

**DEATHSCAPES: MEMORY, HERITAGE AND PLACE  
IN CEMETERY HISTORY**

DEATHSCAPES: MEMORY, HERITAGE AND PLACE IN CEMETERY HISTORY

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the relationship between landscape and experience in understanding the historical trajectory of cemeteries, their ongoing role in living communities and their contribution to heritage and memory. It constructs a phenomenological history of Hamilton Cemetery, established in 1848 in Hamilton, Ontario, using a combination of material, archival and ethnographic research, in addition to employing visual media and statistical analyses. In tracing the physical transformations of this cemetery, as a result of fluctuating levels of maintenance, neglect and destruction, it is evident that cemeteries are implicated in the social processes constructing attitudes towards death, the dead, memory and the past.

This thesis will explore three main periods in Hamilton Cemetery's past in order to examine the role of commemorative activities, grave visitation, vandalism, recreational activities and heritage or tourism. The period from 1848-1950 was one of active use and maintenance of the cemetery landscape, with the frequency and recentness of burial dictating a high level of reverence, respect and maintenance. Between 1950 and 1990, treatment of the cemetery is better characterized by the emergence of vandalism, limited use of the space, and increasing cumulative decay. Finally, from 1990 to the present there has been a resurgence of interest in the cemetery and a transition back into active management and maintenance associated with the importance of a green space in urban Hamilton, as well as the local heritage value.

From their emergence as pragmatic, formalized social spaces constructed for the dead, to the saturation of the medium and a demographic shift creating a disconnect resulting in neglect, to revitalization as a heritage-based collective past, cemeteries represent dynamic components of the landscape. This thesis will not only critically examine methods for their documentation and analysis, but also the significant role that they play in living communities.



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## **Chapter 1: An Introduction to Landscape and History in Cemetery Research**

Placing memory and history in a cemetery landscape is no great stretch for the archaeological imagination. However, in a discipline that recognizes the fluidity of memory in processes of constructing and negotiating history, in addition to the significance of embodied experiences of landscape in shaping cultural perceptions and connections to place, mortuary landscapes become much more than simply spaces where ancestors were buried. Cemeteries can therefore be understood as places where histories can be reworked, where heritage can be maintained, neglected or even destroyed, and where the past can not only be read from monuments but can also be experienced and embodied in different ways over time. In anchoring historical imagination and stimulating social engagement with the past, cemeteries must be recognized as more than simply historical repositories. Rather, mortuary landscapes, or *deathscapes*, are active components in the construction and negotiation of memory, heritage and attitudes towards death and the dead. An exploration of the historical development of cemeteries must therefore examine the entangled histories of people, places and material objects in pursuit of an understanding of the relationships between experience and practice.

### **Time, Objects, Landscapes**

One of the greatest challenges in approaching such an understanding of historical processes is the common disjuncture between people, small-scale actions and events, and large-scale structures and long-term developments (cf. Beck et al. 2007, Harding 2005, Lucas 2008). This struggle is evident from post-processual archaeology to Annales history and the boundary has only been further highlighted by the recent emphasis on agency, individual identity and site-based context in archaeology. Recognizing that short-term mechanisms are generally inadequate to explain long-term continuities, Hodder suggests that the two are incongruous and therefore different scales require different types of theory (1999:130). Although the connections between multiple scales of analysis are often problematic, the suggestion that long-term, grand narratives and short-term narratives of lived experiences should exist as separate entities in archaeology condemns the actions and experiences of individuals to background noise rather than understanding them as significant behaviour. While multiple scales may not always mirror each other, they are mutually constitutive and therefore can only be understood in relation to one another. Both the tensions and connections between scales provide meaningful avenues of study and separating them only serves to isolate strongly intertwined phenomena. One way of bridging the gap between individual choices and large-scale social trends is to explore historical development in terms of memory and embodied practice in material and social landscapes.



## **Experiencing and Understanding Landscape**

In archaeology, the fundamental reconceptualization of space and place as more than a backdrop for human history has increasingly transformed the way that we approach landscapes in the past (Trifković 2006:257, see also Knapp and Ashmore 1999). Influenced by post-processualism and cultural geography (most notably Cosgrove 1984; for discussion of the cultural geography of death in particular see Kong 1999), landscape archaeology emerged as an attempt to deal with extensive and chronologically complex cultural landscapes. In reorienting studies of archaeological landscapes to explore their role in socio-historical processes, these studies necessarily overlapped with and drew upon theory pertaining to embodiment, experience and corporeality, premised on the notion that our subjectivity is defined by our sensory experiences; that is, knowing oneself hinges on the body's interaction with the world (Hamilakis 2002:100). Originally defined by phenomenological philosophers, notably Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, experience has come to be seen as the source of all knowledge. Identity or sense of self, memory and history, and cultural attitudes and practices are therefore inextricable from perception, sensation, and experience through time; new sensations or experiences are only meaningfully understood in relation to past experience, which is entirely personal (Merleau-Ponty 1962:17). In moving beyond the Cartesian divide to reunite mind, body and matter, archaeologists now recognize that thought and knowledge cannot be separated from social and material contexts (Burkitt 1998:64; see also Boivin 2004).

From this pedigree, the anthropology of the senses emerged from the 1980s' interest in bodily modes of knowing and, "how the patterning of sense experience varies...

in accordance with the meaning and emphasis attached to each of the modalities of perception” (Howes 1991:3). While this has most popularly been translated to the archaeology of technology and daily practice, its influence on examinations of landscapes has highlighted the necessity of exploring visionscapes, soundscapes, touchscapes, and even smellscapes in understanding cultural development (Tilley 2004:27; see also Tilley 1994). The connection between knowledge, motivations, and other thoughtful activities and physical or bodily engagement and activity within material landscapes highlights that societies and the landscapes they inhabit are therefore co-constructed. This lays the necessary foundations for an archaeology that can connect the actions and choices of individuals to larger-scale phenomena. By considering micro-events and activities as they were experienced and acted upon in relation to long-term and broader changes and developments, macroscale shifts are grounded at the level at which they were being produced and reproduced. Archaeologists taking on such phenomenological goals have engaged with performative and experimental forms of analysis, including deep mapping advocated by Michael Shanks (c.f. Pearson and Shanks 2001) in addition to more interpretive styles of writing and presentations (c.f. Edmonds 1999). These methods and styles have certainly alienated some archaeologists, who criticize these efforts as losing connection to data and going beyond the evidence, producing circular arguments and being largely self-serving (Fleming 2006:273). It has however been suggested that reworking theory and frameworks to move away from subjective epistemologies may make it possible to study these processes archaeologically (Barrett and Ko 2009:285-287). Most significantly, it is necessary to recognize that because both subjects (and their

agency) and material culture are constructed in history in relation to one another, traces of these processes are preserved in the archaeological record. This is beginning to be visible in studies that seek to understand material culture and landscapes, not as separate phenomena or products of people, but as intertwined with agents (cf. Nesbitt and Tolia-Kelly 2009).

The idea that through dwelling in landscapes, people engage in specific activities related to the experience that the space affords, in turn gathering and embodying meanings specific to that time and place, as presented by Ingold (2000:192), has perhaps been one of the most significant influences on archaeologies of landscape. People, it is argued, do not perceive landscapes as spectators but rather as participants performing a nexus of tasks; as such, people engage with one another, with objects, with landscapes, and with multiple rhythms of time. In turn, it can be understood that the accumulated history of these engagements structures both the space and understandings of the space, which will shape future engagements, activities and experiences (see also Pauketat and Alt 2005). Because the tasks that comprise this nexus of activity are ongoing and never complete, the landscape cannot be conceptualized as ‘built’ but rather as perpetually a work in progress (Ingold 2000:199). The landscape then is a palimpsest of any number of pasts embedded in the present which in turn impacts the processes through which social practices are reproduced and negotiated (Bailey 2006, Olivier 2004, MacGregor 1999). Recognizing that places accumulate their own life histories through their ongoing involvement in these social interactions and that the meanings invested in the material world can change, be negotiated and renegotiated implies that landscapes cannot be fully

understood at any one point in their existence, necessitating a biographical approach (Gosden and Marshall 1999, Kopytoff 1986, Holtorf 1998). This conceptualization has been expanded in some cases to argue that, in engaging in social interactions, material objects and places can develop social identities and even a level of agency (cf. Cloke and Jones 2004, Hoskins 2006, Sillar 2009). As such, an approach to archaeological sites must recognize the constant, mutually constitutive transformation of people and the material landscape.

While developing increasingly dynamic approaches to landscape, archaeologists have also sought to reorient analysis to the scale of practice, placing the body as the central axis of inquiry (Meskell 1996). In doing so, it becomes possible to identify and examine actors in the past, explore the relationship between individuals, groups and structures, and link actors with the context (symbolic and environmental) within which they operate (Trifković 2006:258). The intertwined spatial, material and corporeal dimensions of cultural processes highlight the role of embodied practice as it relates to the construction and contestation of cultural identity and meanings and the construction and manipulation of physical landscapes (Pauketat and Alt 2005). By embedding activities in the varying scales of social context and highlighting the ‘sensual and experiential person’, it is possible to begin to explore the production of different forms of knowledge, the motivations behind actions and the connection between small-scale choices and the long-term trends most visible to archaeologists (Knapp and van Dommelen 2008:23). Beyond simply highlighting the individual or the body, conceptualizing new perspectives of

personhood in landscape archaeology necessitates the fusion of the global, macroscale and long-term with the local, microscale, bodily and individual (Trifković 2006:270).

### **Landscape and History in Mortuary Archaeology**

Despite the clear connections between the body, the landscape and the cemetery, these emerging theoretical paradigms have only begun to influence mortuary archaeology. However, the role of funerals and cemeteries as arenas for the construction of social relationships, for display, and for connecting the living with the dead and the past (Hayden 2009:41, see also Bennet 1994, Dubisch 1989, Reimers 1999) necessitates an approach that considers the actions, experiences and motivations of individuals in the development and transformation of funerary practice. Unfortunately, standard approaches to studying cemeteries have the tendency to simply to describe details of their past, whether demographic, material, economic, social, or religious, and to correlate them to known chronologies and histories on a larger scale (cf. Little et al. 1992, Sattenspiel and Stoops 2009, Walker 2001). While these studies present detailed descriptions of the space itself, a lack of understanding of the ways in which these cemeteries contribute to the social processes of history provides little more than a confirmation of what was already known. They contrast with studies that confront the more difficult task of using cemeteries for historical research, with the pivotal sense that people's engagement in funerary activities or their interactions with mortuary landscapes are active social processes that are connected with and contribute to broader historical and cultural patterns and structures (cf. Keswani 2003, Morris 1987, Preston 2007). In making cemeteries a part of the context of change, not just a reflection of it, and the dead thereby one of the

mechanisms, these studies can interpret variability of mortuary behaviours as dynamic components of broader patterns and structural consistencies. This approach to deathscapes can take a variety of shapes. Conceiving of mortuary practice as fashion, for instance, including processes of adoption, emulation, saturation and obsolescence, recognizes agency, differential rates of change and large scale social patterns in the sequential phases of material change (Cannon 2005: 42, see also Cannon 1996). As such, the continuous transformation of funerary practice can only be understood in the context of historical development.

The relationship between time and mortuary landscapes is however complicated by interweaving threads of memory, heritage, and practice in addition to the tensions between rapid modification through the regular addition of new burials and slower processes of fashion and decay. However, temporality is repeatedly noted as lacking from traditional approaches to landscapes, including cemeteries. There is a tendency to treat monumental features in the landscape as static, neglecting an understanding of refiguring, subversion and improvisation; however, “it is possible that mnemonic devices of these locales primarily resided in their constant processual rebuilding and refiguring as an ongoing process rather than being complete and finished works in their reconstructed totality” (Borić 2002:50). Similarly, Sayer (2010) has criticized archaeological approaches to time as having neglected the dimension within which people experienced each other and expressed each others’ identities in life course rituals like funerals, failing to recognize the fact that people buried within a cemetery would have participated in each other’s lives and burials and the impact that this would have on the reproduction and

transformation of funerary traditions over time. Both scholars call for a finer chronological scale to be able to link people and practices.

Nonetheless, an emphasis on temporal, spatial and material context in understanding practices and interactions can be detected in a handful of studies that look at recurrent social practices, the ways in which they reify and change the social system and the strategies of people who used cultural and material resources to restructure the system (cf. Barrett 1990, Lucy 1998). This has led to a multitude of approaches to the ways in which practices engaged with cemeteries, including commemoration, mourning, pilgrimage and ancestor worship, construct space and at the same time reproduce or modify the social system and meanings within which they exist (cf. Margry 2008). Laviolette's (2003) ethnohistorical/ethnographic analysis of Cornish identity through landscapes of death is framed upon the premise that these spaces both contribute to and reflect changing, multi-vocal identities throughout prehistory and history. However lacking a more refined understanding of the connections between different periods, Laviolette falls short of truly recognizing the temporality of these landscapes by lumping long sequences into static snapshots and losing sight of the processes that lead from one material practice to another.

Chapman (2000) better captures the fluidity and dynamic nature of the processes connecting changing practices, meanings and systems by emphasizing the multiscalar traditions that created burial sequences and their relationship with the landscape in Hungarian Neolithic burials (see also the use of sequence in constructing histories in Higham and Thosarat 1994). Similarly, McGuire's (1981, 1988) analysis of historic

cemeteries in New York demonstrates that monuments and cemetery structure reflecting different and often contradictory attitudes, such as the expression of inequality, or changing social and economic conditions, were visible on a day-to-day basis, sometimes even side by side within the same cemetery. This material incongruity constructs and reinforces modern ideologies in their perceptions of the past and the present (McGuire 1988:467). By conceiving of cemeteries as components of long-term historical processes not just punctuated burial events, and by approaching them from an empirical study on a larger scale, deathscapes can be employed in the construction of historical narratives pertaining to much longer time periods and much broader issues than has previously been attempted.

Finally, while the performative, interactive and communicative values of funerary ritual have been recognized by archaeologists for about four decades (Brown 2007; for examples in mortuary archaeology, see MacDonald 2001, Moore 2006, Tarlow 1997, 1999), its role in constructing culture and identity has yet to be sufficiently engaged with. Existing frameworks associated with identity construction through habitual reinforcement via *habitus* or daily practice, fundamental elements in the study of technology and household, are inadequate in irregular ritual contexts, and the idiosyncratic and unstable nature of burials due to their irregular timing has been highlighted elsewhere (Chapman 2000, Mizoguchi 1993). This does not however undermine the suggestion that partaking in funerary activities is a significant and necessary component of identity, even if there is some variability from one death to the next. By nature of its emotional, social, economic and even political significance, in addition to religious ideals of sacredness or reverence,



death provides for very particular social interactions and sensory experiences that contribute to memory, social networks and structures.

Inherent in this observation is the idea that a change in funerary practices must also result in a change in meaning by modifying the experience or the social networks that are enacted. The localized and continuously changing nature of ideas about burial treatment have been documented in many contexts (cf. Lucy 1998) and lack of change is also seen to be the result of active behaviour and resistance. The implications of these changes for the construction of identity, personhood and self have been touched upon in some cases (cf. Blake 1999, Brück 2001, Sørensen and Rebay 2008) but are rarely expanded upon as a meaningful context in which to examine the historical processes of identity construction. Generally, changes in funerary practice are interpreted as resulting from or a symptom of identity crisis in situations of culture contact, conquest, assimilation or other disruption, rather than a contributing mechanism to broader processes of cultural change because the cultural treatment of the deceased continues to be seen as a reflection of identity rather than necessary for its maintenance and negotiation. For instance, in Blake's (1999) examination of ritual and mortuary practices in Sardinia from the second millennium to first millennium BC the chaotic mixture of traditional and radically new practices is interpreted as a reflection of identity crisis. While Blake is interested in identity formation dynamics within transition period Sardinia, she implicitly assumes that social identity is being transformed elsewhere resulting in changes in funerary practice to fit. In the evidence presented, it is also possible to suggest that funerals and burials were in fact a necessary element in

transforming social identities and were active and meaningful components of cultural interaction.

### **The Deathscapes Research Project**

With these considerations in mind, this thesis project set out to explore the relationship between human experience and the maintenance and neglect of historic cemeteries to understand cultural constructions of mortality, mourning, history and identity. Although the widespread erection of durable funerary monuments, the establishment of perpetual care systems, and the legal safeguarding of burial grounds are motivated by ideals of permanent preservation, equally active forces of forgetting and destroying are discernible in graveyard vandalism, neglect of responsibilities toward the dead, and conscious demolition of mortuary landscapes. What facilitates or stimulates the transitions between or the simultaneous existence of acts of remembering, forgetting and destroying mortuary spaces? The starting hypothesis focussed on the role of experience of landscapes as a significant influence in the historical trajectories of these spaces and understood the accumulation of sequences of actions to be integral in transforming both the cemetery space itself and the ways in which the living related to these places and the dead. Without an understanding of individual experiences and engagement with deathscapes, it would be impossible to fully grasp the connection between micro-scalar actions and broader structural patterns. The goals of this research were:

- 1) An exploratory engagement with methods for recording and analyzing aspects of experience in the past both qualitatively and quantitatively

- 2) To engage in long-term landscape analysis combined with material, archival and ethnographic methods in order to construct a detailed and chronologically-complex interpretation of a cemetery landscape
- 3) To better understand how processes of commemoration, maintenance, neglect, destruction and renewal are interrelated and contribute to a composite landscape
- 4) To develop a sense of the temporality of historic cemeteries at multiple scales, from chronologies of individual lifetimes and experiences to broader trends and developments
- 5) To contribute to frameworks for understanding how monuments and cemeteries and their materiality are implicated in social processes

With these goals in mind, a local historic cemetery was selected for analysis. Hamilton Cemetery, established in 1847 in Hamilton, Ontario, presented the opportunity to tackle all of these goals due to its accessibility, long history of engagement with the living community and complex physical history. The intensive investigation of Hamilton Cemetery was paired with comparative analysis of both prehistoric and historic cemetery landscapes to better contribute to an understanding of how these concepts and frameworks apply to a much longer and more diverse history.

In documenting the life history of Hamilton Cemetery, including its physical transformation and the social relationships tethered to it, this research included spatial and material analysis to document temporal changes and activity-based space use. These data were paired with long-term documentation of daily and seasonal changes resulting from environmental conditions and human actions to explore the relationship between

landscape and behaviour. Archival records in conjunction with ethnographic study of people involved in habitual use of the cemetery were also used to reconstruct human interactions with the cemetery through time.

This thesis will develop our understanding of how humans interact with cemetery landscapes beyond the most evident funerary activities, which have long been the emphasis in archaeological contexts. A social history of space and place in these landscapes recognizes cemeteries as material accumulations of all past activities and as one of the primary spaces within which a society experiences death and memorialisation. By documenting the changing uses of these spaces in relation to acts of maintenance and neglect, and their material manifestations, it is possible to meaningfully interpret the relationship between experiences of deathscapes and sociocultural constructions and expectations of mortality, cemeteries and mourning. Deathscapes are mechanisms in the construction and negotiation of identity, heritage and attitudes towards death, rather than mere reflections of these processes. As such, cemeteries can be seen to influence commemorative practices while stimulating memory and later historical imagination and social engagement with the past.

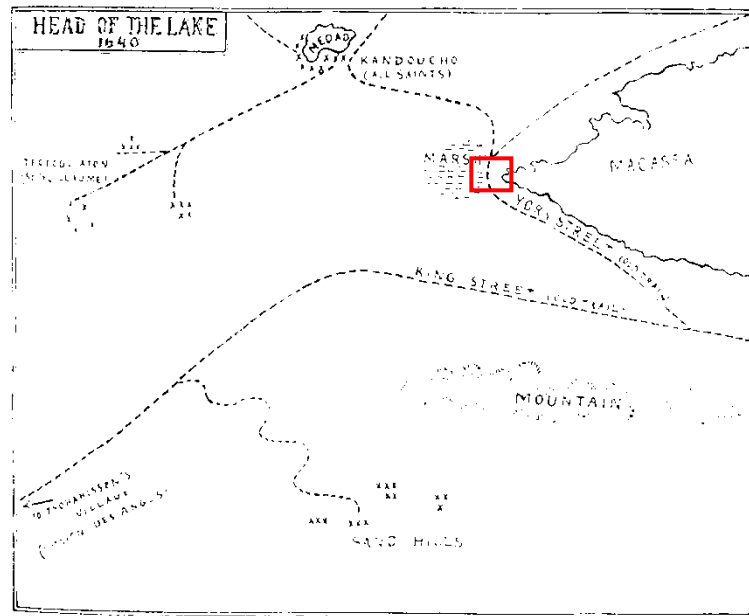
## **Chapter 2 – Hamilton Cemetery**

Following the conclusion of the War of 1812, eight men convicted of treason were hung from temporary wooden gallows set up near the ramparts that had been constructed on Burlington Heights (the northern extremities of modern-day Hamilton). After being cut down and beheaded, the executed were then buried in an unmarked mass grave, becoming the first occupants of what would become Hamilton Cemetery less than thirty years later. While the fate of these eight men had largely been forgotten by the time this space became a consecrated burial ground, the eroded remains of the fort stand as testament to a fascinating history. This is, however, only one of a series of human interactions with this landscape that have transformed it over time – shaping not only the physical place but also the experience that it provides, the memories associated with it and even future actions and attitudes. Traces of many of these transformations form the material composite that is the cemetery today. This thesis is a story about Hamilton Cemetery, but more significantly, it is a story about how people shape and are shaped by places of the dead and of the past, and how archaeologists can uncover these stories.

This chapter will introduce the lengthy history of the landscape in which Hamilton Cemetery was established and the ways in which this history influences the ever-changing use of space. Following a brief history of prehistoric and early colonial uses of Burlington Heights, the development of the cemetery will be outlined in detail. This will serve not only as an orientation to a temporally-complex landscape but also as an introduction to the activities, events and trends that contributed to the relationship between the Hamilton community and this cemetery.

### **A Landscape History of Burlington Heights**

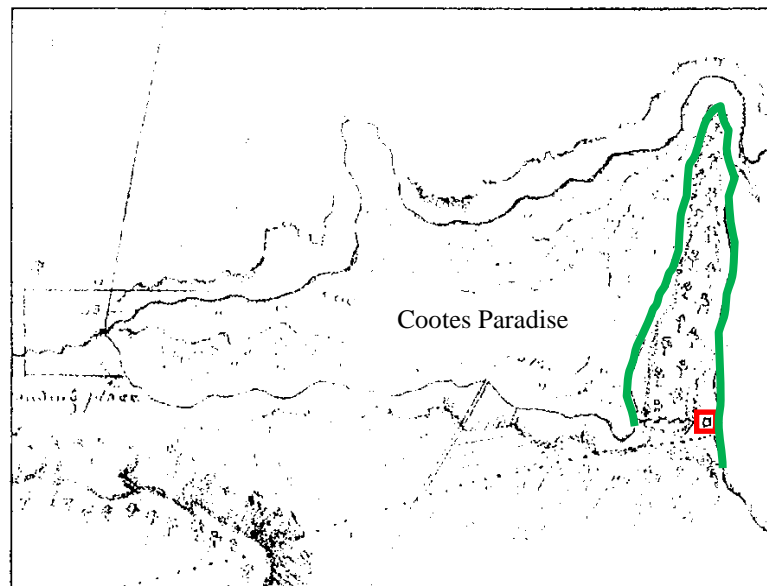
The Burlington Heights are a gravel ridge that once separated Lake Iroquois from the waters covering Dundas Valley, later serving as an important land route connecting the Niagara River area to northern Lake Ontario, and eventually York (modern-day Toronto). As an important geological feature, the Burlington Heights have been part of seasonal occupations of the region as far back as 9500 years ago and it was later used by the Mississauga and the Iroquois as part of their seasonal migrations (Ellis et al. 1990:65). Their trail provided the basis for the development of the first roads through this area (Figure 2.1) and what would eventually become York Boulevard, which defines the Heights today. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Mississauga had established a definite presence on Burlington Heights, following successive wars with the Five Nations of Iroquois. Historical records suggest that some Mississauga families spent as much as eight months a year on the Heights, hunting, gathering, fishing, growing crops and trading (Schmalz 1991, Smith 1987:3, 7-8). Despite the fact that many Europeans that moved into the region as early as the seventeenth century considered the land unoccupied, the Heights



**Figure 2.1** Map of the 'Head of the Lake' region in 1640 indicating the trails recorded by early French traders and missionaries, with the region of Burlington Heights marked in red (Burkholder 1938:17).

were an important point of orientation for the seasonal movements of many Mississauga families.

However, without evidence of occupation as the Europeans conceived of it (i.e. maintained and regular land use with the view to improve it), Richard Beasley, a Loyalist from New York, began squatting on the edge of the Heights by the 1780s. Beasley had recognized the strategic significance of Burlington Heights with a local native population to trade with, proximity to the lake to aid in the transshipment of furs and other goods, as well as the potential to develop side ventures including milling and land speculation. Heavily entrenched in European ideals of land development as a means of displaying one's status, Beasley immediately set to work 'improving' the Heights, and had largely cleared the land of most natural vegetation by the early 1790s (Figure 2.2). While Mississauga use of the Heights continued into the early nineteenth century, Beasley had



**Figure 2.2** Map of Cootes Paradise in 1793, including Burlington Heights (outlined in green) and a small square structure (red) at the base of the Heights, likely Beasley's original habitation (Triggs in McAllister 2002:124).

acquired full title to the land by 1798. He gradually exerted greater and greater control over the property through the establishment of his business and the enclosure of large portions of land for cultivation. Eventually, the Mississauga only temporarily camped on the Heights near Beasley's home in order to carry out trade.

Although Beasley is purported to have been an inept business man (Carter and Holland n.d.), this was a significant period of transformation of Burlington Heights as Beasley appears to have invested almost all of his irregular profits into the development of his property to sustain an image of material prosperity. This included the construction of a Georgian brick house on the top of the Heights (Figure 2.3), a garden, an enclosed field system for rye, hay and wheat, an orchard, outbuildings and a large wharf. The clearing of the land and the establishment of more controlled nature, including a stand of hardwoods in place of a natural forest of softwoods, completed Beasley's improvement of

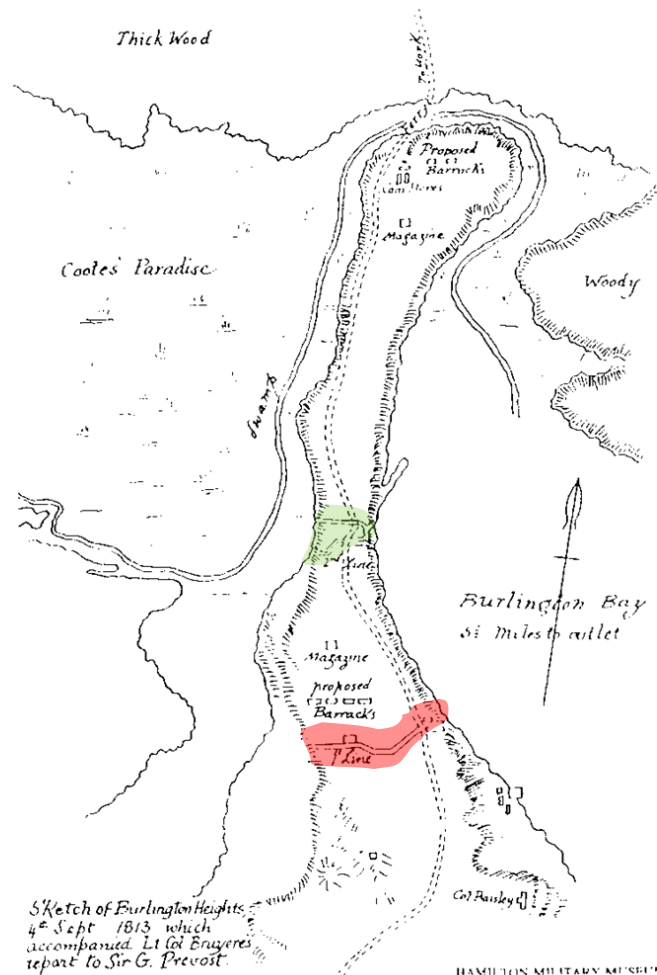




**Figure 2.3** Reconstruction of Beasley's Georgian brick cottage (Dundurn Castle Library in McAllister 2002:74).

the land. By 1800, he had accumulated the title to 976 acres on the Heights, 150 of which he had “under good improvement” (*Canadian Constellation* in McAllister 2002:69).

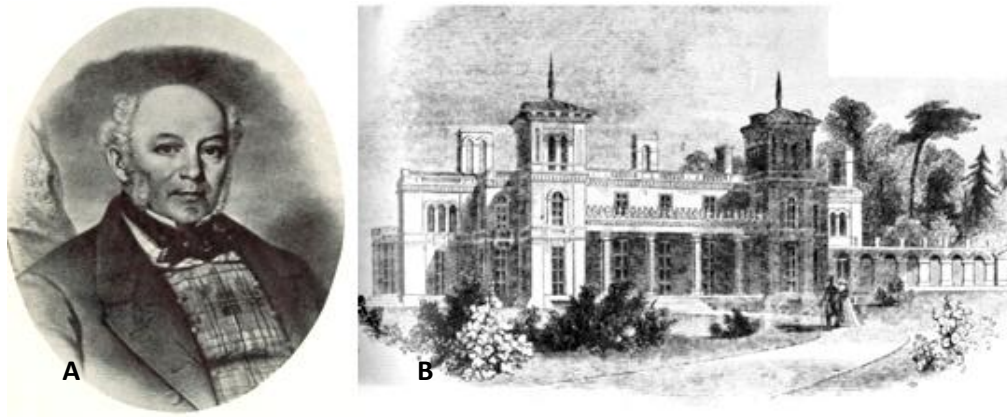
However, in the midst of both development and growing financial difficulties, Beasley's property was taken possession of by troops under the command of General Vincent during the War of 1812. Beasley and his family were forced to leave the premises, which were once again severely transformed by their new occupants. Following the Battle of Stoney Creek on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1813, the army retreated to and fortified Burlington Heights, considered to be a naturally defensible peninsula, and they held their position there until 1815. Large quantities of Beasley's hardwood were cut down in addition to the destruction of some of his fields and outbuildings for the construction of barracks, storehouses and fortifications. Most significantly, an existing earthen mound, likely constructed by Middle Woodland occupation of the Heights c. 2000 B.P., was enhanced to form the basis of the first earthen defensive wall, with a ditch and a *cheval de frises* (pointed wooden posts sunk in the face of the mound as an obstacle to attacking troops) (Figure 2.4) (McAllister 2002:92). However, concerns with the security of this first line of defence soon led to the construction of a second line a few hundred metres to



**Figure 2.4** Sketch of the fortifications at Burlington Heights in 1813, by Lt. Col. Ralph Bruyeres, with the first (red) and second (green) lines of defence indicated (Hamilton Military Museum in McAllister 2002:125).

the north. While the site had good natural lines of communication and connections to the navy, there were issues with the suitability and security of this position and following the end of the War of 1812, the site was abandoned.

