

# **Greener Pastures:**

*Cultural Cemetery Landscapes in the United States*

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Since its emergence in 1998, the green burial movement has sought to bring more sustainable burial practices to the United States. While research exists documenting the ecological impacts of conventional burial and the potential for green burial to alleviate those, none exists looking at the cultural significance of natural burial grounds and how their cultural landscape promotes more sustainable practices. This study originally intended to qualitatively describe both green and conventional death culture as well as quantitatively define the maintenance footprints of maintaining those landscapes. The study found that while green burial has the potential to increase its political economy in the US death landscape, it remains small because of cultural misconceptions about sanitation and the power of the death industry. This study also came to inconclusive quantitative results warranting further study.

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## I. Introduction

Even though cemeteries house life's final right, the way people interact and commemorate the dead says much about the living. Burial demonstrates a society's cultural beliefs about the social rankings amongst the living such as race, class, and gender as well as human's ultimate place in the universe (Yalom, 17). As Victorian Prime Minister William Gladstone once said, "Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals." ("Someone else's) While symbolic markings such as religious symbols or grave epitaphs can give insight into the underlying culture, it is impossible to fully understand fully the symbols without also placing them in the context of a culture's greater history.

Today, conventional burial is marked by the use of embalming, metal or cement vaults, and elaborate caskets made from wood or steel. This means that United States buries the equivalent of one Golden Gate Bridge of steel and one two-lane highway from New York to Detroit of cement each year (Tripler). In more numeric measurements that is 827,060 gallons of formaldehyde-based fluid, 90,272 tons of steel, 2,700 tons of copper and bronze, 30-plus million board feet of hardwoods, and 1,636,000 tons of reinforced concrete each year (Green Burial Council PowerPoint Presentation). Beyond the amount of resources that are eternally laid to rest, bodies that undergo conventional burial putrefy and decompose anaerobically, emitting strong greenhouse gases, such as methane (Mitford, 57; Assadouran). Vaults and metal caskets also prohibit the body from reentering the earth, which can be spiritually and emotionally off-putting to those who want their body to reenter the lifecycle (Feagan 158).

In response to the environmental and spiritual concerns presented by conventional burial, members of the now burgeoning green burial movement have begun to create natural burial grounds in which the body is placed in a shroud or pine casket and allowed to return to the earth (cite). Similar to conventional cemeteries, natural burial grounds also communicate the beliefs of those who bury there. This paper therefore examines the symbolic landscapes of natural and conventional cemeteries in order to more fully understand the cultural and environmental impact of the green burial movement.

## II. Description of Study

While myriad sources exist documenting the forces that shape historical and conventional death culture in the United States including Gary Laderman's *Rest in Peace*, Jessica Mitford' *The American Way of Death* and Marylin Yalom's *The American Resting Place*, little research has been done to study the culture surrounding green burial. Likewise, while the Green Burial Council has documented the ecological impact of both conventional and natural burials, no data exists on the ecological impact of both types of cemetery maintenance. This study was designed to fill the gap in both sets of research by answering the questions "How do cultural forces affect the maintenance of natural and conventional cemeteries" and "What affect do these forces have on a cemetery's ecological impact?"

Cultural Geography was chosen as a lens of analysis and this paper includes a literature review of cultural geography methods and background on US cemetery culture. Following the literature review, qualitative interview questions were sent to a set of conventional, natural, and dual-purpose cemeteries to determine the cultural forces at work within the cemeteries. A set of

quantitative questions was also sent to dual-purpose cemeteries to determine the different carbon footprints of natural and conventional maintenance practices. Cemeteries under qualitative review were chosen in proximity to the researcher as sight visits were made to cemeteries undergoing qualitative study. These included Rock Creek Cemetery (conventional, DC) Oak Hill Cemetery (conventional, DC) and Duck Run Cemetery (Natural, VA). Steelmantown Cemetery (Natural, NJ) also underwent qualitative analysis but a visit could not be made due to scheduling complications and interview was conducted over email.

The cemeteries chosen for quantitative study offered both natural and conventional burial options. Dual cemeteries were chosen as they provided the most controlled maintenance comparisons. In order to control for variables such as climate and size, all cemeteries had to be located within climate zone six and operate at least 10 acres of land. Climate zone six was chosen because as it is the broadest climate zone in United States. The three cemeteries chosen for were Pine Forest Memorial Gardens (Wakeforest, NC), Whitehaven Memorial Park (Rochester, NY), and Hebrew Memorial Gardens (Dual, Michigan). Interviews were thus conducted by phone and email.

### **III. Qualitative Cultural Analysis Literature Review**

Before fully examining cemetery culture in the US, it is first necessary to develop a lens through which to view it. Cultural geography, or the study of the interaction of place and location, provides one of the best tools for understanding how cultural beliefs manifest themselves in everyday or symbolic landscapes, such as cemeteries. This section will therefore examine a variety of texts describing cultural geography and its applications.

In *Human Geography: Places and Regions in a Global Context*, authors Paul Knox and Sallie Marston define culture as “a dynamic concept that revolves around and intersects with complex social, political, economic, and …historical factors” (Knox and Marston, 174). Cultural geography, then, is the study of how culture and place interact to shape each another (Knox and Marston, 175). According to the text, place can take an infinite number or forms, including those of a specific geographic location, body or planet. (Knox and Marston, 175). Areas where certain practices, beliefs and values maintain majority status are called Cultural Regions (Knox and Marston, 82). Within these regions exist a set of structures, called cultural systems, which collectively shape group identity. These systems include a shared history, cultural traits, cultural complexes, territorial affiliation, and other a variety of other cultural forms, such as language, that do not pertain to this paper (Knox and Marston, 183). Shared history acts as the basis for action while cultural traits are singular aspects of a cultural system, such as dietary habits or architecture size. In summation, these traits are called “cultural complexes” (Knox and Marston, 177-178). While these are concrete, territoriality is defined as the “attempt to assert control” over a geographic location and the “people, resources, and relationships” within it. Thus, territoriality facilitates the regulation and enforcement of social codes and power structures. Together these creates the impetus for group and individual identity (Knox and Marston, 217-218).

In order to understand how these codes manifest, Carl Saur developed the cultural landscape theory in 1925. Known as the Berkeley School of Cultural Geography, it states that nature exists in a pristine state until it is molded by a culture. Saur dictates that the resulting cultural landscape pristine until another culture re-molds the landscape to fit its needs. While Saur’s mode of analysis prevailed as the dominant model during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recent geographers have expanded it to include how social location affect the landscape interpretation.

In order to understand how categories such as race, class or gender affect interpretation, geographers have begun looking to other disciplines, like sociology and anthropology to answer their questions. This more interdisciplinary model is known as the humanist approach to cultural geography and it champions the idea of landscape as text, or the ability of found objects to adequately describe the culture that created them (Knox and Marston, 226).

Cultural studies scholar Michael Ryan expands on the idea of landscape as a text in his book *Cultural Studies: A Practical Introduction*. In the chapter entitled “Place, Space, and Geography, Ryan argues that culture and landscape are intimately connected and that culture cannot exist without location. Again, he notes that the physical landscape affects the way culture develops. At the same time, he notes human, meaning, politics, and ideas mold the landscape in return. According to Ryan, the goal of cultural geography then is to understand how human and cultural ideas manifest physically (Ryan 13). In order to understand these physical manifestations, Ryan explains the different spatial aspects of culture. First, culture is spatial in that varies in different geographic locations. Secondly, it diffuses over a terrain causing the landscape to reflect the ideas and conventions of a culture. Thirdly, it provides a mapping mechanism that allows people to move through and negotiate the space they inhabit. And lastly, it is spatial in an economic sense, insofar as an area’s economy permitting certain entities to thrive while declining others (Ryan, 13- 14).

Beyond these broader manifestations of culture, Ryan also suggests that landscapes reveal more individualistic divisions within society, such as gender, race, income, and belief systems (Ryan, 15). Similar to the human geography text, Ryan notes that the beliefs and social location of a viewer can change the perception of a landscape and that a change culture will create a change of landscape. Ryan adds to this, however, by stating that certain groups can

intentionally change a landscape's meaning without physically altering it. Groups are able to do make this change by declaring an area sacred or important, such as a national park (Ryan, 19). Thus, landscapes becomes layered (rather than completely reinvented) with each new cultural implementation and physical or mental manifestation (Ryan, 16). Ryan also notes that multiple cultures can exist in one location (Ryan, 22) and that the landscape reflects the power dynamics between groups and individuals. Taken together, these spatial manifestations create a rich text that explains overall the historical, social, economic, ideology, and philosophical impetus of community as well as the power relations within it (Ryan, 15-16; 23).

While the human geography and Ryan texts act as foundations for understanding cultural geography, neither provide a systematic approach for analyzing a person or place's overall political economy and cultural significance. Chris Rojeck, Professor of Sociology and Culture at Brunel University West London, has created such a system. According to Rojeck, culture is implicit in everything. The use of cultural mapping, then, places people, places, and objects in their broader cultural schema. While this system of cultural mapping does not have a name, it examines four interactive aspects of culture - context, location, embodiment and emplacement (Rojeck, 69-70) to place specific cultural elements (for example cultural systems, or traits, complexes, and codes) within their broader cultural context.

Location, or any place where "individuals interact, help, represent, struggle, conflict and co-operate with each other in relation to scarce economic, social, political, and cultural resources," is where culture is made (Rojeck, 70) An infinite number of locations exist since locations include any place of interaction. These can include more concrete settings such as schools, workplaces, and coffee houses or more ephemeral locations, such as fan clubs (Rojeck, 70; 72). According to Rojeck, analysis of on-location behavior provides the best insight into the

location's cultural significance. On-location behavior is regulated by formal and informal rules of conduct, which Rojeck refers to as habitus. The concept of habitus was first developed by French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and provides insight into the distribution of resources and power relations within a culture, as well as the culture's reproduction strategy and overall sustainability (Rojeck, 71). Since Rojeck believes culture exists at the intersection of this struggle, he thus suggests that all on-location behavior involves some form of politics. (Rojeck, 74; 72). Therefore, recognition of or compliance with a location's habitus increases a group or individual's power, while non-compliance, which Rojeck refers to as exclusion, diminishes it (Rojeck, 72,78)

The physical manifestation of such recognition or exclusion is called embodied habitus. Embodiment, or the symbolic representations of "values, outlooks, and behavioral practices" is learned through a process of acculturation during youth or times of great change (Rojeck, 78). While Rojeck distinguishes between performative and attributive embodiment in his book, such distinction, is not relevant here (Rojeck, 77). What remains relevant is that embodied symbols, such as tattoos, dress, or hairstyle, signify values as well as people and individuals' relations to scarce resources (Rojeck, 84). This relation to scarce resources is thus called emplacement. Someone or something's cultural emplacement is determined by a number of factors including Class, gender, ethnicity, nation, and subculture. While family often determines a person's emplacement, emplacement can change over time (Rojeck, 86). Since embodiment demonstrates a person or object's emplacement, a change in emplacement or embodiment can the other. Likewise, as emplacement and/or embodiment changes, so too does a person's ability to recognize or exclude habitus and his or her relation to a location. Thus location, embodiment, and emplacement are intricately intertwined (Rojeck, 84).

A full understanding of these elements cannot be realized, however, without an awareness of the broader historical, economic, social, political, and cultural context in which they exist. Rojeck presents two forms of context: normative coercion and historical and structural context. While Rojeck describes normative coercion in his text, this paper's analysis is more concerned with the second definition of context: "the historical and structural dimensions behind location, emplacement, and embodiment." (Rojeck, 92). Taken together, context, location, embodiment, and emplacement, create an overall political economy of a person or place and situate it within the full cultural context. While the human geography and Ryan texts alluded to specific aspects of political economy and cultural situation, Rojeck's is the only text that easily allows the researcher to examine the whole political economy and situation at once. Thus Rojeck's cultural mapping system will be used as the study's analytical lense.

#### **IV. Mode of Analysis**

In order to gain a full understanding of today's conventional and natural cemeteries cultural situation, this paper first explores the major cemetery developments in the United States using Rojeck's cultural mapping mechanism. Analysis is performed in the following manner: *context* includes details on the broader culture's population size, social politics of religion race, class, and gender, as well as its technological innovations; views of death and the purpose of cemeteries; and burial trends. *Location* will examine the geographic location and form of

cemetery. *Embodiment* investigates landscape design and layout, maintenance patterns, forms of burial offered by a cemetery, as well as the design of grave markers while *emplacement* examines the ease at which social placements such as religion, race, class, and gender can access the cultural resources of the cemetery. This mode of analysis focuses on the broader aspects of Rojeck's mapping and therefore disregard ideas such as attributive and performative embodiment, habitus, as well as normative coercion and political economy in the initial analysis. Habitus, normative coercion, and political economy, however, are considered in the conclusion and summation of findings

## V. Cultural Map Context Analysis

### i. Colonial Burial (16-18c)

#### *Context*

While Native Americans established North America's first burial practices, today's mainstream burials stem from the traditions of European settlers that came to the continent in the fifteen and sixteen hundreds (Need cite). According to author David Charles Sloan in *The Last Great Necessity*, four types of burials existed in the colonial United States: unmarked burials, potters fields, and churchyard ground and vault burials (Sloan, 13). While unmarked burials and potter's fields were certainly common methods of burial in the early US, this paper is

primarily concerned with both forms of church burials as their influence is more readily seen to this day.

