GRAVES MATTER: URBAN GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION IN SAVANNAH, GEORGIA AND CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

by

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(Under the Direction of Mark Reinberger)

ABSTRACT

This is a study of urban graveyard preservation. It examines the history and significance of public graveyards and churchyards in Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. This thesis identifies threats to these areas. Case studies are used to more carefully examine specific situations in the areas mentioned. The purpose of this thesis is to offer helpful insight into the value and importance of historic urban graveyards and their preservation.

INDEX WORDS: Graveyards, Churchyards, Savannah (Ga.), Charleston (S.C.), Historic Preservation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Boy, take these words to heart, to understand de livin' you got to commune wit de dead. Now go. And don't you dare look back.

Minerva, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*[1]

This thesis is a result of a trend in Charleston, South Carolina. Even in the city that boasts the first locally designated historic district, it has become a fairly common practice for city churches to expand into their graveyards, many of which date to the eighteenth century. The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) has only limited control over the destruction of churchyards. The BAR's authority extends to the treatment of above ground structure, such as vaults and mausoleums. However, as long as the BAR is satisfied that proper documentation is conducted they generally approve a church's plan to encroach on its graveyard. Research shows that this practice of cemetery encroachment and destruction is not unique to Charleston.

This thesis also addresses the threats to Savannah's Colonial Park Cemetery, a public graveyard. Colonial Park has endured numerous misguided restoration and preservation efforts. The graveyard has been a victim to vandalism and neglect during several periods in its history. Recently, however, an exemplary effort to conserve and ensure the preservation of the graveyard has been successful. Urban graveyards are significant and important to the history of Savannah and Charleston. This thesis will offer solutions to the various threats those urban cemeteries face.

[1] Clint Eastwood, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," (Warner Brothers, 1997).

A cemetery is defined as "a place set apart for burying the dead…[the term] became popular in the nineteenth century,"[2] while a graveyard is "an early cemetery."[3] For the purposes of this thesis, the term "cemetery" will generally be used only to refer to burial grounds that were constructed after 1830, unless the area is referred to as a cemetery in historic documentation. The term "graveyard" will be used to describe burial grounds laid out before the aforementioned date. In addition, the term "grave marker" refers to an above ground symbol of a below ground grave. "Tombstones" and "gravestones" both refer to a flat above ground stone used to mark a grave.

A discussion of the history and evolution of the American cemetery is necessary to help one better understand the context of the urban graveyard. Cultural and historical influences that contribute to the evolution of cemetery design, layout, location within the city, and grave markers will also be examined. The role of the cemetery in American culture is continually changing. Cemeteries have evolved from colonial churchyards or public graveyards, to large grassy fields located in the urban sprawl of the twentieth century. Cemeteries reflect a culture's attitude towards death. Cemeteries in different places develop and change in different ways, depending on the area's cultural heritage, available resources, and governing body. Examining the history of graveyard and cemetery design in the early American southeast may offer insight into more effective preservation methods for historic graveyards.

There are two types of graveyard in historic urban areas. The first is commonly associated with a church, and thus privately owned. Generally, this type of cemetery accommodates only those who were members of the church. In many areas, the church cemetery was the first to develop. The second type of cemetery is publicly owned and not directly

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[2] Lynette Strandstand, *A Graveyard Preservation Primer* (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1988), 6.
[3] Ibid, 6.

associated with a particular religion. As cities expanded, church cemeteries could not fully satisfy the final need for all citizens. Public cemeteries developed at different times in different parts of the country, but they were generally used for the burials of people who did not wish to, or could not afford to be buried in a church cemetery. Public cemeteries are generally larger and contain a more diverse sampling of the population than those associated with churches.

It is vital to understand the significance of historic graveyards and cemeteries as historic sites, particularly in urban areas. The grave markers, design, and location of the cemetery are a representation of those buried there. They offer insight as to the religious beliefs, social status, community standing, and family of former citizens. Graveyards provide valuable public greenspace in populated urban areas. They can be used as an educational tool to teach tourists and citizens about the history of the city. Archaeological features found in graveyards can offer evidence of historic structures, graves, gravestones, and activities in the graveyard. Graveyards must be preserved, *in situ*, in order to be valuable educational tools. When gravestones, monuments, and vaults are removed from their context they lose a large part of their historic significance. In order to preserve historic urban graveyards, both the owners of the graveyard and the public must understand the value of these places.

A variety of factors threaten both types of historic urban cemeteries. Historic cemeteries tend to be viewed as developable land, partially because they do not contain buildings. This view leads to the destruction, or diminution, of many urban cemeteries. Furthermore, they require copious amounts of time to maintain and supervise. Most graveyards do not generate an income, so upkeep may become a financial burden for the owner. The most prevalent threats to historic urban cemeteries is a lack of maintenance and adequate supervision. Most other factors, such as vandalism, theft, over-visitation, and stone disintegration, could be avoided if maintenance and

supervision needs are met. Church cemeteries may be threatened by the expansion of the church, as it seeks to better serve its members. Public cemeteries are primarily threatened with neglect due to lack of public funds. The goal of cemetery preservationists should be to preserve the cemetery and its grave markers *in situ*.

The case studies in this thesis are located in the Savannah and Charleston, however, the thesis is widely applicable to the rest of the country. While each region tends to develop a graveyard type based on its heritage and the resources available, the basic efforts necessary to preserve the site remain similar. For example, in New Orleans, Louisiana the sea level prevents people from forming below-ground graveyards. The mausoleums and vaults are unique to the burial culture of that area. However, their design is based on the vaults of Parisian cemeteries,[4] reflecting the French Catholic heritage of the area. In other areas, the stones reflect both local craftsmanship and "trade routes and commercial patterns that were established, sometimes at surprisingly early points in history."[5] The development of public or private graveyards also offers insight into a city's history. Urban graveyards tend to reflect the heritage of the area in which they exist.

Protection of historic urban cemeteries hinges upon pubic interest. Public awareness and education are essential in creating this interest. Interpretation strategies for urban cemeteries will increase visitation and tourism. The community should be involved in the preservation of cemeteries. Documentation of cemeteries is important in providing information about the current condition and location of graves there. Proper documentation that is widely available will attract genealogists who are interested in the history of the people buried there. The more interest that people have in a cemetery, the more likely it will survive.

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[4] "Grave Matters," *Landscape Architecture* 93, no. 7 (2003): 74.
[5] Strangstad, 1.

The central goal of this thesis is to offer preservation-oriented solutions to the challenges facing historic urban cemeteries in the Savannah, Charleston, and beyond. This goal will be accomplished by first examining the history of cemetery design, from urban to suburban. Secondly, the thesis will examine the significance of historic urban cemeteries as valuable educational tools that provide insight into local American history and culture. Their role as valuable public greenspace in populated urban areas will also be discussed. Chapter four will explain the threats common to urban graveyards and how they are caused. The next section features case studies of three urban graveyards in Savannah and Charleston. The history, preservation efforts, and landscape will be described for Circular Church and the Unitarian Church, both in Charleston, and the Colonial Park Cemetery, in Savannah. In conclusion, methods for creating a plan for an historic urban graveyard will be outlined. Solutions to the problems facing urban graveyards are difficult and rigorous, but the resulting protection of the historic fabric and landscape ensures its survival.

CHAPTER TWO

CEMETERY HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Two centuries of interaction between the cemetery and American society has left the cemetery, once central to the urban scene, a necessary, but not necessarily desirable, neighbor in the suburbs.

David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*[6]

The cemetery is an essential part of every American community. Throughout American history, cemeteries have evolved to suit the cultural and spatial needs of each community and region. The earliest European immigrants to the southeastern lowland buried their dead directly adjacent to their religious buildings, which were at the heart of early cities and towns. As cities and towns expanded, overcrowding became a problem in urban cemeteries. Overcrowding, combined with the region's multiple disease epidemics, prompted city fathers to seek burial grounds outside of the city, as the dead were seen as a health risk. The Victorian solution was the creation of the garden cemetery. The rural, or garden, cemetery was located outside of the urban core. It provided a park-like setting designed specifically to attract visitors. The picturesque rural cemetery eventually gave way to the modern cemetery, or memorial garden. Modern cemeteries are grassy lawns located in an area of urban sprawl. Some modern cemeteries have vertical monuments,

[6] David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 1-2.

but many feature horizontal plaques that are placed at ground level. The American cemetery has evolved from a small lot, generally associated with a religious building, to a large lawn located along a major suburban thoroughfare.

It is important to understand the history of cemetery evolution because it provides insight into cultural attitudes about life and death. The placement of a cemetery within a community, the placement of graves, and gravestone forms all represent the culture and individuals responsible for their creation. Urban graveyards provide information about the culture of the southeastern lowlands. The history of cemetery evolution in the coastal southeast is similar to many areas in America. Cemeteries and graveyards in Charleston and Savannah moved from urban areas to picturesque settings, and finally, to suburban sprawl. Preserving urban cemeteries is essential if we are to gain a better understanding of early southern life and death.

Urban Graveyards

There are two primary types of urban graveyard found in the southeastern lowlands. The first was commonly associated with a local church. The church was the central provider of public services in most cities during the colonial period. Churches were the main source of education, community, social welfare, and burial grounds. The main purpose of a churchyard was to provide burial space for members. The placement of a grave within the churchyard and the grave marker were indicative of the deceased's social status. In addition to providing burial ground for church members, many Colonial churches had an area of the graveyard set aside for nonmembers. The people buried in

this section were generally those who did not live in the city in which they died, but were of some social standing and associated with the church's denomination.

The second type of urban graveyard is not tied exclusively to a religious denomination. The public graveyard was available to all citizens of the community, as well as visitors with social standing. Some public graveyards were owned by the city. However, more often, a local church that was committed to providing a public burial ground owned them. Public graveyards were not geographically associated with churches. They were often established on the outskirts of the city. However, there is some evidence that public burial grounds did exist in central locations.

Churchyards and public graveyards were no more than two to three acres in size. They both contained vertical gravestones arranged unevenly, as space was at a premium. Urban churchyards that were used over a long period of time have particularly random gravestone arrangements. Most early American planned cities had either a public cemetery or churchyards, depending upon the principles on which the city was founded. In the 1830s and 1840s, cities expanded so rapidly that churchyards and public graveyards began to face severe overcrowding issues. To protect public health, many overcrowded cemeteries were closed to further burials. In some cases, family members were encouraged to move their deceased relatives to larger cemeteries that were established outside of the city.

Charlestown Churchyards

Charlestown, as the city was called before the Revolutionary War, was founded in 1670 as a proprietary colony. Its purpose was to establish a convenient port between the

northern colonies and the British sugar holdings south of Florida. Charlestown's goal was to make a profit for the Lords Proprietors. Unlike many other British colonial centers on the east coast, Charlestown was not founded on religious principles. Although the Church of England was the established church to which all citizens paid taxes, they were not forced to worship there. The *Fundamental Constitution of Carolina*, written by John Locke, guaranteed liberty to dissenters, including Indians, Jews, Huguenots, and other religious groups.[7] The only Christian denomination not tolerated in colonial Charlestown was the Roman Catholic Church.

Many of the earliest settlers were merchants and tradesmen from Barbados. These merchants were Anglicans, content to support the established Church of England. French Protestants, Huguenots, were also early settlers. They sought to escape the lack of religious toleration in France. The colony also attracted Jewish merchants who built the largest synagogue in America in 1757.[8]

Charlestown is one of the few cities in America where many of the streets were laid out before the buildings.[9] The city plan, the Grand Modelle, set aside land for several public buildings, including St. Philip's Church, at the corner of Broad and Meeting Streets, the present day site of St. Michael's Church (See Figure 1). The churchyard surrounding the structure was used for burials. Circular Church, formed by Congregationalists and Presbyterians, was built in the 1680s on Meeting Street. The

[7] John Locke, "The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina : March 1, 1669 ", ed. Francis Newton Thorpe (Yale University Avalon Project, 2006).
[8] Robert N. Rosen, *A Short History of Charleston* (San Francisco: Lexikos, 1982), 15.
[9] Ibid, 13.

