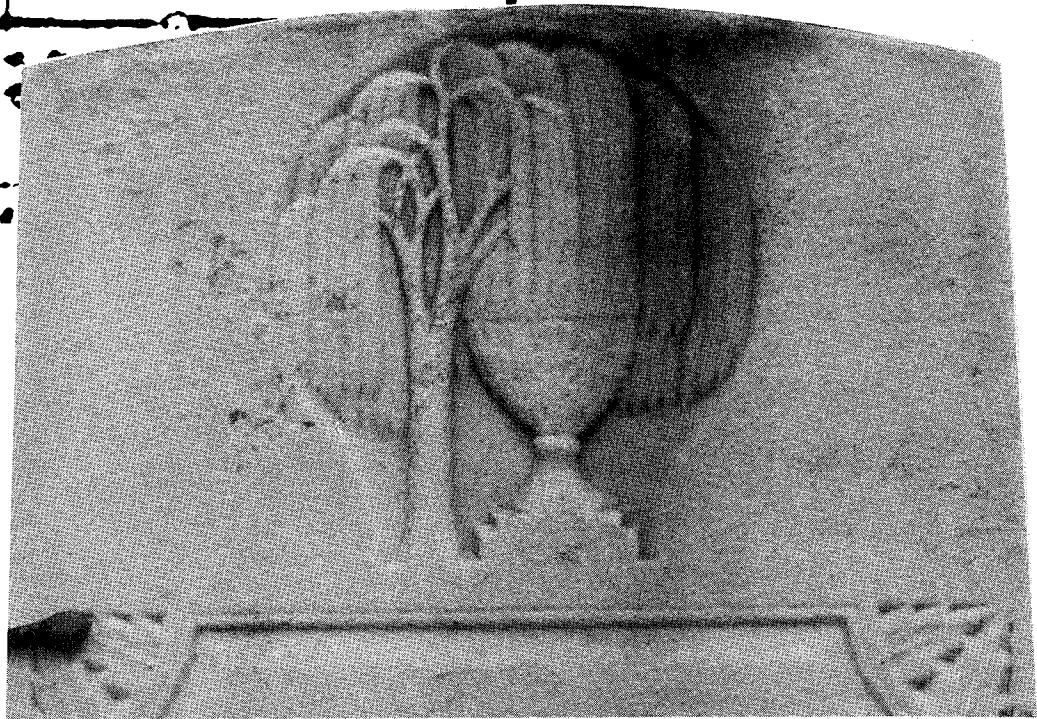
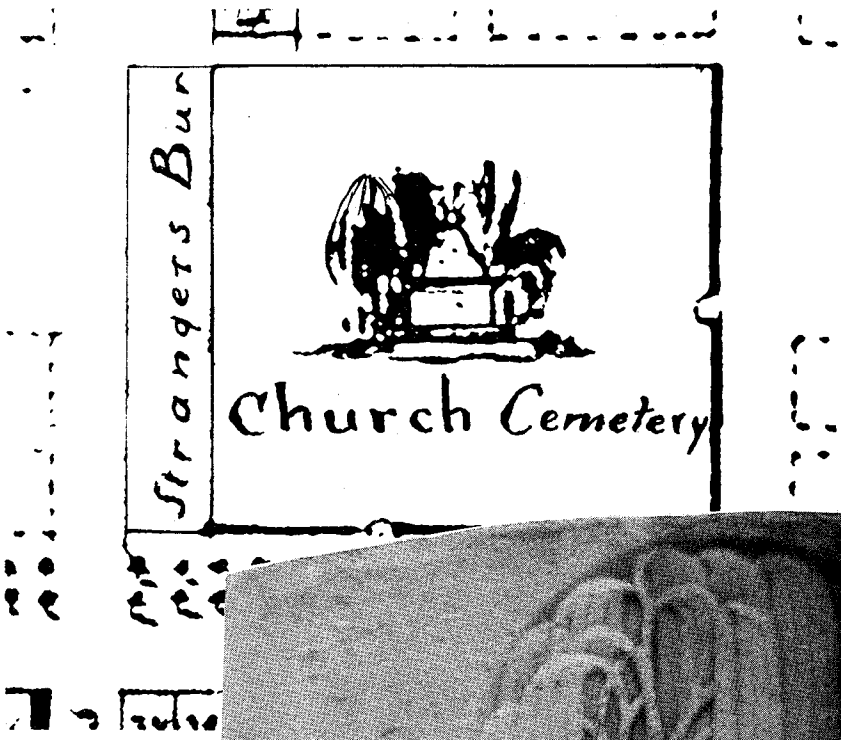


IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING OF HISTORIC GRAVES AT COLONIAL CEMETERY, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA



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IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING OF HISTORIC GRAVES AT COLONIAL CEMETERY, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Research Series 54

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Here is a specimen of the "everlasting houses," and a solemn satire upon the best of all human efforts — impotent and vain — to perpetuate that, which God Almighty has destined to perish.

--Lucius Manlius Sargent, *Dealings
with the Dead*, 1856

ABSTRACT

Savannah, Georgia's Colonial Cemetery, today best known as Colonial Park, is bounded by Oglethorpe Street (previously known as Broad Street) to the north, Abercorn Street to the west, the old Police Barracks to the east, and a small area used as a children's park to the south on Perry Lane. The area was Savannah's earliest public graveyard, laid out in 1753. By the late eighteenth century the graveyard measured about 500 feet square — or about 5.7 acres.

The graveyard was extensively used, resulting in periodic concerns over its health effects on Savannah. As early as 1845 there also was concern that the "Old City Cemetery," as it was then called, was out of space. It wasn't, however, until 1851 that the City took action, purchasing Springfield Plantation and opening Laurel Grove Cemetery as a replacement.

By 1853 the "old cemetery" was closed to additional interments and, in fact, at least some graves and/or monuments were being moved to the new Laurel Grove. The condition of the old graveyard did not improve with this flight to the new Victorian cemetery. By the early 1880s the old graveyard was overgrown in weeds, tombs had been vandalized, and bones were reported to be scattered across the ground. In an effort to clean up the eyesore, the City removed a brick wall along South Broad and Abercorn streets and tried to clean up individual lots in 1886. The problem, however, continued into the 1890s. In 1895 the City placed the cemetery under the stewardship of the Park and Tree Commission.

Since that time a number of "restoration" efforts have been undertaken at the site. The cemetery became known as Colonial Park, several phases of landscaping were undertaken, as were several different efforts to repair the old monuments.

Most recently, Stone Faces and Sacred Spaces, a cemetery preservation organization in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, was retained by the City to repair markers, tombs and fences, develop a preservation plan, and explore long-range improvements to the historic site.

As part of that work, Chicora Foundation was asked to conduct a first phase of an archaeological study of the cemetery.

Although no historic research was involved in this first phase of study, an initial activity was to explore the evolution of Colonial Park, as revealed by the different published maps of the park. These reveal the loss, as well as movement, of stones; the changing landscape patterns; and the evolution of other "improvements" to Colonial Park in the twentieth century.

Following this, Chicora's archaeologists conducted a penetrometer survey of the graveyard to locate unmarked graves. Although 560 marked graves are thought to exist at Colonial Park, no historic documentation has been identified to suggest the total number of graves which might be present. Nor is there any historic period mapping to reveal the location of these graves.

As a result of Chicora's work, a new map of Colonial Park has been developed, which includes the location of 560 existing monuments, as well as the location of 8,678 probable graves, based on the penetrometer study. It is not, however, possible to determine which of these may still contain human remains (since some remains may have been removed to Laurel Grove). Nor is it possible in many sections of the old graveyard to distinguish between the multiple graves which were excavated in near proximity to one another — encouraging the frequent outcry of local citizens for the need of a new cemetery.

These investigations not only again demonstrate the usefulness of the penetrometer as a tool to cost-effectively explore grave locations, but it also reveals that Colonial Park contained an incredible number of burials. The density of these remains is briefly compared to that at other urban cemeteries, with the suggestion that Colonial Park may have been representative of late seventeenth through early nineteenth century burial practices in urban settings.

This work provides the City of Savannah's Park and Tree Department with detailed information necessary to plan future land modifications — suggesting that all possible efforts be taken to reduce the disturbance to human remains in the graveyard.

It also sets the stage for additional archaeological investigations, focusing on exploring the nature of Savannah's unusual tomb styles, the thoroughness of historic efforts to remove bodies, and the late nineteenth century activities of the City to convert the graveyard into a park.

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We must also thank Ms. Lynette Strangstad for her interest in exploring the archaeology of the cemetery and her support of Chicora's efforts. We greatly appreciate her confidence in our work and interest in delving more deeply into what actually happened at Colonial Park — especially when it would be so much easier to simply accept local legend.

We also appreciate the time and effort provided by Ms. Sharyn Thompson of the Center for Historic Cemeteries Preservation in providing us with historical documentation of the cemetery. Our numerous, and often quite arcane, questions were always cheerfully received and promptly answered. She has provided most of the background material incorporated into this report, although we certainly accept full responsibility for any misinterpretations or misinformation that may have crept into the work.

We also want to thank the numerous individuals in Savannah who were interested in our work. Many came by to see what we were doing and offer their support. This interest in the past is certainly why Savannah has such an active, and successful, preservation program. In particular, we thank the local fire department, right across the road from the cemetery, for not only their interest, but also their willingness to have us use their restroom facilities. We also appreciate the assistance provided by Ms. Elizabeth C. Piechocinski, a local historian who has spent much time and effort collecting information on Colonial Park. We also want to thank Mr. Carrick Mollenkamp, Staff Reporter with the Wall Street

Journal, who wrote an excellent article on the efforts to preserve and protect Colonial Cemetery.

The staff of the Georgia Historical Society was also generous with their time and provided us with many leads and even more copies of important documents. In addition, the City of Savannah Archives was especially helpful, taking considerable time to locate plans and provide us with the best possible copies — greatly improving the quality of this final report.

Finally, we want to thank both Rachel Campo and Todd Hejlik of our staff. They were responsible for collecting the incredible quantity of survey data necessary to create the final plan of the cemetery. Without their skill, and care in collecting data, this project would not have been completed.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

As part of a multi-year, comprehensive preservation effort at Savannah's Colonial Park, Ms. Lynette Strangstad of Stone Faces and Sacred Spaces asked Chicora Foundation to propose archaeological techniques that might help further the preservation or understanding of the cemetery. Our initial on-site meeting was during early November 1997. At that time we toured the cemetery, looked at a number of different tombs, and briefly reviewed some of the earlier investigations at the site.

Colonial Park is Savannah's oldest public cemetery, laid out in 1753. By the late eighteenth century the graveyard measured about 500 feet square — or about 5.7 acres. It is bounded by Oglethorpe Street (previously known as Broad Street) to the north, Abercorn Street to the west, the old Police Barracks to the east, and a small area used as a children's park to the south on Perry Lane (Figures 1 and 2).

Previous Studies

Of particular interest is the study by Frank Matero and his students at Columbia University in the early 1990s. Apparently the report was not completed by the time Dr. Matero left Columbia for the University of Pennsylvania and was eventually finalized by individuals who had not originally worked on the project. As a result, some portions of the study are perhaps less comprehensive than they might be.

Moreover, the study comments that much of the work was conducted by "a team of archaeologists and preservation interns from Savannah College of Art and Design," (Center for Preservation Research 1991:13) although elsewhere in the report it appears that "volunteers from the Coastal Georgia Archaeological Society" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:80) may have comprised the bulk of the archaeological expertise. In fact, the most intensive investigation, at what Matero designed tomb I68, was described as "low-level archaeological excavation"

(Center for Preservation Research 1991:83).

This work was to explore how the tombs which seem most typical of Colonial Park (Figure 3) were constructed. The selected tomb was thought to have a stepped entrance, at that time covered by a "concrete mass." The discussions of the excavation technique, charitably, confirm that it was, in fact, "low-level." There appear to have been three units, little more than slot trenches, placed along the south and west sides of the tomb. Although the report specifies that no dateable artifacts were recovered, it does reveal the presence of machine cut nails (likely post-dating about 1805; see Wells 1988), alkaline glazed pottery (likely post-dating 1810; see Greer 1977 and 1981); and at least one blue glass bead (which is probably nineteenth century, but is more culturally significant as an indicator of slavery than temporally sensitive).

The study also reveals that the excavations identified a grave just west of the tomb opening, providing the first, albeit unrecognized, evidence of the cemetery's crowded condition. The excavations also revealed that while the tombs, where visible, were constructed using orange/red high-fired "fine grade imported" brick, the below grade foundations were constructed using common gray bricks typical of Savannah (Center for Preservation Research 1991:84).

As time grew short, the 2-inch levels were collapsed to 4-inch levels and eventually no screening took place — with the excavations being archaeological only in name. Although the base of the tomb was never revealed, the work did suggest that it extended to a depth of about 69 inches (5.8 feet) below the ground, while the projection, thought to be stairs down into the tomb, terminated about 54¼ inches (4.5 feet) below grade. This suggests that the termination of the projection may be about the level of the tomb floor, reflecting an interior tomb ceiling of about 6.5 to 7 feet. While Matero and his colleagues comment that, "the brick type and construction style of the project indicate that it was built at a later time than the tomb itself" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:85), they

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provide no evidence for this speculation. Furthermore, it begs the question of original access and the sensibility of constructing stairs only when the tomb needs to be reused.

Careful review of the section of the report discussing this work (Center for Preservation Research 1991:83-86) unfortunately poses more questions than it answers. Although the authors tell us that it was only "a hole under the brick courses" which "allowed limited observation," they are more or less confident that the projection is "definitely a stepped access into the tomb" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:86). While this seems likely, there is almost no proof of this speculation offered by the excavations. Nor is there any information on the interior construction or finishing of the tombs. The study also leaves us hanging regarding the fill of the stair area. And the failure to adequately record and interpret the stratigraphy of the cemetery leaves unaddressed many questions regarding when and how these tombs were built.

Regardless of these concerns, the investigations do reveal, with little doubt, that Colonial Park is eligible for inclusion on the National Register using Criteria D: properties may be eligible for the National Register if they have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. There are a number of questions surrounding the tombs: how were they constructed; how was access gained and how were they sealed between periods of access; what is the evolution of this tomb style; were these tombs emptied with the opening of a new cemetery (see below); what evidence of cultural activities, ritual, or mourning may be present around the tombs; and is there evidence that these tombs were constructed over pre-existing burials? Matero's excavations document the integrity of the cemetery — there is intact stratigraphy, artifacts are present, and features can be identified through excavations.

Consequently, while Colonial Park is already on the National Register under other criteria, consideration should be given to revising the nomination form to reflect the archaeological potential of the site as well. Criterion D need not meet the special requirements of the Criteria Considerations that usually must be applied to cemeteries.

Based on his work, Matero proposes a series

of 10 archaeological questions. He recommends geophysical exploration of several cemetery areas to understand the density and distribution of graves; continued exploration of the tombs; study of the brick wall on the east side of the cemetery; research on landscape features, such as walkways; an effort to identify the original gate to the cemetery; exploration of a bricked area in front of a tomb (ostensibly to determine if it conceals a tomb); and aerial photography to reveal additional landscape features (Center for Preservation Research 1991:87-88).

Many of these ideas form the nucleus of our recommendations, although we do take several different approaches (discussed below).

Appropriate Use of Archaeology

The use of archaeological techniques in cemetery research is not new. Archaeologists, because of their expertise in "reading" the soil, have often been called on to examine cemeteries. At other times the work has involved the actual removal of graves, while at times it has involved the identification of graves or the investigation of landscape features. Archaeology, in combination with historical research, also has a significant advantage over historical research alone. While history can be subtly distorted to reflect the views or mores of the time, archaeology can often cut through perceptions to reveal what actually happened, rather than just what contemporary society chose to record.

In other words, archaeology has been recognized as uniquely suited to the exploration of a broad range of cemetery issues. It need not result in the removal, or even the disturbance, of human remains. Archaeological investigations can be conducted in a sensitive and appropriate fashion to address questions while respecting the dignity and spirituality of cemeteries.

Archaeological investigations, however, are inappropriate for groups of interested, but untrained, individuals. The previous Columbia University study clearly demonstrates the problems with such efforts — they are frequently poorly conceived, ineptly implemented, and inadequately interpreted, with the final result being that little is learned and the artifacts quickly lose any context (if they can even be found).

