Exploring mortuary behaviors during the Rural Cemetery Movement in the Capital District of New York State

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EXPLORING MORTUARY BEHAVIORS DURING
THE RURAL CEMETERY MOVEMENT
IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT OF
NEW YORK STATE

By

Jeanette Carioto

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the leading causes behind mortuary behaviors in the Capital District of New York during the Rural Cemetery Movement. Four cemeteries were sampled: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, an established rural cemetery; Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, two smaller, non-sectarian cemeteries; and St. John’s Cemetery, a Catholic cemetery. The built and natural landscape was the focus during data collection and analysis, to reveal how the cemetery was experienced and how that experience was affected by and affected society. This study combines a quantitative statistical analysis and a qualitative phenomenological study of the cemeteries’ designs, gravestone data and historical context to determine if the overarching trends that characterized the Rural Cemetery Movement would supersede earlier mortuary traditions regardless of cemetery or population differences. Results from both analyses indicate that the Rural Cemetery Movement had some measure of influence on the popular mortuary aesthetics of the region, despite differences in cemetery location, cemetery size or individual traits of the population. Though always present, the degree of the impact was diminished by certain factors: strong religious connections took precedence over fashionable trends and lower socioeconomic positions of the general population also reduced participation in the movement. Oakwood Rural is a quintessential rural cemetery, in both design and monuments erected. Smaller private cemeteries that served a less affluent
population lagged behind in displaying popular mortuary trends and exhibited them on a reduced scale when they did appear. The religiously affiliated St. John’s, despite serving a very similar population as Oakwood Rural, retained its shape as a traditional Catholic cemetery. During the Rural Cemetery movement, there was a new autonomy given to individuals to choose which cemetery and what monument they desired. Due to this, differences within and between populations are in fact emphasized at times due to the inability or lack of preference to participate in a widespread artistic, social and mortuary trend.
I. Introduction

Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of mortuary behavior, from grave goods to memorial architecture, is a major component in the archaeological analysis of a group or society. Mortuary archaeology is a significant part of the field of archaeology since it is universal that modern humans will in some way grieve, memorialize, or process the death of an individual for the community, and human burials are “one of the most frequently encountered classes of cultural features observed by archaeologists” (Binford 1971: 6). An important principle of mortuary archaeology is the understanding that “all societies employ some regular procedure or set of procedures for disposal of the dead,” (O’Shea 1984: 33) that are affected by the living population and the distinctive attributes of the deceased. Burial grounds, associated monuments and landscape can, and have been, perceived as replicas of a society’s social structure (Collier 2003). However, it is rarely as simple as a direct representation, and mortuary rituals and artifacts can obscure or embellish social organization in varying degrees, as well.

Burials and their associated remains are important, not only because of the regularity of their occurrence, but because they are “the direct and purposeful culmination of conscious behavior,” (O’Shea 1981: 39) fully embedded with data meant to be communicated to an audience by their makers, unlike much of archaeological material. Many discussions of mortuary archaeology must necessarily begin with the idea that “the dead do not bury themselves” (Parker Pearson 1984: 203) in order to begin to fully understand the power mortuary behaviors have. The
things communicated through mortuary practices are not intended solely for the dead or the supernatural, but have a complex relationship with the living in a society.

Cemeteries and mortuary monuments have received considerable attention from archaeologists because they are complex and intricately involved in society; “the cemetery has been an active participant in the creation, maintenance, and recreation of... ideologies through the perceptions of the living,” (McGuire 1988: 457). Monuments have also always been of interest to archaeologists because of the way they reflect the society that made them and the way monuments also continue to shape society during and after their creation. Dethlefson points out that cemeteries are not a closed system, they are adaptive to a larger system and must therefore be transformed by any changes that occurs in that system (Dethlefson 1981: 160). Cemeteries are just a partial reflection of a society, but because they are physical, measurable and controllable entities, it is practical to use them to answer societal questions (Dethlefson 1981).

Several theories and strategies have been developed in the history of archaeology with respect to mortuary symbolism and architecture, ranging from processual, materialist approaches where social organization is directly reflected in mortuary ritual (Binford 1971; Saxe 1970) to interpretation-based, multidimensional approaches where societies are seen as complex entities where social realities can be disguised and also created by mortuary ritual (Hodder 1980, Parker Pearson 1982, and Ucko 1969). Theories such as these, and ones that hover somewhere in between, assist archaeologists in dealing with mortuary monuments and symbolism.

Historic mortuary monuments can provide an archaeologist with answers to an abundance of research questions, ranging from public health to production of goods to how religion is perceived. Even though textual information is available for this time period, it cannot be underestimated how important material culture studies are to the understanding of religion
and society. Many investigations dealing with mortuary goods and monuments have focused on how individual attributes, such as age, sex, and socioeconomic status are differentially represented in the mortuary archaeological record (Binford 1971; Brown 1971; Carr 1995; Peebles 1971; Saxe 1970, 1971; Tainter 1975). While these individual differences absolutely have an effect on the type of monument and symbolism used and must be analyzed and considered in their own right, it is also imperative to study the perspectives and beliefs of the society at large, because these attitudes have a profound impact on individual mortuary monuments. “The view of man as a symbolizing, conceptualizing, meaning-seeking animal… opens up a whole new approach not only to the analysis of religion as such, but to the understanding of the relations between religion and values” (Geertz 1957: 236). It is important to understand the real world context of people’s lived lives and how they use symbolic materials such as monuments to come to terms with their reality. This dissertation examines the design and symbolism of individual mortuary monuments from varying religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds through time, specifically from the earliest available monuments in the research area to modern day monuments.

While it is important not to overanalyze what may be simple answers, it is also vital not to oversimplify an issue as complex as the creation and perception of mortuary monuments. The symbolism and design of mortuary monuments are not lightly chosen, but have deeper personal and cultural meanings that, at once, create and validate existing social norms. The purpose of studying these varying symbols and meanings is to recognize the various social, political, religious, individual and cultural forces that affect mortuary displays. The meanings behind these mortuary symbols and monuments are not random or arbitrary, but related to the larger cultural context of which they are a part (Shanks and Tilley 1982:132). Successful monuments will
embodi “with particular effectiveness, the social and environmental attitudes – and possibly the technological possibilities – of an era, employing a contemporary aesthetic” (Trieb 2004: 201).

Because of their nature, the symbolism and style of mortuary monuments are amenable to study and connection to larger social, cultural and historical processes.

Many significant changes in attitude and behavior are well documented in New England states from early Colonial mortuary behavior to the Rural Cemetery Movement. Within a decade of James Deetz’s (1977) publication of In Small Things Forgotten, historical archaeologists applied his ideas to other areas and religions to see if the concept could be applied beyond New England and the Puritans. From South Carolina (Gorman and Dibiasi 1976) to Utah (Schuyler 1982), evidence of patterns in gravestone iconography and form have been connected to larger cultural and religious trends (Veit, et al. 2009: 2). There is less recorded with regards to New York cemeteries, however, even though the state contains many early rural cemeteries. Legislation passed in New York made rural cemeteries more common and easier to establish. There are numerous rural cemeteries in the state, many well known cemeteries in New York City, and several cemeteries around the Capital District of New York that adopted the rural cemetery aesthetic.

This project will fill in some of the gaps in the literature with regards to New York’s Capital District cemeteries in the rural cemetery style from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and explore the trends leading up to the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement in the area. A mix of quantitative and interpretive methods of studying gravestones and their symbolism will be employed. The questions chosen for further exploration will concentrate on the symbolism and architectural design of the gravestones. An examination of the data collected will help to answer questions such as whether or not changes in symbolism, design, and architecture can be charted
by time periods and, if so, what patterns of change can be detected in these features by doing so. The symbolism itself will be linked to the living population through historical research. The information gathered will be studied chronologically in order to determine what behavioral changes occurred in which time period. These time periods will be linked with life-altering events, including wars and economic changes, and more general transformation in the history of the area, such as the arrival of aesthetic and philosophical movements like Neoclassicism, Romanticism and the Victorian era, with the associated appeal of the Gothic Revival.

A researcher needs to be prepared to manage several layers of meaning with each monument that will distort the reality of the population represented by the monuments. The study of religion “is not, and never has been, a single, bordered, learnable and teachable, sum-up-able thing” (Geertz 2005: 13). An eclectic approach is best suited to the type of questions and type of data available when carrying out historical cemetery research. This type of approach would include a variety of sources because of the wide variety of contexts in which mortuary behaviors come from and affect. Rather than be motivated by a singular theoretical perspective, it is better to be mindful of the types of data available and the questions asked of the data in order to include several, and the best-suited, perspectives when attempting to answer research questions (Womack 2005: 45-46).

These questions will inevitably be connected with the history of the area, the socioeconomic status, religion, and ethnicity of the population, the arts and fashion, as well as trends of public sentiment towards death, religion, and the community. It is important to look for meaning in the styles and symbols of the material monuments in more than just socioeconomic status and look as well to factors such as family structures and belief systems (Rainville 1999: 543). I propose to ascertain if the broader national and community trends and attitudes will
affect the choices made in the design of mortuary monuments more so than the characteristics of
an individual or the overall community (age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and even
religion). If this proposal is true, the cemetery data will show a similarity between mortuary
monuments of the same era and corresponding developments over time, regardless of particular
traits that vary from person to person, cemetery to cemetery, or town to town. Historical
circumstances, prevailing styles, attitudes and the mood of a nation or community may possibly
affect mortuary design and symbolism more so than any other factor.

The differences in age, sex, and other individual characteristics will have to be analyzed
in this research because as time passes so does the prevailing attitudes about women, children,
family, and the importance of religion. This research must examine how individuals are
differentially memorialized in their specific generation and how this memorializing changes over
time. For example, children may receive markedly smaller monuments with minimal decoration
in one time period and receive more ornate memorials in another because of the popular existing
beliefs about the propriety of levels of grief shown for children. While a subset of the population
may be treated uniquely, this research proposes to study if these differential treatments are
related to more widespread cultural attitudes.

The question of how the broad-spectrum attitudes of a region affect mortuary displays
requires several types of historical research. Background information on the community and the
individuals buried is necessary for complete understanding of the complex layers that are
involved in mortuary display. It is important to uncover the general background of the
community through time: when it was founded, who originally settled it, the typical
socioeconomic status, the churches in the area, popular industry, and how nationwide events
affected the area, such as wars or economic depressions. It is also important to obtain
background about the individuals whose monuments are being studied, when possible. Because of the nature of mortuary monuments, much of the pertinent information is inscribed on the stone, such as date of birth, death, sex, and sometimes even occupation, area of birth, wars fought, religious identity, or organizations they belonged to. Census information and historical societies can also provide deeper insight as to the type of lives lived, such as socioeconomic status revealed in the type of jobs they held or the amount of land owned. A thorough understanding of the political, religious, social and economic history of the area being studied will also provide a deeper comprehension of the particular society being studied.

Historical inquiries, such as the ones that will be explored in this paper, are important to the overall understanding of the development of the society in question. It is important to retain records of not just the changing cultural material in an area but to ascertain why the changes occurred. James Deetz (1977) wrote that the “existence of artifacts and written records from the same society makes possible the use of historical archaeological materials for the testing and refinement of numerous methods and theories developed by prehistorians” (p. 22). He goes on to detail how the study of New England gravestones and the stylistic changes in ideological symbols strengthened the use of seriation as a dating technique and confirmed the connection between aesthetic design and cultural change. Historical archaeology offers the ability to see and record subtle changes in cultural dynamics which can then be correlated with material expressions. These historic studies teach us “that common sense is culturally relative… that the phenomenon of culture change is far more complex and imponderable than we might suspect were we to rely only on the detailing of it by prehistorians” (Deetz 1977: 23). The significance of the ready availability of historical texts, records and other supporting materials is invaluable in a fine tuned understanding of cultural changes within a society.
It is for the reasons detailed by Deetz (1977), that this study came to fruition. The Capital Region is not usually associated with other New England cemetery studies; however, the area was a full participant in the Rural Cemetery Movement as a famous rural cemetery, Albany Rural Cemetery, was established in the Capital of New York less than a decade before the cemeteries sampled in this dissertation. With a unique history, the mortuary behaviors of the area have the potential for interesting conclusions about how different societies can co-opt the aesthetics of surrounding regions and make them their own. The interesting insights gained by Dethlefson and Deetz and the resulting battleship curved seriation of gravestone symbolism inspired a return to an attempt at further quantitative study of the style and symbolism seen in the rural cemeteries of New England.

This study focuses on the time period between 1800 and 1920, in order to obtain a complete overview of the beginning, peak and decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement in the area. The Rural Cemetery Movement in the United States has its roots in the garden or landscaped cemeteries that were popular in Europe, which began to be established by the early 1800s (the first being the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris). These garden cemeteries were located on the outskirts of the towns, to escape the health and aesthetic problems created by overcrowded church burial grounds.

The Rural Cemetery Movement, mainly concentrated around the east coast and the northeastern states, developed in the United States almost concurrently with the rising popularity of the garden cemeteries in Europe. The onset of the development of the American rural cemetery was delayed by a couple of decades; the first established rural cemetery was Mount Auburn in Massachusetts in 1831. The enthusiasm for the rural cemetery began to decline between 1900 and 1920. There was no sudden end to the movement, rather a slow tendency of
the population to prefer a more modern, plain style that had a general objective of making “gravemarkers so inconspicuous as to be almost undiscoverable” (Hijiya 1983: 357). The newer, lawn type cemeteries abandoned behind the monumental and ornate grave stones of the rural cemetery, as well as the landscaping trends of the time, returning to the neat, organized rows and simply manicured lawns that were more common during the time of church-yard burials in the 18th century.

Taking a cue from the development of the garden cemetery in Europe, cemeteries began to be moved outside of the cities and away from the church yards in the United States. There were several parallel health concerns on the east coast, especially the yellow fever epidemic in New York City that was attributed to a crowded cemetery in the city, which led to similar developments to what was happening in Europe at the time. It was not just practical concerns of the aesthetics and healthiness of overcrowded cemeteries that led to the rural cemetery in the United States; a multifaceted change in the attitudes of the American public regarding social classes, art and architecture, the escalating pace of the Industrial Revolution, urban places, religion and acceptable mortuary protocol all coalesce at the same period to create a radical change in the way cemeteries were viewed and created.

Before the Rural Cemetery Movement, colonial-era cemeteries in the United States were commonly cramped church yard affairs that followed the early Puritanical traditions, especially in the Northeast. Cemeteries were common within the city and without; parishioners were commonly buried next to the church they worshipped at. There was often limited room in the churchyards inside the cities, which caused the cramped conditions. The earliest gravestones were simple, austere tablets aligned in tight rows. Any decoration on the stones was often generic and fit into acceptable categories that conformed to the prevailing religious doctrine of
the time. The immortal soul was of the utmost concern and the body was simply an unpleasant physical obstacle that one had to overcome to achieve entrance into the afterlife, heaven. The material objects of mortuary rituals focused around these ideas: the cemetery itself was not a place of beauty, remembrance or respite, but was instead a place of warning to those still living that their time on earth was short and they should focus on what comes after. Images of death and mortality were common, such as skulls and crossbones. Epitaphs of warning were commonly included under names and dates. These epitaphs did not reference the deceased as an individual, but as a tool to counsel the living about their impending fate.

Before the institution of the rural cemetery, the attitudes of Americans towards death had already begun to change. The imagery seen in the cemeteries were beginning to diverge from the focus on mortality and morality towards a more peaceful, serene view of death with a focus on grieving and remembrance. The skulls, or Death’s Head, of the Puritan-influenced mortuary symbolism slowly gave was to cherubs, which still put the focus on the afterlife, and then to the famous willow and urn motif, which marked the beginning of a religious shift in the country towards remembrance and mourning of the individual, rather than a focus on religious doctrine.

The removal of the cemeteries from the city centers also coincided with the first cemeteries being privately owned, often run by cemetery associations, and being established as non-sectarian entities. The Rural Cemetery Act, which allowed commercial burial grounds in New York to be run by nonprofit agencies and be exempt from land taxes, was instituted in 1847, though several rural cemeteries had already been established prior to the law. Both churches and private interests made use of this new law, buying new lawns for cemeteries, especially as more ordinances were passed preventing new burials from occurring within the city and existing churchyard cemeteries were often moved outside the city limits. The opportunity for
privately owned and operated cemeteries to exist, separate from religious and church organizations, allowed a wider variety of expression within the cemetery by individuals.

The rural cemetery was developed as a public space, where community members could go to escape the progressively more urbanized and industrialized city limits and find respite, diversion and the newest artistic endeavors in sculpture and landscaping. There was a deficit of public parks for the populace in the early 19th century, as well as a lack of places for the public to observe the fine art scene that was just beginning to develop in the country at that time. The rural cemetery fulfilled these communal needs, transforming the previously severe and ascetic Puritan-influenced cemeteries into more of a cultural institution.

The shifting outlook on death and the afterlife and the more practical need to move the cemeteries out of the city centers coincided with two major artistic movements that had developed in the late 18th century in America: Neoclassicism and Romanticism. Literature, architecture, sculpture, paintings, and more reflected these shifts in style. Neoclassicism was marked by a renewed interest in the classical cultures of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt, especially the architecture, and an appreciation for the simple, powerful, and solemn nature of the designs. Romanticism was characterized by a focus on the individual and on raw expression of emotion. These artistic developments affected more than just the fine arts; but signified a change in the thinking of the American populace. These changes can be witnessed in rural cemeteries because mortuary behaviors would be shaped by the art and philosophy developing at the time. Neoclassical structures were used as inspiration for gravestone and mausoleum design, which often resembled architecture constructed in the classical cultures. The landscaping of the rural cemetery, as well as the general layout, reflected the Romantic propensity for wildness in both environment and emotion; the cemeteries were purposely landscaped to resemble untouched
nature and the neat, tight rows of burials were abandoned for a more random and spontaneous affect on the landscape.

The geographical focus of this study is on the location of the Capital District, specifically cemeteries in Rensselaer County, which borders Albany County on the east. This setting is ideal because of the presence of the well known rural cemetery, Oakwood Rural Cemetery, in the county, and a cemetery in Saratoga County that is located close to the border of Rensselaer County and Oakwood Cemetery. Oakwood Rural Cemetery, established in 1848, is well known for being one of the earliest cemeteries to participate in the Rural Cemetery Movement in the Northeast, as well as being one of the larger cemeteries in the Capital District. Three other cemeteries were chosen in the surrounding area in order to maintain geographical and population consistency with the sample. The three cemeteries vary in size, physical design, socioeconomic makeup of the immediate population, and religious affiliation: Waterford Rural Cemetery, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, and St. John’s Cemetery. To differentiate between religious and non-religious expressions of the rural cemetery, Oakwood Rural, Waterford Rural, and Blooming Grove Rural; were chosen as non-sectarian, non-profit. St. John’s Cemetery was established as a Roman Catholic cemetery. All of the cemeteries were operational in the first half of the 19th century and continue to be used as modern burial grounds.

Oakwood Rural Cemetery was designed by John C. Sidney and John Boetcher as a rural cemetery, influenced by the other developing rural cemeteries in the country which had been established earlier: Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1831; Mount Hope in Bangor, Maine in 1834; Laurel Hill in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1836; Mount Pleasant in Taunton, Massachusetts in 1836; Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York in 1838, Lowell Cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts in 1841; and Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands, New York
in 1841. Oakwood Rural, established in 1848, is a prominent cemetery in the Capital District and was well known as a rural cemetery. Home to over 60,000 burials, it provided a large sample from a genuine rural cemetery in order to obtain a clear picture of the form the Rural Cemetery Movement took in the area.

Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural were titled as rural cemeteries decades after the land had already been used for burial purposes, keeping in fashion with the cemetery trends of the time rather than having been deliberately designed after the famous rural cemeteries in shape and form. Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural were limited by the existing boundaries of the land they had already been established on. They are not true rural cemeteries; instead they were more traditional cemeteries that attempted to emulate some of the popular fashions of the time.

St. John’s Cemetery, was chosen for this dissertation to provide a counterpoint to the non-sectarian cemeteries involved in Rural Cemetery Movement. St. John’s was established as a Catholic cemetery, owned and operated by the Albany Diocesan Cemeteries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. Prior to being named St. John’s, the cemetery was first established in 1829 and sparsely used until it was rededicated as St. John’s in 1869. It continues to be used in the present day. St. John’s was chosen because of its traditional, religious associations as well as for its existence during the height and decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

This dissertation is divided into four major sections: the introduction, the quantitative analysis, the interpretive analysis and conclusion. Within the introduction, the second chapter of this dissertation will explore, in depth, the literature that has helped establish mortuary archaeological studies early on in the development of the field and the changing concepts of the topic that have occurred through time. This chapter will cover the larger movements within the
field, namely the effects of processual and post-processual archaeology on mortuary studies, as well as the wide variety of approaches and topics that are typically addressed from ideology to identity.

The third chapter of the dissertation will cover the historical background of the Capital District in more detail, as well as Rensselaer County, where the majority of the cemeteries in the study are located. The history of each of the cemeteries sampled will be detailed in order to give a perspective on the differences in the areas they occupied, despite being relatively close geographically. Lastly, a comprehensive development of the Rural Cemetery Movement will be discussed. The multiple causes and influences that spurred the development of rural cemeteries and an ideological shift in mortuary behaviors will be laid out in order to better understand the motivations and perspectives of the population that was involved in their creation.

Starting the quantitative analysis section, the fourth chapter will detail the specific methodology taken to record all of the pertinent data within the cemeteries, how the gravestones chosen were sampled and what features of each monument were documented. All written information and symbolism associated with each mortuary monument was collected by photographs and notes. Information about the individual(s) whose grave the monument marks includes: name, date of birth, date of death, age at passing, marital status, epitaphs and any other identifying information, such as jobs held or veteran status. Information about the monument itself includes: material of stone, shape of monument, condition, and all illustrative symbolism and decoration carved into the monument. In order to attain a wider overview of each cemetery, a random sampling of gravestones in each cemetery was taken. The cemeteries were broken up into sections to maintain organizational control over the landscape. These sections were either
previously defined by the cemetery itself, in Oakwood Rural’s case, or sections were generated based on the physical features, such as roadways, of the cemetery.

The fifth chapter details the physical data recorded, such as size, shape, material and decoration. The quantitative analysis was achieved by running the data collected from the gravestones and cemeteries through formulas in order to organize and observe how different features interact. For example, gravestone shape and year of gravestone erection were compared in order to provide an insight into how styles looked at a static moment in time as well as how they changed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the results, which indicates a spectrum of observance of the Rural Cemetery Movement trends based on the average socioeconomic status of the community and their degree of religious affiliation. Oakwood Rural Cemetery is clearly differentiated from the rest of the cemeteries in almost every attribute studied: height, shape, material, and symbolism. It was the only cemetery designed to be a rural cemetery and embodied many of the general characteristics common to renowned rural cemeteries of the time. The other three cemeteries sampled exhibit varying degrees of participation in the popular mortuary trends of the time.

The interpretive section begins with the sixth chapter covering the background behind utilizing an approach that couples the data analysis with a more interpretive or qualitative investigation, focusing on the individual and community experience of the landscape. A more thorough background into qualitative studies of mortuary analysis is provided in this chapter. Landscape analysis, phenomenology and the study of emotion are topics covered in the discussion. Critiques are discussed of these approaches and counter-points are provided. The seventh chapter discusses the materials and methods applied.
The eighth chapter outlines the results of the interpretive models for each cemetery. Using the physical data collected, the visual experience of the cemeteries from two signification points of time, the peak and the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement, is presented. With quantifiable data, a phenomenological approach is taken during analysis. How the varying shapes and heights of gravestones affected the built environment, and therefore, a visitor’s experience of the cemeteries, is detailed. This experience, separate from the modern experience of those same cemeteries, is at once produced by the culture and transforming that same culture. The chapter includes a reflection on how human emotion plays out in the cemetery and how culture expectations shape the expression of it. It is concluded with addressing the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement, how it is observed archaeologically in general and also within the cemeteries specifically studied.

The fourth and final section concludes the dissertation. The ninth chapter addresses the proposed research questions that will be explored in this paper in different ways. The following questions will be answered with the preceding discussed combination of qualitative and quantitative archaeological data about the gravestones and cemeteries themselves, as well as historical research for an understanding of the populations that were involved in their creation:

- What patterns of change in mortuary monuments’ design (architectural and symbolic) can be determined in the Capital Region from 1800 to 1920?

- Do changes and differences in mortuary monument design coincide with specific time periods, major historical events, or artistic movements (whether based in literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, etc)?
• Did the Capital District follow the general time frame and pattern of the Rural Cemetery Movement, from commencement to decline, set by renowned rural cemeteries in New England?

• Did the Rural Cemetery Movement’s aesthetics supersede differences in cemetery or mortuary monument design between privately owned and religiously affiliated cemeteries?

• Did the Rural Cemetery Movement’s aesthetics supersede differences in cemetery or mortuary monument design in all non-sectarian cemeteries, regardless of size or location?

The results are not straightforward for every topic. Most simple is the pattern of change that is seen in the Capital District during the sample. It was well documented that cemeteries prior to the Rural Cemetery Movement were commonly found within the city limits, attached physically and logistically to a church. These cemeteries were practical spaces, a place to bury the dead and not for any other artistic or recreational purposes. The cemeteries were usually unadorned and not landscaped with any intent, the gravestones were commonly tablets made of slate due to the availability of stone and technology to carve it, and the burial plots were lined up in rows facing one direction. This changed, not just in the Capital District but across American and Europe, as cities and cemeteries became crowded, health concerns about cemeteries in city limits arose, the Industrial Revolution caused many to desire an escape from the city, and
legislation began to pass allowing and encouraging private interests to move cemeteries away from the inner city.

The sample shows the shifting tastes, as mourners were given the freedom to explore the popular styles of the time because they were no longer constrained by the rules of a church with regards to their mortuary behavior. Even in the cemeteries that were not in fact rural cemeteries, the preferences of that time become evident in the increasing amount of monumental gravestones, the appearance of symbolism that was not traditionally present in the churchyard cemeteries, and the sheer variety of forms emerging during this period of experimentation with mortuary monuments. The cemeteries in the sample show these behaviors increasing and coming to a peak sometime between 1870 and 1890, wherein a new pattern of simplicity began to emerge. This pattern is noticeable beginning about 1900 in the increase of small monuments, plainer monuments with less decoration, and the disappearance of several symbolic forms that had begun to appear during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

As a whole, Oakwood Rural Cemetery, the only veritable rural cemetery in the sample, does adhere to the expectation of the features a rural cemetery that was active during the Rural Cemetery Movement: the position of the cemetery on high ground overlooking the city; the winding, hilly layout of the cemetery; the influence of monumental classical forms on the gravestones within; the natural landscape combined with culture and art; and the freedom of expression possible because of the lack of scripted behaviors set down by the cemetery association, resulting in a variety of unique decorations and forms not seen before in the American cemetery. The association established to develop Oakwood Rural Cemetery was formed 17 years after Mount Auburn was created, which allowed the planners of Oakwood plenty of time and examples of rural cemeteries to develop their ideal rural cemetery in Troy.
The data shows that the gravestones in Oakwood followed the trends that were gaining popularity in America at the time, including Neoclassical architecture, highly visible monuments and Romantic and individual expressions of emotion.

The remaining cemeteries do not exhibit many of the characteristics seen in the local rural cemetery, though the influence of the Rural Cemetery Movement is not completely absent. St. John’s Cemetery which is located geographically closest to Oakwood Rural Cemetery and the city of Troy was also a Catholic cemetery, run by the Catholic Diocese and therefore those who wished to be buried in the cemetery must necessarily follow proscribed behaviors decided by the diocese. Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery are both located geographically further from both Oakwood and Troy and served smaller populations of their specific towns and hamlets, which were neither as developed nor as prosperous as the city itself. The data shows that both Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural, though their names indicate a predilection towards appearing like a rural cemetery, more closely resemble the older, traditional cemetery model due to the lack of landscaping and decidedly non-picturesque design. The two cemeteries, however, have data that signifies an imitation of the rural cemetery characteristics seen in Oakwood; specifically an increase in tall, monumental gravestones and an increase in adornment variety during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Both cemeteries lagged behind Oakwood by a decade or more in adopting the practices common to a rural cemetery, indicating the populations were not trendsetters either by choice or by necessity due to a lack of access to funds or ideas. St. John’s Cemetery, though closest to Oakwood, had the lease amount in common with the rural cemetery in both cemetery design and monument structure. Limited by the rules and expectations of the Catholic cemetery, mourners erected their stones in neat rows, facing the same direction, in a cemetery that was plain in layout and
landscape. St. John’s has the least variety of symbolism and gravestone types, with a heavy focus on Christian themes. There are some indications that those who buried their family in the Catholic cemetery were affected by the fashions that drove the Rural Cemetery Movement, especially at its peak, as a small amount of monumental gravestones and visibility-focused behaviors do appear in the cemetery.

The Rural Cemetery Movement was not an all-encompassing mortuary tradition in the Capital District, instead limited in its expression due to socioeconomic and religious factors. From the small sample analyzed in this dissertation, not every individual or every cemetery participated in the trends popular during the sampled time period. Just as there were multifaceted reasons why the rural cemetery developed in America, there were multifaceted reasons why there was not a complete adherence to the new style. Predominantly, the reason behind the variety seen between and within the sampled cemeteries is freedom of choice. With the creation of the rural cemetery, individuals had the freedom to continue to choose cemeteries that kept up the traditions of their chosen church or to be buried in a cemetery that allowed a higher degree of nonconformity within the cemetery. Even when an individual or family chose a rural cemetery, there were no stipulations that they must display a monument in keeping with the tastes of the Rural Cemetery Movement, allowing a variety of monuments to be erected. The autonomy to choose is definitely a defining characteristic of the variety of monuments and cemeteries seen in the Capital District between 1800 and 1920.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

Anthropologists have examined issues of monumentality and symbolism, especially in funerary contexts, to aid in the comprehension of many features of human society. Mortuary archaeology is a significant part of the field of archaeology since it is nearly universal that humans will in some way grieve, memorialize, or process the death of an individual for the community, and human burials are “one of the most frequently encountered classes of cultural features observed by archaeologists” (Binford 1971:6). Burials and their associated remains are important, not only because of the regularity of their occurrence, but because they are “the direct and purposeful culmination of conscious behavior,” (O’Shea 1981:39) fully embedded with data meant to be communicated to an audience by their makers, unlike much of archaeological material. Burial and other associated rituals leave a variety of types of material remains, from simple grave goods to extravagant monuments. “Monumental architecture… is associated with all complex societies around the world,” (Trigger 1990:119) and because of its cross-cultural nature is subject to many attempts by archaeologists at explaining the existence and purpose of such monuments, the possible rituals involved, and the power evidenced perhaps by the mere presence of monumental architecture.

Mortuary archaeology has a long history in the discipline of archaeology, though the focus has often been on prehistoric burials. Historic mortuary analysis is comparably a more recent occurrence in the field. “Given the potential of the material evidence, often containing text, symbolism, and many other material attributes linked to well documented individuals and circumstances, data from historic burial grounds has not yet been accepted in a central place
within the sub-discipline. Settlement and domestic artifact evidence is overwhelmingly chosen to research wider questions to which mortuary evidence could provide valuable input” (Mytum 2004: 11). General mortuary archaeological studies as well as specifically historic mortuary archaeological studies will be reviewed.

The study of mortuary memorials and mortuary symbolism in archaeology involves looking at material remains of rituals dealing with death and attempting to connect these remains with social organization and ideologies (Trinkaus 1984:674). As some anthropologists suggested that humans sought to conserve energy as a life strategy (Harris 1974, Trigger 1990), it often caught the attention and curiosity of other anthropologists when monumental architecture rife with complex symbolism was discovered in early societies throughout the world, a perceived excess of a society’s energy without clear explanation. Because of that immediate interest in mortuary archaeology, there have been several significant works featuring very different theories focusing on mortuary archaeology. This paper will discuss the trajectory of those theories as well as the varied archaeological questions about prehistoric and historic societies that mortuary archaeology can help to answer.

Cemeteries and mortuary monuments have received great attention from archaeologists because they are complex and intricately involved in society; “the cemetery has been an active participant in the creation, maintenance, and recreation of… ideologies through the perceptions of the living,” (McGuire 1988:457). Monuments have also always been of interest to archaeologists because of the way they reflect the society that made them and the way monuments also continue to shape society during and after their creation. This curiosity inspired such early projects as the recording of the mounds of North America by Squier and Davis in the mid-1800s (Clark 2004:163) and continues to inspire archaeologists today. The interest in
mortuary theory can be seen through all of the phases of American archaeology, from the early processualists (Saxe 1970, Binford 1972) to the post-processualist researchers (Hodder 1980, Parker Pearson 1982). This paper will discuss the possible avenues of investigation for mortuary archaeologists such as the socioeconomic status of individuals, the level of equality in society, ideological trends, style and fashions of the time, and religion. While individual differences, such as age, sex, status, etc. must absolutely be considered and analyzed, it is also imperative to study the perspectives and beliefs of the society at large, because these attitudes have a profound impact on individual mortuary monuments.

**Early Development of Mortuary Archaeology**

A. L. Kroeber’s (1927) study is an example of one of the early examinations of mortuary practices in which he took a cross-cultural look at societies and their burial rituals. Kroeber came from a place and time of anthropology that was dominated by Boasian thinking, where the principle theme centered around the idea that cultures were only understandable in the context of historical and environmental circumstances, not supposed universal laws that governed how societies developed. This mindset limited the ability to understand mortuary practices as a whole because they were assumed to be unrelated to anything other than the specific contexts in which they developed. In his early study, Kroeber came to the conclusion that burial practices and mortuary rituals were generally unstable and bore no direct relationship to other societal cultural practices (Kroeber 1927: 312-314). He saw, in his study of various cultures and their mortuary practices, that the societies were “partaking of the nature of fashions,” (Kroeber 1927:314). These conclusions would later influence, as well as be criticized by, future archaeologists, many
researchers often striving to connect a society’s mortuary practices with its ideology and organization.

Not all early mortuary studies completely disregarded mortuary practices as “fashion.” Death itself is a human universal because we all experience it and death is something very potent, powerful, disruptive, and frightening, something we all must find a way to deal with. However, even though everyone experiences death, ways of expressing ourselves through memorialization and mortuary rituals is highly variable because humans do not all perceive death in the same way. Concepts of death have changed through time and across space, and it may be ineffective to try and simplify what death means to us as a species and declare how we deal with it as a universal (Metcalf and Huntington 1991:74).

It must be remembered that the only things seen archaeologically are the material remains and the deliberate memorials of mortuary ritual, not the varied ritual actions or perishable goods that may have been involved in funerals, wakes, and other performance rituals of death (Childe 1945:18). Perishable goods are often lost in the archaeological record, but aspects of mourning such as song, dance, tears, and speeches will rarely leave traces, especially prehistorically. The ephemeral nature of much of the mortuary ritual may contribute to the archaeological misunderstandings of social organization (Trinkaus 1984:675). O’Shea (1984) explains clearly that mortuary archaeologists only have access to “(1) those aspects of the mortuary practice that produced physical changes within the funerary deposits; and (2) that subset of the above that survives the forces of deposition, preservation, and recovery” (O’Shea 1984: 27), which generates an incomplete interpretation of the actual mortuary rituals that were performed. Adding to the inherent difficulty of mortuary archaeology is the fact that not all aspects of the social system will be represented in mortuary rituals and symbolism, fewer of those
representations will make a physical change in the archaeological record, and yet fewer will remain preserved completely for future research (O’Shea 1984: 27-28). While the physical aspects of ritual may or may not be deposited into the mortuary record as well as survive in a preserved state, there are many aspects of ritual with no material presence (eg. songs or who among the living participated in the ritual) have a infinitesimal chance of being preserved for the future unless the society was literate and inclined to record funerary rites.

Radcliffe-Brown developed his structural-functional analysis partly from the teachings of Durkheim. After French sociologists such as Durkheim and his followers were publishing their writings, many new ways of looking at mortuary studies evolved. “They stressed that rites were related to other institutions of the social system and could be expected to vary in form and structure with the social variables,” (Binford 1971:7). They were writing in reaction to the writings of academics such as E. B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer, who studied the way societies worshipped and categorized them in a very unilineal way, and for all purposes ruling out the effect of all other social processes on mortuary variables (Bartel 1982:34-37). Social variables included by these new academics could include age, sex, socioeconomic status, or any number of differences that occur in hierarchical societies, and even some egalitarian societies where they still make distinctions between age and sex in death (Saxe 1971).

There was a new tendency emerging during this period to look at practices of a society, not just their beliefs, and to relate these practices to other areas of a social system. Unlike the Radcliffe-Brown example cited above, there was a desire of later archaeologists to pay more attention to the variability that existed in societies and their mortuary practices. While these assumptions may be taken for granted by modern archaeologists, it was not always common to
examine mortuary rituals as important social rituals that transform in practice and meaning along with numerous other social variables.

**Processual Mortuary Archaeology**

Arthur Saxe (1970) is an example of a researcher who endeavored to connect mortuary rituals and social organization in his unpublished but widely cited dissertation. The dissertation title, “Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices” (Saxe 1970) signifies that the study will seek to bring the social dimensions of mortuary ritual into the forefront of mortuary studies. His first hypothesis “states that the components of a given disposal domain cooperate in a partitioning of the universe, the resultant combinations representing different social personae” (Saxe 1970:225). The hypotheses set forward in this dissertation are extremely important to the development of mortuary archaeology, especially in the studies that involve monumentality, even though they may exist in a positivistic paradigm.

Saxe (1970) set forth eight hypotheses in his dissertation. A brief summary of his hypotheses and the most important points relevant to this dissertation follows: that the form of a burial reflects an individual’s role or status in society, though this form will change between cultures and must be decoded in each particular case. The idea is set forth that a social persona is linked to the organizational rules of the society in which it exists, i.e. egalitarian societies are organized based on age, sex, and personal achievements and this organization will be reflected in the mortuary behaviors. It is suggested that lower status will be marked by fewer mortuary artifacts and less complexity in mortuary architecture. Saxe’s (1970) dissertation postulates that the greater an individual’s status in life will result in the most significant identities of that individual will be represented in death at the expense of less significant identities, i.e. a royal
title will be represented over the role of fatherhood. The complexity of a society can be directly correlated with the amount of differentiation in the treatment of distinctive social personae in a society. Famously, hypothesis #8 proposes that cemeteries, or “formal disposal areas,” are maintained by groups in order to legitimize rights to critical resources through legitimacy of descent from ancestors.

Saxe’s hypotheses can be, and were, criticized because of their excessively processual, positivistic approach, where the amount of energy expended and information present in mortuary monuments and grave goods are directly paralleled to the social status of an individual. The assumption would be, for example, that the greater the “social significance” of the individual and the more personae they embodied (e.g. father, brother, warrior, chief, priest, etc) would result in greater information imprinted into the ritual and material aspects of that individual’s burial (Saxe 1970:227-228). However, even though several of his hypotheses were not substantiated in his own work or were unable to be tested, they were an important foundational understanding about relating mortuary behaviors to social contexts. In this dissertation, increasing mortuary monument size and complexity is correlated with higher amounts of energy expenditure. The highest amounts of energy expenditure are marked as unique and/or noteworthy. When possible, historical connections are made to high-energy cost monuments and individuals, who’s socioeconomic status can be presumed based on occupation and house value.

Saxe applied his hypotheses to the Mesolithic site of Wadi Halfa (Saxe 1970) and made interpretations based on the assumption that this site represented an entire social system (though he admitted that was for the purpose of analysis and the site most likely was a smaller part of a larger system). Saxe came to the conclusion in this study that there was significant differentiation in the symbolism of grave goods and these variations correlated with differences in age, sex, and
personal achievements in this otherwise basically egalitarian society (Saxe 1970:46-52). This finding correlates with his assumptions that the more social personae (or identities, such as age, achievements, and roles in the community, etc.) a person has, the more reason those who buried that person would have to incorporate additional information into a burial, and the more information archaeologists will find encoded in that burial.

Saxe was not alone in his approach, though it may have been later criticized by those of a post-processual, interpretation-based perspective. Joseph Tainter followed Saxe’s basic tenets, conveying the notion that the analysis of energy investment was the proper way to study burials. Tainter’s (1975) formal analysis of a Middle Woodland Hopewell group was very similar to Saxe’s approach, except Tainter quantified the amount of energy that was invested into a burial instead of the amount of information, as Saxe did. Using data such as the types of grave goods, log walls, ramps, slabs, and location within a mound, Tainter rated the amount of energy expended in the creation of an individual’s grave (Tainter 1975:2-5). He “anticipated then that the amount of energy expended in mortuary ceremonialism is the key archaeological feature reflecting variations in prehistoric rank structure” (Tainter 1975:2) and found that through his analysis of these mound burials, he could distinguish between socially distinctive burials (Tainter 1975:13-14).

There were many critiques of the processual approach in general, but sometimes specific authors and articles were thoroughly critiqued, such as David Braun’s (1981) criticism of Tainter and his methods. While Braun did not argue against the basic tenets of Tainter’s theories on matters such as energy expenditure, he believed that Tainter was manipulating the data in order to explain social organization in a satisfactory way. In other words, if Tainter was expecting simplicity in mortuary remains because of the social structure then the data would be cherry-
picked and presented in such a way until it appeared simple (Braun 1981:399-401). This was a pointed criticism of an author in particular, but many others would critique this school of thought later, as well. What Braun (1981) was calling for was for archaeologists to deal with several interrelated processes and then decide whether patterns are meaningful, not to just define things until they fit.

Lewis Binford (1971) analyzed social groups with differing organizations and population sizes using the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) and came to similar conclusions as those of Tainter (1975) and Saxe (1970), though on a societal level rather than an individual one. In his study on mortuary practices, Binford found that mortuary behaviors will vary depending on the “complexity and degree of differentiation characteristic of the relevant society” (Binford 1971:25). Binford had an enormous impact in how archaeology was practiced in the 1960s and for decades to come. He proposed that archaeology should be more a part of anthropology than it had been, to get out of the laboratories and participate in the practices of cultural anthropologists. Binford’s thought, that would later be critiqued and challenged, was that archaeologists could and were uniquely prepared to uncover the mechanisms of evolutionary change in a society. (Binford 1962: 223-224).

Binford’s analyses were similarly scientifically rigorous as other processualist studies in his attempts to develop hypotheses that related an individual’s social personae with the type of mortuary treatment they received and that the organizational structures of a society will be reflected in the societal mortuary rituals (Binford 1972: 232-235). Though there has not been a proven one-to-one correlation with the type of society or a specific social role and type of mortuary ritual, there is undoubtedly a link between them that does not vary completely independently. Binford’s linkage between social personae and mortuary treatment comes into
play in a significant manner in this dissertation. Though tempered through the lens of time and the variety of post-processual criticism, the basic tenants of processual mortuary archaeology are utilized. Specific individuals and groups, whether they differed due to religion, socioeconomic status or some other measure, are presumed to have social personae that can be marked in mortuary behaviors, however direct or indirect it may be.

Binford, Saxe, and Tainter are characteristic of archaeologists of their time, where the focus was on deciphering the laws that societies would naturally follow and the features of the society that would vary in accordance with other features (such as mortuary practices and the complexity/status of an individual or society). Formal analysis and scientific rigor were characteristic of the way processualists approached archaeology. James A. Brown (1971) made use of formal analysis to study the mounds at the Mississippian site of Spiro, analyzing the burials from several behaviors, including arrangement of the burial and the space allotted in order to determine high status individuals. His formal analysis is “essentially a means for formally relating items in an explicit cultural domain by their membership within successively more inclusive sets, each stage of which is determined by alternatives of specific dimensions relevant to the domain,” (Brown 1971:110). He uses ethnographic cases to compare what he had found along with processual means of investigation, such as taking binary characteristics (e.g. with or without container, male or female, inside or outside) in order to compare and differentiate burials (Brown 1971:96-106). An interesting part of his study is his insistence that while one might be able to determine who is high status in a society, from that information we cannot infer the organization about the rest of society and must make use of several other lines of evidence (Brown 1971:107-110).
An example of more recent archaeologists making use of this type of approach is Bordach and Mendonca (2001) and their study of the mortuary practices of an early contact period cemetery in Argentina, examining what marked elite social personae in this period. They found several elite indicators, including large flat sealed stones at the entrance to the tomb, along with unique grave goods, which made them label specific people as elite (Bordach and Mendonca 2001:129-130). This hypothesis follows with Saxe’s hypothesis that elites will have more social personae and those social personae can be recognized at death in the monument and grave goods. The study of the Argentinean cemetery also found a demarcation of space between the richest burials and the poorest, indicating that the placement of bodies, memorials, and grave goods will have as much of a social message as the size and opulence involved (Bordach and Mendonca 2001:129).

Lynne Goldstein (1976, 1981) also investigates spatial organization in mortuary contexts, following the basic premise of Saxe, Binford, and Tainter. Though, instead of focusing on the complexity of the society, she concentrated on using the spatial organization to interpret the mortuary practices of the society, something explored in Saxe’s (1970) dissertation. Applying her hypotheses to Mississippian society, Goldstein found that it was important to look at mortuary studies in a multidimensional way, and utilizing the spatial component is a very important part of the analysis (Goldstein 1981:67). The size of the settlement and the size of their mortuary monuments (in this case the monuments were mounds) along with the placement of the corpses were significant variables in the study, allowing Goldstein to identify corporate groups, status of settlements and individuals, as well as chronologic variation in the creation of the cemeteries (Goldstein 1981:61-66).
Goldstein’s investigation and modification of Saxe’s Hypothesis #8, during which she re-tested his hypotheses against more ethnographic examples, became known as the Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis. In essence, this well-known premise asserts that formal cemeteries would be created when there was higher competition for resources, leading to corporate groups who would seek to control access to resources by reaffirming their ancestry. This hypothesis is often referenced in mortuary archaeology as well as critiqued for the lack of human agency and the lack of further understanding as to why cemeteries especially are used in this way, especially in the 1980s backlash against processualism. Others have gone on to test Hypothesis #8 with more distance from the harsh criticism processual archaeology faced in the 1980s and find it to be a useful tool in specific situations and a part of a larger discourse (Morris 1991). Today, the hypothesis is still very much used and/or discussed in mortuary studies, however, there is a modern sentiment that “relationships with ancestors go considerably further than simply establishing functional relationships to land, as surmised by Saxe and Goldstein” (Parker Pearson 1999: 30).

Post-Processual Archaeology and Critiques of Processual Archaeology

In reaction to the more law-driven attempts at explaining mortuary variability, especially in relation to the size and complexity of monumental architecture, other archaeologists have called for a more multi-dimensional, interpretation-based approach to mortuary studies. There is especially frustration with how “the narrowness of our many existing explanatory constructs limits understanding of the creative role of human agency in defining and in altering their own conditions for living” (Anschuetz et al: 2001: 162). Ucko (1969) demonstrated that simple assumptions were inappropriate for mortuary theory, because burial rites changed frequently for many reasons: religious, social, economic and so on. It was important not to just assume social
organization and status affected mortuary remains. The reaction against the Saxe-Binford program often focused on the importance of multidimensionality and interpretation, usually involving ethnographic analysis. Some did not always call for a radical change in archaeology, but instead wished to apply many of the hypotheses and strategies proposed by the likes of Binford and Saxe in order to help understand philosophical and religious perspectives of the past, not just social organization (Carr 1995).

The critiques Ucko offered against the processual paradigm were not typical of the time, the late 1960s through the 1970s, where many American mortuary archaeologists were students of or proponents of the major processual archaeologists. It would take several decades before a large scale, theoretical took place in America when many archaeologists would called for a major change in how mortuary ritual and other archaeological subjects were studied. Ian Hodder (1991) is often seen as the head of this post-processual movement, calling for an active, self-reflexive approach to archaeology where authority is realized and questioned and results are not locked up in a “distant, abstract science or theory” (Hodder 1991:15) where the complexity of human behavior has to be considered. The past processual and positivistic approaches can be seen as trying to directly realize a society’s organization through archaeology, but other archaeologists have attempted to use the study mortuary rituals and monuments as a way to realize the complex social relationships which affect and are affected by mortuary ritual (Barrett 1990:182). The post-processual paradigm rejects the idea that the use of the scientific method in archaeology could lead to definite objects truths but posited that there was more complexity in the past and present affecting our understanding of archaeological remains.

Hodder also looked at the spatial organization of cemeteries to understand social organization, but found that in Nuba burials, cemetery clusters presented an idealized form of
society, where matrilineal patterns are presented but patrilineal patterns are the reality (Hodder 1980:164-165). He further promotes a new way of approaching mortuary archaeology with an example of British Gypsies, who have very complex mortuary rituals because of their views on life, death, purity and impurity. “The Gypsy example shows again how the study of burial must be primarily concerned with attitudes to death and life… we must expect distortions, partial expressions, and even inversions of what happen in social life,” (Hodder 1980:167). The overall message in his writings is to look deeper into the material remains of mortuary rituals, because societies do not follow any sort of natural, unwritten laws. Post-processualists like Hodder call for archaeologists to no longer expect or look for simplistic, black-and-white laws to dictate something as complex, emotional, and intricately entwined with all aspects of society as death and mortuary rituals.

Barrett examined the Bronze Age mortuary mounds of Britain and discussed processual views of these monuments as “conspicuous display undertaken by an indigenous elite whose outward concern was to make manifest their own individual status” (Barrett 1990: 181). He references Binford, Saxe, Tainter and others and the mistaken assumption that mortuary behaviors must reflect social organization, instead looking at mortuary monuments as a result of and as having an effect on social structure. Barrett brings up the fact that cremation appears to have played a large role in the mortuary rituals of which the building of the mounds was a part, and that by its nature, cremation destroys any ritual that may have happened previously. Status display through the use of high status goods is not effective to the population at large when cremation is involved because of their inevitable destructions (Barrett 1990: 184-186). He posits that the mounds were places where members of society could participate in ritual and that the mounds were an active part of society for the living.
Illustrative of the post-processual paradigm and how modern archaeologists have moved away from a purely scientific-method-based, positivistic way of thinking in mortuary archaeology and archaeology in general, Sarah Tarlow (2000) wrote an article discussing the place of emotion in archaeology, and the importance and potential of its study. This particular study is a clear example of the tendency of archaeologists modernly to look past simple, stable social laws and take into account the complexity of the human mind, which includes emotion. Humans are symbolic creatures, and emotion is intimately involved in symbolic acts. Tarlow calls for archaeologists to be open-minded, imaginative, and to remember to humanize their writings (Tarlow 2000:730). Tarlow discusses the usefulness of emotion when studying monumental architecture, how visiting a monument and experiencing it in person can inform an archaeologist as to bodily position and the relationship with the landscape, keeping in mind to analyze emotions in the past with the realization that they may not be the same as modern emotions (Tarlow 2000:724). “Doing justice to people in the past means recognizing that they were complex, feeling, thinking humans and not automata responding to situations in predetermined ways,” (Tarlow 2000:718). This embodies the post-processual movement, determining that humans as a whole and individually will not make certain monuments or perform certain rituals simply because their society is class-based or not or the deceased is a chief or a man or elderly, but that there are a variety of intangible criteria that affect behavior.

The implementation of phenomenology in archaeology is on the opposite end of the archaeological spectrum from positivist, processual archaeology. A highly subjective approach that has been most thoroughly studied and implemented in research involving British prehistory, phenomenology was introduced by Christopher Tilley (1994), a student of Ian Hodder’s, who applied the methodology mainly to landscape archaeology. Phenomenological studies emphasize
the human experience of the landscape in order to more fully understand how people in the past would have experienced it. In his own words, phenomenology is “the attempt to describe the objects of consciousness in the manner in which they are presents to the consciousness. It attempts to reveal the world as it is actually experienced directly by a subject as opposed to how we might theoretically assume it to be. The aim is not to explain the world… but to describe the world as precisely as possible in the manner in which human beings experience it” (Tilley 2004: 1).

Phenomenology is grounded in the physical because our human perception of the world is based around the fact that we have physical bodies that determine our manner of perception. In this way of thinking, the body has to be both object and subject completely and intertwined, because one cannot separate the mind and consciousness from the body that houses it. Perception and experience are sensual things that are informed by our physical body (Tilley 2004: 2-4). The way in which we perceive the physical world changes because of our shifting bodily presence (close/near, back/front, left/right, etc), which makes it altogether impossible to fully describe any object. Our descriptions of an object will also be influenced by our memories of the object and experience with other objects, creating varying types of perception depending on person.

Phenomenological descriptions also rely on the entire sensual experience of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell to create a “thick description” of an object or landscape (Tilley 2004: 11-14, 28). Objects or landscapes cannot be thought of as perceived images that are simply visually observed by humans but must be understood as fully part of the physical experience, “lived thought, mediated, worked on and altered, replete with meaning and symbolism” (Tilley 2004: 25). The idea that there is a separation between subject and object is not held up in phenomenological thought. Instead, it is understood that we create and understand our own
existence through our actions and creations in the material world. This approach allows archaeologists to apply more theoretical ideas about the human mind with the reality of the material archaeological record (Bruck 2005: 46).

Tilley (2004) applied a phenomenological approach to European landscapes, focusing on monumental stone objects from the Neolithic to Bronze Age in order to decipher how social identities were affected by the differing landscapes. Though stone monuments necessarily have some “processual” elements in that they can be mapped, drawn, measured, and so on, they cannot be truly understood without the human experience (Tilley 2004: 218). This methodology can also be applied to natural environmental landscapes and features, contributing to the understanding of how nature is involved in cultural structures (Tilley and Bennett 2001). The phenomenological system of thought stresses the connection between nature and culture, between nature and human, and between body and mind.

**Topics in Mortuary Archaeology**

Presented thus far have been the theoretical extremes of archaeology and mortuary archaeology, from the scientific processual response to the earliest assumptions about mortuary behavior, and the interpretive post-processual reaction against the controlled precision of the processualists. However, there have been several researchers that cannot be so easily classified, or whose theories are separate from the immediate debate between interpretation and science. Many archaeologists have made use of all of the publications and theories that have come before them, whether learning from past mistakes or reworking ideas for their own studies, and have analyzed several issues in mortuary archaeology from how to differentiate reality from idealized presentations of society to how symbolism affects and is affected by society. Presented next in
this paper will be a look at the numerous types of questions that have been examined in mortuary archaeology, including ideology, inequality, identity, power, symbolism, and demographic subjects.

**Ideology**

Ideology is a major topic in mortuary ideology, because of the effect mortuary monuments and mortuary symbolism has on society and vice versa. Despite the extensive literature written about it, ideology is a very broad concept and may seem elusive when one is looking for something concrete to study and understand. Ideology can be defined in a number of ways, as a false consciousness, an ideal world, or more recently it has been described as having a role in society that is a lot more fluid, something that manipulates society and is actively manipulated by society to serve a variety of needs (Shanks and Tilley 1982: 130-132). “Mortuary practices do not just reflect, they also invert and misrepresent. In this way they may act as a powerful means to reproduce and legitimate the social order” (Shanks and Tilley 1982: 152).

An important and influential philosopher to include in a discussion about the definition of ideology is Louis Althusser, whose essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation" (1970) inspired a great deal of work about what ideology truly encompasses. His writings are Neo-Marxist and heavily tied into the structures of capitalism, production, power and how the State exerts control over individuals. Althusser works off of Marx’s definition of ideology as “the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group” (Althusser 1970: 158) and further clarifies ideology as a “representation of an imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”
(Althusser 1970: 162). Ideology, in this view, is something that obscures reality rather than reflecting it and is so all-encompassing that it does appear to be “reality.”

The pervasiveness of ideology works in such a way to make an individual believe they have the free will to choose their own reality. It is important to note that, although ideology is defined as imaginary, Althusser states that it still has a material existence and, by its nature, exists within physical behaviors and the apparatus of society (Althusser 1970: 165-166).

Ideology is not simply a set of beliefs, but a part of a larger systemic machinery in which power relations are played out. In Shanks and Tilley’s book, *Reconstructing Archaeology* (1987), they detail ideological practice as potentially having the following characteristics:

1. it represents as universal that which is partial;
2. it represents as coherent that which is contradictory
3. it represents as permanent that which may be in flux;
4. it represents as natural and necessary that which is cultural and contingent.

(Shanks and Tilley 1987: 131)

In this way, behaviors and material culture dealing with ideology rarely straightforwardly represents reality but are inextricably entwined with many levels of power relations within a society. This Neo-Marxist way of defining ideology is most applicable to capitalist societies of the 19th century, but can be more widely applied when it is kept in mind that individuals are not “passive” in an ideological system, but are rewarded in some way for their participation in the system (Morris 1991: 151). This participation is important when dealing with the archaeology of mortuary beliefs and a larger societal ideology because it is the artifacts of the participation that
must be studied. “Society and its institutions exist only in so far as they are affirmed by everyday behavior” (Parker Pearson 1984: 61).

