2011

Cemeteries as archives: who says dead men tell no tales?

Andrea Chaddock
Western Washington University

CEMETERIES AS ARCHIVES:
WHO SAYS DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES?

By

Andrea Chaddock

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Moheb A. Ghali, Dean of the Graduate School

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair, Dr. Randall C. Jimerson

Dr. Kathleen Z. Young

Ms. Ruth Steele

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Andrea Chaddock

June 15, 2011

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A Thesis
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Abstract

Cemeteries are more than just the final resting place of our ancestors; many scholarly fields have found the cemetery to be a valuable historical resource. The cemetery contains a wealth of information, including the personal stories of those buried there, the actions of the organization that created it, and the beliefs of the people in the community to which it belongs. In many cases, the cemetery is the only remaining documentary evidence about a person or a group of people. The archival profession has tasked itself with preserving the documentary heritage of the full spectrum of society, but it has yet to recognize the archival value of the physical cemetery, due in part to its non-traditional format as immovable, three-dimensional objects contextually bound to a physical landscape. This thesis outlines the ways in which the cemetery fits the definition of archives and how the characteristics of the cemetery can align with various aspects of archival theory. This thesis argues for the archival profession to recognize that cemeteries are archives and to use their unique perspective to help preserve the evidential and informational value at the cemetery for future generations.

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Introduction

There are times when archival repositories are referred to as information cemeteries or document graveyards.[1] This comparison emphasizes the static and "dead" status of the information within its walls. Sometimes the comparison is used to represent the end of the life cycle of a record -- once upon a time is was created, it served its purpose during its useful, active life and now it will be laid to rest in the archival repository for eternity. However, the reality is that archives *are* like cemeteries, but not because the information is dead, static or past its usefulness.

Archives are a place where information sheds its mortal coil and takes on another life. Like cemeteries, which do not exist for those who are buried there, archives do not function for the benefit of the creators of the records. Archives, like the cemetery, exist for the living – for those in the future who are searching for answers about the history of their families, their communities, or the whole of humanity. In archives and cemeteries, the answers are not straightforward. There are only clues, which must be pieced together. These clues, in the form of paper memoranda or tombstone inscriptions, are mutable documents, full of meanings layered on them by the creators, the editors, the previous viewers and the perceptions of the current researcher.

Neither the cemetery nor archives have any agency of their own to tell their tales. Without the intervention of researchers, a cemetery's information will remain silent forever and without the intervention of people, such as archivists, the researchers may not know the

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[1] Arlene Schmuland in her article about the image of archives outlines the use of "burial-related phrases to describe archives" and the "death metaphor" by authors writing fiction about archives. Arlene Schmuland, "The Archival Image in Fiction: An Analysis and Annotated Bibliography," *American Archivist* 62 (Spring 1999): 24-73.

resources exist. If they are lucky, abandoned cemeteries and neglected archives will wait silently to be recognized one day. The unlucky ones will disappear into oblivion, eroded from the landscape or crumbled into dust. The similarities between archives and cemeteries do not stop with this analogy because not only are archives like cemeteries, ***cemeteries are archives.*** The archival profession should acknowledge that cemeteries are archives and help to preserve them as a valuable historical resource.

In the interest of transparency, I must admit my biases. I am a taphophile. During my childhood, my family indulged my healthy (in hindsight) fascination with old graveyards during cross-country summer road trips. One summer when I was older, my grandfather organized a family bus trip to visit the long-since-gone family on a "Marble Orchard Tour." Like most families of the twentieth century who have migrated across the country in the last few generations, our ancestors are not buried anywhere near where we live today. Aside from the most recent of burials, where someone living has direct knowledge of the grave location, we have had to use a variety of documentation, found in family papers and public repositories, to locate the graves of our ancestors. For my family, who takes pride in retaining family heirlooms and stories, the gravestone is just another piece of the puzzle. It is a three-dimensional addition to all the letters, photographs, and artifacts that my family already has about that ancestor.

For every grave that has been visited by a descendent like me, there are graves in cemeteries that have not yet been found by their descendents -- their location remaining separated from the family trees to which they belong. With the passage of time and the deterioration of memory and documentation linking them to their histories, these graves are

more and more likely never to be re-connected with their family and those diaries, marriage certificates and stories that their descendents have. While the story of the people in these graves has lost a portion of its contextual identity and meaning, the person's history may still be kept alive through personal and public documents that are preserved outside of the cemetery. Their history is not completely lost. Although the gravestone is disconnected from its owner's story, it still remains as an important contextual part of the history that the cemetery itself tells about society.

Because a gravestone is made of durable materials and because many cemeteries have been preserved in some way, a gravestone may be the singular item remaining to document a person's life. Perhaps there were no other documents created due to the person's status outside of society's record keeping or perhaps they have just been lost. The inscription on the tombstone may be the only written information left about that person. Further, a cemetery contains more valuable information than what is inscribed on the tombstones. It holds important records of a culture's beliefs and actions. Thus, cemeteries are important to the archival mission of preserving the documentary history of all of society.

For clarification, I am writing only from a scholarly perspective. I argue for the preservation of cemeteries due to their overwhelming documentary value. It is obvious to me that cemeteries have much more value to society than just for historical research. Cemeteries are a necessity for the living as a place of remembrance or a place of emotional healing. In the words of China Galland, a cemetery is, "…a luminal space, a place between worlds in which we take time apart not only to honor but to communicate with our ancestors, to feed the family spirits, to receive guidance, to pour out our heart to the ground

that receives all."[2] Cemeteries are highly sacred places for many diverse spiritual reasons and I am not arguing that the documentary value of a cemetery is more important than that. However, because of the sacred nature of cemeteries, they are often preserved well and therefore their archival value may be retained better than with some other traditional records.

Definitions: What is an Archives? What is a Cemetery?

Archives are defined in several ways by the archival profession. Sometimes the word refers to the physical building housing the collections or the organization doing the collecting. "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology" written by Richard Pearce-Moses can be found on the Society of American Archivists website.[3] The first definition of archives in this glossary is the one that I will be using in most cases when I refer to cemeteries as archives. The first part of the definition says, "Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs…"[4] In the case of the cemetery, these *materials* are the tombstones (alone and as a group), the landscape and other less tangible things which were *created* during the creation and use of the cemetery. The second portion of the definition says, "… and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator…"[5] Previously, cemeteries may have been *preserved* for other reasons, such as sacred or memorial value, or just coincidentally survived because they

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[2] As quoted by Richard J. Cox, "Power, Records, and Love Cemetery," *Reading Archives*, February 23, 2009. Accessed 11/15/2010: http://readingarchives.blogspot.com/2009/02/power-records-and-love-cemetery.html.
[3] Richard Pearce-Moses, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology," accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=156.
[4] Pearce-Moses, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."
[5] Pearce-Moses, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."

are a part of the physical landscape and were built to persevere against weather and time.

However, one purpose of this thesis is to show that the *enduring value contained* is

informational and evidential regarding its *creator*, those buried in the cemetery as well as

the surrounding society. Because of this, the cemetery is an archives. And finally,

"…especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order,

and collective control…"[6] These archival terms are used to describe the management of the

materials in the hands of the archival profession. But Pearce-Moses' use of the term

especially allows for the word archives to describe materials that are not in the hands of

archivists. The cemeteries are archives with or without being maintained by these

principles. But these elements are important concepts and will be outlined when I address

archival theory.

As for the definition of a cemetery, it is not possible to make broad generalizations

about the contents of all cemeteries from all time periods and in every region of the world.

For example, "for the Romans, the funeral structure itself – tumulus, sepulcrum,

monumentum, or more simply loculus – was more important than the space [the cemetery or

location in the cemetery] occupied. To the medieval mind, on the contrary, the enclosed

space about the sepulchers was more important than the tomb itself."[7] In other words, the

meaning and purpose of a cemetery has changed over time and it changes among geographic

regions as well. Therefore, sometimes a cemetery may have more or less value as

documentary evidence. There is so much important historical information to be found in the

cemetery, from the type of flora present to what the cemetery as a whole represents to the

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[6] Pearce-Moses, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."
[7] Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: from the Middle Ages to the Present.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 19-20.

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community. The value of documentary evidence will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis, just as paper records are, so I will give a brief overview of the potential for value and the boundaries that I have put on my definition of a cemetery, which is flexible as most definitions are.

Many of the books about cemeteries use physical evidence found in the burial site and this is often because the actual cemetery walls and monuments no longer exist. In the most extreme examples, the only thing left is the variation in the make-up of the dirt that indicates (to the trained specialist) that there once was a burial in this place. When that little amount of information remains, it may be difficult to argue for its archival nature. However, when that information is compiled into a collection of studies at a site and the experts determine that a site was once a cemetery, an archives may be able to treat the site as it treats other cemeteries.

I previously stated that one of my requirements for a cemetery is some kind of markers. In general, my definition of a grave marker is very broad. If a marker contains modern writing it becomes plainly obvious that it is a piece of documentary evidence. Gary S. Foster and Richard L. Hummel, in an essay about cemeteries, point out that some grave markers yield,

> the deceased's given and surname, birth and death dates, revealing gender, age, ethnicity (as possibly deduced from surname and other indicators), and seasonal conception, natality, and mortality patterns. Inscribed stones often further specify familiar status via relationships, e.g. daughter, son, wife, or mother. Additionally, inscriptions sometimes include migration, military service, and occupational data, while commemorative inscriptions offer potential insight regarding deceased and perceptions others held of them.[8]

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[8] Gary S. Foster and Richard L. Hummel, "The Adkins-Woodson Cemetery: A Sociological Examination of Cemeteries as Community," *Markers* XII (1995): 111.

With the invention of photography, photos were bonded with hardened materials and mounted on markers.[9] When that much information is available on a grave marker it is simple to compare them directly with paper documents held in archives. Depending on the expense of the marker, some can contain veritable life histories, from birth to death.

Many grave markers contain imagery that may not be understandable to the modern viewer, but they are nevertheless a piece of documentation. Additionally, the amount and type of inscription on a marker varies by era. According to Philippe Aries, in the 5th century, inscriptions disappeared because the "dead person was given over to the Church, which took care of him until the Resurrection Day." However, by the 13th century, inscriptions and portraits return, and although the identity of the deceased is important, the "remembrance of the exact place where the body had been placed" is not.[10] Today, in America, it appears to be important to know exactly where someone is buried. On the other hand, sometimes the lack of inscription is cost-based. In Love Cemetery, the people reclaiming the cemetery found markers ranging, "from Ohio Taylor's handsome landmark, to a rusted rifle barrel, glass jars set into the ground, a filigreed Singer sewing machine leg, a piece of ironstone, and pieces of blank white marble lying broken on the ground. … one with a rusted funeral marker, but the name was gone without a trace."[11] These items can contain just as much documentary information about the people in the cemetery as a traditionally inscribed marker; they just require additional translation.

An important guideline that I am using is that to qualify as a cemetery it must have a social aspect to it. For example, it may have been created and maintained by a family, a

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[9] Marilyn Yalom, *The American Resting Place* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 20.
[10] Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: from the Middle Ages to the Present. Johns Hopkins symposia in comparative history, 4th* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 47, 50.
[11] China Galland, *Love Cemetery: Unburying the Secret History of Slaves* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 206.

community, or by government agencies. Jacek Kolbuszewsky, seeking to define the nature

of a cemetery, argues that one factor is that the cemetery is "a certain sector of space

delimited by certain a priori formulated resolutions, according to which it is there that

funeral practices consistent with religious, ethnic, cultural (that is customary) and other

easily defined needs of a given community, will be carried out."[12] A single grave does yield

information for study of the past, but its documentary value may be limited to the actions of

the person doing the burial and the buried person. Although this information could be

extrapolated to represent a larger number of experiences, a group of burials together

becoming a cemetery, documents the actions of a variety of people, as a group and as

individuals. A group of burials serves a permanent purpose to the future community.

Marilyn Yalom writes, "[g]ravestones reflect the beliefs, values, hopes, aesthetics, and

technologies of the societies in which they are embedded. When studied in the aggregate,

they become indicators of mindsets … constellations of ideas and attitudes held by specific

groups at a certain time and place."[13] Cemeteries can contain information related to

personal identity and collective identity.

　　　Although the ideal archival collection, like the cemeteries outlined above, would

contain extensive contextual information and provide insight into large groups of society,

not all archival collections are so perfect. On one hand, a single grave meant to disappear

over time, could be considered akin to non-archival documents, serving a transitory purpose

but never intended to be retained. Julie Rugg, seeking to define the cemetery, concludes,

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[12] As quoted in Julie Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial: what Makes a Cemetery a Cemetery?" Mortality 5, Issue 3 (2000): 260.
[13] Yalom. *The American Resting Place*, 17.

"not every place of burial is a cemetery."[14] As an example, she argues that some mass

graves created during wartimes are merely places of disposal, where corpses are meant to

disappear.[15] A case could be argued using the concept of documentation. When a person is

buried, that is the action being performed, similar to the action being performed when a

Board meeting takes place. When a burial is marked in some way, by having a headstone

placed atop or even just by being put in a place designated by society as a burial ground, this

is similar to the recording of Minutes at the Board meeting or the documentation of the

Board meeting on a calendar. The action has been performed, but it has also now been

documented and this documentation is what is collected and preserved by the archival

profession.

