Rolling in Their Graves:
A Comparative Study of the Patterns of Land Use and Preservation of Cemeteries in
Queens and Staten Island

by

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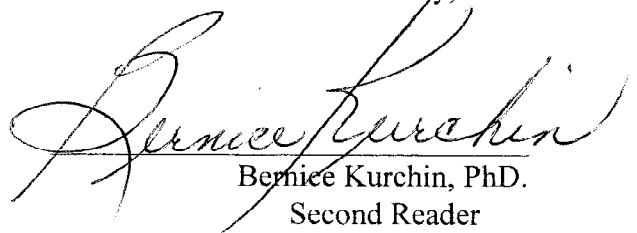
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Hagstrom Map Company (1999)

Some people have sought immortality through burial and memorialization, and at different times in human history we have witnessed great differences in the access individuals have had to such immortality.
-- Randall McGuire

INTRODUCTION

Humans have been performing ritualized burials for thousands of years. On the East Coast of North America, the deceased have been buried in cemeteries since the Middle Archaic began some 8,000 years ago (Crabtree and Campana 2001). As time progressed and civilizations grew, the nature of human burial changed. Whereas human burials were once only a means of disposing of the dead, the creation of cemeteries allowed for the deceased to maintain a "dialogue with the living" (McGuire 1988: 436). In this way, the dead have become an ever-present cultural subset, one that has never left society.

Because of this metamorphosis, human burial has become governed by socio-cultural, political, and religious principles. However, such principles are not stable, and shifts in social thought have altered the nature of human burial (Binford 1971). These shifts affect both how cemeteries are constructed and where they are placed as well as how individual graves are marked. Cemeteries can therefore serve as material records of past ideologies (McGuire 1988).

New York City's cemeteries not only reflect its social ideologies but also capture its evolution from collections of Dutch and English rural farming communities to the bustling metropolis which developed rapidly after the American Revolution. In this case, not only were social principles changing, but the society itself was changing at the same time. All of these transformations became encapsulated in the burial of the city's deceased citizens.

This study explores the changing patterns of land use for burials in New York City, particularly in Queens and Richmond (Staten Island) Counties (see Map 1). Although it covers the period from the first European settlements in the early 1600's to the present, its primary focus is on the period after the American Revolution in 1776 to the early 1990's.

Thus, one would assume that Queens and Staten Island would have very different cemetery land use histories. In Staten Island, where the population is smaller and has been more consistent over time, it was assumed that there would be more frequent preservation[1] of small family and church cemeteries. This would be the result of potential kinship ties that were enhanced and maintained by the population stability which consequently would lead to the preservation of smaller plots. As census data shows, the rate of population expansion for the county was significantly lower than that of Queens (see Figure 1 and 2), and its geographical characteristics did not allow for significant expansion (although some land was created via landfill along the shorelines). Presumably, this generated less pressure to demolish cemeteries in order to create housing.

For Queens, where the population density has always been higher and where there is a greater number of spacious, rural cemeteries, it was assumed that private cemeteries would have a higher rate of obliteration. The smaller cemeteries would be overshadowed by those which covered several hundred acres and one would assume that the family cemeteries would be relocated to the larger conglomerates. However, it was determined that Staten Island actually had a larger portion of its private/family cemeteries obliterated

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[1] The preservation of a cemetery does not always ensure that it will be maintained and cared for. In many cases, preserved cemeteries have been abandoned and have fallen into disrepair.

while more were preserved in Queens.

In both counties, it was expected that most of the obliteration of smaller private/family cemeteries and churchyards would have occurred during the mid-nineteenth century, when the city began to expand at an extremely rapid pace. A second increase would probably have occurred after 1898, when Queens and Richmond counties were annexed to New York City. With surges in population and increased gentrification in all areas, family farms were quickly divided into smaller plots and sold. Although it was common for property deeds to stipulate that a cemetery plot be preserved, this was not always obeyed and more often than not the fate of the graveyard was left to the land's new owners. However, at the same time, the rate of establishment for large cemeteries would increase at this time due to the ban on burials in Manhattan.

Cemeteries located on desirable land were even more endangered as their owners could profit more from selling the land to developers than by maintaining it as a burial ground. Also, older cemeteries would have had less value to a society, as there would be a decreased chance of individuals still residing in the area with familial ties to those interred there. Without living relatives, friends, or other advocates, there were very few obstacles blocking a cemetery's destruction.

Finally, cemeteries associated with minority groups (such as African-Americans or Native-Americans) and cemeteries which were managed by municipal institutions should show the highest rate of obliteration. It would also seem more likely that instead of removing the human remains from such burial grounds, the sites would simply be redeveloped without regard to the individuals resting beneath. It is also assumed that a

similar fate would befall those buried in public cemeteries and potter's fields[2], as city governments have always tended to be frugal, especially before the days of political correctness. In short, it is cheaper to pave over a cemetery than it is to have the bodies transferred to another location.

By the same reasoning, it was assumed that cemeteries associated with religious groups should have the highest rate of preservation. The religious aspects intensify the sacred imagery of a burial ground and would presumably make people less likely to destroy it. It would also be expected that cemeteries surrounding active churches would benefit from added protection as opposed to cemeteries owned by religious corporations but not associated with a particular church. For both Queens and Staten Island, religious cemeteries were rarely obliterated and even those which have not remained active were preserved.

As this paper will show, this hypothesis proved partly accurate and partly false. The majority of cemeteries constructed in both counties were established by either individual families or religious groups. The private and family[3] cemeteries along with public and minority cemeteries were most frequently obliterated while religious cemeteries were most often preserved. Most cemetery obliteration occurred during the twentieth century. Population density has a profound effect on the counties' rates of cemetery establishment and preservation. In addition, obliteration also appears to be correlated with population size. Between 1841 and 1860, there was a surge in the

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[2] Potter's fields are "civic burial grounds dedicated to the burial of 'strangers and paupers'" (Sutphin and Bankoff 2005: 1).
[3] Private/family cemeteries are defined as those which are established by individual families and used exclusively by members of that family.

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establishment of cemeteries while few were destroyed. This surge is most likely the result an abolition of burials in Manhattan. Cemeteries were more likely to be obliterated if they were over one hundred years old and had not been active for at least one generation.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological value of cemeteries

The concepts of death and dying have always been pervasive in anthropological literature. Whereas ethnographic accounts focus on the ritualistic and ceremonial aspects of death, archaeologists investigate the physical remnants of burial, or "corpse disposal" (Bartel 1982: 54). However, it has been noted that too little attention has been paid to the fact that cemeteries act as accumulations of cultural and archaeological data (Binford 1971). In many ways, burial sites can often provide more insight into the social structure of a given culture than any other type of archaeological data (domestic artifacts, faunal assemblages, etc.).

The method in which the dead are buried as well as the items associated with their burial (including grave goods and grave markers) combine to transform individual burials into make-shift time capsules of local history (Sloane 1991). Burials contain information about a culture's social structure and intellectual processes, things that are not easily identifiable in the archaeological record. It has been said that the purpose of cemeteries is "[to] reinforce the beliefs and worldview" of the deceased (McGuire 1988: 436). Barring specific written documentation, cemeteries may be the only way to understand such attitudes of a society which has long since died out or moved on.

Therefore, cemeteries can be seen as material assemblages of the intellectual

activities of a group of individuals at a specific time and place. Indeed, cemeteries are a "microcosm of the real world" in which the deceased are "[bound]...to the architectural and perhaps even spatial preferences and prejudices that accompanied them throughout life" (Francaviglia 1971: 501). The trend of marking graves with the date of death allows us to accurately identify changes in these ideals, and, therefore, changes in general social design, over long periods of time (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966).

More importantly, unlike most other artifacts, cemeteries are intentionally left behind by a society for no other reason than to present their ideologies to any individuals who may encounter them in the future, thus generating a "tangible heritage" (French 1974: 57). This is most likely the end result of humanity's endless quest for immortality (McGuire 1988, Francaviglia 1971). A "proper" cemetery burial would allow for an individual to remain bound to the earth for eternity, or, at least, the foreseeable future, and would ensure that he or she would not be forgotten. It might even be speculated that cemeteries came to be viewed as sacred, something which did not become standard until the nineteenth century (Sloane 1991), in order to ensure their preservation and, subsequently, the preservation of the immortality of those buried in them.

Ideology of burial

Both the construction and presentation of a cemetery are defined by the ideology of the society which creates it (McGuire 1988). Every aspect of the cemetery's appearance can be used to identify the social influences which were behind its construction. Cemeteries can reflect the society's kinship networks, domestic residence patterns, social structure, and its perceptions of death (Bartel 1982, Baugher et al. 1989). These factors

can also inform us as to why some cemeteries are obliterated and others are preserved.

The way a culture views death is by no means stable; it changes frequently over time. It is reflected in the way individuals are buried and the way in which they are marked. Some cultures take great care to ensure that each individual is buried in the same position and proceed to fill burial pits with items of some cultural value. Other societies have no cultural attachment to death at all, leading to burial locations which lack uniformity or signs of a connection between the dead and the living members of the group. Every aspect of burial can therefore reflect some facet of the cultural activity of the living.

Grave markers are perhaps the most obvious manifestations of social ideology. Differing philosophical viewpoints dictate the overall style of grave markers, from plain fieldstones to medium-sized stones with poetic epitaphs, to massive monuments, and even whether graves are marked at all. Functional cemeteries meant only for corpse disposal would be far less extravagant than those found among societies where death was not part of everyday life (French 1974, McGuire 1988). As the mortality rate of a society decreases, one would expect the lavishness of its cemeteries to increase.

Even the engraved images and the colors of the stones themselves are determined by the dominant social ideology of the time (Deetz 1988). Such variations in gravestones can indicate if a culture feared death or revered it, if kinship connections were strong, or if there were strong ties between religion and death (i.e. if there was the concept of an afterlife). Analyzing gravestones is also the best method of tracking ideological change over time (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966).