Colonial Church burials stemmed from the Anglican burial traditions of the English. While various religions were represented in early colonial culture, Anglican and its derivative Puritan sect held the most influence (Yalom, 4-5). Therefore, as settlers became more accustomed to their homeland and relations improved with natives, many cities established church cemeteries. Jamestown, was the first of these with a fully operating church and graveyard in place by 1640, thirty six years after the first settler's arrival to the US colonies (Yalom, 4 -5). With high mortality rates and the absence of an undertaker, death was a constant reality for colonial Americans (cite Yalom,) Two philosophical views on death existed during the church cemeteries peak period: death as a fearful moral compass; and death as a joyful resurrection (Yalom, 15). The first view, influenced by the Puritan thought that only a select few would be saved from eternal damnation (Yalom,13) remained the popular view of death until the First great awakening in the 1730's and 40's. Rather than following a strict external authority, the great awakening placed a great emphasis on individual sentiments and experience (Sloan,, 15). Therefore, death became less of an external moral judge and more of a welcoming end.

### *Location*

While churchyard graveyards continue to be used today, their use as the prominent burial form dates from 1640 till the early nineteenth century (Yalom, (4-5). The churches were often placed in developed urban centers/towns (Sloan, 19) and burial was located both in and outside of the church. Other forms of burial existed around churchyard cemeteries including unmarked

graves in less developed areas and other designated cemeteries such as potter's fields, Catholic, and Jewish graveyards (Sloan 13-14).

### *Embodiment*

Religious graveyards, such as cemetery graveyards, hardly ranged more than a few acres. These acres, however, became crowded with numerous graves as populations grew. To accommodate this demand, graveyards were haphazardly placed throughout the graveyard precluding the creation of cemetery walkways. Decorations were also sparse with only a few trees and shrubs dotting the cemetery. Beyond the chaotic layout, cemeteries were open unfenced areas that acted as the sight for markets, fairs, meetings, walks, and occasionally pasture grazing (Sloan, 20). Such openness reflected the closeness of death most colonial Americans felt. Grave markers, especially prior to the great awakening marked death's coming reality with macabre inscriptions such as death's heads, scull and crossbones, scythes, shovels and hourglasses (Yalom, 13-15?) Following the Great Awakening, however, death's depictions on grave markers reflected angelic faces, willows or Grecian urns (Yalom, 16). Burials themselves, ranged from ground to the more elaborate burials in lead vaults underneath the church (Sloan, 22).

### *Emplacement*

The distinction between vault or yard burial was great with the wealthiest, and most prominent members of society's burial being relegated to the church (Yalom, 5) Placement within the cemetery also marked distinction with the higher members of society buried

next to the east wall of the church and members with less distinction located on the north wall, which was “most vulnerable to evil spirits.” Those without any social status were thus relegated to “the uncertain outdoors (Sloan, 19)” Revered religious leaders, statesman, or soldiers also occasionally received collective monuments, documenting their societal importance. (Yalom, 17) Women, however, could not receive such accolade as they remained secondary members of society in relation to their husbands (Yalom, 21). Women and the poor, were not the only members of society that didn’t receive prominent recognition in church cemeteries. In fact, some people were not recognized at all. For example African Americans, Jews and Catholics were all prohibited from burial within the cemetery confines and had to bury elsewhere (Yalom, 29)

## **ii. Rural and Garden cemetery (19<sup>th</sup> c)**

### *Context*

The nineteenth century marks the emergence of the Modernist and Romantic Eras, as well as the Civil War (Gonzales 7; Sloan 51). The effects of the Industrial Revolution, were now in full force and many areas of society, including death-care, became bureaucratized. Thus, death’s presence was removed from the home as professional undertakers began caring for the dead instead of the family (Gonzales 7). This “social distancing” along with Romantic notions about nature’s inviting and positive presence, changed society’s views of both the graveyard and death. Whereas colonial graveyards had acted as common reminder’s of life’s ultimate end, nineteenth century inhabitants, such as Congregationalist minister Timothy Dwight now felt that

urban graveyards now rendered death “too familiar To have any beneficial effect on the heart.” (Yalom, 43) Thus people such as Dwight called for settings that “propelled the spirit above life’s quotidian cares” (Yalom, 43-44). Mortality being one such care, death was now referred to as a form of “rest” and graveyards as “sleeping chamber” or its Greek translation “cemetary”(Sloan 55). Such changes also reflected a growing religious trend toward a greater emphasis on resurrection theology and the ability to commune with god in the afterlife (Yalom, check pg in doc though)

Concerns of disease and overcrowding also influenced the creation of more rural cemeteries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Epidemics such as yellow fever, remained unexplained by the medical technology of the times and many people attributed its spread to the miasma theory. In the miasma theory, disease remains in decomposing bodies for years and spreads to the city’s living inhabitants (Yalom, 42-43) Thus people like New York City’s Board of Health were advocating for the prohibition of urban internments as early as 1806. (Sloan, 35) Thus, disease and the lack of new burial space caused by population growth in cities such as Boston forced the removal of urban graveyards (Yalom, 45).

### *Location*

By 1861, roughly 66 garden cemeteries existed in the United States. Yalom, 46-47 The first city to create a rural cemetery was New Haven Connecticut with its “New Burying ground in 1796. (Sloan, 33) As with all rural cemeteries it was located at the edge of town. While New Haven’s New Burying ground was the first to locate itself outside city limits, Mount Auburn Cemetery located just outside Cambridge, Massachusetts and the city of Boston became

the country's model (Sloan, 44). After its founding in the 1830s, cities across the US such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Atlanta, Milwaukee and Chicago. (Sloan, 44; Yalom 46-47)

### *Embodiment*

The New Haven garden cemetery was considered large for its era with six acres (Sloan, 46). However the model Mount Auburn consisted of seventy-two acres that would later expand to one hundred and thirteen. Thus, the new rural cemeteries had space for new internments as well as a home for a number of relocated burials due to overcrowded crowded cemeteries, worries about contagion, and churches looking to sell their valuable in city real-estate (Yalom, 45). Of those graveyards that remained in the city, a number of caretakers went and straightened the haphazard gravestones from the colonial era and created pathways for the visitors to match more modern cemetery aesthetics (Sloan, 20). The organization of graves also created the impetus for new family plots that would come to mark rural cemetery landscape for years to come. The landscape within garden cemeteries was lush with a large number of trees and carefully cultivated flowers and other greenery. (Yalom, 45-46) Grave markers also took on new prominence within the cemetery. Whereas colonial grave markers had been flat with depictions of death's heads or willows, 19<sup>th</sup> century monuments took on new proportions with elaborate three-dimensional designs. These monuments and new mausoleums also embodied the growing religious emphasis on hope, success, joy and relief with their white marble texture and depictions of angels or small babies (Sloan, 78).

With changing ideologies and technologies, burial practices within the cemetery also changed. Concerns about disease ensured the use of ground vaults (Gonzales 42-43) and the Civil War introduced the technique of lead embalming into the national vocabulary. A process in which the bodily fluids are drained, and preservatives are imposed, embalming allowed deceased soldiers to their families without rotting (Mitford 46-47). Embalming solidified its place in US death culture, however, following the transport of President Lincoln's body to Springfield, Illinois. As Lincoln's body passed through towns and cities, citizens would come to view it and received it so well that many requested their loved ones be embalmed as well (Laderman, 6-8). Since embalming often includes a process of corporal "beautification", or therefore further perpetuated the idea of the cemetery as an eternal resting place as more people began to look as if they were "peacefully sleeping" (Gonzales 43). Cremation also made its first US large-scale appearance in the nineteenth century following the civil war. As with embalming and vaults cremation's supporters viewed it as a sanitary form of disposition. While its supporters also felt that it cremation was a more purified form of burial than the slow decomposition and putrification process that took place in cemeteries, felt that it violated the body. (Yalom, 27)

### *Emplacement*

Those who chose to be cremated or embalmed, signified specific class and ideological distinctions in society. While cremationists tended to belong to groups of social reformers (Sloan, 140-141), detractors such as Catholics, Muslims and Jews tended to be more conservative or have profit incentives for embalmed vault burial like those in the funeral industry (Yalom, 27). Those who were embalmed either remained among the elite or aspired to demonstrate

higher-class distinction (Laderman 6-8). The monument or mausoleum size devoted to the family plot, also signified class distinctions in the cemeteries with Victorian families often spending as much or more than they could afford (Yalom, 27) Beyond the inclusion of family plots, some cemetery's such as New Haven's New Burying Ground, held sections aside for "strangers, negroes, and the poor," (Yalom, 43). The inclusion of African Americans in most cemeteries would remain rare, however, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when institutions were forced to integrate under law (Yalom, 29). Likewise, Catholics, some protestant sects, Jews, Muslims and immigrant groups were excluded from most cemeteries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Yalom, 28-41).

### **iii. Memorial Garden (early 20th)**

#### *Context*

While the social distance of death increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 20<sup>th</sup> century marked its systematic completion. Developments in medicine allowed people to live longer and the rising popularity of hospitals and funeral homes removed all aspects of death from the home (Sloan, 157). The preference for professionalized death care allowed undertakers to streamline what constituted a "proper" funeral and burial and soon undertakers were able to mass-produce burial packages that included embalming, vaults, and ever increasingly expensive coffins. (Gonzales 9-10). This process of minimal family involvement and the viewing of an embalmed body thus became known amongst funeral directors as "grief therapy." Viewing an embalmed body was of particular importance in this process as it allowed mourners to create a beautiful

“memory picture” of the deceased (Mitford 64). According to Gary Laderman, author of *A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-century America*, funeral directors took great pride in their role as the overseers of this process because they believed “the presence of the corpse had incalculable positive effects for the lives of the survivors” and that the embalming process they allowed the living to greet death in a “soft unthreatening way” (Laderman, 130). While this death industry had its detractors, it thrived throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Views on death began to reflect its social distance. Thus, a greater emphasis was placed on the spirit’s transition to the afterlife (Feagan 158) and the subject of corporal decay became taboo (Laderman, 211).

### *Location*

Beyond securing death’s location in the funeral parlor, the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about the creation of a new burial site: the Memorial Park. First created in Glendale, California in 1913, memorial parks took the place of rural and garden cemeteries on the outskirts of town. Forest Lawn, which was the first created, became the template for cemeteries across the US (Sloan, 59). Over six hundred memorial parks existed in The United States by 1935 (Sloan, 160).

### *Embodiment*

While memorial parks included landscape features such as shrubs, trees, and ponds, nature played a significantly different role in the reading of the landscape changed (Yalom, 48).

Whereas lush 19<sup>th</sup> century landscapes meant to console the living, the landscape in memorial parks attempted to remove visible traces of death from the visitor (Sloan, 159; Yalom, 47) Thus grave markers were laid flush to the ground with space only for a full name and life dates (Yalom, 47-48). While this trend was opposite the trend of increased personalization that cemeteries would see in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it showed the social distance of the living and the dead. The distance and control of death could further be seen in the use of advanced technology to create a well-maintained and trimmed suburban landscape (Yalom, 48). The only real reminders of memorial park's service to the dead, then remained in elaborate statues and sporadic family visits. (Sloan,159 and Yalom, 284)

Though the corporal aspects of death diminished, the commercialization of death became more apparent. Office buildings and recreation facilities, and museums were added to the landscapes to provide programming for outside visitors and school (Sloan,160-167). Visitors were encouraged to take tours (Sloan, 168) and non-death related programming like weddings in the park's chapel became common (Yalom, 48). No longer divided into family plots, memorial parks divided sections by themes such as "Whispering Pines," "Graceland" or "The Court of freedom that features the statues *Republic* by Daniel Chester French and *George Washington* by John Quincy Adams Ward in their original form. The choice of artistic form over individual memorialization, along with the fact that memorial parks now limited aesthetic options to specific landscapes or grave markers, now showed that the corporation, not the individual was in charge of death.

### *Emplacement*

Certainly the new cemetery structure placed the funeral industry as the most important entity within the new memorial parks. Christian religious preference could also be seen in burial sections that featured statues of Jesus or a replica of Michelangelo's *David*. As Memorial parks began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many also included racial elusion clauses in their laws, which would eventually be removed following the civil rights movement.

#### **iv. Modern and Green Cemeteries (late 20<sup>th</sup> early 21c)**

##### *Context*

A consumer backlash to the funeral industry began in the 1960's with Jessica Mitford's *The American Way of Death*. The book detailed funeral industry practices such as lying about state laws to trick customers into paying for embalming or significantly upselling caskets (Mitford). While this led to the creation of consumer advocacy laws and the passage of the Federal Trade Commission consumer protection legislation in the 1990's (Laderman, 134), the funeral industry continued to grow during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, three major corporations came to dominate the death landscape, consolidating a large part of the funeral industry in the 1990's: Service Corporation International, Loewen Group, and Stewart Enterprises (Laderman, 179). Some citizens, such as US green burial pioneer Billy Campbell continued to search for other alternatives. Campbell and other green burial enthusiasts felt that conventional burial was over-processed, expensive, often impersonal, and environmentally

unsound. Therefore they sought a way to return the body to the earth and let it recomplete the life cycle in an inexpensive and cathartic way (Feagan 173).

