

Carved in Stone: Historic Marker Inventory of the Ancient Burying Ground, Hartford, Connecticut

Phase I



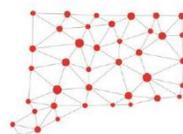
ANCIENT
BURYING
GROUND

ASSOCIATION

*"Preserving A History
Carved In Stone"*



HERITAGE
CONSULTANTS



CONNECTICUT
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
INVESTING IN PRESERVATION SINCE 1955

Final Report:

**Carved in Stone: Historic Marker Inventory of the
Ancient Burying Ground, Hartford, Connecticut
Phase I**

Prepared for:

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With support from:

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Introduction

In November of 2020, the Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc., of Hartford, Connecticut was awarded a survey and planning grant from the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (CT-SHPO) to conduct a digital survey of every grave marker in the Ancient Burying Ground (ABG) and compile the results into an online database of photographs and associated metadata. The Ancient Burying Ground Association received support for this project from the State Historic Preservation Office of the Department of Economic and Community Development with funds from the Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut. The Ancient Burying Ground is located at the corner of Main Street and Gold Street in Hartford and contains stone burial markers dating from as early as 1648. A brief history of the burying ground is included below. Heritage Consultants, LLC (Heritage) captured photographs of grave markers and transcribed their associated inscriptions between April and September of 2021. The methods employed during this survey are described below, followed by a description of the results of the project, including a comparison of the present locations of markers to the map prepared by William Hosley in 1994. Finally, Hosley's map was updated with edits to marker locations and numbering. The updated map of the ABG is presented in Figures 1 through 8 at the end of this report.

Project Personnel

This project was supervised by David George, M.A.. Fieldwork, photography, and report preparation were supervised by Elizabeth Correia, M.A.. She was assisted by Stefon Danczuk, B.A., during the photographic survey, who also completed the transcription database of the marker inscriptions photographed during this project. Heritage staff reported to the Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc., throughout the project.

Locational Description of the Ancient Burying Ground

The ABG is located to the northwest of the intersection of Main Street and Gold Street in Hartford, Connecticut in a parcel covering 1.46 acres of land. The Center Church, or the First Church of Christ, is located to the southeast at 674 Main Street. Main Street runs along the eastern boundary of the burying ground, a paved walkway and sculpture field followed by Gold Street are to the south, commercial buildings along Lewis Street are to the west, and a commercial skyscraper (the Gold Building) and associated parking garage are to the north. The larger area consists of a mix of commercial, business, residential, and social spaces typical of a dense urban area. In addition, Bushnell Park and the now buried Park River are located just to the southwest of the Ancient Burying Ground. As a result of its location in the center of Hartford, the burying ground sees numerous visitors every day, some using it simply as a public open space. Most visitors, however, arrive to explore the historical significance of the burying ground, searching for the burials of their ancestors or admiring the artistry of the stone carvers. Despite the frequent traffic, the Ancient Burying Ground Association has ensured that the burying ground is properly maintained as a representation of Hartford's earliest history within a modern metropolis.

Historical Overview of the Ancient Burying Ground

The oldest extant historical resource in the City of Hartford is the Ancient Burying Ground. This area was a portion of eastern Algonkian land for hundreds of years before European contact. The Dutch established a fort called the House of Good Hope in the area of modern Hartford in 1623. The first English inhabitants of the Hartford area included Reverend Thomas Hooker and approximately 100 followers, who left Massachusetts after a dispute with the Puritan leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636 (Hooker 1892; Williams 1975; Barber 1836; First Church in Hartford 1885). Thomas Hooker passed away in 1647, and a plaque on the west exterior wall of the Center Church commemorates him. Settlers began acquiring

land in the area of Hartford from the Sicaog tribe in 1635 or 1636. For a time, Sicaog tribal members remained on a reservation in Hartford, until they were gradually forced from their ancestral lands by pressure from colonial settlement (Trumbull 1886, De Forest 1852). The English eventually confiscated the Dutch fort in Hartford, securely dominating this area of the Colony of Connecticut (Trumbull 1886). Hartford became an important port, carrying British mainland and colonial goods between the Colony of Connecticut and the West Indies.

The original meeting house located to the south of the ABG was completed in 1737. The building was completed in 1739, at the corner of Main Street and Gold Street; it was replaced with the extant Center Church in 1807 (Babbit 1972). The ABG was Hartford's second burying ground and is thought to have its origins in 1639, when it was established on land purchased from Richard Olmstead. The first burials were placed in the southeastern section of the burying ground beginning in 1640 (Shapleigh-Brown 2015). The table stones just northwest of the Center Church represent the burials of the most prominent individuals interred in the burying ground. Burials potentially radiate out from this location by economic status. Additional space was acquired for the ABG along its western and southern boundaries in 1786 (*The Hartford Daily Times* 1912).

Today, the earliest death date on a marker in the ABG is 1648 on the headstone for Timothy Stanly, though the stone was possibly carved 20 or 30 years after Stanly's death. Among the people that are believed to rest in the burying ground are Reverend Thomas Hooker, four former Connecticut Governors, veterans, free and enslaved Africans and African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and other residents of Hartford. This wide array is due to the fact that the ABG was Hartford's primary burial ground until ca., 1801 (Hosley and Holcombe 1994).

The most recent burial in the ABG is that of Emily Marguerite Holcombe, daughter of Emily Seymour Goodwin Holcombe. Emily S. G. Holcombe was regent of the Ruth Wyllys Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution between 1892 and 1903, and lead the DAR's early restoration projects of the ABG. When she passed away in 1923 she was granted burial in the ABG, and her husband and daughter were laid to rest beside her in 1926. The latest stone recorded during this survey before this honorific burial belongs to Eunice Wadsworth who died in 1825.

There have been historical examples of graves within the ABG being disturbed during construction of buildings including the D. T. Lanman building in 1839, the Waverly Building in 1886, and the Center Church addition in 1852 and cellar in 1902 (Walker 1895; *The Hartford Daily Times* 1902). It appears that some of the disturbed interments were re-buried, while others were destroyed or discarded in a landfill in Hartford (Holcombe 1904, Hosley and Holcombe 1994). Charles J. Hoadly, who served as the Connecticut State Librarian between 1855 and 1900, possessed sexton's lists of burials in the ABG from between 1749 and 1806, and a list of names on standing gravestones in the ABG in 1835 (Holcombe 1898). He himself compiled a complete list of burials in the ABG in 1877. Documentation often spells his surname as Hoadley, though biographies record that he preferred the spelling Hoadly (Carlton 1902). Hoadly was assisted by Lucius M. Boltwood and Lucius E. Hunt who together also transcribed the epitaphs of 526 stones in the burying ground and assigned them unique epitaph numbers (Hosley and Holcombe 1994). This list was updated in 1994 by William Hosley, then Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Wadsworth Atheneum, with the assistance of Shepherd M. Holcombe Sr., then Chairman of the Ancient Burying Ground Association.