Headstones also reflect systems of social stratification, which can be quite

difficult to distinguish archaeologically. However, certain burial customs make it possible to identify class distinctions among the deceased members which mirrored the class distinctions among the living. There appears to be a positive correlation between the elaborateness of an individual gravesite and increasing social status (McGuire 1988, Binford 1971), indicating that class distinctions are maintained even after death (Kephart 1950).

Burial in cemeteries has also been equated with the confirmation of an individual's humanity. Therefore, burial in a potter's field or in a racially segregated burial ground would imply that the deceased individual was sub-human (Kephart 1950, Pattison 1955). In this way, cemetery burial can reaffirm a person's place not only in society, but in humanity as well. The most obvious status differences are manifested in the monuments and headstones which mark grave locations. A large, imposing, stone monument could be used to forever mark the grave of a person who was important to the society in which he or she lived. However, an unmarked grave or one with a degradable marker (i.e. a wooden tablet) might indicate lower social status of the interred.

Ideology of land use

This paper is more concerned with the ideology of land use for burial purposes than it is with the ideology of the burial rituals and goods themselves. Even if it appears that cemeteries are erected in a "seemingly haphazard manner" (Pattison 1955: 245) early in a city's development, the placement of burial locations is closely associated with social beliefs. Ideology is reflected in the distance between burial sites and domestic sites or religious institutions and the number of burials in a given cemetery.

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Kinship and religious affiliations are the two most influential factors which determine how far a cemetery is located from the living community. The placement of graves in a family plot near a domestic dwelling or surrounding a church would serve to "physically, ideologically, and socially [link]...the deceased and grieving relatives" (Mytum 1989: 286). Churchyard burials can also be interpreted as attempts made by individuals to place themselves closer to God and heaven (Sloane 1991).

These cemeteries allowed the deceased to maintain an important role in social life and resulted in coexistence between the living and the dead. Such emotional and cultural connections were often lacking in municipal cemeteries and potter's fields, which were often placed outside of the developed area. However, changing social circumstances can also manipulate the cultural role of cemeteries. As mentioned previously, with decreasing mortality rates, the notion of death becomes increasingly foreign in everyday life.

One would expect that as mortality rates improved, burial locations would become increasingly distant from domestic areas, thus ending the "sharing of space" between the living and the dead (Sloane 1991: 20). As death became less and less "normal," cemeteries would lose their place in daily life. Small, exclusive church and family cemeteries would give way to those which are large and communal, reflecting a new affiliation between the dead and the living (Sloane 1991).

Consequently, the distance between cemeteries and the living population is often dictated by the frequency and subsequent importance of death in a society. However, the number of cemeteries which are established is influenced by other factors. According to Pattison (1955), new cemeteries in American cities are created for several reasons, including basic necessity (additional space is needed for corpse disposal), individual

regional demand for local burial places, the desire to maintain cemeteries exclusive to

particular religions or nationalities, and because of changing social trends.

This would indicate that different subsets of a society might have different criteria

for cemetery land use both within the city and within the cemetery itself. Like grave

markers, land use patterns can also be used to examine social differentiation. There are

"differential property values" (Francaviglia 1971: 506) within cemeteries in terms of plot

sizes and locations. Centrally located burial places tend to be reserved for the upper

classes while the outskirts are reserved for the lower classes (Sloane 1991). Cemeteries

associated with individuals of higher social status also tend to be found in more desirable

locations (in terms of both natural geographic features and accessibility) than those

associated with lower classes (Francaviglia 1971).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History of Queens and Staten Island

Thousands of years before Europeans ever laid eyes on New York City, the area

was inhabited by the Lenape Indians. Queens, in particular, was occupied by both the

Canarsee and Rockaway tribes while Staten Island was home to the Raritan Indians. The

environment in which they lived was shaped by glacial movements which occurred more

than 14,000 years ago (Schuldenrein 2002). When Giovanni de Verrazano, the first

European to discover the area, sailed past Staten Island into New York Harbor in 1524, he

was greeted by the tall sand hills, low-lying marshlands, and lush foliage that marked the

countryside.

The next major expedition to New York was led by Henry Hudson, who traveled

through Jamaica Bay in 1609. This voyage marked the true beginning of European occupation in the area, and subsequently marked the beginning of violent encounters with Native Americans as well. Shortly after their exploration of Staten Island, the Europeans were involved in a skirmish with local Indians which resulted in the death of one of Hudson's crewmen.

Because of this incident, the Native Americans who occupied Staten Island were extremely wary of Europeans. They even went as far as to set up look-outs on tall hills in an effort to spot approaching ships so as to prevent such vessels from landing (Historical Records Survey 1942: xii). In fact, while Queens became home to the European fur trade almost immediately, it was not until 1630 that a successful European settlement could be established on Staten Island due to the violent opposition from Native Americans.

The Dutch colony of New Netherlands began to thrive with the establishment of the Dutch West India Company in 1621 and the subsequent arrival of the first groups of settlers in 1624. These initial settlements were all established on the island of Manhattan, which was then known as New Amsterdam. Queens and Staten Island remained largely unoccupied by Europeans during this initial colonialization.

Despite several attempts, Staten Island could not maintain a permanent settlement until 1638. The first was Olde Dorp, or Old Town, which was founded by Captain David Peters deVries. In 1639, New Netherlands' Director General, William Kieft, began to purchase sections of Long Island, including all of what is now Queens County, from the Canarsee Indians. The Native Americans initially intended to share the land with the Europeans, although peaceful coexistence between the two groups proved to be impossible and many Indians eventually relocated to Staten Island and other nearby areas

(Parry 2000).

Shortly after the land was purchased, formal settlements were established in Queens. However, the first few towns were not settled by the Dutch, but by English citizens fleeing religious persecution in the British colonies. The first to be settled was Maspeth, later renamed Newtown, which was founded in 1642. Flushing was then settled in 1643 followed by Hempstead in 1644 (which was originally part of Queens County), and Jamaica in 1650. Queens was rapidly populated and "by the mid-1660's...virtually all of modern Kings and Queens counties lay in European hands" (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 69).

Regardless of his successes in expanding the colony, Kieft soon proved to be an unstable leader. His hatred of the Native Americans was profound and between 1640 and 1645, brutal warfare raged among the two groups. The town of Old Dorp was destroyed and rebuilt several times during the Indian conflicts. A similar fate befell the first settlement at Maspeth. It, too, was rebuilt after its destruction although many of the outlying settlements were abandoned as people retreated to safer locations in New Amsterdam (Burrows and Wallace 1999).

In an attempt to end the wars with the Indians, Kieft was recalled by the Dutch government in 1645 and replaced by Peter Stuyvesant. Stuyvesant was able to bring about an era of relative peace, although it was punctuated by occasional bursts of Indian violence. The so-called "Peach War" broke out on Staten Island in 1655 during which Olde Dorp was destroyed yet again. Regardless, the colony of New Netherlands continued to grow, although most of the newer residents were of English origin and who quickly outnumbered the Dutch.

The growing English presence in New Netherlands made it quite simple for England to seize the colony. After a brief struggle, during which Staten Island was quickly taken by the British, Stuyvesant surrendered in 1664 and New Amsterdam was re-christened New York. Although the Dutch were able to re-take the colony in 1673, they traded it back in 1674 in exchange for "the far more lucrative colony of Surinam" (Cantwell and Wall 2001: 181). New York would remain under British control for the next one hundred years.

During the British period, both Queens and Staten Island experienced significant expansion. In the late 1660's, Old Dorp was once again reconstructed and another settlement, New Dorp, was built on Staten Island. The increased European presence on Staten Island was facilitated by the exodus of the remaining Native American population. The Native Americans agreed to sell what was left of their land to the British government in 1670; rumors of the island having been won for New York by Captain Christopher Billopp in a sailboat race are most likely false (Botkin 1956). Without the Indian presence, there were no longer any obstacles blocking the settlement of Staten Island.

The British formally restructured the colony, establishing counties and townships in addition to constructing public buildings and roads. The Dongan Charter of 1683 established twelve counties, two of which were Richmond and Queens. Queens was further divided into five townships, Newtown, Flushing and Jamaica (see figure 4), as well as Hempstead and Oyster Bay, which later became Nassau County. Although Jamaica became the county seat of Queens, Newtown became more populated if only because it was closer to Manhattan.

Staten Island was also divided into townships in 1683; Castleton, Northfield,

Southfield, and Westfield (see figure 5). Initially, Old Dorp (sometimes referred to as Stony Brook), located within Castleton, became the county seat. However, in 1729, this was changed in favor of Richmondtown, much of which is preserved to this day as a historic district.

Under British rule, New York thrived as an agricultural center, providing trade goods not only for England, but for the global economy as well. New York was even vital to the transactions of the triangle trade, in which manufactured products and agricultural goods were traded to England and the West Indies in exchange for molasses, rum, and slaves (Cantwell and Wall 2001: 159). Queens and Staten Island were essential to this process, as both counties had large areas of open land which were suitable for farming.

The colony's progress was both halted and facilitated in the mid-eighteenth century during the French and Indian War, which concluded in 1763. Although the region experienced the economic side effects of being at war, thousands of British armed forces were stationed in the New York area. This ultimately brought a significant amount of money into the region. This also prompted neighborhood development, as housing was needed for the sudden population surge.

New Yorkers, however, were not completely loyal to the English crown at this time. Goods were secretly (and illegally) traded to French colonies via Staten Island's more secluded ports (Burrows and Wallace 1999). In so doing, the citizens of New York were not only increasing their own wealth, but asserting their economic independence and sowing the seeds of the impending American Revolution in 1776.