After Beasley regained his land from the military, he continued his previous trends in land improvement until he was forced to sell it to John S. Cartwright in 1832 as a result of increasing debts. Cartwright immediately resold it to Allan Napier MacNab, a lawyer and politician, for £2500. MacNab dreamed of constructing a miniature version of



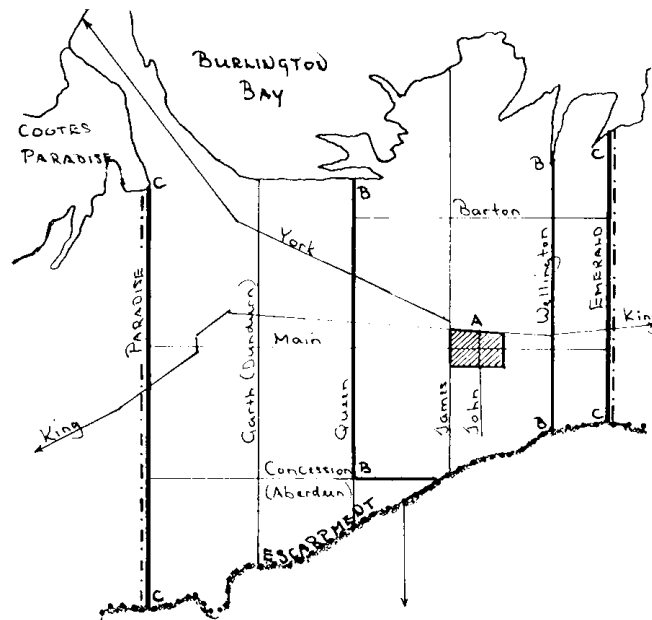
**Figure 2.5** A) Portrait of Sir Allan Napier MacNab. B) Illustration of Dundurn Castle from original plans (Burkholder 1938: 67).

his grandfather's estate in Scotland, the Dundurn (Figure 2.5). MacNab's 'Dundurn Castle' (as it is known today), built on the foundation of Beasley's home, was completed around 1835, though it continued to be modified and enlarged. Not unlike Beasley, MacNab is reputed to have spent more than he could afford on his abode as well as the lavish entertainment he gave there.

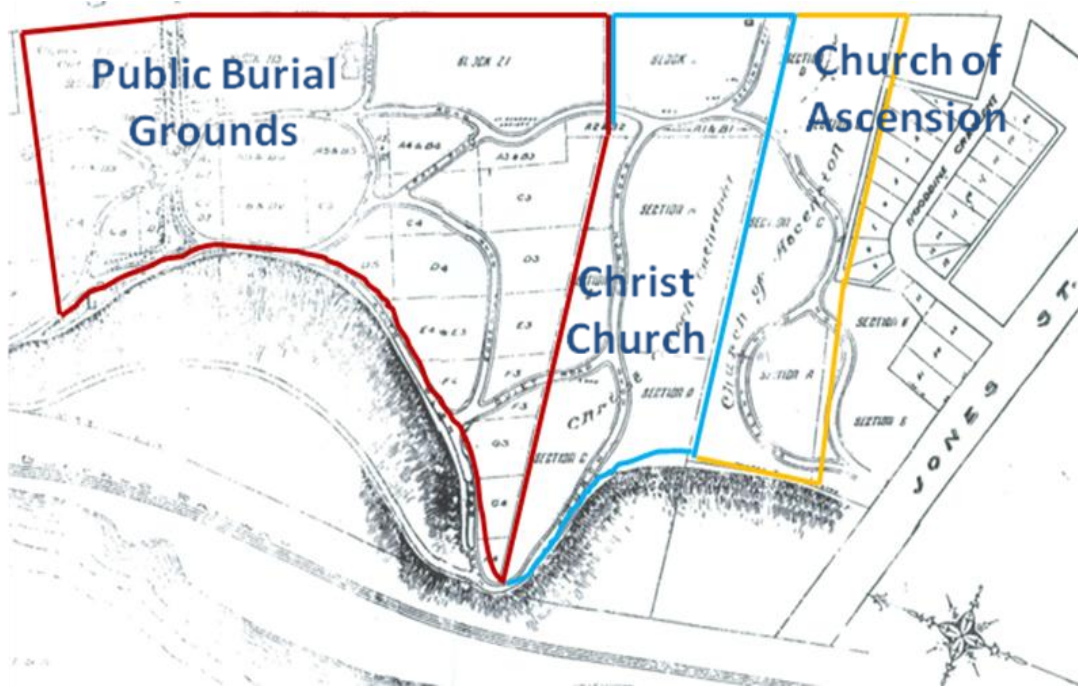
The City of Hamilton purchased Dundurn Castle in 1900 and it is now operated as a civic museum, with over 40 period-style rooms open to the public in addition to the Hamilton Military Museum which is housed in one of the outbuildings. More recently, the City has begun renovations of the gardener's house and a walled garden in order to add it to the museum's attractions. In addition to being open as a museum, Dundurn Castle is also used for weddings, photoshoots and other events, housing a banquet hall in the stable block. It has become an iconic component of Hamilton's heritage movement and is visible from many sections of Hamilton Cemetery, which sits across from it on York Boulevard.

## Hamilton Cemetery

In 1847, Sir Allan MacNab sold part of his large estate to the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral to serve as a graveyard after the Church Wardens recognized that their churchyard was becoming inadequate for the burial needs of a growing city (Figure 2.6). Soon after, Christ Church divided the land and sold 18 acres of it to the city for a public burial ground in 1848, and eventually a further 3 acres to the Anglican Church of Ascension in 1875 (Figure 2.7). It immediately became known as York Burial, and was “the place to go” (Elliott 1993), attracting the burgeoning Hamilton community as an integral social space to see and be seen. Formally opened as Burlington Cemetery, the three burial grounds were operated independently of one another, which is reported to have created a rather hodgepodge feel, with varying levels of maintenance and styles of landscaping.



**Figure 2.6** Map of Hamilton in 1846, highlighting the growth from the original town site in 1816 (A), to the town limits in 1833 (B) to the city limits in 1846 (C) (Manson 2003:16).



**Figure 2.7** Map of the original properties of Burlington Cemetery (Modified from Hamilton Public Library).

In its early years, the cemetery underwent a number of changes. In 1854, the Gate Lodge (known today as the Gatehouse) was constructed at the main entrance off York Boulevard (Figure 2.8). It was to be used not only as a residence for the caretakers, but also as a public waiting room and mortuary chapel. Concurrently, a cholera epidemic hit Hamilton and for two months the cemetery faced some of its heaviest traffic and an incredibly intensive burial regime. The quick disposal of the bodies, mostly in the public sections of the cemetery, would have as much of a lasting impact on the cemetery as the gatehouse, resulting in a large, grassy open area with few markers that contrasts with more saturated sections all around it. A later cholera epidemic resulted in a similar open space further north in the cemetery.

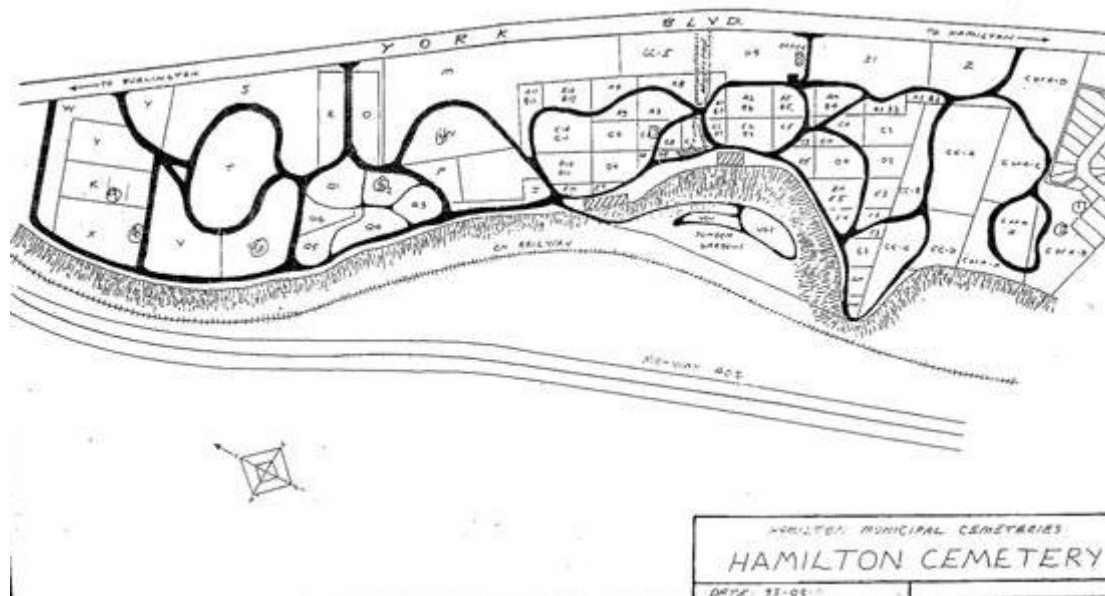


**Figure 2.8** A) Drawing of the Gatehouse prior to 1920, with its original wooden spire B) Photograph from the 1970s showing a stone structure replacing the spire (Hamilton Public Library, WTL Collection).

Finding it difficult to afford the maintenance, the Church of Ascension and Christ Church Cathedral eventually transferred the responsibility to the City of Hamilton, which was looking to expand the burial grounds to meet the demands of a growing, industrial centre. In 1892, after more than forty years of operating independently, the Municipality of Hamilton took over the care and maintenance of the entire property, which established the first municipally owned and operated cemetery in Canada. The name was then changed to Hamilton Cemetery, which was thought to be more fitting and to avoid confusion with the municipality of Burlington to the north. New regulations were immediately introduced to better mark burial plots and boundaries, limit the materials used for monuments to limestone, granite and marble, and to disallow the erection of fences or hedges around burials as well as the mounding of earth over burials. By 1899, the Board of Management of the Hamilton Cemetery was founded in order to deal with

the lack of uniform methods or systems governing the maintenance and administration of the cemetery, which had resulted from its initial three-way ownership. The Board's main goals were to "change the character and appearance of the old-fashioned cemetery into one more modern and park-like... by the removal of all obstructions, by a uniform general system of levels, and by authoritative supervision over and care of individual lots" (Hamilton Spectator 1901). The Board initiated projects to properly lay out the roadways, improve water and drainage systems, and install more systematic caretaking of both private plots and public sections. Despite some controversy regarding these modifications, the Board strongly advocated that, "what might be called sentimental objections... [had] to be overcome, and... that the whole care of the cemetery, both public and private, should be placed in the hands of the board" (Hamilton Spectator 1901). In 1916, a system of perpetual care was introduced to help with this responsibility, by which a percentage of the lot price was set aside for its continued upkeep post-burial.

The cemetery itself continued to expand northward to run almost the length of Burlington Heights. In 1867, prior to the unification of the three properties, the city had bought an additional 9 acres. From that point on, purchases of Crown Land or private acquisition of land continued, including two properties from the Roman Catholic Diocese in 1891 following the opening of the Catholic Cemetery on Plains Road, Burlington. In 1929, the last annex was opened – the Sunken Garden. This 3-acre burying ground was opened on the edge of Cootes Paradise, providing an additional 1200 graves, and rounding off the property of Hamilton Cemetery at 100 acres (Figure 2.9). A foot and road entrance was added as the Garden is located down a steep slope from the rest of the



**Figure 2.9** Final property lines of Hamilton Cemetery, totalling 100 acres (Hamilton Public Library).

cemetery. There was also the addition of a sundial and ornamental pond, which was later filled in for safety as well as maintenance concerns (as a result of rocks being tossed into it at night “by children roaming across the cemetery”) (Hamilton Spectator 1960). New gates and fences were also installed in the 1950s to help regulate the closing time and curtail vandalism.

Having maximized the expansion of Hamilton Cemetery, the Board was in the process of opening new cemeteries by the late 1930s, including East Lawn Cemetery, as well as having annexed the cemeteries of adjoining towns, such as Bartonville Cemetery, Stoney Creek Cemetery, Burkholder Cemetery and St. Peters Cemetery. However, the maintenance and use of Hamilton Cemetery continues today. While all the plots within the cemetery have been purchased, burials continue to take place, though at a swiftly declining rate. Today, there are over 21, 500 monuments that dot the landscape of



Hamilton Cemetery and continue to define the space, its uses and its relationship with living communities.

### **Studying Hamilton Cemetery**

Hamilton Cemetery represents many clear advantages and opportunities for study, which led to its selection for this research project. Location and accessibility were key concerns from the outset, to facilitate frequent visits throughout the year under many different conditions. Situated at the edge of Hamilton and never locked, Hamilton Cemetery fit the necessary characteristics to make this fieldwork feasible. Furthermore, the cemetery is one of the oldest and largest in the area allowing for a long history to be studied and in great detail. The comprehensive archival record, its continued use both for burial as well as other activities, and its connections to an emerging local heritage movement also made this cemetery ideal. Finally, as previously mentioned, the trajectory of this cemetery from three independent cemeteries, to the first municipal cemetery, to its current state of transition to inactive cemetery created a dynamic context in which to pursue the goals of this study.

Through the selection of Hamilton Cemetery, I was able to thoroughly document the cemetery's history for a complete year as well as use material, archival and ethnographic research to take advantage of the greatest time depth possible. The emerging data allowed me to engage with issues of landscape, material culture, time and change, emotion and experience, memory and heritage. Because cemeteries represent a principal venue for learning about death and interacting with the dead, and because in many cases they are visible, easily accessible components of the landscape, these spaces shape

attitudes and these attitudes in turn shape the space itself. The emerging narrative captures the trajectory of cemeteries from their emergence as pragmatic, formalized social spaces constructed for the dead, to the saturation of the medium and a demographic shift creating a disconnect that results in a level of neglect and devaluing of the space, to its revitalization as a heritage-based collective past to be valued and preserved.

### **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

As a result of the issues and concerns with existing methods for accessing experience, phenomenology, historical development, and multi-scalar phenomena, outlined in Chapter 1, the methodology in this research project was largely exploratory. This thesis then is as much a story of Hamilton Cemetery and the social processes associated with cemeteries, as it is an examination of appropriate methodologies for reconstructing these landscapes. Using existing phenomenological and historical studies as a jumping off point, this research faced the challenge of documenting chronologically and materially complex landscapes in meaningful ways to access changing experiences of place in the past and the present. Using a unique combination of photographic reconstructions of the landscape through time, quantitative and statistical analysis, textual and photographic research, and engagement with contemporary communities, it was possible to begin to access these important phenomena throughout the cemetery's history.

An approach to historical development is necessarily predicated on reconstructing the greatest time depth available to observe a full historical trajectory. To make use of the longest possible life history of Hamilton Cemetery, my methods were threefold: 1) archival research; 2) archaeological material and landscape analysis; and 3) ethnography.

Through their combination, I was able to amass relatively comparable data for Hamilton Cemetery from its establishment through to the present. The results of this intensive study of Hamilton Cemetery demonstrate that a more dynamic understanding of deathscapes is accessible when they are approached from the scale of human experience and interaction with material landscapes through time.

### **Archival Research**

A range of textual and visual records were available for this research project. Newspaper articles from the *Hamilton Spectator* and the *Herald*, housed at Hamilton Public Library's Department of Local History and Archives, were the most substantial written records employed. More recent newspaper articles were also available through online databases. These sources were invaluable not only for chronicling events in the cemetery's history, including changes in administration and vandalism, but also as a gauge for public interest in the cemetery. Secondly, some cemetery records and publications were accessible, including regulations, rules, and city ordinances. These were employed to indicate attitudes and what was deemed appropriate behaviour strongly 'suggested' to visitors. They are also useful as an indicator of inappropriate behaviours that were actually occurring, based on the principle that rules are generally created to modify existing behaviours. The combination of newspaper articles and cemetery records produced a strong suggestion of changing values and interests associated with the cemetery, while providing a tight chronology of major events in the cemetery's history.

In addition to these textual archives, the archived photography collection housed at the Department of Local History and Archives, and most recently made accessible

online through a digital collection database, was a crucial resource for the reconstruction of a visual history of Hamilton Cemetery. These photographs are from the collections of local photographers as well as recordings of outings of the Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society and other active historical groups in the area. Images from this collection date back as far as the 1850s and thus represent an integral component of my research. These were heavily drawn upon in conjunction with my own landscape analysis to help reconstruct the development of the space throughout the cemetery's history.

### **Material and Landscape Analysis**

Analysis of the cemetery itself made up the bulk of this research project. Fieldwork was designed with two separate intentions: 1) to document daily and seasonal changes in the cemetery for a complete year; and 2) to document evidence of changes in the cemetery since its establishment in 1848. Limited archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork was also carried out at other contemporary and historic cemeteries as a basis for comparison of historical trajectories.

#### *Material Documentation*

In designing my fieldwork, it became evident that common recording practices targeting individual monuments would not be a sufficient means of documenting this dynamic landscape to address the principal research questions. In order to reconstruct the physical development of this cemetery, it was necessary to find methods of quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing the cemetery through time at a level compatible with human perception of space and place. Inspiration for moving beyond monuments as the unit of analysis was taken from GIS approaches to landscape, and in particular the methods

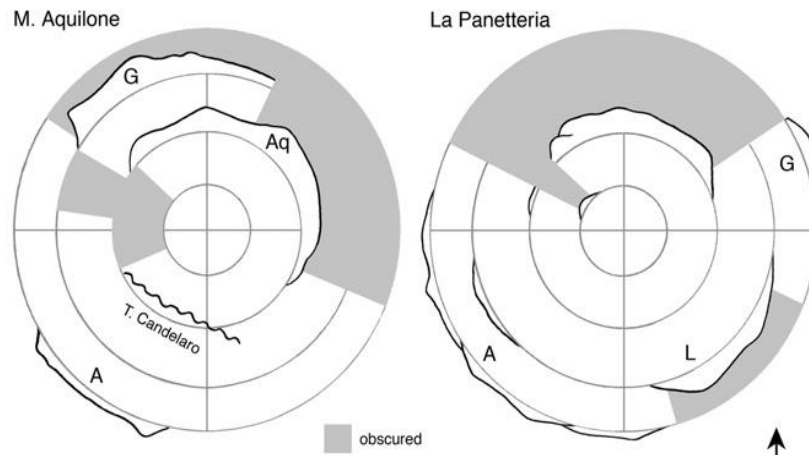
published by Hamilton et al. (2006). This detailed methodology for recording archaeological landscapes places emphasis on familiar and everyday experience, making it an ideal foundation for my study. Although cemeteries are typically classified as ritual rather than everyday, I would argue that principals of studying the familiar or habitual are equally applicable in these deathscapes due to the routine visitation of graves and the significance of these interactions to developing cultural understandings and experiences of death. Hamilton et al. suggest that habitual experiences in domestic or every day environments is connected to the sights, sounds and smells of the immediate landscape, which can be documented, analyzed and compared by breaking them into units compatible with human perception (2006: 35). A consideration of the relationship between Italian Neolithic to Iron Age village sites and the landscapes surrounding them produced circular imaging techniques to represent major features, visibility and accessibility. However, its development on the relatively featureless locales these prehistoric village settlements turned out to be problematic in this context.

Nonetheless, the concept of the ‘viewscape’, based on a 360° circular view to represent three-dimensional space, was borrowed for this study in order to break up a large cemetery into manageable units of analysis while also taking into account the experiential goals of this research. Based on the concept that we look around rather than at, mapping landscapes from a single, central standing point is the best means of representing visual perception because:

the impression of circularity is the *modus operandi* for registering human vision... Human visual perception defines a circle wherever the standing body is positioned. This is self-evidently the outcome of the human body being able to turn through

360 degrees at any given fixed point, and the head being able to swivel through an arc of approximately 180 degrees (Hamilton et al. 2006:38).

Hamilton et al. pursued this concept by drawing detailed figures of circular views of their village sites (Figure 3.1), transforming the landscape into simple, graphic models that could easily be reproduced and compared. In approaching Hamilton Cemetery, this method proved to be too challenging given the complexities of a landscape cluttered with thousands of monuments, trees and other features, as most modern cemeteries are. However, a camera placed on a tripod was found to record this same 360° visual perception more quickly and easily, and therefore photography was used to document viewsapes in Hamilton Cemetery. This modification of Hamilton et al.'s methodology made the study of a number of different viewsapes throughout the cemetery feasible in a relatively short period of time and also allowed for their repeated documentation throughout the year to represent seasonal changes. Finally, it produced a more detailed recording of other valuable aspects of the viewscape beyond visibility, including colour, form and shadow.



**Figure 3.1** Two circular views produced to document visual perception from their centerpoints. Shading represents areas that are obscured or invisible from a central standpoint (Hamilton et al. 2006:41).

Because the number of viewscales within a space as large as Hamilton Cemetery is almost infinite, a sample of twelve viewscales was selected (Figure 3.2). The majority of these were evenly dispersed throughout the cemetery to represent its entire chronology, taking into account its gradual expansion northwards. This was necessary to explore cemetery development and transitions in design and practice over time. A few viewscales were strategically placed to capture significant features, such as the earthworks and mausoleums of Viewscape 5 and the veteran memorials of Viewscape 12. These sought to explore the impact of natural landscape features as well as particular historical events on the processes evident in the rest of the viewscales. Together, these viewscales represent the different timing and rates of development that produced the cemetery landscape that exists today, and are therefore associated with different burial fashions, experiences and regulations, in addition to different types of engagement with the landscape (Table 3.1). The sample size and procedures were considered to be indicative of cemetery-wide processes, where observations were consistent across viewscales. Processes that were observed solely in anomalous viewscales were considered indicative of viewscale-specific occurrences and influences.

Working from a Spring level of visibility, because it represents the least obstruction from trees, snow, leaves, etc., all visible monuments within a given viewscale were recorded in order to analyze the viewscales as a whole. Emphasis was placed on dates of monuments, to create a temporal sequence for each viewscale. This also enabled documentation of the physical components of the monuments that most impacted visual perception of the space, including height, material and style.



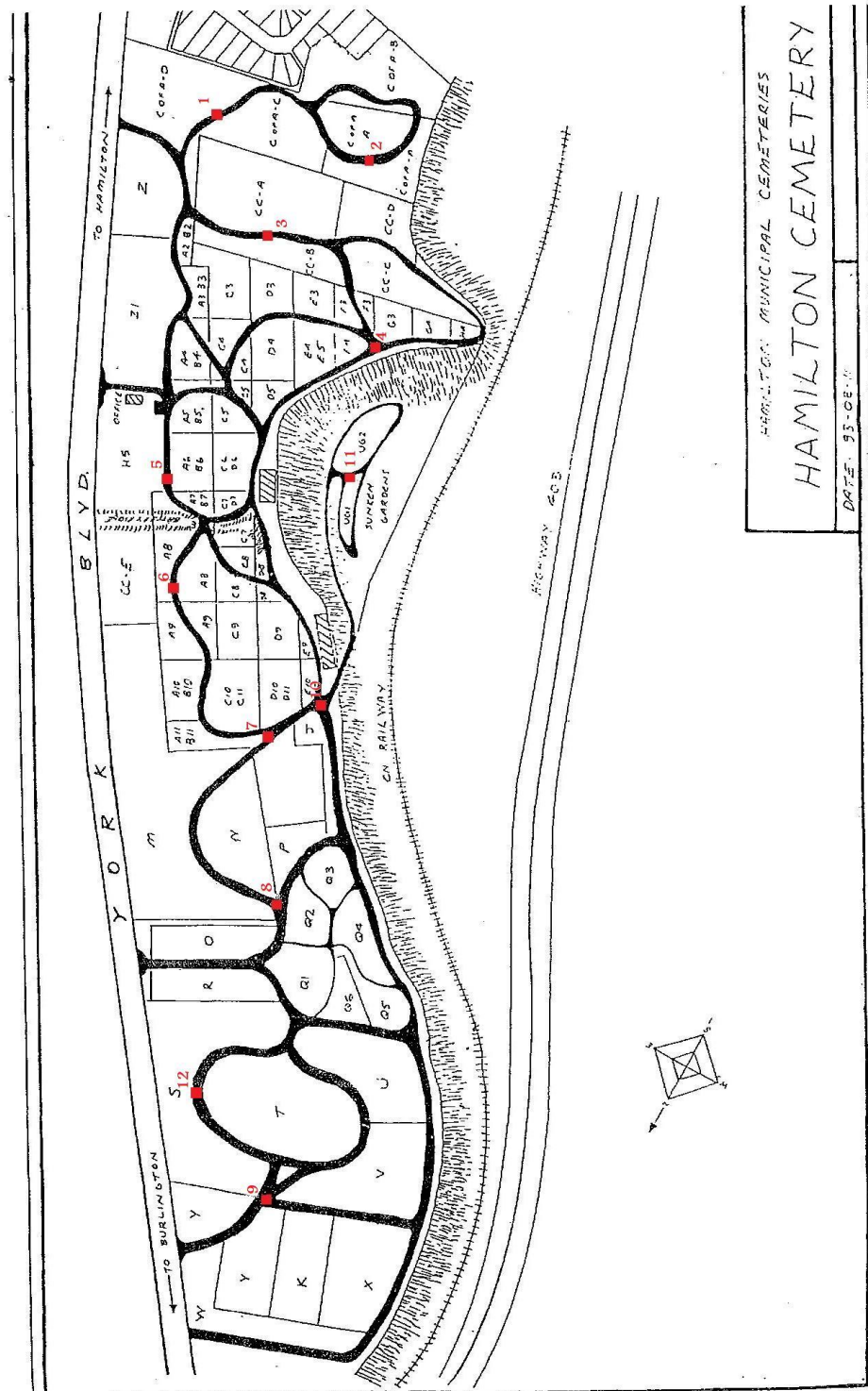


Figure 3.2 Map of center point of the twelve selected viewsaps within Hamilton Cemetery.

**Table 3.1** Characteristics and date range of the 12 viewscales.

<b>View-scape</b>	<b>Total Monuments</b>	<b>Earliest Monuments</b>	<b>Latest Monuments</b>	<b>Peak Usage</b>	<b>Most Visible Features</b>
1	295	1850	1997	1880-1899	Dundurn Castle, houses
2	335	1848	1979	1890-1909	houses, escarpment, trees
3	459	1848	1992	1870-1909	houses, maintenance bldg
4	338	1850	1995	1870-1889	Cootes, large monuments
5	180	1852	1992	1870-1909	Mausoleums, Gatehouse
6	352	1854	1992	1870-1919	Mausoleums, building
7	326	1862	2006	1900-1919	building, Cootes
8	302	1875	2002	1900-1919	Cootes, large monuments
9	327	1893	1995	1919-1929	Cenotaph, Cootes
10	207	1860	2006	1900-1909	Cootes, Sunken Garden
11	151	1930	2001	1930-1939	Stairs, cliff, train tracks
12	388	1908	2008	1920-1929	Vet mems., York Blvd
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3660</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>1870-1919</b>	

The height of monuments affects perception of the crowdedness of a given section, as well as visibility and focal points. Monuments were recorded as being flat, short, medium, tall or extra tall. While this measuring system is very general, it was based roughly on the impact that a monument would have on experience, visibility and viewing, whether it was barely visible among the grass, required you to crane your neck to look at it, or blocked views or movement. Flat monuments were those laid flush with the soil or that only protruded a few inches; these had the least impact on visual perception of space. Short monuments were those that were no taller than knee level; while visible, these monuments were unlikely to obstruct views of other monuments or give the sense of obstructing movement. Medium monuments were those that were between knee and

shoulder height; they tended to have a more significant impact on the sense of crowdedness or obstruction of space and visibility. Tall monuments were shoulder height to just above one's head; while obstructing visibility and movement, these monuments tended to require the least craning or bending to be read by passersby. Extra tall monuments were those that were much taller than the average person; these required substantial craning to view the whole monument, particularly up close, but also tended to be visible from further away. In some cases, there were older monuments that had been laid flat (due to breakage or other damage) but had evidently once been standing. In these cases the estimated height when standing was recorded, but its current state was also documented to gauge cumulative decay.

The material from which monuments were manufactured was also recorded. This was seen to not only impact visual perception but also durability, which affected the condition and decay of monuments. This variable was impacted by fashion, but it was also increasingly limited by administrative regulations. The vast majority of monuments were made of either marble or red or grey granite. In some cases, metal, sandstone, limestone, concrete and combinations of stone were also recorded. Where material could not be confidently assigned, due to damage or plant/lichen coverage, the colour of the material was recorded where possible; otherwise these monuments were not included in analyses of material.

Finally, the general style of the monuments was also recorded. This variable impacted uniformity or diversity within a space. Although there is an incredible level of diversity in the style of monuments erected, particularly during the Victorian era,

categories were based on simplified groupings of styles, once again largely based on their visual impact on perceptions of the space. Monuments were recorded as being slab, complex slab, three-dimensional sculptural element, obelisk/column, structure (mausoleums/crypts), or as other, in cases in which monuments did not fit into any of these categories or where style could not be confidently assigned due to damage.

Following the recording of these variables for each monument within each viewscape, the overall composition of individual viewscales was examined through time. Each variable was analyzed both as the total number added and the cumulative number existing in a viewscape in 25-year increments. The 25-year increments was used as an exploratory unit, rather than a meaningful component of patterns. Once patterns were discerned at this scale, alternative methods, including statistical analysis, were used to refine the temporal scale. The overall dataset was simplified to aid in this refinement, reducing the variables and features of monuments within a viewscape to a single variable indicating their overall impact.

The physical components of the monuments, including but not limited to height, material and style, were combined to create a monument impact index, where monuments were categorized as high, medium or low impact based on their attributes and how well they stood out in the landscape. This hierarchy was evaluated on a case-by-case basis, to be able to take into consideration the unique features of individual monuments as well as their context and history. This flexibility in classification best represented the connection between perception and impact, as features of monument design do not stand alone in dictating visibility, but rather time and space are also major features. Classifying all of the

monuments in this study according to their impact in the landscape made it possible to analyze the overall composition of each viewscape both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. This allowed for the study of changing trends in investment and elaboration of monuments in the context of how they would have been experienced or perceived in the cemetery.

Viewscope analysis also involved digital manipulation of photographs to reconstruct images of how each viewscape might have appeared in different periods. Using digital photography software (Photoshop), monuments were incrementally removed from the 360° panoramas taken in Spring 2010 (again representing the greatest visibility). It is recognized that this can only create an estimation of what the cemetery might have looked like at some point in the past, due to changes that are no longer visible today, such as monuments, trees, and other features that have gradually been lost or removed over time. Where possible, further features were transposed from archival photographs of the cemetery in order to help confront this issue. Regardless, this visual history proved to be essential in truly understanding the development of the cemetery and how this would have impacted viewers' perceptions. The digital manipulation of photography of Hamilton Cemetery, in combination with material analysis and archival research, enabled the investigation of the visual landscape in short developmental sequences, rarely available to the archaeologist. Combining the more 'subjective' qualitative analysis of photography with the quantitative analysis of monuments produced multiple facets of the same story that contributed to a fuller understanding of cemetery landscape development, fashion and tradition, and agency and choice.

