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 Marble Cemetery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Between East 2nd and 3rd Streets, Second Avenue and Bowery not for publication

city, town New York vicinity of congressional district 18

state New York code 036 county New York code 061

3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>district</td>
<td>X public</td>
<td>X occupied</td>
<td>museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building(s)</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>unoccupied</td>
<td>park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>work in progress</td>
<td>educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>X yes: restricted</td>
<td>entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>in process</td>
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<tr>
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<td>being considered</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>X military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X other: cemetery

4. Owner of Property

name Thomas T. Frazer c/o Marble Cemetery

street & number 19 Rector Street

city, town New York vicinity of state New York 10006

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

NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETARY LP-0466

title LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION has this property been determined eligible? X yes

date MARCH 4, 1969 federal state county X local

depository for survey records 305 BROADWAY

city, town New York state NEW YORK
7. Description

Condition  
— excellent  
— good  
— fair  
Check one  
X deteriorated  
— ruins  
x unaltered  
— unexposed  
Check one  
x original site  
— moved  
—— date __________

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The New York Marble Cemetery is situated in the interior of the block bounded by East 2nd and 3rd Streets, Second Avenue and the Bowery, and cannot be seen from the streets or avenues. This non-sectarian cemetery, once in the heart of the most fashionable section of New York, is now completely surrounded by the crowded tenements and storefronts that typify Manhattan's Lower East Side.

Rarely more than one-half acre in extent, the New York Marble Cemetery is characterized by "smooth swaths, some ancient lilac bushes, lanquishing trees" but no monuments or tombstones since all of the 156 burial vaults are underground. The entrance is through an alley squeezed between Nos. 41 and 43 Second Avenue and is protected at both ends by iron gates. The double-door iron gate at the Second Avenue end of the alley is twelve feet high, framed by decorative Greek Revival style newel posts, and terminates in a broad arch. Framing the small green lawn is a high stone wall. On the east portion of the wall there is an inscription, almost indecipherable today, testifying that it was a "place of interment for gentlemen."

Marble tablets of uniform size are set in the north and south walls in tiers of three. Inscribed on the tablets are vault numbers and the names of the 156 original vault owners. The vaults themselves were constructed of Tuckahoe marble from which the cemetery gets its name. At the southwest corner of the cemetery, the old "dead-house" once stood, a primitive rough-hewn structure of stone.

In the early part of the 1900's the cemetery was very run down and interments had virtually ceased. In 1915 an endowment fund was started to preserve the Marble Cemetery from deterioration and by 1934 the burial grounds had regained dignity. Today, the New York Marble Cemetery's grounds and plantings have been kept up fairly well, but the surrounding wall has deteriorated. The western portion of the north wall, for instance, is crumbling. The tombs, however, have remained undisturbed.

8. Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prehistoric</td>
<td>Archeology-prehistoric</td>
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<tr>
<td>1400–1499</td>
<td>Archeology-historic</td>
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<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Architecture</td>
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<td>Art</td>
</tr>
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<td>1800–1899</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900–</td>
<td>Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X exploration/settlement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific dates: 1830-1832  
Builder/Architect: 

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The New York Marble Cemetery was Manhattan’s first non-sectarian burial ground open to the public. Established in 1832, it is located in what was the most fashionable residential section of New York City and was used as a place of interment by some of New York’s oldest families. The New York Marble Cemetery is also notable because it retains its original and unusual design.

In 1830 a city ordinance was passed prohibiting interments within the city limits below Canal Street, under the penalty of a fine of $250. At that time, Second Avenue was a fashionable section and three business men, Perkins Nichols, Anthony Dey and George W. Strong, surmised that a burial ground laid out near this neighborhood would prove to be very profitable. The cemetery would be private and was not connected to any church. On July 30, 1830, Dey and Strong purchased half an acre of land from shipwright Henry Eckford and his wife, and Nichols then had 156 vaults constructed of Tuckahoe marble. When completed, the vaults were sold to the city’s leading families who were determined to be buried not only in Manhattan but in the most exclusive area. The promoters had cleverly located their cemetery in the center of a block, slightly south-east of Astor Place, leaving room for fine houses on the street fronts. Some months later, Nichols, Dey and Strong, together with the vault owners, applied to the State Legislature for a special act of incorporation as the New York Marble Cemetery. This was granted on February 4, 1831, and on May 1, 1832, Dey and Strong conveyed title to the land to the new corporation.

Dr. Valentine Mott, a prominent surgeon, Dr. Gardiner Spring, pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, publisher Uriah Scribner and his son Charles, and Peter Lorillard II, who established the landmark Lorillard Snuff Mill in the Bronx and later founded a thriving tobacco empire, were among those who, looking forward to the future, bought the original vaults. Of this original group, however, only the Scribners were ever buried there. Subsequent interments included Aaron Clark, Whig Mayor of the City from 1837 to 1839; David Olyphant, a wealthy China trade merchant known for his refusal to deal in opium and for his support of the Protestant missions; and James Talmadge, member of Congress, 1817–1819, one of the founders and first presidents of New York University. In addition, branches of several well-known New York families such as the Varicks, Beekmans, Hones, Van Zandts, Hoyts, and Quackenbushes have vaults there.

The history of New York City is a constant record of pushing the dead out of place by the living. As the city grew, burying grounds were continually being moved northward, many being obliterated. Once there were 40 extensive cemeteries south of Fourteenth Street. In 1934 there were only nine left in all of Manhattan. Today there are even fewer and all except two of these are but parts of what they were originally. The New York Marble Cemetery is one of two cemeteries still in existence, unchanged in size and shape, within Manhattan’s boundaries.
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
UMT References

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B   
<table>
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</table>

C   
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D   
|     |         |          |

E   
|     |         |          |

F   
|     |         |          |

G   
|     |         |          |
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Quadrangle scale 1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 458, Lot 30 and is roughly 83' x 275' in size.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state code</th>
<th>county code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>state code</td>
<td>county code</td>
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</table>

11. Form Prepared By Holly Huckins, Research Consultant for
Contact: Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph, 518-474-0479
name/title Joan Olshansky, National Register Coordinator
organization Landmarks Preservation Commission date January, 1980

street & number 305 Broadway telephone 566-7577
city or town New York state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] national
- [ ] state
- [X] local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), 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

title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date 2/27/86

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

New York Marble Cemetery
New York County, N.Y.

Continuation sheet
Item number 9


NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY
Interior of the block between East 2nd and 3rd Streets, Second Avenue and the Bowery
New York County, New York
Manhattan Land Book, Plate 23