

However, the placement of the cemetery several hundred feet from the dwelling also shows a desire of the living to be separated from the dead, and there could be several reasons for this. One reason could be for concerns of health. The graveyard would not be placed near a source of drinking water for fear of contamination. A second reason may have been to separate the sacred burial ground from the profane daily activities of the dwelling house and the nearby farmyard. The distance would reduce the probability that a pig or some other barnyard animal might disturb the graves. Finally, the detached nature of the family cemetery may have allowed for the private indulgence of ancestor veneration or worship.

Graveyards remaining on the landscape today which are no longer associated with a structure can be used in turn as locators or predictors for dwelling houses. The settlement and locational information outlined in the previous pages could be applied to a specific farmstead, perhaps one which had been allowed to return to mature forest, and used as an indicator for a house location. Topographic considerations and a knowledge of the early road system coupled with a known cemetery location may offer a more efficient method for survey.

CONCLUSIONS

Excavation at the Lafferty Lane Cemetery (7K-D-111) revealed the existence of a private family cemetery probably dating from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. Thought to contain several generations of the Benjamin Brown, Sr. family. The cemetery measured 96 by 100 feet or

approximately 1/4 acre and contained 116 burial features representing at least 123 individual interments. One arched brick vault was included in the total. No headstones were encountered and archival research indicated one associated family name, Brown, and one named interment, Robert Graham, in the graveyard. Two of the burials were partially excavated and verified that the exposed graveshafts did in fact contain skeletal remains. Since no headstones or skeletal remains were available for study at this site, the analysis focused upon the description and the internal configuration of the graveshafts, genealogical data, and land ownership records as a basis for reconstructing the chronology of owners and occupants of the landscape during the time the cemetery was used and for making geographic comparisons with other cemeteries in Kent and Sussex counties.

The lack of gravestones at the Lafferty Lane Site is puzzling but not unusual. Historically, headstones were not often used by certain religious groups, specifically Quakers and to a lesser extent Presbyterians, because of their beliefs regarding idolatry. Contemporary examples of this practice are provided by Benjamin Mifflin in his quote at the beginning of this report, and by the Frenchman Brissot de Warville in 1788, when he described the funeral of a Philadelphia Quaker: "I saw near some of the graves, some pieces of black stones, on which the names only of the dead were engraved. The greatest part of the Quakers dislike even this; they say, that a man ought to live in the memory of his friends, not by vain inscriptions, but by good actions" (De Warville 1970:194). Based on some

genealogical research by Heite (1988), it is possible that at least some members of the Brown and Graham families were Quakers, and later members of the family are known to have been Presbyterians. Therefore, the absence of headstones at Lafferty Lane may be attributable in part to the religious preferences of the families.

However, it is known that some stones were present in the cemetery at one time; this contention is supported by the mention of Robert Graham's gravestone in the deeds, and by a recollection of a local hunter, Mr. Harold Short. It is entirely possible that the stones were removed on purpose for other uses, such as corner markers, door steps, or support piers. Bonine (1956) indicates that such "adaptive reuse" of gravestones took place at a graveyard in Lewes, Delaware, where four previously marked graves were discovered, but that fieldstones marking the graves "had been collected to make borders for flower beds by an old colored woman who had lived on a corner of the plot." A similar situation may have occurred at the Lafferty Lane Cemetery, particularly since the families whose ancestors were interred there were no longer tied to that parcel of land and the graveyard location was no longer a part of the collective memory of the descendants.

It should be noted in passing that the number or presence of gravestones is not necessarily a reliable indicator of the number or presence of interments at a site. For example, the Nowell family cemetery was represented by one extant headstone, but Payne and Thomas (1988) uncovered 44 interments at the site.

Thus, the number of gravestones present on the Delaware landscape of today may be drastically under-representative of the number of actual interments in rural areas.

The title searches of the properties in the vicinity of the cemetery gave little indication as to the presence or ownership of the burying ground. Consideration was given to three cemetery types. It is large enough (approximately 120 graves) to have been a church cemetery. Scharf (1888:1052) reported that the first location of Christ Church (established in 1704) was on glebe land located south of Dover, on the east side of St. Jones Creek, close to the vicinity of the Lafferty Lane Cemetery. Extensive historic research into the Anglican Church in Kent County, however, revealed that the earliest Christ Church was located on the tract called "Porter's Lodge", north of "Aberdeen" (Silliman 1982; Rightmeyer 1947). Scharf (1888:1058) also intimated that an early St. Jones Presbyterian Church may have been located somewhere on St. Jones Creek "where in early days there was a somewhat thickly inhabited section of country, and it [the church] ceased to exist entirely about the close of the last century [circa 1800]." Once again, however, extensive investigation into published and unpublished Presbyterian Church records failed to identify the presence of a St. Jones Church (Lappen 1972; Stonecipher 1887; Presbytery Minutes 1789-1820; Turner 1902; and Lewes Presbytery Minutes 1758-1820). Additionally, none of the dozens of deeds examined back to the 1680s ever mentioned a church, churchyard, or church burying ground either contained within their limits or as bordering properties. Since churches have been prominent

landmarks on the American landscape throughout history, it is likely that it would have been mentioned at least once in the deeds or shown on a historic map, if it was present.

The second function considered for the cemetery was as a potter's field. However, the Dover potter's field for this time period lies west of the city and its location is known (Alice Guerrant, personal communication 1988). Once again, there is no mention of land being sold for a potter's field in any of the deeds examined.