On the other hand, an archivist may choose to accept that a mass grave is an

archives. An article written by Bruce P. Montgomery, appearing in *Archivaria,* outlines a

collection of documents created by Saddam Hussein's government, including information

about the perpetration of horrific genocides.[16] While Montgomery writes about the

substantial infrastructure needed and the subsequent records that were created to inflict these

war crimes on the population, he argues there is still some information missing. Sometimes

the documents show the names of people and whole towns that were slaughtered, but the

locations of the mass graves, some of which contained thousands of bodies, were only

located through the testimony of survivors and then proven using forensic evidence.[17] So, in

this case, although the graves were intended to disappear into the landscape and were given

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[14] Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial," 260.
[15] Rugg, "Defining the Place of Burial," 260.
[16] Bruce P. Montgomery, "The Iraqi Secret Police Files: A Documentary Record of the Anfal Genocide," *Archivaria* 52 (2001): 69-99.
[17] Montgomery, "The Iraqi Secret Police Files," 95-96.

no markers to indicate their location, there is documentary evidence at the site that is worth preserving that could not be found elsewhere.

Of course, a large city cemetery with a front gate and a management office obviously fits the traditional definition of a cemetery. When we look at burial grounds that do not fit the definition so clearly we find a gray area. Where should the line be drawn? Just like historical paper documentation, the traditional definition of a cemetery would favor those who hold the power in society. If we were to acknowledge only the large, well-maintained cemeteries where the rich and famous are buried, then we miss the opportunity to preserve the stories of those burial grounds that have been neglected or do not fit the traditional definition. While it may be more difficult to define and preserve small burial sites or mass graves as archives, it is necessary to make exceptions when our goal is to preserve the heritage of all people. For those populations most at risk of being erased from history we need to expand our definitions to include any materials that we can.

In addition to containing information about individuals on tombstones, the cemetery landscape contains valuable information. Each tombstone cannot be separated from the cemetery landscape without the loss of contextual value. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, in his essay about cemeteries, writes that the graveyard as a place, during the colonial times in America, sent a message to the entire population.[18] Whereas a hidden grave intends to provide no message to passersby and a family plot only serves the needs of the living descendents, a public cemetery is a "reminder of duties constantly recurring."[19] During this time period, not only the messages on the tombstones were didactic. The actual layout of

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[18] Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, ed., *John Brinckerhoff Jackson, Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).
[19] Horowitz, *John Brinckerhoff Jackson,* 164.

the cemetery (no family plots or hierarchies) showed the equality of the dead, and the location of the graveyard in the middle of town, not hidden by walls or trees, were all messages to the community.[20] This record of the actions of these colonial communities is not represented in archives if only transcripts of the headstones are collected. The landscape of this particular cemetery is an important piece of evidence.

Jackson later tells the story of the transformation of the cemetery, showing how the landscape of the cemetery has changed based on the contemporary values of the society. The garden cemetery movement, exemplified by Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Boston, showed that the monument at each grave was given less and less value.[21] For the community, it is "the setting, not the grave itself, which inspires emotion, and the custom of spending time at the grave … can be interpreted, at least in part, as a kind of luxuriating in a solemn and picturesque environment."[22] The modern park cemetery is the culmination of that feeling, where graves are intentionally as unseen as possible. The actions of the community to hide the graves from sight and to use the park-like landscape for their memorial needs will not be preserved in an archival collection consisting only of inscriptions or photographs of tombstones.

The cemetery is also a changeable landscape, just as documents are changing materials. Elizabethada Wright argues that the landscape can show evidence of recent manipulations by modern people. She writes that people, "alter the landscape, wanting the landscape to tell a new story – or when people neglect a story because popular ideologies

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[20] Horowitz, *John Brinckerhoff Jackson,* 165.
[21] Information about Mount Auburn Cemetery and about the garden cemetery movement can be found at Mount Auburn's website, http://www.mountauburn.org/ or in Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*.
[22] Horowitz, *John Brinckerhoff Jackson,* 170.

make the story unseemly."[23] As an example, she mentions "a marginalized black section of a cemetery [which] became the cemetery's center when a new wrought iron gate was opened – and views on race had changed."[24] This evidence of changes made by successive generations may not be visible to a researcher looking only at the archival record. Some valuable information can only be seen in the landscape, just as some valuable information can only be found in paper records.

In another essay about landscape, Jackson argues for the importance of its study. He writes, "the boundary creates neighbors; it is the symbol of law and order and permanence. The network of boundaries, private as well as public, transforms an amorphous environment into a human landscape, and nothing more clearly shows some of the cherished values of a group than the manner in which they fix those boundaries, the manner in which they organize space."[25] The cemetery landscape is a record of the important actions of a community. Textual records can provide some light on these actions, but the subtext of those textual records cannot be revealed without the assistance of the physical landscape, because that is the only place it is written.

Traditional Cemetery Records

The majority of my thesis focuses on promoting and defending the archival nature of less traditional forms of cemetery documentary materials, such as the cemetery and its grave markers. First, I would like to address more traditional cemetery records, such as paper and

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[23] Wright, "Reading the Cemetery," 37.
[24] Wright, "Reading the Cemetery," 37.
[25] Horowitz, *John Brinckerhoff Jackson,* 309.

electronic-based records created during routine business of the cemetery, because they are also important. Due to these records' more traditional format, archivists have already accepted these business records into repositories as archival collections or the cemeteries themselves have retained them because their historical value is acknowledged. Unfortunately, I also believe that these records are not recognized as important historical resources by the archival profession and should be more highly valued than it appears they are.

Most cemeteries are, or were once, a business like any other and create the same administrative, legal, and financial records that other businesses create. Some cemeteries may be affiliated with government agencies or religious organizations. Some private cemeteries function as large companies with many employees. Even the smallest cemetery still creates its share of records because this industry is just like any other, creating records as a part of routine business. The processes of acquiring land, maintaining the grounds, organizing burials, etc., create records as a by-product. Many of the records created are common to many industries although the specifics may be unique, such as grave-digging equipment purchases and maintenance. As with all business records, some cemetery records serve a temporary purpose and are discarded after they are no longer useful. Some business records are considered archival and are preserved by the cemetery organization or by an archival repository.

As with records in many industries, the importance of records is often overlooked until bad recordkeeping and the resulting consequences are made public. One recent high

profile instance involved the Arlington National Cemetery.[26] In the summer of 2010,

Arlington came under fire by the public because of a series of published articles showing

that due to bad recordkeeping practices, there were burials that had no headstones and

burials that were located in the wrong place. This caused outrage among veterans' groups

and many others because this failure to maintain proper records caused the desecration of

graves and showed disrespect for families and veterans. Examples such as this one show the

importance of cemetery business records to the active cemetery.

Once a cemetery is no longer accepting new burials, the physical cemetery may

become organizationally separated from their paper records because they no longer have the

administrative need to have current records available. At this point, their fate is dependent

on whether or not these records are recognized for their historical value. Their records may

have been transferred to an archival repository, but unfortunately, some cemeteries have no

saved business records, because these records created during the conduct of the cemetery's

actions were not retained once they had served their primary purpose. But records created

by the cemetery are only one type of documentation about the cemetery. Cemeteries are

impacted by a variety of federal, state, and local laws and the subsequent records of those

government agencies may relate to the cemetery. For example, information about

cemeteries can be found in government archives such as in land grants, tax rolls, city

easements on land, or paperwork involving condemnation of land. Just as the complete

story about a person will be told with records coming from her personal life, her

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[26] Salon.com published a series of articles reporting on the investigation of Arlington National Cemetery. The first of the articles is: Mark Benjamin, "Grave Offenses at Arlington National Cemetery," Salon.com (July 16, 2009). Accessed 3/1/11, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/07/16/arlington_national_cemetery. A description of the Army inquiry can be found at: Yeganeh June Torbati, "Inquiry Finds Graves Mismarked at Arlington" *New York Times*, June 10, 2010.

professional life, and her interactions with government, a variety of records repositories hold

contextual information about a cemetery. All of these records together provide a more

complete history and can be found in various private and public collections.

What and Where are Cemetery Records in Archives

There are cemetery records held in many types of archival repositories. An informal

search of on-line finding aids from a few on-line finding aid aggregator sites and some

individual repositories gives a general idea of what kinds of materials are available

regarding cemeteries in existing collections.[27] Some archives hold records created by a

cemetery association or business, such as cemetery association minutes, incorporation

materials, and burial registers. Often cemetery business records can be found in a personal

collection of a board member or founder of a cemetery. In these cases, it appears that

generally there is not a complete collection of business records. Another common location

for cemetery materials is in family and personal collections. Many people kept cemetery

plot deeds in their important papers and these were subsequently transferred to archives with

their personal papers.

Another place to find cemetery-related materials is in government archives,

including records such as legal proceedings and land use records. One example of a

cemetery that has no records of its own saved, but has a lot of records about it preserved

elsewhere is the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) cemetery in Seattle. The cemetery

records would have been created by the GAR organization and we can assume that some

sort of records were kept regarding the purchase of the land, the layout of the cemetery and

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[27] Finding aid aggregators on the Internet are websites where a group of archival repositories make their finding aids searchable in one place such as the websites I utilized, Online Archive of California, http://www.oac.cdlib.org and Northwest Digital Archives, http://nwda.orbiscascade.org.

the names and locations of those buried there, but no records of this GAR post (a common occurrence with many GAR posts, apparently) can be found. As the members of the GAR dwindled, the City of Seattle took over care of the cemetery and the cemetery became subject to all the bureaucracy and its accompanying paperwork. As expected, the Seattle Municipal Archives has a large amount of records pertaining to the GAR cemetery because, today, it is classified as a city park. There are citizen complaints held in the Mayor's records and in the records of the Parks and Recreation Department, including drafts of correspondence responses. The Parks Department files contain correspondence about various construction activities and maintenance. There are petitions, reports and their related ordinances and drafts. The City Engineering department and the Legal Department have files for every part of the area that was once condemned or deeded to the city. A lot of information about the GAR cemetery's history can be pieced together with these government records.

A large number of the results for a search of the word "cemetery" in the finding aid aggregators are found in the biographical descriptions in finding aids. It is quite common for the description in manuscript collections to include a detailed biography about the creator. The location where someone is buried is quite often the final point mentioned about his or her life. The archivists writing these finding aids must feel that the location of the final resting place of the person is a very important part of the life story. In fact, the location of where someone is buried is a common ending sentence in many biographies found outside of archives. We can infer that the location of the burial site is the final identifying feature of this person's life, making it an important chapter in her story.

Another type of cemetery materials found in archives is a transcription of the burials at a cemetery, sometimes called a name index or cemetery survey. This is often found in the records of a historian or genealogist who spent time in his or her life documenting some cemeteries, but it is also sometimes the entire contents of a collection about the cemetery. Although similar in content to a burial register, the cemetery survey is usually created by a third-party after the cemetery has been in existence for some time. I will address my concerns about name indexes and artificial collections about cemeteries later in this thesis, but usually the main purpose of this transcription is for genealogical research and therefore the primary recorded aspect of the survey is biographical information.

Cemetery Archives in the News

The Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Boston is an example of a cemetery's archives that has been embraced and promoted by a professional archivist. The Mt. Auburn Cemetery is a National Historic Landmark and an example of the garden cemetery movement in the United States. In 1989, the cemetery's part-time archivist/librarian did a survey of garden cemeteries and found that no major garden cemeteries had an archival catalog.[28] An article in the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) newsletter outlines her process of establishing an official archives at her cemetery. The only main historical use mentioned in this article is that the records document the garden cemetery movement in the United States. The archivist seems to emphasize that the best part of establishing her archives is the use of the archival collections for assisting the creation of the Cemetery's Master Plan in "connection with every aspect of Cemetery development, from

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[28] Janet Heywood, "Preserving the Records of Mount Auburn Cemetery," Annotation: *The Newsletter of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission* 27:2: (June 1999): 1.

improving the landscape, to implementing preservation plans for monuments and buildings, to designing interpretative materials."[29] While these are noble reasons to have archives, they are primarily internal. I believe this archivist has sold her archives short by not tapping into a wider audience of users and acknowledging the historical use of her records.

The Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx was also featured in many newspaper articles regarding its archives. In July of 2006, the donation of the cemetery's archives to the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University was publicized. Acknowledging the importance of the records, they were donated so that they would, "come under the discerning eye of Columbia scholars; that they would be properly stored, organized and cataloged."[30] Woodlawn Cemetery is a large cemetery with many famous graves and many famous landmarks of particular interest to the architectural historians at the Avery Library. Woodlawn Cemetery is a combination of a historic cemetery and a modern one, still in need of its important current business records and continuing to create new records. Therefore, it is in the position of many companies wishing to hand off their archival materials to someone else to manage. Woodlawn Cemetery is an excellent example for other cemeteries to follow. One article explains that it was the "friends of the cemetery" group that first realized that the records "had far greater value and appeal than most corporate records."[31] Having the support of outside persons who know the value of the cemetery, such as archivists, could provide the initiative to preserve the value of the cemetery's information resources.

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[29] Heywood, "Preserving the Records of Mount Auburn Cemetery," 19.
[30] David Dunlap, "Forgotten Treasures in the Woodlawn Cemetery Archives," New *York Times,* 07/16/06, accessed 12/6/09, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/16/arts/design/16dunl.html.
[31] Dunlap, "Forgotten Treasures in the Woodlawn Cemetery Archives."

Cemetery Records in Archival Literature

While researching this thesis I discovered that, although cemeteries are studied by many varied disciplines, whose research I will discuss in the next section, cemeteries and their records are almost never mentioned in archival literature -- and archival literature covers many types of archives. A keyword search of the journals *American Archivist* and *Archivaria* turns up only a handful of passing mentions, generally in reference to genealogists. The words tombstone, cemetery, or grave almost never come up more than once in an article.