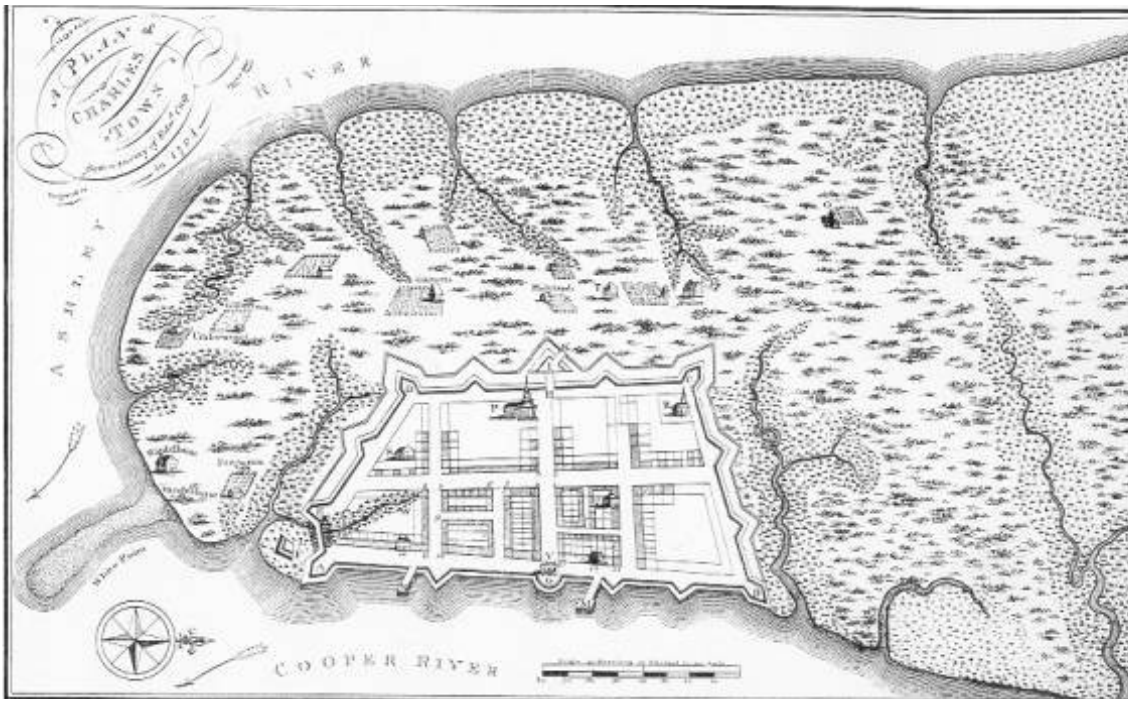

Figure 1: Map of Charleston, South Carolina, Showing the Locations of St. Philip's Church at the Present Site of St. Michael's Church, the Congregational Church, and Various Public Buildings, Historic Charleston Foundation, Edward Crisp, 1704.

Huguenots built their church on Church Street around the same time. In the middle of the eighteenth century, St. Philip's Church moved to its present location on Church Street. St. Michael's Church was erected at the corner of Meeting and Broad Streets. Finally, the Unitarian Church was built on Archdale Street in 1772. All of these churches set aside land in the vicinity of the building as graveyards.

Englishmen founded Charlestown on private business principles. Due to the heritage and ideals of the founding Charlestonians, private churches were responsible for the deceased. It was important to the early settlers, who came to Charlestown seeking religious tolerance, to be buried near their churches. Furthermore, wealthy Charlestonians saw church membership as a status symbol. Prominent burial in the churchyard was a show of one's wealth in much the same way as owning a pew at the front of the church. A public cemetery, such as Colonial Park in Savannah, would not have reflected the principles of colonial Charlestown.

Savannah's Public Graveyard

In 1733, James Oglethorpe and the first one hundred British colonists landed at Yamacraw Bluff, the location of Savannah. Georgia was the last British colony to be settled in North America. It was a philanthropic and social experiment, an attempt to create a utopia. Georgia's Trustees sought to attract debtors to the colony. Each colonist was to "receive free passage to the New World, be given tools, agricultural implements, and seeds, be supported until the first crop was harvested, and be allowed fifty acres of

land."[10] At its founding, slaves and liquor were prohibited. The new colony was also to provide a buffer zone between Spanish Florida and South Carolina.

Oglethorpe and William Bull laid out a city plan based on wards. Each ward consisted of a public square surrounded by private lots. Each ward had tything blocks and trust blocks. Trust blocks were divided into larger lots and were generally used for public buildings. Tything blocks were smaller and mainly residential. Streets uninterrupted by public squares divided the wards into equal rectangles. Wards were a part of a larger, regional plan that laid out farming lots. The city plan, through its equal sized lots and regular layout reflected the city's egalitarian ideals (See Figure 2).

In his original plan, which included four squares, Oglethorpe set aside land for a public burial ground. However, it did not satisfy the city's needs. In 1750, the city established a new burial ground slightly outside of the city limits on what is now South Broad Street. Christ Episcopal Church acquired ownership of the cemetery in 1758, but it remained open to the citizens of Savannah and visitors who died there. Burial in the Christ Church Burying ground was not contingent on church affiliation. The cemetery was expanded several times, ultimately to 500 feet square by 1789.[11]

The utopian ideals on which Savannah was founded are the primary reason for the establishment of a public cemetery. Savannah welcomed most Christians, with the exception of Roman Catholics. Whereas, in Charleston church affiliation and burial was a status symbol, Georgia's founders sought a more egalitarian society. Many of colonists

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[10] E. Merton Coulter, *A Short History of Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 82.

[11] Elizabeth Carpenter Piechocinski, *The Old Burying Ground: Colonial Park Cemetery Savannah, Georgia 1750-1853* (Savannah: The Oglethorpe Press, Inc., 1999), 4.

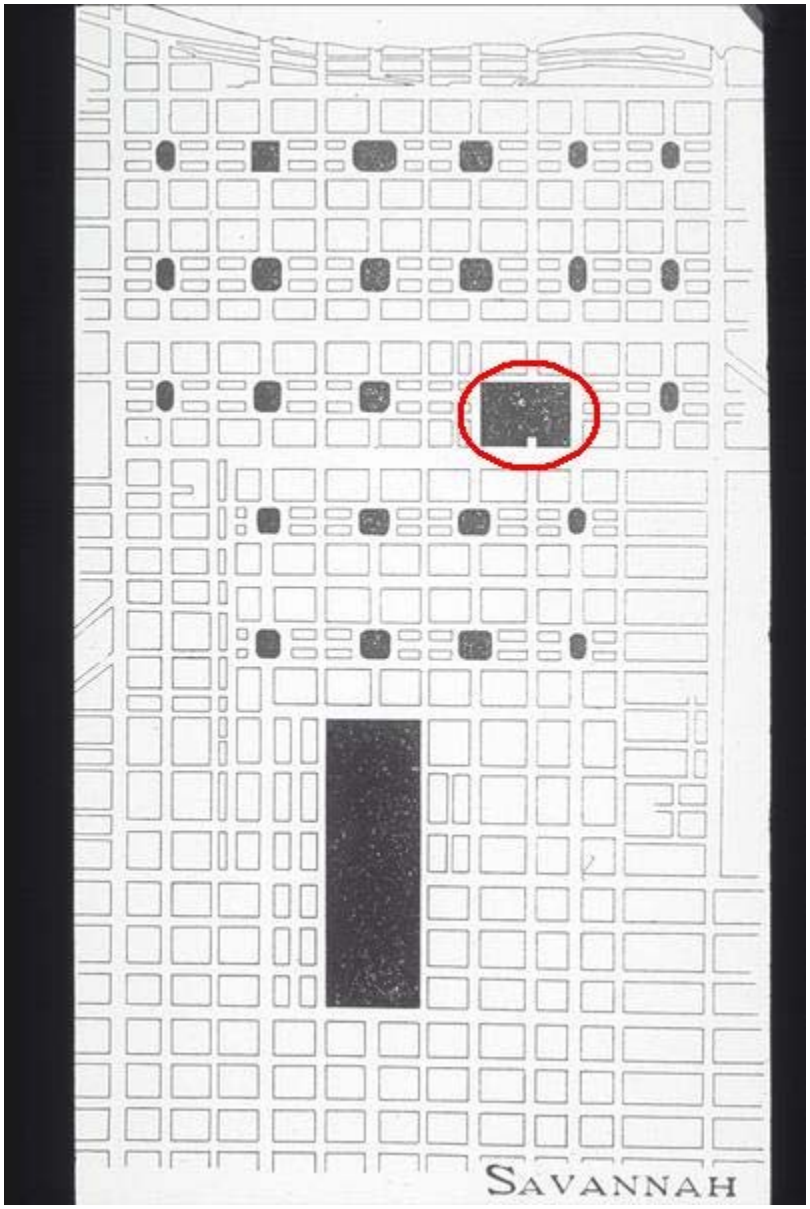

Figure 2: City Plan of Savannah, Georgia, Indicating the Location of Colonial Park Cemetery, Library of Congress, 2006.

who settled at Savannah were impoverished Englishmen, rather than wealthy merchants from other colonies or Europe. The public cemetery in Savannah is indicative of the goals of Georgia's Trustees.

Rural Garden Cemeteries

Rural or garden cemeteries were designed as places where the living and the dead could coexist. They closely resembled parks in their design. The rural cemetery movement began in America in the 1830s in response to rapid urban growth, which led to overfilled city graveyards. The first rural cemetery in America was Mount Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mount Auburn Cemetery was the "first example in modern times of so large a tract of ground being selected for its natural beauties, and submitted to the processes of landscape gardening, to prepare for the reception of the dead."[12] The defining characteristics of rural cemeteries are curving roads and pathways, rolling hills, bosky dells, and ponds.[13] All these characteristics contribute to a natural setting. Mount Auburn Cemetery influenced a movement. City fathers began to build cemeteries outside of the city limits in order to create a more friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to bury the dead. The rural cemetery movement began in the American South by the late 1840s.

Part of the attraction to garden cemeteries was the Romantic aura that surrounded death in the Victorian period. A garden cemetery created a beautiful, natural environment in which family and friends of the deceased could mourn. It also offered a public

[12] John Frances Marion, *Famous and Curious Cemeteries: A Pictorial, Historical, and Anecdotal View of American and European Cemeteries and the Famous and Infamous People Who Are Buried There* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1977), 56.

greenspace for families to visit. The plots guaranteed that families could spend eternity together, rather than the possibility of being buried separately in city lots. The cemeteries also offered a place to display the art of the day. Since status symbols were very important during the Victorian Era, it is only appropriate that their funerary art match their traditions in life.

Garden cemeteries were divided into individual plots. Families purchased the lots and created their own plots. These plots displayed a family's wealth and status. Individual graves were marked with smaller stone markers. A monument, "usually an obelisk, rose from the center of the average lot, and towered over the headstones and the footstones that mark the individual graves."[14] The larger the monument was, the higher the socio-economic status of the family buried there. The monuments also made the cemetery more attractive to curious visitors. These cemeteries represent the styles of art and architecture popular during the antebellum period.

Several factors contributed to the popularity of the rural cemetery. Rapid urban growth and population mobility combined with "booming business and commercial ventures, aggregations of surplus wealth, concentrations of educated and public-spirited people, revisions of religious doctrines, Romantic affection for nature" created a context in which the rural cemetery was a logical alternative to the burial places of an earlier era.[15] Another concern with urban cemeteries was the spread of disease. Several epidemics occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century. Rudimentary

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[13] Ibid, 72.
[14] Ibid, 57.
[15] James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 102.

understanding of how disease was spread combined with the overcrowding of urban cemeteries due to these epidemics led city fathers to conclude that cemeteries could be better placed outside of the city limits.