### *Daily and Seasonal Observation*

In calling for a different type of temporal understanding of landscapes, Bradley has underlined the limitations of typical approaches to landscape survey and study that focus on deeply stratified sites through excavation, arguing that no sequence of this kind could have actually been experienced in the past with the same directness (2003:153). Moreover, traditional recording procedures make us insensitive to features that impact perceptions and actions of people. The need for prolonged exposure to archaeological landscapes can help to stimulate research of multi-dimensional landscapes. A final facet of landscape analysis pursued in this research was therefore founded on long-term engagement with the cemetery in order to expand my own understanding of the space. In combining this type of reflexive landscape analysis with the aforementioned approaches to the temporality of viewsapes, it was possible to extend a consciousness of perception and experience into the past while maintaining a connection to the scale at which it would be experienced.

Daily and seasonal documentation of the cemetery was done through regular visits to the cemetery at different times of the day and in different weather conditions and seasons. Written recording of conditions in the cemetery (including data from all senses) was coupled with general photographic recording of the cemetery as a whole (Table 3.2). More intensive documentation of select areas of each viewscape sought to document in greater detail the changes that occur in the cemetery on a seasonal basis.

Local weather was recorded from online weather reports but was modified in the field if necessary. Special attention was paid to conditions, temperature, wind, humidity

**Table 3.2** Daily/seasonal observation recording form.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Start Time:</b>	<b>End Time:</b>
<b>Area:</b>		
<b>Temp.:</b>	<b>Weather:</b>	
<b>Other:</b>		<b>Photo#</b>
<b>Vehicles:</b>	<b>Pedestrians:</b>	
<b>Other Observations:</b>		

and visibility. Other observations made in the field included auditory observations (particularly with regards to level of noise from nearby York Boulevard and highways, but also noise from events at Dundurn Castle or within the cemetery, and natural noise such as birdsong). Numbers of vehicles and pedestrians were also counted during each visit to help gauge cemetery usage in relation to weather and time of day/season. Finally, any other observation impacting general experience of being in the cemetery during each visit was also recorded, including unusual sightings or experiences. These daily and seasonal changes were observed to have a major impact not only on the activities and use of the cemetery and its visual appearance, but also on the general impression or impact that this place had on visitors.

### **Ethnography**

Although some written records exist detailing the current administration, condition and use of Hamilton Cemetery, ethnography was used to get a fuller sense of contemporary community connections to the cemetery. Following ethics approval through

the McMaster University Research Ethics Board (Protocol 2010-008), I undertook ethnographic research on three levels. The first involved naturalistic observation of cemetery usage, that is, the study of behaviour in natural environments. The second was a widespread survey of cemetery users both in person as well as online through a questionnaire. Finally, a more detailed, long-term interview process was designed for individuals and groups that had greater or more long-term involvement with this cemetery and others.

Natural observation of cemetery usage was completed during every visit to the cemetery, including during monument recording and photography sessions (Table 3.3). Time, weather, and basic information regarding the individual or group of individuals was recorded. If evident, their activity was also noted, as well as whether or not they used paths, took breaks or were visibly interacting with the monuments. This was the first step in gauging who was using the cemetery, when and why.

The questionnaire, which drew on Francis et al.'s study of cemetery users and neighbours in London (2005:218-235), was designed to monitor routine usage of the

**Table 3.3** Natural observation recording form.

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Start Time:</b>	<b>End Time:</b>	<b>Weather:</b>
<b># of Ind., Sex and Age Grp:</b>			
<b>Activity:</b>			
<b>Path:</b> ____ Yes ____ No		<b>Break?</b> ____ Yes ____ No	
<b>Interaction:</b>			



cemetery in greater detail in addition to measuring the impacts that such visits had on users. Participants were asked a series of 12 questions, as well as optional personal information including age, gender and occupation. The questions involved frequency of use, purposes of visits and timing. They also asked about memories of past visits to the cemetery, comparability to other cemeteries and individual knowledge of the history of the cemetery. Finally, participants were asked their opinions about the future of Hamilton Cemetery and how it should best be managed. The questionnaire targeted recreational users of the cemetery, rather than individuals visiting graves. Some individuals were approached in the cemetery while others were invited to participate through online forums and discussion boards relating to Hamilton heritage, genealogy, history and other interested parties. A total of 34 questionnaires were completed between July 19, 2010 and January 1, 2011.

It was hoped that through the interview process a detailed understanding of certain individuals more intimately tied to the cemetery and cemetery management could be ascertained. Unfortunately, while many parties connected to Hamilton Cemetery were contacted to participate in this study, including cemetery administrators, members of paranormal societies, and historical groups, only one individual agreed to take part in this component of the research. Robin McKee, of Historical Perceptions, who has run bi-weekly tours of Hamilton Cemetery for the last eight years, generously offered to participate and allowed me to take part in a number of his tours throughout the summer and fall of 2010. This fieldwork allowed me to interact with both tour goers and the tour guide, providing a better sense of current interests in the preservation of the cemetery as a

heritage space. Interactions with McKee also allowed me to better understand his goals in providing these free tours as well as his own background, experience and perspective of the cemetery. Additionally, a meeting with Bob Trimmer, Trustee and PR officer for Highgate Cemetery, London, United Kingdom, provided comparable data on administration, tours and use of that cemetery. While greater participation would have been greatly beneficial, the detailed pursuit of other components of my research program largely made up for this deficiency.

## **Results**

This methodology was specifically designed to provide the data from which to write a phenomenological history of human engagement with the Hamilton Cemetery landscape, from establishment through to its present status as a cemetery in transition between active and inactive use for burial. This history can be divided into three processes of maintenance, neglect and revival that have clear correlations with the development of the landscape and the attitudes of the community. To begin, the period from 1848-1950 demarks a period of active use and maintenance of the cemetery landscape. This period had the most significant impact on the physical landscape, and the frequency and recentness of burial dictated a high level of reverence, respect and maintenance. The second period spans 1950-1990, and is characterized by the emergence of vandalism, limited use of the space, and increasing cumulative decay. These factors contributed to an overall period of neglect, both active and passive, which peaked around the 1970s with an apparent lack of interest, aside from continued burial in some sections of the cemetery. Finally, the third and current period emerged in 1990 with a resurgence

of interest and a transition back into active management and maintenance associated with the value of a green space in urban Hamilton, as well as the local heritage value.

## **Chapter 4 – 1848-1950: The Making of a Cemetery**

The establishment of new burial grounds on Burlington Heights in the middle of the nineteenth century represents a significant shift in the funerary experience of Hamiltonians (Figure 4.1). In contrast to the increasingly cramped churchyards, these grounds were placed at the edge of town, with relatively open green space and near the illustrious abode of Sir Allan MacNab. The three new cemeteries were in keeping with the fashions emerging in England. Large garden-like cemeteries were being established to fit Victorian aesthetics and ideals of nature, death and mourning. This development also coincided with a shift in funerary culture that placed even lower class families under immense pressure to invest in elaborate funerary accoutrements, including stone monuments that were becoming more and more accessible in the region. Although the stimulus for these changes have been considered elsewhere (see below), the experience of these dramatic transformations have not been examined, nor have the lasting impacts that they had on deathscapes.

Because Hamilton Cemetery acquired new sections gradually over time, the viewsapes selected for this research present a unique opportunity to study the development of cemetery landscapes. Most importantly, they represent different periods



**Figure 4.1** Horse-drawn hearse in the expansive park-like setting of early Hamilton Cemetery (Hamilton Archives Blackmount Collection).

and therefore different trends, regulations and experiences without introducing the possibility of idiosyncrasies from stitching together multiple cemeteries to achieve the same temporal depth. It was however necessary to be able to deconstruct the viewscales as they exist today into analyzable sequences appropriate for recognizing both developmental and embodied histories of landscape. In so doing, it was possible to reconstruct the visual experience of each viewscape from its initial period of formation through to the present to understand the relationship between these changing experiences for cemetery users. The results highlight the impact that early commemoration within a viewscape can have on the choices made for later commemoration as well as the long-term influence that various other landscape features and historical events can have on cemetery development.

### **Making Hamilton Cemetery**

Although churchyard burial grounds remained the norm in many rural settings throughout the nineteenth century, the emergence of garden cemeteries in Britain in the 1820s and 1830s, and soon after in Canada and the United States, introduced new landscapes of death characterized by their large size, situation on the outskirts of town, and naturalistic style (Tarlow 2000:218). Scholars have proposed a range of reasons for this major shift in the venue for burial and commemoration, including sanitation and health concerns, foreign influences (primarily from Paris), religious dissent, the Victorian ideal of ‘improvement’ of land, display of status and sophistication, and changes in the expression of grief and sentimentality (Rugg 1998, Tarlow 2000). While the level of elaboration that characterized British garden cemeteries, including full-size replicas of Greek and Egyptian architecture (cf. Curl 2002:208-213), did not reach Canada to the same degree, the basic principles of extremely large, ‘natural’ landscapes for burial did become increasingly popular in the mid-nineteenth century.

Monument traditions and fashions were also heavily influenced by Britain and the rest of Europe, in addition to the influence of the United States (Hanks 1974:3). Between the 1830s and 1850s, professional monument carvers became increasingly established in Ontario, augmenting the quality, variety and complexity of monuments. While the majority of monuments erected in the last few centuries in Europe and North America are rectangular slab monuments, with varied linear outlines, there are also a large number of more sculptural monuments, particularly from the Victorian period, ranging from columns and urns to life-like busts and statues. These monuments can range from flat to

extremely tall (18-20 feet high), though on average they stand between three and a half to five feet tall. The most common materials are marble and granite, though limestone, sandstone, slate, wood, metal and concrete have also been used.

The period between the three cemeteries' establishment as the York Burial Ground in 1847 to their unification as the municipal Hamilton Cemetery in 1892 and their subsequent reorganization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had major implications for burial and space use. It is evident that the cemetery was designed and modified over time in accordance with the principles of landscape design, fashion and aesthetics. However, it also developed its own unique character as a result of its placement in Hamilton's landscape and early choices in commemoration.

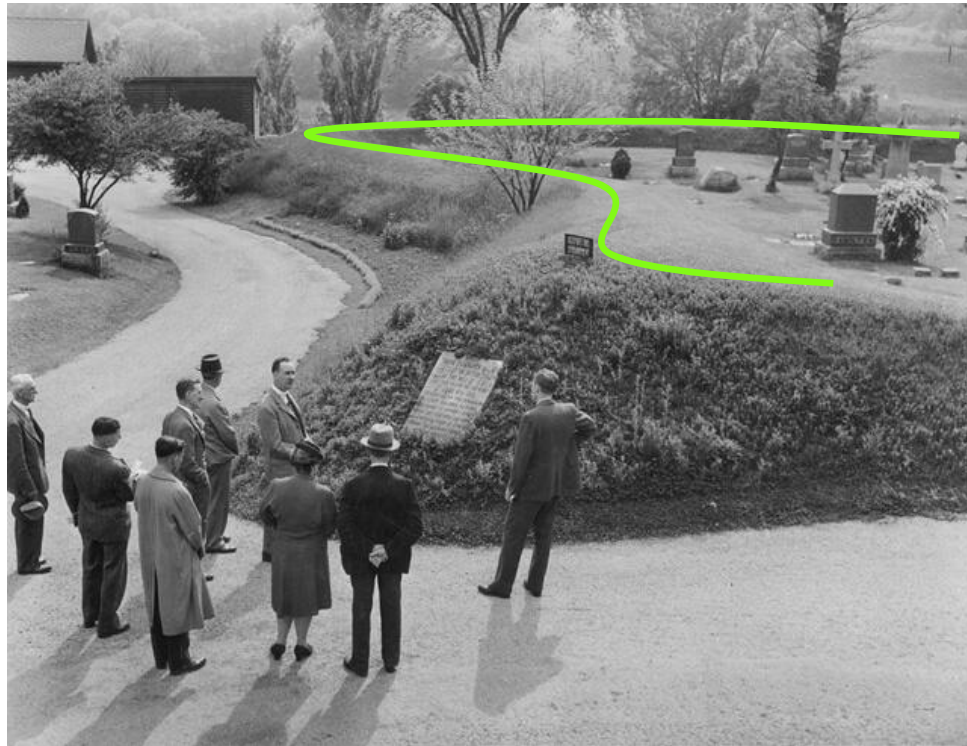
### **The Impact of Landscape on Cemetery Design**

Sandwiched between Cootes Paradise and Burlington Bay, Hamilton Cemetery's elevated position on Burlington Heights offers water views in two directions. It is also quite visible in the landscape and located on a major thoroughfare that has seen high levels of traffic throughout its history. Perhaps most significantly, however, is the impact that military occupation has had on the layout and design of the cemetery, including the fortifications from the War of 1812. The fortifications included two lines of defence defined by earthworks that were built by the military (see Chapter 2). While large sections of Hamilton Cemetery are relatively flat, the area between the first and second lines of defence contrast sharply in their low hills and valleys that break up visibility and shape pathways through the space. Many visitors presume that these grassy hills are natural phenomena, however they are in fact the remains ramparts. Although heavily

eroded today, these earthworks are still very visible and have shaped decisions in commemoration and design, as well as the experience of being in the cemetery (Figure 4.2). For instance, the winding roadways of Hamilton Cemetery fit with the principles of Victorian cemetery aesthetics, however many are influenced by efforts to work with the existing historic landscape.

Monument placement has further been affected by the earthworks. Initially burials were permitted on and approaching the earthworks meaning that monuments could be elevated to a more visible position or alternatively be largely obscured by them. Three structures in particular gained advantage by their placement on the ramparts (Figure 4.3). The mausoleums of the prominent Sanford, Tuckett, and Watkins families occupy ‘Millionaires’ Row’, as it is now known. The mausoleums were erected in the 1890s amidst protest against building tombs into the Lines, largely the work of the Wentworth Historical Society. Although the fort was relatively recent, it had already been incorporated into community heritage and represented a role the War of 1812 that Hamiltonians were proud of. The City Council eventually passed a resolution that the earthworks were to be preserved. Soon afterwards a plaque (visible in Figure 4.2) was posted on the ramparts to indicate to visitors the history behind them and to commemorate their military significance. Apart from keeping the ramparts largely intact, the very prominent position of the three mausoleums that had created the initial outcry was ironically also preserved by ensuring that no future monuments could crowd or overshadow them. To this day, the mausoleums are some of the most visible features of Hamilton Cemetery and have become familiar icons associated with the space.





**Figure 4.2** The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society in 1944, gathered around a remaining section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> defensive line, which have impacted road and monument layout (Hamilton Archives Black Mount Collection).



**Figure 4.3** The three most prominent mausoleums in the cemetery today, highlighted by their position on the ramparts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> defensive line (Spring 2010).

It is undeniable that the existing landscape and the principles of Victorian cemetery design had significant impacts both on the early formation of Hamilton Cemetery and on later development. The original layout of buildings, roadways and cemetery sections has remained largely unchanged and the cemetery today maintains the garden-like feel of winding paths and grassy fields. The ridge of the Heights, remains of

fortifications and other early landscape features also helped to direct the ways in which the cemetery developed as it grew and changed. However, these earlier features and cemetery landscaping were not the only phenomena influencing the character and history of Hamilton Cemetery, or the experience that it would provide for decades to come. The process of burying and commemorating the deceased also had major implications for future use of the cemetery.

### **Histories of Commemoration**

There has been intensive archaeological investment in constructing robust chronologies of all facets of funerary practice, yet there are still large gaps in our understanding of how these practices actually develop and transform. The complexities and dynamics of funerary practice were recognized early on in the work of Kroeber (1927) on methods of disposal of the dead in California. Struck by the irregularities and instability of practices and the contrasting distributions of different cultural traits, Kroeber classifies funerary practices as fashion, akin to dress, luxury and etiquette, rather than as basic biological or social needs, or as formalized or codified behaviours, instead recognizing consciousness and emotional toning (1927:314). While some have instead argued that this variability results from changes in the expression of grief and emotion (Tarlow 1998, 1999), perhaps the strongest and, in this case, most applicable adoption of Kroeber's view has been Cannon's (1989) comparative analysis of cyclical change in display and ostentation of mortuary behaviour. Cannon highlights that, in the context of sufficient historical depth, it is possible to observe consistent patterns of mortuary elaboration and simplification that correspond to increasingly competitive display to the

point of expressive redundancy, resulting in reduced effectiveness (1989:437). While Cannon's observations are clear at the level of large-scale cultural fashions, including Victorian-to-modern England, how would this dynamic have played out in individual cemeteries? Were these cycles perceptible on the micro-scale and what role did individuals play in creating them?

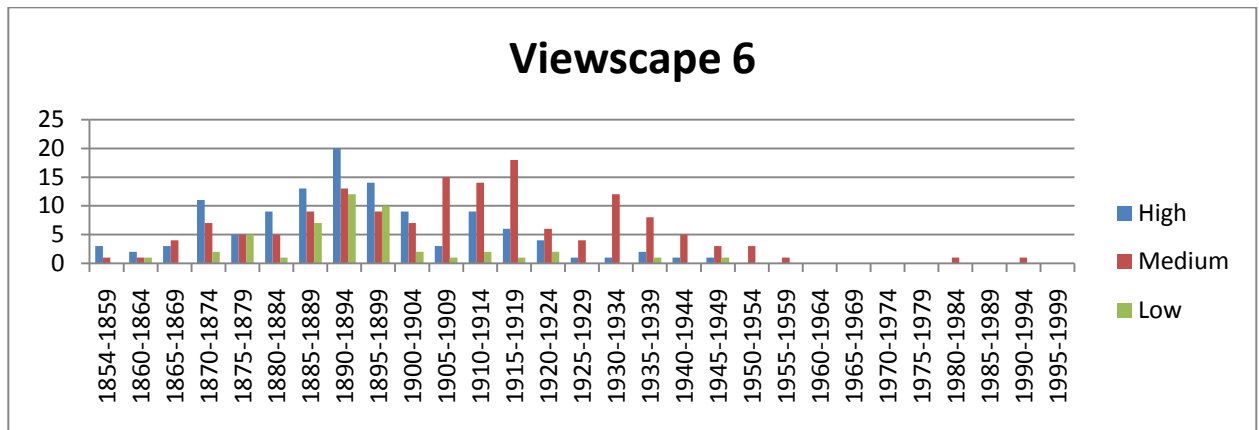
### *Seeing Change in Cemetery History*

Digital photographic reconstructions were produced to visualize the changing landscape in 25-year increments for each viewscape in Hamilton Cemetery (Figure 4.4, see also Appendix I). This technique immediately highlighted how quickly the general characteristics of each section were established and the lack of impact that later additions were able to create as a result of pre-existing monuments and features. These patterns would have been imperceptible without means of visualizing the historical trajectory of each viewscape. However, it was unclear from the images alone whether this was limited to the level of perception of space or whether this saturation of the landscape impacted choices in commemoration. To move beyond subjective impressions, determine if this pattern had real implications for the choices of individuals and interrogate it at a finer temporal scale, rigorous quantitative analysis examined the sequence of each viewscape's monument composition. This was based on a monument impact index, where each monument was assigned to a category of high, medium or low impact based on its height, material and style (see Chapter 3). The frequency of each category of impact was calculated for every viewscape and for the cemetery overall in five-year increments (Figure 4.5, see also Appendix II). Quantification demonstrated that there was a pattern of



**Figure 4.4** Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in a section of Viewscape 6, Hamilton Cemetery.





**Figure 4.5** Frequency of high, medium and low impact monuments erected in 5-year periods.

rise and fall in the use of elaborate, high impact monuments in Hamilton Cemetery, whereby increasing elaboration reached a point of saturation or expressive redundancy, followed by decline in use. However, this trend that is visible in individual viewsapes, does not temporally conform across the cemetery. That is, each individual viewscape followed an independent, micro-scalar process of elaboration, saturation and decline at different times. This suggests that individuals were reacting to the existing cemetery landscape in selecting monuments, which in turn contributed to later commemorative practices and the trajectory of the cemetery in general.

#### *Statistics of Commemorative Patterns*

Statistical analysis was used to further refine the pattern identified. The peak date for high, medium and low impact monuments was calculated in each viewscape, as well as for the entire cemetery, using the median year to represent the overall distribution of each category. In order to prove that these do not represent random distributions, the calculated peak dates were then compared to statistically expected peak dates; that is, the date at which a category of monuments should peak, based on the entire cemetery sample

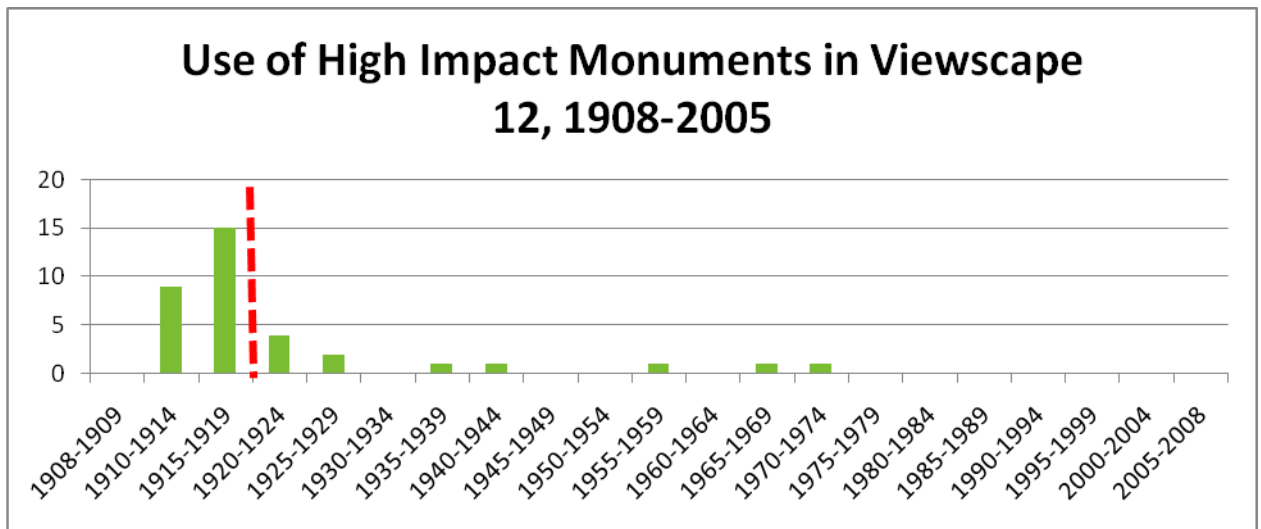
and given the temporal range for each viewscape (Table 4.1). If individuals were for the most part following broader fashion trends, the peak date for individual viewsapes should correspond more or less to the overall peak date for that impact category. However, this is not the case. Not only do some viewsapes demonstrate high use of elaborate monuments long past when they were declining in use overall, but more specifically the peak in use in individual viewsapes consistently falls either earlier or later than the statistically expected date depending on the date at which they were opened for burial. Sections that were opened for burial early on peak earlier than expected, likely riding the thrust of fashion and the impact of context. This thrust however meant that these sections reached a saturation point earlier on and use of elaborate monuments correspondingly declines, even though they were technically still fashionable on a larger

**Table 4.1 Comparison of Peak Date in Each Viewscape and Expected Peak Date**

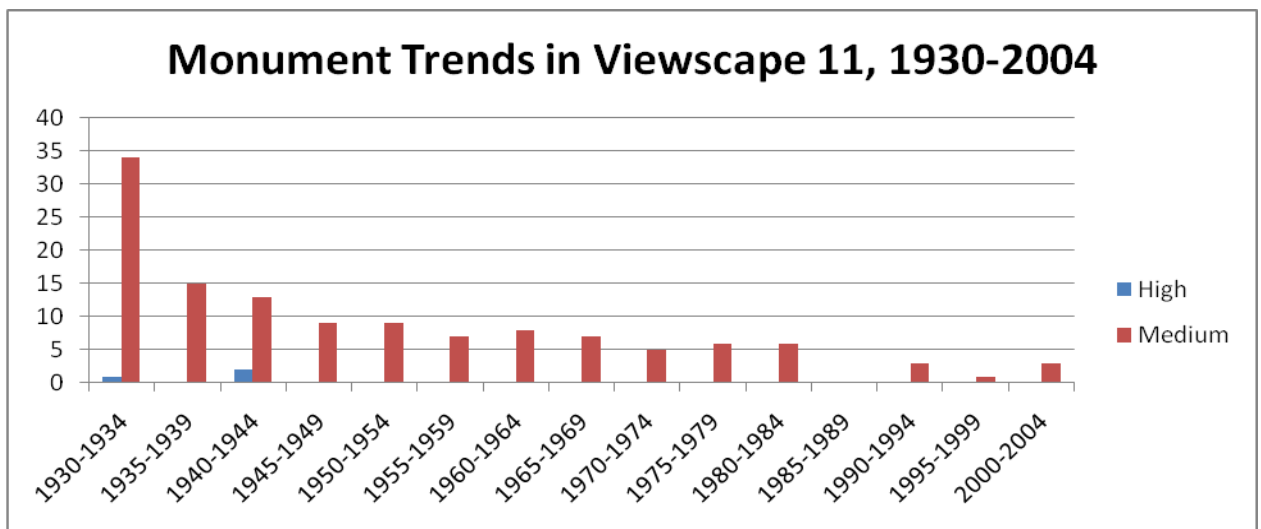
<b>Vscp</b>	<b>Actual Median Year</b>	<b>Expected Median Year</b>	<b>Diff.</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
<b>4</b>	1879	1895	-11	1848
<b>3</b>	1885	1895	-10	1848
<b>1</b>	1890	1895	-5	1848
<b>5</b>	1891	1895	-4	1852
<b>6</b>	1892	1896	-4	1854
<b>2</b>	1898	1895	3	1848
<b>10</b>	1902	1897	5	1860
<b>7</b>	1903	1897	6	1862
<b>8</b>	1909	1901	8	1875
<b>9</b>	1918	1909	9	1893
<b>12</b>	1917	1917	0	1908
<b>11</b>	1940	1937	3	1930

scale. Sections that were developed later, on the other hand, see the continued use of elaborate monuments past peak popularity because they still had a visible impact in these new, relatively empty spaces. As a result of declining popularity, however, there is a slightly lower rate of use of high impact monuments in these sections but this serves to extend their efficacy in display so that these sections took longer and longer to reach a saturation point before declining.

Two anomalous viewscales highlight the fact that this process can be a) cut short by drastic changes to the landscape, and b) that at a certain point, fashion does overcome context. The sudden re-allotment of space to features like veteran memorials or other large features that overpower the visible landscape can disrupt these processes. This is evident in Viewscape 12 where roughly 10 years after being opened for burial, large sections were given over to the erection of hundreds of homogenous monuments for veterans that had died during the First World War (Figure 4.6). This completely overwhelmed the space and any other monuments and displays were largely ineffective, truncating the cycle of elaboration and decline. On the other hand, sections that were opened after ostentatious monuments had fallen completely out of use do not show any cycle of elaboration and decline (Figure 4.7). Evidently once this form of commemoration is truly out of fashion, it is out of fashion for everyone regardless of the impact that elaborate monuments might make in new sections.



**Figure 4.6** Frequency of high impact monuments erected in five-year increments in Viewscape 12, highlighting the sharp decline in usage following the placement of hundreds of veterans' monuments in the 1920s, overwhelming the space.



**Figure 4.7** Frequency of high and medium impact monument erected in five-year increments in Viewscape 11, showing the overall lack of use of elaborate monuments at this late date.

### *Commemorative Practice and Landscape*

Overall, this suggests that as a new section of the cemetery was opened for burial, individuals responded with a tendency to invest in elaborate monuments that would make a dramatic impact in the landscape. This was likely the result of attempts by families



burying their dead to establish and draw attention to these new sections, to lay claim to the space as well as simply to take advantage of the most impact for their investment. As more and more monuments accumulated in a given section, the landscape became saturated and gradually new monuments had less and less impact. People responded by opting to not invest in such showy monuments, selecting more moderate or medium impact monuments, or by moving on to new sections in which they would have greater impact. On a large scale, these individualized actions contributed to the pattern of rise and fall in elaboration typical of the Victorian period. However at the same time, people were still guided by general fashions, and eventually elaborate monuments become so redundant overall that they are no longer used to create a display as they were previously.

These results have considerable implications for our understanding of commemorative practices, highlighting the significance of context, individual choice and display in shaping cemeteries while still connecting them to large scale trends by approaching historical change from the level at which it was experienced and created. The interpretive frameworks associated with variability and display are innately visual, suggesting that there is something fundamental about the ways in which the living were experiencing commemoration in these cemeteries that influenced their responses and actions. However, these concepts have never actually been applied at the level of the cemetery landscape and explored in ways that people would have experienced changing spaces. This research project does suggest that individuals are at least in part acting within and reacting to specific spatial and temporal contexts. This is not to suggest that emotion, identity, economic conditions, and other phenomena did not factor into these

practices, or that they were independent of broader fashion. However, it does indicate the possibility that micro-scalar practices contribute to large-scale trends, and most significantly that individuals apply them based on the contexts of their own lives. The suggestion that levels of investment in monuments and the types of monuments selected change in response to existing monuments in a given cemetery or section of a cemetery further highlights the necessity of a landscape-based approach to memorials that recognizes the impact of temporal and spatial contexts on commemorative processes. Anchoring research on commemorative behaviour to the actual experience of place, and the ways that this experience has changed over time, highlights the processes of commemoration and the production of memory and landscape.

### **Cemetery Administration and Change**

As well-defined commemorative traditions were developing in Hamilton Cemetery, it is also evident from archival records that connections to the space remained strong throughout the first 75 years or so. The cemetery was an important social space and as such attracted large numbers of visitors during this period. The frequent use of the space and the recentness of burials encouraged a strong connection between the community and the cemetery and there was a great deal of interest in the administration and maintenance of this cemetery throughout this period. The issues that the City of Hamilton confronted and the regulations that the City put forward during this time were the subject of many newspaper articles and other widely distributed publications – demonstrating a high level of public interest.

Immediately following the establishment of the municipal cemetery in 1892, a new code of rules was introduced. These regulations included a number of stipulations that impacted the cemetery landscape. The City required that all plots be defined by posts of limestone, granite or marble at the corners of the boundaries, no higher than 6 inches, with the number of the plot clearly indicated. Fences or hedges were barred from any burial plot and materials for monuments were limited to marble, granite or limestone. Finally, the City prohibited mounds of earth greater than 3 inches over graves not only to facilitate the proper cutting of grass but also to ‘improve the general appearance of the lots’ (Hamilton Spectator 1892).