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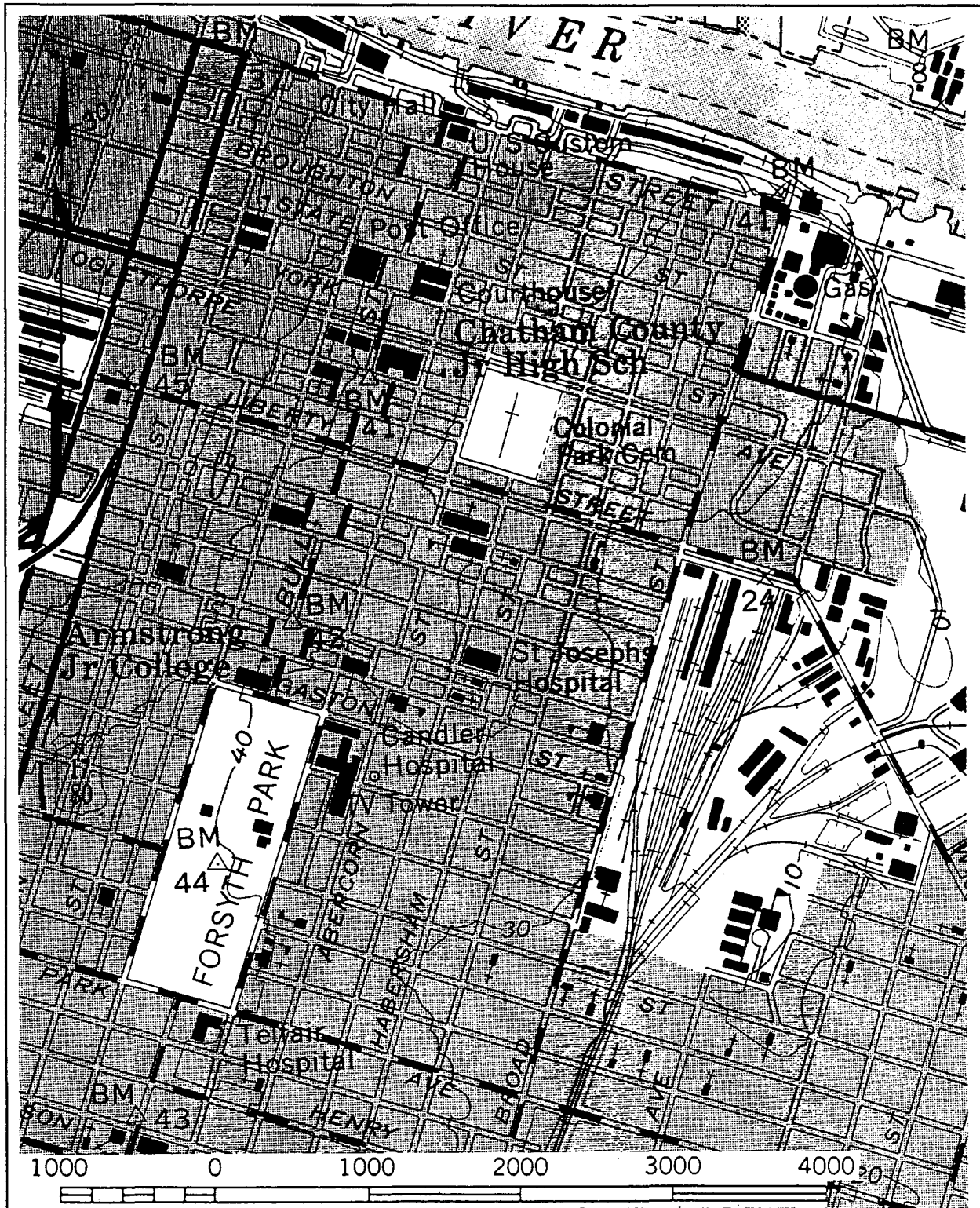


Figure 1. Topographic map of the project area (Savannah 7.5' USGS PR1971).

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Figure 2. Colonial park today, view to the southeast.



Figure 3. View of several typical tombs typical of Colonial Park, view to the northeast.

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It is essential that archaeological investigations be undertaken by individuals trained in the field and competent to undertake the work. Moreover, it is important that the results be presented in a manner that addresses the original questions and makes a contribution to our knowledge. This is even more critical when archaeological studies are anticipated at cemeteries, where opportunities are infrequent and the stratigraphy is complex.

Chicora's Proposal

As a result of the initial meeting we proposed a series of five tasks:

- the recordation of all graves in the cemetery;
- the examination of areas where vaults have been removed or demolished;
- the investigation of access to standing vaults;
- the examination of areas outside the extant cemetery; and
- the examination of additional cemetery features, such as paved areas around graves, original walkways, and the location of several brick walls.

Each of these topics is briefly discussed below.

Recordation of Graves

Our review of three primary maps available for Colonial Park suggested that although a number of graves were located on each, some appear to no longer exist and others appear to be in different locations. Most importantly, it appears that these plans fail to include a large number of graves. There are some demolished tombs that are clearly visible on the surface, either by remnant foundations or different vegetation (Figure 4). There are also a few sunken depressions that are characteristic of graves. But primarily, there are large "vacant" areas (see Figure 2) which were almost certainly used. In fact, there are local "legends" that the cemetery may have contained

2,000, 3,000, or even by some accounts 7,000 individuals. There are also stories of the "mass grave" resulting from one or more of Savannah's eighteenth and nineteenth century epidemics. Consequently, one of the first steps, we felt, had to be the creation of a realistic map of the cemetery which actually showed all of the standing monuments, as well as the locations of unmarked graves.

To accomplish this we recommended the use of a penetrometer survey. This would allow the quick and accurate measurement of ground compaction as an indication of excavation. Although it could not confirm whether human remains were still present, it could provide a cost-effective means of exploring this very large site.

There are, of course, a number of different techniques which can be used to identify burials. Matero, for example, suggested the use of ground penetrating radar (GPR). This technique is based on the introduction of a relatively low frequency magnetic signal into the ground via a surface contact transmitting antenna. As the signal passes through the earth it may encounter subsurface materials of varying electrical impedances or properties. At these electrical interfaces the signal may be reflected or attenuated — resulting in what is called a "target." These, in turn, must be interpreted (just as a reduced soil compaction must be interpreted). Any given target may be a tree, a grave, a pit, a trench, or even a different soil stratigraphy.

There are limitations to GPR, including the generally poor software packages for interpretation and graphic representation of the results, the cost of the equipment, and the requirement to ground truth the signals. In fact, English Heritage, in their *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation*, notes that:

Survey within present-day cemeteries, for whatever reason, while sometimes called upon, is rarely successful. Resistivity traverses and perhaps GPR can be used, where space permits, to identify or confirm the course of features (usually wall foundations), the presence of which may already be suspected from other sources of information Only in very

favorable conditions, therefore, can graves or cemeteries be detected, often only indirectly, and when there is already good reason to suspect such features to be present (David 1995:11)

The document summarizes, notes, “there is no good evidence available to suggest that radar can be used ‘blind’ or in an uninformed exploratory mode” (David 1995:27), perhaps most strongly focusing on the technique’s need to have some initial information concerning what is anticipated to be found.

This is largely supported by one of the few tests of GPR in cemetery research (Beven 1991), where research at nine known cemeteries produced very mixed results, with the author concluding that geophysical surveys “may be suitable for some sites, but they have not been very successful for the sites discussed here” (Beven 1991:1310).

As a result, we chose not to recommend the use of GPR in those areas of Colonial Park where a penetrometer survey could be conducted.

Examination of “Missing” Vaults

There are a number of vaults that are no longer extant, although they are clearly visible as either foundations at grade or as vegetation lines. These are typically attributed to vaults that have been “moved” to other cemeteries. Yet the historic records seem far from clear how these “moves” took place (see the historical overview for additional information). Were the human remains exhumed and moved, or was the public monument simply moved? If the human remains were moved, how carefully did the public expect the collection to be? What happened to those tombs that had already fallen into disrepair — were some simply razed without regard to the bodies inside? Once removed, how were vault areas filled — were the holes left open, were they filled with trash around the cemetery, or was city trash perhaps used to fill the holes?

All of these questions address the historical complexity of Colonial Park and all of them can be addressed only through archaeological research. We proposed identifying three “missing” vault locations

and conducting archaeological investigations in order to address these questions concerning how and why these vaults or tombs were removed.

Investigating Access to Standing Vaults

One of the questions raised by the Matero study is how access was obtained to the vaults. We recommended that one or two of the vaults receive archaeological investigation to determine how access was constructed. This would serve to not only address the technological questions, but may also help us understand why so many of the vaults at Colonial Park seem to have been entered from the rear side (where recent repairs are frequently found).

Examination of Areas Outside the Extant Cemetery

There are intriguing historical hints that graves were placed in areas outside the current cemetery boundaries. These include the area to the north under Oglethorpe, as well as the area to the east under Abercorn. In addition, there is some indication that the Police Barracks, County Jail, and related buildings may have been constructed on the “Negro Burying Ground.” Moreover, there is some thought that what is today a neighborhood park to the west may originally have contained graves.

Each of these areas — and the associated questions — deserves some degree of attention. Depending on the area, this may involve actual archaeological excavation or perhaps some form of geophysical prospecting. For example, the area under the Oglethorpe sidewalk would be an excellent area to use ground penetrating radar in the hope of discovering burials (Figure 5).

Examination of Additional Cemetery Features

There are a wealth of additional cemetery features which are buried or partially buried. These include a number of brick paving areas surrounding graves (Figures 6 and 7), as well as walkways and walls. The investigation of these features are recommended primarily to assist in the interpretation and presentation of Colonial Park to the public. It may be that these topics provide relatively little “archaeological” information. They will, however, allow the City to more effectively present the cemetery

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Figure 4. Vegetation showing the location of a removed tomb during the summer of 1998, view to the north.



Figure 5. Sidewalk along Oglethorpe Street north of Colonial Park, view to the northwest.

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Figure 6. Stone paving around one of the monuments at Colonial Park, view to the northeast.



Figure 7. Brick paving around a monument, perhaps representing a below ground vault.

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and its history to the public.

Development and Execution of the Project

Although it was not possible to fund all of these various projects or tasks in the initial year of work, Savannah's Tree and Park Department selected to fund the first phase — the mapping of the cemetery. An agreement was entered into through Stone Faces and Sacred Spaces on August 1, 1998. The field investigations were conducted from August 19 through 27. A total of 21 person days were devoted to the project in the field, although we originally anticipated only 19 person days. The additional time was necessitated by the exceptional density of remains at the site — far beyond anything that we expected going into the project.

Once the graves were located and plotted, the next phase was the equally daunting project of transferring that information to paper. This portion of the project also required more time than originally anticipated. The complexity of the grave locations and their tight fits meant that the map required considerable "fine tuning" in order to make it a realistic representation of the cemetery.

When all of the work was completed, we found that there were 557 marked graves or tombs in the cemetery, three previously identified family vault foundations, 8,665 unmarked graves, and 15 previously unidentified family vault ruins covering virtually the entire 5.7 acres of the enclosed cemetery.

Natural Setting

Physiographic Area

Colonial Park is situated in the northeast section of Savannah, bounded to the north and west by streets, to the east by buildings, and to the south by a small park for children. Measuring about 500 feet on a side, the site today encompasses an area of about two blocks square (Figure 8). While the elevation of Chatham County (of which Savannah is the county seat) ranges from sea level to about 70 feet above mean sea level (AMSL), the downtown area ranges from about 37 to 41 feet AMSL. As DeBrahm noted, "the Plane of the City is at the highest Place, 30 feet above

the surface of the Stream [the Savannah River]" (DeVorse 1971:152). Located in the lower Atlantic Coastal Plain, Savannah's ecology is not appreciably different from that of Charleston, further north in South Carolina.

Looking at a map of early Savannah it becomes clear that the town was laid out on a sandy ridge between two low marshes which historically were used for rice cultivation. These low, swampy areas would cause extensive problems, encouraging disease well into the nineteenth century.

Soils and Geology

Although Francis Moore observed a "variety of soils" in the vicinity of Savannah, including what he described as "sandy and dry," "clay," and "black rich garden mould well watered" in the early eighteenth century (Moore 1840:I:n.p.), it would be the dry sands which would characterize Savannah. DeBrahm, for example, recounted that the soil was "a single Stratum of Sand from 24 to 30 feet deep down to the general Springs (water Root) in the Quick Sand, on which Dew and Rains strains" (DeVorse 1971:154). Haunton (1968:26-27) also comments on the sandy streets which were impassible in wet weather.

In general, the area around Savannah is predominately flat to nearly level, interspersed with numerous drainages. While some areas, such as the bluff on which the city is situated, are well drained, there are many areas which are naturally poorly drained (at least in part accounting for the city's frequent health problems). The soils are underlain by and developed from beds of unconsolidated sands, sandy clays, and clays of recent geologic origin. Most of the soils are light colored and contain small amounts of organic matter. All of the soils range from medium to strongly acid in reaction. The most common association are the Coxville-Portsmouth-Bladen associations. On better drained soils, such as those on the bluff overlooking the Savannah River, are Norfolk, Ruston, and Dunbar sands with light colored A horizons and yellow sandy B horizons at about 20 inches (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1939:1111).

Climate and Health

The climate of this section of the Atlantic

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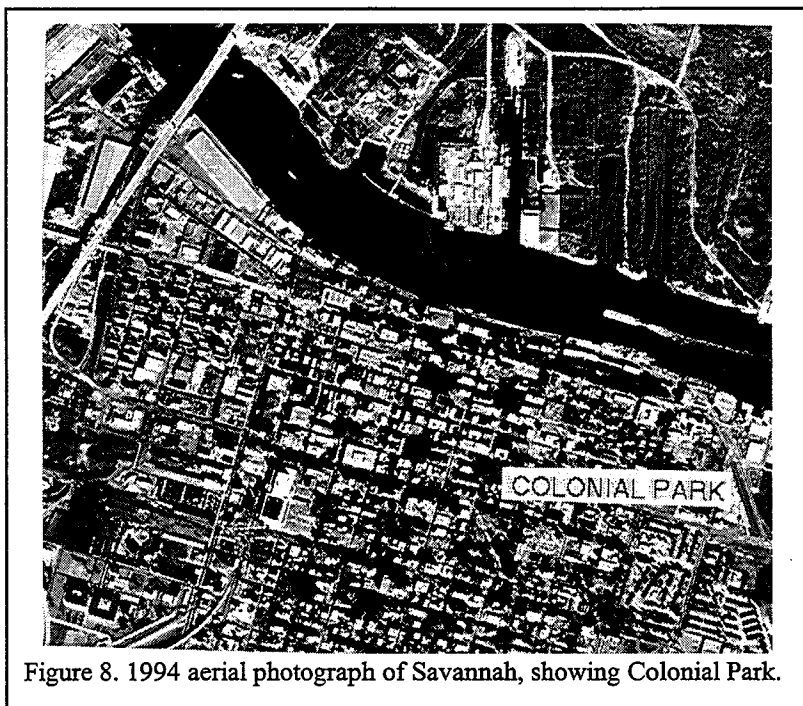


Figure 8. 1994 aerial photograph of Savannah, showing Colonial Park.

Coastal Plain province may be classified as humid subtropical. Most of the air masses which reach Savannah are continental, having been chilled in winter and heated in summer, before ever reaching the City. Because of these continental air masses the seasons change abruptly. During intervening periods, however, the weather may be tempered by air from the Atlantic Ocean. The temperatures range from cold in winter (with frequent periods of striking warmth) to hot in summer (with the climate made more uncomfortable by the high humidities). The growing season is about 273 days.

The average annual precipitation is 45 inches, with a prominent summer peak and reduced amounts in the winter. This rainfall pattern, however, is subject to tremendous variation — often the wettest year has twice the rainfall as the driest and droughts have been known to cause serious water shortages. DeBrahm notes that 1760 (the year he built his house in Savannah, only a few blocks north of the Colonial Park) was “a Season remarkable for extraordinary Drought” (DeVorse 1971:152).

DeBrahm remarked that:

The City of Savannah continued from its first Settlement, for near 30 years to be accounted a very healthy Place. The South Carolinians used to come here for recruiting their Health.

However, as soon as Hutchinson’s Island and nearby swamps were converted to rice cultivation:

the Vapours hanging upon them . . . rolled in . . . and all the Streets and Houses filled with them, to the Prejudice of its Inhabitants, whose Diseases are in every respect similar to those in the Neighboring Province of South Carolina (DeVorse 1971:160).

Savannah suffered outbreaks of yellow fever in 1801, 1807, 1808, 1817, 1818, 1819, 1821, 1827, 1831, 1839, 1850, 1852, 1853, and 1854. The most severe, however, was the last epidemic in 1876, with perhaps 10,000 cases and nearly 1,100 deaths. The community began to understand the climatic events that promoted yellow fever, even if they did not yet comprehend the role of mosquito:

In 1820, 1854, and I add 1876, when yellow fever raged here as a general epidemic, a very peculiar and almost identical condition of the atmosphere . . . existed; that is, each of these epidemics was preceded by a mild winter, an early spring, with a rainfall sufficient to fill the ponds, swamps, and low grounds surrounding the city, with stagnant

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water, and finally, with the intensely hot and oppressive month of July. From September 6th to October 6th the epidemic raged with terrific violence. At this latter date, the temperature lowered (mean 61°), a change occurred in the direction of the wind (N.E.), and new cases gradually decreased in number but the epidemic did not entirely disappear until the occurrence of a light frost on the 14th of November (Dr. J.C. De Hardy, quoted in Usinger 1944:149).

These frequent outbreaks, coupled with "ague," "remittent fever," or "billious fever," now known as malaria (Meade 1980), were enough to encourage Savannah to remove the wet culture of rice from the outskirts of the city (Gamble 1901:145).

Richard H. Haunton, in his discussion of Savannah a decade before the Civil War, remarked that:

to the problems of a semi-tropical climate were added those common to an urban environment in an age of primitive sanitation facilities. Trash and litter were thrown into the City's streets and lanes, which, said the *Georgian* in 1857, were "in a condition fit to be classed among the dirtiest and most unwholesome thoroughfares in the South." "Offal and other putrying matter" lay exposed on the outskirts of town. The City's privies, inadequately ventilated and infrequently cleaned, presented the most serious problem to the health authorities (Haunton 1968:283).

Hardee (n.d.: 127) reports that "in almost all private houses of any importance there was a well" during the colonial and early antebellum periods. These water sources, often no deeper than 16 feet, were frequently contaminated with privy seepage or overflows. In 1854 Savannah's first waterworks began supplying filtered water from the Savannah River. In

1887 the City switched to artesian wells, significantly improving the quality of the potable water supply (Hardee n.d.: 47).

