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### Preservation Plan for the Military Cemetery at Fort Adams

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## Preservation Plan for the Military Cemetery at Fort Adams

### **I. Introduction**

The Fort Adams Military Cemetery is located in Fort Adams State Park, which sits on a peninsula projecting north from Newport Neck. Located in the southern area of Newport, it is approximately three miles from the city center by road. It is surrounded on three sides by water; Brenton's Cove on the east, Newport harbor on the north and east, and the East Passage of Narragansett Bay on the west (Schroder 11). The fort reservation was, at its largest, 136 acres in size and comprised all the property of the peninsula from Harrison Avenue north, with the exception of "Hammersmith Farm", the property of the Auchincloss family.

Currently, the reservation is mixed use, consisting mostly of a state park (Fort Adams State Park), historic attraction (Fort Adams), and military housing for senior officers visiting one of the naval schools in the area (Brenton Village).

The cemetery is located in the southwest corner of the reservation overlooking the East Passage of Narragansett Bay. Physical, this is approximately 2500 ft south of the enceinte. It is situated on a hillside facing roughly east/west. The cemetery proper is a rectangle measuring 155' (north/south) x 208' (east/west) for a size of approximately 0.74 acres. The elevation of the cemetery is approximately 30' above sea level on the western edge and rises to 40' on the eastern edge. It is surrounded by a 5-foot high by 4-foot wide privet hedge. With the exception of the privet hedge, no trees or shrubs are in the area.

In the cemetery, there are 11 rows of gravestones running north/south. The cemetery is divided by two gravel paths, also running north/south that divide the area into 3 sections, of which the middle section is approximately twice the size of the end sections. The gravel paths are bordered by dilapidated wood 2" x 4"s and contain a rather large dimension stone fill.

The western (lower) section of the cemetery is filled with gravestones and the middle section is mostly filled with gravestones. The eastern (upper) section is void of all graves and contains a flagpole. Currently, there are 283 used burial plots of the 317 total plotted. It is estimated that the potential for expansion of the cemetery would be limited to between 75-94 new burial plots.

In addition to the cemetery proper, there is a 50' x 235' appendage circular drive that borders the cemetery on its southern border. This appendage, surrounded by 7'-8' high x 10' wide privet hedge "balls" serves only to allow vehicular access to the cemetery entrances (paths cut through the hedge border). Like the paths, the drive is gravel but has no border. In the middle of the drive is a grassy area with two decorative hedges in a 5-point "star" shape.

Between these two hedges is a statue of John Adams (1735-1826), the second President of the United States, for whom Fort Adams was originally named on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1799. This statue, created by sculptor Gerald B. Denison of Providence, RI, along with the base and tablet, originally stood in front of the main administration building overlooking Brenton's Cove (Panaggio B1).<sup>1</sup> It is believed that the statue and base were moved to this location in the 1950's when the military destroyed many of the buildings lining the Brenton's Cove area.

Most controversial is the stone located at the beginning of this cemetery drive. The stone, made of a local looking slate, is purported to be the final resting place of William Brenton, one of the original founders of Newport. The site is marked by the State of Rhode Island with a bronze plaque testifying to this fact. A walk through this cemetery will reveal soldiers who

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<sup>1</sup> The tablet, made of slate, reads, "JOHN ADAMS/1735-1826/Second President/of the/United States in/whose honor this/Fort was named/July 4<sup>th</sup> 1799"

served in the United States armed forces from pre-Civil War to Korea, along with many of their loved ones, including wives, sons, and daughters.

It is the goal of this paper to utilize information collected through archives, aerial photos, historical deeds, maps, photos, burial records, histories of Fort Adams and government records to construct a concise history of the cemetery. We will document how the cemetery began, how it has changed, how it is being affected by its existing state and what might be done in order to preserve it. We will include field research to better preserve the cemetery for posterity, as it exists in 2001.

## **II. Historical Overview**

The history of this land that the cemetery, and Fort Adams, is situated on goes all the way back to one of Newport's original founders, William Brenton. William Brenton originally came from Hammersmith England. When he first arrived in Boston, he had with him "a grant from King Charles dated 1633, as Surveyor-General, and was allowed a stated number of acres to the square mile of all the lands he surveyed" (Mohr 78). In time, Brenton became dissatisfied with conditions in Massachusetts and moved to Rhode Island. In 1639 he was chosen as an assistant known as "Elder" to Judge William Coddington, chief magistrate of the settlement and in May 1639, Brenton became one of the first settlers to receive a grant of land in Newport (Mohr 78). Although the exact lines of his property are unknown, he roughly owned the entire southern end of Newport, from the Almy Pond over to Ocean Drive. In all, over 2000 acres of land divided into a number of smaller divisions; primary among them were the East Farm and the West Farm (Story of Fort Adams 4). There does not seem to be evidence of any former burials on the piece of his land in question. However, with quite a number of people living on the land, from family,