In spite of this increased autonomy, New Yorkers maintained a closer allegiance to the British throne during the American Revolution then they had during the French and

Indian War. Queens and Staten Island proved to be key assets for the British during the war. In 1776, peace negotiations were held on Staten Island in a house which had been built by Captain Billopp in 1680 (and which still stands to this day). The conference was a failure, and soon after, American troops, led by George Washington, retreated from New York.

The British used Staten Island as a rudimentary home base, due to its strategic location (Historical Records Survey 1942). It was sufficiently close enough to both New York and New Jersey that British soldiers could easily be dispatched in the event of an impending battle. And, reminiscent of the Raritan Indians, the island's tall hills provided views essential to tracking ships approaching the city. The British built numerous fortifications along the shores, which, ironically, would be used against them by the Americans during the War of 1812.

Like Staten Island, Queens also became important to the British during the Revolutionary War. Many British troops were stationed there throughout the duration of the war. Although many Queens residents fled to Connecticut after the retreat of American soldiers, many more stayed and vowed to remain faithful to the crown (Burrows and Wallace 1999).

Despite the loyalty of both counties, the colonists prospered and Queens and Staten Island soon adapted to the new American government. Land owned by British loyalists was divided into small plots and sold off. This availability of land brought about another surge in development in the outer boroughs. Queens and Staten Island continued to grow steadily for the next few decades, fueled by major events such as the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 (Sutphin and Bankoff 2005), the end of the Civil War in 1865, and

the relocation of the headquarters of the Long Island Rail Road to Queens in 1861 (Burrows and Wallace 1999).

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century, however, that Queens and Staten Island began to expand at an astonishing rate. Between 1840 and 1880, the population of Staten Island nearly quadrupled while the number of people living in Queens (at that time including Hempstead and Oyster Bay) tripled (see figures 1 and 2). This huge increase in population and development echoed that of Manhattan, which simultaneously went through sudden and rapid growth in the mid-1800's when the city's boundaries were finally pushed past 14th Street.

As Manhattan's population became denser, industries were relocated to the surrounding counties, including Queens and Staten Island. This prompted increased neighborhood development, which in turn led to the creation of additional townships (see Maps 4 and 5), including Long Island City in Queens (formerly part of Newtown) and Middletown in Staten Island (composed of sections of Castleton and Southfield).

The region's prosperity caused Manhattan and its surrounding counties to become increasingly co-dependent, both economically and culturally. It was therefore suggested that these counties should be consolidated with Manhattan under the name New York City. With only moderate resistance from some Queens and Staten Island residents, the two counties officially became city boroughs on New Year's Day, 1898. It was at this time that the distinction was made between Queens and Nassau County, making sure that

US Census Population Data 1790-1900
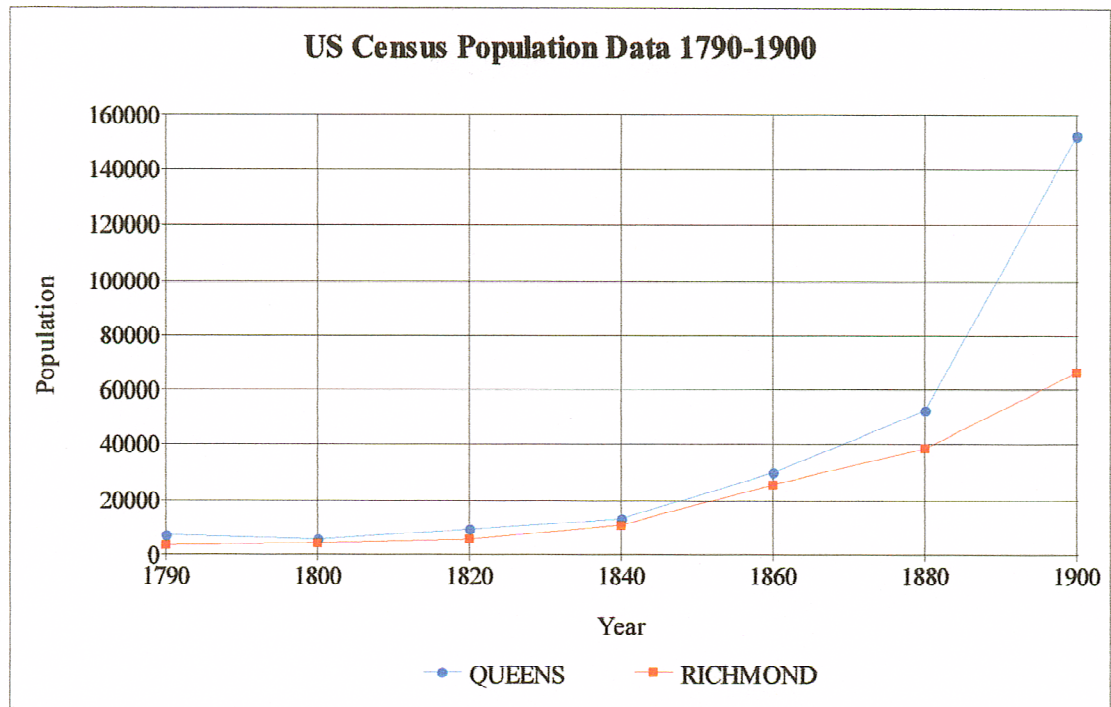
FIGURE 1. Populations of Queens and Richmond Counties, 1790-1900 (Y-axis interval = 20,000)

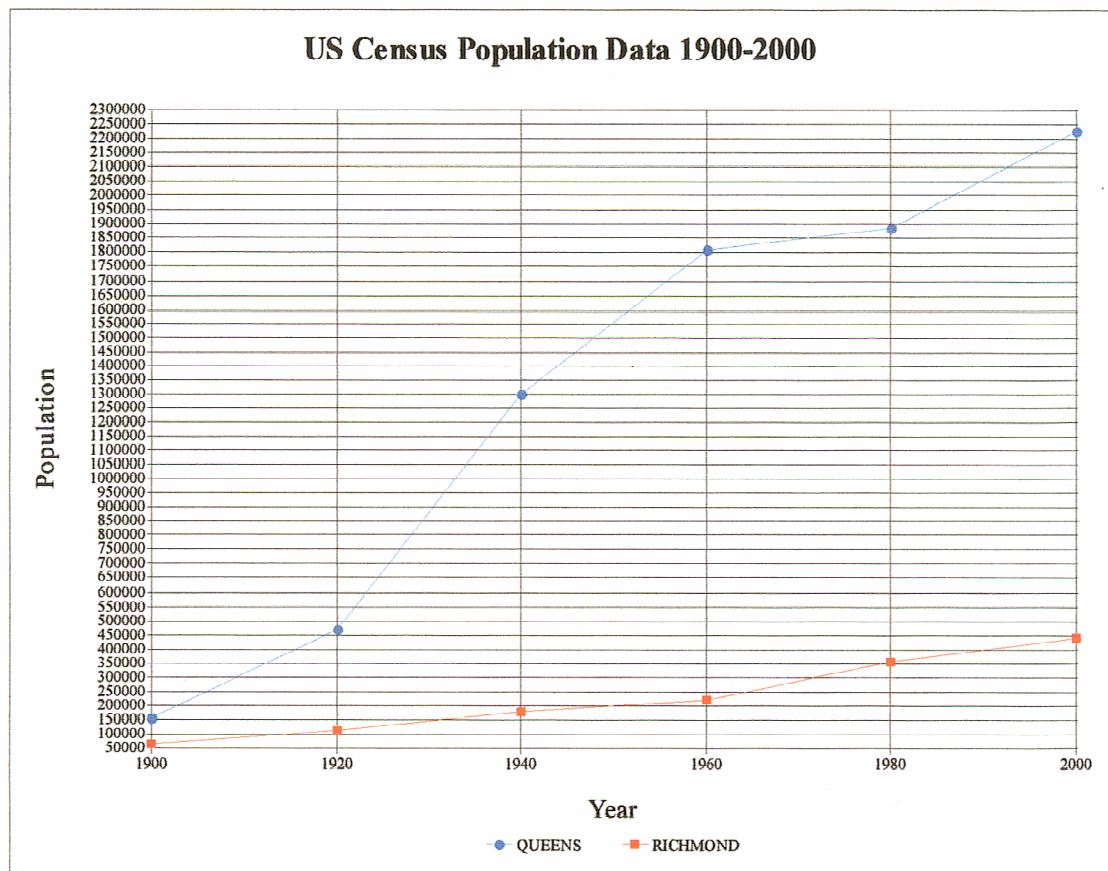## US Census Population Data 1900-2000

FIGURE 2. Populations of Queens and Richmond Counties, 1900-2000 (Y-axis interval = 50,000)

Queens included "potential rival ports [to New York Harbor] Jamaica and Little Neck bays" (Burrows and Wallace 1999: 1226-7). It is for this reason that Far Rockaway, formerly part of Hempstead, was included within the new Queens boundaries.

As part of the consolidated city, Queens and Staten Island flourished throghout the twentieth century. Increased mass transit connected the boroughs and intensified their union, allowing more people to live outside Manhattan while still having access to the city's varied resources. As the population exploded, the area was forced to augment its development in order to accommodate the rapidly increasing population.

In fact, between 1920 and 1960, the area of Queens increased by eight square miles while Staten Island increased by three, presumably through the creation of land via landfill along the shoreline. Much of this early twentieth century development in New York City was implemented by urban planner Robert Moses. Moses succeeded in his quest to reshape the city's landscape, but at the same time destroyed much of its historic value.

The remainder of the twentieth century saw similar growth patterns and increasing population density throughout New York City. At the present time, there is very little undeveloped land in Staten Island and even less in Queens, with the population maintaining its rapid rate of growth. This has resulted in a need to redevelop many areas in order to attend to the increasing amount of people residing in New York City, especially during the past half-century.

