

THE INFLUENCES OF PARENT CULTURES ON THEIR COLONIES
IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATION OF INTERMENT STYLES AND MORTUARY
MATERIALS IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CAYE
CEMETERY, BELIZE

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by

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San Marcos, TX
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	xiii
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. METHODOLOGY	6
III. CULTURAL AND ANCESTRAL HISTORY OF BELIZE	8
The History of St. George's Caye	8
A History of the Belizean Logging Industry	10
Cultural and Ancestral Variation in Belize 1700-1800	15
IV. ST. GEORGE'S CAYE EXCAVATION BACKGROUND	19
Previous Investigations	19
An Excavation History of St. George's Caye	23
V. HURRICANE INFLUENCE ON THE STRATIGRAPHY OF ST. GEORGE'S CAYE	67
VI. BURIAL STYLES	76
Graves without Mortuary Furniture	76
Pinch Toe and Rectangular Coffins	78
Box Tombs	93
Sarcophagus	100
VII. INTER-CEMETERY ANALYSIS	106
VIII. COLONIAL GRAVE ICONOGRAPHY	131

Religious and Historical Background	132
The Artists and the Customers	133
Evidence of Social Stratification	137
Research in Colonial Headstone Iconography	139
Iconographic Background Research	140
Iconographic Analysis and Comparison	151
IX. CONCLUSION.....	156
REFERENCES	160

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Map of Belize.....	3
2. Aerial photo of St. George's Caye and Belize City, Belize	4
3. Map of logwood and mahogany trade	11
4. Old North Church pew reserved for the "gentlemen of the Bay of Honduras"	14
5. Dedication plaque for the pew, 1727	15
6. Belizean five dollar bill depicting St. George's Caye and tomb of Thomas Potts	17
7. Map of Barcadares and Convention Town Settlements.....	21
8. 1887 survey of St. George's Caye properties including the cemetery	24
9. 1872 map of the St. George's Caye cemetery by Rob Hume.....	26
10. Modern burial and Battle of St. George's Caye monument	27
11. XU 2, 3, 6, and 7 were excavated in the 2009 summer field season	29
12. Map of historic hurricane paths in Belize	30
13. Box tomb base discovered in XU 7	32
14. Box tomb lid discovered in XU 13	34
15. Historic box tomb in Yarbrough Cemetery, Belize City, Belize	35
16. XU 13 infant or juvenile coffin remains	36
17. XU 13 Adult coffin underneath infant or juvenile burial	37
18. The distal end of Burial 24.....	38
19. XU15 brick box tomb bases found in-situ	39

20. 2011 GPR survey map results	40
21. Operation 1 excavation units and mapped burials	41
22. Overview of burials discovered in Operation 1	42
23. Burials 4 through 9.....	43
24. Burial 16 in XU 24.....	44
25. Burials 6, 7, 9, and 10 in XU 25	45
26. Burials 11, 13, and 14 in XU 27	47
27. Burials 11-15 in XU 28.....	48
28. Portions of burials 1, 2, and 3 in XU 29	49
29. Burial 1 with breast plate, discovered in XU 29	50
30. Portions of Burials 1, 2, 3, and 4 in XU 30.....	51
31. Spanish Real dated to 1721 found on the skull of Burial 3	53
32. Preserved fabric found under the 1721 Spanish Real	53
33. Burial 17 discovered in XU 31	54
34. Burial 18 found in XU 32	57
35. Burial 19 found in XU 33 with lid partially preserved	59
36. The bottom of the Burial 19 coffin is extremely well preserved	59
37. Burial 20 discovered within XU 35	61
38. Burial 20 and Burial 21	62
39. Burial 21 was excavated in XU 36	63
40. The distal end of Burial 20 is broken from Burial 21	64
41. Burial 21 was constructed with siding at the base	65
42. Burial 21 coffin lid screws found around the top edge of the coffin	66

43. Burial 21 fabric found attached to the interior sides of the coffin	66
44. Soil deposition study aerial and coring map	69
45. Sediment results from the core (FBM#) samples	70
46. The stratigraphy of the XU 34 northern profile wall	72
47. XU 34 northern wall profile drawing.....	73
48. A depiction of early shroud burial ca. 1592.....	80
49. An example of gable lidded coffins ca. 1651	81
50. Burial shroud ca. 1638	83
51. Burial shroud ca. 1871	83
52. Fabric used to mask carpentry errors on the exterior of the coffin	84
53. Parish coffin	86
54. Heraldic depositum plate design typical for a young male.....	89
55. Coffin with heart design found in the African Burial Ground, New York City	91
56. Intramural wall burial example.....	96
57. Cemetery headstone examples.....	97
58. Intramural ledger stone example.....	97
59. Cemetery ledger stone and headstones examples	98
60. Example of intramural sarcophagus in church vault.....	98
61. Cemetery box tomb example	99
62. The Thomas Potts tomb	101
63. Thomas Potts tomb and cemetery overview	101
64. Modern above-ground tomb in St. George's Caye cemetery	105
65. Ceramic plates discovered within looted tomb in Jamaica.....	111

66. Colonial burial excavated with in-situ ceramic plate.....	112
67. Ceramic sherd found within Burial 18 coffin	113
68. Sprott cemetery excavation plan view	115
69. Uxbridge cemetery excavation plan view map	117
70. Old Chelsea Church excavation plan view	120
71. Subterranean brick-lined grave, Old Chelsea Church.....	122
72. Plan view map of Baptist Burial Ground excavation in Poole, England	126
73. Infant interred directly above adult burial in the Baptist Burial Ground	127
74. Dethlefsen and Deetz's Graph of design frequency in the cemeteries of Cambridge, Concord, and Plymouth	141
75. Early 1700's Death's Head Motif, Charleston, South Carolina.....	143
76. Late 1600's Death's Head Motifs, New England	144
77. Cherub Motifs, Charleston, South Carolina.....	145
78. Cherub Motifs, New England	146
79. Cherub simplification transformation, New England	148
80. Urn Motif, Charleston, South Carolina.....	149
81. Urn Motif, New England	150
82. Oldest Cherub Motif in Charleston, South Carolina.....	152

ABSTRACT

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Maya archaeology has dominated the focus of archaeological projects in Belize. However, the potential for studying the historic past of this country is emerging. This study aims to elucidate the development of burial styles and mortuary materials within the cemetery on St. George's Caye. A historical analysis, as well as an inter-cemetery comparison was completed to better understand the colonial funerary enclosures of the island, including the box tomb, pinch toe coffin, and sarcophagus of Thomas Potts.

The investigation and interpretation of burial structures within the St. George's Caye cemetery were successfully completed by utilizing previous archaeological examinations, reviews of corresponding archaeological and historical publications, oral histories, and related global archaeological digs. This confluence of data has supported my hypothesis that the styles of interments and grave goods on the island were influenced by a cultural association with other British colonies on the Mosquito Shore, New England, South Carolina, Jamaica, and England. A review of interments and mortuary materials in these locations has supported my proposed cultural connections as well as explained the evolution of burial styles and personal objects within the St. George's Caye cemetery.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For several hundred years, the island of St. George's Caye was an integral part of the political unit that became Belize, Central America. The corpus of my research focuses on this island's cemetery. The cemetery was likely first established in the late seventeenth century by privateers or Baymen during which time Belize was known as the "Bay Settlement" or the "Bay of Honduras." The island was later heavily occupied by the British when Belize, identified as "British Honduras" for much of the modern era, was used as a mahogany logging settlement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Thomson 2004).

The investigation of burial structures within the St. George's Caye cemetery were successfully completed by utilizing previous archaeological examinations, reviews of corresponding archaeological and historical publications, oral histories, and related global archaeological digs. This confluence of data has supported the hypothesis that the styles of interments and grave goods on the island were influenced by a cultural association with other British colonies on the Mosquito Shore, New England, South Carolina, Jamaica, and England. A review of interments and mortuary materials in these locations has supported my proposed cultural connections as well as explained the evolution of burial styles and personal objects within the St. George's Caye cemetery.

Belize contains a unique set of tropical environments. The country is located on the eastern side of Central America and shares its eastern boundary with the Caribbean Sea between 16° and 18° N. latitude (Figure 1) (Weaver and Sabido 1997). The geographic setting includes a vast barrier island system, coastal region, pine-filled low lands, and a dense, mountainous jungle (Weaver and Sabido 1997). These factors greatly contributed to the survival of the early European inhabitants (Camille 1996). The combination of small islands, undulating shoals, and the large barrier reef on the Belizean coast created a perfect environment for pirate ships to evade capture. Logwood cutters, mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exploited the once dense logwood that inhabited the coast and the inland mahogany trees as well.

The island of St. George's Caye is located nine miles off the coast of Belize, along the second largest barrier reef in the world. It rests slightly northeast of present day Belize City and the mouth of the Belize River. The temperature of the coast varies throughout the year but ranges from 85° F to 71° F (Weaver and Sabido 1997). Precipitation is frequent throughout the country. Belize receives, on average, more than 1500 millimeters (mm) to over 4000 mm of annual rainfall (Weaver and Sabido 1997). Hurricanes and associated storm surge forces are a common occurrence along the Belizean coastline (Weaver and Sabido 1997). St. George's Caye has been decimated by several hurricanes in the last few hundred years, specifically an unnamed storm in 1931 and hurricane Hattie in 1961 (Garber et al. 2009).



Figure 1. Map of Belize (Cook 2003).

The isle is crescent-shaped, with the opening of a calm bay on the leeward or mainland-facing side (Figure 2). This feature, when combined with the proximity to the Belize River, made the island of St. George's Caye a strategic location for its historical

settlers (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). The topography of the island is limited. The highest elevation is no more than two feet above high tide. Furthermore, dense mangrove forests rest at the northern and southern ends of the island.



Figure 2. Aerial photo of St. George's Caye and Belize City, Belize (Google 2013).

The stratigraphy throughout the cay is almost entirely disturbed (Garber et al. 2010). Natural processes, including hurricane and storm surge devastation, as well as human development and dredge filling, have decimated the archaeological record. Allegedly, the cemetery on the cay represents the only property that has not had sand artificially added via dredging (Garber et al. 2009). All or most of the other estates have had significant amounts of marine sand added to increase elevation, expand the size of properties, and ensure the island's survival from the sea's destructive forces.

Existing work on British European colonial Caribbean cemeteries is almost non-existent. Several slave cemeteries in Caribbean British colonies have been excavated and

documented thoroughly in the past fifty years. However, the cemetery found on St. George's Caye was not a slave cemetery. Therefore, the information available from slave cemetery literature is not directly helpful in this analysis. It is worth noting though that historic records do indicate a large African-Belizean population at the beginning of the St. George's Caye settlement (Enclada and Awe 2010).

Information regarding early historic era Belize is quite scarce. The Maya history of the region, especially Maya archaeological excavations, completely overshadows the recent colonial record of the caye. Early in this research, I assumed that the influence of British culture was homogenously distributed throughout the crown's colonies and that a select review of these colonies will reflect the mortuary practices of England from the late seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Many of the British settlers on St. George's Caye who were buried in the cemetery came from the British colonies listed previously or from England itself (Thomson 2004). I anticipated that each interred individual's culture would be reflected in his or her interment style and mortuary goods. This, to an extent, has held true and will be elucidated in the few chapters that follow.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The horizontal excavation approach, outlined by McIntosh (1986), is a common modern excavation method that "advocates the uncovering of a site layer by layer" and was applied for the collection of this data (McIntosh 1986). Ground penetrating radar (GPR), used prior to the 2011 field session on the caye, located several grave-like anomalies within the cemetery boundaries (Garber et al. 2010). These anomalies were represented as large disturbed areas underneath the soil on the map produced by the GPR survey. The disturbed locations closely match most of the grave locations in the historical record. With this information, the data collected from the 2011 summer excavation of the cemetery, and under the direction of Dr. James F. Garber, new excavation units could be positioned and investigated during the 2012 summer field season.

Stratigraphic matrices were recorded with regard to texture, color, and material inclusions. Once completely uncovered, various components of the interment structure were documented using photographs, narratives, and limited sketch maps. Following the basic archaeological laws of association and superposition, attempts were made to date artifacts and features, as well as each observed interment (Renfrew and Bahn 2008).

The distance between monuments and burials is an important factor in this research. The patterning of specific interment styles, or lack of patterning, may reflect a common practice of burying the deceased for a certain culture or time period. The

distance of the church from the cemetery may be consistent throughout all of the researched colonies. The positioning of those interred, specifically, which way the interment is facing, is critical information and was justly gathered. This spatial analysis was collected in the hopes of conducting an inter-cemetery as well as intra-cemetery analysis.

Statistical testing was first planned and later abandoned while searching for related cemetery excavations. Few Protestant European colonial cemeteries have been excavated in the United States. This was also apparent in Jamaica, where only two Protestant European family burials were conducted from the same temporal period. Moreover, an article, titled "Historical Archaeology of Religious Sites and Cemeteries," directly addresses this archaeological issue within the United States.

Ultimately, the research for this thesis became less of a data-reliant analysis and more of an archival, history-based investigation of the burials residing within the confines of the island cemetery. Promising information was gathered from excellent archaeological reports of Protestant cemetery excavations in the greater London, England area and Poole, England. However, the most valuable and significant information came from English authors who wrote extensively on death and burial in colonial England. These include Julian Litten's *The English Way of Death* and Margeret Cox's *Grave Concerns: Death and Burial in England 1700-1850*. The authors provide invaluable information regarding the history of coffins, burial clothing, grave goods, and monument-style development. Conversely, academic research into these areas is limited at best. Never before has a work been published on these fields of inquiry within the United States.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL AND ANCESTRAL HISTORY OF BELIZE

The History of St. George's Caye

The island of St. George's Caye played an important role in the foundations of the English colony of British Honduras. It was intentionally selected by its early European settlers for its leeward side harbor, where ships could easily dock (Garber et al. 2009). Another salient feature is the fact that ships would be undetected in this location because the isle rests within nine miles of the mouth of the Belize River. Over time the Belize River proved to be an important navigation canal to inland resources, particularly mahogany (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996).

During the excavations on St. George's Caye in the summer of 2012, Maya ceramic sherds were discovered for the first time on the island. These sherds are certainly evidence of the island earliest inhabitants. However, evidence of Maya settlements on the series of cayes off of Belize is not uncommon (Thomson 2004). The first European presence in the western Caribbean was the Spanish (Thomson 2004). Spain in the sixteenth centuries began to establish footholds in the Yucatan and Honduras of Central America for the purpose of logwood extraction that would be sent to Europe (Craig 1969). However, the Spanish never elected to focus on establishing a settlement in central Belize. This settlement failure eventually led to a gruesome and costly Spanish military defeat in the 1798 Battle of St. George's Caye.

The advent of the English in the Caribbean in the sixteenth century was sanctioned by the British crown for the purpose of dislodging the Spanish trade embargo in the region (Thomson 2004). Queen Elizabeth I viewed the Spanish monopoly on trade in the area as a threat and unofficially supported any English aggression that hindered Spanish trade and Spanish treasure. The British queen's attitude effectively condoned piracy in the Caribbean. The first recorded English settlement in the Caribbean occurred in 1631. This nascent colony, named Providence Island, is located in present-day Nicaragua (Thomson 2004). Like the early English colony in what is today the Boston area, the Providence Island colonists were English Puritans, escaping a perceived religious intolerance in the motherland. The Providence settlement lasted for about a decade and then was forced to vacate the island due to Spanish territorial claims and constant harassment by Spanish military forces. Certainly, for the Spanish, the unwelcome presence was not only due to their connection to England, but also their religious denomination.

Hostilities between the English buccaneers and the Spanish mercantile fleet continued until the Treaty of Madrid in 1667 (Thomson 2004). This treaty, negotiated between England and Spain, officially outlawed the piracy supported by the English government, effectively driving many English buccaneers in the Caribbean to look for another means of profit and survival. Turning from the sea to the land, these English sailors began to harvest logwood, a tropical tree with dyeing properties (Craig 1969). The logwood trade was not foreign to many English sailors in the area because the Spanish ships they often boarded were hauling the material back to Europe for sale. As previously mentioned, the Spanish had already begun the harvesting of logwood in the seventeenth

century, but it was not until the Treaty of Madrid that English nationals began to participate in the trade themselves.

The first mention of the English on the coast of Belize is by a Spanish priest who recorded, in 1677, how a pirate, the notorious Bartholomew Sharpe, settled on the cayes off the coast of Belize (Thomson 2004). The first official documentation of a settlement in the area came in 1682 and by 1705 the area of present-day Belize City was known as "where the English for the most part load their logwood" (Thompson 2004:17). The logwood industry had effectively made permanent the English settlement on the Belize River.

The logwood trade and, eventually, the trade in Mahogany wood, will perpetuate the rise of the English colony in Belize and foster the development of connections with the other English colonies in the Atlantic during the succeeding eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A History of the Belizean Logging Industry

The most valuable resource in Belize between the rise of the English colony in the late seventeenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was the trade in logwood and mahogany (Campbell 2003). The trade brought with it an intimate cultural and economic connection with other English colonies in the Atlantic including those in Jamaica, South Carolina, New England, and the motherland, England (Figure 3) (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996).

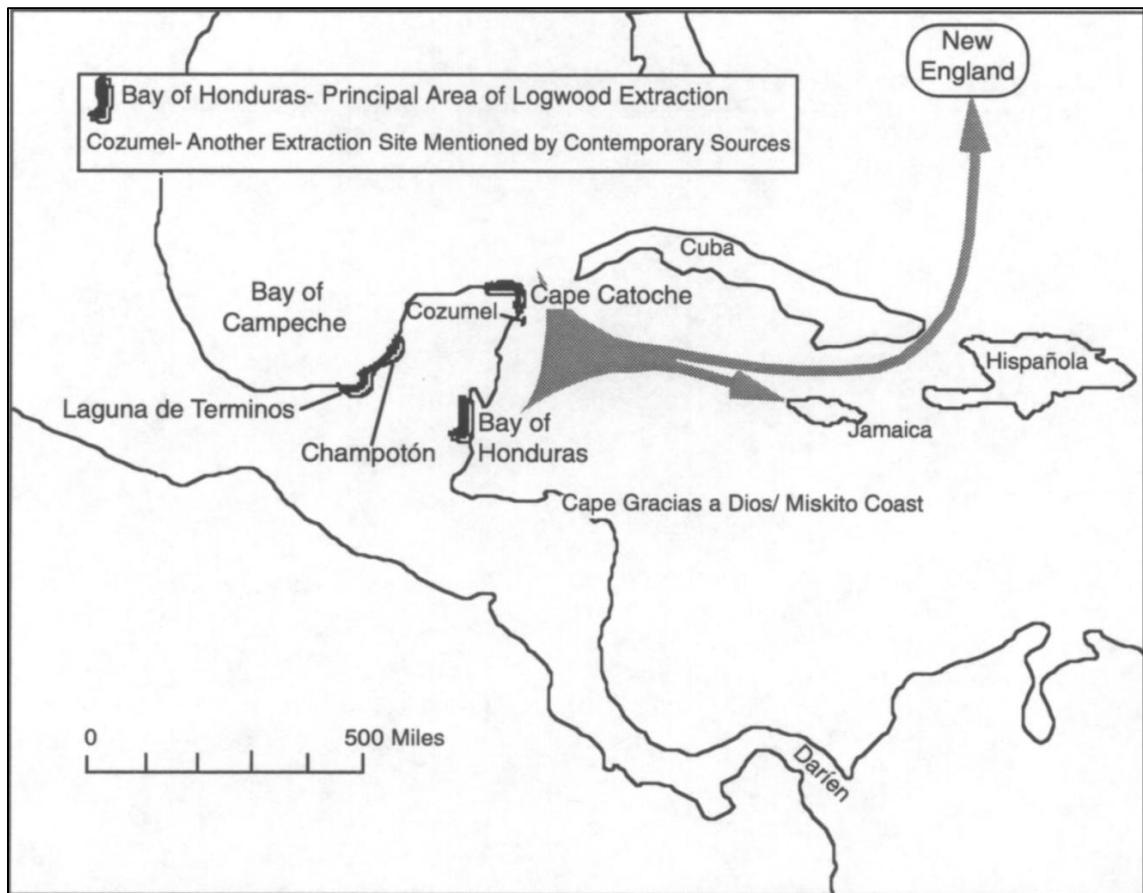


Figure 3. Map of logwood and mahogany trade (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996:78).

As previously discussed, English sailors began stealing logwood from Spanish ships and unguarded forest camps in the seventeenth century. The Treaty of Madrid guaranteed certain rights to England in the Caribbean. Its signing also fostered the English government's suppression of English citizens who harassed Spanish ships in the region. With the support of the mother country no longer formally available, most English seamen stayed in the Caribbean and began to harvest logwood (Thomson 2004).

The English pursuit of the logwood industry effectively "ended Spain's commercial monopoly of this product and forced down the market price for the wood"

(Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996:78). Officials in Jamaica noted that the price of logwood in England, formally purchased for one hundred pounds per ton was now available for fifteen pounds per ton due to the establishment of English logging settlements in the late seventeenth century (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). Several logging camps in the Caribbean were created including those at the Bay of Campeche in present day Mexico, the Bay of Honduras (Belize), and Mosquito Shore in present day Honduras (Joseph 1924). Over the next century the English settlements throughout the region were subjected to sporadic Spanish harassment (Thomson 2004). The Spanish incursion forced an exodus of English settlers until, by the middle of the eighteenth century, only the Baymen at the Bay of Honduras settlement remained.

Several factors attributed to the success of the Baymen's settlement. The territory, comprised within vast lowland coastal and swampland terrain is ideal for the growth and harvest of logwood (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). The barrier reef and numerous cayes, which lie just a few miles off to the west, and are parallel to, the coast of Belize, served as a protective obstacle for Spanish ships from navigating to the mainland (Campbell 2003). English pirates effectively utilized the hazards of the cayes as a staging place for assaults on the Spanish merchant marine. The Belize River flows through what has become today Belize City. This major waterway allowed for easy access to hardwoods inland and for faster export of logwood goods down the river on rafts (Camille 2000).

The English logwood trade began to soar in the early eighteenth century due to the rise in woolen clothing production in England specifically and Europe in general (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). This demand expanded logging in Belize and

further strengthened the Belizean connections with ports in Jamaica, South Carolina, and New England. Furthermore, an English governmental proclamation in 1699 allowed for the direct shipment of Belizean logwood to foreign countries from New England instead of ports on English soil (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). This further enlarged the amount of foreign clientele for the logwood trade and increased the demand in Belize itself.

Ships loaded with logwood or mahogany often left the Bay of Honduras for ports in Jamaica (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). The island of Jamaica became the British station of resources and military reinforcement in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to the trade in tropical woods, Jamaica had strong economic relationships with the British-controlled American colonies (Robinson 1992). Moreover, prior to the American Revolutionary War, most of the "food, staves, and manufactures" in Jamaica came from the American colonies (Robinson 1992:206). In return for these goods, Jamaican products such as slaves, tropical supplies, and sugar were traded to the American mainland (Robinson 1992).

South Carolina and the Bay of Honduras have a long history of contact. Ships from the bay settlement are reported to have stopped in South Carolina as early as 1674 (Robinson 1992). A Charleston newspaper, namely *The Gazette*, record that by 1779 the port have become a major stopping point in the logwood trade (Robinson 1992). The port in Charleston was typically used by ships headed to New England ports or onward to England from the Caribbean.

New England's close cultural and economic connection to the Caribbean can be dated back to the middle of the seventeenth century. The first shipments of logwood from

Jamaica and Yucatan Peninsula reached England via New England as early as 1680 (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). The connection between the logwood cutters and the people in New England was so close that the Bayman donated logwood to the Old North Church in Boston. The church sold the logwood and used the profits to erect a steeple. In return for this donation, a pew was dedicated to the Bayman in the back of the church and can still be seen today with an engraved plaque (Figure 4 and 5) (Camille and Espejo-Savedra 1996).



Figure 4. Old North Church pew reserved for the "gentlemen of the Bay of Honduras" (Wright 2013).



Figure 5. Dedication plaque for the pew, 1727 (Wright 2013).

A review of the logwood trade history in Belize is crucial for the understanding of cultural interactions and influences that make up the rich history of present day Belize. These economic ties not only fostered the growth of the settlement, both financially and with regard to population size, but created avenues of social and religious interaction that exist even today. This thesis will show how these relationships help explain the styles and forms of mortuary interment on St. George's Caye.

Cultural and Ancestral Variation in Belize 1700-1800

The growing demand abroad for Caribbean logwood not only created long-lasting commercial ties, but also is responsible for the ancestral diversity visible in Belize today. By around 1720, the forestry process grew to such a degree that slaves were brought to Belize from the Antillean slave markets to confront the increase in logging harvests (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). The African slave population in British Honduras

was initially small, numbering only in the hundreds from the first few decades (Camille and Espejo-Saavedra 1996). However, by 1790, a census of the settlement showed those of African descent to number over 2300, including 2024 slaves, while the European population numbered only 260 (Thomson 2004).

The historical relationship of slave masters and slaves in British Honduras was believed to be less oppressive than in most of the other English colonies (Joseph 1974). While logging, "slaves worked at the side of their masters in the swamps and forests on much the same terms as free hired labourers" (Joseph 1974:31). The cordial relationship is also represented in the records of those present for the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798. In this battle, over one thousand slaves fought alongside the Baymen in expelling a large, formal Spanish military force. Even while many or most of the slaves were armed, internal fears of a rebellion against the British settlers never materialized (Thomson 2004). People in Belize today represent a close connection to the ancestral demographics found in the late eighteenth century. This is evidenced in the illustrations of St. George's Caye and the Thomas Potts tomb on the Belizean five dollar bill (Figure 6). A majority of the nation is composed of those who are descended from African and Central American indigenous communities, while a small European demographic is also present.



Figure 6. Belizean five dollar bill depicting St. George's Caye and tomb of Thomas Potts (Garber et al. 2009:7).

The introduction of slaves from Africa between the 18th and 19th centuries does not represent the only arrival of another culture. Two major events proved to dramatically increase the population in the Bay of Honduras at the close of the eighteenth century. The loss of the American Revolutionary War for the British in the early 1780's meant that many loyalists to the crown were either going to be deported or would emigrate for their own interests.

American colonists who fought for British control in the southern American colonies sought refuge elsewhere towards the close of that war (Robinson 1992). Many moved to Florida, New York, the Bahamas, and the West Indies. Indeed, over 5,000 loyalists from the Savannah and Charleston areas ended up emigrating to Jamaica (Robinson 1992). Though, the amount of southern loyalists that reached the Bay of Honduras during this time is unknown, the numbers were nearly not as large as those that immigrated to Jamaica.

British citizens arrived in the Bay of Honduras from the American colonies, but also found their way from a southern location. Another focus for immigration was from

the Caribbean settlement called Mosquito Shore. Located in what is today Honduras' Caribbean shore, the main economic drive of the Mosquito Shore colony, like British Honduras, was the extraction and trade in logwood (Dawson 1998). The Convention of London in July 1786, a formal agreement between Spain and England, mandated the immediate evacuation of British citizens from Mosquito Shore (Thomson 2004). Out of the 2,650 evacuees, only around four hundred left for Jamaica, England, or the Cayman Islands (Robinson 1992). The remaining 2,214 went to the Bay of Honduras settlement, effectively quadrupling the number of British settlers reported in the 1783 census (Thomson 2004).

The large population of British citizens who arrived in the Bay of Honduras between the closing days of the American Revolutionary War and the evacuation of Mosquito Shore brought several strong political beliefs. Those who arrived from the American colonies had just fought a long and bloody conflict, bringing experience in current warfare and the subsequent drain that warfare places on any given social order (Robinson 1992). Evacuees from Mosquito Shore carried an extensive knowledge in logwood extraction and shipment, but also a dearly held hatred of Spanish aggression in the Caribbean. These cultural and societal experiences of the immigrating groups to the Bay of Honduras will not only shape the settlement, but also influence the debate as to either fight or flee during the 1798 military invasion.

CHAPTER IV

ST. GEORGE'S CAYE EXCAVATION BACKGROUND

Previous Investigations

Only a few historical archaeological excavations that have been conducted in Belize have been widely published. Two of these excavations were led by Daniel Finamore (1994). The excavations on St. George's Caye mark another attempt at conducting historical archaeology in Belize. Specifically, this has been led by James F. Garber, Texas State University. Intrusive testing on St. George's Caye has covered a large portion of the island, yet unit excavations have primarily concentrated within the enclosed cemetery. This cemetery represents the only property on the caye which, according to locals, has not been filled-in with dredged marine sand (Garber et al. 2009).