While there is some indication that these modifications were not favourably received, these initial changes were far from the full extent of the municipality’s ambitions. By 1899 The Board of Management of the Hamilton Cemetery was established to deal with the lack of uniform methods or systems in place for its administration and maintenance. In a statement published in 1901, the Chairman comments that “the older parts of the cemetery resembled in many respects an ordinary graveyard on an extended scale” and that the patchwork appearance that had resulted from independent workers had resulted in a cemetery made up of different parts rather than a unified space (Hamilton Spectator 1901). The aims of the Board were to, “change the character and appearance of the old-fashioned cemetery into one more modern and park-like” (Hamilton Spectator 1901). After circulating letters to the owners of lots in 1899 asking them to consent to placing their lots in the hands of the Board, work began transforming the cemetery with the aims of properly laying out roadways, improving

water and drainage systems, levelling the cemetery to establish proper grades, and developing a system of maintenance to improve the appearance of the space. These four main goals were coupled with plans to remove iron fences and walls around plots and remove overgrown plantings and other obstructions, to which there were “sentimental objections” by some parties. Nonetheless, the Board managed to overcome any protests and modified the cemetery to fit its goals.

These physical changes were accompanied by new rules and regulations for sales, burials and visitation, which came into effect between 1903 and 1904. Some of the main changes include regulation of prices and costs of maintenance, the requirement of approval by the Board for any major changes to the level of the ground, the erection of large monuments or structures or any other major work, and the limitation of the types of monuments that could be placed in the cemetery and other types of modifications to the plots. For instance, while proprietors were permitted to have trees, shrubs or plants, the Board reserved the right to remove any plantings that were deemed improper, were obstructing the view or were interfering with the general effect. The quality and style of monuments also had to be approved; no wood, iron or marble veneer was permitted, single plots could only have one monument no higher than 2 feet, slabs had to be placed flat or required intensive foundations, and had to be kept up or the stones would be removed. Concerning visitors, the Board put forward a number of rules, including requiring adult supervision for children, restricting the use and speed of horses and cars, barring picnics and smoking within the cemetery, banning dogs and firearms and establishing new opening and closing times. Visitors were reminded that, “these grounds

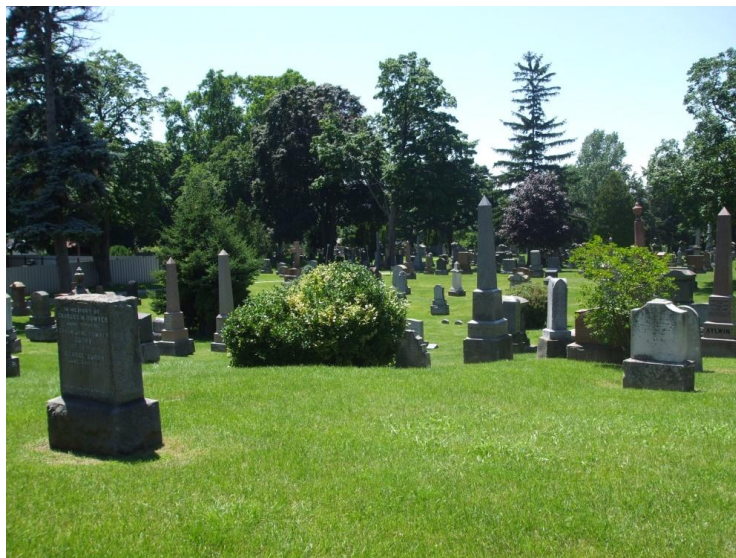
are sacredly devoted to the burial of the dead, and that the provisions and penalties of the law will be strictly enforced in all cases of wanton injury, disturbance or disregarding of the rules” (Board of Managers ca. 1903-1904:18).

These changes had major implications for not only the physical space itself but also for how it was used and experienced. Certainly the changes made to the monuments and cemetery layout drastically altered the appearance of the space, particularly with the removal of fences and other boundary demarcations around plots (Figure 4.8, 4.9). In less than fifty years, many of the original sections that had been opened for burial were already exhibiting signs of being overcrowded and disorganized, evident both in the archival images and in the statements made by the municipality and the Board of Management at the time. Today, while these original sections are full, they have a much more open feeling, as a result of these modifications as well as the removal of probably quite a number of monuments over the years.

Another significant change during this period was the establishment of a system of perpetual care. This was pioneered at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Board of Management was introducing new fees, regulations and rules. At this time, the Board set up certain sections that were Perpetual Care Sections, where plots were more expensive (\$45 per square foot compared to \$20 in other sections). Individuals who had already purchased plots could obtain perpetual care by paying in advance for grass cutting, watering, maintenance of the monument, etc. for the number of years desired. However, in 1916, the cemetery introduced a system of perpetual care governing all plot sales. A percentage of the lot price was set aside, originally 10-15% of the purchase price but later



**Figure 4.8** Photograph of Hamilton Cemetery in the early 1890s, prior to the modifications by the Board of Management (Hamilton Archives Black Mount Collection).



**Figure 4.9** Photograph of Hamilton Cemetery today. While there are still many trees and shrubs associated with monuments, the removal of fencing around them has significantly changed the appearance (Summer 2011).

raised to the Ontario-wide regulation of 35%. This money provided for the upkeep of both plots and monuments even after no family was remaining to do it themselves or pay the cemetery to do so. This money was invested so as to provide for the future of the cemetery. While economic recessions and depressions have inevitably affected this

system, it has nonetheless provided for a relatively high level of maintenance for all sections of the cemetery. The swift expansion of the cemetery between 1890 and 1930 put a great deal of stress on the maintenance of the cemetery and the further addition of other cemeteries, including Woodland Cemetery in 1919 and East Lawn Cemetery in 1938 further stretched the Board's administrative and financial responsibilities. As of 2001, the city of Hamilton is now comprised of six former municipalities and as a result the number of active cemeteries has increased from 15 cemeteries to 67. Hamilton Municipal Cemeteries is now one of the largest known municipal cemetery organizations in Canada and has to balance its goals of providing cemetery services and preserving local heritage while maintaining many diverse cemeteries in a large area. As a result, concerns have been voiced regarding the level of attention that Hamilton Cemetery will continue to receive, an issue which is discussed in later chapters.

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps by virtue of archaeologists' typical position of looking at completed or at least abandoned cemeteries, particularly in prehistory, there has been little critical consideration of the mechanisms of deathscape formation and the ways in which early cemetery activity impacts later development, use and experience of these places. This gap can lead to unwarranted interpretations of burial practices and illogical conclusions about their structure, organization and histories. It is necessary to keep in mind the realities and practicalities of burial and the experiences and memories that are shaped through these practices. While memory and agency have begun to play a role in the understanding of time, small-scale change and mortuary practices (cf. Chapman 2000, Mizoguchi 1993), it

is more often the case that large-scale changes are targeted and attributed to larger cultural shifts, particularly in extreme cases such as catastrophes, natural disasters, and population collapse (cf. Garazhian and Yazdi 2008, Jackes 2007). However, it is important to recognize shifts in burial patterns on a smaller scale and the impact these shifts have on later burials – particularly when above-ground structures or commemoration for the dead are used, where there is greater opportunity for early patterns and choices to directly influence later ones.

The establishment of burial grounds on Burlington Heights was heavily influenced by the needs of a growing population in an urban city centre but the history of the landscape influenced the way that the cemetery developed, in addition to fashionable design at the time. However, the actual choices that were made in burial and commemoration of the deceased at Hamilton Cemetery during this early phase were also significant in impacting later burials and commemoration, and the experience of future cemetery users. Finally, the regulations and modifications introduced when the municipality of Hamilton took over the property had major ramifications for the relationship between the living community and the place of the dead, increasingly limiting and controlling the ways in which people interacted with this important landscape.



## **Chapter 5 – 1950-1990: Forgetting Hamilton Cemetery**

While the period between 1847 and 1950 was largely characterized by a high level of maintenance and investment, Hamilton Cemetery was beginning to experience a shift by the end of its first hundred years. Many of the original burials no longer had family members left and there was a growing disconnect between the deceased and the personal memory of the living community. Furthermore, despite constant upkeep and the establishment of the system of perpetual care, the monuments of Hamilton Cemetery were beginning to decay, as was to be expected in an industrial city like Hamilton. Finally, although the regulations introduced by the Board of Managers were to benefit the appearance and therefore the experience of the cemetery, the extensive rules regarding who could use it, when and in what ways did reduce the numbers of visitors, which in turn made the place more susceptible to neglect and even crime.

From 1950 to 1990, there is an observable shift in attitudes accompanied by a transformation of the social space itself. Increasing rates of crime and decay made the space less and less desirable to the community. Vandalism increased not only in its regularity but in its intensity, sometimes hitting hundreds of monuments in one night. The

cemetery was also neglected as a component of Hamilton's heritage; while programs emerged for other heritage sites in the city, this cemetery, which was now over 100 years old, was not generally part of these endeavours, possibly stemming from a level of taboo or discomfort associated with death and the dead.

It is easy to condemn the acts and the actors that destroy evidence of the past, however it is more valuable to contextualize these behaviours to understand their relationship to processes that construct and negotiate heritage, identity and community. This section will explore neglect, decay and destruction in Hamilton Cemetery as the consequences of both human actions as well as more natural and environmental factors. These phenomena will be critically examined in connection to the transformation of experience and perception to highlight the relevance of forgetting (actively or passively) to changing conceptions of history.

### **Approaching Vandalism and Crime**

There has been relatively little academic writing regarding the vandalism of cemeteries despite their cultural significance. Journals focussing on the topics of death and commemoration, like *Mortality* and *Omega*, have been surprisingly mute on the subject. Archaeology for its part has mainly concerned itself with the political nature of the destruction of sites or the impact that this vandalism has had on the archaeological record and our ability to do archaeology (cf. Holtorf 2001, Layton and Thomas 2001, Stutz 2011). Rarely is vandalism conceived of as a meaningful component of site production. However, it is possible to recognize throughout prehistory the coexistence of paradoxical views of preservation and destruction in cultural relationships to death and

the past, and that the modification of these places is part of a long-term process of reinterpreting them in the context of changing practices and understandings (Baines and Lacovara 2002, Holtorf 1998).

Even in venturing outside archaeology and mortuary studies, to legal studies, sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, there remains a relative paucity of data concerning the destruction of cemeteries. Nonetheless, a general profile of vandalism exists recognizing the community context in which vandalism occurs, the meanings the activity holds for participants, and the actual process or experience of the action. This approach complements the goals of this thesis because it conceives of people's actions based on the meanings they have for them, and this meaning is derived and modified through their interpretive process and social interactions associated with that experience of action (Prus 1996:9; see also the 'phenomenology of youth' Visano 1996:91-97). Viewed from this perspective, vandalism cannot be understood in isolation; it is embedded in a 'lifestyle' network of processes, situations, experiences and moralities through which the participants become implicated or engaged in a number of activities and meanings defined as 'bad' or culpable by the community at large (Prus 1996:36).

Vandalism is most commonly defined as destructive behaviour that is wilful and deliberate but is not accidental or the by-product of another crime (LaGrange 1996:132). While there is a long history of vandalism, with evidence being uncovered in a range of archaeological contexts from Abydos to Pompeii, it has come to be described as an epidemic in the last fifty years (Baird and Taylor 2010, Simpson and Hagan in LaGrange 1996:133). Although the motivations for vandalism are difficult to expose as a result of

multiple, underlying unconscious and even conflicting factors (Lévy-Leboyer 1984:1), typical explanations for vandalism are “dispositional” (personal deficiencies or weaknesses of offenders), social (class, neighbourhood), and institutional (social and cultural structures) (LaGrange 1996:136-8). However there are also “opportunistic” factors, resulting from the nature of modern city life. The place, time and frequency of crime are directly linked to the routine activities of the area. Additionally, the decreased unity of these neighbourhoods and the relative anonymity of individuals living in urban environments contribute to patterns in vandalism (LaGrange 1996:139-141).

Although environment is tangentially part of these considerations, the impact of the physical landscape is rarely seen as a major influence. However, the architectural design and social lifestyle of an environment may make certain places more likely to be vandalized than others (Newman 1969). In particular, communal or anonymous zones used by a large population, impossible to keep under surveillance and disconnected from residents, become choice targets. Other factors that increase the likelihood of vandalism are newness, the accumulation of evidence of previous acts of vandalism, inadequacies of an environment, sensory overload (stimulating frustration or aggression), chances of being seen, as well as accumulated damage from negligent, careless or routine behaviours (Lévy-Leboyer 1984:6-7, Webb 1984). In face of these observations, it is necessary to approach the problem of vandalism by looking at the relationship between individuals and their environment (Lévy-Leboyer 1984:7, 9).

Examination of vandalism that specifically occurs in cemeteries is extremely rare, perhaps as a result of the even lower levels of prosecution of perpetrators or the

separation of cemeteries from the main parts of the city and urban life. However, the symbolic and cultural significance of cemeteries, as well as their historical importance, requires a better understanding of the types of destruction that occur in such locations and the reasons behind this destruction. The two conditions most applicable to considerations of vandalism in cemeteries are: 1) levels of use; and 2) the experience or perception of the spaces (cf. Paine 1992, Voller 1991). Particularly in the case of historic cemeteries, which have fewer numbers of people visiting and maintaining specific graves, but also in contemporary cemeteries where periods of activity cluster in the day time or even in particular seasons, the chance of being sighted and caught are low, which invites crime. However, conservation studies also argue that the physical environment contributes to the issue and that a maintained space gains societal respect and discourages vandalism (Paine 1992:65). On a more theoretical or abstract level, it has also been suggested that the enclosure of property, serving to remind individuals to act with dignity and solemnity, further encourages vandalism. In a study of the relationship between graveyards and their cultural context, Voller contends that:

This propriety... is precisely why cemeteries are violated. Desecration is possible only when claims to sanctity are made; disrespectful frivolity is possible only when solemnity is insisted upon... Those who accept only partially or do not accept those dominant values are provided with a perfect semiotic playground for the articulation of their frustrations in either benign or violent expression. (1991:7)

Voller notes that the cultural conflict between the reverence and sanctity associated with death and a general desire to sanitize or even deny death further intensifies this situation, regardless of whether participants are conscious of this semiotic or political understanding (1991:8).

This study of the neglect and even active destruction of Hamilton Cemetery will draw on these theories and understandings of vandalism, crime and death to better understand its treatment between the 1950s and the 1990s. Following an outline of the damage caused by vandalism as well as natural decay, interpretations of the timing, contributing factors and long-term results will be presented. It will be argued that a demographic shift in addition to the changes in the general experience that the space provided to users contributed to this period of neglect and destruction in Hamilton Cemetery.

### **Vandalism and Hamilton Cemetery**

Despite the limited study of cemetery vandalism, criminal destruction of cemeteries is unfortunately a rather commonplace occurrence in most cities in Canada. Although large-scale events of vandalism may only occur once every decade or so, the human-caused attrition rate of monuments in Hamilton Cemetery is surprisingly high. In this research program's year-long intensive engagement with the place, more than 30 monuments came to have what looked to be damage caused by humans (Figure 5.1). This damage ranged from monuments being knocked over to being broken into multiple pieces. Most of these monuments have yet to be addressed; among those that have, some were set upright again if possible, while others were simply removed and disposed of (Figure 5.2). The only broken monument that received intensive restoration was a veteran's memorial in the Sunken Garden, and it is likely that the individual and associations with the military and patriotism influenced this investment.



**Figure 5.1** A small marble lamb monument that was knocked over during this research (July 2010).



**Figure 5.2** A pile of damaged monument fragments removed from the cemetery and awaiting disposal (February 2010).

The high level of damage that occurred throughout my fieldwork raised a lot of questions about the causes of vandalism, which seem to run contrary to the goals of memory and preservation evident in the high investment in monuments, systems for

perpetual care, and general reverence for the dead. When and why does vandalism emerge in Hamilton Cemetery? Who most often participates in it? What are their motivations? Are there ways to cure or at least curb vandalism in cemeteries? It is hoped that this research, although preliminary, will contribute to both academic discussions of vandalism in cemeteries, as well as more pragmatic concerns about the preservation of these heritage places.

Of course, the desecration of monuments is only one of many types of damage that can occur as the result of criminal activities within cemeteries. Vandalism that is unrelated to monuments, including graffiti on walls and other structural elements of cemeteries (Figure 5.3), must also be considered. Unlike damage to monuments, which can be misconstrued as natural decay, this latter type of vandalism is unmistakable to cemetery users and can impact their experience and desire to return. It is also not always clearly connected to the mortuary context of cemeteries, and in some cases may fit better with urban patterns of graffiti more generally. Cult-based and paranormal activities, which can also result in damage to the cemetery or monuments, should also be seen as distinct from other types of vandalism, due to contrasting motivations and results. Finally, there are many other crimes that occur in cemeteries; drug dealing and even murder have been recorded as taking place in these locations (Danto et al. 1996). The cumulative impact of these occurrences and any physical damage resulting from them contributes to an environment that draws fewer and fewer visitors, which in turn makes the cemetery even more appealing for crime.





**Figure 5.3** Graffiti in Hamilton Cemetery (July 2010).

Although material evidence of vandalism occasionally survives in cemeteries, it is difficult to infer any information regarding the actual event. Consequently, the main source for information regarding past cases of vandalism in Hamilton Cemetery was archived newspaper articles on the subject. This is unfortunately a potentially biased source in that it is affected both by the level of community interest in the subject and the Cemetery Board's attitudes towards reporting vandalism in this public forum (with some feeling that newspaper reports only serve to inspire further crimes rather than to curb vandalism). This means that the cases studied here are likely an under-representation of the actual number of incidences of vandalism and possibly an over-representation of the worst acts of vandalism. Less sensational case are potentially less likely to be picked up by the newspapers. While the Board of Management for Hamilton Cemetery was

approached for assistance with filling in a more accurate report of incidences of vandalism, it failed to comment on the subject. Nonetheless, the known cases do serve as a baseline for characterizing vandalism and crime in Hamilton Cemetery (Table 5.1).

The first known incident of vandalism in Hamilton Cemetery occurred sometime in the early 1930s, with the theft of a brass locomotive top piece off the monument commemorating the 1857 Desjardins Canal Disaster. It is notable that the brass ornament was stolen during the Depression and it is presumed that it was sold and melted down as

**Table 5.1 Chronology of Accounts of Vandalism in Hamilton Cemetery**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of Monuments</b>	<b>Type of Vandalism</b>	<b>Age of Monuments</b>	<b>Estimated Cost of Damage*</b>
1930s	1	Theft (brass locomotive)	1857	NA
1954	54	Destruction	Oldest section	NA
1967	12	Destruction	NA	\$4025
1969	+100	Destruction	NA	\$12 370
1981	200	Destruction	NA	NA
1981	1	Theft (1 skull)	1850	\$62 190
1985	200	Destruction	NA	NA
1997	6	Destruction (cult activities)	50-150 years old	\$6620
2000	34	Destruction	140 years old	\$6630
2001	4	Destruction	NA	NA
2001	37	Destruction	+100 years old	\$12 300
2006	230	Destruction	NA	\$6600
2007	0	Intent to destroy	NA	\$0

\* equivalent value in 2011 with calculated inflation

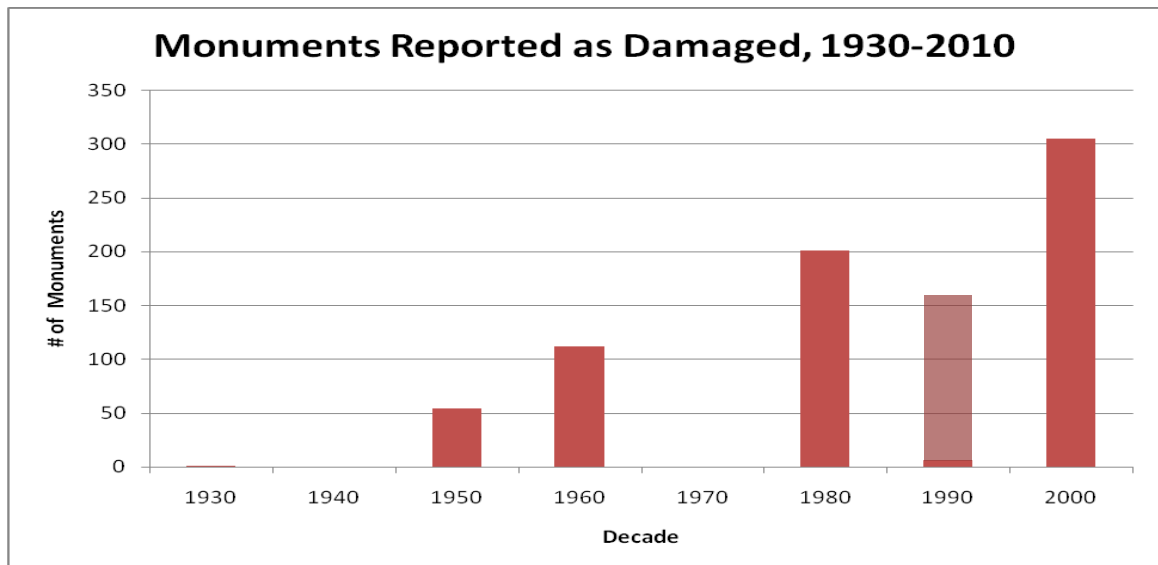
NA: information was not available in archived records

scrap metal. Nonetheless, this still indicates a shift from the sanctity of the space and a level of disconnect that made it acceptable in this period of suffering to essentially steal from the dead. Little is reported after this point regarding vandalism until a 1951 newspaper article reports the introduction of new security measures, including gates, fences, and increased enforcement of closing times, to curtail mounting vandalism (Hamilton Spectator 1951). Although reports are vague or even non-existent for long stretches of time, it is possible to gauge some sense of the progression of acts of vandalism. For instance, one article in 1954, which described the vandalism of 54 monuments in the oldest sections of the cemetery, commented that although this was not the first incident of vandalism it was by far the worst (Globe and Mail 1954, Hamilton Spectator 1954). The impact that this 1954 act of vandalism had is evident in its coverage not only in the *Hamilton Spectator* but also in the *Globe and Mail*. Additionally, extra police officers were assigned to the investigation and the mayor, city controllers and other community members were all called in on the case. Unfortunately, while it was characterized as the worst case ever in 1954, it seems relatively mild compared to later incidents.

Vandalism that occurred between that incident and the present ranges from relatively small incidents involving a few monuments to large events involving the toppling of 200 or more monuments in a single night. Some of the most sensational stories include that of three young men breaking into a mausoleum in 1981 to obtain a human skull for one man's desk, resulting in damages of roughly \$62 000, and the story of a group of five individuals between 16 and 21 years of age breaking into a family crypt

to engage in “cult activities”, causing damages of \$6600 (Hamilton Spectator 1981, 1997). While comments from police, city administrators, judges and community members demonstrate that they were typically horrified and shocked by these acts, vandalism only intensifies between 1930 and the present (Figure 5.4).

The majority of these incidents were either never solved or at least it was never reported if the culprits were caught. Where reported, the individuals were universally under the age of 25. In a rare case, following the desecration of 230 monuments on ‘Devil’s Day’ (June 6, 2006), one teen was interviewed by the Hamilton Spectator regarding his motivations and experience. The youth, who happened upon the cemetery with five of his friends after some monuments had already been knocked over, described it as, “a kid’s energy rush in a candy shop. They run around wanting this, this and this. It was that type of rush, we were just having fun” (Hamilton Spectator 2006). After he bragged about it at school, his classmates were disgusted and threatened him, demanding



**Figure 5.4** Numbers of monuments reported in local newspapers as damaged as a result of vandalism between 1930 and 2010. The 1990s shaded area represents an unconfirmed case of vandalism.

that he turn himself in. The youth then expressed shame and remorse for his part in what is the largest incidence of vandalism reported in the local newspapers.

While these acts seem somewhat disparate, spread out over the history of the cemetery and varying in type of vandalism and intensity, there are some similarities in the cases. To begin, all cases in which the culprits were identified were the acts of youths or young adults, and prevalently male, which corresponds to typical profiles of vandals (LaGrange 1996:135). The story of the aforementioned Devil's Day teen suggests that vandalism is primarily incidental to the activities of normal teens, as the product of the interaction between circumstance and opportunity (LaGrange 1996:L142). However, the reactions of his friends and his subsequent remorse highlights that cemetery vandalism is not widely condoned even amongst youth populations and suggests that social consequences can be more effective than legal or financial penalties. Second, all of the reported acts occurred during periods of reduced usage and visibility, as calculated from ethnographic work which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The likelihood of being seen, and therefore caught, is relatively low in busy urban environments, even at night, and the existence of such a large, dark and anonymous space likely encourages this type of behaviour. Finally, there is evidently a range of motivations for vandalism, including cultish behaviour, skeletal fetishes, teenage angst, peer pressure and rebellion, and therefore there cannot be only one solution.

On the other hand, while it is easy to condemn vandals and the destruction of monuments as horrific and criminal acts, there is growing recognition among a small constituency of scholars engaged in heritage studies of the cultural contexts and meanings

associated with destruction of the past. Rather than assuming that heritage matters, a life history perspective on the commemoration of the past suggests that vandalism and preservation are part of the same process in which living communities engage with the representation, promotion, transformation, manipulation, invention and rationalization of the past (Barthel-Bouchier 2011, Dicks 2000, Holtorf 2011, Smith 2006). This perspective does not seek to justify illegal activities; rather it contextualizes vandalism as a meaningful and potentially necessary way of negotiating memory production. This has already had some very practical implications, where heritage landscape architects have begun to apply the principles of fluidity to their design, updating historical landscapes for modern-day use and even designing memorials to be impermanent, literally decaying away to give the next generation the opportunity to memorialize the past in a way that is meaningful for them (Burden 2011; Viteretto and O'Donnell 2011). Social media and technology have also undoubtedly increased the independence of communities and individuals to commemorate the past as they see fit, regardless of mainstream, academic or government narratives.

Nonetheless, the suggestion that heritage does not need preservation and active intervention but rather that we should take our cues from the needs and wishes of contemporary generations divides heritage scholars; should we act on the intentions of past or present populations in managing historic monuments (Russell 2011)? Monument and cemetery design highlights a desire for preservation in perpetuity, but if this past is no longer meaningful in the present, should they be left to pass into oblivion? This question poses a range of moral, ethical and practical issues to consider, however it is evident that

addressing destruction of cemeteries requires a deeper understanding of the relationships between contemporary communities and the material remains of the past that exist in the present.

### **Natural Decay in Hamilton Cemetery**

People are of course not the only cause of damage to monuments. If left completely on their own, monuments still would not stand in perpetuity. Although there has been a move towards stronger materials, particularly granite, even the best materials are susceptible to environmental conditions, including snow, ice, lichen, and acid rain. Weathering and decay of monuments varies over time, particularly with reference to climatic changes and industrialization, and geographic region, including proximity to oceans, wet vs. dry climates, etc. (cf. Hinds 1995). In fact, weathering and decay can even vary within different sections of large cemeteries and be dependent on the direction that the monument faces, its shape, material and degree of exposure to the elements. Since industrialization, one of the most aggressive forms of ‘natural’ decay that cemeteries do battle with is the result of air pollutants, to which carbonate-based stones (marble, limestone, sandstone, concrete) are most susceptible (Meierding 1993:569). Sulphur dioxide, associated primarily with the combustion of charcoal and high-sulphur coals including industrial processing and metal ore smelting, was identified by Meierding (1993) as the greatest threat, with monuments in industrial cities exhibiting as much as 15 times the level of damage recorded in surrounding areas (see also Šrámek 1990). The growth of microorganisms (lichen, fungi, algae) is another major concern, which in addition to concealing monuments, can also release organic acids and cause chelation

(Baedeker in Meierding 1993). There is a lengthy scientific study of these processes, however it is also important to recognize the impact of gradual, natural decay of monuments on the experience of cemetery users and in turn how this weathering shapes attitudes and treatment of the place.

Unfortunately, Hamilton Cemetery is located more or less adjacent to the industrial sector of Hamilton, which from the mid-nineteenth century defined Hamilton's economic growth and prosperity. Early urban development was characterized by industrial production and metal ore smelting, largely using coal combustion, which would have contributed to high levels of sulphur dioxide. This created not only a high level of air pollutants, which have blackened more porous monuments but also acid rain that has caused pitting and flaking of monuments, particularly on soft stones like marble and limestone (Figure 5.5). Furthermore, the relatively damp climate has encouraged some lichen growth (Figure 5.6), though the high level of air pollutants has likely discouraged the level of growth seen in more rural settings with similar climates (Meierding 1993:576). While levels of air pollution and even climatic conditions have fluctuated since the establishment of Hamilton Cemetery, their cumulative impact is highly visible and contributes to the experience and visual perception of the cemetery.

Cracking and breakage is also an issue, though one that in this context is very difficult to distinguish from vandalism. However, weather conditions, particularly the freezing and melting of water, or even flaws in the stone can result in major damage to monuments over time. The most common type of breakage evident at Hamilton Cemetery was missing sculptural elements or top pieces, including urns from atop columns as well





**Figure 5.5** Monument exhibiting both sooting, particularly on the upper extremities, and pitting, which has affected one of the two visible panels of lettering. The monument also toppled during the summer of 2010 (Fall 2010).



**Figure 5.6** Image of typical lichen growth on a monument that is roughly 60 years old.

as crosses from pedestal monuments. The breakage of thin marble slab monuments was also widespread, often resulting in these monuments being laid flat, if preserved at all (Figure 5.7). Like vandalism and the removal of damaged monuments, natural breakage can significantly modify cemetery landscapes, particularly since sculptural monuments are often highly visible within viewsapes. This can also result in the removal of information from the cemetery and contribute to the feeling of an unmaintained or unpleasant space.

A final category of natural decay includes erosion and the gradual sinking of monuments into the earth. This can result in the gradual displacement of monuments, which can cause breakage by putting stress on the stones or throwing off the balance of the monument. Additionally, the earth can effectively swallow whole monuments. Flat stones, or broken slabs that have been laid horizontally, are in danger of disappearing



**Figure 5.7** Marble slab monument that has cracked into four pieces and is now laid flat.

completely. Seasonally obscured by leaves or long grass, the deposition of dirt on top of monuments and continued sinking will over time make them wholly invisible, save perhaps for a depression or a particularly flat part of the field. The experiential impact of this type of change includes the visual erasure of monuments from the landscape and the accumulation of sunken depressions, which can be dangerous for pedestrians.