Wastes, as previously mentioned, were often simply thrown into the streets, although Savannah did have a Scavenger Department by at least 1820 (Anderson 1856:16a). By at least 1839 city residents were required to stockpile wastes for removal between April and October (Wilson 1858). While these city sponsored garbage services continued into the late nineteenth century, they did little to stem the tide of privy waste. Perhaps the earliest city ordinance, dating from 1839, required at least one privy per residence, although it is likely that most wealthy households had multiple privies. Each privy was required to be built of brick or stone, sunk at least six feet below surface with at least one foot of the vault constructed above ground surface, and possess a flue or vent pipe extending one foot above the privy roof.

"Dry wells" were a nineteenth century alternative to privies, largely nurtured by the availability of city water. They were, as the name implies, wells that did not penetrate the water table and were designed to allow wastes to percolate into the soils. The dry wells, however, were seen as a worse health hazard than the privies, since they often overflowed. The city sewer system began in 1872 and by 1888 privies were allowed only when houses were more than 300 feet from a sewer line. Apparently privies and perhaps even dry wells lasted into the early twentieth century (Haunton 1968:295-296; Lester 1889:201-202; Wilson 1858:12, 339).

Considering all of the problems of the city it seems odd that anyone would have noticed the cemetery, but in all urban areas the public cemeteries were the focus of periodic reform and the grounds were typically seen as festering caldrons of disease, contaminating both the ground and the air. Even as late as 1859 in Charleston, South Carolina, the *Report of the Committee of City Council of Charleston on Burial Grounds and City Interments* reported on the terrible consequences of the city's numerous burials grounds. In New Orleans there were efforts in 1784 and again 1788 to move burials outside the city (Christovich 1989:4). As early as 1807 a special committee on health reported to the City's Aldermen that "burial places near a city have any unhealthy tendency,"

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(Gamble 1901:81).

Floristics

Francis Moore, traveling through Savannah in 1735 left one of the few early accounts of the region's natural vegetation, noting that in the Trustee's Garden just east of the City was a stand of:

old wood, as it was before the arrival of the colony here. The trees in the grove are mostly bay, sassafras, evergreen oak, pellitory [prickly ash, also known as the toothache tree], hickory, American Ash, and the laurel tulip (Moore 1840:I;n.p.).

This natural vegetation, however, had been almost totally cleared away by Oglethorpe's original settlers. In its place were introduced a broad range of exotic plants, such as lemons and olives. Alice G.B. Lockwood observed that the settlers were still struggling, in 1742, "with the culture of such fruits as oranges and 'limmons,' loath to believe that they could not raise them here as well as they could in the same latitude on the other side of the world" (Lockwood 1934:II:272). In spite of the problems, DeBrahm noted thriving "two large Olive Trees, some Sevil Orange, Apple, Plumb, Peach, Mulberry, honey Locust, one Apricot, and one Amerel Cherry Tree" upwards of a decade after abandonment of the Trustee's Garden (DeVorse 1971:155).

Visitors to Savannah during the early eighteenth century were greeted with unpaved streets, many of which were covered in grass (1819 account by Adam Hodgson, quoted in Lockwood 1934:II:275). By 1829 a visitor noted the presence of "groves of trees planted in the streets." In particular:

in all the streets and squares of Savannah, most of which are very tastefully laid out, numerous rows of Pride-of-India trees [China-Berry] have been planted, which serve to shade the walks, and give a tropical air to the scene" (1827 account by Captain Basil Hall, quoted in Lockwood 1934:II:275).

Yet another visitor to Savannah, in 1833, remarked that, "its streets are planted so thick with Pride-of-China that the small dark houses are hardly seen," while an 1829 visitor, Charles Joseph Latrobe, remarked that:

the broad rectangular streets are lined with luxuriant Melia [China-Berry] and Locust-trees, and there are frequent open squares with grass-plots" (quoted in Lockwood 1934:II:275).

While all of these accounts emphasize the regularity and beauty of Savannah, it is likely that as an urban environment the town possessed its "seedier" side. It is also certain that Savannah's biotic community was largely shaped by the intentional (i.e., garden planning and deforestation) and unintentional (i.e., fire) actions of its inhabitants. Both, however, created an unnatural, disturbed habitat open to plants typically called "weeds," many of which are stenotrophic and thrive on enriched (or polluted) conditions.

It's likely, then, that one of the most overgrown portions of town was Colonial Park. With constant use, constant disturbance, and constant enrichment, the 5 acres likely became weed infested with some regularity. Although the City, as early as 1810, was paying to have grass cleared away from the bases of the city's trees three times a year, there is no mention of any efforts to maintain, clear, or care for the burial grounds (see Gamble 1901:84). It's ironic that the southern edge of the cemetery, the area today used as a children's park, was during the first part of the nineteenth century a nursery for Pride-of-India trees (Gamble 1901:84).

Today the project area resembles a typical urban park with manicured grass, interspersed live oaks, alternating palmetto and crepe myrtle, and various ornamental plantings. No landscape theme is immediately detected and the park appears to be a refuge for eclectics.

A Brief History of the Burial Grounds

We do not intend this overview to be anything more than a quick, synoptic history. Our project did not

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include historical research and our overview is obtained entirely from secondary sources or from notes graciously provided by the historian, Sharyn Thompson, working for Stones Faces and Sacred Spaces. Our goal is simply to help place the cemetery in some reasonable framework and help the reader better understand its evolution.

Savannah's earliest public burial ground, designed by Oglethorpe along with places for worship and public meeting, was in Percival Ward, Holland Tything, Lots 2 and 3. It was in use for only 17 years, being closed in 1750 (Center for Preservation Research 1991:3). It is noted that as the land was converted to residential use memory of the cemetery lapsed until March 1950, when bones were found during construction at 9 West York Street. This was long before any interest in either Savannah's history or concern with the treatment of human skeletal material and their seems to have been little concern generated by the discovery.

A new graveyard was established in 1750 by the City to the southeast, just outside the city walls. DeBrahm's 1757 Plan of the City of Savannah and Fortifications shows the location of the palisade, including its three bastions and two gates. Although it appears to encroach on the northern edge of the graveyard (Figure 9), the drawing also identifies the western gate on the southern line as the "Burying Ground Gate," suggesting that the burials were placed entirely outside of the earthworks. In 1758 the City transferred the graveyard to Christ Episcopal Church, an action which would have serious ramifications on the care and maintenance of the cemetery in the nineteenth century.

This 1750 cemetery was largely filled by 1762 when a "Committee appointed to view the Condition of the Cemetery or Burying Ground" reported that additional space was desperately needed. As a result, an April 1763 Act by the Royal Legislature was passed stating:

whereas the cemetery in the parish of Christ Church, belonging to said parish, is become too small for the occasion . . . the said cemetery be enlarged and extended to the line of Abercorn street to the westward, and

one hundred feet to the southward, he whole to contain two hundred and ten feet square; and the church wardens and vestry men of the said parish are hereby empowered [line missing] to complete, enclose and finish the same And be it further enacted . . . that there be laid out and enclosed in a line with the said cemetery, adjoining the lines of the common, towards the five lots, a place of two hundred feet square, for the conveniency of a burial ground for negroes (*Colonial Records of Georgia* 18:568-569).

It was again enlarged in 1768, adding 170 feet to the east (*Colonial Records of Georgia* 19:74). This act, like the last, authorized the church vestry to enclose the cemetery, although it is uncertain whether each of the different enlargements was actually fenced.

By the early 1780s it seems clear that the cemetery was still situated outside of Savannah fortifications, and at least one map shows the cemetery fenced, with a gate on its east side (Georgia Historical Society, Waring Map Collection 2:2). The city's earthworks were maintained until the end of the American Revolution, at which time they were apparently leveled.

In 1789 the graveyard was enlarged one last time. The ordinance allowed it to be enlarged 120 feet to the east and 290 feet to the south, bringing the total size of what was still known as the Christ Church Burying Ground to 500 feet square (Gamble 1901:61).

There are two modern historical reconstructions of the burying grounds' evolution (Figures 10 and 11). Figure 10 shows the layout of Savannah in 1770, with the cemetery encompassing an area measuring 211 feet north-south by 346 feet east-west. This rectangular shape, of course, fits the combined additions of 1763 and 1768, although the legislative acts indicate that the measurements should be 210 feet by 370 feet. Moreover, Figure 11 is reconstructed to show the initial burying ground as measuring 110 by 210 feet, while the 1763 enlargement suggests that the original burying ground was a much more modest 110 by 110 feet and the 1763 enlargement

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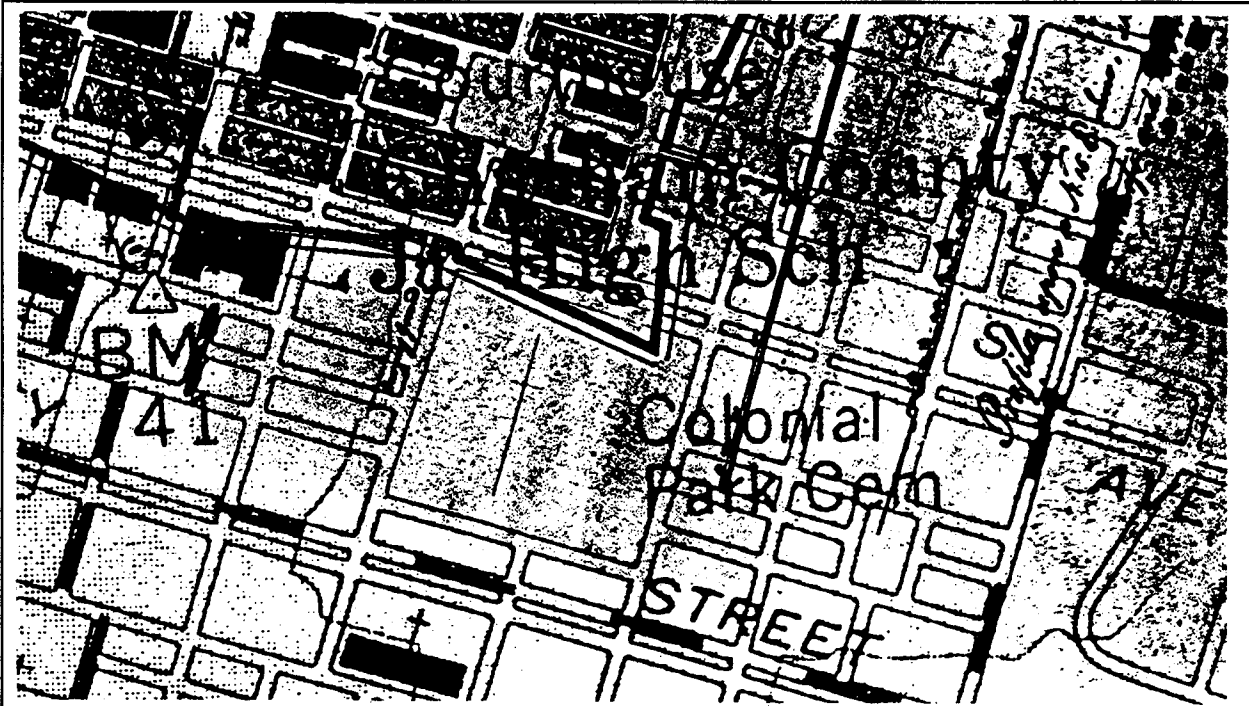


Figure 9. DeBrahm's 1757 city plan overlaying the modern topographic map of Savannah, showing the approximate location of the city wall in relationship to Colonial Park.

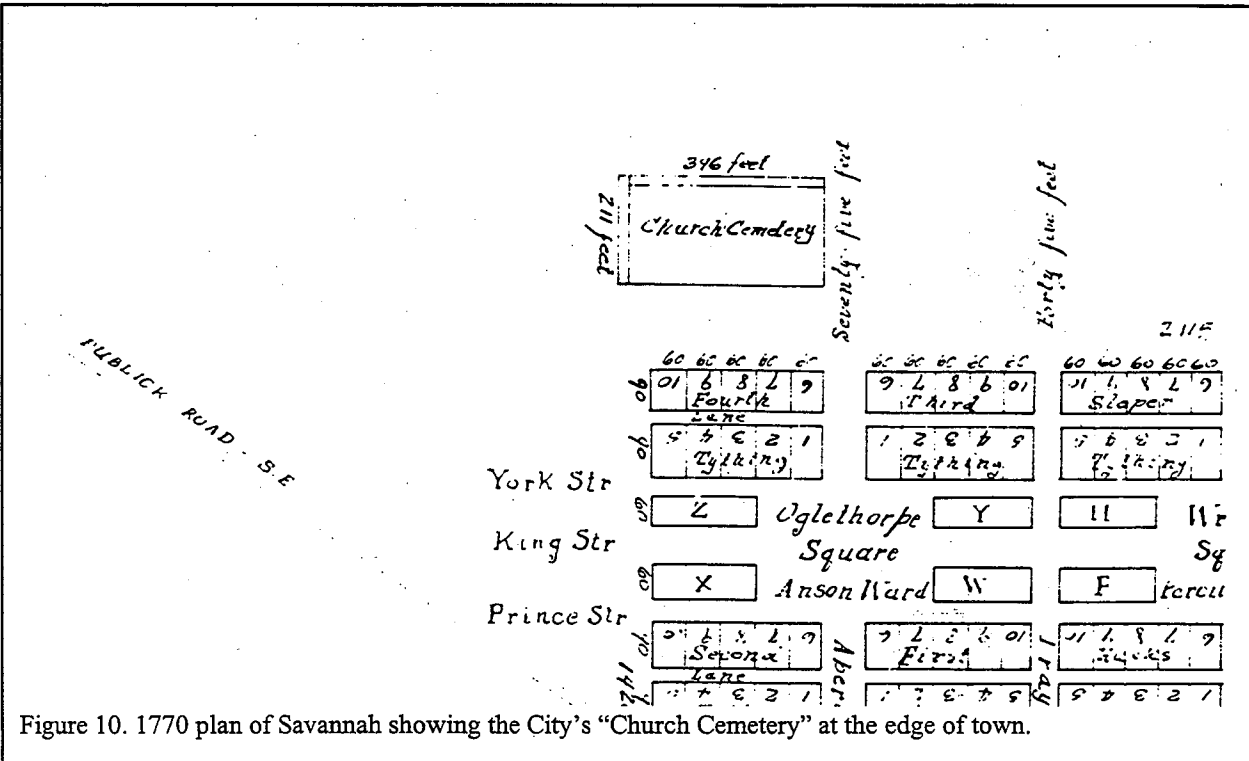


Figure 10. 1770 plan of Savannah showing the City's "Church Cemetery" at the edge of town.

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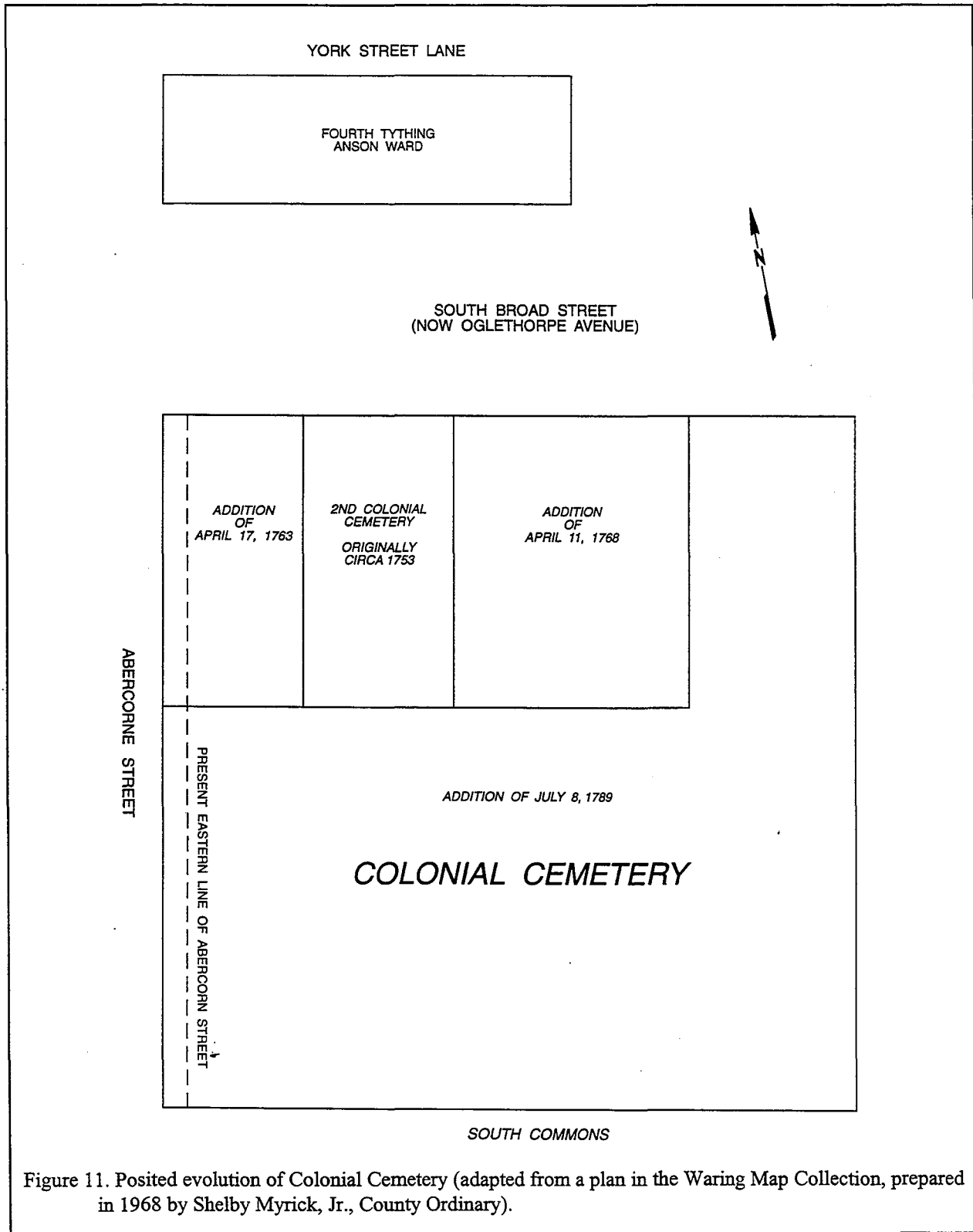


Figure 11. Posited evolution of Colonial Cemetery (adapted from a plan in the Waring Map Collection, prepared in 1968 by Shelby Myrick, Jr., County Ordinary).