### *Location*

While the location of green cemeteries have since expanded since the 1998 opening of Ramsey Creek Preserve in South Carolin, a study by Marisa C. Gonzales (2009) determined that the majority of green burial supporters today are located in the south (32%) and west (23%) (Gonzales 32). A 2012 comparison of Green Burial Council approved and the total funeral homes in the United States, demonstrates that green funeral homes comprise only .01% of the total market. (“Providers”; Buxbaum). However, recent studies by the International Cemetery Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) and the American Association for Retired People (AARP) have found that roughly 23% of the overall US (ICCFA) and 21% of Americans over fifty find the idea of having a “more environmentally friendly burial appealing (Sehee).

### *Embodiment*

A number of different forms of “green cemeteries” exist. These include conservation cemeteries, in which natural burials and active land restoration occur; dual cemeteries, in which both natural and conventional burial are equally offered; and hybrid cemeteries that are conventional cemeteries with green burial options (Wolf). The conservation cemetery Ramsey Creek, as shown in Ellen Trippler’s documentary *Dying Green*, consists of white church surrounded by a small grassy area that leads into a forest. Within the forest, exists a winding

pathway, off of which the dead are buried. A river also runs through the forest providing some locations with a beautiful place of reflection for the living. The burial practices shown within the Documentary demonstrate a high level of human interaction, with cemetery owner Billy Campbell digging each grave by hand and mourners symbolically covering the grave until maintenance fills the rest (Tripler). Full maintenance standards of natural burial grounds can be found in The Green Burial Council's set of environmental standards on their website (Standards).

Within Ramsey Creek two forms of burial are permitted: natural ground burial, in which the body is placed in a shroud and allowed to decompose without a vault, and cremation. Natural ground burial, in which the body is placed in a shroud and allowed to decompose without a vault, and cremation are the most common. More obscure forms of green burial, such as reef burial or promession, exist. However, these are not representative of the current movement's majority (Gonzales 14). While cremation is not as environmentally friendly as ground burial due to the emission of gasses during the burning of the body, many within the green burial movement consider it to be a form of green burial. What is distinct about green burial cremation, however, is that the cremains do not remain contained but rather return to the earth, either through scattering or burial in a compostable container (Tripler).

### *Emplacement*

Gonzales' 2009 study provides the demographic information for green burial supporters. In her study, she found that the groups with the greatest support for grebe burial were people with an income of less than fifty-thousand dollars a year (58%), had a lower level of education (35% with highest level of education high school diploma), were

female (58%) and between the ages of 50 and 60 (57%). Gonzales also found that support for green burial decreased as those surveyed increased in age.

## **VI. Individual Cemetery Analysis**

### **i. Rock Creek Cemetery**

#### *Context*

Rock Creek Church Cemetery was established following the founding of St. Paul's Episcopal Parish in 1719 on tobacco land. Formal sales began in 1830 and the cemetery remains to this day with an endowment of thirty million dollars. Cemetery Manager Diane Glen knew little else about the cemetery's history. She did state however, that the history could be found in the cemetery rules and that the cemetery was hoping to create a brochure.

#### *Location*

Glenn stated that she was unaware if Rock Creek followed a cemetery model, however the time of its establishment in the 1700's puts its historic location as an 18<sup>th</sup> century church cemetery while its public sales starting in 1830 also place it in the realm of garden cemeteries. Physically, it is located at the intersection of Rock Creek Church Rd. & Webster St. NW, DC, with most visitors entering from the main gate located on Allison St.. No longer surrounded by

tobacco, the cemetery is bordered by an assortment of two story homes. Five other cemeteries exist in the DC area: Glenwood, Prospect Hill, one on Lincoln Rd., Congressional (church), and Oak hill (church). While beautiful, Glenn stated that Oak Hill differed the most from Rock Creek because the limited space and burial options (she stated only side walk crypt). On the other hand, Glenn said that Glenwood shared the most similarities, though she did not specify why. As to the cemetery's relationship with funeral homes, she stated that they worked with a number of cemeteries within a 15-mile radius on regular basis. The majority, she said came from Maryland and DC, while the rest came from Virginia

### *Embodiment*

Of Rock Creek's 86 acre cemetery, Glenn stated that over 50,000 plots have been sold and that the cemetery probably has another 10-15 years of use. When asked if families mentioned any aesthetic preferences, she stated that people want trees because of the shade they offer and that people often wanted to be buried on a hill. She said it was hard to accommodate either preference, however, because of tree root growth and the presence of a natural spring underneath the cemetery's hills. The cemetery permits all forms of grave markers including those made in the flat styles. According to Glenn, monuments markers are the most popular in the cemetery. From observation, then the cemetery's rolling hills are dotted with a hodgepodge of short, tall, skinny, and fat monuments that resting upon the neatly trimmed grass. A number of landscaped areas exist including a pond and a line of trees that follow part of the cemetery's rot iron fence. Maintenance assumedly involves mowing as well as burial preparation, which Glenn said consisted of backhoe digging.

As Glenn stated, the landscape is divided into a number of non-designated sections with the exception of a cremation garden and columbarium that are located near the pond. Glenn noted however, that scattering of ashes or burial of cremains was permitted throughout the cemetery. Three churches, St. John's Russian orthodox, St Nicholas's Russian Church, and Latvian Lutheran have also purchased large sections of the cemetery, unofficially marking them as their own. Burial began in the section closest to the church and spread from there. Because the concentration of early graves, it is still common for cemetery workers to come across brick vaults when someone new is buried in sections A, B, or C.

While conventional ground burial was offered since the cemetery's founding, the cemetery adopted the use of Mausoleums in the early 1900's and cremation in 1930. Conventional burial remains the cemetery's most common form of burial with a "huge trend going toward cremation." When asked if she expected to see a rise in green burial for cultural reasons, she stated that she thought that it would become popular elsewhere but not in DC. She believed this rise in popularity would correlate with the eight-year trend indicating a decline in embalming, three day mourning periods; and traditional two-day viewings/funerals/. Glenn could not explain the decline in embalming but attributed the shift away from long funerals to cost (prices of funerals have risen from five thousand dollars to ten-fifteen thousand.

### *Emplacement*

Rock Creek pulls from a large diversity of clientele. While it began as a white cemetery, the racial makeup of the cemetery has shifted with the progression of time and neighborhood demographics. Name noted that while whites cremate, a growing number of black families are

also choosing to cremate. Just as the cemetery enjoys racial diversity, it also buries a wide range of incomes. Name said that this was especially helpful in “keeping the cemetery going” and that wealthier people tended to like things “snappy.” The cemetery also has a wide variety of religions represented, despite the strong presence of St. John’s, St Nicholas, and Latvian Lutheran. Name did note, however that burial practices were different amongst orthodox clientele because the Orthodox Church does not permit cremation. Thus, name said, orthodox who did choose to cremate had to look for another person to facilitate the burial, as an Orthodox priest will not preside. Name also mentioned that the catholic ban on cremation had been lifted and a subsequent cremation ceremony had occurred.

As for location in the cemetery, there were no notable distinctions between sections except for the three religious groups located in sections along the fence. Within sections, however, people still purchased family lots, with a tendency toward smaller numbers than the past. Whereas Glenn noted that family lots used to include 10-12 burial plots, they now often only included two. Name noted that many of the customers had roots elsewhere such as California, New York and Austin, and suggested that this shift had been caused by increased mobility and familial separation.

## **ii. Oak Hill Cemetery**

*Context*

Oak Hill cemetery opened in 1849 through an act of congress championed by William Corcoran. While Corcoran would come to be known as an active philanthropist the purchase of Oak Hill's land from the descendants of Mary Washington and the creation the cemetery was his first real venture into philanthropy. Upon it's opening, the cemetery experienced an influx of transfer internments from cemeteries that had begun to be overtaken by the growing city of Washington DC. Therefore, a number of notable revolutionary war soldiers were buried within the cemetery. While the number of notable internments has grown since its start, cemetery superintendent David Jackson stated that a full list can be found on [Oakhillcemeterydc.org](http://Oakhillcemeterydc.org) as well as in the cemetery's brochure. While the cemetery is overseen by the superintendent, it is run by a board of volunteer managers from the surrounding community. In total, the cemetery hires seven employees: the superintendent, secretary, foreman, and four groundskeepers. The number of employees has dropped since the founding, as technology has made grounds keeping easier.

### *Location*

With a chapel designed by James Renwick, architect of the Smithsonian Castle and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and a founding in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the cemetery is historically located as a Victorian church cemetery. Physically, however, it is located in a residential area at the highest point of Georgetown, one of the wealthiest sections in DC. As Jackson recently began working at Oak Hill, he was unable to answer what other cemeteries were located in the area. He noted, however, that Oak Hill primarily works with two funeral homes from the area. While possible, outside funeral homes were uncommon as Oak Hill uses

their own custom fit burial vaults, and the funeral homes would not profit from the sale of the vault.

### *Embodiment*

What originally began as fifteen acres, Oak Hill now spans 25. This expansion occurred soon after the cemetery was built, when a neighbor “made a deal” with the cemetery. While Jackson does not know the amount of plots per acre, he stated that the cemetery has roughly 19,500 people interred in it. As of today, only seven to eight hundred plots remain available, yet the cemetery hopes to expand that number by adding more forms of burial options in the future. As for aesthetic preferences amongst customers, Jackson said he had not observed any. However, as the cemetery keeps in its Victorian image, it has a set of visual guidelines for monuments and markers. For example, the cemetery does not permit any grave decorations inconsistent with the Victorian era, such as laser etching, and has size requirements for certain sections of the cemetery.

While many of the sections within the cemetery are simply divided into family plots, forms of internment are generally grouped together. Sections such as the Lousie Home boarder’s section, the Corcoran, and Davidson sections are also named for notable internments within the section. Observation shows a wide variety of grave markers from tall obelisks, flat lying ledger stones, elegant mausoleum entrances and ordinary headstones to engraved side walk crypt covers and blank panels waiting for columbaria inscription. The terrain of the cemetery consists sloping hillside that flattens out at the cemetery’s base of Rock Creek. The hillsides are anything but bare as the grave markers take a prominent roll with shrubberies, flowers, and myriad trees

intersperse throughout the landscape. The strong presence of flora along with the elegant and often unique grave markers, gives the cemetery a stately yet, comforting feel. At the same time, the age of the cemetery shows, with many of the oldest grave markers showing signs of weather damage and minimal upkeep. These signs of wear, however, Jackson attributed to the fact that relatives were responsible for grave upkeep and that by now, many of the family members no longer remained in the area or had been deceased for some time.

Some machines such as weed eaters and string trimmers are used however. When preparing the land for burial, maintenance can easily remove and replace plant materials such as sod as a fully developed cemetery. Such removal, is less necessary than newer cemeteries, however because most of Oak Hill's burials are under walkpaths or in columbaria. While more mechanized than the 1800's, much of the cemetery's maintenance practices require more intensive labor than those of modern cemetery. For example, the cemetery does not own a backhoe tractor, or riding mowers due to the terrain and high density of graves. Therefore all graves must be dug by hand. While this makes Oak hill's maintenance practices greener than modern cemeteries, it is a result of necessity rather than choice. superintendant last name thus stated that he was "trying to find ways to mechanize" the maintenance practices like leaf removal to "make it more efficient."

As noted, burial options within the cemetery include conventional ground, mausoleum, and crypt burial. While space in these forms of burial are limited to the general public (most left are family plots), the cemetery is innovating ways to meet the demand for cremation and extend the cemetery's working life. Thus the cemetery recently installed a columbaria that will fit between four and five hundred cremains. Currently the cemetery is also undergoing a process of creating sidewalk crypts for conventional burial and cremains. Eventually, it has plans to build a

large crypt underneath the cemetery's ellipse along with a scattering path. Cremation's presence in the cemetery began in the early 1900's and Jackson stated that it was "an early adopter" of cremation in order to meet customer's demands. While Jackson did not mention when mausoleum burial began, he did note that conventional ground burial began with the opening of the cemetery in 1849. The vaults used with original burial were made of brick and mortar, while the cemetery has switched to the use of plastic or concrete.

While many of maintenance practices within Oak Hill and the developing cremain path could be considered green, Jackson does not see Oak Hill as green cemetery. While he said they did not "offer any green interment options" they had offered ash scattering and that the cemetery was considering creating a "green path" on the north border of the cemetery that would serve as a scattering area. While he said it would take a while before it came to fruition he said the cemetery recognized that cremain scattering was "becoming the way of the world" and that the cemetery "ought to have a way to respond to that sort of thing." He did note, however, that in his five months at Oak Hill, no one had contacted him about desiring a green burial. He did note however, that this lack of contact may have been influenced by the popular perception that the cemetery is already full.

### *Emplacement*

While Jackson did not mention any trends in clientele's race, the cemetery is located in a predominantly white area. Jackson likewise did not mention the income range of customers. The presence of civil and revolutionary war notables suggests however that at least in its early days, the cemetery remained a fairly upper-class domain. As for religious preferences, the cemetery allows all faiths to bury there, yet Jackson noted that Catholics were now permitting cremation.

As noted earlier, the cemetery is divided into family plots marked with bronze square markers. Family members usually desire to be next to the closest kin. Differences between demographics amongst the buried can then be understood by the type of burial type, section, and size/upkeep markers. Families buried in the mausoleums show the greatest wealth while the Grecian styled Corcoran family tomb shows the family's power status. On the other hand the simpler gravesites of the Lousie Home boarder's section connote the fact that the section was donated for lower income patrons. The size of marker also connotes wealth and tall obelisk monuments were a popular form of demonstrating wealth in the Victorian era as they could then be easily made using new technology. Markers that showed more wear, also demonstrated the age or current location of family members, as their wear noted an absence of family care.