New York City's cemetery history

Due to the fact that New York City remained a largely rural area for so long, most

of the city's early cemeteries were simple family burial plots, churchyards, or town cemeteries, including potter's fields (Sloane 1991). Family burial plots were the most common, especially early on when populations were too low to warrant communal burial locations or the constructions of church buildings with associated graveyards. Also, it was much easier to reserve a small section of farmland in the event that a family member should pass away. In some cases of New York's family burial grounds there were only a handful of burials, while others included several generations of relatives. The oldest gravesites were marked with plain stones, some displaying the deceased's initials, others displaying nothing at all. As time progressed and stone carving became a legitimate profession, more formal headstones were erected atop gravesites.

In the event that an individual was not buried on his or her family's property, he or she was most likely buried in a cemetery adjacent to, or for the social elite, within, their local church. As previously stated, this did not become a common practice until later in the seventeenth century when permanent churches were built and congregation sizes began to grow. Some of the oldest church cemeteries built during this time are still active to this day.

The third type of cemetery used in New York's early history were community cemeteries. In some communities, these public cemeteries were constructed on the outskirts of the town or village. However, these were often quickly moved or redeveloped in order to accommodate the town's growth. Town cemeteries and potter's fields were the only burial locations regulated by the government until the mid-nineteenth century, when cemeteries became increasingly common on the grounds of hospitals, orphanages, and other institutional facilities. Not all of these institutional facilities were managed by the

government as some were owned by private hospitals or religious associations.

Small, localized cemeteries remained the norm until the early 1800's when, a variety of factors brought about the abandonment of family cemeteries and led to the development of the large, grassy sanctuaries that we see today. This was an age where public health and sanitation were misunderstood, and a general fear that cemeteries were "receptacles of putrefying matter and red-hot beds of miasmata" (City of Boston 1879: 9) was common among most urban dwellers. This was not helped by the fact that these small cemeteries were filled past capacity. The decomposing bodies were left relatively close to the surface, creating an "embalming matrix, a foul-smelling, slimy mass of purification" (Mytum 1989: 286). Soon after, there developed a social desire to construct cemeteries not only away from family farms, but completely outside city limits in an attempt to prevent outbreaks of disease.

The concerns about public health coincided with the popularization of the "rural cemetery movement." This trend, which persists to this day, is typified by cemeteries with rural, park-like characteristics amidst the urban setting, creating a "rural-urban continuum" (Bender 1974: 210). At the same time that these rural cemeteries were established, any of the "unhealthy" cemeteries which were not relocated to other parts of the city were converted into parks in an attempt to create a similar rural ambiance (French 1974).

Rural cemeteries took on a social role and for a long time were the city's main recreation spots, combining "natural and rural landscapes" (Barrett and Barrett 2001: 1821). This role was then transferred to city parks towards the middle of the century (Sloane 1991). It was also hoped that cemeteries might bring about social

reform because of their ability to:

> *assuage the suffering of the mourner...make the young and careless pensive, the wise wiser; the vain would become aware of and correct their vanities the avaricious would be rendered less grasping, ambition would be purified, the lessons of history would be remembered and patriotism enhanced, theological truths would be more easily perceived and morality would be strengthened.* (French 1974: 52)

The switch from private burial grounds to rural cemeteries was extremely rapid, and it was aided by the gradual ban on burials in Manhattan. With the population increasing, Manhattan became overcrowded to the point where land was desperately needed for development and not for human interment. Laws restricting burials on the island began in 1831 and new burials were completely banned by 1851. The public became pressed to find large tracts of land on which to build cemeteries and they had to find such places in the outer boroughs. In the mid-1800's, Queens and Staten Island became host to the region's dead despite the fact that they were not legally incorporated into New York City until 1898.

Once large cemetery corporations became popular, the hundreds of family plots that were scattered around the city became outdated reminders of past social customs. Even the small cemeteries that had surrounded local churches for over a century fell out of favor with the general public. The old, obsolete burial places were quickly placed in jeopardy as the growing city struggled to expand.

METHODOLOGY

Research methods -- Using cemeteries as artifacts

The first phase of this research focused on locating as many cemeteries as possible

in the boroughs of Queens and Staten Island. This proved very difficult as the gentrification and urbanization of both counties has proliferated at a staggering rate during the past century. There are few areas which survived transformation and which serve as a reminder of the city's rural beginnings. Even fewer have been left unaltered, and many of the cemeteries which managed to escape total obliteration have been at least partly demolished[4]. Therefore, one of the goals of this project was to identify not only the locations of the cemeteries that still exist, but also the locations of the ones that have been destroyed and/or redeveloped.

After the location and status of each cemetery was determined, it became possible to identify patterns of land use for cemeteries in Queens and Staten Island. In addition, this data would indicate which types of cemeteries were more likely to be preserved or obliterated over time. A traditional archaeological approach to these kinds of questions might involve excavating burial sites and using the artifacts found within to look for answers. However, by examining the surface remnants of burial places, it is possible to gather enough information to formulate an answer simply. In this way, the cemeteries themselves are the artifacts.

A cemetery, or at least the stones found within, can be thought of as "a valuable laboratory in which to test many of the inferential methods employed by the archaeologist who works with material culture" (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966: 503). Grave markers can act as a primary source containing valuable information about a cemetery that might not

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[4] "Partly obliterated" cemeteries are defined here as those which have been partially destroyed, which have been removed and reconstructed in another location, or those which have not yet been redeveloped but which no longer show any external signs of human burial (i.e. grave markers) and are therefore vulnerable.

be accessible elsewhere. Written documentation and cartographic references can also be used as artifacts (Trinkhaus 1984) presenting a sufficient body of evidence without the destruction of a site.

Sources used

The primary sources of information for this study were the files of the New York City Cemetery Survey maintained by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). This project was started by the LPC in order to keep track of the city's cemeteries in order to determine their effect on future development. The files contain a great deal of information about individual cemeteries and include maps and references for further research. The LPC also maintains a large library of archaeological reports prepared by cultural resource management firms for hundreds of sites in New York. These reports contain pertinent information, often from archaeological digs, that is not available elsewhere.

Although the LPC files are voluminous, they are by no means complete, and significant additional research was completed in order to fill in the gaps. Further research was carried out at the New York Public Library, the Long Island Division of the Queens Public Library, the Bobst Library at New York University, the Hunter College Library, the Queens Historical Society, the Queens Topographical Bureau, the St. George Division of the New York Public Library (Staten Island), the Staten Island Topographical Bureau, the Staten Island Museum, and the Staten Island Institute of the Arts archives. Each location has its own unique collection, which, when combined with resources from other sites, creates a more complete profile of the city's cemetery history.

The most invaluable resources utilized for this study were historic maps. Maps are incredibly useful not only for their depictions of the exact locations of cemeteries, but for their ability to show changes in the cemeteries over time. In many cases, the footprints of cemeteries which were obliterated long ago could still be seen in the layout of the streets for many years after, and in some instances, they are still visible.

Detailed maps which pre-date the American Revolution are rare, so most of the maps consulted were created after the 1770's. In addition to hard copies of such maps located at the institutions named above, there are several map archives which can be accessed through the Internet. These include the New York Public Library's American Shores collection (http://www.nypl.org/research/midatlantic/), the Library of Congress Map Collection 1500-2004 (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html), and The David Rumsey Cartography Associates Map Collection (http://www.davidrumsey.com/), among others.

There is a variety of city atlases which have extremely precise maps of different city neighborhoods. The detail on these atlases is far greater than that of general maps and they often show smaller family cemeteries which cannot be found elsewhere. Even if the cemeteries themselves are not depicted, the older atlases almost always label the property holdings of individual families. Such indicators can then be used to estimate the location of a family's private graveyard. Some of the more useful atlases are Beers' atlas of Staten Island (1874), Robinson's atlas of the Borough of Richmond (1907), and Belcher-Hyde's atlas of Queens County (3 volumes published between 1901 and 1904).

In addition to historic maps, collections of insurance maps have been published by the Sanborn Map Company since the mid-1800's. Older versions of these maps often

show the locations of cemeteries before they were obliterated. They can also be used to track changes in the size of cemeteries as streets were widened and buildings were expanded around them. These maps were also consulted to obtain block and lot numbers which identify the location of each individual cemetery.

Documentary evidence was also used in an attempt to locate all of the cemeteries in Queens and Staten Island. While there have been many publications which chronicle the rural cemetery movement or which analyze gravestone designs, there are not many which focus solely on the cemeteries of New York City. There are even fewer which attempt to identify all of the city's cemeteries, including those that have been obliterated. In fact, most cemeteries are only briefly mentioned in church records, death records, wills, or biographical texts.

Perhaps the most thorough collection of information regarding New York City cemeteries is *The Graveyard Shift* by Carolee Inskeep (2000). This book profiles hundreds of cemeteries in all five boroughs. The only other major publication on the same topic, *Permanent New Yorkers: A Biographical Guide to the Cemeteries of New York* (Culbertson and Randall, 1987) documents only a handful. While Inskeep's book is the result of extensive research, it contains a number of significant errors and questionable citations (there is at least one instance of text from different sources being combined within the same quotation). Regardless of its flaws, it provides an extensive bibliography which is useful for researching cemeteries in New York City. Those resources were then exploited to correct or clarify most of the author's inaccuracies.

One reference which proved to be exceptional was *Description of Private and Family Cemeteries in Queens*, a collection of maps and gravestone inscriptions from

cemeteries throughout Queens compiled for the Queens Topographical Bureau by Charles

U. Powell (1932, 1975). Because most of the sites were surveyed near 1919, just before

there was a surge in the destruction of cemeteries in New York City, this book preserves a

significant amount of information which would have been lost otherwise. There are also

exceptional maps included which not only show the locations of cemeteries, but also

provide diagrams of individuals grave positions with accompanying transcriptions of

gravestones.

