

“Although He Sleeps”: A Study of Old City Cemetery and St. John’s Episcopal Cemetery
in Tallahassee, Florida.

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Capstone Project

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There is a dismal process going on in the grave, ere dust can return to its kindred dust, which the imagination shrinks from contemplating; and we seek still to think of the form we have loved, with those refined associations which it awakened when blooming before us in youth and beauty.

~Washington Irving¹

Over the past few decades, scholars have debated why 19th century Americans excessively mourned their dead, at least by today's standards. Several explanations have been offered: changes in religious beliefs concerning afterlife, science and technology, the very pervasiveness of death, and continued existence, albeit in an altered state. Archaeologists Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz documented transitioning attitudes towards death by studying changing iconography on American headstones spanning the 17th and 19th centuries. By studying three recurrent symbols, the death's head, cherubs, and urns and willow trees, they showed how society's interpretation of what happened after death slowly changed from the pessimistic 'as I am now you soon must be' mentality of the early Puritan gravestones, to the softer image of cherubs with their promise of an afterlife, towards the more generic but evocative image of mourning: the urn and willow.² Likewise, historian Richard Betterly's study showed how a Tennessee graveyard "reflected a movement away from the stark realities of death in Colonial America pronounced in the death's head effigy symbols of Puritan gravemarkers ... as Victorian romanticism began to dominate cemetery architecture, design, and motifs after 1840."³ Whereas, historian David Sloane stated that during the 19th century, "the boundary between the

¹ Washington Irving, "Rural Funerals," in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, accessed September 24, 2013, (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2048/2048-h,htm#link2H_4_0019).

² Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz, "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries," *American Antiquity*, 31.4 (1966): 506-508, accessed February 17, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2694382>.

³ Richard D. Betterly, "St. John's Episcopal Churchyard: Material Culture and Antebellum Class Distinction," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 53.2 (1994): 91, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42628371>.

living and the dead was unclear.”⁴ Sloane argued that science and technology diminished religious influence on life by offering alternative explanations for sickness other than God’s will, and sentimental religion reduced the horror of death.⁵ Historian Lewis Saum simply attributed it to the pervasiveness of death in the 19th century. According to Saum, very few scholars notated “the intimacy most people had with death. Their’s was an immediate, not a derivative or vicarious awareness.”⁶

However, even though 19th century Americans were surrounded by death, it should not be assumed that they were no longer affected by it. In his study of Justice Joseph Story’s personal letters, scholar S.M. Silverman noted that Story acutely felt the loss of each of his children, friends, and family to such a point that he coped through several methods: working, poetry, religion, and his involvement with the Mount Auburn cemetery in Massachusetts.⁷ Silverman further stated that Story essentially negated the loss of his loved ones by giving “significance to the death by providing for a new or continuing life.”⁸ It is with this point that Silverman offers an extremely plausible explanation for why 19th century Americans immersed themselves in a culture of death and one that even today’s modern society can not only understand, but relate to, as well. By erecting sacred spaces such as cemeteries, creating a plethora of consolation literature and poetry, constructing mourning jewelry, and etching words of remembrance on headstones, mourners breathed life in to their dead. Their loved ones may not have been present in the flesh, but they lived on through memory and the objects that evoked their existence.

⁴ David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 145-146.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁶ Lewis O. Saum, “Death in the Popular Mind of Pre-Civil War America,” *American Quarterly* 26.5 (1974): 479, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711886>.

⁷ S.M. Silverman, “Justice Joseph Story and Death in Early 19th-Century America,” *Death Studies* 21.4 (1997): 410.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 412.

The purpose of this capstone project is to observe how people in 19th century Tallahassee mourned their dead through the examination of epitaphs within local cemeteries and how they fit within the historical narrative of death. In order to accomplish this objective, I took a two prong approach with the creation of a website⁹ and a paper describing the finer details of the project and its results. The website is directed to the general public and anyone interested in the topic. It also serves as a visual representation of many of the gravestones discussed in further depth within the paper. Essentially, the website is meant to incite interest in the topic, give a brief history of cemeteries in America with a focused concentration on Tallahassee, showcase the results of the project, and point the interested party to recommended literature so that they may expand their knowledge. Concerning the paper, I will first address the findings and perspectives of researchers from several different disciplines concerning death and burials in 19th century America to establish a historical narrative. After the historiography follows the methodology used to obtain information on the two cemeteries selected for this project based on their age, size, location, and popularity: Old City Cemetery and St. John's Episcopal Cemetery. Next, the paper discusses the findings of the research conducted. The results have been divided into three separate categories: roles and/or relationships, bible verses, and prose and/or poetry. Naturally the conclusion will follow with additional recommendations for research.

Historiography

The study of cemeteries has captured the attention of scholars from many disciplines: architecture, art, history, and archeology, just to name a few. Each scholar has focused on different attributes of cemeteries in regards to their discipline or interests and has approached their chosen topic accordingly, but many of the questions they have asked have been very

⁹ <http://tallahasseececemeteries.weebly.com/>

similar. Several questions have concerned the actual formation of cemeteries and the events leading up to their creation. Other scholars have asked the significance of certain recurrent symbols in an attempt to explore religious meanings, or in some cases, revealed repressed feminine desire. Whereas, some scholars have observed and questioned the actual epitaphs to discover how Americans perceived and experienced death. This portion of the project will identify these scholars and discuss their findings along with any further questions that their research has uncovered.

Concerning the formation of cemeteries in the 19th century, historian Stanley French published an article on the formation of the first rural cemetery Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, based on popular literature and written accounts from which he drew several conclusions. According to French, health hazards from overcrowded burial grounds and graveyards paved the way for the creation of rural cemeteries that boasted of open, natural landscapes set outside of the city.¹⁰ Dell Upton, an art historian, reiterated and expanded on French's argument in his study of 19th century New Orleans cemeteries when he stated that "traditional fears of death and the dead were magnified by new medical theories that attributed disease to the 'miasmas' emanating from low, damp places like graveyards."¹¹ Archaeologist Harold Mytum presented the health concerns due to overcrowding as not only an American problem, but as a European problem as well. Mytum stated that overcrowding in graveyards within Western Europe became such an issue that "bodies had to be interred over others, and in some graveyards this led to burial ever near the surface with consequent health risk ... the

¹⁰ Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly* 26.1 (1974): 42, accessed February 14, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2711566>.