Some more substantive references in archival literature may illuminate the perception that the archival profession has about cemeteries. In February of 2009, Richard J. Cox wrote a post on his blog reviewing the book, *Love Cemetery: Unburying the Secret History of Slaves,* by China Galland. He titled the post, "Power, Records and Love Cemetery." At first he writes, "as archivists, genealogists and other researchers know, the information on headstones and other markers may be the only record of an individual's life."[32] And then he reminds us of the "power associated with records, a power that archivists need to appreciate and understand."[33] While Cox recounts China Galland's difficulty in trying to find documents relating to the African-American cemetery, I believe he missed the opportunity to emphasize the rehabilitation of the cemetery as a restoration of a collection of records to tell the story of those who were not included in the governments' records. Yes, it is a challenge finding the African-American story in most archives, but if we acknowledge Love Cemetery itself as an archival collection worthy of preservation, the void will be filled just a little bit.

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[32] Cox, "Power, Records, and Love Cemetery."
[33] Cox, "Power, Records, and Love Cemetery."

In 2010, the SAA newsletter *Archival Outlook* had photographs of tombstones on the front cover with the title "Etched in Time." The corresponding article by T. Matthew de Waelsche is about a collection of African American Funeral Programs. This is an important collection and I would argue that the intent of the creation and support for the collection is very similar to my main argument for the preservation of cemeteries. De Waelsche states that the programs "document important cultural and historical information on a segment of the population that has historically been largely underrepresented."[34] Despite the cover art and article title, this article is not about cemeteries, and I would have to say there is no "etching" involved regarding these paper documents. This short article makes no mention of the historical value within a cemetery.

Whether or not it was the intent of the editor or the author, the use of an artistic photograph of tombstones on the cover signifies, to me, the value that cemeteries have to the archival profession – visually dramatic, but not archival. *Archival Outlook*'s cover often contains an image of a paper document, so why was a photograph of a tombstone chosen to illustrate the topic? The article was about funeral programs and there are several photographs of the documents within the article. Why wasn't one of them used for the cover? A quote from a report written for NARA by Jeffrey N. Lash regarding objects in archival collections shows a similar perception of objects. Lash applauds the use of objects for reference as well as for exhibition purposes, but advises that, "National Archives artifacts should not be used as museum pieces to illustrate a national historical theme, but should rather be used to document the functioning of a federal agency within the framework

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[34] T. Matthew de Waelsche, "A Lasting Tribute: The San Antonio African American Funeral Program Collection," *Archival Outlook* (January/February 2010): 6.

of an exceptionally significant American historical experience."[35] The use of a photograph

of a tombstone was simply an illustration and it is unfortunate that tombstones are not

emphasized as the documentation that they truly are.

I suspect another potential reason for the lack of attention to cemetery materials is

their association primarily with genealogy. Archivists still find genealogical research to be

second-class while scholarly work is more highly respected.[36] Some believe that

genealogical research doesn't provide any historical understanding for our society as a

whole. If you only believe that the cemetery is a three-dimensional version of a list of

names and dates, then it has very little value aside from genealogical research and that

information could be quickly typed up in a Word document and then the cemetery could be

forgotten about as a resource. In fact, some archivists argue for the preservation of items

such as burial lists for these genealogical purposes.   Of course, I argue that the cemetery

itself contains so much more valuable information to many other researchers. The

preservation of traditional cemetery business records is important, but not sufficient to

provide a complete collection of the documentary heritage to be found in the cemetery.

Cemeteries should also be considered archives and be incorporated into the protection of the

archival profession.

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[35] Jeffrey N. Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives: A Summary of Past Practices, Present Uses, and Prospective Arrangements," NARA (1989): 17-18.
http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED345737.
[36] A few articles in defense of genealogists and/or outlining the rift between genealogists and archivists:
Tamma Farra, "Archivists and Genealogists: Past Criticisms and Current Perspectives," MA Thesis, Western Washington University, 2004; Richard J. Cox, "Genealogy and Public History: New Genealogical Guides and Their Implications for Public Historians," *The Public Historian* 6, Spring 1984; Gail R. Redmann, "Archivists and Genealogists: The Trend Toward a Peaceful Coexistence," *Archival Issues* 18, no. 2, 1993.

Cemeteries as a Scholarly Resource

The history of the cemetery and its place in society has been extensively studied from varying viewpoints. Architectural historians have studied the urban planning aspects and landscape architecture of cemeteries as well as the actual architecture of buildings, mausoleums and crypts. Art historians have studied the folk art on the markers and the character styles used. Anthropologists research business records as well as cemeteries to learn about the history of burial customs and mortuary practices. As a final example, and not surprisingly, many researchers use the cemetery to make conclusions about a society's changing view of death and mortality.

Those already aware of the goldmine of information at the cemetery are eager to incorporate the findings of many other disciplines. In the introduction to a collection of cemetery research essays, Richard E. Meyer argues that his book is an attempt to "bring to bear in one venue the resources and critical insights of a variety of academic disciplines for the purpose of analyzing these sites and artifacts."[37] The disciplines he cites are: Folklore, Art History, Cultural Geography, English, History, and Anthropology. Terry G. Jordan proclaims the success of the variety of disciplines found in the library with monographs on cemeteries. Jordan cites: "anthropologists, folklorists, sociologists, and fellow cultural geographers."[38] The study of cemeteries is not just a small interest of a few taphophiles, or only genealogists, it is a mainstream and widely studied research topic.

Some fields of study use the information found at the cemetery to supplement studies unrelated to cemeteries. Well-known examples are genealogists who turn primarily to the

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[37] Richard E. Meyer, *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture,* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1992), 4.
[38] Terry G. Jordan*, Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy (*Austin: University of Texas Press: 1982), 9.

inscriptions on the markers for their research into biographical histories. Social historians

have been able to see patterns of segregation, repression and empowerment in the cemetery

business records as well as the grave markers themselves. They are not interested in the

cemetery and its history itself, but in the information that it can provide for their fields of

study.

Some cemetery research is done using traditional archival materials, such as those

listed above, using business, private, and/or government records. In addition to

documentary research, a lot of information can be found using the actual cemetery grounds -

- when no documents exist, the cemetery may still be there. Cemeteries also often serve as a

permanent and unchanged representation of a particular time in history. Although symbols

of racial segregation are mostly destroyed, such as "whites only" drinking fountains and

other signage, the segregated cemetery will always retain its segregated quality.

Elizabethada Wright, in her essay on the cemetery as a site of memory, writes,

> The cemetery stores memories not held anywhere else, or not easily found
> anywhere else. Though genealogical records note births and deaths, they do
> not remember the stories of most people and mourners. Though history
> books record past achievements of many, others go unnoticed, and cemeteries
> tell stories about many of these others … that cannot be found elsewhere.
> While statues and memorials praising generals and other warriors are often
> found outside the cemetery, it is rare that a memorial is raised to a woman
> outside the cemetery. Relationships among families are also remembered for
> the public; I would never have realized Margaret Fuller and Buckminster
> Fuller were related if I had not seen their memorials in the Fuller family
> plot.[39]

She also argues that the cemetery is a representation of postmodern history, where many

voices and versions of history are recorded together. Many people are able to tell their own

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[39] Elizabethada Wright, "Reading the Cemetery, Lieu de Memoire Par Excallance," Rhetoric *Society Quarterly* Vol 33, No. 2 (Spring 2003), 33.

story on their tombstones, regardless of what is written in the history books, and she cites a few tombstones whose stories are disputed by other sources.

Genevieve Fabre and Robert G. O'Meally write about racial segregation in American cemeteries. They suggest several examples of evidence of segregation, which is available only in the physical cemetery. In their description of a Native American woman's grave in a small cemetery, they write, "Molloy Mahalk's identity is defined for eternity by her gender and her ethnicity, or at least for as long as her stone withstands the onslaught of natural erosion and of pollution. The physical separation of her gravestone and those of her neighbors … conveys a sense of their social isolation when alive."[40] And when referring to the occasion where slaves were buried in the same plot at their masters, they conclude, "although burial in the same area might look like equality, sometimes it suggests subjugation. If the family and the servants surround the master's grave, that could show the "patriarchal image into the beyond."[41]

Marie T. Hernandez's book about narratives in the Texas borderlands focuses on an "old Mexican cemetery caught inside a whitewashed suburban community."[42] She searches out the cemetery's story, "because of the paucity of archival records concerning the laboring classes who lived on the plantations both before and after the Civil War … my concern that archives can be destroyed, manipulated, or misread leads me to search for other forms of discourse."[43] Hernandez acknowledges that the cemetery is a place to preserve memories, but also is a place to hide memories from view. She describes the complexity and

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[40] Angelika Kruger-Kahloula, "On the Wrong Side of the Fence: Racial Segregation in American Cemeteries," in *History and Memory in African-American Culture,* eds. Genevieve Fabre and Robert G. O'Meally (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 134.
[41] Kruger-Kahloula, "On the Wrong Side of the Fence," 137.
[42] Marie T. Hernández, *Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire: Unearthing Deep South Narratives from a Texas Graveyard* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 4, 9.
[43] Hernandez, *Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire*, 11.

contradiction of the cemetery as, "the tight hold around the cemetery, with its tall fence,

locked gates, and no sign, can be read as protection, or alternatively, as delimitation of

detritus."[44] She refers to Michel Foucault's idea that some stories are enhanced and some

are erased from the narrative, recognizing that the stories held in the cemetery may be seen

as, "disqualified memories that are said to lack detail, relevance, or logic amid the large,

more materially substantiated memories that have been incorporated into narratives about

'significant' figures in 'history.'"[45] Hernandez's book shows that the examination of a

cemetery's story can provide additional detail to a town's various narratives. But her

thoughtful study of the cemetery also shows that the cemetery is not immune to the

manipulation of those in power who are writing the history books.

Katherine T. Corbett's essay, "Finding Women's History in Nineteenth Century

Cemeteries," argues that women's role in the domestic sphere keeps their stories from being

told in archives. Even socially prominent women are often left out of a town's narrative,

lacking memorials and inclusion in town histories. Corbett argues that the evidence of their

lives can be found in the cemetery. She argues that, "visitors in search of women's history

will find that the design and size of monuments, memorial inscriptions, and the placement of

grave markers all reflect nineteenth century attitudes about women's place in the family and

in the culture."[46] She cites as an example that most women's inscriptions include the phrase

"wife of" or "mother of," while the equivalent phrases are rarely used for men. She also

examines the information provided in the large family plot of George Collier. The stones

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[44] Hernandez, *Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire*, 10.

[45] Hernandez, Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire, 9. For additional information about Foucault's relevant ideas, Hernandez cites Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 78-92.

[46] Katherine T. Corbett, "Called Home: Finding Women's History in Nineteenth Century Cemeteries," in *Her Past Around Us: Interpreting Sites for Women's History. Public history Series,* eds Polly W. Kaufman and Katharine T. Corbett (Malabar, Fla: Krieger, 2003), 166.

show that he had two wives, one who died quite young and likely during childbirth, and that each of his wives had three children who died at a very young age. She writes that this is "a poignant reminder of the fragility of life on the urban frontier."[47] I would argue that it is more than a reminder. This information would be difficult to find all in one place in an archival repository. To search various birth and death records would never fully provide the impact of seeing it all in one place and the immediate understanding of the frequency of infant and maternal mortality.

The cemetery is not a collection of facts just waiting to illuminate the past with its truth and sincere evidence. The information at the cemetery is highly contested by various interests, just like the paper records in an archival repository. While the cases above seem to be a positive use of a cemetery's historical value, oppressed groups are not the only cemetery advocates. Not all cemetery advocates are arguing for the truth to be revealed about their history, fighting against a dominant narrative that is reinforced by the documentary materials. In an essay touting the benefits of historical cemetery projects, Thomas A.J. Crist, an archaeologist, argues, "burial grounds can be manipulated to serve opposing views, to legitimize claims to power, or to accommodate the dominant group's moral and economic positions."[48]

In the essay, "The Anatomy of a Disinterment: The Unmaking of Afro-American History," a rural area being cleared uncovers a small abandoned burial site, determined by a historian to likely be a nineteenth century African American gravesite. The historian and others recommend the burial be respectfully moved and placed with another cemetery which

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[47] Corbett, "Called Home," 177.
[48] Thomas A.J. Crist, "Empowerment, Ecology, and Evidence: The Relevance of Mortuary Archaeology to the Public" in *The Public Benefits of Archaeology*, ed. Barbara Little (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, from Little, Public Benefits of Arch), 102.

is thought to contain buried whites and is likely the main plantation's burial ground found on the same property. While some opposed the removal because they feared the rural character would be lost in the area, another group opposed it because of the possibility that it may contain their white ancestors, therefore "the preservation of the graves as an ancestral site would both legitimize their claims to deep roots in the county and enhance the county's status as an important historical area."[49] The implication of this argument is that if the burial site only contained African-Americans, the area would not have the same historical value.