Finamore's field-work (1994) focused on the archaeology of the colonial logwood and mahogany trade in Belize. He spent over five months conducting field-work in Belize, collecting data for his thesis (Finamore 1994). This includes a systematic survey of the New River, Belize River, and the tedious excavation of two British settlements. Finamore utilized a plethora of resources including old maps, historical descriptions of locations, soil analysis, and vegetation growth to locate alleged logging encampments among the two main Belizean rivers. He conducted excavations at what he believed to be the Barcadares settlement and the Convention Town settlement (Figure 7). The Barcadares settlement, dating back to the early eighteenth century, was positioned 40 miles up the Belize River and was the first significant British settlement on the Bay of

Honduras (Finamore 1994). Loggers camped at that location during the wet season and loaded wood on barges for downstream shipment (Finamore 1994). The location and culture of these logging camps were documented by a merchant captain, Nathaniel Uring, who was shipwrecked off the Belizean coast in the eighteenth century and subsequently spent four years with the logging community. His ethnographic descriptions offer a glimpse into the early British settlements in the beginning of the eighteenth century. No records of burials or interments were described by Captain Uring or recovered by Finamore during his excavations (Finamore 1994).

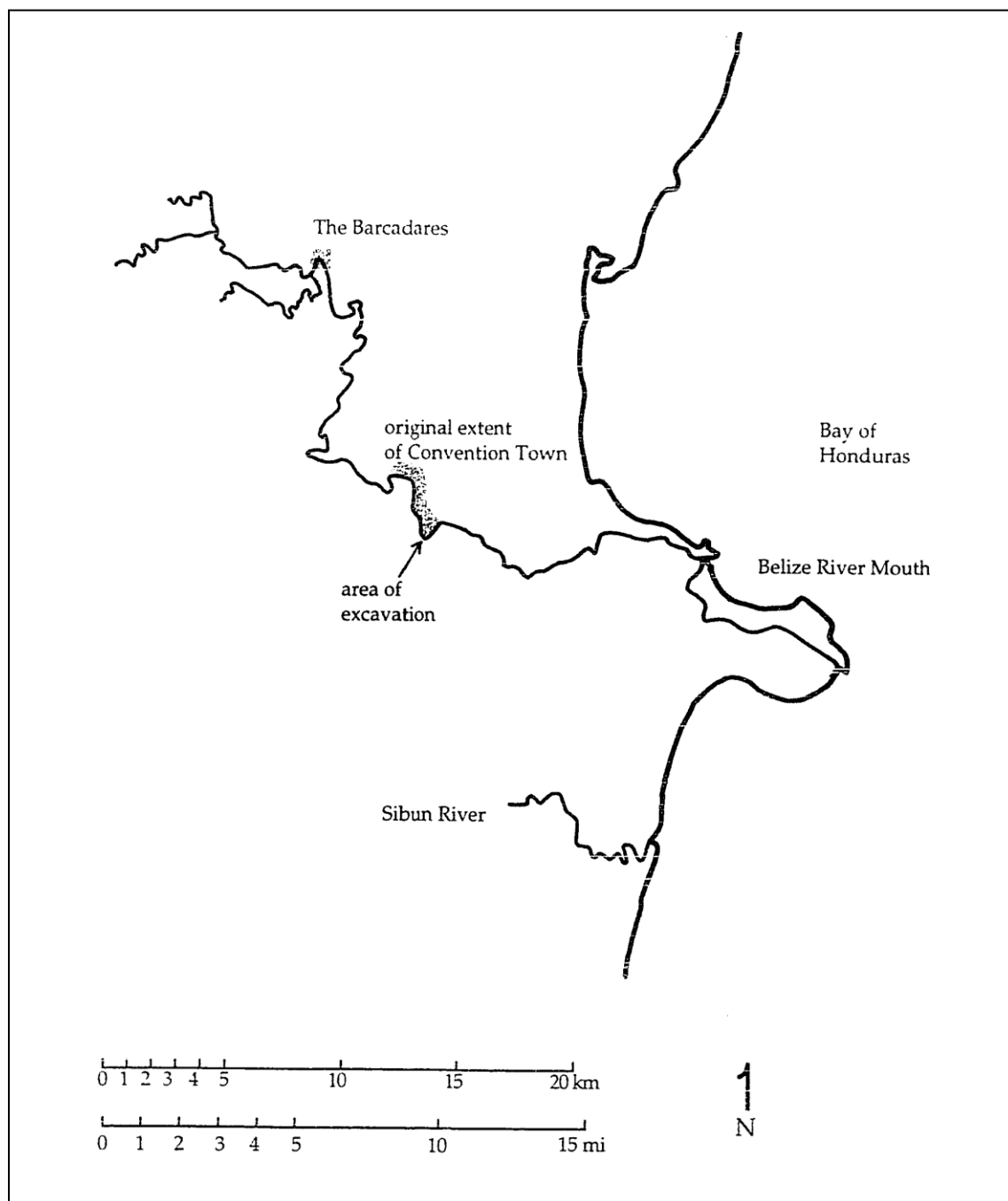


Figure 7. Map of Barcadares and Convention Town Settlements (Finamore 1994:137).

The other settlement, Convention Town, was positioned on the Belize River and was approximately eight miles from the ocean (Finamore 1994). Evacuees from the previously discussed British settlement of Mosquito Shore inhabited this area following

the failure of the unwelcoming Bay of Honduras community (Finamore 1994). Finamore suggests that this small community, of around 470 persons in 1790, may have been composed of people not associated with the logging community itself (Finamore 1994). The town is named for the Convention of London, which included a series of agreements between Britain and Spain signed in 1786 (Thomson 2004).

The archaeological investigations conducted by Finamore help elucidate the social dynamics, governing practices, and cultural influences that fundamentally shaped the Bay of Honduras from the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. However, the results of the investigations do not directly aid in the analysis of interment styles recovered on St. George's Caye. The Barcadares and Convention Town excavations are helpful in elucidating the cultural, governmental, and social changes within the Bay of Honduras settlement during this temporal period. Regarding stratigraphy and soil deposition, Finamore's research and field-work was completed in a vastly dissimilar area of Belize. The two large-scale excavations rested in a higher elevation, were inland, and involved significantly different soil matrices.

The observed soil profiles of units excavated in the Barcadares and Convention Town settlements were composed of silt, clay, or a combination of the two (Finamore 1994). In contrast, excavation units within the cemetery on St. George's Caye, as previously stated, represent the least disturbed portion of the island. These excavation unit profiles had matrices composed of a thin humic layer, followed by sandy strata. Variations of clay strata have been observed through intrusive surveys of the island but generally not within the boundaries of the cemetery.

Storm surges, hurricanes, housing development, and marine sand added from dredging have disturbed the context for the majority of artifacts found on St. George's Caye (Garber et al. 2009). This has resulted in the almost total abandonment of the stratigraphic record with regard to understanding artifact context. Modern materials are often found resting next to historical features or artifacts at great depths. This archaeological anomaly is most likely the result of tidal patterns, hurricane forces, and storm surges that have repeatedly hit the caye over the past three hundred years.

The formation processes that have affected the deposition of cultural material on St. George's Caye have helped create a unique archaeological site in Belize. These processes, combined with enormous differences with regard to social, utilitarian, and economic functions, support the dissimilarity between the historical inland sites and this island site. Scholars assert that the contrasting use of these two geographic locations is especially evident toward the end of the eighteenth century. Beginning ca. 1780, St. George's Caye became an island home for the socially affluent and the previously discussed settlements were mostly utilized for inland economic functions, such as logging (Campbell 2003).

An Excavation History of St. George's Caye

My research focuses solely on the St. George's Caye interments, specifically those within the historic cemetery. The cemetery is centrally located and abuts the western coast of the island (Figure 8). In this section of my thesis, I will provide a history of the St. George's Caye Archaeology Project excavations within the confines of the cemetery boundaries. All other intrusive testing on the island will be omitted in this discussion,

including the additional survey and excavation report information that does not relate to the cemetery.

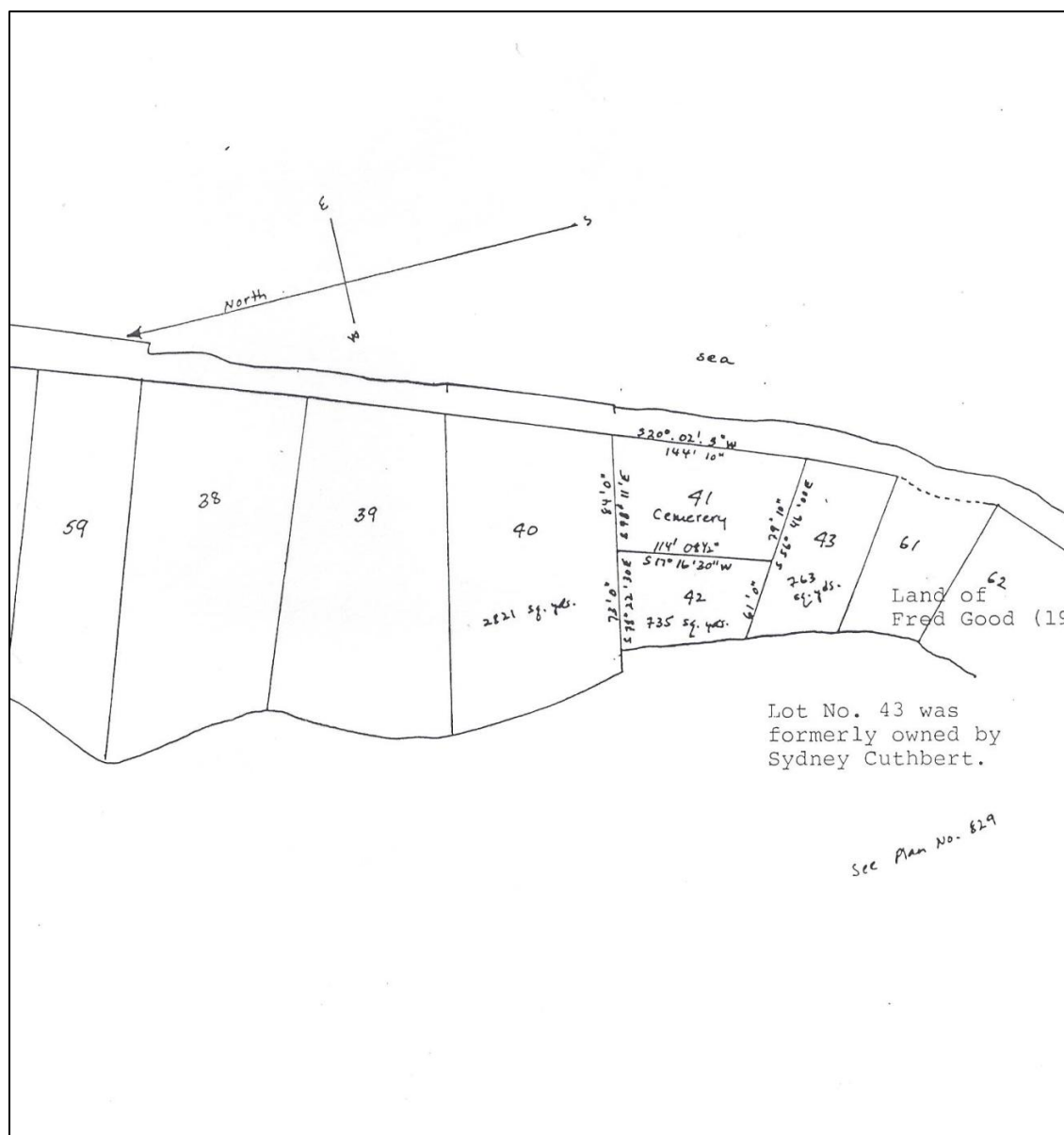


Figure 8. 1887 survey of St. George's Caye properties including the cemetery (Check-Pennell 1989:21).

Terminology commonly used in forensic anthropology, such as "distal" and "proximal," will be used in this chapter to describe coffin positioning in the archaeological record. These terms will refer to the coffin ends according to the suspected

positioning of an individual within a confined enclosure. The proximal end of a coffin represents the part of a burial structure that was occupied by the upper half of a human body. Conversely, the distal end of a coffin refers to the part of the enclosure associated with the lower half of a human body. Photographs of exposed coffins will also be provided to clarify the discussion of burials within the cemetery.

The island resonates powerfully with the cultural memory of the Belizean population. It represents the first capital of the country and, as mentioned previously, is even depicted on the Belizean five dollar bill. An archaeological analysis was conducted to help conserve the precious cultural history of the cayes and mitigate the damage caused by development and hurricane destruction. These excavations began with the first field season in the summer of 2009 and the first field school in the summer of 2010.

The objectives of the first field season were fourfold: archival research, metal detector survey, cemetery probing survey, and an archaeological investigation (Garber et al. 2009). Archival research in Belize and oral histories of the St. George's Caye residents suggests several above-ground brick and marble burials rested within the cemetery (Garber et al. 2009). These materials formed the box tombs that were once located within the cemetery. These box tombs dated from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century. The locations of the 20 box tombs and a large sarcophagus were recorded in an 1872 cemetery map by Rob Hume (Figure 9) (Check-Pennell 1989). Epitaphs of these tombs were later recorded in 1907 by James Purcell Usher (Garber et al. 2009). Additional burials, numbering eight at least, were reported in 1989 by Mary Check-Pennell (Garber et al. 2009). Some of these markers were most likely wooden stakes and have since decomposed or were destroyed by hurricane forces.

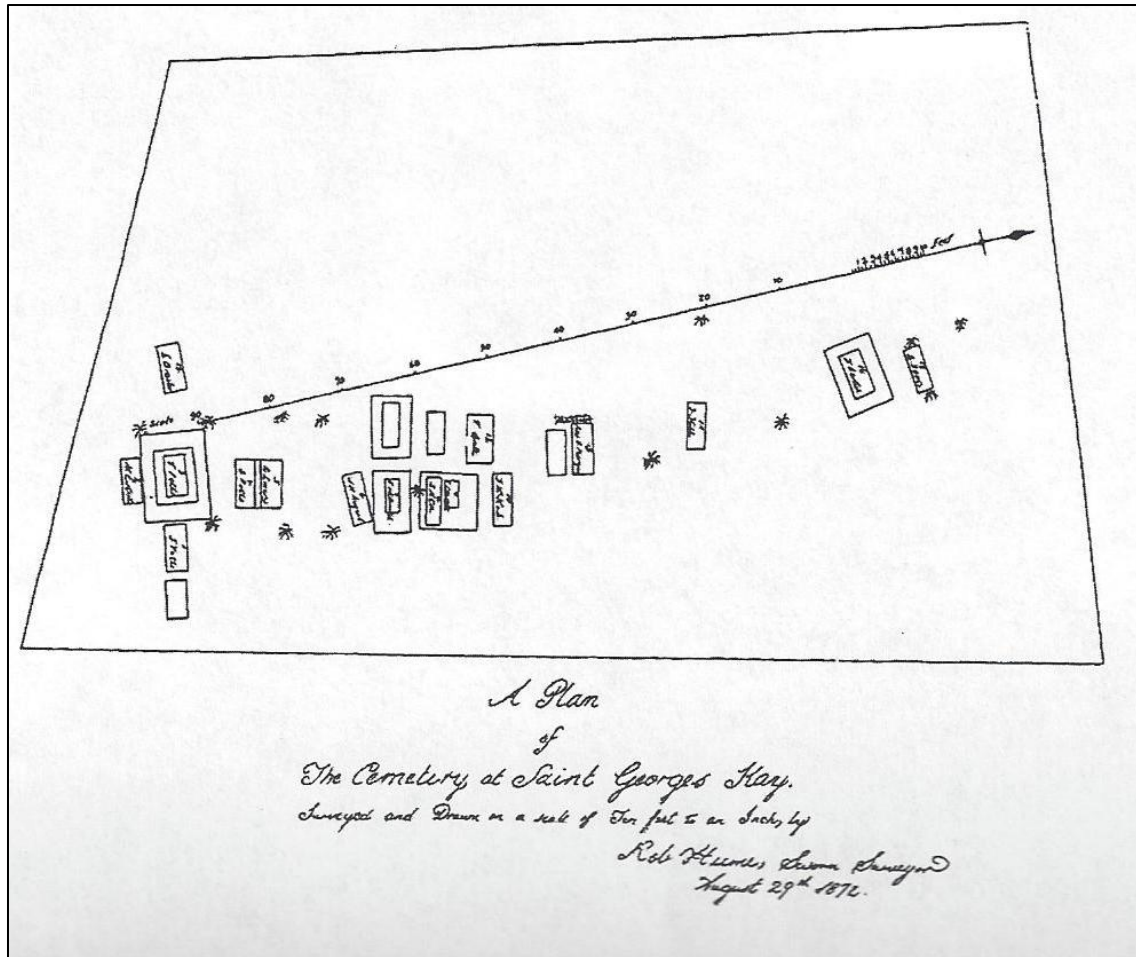


Figure 9. 1872 map of the St. George's Caye cemetery by Rob Hume (Check-Pennell 1989:23).

The above-ground monuments have been destroyed since the original 1907 recording of their epitaphs. Massive hurricanes in the nineteenth century, including one in 1931, Hattie in 1961, and Greta in 1978 struck St. George's Caye (Garber et al. 2009). Today, the cemetery looks nothing like a cemetery, except for stone memorials and an elaborate, black stone above-ground sarcophagus marking a recent local's burial (Figure 10). The memorials do not represent the interment of individuals, but instead honor the names of individuals who once resided on the island and have been buried elsewhere. In

addition, a large stone monument is erected near the entrance of the cemetery commemorating the early British settlers in the 1798 Battle of St. George's Caye.



Figure 10. Modern burial (left) and Battle of St. George's Caye monument (right) (Searle 2013).

One of the goals of the 2009 summer field research was a probing survey of the cemetery. This probing survey was conducted in order to locate any remains of the above-ground burials. Those noted burials include any of the debris used in the construction of the tombs that have since washed away from hurricane destruction. This systematic probe survey included the use of a 1.5 meter long metal rod with a quarter of an inch width. The metal probe was sunk at one meter intervals within select locations. The goal of the survey was twofold: first to locate any large, stone anomalies buried under the surface and to compare the soil consistency and rigidity to surveyed areas

outside the cemetery. A positive probe test resulted in the abrupt stopping of the metal rod while sinking into the matrix. Additional probes were administered in cardinal directions of 10 centimeter increments around those positive tests.

An area in the southern boundary was also probed during the 2009 field season. This survey corroborated with historical accounts that nineteenth century hurricanes cut a large channel through the southern border of the cemetery. Here, probes easily sunk into the ground up to 1.5 meter depths. This indicates a recently deposited soil deposition and contrasts with the typical harder stratas found elsewhere within the cemetery boundaries.

Four excavation units (XU) were dug in the cemetery during the 2009 field season (Figure 11). The four units varied in size according to the specific goal of each unit location. XU2, a 1x1 meter square unit, was placed in the northeastern end of the cemetery. This was excavated to determine the stratigraphy within the cemetery, find the depth of the water table, and observe any cultural material that might be revealed (Garber et al. 2009). The unit was terminated at a significantly hard and compact layer approximately 50 centimeters below the surface. Degraded fragments of red brick were discovered, suggesting these brick remains once belonged to an above-ground tomb.

UX3 was placed within the western boundary of the cemetery, just north of the southern wall (see Figure 11). Several artifacts were observed on the surface within this area of the cemetery, most likely resulting from the recent cemetery wall construction. Culturally identified artifacts included historical pipe fragments, broken historic and modern glass, and brick fragments. The goal of the unit was to further locate any cultural material and architectural features associated with the observed artifacts. A dense layer of large brick pieces was encountered 15 centimeters below the surface (cmbs). These large

brick and mortar fragments were most likely elements of an above-ground tomb enclosure, yet no brick-made tombs were reported to have been in the western end of the cemetery. This brick debris layer, therefore, is the result of hurricane destruction and secondary deposition. In 1961, Hurricane Hattie was documented as sustaining over 200 mile per hour winds (Weaver and Sabido 1997). This destructive force, combined with storm surge, would have easily destroyed above-ground colonial tombs and displaced the monument materials to the western half of the cemetery (Figure 12). This secondary deposit of tomb fragments would have followed the direction of the powerful hurricane forces coming from the east.

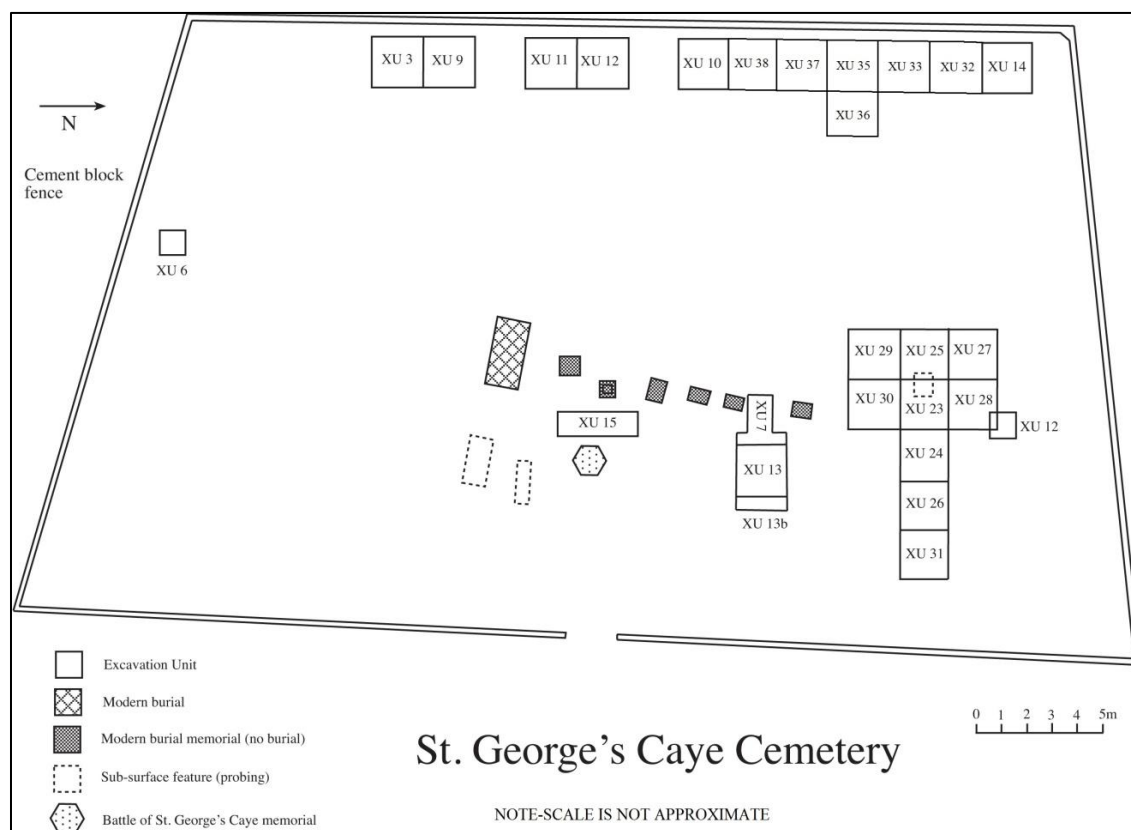


Figure 11. XU 2, 3, 6, and 7 were excavated in the 2009 summer field season.

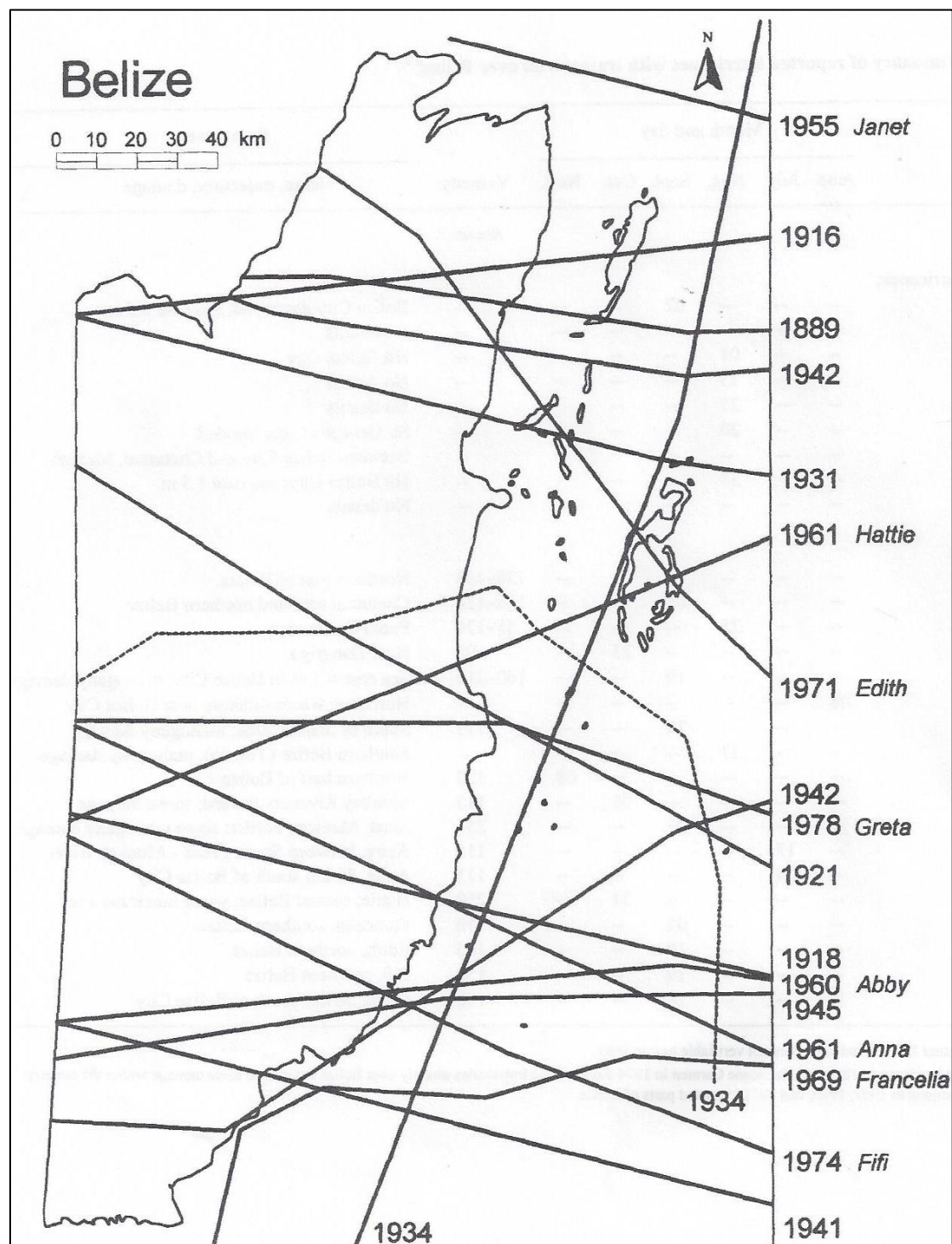


Figure 12. Map of historic hurricane paths in Belize (Weaver and Sabido 1997:4).

Additional historical and modern artifacts, including faunal remains, were not only dense at this aforementioned layer but were also found in underlying strata. A notable find included a military button from the West Indies 7th Regiment (Garber et al. 2009). However, the frequency of artifacts became less numerous as the unit was excavated. No architectural features were located within this unit. The excavation was terminated just below the water table, around 55 cmbs.

Excavation unit 6 was placed on the southern border of the cemetery. The location was chosen in order to investigate an anomaly encountered during the probing survey, however this anomaly was never explained in the 2009 field report (Garber et al. 2009). The purpose of the unit placement was most likely to better understand the extent of the hurricane damage on the southern end of the cemetery, and to see if any stone tombs visible on the 1872 map still remain under the soil's surface. Like the previous two units, modern and historic artifacts, as well as brick fragments, were common within the first 30 centimeters of the unit (Garber et al. 2009). However, between 35-40 cmbs large whole Queen Conchs (*Strombus gigas*) along with large glass bottle fragments and clay pipe pieces were observed. This debris closely parallels the frequency, type, and depth of artifacts observed in XU 3. According to the 1872 map, the placement of the unit should have led to the discovery of funerary architecture, yet nothing was observed (Garber et al. 2009). Excavations within this unit were terminated at the discovery of the water table around 50 cmbs.

The last unit excavated from the 2009 field season, XU 7, was placed near XU 2, in the northeastern section of the cemetery (see Figure 11). The purpose of this placement "was to examine a large anomaly identified through probing" (Garber et al. 2009). In

addition, this reported anomaly matched the dimensions of above-ground tombs drawn in the 1872 map. At about 20 cmbs a large rectangular feature was encountered. This concrete feature measured 1x2 meters with a centrally located human-sized depression (Figure 13) (Garber et al. 2009). The depression extended downwards, revealing the frame of the rectangular feature to measure approximately 25 centimeters thick. No human remains were observed above or immediately below the feature, suggesting that the human remains were displaced during one of the powerful twentieth century hurricanes (Garber et al. 2009). Excavations in this unit were terminated at approximately 50 cmbs. The remainder of positive probes from the 2009 field season would not be investigated until the following summer.