to tradesmen, to farm help, it would seem probable that there would be a burial, at least somewhere on the vast holdings (Simister 31). The Brenton's were loyalists and when hostilities broke out in the colonies, and the commandeering of their herds took place, they fled. As Tories, their land was also seized. Being an ideal place for commanding the Passage, a battery was built by the Colony first, then the British when they occupied Newport, and finally the French. Although never a "Fort" per se, the battery at "Brenton's Point", as it was then known, did aid in the defense of the wonderful harbor. At the end of the Revolutionary War, the Brenton land was retrieved by Jahleel and in time divided up and sold.

Through a number of years passed, the military did not become involved in the land until May 2, 1799, when they purchased from Susanna Mumford (and others) 7 acres, 1 rood, 17 rods for constructing a fortification (Land Evidence, Book 7). The last deed is dated June 24, 1824 where the President is buying 63 acres from Audley Clark and wife. (Book 16, page 288).

The establishment of the military cemetery itself, however, cannot be traced back any further then 1841, when Private Christian F. Roff of Company F, 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Artillery died on October 21, 1841. This date would be consistent with the military first garrisoning the fort on August 24, 1841. Before this time, a burial would be unlikely as most of the people there would have been the Irish laborers. Since the Irish did not live at the building site (they lived in boarding houses on Long Wharf or in family houses) there would be no need for burial at the fort proper. In addition, since they were not military, the Commanding Officer would have no stated or implied obligation to bury them and, as they were a majority catholic, they would probably be buried in a cemetery conforming to the faith.

The majority of the military at the fort at that time would have been from the Corp of Engineers, and therefore either officers or artillery officers. As such, they would probably have

had a house in the city along with their family and would have had the means to be buried in the family cemetery or a local cemetery. Colonel Totten, for example, lived at the “Malbone House”, an extremely large, ornate, and beautiful mansion, while in town in the 1830’s.

With the establishment of this cemetery, a relatively intact burial record exists. These records, originally belonging to the Army but now in the hands of the Navy, trace the growth of the cemetery from the beginning to the most recent burial. The records tell us information such as burial number, name, rank, unit, date of death, section and plot number buried in. There is also a place for remarks, such as where they died (Fort Adams or somewhere else) or if they were disinterred.

The army vacated the property in the early 1950’s, it being superfluous to their mission. The navy, however, wished to continue using the property as storage for materials (as they had been for some time) and for housing. They also thought of destroying the fort and using the granite blocks for the jetty they planned on building at Coddington Cove (Duchesneau 7). Fortunately, prominent people intervened and the fort was spared. The multitude of auxiliary buildings populating the base, along with the materials and supplies filling them were not as lucky. In the 1950’s and 1960’s many of these buildings were destroyed for various reasons.

The State of Rhode Island was given the majority of the property in 1965 for use as a state park. This gift, however, does not include the military housing or the cemetery. Ironically enough, the navy did try to give the cemetery to the state, but they refused it (Sanders).

This is the way it now stands; the United States Navy is in possession of a military cemetery that has, historically, been an Army one. The Commanding Officer of Naval Station Newport is responsible for all aspects of the cemetery, from daily maintenance to long term planning.

### **III. United States Government Gravestone History**

While studying the gravestone at the cemetery, we realized that there were distinct differences in government provided gravestones. Namely, stones with sunken “Federal” shields, and those without. This led us to the study of government issued stones. Although material on this topic is difficult to find in contemporary sources, the National Cemetery Administration (Veterans Administration) did have a wealth of information on the history and development of the gravestones. In short, before the War Department issued General Order #75 on 11 September 1861, there were no set standards. The dead were buried wherever they could by the garrison commander. Eventually, wood boards (headboards) with rounded tops were used to mark the location of the dead and included information about the soldier and a registration number. There was no centralized system for recording the burials.

By the Civil War, this method was woefully inadequate, as the sheer numbers of dead were enormous. With the General Order #75, the Quartermaster General was directed to secure and provide headboards and ledgers for the recording of the burials.

Through time, wooden headboards were judged to be inadequate and not cost effective, having a life of approximately 20 years, and were replaced with marble markers, as discussed below. In the 1903 report from the quartermaster of Fort Adams, all the unknowns were still marked with wooden headboards, along with some of the civilians. By this late date all military personnel had marble markers on their graves. It wasn't until after 28 April 1904 that civilians were authorized to have government provided stones on their graves. Through time, stones were replaced and, when done, replaced with the current style of the period.