¹¹ Dell Upton, "The Urban Cemetery and the Urban Community: The Origin of the New Orleans Cemetery," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 7 (1997): 133, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3514389>.

graveyard then became an embalming matrix, a foul-smelling, slimy mass of putrefaction.”¹² It should be noted that this callous disregard of the dead was a direct violation of how mourners believed the dead should be treated, especially their loved ones.¹³

Yet, health concerns were not the only reason 19th century American created rural cemeteries. French argued that after the initial response to health concerns, the founders of Mount Auburn created the cemetery to act as a cultural institution meant to instruct the living.¹⁴ Essentially, nature was to give instruction on “natural theology,” sculptures and art were “to render the lessons of history tangible and to inspire the sentiment of patriotism,” which was meant to inspire a feeling of home.¹⁵ In historian Blanche Linden’s comprehensive study of Mount Auburn, Linden explicitly stated that the primary reason for the creation of rural cemeteries did not lie just in public health reforms; rather “the impulse to improve burial practices and places stemmed as much from changing sensibilities as from fears that burying the dead in the midst of the cities endangered public health.”¹⁶ Echoing the sentiments of French, Linden reveals that one of the founders of Mount Auburn, Henry Dearborn, “believed that a cemetery, more than patriotic monuments in public places, should be representative of the

¹² Harold Mytum, “Public Health and Private Sentiment: The Development of Cemetery Architecture and Funerary Monuments from the Eighteenth Century Onwards,” *World Archaeology* 21.2 (1989): 286, accessed July 7, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/124914>.

¹³ French historian, Philippe Aries, one of the most often quoted experts on death and society, advised in his work, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, that Western Civilization endeavored to domesticate, or ‘tame’ death since the Middle Ages. Aries observed, through literature, that there was a consistent formula for how people died, which was witnessed by the family, friends, and neighbors. By the 19th century, Romanticism influenced people to be more concerned with “to death,” or the death of other (8-12). By the 19th century, a reoccurring obsession with loved ones dying a ‘good death’ appeared, which according to historian Judith Giesburg in her book *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front*, consisted of dying “in the company of loved ones, remaining conscious and resolute until the end. When a dying person faced death willingly, friends and family could be reassured of his salvation. As the final performance of life, death was an important family event in which survivors lent the dying man strength and said goodbye” (146-147).

¹⁴ French, “Cemetery as Cultural Institution”, 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-49.

¹⁶ Blanche M. G. Linden, *Silent City on a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston’s Mount Auburn Cemetery*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 117.

highest culture of the city and the nation.”¹⁷ The cemetery, then, would teach history and unite the nation as a whole.¹⁸¹⁹ On the other hand, historian Aaron Sachs argues that the rural cemeteries were established to reunite man with nature by “enshrine[ing] their kin in sacred groves and thereby establish[ing] a new kind of kinship with the land.”²⁰ Along the same lines, Diane Jones, an Associate Professor with Morgan State University, wrote an article on the African American cemetery Mount Auburn in Baltimore, Maryland, in which she argued that besides the obligatory cultural functions of the cemetery, the cemetery managed “to preserve the environment by providing organized green and open spaces.”²¹ So, what we see here is that a cemetery has several roles beyond the simple concept of disposing a body: cultural custodian, historian, patriot, and preservationist of the natural landscape.

With its roots in nature already established, what influenced the style of the cemeteries created in the 1800s? Linden extensively documented the direct influence from France’s Pere Lachaise Cemetery to the picturesque English gardens and even mentioned how Henry Dearborn requested material from Paris and London for inspiration because he believed that “the cemetery unified society, both on a private and public, a personal and national level.”²² Though Linden acknowledged the Greek and Egyptian influences that ran rampant throughout 19th century cemeteries, she did not fully explore why; instead, she referred to the fact that the style was

¹⁷ Ibid., 115.

¹⁸ Ibid., 146.

¹⁹ One of the most remarkable observations Linden makes while researching the material on Mount Auburn is that “the cemetery provided a ritualized mechanism by which men, unlike women in their private sphere, might manage their grief ... through a controlled expression of mourning, permitting them to get on with their life and work. They would master their sorrow by putting it aside, away from daily view, while going about their business in public.” Sadly, she does not elaborate more on this topic. pg 150.

²⁰ Aaron Sachs, “American Arcadia: Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Nineteenth-Century Landscape Tradition,” *Environmental History* 15.2 (2010): 208-209, accessed July 17, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20749670>.

²¹ Diane Jones, “The City of the Dead: The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery,” *Landscape Journal: design, planning, and management of the land*, 30.2 (2011): 226, accessed July 17 2014, doi: 10.1353/lnd.2011.0022.

²² Linden, *Silent City*, 147.

already popular in France, England, and America.²³ Stanley French mentioned the pagan influences when focusing on Justice Joseph Story's address at the grand opening of Mount Auburn in which Story spoke of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Hebrews who, in his opinion, properly mourned their dead.²⁴ He then attributed the Greek influences to the Greek revival which enjoyed popularity because of its ties to "republican principles."²⁵ Sachs suggested that the inspiration for 19th century cemeteries did not derive solely from the British and French interest in Egyptian and Greek culture; rather, he stated that the nature influence came from "a celebration of Native American death rituals and burial practices."²⁶ Sachs reached this conclusion due to the obsession with nature which dominated the early 19th century and from Justice Joseph Story's address at Mount Auburn which was inspired by "a celebration of Native American death rituals and burial practices."²⁷

Unfortunately, the majestic views of rural cemeteries like Mount Auburn and Laurel Hill received the most attention by scholars, which begs the question of how did people bury their dead if they lacked the funding or the space of the aforementioned cemeteries? Dell Upton provided one example in his study of New Orleans cemeteries in which he coined the term "reform cemetery" to describe cemeteries that did not necessarily meet the criteria to be called rural cemeteries, but still operated as cities of the dead.²⁸ According to Upton, these cemeteries were erected on the outskirts of town and reflected social standing and the architecture of the cities themselves which "reproduced the social divisions and the favored spatial organization of

²³ Ibid., 181.

²⁴ French, "Cemetery as Cultural Institution", 46.

²⁵ Ibid., 50.

²⁶ Sachs, "American Arcadia", 221.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Upton, "New Orleans Cemetery", 132.

the living city.”²⁹ Anthropologists, Barbara Little, Kim Lanphear, and Douglas Owsley, decided to test the idea of social status transcending death by excavating a small 19th century cemetery in Manassas, Virginia. They found that burials dating from the beginning of the 19th century possessed little to no decoration, but after the 1840s the burials become more ostentatious and the bodies themselves showed signs of wealth due to possessing healthy teeth and access to medical attention as was proved by a pessary located in one of the coffins.³⁰ Their research shed further light on how social status and wealth influenced the type of burial someone would receive.

When it comes to the monuments themselves, many researchers narrowed their questions to one specific area. One historian, Colleen McDannell, noticed that her peers tended to overlook the religious connotations found in the cemeteries due to the allure of the more popular pagan symbols.³¹ McDannell argued that Laurel Hill Cemetery provided immortality to those fortunate enough to be buried there as it “stood as a monument to memory, and any sign of decay weakened its ability to assure Philadelphians of their immortality. There was, in effect, no real death.”³² She noticed that in the later portion of the 19th century, three types of Christian symbols gained popularity throughout the cemetery: “the cross, the book, and the angel.”³³ Yet, why these three symbols? At their most basic understanding, all three represented eternal life or the hope for something better. McDannell added that these familiar images would have been in found in the homes of the living and because of this “families reflected the connection between

²⁹ Ibid., 139-141.