### **iii, Duck Run**

#### *Context*

Duck Run cemetery received its license from Rockingham County Board of Supervisors in March of 2012. While two members of the board initially disapproved due to concern about water table safety, the cemetery was approved after a biological and geological study showed that the land was perfect for its intended use. Under its licensing the cemetery must follow all Virginia rules and regulations as well as the guidelines set by the Green Burial Council. The cemetery is so new that it has yet to complete its current and first advertising campaign. As cemetery operator Glen Jennelle jokingly noted the cemetery wanted to get all of its "ducks in a row" before going public. The idea for a green cemetery came after cemetery owner and

president Kenneth Kyger noticed a number of his funeral home customers asking why caskets and vaults were necessary and if embalming was required by state law (it's not). Kenny had been one of the first people in the area to open a crematorium in the 1980's, when less than 1% of the population practiced cremation. Thus, Jennelle stated that Duck Run Cemetery was another product of Kyger's ability to read trends.

Beyond the cemetery's purpose of meeting a growing demand, the fact that the cemetery tries to reduce burial's ecological impact remains important to its founding. Jennelle stated that he was particularly concerned with water conservation that the cemetery's driving concept is total land reclamation. Duck Run also hopes to become a center for environmental education and recreation, making it a vibrant community asset.

### *Location*

Duck Run prides itself on the fact that it does not follow a cemetery model. In fact, several times during the interview and site visit, Jennelle mentioned how Duck Run hopes to become a model for future green cemeteries. The cemetery management did, however use website and report information from natural burial grounds UK as a sounding board. As Jennelle noted, the UK is currently at the "forefront" of natural burial. Duck Run, however is at the forefront of the US green burial movement and is located in Penn Laird, VA, part of the Shenandoah Valley. This piece of land, which was formerly a dairy farm, was chosen because it is in a landlocked area that will most likely remain undeveloped for a long time. In fact, the cemetery's land is surrounded by both the Allegany and Blue Ridge mountain ranges.

Duck Run's neighbors, including a turkey farm that visitors pass on the way into the cemetery, were initially skeptic about the prospect of the cemetery located next door because noise and misconceptions about green burial, these misconceptions have changed as the cemetery becomes more engrained in the community and educates it about green burial practices. The other cemetery models in the area are small church, community cemeteries, and family cemeteries. While Jennelle estimates four thousand cemeteries in the state of Virginia, he believes there are between one hundred and two hundred cemeteries within a fifteen-mile radius. As for Duck Run's relationship with the funeral homes in the area Jennelle said they had amicable relationships and that management had given tours to interested funeral homes in order to show them what green burial looked like. Since modern funeral homes are generally not supplied with equipped to handle green burials, Duck Run has created a service of stocking necessary materials such as shrouds and non-formaldehyde based embalming fluids so the funeral homes don't have to.

### *Embodiment*

While the cemetery has ample land devoted to burial (113 acres), only a handful of cremains have been interred or scattered. Eventually, the cemetery desires to have around six hundred graves per acre. This number is significantly less than the 1,000-1,200 graves per acre in a conventional cemetery and Jennelle estimates that the cemetery will be full in about 100 years. Since customers are usually unfamiliar with green burial, Jennelle noted they don't tend to have aesthetic preferences. This may change, however, as the cemetery expands beyond the burial section located at its entrance. To meet it goal of land reclamation, the cemetery hired a graduate

from Clemson University to design a representation of what the cemetery would look like if it had remained untouched by humans. The representation depicts a forested area and the cemetery is currently undergoing a process that will cause the cemetery to look like an arboretum with over 200 varieties of trees. Native plants such as milkweed and black-eye susan have already been installed and the cemetery's plans to plant a number of native trees along the cemetery's drive as the next phase of development.

In order to make the cemetery look "as natural... as possible" all materials on or within the burying grounds must be one hundred percent biodegradable and blend in with the natural settings. Headstones therefore consist of flat fieldstones and cedar stumps covered in beeswax. Markers may be engraved with the deceased's name and dates of life and those who wish to forgo a headstone may plant native flowers on the sight. Visitors who wish to decorate the grave may also plant native flower but artificial decorations such as swirling lights commonly found in other cemeteries are prohibited. To keep burial's impact at a minimum, all internments are carried to their gravesites on a large wagon. All machines that Duck Run uses for maintenance, such as backhoes and excavators, are also low impact machines with the use of floatation tires and wide tracks to avoid ruts and landscape changes when operated. The use of herbicides is also limited with regulation on how often they can be used provided by the Green Burial Council. Wildlife conservation and upkeep are also important to the cemetery's maintenance practices, and unwanted animals such as coyotes must be removed through the use of live traps.

While the general location, depth, and number of graves have been determined by biological factors, the cemetery's layout was designed by a Kansas City architect. The layout includes a stone pavilion that overlooks the current burial area and a large barn where maintenance equipment is stored. Within the burial area are a number of mowed pathways and

grave sections that will eventually be decorated with flowers, trees, and shrubs. The burial section also includes two unique sections devoted to cremain scattering and renewable graves. Renewable graves are a concept that is currently in practice in the United Kingdom. In renewable graves, bodies are interred in a circular fashion with each interment located next to the most recent grave. While those in the UK typically surround a church, Duck Run's renewable graves will be housed in a circular patch of grass. New internments must wait until the body has fully decomposed before reuse of a grave. While a body typically decomposes within fifty years, Duck Run has chosen a span of seventy-five years for the reusable graves.

Despite the fact that most of the cemetery's visitors have liked the concept of renewable graves, most state that they personally would not like to be buried in one. Jennelle attributes this to the fact that Duck Run is the first cemetery to offer this in the United States and that the trend will most likely catch on once people become more familiar with the idea. Ground internment, with a shroud or wicker or bamboo casket, also has yet to be used by patrons. As the local cremation rate is between 50 and 52 percent, internments that the cemetery has completed in its short life are either cremain burial or scattering.

As far as embodying Duck Run's other goal as an outdoor recreation and education sight, several things have occurred since its founding. Hikers have come to explore the areas large grounds and a local boy scout troop has already camped on the site. Jennelle was also pleased that the cemetery will partner with local universities who need a place to do biological studies.

### *Emplacement*

Duck Run's clientele come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds with most patrons coming from the Harrisonburg area and Northern Virginia. As compared to the clientele from the north, local patrons are more conservative. Therefore the cemetery houses a range of ideological backgrounds and religions. Jennelle stated that all of the major religions were already represented in the cemetery through internment of plot purchase and that Duck run will accommodate religious burial practices such as having a body face the East so that Christians can see the Jesus's second coming. As Jennelle stated the cemetery aspires to be a "peaceful place" where anyone can "come out and bury...loved ones and pay respect." Beyond the inclusion and accommodation of different demographics, Duck Run also tries to accommodate other customer needs. As many are not familiar with green burial, most of this accommodation is answering questions on the subject. When asked if people had specific preferences, Jennelle answered that most people didn't have preferences such as being buried high on a hill, etc., but just wanted to avoid embalming, vaults, and costly grave markers. Finally, Jennelle noted that while he expected the majority of people interested in green burial to come from a younger age group (had grown up with ideas such as earth preservation and recycling). However, Jennelle said that older conservatives made up the majority of the property buyers. He believed that this would positively correlate to their children burying there as well.

#### **iv. Steelmantown Cemetery**

*Context*

While Steelmantown cemetery opened in the early 1700's, its operation as Green Burial Council approved cemetery began in the 2000s. Prior its current operation as a natural burial ground it served as a community cemetery that had fallen under poor maintenance practices in the previous' owner management. Current owner Edward Bixby therefore approached the owner to see if he could fix and maintain the cemetery as his brother was buried there. As the former owner was in his old age, he transferred the cemetery to Bixby's name. Since most of the cemetery practices already qualified, as green practices Bixby became council approved and has been operating since then.

#### *Location*

In historical context, the cemetery is an 18<sup>th</sup> century church cemetery that now operates as a modern day natural burial ground. It is located in the southern tip of New Jersey in Steelmantown. Bixby estimated that there are a dozen cemeteries offering traditional burial and layout in the area around Steelmantown Cemetery. He also noted that "Funeral directors have been nothing but receptive and certainly willingly offer [green burial] to any family with interest."

#### *Embodiment*

Steelmantown offers several hundred plots on their ten-acre lot. Aesthetically customers have not mentioned any preferences. As the cemetery ownership wants to keep it in a "natural

state” indigenous plantings and landscaping occurs. Maintenance practices surrounding burial therefore ensure that all plant life is carefully removed and that the soil is separated by type so that everything can return to the same formation that it existed in before burial. Within the 10 acres, one acre is devoted to chapel graveyard burial, while nine contain woodland burial. All burials within the cemetery are natural burials and have been since the cemetery’s founding roughly three hundred years ago. Sales are once again increasing as more people become aware of the green burial option available to them.

Bixby believes that this desire for green burial will further rise as people “experience the ritual/service” involved with the green burial tradition. Bixby noted that these services/rituals provide a “healing and cathartic way to accept death and embrace life.”

### *Emplacement*

Bixby noted that the cemetery serves “people of all faiths and races” and that no majority demographic trends exist. He also said that families don’t express any cultural preferences such as a desire for family plots.

## **VII. Description of Findings**

This section summarizes the major trends found in the analysis above and citations for this information can be found in their original descriptions

### *Context*

Since the colonial era, the United States has undergone significant population growth causing an increase in urban metropolises. Along with population growth, medical advances have played a significant role in the way that US citizens encounter death. Medical technologies have decreased the death rate and also created more sterilized forms of burial. While the miasma theories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proved to be false, the continued use of conventional vaults demonstrate that the population wants to secure the living from the dead. The industrialization of death and its separation has made conventional death increasingly commercialized and the use of embalming has secured a taboo of the decomposing in many US citizens' minds.

However, the consumer backlash of the 1960's, the rise of the cremation rate and the birth of the green burial movement seeks to challenge the most commercialized aspects of death by demonstrating that a proper burial can include less resources and have a smaller environmental impact. Pioneers like Campbell and Glenn Jennelle at Duck Run, however, have to dispel many of the misconceptions about green burial to show that it can be sanitary and fulfilling to the earth and humans at the same time.

## **Location**

As colonial burials spread from the eastern seaboard to the west coast, early graves were often unmarked. However, as settlements became more secure and their populations grew more colonial style graveyard were formed. Eventually, though the population growth and spread of disease would move burial grounds to the rural and suburban parts of the city. Thus garden/rural cemeteries and later Memorial Parks took their place in the cultural landscape. Today, natural burial grounds remain on the outskirts of town in natural settings.

## **Embodiment**

Cemetery size has greatly increased since the colonial era, as more people need to be accommodated. The interviews show, however, that while conventional cemeteries have high densities, natural burial grounds are attempting to reduce the number of plots per acre. Common throughout all forms of cemetery embodiment, is the growing importance and changing perceptions of nature. Therefore while only a few shrubs or trees existed in colonial graveyards, natural burial grounds now try to highlight and restore nature's features. In this restoration, however, the larger headstones of the colonial era and 19<sup>th</sup> century have become hidden in ordinary field stones. This depersonalization of the grave, however, is similar to that of the flat stones of the memorial park. Showing that individuality of the grave, may not be as important as it once was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Emplacement**

While cemeteries have historically shown class, race, and religious differences amongst the dead either through grave markers, exclusion principals, or religious symbols, green burial's emphasis on the landscape makes most of these less notable.

## **VIII. Limitations of Study**

This study included a number of limitations due to time constraints, the size of the green burial movement, and the availability of information from interviewees. The time constraints on this study included a semester period for research, analysis, and writing, in addition to further coursework. The small amount of literature available on green burial and number of providers also limited analysis for the literature review and the study's sample size. The sample size, along with the availability of cemetery owners and the amount of information they had access to, severely limited the results for the quantitative analysis. Thus the only quantitative data available on cemetery maintenance came from White Haven Memorial. This lack of data shows that further studies need to be pursued once the number of dual burial providers increases or through another form of analysis.

## **IX. Conclusion**

This paper culminates a series of research projects documenting the cultural significance of the Green Burial Movement. The study completed was endorsed by the Green Burial Council and completed at American University.

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Appendix

## Qualitative Questions

- 1. When was this cemetery established?**
- 2. Why did you decide to establish this cemetery?**
- 3. How did you choose this piece of land?**
- 4. What layout does the cemetery follow? Why was this chosen?**
- 5. How many cemeteries are in this area (how big an area: town, city, region?) and how are they different from or similar to yours?**
- 6. Are the family cemeteries green?**
- 7. Did you follow a model of a cemetery elsewhere?**
- 8. What forms of internment do you offer?**
- 9. How did you prepare the land for burial? For instance, in woodland burials, carefully removing then replanting uncommon plants;**
- 10. How long has each form of internment been offered?**
- 11. What form of internment is the most common?**
- 12. Have you noticed this number changing over time?**
- 13. I recognize this is a subjective question and wonder if you notice any demographic patterns (class, gender, ethnicity) among your patrons and their choice of internment? (If both green and conventional offered, are the demographics different or the similar?)**
- 14. What kind of cultural values do families mention when planning their burials (like do they want to be buried next to their mother)?**
- 15. What kind of markers do you use and why?**
- 16. What kind of aesthetic preferences do families mention to you.**
- 17. Insight as to why?**
- 18. Based on your long-standing cemetery involvement, do you expect to see an increase in green burials for cultural reasons?**
- 19. What is your relationship with the funeral homes in the area?**
- 20. How many acres is the cemetery?**
- 21. How many plots per acre?**

## Rock Creek Church Cemetery

A lot of people ask us if we have certain sections for certain folks but here we are right here did you come in rock Creek Church Road?