### **Damage, Decay and the Process of Forgetting**

While the character of a viewscape may be set relatively early (see Chapter 4), this study of neglect and destruction has demonstrated that the landscape is far from static from this point on. Weathering or lichen growth in Hamilton Cemetery generally results within approximately fifty years of placement. However, it is closer to 75-100 years before decay is intensive enough to be noticeable from a distance. These timelines are significant with regards to the history of Hamilton Cemetery (Table 5.2). For monuments in general, fifty years, or two generations, is considered to be a significant milestone as the point at which many monuments are no longer being maintained by visiting family members, and therefore any maintenance is the responsibility of the cemetery. In a study of patterns and trajectories of grave visitation in London, U.K., Francis et al. (2000:45)

**Table 5.2 Timeline for the Decay of Monuments in Hamilton Cemetery**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>State of Monuments</b>	<b>Effect</b>
50 Years	Mild decay Disconnect from the living	Perpetual care system Changes to landscape
75 Years	Noticeable decay	Vandalism emerges
100 Years	Increased noticeable decay	Rampant vandalism reaches point of concern

found that less than 6% of visits were to graves more than fifty years old. Such a downturn in visitation has serious consequences, leaving many monuments without advocates in the living community. The administrators of Hamilton Cemetery have both reacted to and taken advantage of this situation in the past. For instance, the Board of Management made use of the fact that large sections of the cemetery were disconnected from the living to implement drastic changes, including the removal of some monuments or portions of monuments. Shortly thereafter, in 1916, the Cemetery implemented a system of perpetual care, a development which was again in part the result of many monuments reaching the point where there was no one left to maintain them. However, if monuments start to accumulate noticeable amounts of decay at the same time that there are fewer and fewer visitors to maintain them, this situation has long-term implications for the visual impact of the space and the effect of cumulative decay on the experience of cemetery users. Additionally, since evidence of neglect and a disconnect from the community can encourage vandalism and other destructive behaviours, the accumulation of visible decay corresponding to a decline in close relations with the deceased likely contributed to the emergence of vandalism.

As noted, sometime in the late 1920s and early 1930s, roughly 75-80 years after the cemetery was established, the first act of vandalism is recorded. By the 1950s, roughly 100 years after establishment, vandalism was rampant enough that the cemetery had to invest in new security measures, including gates, fences and increased enforcement of closing hours. The emergence of changes to cemetery administration or vandalism at these points is very likely the result of both a disconnect from populations that

remembered the individuals buried in the older sections of the cemetery as well as the cumulative natural decay of the monuments which gradually transformed the cemetery and the experience it provided. This decay contributed to further neglect because it gradually transformed the cemetery into a less desirable space. As decay, neglect and crime increased there was a corresponding decrease in the community interest in and use of the space. Furthermore, these activities will likely influence future interactions, effectively erasing not only monuments but also parts of Hamilton's history.

The accumulation of decay and destruction of monuments, however, is not an irreversible process of forgetting. Resurging interest can breathe new life into a cemetery, bring new visitors in and re-establish a memory of the past that has been neglected, although this process is not without challenges. The possibility of resurrecting a cemetery will be discussed in the following section examining the history of Hamilton Cemetery from 1990-2010. The emergence of new types of interactions with old cemeteries can rebuild connections – even tenuous ones – on the basis of an overarching, collective sense of heritage, rather than on direct personal memory. The new significance of the cemetery as a heritage site can spur a renewal in maintenance and preservation.

## **Chapter 6 – 1990-2010: Resurrecting a Cemetery**

Despite decades of relative neglect and at times even active destruction of Hamilton Cemetery and its monuments, there is nonetheless evidence of a resurgence of interest in this space and a transition towards increased maintenance and security. Visit the cemetery on a sunny weekend afternoon in the summer and the evidence of neglect and forgetting largely melts away in a landscape of manicured grass, tended flowerbeds, and a scatter of community members walking dogs and cycling. The increasing value of this open green space within the urban city of Hamilton and the value of easily accessible, tangible connections to the past have contributed to this resurrection, increasing traffic in the cemetery and consequently the demand for a well-maintained and secure environment. Nonetheless, the decline in use of the cemetery for burial, lack of funds for heritage development and urban expansion threaten the future of this deathscape. This section will consider archaeological approaches to contemporary relationships with the dead, and will present a comparative analysis of current engagements with historic cemeteries to demonstrate the ongoing and active role they play in constructing perceptions of death and the past.

## **Histories of Cemetery Usage**

Extensive changes in attitudes towards death, mourning and the dead in the past 200 years have transformed the ways in which living communities engage with mortuary landscapes from the past and the present. During the Victorian era, a period of heightened social display and ostentation associated with funerals, cemeteries were *the* place to be seen. As part of the garden cemetery movement, winding promenades and non-memorial focal points were incorporated into landscape design to not only accommodate but to encourage regular social use that extended far beyond simple visitation practices. However, as the levels of display and intimacy with death exhibited in Victorian funerary culture declined, argued variously to be the result of the intensity of death during both world wars, the medicalization of death, saturation of the medium and the rise of cremation (Blauner 1966, Cannadine 1981, Cannon 1989, Parker Pearson 1982, Tarlow 2000), so did the regular use of cemeteries for social practices beyond burial. Several generations of heightening taboos associated with death in Western society have led to avoidance and ignorance of the landscapes of the dead. Writing in the 1970s, Curl aptly characterized the commonly held view that an interest in cemeteries was perverse, noting:

The aversion of eyes from the hearse; the studied avoidance of a glance at a passing coffin; the hurried disposal of corpses in the municipal incinerator with next to no ceremony; and the somewhat glazed and embarrassed expressions of many who pass by a cemetery, a burial ground, or an undertaker's shop are witness to an extraordinary change in public taste in the last few decades (1972:xiii).

This level of discomfort with death transformed the position of cemeteries within communities and their ongoing maintenance and use. Initially established on the outskirts of town, many cemeteries have now been surrounded by urban expansion, which has

nonetheless failed to embrace them, often walling or fencing them without engagement. But even in the 1970s, the ‘incalculable’ value of cemeteries in cities was gradually being recognized as “temporary havens for the living” (Curl 1972:xiv).

It is still far from customary to spend a great deal of time in cemeteries. Doing so continues to trigger raised eyebrows and uncomfortable silences in some circles, however increasing traffic in cemeteries is both resulting from and encouraging changing attitudes. The taboo, recognized by Gorer (1955) and Ariès (1974a, 1974b, 1981), is being gradually revised through the increase in personal expression in the face of death, which has gradually emerged since the 1960s (Walter 1991, 1994) and even through exposure to death and mortality through increasing public engagement with fields like biology, psychology and archaeology (Sayer 2011). These changes have significantly impacted the ways that death is dealt with, not to mention how it is thought about and talked about in contemporary culture. A veritable explosion in popular television series, including *Six Feet Under* (2001-2005), *Dead Like Me* (2003-2004), *Pushing Daisies* (2007-2009) and *Death Comes to Town* (2010), in addition to innumerable films have sought to add humour and personal drama to notions of death and dying. These changes have perhaps been counteracted to some degree by the more or less equal popularity of horror movies and the recent zombie and vampire cultures that continue to connect a level of fear with cemeteries. In fact, Hamilton Cemetery itself was used in the filming of *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (2004), is frequented by paranormal interest groups and is often the destination of the annual Hamilton Zombie Walk. These competing interests and attitudes continue to play out in historic cemeteries across North America and Europe, but



regardless, interactions with death are re-emerging one way or another in mainstream culture.

### **The Practice of Visiting**

There have been extensive studies of grave visitation and bereavement in contemporary Western societies from sociological, psychological and anthropological perspectives. As a result, this study did not focus specifically on these practices for reasons of feasibility and in correspondence with principles of ethical research in studying sensitive topics. However, grave visitation contributed significantly to the use of this cemetery in the past. Although it continues to play a role in defining Hamilton Cemetery today, it is a role that is swiftly declining.

Visitation of graves in combination with other mourning practices, as directed by culture, religion, and even the funeral industry, is considered to be an integral part of educating the bereaved in, “the public expression of private emotions” (Francis et al. 2005:55). Moreover, the relationship of survivors and graves impacts landscapes, transforming spaces with both short-term changes, like the mounding of upturned soil following a recent burial, and long-term additions like monuments and plantings. As a result, these landscapes become encoded with specific material manifestations of distinctive cultural, religious and ethnic discourses, representing constructions of memory at multiple levels, including the individual, familial and collective (Francis et al. 2002:95). The financial investment and burial rights associated with plot ownership also become significant motivators for visitation, with a sense of pride and permanence intertwined with graves leading to a sense of custodial obligation (Francis et al 2000:83,

89). In turn, the grave and the monument become important foci of memory, but ones that require sustained interaction. Stained, weathered and broken monuments are interpreted by cemetery users as, “the material enactment of forgetting,” while stones that are in better condition are considered to reflect the devotion and respect of the family and a perpetuation of memory (Francis et al. 2000:113). Visitors also maintain a connection to the cemetery overall; as one London cemetery visitor commented:

I like the whole cemetery, I know every bit. I’ve been here forty-odd years. Every week, I look around generally. I look at all the flowers, both on the graves and on the bushes in the spring. And I look at and read the headstones. I try to see new headstones I have not seen before and to find the oldest, and then I try to beat it the next week (Francis et al. 2000:99).

Similar practices were witnessed at Hamilton Cemetery where individuals that had come to visit graves also spent time wandering around other monuments in the vicinity, both for pleasure and in the process of getting water, disposing of waste or coming to and from parked cars. Individuals visit cemeteries, not isolated graves; the relationship between mourners, graves, and mortuary landscapes therefore continues to impact deathscapes beyond the initial act of commemoration. For visitors, monuments are seen as a proxy for the respect and love of the family, but the condition of the cemetery landscape is similarly connected to respect for the dead, even if its maintenance and management rests in the hands of those who are in no way personally connected to the deceased.

Although industry professionals have noted an increase in visitation and public expressions of grief (Francis et al. 2000:62), a number of factors contribute to the low rates of visitation that emerged following the Victorian era. The increase in cremation, following which remains may be placed in cemeteries or mausoleums, or may be

dispersed or kept in survivors' homes, has certainly contributed to the decentralization of the dead. Furthermore, increased mobility, with families spread across countries and even continents, has also impacted the visitation of graves; in these cases, family members may only rarely be able to visit the city in which a relation is buried, making it impossible to sustain a lasting relationship with graves. The dispersal of families and friends and its impact on mourning activities can be seen in the proliferation of new technologies to 'take the place of' cemeteries, including website-based memorials ("cybercemeteries"), iPhone apps, and other means of effectively visiting graves from one's computer or phone (cf. de Vries and Rutherford 2004; Roberts 2004). While I would argue that there are certain incompatibilities between mourning practices and these technologies, including issues of permanence (cf. Jones 2004) and the lack of visceral, embodied realities, these innovations in commemoration do reflect shifts in relationships to mortuary landscapes that will have serious implications for existing cemeteries, their role and their maintenance.

### **Placing Cemeteries in Contemporary Communities**

Unlike many historic cemeteries that were established on the outskirts of towns but are now being encroached upon by urban development as a result of population growth, Hamilton Cemetery's position on Burlington Heights has so far helped to shelter it from such an imposition. While it is skirted by houses on its southern edge and now looks out over a busy highway to the west, the narrowness of the Heights and the existence of Dundurn Castle, a long-established heritage site, to the east have protected the constricted peninsula from too much development while also creating a hub of

heritage activities in Hamilton. Consequently, as a large, relatively quiet green space located between the urban centres of Hamilton and Burlington, the cemetery has come to play an active role in the community, in spite of its connotations of death. The emerging recreational use of Hamilton Cemetery is increasingly shaping the landscape as burial and grave visitation decline in frequency.

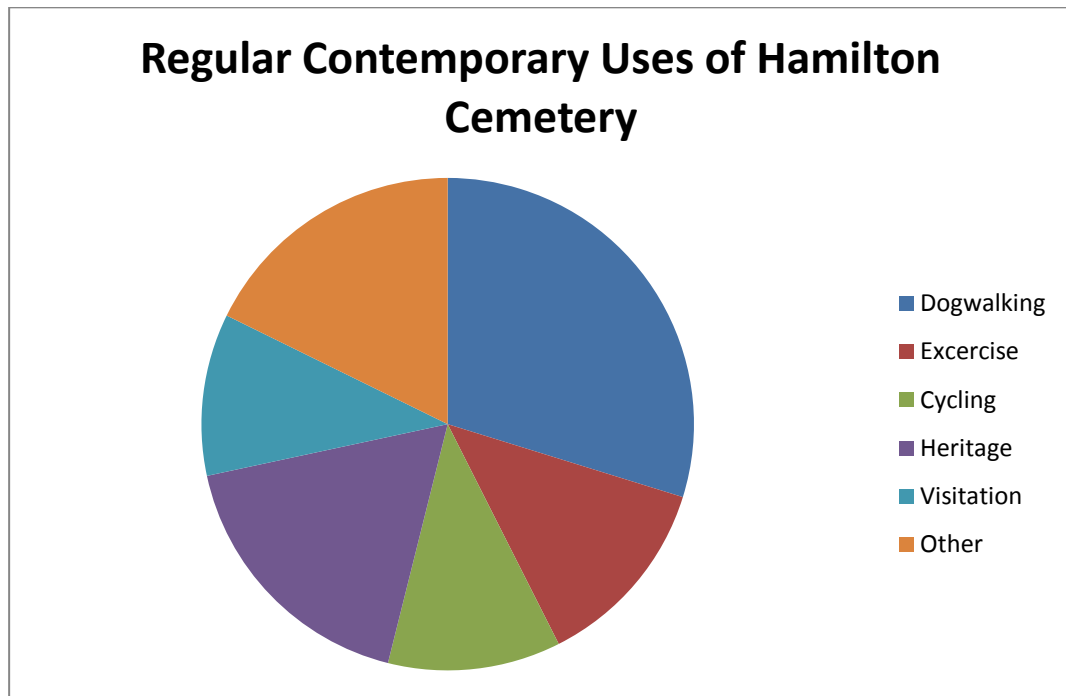
Regular observation of cemetery usage throughout the year (sample size of 290 individuals) combined with survey data (sample size of 34) highlighted the range of functions that Hamilton Cemetery has come to fill (Figure 6.1). More than half of cemetery users utilize the space for exercise, including dog walking, jogging, and cycling. These individuals typically use the cemetery on a very regular basis, including daily or weekly visits as part of a regular routine. Dog walking is by far the most prominent use of Hamilton Cemetery, in fact roughly the same number of dogs use the cemetery on a regular basis as people. This function has come to impact the cemetery itself, with regularly-spaced trashcans and signs warning to keep dogs on leash and to clean up after them posted around the cemetery. Regardless, many dog owners use the space as an off-leash zone where canines can actually get the chance to run free in an otherwise busy urban area. Minimal traffic, open grassy areas and fencing are noted as the main attractions for dog owners. Walking, jogging and cycling are also important uses of the cemetery, with individuals being drawn to the paved and well-maintained paths, lack of cars and overall peacefulness. There were markedly fewer walkers, joggers and cyclists in the cemetery in the fall and winter months, while the number of dogs and their owners remained high, probably as a result of the year-round need for exercise for dogs and the

possible transfer of human exercise indoors to gyms and studios during periods of inclement weather.

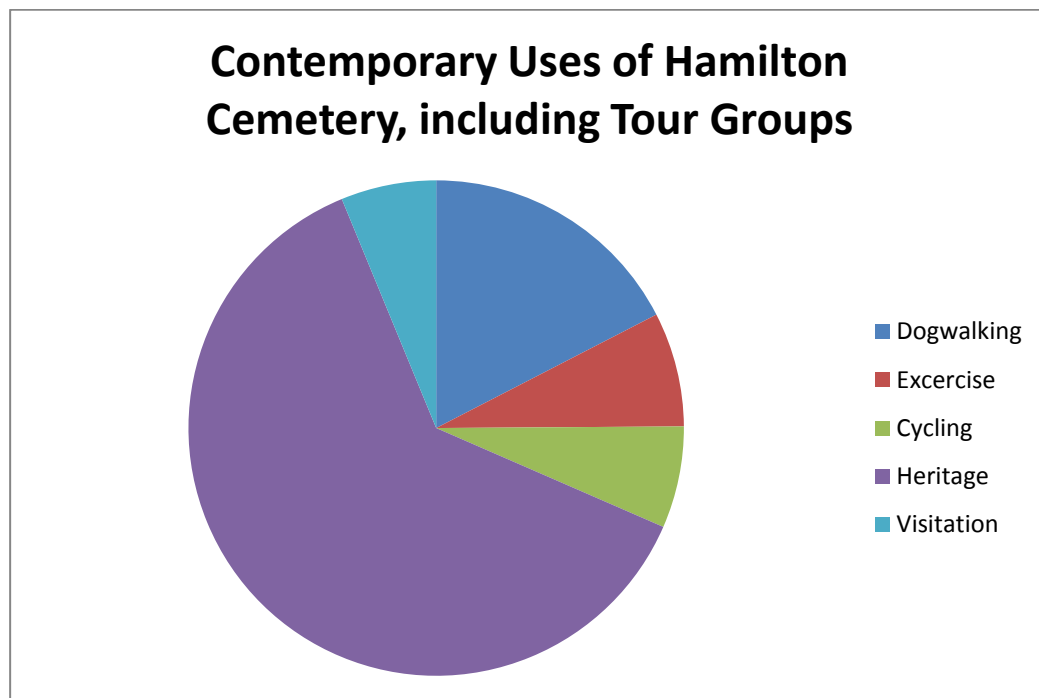
There was greater variability in the timing and rates of other types of use. Heritage attracted roughly 18% of cemetery users on a regular basis, though during the summer when free tours are offered, that number can soar to 56% of cemetery users, attracting up to 50 or 60 individuals on each tour (Figure 6.2). On a smaller scale, genealogical and academic research accounted for the other individuals using the cemetery for heritage purposes. This type of usage ranged from regular visits as part of field work, or sporadic visits separated by months or even years when necessity arose. This can also vary substantially from year to year, as Hamilton Cemetery has been used at various times for elementary and high school programs, as well as university-level assignments.

Cemetery users that were confidently identified as visiting graves accounted for roughly 11% of individuals observed during the course of this study. This number is likely a slight underestimation of visitation practices though due to situations where individuals using the cemetery for exercise and other practices were also visiting graves. There was also a significant “miscellaneous” activity category, including individuals that were using the cemetery as a hangout spot, artists, and individuals whose activity or purpose could not be ascertained. As expected, this range in activities is accompanied by correspondingly irregular timing and rates of use.

The age range of cemetery users is extreme, stretching from infants to seniors (Figure 6.3). Based on a sample size of 113 individuals for whom age could confidently be estimated, the vast majority of users are adults, particularly those estimated to be

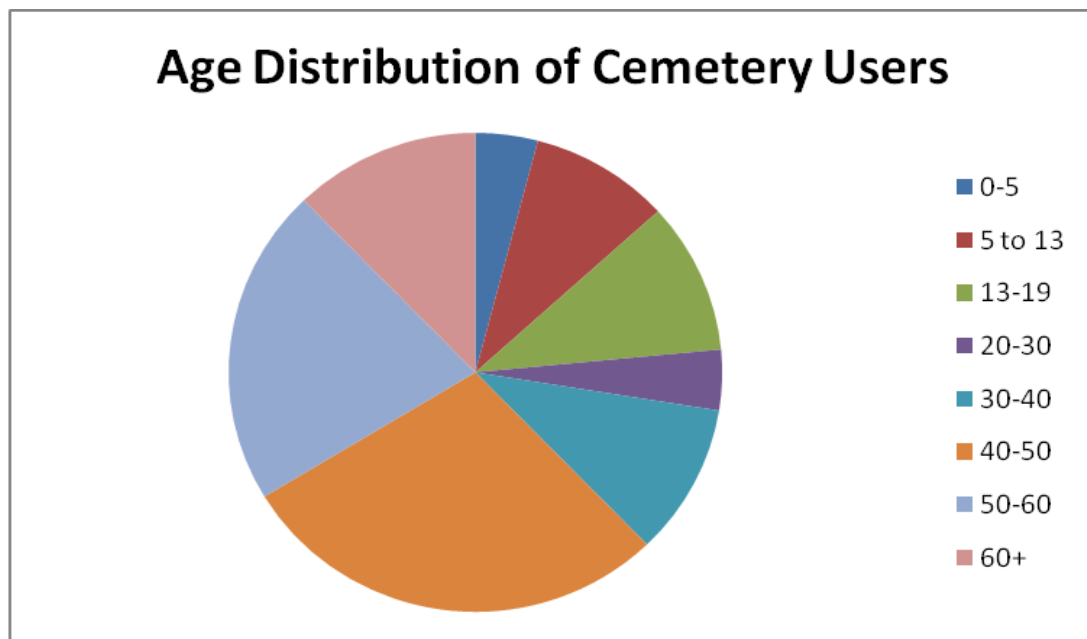


**Figure 6.1** Distribution of contemporary uses of Hamilton Cemetery, based on a subsample of 110 from observation 2010-2011. Tour groups were excluded from this calculation because of their irregularity (see also Figure 6.2).

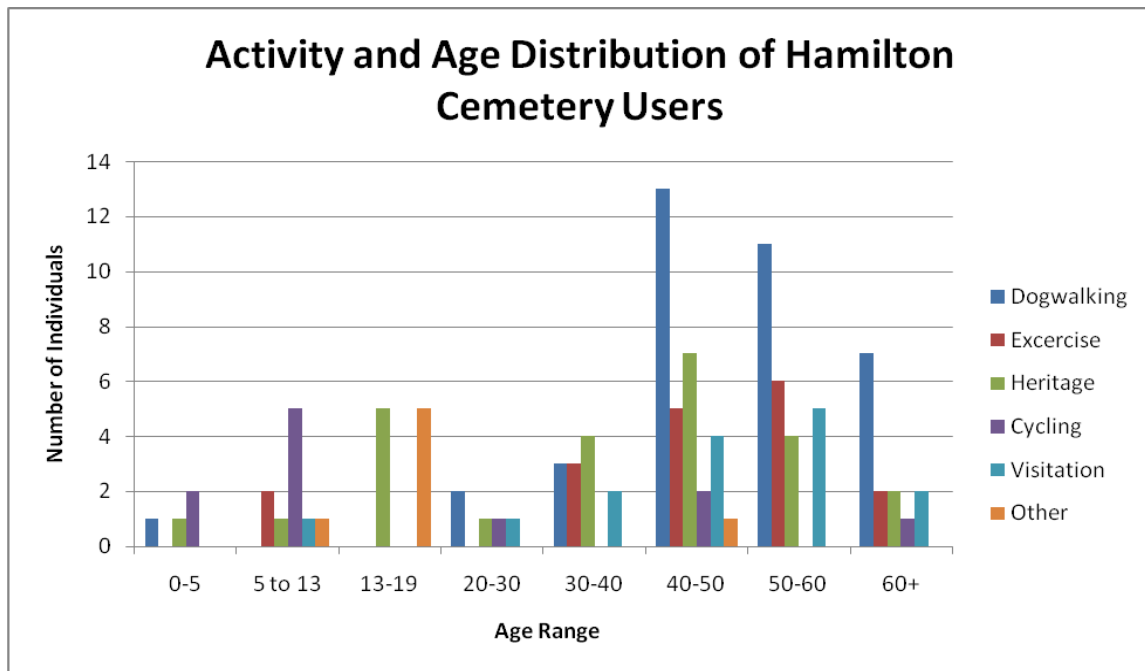


**Figure 6.2** Distribution of contemporary uses of Hamilton Cemetery, including the full sample of 290 individuals.

between 40 to 60 years old, who accounted for 50% of cemetery users. There is likely to be a higher number of adolescents and young adults using the cemetery than recognized here, however their tendency to use the cemetery at night and to hang out in more secluded areas of the cemetery reduced their visibility in this study. Nonetheless, the prevalence of adults and seniors in the cemetery suggests that the taboo associated with death in the past was either exaggerated or is reversing itself, promoting use of this important green space. Different age groups were also seen to be engaging in different activities (Figure 6.4). Adults were more likely to be using the cemetery for dog walking and exercise than younger individuals, while heritage interests were relatively consistent across all age groups. The age distributions also point to an aging population that is engaged in grave visitation, with almost three quarters of grave visitors estimated to be above the age of 40.



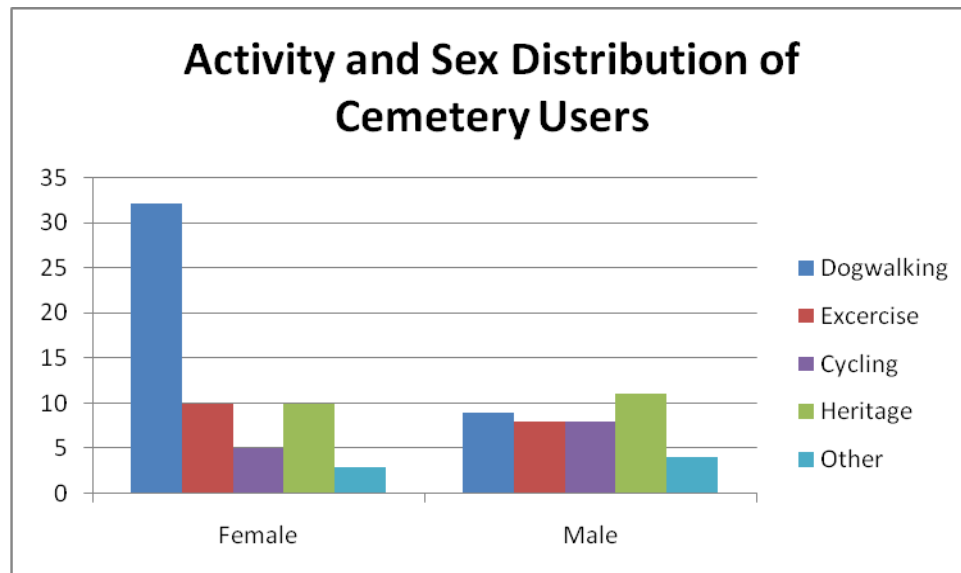
**Figure 6.3** While the age range at Hamilton Cemetery is extreme, the majority of users are adults aged 40-60.



**Figure 6.4** Distribution of activities by age group for Hamilton Cemetery users.

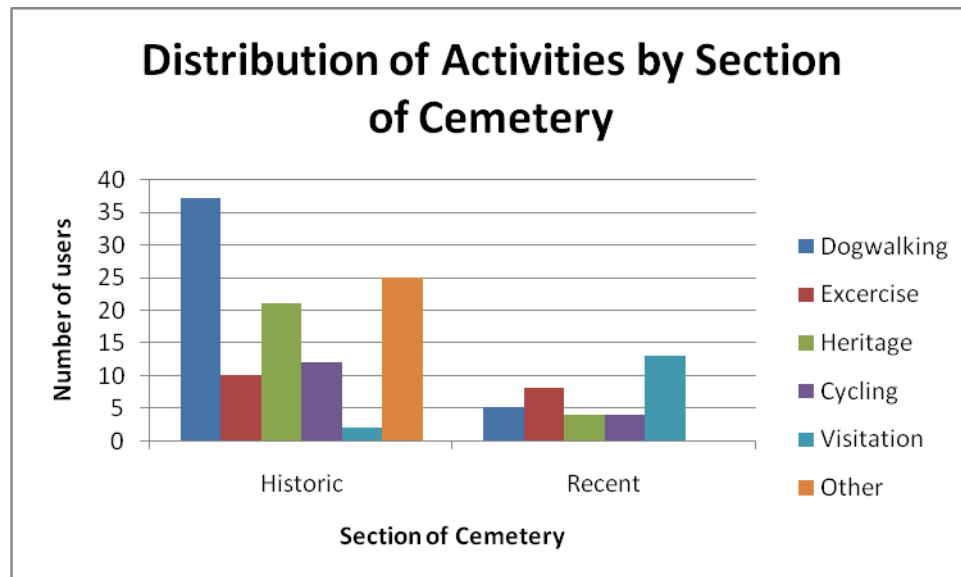
There was also a significant variation in the use of the cemetery by sex (Figure 6.5). While females made up 60% of Hamilton Cemetery users, males only made up 40% (sample size of 100). Significantly, females made up a much larger portion of the dog walkers in the cemetery (more than 75%). Sex distribution in the other categories of cemetery usage was more or less equal. While there have been some broad claims that women are more comfortable with death and engaging in and dealing with expressions of grief, I would argue that the equality in most activities, most notably heritage and visitation, suggests that the overrepresentation of women in the case of dog walking may be the result of some level of labour distribution associated with domestic tasks and dog care rather than a difference in attitudes towards death and landscape, however this needs to be examined further.





**Figure 6.5** The use of the cemetery correlated with sex of users.

Finally, levels of foot traffic varied throughout the cemetery and specific activities were seen to fluctuate in correspondence to different sections (Figure 6.6). By roughly dividing the cemetery into historic sections (sections that were most heavily used prior to the 1930s) and recent sections (those developed following the 1930s and still recognizably recent for participants of this study), it became evident that traffic in historic sections (73.1%) was dramatically higher than traffic in recent sections (24.1%) (sample size of 145). There was some expected division in the types of activity in each section; visitation was more frequent in recent sections whereas heritage activities were more often focussed on historic sections. However, activities like dog walking and exercise, which are not necessarily influenced or enhanced by the age of the graves or section, were also far more common in historic sections than in recent ones. This pattern is perhaps the result of the proximity of historic sections to the most common access point for local users, where only the original, southern end abuts Hamilton proper and the Jones Street



**Figure 6.6** The distribution of individuals and activities based on cemetery sections reveals disparity between the number of people using historic sections and those using recent ones.

entrance is easily accessible to the residential community. The extremely long, narrow cemetery may mean that some users turn back before reaching recent sections, located at the far northern end.

However, survey results suggest that two other factors dominated individual choice to use historic sections. The first is the beauty and ambience of these older sections, which have reached a level of ‘romantic decay’, where the natural weathering of monuments has contributed to an attractive atmosphere and conveys a sense of “pastness” (Holtorf 2011b) that is particularly appealing to cemetery users. In fact, many of the participants in this study did not or could not distinguish between natural weathering and active destruction of monuments by vandals. The variability of monuments and the connection to heritage also encouraged users to stay in these sections. The second factor, less commonly cited but still evident in many interactions, was the uneasiness associated with being in recent sections. Individuals expressed a desire not to disturb funerals or

individuals visiting graves, as well as the discomfort of being around the recently dead. It was evident that where monuments appeared to be old and decaying, their associations with death were considered to be relatively benign, but where monuments followed recent trends, were still fresh and clean, and where it is more likely to pass graves with upturned soil, fresh flowers, and even close relations visiting them, the proximity to death was palpable and tended to be avoided.

This mirrors Francis et al.'s (2005:201) findings in the U.K. that the older, 'romantic' cemeteries dominate public imagination, while modern municipal cemeteries are seen to be "too close to death" to stimulate anything but reluctance and revulsion at the idea of visiting. In the Hamilton case, where these two situations coexist, recreational users modify their routes and movement through the cemetery in keeping with what they deem to be appropriate behaviour reflecting a sensitivity for the bereaved. This attenuation of associations with death has been integral to encouraging renewed community use of the space. Most dog walkers who note the open grassy areas in the cemetery as a draw are not thinking about the mass graves of cholera and influenza victims below that created these spaces above. Likewise, joggers and cyclists are not thinking about the many hearses, initially horse-drawn and later motorized, that have followed the same paths through the cemetery's long history. The entangled actions of people with natural processes of weathering and environmental change have had a notable impact in structuring the cemetery that exists today and will continue to impact its trajectory in future, as changes gradually accumulate and continue to impact community relationships with the cemetery.