Therefore, it was concluded that 7K-D-111 was a private cemetery, albeit a very large one. Most of the private family cemeteries in the area are considerably smaller, so this one must include several families and extended families who lived in the area for several generations. Most likely, the families were linked by direct descent and affinal ties and lived on farms which were split off from the original "Aberdeen" grant or situated adjacent to it.

The burial places of most of the 76 people listed in Figure 8 are unknown. Two exceptions are Jackson Lafferty (I) and (II) who died in 1865 and 1868, respectively, and are buried in a churchyard in Dover. It is also unknown if there could have been another family or families who made use of the cemetery prior to Benjamin Brown, Sr. But, based on the remaining 76 names shown in the partial genealogy of Figure 8, it is conceivable that 123 people could be buried there if we include several extended families over approximately 80 years of use.

The later owners of this farm (Register 1833, Dyer 1865, the Maloney Brothers 1919, etc.) are known to be buried elsewhere, so even if a few earlier Brown family members were returned to this cemetery for burial after the farm had passed out of the family, interments would be increasingly uncommon after the mid-nineteenth century. Families who moved to other hundreds, counties, or states would have most likely established their own family graveyards.

The graveshafts were organized into 16 clusters which exhibited high degrees of internal grave proximity and similar orientation. Nearly all of the features were oriented east-west and the overall average degree bearing was 73.4 degrees east of north. The high degree of parallelism and proximity apparent within each cluster suggested that these factors were more important for grave placement than bearing. The clusters included graveshafts numbering from two to 25 burial features which are interpreted as representing various nuclear and extended families related by birth and marriage. Some clusters contained postmolds located at the western edge of the cluster or at the heads of the graves which are possible grave or plot markers.

A partial Benjamin Brown, Sr. family genealogy was constructed and correlated with local land records, tax assessments, and other public documents to recreate the eighteenth and early nineteenth century settlement pattern and thus provide a range of possible names for the interments at 7K-D-111. The land records indicated that Benjamin Brown's sons and sons-in-law tended to stay on Benjamin Sr.'s land well after

his death in 1767, occupying farmsteads gained through inheritance and marriage. Only two of the 94 individuals shown in the Brown genealogical chart (Figure 8, which also includes household head counts from census data where actual names of individuals were not obtainable), have known burial locations. Therefore, it was concluded that the Lafferty Lane cemetery was the final resting place for Benjamin Brown, Sr. and his descendants from the time of his death in 1767 (and possibly earlier) until the time the farm passed out of the Brown family's ownership in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Comparison of the Lafferty Lane cemetery with other excavated unmarked family cemeteries in the Delaware Coastal Plain revealed similarities in general plan, orientation, graveshaft outline and brick burial vault construction, although the number of interments in other family cemeteries is generally less. One size exception may be the Marsh family cemetery outside Lewes, Delaware, which reportedly contained 125 graves of several generations of the Marsh family dating from 1762 to the present (Eckman 1955:409).

Analysis of family cemetery placement upon the landscape of southern Kent and central Sussex counties revealed consistencies in placement upon the family farm. The graveyard was usually located from 400 to 1000 feet away from the farmhouse on a piece of well drained ground set off by a masonry wall, iron fence, vegetation, or a boundary ditch. The location choice also included placing the cemetery in the 180 degree semicircle "to

the rear" of the house, away from the "public" area of the commonly traversed state or county road and driveway leading into the farm.

In summary, the limited excavation of the graves at the Lafferty Lane cemetery and the complete absence of headstones for grave identification served to limit the amount of data available for analysis. However, meaningful insights about cemetery design and placement were gained through a study of the internal arrangement of the graveshaft outlines and other cemetery features and a geographical comparison of the Lafferty Lane cemetery (7K-D-111) with a sample of other known family cemeteries in Kent and Sussex counties. In this manner, the Lafferty Lane cemetery analysis can prove useful to archaeologists, geographers, historians, demographers and planners concerned with the historic disposal of the dead in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Family cemetery sites like Lafferty Lane, Byfield, and the Nowell Site, are representative of the larger cultural process of generational continuity and land ownership through time. It is significant that in Delaware there are more known and maintained family graveyards in southern Kent and Sussex counties than in New Castle County and northern Kent County. The lack of family cemeteries in the northern part of the state is probably a function of historically rapid land transfer and industrialization, and more recently, suburbanization and development. Conversely, in the southern, more rural parts of the state, the continued presence of the same family on a particular farm is a well-known and documented phenomenon

(Bausman 1941), indicating concern for family ties to the land over long periods of time. Thus, the family graveyards reinforce this view of landownership and cultural values, a view which has changed in the northern part of the state with rapid development and the influx of non-Delawareans into the area who have little or no ties to the land. Unfortunately, suburbanization and commercial development are beginning to have an effect on the previously rural character of Kent and Sussex counties. The family cemetery is a significant cultural resource which is endangered by this development, and this is particularly true of unmarked cemeteries, like Lafferty Lane. The loss of these cultural resources is perhaps inevitable, and certainly not new. Over fifty years ago, Works Progress Administration historian Jeanette Eckman wrote the epitaph for these fragile resources, and her statement is still true today:

Nearly every plantation of lower Delaware had a private burying-ground, but most of these plots... are abandoned jungles of briars and toppled gravestones. Each spring the ploughs go closer until finally, in some cases, fences and jungles and tombstones disappear and growing corn brings oblivion.

(Eckman 1955)