³⁰ Barbara J. Little, Kim M. Lanphear, and Douglas W. Owsley, “Mortuary Display and Status in a Nineteenth-Century Anglo-American Cemetery in Manassas, Virginia,” *American Antiquity* 57.3 (1992): 401, 412, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/280930>.

³¹ Colleen McDannell, “The Religious Symbolism of Laurel Hill Cemetery,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 111.3 (1987): 278, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20092118>.

³² Ibid., 290.

³³ Ibid., 292.

religion at home and in the public space of the cemetery.”³⁴ Ultimately, McDannell determined that Laurel Hill Cemetery revealed how “Philadelphians sought to elicit, control, and display their religious experience.”³⁵ However, English Professor at Gardner-Webb University, June Hobbs, took a more feminist approach when she evaluated cemeteries in the Deep South. She argued that the markers found in Southern cemeteries were highly sexualized and challenged the status quo of authoritative texts and church policies.³⁶ According to Hobbs, the elevation of the ideal southern woman caused her to suppress her sexual desires, even “though white women’s erotic desire had to be buried like a corpse in a rural graveyard to protect its purported ‘sacred’ quality,” the tombstones still managed to link the subdued desire and passion and free it in death.³⁷ Ultimately, Hobbs concluded that 19th century Americans controlled death through a thin veneer of pleasantries.³⁸

Another historian, Elisabeth Roark, studied the widespread usage of angels within American cemeteries and argued that their appearance illustrated “a growing emphasis on consolation rather than commemoration.”³⁹ Roark, not satisfied with the traditional view of angels just being another way 19th century Americans attempted to beautify death, decided to question their popularity, especially since they appeared in Protestant cemeteries which typically shunned Catholic imagery.⁴⁰ What she found was that angels “were the most direct and forceful reminders of the promise of eternal life” and that during the 19th century, Protestants slowly

³⁴ Ibid., 296, 302.

³⁵ Ibid., 278.

³⁶ June H. Hobbs, “Tombstone Erotics and Gender in the Graveyards of the South,” *Southern Quarterly* 39.3 (2001): 11.

³⁷ Ibid., 15.

³⁸ Ibid., 12.

³⁹ Elisabeth L. Roark, “Embodying Immortality: Angels in America’s Rural Cemeteries, 1850-1900,” *Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, 24 (2007): 57, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.archive.org/details/markers24asso>.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 57.

relented on their stance towards art and religion.⁴¹ Roark goes on to argue that the angels filled the dual roles of being “consolatory and didactic” towards the viewer and that their purpose was not to teach history, but to offer comfort and hope.⁴²

It is not surprising that the most popular icons in the cemetery offered hope, but how did mourners deal with the loss of a child? By the 19th century, Americans viewed children as innocent, free of worldly sin, and firmly associated with the home.⁴³ Ellen Snyder, historian and museum curator, studied children’s graves to find out how they were mourned. Snyder observed the popularity of sculpted sleeping children used as grave markers and noted that the depiction of sleep helped to soften the blow of death by making it seem less permanent.⁴⁴ Whereas, the sculpted empty chair or bed symbolized that emptiness that the mourners felt upon the death of their loved one.⁴⁵ Her conclusion, which ties in with Collen McDannell’s argument of immortality, was that children who died young remained forever unchanged, unblemished, and “forever innocents in a worldly world.”⁴⁶

In her article, “Say it with Flowers in the Victorian Cemetery,” June Hobbs warned fellow researchers to not let the commonality of certain motifs blind them to their inherent truths; for these clichés “are a discourse so attuned to a cultural need that they become a sort of shorthand for complex ideas.”⁴⁷ In order to illustrate this, Hobbs studied the meanings of flowers, which appear on the majority of grave markers in most cemeteries, to reveal their message. She categorized the flowers into two groups: those in which the deceased has been

⁴¹ Ibid., 66, 72.

⁴² Ibid., 88, 103.

⁴³ Ellen Marie Snyder, “Innocents in a Worldly World: Victorian Children’s Gravemarkers,” in *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, ed. Richard E. Meyer (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I. Research Press, 1989), 13.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁷ June Hadden Hobbs, “Say It with Flowers in the Victorian Cemetery,” *Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, 19 (2002): 241, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.archive.org/details/markers19asso>.

called forth to teach a lesson and those who emphasized the “transitory beauty of life.”⁴⁸ Hobbs explored literature and religious activities, such as flower missions in which Protestants sent flowers with biblical scripture in order to spread the word of God, to show how pervasive this ‘language of flowers’ was in the culture.⁴⁹ Essentially, Hobbs determined that flowers were mirror symbols due to the fact that “they point to death and to its polar opposite: fresh, budding youth, whether in the past or in heaven.”⁵⁰ It is this duality that Hobbs starts to chip away at in the conclusion of her article; for Hobbs recognizes that “the process of memorialization is a two-edged sword, defeating the ravages of time even as it injures the one who wields it.”⁵¹

So far, historians have concentrated largely on the formation of cemeteries and the actual grave markers, but what about the words etched upon stone? Surely, the last words of the deceased or of the mourners would illustrate exactly how 19th century Americans mourned their dead. Unfortunately, very few researchers concentrated on the epitaphs; if they did, it was usually because they examined a marker in its entirety. Researchers Dianna George and Malcolm Nelson recognized that their peers focused mostly on the icons, and urged other researchers to not overlook the significance of the epitaphs. According to George and Nelson, the words chosen by the deceased or those who mourned them were “as accurate and intimate a statement as we are likely to find in durable physical form of things beyond mere fashion and price: feelings and attitudes, held both consciously and unconsciously, about the most ultimate

⁴⁸ Ibid., 244-245.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 247-261.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 262.