Figure 13. Box tomb base discovered in XU 7 (Garber 2010).

The information gathered from survey and excavations on St. George's Caye in the 2009 summer field session were taken into account prior to the commencement of

excavations in 2010. A bilge pump was employed to artificially lower the water table in excavation units, allowing for deeper excavations (Garber et al. 2009). This method required the placement of a large hose in a previously excavated unit. This placement choice was intended for the purpose of mitigating the disturbance of cultural material.

Due to the high density of artifacts encountered while excavating XU 3, additional excavation units were placed along the western wall, including XU 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 (see Figure 11). XU 13 and 15 were positioned on the eastern half of the cemetery. Specifically, XU 13 was placed just east of XU 7 and XU 15 was positioned in the middle of the eastern half of the cemetery. The goal for excavating these two units was to further examine the extent of the remaining funerary architecture mapped in 1872.

The excavations on the western boundary of the cemetery revealed dense amounts of historical artifacts. Large brick pieces were not uncommon in these units, especially in XU 11, where several whole and fragmented pieces of brick were observed at around 20 cmbs (Garber et al. 2010). More notable artifact finds were revealed within these western excavation units including the discovery of historical British military buttons, shot, and clay pipe stems. The discovery of these artifacts in consistent densities suggests the western boundary of the cemetery may have once been used as a military barracks (Garber et al. 2010).

As previously mentioned, XU 13, a 2x2 meter unit, was positioned just east of XU 7. Positive probe tests from the 2009 field season suggested a large, solid feature resting just east of XU 7. Therefore, the excavation goal for XU 13 was to investigate the feature. This excavation revealed "a large rectangular cement object which we inferred was the lid of the burial monument uncovered in XU 7" (Figure 14) (Garber et al.

2010:11). Measurements of the lid fit the dimensions of the feature located in XU 7. XU 13 was eventually extended half a meter to the east to include the entire cement lid. The feature was revealed at around 30 cmbs, a slightly greater depth than the associated cement feature found in XU 7.



Figure 14. Box tomb lid discovered in XU 13 (Garber 2010).

The cement used in the construction of the lid included conch shells and stones, possibly used as temper. These lids were often adorned with large marble slab engravings

and an epitaph in the center of the stone (Garber et al. 2010). Such epitaphs, as previously mentioned, were recorded in the early twentieth century prior to the massive hurricanes that struck the island in 1931 and 1961. Similar box tombs are still present in Yarbrough Cemetery, the second oldest historic cemetery in Belize City (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Historic box tomb in Yarbrough Cemetery, Belize City, Belize (Elverson 2012).

No marble slab was observed on either side of the cement lid uncovered in XU 13. However, upon turning over the lid, a preserved portion of a small, child's preserved pinch toe coffin was revealed (Garber et al. 2010). This coffin was later designated Burial 23 (Figure 16). The small coffin rested just above the remains of another wooden coffin, most likely constructed for an adult and later designated as Burial 26 (Figure 17). Above-

ground tomb materials were said to have been broken up and reused by lobster fisherman after hurricanes destroyed the island's cemetery (Garber et al. 2010).



Figure 16. XU 13 infant or juvenile coffin remains (Garber 2010).



Figure 17. XU 13 Adult coffin underneath infant or juvenile burial (Garber 2010).

Only the base of the lower portions of the Burial 26 adult coffin and its accompanying human bones were preserved. The coffin was most likely constructed with native mahogany, pine, or Santa Maria wood (Garber et al. 2010). The adult coffin depth measured to approximately 80 cmbs (Garber et al. 2010). Final excavations throughout the unit revealed the distal end of a pinch toe coffin, with the remainder of the interment resting to the west of XU 13 and just south of XU 7 (Figure 18). This coffin was later designated Burial 24.

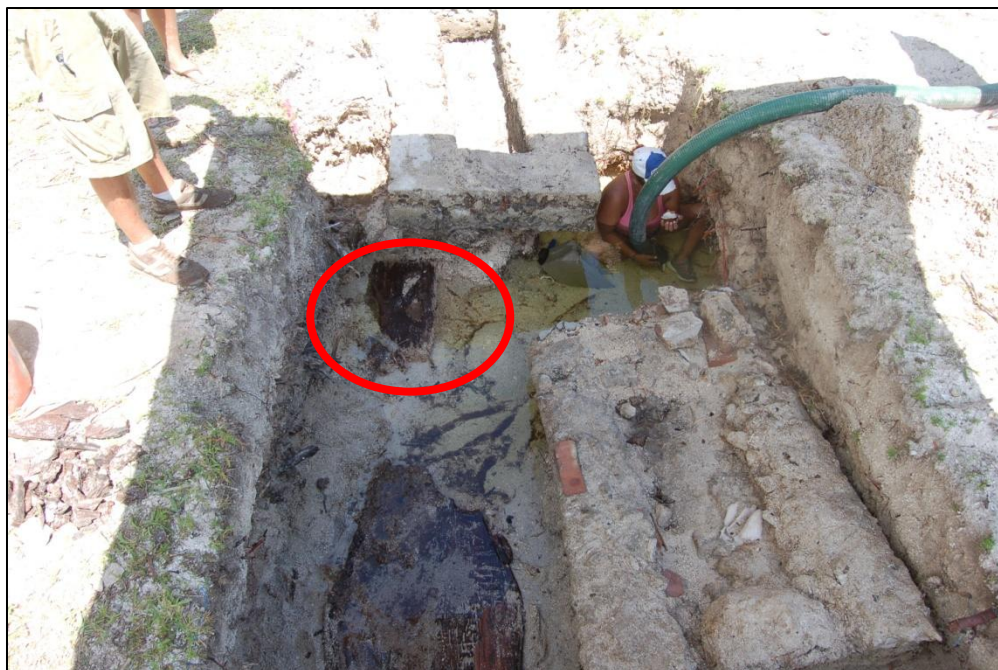


Figure 18. The distal end of Burial 24 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2010).

XU 15 was the last unit excavated during the 2010 field season (see Figure 11). It is located near the entrance to the cemetery, on the eastern half of the property. The position of the unit was selected in order to locate additional above-ground tombs that were depicted in the previously discussed 1872 map. The dimensions for the unit are 2x1 meters, with the longer portion of the unit running north to south. The unit was later enlarged to include discovered features, resulting in a dimensional change to 3x1 meters.

Excavations in XU 15 revealed portions of two brick box tombs. All that remained of these box tombs were the original brick bases (Figure 19). The tombs were formed by large bricks, neatly stacked next to one another and eventually stacked on the sides of the tomb. Few bricks that once formed the sides of the box tombs remained in situ. However, the bases of the tombs, at least the portions unearthed in the unit, were in-situ. Both tombs abutted one another and contained well preserved, whole bricks. The depths of the in-situ bricks ranged from around 50 to 70 cmbs, with the southern

interment resting slightly lower than the northern one. The lack of evidence for a southern wall on the northern tomb suggests that the southern tomb was constructed first (Garber et al. 2010). In addition, the tombs were oriented in a northeastern to southwestern fashion. The box tomb lids were never located for these two interments.



Figure 19. XU15 brick box tomb bases found in-situ (Garber 2010).

Prior to the commencement of the 2011 field school, Chester Walker, conducted a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey in the cemetery. This survey was conducted in an effort to locate sub-surface anomalies such as stone interment architecture, coffin outlines, or general sub-surface disturbances. The results from the GPR survey showed several large, anomalous areas within the cemetery (Figure 20). These anomalies were highlighted on the resulting GPR survey map as fluorescent colors, whereas areas without sub-surface anomalies were recorded in dark colors. The resulting GPR survey map suggested clustering of sub-surface anomalous areas in the northeastern and eastern areas of the cemetery. This new information, in addition to data from the 2009 probe survey,

helped determine the positions of excavation units for the 2011 summer excavation season.

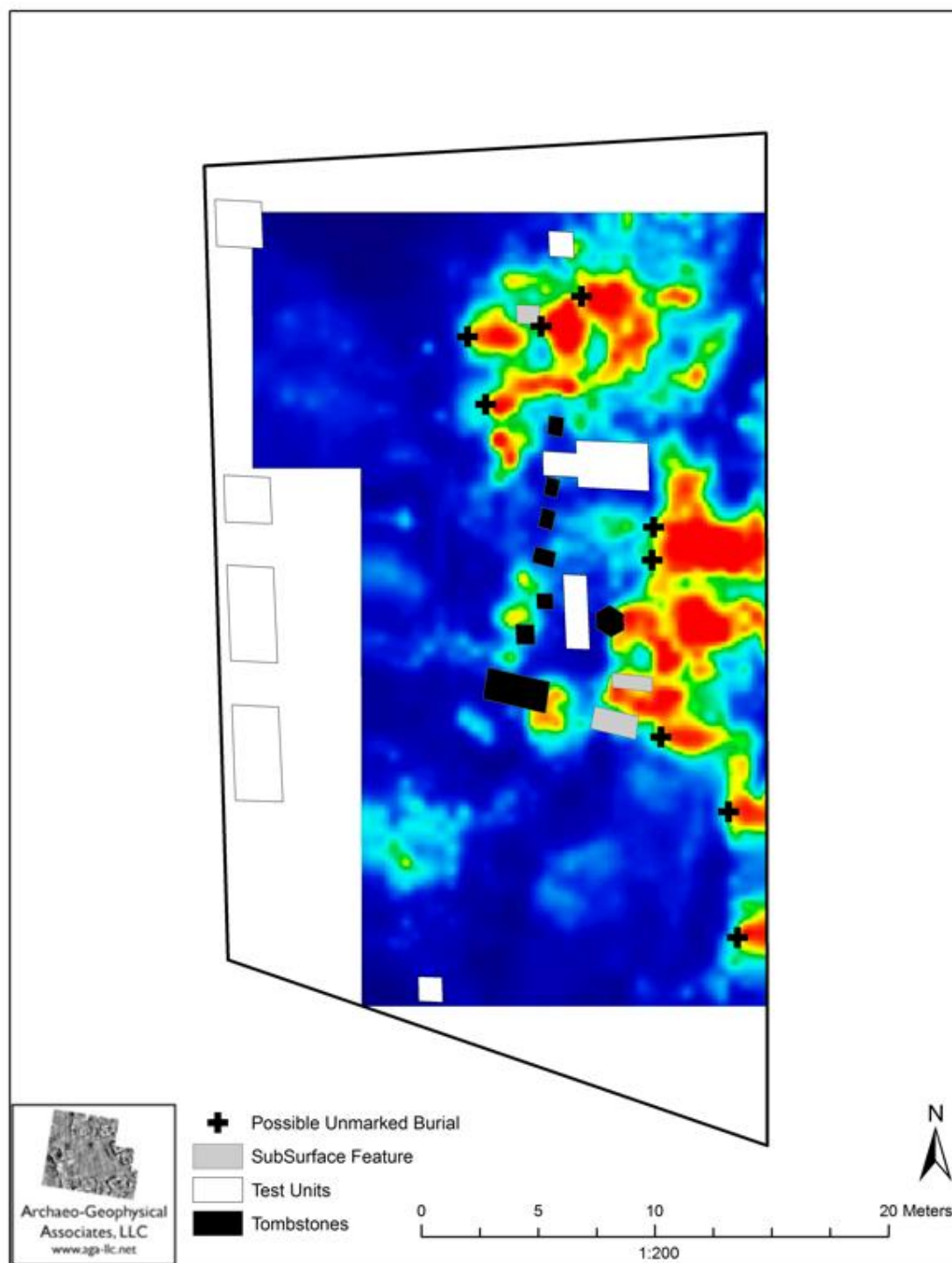


Figure 20. 2011 GPR survey map results (Garber 2012).

A series of excavation units were positioned over the aforementioned anomalous area in the northeastern segment of the cemetery. This cluster of units, including XU 23 through XU 31, was labeled Operation 1 (Op. 1) (Figure 21). Finds from these units include 17 human burials, the remains of several wooden coffins, and fragmented building materials, including brick and mortar, from above-ground tombs (Figure 22) (Garber et al. 2011).

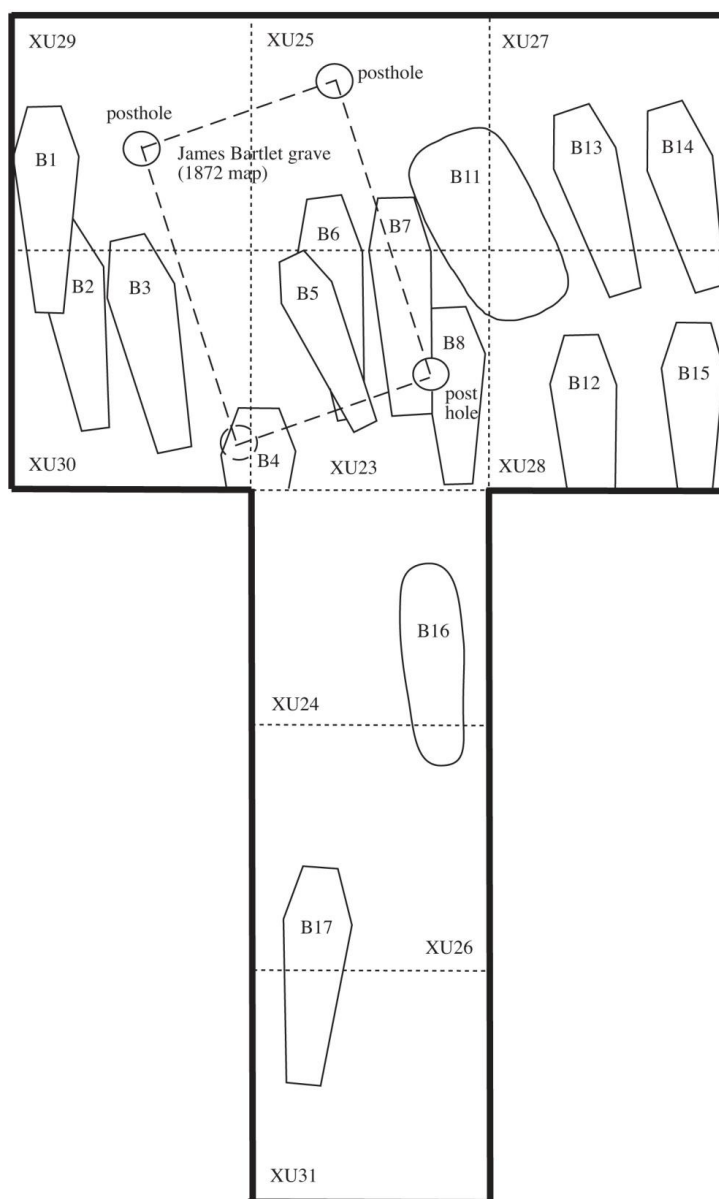


Figure 21. Operation 1 excavation units and mapped burials (Garber 2011).



Figure 22. Overview of burials discovered in Operation 1 (Garber 2011).

The first unit excavated was XU 23 which was positioned to lie directly over the center of the anomaly identified on the GPR map. Whole, in-situ bricks were revealed at approximately 30 cmbs in an L-formation (Garber et al. 2011). In addition, the top of a wooden post was discovered. Both features are later identified as representing the grave of James Bartlett (Garber et al. 2011). His tomb is recorded on the aforementioned 1872 map. The bottom of the brick feature ended at approximately 45 cmbs. Artifacts encountered during the excavation of this feature level include modern and historic glass, faunal remains, and an impacted cannon ball (Garber et al. 2011).

Portions of six burials, including Burials 4 through 9, were revealed in the final excavated level (Figure 23). The elevations of these interments were measured at approximate depths of 45-68 cmbs. Notable finds among the burials included the

discovery of "11 coconut shell buttons found in burial 5 as well as 5 coconut shell button fragments also found in Burial 5" (Garber et al. 2011). Burials 4 through 8 either contained preserved coffin wood or had a unique soil composition that retained the shape of the individual coffin. The excavation of Burial 9 revealed no evidence for an enclosed grave confinement. No preserved interment structure or an indication of an enclosed burial, such as a change in the matrix color, texture, or consistency, was encountered. The unit was terminated after the human remains were removed and coffins were completely documented.



Figure 23. Burials 4 through 9 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011). Refer to Fig. 21 as well.

XU 24, positioned just east of XU 23, was excavated next. Another burial, numbered Burial 16 was removed during the excavation of level two, ranging in depth

from 15-40 cmbs (Figure 24). The remains were relatively well articulated, suggesting the burial may have once included a coffin. The high elevation of the remains may explain the absence of any coffin wood preservation (Garber et al 2011). Any wooden interments above 50 cmbs typically did not maintain an advanced state of preservation (Garber et al. 2011). Little to no cultural material was encountered after the burial was removed. Excavations in this unit were terminated at approximately 65 cmbs.



Figure 24. Burial 16 in XU 24 (Springs 2011).

XU 25 was positioned just west of XU 23. The brick feature discovered in XU 23 continued into this excavation unit, but the structure itself appears to have collapsed. Both features share a connected context and depth. In addition, a second wooden post, resembling the first post encountered in XU 23, was revealed among the brick debris (Garber et al. 2011). The second post is positioned vertically and rests 22 cmbs. The brick and post features discovered in XU 25 represented level 2. This level was terminated after the removal of both features at an approximate depth of 46 cmbs (Garber et al. 2011). Level 3 revealed the proximal ends of Burials 6, 7, 9, and 10 (Figure 25). The only artifacts found in association with these interments were 9 coconut shell buttons. These buttons were found among the human remains in Burial 6 (Garber et al. 2011). Excavation in this unit was terminated at 68 cmbs due to culturally sterile soil.



Figure 25. Burials 6, 7, 9, and 10 in XU 25 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011). Refer to Fig. 21 as well.

XU 26 was positioned just east of XU 24 and was excavated for the purpose of uncovering the remaining human bones found in Burial 16. The distal end of Burial 16 was encountered and removed at a depth of 50 cmbs. Artifacts found associated with this burial include fragments of metal that were once coffin nails (Garber et al. 2011). The next level included the complete removal of the human remains and terminated at 66 cmbs. The final level, level 4, included the discovery of a new burial, later listed as Burial 17. The elevation for this burial ranged from 66 to 94 cmbs (Garber et al. 2011). Unlike Burial 16, this interment barely contained the bottom and sides of a wooden coffin. Twenty six coconut shell buttons were discovered in association with this burial (Garber et al. 2011). Excavation in this unit terminated at 94 cmbs.

As additional coffins or burials were found to extend past excavated unit boundaries, new units were set up in order to excavate the remaining portions of these unearthed interments. The next unit, XU 27, was created for this exact purpose. It lies just north of XU 25 and directly northwest of XU 23. Two perpendicular lines of 5 complete bricks were discovered in level 2b, within a rarely encountered sandy-clay matrix. The depth for this level ranged from 33-45 cmbs. The line composed of three bricks was aligned in a north-south direction, while the line positioned in an east-west direction was comprised of two bricks. The two lines loosely met at the east end of the east-west line (Garber et al. 2011). No photos were taken of these bricks. Two large conch shells were discovered among the brick features. The level was terminated below the brick lines where a matrix change occurred.

Level 2c included the return to a light sandy matrix and the discovery and removal of new burial segments, including portions of Burials 11, 13, and 14 (Figure 26).

All three burials rested in the third level which ranged from a depth of 45-72 cmbs. No interment structure was associated with Burial 11, however, Burials 13 and 14 appeared to have once been in coffins. A notable discovery includes a degraded copper candlesnuffer found within Burial 13 (Garber et al. 2011). In addition, two large conch shells were found to be associated with Burial 11.



Figure 26. Burials 11, 13, and 14 in XU 27 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011). Refer to Fig. 21 as well.

Excavation unit 28 was established just east of XU 27 and north of XU 23 in order to recover the distal ends of Burials 13 and 14. Three large bricks were encountered in level 2 on the western border of the unit, some 20 centimeters below the surface. These bricks are most likely associated with the brick feature discovered in level 2 of XU 27 (Garber et al. 2011). A brass button was also found in this level; however, the primary

context was not determined. Level 2 was terminated at the end of the brick feature at a depth of 46 cmbs.

Five burials were revealed in level 3, only four were excavated. Burials 11 through 15 were discovered, but, Burial 12 was not removed because the distal end of the interment extended eastward into the unit wall (Figure 27). The remaining burials were documented and removed. All of the interments rested in level 3, at a depth of 46-73 cmbs, with most falling within the deeper portion of the level. No notable artifacts were recovered from the burials in XU 28. Excavation in the unit was terminated after the four previously listed burials were removed.



Figure 27. Burials 11-15 in XU 28 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011). Refer to Fig. 21 as well.

Operation 1 continued to expand as unexcavated portions of the interments were pursued beyond exposed unit profile walls. The next unit opened was XU 29. This unit is positioned just south of XU 25 and southwest of XU 23 (Figure 28). Notable artifacts

were discovered in level 2 of XU 29. These include the discovery of a pewter button, a marine shell button, and a vertical wooden post (Garber et al. 2011). These buttons are not directly associated with a specific burial, however, the post, like those found in XU 25 and XU 23, make up the foundations for the previously discussed James Bartlett interment. The vertical wooden post matches the dimensions and depth of the other two posts. No bricks were found in this level.



Figure 28. Portions of burials 1, 2, and 3 in XU 29 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011).

The reason for beginning a new level, level 3, was not mentioned. Several burials were discovered in this level, resting at a depth range of 47-72 cmbs. The proximal ends of Burials 1, 2, and 3 were revealed in this unit, with the remainder of the interments extending into the eastern profile walls. A remarkable artifact found from this unit

includes a large heart-shaped, likely lead coffin plate resting above the chest area of Burial 1 (Figure 29) (Garber et al. 2011). Metal rivets were found on the periphery of the plate with fragments of decaying wood underneath the artifact, suggesting it was once attached to the outside of the coffin (Garber et al. 2011). The distal end of Burial 1 once also seems to overlap the proximal end of Burial 2, suggesting Burial 2 was interred first. Excavation in this unit was terminated below the burials at 72 cmbs.



Figure 29. Burial 1 with breast plate, discovered in XU 29 (Garber 2011).

Next, XU 30 was positioned just east of XU 29 and directly south of XU 23 (Figure 30). This was positioned here for the purpose of removing the unexcavated portions of Burials 1, 2, and 3. Fragments of two wooden posts were revealed in levels 2a and 2b. The first, found in level 2a, rested at a depth of 16-23 cmbs. The second post was measured to a depth of 23-38 cmbs. The exact positions of the posts were not mapped. The locations described in the 2011 field report do not match with the expected fourth post of the square, above-ground tomb belonging to James Bartlett. Instead, Burial 4, which infringes upon XU 23, rests in the expected location of this fourth wooden post. Evidence for this fourth post was never observed. This suggests that either the two wooden posts found in levels 2a and 2b of XU 30 represent the secondary location of the last James Bartlett post or the post has been lost due to hurricane and storm surge forces.



Figure 30. Portions of Burials 1, 2, 3, and 4 in XU 30 (highlighted in red) (Garber 2011).

In addition, the exact description of the soil change, which was the justification for dividing level 2 into three sections, was never specifically explained for 2a and 2b. It may be assumed that the strange soil stratigraphy encountered in XU 27 may be a close example of the XU 30 varying matrices. Level 2c began at a depth of 39 cmbs and was noted as a "light-colored sand matrix" (Garber et al. 2011). Although the two wooden posts in this unit were first observed in levels 2a and 2b; both extended downward into 2c. The level was terminated at 50 cmbs after the removal of one above-ground tomb brick in the northwest corner of the unit (Garber et al. 2011).

Level 3 was extended to enable the complete removal of the burials in the unit except for Burial 4. Only the proximal end of this burial rested in XU 30 and XU 23. The burial was left in-situ because the distal end of the interment extended into the profile wall. The archaeological context for this end of the burial may have been affected by bilge pump usage in XU 24. A notable find amongst the burials includes a Spanish Real dated to 1721 (Garber et al. 2011). This silver coin was found on the skull within Burial 3 (Figure 31). The positioning of the coin appears to be its primary context. When the coin was removed, black cloth was visible from where the coin was resting on the skull (Figure 32) (Garber et al. 2011). Excavation in this unit was terminated at 70 cmbs.



Figure 31. Spanish Real dated to 1721 found on the skull of Burial 3 (Garber 2011).

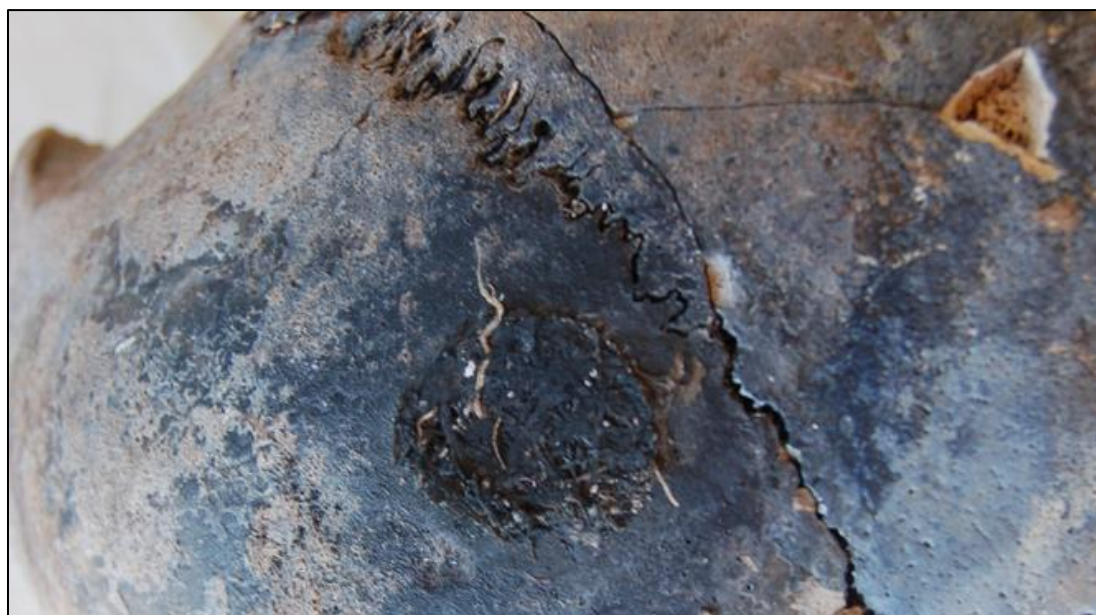


Figure 32. Preserved fabric found under the 1721 Spanish Real (Garber 2011).

The final excavation unit of the 2011 summer field session was XU 31, placed directly east of XU 26 (Figure 33). The purpose of this unit was to unearth the buried human remains within the distal end of Burial 17. Four levels were fully excavated in the unit. The rest of Burial 17 was revealed and excavated in level 4, at a depth ranging from 68-100 cmbs. The actual burial itself rested closer to 100 cmbs. None of the artifacts encountered during the excavation of XU 31 were associated with Burial 17 (Garber et al. 2011).



Figure 33. Burial 17 discovered in XU 31 (Garber 2011).

Six 2x2 meter excavation units, as shown in Figure 11, were opened within the cemetery during the 2012 field season. This includes the reopening of XU 14, which served as the bilge pump suction hose location for the field season. This allowed for the water table to be lowered both within the cemetery and a unit placed just beyond the northern cemetery wall. The goals for this summer field season were to identify the extent of the burials, military debris, and wall construction disturbance on the western side of the cemetery.

XU 14 was opened first to establish a consistently functioning bilge pump, followed by the opening of XU 32 and XU 33. These units were positioned directly south of XU 14. In addition, all of the units opened the summer of 2012 are approximately 50 centimeters east of the western cemetery wall in the hope of excavating a less disturbed cultural deposit. The GPR survey map does not indicate subsurface anomalies on the western border of the cemetery, but human burials were encountered during excavations in 2010 (Garber et al. 2010). This suggests interments may extend to the northwestern area of the cemetery.

As discussed previously, XU 32 is positioned directly south of XU 14 in the northwestern area of the cemetery as shown in Figure 11. An archival analysis of the 2012 field lot forms for this unit revealed that large brick fragments were observed in the first excavated level. These fragments represent destroyed above-ground tomb construction materials. The significance of encountering bricks this far away from where the tombs originated signifies the intensity of the natural processes that destroyed the tombs. Soil deposition disturbance was discovered within the second level, along the

western border of the unit. This disturbance encompassed the upper soil horizons up to a depth of approximately 30 cmbs (Bentley 2012:2.2).

