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Charleston's Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District: A Necrogeographic History

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CHARLESTON'S MAGNOLIA UMBRA CEMETERY DISTRICT:
A NECROGEOGRAPHIC HISTORY

by

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Bachelor of Arts
University of LaVerne, 2011

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Public History

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2014

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to parse the deeper historical meanings of the establishment and expansions within the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District (MUCD), a collection of 26 different, yet contiguous, cemeteries in Charleston, South Carolina founded by a diverse cross-section of the city's nineteenth century population, by utilizing the framework of necrogeography. This methodology hinges on the notion that one can derive useful analysis of the living by analyzing the landscapes of the dead. Cemeteries, in this lens, are not constructions of the dead but of the living, and therefore the choices of cemetery location, style, and monumentation are all physical expressions of the contemporary feelings and cultural mores of the living overlaid onto a space that contains the dead. The concept of the necrogeography within the MUCD is expanded further in this paper by separating the methodology into two sub-frameworks: inter-cemetery and intra-cemetery necrogeography. In the latter framework, typologically similar cemeteries (those of Jewish Charlestonians, Colored Burial Societies, etc.) are examined for features within them which indicate conformity or discontinuity with the broader social and cultural trends of the contemporaneous living members of that group. In the former, cultural trends and attitudes are parsed from the geographic and spatial relationships between the cemeteries as discrete wholes, rather than a collection of markers and stones.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Methodology

On the morning of November 19, 1850 the famed Charleston poet William Gilmore Simms addressed a crowd of hundreds gathered on the site of a formerly run-down rice plantation two miles outside of the city limits. The plantation grounds had undergone a transition in the previous 18 months under the guidance of architect Edward C. Jones. Jones transformed the former Magnolia Umbra Plantation with meandering walkways and artificial lakes into Magnolia Cemetery, and Simms was the man chosen to dedicate Charleston's now-preeminent place of burial. The poem Simms chose for his dedication was one he had written expressly for the purpose and was solemnly titled *The City of the Silent*.

In typical Victorian style *The City of the Silent* – all 500 lines of it – reflected both the ornate styling and meanderings of Magnolia Cemetery itself. Simms' poem urged those gathered "midst sacred gloom of trees, midst shadows meet" to ponder their mortality and the opportunity now realized in Magnolia Cemetery to be buried in a setting which "[c]rowns it [death] with trees, and shapes its walks with grace; Removes each noxious weed,--with tracts of green". Most tellingly, Simms's dedication was a literal paean to Magnolia as the place where "the hero and the statesman sleep," dedicating stanzas to the pantheon of famous Charlestonian heroes of the eighteenth

century: the Pinckneys, Gadsdens, Rutledges, and others – whose bodies and monuments, Simms correctly predicted, would populate Magnolia Cemetery in the decades to come.[1]

The prescience of Simms's poem in retrospect, however, puts a lie to its title. Magnolia was always designed to be a final repository for the elite of Charleston society: the type of people Simms was careful to enunciate in his dedication. Despite the titular assertion by the poet, Magnolia Cemetery is, therefore, not the accurate necrological analogue for the city of Charleston, implying as it does that the "city" seemingly ceases to exist outside of the grand homes of the Battery and the plantations lining the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. The vast majority of Charlestonians lived outside of this rarified atmosphere and therefore even in death could only be interred in areas outside of Magnolia.

Ironically, Simms's literal necropolis becomes a reality if the scope of the area under analysis broadens from Magnolia Cemetery to the entire area that once was William Cunnington's vast rice plantation. While Magnolia Cemetery would always remain an elite bastion, the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District, as the surrounding area was and continues to be called, would be transformed by the cemeteries of Charleston's "others" which sprung up within it into a true reflection of the population that lived and died in the Holy City.[2]

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1 Though no members of these illustrious Charleston families were buried in Magnolia Cemetery during Simms's remarks, there was a dedicated attempt shortly after the cemetery opened to have prominent eighteenth-century Charlestonians disinterred from churchyards and moved to Magnolia.

2 The geographic area encompassing Cunnington's lands continued to be called "Magnolia" or "Magnolia Umbra" even after it was partitioned into multiple cemeteries. The conception of these various cemeteries composing a singular District of the dead is the product of modern historic preservationists and city planners needing a convenient descriptor for the specific area. The non-cemetery structures in the area are described as being located in Charleston Neck or North Meeting in modern deeds and titles. As this paper deals exclusively with the cemeteries of the area I have chosen to use Magnolia Umbra

The purpose of this paper is to parse the deeper historical meanings of the establishment and expansions within the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District by utilizing the framework of necrogeography. As the term implies, this methodology hinges on the notion that one can derive useful analysis of the living by analyzing the landscapes of the dead. Cemeteries, in this lens, are not constructions of the dead but of the living, and therefore the choices of cemetery location, style, and monumentation are all physical expressions of the contemporary feelings and cultural mores of the living overlaid onto a space that contains the dead. I have taken this concept of necrogeography a step farther in this paper by separating the methodology into two sub-frameworks: inter-cemetery and intra-cemetery necrogeography. The latter is the traditional format used by historians and geographers when analyzing cemeteries, while the former is a new approach for which the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District will serve as a test case for its utility.

The earliest scholarly work which treated the cemetery as a legible cultural landscape was James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefson, "Death's Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow," in which the two archaeologists applied the methodologies of their discipline to the tombstones in the cemeteries surrounding Deetz's Boston home. This initial work was followed shortly by Fred Kniffen's "Necrogeography in the United States," which, though short, is considered the seminal text of cemetery study as Kniffen coined the methodological term and laid out the fundamentals for its use. Kniffen's definition of

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Cemetery District (MUCD) to refer to the collection of cemeteries. See Figure 1.1 for the full geographic outline of the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District as it exists currently. In addition to the cemeteries discussed in this paper there are others included in the District which I have decided, as they were founded in the mid-twentieth century, not to discuss at length. While these twentieth-century cemeteries, such as the Greek Orthodox Cemetery and the Harleston-Boags Funeral Home Cemetery, are components of the MUCD and have important histories in their own right, I have chosen to focus this paper on the more complicated necrogeography of the District during the nineteenth and early twentieth century because it provides a more streamlined test case for the methodology of inter-cemetery necrogeography. Where I have made exceptions to this chronological focus for purposes of typographical examinations I have noted them as such.

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necrogeography as the "evolution, invention, and diffusion" of "the formal disposal of the deceased [as it] reflects traditional values, religious tenets, legal regulation, economic and social status, and even natural environment" is the essential framework for this paper.

Richard V. Francoviglia's "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," acted as the bridge between Kniffen's methodology and Deetz and Dethlefson's one-off headstone study by simultaneously categorizing cemetery features and interpreting them as they related to their contemporary cultural influences. These formative texts of necrogeography, while advocating its use as an overarching methodological framework, have utilized it in ways that are exclusively intra-cemetery. Kniffen, relying on the pioneering work by Deetz and Dethlefson, focused on establishing a periodization in American cemeteries using marker styles and decorative motifs in various cemeteries in a manner that was concerned with cemeteries as a collection of interpretable markers, rather than examining the patterns in which they were arranged. Francoviglia's work expanded Kniffen's concept of necrogeography to include not only the styles of markers but also a more holistic view of cemeteries as designed landscapes in which typological change and continuity can be read from features such as layout, landscaping, and geographic location. While Francoviglia's work provided historians with a greater range of tools with which to derive important cemetery patterns, it continued to focus on the methodology as one of *parts* rather than *wholes*. This has continued on to this day in cemetery scholarship with the vast majority of work applying necrogeography either to monumentation trends, specific types of cemeteries (rural, African American, etc.), or geographic location (the cemeteries of East Texas, Appalachia, etc.).[3]

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3   James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefson, "Death's Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow," *Natural History* 76 (March 1967): 29-37; Fred Kniffen's "Necrogeography in the United States," *Geographical Review* 57

In previous scholarship the cemeteries of the Magnolia Umbra District have been analyzed according to their typological conformity to pre-established categories, when they have been analyzed at all, which has relied heavily on the traditional use of necrogeography as a intra-cemetery methodology: reading the parts of a burial area in order to situate either that part, or the cemetery as a whole, in a correct geographic, social, or architectural context. The utility of this approach as a methodological tool is undeniable as I, and every other cemetery historian, have utilized it in one way or another to derive conclusions about a set of burial areas, but I believe that the full utility of necrogeography has been limited by its exclusive use in this intra-cemetery manner. If it is true as Francoviglia has stated that the "architectural...and spatial prejudices" read from cemeteries can be used to derive conclusions about the society, time, and people which created them (and indeed the entire discipline depends on this fact as a core principle), then a reading and understanding of inter-cemetery relationships, one which views the interactions of cemeteries as *en bloc* parcels of land divorced from the features contained within, can fully elucidate the "spatial prejudices" of his statement.

Out of all the previous scholarship on cemeteries it was Francoviglia's seminal article which came closest to pursuing the idea of analyzing inter-cemetery relationships, albeit in a tangential way. In approaching cemeteries with a geographer's eye he drew the initial parallels between these "cities of the dead" and the cities of the living. Cemeteries were replete with "differential property values," "suburbanization," changing patterns of layouts, and, most importantly for inter-cemetery analysis, the concept that cemeteries

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(July 1967): 426-427; Richard V. Francoviglia's "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," *Annals of the Association of America Geographers* 61, no. 3 (Sep., 1973): 501-509.

have both "good" and "bad" neighborhoods just like any city or town.[4] He stops one step too short in this analysis, however, by failing to explore the idea that a whole cemetery could be examined as a single component "neighborhood," with the inter-relationships between it and other "neighborhoods" able to be just as informative as to the contexts of society, place, and time.