*Mere Yeah are actually I came in on Allison Street*

Right there most people use our main gate.

We have two Russian churches and when they come in they buy 100 graves at a time bc they sell them to the parishioners to keep them all together. Down here is where the chapel is and that St. John's. it's Russian orthodox. Section 3, this is all St. Nicholas Russian church. And we also have Latvian Lutheran. We ain't spelling that right... you've got to correct that.

Meredith: its ok

There's only three specific... there's Latvian Lutherans here too, under LL.... The others are all different religions

Meredith And is it laid out by type of burial or is it?

We have certain areas that are just cremation

M okay

But we allow cremation anywhere in the cemetery

M ok

Down near our pond is a cremation Garden And all that means is the grave is a 12 x 12 verses Your 3 foot wide 10 feet long. We have columbarium's that are just for urns we have a lot of those throughout the cemetery too.

Meredith: do you also have Mazza Liam's?

We have a lot of mausoleums, they are all privately owned. See these little boxes, these are all Mazza Liam's. We have no public mausoleum

Mok. And then when was the cemetery established?

1719

M 1719, ok and then what was why was it that the cemetery should be established? Do you know?

For ours the church was put here. This was all tobacco fields and things it started out like section a is the oldest they started church burials there then they went to section B. C. We're getting ready to to a history, you'd think with all of this we'd have a history brochure but we don't/I'm going to look at at copy of the rules and regulations because I think it says in that maybe. We've just been tlakin about this recently too. So 1830 is when they started selling it

M and then I already asked you what forms of interment you offer and then when you are preparing the land for burial is there a certain procedure that you follow

Well when they call.. someone makes a call and dhow many other cemeteries are in this area and how are they different or similar?

All I know is there's group Glenwood I don't know if you've been there off Lincoln Road. And I can't give you account I know there's one area, there's Prospect Hill, there's one little area where there's three little church ones together I'm not sure where that is but it's all towards Lincoln Road and that area

Meredith and they're all church cemeteries?

And there's congressional and Oak Hill and those are the only ones in DC.

Meereidht : ok And would you say that they are similar to your cemetery or different?

Glenwood I say is very similar to us Oak Hill I think Oak Hill is beautiful but they only have cryptss left, side walk crypts. So they are not a lot I don't think like us at all burial wise

Meredith: yeah okay.And then when the cemetery was created did it follow a model of a cemetery somewhere else or was it ?

I couldn't tell you that. When thisis church this church was very well be back in the day. We used to own A place called St. Paul's Episcopal Church they used to own Fort Lincoln Cemetery on Bladensburg Road. They used to own mount comfort Cemetery in Virginia.

Meredith: oh wow, that;s huge

and then they sold it to the corporated Owned. we're not corporate owned but they are. They sold to steelwork corporation so that's how they made their money for their endowments and things.

M: and then, actually just curious how is your endowment run is it like a board or?

Right now we are only about 30 million for us now

oes a funeral.. we got so many funerals coming in we are old school (we don't know) (compared to) how other people do it. Everythin We still have is all paper. everybody has a lot folder... everybody in section books, and Then an internment book so we are old-fashioned

Meredith: it's okay.

Like someone calls and gives me all the information for a burial and then I pulled a lot folder that shows us the actual lot. Then we have to actually draw it up for the men outside And they dig it.

M and do they Dig it by hand or do they use a backhoe?

Backhoe. Yeah no very I've only seen a handful Is and Doug. That's because they can't get into a spot or something like that.

MOk. And then do they also use burial vaults here?

Yeah They use a minimum is a concrete liner or they can buy a water resistant vault. They have to have one or the other. Just as the cemetery rule not a DC rule.

MHow long has that been in place? The cemetery rule of

Ever since... we have records if they didn't have vaults and liners actually the graves were bricked.

MReally wow

So we have bricked graves and a lot of those we'll still find. They are in ABC and D

MOk

So wer'e' still finding brick graves

Mwow I've never heard that one before

That would take forever.

MThat *would* take forever. You got to let it dry and

Yeah and they had to be ready in two days or something and I don't know how they did all that.

MWow. And then with the different forms of internment how long have each of them and offered? Do you have a timeline of like cremation or 50 years or

Cremation I've seen it go far back as as 1930 which was pretty uncommon but I do think that we had some

Wow and then mausoleums those

Those were all early 1900sthat are here

Ok and typical burial since the beginning?right?

Say that again.

Like typical burial like ground burial

Since, oh yeah

Yeah, and then what form of interment would you say is most common here

Ground burial still full body burials. We're seeing a huge trend going towards cremation. But we're still the majority is full body burial.

And then I recognize this next one is sort of a subjective question but I was wondering if you notice any demographic patterns among your patrons and their choices of interment?

Busbars before we used to be all we used to mostly white burialst. hat's what the neighborhood was but that's changed and now we have the black funeral (something parentheses) 8:15 Afro-American whatever you want to call that the shift is going toward cremation which you never saw not even 10 years ago. It's all going to cremation.

M okay

The Russian orthodox they very rarely will cremate. If they do cremate the priest will not come out

M really?

They have to get somebody else to do the service.

Wow

So theyre pretty much like old fash--they're still like Orthodox like Catholics wouldn't allow cremation but now they do.. But it depends on what kind of minister you have and some will not even allow the urn in the church still. So it depends on who the priestesses.

MOk well what kind of cultural values do family members mentioned to you when they're planning their burials? Amazon the lines of I would like to be buried next to my mother or I really want to be very certain kind of cemetery or something like that

Not most people have their family lots. Most people do try to stay with their mom father kids or grandkids. We have a lot of lots like that.

Ok

But you can see the shift, way back in the day most people buy 10 to 12 Graves for the whole family. Most people are buying one grave for two people because families live around any longer. Because everyone's moving over the place. We have a lot of business that comes from California New York Austin it's incredible.

M wow yeah DC is a very happening place

It is and I (aaron?) just can't believe it. I sell a lot of stones to and the stonemasons can't get over how many people we deal with.

Yeah. How many people do you deal with on average like in a week or so?

Burial we almost do one a day but like yesterday I probably had like 12 families in here it was, it was just crazy but it can be 12 but it all depends and I do believe in a full moon but it just depends

Meredith Laughs

It does happen

Meredith There you go and back to your markers is there a certain type of marker that you use or allow?

We allow all types . It depends on what section you choose and do you want to have a flat marker vs a monument. Most people would like to have a monument. That means anything that sits up.

And then do you notice any sort of aesthetic preferences that families mention about the cemetery or what that

Trees. Everyone wants trees.

Every one wants trees. Ok

And trees are not your friend. Their roots are awful. The limbs always fall

Do you, do you think, do you have insight into why people want trees?

Just pretty. Everyone likes shade. I don't know. Everyone also says, well I'd love to have a tree, well everyone would. But we can't do that.

Yeah

And hills. Everyone wants to be on a hill. They think that the water runs drains off there. It's not always true because there's a lot of natural springs that go through here so we could be on the high spot and there's so much water you can't believe it .

Wow

Do they feed into the Potomac or?

I don't know it's funny

Huh. Interesting and then I know you already sort of mentioned this but do you expect to see an increase in green burials with your knowledge of the death culture around here or death industry culture. Do you see do you expect to see a rise in them or do you expect it to stay away from dC?

I don't think it will happen a lot in dc. I expect it to be popular somewhere else Does anyone on MD do any? I get calls about that but don't even know where to turn to

There is a cemetery called duck run down in VA. It's about a two and a half hour drive from here so. And there's one up in NJ and that's it right now

I think that a lot of people are going to turn to that. Cause a lot of people don't want to embalm anymore,. Everyone's getting away from it. Well, traditionally 2 day viewing, then your funeral, you know these big 2 day receptions. We don't have it anymore.

Yeah. And so what are people shifting toward? People are doing viewing one hour before the service if any

Ok

And then everything is done in one day. There is no 3 day mourning or that any thing.

When did that change?

I'd say probably at least within the last 8 years.

Ok

Yep

And do you think its cost (she says it's cost at the same time)

I think it's cost

Because funeral homes, Between us and the funeral homes you are talking a lot of money. Everyone used to be able to do a nice traditional funeral for 5,000. Now you are talking 10-15 now. And that's just the funeral home

Wow

It's a lot of money

Yeah. And do you think the decrease in the demand for embalming is definitely part of that or would you say its

Just people have gotten out of it, people . I don't know why people have gotten out of the viewing part of it. They'd rather just have a memorial service or things you don't have to rush.

M yeah interesting. And then with the funeral homes in the area what's your relationship with them do you..

We have quite a few that come all the time and the majority of those are probably within 15 miles from here. A lot from Maryland and DC. There are quite a few Virginia ones that come also.

and then how many acres is rock Creek?

86.

86 ok.

And then how many pots per acre do you normally choose to have?

Plots per acre? I couldn't even tell you that.

Ok.

Laughs

That's totally fine

How many plus breaker? I don't, I don't even know! Hm I couldn't even tell you.

Yeah. Do you know how many plus you have right now?

Not really. Uh uh we have the computer I think they show maybe I mean I'd have to double check but maybe 50,000 I hear now. We figure we at least have 10 to 15 more years without doing anything to sell still. I like we're now, we are still taking out old carriage

Roads and adding graves and since cremations on the rise and were adding columbarium's we are always adding.

Oh well. Well those were basically the group of qualitative questions that I had.

Okay

So yeah Thank you.

If you ever have any questions it seems like Maguires would talk to you., or GAulers There's a lot of people like Collins in Maryland I would want to talk about types of burials or how they think we are shifting. That's who I would go to.

Yeah actually I was in a class last semester we went to dollars as one of our field trips

I used to work there 23 years ago

. Oh wow. It's incredible

Oh yeah. It's massive. You pay top. It's the most expensive one that we have in DC.

I can imagine.

Oh yeah it's. Just to walk in and it's probably about \$5000 just walk in the door

Laughs.

People don't blink an eye!

Yeah. What would you say the average income ranges for the people that use Rockcreek would you say that dollars Woodberry here or

We have all types. It's so funny we have all salary wise. We have people that have no money to millions come here.

Okay. Wow. That is unique.

Yeah it's nice.

Yeah

Not to have to deal with all the money all the time. Laughs

Yeah

(whispers) because they like that like that. Snaps fingers.

Okay. What is the most interesting burial you have seen?

Oh my God I couldn't even tell you that. I have no idea. I've been doing this , I've been here 23 years so I couldn't tell you there's just so many it's just so crazy.

Yeah how did you get into this profession.

Hello since I was a little girl I always wanted to be a mortician. So I went and got license for that. And then I worked at Gallers and then I worked at flex and *not sure. And then they got me to come here. That you know them coming from dollars to do very a lot and they needed someone for sales they got me to come here.*

*Enter oh wow. .*

*It was better hours better money. When you are at a funeral home is 365 days a year 24 hours a day. They never close*

Would you just be on call the whole time.  
you would be on call all the time. Of course when I worked there we would work shifts.  
There was someone there all the time. Now they don't do that you are on call

yeah that's intense

Yeah I remember how are two ergotic dollars was talking about is that it been a mortician and how that was made everything crazy in their family and

Their holiday stink and there's just no calm ever.

Wow

People don't realize that.Well it's like being at a hospital. they never close our ports never close

Yeh  
It's also in people think about their career you gotta have someone tell you that before you get into that laughs

Always working.

## Oak Hill

oice two        Melissa do you know how many family plots there were in the original layout?is that number somewhere

pause

Melissa Not really. I mean..

cause there all various sizes and shapes and everything

Melissa yeah and then you know so and so. Mr and Mrs. Smith could have bought a lot and then it becomes a family lot eventually and people contact their descendants and everything. It's a little harder to pin down. Ella, I think I'm -going to ask Ella about that. There are some family plots like Hazel Basil? Mausoleum that obviously were for families and so on and so forth

Ok. Alright well, let me go through your list here and all. So we are recording

Meredith. ok

Cool.

MeredithL yes we are

Oak Hill cemetery was started in 1849, it was set up by William Corcoran who was the same Corcoran as the Corcoran art gallery and all those sorts of things. He was a great philanthropist in the city of Washington. This was his first large philanthropic effort, he bought the land from the descendants of Mary Washington and went to Congress and established the business operating entity of Oak Hill cemetery on this land, hired an engineer to lay it out and create the plots and it's on a hill so it's all terraced and that sort of thing. all that was done and built over the successive years. And then he hired James Renwick the architect who the guy who did the castle at the Smithsonian, St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and so on and so forth. He did a lot of buildings in that time. Renwick designed our chapel and this gate entering here and the iron fence that goes across front boundary of the cemetery. So he set all this up and and it operates as a not-for-profit corporation. There's a board of managers who are volunteers from the community who oversee the cemetery. I am the superintendent and work for those folks. And we have seven employees, myself and Melissa here in the office, and there are five gentlemen who work on the grounds. we have A foreman and four groundskeepers, if you will.