In her article about the preservation movement by British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) regarding colonial cemeteries in India, Elizabeth Buettner examines the "politics behind efforts to preserve and commemorate selected historical narratives and artifacts."[50] The British cemeteries in India are being revered for their role in the creation of a nostalgic depiction that Britons literally gave their lives for the cause of Empire. She writes that cemeteries allow "persons who might be depicted as colonial oppressors to be recast as victims."[51] Although a main activity of BACSA is creating a collection of records to be held at the British Library, the organization also understands that repatriating the cemetery monuments or bodies to Britain would conflict with its message – the physical presence of the British cemeteries in India is key to the maintenance of their story. This movement is another example of how the physical cemetery can be a key element in the preservation of the cultural history of society, or perhaps just one particular vision of history. It is possible that a chosen history will not incorporate the preservation of the

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[49] Gertrude Fraser and Reginald Butler, "The Anatomy of a Disinterment: The Unmaking of Afro-American History" in *Presenting the Past*, eds. Susan Porter Benson and Roy Rosenzweig *(*Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 122.
[50] Elizabeth Buettner, "Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India" *History & Memory* 18.1 (2006): 9.
[51] Buettner, "Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia," 19.

physical cemetery. Buettner speculates that a future generation of Britons may not be as interested in the preservation of these far away artifacts, because their chosen message to the future will not involve the celebration of their ancestors' presence in India.

Just as the information in the cemetery landscape can be manipulated to reinforce the chosen narrative of many groups of people, it must also be mentioned that it is not a complete representation of all of society in itself. Meredith G. Watkins argues against the cliché that the cemetery is a site of memory for every faction of society. She points out that many cemetery studies only use the information found in the landscape and she ventures to investigate the cemetery by visiting the traditional records first. She writes, "archival materials provide insight into the lives of individuals and families no longer visibly commemorated."[52] By collecting the names of people from archives and then following the records to the places where they should have been buried, she found that a large number of people were no longer commemorated at the cemeteries. This does not mean that the cemetery is not a valid source for documentary evidence, but it does show that the traditional documentary materials in archives and the cemetery materials make a more complete collection. The paper documents don't tell the complete story – the context provided by the cemetery gives a fuller picture and vice versa.

As a preserver of documentary heritage, archives are missing out on the opportunity to be preserving materials that so many disciplines think are important to study. Cemetery research is very popular and the archival profession should be receptive to its value, mainly because it is an important evidential piece of history, but also because historians and genealogists are coming looking for it. It is also important to note that if the preservation of

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[52] Meredith G. Watkins, "The Cemetery and Cultural Memory: Montreal, 1860-1900," *Urban History Review* 21(1) (Fall 2002): 52.

a cemetery is left in the hands of a group with their own particular agenda, its complete

history may not be preserved when the group dies out or the chosen political message is out-

dated. The archival profession's objectivity and mission to preserve the history of all of

society can prevent the piece-meal, and potentially biased, preservation of cemeteries.

The Cemetery is an Archives

It is clear that other scholarly disciplines have been using cemeteries for research,

sometimes along with traditionally accepted archival collections and sometimes alone,

discovering them to be a goldmine of information providing depth and insight into many

aspects of cultural understanding. But will archival theory have to change dramatically to

intellectually incorporate the cemetery as a collection? Can we find an archival approach to

the inclusion of the cemetery as archives?

Archival Theory as it Relates to the Cemetery

Selection and appraisal is that part of the archivist's job when she decides what

materials should be included in her archives. She decides whether or not the materials fit her

repository's mission and she decides whether the materials are archival or not. Perhaps

these questions are usually answered based on instinct. For this thesis, however, I would

like to demonstrate how the cemetery fits in with the archival literature's definitions of

archives. Previously in this thesis, I aligned the cemetery's characteristics with some of the

definition of archives found in the SAA Glossary. But how are non-traditional cemetery

materials incorporated into archival theory, including the archival concepts of primary and

secondary purposes; informational, evidential, and intrinsic value; reliability and authenticity; and originality and uniqueness?

A central element of archival value is that archives have a primary and secondary purpose.[53] A tombstone's primary purpose is expressed when one refers to a tombstone as a grave marker. In the simplest terms, the tombstone serves to record that a body lies underneath. Without a grave marker, caskets could be disturbed inadvertently. If there were no grave markers, how would a family know where to place flowers or where to be buried if they chose to be buried in the family plot? In an essay about the phenomenon of the memorial park type cemetery, Herbert Blaney observes that monuments in this type of cemetery are sometimes flush to the ground. He goes so far as to write, "if the records of the superintendent are carefully kept and stored in a fireproof vault there remains scant excuse for the headstone as each individual grave can always be accurately located."[54] This view is a good example of the belief that the singular role of the headstone is as a burial location document.

A tombstone's secondary purpose begins as soon as the tombstone is set, and continues until after the primary purposes no longer exist. For many archivists, that secondary purpose can have evidential and/or informational value. Evidential value refers to what the record says about the body that created it and about the event that produced it. Informational value refers to the rest of the data that can be taken from the record, regarding

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[53] James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *American Archivist* 57 (Fall 1994): 633.
[54] Herbert Blaney, "The Modern Park Cemetery," in *Passing: The Vision of Death in America. Contributions in family studies, no. 2,* ed. Charles O. Jackson (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1977), 221.

people, places, etc.[55] The cemetery's informational value is what is used by genealogists and other scholarly researchers, such as those outlined above.

Of course, not all archivists agree about evidential or informational value and which is more important. Richard Cox argues that evidential value is the key ingredient. He writes: "before records or archives … take on symbolic or cultural value they exist as evidence of activity. Whatever symbolic or cultural value they assume is a kind of added-on value, not the sole explanation for their existence."[56] Cemeteries meet the requirements of Richard Cox. Cemeteries are evidence of how and when a society buried its dead and how it memorialized them.

Another characteristic of archives is uniqueness. While this is often thought of as a general way to differentiate archives from published material, I will use James O'Toole's analysis regarding several ways of defining uniqueness.[57] Using O'Toole's definitions, I would argue that tombstones are unique as a record itself (especially, when dealing with older tombstones, there is only one hand-made copy), unique in information (it applies to a unique person), uniqueness in process (it was placed there upon the burial of a unique person), and uniqueness of aggregation (this referring to the collection of tombstones at the cemetery). While the definition of what qualifies as unique is a debated issue, cemetery markers would be considered unique by many definitions and perhaps even more than many documents already held by archives. Some aspects of tombstones and cemeteries lead to questions regarding their uniqueness. It is possible to argue that the tombstone is not the

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[55] T.R. Schellenberg, "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records," in *Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice,* eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1984), 58.

[56] Richard J. Cox, *No Innocent Deposits* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press: 2004), 170.

[57] James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness" *American Archivist* 57 (Fall 1994), 637-639.

original record if one is looking for the true record (in the regular conduct of business) of a death, or even of a burial. If there is a ledger where burials are recorded, with date, name, perhaps even tombstone information, that could be the original record, making the tombstone just a memorial copy of the event.

Another type of value attributed to some archival records is intrinsic value. This is something that can easily be applied to grave markers. Intrinsic value is applied to "permanently valuable records that have qualities and characteristics that make the records in their original physical form the only archivally acceptable form for preservation."[58] Tombstones have a particular physical form that can be used as evidence of art movements, stone-cutting technology, and so on. The aggregation of tombstones, the cemetery itself, also has intrinsic value. The lay-out of a cemetery, the use of particular planning designs, etc., can be used as evidence of landscape movements, social and ethnic divisions at a particular time and place in history and so on.

A couple of hypothetical questions add to the discussion of intrinsic value. Would any value be lost if the information on a tombstone was faithfully copied onto another permanent material and the tombstone was removed and replaced by the copy? Would it be acceptable if a photograph were taken of the tombstone and it was removed and replaced with something else? What if all the tombstones in a cemetery were removed from their locations and placed in the exact same order in another location? Each tombstone is necessarily associated with the remains beneath it. If the tombstone is removed from the remains it loses a substantial element of its value -- it can no longer be defined as a literal

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[58] National Archives and Records Service, "Intrinsic Value in Archival Materials," in *Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice,* eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1984), 91.

grave-marker. And if the remains are removed from below the grave-marker, it also no longer has the same value.

Alicia Rekrut's thesis on materiality in archives illuminates the discussion of how narrow the traditional definitions of intrinsic value are.[59] She argues that the information and evidence that the document has outside of its textual components make the phrase intrinsic value redundant. That information does not need a separate definition, as it is just an element of evidential and informational value. Other authors have tried to make a similar argument, regarding photographs, art, and ephemera. In an article about the management of political posters, Susan Tschabrun writes, "mined solely for the textual information they contain, posters occasionally disclose facts and details that are not recorded elsewhere, but studied for the messages they communicate by the juxtaposition of words and images, they open wide a window on the social movements that generated them."[60] Just like a tombstone, there is textual information, but also the combination of the words with the style of the tombstone or the location of the tombstone in the cemetery can provide even more valuable information.

Another important quality of archives is reliability, and its related concept, authenticity. Reliability refers to "the authority and trustworthiness of the records as evidence, the ability to stand for the facts they are about."[61] Can a tombstone stand for the very fact that a person is buried at this location? If we trust in the cemetery system in general, believing that they will always place a tombstone with the correct information

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[59] Alicia (Ala) Rekrut, "Reconnecting Mind and Matter: Materiality in Archival Theory and Practice" (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg, 2009.)

[60] Susan Tschabrun, "Off the Wall and into a Drawer: Managing a Research Collection of Political Posters," *American Archivist* 66 (Fall/Winter 2003), 305-306.

[61] Luciana Duranti, "Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995): 6.

where there was a burial, then the tombstone is reliable. As we saw when Arlington Cemetery failed in its duty to maintain their cemetery grounds and accurate records, it became apparent that we, as a population, expected that cemeteries make proper use of the tombstones. Arlington stands as an exception to the rule, proving that tombstones are generally reliable as evidence.

As for the related concept of authenticity, a record is authentic "when it is the document it claims to be."[62] This is generally an issue of manipulation of the document or replacement rather than anything to do with the facts the document purports. With a tombstone, authenticity is only a concern if there is a chance that a tombstone could be removed or altered. While this is a possibility, it is not likely, due to its durable materials. While tombstones may easily be knocked to the ground, it would be difficult to remove one and replace it with a fake. It would also be difficult to change the information etched onto a tombstone without special equipment. In fact, I argue that the authenticity of a tombstone will always be less in question than most paper documents.

Cemeteries do align with the guidelines of archival theory and do fit the definitions outlined in archival literature. Many items already preserved in archival collections have been accessioned without such rigorous questioning -- perhaps because their format matched the generally accepted format of archival collections and therefore their qualifications did not need to be proven. Because of the non-traditional format of the physical cemetery as a collection, it needed to be compared to the archival definitions and this exercise has proven it matches the important qualities of many of the items already in archival collections.

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[62] Duranti, "Reliability and Authenticity," 7.

Archival Imperative: When a Cemetery Holds the Only Record

Cemeteries play a key role in another important aspect of archival theory –

archivists' mission to make an informed selection of information that will provide the future

with a representative record of human experience in our time.[63] F. Gerald Ham wrote in the

groundbreaking essay "The Archival Edge," that our job as archivists is to ensure the

preservation of, "a national mosaic that will bequeath to the future an eminently useable

past."[64] Sometimes, a cemetery marker is the only document of a person's life and

sometimes a whole cemetery is the only collection left of a group of people who were a

community in life as they are in death. Even if there were paper documents about a life, a

tombstone, because of its physical permanence, often exists longer than more fragile paper

materials. In many cases, such as for migrant or oral societies, a gravestone was the only

record created for a life.

A tangible example of cemeteries serving as the only records preserved here in the

United States is the use of grave-markers for illuminating the history of African-Americans.

Ann and Dickran Tashjian, in an essay about a cemetery in Rhode Island argue, "blacks in

their inferior social status generally remained outside written documentation."[65] David

Charles Sloane, writing about American cemeteries, points out, "the racist slave-holding

society's attempt to strip African-Americans of legitimate familial and community

relationships encouraged them to develop and protect the areas in which they could express

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[63] F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," in *Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice,* eds. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, U.S. General Services Administration, 1984), 326.
[64] Ham, "The Archival Edge," 326.
[65] Ann and Dickran Tashjian, "The Afro-American Section of Newport, Rhode Island's Common Burying Ground," in Cemeteries *and Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture* ed. Richard E. Meyer (Logan: Utah State University Popular Press: 1992).

their sense of family and community."[66] Michael L. Blakey, Project Director of the New

York African Burial Ground Project writes, "those who owned plantations succumbed to a

certain level of negotiation with those who were enslaved. Basics of food, shelter, social,

and cultural life would be required if this unalterably human labor were to be made useful to

Europeans. The cemetery was one such necessary concession."[67]

In the previously mentioned article by Fraser and Butler about the abandoned

African American burial site discovered on land being cleared, the white population

disputed its removal because of the potential for this burial site to contain their white

ancestors. Despite the area having a high African American population, no African

Americans spoke out to oppose the removal. Fraser and Butler argue that the local African

Americans had no recourse,

> the absence of vital records, combined with political and economic
> circumstances preventing Afro-Americans from owning the land they
> occupied, makes it difficult to 'prove' the presence of Afro-Americans.
> White witnesses at the hearing could fairly accurately trace their family trees
> to the pre-Civil War period, but blacks rarely can. Surnames, for example are
> frequently not given for slave and free blacks in the surviving county records.
> It would have been almost impossible for black claimants to assert an interest
> in the abandoned cemetery since the individuals buried on the site did not
> own the land."[68]

While this story reiterates the problems with a lack of traditional documentary materials

relating to African Americans in early United States history, Fraser and Butler miss the

opportunity to argue that the abandoned cemetery *is* a part of the "vital records" for which

they search. The cemetery is not just supplementary to the traditional records and therefore

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[66] David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 15.