Restoration work has been taking place in the burying ground since 1836, when the Ancient Burying Ground Association was formed. In 1896, the Daughters of the American Revolution began their

restoration work, which coincided with the widening of Gold Street (Hosley and Holcombe 1994). At that time, existing stones were cleaned and treated, patched, given brick and artificial stone foundations, and their inscriptions were recut. Inscriptions were enhanced from their existing state, were carved based off of Hoadly's transcriptions, or, if no record remained, the descendants of the interred were contacted and a new epitaph was devised and carved. Approximately 90 stones were restored and replicated at that time. Table stones also were raised and given stone and sand foundations (Pelton 1897). Finally, the grounds were graded, paths were arranged, and plantings and the wrought iron fencing on the south side designed by McKim, Mead, and White were put in place in 1900 to replace 1866 brick walls (Holcombe 1904). Modern landscaping and restoration efforts have been ongoing since the 1960s, with stone preservation and replication being carried out between 1961 and 1968, then again from 1985 to the present, as funds have been acquired by the Ancient Burying Ground Association (Hosley and Holcombe 1994). In 2014, a water drainage system, updated paths, and new gates were added to the burying ground.

Survey Methods

Photographic survey of the Ancient Burying Ground by Heritage personnel occurred between April 13 and September 7, 2021. The survey effort could only proceed on days with consistent sunlight to best capture the inscriptions on the grave markers. A total of 17 survey days were required to fully photograph the burying ground. A Nikon D5600 DSLR camera with AF-P DX NIKKOR 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6G VR lens was used to photograph all of the markers in the burying ground. The camera was positioned to face the stone directly, atop a tripod whenever space allowed. For headstones and footstones, a photo of the full face of the stone, the tympanum, and any additional unique features (including restoration marks) were captured. A piece of Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) was held behind headstones and footstones when possible to block distracting background features. Measurements of the MDF boards used were 34 x 45 inches and 34 x 32 inches. A mirror was held at an oblique angle to stones with worn surfaces, reflecting sunlight across the face of the stones to make the carvings and inscriptions more easily visible in the final photographs. Two mirrors were used to reflect sunlight around the shade of tree cover. In these rare cases, the camera was set on an automatic timer to capture the photograph. Mirrors used during this survey measured 11 x 47.5 inches and 23 x 29.5 inches.

In the case of table stones, a six-foot step ladder was utilized to lean over the top of the table stone, holding the camera facing downwards. This captured the full top face of the table stone. Photos showing a three-quarter view of each table stone, as well as a representative example of its legs or side construction, also were captured. Obelisks were recorded through the photography of each face. Monuments and plaques were photographed to capture the full construction, as well as any associated inscriptions. Finally, overview photographs of the Ancient Burying Ground as a whole were taken on May 12, 2021.

Headstone and footstone fragments stored in the Center Church basement were photographed on June 29, 2021, at the discretion of the Center Church Sexton Thomas St. Amant. Heritage staff members placed individual stone fragments onto dollies after removing them from stacks amongst utilities in the Church basement. The fragments were photographed individually unless pieces could be matched and photographed as one fragmented stone. A portable floodlight was used to illuminate the face of the stone and rake over the inscription. After photography, the stone fragments were returned to their original storage positions in the church basement.

All fine quality RAW photograph files were then cropped and exported as JPEG files using the NX Studio application. The digital files were labeled with the Map Location Number provided in William Hosley's

1994 survey and a code indicating the type of marker the photograph captured. For instance, “hs” signifies a headstone, “fs” a footstone, “ts” a table stone, “ob” an obelisk, “pl” a plaque, and “mo” a monument. The suffix “tym” was added for photographs of the tympanums, “detail” for unique shots of details on a stone, “side” and “leg” for table stone features, and “n”, “e”, “s”, or “w” for the cardinal directions of an obelisk or monument. Microsoft Word documents containing metadata for associated photographs were created when elaboration on the subject of the photographs was required. All files were stored on an external hard drive then shared with the Ancient Burying Ground Association through Google Drive so that they could access them during creation of their online platform.

After photography, a Microsoft Access database was created with a row for each marker captured in this survey of the ABG. Columns in the database included Map Location Number, Epitaph Number, last name of the interred, first name of the interred, death date, inscription on the existing marker, the marker type, and the photograph file names associated with the marker. Inscriptions were transcribed as they appear on the stone on the day they were photographed during this survey. Individual lines were marked by forward slashes and missing text from deteriorated stones were marked by ellipses. Breaks between markers with multiple sections (e.g., a double headstone) were noted with a vertical bar. Transcriptions from the front and back faces of markers were separated by semicolons. This differs from Charles Hoadly’s inscriptions from 1877, in which Hoadly corrected spelling errors and did not follow line breaks exactly as they appear on the markers.

Results of the Marker Inventory

A total of 657 grave markers and commemorative monuments or plaques were recorded and photographed during this survey. This included 410 headstones, 196 footstones, 37 table stones, three obelisks, five monuments, and six plaques. Headstones include the names of many Hartford citizens, as well as people from other towns or states who were buried in the ABG. Footstones are typically found to the west of their associated headstone. However, in some cases only the footstone remains to mark a burial. Not every headstone has an associated footstone. In other cases, the footstone and headstone pair have been separated and no longer are aligned from east to west; they were likely moved during past landscaping activities. When pairs do exist, matching silhouettes, stone material, and carving style predominate.

Headstones within the ABG typically provide the name, death date, and age of the deceased, and they often have an epitaph and decorative tympanum. Footstones, however, normally only contain the name or initials of the deceased. One headstone and one monument belong to the 1988 commemoration of African Americans buried in the ABG, who were originally given unmarked graves (see Map Location Number aa). Other monuments commemorate the founders of Hartford, the Governor’s Foot Guard, the Wadsworth family, and the Wyllys family (see Map Location Numbers 222, 001, 384, and 379). The table stones in the ABG are associated with various members of the Allyn, Austin, Bigelow, Boardman, Bull, Caldwell, Chenevard, Dorr, Ellery, Fish, Foster, Gardiner, Haynes, Holcombe, Hooker, Hopkins, Keith, Ledyard, Lord, McLean, Moore, Olcott, Richards, Seymour, Smith, Stanley, Stanly, Stone, Strong, Talcott, Wadsworth, Woodbridge, and Wyllys families. Obelisks within the ABG are associated with members of the Deming, Whitman, and Leete families (see Map Location Numbers 152, 658, and 737). The identified plaques in the burying ground serve to memorialize John Haynes (Map Location Number 903 and plaques on the Ancient Burying Grounds south gates recorded as abg_07 and abg_08), Thomas Hooker (Map Location Number 902), and the Olmsted Family (Map Location Number 842). All that remains of the plaque recorded as Map Location Number 085 is an unmarked granite base.