The two styles were the “Civil War” style and the “General Style”.<sup>2</sup> The “General Style” was adopted following World War I. Each style had its own dimensions and information requirements. The general style was the first to adopt religious belief emblems.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the last century government marker design has change much, allowing such materials as upright and flat granite, bronze flat and niche markers, and flat marble. In addition, the information displayed on the markers has changed. Including, at one time or another name, rank, organization, conflict, birth/death date, state, awards, belief emblems, awards, and other information.

#### **IV. Stone Type**

There are three main types of stone, and one unidentified type of stone, located within the Cemetery. Of the three, the most prevalent is white marble. White marble was the Government Issue stone and thus accounts for the large percentage found here. However, many of the private stones are white marble as well. Marble was chosen by the government in favor of galvanized iron coated with zinc by Secretary of War William W. Belknap who, in 1873, “adopted the first design for stones to be erected in national cemeteries. For the known dead, the department adopted a slab design of marble or durable stone four inches thick, 10 inches wide and 12 inches in height extending above the ground. The part above the ground was polished and the top

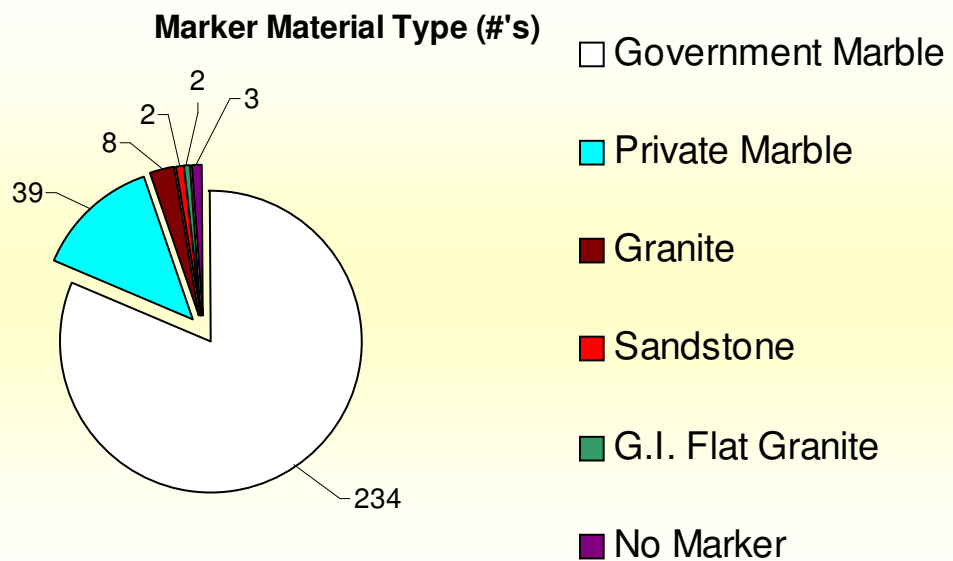
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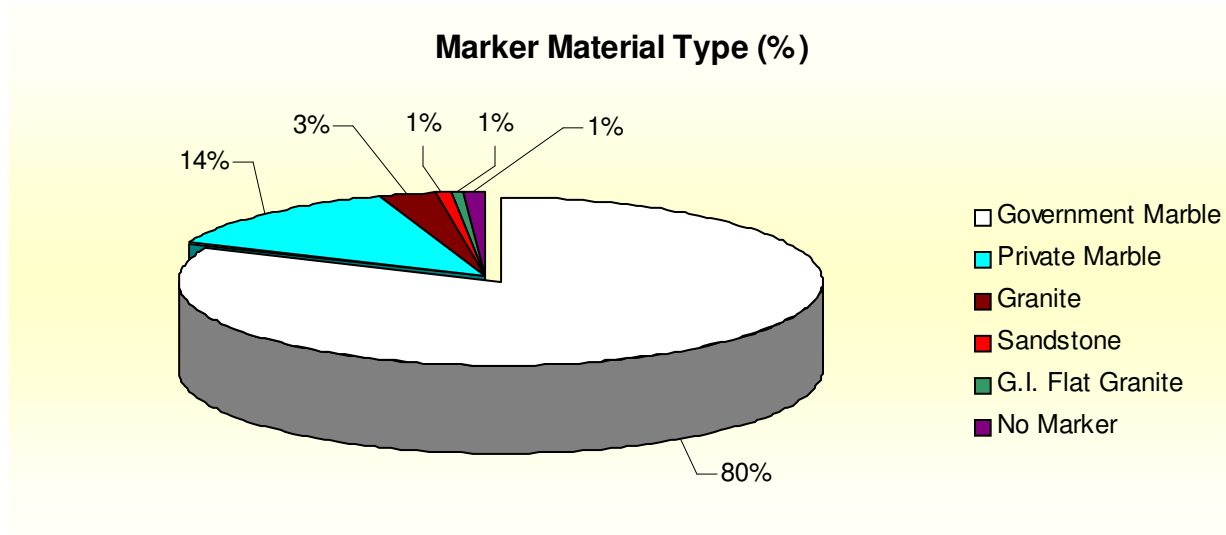
<sup>2</sup> The Civil War style was the one prescribed in 1873 by Secretary of War William W. Belknap. It was authorized for graves of veterans from the Revolutionary War through the Spanish-American War. The General Style was all graves except the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