[67] Michael Blakey, "Forward," in *Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries,* eds. Wilbur B. Hughes, Gina R. Misiroglu, and Wright R. Hughes (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1996), xiii.

[68] Fraser and Butler, "The Anatomy of a Disinterment," 129.

serves no purpose without corresponding documentation; the cemetery is a form of documenting the lives of those people buried there.

The result of the archival mission to preserve a documentary history that is fully representative of all of society is the opportunity for historians as well as traditionally undocumented groups to bring their histories to the light of day. The result of that is eloquently argued by Thomas A.J. Crist, an archaeologist, who writes, "a group's social past, ancestral history, and national appreciation constitute much of how that group's members view themselves and how they are perceived by others in modern society. From our heritage we draw a sense of social worth and meaning, and biases in the historical record often obscure or dismiss the pasts of disenfranchised minorities whose real contributions are unrecognized and underappreciated."[69]

Similarities to the Study of Rock Art

Because of some similar qualities between rock art and cemeteries, a look into the study of rock art[70] may provide additional insight into how cemeteries can be intellectually incorporated into the archival definition. Similar to what I have found regarding cemeteries as archives, there is very little archival literature about rock art. However, there is at least one archivist who has investigated the value of rock art as an indigenous form of record keeping. Acknowledging rock art as a valuable source or records would provide a Native American voice to archival collections when traditionally, Native American archives have

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[69] Crist, "Empowerment, Ecology, and Evidence," 109.
[70] Fred Hirschmann and Scott Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest* (Portland, Or: Graphic Arts Center Pub, 1994), 9. [This term as used by many experts includes all manner of symbols and pictures on stone formations whether scratched or painted.]

been filled with European created documents.[71] Using her experience with rock art sites

related to shamanic activity, Erica Olsen uses archaeological and anthropological scholarly

literature to show that this rock art was created for a record-making purpose.[72]   She also

concludes, as I do about cemeteries, that accepting rock art as archives does not mean a

literal accession of the materials, but a change in understanding to a point "where indigenous

documentation systems are accorded the status they deserve."[73] Olsen's conclusions about

rock art are similar to my conclusions about cemeteries and I would like to further outline

additional similarities between the fields of rock art and cemetery studies.

I previously argued that tombstones are sometimes the singular document of a

person's life, and the cemetery is sometimes the singular document of the culture that

created it. Nearly all rock art is ancient and it is often the only record left of the culture that

created it. As with tombstone research, this has positive and negative aspects. A lack of

supporting evidence or insider knowledge causes a problem for those who study the images,

almost completely preventing any interpretation that is not "too speculative [and] too open

to explanations that could not be verified," as Fred Hirschmann and Scott Thybony put it.[74]

But it also allows for insight into an otherwise lost culture. These sites are interpreted

widely, sometimes cautiously and sometimes not.

Hirschmann and Thybony capture the difficulty in avoiding uninformed conclusions

and leave us with the same questioning many have when viewing rock art. They caption a

photograph of a detailed pictograph involving animals and people with, "one cannot help but

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[71] Erica Olsen, "Archives in Stone: A New Way of Looking at American Indian Rock Art" (paper presented at Northwest Archivists annual meeting, Moscow, ID: 2007), 3.
[72] Olsen, "Archives in Stone," 4.
[73] Olsen, "Archives in Stone."
[74] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 9.

feel this site told an important story."[75] That story, however, may never be fully understood because of a lack of supporting information. In order to interpret the images, researchers use any contextual information available to them, including consultation with members of local native cultures who may or may not have any association with the rock art. Hirschmann and Thybony write of a Navajo who stated that one particular site was created as an "archive of ritual knowledge … in case the medicine men … died before passing on their knowledge."[76] If this expert is correct, then the primary purpose of the rock art makes it archival by our definition.

Many archaeologists agree that rock art is meant to convey information, as the Navajo consultant mentioned above stated. Some record the "coming of the horse, the arrival of the first guns, and famous battles. The bravest deeds and important coups of chiefs and warriors were recorded on rock; scenes illustrating individual combat, horse raids, and sexual conquests are carved and painted throughout the area. Many record the life histories of important warriors."[77] Other subject matter depicted on stone is related to the spiritual life of the particular culture. It documents the experiences of religious rituals and vision quests, etc, often as "teaching tools in group rituals structured to pass knowledge across generations."[78] Not all rock art sites are documentary in purpose. While most archaeologists agree that they are not merely art for art's sake, there are some sites that it is believed were intended to perform a function other than conveying information. Hirschmann and Thybony write that a particular site containing images of animals was

[75] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 19.
[76] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 107.
[77] James D. Keyser and Michael Klassen, *Plains Indian Rock Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 307.
[78] Keyser and Klassen, *Plains Indian Rock Art,* 309, 312.

drawn with the belief that the drawing would increase the herd.[79] James D. Keyser and

Michael Klassen write about "hunting magic" and the intention of the artist to appease

spirits with his pictograph.[80] These images can, nevertheless, provide information to future

researchers about the creator.

Similar to the importance of the location of tombstones in a cemetery and the

location of the cemetery in a landscape, the location of rock art is of high importance.

Various investigations have taken place at rock art sites and experts have discovered such

site-specific things as the play of sunlight on an image and/or alignment with stars. Jean

Clottes and Guy Bennett conclude, "it is meaningless to isolate paintings and engravings

from their natural settings. They are not individual works on the walls of cliffs or on rocks,

like paintings hanging on the walls of a museum. Their full meaning can only be

appreciated in a broader context, in which water, cliffs, shelters, rocks and weather – and the

sacred stories attached to them—are every bit as significant as the images created by men

and women."[81] The location-specific nature of rock art, also seen at cemeteries, presents

problems for the preservation of the information, the preservation of the physical materials

as well as problems with physical control and providing reference if the rock art is

considered an archival collection.

The difficulty in interpreting rock art sites due to a complete lack of additional

information about the culture that created the images forced many archaeologists to

concentrate on recording the content of the sites and making comparisons with other sites

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[79] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 29.
[80] Keyser and Klassen, *Plains Indian Rock Art,* 309.
[81] Jean Clottes and Guy Bennett, *World Rock Art. Conservation and Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2002), 60.

rather than working to interpret their meaning.[82] Even today, this descriptive documentation

is a primary means of preservation. Aside from the obvious natural deterioration of

materials, rock art is also the victim of destruction by vandals and unintentional damage by

visitors. Some rock art sites receive protection because of their presence on private or

government land such as National Parks so that the access to the site can be monitored and

regulated. Archaeologists also argue that a way to help preserve these sites is to keep

locations secret whenever possible.[83] The caretakers of one very famous rock art site tried

another preservation tactic. When the art in the caves at Lascaux began to deteriorate due to

the changes in the cave's climate resulting from all the visitors, a replica of several of the

caves was created in a nearby location and people visit this replica today.[84] These strategies

for preservation can be considered similar to archival procedures such as duplication,

migration and transcription.

There are many similarities between rock art research and cemetery research. The

most important thing to note when comparing the two fields is that they are both archives of

evidential information, despite their physical make-up differing from what is traditionally

held in archival repositories and should be accepted as archival collections.

Artifacts In (and Out of) Archives

One of the immediate problems seen with rock art and with tombstones is that they

appear physically to be artifacts and not documents. While I have argued that they are

documentary evidence in a non-traditional form, it is still necessary to acknowledge this

non-traditional form and how the archival profession has dealt it with previously. Artifacts

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[82] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 9.
[83] Hirschmann and Thybony, *Rock Art of the American Southwest,* 9.
[84] Clottes and Bennett, *World Rock Art,"* 21.

of all kinds can be found in archives for varying reasons. Perhaps the artifact is a single

object that was accessioned with a collection for no apparent reason. In a National Archives

and Records Administration (NARA) report regarding artifacts in archives, Jeffrey N. Lash

concluded that, "nearly all the accessioning of artifacts occurred in conjunction with the

accessioning of textual records."[85] Or perhaps we have consciously accessioned them by

making an argument for their documentary value. In any case, we inherently know the

importance of objects and they are included in our collections.

Lash's 1989 report proposes to summarize NARA's policies and practices regarding

the accessioning of artifacts with the final purpose of advising on the transfer of artifacts to

the soon-to-be-created Archives II, the National Archives facility located in College Park,

Maryland.[86] One portion of the report outlines the scholarly perspective on the types of

artifacts belonging in archives. He quotes several *American Archivist* articles and

concludes that they are not in consensus. While one viewpoint is to reject any distinction

between "the written word and the material object" another "rejected the idea that an artifact

necessarily has intrinsic documentary value."[87] Lash did not provide any conclusions, but

just compared these theoretical approaches.

Next, Lash uses the argument regarding whether or not artifacts can be legal federal

records. While this is not necessarily a concern of non-federal repositories, his conclusions

can be helpful for determining the definition of an artifact as record. Lash explains what he

was told by Legal Services Staff, writing, "the 'documentary evidence' of federal agency

activity that a three-dimensional object has or reveals forms the critical standard by which

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[85] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 8.
[86] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 8.
[87] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 3-4.

an artifact should be considered a federal record. … [A]n object's message should represent

the definitive criterion, irrespective of the format."[88] But what Lash learned from Legal

Services makes this argument an "unresolved matter" because he then learned of a court

case from 1971 regarding the legal exclusion of material objects associated with the

Kennedy assassination from the definition of federal records. "Neither the language nor the

meaning of the Freedom of Information Act, the court concluded, could be construed to

define or classify those objects as federal records."[89] But Lash does not find this to be the

definitive argument. His report concludes with recommendations for transferring some

artifacts to Archives II, after an elimination of a great number of objects deemed to be

useless to the goal of documenting "and illustrating significant functions performed by

federal agencies."[90]

Artifacts are very important and if they can serve a documentary purpose, they

should be included in archives. In an article about Moroccan ceramics, Margaret S. Graves

writes about the formal qualities of the ceramics but then also concludes, "above all, the

group stands as a reminder that not all historical documents are textual: visual culture can

carry within its products the whole weight of its own cultural milieu."[91] A piece of pottery,

that serves as evidence of the actions of its creator can be included in archives, as long it is

being used to demonstrate this evidence and not just as an illustration.

Elizabeth Brumfiel, in an article published in an anthropology journal, argues for the

value of artifacts. She states that the difference between anthropology and archaeology is

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[88] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 6.
[89] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 6-7.
[90] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 25.
91 Margaret S. Graves, "Visual Culture as Historical Document: Sir John Drummond Hay and the Nineteenth-Century Moroccan Pottery in the National Museum of Scotland," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36(1), (April 2009): 118.

that anthropology uses documents and archaeology uses artifacts. She argues that better histories are made when these two fields work together, stating, "material remains supplement the historical record in several crucial ways."[92]   In some books regarding the historical importance of the African-American cemeteries, archaeology is claimed to be the way for mainstream narratives to be disputed. No matter what the narrative told by the dominant parties, archaeology exists to find information that was hidden. Archives have often been accused of just telling the story of the powerful, due to the reality that those in power create the records and therefore control the message. In order to tell the most complete history, artifacts may need to be used to fill in for a lack of traditional documentation.

Tombstones also carry another complication not present in many artifacts. The textual nature of the information written on the tombstone causes an immediate desire to focus singularly on the words, which could lead more easily to the exclusion of the physical tombstone and its context as additional information. Alicia Rekrut states, "In a logocentric system the graphic is difficult to read – but where text is present the rest of the physical record is usually marginalized. … Inadequate visual literacy and material literacy limits understanding of textual records, for every textual record is also a non-textual record."[93] Rekrut goes on to cite a manual of archival management where the rebinding of large records is advised, concluding that for the author of this manual, the binding, labels and other materials are not part of the record and are extraneous.[94] She quotes James O'Toole, who said that it is, "bias of literate people … to suppose the records, books, manuscripts and

[92] Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, "It's A Material World: History, Artifacts, and Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 32 (2003): 207.
[93] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 35.
[94] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 34.

other materials mean only what the words in them say."[95] And cemeteries have this textual

bias problem too, as can be seen by their value being limited to research about names, dates,

and anything written in the inscription.

Lash's NARA report, Graves's ceramics article, and Spurgeon's documentary art

article are all arguments for the inclusion of visual and three-dimensional objects into

archives. Despite their non-traditional format, these artifacts can hold important

documentary evidence about a society. Tombstones and cemeteries should also be included

in this argument.

Are Markers Primarily Monuments or Art?

I have argued that cemetery tombstones fit the criteria of archives and shortly I will

address a variety of problems with the reality of incorporating cemeteries into archives.

First, I would like to address some other qualities of tombstones. Tombstones have often

been studied as monuments or as art and if an item were determined to be solely art or solely

a monument, it would not fall under the protection of the archival profession. I would like

to further emphasize that cemetery markers are archival by showing how they are neither

primarily monuments nor primarily art.

Some might argue that tombstones are merely monuments and not archival materials

at all. That argument might lead to the conclusion that if we agree that they are monuments

then their care and study should be left to the architectural historians. What is a monument,

then? A monument's purpose is to "bind a community together horizontally, but also

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[95] Rekrut, "Material Literacy," 35.

vertically connecting the present generation with a heroic past and fulfilling destiny."[96] It is

apparent that many tombstones do serve a memorial purpose commemorating a heroic past,

as many monuments do. And the cemetery is often a place where people choose to put

monuments, unrelated to the burials that occur there. But where is the line between a

monument and documentary evidence? To consider another aspect of a monument, the

inscriptions, "are meant to carry a direct message from its builder to posterity. … The shaft

of an obelisk in ancient times was often covered with inscriptions and symbols detailing the

great and mighty deeds of the hero it honored."[97] Here again, there are striking similarities

to a tombstone.