Burial 18, lying in an east-west alignment, was discovered at a depth of approximately 60 cmbs in XU 32 (Figure 34). The majority of the burial lies within the confines of the unit boundaries, with only the most proximal end of the coffin extending into the western profile wall. The bottom and partial sides of a pinch toe coffin were preserved, as well as a vast amount of the human bones from the interment. The top of the coffin was not preserved, but the majority of the sides withstood the damage inflicted by the degradation of time and water. The base of the coffin rested at a depth of around 70 cmbs, a depth well within the water table. This explains the abnormal amount of preserved wood in the coffin. A vertically aligned wooden plank was also driven through the proximal end of the coffin. One ceramic sherd was discovered among the human remains at the bottom of the coffin and can be seen by the skull in Figure 34. This may have been intentionally deposited within the interment or may have represented a secondary deposition from natural disturbances. Excavation in the unit was terminated below this burial.



Figure 34. Burial 18 found in XU 32 (Garber 2012).

XU 33 was opened next. XU 33 was located 50 centimeters east of the western cemetery wall, just south of XU 32 (refer back to Figure 11). Two large brick fragments were revealed on the top of the second level at a depth of around 20 cmbs. Additional brick fragments were noted in level 3 at a depth range of around 40-60 cmbs. Three buttons, unspecified in description, were also discovered in this level. Their original context was not posited within the field lot forms.

Burial 19 was discovered in XU 33 at a depth of between 75 and 80 cmbs (Figure 35). The wooden coffin is box shaped and is positioned on a southwest to northeast alignment. This wooden burial marks the first square-shaped coffin found during the previous three years of excavations in the cemetery. All other proposed wooden coffin interments are believed to be of the pinch toe or hexagonal coffin style. The sides and part of the coffin lid were preserved as well. This also marks the first discovered intact coffin lid. The excellent preservation of the wood is likely due to the great depth of the burial. The state of preservation was so good, in fact, that much of the bottom of the coffin retained a yellow appearance, as if freshly cut (Figure 36).



Figure 35. Burial 19 found in XU 33 with lid partially preserved (Garber 2012).



Figure 36. The bottom of the Burial 19 coffin is extremely well preserved (Garber 2012).

A notable discovery while excavating the interior portion of the interment was a ceramic sherd, found next to a femur, within the southern side of the coffin (Bentley 2012: 5.4). Another vertical wooden plank, like the one found in XU 32, was encountered on the top of the burial structure. It appeared to enter the proximal end of the coffin, suggesting whoever placed the plank in the ground was not aware of a burial underneath. Excavation in this unit was terminated just below the interment.

XU 35 was opened just south of XU 33 and was offset approximately 50 centimeters from the western cemetery wall (refer back to Figure 11). Another vertical wooden post, like those found in XU 32 and XU 33, was discovered in the first level of excavation at a depth of around 20 cmbs. The three posts measure approximately 240 centimeters between each post in a direct north-south alignment. This intentional spacing and alignment of the planks suggests they were possibly used for a fence in the cemetery. These wooden poles do not represent burial markers since the planks enter coffins both in XU 32 and XU 33. In addition, there is no burial present immediately to the east of the plank discovered in XU 35. However, the distal end of a coffin was discovered just within the southwestern profile wall of XU 35, next to the vertical plank.

Brick and mortar fragments were present in low frequency and size in levels 1, 2, and 3 of XU 35. A small burnt brick fragment was revealed in level 3 at a depth range of around 40-55 cmbs. No interpretation was provided in the field log form as to how or why it appeared burnt.

Two burials were discovered in this unit. Burial 20 is a wooden coffin in the pinch toe style (Figure 37). The proximal end was uncovered in XU 35 with the distal end extending into the eastern profile wall. The distal end of Burial 22 was also discovered,

but was left unexcavated since the majority of the burial extended eastward to an area under the current western wall of the cemetery. However, the distal end of Burial 22 appeared to be quite narrow, implying a pinch toe coffin style. Burial 20 consisted of a narrow, wooden pinch toe coffin at a depth range of around 55-80 cmbs. Like Burial 19, the lid for this coffin was still intact albeit slightly sunken into the interior of the coffin (Figure 38). No artifacts were found in association with this burial. Excavation in this unit was terminated below the burial depth.



Figure 37. Burial 20 (center) discovered within XU 35 (Garber 2012).



Figure 38. Burial 20 (center) and Burial 21 (right) (Garber 2012).

XU 36, located directly east of XU 35, was opened for the purpose of removing the interior matrix from the distal end of Burial 20. A notable discovery, a modern plastic wrapper, was discovered at approximately 45 cmbs. This is a prime example of how modern debris is often found deep within excavation units both within the cemetery boundaries and throughout the island. Finding modern items this deep in the stratigraphic record often makes the identification of artifact primary contexts difficult.

Two Burials were uncovered within this excavation unit. Burial 20, extending eastward into the western profile of the unit, was completely uncovered. Another interment, Burial 21, was discovered just east of the distal end of Burial 20 (Figure 39). Here, Burial 21, with the proximal end in the center of the unit, extends eastward, slightly entering the eastern profile wall. No additional artifacts were uncovered during the removal of the matrix from inside the distal end of Burial 20.



Figure 39. Burial 21 (lower coffin) was excavated in XU 36 (Garber 2012).

Once both burials were excavated, it became apparent that Burial 20 superseded the placement of Burial 21. The southeastern corner of Burial 20, on the distal end, was partially broken (Figure 40). This break most likely occurred during the interment

episode of Burial 21. Those digging the grave either broke the end of Burial 20 to fit the new burial or the coffin itself smashed the distal end of the older coffin.



Figure 40. The distal end of Burial 20 (upper) is broken from Burial 21 (lower) (Garber 2012).

Burial 21, aligned in an east-west direction, was slightly angled when buried or has since moved due to natural processes. The proximal end, almost abutting Burial 20, is at a higher elevation than the distal end of this burial. In other words, the eastern end of the coffin dips slightly. The overall robust construction of the coffin material, when compared to Burial 20, is significant. Not only is the Burial 21 coffin larger and wider, but the wooden planks used to build the interment are thicker. Additional thin wooden siding is also used at the base of Burial 21 (Figure 41). This type of funerary construction has not been documented elsewhere within the cemetery.



Figure 41. Burial 21 was constructed with siding at the base (Garber 2012).

Burial 21 is notable also for several other reasons. Large metal decorations were discovered around the border of the coffin top but were not found attached to the coffin (Figure 42). These decorations, I believe, were once the tops of screws which held the coffin lid on the body of the interment structure. In addition, pieces of black cloth were preserved on the bottoms of the sides and under the lid of the coffin (Figure 43). It was examined by James F. Garber in the field with a 70x microscope and the material was determined to be felt. No other artifacts were found in association with either burial in XU 36. The excavation was terminated in this unit at a depth just below the burials, approximately 75 cmbs. No other interments were encountered during the 2012 summer field excavations.



Figure 42. Burial 21 coffin lid screws found around the top edge of the coffin (Garber 2012).



Figure 43. Burial 21 fabric found attached to the interior sides of the coffin (Garber 2012).

CHAPTER V
HURRICANE INFLUENCE ON THE STRATIGRAPHY
OF ST. GEORGE'S CAYE

This chapter aims to present a better understanding of the convoluted stratigraphy within St. George's Caye, including depositions inside and outside of the island's cemetery boundaries. Due to the complex nature of the soil matrix on the caye, a working understanding of the isle's stratigraphy has never been attempted. However, as many archaeologists know, context is a critical tool in understanding the history of an archaeological site and the interpretations of the site's associated cultural material. Authors Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn have written extensively on the methods, history, and practice of archaeology. They assert that understanding the distinctions between cultural and natural formation processes is "vital to the accurate reconstruction of past human activities" (Renfrew and Bahn 2008:54). A comparison of the stratigraphy on the island to a similar setting in the Caribbean will aid in the elucidation of the confusing soil layers of St. George's Caye.

Few geology academic papers have been published on the effects of soil deposits from hurricanes in the Caribbean. The few published articles are mostly focused on Florida or eastern locations in the Caribbean. However, an article was discovered that shared the same research interest on deposition and stratigraphy. The research within the article also took place on the eastern coast of Nicaragua. This study location is significant because it represents the closest such study to Belize out of the few aforementioned

articles on Caribbean deposition and stratigraphy.

The geographical setting of this research article in Nicaragua is similar to that of the Caribbean coast of Belize. Specific shared attributes between the two countries include dense coastal lagoons, mangrove forests, and eroding pine-filled plains further inland (McCloskey and Liu 2012). Although this geologic research in Nicaragua did not take place on a distant barrier island, a geographic label that best describes the island of St. George's Caye, the setting and results are close enough to the stratigraphic record found in coastal Belize to allow for a good comparison.

Four core samples were taken by the authors of the study with the purpose of interpreting the effects of previous hurricanes in the stratigraphic record. The core samples were taken approximately 100, 120, 132, and 156 meters from the edge of the sea (Figure 44) (McCloskey and Liu 2012). The land mass in which these samples derived is a close barrier island, flanked by a tidal bay to the west and the Caribbean Sea to the east. Depths for these samples ranged from 75 to over 135 cmbs (McCloskey and Liu 2012). Clastic layers, or sedimentary layers composed of transported fragments of rock or soil, are indicative of hurricane episodes within the region. These layers were further tested to understand the original origins of the sediments prior to their current deposition (McCloskey and Liu 2012).

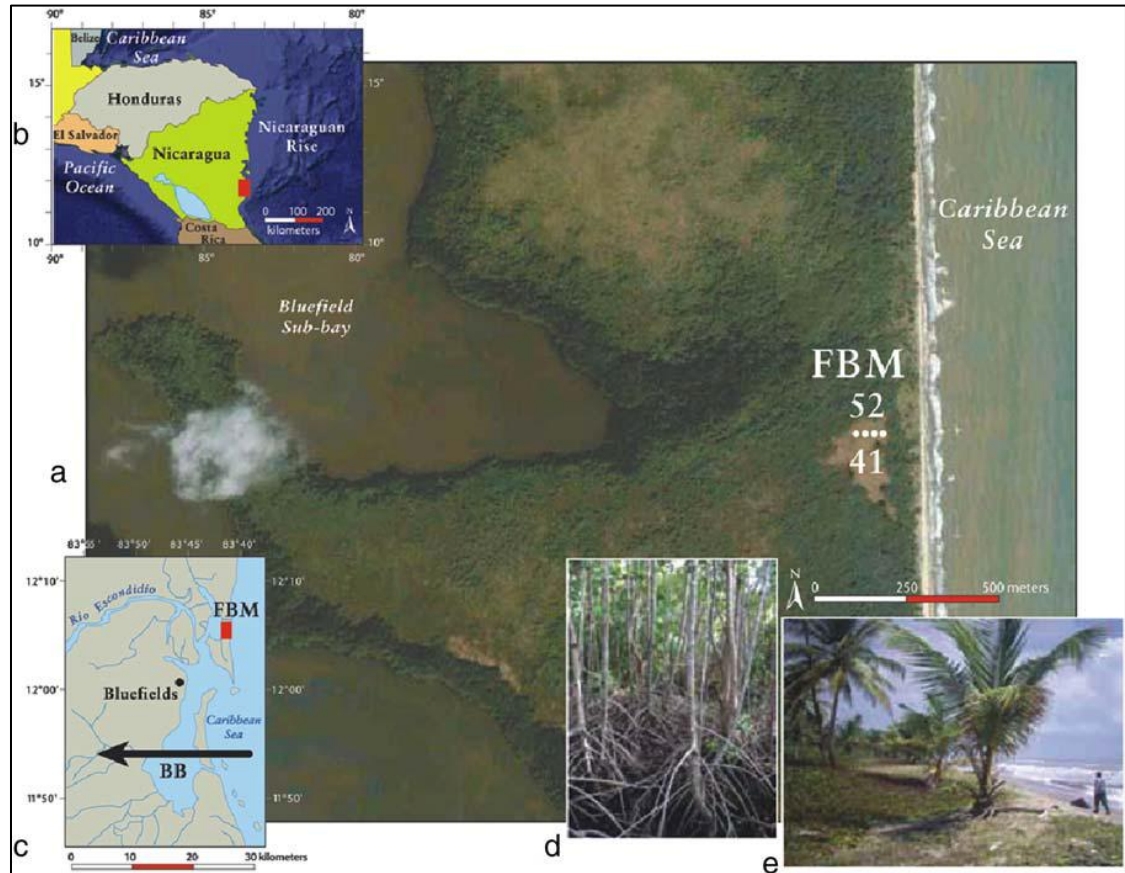


Figure 44. Soil deposition study aerial and coring map (McCloskey and Liu 2012:455).

The results of the samples show ubiquitous clastic layers throughout three of the four cores. These clastic layers, particularly layers A and C, are composed of coarse sand and fine-grained clay resting between 0-50 cmbs (Figure 45). The coarse sand strata rest just below the clay strata. The authors assert that these layers represent specific sediment transportation episodes within the soil matrix. Moreover, the abrupt change in strata texture, color, and consistency within the matrices indicates a powerful natural event such as a storm surge or a cultural disturbance (McCloskey and Liu 2012). The coarser sand strata, also referred to as the traction load, represents the initial overwash and storm surge

from the open sea (McCloskey and Liu 2012). The clay layer, or suspension load, rests just above the traction load strata and represents the excess flooding of bay sediments from the west (McCloskey and Liu 2012). Clay-based sediments were disturbed from the bay during a hurricane episode and deposited on the barrier island while excess water retreated to the sea.

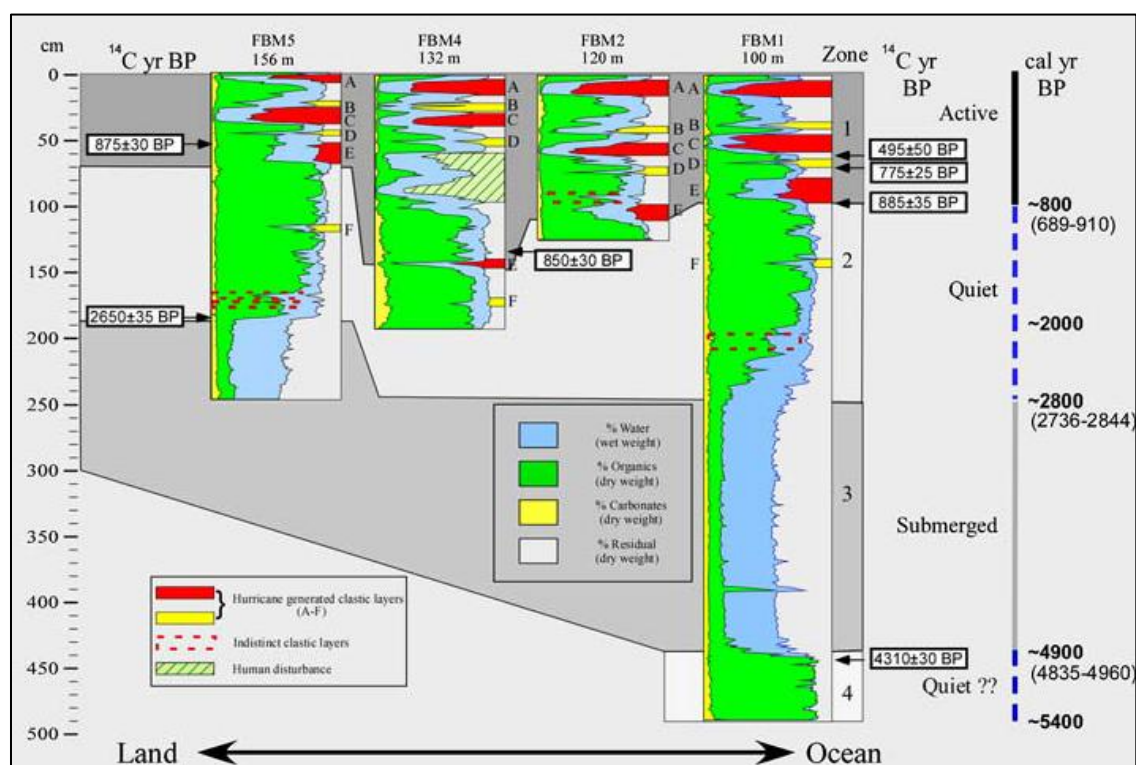


Figure 45. Sediment results from the core (FBM#) samples (McCloskey and Liu 2012:458).

A similar topographic setting is found on St. George's Caye. The crescent-shaped island includes a large bay on the leeward or mainland-facing side of the island. Although not a perfect match, this large bay corresponds with the bay environment in the Nicaragua study. The windward or ocean-facing side of St. George's Caye receives small waves from the Caribbean Sea. All of the waves have been lessened in intensity from the

barrier reef located a mile east of the island. This, however, would not occur during a hurricane's storm surge when sea levels can climb high above the barrier reef, nullifying their protective properties.

Oral histories of the island report that many of the properties, except for the cemetery, have had dredged marine sand added to increase the overall elevations (Garber et al. 2009). This artificially added sand or fill was said to have been added several feet thick to the natural terrain. An investigation regarding which properties have taken advantage of this artificial process should take place in the future. This prospective investigation will clarify the stratigraphic record of the island and elucidate which properties are buried under fill.

The two clastic layers described in the Nicaragua geologic study are identical to two strata visible within the cemetery and the remainder of the island. A thin clay stratum is located between 30-40 cmbs throughout parts of the cemetery and the surrounding properties. However, this depth varies slightly within a few centimeters. An abrupt change takes place from this clay stratum to an isolated coarse sand lens. This lens, which rests on top of the clay stratum, is not common throughout the archaeological units previously excavated. Furthermore, it is only noted in the field lot forms from XU 34, a unit located 2 meters north of the cemetery wall (Figure 46 and 47).



Figure 46. The stratigraphy of the XU 34 northern profile wall (Garber 2012).

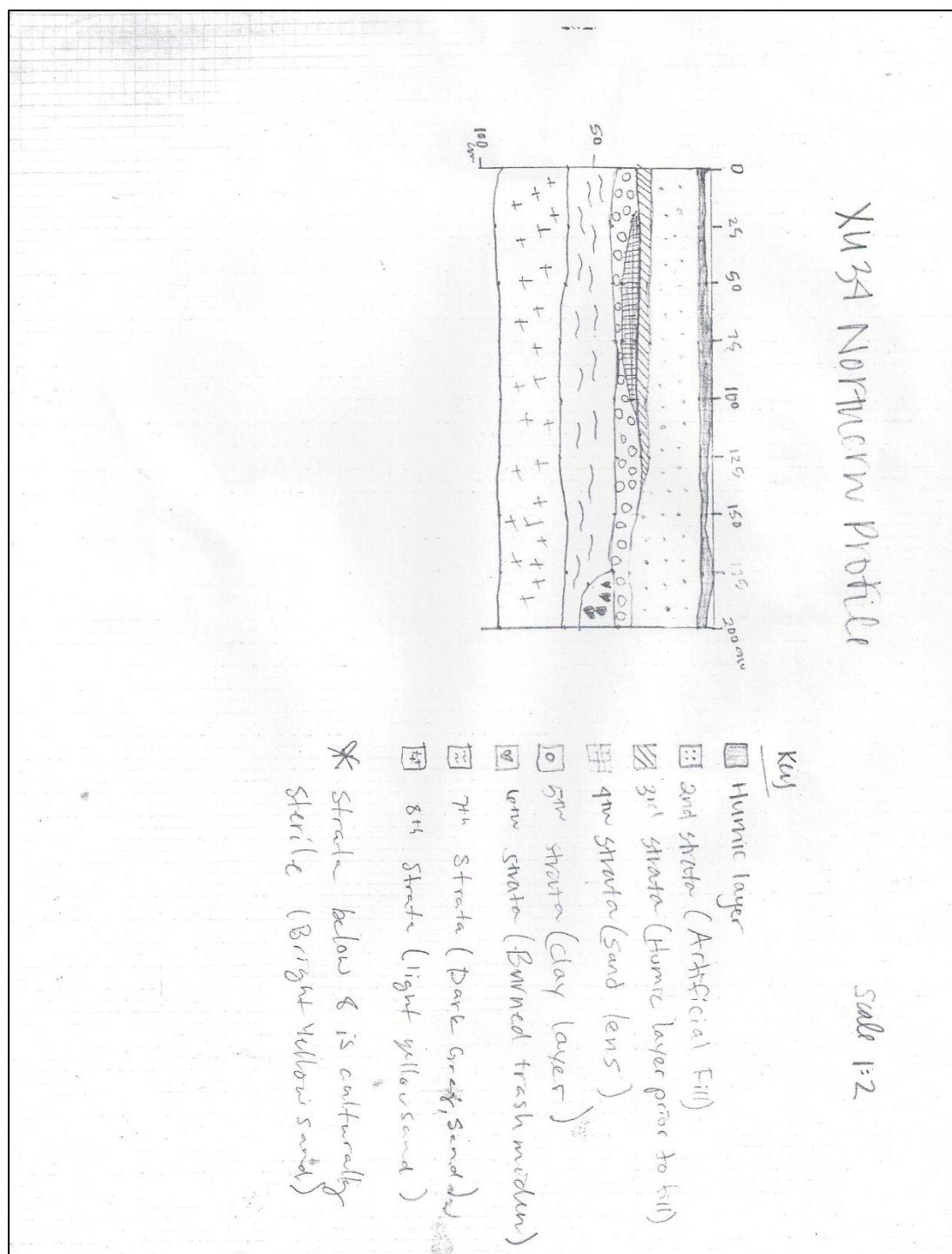


Figure 47. XU 34 northern wall profile drawing (Elverson 2012).

According to the depositional processes and sediments in the clastic layers described in the Nicaragua study, the thin clay stratum is indicative of a hurricane

episode with overwash deposits originating from the island's bay. The dark matrix above this clay layer may represent a humic layer that developed after the clay stratum was formed. However, this dark sandy layer is the same color and texture as the matrix below the clay stratum. This suggests that the thin dark sandy stratum above the clay lens is only a portion of what remains of the deposits that were not removed during hurricane Hattie in 1961. The thick yellow sandy stratum above the dark sandy soil layer most likely represents the significant overwash deposit from hurricane Hattie. The bottom of this thick upper stratum, as well as the clay layer, coincides with the few preserved architectural tomb materials in-situ. In other words, classifying this stratum as a massive overwash deposit is likely. This is evident since the bottom of the stratum covers what is left of the intact tomb monuments.

It is possible that the clay soil layer indicates the base of the hurricane Hattie overwash episode. This series of matrix deposits does not fit the same sediment depositional order as seen in the Nicaragua study. However, one must also take into account the geographic disparities between St. George's Caye and the mainland setting in the aforementioned article's data comparison. The clay stratum is largely absent throughout the cemetery units. This may reflect a random patterning of bay deposits during the storm's disturbance, followed by a massive overwash of ocean marine sand.

The stratigraphic record outside of the cemetery, as described, drawn, and photographed in XU 34, as well as the stratigraphy described within the cemetery, is indicative of several high-energy events. These clastic layers should be tested, possibly by the Horiba LA-950 laser particle size analyzer used in the Nicaragua research, in order to better understand the origins of these sediments (McCloskey and Liu 2012). Once

documented, this sediment information can further explain the matrices encountered during excavation. This brief analysis of the stratigraphic record on St. George's Caye demonstrates that it can be utilized in the future for the interpretation of cultural material and feature contexts.

CHAPTER VI

BURIAL STYLES

Archaeological interpretations for each interment will be discussed within this chapter. The burial style, materials used, and, if present, grave goods, will amount for the corpus of information used in each interpretation. After discussed in totality, the analysis of all burials will present a limited chronological order, evidence for socio-economic hierarchy, Christian burial traditions, and a confluence of cultures within the early British settlement.

Graves without Mortuary Furniture

The earliest burials on St. George's Caye, found within the confines of the modern cemetery, are characterized by the lack of a coffin-like structure. Remains from multiple individuals in Burials 9 through 11, excavated in the summer field season of 2011, are in the extended position; yet lack any evidence of coffin interment. No organic material, such as wood or cloth, was located in association with these burials. In addition, the elevation of the remains in Burials 9 through 11 is not any higher than the surrounding burials that still contain remnants of wooden coffins. The comingled and scattered nature of the remains also suggests a lack of containment of the skeletal elements while buried. Many of the remains within the cemetery are comingled, but are located within a coffin or a stain that represents a degraded coffin structure, now long eroded by natural formation processes. With regard to coffined burials only, Burials 9 through 11 represent

the only interments within the cemetery that did not include evidence of a coffin enclosure.

Early graves in American colonies share this coffin-lacking appearance. The burial ground at the Jamestown, Virginia settlement in colonial America, dating to between 1610-1630, based on recovered European artifacts, provides insight into burial styles of nascent British settlements. According to William M. Kelso, one of the main archaeologists who excavated the Jamestown settlement, the most haphazardly created and interred burials within the cemetery represent the earliest use of the property. Having only just established the colony in 1607, persistent Native American attacks and drought-induced famine quickly thinned the English population in the New World. In discussing the cemetery, Williams notes that the "misalignment, careless disposal, shallowness of some graves, and the possible 1610 beginning date for the cemetery suggest that some burials indeed could date back as early as the "starving time" winter of 1609-1610" (Kelso 2006:164). The infamous winter in the early history of the colony left only 60 alive out of the original 215 that began the winter season. Such harsh conditions and a lack of resource suggest that many were left to be buried in close to nothing.

The earliest burials within this cemetery were comprised of 63 graves, which contained the remains of 72 individuals. Of those individuals, only seven were buried within coffins, one of which was made out of a shipping container (Kelso 2006). The "rest of the people were unceremoniously wrapped only in shrouds or were completely uncovered" (Kelso 2006:166). Coffins were expensive to manufacture, and were most likely created by the local carpenter or handyman within the community (Kelso 2006). This left the remaining population to either be buried in shrouds of cloth or wear nothing

but their own skin. The desperation within the community to survive the earliest years in the New World is clearly found in the absence of traditional English burial practices. The issues faced within the early Jamestown settlement were most likely not shared with those on St. George's Caye a hundred or more years later. However, the lack of a strong economic and agricultural system on the island and mainland British Honduras explains the haphazard interment of individuals in Burials 9 through 11.

Although these few interments may represent the earliest use of the island for historical interment, they may also simply signify the presence of a socio-economic stratification. The construction of basic coffin interments requires carpentry skill, nails, and wood. These materials may not have been available or could have been too precious to part with in an early, isolated settlement. Furthermore, the biological analysis of the remains may indicate a low socio-economic status, which attributed to the lack of coffin burials. This hypothesis may be the true explanation of the coffin absences, rather than the early use of the cemetery.

Pinch Toe and Rectangular Coffins

The most frequent burial interment style encountered while excavating within the St. George's Caye cemetery is the wooden coffin. Two varieties of the coffin were revealed through excavation, including the pinch toe and rectangular forms. These styles consistently match the specific funerary practices found in England between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. A discussion regarding the spatial analysis, construction, ornamentation, and associated grave goods of burials will elucidate the social stratification, use, and cultural influence within the cemetery.

The use of the wooden coffin in British society dates back to at least the fourteenth century (Litten 1991). However, the use of this funerary enclosure was limited to the nobility until the middle of the sixteenth century (Litten 1991). Julian Litten, an author who has written extensively on the burial traditions of the British, asserts that the "private coffin...was an item indicative of status, a luxury unattainable for the majority" (Litten 1991). Prior to the sixteenth century, commoners would typically bury the dead in a burial shroud. This consisted of a cloth wrapped around the entire body and tied at the head and feet (Figure 48).

The wide use of coffin interments for the majority of the population begins around 1575 (Litten 1991). The style included a gabled lid with a form fitting, hexagonal shape to the coffin (Figure 49). The gabled lid, or convexly angled lid, was a continued style from the pre-1575 aristocratic burial coffins. Prior to 1575, many nobles were buried in a rectangular wooden coffin with a gabled lid. This new funerary containment form arose throughout Britain in the latter half of the sixteenth century, yet "no distinct regional trends in basic coffin style existed" (Litten 1991:90).