<sup>3</sup> At the time the only two religious belief emblems allowed were the Cross and Star of David. There are now over 32 emblems to choose from.

slightly curved. The number of the grave, rank, name of the soldier and the name of the state were cut on the front face. This original design for the permanent headstone was referred to as the “Civil War” type, and was furnished for members of the Union Army only. The stone featured a sunken shield in which the inscription appeared in bas-relief. For the unknown dead, the stone was a block of marble or durable stone six inches square, and 30 inches long. The top and four inches of the sides of the upper part were finished and the number of the grave cut on the top.” (History of Government Headstones 2).

The following graphs analyze the material these markers were made out of. As can be seen, marble is the most populous material, with 234 out of 288 markers (80%). This marble is divided into government issue marble (86%) and private marble (14%). Granite is the second most popular stone used with 10 stones (3.5%), made up of 8 private granite stones and 2 government flat granite stones. Sandstone is the next in line with a total of 2 stones (< 1%). Interestingly, both of these sandstone markers were made by “C. Hill”, who to this date is unknown to us. With research, we hope to put a name to this carver. There is one unidentified stone.





White marble is a metamorphic stone which is the “result of the metamorphosis of limestone, marble is formed of densely packed crystals having reduced pore space and size.” (Dept. of the Interior P:11). Despite the reduced pore space in marble, the limestone inherent in marble is particularly pervious with the subsequent deterioration factor that goes along with it. Of all the stones in the cemetery, the earliest (1841) is this same white marble. Despite this relatively young age of the cemetery, much of the information on these white marble stones is, today (2001), indecipherable. Many of the stones are not dated and the information on them varies. We have found that even second-generation stones, replaced after 1908, can still be illegible.

The second type of stone found in the cemetery is granite. Granite is from the much harder category of rock known as igneous rock. The interlocking crystalline structure of this type of rock makes it a more stable stone (Dept. of the Interior P:11). Granite is a more expensive stone due to these features and this played a part in its rejection by the government.

Nevertheless, there exist two Government Issue granite stones within the cemetery along with eight private ones. Their dates range from 1886 until mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of these stones

are dated and the information complete. Because of its durability, the condition of these stones is excellent. The designs vary, largely because of their mostly private nature.

The third type of stone that we find in the Fort Adams Military Cemetery is sandstone. Sandstone is a sedimentary stone “composed of consolidated layers of disintegrated material are usually more permeable and exhibit a more rapid rate of deterioration than igneous rock.” (Dept. of the Interior P:11). This rapid rate of deterioration accounts for the, generally, poor condition of the two private stones found here. These stones are mostly dated and complete. These stones date from the late 1880’s. Their design and conditions vary but, as mentioned above, they are generally in poor condition despite their “young” age.

One stone was of an unidentified material. We believe it to be a metamorphic stone related to marble. Maybe even a bluestone judging by the particularly handsome veining.

## **V. Stone Damage**

We discovered two broad types of marker damage to the stones in cemetery. The first type of damage we describe as physical damage. These physical types of damage include damage done from lawn mowers and edge trimmers. Other types of physical damage include vandalism and damage done as a result of poor original quality and design. We found the lawn mower nicks to be the most common type of physical damage done to the stones. The most serious of these nicks occur at the corners of the stones. Most of the Government Issue Stones are baseless and the banging of the lawn mower into the corners of these stones has taken nicks, (in some cases small chunks would be a more appropriate word), from the corners. Over time, these nicks can cause more serious damage to occur by creating cracks that allow that much more water to seep into the stone. Such damage is 100% preventable. However the contracting

out by the government to the private maintenance firms will probably continue and, as such, the damage as well. This being a factor of time and expense. The quicker something is done, the cheaper the cost to the navy.