    Generally, archival records are expected to have been created at or near the time of

the event it is recording – the closer the better. Monuments are more likely to be put up

after a sufficient amount of time has passed, so that those erecting the monument know

which memory they want society to retain. In some cases, monuments are put up to counter

the memory that already exists. Nevertheless, monuments are not evidential documents by

the archivist's definition because they are not documenting the event, they are

commemorating it. Perhaps one of the most "commemorative" cemeteries in the United

States is at Gettysburg, but G. Mosse, writing about national cemeteries, argues, "the

soldiers' cemetery at Gettysburg … [was a] simple burial place, and no thought was given to

creating a place of national worship."[98] As I have argued before, the tombstone has an

important purpose of marking a grave and that action cannot be done too long after the event

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[96] Gerald A. Danzer, *Public Places: Exploring Their History* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History: 1994), 1.
[97] Danzer, *Public Places,* 9.
[98] G. Mosse, "National Cemeteries and National Revival: the Cult of the fallen Soldiers in Germany" *Journal of Contemporary History* 14(1), (1979), pg 8.

of burial happened for obvious reasons. Sometimes a piece of evidential record can become a monument, but a tombstone's original purpose was not as a monument. This makes the tombstone less of a monument and more of an archival record.

Another aspect that has been applied to tombstones is an artistic quality. Tombstones can be studied as evidence of folk art movements as well as practices of stone cutting and engraving. But are tombstones only important because they are examples of folk art and stone-masonry? If the cemetery is full of art pieces, is the cemetery actually an art museum? The difference between museums and archives is important. Although both are in the profession of heritage protection, there is a difference between artistic heritage and documentary heritage.

Greg Spurgeon wrote an article exploring the role of documentary art in archives, where he differentiates between fine art, belonging to a museum, and documentary art, belonging in archives. He writes, a "museum [collects] objects illustrative of antiquities, natural history, fine and industrial art" and "archives [are where] public records or other important documents are kept."[99] He cites a difference of focus, where "art [focuses on] taste, beauty, and creative excellence [and] archives [focus on the] document with its inherent evidential, informational, or historical value."[100] His case study involved the Canadian War Memorials Committee. The National Gallery had encouraged them to provide a visual record of Canadian participation in World War I. During the birth of Public Archives Canada, they made no claim to this art and this resulted in it being processed as art and not as documents. Spurgeon argues that the "project was clearly documentary in intent

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[99] Greg Spurgeon, "Pictures and History: The Art Museum and the Visual Arts Archive," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 62.
[100] Spurgeon, "Pictures and History," 62.

and the products of which were primarily of historical rather than aesthetic value."[101]

Spurgeon, an archivist, has claimed that evidential value trumps artistic value, although he

leaves us with a question: can something ever be wholly 'art' or wholly a 'document' and

when is it allowed to separate content from its form?[102]

Including cemeteries into the archival definition does not change the tenets of

archival theory. My argument is that cemeteries clearly fit into the traditional definitions.

Cemeteries are archives even though they are in a non-traditional form, different than what

is usually the format of an archival collection.

Practical Concerns with the Cemetery as Archives

Even if archivists agree that cemeteries meet the guidelines described in archival

literature and that their inclusion into archives is necessary if we are to preserve the entirety

of the documentary heritage of society, we must acknowledge the complications of

considering a tombstone or a cemetery as part of an archival collection. How will the daily

processes of appraisal, arrangement, description, and reference be handled? While physical

arrangement is a moot point surely, other aspects are more problematic.

Selection/Appraisal, Arrangement/Description

Selection and appraisal refers to the decisions an archivist makes regarding whether

or not particular materials will be accessioned into the repository. The previously outlined

definitions of a cemetery could be used, for example whether or not the cemetery contains

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[101] Spurgeon, "Pictures and History," 68.
[102] Spurgeon, "Pictures and History," 68.

unique information not found elsewhere or sufficient amounts of information to make it

worth the time and money spent for preservation. Selection and appraisal are very

subjective actions and my guidelines are up for debate. The most important element is that

as long as the information found at the cemetery fits with the particular institution's mission,

then the cemetery should not be excluded just because of its non-traditional format. Any

repository that would accept the business records of a particular cemetery, could easily

accept the cemetery itself.

Description is an important part of making a collection usable for the researcher.

Traditional finding aids can work fine for the description of a cemetery. In fact, because of

the archival principle of provenance, the paper and electronic business records of a

particular cemetery would be included on the same finding aid (and in the same collection)

as the cemetery site and tombstones themselves, only the physical arrangement (that the

cemetery remains in another location) will be affected. Important context regarding the

cemetery's creation and the vital information held at the site will be connected intellectually

in the finding aid.

This brings me to another issue regarding the current archiving of cemetery materials

– the name index or cemetery survey, which I would like to discuss in some detail. In a

search of archives' finding aids on the Internet, it is apparent that some repositories have

cemetery surveys or name indexes as the entirety of a collection about a cemetery. When

considering the evidentiary value of the cemetery, cemetery surveys are not enough, as they

generally exist with very little additional information. Name indexes are generally created

by a genealogist or historian and not the cemetery itself. While a name index may contain

the same basic information as the burial register, the burial register is an evidentiary

document created during the course of business. It contains the details created at the time, which can later be examined by the present researchers. A name index or cemetery survey is equivalent to a secondary document like a published book written about a cemetery.

Cemetery surveys are not finding aids. They merely serve as a stand-in for a very limited amount of the information at the cemetery. They also generally only provide the information that is written on the tombstone. We know that there is so much more to the cemetery than the inscriptions and that information should be outlined in a finding aid. As Richard Cox writes when scolding archivists for writing descriptions only containing the information in the collection, "the descriptive information that is really needed is the form, function, warrant, origins, and other aspects of the records and the system supporting them."[103] A successful finding aid for a cemetery would at least give a short history of the cemetery, giving the researchers some context before they review the documents (the tombstones) themselves.

Physical/Intellectual Control and Providing Reference

A cemetery has even more complications because it is not possible to move it into a repository for protection and better accessibility as we could with a piece of pottery deemed archival. What about the need to gain physical control of the collection? Do we need to? Archivists, in our traditional role of protector of archives, would feel very uncomfortable allowing people to walk around unsupervised through our archives, as people do regularly in a cemetery. In Alicia Rekrut's thesis regarding material culture, she explains the difference between movable and immovable cultural property, concluding that while "physical sites are obviously part of the dynamic contextual milieux of records creation, the material and

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[103] Cox, *No Innocent Deposits,* 276.

virtual objects that are considered archival records are almost always limited to movable

cultural property."[104] Unfortunately, she does not go on to argue for the consideration of the

immovable cultural property, as I do in this thesis.

In his report for NARA about artifacts in archives, Jeffrey N. Lash explained the

problems with providing reference for objects, concluding that a central location for artifacts

would "substantially increase the practical research value and use of artifacts" as opposed to

artifacts being physically located next to their associated textual documents.[105] This method

would help with the concerns of collecting objects, which he outlines as, "security of

valuable materials objects, the special associational relationships existing between artifacts

and textual records, and the physical integrity of artifacts."[106] So, having the objects (or the

cemetery) physically located in a different place than the related paper materials is not a

problem for Lash.

A trip into architectural archives can provide some insight, making the connection

between the cemetery and its records compared to architecture and its records. Kent

Kleinman writes about the value in the division between architectural records and the

architecture itself. He states, "buildings and documents related to buildings have utterly

divergent trajectories that at best cross only at the briefest moments (e.g., during

construction) and diverge relentlessly as a function of time. The function of the archives is

not to prevent this separation but to insist upon it; to quarantine certain records from the

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[104] Rekrut, "Reconnecting Mind and Matter," 99.
[105] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 17.
[106] Lash, "Artifacts at the National Archives," 17.

contamination of age, weather, and abuse."[107] The analogous documents in the cemetery

scenario would be the burial registers. This does not include materials created about the

cemetery years later. A name index, created by a genealogist at a later time, is not

equivalent to the original architectural documents Kleinman is referencing because a name

index merely stands as a snapshot of a moment in time when the cemetery has already been

affected by years as a public space. Kleinman writes, "the documents of the archive can

claim as central a role in the definition of architecture as can the buildings themselves. …the

two are mutually dependent, like brick and mortar."[108] The cemetery's business records and

the cemetery's physical space make up the complete collection.

The SAA Glossary definition of archives ends with the phrase, "especially those

materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective

control."[109] This refers to the archival profession's core values and to their perspective when

managing a collection. If the physical cemetery is to remain out of the hands of archivists,

such as if an archival repository intellectually accessioned the cemetery, created finding aids

for it, and agreed to promote its value as archives, how will those principles of provenance,

original order and collective control be maintained out in the physical landscape.

Provenance refers to the idea that the creator of the records determines the content in each

collection; archives are organized by creating organization. This is something that is

inherent at the cemetery. It encompasses only the records (tombstones, etc.) that were

created by the cemetery organization; for example, the creator could be the society at large,

[107] Kent Kleinman, "Archiving/Architecture" in *Archives, Documentation, & the Institutions of Social Memory,* eds. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: Bentley Historical Library, International Institute, University of Michigan, 2000), 55.
[108] Kleinman, "Archiving/Architecture," 55.
[109] Pearce-Moses, "Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology."

those buried in the cemetery or the actual cemetery business. An archivist understands that

the cemetery business records and the cemetery itself are parts of the same collection.

Original order is a related concept that archivists use to manage collections. Archivists

place high importance on maintaining the organizational scheme that was chosen by the

creator. In the case of cemeteries, this is clearly not a problem; the original order will be

maintained even without the intervention of an archivist.

Even if, as archivists, we accept that we will not have complete physical control over

the cemetery, we could still retain intellectual control over it. If a traditional archival

repository with an interest in the cemetery markers chose to "collect" the records, they could

provide reference for the cemetery collection. An ideal situation might be if a cemetery

could be its own repository, holding the cemetery's business records if they existed, so the

complete collection would be under the protection of one archives. In this case, the

cemetery archives collection is located on the site of the physical cemetery markers, and the

archivist could retain some form of physical control of the markers as well as the business

records. Physical control of the cemetery is not as much of a concern as the archivist's need

to gain physical control over a paper document collection of a business. If that business

were allowed to keep their own records, there would be opportunity for them to rearrange or

manipulate the records, which would cause the loss of authenticity, provenance, original

order and other qualities of archival collections that are important to their value as evidential

and informational resources. The cemetery, because of its inherent immovability is less

likely to be rearranged or manipulated even if it not in the physical control of an archives.

The daily processes of accessioning and managing an archival collection will not

change if a physical cemetery is accepted as an archival collection. Difficulty arises only

when the cemetery's qualities of three-dimensionality and immovable physical location are concerned. I argue that there are complications with many archival collections, such as when a donor puts restrictions on donated materials or when nitrate negatives must be kept in cold storage. The archival profession's literature regarding artifacts in the archives shows ways in which this complication can be dealt with. Arrangements must be made in order to satisfy the archival mission of preserving the history of all of society. The cemetery contains too much valuable archival information to be disregarded because of its non-traditional format.

Case Study: Lake View Cemetery in Seattle, Washington

I have previously outlined a variety of scholarly writings using the cemetery for research. Those researchers investigated their theories by asking questions such as, "Does racial segregation appear in American cemeteries?" "How has the cemetery become the repository of the collective memory of a community?" "How were death and burial represented in novels of Victorian England?" and "What does the layout of a cemetery reveal about the ideas of the community that created it?"[110] As the writers developed their individual conclusions, they used research material found only in the cemetery – and I used those occurrences as evidence in my argument. Their intent, however, was not to show that cemeteries contain unique information – it was just a by-product of their research.

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[110] My own speculation regarding the following: the essays appearing in Fabre and O'Meally, *History and Memory in African-American Culture;* Hernández, *Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire: Unearthing Deep South Narratives from a Texas Graveyard;* Hotz, *Literary Remains: Representations of Death and Burial in Victorian England;* Horowitz, *John Brinckerhoff Jackson, Landscape in Sight: Looking at America.*

I approach my case study from an archivist's perspective and not from a historical researcher's perspective. My guiding research question, as I begin my case study, is one an archivist might ask when appraising the value of a particular cemetery as a collection, "Does it contain unique material worth archiving or can the evidential and informational content be found elsewhere?" Throughout this thesis, my argument for the value of the physical landscape of the cemetery has two major elements. One is that there are individual stories told in the cemetery that cannot be found elsewhere. The other is that the cemetery as a collection of individual tombstones, in its specific place in the landscape, has a unique story to tell. These two points could be said about almost any collection held in an archival repository. This concept is a key component of the archival perspective – knowing that the value of the collection is the combination of the individual pieces of information as well as the aggregation of the pieces in the context of the collection.

As for the argument for individual stories not told elsewhere, there are over 40,000 graves in the cemetery used in the case study and I believe it reasonable to assume that some of the people buried there have no other documentation preserved – or will no longer have any other documentation at some point in the future. Therefore, I will not focus on searching out specific names and proving that the information in the cemetery cannot be found anywhere else. Rather, I will focus on the information that the cemetery as a whole provides. My goal, by reviewing available archival records and comparing them to the information that can be found at the cemetery, is to propose some hypotheses to show the unique value of this cemetery as an archival collection.