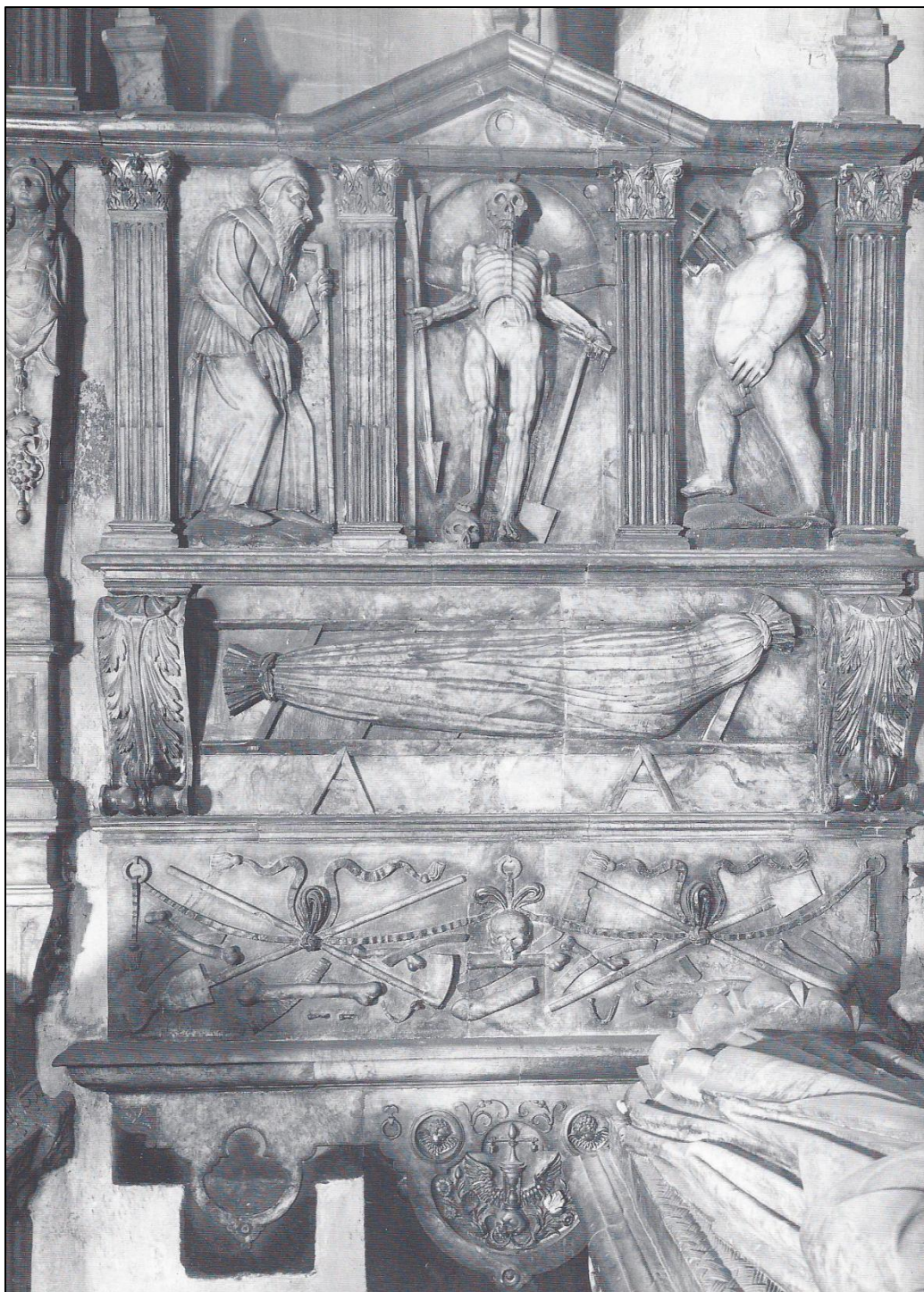


Figure 48. A depiction of early shroud burial ca. 1592 (center) (Litten 1991:64).



Figure 49. An example of gable lidded coffins ca. 1651 (Hume 1982:78).

The hexagonal coffin shape is synonymous for the pinch toe style. This shape, with the gabled lid, remained popular in Britain until ca. 1660-75 (Litten 1991). The new style, a pinch toe coffin with a flat lid, took some time to reach the more rural communities in the United Kingdom. Litten provides the example of a sculptor, who, in 1717, depicted a resurrection scene with a gabled coffin (Litten 1991).

This change in England's funerary tradition coincides with political reforms in the late seventeenth century. An act passed in 1660 decreed that any person to be buried must be wrapped in wool, as opposed to "linen...flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver" (Litten 1991:74). This act, combined with an act in 1678, enforced the necessity for this interment material. If this decree was not followed, a fine of £5 would be levied on those interring the deceased (Litten 1991). However, this allowed for the wealthier individuals to simply reserve funds in their will for this fine, and pursue other funerary materials.

The time in which these acts were passed in England coincides with a social, cultural, and political change known as "The Restoration Period." This period is defined by the assumption of the crown by King Charles II and is highlighted by the opening of British culture to renewed artistic expression and experimentation that had been disallowed under the harsh Puritan rule of the previous ruler, Oliver Cromwell (Gardiner 1899). New artistic expressions in funerary monuments are visible both in England and its colonies during this time. A more in-depth discussion of these monuments and the change in funerary style will be discussed in a later chapter.

Not only were the acts of 1660 and 1678 significant for their encroachment into funerary practices, but also for their influence on funerary commerce. These acts indirectly created a prosperous industry with regard to clothing adornments and ornamentation on the body and within the coffin structure. Trends for wrapping the deceased in shrouds eventually developed into open-back gowns. This style was popular circa 1700-1770 and eventually leads to funerary gowns in the late eighteenth century (Figure 50 and 51) (Litten 1991). The increase in variation of mortuary dress, clothing, and designs changed rapidly between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain.



Figure 50. Burial shroud ca. 1638 (Litten 1991:71).



Figure 51. Burial shroud ca. 1871 (Litten 1991:82).

Non-wood organic materials such as cloth, discovered within the St. George's Caye cemetery, were revealed during the summer 2012 field excavations (refer back to Figure 43). Remnants of black fabric were encountered under the lid and along the sides of the Burial 21 coffin. Samples were collected but remain in Belize for future analysis. However, finding cloth attached to the coffin is a diagnostic feature, providing a date range for the interment. Wrapping a coffin in fabric represents a specific style common in England beginning ca. 1750. This continued as a popular funerary trend until the introduction of polished coffin exteriors in the mid-nineteenth century (Litten 1991). The fabric covering style became especially popular with coffin-makers during this time. The cloth could mask carpentry mistakes made during construction or cover aesthetically unpleasant pieces of wood used to build the enclosure (Figure 52) (Litten 1991).

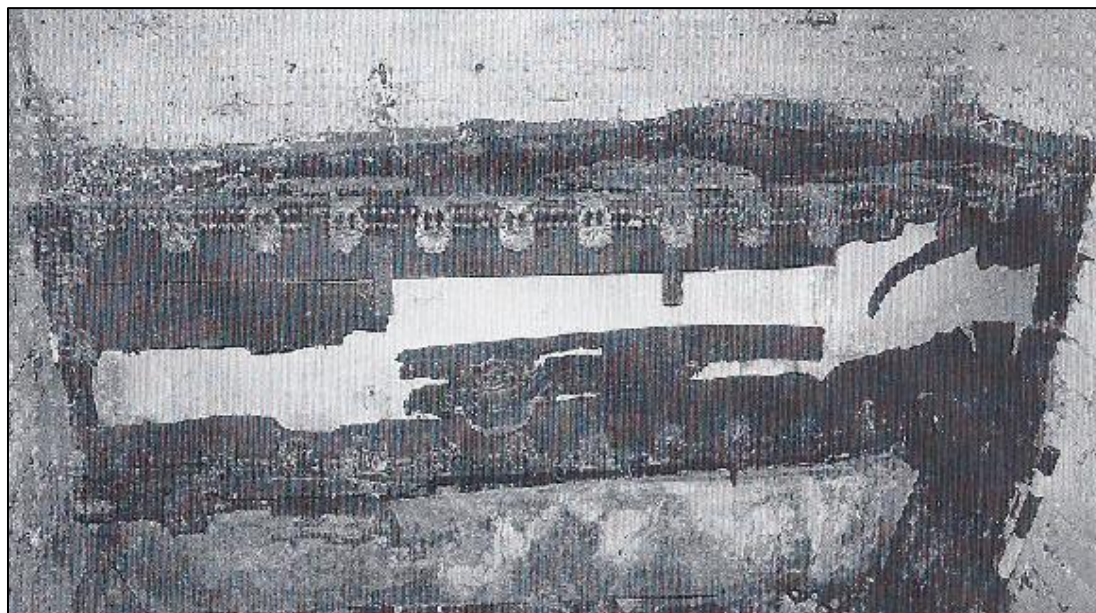


Figure 52. Fabric used to mask carpentry errors on the exterior of the coffin (Litten 1991:104).

Evidence for the coffin exterior style transformation, from gilded to flat lidded coffins at the St. George's Caye Archaeology Project is currently nonexistent. The majority of coffin lids within the cemetery on St. George's Caye did not withstand the ruin inflicted by natural processes. The ones that did survive, Burials 19 through 21, appear to have been constructed with a flat lid. Typically, gilded coffin lids were constructed with metal nails or tacks down the apex of the lid. When found in an archaeological context, even in caustic soils or environments friendly to degradation, the metal elements usually preserve and remain in-situ within the soil matrix. Unfortunately, corroded metal objects are encountered frequently during excavations within the cemetery and often represent secondary deposits from natural processes. No linear nail or tack fragments have been observed above alleged coffin interments at the St. George's Caye Archaeology Project.

Increased coffin variation was not limited to the interior properties of the interment structure. The exterior decoration, material, and style varied considerably between the late seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century. As discussed previously, the hexagonal or pinch toe coffin became widely used by the majority of the English population by circa 1700. The parish coffin, a wooden coffin used to transport the deceased poor to their resting place, was almost never used by the eighteenth century (Figure 53) (Litten 1991). The major factor in England that influenced a change in funeral tradition was the constant public visibility of dead bodies transported to burial grounds during the plague of 1665 in London, England (Litten 1991). The funerary industry boom, fully developing between 1700 and 1725, allowed for all social classes to be interred within a coffin. However, the wood, cloth and other materials purchased to

make a coffin depended on the amount of money the bereaved were willing to pay. The textiles utilized for the construction of elaborate coffins eventually led to a profitable industry beginning at this time in England. Moreover, some carpenters practiced coffin-making as a full-time occupation by 1725 due to the newly profitable business (Litten 1991).

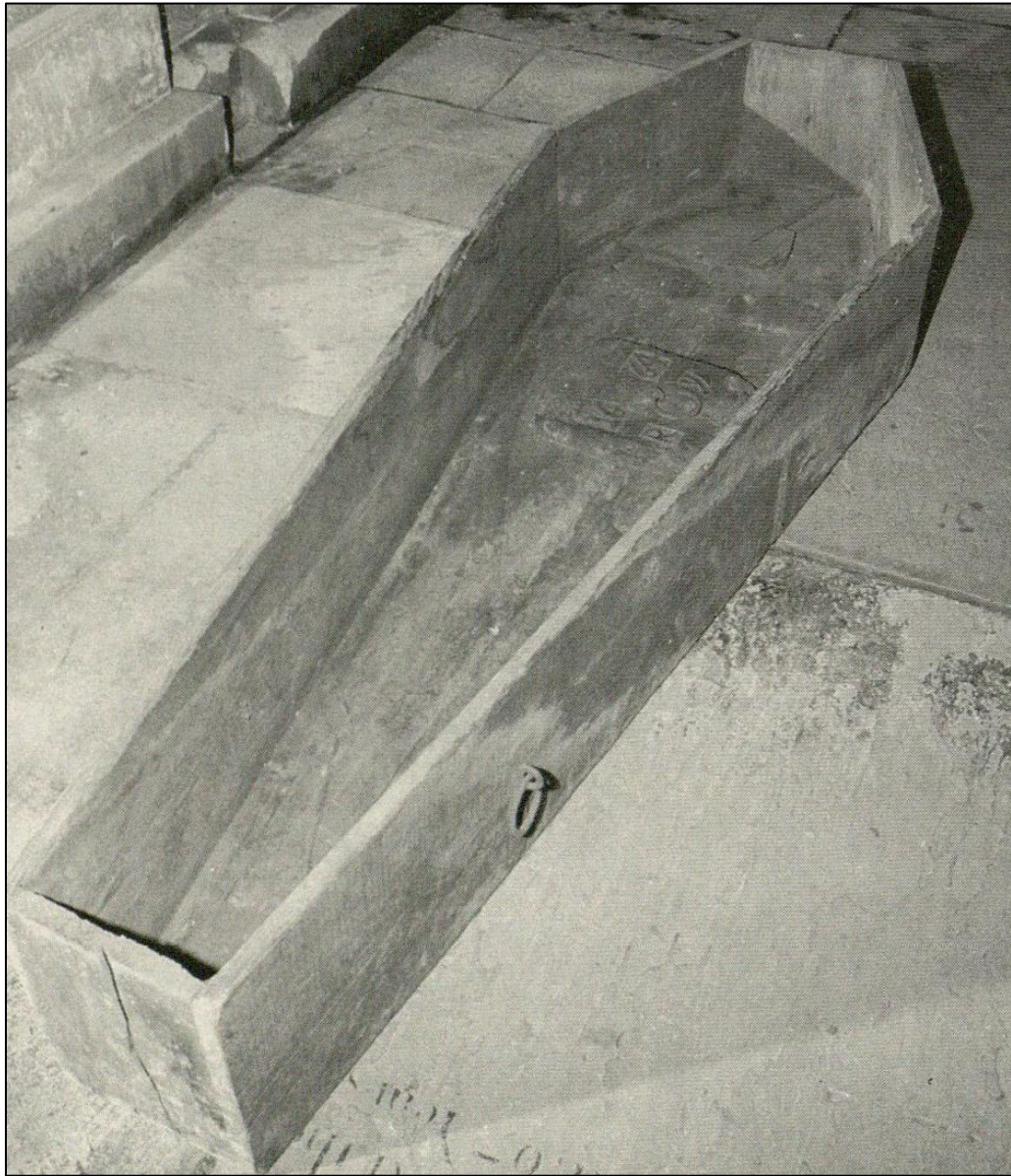


Figure 53. Parish coffin (Litten 1991:98).

Only one example of coffin variation with regard to shape has been observed within the St. George's Caye cemetery. One rectangular coffin, Burial 19, was discovered in XU 33 during the 2012 summer excavation. The lid was composed of simple horizontal cross-planks as well as the base (refer back to Figure 36). Regarding spatial patterning, the rectangular wooden coffin was aligned in a row on the western boundary of the cemetery. It was positioned an almost equal distance of around 250 centimeters from Burial 20 to the south and Burial 18 to the north. This coffin style is an anomaly within the cemetery and cannot be explained by popular funerary trends in colonial England. The rectangular style was only popular among the nobility during the late Middle Ages (Litten 1991). This style represents the earliest preserved coffins of the Middle Ages in England.

Another possibility for this style choice was that the interred was too large for the traditional pinch toe coffin. The other burials that rest in the same row, Burials 18 and 20, are poorly constructed pinch toe style coffins made with thin wooden pieces. It would have been difficult to fit an overweight individual in these burial styles. A forensic analysis of the preserved human bones from this burial may support the claim that the coffin was occupied by an overweight individual.

In addition to Burial 19, there are a few other coffin burials in the cemetery that are unique in their design. Burial 1, positioned in the southeastern corner of XU 29 and southwestern corner of XU 30, was discovered with a metal chest plate just above the preserved human remains (refer back to Figure 29). This chest plate, also referred to as a breast plate or a depositum plate, has yet to be completely deciphered. The material is unknown and only small portions of the inscription are still legible. However, the overall

shape, that of a heart, is still preserved. As previously stated, fragments of wood and most of the rivets used to attach the plate to the lid of the coffin are preserved.

The depositum plate is intriguing, not only because it represents the only such coffin ornamentation discovered thus far in the cemetery, but also because the shape is unique. Chest plates became a popular coffin decoration around 1720 in England. The rise in popularity of this style coincides with the previously mentioned funerary industry boom in England. This coffin decoration continued to be a popular burial addition well into the nineteenth century (Mckinley 2008).

The shape of the depositum plate was typically rectangular, however, "a few followed the dictates of heraldry" (Litten 1988:109). Heraldic funerals and mortuary decorations were restricted to the noble or affluent English families. These depositum shapes often reflected the sex and age of the individual. In particular, "the plate for a young girl was lozenge-shaped, shield-shaped for a boy..., rectangular with a central cartouche for a married woman...and rectangular with a central square panel for an adult male" (Figure 54) (Litten 1991:109). Heart-shaped depositum plates are frequently mentioned in literature regarding English burial traditions or English archaeological reports. The few examples found of this design will be discussed in a later chapter within this thesis.

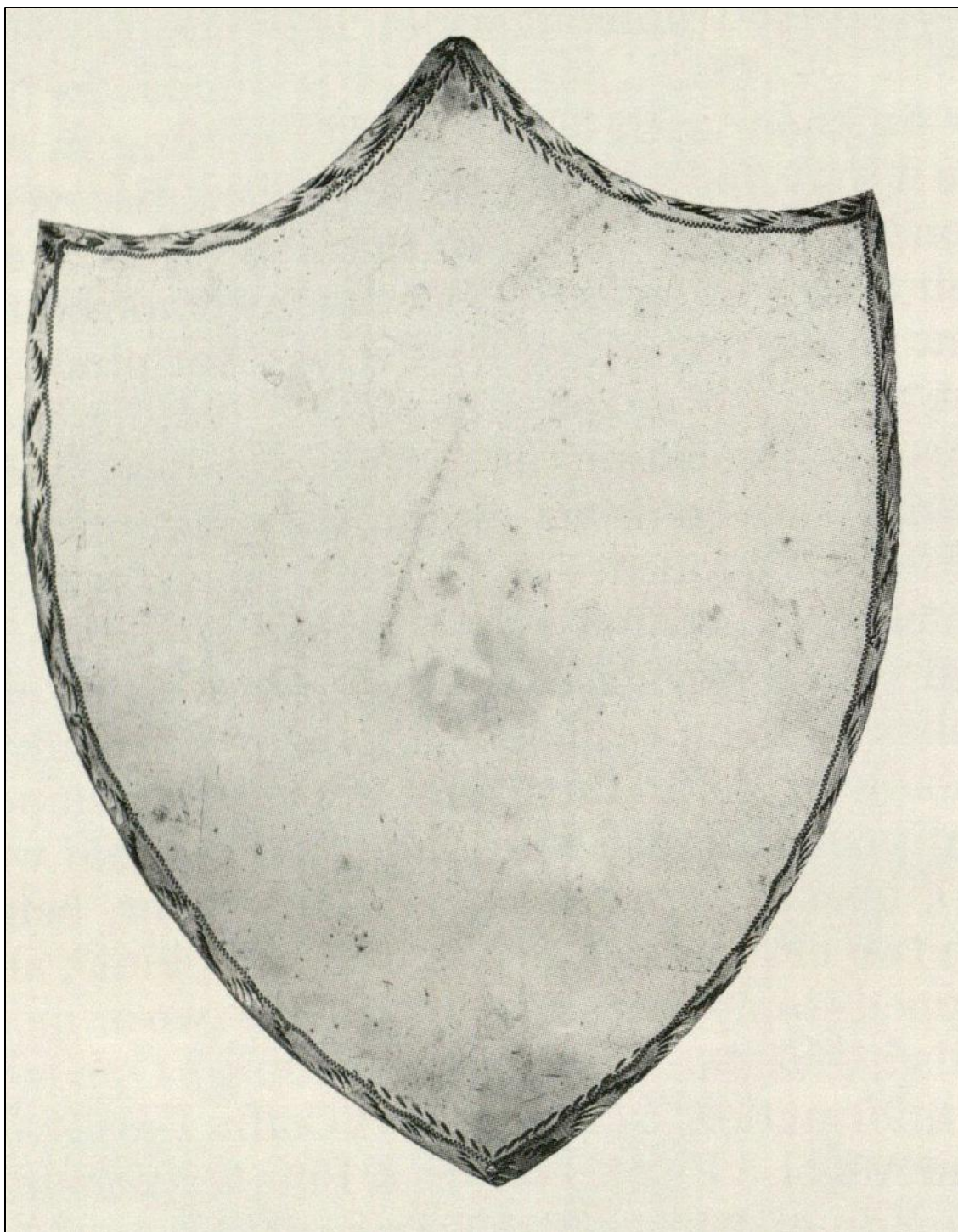


Figure 54. Heraldic depositum plate design typical for a young male (Litten 1991:108). (Blakey 2010).

The heart shape may be associated with African culture. If so, this would demonstrate a strong tie between the European and African populations within the colonial Bay of Honduras. The aforementioned relationship of Europeans to African slaves was said to have been generally cordial in the eighteenth century. This is unique when compared to other demographic relationships in English colonies (Campbell 2003).

A large African burial ground was discovered and excavated in New York City in 1991 prior to the construction of a Federal building. The cemetery, located in the New York City borough of Manhattan, was eventually dated to have been used from circa 1690 to 1794 and more than 400 burials (Blakey 2010). Archaeologists now believe that more than 15,000 individuals could have been buried within the confines of this property. Unfortunately, much of the burial ground remains under adjacent buildings in Manhattan.

Many scholars have focused on one burial in particular from the African Burial Ground. A heart shape on the preserved lid of the coffin was discovered in this burial (Figure 55). In New York, many of the slaves were Christianized, adopting the use of the pall and the coffin for the deceased, however, the heart shape is argued by many scholars to represent the *sankofa*, a symbol typically found in western Africa (Seeman 2010). Further still, a recent article, written by Erik R. Seeman, points out that this symbol was not found in western African mortuary practices in the eighteenth century (Seeman 2010). Instead, the symbol may reflect an interesting synthesis of Anglo and African cultures in the mortuary context of the eighteenth century.

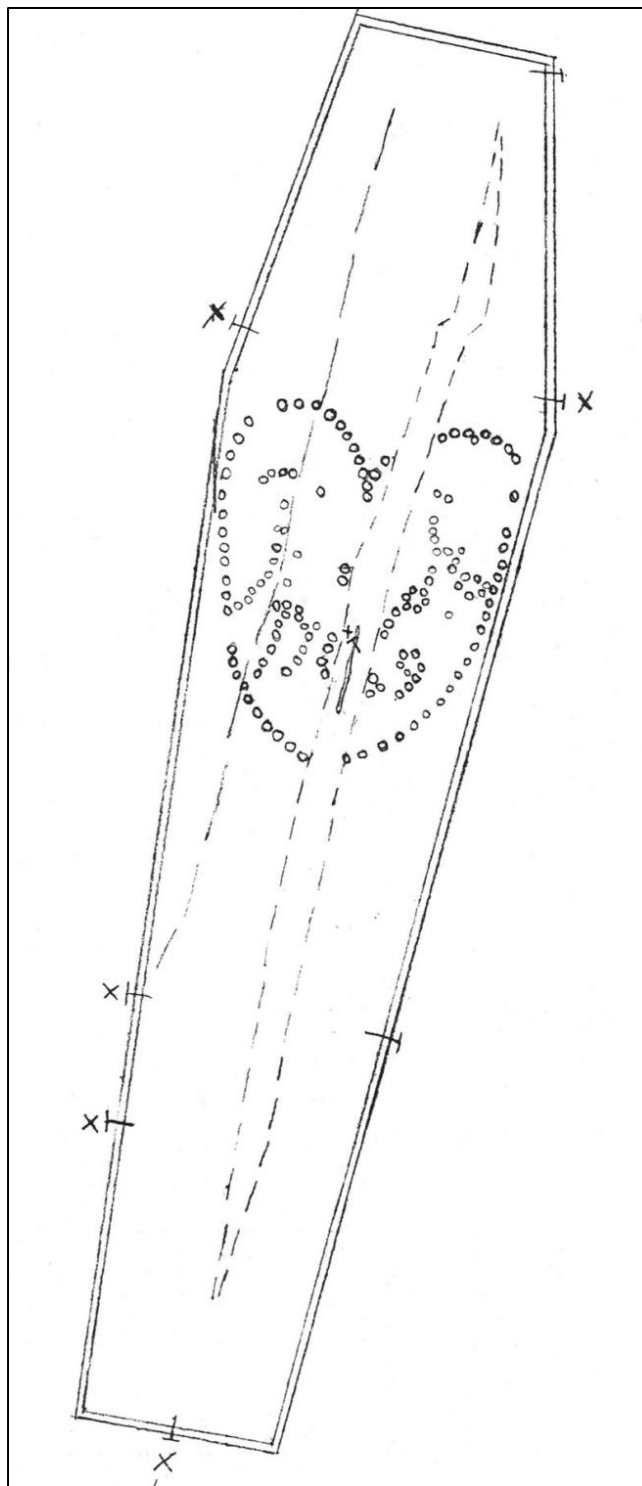


Figure 55. Coffin with heart design found in the African Burial Ground, New York City (Seeman 2010:110).

The use of the heart shape on the coffin lid is noted by Seeman to have occurred on Anglo coffins as well. Three examples were provided from small family plots ranging from Virginia to Massachusetts. The author notes how this heart adornment was not "uncommon" on Anglo coffins, yet he can only provide these few examples in the American colonies. In addition, these are the only discovered throughout the entirety of the research conducted for this thesis. It is possible that the heart shape motif on the St. George's Caye coffin, a design only found in the American colonies from the early eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, represents a specific community's religious symbol. The image could have been brought by an individual who emigrated from the American colonies to St. George's Caye. This scenario is quite possible since the burial of the coffin most likely occurred during this temporal range.

Other evidence for the synthesis of Anglo and African cultures is present within the cultural material of the St. George's Caye cemetery. As previously mentioned, a Spanish Real, dated to 1721, was discovered resting on the skull in Burial 3 (refer back to Figure 31). The coin was intentionally placed on the skull, made evident from the preserved black fabric found underneath the coin (refer back to Figure 32). The tradition of placing a coin in a burial has roots in "the classical world [where] a single coin was customarily placed in the mouth of the deceased in order to pay Charron's fee for ferrying the dead across the River Styx" (Parrington et al. 1986:61). Explaining the development of this practice in a historical archaeological context is much more complicated than the classical origin.

Many authors blindly ascribe the mortuary practice of placing the coin on the head, particularly with regard to historical contexts, as a definitively African cultural

practice (LeeDecker, 2009). However, recent scholarly research conflicts with this hypothesis. In England, the use of the coin in a funerary context is first noted in 1686 (Davidson 2010:620). Davidson argues that the typical use of the coin in burials of individuals associated with African culture is a "creolization" of Western beliefs (Davidson, 620). He points out that this tradition is widely observed in the excavation of African burials in the United States that date back to the nineteenth century.

The specific placement of the coin on the forehead, as seen in pictures of Burial 3, has not been discussed or encountered during the entirety of this thesis research. Although numerous archaeological reports mention the inclusion and positioning of coins around the body, particularly around the head, none mention the positioning of a coin on the forehead.

Box Tombs

The box tomb, also known as the chest tomb, can be generally described as an above-ground, rectangular tomb, with brick sides, and a large stone lid. The large stone slab is also usually carved with an epitaph for the deceased. This burial style arose from the general termination of intramural or in-church burials.

As mentioned previously, The Reformation Period in England not only greatly influenced the funerary industry, but also funerary monument styles and locations. English nobles and social elites began to bury their dead within the church around 1675 (Litten 1991). By this time, Westminster Abbey had become a restricted place for mostly royal burials and rural elites had begun to reserve the communal parish as an exclusive burial tomb (Litten 1991). This left urban churches as the remaining intramural venue for the affluent English.

The location of the burial was directly linked to flaunting one's social status and their closeness to God. The closer one was buried to the altar, the closer they were to God and the more visible they were to the public who frequently attended services (Litten 1991). Therefore, a worshipper would pass religious figures and the names of the social elite when entering a church. The public display was not only indicative of social status in death, but also somewhat deified the deceased by their association with powerful religious imagery.

As time progressed and more single interments, vaults, and wall burials were constructed, serious health problems arose within the church. Freshly dead bodies, enclosed in wooden or lead coffins, were often only covered by a stone slab, also referred to as a ledger stone, under the church floor. The close proximity of the church patrons to the freshly deceased was said to have led to "unpleasantness, foul air and nasal offence" (Litten 1991). The combination of less available space for burial and the common stench of the dead fostered the movement of the affluent to outside burial grounds. This transition also coincides with the Cemetery Movement, a cultural and ideological shift toward the location and imagery associated with burials.

The Cemetery Movement arose in response to the lack of space within churches for the affluent and cramped church burial grounds for the remaining population. The origin of the modern cemetery can be traced to the Père-Lachaise Cemetery, just outside of Paris, France (Schechter 2009). Like in England, Paris was having serious health issues regarding the burial of the deceased. Burial grounds in Paris, up until the construction of the Père-Lachaise Cemetery, were located in the heart of the city. These

burial grounds were crowded with bodies, often placed in open trenches for months on end (Schechter 2009).