⁵¹ Ibid., 263.

matters.”⁵² They also warned against passing by gravestones that exhibited generic or unremarkable icons due to the fact that the epitaphs themselves may be of significance.⁵³

One historian, Michel Vovelle, decided to study the collective work of a 19th century American clergyman who had collected epitaphs from graves within the 13 colonies dating from 1647 to 1813, with a grand total of 750 inscriptions, to find the answer to the question of how colonial Americans “envisaged their final passage.”⁵⁴ He noticed two trends: women steadily increased in importance by the beginning of the 19th century and that the “function of the epitaph itself had changed, from a perpetuation of honors, it became an expression of family grief.”⁵⁵ According to Vovelle, the epitaphs of the 17th century referred to the body, the 18th century referenced the remains, but the 19th century utilized the terminology ‘sacred to the memory’; thereby stressing the importance of remembrance and grief by those who had been left behind.⁵⁶

Another researcher, Deborah Smith chose to study the epitaphs of children from 1840-1899 in Delaware to illustrate how the gravestones comforted the mourners of the deceased. In her study of 905 children’s headstone, Smith made several observations: 48 percent of the gravestones had only generic information inscribed (date of birth and death, name, etc.), fashion did have some influence on the type of sentiment that appeared on the stones, and that the age of the child when it died could affect the length and type of epitaphs (usually children at the brink of adulthood and children between 2 and 6 years of age received the most attention).⁵⁷ Smith

⁵² Diana Hume George and Malcolm A. Nelson, “Resurrecting the Epitaph,” *Markers: The Annual Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, 1 (1980): 85, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.archive.org/details/markers01asso>.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵⁴ Michel Vovelle, “A Century and One-Half of American Epitaphs (1660-1813): Toward the Study of Collective Attitudes about Death,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22.4 (1980): 534-535.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 536-540.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 541.

⁵⁷ Deborah A. Smith, “Safe in the Arms of Jesus: Consolation on Delaware Children’s Gravestones, 1840-1899,” *Markers: The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, 4 (1987) 87-91, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.archive.org/details/markers04asso>.

argued that consolation gravestones spoke of love and loss, but that the “survivor focused statement incorporated some means of assuaging the pain.”⁵⁸ Smith charted four distinct styles of epitaphs: the type of epitaph that believed the child was in a better place, didactic, the death being God’s will, and a total denial of death.⁵⁹ It was during this time that it became very evident that the living found it harder to let go of the dead, and that the gravestones stood as markers in that moment of time. As Smith stated “we can conclude, based on the fact that messages of solace are in the great majority of all stones with sentiments, that communication on children’s gravestones was intended to promote comfort for the survivors more often than to eulogize the child.”⁶⁰ While the stones existed as monuments of memory, they served a dual purpose of keeping the deceased alive and offering comfort to those still living.

Mike Huggins, with the University of Cumbria, set out to see how sport celebrities’ fame influenced their gravestones, and in doing so, made several observations in regards to gravestones. He observed that gravestones usually were situated in graveyards or cemeteries, which occupied two planes of existence, both public and private, and because they were situated in this dual landscape, they “evoke[d] different rituals of remembering” in which Huggins stated that there were 3 major aspects that influenced the overall message: the gravestone, the epitaph, and the cemetery itself.⁶¹ Huggins explained that the gravestones typically depicted how the party who erected it wanted the deceased to be remembered. Unlike public monuments, gravestones seldom became “explicit sites of contestation, but rather impl[ied] consensus, closed and simple, with no reflection or complexity.”⁶² That is what makes gravestones so unique when

⁵⁸ Ibid., 92.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 92-99.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 102

⁶¹ Mike Huggins, “Gone but Not Forgotten: Sporting Heroes, Heritage and Graveyard Commemoration,” *Rethinking History* 16.4 (2012): 481, accessed June 1, 2014, doi: 10.1080/13642529.2012.697261.

⁶² Ibid., 485.

it comes to memory. While public monuments have consistently caused contentions in the past and today due to various social, political, and economical reasons, gravestones rarely caused this kind of distress as they were placed in what was deemed an appropriate venue with a public message of private grieving. Ultimately, these headstones were not addressed to us, the casual viewer. Their message is intended for the mourners, and we are merely looking at a letter penned a long time ago.

In her study of cemeteries as a rhetorical memory of place and space, Elizabethada Wright stated that cemeteries were unique because “as a physical place and a spiritual space, the cemetery confuses the symbolic and physical to allow memories forgotten in other location to survive.”⁶³ Wright considered how rhetoric and culture influenced who could occupy what space and to what extent. When considering how culture influences space, Wright urged the reader to remember that “rhetorical space, then can deny truths by translating the truth’s discourse into something more appropriate to the rhetorical space.”⁶⁴ Yet, the cemetery is unique in the aspect that it is also a sacred space. Because of this, Wright applied Michel Foucault’s definition of a heterotopia in which a real space reflects a fantasy.⁶⁵ One of the most fascinating observations Wright made was that rhetorically women were not allowed in the public sphere and that memorials to them would not have been acceptable, but within in a cemetery, although a public place, monuments of memory (gravestones) were entirely acceptable because mourning was associated with the feminine.⁶⁶ Aaron Sachs also reached a similar conclusion when he stated that cemeteries “weave together seemingly opposing elements, to preserve wildness in the midst of the artificial city, to blend life and death, time and space, female emotiveness and male

⁶³ Elizabethada A. Wright, “Rhetorical Spaces in Memorial Places: The Cemetery as a Rhetorical Memory Place/Space,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 35.4 (2005): 51, accessed July 17, 2014, <http://jstor.org/stable/40232609>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

restraint.”⁶⁷ Because of the dual roles of the cemetery, what is not allowed in public becomes acceptable within the sacred area. Wright also considered the disenfranchised and the voiceless areas of the cemetery. Whereas, women may have found a voice within the stone; more oftentimes than not, African Americans were silenced in the margins of the cemetery, with no durable record marking their place.⁶⁸ In the end, women and African Americans still were allowed a place and space within the cemeteries, and as Wright eloquently puts it within the cemetery their “s/p(l)ace exists with its symbolic power.”⁶⁹

Scholars have repeatedly asked questions from different angles and perspectives, but in the end one simple question remains: why? Why this image? Why this word? Why this space? Why does it matter? There are many different answers to the later question, but it is one that I feel each researcher should personally answer. By understanding how people mourned their dead, we start to understand how a society operated, what was important to them, and what they lived and died for. In order to understand our present and future, we must examine the past.

Methodology

So far, it has been determined that cemeteries reveal changes in beliefs, economic standing, changing social attitudes pertaining to women and children, and how people mourned their dead. Researchers from varied disciplines have posed questions in reference to how and why cemeteries were formed in the 19th century. They have asked the gravestones what information they can yield in reference to social standing, economical information, treatment of women and children, importance of word choice, stock images, and the answers have been obtained. Researchers have garnered this information by surveying selected cemeteries,

⁶⁷ Sachs, “American Arcadia,” 210.

⁶⁸ Wright, “Rhetorical Spaces,” 64.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

photographing pertinent information, and collecting and analyzing data, or by examining literature and material culture.