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was to the west and south.

As part of the recovery efforts after the Revolution, attention turned to restoring the city graveyard, and in 1783 a subscription account was opened at the Attorney General's Office to accept contributions to rebuild the wall which apparently had been damaged or destroyed by the British occupation. Matero's study observes that:

apparently not enough funds were collected, for in 1785, a list of grievances was published by the citizens, including the need for a fence to enclose the burial ground. Later that same year, after reports that dogs and wild animals were digging up corpses in the yard, a group of men formed the Charitable Society with the mission to raise funds to build an enclosure wall by putting on theatrical performances. Their first attempt on February 17, 1786 raised £34, which was later supplemented with an additional £600 by the City in 1790. Contained within the City's allotment were £80 collected from merchants by ladies of the City. There is also an indication that George Washington himself, while on a visit to Savannah in May of 1791, may have contributed to the fund for the construction of the brick wall (Center for Preservation Research 1991:4; see also the City Council Minute Books, 1790:24-25).

The construction of the wall, however, appears to have taken nearly five years, beginning in 1791 with the letting of a contract to James Meyer. Meyer died in 1793 and a new contract was let to Dennis Moriority, Thomas Swinton, and Daniel Bacon (Gamble 1901:61). It appears that this was later modified to include John Armour (1796 City Council Minute Books:340). Gamble reports that apparently about 300,000 bricks were used to build the wall, which was variously reported to be six feet high, with periodic pillars or columns, probably to buttress the wall (Gamble 1901:62).

If we assume a series of four walls, each 500 feet (154 m) on a side, and figure 6 feet above grade and 2 feet below for a footer, for a total height of 8 feet (2.5 m), a wall a single brick in width (perhaps set in Flemish bond for strength), would require approximately 194,000 bricks (allowing about 5% for wastage) (Lynch 1994:205). Of course, there would have been gates, but there were also apparently columns, not figured into this estimate. The difference between this estimate and the number of bricks suggested by Gamble may reflect a more substantial wall, perhaps two brick in width, rather than one.

Regardless, Matero and his colleagues note that this new wall had its gate on the north wall, "directly across from the intersection of South Broad and Lincoln Streets" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:4). They also note that there was a brick pathway through the graveyard (perhaps accounts for the extra bricks?) Running from the main entrance at South Broad southerly to an exit at Perry Lane. They also report a second entrance gate at the north end of west wall, in the general vicinity of the main entrance today.

By 1803 the Broad Street Burying Ground had been in use for 53 years, but there never had been any record maintained of those buried there (which seems odd, given that it was maintained by Christ Church). Nevertheless, by the end of 1804 a burial register was begun and placed in charge of the City's Board of Health (Gamble 1901:81). If we take the years of 1794 and 1798-1799 as typical, and average the 78 and 113 citizens from the two samples to yield 95 burials a year (*Georgia Gazette* April 9, 1795 and *Georgia Gazette* February 6, 1800), then the cemetery would already have held over 5,000 individuals. Little wonder that by 1807 the City was already concerned over the health aspects of the cemetery and urged plantings along the edges to remove "the impurities of the surrounding atmosphere" (Gamble 1901:81).

By 1812 the city was already laid out completely around the burying grounds and Houstoun's *Map of the City of Savannah* reveals only one entrance, still centered on the north wall, facing Lincoln Street (Figure 12). The cemetery is shown as a full 500 feet square, with no development or lots on any side. This is odd, since Gamble comments that by 1810, "the tree committee was ordered to establish a nursery for Pride of India trees in the margin of the burial ground so that

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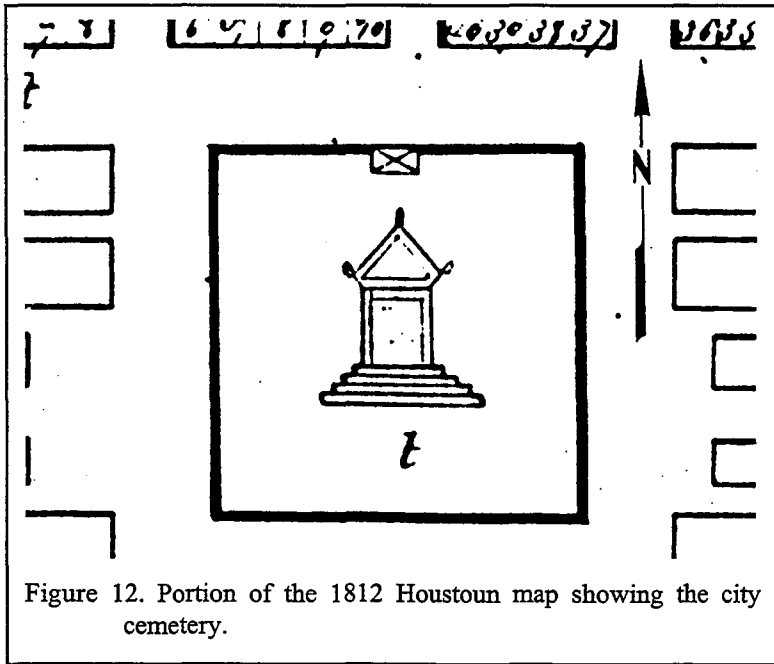


Figure 12. Portion of the 1812 Houstoun map showing the city cemetery.

east of, the Broad Street “Church Cemetery.” It fronted Habersham Street and measured about 100 feet east-west by 500 feet north-south.

The 1840 *Map of the City of Savannah* by Stephens shows the site as “Old Cemetery” (Figure 14). It is still 500 feet square, but the Strangers’ Burial Grounds are not shown to the east and Habersham Street, like Floyd (now Abercorn) to the west, is shown as widening adjacent to the cemetery. This view is essentially unchanged on Vincent’s 1853 *Subdivision Map of the City of Savannah* (Figure 15), except that a row of shallow lots has been added to the southern edge of the cemetery, extending into what had been a relatively wide east-west street. By this time there were three separate clusters of buildings, one of which backed up to the cemetery.

old and dying trees could be readily replaced” (Gamble 1901:84) and, in fact, such a nursery does appear on maps in the 1880s. Perhaps this earlier nursery is never shown because it was located at the grave yard for only a short while, being moved in 1817 (Gamble 1901:123).

About this time there was increasing concern over the cemetery. In 1846 trees were ordered planted and there continued to be suggestions that the cemetery should be moved outside of the city’s limits. Gamble notes that, “on April 11, 1850, citizens petitioned

More interesting are efforts to establish a strangers’ burial ground, beginning as early as 1812, when a committee was established to explore the expansion of the existing Broad Street Burying Grounds (Gamble 1901:123). Gamble observes that nothing must have been done, since another committee was appointed in 1819. In that year an ordinance was passed establishing the strangers’ burial ground 565 yards south of the “present burying ground” (*The Columbian Museum*, September 21, 1819). Thompson notes that it was likely between Abercorn and Lincoln, and Wayne and Gaston streets (Sharyn Thompson, personal communication 1998). In spite of this, the 1813 *Plan of the City of Savannah in Chatham County* (Figure 13), shows that a “Stranger’s Burial [Ground]” had been established adjacent to, and immediately

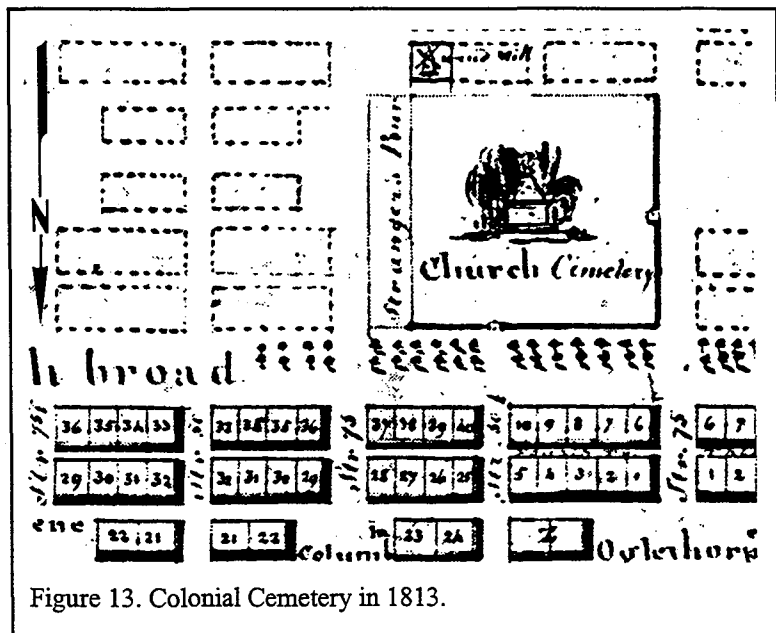


Figure 13. Colonial Cemetery in 1813.

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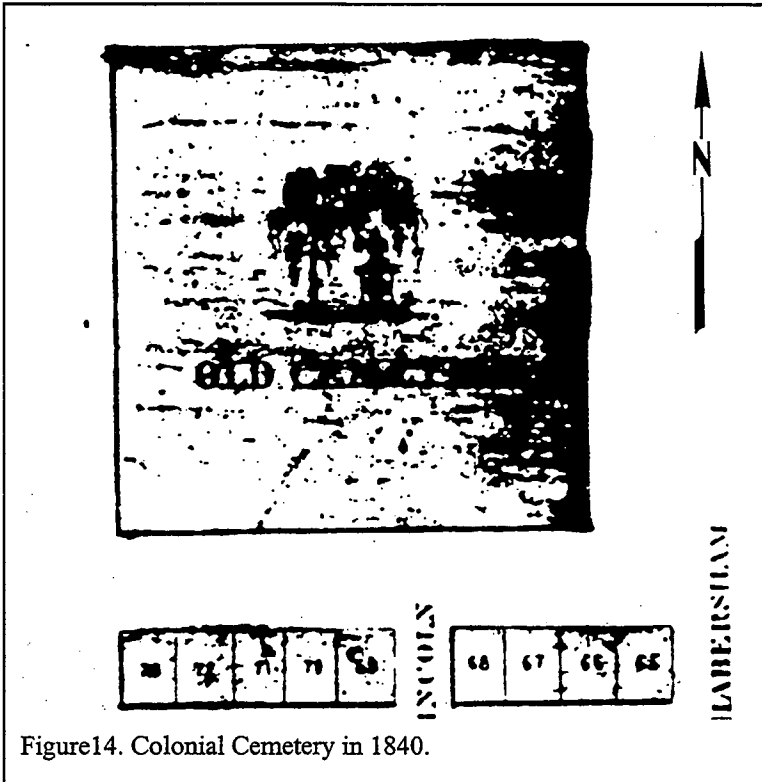


Figure 14. Colonial Cemetery in 1840.

street burying ground (Gamble 1901:207).

The exact number moved, the circumstances of the moves, the thoroughness of the removals, and how the resulting holes were dealt with by the city are not clearly dealt with in the historic records and, of course, are at least partially questions additional archaeological research at the cemetery intends to address.

These removals, however, appear to have caused some considerable concern at Christ Church. Gamble suggests that it was the fear that the old cemetery might be, in the end, used for some other purpose, that pushed the episcopal church to put on record their claim to a portion of the cemetery measuring 380 by 210 feet — apparently representing the original cemetery and first two additions (Gamble 1901:207). Christ Church petitioned the City to vest them the title to the property and allow the construction of church on the

Council to establish a new cemetery, it being impossible to dig a grave without disturbing the remains of those already interred” (Gamble 1901:199). This provided the impetus for the purchase of Springfield Plantation in 1850 and the establishment of Laurel Grove Cemetery the following year (Gamble 1901:205-206).

By October 1852, 280 lots in the new Laurel Grove cemetery had been sold and it was decided to close the old cemetery (along with the potter’s field and the negro cemetery) to additional burials in 1853. Gamble tells us that:

Early in 1855 all bodies in potter’s field and the negro cemetery were ordered exhumed and removed to Laurel Grove. Many bodies were also removed from the old South Broad

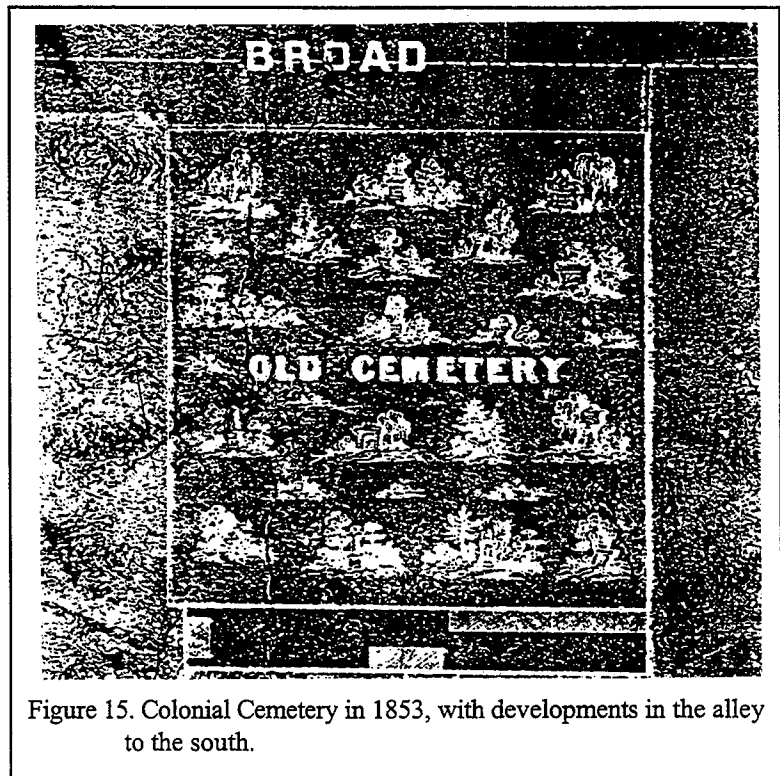


Figure 15. Colonial Cemetery in 1853, with developments in the alley to the south.

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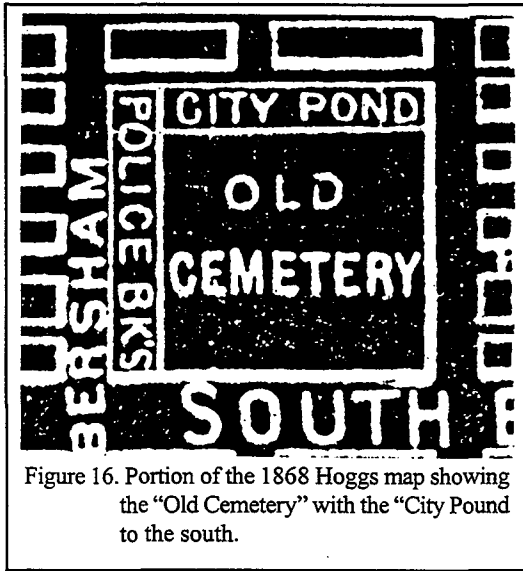


Figure 16. Portion of the 1868 Hoggs map showing the "Old Cemetery" with the "City Pond" to the south.

cemetery. The Catholics quickly picked up on this and insisted that they, too, had a right to a portion of the tract since their members were also buried there. Not surprisingly, they also wished to build a church on the cemetery. The city rejected both petitions and, in 1872, the care of the cemetery was placed under the committee on squares (Gamble 1901:213).

A series of maps for the period from about 1868 through 1888 reveal that changes were modest. In 1860 the City had established police barracks on lots to the east of the cemetery, essentially taking the area shown on one map (Figure 13) to be a burial ground for

strangers (Figure 16; Gamble 1901:241-242). At the south end of the cemetery was the City Pond (probably "pond"). The cemetery itself, however, still measured about 500 feet square. By the time the 1871 *Birds Eye View of the City of Savannah* was published (Figure 17), there were three buildings adjacent to the cemetery along Habersham and four on the lots to the south. In 1888 the *Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity* reveals the presence of the "Police Barracks" and "County Jail" to the east and the "Street and Lanes Lot" and "City Pond" to the south (Figure 18).

During this period it seems certain that the "old cemetery," as it was most often called, continued to deteriorate. Gamble refers to it as an "eyesore," "overgrown with weeds," with graves "fallen down" and "broken into" (Gamble 1901:387). He notes that, "those laying claim to the ground were evidently averse to expending any money in its care and the City, denied the right of ownership, likewise refrained from the expenditure of any money" (Gamble 1901:388). In 1881 the City resolved to preserve the cemetery "for the purposes for which it was originally designed" and it was decided that the wall fronting Abercorn and South Broad streets would be removed. This action appears to have stalled and five years later, in 1886, the City Council again determined that removing the walls and cleaning up the cemetery was a priority. This time, however, Christ Church objected to the proposed undertaking and an equity suit regarding the ownership of the cemetery (filed years earlier, but placed in suspense) finally went to court (Gamble 1901:388).