The Père-Lachaise Cemetery typifies the modern cemetery not only for its then rural location, but also for its restrictions for burials. These restrictions include the "provisions that bodies lie only side by side, not atop one another; that cemeteries should be made park-like places [and] garnished with greenery" (Schechter 2009:146). This funerary movement to a more rural setting represents the abandonment of intramural and burial ground interments, an increase in health and safety awareness, and the addition of nature in the resting place. The rural progression was not confined to France. In fact, it spread quickly through England and the United States by the early nineteenth century (Schechter 2009).

Within the United States, the rural cemetery movement coincides with the "beautification of death" trend (LeeDecker 2009). This is synonymous with the use of decoration or ornamentation on burial enclosures. As mentioned previously, the trend began in England during the first half of the eighteenth century, while the deceased elite were still often interred within church vaults. A more distinctive movement found in the United States after the Revolutionary War is the use of classical imagery on funerary monuments (LeeDecker 2009). The imagery was intentionally used to parallel the new democratic nation with symbols of the once powerful ancient Roman empire and Greek democracies.

As intramural burials in England began to wane by the middle of the eighteenth century, similar burial styles began to arise in the burial grounds or newly constructed rural cemeteries. The rise of the box tomb, or any other cemetery monument for that

matter, can be attributed, directly, to intramural burials (Gordon 1984). Cemetery monuments from this period often include box tombs, ledger stones, and headstones. Each monument is inspired by similar burial monuments found within the church. The headstone, a vertical stone slab with an epitaph, intentionally imitates the vertical, stone slabs used to cover intramural wall interments within churches (Figure 56 and 57) (Gordon 1984). Ledger stones, long, stone slabs covering a grave in a cemetery, imitate the long ledger stones with epitaphs found on the church floor (Figure 58 and 59) (Gordon 1984). Box tombs also follow this iconographic formula. The above-ground tomb in the cemetery represents the subterranean vault, often with a ledger stone and epitaph (Figure 60 and 61) (Gordon 1984).



Figure 56. Intramural wall burial example (Searle 2010).



Figure 57. Cemetery headstone examples (Franks 2013).

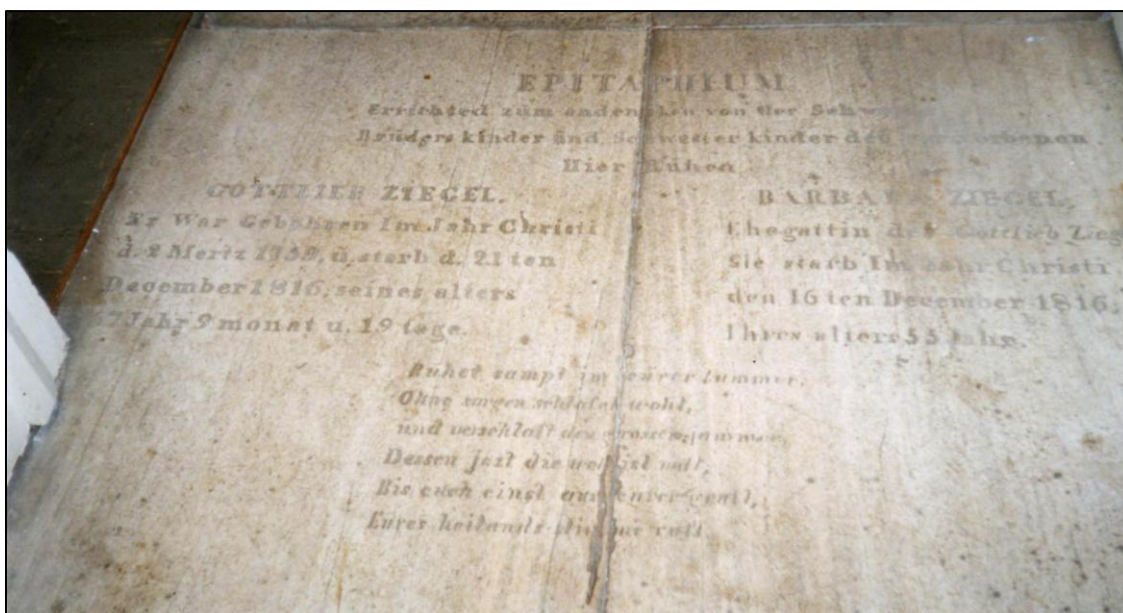


Figure 58. Intramural ledger stone example (Blake 2011).



Figure 59. Cemetery ledger stone and headstones examples (Casperflea 2011).



Figure 60. Example of intramural sarcophagus in church vault (Ianvisits 2010).



Figure 61. Cemetery box tomb example (Wright 2013).

The box tomb may be an attempt to imitate sarcophagi intramural burials as well. Many colonial box tombs were said to have had brick sides covered in plaster. This would give the viewer the impression of a homogenous, stone material (Chicora Foundation 2006). Such large stone pieces would have been expensive to purchase for the construction of the tomb. Therefore, the deceased intended to imitate these expensive burials to display a high social status in death.

Box tombs within the cemetery on St. George's Caye follow the same historical criteria regarding the temporal period of use and social status. As mentioned in the excavation history of the island, all of the above-ground monuments were first mapped by Rob Hume in 1872 and all of the tomb epitaphs were recorded by James Purcell Usher in 1907 (Check-Pennell 1989). This map and collection of epitaphs provide invaluable

information when discovering and interpreting tomb materials from archaeological contexts.

The only partially intact brick above-ground tomb structure discovered while excavating within the cemetery was in XU 15. As mentioned previously in the excavation history of St. George's Caye, only the bottoms of two brick box tombs were revealed. No diagnostic artifacts were observed while excavating this unit. However, the positioning of the tombs, when compared to the 1872 map, matched the position of the northern tomb to the "grave [that] belongs to Reverend John C. Mongan" (Garber et al. 2010:15). The 1872 map does not record a name for the adjoining box tomb to the south (Garber et al. 2010). The cement burial enclosure and lid found in XU 7 and XU 13 also represent partial materials from box tombs but have not been associated with a tomb on the 1872 map at this time.

Sarcophagus

One sarcophagus, an elaborate above-ground tomb, has been documented within the St. George's Caye cemetery (Figure 62 and 63). At least five pictures have been taken of this tomb, erected for Thomas Potts, prior to the arrival of hurricane Hattie which displaced the monument in 1961. Thomas Potts died in 1806, but the date when this distinct monument was erected is not known. A description of the tomb is relegated to the five known pictures of the monument, the 1872 map, and the 1907 epitaph recordings. In these five pictures one can see how the tomb is elevated on a stone platform; held up by lion feet; covered with a convex lid, displaying a detailed relief on at least one side; and mounted with a bust of Thomas Potts on at least one side of the tomb as well.



Figure 62. The Thomas Potts tomb (photo taken before 1931) (Belize Music World 2013).

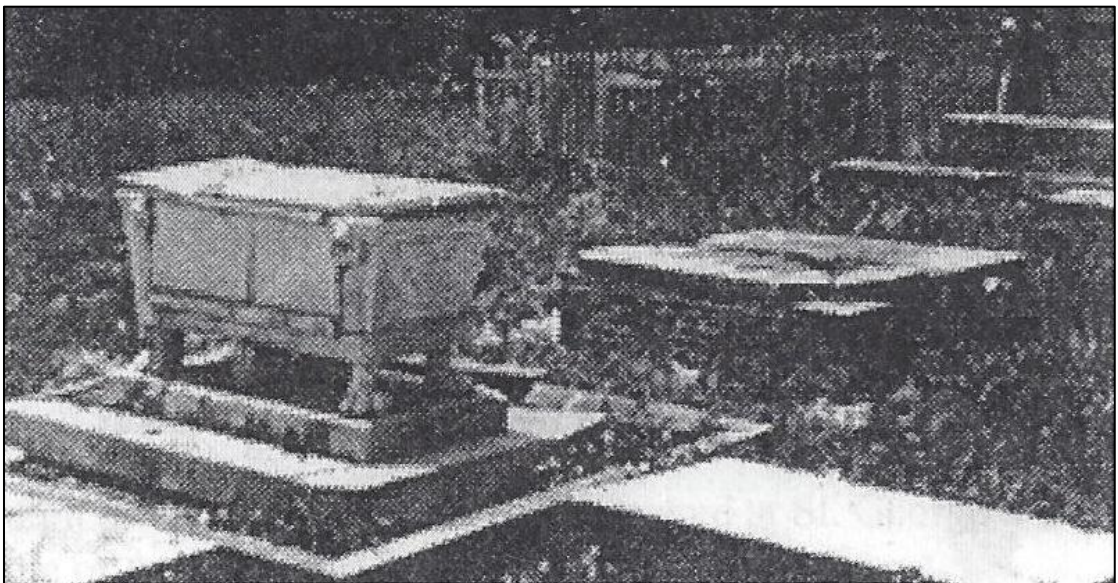


Figure 63. Thomas Potts tomb and cemetery overview (photo taken between 1931-1961) (A History of Belize: A Nation in the Making).

The pictures suggest that the tomb is most likely made entirely of marble. The intricately carved and decorated monument must have been made outside of the Bay of Honduras. Evidence supporting this claim is found in Mary Check-Pennell's *Historic Cemeteries of Belize City, Belize, Central America*. Mary Check-Pennell, a Peace Corps volunteer, documents the current conditions and complete histories of every known historic cemetery in Belize. Interestingly, the 1989 book notes the condition of the St. George's Caye cemetery as "vanished" (Check-Pennell 1989).

In her discussion on the history of the St. George's Caye cemetery, she notes how there was only one remaining gravestone, now long gone due to hurricane destruction. This gravestone, marking the grave of Agnes Mary Cuthbert who died in 1892, was said to have come from Britain (Check-Pennell 1989). Agnes was born in Aberdeen, United Kingdom and the granite gravestone was said to have been imported from this area (Check-Pennell 1989). Although the gravestone was most likely set almost a century after the Thomas Potts sarcophagus, it does support the argument that the Potts tomb originated from England. Additional research, specifically at the historical archives at Belmopan, Belize, is needed to identify when and from where the tomb was shipped to the bay settlement.

Mary Check-Pennell provides several quotes from local islanders in the first half of the twentieth century regarding the tomb of Thomas Potts. Even after the destructive forces of the 1931 hurricane, a local islander in 1951 is said to have observed the tomb in good condition (Check-Pennell 1989). Unfortunately, a decade after this report, the tomb was displaced by hurricane Hattie in 1961. The hurricane hit Belize with sustained winds of between 150 and 230 miles per hour and a tidal surge of 10 to 15 feet above sea level

(Friesner 1993). All of the structures on the island were destroyed, including any remaining above-ground monuments within the cemetery.

A comprehensive description of the Thomas Potts tomb was recorded by Thomas Gann in 1926. In this narrative, he describes the relief on the side of the tomb in great detail saying,

One of the most remarkable [graves] is that of Thomas Potts, who, during the mid-eighteenth century was Chief Magistrate of the Colony. He is interred in a great stone urn, on the back and front of which are inset marble medallions upon which are sculptured his face in profile--grim, bald-headed, long-nosed and bewhiskered. On the front of the urn is depicted in low relief, and with considerable realism, a great fallen mahogany-tree and the stump from which it has just been cut, with a barbecue (or platform of sticks, to admit of the axemen reaching the trunk above the huge spurs) erected around it. Beside the tree stand two naked black slaves, one devoutly praying, the other pointing downwards with one hand, as if to indicate T. P.'s probable destination. In the centre are two more naked slaves, each holding an object more like a polo stick than anything else.... In the background are four naked negroes sitting round an immense fire of sticks, in a clearing in the forest, which at first I took to be a further reference to the ultimate destination of the deceased, though it is probably only the cooking-fire of a great camp of slaves, sent out to cut

mahogany, in the early days of the Colony, when everything was done by slave labour [Gann 1926:23-24].

The marble medallion discussed by Gann was later discovered in 1978 when hurricane Greta cut a small channel through the caye just south of the cemetery. This is believed to be one of the marble medallions from the Thomas Potts tomb, yet Gann's description of this medallion does not match the one discovered in 1978. His description states that the marble head of Thomas Potts was bald, yet this recent medallion find depicts hair on the man's head (Check-Pennell 1989). However, the shape and absence of any other medallions from the cemetery burials suggests this is, in fact, from the Thomas Potts tomb.

Today, the sarcophagus that once contained the remains of Thomas Potts is said to be buried underneath the resort that encompasses the property directly to the south of the cemetery (Check-Pennell 1989). This location matches the direction hurricane Hattie traveled, from the northeast to the southwest, when the storm passed over the island (Weaver and Sabido 1997). An archaeological excavation should be performed on this property to restore the tomb to its original location within the cemetery.

Several modern structures are present in the St. George's Caye cemetery today. This includes headstone-like monuments that are aligned in a north-south direction in the center of the cemetery. These do not mark interments, but instead commemorate previous islanders. A large, cylindrical monument rests in the center of the cemetery, honoring the individuals that fought in the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798. The only other

monument on the property is that of an above-ground tomb. This recently constructed burial was made for a local islander (Figure 64). The tomb is rectangular in shape, made of black, polished stone, and includes an epitaph for the interred. The style of the tomb is a modern variation of the historical box tombs that were once found in the island cemetery. Like the English burials from the eighteenth century onward, the tomb was constructed from foreign, polished stone to display the affluent social status of the deceased.



Figure 64. Modern above-ground tomb in St. George's Caye cemetery.

CHAPTER VII

INTER-CEMETERY ANALYSIS

An attempt to interpret corresponding elements of the burials at the St. George's Caye cemetery with cemeteries in England and its colonies was largely a fruitless endeavor. Through researching previously excavated cemeteries from this temporal period, particularly those near commercial ports of interest in the logging trade, I have found that few such excavations exist. The criteria for my search mandated that in order for a cemetery to be comparable, the prospective cemetery excavation must be identified as being from the colonial period, Anglican, and mostly European. These criteria represent the basic elements for the majority of the burials found within the St. George's Caye cemetery. Therefore, in order to conduct an analysis with meaningful results, the compared cemetery must meet this set of attributes. Unfortunately, as this thesis chapter reveals, few relevant cemeteries were found.

In Jamaica, only two small family plots were located and briefly described in a 1973 publication. An exhaustive search for Anglican churches, colonial cemetery photos, articles, and books resulted in only a few, distant photos of historic churches and adjoining cemeteries. Unfortunately, this trend of inadequate results continued into my search for excavations in the United States. Here, I discovered that few cemeteries matching the aforementioned research criteria have been excavated. However, upon investigating archaeological projects involving the removal and study of colonial-era

burials in England, I found that several well-written reports, including reports from sites in Chelsea and Poole, England, are available.

There are several causes for the considerable deficiency of cemetery excavations in the United States and the Caribbean. Veit et al.'s "Historical Archaeology of Religious Sites," published in 2009, was an attempt to address this significant problem in historical archaeology. The authors first began by reviewing all of the available literature concerning religious sites and grave markers in the United States. They eventually found that "based on...the general review of literature, it seemed that religious places, sacred sites, and cemeteries had long been minor chords in North American historical Archaeology" (Veit et al. 2009:1). In other words, the available literature for these sites in historical archaeology is, and always has been, lacking at best.

A continued investigation into this apparent lack of literature revealed four main reasons for the absence of historical archaeological excavations. The first justification is somewhat subjective. Veit et al. (2009) argue that churches have historically been "bastions of literacy" and that an intrusive excavation into the structure or associated cemetery is unnecessary (Veit et al. 2009:3). Although this justification for not intrusively testing a site seems hard to believe, the authors support this first claim by stating how "many scholars" follow this excuse (Veit et al. 2009:3).

The second, and arguably most realistic excuse, is that historic churches, places of worship, or cemeteries rarely fall within the predicted area of disturbance in a cultural resource management (CRM) project. My review of cemetery literature supports this argument. However, this claim only appears to be concerned with historically European cemeteries. I came across several African American cemeteries that were excavated due

to development projects, including the African Burial Ground in New York City, site 38CH778 in Charleston County, Charleston, and the Freedman Cemetery in Dallas, Texas.

The lack of available literature regarding historical cemeteries inspired me to contact all or most of the major CRM companies on the eastern seaboard. All of my emails were responded to, however, only a few email responses provided suggested reading for my research. Dr. Michael Trinkley, the director of The Chicora Foundation, one of the largest CRM companies in the American Southeast, summed up the basic reasoning for the absence of cemetery excavations by saying, "Black cemeteries tend to get moved and White cemeteries don't" (Trinkley 2013). My thesis research into historical cemeteries in the United States, sadly, has found this statement to be historically accurate.

The third and fourth excuses provided by the article's authors for the severe absence of cemetery and religious site archaeological research are mainly subjective. The authors argue that many archaeologists find church excavations to "contribute little to the past" (Veit et al. 2009:4). In addition, the authors hypothesize that there is a "lack of interest on the part of many archaeologists to investigate the spiritual aspect of past cultures, both ideologically and materially" (Veit et al. 2009:4). This second excuse may appear to be ridiculous to many in the field of anthropology; however, it does carry some credence in the historical archaeology sub-discipline. This reason is also justified by the preference for studying material culture in historical archaeology instead of "symbolism or religious beliefs;" an academic focus likely the result of Marxist theory on the sub-discipline (Veit et al. 2009:5).

Another, more objective theory, for this issue in historical archaeology, is the extensive amount of CRM reports that go unpublished, also known as grey literature, and their lack of availability for the general public. My experience in CRM, and through communicating with CRM archaeologists during this research, has opened my eyes to the massive amount of archaeological reports that go unpublished. This problem is not relegated to the historical archaeology sub-discipline, but can be attributed to all temporal periods of archaeology in the United States. However, with regards to historical archaeology cemetery reports that correlate with the St. George's Caye Archaeology Project, few were located and supplied only limited meaningful results.

As discussed in the introductory chapter of my thesis, cemetery excavations in London, England; Poole, England; Jamaica; and North Carolina represent the collection of data I've collected to compare to my St. George's Caye burial research. All or most of the burials within this cemetery follow the typical Christian burial doctrine. This includes the positioning of the interment to lie in an east-west alignment, with the head of the individual to the west. This alignment was intentional for the deceased to face Christ as he came from the east on Judgment Day (Crissman 1994). In addition, burials were typically placed in rows to facilitate better use of space within the cemetery boundaries. Urban cemeteries were often small properties which typically forced burials into spatial patterns that maximized the use of the land (Cowie et al. 2008; McKinley 2008). Burials also, like intramural burials, were placed within a cemetery according to social rank. At other times, clustered burial patterns may represent the interments of individuals from the same family (Cowie et al. 2008; McKinley 2008).

Although my focus is mainly on the burial styles at St. George's Caye, I've also found in my research that grave goods are not typically present in colonial Christian burials, but are not uncommon as well (Cowie et al. 2008). Often by the request of the individual or the bereaved, items associated with an affection for the individual are included within the coffin. This distinction is noteworthy because these grave goods are not universal, but instead reflect personal interests and affections. No such items, if once present, have withstood the natural formation degradation of the St. George's Caye soil matrices.

Beginning with the former English colony closest to Belize, Jamaica at first seemed like it would provide sufficient information for my analysis due to the long history on the island. However, as discussed previously, only two family plots from the colonial era have been reported. The first, discovered in 1967 consisted of an isolated family vault in Southwestern Jamaica and was dated to the middle of the eighteenth century. Upon discovery, archaeologists noted that the family vault had been looted. The lead coffins that once contained human remains were taken, leaving fragments of inner wooden coffins, bones, and an English ceramic plate dated to the middle of the eighteenth century (Fremmer 1973). The discovery of the plate did not register with archaeologists as a burial tradition until another plate was discovered in another English burial in Jamaica dating to the same period (Figure 65).

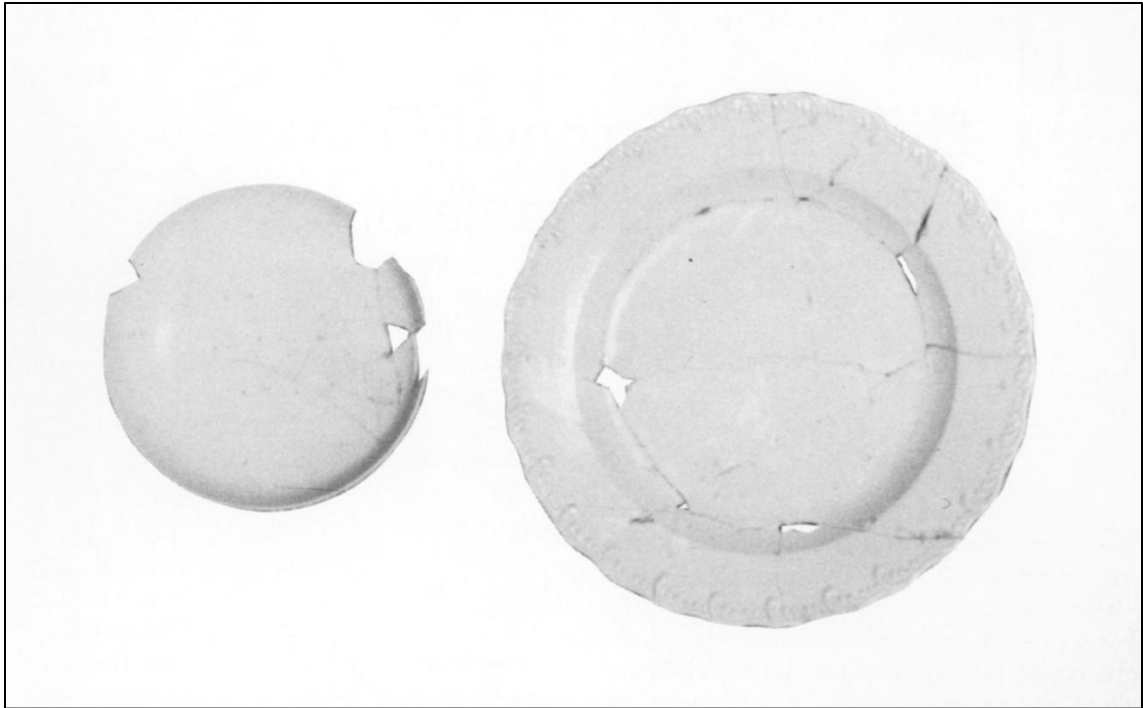


Figure 65. Ceramic plates discovered within looted tomb in Jamaica (Fremmer 1973:59).

The second burial, a single individual within a coffin, was found in Trelawny, Jamaica in 1972. Unlike the first discovery of a ceramic plate in 1967, this plate was found in-situ, next to the individual's femur (Figure 66). The ceramic plate associated with this "well preserved" individual was eventually dated circa 1770-1780 (Fremmer 1973:59). The author of this outdated article associates the use of the ceramic plate to English mortuary traditions found in England as well.



Figure 66. Colonial burial excavated with in-situ ceramic plate (Fremmer 1973:60).

The archaeological excavation of St. Martin in London, England revealed a burial with a shared funerary practice (Fremmer 1973). The 1956 excavation of the church revealed five preserved wooden coffins with human remains. One of these coffins included an individual with a ceramic plate positioned over the pelvis (Fremmer 1973). The ceramic plate, dated to ca. 1675-1685 represents one of the oldest examples of this tradition in the burial context.

Two examples of this tradition are found within the St. George's Caye cemetery. Burials 18 and 19, both discovered and excavated during the 2012 field season, contained ceramic sherds within the confines of the wooden coffin. Burial 18, located in XU 32, was excavated and revealed a ceramic sherd adjacent to the skull of the individual (Figure 67). The positioning of this sherd may have been disturbed since the lid of the coffin did not preserve it or it may have moved into the coffin as a result of natural processes such as the rise and fall of tidal patterns and repeated storm surge events.



Figure 67. Ceramic sherd (highlighted in red) found within Burial 18 coffin (Garber 2012).

The second recorded discovery of a ceramic within a coffin, a sherd found in Burial 19, is a more convincing example of this cultural tradition. Burial 19 is located just south of Burial 18 in XU 33. Like the examples found in Jamaica and England, a ceramic sherd was revealed resting in-situ next to the pelvis of the interred individual. Moreover, this coffin retained its preserved lid, suggesting the context of the sherd was original or at least placed somewhere within the coffin.

A more recent study of this tradition was needed to support my interpretation. An in-depth investigation of this cultural practice proved the hypothesis of Fremmer's 1973 article on the Jamaican burials to be correct. The placement of bowls or plates on the body is a longstanding tradition from the British Isles (Davidson 2010). The original intention of the practice was to protect the soul of the deceased. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, it was believed to inhibit the bloating of the body prior to burial and after interment (Davidson 2010).

As discussed in the Cultural and Ancestral History chapter, Charleston played an important role in the logwood trade. The closest cemetery excavation to Charleston, South Carolina that matched the criteria established for comparison to the St. George's Caye cemetery was in southern North Carolina. Today, many of the old Protestant cemeteries still exist. However, no Protestant cemetery excavations from this temporal period of interest have been conducted in South Carolina. However, the Sprott Cemetery, excavated in 2007, represents a European, Protestant cemetery in North Carolina not far from the Carolina Lowland area. The use of this cemetery can be dated with the few remaining headstones. These ascribe burial dates within the cemetery to between the middle to the late eighteenth century.

In total, 19 burials were recovered from the excavation. Of these 19 burials, five were found to have been interred in pinch toe coffins and one was discovered in a rectangular coffin (Figure 68). The remaining burial forms were either indeterminate or isolated human remain discoveries (Matternes et al. 2010). No coffin ornamentation was revealed that corresponds with the location and social status of the local population was exhibited. This cemetery, during its time of use, represents an isolated, rural population within the American colonies (Matternes et al. 2010).

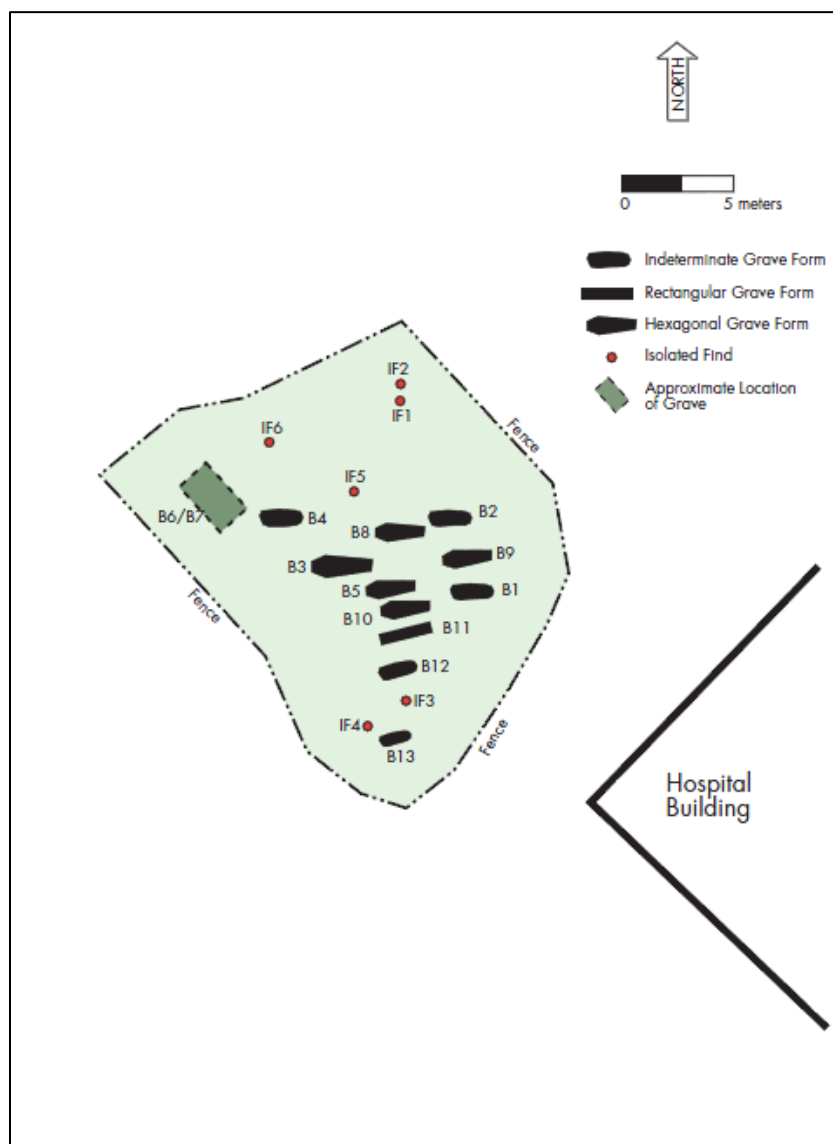


Figure 68. Sprott cemetery excavation plan view (Matternes et al. 2010:25).