**Power and Inequality**

Intimately tied to the creation and representation of ideology in a society, mortuary rituals are intimately bound up with power, especially in communicating who has power and who wants power. Monuments are an important part of this system, because larger monuments can dominate a landscape and can be visible to a large part of the society, communicating a message to many people at once. Those in power are likely to try to work a message about their power into the ritual of the society, whether to make it appear natural and normal or to deny its very existence in order to protect it (Shanks and Tilley 1982:133). It is vital when trying to distinguish what is real from what is idealized and to see all of the complex social relations evident in mortuary ritual remains that a researcher have a firm understanding of historical context whenever possible (Cannon 1989, Little, et al. 1992).

Especially when historic documentation and other information is available, it is important to delve deeper into the meaning of the cemetery apart from simply what is presented. A study of a Hanover, New Hampshire, cemetery conducted by Lynn Rainville (1999) tested different elements of gravestones (i.e. material, epitaphs and symbolic motifs) against the socioeconomic status of the people in the cemetery to determine if there were any correlations that could be establish. The cemetery presented a view of a more homogenous society with similar stones arranged in rows. Hanover social elites, such as academics and wealthy businessmen were buried in this cemetery, but it also included those individuals considered belonging to a lower socioeconomic classes such as paupers or Native Americans. The cemetery was not completely
homogenous. For example, the wealthiest in the society did monopolize some high status symbolism in the cemetery, such as the horizontal table gravestone shape or the use of Latin inscriptions (Rainville 1999: 578-579). In the end, though socioeconomic differences could be derived from differences in mortuary architecture, the biggest impact on a gravestones appearance was “the community’s widely accepted ideas about death and the large sphere of American beliefs” (Rainville 1999: 581). Rainville’s study emphasizes the importance of strong temporal control and sufficient historical knowledge about the society in order to make these determinations. The archaeologist can see what view of society was produced by the cemetery along with the actual social structure.

Michael Parker Pearson’s (1982) case study of British mortuary ritual from the early 1800s to 1977 showed that class difference could be expressed not just in the type of monument used but also in the placement and treatment of the bodies. In the historic analysis of the study, the early to mid 19th century, or the Victorian era, witnessed the upper socioeconomic class paying for extravagant funerals, mortuary furniture, and monuments to directly display their status, in the sense that larger monetary expenditure directly reflected a higher status. In this time period, people of all classes spent a large portion of their income on funerary ritual in attempts to achieve or represent status (Parker Pearson 1982: 108-109). British society was in flux during the height of the Victorian mortuary display, with immigration and industrialization changing the nature of social relations, and could account for the degree to which the dead were used to represent a desired hierarchy. “The past, especially through ritual communication (including the context of death), is often used to ‘naturalise’ and legitimate hierarchies of power and inequality which would otherwise by unstable” (Parker Pearson 1982: 101).
The Victorian conspicuous consumption behaviors changed over time as the cost of funerals and monuments were “no longer a clear indication of social position,” (Parker Pearson 1982: 105) because a mortuary industry developed that allowed more of a mass market package that cost the same, regardless of class or status. The population as a whole began to shift towards less ostentatious displays, just as the overall status display evident in all parts of Victorian life in Britain declined for a variety of reasons. The “changing relation to the dead can be explained in terms of the replacing of traditional agencies of social control, notably religion, by the new agencies of rationalism, science and medicine within the framework of modern capitalism” (Parker Pearson 1982: 110). His study discusses the rise of the popularity of cremation in the 20th century, especially first among the upper classes and later emulated by others, as another piece of the scientific, rational movements replacing the very religious, Christian tenet of preserving the body for later resurrection (Parker Pearson 105, 108). In his conclusion, Parker Pearson proposes several ideas that are very familiar in modern mortuary archaeology, specifically that ritual symbols and behavior may refer to actual or idealized power relationships and that the dead can be used to either obscure or naturalize those relationships (Parker Pearson 1982: 112).

Randall McGuire (1988, 2001) has published several studies on ideology and how ambiguous and complex ideologies can be, especially in mortuary monuments. In these papers, McGuire stresses how important it is to remember that the monuments, symbolism, and other material expressions of ideology “are part of a larger cultural structure... changes in beliefs about death are linked to the changes in the dominant ideology at this broader cultural level,” (McGuire 1988: 469). His studies analyze the masking of inequalities in societies, both prehistoric and historic. The prehistoric example is of the Hohokam of southern Arizona and how their mortuary rituals were in discord with the complex social organization and the inequality evident in their
society (McGuire 2001:27-29). His historic study discusses many of the same issues from
the Hohokam example, but in the past two centuries in New York, focusing on the mortuary
monuments and the many different ideologies they present and mask (McGuire 1988).

McGuire clearly uses interpretation over simply relying on technical formulas in order to
interpret the remains of mortuary rituals, for the presentation in the cemeteries in his studies do
not always parallel what the research of the societies revealed. While sometimes the monuments
“reflected the status and social position of the people who were buried,” (McGuire 1988: 51),
McGuire had to consistently try to penetrate the true meaning of the monuments and symbolism.
There were always several different types of power being portrayed and created in the
monuments, between ages, sexes, ethnicities, and those of different economic statuses. At times,
the family dynamic was ideally characterized, the patriarch always having the most prominent
space on the monument and other relationships being downplayed as supporting roles, reenacting
the “cult of domesticity” that was preeminent at the time (McGuire 1988:463). The sizes of the
monuments and the symbolism created for them did accurately portray the amount of wealth and
energy expended, however, they did not accurately portray who would be the most likely to put
forward that wealth for their mortuary monument (McGuire 1988: 457-460). For example, the
Binford-Saxe assumption that size and energy would parallel wealth and status did not always
hold true in the New York cemetery. In the early 1900s, certain ethnic groups such as Italians
and Slovaks, who were lower on the socioeconomic scale, began erecting monuments and
mausoleums that cost double the average price of a house (McGuire 1988: 453). Those who were
not in power would erect monuments that would tell the audience they had more power, wealth,
and status than they actually did, in an attempt to recreate the actual society they lived in.

Another study done on status in mortuary monuments (Cannon 1989) explored further
how mortuary rituals at times idealize and at times correspond to social realities. In looking at
Victorian England, mortuary rituals did not fluctuate directly with social change, instead
appearing to alternate between social classes because of competition and the desire to
differentiate between classes (Cannon 1989:438-439). The patterns show the upper and lower
classes shifting in the use of the ostentatious monuments that were characteristic of Victorian
England. The lower classes found a chance in death to be what they were not in life, and so
would emulate the habits and styles of the upper classes; in return, the upper classes would stray
away from the behaviors exhibited by the lower classes, resulting in a cyclical pattern that did
not correspond with the dominant ideologies (Cannon 1989:438-439).

Identity

Depending on your socioeconomic status, ethnicity, age, sex, and historical situation,
your identity in death will be memorialized in very different ways. Identity is a huge concern
when creating mortuary monuments and when viewing mortuary monuments. Identity is a very
complicated issue, and needs to be examined in a variety of ways. Sometimes the study of
identity is complicated by the loss of personal identity, as in 17th- and 18th-century American
gravestones, where the focus of the gravestones were more often concerned with presenting
social attitudes towards death and morality (Mytum 1989:295).

Mortuary monuments are intricately wrapped up in issues of identity because they are
created by the living, using a powerful message delivered through the deceased, with an eye to
how the monument will affect their status. “The survivors were responsible for choosing the
coffin, stone, and burial location for the deceased,” (Rainville 1999:551). Identity is a
combination of how people view themselves, how others view them, how they wish to be viewed
in the immediate and long term. And importantly, “one’s archaeological enquiry should be historical, in a way in which the question of how the outcome of an action was monitored by actors, and formed the unacknowledged conditions of the next action, is given interpretive priority,” (Mizoguchi 1992:41).

Identity must continually be brought into modern discussions of mortuary archaeology and mortuary behaviors. The questions of the ability of individuals to freely choose their behaviors, if they can only choose within a pre-ordained structure, or if their actions are solely dictated by outside societal organization. Mizoguchi (1992, 1993) draws on Giddens’ work on structuration to develop a framework in which individual actors still have agency to act within a social structure, a more interpretive way of examining the influences of social mechanisms. Social structures can be thought of as the methods by which individuals relationships with others and with the material world are created and maintained over time (Giddens 1984: 16-19). In structuration, the word “rule” is not often used, because the term invokes something rigid or static, whereas societal structures are “open to interpretation” by the actors (Giddens 1984: 21).

Without some level of free will in at the individual level, social change does not happen, though the scope of actions available to an individual are limited by the existing organization (Giddens 1993: 121) “The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space” (Giddens 1984: 2). Structure and agency are intricately linked, one playing off of and setting limits on the other. The social organization that mortuary archaeologists see is a result of social structures being continually recreated by individuals who are “reflexive” and in some ways, actors who are willingly playing a part in a preconceived social structure (Giddens 1984: 3-4). It is the reflexive, continuous
reproduction of social discourse that allows archaeologists to recognize patterns and meanings in the archaeological records (Mizoguchi 1992: 41).

Mizoguchi wrote an article exploring linear barrow cemeteries in England from the structuration perspective detailed above. Barrows had been conceived of as belonging to two synchronic groupings, Beaker and Earlier Bronze Age, which gave the appearance of stable and unchanging behaviors over long periods of time with an abrupt shift into new behaviors (Mizoguchi 1992: 47). Instead, Mizoguchi contends that the barrows had a long, constantly changing history which involved individuals’ memories of past funerals and the influence of the physical presence of earlier barrows. Once monumental barrows were present, their simple presence lessened the importance of monumentality and use of resources, because the memory was enough to invoke a sense of ancestral past and power. New behaviors were introduced, such as cremation, which made it clear that it was the control of people rather than resources that took precedence in the enacting of mortuary rituals (Mizoguchi 1992: 45-46). The past barrows, their physical presence and the memories associated with them, directed behaviors but also were manipulated by individuals for current needs. He concludes his study by saying that both processualists and post-processualists focused too heavily on a perceived stability of social institutions and “have so far failed to appreciate the importance of the reproduction of a social system through agents’ actions” (Mizoguchi 1992: 47), actions which are heavily influenced by the past and memory.

Identity studies in mortuary archaeology are especially common in the historic time period, because there is plenty of documentary evidence available to compare the monuments to, enabling the archaeologist to see true identities as well as idealized portrayed identities. These can range from “overt, performative identities” (Tarlow 2005:165) such as profession or place in
A family which are prominently and clearly displayed on a monument or how the plots are arranged to more subtle expressions of identity, such as choosing cremation over inhumation in the 19th century, a “discursive statement of political identity,” (Tarlow 2005:166).

A person may be part of many groups, religiously, ethnically, professionally, militarily, and so on, but often not all of those identities are displayed. It may be of interest to some archaeologists to study what, in fact, is not chosen for the monument because that makes a statement as clear as what is chosen. Many types of identity are also self-defined and very personal, such as ethnicity, especially in an American setting where people often cannot claim ancestry from just one homeland. In America, many opportunities for study of ethnicity in cemeteries are available, with groups such as Mexican-Americans and African-Americans tending to have very distinguishable memorials and rituals (Mytum 2004:146). Some people will look to their ancestors’ country for a guide as to how to create their monuments. For example, those claiming Irish heritage in America and Australia will often make use of shamrocks and Celtic crosses on their mortuary monuments, a trend begun in Ireland in the later part of the 19th century along with the Gaelic revival (Mytum 2004:145).

The way an identity is meant to be portrayed at one moment in time may not mesh with the way that identity is interpreted at another time in history. Mortuary monuments are a prime medium to get across social messages, and therefore they change as rapidly as social attitudes or the attitudes of those in power change. A study of how soldiers of the Roman Empire were commemorated discusses how memorials and memories differ in that time (Hope 2003). Common monuments of the empire were trophy monuments, where the people of Rome were shown the victory of the battle and the lost soldiers were vastly ignored, making a statement of the utter defeat of the enemy and not making clear the losses of the Roman population (Hope
Mortuary monuments of Roman soldiers found across the empire changed through time; often the tombstones found were of soldiers who had found some permanency and community in their new military settlement (Hope 2003:86) or who had died in peacetime and their monuments were of use to promote “military symbolism, verbally as well as pictorially,” (Hope 2003:87). Hope discusses the various ways in which the monuments were used, who they were meant for (the deceased soldier, their families, the military, or to send messages to the local populace) and how even recent war memorials were intended for different reasons and are read differently depending on the viewer (Hope 2003:93-94).

**Landscape**

There are several patterns and trends evident in mortuary studies with choices in monuments, symbolism, and other rituals, and it has been shown in paper after paper that mortuary behaviors are not arbitrary or stagnant or simple whims and fashions. So far mostly issues of class, identity, and individual reasons for mortuary practice have been discussed. As Shanks and Tilley (1982) argue, the use of mortuary monuments can also be very clearly related to power and landscape in a society. Several other authors have examined this topic, because issues of monumentality as society-wide symbolism have huge ramifications in the study of the historic and prehistoric power relations.

Monuments can be imbued with incredible social and political meaning, including how monuments and tombs are placed in a landscape, where cemeteries are situated, or how large these monuments were (Carr 1995; Parker Pearson 1982). The use and reuse of monuments is significant to the makers and the viewers of those monuments. The placement of mortuary monuments and cemeteries is not a random choice, but is usually important to the society in
some way, because of who can view the monuments or the importance of that plot of land to the society (Williams 1998:91-92). The study of early British societies are prevalent in mortuary archaeology, especially in the multifaceted landscape studies which may be a response to Ian Hodder and his post-processual work for these studies call for an interpretive framework.

The landscape can be studied in historic contexts, because the layout and organization of modern cemeteries gives as much, and more, information as prehistoric monuments. Cemeteries can range from the sprawling, haphazard rural layouts to a very precise grid layout and everything in between, and the divisions or “neighborhoods” within a cemetery can clearly delineate social groups. A study of Oregon cemeteries describes four stages of layouts which, until further research, are similar to the other patterns in the various regions of America (Francaviglia 1971). The stages include a pioneer period (1850-1879) where simple stones and simple grid patterns dominated, a Victorian period (1880-1905) where lavish, decadent monuments were the norm, especially towering obelisks, a conservative period (1906-1929) where the grid became more curving and simplicity returned to monuments, and the modern period (1930-1970) where stones became even more simple and the grid pattern all but disappeared, more often the layout following the natural landscape (Francaviglia 1971:507-508). These stages are correlated with different eras in American history, such as the Victorian period, and social moralities, such as the reactions against the ornate Victorian mindset.

A more thorough discussion of landscapes and landscape archaeology will be covered later in this paper with respect to both the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the cemeteries in this study.

**Symbolism**
Monumentality and their design and layout, etc., all figure greatly into mortuary studies, but equally significant is the symbolism used in mortuary rituals and monuments. Symbols project feelings that are important to humans, and are quite significant when they are taken from the human mind and put into the real word through a process of depiction (Ludwig 1966). It is essential to study symbolism in mortuary contexts, because grave and tomb symbolism are profoundly connected to powerful emotions and intricately involved in the social system and must be thought of as strongly related to the cognitive processes of humans and their culture (Womack 2005).

The anthropology of symbolism has a huge effect on mortuary studies and it is important to have a general understanding of how anthropologists approach symbolism. Symbolism is often thought of by researchers as ephemeral and variable, more open to change and harder to quantify. The world of the material, on the other hand, is seen as more “real” because it is physical and tangible and, therefore, better suited to study. “But the error consists in this: that there is no material logic apart from the practical interest, and the practical interest of men in production is symbolically constituted” (Sahlins 1976: 207). This is the circular system where everything is related, where material goods are not separate entities from the symbolic world. Symbolism is society’s system of meaning which people can manipulate to their needs (Sahlins 1976: 86). Instead of the restraints of the material world creating practices, systems, and symbolic thought, it is the approach of the society that creates a meaningful and inhabitable material world.

Clifford Geertz is an often cited anthropologist in the realm of symbolic anthropology. He takes an emic perspective of cultures, attempting to understand how individuals within a society take meaning from symbols and use this meaning in their actions (Geertz 1974). Geertz
reaffirms the idea of symbolic meaning and material expression being intimately linked, that meaning is “formed, conveyed, realized, emblematized, expressed, communicated, via ponderable, perceptible, construable signs” (Geertz 2005: 6). Meaning, without which symbols are useless, is not something private to each individual, but instead created and reaffirmed in the physical world in which we interact. It is an individual’s experience in the physical world that gives them the tools to understand a symbol’s meaning, but these symbolism also shape meaning for that same individual.

The importance of using archaeology and material culture studies in the understanding of American mortuary rituals and symbolism, in the past and in the present, cannot be undervalued. The past cannot solely be understood by the written word, but must be supplemented by the study of the physically lived world in which people create and perceive their lives. The layout of a cemetery, the architecture of a church or mausoleum, or the chosen symbols used on mortuary monuments imparts information about how a group or an individual experiences their world. The material world is intimately involved with how people see and think about their world. The myriad manifestations of the human mind in the physical world make the human mind measureable and understanding thought and belief possible (Leone 1982: 757).

Though it is clear that the written word, specifically historical documents, cannot relate the totality of a society’s beliefs in and of themselves, the availability of such documents allows researchers a greater temporal control and understanding of society. Cemeteries, especially historic cemeteries with available documentation, are particularly useful in the analysis of symbolism, because of the amount of information available about the cultures, ethnic groups, and even individual people who were involved in the creation of cemeteries. Because of the tendency
to date grave markers, cemeteries are sensitive indicators of cultural change (Gorman and DiBlasi 1981).

Historic archaeology flourished in the mid-20th Century with the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, several conferences convening for the first time in the 1960s, including the Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology, the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology and the creation of the Society for Historical Archaeology (Veit, et al., 2009: 1). Several books published in the 1970s helped to shape the way historic archaeology was practiced in the United States, including In Small Things Forgotten (1977) by James Deetz, which contained a chapter focused on mortuary art and its relationship to religious beliefs. Early on in the practice of historical archaeology, there was a strong focus on the readily available material culture in cemeteries.

One of the more well-known studies of mortuary symbolism is by Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966, 1971). "The unique control offered by the mortuary art of Colonial New England provides an opportunity to scrutinize closely the relationships between its development and the culture which produced it," (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1971:30); this study makes the advantages studying historical cemeteries and their symbolism clear. Using frequency seriation, they analyzed the rises and falls of specific symbols and related the resulting curves to the specific history of New England. When one style, such as the Death’s Head, wanes, a new style, such as the cherub, will rise. Local styles will start with a minority of people adopting a new symbol or design and spread to the majority, eliminating previous trends (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:503-505).

The significance of this finding cannot be underestimated. Research that tries to attribute mortuary behaviors, especially monument types and symbolism, directly to a simplistic cause and effect reasoning falls extremely short of the entire picture. Individuals, firstly, do not simply
have a change of heart about religious beliefs. Religious beliefs, such as ideas about the afterlife, are closely tied to many other sociocultural factors, such as the typical family structure, the state of the economy, politics, and more. Religious beliefs do not exist in a vacuum. When these ideas change, it is rarely sudden, but often by gradual shifts. The battleship curves of the cemeteries studied by Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966) show that members of a society slowly begin to experiment with new styles based on old ones, evidencing a resistance to change, even though undeniably things in their society were changing. Dethlefsen (1992) stated that “to conclude that gravestone designs had to change in response to people’s beliefs about death is to oversimplify an infinitely complex process. One can never understand evolution in terms of such simplistic and judgmental inferences from single, or even multiple, discrete correlations” (156).

Dethlefsen and Deetz also related the presence of these symbols to shifts in the religious tenor of the times. For example, Death’s Heads were more popular with an earlier form of Puritanism that stressed the finality of death while the Cherubs were in use when a focus on the hopefulness of the afterlife became popular (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:505-506). This same symbolism was also related to social class in this New England study, with cherub symbolism being more closely related to social class; the upper, educated class beginning the trend in the earliest forms and the lower, rural classes picking up on the trend and replacing the death’s head with the cherub (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1971:31-32).

Studies such as the type pioneered by Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966, 1971), giving future researchers a framework to study gravestones. Many took it farther than New England and the Puritans, however, expanding the scope to look at larger societal patterns and think beyond the initial findings of Dethlefsen and Deetz. Gaynell Stone (2009) examined 164 colonial cemeteries in Long Island, New York, including a variety of religions including Baptists, Quakers,
Presbyterians and more. Stone recognized the death’s head-cherub-willow and urn sequence first published by Dethlefson and Deetz, but Stone’s larger and more varied sample size allowed her to make more complex connections about how gravestones’ form and style are affected by not just religion, but also ethnicity, kinship and cultural spheres of influence.

It is often of interest to archaeologists to study how symbolism changes through time because of the connections that can be made to other shifting social processes. This chronological study is appropriate to historical mortuary studies, because, as mentioned above, historical cemeteries are especially sensitive to changes even over a small amount of time. Harold Mytum and Kate Chapman (2006) published a study on Bedfordshire headstones, their origin and their change through time. The types of the earliest gravestones have a chronological sequence, using decorations and inscriptions and forms of the stone to order the gravestones. The earliest stones are marked with domestic motifs and architectural features and by the end of the 17th century display more mortality symbols, such as skulls and hourglasses (Mytum and Chapman 2006:69-73). These early external monuments (where before remembrance occurred by placing plaques inside the church) often display an imitation of the high art of the times and may “reflect an emerging middle class identity and newly forming cultural behavior regarding commemoration,” (Mytum and Chapman 2006:76).

Carl Lindahl (1986) looks at contemporary mortuary practices and charts how they have changed since early American practices. He saw, from the symbolism displayed on the gravestones, that the early gravestone was a merely a marker, an obligation, and deeply rooted in the morality of the country and that modern gravestones “show signs of our increasingly varied and internalized views on death,” (Lindahl 1986:166). The ambiguity in modern symbolism is important, for example, the ability of a symbol to stand for two concepts at the same time, such
as plants, which are at the same time representing both life and the ephemeral nature of life, or like the lamb which can symbolize both hope and grief (Lindahl 1986:167-168, 184). There is an increased secularization of modern symbolism, to the point where young viewers will interpret even religious symbolism as secular. For example, young viewers would interpret two hands clasped as meaning some sort of business transaction (Lindahl 1986:183). In the 20th and 21st century Lindahl shows a tendency to take a more introspective look at death and deal with it personally rather than displaying symbolism based on cultural trends of attitudes towards death (such as Dethlefsen and Deetz’s (1966) cherubs and death’s heads).

The social understanding of death has changed dramatically, depending on place and time and historic contexts. Because everyone in every society experiences death, archaeologists have often been interested in the different ways in which death is viewed by these societies, and those views change through time. Something as seemingly innocuous as terms ascribed to death can change over time and show a shifting understanding of death in societies. In New England, there is a shift during the more romantic Rural Cemetery Movement to soften the effect of death and death began to be referred to on gravestones as “sleep” and “rest,” and even the “term cemetery, in contrast to the more descriptive term graveyard, softened the association of death and it demonstrated a belief in resurrection,” (Rainville 1999:559).

**Worldviews**

There are different reasons to create mortuary monuments and enact mortuary rituals. Ethnographic data has suggested to some that these behaviors “reflect separation of an individual from the community and reinforces the intactness of the community despite the loss of a member,” (Trinkaus 1984:674) and historic studies have echoed that sentiment, with “the
passage from life to death, deathbed to grave, allowed the survivors an opportunity to pay their last respects and to make certain that the rupture in the social fabric was repaired by collective action and communal solidarity,” (Laderman 1995:45). Something as simple as a fence around the cemetery can reflect the separation of the dead from the living, a material expression to reaffirm the living’s place in society (McGuire 1988:458).

The idea that mortuary rituals exist in order to fill some sort of society-wide need is an extremely functionalist position. Functionalism has long had its critics, which can be applied to these mortuary functionalist theories. Major critiques of this approach include the lack of agency attributed to individuals and the lack of attention paid to change. When a society is seen almost as an organism that has needs which can be met by rituals and institutions, the individuals in that society are disregarded as the thoughtful and purposeful actors they are. Looking at rituals as filling a societal need, functionalist theory fails to explain the inevitable change that societies and rituals undergo. Critics believe ritual should not be seen as simply a mechanism to serve society and institutions (Geertz 1973).

Even though there may or may not be a deep psychological need to create mortuary monuments, these practices can reflect the attitudes or mood of the time, such as New England’s Puritan era where fear and severe moral doctrine was the norm and the tombstones reflected it with images of decay, death, and warning (Laderman 1995:29-30). These images decreased in appearance when the religious outlook of the people changed, with an eye towards life, resurrection, durability and the eternal spirit (Laderman 1995:38-40, McGuire 1989:295) and eventually towards a focus on beauty and nature in death with the rural cemetery movement, epitomized in the beautification of cemeteries in America, coinciding with the Transcendental movement and Romantic movement where death was sentimentalized (Laderman 1995:41,
Rainville’s (1999) study of Hanover, New Hampshire, cemeteries and history suggested that “religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, and emotional attachment to the deceased had significantly less impact on the choice of gravestone material, morphologies, and inscriptions than the community’s widely accepted ideas about death and the larger sphere of American beliefs,” (Rainville 1999:580).

Not just the religious attitudes of a society are evident in their cemeteries, but their political and social circumstances, as well. For example, a study in Oregon noted the exclusion of African-Americans from the “better” or wealthier parts of the cemetery or their complete exclusion from the cemetery in general, reflecting the segregation the country was experiencing at the time (Francaviglia 1971:506). McGuire’s (1988) study of cemeteries in New York showed how the socioeconomic separation of the rich and the poor was mirrored in the cemeteries, with the poor unable to buy their place in the cemetery or unable to secure the large family memorials that were so central to the family standing (McGuire 1988:463).

**Technology, Health and Demographics**

Attitudes on death can be affected by modifications in how people view land, ownership, and new technologies. When industrialization took hold of Europe and America, the middle class found the ability to hold their own wealth and own their own property, and this new-found ability led to the desire “for private property of death,” (Mytum 1989:295). As new technology developed, such as mass production in the 1920s in America, mortuary memorials were becoming available to people of all socioeconomic levels. When specialized craftsmen no longer had to be commissioned, the memorials became cheaper and the “marked difference between classes in the cemetery began to diminish. Many of the rich continued to erect mausoleums and
large stones, but so too did families of lesser status,” (McGuire 1988:465). Changes in technology and wealth allowed all people to participate in mortuary rituals and attitudes of death were affected because of this new participation, creating an atmosphere of competition within American cemeteries, as discussed in McGuire (1988). A study of a cemetery and coffins in Virginia (Little, et al. 1992) discusses how just as the intensification of decoration and embellishment can be attributed to the trend of rural beautification common in America after the Civil War, so too can it be attributed to “the availability of manufactured coffins and coffin hardware and the increasing ease of distribution in the rural South,” (Little, et al. 1992:412). This continues the theme of modern mortuary studies of looking at several processes when studying changes in mortuary display. There is usually no single, cut-and-dry reason why people begin to modify their mortuary behaviors, but often many historical, social, political, economic and religious causes are involved.

Through history, death was an everyday occurrence and intricately wrapped up in the people’s lives, and high mortality rates were the norm (MacFarlane 1981:249). As medicine advanced and the medical community struggled against death, death ceased to become a natural process and now has become removed from everyday life, leading to the contemporary prevailing habit of the denial of death and a focus on the survivors on gravestones (Parker Pearson 1982:111, Lindahl 1986:172). With the changes in medicine and technology in the industrial age and after, death became an economic issue as well as a religious or community issue. Many businesses grew around death and the body: undertaking, funeral industries, coffin manufacturing, hearses, and even medical dissection (Laderman 1995:36, 42).

Just as health has a substantial affect on how death is viewed and how death is portrayed, mortuary monuments can give archaeologists a good sense of the health and demographics of the
populations being studied. The health of a society and their mortality rates undoubtedly had an effect on how they experienced their life. For example, high infant mortality rates may harden a population against the sentimentalities of death (MacFarlane 1981:249). Using birth records, death records (such as a cemetery can give you), and all the other records a community might keep such as land ownership and the like, archaeologists can examine many aspects of life: status, mobility, family patterns and position, and the characteristics of the individuals who died (MacFarlane 1981:256-257).

Death, children and childbirth are difficult subjects to deal with, in life and in the memorializing of death. It is of interest to archaeologists how a society depicts these issues in their mortuary monuments, because they are such powerful images. When infant mortality levels are high, it is often seen in cemeteries that the infant mortuary memorials are not large, expensive, or ornate, and it is suggested that this is the case because parents could not afford to emotionally invest in their children until they were older. This assumption paints men and women in the past as being callous and the “birth of affection, joy, spontaneity is dependent on the demographic revolution,” (MacFarlane 1981:251). Though, one can not assume because monuments are small, insignificant or non-existent for children that love for the children did not exist, or vice versa that because a memorial is grandiose or expensive that modern people are all incredibly affectionate towards their children. While the graveyard and death records are important tools in analyzing a society, one must be careful in the assumptions made from those sources without utilizing other sources, as well.

A study of memorials that depicted death in childbirth in 17th-century England showed that the sudden appearance of sculpture and memorials illustrating death in childbirth did not coincide with any mortality/demographic change, but instead was affected by changes in the
family and social structure (Hurtig 1983). Sculptures and engravings depicted women, often in a bedroom scene, with a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and went along with the general theme of 17th-century English poetry and painting of an anxiety of death, a desire to be prepared for a common death of the time, and an understanding of the irony of the loss of both mother and child (Hurtig 1983:604-613). The types of death that were common in a certain time and place have a major effect on the types of monuments erected and the symbolism depicted on them. The reality of life in certain periods must be remembered when looking at their mortuary monuments.

A historical mortuary archaeologist must bear in mind all of the precautions laid out in this chapter when dealing with the complexity of death, ritual, symbolism and meaning, especially in a literate society where it would be simple to take written documents at face value and not delve deeper to unravel the myriad reasons behind mortuary behaviors and what they meant to a society. That said, the historical archaeologist must make use of all of the tools at hand and take care to become intimately appreciate the history of the society being studied, the history of its people and major events that shaped it.
Chapter 3: Historical Background of the Cemeteries and Surrounding Areas

Introduction

Four cemeteries were chosen to analyze in this dissertation that were established or experienced most of their growth during the Rural Cemetery Movement: Oakwood Cemetery, Blooming Grove Cemetery, St. John’s Cemetery and Waterford Rural Cemetery. Three of the cemeteries are located in Rensselaer County, the exception being Waterford Rural in Saratoga County though it lies very near to Rensselaer County’s western border. All four cemeteries abut Albany County and are situated close to the capital city. The Capital District, or the Capital Region, is comprised of Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties (Figures 1 – 2) and shared closely interconnected histories (CDRPC 1969: 1). Because of the central location of the cemeteries in their respective counties to Albany County, the shared history will often be discussed by referring to the Capital District at large. Originally the entire area was considered part of Albany County, one of the original ten counties of New York, in the 17th Century. Rensselaer and Saratoga counties were both declared independent counties in 1791 (CDRPC: 50).

Historical archaeology is distinct from prehistoric archaeology because of the access to information from those who lived during those times. Historical archaeology allows “a greater sense of the real historically situated person whose lives and actions writers attempt to represent, created by the ability of historical archaeologists to engage with their subjects through documents as well as other forms of material cultures” (Joyce 2005:48). This benefit to researching historical matters is crucial and should not be overlooked. A background of the history of the area in general, as well as each cemetery, will be discussed in order to give a well-
rounded understanding of the culture that ended up creating the mortuary monuments that will be analyzed later.

Figure 1: Map of New York State highlighting the Capital District from esd.ny.gov

Figure 2: Map of the counties in the Capital District from dot.gov
This area has a relatively long history of European settlement as well as a long occupation pre-contact. Native American tribes speaking the Algonquin language occupied the area until displaced by the 1600s by tribes that would come to be known as the Iroquois Confederation of the Five Nations. The contact period, marked by a European presence, began when Henry Hudson arrived while searching for a shorter route to the Far East on the ship, the Half Moon (Bennet 1980: 1, CDRPC 1969: 5). By 1630, Killiaen Van Rensselaer, of the Netherlands, had purchased large tracts of lands from the tribes on both sides of the Hudson River, and early government in the area was controlled by the Dutch until it was surrendered to the British in 1664.

The region was heavily involved in various wars during the colonial period, famously the French and Indian War from 1754 – 1763, and the American Revolution from 1775 – 1783. (CDRPC 1969: 9 – 11). All of the counties were involved in these wars because of their optimal position for transport; both battle sites and forts common archaeological finds from this time period. Wars that followed that occur during the time period considered for this study, such as the War of 1812 and the Civil War, were not fought in the area, though the Capital District was still involved through the production of goods and the sending of troops to these conflicts (CDRPC 1969: 15).

The Capital District occupies an excellent location with regards to transportation by land or water. In the years before the American Revolution, its placement among the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers made it the central area of growth in the state. In the 1700s, it was a focal point for departures west by arriving Europeans. The 1800s saw the area become a hub for the transport of labor and goods in all directions (CDRPC 1969: 3). The region early on was considered a frontier outpost, ideal because of the Hudson River as the largest north-south
waterway in the area that flows into the ocean as far south as New York City. The Mohawk joins the Hudson in the Capital District, specifically in Waterford, and is the major east-west waterway. The confluence of these two rivers kept the area significant in New York’s history from its founding to modern day. The Erie Canal opened in 1835, allowing access from the Great Lakes to the Adirondacks and Canada, aiding the growing industrial development in the region (Fox 1976: 25). Railroads also kept the counties connected easily to each other and to the rest of the state in the late 1700s/early 1800s. (CDRPC 1969: 41-42). Transportation is a fundamental feature in the history of the Capital District.

**Brief History of the Capital District**

The fact that the Capital District was one of the earlier European settlements and that it held a powerful position along waterways caused the area to be inevitably engaged in political upheavals as well as a focal point for burgeoning industrialization, and inevitably made the area a draw for diverse immigrant populations. Since the colonial era, one of the essential characteristics of American society has been its ability to incorporate a wide variety of people into its society. Creating a new type of society out of immigrants from other groups and cultures is not always a peaceful state of affairs, however, and conflicts “have marred every period and historians have spent many pages explaining the economic, historical, and social causes” (Ellis 1972: 262). Early American politics and economics are extremely complex and cannot be summarized easily. This chapter will focus on the historical events and social groups that most impacted the Capital District’s political and socioeconomic development, as well as the events that affected the culture and religion of the area.
As stated previously, the Capital District area was inhabited for thousands of years by Native Americans until European contact. However, there is no known Native American population in the cemeteries recorded in this paper; the cemeteries were overwhelmingly used by people of mostly Dutch, Irish and English ancestry or other European descent due to the fact that was the general makeup of the populace in and around the Capital District at the time. The southeastern part of New York State, called New Netherland in the early 17th century, was mainly settled by the Dutch. The area around present-day New York City and up the Hudson River was inhabited slowly in the early parts of the century because of troubles with the native populations as well as conflicts between Dutch investors and politicians. It wasn’t until Peter Stuyvesant, an employee with the Dutch West India Company, became the Director General of New Netherland that the colony saw stability in its borders and internal growth (Rink 2001: 30-45).

Before Stuyvestant’s administration in New Netherland, the population had been mostly young men without families. However, the new political stability in the colony, along with a purposeful campaign to attract new immigration to the area in the mid 17th century, resulted in more married couples and families as immigrants. Surprisingly, nearly a quarter of the new settlers were non-Dutch, including many French, Germanic and Scandinavian groups. Colonists from New England, mostly of English decent, settled in Long Island at this time. While the English settlers would prove to resist Dutch rule and assimilation into their culture, most other ethnic groups did not put up such a struggle (Rink 2001: 45-51.) The influx of immigrants changed the structure of the economy in the colony, where previously the fur trade had dominated, agriculture became the main livelihood of the settlers.
Farming in New Netherland was “market-oriented” instead of providing solely for the subsistence of the residents. One end of the spectrum, there existed many isolated farms in the colony, while another system grew based on the feudal estates in the Netherlands, called patroons, developed. Only Rensselaerswyck succeeded as a patroonship in New Netherland. Neither isolated nor part of a larger political development, many farming towns were settled and grew rapidly in size because of the influx of immigrants. The Dutch West India Company tried to offer incentives for the population to gather in easily defendable villages. As a result of these incentives, Albany, at the time called Beverwyck, received a municipal charter in 1652 (Rink 2001: 61-62).

The Dutch settlement of New Netherland was always contentious with the British. In England itself, there were constant objections to Dutch control of the area. In the colonies, New Netherland was bordered by New England, which had a strong Puritan English population. These facts, coupled with the fact that parts of New Netherland had become primarily English and that migrations into New England were causing the population to look elsewhere for land, caused the claim on New Netherland to be challenged. Stuyvesant attempted to mitigate the danger by compromising on boundaries in New Netherland in the Hartford Treaty of 1650. However, English resistance within and outside of the colonies continued to threaten the Dutch hold on the area. By 1664, an English fleet invaded New Amsterdam (New York City), and Stuyvesant was compelled to surrender by his people (Rink 2001: 87-104). The Dutch would gain control again, but ultimately lose power finally to the English in 1674. James II, who was then Duke of York, was given power over New Netherland by King Charles II. As the Dutch lost power in the colony, they “embraced even more tenaciously that which gave them their identity” (Rink 2001: 105).
Especially in the areas that make up the Capital District, the Dutch presence proved resilient and was clearly evident in culture and language. Albany and the surrounding towns boasted a strong presence of wealthy Dutch merchants, whose influence aided the continuation of Dutch culture, and their names remain prominent today, including the Van Rensselaers, Gansevoorts, Ten Eycks and Bleekers (Ellis 1972: 263). It wasn’t until the mid-18th century, when Albany was used to house British soldiers on their way to Canada, that English influence became just as powerful in the area (Rink 2001: 105).

The culture in what became known as New York was unique because of the history of the Dutch and English heritages involved. Once the English had gained control of the colony, there was a push to anglicize the very foreign populations already living there. The Dutch widely followed the Dutch Reformed Church, which had developed during the Protestant Reformation, and under Dutch rule, many other religious groups, such as the Jews and Quakers, were tolerated (Howard 2001: 118-120). At this time, in England, King James II, who was a Roman Catholic, was embroiled in a fight with Protestants William and Mary, which ended in James II being deposed in 1688. It was at this point, in England, that it was made clear that England would be Protestant and not Roman Catholic. However, by this time, there was a wealth of diversity in New York colonists, both ethnically and religiously, because of the variety of people and ideas that had come to the area during the political and religious fighting in England. The fighting and rebellions within the colony as a result of the confusion in England in the latter parts of the 17th century, “brought home the fact that New York was militarily unreliable, politically unstable, and the least English province in North America” (Howard 2001: 126-130).

Leisler’s Rebellion, which lasted from 1689 to 1691, led by a Calvinist named Jacob Leisler who had left the Dutch Reformed Church, polarized the members of the Dutch Reformed
Church. The rebellion occurred at a time when England and France were at war and tensions were rising in the colonies as the English settlers were constantly at risk. Leisler was paranoid about pro-Catholic supporters and a desire to support the Protestant faith. Believing the Lieutenant Governor Nicholson to be involved in pro-Catholic activities, Leisler was an integral part of an uprising that caused Nicholson to surrender control of Fort James. Though initially resistant, Albany had recognized his authority when inhabitants of Schenectady were massacred by the French and Native Americans. King William III eventually assigned Colonel Henry Sloughter to govern the colony, which Leisler resisted and was arrested and executed for the trouble (Howard 2001: 126-134).

Though some suggest this rebellion signified the colony’s resistance to the monarchy or the Anglicization of the colony spurred by James II, others propose that this was a sign of objection to a dominant wealthy merchant class made up of both Dutch and English individuals. Whatever the impetus, the result of the rebellion was to further destabilize the political and religious situation in New York. It was under governor-general Colonel Robert Hunter who took office in 1710 that the various factions were brought together to serve under a provincial council and the English system of law truly began to take root. From the reduction of women’s economic rights to the establishment of English property and testamentary laws, the sociopolitical world of New York was finally becoming anglicized, and with the adoption of English law by the Dutch, the culture of the state soon followed (Howard 2001: 126-144). However, in the religious sector, the failure of the English government to “bring New Yorkers into conformity with the Church of England underscored the fact that cultural pluralism remained deeply entrenched in the province” (Howard 2001: 144).
While the heterogeneity of New York was posing problems for the English government trying to anglicize the population, it was the English government that was aggravating many New Yorkers and their lack of influence in it. The wars in the area, particularly the French and Indian War, brought the tensions in New York to the forefront, especially between the Dutch and English residents (Ellis 1972: 264). New Yorkers protested the strain the wars put on the colony along with several acts and taxes proposed by Parliament, such as the Stamp Act of 1765 which taxed all of the British colonies and requiring printed materials to be on British produced stamped paper, in order to pay for the costs of previous wars. Petitions were sent to Parliament to repeal the Act, which went ignored until merchants and others in New York City demonstrated and rioted for days, promising not to sell English products and eventually attacking the Governor’s home. The population in Albany was more restrained in obvious opposition to the Stamp Act, but after Albany assemblymen visited New York City, the city agreed with the resistance and its merchants followed suit. The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 by Parliament (Howard 2001:206-209, McAnear 1947: 486-487). Tensions in the colonies were rising, with New York playing a large role.

A similar tax, the Townshend duties, was also highly unpopular and caused unrest in New York, especially in New York City. They were repealed in 1770 and momentarily, unrest ceased in the state. However, the remaining Townshend duty on tea became a heated issue in all of the colonies in 1773, giving the British East India Company a monopoly on tea. This led to the infamous Boston Tea Party, a strong act of resistance against the crown. New York participated in a “tea party,” as well, when tea was thrown off the ship called the London in 1774. The aversion towards Britain was at a boiling point, and many were calling for boycotts of British goods (Howard 2001: 213-216).
Rebellion was beginning in the colonies and parties were developing, the loyalists and patriots (or Whigs). Albany itself was divided as many cities were, though remained controlled by the Whig party (Howard 2001: 220). New York patriots began to form a government of their own and attained control of the colonies, declaring independence in 1776. New York State was embroiled in the Revolutionary War fully throughout the war, the battle at Saratoga marking one of the major American victories in the war (Countryman 2001: 230-236). It was not just resistance to taxation or ethnic unrest that caused the Revolutionary War, but a growing national ideology in the colonies that developed even before a nation was officially declared. This ideology spread to areas like the Capital District that differed from other parts of the colony with its strong Dutch mercantile presence. The “new national ideology provided Albanians with a new basis for unity that, in turn, became a vehicle for challenging that unity as social and economic conditions changed” (Hackett 1988: 660). Though the Dutch and English tensions would continue in the city post-revolution, there was now a common cause driving unification. A Committee of Correspondence was created in the city in order to cement the patriotism of the city and drive out loyalists. The committee devised an oath that would alter the traditional Dutch identity to an American one, no longer involved with the Dutch Reformed Church. “Every inhabitant was called upon to reach beyond local and ethnically based political and religious bonds to affirm their common national and religious ties” (Hackett 1988: 665-666). The area would remain united post-revolution, despite the membership in different churches and identification with different ethnicities.

In the decades following the Revolutionary War, the government in New York began to take shape. In Albany, which in colonial times had been dominated by powerful and wealthy Dutch merchant families, a new form of government would arise from the machinations of many
powerful men who entered political life after the Revolution, among them Martin Van Buren, a man of Dutch ancestry who would eventually be elected president. Since Colonial times, the city and surrounding areas had always seen many groups working towards their own interests, a fact that became exaggerated during the Revolution. Many parties developed in the last century of the 18th century, working for their own goals, such as whether or not to build the Erie Canal and who would take ownership of it. Van Buren’s faction, the Bucktail faction, which would eventually evolve into the current Democratic party, gained control of most of the state, especially through manipulations of the Erie Canal. However, following James Madison’s discussion of how to control ambitious factions, Van Buren called for sponsored partisan groups with public appointments so that whichever party was able to control the most influence would still work for the New York population at large. Democracy and partisanship had been established in New York by the 1820s (Countryman 2001: 288-304).

The Capital District’s political and social development was complicated from the beginning and unique from its New England neighbors. The full picture would require much more fleshing out, but the crux of the matter is that the area has a contentious mixed ethnic heritage and was at the forefront of the development of the American system of government. However, a few more important points must be touched on to fully understand the area in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. One advance that was integral to the growth of the area was mentioned briefly earlier: the Erie Canal. As a whole, New York was dominating the nation as far as population growth, trade and manufacture by the early decades of the 19th century. The crowning achievement on this economic command was the canal, which connected the Great Lakes to the Hudson River, creating a new powerful network of trade with the Ohio Valley. The state was an industrial leader in the country and in the world (Gunn 2001: 307-308).
The Dutch character of the city was coming to an end, as the modernization of the city and new ease of transportation drew new immigrants and select groups, mostly of English ancestry, were growing wealthy off of the trade from the canal. The powerful Dutch families would remain in the city and retain much of their wealth and influence, but it would now be shared (Hackett 1988: 668). It was in this economic growth that the cities of Albany and Troy became “commercial rivals,” jockeying for control of the canal, railroads, and bridges to ultimately gain control of traffic and trade. Before the canal, Albany had easily dominated the economy in the area without much interference (Ellis 1943: 484-484). Both cities, regardless, enjoyed both population and economic growth at this time. It is important to keep this economic boom in mind when deciphering the Rural Cemetery movement.

The area’s heritage is a clear indication of the religion that was practiced by the early 19th century. The most influential churches in the Capital District were Protestant Dutch and English churches, recognizable by “Reformed” in their names (Hackett 1988: 669). However, a reformation in religion would come to the area just as the Erie Canal was being completed. In fact, the presence of the canal was integral in the spread of the “Second Great Awakening” in New York, a movement which started in the south. This awakening was a religious revival among Baptists and Methodist. “Alienated from orthodox Calvinism, revivalist ministers preached an optimistic message of personal autonomy and human potential for salvation” (Gunn 2001: 330). This evangelical movement was an important occurrence that would influence religion in New York because it turned many away from the established churches and led to several reformation movements and the establishment of new religious denominations.

The new evangelical denominations were not the only competition for the traditional Protestant churches in the Capital District because the Roman Catholic Church was also gaining
a foothold in the area. The growth of Catholicism can be attributed to the sudden increase of non-Dutch and non-English immigrants, specifically those of Irish and German descent (Gunn 2001: 342-343). Fueled by religious competition, which was underlain with economic competition from the new immigrants who provided cheap labor, the area would see hostility grow between Catholics and Protestants. Religion and politics would be inextricably linked, as the fear of immigrants would be linked to Catholicism and perceived as a threat to democracy (Gunn 2001: 343). As the Capital District moved into the mid-19th century, it could be identified as increasingly pluralistic from ethnicity to religion and on a fast track towards the modern era.

**History of Rensselaer County**

The Rural Cemetery Movement in New England was prevalent in the Capital District, one of the few areas outside of the New England area that participated thoroughly and early in the associated mortuary trends linked to the movement. This is perhaps because of the ease of transportation, movements of goods, men and ideas through the Capital District to and from surrounding areas. The first cemetery established in the Rural Cemetery Movement was Mount Auburn near Boston in 1831. A decade later, an association was formed to found the first rural cemetery in the Capital District within Albany County, Albany Rural Cemetery, with the first burials occurring in 1845. This cemetery is one of the most well known and earliest rural cemeteries in the United States. Not long after, in 1848, Oakwood Cemetery was established in nearby Troy in Rensselaer County.

Rensselaer County is the nucleus of the cemeteries in this dissertation and contains the largest and most prominent rural cemetery in the study. The county was named for Kiliaen Van Rensselaer and became a county, independent of Albany County, in 1791. The city of Troy,
located in Rensselaer County, is also a geographical focus for this study. Troy was incorporated in 1816 and is the county seat of Rensselaer County (Carmody 1941:7-9). Much of the county was considered rural, with the highest and most dense populations occurring in the cities of Troy and Rensselaer, though in modern times the bulk of the county is suburban (Fox 1976: 4-5). The area saw heavy migration into the county from surrounding states in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Fox 1976: 20).

The Rensselaer family owned much of the county’s land during this period. Rensselaerwyck manor remained in a type of feudal system, demanding rent payments from the tenant farmers in the area. This system remained in the area, even though a burgeoning democratic identity was taking hold in the rest of the area in the mid-19th century, associated with Grecian democracy and symbols, which can be seen in the cemeteries. In 1850, the judicial system in the county ruled in the favor of the tenant farmers after the grassroots Anti-Rent wars or rebellion caused deaths and disturbance in the county for several years. This effectively ended the type of control the Van Rensselaer family had wielded in the area (Fox 1976: 20-22). Troy is named for the Greek city and created an identity associating with the democratic nation, even naming areas in the city after Mount Olympus and Mount Ida (Fox 1976: 25). Rensselaer County, and Troy specifically, was prosperous well into the 19th Century, utilizing the prime geographic location to take advantage of hydraulic energy in the new industrialized nation.

**History and Location of the Cemeteries**

**Oakwood Rural Cemetery, Troy, NY**
Oakwood Cemetery (Figures 4, 6, 7) is a non-sectarian, non-profit cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places located at 50 101st Street, Troy, NY, 12180. Troy is a city located to the east of the Hudson River and the capital of Albany, N.Y. Troy is situated within Rensselaer County, and is considered part of the Capital Region of New York State. Troy had a population of 19,334 in 1840; 56,747 in 1880 during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement; and 71,996 in 1920 at the end of the recorded sample.

The city of Troy quickly grew in affluence after it was selected as the site for county buildings in the 18th Century. The area continued to prosper, especially after 1823, when the Erie and Champlain canals were opened, followed by several railroads that allowed the area to become a hub for the transport of goods (Bureau of the Census 1886: 650). Manufacture, with a focus on the manufacture of clothing and foundry goods, was a constant in the city by the mid-19th Century. Production included but was not limited to cotton mills, nail factories, steam engine factories, brush factories, flour mills, tanneries and breweries. Shirt collar manufacture was also an important industry in the area which employed thousands of residents in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries. (Bureau of the Census 1886: 651; Fox 1976: 25). The industrial character of the area is clearly evident and the neighborhoods and homes surrounding the cemeteries in this study are clustered tightly together rather than sprawling as may develop in more rural areas. In 1875, the population of Troy was made up of 20,136 Irish immigrants followed by 15,527 native born Americans. There were smaller populations of other immigrants; the largest were those born in England (1,635) and German (1,514) (Bureau of the Census 1875a: 263, 1880b).

In an effort to determine the general socioeconomic status of the city, federal and state censuses were examined to ascertain frequent occupations and average house values in Troy. Being one of the larger cities in the area, the population held a large number of varying
occupations. Common occupations were workers for the many factories and mills in the area, especially the collar factory. Other common occupations were general laborers, machinists, boatmen, housekeepers, dress-makers, and other similar jobs. Less common, but present, were lawyers, physicians, professors (for the local college, RPI), jewelers, engineers and other like professions. There were almost no farmers listed as living within the city of Troy, which was customary as farmers at the time would live on their farmland, outside of the city (Bureau of the Census, 1880b).

In all of the wards of Troy in 1875, house values were generally over $1,500, with very few instances appearing in the census of houses worth under $1,000. Just as common as a house worth between $1,000 and $2,000 were houses worth between $5,000 and $7,500. A smaller, but still significant, segment of the population lived in houses worth over $10,000. The distribution of houses worth less or more varied depending on wards. Ward 6 in Troy, at the south end of the city, had almost exclusively houses worth under $2,000 while Ward 1, at the north end, had high numbers of houses worth between $10,000 and $20,000 (Bureau of the Census 1875c). In 1875, the average house value in Rensselaer County was $2,811 (Bureau of the Census 1875a). Many houses in Troy fell well above this mark.

Oakwood Cemetery in Troy was founded in 1848; the fourth rural cemetery founded in New York, and remains active to the current day, the largest cemetery in this study in both acreage and number of graves. It is situated on just over 300 acres of land, half the land purchased in 1848 and the additional land purchased in 1871 by the Troy Cemetery Association, on an escarpment with a famous view of the Adirondack foothills, including a 100 mile panorama of the Hudson River valley. The land for the cemetery was chosen with the aesthetics of the Rural Cemetery Movement in mind. The cemetery was designed by John C. Sidney and
was further developed by Superintendent John Boetcher. Oakwood is home to about 60,000 burials, including many famous residents of the Capital Region. Prominent burials include Civil War officers Rice Bull, Joseph Bradford Carr, William Freeman, George Thomas and John Ellis Wool. Other renowned burials are those of educators Amos Eaton and Emma Willard and prominent community leaders such as Abraham Lansing, George Phelps and Russell Sage (Sanders N.D.)

St. John’s Cemetery, Lansingburgh, NY

St. John’s Cemetery (Figures 4, 6, 7), also known as St. John’s on the Hill, is located on Cemetery Road in the village of Lansingburgh, city of Troy, NY, roughly 1.5 miles north of Oakwood Cemetery. The village of Lansingburgh was founded by Abraham Jacob Lansing and originally called New City, was often in competition with Troy with regards to commercial success and political importance. It was surpassed in both by Troy, however, and became part of the city of Troy in 1900. The confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers is located directly to the east, about a mile from the cemetery. The village participated in many of the same industries as the city of Troy due to its proximity. The population of Lansingburgh in 1855 was 5,700 and in 1875 was 6,924.

The population in Lansingburgh had similar proportions to Troy; the majority of the people had either been born within the country or in Ireland. Smaller numbers of people were born in other countries, mainly Germany, England or Canada. Similar to Troy, there were a variety of occupations in the village, with a preponderance of workers in the factories, especially the brush and collar factories. Another very common profession was brick-maker. Due to the location along the river and near the industrial zone, farming was not a common occupation in
the area. Like Troy, houses were often valued over $1,000. However, the most common value was between $1,000 and $6,000, with few houses costing more or less (Bureau of the Census 1875a, 1880a).

St. John’s is the only Catholic cemetery in the sample, owned and operated by the Albany Diocesan Cemeteries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, one of eighteen Catholic cemeteries they operate in the Capital District. This makes the cemetery very different from the others discussed in this dissertation, which were deliberately non-denominational. Though it is not specifically a rural cemetery, and does not claim to be, it was chosen for this study to attempt to infer how much of the Rural Cemetery Movement’s aesthetic styles were adopted, even at a religious cemetery. St. John’s was also chosen because it was operational through the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement and into modern day.

St. John’s is utilized by the population as the present Catholic cemetery in the area, preceded by the Catholic Burial Ground which was opened in 1829. The land for St. John’s was purchased in 1860, on the hill overlooking Lansingburgh. The land was given to St. Augustine’s Church in 1937. St. John’s was established in 1869, however, several burials were removed from the older cemetery and reinterred at St. John’s, which explains the presence of burials pre-1869 (Broderick 1965:1).

**Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, North Greenbush, NY**

Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery (Figures 3, 5, 8) is regulated by the New York State Cemetery Board, located between North Greenbush Road, or Route 4, and Blooming Grove Drive in the hamlet Defreestville, town of North Greenbush, Rensselaer County. The population of North Greenbush consisted of 2,170 people in 1860; 4,131 in 1880; and 1,425 in 1920. The
population experienced a sharp decline in 1910, at the same time that Troy experienced a boom in population growth. Ancestry in the town was similar to the rest of Rensselaer County, the majority of citizens having been born in America or immigrants from Ireland. The census of 1855 showed that most houses were worth under $1,000. The low value of the houses, sometimes as low as $50, indicates a much lower cost of living compared to Troy and Lansingburgh. Farming made up the majority of occupations, with manual labor (laborers, mechanics, blacksmiths, etc) accounting for most of the rest of the jobs. A few other professions were present, such as doctors and clergymen. Factory work was not as common in the area (Bureau of the Census 1855a). The 1875 census shows that the house values in the area did not change drastically in two decades. Most houses were listed between $500 and $2,000. The 1875 census shows more estates worth up to $5,000. Some of the professions of those with the more expensive homes are listed as piano maker, roofer and coal dealer, for example (Bureau of the Census 1875d).

Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery is located about 2 miles east of the Hudson River and roughly three miles south of Oakwood Rural Cemetery in Troy. The cemetery is located almost directly between Troy and Rensselaer, along Route 4 which connects the two cities. The hamlet of Defreestville was originally called Blooming Grove (renamed in 1830 because of the Blooming Grove in Orange County, NY) and, along with Bath on Hudson and Wynantskill, made up North Greenbush. The area was part of the Rensselaerswyck Patroonship established in the early 17th century, but was only sparsely settled until the mid 18th century.