In the case of the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District the spatial layout of the cemeteries contained within its boundaries, the chronological progression of this layout, and the interactions between the cemeteries themselves all reflect broader societal and cultural mores in Charleston, specifically those related to perceptions of whiteness and accompanying acceptance in "good" society. Applying both aspects of a necrogeographic methodology to these cemeteries allows the full extent of these reflections to be observed.

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4 Francoviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," 505-506. Angelika Krueger-Kahloula's *"On the Wrong Side of the Fence: Racial Segregation in American Cemeteries,"* in *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, ed. Genevieve Fabre (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 130-147 also makes the necrogeographical connection to racism, segregation, and interpretations of goodness in ways that inform my methodology. She is the first to state explicitly that "Burial patterns... reflect intra- and intergroup as well as interpersonal relationships and project them into eternity." Krueger-Kahloula's study, however, is mainly confined to the processes of segregation within antebelllum cemeteries, as both Northern and Southern societies partitioned non-whites within established cemeteries, and in the repercussions of the Civil Rights movement in the contexts of burial equality and desegregation.

6
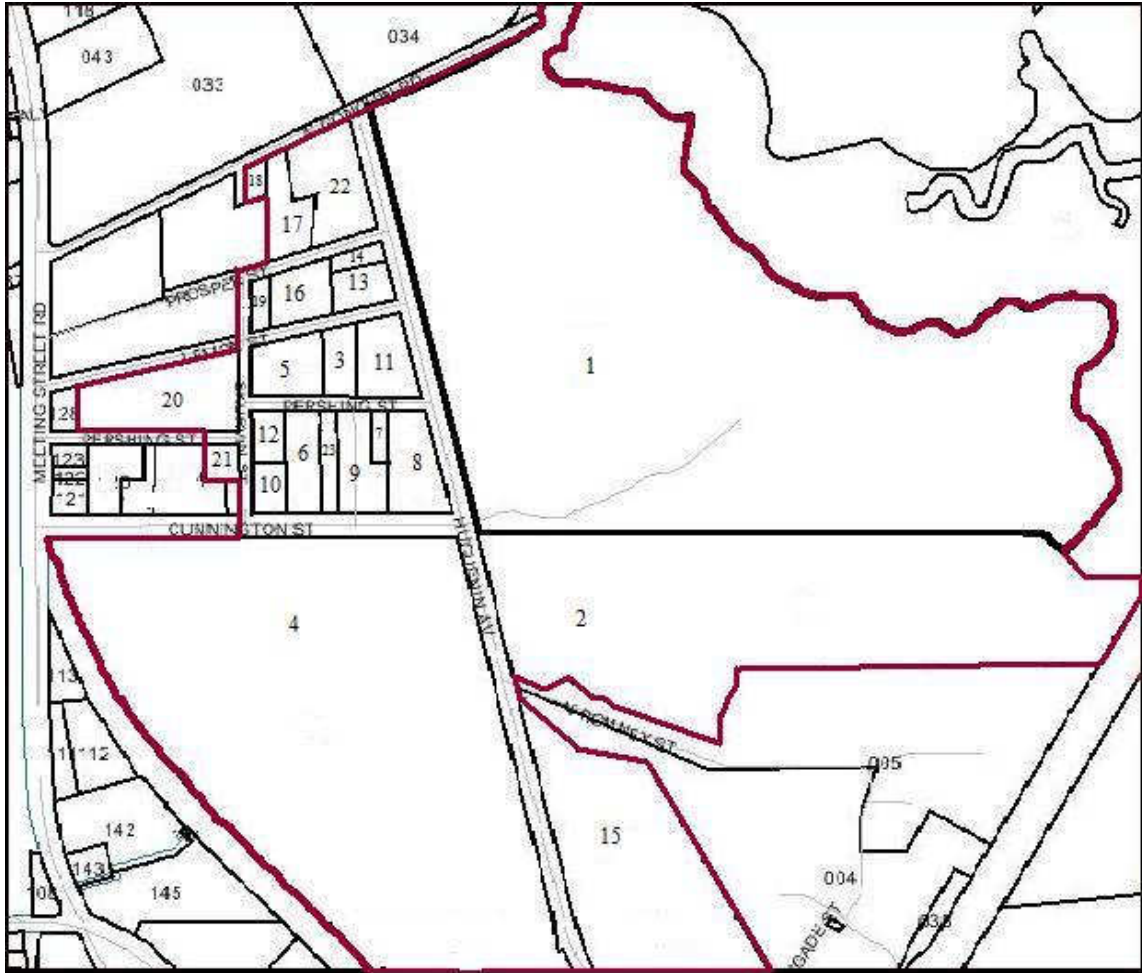
Figure 1.1 The modern boundaries of the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District, outlined in burgundy.

The cemeteries of the District are labeled chronologically. 1. Magnolia Cemetery (1850) 2. St. Lawrence Cemetery (1852) 3. Berith Shalom Cemetery (1855) 4. Bethany Cemetery (1856) 5. Brotherly Association Cemetery (1856) 6. Friendly Union Society Cemetery (1856) 7. Christian Benevolent Society Cemetery (1856) 8. Unity & Friendship Society Cemetery (1856) 9. Humane and Friendly Society Cemetery (1856) 10. Bethel UMC Cemetery (1873) 11. Calhoun AME (Old Emanuel Church) Cemetery (1874) 12. Lewis Christian Union Cemetery (1879) 13. Reserved Fellowship Society Cemetery (1884) 14. Jenkins (Trinity AME Church #1) Cemetery (1886) 15. Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Cemetery (1887) 16. Old Morris Brown AME Cemetery (1887) 17. Trinity AME/Harleston-Boags Cemetery (c. 1900) 18. Trinity AME Church #2 Cemetery (1905) 19. Beth Israel Cemetery (1911) 20. New Emanuel AME Church Cemetery (1926) 21. Greek Orthodox Cemetery (1936) 22. New Morris Brown AME Cemetery (1945) 23. Brown Fellowship Society Cemetery (1956).

Chapter 2

The Establishment of Magnolia Cemetery

One has only to examine the founding of Magnolia Cemetery to view how profoundly the addition of white dead to an area could transform societal perceptions and cultural mores as they relate to place – a transference of the values of the living onto an inanimate plot of land. This conflation of space and values was not an instant one at Magnolia but, for as complete of a transformation as it was, it was still accomplished surprisingly quickly. It is ironic, given the status that Magnolia Cemetery would have only a short time later, that the initial reactions to the idea of converting William Cunnington's disused rice plantation into a cemetery were vehemently negative. "The inhabitants of the city could not bear to give up burying their loved ones in their old sacred inclosures [sic], where lay the ashes of their ancestors and kindred who had gone before," remembered one writer about the initial feelings of Charlestonians, adding that "it was only in opposition to [these] numerous old and firmly grounded prejudices that it was founded at all."[5]

This opposition among tradition-minded Charlestonians faded quickly however when balanced against two factors, both related to a sense of propriety and correctness as they related to the dead. The first was a practical one which had driven the rise of the rural cemetery movement in Europe: there was simply no more room in Charleston's

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5   "Sketches of Life in South Carolina," *Keowee (S.C.) Courier,* March 30, 1861.

churchyards to bury the dead of a city on the rise. The prospect of "depositing a newly buried person in an old grave" flew too far in the face of respect for the dead.[6] This was not because a graveyard could not be worked over again, with the dead buried in layers, but because Charleston had reached such a critical mass of burials that old remains would need to be disinterred and moved in order to accommodate the newly deceased. Implementing the use of ossuaries, or "charnel houses" as they were already referred to with derision in nineteenth-century America, in order to house the disinterred bones was deemed not only improper in a society that feared the pestilential consequences and "miasmatic vapors" of exposed human remains but also hopelessly out of fashion as it harkened back to medieval Europe.[7]

This sense of cemetery fashion was the second, and more important, factor in the driving ideology behind Magnolia Cemetery and explains why Charleston was so quick to embrace the new cemetery after such strident resistance. Antebellum Charleston, or at least its white upper-class citizens (and it was these sorts of citizens who held nearly exclusive power), considered the city to be the vanguard of culture for the South, consciously pushing back at perceived Northern assertions that the region was a backwater. Thus Charlestonians were eager to prove that they too could embrace fashionable trends, whether in clothing, music, or cemeteries, and execute them with aplomb. Magnolia Cemetery was Charleston's funerary assertion that they could embrace change and excel. The sense of competition is evident from the accounts of the time. Not only was Magnolia "destined to... follow on after the pattern of Laurel Hill and Mount Auburn at the North," a reference to the two premier rural cemeteries then extant in the

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6   "Sketches of Life in South Carolina," *Keowee (S.C.) Courier,* March 30, 1861

7   Dell Upton, "Gridding the Graveyard," in *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 206 – 207.

United States, founded in Philadelphia in 1836 and Boston in 1831 respectively, but Charleston's new cemetery would exceed them, as the city had an "advantage, not easily found elsewhere" in its already "magnificent" beauty.[8] As soon as the change in burial styles became conflated with progressive white propriety, beauty, and assertion of Charleston's high status (and by extension the high status of its citizens) rather than an abandonment of tradition, Magnolia became *the* destination for burial in the city and the property itself was overlaid with these virtues.[9]

The purpose of the rural cemetery movement was, in large part, a sense of control over the landscape of death. While Edward C. Jones's design for Magnolia incorporated water features, meandering pathways, and various plantings of trees and shrubs, these elements were imitative of a preconceived notion of an idyllic setting and subsequently layered upon the area; it was artificiality striving to appear genuine. Within the bounds of Magnolia the six founding members could similarly exercise control, not only of the "natural" world which they had spent time and money creating out of Cunnington's rice plantation, but also on the people who would be allowed to take their eternal rest within.[10] As a private cemetery Magnolia was allowed to be as discriminating as it

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8 "Sketches of Life in South Carolina," *Keowee (S.C.) Courier,* March 30, 1861

9 Mark Schantz sees the dedication of Magnolia Cemetery as an event which transcended the sectional crises then brewing, in which "Charleston civic leaders stood arm-in-arm with their brothers in Boston [Mount Auburn]". This statement, while touching on the pan-national taste-making of the rural cemetery movement, ignores the competitive impulses in the South which produced Magnolia and the popular hope in Charleston that Magnolia would, in fact, better its Northern counterparts; this was more arm-wrestling than fraternal embrace. Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 76; Aaron Sachs, *Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an American Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 399 *n. 156*. Also of note on this point is the postmortem journey of Hugh Swinton Legare, who was disinterred from Mt. Auburn Cemetery in 1857 and moved to Magnolia. When it came to the proper place of rest for South Carolina's favorite sons, Mt. Auburn, no matter how prestigious a place, was no match for the Southern propriety of Magnolia.