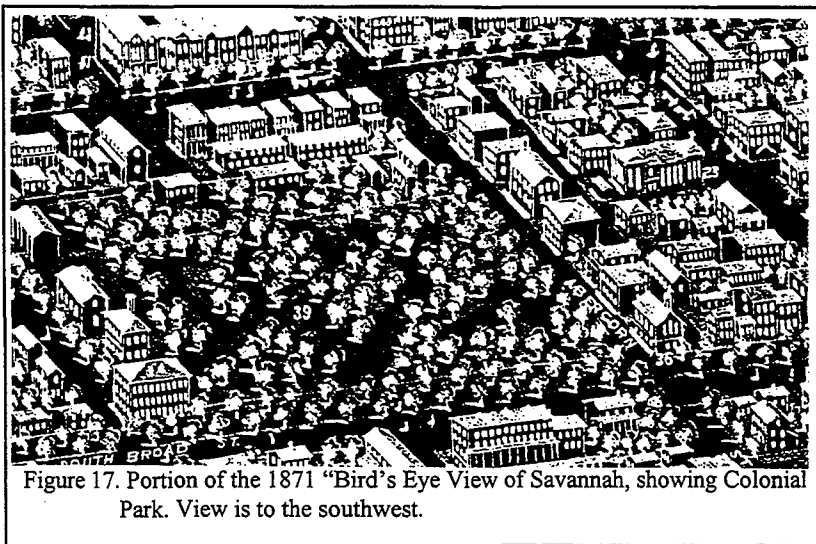


Figure 17. Portion of the 1871 "Bird's Eye View of Savannah, showing Colonial Park. View is to the southwest.

While court was underway, it appears that there was some interest on the part of the County to use the old cemetery as the location for a new courthouse. This suggests that all of the parties in the suit — and even some outside — were far more interested in the "adaptive reuse" of the burying grounds than they were in preserving this sacred ground where, as Gamble observed, "the dust of the colonists and their descendants lay" (Gamble 1901:388).

The Superior Court handed down a verdict in favor of the City, but the case was immediately

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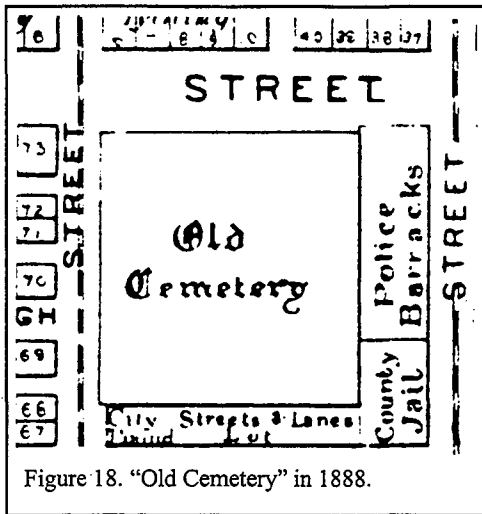


Figure 18. "Old Cemetery" in 1888.

often find their way into the cemetery without permission and desecrate it. In its present condition the cemetery is an eye-sore and will continue so as long as the question of title or the right of the City to improve it prevails. It would be much better if the old cemetery could be abandoned entirely as a relic, the wall removed and the streets opened through it (quoted in Gamble 1901:389-390).

It may have been these sentiments that spurred the first effort to record the cemetery. Matero and his colleagues report that in 1887 the Georgia Historical Society began copying epitaphs and making a map of the cemetery. Although over 700 epitaphs were reportedly gathered, today all that can be identified are about 100 (Center for Preservation Research 1991:7).

appealed to Georgia's Supreme Court, where the lower court's decision was reversed in 1889. This encouraged the City, once again, to do nothing to improve the condition of the old cemetery, with the Mayor complaining that:

Although the equity suit was settled, there were yet matters of law before the court and the City Council pushed forward with those suits. In 1895 the Superior Court determined that title to the property was vested in the City. The judge's decision was based at

the remains in the vaults therein are in many cases exposed to view and the dilapidated condition of the vaults and surroundings are such as to impress one unfavorably in the extreme. It would be best to collect those remaining into one receptacle and place them in a portion of the cemetery where they would be undisturbed or remove them to another place of burial where they might rest free from interference of persons who

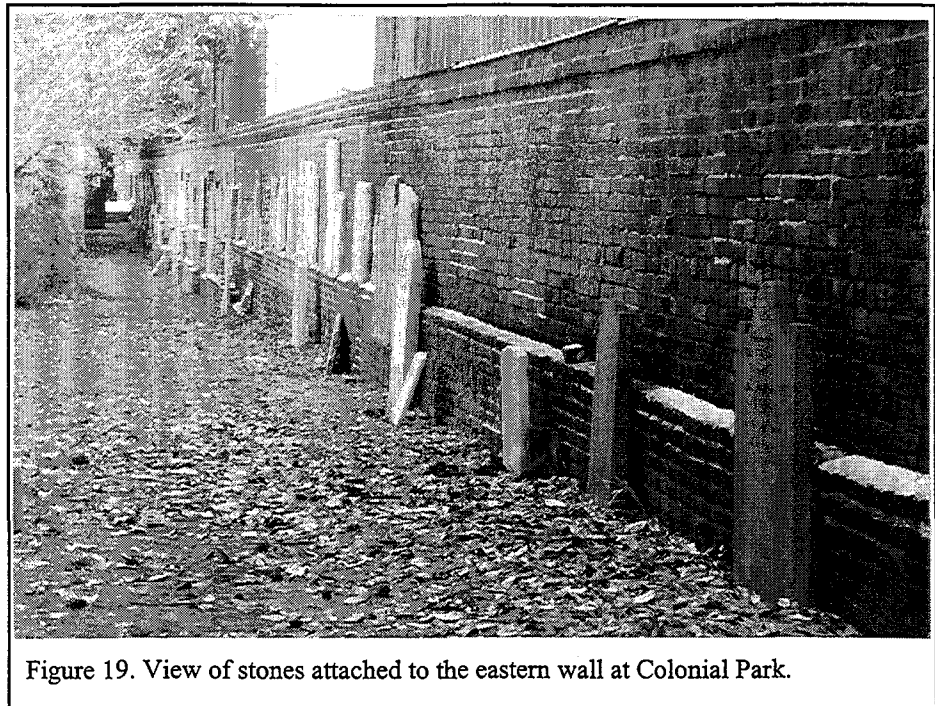


Figure 19. View of stones attached to the eastern wall at Colonial Park.

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least partially on the City's agreement that the cemetery would be forever preserved (Gamble 1901:390-391). Moreover, the City agreed to pay Christ Church \$7,500. Upon payment of this amount the City had the authority to remove walls and make repairs on the property, creating "Colonial Park" on the site.

The settlement also stipulated that although the City would have title in the property, it did not:

have the right to lay off, run or project streets through the same, nor shall it have the right to convey or sell said tract, or any lot or portion of the same, to any person or persons whatsoever (Gamble 1901:391).

The settlement also stipulated that Abercorn Street could never be widened and that the City would be responsible for the care of the graves, tombstones, monuments, and vaults in the cemetery.

The new park was placed under the control of the Park and Tree Commission in 1895, which quickly took action the following year to remove the walls, lay out walkways, plant trees and shrubbery, and restore the tombs. The firm of P.J. Berckmans of Augusta was employed to lay out and landscape the cemetery. It was during this period that broken stones began to be gathered up and set in the eastern wall of the cemetery, a practice which continued well into the twentieth century (Center for Preservation Research 1991:10) (Figure 19).

The Park and Tree Department also created the first detailed map of the cemetery, dated February 1896 (Figure 20). This map shows the cemetery as it was after years of neglect. The walls are shown on four sides, with an entrance opposite Lincoln Street on the north side, a small entrance on the west side, and a much larger opening on the south side. A series of pathways are shown in the northern third of the cemetery. Given the date of the map these must have been the paths being used at the time (not planned additions), although the way they terminate suggests that the surveyors simply chose not to place all of them on the map. It is possible that they reflect anticipated additions, although this seems less likely.

The plan also included topographic lines,

revealing that the cemetery had high points in the northwest and southeast corners, sloping to a low spot in the southwest quarter of the tract. Trees are shown scattered across the cemetery, with lines along both Abercorn and South Broad. Abercorn is also shown as narrowing at the cemetery, although the typical right-of-way is shown cutting through the cemetery as a dashed line. The orientation of the cemetery, based on the brick wall, is slightly skewed from the alignment of the city plan, most obvious along South Broad Street. There is a pie-shaped wedge of ground outside the wall, adjacent to South Broad Street. Although no graves are shown in this area, our research (described in the next section) suggests that graves are present, probably dating from the period prior to the erection of the brick wall, when the cemetery was only roughly defined.

Individual grave markers, what are probably box tombs, and what are referred to as "family vaults," as well as fenced plots are all shown on the plan, although only a few are given names. Although the graves form rough north-south lines there is considerable variation in the east-west axes. These variations provide some indication of the very long, and frequently unplanned, use of the burying grounds. This plan, produced by the City as part of their restoration efforts, would become the base map for virtually all future work at the cemetery.

In 1913 the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) began a second phase of "improvements" to the cemetery, erecting the current granite memorial archway at the northwest corner of the cemetery (Center for Preservation Research 1991:9). This created the main entrance to the park, still in use today. Other than this entrance and some brickwork, little seems to remain of their efforts.

In 1922 the City attempted to cut a road through the cemetery, continuing Lincoln Street from South Broad (by this time known as Oglethorpe) to Perry Lane. The public outcry was apparently significant and Matero and his colleagues quote one citizen who complained:

the very thought of vehicles running carefree over the bodies of Savannah's former citizens and builders is abhorrent Most

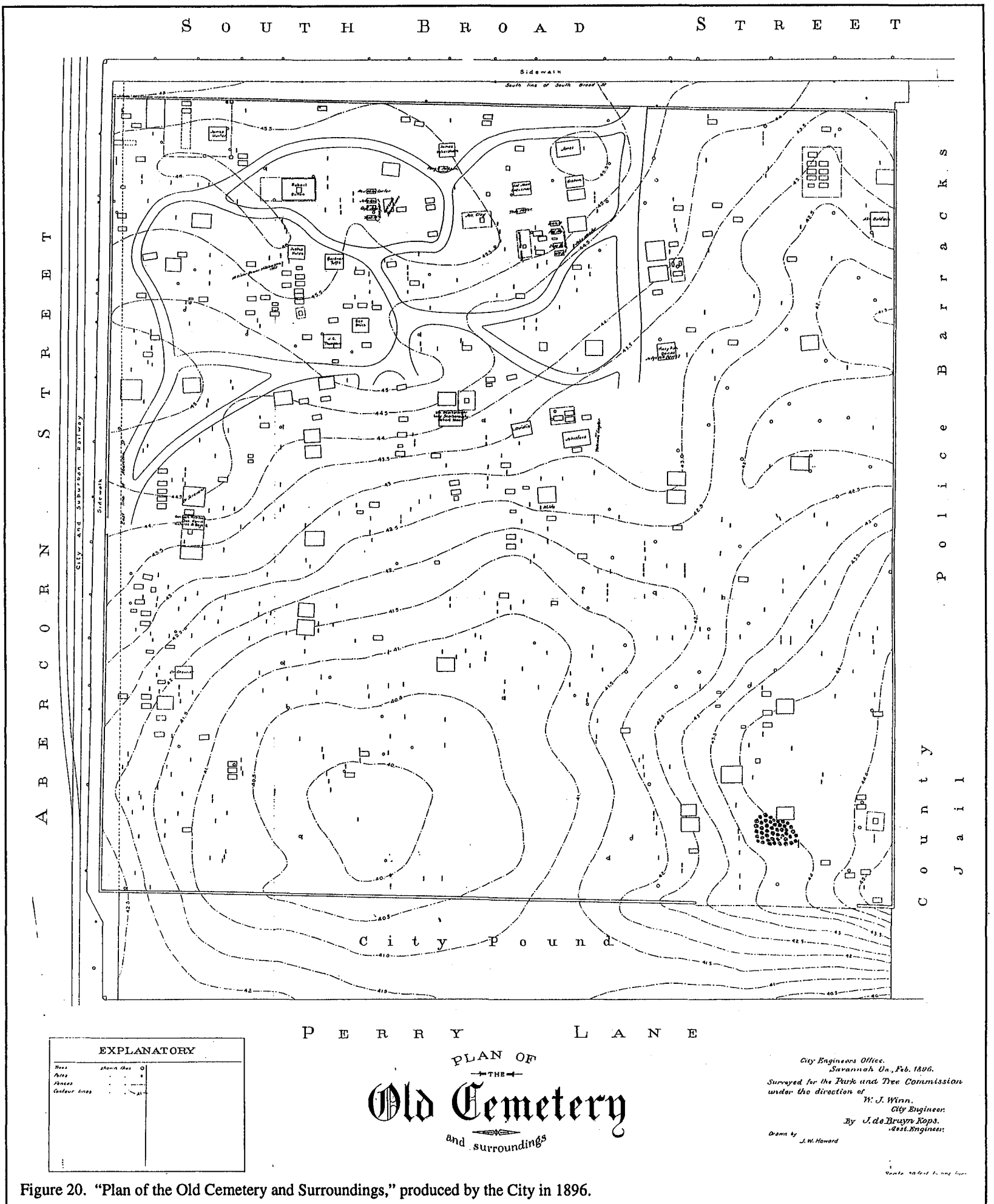


Figure 20. "Plan of the Old Cemetery and Surroundings," produced by the City in 1896.

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certainly nothing is to be gained by the idea that tourists might remain in their automobiles and carriages and view the cemetery (Center for Preservation Research 1991:9).

The city chose to drop the plans for the street, although curiously, it appears from a variety of maps that a central pathway (dating to perhaps the nineteenth century) continued to be recognized and used.

The next phase of "restoration" was conducted by the Colonial Dames in 1924. Matero observes that the work included the recordation of the epitaphs, published as *Some Early Epitaphs in Georgia*. Another map was generated as a result of this work. Although untitled, it includes a brief listing of the more "significant" (i.e., wealthy and powerful) individuals in the cemetery and the notation, "Harry A. Chandler, Delin." is likely a reference to the compiler of the plan. Comparison of Figure 21 to Figure 20 reveals that the Colonial Dames borrowed heavily from the original plan by the City. By this time, however, the park walkways had been installed and are shown as heavy, dark lines. While most of the pathways were rambling, there is a nearly straight cut from South Broad to Perry Lane — likely a remnant of a relatively early access road through the graveyard.

It was also in 1924 that Samuel Elbert and his wife, who had been buried on their plantation, Rae's Hall, were removed and placed in Colonial Park. Matero explains that the move was made because the remains "were threatened by development," although it seems likely that this move was at least partially inspired by a desire to promote the restoration efforts. Elbert's new grave was marked by a large granite box tomb, which Matero observes, "bears witness to his historical importance to the state of Georgia" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:11).

The fourth "restoration" phase was conducted under the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) in 1935. The Savannah Historical Research Association surveyed and indexed the burials and markers. The resulting list was published in serial form in the *Saturday Evening Press* in that year and a third map was produced (Figure 22).

Pathways have changed somewhat, with

perhaps the most obvious difference being the "softening" of the major north-south artery through the cemetery shown on the Colonial Dames plan. The sidewalk along Oglethorpe now abuts the cemetery, with the open space previously noted now incorporated into the street scape. Likewise the street edge along Abercorn is now unified, with the resulting loss of perhaps 20 feet along the west edge of the cemetery.

For reasons that have not been explored, it appears that in the late 1930s and early 1940s the use of the park as a promenade declined and vandalism increased. Matero and his colleagues note that by 1945 the Park and Tree Department had removed 39 desecrated stones and 34 loose legs of table tombs, placing them in storage for safe keeping. The City, discovering that they were facing the same problems observed by Gamble for the end of the nineteenth century, began exploring the idea of erecting another fence around the cemetery. This came to fruition in 1956 when a wrought iron railing around the north and west sides of the cemetery and a chain link fence between the cemetery and the children's park (Center for Preservation Research 1991:10).

Matero notes that a "special burial" in Colonial Park was allowed for Private Joseph Brown, who died in 1945. Yet he also observes, "very little specific information was uncovered pertaining to this burial, and it is possible that this stone is another moved or misplaced marker" (Center for Preservation Research 1991:12). This would seem to discount the earlier conclusion that Joseph Brown was a "special burial." This stone, a small modern granite ground tablet, is found in the southeast quadrant of the cemetery, near the east wall. Our study found a burial in this spot, although it is not possible to determine if the burial is associated with this particular stone.

By 1966 Colonial Park had again fallen into disrepair and the City began looking for someone to care for the park. The Trustee's Garden Club agreed to begin work on the project in 1968 and their work continued over three years. Matero indicates that they were responsible for the installation of a sprinkler system and lamps, created new paths, added benches, and installed two new gates. Damaged sections of the fence were repaired and ironwork within the cemetery was extensively reworked. It was also during this period that many stones were reset, often in brickwork.