The land for Blooming Grove Rural was used sporadically as a burial grounds, mostly by the Blooming Grove Reformed Church which was established in 1814, in the first half of the 19th century, before being fully utilized by the community post-1860. Blooming Grove has the oldest
burial in the sample, which also happens to be the one famous internment in the cemetery, of John Evert Van Alen, a US Congressman from 1793 to 1799, buried in 1807. There are many prominent family names among the buried in Blooming Grove Rural, including the DeFreest family, after which Defreestville is named, an early settlement in the town of North Greenbush.

**Waterford Rural Cemetery, Waterford, NY**

Waterford Rural Cemetery (Figures 4, 6, 7) is a non-profit cemetery located at 180 Saratoga Avenue, Waterford, NY and is within the boundaries of Saratoga County. The cemetery is the only one in the study on the western side of the Hudson River, just north of the fork where the Mohawk River joins the Hudson. The cemetery’s location in Waterford is also notable because of its proximity to the junction of important waterways in New York. Waterford is the site of the southern terminus of the Champlain Canal and the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal. The village of Waterford had a population of 1,822 in 1880; and 2,637 in 1920. The population was commonly made up of people born in America or immigrants from Ireland, similar to Rensselaer County (Bureau of the Census 1850).

The most common occupations in the town were farmers, laborers, merchants and lawyers. People who worked for the canals, boatmen and toll collectors, were also frequently listed. Druggists, bank workers, and other similar professions were also common (Bureau of the Census 1850). In comparison to Rensselaer County, where the average cost of a house was $2,811 in 1875, the average cost of a house in Saratoga County was $1,844 (Bureau of the Census 1875a: 266). The census of Saratoga County in 1850 indicated that the majority of houses in Waterford were worth well under $1,000, similar to North Greenbush. However, there was a wealthier contingent in the area that owned houses worth over $5,000, with many of the
head of households of these homes being merchants. Several estates were present that were worth over $10,000, owned by those involved in professional fields, like lawyers, or profitable farmers (Bureau of the Census 1850). By 1875, the house values remained very much the same as the majority of houses were still listed as worth under $1,000, though there is an increase of homes listed between $1,000 and $2,000. There are many houses worth over $10,000, still listed as belonging to professions such as lawyers and engineers (Bureau of the Census 1875f).

Despite being in a different county, Waterford Rural is physically very close to the other cemeteries in the study, less than two miles to the west of St. John’s Cemetery and Oakwood Rural Cemetery. There was a much older cemetery in this spot that was founded in 1774. The newer section of the cemetery was founded in 1816, expanding out and away from the older section and utilizing the land with the rural aesthetic in mind. It was in this same year that the original district of Halfmoon was separated into Halfmoon and Waterford.
Figure 3: Location of Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery on Troy 1893 USGS 15’ Topographic Map
Figure 4: Location of Oakwood Rural, St. John’s and Waterford Rural Cemeteries on Cohoes 1898 USGS 15' Topographic Map
Figure 5: Location of Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery on Troy 1928 USGS 15’ Topographic Map
Figure 6: Location of Oakwood Rural, St. John's, and Waterford Rural Cemeteries on Cohoes 1929 USGS 15' Topographic Map
Figure 7: Location of Oakwood Rural, St. John's and Waterford Rural Cemeteries on Cohoes 1949 USGS Topographic Map
History of the Rural Cemetery Movement

The majority of mortuary behaviors in nineteenth-century America, especially New England and the Northeast, were influenced to some degree by the rural cemetery movement. Rural cemeteries, cemeteries located outside of the main city with a romantic English garden
landscaping aesthetic, were built in most major cities during this time (Bender 1974: 196). The name rural cemetery is not quite accurate. It is more the style and layout of the cemetery than the geographical placement that defines it, but the term “garden cemetery” that was used in England was not as popular in America or in the literature about the American Rural Cemetery Movement.

The larger and more historically important rural cemeteries, such as Mount Auburn Cemetery in Boston or Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, have been the focus of many studies on the art, architecture, and social and religious reasons behind the shift towards the rural cemetery. Mount Auburn was established in 1831, with Dr. Jacob Bigelow as the main driving force behind its formation, the first rural cemetery in the country. The impetus behind the creation of Mount Auburn was the ever-increasing population and urbanization occurring in the city of Boston. Services in the city, from providing proper water to its citizens and keeping the city clean, were suffering by the beginning of the 19th century. Lawmakers proposed banning burials within city limits in 1822, and though the laws did not pass, it opened a dialogue in the community about whether burials within the city were healthy to begin with. Discussions about possible substitute burial grounds, other than city church yards, began at this time (Sloane 1991: 44).

Several other rural cemeteries were built in the following years: from Mount Hope Cemetery in Bangor, Maine (1834) to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia (1849). Receiving less study and attention, but founded during the height of the rural cemetery movement, Oakwood Cemetery in Troy, New York (1848) is part of a national historical and cultural phenomenon and has played a role in the Capital Region of Albany, NY since its founding.
This trend towards open spaces, monumental architecture, nature within the cemetery and Neoclassical or Romantic symbolism contrasts starkly with the mortuary behaviors of the previous century, which was influenced heavily by Puritan morals. Prior to the rural cemetery movement, Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used gravestones to remind themselves of their mortality and prepare themselves for death (Hijiya 1983: 346). The change in cemetery placement and design in the nineteenth century marked a transition in religion, art, and thinking towards remembrance, the individual, and an attitude towards death that ranged from hopefulness to denial. “If at times neglected in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the gravesite became a primary locus for expressions of love, honor, and grief by the survivors of the deceased.” (Swedlund 2010: 177).

Prior to the rural cemetery movement, cemeteries were found within the city or town limits, often right in the middle of the community and connected to church property, or in the countryside where very small cemeteries consisted of a family at individual farmsteads. Burials from the early Colonial Period on had to be in consecrated ground, inside walls and fences, and separated from nature, which had a long history back to Medieval Christianity of being considered evil or unclean (Linden-Ward 1989: 17). The practice of keeping cemeteries within the confines of the settlement, in churchyards or other common areas, was common in England as far back as the 8th century and continued in America with settlers from the region (French 1974:38). These precursors of the rural cemetery differed in more ways than simply geographical placement in regards to towns and cities. Generally, the layout and symbolism used followed traditions established over a thousand years ago in Christian and European cultures, traditions that were largely solemn, somber, morbid and focused on the inevitability of death (Linden-Ward 1989:15). The majority of the burials in this study fall under the Christian headings,
whether Catholic or Protestant; some of the themes common to Christian burials are humility under the face of God, a resignation towards death or alternately a fear of death, and preparation for the afterlife.

American cemeteries followed European traditions and early American burial grounds, before the rural cemetery movement, were often bleak and unkempt, as the visual image of the graveyard was unimportant. Burials and memorials were equally nondescript and austere, there was negligible ritual surrounding the burial, unadorned wooden coffins, and, if there were any decorations on the gravestone, they were also simple and generic (Swedlund 2010: 35). In the early 18th Century, the literature and eulogies of the Western world “stressed the finality of death and the horrors of decomposition, while making only scant reference, if any, to the comforting hopes of Christianity,” (French 1974: 40).

Much of the behavior reflected in American burial grounds, specifically, reflects the Puritan distaste for the body. Summing up early American colonists’ view of death and their material treatment of death would be the statement of Cotton Mather, an 18th century preacher, “That Man is like to Die comfortably, who is every Day minding himself that he is to die shortly.” (Hijiya 1983: 346). Similarly illustrating this attitude is an epitaph found commonly in the Capital Region area of New York, and elsewhere in the Northeast, in the latter part of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century:

Reader behold see as you pass by
as you are so once was I
as I am now you soon will be
so prepare for death and follow me

-epitaph of Jessie Raymond, died 1819, East Line Cemetery
The descendents of the Puritans, after the decline of the strict religion, still greatly affected the mortuary symbolism of New England well into the 19th Century. The religious atmosphere switched to one of melancholy in the interim between the harsher Puritan symbolism seen in early New England cemeteries and the later romantic rural cemetery symbolism. Melancholy expressed itself in the desire to contemplate death and sentimentality, especially in natural settings. Gothic or romantic settings were preferred, overhanging and dark tree groves especially, with Gothic architecture and classical urns and monuments in the shape of pyramids or obelisks. The weeping willow was especially popular in early 19th Century New England, containing old world mortuary symbolism along with its natural appeal. These preferences show themselves in New England and New York with the appearance of the stylized “willow and urn” motif. (Linden-Ward 1989: 131-134).

However, “despite persistent use of a grim iconography of death and stern warnings of man’s postmortem fate, Puritanism in Old and New England contained seeds of a more benign view of death than that of medieval Christianity,” (Linden-Ward 1989: 38). There was more of a search for understanding of how one’s actions and environment affected the soul in Puritanism than previous forms of Christianity in Europe. Even in the 17th Century, there were Puritans who thought nature was an ideal place to come to terms with and understand death and the afterlife. It was here that melancholy and nature became associated, a concept which would later grow and thrive in the Romantic period (Linden-Ward 1989: 39).

There are numerous, complicated and inter-related reasons why these early American colonists had this view of death. Similarly, it is as complex an explanation why both Europeans and Americans latched onto the garden landscaping aesthetic and more Romantic symbolism for cemeteries and gravestones, later known as the rural cemetery in America. There were both
practical and aesthetic/emotional reasons for the changing cemetery designs, cemetery placement, and gravestone styles. Some of the most pressing practical matters that drove the change from within-city cemeteries tending towards the grim to usually outside-city limits rural cemeteries that focused on the visual pleasure are overcrowding, which led to concerns about space and health concerns and the artistic movement of the Romantic, which engrossed Europe and America’s populations and changed the artistic and funerary fields.

In both Europe and America, health concerns and overcrowding in smaller graveyards were some of the primary catalysts for the development of a new approach to burying the dead. Many countries in Europe struggled to manage overflowing cemeteries as the population boomed during the Industrial Revolution. The Parisian catacombs are an example of the extreme measures that had to be taken to deal with overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in burial grounds. In highly populated American centers, the problem was very similar, and cemeteries were hubs of unpleasant odors and sights. Soon the urban cemetery became a problem that surpassed simply a repulsive sight and was singled out as the cause of disease. The population began to complain about the state of the graveyards (French 1974: 41).

There was a belief that noxious fumes and miasmas transmitted disease at this time. There were reports, exaggerated or not, from London that pedestrians could be suffocated from the strong gases coming from the cemetery’s overloaded soil (Penny 1974: 61). European cities such as London and Paris had long been dealing with overcrowded cemeteries for many years by the 18th Century, having resorted to exhumation, reburial, mass graves, and purported use of human remains as fertilizer. The famous les Innocents cemetery in Paris was closed in 1780 due to concerns that the resulting noxious fumes were dangerous. Changes were brought about in the
mid-18th Century by a more prosperous middle class that could afford and demand sentimentality and better treatment after death (Linden-Ward 1989: 29).

This belief that the ability to smell noxious fumes resulted in disease was a concern in America, and was supported by the several outbreaks of disease in the country. A cholera epidemic between 1831-1832 was used as to substantiate the fact that overcrowded cemeteries, especially those that were closely surrounded by residential areas, were a public health risk (Schuyler 1984: 293). The yellow fever epidemics in the late 18th Century in New Haven, CT, where an urban cemetery held upwards of five thousand burials marked another outbreak that concerned citizens. The overcrowding of the cemetery was deemed related to the epidemic. The cessation of burials at the original burial ground led to the creation of a new cemetery, Grove Street Cemetery, a precursor to the rural cemetery, in 1797. It is not considered a part of the Rural Cemetery Movement, because although it was placed outside the city, it lacked the garden park aesthetic of rural cemeteries, instead arranging burial plots in the neat rows and columns common since the colonial period (Schuyler 1984: 294). The new cemetery was essentially an overflow cemetery for the city, but was unique at the time with a new layout and plots designated for families and other groups, rather than a haphazard design with random assignations depending on date of death (Linden-Ward 1989: 29).

Yellow fever epidemics were a concern in many major American cities, occurring in New York City after a long hiatus in 1819, 1820, and 1822 with significantly high death tolls. It was a source of much medical debate as physicians argued whether or not the disease was contagious through human contact or spread through the “miasma.” Many believed yellow fever was spread through the air, the miasma, due to unclean conditions and called for the city to be cleaned up and maintained. This included cleaning the streets and removing garbage, but the crowded
burials grounds were also implicated as contributing to the miasma that spread disease. In 1823, legislation was passed in New York City called “A Law respecting the interment of the Dead” that outlawed burials in cemeteries and church yards in certain overcrowded areas of the city (Sloane 1991: 34).

Public health and hygiene also influenced how death was portrayed and dealt with. Practical concerns of life could and did affect how bodies were disposed of and how the deceased were memorialized. “In the Victorian period public health and hygiene, sanitation and medical services became integral features of everyday life and became incorporated with religion and scientific and technological progress as a means of power legitimation… the dirtiest members of society were naturally the lowest,” (Parker Pearson 1982:111). Religious and political institutions have often struggled through history to have access to deceased bodies and control how they were displayed and memorialized, because of the ability of the portrayal of the dead and of death itself to create and reflect meaning (Laderman 1995:29).

Especially in Europe, as towns and cities grew in size, the disposal of the dead was a practical concern as much as an emotional and spiritual concern, and affected many changes in how the dead were dealt with and memorialized. When there was a great deal of overcrowding in cemeteries, church burial grounds were often reused and the poor often had to endure communal graves, with graveyards becoming repugnant areas of inadequately handled death (Mytum 1989:284-286). Several responses occurred, such as the use of private above-ground vaults (a huge change in the memorializing of death) or air-tight coffins as well a cemetery movement in Europe the late 18th and early 19th century where new cemeteries were opened outside the church ground (Mytum 1989:288-290). Many European cities began outlawing founding new cemeteries within city limits or walls at various dates throughout the early 19th Century, and
many cemeteries were opened in rural areas and were stark contrasts to the overcrowded city cemeteries by resembling landscaped gardens. Three notable London cemeteries that were planned to specifically be “garden cemeteries” are Kensal Green, Highgate and Abney Park and included many aspects that can be seen in the New England rural cemeteries: Classical and Gothic elements, walking paths designed for recreation and the ability to enjoy the scenery, and lots of landscaping in the romantic ideal: unreserved, purposely haphazard, and expansive (Penny 1974: 66). The idea was to have a structured environment that gave the impression of being wild.

The fear of disease spread as well as the idea that overcrowded and unsanitary cemeteries were a main cause of disease into the New England cities. Epidemics continued in America, though none resulted in the creation of a rural cemetery or a European “garden-landscape cemetery” until the Brooklyn Rural Cemetery. The cause was, once again, a yellow fever epidemic which occurred in New York City in 1822. The epicenter of the epidemic was conspicuously strong near the Trinity burial ground, an inner city cemetery. The creation of Brooklyn Rural Cemetery in 1838 was a direct result of the upheaval that surrounded the yellow fever epidemic (French 1974: 42). Dr. Jacob Bigelow was very likely aware of the possible health threats posed by small, crowded cemeteries in the cities when he actively pursued the launch of Mount Auburn (Bender 1974: 197).

John Claudius Loudon, a Scottish writer who had considerable effect on the taste and architecture of Britain in the first half of the 19th Century, wrote on the predicament of the growing number of cemeteries and the concern that they were not being developed properly or in good taste. He was forward-thinking, worrying about the back-lash of the community when unattractive and potentially unhygienic cemeteries grew to be too many or too large (Curl 1983:}
In 1843, he wrote a book, first published as a magazine series, titled *The Principles of Landscape-Gardening and of Landscape-Architecture applied to the Laying out of Public Cemeteries and the Improvement of Churchyards; including Observations on the Working and General Management of Cemeteries and Burial-Grounds*, in which he described a cemetery’s central focus should be in burying the dead in a manner that does not harm the health of the living society. Loudon wrote that bodies should not mix with soil nor be buried in a sealed leaden box, on the chance that the trapped noxious fumes would cause an explosion (Curl 1983: 137). These health concerns came first, second being the very important task of the cemetery to improve the morality and mood of the community.

At the same time as the aesthetic and hygienic needs of society were changing, so too was the composition of social classes. In the 19th Century, the middle class was growing and becoming more visible which caused society to be divided merely into the predetermined haves and have-nots. A new attitude was developing, especially in America, where one could work hard enough to succeed and move amongst the classes. Success was also measured in wealth and wealth was measured in material possessions. Because of this trend, conspicuous displays of wealth were important in order to define your station in life, to mark yourself as successful. The cemeteries were becoming ideal places to showcase wealth because of their public nature (Baugher and Veit 2014: 133).

Though the shift away from the early, thin slate gravestones lined up in neat rows in churchyards had numerous causes, it would not have been possible to acquire the new variety of stone in such large quantities if it were not for the improvements made in transportation in the 19th Century. Railroads and canals made the gravestone industry possible in a way the earlier colonists could not have enjoyed (Baugher and Veit 2014: 141). The Capital District was an ideal
place to receive the materials needed for carving grand monumental memorials because of the
construction of proximity of the local railroads and the Erie Canal. The availability of raw
material allowed burial monuments to reach new heights of elaborate construction, size, and
decoration.

The ready ease with which gravestone makers could acquire materials combined with
artists being involved in the creation of sculptures and memorials for rural cemeteries paired well
to create the idealized museum-like, park-like retreat from the city that had been imagined.
Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn was well known for having an extensive collection of fine art
among its memorials. Notably, Greenwood was designed by David Bated Douglas who also was
responsible for the other major cemetery in the Capital District, Albany Rural Cemetery
(Baugher and Veit 2014: 135-141). Artists were being encouraged to display their craft in the
cemetery and patrons of the newly privatized cemeteries were being urged to make their plots
unique to promote a diversity of form in the cemetery to more closely mimic the outdoor
museum aesthetic.

Mount Auburn was the first of its kind in America and the standard to which other rural
cemeteries would be held. “It was a new type of burial place designed not only to be a decent
place of interment, but to serve as a cultural institution as well” (French 1974: 38). This was a
new way of viewing the cemetery which occurred in the 19th Century, the last of the
“melancholy” attitudes in art and architecture faded by the late 1820s just as the rural cemetery
movements began to take hold (French 1974: 41). There was a reaction against the predilection
for dark or depressed aesthetics, calling for cemeteries to be open spaces of relaxation.
Cemeteries were no longer somber places where silence had to reign, rather were much needed
areas for urban dwellers to escape to (Curl 1975: 13).
Bigelow, one of the main proponents behind Mount Auburn, was also a part of the growing agricultural movement in America, which served to promote agricultural improvements in the country as well as bring about awareness of the movement to the public. “Contemporaries thought that such movements not only demonstrated the vitality of the new republic but also reinforced society’s moral virtue. Agriculture was a virtuous occupation … As America became more urban, domestic horticulture also became a cherished cultural symbol. Americans closely identified domestic tranquility with agriculture and horticulture” (Sloane 1991: 46). Mount Auburn, a model for the American rural cemeteries that would follow soon after, incorporated these ideas by creating a natural landscape, with rolling hills and wild-seeming floral landscaping, that brought a similar sense of the “virtuous” farms and gardens that were so popular. Because of these associations, the landscape created for the rural cemetery gave the American public a sense of optimism and pleasure, directly opposing the feelings of sickness and sadness the city cemeteries had been presenting previously.

Mount Auburn is also the center of the explosion of mortuary art and sculpture seen in the Rural Cemetery Movement. America was a very young country in comparison to the European nations from which many immigrants came and did not have a long history of art and architecture. Sculpture in America was limited to craft and folk traditions, usually decorating utilitarian items or focusing on woodcraft. The dearth of American sculpture as a fine art form was spotlighted in the early 1800s after an explosion of early American painters traveled to European cities to study (Ciregna 2004: 101). The emergence of sculpture as a fine art in America began at the same time and places as the Rural Cemetery Movement, because the aesthetics of the garden cemetery called for beauty and art to transform the graveyard into a
beautiful public place of respite. The sculpture trend began in Mount Auburn, a cemetery which provided the model for all other rural or garden cemeteries in the country.

The rural cemetery as public art park filled in a conspicuous lack of public art museums across the country. There were typically no restrictions on individuals or families on the size or style of the monument they wished to erect. Mount Auburn was founded in 1831, with sculptures soon filling the cemetery as mortuary monuments in the following years. It wasn’t until 1849 that non-cemetery parks and gardens began to be developed for the public following the success of Frederick Law Olmstead’s design of Central Park. And it was much later, in 1876, that one of the nation’s first public museums of fine arts was established in nearby Boston (Ciregna 2004: 137). This followed the prevailing trend of the rural cemetery satisfying the need of a nation to develop in areas other than government and infrastructure. The artistic and architectural movements of the 19th Century all pointed towards a desire of people to create an identity. The Rural Cemetery Movement is a direct reaction towards a short history of a utilitarian, severe or austere visual experience in the country. One of the most austere and sometimes gloomy places in society, the often Puritanical cemetery, became the center for this change.

Cemeteries in New England prior to the establishment of rural cemeteries were commonly crowded into available spaces near churches and were merely practical places to inter the dead. They were not places to be frequented by the living population. (French 1974: 38 - 39). The cemetery was no longer a grim place to hold the bodies of the deceased, but a place of recreation, art, and beauty. The garden cemeteries in Europe and the rural cemeteries in America changed the usage from simply burial to one of retreat and recreation (McDowell and Meyer 1994: 14).
This change reflected the changing attitudes towards cities towards the end of the Industrial Revolution, which began in the 1760s and continued into the 1840s. There was a growing dissatisfaction towards all that accompanied urban progress and a desire to return to the perceived peace one could find in rural and farming communities. A Swiss physician of the time, Johann Georg von Zimmerman, believed “that natural scenery had a positive impact on the mind” (Schuyler 1984: 294) and recommended walking in nature to heal one’s mental state. A time of mourning is when this type of mental healing is most needed. There was a sense that mourning could not properly occur amidst the noise of the city but solace could be found in an atmosphere that recalled the serenity of nature (Bender 1974: 198). These ideas about mourning and where it could best occur shows a stark change in American attitudes towards death, especially the earlier New England Puritanical notions that death was something to be feared and prepared for rather than to focus on the individual.

The consecration speech given by Reverend Amos Blanchard at the opening of the rural cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts, encompassed many of these attitudes that began to arise as growing urban centers and industry began to overtake everyday life. He said that the rural cemetery would help to make the city feel less impersonal and severe and the people less focused on opportunity and expansion. Blanchard bemoaned the loss of a sense of community and the past in the industrial age, even mentioning that gravestones within the city had become little more than another place to post business flyers (Bender 1974: 201 – 204). In ever growing cities that focused on machinery, the people were looking to rediscover a sense of tradition, connection and community that would reestablish their sense of humanity and hoped this could be achieved by shifting behaviors and attitudes towards death.
It is important to understand the concept of the picturesque and how it was being used in Europe and in America at the time the rural cemeteries were being designed. American horticultural societies used the French cemetery of Père Lachaise, built in 1804 as a response mainly to the deplorable, overcrowded condition of the Holy Innocents’ Cemetery in Paris, as an archetypal ideal for cemeteries in the states to be modeled after. Outside of and separate from the city, Père Lachaise still overlooked Paris and was designed with the picturesque garden aesthetic in mind (Sloane 1991: 49). “The picturesque balanced art and nature. Nature was manipulated in such a way as to allow civilization to be present, but without disturbing the grandeur and power of the natural setting” (Sloane 1991: 49). Visitors to the cemetery did not have to feel overwhelmed by either nature or civilization in a picturesque setting and were able to view, and take lessons from, unconstained nature and all of its seasons and forces without truly fully separating from the civilized world. At the same time that the presence of art and civilization within the cemetery subdued the aggressive aspects of nature, they did not overtake the natural aspects of the cemetery. Père Lachaise quickly became a destination for recreation for Parisians (Sloane 1991: 50).

Two major aesthetic movements developed approximately at the same time as the burgeoning Rural Cemetery movement that had direct influence on the visual structure that the cemeteries would take on. Neoclassicism began in American in the late 1770s, characterized by a renewal of interest in classical, Greco-Roman models for art, literature, architecture, philosophy and politics. This period overlapped with the beginning of Romanticism at the end of the 1700s. Romanticism was a movement whose influence was most widely seen in literature and the arts and was typified by a focus on the individual and emotion by highlighting the wild beauty of
nature. It is important to understand the characteristics of these new manners for seeing and representing the world, and to appreciate the world stage that made them possible.

The first of the movements to show in American arts and attitudes was Neoclassicism, a trend that would continue in the country for over two hundred years. The term Neoclassicism was not used at the time to describe the revival, but “is used today to describe a multivalent cultural phenomenon that revalued antiquity between 1750 and 1900,” (Center for Education Studies 2010: 3). The classical world, especially ancient Greece and Rome and their associated aesthetic tastes and intellectual models held an allure for Americans since the earliest European settlements. Prior to settling America, many western European nations tended to hold the classic eras and nations in a high regard and routinely reworked the art, architecture and philosophy of that time period to fit their ethos and structures of their own society (Winterer 2002: 11). This taste for the classical world would help to “structure ethical, political, oratorical, artistic and educational ideals, sometimes overtly, sometimes subtly” (Winterer 2002: 1).

The motivation for Neoclassicism was partly due to a shift away from the styles of the Rococo, or Late Baroque, period in Europe, characterized by heavily intricate and ornate aesthetics, later to be perceived as too flippant and lighthearted a style by Europeans in the mid 18th century. The frivolous style was thought to be too closely related to and make allowances for a loose moral code, associated with French aristocracy (Honour 1968: 17-18). The stoicism of the ancient Roman republic became the admirable guide to Neoclassicists, not just in arts and literature, but in morality and politics (Honour 1963: 171).

Another significant impetus for the rediscovery of this period really began with significant archaeological excavations of the classic Greco-Roman world, such as those that occurred at Pompeii and Herculaneum (Honour 1963: 44). The cities had been completely
preserved since the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, giving modern audiences a comprehensive view of how the classic world looked. These investigations spurred other researchers and artists to begin to study the ancient classic world, from sculpture to grand architecture, in order to try to replicate the styles in their own works. The more restrained and somber manner of the classic aesthetic were the perfect foil to the frivolous fashions of the Baroque (Wardropper 1989: 4). Scholars, artists, architects, archaeologists, collectors and many others inundated Europe with the classic style in the mid 18th century with the desire to return to more simple and somber standard.

“’There is but one way for the moderns to become great, and perhaps unequalled … by imitating the ancients,” the German historian Johann Winckelmann declared in his influential 1755 book, Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture. With his History of the Art of Antiquity, published in 1764, a systematic survey of Greek art by date and style, Winckelmann is often thought to be the originator of art history as a scholarly discipline. Winckelmann’s immense influence throughout Europe shifted taste against baroque conventions and toward classical form.” (Center for Education Studies 2010: 3)

There are many examples of influential people, like Winckelmann, disseminating the classical style throughout the Western world. Some were politicians, like Lord Elgin or Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Bruce, the 7th Earl of Elgin, worked as an ambassador for Britain in the areas of interest and procured examples for consumption by Europeans. Lord Elgin is credited with arranging the removal of the Parthenon friezes from Athens, Greece to the British Museum in the
earliest part of the 19th century. Thomas Jefferson, who traveled to Italy and became interested in
the antique architectural styles, designed several Neoclassical structures in America. The State
Capitol in Richmond, Virginia is a significant example. Others were artists who had also traveled
to Italy and found inspiration for their paintings or sculpture. Benjamin West was born in the
States, but moved to London after studying in Italy, and became a well-known artist who would
influence a large school of American painters who studied under him (Center for Education
Studies 2010: 12-21). Neoclassicism attained a universal standardized style through Europe and
in America, and this level of standardized harmony was one of the aims of those who pursued the
aesthetic, “to appeal not to the individual of his own time, but to all men in all times” (Honour
1963: 29).

Important especially to the Rural Cemetery Movement was a specific architectural
movement that occurred during this time, called the Egyptian Revival (1808-1858). Important
monuments in the United States were constructed during this time, such as Baltimore’s
Maximillian Godefroy’s battle monument, the Bunker Hill monument in Charlestown,
Massachusetts, and famously, the Washington Monument in D.C. (Ryan 1992: 6-7). A
fundamental symbol to this revival was the obelisk. Obelisks have been used ritually and
religiously since circa 3100 B.C., dedicated to the Egyptian sun god, Atum. Obelisks quickly
became a desired symbol and many were taken from Egypt during the Roman period to
important cities in the empire. Old and new obelisks were used and their meaning repurposed
well into the Christian era (Ryan 1992: 2-6). Architects in the country at this time were searching
for a defining style and found in the obelisk, and other similar forms, an exotic form that would
create “associations in the mind of the user or observer which would strengthen and enhance the
functional purpose of the building” (Roth 1979: 54). This architectural movement would
cultivate a taste for this style in the American populace and soon the imagery of Egypt would become a hugely popular fashion in the 19th Century.

For the purposes of this study, the aesthetic effects of this period are most significant, but it is important to appreciate that the Neoclassical period was influenced by other factors, such as philosophy and politics in antiquity, and would affect many other aspects of American culture other than the visual arts. The newly developing government in the colonies used Neoclassical images to augment “such modern republican ideals liberty, commercial prosperity, and bucolic simplicity. Neoclassical themes, embodied most memorably in such classical goddesses as Liberty and Minerva, appeared in a staggering variety of places in late eighteenth-century America: paintings, newspapers, journals, broadsides, coins, paper currency, seals, almanacs, punch bowls, flags, wallpaper, architecture, furniture and fashion” (Winterer 2005: 1264). From the education system to the practice of law, classical republicanism had taken root in pursuits of knowledge. Rome became preferred over Greece for imagery in America because of the features of Roman government that appealed to Americans: “the Senate as guarantor of liberty and stability; the ideal of the cultivated, virtuous Ciceronian orator; and agriculture as safeguard to civic virtue” (Winterer 2002: 19).

In the decades following the advent of Neoclassicism in America, the Romantic era arose, which favored an aesthetic that aimed to express a wide variety of passionate emotions. Romanticism arose in Europe, especially in England and France, and hit its peak in mid 19th Century America. There was an association of nature and emotion in this movement that spanned all types of art forms and intellectual pursuits. Romanticism was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, and to Neoclassicism. The movement rejected the over-
rationalized, ordered and scientific view of the world that the previous movements had embraced.

The focus on reason during the Enlightenment of the late 17\textsuperscript{th} and early 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries, followed by the developing technologies of the Industrial Revolution, at its height from the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} to early 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, had created a society which was preoccupied with the logical, factual, mechanical, material things of the world; emotional phenomenon such as grief and sadness did not fit easily into these confines. The intellectual attitude of the Enlightenment centered around the idea that all things could be known if the right questions were asked, and the only way to achieve the correct answers was through the use of reason (Berlin 1999: 21-22). There was a backlash against the stern use of reason, the idea that life itself was completely knowable and could be dissected with science, that everything could and should be analyzed, and the almost sterile, lifeless way of understanding the world. The 18\textsuperscript{th} century is well known for being a time in which great strides forward were made in all of the sciences; however, the rationalization of the universe that occurred to make those advances possible created a vacuum that people sought to fill with anti-rational, deeply spiritual, painfully emotional creative energy (Berlin 1999: 46-48).

The balanced, sober, harmonic art and architecture of the Neoclassic period had lost the individual’s creativity and emotion. Romanticists felt that the American people had lost their passion in creating an ordered society after the Revolution. The country had become too well structured and there was no longer the former zeal of budding country and the heroes who had created it (Drescher 1959: 5). There was a drive among all types of artists to make sense out of the chaos of the world, but rather than a somber, rational analysis, romantics sought to find meaning by identifying and expressing human feeling (Smith 1973: 306).
Romantics looked to the future as opposed to the Neoclassical fascination with the past. Established traditions were to be resisted in favor of individual style, ingenuity, and independence. These new, often rebellious, ideals were played out in the arts, but were closely linked to world affairs. For example, in France, “during period of cultural and political calls to order, such as followed the Franco-Prussian War and World War I, Romanticism … was virtually ostracized in favor of its opposite, classicism” (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer 1993: 18). The Neoclassic aesthetic imbued people with a sense of calm rationalism, while Romanticism encouraged individual thought, freedom and expression.

Moving away from the pursuit of ultimate truths in the Enlightenment and the Neoclassic structured, scientifically knowable harmonic ideal of beauty, Romanticists pushed for a more democratic idea of taste, and “a new aesthetic ideal emerged, egalitarian and all-inclusive” (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer 1993: 19). The idea that art could be learned, in an almost systematic way, was cast aside in favor of accepting all things as art and embracing all aspects of the human condition. Neoclassic imitations of the past were seen as little more than the systematic study and imitation of old works of art. Romanticists scorned the idea that copies were art, espousing the idea that it was “not merely the technique, not merely the form which the artist, perhaps consciously, imposed, but also something of which the artist may not be wholly aware, namely the pulsations within him of some kind of infinite spirit of which he happens to be the particularly articulate and self-conscious representative” (Berlin 1999: 99). The individual’s creativity and imagination were important, but the Romantic period also developed a sense that the individual was part of a greater spiritual whole, often intimately tied to nature. These notions, radically different to what had come before, would change the nature of the way people thought about life and death and the related art and symbolism.
Romanticism’s rejection of set and accepted notions of beauty and art paved the way for a variety of new imageries to find their way into all forms of art. Ridding itself of moral notions associated with beauty, such as the idea of “goodness,” allowed more typically negative emotional expression, such as terror or misery. Romantics developed “notions of primitiveness, nature, spontaneity, and imagination, as means of countering such normative concepts as civilization, reason, and learning” (Athanassoglou-Kallmyer 1993: 20). The duration of the Rural Cemetery movement occurred over a span of time that encompassed these major shifts in intellectual, philosophical and artistic worldviews.

The opposing aesthetics of Neoclassicism and Romanticism helped form the character of the rural cemeteries in America. However, it was a combination of all of the factors mentioned above that led to the national need and desire for change in burial traditions and how the public expression of grief would be expressed. Finally, in 1847, the Rural Cemetery Act was passed in New York State, marking the momentous shift in thought with regards to material expressions of death. The Rural Cemetery Act made it much easier for cemeteries to become commercial businesses because land used for such cemeteries were exempt from property taxes. Though cemeteries had been moved away from the churchyard, churches could still purchase land and sell burial plots along with secular business people. The commercialism allowed changes to happen more freely within the cemetery, for trends to easily come and go, because the burial plots were closer to private property now and less tied directly to the church. Fashions and whims could appear on gravestones as they appeared in society. “Cemeteries are history and they are a repository for the history of taste,” (Curl 1975: 40). This statement was never truer than during the rural cemetery movement in America.
II. Quantitative Analysis

Chapter 4: Materials and Methods

Gravestones are a valuable historical resource. Depending on quality of materials and the environment of the cemetery, they are a declining resource. Collection of as much data as possible is necessary in order to preserve historical information about society that is not easily procured from church or census records. The goal of this study was not to record each individual gravestone in each of the four cemeteries, but to obtain an adequate sample size from each cemetery and to record the gravestones in the sample as completely as possible. Though a qualitative approach is often used for historic cemetery symbolism research, and is used in this study, physical data was collected to layer upon interpretation for a more meaningful and multifaceted approach to historic cemeteries and landscape (McMillan 2012: 559).

The main data source for this dissertation is the physical cemeteries and gravestones themselves, which includes all of the written information and dates present in order to anchor the styles and behaviors to particular times. The history of the Capital District and of Troy specifically is discussed in depth in order to explore the reasons for the development of the Rural Cemetery Movement or other mortuary trends and to connect the changes through time to real historical contexts. In order to connect specific mortuary behaviors to known individuals, census research was conducted on Capital District census documents from 1850 through 1888. Names, occupations and house values were available in the censuses. When an identity could be confirmed to be the same from one of the cemeteries to a census, due to dates of birth and familial relationships as well as name matching, their personal and family occupations and house
value were assessed in comparison to the average in the area. In this way, some measure of socioeconomic status could be assessed and directly tied to specific mortuary behaviors.

As discussed in the background, four cemeteries were chosen for the study. The initial cemetery chosen was Oakwood Cemetery in Troy, NY, because of its significance as being among the first rural cemeteries in the nation and a prominent cemetery in the Capital District of New York. The other cemeteries were chosen for two reasons. First, their geographical proximity to Oakwood Cemetery was important in order to maintain some control of cultural similarity in the population that was being buried and memorialized in the cemeteries. Second, the remaining cemeteries were chosen to provide some counterpoint to the larger and more affluent Oakwood cemetery in order to show how different socioeconomic status (Blooming Grove Cemetery and Waterford Cemetery) or different religious preferences (St. John’s Cemetery as a traditional Catholic cemetery) affect mortuary behaviors.

This was not a complete recording of each cemetery as not every stone was recorded. Only half of the gravestones that fit the dates of interest and were legible were recorded. This amounted to a total sample size of 1,751 gravestones: 1,172 from Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 359 from Waterford Rural Cemetery, 141 from Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, and 79 from St. John’s Rural Cemetery. Oakwood Rural Cemetery especially contained numerous stones that were not recordable, partly due to the hilly nature of the cemetery that caused many monuments to fall and completely obscure identifiable information. Many of the stones in all of the cemeteries had portions that are illegible. In these cases, the portions that were illegible were noted.

The dates of interest for this study included the earliest gravestones in the cemeteries that were legible in order to obtain a sample of the earlier stones that existed before the
implementation of the rural cemetery aesthetic, as several of the cemeteries had older stones on
the grounds before the official and legal establishment of the cemetery. The latest dates that were
recorded were from stones erected in the early 1920s in order to see how the Rural Cemetery
Movement’s effects on mortuary behaviors fully developed. By the 1920s, the Rural Cemetery
Movement was in decline and not prevalent in mortuary behaviors due to a variety of reasons,
from a shifting attitude about death as well as socioeconomic changes such as the Great
Depression. Modern mortuary monuments erected post-1920 were not of significance in this
particular study and were not recorded.

The cemeteries were divided into sections using existing maps or natural divisions within
the cemetery, such as roads, to maintain a degree of geographical integrity during analysis
(Figures 9 - 13). The section in which each gravestone was located was recorded. Each section
was recorded in the same manner: every other gravestone in the section was recorded, though
gravestones were omitted if they did not fit the time frame of interest or were illegible due to
weathering or breakage. Larger sections with more overall gravestones would tend to have a
larger number of gravestones sampled, though this was not always the case as some sections had
higher percentages of modern stones or higher percentages of damaged stones than others.
Figure 9: Section Map of Oakwood Cemetery from oakwoodcemetery.org, reproduction permission granted by the Troy Cemetery Association Inc.
Figure 11: Section Map of Waterford Rural Cemetery from http://saratoganygenweb.com/images/WaterfordRuralmap.pdf, adapted from Saratoga County Historian’s office, Saratoga, NY
Figure 12: St John’s Cemetery section map, satellite aerial accessed from Google Earth
Gravestone Information Recorded

Each gravestone was given a unique number within the cemetery. The map section the gravestone was located in was recorded. Every stone was photographed and the photograph numbers were recorded. Photographs were taken in natural light unless the use of flash better brought out the inscriptions and decorations on the stone. Rubbings were not done to preserve efficiency of recording a large number of gravestones. The potential of possible damage and
wear to stones during rubbings was also of concern, as it can wear away fragile or low quality
stone and make inscriptions even more unreadable.

The physical condition of each stone was recorded, unless so completely weathered or
broken that no names, dates or symbols were legible then the stone was skipped over and not
recorded. The possible conditions were:

1. Sound, in situ
2. Sound, displaced
3. Leaning
4. Collapsed
5. Overgrown

Size

The dimensions of each stone were recorded in centimeters with a standard tape measure.
Most gravestones sit upon pedestals that are slightly wider than the stone itself. In these cases,
the pedestal was added to the height measurement of the stone, as it usually raised the monument
a significant amount. The width and length was not taken into account as the majority of the
stone was not as wide and long as the pedestal. In cases that gravestones had sunk into the
ground, best efforts were made to remove a small section of the dirt and measure the entire stone.
Size measurements were taken with the processual framework in mind that the larger the
monument is, the more energy was invested in its creation and erection, and that could be related
to the wealth and/or status of the individual(s) for which the monument stood. That processual
perspective often assumed that the monuments with the highest energy expenditure automatically
would be related to those with the most wealth and status; however, later investigations revealed
that it is not always such a close relationship due to the potential of lower status individuals
mimicking behaviors in order to gain status.
Identifying Information

Every name (First, Middle, Late and Maiden where applicable), birth date, death date, date of erection of monument (if different from death date), personal inscription and epitaph was recorded. Many of the larger and more intricate stones often had a date of erection carved into the monument. If no date of erection was available, the first death date on the stone was used as the date of erection. This data was recorded for possible identifying information to connect with in a specific historic context. A personal inscription would be something attributed to the individual, such as “Beloved Mother” or “Only Son,” whereas an epitaph would be a longer memorial quote inscribed on the stone, whether religious in nature or not. Again, this data was collected for possible identifying information but also to give clues to occupation, religious affiliation and ethnic ancestry.

Type

Each gravestone was placed within a type category. This category was designed to easily distinguish between stones that memorialized individuals or several individuals. Three main types exist in the Capital District cemeteries in the time periods recorded: individual, spousal and family. The individual type is simply a stone that marks a single burial and has one person’s name and information inscribed on it. The spousal type is a gravestone that marks two burials and has a husband and wife’s names and information inscribed upon a single stone. The family type of marker is a single gravestone that stands in a family plot and records two or more family members and their information on the stone. The family type is commonly larger and more ornate, recording up to two dozen individuals. A fourth, and very uncommon, type is recorded in this study as “other” in order to record stones that do not fall into the previously described
categories. The other type most often includes small stones that record several infant deaths in a family, which differs greatly in form, size and style from the family type. These type categories are important to note due to the fact that many gravestones’ size grows larger directly proportional to the number of individuals memorialized on the monument. Due to this, there is the potential for a connection between type and status because these monuments were erected at one point in time, and the cost of manufacture/erection incurred at one point in time, which point to the family’s financial status or social status at the time of erection.

Material

The material each gravestone was comprised of was recorded in this study. The most common materials found in the cemeteries at this time period were slate, granite, polished granite, red granite, and metal. Metal monuments were often in plaque form flush to the ground and marked military veterans. There are several stones that fall into an “other” material category and the materials in these cases are described in the notes. The “other” materials usually refer to rough field stone. The materials were identified in the field and there is the possibility of investigator error. However, the materials were identified based on several characteristics to reduce error in classification.

Slate was a typical material used in the earliest parts of the cemeteries, common from about 1650 – 1900 A.D. It is a fine grained metamorphic rock that occurs in many shades, with varied shades of gray being the most common for mortuary monuments in the Capital District and the rest of the Northeast. Slate also varies widely in quality, but high quality slate was preferred for gravestones, so many of the earliest can still be read today as they are more resistant to weathering from the environment (Quiring 2013, Appell 2010).
Granite is very common but often misidentified as marble because it can be polished to appear like marble. Marble is softer than granite, a 3 – 4 on the Mohs hardness scale, and has a very identifiable pattern of two or more color swirling together. Marble was not commonly used in the Capital District cemeteries studied, as most of the gravestones were manufactured after the popularity of granite grew in the rest of New England. Material was identified as granite even if it initially appeared to be more marble-like if it was highly speckled with crystallizations, appeared more granular. Granite is an igneous rock made up mostly of feldspar, quartz and mica. The different inclusions made it appear to sparkle in light. Granite is a hard and durable rock, rating a 7 on the Mohs hardness scale. Granite monuments, like marble monuments, tend to be much thicker and heavier than slate monuments. Granite started to be used in the mid-1800s, achieving a height of popularity by the early 20th century, and continues to be commonly used in cemeteries today (Quiring 2013, Appell 2010).

Granite became the material of choice for those of a higher socioeconomic status who desired permanent immortalization and memorialization in stone because of its durability. However, this durability was accompanied by the fact that granite was significantly more difficult to work, and “monument carvers replaces their mallets and chisels with air compressors, pneumatic tools, and sandblasting equipment” (Baugher and Veit 2014: 151). It was not until the technology existed to work the granite to the specifications of mourners existed that granite could have been a standard material used in American cemeteries.

The materials used in the Capital District cemeteries were mainly indicative of time period and the development of technologies that allowed the carving of harder and longer-lasting stone types. The time line follows a general slate – granite – polished granite/red granite timeframe. However, this information was not recorded simply as a time marker. The
accessibility of newer materials is also indicative of a community and/or individual’s socioeconomic status. The earlier that a cemetery or individual acquires the new material suggests a higher status.

**Shape**

The shape of each gravestone was recorded. Based on examination of other gravestone studies and my own previous experience (Carioto 2007), a general typology was created for this project in order to comprehensively include all possible variations of gravestone shapes. The main types of shapes are: tablet, block, plaque, scroll, cross, obelisk and column.

Tablets (Figure 14) are rectangular slabs that are two or more times taller than they are wide, with the typical thickness of a tablet being about 10cm. The tablet type is broken down into domed tablet, gothic tablet and shouldered tablet. Domed tablets (Figure 15) are arched or curved at the top instead of straight across like a tablet. Gothic tablets (Figure 16) have a pointed arch at the time, unlike the smooth curve of a domed tablet. Shouldered tablets (Figure 17) are defined by their small “arms” or “shoulders” that are decorative pieces extending past the side of the tablet. Shouldered tablets are further broken down into types. Shouldered tablets with gothic influence (Figure 18) have pointed arches in the middle. Shouldered tablets with scalloped edges (Figure 19) have a smooth series of curves that extend from the middle of the stone to the edge. These stones do not have protruding “arms” like the typical shouldered tablet.
Figure 14: Waterford stone 306 - Tablet

Figure 15: Oakwood stone 24 - Domed Tablet
Figure 16: Blooming Grove stone 94 - Gothic tablet

Figure 17: Oakwood stone 413 - Shouldered tablet
Figure 18: St. John’s stone 12 - Shouldered Tablet with Gothic Influence

Figure 19: Waterford stone 319 - Shouldered Tablet with Scalloped Edges
Blocks (Figure 20) are gravestones that are twice or more times as wide as they are tall. These often tend to be much thicker than the tablet types described above, forming a blocky appearance. Blocks are rectangular as well, though sometimes very faintly domed, slightly enough that the types are not divided into two separate types. Four distinguishing types of blocks are roofed blocks, gothic blocks and blocks with sculptures. Roofed blocks (Figure 21) have a separate slab of stone on top of the block that extends past all four sides. Gothic blocks (Figure 22) have an obvious and exaggerated pointed arch to their tops. Blocks with sculptures on top (Figure 23) have any of a variety of sculptures attached to the top of the stone and the sculptures are described in individual gravestone notes.
Figure 21: Oakwood stone 446 - Roofed Block

Figure 22: Oakwood stone 1160 – Gothic Block
Plaques (Figure 24) are gravestones that are rectangular stones typically small and flush to the ground surface or almost flush to the ground surface.
Crosses (Figure 25) are markers in the shape of a cross, often mounted on some type of pedestal.

Columns and obelisks are very similar in that they have four sides of equal length and are twice or more as tall as they are wide. Columns (Figure 26) are differentiated into several types: roofed columns (Figure 27), columns with urns (Figure 28), which also include columns with shrouded urns, urns with fire and columns with sculptures. Roofed columns, like roofed blocks, have a slab on their tops that extend past all sides of the monuments. Obelisks (Figure 29) are differentiated by the face that their tops come to a point whereas columns are flush across their entire top.
Figure 26: St. John’s stone 37 – Column

Figure 27: Waterford stone 278 – Roofed Column
Figure 28: Blooming Grove stone 106 – Column with Urn

Figure 29: Waterford stone 123 – Obelisk
Special designation was given to several monuments, whose intricate shapes differentiated them significantly from all other stones. These are given the type of temple (Figure 30 - 31). Temple monuments are often similar to columns in that they have four equal sides, but tend to be decorated with pillars and roofs in such a way to make them resemble buildings, particularly ancient Classical temples.

Figure 30: Oakwood stone 628 – Temple
As is typical of style, there is a continuum of types, and if every variation were recorded, there would be as many styles as there were gravestones. For example, the shouldered tablets are clearly different from perfectly rectangular tablets, but they are as variable as the manufacturers who created them and the individuals who purchased them. The tablet styles exist more on a continuum, from the 90 degree angles of the rectangular tablets to the extensively scalloped and filigreed Gothic shouldered tablets seen later. This is typical of gravestone art in general, as evidenced by the notable studies of gravestone symbolism and battleship curves done by Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966). Change rarely happens all at once, but is a slower process of gradual transition. “Resistance to change seems to be the primary evolutionary mode,” (Dethlefsen 1992: 155). Rarely will you see a sudden jump from one style to another without
subtle changes in between, resistance from certain members of a society, and testing of the waters of new styles by others.

*Decoration*

All gravestone decorations were recorded and photographed in the field. Historic cemeteries are vast repositories of symbolism. They do not simply store demographic information such as names and dates, but can impart information on an individual’s religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic status as well as individual and culture-wide perceptions and about the afterlife and the world. Significant time and energy was invested in accurate recording of the symbols and decorations on each gravestone in the study in order to more precisely decode their meanings.

Large family names displayed prominently were recorded as decoration (Figures 19 -21). Simple edge decoration like scrollwork or filigree was recorded as scrollwork (Figures 22 – 23). All symbols were recorded at the moment of recording in the cemetery with the help of a field guide, *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* by Douglas Keister (2004). When a decoration could not be identified in the field, photographs were used for later identification.

Ninety-seven symbols and symbolism categories were recorded. Several broad categories of symbolism were broken down into more detailed descriptions: cross (Celtic cross), leaves (oak, fern, acanthus, palm), floral (rose, lily, morning glory, buds, lily of the valley, passion flower, poppy, calla lily, thistle, three leaf clover, four leaf clover, primrose, tulip, daffodil), hands (clasped, pointing up, prayer, holding something), book (Bible), crown (cross in crown), fire (torch), mason (specifically the square and compass symbol), angel (cherub), bird (dove,
eagle), horse (horse being ridden), and sword (sword in scabbard). Both the larger category and the detailed symbol were recorded, but kept separate during analysis.

A complete list of the symbols recorded, including the numbers assigned for ease of data entry and analysis is below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Symbol Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Symbol Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cross -74 (Celtic Cross)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ribbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Scrollwork</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Grapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leaves: -21 (oak)</td>
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<td>Tree/Log/Trunk</td>
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<td>-22 (fern)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Chalice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-23 (acanthus)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Curtains/Tassels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-89 (palm)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Anchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Floral: -24 (rose)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-25 (lily)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-26 (morning glory)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-68 (In Scabbard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-27 (buds)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Horn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-28 (lily of the valley)</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>Star of David</td>
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<td>-30 (passion flower)</td>
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<td>Heart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-31 (poppy)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-32 (calla lily)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-33 (thistle/wheat)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>&quot;Chi-Rho&quot; or &quot;sigla&quot;: the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>letters &quot;X&quot; and &quot;P&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-56 (4 leaf clover)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-69 (Primrose)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-78 (Tulip)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-97 (Daffodil)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Urn: -34 (w/ flame)</td>
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<td>-35 (w/ shroud)</td>
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<td>Scroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-36 (w/ wings)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Willow and Urn</td>
</tr>
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<td>Branches</td>
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<td>-37 (clasped)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Fire</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-88 (Cherub)</td>
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<td>-87(Torch)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ivy</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Acorns</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-49 (Dove)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Hands: -37 (clasped)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-73 (Eagle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Scroll</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Shroud</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Angel</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-49 (Dove)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ribbons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Grapes</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Tree/Log/Trunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Chalice</td>
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<td>Curtains/Tassels</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Rope</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>-68 (In Scabbard)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-80 (being ridden)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Cloud</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Olive Branch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Children/Babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Pitcher</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Skull/Crossbones</td>
</tr>
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<td>75</td>
<td>Sunburst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Soldier’s Hat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>77</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Object broken/dead</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Snake</td>
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</table>

Shown below are the best examples of the most common decorations and symbols found in the cemeteries.
Figure 32: Family name decoration shown on a roofed block gravestone

Figure 33: Family name decoration shown on a block gravestone
Figure 34: Family name decoration shown on an obelisk
Figure 35: Scrollwork decoration shown on a shouldered tablet

Figure 36: Detail of scrollwork decoration
Figure 37: Ivy on a tablet gravestone

Figure 38: Cross shown on a roofed block gravestone
Figure 39: Chi-rho shown on a cross gravestone

Figure 40: Alpha and Omega

Figure 41: IHS on a cross gravestone
Figure 42: Three inter-connected rings symbol

Figure 43: Cross and crown symbols

Figure 44: Detail of mason symbolism, square and compass
Figure 45: Hand pointing up shown on a tablet gravestone

Figure 46: Detail of clasped hands
Figure 47: Detail of fire (torch) symbol

Figure 48: Detail of dove symbol
Figure 49: Lamb shown on a small block gravestone

Figure 50: Detail of lily
Figure 51: Detail of lily of the valley

Figure 52: Detail of morning glories

Figure 53: Detail of rose and buds
Cemeteries

Four cemeteries were sampled with a total of 1,751 individual gravestones memorializing a total of 4,118 individuals. Oakwood Rural Cemetery was the largest with 1,172 gravestones recorded and 2,980 individuals. Waterford Rural Cemetery’s sample included 359 gravestones and 689 individuals. Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery’s sample included 141 gravestones and 234 individuals (Figure 55). St. John’s Cemetery was the smallest sample with 79 gravestones and 215 individuals. The earliest gravestone recorded was erected in 1799, though that stone, found in Blooming Grove Rural, was an outlier, as it was not until the 1820s that most of the monuments in the cemeteries were erected. The sample was concluded in 1920, though all of the cemeteries continue to be active in present day, because the focus of the study was on the rise and decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

The number of gravestones by decade varies in each cemetery (Table 1, Figure 56). The cemeteries had different establishment dates, discussed in the background sections, so some had
more stones erected earlier than others. The samples decline in size by 1910, because stones post-1920 were not considered necessary due to the focus of this paper on the Rural Cemetery Movement since the movement ended by the early 20th Century. The stones were sampled at random in each of the sections as long as they fell into the appropriate time frame; the decades with the most stones erected would likely have higher numbers in the sample. Oakwood’s sample peaked in the 1870s, Waterford and Blooming Grove in the 1890s, and St. John’s in the 1880s.

**Number of Gravestones by Date of Erection – All Cemeteries**

![Histogram of gravestones by date of erection](image)

*Figure 55: Number of Gravestones by Date of Erection, All Cemeteries*
Table 1: Number of Gravestones by Date of Erection, All Cemeteries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Oakwood</th>
<th>Waterford</th>
<th>Blooming Grove</th>
<th>St. John's</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1830-1839</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>1840-1849</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
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<td>1870-1879</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>1910-1919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>79</td>
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</table>

Figure 56: Number of Gravestones by Date of Erection by Cemetery
Sections and Mapping

Due to the design of the rural cemetery and the reliance on aesthetic placement of graves, rather than the reliance on rows, the number of stones recorded per section varied depending on many factors other than the physical size of the section (Table 2). Many sections, especially in Oakwood Cemetery, were extremely variable depending on the swells of the land and the placement of the pathways. Oakwood Cemetery has many hills and graves tended not to be placed on extremely sloping hillsides, limiting the number of stones that might have been found even in the larger sections. Gravestones that were placed on steep slopes often fell, obscuring information and could not be included in the samples, causing the hilliest sections to have
smaller samples, as well. The number of gravestones recorded per section also varied because of the time range focus of this paper; some sections contained significantly more modern gravestones than others and this was true of all of the cemeteries recorded which decreased the sample sizes in those particular sections. Some sections in the cemeteries were comprised completely of modern stones not within the scope of this paper, and so are not included in the analysis.

Oakwood Rural Cemetery had existing sections that were labeled and mapped by the cemetery association, and those designations were used in this dissertation (Figure 58). The other cemeteries, Waterford Rural, Blooming Grove Rural and St. John’s, did not have pre-labeled sections. Following the example of Oakwood, the pathways constructed in each cemetery were used in order to separate the sections (Figures 59 - 61). The sections were labeled for the purposes of this dissertation, though they are not the official designations of the cemeteries themselves.
Figure 58: Oakwood Rural Cemetery section map
Figure 59: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery section map
Figure 60: Section Map of Waterford Rural Cemetery from http://saratoganygenweb.com/images/WaterfordRuralmap.pdf, adapted from Saratoga County Historian's office, Saratoga, NY
Figure 61: St. John's Cemetery section map
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Table 2: Number of gravestones recorded per section
Chapter 5: Results

Physical Data

Presented in this chapter are the results of the data collection and analysis of the physical data collected from the gravestones in the four sampled cemeteries: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, Waterford Rural Cemetery and St. John’s Cemetery. The main groupings of analysis focus on material, height, type (eg. individual or family stones) and shape of the gravestones.