We found edge trimmer damage to be extremely common and was also on the majority of the stones. Although not as serious as lawn mower damage, it too is 100% preventable. For the same reasons mentioned above concerning the nicks, the edge trimmer damage will also probably continue.

The third type of damage, resulting from poor original quality and design, was not common in this cemetery. Memorials by their very nature are indented to be long standing. Thus the choice of poor quality and design would seem to indicate that those who made the choice in the past were not aware of their bad judgment for preservation purposes. For example, the choice of sandstone as a permanent marker was not a good one due to the very nature of sandstone in combination with current pollution problems. Precautions to prevent further damage can be taken but cannot be prevented. Some of the damage that could eventually result from this poor choice of stone could be very serious in nature. Already the information on the stone is almost indecipherable and as time goes on, the very design of the stone will be seriously altered.

Finally, damage done as a result of vandalism was, fortunately, not common in this cemetery. Actually, we are uncertain if observed occurrences such as stone removed from its base, baseless stones lying flat on the ground and one stone broken in half with the top half lying behind it on the ground are even cases of vandalism. In the past, the controlled entry to this cemetery undoubtedly contributed to the lack of vandalism. However with this controlled entry now lacking, the possibility of vandalism is always a possibility unless precautions are put in place. Precautions can be taken but cannot eliminate vandalism as long as the public is allowed



open entry. As we know from far too many public cemeteries with such open entries, vandalism can be of a very serious nature.

The second broad type of marker damage is natural damage caused by water, atmospheric pollutants, biological agents and windborne materials. Water is the primary cause of deterioration in any cemetery and the Fort Adams Cemetery is no exception. Water has a 9 to 1 freezing volume. Constant freezing and thawing with this existent ratio explains the eventual separation of layers within the stone often-called delamination. Water also carries with it soluble salts. These pollutants work their way into the stone facilitating deterioration.

Atmospheric pollutants leading to deterioration include carbon dioxide, chlorides, nitrates, sulfur dioxide and hydrocarbons. Carbon dioxide when combined with water creates a carbonic acid that dissolves calcium carbonate, that is to say, marble. Chlorides and nitrates, when combined with water, hydrolyze to form hydrochloric and nitric acids which are particularly aggressive toward the stone material. In turn, sulfur dioxide when combined with water forms sulfuric acids that also attack the stone. Soot from hydrocarbons and free sulfur is converted into black sulfur layers called “black crust” which stains the stone as well as attacking it (Dept. of the Interior P:16).

Biological agents causing deterioration include algae, fungus, and moss. We observed almost all the stones with cases of lichen on them. These biological agents retain water and hence the pollutants within the water. In addition, these biological agents give off waste in the form of organic acid. This acid contributes to dissolve the marble. Finally, these biological agents stain the stone and hide information on the stone, which was originally meant to be seen. They can cause pitting in the surface of the stone, which can in turn, create new opportunities for other detrimental agents to enter the stone.

The location of the cemetery on a treeless hill, exposed to the considerable wind that has made Newport famous for its sailing, has also made it a victim of many particles such as soot, sand, gravel, etc, which act as a sandblaster against the stone. This sandblasting effect removes the “weathering crust” that forms on the stones and that act as a protecting agent. Removal of this crust further exposes the stone to erosion caused by water and other pollutants.

## **VI. Documentation**

In documenting this project we used a large number of sources, most of limited value. A vast majority of these sources were used to define the Brenton land holdings through history and if any of them were buried on the land. Although important, these third party sources proved rather disappointing, giving at best conflicting information. More important as a documentation source was the original Army record books (1800’s – 1990’s) and plot map from 1983. In addition, we were able to examine some military correspondence in relation to the cemetery and particular people in the cemetery. These records are currently housed in the Office of Public Affairs in the headquarters building of Naval Station Newport. Without the use of these records, much of the data analysis would have been impossible, as some of the stones are in extremely bad condition or, being military, provide only limited information on the epitaph.

With these records, we were able to produce an updated plot map that was color-coded to both gender and material type.<sup>4</sup> In the future this material type of analysis should be extended to include “at time of” analysis. If we can construct what was in the cemetery at a particular time,

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<sup>4</sup> In the future, we would like to continue this analysis to include rank, age and year of death.

say 1903, we can see what stones were replaced by the military and, maybe, determine why they were replaced.