We originally had 15 acres in the original layout and a neighbor at the time named Davidson made a deal with the cemetery for another 10 acres roughly, not too long after the cemetery was established so we have 25 total acres is what we've got. The original layout was to identify sections...where the intent was for more than one internment and the intent being family plots. Meredith question, "What do you mean by more than one internment? next to each other or on top of each other? Response, all of the above. And so they vary in sizes and when you you walk around the cemetery you'll see how that variation works. but The idea was to sell those family plots as family plots and then do internment's as necessary and So many of the monuments you see have numerous names on them because of the various family members or there are several markers within a lot that will mark different family internment's within a lot.

I believe the more modern cemeteries, most of what they sell today is individual gravesites, and we've come to that and I'll explain how that happened but the original intent of this was to sell family plots and do the interment as necessary within each family plot.

Corcoran chose the land, I'm not sure why, I guess..at one point it was the highest point in Georgetown, it

sort of was the peak of the hill and then goes over the hill towards rock Creek. So he thought it was appropriate for a cemetery. Melissa jump in here if I'm speaking about antying.

Melissa: No yeah You're doing well

Cemeteries in this area.. I don't know the answer to that.. How are they different from us? I know that there are some other historic cemeteries in the area and I'm sure you'll research those.

um Are family cemeteries green? (draws out nnnnn), no!

Meredith: ok (laughs)

Do you follow the model of a cemetery elsewhere? No.

What forms of internment do you offer? Well for Both casket and for cremains.uh Typically in both cases we will put whatever the remains are contained in within a vault being either concrete or plastic. I think that's a practice that's been in use here forever and ever. In the early days vaults were made of brick and Mason. Meredith Ok. And so when the site was prepared the hole was put in the ground, and went and lay brick and so forth. I know there's a number of brick vaults within here because we have internment's that started in 1849 and 50. As Washington grew there were cemeteries that were overtaken within that growth, and so the remains were taken out about cemetery moved over here. So we have a number of people who died prior to the establishment of the cemetery who were buried elsewhere and moved here. so We have some revolutionary war guys Meredith Oh Wow and all that sort of thing that that was the case with. so that's kind of how that transpired over a period of time. we have some Civil War notables and we've got a brochure I'll give you with some internment information on it and there's a website that is OakHillCemeteryDC.ORG).

MeredithL I saw the website

You've seen that. it has a lot of that same information on it

How long has each form of interment that offered? I'm under the impression that we've done cremations probably since the early 1900s, when crematories probably started. Meredith OK I can't tell you when that practice started but I know that I've seen some fairly old internment's in our records that were cremations. so When that started we started doing some of that as whatever the family wanted. Clearly though from what I understand, the number of cremations in the world today far outnumbers or outnumbers anyway, the casket burials. And the inventory that we've created is in response to that. We probably have 10 or 20 cremain sites as opposed to casket sites that are available for sale here. So we're really more trying to service a cremation market than anything else. We had a Catholic service today and the priest was in and said that the Catholic Church changed and said, i guess I didn't know the catholic church changed anything, He said the Catholic church had changed and said cremations are okay now. So that's kind of in response that same sort of thing i think

How do you prepare the ground for burial the land for burial? for instance in woodland burial (fades off but says question) Meredith: or even jus the terracing or Yeah, We don't take down trees, we're pretty much, we are fully developed we don't have any undeveloped areas like a newer cemetery.so we really, we don't have any issues with removing and replacing plant materials and that sort of thing. If there's, If we cut sod off we'd put it back on or replant seed if it's a grassy area. A lot of what we do are in the walk paths or under sidewalk paths in stone or in columbarium type situations.

We don't offer any green interment options. I know We've offered ash scattering around the fountain out there in the ellipse. I've been here five months we have had any of that. We do have underway however a

consideration to create a path that will be a green path on the far northern border of the cemetery that is a wooded area that would not be anything that we could develop for anything else but would offer an opportunity for a scatter area. It's not yet available and will be some time before we develop it. but We are recognizing that that's becoming the way of the world and we ought to have a way to respond to that sort of thing.

that's neat

*Cultural values (question?)* yeah I get calls that I want to be next to so-and-so, or such and such, particularly in a family plot. where there's, I spoke with a representative of a family yesterday and they've got a fairly large piece of ground and between the caskets and the cremation internment's, there'd been 10 different interment sites there, some of which had a couple of caskets in them and some of which are cremains which aren't stacked by the way they are just at one level. He wanted to be a casket. Well we kind of had to get a little creative to see if there was space to put one more casket side in there , and there is. He said is it next to so-and-so? Well, it's not but it's perpendicular and there is some concern about who you're going in next to and all that sort of thing. But within family plots, it's kind of I want to be next mother but not my great great great-grandmother. Commonsensical. We have had people who've purchased cremains sites next to one that are continuous so we can put family members together under a walk or a setting like that. So we still have that kind of request.

What kind of markers do we use? well, It depends on the site. If it's a lawn site, under grass, green top, we are not in the monument business we have a list of monument dealers with whom we have worked with over the years and have some confidence in and they know what our requirements are and so we refer families to those individuals. We do have an approval process where everything that comes into the cemetery, before it is created goes through approval from us. So we are consistent with materials and the layouts so not everyone necessarily has to have the same typeface, but within some borders and that sort o thing. Meredith question-do you have a size requirement? as well? Yes we do, and it depends on the site. It's all all over the road, I don't know if you've walked around out here or not No yet. I mean you're going to see great big things and little bitty things. So they're all over the road just depends on where the sight and plot is. The other case where we have some pathways that we've created space under, we've done inscriptions directly on the path and they're walked over, which makes some folks kind of uncomfortablebut it is what it is. Same story we have monument dealers who do those inscriptions most the time on site. and We go to the same approval process and all that sort of thing with layout and design all that kind of stuff. We've got one that's new that's kind of outside the box little bit, with inscriptions filled with different filled in letters with different epoxies and different colors and has some inlaid, i think it's glass that is part of the design on it. It is a walk path cover in a piece of stone that is 4 feet long and 2 feet high with a couple of names inscribed on it in this inlaid mosaic design that the owners wanted on this one marker. The monument guy is fairly creative and he came up with a way to do that. The reason we approved it was is that is a style and a method was used sometimes in Victorian years in Europe. We have one guy on our board who's done a lot of research and a lot of things and traveled and visited cemeteries and so forth had seen that and was okay with it. We have not however approving things like laser edged etching and that sort of artistic endeavor that's more modern because it's just not consistent with what's here in the cemetery. We are a Victorian cemetery and where going to stay that way. So that's kind of. no matter What venue is used for monuments either green tops size, big small twwhatever or the inscriptions on the walk paths,we tend to stay ver well within whatever you expect at a Victorian age cemetery.

Markers, aesthetic preferences?

Do I expect to see an increase in green burials for cultural reasons? Well I'm not long-standing. I'm fairly new. And I haven't been in the business that long. And I will tell youWithin the five months I've been here I haven't had one person call me and say do you do Green burials. but on the other side of that coin.

Most. The impression about Oak Hill is that it's full so we do get calls and people that are shopping but I've not had that question. But the number of calls we get is probably held down by the fact that everyone thinking it's full . But that's not the case.by the way

yeah

Relationships with funeral homes. Well I think it's fine. We work primarily with two over on this side of town. I know others have been in here and we've had some from out of town work with us. But I guess The thing that's a little different about us is that we include vaults and so forth in the pricing of the site, and funeral homes want (19:20) to sell that so that's a little different and The reason we do that is we have to control the insertion or the selection and the use of vaults because of the topography here. We don't have for instance we don't have a backhoe, any mechanized equipment for digging graves, we don't have a tractor, we don't have riding mowers, we don't have anything like that. So when we do a burial, for instance we are going to do an interment tomorrow at a casket site that is a double deep sight and we have to dig it by hand. Our guys have been over there digging for two days and they have to do a 9 foot excavation and prepare it (20:26) for the lower casket to go into, set the base of the liner. And we'll do that interment tomorrow and fill it back up, and when the next person's ready to go in there, we'll undo do all that down to 6 feet, put another liner on top of it but it's all done by hand. We can't get anything into that site without tearing up other markers and so. Meredith, that's within the whole cemetery? Answer, the whole place. It just can't be done. So requires handwork by men compared to most other places.

Meredith, and so for the mowing, do you have push mowers that you use?

Answer: yes we have some that are mechanized that you can stand behind and ride on but we do a lot of it with weed-eaters. with weeders? Weed whacker's. String trimmers. We do a lot of stuff with string trimmers. It's incredible. When we do leaves and so forth, our guys use backpack blowers and when they sweep all those leaves up they sweep it up onto a big piece of burlap that's 6x6 and tie corners together and throw it up on their back and take it over and then throw it in the back of a big pickup truck and then take that big bundle to a roll-off box and empty it. We haul the rolloff box away from here but there's no way blow anything into.. so it's all handwork. Meredith: that's fairly green, actually. Response: well it is but its is not by choice, but by necessity. I'm trying to find ways to mechanize that a bit and make it more efficient. If there's someway we could you use some kind of suction kind of a thing on the back of a truck and pick them up that way. You could do that, but then you have to get them out of the truck into the rolloff box so that the rolloff box can be hauled out and emptied somewhere. So now you're and handling them again. an its just the efficiency is the issue.

So I guess to the extent that you would say that the maintenance methods we used are green, well they are.

I have picture, and we have five guys on the staff, we have a picture somewhere that was taken of the superintendent and the staff in about 190 something 2 or something like that. there must've been 25 or 30 people on the grounds staff because they had didn't have gasoline kind of things so they're out, you know, doing everything literally by hand. so to that extent we've progressed, but not much more. It is not like golf courses and and modern flatland cemeteries situation where they just take a big ...and just cut acres at a time.

So there you go.

25 acres, plots per acre, I don't know what that number is. We have about 19,500 or so currently interred here, between casket and cremains internment's. From inventory standpoint today, we have probably somewhere between seven00 and 800 spaces that if I sold them all today, their design, I would have sold all of the inventory. most is with most of which is in a columbarium 430 something. but as I say, as time goes on, we will develop other spaces under walk paths that we'll make available for sale and what the potential is for that, I don't know, I haven't spent any time, but we got a long long way to go before we say we don't have any more pathways we can develop.as I say We're gonna be an active cemetery for at

least another hundred years.

So I think that was all of your questions.

Yes it was! Thank you.

What other questions do you have?

I guess, what is the use of this building? Is it just offices?

No, this is the building that was intended for the superintendents quarters.

ok

And the office obviously. So when it was originally built it was the office and another two rooms behind it and then it was started in 1850s and there were two additions. the last one was started in 1870. Added two more rooms on the back and then this staircase with a bellower on top of it and the third floor. the cemetery offices are this and the superintendents quarters are the rest of the house. So I live here.

so Is there a chapel here on the grounds?

There is. The old building at the other end of the elipse is called renwick Chapel after the architect. There is another building back behind this where our staff guys work out of so theres.. I don't know how old that building is, it's probably nearly as old as this thing is but it has a locker area and showers and restrooms a and a break area and an office and some storage and so forth. so that is a staff building. There's another building down in the center of the cemetery that is a storage building. It's about 25 or 30 years old and its built to fit into the landscape if you will and we use it for equipment storage in such.

And I was wondering, Is there a map that I can look at?

Sure. Let me... this is on our website but this is the gatehouse where we are on 12. the ellipse here where the chapel is and so this Chapel Hill goes down hill to a valley. Western Avenue is the bottom of the valley. And then this goes back uphill to what's called Northhill and Corcoran and those sort of things. There are several large mausoleums that were built at the beginning of the cemetery along these lines that looked out toward rock Creek itself. And then the bottom of the valley kind of goes along this way. The carriage house is at that end of the property and then you can follow along here: this is a kind of another hill and this is kind of another hill. and there's a valley in between the two. the columbarium that we built is down here. Where it says 41, it's got an identifiable on this list, confederate Gen. Wilcox. but the Columbarium's down here. and this is a list of folks that have been buried here.

What has Western Avenue? Is that foot traffic or car traffic?

Those are drivable.

Ok that's huge

## Duck Run Cemetery

### Section 1

We actually have 113 acres here. We own from where you came in the gate there, all this area and about as far back as you can see, and over beyond that last tree line over there. Our intentions are to develop it entirely as a green cemetery. Right now we've just dedicated this one section for the burials and we'll grow/move out from there. We had an architect out of Kansas City come in and design, they've worked with the Green burial Council before. We have a fellow, Jeff Hoedies who is a member of the board and he's been a big help to us. And of course he knows these people out of Kansas City ~ before. We actually flew everybody out and we all got together and kind of sit down and go over what we thought the cemetery ought to look like. They told us what they thought it ought to look like so we had some compromises that we made.

Question Meredith: what were some of the changes they suggested?

Mainly just cosmetic. Have you checked any of the websites of the guys over in the United Kingdom?

Meredith reply: I haven't but I read a book called death ~ which looked at natural burial.

Reply: They are probably the forerunners of green burial, we've searched of their websites and just getting information as far as what impact it actually had not only on the trees and plants but we animals themselves as well. Our main idea, the total concept is total land reclamation. So when we came in we have a lot of invasive species that we had to get rid of, the place was, I don't want to say rundown, but it was a dairy farm and hadn't used for probably 15 or 20 years. Garbled-the length of the barn almost down to the telephone pole, we had milking parlors and all this kind of stuff. We had corn cribs; they had an old chicken house, concrete chicken houses: we came in and got rid of all of it. Our intentions are to make it is natural looking as possible. So we built a pavilion and the reason we did that was, were not going to have like a graveside service with tents, chairs, artificial grass and that sort of stuff - everything that goes in the cemetery or on the cemetery has the 100% biodegradable.