Material

Three major material types dominated the four cemeteries: slate, granite, and polished granite that resembled marble. A fourth material type was presented, but highly underrepresented in all cemeteries and completely absent in St. John’s cemetery: red granite. The four cemeteries had slightly different proportions of material by decade.

Oakwood Cemetery had both slate and granite present in all decades, though slate gravestones slightly outnumbered granite/polished granite until the 1850s (Figure 62). This correlates with the abundance of slate at the time nationwide. After 1850, granite was the dominant material type until 1920, after which gravestones were not included in the study. The rise of granite is due to its increased durability and the growing carving technology that was capable of cutting granite. However, slate was still more popular than polished granite until 1880s. After this point, granite and polished granite were the major material types chosen for
gravestones. Oakwood Cemetery has the most amount of red granite of the cemeteries sampled, though it should be noted that Oakwood Cemetery had the biggest sample size of all the cemeteries.

![Material Type by Decade - Oakwood Cemetery](image)

Waterford Rural Cemetery differed from Oakwood Cemetery because slate was the dominant material until the 1900s, two decades after granite had become the preferred material in Oakwood Cemetery. Waterford also differed because slate was not just the preferred material, but highly preferred, consisting of almost 90% of the sample until the 1890s (Figure 63). In the 1890s, the majority of stones are still made of slate, but granite and polished granite are not far behind. Polished granite becomes the preferred material type in the 1910s, after which the sample size becomes too small to note trends in the cemetery.
St. John’s Cemetery has too small of a sample size prior to the 1860s to make note of the trends in the cemetery. In the 1860s, though, slate is the dominant material type of the gravestones (Figure 64). Afterwards, granite becomes just as popular as slate in the 1870s. The 1880s saw a jump in the number of polished granite stones, which becomes the prevailing material type until the 1920s, when the study ends. St. John’s is the only cemetery in the study that does not contain any gravestones made of red granite.
Blooming Grove Cemetery follows the general trend of slate gravestones accounting for the majority of the gravestones. In this cemetery, slate is overcome as the dominant material type in the 1860s by granite (Figure 65). Polished granite becomes almost as popular as granite in the 1890s and overtakes the majority after 1900. The sample size decreases after 1910, but after that date, only polished granite gravestones were recorded.
An overview of the four cemeteries indicated that slate was the prevailing material used in the area until the mid-19th Century with granite usurping the majority for the next few decades, followed by a rise in frequency of polished granite into the 20th Century. Carvings in granite lasted longer than slate, and undoubtedly the population in the mid-19th Century could see the disintegration of the earliest slate monuments and would not want their own memorials to decay in such a way. The consistency of the trend throughout the cemeteries, and therefore throughout the immediate area and population as a whole, can be attributed to both taste and availability of material. Taste and trends often drive supply, as well as the inverse. The availability of granite and the ability of stone carvers and improving technology to carve these harder materials is the likely cause of the switch from slate to granite in the cemeteries.
The differences between the cemeteries are most sharply marked by Oakwood’s position as vanguard for the changing materials in the area. Oakwood has earlier and often higher percentages of new material types than the other cemeteries. This is potentially due to the fact that Oakwood was home to burials of higher number of individuals in upper socioeconomic groups. They would therefore have the financial ability to acquire gravestones of the newer, harder to carve materials which had a higher price due to the distance of the quarries at the time and necessity of the carvers to obtain newer technologies. Oakwood, as a high status cemetery, would also contain burials of families that were likely more interested in increasing their perceived status. This would necessitate possessing the newest and most desirable stone materials. The cemeteries, Waterford and Blooming Grove, that contain higher percentages of slate for longer durations than Oakwood, are consequently marked as lower on the socioeconomic status scale. They did not have equal ability to obtain granite or polished granite or the need to maintain appearances of their status in their mortuary behaviors.

The fact that the overall trend in all of the cemeteries is an increase in granite, however, is due to practical reasons rather than due to people emulating the higher classes. As the carving technologies became more commonplace and mass-marketed, the granite monuments became more accessible to people of all social classes. Slate would remain a cheaper alternative, so high percentages of slate in a cemetery like Waterford well into the sampled time period implies that the population that utilized the cemetery did not have the wealth available to even adhere to a common mortuary trend of the time.

Oakwood also has the most examples of red granite. Red granite is relatively rare in rural cemeteries when compared to the vast majority of gray-toned granite and marble monuments that can be found. The lack of color in the mortuary monuments sampled for this dissertation overall
also marks the red granite numbers in Oakwood as unique. Oakwood was an innovator amongst the cemeteries in the sample due to its early adoption of granite and amplified incorporation of red granite, though Oakwood itself was taking cue from other earlier rural cemeteries in the Northeast.

**Height**

Height of the gravestone was variable, as well. The data was divided in order to see important differences of height among the gravestones. Height categories were less than 50 cm, 51 – 100 cm, 101 – 200 cm, 201 – 300 cm, 301 – 400 cm, 401 – 500 cm, and over 500 cm. Height was charted per cemetery and by decade in order to determine if there were any patterns, similarities or differences among and between the cemeteries.

Oakwood Cemetery had comparably few gravestones under 50 cm compared to the total population in every decade (Figure 66). It was only after 1910 that more than 20% of the gravestones in that decade were under 50 cm. The 1850s to the 1870s saw the lowest amount of gravestones under 50 cm. The 1820s saw the overall lowest height in the population, with no stones over 300 cm occurring in the cemetery and the majority under 100 cm.

In the 1830s, gravestones appear that are over 300 cm and over 400 cm in height. It is in the following decade that gravestones over 500 cm in height begin to be erected. Though usually less than 2-4% of the population, gravestones over 500 cm in height appear during every decade until the 1910s in Oakwood Cemetery. Overall, the heights that occur the most in every decade with a large sample size are stones that fall between 51 – 200 cm (Figure 66).

The correlation of height with wealth and status, real or perceived, was investigated by attempting to find the families listed on the tallest gravestones in Oakwood. This was done in
accordance with processual proposals that energy expenditure, in this case larger monument size, is correlated with social status. Not all of the families in the cemetery were listed in Troy’s censuses, but several of the tallest monuments were able to be matched definitively against the 1875 census. Resources were dedicated to finding matches with the tallest monuments and families in the census in order to ascertain if there was a correlation with higher wealth/status and energy investment in the stones. This is not meant to suggest that all people of a certain socioeconomic class would always erect tall or short stones, monuments with more or less energy investment, because there are many factors involved in energy expenditure. However, it was of interest to determine the types of families who did choose to expend the most energy, usually in the form of money, to erect monuments. Information about the head of household and the residence itself was used to give a sense of socioeconomic status. With the exception of one obelisk in section S, all of the stones that were able to be matched centered around the water feature or the chapel in the center core of the cemetery. The obelisk in section S was 600cm tall and matched to Obed McChesney. He was a grocer who lived in a $5,000 brick house, which was valued higher than the average house in the area (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 11th ward, p. 8, ln 34).

The stones that were able to be matched near the chapel, a desirable place visually within the cemetery to be buried, included both an obelisk and a column in section K1. A 940cm tall obelisk was matched to Robert Smart, who owned a $2,000 brick house. Smart was a paper manufacturer (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 6th ward, p. 35, ln 10). A 650 cm tall column was matched to Gardner Rand, who lived in ward 2 in a $16,000 brick house. He had no occupation listed. Two domestic servants were listed as living in the house with the rest of the family (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 2nd ward, p. 27, ln 34). Smart’s house was valued well within the
average, while Rand’s was significantly over the average. The fact that there was no occupation listed for Rand indicates he potentially had already made his fortune or had access to family money.

Four families with obelisks near the water feature were identified. A 650 cm tall obelisk in section H1 was matched to Miles Sweet, a hardware manufacturer who owned a $10,000 framed house (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 5th ward, p. 23, ln 38). Miles Sweet was listed as a comb shop keeper in the 1880 census (Bureau of the Census 1880b). Another 650 cm tall obelisk in section D was matched to E. Fisk Brown, a sash and blind maker with a $5,000 wood house (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 5th ward, p. 37, ln 1). A 680 cm tall obelisk in section F was matched to Charles Lee, a stone cutter who owned a $5,000 brick house (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 7th ward, p. 81, ln 3). Lastly, an 890 cm obelisk was matched to Francis Mann whose occupation was listed as lawyer. He owned a $25,000 brick house, amongst the most expensive houses to be found in the 1875 census, lived with his sons, a lawyer and an engineer, and retained two domestic servants (Bureau of the Census 1875c: 2nd ward, p. 30, ln 14).

The head of households that were able to be correlated with specific stones indicate that it was not just perceived wealth or status that led to the construction of the tallest monuments, but actual wealth and status. All but one of the gravestones that could be matched belonged to families who owned houses worth at least $5,000, several thousand dollars above the county average at the time. Robert Smart’s house was worth $2,000. The occupations of the matched head of households were manufacturers, lawyers, stone cutters and a grocer. Some matches to the 1880 census showed tablets and blocks under 150cm tall belonging to a store clerk (Charles Thayer, stone 31), laborer (Chas Purdy, stone 988), a boarder with no occupation (Harriet Blatchford, stone 1022), and a collar shop worker (Edwin Green, stone 101). House values were
not listed (Bureau of the Census 1880b). There is a marked difference in the type of work done by those who built tall obelisks versus shorter tablets or blocks. This is not meant to insinuate that someone who was wealthy or had a prestigious occupation would never erect a shorter, less ostentatious stone, but a trend did present itself in the few matches that were able to be made between cemetery and census.

Waterford Rural Cemetery also has proportionately few gravestones under 50 cm compared to the overall population, but more than Oakwood Cemetery (Figure 67). The 1890s, 1900s and 1910s all saw frequencies at 20% or higher of the smallest gravestones. The most common stone height in the cemetery is between 101 – 200 cm.
The gravestone height in each decade and in the total population is generally shorter than Oakwood. There are fewer gravestones over 200 cm in each decade than seen in Oakwood. Gravestones with heights between 201 – 300 cm in height occur from the 1840s to the 1890s. Gravestones with heights between 301 – 400 cm occur only in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1880s. Gravestones with heights between 401 – 500 cm occur between the 1850s and 1880s. Only one decade, the 1850s, saw any gravestones over 500 cm in height.

There was only one match from the taller monuments in the cemetery that could be confirmed in the 1875 census for Waterford Rural Cemetery. Head of household Asa McOmber and his wife Patience, whose gravestone was a family obelisk that was 380 cm tall, was confirmed in the Cohoes, Albany 1875 Census. Asa was a merchant and no house value was listed (Bureau of the Census 1875g: p. 12, ln. 4). Little else could be said about specific families. Of note, though, is that there are very few old Dutch names in the cemetery compared to Oakwood Rural. Vanderwerken and Knickerbacker are present, but most of the other names are English or Irish in origin. Several Vanderwerkens are listed in the census as boatmen and cabinet-makers, but could not be linked to specific individuals in the cemetery (Bureau of the Census 1875g). Knickerbacker is an old family name in the Capital District, but again, no individuals in the cemetery could be positively identified in the censuses.
Many of the last names in St. John’s are of Irish ancestry: O’Brien, O’Conner, Sullivan, Murphy, Roark, Tierney, and so on. Because so many of the names were of typical Irish descent, often paired with common first names such as Patrick, James, Mary and Catherine, it was difficult to find definite matches in the 1875 census. The population at the time consisted of over half Irish immigrants, many of whom were Catholic. However, two matches were able to be definitively identified in the census. On a 750 cm tall column, the head of household was identified as James Flynn. He was a laborer from Ireland and lived in a $2,000 framed house. A son employed as a brush maker lived in the household (Bureau of the Census 1875a: p. 41, ln. 20). Patrick Roark was matched on an 850 cm tall column. He was a grocer from Ireland who lived in a $2,000 frame house (Bureau of the Census 1875a: p. 4, ln. 1). The occupations and
house values on these monuments, the tallest in the cemetery, do not parallel those matched to
tall monuments in the other cemeteries. The value of the house is less than what is seen owned
by those in Oakwood or Blooming Grove on equivalent gravestones. And the occupations tended
towards more white-collar jobs than laborer. However, both matches in St. John’s were from
Ireland, participating in a more traditional Catholic cemetery. The same socioeconomic trends
would not necessarily apply to the situation.

St John’s Cemetery, with the smallest sample size, also has a higher proportion of
gravestones less than 50 cm in height than either Oakwood or Waterford (Figure 68).
Frequencies between 25 – 50% occur between the 1880s and 1900s in the cemetery. However,
the most frequent heights seen in the overall cemetery population are between 101 – 200 cm.

Gravestones between 201 – 300 cm in height occur from the 1860s to the 1890s.
Gravestones between 301 – 400 cm in height occur from the 1870s to the 1900s. There were no
gravestones between 401 – 500 cm in height, but gravestones that exceeded 500 cm were present
in the 1870s and 1890s.
Similar to St. John’s Cemetery, the gravestone height with the highest frequency in Blooming Grove Cemetery’s overall population was 101 – 200 cm (Figure 69). Gravestones with heights between 51 – 100 cm were also popular in the cemetery. Blooming Grove had no gravestones under 50 cm until the 1880s, with an increasing popularity to 25% in the 1900s.

It was only between the 1850s and the 1890s that stones over 200 cm occurred. Stones with heights between 201 – 300 cm in all five of those decades, while gravestones between 301 – 400 cm only occurred in the 1860s and 1880s. There were no gravestones that measured between 401 – 500 cm and only in the 1880s were gravestones over 500 cm erected.

In Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, William DeFreest was matched to a 225 cm tall column. He is listed as a farmer, living with his sons who were also farmers, in a $5,000 brick
house. He also employed a household servant (Bureau of the Census 1875d: p. 59, ln. 15). Only a few other stones were successfully matched with individuals listed in the 1875 census. A 280 cm tall column was matched with Susan Whitbeck, whose husband passed away before the census. She is listed as living in a $2,000 framed house with another couple and a household servant (Bureau of the Census 1875d: p. 48, ln 12). A 370 cm tall obelisk was matched with head of household Jacob Moul, a farmer in an $1,800 framed house (Bureau of the Census 1875e: p. 4, ln. 10). One of the tallest obelisks in the cemetery at 610 cm tall was matched to William Colehammer, a farmer with a $1,500 framed house. He lived with his sons, also farmers, and employed two servants (Bureau of the Census 1875e: p. 4, ln. 17). The main occupation in the area was farming, so it is not surprising that many of the matched stones were linked to farmers.

Figure 69: Height of Stone by Decade - Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery
Similar to the material analysis, Oakwood stands out amongst the cemeteries in regards to having the highest percentages of the tallest stone groups as well as earlier examples of the tallest stones. Height of mortuary monument is at once a good indication of the overall size of the monument, as the examples of very wide/long stones are not as numerous, as well as the visibility of the monument. Due to this, very tall stones are indicative of higher amounts of energy expenditure as well as the perceived value of being seen. Oakwood unquestionably differs from the other cemeteries sampled in the height category; the population utilizing Oakwood had the means and the ambition to dedicate their resources to their mortuary monuments.

The census information indicates that individuals and families whose house values were above average and occupied higher status jobs were erecting the tallest monuments in Oakwood. In contrast, the stones that could be matched to individuals in Blooming Grove and St. John’s did not overwhelmingly own homes far outside the average or always occupy white collar jobs such as lawyers or doctors. It is important to note, though, that the tallest of monuments in Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s were not as tall as the tallest stones in Oakwood percentage-wise. One did not have to be as significantly wealthy in order to stand out in the smaller cemeteries.

In Blooming Grove, Waterford and St. John’s, it is potentially due to the desire to appear of a higher socioeconomic status while occupying the middle ground between classes, which drove the desire to erect large monuments. In Oakwood, it appears to be more simplified: those with the financial capability and with high status were marked by their ability to erect large stones. Due to the higher percentages of tall stones, a monument in Oakwood would need to stand over 400 or 500cm tall in order to tower over other monuments in nearby sections, whereas
much smaller stones (with less energy investment) could be prominent in a smaller cemetery. Putting these concepts together, it signifies that the populations utilizing the smaller cemeteries were taking cues from Oakwood, seeing that higher status families had tall stones, and followed suit but were not necessarily extremely wealthy or of high status. The ability to invest less wealth in a monument and still be amongst the most visible monuments in a cemetery would have been an impetus to mimic the styles of Oakwood in order to imitate the same status.

**Individual – Spousal – Family Gravestone Types**

The type of gravestone (individual, family, spousal or other) was charted for each cemetery and decade. The cemeteries do not differ as significantly from each other in this group as they do in others. Overall, individual stones were the most numerous in each cemetery, except for St. John’s where family stones are just as popular, but again, St. John’s has the smallest sample size and was the smallest cemetery. In all the cemeteries, the “other” category of gravestone type is the least numerous. The “other” category encompasses gravestones such as siblings, often twins, which imitate the spousal style of dual burial, but are not spouses. This information was recorded in the personal inscriptions on the gravestones.

For Oakwood Cemetery specifically, the family style of gravestone is most popular between the 1830s and 1850s (Figure 70), however every decade maintains at least 15% of its population as family style gravestones. Spousal stones rise in popularity in the cemetery after 1880. The smaller sample size after 1910 might affect the appearance that spousal stones decline in popularity because personal experience in the cemeteries indicate that a large proportion of gravestones after 1920 are spousal stones.
Waterford Rural Cemetery is dominated by the individual stone type, with the family type peaking between the 1860s and 1880s (Figure 71). This cemetery shows the growing popularity of spousal stones, which occur steadily around 10% of the population between the 1860s and 1880s and then to about 20% in the 1890s and over 30% in the 1910s.
St John’s Cemetery, as mentioned above, has the lowest frequency of individual stones (Figure 72). This is the only cemetery in which family stones outnumber individual stones. This occurs in the 1890s. Spousal stones account for over half of the stones in the 1910s.
Blooming Grove Cemetery is the cemetery with the highest frequency of individual stones (Figure 73). Individual stones account for over 60% of the population in every decade and over 70% of the popular in every decade except the 1890s. Family style stones reach their popularity in the 1860s, accounting for approximately 25% of the population. Spousal stones appear in the 1850s and reach the height of their popularity in the 1890s at 20% of the population.
The possibility of the number of individuals per stone affecting gravestone height was suspected during the recording of the gravestones in all four of the cemeteries (Figures 74 - 77). In order to determine if there was any truth to this notion, gravestone height was compared to the type of stone: family, individual, spousal or other. Family stones had three or more individuals inscribed on the monument, individual stones memorialized just one person, and spousal stones were erected for just a husband and a wife. The other category was reserved for special cases, often family-type stones with just two people. The most common instance of these stones were young siblings buried together, who died within a short span of each other. The second sibling was often inscribed near the bottom or on the back of the monument, presumably to spare the expense of buying a second stone.
There are clear differences between the type of stone and the height of the stone when the graphs are examined. Oakwood Rural has the broadest sample, with 321 stones in the family type, 711 individual stones, 131 spousal stones and 9 other stones. There were no family stones under 50cm, very few under 100cm, and an almost equal distribution of family stones for all of the other height ranges. In relation to the rest of the cemetery, the family stone type is the type that makes up most of the monuments over 200cm. No other type has such high percentages of tall stones, indicating that the higher the number of individuals for whom the monument stands, then the taller the monument. The other category that contains a significant amount of tall stones, stones over 201cm, is the spousal stone type, lending credence to the concept that the amount of people on the monument affects height. Over 95% of the individual stones and 100% of the other type were under 200cm in height, making these categories the shortest monuments in the cemetery. Individual stones and the other stones also have the highest percentage of stones under 50cm.

Waterford Rural Cemetery, the cemetery with the next highest amount of gravestones in the sample, follows suit with Oakwood in almost every way. Individual and other stones have the highest percentage of stones under 50cm, and almost 100% of the rest of the stones are under 200cm. Conversely, there were no family stones under 50cm, and over 40% of the stones were over 201cm. The way in which Waterford differs from Oakwood is that over 50% of its family stones did stand between 101 and 200cm in height, much higher than Oakwood’s percentage. Spousal stones, as well, have a higher percentage of stones between 101 and 200cm in height, but still contain stones over 201cm.

Blooming Grove Rural adds to the support for number of individuals on the monument affecting height. The only gravestones in Blooming Grove that stood over 301cm were in the
family type category. Spousal stones contained almost 20% stones over 201cm, while the individual type had an insignificant amount of stones over that height. The only category to contain stones under 50cm were individual stones. St. John’s follows these trends, in an abbreviated way because of the small size of the sample for this cemetery. No stones over 401cm occurred in any category aside from the family type. Again, stones under 50cm only occurred in the individual and other types, and stones over 201cm were most common in the family and spousal types. The individual category had a very small percentage of stones between 301-400cm.

An important point to consider when examining the type of stone, whether family, spousal or individual, is that socioeconomic factors may come into play when families are purchasing gravestones. It might have been beyond the capability of some to purchase a large, multi-person stone at the time that the monument was erected, leading to the purchase of a smaller, individual stone. Those with more disposable income may have been better equipped to purchase a large monument to honor several generations of a family at the time of the first death that needed to be memorialized.
Figure 74: Oakwood Rural Cemetery - gravestone type compared to height

Figure 75: Waterford Rural Cemetery - gravestone type compared to height
Figure 76: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery - gravestone type compared to height

Figure 77: St. John's Cemetery - gravestone type compared to height

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Shape

Gravestone shape is another variable examined in all four cemeteries, divided up into decades in order to see diachronic patterns in the cemeteries. The shapes were reduced into broad categories (eg. shouldered tablets with scalloped edges are included in the group shouldered tablets, roofed blocks are included in the group blocks, roofed columns are included in the group columns, etc) for analysis. The shapes are: tablets, domed tablets, shouldered tablets, Gothic tablets, blocks, columns, obelisks, scrolls, crosses, sarcophaguses, temples, and other. The four cemeteries in this study vary on frequency of shapes, overall, as well as which shapes were most popular by decade.

Oakwood Cemetery gravestones show an interesting frequency variation throughout time (Figure 78, Table 3), with the frequency of domed tablets staying steady throughout time, averaging about 20-30% of the total amount of gravestones per decade, excepting the years prior to 1830 and after 1920, where the sample size was too small for proper frequencies to be determined. In fact, the frequencies of all the tablet forms (regular, domed, shouldered and Gothic) accounted for most of the gravestones in the sample until the 1890s, when block style gravestones rose in popularity. The block style of gravestone was in use since the 1830s in Oakwood Cemetery, making up about 2-10% of the gravestone population per decade, until jumping to roughly 25% of the population in the 1880s and then usurping dominance in the 1890s by accounting for over 40% of the gravestones.

Other styles show clear popularity during certain decades, waning or even disappearing from the sample over time. The column gravestone was used very early in the sample, being the style of the earliest recorded gravestone in the cemetery. From the 1820s to the 1880s, it
accounts for anywhere from 20-25% of the sample per decade, losing popularity in the 1890s and 1900s until the style is not represented in the cemetery by 1910. The other style that accounts for a large percentage of the sample and wanes over time is the obelisk, which drops from a steady 12-16% of the sample from the 1830s to the 1870s to approximately 4% in the following decades.
Waterford Rural Cemetery presents a slightly different pattern of frequency than Oakwood Cemetery (Figure 79, Table 4). In the 1820s and 1830s, the variations of tablets, especially regular and shouldered, account for the entire sample in those decades. The regular tablet style makes up over 72% of the sample in the 1840s, about 45% in the 1850s, and then the style drops rapidly in popularity in the cemetery in the following decades. It is only in the 1880s that the tablet forms (regular, domed, shouldered and Gothic) account for less than half of the total styles used. Domed tablets actually grow in popularity in the 1860s and 1870s and continue to account for at least 25% of the sample in the cemetery until 1910, when the sample size becomes too small to accurately examine the population.

Table 3: Oakwood Rural Cemetery Gravestone Shapes by Decade

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<th>Decade</th>
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<th>Gothic Tablet</th>
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<th>Column</th>
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<th>Scroll</th>
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The block style doesn’t appear in Waterford Cemetery until the 1850s, but accounts for the majority of the population in the 1890s with an over 38% frequency. The only style recorded in the 1910s is the block style, but as stated above, the sample size in this decade is not large enough to make inferences about the general population. Most of the population of the cemetery in the 1900s are made up of either blocks or tablets, with columns and scrolls making up the rest.

Obelisks are only present in Waterford Rural Cemetery from the 1840s to the 1880s, whereas they are used earlier and for several more decades in Oakwood Cemetery. The obelisk style also accounts for much less of the population than Oakwood Cemetery, having a frequency no more than 10% in any of the decades it is present. The are no sarcophagus or temple style gravestones present in Waterford Rural Cemetery.
Figure 79: Waterford Rural Cemetery - Frequency of Gravestone Shape by Decade

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185
Table 4: Waterford Rural Cemetery Gravestone Shapes by Decade

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St. John’s Cemetery’s sample is the smallest of the four cemeteries recorded, with no stones recorded prior to the 1850s (Figure 80, Table 5). Because of the small sample size, and perhaps because of the fact that St. John’s is the only specifically Catholic cemetery in the sample, the frequencies of gravestone shapes are different from the other cemeteries.

Fewer types of styles make up the frequencies in each decade in St. John’s Cemetery with no more than five gravestone shapes present per decade. This lack of variation seems to set this cemetery apart from others in the study. In the 1850s, only two styles are present: regular tablets and columns, almost exactly 50-50. In the decade, the other types of tablets represent themselves in almost equal frequencies: shouldered, domed and Gothic. Gothic tablets are only present in the 1860s while regular tablet style popularity wanes and disappears from the cemetery by the 1890s. Domed tablets are not represented after 1900. Shouldered tablets have the longest run of popularity in the cemetery of all the tablet types, as they are present steadily from the 1860s to the 1900s.

Obelisks are only present in St. John’s Cemetery in the 1890s, accounting for 6% of the population in that decade. Interestingly for a Catholic cemetery, the cross shape is only present in
the 1880s and 1890s. There are no sarcophagi, temples or scroll shapes represented in the sample of this cemetery.
Table 5: St. John’s Cemetery Gravestone Shapes by Decade

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</tr>
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<td>1890-1899</td>
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<td>1920-1929</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blooming Grove Cemetery contains one of the earliest stones of all the cemeteries, a shouldered tablet in the 1790s, and various tablet forms account for most of the early stones in the cemetery, but the sample size is inadequate for much analysis until the 1860s. Prior to 1860, the gravestone shapes present are tablets, domed tablets, shouldered tablets, Gothic tablets, columns and blocks.

Unlike all of the other cemeteries in the study, Blooming Grove is dominated by the various tablet styles for every decade studied (Figure 81, Table 6). The tablets (regular, shouldered, domed and Gothic) account for over 50% of the sample in every decade, and sometimes as much as 80% of the sample. Domed tablets are the most popular tablet form after 1860 and for every decade following.

In a similar pattern to the other three cemeteries, the block style of gravestone grows in popularity in the last decades in the study. In Blooming Grove Cemetery specifically, the block style jumps from about 4% frequency in the 1870s to over 16% in the 1880s and about 30% in
the 1890s. As was common with the smaller cemeteries in the study, there are no sarcophogai or temple style gravestones present in Blooming Grove Cemetery. Obelisks are present from the 1870s to the 1890s, accounting for no more than 7% of the population in any decade.

Figure 81: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery - Frequency of Gravestone Shape by Decade
The pattern that is clear throughout the variation in all of the cemeteries is that the four tablet types are the dominant gravestone shape in the earliest decades of the study, with the block shape gaining popularity and eventually becoming the dominant style in the last decades of the study. Other styles, such as the obelisk, are more variable between cemeteries and within cemeteries, depending on the decade.

These patterns reveal that, generally, all of the cemeteries in the Capital District followed the basic mortuary patterns embodied by the Rural Cemetery Movement. Smaller, thinner tablets were popular in the early decades of the study, remnants of the Colonial era mortuary traditions. More decorated, detailed styles increased in popularity, with classic or Gothic traits rising with
the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement. The obelisk is a prime example of this since it epitomizes the opulence, taste and visibility-chasing of the Rural Cemetery Movement. This morphed into the block style, a more robust but simpler style, continued to grow in popularity, remaining popular long after the more decadent styles of the Rural Cemetery Movement began to fade.

Oakwood follows the typical rural cemetery trend most closely, as is expected due to its design and purpose. The two smaller non-sectarian cemeteries, which attempted to mimic a rural cemetery, did not mirror the trends as closely. This is likely due to the lack of financial ability or the lack of social pressure to create more intricate or fashionable monuments. St. John’s had the least amount of variation in its monuments and had very few features of a rural cemetery with regards to gravestone shape. The religious nature of the cemetery caused the artistic expression of a rural cemetery to be more muted. There were some effects of the Rural Cemetery Movement in St. John’s, however, seen especially in the establishment of obelisks just after the peak of the movement. Despite the more traditional tone of the cemetery, popular fashions still affected the population there.

Symbolism and Decoration Data

Decoration on a gravestone is more complicated to assess since there are endless variations on the images that can be engraved/sculpted onto a gravestone. Decorations were put into more general categories for purposes of analysis, for example, all images of doves were included in the same general “dove” category, regardless of if they were flying or not, facing a certain direction, or carrying a flower in their beak. All attempts were made to account for all of the symbolism on each gravestone; the flower that the dove was carrying would have been
recorded under its particular flower symbolism category. Comparable differences between overall similar symbols were also grouped into the same categories.

The plainest distinction that can be made about decoration is whether a gravestone was decorated or left plain (Figure 82). All of the cemeteries have populations with at least 40% decorated gravestones. Blooming Grove Cemetery has the lowest percentage of decorated gravestones and St. John’s cemetery has the highest at over 70%. St. John’s high percentage of decorated stones could be attributed to its small sample size and that the cemetery does not have very many early stones, or perhaps to the fact that it is the only religiously affiliated cemetery in the sample. Oakwood and Waterford Rural Cemeteries have approximately half of all of their gravestones with decoration. These two cemeteries also have the largest samples and cover the most complete time span.

![Percentage of Stones with Decoration](image)

**Figure 82: Percentage of Stones with Decoration per cemetery**
It is common for the frequency of decorated stones to increase as the number of total stones increases, creating a parallel bell curve in both categories in every cemetery except Blooming Grove. Blooming Grove was not used steadily until the 1860s, being used off-and-on as a community and church burial ground for Blooming Grove Reformed Church prior to being established as an official cemetery. As the graphs show, there are no decades that have a significantly higher frequency of decoration than any other decade when compared to the overall total amount of gravestones that had been erected during those times (Figures 83 - 86). Therefore, it is the type of decoration that is of interest in this dissertation. Since decoration itself appears to be equally common throughout the sample, it is not simply decoration itself that defines the Rural Cemetery Movement or differences in mortuary expression, but choice of decoration.

Figure 83: Oakwood Rural Cemetery - Decorated Stones by Decade
Figure 84: Waterford Rural Cemetery - Decorated Stones by Decade

Figure 85: St. John's Cemetery - Decorated Stones by Decade
As shown in the table (Table 7), most decorated stones only have one, two or three decorations engraved or sculpted on them. As the number of decorations increases, the frequency of stones that have that number of decorations decreases. No stone in the entire sample among all of the cemeteries has more than seven different decoration types. Oakwood Cemetery is the only cemetery to include stones, eleven in total, with seven decorations. This should be marked as another indication of Oakwood mirroring the Rural Cemetery Movement most closely, as opulent decoration was preferred to simpler tastes. Oakwood Cemetery and Waterford Cemetery both include stones with six decorations. Every cemetery includes stones with five or less decorations. St. John’s Cemetery has more stones with four or five decorations compared to the slightly larger Blooming Grove Cemetery.
Oakwood Rural Cemetery Symbolism

The following tables, and associated graphs for visual comprehension, detail the patterns of the most common decorations and symbols used on the monuments Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Some cemeteries, especially Oakwood, have several decorations that are either unique to just one gravestone or used very rarely. These will be discussed separately. The following chart (Table 8) shows the amount of unique or overall rare decorations per decade that have not otherwise been included in the charts. The amount of these atypical decoration types increases through the early parts of the 19th century, peaking in 1870. This means that in the 1870s, more stones with individualistic decorations were erected than any other decade in the sample. This can be attributed to the increase in the number of stones erected during these decades as well as the fact that the Rural Cemetery Movement was at its height at this time, fostering a cemetery culture that welcomed artistic expression on mortuary monuments. This was very different from the earlier Colonial mortuary traditions where standard forms were expected on gravestones, such as death’s heads and cherubs, and there was very little variation among the forms. The unique or rare decorations decrease after the 1870s, likely partly due to the decrease in sample
size. However, in the next decade, the 1880s, the sample size was smaller by only 28 stones and yet the number of decorations of this type decreased by 12, proportionately a much larger number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Decoration Not Otherwise Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (27)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (47)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (113)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (226)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (251)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (223)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (145)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (93)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (34)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Amount of decorations not otherwise specified in Oakwood Rural Cemetery's Graphs

Oakwood Rural Cemetery contained the highest number of unique decoration types out of the four cemeteries sampled. It includes all of the most common symbols found in all of the cemeteries (such as the family name, scrollwork, urn, cross, leaves and floral symbols). The table below (Table 9) includes the amount of stones that had any floral decorations, and the next table (Table 10) includes the specific type of flower that was depicted. The number of morning glories, roses, lilies and lilies of the valley are all included under the larger floral count, which is why they are not graphed together. The purpose for the floral decoration count is that not all of the flowers depicted could be identified through use of a natural identification guide due to
condition or were abstract images not amenable to identification. A total count of the number of stones that had any floral designs was desired as well as a count of the most common floral types.

Six different embellishments were most common throughout Oakwood’s history: the family name, scrollwork, urns, crosses, leaves and floral symbolism. From the graphs, clearly the most popular decoration in the cemetery was the use of the family name. The family name was the display of the last name, usually of the eldest patriarch of the family, on a gravestone that contained more than one individual on it in large script to be the most dominant word on the stone. Occasionally, even individual gravestones would have the family name decoration, separate from the inscription of the name of the deceased, to increase the visibility of the last name. The oldest and the newest stone in the cemetery sample both had the family name inscribed on them, making it a common decoration throughout time. The other types of decoration depicted, scrollwork, urns, crosses, leaves and floral décor, were all roughly popular in similar amounts from 1820 to 1920. The counts increase through the 1860s and 1870s for these decorations, due to the increase in the amount of stones erected as well as the popularity of elaborate decoration during the Rural Cemetery Movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Scrollwork</th>
<th>Urn</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (11)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (27)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (47)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (113)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (226)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (251)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (223)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (145)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>
Examining the specific types of decoration more closely, some types of floral designs and leaf designs were more prevalent than others. The four commonly identifiable flower decorations in Oakwood: morning glories, roses, lilies and lilies of the valley, began to appear by the 1830s and continued to show up in the sample until the first decade of the 1900s. Lilies were the most common flower, seen 33 times in the sample, a common symbol for mourning due to their...
fragility and their association with purity; the lily was often used in Victorian funerary rituals. Rose decorations appear 31 times in the Oakwood sample, peaking in the 1870s, with a sharp drop off afterwards. Morning glories were also popular during this time, occurring 17 times overall, a flower with a short lifespan that symbolized mourning for a life cut short and also was associated with resurrection, making it a common Christian symbol to engrave. Lily of the Valley is a flower also imbued with Christian symbolism, also called the “Ladder to Heaven” and associated with the Virgin Mary. This flower occurred 14 times in the cemetery sample, most popular between 1860 and 1890.

As seen in the above chart (Table 9), leaves were a frequent decoration used on gravestones, often used to ornament the edges of the stone. Many of these leaves were abstract or unidentifiable, but a common trend did stand out in the sample. Oak leaves, or oak leaves combined with acorns, could be found in the sample from the 1830s on. Oak leaves and acorns have Christian connotations, like many of the flowers described, as the oak tree was thought to have been used to make Jesus Christ’s cross. The oak and acorns symbolized endurance, immortality and eternity for Christians of this time and was also commonly found on military gravestones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Morning Glory</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Lily of the Valley</th>
<th>Oak Leaves/Acorns</th>
<th>Ivy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (27)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (47)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (113)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (251)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>
Table 10: Oakwood Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Morning Glory</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Lily of the Valley</th>
<th>Oak Leaves/Acorns</th>
<th>Ivy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (145)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (93)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (34)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were at least ten other distinctive decorative symbols used in Oakwood more than just once or twice (Table 11, Figure 89). Many of these types had at least some general association with the Christian religion, such as the fire, angel, three rings, hands, and doves, and belief in the afterlife, such as the crown, shield, wreath and columns. As can be read in the background sections for Troy and the surrounding areas, the population was heavily descended
from various Christian faiths. Although Oakwood was a privately owned and operated entity, the general makeup of the surrounding population affected the type of symbolism that was depicted on its mortuary monuments. The majority of these symbols were most popular at the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement, which is also when the cemetery saw the largest amount of internments, from the 1860s through the 1880s.

Fire symbolism was often associated with the Holy Spirit and was seen evenly from 1830 to 1900, with a large spike in popularity in the 1860s, most likely due to the rising popularity of rural cemetery art in general at that time. Angel symbolism was scattered randomly through time in the cemetery, with no seeming patterns, indicating that the inclusion of this type of decoration was a more personal choice and not guided by fashion. The three connected rings were indicative in a belief in the Holy Trinity and were found in small numbers from 1850 to 1900. Doves symbolized the Holy Spirit and were also found in small numbers arbitrarily through the sample.

Hand symbolism was counted together, though there were several permutations that could be found: hands pointing up, hands pointing down, hands praying or clasped hands. The first three types listed all relate to Christian symbolism. Hands pointing up pointed to heaven and hands pointing down indicated the hand of God. Praying hands were a symbol of Christian devotion. Clasped hands potentially do not have a religious connotation, especially when found on spousal stones, rather referencing the connection between the deceased and still living loved ones. Hands were only seen in the cemetery sample from 1850 – 1890.

Though not a Christian organization, and nonsectarian, Masonic symbols could be found in the sample from 1860 – 1910. The symbol was most often in the form of a square and a set of compasses joined together, with a G in the middle of the tools. There are different meanings from area to area, depending on the Masonic group in question, but usually the G is assumed to
stand for God. The existence of this symbol in the cemetery indicates a personal affiliation rather than any mortuary trend, but it is important to note that members of Masonic lodges felt free enough in the privatized, non-religious rural cemetery to freely display their membership in a non-Christian group.

The other symbols, crowns, wreaths, and shields, were most often used to represent victory over death by having passed into the afterlife. There is nothing inherently Christian about these symbols, but they were utilized often by Christians to indicate their belief in heaven and were often joined with other Christian symbolism on the same monuments. These symbols peaked in Oakwood between 1860 and 1890. Columns very often indicated mortality, especially if the column was broken or damaged in any way. Columns were also a common decorative device used that evoke the Neo-classical movement that was so popular during the Rural Cemetery Movement. This decoration peaked around the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement, in the 1880s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Crown</th>
<th>Fire/Flame</th>
<th>Shield</th>
<th>Angel</th>
<th>Wreath</th>
<th>3 Connected Rings</th>
<th>Columns</th>
<th>Hands</th>
<th>Mason</th>
<th>Dove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (11)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (27)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (47)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (113)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (226)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (251)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (223)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (145)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (93)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (34)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Oakwood Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
The charts and graphs above give a sense of how the symbolism and decoration of the gravestones in Oakwood looked at any given decade. There was nothing out of the ordinary occurring in the symbolism of Oakwood for a rural cemetery as expected types occurred at the appropriate times and the symbolism reflected the religious composition of the population that utilized the cemetery. The use of symbolism reached a height at the same time as the Rural Cemetery Movement peaked in popularity, coinciding with the largest amount of burials in the cemetery. Burials increased at the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement because Oakwood
was a true rural cemetery and a draw to those influenced by the tastes, trends and various artistic movements that made a rural cemetery desirable at that time.

**Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism**

Waterford Rural Cemetery was sampled and recorded identical to the methods used for Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Waterford Rural Cemetery, though its name contains the word “rural,” was not a rural cemetery in the same sense that Oakwood was, as it was not designed specifically with the purpose of being a park-like, rural retreat by an architect and designer. Rather, the cemetery was conventionally named rural in keeping with the popular fashion at the time in order to give the population it served a sense of participation in the desired mortuary rituals and behaviors of the time.

There were fewer unique symbols and decorations used in Waterford Rural Cemetery. This could partly be due to the fact that the cemetery, and therefore the sample size, was significantly smaller than Oakwood, resulting in simply fewer opportunities for different expression on the monuments. However, it cannot be underestimated that Waterford was a smaller cemetery serving a smaller and less urban population, and would consequently likely have differential mortuary behaviors than the larger Oakwood. As seen in the chart below (Table 12), the amount of decorations not otherwise specified, decorations that were rare or exclusive to only one or two stones over time, were much fewer than seen in Oakwood. The numbers were the highest in the 1850s and the 1870s, times when the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement was increasingly in vogue and elaborate decoration was at its most popular.
Table 12: Amount of decorations not otherwise specified in Waterford Rural Cemetery's Graphs

Similarly to Oakwood, the family name decoration was also the most frequent decoration seen at Waterford (Table 13, Figure 90). This could be attributed to similar reasons listed for Oakwood: the importance of the visibility of the family name. Notably, the family name is seen only starting in the 1850s, becoming most popular between 1860 and 1900. The time frame is similar to what is seen in Oakwood, but on a reduced scale. A similar trend can be seen for the other major decoration types, most popular between 1860 and 1900, but occurring far less often than in Oakwood. Despite the smaller sample size, the patterns of the most used decorations (scrollwork, urns, crosses, leaves and floral) still mirror the larger rural cemetery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Scrollwork</th>
<th>Urn</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (4)</td>
<td>1820-1829 (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (7)</td>
<td>1830-1839 (7)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (11)</td>
<td>1840-1849 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (42)</td>
<td>1850-1859 (42)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Scrollwork</th>
<th>Urn</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

Figure 90: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

Not all of the symbolism seen in Oakwood appears in Waterford. Waterford contains fewer flower types, the morning glory, rose and lily only (Table 14, Figure 91). No lilies of the valley were recorded in the sample. Morning glories appear only once, in the 1890s, and roses appear only once, in the 1850s. Lilies are seen three times in the 1870s. This indicates a far lower
usage overall in the cemetery of floral decorations, especially when compared to Oakwood. Oak leaves and/or acorns are seen from 1860 to 1910, and in higher numbers than floral symbolism. Ivy can be seen in small numbers from 1850 to 1920, often used similarly as the decorative scrollwork.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Morning Glory</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Oak Leaves/Acorns</th>
<th>Ivy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (7)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (42)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (52)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (68)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (71)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (73)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (28)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
The other symbolism types, indicating a religious belief or belief in the afterlife in general, can be seen several times in Waterford Rural Cemetery (Table 15, Figure 92). Masonic affiliation was also declared on monuments in the cemetery. These symbols are also only seen from the 1850s, at the earliest, to the 1900s in the Waterford sample. An important deviation from the Oakwood sample is that hand symbolism occurs considerably more often in Waterford, especially given the proportions of the sample. In the 1870s, when only 68 stones were sampled, 7 instances of hand symbolism were recorded. Though this symbolism can be seen in the other cemeteries sampled, the high percentages seen could be seen as distinctive to the population served by the cemetery, a miniature trend.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Crown</th>
<th>Fire/Flame</th>
<th>Shield</th>
<th>Angel</th>
<th>Wreath</th>
<th>3 Connected Rings</th>
<th>Hands</th>
<th>Mason</th>
<th>Dove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (7)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (42)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (52)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (68)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (71)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (73)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (28)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

Figure 92: Waterford Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Symbolism

Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery is a smaller cemetery than both Oakwood Rural and Waterford Rural, with fewer internments in the sampled years. As a result of this, there are fewer decorations overall and per stone. There are very few decorations in the cemetery not covered by the following charts, as most of the decoration and symbolism used on the monuments falls into the major categories seen in the cemeteries already discussed. This indicates that those burying their dead in Blooming Grove did not stray from the most common and accepted symbolism of the time. The chart below (Table 16) illustrates that most decades contain only one decoration not otherwise specified in the larger symbolism charts, with the 1860s through the 1880s containing three or four decorations of this type. These time periods are the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement and also when the most internments occur during the time period sampled. Like Waterford, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery contains the word “rural” in its name, mostly as a convention to satisfy the population’s interest in this type of cemetery rather than due to its actual design. Though there was some imitation of the rural cemetery, especially at the height of the movement, the utilization of symbolism in Blooming Grove does is not similar to the abundant use of symbolism during the Rural Cemetery Movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Decoration Not Otherwise Specified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1799 (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (11)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (27)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (24)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (29)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16: Amount of decorations not otherwise specified in Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery’s Graphs

All of the decoration and symbols detailed in the charts below have been described in more detail for Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Not every type that occurred in either Oakwood or Waterford occurs in Blooming Grove, however, and those categories have been eliminated from the charts where necessary. Blooming Grove follows suit with Waterford’s pattern of overall less symbolism used throughout the sample, with a peak seen during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

The family name decoration numbers the highest of any other decoration type, similar to the cemeteries discussed previously. Unlike the other cemetery, the family name decoration is only seen from the 1860s through the 1890s, despite there being several stones samples previously to 1860 (Table 17, Figure 93). Floral decoration is the next most popular decoration type, peaking in 1860. Urns were seen steadily in low numbers from the 1850s through the 1890s. Crosses appear as decoration by 1870 and continue to be seen through the first decade of the 1900s. There are only four instances of scrollwork, a general decorative feature, seen throughout the sample. Leaves are used starting in the 1870s through the 1900s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>1890-1899 (30)</th>
<th>1900-1909 (12)</th>
<th>1910-1919 (0)</th>
<th>1920+ (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Name</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrollwork</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Scrollwork</th>
<th>Urn</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1799 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (11)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (27)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (24)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (29)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (30)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 93: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
There are fewer identifiable floral types seen in Blooming Grove, only roses and lilies appearing on the monuments (Table 18. Figure 94). Lilies were the most popular choice in the cemetery, with four instances recorded in the 1860s. As mentioned before, lilies were a sign of innocence and purity, of the individual themselves or of the renewed purification of the soul at death, and a prevalent flower used in Victorian mortuary rituals. The symbolism of the flower was widely known in American culture at this time; its familiarity making it a popular choice for grave stones. It is important to note that both oak leaves/acorns and ivy were present in the cemetery, indicating a general shared perception of mortuary symbolism with the other cemeteries in the sample. The numbers of these symbols are very low, but are also found during the height of the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement. It appeared most customary to experiment with additional symbolism and decoration in non-rural cemeteries during this time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Oak Leaves/Acorns</th>
<th>Ivy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1799 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (11)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (27)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (24)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (29)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (30)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
The following categories of symbols were included in order to compare with the other cemeteries in the sample, even though their numbers are very low. Most of the symbols occur only once or twice: the shield, angel, wreath, hands and dove (Table 19, Figure 95). The exceptions are the crown, which occurs three times, a popular symbol to indicate victory over death by the resurrection of the soul to the afterlife, also recalling images of “Christ the King.” Masonic symbols occur five times, mostly in the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s. This
depended on the amount of masons buried, though, rather than the attraction to a usage of symbolism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Crown</th>
<th>Shield</th>
<th>Angel</th>
<th>Wreath</th>
<th>Hands</th>
<th>Mason</th>
<th>Dove</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1799 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (5)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (11)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (27)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (24)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (29)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (30)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Symbolism Counts
St. John’s Cemetery Symbolism

St. John’s Cemetery, the smallest sample of the four cemeteries due to its overall small size and minimal usage during the time period studied is also the only Catholic cemetery in the sample. There were no pretense that this cemetery was a rural cemetery by those who used it. As a result, there are far less of the conventional decorations and symbols found at St. John’s that were typically found in the other three cemeteries. The cemetery does have several decorations or symbols recorded that were not otherwise specified in the graphs (Table 20) and will be discussed later.
There are some familiar conventions that St. John’s adheres to, mainly that the family name decoration is the most used decoration in the cemetery. The family name decoration can be seen in every decade that there were monuments erected in St. Johns, from 1850 to 1920 (Table 21, Figure 96). The use of this decoration peaked in the 1880s, a time when the Rural Cemetery Movement was also at its peak and the desire for individual and familial visibility was high. Scrollwork, urns, leaves and floral decorations are all present but rare in the cemetery. It is important to note their presence, as these decorations and symbols were the most common in the other three cemeteries. Unsurprisingly, the cross is the second most used symbol in the cemetery, one of the most clearly understood symbols of Christianity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Scrollwork</th>
<th>Urn</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Leaves</th>
<th>Floral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (10)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (14)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (21)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1890-1899 (16)</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Amount of decorations not otherwise specified in St. John’s Cemetery’s Graphs
In order to give a visual comparison to the other cemeteries sampled, the figures below (Table 22, Figure 97) shows that the only other symbols that St. John’s shares with the other
cemeteries is the rose, ivy and shield. Ivy was the most common of these three symbols, occurring five times. Ivy was a common decorative addition to gravestones at this time, a widespread cemetery plant in England and standing for immortality because it would remain green even in very harsh conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade (amount of stones)</th>
<th>Rose</th>
<th>Ivy</th>
<th>Shield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800-1809 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810-1819 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820-1829 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-1839 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1849 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1859 (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-1869 (10)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-1879 (14)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1889 (21)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1899 (16)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1909 (12)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1919 (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920+ (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: St. John’s Cemetery Symbolism Counts
Infrequent Decorations/Symbols

As discussed above, not every type of symbolism and decoration was included in the above charts in order to simplify the charts and make it easier to observe the distribution of the most common symbols and decorations. The most frequent types were the family name, scrollwork, urn, cross, leaves and floral decorations in all of the cemeteries. Oakwood had several other very frequently occurring types: morning glories, roses, lilies, lilies of the valley, oak leaves/acorns, ivy, crowns, fire, shields, angels, wreaths, three connected rings, columns, hands, masons and doves. These types were charted for Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s, regardless of the frequency, in order to be better able to compare the cemeteries’ usage of various adornments. However, there were many other types utilized in the cemeteries that were
not graphed due to their rarity in Oakwood or their rarity across all four cemeteries. Many of these types will be discussed below for each cemetery in order to provide a more comprehensive view of what types of symbolism and decoration were used in the cemeteries during the Rural Cemetery Movement.

**Oakwood Rural Cemetery**

There were several additional floral types found in Oakwood that were not graphed: buds (unidentifiable types), daisies, passion flowers, poppies, calla lilies, primrose, tulips, daffodils, three leaf clovers, an olive branch and thistle/wheat. Buds were often found on the monuments of children or young adults, a sign of a life cut short. Daisies were also often associated with children and innocence, but were also a flower closely associated with the Virgin Mary. Passion flowers represent Christ’s “Passion, Redemption and Crucifixion” due to the belief that the structure of the plant resembled the crown of thorns and other aspects of the crucifixion. The poppy flower is sometimes associated with Christian themes, but also with sleep and death and the Greek god Morpheus because of its narcotic properties. Calla lilies were popular during the Rural Cemetery Movement because they were introduced to the United States around the same time from South Africa and became popular in many rituals, including marriages and funerals. Primroses often represented youth and hope and were likely to be found on the monuments of younger individuals; they are unique flowers because they opened in the early evening. Tulips symbolized love but were also a popular flower in the Capital Region because of the widespread Dutch heritage in the area. Daffodils represented vanity in the Greek legend of Narcissus, but Christians co-opted the symbol to represent the ability of divine love to triumph over vanity. Three leaf cloves most often represented the Holy Trinity in the Christian representations, but
also carried a possible connotation of an Irish ancestry. Olive branches were often referenced in the Christian bible and were used as a symbol of the soul in funerary art. Lastly, thistle and wheat symbolism was used to reference earthly sorrow as well as the crown of thorns (Keister 2004: 44 – 63).

This floral symbolism appears haphazardly throughout Oakwood’s sample, with some types occurring more frequently than others. For example, the daffodil symbol is only seen once in 1853 while bud symbolism occurs thirteen times from 1845 to 1885. Many of the flowers have Christian undertones, even if they had originally been used by other cultures and religions to signify various meanings.

There were also some very customary Christian inscriptions that were often made part of the decoration rather than used as an epitaph found in Oakwood. These would be the Alpha and Omega symbol (commonly understood at this time as God being the beginning and the end), “IHS” (standing for Iesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus, savior of mankind), and the chi-rho or sigla (the letters X and P joined to represent the first two letters of the word “Christ” in Greek). Also a very recognizable Christian symbol was the Bible; twelve gravestones had carvings of the Bible on them throughout Oakwood’s sample.

The willow and urn decoration was also found in Oakwood Cemetery, seen only once in 1833. The willow and urn symbolism was very common in colonial mortuary art, following the death’s head and cherub in Puritan New England cemeteries. The willow and urn motif was a move away from the frightening reminders of death and sin, instead focusing on grief and memorial. It is not strange to see the motif still occurring in rural cemeteries, especially as early as 1833.
Anchors, ropes, flags, swords, and soldier’s hats were seen on gravestones in Oakwood. These symbols potentially represented a more patriotic or military association, but also represented broader attitudes about death. For example, the anchor, seen seven times in Oakwood from 1841 to 1886, was a symbol of hope because of a passage in the Bible that states, “hope we have as an anchor of the soul” (Keister 2004: 111). Rope symbolism often has a similar connotation as the anchor, as the anchor was often depicted with either chain or rope wrapped around it. Flags, swords and soldier’s hats, however, have everything to do with the individual’s personal patriotic feelings or record of service in the military.

The lamb as a symbol was present in Oakwood, used four times from 1853 to 1889. It was solely used on children’s gravestones, especially infants, indicating both youth/innocence and a belief in Christianity. The lamb is a reference to Jesus as the “lamb of God.” Other animals could be found in Oakwood: butterflies, horses, eagles and snakes. The use of the butterfly on gravestones most often references the idea of resurrection, specifically the soul emerging from the body, because the butterfly must emerge from its chrysalis (Keister 2004: 77). Horses have a variety of possible symbolic meanings. In Oakwood, the horse is only seen once in 1856 and it is being ridden, most likely by a soldier. Eagles also have several different possible associations, the clearest being patriotic. The only eagle carved in Oakwood occurred in 1876 for a Major General in the US Army. Snakes are well known in the Bible as a sign of evil and temptation. The only instance of a snake in Oakwood co-occurs in 1910 with tulip and wing symbolism. This was during the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement when there was more of a trend towards individualized mourning and memorialization.

There were three instances of the Star of David inscribed upon gravestones in Oakwood. Oakwood was not a religiously affiliated cemetery and people of all religions could be buried
there. The dominant religions in the area were various forms of Christianity, as indicated by the high number of Christian symbols found in the cemetery, but it was not completely uncommon to see completely non-religious monuments or monuments dedicated to different religions. This holds true, perhaps more so, post-1920.

There were a few other more arbitrary symbols found in Oakwood that do not fit easily into a category. Skull and crossbones were used in 1871 in conjunction with the sword, shield and the family name. The skull is one of the most blatant symbols of death, generally understood by most people throughout time as representing death. An eye was carved into an 1869 gravestone, paired with an urn, ivy and the three connected ring. The all-seeing eye is a well-known and old symbol for God, and has some association with the Masons due to its use on the dollar bill with its connection to America’s Founding Fathers (Keister 2004: 106). Sunbursts have many meanings through time, but if one focuses on Christian symbolism, it recalls the Holy Spirit and the soul. Spheres were recorded once in Oakwood, in 1842 along with the family name and scrollwork. With no clear symbolic connection, this potentially could have been purely decorative. Wings were used just once, in 1910, and recalled angel or bird’s wings, symbolizing the flight of the soul to heaven.

**Waterford Rural Cemetery**

Seen in the above chart (Figure 82), Waterford Rural Cemetery has fewer overall symbols and decorations on its gravestones than Oakwood, and fewer still that were not already discussed in the above charts. Compared to Oakwood, the cemetery has significantly less distinctive symbolism. The decoration did not vary from the norm or the expected which indicates that there was less artistic experimentation. The variety of floral decorations only
includes: buds, thistle and wheat, three leaf clovers, four leaf clovers, branches and grapes. Buds occur only twice, in 1855 and 1859, both on the monuments of young women. Thistle and wheat occurs only once in 1883. Three leaf clovers occur 6 times from 1866 to 1888. The four leaf clover, occurring once in 1890, was not seen in Oakwood. This particular symbol holds the connotation of the deceased being of Irish ancestry, whereas the three leaf clover could have indicated Irish ancestry or referenced the Holy Trinity. Branches occur once in 1873, not defined enough to be identified as an olive branch that would normally be carried by a dove. The branches could have been purely decorative or indicating death in the sense of a tree without leaves. Grapes were recorded once in 1909, having the association with the Christian Eucharist (Keister 2004: 57).

