

The Impact Of Cemeteries On The Environment And Public Health

During the Industrial Revolution people flocked to American cities. Overcrowding in these areas led to packed urban graveyards that were not only unsightly, but were also a source of public health fears. The solution was a revolutionary new type of American burial ground located in the countryside just beyond the city. This rural cemetery movement, which featured beautifully landscaped grounds and sculptural monuments, is documented by James R. Cothran and Erica Danylchak in *Grave Landscapes: The Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemetery Movement*. The movement began in Boston, where a group of reformers that included members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society were grappling with the city's mounting burial crisis. Inspired by the naturalistic garden style and melancholy-infused commemorative landscapes that had emerged in Europe, the group established a burial ground outside of Boston on an expansive tract of undulating, wooded land and added meandering roadways, picturesque ponds, ornamental trees and shrubs, and consoling memorials. They named it Mount Auburn and officially dedicated it as a rural cemetery. This groundbreaking endeavor set a powerful precedent that prompted the creation of similarly landscaped rural cemeteries outside of growing cities first in the Northeast, then in the Midwest and South, and later in the West. These burial landscapes became a cultural phenomenon attracting not only mourners seeking solace, but also urbanites seeking relief from the frenetic confines of the city. Rural cemeteries predated America's public parks, and their popularity as picturesque retreats helped propel America's public parks movement. This beautifully illustrated volume features more

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than 150 historic photographs, stereographs, postcards, engravings, maps, and contemporary images that illuminate the inspiration for rural cemeteries, their physical evolution, and the nature of the landscapes they inspired. Extended profiles of twenty-four rural cemeteries reveal the curvilinear design features of this distinctive landscape type prior to the American Civil War and its evolution afterward. *Grave Landscapes* details rural cemetery design characteristics to facilitate their identification and preservation and places rural cemeteries into the broader context of American landscape design to encourage appreciation of their broader influence on the design of public spaces.

This study examines residents' perceptions regarding potential uses of sacred spaces. It further investigates a cemetery's visual impact on residents in high-density urban environments. Historically, cemeteries have provided open space to urban residents, and have become intertwined with the spaces where humans live and work and they have come to provide historical significance to urban space (Harker and Merolli 2010). As rituals and methods of disposing human remains change, the ways people use cemeteries or burial spaces also change. Specifically as alternative uses for cemetery are emerging, along with changes in attitudes toward commemoration burial sites in contemporary culture (Basmajian and Coutts 2010). The sexton, Smith rejects the idea that his facility is only for somber reflection. Rather, he sees it as an open space resource that can be used for something other than interments (Harker and Merolli 2012). Cases like Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York, are primarily manicured and sculpted green spaces within those cities. They and other Contemporary cemeteries have adopted various 'useful' applications, yet they also remain highly complex and ambiguous spatio-temporal

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enclosures (Johnson 2012). Research indicates a high demand for parklands within and around pre-existing cemeteries in highly-developed urban areas (Basmajian and Coutts 2010). Previous cemeteries constructed on the outskirts of cities due to metropolitan expansion in these cases cemeteries come to population centers compete for the same desirable land (Basmajian and Coutts 2010; Northway 2005; Francaviglia 1971). Since 1874, a cluster of historical cemeteries Greenwood, Calvary, Emanuel historic cemeteries, and Freeman Memorial Park have existed in the Uptown area of Dallas, an area which has become a high-density vibrant, mixed-use part of the city. Occupying two city blocks in Uptown, those historical cemeteries are a green open space with activities limited primarily to burial grounds and a walking trail. The area surrounding cemeteries provides a rich opportunity to examine the perceptions of residents regarding to potential uses cemeteries can provide. This study uses open ended interviews to gain an understanding of residents' perceptions regarding potential uses of cemeteries. Interview questions focus on interviewee's viewpoints of utilization of cemetery space and visual impact of cemetery to them. The study involves perceptions of people who live in the surrounding area of those cemeteries because they can provide everyday observations and perspectives to those cemeteries. The perception also gives people information about their environment, it enables people to form beliefs and make judgments about how things are in their immediate surroundings (Crane 1992). This study establishes a better understanding of how people see potential uses for cemeteries and how to respond to existing uses of cemeteries in Uptown Dallas. After analyzing interview data, the study concludes that through better integrating the landscape of death into community life, and enhancing the burial sites, and cemeteries can better serve

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the neighborhood and green infrastructure, enriching sacred spaces in an urban community.