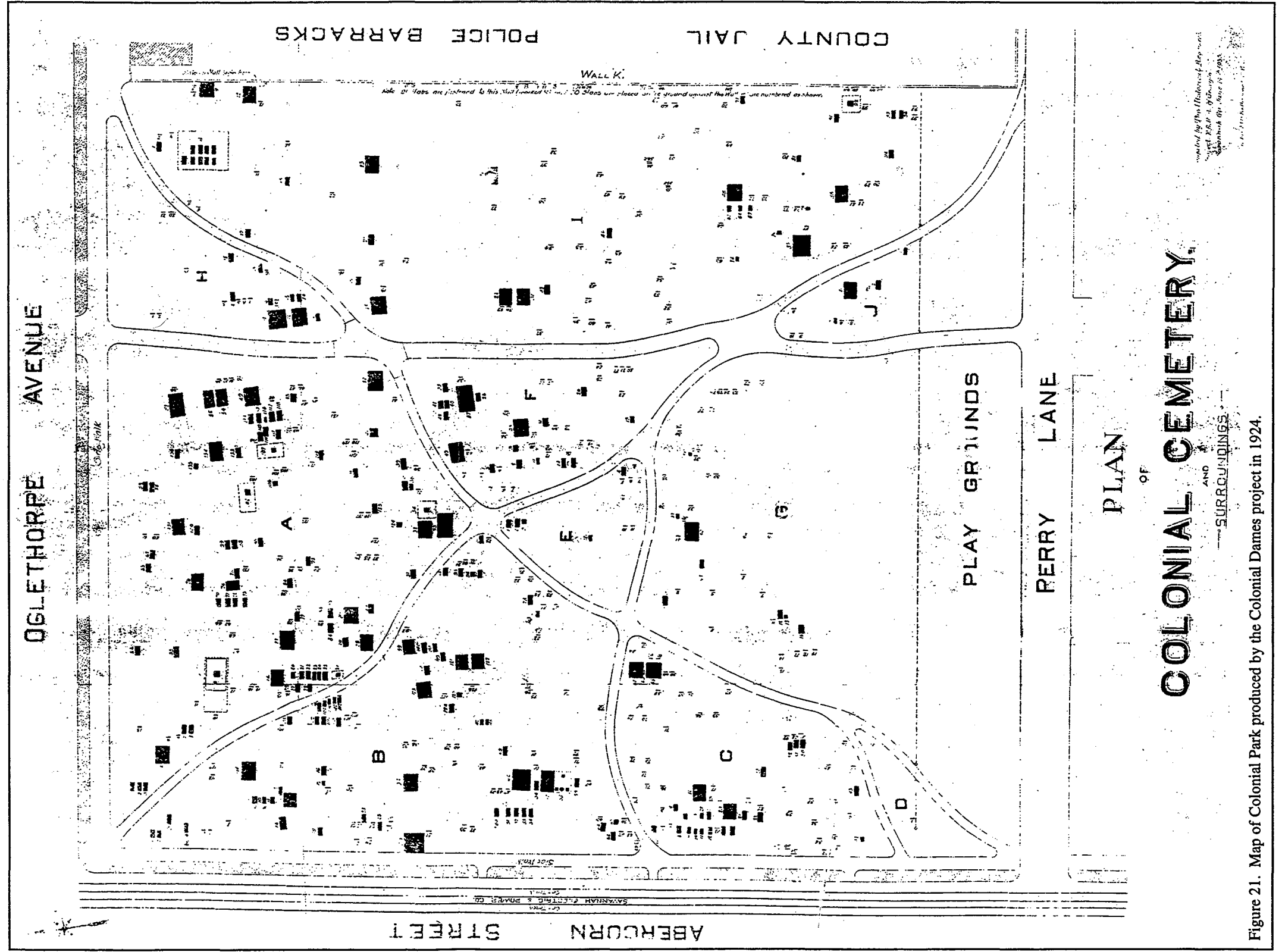


Figure 21. Map of Colonial Park produced by the Colonial Dames project in 1924.

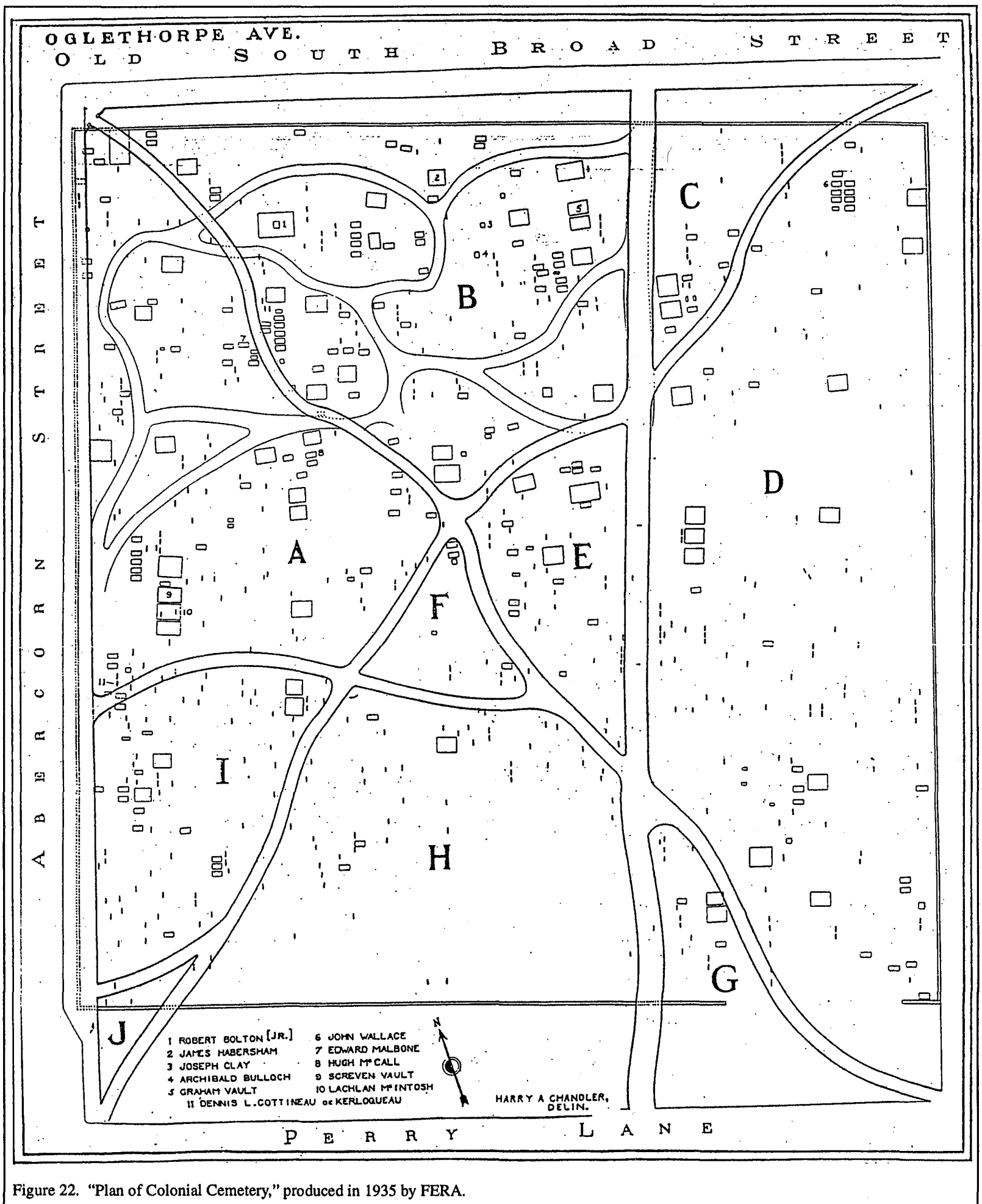


Figure 22. "Plan of Colonial Cemetery," produced in 1935 by FERA.

Nine were apparently reset in concrete, with the assistance of Leggett Marble and Granite Company. Matero also reports that all of the stones being stored by the Park and Tree Department were returned to the park, although it seems unlikely that all 34 table tomb legs found their way back to the cemetery. Some of the tombs were rebuilt, although there is no real discussion of how this was accomplished or which tombs were involved. He also reports that, "most probably at this time additional stones, possibly removed earlier from Laurel Grove Cemetery, were installed on the east wall," although no documentation is provided to support this speculation (Center for Preservation Research 1991:10). Unlike earlier efforts, the Trustee's Garden Club did not create a map documenting their efforts.

During the Trustee's work, in May 1967, excavation associated with the laying of a utility cable in Abercorn Street adjacent to the cemetery discovered at least three burials about 3½ feet below the street level. Skulls were found on the west side the trench, with leg bones on the east, reflecting a traditional Christian interment practice of ensuring that the deceased faced the east. In addition, the three recognized during the work were apparently evenly spaced, with the construction foreman reporting, "that fragments of many other skeletons probably could be found in the trench if further probing were done" (*Savannah Evening Press*, May 2, 1967). The bones were in good condition and apparently coffin wood was also recovered. The newspaper reported that the remains would be reinterred in Colonial Park and Matero reports that they were located near the east wall, in the southeast corner, marked today by a plain concrete post (Center for Preservation Research 1991:12).

In 1990 "restoration" efforts were again attempted, with Columbia University's Center for Preservation Research contracted to map the cemetery, conduct some "archaeological" excavations, and prepare condition reports for the stones. This work has been previously discussed, but it is important to note that a map of the cemetery was prepared (Figure 23). This plan reveals that the pathways were altered, albeit in relatively minor ways.

INTRODUCTION

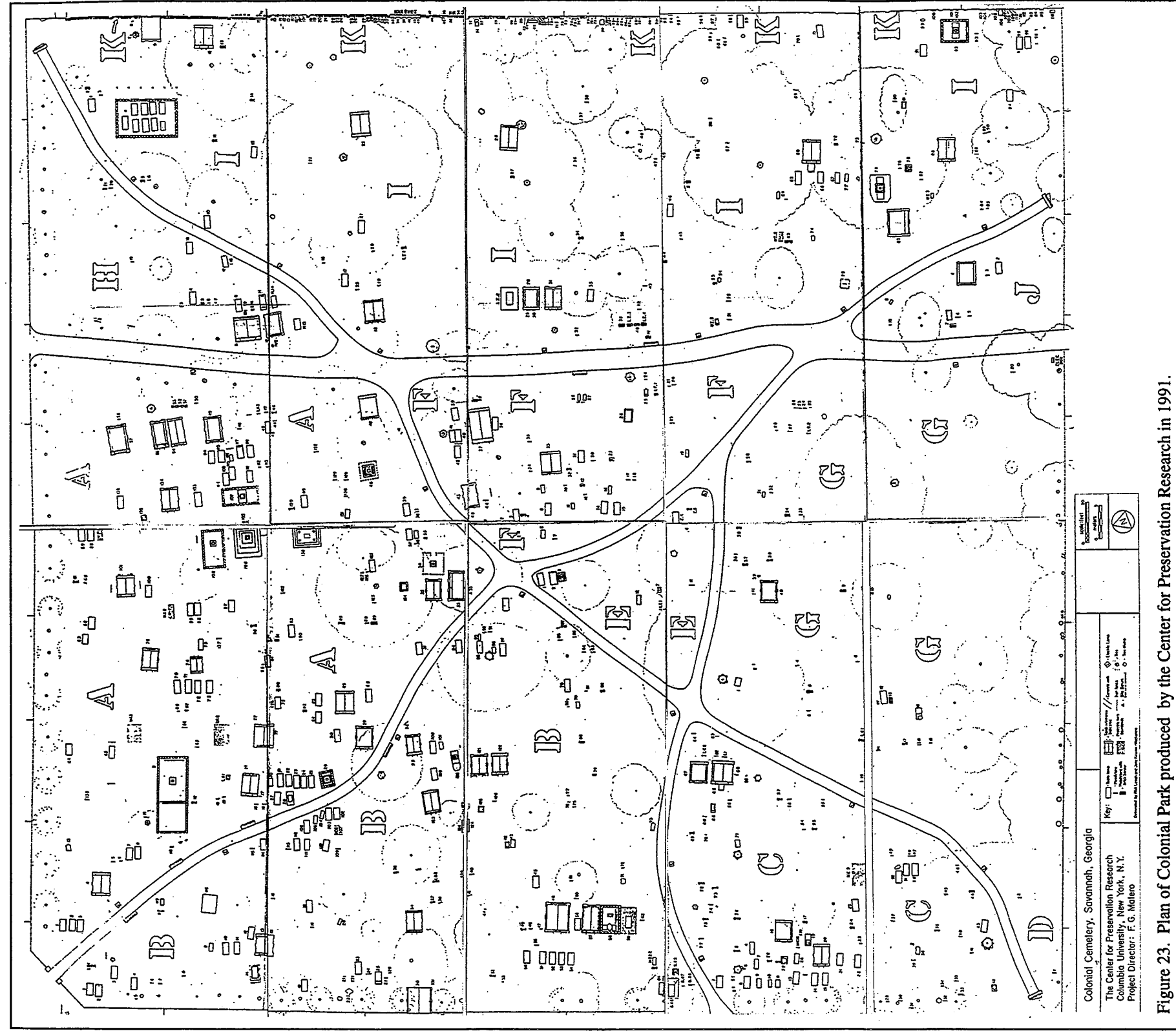


Figure 23. Plan of Colonial Park produced by the Center for Preservation Research in 1991.

COLONIAL CEMETERY, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

The Penetrometer Survey

General Methodology

A penetrometer is a device for measuring the compaction of soil. Soil compaction is well understood in construction, where its primary objective is to achieve a soil density that will carry specified loads without undue settlement, and in agronomy, where it is recognized as an unfavorable by-product of tillage. Compaction is less well understood in archaeology, although some work has been conducted in exploring the effects of compaction on archaeological materials (see, for example, Ebeid 1992).

In the most general sense, the compaction of soil requires movement and rearrangement of individual soil particles. This fits them together and fills the voids which may be present, especially in fill materials. For the necessary movement to occur, friction must be reduced, typically by ensuring that the soil has the proper amount of moisture. If too much is present, some will be expelled and in the extreme the soils become soupy or like quicksand and compaction is not possible. If too little is present, there will not be adequate lubrication of the soil particles and, again, compaction is impossible. For each soil type and condition there is an optimum moisture level to allow compaction.

When natural soil strata are disturbed — whether by large scale construction or by the excavation of a small hole in the ground — the resulting spoil contains a large volume of voids and the compaction of the soil is very low. When this spoil is used as fill, either in the original hole or at another location, it likewise has a large volume of voids and a very low compaction.

In construction, such fill is artificially compacted, settling under a load as air and water are expelled. For example, compaction by heavy rubber-tired vehicles will produce a change in density or compaction as deep as 4 feet. In agriculture, tillage is

normally confined to dry weather or the end of the growing season — when the lubricating effects of water are minimized.

In the case of a pit, or a burial, the excavated fill is typically thrown back in the hole not as thin layers that are then compacted before the next layer is added, but in one, relatively quick, episode. This prevents the fill from being compacted, or at least as compacted as the surrounding soil.

Penetrometers come in a variety of styles, but all measure compaction as a numerical reading, typically as pounds per square inch (psi). The dickey-John penetrometer consists of a stainless steel rod about 3-feet in length, connected to a T-handle. As the rod is inserted in the soil, the compaction needle rotates within an oil filled (for damping) stainless steel housing, indicating the compaction levels. The rod is also engraved at 3-inch levels, allowing more precise collection of compaction measurements through various soil horizons. Two tips (½-inch and ¾-inch) are provided for different soil types.

Of course a penetrometer is simply a measuring device. It cannot distinguish soil compacted by natural events from soil artificially compacted. Nor can it distinguish an artificially excavated pit from a tree throw which has been filled in. Nor can it, per se, distinguish between a hole dug as a heath and a hole dug as a burial pit. What it does is convert each of these events to PSI readings. It is then up to the operator to determine through various techniques the cause of the increased or lowered soil compaction.

Curiously, penetrometers are rarely used by archaeologists in routine studies, although they are used by forensic anthropologists (such as Drs. Dennis Dirkmaat and Steve Nawrocki) and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Special Agent Michael Hochrein) in searches for clandestine graves. While a penetrometer may be only marginally better than a probe in the hands of an exceedingly skilled individual with years of experience, such ideal circumstances are

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rare. In addition, a penetrometer provides quantitative readings which are replicable and which allow much more accurate documentation of cemeteries.

Like probing, the penetrometer is used at set intervals along grid lines established perpendicular to the suspected grave orientations. The readings are recorded and used to develop a map of probable grave locations. In addition, it is important to "calibrate" the penetrometer to the specific site where it is being used. Since readings are affected by soil moisture and even to some degree by soil texture, it is important to compare readings taken during a single investigation and ensure that soils are generally similar in composition.

It is also important to compare suspect readings to those from known areas. For example, when searching for graves in a cemetery where both marked and unmarked graves are present it is usually appropriate to begin by examining known graves to identify the range of compaction present. From work at several grave yards, including the Kings Cemetery (Charleston County, South Carolina) where 28 additional graves were identified, Maple Grove Cemetery (Haywood County, North Carolina) where 319 unmarked graves were identified, and the Walker Family Cemetery (Greenville County, South Carolina) where 78 unmarked graves were identified, we have found that the compaction of graves is typically under 150 PSI, usually in the range of 50 to 100 PSI, while non-grave areas exhibit compaction that is almost always over 150 PSI, typically 160 to 180 PSI (Trinkley and Hacker 1997a, 1997b, 1998).

For example, at Kings Cemetery it was possible to produce several compaction cross sections through cultivated fields, old (fallow) fields, woods, roads, bulldozed areas, and cemetery areas (Trinkley and Hacker 1997a:Figure 10). Particularly important were the location of graves made obvious by either monuments or sunken grave shafts.

Cultivated areas and burials both revealed compaction readings under 100 PSI. Of course the two areas could be distinguished from each other by the depth of the various compaction readings. The cultivated fields were underlain by soils with compaction readings between 201 and 300 PSI, usually within 0.8 foot of the surface. Burials, on the other

hand, revealed the lower compaction readings to depths of 3 feet.

The roads and other disturbed areas, such as where bulldozers had recently been operated, exhibited compaction levels of over 300 psi. In such areas it is usually impossible to distinguish burials — they are effectively "masked" by the increased soil density.

Between burials, in areas where there was no evidence of burials, compaction ranged from 101 to 300 psi. This suggests that in some areas there may have been earlier graves, at least partially masked by more recent, intrusive graves.

After the examination of over 20 cemeteries using a penetrometer, we are relatively confident that the same ranges will be found throughout the Carolinas and Georgia. It is likely that these ranges are far more dependent on general soil characteristics (such as texture and moisture) than on cultural aspects of the burial process.