Not only were there fewer floral types overall compared to Oakwood, but fewer instances of the floral types that were present in Waterford. Waterford had a fraction of the number of gravestones in its sample and was not truly set up as a rural cemetery. Those utilizing the cemetery as a burial place for loved ones did not have the same expectations that the cemetery would be used as a public place of respite in the same way that Oakwood was. Waterford Rural Cemetery also did not serve the same urban population as Oakwood. There were potentially less resources available to invest in mortuary monuments, as well as potentially less desire to follow the fashionable trends of the time.

The population that was served by Waterford Rural Cemetery may have had slightly less socioeconomic status or less desire to appear so, but overall, the population still had similar ancestry and religion as those who made use of Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Christian symbols could still be found in Waterford, the “IHS” and Bible being the two most recognizable. The “IHS” appears only once in 1891. The Bible occurs five times between 1857 and 1895. Two
angels were carved into gravestones in 1854 and 1857. Six instances of the crown were recorded between 1866 and 1902. A chalice was recorded in 1855. Most of the more specific decoration pertaining to Christianity occurred in the early years of the sample, fading as the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement grew.

A chair was recorded in 1873 on the stone of a child under one year old. Due to some literary pieces released in the early 19th Century, empty chairs were common symbols that could be found on children’s gravestones. Lambs, indicating the stones of young children, were used in the cemetery four times between 1851 and 1876. Like buds, this symbol was primarily used to indicate youth and innocence, a life cut short. However, the lamb also referenced a Christian theme of the “Lamb of God,” as well as the idea that practitioners of the faith were like lambs and Jesus their shepherd. The only other animal seen in Waterford was the dove, recorded once in 1863. These two animals have specific reference to Christianity, unlike the horse, eagle, and butterfly that were recorded in Oakwood.

Military symbols were less common in Waterford Rural Cemetery, the only instance besides shields being a flag carving in 1900. This may be due to the lower numbers of gravestones resulting in a lower chance of a soldier or veteran being buried in the cemetery or part of the sample. It also may not have been as important to make statements about belonging to certain groups when buried in the smaller cemetery where there was less chance of non-familial visitors.

The willow and urn motif was seen on an early stone from 1831 and a stone from 1855. These dates are early enough to still be influenced by the New England symbolic trend of moving away from Puritanical symbols to ones of mourning and memorialization. The
cemeteries of the Capital Region do not generally contain stones old enough to see the death’s head and cherub, but the willow and urn motif persisted as a motif well past the colonial era.

None of the other symbols mentioned in Oakwood’s section on symbolism above could be found in Waterford. The unique symbols found in this cemetery were the four leaf clover, branches and a chair. The presence of symbols in Waterford not found in the nearby large rural cemetery indicates that there was a measure of personalization and individuality when choosing mortuary monuments.

**Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery**

Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery is the third smallest cemetery in the sample, only St. John’s had fewer gravestones in its sample. Due to its size, and the fact that Blooming Grove Rural had a smaller percentage of decorated stones than either Oakwood or Waterford, there is less decoration recorded for this cemetery overall. The symbols not otherwise noted in the above charts (Tables 17 -19, Figures 93- 95) will be detailed below.

The floral types not already noted that were recorded in the Blooming Grove sample included buds, three leaf clovers and an olive branch. Two examples of buds were recorded in 1859 and 1865. One three leaf clover occurred in 1889. The olive branch was recorded once in 1863. There is significantly less variety in Blooming Grove compared to both Oakwood and Waterford. Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery is situated the farthest from the urban centers of Troy and Albany of all of the cemeteries sampled. It served a more rural and smaller population that may not have been affected by seeing the trends and fashions of the Rural Cemetery Movement as much as individuals who had closer proximity to rural cemeteries. Like Waterford, despite the designation of Blooming Grove as a rural cemetery, it was not a true rural cemetery.
It was not designed to be a public place of respite, park land, or sculpture-park in the vein of the famous rural cemeteries designed at the same time.

Other than the cross and hand symbolism, which was discussed with respect to Blooming Grove previously, Christian symbolism was present in the cemetery. The alpha and omega symbol occurred once in the sample in 1888. There was a lack of the chi-rho symbol or the “IHS” inscription, however. The anchor, which has some symbolic ties to Christianity, was recorded once in 1873. An angel was used on a monument in 1880.

Symbols of youth with ties to the Christian faith were also used in Blooming Grove; the lamb was used on the monument of a four year old child in 1849. Another animal with Christian connotations was the dove, which was also seen once in the cemetery in 1863.

The willow and urn motif shows up in Blooming Grove, as it did in the previous cemeteries discussed. The first instance was in 1838, following suit with the other early instances of the willow and urn seen in the area. The willow and urn motif was seen again in 1862 in Blooming Grove, however, much later than would usually be expected. This was an idiosyncratic incidence and could possibly be attributed to a personal taste for the mortuary monuments of the past.

The only instance of military symbolism found in the cemetery was a sword in 1867. No flags, eagles or other decoration was used on the sampled stones. This is not to say that there were no soldiers or veterans buried in Blooming Grove, but just that it was not popular to use images to depict this association. Often, personal epitaphs describing rank and service were used in place of symbols to honor military service.

There were no instances in Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery’s sample of symbolism used that was unique to the cemetery. Compared to Oakwood and Waterford, there were significantly
fewer symbols and decorations used, as well. The lack of variety and smaller amount of symbols and decorations sets Blooming Grove apart from the other cemeteries. Despite some other attempts at mimicking the forms of the Rural Cemetery Movement, the population that used this cemetery lacked the incentive or ability to fully embrace the newly opened ability to experiment with new decorations, adhering to the most well known and common symbolism of the time. This could be correlated with the lower socioeconomic status of the area, with lower house values and fewer people in white-collar occupations.

**St. John’s Cemetery**

St. John’s Cemetery is distinct from the other cemeteries sampled due to the fact that it is a Catholic cemetery. Unlike Blooming Grove and Waterford cemeteries, there was no pretense of St. John’s identifying as a rural cemetery. This is not to say that mortuary behaviors in the cemetery were not at all affected by the Rural Cemetery Movement, but the main identity of the cemetery was a religious and traditional one. As seen in the chart above (Figure 82), St. John’s has the highest percentage of decorated stones of all of the cemeteries. This may be due, in part, to the fact that there are not many early stones in the cemetery. The earliest stone was erected in 1851, well into the decades when new carving technology and popular fashion made decorating gravestones more popular.

As noted in the charts above (Table 21, Figure 96), St. John’s had a high percentage of cross symbolism, predictable because of the religious atmosphere that was traditional for Catholic cemeteries of the time. There were few other instances of Christian symbols present in the cemetery, however. Ten instances of the “IHS” inscription were recorded in the cemetery between 1860 and 1897. No alpha and omega symbolism, or the chi-rho, was recorded in the
sample. There were no recorded instances of angels, chalices, anchors, Bibles or crowns engraved. There were not even doves or lambs present. The lack of these Christian symbols may indicate the more traditional leanings of the cemetery and the preference of the population to remain in the realm of known and accepted imagery on their mortuary monuments.

Military/patriotic symbolism was present in St. John’s. There were three flags engraved into stones from 1885 to 1902, all occurring on stones of men who had served in some form in the military. The other types of symbols that were seen in the cemeteries already discussed that were association with the military or patriotism did not appear in St. John’s sample.

There were no other floral decorations recorded in the sample, other than what was detailed in previous charts (Table 22, Figure 39). There was also no other symbols used in St. John’s that were unique to the cemetery compared to the others in the sample. Although the cemetery had a high amount of decorated versus undecorated gravestones, the symbolism was confined mainly to the more popular symbols detailed previously, such as the family name and the very recognizable symbol of the cross.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

As stated previously, 1,751 gravestones in four cemeteries were sampled, photographed, and recorded in the Capital District of New York, centering around the city of Troy; Oakwood Rural Cemetery containing 1,172 stones, Waterford Rural Cemetery containing 359 stones, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery containing 141 stones and St. John’s Cemetery containing 79 stones. All of the cemeteries were sampled in the same way: divided up into sections, either previous defined by the cemetery itself or delineated by existing pathways, photographed, measured, and all of the information, words and images, was recorded. This data was examined for patterns, with a focus on change in mortuary monument style or symbolism usage through
time. Several patterns emerged that reveal how mortuary behaviors, specifically the Rural Cemetery Movement, were expressed in a variety of cemetery types in the Capital District area.

Three of the cemeteries incorporate the word “rural” in their title, though the physical stone data and symbolism data indicate that only Oakwood Rural Cemetery adheres closely to traits commonly found in rural cemeteries of the time. The historical data supports the fact that Oakwood Rural was the only cemetery of the four to be intentionally constructed in the style of a rural cemetery. St. John’s, the only religiously affiliated cemetery in the sample, is conspicuous in that it abides by more traditional cemetery practices rather than the fashionable rural cemetery trends. Blooming Grove and Waterford both have characteristics that indicate there were attempts to emulate the popular fashions of the Rural Cemetery Movement, especially the trends that were most popular at nearby Oakwood. On the other hand, Blooming Grove and Waterford also have characteristics that indicate they followed a more traditional path for cemeteries that was followed previous to the advent of the Rural Cemetery Movement; they were limited by smaller overall cemetery size, lack of wealth or lack of individual aspiration to fully reproduce the features common to rural cemeteries. North Greenbush and Waterford both occupied a lower socioeconomic position than Troy. Despite occasional large estates, the house values averaged significantly less compared to the urban area and farming was the dominant occupation. This would give credence to the notion that those with more wealth, more disposable income, would have the more elaborate monuments.

In all of the categories discussed, material type, gravestone height, number of individuals included on the monument, and gravestone shape, Oakwood Rural Cemetery is always notable among the four sampled cemeteries. With regards to material, it contains the highest percentage of red granite monuments over the widest span of time. Polished granite also becomes more
popular in Oakwood before the other three cemeteries, in the 1870s, as well as showing up in the
cemetery very early, in the 1820s. Possibly due to the large sample size, polished granite never
overtook regular granite gravestones in Oakwood, as the majority of the population would still
likely not be able to afford the pricier option despite the average income/house value being
relatively high in the city. Only St. John’s cemetery has a higher percentage of polished granite
stones than Oakwood, however, the popularity of polished granite doesn’t overtake the other
material types in St. John’s until 1880. Oakwood generally appears to be a trend-setting cemetery
for the smaller non-rural cemeteries. It included unique and harder to obtain materials, such as
red granite, and popular styles long before they show up in other cemeteries. Being in Troy, a
main urban center with more expensive homes and more lucrative occupations than the other
areas studied in this dissertation, Oakwood had a higher probability of a larger percentage of
wealthier individuals buried in the cemetery. This population had the means to invest wealth into
their mortuary monuments and, during the Rural Cemetery Movement when visibility and
extravagance was welcomed, indulged in the opportunity to display their socioeconomic status.

When examining the data for gravestone height, Oakwood also stands out for having the
tallest stones of all the cemeteries sampled. It is also significant to recognize that Oakwood also
has very tall stones, in the 401 – 500cm and 501cm + categories, across a large span of time.
Stones over 401cm appear in the cemetery by 1830 and continue into the 1900s. Stones over
501cm begin to be erected by the 1840s and also continue into the 1900s. Comparatively,
Waterford Rural Cemetery contains stones over 401cm between the 1850s and 1880s only, and
stones over 501cm only appearing in the 1850s. Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery contains no
stones in the 401 – 500cm category, and only in the 1880s do stones over 501cm appear. St.
John’s Cemetery also has no stones in the 401 – 500cm category, and only in the 1870s and 1890s do stones over 501cm occur.

In the height category, Oakwood definitely overshadows the other cemeteries for tall, highly visible monuments. Following a processualist model, the additional energy and expenditure that went into the monuments at Oakwood is indicative of the higher social status, real or perceived, of the persons buried in the cemetery, compared to the smaller cemeteries in the sample. Troy did have a real, measureable socioeconomic advantage compared to the other areas. The other cemeteries appear to attempt to emulate the fashion for these types of large scale gravestones, but fell short and were often limited to mainly stones under 401cm. Despite the aspiration to participate fully in the trends of the Rural Cemetery Movement, Waterford and Blooming Grove were still limited by the wealth and status of the population that buried their dead there.

Using house values and occupations as a broad measure for determining socioeconomic status, Waterford and North Greenbush were both significantly less wealthy than either Troy or Lansingburgh. Farmers and laborers made up the bulk of the professions and house values were often worth well over $1,000 less than Troy. Unlike North Greenbush, Waterford did contain a small but significant number of expensive estates, which bolsters the idea that higher socioeconomic status would correlate with more participation in the Rural Cemetery Movement due to the fact that the cemetery more closely mimics a rural cemetery than Blooming Grove. However, neither of these cemeteries was capable of providing wealthier individuals with the style expected of a true rural cemetery. Oakwood was highly visible as a location, created to be a place of public recreation and encouraging of visitors, so higher status individuals and families would have been drawn to a cemetery of its caliber in order to be seen. Blooming Grove and
Waterford were not created with those aims in mind and would fall short of attaining the same goals.

St. John’s Cemetery is in Lansingburgh, a village that was usurped by Troy early in its history to become the seat of the county and more prosperous due to the industry in the city. It is physically the closest to Troy compared to the other areas studied. Occupations in Lansingburgh also more closely matched those in Troy than the other areas, with factory work being most common; however, Troy included a higher number professions that would have drawn larger salaries, such as lawyers and professors. House values were often significantly less than Troy, including the lack of a large number of high priced estates over $10,000. These facts, combined with the fact that St. John’s was a Catholic cemetery, gives more indication as to why there is a lack of emulation of the Rural Cemetery Movement, despite Oakwood being so close. There was a lack of desire to emulate, for religious reasons, and a lack of means to incorporate the same lavish designs.

The most common gravestone heights in all of the cemeteries are between 51cm and 200cm. The two smallest cemeteries, Blooming Grove and St. John’s have higher percentages of stones in the 101 – 200cm range than the other cemeteries, and this might be due to their small sample size and shorter time ranger. Shorter stones were common for those who died young, from infants to young adults. For reference, Oakwood had 2980 individuals included in the sample, many on shared monuments; 12.2% of those individuals were under the age of 10 and 2.8% were between the ages of 10 and 18. Waterford had 689 individuals; 9.1% were under the age of 10 and 2.2% were between 10 and 18. Blooming Grove had 234 individuals; 4.7% were under the age of 10 and 3.0% were between the ages of 10 and 18. St. Johns had 215 individuals; 12.5% were under the age of 10 and 7.0% were between the ages of 10 and 18. Blooming Grove
had significantly fewer burials of children under the age of 10 than the other cemeteries, though similar amounts of children between the ages of 10 and 18. St. John’s had relatively high numbers of burials of children of all ages. Age at death does not appear to have been a determining factor for why these cemeteries had higher numbers of stones between 101 – 200cm. Another possible explanation could be an effect of the fact that the majority of stones in these cemeteries were tablets, a simple and traditional monument design, which often fell between 101 – 200cm tall due to the nature of their design.

The stone type, whether family, individual, spousal or other, also affected the height of the monument. Family stones, which stood monument to more than two family members, tended to be taller than individual gravestones. Oakwood and St. John’s had the highest percentage of family stones, 27.7% and 36.7% respectively. Due to Oakwood’s much larger sample size, family stones accounted for 321 of the stones sampled, and St. John’s accounted for 29 stones. Waterford and Blooming Grove had 19.2% and 12.7% family stones, respectively. The comparative lack of family stones in Waterford and Blooming Grove may account for some of the differences with regards to having monuments over 401cm. Family stones may not have been popular in the smaller cemeteries due to their essential larger size, which would have necessitated an individual or family paying significantly more at the time of erection rather than spreading out the cost for smaller monuments through time, as members passed away. Waterford and Blooming Grove were both smaller cemeteries and served communities on the outskirts of the city of Troy with generally lower socioeconomic status. The families may not have had the capital to invest in mortuary displays in the same way those of higher socioeconomic status would have, the same people who would have been drawn to the visible and popular rural cemetery of Oakwood. This is why it appears that Waterford and Blooming Grove attempted to
emulate what was possible of the Rural Cemetery Movement and the nearby rural cemeteries, but could not fully commit due to lack of ability to expend the same resources.

St. John’s has the highest percentage of family stones, but it should be noted that 60% of the family stones in the cemetery were under 201 cm tall, whereas in Oakwood approximately 72% of the family stones were over 200 cm tall. While in all of the cemeteries, family stones accounted for the majority of the tallest stones, the threshold was much lower for Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s. Family stones would always tend towards the high range of the cemetery’s average height, but these averages were different between cemeteries. St. John’s was a Catholic cemetery and did not profess to be or to resemble a rural cemetery, so differences between actual rural cemeteries and those emulating rural cemeteries are to be expected. While there are some signs that those who were buried in St. John’s were affected by the social mores of the time, the same tastes and customs that made the Rural Cemetery Movement possible, the cemetery as a whole was traditional and not overall prone to individual pretense and display.

The family stones in Waterford also have a high percentage of stones under 201 cm: ~58%. Only ~33% of Blooming Grove’s family stones fell under 201 cm. This could be due to the differences in sample size, 59 family stones in Waterford and 19 in Blooming Grove, skewing the results. However, it should be noted that the smaller cemetery farther away from the city of Troy, Blooming Grove, had taller family stones overall than Waterford, which was physically much closer to Oakwood Cemetery and Troy. Waterford had more stones in the upper range of the height spectrum and in more decades than Blooming Grove. Due to the smaller sample size, Blooming Grove has a lower percentage of stones under 101 cm than Waterford, however.
Gravestone shape also highlights the differences between the cemeteries. St. John’s is conspicuous amongst the cemeteries due to its lack of variety: the various tablets and columns dominate the first four decades of the sample and block stones make up the majority of the stones in the last three decades of the sample. It is important to note that gothic tablets are uncommon in St. John’s, only appearing in the 1860s. Gothic architecture was an ornate style very common to the aesthetics of the Rural Cemetery Movement and did not fit in with the overall sedate atmosphere of the Catholic cemetery. The traditional religious atmosphere precluded the erection of the newest, most ornate styles. Obelisks are also very rare, only occurring in the 1890s, at the peak of the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement, when the driving tastes that propelled the movement were strong enough to infiltrate even a staid religious cemetery. Though Lansingburgh was second to Troy in socioeconomic status, sharing similar house values and occupations due to its proximity to the city, ornate gravestones were not popular in the cemetery. This is likely due to the traditionally religious focus of the Catholic cemetery. Interestingly, there are very few cross monuments erected in the sample, crosses are more common in the cemetery as smaller sculptures constructed on the top of an existing monument. Sculptures will be discussed later in the landscape chapter.

Waterford and Blooming Grove are similar in the amount of variety of gravestone shapes present in the samples. They are also similar in that obelisks make up a small percentage of the overall sample of both cemeteries, as well as the fact that there were no sarcophagi or temples erected. This fits with the suggestion that Waterford and Blooming Grove sought to emulate rural cemeteries like Oakwood, but the community overall lacked the ability to invest in the monuments to truly recreate the landscape of the rural cemetery. The various styles of tablet were most popular in both cemeteries for the majority of the sample; however, in Waterford the
block gravestone shape overtakes the tablets for the highest percentage in the cemetery. Waterford had a larger, and later, sample that may have affected this difference. Blooming Grove was also seeing a rise in the popularity of the block shape by the 1880s and 1890s, though tablets were still the most popular shape.

Waterford and Blooming Grove share another trend when examining the different types of tablets. The regular tablet, with squared off edges, was the dominant tablet type until 1850 in Waterford (not counting the earliest decades that have a minimal sample size) and the dominant tablet type until 1860 in Blooming Grove. After that, both cemeteries saw a surge in the prevalence of domed tablets. The regular, squared-off tablet type was a popular style in the Colonial Era, a simple shape to cut into the stone, and as the technology progressed, along with a developing taste for more elaborate styles among the population, this style began to fade in the cemeteries.

Oakwood stands apart from the other cemeteries due to the variety of stones seen in the cemetery and the fact that several stone shapes seen in Oakwood are not seen in the other cemeteries at all, such as the temple and sarcophagi shapes. There are some ways, however, that Oakwood mirrors the general trends seen in all of the cemeteries. It was not a cemetery completely set apart from the broader mortuary trends of the area. For example, the various tablet types still made up the majority of the sample, until 1890 when the block shape rose in popularity and took the place of tablets. Similar to the other cemeteries, the regular tablet shape, with squared-off edges, was more visible in the early decades of the sample, a residual effect from the fact that the style had been so widespread previously. Domed tablets were always very popular in Oakwood, remaining at similar percentages from the 1820s to 1910, though the percentage was much higher in the 1820s due to the smaller sample size at this time.
Unlike the other cemeteries, shouldered tablets were very common throughout Oakwood’s sample, only starting to decline in the percentages around 1890/1900. Gothic tablets also remain at a steady, though low, percentage in Oakwood’s sample from 1840 to 1910. Only Blooming Grove has a similar pattern, with gothic tablets appearing in the sample from 1850 to 1900. The other two cemeteries have very few gothic tablets in their samples. Gothic tablets fit in with the Victorian Gothic revival styles that gained so much popularity in the art and architecture of the time, which was represented in the common styles of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Another style that is symbolically very illustrative of the Rural Cemetery Movement is the obelisk, which stems from the fondness for Neo-Classical styles. Oakwood contains obelisks throughout the sample, starting in the 1830s and continuing until 1920. The obelisks make up approximately 15% of the sample until the 1880s, when the popularity drops to roughly 5% of the sample.

As mentioned previously, a point of interest is that Oakwood has far more cross shaped monuments than the Catholic cemetery of St. John’s. The cross shape peaks in 1880 and 1890 in Oakwood, making up about 10% of the sample. While Oakwood was a private cemetery not run by a church, the majority of the population that the cemetery served was made up of various Christian sects including Roman Catholics, Baptist, Episcopal, Methodists, Presbyterian and Universalist groups (Census of New York State 1875: 271). Therefore, Christian symbolism was prevalent. However, the cross gravestone type was typically very tall, taller than the more common tablets and blocks, and often very ornate. This fit right in with Oakwood’s general aesthetic was would have been out of place with the greater part of St. John’s more sedate monuments.
The symbolism data supports some of the general trends already mentioned. Oakwood, as the largest cemetery and only cemetery purposely designed as a rural cemetery, contained a wider variety as well as overall more decoration and symbolism than the smaller cemeteries. The only difference is that St. John’s technically has a higher percentage of decorated stones out of all of the cemeteries sampled, even Oakwood. However, this is likely due to the small sample size at St. John’s distorting the percentages and the fact that St. John’s sample starts at a later period than the other cemeteries, as plain stones were more common in the early part of the 19th Century. Despite this discrepancy, it is clear that the monuments in Oakwood were the mostly highly decorated compared to all three of the smaller cemeteries, with a wider variety of decoration types present as well as the fact that many stones had several types of decoration present. Oakwood is the only cemetery that had stones with seven distinct symbols or decorations, indicating a preference for the overly ornate and the ability to put the energy or investment into the stones to achieve this preferred appearance.

All of the cemeteries in the sample had the same types of symbolism and decoration, making up a core group of standard, most prevalent types: the family name, scrollwork, urns, crosses, leaves and floral decoration. The family name was the most popular decoration in every cemetery in the sample. While the amounts and percentages changed between cemeteries, they did share these adornments in common, indicating what was the most widespread and common mortuary symbolism one would see in the general area. These were familiar and understood symbols in the Capital District, influenced by the art and literature and attitudes that contributed to the development of the Rural Cemetery Movement, but not necessarily confined to rural cemeteries.
The variety and meaning of the symbolism in Oakwood has already been discussed previously. There were no symbols that appeared in the other cemeteries that did not appear in Oakwood, as well. It is worth noting that as the cemeteries of Waterford and Blooming Grove got smaller in size and physically further from Oakwood, the amount and variety of symbolism and decoration decreased. This was partly an effect of their sample size, but also related to the visibility of the cemeteries. Neither Waterford nor Blooming Grove was intended to be a public space in the same sense that Oakwood had been. They were not designed to be places where outsiders, those who might not have loved ones buried in the cemetery, would go to take respite from the city. Those who chose to be buried in, or have their loved ones buried in, Oakwood would have been aware of the high potential to be seen in the cemetery by the general public. It would have made it a higher priority to make one’s monument more noticeable than the neighboring monuments.

The trends seen in the physical and symbolic data indicate that the average size and decorative elaboration on gravestones, which is used as a proxy for cost, vary with both socioeconomic status and religious ideology. The Rural Cemetery Movement was not homogenous; instead the movement operated on a spectrum of adherence. A poorer or more religiously conservative population would be less likely to participate in the behaviors of the Rural Cemetery Movement, either because they did not want to participate in the reproduction of that specific ideology or because they were unable to. The fact that it was a spectrum is clear, however, because despite differences in socioeconomic status or religion, some level of participation in the ideological structure embodied by the Rural Cemetery Movement does appear in every cemetery.
III. Interpretive Analysis

Chapter 6: Background

Introduction

This project has focused on the potential information available to researchers by taking a quantitative approach to historic cemeteries and their gravestones. However, the bulk of the literature available on historic cemeteries and gravestones (excepting skeletal analysis) features a more qualitative analysis because of the nature of the subject. “Social identity is always experienced and enacted in specific contexts. Having a processual character, it always requires specific concrete material points of reference in the form of landscapes, places, artefacts, and other persons” (Tilley 2004: 217). It is tempting to try to reduce choice of mortuary and religious monuments, symbolism and their placement in the world to precise data points that can be analyzed in a systematic fashion. However, these choices are also inherently impressionistic, stemming from hard-to-quantify social phenomena, such as artistic tastes, ideas of beauty, beliefs in the afterlife, social aspects of expressed emotion, cultural identity and more that affect the final appearance of a cemetery or gravestone. These aspects have proven not to behave like other quantitative factors that are amenable to statistical analysis but rather open to a more subjective interpretation. This chapter will explore the qualitative and interpretive aspects studying the cemeteries in this project, with a focus on landscape archaeology, the phenomenological approach to landscape studies, and an anthropological look at emotion.

There are many factors at play when individuals are making decisions for loved ones (or when individuals are making final arrangements for themselves pre-mortem): social position in the community, religious affiliation, vocation, age of death, type and size of family and more.
“Whilst this may all suggest a highly individualized set of experiences for each death, and this was no doubt felt to be the case to those grieving, the emotions and behaviors were and continue to be culturally situated. Constructed through feelings and actions learnt within the culture, they express normative values which are open to analysis and around which variation can be considered,” (Mytum 2004: 178). Symbolism upon grave markers can appear at first to be wholly individual, chosen by loved ones to commemorate a resting place for a particular individual or family. The choice might seem especially exclusive due to the wide variety of symbols found across time and space on mortuary monument. However, mortuary symbolism often fits into culturally understood groupings and types, and choices are limited to expected and known images.

Mortality symbolism, such as skeletons, skulls, coffins, shrouds, Father Time, and hourglasses, broken plant stems, broken columns and more appear in the United States and in Europe as long ago as the medieval era. These symbols developed, at times independently across time and space, due to experiences with physical decay of the human body. These symbols, depending on a culture’s level of symbolic understanding, have also been suggested to emphasize spiritual salvation through depicting physical death. Mixed mortality and salvation symbolism can be seen in the Puritan winged skull images in colonial America. Salvation symbolism, such as angels, the cross or other resurrection scenes, scales of justice, fingers pointing upwards, doves (symbolizing the Holy Spirit), Bibles, and more are among the assortment of symbolism available to those who wished to express a belief or hope in Christian salvation (Mytum 2004: 170-172).

As has been discussed in more thorough detail in the background chapters, mortality symbols, like those listed above, occur when the society is focused on sin, the fear of death, and
warning the living about the repercussions of their actions on their afterlife. Salvation symbols dominate when the culture as a whole departs from the focus on fear and moves towards a more optimistic and positive outlook on life after death. These shifts in symbolism are preceded by alterations in the greater societal attitude about religion, nationalism, individualism, etc. Any image could notionally be chosen for a mortuary monument, but the vast majority of mortuary symbols seen in historic cemeteries are selected from a culturally known array of images that often fit into categories that represent the “normative values” of the society. Cemeteries as public places are ideal places for officially reconstructed recreations of dominant ideologies.

**Landscape**

The notion of landscape in archaeology is not limited to the definition of landscape as “countryside,” but encompasses the fuller sense of the concept that a landscape is made up by an individual’s entire worldview. Corresponding to the trend in archaeological theory overall, landscape archaeology began with a focus on settlement patterns and descriptions of spatial relationships between and within sites and slowly began to shift into an inclination of researchers to question why changes occurred in landscapes rather than to just record the changes. This led to a development of several different approaches, such as focusing on ecology, economy, ritual or identity; though no single approach seemed to be widely accepted as answering over-arching questions about society and its material residue. Contemporary research in the archaeology of landscape is more comprehensive, including modern technology, a variety of theoretical perspectives and diverse data. Recent landscape paradigms are composed of four central aspects: “1. Landscapes are not synonymous with natural environments … 2. Landscapes are worlds of
cultural product … 3. Landscapes are the arena for all of a community’s activities … 4.
Landscapes are dynamic constructions, with each community and each generation imposing its
own cognitive map on an anthropogenic world of interconnected morphology, arrangement, and
coherent meaning” (Anschuetz, et al 2001: 160 – 161). These pieces make up a well rounded
understanding of what it means to analyze landscape in archaeology; the cognitive structure of a
community and of the individual is as vital as the physical realities of the environment in the
discussion.

No two people will be able to view a landscape in the same way because a landscape is
defined by how it is experienced, and that specific experience is defined by the greater cultural
understanding of the world of the society that individual belongs to, the past and memories of the
past, as well as the particular time and place in which one is bodily viewing the area (Darville
1999: 104, 107). It is important to note that the construction of the landscape is often shaped in a
way to elicit similar impressions from dissimilar individuals, in order to convey a more
universal, all-purpose message for the society and landscape in question. In an archaeological
context, landscape is often discussed as something that has been “done to the land,” (Bender
1992: 735), relating to subsistence, ritual, or development. Most landscape theories prior to post-
processualism conceived of the environment as differentiated from culture, nature being nothing
more than an arena in which society was created and enacted (Hirsch 2004: 437). The general
consensus of recent work in phenomenology and landscape archaeology considers the idea that it
is really the heavily entwined, back and forth connection of nature and culture that makes up a
landscape.

The discussion of the “recursive, multiscalar, and historical qualities of landscapes” is
essential to modern discussions of place and space. “On the one hand, the physical particulars of
experienced landscapes shape general conceptualizations of landscape; on the other hand, mental constructions of landscape expressed in custom, law, and policy, and materialized through construction and use, have undeniable effects – which may be both profound and persistent – on the physical landscape” (Pool and Cliggett 2008: 6). Pool and Cliggett (2008) make clear in their volume that the mental/imagined and the material/experienced aspects of landscape are constantly interacting and influencing each other. How the physical world is perceived causes people to enact upon the landscape in certain ways, which reinforces those perceptions.

Barbara Bender, in writing about landscape and Stonehenge, examines several themes that translate well to thinking about landscape in a historical cemetery. These themes she touches upon include “the indivisibility of nature and culture; … differential experience of the landscape; … the appropriation, over and over again, of past landscapes” (Bender 1992: 742). Several of topics she discusses with regards to Stonehenge, such as conceptual boundaries and contested land, will not bear the same importance or relevance when discussing a modern, historic landscape, but it is important to note the diverse aspects of a total understanding of what landscape is or can be. There will be differences when attempting to understand a prehistoric landscape versus a historic one, especially because of the availability of written works. The experience of a landscape may be overlooked in historic sites for that very reason, but the concepts still stand firm; landscape is more than just a physical artifact, but involves a particular and shifting experience of the world.

It is widely accepted in modern archaeology that nature and culture cannot be separated, and with that understanding, Bender delved into the idea that it was not just the physical stones that were erected at Stonehenge that held significance, but also the surrounding natural surfaces and substances found in the general vicinity of the man-made structure, as well as the celestial
orientations that could be observed from the time and place of the building (1992: 745-746). Too often, there has been a spotlight on the physical presence of the archaeological site, “people did not exist only within the confines of definable sites and monuments that had integrity, structure and symbolic meaning” (Darville 1999: 106). The total site or feature innately consists of more than what can be seen archaeologically. The natural elements, from the surrounding topography to the smells and sounds of the area, the other man-made objects, from past or present, as well as the empty spaces are relevant.

The rural cemetery is a prime example of the interconnectedness of nature and culture with regards to the experience of landscape. Nature and man-made is often discussed, however, “the built environment, of course, is never really separate from the natural one… a better viewpoint would use the affected environment and unaffected environment (Hampton Adams 1990: 92). Cemeteries during the Rural Cemetery movement were purposely established outside of the city and onto lands that resembled a wilderness that was unsullied by urban progress. However, the rural cemeteries were rarely located too far into the countryside, because it was important that they were accessible to people who lived in the nearby urban areas. The natural environment of the cemetery was meant to be a balm to visitors, who were grieving or just seeking to escape the noise and crowds of the city. The Rural Cemetery movement was never intended to impede industrial progress, but hoped to provide an alternate experience to the urban population. “Instead of trying to blend city and country, Americans granted cities their essential urbanity, but insisted upon easy periodic access to nature” (Bender 1974: 200). Modernly, many rural cemeteries have been incorporated into the ever-growing urban sprawl of the nearby cities, but have maintained the essence of what made them part of the Rural Cemetery Movement within their fences and boundaries. The built landscape of the rural cemetery, the meandering
paths, rolling hills and environmental backdrop has remained essentially unchanged for many Northeastern rural cemeteries, including the ones sampled for this project.

It was not merely the gravestones’ shape and substance and symbolism that made up the essence of a rural cemetery. The environment in which it was laid out was vital. The rural cemetery was meant to appear to be forested parkland, meant to evoke a sense of the naturally occurring environment, though it was highly manicured for the aesthetic pleasure of the visitors. This effect was achieved by utilizing hilly tracts of land that had a variety of physical features. The land chosen for Mount Auburn, a significant early rural cemetery in America, was “a pleasant, heavily wooded tract with a variegated topography of many little hills, valleys and streams” (French 1974: 44), with a significant high point from which people could view the city. The location of Mount Auburn greatly added to its appeal, making it a very popular cemetery, causing others in the northeast to emulate it. Though the cemetery was a manmade creation, one of its most important features was the surrounding environment.

Bender (1992) discusses differential experiences of the landscape, which has been discussed previously with regards to phenomenology. As landscape studies continue through time, the frequent impression is given that no two people will ever have the same experience of their physical landscape. Meaning is giving to physical and cultural spaces on multiple levels and in multiple ways. Because of the multi-layered ways in which meaning is giving, it is imperative to incorporate subjective experience (Bowser 2004: 1). Landscape is not a stable concept; the actual physical component constantly changes (through environmental or human modifications) and individuals’ perceptions of it transform, as well. Darvill (1999: 108-110) explains this shifting and particular experience as contained in the context of a landscape, in space, time and social action.
Social space “is not really about distance or physical geography so much as about the compartmentalization of space according to socially defined categories” (Darvill 1999: 108). This concept adopts the idea that the actual physical environment does limit what can actually occur in the area, but it is the social structure that really determines the use of the land. There are social defined boundaries and socially prescribed activities that can only occur in certain areas, perhaps even at particular times. These social directives are usually related to the reigning belief system or worldview possessed by members of the society.

Time is another component of the context of a landscape because as time passes, it is socially arranged into known events or set durations so that the past can be socially understood in the present or future. A person’s or a group’s understanding of the past inevitably colors their understanding of their present. Time is inherently not a permanent situation and the passage of time necessitates the understanding that you will not be able to experience the same moment twice, leading to the inherent instability of the experience of landscape. “Our bodily existence and perception of the world always involves a stretching out of the present towards the past, which thus remains in contact with it and in relation to the future. Thus experience is temporally coloured and constituted” (Tilley 2004: 12).

Social action, in Darvill’s conception is “intentional attempts to affect or prevent change in the world” (Darvill 1999: 109) and is expressed in material culture, which is the corner stone of archaeology. This concept is why landscape is not archaeologically thought of as just the natural environment in which people live. The landscape includes both the geological and biological influence that give it shape, as well as the human structures and objects that have been created within it. Social action is differentiated from an individual’s behavior as occurring within
a socially-defined time and space. The material culture that helps create a landscape is known and understood by the social group, and becomes part of society.

Returning to the last theme Bender (1992) explored that is significant to historical archaeology and this study is appropriation of the past. The Rural Cemetery movement is well-known for its symbolic reclamation of the Classical world, especially with architectural styles utilized in Greco-Roman temples and other monuments, such as obelisks. Though the appropriation of past styles differs slightly from the appropriation of actual physical material culture that exists in a landscape, the intentions remain similar. As long as there remains a memory and a shared symbolic understanding in the social consciousness, reutilization of past material culture is permeated with social significance. The landscape is not a passive artifact but rather a very active agent in society. It can be acted upon and be part of the social performance, but it also very clearly has an effect on social behavior and thought.

Since the exploration of landscape discussed in Bender’s work, archaeologists have continued to flesh out the concepts and explore the possibilities of landscape archaeology in a more comprehensive way than even thought possible, integrating ever-changing technology, traditional and innovative methodologies and interpretive theories. There is such an overwhelming amount of context-specific behavior and moving parts that make up a society that it can never be as simple as using landscape models to predict behavior or to assume behavior. There are unique environments and historical contexts that must be coupled with the understanding that people act upon their landscapes as much as are transformed by them. Landscape archaeology can aid in bringing these many elements into focus (Anschuetz et al 2001: 192). A truly reflexive archaeology must take into account the specific questions being
asked and the places, spaces and people being studied in order to determine which tools and theoretical perspectives to draw from.

**Phenomenology of Landscape and Pathway Analysis**

Cemeteries are places to bury the dead and enact mourning rituals, but at their basest level serve the needs of the living over the dead. They are constructed public spaces that convey messages to the living about their past and their present. The cemetery is a particularly powerful place to create and reproduce, again and again, ideologies and messages because of the significant draw individuals in the community have to the site, itself. It is a public space that revolves around and depends on participation, centered around an event, a burial, and continuing through the memorialization of the deceased and memory of the ritual event. Community members will continuously be drawn back to the public space by their previous memories and participation, which therefore creates more participation with the messages of that public space.

As discussed previously, phenomenological approaches to landscape archaeology have been, by and large, developed and utilized in the study of prehistoric British landscapes, with Christopher Tilley (1994, 2004) having a substantial influence on the literature. His initial contribution to phenomenology centered on tearing down the idea that landscapes were just a detached environmental aspect of life, upon which humans acted and created. Previous to his first book on the subject, *A phenomenology of landscape* (1994), there was a reliance on the mapping of space and human activities, and he argued that there was a fault in this approach when not coupled with an understanding of how the human experience works within and helps create meaning in a landscape (Bruck 2005: 46-47).
Prior to Tilley’s application of phenomenology to landscape, phenomenological approaches to interpretation were really developed in the 1930s by Alfred Schutz (1967). He discussed meaning as being centrally related to an individual being able to look back upon their own lived experience and applying that experience to their present circumstances and understanding of the world. This lived experience is different for each person, and so we can attempt to understand another’s understanding of meaning by applying our shared experiences to the situation, but it will ultimately always fall short of fully knowing another’s perceptions.

“Anyone who encounters a given product can proceed to interpret it in two different ways. First he can focus his attention on its status as an object, either real or ideal, but at any rate independent of its maker. Second, he can look upon it as evidence for what went on in the mind of its makers at the moment it was being made. In the former case the interpreter is subsuming his own experiences (erfahrende Akte) of the object under the interpretive schemes which he has at hand. In the latter case, however, his attention directs itself to the constituting acts of consciousness of the producer” (Schutz 1967: 43).

To subjectively understand an object means to understand how the lived experience of the creator contributed to the creation of that object. Objective understanding of an object refers to the sense of that object as a completed, no longer part of a series of actions instructed by lived experience, but simply a finished product (Schutz 1976: 44). Intersubjectivity is described as being able to experience the world in a shared way with others. Without participant observation that is available in cultural anthropology, “the archaeologist will have even greater difficulty than
the anthropologist in attempting to understand the lived experience of another cultural tradition” (Layton and Ucko 1999: 12).

Regardless of the difficulty, it is also clear that meaning is not entirely self-made, but created from shared, past events that were experienced by communities and groups, not just an individual. Shared meaning created material expressions that are understood by most members in a society, and these material creations in turn affect future generations, creating a shared habitus that can be recognizable by archaeologists. One of the biggest hurdles for archaeologists is that material expressions of this shared social meaning are often ambiguous if removed from the society that created the objects (Layton and Ucko 1999: 12-13). The relatively recent historic Rural Cemetery movement fortunately does not suffer from that obstacle in the same way prehistoric landscape studies would because of the wealth of written documents as well as the proximity of cultural comprehension of the symbols and associated meanings to present day.

Despite having written accounts of beliefs and aesthetic tastes, it is nevertheless important to attempting an understanding of the, perhaps unconscious, material manifestations of meaning. Meaning is created, transmitted, transformed in the physical landscape. It is still not enough to explore even historic cemetery monuments and symbolism through records and maps. The bodily experience of the overall landscape understood in the context in which it was created can give a more comprehensive impression of the reasons why the landscape was chosen, changed and what influence it had on successive generations.

Traditionally, sight has dominated the philosophies and science of the Western world, perhaps because of the invention and saturation of the printed word and image. This is not necessarily the way other cultures across time and the world have operated, with a sense of smell or hearing taking precedence (Tilley 2004: 15). All of the senses should be used to contextualize
an experience of landscape, including the placement of the body within the landscape. “Place is always experiences as three-dimensional and sensuous, a point that is all too often lost in tradition archaeological accounts of landscape” (Bruck 2005: 47). One’s perspective, the order in which objects are encountered, the boundaries of an area, its relationship to other areas of importance, and the overall physical experience while in that landscape has an effect on how meaning is perceived.

Critiques of Phenomenology: Towards a Multi-Disciplinary Landscape Approach

Landscape archaeology is not, and should not be, limited to phenomenology, an inherently qualitative approach. A purely phenomenological approach to landscape archaeology is insufficient on its own, that much is agreed upon even by researchers who utilize a phenomenological standpoint in their own work. There have been critiques of phenomenology and specifically of Tilley’s research from those with more processual leanings and those also working within an interpretive framework.

Basing interpretations of a site on a personal, reflexive experience of the landscape ultimately may say more about the researcher’s perceptions of the world as well as the background of the area and group in which they live than of any particular experience of that landscape in the past (Bruck 2005: 57). The critiques of the research that followed in the footsteps of Tilley’s (1994) work was that the attempt to get at the thoughts of past people through personal experience was “unbridled subjectivism, which is ultimately narcissistic” (Thomas 2008: 301).
Fleming (2006) suggests the major flaw with phenomenological research is that those employing that methodology often ignore and disregard the wealth of knowledge and experience from the previous decades of empirical archaeological research. In an attempt to distance their research from processual shortcomings, interpretive and phenomenological researchers fail to recognize the strengths of the approaches. Processual and other empirical methods of archaeology are valuable in a heuristic sense: they allow experiments to be tested and potentially reproduced in a variety of arenas.

More recently, there has been an appeal to rework the very theoretical framework of phenomenology due to the fact that the approach has been misapplied on a philosophical level (Barrett and Ko 2009). Phenomenological work in archaeology, such as that practiced by Tilley, can be overly-interpretive to the point in which the results are so questionable and person-specific that they could not be replicated or accepted due to the lack of anything resembling the scientific method. Some suggestions for the restructuring of phenomenology has been to include case studies with greater historical context and/or documentation and the integration of spatial data technologies such as GIS (Johnson 2012: 278-280).

A multidisciplinary approach is essential to comprehend a society and their behavior as fully as possible (Tilley 2004: 224, Graves McEwan and Millican 2012: 492). From conventional archaeological excavations, maps, and other research to experiencing the site itself as a tourist, all aspects of a site and its landscape should be explored. It is a “synthetic process bringing together what may seem at first totally unrelated elements. Such research is not reducible to a set of rule-book procedures which might guarantee ‘useful’ knowledge” (Tilley 2004: 225). Different approaches will have to be employed for sites, because each site has a unique
landscape, history and structure. A historic rural cemetery in New York will be handled with a different set of tools and viewpoints than a prehistoric monument site in England.

There are two distinct methodologies in landscape archaeology: the phenomenological approach, which has been well documented in this paper, and the quantitative spatial analysis approach. Geographical information systems (GIS) is a common instrument used by archaeologists to aid in accurate mapping and analysis of site and mobility patterns. Ideally, though rare, a study would seek to find a middle ground that incorporated both the experiential and science-based approaches. Just as Tilley (2004) expressed, there is no one set of preconceived rules that could adequately describe a middle ground approach for every site and every landscape studied (Graves McEwan 2012: 491-492). The researcher has to integrate the methods that best fit the situation while ensuring both qualitative and quantitative processes are included.

The two approaches seem incompatible by their very nature. “Proponents of post-processual, qualitative, experientialist or phenomenological landscape theory in archaeology have argued that quantitative or empirical techniques, which included GIS-based mapping methods and predictive techniques, effectively dehumanize and distort the past through the distinctively Cartesian gaze of Western society. In response, strong criticisms have been raised about the validity of evidence presented in the qualitative, experiential or phenomenological frameworks, especially research methods that are characterized as highly subjective attempts to empathize with the lives of long-dead human beings” (Graves McEwan 2012: 528). However, modern researchers who believe that a multi-disciplinary approach, in theory and technique, will resolve a lot of inconsistencies in archaeological research are starting to explore the potential of integrating interpretational methods with empirical science.
Gathering data, analyzing it, and ending up with a statistical base is an important step in archaeological research, but it does not need to end there. A qualitative interpretive model, perhaps based around a phenomenological understanding, could aid in the modification of models that either lack enough data to be statistically significant or become less viable when new data is uncovered (Graves McEwan 2012: 528). This endorsement for an integrative approach is reminiscent of the move towards a multi-disciplinary approach in the sciences overall, as well as archaeology, during the 1980s. It had become clear to a generation of researchers that purely processual, empirical investigations were inadequate for unraveling complex issues that involved human social systems (McGlade 1999: 426). However, this reaction caused a largely post-processual, qualitative swing in archaeology that missed the opportunity to integrate the empirical technique and knowledge that had come before.

A middle ground approach for landscape archaeology for a recent special issue of The Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory was defined as “those explicitly seeking to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques. As examples of such work are rare, we deliberately avoided advocating a strict set of rules or guidelines about what a middle ground approach should entail or the particular techniques it could encompass” (Graves McEwan and Millican 2012: 492). This broad, inclusive system of thinking about archaeological research opens up many venues for study, rather than narrowing down a researcher’s focus and drawing boundaries so tight that little can actually be gleaned from the data. Spatial modeling does not need to be a contradictory point to more interpretive frameworks, but rather can act as a balancing counterpart that can strengthen and broaden the research. The combination of phenomenological approaches with quantitative data is still relatively new in landscape archaeology, even seen as diametrically opposed to each other. Creativity would allow the use of
spatial modeling and similar analysis to answer deeper questions about landscape, which has often been done “at a distance” (Llobera 2012: 506), and begin to unravel past experience.

There has been a noticeable hesitation on the part of interpretive of phenomenological theorists to rely too heavily on traditional data, models and technology. An over-reliance on GIS and other modeling can be perceived as reinforcing a modernist perspective or even putting forth a false impression of authenticity or authority with modern methods, technologies and representations of data (Thomas 2004: 200 – 202). Too often in past research, “the role of visual output is restricted to legitimizing our output rather than as an active element within the archaeological reasoning machine” (Llobera 2011: 194).

However, due to inevitability of the proliferation of modern methods and techniques, it is important to realize that all tools are useful tools and can be “hybridized” for a variety of purposes. (Llobera 2012: 498 – 500). “Unlike the analysis of space viewed in two dimensions for which plenty of syntheses exist, a formal understanding of the dynamic properties of space when moving in three dimensions is spread throughout multiple disciplines (e.g. architecture, urbanism, ecological psychology, landscape architecture, etc.)” (Llobera 2012: 503). Simply because modernist tools are used does not mean that one has to espouse modernist viewpoints.

Important to note is the recent criticism and warnings from Thomas (2008) who cautions that it is not suitable to consider that traditional or modern empirical archaeological techniques are able to measure or study the features that are important to phenomenological questions. Phenomenology of landscape should “be conceived as only one aspect of a kind of “hermeneutics of landscape,” in which how a phenomenon presents itself to us in the present is only one step in attempting to understand how it might have presented itself in a past context… Archaeology imagines the past by placing contemporary observations and experiences into as
complete as possible a reconstruction of the factors the informed their ancient counterparts” (Thomas 2008: 305). The physical data that can be measured is important for reconstruction of the lived lives of the past, but perhaps cannot answer larger questions about experience and thought. Phenomenology must be utilized alongside traditional empirical methods, but cannot be assumed to be the same.

Joanna Bruck (2005) brings up the question “whether contemporary encounters with landscape … can ever approximate the actual experience of people in the past” (54). At the heart of interpretive, landscape studies is always the idea that what a contemporary archaeologist finds significant to the senses, visual or otherwise, was significant in the past. Though this point has been discussed in other sections, it is an important critique that must be noted and addressed. “Describing our own embodied encounters with landscapes, monuments and objects tells us more about contemporary perceptions and preoccupations than it does about the past” (Bruck 2005: 57). In any attempt at landscape archaeology or phenomenological approaches, there is a need for reflexive understanding of self on the part of the researcher.

“An archaeology of landscapes has the promise for bridging some nagging problems in archaeology by providing a set of interdisciplinary methodologies that accommodate, if not integrate, contrasting theoretical perspectives” (Anschuetz et al 2001: 191). It is possible to approach a question from multiple viewpoints and to integrate the results into a more complete answer that takes into account complex systems. From early culture-historical styles to the differing processual and post-processual methodologies to modern reflexive viewpoints, merged with ever-changing technological advances, a variety of paradigms can be considered to form the whole (Duke 1995).
Pathway Analysis

Those who actively create the landscape have the ability to structure how others experience the world, effectively having the power to manipulate which meanings will take the forefront in how others perceive the world in general. This is one way in which dominant ideologies can be created and maintained, by controlling the experience of the physical cultural landscape. A term to succinctly encompass these ideas, *pathway analysis*, will be used. Pathway analysis refers to the consideration of how the structure of a place, such as a cemetery, specifically the shaped pathways and natural barriers, creates routes that are almost instinctually followed by visitors. The pathways affect each individual’s movement through the cemetery and either encouraged or discouraged viewing it in a specific way. This includes where entrances and exits are placed, which monuments have the high ground or prominent display areas, which monuments are easily viewed from the road or paths and which are easily overlooked. Also involved are natural features, such as hills and water, which limit travel or route travel in specific ways. This concept will be explored in depth in the discussion about each cemetery in the sample.

Pathway analysis has a history of application within archaeology, specifically within GIS analyses called least-cost pathway analysis (LCPA) where the aim is to obtain a variety of data that can map onto an area to determine the energy costs of moving through the landscape. This is done in order to reconstruct networks of pathways that humans will naturally gravitate towards due to the least cost, energy or otherwise, to take those routes. These methods are often applied to reconstruct how new populations colonized an area, such as the Americas (White and Surface-Evans 2012). This application of pathway analysis can be used to more efficiently find archaeological sites.
In this dissertation, the concept of least-cost is not specifically applicable as described but useful instead is the notion that the flow of human movement is directed by landscape features that essentially direct travel due to the natural inclination of people to follow the path of least resistance. Cemeteries are laid out with purposely placed pathways and manicured landscapes that direct the movement and sight to certain areas over others. Cemeteries of the Rural Cemetery Movement were especially constrained by natural pathways due to the focus on the inclusion of the natural environment in their design. Water, varying terrain and flora were essential to the character of the rural cemetery, but also limited where visitors could walk. The incorporation of mortuary monuments into these elements gives an indication of where the creators of the cemetery wanted traffic and sight to be drawn.

Applications

The natural and cultural landscapes, and the interplay between the two, encompass a wealth of archaeological data than can inform on a number of questions about human behavior. A notable detail is that many middle ground attempts at landscape archaeology that combine experiential approaches with quantitative data, such as GIS, “have focused on particular types of archaeological landscapes, mainly prehistoric and monumental, characterized by moderately to high-relief topographies. The themes these studies have engaged in have been equally narrow, predominantly concerned with the ritual and symbolic nature of the landscape” (Llobera 2012: 496). These types of landscape theories have been most commonly applied to early British societies. A study of British barrows in the Yorkshire Wolds examined how these mortuary memorials were used as political manipulation, to legitimize power for the groups that made use
of them. The original builders of the barrows created them to assert their authority and subsequent populations to create a connection between the living and the dead to legitimize power that may have been in question (Lucy 1992: 93-95). “The landscape of the Yorkshire Wolds was utilized in various periods by different groups, not only to provide subsistence, but also to create, justify and perpetuate conditions of inequality” (Lucy 1992: 99). A survey of the barrows and the time periods in which they were used indicated a conscious decision of those in power to manipulate the landscape for reasons of power and authority.

It is not the dead who are making a statement with mortuary monuments, but the living who are manipulating the dead and burial practices for their own aims (Lucy 1992:94-95), and so if the dead and their monuments are placed very close to a settlement, it is a purposeful and powerful statement. The British landscape in this study was used in the past to “create, justify, and perpetuate conditions of inequality,” (Lucy 1992:99), especially when the early kingdoms were not firmly established and needed to make statements of their power, statements of legitimacy that tended to decline after those in power were firmly instituted in their positions (Lucy 1992:98). These patterns and processes are not arbitrary or abstract, for the early Anglo-Saxons chose certain mortuary practices even though many others were available to them, and it is important to interpret these strategies within the complex situations in which they occurred.

Other studies done in Britain used a more phenomenological landscape approach, incorporating the socio-symbolic significance of natural features (Tilley and Bennett 2001). Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Age structures in West Penwith were examined in relation to the natural features of the earth, such as rock outcrops, in order to discern how ancient peoples conceptualized their society. The shape of the land itself, a peninsula with rugged granite outcrops surrounded by water, creates a dramatic backdrop where many types of monuments
were constructed. The authors suggest the natural places created a stage on which “meanings were intricately linked to elemental processes involving metaphorical relationships between water and fire, stone, sea and the passage of the sun” (Tilley and Bennett 2001: 335).

The experience of a Neolithic or Bronze Age individual in West Penwith would have been intricately linked with both nature and culture. Ancestry and mythology were written in the physical features of the land, whether rock stacks or basins or caves. Even the wind moving through the weathered outcroppings has been linked to ancestral voices (Tilley and Bennett 2001: 344). Man-made monuments, such as circular stone slabs with holes carved into the middle or the dolmen tombs with their large flat slab tops, referenced the existing environment. In this way, the creators of the monuments were referencing their ancestors, with whom the land was so intimately linked (Tilley and Bennett 2001: 353-354). The overall experience of the landscape, especially the fact that the sun rises from and sets into water at various points throughout the year connects water and fire. Solution basins that formed on high outcroppings of rocks and collected rainwater were often incorporated into the monumental architecture, and are linked to the re-creation of the experience of the sun with surrounding sea. The man-made monuments draw meaning to and from the natural environmental features. It is the experience of the individual, informed by their cultural awareness, which informs their perception of both the natural and created landscape.

While prehistoric, monumental dominate the field, landscape theory has been applied to several different arenas in archaeology. Hampton Adams (1990) used several approaches, including experiential archaeology and central place theory, to examine 19th Century farms. He examined the layout of the farm itself, including artificial boundaries such as fences and the design of the farmhouse, as well as the interrelation of the natural environment to the function
and design of the site. “By examining the farm within the context of landscape history, a better understanding of the relationship between the domicile and the land will be created. Because the farm had to respond to a variety of outside forces and ideas, it is a microcosm of those changes in broader society” (Hampton Adams 1990: 101). Several levels and systems were examined, from the farmhouse to the farm to the larger society in which the farm existed. Conservatism and innovation in society is specifically examined in relation to the layout of the farm. For example, it was suggested that farms whose main houses were located close to the main road were following a traditional pattern that indicated they were more conservative, not adopting newer and more progressive ideas about farming. This study is of particular interest because it tackles a historical period and utilizes maps, photographs and documents in order to bolster ideas that, if they were only supported by the remains of the structures themselves, could not be totally substantiated.