In addition, 13 fragments of unknown headstones and two pieces of unknown footstones were identified within the Center Church basement; they were photographed and labeled “unk_fs” or “unk_hs.” The footstones contain the initials MW and BH, which could not be assigned to specific individuals. In addition, two headstone fragments in the Center Church basement appear to have parts of the last name Jepson carved on them, while another likely belongs to a member of the Doolittle Family. The inscriptions of these 13 headstone fragments, however, are too worn to conclusively assign them to any person buried in the ABG.

Comparison to Previous Inventories

The numbering system used throughout this survey is based on the Epitaph Numbers created by Charles Hoadly in 1877 as well as Map Location Numbers used by William Hosley in 1994. William Hosley, with the assistance of Shepherd Holcombe, used a plan view map of the ABG to show the locations of markers present at the time of their survey in 1994. Each marker was labeled with a Map Location Number that corresponded to an Alphabetical List of Inscriptions and Markers in the Ancient Burying Ground. This list provides the name of the interred, the associated Epitaph Number created by Hoadly, and the associated Map Location Number provided by Hosley. The Alphabetical List also includes 15 transcriptions added by Hosley in 1994 for markers installed after 1877. These additions were assigned Epitaph Numbers 521 to 536 (Hosley and Holcombe 1994). Their Map Location Numbers are 001 (Foot Guard), 002 (Holcombe Family), 152 (Deming Family), 188 (Richard Risley), 222 (Founders), 379 (Wyllys Family), 479 (Samuel Russell), 575 (Isaac Sheldon), 692 (Timothy Stanly), 719 (Elizabeth Bunce), 728 (Epaphras Bull), 842 (Olmsted Family), 891 (Ozias Goodwin), 895 (John Barnard), 896 (Hannah Barnard), 902 (Thomas Hooker), and 903 (John Haynes). While Hoadly recorded 526 stones in the ABG in 1877, Hosley and Holcombe recorded 427 headstones and 169 footstones in 1994 (Hosley and Holcombe 1994). As Heritage staff conducted the photographic survey of the ABG, they noted differences between the present location of markers in the burying ground in comparison to Hosley’s 1994 map.

Figure 1 shows the general layout of the ABG as mapped by Hosley; it was divided into arbitrary sections numbered I through XIV. Figures 2 through 8 show detailed views of these sections. The markers plotted in black are copied from Hosley’s survey and are labeled with their Map Location Numbers, also provided by Hosley. Heritage noted changes in marker locations during the current 2021 survey. The blue triangle markers in Figures 2 through 8 are no longer present in the ABG as of 2021. Green circle markers were added in locations where a marker was photographed in 2021 that was not recorded on Hosley’s map. These additional markers were given a Map Location Number corresponding to a cardinal direction in relation to the nearest Map Location Number provided by Hosley. For example, n078 indicates a newly recorded marker to the north of Map Location Number 078. In some cases, the newly recorded marker could be associated with a Map Location Number provided in the “Alphabetical List of Inscriptions and Markers in the Ancient Burying Ground” that Hosley created alongside his map. For example, Hosley gave the internment of Catey Weare the Map Location Number 070, yet it is not drawn on the 1994 map. When Heritage staff identified Weare’s marker they recorded it as 070 in Section I. The changes to the ABG identified by Heritage staff are described below by section, from Section I to XIV.

Section I of Hosley’s map, located in the southwest corner of the ABG, was found to have ten markers not previously recorded in 1994 (Figure 2). These included the headstone for Catey Weare recorded as Map Location Number 070 to the north of Map Location Number 068, the headstone base fragment recorded as n078 to the north of Map Location Number 078, the headstone fragments recorded as Map Location Number n013, the footstone fragment for Roswell Butler recorded as n036, the nn036 footstone carved with the initials SB located north of Map Location Number n036, the s056 headstone fragment, the w084

footstone, the double headstone for two children named Rebecca Burr recorded as Map Location Number 046, the w049 footstone carved with "OUR FRIEND & FATHER", and the footstone for Susanna Bunce recorded as w064 and found leaning against the back of the 064 headstone. One marker recorded by Hoadly in Section I was no longer present; this was Map Location Number 026.

No changes since 1994 were recorded in Section II, which is located centrally in the ABG (Figure 3). Three markers were mapped in the south-central portion of Section III that were not previously recorded on Hosley's map. These included Map Location Number 134 which is the headstone for Michael Toocker to the northwest of Map Location Number 132; the headstone for Frederick Adams recorded as Map Location Number s136; and the 169 headstone for Dorothy Steel to the south of Map Location Number 170. No markers recorded in Section III by Hosley in 1994 were missing in 2021 (Figure 3).

Two previously unmapped grave markers were recorded in Section IV, which also is centrally located in the ABG (Figure 4). The footstone for Henry Chenevard was recorded as w228 and the base of a footstone was recorded as w226. One marker was renumbered because Hosley labeled the worn footstone west of Map Location Number 223 with a dot. Heritage updated this to Map Location Number w223 to make it identifiable in the inscription database. No markers recorded by Hosley in Section IV were missing during 2021 survey. Section V consists of the northwest corner of the ABG (Figure 5). There were no recorded changes within Section V between Hosley's 1994 survey and Heritage's 2021 survey. However, Hosley had labeled the footstone for Daniel E. Boardman with a dot and Heritage updated this to Map Location Number w234. A single marker was newly mapped in Section VI, in the northcentral portion of the ABG (Figure 4). This was the base of an unidentified footstone recorded as w321. In addition, the footstone for Beavel Watters was mapped by Hosley as being located south of Map Location Number 342. In 2021, it was noted as having been moved from that location to a position to the south of Map Location Number 348.

The only change noted in Section VII (south-centrally located in the ABG) was the absence of Map Location Number 354, which was drawn on Hosley's 1994 map but not present in 2021 (Figure 6). Section VIII is centrally located in the ABG (Figure 6). One marker within Section VIII was moved since 1994. This was the headstone of Martha Cook (Map Location Number 391) once located east of Map Location Number 389 and now located southwest of Map Location Number 386. A tree grew in the headstone's original location, surrounding it with roots. Therefore, Map Location Number 391 was moved in November 2006 to preserve it. The tree that was growing in its original location was removed in September 2021. Heritage photographed the footstone for Joseph Jones, which was not present in Hosley's map, and marked it as Map Location Number s449. In addition, the monument for African Americans buried in the ABG in unmarked graves was recorded to the east of Section VIII as Map Location Number aa. The gate to Main Street has been moved east since the 1994 map, making the aa monument within the fences of the ABG in 2021. Section IX is east-centrally located in the ABG and only one change since 1994 was recorded in this section (Figure 6). This change is that Map Location Number 495 is no longer present in 2021.