Following in the footsteps of researchers before me, I selected two cemeteries that are adjacent to each other near the center of the city of Tallahassee, Florida: Old City Cemetery and St. John's Episcopal Cemetery. Previous studies have been conducted in areas that were largely settled well in advance of the 19th century. My question was how did a newly formed city within a brand new state match the historical narrative of 19th century America when it came to burying their dead? In order to answer this, I first identified what graves were erected in the 19th century, as burials are still ongoing within St. John's Episcopal Cemetery and Old City Cemetery has quite a few 20th century burials. I then photographed each grave that met the time restraints and assigned it an image number with a total of 313 headstones between the two cemeteries: 128 headstones in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery and 185 headstones in Old City Cemetery. Due to neglect and vandalism, or a lack of date, the number of headstones examined does not reflect the total of burials within both cemeteries as many headstones for graves are missing or too badly damaged to discern name or date of death.

After photographing the headstones, I proceeded to transcribe the epitaphs to the best of my ability. Setting aside all the graves with epitaphs, I then sorted the images into 3 categories: roles and/or relationships, bible verses, and prose or poetry; naturally, some epitaphs shared the same categories. Next, I analyzed the data, which is where I derived my results. This is not a comprehensive examination of death in Tallahassee due to several factors mentioned above and because not everyone could afford headstones and/or the often expensive lettering for epitaphs. In an attempt to better understand the creation of both cemeteries, I searched the Florida State

Archives and the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation for relevant documents.⁷⁰ Alas, I did not locate any records that concerned the creation of either cemetery. What is known about Old City Cemetery, currently situated west of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and north of Park Avenue in Tallahassee, Florida, is that the Territorial Legislative Council created the cemetery in 1829 outside of the city limits and that most of the grave-markers from that time were made from wood.⁷¹ By 1840, the city started to maintain the public burial land. While information on the cemeteries remains scarce, I did locate an excerpt of a letter written by Charles Hutchinson to his sisters in regards to the burial of their brother, Henry Hutchinson, in Old City Cemetery.⁷² In 1840, almost a year after the death of his brother, Charles Hutchinson erected a wooden head and footboard to mark Henry's final resting place in Old City Cemetery.⁷³ Charles sent a map to his sisters along with a description of the burial site. He stated that the cemetery "has been considered public land until about 4 weeks since, when the streets were cut thro' and the land on either side sold at auction—that on which our brother remains was purchased by the corporation for a graveyard, & that on the north side was purchased by the members of the Episcopal Church, for a similar purpose."⁷⁴ After the yellow fever epidemic of 1841, the city set out lots and arrangements based on religion and race. Caucasians were buried on the east side and African Americans, regardless if freed or not, were buried on the west side, which accounts for the open space in that area since many African Americans would not have been able to afford the

⁷⁰ According to the City of Tallahassee website a fire destroyed many of the records concerning Old City Cemetery years ago.

⁷¹ "Old City Cemetery," City of Tallahassee, accessed December 2013, <https://www.tal.gov.com/pm/pm-occhist.aspx>.

⁷² The City of Tallahassee website states that most of the information was garnered from records reviewed at the Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board, which no longer existed after the 1990s. Most of HTPB's materials transferred over to Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation, but they are missing many items due to theft or wear and tear. Unfortunately, I was unable to secure the original letter from Charles Hutchinson.

⁷³ "Old City Cemetery: The Virtual Walking Tour," City of Tallahassee, accessed December 2013, <https://www.tal.gov.com/pm/pm-occ-walkingtour-site.aspx>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

marble markers which crowd the east side.⁷⁵ In the 1890s, a Jewish section was established on the west side of the northeast section, an area that is marked by Professor John Grant's gravestone, but many of those graves have reportedly been relocated to Jacksonville.⁷⁶

Just north of Old City Cemetery and West Call Street, lies St. John's Episcopal Cemetery. St. John's Episcopal Church, situated at the northeast corner of Monroe Street and East Call St, established this cemetery in 1840 to bury members of their congregation.⁷⁷ Charles Hutchinson mentioned quite a bit in his letter to his sisters in regards to the first burial that took place in St. John's. He wrote:

Mrs. Gamble is first & only one buried in that yard [St. John's]—she was a member of that church—you will observe that the grave of our brother & Mrs. Gamble are nearly opposite. Mrs. G's is about 10 feet from the corner & our brother's is about 15 feet—Our brother's paling is about one foot inside the line where the fence is to run—As yet neither of the grave yards are enclosed, but are to be so immediately ... [Mrs. Gamble's husband] has been at work for two days past beautifying the grave setting out grass & roses etc. He is going to get tombstones and an iron railing in New York this summer.⁷⁸

It appears that Mr. Gamble, or someone within their family, was successful in obtaining the tombstone for his wife. At the far southeast corner, right inside of the fenced in cemetery, there stands a rather large pedestal obelisk erected in the memory of Mary S. Gamble who died in 1840, the beloved wife of James Gamble. Now that the history of both cemeteries has been discussed, what information can be garnered from them?

Results

In an attempt to understand how 19th century residents of Tallahassee mourned their dead, I studied the surviving headstones in Old City Cemetery and St. John's Episcopal

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ I contacted St. John's Episcopal Church via email only to find that they no longer have any records in regards to the formation of their cemetery.

⁷⁸ "Old City Cemetery".

Cemetery. Out of the 185 headstones examined within Old City Cemetery, 66 headstones did not have lengthy epitaphs, which left 64 percent of the headstones with information beyond the normal name, date of birth and/or death, relationships, and birthplaces. Out of the 128 headstones considered in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery, 57 headstones did not have extended epitaphs, leaving 55 percent of the cemetery with extensive epitaphs. Upon examination, 3 major divisions appeared: roles and/or relationships, bible quotes, and prose and/or poetry. Within the 119 epitaphs examined in Old City Cemetery, 17 percent proclaimed the roles and/or relationships of the deceased. Out of the 71 epitaphs analyzed in St. John's Episcopal cemetery, 16 percent dealt with roles and/or relationships. In Old City Cemetery, 40 percent of the epitaphs contained bible verses. Unsurprisingly, due to its religious background, St. John's Episcopal Cemetery had a slightly higher percentage at 69. Concerning prose and/or poetry, Old City Cemetery showed 43 percent and St. John's Episcopal had 35 percent. Surprisingly, the terminology "sacred to the memory" did not appear as frequently as anticipated; in fact, only 98 gravestones out of 313 had it inscribed.