A research visit to any cemetery provides a lot of data and raises just as many questions. Walking through a cemetery and stopping at every tombstone is like going

through each page of a paper document collection. Some pages contain very little

immediate information and some contain an encyclopedia's knowledge of a subject in one

glance. Just as in a paper file, sometimes the relationship between two pages is important,

sometimes the relationship between disparate pages within a larger grouping is important to

the context, and sometimes a file is labeled "miscellaneous" and contains a variety of

materials having no relevant relationship, except that they are part of the same collection. In

the cemetery, people who were closely related in life, by family or business ties, are often

buried in the same plot or nearby to each other. However, sometimes the only relationship

between two side-by-side tombstones is coincidence. A choice of a particular cemetery and

location of burial plot is dependent on regulations of government and cemetery

management, price, tradition, personal preference, and many other factors. Just as the

knowledge of a creator's world view is important to an accurate understanding of his or her

manuscript collection, a little knowledge of cemetery and social history is necessary to aid in

understanding the informational value of the cemetery.

Lake View Cemetery is arguably the most famous cemetery in Seattle.[111] Opened in

1872, its 40 acres are home to most of Seattle's well-known pioneers. It is located atop one

of the highest hills in Seattle and has panoramic views of Elliot Bay, Lake Washington, the

Olympic Mountains and the Cascade Mountains. It has always been privately run and

consequently, most of its records are not open for research. The cemetery website provides

a burial index of names, without accompanying plot numbers, but those are available at the

cemetery office as is some additional information if requested. This is additional evidence

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[111] I will not provide a general outline of the history of the cemetery here. A brief history can be found on pages 6-7 of Robert L. Ferguson, *The Pioneers of Lake View: A Guide to Seattle's Early Settlers and Their Cemetery* (Bellevue, WA: Thistle Press, 1995).

that cemetery management and the public are under the assumption that the only information value the cemetery has is the names and dates. I was able to view some pre-1900 Plot Record ledgers and a few other documents. The minimal documentation available to the public is a combination of privacy concerns on behalf of the cemetery's clients and also the words often heard by anyone researching early Seattle history: *all the records burned in the fire*.[112] Lake View is still an active cemetery and I was told that they plan to be active for one hundred more years. This could mean that the business records remain private for many years. This gives me a similar perspective when visiting the cemetery as one would have visiting many of the cemeteries that have saved no business records.

Like most cemeteries in the United States, no substantive monographs have been written about it. It has been featured in a book about Seattle cemeteries and also has its own well-known guidebook, but neither of these provides any in-depth information about the cemetery itself.[113] Both of these books use the cemetery as a jumping off point for telling the biographical stories of notable Seattleites. Generally, after acknowledging that the name was found on the tombstone (or showing a photograph of the tombstone), they turn their focus away from the cemetery and return to the traditional research sources to tell the story, missing the opportunity to see what information the context of the tombstone could provide.[114] Unfortunately, they also miss the opportunity to tell the stories of any number of the less well-known early Seattleites who are buried in the cemetery.

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[112] It is common knowledge (and potentially legend) that most businesses located in Seattle's downtown lost most or all of their records in 1889. Additionally, the staff helping me at Lake View Cemetery's offices also spoke of another fire in the early 1900s that may have destroyed Lake View's records.

[113] Robert L. Ferguson, *The Pioneers of Lake View: A Guide to Seattle's Early Settlers and Their Cemetery* (Bellevue, WA: Thistle Press, 1995); Robin Shannon, *Cemeteries of Seattle* (Charleston SC, Chicago, IL, Portsmouth NH, San Francisco, CA: Arcadia Publishing, 2007).

[114] These books are not intended for a scholarly audience and therefore are almost completely without citations or reference to what sources were used.

As if opening a newly accessioned collection for the first time, one of the first things to notice about this cemetery is that, in addition to being on the top of Capitol Hill in Seattle, the cemetery itself has a noticeable hill in its own landscape. Even if a researcher were unfamiliar with the names of the notable pioneers of Seattle, it would be apparent that those people with the most beautiful views at the top of the hill, physically higher than everyone else, were those in life with the monetary means or influence to afford that spot. Further accentuating the importance of this select group of people is a small circle road that surrounds twenty or so plots. The rest of the cemetery is laid out in a grid pattern. They even have a short wall around them, which is likely for soil-retaining purposes but nevertheless provides another level of seclusion.

Almost every surname on a plot within the circle road can be found on Wikipedia or HistoryLink,[115] highlighting their importance to the story of Seattle. Certainly, this is not a situation where the only record of a person's life is here at the cemetery. Their biographies have been written using government documents, personal narratives, diaries, and every time they put their pens to paper to document a business deal, or report on their daily lives for the gossip pages. What is apparent only through a visit to their burial plots is their presence all in one place, choosing to maintain their importance and seclusion from the rest of society here on the top of the hill. Just by having their burial plots in amongst the other important people, they ensure the survival of their legacies as prominent members of society.

The choice to be buried in this cemetery shows a secular side to the personalities of those buried here. Very few references to religion are found on the gravestones of those

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[115] Historylink.com is a on-line encyclopedia of Washington state history that includes essays about local history topics. Information is fully cited and scholarly in nature, although intended for all audiences. It does not provide in-depth analyses.

buried in the early 20th century or before. It is more common to find inscriptions showing

the values of hard work, pioneering spirit, and commerce. But this was not unique to the

early Seattleites – they were just a part of the wave sweeping across the country. Across

America, the individual churchyard was used less often by the mid-19th century. A person's

role in his civic community was more important to his legacy than his participation in his

chosen religion, if he had one.

The fact that this non-religious cemetery was the chosen burial location of many

Seattle pioneers may say more about the young city of Seattle and less about the specific

people, once a little context is provided from other available archival collections. It is

interesting to learn that some of the early graves in Lake View are the second, third and

sometimes fourth burial sites of the same person. A review of early city ordinances reveals

that Seattle was expanding quickly at the end of the 19th century and its expectation of land

uses was changing. In 1873, the city managers created a city cemetery on what were the far

outskirts of town.[116] By 1884, Seattle preferred that this location, which was now

substantially closer to the center of town, to become the first city park and all the bodies

were removed to other cemeteries.[117] Another city cemetery was established in the same

year on Capitol Hill.[118] But then in 1887 that land was considered prime real estate and also

turned into a park and the bodies were removed.[119] The city council was trying to develop

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[116] City of Seattle Ordinance No. 36, *An Ordinance Concerning Seattle Cemetery and City Sexton*, Approved January 3, 1873.

[117] City of Seattle Ordinance No. 571, *An Ordinance for the purpose of converting Seattle Cemetery into a Public Park*, Approved July 10, 1884.

[118] City of Seattle Ordinance No. 642, *An Ordinance creating Washelli Cemetery, and setting apart and dedicating the grounds for the same*, February 6, 1885. This ordinance can be found as published in Seattle Daily Post-Intelligencer, February 13, 1885.

[119] City of Seattle Ordinance No. 877, *An Ordinance converting Washelli cemetery in the City of Seattle into a public park, and providing for the removal of the bodies of persons burned therein and for the purchase by the city of the burial lots therein owned by private person,* Passed October 4, 1887. The full-text of this ordinance

what it believed to be a modern city and when land was needed for a park, the cemeteries were moved.

Lake View Cemetery was established in 1872, at the same time that the city cemeteries were available for burial. How would one choose whether to be buried in the city cemetery or at the privately run Lake View? Was it about price, location, or neighbors? The prominent members of society were primarily buried at Lake View and not the city cemetery, as can be seen from records showing the names of those who had been buried at the Old Seattle Cemetery.[120] The prestige of Lake View was recognized very early on and those concerned with their legacies would prefer to be buried at Lake View. Even today, the cemetery's website outlines the difference between traditional and premium burial sites, calling the latter, "available to discerning families, providing panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and lakes to the east."[121]

The first and second city cemeteries had areas designated as Potter's Fields, intended for those who could not or did not buy lots, which could also be another reason a discerning elite person would not want to be buried there.[122] While there was no such potter's field at Lake View cemetery, it was not just the cemetery of the rich and powerful. Here at Lake View, often there is a strong correlation between a person's wealth and social importance in life and his prominence in the landscape of the cemetery. The northeast corner of the cemetery is the farthest from the central hill. Here, we can see a large section of flat stones

is not available at the Seattle Municipal Archives and was not found published during a search of local newspapers. The information listed in this citation can be found in the index of legislative records at the Seattle Municipal Archives website.

[120] City Cemetery Report no. 2 of the Seattle Cemetery Commission, November 21, 1884 and Plat of Old Cemetery, undated. Box 1, Folder 1, *Department of Parks and Recreation: Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, Seattle Municipal Archives.*

[121] "Premium Estates," Lake View Cemetery website, accessed February 11, 2011, http://www.lakeviewcemeteryassociation.com/premium.php.

[122] City of Seattle Ordinance Nos. 36 and 642.

often with just a name and an inscription of "Aged X Years." Here there are also a number

of graves without markers, possibly because they were made of wood and have since

deteriorated. Around 1905, the burials in this corner of the cemetery were threatened by

neighbors who wanted to have the bodies removed because of some dispute in the title for

the area.[123] I did not find further information about the outcome of this dispute, but it

indicates that a humble section of even a privately owned cemetery is at more risk of

disappearing than where the rich and powerful are buried. Because archivists believe in the

importance of all documentary evidence, these poorer cemeteries need additional protection.

In this area of the cemetery, people purchased just one grave, unlike at the top of the

hill where an entire plot was sold to one owner. A plot is generally about 24 feet square and,

for example in Henry Yesler's plot near the top of the hill, he erected a large monument,

placed a small concrete wall at the edges of the plot and made room for three burials. In the

northeast corner of the cemetery around 27 single burials are placed in one plot. In this area,

very rarely are two similar names adjacent to one another. Often plots appear to be filled in

chronological order.

In this area, a large number of tombstones with Japanese names are gathered close

together, mostly dating from before 1900. After reading about segregated cemeteries in the

southern United States, a researcher might wonder if the Japanese were officially segregated

in the cemetery. According to informal discussions with the cemetery staff, this was not the

case. But these early Japanese burials were certainly segregated by income, because of their

inability to purchase the prominent plots at the top of the hill. What can we learn from a

visit to this portion of the cemetery? In one plot, the stones date from the 1880s and they are

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[123] "No Potter's Field in Lake View Ground," *Seattle Daily Times (*May 11, 1905), 10.

mostly for 20-30 year olds. The first instinct might be to conclude that the young Japanese workers living in Seattle were subjected to harsh and dangerous working conditions. While this is true, we can also consider that only young Japanese people immigrated. We see no elderly Japanese deaths because possibly there were no elderly Japanese living here in the late 19th century.

We also can see that Japanese families were living here early in the 20th century. Another nearby plot appears to be completely filled with Japanese infant burials from the first decade of the 20th century. When reading about Chinese and Japanese immigration often we hear about hordes of male laborers coming to work in the mines and on the railroad. But we can see right here in the cemetery that there were Japanese babies being born to Japanese mothers. Using supplemental archival collections and searching the names of these infants in the King County death records turns out to be an easy task. For example, one stone reads, "Teruko Nishi, Aug 5, 1906, 15 months." The King County Death register shows that both her father and mother were born in Japan and this turns out to be a common result of searching the other names.

In this section we can also find the Nisei war memorial, which honors Americans of Japanese descent who were killed in World War II as well as other wars. This memorial was placed here for a reason, but it wasn't because these veterans are buried here. The memorial is surrounded by burials from decades earlier, and therefore, it serves to represent the contributions of all Japanese immigrants and their descendents to the success of this country.

Of course, the Japanese were not the first international immigrants who played a large part in Seattle's history. The Japanese came to Seattle in high numbers after the

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the subsequent riots, expulsions, and violence against the

Chinese population. So is the Chinese impact in the pioneer Seattle story represented in the

cemetery? Most Chinese immigrants who died here early on had their bodies sent back to

China for burial, as described by an article in the Seattle Daily Times in 1904, when 22

Chinese men's bodies were disinterred from Lake View and returned to China.[124] The

Chong Wa Benevolent Society owned a plot where temporary interments took place. When

the Old Seattle Cemetery was converted to a park in 1884, "21 Chinamen" who were buried

in the Potter's Field plot were removed to the Chong Wa plot in Lake View.[125] The location

of at least one of Chong Wa's plots is identified in the ledgers held by Lake View Cemetery.

The early Chinese population in Seattle is not represented in the landscape of Lake View

because of their choice to be buried in their homeland of China. This is an example of how

it is necessary to find contextual information in other archival sources to tell the complete

story. Their absence from the cemetery does give us some information about the early

Chinese population. They did not believe that Seattle was their home, choosing to be buried

in China. But this belief did not last for too many years.

Chinese tombstones are numerous in Lake View cemetery, with death dates starting

about 1920. This shows the researcher that by the 1920s the beliefs of the Chinese

population had changed for some reason. Perhaps they began believing that Seattle was

their homeland or perhaps their spiritual beliefs had changed. Whatever caused the shift,

modern tombstones of all nationalities of Asian people are scattered throughout the

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[124] "Chinamen's Bones Taken From Lake View" *Seattle Daily Times* (December 16, 1904), 1-2.
[125] Seattle Cemetery Removal and Reburial Register. Box 1, Folder 1, *Department of Parks and Recreation: Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, Seattle Municipal Archives. [The Wa Chong Association is referred to as Chong WA and Lake View Cemetery is referred to by its old name, the Masonic Cemetery.]*

cemetery and in some areas they make up a high percentage of headstones. There are many

tombstones showing how the make-up of the population of Seattle has changed and how

successful and important the Asian population is in Seattle.

