(N/A) NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SOUTH CAROLINA INVENTORY FORM FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS AND INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES IN A MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION

NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION: Conway Multiple Resource Area

PREFERRED NAME OF PROPERTY: Kingston Presbyterian Church Cemetery

COMMON NAME OF PROPERTY: Same

LOCATION: 800 Third Avenue

CLASSIFICATION: Site

OWNER: Kingston Presbyterian Church
800 Third Avenue
Conway, S.C.

DESCRIPTION

The Kingston Presbyterian Church Cemetery includes seventy-five marked and several unmarked graves to the rear of and adjacent to the sanctuary and to the left of the church school building. Located on a bluff overlooking Kingston Lake and shaded by several large oaks, the cemetery is bounded on the north and south by brick walls. Portions of the plot, which covers approximately one acre, were originally the town and Beaty family graveyards and were later deeded to the church. Burials began here soon after the founding of Kingston ca. 1737 and continued until 1909.(1)

The most outstanding examples of mid-nineteenth century gravestone art in the cemetery are the tombstones of the Beaty, Buck, and Graham children.(2) The stones seem to have been sculpted by one artist, and those of Clara and Mary Beaty, Frederick Buck, and Florence Graham are particularly significant. These three tombs are marble table-type tombs, so-called for the low flat slab on top which often served as a table for vases. The design was fairly common in gravestone art of the mid- to late-nineteenth centuries, consisting of a top slab supported

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by slabs or columns.(3) These children's stones have top slabs with an inscription, supporting end slabs, and open sides. The most remarkable features of these stones, rare in table tombs, are the delicately sculpted figures which lie in the space under the top slab and between the end slabs.(4) These figures represent children either sleeping or in death. The Beaty sisters, buried together, are depicted as embracing, and their figures are strikingly reminiscent of Thomas G. Crawford's Babes in the Wood (1851). Crawford, an American sculptor living in Italy, was well-known to Victorian-era audiences and his depiction of two children embracing in death was widely imitated.(5) The glass panes on these three stones which protect the figures are a later addition. The nearby grave of Louisa and Willie Beaty, though much simpler in its design, is notable for its finely detailed carving of a bouquet of mixed flowers flanked by the figures of two sleeping lambs.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: Gravestone Art

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: L (FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kingston Presbyterian Church Cemetery is significant for its fine examples of Victorian gravestone art of a quality not generally found in South Carolina. Portions of the cemetery site were first the old Kingston "burying ground" and the Beaty family cemetery; few gravestones from the town graveyard survive but the Beaty family plot, which contains the artistically significant stones, is intact.

Most studies of gravestone art in America have been concerned with seventeenth and eighteenth century art and its symbolism, particularly in the New England colonies. Colonial and Victorian gravestone art were separated not only by time but by the intent of their message. Early gravestones were almost uniform in design, with the major emphasis on the epitaph as an admonition to the living; later stones were more individual and elaborate in design, symbolizing the personality or status of the deceased.(6)

Gravestones in mid-nineteenth-century America tended to be monuments to the dead rather than simply markers of the burial place. They were generally larger, and often three-dimensional sculpture, in contrast to the relatively simple slabs of the colonial and early national eras. Symbols such as the draped urn, the broken column, and the weeping willow were commonly used, as well as more individual symbols such as an open bible for a minister, or a sword for a soldier. Some of the most recognizable symbols were those reserved for children, particularly the lamb and the cherub.(7) This emphasis on gravestones as sculpture was a result of the rural cemetery movement of the 1830s, in which cemeteries became viewed as acceptable places to visit and were carefully planned as parks where the living remembered the dead. John Maass has observed that "the Victorian cemetery was also the people's museum which displayed sculpture in communities which had few other specimens

of the art."(8)

These four graves are exceptional examples of Victorian gravestone art in their craftsmanship, particularly so when judged in the context of mid-century gravestone art in South Carolina, which is generally more utilitarian in design and more simple in execution.(9) The six children buried in these graves were first cousins who died within months of each other, presumably of disease, in 1859. Their fathers were deeded the land for the family cemetery in December 1859 by Sarah Jane Norman, who had owned the land on which the church had been built the previous year. Some time after the Civil War the plot, which measured fifty-four feet by eighty-five feet and was fourteen feet from the rear of the church, was deeded to Kingston Presbyterian Church by the Beaty family.(10)

Though the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places states that cemeteries will not ordinarily be considered for the National Register, Exception D states that "a cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events" may be considered. The Kingston Presbyterian Church Cemetery is an exception to the criteria because it derives significance from the "distinctive design features" of the Beaty, Buck, and Graham gravestones.