In *The Cemeteries of New Orleans*, Peter B. Dedek reveals the origins and evolution of the Crescent City's world-famous necropolises, exploring both their distinctive architecture and their cultural impact. Spanning centuries, this fascinating body of research takes readers from muddy fields of crude burial markers to extravagantly designed cities of the dead, illuminating a vital and vulnerable piece of New Orleans's identity. Where many histories of New Orleans cemeteries have revolved around the famous people buried within them, Dedek focuses on the marble cutters, burial society members, journalists, and tourists who shaped these graveyards into internationally recognizable emblems of the city. In addition to these cultural actors, Dedek's exploration of cemetery architecture reveals the impact of ancient and medieval grave traditions and styles, the city's geography, and the arrival of trained European tomb designers, such as the French architect J. N. B. de Pouilly in 1833 and Italian artist and architect Pietro Gualdi in 1851. As Dedek shows, the nineteenth century was a particularly critical era in the city's cemetery design. Notably, the cemeteries embodied traditional French and Spanish precedents, until the first garden cemetery—the Metairie Cemetery—was built on the site of an old racetrack in 1872. Like the older walled

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cemeteries, this iconic venue served as a lavish expression of fraternal and ethnic unity, a backdrop to exuberant social celebrations, and a destination for sightseeing excursions. During this time, cultural and religious practices, such as the celebration of All Saints' Day and the practice of Voodoo rituals, flourished within the spatial bounds of these resting places. Over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, episodes of neglect and destruction gave rise to groups that aimed to preserve the historic cemeteries of New Orleans—an endeavor, which, according to Dedek, is still wanting for resources and political will. Containing ample primary source material, abundant illustrations, appendices on both tomb styles and the history of each of the city's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cemeteries, *The Cemeteries of New Orleans* offers a comprehensive and intriguing resource on these fascinating historic sites.

Soils have important roles to play in criminal and environmental forensic science. Since the initial concept of using soil in forensic investigations was mooted by Conan Doyle in his Sherlock Holmes stories prior to real-world applications, this branch of forensic science has become increasingly sophisticated and broad. New techniques in chemical, physical, biological, ecological and spatial analysis, coupled with informatics, are being applied to reducing areas of search by investigators, site

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identification, site comparison and measurement for the eventual use as evidence in court. Soils can provide intelligence, in assisting the determination of the provenance of samples from artifacts, victims or suspects, enabling their linkage to locations or other evidence. They also modulate change in surface or buried cadavers and hence affect the ability to estimate post-mortem or post-burial intervals, and locate clandestine graves. This interdisciplinary volume explores the conceptual and practical interplay of soil and geoforensics across the scientific, investigative and legal fields. Supported by reviews, case-studies from across the world, and reports of original research, it demonstrates the increasing convergence of a wide range of knowledge. It covers conceptual issues, evidence (from recovery to use in court), geoforensics, taphonomy, as well as leading-edge technologies. The application of the resultant soil forensics toolbox is leading to significant advances in improving crime detection, and environmental and national security. "Early in 1972, the Cemetery Association entered into contract with Granite Construction Company to fill the gulch area along the East fork of Arana Creek running through the cemetery property ... The grading permit now being applied for, if granted, would permit the present filling process to continue for the eventual development of the westerly portion of the cemetery"--Page 4.

In modern society, we have professionalized our care for the dying and deceased in hospitals and hospices, churches and

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funeral homes, cemeteries and mausoleums to aid dazed and disoriented mourners. But these formal institutions can be alienating and cold, leaving people craving a more humane mourning and burial process. The burial treatment itself has come to be seen as wasteful and harmful—marked by chemicals, plush caskets, and manicured greens. Today's bereaved are therefore increasingly turning away from the old ways of death and searching for a more personalized, environmentally responsible, and ethical means of grief. *Is the Cemetery Dead?* gets to the heart of the tragedy of death, chronicling how Americans are inventing new or adapting old traditions, burial places, and memorials. In illustrative prose, David Charles Sloane shows how people are taking control of their grief by bringing their relatives home to die, interring them in natural burial grounds, mourning them online, or memorializing them streetside with a shrine, ghost bike, or RIP mural. Today's mourners are increasingly breaking free of conventions to better embrace the person they want to remember. As Sloane shows, these changes threaten the future of the cemetery, causing cemeteries to seek to become more responsive institutions. A trained historian, Sloane is also descendent from multiple generations of cemetery managers and he grew up in Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery. Enriched by these experiences, as well as his personal struggles with overwhelming grief, Sloane presents a remarkable and accessible tour of our new American way of death.

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