United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name
historic New York City Marble Cemetery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 52-74 East 2nd Street

city, town New York vicinity of congressional district 18

state New York code 036 county New York code 061

3. Classification

Category

Ownership

X public

X private

both

Status

X occupied

unoccupied

work in progress

Present Use

agriculture

commercial

educational

entertainment

government

industrial

military

X museum

park

private residence

religious

scientific

transportation

other: cemetery

Public Acquisition

X in process

being considered

Accessible

X yes: restricted

yes: unrestricted

no

4. Owner of Property

name Bernard J. Schwartz c/o 29 BAF Corp.

street & number 250 West 57th Street

city, town New York vicinity of state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New York County Register's Office

street & number 31 Chambers Street

city, town New York state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title New York City Marble Cemetery LP-0464

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

has this property been determined eligible? X yes no

date March 4, 1969 federal state county X local

depository for survey records 305 Broadway

city, town New York state New York
### 7. Description

<table>
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The New York City Marble Cemetery is located on the north side of East 2nd Street between First and Second Avenues in the thickly settled tenement district of the Lower East Side. The cemetery is about half the length and half the depth of the block. Enclosing the grounds on three sides is a tall, brick wall, shutting out the surrounding alleys and tenements. On the south side, bordering the street, is the original arrow design iron fence of 1832 which is graced with a decorative Greek Revival entrance gate and corner piers.

Unlike the New York Marble Cemetery, located one block west, this cemetery can be readily seen from the street. It is laid out in a grid arrangement: four parallel gravel walks run the length of it and one crosswalk extends from the entrance gates to the back wall where the "dead-house" is located. (The dead-house, a rough-hewn stone structure, was built to store the corpses until interment.) Between the walks, narrow strips of sodded ground are marked by flat marble slabs which cover the entrances to 254 underground vaults constructed of Tuckahoe marble. In this cemetery, families were permitted to erect tombstones and monuments to indicate the locations of the vaults. Many of these monuments have classical forms -- urns, columns, and obelisks -- and most are constructed of white marble. One of the most graceful monuments is to the memory of Preserved Fish, a 19th century shipping merchant.

In 1917, a resident of New York City described her impressions of the New York City Marble Cemetery: "a hidden graveyard ... forgotten and neglected, ...which may still be admired as a distinguished bit of garden, giving breath to Second Street."

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8. Significance

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<tr>
<td>1900–</td>
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The New York City Marble Cemetery, begun in 1831, was the second non-sectarian burial ground in the City of New York open to the public. Situated in an area which was once a fashionable section of Manhattan, the many impressive marble memorials and markers denote the location of the 254 underground vaults belonging to some of New York's and the nation's most distinguished families.

In 1831, Perkins Nichols and Evert A. Bancker bought a lot of ground to be used as a private cemetery for their own and a few other families. It was organized by Bancker and Samuel Whittmore, Henry Booraem, Garret Storm, and Thomas Addis Emmet, and was begun on some land belonging to Samuel Cowdrey, a vault owner in the New York Marble Cemetery, located one block west on the same street. The New York Marble Cemetery had been opened to the public just one year when construction of the New York City Marble Cemetery began. Both cemeteries were laid out as a result of the city ordinance of 1830 which prohibited burials below Canal Street, under penalty of a fine of $250.

Perkins Nichols, one of the developers of the first Marble Cemetery, contracted for the construction of the original vaults of Tuckahoe marble (hence the name of the cemetery), and the first vaults were ready by the summer of 1831. The new organization received its own act of incorporation on April 26, 1832, as an annex to the other Marble Cemetery. Over the next three years, the corporation acquired the first parcel of land in which the vaults were situated, and then the adjoining lots, until it reached its present limits in 1835.

By 1835, interments were prohibited south of Grand Street, and some old cemeteries in lower Manhattan were being abandoned. "Among others, the remains of the Dutch dominies in the 'Ministers' Vault' at the foot of the island were removed to the Nichols-Bancker burying grounds, and are probably the oldest white men's bones buried in New York."4

The cemetery contains the various remains of many important New Yorkers such as Stephen Allen, one-time mayor of the city and governor of New York State; James Lenox, whose library, together with the Astor and Tilden collections, formed the New York Public Library; Isaac Vanian, another mayor; Preserved Fish, a well-known New York merchant in mercantile and shipping ventures; and Marinus Willet, a local hero of the Revolutionary War. Also, there are six members of one branch of the Roosevelt family, including James Henry Roosevelt who founded Roosevelt Hospital; all the remains from the churchyard of the South Dutch Church, and all the Kip family remains from Kip's Bay.5 Such prominent family names as Lewis, Ogden, Ogilive, Webb, Oothout, and Hyslop can also be found here.
People of national importance buried in the cemetery include Moses Taylor, an exceedingly wealthy New York financier, who backed Cyrus Field in the first Atlantic Cable venture, and who strongly supported the Lincoln administration during the Civil War, heading the banker's committee which took the first federal loan in 1861. Another nationally known figure buried here is John Lloyd Stephens, who pioneered archeological research in the Mayan country of Mexico in the nineteenth century; his vault is marked by a Mayan glyph designed by his celebrated collaborator, Frederick Catherwood. John Ericsson, inventor of the ironclad Monitor, was also buried here before his body was returned to Sweden in 1890.

The most important person buried in this cemetery was ex-President James Monroe who had moved to New York in 1830, after the death of his wife, to live with his son-in-law, Samuel Gouverneur. Gouverneur owned a vault in the cemetery, and when Monroe died on July 4, 1831, he became one of the first to be buried here. The interment ceremonies were carried out with much pomp and military pageantry, which served to increase greatly the prestige of the cemetery. In 1857, however, a number of Virginians residing in New York decided to erect a monument over Monroe's vault. This move prompted the Virginia Legislature to pass a resolution to have the ex-President's remains returned to Virginia. The Gouverneur family agreed, and on July 2, 1858, Monroe's body was removed to the Church of the Annunciation on Fourteenth Street, while church bells tolled and every ship in the harbor flew its flag at half mast. It lay there in state for several days and was finally sent by steamer to Virginia, preceded in another ship by its escort, the Seventh Regiment. It was buried at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

As the neighborhood around the cemetery deteriorated, the trustees became alarmed, fearing that the encroaching construction of houses might force them out of the property. In 1891, Alexander Mailand, a grandson of James Lenox, started a movement to raise an endowment fund. He formed a committee which collected about $12,500. By 1934, the fund amounted to $26,500. Today the cemetery is supported by the endowments administered by boards of trustees. Fifth Avenue has since become the city's most elegant thoroughfare, and this small plot near Second Avenue is an oasis in a shabby neighborhood.

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1See New York County Conveyance Liber 291, p. 201, the deed by which Banker, the agent turned over to the trustees the first parcel of land purchased from Crowther.

2New York Mirror, Sept. 13, 1836.

3Laws of New York, 1832, chap. 319; amended by Laws of New York, 1843, chap. 36.


5See the Burial records for the New York City Marble Cemetery at the New York Historical Society.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data  See Attached Site Map

Acreage of nominated property: less than one acre
Quadrangle name: Brooklyn
Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

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Verbal boundary description and justification:
The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 444, Lot 49.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

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<th>Joan Olshansky, National Register Coordinator</th>
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<tr>
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<td>December 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street &amp; number</td>
<td>305 Broadway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>(212) 566-7577</td>
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<tr>
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12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-655), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

For HCRA use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register
Attest:
Chief of Registration

state: New York


Laws of New York, 1832, chap. 319; amended by Laws of New York, 1843, chap. 36.


New York Mirror, Sept. 13, 1836.