No such work exists for the cemeteries of Staten Island, although an organization

called the Friends of Abandoned Cemeteries of Staten Island (FACSI) maintains a list of

past and present cemeteries from Richmond County. Like Inskeep's book, there are a

number of inaccuracies, however, it is the most complete list of Staten Island's cemeteries

currently available. It can be found online at the organization's official website at

http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyrichmo/cemeteries.html. A similar list, the *New York State*

Cemeteries Name and Location Inventory was published in 1999 by the Association of

Municipal Historians of New York State. This includes both Queens and Staten Island,

but it is not as extensive as the one published by FACSI.

Other important works consulted were *Staten Island and its People: A History*

1609-1929 by Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis (1930), and *Inscriptions on*

Homestead Graves on Staten Island by William T. Davis (1899). Both publications

include a great deal of data accumulated by Davis towards the end of the nineteenth

century. As borough historian, Davis took a great interest in the county's cemeteries and

spent a good deal of time recording gravestone inscriptions. These were then published

in his 1899 work and incorporated into the comprehensive history of Staten Island which

he co-authored with Leng (1930).

Finally, newspaper articles were influential primary resources for this project. Newspapers often reported on the establishment and/or demolition of cemeteries and, more notably, the discovery of cemeteries which had been long forgotten. The *New York Times* was the most frequently used reference simply because of its antiquity, but other local papers were useful as well, including the *Long Island Star*, the *Staten Island Advance*, and the *North Shore Daily Journal*.

Data limitations

It is important to note that there are many holes in the data which may have skewed the final results. In many cases, especially regarding cemeteries that were established in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, information regarding the date of establishment or obliteration could not be ascertained. Additionally, only cemeteries for which sufficient information could be found were included in this analysis. Therefore, this project does not reference every cemetery which ever existed in New York City. However, a sufficient number of cases were examined to identify significant trends.

For some cemeteries, an exact location could not be determined, so an approximate location was established based on information found in primary or secondary textual sources. If a cemetery's location could not be narrowed down to more than a few blocks, it was omitted from this study. Similarly, if there was insufficient information to prove where a cemetery was located, or if it existed at all, it was also left out of the final analysis.

As with location, the exact date that a cemetery was established or went out of use

could not be verified in many cases, so an assumptive date was generated. This was most often determined by the dates on surviving headstones, but also by the construction and/or demolition of associated churches, its first or last appearance on maps, or the construction date of any buildings which now occupy the site.

To calculate the population density of both Queens and Staten Island, data was obtained from the records of the United States Federal Census, the first of which was conducted in 1790. The original, hand-written ledgers maintained by census takers from 1790 to 1930 are available on the Internet (http://www.ancestry.com) and are useful in calculating the total populations of individual neighborhoods or towns. The official website for the United States Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov) provides and online version of the demographic data compiled from each census between 1790 and 1900 which was originally published by the Department of State. Similar publications for each census conducted after 1900 are available in book form and were accessed at the New York Public Library and the Jacqueline Grennan Wexler Library at Hunter College. In only one instance was there a significant discrepancy between the population figures from the handwritten ledgers and the official census publication (in 1840, the latter was higher by 662 people in Staten Island). This was most likely due to the result of missing ledger pages resulting in an underestimation of the neighborhood totals.

The 1790 and 1800 censuses were examined as well as every other census taken thereafter. Richmond County was divided into several census districts, Castleton (later Ward 1), Northfield (Ward 3), Southfield (Ward 4), Westfield (Ward 5) and, beginning with the 1860 census, Middletown (Ward 2).

Until the time of consolidation, Queens included what is now Nassau County.

Early Queens Census totals therefore include numbers from Hempstead and Oyster Bay. For the purposes of this study, the Queens totals have been recalculated to include only the areas which are included in the county today. The Queens County populations listed hereafter include only Long Island City (Ward 1), Newtown (Ward 2), Flushing (Ward 3), Jamaica (Ward 4) and, after 1900, Far Rockaway (Ward 5). Far Rockaway was, until consolidation, included within Hempstead, which was a very large area with a high population. Because of this, population data from Far Rockaway has been omitted for all census calculations before 1900 so that it would not skew the data.

Figures and maps

All maps were created using Adobe Illustrator, version 9. Figures 2-3 are superimposed over New York State geographic information systems digital raster quadrangle maps downloaded from the New York State Geographic Information Systems Clearinghouse (http://www.nysgis.state.ny.us/gisdata/quads/). Neighborhood boundaries found in figures 4 and 5 were based on those found on similar maps from Macy (1998). Figures 7-14 were created with Microsoft Works Spreadsheet.

Description of the data set -- Queens

Type	TOTAL	Active	Preserved	Obliterated	Partially Obliterated
Military (1 unknown)	2	----------	1	----------	----------
Native American	1	----------	----------	1	----------
Non-Sectarian	8	8	----------	----------	----------
Public and Potter's Field	6	----------	1	5	----------
Private/ Family	36	----------	15	17	4
Religious	42	25	11	5	----------
TOTAL	95	33	28	28	4

TABLE 1. Breakdown of Queens County cemeteries by type and status

As Table 1 shows, most of Queens' ninety-five cemeteries are either religious (44.2%) or private/family (37.9%). The remainder is composed of non-sectarian[5] (8.4%), public and potter's fields (6.3%), military (2.1%) and Native American (1.1%). There is not a great difference between the number of active, preserved, or obliterated (in whole or in part) cemeteries; each makes up roughly a third of the sample (34.7%, 29.5%, and 33.7%, respectively). The number of obliterated cemeteries is greater than the number of preserved cemeteries, but only by 4.2%.

There is a great deal of variation, however, within the individual cemetery types with respect to current status. Of the religious cemeteries, 59.5% are active, 26.2% are preserved, 11.9% have been obliterated, and 2.4% are unknown. The numbers for the

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[5] Non-sectarian cemeteries are owned by private cemetery organizations but are not exclusive to particular religious, ethnic, or kin groups.

private/family cemeteries show a very different trend, with no active cemeteries, 41.7% preserved, and 58.3% obliterated (including partially obliterated cemeteries). Only one of the six public cemeteries and potter's fields is preserved (17%) while the rest are obliterated. It is interesting to note that the one public cemetery which was preserved, Prospect Cemetery, was originally established as a religious cemetery. This religious association could very well have led to its preservation. In addition, 100% of the non-sectarian cemeteries are active, 100% of the Native American Cemeteries (with a sample size of one) were obliterated, and one of the two military cemeteries is preserved while the other is of unknown status.

As shown by Figure 3, there was a tremendous surge in the establishment of cemeteries in Queens between 1841 and 1860, with smaller peaks during 1721-1740, 1781-1800, and 1901-1920. A similar surge occurred in the number of cemeteries obliterated between 1921 and 1940, but to a lesser degree. The first instance of cemetery obliteration occurred in 1849, and the last in 1958. The first establishment of a cemetery was in approximately 1652, and the last was in 1945.

Although the time between a cemetery's first burial and its obliteration ranged from 7 to 249 years, the average in Queens was 131.1 years. Furthermore, the average time between a cemetery's last burial and its obliteration was 44.2 years with a range of zero to 124 years (see Table 5).

Description of the data set -- Staten Island

Type	TOTAL	Active	Preserved	Obliterated	Partially Obliterated
Institutional	9	----------	3	6	----------
Non-Sectarian	7	5	2	----------	----------
Public and Potter's Field	3	----------	1	----------	2
Private/ Family	28	----------	8	19	1
Religious	36	19	12	5	-------------
TOTAL	83	24	26	30	3

TABLE 2. Breakdown of Richmond County cemeteries by type and status

Like Queens, most of Staten Island's eighty-three cemeteries are either religious (43.4%) or private/family (33.7%) (see Table 2). The rest of the sample is composed of non-sectarian (8.4%), public and potter's fields (3.6%), and institutional cemeteries (10.8%). There is a greater difference between the number of active, preserved, or obliterated (in whole or in part) within the Staten Island sample when compared to Queens. Only 28.9% are active, 31.3% preserved, and 39.7%. The number of obliterated cemeteries is greater than the number of preserved cemeteries by 8.4%, twice that of Queens.

There is also a great deal of variation within the individual cemetery types with respect to current status. Of Staten Island's religious cemeteries, 52.8% are active, 33.3% preserved, and 13.9% obliterated. Private/family cemeteries exhibit the opposite pattern, with none active, 28.6% preserved, and a staggering 71.5% has been obliterated (including partially obliterated cemeteries). Only one of the three public cemeteries and potter's fields is preserved (33%) while the rest are partially obliterated (67%). In addition, 100% of the non-sectarian cemeteries are currently active and just one-third of the institutional cemeteries are preserved while the rest have been obliterated.

Figure 4 depicts patterns of cemetery establishment which are similar to those of Queens. Like Queens, Staten Island also experienced an enormous surge in the establishment of cemeteries in Staten Island between 1841 and 1860. There is no such surge in the number of cemeteries obliterated, however, and the rate of obliteration exhibits a more consistent pattern. In this case, the first instance of obliteration occurred in the 1730's, and the last in 1990. The first establishment of a cemetery took place in the 1680's, and the last in 1985.

For Staten Island, the amount of time between a cemetery's first burial and its obliteration ranges from 29 to 219 years, with an average of 110.72. The average time between a cemetery's last burial and its obliteration was 55.1 years with a range of zero to 139 years (see Table 6).

Comparisons and implications

Among the active cemeteries in Queens, an overwhelming amount are either Jewish (55%) or Non-Sectarian (24%). The bulk of these active cemeteries were established between 1850 and 1870, although the dates range from 1848 to 1945. On the other hand, the active cemeteries in Staten Island are highly variable in age and the range of their dates of establishment covers 1696 to 1985. The greatest number was established between 1900 and 1910, while 25% were constructed before 1850. In addition, most of Staten Island's cemeteries are Catholic (25%) and Non-Sectarian (21%), while only 17% are Jewish.

