William Houlte, 1683. The first prominent man to be buried in Center Street Cemetery was Abraham Doolittle (1620-1690), a founder. Wallingford's first ordained minister, the Reverend Samuel Street (1635-1717), called from New Haven in 1674, was buried in 1717. During the 45 years of his pastorate he was the town's most influential leader in guiding the community through the difficult years of colonization. In 1852 a brownstone pier was erected on the former location of his grave marker (Photograph 24).

The Reverend Samuel Whittelsey (1676-1752), the second minister, served during the divisive years of the Great Awakening, which shook the theological convictions of the Congregational Church in New England beginning in 1739. During his lifetime the Reverend Whittelsey was able to maintain unity in the Wallingford ecclesiastical society.

In 1740 initial attention was given to the need for a fence by a vote "That ye burying place be fenced with a five rail fence with a good gate to it" (Phelan, p. 2), but up until the time of the Revolutionary War no fence was erected.

Caleb Merriman (1707-1770, Photograph 7) was a citizen who died of smallpox. His slate stone was carved by a member of the Lamson family, originally from Charlestown, Massachusetts, who for four generations worked in Rhode Island and Connecticut as well. Stratford, Milford, and Fairfield have good representations of their work. Carvers of other stones in Center Street Cemetery have been identified. Roswell Cowles of Meriden carved stones for Isaac Lewis (Photograph 25) and Charles Dutton; his stone for Moses Rice is signed. The group known as Middletown-Durham School, which included several generations of the Johnson, Buckland, and Miller families, was responsible for many Center Street Cemetery monuments. (Kelly, October 27, 1996)

Lyman Hall (1724-1790), a Wallingford native of many accomplishments, was active in Georgia during the Revolutionary War. When a young man he was the first minister at Cheshire, Connecticut, then became a teacher, and also studied medicine. As a physician, he moved to Georgia where in 1775 he was elected to the Continental Congress, went on to sign the Declaration of Independence, and became the first governor of the State of Georgia. Since he is perhaps Wallingford's most distinguished son, it was appropriate when he was re-interred in Georgia in 1857 that his first tablet came to Center Street Cemetery (Photograph 26).

Men from the community who served in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War are commemorated in Center Cemetery. Eighty-five Revolutionary War soldiers are buried there (Hale, 1940, quoted by MacKenzie). Wallingford's contribution of young men to the cause of the Civil War, the major event in the nation's 19th-century history, is marked by the circle of unusual stones which commemorates their sacrifice.

Like Lyman Hall, Moses Y. Beach (1800-1868) went out from Wallingford to make his place in the world. He became publisher of the *New York Sun* in 1836, but returned to his birthplace in retirement to build a well-known house designed by Henry Austin (1804-1891) in the Moorish Revival mode on North Main Street. Only the distinctive columns of the house remain. His cemetery monument is also distinctive because of the spiral around the column.

The late-19th- and early-20th-century economic well-being of Wallingford was closely tied to the metal-fabricating industry, notably the production of cutlery. The two families who led the industry during its period of growth, culminating in the formation of

the International Silver Company, were the Wallace and Simpson families. Each family gave one of the Egyptian Revival gateways to Center Street Cemetery erected in 1911.

Industrial activity encouraged the arrival of immigrants in town who sought factory jobs. They had due impact on Center Street Cemetery, bringing grave markers of various ethnic backgrounds, especially along the southern wall, as noted in Item 7. above. Immigration marked the closing chapter in the series of events in Wallingford's history, starting with settlement and running through development, industrial growth, and adjustment to the 20th century, as reflected by the cemetery. Since the cemetery is still an active public burying ground, its significance as a summary history of Wallingford will continue.

Funerary Art

For New England's deeply religious Puritans of the 18th century, images and symbols were forbidden in daily life. Only in their death rituals did the early settlers indulge in any sort of image-making. Motifs carved into their gravestones carried great impact because they were unique, the only such expression. Among the funerary images the death's head often was the principal symbol, designed to give a fearsome reality to man's mortality. Graveyard imagery as abundantly displayed in Center Street Cemetery was an art of the people, the only art, and significant for that reason.

Graveyard imagery was not static. By the end of the 18th century the death's head began to soften, reflecting the introduction of love as an alternate to reason in the religion's theology. After Jonathan Edwards' Great Awakening, which introduced love as an element equal in force to reason, concepts changed, and the change was reflected in the graveyard images, still the only imagery in the community. The death's head in Center Street Cemetery was softened to become a winged cherub, demonstrating the effect of theological changes in stone-carving advances. The winged cherub came to symbolize man's immortal side, suggesting life rather than death. Accompanying epitaphs went through corresponding change. Instead of "Here lies the body of..." wording stressed the joy of resurrection and immortality.