Roles and/or Relationships

Many of the epitaphs that listed roles and/or relationships appeared fairly short and simple.⁷⁹ Several epitaphs informed the viewer that the deceased served the community; typically, when the role in which the deceased served the community was not explicitly stated,

⁷⁹ In Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's study on 17th and 18th century women in Colonial America, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*, Ulrich acknowledged the trend of inscribing terms such as a "kind mistress," "Loving consort," and "deputy husband" (Kindle location 237). While listing roles the deceased filled may seem a little impersonal compared to the more verbose epitaphs discussed later in this paper, this does not mean that the deceased were mourned less. Ulrich realized that "for seventeenth-century readers these stock phrases were cues that unlocked a whole store of specific images. They had no need for a complete role description" (Kindle location 189). In other words, these titles operated as shorthand to describe the roles the deceased filled and contemporary viewers would have had no problems visualizing what they meant even in the 19th century when the tradition continued.

the sex of the person was female.⁸⁰ Whereas, other epitaphs described virtues and roles that the deceased filled, such as beloved mother, kind father, devoted husband, a good Christian, true friend, and even a lenient master.⁸¹ Princess Murat's epitaph took it one step further when it proclaimed "A kind and affectionate wife and sister,/A sincere and devoted friend./ None knew her but to love her/None named her but to praise."⁸² Several epitaphs revealed the position that the deceased had held in the community along with their years of service, such as Senator James Westcott, a Florida Senator from 1845 to 1849, Professor John Grant, a teacher for 21 years, Reverend Donald Auld, a minister for 19 years, and General Stephen Miller, a Senator of North Carolina who had recently moved to Tallahassee before his untimely death.⁸³ Oftentimes, a rather large or elaborate monument accompanied the more excessive listing of accomplishments, as is the case with the aforementioned gentlemen. Yet, these types of monuments, accompanied by accomplishments, appeared infrequently across the landscape of the cemeteries, which confirmed Vovelle's observation that memorials to patriarchs of the community had started to decline by the 19th century.

However, not all headstones focused solely on accomplishments or roles within society, especially when mourners proudly listed the virtues of children. Edward Barnard's headstone, erected by his Uncle, described the nineteen year old in glowing terminology: "health sat upon his blooming cheek/life sparkled in his eye,/genius conspired in what he spoke/to raise our

⁸⁰ Image 4. "Having served her generation, By the will of God she fell asleep." Image 221. "She had been a sincere member of the Community the last nine years of her life."

⁸¹ Image 13: "A tender loving and devoted husband." Image 32: "As a husband and father He was affectionate, confiding, and tender; as a son and brother devoted and true: as a Christian humble and sincere." Image 46: "She lived as a Christian should live And died as a Christian would wish to die." Image 89: "In remembrance of a kind husband and affectionate Father and warm friends." Image 167: "A Christian Man." Image 293: "A Devoted husband, kind father, Lenient Master and true friend."

⁸² Image 286.

⁸³ Image 35, 37, 106, and 253.

prospects high.”⁸⁴ Essentially, the youth was full of promise, which was never fulfilled due to his premature death. Mourners for sixteen year old Horatio Morgan described him as “virtuous,” “sweet,” “intelligent”, in which all these attributes culminated in making him “an interesting youth, and one that was/loved by all who knew him.”⁸⁵ In another example, fourteen year old Alexander Brevard’s family described him as having “an intellect and affections,/developed far beyond his years” with a “rich promise of a brilliant future.”⁸⁶ All the more tragic when fickle fate cut their lives short.

Children and young adults were not the only ones to have lengthy epitaphs: in fact, some women had fairly extensive tributes made in their honor.⁸⁷ The wife of Robert Walker, Margaret, not only had an elaborate cross headstone, but had these words inscribed along the base, “In memory of/A loving and beloved wife/A pure, truthful, faithful/Christian woman.”⁸⁸ Robert Hilton engraved a loving tribute upon his wife’s headstone: “A Husband never had a more/Devoted wife, nor the poor/And sorrowing, a more faith-/ful and sympathetic Friend.”⁸⁹ Whereas, in Old City Cemetery, Charlotte Blood’s headstone echoed sentiments of the 17th century, while paying tribute to her character, when it read “Copy the virtues of her/who doth here lie./That you when called/may be prepared to die.”⁹⁰ However, the epitaphs dedicated to women almost always concerned their role, whether it was as a Christian, friend, sister, daughter, mother, and/or wife. None of the epitaphs for females described particular characteristics that appeared with the young male adults, such as being intelligent, witty, or full of promise.

⁸⁴ Image 185.

⁸⁵ Image 87.

⁸⁶ Image 115.

⁸⁷ The evidence of tributes made in honor of females furthers Elizabethada Wright’s observation that the cemetery, though public, was considered private enough to honor women.

⁸⁸ Image 311.

⁸⁹ Image 243.

⁹⁰ Image 154.

Bible Verses

Within Old City Cemetery, 40 percent of the headstones had bible verses inscribed upon them; whereas, within St. John's Episcopal Cemetery, 69 percent of the headstones featured bible verses. Matthew, the most frequently quoted book of the bible, had 32 references that appeared within both cemeteries. Mourners chose the book of Psalms 18 times, followed by Revelations at 10. The most popular verse inscribed on the headstones was Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure at heart for they shall see God." Another verse used extensively was Matthew 19:14, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." However, this verse only appeared on children's headstones; unsurprisingly so, since the first portion of that verse read: "suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me." Within both cemeteries, the bible verses chosen for the headstones split into two distinct camps: one which dealt with how to live life in honor or fear of the almighty God and the other which concerned promises made by God.

One example merely identified the power that God possessed, as displayed on Mary Barry's box tomb, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away/Blessed be the name of the Lord."⁹¹ Another example exhorted the virtues of being righteous when it quoted Proverbs 21:21: "He that followeth after righteousness/And mercy, findeth life, righteousness,/and honor."⁹² Lena Potts' grave simply stated "she hath done what she could" from Mark 14:8.⁹³ Whereas, Adna Rowe's obelisk warned the viewer "Be ye therefore also ready for the/son of man cometh at an hour when/ye think not."⁹⁴ These verses show a mix of quiet resignation for what cannot be changed and anticipation for what will come.

⁹¹ Image 103.

⁹² Image 132.

⁹³ Image 163.

⁹⁴ Image 79. Luke 12:40.

A majority of the selected bible verses contained promises of life eternal or happiness. William Whitner's headstone displayed a quote from Luke 18:30: "In the world to come/life everlasting."⁹⁵ Likewise, William Pettes' grave quoted from James 1:12: "He shall receive the crown/of life, which the Lord hath/promised to them that love him."⁹⁶ As mentioned before, a total of 10 children's headstones contained the quotation from Matthew 19:14, which alluded to the fact that children dwelled in a happier place.⁹⁷ Both Matthew 9:24 and Psalms 127:2 stated that the dead merely slept, which was seen on 11 headstones within both cemeteries. Yet another popular verse concerned resurrection, 6 headstones bore John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and/the life. He who believes in/me though he were dead/Yet shall he live."⁹⁸ Some inscriptions functioned as affirmations of faith, such as Robert Gamble's, which quoted Psalms 31:5: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit."⁹⁹ The aforementioned selection of scriptures reveal that mourners possessed a belief and hope of something better for their deceased loved ones; which is made even more evident when considering the prose or poetry featured on many gravestones.