The spectrum of activities and the demographic range of users highlight the challenges presented by contemporary reuse of space. Divergent motivations for use lead to contradictory demands on the space – where maintained paths, easy accessibility and natural green space may be important for exercise-based use, restoration of monuments and maintenance of landscape focussing on securing their survival are critical to heritage goals. Balancing these needs with financial constraints and the needs of plot owners or relatives may seem next to impossible. However, in recognizing that some of the contributing factors to vandalism and other destructive activities are the lack of the space and the appearance of neglect, it is clear that encouraging the community to re-inhabit this landscape by managing their complicated demands is critical for its long-term survival.

### **Seasonality**

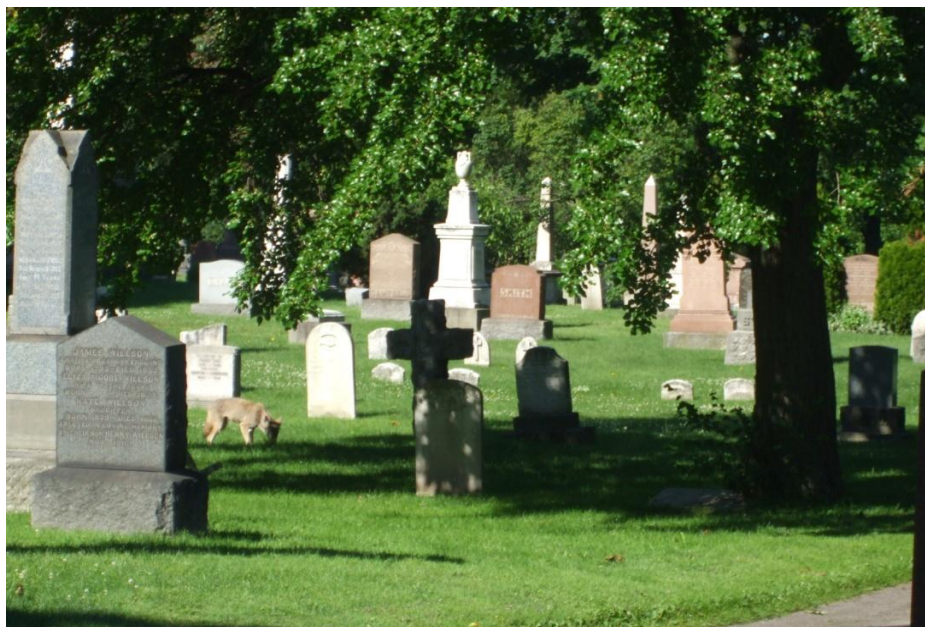
Of course, one of the dominant factors influencing use of space on a regular basis is environmental. The annual transformation of a cemetery landscape from spring to summer, fall to winter has a staggering impact on the experience that the space provides its visitors (Appendix III). In my own experience of doing long-term fieldwork, engaging with the landscape during all seasonal changes, the contrast between seasons regularly had a drastic impact on my own impression of the cemetery. I found the cemetery in the winter to be desolate. Even on sunny days, there is a sense of emptiness that cannot be lifted. The bare branches fail to break the wind, which seems to tunnel straight through the cemetery, and the sounds of traffic are unmasked. When blanketed in snow, there is an overwhelming monochromatic greyness to this space. Although the roads are ploughed

frequently, and there is evidence of other visitors in the footprints in the snow, the extreme decline in foot traffic contributes to a sense of being forgotten (Figure 6.7) and there is only the occasional sighting of geese or winter birds. Indeed, my field notes from this period are riddled with words like ‘forlorn’, ‘unpleasant’, ‘uninviting’, ‘neglected’, and as a result my research at that time also focussed on the neglect and destruction of the space, rather than its use and maintenance.

Spring and summer, in contrast, could not be more different. Transformed into botanical gardens, the cemetery is ripe with greenery and flowers of every variety, including magnolia trees, spring bulbs, and flowering bushes. The constant chatter of chipmunks, squirrels, and many species of birds as well as sightings of other wildlife also enliven this deathscape (Figure 6.8). Not even the rain seems to be able to dampen this liveliness for long. The dense foliage on the trees along with birdsong also helps to muffle or cover the sounds of traffic from York Blvd. and Highway 403, which sandwich the cemetery, making this a peaceful oasis amidst urban hustle and bustle. The constant foot traffic in the cemetery also casts a pleasant glow on the space; there is peacefulness without complete isolation. I started my fieldwork in winter, and when spring finally came, there was a sudden realization that I had temporarily overlooked some of my initial interests in people, use and experience of landscape, rather than just its neglect and decay. The struggle to balance all of the goals of this research in the midst of the fluctuating experience of the cemetery itself is a telling indicator of the level of impact that seasonal changes can have on attitudes towards the cemetery and its use.



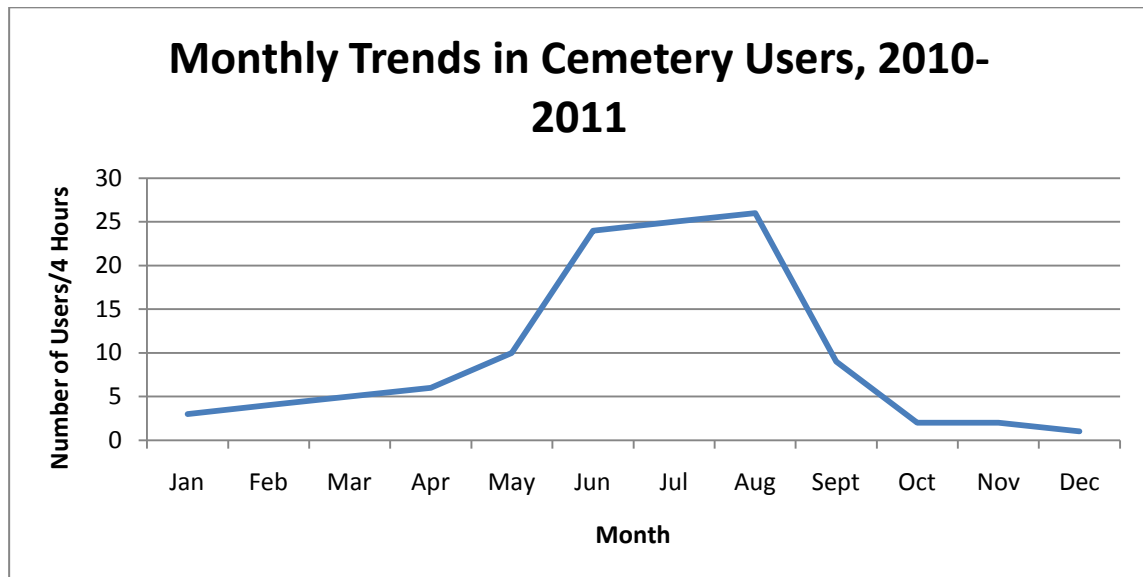
**Figure 6.7** Despite evidence that others have been here recently, the emptiness of the cemetery in winter is overwhelming at times (January 2011).



**Figure 6.8** A young coyote scavenging fallen mulberries in the summer (July 2011).

Weather undeniably influences the use of Hamilton Cemetery. Two thirds of participants in this study noted that weather and season were the most significant conditions influencing their choice to use Hamilton Cemetery (sample size of 34). The highest rates of cemetery use span June, July and August, in contrast to minimal use between October and April (Figure 6.9). It can also be suggested that these seasonal trends are common for most of the history of Hamilton Cemetery. While use of the cemetery for burial and grave visitation would have encouraged higher levels of foot traffic during the peak usage of the cemetery (roughly the 1870s to the 1930s), archival records still suggest possible seasonal variation in usage. Out of almost a hundred archived photographs of the cemetery, only three are identifiable as winter shots (based on the existence of snow and bare trees), suggesting lower frequencies of use during the winter (Figure 6.10). Similarly, although articles reporting on vandalism or administrative news were published throughout the year, general interest pieces were restricted to the warmer seasons, predominantly falling between April and August. Finally, the large number of regulations concerning visitors, including longer visitation hours during the summer and rules to limit bicycle riding and prohibit activities like picnic parties and picking flowers, also suggest higher rates of use of the cemetery in the warmer seasons (Board of Managers ca. 1903-1904:17).

While this seasonal pattern of use is rather commonsense and is true of most outdoor spaces, it does have implications for the cemetery's use and preservation. Almost 40% of cases of vandalism occurred between December and March, when traffic in the cemetery would be at its lowest. While earlier sunset times would certainly contribute to



**Figure 6.9** Frequency of cemetery usage based on average number of individuals observed per four hour period.



**Figure 6.10** A rare archived photograph taken during the winter in the 1970s (Hamilton Public Library Blackmount Collection).

making vandalism easier to commit in the winter, the low rates of use during this season would also be an attractive feature for vandals. Furthermore, while it is difficult to ascertain the motives of vandals (the majority are minors and are therefore usually anonymous and are not frequently interviewed), the same neglect and emptiness that I experienced in the cemetery in the winter could also contribute to the attitudes of vandals,



disconnecting the monuments from any sense of respect, care or community. At the same time, while there is a high frequency of occurrences in the winter, the most intensive acts of vandalism, such as those targeting between 50 and 230 monuments or involving breaking into mausoleums, universally take place during the warmer months, particularly between June and September. Despite heavier traffic, at least during the day, and the later sunset, the warmer conditions would make it easier to accomplish such large acts in a single event.

It is evident that beyond the impact of long-term environmental conditions on monuments and cemetery landscapes (see Chapter 5), seasonal factors have a significant impact on the level of traffic and the types of activities engaged in, in turn influencing experience and treatment. These disparate experiences can encourage vandalism and crime during the winter, as well as avoidance and neglect, or engagement with heritage, exercise and activity in the summer, and thus have significant implications for the continued preservation or neglect of the space itself. The issue of seasonality and activity use should be pursued in cemeteries in climates with less extreme seasonal changes, including cemeteries in year-round cold or warm climates to further investigate the influence of environment on attitudes, activities and the preservation of historic cemeteries over time.

### **Hamilton Cemetery and the Heritage Movement**

Despite fluctuating interest in the site, there is a history of engagement with Hamilton Cemetery as a locus of heritage and history for the city of Hamilton and the surrounding region. Already by the end of the nineteenth century, the Wentworth

Historical Society, the Wentworth Women's Historical Society, and later the Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society were actively engaged in exploring, preserving and contributing funds to Hamilton Cemetery as a key military site, the resting place for important Hamiltonians, and therefore a tribute and testament to the city's illustrious past. In addition to adding plaques and monuments throughout the cemetery, and raising the necessary funds to do so, the historical societies also engaged in frequent tours and events within the landscape (Figure 6.11).

After a period of relative inactivity, between the 1960s and the 1980s, interest in the heritage value of the cemetery increased in the 1990s as tours began to be offered. After a brief interruption caused by the sudden death of the original guide, tours resumed under the wing of community member and Historical Perceptions founder Robin McKee in 2002 (Figure 6.12). McKee, with a background in history and an interest in local heritage, has been researching, designing and giving free tours of Hamilton Cemetery



**Figure 6.11** The Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society visiting the Ferrie family monuments as part of a tour event (Hamilton Archives Black Mount Collection 1944).

every year between May and November for almost a decade now. An interview with the Cable Public Affairs Channel highlights his perspective on cemeteries: “I see it more as the museum without walls, I also see it as an art gallery. The stones tell stories” (CPAC n.d.). McKee is passionate about teaching history in a unique and entertaining way, emphasizing the art and craftsmanship of memorials in Hamilton Cemetery while also seeking to teach proper cemetery etiquette, the importance of preserving historic cemeteries and the fact that cemeteries are not spooky or unpleasant places but rather are filled with the lives of our past. McKee has a number of different tour themes that he cycles through each year, often trying to add a new tour each year. The themes range from tours of mayors, veterans, Masons, and firefighters’ graves, to tours of important



**Figure 6.12** A tour group visiting the Ferrie family monuments (September 2010).

Hamiltonians, Hamiltonians connected with inventions and innovations, as well as disasters and tragedies. These tours are offered every other Saturday, commencing at 11 a.m. at the Gatehouse, and run for roughly two hours. On most days, the tours attract upwards of 50 or 60 people, of a range of ages and backgrounds. Many participants were local, however the tours also draw individuals from surrounding cities, and occasionally from as far away as the U.S. Many community members attend multiple tours with an interest in learning more about the history of Hamilton and the people behind it, while also engaging in a unique heritage experience.

Community members taking the tours I attended were most interested in the individuals and lives of Hamiltonians, as well as in some cases the circumstances of their demise. While long-winded discussions of the history of Burlington Heights and the City of Hamilton occasionally resulted in glazed expressions and background chatter, the stories of Hamilton Cemetery's occupants were certainly the focus for most tour attendees. This observation correlates with my survey results in which cemetery users most commonly cited the monuments of individuals and the stories that go with them when describing their favourite parts of the cemetery or their most vivid memories. Unfortunately, the tours themselves often focus on the big and powerful, as well as the 'heroes' of the past, with very little recognition of women, children, and minority groups. These tours then serve the purpose of engaging the public, getting them into the cemetery and recognizing the importance of the place.

There are also a number of other programs that have run in or used the cemetery, including school programs, art courses, and other youth education projects that emerged

in the late 1990s. These projects challenge prevailing attitudes among youth towards cemeteries in the hopes of discouraging cycles of vandalism. Finally, the recent popularity of genealogical research hand-in-hand with an emerging ‘graving’ movement, fostered by websites like [ancestors.com](http://ancestors.com) and [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com), have produced a generation of amateur cemetery researchers and grave enthusiasts committed to the recording and sharing of monument data. These various activities anchored in the contemporary heritage movement have popularized cemetery research and have increased the use of cemeteries by individuals concerned with their preservation, which is instrumental in ensuring continued maintenance. It is when foot traffic declines that neglect goes unchecked and irreversible decay can accumulate, sending cemeteries hurtling towards more destructive events.

### **The Trajectory of Cemeteries: A Comparative Analysis**

Hamilton Cemetery has only recently emerged out of a lengthy period of relative neglect, which although not overwhelmingly destructive, has had long-term impacts on the space. Lack of funds for continued maintenance, demolition of buildings, clearance or rearrangement of monuments, the shortage of available burial space, and urban development are widespread threats to historic burial grounds (Francis et al. 2005:198-199). Their treatment or modification today suggest new narratives or histories, changing ideas of nature, and transformations in relationships with death. An analysis of other historic cemeteries in the area, as well as across North America and the United Kingdom can help to highlight both the processes and idiosyncrasies of the trajectories of

cemeteries and the impact that experience and use can have on their preservation beyond peak usage.

*Recycled Space: Christ Church Cemetery, Mimico, Ontario*

Christ Church Cemetery, originally established in 1832 around Christ Church Mimico which burned down and was fully demolished in 2006, comprises over 100 grave markers and 500 burials. Relatively small in comparison to the garden cemeteries that were emerging around the same time period and shortly thereafter, Christ Church Cemetery is quite open, aside from an avenue of mature trees leading to the back of the property. Today it is slotted between a public transit station parking lot and a housing development, however its central location accounts for a great deal of its use today and the modifications that have been made recently. Designated as a property of cultural heritage or interest in 2009 following growing concerns for its preservation, the site was dramatically modified in order to create more of a modern park-like setting. Pathways of interlocking brick, modern black metal benches, a cedar pergola and cross structure, and new gardens have been put in at the front of the property where the church used to stand (Figure 6.13). As a growing focal point for the community, the space has been redesigned to welcome use as a park for gathering and socializing. In some cases headstones have even been realigned to fit between new pathways and gardens. The landscape has certainly been designed to encourage use, which was viewed as an important component for its continued protection. Not much older than Hamilton Cemetery, this church burial ground has been preserved in Toronto largely as a result of the interest of community members and the recycling of space in this packed urban environment. It will be



**Figure 6.13** Christ Church Mimico Cemetery, November 2011. On the right, brick pathways and bench clusters create a gathering space in urban Toronto. On the left, cedar pergola and cross stand as a legacy of the church that was recently destroyed, with funerary monuments visible in the background.

interesting to see how traffic and use of the space continue in future following this major transformation in space, however it is already clear that the modifications have given the cemetery a new lease on life and have contributed to a resurgence in preservation that would not likely have otherwise been possible following the sudden destruction of the church and the decision that it not be rebuilt.

Christ Church Mimico is far from an anomaly; the modification of cemeteries, which take up huge amounts of space after they have fallen into disuse, in order to make them useable for other purposes is becoming quite common. Recently, Toronto's Victoria Memorial Square, associated with the illustrious Fort York site, underwent similar transformations to both improve park amenities and the commemoration of the site's

history (cf. Wellington Place Neighbourhood Association 2011). In cases like these, it is not uncommon to move some or all monuments, in some cases setting them into facades or laying them flat in the ground to reduce maintenance costs while opening up the space for other uses. This movement largely reflects the circumstances in Ontario, as in many provinces, where under Section 62 of the 1980 Cemeteries Act, transference of ownership of abandoned cemeteries to municipalities has placed the responsibility for maintenance on the city (Paine 1992:60). The City of Hamilton, for instance, is responsible for 145 cemeteries, 78 of which are inactive. The weight of this responsibility has led many cities to seek ways of decreasing maintenance costs while also repurposing the sites to make them useable for the community as parks and green space. As such, much of the heritage value has been compromised and components that are associated with death and burial are often pushed to a far end of a site or somehow segregated from activity areas, as at Mimico Cemetery where monuments are barely even visible from the front entrance, with the new pathways, seating areas and pergola forming the focal point. This diffusion of connotations with death is likely seen as crucial to encouraging public use, however transferring focus away from monuments may negatively impact their long-term chances of survival.

*Friends of Cemeteries in the United Kingdom: Highgate, Abney Park and Arnos Vale*

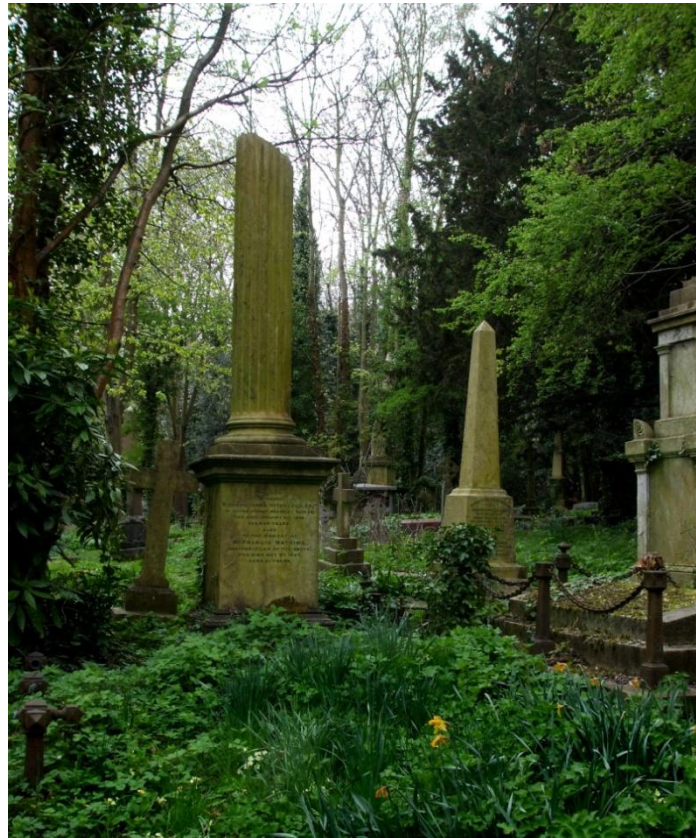
Unlike Ontario, it is now very common in the United Kingdom for many of the older cemeteries to be under the management of trusts, community groups and other non-profit organizations, particularly those that were originally owned by companies. In the U.K., private cemeteries emerged earlier than in Canada and in many cases went



bankrupt, leaving the cemeteries to decay at an alarming rate). While the cemeteries may still be the property of the city, administration and decision-making largely rests in the hands of non-profit organizations. These groups were often formed after significant damage and decay had already occurred as a result of the dramatic cessation of maintenance. As a result, many are still in the process of restoring the landscape.

Perhaps one of the most famous cemeteries in the UK currently being conserved in such a manner is Highgate Cemetery, in London, run by Friends of Highgate Cemetery (FoHC) (Figure 6.14). Established in 1839, the 170-year-old cemetery has been cared for by FoHC since 1975 (for a complete history, see Friends of Highgate Cemetery 1992). Maintenance had declined dramatically in the 1930s as burial space ran out and therefore profits declined as well. Facing bankruptcy, its owners, the London Cemetery Company, were absorbed into the United Cemetery Company, who equally had trouble maintaining the 50-acre site. When funds ran out in 1975, the FoHC was formed to protect the site and they have been engaged in restoring it for 36 years. Attracting more than 80 000 visitors a year, the trust now raises funds through contributions by members, admission fees, paid tours, and other activities, and relies heavily on the labour of volunteers. The FoHC has made significant progress in restoring the cemetery and although the West Cemetery is still closed to visitors except for guided tours, the East Cemetery is fully accessible.

The FoHC's approach to Highgate is manifold. Recognizing that it is first and foremost a cemetery, burial and visitation are ongoing and the Trust does its best to be sensitive to this in all research, restoration and community activities while balancing the need to bring in money to keep the cemetery going. The architectural and historical



**Figure 6.14** Highgate West Cemetery, balancing nature and heritage conservation (April 2011).

values are also significant. In the effort to preserve and celebrate the heritage of this site, the FoHC has sought to balance restoration efforts with maintaining the historical ambience, primarily seeking to conserve monuments and mausoleums to prevent further damage without reversing evidence of their age. The organization recognizes Highgate's, "wealth in the biographies of the people. It is what makes it meaningful [to visitors]" (Bob Trimmer, FoHC trustee, pers. comm.). As such, tours are focussed around individual stories and the cemetery celebrates individuals of both local and national importance. As a Grade II listed park, Highgate is also home to more than 44 species of birds, 227 species of wildflowers, 18 species of butterfly, and many native tree species (Yuille n.d.). With a small team of full-time staff trained in conservation management, the

FoHC has aimed to create a managed natural woodland, balancing the clearance of invasive species and plants causing damage with the creation of a sort of nature preserve in the middle of London, even putting in a pond in one corner to develop a rare wetland environment. Finally, the FoHC is committed to establishing good public relations for Highgate and cemeteries more generally to elevate their place in communities. There is, for instance, a great deal of concern about fostering good publicity and use of the cemetery, hand selecting the research that goes on there and avoiding associations with Dark Tourism, a growing movement focussing on death, pain, suffering and even the supernatural rather than celebrating the lives of the people buried in cemeteries (cf. Lennon and Foley 2000, Stone 2006). This level of involvement and investment in every aspect of the cemetery has certainly contributed to the cemetery's renewed successes.

Similarly, Abney Park Cemetery, London, and Arnos Vale, Bristol, have both undergone serious transformations in recent years, following decades of neglect as a result of decline in income and inactivity (Abney Park Trust 2011, Cloke and Jones 2004, Francis et al. 2005). Clearing vegetation and restoring buildings and monuments as funds allow, the process in these cemeteries has been slightly more contested than at Highgate. In trying to balance the ecological value of the woodland wilderness that has developed from years of neglect and admiration of the 'romantic decay', with the preservation of the buildings, monuments and landscape design of the original Victorian cemeteries, the Trusts' work has been more slow moving and large sections of the grounds remain very natural looking with the intent to manage it as a rare nature preserve in the inner city.

These examples from the UK, where the maintenance of many historic cemeteries has become the responsibility of charitable organizations, highlight both the necessity of community involvement and the significant transformations that can occur naturally to a large landscape with just a few decades of neglect. Without the passionate and vocal communities in London and Bristol, from teams of volunteers to the almost guerrilla-style efforts of the Arnos Vale Army, these cemeteries might have been lost to development or dereliction. Today, they are places for community education, outdoor activities, and even private events, as many cemeteries today rent buildings for conferences, functions and social gatherings. The decades of neglect, on the other hand, have transformed these spaces into more than a heritage site, as nature has reclaimed these large open spaces within the urban environment. The difficulties in balancing these facets are clear in these examples, but they also highlight the stability that can emerge when such movements are successful.

*Losing Cemeteries: Camp Lowell and Other Forgotten Cemeteries*

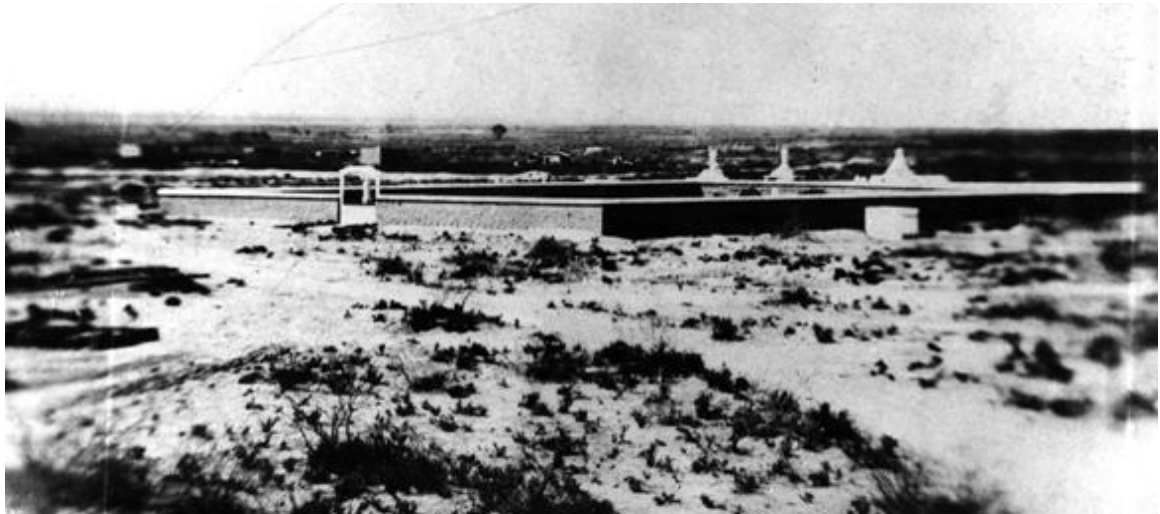
Unfortunately, not every cemetery is reclaimed by living communities in the ways exhibited in these cases in the United Kingdom and Ontario. As cemeteries fall into disuse, they may equally be completely abandoned, forgotten, and even actively destroyed. At a certain level of accumulated decay, the damage may be considered irreversible, undesirable or dangerous, or over long periods of time the exact location of a cemetery may be forgotten if little or no material evidence remains on the surface. Countless cemeteries have been lost this way and it is not uncommon for cities that have recently conducted cemetery surveys to have several known cemeteries without positive

locations. Hamilton itself lists 32 ‘lost’ and forgotten cemeteries (City of Hamilton 2005: 1). There may be the odd reference in archival documents but actually locating them can be difficult, if not impossible.

The Camp Lowell Cemetery, formally established in Tucson, Arizona in 1869 as part of a U.S. Army Camp established there following the Civil War, is a prime example of a cemetery that was lost for decades until urban development necessitated a full cultural assessment of the area (Figure 6.15) (O’Mack 2005:31). The relatively small cemetery did not have a long history of use, and although the military continued to use the same cemetery ground after the camp was relocated 7 miles northeast of Tucson in 1873, the level of neglect that followed was noticeable almost immediately. In 1881, a Tucson resident attending the funeral of a Corporal, wrote to the Arizona Weekly Star, condemning:

the neglect and desecration which rests upon the mural monuments of the brave dead. It is nearly sad as death to think we live among human beings who would be so degraded as to make targets of tombstones; and yet the ravages of these iconoclasts was [sic] painfully visible. The other “signs” of beastliness are unmentionable (O’Mack 2005:36).

Civilian burial continued at and around the site of the old camp cemetery even after the city pulled down the wall around the cemetery in 1884 and exhumed partial remains of 74 individuals (from roughly 100 burials). The exhumed were relocated to the new military cemetery at Fort Lowell, some of which were later recovered again and moved to the San Francisco National Cemetery when the fort was abandoned in 1891 (while some civilians were left in the Fort Lowell Cemetery, the exact location of this cemetery has also been lost). Prevailing attitudes and treatment of the dead were necessarily implicated in these



**Figure 6.15** The earliest photograph of the cemetery at Camp Lowell taken in 1870, showing the adobe wall that enclosed the cemetery and the main gate (O'Mack 2005:32 fig. 4).

shifts, however it is likely that the impetus to close the Camp Lowell Cemetery and establish a new one was heavily influenced by the development of downtown Tucson, including the establishment of a railroad that cut over one corner of the cemetery, and the increasing value of the land itself due to its central location (O'Mack 2005:40). The land was used first for residential development, including a school, and was later converted to exclusively commercial properties.

Despite the recorded exhumation of burials that were moved to Fort Lowell, the excavation of the area by the Joint Courts Archaeology Project ahead of development revealed more than a thousand burials, many of which were relatively intact, even with more than a hundred years of building on top of the site. These burials likely reflect a complete cross section of the early population of Tucson, not just military personnel (Hall et al. 2008:11). Considering the large number of burials and the immediacy of neglect and destruction, why was there so little reverence or value for this cemetery? The case is complex, however the history of cultural interaction and politics in this region likely

influenced the lack of respect for the dead, as the cemetery served a diverse and conflicted population, some of whom did not have a long history in the area.

Old Frankfort Cemetery, established in the early 1800s in Frankfort, Kentucky, follows a similar trajectory. It was used largely for the burial of the working class, immigrants, the poor and the enslaved until the 1850s when a new cemetery was established (the new Frankfort Cemetery) (Killoran and Pollack 2005). Following its disuse, the site was heavily neglected and by the 1860s it was overgrown and neglected. In the following decade, development of the property began and by the 1950s all evidence of the cemetery had disappeared. Its location was largely forgotten until construction re-discovered it in 2002. Archaeological excavation uncovered approximately 250 burials, and was followed up by an intensive project of forensic portraiture and three-dimensional bust sculpting, as well as the placement of a monument within a nearby park to commemorate the individuals that had been interred in the forgotten cemetery.

### *Connections and Conclusions*

These case studies do not of course provide a predictable trajectory for cemeteries as they fall into disuse. However, they do point to a number of important patterns in understanding the relationship between communities, cemeteries and the landscape. To begin, it is undeniable that that the period just before and immediately following the end of active use for burial is the most critical time during which neglect can dramatically increase to the point of irreparable damages, particularly if the impetus for maintenance is removed (as in the case of the Camp Lowell Cemetery after many of the military burials were exhumed and moved elsewhere). Following this neglect, the cemetery is in danger

of complete destruction in the face of development if land is at a premium, which it often is in urban environments. Development can regularly overcome any other concerns, including community protest and the expense of exhuming burials. However, if development is not an immediate issue, cemeteries can remain neglected for decades, gradually decaying in the middle of busy cities.