This data indicates that Queens has been heavily influenced by the rural cemetery movement while Staten Island was not. Staten Island cemeteries were probably
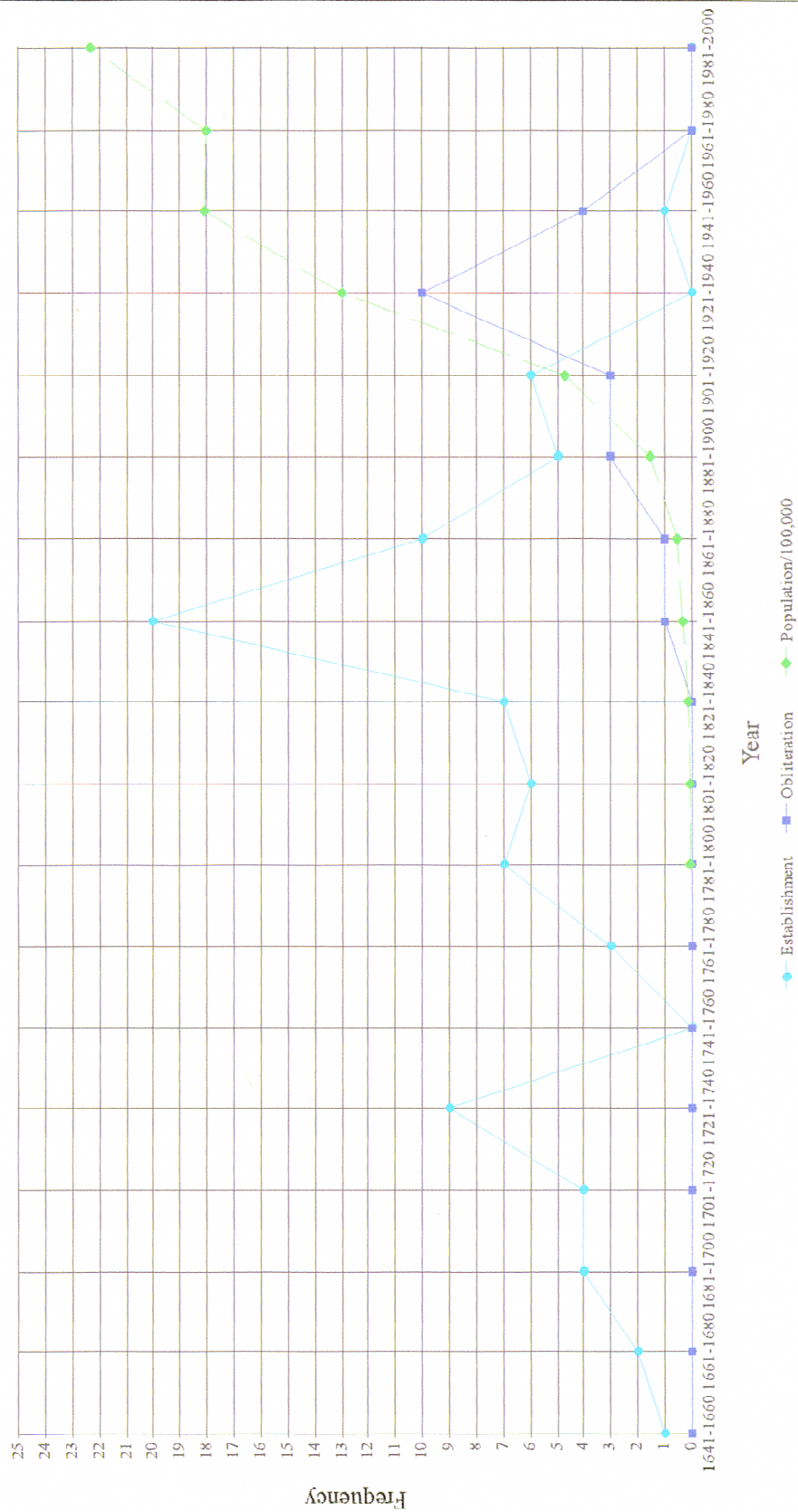
FIGURE 3. Queens County Cemeteries: number of cemeteries established and obliterated by year (1641-2000) along with population data which has been scaled to fit this graph (the population was divided by 100,000). Total number of established cemeteries = 95; 10 cemeteries have been omitted due to lack of accurate information. The number of obliterated and partially obliterated cemeteries = 32; 10 cemeteries have been also been omitted.

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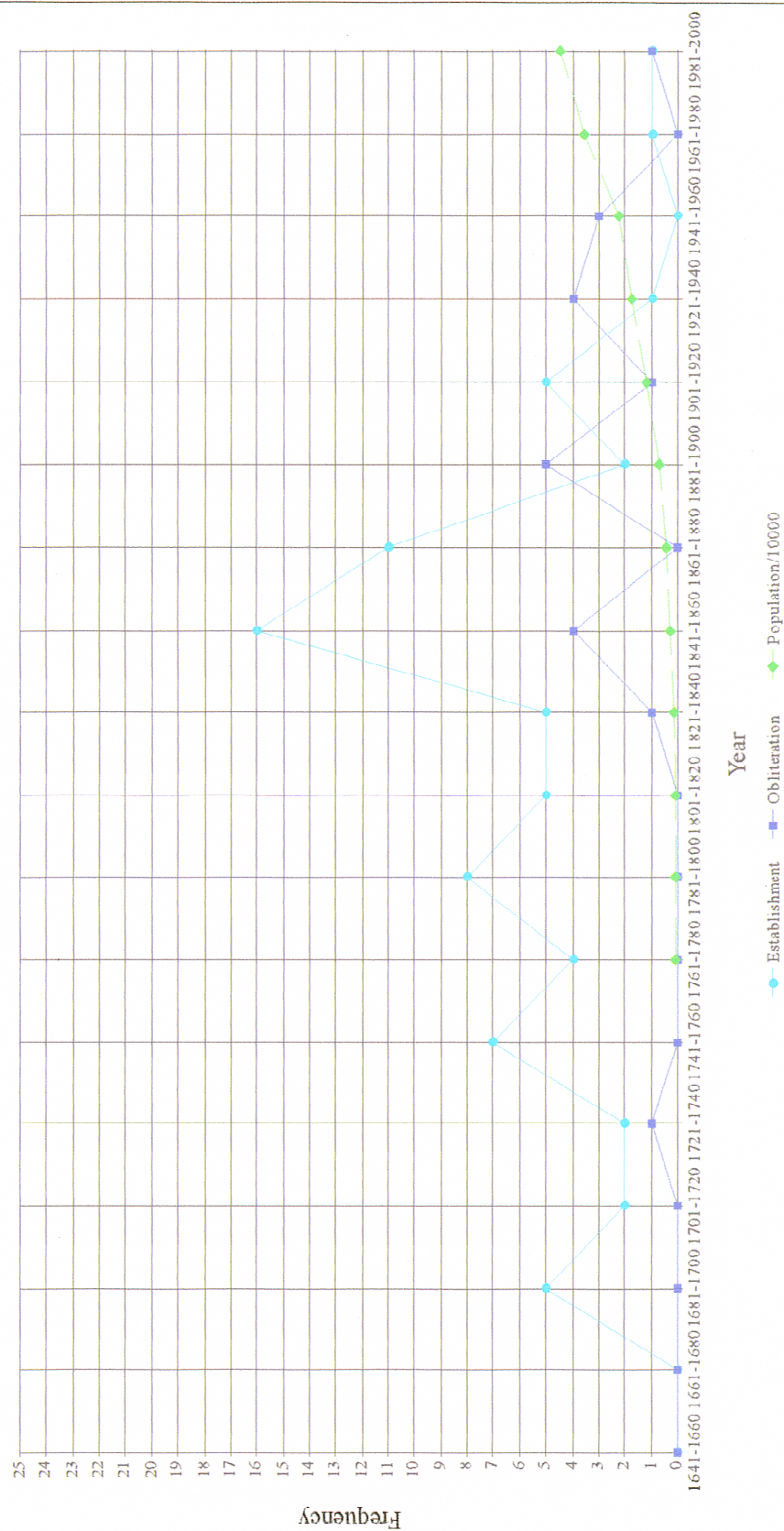## Richmond Cemeteries: Establishment, Obliteration, and Population