ACREAGE: .5 Acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The boundary of the nomination is shown as the black line on the accompanying Horry County Tax Map # 137-2, section 1, parcel 9, drawn at a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes the cemetery and its immediate setting.

QUAD NAME: Conway

QUAD SCALE: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCE POINT:

A: 17/680900/3745560
B: 17/680940/3745480
C: 17/680860/3745480
D: 17/680840/3745540

NOTES

1) Paul Quattlebaum, "The Presbyterian Church on the Waccamaw," South Carolina Historical Magazine 54 (April 1953): 65-69; Edward S. Barnhill, The Beatys of Kingston (n.p., n.p., 1958), p. 66.

2) According to James McBride Dabbs, in his introduction to Carl Julien's Pee Dee Panorama (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), p. 21, "In the Presbyterian cemetery at Conway stand three tiny monuments, dating from the 1850's and done by the hand of Hiram Powers, that capture in soft Italian marble the pathos of young lives snuffed out. The figures, protected by glass from the weather, are of children sleeping, their hands relaxed in living repose." Research has failed to support this assertion that Powers, an American sculptor living in Italy, carved these stones; they are, however, quite similar to two well-known works by Thomas G. Crawford and William Henry Rinehart, also expatriates in Italy. See footnote 5 below.

3) Peggy McDowell, "Influences on 19th Century Funerary Architecture," in Mary Louise Christovich, ed., New Orleans Architecture: Volume III: The Cemeteries (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1974), p. 81.

4) A tomb similar to these was commissioned by Charles Binney for his daughter Emily in 1842; it is in the Mount Auburn Cemetery near Boston. An engraving of the tomb is in Frederic A. Sharf, "The Garden Cemetery and American Sculpture: Mount Auburn," The Art Quarterly XXIV (1961): 82.

5) William Henry Rinehart's Sleeping Children (1859) is similar to Crawford's Babes in the Wood. Rinehart, however, depicts two naked infants, sleeping on a pillow and draped by a sheet, in contrast to Crawford's depiction of two older children, clothed and found dead in the forest. For background on Crawford and Babes in the Wood, see Sylvia E. Crane, White Silence: Greenough, Powers, and Crawford: American Sculptors in Nineteenth-Century Italy (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1972), pp. 313-14. For illustrations of the Crawford and Rinehart sculptures, see Milton W. Brown, American Art to 1900: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), pp. 402-403.

6) One of the few works dealing with Victorian gravestone art in the Southeast is Diana Williams Combs' "All Who Live Must Hear," a study of Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery, in The Atlanta Historical Bulletin XX:2 (Summer 1976): 61-96. See also J.B. Jackson, "The Vanishing Epitaph: From Monument to Place," Landscape 17:2 (Winter 1967-68): 21-24; Kenneth L. Ames, "Ideologies in Stone: Meanings in Victorian Gravestones," The Journal of Popular Culture 14:4 (1981): 641-656; and David E. Stannard, "Calm Dwellings: The Brief, Sentimental Age of the Rural Cemetery," American Heritage 30:5 (May 1979): 42-55.

7) Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., Victorian Cemetery Art (New York: Dover Publications, 1972); Ames, 643-653.

8) John Maass, Review of John Morley, Death, Heaven, and the Victorians; James Stevens Curl, The Victorian Celebration of Death; and Edmund V. Gillon, Jr., Victorian Cemetery Art. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 32:1 (March 1973): 78.

9) Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina Survey Files, State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina.

10) Interview with Mrs. Laura Quattlebaum Jordan, Conway, S.C., 20 February 1986. The children were Clara Beaty (1852-1859) and Mary Brookman Beaty (1856-1859), daughters of Thomas Wilson and Mary Brookman Beaty; Florence Agne Graham (1855-1859), daughter of William I. and Margaret Beaty Graham; Louisa and Willie James Beaty (d. 1859), daughter and son of John Robinson and Melvina Beaty; and Charles Frederick Buck (d. 1859), son of William Henry and Angelina Beaty Buck. Barnhill, pp. 66, 76-79.