There are two obvious routes for their preservation. The first is the recycling of space for another purpose that does not necessitate complete destruction of the cemetery (as in the Christ Church and Victoria Memorial Square cases). The transformation of cemeteries into parks, while potentially compromising the original cemetery layout, does ensure a certain level of continued maintenance. In turn, this encourages the community to be in the space, which may decrease levels of vandalism. However, this in turn introduces a slew of issues regarding balancing the preservation of the historical value of cemeteries and the promotion of the ecological value of green spaces. On the other hand, in instances where communities are particularly vocal or the circumstances are right for promoting the heritage or ecological value of a cemetery, the landscape may be conserved by a trust or charitable group that works to restore the space while balancing the natural value of the ecosystem that has developed there. Of course, it must be recognized that a cemetery is never really preserved in perpetuity and it is relatively easy for a space to be destroyed or repurposed for development at any time.

Hamilton Cemetery rests at this pinnacle point where active burial is rapidly declining and most burials now take place at one of the other 67 active cemeteries in the Municipality of Hamilton. With declining profit and the heavy municipal responsibility to



maintain such a large number of cemeteries, all with diverse conditions and needs, I would argue that Hamilton Cemetery is indeed in a challenging position. Preservation is part of the Hamilton Municipal Cemeteries' Board mission statement and its main office is located on the grounds of Hamilton Cemetery in the former gatehouse. However, the Board declined to comment on its plans for maintaining the cemetery as it transitions into inactivity or on the consistently high levels of vandalism and damage to monuments that persist today. It has as of yet failed to truly embrace a future built on heritage. While the Board allows McKee's tours to take place, it does not actively promote or support them. Its lack of enthusiasm or engagement with researchers will also have a serious impact on the cemetery and more than one participant in this study commented on the difficulties of doing research at Hamilton Cemetery. It is evident that, despite community efforts through tours and other educational programs, the future of Hamilton Cemetery is far from certain. More generally, once routine burial ceases, the preservation of the landscape is tenuous at best, particularly if the living community cannot find the means to maintain strong emotional attachment to the place and the individuals buried within.

## **Chapter 7 – Conclusion**

This research project pursued long-term landscape and material analysis in combination with archival and ethnographic research in order to examine the relationship between experiences of and attitudes toward cemeteries. Hamilton Cemetery, and its complicated history of development, decline and revival, provided the opportunity to deconstruct a composite landscape to better understand how processes of construction and commemoration, maintenance, neglect, destruction and renewal are interrelated and contribute to one another. Marrying multiple temporal and spatial scales of analysis, and a unique blend of visual media and qualitative and quantitative analysis, this project provided a new way of seeing historical development in mortuary landscapes. This enabled recognition of sequence and consequence in relation to perception and experience that would not otherwise have been possible. Without this scale of understanding, it is impossible to access the motivations behind actions and the mechanics of change in landscape. It is evident that cemeteries play an active role in the processes of constructing and negotiating history, identity, cultural attitudes towards death and the dead, and relationships to space and place.

### **Deathscapes Research Project: A Discussion**

The existing landscape and its history will extensively shape the development of cemeteries, but the significance of choices in commemoration and trends in monuments in this process cannot be overlooked. While connected to broader fashions, the choices of individuals are also notably influenced by the existing monument composition in a given section of a cemetery. As such, a cycle of elaboration and decline is visible in individual viewscapes, where early use is characterized by typically high levels of ostentation and elaboration as a result of the high impact that monuments can make, in addition to potentially attempting to establish or draw attention to these new sections. High impact monuments continue to be used until a level of saturation is reached, at which point the return for investment in these elaborate monuments is no longer as substantial and their usage declines. Individual sections of the cemetery follow their own cycles that do not temporally conform to the trend overall for the cemetery, nor for the region. However, the placement of monuments is only the beginning of a lifetime of transformations.

As the care of close relations declines and natural decay accumulates, monuments and the cemetery as a whole may transition into a period of neglect. The increasing lack of use of the space as a result of its growing unpleasantness and signs of dereliction encourages vandalism and crime, which in turn further alienates the living community. These attitudes extend to newspapers and other community networks as the cemetery gradually recedes into the shadows of the community, with the exception of necessity as new burials arise. The physical changes to the space clearly have a significant influence on the sensory experience that it provides, and therefore the meanings and memories

gathered when it is used. The transition from active use for burial to inactive use is an equally critical point in the cemetery's life history; the financial burden combined with the lack of regular use can result in decades of neglect. However, these transitions are not necessarily irreversible.

The perceived value of the space as an urban oasis and its historical value in the emerging heritage movement can resurrect cemeteries from this state of being forgotten. The development of tours and other programs is one of the most significant tools for educating the community and for bringing people in, however dogwalking, jogging, cycling and other recreational activities create more routine patterns of use. As these new employments of the space and the meanings associated with them develop, so too do they transform it to fit contemporary needs. These transitions however are tenuous and ever-changing; it is up to each generation to reinterpret and reinvent these landscapes.

### **A Reflection on Methods**

As a result of the lack of effective methods to document and analyze embodied engagement with temporally complex landscapes, the methodology for this research project was from the outset largely experimental. It is necessary at this stage, then, to critically reflect on the contributions of different elements of this research programme in order to assess their value, feasibility and applications in future research. In exploring the best means to build a phenomenological history of a cemetery, landscape and material analysis, archival research and ethnography were combined to create a layered narrative of Hamilton Cemetery's past, present and future. The elements that most contributed to the strengths and limitations of this thesis included novel approaches to sampling,

documenting and analyzing cemeteries, the use of visual media, and the incorporation of ethnographic research.

*Dissecting a Cemetery*

In designing methods appropriate to the goals and motivations of this research project, it became clear that traditional methods for recording and analyzing cemeteries would not convey the necessary aspects of human interactions with landscape. Typically, research in cemeteries centres on monuments through the recording of a variety of features, including inscriptions, iconography, style, size, and material. These are certainly valid methods for answering a range of questions regarding mortuary culture, trends and fashions, demographics, and more. However, it is very difficult to make the leap from this scale of research to the scale of the landscape because it is impossible to reconstruct the relationships between monuments. As such, it was necessary to start at the scale of the landscape, breaking the space into feasible and accessible units (the viewscape), and then use finer-grain recording of monuments within those units to supplement analysis of their composition. This approach made it easy to reconstruct an analytical profile of individual viewscales, including their historical development, while also being able to combine them into a master sample of the entire cemetery for statistical testing and comparative analysis of different sections.

This method is relatively simple and feasible – its technological requirements are low, it creates meaningful sample units that can be recorded more quickly than targeting the entire cemetery and it could easily be applied to many cemeteries, regardless of size or style. There are of course more technologically advanced methods that could develop

some of these analytical techniques further. There are increasingly accessible GIS methods involving mapping, satellite imaging, GPS, LiDAR and computer imaging that could allow for the construction and analysis of almost infinite numbers of viewscales within a cemetery. These methods, however, entail much more intensive technological investment and skill, in addition to time requirements both in surveying and recording monuments as well as analyzing that amount of data. The benefit would be the enhanced ability to reconstruct the temporal and spatial relationship between monuments and features of the cemetery, as well as the relationship between different sections. However, for the most part, the lower technological requirements of the methods used in this research accomplished the goals of the project in providing a strong basis from which to analyze and present a temporal landscape more closely connected to the ways in which people experience and perceive space and place. These methods also provided the necessary foundations for the creation of photographic reconstructions of the cemetery through time.

#### *Using Digital Photographic Reconstructions in Analysis*

Visual media technologies played an essential role in this research in enabling the documentation, analysis and presentation of landscape while highlighting phenomenological or sensory elements. However, these relatively new technologies must not be applied uncritically to archaeology. Part of the persuasive power of photography resides in the almost unconscious assumption that a photograph conveys a likeness that is universally recognizable and therefore requires little to no commentary or critique (Thomas 2009:167). While this idealism has faced a barrage of criticism in recent years

(Burke 2001, Evans and Daly 2006, Schneider 2007), an inherent belief in the authenticity and meaning of these images from the past remains. There is a danger then in using photography as a means to represent our own perspectives without additional evidentiary support, and this danger is particularly present where extreme manipulation of images has taken place, as in the case of digital reconstructions. In these instances, the majority of the image might be fiction, constructed simply by pixels and the imagination and skill of the maker, and yet the images present the same innate sense of authenticity of any other photograph. This is the major difference between using historical illustration and creating images with digital photography – while both may hold a level of visual persuasion that is compelling, only the latter has a built in facade of realism, and the alteration of photographs may not always be clear. It does not necessarily make the results any less real than those reached quantitatively or through the interpretation of historical records and artifacts. However, it is necessary not only to question the confidence that we ourselves place on this evidence, using other forms of data to check and support interpretations, but also to equally caution audiences and be forthcoming about the limitations of these ‘reconstructions’ in any context.

Labelling this approach as ‘reconstructive’ may be a little optimistic in and of itself. These digital images are certainly the products of concrete evidence, utilizing not only archival evidence where it exists but also benefiting from the dates available on monuments to create relatively accurate and precise representations of visual sequences. However, there are many issues that limit these as merely possible fragments, and thus the line between reconstruction and simply construction becomes blurred. In the case of

the Hamilton Cemetery project, the viewsapes selected represent merely twelve of an almost limitless number of viewpoints, and six moments in over 150 years of existence. While these methods only begin to confront Roth's (2009) concerns with the limited ability of photography to represent historical duration, they do present a major advantage in visualizing processes with the ability to represent change within a consistent frame of view, rarely available from archival images alone. As in any historical study, it is necessary to contend with balancing the representation of variability and complexity with feasibility. Producing visual representations of every year, for instance, would be almost inconceivable for even a small-scale study like this one, let alone to communicate it in print or other available formats. On the other hand, such a fine temporal scale would also be largely unnecessary, as the changes would be almost imperceptible and the key component is the accumulation of change, not the event. Likewise, one could not seek to represent every point within the cemetery where a visitor might stand but a large enough sample will capture the patterns and variability necessary to make an argument for consistent processes. While these are problems faced in any study of time and space, the aforementioned sense of realism afforded by the incorporation of photographic evidence can influence levels of confidence in the patterns that emerge. It is therefore necessary to be critical of interpretations and incorporate other evidence to ensure that visualizations are not merely of our own constructs.

A final issue highlighted by this project is the way in which the incorporation of visual media into our analysis and interpretation privileges eyesight and visual components of experience. However, research aimed at understanding phenomenology or



aspects of corporal embodiment in history cannot be restricted to sight. Sight is certainly a strong component, influencing senses of crowdedness, openness, naturalness, beauty, decay, etc. However, smell, sound, touch and feeling are also important. The experience of a cemetery can completely shift in response to the sounds of traffic versus birds, the sensory impact of sunny, warm days versus windy, cold or wet days, and even smell and sanitation, in the case of pre-Victorian cemeteries. These aspects are very difficult to build into photographs or other representations compatible with print format. While these senses can be incorporated through descriptive narratives, the power and strength of photographs as evidence of visual perception and the lack of methods to quantify and analyze other senses may continue to overpower underlying narratives of complete corporal experience. Nonetheless, it is a useful exercise at present to continue to manipulate technologies, push the boundaries of what is considered possible and continue to work on all aspects of embodiment, not only those most readily accessible.

Although digital manipulation of archived or contemporary photographs may yet be unconventional, I would argue that it is a legitimate means of producing historical narratives when used in combination with historical records, material studies, and quantitative or statistical analysis and deserves further attention. In the case of Hamilton Cemetery, it was possible to recognize micro-scalar commemorative practices based in experiences of landscape that were previously imperceptible and thus contribute to our understanding of agency and change in funerary practice as a result of our ability to visually capture these considerable changes. While the implications for landscape studies are evident, these methods are applicable to a much wider range of historical and

archaeological studies, with interesting prospects for the incorporation of photography into studies of even prehistory. The images produced are of course partly created by our own historical imagining, however they are invaluable in stimulating new and alternative understandings. They can therefore contribute significantly to the production of narratives that incorporate understandings of experience, perception and embodiment into conceptualizations of historical processes and contexts.

### *Ethnography and Cemeteries*

In designing this research to encompass the entire life history of the cemetery, ethnography was seen as a critical component to best access contemporary attitudes towards Hamilton Cemetery, complementing historical data gathered through archival and archaeological research. Given the paucity of data regarding contemporary relationships with cemeteries beyond simple grave visitation, including recreational uses, heritage and more destructive activities like vandalism, natural observation, questionnaires and interviews produced a large body of data relatively quickly. These methods are not appropriate for all circumstances and the managers of some cemeteries express concerns about approaching individuals using the cemetery to ask questions, as there is a need for sensitivity in these environments.

Ethnographic research did provide systematic data regarding the uses of the cemetery, and their timing, relationship to weather, motivations and regularity, as well as the attitudes that accompany them. While this data mostly confirmed expectations, systematic data do not exist elsewhere and it was therefore necessary to explore this aspect of the research. The greatest drawback was the difficulty in fully accessing and

contextualizing the embodied experiences of the participants involved in this research. As Beatty (2010) has recently highlighted, emotions and experiences are not easily generalized because they “are not the creation of a moment; they participate in manifold relationships formed over periods of time” (2010:430). While Beatty highlights that our writing must be able to represent this complexity, so too must our methods of gathering data. I do not believe that the ethnographic methods employed in this research were able to represent the personal histories necessary to fully understand the position of the participants and therefore could not fully contribute to the aims of this project.

Unfortunately, persuading individuals involved with the cemetery to participate in this study turned out to be a more difficult task than anticipated. On the part of the cemetery administration, the difficulty was in finding someone who would spend the time and prioritize the research, whereas in other cases individuals were inaccessible due to the nature of their relationship with the cemetery (for instance, paranormal societies tend to frequent cemeteries at night which is technically not permitted and therefore members wished to avoid engagement with the project) or because their identities are unknown (most cemetery vandals are minors). It is possible that more in-depth and long-term engagement with participants could have enriched this research, as in a preliminary study of the interactions between people and monuments (Cook 2011) where longer interviews were able to access not only participants’ interpretations of monuments but also their own backgrounds, which provided essential context for their responses. However, there are of course wider problems that have been recognized in studying emotion through

ethnography, particularly due to its diversity (cf. Rosaldo 1984) that correspondingly limit archaeological pursuits of phenomenological research.

### **People, Monuments, Cemeteries**

The Victorian funeral is certainly infamous for its ostentation and extravagance; it was in this period that black ostrich feathers, crape and velvet became the language with which to express grief, identity and status. From feasts of ham, port and cakes to lengthy processions of horse-drawn hearses and hired attendees, funerals became critical social events, but they remained just that – events: short periods during which life centered around the deceased. However, once the remains were buried, and the period of mourning drew to a close, families and friends gradually returned to their regular clothes, routines and responsibilities; memories of the event would fade and eventually die with those that had attended. What remains is the material culture of death, most notably the funerary monument and the cemetery. As an anchor for historical imagination and a stimulus for social processes, the interaction between people and cemeteries governs the relationship between the living and the dead, popular conceptualizations of the past, and the maintenance, neglect or even destruction of these places in whole or in part.

Despite relatively intense investment in the disposal of the dead, including the preparation of the body, the purchase of a coffin, transportation to the cemetery, and the purchase of a plot, this level of engagement with the physical remains is of short duration. Once buried, these connections begin to fade rapidly, as mounded earth over fresh graves is eventually levelled and re-sodded, and as the focus moves from the remains below to the tending of the plot above, including the placement and maintenance of a monument,

weeding, and in some cases planting flowers and shrubbery. This reorientation of meaning and practice is mirrored by the activities and interactions of most cemetery users, who do not have direct knowledge of the individual commemorated, and therefore engage most readily with the landscape, including monuments but also plants, paths and buildings. As these places accumulate biographies, age, change, and impact the actions and understandings of people (and therefore have agency), they are integrated into the social processes governing attitudes and treatments of death and the dead, and heritage and the past, in addition to the construction of contemporary community and individual identities.

This process can be seen on the smallest scale by examining the ways in which different people interact with and interpret individual monuments and the social meanings that are assigned to those interactions. An informed, collective memory provides a basic framework for the interpretation of monuments, creating common threads, informed by symbols, dates and other communicated information relating to family, gender roles, religion and ethnicity based on cultural values and knowledge passed on through history classes, popular culture and family traditions (Cook 2011:194). In this way, not only do individuals emerge with a certain sense about the identities commemorated, but these monuments also become sites of memory, reminding present observers of past time periods. However, personal prescribed memory creates meaningful variations in interpretations because of the living individual's own experiences and beliefs. In the process of interpreting monuments, peoples' own personal narratives become intimately connected with the stories that they construct about the past and contribute to the

negotiation of their own identities, in addition to contemporary constructs about the past. At a slightly larger scale, in viewing a series of monuments as you would in passing through a cemetery, individuals are more likely to respond to and remember monuments if they have a personal connection to them. Monuments with names that viewers were familiar with, that triggered emotional responses, or that stimulated curiosities reflecting personal knowledge from travel, literature, hobbies or background, consistently made more impact on viewers than monuments that did not communicate an identity that participants could personally connect with.

Beyond demonstrating the types of social engagement that occur between monuments and people, and the impact of these interactions on attitudes and identities, understanding the connections that people make with the material manifestations of commemorative activities is important in understanding when and why cemeteries are preserved, neglected or destroyed, in whole or in part. Monuments that the community connects with most are more likely to be the focus of research, restoration, and cemetery events like tours. At the same time such monuments can also attract negative attention and become magnets for vandalism. If monuments do not make an impact on the living or can no longer communicate an element of the past that is meaningful in the present, it is more likely that they will be neglected or forgotten.

Monuments, of course, do not stand in isolation. The accumulation of large numbers of monuments in cemetery landscapes, and their interactions with both the natural environment and with people at a much vaster scale, must also be considered in understanding the relationship between people and material forms of commemoration. At

this level, cemeteries contribute to a more general experience of the living community that is less tied to particular monuments and individual narratives from the past, and is governed more by sensory responses and perception of place. These experiences are gradually accrued through long-term engagement with the space, whether through visiting graves or more recreational uses that have emerged at various times, most recently including dog walking, jogging and cycling. As the space itself changes, both naturally and as a result of human actions and intervention, so does the experience it affords, and ultimately the meanings that are gathered from it. In turn, people act and react on the basis of their understandings of the space, which will then shape future engagements and the space itself. Activities that seek to maintain cemeteries and those that are more destructive are all reactions to varying experiences of the care, decay, historic character or naturalness of the landscape.

Finally, I would argue that the interactions between people, monuments and cemeteries that I have outlined here, whether contributing to the preservation, neglect or destruction of these spaces, are all part of the same process of dealing with the past and making it meaningful. Moshenska (2010:21), in a study of British World War II monuments and sites, has argued that monuments and memorials are “stubborn lumps” from the past that cannot be fully integrated into contemporary life. In contrast, I would suggest that, although the interactions with living communities may transform over time alongside changes in attitudes, interpretations and valuing of the space, we are constantly contributing to these spaces, even if these contributions are perceived as neglect, destruction and forgetting. The lives of these monuments and cemeteries continue

regardless of the ways in which living communities' attitudes or treatments change and we cannot discount any part of that biography; even the engagement of archaeologists with these material worlds needs to be considered to understand the processes through which meaning is invested in material culture.

It has been claimed that it is up to every generation to rewrite history for itself and I think that the active engagement of living communities long detached from these mortuary landscapes involves exactly that process of negotiating the past. Because the majority of physical remains buried in older cemeteries and the individuals themselves are no longer personally connected to living populations via memory, it is necessary to rework these spaces in the present. This is visible in the ways in which the living interpret monuments, melding the information communicated with their own experiences, and in the changing aesthetic and experiential value of historical landscapes more broadly. Our understanding of the production of heritage must be one that recognizes the fluidity of this process and the need to negotiate these sites of history.

It is sometimes difficult to reconcile contradictory actions of community groups that are heavily invested in promoting heritage, restoring monuments and protecting cemeteries, the vandalism, theft and other damages caused by humans that destroy countless monuments every year, the large sections of the population that are either oblivious to the existence of these spaces within their communities or are intentionally avoiding them, and even the actions of administrations that actively maintain and restore some cemeteries or sections of cemeteries while destroying or neglecting others. However, by approaching these phenomena from a perspective that highlights interaction



and engagement and understands the impact that material objects and landscapes have on the choices that contemporary populations make in the treatment of past places, it is possible to not only better understand these processes and the motivations behind them, but also to re-examine how to manage them. It is necessary that these places be meaningful for living communities, whether in the experience they provide as rare green oases in urban centers or in their historical narrative value.

In conclusion, cemeteries may be collections of earth and stone, but their role in commemoration and heritage is neither static nor passive. Whether borne out of motives to remember, to dominate or to display, there are many ways through which people continue to interact with mortuary landscapes for extended periods of time. The connections that these places make with living communities for generations to come will affect not only their chances of survival but also the impact that they have on memory, identity, heritage and popular views of the past. Approaches to heritage and cemeteries have traditionally centred on people. This thesis, however, has highlighted the need to integrate a recognition of the significant and long-term impact that material monuments and mortuary landscapes actively have on attitudes, understandings, emotions and identities, and ultimately on the processes through which contemporary populations engage with history and make the past meaningful in the present.



Figure 1a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 1, Hamilton Cemetery.





**Figure 1b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 1, Hamilton Cemetery.**





Figure 2a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 2, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 2b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 2, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 3a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 3, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 3b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 3, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 42a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 4, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 4b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes Viewscape 4, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 5a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 5, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 5b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 5, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 6a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 6, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 6b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes Viewscape 6, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 7a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 7, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 7b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscope 7, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 8a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 8, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 8b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 8, Hamilton Cemetery.



Figure 9a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 9, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 9b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 9, Hamilton Cemetery.



Figure 10a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 10, Hamilton Cemetery.



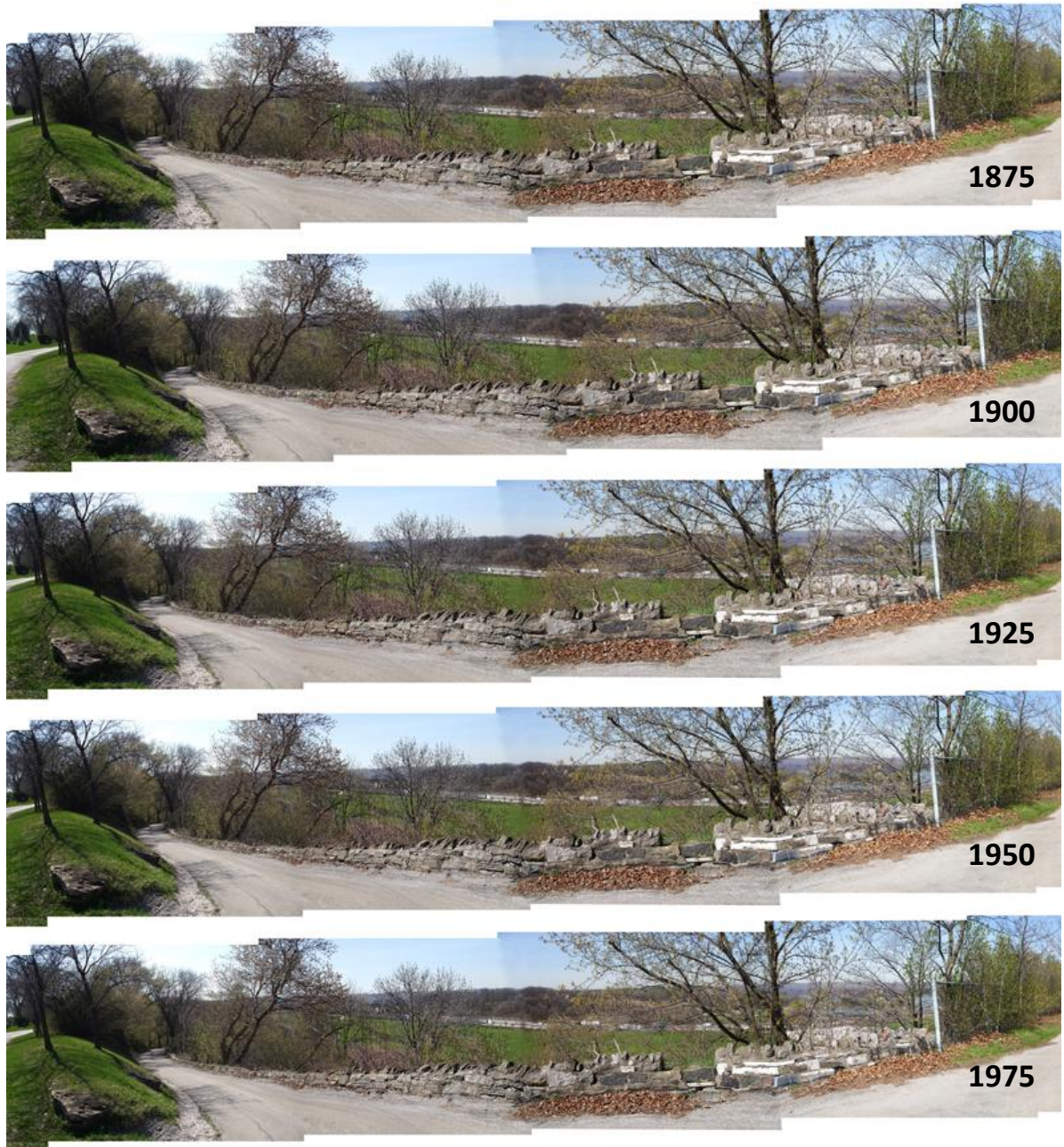


Figure 10b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 10, Hamilton Cemetery.





Figure 11a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 11, Hamilton Cemetery.



Figure 11b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 11, Hamilton Cemetery.



Figure 12a. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscope 12, Hamilton Cemetery.

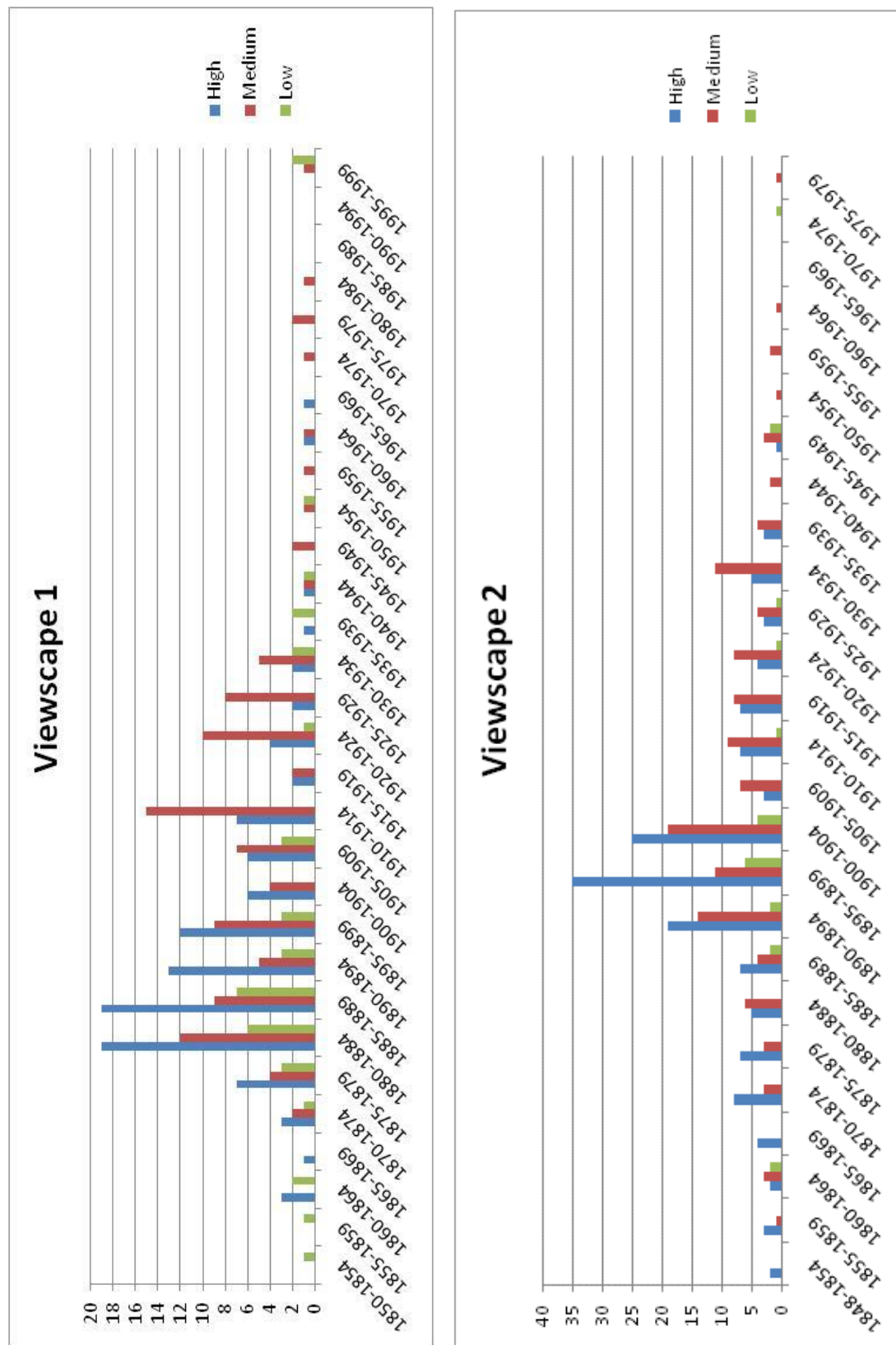




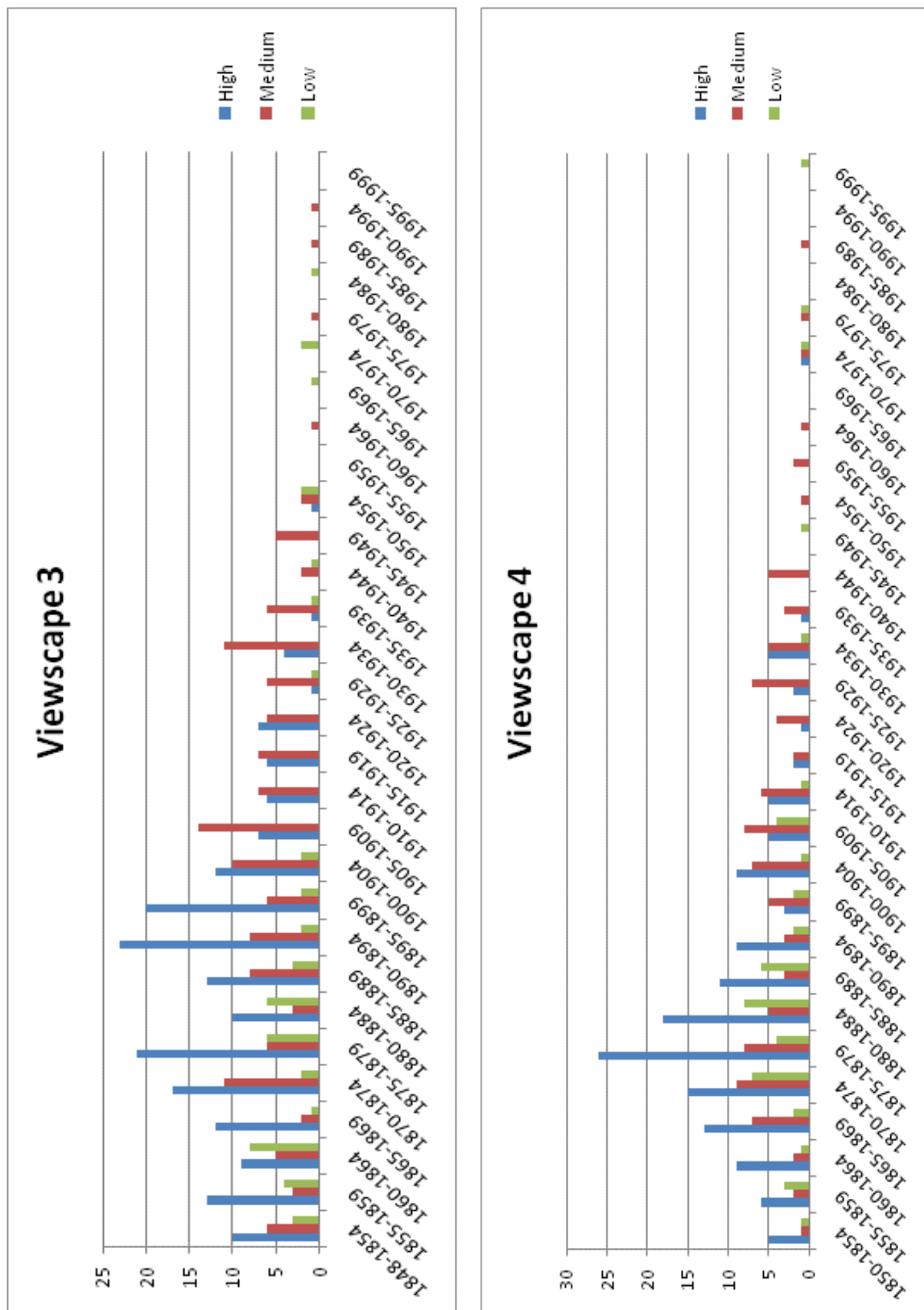
Figure 12b. Digital reconstruction of temporal changes in Viewscape 12, Hamilton Cemetery.