10 These men included Edward Sebring, the president of the state Bank of South Carolina and the original purchaser and developer of the land which would become Magnolia Cemetery, as well as William Porter, a prominent local attorney. It is worth noting that none of the six founding directors were

wished to be in regards to who would be allowed to purchase plots. While the price of a plot alone was fairly self-selecting, any remaining question concerning the suitability of a person to be buried in Magnolia could be vetted by the board members. It is no wonder then that although the antebellum interments in the cemetery were not of the stupendous amount, or quality, that the founders had envisioned, they were all of the "better" sort of Charlestonians.

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members of landed Charleston gentry but were self-made businessmen and lawyers, which positioned them to be non-traditional when it came to burial grounds. See, Ted Ashton Phillips Jr., *Cities of the Silent: The Charlestonians of Magnolia Cemetery*, ed. Thomas J. Brown (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), xii-xiii.

Chapter 3

St. Lawrence Cemetery

While internal control of this landscape of death could be, and indeed was, effectively shaped and molded into a place to rival the Mt. Auburns or Laurel Hills above the Mason-Dixon, controlling the external – the lands and spaces surrounding Magnolia Cemetery – had the potential to be problematic. What good was an ideal southern rural cemetery if it could be encapsulated by undesirability? Fortunately, the first cemetery founded after Magnolia within the bounds of the District was the Roman Catholic cemetery of St. Lawrence, which embraced the cemetery standards set by Magnolia.[11] The necrogeographical interactions of these two neighboring cemeteries clearly reflect a positive societal dynamic between Charleston's Catholic population and the type of good Charlestonians who embraced Magnolia.

In both style and geographic location the Catholic St. Lawrence Cemetery seemingly defies the confessional basis which produced it; it is a lightly modified rural-type cemetery far removed from a Catholic church and the churchyards that traditionally contain the Catholic dead. Appearances, however, are only a thin veneer covering cemetery features wholly typical and indicative of a Catholic cemetery. What departures there are from confessional tradition are the result of the process of becoming "good" white Charlestonians by conforming to contemporary trends and mitigating their "otherness."

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11 Figure 3.1

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St. Lawrence exhibits all the hallmarks of the rural cemetery movement that was coming into vogue in mid-nineteenth-century America. "[T]he various lots were laid out in various forms – square, circular and semi-circular, oval, &c," a visitor wrote in 1866, noting appreciatively that "the numerous roses and other flowers, made them look like pet gardens."[12] This precisely landscaped beauty was a stark contrast to the churchyards surrounding the various Catholic churches of Charleston, which were densely packed jumbles of stones with little room to navigate within.[13] In layout St. Lawrence is only atypical of the rural cemetery because its center road and divergent pathways are laid out in right angles rather than the winding paths of Magnolia or the soon-to-be-founded German-American Bethany Cemetery. This non-rural layout of paths is only readily apparent if the cemetery is viewed from above, however, and as there is no wall separating the north boundary of St. Lawrence from Magnolia Cemetery it is nearly impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins, so closely do the layouts conform to each other.

While the designed landscape of St. Lawrence Cemetery is reflective of the rural cemetery becoming a pan-American phenomenon, every other facet of the cemetery conforms to the stylistic and cultural traits of a Catholic cemetery. The most self-evident marker for Catholicism in the cemetery is the St. Lawrence name, which is a vestige of the traditional churchyard burial ground. Historically, as the churchyard was part of the already sacred grounds of the church itself, the graveyard simply carried the name of the church to which it was attached. Even in cases where the burial area is separated from the

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12 Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1
13 Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker, *The St. John Burial Association and the Catholic Cemetery at Immaculate Conception, City of Charleston, South Carolina: What Became of the Repose of the Dead?* (Columbia, SC: Chicora Foundation, Inc., 1994), 25 -27.

grounds of the mother church this nomenclature continues, often indicating the ethnic origin of the parishioners.[14] In Charleston, where no church carries the St. Lawrence name, the new burial ground asserts a pan-Catholicism by bearing the name of a widely-venerated saint and by being the only cemetery in the District to have such a "sanctified"name.

For both the contemporary visitor and the modern cemetery scholar the most significant physical indicator that St. Lawrence Cemetery belongs to the Catholic typology is the pervasive use of the cross as a gravemarker and motif.[15] "To the best of our recollection the sign of the cross consecrated every grave, wooden crosses being erected where there was no other head board, and marble crosses carved on all the upright monuments, while a representation of the cross was engraved on the horizontal slabs," remarked the 1866 observer who also commended St. Lawrence on its landscaping.[16] While Protestant use of the cross in funerary monumentation would find slight favor during the late Victorian period of the 1880s and 90s, particularly among Anglicans and Episcopalians, it was previously avoided for its association with the perceived "superstition" and "profanity" of Roman Catholicism.[17]

The profusion of cruciform monumentation in St. Lawrence is, both then and now, not merely confined to individual gravemarkers and headstones. The initial layout of the cemetery reserved the highest and most central spot for a large wooden cross,

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14 William D. Pattison, "The Cemeteries of Chicago: A Phase of Land Utilization," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 45, no. 3 (September 1955): 248-250.

15 A number of modern scholars have concluded that this is *the* indicator for a Catholic burial area. See Kniffen, "Necrogeography in the United States," 426-7; Francoviglia, "The Cemetery as an Evolving Cultural Landscape," 504; and Richard Adams, "Markers Cut by Hand," *The American West* 4 (1967), 59-64.

16 "Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1

17 Kenneth Jackson and Camilo Vergara, *Silent Cites: The Evolution of the American Cemetery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989), 90-91.

painted black, which was visible from any location within the cemetery as it stood in the nexus of all St. Lawrence's pathways..[18] Unsurprisingly, due to the material of its construction, all that is left of this early cross is the hole in which it was sunk, found directly before the central roadway splits to form an oval. The visual statement made by a large black cross, however, has not been lost in St. Lawrence, as the entryway of the cemetery is now dominated by one made of wrought iron. This intricately filigreed cross stands nearly 15 feet tall and is the final work of famed blacksmith Christopher Werner, who designed and built it as his gravemarker; it was probably installed at St. Lawrence by his wife after his death in 1875.[19] Though no contemporary records exist, it is distinctly possible that Werner's iron cross served the dual purpose of replacing the original wooden cross as well as marking his final resting place, given that the climate of the Magnolia area would have been extremely detrimental to exposed wood over a twenty-year period. Regardless of intentionality, the continuity of form, color, and arresting location of Werner's cross continue, along with the other typifying features, to assert visually to visitors that they have entered into a cemetery for Charleston's Catholics

If the internal design and layout of St. Lawrence indicates the advanced level of attempted cultural assimilation by Charleston Catholics by the middle of the nineteenth century, the proximity and permeability between Magnolia and St. Lawrence indicates a tangible reward for these attempts. The most obvious of these rewards was the fact that

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18 Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1
19 See Figure 3.2. Werner, a German who also designed and fabricated the lavish central enclosure at the Lutheran Bethany Cemetery in the Magnolia Umbra District, raised his family Lutheran but desired to be buried in St. Lawrence as he himself was raised Catholic before he emigrated to the United States. See Kelly Ann Ciociola, "'Werner Fecit': Christopher Werner and Nineteenth-Century Charleston Ironwork" (master's thesis, College of Charlesston, 2010), 85-87.

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the Bishop of Charleston was even able to purchase the property which would become St. Lawrence Cemetery. Edward Sebring had purchased most of the plantation lands east of Lee (now Huguenin) Street for the development of Magnolia, but by the time Jones was contracted to design the new cemetery it was decided that only the acreage lying north of Cunnington Street would be developed, leaving nearly two dozen acres to spare. Perhaps the thought of the founders was that demand would quickly spur the use of this excess property, but resistance to the new rural cemetery was somewhat strident and the southern acres seemed unlikely to be needed in any near future. Simultaneously, the Catholic Diocese of Charleston was searching for new burial areas in response to the dual problems of lack of space and the prohibition on further cemetery development within the city limits. Purchasing Magnolia's excess southern property was an ideal fit, and if there was any contemporary concerns about having a Catholic cemetery as a next door neighbor it is not extant in any records. While in earlier decades such close proximity to the "superstitions" and "profanity" of the "papist" confession and their dead would have been significantly off-putting, and probably would have scuttled any land deal, it is a testament to the level at which Catholics were thought of as normative Charlestonians that in August of 1851 the Bishop of Charleston easily purchased these 20 acres and consecrated it as St. Lawrence Cemetery six months later.[20]

Adding to this assertion of mutual acceptance between the two cemeteries, and thus by extension the people associated with them, is the fact that there is no barrier between the two spaces.[21] As has been previously noted, it is generally impossible to determine where Magnolia fades into St. Lawrence as no wall or fencing was ever erected