### Section 2

So what we'll do is that we're not going to have chairs or any artificial. The body itself will be placed up here garbled the way we have the cemetery laid out (garbled) so the pallbearers don't have to carry from here to way up on side the Hill. Question Meredith: is the vehicle that carries it? No it's a big wagon. We'll come down the sidewalks to wherever. We had a guy who graduated from Clemson with a degree in horticulture; native plants that sort of stuff. We got him out here and design was this place would look like if it had been left alone over the years, just a natural state, what plants would grow here. So he's done a fantastic job on that. I have a picture here, like a forest. We are in the process of doing some planting now; we've even planted some milk weed, which is actually native to this area. All my life we grew up trying to get rid of these

things and now were planting them. We've got a lot of them like black-eyed Susan's, he's got a list of plants that uses the scientific names and I can't even pronounce them, much less know what they are. We should come back (*garbled*) and will have probably hundred to 200 varieties of trees that are coming in and the native to this area along with shrubbery and stuff like that.

We are going to do it in different phases. Phase 1 will actually start at the driveway and we'll bring it all along the drive. You see we have a couple of trees out here, and we had a few more than that of the deer like them better. We bring all the way up the pavilion and landscape around the pavilion. Everything is going to be a gift and natural to the area. And one thing that we found is that we couldn't find hickory trees. Hickory's take 50 years to get to any size, and people today with a build a house that one instant results to the fine the firs, the Pines in the quick growing trees so they can get the buffer zone don't have to wait 50 years. We were actually going to plant them last fall and we couldn't find the seeds. That's been rectified. We hired a landscape guy to get all our trees and shrubs for us. He's got connections nurseries out-of-state and has been able to find the majority of them. There's a few he still hasn't found *garbled*. He even went as far as finding a place in North Carolina that specializes in grass seeds. We had them blend us upload next year grass seed that are indigenous to this area. We have three bags and it was like *garbled* dollars. The plan is him up here.

### **Section 3**

What are the requirements run herbicides and things? Well they want to be biodegradable, I have the specs on from the green burial Council that I will look up and get those for you. You can use them (herbicides) in limited quantities. Your some people spread their yards or feels to her three times a year, so you're limited to how many times you can spray and mainly the usage of it as far as the dosage I guess, it has to be really diluted. That's why we wanted to go with the green burial Council they been in this business, they've done the research and they more or less set the guidelines regulations for cemeteries followed by and funeral homes to. In fact we have is funeral homes, Kiger funeral home. Our funeral home is also certified by the green burial Council. We have some caskets there. The majority of the people we've sold to have chosen shrouds.

Meredith: interesting! I thought that was very interesting. *Aside* I was thinking you were buried in a shroud the families going to have the fear of the cemetery throwing the rocks and dirt on the body, whereas it was Wicker casket or bamboo casket at least that would cushion the blow some. It's just a normal thing. But it really surprised me the majority of them now are leaning towards the shroud, which is good. Course to green burial Council had restrictions on the kinds of shrouds you could use; they can be the silk for the fancy ones, they can be just the plain hopefully 100% cotton would work. The caskets of course are bamboo, Pine, Wicker. We don't have any full bodies buried out here yet. We do have three cremations buried out here and a couple scattered.

We really just opened our doors the middle of last part of last year. We haven't really done an advertising campaign or anything like that yet. Were just now trying to kick that off, *garbled*. What we thought we would do first and we did and are still in the process of educating funeral homes. Generally funeral homes of the first

people to get in contact with the body. We had good results from that. Everybody's okay with that. We brought a lot of the funeral home guys out here and showed them what we had. If they need we had fluids available instead of formaldehyde, enigma. There are several out on the market. I don't think they want to stop the green shrouds, caskets, fluids, etc. so we worked it out with them that when they get a call in needed there more than welcome to it and we just asked and replace it. We try to work hand-in-hand with all of funeral homes around here and had a good response. I think it would be a lot bigger down the road would people are fully aware of what a green burial is. We have so many misconceptions of green burials, even though we've had a few ads out in the paper. We had a couple of articles written about us the pre-match explains were going to from a green cemetery and they still think that all we do is dig a hole, roll the body and their and cover them up, that's it! No headstones, nothing, just out there in the field and is nowhere near being right.

#### **Section 4**

So what are you going to use as headstones? Do you the fieldstone? Garbled - natural stones; no two are alike, that's the unique thing about it. Uh, garbled - Ok - Garbled - a lot of what you know - garbled - yet we have a guy that does our all of our engraving for us. We're not going to just have military ranks, and we're not going to have a lot of those little logos that you can put on headstones we ... them. Um-huh. Most likely gar.... gardener... date of birth, date of death. And that way, when you look out through the field it will look like natural field stones out there. Yeah. And what we're also doing is for someone who chooses against having a head stone we'll allow them to plant flowers on the grave. OK. Uh, again, as long as they're native to the area and stuff like that. Um-huh. Uh, As a matter of fact, I would, I'd like to encourage them all to do that if they would. Uh, it makes the whole area yeah, look better. When you'll have ... you've got flowers and stuff, so upright monument I'm sure you've seen some of these cemeteries, and nobody never wants any disrespect to them Um-huh. Still have the lights that light up... little whirly-gigs that fly around and it just isn't looks more like a flea market anymore and that's sad. Different ways to have closure, but what we're trying to do is to have a natural environment out here. One of the first things

#### **Section 5**

That we did the year before. We went to the board of supervisors with hired a local engineering firm, and we got them to come out and they did a phase 1 environmental study on the property Uh, along with a couple of biologist that worked directly under uh, Blackwell Engineering.....if they came out and of course they did their thing and their final analogy was that the property was well suited for its purpose. OK. Intended purpose. Uh, they came up with a depth of approximately about 4 feet for burials that will get a body the chance to decompose naturally. We have clay and shale out here, so you don't want to go too far because it needs air and that type of thing for the decomposition. I know looking at some of these reports and stuff that we got from the UK, they did a lot of, uh, environmental studies, as far as waste water, not waste water, water runoff and stuff. That was a big concern, we ran into that out here even though we don't have a continuous stream

have um, uh tributary, that ... spillway, whatever you want to call it, that feeds this pond and uh, so in order to effectively protect on that do you make sure the body's ... like is close enough to the waterway or.... That's one way, yes. Again we left enough area at all of our waterways so we won't have that problem. We don't to, we don't want to contaminate anything... and plus too, we've found that, uh the earth if a body is buried let's say, in our case, is buried at 4 feet the earth is able to naturally take care of the decomposition. That's one thing that the World Health Organization is kind of concerned about these cemeteries with vaults and formaldehyde and in some cemeteries you know will have thousands upon thousands of people buried in there. And they're buried in concrete vaults, uh, if embalming fluids involved and stuff with the formaldehyde um-huh. And again no disrespect to the cemetery. Uh, just want to have think we all really need to look at Uh, what's going to happen eventually is we all know concrete breaks down and the main concern is when that concrete starts breaking down these chemicals are going to overwhelm the earth's not going to be able to do its' natural absorption, in a natural setting like this So how

## Section 6

How did you choose this piece of land, uh, for the cemetery? That was Kenny, Kenny Tiger, he's our owner, president, uh, he's been in the business mainly all of his life. His father was a, uh, funeral director, owned a funeral home, down in Shanendoahville Hang on here! And Kenny actually opened his first funeral home in 1975. OK. First to have a crematory in this area. Huh. He got that in 1980. We were doing less than 1%. And everybody was saying I don't know why you bought a crematory. Nobody around here's going to want Kenny just, uh, he's, he's got a good knack of being able to tell what trends and fads is and uh, by him working with people uh, in the funeral end of it yeah well, he's always getting a "Why do I have to, uh, buy a casket?", or, "Why do I have to have a vault?" The family wanted to know, "Why do I have to be embalmed as a state law?" Of course it's not a main cemetery requirement ... So anyway, uh, Kenny listened. He listened to what people say.. I say it was mainly his idea. Uh, looked around for several months and several months had various people looking for properties and we found this piece of property. And, it just, just met our needs. It's got everything we ... really wanted were kinda land locked as far as anybody building up around us and in the near future or, away down the road is this is an old farm house uh, I doubt you'll ever see it. Uh, we're hoping not anyway. Yeah. And in perfectly gift of peace and quiet that, that's out here and it's just wonderful. Yeah, the grounds are beautiful. Absolutely. We have course mountain up the peak. but mountain range, over to the west are clear day, you can actually see the Allegany mountains back towards West Virginia. Yeah, yeah. And, over here of course you've got the Blue Ridge... uh, uh, our views are really fantastic. Yeah, great! Have you driving down here beautiful fawn in the We're trying to dowe, we started out with and I forget what ... our research we looked a couple of web sites and they was all "let's don't do that." and that's come up with our own idea for what a natural burial cemetery should be Ok. And that way we didn't copy somebody. OK. Uh, even though, you know, a lot of things that we do, other cemeteries are doing as well we feel like we did it, the way we wanted it... Yeah. We people are going to... all of that equipment that we used in the farm perhaps the big ... so you don't have to run back hoes and excavators are all the wide tracks, uh, uh, that, for instance are

you could probably run over your foot with the uh, backhoe and it wouldn't hurt you. They're like eight PSI. We were gonna try this, uh,... wide feet are open. Um-huh. We gonna have a lot of debts here. So we thought we would take 50 year block and we're going to scribe people's names and dates on it. Uh, it may be an option down the road for a different type of head stone. OK. Uh, we'll put course, it'll get these burned in there with a wood burner, and then we'll use bee's wax over the top of it. Okay. I was wondering what you were going to and uh, we just cut these out last week. They're very pretty. They're really pretty. We thought we'd give it a try. We don't know how long they're going to last, See there's room here to make a lot of cedar posts out there, they're still paying an extra hundred I don't know that they'll last that long, but we're hoping. The other option that we have. OK. If we're limited on the materials that we can use Which is ... We'll, uh, ... garbled

## Section 7

... OK.

garbled

... sunrise. I'm.. It's actually beautiful out here. him and Yeah. .....

## Section 8

... that's why

...

... OK.

## Section 9

We had a ... guy working on ... garbled - tall oaks, drying racks, ..., OK

We are going to put a barn in, a new barn in and all the enclosures, and Celia, actually Kenny bought our barns. It gonna be the old style barn. Barn has a lot of stone far as, far as that wood

## Section 10

The with the payment able to help with

## Section 11

And what is... ? The way I understand him, at the first .... he was saying,

then I say ... go round

garbled

garbled... Well then it gets into what about the ground water, what about this, so we had to had to meet their expectations and, ah, like I said, I know we had, uh, engineering company come out and do the phase 1 environmental studies and we had all of their reports, we had reports from United Kingdom and then all the other cemeteries that have folks on what a natural burial is.

## Section 12

So when you said the board what, what board are,? Supervisors, Rockingham. Rockingham County Board of Supervisors. They, uh, we had, I think two of them on the board were against the cemetery, and mainly because once we got all these reports in and had these engineering people biologists and geologists come out and do studies and stuff and basically, write the portion say this land's perfect for its intended use. And then they So once we used the term natural green burial, no vaults, no formaldehyde, no embalming fluid, uh they just didn't know what to think. Of course the green burial, it's a Green Burial Council's just trying to educate the folks on it too, around these concepts. I think it's the way we need to go maybe for you know, saving our water and stuff like that. Um-huh. Uh, I think that's one of the big concerns, should be is in the water. The points, without it, you can't live. So we better take care of it, uh, we contacted this one group over there and, they said that they had a report that they could send us over. Fax it over. So we said, great. So this thing started coming across the fax machine and kept coming, and coming, and coming. 400 pages later Oh, wow! Uh, ... they were done. Uh, 20 some pages and 40 some pages. I've read it. It's really interesting couple of years trying to get this thing put up, put together. We've had people coming in and asking questions about what are your intentions, what is a green burial? All for it. Umh, I hate to use the generation gap but, uh your generation, uh, but uh, but we've got five children. Our oldest one is like 39. And our youngest is like 29. And, they are totally for the green burial and ...uh, seems to more in tune with uh, preservation the earth, recycling and the whole 9 yards which is great. I'm glad somebody's finally taking a look at it. Uh, what surprised me was the older folks those are the ones, in this area we're always considered to be a conservative area, don't like change and that type of thing. But those folks make up majority of our property buyers. Really. They're the folks yeah. What, what kind of A-Trains? Could your dad use probably? OK. Younger folks and the reason that is because Mom and Dad bought property here I think it's going to work out really good

## Section 13

I'm curious, um, as far as the demographics go in the area would you say that most people are of the same ethnicity that buy the plots or is it a mix? It's more of a mix. More mix. We have uh, the Harrisonburg area, we're getting a lot of folks from up North who are coming down here to retire.

To give you an example, say earlier, cremations back in 1980 were less than 1%. Today in this area, which surprises everybody, is probably around 50 to 52%. Around the national? Exactly.

And so that what we're thinking is going to happen also with the green burial. Uh, cause we are getting those people moving down from North, who, weren't these conservative people around here that didn't want cremations and didn't want that. Um-huh. So we're getting a good mix of people.

