

NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY

1822

A PUBLIC BURIAL GROUND

In 1820, the city of Nashville purchased four acres of property "on the plains south of downtown" for use as a public burial ground. The cemetery at Sulphur Spring Bottoms, just north of today's State Capitol, was plagued by flooding from the Cumberland River. In response, Mayor Thomas Crutcher and the town aldermen acquired more elevated terrain below St. Cloud Hill, two miles to the south.

Captain Alpha Kingsley, owner of a downtown boarding house, was chosen to design the layout for the cemetery. Some, though not all, graves were exhumed from various burying grounds around the county and moved to the new location. In 1822, with the initial burials complete, the City Cemetery was officially opened, and Kingsley was hired as the first sexton.

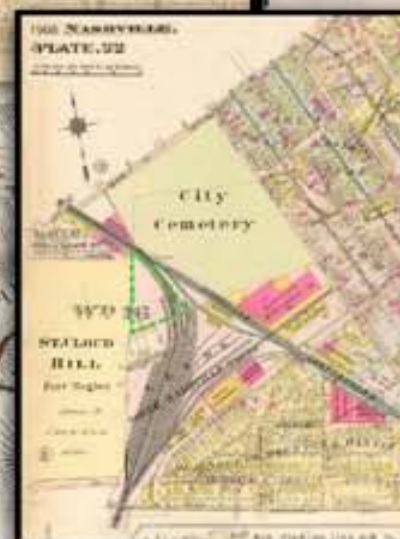
By 1831 the cemetery had outgrown the original four acres. Over the next twenty years the city made additional land purchases. During that period roads were also constructed and the property was divided into sections containing both individual and family plots. By 1856, the cemetery had grown to twenty-seven acres and contained over 20,000 graves.

The City Cemetery was closed to further burials - except for those in pre-purchased plots - after 1878 because of the unfounded belief that outbreaks of disease plaguing the city originated in the cemetery. Though several preservation and restoration efforts took place beginning in the late 19th century, the cemetery continued to deteriorate. Today, the site is on the National Register of Historic Places. In walking the grounds you will find

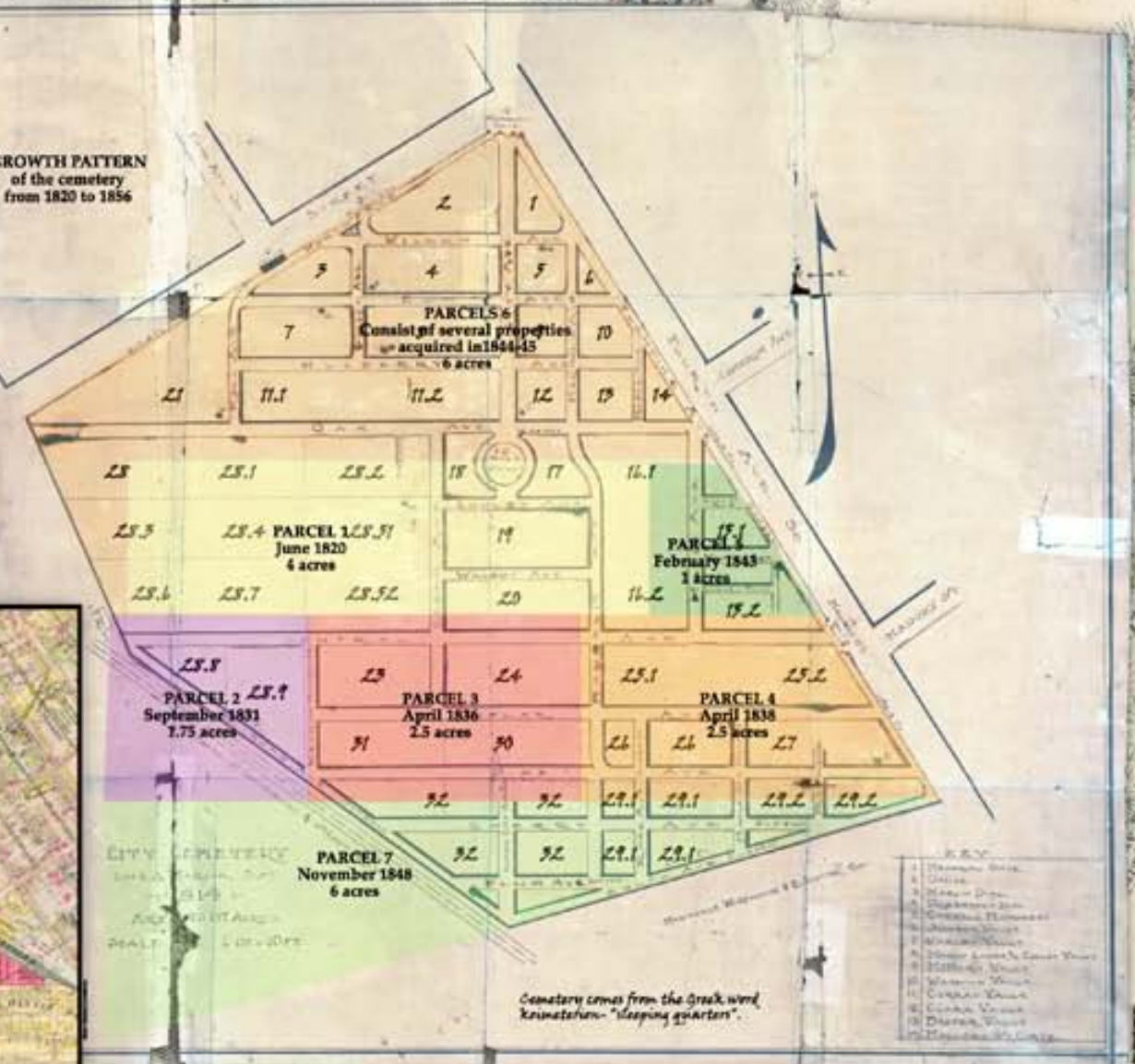
NASHVILLE'S FOUNDERS:

- a Tennessee governor,
- fifteen mayors,
- four Confederate generals,
- a Union Naval Commander,
- the man who named the flag "Old Glory,"
- four United States Senators,
- two original Fisk Jubilee singers,
- educators,
- merchants,
- ministers,
- lawyers,
- slaveholders,
- slaves,
- Free Blacks,

and thousands of other Nashvillians who at one time called the city home.



GROWTH PATTERN of the cemetery from 1820 to 1856



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