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20 Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, SC. Charleston County Deed Book, Book O42, Page 395
21 See Figure 3.3

to differentiate them. This perfect geographic permeability is reflective of contemporary views about the shared propriety of the two cemeteries as "good" places; this view invariably treats them as a single whole rather than separate places, with St. Lawrence seemingly the Catholic section of the nondenominational Magnolia. While an 1854 map refers to St. Lawrence Cemetery simply as the "Roman Catholic Cemetery" the conflation of the two cemeteries advanced markedly in subsequent years: an 1865 obituary noted the place of interment as the "Catholic Cemetery, at Magnolia" while a year later another Charleston obituary was even more explicit in stating that the deceased was to be buried at the "Catholic Magnolia Cemetery".[22]

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22 Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston, SC. Charleston County Plat Book, Book C, Page 10; "Obituary of Mr. Timothy Collins", *Charleston daily news*, October 18, 1865; "Obituary of James Kennedy", *Charleston daily news*, July 18, 1866.
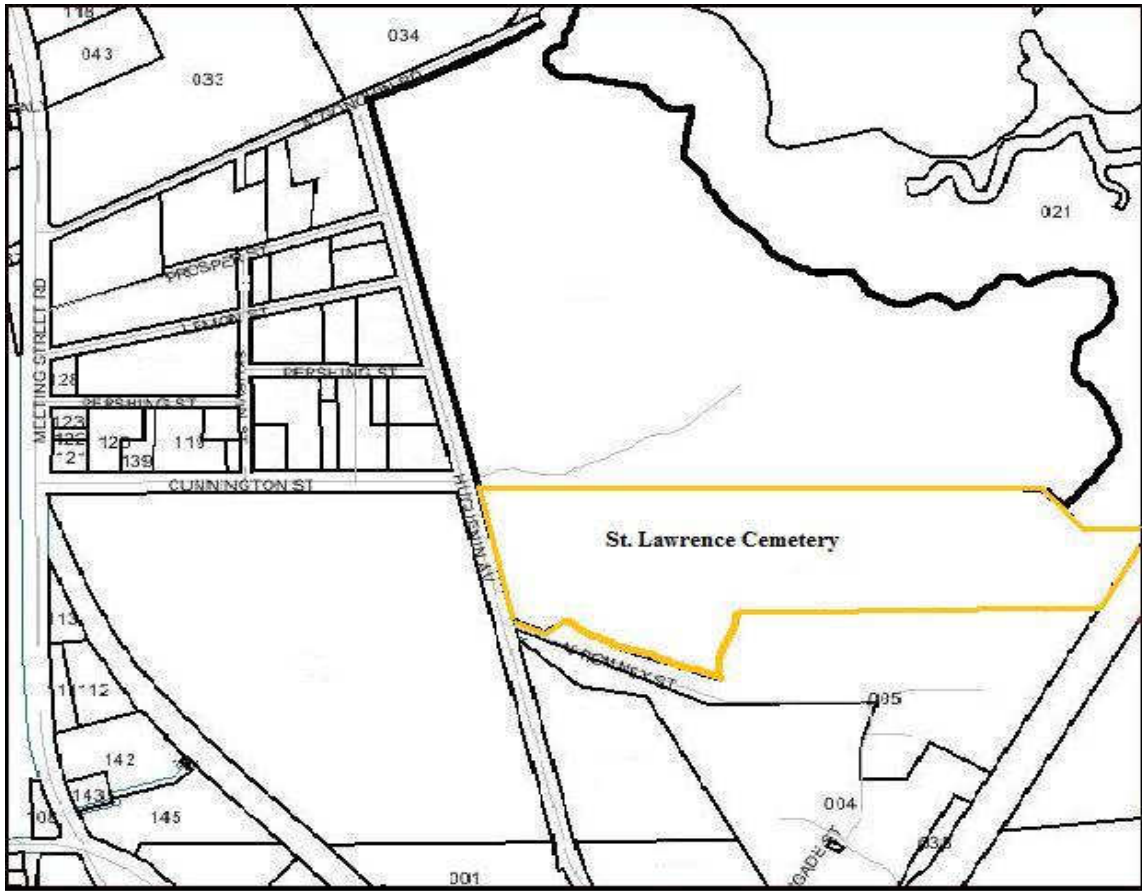
Figure 3.1 St. Lawrence Cemetery
Founded by the Catholic Archbishop of Charleston in 1852 St. Lawrence Cemetery was the second cemetery founded in the area. Note the large shared border between St. Lawrence and Magnolia Cemetery to the north.

Figure 3.2 The entrance to St. Lawrence Cemetery
Christopher Werner's large iron cross occupies the central circular feature just within the gates.

Figure 3.3 A bird's-eye view of St. Lawrence Cemetery, looking west
St. Lawrence's lightly modified rural-typology is very evident when viewed from above, complete with circular pathways, obelisks, and plot dividers. This view also shows the permeability between St. Lawrence and Magnolia. The dirt road which starts in the lower right is the only divide between the two properties.

Chapter 4

Bethany Cemetery

Very little contemporary documentation exists that speaks to the historic appearance of the earliest German cemetery in Charleston, identified alternately as Hampstedt or simply God's Acre. However, the latter name does provide clues to the typology of the place and forms a baseline for the evolution of German burial grounds which resulted in the purchase and style of Bethany Cemetery as a component of the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District.

The documentation that does exist speaks exclusively to the tremendous amount of use the German population of Charleston had gotten from their God's Acre, located at the margins of the nineteenth-century city limits on Reid Street in the Hampstedt, later "Hampstead", area Although it was more than a literal acre of land the parcel was not large, sufficient perhaps for 1500 – 2000 interments if the ground was used as efficiently as possible. This type of use is implied by the name. The term was occasionally used during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by both Europeans and Americans to describe small churchyard burial grounds with consecrated soil (thus the small area was literally perceived to be owned by the Lord)[23], but was most often used in a way that acknowledged its origins as a German phenomenon.[24] Specifically, the Teutonic God's Acre was the geometrically arranged, unadorned burial areas established by groups of

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23 See Elizabeth Stone, *God's Acre; or Historical Notices Related to Churchyards* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858) and Oliver Oakleaf, "God's Acre," *Irish Monthly* 33, no. 379 (Jan., 1905): 38–44.
24 Archer Taylor, "'God's Acre' once more," *Modern Language Notes* 67, no. 5 (May 1952): 341.

German Protestant dissenters, such as the Moravians or Brethren, who settled in the United States, particularly North Carolina, during the 18th and 19th centuries.[25] As an extant visual example, the God's Acre in Salem, North Carolina shows row upon row of identical, closely spaced graves with simple gravestones marking the mid-nineteenth-century burials. Earlier burials are unmarked or covered.[26]

The lack of monumentation reflected the inherent equality of men firmly espoused by these dissenter groups and also facilitated the type of graveyard overfill evident to the citizens of Charleston in the Hampstedt burial area. With the first layer of bodies buried the requisite four feet deep and the second two feet deep, additional backfill dirt could simply be brought in to raise the grade of the graveyard and bodies interred in subsequent layers.[27] The problems faced by other graveyards in raising the associated monuments and gravestones in order to facilitate further layering was avoided because early German gravemarkers were likely extremely simple, perhaps even fieldstones, due to both the confessional emphasis on avoiding ostentation and the relatively low economic station of the earliest German Charlestonians.[28]

While the early German immigrants to Charleston may have been poor and simple, reflected by their use of a God's Acre-type burial ground, they quickly assimilated and embraced the broader Lowcountry mores in a way that was remarkable. Their transition away from God's Acre is a reflection of this assimilation and embrace.

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25 Two centuries later a number of the burial areas of German-derived peoples in North Carolina and beyond continue to bear this name. These include extant graveyards in Winstom-Salem, NC, Hague, SD, and numerous areas of southeastern Pennsylvania.

26 M. Ruth Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 85-90.

27 The perception of burial being "six feet under" is relatively modern and is still not legally required in many areas of the United States. Particularly in the downtown area of Charleston, with its tidal changes and high water table, burial four feet deep was probably the best that could be expected.

28 Robert A. Jones, *Common Blood: The Life and Times of an Immigrant Family in Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: Xlibris Corp., 2012), pp. 10-12.

Charleston's Germans elevated themselves both socially and economically by the middle of the nineteenth century, becoming the city's preeminent force in areas such as green-grocering, in which they faced little competition from free blacks and slaves. This era of economic prosperity coincided with the assessment, by both the city and the elders of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, who administered their God's Acre, that the burial ground was unsustainable for future burials.[29]

The solution was the purchase of Bethany Cemetery, across the road from Magnolia Cemetery, and its nexus of design and culture makes the cemetery a type unto itself: it is a rural-type designed landscape with the unique overlay of specific ethnic and cultural features.[30] Much has been made of the fact that in Charleston the German immigrant community acculturated in various ways that mirrored the prevailing Anglo-American views on slavery and economy more than in other major southern cities, becoming "good whites" by the process.[31] Bethany Cemetery is the necrogeographical result of this process. Viewed from above it is nearly indistinguishable in type from Magnolia Cemetery, exhibiting the same "picturesque atmosphere, inefficient but aesthetically pleasing serpentine roadways, and economically impractical wide pathways and natural land reserves" that cemetery historian David Charles Sloane has asserted are the qualifying hallmarks of the rural cemetery in the United States.[32]

The German community had become increasingly affluent by 1856, when

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29 Jones, *Common Blood*, 32-33 and Michael Everette Bell "Regional Identity in the Antebellum South: How German Immigrants Became 'Good' Charlestonians," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 100, no. 1 (January 1999): 15-16.

30 See Figure 4.1

31 Bell, "Regional Identity in the Antebellum South," 15-20 and Jeffrey Strickland "How the Germans Became White Southerners: German Immigrants and African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina, 1860-1880," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 52-54.