Rural Cemeteries in Savannah and Charleston

Charleston and Savannah both experienced population growth during the antebellum period. Charleston's churchyards were unable to accommodate the growing population. Savannah's public cemetery was so full that officials encouraged families to move their dead to a new cemetery outside of the city. The land set aside for these new cemeteries was former plantation land. Overcrowding and health concerns led to the formation of rural cemeteries in both cities.

Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston was founded in 1850 (See Figure 3). It consists of 250 acres on the upper part of the Charleston peninsula, commonly referred to as the Charleston Neck. It fronts the Cooper River. Urban burial was never completely prohibited in Charleston, but many people preferred Magnolia to the more expensive, overcrowded churchyards. It offers a beautiful setting with a central pond and bridge. The historic section has many large Victorian monuments and mausoleums. It also features a large Confederate graveyard with a monument. Magnolia Cemetery is still an active burial ground.

Laurel Grove Cemetery was the first of Savannah's two nineteenth century cemeteries. It was established in 1852, at the former site of the Springfield Plantation. Laurel Grove was originally divided into two sections, Laurel Grove North and Laurel

Figure 3:. Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2005.

Grove South. Laurel Grove North was the white burial ground, while Laurel Grove South was reserved for African-American burials. It was used as a Confederate and Union military encampment during the Civil War. Members of the Union Army who died during the occupation of Savannah were buried there, much to the chagrin of Savannah residents. As early as the 1920s there was public concern over the condition of the cemetery. Eventually, the city established consistent funding. Today, Laurel Grove is no longer open for burials, but continues to be a popular tourist site. [16]

Bonaventure Cemetery was created shortly before the Civil War. It was the site of a plantation, located on the Wilmington River. A canopy of live oaks makes the cemetery a shady and somewhat spooky place. Many interesting Victorian markers and monuments exist there. Bonaventure is mostly full, with the exception of some family plots. However, the adjacent cemetery, Greenwich Cemetery, is still open for burials. The newer parts of Greenwich resemble modern cemeteries in almost every city. The markers are placed at grade, giving the land the appearance of an empty field. [17]

The graveyards of Savannah and Charleston reflect the history of each city. They provide insight into the beliefs of former citizens. The public graveyard in Savannah and the private churchyards in Charleston reflect the principle on which the cities were founded. The rural cemeteries provided relief from the overcrowding dilemmas in the cities. Overall, their graveyards and cemeteries are typical of American cities. Burial grounds are created according to the fashion of the day. Understanding the history of

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[16] John Walker Guss, *Savannah's Laurel Grove Cemetery*, *Images of America* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 7.
[17] Amie Marie Wilson and Mandi Dale Johnson, *Historic Bonaventure Cemetery: Photographs from the Collection of the Georgia Historical Society*, *Images of America* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 7.

urban graveyards and cemeteries offers a better understanding of their importance within a city.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN GRAVEYARDS

Dead men may tell no tales, but their tombstones do.

Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone*[18]

Cemeteries are a physical representation of a culture's attitude towards death. Urban graveyards, in particular, are a valuable cultural resource. They are sources of both cultural and historical information. Urban graveyards are essentially aboveground archaeological sites. Evidence of local craftsmanship, early trade routes, and social status exists within these areas. Symbolism and epitaphs on gravestones and monuments reflect both individual and cultural attitudes concerning death. Graveyards also serve as valuable parks and green space in densely populated urban areas. In addition, they are an important resource for genealogical researchers. The overall context and content of graveyards is important to urban areas.

Forms, images, and epitaphs of historic tombstones offer valuable insight into the culture that produced and placed those stones. Tombstones found in the urban graveyards of Charleston and Savannah are among the oldest in the south. They range from the 1740s to the early 1900s. Some of Charleston's urban churchyards are still used for burials today. The forms of the stones, carvings they display, and epitaphs have changed

[18] Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Symbolism and Iconography* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2004), 11.

throughout American history. Each feature reveals evidence about the deceased and the culture of the time.

Colonial Gravestones and Family Vaults

The earliest surviving stones in Charleston and Savannah are the work of local stonecutters. Gravestones of this style were usually made of local stone, such as sandstone. They do not contain images, but rather extended epitaphs offering information about the life and death of the deceased. Epitaphs on these stones, and those manufactured later, sometimes name the parents of the deceased, a valuable reference for genealogical researchers. Historical events, such as war or epidemic, which caused the death, may also be mentioned. These stones usually have a simple flat or arched top and are smaller than the more elaborate imports.

Iconic colonial tombstones became available in the south during the same time as those that were locally made. These tombstones were largely the work of New England stone carvers, as "native iconic representation was virtually nonexistent until the 1790s."[19] There are many existing gravestones from New England in Savannah and Charleston. They are examples of the work of many important master carvers. In addition, they are evidence of sophisticated early trade routes between New England and the early south.[20] Slate, imported from England, was the preferred material of New England stonecutters.[21] The shape of the gravestone generally incorporated a central arch flanked by smaller arched pilasters. However, as technology and demand flourished,

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[19] Diana Williams Combs, *Early Gravestone Art in Georgia and South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 6.
[20] Strangstad, 1.
[21] Combs, 8.

more complex forms were made available. The script found on these stones was much more refined than most early local stones. However, the epitaphs contained similar information about family connections, achievements, and historical events. Elaborate stonework from New England was expensive, and therefore an indication of wealth and status.

The symbols incorporated into colonial tombstones displayed an acute awareness of the fragility of life. In Charleston, the winged death's head was a prominent symbol during the mid eighteenth century (See Figure 4). This symbol was carved into the main top arch of a tombstone. It featured a skull with wings on either side. This symbol represents a macabre religious attitude toward death and the afterlife. A stone featuring the winged death's head may also have figs, a symbol of fertility, and acanthus leaves surrounding the epitaph. Mortality rates were high in the south during the colonial period. Many colonists led a precarious existence. In addition, religious beliefs dictated that only a chosen few would enjoy the afterlife. The death's head motif remained common even after early settlements stabilized and religious beliefs changed, into the 1760s. Other symbols prevalent during this period, which emphasized a sense of mortality, include the empty hourglass, skull and crossbones, and the scythe. These symbols appear both independently and as part of death's head stone motifs.

By the 1750s, the winged death's head had evolved into the less macabre winged soul motif (See Figure 5). Life in the colonies was becoming more stable and predictable. The Great Awakening encouraged many Americans to believe in a God who

Figure 4: Death's Head Motif on Lydia Dart Gravestone of 1735, Circular Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

Figure 5: Soul Effigy Motif on Samuel Beacham Gravestone of 1793, Circular Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

evaluated afterlife eligibility based on acts committed on earth. Therefore, "the winged soul figure came to symbolize the soul either in, or poised for ascension."[22] The gravestone art of the latter part of the eighteenth century reflects these new religious and social beliefs. The winged soul is a modification of the earlier winged death's head. The winged soul replaced the skull of the death's head with a cherubic face. The wings were located below the face, whereas they had previously been displayed behind the skull. The winged death's head and the winged soul, combined with varying expressions of flora, were primary gravestone design motifs in Charleston and Savannah until the 1780s.

Another important gravestone design motif incorporated in Charleston during the eighteenth century is the portrait (See Figure 6). Portrait gravestones incorporate a small likeness of the deceased as the central motif in the tympanum, or central arch. Slate is the most prevalent material used for portrait stones. The portrait expresses an individual either from the waist up, or as a bust. Portrait gravestones do not currently exist in Savannah. They are a testament to the wealth of Charlestonian merchants and the skill of New England stone carvers.

Due to the lack of space available in urban graveyards, some families chose to erect burial vaults. These rectangular structures are present in both Savannah and Charleston. They are constructed primarily of brick. The structure extends three to six feet below grade with a brick or stone floor. The above ground walls are several feet high and support a brick barrel vault or gabled roof. A marble or granite plaque at one end of the vault identifies the family members interred there. The bricked in door at the opposite

[22] Ibid, 25.

Figure 3: Tympanum Detail on Solomon Milner Gravestone of 1757, Circular Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

end of the vault was designed to be removed at the death of a family member. When the vault is opened, the deceased, in a coffin or burial shroud, would be placed on one of several shelves lining the interior walls. Family burial vaults allowed families to be buried together in an urban setting. They also conserved space in overcrowded urban graveyards.

Federal Period Gravestones

Local craftsmanship and transportation improved in the period following the Revolutionary War. These two improvements ensured availability and a wider selection of tombstones. Symbols, material, and shape changed, as a result of improved technology and more optimistic religious and social beliefs. "The urn and the willow tree were the first funerary motifs to replace the death's head and soul effigies when funerary symbolism started to take a softer air."[23] Urns represent mortality and were often paired with weeping willows during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The weeping willow tree symbolizes immortality because of its resiliency. Together, these motifs acknowledge an end to one's life on earth and the belief in heavenly immortality (See Figure 7).

While slate was still commonly used for gravestones in Savannah and Charleston, sandstone quickly surpassed it in popularity. Sandstone was prevalent because it was easier to carve, more locally available, and, therefore, cheaper, but still attractive and permanent. Marble was also used for tombstones, single vaults, and early monuments, by the early nineteenth century. A wider variety of shapes became available during this

[23] Keister, 67.

Figure 7: Willow and Urn Motif on Augusta Marta Gravestone of 1820, Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

period. Some tombstones displayed an elaborate tympanum with finials and pilasters, while others opted for sophisticated carving on a less intricate, or modified colonial form. As technology improved, stones became more elaborate and widely available.

Antebellum and Victorian Gravestones and Monuments

Both Charleston and Savannah established rural cemeteries in the 1850s. The overcrowding situation in Savannah was so severe that very few people were buried in the urban graveyard after the establishment of Laurel Grove. However, urban burial remained a common practice among those who could afford it in Charleston until the turn of the nineteenth century. Therefore, Charleston's churchyards contain an extensive collection of Victorian and Antebellum gravestones and monuments.

The use of ornamental cast iron became popular during the antebellum period. In cemeteries, cast iron fences enclose family plots, or individual monuments. There are several examples of this practice in Charleston churchyards. The fences and gates surrounding plots display a variety of decorative motifs. They are usually set in granite and painted black. Some incorporate decorative corner posts. The cast iron fences in Charleston's urban churchyards are significant because in many urban graveyards they do not survive, or were not used. As with many architectural elements, ornamental cast iron became widely available when the railroad improved trade conditions, in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The lack of cast iron use in most urban graveyards can be attributed to the beginning of the rural cemetery movement in the 1830s and the overcrowded situation of most urban graveyards at the time.

Figure 8: Broken Column Monument of 1860, Unitarian Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

The funerary memorials of the Antebellum and Victorian periods tend to be larger and more accepting of death as a quiet repose than gravestones of previous eras. They are usually made of marble or sandstone. Many are in the shape of obelisks, urns, or classical columns. The obelisk is an Egyptian symbol that became popular during the middle of the nineteenth century. It symbolizes a connection between earth and heaven in the form of an elevated pyramid. A full standing column represents strength and a long life. The broken column is also a common motif (See Figure 8), symbolizing "the end of life and, more specifically, life cut short."[24] The use of flowers on gravestones became popular during the Victorian period. Flowers "remind us of the beauty and brevity of life."[25] The poetry and symbolism on Victorian stones and monuments indicates an accepting attitude toward death as a reward after a productive life.

Archaeological Features

Archaeological features are an important part of every graveyard. Conducting phase one archaeological surveys and studying historic maps of the area locate them. Important features include foundations and remains of historic structures within the graveyard. These may include burial vaults, tombs, or adjacent buildings. Archaeologists may also find other artifacts relating to activities with the cemetery, such as pottery sherds and china from vases used to place flowers on graves. It is important to document any archaeological finds within the graveyard.