FIGURE 4. Richmond County Cemeteries: number of cemeteries established and obliterated by year (1641-2000) along with population data which has been scaled to fit this graph (the population was divided by 100,000). Total number of established cemeteries = 83; 8 cemeteries have been omitted due to lack of accurate information. The number of obliterated and partially obliterated cemeteries = 33; 13 cemeteries have been also been omitted.
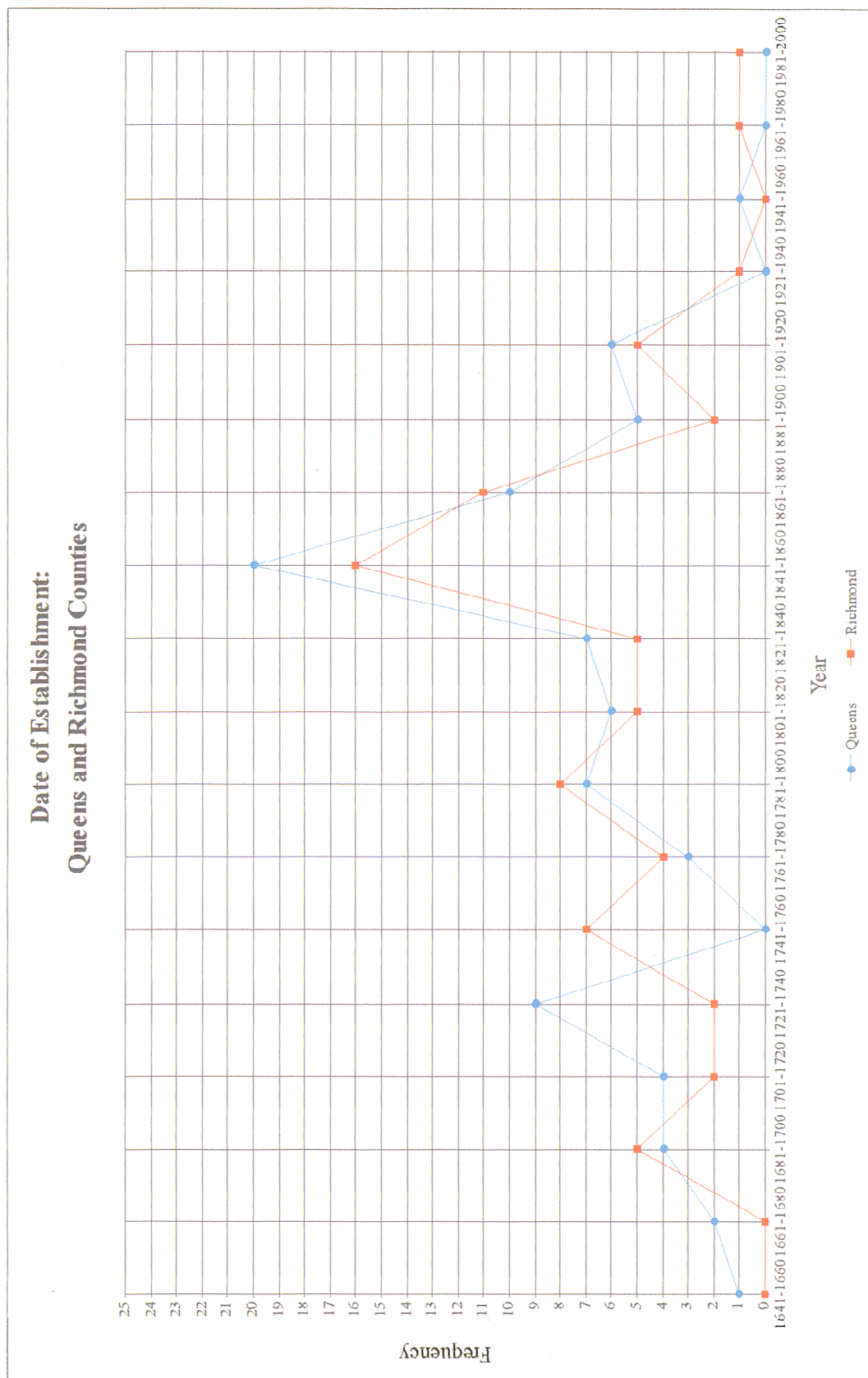
Date of Establishment: Queens and Richmond Counties

FIGURE 5. Comparison of the dates of establishment of cemeteries in Queens and Richmond Counties.

Date of Obliteration:
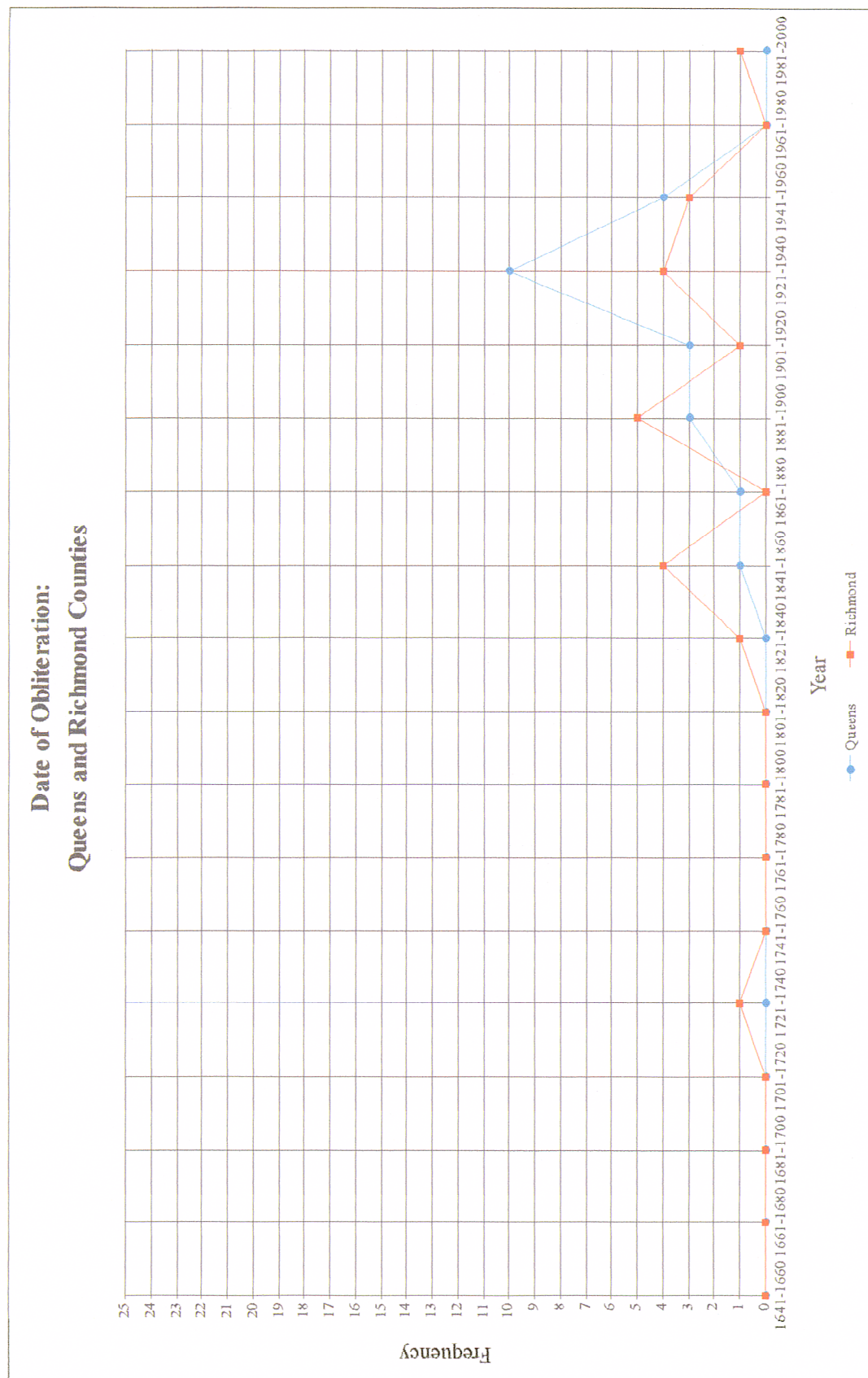**Queens and Richmond Counties**

FIGURE 6. Comparison of the dates of obliteration of cemeteries in Queens and Richmond Counties.

influenced more by need than by ideological shifts. It could also signify that the rural cemetery movement had a greater effect on the establishment of Jewish and Non-Sectarian cemeteries, as all such cemeteries were established in the mid-nineteenth century and nearly all remain active. It should also be noted that there were many cemeteries established for the burial of poor or indigent Jews, as they were traditionally not buried in potter's fields or public cemeteries (Seitz and Miller 1996: 127).

Aside from the active cemeteries, Queens and Staten Island exhibit similar data with regard to dates of cemetery establishment and obliteration. This is especially true for cemetery establishment, for which both boroughs show nearly identical patterns (see Figure 5). However, the rates of establishment do not appear to be correlated with population growth (see Figures 3 and 4). While both counties experienced increases in cemetery establishment at around the same time that the population begins its significant upward climb, namely, between 1820 and 1860, the population continued to increase rapidly thereafter while the number of established cemeteries decreased. The surge in cemetery establishment that occurred at this time is likely due more to the ban of human burials in Manhattan than due to population growth.

On the other hand, there does seem to be a correlation between population growth and the obliteration of cemeteries. The patterns of obliteration for Queens and Staten Island are not identical, although there is a general increase for both areas between 1841 and 1921 (Figure 6). The rate of cemetery obliteration in Queens County is nearly identical to that of the increasing population (Figure 3). This is probably the result of the post-consolidation development boom and subsequent population increase that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century.

However, in Staten Island, the population expanded at a steady rate while the number of obliterated cemeteries fluctuated (Figure 4). The oscillating pattern of obliteration began between 1841 and 1860, at the same time that cemetery establishment peaked. The different patterns of obliteration observed in the two counties were most likely caused by the fact that Queens is twice the size of Staten Island (United States Bureau of the Census 1921), and is not geographically isolated.

While both counties began constructing more cemeteries in the mid-nineteenth century, Queens was able to do so with fewer restrictions. There was more land available for use and, at first, there was sufficient space on which to develop without having to obliterate cemeteries. However, Staten Island's extreme space limitations would have forced its residents to sacrifice older cemeteries to make room for growing number of inhabitants. As the population grew slowly, the need for more land would vary from year to year, creating an equally variable pattern of cemetery obliteration.

For the same reasons, the two boroughs exhibit different trends in cemetery land use. In Queens, nearly all of the cemeteries were located in the northern half of the county, where the population has always been significantly larger (see Maps 4a and 4b). This portion of Queens also contains the greatest number of obliterated cemeteries (see Maps 2a and 2b). In Staten Island, however, cemeteries are more equally dispersed across the island (see Maps 5a and 5b). The obliterated cemeteries are also evenly dispersed (see Maps 3a and 3b), and, unlike Queens, there are no areas characterized by an overwhelming presence of cemeteries, obliterated or otherwise.