32 David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 2.

Bethany was founded, and a rural cemetery was the appropriate Anglo-American expression of this wealth; its monuments are the upright obelisks and elaborately carved expressions of Victorian mourning that could only be purchased at a premium from the skilled stonecarvers operating in Charleston and other major cities along the eastern seaboard. Similar to the buildings at Magnolia, Bethany Cemetery included a chapel where funeral services could be held outside of a specifically religious context, as well as a receiving tomb in which bodies were held for interment or shipment to areas outside of Charleston. The establishment nodded its assent to the new cemetery, with the *Charleston Daily News* remarking on its front page that "[t]his cemetery is beautifully kept, and its white gravelled walks shining amid the green shrubbery, and the blooming flowers, and under the aged oaks, illustrate how well nature is improved by art."[33]

What makes Bethany Cemetery nationally unique is not, therefore its features, which while beautifully executed are typical of the rural cemetery movement of the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, it is the remarkable overlay of German-ness which is evident in all of these features. This fact was not lost on contemporary observers of the cemetery. The same *Daily News* article observed that all of the epitaphs and inscriptions adorning the monuments in Bethany were in the German language and "the solemn and touching words 'Hier Ruhet in Gott' ["Here Rests in God", the German equivalent of "Rest in Peace"] greet the eye at every step."[34] The famous Charlestonian German ironworker Christopher Werner designed and fabricated the intricate iron fencing which encloses the central burial "island" at the entrance to Bethany in 1871. The crosses that top the fencing are a distinct German type, being stylistically identical to other German ironwork crosses

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33 Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1
34 Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1

which mark graves in North Carolina, North Dakota, and elsewhere.[35]

The most prominent physical feature of Bethany Cemetery is the chapel, which is visible from nearly every place within the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District, and is the perfect example of the overlay of German-ness onto a traditionally American cemetery form.[36] Originally the chapel had been a small house, either an outbuilding of the Magnolia Umbra plantation complex of William Cunnington or the living quarters of one of the small-time farmers who temporarily utilized the land as grazing areas for their animals. When the land was purchased to be converted into Bethany Cemetery, the house was refitted in German style for funerary purposes: the roof was pitched, vaulted windows and arches were installed, and a steeple was raised. Unlike the ornate Gothic structure of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, the owner of the cemetery and the place of worship for Charleston's German community, the chapel's architecture is identical to those found in the northern German areas which produced the immigrant community.[37]

In their most private of sacred spaces German Charlestonians successfully looked back to their roots even while they asserted their "good" American acculturation. The result is a rural cemetery designed by, and for, a specific ethnic group, a rare and undiscussed typology possibly only found at Bethany. It is both typically American and German, while simultaneously representing the shift away from the overcrowded God's Acre-typology. It is fittingly circular, however, that when the Hampstedt site was under development in the 1980s the remains from the burial ground were removed to an acre of ground in the rear of Bethany in 2009 and buried *en masse*, with only a single simple

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35 John Gary Brown, *Soul in the Stone: Cemetery Art from America's Heartland*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1994), 48-50.
36 See Figure 4.2
37 Mildred K. Hood, *Tombstone Transcriptions From Bethany Cemetery, Charleston, SC* (Charleston, SC: South Carolina Genealogical Society Press, 1992)

stone to mark their last interment.[38]

While it was never considered to be a part of Magnolia Cemetery to the same
extent as St. Lawrence, the formation and location of Bethany Cemetery was made under
similar circumstances and greeted with similar acclaim as the Catholic cemetery. The last
section of Cunnington's plantation that had been under control of the founders of
Magnolia was sold to the German community for their cemetery and the physical
vestiges of the former use re-purposed for a funerary function in imitation of the work
done in the nondenominational cemetery whose gates lay mere yards from Bethany and
the Catholic one across the dirt road to the east. While both the German Lutherans and
the Catholics did not execute exact replicas of Magnolia, the additional layers of ethnicity
and confession these groups superimposed on their rural cemeteries can be read,
paradoxically, as an awareness of their full acceptance in Charleston society. So secure
was their full acceptance and acculturation that they *could*, and did, insert obvious
indicators of their otherness in their cemeteries without the fear that these assertions
would lead to criticism or alienation from the rest of good white Charlestonian society.[39]

The benefit to the area surrounding Magnolia Cemetery and St. Lawrence by the
addition of Bethany was threefold. As been previously discussed, the Germans and

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38 "Graves to Move for Housing", *Charleston Post & Courier*, February 20, 2009.
39 William Freehling has argued that immigrants into Charleston during the decade before the Civil War,
particularly the Irish, were not readily accepted into good society and were, in fact, viewed as a
hindrance to good society as their competition with blacks for "grunt work" and their resistance to
slaveowning precipitated a call to reopen the importation of African slaves, see *The Road to Disunion,
Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant 1854-1861* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 169–173.
While this would seem to undermine the necrogeographic implications of Bethany and St. Lawrence, it
is important to note that the immigrants buried in these cemeteries are not the sort that Freehling is
discussing. Both Bethany and St. Lawrence were established by men who were wealthy, invested in the
slaveholding system of the elite, and had emigrated into the city before the rush of poor unskilled
European labor which caused, according to Freehling, so much consternation. Also, despite being a
Catholic cemetery, burial in St. Lawrence was not guaranteed by dint of confession. The cost associated
with burial in the cemetery would have excluded poorer Catholics, who would have then been buried in
the cramped churchyards of downtown or the Catholic section of the Potters Field, outside the city
limits.

German-Americans who would be buried there represented a completely integrated and acceptable section of the population to have in close proximity. The cemetery itself was also to be an acceptable extension of landscape design and contemporary assessments of beauty; an extension of Magnolia in typology. The final benefit was one of location: situated just west of St. Lawrence and occupying a large swath of land, Bethany added a new flank of propriety to what was emerging as a new district of cemeteries rather than the random scattering found within the city limits.

The combination of Magnolia, St. Lawrence, and Bethany now formed a extensive curving cradle of white, high-style cemetery spaces anchored around the intersection of Cunnington and Lee (Huguenin) Streets – uncoincidentally also the location of the front entrance gate to Magnolia.[40] This swath of space allowed for the unbroken walk through cemetery beauty which the local press and prominent men like Arthur Mazyck highlighted in widely dispersed publications, hoping to draw outsiders to Charleston, as it was "like a fairy city...[which] affords a fit theme for poet, novelist, historian, and tourist."[41] If inter-cemetery necrogeography is a study of reciprocity, either given or denied as expressions of good society, then St. Lawrence and Bethany are the perfect examples of the former with their embrace being whole and utilitarian.

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40 See Figure 4.1

41 Arthur Mazyck, *Guide to Charleston Illustrated* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1875), 1-2, 117-121. Charleston Daily News, "A Visit To Magnolia", Nov. 12, 1866, pg. 1. These two sources overlap in language considerably and it begs the question of whether Mazyck was not the author of both. If he was not, he plagiarized a significant amount of the newspaper article for his Guide.

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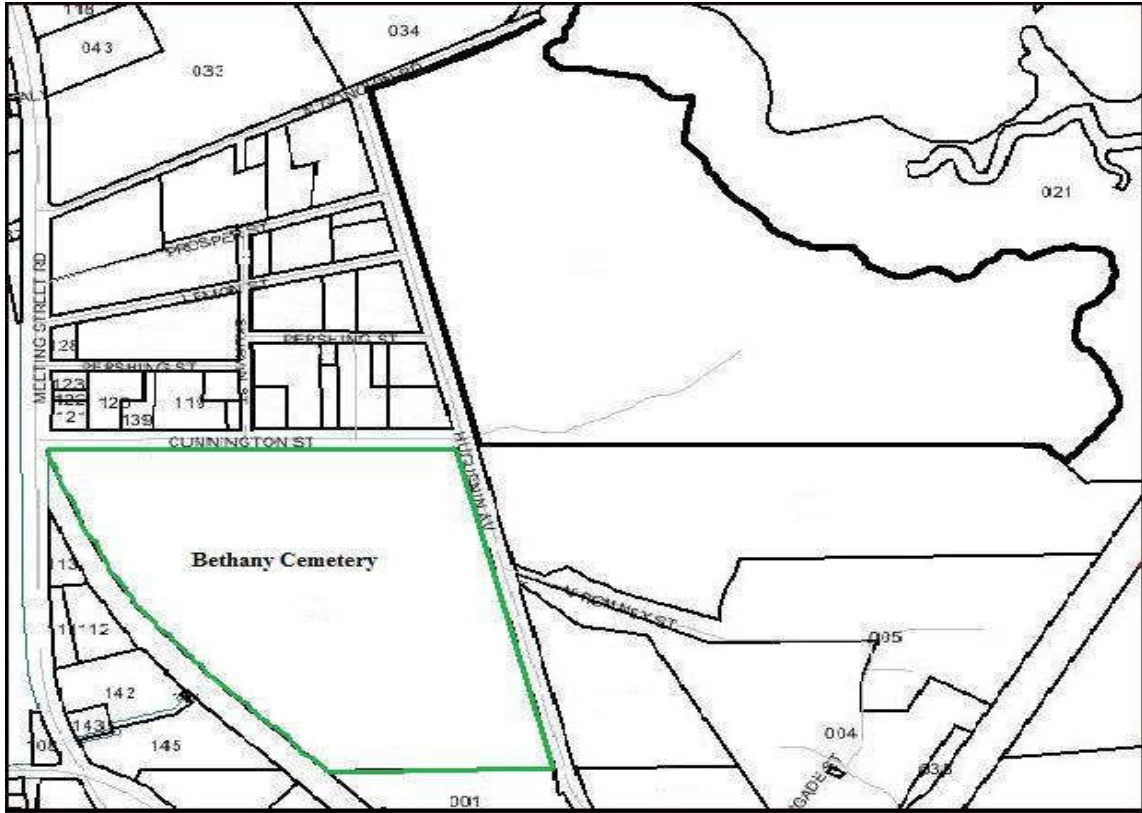
Figure 4.1 Bethany Cemetery
Established in 1856 to alleviate the overcrowding of the traditional God's Acre cemetery used by
Charleston's German population. The addition of Bethany Cemetery to the District completed what I have
termed the "nexus of whiteness" at the corner of Cunnington and Huguenin.