The process works best when there are clear and distinct non-grave areas, i.e., when the graves are not overlapping. In such cases taking penetrometer readings at 2-foot intervals perpendicular to the supposed orientation (assuming east-west orientations, the survey lines would be established north-south) will typically allow the quick identification of something approaching the mid-point of the grave. Working along the survey line forward and backward (i.e., north and south) will allow the north and south edges of the grave to be identified. From there the grave is tested perpendicular to the survey line, along the grave's center-line, in order to identify the head and foot.

Typically the head and foot are both marked using surveyor's pen flags. We have also found that it is helpful to run a ribbon of flagging from the head flag to the foot flag, since the heads and feet in tightly packed cemeteries begin to blur together.

Implemented Methods at Colonial Park

Our initial survey of Colonial Park revealed that in many places there were so few stones left that it was difficult to reconstruct what might have been the original lines. Moreover, there was some concern that stones might have been set (or reset) without regard to

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

actual grave location. As a result, we began our work in the southeast corner of the cemetery, with the intention of working north and west from this spot. We quickly found, however, that this approach was far harder to implement than we anticipated.

Initially we attempted to “calibrate” the penetrometer by examining what were thought to be marked graves. We found that the soil compaction varied from about 50 psi to about 125 psi. During this process we began exploring the sides, feet, and head of the grave, but without finding any appreciable increase in compaction. Several additional marked graves were examined, with generally identical results. We found that what we interpreted to be non-grave areas might have soil compaction as high as 150 psi, but never higher. We also found that in some areas it was impossible to distinguish the sides of the grave shaft. In fact, it appeared that one grave ran into, or overlapped, graves to one or both sides or even at the head or foot.

This meant that staying “on line” was difficult and on several occasions we discovered that over several hundred feet we had gradually slipped from one row or line of graves to the east or west, into another. When this happened we would have to restart some portion of the line and attempt to distinguish the two lines.

We slowly began to realize that the difficulty we were having in separating individual graves was the result of nearly 100 years of intensive cemetery use, with graves being excavated into and around previous graves. The faint differences we were observing in soil compaction were those of a grave which had been dug in 1760, as opposed to one which had been dug in 1840. The earlier graves, because of the longer period for settling, tended to have slightly more compact fill, perhaps 120 to 150 psi, while the more recent graves had less compact fill, perhaps in the range of 80 to 120 psi. Finally, it is also possible that we were encountering some areas where graves had been removed for reinterment at Laurel Grove and these may have had the least compact fill of all, perhaps less than 80 psi.

As initially proposed the individual graves were flagged and then recorded using a laser transit. In some areas, however, the graves were in such close proximity that we simply identified the beginning and

ending points of the row, counted the number of graves between those points, and measured the distance between graves. This process was more accurate in some cases than attempting to plot individual burials in very close proximity.

At the conclusion of the work all flags were removed from Colonial Park. Temporary bench marks, however, were retained in case additional mapping was necessary.

The Resulting Map

Over the course of a week we slowly proceeded through the entire cemetery, locating first individual lines, then gradually attempting to discern individual graves. It was, in essence, something like untangling a huge ball of twine. In the end we discovered that the individual lines, while recognizable, clearly reflected what the map of the remaining stones suggested. There was considerable “torquing” or rotating of lines. This is likely the result of the cemetery’s gradual expansion, the very longer period of use, and the failure on the part of either Christ Church or the City to take any special care to lay out or maintain plots.

A total of 557 marked graves were verified during the work. These include individual monuments (typically tabletstones or vertical markers), box tombs (brick boxes capped with slabs), slabs (a marker laid horizontally at ground level), a few table tombs (slabs supported by pillars or columns resting on another, ground level, slab), and a number of standing family vaults. We also identified the three family vault foundations numbered by Matero, but no longer standing. Finally, we identified a total of at least 8,678 unmarked graves in Colonial Park. In actuality there are probably more.

In several areas we were unable to distinguish individual graves and had to mark lines of graves. There were also some areas where there *may* have been graves between rows, but since these are not certain we have taken a conservative approach and not included them in the map or the numbering.

The resulting map of Colonial Park is shown as Figure 24.

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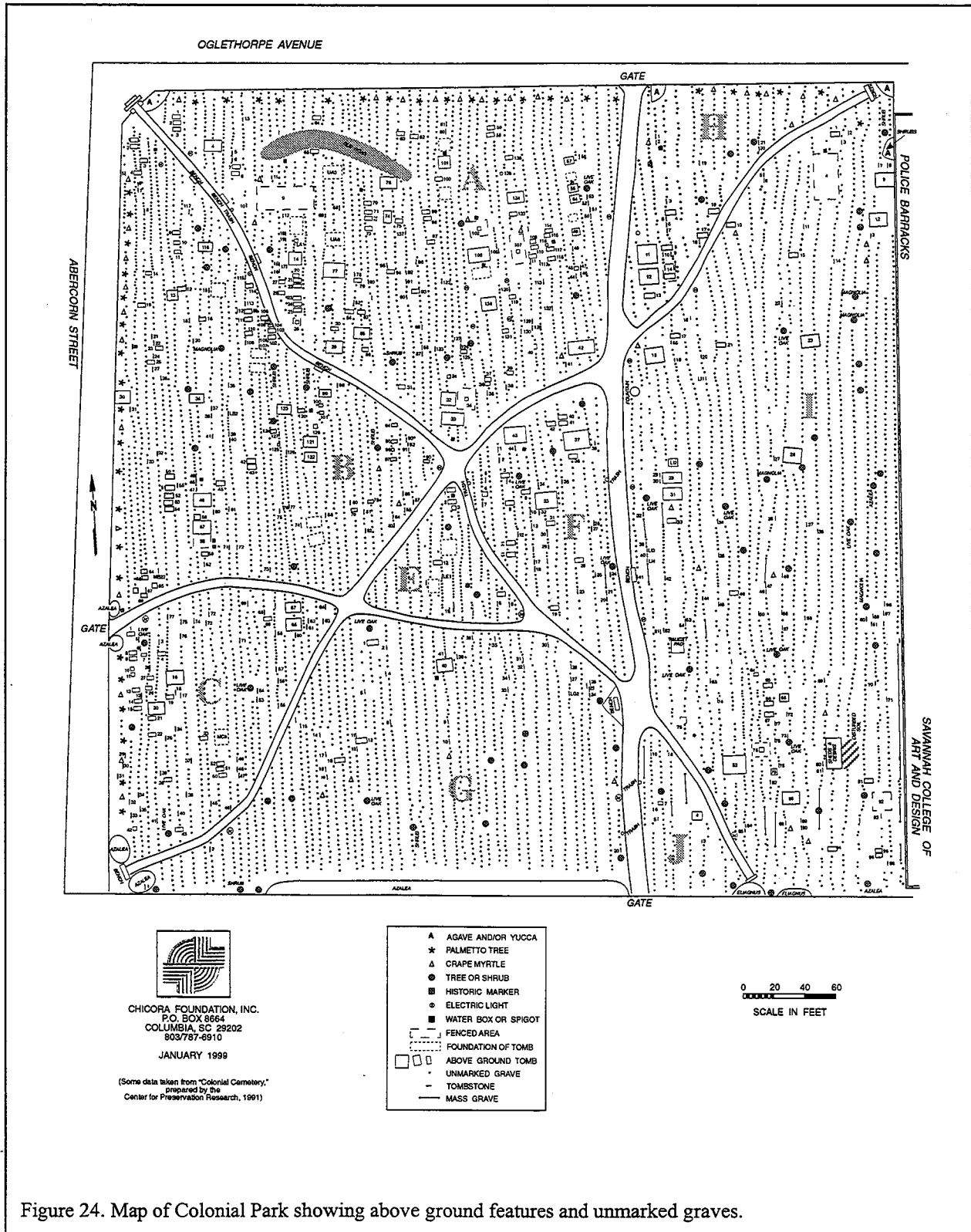


Figure 24. Map of Colonial Park showing above ground features and unmarked graves.

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Findings

Perhaps the most significant finding of the mapping project was the exceptional density of graves at Colonial Cemetery. We found that the cemetery was not simply filled, but overflowing.

There were very few locations in the cemetery where graves were defined by four complete sides. Almost everywhere at least one or more of the “sides” (including the head and/or foot) were intruded upon by another grave. Unlike other cemeteries examined, where individual graves were clearly definable, at Colonial Cemetery this was largely impossible. Identification of individual graves turned out to be a tricky process of attempting to distinguish very minor differences in compaction or to find slight offsets that suggest different excavation episodes.

The data generated by this study verify the legends concerning the number of graves at the cemetery, as well as support the historic documentation thus far generated. The City’s old cemetery was, in fact, quite full and there is no question that every new grave in the first quarter of the nineteenth century intruded on an earlier one. Likewise, it is entirely reasonable that bones were found scattered across the cemetery in the nineteenth century — there certainly was enough disturbance to routinely bring skeletal material to the surface.

Our research, however, did not support the

notion that somewhere in the cemetery there was a mass grave. Although there were areas of 20 to 40 feet where we simply could not distinguish individual grave outlines, this does not mean that they were “mass” graves. It is far more likely that they were simply very crowded areas.

Just as archaeology can help address historical questions, historical research can help resolve archaeological ambiguities. In this case, additional historical research, exploring either the death rate or the number of recorded deaths, may be able to determine that there were not unusual numbers of dead suggesting the need for mass graves, confirming our initial assessment. This is clearly an area which warrants additional historical investigation.

There are several areas where existing slabs document the proximity of graves, with the stones being placed edge to edge (Figure 25). It seems likely

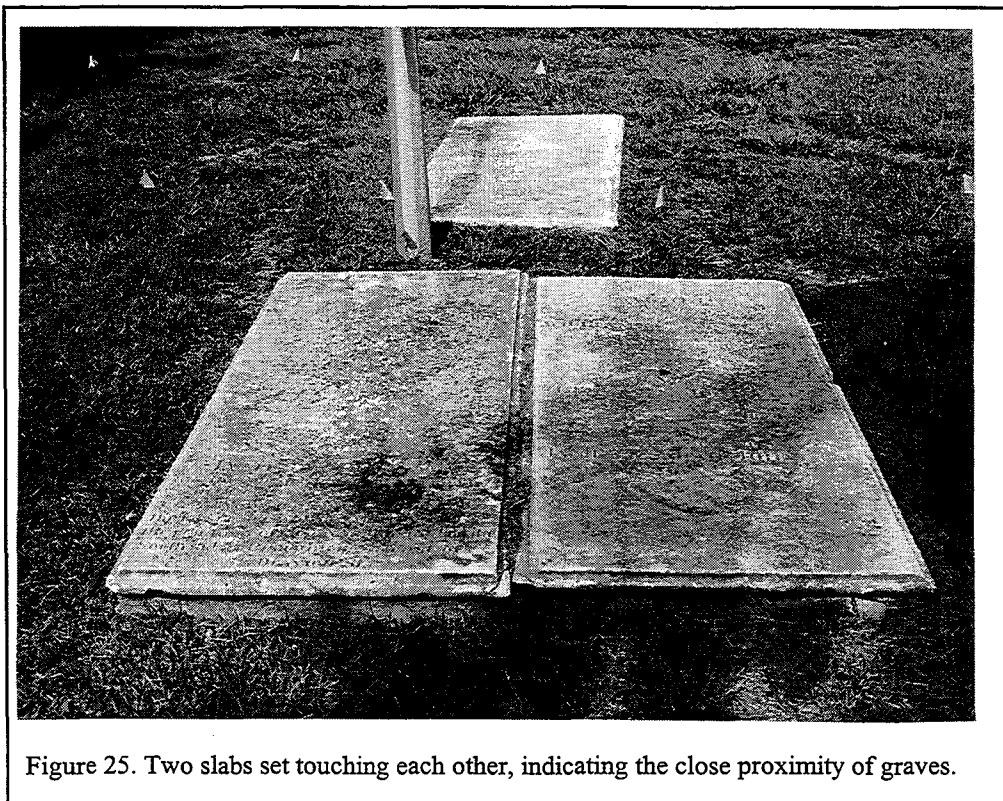


Figure 25. Two slabs set touching each other, indicating the close proximity of graves.

that these stones accurately portray the situation at Colonial Cemetery, with grave walls literally touching,

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if not actually intruding into, the adjacent graves.

Authors such as Schafer (1991:12-13) view the types of monuments as indicative of status, or suggest that religious factors affected the type of marker used. For example, Schafer observes that foot stones came into use to ensure that graves were "carefully marked" and "remain undisturbed by future generations of burials." Certainly as one moves from an upright grave stone at one end of the grave to a headstone and foot stone, there is more careful demarcation of the grave location. Likewise, moving from tabletstones to slabs makes the grave location far more obvious and less likely that it will be accidentally penetrated. Moving from slab to box tomb or table tomb further increases the visibility of the grave. The brick family vaults, at the far end of the spectrum, most clearly documents the grave location, essentially assigning it a permanent architectural residence.

It seems that this concern with indelibly marking the grave has considerable antiquity in the western world. Ariès (1985) has noted that the shift from burying within the church or churchyard to use of graveyards beyond the churchyard is correlated with an increase in marking graves. Medieval Europeans believed that once bodies were committed to the church, it didn't matter what became of them, as long as they stayed on the grounds of the church. This was sufficient to ensure entrance to heaven and, just as importantly, resurrection of the body at the second coming of Christ.

But, as burials shifted to non-church areas, it was essential that something be done to ensure the sanctity of the grave, preserving the integrity and identity of the grave. As a consequence, markers were introduced.

The range of markers seen at sites such as Colonial Cemetery illustrate this concern for making the grave inviolable — as well, perhaps, as the relationship between this concern and one's wealth. In other words, it seems likely that each step in making the grave more secure increased the cost — so that only the wealthiest in Savannah were able to afford brick family vaults, which offered the greatest perceived protection. This points out a second line of possible historical research — do owners of the family vaults, where identifiable, represent the wealthy elite of

Savannah during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries?

Our research at Colonial Park also documented the extensive changes in the graveyard which occurred during the twentieth century. Figure 26 is a comparison of the different maps available for Colonial Park.

The figure shows that many aspects of the landscape have not changed. For example, the north-south pathway in the park appears to reflect the location of the major artery through the cemetery in the nineteenth century. This road was simply converted into a path. In addition, there have been very few changes in the family vault population in the twentieth century — with the one notable exception being the apparent addition of a vault in the northeast quadrant of the cemetery, north of Vault 28, by 1935.

Many more aspects of the landscape have changed, however. For example, there are numerous examples of tabletstones being converted into slabs. Apparently as stones toppled, or were broken, they were simply left lying. Others, however, were gathered up just prior to the Colonial Dames map and were mounted along the east wall of the cemetery. There are also many examples of stones which appear to be simply relocated a few feet from their original locations. Most appear to be efforts to reset toppled stones, without attention being paid to the precise location of the stone. A few appear to be efforts to move stones away from offending trees. This finding is particularly important since it reveals that not all markers actually represent the head or foot of a grave. During our penetrometer study we consistently had problems making rows line up. It seems likely that at least some markers can no longer be used for alignment purposes.

Many stones were removed for landscaping efforts — most particularly the placement of the pathways. The map reveals no fewer than 28 stones removed for the current concrete pathways, although it is clear from the penetrometer study that far more graves are partially covered (Figure 27). It is also clear that at least nine graves were lost under the widening of Abercorn Street to the east, with the stones moved elsewhere.

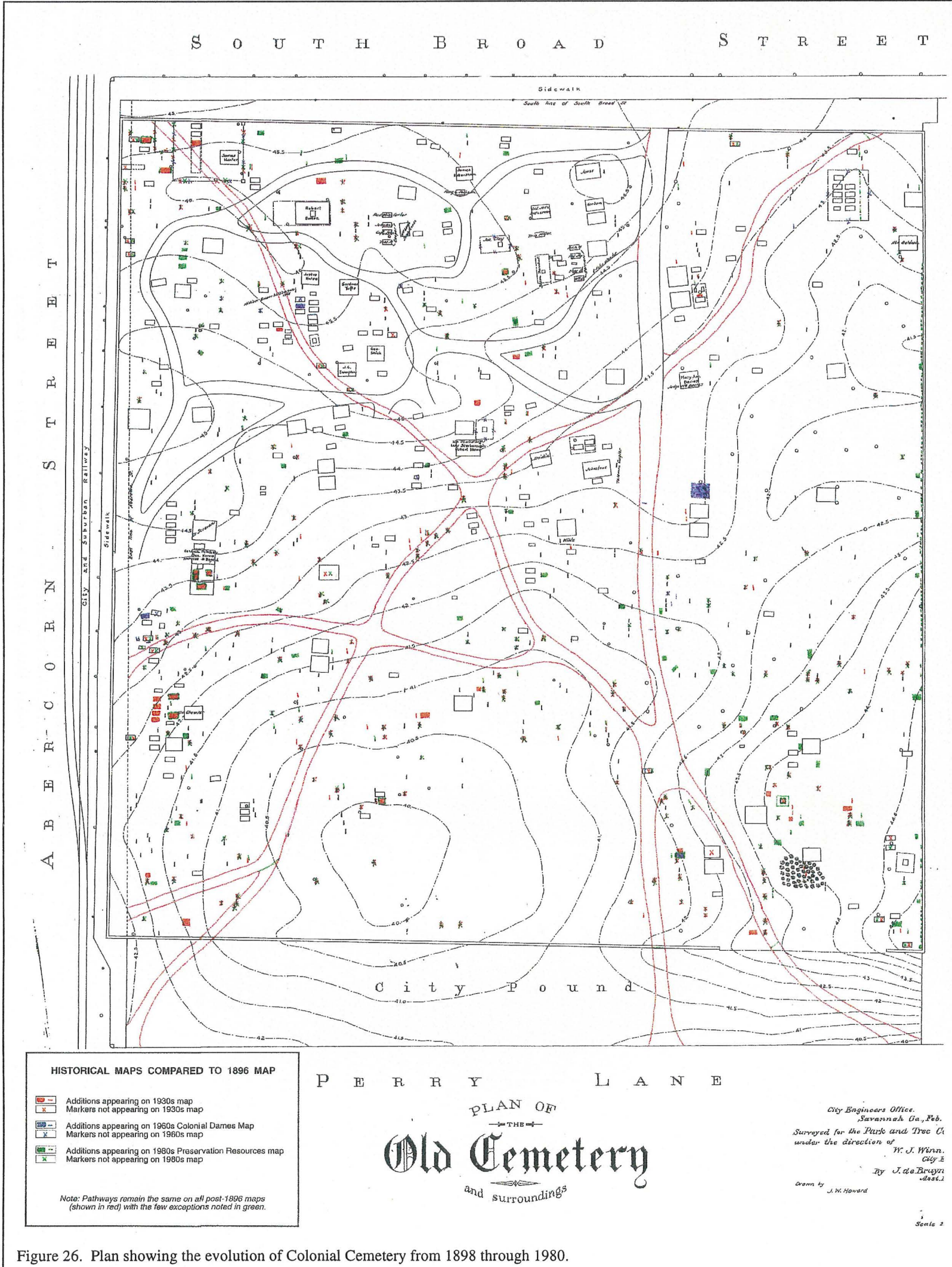


Figure 26. Plan showing the evolution of Colonial Cemetery from 1898 through 1980.