[24] Ibid, 129.

A phase one archaeological survey consists of a series of shovel tests. Archaeologists lay out a grid that covers the area and mark points at which to examine the soil at consistent distances. At each point, a shovel full of earth is taken up and sifted through for evidence of historic artifacts. This technique is minimally invasive. It can provide valuable information about areas that should be examined more closely.

Another archaeological technique used in graveyards is the penetrometer. It is a devise used for measuring the density of soil compaction. A penetrometer can be used to identify unmarked graves. The soil in a grave, even an historic grave, is not as compacted as the undisturbed soil around it. The penetrometer can detect the discrepancy, alerting the archaeologist to the possibility of the existence of an unmarked grave. This instrument causes no damage to the historic landscape of the graveyard, but is rarely used in archaeological research.[26]

Current Benefits of Urban Graveyards

Most urban graveyards are no longer used for burials. Since their primary function is no longer relevant, some believe that they are no longer important for urban areas, where space is at a premium. However, urban cemeteries serve several functions that are beneficial to modern city dwellers and visitors. Besides being valuable repositories of local history, urban graveyards can provide valuable community greenspace. They offer a peaceful, park-like setting, sheltered from the noise and rush of the city. Graveyards present a wide variety of opportunities to educate the public. Urban

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[25] Ibid, 41.
[26] Michael Trinkley, *Identification and Mapping of Historic Graves at Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Chicora Foundation Research Series* (Columbia: Chicora Foundation, Inc., 1999), 26.

graveyards are an important part of the city plan. Any city seeking to maintain its historic integrity must preserve its graveyards. As parks, they serve both educational and environmental purposes.

The best rehabilitative use for an urban graveyard is as a public park. Graveyards were designed to be peaceful areas inside the city. They still serve this purpose even if burials no longer take place there. Converting a graveyard into a park encourages its preservation in several ways. First, it does not pose an immediate threat to the historic fabric of the graveyard. The gravestones and monuments add to the attraction of the locale. Graveyards that are open to the public also encourage pedestrian traffic. As a general rule, graveyards that attract curious visitors are less likely to suffer acts of vandalism. Public access and usability promote public interest in the graveyard. This interest translates into community support of preservation plans. Finally, using a graveyard as a public park is an opportunity to educate the public about its significance.

Graveyards are a valuable community education tool. Teachers can use them to teach students a variety of topics. Children can learn about the heritage of their city by visiting the graves of significant citizens. The grave markers themselves can be used as a visual aid to teach symbolism, architecture, and geology. Graveyard walking tours can be used to educate adults about significant people and features. Education promotes public interest, ensuring graveyard preservation.

The significant features of urban graveyards should be considered when creating preservation plans. They are tangible parts of a city's history. Historic gravestones and monuments provide insight into culture and individual lives of the past. Archaeological features offer evidence of past structures and activities that can help interpret the history

of the area. Graveyards can be used as valuable tools to educate children and adults about history and historic preservation. Finally, they are important havens of greenspace in crowded urban areas.

CHAPTER FOUR

THREATS TO URBAN GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

A variety of factors threaten urban graveyards. Problems such as maintenance neglect, vandalism, theft, development, and public apathy are the main threats to these areas. Nearly all of the preservation issues of urban cemeteries are interrelated. Each problem creates more issues that need to be solved in order to maintain an urban graveyard. These problems are ubiquitous among urban graveyards. As difficulties escalate, it becomes harder for preservationists to make a convincing case for restoration. Threats to urban cemeteries must be addressed as they arise, in order to avoid more serious consequences.

Savannah and Charleston have had to deal with many of these threats in their urban graveyards. At present, many of these problems have been mitigated in those cities. However, more issues tend to arise daily. Colonial Park Cemetery in Savannah has battled extensive problems with vandalism and maintenance. In addition, parish halls or parking lots have adversely affected nearly all of Charleston's churchyards. Above all else, the largest threat to historic urban cemeteries is the attitude that it is vacant or developable land.

Maintenance Neglect

Neglect is a common problem in historic urban graveyards. It is usually a result of a lack of funds or interest in the graveyard. Publicly owned urban graveyards are more at risk for large-scale neglect than those that are church owned. However, churches are often guilty of neglecting smaller issues, which can lead to the same devastation of historic fabric as a complete lack of maintenance. Many cities do not know how to maintain graveyards that are no longer used for burial. Due to the fact that a substantial investment of time and money would be necessary to restore and maintain these historic sites, many cities simply ignore the problem, allowing it to grow worse. Like most historic sites, graveyards require maintenance in order to retain their historic integrity.

The most severe expression of neglect is the complete lack of maintenance of the landscape of urban cemeteries. This situation occurs most often in publicly owned graveyards. Aggressive plants and other natural forces can lead to the destruction of gravestones and monuments. It is acceptable, even desirable, for urban graveyards to have horticultural diversity. However, if the landscape is not maintained, vines, fungus, and other destructive elements may cause the loss of historic fabric within the graveyard. In addition, a severely overgrown graveyard will deter visitors. Long-term lack of maintenance can lead to a situation so severe that destruction of the graveyard may seem like the only economically viable option.

In some urban graveyards, the landscape is maintained, but there is a lack of regard for the treatment of historic gravestones and monuments. Simply mowing a graveyard periodically with little regard for the stones may be more of a threat to historic stones than outright neglect. Lawnmowers and commercial herbicides can cause

catastrophic damage to gravestones.[27] Lawnmowers can break and chip stones by running into them, or slashing them with sharp blades. Commercial herbicides "virtually all contain salts or acids that are damaging to most stone."[28] In addition, historic stonework requires periodic maintenance. Gravestones and monuments should be examined for signs of deterioration periodically. Landscape maintenance must be undertaken with careful consideration of the preservation and conservation of the stones.

Vandalism and Theft

Vandalism of urban cemeteries takes many forms. It is not solely a modern phenomenon. When soldiers occupied Savannah during the Civil War they used the graveyard as barracks. Soldiers emptied family vaults for use as sleeping quarters and changed the inscriptions on gravestones.[29] Vandalism occurs most often when a graveyard is easily accessible and unsupervised. Urban graveyards are "all too tempting targets for bored youth or young adults or, even more insidious, for theft by professionals."[30] The effects of vandalism can be detrimental to the historic fabric of a graveyard. Usually, the damage caused by vandalism cannot be fully erased. Education, supervision and security measures are the best ways to prevent vandalism.

Vandalism poses a serious threat to the historic fabric of an urban graveyard. Vandalism takes several forms. In some cases, vandals feel a need to leave a permanent mark on historic stones. Some carve their names or designs to, in effect, leave their mark

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[27] Strangstad, 50.
[28] Ibid, 48.
[29] Piechocinski, 5.
[30] William Clendaniel, "America's Urban Cemeteries: An Endangered Species," *Historic Preservation Forum* (1997): 8.

on history. Other vandals use the destruction of historic stones as a form of entertainment. Destructive vandals will break stones apart and remove them from their original settings (See Figure 9). Pieces of broken gravestones are also subject to theft. Theft of whole gravestones and monuments also occurs. It is usually the work of collectors or profiteers seeking to sell the stone or monument. All forms of vandalism are detrimental to the historic fabric of urban graveyards.

In order to prevent vandalism, it is important to understand why it occurs. There are several conditions that tend to make urban graveyards vulnerable to vandalism. First, graveyard accessibility is an issue. Graveyards without adequate fencing allow vandals access to the premises at any time of day or night. Adequate fencing can limit admission to the graveyard at times when vandalism is likely to occur. A lack of supervision also creates an ideal situation for vandalism. Adequate supervision is not necessarily achieved by hiring a security guard. Due to their location, most urban graveyards are visible to the public at most times of the day. Vandals tend to prefer a certain amount of seclusion in order to carry out their destruction. The construction of a wall around an urban graveyard may encourage vandalism "The function of a wall is to keep people out. But remember that solid walls also provide privacy to those within."[31] Finally, overgrown and neglected graveyards attract vandals because of the lack of interested visitors and legitimate foot traffic. The conditions that make urban graveyards vulnerable to vandalism and theft, over-accessibility and lack of supervision and maintenance, can be prevented or corrected. However, the destruction vandalism and theft create is not so easily remedied.

[31] Strangstad, 18.

Figure 9: Reset Stone Broken by Vandals, Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

Development

Development is the most devastating threat to an urban graveyard. Developers pose a threat when they destroy graveyards in order to put the land to a different use. Most often, developers use the land for buildings or roads. Graveyards are particularly vulnerable because they appear to be unused land. Developers are not necessarily profit-seeking philistines. The threat of development comes from many different sources. Urban churches may consider building or expanding the parish hall into the churchyard. The federal government, through agencies such as the Department of Transportation (DOT) or the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has destroyed many urban graveyards. In addition, some private developers consider graveyards prime real estate for any number of projects.

Development completely, or partially, destroys the historic fabric of an urban graveyard. Development of urban graveyards has happened continuously throughout American history. For example, all that exists of the original public graveyard in Savannah is an historical marker positioned in front of a parking deck. It is most devastating because a cemetery cannot be restored after it is developed. The gravestones and monuments either go to the descendants of the deceased or become items for collectors. In either case, the historic and symbolic value of grave markers decreases greatly when they are taken out of context. Developers should consider the value of the historic resource before destroying it.

In Charleston, expanding churches are the greatest threat to urban graveyards. Growing churches require larger parish halls and more space in general (See Figure 10). Some churches see the graveyard as the most logical place to build and expand these

Figure 10: Development in St. Michael's Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

buildings. The Board of Architectural Review only has control over the structures in the graveyard, such as burial vaults, and the proposed new construction. The attitude of the BAR has been that if the graveyard structures are substantially documented and the new construction is acceptable, the graveyard development will be approved. Urban graveyards themselves are not protected under the current Charleston zoning. As a result, nearly every church in the historic district has destroyed part of its churchyard to make way for parish halls and parking lots. In order to solve this problem, churches must be willing to consider alternatives to developing their graveyards.

Before the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1966, federally funded projects through DOT and HUD preferred to destroy graveyards, as opposed to structures. Developing graveyards raised less public concern than bulldozing someone's house, though DOT and HUD have done that too. NHPA offers some defense for historic urban graveyards from federally funded projects by requiring an Environmental Impact Report that contains a recommendation as to the treatment of the historic property. The federal agency is not legally bound by the recommendation, but it forces them to consider other options.

In locally designated historic areas, it is difficult for private developers to acquire urban graveyards. However, outside of locally designations, they are fair game. Most developers do not search for graveyards to destroy, but developing a graveyard site in an urban area is decidedly cheaper than the alternative. Unprotected graveyards require little investment in demolition, allowing new construction to begin sooner. Dissuading private developers from building on what many perceive as undeveloped land can be difficult.

Local governments should be aware of graveyard preservation issues and implement protection from development for them.

Public Apathy

A community's attitude toward its urban graveyards is essential for their survival. Many communities do not understand the value of these historic resources. An urban graveyard should inspire community members to learn about their history and instill civic pride. Instead many people see graveyards as morbid, spooky places, rather than the well manicured parks that they could become. As previously mentioned, neglected graveyards "play host to derelicts and vandals."[32] It is not surprising that neglected cemeteries tend to be considered urban blight by uninformed community members.

There are two primary causes for the passive attitude extended to many urban graveyards. The first is the general American attitude towards death and cemeteries in general. In present day American society, death is not considered an appropriate topic of conversation. In fact, it is usually referred to by more pleasant sounding phrases, such as passing on, or going to one's reward. In addition, modern cemeteries are located increasingly farther away from the public sphere at the outskirts of towns and cities. They have become nondescript grassy fields with little or no artistic significance. Death and cemeteries are hardly a part of daily life. Therefore, it is often difficult to interest a community in preserving its cemetery.