UNKNOWN  
women  
children  
men



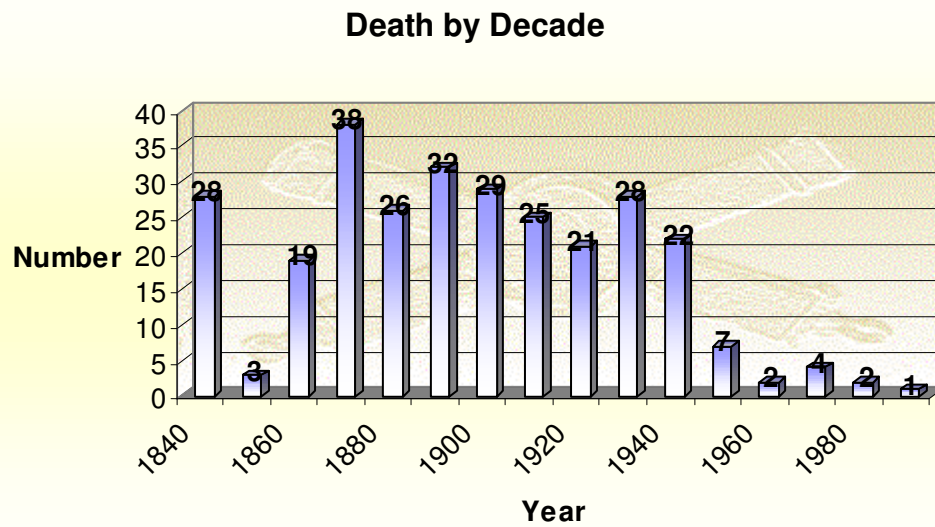
ALL Stones are "G.I."  
White marble except  
as noted

- Private marble
- Granite
- Sandstone
- "G.I." Flat Granite
- NO STONE

In addition, we photographed many of the stones in the cemetery concentrating on the condition of the stone in general and the epitaph in general.

Our research through the original burial records has offered us the opportunity to do some data analysis on a number of aspects of the cemetery. Figures were calculated and graphs were produced for a number of different data points. This includes the number of deaths by decade, gender of the dead in both numbers and percentage, and the type of stone used for grave markers, by numbers and percentage.

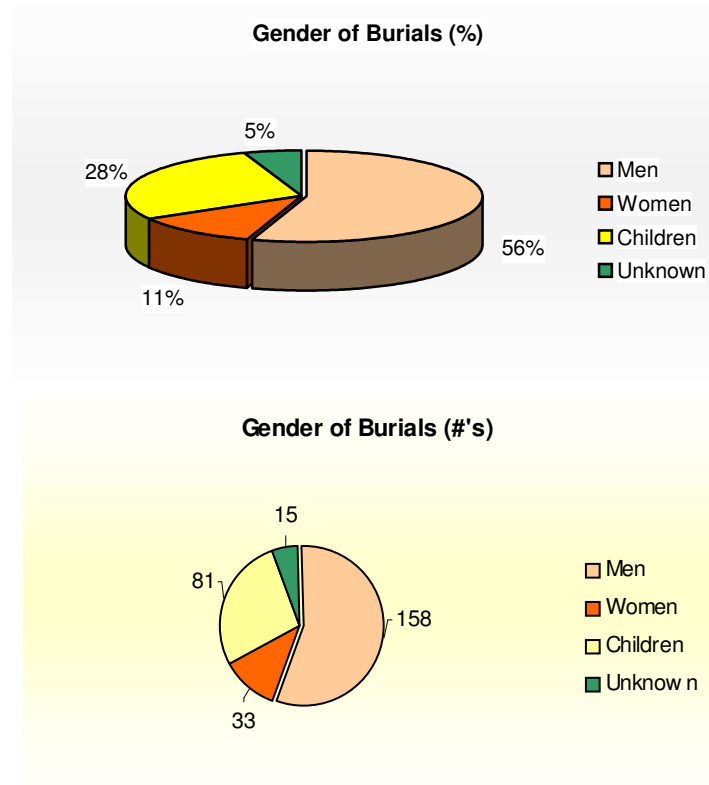
The death by decade was important to us so we could determine the active periods in the forts history and, correspondingly, the active periods in the cemeteries history. The results were as expected; high periods of activity in the cemetery correlated with active periods at the fort.