No changes between 1994 and 2021 were recorded in either Section X or XI, which are centrally located in the ABG (Figure 7). Three changes were noted in Section XII, which is in the north-central portion of the ABG (Figure 7). The headstone for William Leete was recorded as n725 and the headstone for Phinias Willson was recorded as 811 located to the east of Map Location Number 656. The marker Hosley recorded as Map Location Number 700 was no longer present in 2021. Heritage recognized that there were two markers labeled as "724" in Hosley's drawing of Section XII. The southern marker of the two was relabeled to "727" as the headstone for Captain Thomas Bull which stands there and is recorded in Hosley's "Alphabetical List of Inscriptions and Markers in the Ancient Burying Ground."

Section XIII is located in the northeastern corner of the ABG (Figure 8). The headstone and footstone for Jonathan Seymour Wattels were previously unrecorded and added to the map by Heritage. The headstone is labeled as n823 and the footstone is labeled w823. The marker Hosley recorded as Map Location Number 786 was no longer present in 2021. Heritage recognized that there were two markers labeled “783” on Hosley’s map within Section XIII. The northern one was changed to “796”, which is the Map Location Number provided for the burial of Mary Seymour in Hosley’s Alphabetical List of Inscriptions and Markers in the Ancient Burying Ground. This corresponds to the headstone at this location. Finally, no changes were recorded in Section XIV between 1994 and 2021 (Figure 6). In total, 22 markers were recorded that were not previously mapped, four markers that Hosley recorded were no longer present, and two markers were identified as moved from the location Hosley recorded them in. Four markers were renumbered for accurate identification.

Conclusion

Heritage completed a digital survey of grave markers in the ABG in 2021 on behalf of the Ancient Burying Ground Association, Inc., during which 657 markers were photographed and recorded into a Microsoft Access database. The survey aimed to capture the present condition of all markers in the ABG and to prepare the collected data for public consumption. Markers were labeled using the numbering system created by Charles Hoadly in 1877 and adapted by William Hosley in 1994. Inscriptions on each stone were transcribed into this database. Marker fragments stored in the basement of the Center Church were also photographed and recorded. Finally, the map of the ABG created by William Hosley in 1994 was edited showing the present location of markers in the ABG. Two markers were determined to be moved from their 1994 locations, nineteen were previously unmapped, and four shown on the 1994 map were no longer present.

Photographs and the associated database were provided to the Ancient Burying Ground Association for their use in creating a public website for visitors to access the photographs and transcriptions at any time. This is significant especially for people interested in the ABG but unable to visit it in person. The photographs provide insight into the marker material, carving designs, the identity of the stone carver, and previous restoration techniques. The database provides basic biographical information on the interred gathered from epitaphs and makes all data easily searchable.

The data collected during this survey will also prove useful in restoration projects. The Ancient Burying Ground Association will be able to assess the appearance of the markers to determine which require attention. Photographs and inscriptions can be utilized to determine the original state of markers being repaired and replicated in the future. Should any marker become naturally worn, this project provides a record of each marker's appearance in 2021. Altogether, this survey is meant to be a tool in public history and the preservation of the markers in the ABG through documentation.

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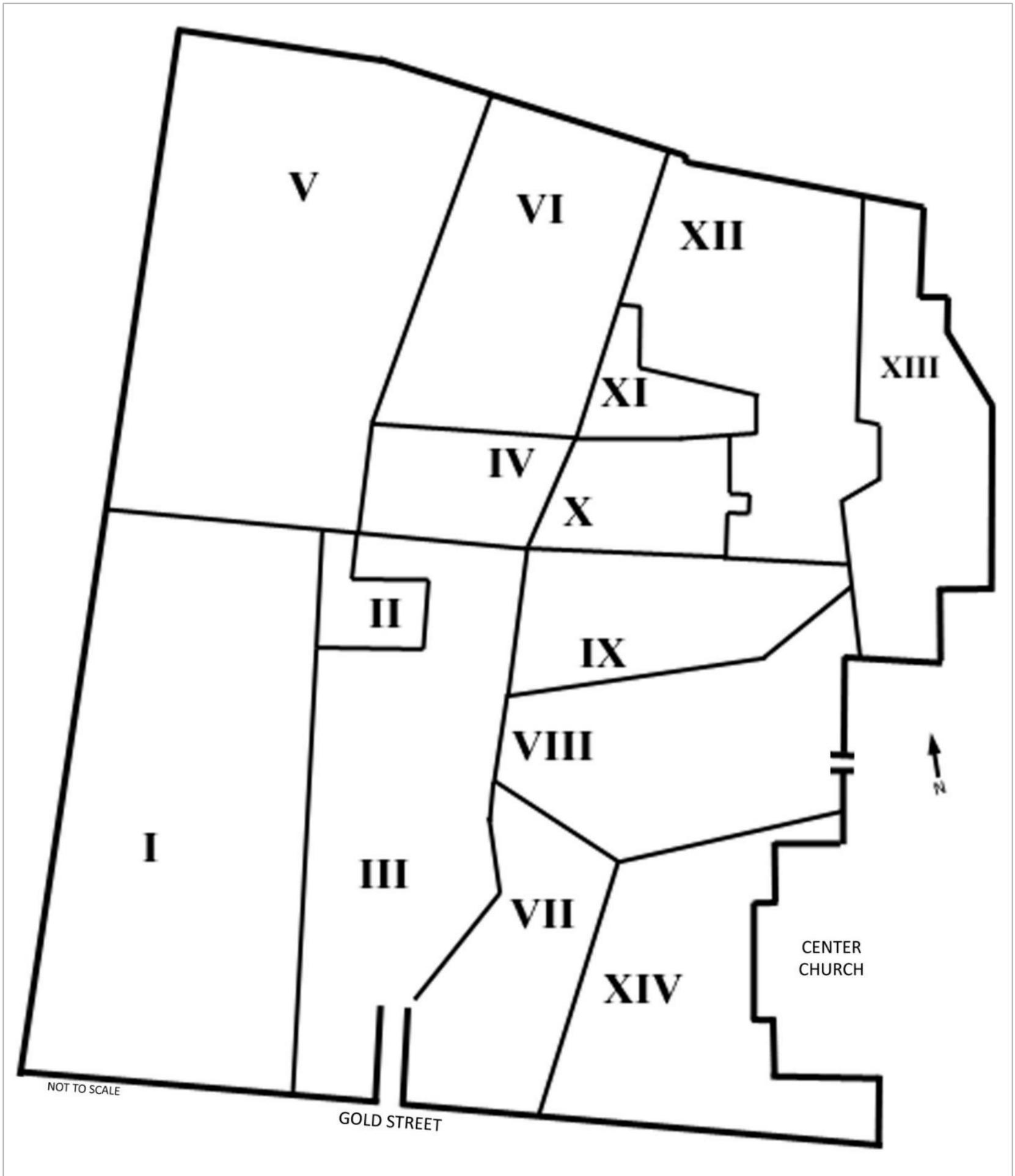


Figure 1: A digital plan view drawing of the sections of the Ancient Burying Ground in Hartford, Connecticut as copied from William Hosley's 1994 map.