Asian immigration played a very prominent role in Pacific Northwest history. Not

far from the top of the hill is an east-west row of tombstones, three abreast, that is so

visually striking in the landscape that it cannot be ignored. Made of red stone, starkly

different from the older stones on either side of them, with death dates beginning in the

1970s and almost without exception they are Asian names or use Asian characters. Many

have photographs of Asian faces. This used to be a road in the cemetery and then recently it

was turned into plots. Not far from the top of the hill, some are only a couple of yards away

from the pioneering Denny family's ornate pink marble and gilt lettering. Also nearby this

plot, is a large block monument, with the name "Woo" etched in enormous letters. Beneath

the name in smaller, but still inches high, font is a dedication noting the Woo family's

settlement in Seattle in 1872. According to the inscription, the son of the original couple is

buried in this plot. This monument dwarfs everything around it and serves as a reminder

that today we acknowledge the importance of Chinese immigrants in Seattle.

Another tombstone stands out in the landscape. Princess Angeline, the daughter of

Seattle's namesake Chief Sealth, is buried at Lake View. Her monument is found right

outside the plot of Henry Yesler, a very prominent Seattle pioneer. At first this seems to

show that this Native American had the means to purchase a plot at the cemetery, but stories

about Princess Angeline indicate that she was destitute, likely only by the definition of the

settlers, but would not have been able to afford such a prominent plot. According to news

accounts, the cemetery donated the plot.[126] Even once we know that she did not pay for it herself, we still can be sure that the respect that the people of the city had for her earned her this elite location.

It is interesting to consider the chosen monument type. It is a naturalistic large boulder, completely different than any of the ornately carved and sharp-cornered Victorian tombstones of the pioneers around her. The visitor may immediately think that this is Princess Angeline's way of maintaining her Native American identity in a white cemetery by using a natural stone. But did she even choose it? Was it the imagination of the monument purchaser or maker, romanticizing the division between savagery and civilization? Most of Princess Angeline's story is made up of legend, likely because as a Native American woman, she remained out of the documentary reaches of society. The local legend, as repeated in many newspapers, is that pennies collected by local school children paid for her stone.[127]

Currently, there is a plaque on the monument, placed there by the Seattle Historical Society in 1958, which of course leads the inquisitive researcher to wonder if the whole monument was not placed until 1958. The dedication shows Princess Angeline (this is not her real name) in a paternalistic and European way and also a traditionally historical way. The dedication is: "The daughter of Chief Sealth for whom the city of Seattle is named was a lifelong supporter of the white settlers. She was converted to Christianity and named by Mrs. D.S. Maynard. Princess Angeline befriended the pioneers during the Indian attack upon Seattle on January 26, 1856. At her request she was laid to rest near her protector and friend,

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[126] "Duplicate Grave Puzzles Photographer" *Seattle Daily Times* (October 3, 1956), 23.
[127] C.T. Conover, "Just Cogitating: Seattle's First Cemetery was at the White Church," *Seattle Daily Times* (February 28, 1948), 4.

Henry L. Yesler." Even some of the language choices on the plaque present her in an objectified way, such as 'was converted' and 'named by' as if she had no active role in these activities of her life. For eternity, this plaque remembers her in reference to the more important subjects, including her father, Mrs. Maynard, Mr. Yesler, and all the white settlers.

Investigating related archival collections adds some detail, but the reason for the Seattle Historical Society's addition of the plaque to the monument isn't very clear. The Society's minutes show that the plaque was suggested because the "historic inscription had disappeared."[128] Additionally, a newspaper article promoting the event stated, "the same account carved in the granite monument had become almost illegible."[129]   These limited accounts make it seem as though the plaque inscription is a duplicate of what was originally on the monument. However, a photograph appearing in the 1928 Seattle Daily Times shows that, at that time, the stone has etched into it: "Angeline. Daughter of Sealth. Died May 31, 1896."[130] Did Angeline choose this original inscription or was that also chosen by someone else? Was it important to the original writer of the inscription that the word "princess" was left off? Did Angeline want to be remembered the way the original plaque describes? We will never know.

Instances such as the Angeline plaque are evidence of public memory being shaped by contemporary values. The specific details of the intentions of the historians who wrote the 1952 plaque are not known, but we can assume that their intentions were good.

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[128] "Seattle Historical Society Minutes of the Executive Committee, May 26, 1958," Album of Seattle Historical Society Minutes, April 1958 – April 1960. Museum of History and Industry.

[129] "Seattle Times Clipping, September 11, 1958." Seattle Historical Society Scrapbook. Museum of History and Industry.

[130] "Hall of Fame for the Princess Angeline," *Seattle Daily Times* (June 24, 1928), 66-67. [A similar photograph can be found in University of Washington's digital collections, it is undated.]

Although they did cover the original inscription, they left evidence of their actions. The Seattle Historical Society's name is prominently on the plaque as well as the date when it was put there. In their own way they left a record of their actions. Perhaps this was done for a self-serving purpose rather than an interest in archival record keeping. They were likely very proud of the story that they were leaving for the public memory.

The story of this cemetery mirrors the traditionally told history of Seattle. This cemetery has about 50,000 graves ranging in date from the 1850s (thanks to reburial) up until the present and more burials will continue to fill in the landscape. In some cemeteries burials take place from left to right or north to south, but here the purchase of a particular plot is up to the family. How much money you had or didn't have was a part of that decision. It is the patchwork of over one hundred years of history placed into one page. The Denny party may be the legendary founders of Seattle, but martial artist and movie star Bruce Lee is buried a short distance away and he gets a lot more visitors.

Seattle was, and still is, a city of immigrants, from other countries and from the rest of the United States. Family plots begin no earlier than the dates of first settlement and quite often there are single graves of people who travelled alone to this new city, died here, and never had the chance to fill a family plot. This is quickly observed in a visit to the cemetery and would require many traditional research sources to create that story with a variety of archival documents. Additionally, the (now legendary) Great Seattle Fire caused the destruction of many paper documents from before 1889, so the telling of Seattle early history is even harder when using traditional archival sources. But the cemetery is still there. The paper materials available documenting the history of Seattle and the cemetery are related collections. The cemetery is not just a visual accompaniment to the information

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found in the paper records, as many people use it. It contains its own valuable evidence and information.

Conclusions

Why Cemeteries Need the Archival Profession

Many types of cultural heritage are disappearing before our eyes and, of course, there is never enough money to go around. But there should never be a lack of advocacy to go around. Along with our fellow cultural heritage preservers, we have tasked ourselves with making sure it survives until the next generation – and cemeteries are part of the heritage. Archivists should advocate for their protection and we should do it by arguing for their value as documentary materials. In the book *Love Cemetery* about the restoration of an African American cemetery in Texas, author China Galland consults a lawyer regarding how best to legally protect the cemetery. He says to her, "You've got to get the cemetery resurveyed before anything else can happen. You get it resurveyed and then come back to me. Then I'll take it down to the courthouse and get it properly re-documented in the public record. That's the only way you can protect it. … What matters is the public record – that's the courthouse."[131] While this action is advisable for legal protection, it reiterates the view that the traditional documentary materials are the primary record, and the cemetery cannot survive without corresponding documents. But the truth is that the cemetery is already an archival collection and should be treated with the same respect as a "public record." We

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[131] Galland, *Love Cemetery,* 226.

need to stop thinking about cemeteries as only supplementary to traditional documentary materials.

It is also important to keep in mind the interpretive nature of archival materials in the cemetery. The archival profession in the postmodern world understands that documentary materials are layered with meanings provided by the historical actors who created, edited, organized, studied, and interpreted the materials. Cemeteries are no different, as many scholars have discovered, some of which are outlined in this thesis. But that information must be broadcast to all who are studying the cemetery as evidence, and the archives profession can take a role in sharing that with researchers because of their particular view of history.

As with the Public Archives Canada's loss of the military documentary art to the National Gallery, if we don't speak up and explain how these cemetery markers are archival, they may be regarded merely as pieces of art or perhaps documented only as genealogical records. If their archival qualities are ignored, the worst-case scenario is a loss of evidential and contextual value that cannot be recreated. The revision of Princess Angeline's inscription, for example, could have benefited from the perspective of an archivist educating the public about the value of the original inscription for enhancing the cemetery's story rather than obscuring it with a new plaque.

Another opportunity for archivists to educate the public is with the growing popularity of cemetery tours. An informal survey of a handful of cemetery tours shows that the highlights of the tours are generally a visit to the graves of the rich and powerful. While many archives can be accused of similar marketing – name-dropping is the way to get people through the doors – most archives are also aware of the value of documenting the

whole of society. As we understand the value of a collection of materials, we are more likely to preserve the cemetery and advertise its value as a whole, providing the public with valuable information found when viewing the burials surrounding the rich and famous, not just each singular one, separated from its neighbors. The archivist's unique vision of the tombstones as individual stories and also as a collective story could make the cemetery's story even more accessible.

Archivists should accept that cemeteries are archives because we, as a profession, have a unique vision of the preservation of cultural heritage. The tenets of archival theory, including provenance and respect des fonds, can provide additional insight to the historical studies already being conducted. Some cemeteries are aware of the archival importance of their business records, perhaps thanks to legal regulations and perhaps genealogists. They are not receiving much encouragement from the archival profession as can be seen by the lack of recognition of the value found even in cemetery business records. And what about the grave markers themselves? They are being intellectually separated from the rest of their collection, and if they are lucky, they are being cared for as a visual and artifactual space and not as archives. Although it will be difficult to keep them physically together, they can be intellectually kept in original order. The value out on the cemetery lawn is important to the context of the paper records and vice versa. This may be considered a version of post-custodial archives, where an archivist lacks the physical control of the materials, but assists the collection with staying in context, and thus retaining its evidential value to the future.

If they choose to embrace cemetery materials as archives, the archival profession also stands to gain several things. Any type of participation in a multi-disciplinary field will prove to raise the awareness level of the archival profession. No publicity is bad publicity.

If we feel as though no one knows what we do or what role we play in the preservation of

cultural heritage, it may be because we do not take the time to explain our archival values to

our scholarly colleagues. Participating in the dialogue with various scholarly disciplines on

a well-researched topic such as cemeteries would allow us to engage our colleagues and

teach them about our field and the value that we provide to researchers.

Integrated Management of Cultural Heritage

Although I previously argued that tombstones are neither monuments nor art pieces

for the purpose of showing that they are archival by definition, I also argue that just because

they are archival does not remove the qualities that make them art or monument. This multi-

disciplinary approach to cemetery studies is ideal. Kenneth E. Foote puts it this way,

> The value of this point [that museums and archives are interrelated] is that it
> guards against assuming that collective memory is invested in any single type
> of human institution, such as the archives. Any view of the past conserved
> by the archival records can be placed, profitably, in the context of the
> representations maintained by other institutions. The task of assessing this
> archival contribution is made no easier by the variability in the way different
> societies come to sustain important information. In one society, oral and
> ritual traditions may predominate, while in another society they may be allied
> with archival records, written documentation, and even elements of material
> culture such as monuments and memorials.[132]

So, we can work together with these other fields to help preserve this important heritage. It

is imperative, Richard E. Meyer writes in the introduction to a book of essays about

cemeteries, that "perspectives and modes of critical enquiry of a variety of disciplines be

pooled in order to achieve a more balanced assessment of the meanings inherent in these

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[132] Kenneth E. Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory and Culture" in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice,* ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 31.

values and the objects which project them."[133] David Lowenthal, as quoted by Alicia Rekrut, writes, "Memory, history, and relics offer routes to the past best traversed in combination. Each route requires the others for the journey to be significant and credible."[134] A multi-disciplinary approach means that archivists do not need to stake claims on every cemetery in America and take on the responsibility of preserving it. We are already overwhelmed with materials, but we must participate in the dialogue to ensure that the archival nature of cemetery materials is known.

This thesis provides the intellectual authorization for the archival profession to accept a cemetery as an archival collection and outlines the necessity for the preservation of cemeteries as archival collections. As a result, I argue, we must advocate for the cemetery's archival value with the same vigor that we defend the archival value of the records of the United States government and the personal papers of Thomas Jefferson. In some cases, it may be necessary for an archival repository to "accession" a cemetery, which would entail some action to provide for its physical preservation as well. This situation, where an archival repository is responsible for the preservation of a physical cemetery, is not currently the ideal situation because of a lack of experience with immovable objects in the landscape and because it may not be financially feasible. But solutions could be developed if necessary.

The archival profession has the expertise to work as consultants to those professionals and volunteers who are already working with cemeteries. It is necessary that the archival profession reaches out to active cemeteries and historical cemetery

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[133] Meyer, *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers,* 2.
[134] Alicia (Ala) Rekrut, "Material Literacy: Reading Records as Material Culture," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 36-37.

organizations and educates them on the archival value in their cemeteries and how best to preserve it. Specifically, we could assist them with creating adequate finding aids for use by their researchers, ensuring that contextual information is documented and provided. The archival profession must reach out to genealogists and historians who are creating cemetery indexes and surveys. We can educate them about the value of documenting more than just names and dates. It is our profession's mission and it is key to the survival of the valuable information at the cemetery.

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