<i>Active dates of Fort Adams:</i>	
1799-1802	Old Fort Adams
1803-1814	Not in use. Sub-base of Fort Walcott
1814-1821	For War of 1812
1821-1824	Activity not known (Totten surveyed in August 1824)
1825 –1841	In building phase.
8/24/1841-1845	Garrisoned
1846-1849	Caretaker status
1849-1853	Infantry
1853-1857	Caretaker status
1857-1859	Active
1860-1861	Caretaker status
1862-1952	Active

The gender of the dead was used to determine the nature of the cemetery in light of certain facts, mainly, as an active military base housing both officers and enlisted men, along with their wives and children. The conclusions were very surprising indeed. Of the 287 burials,

158 (56%) were men, 81 (28%) were children of various ages and genders<sup>5</sup>, and 33 (11%) were women. The remainder of 15 (5%) were unknown burials<sup>6</sup>.



We also did an analysis on the material the stones were made out of. This information is included in the section on Stone Type.

## VII. Summary and Conclusions

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<sup>5</sup> The genders of children were not always reported on the burial register. More research will need to be done in this area.

<sup>6</sup> When the register was first started in 1841, the first 14 burials were of unknowns. These unknowns could have been from a preexisting cemetery on the base proper, or they could have been from a much earlier cemetery on the Brenton land, although highly unlikely.

Although the current study of the Fort Adams cemetery is not all-inclusive and is far from complete we have, through on-location fieldwork and various research methods provided at least a glimpse into its history. This view has included the earliest known use of the land by Europeans and extended through the early history of Newport and the Nation. It has looked at the use of the land as a defensive position from the end of the eighteenth century to the withdrawal of the Navy in the 1950's, which, in essence, ended the major purpose of the cemetery; a place to bury the dead from the fort.

By using the original source documentations (record books, letters, memos, and plot maps from the government) we have tracked down and given dimension to people and stones that could no longer speak. By tracing the paper trail we were able to once again put names, units, and dates on stones that have been damaged beyond readability.

Because of both the scope of the project and the time limit that accompanies a traditional academic class, we were unable to completely resolve a number of issues dealing with the early history of the land and any burials that may have occurred on it. We were not able to answer the question, "Is William Brenton buried on this land?" or "Is the slate stone to Jahleel truly a grave or just a memorial erected by an Army officer?"

We were however, able to determine with a high degree of certainty that the U.S. Army founded the cemetery, where it now exists, in the year 1841. This would be consistent with the first garrison occupying the fort on 24 August 1841. (First known soldier to be buried, 21 October 1841). It does not however answer the question of there being an earlier cemetery either at that location (Brenton?) or somewhere else on the base. As there are 14 unknowns, this is a possibility. As was expected, the majority of the graves were demonstrated to be that of military men, followed by children, then women.

In anticipation of a preservation plan, we tried to determine the gravestone materials and problems associated with them. Most prevalent was white marble (95% - government provided 86% and privately provided 14%) followed by granite (4%, both government 25% and private 75%) and then sandstone (1%, all private).

We concluded that the major conditional problems of the gravestones are associated with atmospheric pollutants, especially that of carbon dioxide interacting with water to form carbonic acid, which literally will wash the carving from the marble. This occurs because carbonic acid will dissolve calcium carbonate, the chief component of limestone (Dept. of the Interior P:16)<sup>7</sup>. Another major problem caused by the environment is the presence of “black crust” (formed when soot and un-burnt sulfur change carbonate into black surface sulfur on stone) and lichen, a biological life form that can damage all stones, especially marbles and sandstone by trapping in above mentioned pollution and forming their own waste products that may stain stone.

In addition, physical damage is rampant due to improper maintenance of the cemetery. Many stones are either chipped at their bases by lawn care crews hitting the stones with the mowers or by edge-trimmer crews whacking the stones with their equipment. In some cases, this damage extends up 4 inches from ground level.

There are several positive factors working in favor of preservation of this cemetery. First, having been located on a former military base, entry to the cemetery has been controlled for over 110 years. Such control has cut down on the vandalism that is, unfortunately, so prevalent in many cemeteries today. Secondly, the cemetery was, and still is, maintained with care by the

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<sup>7</sup> In addition, chlorides and nitrates hydrolyze to form hydrochloric and nitric acids, and sulfur dioxide and sulfur trioxide can hydrolyze to form sulfurous and sulfuric acids, which dissolve calcium carbonate. (Dept. of the Interior P:16)



Government. Thus, the whole issue of who should maintain the cemetery, which we learned in class, has always been a factor influencing the history of cemeteries has been avoided. The cemetery is, to this day, somewhat close to the military housing further up the hill and this proximity insures a populace that cares for what happens to the cemetery. Today, the land on which the cemetery sits has become part of the state's park system and as such is part of a larger tourism development site. This insures that the cemetery will continued to be looked after and not fall prey to encroaching development from outside sources. Finally, having been associated with the U.S. Government for so long, a fairly complete record system is already in place. In the future this system will help preservationist conducting any further documentation of this site.