Figure 4.2 View looking east from the entrance to Bethany Cemetery
The Germanic chapel is in the background with the receiving tomb located just to the left. The foreground shows Christopher Werner's intricate ironwork enclosing the central "island" feature and the high-style Victorian monumentation.

Chapter 5

The Jewish Cemeteries of the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District

The subsequent development of cemeteries in the Magnolia Umbra area further highlight the call-and-response nature of intra- and inter-cemetery necrogeography, respectively. However, unlike the cases of Bethany and St. Lawrence in which the internal expressions were positive and the external responses accepting, the expansion of the District after the founding of Bethany and St. Lawrence is marked, necrogeographically, by expressions and responses which were of negation, resistance, or hostility on the part of one, or both, sides of Charleston's "good" population.[42]

Precipitating this changing inter-cemetery dynamic was the fact that the founders of Magnolia Cemetery had not purchased the entirety of Cunnington's former plantation. Nearly all of the land lying west of the cemetery was in the hands of Mary Price, a wealthy widow who died in 1854, prompting the executors of her estate to survey and parcel the land into 81 individual lots to be sold by one F.J. Porcher.[43] This produced a large amount of new real estate available for groups in need of a new burial ground. Ironically, while establishing Magnolia in the erstwhile plantation had marked the surrounding area as an acceptable place for the development of cemeteries, by not purchasing all of the surrounding area the proprietors of Magnolia no longer could

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42 The Jewish cemetery of Congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim is the exception to this change towards contention in the MUCD, but it is an exception which proves the functionality of inter-cemetery necrogeography as a methodology, as will be discussed further in this chapter.
43 CCPB Book C, Page 10. See Figure 5.1. This copy of the original plat, which is dated August 1, 1879, erroneously lists the man in charge of selling Price's property as *P.J.* Porcher. This is undoubtably due to a transcription error from the original 1854 plat.

directly control who their other neighbors would be.

The first cemetery to be made from the parceling of Mary Price's land was that of the Orthodox Jewish congregation of Berith Shalom in 1855, marking a distinct contrast in the expansion of the District away from large tracts purchased by the powerful and tradition-minded.[44] The funerary material culture of Charleston's Jewish population found in the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District are physical expressions of the fundamental divergence of the Jewish faith: the split between Orthodox Jews, with their insistence on the traditions and rituals of the Old World indicated by the appellation of orthodoxy, and the Reformed Judaism movement which modified much of the foreignness of the faith in order to more effectively assimilate into American culture.[45] The three Jewish cemeteries of the Magnolia, two Orthodox and one Reformed, typify this dynamic in their competing visions of Jewish cemeteries.

When the founders of the Orthodox congregation of Berith Shalom announced to the city of Charleston that they were "the only synagogue in Charleston in which Israelites from Continental Europe can worship the God of their fathers in precisely the same forms, language, and ceremonies as their forefathers did," they were careful to ensure that their cemetery conveyed the same message.[46] Both the Berith Shalom and later the schismatic, but still wholly Orthodox, Beth Israel cemeteries are burial grounds designed in the Old World Jewish function and form, in contrast to the hybridized Jewish-American style of Congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE).[47] The physical

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44 See Figure 5.2
45 The schism between liberal and Orthodox Jews in Charleston was begun in 1840 when traditionalists split from Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (and their cemetery on Coming Street in downtown Charleston) to form Berith Shalom.
46 *Charleston Daily News*, June 14, 1867
47 Congregation Beth Israel and its cemetery in the MUCD were both established circa 1910 as a result of a congregational schism with Berith Shalom. Despite the late date of establishment Beth Israel's

remains of the traditional Jewish funerary rites can still be parsed from the Orthodox

cemeteries but are missing from the Reformed; an informed eye can recognize within

Berith Shalom the standpipe which provided water for cleansing the hands after a visit to

a place of the dead, as well as the footprint of the small structure in which a body was

ritually washed and prepared for interment.[48]

The most apparent of these deeply-rooted Orthodox cemetery traditions is the

separateness of the Berith Shalom and Beth Israel cemeteries within the Magnolia Umbra

Cemetery District. Surrounded by six-foot-high brick walls with entry points guarded by

lockable wrought iron gates, they are the only cemeteries within the District that can

functionally exclude visitors.[49] The walls and the gates indicate the "otherness" that was

first externally pressed upon Old World Jews and subsequently internalized into a

hallmark of their culture; after centuries of expulsions and pogroms throughout Europe

Orthodox Jewish communities become self-sufficient ones with a fierce isolationist streak

driven by perpetual self-preservation.[50] To be able to shut out the outside world from a

sacred place of burial was, therefore, a proactive step against the horror stories of burial

disruption and vandalism which had been passed down within the community as

remnants of centuries of European experience.[51]

If one is permitted entry inside the circumscribed cemeteries of Berith Shalom and

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cemetery,is included in this study to demonstrate the persistent continuity of cemetery forms among Charleston's Orthodox Jewish community.. The schism between the two Orthodox congregations was repaired in 1958 and the combined Congregation Berith Shalom Beth Israel now administers both cemeteries.

48 Mr. Charles Karesh, head trustee for Brith Shalom and Beth Israel cemeteries, personal conversation with the author, June 18, 2013.

49 See Figures 5.3 and 5.4

50 Roberta Halporn, "American Jewish Cemeteries: A Mirror of History," in *Ethnicity and the American Cemetery,* ed. Richard E. Meyer (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993), 131.

51 Halporn, "American Jewish Cemeteries," 131.

Beth Israel the arrangement of tombstones within the walls is another typological indicator of Orthodox burial, which like the walls that surround them are a vestige of centuries of painful European experience internalized into a cultural attitude towards burial. The historic ghetto-ization of European Jewry was not merely confined to the living; governments tightly controlled spaces where Jews could bury their dead by granting them minimal space for the purpose in order to discourage assimilation and acceptance.[52] The resulting European cemeteries, most notably in Prague, were densely packed with bodies and gravestones, with burials of up to seven people in the same plot.[53] While the Orthodox cemeteries of Charleston do not exhibit this layered burial (due to the comparative dearth of Orthodox Jews in the city), they are visually similar to the European type; they conform to historian Michael Weisser's assessment that Orthodox Jewish cemeteries invariably "lack walkways, space between monuments or headstones, landscaping, benches, and other ornamental features."[54] The familiarity of the tightly packed cemetery begat a cultural tradition, regardless of its origins in external persecution.

Geographically, the Orthodox Jews of Berith Shalom similarly chose to separate their dead from the cradle formed by Magnolia, St. Lawrence, and Bethany cemeteries. This was certainly a conscious decision, rather than an instructive coincidence. As the first entity to express interest in Mary Price's lands Berith Shalom had their pick of any of the 81 lots for sale, all of which were essentially equal in size, suitability, and price. The lot they chose, composed of number 55 and a portion of 56, was significantly removed

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52 Halporn, "American Jewish Cemeteries," 147.
53 Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 124.
54 Jackson and Vergara, *Silent Cities*, 56-57. See Figure 5.4.

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from Magnolia's gates, lying nearly 550 feet away on a diagonal to the northwest.[55] This was no accident. For Orthodox Jews, who cared little or nothing whether they were accepted or not in Charleston society and having internalized centuries of history to back the acceptance of their otherness, it was an indifferent and internal decision to separate themselves in life and in death. Hence, out of all the available plats of land it was of no consequence, and probably considered a benefit, to the congregation to choose an outlying area removed from the nexus of whiteness at the corner of Cunnington and Huguenin.

This powerful internal assertion of separateness presents an unusual necrogeographical study, as it appears that the designation of Orthodox Jews and their dead as "others" was not reciprocated by external Charleston society. The contemporary press surrounding the founding of Berith Shalom's cemetery was, in fact, quite enthusiastic and positive. "A new Jewish Cemetery has recently been consecrated in the vicinity of Magnolia Cemetery," proclaimed the front page of the *Edgefield Advertiser*, which subsequently noted the "substantial brick wall" that surrounded the cemetery and the dimensions of the enclosure.[56] The fact that the cemetery received any mention at all in any newspaper of the day is indicative of acceptance, as the cemeteries of groups who were considered by white Charlestonian society to be unequal received no publicity, as

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55 CCDB Book P014, Page 191.
56 "Charleston Correspondance", *Edgefield Advertiser*, December 2, 1857. The gap between the purchase of the cemetery in late 1855 and this article is a product of the author conflating the opening of Brith Shalom's cemetery and the Reformed cemetery of Congregation Beth Elohim at Rickersville in 1857. The dimensions mentioned in the article, along with the description of the wall and the cemetery's adjacency to Magnolia Cemetery correspond to Berith Shalom, as the Rickersville area would not be described as in the vicinity by anyone who was writing from Charleston, as the author states that they are. However, it was Beth Elohim which was the recipient of the endowment from the prominent Jewish philanthropist Judah Tuoro, which is mentioned in the article. The "commodious building" mentioned could be located in either cemetery but is probably a description of Rickersville. This conflation notwithstanding, the point that Jews were considered acceptable members of broader Charleston society as indicated by the positive press coverage of their cemeteries, is still given validity by the article.

will be discussed further later. The citizens who buried in the three large Magnolia-area cemeteries would almost certainly have been comfortable with Berith Shalom establishing their cemetery in one of the closer areas of land offered for sale but, necrogeographical proximity being governed by reciprocal acceptance, the Orthodox Jews of Charleston firmly demonstrated that they wished to continue their way of life as a way of death.