Figure 27. View showing graves disappearing under modern walkway.

Figure 26 reveals just how much change has taken place at Colonial Park over only the past 102 years (1896-1998). The impact in many areas has been significant.

The penetrometer study also revealed that modern landscaping efforts have impacted many more graves than even suggested by Figure 26. Figure 28, for example, shows the placement of a water meter box in the middle of an unmarked grave. Figure 29 illustrates that the historic marker for one grave, perceived important, was placed in the middle of another grave. There are many examples of this — water sprinklers and hose bibbs being run through graves, markers placed into graves, walkways placed over graves, plantings on top of graves, fences cutting through graves — all clearly documenting the need for the current study.

During the study, we also discovered a number of gravestones which had disappeared from view. Figure 30 shows the stone of Oliver Foster, who died in 1805. The stone has been reset into brick and concrete, likely during one of the twentieth century

“restoration” efforts, but had since been buried by nearly 0.3 foot of soil. Figure 31 shows the southern two-thirds of a table stone base. This stone was also buried by about 0.3 foot of soil. These findings suggest that the landscaping activities in the park have resulted in significant movement of soil, probably burying a host of additional stones.

The excavation of these two stones yielded three historic artifacts: two glass

bottle fragments and one alkaline glazed stoneware sherds (Figure 32). Alkaline glazed stoneware began in the early nineteenth century and while originally centered in the Edgefield area of South Carolina, its production expanded westward into Texas by mid-century. Although the pottery was produced into the twentieth century, it appears to have reached its greatest popularity about mid-century (Greer 1981:202). The two bottle fragments are both examples of manganese or sun-colored amethyst glass, dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the first decade of the twentieth century. Both are also examples of two-piece mold construction, which typically dates from about 1810 through 1880 (Jones and Sullivan 1985:13, 27). One has a prescription lip, which is narrow and flat on its side, but sloping toward the bore. This lip type is characteristic of medicine bottles dating from late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The other has a patent lip, used extensively on proprietary (so-called “patent”) medicines, as well as on extracts and other small-mouthed food bottles. This style is also consistent with the last half of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century.

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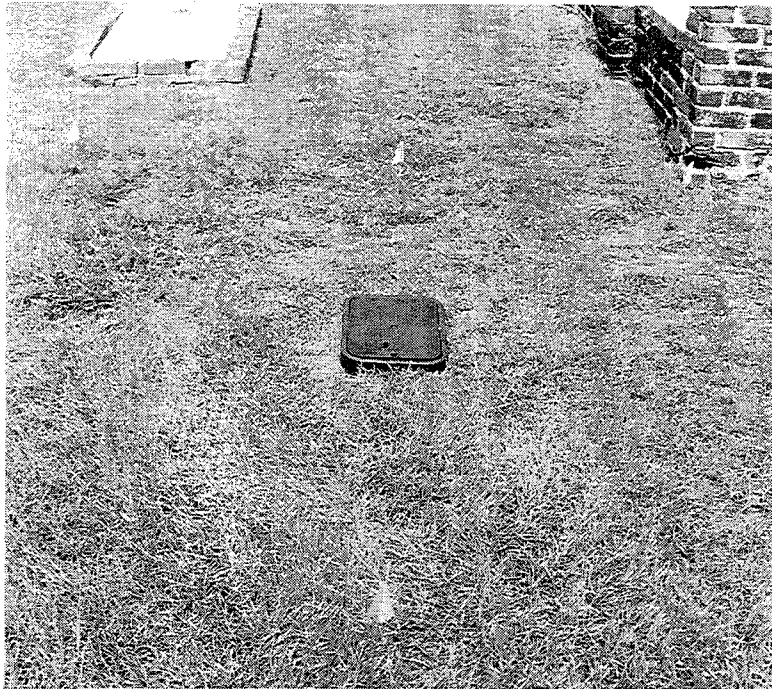


Figure 28. Example of water meter in center of identified grave.

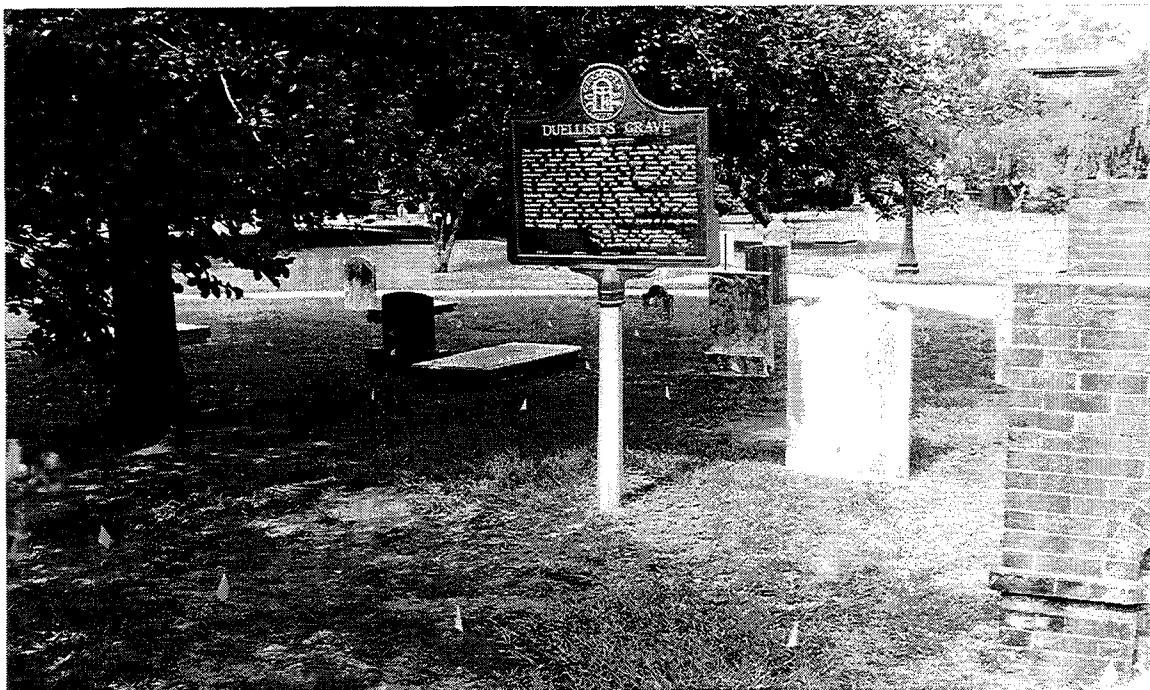


Figure 29. Example of a historic marker placed in a grave.



Figure 30. Stone of Oliver Foster, buried by about 0.3 foot of soil.

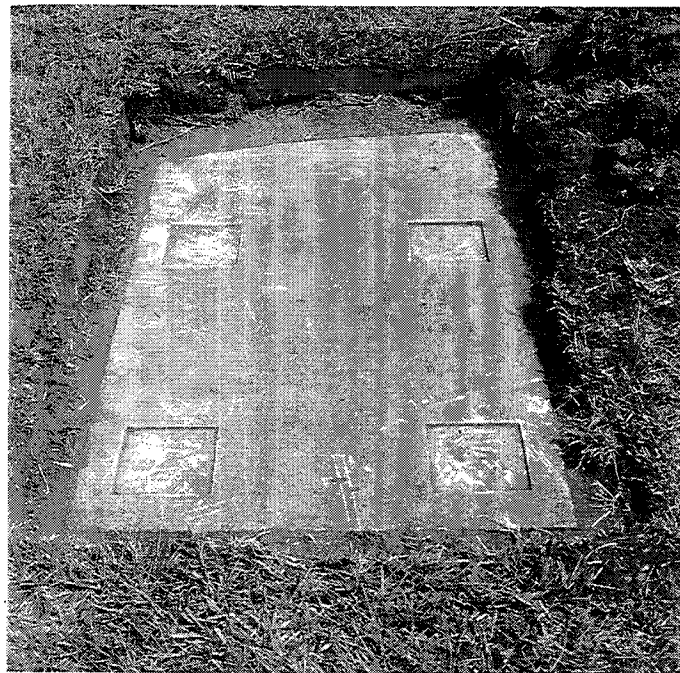


Figure 31. Basal portion of a table tomb, buried by about 0.3 foot of soil.

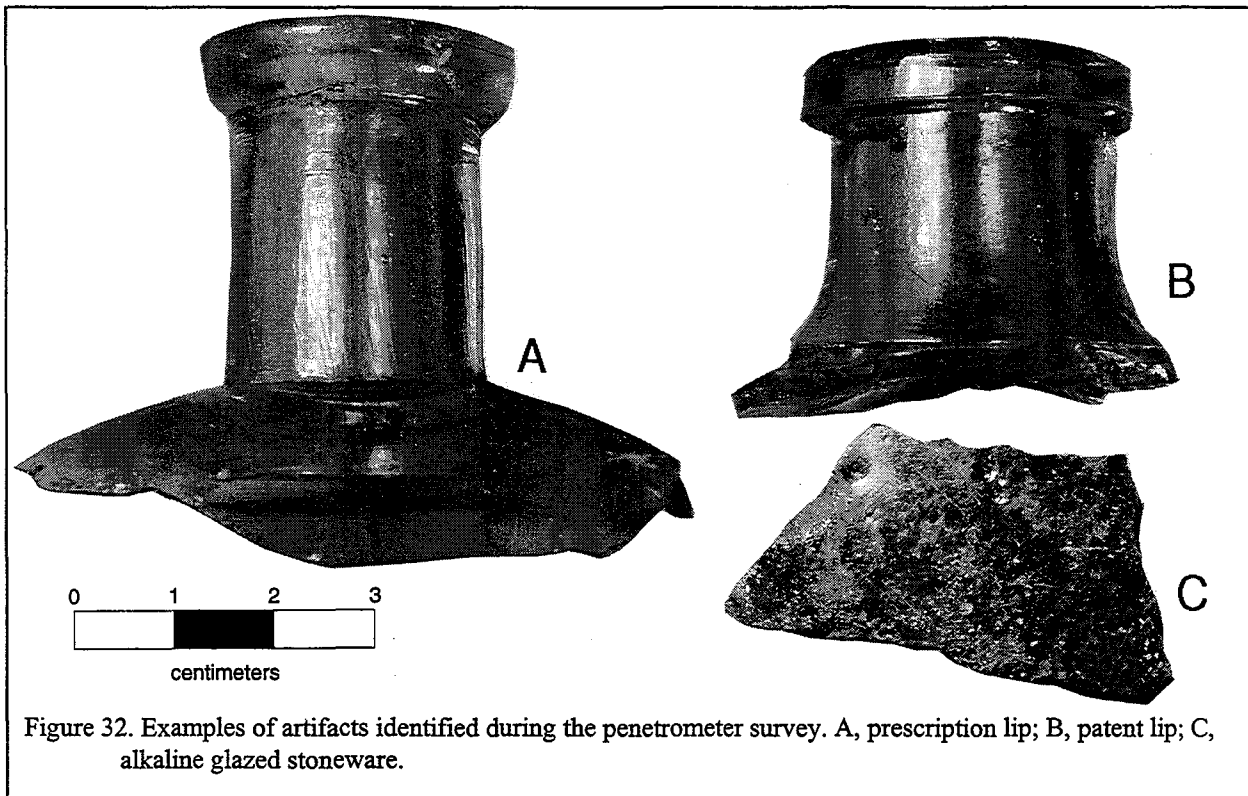


Figure 32. Examples of artifacts identified during the penetrometer survey. A, prescription lip; B, patent lip; C, alkaline glazed stoneware.

Taken together, these specimens are most characteristic of the period from about the Civil War through the turn of the century. This is largely the time period of the graveyard’s abandonment and the artifacts suggest that the grounds may have been used for trash disposal by neighboring houses. This is yet another area where only additional archaeological research is likely to provide answers. Nevertheless, it appears that artifacts are more common than Matero’s original work suggests.

Identified between two family vaults were numerous fragments of brownstone, perhaps reflecting original roofing material. Although these are technically architectural materials — not domestic artifacts — they, too, have the potential to provide considerable information concerning the tombs, and use, of the cemetery. One initial explanation for their recovery is that the tomb has been “restored,” with its deteriorating brownstone slab covering removed and replaced with bricks. Again, additional archaeological investigation — of both the area surrounding the tomb and likely of the tomb itself — is necessary in order to resolve these initial findings.

When the general pattern of the identified graves is examined, we can see that there are actually a variety of different orientations present in the cemetery. These may reflect expansion over time, although they don’t seem to represent any identifiable area-by-area shift that can be easily correlated with the cemetery’s historic expansion events. Instead, the variety of orientations seem to suggest that the cemetery was expanded with no real effort to insure uniformity — that individual graves were defined and excavated by eye. There seems to have been no effort to lay out rows or plots. Even brick family vaults side by side may have slightly different orientations, as though the masons themselves were relatively unconcerned with how their work tied into any overall plan. This, in turn, suggests that Savannah’s Christ Church exercised relatively little control in the organization or use of the graveyard — perhaps reflected in the City’s concern over the behavior of the church sextons.

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CONCLUSIONS

What the Penetrometer Survey Tells Us

First and foremost, the penetrometer survey tells us just exactly how crowded the graveyard actually was. With at least 9,238 graves, it was *very* crowded. There is no wonder that there are occasional graphic comments in the historic records concerning just how badly Savannah needed a new burying ground. What is perhaps surprising is that there hasn't been found more complaints and accounts of the ghastly conditions.¹ This study suggests that it was virtually impossible to excavate a grave without intruding on one or more previous graves and, in fact, most of the graves could not, with certainty, have at least one side clearly identified. There are even spaces where it became clear that the grave diggers sought to avoid other graves by moving the grave — typically east or west, trying to place it more in what was thought to be an aisle. It is doubtful that this strategy was successful.

It is likely that the only graves which remained relatively intact were those protected by something more than a tablet stone. Since slabs appear to have been moved, perhaps only the brick family vaults actually provided much protection. Even these, however, were broken into, disturbing the eternal rest of their occupants.

These family vaults, while found most commonly at Colonial Park, are also present in reduced numbers in Laurel Grove, where they probably represent the last gasp of the tradition. Nearly identical features, frequently called tombs, grave vaults, or even mausolea, are found on the North Carolina coastal plain. Little notes that these, as at Colonial Park, were well built of brick, sufficiently large for multiple burials, "even an entire family," and were "submerged

wholly or partly in the earth, with walls and a roof" (Little 1998:10). In North Carolina, as in Georgia, they were reserved for the wealthy and Little suggests that the particular device has an English origin. Stepped ends are common, as are marble plaques attached to the structure to commemorate different individuals (Little 1998: 10-11, 47).

Sargent takes particular exception to tomb burials, noting that they were storehouses of illness, producing an environment that was "highly offensive, on the score emanation . . . the worms are riotous, and corruption is rankest, and the pungent gases are eminently dangerous, and disgusting" (Sargent 1856:I: 37, 46). His complaints regarding re-use of the tombs also reveals that they provided the sought-after protection only as long as families were alive and the use of the tomb carefully controlled (Sargent 1856:I:47).

It's likely that Colonial Cemetery is representative of the graveyards of urban Colonial America in the South — incorporating bits and pieces of what Sloane has called the town or city cemetery, as well as the Churchyard. In fact, although Colonial Cemetery is not "next to a church" as required by Sloane's typology for a Churchyard cemetery, it is far closer to this landscape of gridded graves and "artistic iconographic markers" than the formal garden landscape with sculpture he identifies with town cemeteries (Sloane 1991:4).

The shift from graveyards to rural or garden cemeteries is often viewed as representing society's new views about death. For example, a writer in *American Gardening* observed, in 1895, that:

the modern garden cemetery like the modern religious impulse seeks to assuage the cheerlessness and the sternness of life and to substitute that free and gracious charity which was the mission of One who came to rob death of its hideousness (quoted in

¹ On the other hand, it seems likely that these conditions were *so* typical of urban cemeteries that perhaps no comment was deemed specifically necessary.

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