For both counties, the obliterated cemeteries were, for the most part, older cemeteries which had not been active for some time. The average time between first

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burial and obliteration was well over one hundred years for both Queens and Richmond Counties, and the average time between the last known burial and obliteration was 44-55 years. Therefore, on average, at least one generation had passed before a cemetery was obliterated. This gives further credence to the theory that with increased age, cemeteries begin to lose their social ties to the living community and therefore become expendable.

Overall, the number of obliterated and partially obliterated cemeteries in Staten Island was 6% higher than that of Queens. However, the two samples are relatively similar in their basic makeup: the number of religious cemeteries in either county differs by only 0.8%, private and family cemeteries differ by 4.2%, and public cemeteries differ by 2.7%, with Queens having the higher value in all cases.

There is an astonishing difference between the two boroughs with regard to the preservation of private/family cemeteries. The number of private/family cemeteries completely or partially obliterated in Staten Island was 13.2% larger than that of Queens. As stated above, due to its smaller area, Staten Island did not require the same population density to create an urgent need for developable land.

The number of institutional facilities which were constructed on Staten Island (10.8% of its cemetery sample) indicates that the government and certain private groups controlled a great deal of land. These factors, combined with the island's geographic isolation, would have made available land even more scarce, and more desirable. Therefore, it is not surprising that as the county developed, private/family burial plots would have been the victims of the island's development.

The number of preserved religious cemeteries in Staten Island is 7.1% higher than that of Queens, although the number of active religious cemeteries is 6.7% lower. The

total quantity of obliterated religious cemeteries is also higher, but by only 2%. Overall, the amount of obliterated religious cemeteries is significantly lower than the amount of obliterated private/family cemeteries for both counties.

This differentiation is most likely the result of three ideological factors. First, as previously stated, religious cemeteries have a sacred connotation because of their association with a deity or the afterlife. This generates a greater social bias toward preserving them and creates more emotional and bureaucratic obstacles to their obliteration. Second, the fact that religious cemeteries are still active to this day while private/family cemeteries are not is indicative of an ideological shift resulting from the rural cemetery movement. Many of the larger rural cemeteries are managed by religious institutions. Therefore, when society began to prefer such cemeteries in the mid-nineteenth century, private/family cemeteries lost much of their importance. Lastly, because of the fact that private/family cemeteries were exclusive to kin groups, unrelated individuals would have little or no attachment to the burial plots. However, religious cemeteries are more communal and therefore open to broader range of the population, creating a wider network of people to ensure its preservation.

It would be expected that the rate of obliteration of public and institutional cemeteries would be rather high because the government charged with maintaining them would presumably be more concerned with finances than memorialization. The costs of maintaining a cemetery would be weighed against the value of the land to determine whether selling the land or using it for other purposes would be more cost-effective. This is the case for both Queens and Staten Island. In Staten Island, two-thirds of the public and institutional cemeteries were obliterated, as were all but one of the public cemeteries

located in Queens (83%).

It is also interesting to point out the lack of institutional cemeteries in Queens. Such cemeteries were reserved for poor, diseased, or transient individuals. It appears that they were placed on Staten Island[6] in order to socially and geographically isolate such people from the bulk of the city's population. This is especially true of the cemeteries associated with quarantine stations, which, as a result of public outrage, were frequently moved around from place to place until they were finally based on Staten Island.

Of the nine institutional cemeteries on Staten Island, seven were dedicated to orphans, the elderly, the poor, or sick or quarantined individuals. The other two were devoted to retired seamen. Public health concerns and social inequality had a substantial effect on the obliteration of these cemeteries. Not surprisingly, the two sailors' cemeteries were preserved while all but one of the others has since been obliterated. The exception is the cemetery on the grounds of Mount Loretto, an orphanage. This remains a functioning institution, which is probably why its cemetery has been preserved. Had this institution closed its doors, the cemetery would most likely have been obliterated along with the rest of the graves containing people of lesser social status.

It appears that the only way for the graves of the poor or the sick to receive protection is for them to be included within religious cemeteries. In both Queens and Staten Island, several religious cemeteries were dedicated to the burial of the poor. Many others reserved separate plots for such individuals. These cemeteries have been relatively untouched. In some cases, there has been an effort made to erect grave markers (both

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[6] Other burial grounds were intentionally established on the isolated islands off the coast of Queens, including Randall's Island and Hart's Island, but as they are part of Manhattan and Bronx Counties, respectively, they have not been included in this study.

individual and communal) in order to restore some degree of humanity to these types of graves (Salmon 2005). Such care has not been given to the graves of the indigent individuals buried in hospital or quarantine cemeteries and potter's fields.

In addition, social inequality would presumably cause burial grounds associated with minority groups to have high rates of obliteration. In both Queens and Staten Island there were at one time several African-American and Native American burial grounds dispersed throughout the counties. Of the five in Queens, all were obliterated between 1928 and 1953. Curiously, two of these were religious cemeteries belonging to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Therefore, it seems that in some cases, even a church is not powerful enough to guarantee grave protection.

However, of Staten Island's four minority cemeteries, only one was obliterated (the Cherry Land Second Asbury African Methodist Episcopal Church Cemetery, in 1951) while the rest have been preserved. In addition, the Frederick Douglass Memorial Cemetery (still active) was originally exclusive to African-Americans, but has since become open to individuals of all ethnicities. Census data shows that historically there has been a smaller population of individuals of African descent in Staten Island as compared to Queens. It might be speculated that a smaller population might have enhanced community ties which would lead to increased preservation. Another possibility is that Staten Island may have had a more diverse population over the years, as evidenced by its greater religious diversity (see Tables 9 and 10). This increased diversity may have reduced the degree to which race and religion generated social inequality. A conclusive answer would require further study.

Cemeteries are built by societies to preserve their shared ideologies and to create a sense of immortality for the deceased interred therin. In New York City, cemeteries began as private lots on family farms or churchyards. These types of burial locations were soon abandoned in favor of more spacious, rural sanctuaries. When burials in Manhattan were outlawed in the first half of the nineteenth century, the outer boroughs, including Queens and Staten Island, became the repositories of the city's deceased population. Queens was more influenced by the rural cemetery movement, and many of the cemeteries which are active today are large, spacious, and were constructed in the mid-nineteenth century. In Staten Island, it seems that cemeteries were built on an as-needed basis and the cemeteries which are active today were established over a period of almost 300 years.

For Queens cemeteries, 33.7% have been obliterated (in whole or in part), 29.5% have been preserved, and 34.7% remain active. In Staten Island, 39.7% have been obliterated (in whole or in part), 31.3% have been preserved, and 28.9% are still active. The increase in obliterated cemeteries in Staten Island is probably the result of its small size and geographic isolation. Unlike Queens, where there was plenty of room to accommodate the rising population before cemeteries had to be demolished, Staten Island had much less available land and very little possibility of expansion. Therefore, there was more pressure on Staten Islanders to obliterate cemeteries in order to provide more room for the living population.

In both counties, most cemeteries are associated with religious or family groups. Private/family and public cemeteries are the most susceptible to obliteration, while

religious cemeteries are very rarely destroyed. This was especially true in Staten Island, where a greater portion of private/family cemeteries was destroyed than in Queens (71.5% and 58.3%, respectively). Private/family cemeteries are in greater danger because of their exclusivity to specific kin networks. Individuals from other family groups will have no emotional attachment to them and are more likely to obliterate these types of burial grounds. This reflects an overall loss in the use of community as a source of social identity.

In addition, public and institutional cemeteries are destroyed more often. This is because of the lower social status of the individuals buried within. Individuals who are indigent or diseased are viewed as being less than human, and therefore, their graves are not given the same protection. Institutional cemeteries were constructed on Staten Island to separate, both socially and geographically, such lesser individuals from the remainder of the population. Similar social inequalities seem to have resulted in the obliteration of all the minority cemeteries located in Queens. However, in Staten Island, minority cemeteries have a high rate of preservation. This suggests that Staten Island had a more diverse and tolerant community in terms of race and religion.

On average, the cemeteries which have been obliterated were more than a century old (see Tables 5 and 8). These obliterated cemeteries had been inactive for an average of 40-50 years. Most cemeteries were obliterated between 1881 and 1940 as a direct result of the increasing population. In Staten Island, obliteration was more common because the fixed area of the island severely limits the amount of open/developable land. It can therefore be assumed that with increasing population density, aging cemeteries lose their cultural value. Such a loss makes it more likely that they will be obliterated in order to

create more room for the living.

Finally, the ban on human interments on the island of Manhattan caused a tremendous increase in the number of cemeteries established in the outer boroughs. This occurred between 1841 and 1860. Most of the cemeteries established at this time were large, rural cemeteries that were spacious enough to contain not only local interments, but the deceased from Manhattan as well. Many of the human remains from obliterated private/family cemeteries and churchyards were relocated to these cemeteries.

Cemeteries undoubtedly contain a profound amount of cultural information. However, according to Binford, "there is a surprising lack of literature in which attempts are made to deal with burials as a distinct class of variable phenomena" (1971: 6). More importance should be placed on the wealth of social knowledge recorded in cemeteries, especially in New York City. Cemeteries are intentionally created to present social ideologies to future populations. This should not be ignored since the study of cemeteries can allow us to understand and analyze cultural shifts. It has been said that the "data base of archaeology offers the only source for the development of a true theory of culture change" (Bartel 1982: 55), and cemeteries play an important role in understanding such change.

Future studies should analyze the patterns of land use and preservation for cemeteries in the other boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. This could provide a complete picture of the cemetery history of the entire area. This could also determine whether or not the cemetery histories of Queens and Staten Island reflect the trends seen throughout the rest of the city or if they have developed independently. Such knowledge could therefore provide an anthropological view of the changes in New York

City's culture over time in a way that historical accounts cannot.

In addition, further research should focus on the make-up of the populations of both Queens and Staten Island. Such information might help to explain the increased religious diversity and preservation of minority cemeteries which has been observed in Staten Island as compared to Queens.