If the Orthodox cemeteries of the MUCD visually and stylistically represent Old World Jewish attitudes towards both traditional burial areas and a deeply ingrained antipathy towards assimilation, the Reformed cemetery of congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) is their cultural counterpoint. While the KKBE cemetery still exhibits unmistakable marks of Judaism, its look and feel decidedly reflect the prevailing trends in contemporary Anglo-American funerary culture; it is a New World cemetery for Charleston Jews who had thoroughly absorbed the culture of the city.

Despite being the mother congregation for Charleston's Jews, and one of the oldest in America, KKBE's cemetery in the Magnolia area was opened in 1887, replacing both the overfull cemetery on Coming Street that had been in use by the congregation since 1740 and a disastrously placed cemetery on the banks of the Ashley River at Rickersville.[57] Significantly, the founding of the Huguenin Avenue cemetery came after the congregation initiated the Reformed Judaism movement in the United States in 1873, effectively completing a move towards a liberalization of the faith which had begun in

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57 For full discussions of the foundation, style, and subsequent history of KKBE's cemeteries predating Huguenin Aveneue see two works by Barnett A. Elzas, *The new Jewish cemetery of K.K. Beth Elohim at Charleston, S.C.* (Charleston: N.p., 1910) and *The Old Jewish Cemeteries at Charleston, S.C., 1762-1903,* (Charleston: Daggett Print Co., 1903). Elzas was KKBE's rabbi beginning in 1894 and rediscovered many of the city's Jewish cemeteries from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Charleston as early as 1840 and which caused the Berith Shalom schism.[58] Rather than

hearkening back to their persecuted roots in Europe, the Reformed Jews of KKBE would

declare of Charleston and America that "this city [is] our Jerusalem, and this happy land

our Palestine."[59] They embraced the idea of being Jewish-Americans and their new

cemetery would be a reflection of this hybridization.

The cemetery layout was designed in a manner that is immediately redolent of the

rural cemetery movement, which continued to be popular in the late Victorian period

despite the style being nearly 70 years old at that point. Like St. Lawrence Cemetery,

which lies less than one hundred yards to the north, KKBE's Huguenin Avenue cemetery

has a broad white-gravelled road running through the center, with small lanes splitting

from the main road and leading to the far corners of the cemetery.[60] Ornamental oak trees

were planted along this center road to increase the "natural" feel of the area. While the

Orthodox cemeteries are intentionally devoid of natural features, the Reformed cemetery

embraced them in the same manner as the gentile Magnolia, Bethany, and St. Lawrence

cemeteries.

Like the other rural-type cemeteries in Charleston and beyond, the Reformed

cemetery's monumentation is arranged to affect a more naturalistic environment. In

traditional Jewish cemeteries like Brith Shalom and Beth Israel, as has been mentioned,

the stones are packed tightly together in order to maximize space, but on Huguenin

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58 The complete story of the formation of Reformed Judaism in Charleston can be found in Charles
    Reznikoff, *The Jews of Charleston: A History of an American Jewish Community* (Philadelphia: The
    Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950).

59 This famous quote was made by Rabbi Gustavus Poznanski during his dedicatory remarks for KKBE's
    new temple building in 1840. A significant force in the Reformed movement in Charleston, Poznanski's
    advocacy for discontinuing the second day of observance during major holidays was one of the major
    factors in KKBE's congregational rift. See Solomon Breibart, Jack Bass, and Robert N. Rosen,
    Charleston's Jewish History: Essays by Solomon Breibart. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2005),
    57-59.

60 See Figure 5.5

Avenue they are spaced apart from each other and follow the curving contours of the walkways. The grave markers are also arranged into family plots, delineated by granite and marble plot dividers, indicating that unlike in Orthodox cemeteries where burial plots were assigned in the order in which congregants died, the Reformed cemetery was pre-designed, like Magnolia, with families able to purchase large burial tracts and maintain familial proximity even after death. The monumentation is also unorthodox in all senses of the word. Several large mausoleums occupy prominent positions in Huguenin, and the cemetery is a jumble of the ornate Victorian expressions of funerary architecture common to non-Jewish cemeteries but virtually absent in the Orthodox cemeteries of the Magnolia District.[61]

This is not to say that evidence of Jewish identity is missing from KKBE's cemetery, but what pan-Jewish expressions there are have been modified to better assimilate into popular contemporary mortuary culture. Huguenin Avenue, like the Orthodox cemeteries, is surrounded by a wall and a gate. Unlike the Orthodox burial grounds however, these features of the Reformed cemetery are purely decorative and do not function as expressions of otherness and separation; the wall is only two feet tall and is easily surmounted, while the gate is elaborately scroll-worked and lacks a functional locking mechanism.[62] When one wanders through the Jewish cemeteries of the District it is impossible not to note the Jewish surnames incised on the tombstones and the use of Hebrew characters and dates on many of the markers. However, in Huguenin Avenue the use of Hebraic characters and motifs are significantly hybridized – many tombstones contain epitaphs and biographical information in both English and Hebrew, while some

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61 See Figure 5.6
62 See Figure 5.5

are purely inscribed in English. In the Orthodox cemeteries this assimilation is universally absent as there is not a single marker that fails to contain at least some example of Hebrew lettering.

It is also of note that although the Huguenin Avenue cemetery contains the markers of three other earlier Jewish cemeteries that predate the firm assertion of KKBE's Reformed movement – those of the Harby, DaCosta, and Rickersville cemeteries, which were moved to the site in response to threats to their continued existence -- these remnants were re-placed in a rural-type manner. The brick box tombs in the northern half of the cemetery certainly predate the founding of Huguenin Avenue although their inscriptions are so worn as to be illegible, and are of a type which distinctly reflects early nineteenth-century Sephardic Jewish burial architecture, but they have been rearranged in the flowing style of the rest of Huguenin Avenue. While this new style of cemetery would have been foreign (and possibly anathema) to the early Charleston Jews marked by these box tombs, it is a reflection of the assimilation of their descendants, who were willing in this case to literally rearrange their burial culture in imitation of their new hybridization.[63]

Given the internal typography of KKBE's cemetery and the expressions of assimilation it contains, along with the unrequited overtures of external acceptance expressed in Charleston's dealings with Orthodox Jewish cemeteries, it is no surprise that the Reformed cemetery's establishment and inter-cemetery dynamic hews very closely to that of Bethany or St. Lawrence rather than to that of Berith Shalom. If one was to take a bird's eye view of the District, simply noting the geographic location of KKBE's

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63 Elzas, *The new Jewish cemetery of K.K. Beth Elohim at Charleston, S.C.,* 105-109. See also Figure 5.7 for an example.

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cemetery in relation to the nexus of whiteness would be sufficient evidence for the comfortable relationship between Reformed Jews and the groups of prominent Gentiles lying to the east of Huguenin Street. Only a small swampy stretch of creek, a quirk of the District's proximity to the Cooper River, separates KKBE from St. Lawrence to the north, while the core of Bethany Cemetery lies directly west, a matter of a few yards across Huguenin Street. Given the quantity of land required for Beth Elohim's dead, as the Reformed congregation was significantly larger than those of the Orthodox Jews and a space the size of Brith Shalom's would fill rapidly and not allow the rural-type arrangement of graves that they evidently desired, the cemetery lies as close to Magnolia's gates as it possibly could.[64]

While KKBE did not purchase the land for their MUCD cemetery from Magnolia Cemetery, like Bethany and St. Lawrence, they did acquire the land from the Washington Light Infantry (WLI), a group whose ties to white values, history, and propriety was even stronger than Magnolia's. The Infantry was initially formed in 1807 as a private militia company and took their name from Col. William Washington's distinguished Carolinian patriot cavalry company of the American Revolution. The WLI had used the land lying along Huguenin as a muster ground for nearly half a century as they drilled troops composed of some of Charleston's most prominent families to fight in the War of 1812 and the Civil War.[65] The idea that the WLI would have sold their land to any group viewed as anything other than 100% acceptable is inconceivable no matter how little use

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64 See Figure 5.2
65 R.L. Schreadly, *Valor and Virtue: The Washington Light Infantry in Peace and in War*, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1997), 8-12. The prominence of the WLI in Charleston was such that one of the most visible monuments in Magnolia Cemetery is an 1857 cenotaph/memorial column commemorating Col. Washington in a "grateful offering". The epigram notes that the Infantry are "the honored guardians of the colors of Col. WASHINGTON's regiment". It also speaks to the success of Magnolia Cemetery in establishing itself as a place of distinction that the Infantry chose to place this monument within the cemetery rather than in their own muster grounds a short distance away.

the Infantry were getting from the land post-Civil War, given the level to which the men who composed it so explicitly personified traditional white Charlestonian values.

The acceptance of KKBE's Huguenin Street cemetery neatly parallels a broad current of acceptance for the congregation during the nineteenth century. The thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of KKBE's Hasel Street temple building was front-page news in Charleston, with the dedicatory remarks of the Rabbi reproduced in whole. The article made special note that the ceremony was attended by a significant amount of Charleston's Christian population in a sign of support for the "valuable" congregation.[66] While the laurel of propriety had evidently been proffered to the entirety of the Jewish population, it was the Reformed Jews who whole-heartedly accepted it and were rewarded by, among other societal positives, being welcomed into the fold of cemeteries in the Magnolia area in a way that the Orthodox cemeteries, with their rebuff, were not. When it was decided that KKBE's cemetery at Rickersville was to be dismantled and moved to the Huguenin Street location the *Post and Courier* applauded the move to a location which was better suited to use as a "city of the dead" and therefore was a cemetery more indicative of the respect and place in society which the Jews of KKBE held.[67] In a final sign of the place in society gained by the Reformed Jews of Charleston and their cemetery, all guidebooks to the Charleston area published after Huguenin Street was consecrated include the cemetery in the same section as Magnolia, Bethany, and St. Lawrence.