“A landscape is a series of named locales, a set of relational places linked by paths, movements and narratives. It is a 'natural' topography perspectively linked to the existential Being of the body in societal space. It is a cultural code for living, an anonymous 'text' to be read and interpreted, a writing pad for inscription, a scape of and for human praxis, a mode of dwelling and a mode of experiencing. It is invested with powers, capable of being organized and choreographed in relation to sectional interests, and is always sedimented with human significances. It is story and telling, temporality and remembrance. Landscape is a signifying system through which the social is reproduced and transformed, explored and structured - process organized” (Tilley 1994: 34). It is this experience of the landscape which is significant to this dissertation. Despite the disparate locales and eras between the case studies and this project, the concept is the same. In fact, the more recent period studied here significantly increases the
accuracy with which an individual’s experience can be deciphered. The location of the
cemeteries, the composition of the land the cemeteries were built on, and the use of man-made
structures to recall, draw from, and transform the environment are important facets to the
comprehensive understanding of the experience of the rural cemetery.
Chapter 7: Materials and Methods

Though no diagram, chart or map could take the place of the real physical experience of a place, they are necessary tools. Quantitative methods do have the benefit of assisting readers who has not visited the site attain a sense of what one would experience on the ground. As an experiment, charts were created from the gathered data of all the cemeteries, not to undergo a statistical analysis, but to represent the visual landscape. Attributes that are the most striking to a visitor of the cemetery, even from a distance, were chosen: the shape and height of the stones. A majority of the symbolism used in the cemeteries, with the exception of large statues reserved for the most ornate stones, is relegated to small, carved images that are difficult to see unless one is standing a couple of feet from the stone itself. Shape and height are discernible even to those who drive past the cemetery at speed. Shape and height make a substantial impact on the landscape of the cemetery and will therefore be explored in greater depth below.

The data for this chapter was the same as collected for the quantitative analysis of Oakwood Rural Cemetery, Waterford Rural Cemetery, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery and St. John’s Cemetery. The sampling was taken per section, so larger sections usually have a larger sample of stones. However, if the cemetery section contained mostly modern stones that were not collected as part of the study, this will be reflected in a smaller sample size, despite the overall size of the section itself. No section was collected completely. The figure below shows the percentage of gravestones collected in the sample per decade (Figure 98). The percentages are important to show key phases in the cemeteries’ development: pre- and post-1880, the average date when the cemeteries peaked in popularity and burials. There were few burials in all of the cemeteries prior to 1850 and all of the cemeteries began to increase in usage and popularity in the 1860s, with Oakwood reaching its peak in the 1870s and the other cemeteries
reaching their peak in the following decade. All of the cemeteries continue to be used in the present day, but no stones post-1920 were collected in order to obtain a snapshot of the cemeteries during the Rural Cemetery Movement, not after. Despite being used in modern times, the cemeteries have fewer interments overall compared to the numbers of the 19th Century, as the population of the area moved away from desiring the aesthetics of the rural cemetery.

![Percentage of Gravestones by Decade](image)

*Figure 98: Percentage of Gravestone by Cemetery and Decade*

The difference in methodology for the interpretation of the data lies in the diachronic divide of the collected data. This comes from the proposal that “any activity that is conducted in the present is situated and rendered comprehensible in relation to past happenings, which are manifested or called to mind by the landscape” (Thomas 2008: 304). Landscapes are experienced
in the present due to the totality of changes that have happened to them over time. This is especially true for monuments. Looking at a historic cemetery modernly is not the same as an individual looking at it from different points in the development of that cemetery, as monuments and other changes were continually added through the years, all affected by the historic context and the monuments previously erected.

“We conventionally assign monuments of particular types to separate chronological horizons, and present them as representative of specific stages of social evolution or socioeconomic structures” (Thomas 2008: 304). With this in mind and to get at the difference in experience diachronically, the collected data was separated in order to represent the landscape’s attributes as it would have been seen from different points in time. The gravestones in each section of the cemeteries were analyzed at two distinct time periods that appear significant in the development of the cemeteries. The landscape created by the gravestones was examined from the perspective of a visitor to the cemetery in 1880, when the cemeteries were in the middle of their peak popularity of number of burials. All stones prior to 1880 in the sample were included in the graphing. Next, the landscape was examined from the perspective of a visitor in 1920, when the Rural Cemetery Movement was in the final stages of decline and the popularity of the cemeteries themselves were lessening. Since the sample does not include stones post-1920, the graphs showing the perspective of a visitor in 1920 contains all of the stones in the sample.

The gravestone shapes were simplified for this analysis: the basic tablet, gothic tablet, shouldered tablet and domed tablet were all included in the “tablet” category. Despite the differences in decoration of the top edging and the shape of the shoulders, all of the tablets were of comparable shape and size being thin (often less than 10cm wide) and often between 101 – 200cm high. The various tablets would have made a similar impact on the landscape, regardless
of the ornamental differences. The landscape as a whole is the most relevant to this discussion, so the tablets were lumped into one category to better see the how the tablet forms covered the landscape from decade to decade.

Also important to this discussion is pathway analysis, which was previously defined as the analysis of the structure of a site, specifically the natural or shaped pathways, to identify routes that are instinctually followed by visitors. It is a useful method to examine the effect the structure and shape of the cemeteries would have on the consciousness and sub-consciousness of its visitors. Every step taken through the cemetery is guided by paved pathways and the shape of the physical landscape. The routes one takes through the cemetery, whether for funeral rites, visiting memorials, or just pleasure, would reinforce and reproduce the social status quo.
Chapter 8: Results

Oakwood Rural Cemetery

Oakwood Cemetery was one of the first rural cemeteries in New York State. The association formed to run the cemetery was the first rural cemetery association in the state, giving it prominence in the area. It is the largest cemetery in the sample studied, though Albany Rural Cemetery is a similar cemetery in the area that rivals Oakwood’s size, design and grandeur. Early on after the development of the cemetery, many of Troy’s wealthier and more prominent families and citizens began purchasing plots to secure the sites with the best views and to begin building their sculptures and/or mausoleums. Many previous burials from local cemeteries were re-interred at Oakwood because of the high status associated with the cemetery (Sanders, N.D.).

Walking through Oakwood, pedestrians will not be able to walk more than a few hundred feet without encountering a towering obelisk, a Classically-styled mausoleum, or a fine sculpture perched on top of a memorial. The effect is overall one of wealth and prestige, despite the many simple gravestones that dot the landscape, the monumental architecture stands out in every section. Just being buried in Oakwood, an individual has already created a material social status, despite the status one held in life. This is likely the primary reason for the re-interments at Oakwood, because those with high socioeconomic status did not want their deceased family to lack the status gained in death from being buried at Oakwood. Or, similarly, the there would be an interest in re-interment in order for the extant family to benefit from having their ancestors, and monuments with their family name, buried in a more prestigious area.
There is another possibility when it comes to the re-interments at Oakwood that connects to the larger question about how the Rural Cemetery Movement related to overall general changes in American society happening at the same time. At the consecration of the rural Lowell Cemetery in Massachusetts, the Reverend Amos Blanchard described “American cities as “cities of strangers.” Life in the city was impersonal, ever in flux, and more concerned with the next commercial opportunity than with a proper attention to the permanent roots of community life.” (Bender 1974: 201). This impersonalizing, industrializing, and aloof atmosphere led community members to feel that previous cemeteries, located near churches and closer to or within the city neighborhoods, would not remain sacred. Nonprofit, non-sectarian, and privatized cemeteries of the Rural Cemetery Movement offered hope of an escape from the cities towards a place of togetherness. “The rural cemetery movement reflected an anxious search for a sanctuary from the “go a-head” spirit of the age.” (Bender 1974: 202).

Regardless of reason, Oakwood Cemetery quickly became an ideal place to be buried and the height of cemetery art and structure that surrounding cemeteries in Troy and the rest of the Capital District wished to emulate. Many prominent Capital District residents set the standard for the cemetery by choosing Oakwood as their final resting place, including Samuel “Uncle Sam” Wilson; Abraham Lansing, founder of Lansingburgh; Jacob Vanderheyden, founder of Troy; Emma Willard, prominent for her work in women’s education; Amos Eaton, founder of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Russell Sage, financier and the man whom Russell Sage College is named for; George M. Phelps, who was involved in the invention and patents of telegraph and telephone instruments; and many others. Those who perhaps did not have the social prominence or the economic success of others buried in Oakwood Cemetery would desire to share their final resting place with those who did to share in the prestige. In the finality of
death, there could be an assumed community among those who were buried in the same
cemetery.

Oakwood Cemetery is surrounded by fencing, marking the area inside as separate.
Randall McGuire described the cemeteries in Broome County, NY, whose fences “separated
member from nonmember in death and affirmed this contrast for the living. … The cemetery
created the appearance of equality among the dead and this affirmed the ideology that masked
the relations of power among the living” (McGuire 1988: 458). With the opening of the
privatized cemeteries, it was no longer just one’s religious affiliation that was related from the
choice of cemetery one was buried in. An individual (who purchased a plot before death) or a
family (purchasing a plot after an individual’s death) could make a different statement about
their place in society by choosing a prominent cemetery populated with prominent figures.

Oakwood Cemetery’s geographical placement in the area was specifically chosen
because of the appeal to the rural cemetery aesthetics. Joseph Story, who gave the consecration
speech at Mount Auburn Cemetery, said “We stand, as it were, upon the borders of two worlds;
and as the mood of our minds may be, we may gather lessons of profound wisdom by contrasting
one with the other” (Bender 1974: 198), and detailed the importance of having a view of the city
from the cemetery, so that the natural and urban landscapes could blend in a way that each could
retain their own characteristics, but the people who could view the city from the cemetery would
achieve a higher wisdom about the nature of both. Oakwood is renowned for its views of
neighboring Albany, Troy, Cohoes, Waterford, the Hudson River, the Helderberg Escarpment,
plus many more natural and urban landmarks. The 100 mile panoramic view is commemorated
on a large sign board in the cemetery that details the attractions and their history (Sanders 2012).
Oakwood exemplifies the ideals behind the Rural Cemetery movement, its vantage point and
views highlight the contrasts between urban and natural environments and combine them in a pleasurable way.

Out of the 75 sections that make up Oakwood Cemetery, only 51 sections (A, A1, B, B1, B2, B3, C, C1, D, D1, D2, D3, D4, E, E1, E2, F, F1, F2, F3, F4, G, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, H, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, I, I1, K, K1, L, L1, M, M1, N, N1, P, P1, S, S1, S2, T, T2) were included in the sample and analyzed, as the remaining sections in the cemetery contained only stones dated after 1920. Per the map (Figure 133 – 134), the most modern sections are laid out in the northeast portion of Oakwood Cemetery, with the older stones making up the middle core of the cemetery. The modern segment of the cemetery also has a significantly different layout than the older one, with larger land areas per section as well as fewer and more widely spaced pathways and roads. The earliest part of the cemetery, contained for the most part in the inner sections, has more varied pathways, some smaller and more suited to pedestrians than vehicles, though one could get to most areas of the cemetery by vehicle.

**Oakwood Gravestone Shape, 1880 vs. 1920**

Each graph displays the section and the number of stones sample in that section in parentheses (Figures 99 - 102). It is important to take note of the number of stones in the sample in each section, as some sections have a very small sample size of 1 – 5. The percentages of stones of each particular shape that make up the sample in each section are displayed in a unique color. This gives an easy visual representation to determine which shapes were most prominent or popular in each section. The map of the cemetery, and its labeled sections, is included below along with an aerial view of the cemetery (Figures 133 - 134). Using the maps and the charts created showing the percentages of gravestone shapes per section, a pathway analysis can be
attempted to facilitate the reader with an interpretation of how the overall landscape of the
cemetery would have appeared at the time.

It is important to note that only 49 of the 51 sections are represented in the 1880 sample;
there were no stones during that time period in sections A and T. There were 676 gravestones in
the sample by 1880.

![Graph: Oakwood Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone Shapes by Section]

*Figure 99: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone shapes by section*
Figure 100: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone shapes by section

Figure 101: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone shapes by section
In 1880, the majority percentage of the gravestones in the cemetery were made up of the tablet shape, whether Gothic or shouldered or plain, with the tablet shape compromising 50% or more of the stones in the sample in 26 sections. The tablet form was widely popular before the Rural Cemetery Movement, especially during the colonial era. Tall, thin tablets made of slate or other similar stone is the prevalent stone found in early 18th century New England and Northeast cemeteries. Block, column and obelisk gravestones dominate the majority of the rest of the samples, though each section has its own unique makeup.

Block gravestones began to rise in popularity by this point, wider and thicker than tablet gravestones and customarily used in conjunction with a family plot. Blocks often prominently
displayed the family name as their primary decoration and stood as the memorial marker for
three or more family members, husbands, wives, children and even extended family. Blocks
occurred in 30 of the sections, accounting for less than 5% to over 50% of the samples in each
section.

The columns and obelisks are both very recognizable and stand out amongst the
gravestones and tend to cluster in certain areas of the cemetery. As mentioned above, both
columns and obelisks were relatively common by 1880, with columns appearing in 38 sections
and obelisks in 34. Both shapes tend to be amongst the taller of the gravestone shapes and
hearken back to that classical imagery that became so popular during the Rural Cemetery
Movement and the coinciding Gothic and Classical revivals that occurred during the
Neoclassical and Romantic Periods. For Americans searching for a defining architectural style,
revival architecture was extremely appealing, and the cemetery was an ideal place for new
statuary and sculpture to be displayed. Even after the height of the specific Egyptian Revival
period, which ended around 1850 A.D., obelisks continued to be used as mortuary monuments,
their height and grandeur indicating status and wealth by their sheer height and size as well as
their tribute to a more desirable age of art and architecture (Ryan 1992: 2-6). Columns, as well,
were part of the revival architecture, both Classical and Gothic, as they are reminiscent of Greek,
Egyptian and Roman temples and palaces as well as the grand cathedrals of the European
Renaissance. It is no surprise that these shapes are among the most common found in Oakwood
Cemetery, as they embody some of the defining characteristics of the Rural Cemetery
Movement.

Several shape types occurred by this date in the cemetery, though remained relatively rare
across the sections. Temples were rare at this point in the cemetery, only appearing in 6 sections
and making up a minority of the sample where they did occur. Sarcophagi, made to look like stone coffins reminiscent of ancient Egyptian or Roman styles, were quite rare, appearing in 7 sections, rarely more than 10% of the sample. Cross gravestones are also relatively rare, with occurrences in 8 sections, making up a small percentage of the stones in the samples they did occur in.

An important aspect of pathway analysis, other than the relative occurrences of each shape type, is where each shape type occurs, along what routes, and which areas have emphasized visibility and potentially higher desirability. Using the graphs and map of Oakwood Cemetery, any clustering or patterns along certain paths will be discussed. First, it is important to discuss the map and layout of the cemetery itself. There are several water features within the cemetery, two smaller ones at the south entrance, a large pond in the middle and oldest part of the cemetery (Figure 50), and a small feature in section T, surrounded by the most modern sections to the north. The red mark on the map indicates the Earl Crematorium, the blue mark indicates the Warren Chapel, and the green mark is the location of the panoramic map and site of the famous panoramic view from Oakwood Cemetery. Warren Chapel and the sections immediately surrounding it stand on one of the higher and most visible hills in the cemetery.

The tablet gravestone shape type is too ubiquitous to make any statements about the impact of seeing that shape in one area rather than another. This early, plain shape is a background against which the other types can be contrasted. Tablets do not show up in the samples of only 3 sections, B1, F4, and I1. B1 and F4 are in the center of the cemetery, near the main water feature, and I1 occurs slightly south and closer to the entrance. B1 and F4 also are sections with a relatively small area and small sample size, and there is likely no specific reason why these sections lack tablets. B1 and F4 contain only obelisks, crosses and columns and this
may indicate that these small sections were dominated by a family or families with more wealth, status, or a desire to appear that they had wealth or status. Tablets do not make as much of a visual impact on a visitor as do the more opulent revival forms or crosses, especially due to the sheer number of tablets that dotted the cemetery’s landscape.

As a visitor enters the cemetery, they would come across the ponds and crematorium. Section 16 at the entrance, which is not included in the samples, is a very modern lawn-type cemetery with plaque gravestones set low into the ground. In 1880, it would have appeared to be just a manicured lawn. There would be no gravestones to see until just after the water features at this point in time. There are two types of pathways in Oakwood Cemetery, and they can be distinguished on the cemetery map by slightly thicker or thinner black lines. The thicker lines are wider pathways that vehicles, or carriages, can easily pass through and are modernly well maintained and paved. The thinner lines indicate narrower, uneven, gravel pathways that larger cars would have trouble navigating and would require a vehicle to pull onto the grass to allow another to pass. It would be less probable that a visitor would take the narrower pathways unless they had a specific reason, perhaps if they were visiting a particular gravesite. Most of the sections are still visible from the wider roads, but would require more effort to reach. Included is a satellite map image of Oakwood Cemetery (Figure 134), where only the thicker roadways are outlined, to give an enhanced visual of which paths were the likely more traveled ones.

The first sections encountered (sections I-S) in the cemetery follow suit, in general, with the discussion of the percentages of gravestone shapes that occur most/least often. Tablets make up the majority of the sample, with obelisks, columns and blocks accounting for the greater part of the rest of the sample. Section P and P1 are noteworthy because of the small sample size, indicating that the sections were not heavily used by 1880. The sections likely just recently
opened for use due to the population increase in the center of the cemetery. Each contained one tablets in their sample, while P had a unique log-style gravestone and P1 had a column. Each gravestone would have been more visible at this point in time due to the sparse usage of the area. The sections on the map down the road from these sections were not in use by 1880.

These more southerly sections show two temples (I, L1) and three sarcophagi (I, I1, K1) in their samples. These sections are either right off the main, large path (I and I1) or just one path removed from the main road network (L1, K1), though the stones are easily visible due to their distinctiveness compared to the surrounding stones. What is of interest is that these sections form a nearly straight line running northwest to southeast just south of the Warren Chapel; none of the sections further south of this line of sections contain sarcophagi or temples in their samples. These sections occupy a desirable space in the cemetery, on higher ground near Warren Chapel. There is not a heavy concentration of gravestones in these sections even in modern day, suggesting that more money was spent for larger plot areas.

The sarcophagus shape type is unique to the Oakwood sample compared to the other sampled cemeteries, as well as the other cemeteries studied in this dissertation. Pictures of the I1 and K1 sarcophagi are included (Figures 103 - 104), showing two very different fashions. In K1, the stylized stone coffin shape is used, but no other classical or revival symbolism is used along with it. Instead, the coffin is topped with a raised cross on the lid, indicating the Christian faith. This is typical of many of the sarcophagi in Oakwood, including the sarcophagus from section I. Section I1 contains the more extravagant style, a large eagle statue topping a more detailed and intricate stone coffin. The male deceased was a major in the US Army, and the eagle is clearly a patriotic symbol used in place of any typical classical or revival forms. From the photos, it is clear that the plot size for the multi-person (K1) and spousal (I1) sarcophagus is large, as there
are few other gravestones surrounding it, with II1 having fencing around the plot, which is also relatively rare in any of the cemeteries. It is an indicator of a certain socioeconomic status to be able to afford the large plot and the large, distinct gravestone type.

Figure 103: Sarcophagus in Oakwood section K1
The temples, (Figures 105 - 106), follow the typical pattern for the temple gravestone type found in Oakwood. They are four-sided and reminiscent of structures, often with columns carved at the four corners, and usually ornate (temple in I) or with Christian symbolism in place of the older ritual forms that would be found on a true classical temple (temple in L1). Temples are often taller than surrounding tablet or block shaped stones, and draw attention due to their uncommonness and starkly different style compared to the more widespread gravestone shapes. It is the reason why these types are of note at this point in the cemetery, and not further south, by 1880. Gravestones that make a statement in this way were not found closer to the entrance, indicating that the most prestigious spots were to be found closer to the center, and higher up on the site, than those at the edges.
Figure 105: Temple in Oakwood section I
By 1880, not much of the north/northeastern section of the cemetery was in use; only section T2 had any available gravestones to sample. The small population in this sample produced a sample of only three, comprised of tablets and a column, unremarkable compared to the general population of the cemetery. The sections just north of the water feature (A-C1) are comprised solely of tablets, obelisks, crosses, columns and blocks. These sections may only be of note because of their higher concentration of cross gravestones than the rest of the cemetery, 8% in B and 33% in B1. There are no crosses at all in the most southern sections, and only 7 sections in the center contain crosses, but all less than 8%, aside from the 50% in section F4 that only has a sample size of two. The area between the main water feature and Warren Chapel were most popular and tightly clustered together, with more small pathways winding through the cemetery, creating more of the typical aesthetic favored during the Rural Cemetery Movement, many
winding paths and natural features for walkers to take pleasure in and reconnect with the environment. This area is located on a slope between the highest point in the cemetery, where Warren Chapel stands, and the lake. The sections get progressively more tight and dense as the elevation rises. A topographic map, from the 1898 Cohoes historical 15’ topographic map (USGS 1898), is provided to show the increasing elevation from the water feature (A) to Warren Chapel (B) (Figure 107). Other valuable sites lay just to the south of Warren Chapel, higher in elevation than the surrounding areas, but the northerly most sections and the southerly most sections of the cemetery, on the lowest ground, were the last to be utilized.

Figure 107: Topography of Oakwood Rural Cemetery on 1898 Cohoes historical 15’ topographic map
The sections included in this desirable area range from section C – H5. There are no widely variant sections among these, though this area contains some very small sections, designated by winding pathways, which caused a small sample size. This caused some of the sections to appear to have extremely high percentages of tablet concentrations, such as F1, G1, and H4. Columns and obelisks are common in this area, while four of the sections contain sarcophagi and three contain temples. Those are the most ornate of the gravestone types, and they do not appear to cluster up in any specific area aside from two sarcophagi in nearby E1 and E2. Block stones are fairly uncommon when compared to the outer edges of the cemetery, occurring in 15 out of 27 sections, and usually making up less than 30% of the sample. The outer edges, made up of 21 sections, also have 15 sections containing blocks. Sections H, H1, and H3 contain a large amount of block stones compared to the rest of the center of the cemetery, however, these three sections on the southeast corner of the elevated “core” of Oakwood Cemetery, perhaps sharing more in common stylistically with the periphery.
Oakwood Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Shape by Section

Figure 108: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone shapes by section

Oakwood Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Shape by Section

Figure 109: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone shapes by section
Figure 110: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone shapes by section

Figure 111: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone shapes by section
The graphs (Figures 108 – 111) for 1920 include the entire sample (1171 stones), so the number of stones recorded per section is higher. Additionally, three more sections are added to the sample by 1920, as sections A, G4, and T were not utilized heavily enough by 1880 to have readable, intact stones from that time period to sample. These samples can be interpreted as a representation of what a visitor to the cemetery in 1920 would have experienced. No stones were sampled that were erected after 1920 because the Rural Cemetery Movement had entirely faded from favor in the country by that point, though the influence of the styles used would continue affect gravestone choices to modern day. Starting around 1900, and certainly by 1920, other cemetery layouts became preferred, such as the understated lawn type and the modern plain style of gravestone was in vogue. By the 20th century, cemeteries and gravestones consisted “of an absence of ornament and a minimum of inscription. Some plain stones had appeared in every period of American history, but beginning around 1900 they arrived in droves” (Hijiya 1983: 357). A discussion of this more modern change in mortuary methods will be discussed later in this dissertation. A visitor to the cemetery at this point would get to experience the totality of the effects of the Rural Cemetery Movement on the cemetery.

Similarly to the landscape of the cemetery in 1880, the sample by 1920 is dominated by the tablet shape. Only three sections do not contain tablets, and those sections have relatively small sample sizes to draw from so the chance of sample a tablet is less likely to begin with. Also similarly to 1880, the rest of the 1920 sample aside from the tablet shape is made up of blocks, columns and obelisks. In 1880, columns appeared in 39 out of 49 sections and obelisks in 35. By 1920, columns appeared in 46 out of 51 sections and obelisks in 40. Recognizing that there were two more sections by 1920, columns appeared in 7 more sections than in 1880 while obelisks
appeared in 5 more. Columns, on average, ranged from 10-30% of the sample in the sections where they occurred and obelisks averaged 5-10%. Columns were spread evenly throughout the cemetery. Obelisks occurred sporadically through the center area of the cemetery; however, there are no obelisks to be found on the extreme southern and northern peripheries of Oakwood. Sections P1, S, S1, S2, T and T2 do not contain obelisks, despite relatively large sample sizes.

Temples occurred in 5 out of 49 sections in the 1880 sample and sarcophagi occurred in 7. By 1920, temples show up in 8 out of 51 sections and sarcophagi in 9. Considering that two sections had been added by 1920, this is not a significant increase of occurrences from 1880 to 1920. These two types make up a smaller percentage of the samples by this date, temples often less than 5% and sarcophagi averaging about 10%. This indicates that the popularity for these types of stone shapes had peaked by 1880, despite the fact that the sample size nearly doubled in size between 1880 and 1920 (from 676 stones to 1171).

Also bearing similarity to the 1880 sample, the sections just north of the water feature (A-C1) are comprised solely of tablets, obelisks, crosses, columns and blocks. However, unlike 1880, these sections do not lay claim to the characteristic of having the most crosses in the cemetery. By 1920, the cross gravestone shape became much more ubiquitous, appearing in 23 sections and in reasonably the same percentages in each section. The cross gravestone shape is a commonly used shape into modern day, unlike some of the other shape forms that had appeared during the Rural Cemetery Movement, such as temples and sarcophagi. It would also be extremely rare to find obelisks erected in the modern period. Because of their continued popularity, and simple tie to the dominant religion in the area, crosses would steadily appear in the cemetery through time, though never dominating the percentage of stone types.
The block stone shape increased in popularity by 1920, representative of the trend of fashion by this period towards minimal and plain gravestones, as the blocks were simple in construction and often minimally decorated, the family name being the prominent decoration. In 1880, blocks occurred in 30 out of 49 sections and in 1920, they appeared in 43 out of 51 sections, an increase of 13 sections, impressive even taking into account the addition of the three sections. In most of the sections, blocks accounted for between 20-50% of the sample, indicative of their rising popularity.

The core of the cemetery between the water feature and Warren Chapel continued to be filled in post-1880, with most of the sections increasing their sample sizes, some almost doubling in count. This is another indication that the center core of the cemetery was the most attractive area to be buried in, from an experiential landscape perspective, due to its elevation, many larger walkways, appealing natural features, and small section size. This area is also the most diverse in terms of stone shapes, containing all the possible shapes from blocks to temples, indicating that the population buried there was also participating in the trends common to the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Oakwood Cemetery Gravestone Height 1880 vs. 1920

In order to get a more complete understanding of how the cemetery might generally appear to a visitor, aside from just the shapes that adorned the landscape, gravestone height in each section was also analyzed at two distinct points in time. The height landscape created by the gravestones was examined from the perspective of a visitor to the cemetery in 1880, so all stones
prior to 1880 in the sample were included in the graphing. The popularity of all of the cemeteries appear to peak in the 1880s, as the sample shows the highest number of stones erected in all of the cemeteries from 1870-1890. Next, the height landscape was examined from the perspective of a visitor in 1920, when the Rural Cemetery Movement was in the final stages of decline and the popularity of the cemeteries themselves lessened, as well. Height was chosen because of the visual impact a very tall gravestone would make, especially if the norm was shorter stones. The graph (Figure 98) above shows that the sample of stones in 1910 dwindled compared to earlier decades. All of the cemeteries continue to be used to present day, but the majority of the interments occurred in the latter part of the 19th century.
Oakwood Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 113: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone height by section

Oakwood Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 114: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone height by section
Height is correlated to certain degree with shape, as some forms limit the vertical potential of the gravestone. For example, a tablet, being wide and thin in length, often will not be constructed over 300 cm or else risk toppling over. In fact, many tablets were too tall and it is common to see fallen tablets in all of the cemeteries in this dissertation, often too destroyed to be read any longer. However, other forms, such as obelisks, which have the same width and length, can easily be constructed to have significant height, especially with a good base. Walking through Oakwood Cemetery, the tallest monuments are always obelisks, visible from far away. This is not to say that all obelisks are very tall, just that they have the potential to be. Some obelisks were constructed no taller than a tablet would be, the form being the goal rather than height.
A quick analysis of the graphs produced for how the height landscape would look to a visitor in 1880 (Figures 112 - 115) shows that the most popular heights for gravestones in Oakwood Cemetery were the 51-100cm and 101-200cm height ranges. The southeastern periphery of the cemetery, sections M-S2, are especially dominated by these shorter stones, with most of the sections having 80-100% of their gravestones in this height range or shorter, only N and S2 being made up of 65-70% of the same height stones. This is just a slight deviation from the norm, as the rest of the sections in the cemetery generally has at least 50-60% of their sample made up of stones 200cm or shorter.

Taking into account the preponderance of stones 200cm or shorter, it can be understood that a visitor to the cemetery in 1880 would not have their eye drawn specifically to monuments of this height, unless they were of a particularly notable shape. With this in mind, it is of interest to examine which sections and areas in the cemetery have stones in the 201-300cm range and higher. As mentioned before in the shape analysis, the sections just south of Warren Chapel that form a roughly horizontal line across the cemetery, L, I, I1, K, and K1, begin to have a markedly different height make-up than those sections to their south. Over 15% of L is made up of stones 201-300cm in height and 50% of the stones are over 501cm. I, I1, K and K1 have 55-60% of their stones under 201cm in height, and 20% of their samples over 301cm. K1 has a high percentage of stones over 501cm, which is rare for the sections to the south, on the periphery of the cemetery.

The northwestern periphery, A, A1 and T2 also show a pattern of shorter stones, with 75-100% of their samples at 201cm or shorter. The sections to the south, however, that border the largest water feature, begin to have more diverse and, on average, taller, gravestone heights. The area surrounding the large water feature was a coveted spot for monuments. The main pathways
wind around the water to heighten the nature experience of visitors, so the foot traffic would be higher in those sections, giving more visibility to the monuments in the area. B1, the most northwestern section to border the water feature, is made up of 30% 301-400cm tall stones and just over 30% 501cm+ stones. These are very tall, especially in comparison to the sections to the north, and the monuments benefitted from the visibility of being near the water feature as well as towering over neighboring sections.

South of the large water feature, there are several sections that have large percentages of the tallest of gravestones. The small section F4, tucked into a nook on the southern shore of the water feature and cut off from other sections by a small pathway, has only stones over 501cm in its sample. Despite its small size as a section, it would have been highly visible. The other sections, the ones that make up the center core of the cemetery, are not terribly distinct from the rest of the cemetery, other than the fact that they have higher percentages of taller stones than the sections on the periphery.

Something to note is that the rarest stones to fine in the cemetery are those in a height range of 401-500cm, or stones roughly 14-16 feet tall. Even the stones in the 301-400cm range are relatively rare, compared to the stones over 501cm or stones under 300cm. This may be because the families erecting the gravestones were either going to attempt to make a huge statement by erecting a monument that stood several feet taller than all others or they were putting their resources towards aspects of the gravestone other than that would speak as to their status, such as sculpture, shape or symbolism. Attempting moderate heights did not seem to be the goal of many of those who erected stones in Oakwood; it was either attempted to achieve the most elevated in height, or find some other way to display status.
Figure 116: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 117: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 116: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone height by section

Figure 117: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone height by section
Figure 118: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 119: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Height by Section
As in the analysis on gravestone shape, the sample size from 1880 to 1920 nearly doubled to 1171 and two more sections became part of the sample (Figures 116 – 119). The sample from 1920, depicting what a cemetery visitor at this time would observe, is similar to the 1880 sample because the height ranges 51-100cm and 101-200cm are the most dominant in the sample, overall. There are differences in the percentages, but gravestones in these height ranges remained the most popular and accessible to the wider population.

It is important to note the changes in the percentages of these height ranges cemetery-wide, however. The largest changes appear to be on the southeastern periphery of the cemetery, an area that had a generally smaller population in 1880 and was likely not the most desirable burial area at the time. Necessity likely required higher usage of these sections by 1920, as the rest of the cemetery was filling in. The Rural Cemetery Movement was in part a reaction against the overcrowded cemeteries that preceded it; it would have been antithetical if the rural cemeteries themselves began to overcrowd and impair the peaceful, natural atmosphere that was the ideal of the movement. Gravestones were firstly mortuary monuments, but their style and form in this period was supposed to add to the serene, park-like feel of the cemetery by being aesthetically pleasing. None of the sections in Oakwood are overcrowded and none of the stones impinge upon the others, requiring the extra space on the periphery of the cemetery to become utilized.

The necessity of the usage of these spaces may have led to the diversification of the gravestone heights in 1920, as newer burials would potentially have less options of being established in the center core of Oakwood. All of the sections on the southeastern periphery had stones over 201cm in 1920, and a majority of them contained stones over 300cm. Overall,
though the stones in the 51-100cm and 101-200cm ranges were still the most popular, the southeastern periphery sections in 1920 more closely resembled the center core of the cemetery in 1880, having added taller stones to all the sections, and in some cases, some of the very tallest stones. Sections K, K1, L, M1, N, N1, P1, S, and S2 all had stones over 401cm in height by 1920. M1 and P1 had had no stones in this height range in 1880, and all of the sections increased their percentages of tall stones. The visual landscape by this time would have been much more similar to the rest of the cemetery.

The center core maintained its diverse array of stones in all of the height ranges, though most of the sections saw increases in the percentages of taller stones, those in the 301-400cm to 501cm+ categories. Other than E1, all other sections in the center core contained stones in at least the 301-400cm range, and most contained stones over 401cm. This continues the trend of the visible center core containing the most visible stone types, indicating a higher energy investment in the most desirable area of the cemetery.

Stones in the 401-500cm height range became more popular between 1880 and 1920, with 22 out of 51 sections boasting stones of this height in 1920 versus 17 out of 49 in 1880. Additionally, four more sections in 1920 contained stones over 501cm in height compared to 1880. The percentage of stones over 501cm either remained roughly similar or increased between the two dates, as well. This would have added to the dramatic height landscape experienced by a visitor in 1920, seeing more towering monuments, typically obelisks, as they walked or drove through the cemetery.

Alternately, the shortest of stone heights, under 50cm, were also becoming increasingly popular by this date. Stones under 50cm occurred in 27 sections in 1880 and 39 in 1920, a large increase even taking into consideration the addition of two more sections. Though the
percentages in the sections that already contained stones of that height in 1880 did not increase dramatically by 1920, and the percentage of the stones in any given section was always under 25% and usually under 10%, the increasing incidence of these short stones in most of the sections in Oakwood indicates the shift away from the Rural Cemetery Movement by 1920. Some families and individuals were continuing to construct imposingly large monuments between 1880 and 1920, but a significant portion of the population was turning towards understated and nearly invisible gravestones by this time.

Oakwood Cemetery Sculptures 1880 vs. 1920

Sculpture was an important part of the Rural Cemetery Movement, and oftentimes the rural cemetery was utilized as a type of public sculpture park, a place for artists to display their work. The 18th century was not a gainful time for sculptors in America, and by the early 19th century, many artists had migrated to Europe to hone their craft from masters who had enjoyed a centuries-long tradition of sculpture in their own countries. “In America, chiseled or carved work was still bound by earlier folk and craft traditions. Largely produced by anonymous native woodcarvers and stonemasons, it was utilitarian in nature – ship figureheads, shop signs, marble mantelpieces, and gravestones. When American academic sculpture finally began to appear on these shores, one of the first places it was prominent was at a new institution: the garden cemetery” (Ciregna 2004: 101). Mount Auburn, the early standard for American rural, or garden, cemeteries, set a precedent for sculpture in the cemetery as its founders were patrons of the emerging artistic scene, and it was here that the American public got to enjoy American sculpture, before the advent of public museums (Ciregna 2004: 103).
In the custom of the earlier analysis of shape and height, Oakwood Cemetery’s sculptures were examined from two points in time, 1880 and 1920 (Figures 120 – 127), with all of the same notes about population size and section count remaining the same. Sculpture was chosen as a feature to study more thoroughly, not just because of its importance to the aesthetic and history of the Rural Cemetery Movement, but because of the visual impact large sculptures have on the experience of the cemetery’s landscape. All sculptures were large, and constructed on proportionately large gravestones usually over 300cm in height, aside from the lamb sculptures. Lamb sculptures were often found on children’s stones that were under 50cm in height.

The sculpture types found in Oakwood are: anchor, birds, book, cross, fire, lamb, missing/unknown, pitcher, shroud, sphere, statue and urn. The bird statue is of an eagle, which has been discussed earlier in this analysis, sitting atop a sarcophagus in section I1. Book sculptures can be interpreted to be the Bible based on the religious affiliation of the general populace, though there was rarely any clear symbolism on the book indicating Christianity. Statues refer to human figures, most often angels, and represent some of the most detailed and distinguished art in the cemetery. At times, urns sculptures were found with shrouds and/or fire as additions, but for the purpose of simplifying this analysis, shrouds and fire were only classified as sculptures if they were found on their own. Urns have been simplified to just urns, regardless of the additional symbolism. All of this symbolism was recorded under the general symbolism category and discussed in a previous chapter.

The missing/unknown category represents gravestones that only have a section of sculpture left, usually just the base that would sit atop of the stone to support the sculpture. Many of these sculptures have fallen off of their original stone, most likely due to weather/erosion or a poor balance between the weight of the sculpture and its base, and been removed from the
cemetery. In rare instances, the sculpture remains by the monument, propped up against its side. In these cases, the sculpture was recorded and added to the overall height of the stone.
Figure 122: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Sculptures by Section

Figure 123: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1880 - Sculpture by section
Figure 124: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Sculpture by section

Figure 125: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Sculpture by section
Oakwood Cemetery, 1920 - Sculptures by Section

Figure 126: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Sculpture by section

Oakwood Cemetery, 1920 - Sculptures by Section

Figure 127: Oakwood Rural Cemetery, 1920 - Sculpture by section
In 1880, 35 of 49 sections contained sculptures, with no section containing more than five sculptures. In 1920, 43 of 51 sections contained sculptures, with no section containing more than nine sculptures. Sculptures had always moderately widespread in the cemetery, but it became more so in the years between 1880 and 1920. Many of the sections that gained sculptures by 1920 were on the periphery of the cemetery, as the center core already had most of its sections containing sculpture by 1880 (sections A, L, M1, P). The periphery also had the lowest amount of sculptures were they did occur, three or less per section in both 1880 and 1920. Some of the sections surrounding Warren Chapel also gained sculptures in those years (G1, G3).

In 1880, the sections with the most sculptures were D1, F, F2, G4, I1, and K1 with five sculptures per section. The sections were either in the center core of the cemetery or the two sections immediately to the south of Warren Chapel. D1 was just on the water’s edge to the south, putting it by the water feature and in the center core (Figure 132). These were highly visible sections that visitors were encouraged to experience by the wealth of walkways and proximity to landmarks. In 1920, the sections with the most sculptures were D1, D3, F2, H, H3, K, and K1 with 7-9 sculptures per section. Again, these sections occur either in the center core of the cemetery or immediately south of Warren Chapel, adding to the already desirable impression given by this area of the cemetery, created with the environment (high ground and water features) and structures (Warren Chapel).

In both 1880 and 1920, urns account for the majority of the sculptures found on the gravestones. Urns were not used in the same way that skulls were in the colonial era, though they are a type of mortality symbolism. However, during this time, the urn was used to represent memory for the deceased, focusing on respect and honor rather than an attempt to warn or frighten the living about their own impending death. Crosses, a simple expression of a belief in
Christianity and an afterlife, were also popular in both 1880 and 1920, with not much of a statistical difference in number of sections they occurred in or amount of crosses, though they did increase proportionately with the overall increase in gravestone sample size.

It is interesting to note the appearance of, and increase in, the number of statues in the cemetery. It was only in the early-mid 19th century that sculptors were beginning to return to America and create works for rural cemeteries. Oakwood Cemetery appears to lag behind the styles and fashions of the earliest and most influential rural cemeteries, like Mount Auburn. It took cues from those cemeteries and their creators with a trickle-down effect, causing a slight delay in the adoption of trends. Statues appear in 8 sections in 1880 and in 17 sections in 1920. This timing parallels the advent of the rural cemetery as public sculpture park, accounting for the delay in when typical rural cemetery trends are found in Oakwood. Oakwood, more so than the other cemeteries in this dissertation, contains statuary that would be considered part of the Classical revivalist artistic movement (Figures 128 - 131). The sculptures were as much art for the public park-like cemetery as memorials for the deceased.
Figure 128: Oakwood stone 110, section K1, erected 1883
Figure 129: Oakwood stone 334, section L, erected 1907
Figure 130: Oakwood stone 517, section H, erected 1884
The other sculpture types found in the cemetery are rare and might be associated with the individual taste of those who commissioned the sculptures. The symbolism, however unique to the cemetery it might be, was well-known in the collective consciousness. Anchors, books
(Bibles), pitchers, and shrouds were all part of the national and religious symbolic language that would have been easily recognized and interpreted by a visitor to the cemetery.

Figure 132: View east from the west end of the water feature, Oakwood Rural Cemetery
Figure 133: Oakwood Rural Cemetery section map
Figure 134: Arial view from Google maps of Oakwood Rural Cemetery
Conclusions about Oakwood Cemetery’s Landscape

Using pathway analysis as a tool for investigation, combining the map, known constructed pathways and natural environmental features, the hard data from the gravestones themselves and phenomenological landscape theory, it is possible to get a clearer understanding of the built environment at Oakwood Cemetery and its effect on visitors throughout time. Approaching the cemetery in this manner, certain things about the landscape and construct of the cemetery become clear that could only be tangentially assumed previously.

The shift away from the traditional Colonial and Puritan-influenced cemetery in rural cemeteries affected a visitor’s experience of the cemetery to a great extent. In Oakwood, there is the curious sensation of the monuments orienting towards the visitor, almost wanting to be seen. This effect seems to be achieved by the winding pathways and more haphazard placement of plots, as well as the freedom of the executor of that plot to arrange the monument in personally preferred ways. There was no longer the provision for monuments to be set in rows, facing the same way, which made allowances for those who wanted to compete for higher visibility. The landscaping to recall the beauty of nature would also have had an intense effect on a visitor, evoke a sense of peacefulness rather than the dread of death. Sculptures and elaborate monuments are present in almost every section that was used by 1880, intending to appeal to the need for aesthetic pleasures. Oakwood was truly a cemetery designed to be enjoyed.

With the understanding that emotion is a combination of real physiological sensations as well as the accepted social framework to express them, it is also obvious that Oakwood, as a rural cemetery, was planned to elicit very specific emotions. While previous cemetery and gravestone designs brought out feelings of fear, judgment and anxiety about the afterlife from
their observers, rural cemeteries would deal with death as a recollection of the past, encouraging
visitors towards a somber reflection with a pleasant atmosphere to avoid more depressed states.
The landscape of the rural cemetery was developed so that people would wish to spend time in
the emotional states that were brought out.

The area between the large water feature and Warren Chapel, the center core of the
cemetery, was clearly the earliest and most desirable locale in the cemetery. It was constructed
on elevated land for visibility and most of the aesthetically pleasing, wilderness-mimicking
natural features are there. The outer edges, or peripheries, of the cemetery were not utilized fully
until later in time when the plots in the center core began to be filled in or bought up. The
architects of Oakwood chose this center area to most heavily develop, with many more options
for walking paths than the rest of the cemetery; there are smaller sections with more looped
pathways to ensure more stones in these sections were seen. The view of the city from the rural
cemetery, as is famous from the panoramic viewpoint in Oakwood, is a prized feature in the
aesthetics of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Visitors were encouraged to spend more time in the
center core because of these characteristics, giving the gravestones in the area a larger audience
than those in the periphery. Many of the smaller, narrower pathways converge in the middle of
the center core where sections D1, H2, and G4 meet (Figure 133), ensuring that visitors would
have a tendency to keep ending up right in the middle of the area.

The patterns in the graphs show that the gravestones in the center core, on average, had
higher visibility in the cemetery because of having larger monuments and more distinctive
decorations, such as statues or choosing neoclassical forms for their gravestone shape, along with
the high visibility that came naturally by being on high ground and surrounded by constructed
pathways. The pathways in the center core would lead a visitor to walk around each section,
which were generally smaller, so that every stone in the section was visible. The farther spaced pathways constructed on the periphery of the cemetery meant that many of the stones in the middle of those sections, if they were not tall or otherwise exceptional, would go unnoticed. The least-cost path for individuals in the cemetery would be to follow the pre-laid walkways designed into the cemetery. They were flattened and paved over or laid out with gravel for ease of walking. The paths also followed natural dips of the grounds, circling around the highest points in the cemetery. Where the land was naturally flat for large spans, as in the outlying sections, the pathways did not cross as frequently, causing visitors to avoid the middle areas of the outlying sections (in turn making those specific areas less desirable to those interested in high visibility for their plots and monuments).

This strategy of land use did not really change over time, aside from the necessity that occurred when the most preferred space was no longer available. The graphs show that the center core of the cemetery adhered most strongly to the symbolism and structure expected during the Rural Cemetery Movement, while the stones on the peripheries belonged to families that did not want to or were unable to participate as fully and lavishly as in the center core. This fits into the processual premise that the largest and most detailed stones would belong to the wealthiest or most high status individuals in the community, the same people who would be able to afford or otherwise secure the most prominent areas in the cemetery for themselves. The patterns shows that those who lacked this ability, or desire, tended to cluster on the peripheries with less opulent gravestones, also giving up the visibility enjoyed by those in the center core.

**Waterford Rural Cemetery**
Waterford Rural Cemetery, founded in 1816, can be found at between Davis Avenue and Route 32 in Waterford, NY (Figures 145 – 146). It lies in Saratoga County and has the distinction of being the only cemetery in the sample west of the Hudson River and north of the Mohawk River, nestled in the delta at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk. The cemetery’s location in Waterford is also notable because of its proximity to the junction of the Champlain and Erie Canal. In the year the cemetery was founded, the original district known as Halfmoon was separated into the towns of Halfmoon and Waterford. The rivers and canals provided the area with a booming industry in several economic sectors, so the location of Waterford itself, as well as the cemetery, is important in understanding the socioeconomic character of the area at the time.

The section map and aerial maps of Waterford Rural Cemetery show that the cemetery is significantly smaller than Oakwood, in both land area and amount of burials. The sample size for Waterford is for 359 gravestones, making it the second largest cemetery that is part of this dissertation. Despite not having the sheer size of Oakwood, Waterford Rural has many elements of the typical rural cemetery and has several internments of prominent citizens from the Capital District including US Congressmen John Cramer, Chesselden Ellis and Richard David Davis. The cemetery was on the whole smaller and served a slightly different population, as the most elite in Troy sought to be buried at Oakwood. Yet the rural cemetery at Waterford drew leading members to wish to have their final resting places there, because it still fit the mortuary fashions of the time.

Contrasted to Oakwood again, however, Waterford attempted to mimic the well known rural cemetery styles but lacked several features that were described at Oakwood. Most noticeably on the aerial maps is the lack of natural or man-made features that would be a draw to
visitors to enjoy as part of the park-like experience. There is also a lack of general landscaping, the trees and other foliage are noticeably lacking in the cemetery apart from the section that borders the railroad and Davis Avenue. Experientially, Waterford is more similar to Oakwood than the other cemeteries sampled because its layout does encourage walking for pleasure, though the paths seem very sharp on the map. It has the most park-like atmosphere out of the three non-rural cemeteries.

Shown in the 1949 Cohoes topographic map (Figure 135), Waterford Rural Cemetery, circled in red and marked by a cross, rests on a very even parcel of land. It lacks the rolling hills and high-low differentiation of land that Oakwood Cemetery boasted. The natural environment of the cemetery was definitively not as ideal for a rural cemetery as the land Oakwood was founded on, though attempts were made to mimic the larger and more renowned rural cemeteries of the day.
Waterford Rural’s sample size peaked in the 1880s and 1890s, after steadily climbing since the 1820s, with a sharp drop off after 1900 (Figure 98). No stones after 1920 were collected per the reasons laid out in earlier sections. The sample was random and can be considered representative of the cemetery population, indicating that although the cemetery continues to be used for internments in the present day, the majority of internments occurred as the Rural Cemetery Movement began and increased in popularity. The sections were divided up based on the pre-constructed pathways through the cemetery in order to give the best visual understanding of how the cemetery would have been experienced by a visitor walking through it. From the map (Figure 136), there is a portion of gravestones that appear to be in section H that are included in section I. In the actual experience of the cemetery, the stones in the hollow of the curved pathway are separated slightly from the rest of the stones in H, and were therefore included in I.

There are 12 sections in Waterford Rural Cemetery: sections A through M. Most are roughly similar in size, with G, I, J, and L being the smallest. Some of the sections contain more modern stones, post-1920, and the sample sizes of those sections will correspondingly have a smaller sample size than sections with more stones in eras of interest. The sample size of Waterford pre-1880 is 189 stones and the entire sample size, ending in 1920, is 359 stones. Only 11 sections are included in the pre-1880 sample because there were no stones dated earlier than 1880 in Section A’s sample.
Figure 136: Section Map of Waterford Rural Cemetery from http://saratoganygenweb.com/images/WaterfordRuralmap.pdf, adapted from Saratoga County Historian’s office, Saratoga, NY

Waterford Rural Gravestone Shape, 1880 vs. 1920
By 1880, Waterford Rural Cemetery did not have the variety of gravestone shapes that were seen in the same period as Oakwood Rural Cemetery. The sample is made up of only five distinct shapes: blocks, columns, obelisks, tablets and a chair. The chair shape was definitely an outlier, a unique one-time occurrence in the cemetery. A visitor to Waterford Rural Cemetery in both 1880 and 1920 would see mostly tablets, but the tablet shape truly dominated the cemetery in 1880 because every section’s sample consisted of over 50% tablets (Figures 139 – 140). It is interesting to note that the popularity of the tablet waned slightly after 1880, with several sections containing 40% or less of the tablet form by 1920. Tablets were definitely reminiscent of the earliest colonial gravestones, and though the shape would remain ubiquitous even into modern times, its popularity started to decline during the Rural Cemetery Movement. Waterford Rural Cemetery, a smaller cemetery not connected to a large urban area like Oakwood, however, was still overshadowed by this shape at the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Sections C, D, E, G and L all have a higher percentage of block gravestones than the rest of the cemetery in 1880. These sections are grouped together physically on the northern border of the cemetery, which runs mostly parallel to Davis Ave and also has the most amount of trees in the cemetery. Sections E and M appear to have the highest amount of columns in the cemetery, but these are also sections with a very small sample size, so the results could be skewed. All of the other sections have a similar percentage of columns making up their samples, aside from B which only has a sample size of three, indicating that the usage of the column gravestone was relatively popular no matter where the burials occurred.

Obelisks only occur in section B and the more southerly sections: F, H, I, J, K and L. These are also the sections with the highest sample sizes, and therefore the most overall gravestones from this time period. These sections are closer to Route 32 and the canals and
rivers. It is possible that these sections of the cemetery were slightly more desirable, closer to major thoroughfares, and most burials occurred in those sections first. Wealthier or those wishing to display real or desired status might have bought up the plots on this edge of the cemetery, giving an indication why the more expensive and elaborate symbolic obelisk can be seen primarily in these sections. By 1920, however, the obelisk became more ubiquitous in the cemetery, seen in 11 sections rather than the 7 sections in 1880.

The percentages of all gravestone shapes increase by 1920, aside from tablets, due to the decline in the popularity of the use of the tablet form. However, what stands out most about Waterford Rural Cemetery by 1920 is that all of the sections are relatively uniform in their makeup. The sections with a significant sample size, at least over ten stones, are made up in a similar way: tablets still dominate the percentages, with blocks and columns coming up as alternately the second or third highest percentage, and obelisks following as having the smallest percentage in the sample. Pathway analysis is more difficult in a uniform cemetery such as Waterford Rural presents to a visitor in 1920.

Two sections have outlying gravestone shapes: the log in section A (Figure 137) and the chair in section K (Figure 138). The log gravestone was erected in 1909, past the prime time of the Rural Cemetery Movement and into the period when individual remembrance, mourning and uniqueness began to be primarily valued. Though the cut log can be seen during the Rural Cemetery Movement, symbolic of a life cut short, the fact that this is the only one of its kind in the cemetery indicates that the family felt comfortable being more individualistic in their choices by the early 20th Century. Two people are listed on the stone, the first, Florrie Robinson, died in 1909 at the age of 24 and the second, Ernest Robinson, died in 1961 at the age of 76, and they were likely married though the stone does not indicate this directly. The chair stone was erected
in 1873, for a one-year-old child. Often, conventional stones were not used for such young children; instead very small stones with proportionately small sculptures were used, though primarily the sculpture would be of a lamb. The chair stone instead appears to be an armchair with a shroud draped over the back. This might have held some more personal meaning to the family than more standard symbols. It seems that in the grief of losing a young child, often families would eschew the opportunity to make grand statements about family, wealth, and status through large monuments or neo-Classical symbolism, and instead limit the stone to a small, individual expression of grief.

Overall, Waterford Rural Cemetery appears to be an abridged or condensed version of Oakwood Rural Cemetery. The gravestone shapes used are very similar to the larger cemetery, as well as the typical proportions found in each sample. However, there are far fewer obelisks seen at Waterford Rural, and no more elaborate stone shapes such as sarcophagi or temples. The cemetery lacks the overall character of Oakwood, as well, as there is less rolling topography, less overall landscaping, and the pathways created for visitors are mostly sharp angled and create square sections. Oakwood Rural employed many rounded sections with winding pathways to entice visitors to stay and stroll the grounds.
Figure 137: Log gravestone in section A, Waterford Rural Cemetery

Figure 138: Chair gravestone in section A, Waterford Rural Cemetery
Figure 139: Waterford Rural Cemetery, 1880- Gravestone Shapes by Section

Figure 140: Waterford Rural Cemetery, 1920 - General Gravestone Shapes by Section
Waterford Rural Gravestone Height, 1880 vs. 1920

There is a general correlation between gravestone shape and gravestone height, due to the inherent link between form and size. Obelisks tend to be the tallest and tablets tend to be shorter, as tablets rarely exceed 300cm in height due to their thin build. Columns and block gravestones vary in either direction on the height spectrum, but do not reach the elevation that an obelisk would. For this reason, and because there is a dearth of obelisks and other more elaborate stones such as temples, monuments over 301cm are extremely rare in Waterford Rural Cemetery (Figures 141 – 142).

In 1880, six sections contained stones taller than 301cm, three contained stones taller than 401cm, and only one contained stones taller than 501cm. The tallest stone in the cemetery by this date could be found in section F, a section that was nearer to Route 32 and the water. All of the sections that contained stones taller than 301cm can be found in the southern half of the cemetery that lies closer to the water, indicating again the possibility that this area of the cemetery was more desirable for burial and populated by those with the means to bury their loved ones there. By contrast, in 1880, the shortest of stones, under 50cm, were relatively rare and only found in low percentages in four sections. Dominating the samples and making up almost the entire population of the cemetery were stones between 51 and 200cm in height.

The scenery did not change drastically by 1920, as stones between 51 and 200cm in height continued to make up the majority of the sample. However, taller stones show up in more sections, though continue to make up a small proportion of the sample, never more than 15%. Ten sections in 1920 contained stones over 301cm, 5 sections contained stones over 401cm, and
still just one section, F, had stones over 501 cm. The northern half of the cemetery has two sections, E and M, that contain stones over 301 cm, by this period, indicating that the cemetery was being used more generally by 1920 and not grouping together in more desired plots or sections.

Six additional sections in 1920 included stones under 50 cm, making up ten sections total. This is to be expected at the downturn of the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Families and individuals were more inclined towards the lawn cemetery movement and small, more personalized stones meant for familial remembrance and mourning. The proportions remained low, never above 20%, but the spread of the smaller stones and the persistence of monuments generally under 200 cm in height at this time is reflective of the overall shift in mortuary behaviors and artifacts post-Rural Cemetery Movement.

![Waterford Rural Cemetery, 1880- Gravestone Height by Section](image)

*Figure 141: Waterford Rural Cemetery, 1880- Gravestone Height by Section*
Fewer sculpture types can be found in Waterford Rural compared to the larger Oakwood Rural, as well as fewer sculptures overall. Sculptures tended to be found on taller monuments, or to add to the height of the monument, so it is not surprising based on the analysis of gravestone height that few sculptures exist in the cemetery (Figures 143-144). The only sculpture types found at Waterford Rural in the entire span of time of the sample are the cross, fire, lamb, missing or urn.
By 1880, eight sections contained sculptures, with one section, H, containing three and the rest containing only one or two sculptures. It is of note that section H is at the southernmost edge of the cemetery, closest to Route 32 and the waterway, possibly lending that section the highest visibility. One lamb sculpture is found in the cemetery by 1880, indicative of a child’s burial, and the rest of the sculptures were either missing or urns. The urn was a common symbolic sculpture found in this era, understandable by the masses and seen widely at Oakwood Rural. The urn was a relatively simple sculpture to create and mount on the monument, lacking the intricacies of some of the more artistic human-form statues found at Oakwood.

