



# Headstone Dedication



## To a Fallen Soldier

**DEDICATION CEREMONY  
PRIVATE – JOHN O. H. WATKINS  
SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2013  
MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**

On August 9, 1937, a soldier was laid to rest in Mountain View Cemetery and he was not given a headstone to mark his passing. His name was John O. H. Watkins, and he had served as a Private in the Union Army from June 23, 1864 until October 1, 1864 – a portion of the American Civil War.

He served in Company B of the 37<sup>th</sup> New Jersey Infantry.

On Sunday, April 28, 2013 at 1:00 p.m., 75+ years after his passing, a dedication ceremony will be held in his honor and he will finally have a headstone.

Finally this soldier will be honored and shown the respect that should be afforded to all United States Service Men and Women.

The public is invited to attend. Please join us in Honoring Private John O. H. Watkins. This ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m., so please arrive early.



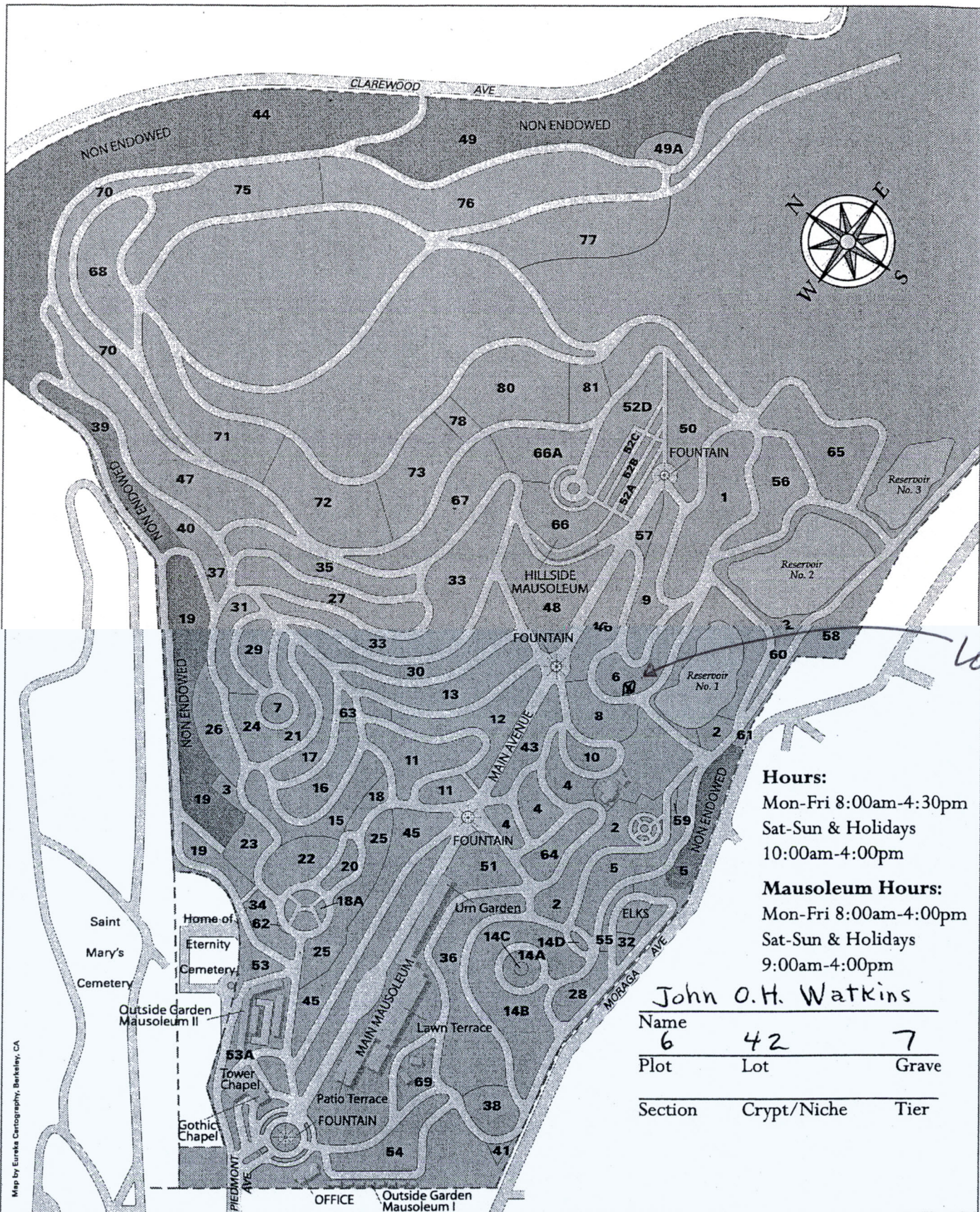
**Mountain View Cemetery  
5000 Piedmont Avenue  
Oakland, California  
(510) 658-2588**

**John O. H. Watkins  
Plot 6 Lot 42 Grave 7**





# MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY



**Hours:**  
 Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:30pm  
 Sat-Sun & Holidays  
 10:00am-4:00pm

**Mausoleum Hours:**  
 Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:00pm  
 Sat-Sun & Holidays  
 9:00am-4:00pm

*John O.H. Watkins*

Name	Plot	Lot	Grave
	6	42	7
Section	Crypt/Niche	Tier	

# Headstone records for US military veterans

## Part I: Headstone design

*In honor of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, this is the seventh in a series of articles about records at the National Archives in Washington, DC, that are useful in researching the war and its participants.*

**T**he eruption of the American Civil War changed millions of lives and many governmental practices. For the first time, US leaders were faced with the considerable task of burying thousands of military dead. The exigencies of war led to many poorly marked burials. Some soldiers pinned paper with name and address to their clothing, but thousands died without identification. (The US Army adopted "dog tags" in 1906.)

In 1862, the Army's Quartermaster General established the first military cemeteries for Union dead. The task of locating, identifying if possible, and exhuming the remains of three hundred thousand Union war-time dead for reburial in those cemeteries continued after war's end. At first, graves were marked with wooden headboards costing \$1.23 each, but with a life expectancy of only five years, they were not cost effective. In 1873, Congress authorized \$1 million to mark graves in national cemeteries with marble or granite headstones.

Over the years, Congress enacted new benefits for veterans because of public pressure. The act of 3 March 1873 (17 Stat. 605) allowed burial in a national cemetery to all honorably discharged Union Civil War veterans. An act of 3 February

1879 (20 Stat. 281) extended the privilege of government-provided headstones to all honorably discharged Union Civil War veterans, and required the Quartermaster General to keep a record of their names and burial locations. Congress authorized government-provided headstones for Confederates who died in military prisons and hospitals in the North who were buried near their place of confinement by an act of 6 March 1906 (34 Stat. 56) and then extended the headstone privilege to all Confederate soldiers buried anywhere by an act of 26 February 1929 (45 Stat. 1307). Ultimately, the headstone privilege was authorized for any active duty or honorably discharged veteran buried in an unmarked grave, resulting in millions of government-provided, taxpayer-funded, headstones being carved or cast for placement on veterans' graves. Recent statistics show that 372,700 headstones or markers were provided for veterans' graves in fiscal year (FY) 2011, and 354,600 in FY 2012. The Quartermaster General's Office (QMG) and its successors ran the headstone program until 1973, when it was transferred to the Veteran's Administration, now called the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

This article will examine headstone design styles and elements because understanding the clues provided by them may assist researchers in locating related paper records in the National Archives (NARA). Part II will examine records for headstones requested from 1879 to 1925. Part III will examine records for headstones