Public apathy toward urban graveyards can also be the result of a lack of education about the historic significance of the site. This may be caused by a

[32] Clendaniel, 12.

community's lack of awareness about historic preservation, in general. In addition, if urban graveyards are severely overgrown and inaccessible it may be hard for the public to recognize the value. Public interest in a graveyard is tied to community memory. Community members who remember the graveyard as a part of their native city are likely to try to preserve it. However, in cities that do not have a strong sense of community or ties to the built environment, the graveyard is not likely to survive.

The factors threatening urban graveyards are many. However, the most effective solution to all these problems is citizen involvement. Community support can make the difference in many preservation projects. In the case of severely neglected graveyards, efforts usually start slowly, but the results are worth the work. Even in cities that have a good understanding of historic preservation, plans should be in place to ensure the preservation of these valuable historic sites.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS

It is important to examine the history and preservation of several graveyards in order to better understand preservation strategies that have been and are currently being used. Colonial Park Cemetery, Circular Church graveyard, and the Unitarian Church graveyard are interesting examples. Colonial Park Cemetery, in Savannah, is owned by the city, which has not consistently maintained the site. Circular Church graveyard and the Unitarian Church graveyard are privately owned. Each graveyard has undergone significant changes throughout its history. The graveyards have been subject to many different preservation and restoration strategies, some more successful than others. In the end, they are all excellent examples of how a graveyard can survive and benefit an urban environment.

History of Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia

"There is something unique and attractive, I came near saying something romantic, about this particular cemetery. Situated in the very heart of Savannah, this cemetery…is a wide open place where every tombstone beckons you to come in and make yourself at home."[33] Throughout its history Colonial Park Cemetery has known many different names, including the Cemetry or Public Burial Ground, Broad Street

[33] "Our Colonial Cemetery," *The Campus Quill*, January 1932.

Burying Ground, Church Cemetery, Old Burying Ground, Old City Cemetery, and Old Cemetery. In 1789, "An Ordinance for enlarging the Cemetry or Public Burying Ground" decreed that the land "shall from henceforth and forever be and remain a Public Burial Ground, for the Interment of all Christian People of whatever denomination, and not to be considered belonging or appertaining solely to the Episcopal Church of Savannah commonly known as Christ Church."[34] Burials have long since ceased in this graveyard. It now serves as a pleasant park and tourist destination (See Figure 11).

The graveyard now known as Colonial Park Cemetery was not the first public burial ground in Savannah. James Oglethorpe's 1733 plan included a graveyard in the Percival Ward, Holland Tything Lots two and three, bounded by York, Bull, Broad (now known as Oglethorpe), and Whitaker streets. This graveyard was only used until about 1750, and very little information exists about it. Today, all that exists of the first graveyard in Savannah is a plaque, which marks the graveyard's former location, on York Street.[35]

In 1750, the city laid out a Public Burial Ground just outside of its fortifications, bounded by Broad Street to the north, Habersham Street to the east, Perry Lane to the south, and Abercorn Street to the west. Shortly thereafter, the city conveyed ownership of the graveyard to Christ Episcopal Church. Christ Church was to maintain it as a public graveyard. During the last half of the eighteenth century Savannah grew steadily, making it necessary for the city to expand the graveyard. The Royal Legislature first expanded it in 1762 because the Burying Ground "is become too small for the occasion."[36] It was

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[34] Savannah City Council, "An Ordinance for Enlarging the Cemetry [Sic] or Public Burial Ground," (1789).
[35] Piechochinski, 1.
[36] Colonial Records of Georgia, quoted in Trinkley, 13.

Figure 11: Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

again necessary to increase the size of the Burying Ground in 1768. Both acts authorized the church to erect a fence to enclose the graveyard, but it is unclear whether each expansion was actually fenced.[37] The city government passed an ordinance that authorized the final expansion of the graveyard in 1789. This ordinance extended the Burying Ground to its present size of five hundred square feet.[38]

The Broad Street Burying Ground was the only burial place in Savannah. It is where most of the city's deceased were buried during this time period. By 1800, the graveyard would have held as many as five thousand individuals. The growing number of graves prompted the city to encourage planting around the borders of the Burial Ground to create a buffer that would filter the offensive aromas emanating from the area. The severely overcrowded graveyard was closed for burials in 1853, after the opening of Laurel Grove. Due to the overcrowding situation at the Old Cemetery, some six hundred graves were moved to Laurel Grove, at the city's expense.

After the graveyard closed, Christ Church feared that the "old cemetery might, in the end, be used for some other purpose."[39] The church petitioned the city to for a large tract of the graveyard. Their intent was to make it a private churchyard available only to members of Christ Church. The Catholic Church soon claimed that they also had a right to part of the graveyard. The Catholics' purpose was similar to that of the Episcopalians. The city denied both requests and put the Old Cemetery under the authority of the Committee on Squares.[40] Legal battles raged between the city and Christ Church over the ownership and maintenance of the graveyard until 1895. In that year, the city was granted

[37] Trinkley, 13.
[38] Savannah City Council, 1789.
[39] Gamble, quoted in Trinkley, 18.
[40] Ibid, 18-19.

title to the graveyard for seventy-five hundred dollars and agreement to stipulations concerning the Old Cemetery's preservation. [41]

Preservation Efforts at Colonial Park

Colonial Park Cemetery has been subjected to many preservation and restoration efforts. While each effort succeeded in cleaning up the cemetery, which falls into decline periodically, some projects caused more harm to the historic fabric. The late nineteenth-century decision to remove the several sides of the wall surrounding it was certainly detrimental. Over the years, the graveyard has been a constant victim of vandalism and neglect. Many gravestones have been irreparably damaged, while others have disappeared entirely. However, the most recent preservation effort, undertaken in the 1990s, has proved to be highly beneficial for the graveyard. Some of the earlier preservation attempts were not undertaken with such care or dedication.

The first preservation attempt at Colonial Park began in 1868 with the formation of the Old Cemetery Association, a group of concerned citizens who used private and public funds to repair the damaged brick wall and the gate. The goal was also to repair damage to the family vaults caused by Sherman's troops. However, there was a lack of continued support that prevented the group from further efforts.[42] Twenty years later, the Georgia Historical Society successfully documented the epitaphs on over seven hundred gravestones. By the end of the nineteenth century the cemetery had fallen into gross

[41] Trinkley, 21.
[42] Piechocinski, 3.

Figure 12: Damaged and Unset Gravestones on the East Wall of Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

disrepair. The city could do nothing to the Old Cemetery if they did not own it. After years in court, the city gained possession of the land, in 1895.

There were several provisos attached to the deed. The city was not allowed to run streets through Colonial Park, sell all or part of it, widen Abercorn Street, and was responsible for the care of the graves, tombstones, monuments, and vaults within the cemetery. If the city failed to abide by these covenants, the property reverted back to Christ Church.[43] The city placed the cemetery in the care of the Park and Tree Commission and began a preservation project. In 1896, the Park and Tree Commission removed the walls on three sides of the graveyard, laid out walkways, planted trees, and restored vaults. It was at this time that the practice of placing broken and unset gravestones against the east wall began (See Figure 12). The most valuable product of this project was the creation of a map that noted graves, vaults, and topography.

In 1913, the cemetery was again falling into disrepair and attracting derelicts and vandals. The Savannah Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) made an attempt at preservation. The main accomplishment from that effort was the construction of a grand gateway at the northwest corner of the cemetery. Not to be outdone, the Colonial Dames tried their hand at preserving, and cleaning up, the cemetery eleven years later. They published a prioritized list of five recommendations. These recommendations were:

> One: To put a stop to the removal of any more stones. Two: To have repaired and replaced those now or in the future which are broken or removed. Three: To enact

[43] Trinkley, 21.

> an ordinance providing for the punishment or fine for injury to the stones, or for other acts of vandalism. Four: To have signs placed in the graveyard telling of this ordinance. Five: To make proper provision for a custodian of the cemetery, empowered to enforce the ordinance, or give adequate police protection.[44]

They recorded epitaphs and produced a map noting significant graves. They also moved the grave of Samuel Elbert, an early governor of Georgia, to Colonial Park, a move that was at least partially motivated by the attention that it brought to the work being done on the cemetery.[45] Two years before the Colonial Dames made their effort at preservation, the city made an attempt to extend Lincoln Street through the cemetery, which was promptly dropped due to public outcry. Clearly, the public had some interest in preserving the historic graveyard, but no one knew quite how to go about it.

In 1935, the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA), in conjunction with the Savannah Historical Research Association, did a survey of the burials and markers and produced a third map. By the mid 1940s, park attendance and maintenance reached such a crisis point that that the Park and Tree Commission removed a number of damaged gravestones and placed them in storage to prevent further damage. Since the demolition of the historic wall, the cemetery remained largely unprotected and vulnerable to destructive visitors and thieves. Growing public concern prompted the city to erect a cast iron fence around the area, in 1956. However, the cemetery continued to decline.

The Trustee's Garden Club undertook an exhaustive three-year restoration effort in 1967. Using public and private funds, "brick vaults and tombs were cleaned and repaired; unsightly trees and shrubs removed; an adequate watering system installed;

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[44] "Society of the Colonial Dames Seeks to Preserve Cemetery," *Savannah Morning News* 1945.

walks repaired; new lights and benches placed; and new and interesting trees planted."[46] The project also reset stones using brick or concrete. The project was largely successful and attracted many visitors to Colonial Park.

By the late 1980s, Colonial Park was again in need of a facelift. The city, with the help of the Historic Savannah Foundation, undertook an expensive venture that would last nearly a decade, beginning in 1990. In that year, Columbia University's Center for Preservation Research was retained to map the cemetery, undertake preliminary archaeological research, and prepare condition reports for the stones. Later work by Stone Faces, a graveyard preservation firm, was based on the research done by Columbia University. The goal of the project was not so much to restore the cemetery as it once was (there had been far too much damage for that to be feasible), but to make repairs to damaged stones and promote the park setting. Stone Faces worked with the Chicora Foundation, an archaeological firm, to stabilize the cemetery and create a preservation plan. The plan, completed in 1999, recommended that: minimal new paths and plantings should occur within the cemetery because of the density of human remains; the stones should not be moved due to the fact that the move causes them to lose their original function of marking the grave; careful monitoring of projects just outside of present cemetery bounds be initiated because human remains may exist there; and further study be conducted on family tombs.

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[45] Trinkley, 23.
[46] Cliff Sewell, "Gardeners Become Bricklayers to Restore Colonial Cemetery," *Savannah News-Press Magazine*, 20 September 1970, 9.

Landscape and Monuments at Colonial Park

On almost any day, tourists and residents alike can be observed milling around Colonial Park Cemetery. The landscape is typical of urban parks. Curvilinear, faux tabby paths traverse the cemetery. Attractive cast iron light poles, park benches, and trash receptacles flank the walkways. Interpretative signage is placed throughout the cemetery, mostly chronicling the wealthy and powerful individuals interred there. The grass is expertly manicured. Crepe myrtles and palmettos alternate to form a border along the west side of the cemetery. Live oaks and evergreens are interspersed throughout the graveyard. Small shrubs and bushes border the north, south, and west edges, but are not planted among the graves. The pleasant and functional landscape attracts many visitors. A cast iron fence encloses the cemetery on three sides. There is an historic wall located on the eastern edge of the graveyard. The main entrance is located at the northwest corner. The Savannah Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution commissioned the gateway in 1913 (See Figure 13). Three granite steps lead up to the large, granite structure with rusticated columns on both sides of a central, polished arch. The cast iron fence joins the structure on both sides. A simple entablature wraps around the gateway, just above the keystone, which bears the DAR seal. A large brass eagle spreads its wings atop the structure. An arched cast iron gate, which can be locked to restrict access to the cemetery, is attached on the inside of the gateway. The DAR dedicated the gateway “In Memory of Patriots of War the American Revolution 1775-1783 Resting in Colonial Cemetery.” The gateway provides a monumental entrance to the cemetery.

