



The Connecticut Freedom Trail

documents the struggle toward freedom. This trail designates sites that celebrate the struggle for justice and equality that continues in the 21st century. Sites depict the efforts, in all their forms, of the state's African American community and all the communities that championed the goals of universal freedom and human dignity.

Application for Listing to the Connecticut Freedom Trail

The following is a list of **CRITERIA** that the Selection Committee has developed. Keep these points in mind as you answer the questions in the application.

1. How the site represents one or more of the eligible categories;
2. If the site is the location of a "First," or provided opportunities for others that followed;
3. If the site is centered around Connecticut history/events; and
4. If sufficient time has passed to be able to evaluate the site within the context of history (ideally at least 50 years, but there may be some sites of importance that are less than 50 years old).

Site Information:

Name of site (if applicable): Waterbury Colored Burial Ground _____

Address: _267 Grand St. _____

City: _Waterbury_____ State: _CT_____ Zip: _06702_____

Property Owner:

Name: _Silas Bronson Library_____

Address: _267 Grand St. _____

City: _Waterbury_____ State: _CT_____ Zip: _06702_____

Phone: _203-574-8221_____

E-Mail: _rguest@waterburyct.org_____

General information:

Present use of property: _Library_____

Age of property: _130 years_____

Open to Public: Yes ☒ No ☐ Visible from the Public Road: Yes ☒ No ☐

Type of site (check at least one):

☐ Amistad

☒ Civil Rights

☒ Concept of Freedom

☐ Underground Railroad



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Contact information of the individual or organization presenting application (please note: this entity will be considered the Site Ambassador if listed):

Name: _John Mills_

Address: _44 Burr Rd_

City: _Bloomfield_ State: _CT_ Zip: _06002_

Phone: _860-212-9897_

E-Mail: _john@alexbreanne.org_

Longitude and Latitude of building or site to be included on the Connecticut Freedom Trail for future GPS mapping: _ 41.554531, -73.044220_

Historic Designations:

Is the project site recognized for its architectural/cultural/historical significance by any of the following designation program? (Check all that apply.) Visit conncris.ct.gov to determine if the property has a designation.

	Yes	No
National Historic Landmark	[]	[X]
National Register of Historic Places	[]	[X]
Individually listed	[]	[X]
Contributing to a District District Name: _____	[]	[X]
State Register of Historic Places	[]	[X]
Individually listed	[]	[X]
Contributing to a District District Name: _____	[]	[X]
Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)		
Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)	[]	[X]
Other: (specify) _____	[]	[X]



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Please describe the site and how it represents one or more of the categories for inclusion. Include any relevant sources and documentation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

The front grassy area in front of Silas Bronson Library in Waterbury, CT is the location of the original Colored Cemetery for the town (Sturges, Map, 2004).

The Silas Bronson Library is the location of the first cemetery in Waterbury which was established in the 1600's. The cemetery was called Grand Street Cemetery (Prichard, p.11). In the 1700's, a section of the cemetery was reserved as the "Colored Burial Plot", used by Waterbury's non-white population (Sturges, Book, 2004). On the opening of "Riverside Cemetery" in 1853, the Grand Street cemetery started to decline in use. By the 1880's, it was hardly used at all (Prichard, p.12).

Originally from Waterbury, Silas Bronson was a wealthy New York merchant. On his death in 1867, Bronson left \$200,000 to the city of Waterbury specifically for the creation of a library. The original library opened in 1870 on West Main Street but was rebuilt on the very land of the Grand Street Cemetery in 1894 (Silas Bronson Library, 2020). While some of those interred there were moved to Riverside Cemetery at the expense of their families, most were not (Mattatuck Museum, 2004).

Today, the former Colored Cemetery location exists near a statue of Benjamin Franklin in a large grassy area near the front walk of the library. It is honored by a stone bench placed there in 2005 by the Mattatuck Museum and funded by the Mayor's Arts and Tourism Commission and the Friends of Silas Bronson Library. It's estimated that as many as 40 African American's lie buried under that location (Oshinskie, 2022).

The site is a reminder of the ancestral disconnections created by segregation even in death, as well as the lack of documentation afforded those considered of lesser value.