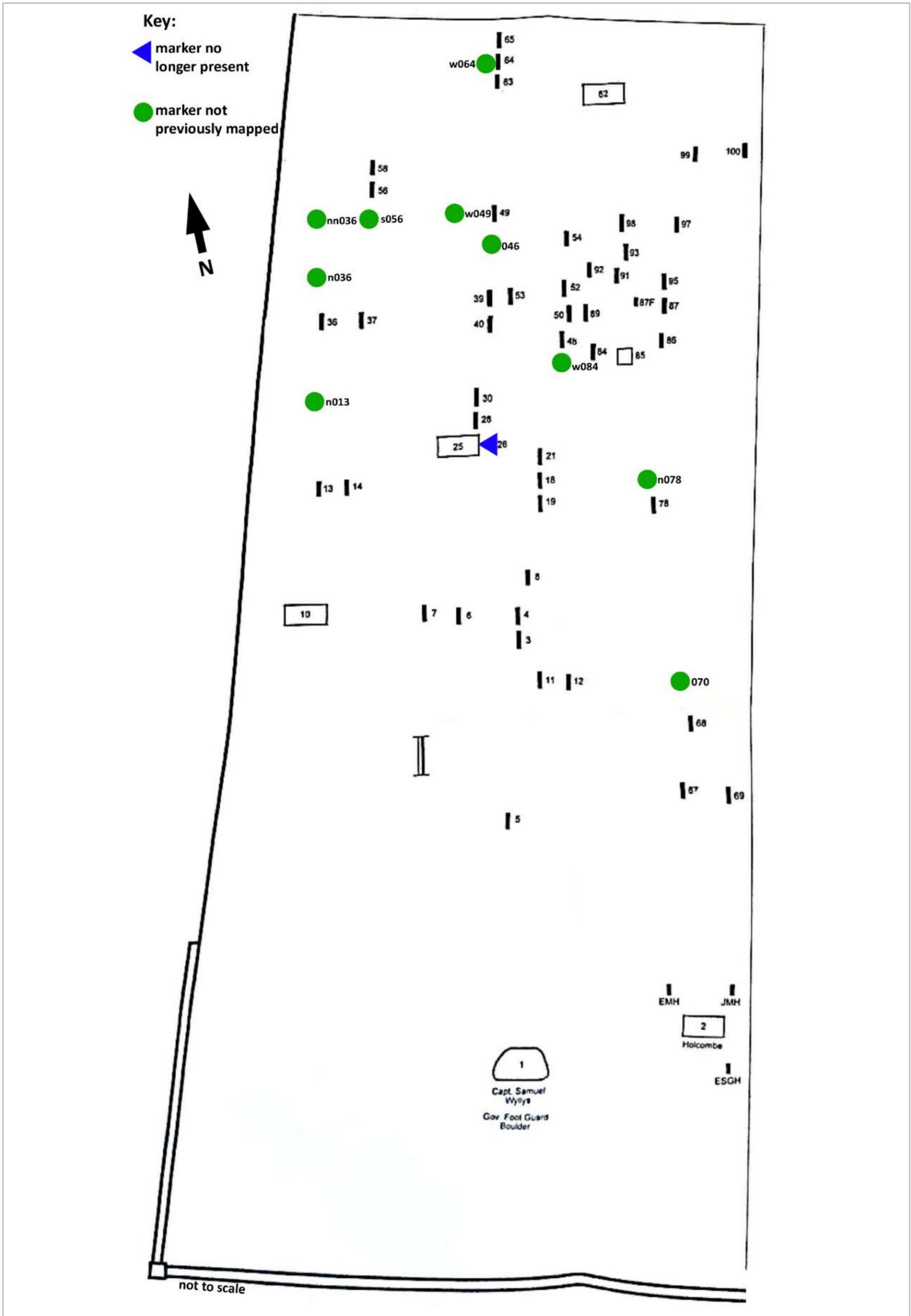


Figure 2: Detail view of Section I from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

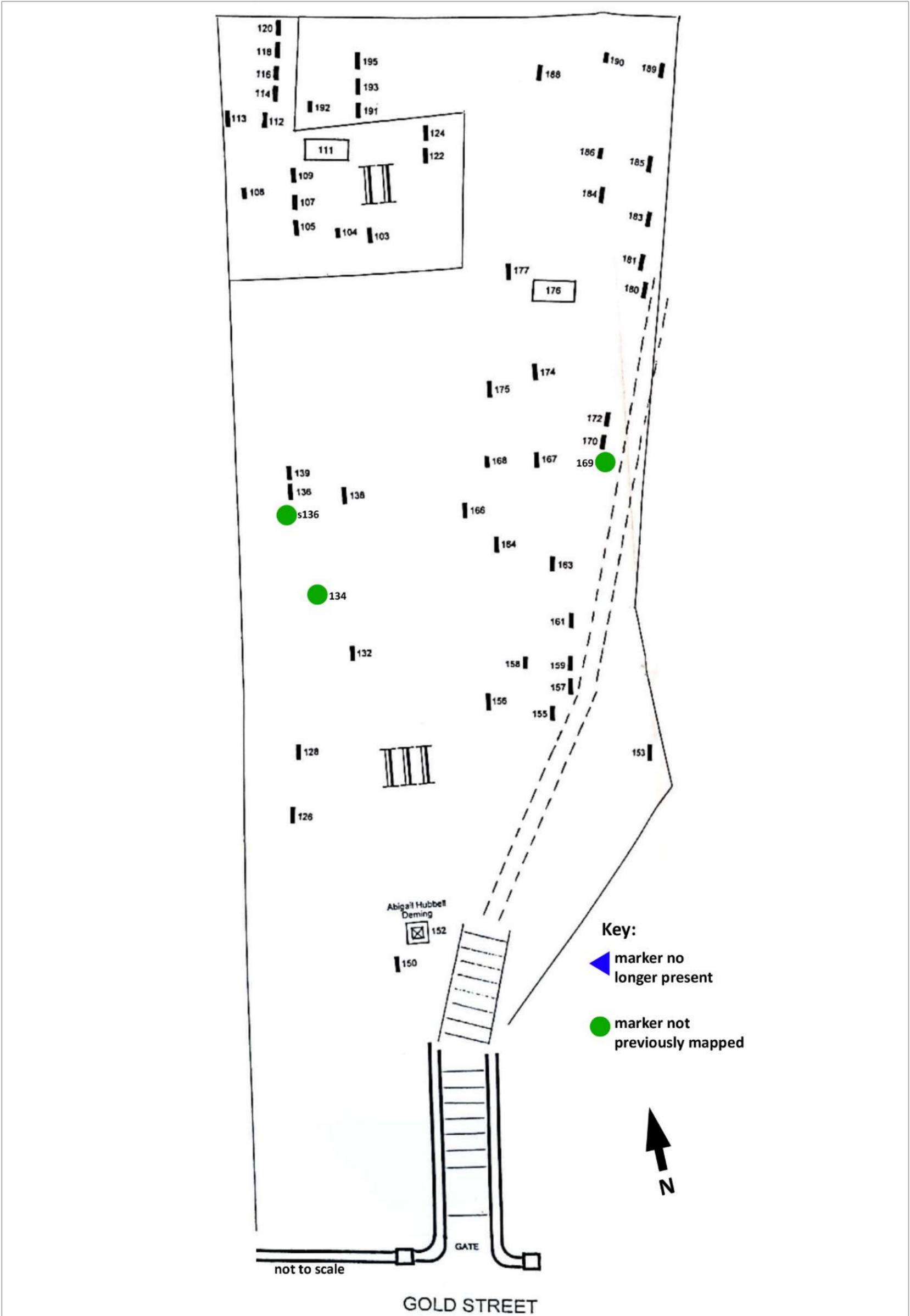


Figure 3: Detail view of Sections II and III from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