Figure 13: Daughters of the American Revolution Gateway, Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

Colonial Park has a wide variety of gravestones. The dates range from 1762 to the early 1850s. The stones display a wide range of forms, materials, and symbols. The existing tombstones form vague north-south lines, but vary on the east-west axis. This arrangement is characteristic of the very long, and frequently unplanned use of urban burial grounds.[47] Most of the existing gravestones are made of granite, slate, or sandstone. Marble is also a common material for both gravestones and monuments. Gravestone forms vary from colonial stones with a central tympanum with finials projecting upwards to rectangular stones with intricate detail. Some stones are locally made and fairly plain, with simple shapes and lettering. Several early tombstones feature the soul in flight or soul portraits. Hourglasses, Masonic symbols, and weeping willows with urns are also common design motifs in this cemetery.

Other than its gravestones, a wide variety of unique and interesting monuments, family vaults, and table tombs stand in Colonial Park. The vaults are unique to the Savannah and Charleston areas.[48] These family tombs are constructed of brick or stone (See Figure 14). Characteristically, they are comprised of a central barrel vault or gable roof that runs the length of the tomb. Low walls support the vault or roof on either side. Walls that are higher than the vault or roof are at either end of the structure. One wall is usually about a foot higher than the other. The door is located on the end of the vault with the taller wall. Generally, only the top part of the door is visible above grade. The table tomb is another interesting feature of cemetery. It consists of an engraved flat stone held up by four to six piers. The materials for the piers and stone vary greatly from carved

[47] Trinkley, 21.
[48] Piechocinski, 15.

Figure 14: Family Burial Vault, Colonial Park Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia, Katherine Anderson, 2006**.**

marble balustrades with a marble top to large brick piers with a granite top. Colonial Park does not have many nineteenth-century monuments. The few that exist are made of marble and feature either an urn or an obelisk set on top of a four to five foot square pier.

Colonial Park offers a quiet escape from the bustling traffic on Abercorn and Oglethorpe Streets. Its function as a park is largely conducive to its preservation as long as it is maintained properly. The graveyard has suffered from many problems common in urban graveyards, including vandalism and neglect. At present, its existing collection of interesting and unique stones is being maintained admirably. The landscape is well kept up. The city is using the recommendations outlined in the preservation plan. As long as people continue to use the park and the city keeps appropriate security measures in place, the future of Colonial Park Cemetery will be ensured.

History of the Congregational (Circular) Church, Charleston, South Carolina

The Congregational Church, commonly referred to as Circular Church, was originally known as the Society of Dissenters. Its membership included many early colonists who did not wish to belong to the Episcopal Church. Circular Church was constituted between 1680 and 1690. Four different buildings, including the present church, have stood on the site. The third church, designed by Robert Mills, burned in the devastating fire of 1861. The current church building, designed in the Romanesque style, was completed in 1892 (See Figure 15). In 1821, a Sunday school building was

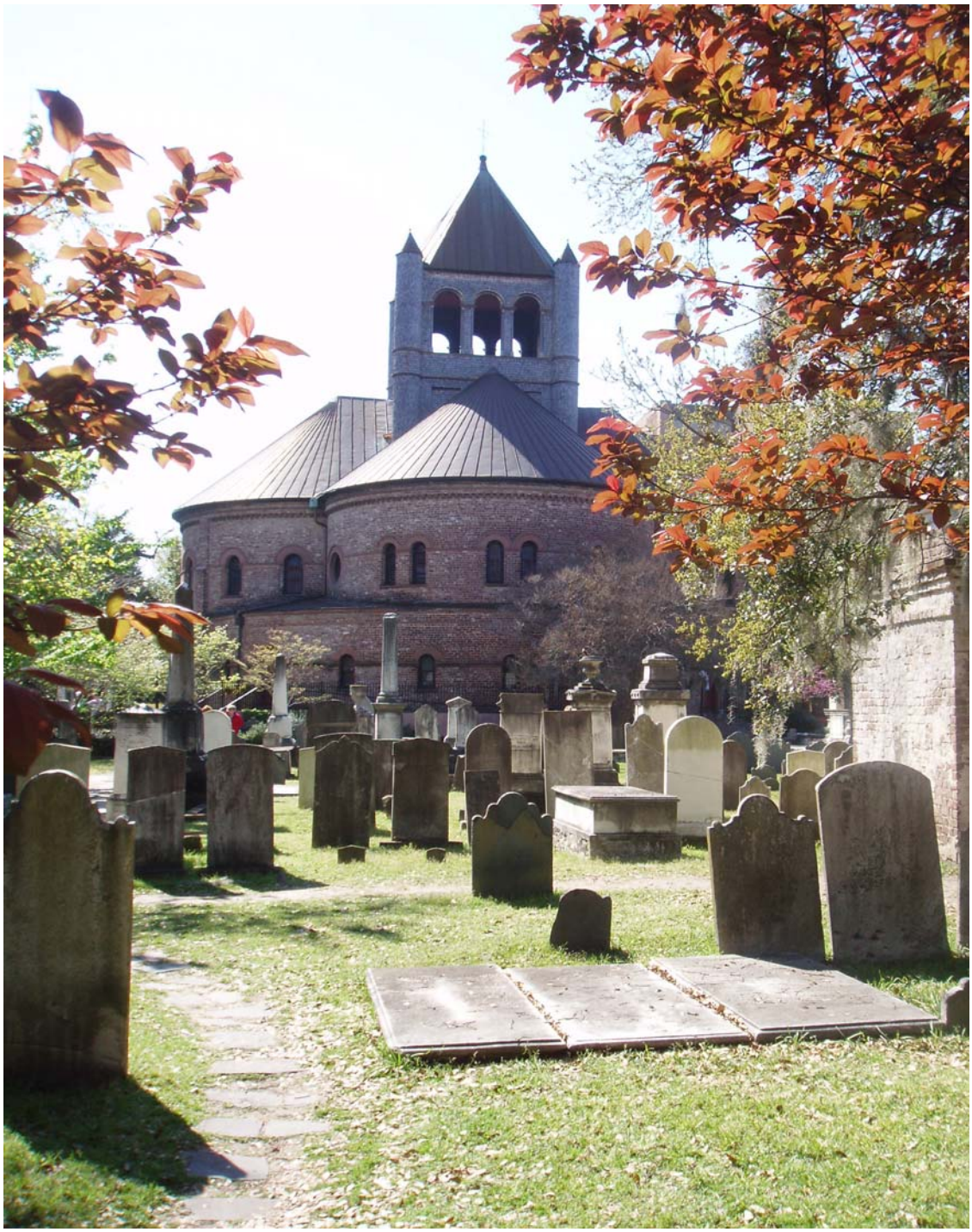

Figure 15: Circular Church and Graveyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

constructed near the south border of the graveyard. This building also burned in 1861, but was reconstructed in 1867 to serve as the chapel until a new church could be built.[49]

The gravestones in the churchyard date from 1737 to 1980. They are excellent examples of local and imported stone carving, representing every period of American gravestone design.[50] The graveyard was never formally closed to burials, although relatively few took place there after 1850. The churchyard has survived both the British and Union occupations of Charleston, three devastating citywide fires that destroyed the church buildings, the massive 1886 earthquake, and a host of hurricanes. Vandalism has been a constant problem in the graveyard since the late eighteenth century. Over the years, the church has made an effort to preserve and maintain its grounds.

Preservation Efforts at Circular Church

Circular Church has made an effort to protect its graveyard from the ravages of weather and vandalism. After Magnolia Cemetery opened in 1851, the churchyard was rarely used. It began to fall into disrepair. The first preservation project began in 1878. Additional efforts in the late 1920s also took place. However, by the 1970s, the churchyard was in a severe state of disrepair. In addition to devastating acts of vandalism, some stones were showing the effects of weather damage, while others were slowly sinking into the ground. In 1983, Circular Church partnered with the Historic Charleston Foundation to undertake a large-scale preservation project that was completed in 1986.

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[49] George Edwards, *A History of the Independent or Congregational Church of Charleston, South Carolina (Commonly Known as Circular Church)* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1947), 92.
[50] Historic Charleston Foundation and Circular Church, "Preserving Charleston's Oldest Graveyard," (1983).

Finally, in 2004, the church accomplished the controversial task of moving burial vaults and gravestones from their original locations on the south side of Lance Hall to allow for an expansion.

Early preservation efforts of the Circular Church graveyard focused primarily on the landscape. In the 1870s, the fence surrounding the graveyard was in a state of disrepair, along with the landscape. Yankee troops defaced gravestones and monuments during the Union occupation. A preservation project began in 1878. The goal of this project was mainly to clean the churchyard, lay out new walks, and trim the shrubbery.[51] Another goal of the first preservation project was to fix the west side of the fence. The concern with the state of the landscape indicates that the graveyard was being used as a park. In 1927, members again raised money to improve the grounds. The money was largely used for new plantings of shrubbery, hedges, and flowers. A year later, Andrew B. Murray, a wealthy Charlestonian, donated five thousand dollars in city bonds, known as the Mary L. Bennett Fund, for graveyard upkeep. The church created a Committee on Grounds that was appointed annually to oversee the use of the income from the fund.[52] A newspaper article from 1931 describes the churchyard as, “a quiet breathing spot shaded by great trees and filled with unique stones bearing quaint inscriptions.”[53] Landscape maintenance has been consistent since this period.

The graveyard suffered several severe acts of vandalism in the 1970s that were at least partially due to a lack of adequate lighting and security. Community members were outraged by the destruction, describing it as “one of the most outrageous acts of

[51] Edwards, 103.
[52] Edwards, 121.
[53] George N. Edwards, "Church Nearly 250 Years Old," *Charleston Post and Courier*, 8 July 1931.

vandalism we can imagine…a graveyard which contains monuments of national significance, situate on a main thoroughfare, should be safe from marauders."[54]

In 1983, Circular Church partnered with the Historic Charleston Foundation to create and implement a graveyard preservation plan, implemented in 1986. This project, which was undertaken in two phases, took three years to complete. It enjoyed enthusiastic community support. Lynnette Strangstad, a noted stone restoration expert, was retained to work on the project. Its goals were to restore, reset, or stabilize damaged stones, create interpretative landscaping, document the grave markers, conduct an archaeological survey, create a walking tour and improve cemetery security.[55] The first phase of the project was to survey and document the current state of the graveyard. The archaeological survey conducted during the first phase uncovered six buried gravestones that were eventually reset in the graveyard. The goal of the second phase was to restore grave markers, install landscaping, and implement security measures.[56] Sinking gravestones were reset into the ground to prevent them from breaking under their own weight. Monuments were stabilized. Broken stones were repaired using tedious stone restoration techniques. Plants that were too close to the grave markers were removed. An open lawn of grass, interspersed with trees, and bordered by decorative plantings was installed. Additional lighting and fence repairs, during the second phase, increased the security of the area. This comprehensive project was highly successful at restoring and preserving the Circular Church graveyard.

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[54] "Graveyard Vandalism," *Charleston News and Courier*, 12 November 1970.
[55] Skip Johnson, "Gravestones Reflect Philosophy, Art of Ancestors," *Charleston Post and Courier*, 25 June 1984.
[56] Historic Charleston Foundation and Circular Church.

Landscape and Monuments at Circular Church

The landscape of the Circular Church graveyard is typical of urban churchyards. It extends 158 feet on the west side, 129.5 on the east side, 261 feet along its southern border, and 264 feet on the north side. All borders, with the exception of the one to the south, are straight. The southern border extends out to form a rough rectangle on the south side of Lance Hall (See Figure 16).[57] The west side of the graveyard is along Meeting Street. The east edge borders the St. Philip's churchyard. A cast iron fences encloses the area on three sides. A wall is located along the south side of the churchyard. The paths are made of either dirt or stone. A central path runs along an east-west axis from the church to the gate leading to St. Philip's. Smaller paths originate at the central path. They generally follow a north-south route.