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Is there any additional information that the Committee should be aware of?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mattatuck Museum, Burial Locations: Waterbury's Early Cemeteries, article, *fortunestory.org* (<https://fortunestory.org/religionandslavery/burial.asp>, accessed : 6 December 2023)

Oshinskie, Ali, Juneteenth marks the end of slavery in the U.S. But when did it end in CT?, article, *ctpublic.org* (<https://ctpublic.org/news/2022-06-16/juneteenth-marks-the-end-of-slavery-in-the-u-s-but-when-did-it-end-in-ct>, published : 16 June 2022)

Prichard, Katharine A., *Ancient Burying-Grounds Of The Town Of Waterbury Connecticut*, Waterbury: The Mattatuck Historical Society, 1917

Silas Bronson Library, Silas Bronson (1788 - 1867), article, *bronsonlibrary.org* (<https://bronsonlibrary.org>, published : 11 April 2020)

Sturges, Judd, Cemetery Book, Mattatuck Museum Collection, Waterbury, 2004

Sturges, Judd, Map of Grand Street Cemetery, Mattatuck Museum Collection, Waterbury, 2004

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date of Submission: December 6th, 2023

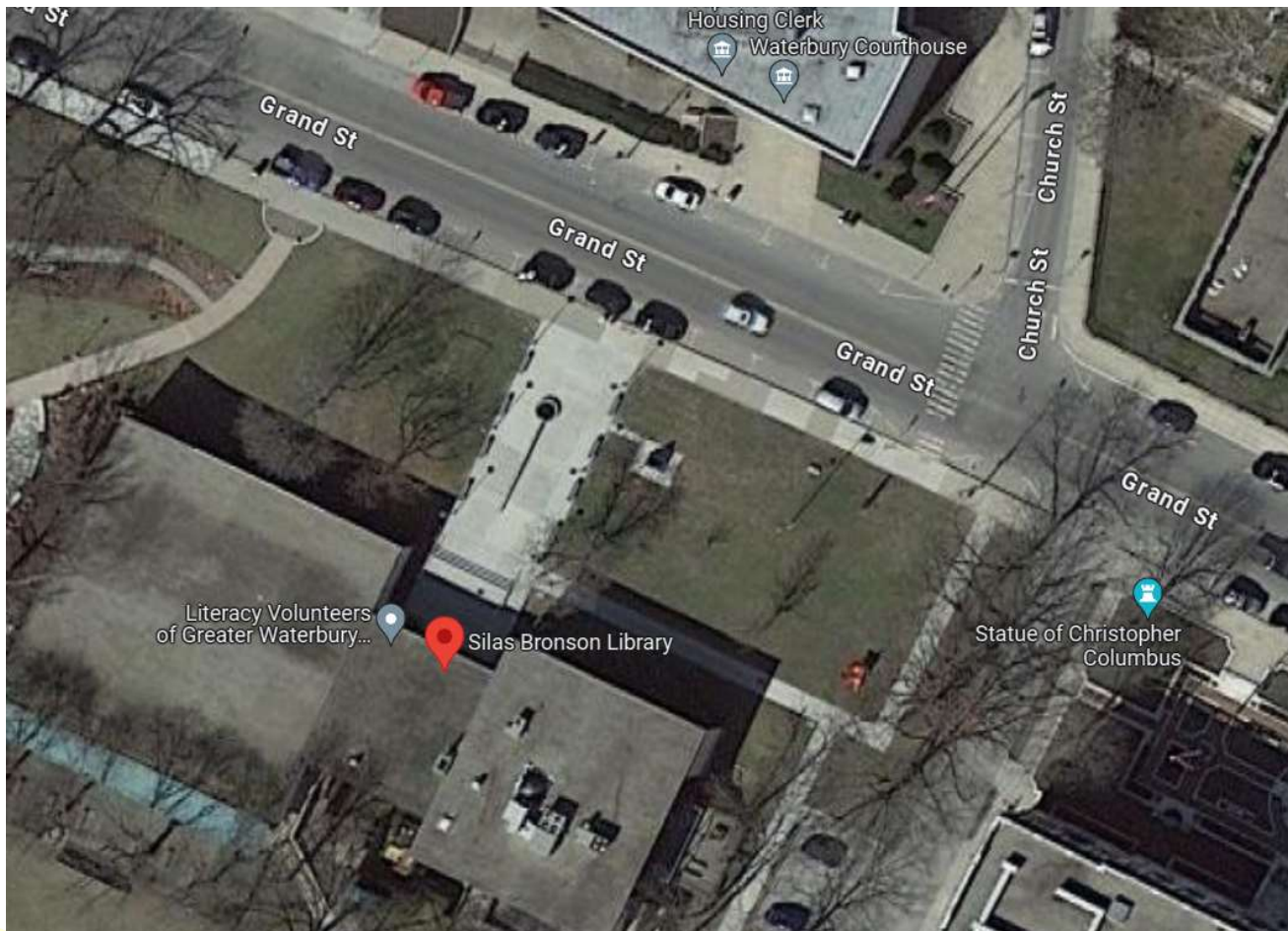


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Photographs:

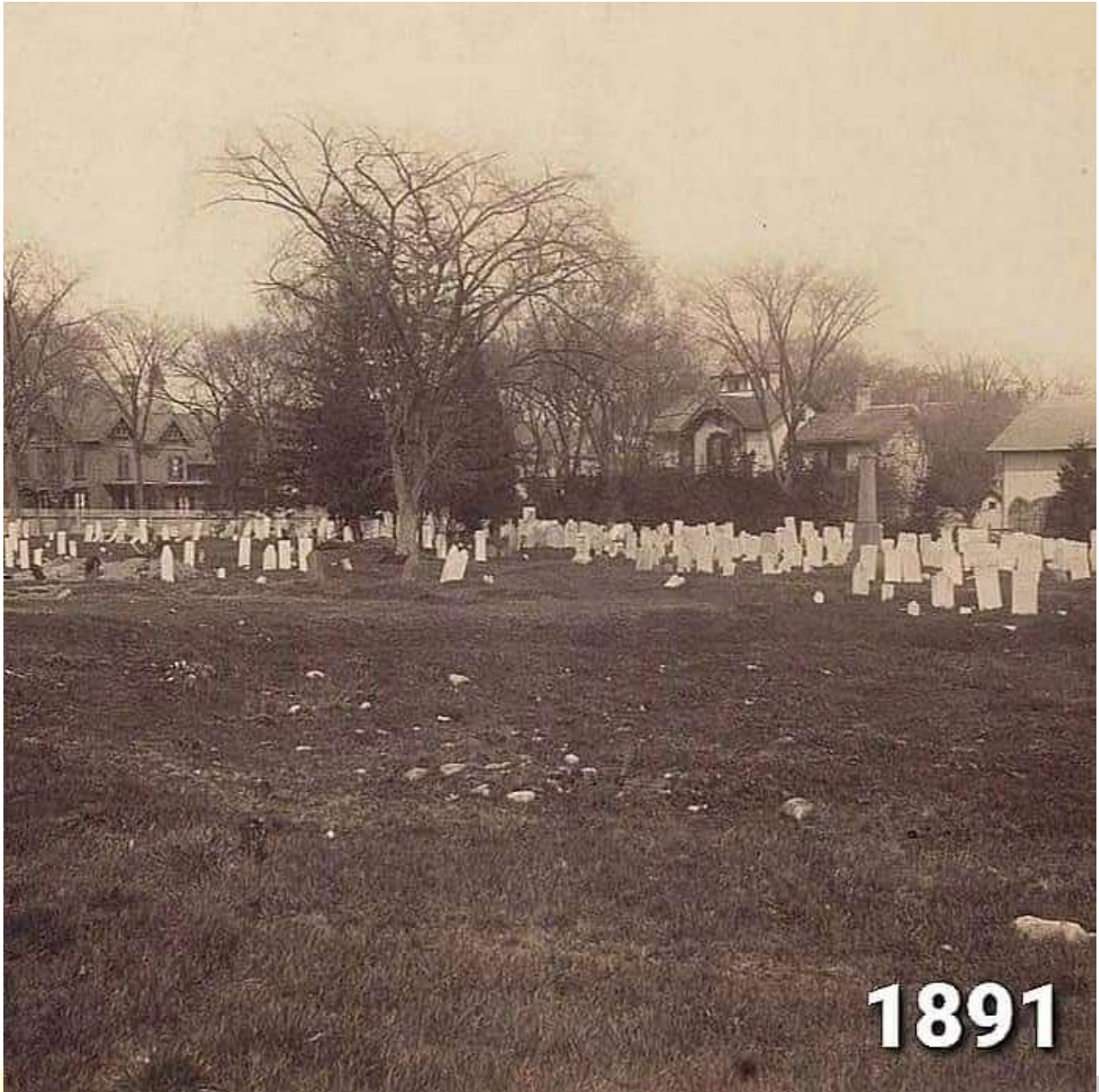
Color photographs and a site map are a requirement and should be included below. The photographs should include: a CONTEXT image (depicting the location of the site, such as, an aerial view, streetscape, neighborhood or city map); front, back, and side views of the main structures, pertinent interior views, and any other views or details that are important to explaining the nature of the nomination.





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The Historic Grand Street Cemetery 1674 - 1891

WATERBURY'S FIRST BURIAL GROUND

This is the location of the first cemetery in Waterbury, established in the 1670's. The cemetery was in use until the 1870's and closed in 1891. As many as 2,000 people remain buried here. Some burials were removed to Riverside Cemetery.

In 1893, this cemetery was converted to a park and the first public library was erected here. The graves located in the footprint of the library were relocated elsewhere in the cemetery.

In the early 1700's, a section of the Grand Street Cemetery was reserved as the "Colored Burial Plot" for use by Waterbury's non-white population. The stone bench marks their final resting place. As many as 40 people could lie buried in this location. Caesar Rose, who died on January 31, 1868, at age 77, is the last known person of color to be buried here.

This memorial placed by the African American History Project of the Mattatuck Museum, the Waterbury Monuments Committee, October 2005 and funded by the City of Waterbury Mayor's Arts and Tourism Commission and the Friends of the Silas Bronson Library.