Prose and/or Poetry

In regards to prose or poetry, mourners had a wealth of topics to draw from. Some mourners reflected traditional thoughts of death, some stoically believed that their loved ones were in a far better place, others dwelled on their loss. Several epitaphs refer to heaven being far more enriched with the souls of their loved ones. While other epitaphs merely stated that the mourner would reunite with their loved one again. Both cemeteries show radically differing perceptions towards death amongst mourners.

⁹⁵ Image 262.

⁹⁶ Image 246.

⁹⁷ Image 50, 140, 142, 145, 171, 201, 240, 279, 283, 330.

⁹⁸ Image 63, 115, 253, 255, 265, 301,

⁹⁹ Image 224.

More often than not, mourners compared their loved ones to a flower; in fact, gravestones often displayed a broken or wilted bud to signify a life cut short. Parry Lee Branch, who died at the age of 15, had the following poem inscribed on her headstone: “Gone like the sweet flower/Neath death’s fearful power.”¹⁰⁰ Caroline Summerlin erected a headstone for her sister who died at the age of 10. Summerlin borrowed a poem from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, titled “Epitaph on an Infant”, to express her beliefs in regards to her sister’s death: “ere sin could blight or sorrow fade/Death came with friendly care/The opening bud to heaven conveyed/And bade it to blossom there.”¹⁰¹ Interestingly enough, the author of this poem seemed not to fear death. Rather, they portrayed death as a friend, a caretaker, someone to whom a precious package could be entrusted to send it to a better place, which is in complete juxtaposition to Branch’s epitaph which trembles at the all-consuming power of death. The comparison of deceased loved ones to a flower did not only apply to children, but to young women as well. On Rebecca Scott’s epitaph, the following script appeared:

Leaving an affectionate Husband
And one child to mourn their
Irreparable loss.
In youth’s full flush & hope’s bright hour
Her Spirit passed away
She bloomed like some sweet summer flower
Then sought a better day.¹⁰²

Occasionally, young women who died unmarried were referred to as brides of death, as was the case with Mary Ann Scott who died during the yellow fever epidemic of 1841 at the age of 23.¹⁰³ Echoing Maria Snyder’s observations on the death of children in how their memory would remain forever young and pure, James and Henrietta Broome carved onto the box tomb of their

¹⁰⁰ Image 1.

¹⁰¹ Image 36.

¹⁰² Image 91.

¹⁰³ Image 90. “To one she breathed her high and holy vow. Sacred to love even to her latest breath. How sad to think she wedded not, but now is doomed to be at last the bride of death.”

children the following inscription: “They died before their infant souls/had ever burnt with wrong desires/had ever spurned at Heaven’s control/or ever quenched its sacred fires.”¹⁰⁴

Many mourners believed that their loved ones merely slept and took great solace from memories. Richard Brower’s mourners etched upon his headstone, “Although he sleeps/His memory doth lives/and cheering comfort/to the mourners give.”¹⁰⁵ Other mourners felt differently, and believed that the void left by their loved one would never be filled, such as seen with W.O. Head’s headstone which read, “A voice we loved is stilled/A place is vacant in or home/which never can be filled.”¹⁰⁶ Others accepted what they believed to be the will of God, but admitted that they found it difficult, such as Fanny Papy’s headstone which stated, “Thus hard to give her up/But thy will/O God/be done.”¹⁰⁷ Several other epitaphs showed that some mourners vocalized their grief more excessively.¹⁰⁸ The back of Alex Gallie’s headstone displayed the following lamentation:

Had he asked us, well we know.
We would say, “o spare the blow!”
Yes, with streaming tears should pray.
“Lord, we love him, let him stay.”
In love he lived in peace he died,
His life was asked, but God denied.¹⁰⁹

In regards to soldiers, mourners often called for them to rest, that their battle had been fought. Julius D. Alford’s headstone encouraged him to “Sleep Soldier Sleep!/Thy battles

¹⁰⁴ Image 112. This verse was derived from J.W. Cunningham’s hymn “On the Death of an infant.” In St. John’s cemetery, Robert Alston’s (image 209) parents chose to go with the first stanza: “As the sweet flower that scents the morn But withers in the rising day Thus lovely was this infant’s dawn. Thus swiftly fled its life away.”

¹⁰⁵ Image 3.

¹⁰⁶ Image 26.

¹⁰⁷ Image 33.

¹⁰⁸ A cemetery guide titled “Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida Cemeteries,” written by Floreda Varick and Phyllis Smith in 1979, mentioned a headstone for a Jasper Bassett who died in 1865, which I was unable to locate, possibly due to the heavy vandalism that occurred in the 1980s. However, Varick and Smith stated that his inscription read “Snatched from my warm embrace and hurried into eternity by the ruthless hand of his fellow man. I’m alone. All alone. Jennie.” Pg 10.

¹⁰⁹ Image 129.

fought/Thy rest is sweet.”¹¹⁰ For Nathaniel W. Holland’s headstone, who fell in the Battle of Ocean Ponds during the Civil War, his family also chose to honor his service and etched upon his stone: “Lo! The soldier is released,/Weary path his feet have trod,/Now he is forever at Peace/Now he’s gathered to his God.”¹¹¹ For soldiers, life was the war with sleep and peace being the reward. It should be noted that these types of epitaphs for soldiers tend to be the exception and the aforementioned headstones typically are located in family plots versus the mass graves of the Confederate and Union soldiers. Most of the headstones for Confederate and Union soldiers alike list the name of the deceased, if known, and which army they served, such as William Arnold’s headstone which read “William Arnold C.S.A. 61-65.”¹¹² Old City Cemetery separated the two armies with the Union dead buried in the southwest corner and the Confederate dead in the southeast corner. The few gravestones erected represent only a small percentage of those buried there.¹¹³ On the Confederate side a simple plaque reads “In this section lie an unknown number of Confederate dead; known but to God.”¹¹⁴

Occasionally, mourners harkened back to the sentiments of times past and informed others that death should be handled stoically as it was an inevitable part of life. Phebe Brokaw’s headstone exemplified the concept of the ‘tame death’ with a few words: “Kindled to being, O mystery why?/Death is but life, weep not nor sign.”¹¹⁵ Echoing the traditional language of the

¹¹⁰ Image 334.

¹¹¹ Image 229. Holland’s full epitaph reads: “Lo! The soldier is released, weary path his feet have trod, now he is forever at peace, now he’s gathered to his God. Lo! The pain of life is past. All his warfare now is o’er, Death and hell behind are cast. Grief and suffering are no more.”

¹¹² Image 125.

¹¹³ According to the City of Tallahassee website, the mass burial places for the Confederate and Union troops are from the Battle of Natural Bridge and the Battle of Ocean Pond. An exact number of dead is not known, but it is believed that 186 men were buried in the Confederate area alone. The sheer chaos of warfare typically results in this type of burial, as the deceased must be buried quickly due to the necessity of disposing of bodies and the mobilization of troops, not to mention the daunting task of attempting to identify mangled bodies.