By 1920, every section other than section A contained some form of sculpture. Urns, and missing sculptures, still dominated the sample by this point; urns were present in ten of the sections. The biggest jump in numbers of the sculptures was the cross. Absent in 1880, there were eight crosses in seven sections by 1920. This would have changed the visual landscape of the cemetery greatly, as the decades went on, more and more crosses were erected. This is clearly a move away from the neo-classical love affair with the past of polytheistic cultures such as Egypt and Greece and a move towards a declaration of personal religious beliefs.
Figure 143: Waterford Rural Cemetery - Sculptures by section, 1880

Figure 144: Waterford Rural Cemetery - Sculptures by section, 1920
Figure 145: Aerial view from Google maps of Waterford Rural Cemetery
Conclusions about Waterford Rural Cemetery’s Landscape

Based on the maps, aerial images, topography and charts, it is clear that Waterford Rural Cemetery mimics but does not completely adhere to the aesthetic standards set by many of the larger rural cemeteries of its time, ones that are connected to larger urban centers such as Boston, Brooklyn or even Troy. Waterford Rural served the outskirts of the Troy-Albany population, the greater part of the urban centers’ mortuary needs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were satisfied by either Oakwood Rural Cemetery or Albany Rural Cemetery.
There is some indication in Waterford Rural of a general population preference of the southern sections of the cemetery, those that were located closer to major thoroughfares. The more elaborate stones, ones that most indicated the stylish Neo-classical/Gothic forms such as obelisks, were all located in the southern sections. Likewise, the tallest monuments were also located in these sections. Higher status, or those wishing to appear higher status, individuals and families were established in these sections first. As time went on, these trends, and perhaps emulation of higher status trends, spread into the rest of the cemetery.

However, a pathway analysis of Waterford Rural is difficult to assess due to the small size and lack of pathways that appear deliberately constructed to guide visitors to one section or another. The squared-off sections are all relatively similar sized and easy to access from any point in the cemetery. The pathways were constructed out of a practical need to travel through the cemetery rather than to purposely encourage recreation. There are no hindrances or incentives to access certain sections due to pre-constructed pathways or natural landscape features. There are no environmental elements, such as grounds-keeping or ponds, to draw visitors and create a park-like atmosphere intended for loitering. In this manner, Waterford Rural does not succeed in emulating the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Previous chapters detailed the socioeconomic differences between the population utilizing and area surrounding Waterford Rural compared to Oakwood. The reduced wealth and status differences could be related to the reason that the cemetery was not more heavily reworked or designed to mimic the standard rural cemetery. There was no pressing need or even financial ability to exaggeratedly display status differences in mortuary monuments and, therefore, no need to have a cemetery which clearly displays those differences in such stark fashion as a rural cemetery. Though, as noted above, Waterford Rural is not completely devoid of status
differentiation through mortuary behaviors and does mirror some of the rural cemetery tropes, even more so than the other cemeteries sampled compared to Oakwood.

**Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery**

Blooming Grove Cemetery is located in the hamlet of Defreestville, town of North Greenbush, Rensselaer County, NY. North Greenbush is located just south of Troy and is also on the east side of the Hudson River. The sign arched over the entrance to the cemetery labels it as “Blooming Grove Rural.” The land was used intermittently as a burial ground for Blooming Grove Reformed Church, established in 1814, but was only designated officially and used by the community as a non-sectarian and non-profit cemetery post-1860. The cemetery is significantly smaller in size and number of gravestones compared to nearby Oakwood Cemetery, but imitates the rural aesthetics in landscape and monument choice. And though a more modest cemetery, it contains the graves of some of the Capital Region’s renowned families.

The cemetery exists modernly in a lightly residential area that had been built up slowly over time. The earliest historical map, the Troy 1893 topographic map (Figure 147), shows very few residential buildings around the cemetery, and the cemetery had yet to be officially designated on the map. The Troy 1950 Topographic map (Figure 148) shows the geography of the land the cemetery was established on, as well as the slightly increased residential construction. There is a downward slope from Blooming Grove Drive to Route 4, and though the slope is not dramatic, it is not a completely flat cemetery and has a slightly similar feel of rolling landscape as seen in Oakwood Rural Cemetery in that regard (Figure 149). Trees grow in every section of the cemetery aside from sections A and B, planted in neat rows in sections C and D, and more unsystematically in the eastern half of the cemetery by Blooming Grove Road. The
cemetery has only eight sections, divided up for the purposes of this dissertation, using the four east to west and three north to south existing pathways.

The differences in landscaping are temporally differentiated. The four sections to the west, by Blooming Grove Drive, E – H, were the only sections in use prior to 1920. The landscaping reflects the more casual and natural style of the time, influenced by the Rural Cemetery Movement’s preference for a more organic and wild environment. The eastern most sections, bordering Route 4, were only put into use post-1920, and the more rigid landscaping pattern, or lack of landscaping in sections A and B, reflect the modern taste for the lawn type cemetery, a more orderly cemetery with small stones regularly spaced.

Figure 147: Topography of Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery on the Troy 1893 Topographic Map
Figure 148: Topography of Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery on the Troy 1950 Topographic Map

Figure 149: Section H near Blooming Grove Drive showing the slope in the cemetery
Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Gravestone Shape, 1880 vs. 1920

Unlike the other cemeteries sampled, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery used only four sections in both 1880 and 1920, whereas the other cemeteries had expanded into additional sections by 1920. In 1880, there is a sample of 70 stones and in 1920, the entire sample of 141 gravestones is included. The sample doubled in size between the two dates, indicating that those decades were a period of growth for Blooming Grove. Only four gravestone shapes can be found in Blooming Grove in 1880, which appears about average for the smaller cemeteries discussed: blocks, columns, obelisks and tablets (Figure 152). By 1920, the cross gravestone shape can also be found in Blooming Grove (Figure 153).

The most dominant gravestone shape in the cemetery is the tablet, which accounts for a majority of the sample in both 1880 and 1920, accounting for over 60% of the stones in every section. A visitor to the cemetery in either time period would not be struck by a vastly different visual landscape as far as gravestone types; the tablet form would vastly overshadow the others. However, there are a few differences that should be discussed.

In 1880, only one section, section E, contained the obelisk gravestone shape, and that accounted for a very small percentage of the sample, less than 5%. Section E also contained the only block gravestones found in the cemetery by 1880. Section F was sparsely filled in by 1880 and contained only tablets. The southernmost sections, G and H, contained mostly tablets with less than 30% of their samples being made up of columns. There was certainly not a diversity of gravestone types in Blooming Grove prior to 1880. Only section E, the northern most section that was in use at the time, contained four different stone shapes. The other sections contained only one or two stone shapes, the most common that could be found in the all of the cemeteries.
By 1920, all of the sections contained at least three different stone shapes, with section H containing all five different possible stone shapes. The fifth stone type that was introduced, the cross, only accounted for a very small percentage of the sample in section H. Though the landscape would not be strikingly different because the tablet shape still accounted for at least 60% of the sample in each section, it is important to note that there were more attempts at other gravestone designs by 1920. Three of the four sections’ samples included obelisks by this date. Though the percentage of obelisks in each section was still very small, less than 5%, obelisks would still make a significant visual impact in the cemetery, especially when surrounded by tablets more often than not (Figures 150 - 151). The small increase in obelisks in the cemetery could be due to the influence of the larger rural cemeteries that served the surrounding urban areas. The smaller cemeteries tended to lag behind the large rural cemeteries as far as adopting the rural cemetery forms and styles. It is worth noting that Blooming Grove is the farthest cemetery from Troy and Oakwood Rural, as well as the farthest cemetery in this dissertation from a major urban center like Troy or Albany. It served a much smaller and more rural population.

Another interesting change in the cemetery between 1880 and 1920 is the increase in the amount of block gravestones. Blocks accounted for just over 10% of the sample in one section in 1880 and accounted for 10 – 20+% of the sample in every section by 1920. This is a significant increase that would have affected the visual landscape. The block gravestone shape was often very simplistic in design and ranged in size, though never towering as high as the obelisk stones would have. The increase in the block shape can be seen in other cemeteries in this dissertation between 1880 and 1920 and may relate to the decline of the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement.
Figure 150: Obelisk in section H, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery

Figure 151: Obelisk in section G, Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery
Figure 152: Blooming Grove Cemetery, 1880 - General Gravestone Shapes by Section

Figure 153: Blooming Grove Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Shapes by Section
**Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Gravestone Height, 1880 vs. 1920**

Gravestone height patterns in Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery mimic the patterns seen in the previous discussion on gravestone shape in that there is not a great diversity of types to be found. Overall, the height ranges of 51-100cm and 101-200cm make up the majority of the sample in all sections in both 1880 and 1920 (Figures 154 – 155), mirroring the fact that tablets are the most common stone type in the cemetery and often stand between 51cm and 200cm, due to the nature of their design.

By 1880, there are no gravestones in the sample that stand taller than 400cm and none shorter than 50cm. Section F stands alone in containing only stones under 200cm, while sections E and F both contain stones that range from 201-300cm and section G has some gravestones that range from 301-400cm. This also mirrors the shapes found in 1880, as section F contains only tablets in the sample, which sections E, G, and H contain columns and obelisks. As stated before, tablets are not typically monuments that are constructed for height. Columns and obelisks, due to their even widths and lengths, have the greater structural potential for height.

By 1920, there were several taller monuments erected. All four sections contained stones over 200cm and three sections contained stones over 300cm. Section G even had monuments over 500cm in the sample. Though these taller monuments still made up a small percentage of the samples, they would have stood out in the cemetery even more to a visitor due to their distinctiveness compared to the shorter stones that would have surrounded them. While tall monuments never became extremely popular in Blooming Grove, their presence would nonetheless have been felt and the families who erected them would have been the most visible
in the cemetery. Not surprisingly, the well-known DeFreest family is included amongst the families who erected obelisks.

The shortest stones, under 50cm, make an appearance in two sections, G and H, by 1920, a common trend as the popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement declined and the simplistic, understated lawn type cemetery was on the rise. These shorter stones, often small versions of blocks, can be seen in the more modern western half of the cemetery.

Figure 154: Blooming Grove Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone Height by Section
Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery Gravestone Sculptures, 1880 vs. 1920

Blooming Grove has the least amount of diversity for sculptures out of the four cemeteries in this dissertation (Figures 156 – 157). The only unbroken sculptures visible are urns. The urn was a very common symbol in rural cemeteries and widespread throughout the samples of all of the cemeteries studied. It is not a surprise that the urn is found in Blooming Grove, though the lack of other sculptures stands out as unique, especially because the cemetery has some of the landscape and design attributes of a rural cemetery. This may relate to the socioeconomic disparities between the areas. North Greenbush had the lowest house values and the highest percentage of manual labor occupations, especially farming. Additional sculptures on
The amount of sculptures goes from eight in 1880 to 11 in 1920, an increase of only three though the sample size of stones in general doubled. Section F contains no sculptures at all while section E contains the most out of all the sections.
Figure 158: Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery section map
Conclusions about Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery’s Landscape

Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery exhibits several features of a rural cemetery, specifically in the manner of a smaller cemetery that serves a smaller population emulating larger, more well-established rural cemeteries that serve major urban centers. The original sections of the cemetery were formed on the gently rolling hill between two roadways and contain a natural formation of trees, giving the built landscape a more relaxed and unaffected
feel. This is especially obvious when compared to the western half of the cemetery that borders Route 4, which has an artificial arrangement of trees or completely lacks vegetation (Figures 158 – 159). The natural, less rigid landscape recalls the preference during the Rural Cemetery Movement for the cemetery to evoke a feeling of being in the cultivated wilderness.

The cemetery lacks the winding pathways that would have encouraged visitors to take leisurely walks. Instead the paths, which are wide and well paved, run equidistant from the eastern border to the western border of the cemetery. As discussed with reference to Waterford, the reduced high socioeconomic population in the area resulted in less of a need to create a true rural cemetery, with displays of wealth and status with massive monuments, overly ornate grounds and differentiated areas that would offer higher visibility in death to some and not to others. The energy investment in the monuments and the energy cost of traversing the cemetery is much more leveled compared to the peaks and valleys, literally and figuratively, in Oakwood Rural.

Since the cemetery did not have a significant residential population surrounding it, especially between the mid-1800s and 1920, there may have been little use for a park-like environment to draw the citizens of DeFreestville or North Greenbush. Also, the surrounding area is not heavily developed, like Troy would have been, so the community was likely not as affected by the need to escape urban development and industrialization as families that were living in Troy at the time. This may explain the mix of rural and traditional cemetery traits.

St. John’s Cemetery

St. John’s Cemetery is located at 250 Cemetery Road, Troy, NY, approximately 1.5 miles north of Oakwood Cemetery. St. John’s was formerly associated with the parish of St. Augustine
Church, originally called St. John’s Church, and is currently managed by the Albany Diocesan Cemeteries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. St. John’s cemetery began interring individuals around 1869 and remains an active cemetery today. It sits on a rolling hillside with views of the Hudson Valley, reminiscent of the larger Oakwood Cemetery to its south that was founded about two decades earlier.

Many of the earliest Catholics in the area were Irish immigrants or of Irish descent, this trend was especially obvious in the older Catholic cemeteries in Lansingburgh. The churches in the area were mostly attended by those of Irish nationality, and so many of those interred in the Catholic cemeteries in the area were as well. This was not exclusionary. There were other nationalities represented in the Catholic population of the time (Scuton, Bruce 1971). No major noteworthy social or political figures could be identified as buried at St. John’s, however, two major league baseball players were buried here during the sampled time: Charles Frank Briody and Michael James McAtee.

Shown in the 1949 Cohoes topographic map (Figure 160), St. John’s Cemetery, circled in red and marked by a cross, lays on a swath of mostly even land. There are tightly bunched elevation lines to the northwest of the boundary of the cemetery; however, the actual burial grounds are confined to the level area to the south, just north of the road today known as Cemetery Road. Gurley Avenue is the roadway directly to the east of the cemetery. Railroad tracks are shown running along the western border of the cemetery from the 1898 to 1949 historical topographic maps, though presently the tracks have been repurposed into the Uncle Sam Bikeway. Nothing but forest appears in historic or modern maps north of the cemetery.

The cemetery was divided up into eight sections, A-H, based on the divisions created by the pathways in the cemetery. Only four sections in the sample contained stones by 1880: A, C,
D, and E. By 1920, section B also contained stones in the sample. There are three main paths in
the cemetery, large and well paved and accessibly by foot or vehicle. One runs north to south
along the western border, another runs parallel to that, bisecting the cemetery, and a third creates
a loop in the eastern section of the cemetery. The eastern loop, which contains sections G and H,
did not contain stones pre-1920 to be included in the sample. Sections D and F, which lay
directly next to G and H also contained no stones in the sample. Only the section of the cemetery
that ran along the railroad tracks, running north to south above Cemetery Road were utilized
during the time period of interest.

From the aerial view (Figure 161), it is easily seen that St. John’s kept the older tradition
of lining up the plots and burials in neat rows, with the gravestones lined up. The other
cemeteries in this dissertation have a more haphazard feel to the layout of the gravestones and
plots, causing a visitor to have to meander around and through each section. St. John’s allows
visitors to stride up and down artificial aisle ways, easily able to view the stones in a systematic
manner. This orderly arrangement evokes the older, Puritan and Colonial cemetery layouts.

Figure 160: Topography of St. John's Cemetery on 1949 Cohoes USGS topographic map
St. John’s Cemetery Gravestone Shape, 1880 vs. 1920

Throughout the sample of St. John’s, only five different gravestone shapes were used: blocks, crosses, columns, obelisks and tablets (Figures 163- 164). However, a visitor in 1880, at the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement’s popularity, would notice only two different gravestone shapes at St. John’s: tablets and columns. The lack of diversity in grave stone shape at the height of the experimentation with style in other cemeteries of the time indicates a significant difference in mortuary expression in this Catholic cemetery. Aside from section A,
which had very few stones erected by 1880, as it is the farthest from the cemetery entrance and would not have needed to be utilized till the cemetery filled up more, the sections had a generally 50/50 distribution of tablets and columns.

This trend changes drastically post-1880, as a visitor in 1920 would see all five gravestone shape types, with blocks occurring in higher percentages than the tablets or columns. The block style gravestone at St. John’s by 1920 made up anywhere from 15 – 55% of the stones in each section. While blocks were certainly ubiquitous in Oakwood and other rural cemeteries, it was not a particularly symbolic or stylistic gravestone shape. The adoption of the style, however, indicates that the population using St. John’s was similarly influenced by the tastes that drove the population at large to shift to the nondescript block style. While the cemetery did not fully participate in the tastes that drove the Rural Cemetery Movement, it did follow the more reserved, simplistic style that followed. These trends fit well in to the traditional, conservative cemetery.

The cross gravestone also makes an appearance at St. John’s by 1920. This does not necessarily indicate that the cemetery was participating in trends, despite the fact that cross monuments are fairly popular at Oakwood Rural. Crosses are not specific to rural cemeteries, as they do not fit in to the typical Neo-Classic or Gothic forms. The presence of crosses at St. John’s instead is a trait marking it specifically as a religious Catholic cemetery.

The only indication that the styles of the Rural Cemetery Movement found their way into the cemetery is the single obelisk erected in section D, a family stone for the Colmeys erected in 1892. The picture (Figure 162) shows that the obelisk lacks other symbolism common to the rural cemeteries and had a cross emblazoned across it, keeping with the prevailing religious sentiment of the cemetery. However, the family did utilize a gravestone shape that was designed
to stand out and tower over the other monuments in the cemetery, a common strategy at the time to indicate status. Therefore, the generally more conservative population at St. John’s was still affected by the growing popularity of displays of status in the cemetery. St. John’s was situated very close to Oakwood and drew upon very similar populations, socioeconomically. There was little separating the mortuary behaviors of the two cemeteries other than the non-sectarian and Catholic distinction, which is clearly significant.

Figure 162: Obelisk in section D, St. John’s Cemetery
Figure 163: St. John’s Cemetery, 1880 - General Gravestone Shapes by Section

Figure 164: St. John’s Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Shapes by Section
St. John’s Cemetery Gravestone Height, 1880 vs. 1920

The standard divisions of height were used for St. John’s Cemetery as for the other cemeteries sampled. Again, only four sections were in use pre-1880 and five by 1920; the other sections were utilized later and continue to be used for burials presently. Due to the smaller size of St. John’s compared to neighboring Oakwood, as well as compared to the other cemeteries in the sample, the sample size is relatively small per section. However, some inferences about mortuary behavior and monument choice can be made.

A visitor to St. John’s in 1880 would not notice many tall monuments (Figure 165). Only one section by this date had a stone over 301cm, section A. There was only one stone that reached this height and it was in the farthest section from the road. Two sections, C and E, had stones in the 201-300cm height range and both of these sections bordered the west edge of the cemetery, nearest the railroad tracks. Section D contained no stones over 201cm. The most popular height range for a gravestone was between 101-200cm, which lines up well with the fact that tablets and columns were the only shapes in the cemetery by this point. Tablets tended to be in the 101-200cm range, due to their customary thinness making it unwieldy or impossible to have more height without toppling over. Some tablets did stand taller if they were wide enough and have a sturdy enough base. Columns had the potential to be as tall as the obelisks seen in Oakwood, but typically, in all of the cemeteries, columns stood no taller than the typical tablet. The tallest stone in the cemetery’s sample by 1880, however, was a column. Very short monuments were not very popular in the cemetery; only section E contained any stones under 50cm.
By 1920, several sections saw taller monuments erected (Figure 166). Three sections, B, D, and E, contained stones over 501cm. One section contained stones in the 301-400cm range, and three contained stones in the 201-300cm range. This slight increase in the height of mortuary monuments in St. John’s could be due to the influence of Oakwood and the Rural Cemetery Movement, where individuals saw that they could make statements about their families by the size and grandeur of their monuments, despite the relative non-participation of St. John’s in the movement. Also, the appearance of an obelisk in the cemetery, as well as the cross gravestone shape, which often stood taller than tablets, columns or blocks, brought the average height of the gravestones up.

It is interesting to note that, as the rural cemetery trends towards tall and visible monuments eventually starting showing up in St. John’s, the later trend of smaller monuments almost immediately followed. By 1920, four sections contained stones under 50cm, and four sections contained stones between 51-100cm in height. The popularity of the 101-200cm height range held strong by this time, as well, still making up the majority of the sample. While a select few families and individuals were indulging in the trend towards taller monuments, overall the cemetery maintained its appearance of modest and unassuming stones, with a focus on religion rather than contemporary style, creating a very different landscape than the rural cemeteries already discussed. St. John’s traditional aesthetic already matched the mortuary trends that began in reaction to the Rural Cemetery Movement.
Figure 165: St. John's Cemetery, 1880 - Gravestone Height by Section

Figure 166: St. John's Cemetery, 1920 - Gravestone Height by Section
St. John’s Cemetery Sculpture, 1880 vs. 1920

The sample size of existing sculptures in St. John’s is proportionately small in comparison to its overall gravestone sample size. In 1880, there were seven sculptures present and in 1920, the amount doubled to fourteen sculptures (Figures 168 – 169). Though the sample size may be too small to give an adequate view of Catholic trends in sculptures, overall, it is still valuable to take note of the sculptures that were included in this non-rural, religious cemetery during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Only four sculpture types can be seen in St. John’s Cemetery: the cross, the urn, statues and missing.

All four types are present by 1880, missing or destroyed statues accounting for two of the seven sculptures. There were two crosses and two urns, as well as one statue that can be found in section E, bordered by both Cemetery Road and the railroad. However, the statue is not evocative of the artistic, larger-than-life statuary done by artists at Oakwood. It is a small, modest statue of a presumably religious figure (Figure 167), though it is unclear who it is depicting, as the head and any defining characteristics are missing. The figure is assumed to be a religious figure due to the robes it is cloaked in, typical of monks or saints commonly depicted in Catholic imagery, and it is possibly holding a rosary. This statue, though unique at St. John’s, does not appear to be inspired by the trend of creating and displaying art in the cemetery that is so common in rural cemeteries.

The number of sculptures increased by 1920, due to the general increase in burials between 1880 and 1920, and no more statues were created for the cemetery. The number of urns stayed the same and an additional missing sculpture was recorded. It was crosses that increased
the most, from two to seven. Urns were the most reminiscent of the rural cemetery aesthetic, and perhaps the influence of the movement and style did affect the two families who chose urns for their monuments. It was crosses, the most clearly defined symbol of the Christian faith, which dominated the sculpture of St. John’s cemetery, giving credence to the sense that the cemetery was removed from the inclinations and fashions that drove the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Figure 167: Statue in section E, St. John’s Cemetery
Figure 168: St. John's Cemetery, 1880 - Sculptures by Section

Figure 169: St. John's Cemetery, 1920 - Sculptures by Section
Conclusions about St. John’s Cemetery’s Landscape

It has been made clear in discussing the overall layout of the cemetery and the monument shape, height and sculpture of St. John’s Cemetery that the cemetery was not significantly
affected by the Rural Cemetery Movement, maintaining a traditional Catholic look to the
cemetery primarily. The grounds of the cemetery are relatively flat, with little landscaping aside
from clearing areas for burial and establishing roads to access them. As with the other smaller
cemeteries, pathway analysis is not informative in a simple cemetery of this size as there are very
few ways in which a visitor can experience the cemetery. The monuments are all aligned in rows
and all of the monuments in each section face the same way. From every direction, the cemetery
appears very uniform. There is little evidence in the cemetery that any particular area or stone is
vying for visual dominance. A visitor would never be under the impression that the cemetery was
a rural cemetery or was trying to emulate the characteristics of one. St. John’s keeps true towards
maintaining the atmosphere of a more traditional Catholic cemetery. A visit to many other
Catholic cemeteries in the Capital District would appear very similar to St. John’s.

There are some small indications that individual families followed a few particular trends
displayed in nearby Oakwood Cemetery, such as the erection of an obelisk gravestone, the
erection of taller stones following the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement, and the inclusion
of urn sculptures on certain gravestones. These inclusions indicate that the Rural Cemetery
Movement was part of a larger aesthetic and social change that influenced even those choosing
to be buried in a non-rural religious cemetery. The similarities to Oakwood and other rural
cemeteries are minimal, however. Overall, St. John’s kept to the traditional Catholic cemetery
standards, keeping the cemetery as a religious place of rest and not encouraging visitors to treat
the cemetery as a park or place of leisure by not including landscaping features, winding
walkways, or encouraging artistic monuments meant to be enjoyed for art’s sake.
Discussion of the Landscape Analysis

Each cemetery recorded for this dissertation has a physical layout and approach to land use and landscaping that indicates the level to which it participated in the Rural Cemetery Movement, which in turn suggests characteristics of the population that utilized it. Oakwood Rural Cemetery is the largest in the sample, in both acreage and number of sections. It is a notable cemetery amidst the four discussed because it is a true rural cemetery by purposeful design which is reflected in the physical data; its architect being John C. Sidney and headed by a rural cemetery association. The creators of the cemetery intended for it to be a place of respite for the public, to serve as a place of introspection, art, and a retreat from the nearby urban area. The areas surrounding the cemetery are heavily forested and a large percentage of the trees were kept in each section that was in use during the sample. The trees have a natural dispersion; the landscaping is maintained in a way to reproduce a genuine environment despite the purposeful manicuring. There is a wide range of ecological and biological characteristics found in the cemetery that suggests the natural environment: the water features have uneven shorelines, there are peaks in the cemetery as well as associated wooded ravines, there are several types of trees present included oak, maple and beech, and the diverse setting encourages the presence of a variety of wildlife to make their home in the cemetery.

The maps and aerial photos above (Figures 133 – 134) show this design in the constructed pathways that are placed almost haphazardly throughout the cemetery, creating sections of multiple shapes and sizes. These pathways encourage a visitor to walk throughout the cemetery, focusing on the most desirable areas at the top of the hill and around the largest water feature. The multiple loops of paths around the center core present an easy, low energy cost
enticement to visitors to spend their time mainly in this area. The center area was the most popular during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement, with the majority of burials, especially high energy investment burials, concentrated there. It contains some of the tallest and most unique gravestones, such as temples and sarcophagi. The visibility for these sections is quite high due to the tight, winding pathways that allow visitors to easily see all of the monuments in each section, contrasted with the sections on the outer edges that are larger and have fewer pathways cutting through them. Related to this division is the fact that the tallest, most intricate, highest cost monuments are found in the center where the visibility is highest. There is a division of those who could afford, or chose to afford despite ability, to be buried in the main visible center of the cemetery. Many of the most outlying sections to the north and south are the most modern, having no stones pre-1920.

Though two of the smaller cemeteries have rural in their name, Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, they were not planned in the same manner as Oakwood and had no architects planning the layout and landscaping. Blooming Grove is easily divided into equal sections because of the simplistic pathways that cut the cemetery generally east to west and north to south. The older half of the cemetery, the eastern half, resembles some of a rural cemetery’s layout in the sense that the stone are not arranged in neat and even rows, instead placed more unsystematically through each section and the trees were left to grow naturally and randomly through the sections. The opposite holds true for the modern half of the cemetery, where both the stones and the trees are precisely arranged in orderly rows. The older half of the cemetery encourages some exploration by visitors. However, there is no clear differentiation of visibility in this cemetery as in Oakwood Rural’s, indicating also that the socioeconomic divisions in the area were not as striking as they were closer to Troy.
Waterford Rural Cemetery has less exact and uniform sectioning than Blooming Grove, the pathways dividing the areas in the cemetery unevenly, the paths running in several different directions and with similar landscaping to Blooming Grove, with randomly dispersed trees scattered throughout the cemetery. Though both cemeteries differ from Oakwood in similar ways, with the reduced adherence to rural cemetery styles, Waterford does not differ as extensively as Blooming Grove. Waterford is both geographically and socioeconomically closer to Troy, which may have strengthened the influence of the Rural Cemetery Movement on the cemetery. The maps and aerial photos (Figures 145 - 146) of Waterford, however, show that the plots are very consistently spaced in even rows, though some plots were larger than others. This gives a very different feel to the cemetery, a sense of orderliness and regulation that is at odds with the general aesthetic of the rural cemetery. Similarly to Blooming Grove, the division of visibility in the cemetery is not as striking as in Oakwood Rural.

St. John’s Cemetery, a Catholic cemetery that was never intended to approximate a rural cemetery, resembles both Blooming Grove and Waterford in certain respects; the group of these three smaller cemeteries can be simply clustered together from a general landscape perspective, as they all differ from Oakwood’s design in comparable ways. St. John’s has several, mostly equivalent in size sections, divided by a few north to south and east to west running paths. The stones in the cemetery are generally arranged in orderly rows and there was very little landscaping done, though some of the naturally occurring trees were left amidst the sections. St. John’s, though showing some influence from nearby Oakwood in monument choice, very clearly represents a more traditional Catholic cemetery and shies away from the aesthetics of the Rural Cemetery Movement. The fact that Blooming Grove and Waterford more closely resemble this cemetery than the distinctively rural Oakwood Rural Cemetery is an indication that though the
population and maintainers of the cemeteries desired a rural cemetery aesthetic, they did not have the means or the ability to follow suit completely.

The lack of a great deal of pattern amongst the smaller cemeteries (Waterford, St. John’s and Blooming Grove) in comparison to Oakwood Rural Cemetery is relevant to this discussion. Part of the lack of pattern can be explained simply by the fact that each cemetery had less physical space to work within, which means there was less space to make distinct in meaningful ways. There was not much room to design different landscaping features or create multiple pathways and sections to differentiate each section in each cemetery. However, it was also a purposeful choice to carry on with the traditional, straight pathways and square-ish sections of cemeteries that had existed during the Colonial Era. There is very little segregation amongst these sections that are mostly equal as far as design, size and structure. The tendency towards a more conservative cemetery design in the three non-rural cemeteries is clear, despite the minor imitations of a rural cemetery taken by each. This is likely due to socioeconomic levels for Blooming Grove and Waterford and to traditional religious adherence in mortuary styles for St. John’s.

Pathway analysis, which is the analysis of the structure of a site with regards to how it is experienced, is more challenging in the smaller cemeteries. However, the lack of variety that makes a pathway analysis difficult reveals a lot about the preferences and needs of the population. The cemeteries themselves plainly have very little room for varied pathways and limited ways to direct traffic through the cemetery. It may have been a practical choice, or a lack of desire to create something larger and more intricate because of the smaller, less wealthy population they served. Either way, an analysis of the structure of each cemetery was attempted and in all of the cemeteries aside from St. John’s, there appears to be at least a very basic level of
organization in the cemetery based on visibility. St. John’s as a cemetery was focused largely on religious conformity rather than socioeconomic display. Though there were some instances of displays of wealth in the cemetery, it was not the norm, and there was little thought to individualized visibility.

The discussion on Oakwood details the center core of the cemetery, where the topography of the land creates a raised hill and the largest water feature is located. The center core has numerous, smaller sections compared to the outer edges of the cemetery. The center core also contains many pathways twisting throughout, coalescing in the middle of the core to encourage traffic flow there. These characteristics make the center core the area of highest visibility, meaning that the monuments found here would have the best chance of being viewed by visitors. The paths led visitors to the center and gave them multiple opportunities to loop through and around this high point and the sections around the water feature. High visibility was desirable to those who wished to make statements to the outside community, not just the family of the deceased, about status and wealth. The landscape of monuments throughout Oakwood Rural Cemetery holds up to this idea because the outer edges were not used as heavily during the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement, only being utilized because of the lack of space in the center core. When the periphery was used during the Rural Cemetery Movement, the monuments tended to be smaller and on the less ostentatious side of the spectrum; this indicates that less energy was expended in the monuments as well as being in a less visible part of the cemetery.

The largest, tallest and most ornate monuments can be found in the center core, monuments that were designed to be highly visible on their own. As mentioned earlier, some correlations were found with head of households in the 1875 New York State Census with individuals on tall monuments in the cemetery, such as obelisks. All of the households were
valued well above the average house in Troy and most of these monuments are located in the center core, around the chapel or the water feature (sections K1, H1, F and D). These highly visible monuments in a highly visible area of the cemetery were positively linked with families of a generally higher socioeconomic class than average.

Another point to take note of is the location of certain types of stones within each section. This data was not recorded precisely during the original data collection, but casual observation shows that monuments that would have a higher visibility, due to height, overall size, unique shape or extreme amount of adornment, tended to be located on the edges of the sections, especially edges that abutted a pathway. Smaller, less ornate and simpler monuments tended to cluster in the middle of the sections, where visibility was lower. The photos below (Figures 171 - 173) show the proliferation of monuments, especially obelisks and larger columns, along the roadside in the sections depicted. This could indicate that preferential burial plots were not only located in sections that would benefit from a high amount of traffic but would also be located in areas of the sections that would be the most visible to that traffic.

![Figure 171: Panorama of sections B3 and B4 in Oakwood Rural Cemetery](image)
High visibility in Waterford Rural Cemetery was observed to play out differently in structure than in Oakwood Rural. There was little topographic or environmental change within the smaller cemeteries, and the sections were roughly the same size and make-up. Visibility was determined by placement along higher-traffic or main routes outside of the cemetery, such as Route 32 and the canal system by Waterford Rural. Blooming Grove Rural had no discernible
areas of higher visibility, as the sections that were in use prior to 1920 had the same amount of exposure to the roads because of the small amount of land utilized for the cemetery. Blooming Grove Rural was smaller than Waterford Rural, and significantly farther away from the influence of Oakwood and the cities of both Troy and Albany. It also served more of the countryside than the urban areas and a smaller population of people, who likely did not require mortuary monuments in order to make the family known in their community due to its size.

Similarly, Waterford Rural functioned as a cemetery very close by to Oakwood, though separated by both the Hudson River and the Mohawk River. The town of Waterford is situated in the southeastern corner of Saratoga County, but its nearest urban center is Troy, with the capital lying farther south down the Hudson River. Though the cemetery was formed in a more heavily populated area than Blooming Grove Rural, the very close-by rural cemeteries in both Troy and Albany served the needs of the majority of the population. While the proximity of cemeteries like Oakwood influenced the landscape of Waterford Rural, mourners at the time following the trends of the Rural Cemetery Movement, the reduced size of the cemetery and the population that it served produced a cemetery that fell somewhere between a traditional, earlier Colonial cemetery and a newer styled rural cemetery in shape and form.

Certain patterns can be seen amongst the cemeteries across time, however, with regards to gravestone shape and size, regardless of the specific cemetery’s own size or structure. There were definite mortuary trends that colored the visual landscape at the two time periods discussed. The period between 1880 and 1920 suffers a dual identity: the height of popularity and mimicry of the Rural Cemetery Movement as well as the decline of the movement and the trend towards simplicity and personalized grief. This can be seen in all of the cemeteries discussed above. Large and ornate monuments, such as obelisks, continue to be constructed well after 1880. The
smaller cemeteries often appear to lag behind Oakwood and only erect these types of monuments post-1880, after the fashions of the Rural Cemetery Movement were already well established and had been employed by citizens using the larger rural cemeteries (Oakwood) for decades. However, post-1880, smaller and less distinctive monuments rise in popularity, such as block gravestones or monuments measuring under 50cm in height. Erections of these smaller monuments grow steadily throughout the samples towards 1920, signaling the end of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Taking into consideration again that landscape is a combination of natural elements and culture, not something solely done to the land by human hands, and creates an overall experience from both elements that provides an overall experience to those present in the time and place, it is relevant to note that when the landscape of all of the cemeteries in the sample, only Oakwood Rural Cemetery accurately reflects the sensations that designers and proponents of the Rural Cemetery Movement were concerned with. The landscape of a rural cemetery was chosen due to its natural features, but human hands molded it to reflect the essence of the beliefs of the time. The other three cemeteries lack both the natural environmental components and the built environment components of ideal rural cemeteries. They do not give the impression of cultivated parkland, carefully manicured to give the impression that the land was still somewhat wild and raw. Only Oakwood contained the necessary geographic markers, such as naturally occurring peaks and valleys, and water features were added to the cemetery in order to complete the desired atmosphere.

Oakwood is the only cemetery situated right in the city of Troy, which was experiencing a boon of development and industry at the time and housed many wealthy families. The peripheral areas that contained Blooming Grove and Waterford benefited from this growth, but
not to the same degree. There is a correlation of economic prosperity to type of cemetery in this landscape study. Additionally, St. John’s religious affiliation appears to be the main dividing characteristic between it and Oakwood, due to Lansingburgh’s proximity to Troy. St. John’s maintains the most traditional cemetery features of all the cemeteries, indicating that conservative religious taste outweighs even socioeconomic limitations when it comes to not participating in trending mortuary artistic movements.

Uncovering Emotion in the Past

This section will explore the expressions of emotion that can be seen in the mortuary monuments and cemeteries in this study. There are limitations how complete a picture just this data can draw, however; this section will also discuss ways archaeologists and anthropologists can create better models for getting at emotion in the past. Additional research relating to the specific areas of study and cemeteries themselves combined with the data already presented in this dissertation is necessary. More thorough archival research done in the manner of cultural history theory would aid in exploring the nuances of how emotion and identity (social class, religion and ethnicity) are intertwined. This may very well require a reduced scope of cemetery analysis, small cemeteries or smaller samples, due to the level of detail that should be collected on the actual people being buried in the cemeteries. A full reconstruction of grieving can be paired with cemetery analysis, including funeral home records and obituaries, with the aim of creating a model in which researchers can begin to distinguish emotion from culturally created and acceptable expressions of emotion.

There are many factors at play when individuals are making decisions for loved ones (or when individuals are making final arrangements for themselves early) that can potentially be
documented in the cemetery itself: social position in the community, religious affiliation, vocation, age of death, type and size of family and more. The intangibles that help characterize a cemetery that are more difficult to get at include religious beliefs, artistic taste, ideas about identity and community, the human experience of landscape, the effect of the past and memory, and much more. Particularly, human emotions influence so much of the material expression that one sees in the cemetery. Whether one takes a positivist, biological or a social approach when examining emotion, or a mix of the two, the importance of taking emotion into account is vitally important when dealing with matters of death, grief, and commemoration. From the biologic standpoint, emotion is seen as “primarily genetic, based on evolutionary adaptation, and functional,” (Tarlow 2000: 715). Thus, humans are thought to share a basic repertoire of emotion, regardless of cultural effects. From this viewpoint, emotion is thought to be a physical reaction, but could be interpreted in varying ways depending on social disparities. On the other end of the spectrum, social constructionist approaches do not see emotion as a biologic, human universal and claim that “emotion is entirely performative, a social construct serving to mediate social relationships,” (Tarlow 2000: 717).

In the extreme, the social constructionist approaches deny that any bodily, physiological experience relate to true emotion and positivist approaches take the opposite stance. “Social constructionists suppose that emotions are largely determined by social norms for emotions, or “feeling rules,” while positivists assert that social structure, particularly the outcomes of actors’ power and status relations, determines emotions” (Kemper 1981: 336). It is excessively radical to firmly stand behind either of these stances in their most extreme perspective, and it is ideally possible to find a middle ground that integrates the reality of the physical human body with sociocultural influences. Kemper (1981) suggests pursuing a “sociophysiology” to merge the two
approaches where the emotions are understood to be produced by both physiological responses to stimuli and the cultural norms and expectations of the given society.

Emotion is both intrinsically related to the processes of the body as well as sociocultural influences. Simplifying the effects of either on a matter so complicated as human emotion is not desirable. People in the past, prehistoric or historic, cannot simply be understood through sterile analysis; they were complex and emotional people. These emotions, if not fully universal and biological, cannot be assumed to be similar or easily understood in comparison to our current understanding of our own emotions. “Common elements of archaeological explanation involve emotional concepts such as attachment to land, respect or awe before the ancestors, social control through shame, guilt, or fear, and so on. Yet given the variability of emotional experience, it will not suffice to assume that certain emotions were relevant in the past” (Tarlow 2000: 719).

Archaeologists must be self-critical and self-aware to ensure they do not falsely apply their perception of emotions onto people in the past.

An emotion such as grief is intricately enmeshed in mortuary monuments. And though it is assumed in this paper that there is a biological basis to emotions, like grief, a large part of the expression of emotion is socially derived. Grief is intimately tied up with many real world matters, such as the state of the economy and how family relationships are structured and viewed. The Rural Cemetery Movement has been discussed in this dissertation with regards to social phenomenon such as reactions to increasing industrialization and urbanization; changing religious behaviors, and the Romantic artistic movements, but none of this can be separated from emotion, and in fact, most often originates from emotion. A more comprehensive analysis of contemporary art, especially novels and poetry which often expose in depth the sentiments of a
society, should be done and framed against the mortuary behaviors of that society. With this, a
more well rounded theoretic model could be created to depict past emotion.

The analysis of the physical analysis of mortuary monuments can offer a beginning insight into expressions of emotions. In the northeast United States, the change from simplistic, thin individual slate stones with a limited range of religious symbolism to the larger, more personalized, more secular stones that often represented extended families can be explained by several simple, factual reasons, detailed in other chapters, such as the introduction of mass production into mortuary monument creation or the changing economics or population proportions of the Capital District at the time. As stated, though, mortuary behaviors such as these cannot be separated from more ephemeral phenomenon related to emotion. The emotional impact of grief cannot be underestimated with regards to the selection of mortuary monuments. Religious sentiments, beliefs on the importance of the physical body, and the understanding of the spirit or soul are deeply emotional and personal as well as culturally constructed notions. The ability to express, or even feel, emotion in newly culturally acceptable ways within the cemetery is as important as new technologies to create gravestones. The trend towards more ostentation and elaboration in the 19th Century American cemetery is connected to the sentiments of individuals and the larger population. With the decline of Puritan-like moderation and sobriety, powerful emotions from sadness to love were more clearly publicized in mortuary behaviors.

Though human emotion has and will always be an integral part of the physical expressions during death rituals, changing circumstances in a society will make the level of expression of those emotions more or less important to showcase in the landscape. In early colonial times, when the mortality rates were high and life spans were shorter, “burial grounds were the stark reminders of the brevity of life” (Baugher and Veit 2014: 200) with simple stones
and mortality symbolism being most commonplace. The 19th Century, with an emerging industrial workforce and middle class, displays of wealth became the norm and symbols of personal grief became widespread as showcasing individual status and wealth became most important. Though only briefly touched on by the sample in this project, the 20th Century saw another shift in the expression of emotion. This time period saw a drop in mortality and lengthened life spans which allowed the populace to turn away from a focus on death and turn towards memorialization (Baugher and Veit 2014: 201).

Furthering the concept that even though the physiological reaction to occurrences such as death will always direct the immediate emotional response, socio-cultural norms will have an enormous effect on the expression of those emotions. There are rules in all cultures surrounding power and status that determine the appropriate social performance expected. Culture also affects the expression of emotions because “it specifies the power and status significance of concrete behaviors and objects,” (Kemper 1981: 356) and this is where you see the greatest variability between cultures surrounding emotions, when dealing with the physical material or behavior of expressed emotions. However, it remains persistent throughout all cultures that there will be some form of relational significance regarding the behaviors and objects involved in emotional expression. It is important to remember that one cannot separate human experience or emotion from archaeological study, especially mortuary archaeology.

Death evokes a multitude of powerful sentiments that must be dealt with and are often expressed in some type of ritualistic manner cross-culturally. The shift away from traditional, churchyard cemeteries with their associated proscribed behaviors towards a more open movement that embraced choice and variety led to the ability of individuals to more freely express emotions within the cemetery during the Rural Cemetery Movement. The privatization
and more profit-driven nature of the developing rural cemeteries made it so that the focus was not on what was expected out of an individual or family during mourning but towards what would best suit the needs of that particular individual or family. This led to the ability of certain people to create monuments that would affirm real or desired social status, but also led to the expression of a variety of emotion within the cemetery. The rural cemetery was much more than simply a burial ground but was developed to be a cultural institution that was a “cultivator of the finer emotions” (French 1974: 59) in society.

The first indication of the expression of emotion in early American mortuary behaviors is the presence of the willow and urn motif in Puritan-influenced churchyard cemeteries. This motif evoked a sentimentality not seen before in the American cemetery. As mentioned previously, this motif is present in the sampled cemeteries in this dissertation, as the weeping willow tree and urn symbolism fit well with the English garden aesthetic as well as the Romantic penchant for free expressions of emotion like grief and sadness. The previous burial institutions had inspired a fear of death, with symbolism and epitaphs that warned onlookers that they would be next in the grave to persuade them not to sin. By the 19th century, American society was searching for “a new institution to teach lessons of moral philosophy, to inspire the beneficial emotion of melancholy rather than dread of death, and to foster a socially stabilizing cult of ancestors” (Linden Ward 1989: 168). Combined with a growing cultural trend to individualize emotions such as grief, rather than focusing on moral instruction for a whole community, resulted in more personalized displays than simply the willow and urn motif in the rural cemetery. This can be seen in Oakwood Rural Cemetery, and to a lesser extent in Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, by the diversity and range of forms and decorations that begin
to be used during the Rural Cemetery Movement, which are expressions of a more individualized mourning process.

Panoramic views were also associated with the ability to evoke the desired emotions, such as melancholy and wistfulness, and to inspire introspection during one’s visit to the cemetery (Linden Ward 1989: 181). Panoramas were popularized by English garden landscapes and the garden cemetery in Paris, Père Lachaise, was specifically chosen for its panoramic view of the city. Oakwood Rural Cemetery was also purposely established on high ground that overlooks the city and its 100-mile panoramic view is a famous landmark within the cemetery (Figure 174). The location and view in Oakwood are one of its defining characteristics as a rural cemetery. The scenery visible from the cemetery significantly adds to the belief that humans will have a psychological emotional response to nature and beautiful landscapes.

![Figure 174: View of Oakwood Rural Cemetery’s Panorama](image)

Epitaphs are another avenue through which emotion and culturally accepted ways of expressing emotion can be seen in the cemetery. “Epitaphs have as much to tell us as icons. From epitaphs, and from their relation to icons, we can learn that American gravestones are beautiful composite works of art” (Hume George and Nelson 1980: 94). Epitaphs changed through time, along with mortuary symbolism, and demonstrate the shift from a fearful morality
to a more personalized sense of grief. Early epitaphs, often found in the churchyard cemetery, are
very stylized and similar throughout New England cemeteries. One of the most common is some
variation on the following inscription:

“Stranger, stop and cast an eye;
As you are now, so once was I,
As I am now, so you shall be.
Prepare for death and follow me.”
(Hume George and Nelson 1980: 86).

There are a few, rare examples of this type of epitaph in the cemeteries sampled. Waterford Rural
Cemetery includes this epitaph, “Remember friends as you pass by, as you are
now, so once was I, as I am now, so you must be” on an early stone dating to 1822, name and
age of the deceased unknown. This is the typical variation seen in the Capital District and will
commonly be seen on older stones dating to the first half of the 19th century or before. Variations
on this epitaph, reminders of inevitable death, disappear during the height of the Rural Cemetery
Movement in the area.

A majority of the inscriptions in each of the four cemeteries sampled include common
designations of relationships that had been used on gravestones back to early colonial era times.
These include: “His Wife,” “Wife of,” “Husband of,” “Our Father,” “Our Mother,” “Their
Children,” “Children of,” “Their Daughter,” “Daughter of,” “Their Son,” “Son of,” and several
additional variations on the family theme. Other common notations include place of birth or
career of the deceased. Epitaphs were recorded separately from these inscriptions. The following
discussion is not a comprehensive list of every epitaph engraved on the monuments sampled,
especially as many repeat the more common phrases, but are meant to give an indication of the
type of epitaphs favored during the Rural Cemetery Movement in Troy and the surrounding
areas.
A changing outlook on death during the Rural Cemetery Movement made references to death as sleep very popular. The desire of the majority was to view death as a more beautiful process than it had been before, a gentle transition filled with hope rather than with dread and horror at the finality of it. “The fundamental trend in the meaning of death was thus characterized by a beautification and domestication of death and an attitude that death had its proper place in American society” (MacLean and Williams 2003: 746). The epitaphs that include references to sleep are indicative of the changing emotions surrounding death in society. People were no longer obligated by regulations set by their church from expressing optimism, hopefulness, personal grief, etc., when dealing with the death of a loved one. A few of the epitaphs of this type seen in the sampled cemeteries are listed below. It should be noted that the majority of references to sleep in St. John’s Cemetery include the widespread “Rest in Peace,” a turn of phrase that had been prevalent for a long time in American cemeteries and associated with Christian mortuary practices.

“She is not dead but sleepeth” (Blooming Grove stone 58, Alida VanValkenbergh, died 1866, age 69).

“He giveth his beloved sleep” (Oakwood stone 126, Spousal stone, erected 1870)

“She sweetly sleeps in Jesus” (Waterford stone 67, Martha Griffeth, died 1874, age 30).

“Now I lay me down to sleep” Oakwood stone 586, Family stone, erected 1884).

“Resting” (Oakwood stone 618, Family stone, erect 1887).

“He giveth his beloved sleep” (Oakwood stone 693, Family stone, erected 1859)

“He is not dead, but sleepeth” (Oakwood stone 279, George Lemon, died 1862, age 42).

“Asleep in Jesus” (Blooming Grove stone 8, Jennie Sharpe, died 1880, age 22).
“He giveth his beloved rest” (Waterford stone 160, Sarah Curtis, died 1858, age 34).

“Sleep my son and take thy rest, God called thee home, he thought it best” (Oakwood stone 1077, Edward Austin, died 1841, age 0).

“Entered into rest” (Waterford stone 210, Kate Reinhart, died 1900, age 57).

“Grant rest to the soul of thy servant O Lord” (Oakwood stone 101, Family epitaph, erected 1886)

“Good Night” (Blooming Grove stone 120, Mary Ann VanAlen, died 1863, age 44).

“At Rest with the loved ones” (St. John’s stone 56, William Gillespie, died 1888, age 38).

“May His Soul Rest in Peace” (St. John’s stone 22, Thomas Connally, died 1888, age 70).

“Requiescat in pace” (St. John’s stone 25, Hannah Tracy, died 1907, age unknown).

A similar shift seen in the epitaphs in all of the cemeteries sampled, regardless of size, location or designation as a rural cemetery, is the changing thoughts on God. Most of the epitaphs indicate a belief in a merciful God and express hopefulness with regards to the afterlife, even a definite knowing that the deceased have already ascended into the afterlife. This is very different from the warning, moralistic tone set by early American epitaphs which cautioned the living on their behavior so that they would have a chance to see God in the afterlife. There was almost a sense of despair in the early American cemetery when it came to both the symbolism and epitaphs used. This kept in line with the teachings at the time of the churches to which these cemeteries were connected. As cemeteries became privatized and separated from religious affiliations, the ability to express a wider range of emotions appeared in all aspects of mortuary behavior. The freedom of expression is seen in the variety of ways that sentiment is expressed throughout the cemeteries.
“Out of darkness into His marvelous light” (Oakwood stone 167, Spousal stone, erected 1890).

“Passed to Spirit Life” (Waterford stone 324, Opha Hall, died 1880, age unknown).

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Waterford stone 263, Spousal stone, erected 1862).

“He is not here, for he is risen” (Oakwood stone 1030, Family stone, erected 1866).

“The everlasting doors shall soon the saints receive, above those angel powers in glorious joy to live far from a world of grief and sin with God eternally shut in” (Oakwood stone 168, Elizabeth Woodhams, died 1860, age 76).

“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life” (Waterford stone 132, unknown, died 1879, age 47).

“Jesus Saves Me” (Oakwood stone 1038, Maria Hayward, died 1867, age 72).

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord” (Blooming Grove stone 7, Catherine Sharpe, died 1886, age 57).

“Tell Him I am weary and I fair would be at rest that I'm daily hourly longing to repose upon his breast” (Blooming Grove stone 30, Eliza DeFreest, died 1903, age 98).

“Until the day break and the shadows flee away” (Blooming Grove stone 93, Noah Vandenergh, died 1899, age 76).

“The Eventide has come; We asked life and thou gavest long life, even for ever and ever” (Oakwood stone 151, Family stone, erected 1830).

“Awaiting the Resurrection Morn” (Waterford stone 40, Family stone, erected 1886).

“In hope of eternal life” (Oakwood stone 1101, Family stone, erected 1887).
“Beyond the wonderous evening star where all is joy and peace, 'tis there goodbyes are faint and far where welcomes never cease; and there shall be no night there” (Oakwood stone 943, Hannah Cilliland, died 1897, age 66).

“I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall live” (Oakwood stone 261, Family stone, erected 1875).

“The memory of the just is blessed, in the way of righteousness is life” (Oakwood stone 870, Family stone, erected 1833).

“Gone home” (Oakwood stone 26, Hiram Slingerland, died 1863, age 8)

“There shall be no night there” (Blooming Grove stone 122, Jacob VanAlen, died 1893, age 54).

“The youngest of our flock is taken. 'Twas by our Father's gentle hand, a time of grief but not forsaken while in this sinful weary land. But whither is our loved one gone? Is it to yonder realms so bright where Jesus our Redeemer reigns to dwell forever in his sight?” (Blooming Grove stone 60, Rachel VanDenbergh, died 1860, age 16).

“Another little lamb has gone to dwell with him who gave, another little darling babe is sheltered in the grave, God needed one more angel child amidst his shining band, and so he bent with loveing (sic) smile and clasped over our darling's hand” (Oakwood stone 176, James Feely, died 1876, age 2).

The move towards freedom of emotional demonstration is perhaps best illustrated by the epitaphs that indicate human memory of the deceased as most important. These epitaphs are often highly emotive and expressive, including the living’s grief, sadness, and hope for the deceased as well as a desire for those who read the stone to remember the deceased as an
individual whose loss will be felt. These examples could include a religious aspect or not, but the desired intent was always to evoke a sense of loss in the reader. These types of epitaphs were very rarely or never seen in Colonial era cemeteries, as the focus was not on the individual or family-level emotion but instead on religious dogma. Often, personal attributes of the deceased were included in these rural cemetery era epitaphs in order to achieve this goal of remembrance. These epitaphs are mostly seen in Oakwood Rural Cemetery, though a few do also occur in St. John’s Cemetery.


“He gave his life for his friend” (Oakwood stone 788, Charles Judson, died 1907, age 27).

“Dearest mother, oh how we miss thee, but God knows best” (Oakwood stone 339, Emeline Smith, died 1887, age 72).

“He was, to me, the best man in all the world – Laura” (Oakwood stone 506, Frank Hill, died 1914, age 60).

“Kind husband and father, gone to meet no more” (Oakwood stone 884, Henry Steenburgh, died 1861, age 51).

“We miss thee from our home, dead, we miss thee from thy place, a sorrow o’er out life is last. We miss the sunshine of thy face, we miss thy kind and willing hand, thy fond and earnest care. Our home is dark without thee, we miss thee everywhere” (St. John’s stone 10, William Kirwin, died 1890, age 25).

“A friend to the friendless” (St. John’s stone 58, George Gillespie, died 1851, age 41).
“Yes dear Pearley, thou hast left us, gone from earth, far far away, to that land of endless
glory, where the blessed angels stray” (Oakwood stone 483, Pearley Whyland, died 1877, age 2)

“His acts were marked with justice and integrity” (Oakwood stone 567, Andrew Craig, 
died 1865, age 72).

The more personalized epitaph occurs throughout the sample, but most occurrences are
seen during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement. “Gone but not forgotten,” is the most
common phrase seen of this type and is among the earliest epitaphs that indicate the important of
memory in mortuary ritual and behavior. Through casual perusal of the cemeteries, in this
sample and outside of it, this type of epitaph becomes more ubiquitous post-1920 as the more
modern, simpler styles begin to prevail in the cemeteries. Often used in lieu of overly ornate
decoration or large monuments, a short and to the point epitaph about the deceased’s personal
attributes and how they will be missed became more common. After the Rural Cemetery
Movement, family-level grief and memory was more important than overt displays on the
mortuary monument itself.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, only a small part of the wide range of
emotion and how it is constructed for public display and consumption, can be derived from the
cemetery itself. From the monuments’ shape and size to the words and symbols used for
decoration, the cemetery is just one important aspect of the grieving process. It is the long-
standing memory of the deceased, but also the most public aspect. Therefore, the emotion
expressed is filtered through knowing that it will be viewed, saying more about the expectations
of the society as a whole. This data must be measured against an exploration of the art and
literature of the time and other forms of historic research that can inform about significant details
about the population that would also affect how their emotions were displayed publically, such as ethnicity.

After the RCM: Emergence of the Memorial and Lawn-Park Cemetery

The Rural Cemetery Movement gradually faded out of widespread practice in the early 20th century. The American public lost their fascination with showy displays of conspicuous consumption in the cemetery. Therefore, monumentalism and elaborate ornamentation on gravestones became scarcer with every passing decade in the cemetery, even within previously established rural cemeteries, starting in the 1900s. Plainer tablet styles, block gravestones, plaques and generally much smaller stones began to overtake the obelisks, columns, and ornate interpretations of tablet. This is especially evident in many cemeteries that were established post-1900, often described as lawn-park or memorial cemeteries because of their flat, structured, uniform appearance. “During the heyday of twentieth-century modernism, the landscape was conceived as an anti-monument … in contrast to the idea of ‘landscape as linkage’ which had dominated classical thinking about the landscape in the historical Western city, ‘landscape as buffer’ was a complete reversal of received values” (Treib 2004: 200). It was preferable to keep landscapes neat, subtle and simplistic to provide a counterpoint to development.