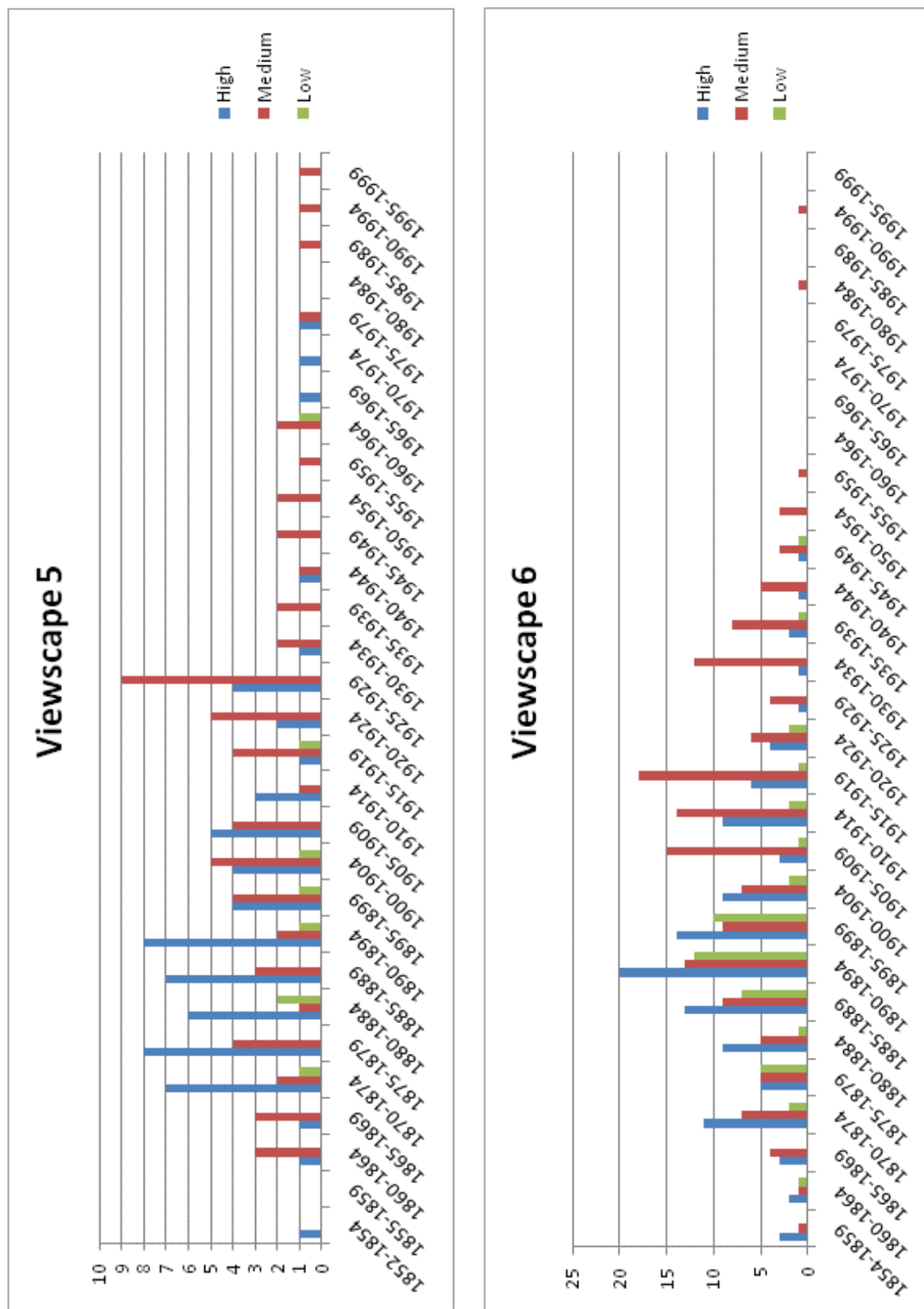
APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments



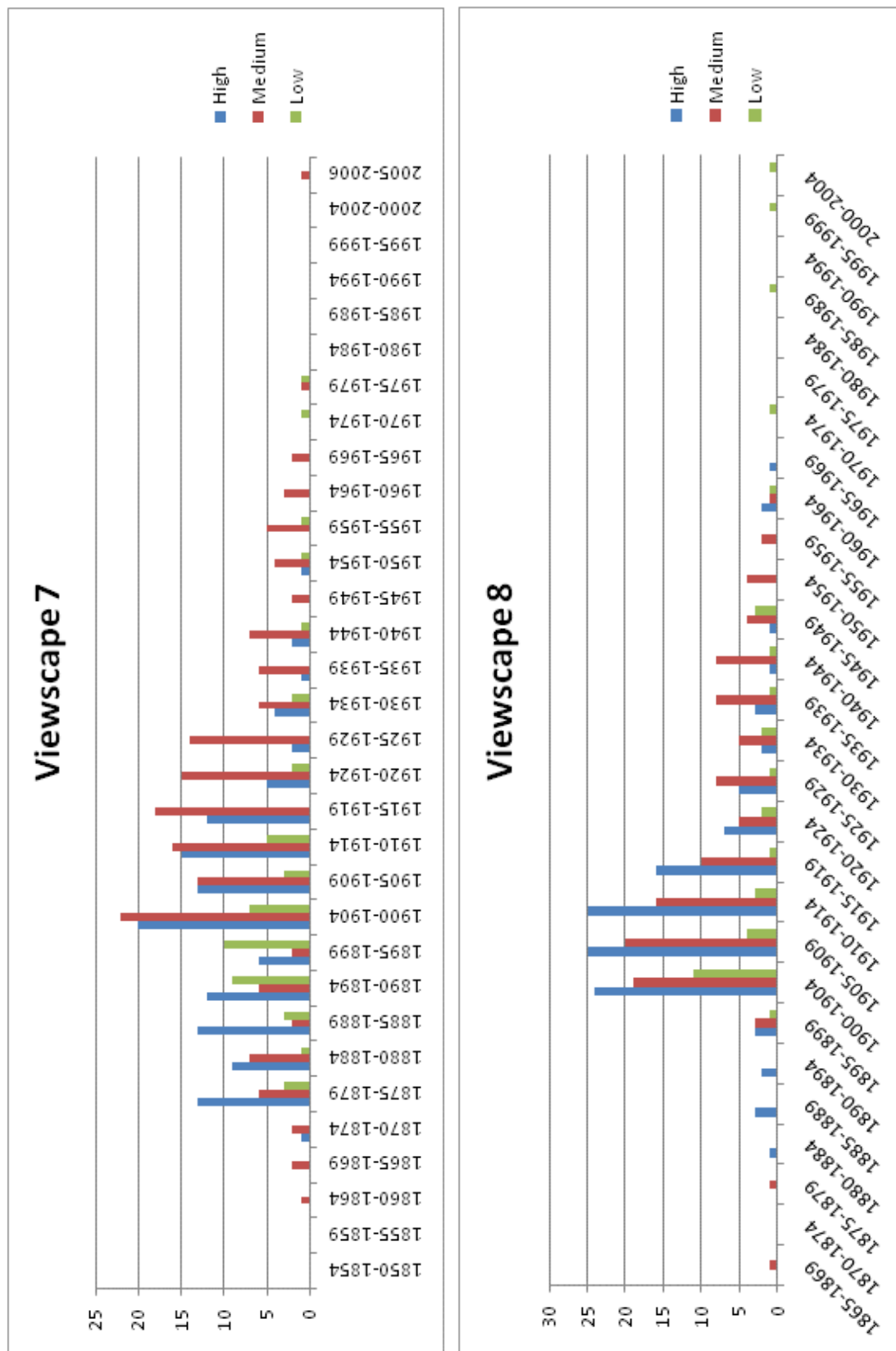
APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments



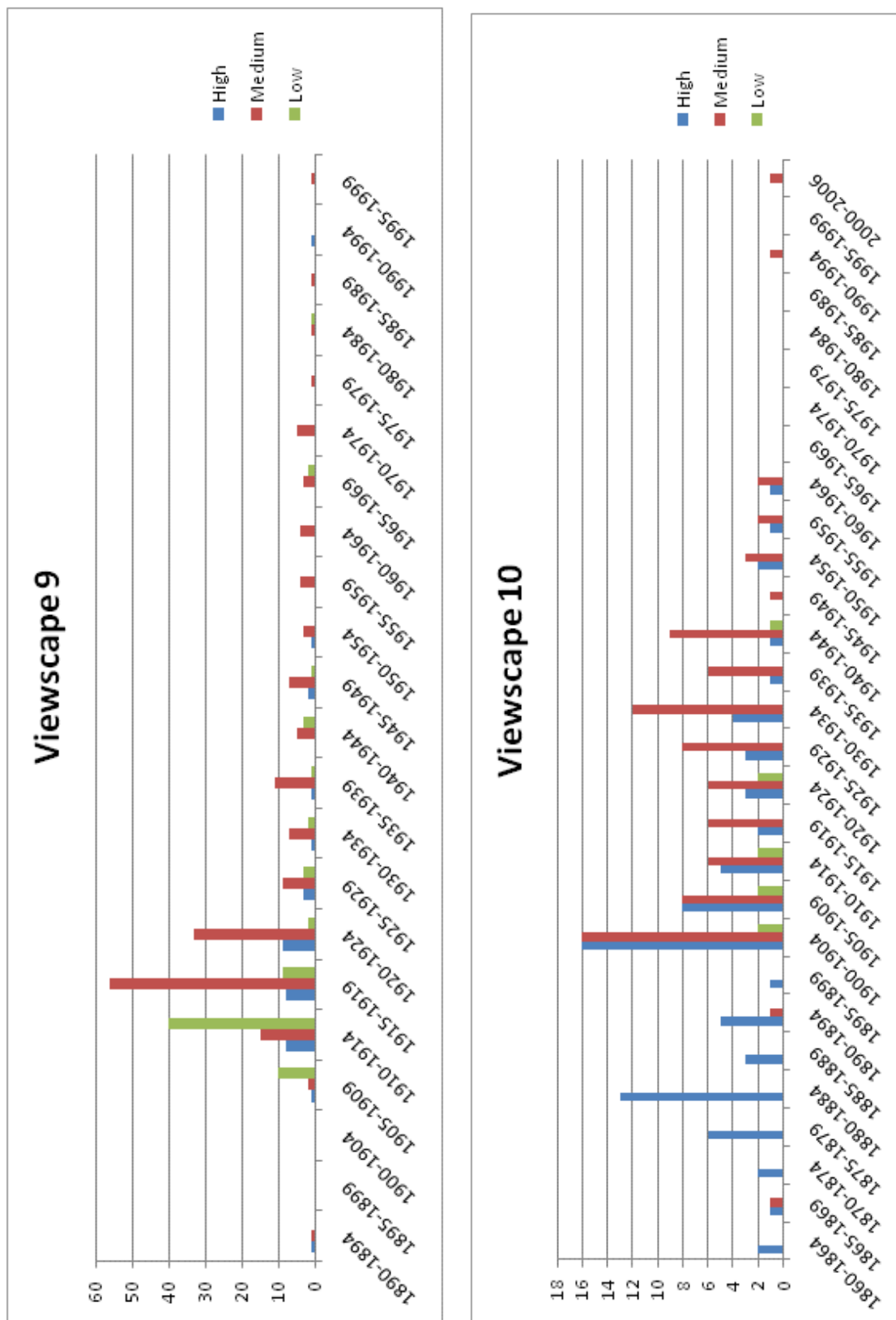
APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments



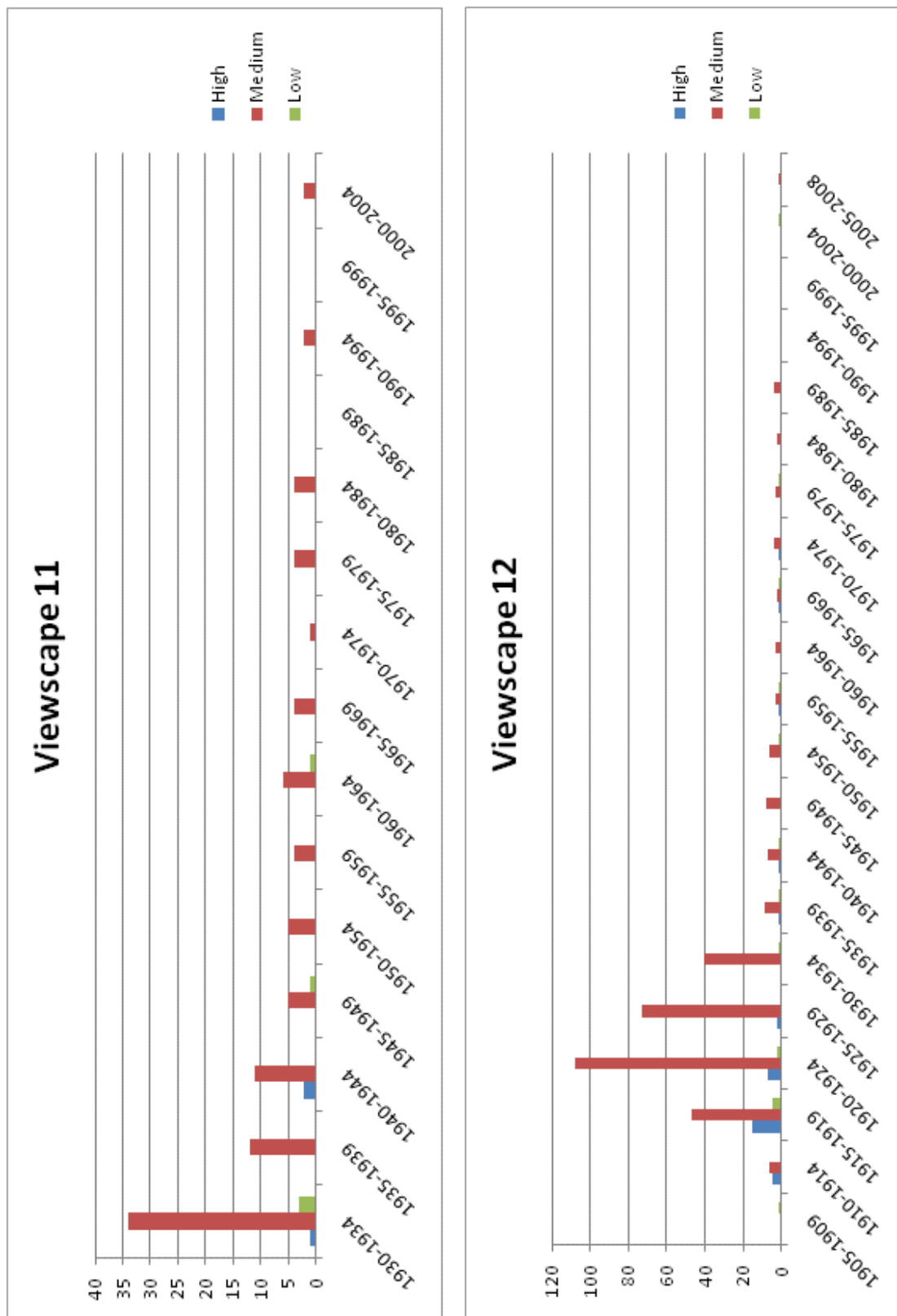
APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments



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APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments



APPENDIX II – Temporal Distribution of High, Medium and Low Impact Monuments

Decade	V4	V5	V3	V1	V6	V2	V7	V10	V8	V9	V12	V11
1850-1854	5	1	10			2						
1855-1859	6		13		3	3						
1860-1864	9	1	9	3	2	2		2				
1865-1869	13	1	12	1	3	4		1				
1870-1874	15	7	17	3	11	8	1	2				
1875-1879	26	8	21	7	5	7	13	6				
1880-1884	18	6	10	19	9	5	9	13	1			
1885-1889	11	7	13	19	13	7	13	3	3			
1890-1894	9	8	23	13	20	19	12	5	2			
1895-1899	3	4	20	12	14	35	6	1	3			
1900-1904	9	4	12	6	9	25	20	16	24			
1905-1909	5	5	7	6	3	3	13	8	25	1		
1910-1914	5	3	6	7	9	7	15	5	25	8	5	
1915-1919	2	1	6	2	6	7	12	2	16	8	15	
1920-1924	1	2	7	4	4	4	5	3	7	9	7	
1925-1929	2	4	1	2	1	3	2	3	5	3	2	
1930-1934	5	1	4	2	1	5	4	4	2	1		1
1935-1939	1		1	1	2	3	1	1	3	1	1	
1940-1944				1	1		2	1	1			2
1945-1949					1	1						
1950-1954			1				1	2		1		
1955-1959								1			1	
1960-1964				1				1	2			
1965-1969				1					1			
1970-1974		1										1
1975-1979												
1980-2010												

**Table 1.** Temporal drift of high distribution monuments demonstrating individual cycles in different viewsapes.



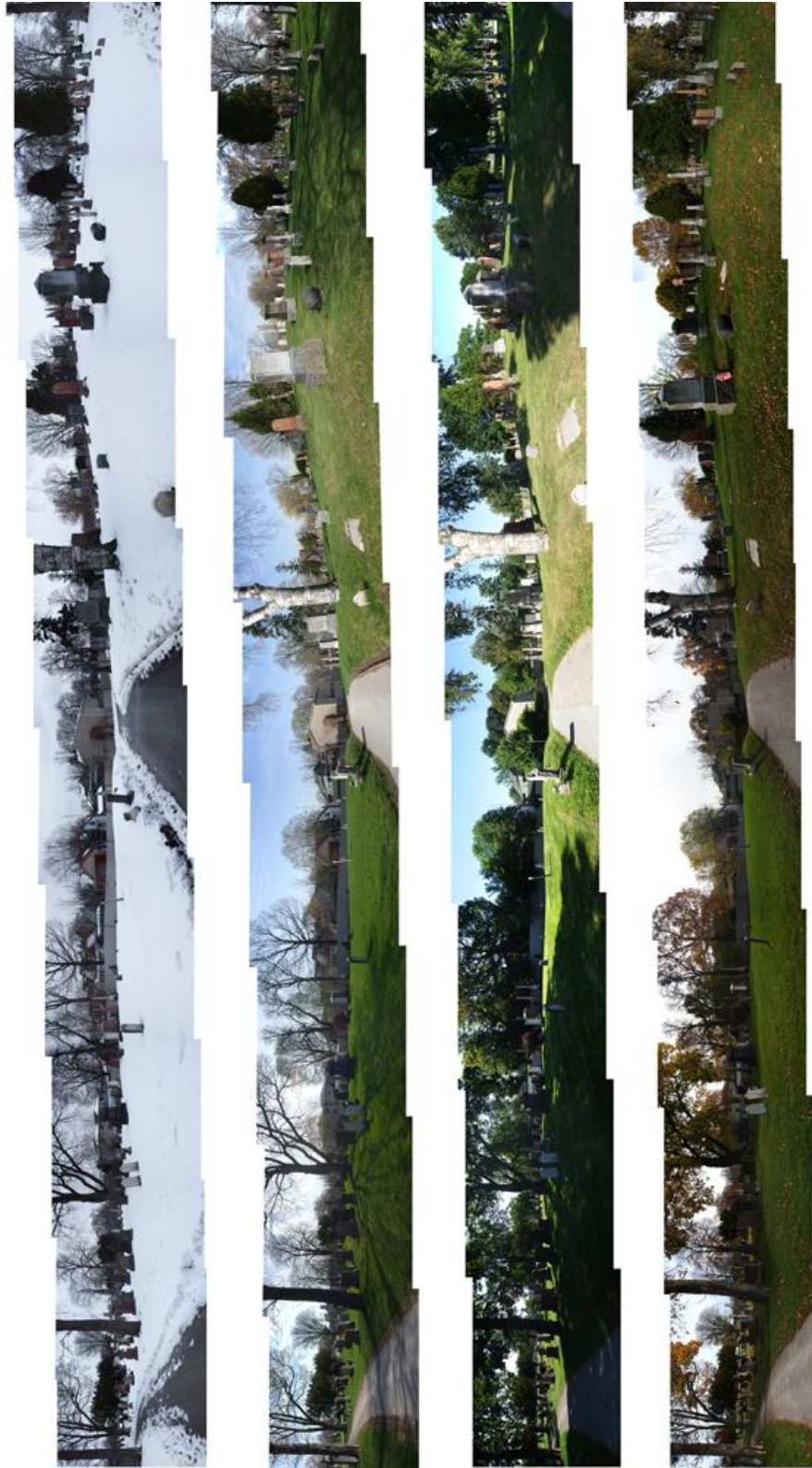


Figure 1 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 1, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.



Figure 2 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 2, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.



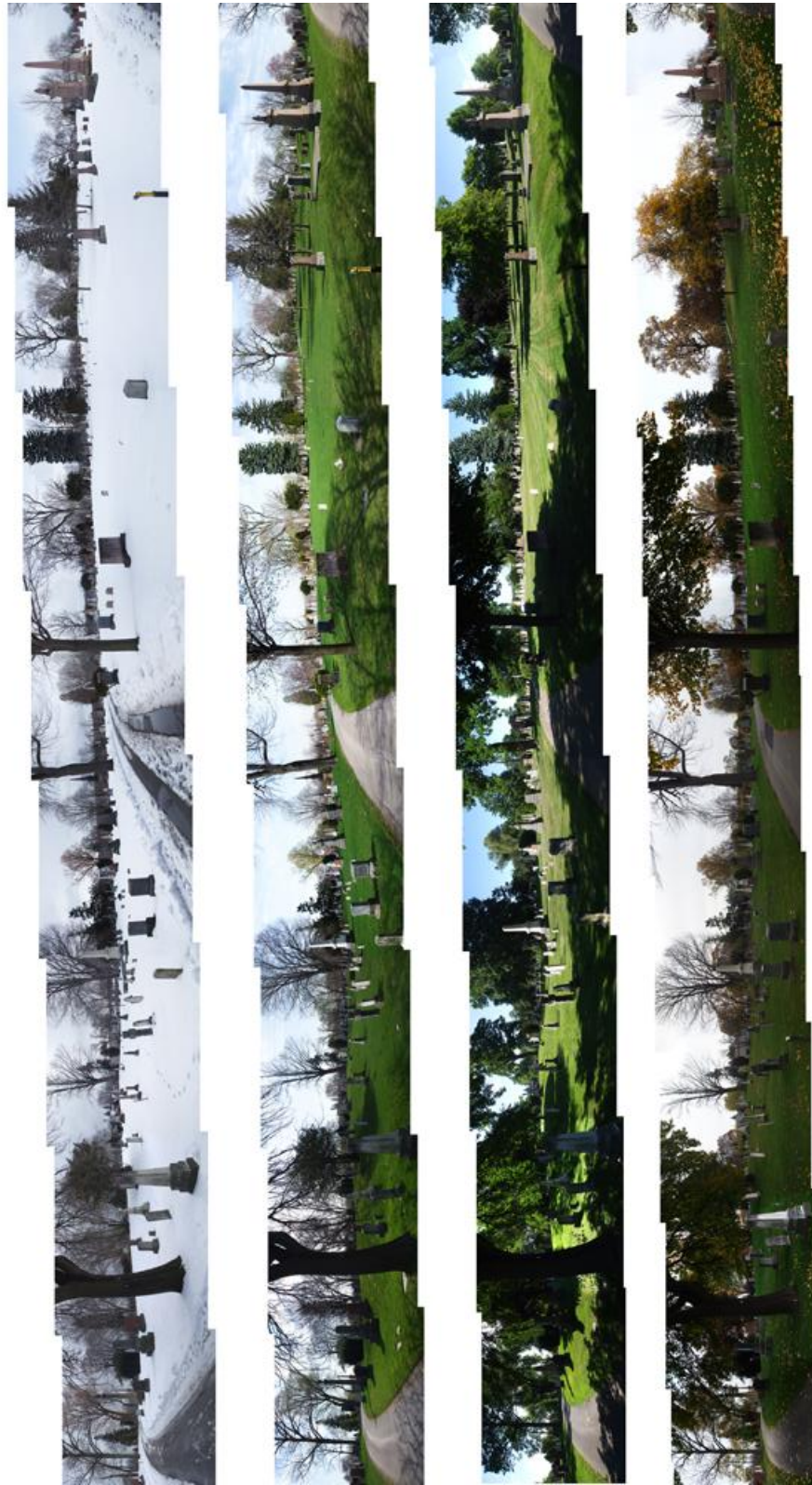


Figure 3 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 3, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.



Figure 4 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 4, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.





Figure 5 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 5, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.

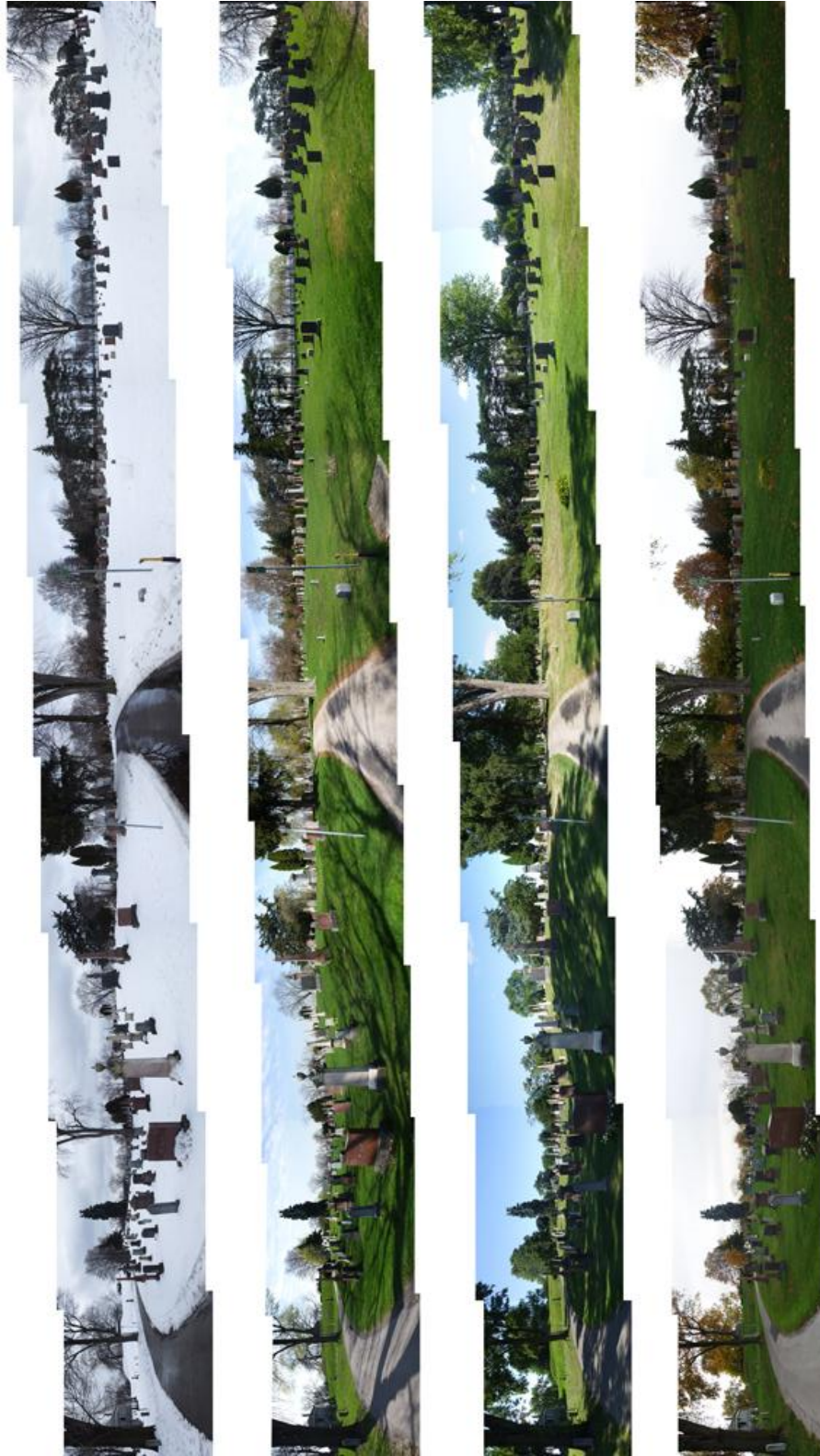


Figure 6 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 6, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.





Figure 7 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 7, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.





Figure 8 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 8, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.



Figure 9 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 9, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.





Figure 10 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 10, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.



Figure 11 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 11, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.





Figure 12 Seasonal cycle in Viewscape 12, Hamilton Cemetery. From Top: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.

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