This characteristic, along with the shared Protestant religion, corresponds with characteristic of St. George's Caye settlement in the eighteenth century. However, unlike those in St. George's Caye and the Bay of Honduras, the individuals within the Sprott cemetery were not connected to a flourishing logwood and mahogany-driven economy. The lifestyle on the North Carolina frontier at that time was a rural and limited life with regards to available resources and coffin-making abilities. Due to the lack of cemetery excavations in this region, an iconographic analysis was conducted to elucidate the funerary trends and styles in the Carolinas. This analysis can be found in the following chapter within this thesis.

European Protestant cemetery excavations in New England from the colonial era share a similar fate to those in South Carolina. Few have been excavated or even published in these locations. The cemetery archaeology project chosen from the New England region for comparison in this thesis is the Uxbridge, Massachusetts Almshouse Burial Ground, excavated in 1985.

Like many cemetery removal projects in the United States, this commenced as the result of a highway relocation project (Bell 1990). Historical records indicate that the cemetery was created by the local government for the purpose of interring the local poor who could not afford burial enclosures (Bell 1990). The use of the cemetery, recorded as ranging from 1831-1872, does not correspond directly to the use period of the St. George's Caye cemetery. However, out of the 31 recovered coffin burials, most consisted of hexagonal or pinch toe coffins with moderate to minimal funerary ornamentation (Figure 69). The style and, for the most part, the lack of coffin ornamentation is analogous to the coffins discovered at St. George's Caye.

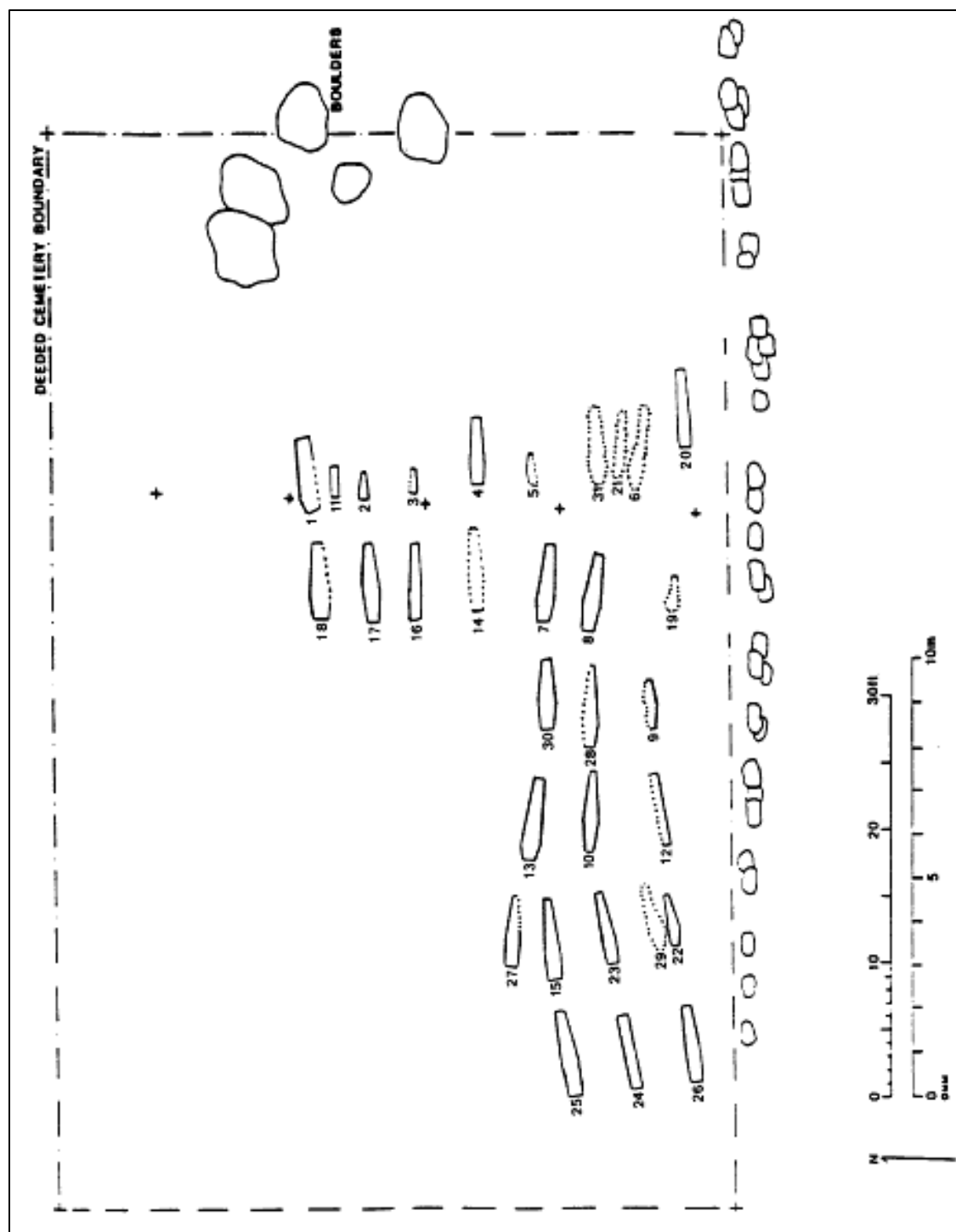


Figure 69. Uxbridge cemetery excavation plan view map (Bell 1990:24).

The strong connection between the coffin features of both cemeteries is not a result of shared social or ideological factors. Instead, these shared funerary traits can be explained by understanding the economic, cultural, and political landscape within each respective community. The Almshouse Cemetery, as stated previously, was created and completely financed by the local government for the poor. Therefore, the "coffins provided for the pauper burials at Uxbridge were quite plain" (Bell 1990:61). Coffins that did include items of ornamentation were provided with such options as a result of the mass production of funerary textiles in the United States.

This industry boom coincided with the aforementioned beautification of death movement, "which regarded in the archaeological horizon...is reflected materially in the use of decorative, mass-produced coffin hardware" (Bell 1990:55). The ubiquitous use of funerary ornamentation beginning in this period within the United States follows the funerary trends of England beginning in the early eighteenth century. Like in England, the beautification of death movement in the United States comprised the "mass consumption of mass-produced items, imitative of expensive objects, [reinforcing] a need among some to display the appearance of wealth and to impart a tenuous sense of security" (Williams 1982). These aspects that shaped the government's purchase of burial enclosures are not the same reasons for selected interment styles on St. George's Caye.

Overall, burials within the St. George's Caye cemetery are a chronological display of the economy's strength in the early Bay of Honduras settlement. The transition from simple coffin burials to box tombs within the cemetery represents the strengthening of the economy. This is apparent not only because of the change in materials used for burial enclosures, but the expertise and detail associated with the later, more elaborate

interments requires special talent, training, or strong commerce ties to facilitate the importation of such items. The strongest similarity between the two cemeteries, that of simple coffin enclosures, is a shared trait in material form only. The justification or reasoning for these interment types is entirely dissimilar between the two communities.

The only archaeological cemetery excavations that shared all of the criteria for comparison in this inter-cemetery research were found in England. The general lack of corresponding cemetery excavations is frustrating for my analysis. However, if any of the selected regions in this study for comparison could be chosen, it would be England. The strongest cultural ties between the Bay of Honduras and these locations of interest should be England. Not only were the settlers in the bay colony prematurely settling a new territory, but the final destination for logwood and mahogany was often England. Moreover, many of the eighteenth and nineteenth century epitaphs recorded in 1907 display how several if not most of the interred were born in Britain. Therefore, two cemetery excavations, including those in Poole and London, England, were compared in this analysis to investigate the transfer of funerary traditions to the bay settlement.

The Chelsea Old Church cemetery, located in present day Chelsea, Kensington, rests just outside London, England. This cemetery's attributes, including its religious denomination, socio-economic stratification, and burial styles, closely resemble those found within the St. George's Caye cemetery. In fact, out of the cemeteries chosen in Jamaica, the Carolina Lowlands, and New England, the Chelsea Old Church cemetery is the only such excavation that matches all of the criteria for my investigation.

A total of 290 burials were recovered from the excavation (Figure 70) (Cowie et al. 2008). The reported dates of use of the property as a place for Protestant burial range

from the close of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. This temporal range closely resembles the period in which most of the deceased were interred within the St. George's Caye cemetery, particularly the coffin interments. The use of the Old Chelsea Church cemetery came to a close as a result of burial overcrowding (Cowie et al. 2008). In addition, the urban setting of the cemetery necessitated, as the authors term, an "economical" use of the property regarding the positioning of burials (Cowie et al. 2008). The majority of the interments followed the conventional east-west alignment. However, a few interments were aligned not according to typical Christian doctrine, but due to an insufficient amount of burial space. This problem has not yet been observed within the cemetery on St. George's Caye.

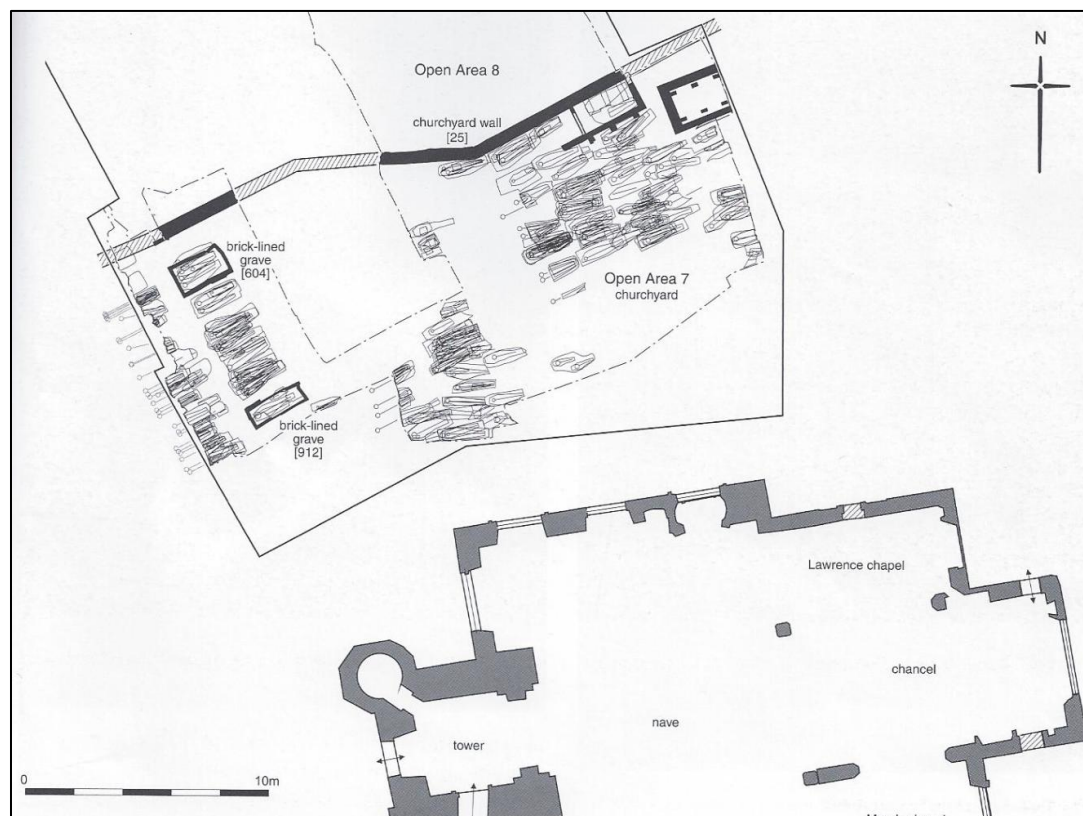


Figure 70. Old Chelsea Church excavation plan view (Cowie et al. 2008:29).

The interred within the Old Chelsea Church cemetery varied regarding social rank within English society. This heterogeneous use of the cemetery included individuals who, in life, worked as "bricklayers, carpenters, a barge builder, an apothecary, a butcher, a brewer, a vintner, a pastry cook, a printer, lawyers and army officers" (Cowie et al. 2008). The welcomed burial of both the poor and wealthy alike in this cemetery was thought to also occur within the St. George's Caye cemetery, at least prior to the nineteenth century. As discussed previously, by the early nineteenth century, property on St. George's Caye was owned solely by the settlement's elite. This also marks the time when the majority of the box tombs were constructed in addition to the Thomas Potts tomb, as well.

Only two brick-lined tombs were discovered during excavations of the Old Chelsea Church cemetery. One encompassed a stacked family tomb consisting of lead coffins placed on top of one another within the confines of the brick walls. The other, although subterranean, resembled the box tombs that once could be seen on St. George's Caye (Figure 71). This tomb was built for one individual and consisted of a rectangular brick lined grave with a coffin interment.



Figure 71. Subterranean brick-lined grave, Old Chelsea Church (Cowie et al. 2008:30).

The brick of the tomb, dated to between 1450-1700, correlates with the popular use of intramural burials within English churches (Cowie et al. 2008). This date explains the subterranean nature of the brick-lined tomb, since box tombs arose in response to the end of intramural burials, as mentioned previously. Lead coffins were found in both brick-lined tomb burials. These coffins were commonly used for the English elite from the end of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Litten 1991). No such coffins were discovered within the St. George's Caye cemetery. The material is heavy and would have most likely been expensive to transport to the bay settlement.

Wooden coffin interments in the Old Chelsea Church cemetery did not withstand degrading natural formation processes. These wooden coffins, most likely made of elm, were uncovered as a dark soil stain within the matrix (Cowie et al. 2008). The majority of the wooden coffins were hexagonal in shape, yet a specific number was not provided. In addition, 93 wooden coffins were found with depositum or chest plates. Out of this total, only 20 lead plates survived with legible engravings (Cowie et al. 2008). Although all of the plates are described as rectangular in the excavation report, one is noted as having "two punched lines of hearts around the edge" (Cowie et al. 2008). This represents the only connection to the sole depositum plate discovered within the St. George's Caye cemetery. No additional information regarding the context, inscription, or biological information is provided for the aforementioned Old Chelsea Church depositum plate of interest.

Funerary textiles, such as coffin linings, coverings, and shrouds were found to be partially preserved during the excavation of the Old Chelsea Church cemetery. The coffin

linings, in particular, match the location and color of the fabric recovered within Burial 21 in the St. George's Caye cemetery. Coffin covering fabric was believed to be used within the Old Chelsea Church cemetery to "indicate what may have been common practice or a way of showing a high social standing in life as well as after death" (Cowie et al. 2008). This archaeological interpretation applies to Burial 21, as well. In addition to the robust construction of the coffin, Burial 21 is unique due to the presence of fabric, pins, and decorative lid screws (refer back to Figures 42, 43, and 44).

The authors of the excavation report assert that "it was not usual to include grave goods in 18th- or 19th-century burials" (Cowie et al. 2008). This statement matches most of the scholarly opinion regarding grave goods in English historical burials. However, the authors do concede that the "dead were more commonly buried with items of personal adornment" (Cowie et al. 2008). This also was found to be true by a range of scholars, including Litten (1988) and Cox et al. (1998). As discussed in the Burial Styles Chapter of my thesis, grave goods, such as personal items of adornment, were not uncommon within interments. Many individuals entered the ground with items requested personally or by the bereaved to be placed in the burial. This paradox needs to be addressed by the historical archaeology community to further define what constitutes a "grave good" to clarify this issue.

The final cemetery chosen for this inter-cemetery comparison is the Baptist Burial Ground in Poole, England. Unlike the Old Chelsea Church cemetery, this cemetery in Poole was not of the Anglican denomination. However, a further analysis of the cemetery excavation revealed that many in eighteenth century Poole were merchants or sailors. These occupations were a product of Poole's geographic location along the southern coast

of England. In light of Belize's rich history of English pirates, sailors, and alike, I decided to investigate the cemetery excavation to see if any parallels with the St. George's Caye cemetery could be discovered.

The establishment of the first mentioned church in British Honduras, which was Anglican in denomination, occurred in 1810. However, the first church constructed for the settlement was an Anglican "place of worship" built on St. George's Caye ca. 1776-1779 (Thomson 2004). Although non-conformist denominations, such as Baptists, were not the first in the bay settlement, their arrival only shortly follows (approximately 22 years) the formal construction of an Anglican church in British Honduras (Thomson 2004).

The Poole Baptist Burial Ground was established in 1735 and used until the cemetery was closed in 1855 (McKinley 2008). Human remains from 83 individuals were recovered from a total of 81 burials (Figure 72). The majority of burials were coffined and covered by fabric funerary shrouds like those found at the Old Chelsea Church cemetery (McKinley 2008). Like the coffin styles found on St. George's Caye and those in the Old Chelsea Church cemetery, the coffin styles were generally hexagonal or pinch toe in shape (McKinley 2008). Also, as seen in the Old Chelsea cemetery, space was a serious concern in the Poole cemetery. Approximately 92.6% of the burials in Poole were aligned in the typical east-west direction, with a few not following this doctrine due to a lack of burial space (McKinley 2008).



Figure 72. Plan view map of Baptist Burial Ground excavation in Poole, England (McKinley 2008:26).

A remarkable burial pattern is consistent between the St. George's Caye and Baptist cemeteries. In two instances within the Baptist burial ground, an infant or juvenile coffin was placed directly over an adult coffin (Figure 73). This re-use of the burial shaft represents the medieval English funerary tradition of interring an infant with a mother

after both are killed as a result of childbirth (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005). The funerary tradition was encountered during excavations of the St. George's Caye cemetery as well.



Figure 73. Infant interred directly above adult burial in the Baptist Burial Ground (McKinley 2008:28).

Burial 23, a small wooden coffin, was found resting above the distal end of Burial 25 in the summer field season of 2010 (refer back to Figures 16 and 17) (Garber et al. 2010). Few human remains were discovered in-situ with these burials. Furthermore, a

biological profile estimation of these remains has not yet been conducted. However, the medieval English funerary tradition, which was present in the Baptist Burial Ground, appears to have traversed the Atlantic Ocean as a shared English mortuary practice.

Spatial patterning of interments within the Baptist Burial Ground is similar to those found in the Old Chelsea Church cemetery and somewhat alike to those in the St. George's Caye cemetery. Evidence for familial relationships, or grouping according to kinship, is strongest within the Poole cemetery, specifically regarding the aforementioned infant and adult burials (McKinley 2008). In addition to Burials 23 and 25 on St. George's Caye, interment concentrations according to kinship are visible on the 1872 map. Many of these box tombs are clustered together in kinship groups, like the several Potts family box tombs around the Thomas Potts sarcophagus. Similar patterns of familial clustering were visible in the archaeological record of the Old Chelsea Church cemetery. There, family vaults and large brick-lined graves contained several individuals of the same family.

As was found in the Old Chelsea Church cemetery, the majority of coffins in the Poole cemetery were made of elm, a local wood (McKinley 2008). Only four fragmented tin breast plates were recovered from the burials, all of which could not be preserved or deciphered (McKinley 2008). However, coffin ornamentation was wide-ranging. Out of sixty graves, 222 coffin grips and grip plates were recovered (McKinley 2008). This level of coffin ornamentation matches the relative frequency of coffin textiles present in the Old Chelsea Church cemetery. However, no such items have been discovered within the St. George's Caye cemetery. Grips and grip plates would have been manufactured for the Poole cemetery by local blacksmiths (McKinley 2008). This reflects the ubiquitous and

common use of funerary textiles in eighteenth century England. An analogous cultural and ideological trend regarding death did not arrive in the United States until the middle of the nineteenth century.

No above-ground tombs or mortuary monuments were observed or recorded in the historical archives for the Baptist Burial Ground. The authors of this excavation could not definitively attribute the simplicity of the interments as either resulting from nonconformist beliefs or because of socio-economic factors that inhibited expensive monument construction and coffin ornamentation (McKinley 2008). Many of the coffin burials on St. George's Caye, however, were most likely identified by above-ground wooden markers. In addition to the constant barrage of hurricane and storm surge forces, organic material, such as wood, would not have preserved well other than in an anaerobic environment.

In fact, the rate of decomposition for wood on the caye may be determined by using James Purcell Usher's 1907 epitaph recordings. In his documentation of Joseph Bevan's epitaph, he records that the monument to which it belongs is made of wood. In addition, he notes that the marker indicates the deceased was buried in 1889 (Usher 1907). Assuming that the marker was placed at the time of burial and remained in the cemetery until Usher's recordings, then wooden markers would withstand the natural elements on the island for at least eighteen years. Unfortunately, Usher provides no information regarding the state of preservation or decay the wooden cross is in. Also, it is unknown when the cross was actually first placed or eventually moved due to natural disturbances.

The cemeteries selected for comparison in this study generally reflected basic shared funerary traditions with those revealed on St. George's Caye. This includes, for the most part, interment orientation in an east-west alignment, the clustering of burials according to kinship, and graves positioned in rows. Additional funerary trends that were discovered on the island may represent the transfer of unique funerary practices from specific communities abroad to St. George's Caye. This includes the placement of a bowl or plate within a burial and the heart shape design. The ceramic plate funerary tradition may be representative of a specific region within the United Kingdom. The heart shape design, as discussed by Seeman (2010), was found in a few colonial American burials. This may imply that the individual in Burial 1 on St. George's Caye came from the American colonies. Additional excavations within the St. George's Caye cemetery are needed to completely understand the extent of shared funerary traditions.

CHAPTER VIII

COLONIAL GRAVE ICONOGRAPHY

As previously explained, colonial Protestant European cemetery excavations are rare in the United States. However, iconographic cemetery research during this time period is extensive. New England and lowland South Carolina gravestone styles and designs have changed significantly from the earliest colonial period to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although this analysis is not as intimate with regard to the cultural remains of the deceased, it does uncover cultural, social, and economic funerary trends in the colonial era. This chapter compares colonial above-ground funerary artistic trends for the purpose of replacing serious deficiencies in sub-surface cemetery data within the United States.

New England and lowland South Carolina gravestone styles and designs have changed significantly from the earliest colonial period to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The variance in headstone styles and images reflects a change in the artistic expression and the social understanding of death. It represents variations between dissimilar social and religious communities. Imagery appears to change from a strict use of biblical references to culturally identified symbolic motifs. An iconological review of grave markers and monuments in eastern Massachusetts and lowland South Carolina will convey the gradual change in above-ground mortuary style, design, and materials used on grave markers. In addition, headstones with preserved dates will provide an exact or roughly estimated temporal context as to when artistic designs developed or evolved.

Religious and Historical Background

Before an iconographic analysis of grave marker images can take place, one must first understand the founding communities in this study. The two locations under review not only differ in geographic location but also reflect entirely different social and religious groups that comprised the original colonizers. The Boston, Massachusetts area was first populated by Puritans in the early 1630's. Charleston, South Carolina, however, was settled in the early 1670's primarily by British Anglican Protestants who were followed by a large number of French Huguenots (Mould and Loewe 2006). As we will see, a history of animosity rests in the relationship between these two religions.

Unlike the Church of England, the Puritans believed in a closer relationship to biblical scripture. The decadence and extravagant material wealth of bishops in England during the first half of the 17th century was perceived as a religious farce by the Puritans. The Puritans, quietly hiding behind the swords of Oliver Cromwell and those loyal to him in the British parliament, took control of the government after the Second Civil War in the late 1620's (Gardiner 1899). However, within twenty years, the crown and its accompanying Anglican church were restored. This restoration, also known as the Restoration Period in the art history community, led to an outflow of Puritans to locations that were more accepting of their faith. Central to this diaspora was the fact that Massachusetts became a colonial bastion to the Puritan religion. Certainly Puritanism, brought with it strict religious codes which had failed and been rejected by the English population as a whole.

The beginnings of Charleston fall within the English Restoration Period. The restoration is defined by the assumption of the crown by King Charles II and highlighted

by the opening of British culture to renewed artistic expression and experimentation that had been disallowed under the harsh Puritan rule of Cromwell (Gardiner 1899).

Charleston, South Carolina was founded by members of upper-class English that had been restored in England along with the crown and Anglican religion. The city itself, Charleston or Charles Town as it was first called, was named in honor of the British Anglican monarch King Charles II, son of the late King Charles I who, as previously stated, was executed by those who sympathized with the Puritan community and its values. The colonizing society, supported by the monarch, consisted of the British elite. The powerful founding nobility of Charleston allowed for a less socially restrictive lifestyle in the South Carolina Lowland as opposed to the strict culture present in New England (Mould and Loewe 2006).

Although these two communities reflected different religious views and socio-economic strata, both were strongly connected via commerce and, at least initially in the history of the colonies, the British crown. One frequently traded commodity between the two colonies was the slate gravestone or grave marker. First used in early New England funerary contexts, the native slate was designed and carved with great artistic expression and care. The rock itself also is highly durable and is composed of a material in which artistic engraving can be administered with extreme detail. Even today, many early colonial slate grave markers are beautifully preserved and have withstood the test of natural and cultural degradation through the ages.

The Artists and the Customers

Colonial grave markers became fashionable in the colonies at the turn of the eighteenth century. Beginning in New England, gravestone artists quickly became

popular throughout the thirteen colonies for their detailed and exquisite work. Yet, before a discussion of these artworks, it is imperative that one must understand the artist and his or her culture. Robert Layton argues that before one can attempt to understand the message or intent of an artist they must first understand the culture to which they belong (Layton 1991). Once an artist's background or culture is discovered, the researcher can then grasp the social and religious ideals the artist may hold and include in their artwork. In this case, that would suggest the esteemed artists, or at least the ones known by historians, should be discussed prior to an iconographic analysis of their mortuary art. A look into the background of the artists may provide information regarding their socio-economic status, political views, place of origin, and noteworthy designs. Understanding these attributes may then explain how or why certain designs were used on headstones.

Today, only a few of the gravestone carvers are known today for their work. Understanding who the people were that constructed these pieces of art is limited to the few available resources such as clippings of advertisements in colonial newspapers, the occasional engraved signature of an artist on a marker, bills of sale, and the art historians who have identified unique features or styles pertaining to an artist. However, from this information one can gather the place of origin where these stones were developed and what the imagery on the stones may indicate about the carver. Many of the signatures on the stones reflect famous gravestone carving artists, mostly from the New England area.

The individuals that created these funerary monuments typically held another, if not several, jobs in addition to their gravestone engraving profession. Archaeologist and historian James Deetz asserts that many of the artists were not full-time engravers (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966). In fact, he believes that many of these individuals were

local "ropemakers, leatherworkers, smiths or printers who pursued stone cutting as a secondary specialty" (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:502). Focusing on gravestones in New England, James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen found that the rock used for engraving was usually locally harvested and worked. This would suggest most, if not all, of the slate in the South Carolina colony was imported from the New England or England quarries. Most importantly, the authors found that it was typical for a headstone to be erected in just under a year after the deceased had passed away (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966). The quick turnaround of monument placement to the death of the loved one suggests images or symbols on headstones reflect up to date cultural motifs, themes, and styles.

Many of the headstone artists resided in the northern colonies, accepting work while in New England and occasionally living down in Charleston for the bitter northern winters. Artist John Bull of Newport, Rhode Island is one such artist who traveled extensively between Rhode Island and South Carolina to improve his profits. Newspaper ads for his talents are preserved in the archives of the colonial *Gazette and Country Journal* newspaper. Bull's work in gravestone carving reigned from the mid to late eighteenth century. He is renowned by mortuary historians for having been one of the first entrepreneurs to establish an office or base in Charleston, rather than remain in the northern colonies. His territorial expansion from offices in Rhode Island to Charleston may reflect the growing popularity, demand, and competition for talented gravestone artists in the eighteenth century. Bull's art is recognized in Charleston and in the North by his appreciation for the hourglass theme and, of course, his signature in the lower left corners of his headstones.

Another prominent engraver from the northern colonies was a man named John Homer. Homer, based out of Boston, was famous for his specific style, yet like most other engravers, also had other occupations. His talent for detailed and beautiful artwork on headstones made the man famous in New England and in Charleston, but his work as an alcohol smuggler in Boston made him infamous. His notable skull and crossbones imagery on all of his headstones reflects his specific style during the second half of the eighteenth century. Homer was also secretly a member of the Sons of Liberty, an early pro-revolution group in the Boston area (Mould and Loewe 2006). The imagery on his headstones, associated with death, may also reference his illegal activities since the skull and crossbones image is a most notorious representation of pirate flags.

Although the first two artists discussed were born in the American colonies, many, in fact, learned the trade of engraving stone abroad and later established business in the thirteen colonies. One of the most famous immigrant artists in the New World was Thomas Walker, a Scottish native who immigrated to Charleston to establish a headstone business. With a formal training in architecture, Walker founded his business in the last decade of the eighteenth century and continued his work within the city until the middle of the nineteenth century. His experience in architecture, combined with his advertisements in the local newspapers, created quite a lucrative profit for the Scottish artist (Mould and Loewe 2006). Walker's classical architectural style training meshed perfectly with the themes and images that were popular in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition, his headstone symbols copied the popular figures found in many of the affluent homes' doorways, exteriors, and fireplace mantles that Walker designed including urn and drapery imagery (Mould and Loewe 2006).