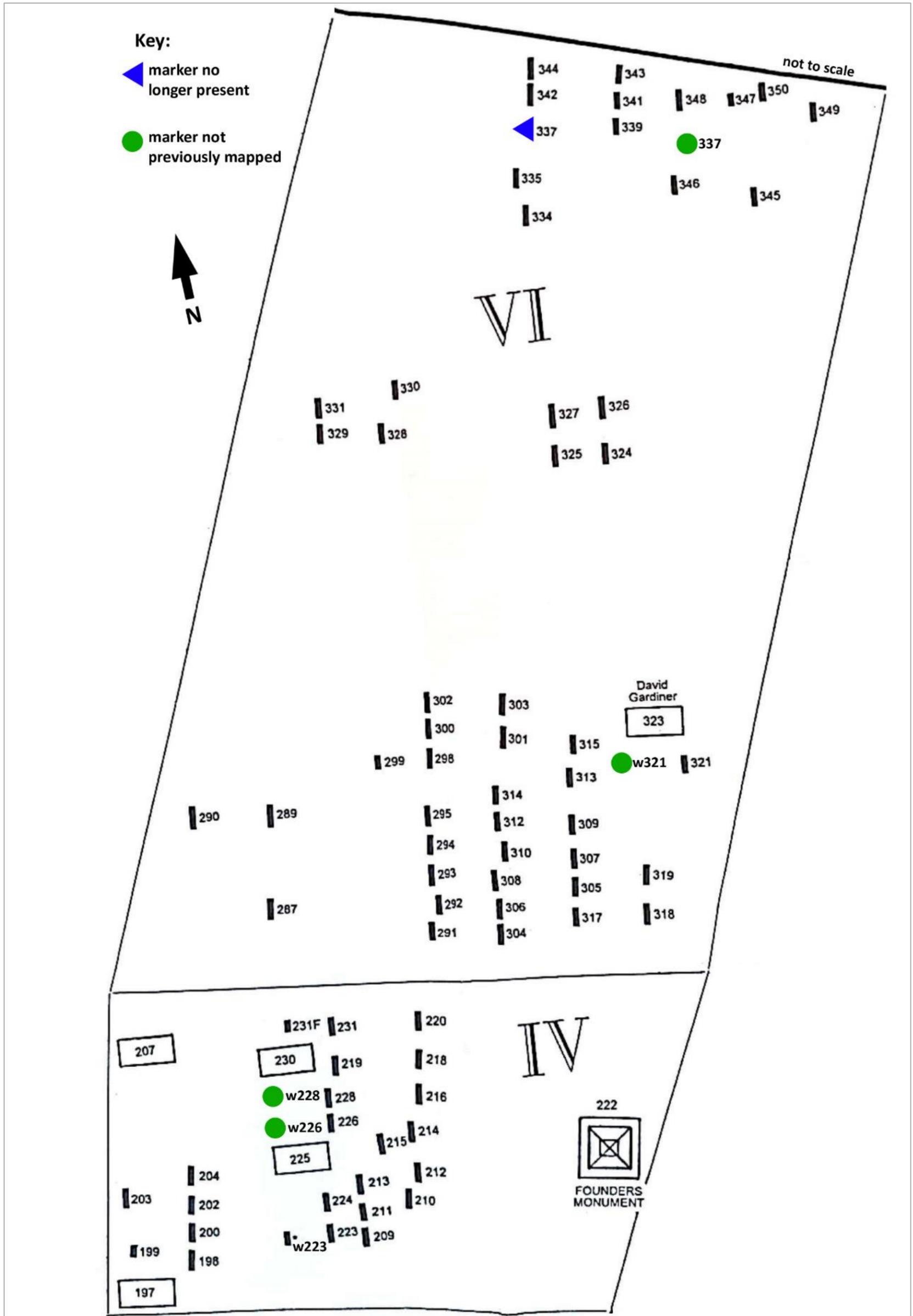


Figure 4: Detail view of Sections IV and VI from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