The plantings in the churchyard are designed to cause minimal impact to the stones. Several large shade trees, including an ancient live oak, are present around the eastern area of the graveyard. Smaller, ornamental trees, such as crepe myrtles, are planted closer to the church. Grass covers the entire churchyard. There are no plantings in the vicinity of monuments, due to the harm that moisture and landscape maintenance can cause. Small shrubs and ornamental plants form a border along the inside of the fence.

Just over five hundred grave markers and structures, with dates ranging from 1737 to 1980, are located there. The gravestones are arranged in fairly neat north-south rows. However, the east-west columns are less easily defined. Nearly all of the gravestones face west, towards the church. Every period of American gravestone

[57] W.L Gaillard, "No. 138 Meeting Street," (Charleston: City of Charleston, 1983).

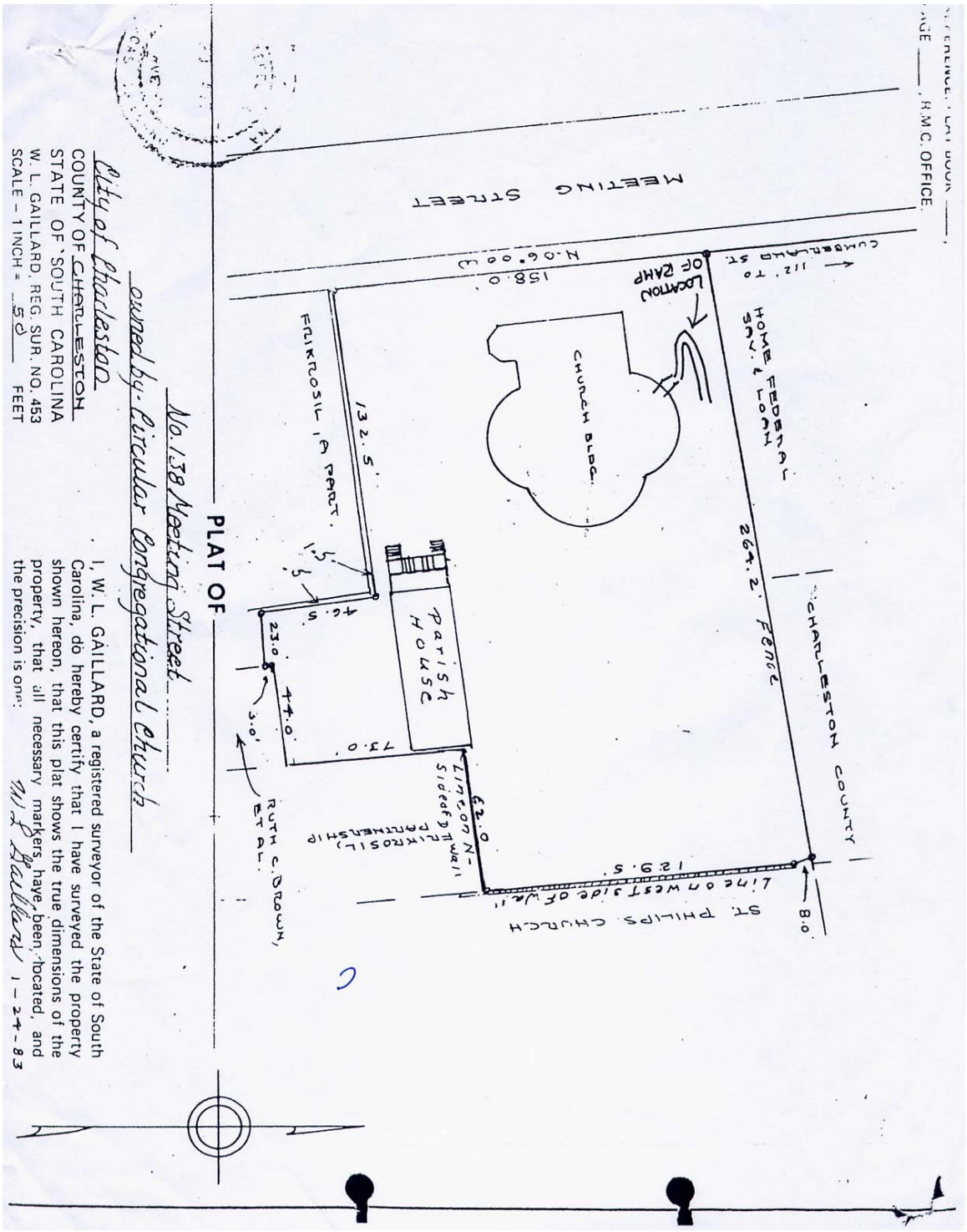

Figure 16: W.L. Gaillard Plat of Circular Congregational Church and Graveyard, Charleston, South Carolina, 1983.

symbolism is present here. As Lynnette Strangstad, the graveyard preservation expert, explains about Circular Church:

> The graveyard reflects whatever is going on in society. Around 1690 there was a lot of dying going on among arriving colonists, so the common motif was a quick, simple skull and crossbones. Twenty years later, these have more human details—lips and teeth—but also wings to suggest a soul's immortality. Twenty more years go by and you start to see 'soul effigies' in the form of floating cherubs. In another twenty years or so, the emphasis is on mourning and loss, both in words and by etching a likeness of the person on the stone.[58]

The graveyard is an ideal place to study the evolution of gravestone art. Circular Church also has an impressive collection of forty portrait stones, an unusually high number for the region.

There are many examples of early New England stone carvers work in the graveyard. The works of Henry Emmes and William Coder, two of New England's foremost gravestones artists, are prominent. Significantly, the only known signed stone of William Coder is located at Circular Church. It is the Nathaniel Bassett gravestone (See Figure 17), dated 1740.[59] Gibbs's *Architecture* heavily influenced both Emmes and Coder, as evidenced by the neoclassical details, such as weeping putti and classical profile portraits on their stones.

The Circular Church graveyard is an excellent example of a successfully preserved urban churchyard. The church has solved many of the threats to its preservation

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[58] Joe Rada, "Etched in Stone," *Southern Living*, October 1984.
[59] Historic Charleston Foundation and Circular Church.

Figure 17: Tympanum Detail on Nathaniel Bassett Gravestone of 1740, Circular Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

in an innovative way. The preservation plan formed in 1983 has largely been followed, with the exception of the vault relocation to allow for the expansion of Lance Hall. Circular Church has planned for future preservation, knowing the problems to which the churchyard is vulnerable. For this reason, it is able to boast one of the most significant, preserved collections of gravestone art in the United States.

History and Preservation at the Unitarian Church, Charleston, South Carolina

The Unitarian Church in Charleston is the oldest established Unitarian Church in the south. It began as an extension of the Circular Church, to accommodate the overflowing crowds there. It officially became Unitarian in 1839. The original church building was completed in 1787, but in the 1850s it was remodeled into the perpendicular gothic style (See Figure 18). The 1886 earthquake shattered the original windows and destroyed some architectural details. Art Nouveau style windows were installed as replacements in the 1890s. Many of the architectural details were never replaced.[60]

The churchyard has been used as a burial ground since the 1790s. It is unique because much of its original ironwork is still intact (See Figure 19). In addition, it contains several family plots, which were rare in urban churchyards. The Unitarian churchyard never suffered from the overcrowding that was common in other graveyards. This is largely due to the fact that it was an extension of Circular Church. Most Congregationalists preferred to be buried in the older, more prestigious graveyard. Magnolia Cemetery was opened eleven years after the Unitarians separated. At its opening, Magnolia Cemetery became more fashionable than the urban graveyards.

[60] Pamela D. Gabriel and Ruth M. Miller, *Touring the Tombstones: A Guide to Charleston's Historic Churchyard, Unitarian Church* (Charleston: Touring the Tombstones, 2005), 1.

Figure 18: Unitarian Church and Graveyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

Figure 13. Intact Iron Fence, Unitarian Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

Few preservation projects have been necessary for the Unitarian Church graveyard. However, in the 1880s, Caroline Gilman did an extensive survey of the grave markers. She recorded all of the epitaphs and plot numbers of the stones. This documentation was invaluable to the preservation effort that took place in 2004. Caroline Gilman was the wife of a prominent minister of the church. She and her husband also bought land adjacent to the churchyard in order to enlarge it.

In February of 2004, Francisco Castillo was hired to restore the stones and monuments that had been damaged by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The hurricane left the churchyard in complete disarray. The church had done some minor repairs, but the graveyard was in need of a large-scale restoration. Castillo used bronze rods, Italian epoxies, and glues to repair damaged markers. He used pieces of wood, instead of machines, for leverage to lift heavy stones. He also did not over-clean stones. His philosophy was that any stains were a part of their history. He believed the stones should retain their patina. Castillo restored a total of one hundred gravestones and monuments.[61]

Landscape and Monuments of the Unitarian Church

The most significant feature of the Unitarian churchyard is the landscape. The only existing part of the "Golden Walkway," a series of alleys and side streets that connected St. Philip's Episcopal Church, the Congregational (Circular) Church, and the Unitarian Church, leads to the graveyard from King Street. There is little recorded about the "Golden Walkway," but it acquired its name in the late eighteenth century and was primarily used by members of the Congregational Church to travel between its two early

[61] Robert Behre, "Using 'Old Ways' in an Old Graveyard," *Charleston Post and Courier*, 3 May 2004.

Figure 20: Loutrell Briggs Designed Gate and Walk, Unitarian Churchyard, Charleston, South Carolina, Katherine Anderson, 2006.

campuses. The noted Charleston landscape architect Loutrell Briggs designed the entrance and walkway to the graveyard (See Figure 20).

The garden concept in the graveyard is the result of the work of Caroline Gilman in the 1880s. She wanted to create an urban garden cemetery at the Unitarian Church, a concept that still exists today. There are a variety of plants that grow in the family plots and on individual graves. Generally, this treatment is inadvisable due to the harm that plants and maintenance can cause the gravestones. However, in this case it seems to be working despite the fact that the plants are minimally maintained and allowed to grow naturally. To this day, the first Saturday of every month is a work party day when members of the church come out, trim the plants back from the gravestones, and do other needed maintenance. Urban garden cemeteries are rare, but the Unitarian Church serves as an example of a successful one.

The Unitarian Church has a significant landscape that has been in place since the 1880s. When inside the graveyard, it is difficult to know that one is in a city at all. While the preservation of the gravestones has historically received little attention, the most recent stone restoration effort was highly successful. The Unitarians maintain their graveyard in a nontraditional way, but it still provides a peaceful park setting and protects the grave markers.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: PRACTICING PRESERVATION

Practical preservation of an urban graveyard requires the support of both public and private organizations and individuals to create and implement a preservation plan. An effective preservation plan should outline long and short-term goals appropriate to the preservation and conservation of the graveyard. The goal of a graveyard preservation project should be to conserve the existing historic fabric of the area and provide for the long-term preservation of the site. Restoration is a term that is rarely appropriate when referring to the landscape an urban graveyard. Unlike residential and commercial preservation projects, a graveyard does not need to function as architecture. It is most important that a graveyard retain as much of its historic landscape and material as possible. Preservationists should not focus on restoring the cemetery to its appearance at an arbitrary time in history, but on protecting and maintaining the existing historic fabric, unless there is documentation that can be used for this purpose.

