

FORM E- BURIAL GROUND

Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

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Reading

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803

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town North Reading

Place (neighborhood or village)

Walnut Corner

Address or Location Main Street

Name Congregation Ahabat Sholum Cemetery

Ownership Public Private

Approximate Number of Stones 1,000 +

Earliest Death Date 1905 (and earlier?)

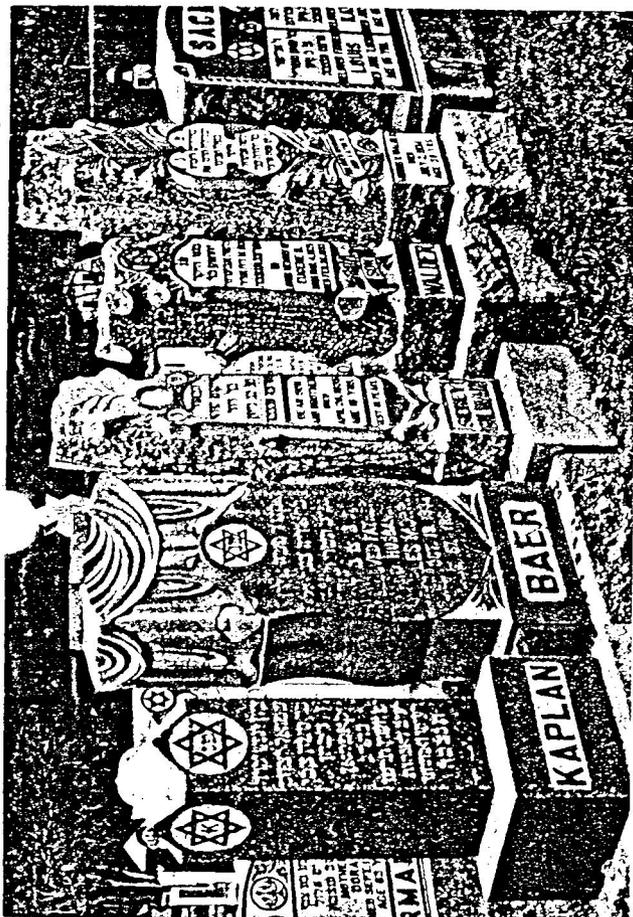
Latest Death Date recent

Landscape Architect Undetermined

Condition Good

Acreage 1 or 2 acres

Setting Heavily-trafficked highway.
 Mid-to-late twentieth century commercial & resident
 Buildings; asphalt-paved parking lots. Cemetery
 itself characterized by regimental rows of closely
 spaced stone markers. Wooded area at rear.



Location
 of
 burial
 site.

Recorded by Elise Madeleine Ciregna

Organization North Reading Historical Commission

Date (month/year) June 2002

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form

BURIAL GROUND FORM

VISUAL/DESIGNASSESSMENT *see continuation sheet*

Describe landscape features, gravestone materials, designs, motifs, and symbols that are either common or unusual. Note any known carvers.

The cemetery of the Lynn-based Jewish Congregation Ahabat Sholom, is located on the east side of Main Street (Route 28) just to the north of North Street. Main Street is North Reading's most heavily trafficked thoroughfare. The cemetery is surrounded on three sides by undistinguished mid-to-late twentieth century commercial buildings. A wooded area borders its east side.

Possessing a rectangular plan, entrances to the cemetery are located near the northern and southern ends of the Main Street edge of the property. Marking the entrances to the cemetery are pairs of granite posts. Grave stones are set out close together in regimental rows as is the custom in the Jewish faith. A grid path system runs between the stones and are linked with the east-west roads at the northern and southern ends of the cemetery.

The overwhelming majority of the 500+ vertical slab markers are composed of polished marble and date from 1906, if not earlier. The grave stones bear the names of early members of the synagogue's members including: Guber, Moskowitz, Pozner, Reinherz, Sidell, Slobodkin, Tartikoff and many others.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

Explain religious affiliations, major period of use, and evaluate historical association of this burial ground with the community.

The cemetery of the Lynn-based Jewish Congregation Ahabat Sholom was established between c.1895 and 1905 in the Walnut Corner section of North Reading. This place of internment was set out over former farm land that may have been owned by a W. F. Chisholm or a member of the Batchelder family. The cemetery is not indicated on the 1889 Middlesex County Atlas but does appear on the 1906 Atlas. According to Jonathan D. Sarna and Ellen Smith in The Jews of Boston, Congregation Ahabat Sholom's first house of worship was built in 1905 on Church Street in Lynn. The possibility remains that this Congregation's members could have been organized earlier with services taking place in private residences and that the cemetery may predate the synagogue's completion.

A staff member of the synagogue, now located at 151 Ocean Street in Lynn, indicated that there is little or no information on the history of this cemetery. Congregation Ahabat Sholom began as an Orthodox immigrant congregation with members with roots in central and eastern Europe. Judging by the names on the markers it would seem a significant percentage of the early twentieth century congregation were Russian Orthodox Jews. As pioneers with no roots in the host community, the congregation may have chosen seemingly remote North Reading for the location of their cemetery for reasons associated with prejudice on the part of non Jewish Lynn property owners who did wish to have the newcomers in their midst, lack of available land in heavily built-up early 1900s industrial Lynn or simply that the price of the North Reading land was more affordable for an emergent immigrant congregation, than what might have been available closer to Boston.

According to Sarna and Smith the Lynn synagogue looked to the architecture of the Reform Temple Israel on Columbus Avenue in Boston for design inspiration. The Lynn synagogue was "built in the German Romanesque style to express the congregation's cultural and religious ties to the European homeland."

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

North Reading Maps/Atlases: 1795,1831,1857,1875,1889,1906
Sarna, Jonathan D. and Smith, Ellen, The Jews of Boston, 1995

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

STREETS, PARCELS & BUILDINGS NORTH READING



WILMINGTON