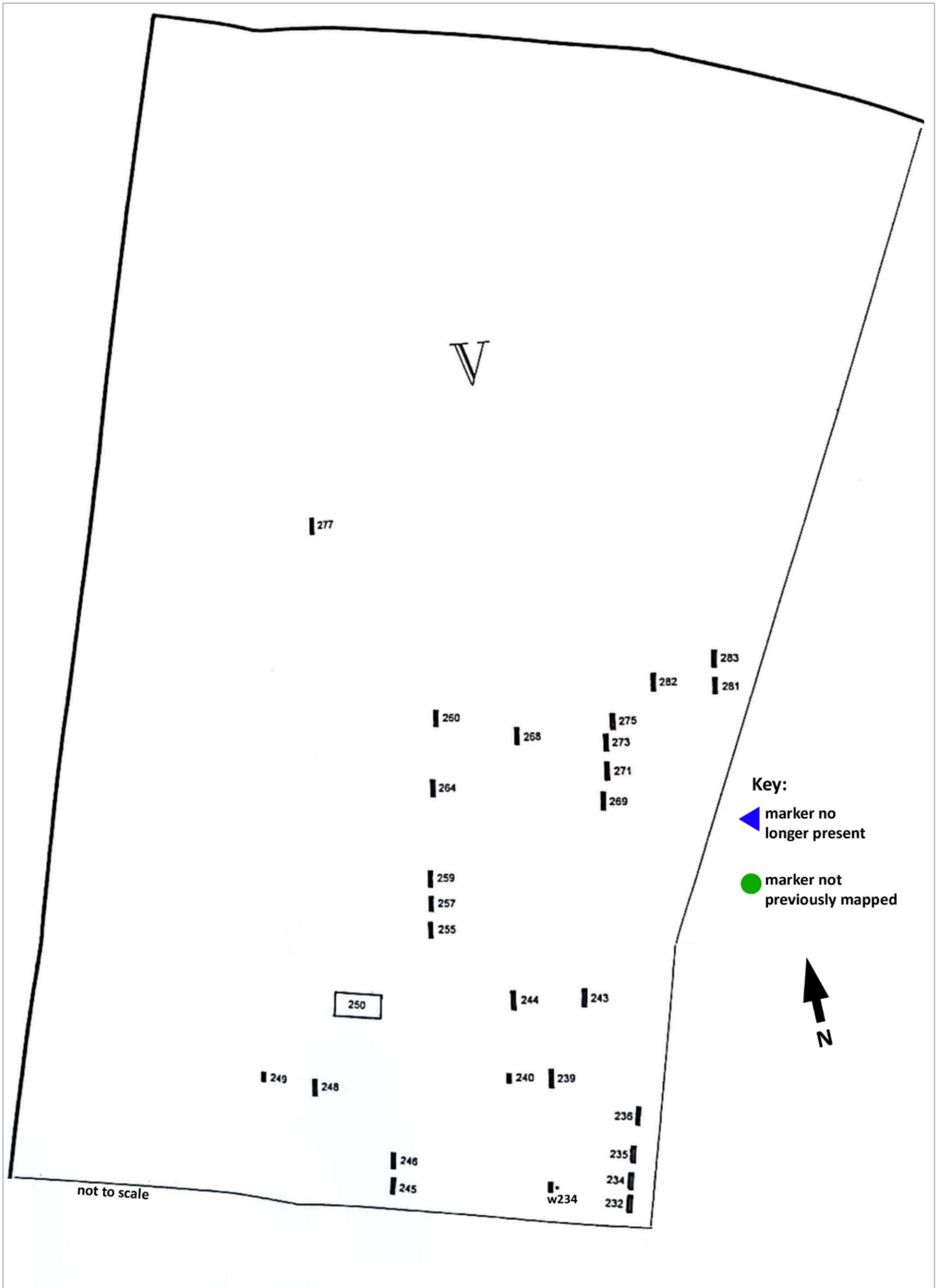


Figure 5: Detail view of Section V from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

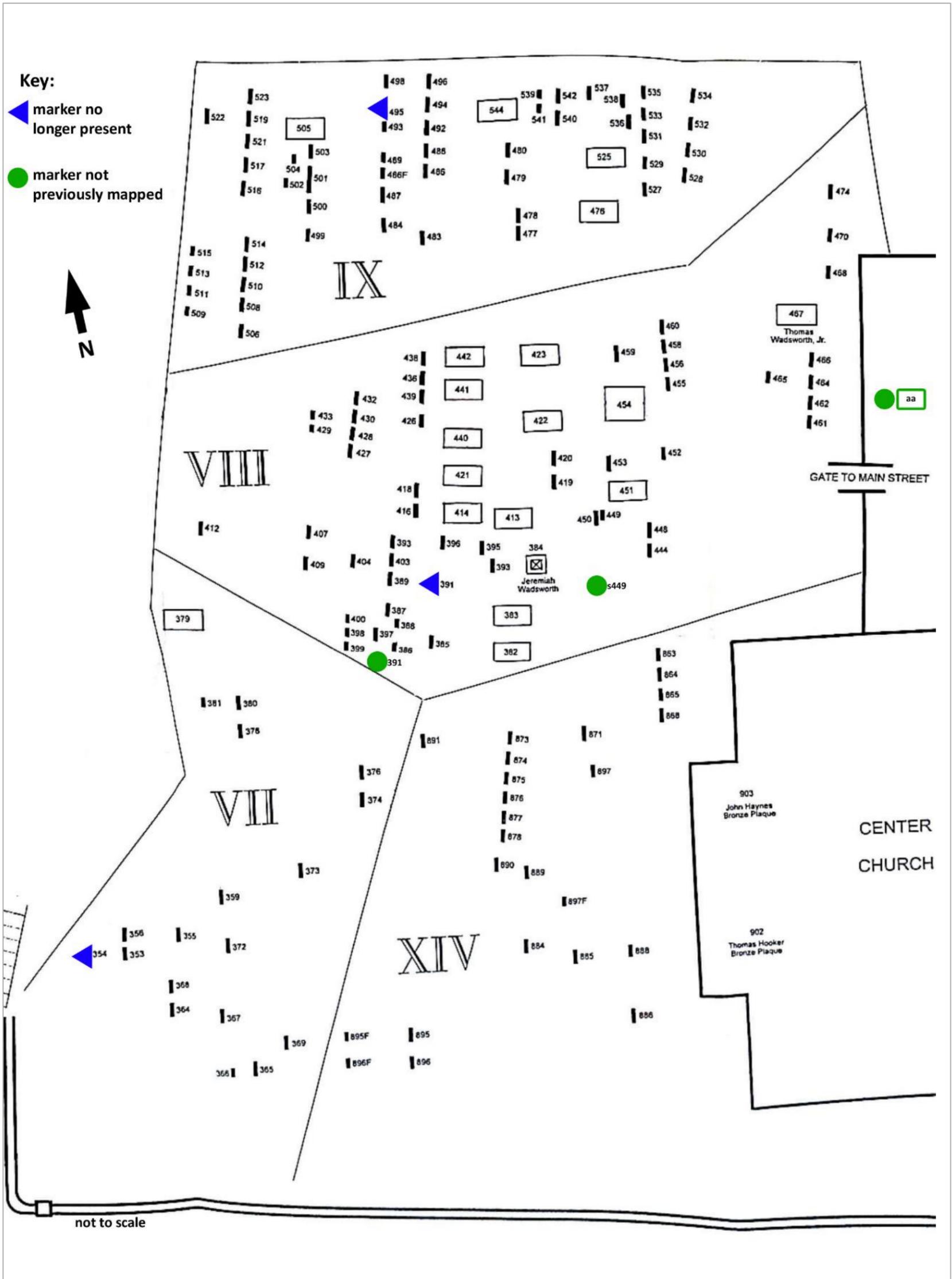


Figure 6: Detail view of Sections VII, VIII, IX, and XIV from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