And, talked to a family there yesterday that was from up Northern Virginia area and they were saying ... that they'd been looking for months to try to find a green cemetery. Oh wow!

Um, As far as religious concerns, we, we try to stay out of that, as best we can, but we do have, uh, about every

religion covered out here now I think, as far as property and people that have bought property and stuff. That's good; we don't want to discriminate against anybody.

We want to make it just, uh, peaceful place to come out and bury you loved ones and pay respect.

And the whole concept of the, our cemetery any way is going to be that once it's done, say this section uh, it's going to look like an arboretum. OK Um-huh. It'll have the flowers; it'll have the shrubs, the trees, the mowed pathways, the stones and all that kind of stuff. It's going to be nice.

Uh, and eventually of course as we move out, and we expand on out, we'll do the same there too. And, like I say, earlier we'll start going back and putting our hardwood trees in the cemetery itself. If the family wants to do that on a grave that'd be fine.

So I think we've got all of our bases covered as far as what we really want our end-goal and that's the total land restoration and to have a natural place for people to come.

For whatever reasons, you know we like to be thought of not only a cemetery, but like you know people want to come out and hike around that's uh, we encourage that. Just to come out and have that just hang out. It's a wonderful place to come out. You'll have to come down this spring or summer and just see. Yeah. It's just absolutely beautiful.

#### **Section 14**

Uh, would you like to see the rest of the property? Sure. Alright. Let's uh. Are you cold? I'm actually good. Are you? I'm from Ohio. Ohio, I was going to ask you where you were from

It's really interesting that people are beginning to ask about green burial.... Garbled...

More studies need to be done.

Yeah actually when I was talking to the green burial Council, part of the paper they wanted me to do was, was looking at cemeteries that are both natural and conventional, and comparing maintenance. There's only like three right now. And one of them says they hire out their maintenance so we'll see if we can get the data.

We have one section that we've developed down here for what they call renewable graves. In the United Kingdom they have (garbled) churches there and as they bury members of the church, they'll start like right here. It takes like 50 years and they'll surround the church. Whoever dies takes the next space. (Garbled)

It takes about 50 years to get around the church and once they get back to the starting block, they'll resell that grave, because by that time (garbled).

We thought about it, garbled, if it takes 50 years that's not bad, garbled. So what we did was up at the 75 years. So after 75 years the land and go back and somebody else can be buried there. As far as I know where the only people or the only Cemetery in the country this doing this. How do people react to that? For the most part, people like the concept but they're just not sure if they want to go through (garbled). I guess is like

anything, anytime you have change, garbled you have to be shown is for the best.

What we done here is we had hedgerows all out through here back what was a dairy farm. We've taken the fence rows out. That we can come in and farm the whole land, garbled, big wad of metal. We're letting people come in and get the fence posts, something about trees, firewood. We had one guy who's a preacher with a small church nearby, he'll go around and cut firewood for his congregation. He's been out a lot we given him a lot of wood. Garbled conversation.

The guy over here, garbled conversation, something about coyotes and that's not looking for them. That's a lot. They say we have a bunch of garbled. I've seen a few. There was a guy who is using cages to live catch them and then relocate them. Garbled conversation.

Our property goes on down the hill and we got our name this little creek that runs down there, Duck Run. I saw Duck Run, Duck Run Road. Kenny and I were scratching our heads trying to come up with what to call this place for like six months. Garbled conversation around the naming.

## Section 15

And Duck Run is a river, is that what you said? It's just a Creek.

That's gorgeous. Garbled Millsap.

Garbled conversation.

Garbled conversation about: People come out water route even though they don't have anybody buried here.

This is going to take a long time to complete the Cemetery; we're looking at it taking about 100 years.

Garbled conversation about cutting up barns. Garbled. I'm hoping it's going to work. There's a company somewhere, they did a similar thing, garbled, cracked open. Don't know how many loads. Meredith asks is there anything like petrified wood around? I wish there was, I wish there was.

Garbled conversation about a 100 year old tree. In fact my brother wants to be buried under the tree, and I told him if I'm not that far along Joe I'll bury you under the tree.

We're thinking about coming out here and planting little Hickory trees.

Garbled conversation.

We have one guy-garbled conversation.

Garbled conversation preceding scare forest, a Halloween thing. A pathway between a bunch of old buildings and we have people on this Hill who jump on scare you.

## Section 16

All the neighbors out here are great. All the way back to the tree lines are dams. Once you get to that tree line it goes downhill, probably too steep for graves. I'm sure I won't be around when that part is developed.

Garbled.

What do you think garbled out here? Probably this spring. We've already had lilies are blooming. Garbled.  
Roses blooming in January.

Something about not farming in here and possibly deer.

Birds, we have all kinds of birds nest here. Garbled, Kingfisher, we have a lot of migratory birds – garbled.

We had a lot of cattail. Red winged blackbird's love cattail. Garbled

### **Section 17**

Garbled discussion about possibly the Blue Ridge parkway, ending with Meredith saying she's been on it in Kentucky.

Skyline drive discussion.

### **Section 18**

This is Duck Run. OK. - garbled - the water got way up in here and over the dam. Oh wow. Very deep.

### **Section 19**

Have you ever thought about doing like outdoor education programs here? Thought about it and haven't done anything on it. In fact, we're not really sure about what is available - garbled - . Yeah. - garbled - that's why we're excited

### **Section 20**

Everything needs processed, is there a reason why and I was doing research on like how much methane the body emits when it decomposes anaerobically, uh and I was finding research on that. And then how like the green burial now, I will even Yeah, I normally, I normally started with but most people are really receptive to it, uh. yeah, it's what I want and then my parents friends have all been ... and I actually talked to like the mayor ... and I was talking with her about it as I was talking with you, I ... possibility of a green burial he said like, you know, I think that they're at everyone's ...

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## Section 21

Garbled

## Section 22

...garbled...

For the most part, they're all good people, uh they're well maintained, we have little country cemeteries, and see that's the thing too, these little country cemeteries and family cemeteries, uh they've been burying their family members in back yard, just in wooden caskets for years. Um huh. Theoretically they're green burials. Yeah. Uh, and you know people used to have that misconception. Uh, I think once they realize what a green burial is, it's gonna be - make our job a lot easier, as far as being able to help them out properly. Do you have a bottle of water? I'm actually all right, thank you. Yeah. ...garbled.... ...crematory operation. Okay. That's been unreal this year. ...garbled... You may already have all of this information, but I was just wondering if I could get you something anyway. This brochure, have you been to our website? I've been on it, but I haven't been through it extensively yet. This basically is our web site.

## Section 23

This is just some general information. This is what we went through with the board of supervisors, trying to explain to them where we were coming from. Um, what we were doing. They were under the impression, or I guess they thought there are no regulations on green burial cemeteries; therefore you can go out and do what you want to do. That's not the case, uh; we're actually governed by the same set of rules and regulations that any cemetery in Virginia is. And there are about 4,000 of them roughly. I guess the real advantage is that we use ...garbled...

There's some different information about what green burials are. This is mainly stuff that I can pull up out of the computer in the beginning of our study, and just things that I thought were important as to what a green burial was and what cemeteries should do. People's vision of natural cemeteries, uh. Independent cemeteries and cremation funeral associations. We work closely with the funeral alliances throughout Virginia. Virginia Codes and Restrictions, they even threw that in there, you'll see how little ...garbled...restrictions there are, uh. I was surprised by that in Ohio too.

## Section 24

This is the summary I was telling you about, heh, heh. Alright. Uh, if you get to an interesting section, just let me know and I'll send you that chapter or whatever. OK. And, uh, if you want to look at the whole thing, you're more than welcome to. I think you'll find it interesting. It's just a little long. OK. It's just like a little brochure.

If there's any time we can do anything as far as ...garbled... If you want to bring people down with you to study this or study that, feel free to do it. I think the more research that's done on this, is better for all of us. I think

we're going to find that this is the way to go. The clean route. In the end, we're just reintroducing the basics. It's what it boils down to. Definitely, this is really inspiring to see. Well, I'm glad. We've been fortunate with the response that we've had. Uh, for the most parts, all positive.

## Section 25

Likely the only negative feedback we've had is, we had one person that was concerned that, if you don't put them in a vault, are the animals going to dig it up. Well, no. I've traveled and hiked a lot of places and I've never seen any animals that have dug up bodies yet. But, that's a good thing. It's going to be a good thing. And I think eventually you're going to see a lot more of them. We're already starting to see the hybrid cemeteries. I don't know, larger corporations, cemetery corporations, it wouldn't surprise me if they didn't start putting a section in their cemeteries for green burials. I think more and more people are starting to ask about.

I know from the funeral home, our funeral home standpoint, we're getting a lot more people asking and inquiring about green burials. And that's good, and I think as time goes on, it's going to be a lot better. Yeah. And, it's a good thing for everybody. I like it, I like it.

Yeah, and we get to go back to the earth. It's a cycle, just a cycle. ...garbled... are made from earth and they return to the earth. Yeah. It didn't say anything about putting you in a vault. That's right, that's right! That is a big challenge with the world health organization, when these vaults and stuff do start breaking down, that massive concentration comes out of the body, formaldehyde and other chemicals are; the earth's just not going to be able to absorb it and process it naturally like it would with a green burial. Our spaces are big enough...

## Section 26

In a traditional cemetery, they like to get anywhere from 1,000 to 1,200 graves per acre. How many are you looking for here? 600. OK. So and, I uh, well, I think it's just the best way to do it. We had contemplated on more of up to maybe 700 or 800 per acre, but then we really couldn't go in there and do a natural design to the area. Um huh. So we backed it on down to 650 and I think now we're down to 600. I don't know will happen back here, it may even be fewer than that in the next go round.

Like I say, we got these guys out in Kansas City that had worked with the green burial council and had designed other green cemeteries throughout the country. And so we wanted to get somebody who was familiar with green burials and with cemeteries naturally, to help us with the layout.

And our bodies will be facing East, when they're buried, uh, that was a big concern for a lot of people. Some of these cemeteries, uh, some people don't care, some people do. OK. What's the significance of facing east? Well I think that's a religious thing. The Bible says that the Lord will come from the East when He returns so they want the body to face the East so they could see...garbled.... OK. I think it's a preference, just a preference. Which is kind of good, I like the idea of it. I want to be buried facing east, I wanna see Him coming. ...garbled... sunrise.

That's why the sunrises are great. The sun comes up over right over that valley and it is absolutely beautiful. You got to get down here before sunrise sometime. You have to do that, heh, heh, heh. Sounds great!

Have you got any other questions?

When was Duck Run established again? We opened; we actually got our license, March of 2012. OK, very recent. Very recent, yes. Like I say we didn't come out with an ad campaign or anything like that, we're just now trying to kick that off. We wanted to stay low key mainly. We wanted to make sure that we knew what we were doing as a cemetery and the direction we wanted to go in. So it was more of an internal thing for us to get all of our, hate to use the phrase, ducks in a row, heh, heh, heh. OK. We actually got our license last year. Great.

And then the other question I had was "How many other cemeteries are in the area? We think there are..., and there are a lot of cemeteries that aren't even registered. You have the little family cemeteries, little church cemeteries, little community cemeteries, roughly about 4,000 in the state of Virginia. That's the best estimate that we could come up with, and we got that information through the funeral association, funeral directors association. In this area, I would say probably 100, 200, if you count the small cemeteries, the private cemeteries. As far as uh, corporate cemeteries, about 4 and that's within a 15-20 mile radius. Like I say you have a lot of little community cemeteries, little church cemeteries which are very nice. I love old church cemeteries.

Uh, the need was here I think for another cemetery, and that's another reason why we wanted to get into it. And the green aspect, that just set it off. That's what we decided, yes, that's what we want to do, where we want to go. And so far it's been positive for us. Great.

We're looking forward to the future. If anybody has any recommendations, we're an open ear. We're flexible as far as; this is the line, walk it. There's a lot of things we don't know yet, things we're trying to study and put together some different things. We'll make it right. It's coming.

## **Steelmantown Cemetery**

Here are the answers to your questions in order. Many do not apply to me because the cemetery was already in existence. Please feel free to call me if you would like more content on the subject. Good Luck Ed

- #1. Established early 1700's
- #2. Family owned at one time, Already established
- #3. Did not have a choice, Cemetery already there.
- #4. 1 acre chapel graveyard, 9 acres woodland burial ground. Made sense
- #5. Maybe a dozen, They are traditional cemetery layouts offering only traditional burial.
- #6. No
- #7. Only Natural Burial
- #8. We remove all plant life carefully and set aside, all soil is removed and separated per type, everything including plants are returned as they were.
- #9. 300 years, natural is the only option.
- #10. Sales are increasing as people become aware of the option.
- #11. No, we serve people of all faiths and races and have seen no particular group choosing this on a whole.
- #12. No one has expressed any type of family plots ect....
- #13. Only natural fieldstones from the midatlantic region. We want to keep the cemetery in a natural state with only indigenous plantings and landscape.
- #14. They don't have a preference.
- #15. Not asked about it.
- #16. Yes, as people experience the ritual/service they come to have a better understanding of why this option should be embraced as a healing and cathartic way to except death and embrace life. Funeral directors have been nothing but receptive and certainly willingly offer it to any family with interest.
- #17. The Preserve is 10 acres offering several hundred plots per acre