A carefully planned preservation project can exploit public visibility to provide education, gain support and raise funds. Furthermore, preservation awareness in Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina, cities that have effective preservation ordinances, is especially high. These cities recognize the importance of preservation, in general, to the local economy. However, their graveyards are often not held in as high esteem as the architecture, even though they are extremely significant

examples of urban graveyards. Adding an historic landscape component to the preservation ordinance could aid in the protection of these sites. In addition, comprehensive documentation and preservation plans should be implemented in all of the cities' historic urban graveyards.

The preservation strategies and procedures noted here are not necessarily appropriate in all historic graveyards, however many of the basic ideas are widely applicable. The following preservation treatments are specific to large, urban graveyards located in locally designated historic areas, specifically in Savannah and Charleston.

Graveyard Survey and Documentation

Surveys and documentation are an essential part of any preservation action. Proper documentation of a graveyard should be undertaken in several phases. First, a preliminary survey should be conducted to determine the current condition of the graveyard. The information gathered from this survey is essential to formulating a preservation plan. The preservation plan will utilize the information in the preliminary survey to identify damaged stones and prescribe methods for their treatment. After stone conservation work is complete, a comprehensive photographic survey should be conducted. Survey teams should also accurately transcribe the epitaphs on each grave marker. Archaeological surveys should also be completed to determine the existence and location of significant archaeological features. The final phase of the documentation process is to create an accurate map that can be used as a basis for future preservation efforts.

A preliminary survey should be conducted before any other work is undertaken. The survey should document some basic information about each gravestone, monument, or structure. The survey form should provide information about the material, design motif, previous restorations, type of marker, date, shape, and construction. The survey form should also include information about the current condition of the stone and the landscape, including the type, location, extent, and severity of damage.[62] Relevant historic or previously recorded information, as well as historic photographs, should be included, if available. The survey must contain pictures of all grave markers, those that are damaged in particular, and the existing landscape of the graveyard. The information provided by this survey is important to consider when prioritizing individual objectives in a preservation plan.

Graveyard documentation should also include a comprehensive photographic survey. The photographs should be of professional quality. Black-and-white photography is preferable. “What is needed are high-contrast photographs in which the lettering, decorative carving, and condition of the gravestone are clearly visible.”[63] Additional pictures of carving details or lettering may also be useful. To achieve high contrast photographs, the camera must be positioned at a slight downward angle, if the gravestone is in full sun. In areas with less light, use of a mirror to reflect natural light may be helpful. In some instances, it may be necessary to use an electric light source, but natural light is preferable. When photographing a grave marker, it is useful to place a ruler in the picture to create a scale. Most photographers prefer a 35mm, or larger, film camera.

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[62] Frank G. Matero and Judy Peters, "Survey Methodology for the Preservation of Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries," *APT Bulletin*: 40.
[63] Strangstad, 29.

However, it is important to consider the benefits of a digital camera. This type of camera takes high-quality photographs that are immediately visible and easy to insert into a computer database. The final product of this detailed photographic survey is a record of the individual gravestones and monuments before and after preservation efforts.

The epitaphs on each gravestone should be recorded. This documentation can be done by individual surveyors, or in groups of two. If two people are working together, one reads the stone, while the other transcribes it. To ensure accuracy, two different surveyors or groups should survey each stone. After both surveys are complete, the results should be compared to resolve any discrepancies. Surveyors should note of details in the lettering on the stone, such as a capital letters, the letter *J* substituted for the number *1*, the elongated *S*, abbreviations, punctuation, and lettering style.[64] In order to be useful to future researchers documentation of the epitaphs must be accurate.

Archaeological surveys can reveal important information about a graveyard. Generally, the ground has remained undisturbed in these areas, leaving evidence of burial structures and artifacts that are vital to understanding the history of the graveyard. A phase one archaeological survey is minimally invasive. It can reveal the location of significant archaeological features. During a phase one survey, archaeologists conduct shovel tests at certain points throughout the graveyard. They also study historic graveyard documentation to determine which areas are most likely to contain foundations of former structures. Archaeological evidence can play an important role in compiling the history of a graveyard.

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[64] Strangstad, 24.

The final phase of a documentation project is the creation of a map. There are two reasons a map is necessary. First, to compile the information gathered in other documentation projects. Secondly, to create a record of the current condition of the graveyard for future preservationists and other interested parties. The map should include the locations of graves, gravestones, monuments, and vaults. It should also note landscape features, such as fences, trees, and other plantings. The map will vary in complexity depending on the technology used to create it. Currently, geographic information systems (GIS) and computer aided design (CAD) programs create the best maps. With the help of this computer software, the map can be linked to a database containing other survey information. Linking data tools enhances information management, makes the information easier to access, and more widely available.[65] A map and an available database of survey information are the ultimate goal of a documentation project.

Neutralizing Threats

An effective preservation plan for an urban graveyard should identify past and present threats to the landscape and historic fabric. Each graveyard has its own problems that must be addressed. The plan should prioritize the treatments in order of the severity of the problems. Preliminary survey results should be used to create the preservation plan. The first priority should be to protect or repair any emergency conditions. The plan should make a timetable for necessary stone repairs and landscape issues. Standards and guidelines within the plan should outline proper conservation methods to treat the present

[65] Matero and Peters, 42.

and future issues of the graveyard. Threats to the historic fabric and landscape a graveyard must be prioritized into a comprehensive plan.

Threats to urban graveyards can be caused by several situations. For example, when a graveyard is not properly maintained, it becomes vulnerable to a host of other problems. Vandalism and theft are often the result of neglect and public apathy. Neglected graveyards are also more likely to fall victim to development. Conversely, vandalism causes visitors to avoid even a well-manicured graveyard. Continued destruction could lead an under funded graveyard maintenance crew to abandon its efforts. In either case, the problems must be examined in relationship to each other. The primary cause should be identified and mitigated. Identification of the main problem in a graveyard will ensure the success of the solutions to secondary problems.

Public Education and Support

A successful preservation effort requires the support, both monetary and voluntary, of the community. An effective plan will inform the public about the work that is being done through signage, media, and other sources. Generally, if the public has an understanding of the preservation activities, it will support the plan. In addition, the preservation plan should clearly establish rules to protect the graveyard from further harm, both intentional and accidental. After the project is complete, a walking tour, or other informative brochure available at the graveyard can inform visitors about the history of the area. It is essential that the community is considered within the preservation plan.

Signage and media should be used to inform the public about the preservation project. In Savannah and Charleston, the community is interested in preservation projects. Historical and informational signs were placed at Colonial Park Cemetery and Circular Church during and after conservation. Signage placed at the graveyard can educate the public about the project. It can also set forth rules for the graveyard, including open and closing times, guidelines for making rubbings of gravestones, and other instructions that are designed to help protect the stones. Historical markers can identify persons of interest to graveyard visitors. Print and news media can be used to further the public's understanding of the project. Media can also advertise the need for donations and volunteers.

A website can be a valuable promotional tool for a graveyard. A website can display pictures and offer information about the history and preservation of the graveyard. The information provided on a website can attract potential visitors and inform community members about relevant graveyard issues. Circular Church in Charleston maintains a website devoted to its graveyard. The website has a brief time line of events, information about gravestone symbolism, and photographs.[66] The primary advantage of a website is that the information is widely available and easily accessible.

Public education about the significance and history of the graveyard should continue after the project is completed. A walking tour can point out important people and gravestone art to visitors. An informative brochure can educate visitors about the history of the graveyard, its place in the city, and preservation actions that have been

[66] "Circular Congregational Church--Graveyard," (Circular Congregational Church, 2006).

taken to preserve the significant area. Public education helps to ensure the future protection of the graveyard. A graveyard should be a part of the community. For it to be successful, people have to know about the area and respect it.

Graveyard Preservation Nonprofits

Occasionally, cities or churches may not have the necessary resources to maintain their graveyards properly. In these cases, a nonprofit organization that is devoted to the preservation of the graveyard can ensure its future. The nonprofit does not necessarily own the graveyard, but is committed to its preservation. Many preservation nonprofits exist for larger, garden cemeteries, which tend to be more expensive to maintain. Fewer currently exist to benefit specific urban graveyards. However, preservation nonprofits for garden cemeteries could serve as a model for smaller graveyards, as the goals of restoration, maintenance, and conservation are similar.

A graveyard preservation nonprofit organization can benefit a graveyard by providing funds and assistance for preservation and maintenance. It has the specific mission of protecting and promoting the graveyard when the owner lacks the resources. The primary responsibility of a graveyard nonprofit is to raise money. That money is used to satisfy the restoration, conservation and maintenance needs of the graveyard. A successful graveyard nonprofit will make funding a preservation plan the primary goal.

A nonprofit organization plays a vital role in public education. A graveyard preservation nonprofit can organize events, tours, and other educational opportunities for the public. The preservation nonprofit at Oakland, a rural cemetery in Atlanta, offers tours on a variety of topics, including symbolism, the art and architecture of death, and

landscapes. They also maintain a website that serves as a fundraising and educational tool.[67] An urban graveyard nonprofit could offer similar programs that would promote public interest in the graveyard.

Public—Private Partnerships

Partnerships between public and private entities are common in urban graveyard preservation. In many cases a citywide preservation nonprofit or church will join with the city to benefit an endangered graveyard. These partnerships are advantageous because all participants contribute funding and expertise. Usually, agreements between the city and nonprofits are ongoing, ensuring the long-term preservation of the graveyard.

Two important examples of public—private partnerships are Colonial Park Cemetery in Savannah and the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative (HBGI) in Boston, Massachusetts. The conservation effort at Colonial Park Cemetery during the 1980s and 1990s was a result of a partnership between the city and the Historic Savannah Foundation (HSF). HSF held a successful capital campaign that helped to fund a decade of restoration and documentation. The city also allocated funds for the project. As the graveyard is owned by the city, HSF does not contribute money for its continued maintenance, but has a vested interest in its continued preservation.

The Historic Burying Ground Initiative in Boston is a combination of city and nonprofit funding. The Boston Parks and Recreation Department supervise it. The mission is “comprehensive restoration, on-going conservation and heritage interpretation

[67] "Historic Oakland Cemetery," (Historic Oakland Foundation, Inc., 2006).

of Boston's sixteen historic burying grounds."[68] The project began in the 1970s. Among other things, HBGI has funded preservation plans, created a master plan for the city, and restored many damaged gravestones.

Many urban graveyards could benefit from public—private partnerships. Funding and interest from two sources is generally preferable to one. These agreements ensure that the city or church will not develop the land, that preservation expertise comes from preservation specialists at citywide nonprofits, and that there is enough money to complete the project. The participants, regardless of who owns the graveyard, retain an interest in the site and plan for its future.

Conclusions

The urban graveyard is a significant part of America's history. Its future survival depends on the efforts of the community and responsible preservationists. The most effective method for preservation of these places is use as a park. Many of them are no longer used for burials, but retain the peaceful air of a park that is so rare in many cities. They are also valuable repositories of local history and art. Urban graveyards are a valuable part of the historic fabric of cities.

Establishing the graveyard as a public park will help ensure its survival. Public parks are of great value in urban areas. Citizens and visitors are attracted to the peaceful setting and curious gravestones in historic graveyards. Graveyard stewards should take advantage of this attraction by providing educational opportunities within the graveyard

[68] "History of the Historic Burying Grounds Initiative," (City of Boston, 2006).

to help visitors better appreciate its significance. Education also is the best way to gain public support for preservation projects.

Present and future preservation efforts should strive to conserve the historic fabric and peaceful setting of the cemetery. Only a qualified professional should undertake the restoration of damaged stones. Some restoration techniques ensure the survival of the stone. However, over-cleaning, or recarving a stone damages its historic integrity. The goal of landscaping is to ultimately protect the historic stones. Grass should be used by itself in areas that contain monuments. Decorative planting and landscaping is appropriate at the edges of the graveyard, away from the historic grave markers. Landscape maintenance crews should not use heavy machinery in the graveyard, especially around historic markers. Following these simple guidelines can ensure the continued preservation of urban graveyards.

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