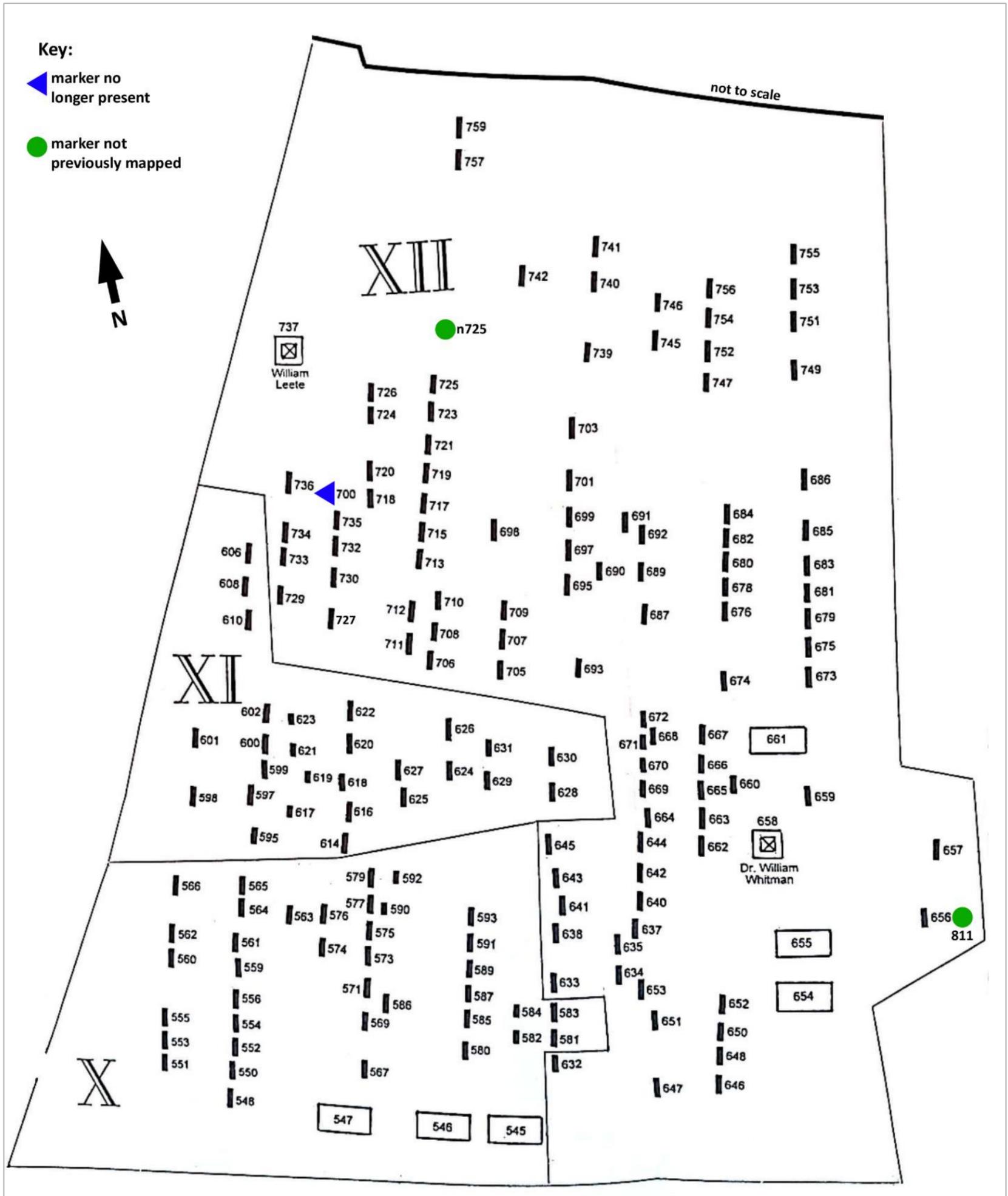


Figure 7: Detail view of Sections X, XI, and XII from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.

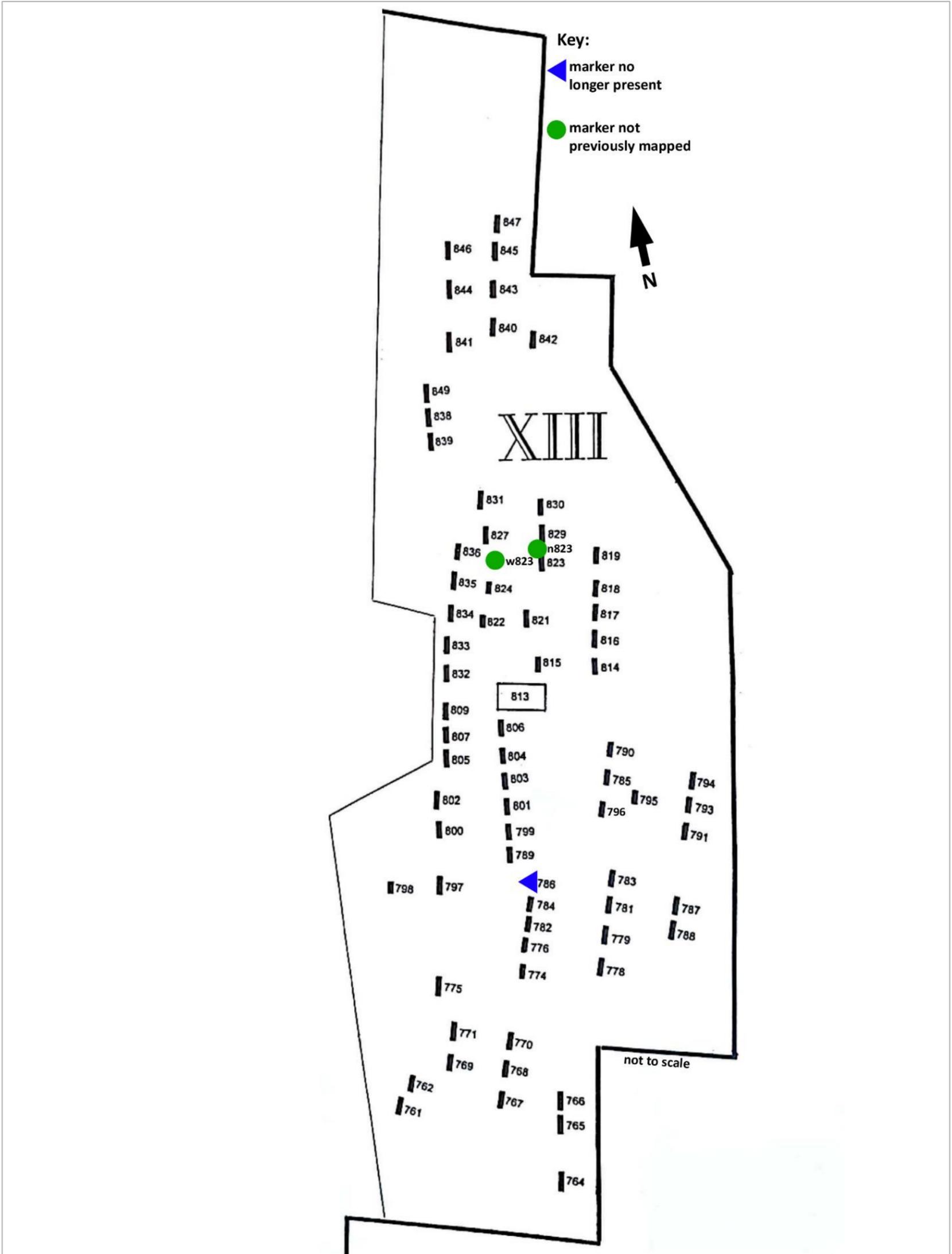


Figure 8: Detail view of Section XIII from William Hosley's 1994 map of the Ancient Burying Ground showing marker locations as recorded in the present survey.