By the beginning of the 19th century a more intellectual approach to religion and its funerary art evolved, represented in Center Street Cemetery by the urn and willow motif, which continued to symbolize both mourning for loss of earthly life and the joy of celestial life, while epitaphs were likely to read "Sacred to the memory of..." thus avoiding discussion of both death and eternity. Simultaneously, interest in gravestone art declined. By mid 19th-century the only carving on stones was lettering. The many marble stones of this description in Center Street Cemetery testify to the change. (Foregoing three paragraphs are based on Jacobs, pp. 17-55.)

Patriotism, a non-religious motivating force, also influenced cemetery art, for example the design of Civil War stones at Center Street Cemetery. The incised shield of the circled monuments is a national emblem, here found in an unusual application, but reflecting the cemetery's function as a record place of the history and mores of the community.

Widespread increased cultural interest in antiquity and the classics as the 19th century wore on is evident in the cemetery's monument designs of that period. The obelisk had been known for centuries as an Egyptian funerary object; many obelisks were erected in Center Street Cemetery, some with mourning drapery carved in the stone. The column from

Greek and Roman architecture was adapted to monument use with added funerary symbolism when it was truncated and with specific classical antecedent in the case of the spiral image from Hadrian's column. The Beach column with spiral motif is signed N. Swezey, but no information has come to hand regarding him.

Another non-religious, and non-cultural, influence on cemetery art was technological development in working stone, notably the use of steampower. With steampower, polished surfaces and intricate shapes of visual quality theretofore out of the question became possible in hard stone such as granite. Sandstone and marble fell from favor as their soft workability became less important. Zinc casting and sandblasting were other technological advances impacting appearance of the monuments.

The significant architectural feature of Center Street Cemetery is the Egyptian Revival gateways and wall. The great Connecticut example of the first Egyptian Revival style in cemetery application is the entrance to Grove Street Cemetery, New Haven, 1845, designed by Henry Austin a few years after the first New England example at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts.. The mode was one of the series of revival styles of mid-19th century. Whiffen notes that there was a second Egyptian Revival in the 1920s whose architects took advantage of the decorative potential of concrete (p. 50). Center Street Cemetery provides a case in point of this revisiting of the Egyptian Revival style. Hillside Cemetery, Naugatuck, also participated in the second Egyptian Revival with its perimeter concrete wall and gateways. At Center Cemetery the gates lead to roadways laid out in a grid pattern contrary to the late-19th/early-20th-century popular preference for the curving patterns of rural or naturalistic landscape architecture.

The array of grave markers surrounded by an Egyptian Revival wall at Center Street Cemetery is a significant demonstration of artistic values in funerary art and cemetery design for a period of three centuries.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: _____

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: 9.67

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	<u>18</u>	<u>4591380</u>	<u>681940</u>	B	<u>18</u>	<u>4591295</u>	<u>581880</u>
C	<u>18</u>	<u>4591295</u>	<u>681880</u>	D	<u>18</u>	<u>4591330</u>	<u>681620</u>
E	<u>18</u>	<u>4591500</u>	<u>681680</u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is shown by the dashed line on the Site Plan.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary on the south, east, and west is the same as always; no recorded change is known. On the north the boundary was adjusted to the south side of Center Street when the street was developed, probably mid-19th century.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Org.: Architectural Historian

Date: November 1996

Street/#: 33 Sunrise Hill Drive

City/Town: West Hartford

State: CT

ZIP: 06107

Telephone: 860 521-3387

List of Photographs

Photographs were taken by D.F. Ransom in November 1996. Negatives are on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT.

Photograph 1

Main Center Street gateway
View southeast.

Photograph 2

Detail of Photograph 1
Pier capital

Photograph 3

Roadway
View northwest

Photograph 4

Row of sycamore trees
and rear wall
View west

Photograph 5

Open grounds
View north

Photograph 6

Mr. Abraham Hall Monument

Photograph 7

Caleb Merriman Monument

Photograph 8

Abraham Stanley and Wife Monument

Photograph 9

Hannah Hall and Meria Monument

Photograph 10

Mr. Charles Dutton Monument

Photograph 11

Table stone

Photograph 12

Urn and willow

Photograph 13

Civil War circle

-
- Photograph 14
Truncated column
- Photograph 15
Talcott obelisk
- Photograph 16
Francis obelisk
- Photograph 17
Francis obelisk finial
- Photograph 18
Beach Monument
- Photograph 19
Batholomew Monument
- Photograph 20
Zinc monument
- Photograph 21
Janisch Stone
- Photograph 22
Dziubiel Stone
- Photograph 23
Orozco Monument
- Photograph 24
Rev. Street Pier
- Photograph 25
Isaac Lewis Monument
- Photograph 26
Lyman Hall sarcophagus