The cultural and economic contact between those in the northern and southern colonies was not limited to headstone purchases or other commerce. Mould and Loewe assert that many of the upper class families in colonial Charleston sought refuge in the northern colonies during the late spring to early fall months (Mould and Loewe 2006). Summers in Charleston were especially brutal to its citizens. As the mosquitoes began to swarm in the warmer months it was common for epidemics of yellow fever to run rampant, killing large portions of the population every summer. Attempting to escape this morbid certainty, those with the monetary means began to establish summer homes in New England colonies such as Rhode Island.

As the population in eighteenth century Charleston grew, more financially prosperous families began to move up into Rhode Island and other neighboring colonies. These families then noticed the exquisite artwork of the headstones in the cemeteries and fostered connections with the artists responsible. It is said that so many Charleston families began to arrive and summer in the city of Newport, Rhode Island that the locals began to call it the "Carolina hospital" (Mould and Loewe 2006:216). Not only were the northern colonies less likely to be filled with the swarming mosquitoes found in the southern swamps, but the climate fared much more like the traditional Charleston temperate winter, at its hottest. This connection between the regions aided not only in the transfer of merchandise, but also in the imbueement of specific religious, social, and cultural ideals which may have aided in the transformation of mortuary style and art.

Evidence of Social Stratification

The first markers, made out of native New England slate, were constructed in the Boston area in the late sixteenth century and brought to Charleston, South Carolina by the

early eighteenth century from Massachusetts. Some of the first stone markers found in Charleston were actually imported from England (Mould and Loewe 2006). The early gravestones in Charleston mark burials belonging to the affluent social community (Mould and Loewe 2006). These imported markers identified those in the upper class, and were purchased as a means to flaunt their economic prosperity to the masses. Those in the middle, yet mostly lower classes, most likely used wooden markers to identify the locations of the deceased, at least in the nascent stages of Charleston's development.

The first markers in New England contrasted remarkably from those in the American South as well as those across the Atlantic Ocean in England. Early New England communities implemented an egalitarian form of burial ritual and marker for all social classes. Allan I. Ludwig posits that it was customary in England for the gentry to perform a decadent funeral for their loved ones, often with an accompanying orchestra while the deceased was moved to their final resting place (Ludwig 1999). The sound of the church bell ringing was apparently the only accompanying music to the early colonial burials and associated funeral processions in New England. The use of grave markers in Charleston for the intended purpose of distinguishing those who belong to the affluent social classes was a tradition brought from the motherland, England. Burials with small markers and with poor quality, or lack of, decorations in early Charleston, on the contrary and if present at all; mark those in the middle to lower classes. These mortuary traditions were not brought to Puritan New England. Instead, universally sized monuments with equal amounts of decoration were common for all regardless of their social standing (Ludwig 1999). This egalitarian practice faded out eventually in the eighteenth century as the Puritan influence began to dissipate and other religions and cultures populated the

New England colonies. The combination of an increasingly diverse population in the colonies and the strengthened unity, at least initially, with England allowed for the eventual collapse of egalitarian cemetery decoration quality, quantity, and size.

Research in Colonial Headstone Iconography

The iconographic analysis is mainly based on research of books or articles written by archaeologists, historians, and those interested in colonial headstone art. Literature written on colonial gravestone iconography and art is extensive in the New England area. The widely read James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen's 1966 article "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries" is one of the first major academic research projects on cemetery iconography. This is justifiably used as a methodological foundation to base the comparative investigation of New England and Charleston mortuary artwork. An additional extensive, yet more current, reference to use on New England burials is Allan I. Ludwig's *Graven Images*, an extremely in-depth analysis of New England headstone iconography with both an explanation of various symbols found and the pertinent Puritan history justifying the use of such images.

Few academic studies have given the Charleston colonial cemeteries as much attention as those found in the North. The lack of attention most likely reflects the smaller amount of colonial gravestones in the southern colonies. The use of elaborately decorated slate burial markers began in Massachusetts well within the seventeenth century, as compared to those found in Charleston just beginning at the turn of the eighteenth century or later. Sadly, only one significant book could be found discussing headstones in Charleston, let alone the iconographic analysis. David R. Mould and Missy Loewe's

Historic Gravestone Art of Charleston, South Carolina (2006) is not as academically involved as the previously mentioned pieces of literature, however, the authors do provide an adequate amount of description, photography, and helpful historical references.

Iconographic Background Research

Deetz and Dethlefsen's 1966 paper reviewed headstone imagery from over forty colonial cemeteries in and around the eastern Massachusetts. The article provides an extremely helpful graph including the frequency of certain designs within the large colonial cemeteries of Cambridge, Plymouth, and Concord (Figure 74). Their iconographic analysis found that there are three consistently used universal motifs from the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century including the deaths head, cherub, and the urn and willow motif. Their research indicates that the images also reflect certain periods of popularity and can, therefore, be segregated into temporal contexts.

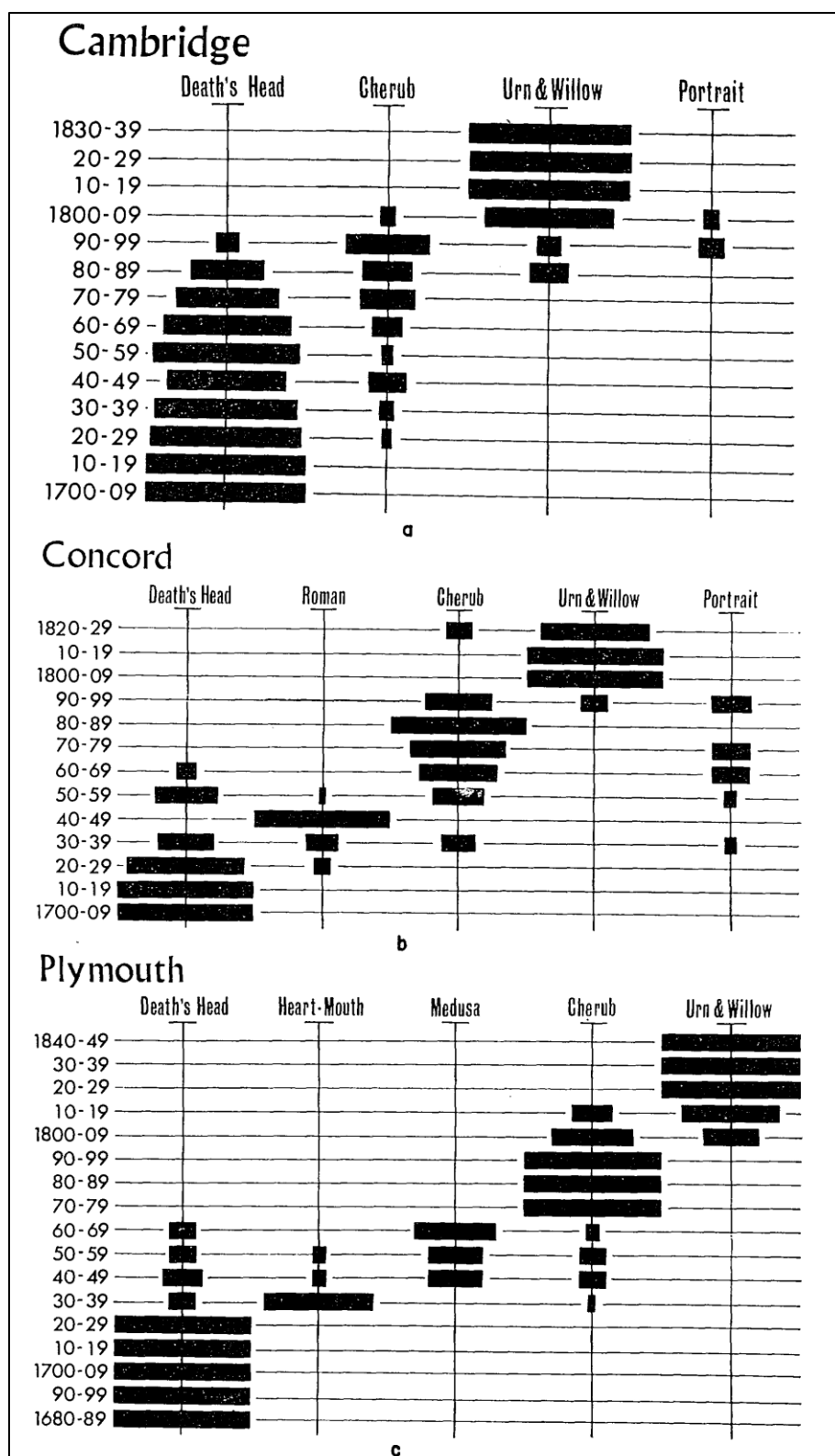


Figure 74. Dethlefsen and Deetz's Graph of design frequency in the cemeteries of Cambridge, Concord, and Plymouth (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:505).

The first phase, where death's heads were extremely popular in New England headstones, ranges from the earliest markers to a declining popularity in the early to middle eighteenth century. The death's head image varied throughout the various cemeteries in colonial New England, however, this was recognized as a large cranium with wings projecting out from the sides of the skull (see Figures 75 and 76). This morbid image reflected the common Puritan belief in the process of death and dying. Morality was one of the highest tenants of Puritanism in life and in death. The death's head image most closely reflects the Puritan religion and its view of death. Typically, little is mentioned on these headstones of the afterlife; instead, the graven image simply reminds the viewer that he or she will soon share the same fate (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966). Epitaphs from the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries commonly depict scenes of death with images of decay, worms, and other melancholy icons.



Figure 75. Early 1700's Death's Head Motif, Charleston, South Carolina (Mould and Loewe 2006:60).



Figure 76. Late 1600's Death's Head Motifs, New England (Ludwig 1966:83).

Next, the cherub motif arose to popularity in the middle to the end of the eighteenth century and finally diminished at the turn of the nineteenth century. The rise in the use of the cherub in colonial headstones signals a shift in artistic views, but more importantly, represents a change in cultural and religious influences. The cherub motif is similar to the death's head image in that they both share projecting wings (Figures 77 and 78). Yet, the cherub supplants the central skull figure with a human or angelic face. This change alone represents the evolution of the Puritan morbid death and decay themes to a more positive understanding of death and the possibility of an afterlife.



Figure 77. Cherub Motifs, Charleston, South Carolina (Mould and Loewe 2006:15).



Figure 78. Cherub Motifs, New England (Ludwig 1966:71).

The change also coincides with the time of the Great Awakening period (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966). This is a movement within the religion of Puritanism that began in central Massachusetts and expanded outwards to the coast around 1740. Deetz et al. notes that this Puritan religious change was "characterized by a newly placed stress on the joys of life after death and resurrection of the dead, rather than the earlier stern emphasis on judgment and morality" (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:508). The cherub or soul effigy signifies the approach to the personalization of death. In addition, the cherub motif transforms from a complex to simplistic design over the years of use (Figure 79).

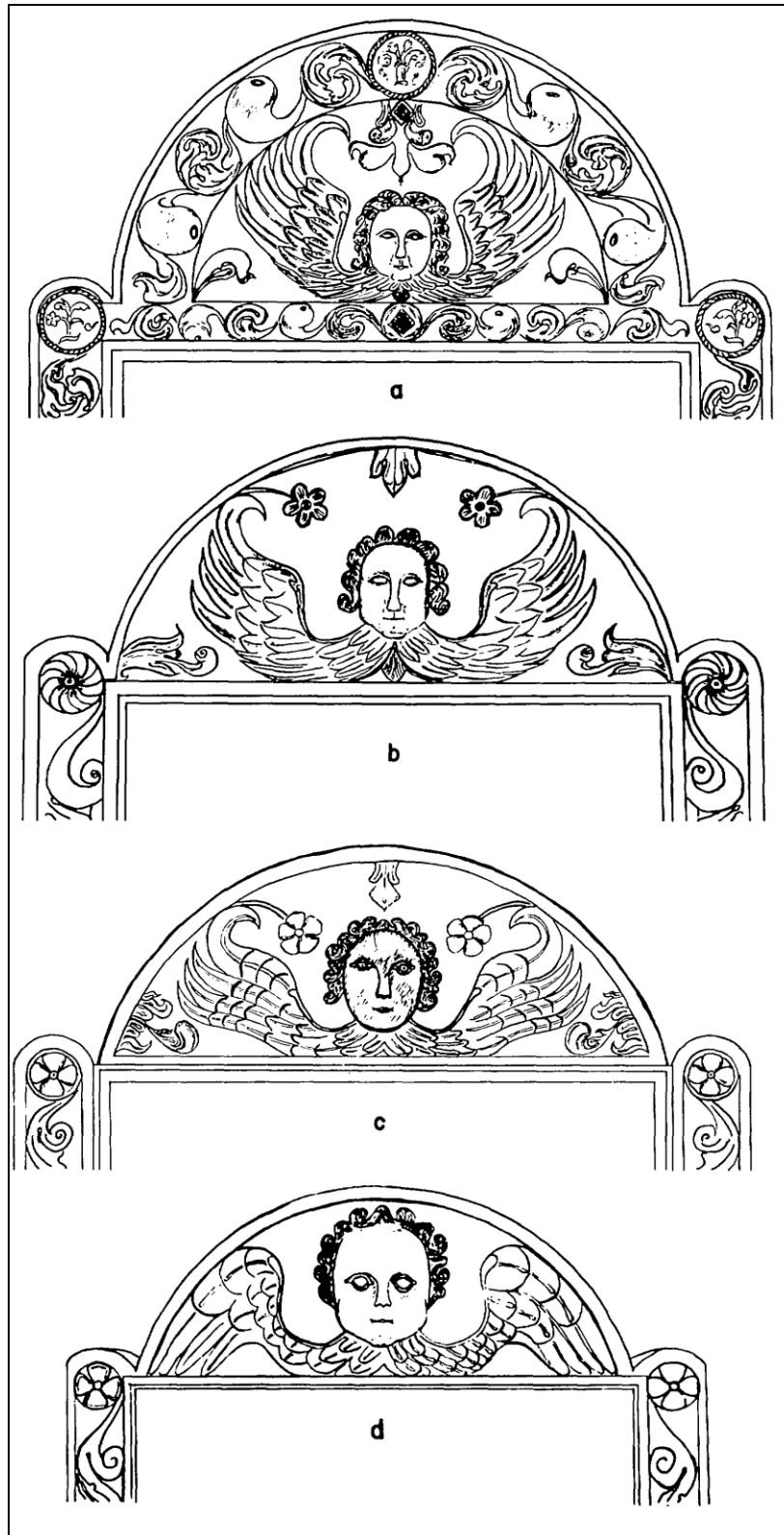


Figure 79. Cherub simplification transformation, New England (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:507).

The end of the Great Awakening also marks the end of the cultural and religious power of Puritanism in New England. Taking its place in society are the rising religions of Unitarianism and Methodism. The replacement of one religion by two further supports the idea of increasingly diverse American colonies.

The third and final phase is indicated by an increased use of the urn and willow motif, which is still prevalent in American cemetery architecture (Figures 80 and 81). This final phase is representative of the Victorian era and began toward the end of the eighteenth century and turn of the nineteenth century. This mortuary art trend is represented by the urn and willow motifs on headstones and other funerary structures. As the Cherub phase in the mid-eighteenth century signifies a move to personalization of the individual and death; the urn and willow reflect "a depersonalization of death and memorial" (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966:508). The use of urn and willow imagery was apparently universally utilized during the early nineteenth century and represents the foundation for modern cemetery art (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966).



Figure 80. Urn Motif, Charleston, South Carolina (Mould and Loewe 2006:22).

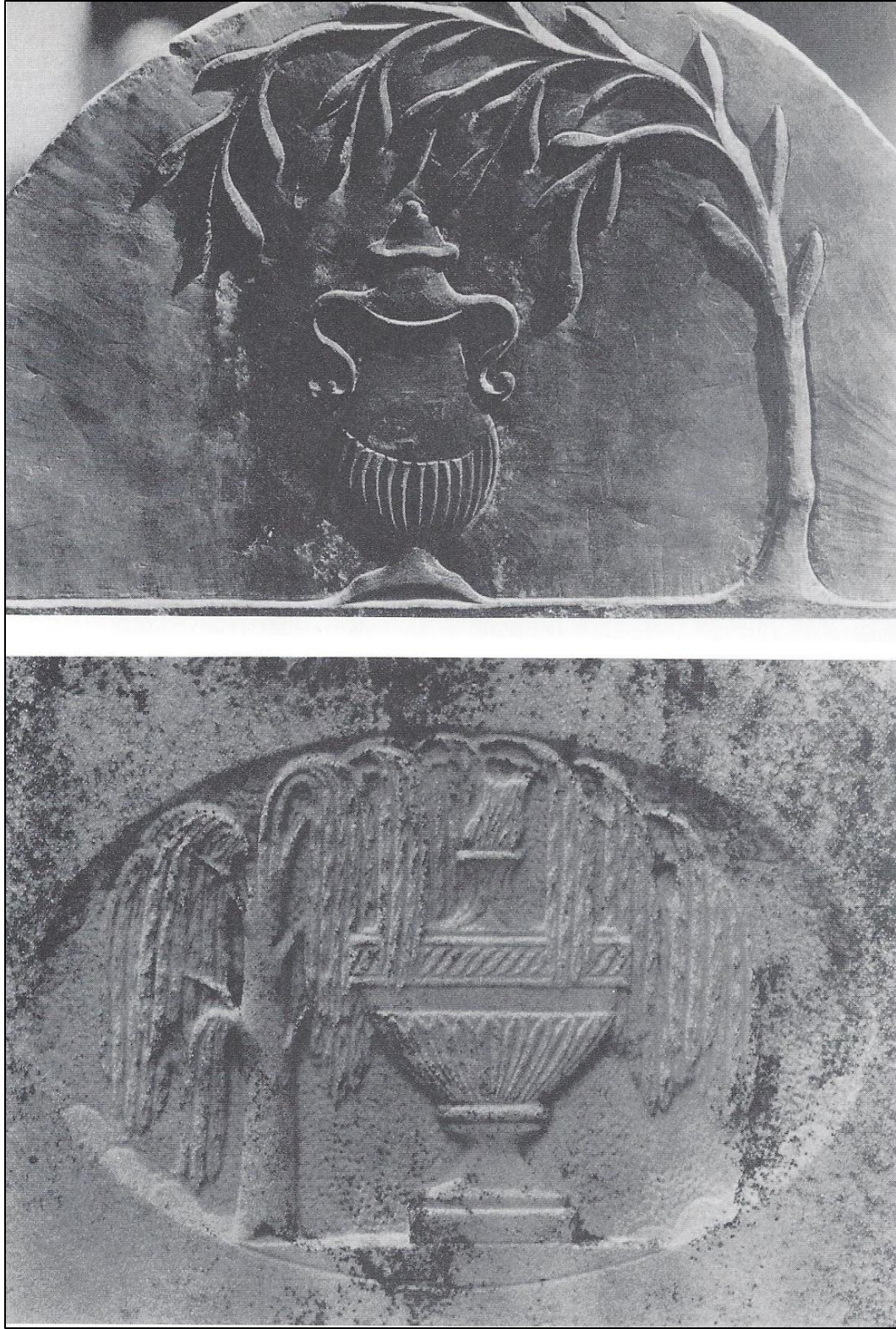


Figure 81. Urn Motif, New England (Ludwig 1966:339).

Iconographic Analysis and Comparison

As discussed prior, the populations of greater Boston and Charleston areas were composed of very different religious, social, and cultural groups. These differences, combined with the significant distance, especially for the colonial period, follow a certain formula for influence and change in funerary art. This formula is evident in the change between England and New England headstone design and imagery. Dethlefsen and Deetz found that the significant change in popularity and use of the death's head and the cherub motif occurred more than 70 years in England before it developed in the American colonies. The vast time interval between England and the Boston area may be the result of a cultural conflict with Puritan ideals. Furthermore, the subsequent acceptance of the cherub in funerary contexts coincides with Puritanism fading away as the leading social and religious structure.

The early Puritan headstone imagery in the seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries reflects common mortuary images of the Middle Ages in Europe. Mould and Loewe assert that "the earliest gravestones in New England...were dominated by symbols of death and the passage of time, such as the skull-and-crossbones or the hourglass, in keeping with Puritan doctrine" (Mould and Loewe 2006:8). These gloomy images soon took the shape of the universally used death's head design at the turn of the seventeenth century. The earliest reported death's head headstone imagery in Charleston is dated to 1729 in the St. Philip's Episcopal Church burial grounds (Figure 82).



Figure 82. Oldest Cherub Motif in Charleston, South Carolina (Mould and Loewe 2006:17).

Although popularized first in the 1740's, the image of a cherub is first seen in the Cambridge cemeteries within the period of 1720-1729. When compared to cemeteries in Charleston, this reflects a change almost ten years before the funerary art design developed with the first cherub image on a South Carolinian headstone in 1736. The popularity of this motif in New England did not reach the masses until the early to middle 1740's. This reflects a strange phenomenon where the cherub was more widely used in

Charleston, but first present in New England. Mould and Loewe cite a study in Boston to explain this discrepancy. The study found that when looking at the colonial cemetery of Harvard, more than seventy percent of those that had cherubs on their headstone were believed to be associated with the upper class. This explains the earlier popularity in Charleston, due to the powerful and less socially restricted affluent society in comparison to Puritan New England. The delay in the first use of new designs between locations is somewhat consistent.

It was common for Charleston's headstones to share a certain amount of artistic expression not allowed or visible in the northern colonies. Mould and Loewe cite art historian Diana Williams Combs when they discuss how the affluent in Charleston requested certain changes to their headstones not found to the north. They quote Combs as saying that Charleston's headstones were "often more sophisticated than those in New England, providing incontrovertible evidence that a more cultivated urban style was sought after in the affluent anglophile community of Charleston" (Mould and Loewe 2006:8).

As discussed prior, the urn and the willow motifs represent a break from the personalization of death and memorial and signify a shift towards the depersonalization of mortuary art. Such images appeared in the largest cemeteries around the Boston area beginning in the 1780's but did not gain a significant amount of popularity until the turn of the century. Charleston's first headstone with an urn design dates to 1770 and was imported directly from England. The majority of the other urn or willow designs in Charleston are mostly date to the 1790's or later.

The ascension of the urn and willow tree motif to funerary popularity was largely the result of the Revolutionary War. This explains the overall increase in usage in the years following the American victory and subsequent independence from England. After the American colonies declared freedom, the mortuary art of the English rule left with the governing body. The American people looked for funerary designs that represented a republic. Of course, the most famous republics and some of the most powerful countries in history were the Romans and Greeks. Americans adopted classical imagery on headstones, like the urn and willow tree, as well as on government architecture to symbolize a new beginning and the strength of democracy (Keister 2004).

Surprisingly, not all motifs arrived at the American colonies via the same route. The use of the portrait on colonial headstones did not follow the trajectory as the previously discussed three motifs. The artwork designs of the Death's head and cherub motifs originated in England, made their way to New England, and finally reached the Charleston populace. The portrait, a small, semi-detailed engraving of the deceased on the top of the headstones, was thought to have originated in Charleston and then later adopted in New England and abroad. This unique design on funerary monuments is reflective of the aristocratic control and artistic expression in the southern city. Few portrait headstones can be found today in New England colonial cemeteries. The portrait design represents a unique style concentrated almost entirely in the cosmopolitan community of Charleston.

The amount of diverse religions, cultures, and strong hegemonic control by the affluent created a melting pot of artistic expression in Charleston, South Carolina. The most apparent reason for differing headstone designs are the vastly dissimilar customers

who purchased such items in the northern and southern colonies. Almost all of the headstones in Charleston can be linked to those in the upper class of society. New England, however, began with an egalitarian system of headstones, allowing all to share in the same privilege regardless of their social status or amount of wealth. This appears to have shaped the two colonial regions significantly in the one hundred or so years of ever-changing funerary designs from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries.

New England and lowland South Carolina gravestone styles and designs changed significantly from the earliest colonial period to nineteenth century markers. The variance in gravestone styles and images reflects a change in artistic expression, social understanding of death, and represents the variations between dissimilar social and religious communities. The information gathered in this chapter is helpful in further understanding the early colonial settlement on St. George's Caye, as well.

Iconographically, the arrival of the box tomb monuments and the elaborate Thomas Potts sarcophagus parallel Charleston's affluent funerary artwork. The presence of these above-ground tombs support the historical claims that the early bay settlement gradually changed from a nearly egalitarian society to more of an oligarchy in the late eighteenth century.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The archaeological record of the St. George's Caye cemetery reveals specific burial styles and funerary traditions that originated in England, as well as one trend that may have come from the American colonies. As argued by Veit et al. (2013), a serious academic void of information is evidenced by the near absence of historic religious and associated burial site excavations in the United States. However, in spite of this shortfall of data, interesting funerary traditions were found to have developed in the Bay of Honduras settlement. An investigation into the history and use of funerary textiles, burial styles, and materialistic representations of social status in England demonstrated a strong cultural connection between British Honduras and its motherland.

The origin and development of the colonial above-ground box tomb, headstone, and ledger stone, first seen within intramural burials, is remarkable. These funerary monument styles are derived from a ubiquitously strong system of social stratification in England that transcended these intermixed cultures found in the early American colonies, Jamaica, and Belize. In fact, many of the widely believed African mortuary practices can be traced to English origins that have, through time, been adopted by enslaved communities in the colonies (Davidson 2010). However, a review of these Creole traditions supports the claims by scholars who have hypothesized that, at least until the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798; the relationship between European loggers and African slaves was based on an equality that disappeared in later times. Archaeological

evidence that may support these claims includes the presence of conch shells around and over interments within the St. George's Caye cemetery, the coin placed on the head of Burial 3, and the heart shape depositum plate in Burial 1. Although the latter two funerary traditions, as stated previously, originated in England, their use on the cayes may have been adopted by the African population by that time.

The first burials on the island, Burials 9 through 11, parallel the conditions of burials found in the early Jamestown, Virginia settlement. The interments on the cayes are the only graves that lacked clear evidence for burial enclosures. This is a shared trait with the burials haphazardly interred in the early Jamestown cemetery. In addition, the pathological analysis of these human remains in the St. George's Caye cemetery indicate that these individuals were the most nutritionally deficient. If these interments were buccaneers, this evidence may add credence to the claim that pirates once utilized the cayes as a strategic point of attack on Spanish ships.

The development of the Bay of Honduras' economy, from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, is apparent in the change of burial styles exhumed from the archaeological record. The discovery and excavation of coffin burials within the St. George's Caye cemetery have not only revealed a template of English funerary traditions that traversed land and sea, these coffin interments also displayed the chronological use of the cemetery. The transformation from simple pinch toe coffins to elaborate box tombs, the tomb of Thomas Potts, and eventually, the black, polished above-ground tomb in the cemetery today, correlates with the documented cultural, social, and ideological shifts regarding death in England. Even though many of the settlers by ca. 1800 in the Bay Settlement were from the former British American colonies as well as Jamaica, they

all shared a confluence of material traditions associated with death that originated in England.

Future research into the topic of culturally-bound burial traditions in historical archaeology should first recognize the serious limitations associated with conducting this research. Testing materials within the St. George's Caye cemetery, specifically coffin wood, preserved coffin cloth, or even human remains would be beneficial for a future analysis of the cayes as well as for other cemeteries from this same temporal period. If reliable dates are collected from these samples, a better understanding of the chronological use of the cemetery will be elucidated.

In addition, during the 2013 summer excavations, intrusive testing and surveying will be conducted on Caye Chapel, a small cay north of St. George's Caye. Caye Chapel was the staging area for the Spanish military fleet during the Battle of St. George's Caye in 1798. British settlers reported visiting the island after the battle and view a large number of graves. If these remains are uncovered, a comparison of Catholic and Protestant funerary traditions would be a fascinating addition to this research.

Lastly, an aggressive survey of the remainder of St. George's Caye is required to fully understand the stratigraphy, the scope of hurricane and dredge-filling damage, as well as the remaining buried cultural material. This survey includes terrestrial and marine explorations on and around the island. It is difficult to imagine that the successive occupation by Europeans and resulting buried archaeological material on St. George's Caye, for the past three-hundred and fifty years, can be utterly decimated by natural processes. A continuation of thorough cemetery excavations and a systematic survey on the isle will conserve the cultural history and national pride of the original capital of

Belize, St. George's Caye. Furthermore, a close examination of graves and funerary remains will undoubtedly reveal that the burial of the dead is more about the living.

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