Both lawn-park and memorial cemeteries were often business ventured interested in profit. Many of the cemeteries were started by land developers or other entrepreneurs for commercial gain while fulfilling the public need for mortuary services. This is an extension of the fact the rural cemeteries had changed the way cemeteries in America were established, with private financing as a main source of development money and allowing some profits to be made.
In New York, half of the profits from a burial could be pure investor profit, with the other half designated for upkeep and development (Sloane 1991: 131).

Much like Mount Auburn had been the standard by which other rural cemeteries had modeled themselves; Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California became the example for lawn-park and memorial cemeteries in the 20th century. Forest Lawn was established in 1913 by Hubert Eaton, a suburban developer. The cemetery offered incentives to mourners to use grave markers that were flush to the ground, and “eliminated the family monument, restructured the grounds to expand the lawn, and established a suburban-like pastoral environment” (Sloane 1991: 159). This was a business venture as well, and Eaton simplified the funeral industry to provide everything a consumer would need within the memorial park, from the monuments to the funeral itself. The newly developing areas in southern California were an ideal place to establish a new type of cemetery and the idea was soon replicated throughout the rest of the country to varying degrees.

The ideas of Adolph Strauch and criticisms of rural cemeteries influenced the development of the lawn-park cemetery. Strauch, a landscape gardener at the Cemetery of Spring Grove in Cincinnati, designed several lawn-park cemeteries, such as Mount Hope in Chicago, and published his ideas to aid others in designing similar cemeteries. He was trained in England as a landscaper and brought with him to American the developing ideals in English gardening of simplicity and developed the “landscape-lawn” plan (Sloane 1991: 99 – 103). He rejected the overcomplicated and idiosyncratic traits common to the rural cemetery: “Strauch strove for the unity of art and nature, which had been suppressed in the individualism and naturalism of the picturesque rural cemeteries. Both nature and art had been extravagantly displayed in the earlier cemeteries. The new landscape appeared more sophisticated than the rough terrain of the
picturesque” (Sloane 1991: 103). To remove the individualistic effect, Strauch suggested allowing cemetery management to maintain control of the cemetery plots and maintenance, so that individual lot owners could not alter the landscape surrounding their monuments. The resulting lawn-park cemeteries that were established often veered slightly from some of Strauch’s ideas, losing some of the balance between nature and art that he was a proponent of. The open lawn spaces often dominated the cemetery, eliminating the connection with nature. Monuments, often mausoleums, that were erected were often over-large and over-ornate and too visible on the landscape (Sloane 1991: 121-122).

The lawn-park cemetery, the type of modern cemetery that was more common in the Northeast, also had a prominent cemetery for other cemeteries to model themselves after. Affected by the emergence of the memorial cemetery, Pinelawn Cemetery in Long Island, New York, was established in 1902 by William H. Locke, Jr. and designed by Samuel Parsons, Jr., a landscape architect for the Department of Parks. The cemetery was designed to promote the beautification of the city with concentric circular sections that were diametrically opposed to the harsh, angular grid of nearby New York City. There was a sense of the pastoral in the cemetery with wide lawn spaces and an abundance of flat landscape. Family monuments were allowed, but individual markers were to be flush to the ground like in memorial parks (Sloane 1991: 139-140).

The newer, modern cemetery layouts made much less of a visual impact on the landscape, lacking the multitude of towering monuments and intricate landscaping found in the preceding rural cemeteries. However, the new cemetery was still “a pastoral landscape but emphasized open spaces, dispersed trees and plantings, small gravemarkers close to the ground, and a limited number of monuments in a narrower range of sizes and styles” (Baugher and Veit
In cemeteries specifically developed as lawn-park cemeteries, restrictions were often put on patrons of the cemetery to adhere to the minimalistic atmosphere. Though similar restrictions were not put on older cemeteries that had once functioned as rural cemeteries, the influence of the lawn-park cemetery could still be seen. Existing rural cemeteries modified their approaches to fit in with the changing mortuary tastes, by “adding sections with more open lawn space and flowering shrubs more in the style of lawn-park cemeteries” (Baugher and Veit 2014: 146).

James Hijiya (1974) detailed the progression of the American cemetery as following these general trends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plain Style</td>
<td>1640-1710</td>
<td>Resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death’s Head</td>
<td>1670-1770</td>
<td>Awe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel</td>
<td>1740-1820</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urn and Willow</td>
<td>1780-1850</td>
<td>Mourning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monumentalism</td>
<td>1840-1920</td>
<td>Defiance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Plain Style</td>
<td>1900-2001</td>
<td>Ignorance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first four periods reference the development of the cemetery from the necessarily simple, earliest Colonial cemeteries where the plain tablet was usually the only available option to the Puritan-influenced fear-inducing Death’s Head symbolism to the shift away from dread of the afterlife towards hope. The following periods, of the urn and willow and monumentalism, can be commonly seen in the rural cemetery. Mourning had become an acceptable emotion in the cemetery as the rejection of the Puritan revulsion for the human body and fear of death spread, evidenced by symbolism such as the urn and willow in New England cemeteries, followed by the urn as a decorative motif occurring regularly in the rural cemetery.

The development of monumental gravestones, whether large in size or ornate in decoration, echoed the idea of grief, but in a much more individualistic way because the
“purpose of monumental gravestones is to remind us not (like the Death’s Head) of the general fact of mortality, but rather (like the Urn and Willow) of the past life of a particular person” (Hijiya 1974: 355). The size and wide variety of decoration in this period was used in order to draw attention to the deceased as a person and to attempt to cause the living to remember that specific person as important. There was no longer a singular or limited amount of motifs or symbolism that could be used within the cemetery, but a multitude of options from a range of different origins. The option to be original and unique in gravestone design was a far cry from the mortuary behaviors that came before (Hijiya 1974: 355).

The modern, plain style, which Hijiya observes occurring in American cemeteries starting at the beginning of the 20th century, has not been discussed in depth in this dissertation, though the rise of the style in the sampled cemeteries is evident in the data collected. The style can be recognized by the profusion of “rectangular parallelepipeds two or three feet high, distinguished only by their names” (Hijiya 1974: 357). The emergence of the modern, plain style coincides with the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement and its associated monumental gravestones with Neoclassical or Romantic influences. The modern, plain style is reminiscent of the earliest American gravestones that were, by necessity, plain and simple tablets made of available slate. The reoccurrence of this style had little to do with necessity and everything to do with a shifting attitude in the American public about death and mortuary display. There is an overall decline of energy expenditure across the board with this movement and a lack of differentiated social personae, two key components processual archaeology uses to analyze mortuary behavior.

As time progressed, and several major events changed the character of the United States, such as World War I from 1914 to 1918 and the Great Depression from 1929 to 1941, the public
naturally shifted their mortuary behaviors. The influx of death and mourning resulting from WWI caused one last large upswing in monumental gravestones common to the Rural Cemetery Movement, triggered by the desire to memorialize the fallen soldiers. After the war and resulting surge in monumental stones immediately following, the economic downturn of the Great Depression added to the fact that the rural cemeteries, which had been such a fashionable place to find peace and pleasure, were no longer feasible or necessary. It must be noted that after in the first half of the 20th century, death rates in America dropped significantly (from 17.2 to 9.2 per 1000 by 1954) coupled with the fact that fewer infants were dying and people were living longer lived, which affected how the country saw and experienced death (Sloane 1991: 173). The monumental period was marked by a close relationship between the living and the dead, and the modern lawn-park and memorial cemeteries, with their less striking affect on the visual landscape, marked the trend of the American public of withdrawing from this close relationship.

The rapid rise in popularity of the rural cemetery resulted in a similar problem to the cemeteries that had come before: they had become cluttered and chaotic due to overuse and the fact that fencing, elaborate stones (sometimes several per plot), and other decorative objects were often used. The limited spaces occupied by the rural cemetery were being invaded by the ever expanding cities, making it nearly impossible to expand, creating a crowded atmosphere in the existing rural cemeteries as burials continued to proceed. This overcrowding resulted in an unpleasant aesthetic that went directly against the original appeal of the rural cemetery. Also, blatant displays of materialism were no longer as popular, especially as a large portion of the population became unable to afford to mimic the grandiose displays of the wealthy.

Interestingly, it was the design of the lawn-park cemetery that allowed those who still wished to display their wealth an even more visible way to do so. The open lawn design of the
new cemeteries made it so that cemeteries that allowed family mausoleums, which were growing in popularity among those who could afford them, stood out to an even greater extent on the landscape (Baugher and Veit 2014: 146). These mausoleums were still constructed following the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement, especially in the Northeast where families of a higher socioeconomic status were used to displaying that fact in death. It was not an immediate change from rural cemetery to lawn-park cemetery in areas where there was a firm tradition of monumental grave stones and mortuary display.

The modern, plain style and new cemetery designs were absolutely a reaction to the particular outlook and approach of rural cemeteries. The more simplistic styles were a response to extravagance of the monuments and of the very design of the rural cemetery itself. The lack of lavish monuments, and the increase in plaque or other low-to-the-ground grave stones, were supposed to give an impression of equality because of the affordability of the new mortuary circumstances. The growing extravagance of the Rural Cemetery Movement had caused many to criticize growing mortuary costs “Rich and poor could have a lot that was not overshadowed by a neighboring obelisk or mausoleum. … The simpler markers were private family reminders of life rather than public statements” (Sloane 1991: 161). Rather than developing a cemetery that focused on the individual or specific family achievements, the memorial park style cemeteries emphasized a sense of community. It must be noted, however, that many of these cemeteries, while technically affordable to all, were still separatist in that they set regulatory rules disallowing non-Caucasians to be buried in the cemetery (Sloane 1991: 187).

Another factor that led to the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement was the expansion of suburban spaces in America. The population was growing at ever faster paces, and the cities could not accommodate the sheer amount of people with the existing building
technology (Bender 1974: 210). Suburban areas were developed as extensions of urban areas. “A rural-urban continuum was now thought to provide optimum living and conditions, a concept resulting in a homogenization of the landscape. With the muting of differences, the city lost some of its urbanity and the landscape some of its natural beauty” (Bender 1974: 210-211). This new way of comprehending living space was on the opposite end of the spectrum from the way the rural cemetery was conceived. The rural cemetery was a place to escape urban spaces and indulge in the pleasures of wild nature, from the safety of the landscaped rural cemetery. There was no longer a yearning for the separatism from city life that the rural cemetery provided because there was more of a middle-ground to be found throughout daily life.

Rural cemeteries had also served as public parks and art museums for recreation, services that were not generally available to the population in the 19th century. Again, like the rural escape, this need had been filled. Parks within urban areas and without, separate from the cemetery, were beginning to be established after the Civil War, in the 1870s, removing the need to visit a cemetery in order to be in a more natural setting. Because of this, people used the rural cemetery less and less as the decades progressed for recreation, returning the cemetery and death to a separate part of life (Sloane 1991: 168). Museums of all types were opening during and after the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement. In New York City, the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened in 1872 and the Museum of Modern Art opened in 1929. In Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts opened in 1870. In Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Museum of Art started as the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art in 1877 and grew from then on. The Albany Institute of History and Art got its start officially in 1897 when the Albany Historical and Art Society opened a gallery in the city. Many other museums would be established between the
peak and decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement, eliminating the need to use the cemetery as a way to get fine art, especially sculpture, seen by the American public.

The lawn-park cemetery was not the only type of cemetery that was available in the 20th century. As mentioned before, many rural cemeteries remained open but established new areas more amenable to modern sensibilities. However, not every individual had the same world view as described above, especially when it came to the perceived equality espoused by the lawn-park or memorial cemeteries. Varying ethnic groups, religious orders, and socioeconomic statuses had their own needs when it came to mortuary behavior. Some stuck with the monumental forms of memorialization, others deferred to religious traditions, and in general, “Americans had a wide range of burial types and cemeteries to choose from” (Baugher and Veit 2014: 158). The lawn-park and memorial cemeteries were an ever-growing option, but many smaller town cemeteries opted to continue to emulate the rural cemetery. Large, established communities of immigrants and their descendants led to the development of separate burial places that incorporated the traditions of their home countries. Non-Christian groups, such as in Jewish communities, were just as likely to abandon American traditions and establish cemeteries in the style of their religion and culture. Catholic cemeteries, while often reproducing the more Protestant rural cemetery trends, often upheld their own traditions within their cemeteries (Sloane 1991: 124).

**Post-RCM Data from Capital District Cemeteries**

The data collected from the four sampled cemeteries, Oakwood Rural, Waterford Rural, Blooming Grove Rural and St. John’s, all show evidence of the influence of the lawn-park and memorial type cemetery towards the end of the time frame sampled. None of the cemeteries were ever re-done completely as they were constrained by the existing landscape and design, but the
cemetery associations and the population as a whole altered their mortuary behavior in keeping with the changing attitudes and trends occurring in the country and newly established cemeteries at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Several aspects of the cemeteries can be considered when looking for signs of the influence of the lawn-park and memorial cemeteries, including the amount of decorated stones through time, the height of the stones through time, and the popularity of the more simplistic block stone shape through time. A landscape approach can also be used to compare the newer, more modern sections in the cemeteries with the sections that were most heavily utilized during the Rural Cemetery Movement. The cemeteries as a whole were analyzed for this issue, though they have been separately dissected in each category in previous chapters.

In the graph below (Figure 175), it becomes clear that the cemeteries sampled did not amend their tendency to use symbolism or decoration on gravestones as the Rural Cemetery Movement declined in popularity over time. The percentage of non-decorated stones only tops the percentage of decorated stones in the decades of the 1820s, 1840s, 1850s, and 1900s, and even then, usually not by a drastic amount. In the 1910s, the percentage of decorated stones surpasses non-decorated stones by almost 30%, right at the time when the lawn-park and memorial cemeteries were emerging with their notions of simplicity. The tradition of decorating mortuary monuments may have been too ingrained in the communities using the sampled cemeteries to completely abandon the practice. Often the symbolism used was simplified in all of the cemeteries as time progressed, however, with more general religious or straightforward decorative motifs being used rather than the extreme diversity of types seen at the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement.
Figure 175: Percentage of Decorated and Non-Decorated Stones in All Cemeteries by Decade

In the graph below (Figure 176) that examines the height of gravestones by decade, the influence of the lawn-park cemetery is more evident. The shortest category of stones, those under 50cm in height, were present in the cemeteries from 1820 on, though the amount of those stones erected fell steadily as the sentiments of the Rural Cemetery Movement became more prevalent and accepted. The amount of stones under 50cm started to rise by 1880 and increased steadily up until the end of the sample. Combined with the fact that the tallest stones, those over 301cm
began to decrease in the 1890s and no stones over 401 cm were included in the sample after 1910, it is apparent that the reaction against the monumental stone design of the rural cemetery was showing itself in the Capital District. This trend is similar in all four of the cemeteries, which is why they were grouped for analysis.

Figure 176: Percentage of Gravestones by Height and Decade in All Cemeteries
Gravestone shape was another indicator of lawn-park and memorial cemetery influence. The simple block design was commonly used in lawn-park cemeteries while the memorial cemetery often employed plaques that were flush to the ground, or very low block gravestones that almost appeared flush to the ground. These type of monuments were easily mass produced and therefore affordable, due to the simplicity of the design, compared to the more ornate Neoclassical inspired stones that were popular during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement. In the graph below (Figure 177), the percentage of block gravestones erected per decade in the cemeteries is displayed, as plaques were not apparent in the cemeteries sampled. The percentage of block gravestones rose steadily, more than doubling between the 1870s and 1880s, making up almost 70% of the entire sample by 1910. The percentage drops in the 1920s, but this is a result of the small sample size collected in this decade, only two gravestones. The prevalence of the block gravestone post-1900 indicates that the population was affected by the philosophy behind the lawn-park cemetery and the industry behind it.
Two of the cemeteries, Oakwood Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery, have very defined sections that were designed and utilized post-1920. Gravestones in these areas were not collected for the sample in view of the fact that the proposed research questions for this dissertation were focused on the Rural Cemetery Movement as a whole, encompassing a time period that did not include mortuary behavior after 1920. However, examining these sections from a more phenomenological landscape approach is worthwhile. Both indicate that the development of the cemetery changed drastically after the decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement, which affected not just gravestone choice, but the design of the cemetery.
Oakwood Rural, which had been purposely designed in the style of the rural cemetery, influenced by other famous rural cemeteries of the time, such as Mount Auburn, has several modern sections. The northeast-most sections, U, U-1, W, W-1, Y, 10, 13, 20 and 21 (Figures 178 - 179), as well as the most southern sections, 15, 16, Q and Q-1 (Figures 178, 180 - 181), are all sections that were established after 1920 and not included in the sample. Looking at an aerial view of these sections shows their layout and design.

The northernmost sections have stones ordered neatly in rows, with no natural features like ponds, though the trees that were so ubiquitous throughout Oakwood were maintained in most of the sections. Sections 20 and 21 have no flora within the section, instead resembling the lawn-park style of open spaces. The southern sections of 15, Q and Q-1 are all surrounded by trees, though the sections themselves are landscaped as open lawns with neatly spaced monuments. All of these sections have an abundance of block gravestones and a lack of towering monuments, like obelisks. Many of these stones are similar in size and design to neighboring stones, giving an impression of uniformity throughout the section.

The clearest example of the influence of the lawn-park design is in section 16 (Figures 178, 181), one of the newest sections established in the cemetery, directly across from the chapel and two smaller water features. There is absolutely no landscaping, whether trees or shrubbery or flower beds, in this section. The gravestones included in the section are exclusively very small block gravestones or plaque gravestones, and most lie completely flush to the ground or within 10cm of the surface. Driving in to Oakwood Rural, it is likely that a visitor will not notice this section as containing gravestones at all, if it were not for the occasional memorial flowers brought by families. This is the epitome of the memorial cemetery aspiration: the section gives
an impression of complete equality and the focus is on the community, and individuals are only specifically remembered by family members.

Figure 178: Oakwood Rural Cemetery’s section map
Figure 179: Sections U, U-1, W, W-1, Y, 10, 13, 20 and 21 in Oakwood Rural Cemetery

Figure 180: Sections 15, Q and Q-1 in Oakwood Rural Cemetery
Figure 181: Section 16 in Oakwood Rural Cemetery
Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery has four sections, half of the cemetery, which were not sampled for this dissertation because the sections were established and filled after 1920. The most modern sections are sections A, B, C and D (Figure 182). A closer aerial view (Figure 183) shows that sections A and B are designed completely in keeping with the memorial style cemetery, with completely open spaces and neatly spaced rows of monuments. Unlike the memorial cemetery, the monuments in sections A and B were not flush to the ground, but rather were more like the lawn-park cemetery’s typical nearly identical block gravestones (Figure 184). Sections C and D had some landscaping, that was more in keeping with the lawn-park cemetery which still incorporated limited organized trees and shrubbery into the design. Unlike the older sections of the cemetery on the eastern half, the trees in sections C and D are placed in orderly rows, just like the monuments.
Figure 183: Sections A, B, C, and D in Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery
The inclusion of differently landscaped and designed sections in both Oakwood Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery supports the general American trend discussed above. In existing cemeteries, even if they were large and well-known rural cemeteries, the new attitudes towards death and display that were emerging within the population would take precedence over the previously established styles within the cemetery. In sections that were already established, there was a shift in monument style towards smaller and less conspicuous gravestones. When the cemetery had to expand by necessity, the landscaping that was so
common during the Rural Cemetery Movement was not employed, instead favoring the memorial or lawn-park cemetery to model new sections on.
IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

This dissertation set out to document and compare data from cemeteries in the Capital District that were active during the Rural Cemetery Movement in order to determine how extensive the effects of the movement were on the mortuary behaviors of those who buried their dead in a variety of circumstances. The four cemeteries in the sample were chosen in order to represent the diversity of burial grounds that were present in the area: legitimate non-sectarian rural cemeteries that served a large urban center; smaller cemeteries less associated with the city and not deliberately designed as rural cemeteries; and traditional religiously affiliated cemeteries. This study was undertaken with the aim of adding to the knowledge of the role of the Capital District in the Rural Cemetery Movement, a topic which had not been as thoroughly covered as many well-known New England rural cemeteries. Alternate methods of examination were employed in order to ascertain if a middle-ground approach to cemetery and monument design would provide a more thorough comprehension of mortuary behaviors. This study sought to answer these questions through a mix of systematic data collection and analysis and phenomenological interpretive concepts:

- What patterns of change in mortuary monuments’ design (architectural and symbolic) can be determined in the Capital Region from 1800 A.D. to 1920 A.D.?
• Do changes and differences in mortuary monument design coincide with specific time periods, major historical events, or artistic movements (whether based in literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, etc)?

• Did the Capital District follow the general time frame and pattern of the Rural Cemetery Movement, from commencement to decline, set by renowned rural cemeteries in New England?

• Did the Rural Cemetery Movement’s aesthetics supersede differences in cemetery or mortuary monument design between privately owned and religiously affiliated cemeteries?

• Did the Rural Cemetery Movement’s aesthetics supersede differences in cemetery or mortuary monument design in all non-sectarian cemeteries, regardless of size or location?

Summary

Though the Capital District has a long history in the development of the country politically and economically, it does not contain as many colonial graveyards as other major cities in the Northeast, specifically in New England, do within the cities themselves. The Capital District’s initial mortuary behaviors were influenced by earlier colonial and Puritan traditions, but it was during the Rural Cemetery Movement that the area fully participated in a major
mortuary development, a revolutionary change that would forever alter the way the populace would bury their dead. Oakwood Rural Cemetery and Albany Rural Cemetery are well known rural cemeteries, both established early in the conversion to the new approach to mortuary monuments and cemeteries. Due to the fact that the area participated in the beginning of the Rural Cemetery Movement and has two prominent cemeteries of the era, it makes the Capital District an ideal location for research in this subject.

The Capital District is ideally located to study the emergence of new ideas and concepts, from politics to religion to the arts, because of its key position at the intersection of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers that made the area a center of commerce and transportation. The Erie Canal opened in 1835, almost concurrently with the formation of many rural cemeteries, connecting the Hudson River to the Great Lakes and Canada. This drew more traffic up the Hudson River from downstate New York and nearby New England states. Where goods passed through, so did people and ideas.

The area has a long history, though its prehistory and contact period is not significant to the issues discussed in this dissertation. The mortuary behaviors in the colonial and rural cemeteries were purely influenced by European traditions carried over by immigrants and followed by their descendents. There is no evidence of native people buried in the cemeteries of interest or any associated mortuary behavior. The initial immigration in the early 1600s into the Capital District was Dutch. Though the colony was controlled by England in 1674, Dutch remained the dominant ethnicity. It was not until the mid-1700s that an influx of English began initiating a push from the English government to anglicize the population. This timeline created an interesting mix of the Dutch and English cultures in the area. Later immigrations into the area were mainly Irish and German.
Religious affiliation in the area was also mixed, as the Dutch and English were predominantly Protestant, but a growing population of non-Dutch and non-English immigrants was overwhelmingly Catholic. Despite a burgeoning national identity that took shape after the Revolutionary War and independence, many of the citizens of the area remained allegiance to their previous churches and ethnicities. Reformed Dutch and English churches remained influential, though the Roman Catholic Church and developing evangelical traditions competed for authority in the area. What is most important to note from this background is that there was heterogeneity of ethnicities and religions in the area, generating several different traditions. It was an aim of this dissertation to see if the styles and forms of the Rural Cemetery Movement would supersede the varying established burial customs and draw the area into a more homogenous burial tradition.

The Rural Cemetery Movement began in America in 1831 with the founding of the first rural cemetery, Mount Auburn. These cemeteries modeled after the English garden cemetery design was a significant change from what came before: church yard cemeteries that were not designed with any aesthetic purpose in mind and often influenced by the Puritan mortuary traditions, where death was to be used as a tool of fear in order to persuade the living to living a moral life. Several practical issues drove both European and American cities to alter their approach to cemeteries, including expanding city populations, overcrowded cemeteries, and health concerns about where disease originated and spread from.

A growing middle class in America, and national beliefs about the “American Dream” and the acquisition of wealth, bled into mortuary behaviors, where conspicuous displays of wealth could reflect and enhance social status. The availability of new and better technologies also factored into the changes in the cemetery, where it was now possible in ways it hadn’t been
before to use other materials than slate and shape it into unique and ornate forms. The developing technologies were a result of the ever developing Industrial Revolution, which was changing the shape of cities into areas of industry and commerce, and there was little of the natural environment to be found in urban areas as populations and business grew. Due to the changes during the Industrial Revolution and a significant lack of public parks and art museums in America at the time, the rural cemetery filled that niche by becoming a place of recreation and beauty for the people in the city to escape to.

Changing tastes in architecture and art also influenced the modification of cemetery design. The picturesque garden aesthetic, Neoclassicism and Romanticism all began taking root in the humanities by the late 1700s. These movements affected many different art forms and ways of thinking, from literature to politics. Of special interest in this dissertation was the effect on architecture, sculpture and symbolism. New tastes were developing in the country and they were reflected in mortuary behaviors. Neoclassicism and Romanticism were opposing approaches; the former valuing rational thought and restraint, somber aesthetics, while the latter valued the chaos of nature and human emotion, though both trends can be seen to coexist in the cemeteries.

**Methodology**

Four cemeteries in the Capital District were chosen that were active at least in part between 1800 and 1920 in order to include the rise, peak and decline of the Rural Cemetery Movement in the area. This historical time period studied permits a more thorough understanding of mortuary behaviors due to historical texts which provide detailed and specific contexts in which these behaviors were performed. Precise chronological control of temporal data within
these known contexts allows more than an intangible comprehension of how cultural influences shaped mortuary behaviors.

Oakwood Rural Cemetery was chosen due to its standing as an early, prominent rural cemetery. Oakwood Rural Cemetery is located in Troy, NY, one of the three major urban centers that made up the Capital District (Albany and Schenectady completing the trio). The remaining cemeteries were located, to varying degrees, nearby Oakwood and Troy. Waterford Rural Cemetery is located in nearby Waterford, NY, approximately two miles west of Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery is located in North Greenbush, NY, approximately three miles south of Oakwood Rural Cemetery. Both Waterford and Blooming Grove cemeteries served smaller towns and villages than Oakwood. The fourth cemetery included in the sample is St. John’s Cemetery, a Catholic cemetery located one and a half miles to the north of Oakwood. St John’s was chosen due to its proximity to Oakwood Rural, the fact that it was operating as a burial ground in the time period of interest, and to provide a look at how a traditional religious cemetery participated in the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Each cemetery was divided into sections to maintain objective geographical control of where the gravestones were located. Half of the gravestones that were erected in the timeframe of interest in each section and were not otherwise illegible due to weathering or other damage were recorded. Not every section made it into the sample because some sections contained only gravestones dating after 1920. Every stone was recorded in the same way: the stone was given a unique number within the cemetery and the section it was located in was noted. Every stone was photographed; no rubbings were done due to the possible damage the act of making the rubbing can inflict. The following was recorded for every stone: the full name, birth date, death date and date of erection (if different from the earliest death date), personal inscription and epitaph; all
decoration and symbolism engraved on the stone; any sculpture on the stone; the width, length
and height of the stone; the physical condition of the stone; whether the stone was an individual,
spousal or family monument; the material of the stone; and the shape of the stone.

The data, both physical and symbolic, was grouped by decade, e.g. 1820-1829, 1830-
1839, and so on. Several aspects of the physical gravestones themselves were analyzed in detail:
material, height, type (individual, spousal, family, other), and shape. Height of the monuments
was focused on in depth due to the concept that higher energy expenditure in the form of cost
would potentially reflect social status, real or perceived. Decorative and symbolic data was
examined in detail; all of the most commonly occurring adornments were graphed by their
temporal occurrence. Due to its size, prominence, and the fact that no images occurred in the
cemeteries that did not also occur in Oakwood Rural Cemetery, Oakwood set the standard for
which images and symbols were the most common and the other cemeteries were compared to it
regardless of it they contained large or any occurrences of the image. Less common adornments
were discussed individually due to the fact that they rarely appeared in the cemeteries and
statistical analysis would be irrelevant.

A phenomenological, or experiential, approach to the landscape of the cemeteries was
undertaken in conjunction with the physical analysis to ascertain the effect of the Rural Cemetery
Movement on cemetery design. Landscape in this sense is distinguished as a construct that is
both active and reactive when it comes to an individual’s and community’s worldview. The
overall shape of the cemetery was considered, as well as the decorative floral environment,
constructed pathways, and natural features. The architectural landscape was taken into account,
as the height and shape of the gravestones and presence of sculpture greatly affected how the
cemetery was perceived by visitors. The changing architectural landscape was charted from two
points in time: 1880, during the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement and 1920, at the tail end of the decline of the movement. This approach to the data collected is slightly more interpretive, as the landscape was considered from the point of view of those who utilized the cemeteries for either mortuary activities or recreation. However, the interpretation of the cemeteries’ landscapes is still factually grounded. The data collected from the gravestones is quantifiable and reproducible, and the landscape of the cemetery was constructed recently enough to be decoded with a high degree of accuracy.

**Results**

The results of the data analysis, both the quantitative and qualitative data, classify the four cemeteries in the sample into three distinct groups. Oakwood Rural Cemetery on one end of the spectrum and St. John’s Cemetery on the other, with Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery occupying the space somewhere between the rural cemetery and the traditional cemetery, more similar to each other than either Oakwood or St. John’s. The data supports the distinction of Oakwood as the non-sectarian, rural cemetery and St. John’s as the traditional, religious cemetery. Waterford and Blooming Grove were non-sectarian cemeteries, as well, which tried to emulate a rural cemetery but showed a tendency to maintain more traditional mortuary appearances along with the adoption of several characteristics of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Oakwood Rural Cemetery is conspicuous in every category as distinctive from the other cemeteries in the sample. Even in the material analysis where all of the cemeteries follow a basic trend of slate being the dominant material followed by granite and polished granite, Oakwood is an outlier for containing red granite monuments from 1850 until 1920. Both Waterford and
Blooming Grove have limited amounts of red granite monuments in the 1880s and 1890s during the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement (though Waterford also displays red granite in the 1860s), but the amounts do not mirror the usage in Oakwood. St. John’s Cemetery does not include any examples of red granite in the sample. Though red granite has been used and available throughout history, it is a color that is harder to find, especially in good quality. It would have been difficult to obtain or prohibitively expensive.

Regarding height of monument, all of the cemeteries contain high frequencies of stones between 51 and 200cm. Oakwood is distinguished again in the height category, with the tallest monuments in the sample, the highest percentage of taller monuments among the cemeteries, and the longest period during which very tall monuments were erected. The other cemeteries contain far fewer instances of tall monuments, especially those over 401cm in height. St. John’s Cemetery also differentiates itself from the other cemeteries due to its high percentages of stones under 50cm, and the proportionately low number of stones between 51 and 100cm compared to the other cemeteries.

The gravestone shape also separates the cemeteries into three groups, with Oakwood standing out for having the widest variety of gravestone shapes, St. Johns for having the least amount of variety and Waterford and Blooming Grove falling in the middle. Notably, there are sarcophagi and temple monuments in Oakwood and those shapes do not occur in the other cemeteries. St. John’s has a total of seven different shapes occurring in its sample, with two of the types only occurring once. Waterford and Blooming Grove each have nine different occurring shapes, each occurring several times during the sample. However, there are commonalities among the cemeteries with overall mortuary behavior: each of the cemeteries
begins the sample with a higher concentration of tablet shaped gravestones and ends the sample with higher frequencies of block shaped gravestones.

The type of gravestone, from individual to family monuments, was correlated with the size of the monument. Families with more resources on hand would have been able to erect large monuments to commemorate numerous individuals at one time. The more prosperous population that utilized Oakwood disproportionately had the ability to erect large, family monuments common to the Rural Cemetery Movement. It should also be noted that individual versus family monuments speaks to attitudes about social position and display. The Rural Cemetery Movement encouraged highly visible displays of personal emotion and tribute. Therefore, high percentages of family monuments were erected at this time. As the nation’s attitude waned towards simplicity and subdued remembrance, geared towards family rather than the larger audience, these monuments lost popularity in favor of small, intimate, individual stones.

The symbolism and decoration data analysis separates Oakwood from Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s due to the overall variety of symbols that occur in Oakwood. St. John’s had the highest percentage of decorated gravestones, due to the fact that St. John’s had the smallest sample size as well as the latest sample size, with few stones erected prior to 1860. Oakwood, with the largest sample size, had the next highest percentage of decorated stones. Oakwood also had more stones with multiple types of decoration than the other cemeteries and was the only cemetery to have monuments with up to seven distinct decoration types. All of the cemeteries contained examples of the basic decoration types seen in this period: the family name, scrollwork, urns, crosses, leaves and floral decoration. Oakwood contained a variety of types not seen in the other cemeteries, including specific floral symbolism and many examples of unique or rare decoration. Despite a reduced amount and variety of symbolism present, both Waterford
and Blooming Grove mirror many of the patterns of Oakwood; symbolism popular during the Rural Cemetery Movement (such as urns and the highly visible family name) appears during the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement, usually a decade or two later than it first appears in Oakwood. It is in the symbolism and decoration that St. John’s falls into a separate category from the other three cemeteries, with an extremely low variety of decoration types and a focus on Christian symbols, such as the cross.

Other tendencies became apparent during analysis. Specifically of interest is how the non-rural cemeteries, even St. John’s, changed as the Rural Cemetery Movement developed throughout the country, despite the fact that they were not rural cemeteries. Socioeconomic status and religious conservatism definitely obstructed full participation in the complete assortment of trends of the rural cemetery, especially the elaborate, sometimes ostentatious, monuments and decoration common to the movement. However, all of the cemeteries show the greatest variety of symbolism and the greatest penchant for experimentation during and directly after the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement in Oakwood. Even obelisks appear in the religious cemetery post-1880. This change in mortuary taste is clearly affected by the Rural Cemetery Movement in the Capital District and elsewhere.

The landscape analysis of the four cemeteries indicates a notable similarity between Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s, again putting Oakwood in its own separate class. From the layout of the cemetery and its pathways to the distribution of monuments of varying shapes and sizes, Oakwood adhered to the criteria set forth for the construction of rural cemeteries in the early 1800s. The cemetery was ideally placed on a rise of land that overlooked the city, creating that balance between the city, nature and art that produced the picturesque aesthetic that was so sought after in the Rural Cemetery Movement. The cemetery itself reflected
the tamed natural landscape so common in other rural cemeteries, with rolling hills, winding pathways, water features and a variety of trees dotting the terrain. The civilized wildness is evident in the sophisticated statuary found throughout the cemetery, evidence of the newest artistic movements of the time. The cemetery contained the most ornate monuments in both the Neoclassic and Romantic styles (including temples, sarcophagi, and a variety of sculptures) and the tallest monuments. By the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement, a visitor would observe towering obelisks in almost every section. Waterford, Blooming Grove and St. John’s have an immediate resemblance because of their straight angled pathways and decided lack of expected picturesque landscaping. The sections in each cemetery were roughly of the same size and the topographic maps show that there is not significant differentiation between high ground and low ground; the cemeteries were not designed to mimic a natural setting in the ways that Oakwood was despite later attempts to replicate fashionable landscaping. None of the three cemeteries had the diversity of sculpture and monuments seen in Oakwood.

Utilizing a pathway analysis approach, it also became readily apparent that Oakwood was unlike the other three cemeteries when it came to visibility. There were specific areas present in Oakwood, namely the center core which was situated on high ground in the cemetery, that were more visible and therefore more desirable for burial plots. The center core was purposely developed in such a way that visitors would be drawn to and spend most of their time in the vicinity. Areas of high traffic, those sections surrounded by numerous pathways and made visually pleasing by the additions of natural features such as the ponds, were populated by the monuments that took the most energy and resources to create (the largest and most ornate). Smaller stones of more simple design tended to cluster at the peripheries of the cemetery. This pattern is not evident in Waterford, Blooming Grove or St. John’s in the same way, though there
is some tendency for the larger monuments in the cemeteries to cluster at the boundaries of the cemeteries where major road or waterways, and therefore traffic, passed.

All of the cemeteries have some distinction between sections that were used during the Rural Cemetery Movement and sections used post-1920. The Rural Cemetery Movement was so pervasive in the area that even non-rural cemeteries were adopting elements in adaptation of the movement. However, it appears the stronger the religious identification of a cemetery, the more relatively free of the influence of the Rural Cemetery Movement it was. Religious conservatism or traditionalism was not as easily swayed into adopting the passing fashions of the time. Also important to note, every cemetery lost significant characteristics of the Rural Cemetery Movement as time progressed. More modern sections tended to have either more open spaces or more neat and well-ordered landscaping. The modern sections also universally have less overtly ornate and excessively large monuments, with the trend clearly moving towards smaller gravestones that tended to be block shaped at the end of the sampled time period.

**Discussion**

The questions presented in the introduction can be answered, in full or in part, by the data collected from the four cemeteries sampled in the Capital District for this dissertation. First, the patterns of change in mortuary behavior from the beginning to end of the sample, the early 1800s to 1920, in the Capital District are similar to those seen across America in the same time period, especially in the Northeast. For many reasons, including health concerns and growing populations, the use of churchyard cemeteries within the city declined in the early 1800s and cemeteries were moved to the outer limits of urban areas throughout the country. This coincided
with the privatization and secularization of cemeteries. The traditional religious cemetery, with a lack of attention towards aesthetics and a rigid set of expected forms and symbols, was supplanted by cemeteries influenced by the English gardening aesthetic. The establishment of rural cemeteries marked an enormous change in mortuary behaviors in America, the cemetery was no longer just a religious space for burials and mourning but had morphed into a multi-use area that embraced the arts and became a place for recreation and sentimentality. All four of the cemeteries embraced the broader changing attitudes towards death in America with regards to a wider expression of emotion, especially the emotions of grief, love, and sadness. The radical change in epitaphs to include hopefulness and memory during the Rural Cemetery Movement, regardless of cemetery location or size, compared to the earlier Puritanical fearful and forewarning epitaphs, indicates an overall shift in worldview, both religiously and socially.

Unlike the cemeteries that came before, influenced by the Puritan morals of the colonial era in New England, there were not many scripted behaviors in the rural cemetery, which opened the door to expression and individuality. There was eventually a reaction to the monumental and ornate trends in mortuary monument design and the Rural Cemetery Movement fell out of popular preference by the end of the sampled period in favor of more simplistic cemetery design and monument styles. Across the board, all of the cemeteries sampled show indications in the hard data and in the landscape analysis of embracing the lawn-park cemetery style that eventually replaced the rural cemetery in popularity throughout the country. That this style becomes prevalent in all of the cemeteries further suggests that there were larger mortuary trends that arose from a national consciousness and were affected by broader events and changing beliefs that overrode the tastes and fashions on a smaller community level. From the prestigious rural cemetery in Troy, Oakwood, to a small Catholic cemetery that was always dominated by
tradition, the monumentalism and showy extravagance of the Rural Cemetery Movement was replaced by a subdued return to the plain style.

Changes in mortuary monument and cemetery design certainly coincide with several historic events and artistic movements. The Industrial Revolution and its associated urban expansion and population growth necessitated cemeteries being removed from the cities, which no longer had room for burial grounds and were experiencing negative effects from the existing burial grounds already within urban areas. The Rural Cemetery Movement was also greatly influenced by Neoclassicism and Romanticism, developments that were not only associated with mortuary behavior but were originally developed in several other art forms, such as architecture and literature. World War I gave the Rural Cemetery Movement one last swell of popularity as the country dealt with the deaths of many young men and the desire to honor them in monumental style. After the war and the beginning of the Great Depression, the styles of the rural cemetery waned as people no longer had the inclination or the means to memorialize their dead in the same way which, among other causes, led to the development of the lawn-park cemetery style.

The Capital District did follow the general time frame of the Rural Cemetery Movement that was occurring throughout the Northeast. The first rural cemetery in the country was established in 1831, the first rural cemetery in the Capital District, Albany Rural Cemetery, was established in 1841 and Oakwood Rural Cemetery was established in 1848. As stated in Hijiya (1983), the monumental style associated with the Rural Cemetery Movement ended in the 1920s, with the newer modern plain style already having taken root in many cemeteries by 1900. Oakwood Rural followed this trend, which was being observed in most of the major rural cemeteries at the time, as the monuments within the cemetery began to decrease in size,
complexity and overall ornamentation. These patterns can be seen in all of the cemeteries sampled, as the height and elaboration of monuments generally increases beginning in the mid-1800s and coming to a peak just prior to the end of the century before the decline of the popularity of monumentalism begins.

The aesthetic fashions of the Rural Cemetery Movement did not necessarily supersede differences between privately owned and operated cemeteries and religiously affiliated cemeteries. The religiously affiliated cemetery in the sample, St. John’s Cemetery, preserved an overall traditional expected Catholic appearance throughout the sample. The grounds were maintained simply, with straight paths through the cemetery for access to the monuments and with no ornate landscaping that would have been reminiscent of English garden landscaping. Monuments types and symbolism types were limited in scope, much more heavily prescribed than in the rural cemetery as the Diocese had expectations for the look of their cemeteries. Overall, the monuments were smaller than Oakwood and the other cemeteries. However, this is not to say that the Rural Cemetery Movement had no effect on the Catholic cemetery. St. John’s still showed signs of participating in the general trends on a reduced scale: monument sizes and the amount of symbolism increased through the height of the Rural Cemetery Movement and decreased during its decline, some common symbolism found in Oakwood and other rural cemeteries appears in the cemetery (such as urns) and highly visible monuments (such as obelisks) make an appearance at the peak of the movement. Within scripted behaviors, the cemetery was affected by the common fashions of the day but always maintained the aspects expected in a Catholic cemetery.

The question of whether the Rural Cemetery Movement superseded differences between all non-sectarian cemeteries, regardless of size and location, is more complicated to answer. The
aesthetics and expected forms of the Rural Cemetery Movement were most obvious in Oakwood Rural Cemetery, which was modeled after other established rural cemeteries in the Northeast. Despite their names, Waterford Rural Cemetery and Blooming Grove Rural Cemetery were most often comparable to St. John’s Cemetery, a traditional Catholic cemetery due to similarities such as layout, design, and gravestone composition and type. Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural were not established or originally intended to be rural cemeteries in the fashion of the famous New England rural cemeteries like Mount Auburn that set the standard for rural cemetery plans. However, Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural, as non-sectarian cemeteries, attempted to mimic the fashions of the Rural Cemetery Movement, especially those seen in Oakwood Rural, to a greater degree than St. John’s.

The locations of Waterford Rural, across the Hudson River from Troy and in Saratoga County serving the smaller town of Waterford, and of Blooming Grove Rural, located several miles south of Troy and serving the hamlet of Defreestville in the town of North Greenbush, affected the level of participation in the Rural Cemetery Movement. In comparison, Oakwood Rural served the urban center of Troy, a prosperous industrial center in the 1800s due to its position on the Hudson River for transportation of goods and its participation in the steel industry at the time. Therefore, the cemeteries of Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural were not as large as Oakwood because they did not need to support the large, urban center of Troy or have the same resources available. Defreestville was not widely developed until after 1900, though Waterford did participate in some of the industrial expansion due to its position near the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers as well as the Erie and Champlain canals. Nonetheless, Waterford simply was not as large or as wealthy as Troy in the same period, demonstrated by the house value and occupation comparisons in the 1875 census. Consequently,
there was not as much money flowing into the cemetery as well as no pressing need to design a cemetery to act as a public park and art museum since the citizens of the smaller towns would not have had as much need for diversion and escape from an overwhelming urban center.

The non-sectarian cemeteries did enjoy the same freedom as Oakwood Rural to have less scripted behaviors compared to the religiously affiliated cemetery. They had the ability to construct monuments to individual taste, which were ultimately related to the general predilections of the time in which they were created. This made it so that both Waterford Rural and Blooming Grove Rural displayed traits, on a smaller scale, seen in Oakwood Rural. There was also a slightly delayed imitation of the rural aesthetic trends; Oakwood Rural was the first cemetery in the sample to display many of the symbols, monument shapes and monumental stones that gave the cemetery the necessary look of a rural cemetery. The other cemeteries lagged behind in erecting taller monuments, Neoclassic monuments, and displaying the symbolism most popular in Oakwood Rural.

The Rural Cemetery Movement was part of a larger cultural attitude that involved many different aspects of life. Though this shift in philosophy affected mortuary behaviors, it encompassed a wider set of standards developed in the fine arts, literature, architecture and philosophy. The movement was a result of a changing, industrial world in which most of the Western world was struggling to find a new voice. Because of this background, the change in mortuary behaviors can be seen in the newly established rural cemeteries as well as other cemeteries not specifically established as rural cemeteries. Religious preference, location and the socioeconomic make up of a community did not prevent the prevailing tastes in mortuary monuments from appearing, even minimally, in the cemetery. Likewise, when the tide turned
away from the trends common to the Rural Cemetery Movement, the effect was widespread and emerged in all of the cemeteries, regardless of type.

This is suggestive of national mortuary trends that will, if not supersede, at least influence mortuary behaviors in a variety of community cemeteries, regardless of type or affiliation. Due to the adherence to more conservative or traditional behaviors by individuals in all cemeteries and the willingness to adopt new trends in others, even in religious or less wealthy groups, it becomes apparent that the biggest change in the mortuary performance in the mid-19th Century was the freedom of choice. Individuals had several cemetery types to choose from once the cemetery was separated from the churchyard. And within those cemeteries, there were fewer restrictions and more choices available.
Chapter 10: Conclusion

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to determine if the Rural Cemetery Movement would cause the residents of the Capital District to alter their mortuary behaviors regardless of the type of cemetery, size of cemetery, religious affiliation or socioeconomic status of the population. The questions posed were answered with a mixture of historic research, traditional physical data collection and analysis and an interpretive approach based on phenomenological landscape theory. Though the two contrasting methods may not always answer the same research questions, it has been demonstrated that a multi-disciplinary approach will be able give more inclusive answers in a more well-rounded way (Barret and Ko 2009, Bruck 2005, Fleming 2006, Graves McEwan and Millican 2012, Johnson 2012, Thomas 2008, Tilley 2004). The aim was to reconstruct the experience of the cemeteries in the past in order to determine what drove individuals and populations to adopt, abandon or maintain specific mortuary behaviors.

This dissertation examined the patterns of change that can be seen in the Capital District from 1800 to 1920 in rural and non-rural cemeteries. The major finding of the study was that the Rural Cemetery Movement, a shift in mortuary behaviors that stemmed from and affected many other parts of society, was encapsulated chiefly in the cemeteries established with the purpose of creating a rural cemetery from their inception. Correspondingly, other non-rural cemeteries were found to display varying levels of the characteristics of the Rural Cemetery Movement. The level
of imitation of a rural cemetery declined as the general socioeconomic status of a population decreased and as the religious affiliation increased.

The methodological theory used in this paper assumes that there is credibility in early processual research when correlating energy expenditure in mortuary monuments to status in life (Saxe 1970, Binford 1971); physical data on the size, intricacy and cost of the gravestones was collected. It is especially useful when tempered with late post-processual critiques and reflexive archaeology (Barrett 1990, Hodder 1991) so that the correlation of status and energy is not assumed to be cause and effect. The gravestone data was collected to determine if small cemeteries outside of the major cities of the Capital District mirrored the patterns of the Rural Cemetery Movement, which emphasized monumentalism, the picturesque, Neoclassic and Romantic styles, the cemetery as recreation and sanctuary, and the expression of emotion and grief through mortuary display.

The Rural Cemetery Movement was not confined to mortuary behaviors, but affected and was influenced by larger artistic movements in the United States and Europe. All of the cemeteries sampled, whether nonsectarian or religious, large or small, in an affluent area or not, exhibited changes in mortuary behavior that mirrored the rise of popularity of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Through the mid-19th to the late-19th century, gravestones were increasing in size and the percentage of large monuments was also increasing. During this time, variety in gravestone shape and decoration also intensified. However, the sampled cemeteries differed with regards to what extent they mimicked the styles of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Oakwood Rural Cemetery, located in the most prosperous area of the study and designed as a rural cemetery, followed the distinctive development of the Rural Cemetery Movement. The trend towards highly visible monumental gravestones was latched onto by the affluent
population, who had the means to display their status in death during a time when it was encouraged socially. Despite being located closest to Oakwood and Troy and being the nearest in socioeconomic ranking, St. John’s Cemetery remained the most traditional, containing less variety overall, fewer Neoclassic or Romantic designs, and fewer examples of monumental gravestones, due to its affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Falling somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, Blooming Grove Rural and Waterford Rural were located in areas that ranked below Troy in regards to house values and occupation, which were used as a proxy for overall wealth of the population. The percentage of tall monuments was lower than Oakwood, the overall heights of the monuments were shorter, and there was less variety of shape and symbolism in the cemeteries.

A phenomenological landscape approach was also used to reveal the historic experience of the cemetery. The concept of landscape as more than the physical environment and as an interactive part of society that could be influenced by and influence the community was employed (Anschuetz, et al 2001, Bender 1992, Pool and Cliggett 2008, Tilley 1994, 2004). The layouts of the cemeteries were explored, as well as how they were utilized. Oakwood Rural is the only cemetery in the sample designed to be an authentic rural cemetery, with winding pathways, rolling hills, haphazard burial plot layout, plants and trees intended to mimic naturally occurring flora, fences and gates, water features, benches and panoramic views. The paths through Oakwood are laden with intention, designed after English garden cemeteries and guiding visitors to linger in the desirable, manicured raised center core of the cemetery where the most expensive and visible monuments were constructed. Oakwood was a cemetery meant for sanctuary and recreation and the concern for visibility, among those who could afford it, was crafted into its design.
The remaining cemeteries have straight paths with sharp angles, a tendency towards maintaining neater rows of gravestones, and an overall lack of variability in terrain and plant life. The designs of Blooming Grove, Waterford, and St. John’s do not lead visitors to any specific place within the cemeteries. These cemeteries do not resemble a recreational park or inspire the need of a visitor to linger within them. It is because of these reasons that they lack an essential part of the experience of the rural cemetery, despite the attempts of the nonsectarian cemeteries to mimic the rural styles that had been in vogue at the time.

A diachronic analysis of the physical data, specifically of the height and shape of the gravestones in each section, was completed to illustrate how the cemeteries would have looked and been experienced during the peak and at the end of the Rural Cemetery Movement. Combined with the modern experience of the cemetery, this approach highlights how each cemetery did or did not exhibit traits of a rural cemetery. The results reinforced earlier findings that all of the cemeteries showed a general pattern of large and ornate monuments established in the most visible areas during the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement and a slow shift towards smaller, plainer gravestones that focused on familial grief rather than an audience on the peripheries of the cemetery during its decline. However, Oakwood displayed the rural cemetery traits earlier and in a much more pronounced fashion than the other cemeteries: the prominent center core was mainly developed by the peak of the Rural Cemetery Movement with the largest and most stylistic stones while many of the smaller, less visibly striking monuments were distributed on the edges of the cemetery. None of the other cemeteries contained an area that was so noticeably designated as a desirable area or utilized principally for overt displays of wealth and status.
Mortuary behaviors in the Capital District during the period of study, taken as a whole, moved away from the traditional, churchyard cemetery designs and early, limited symbolism. Even reactions against the Rural Cemetery Movement were widespread through the cemeteries and culminated in the development lawn-type cemeteries and overall adoption of simpler, less ostentatious styles. Merging established processual and interpretive, landscape archaeological theories, the data reveals that in the Capital District, the Rural Cemetery Movement in its full expression was limited to private, nonsectarian cemeteries in areas affluent enough to create and maintain the park-like cemeteries, though it did contribute to the alteration of the general attitude of Americans with regards to mortuary behaviors. The movement did not dominate over traditions shaped by religious observance and could not overcome socioeconomic differences, perhaps even highlighted them due to the imitations of rural cemetery features that yet fell short in the small, nonsectarian cemeteries.

**Recommendations**

There are several interesting opportunities for further research on the topics covered in this dissertation. As discussed earlier, the combination quantitative data with phenomenological is a relatively new development in landscape archaeology. The novelty of this type of research means that the type of questions that can potentially be answered has only just begun to be touched on. This type of study has rarely been applied historically, though the vast availability of written documentation would only strengthen claims made. Historic cemeteries lend themselves well to experiential archaeology, because there is far less conjecture and presumption about the society that created them.
There were several limitations of the research strategy employed for this project that prevented a more thorough understanding of how the cemeteries developed over time. Primarily, higher quality and tighter control of the mapping of the gravestones themselves in each cemetery would allow more quantitative analysis to be done. Each stone would ideally have been recorded using a geographic information system (GIS). This would have provided the ability to manipulate and analyze the data collected in a more precise manner to answer more specific questions. The ability to create maps of the cemetery at different points in time and be able to tie that information in to other recorded data (such as size, shape and decoration) would have provided a level of insight into the development of the Rural Cemetery Movement not possible with the way the data was originally collected. The development of GIS has intensified and opened up new possibilities of scientific investigation since the data was first collected. “Richer, more rounded interpretations of landscape are possible when combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative landscape research … more holistic interpretations of landscape can be achieved by drawing from both sides of this divide and by combining aspects from both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ landscapes” (Millican 2012: 550).

The data analysis completed for this dissertation has shown that there is some promise for a more exacting method of data collection and statistical analysis for the historical cemetery. A number of patterns revealed themselves with rudimentary statistical techniques. More sophisticated analyses were attempted early on in the analysis of the data, namely tests of significance such as the chi-squared test. However, the manner in which the data was collected, stored and the types of data collected were incompatible with this manner of analysis. The data was cluttered and not amenable to such statistical models, resulting in a confused jumble of meaningless results. Those with a more considerable background in statistical analysis could
explore ways to collect, store and manipulate similar data in order to produce more meaningful outcomes. An example of the more specific types of questions to examine is use mapping software to study the exact position of specific styles of stone or symbols. Another example is to use more sophisticated data analysis to look at the co-occurrence of particular symbols through time.

That leads to the next suggestion for further research. More rigorous scientific methods should be combined with the more common, interpretive approaches applied to historic cemetery research currently. Though qualitative avenues are certainly valuable in this field, the results would often benefit from the support of more quantitative data analysis, such as GIS mapping and statistical examination. Several critiques have been thrown at more interpretive methods, especially phenomenological approaches, due to the many assumptions that are made during the process. It is very difficult for a research to be completely self-reflexive and remove prior beliefs and their current worldview from affecting their understanding of the past. A middle-ground approach is preferred in these circumstances.

Further research is also suggested for the cemeteries themselves. Oakwood Rural Cemetery, even though it was a major rural cemetery during the Rural Cemetery Movement, is not as widely studied and written about as Albany Rural Cemetery or other rural cemeteries in New England. Additional exploration into that cemetery specifically would enhance the field’s knowledge base greatly. Oakwood Rural Cemetery has several dozen elaborate statues throughout the grounds. A historic artistic analysis with a focus on the development of the sculptures in relation to the budding American art scene at the time of the Rural Cemetery Movement would be a worthwhile pursuit.
Only four cemeteries in the Capital District were included in the study; there are dozens of cemeteries surrounding the three major cities that make up the region that could potentially be examined and recorded. Only one cemetery that had religious affiliations was included, St. John’s Catholic Cemetery. There are several more Catholic cemeteries that were active at least as far back as the latter part of the 19th century as well as many more cemeteries with differing religious or ethnic affiliations that could be recorded and compared. As cemeteries age, it is in fact a service to historical research to record as much information as possible as time and the elements destroy information on the oldest stones, especially those made of slate.

An area of investigation that seems to present the most potential future work in historic cemetery analysis is connected to the least-cost energy analysis methodology. Additional studies could be done in cemeteries in an experiential manner, by following constructed pathways and following the most effortless paths through the cemeteries and documenting it photographically. Noting which monuments can and cannot be seen, when they were built, what their construction is and who they belong to, would present a much clearer understanding of how the cemetery was experienced by those in the past.

Additionally, a different approach to the investigation of the historic cemetery of this time period would be to include more comprehensive genealogical research and census information. If less stones were sampled, it would be possible to dedicate the time to finding each individual or family’s full ethnic, religious and socioeconomic status. Linked with a more sophisticated map of the gravestones, this information could greatly enhance the understanding of what type of person was buried in each of the cemeteries, in each of the sections, with what type of monument and symbolism, and when. This would provide a clearer understanding of who was participating in the trends of the rural cemetery and who was unwilling or unable to.
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