Unfortunately, there are also some negative factors influencing the cemetery as well. As mentioned above, the cemetery is now part of the state's park system, which means that it is open to the public. The controlled entry is no longer in place. In addition, the location of the cemetery within the park is in a rather remote section. Being in a public park, the site is subject to all that the public enjoys doing in parks. During our short research of the site, we have noticed trash such as beer cans and food wrappers lying around the hedges and grounds. We also observed several people letting their dogs run free, younger people playing Frisbee and ball games in close proximity to the stones, and SUV's, mountain bikes and motorcycles within the grounds. Surreptitious activity also occurs in the abandoned artillery emplacements, which are also located nearby.

### **VIII. Suggestions for Additional Research**

The potential for additional research is Biblical in proportion. Being such, we have divided it into two sections, research, meaning paper chasing, reading, and investigating sources and fieldwork, meaning on location work.

#### *Additional Research*

For research, it would be beneficial to continue looking at the early land ownership of the whole reservation. Although we conducted searches at the Newport City Hall Land Evidence Room, they were far from exhaustive. It also would help if the original location of William Brenton's house "Hammersmith"<sup>8</sup> was located. This house was surrounded by vast gardens, orchards, and winding paths (Cullum 30) that overlooked the East Passage and may lead us to the location of a "family plot" for burials. It has been written that "The Chimneys" was located in the area of the commanding officers quarters (Cullum 30), although by 1854 it was in a great state of ruin (Mason 20).

As William Brenton was a surveyor by trade, among other things, it should be interesting to search for any maps or documentation that he or his sons may have made of his vast land holdings. If in existence, it would delineate where some of the ancient landmarks were located in respect to the contours of the land.

In regards to the "Memorial" to Jahleel Brenton, research should be done to determine if original sources corroborate the memorial theory as set forth in a history of Fort Adams prepared

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<sup>8</sup> Although he named his house "Hammersmith", after the location of his birth in England, it was known to the locals as "The Chimneys" (Simister 31), as it had 4 brick chimneys, two on each end (Van Rensselaer 83).

by the Narragansett Bay Marine Repair Shops, 1112<sup>th</sup> Area Service Unit.<sup>9</sup> By original sources, I refer to either newspapers of the time, private correspondence, and Army documentation. In addition, as the history states that the stone was located across from Officers' Row (1112<sup>th</sup> ASU 1), the location to may have been changed over time to its' present one.

We adamantly recommend more research into the original plethora of reports produced by their commands. Such reports can included, but should not be limited to Commanding Officers' Reports, reports from the fort surgeon and the Surgeon-General of the United States, and quartermaster reports indicating what gravestones were "ordered" and/or replaced for any given year. Army correspondence should also be looked into, such as letters and memorandums from the above-mentioned people and, most importantly, the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corp of Engineers produced wonderful drawings of the reservation and work-in-progress in various years, in addition to columns of correspondence. Maybe they surveyed or mentioned an older cemetery, especially as the fort changed in 1824 from the 1<sup>st</sup> System of seacoast defense to the 3<sup>rd</sup> System of seacoast defense.

Lastly, for research, newspapers should be combed for information on deaths and burials at the fort, although we have found this of limited use since the fort was, in some respects, an entity unto itself and little was reported in the town papers of these events.

### *Additional Fieldwork*

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<sup>9</sup> The 1112<sup>th</sup> ASU history states, in part "There is an interesting slab marker, often mistaken for a grave, located on the hillside across from Officers' Row. This stone was laid by Colonel George W. Elliot of the Army Engineers, who bore all the expense himself."

For fieldwork, it would be quite interesting to conduct a non-intrusive investigation into the Brenton plot by the cemetery to determine if there is or was anything under the stone at anytime. Such imaging could save valuable research time and resources.

The continuation of photographing all gravestones and the recording of existing condition is one project that could be completed with relative ease, weather permitting, and with little expense if a digital camera is used. This fieldwork could also focus on the epitaphs. More precisely, which ones are legible or illegible in addition to what is recorded on them. This information could then be compared to the 1995 John Sterling transcription<sup>10</sup> of the cemetery to determine the rate of erosion in the stone.

Lastly, for fieldwork (part research), a map should be produce which is color coded to rank of person, age of person, and design on stone (for military stones).

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<sup>10</sup> In 1995 John Sterling transcribed all the stones in the Fort Cemetery and input the data into the Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Database under the code JES. See Rhode Island Cemeteries Database Home Page at < <http://members.tripod.com/~debyns/cemetery.html>>

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