¹¹⁴ Image 125-2.

¹¹⁵ Image 39.

‘good death’ as explained by Judith Giesburg, Dr. James Stone’s marker revealed that the people that mourned him shared in a national narrative. His stone stated:

Though he died far from the
Homes of his nativity his bereaved
Family have the satisfaction of
Believing that by strangers he was
Beloved, Honored, Lamented.¹¹⁶

Mourners needed to believe that someone had taken care of their loved one, whether a tender stranger or God, their loved one must have had the utmost care rendered unto them.

Oftentimes, mourners turned to the words of others to express grief. The Kirksey family, after losing four of their children over the course of six years, chose the words of the Scottish poet, James Montgomery. Erecting a single monument with the names, dates of births and deaths of the children, James and Martha Kirksey etched on one side of the headstone the following verse:

There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown;
A whole eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happier sphere.¹¹⁷

The headstone of Ann C. Burroughs echoed the words of the poet J. L. McCreery, “there is no death! The stars go down/To rise upon some other shore.”¹¹⁸ Both poems reflect a better existence; in fact, they show conviction in the belief that the deceased lived on. Still, some people continued to mourn their loss. Philip Hayward’s epitaph quoted a poem attributed to the

¹¹⁶ Image 217.

¹¹⁷ Image 75.

¹¹⁸ Image 62.

English poet, Felicia Dorothea Browne Hemans, which beseeched “Earth! Guard what here we lay in Holy trust/that which hath left our home a darkened place.”¹¹⁹

Elizabeth Budd Graham’s final resting place, without a doubt the most impressive monument to memory within both cemeteries, listed her marriage date in between her date of birth and death, showing the viewer that she tragically missed her 2nd year anniversary by a matter of a few days. After lovingly listing her roles, as a daughter, mother, and wife, her epitaph quoted 10 lines of Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “Lenore.” Essentially, Poe compared the body to a broken vessel, or bowl, that the spirit escaped from to roam the river Styx and called for “an anthem for the queenliest dead/that ever died so young,/a dirge for her, the doubly dead/in that she died so young.”¹²⁰ A fitting tribute to one who died at the age of 23 and whose husband appeared to hold in high regard.

Some mourners believed that heaven was enriched by the souls of their loved ones even as they were sorely missed on earth. Martha Hardy’s headstone read: “Though earth may boast one gem the less/May not e’ver Heaven the richer be?/And myriads on thy footsteps press/to share thy blest Eternity.”¹²¹ Martha Maltbie’s epitaph shared the same sentiments. Her family wrote, “Martha/Thou was a little girl Only a little girl/Yet thou wast worth the wealth of earth/Diamond, and Ruby, Sapphire, Gold and Pearl/To me thou blessed little girl.”¹²² Sometimes, the epitaphs simply stated that the living would eventually meet with the deceased one day.¹²³ The most eloquently worded epitaph stating this concept appeared on the headstone of Eugenia Phillips, in which her husband wrote, “What is the grave to us/can it divide/the

¹¹⁹ Image 292.

¹²⁰ Image 120.

¹²¹ Image 114.

¹²² Image 157.

¹²³ Image 73 which reads “we’ll meet again.” Image 122 “We shall go to her.” Image 180 “In time we’ll meet.” Image 207, a headstone for the Fischer family states, “United in life by the tenderest of love Separated in death only to be eternally united in heaven.”

destiny of two by/God made one?/We step across and reach/the other side/To know our blended/life is but begun.”¹²⁴ In opposition to that, occasionally some mourners seemed to struggle with the concept of never seeing their loved one in this life again. In St. John’s Episcopal Cemetery, the words “I’ll come back sometimes, Momma” were etched upon the headstone of a six year old girl.¹²⁵

Unsurprisingly, many mourners felt that their loved ones had moved on to a better place. On Medora “Dora” Higs epitaph her family wrote that she had gone “where sorrow and sighing/and pain never come...for thy Father in Heaven/Hath now called thee home.”¹²⁶ Another epitaph mourning the loss of a mother and brother merely stated that “we sorrow but not as/others who have no hope.”¹²⁷ Whereas, one mother joyfully declared “Gone to God!/Be still my heart what could a Mother’s prayer/In all its wildest ecstasies of hope,/ask for its darling like the bliss of heaven.”¹²⁸ Sometimes, though, words simply did not suffice. With the creation of Philoclea Walker’s headstone, her mourners added, “Words cannot express our/Love for her, this Marble can/only mark her grave.”¹²⁹

So far, it has been discussed how 19th century Americans who resided in Tallahassee expressed their love and concern for the deceased through words. However, it should be noted that words were not the only method employed in describing those sentiments. Members of fraternities and societies often commemorated their respect for deceased comrades, as was seen with the sometimes elaborate headstones for Masons, Woodmen of the World, and the Knights

¹²⁴ Image 175.

¹²⁵ Image 274.

¹²⁶ Image 256.

¹²⁷ Image 215.

¹²⁸ Image 302.

¹²⁹ Image 258.

of Pythias.¹³⁰ The Shine family tombs have no last words etched upon them, but command attention with their unusual architecture.¹³¹ Numerous obelisks dot the landscape of both cemeteries, but very few carry the thoughts of those left behind to mourn their loss. Instead, we are left with a silent monument that begrudgingly gives a name, and if we are lucky, a date of birth and death.

The 19th century saw an increase of an aversion to death. Mourners buried their dead in beautified cemeteries with elaborate monuments and epitaphs. They no longer referred to the deceased as dead; rather, they peacefully slept. People believed they would see their loved ones again, a second life, if you will, in heaven. The cemeteries in Tallahassee represent these same ideals held by the rest of the nation, though on a much smaller scale. The epitaphs utilized the same flowery terminology concerning death, and the bible verses focused mostly on promises from God that there was more to life.

While it has been discussed how the epitaphs in the Tallahassee cemeteries revealed the beliefs of 19th century residents that is not the only information that a researcher could obtain from this study. The headstones themselves raise certain question, such as why certain styles were popular and others not. What type of material were the headstones manufactured from, and was it locally sourced or shipped from another state? Some sculptors did sign a small percentage of the headstones, mostly from the northern states, but some claimed to be locally made. Recurrent iconography, consisting of crosses, doves, lambs, broken columns, and wilted flowers dominates the headstones within both cemeteries; how do these images fit into the historical narrative? Are there any images that do not; if so, what does that tell us? From an environmental view, what type of vegetation and trees did the mourners plant within the

¹³⁰ Reference Image 73, 55, 123, 161, 177, 248, 180, 26, 70, 184.

¹³¹ Reference Image 137.

cemeteries and why? It is a strange concept, this need for us to mark the final resting place of those we loved, as if doing so keeps them alive; yet, we seem compelled as a society to preserve their memory and to show that they were loved and mourned.

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