A MONUMENTAL UNDERTAKING: 
RESURRECTING A RURAL ILLINOIS COMMUNITY VIA A CEMETERY STUDY

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Anthropology Senior Project Presentation
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Historical Cemeteries

- Gravemarkers
  - Gender, socioeconomic status, kinship, religion, ethnicity, age, etc.
- Communication
- Multidisciplinary research
- Publication of cemetery studies

Photo by Susannah Oettle
Historical Cemeteries (Continued)

- Research
  - Focus on design motifs and symbolism
  - Standardized designs
- Deetz & Dethlefsen (1965 & 1966)
  - Structuralist approach - oppositions in gravestone motifs
- Now: interpretive approach

Photo by Susannah Oettle
Rural Cemeteries in the American Midwest

- Mostly ignored
- Connection to land and sense of place for settlers
- Family plots & church graveyards
Hartland in Morgan County, Illinois

Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016
Hartland Cemetery

Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016
Objectives & Hypotheses

• Understand the culture of the deceased
• Record/preserve data
• Compare with Foster & Hummel (1995)
  • Similar communities = similar cemeteries?
• Gender/Age
  • Men’s gravestones more ornate/expensive than women’s and children’s?

Photo by Susannah Oettle
Methods

• Fieldwork
  • Photos
  • Inscriptions

• Spreadsheet
  • Ages, year of birth, names, etc.

• Demographic analyses
  • Foster and Hummel (1995)

• Gender/Age
  • Relationship status inscriptions ("Daughter of...", etc.)
  • Qualitative data categories

Photo by Susannah Oettle
Results

• N = 115
• For comparison to Foster & Hummel (1995):
  • Created 4 tables & 6 graphs
• Gender/Age
  • 2 tables

Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Status</th>
<th>Winter (Nov-Dec-Jan)</th>
<th>Spring (Feb-Mar-Apr)</th>
<th>Summer (May-Jun-Jul)</th>
<th>Autumn (Aug-Sep-Oct)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subadult (Birth-19)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>32.61%</td>
<td>15.21%</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.85%</td>
<td>32.91%</td>
<td>20.25%</td>
<td>18.99%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Spousal Gravestone Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maiden Name; Otherwise Identical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Wife&quot;; Otherwise Identical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maiden Name + &quot;Wife&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife’s Marker Less Expensive + &quot;Wife&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s Marker Less Expensive + &quot;Wife&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

• Cemeteries = rich sources of data
• Future research:
  • Design motifs
  • Government documents
  • Collect data from neighboring cemeteries

Photo by Susannah Oettle
References Cited