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66 *Charleston daily news,* April 1, 1873.
67 *Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC), May 24, 1889.
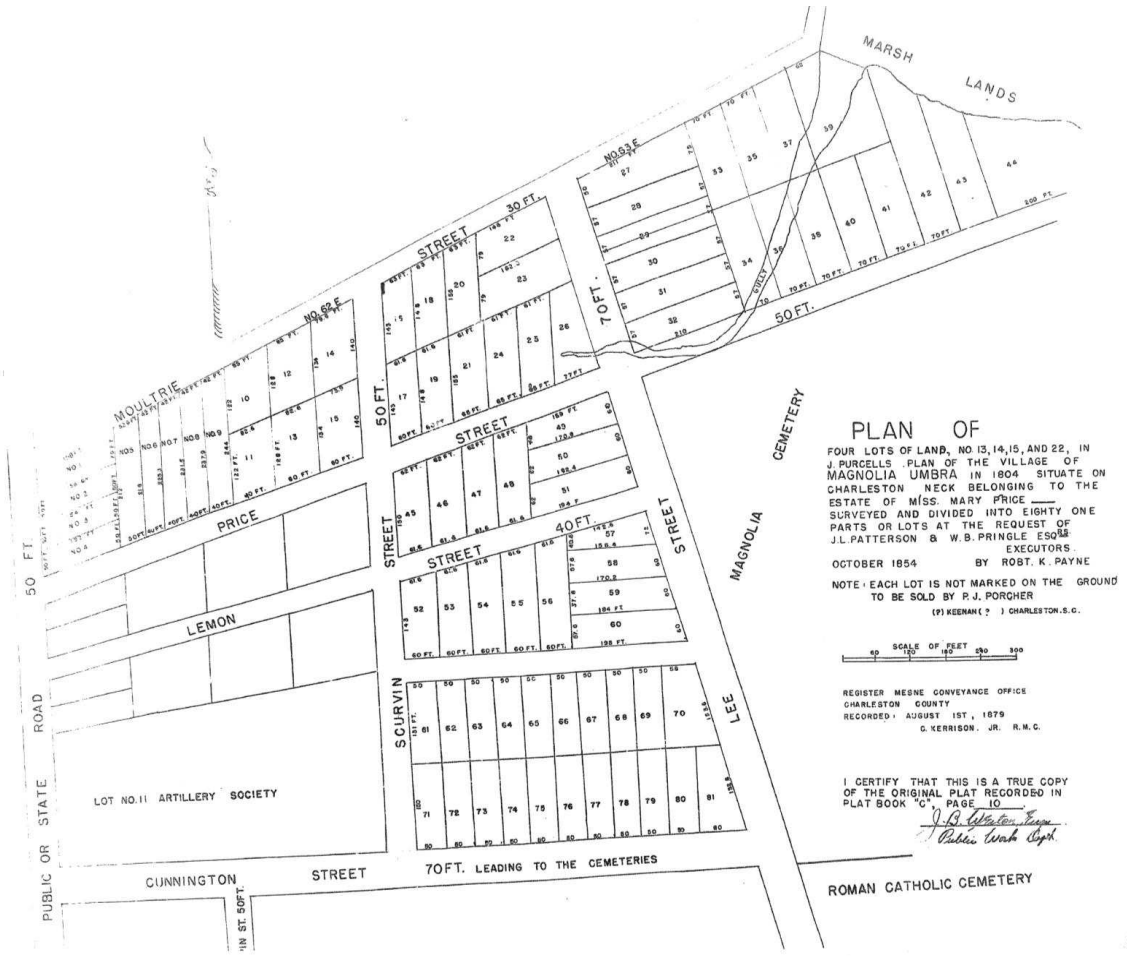
Figure 5.1 1854 Survey plat of Mary Price's Magnolia-area lands with lot numbers.
Price's lands were parceled out into 81 plots of land by the executors of her estate and sold to a variety of
groups for the establishment of cemeteries.

www.manaraa.com
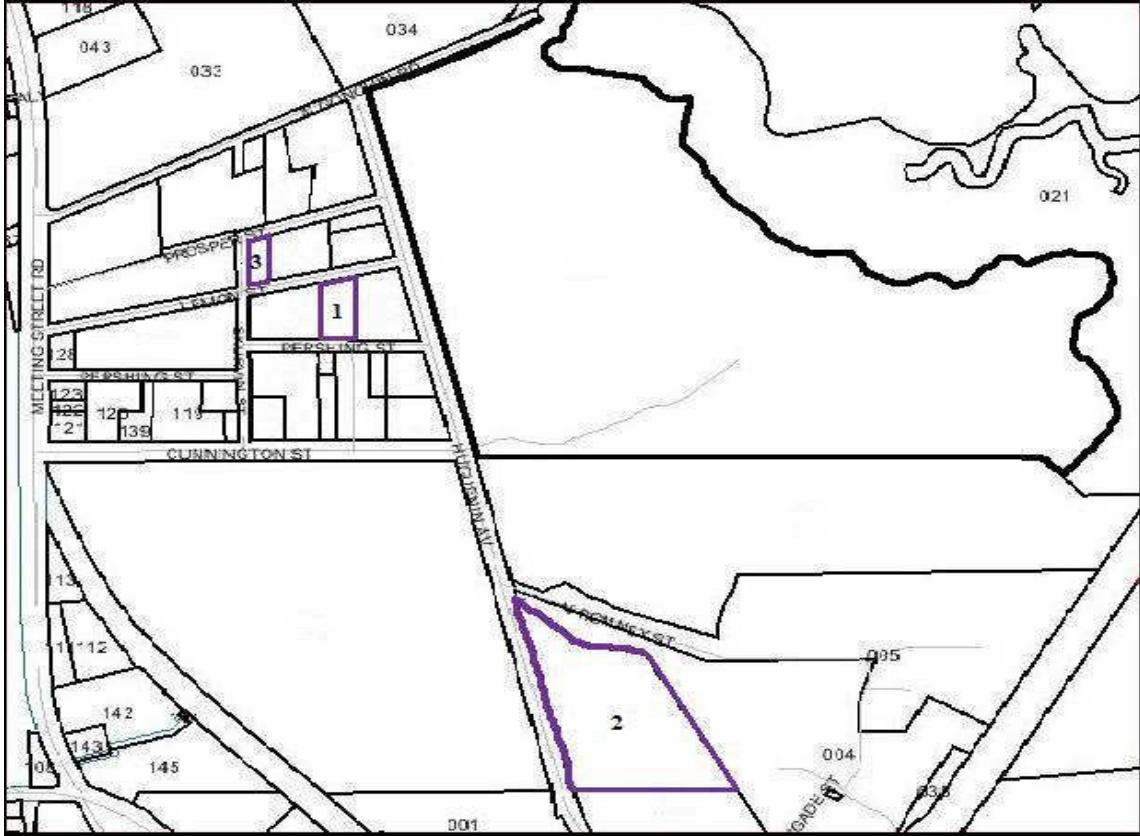
Figure 5.2 The Jewish cemeteries of the MUCD, outlined in purple
The cemeteries are numbered chronologically beginning with Berith Shalom Cemetery (1854), and
followed by Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Cemetery (1886) and Beth Israel Cemetery (1911). The distance
of the two Orthodox cemeteries (Brith Shalom and Beth Israel) to the nexus of whiteness is instructive as
to those groups' internal desire for acceptance when compared to the location of the cemetery of the
Reformed Congregation KKBE.

Figure 5.3 The southern gate of Berith Shalom Cemetery
The two gates of Berith Shalom, on opposite ends of the cemetery, are the only entry points into the cemetery and can be effectively look to bar access to the cemetery.

Figure 5.4 View of the interior of Berith Shalom Cemetery, looking south.
The tightly-packed arrangement of markers within the cemetery are typical of Orthodox Jewish cemeteries found throughout the world. Note also the large brick walls which surround the cemetery and assert a separation of identity.

Figure 5.5 View of the Entrance to Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Cemetery
Unlike the Orthodox Jewish cemeteries the Reformed Congregation of KKBE embraced contemporary notions of cemetery design and ornamentation. The gate and walls are essentially decorative, as are the main walk and ornamental landscaping.

Figure 5.6 Two mausolea in KKBE Cemetery
Large-scale funerary monumentation such as the mausoleums of Thomas Mordecai (l) and the
Cohen/Loeb family (r) are yet another indication of the extent to which Reformed Jews assimilated into
the prevailing white gentile cemetery norms exemplified by Magnolia Cemetery.

Figure 5.7 The grave marker of Henry Harby, Sr.
Harby, a member of one of the earliest Sephardic Jewish families to settle
in Charleston, died in September of 1851 and was buried either in the
Harby Cemetery on Hanover Street or KKBE's cemetery in Rickersville.
This marker, probably the top of a box-style tomb, was moved from its
original location and re-placed in the Huguenin Avenue location.

Chapter 6

African-American Cemeteries in the MUCD:
Antebellum

The first cemeteries established in the Magnolia Umbra District by non-whites were a product of mutual-aid societies founded by a unique class of Charlestonians: Free People of Color.[68] Alternately referred to as "benevolent," "friendly," or "fraternal" organizations, these societies were founded in order to provide insurance against events such as illness, indigence, or death which could be financially disastrous for members and their families. The societies were also tasked with caring for the widows and orphans of their members. For a membership fee and subsequent yearly or monthly dues, members of these societies would be provided with money and care when they became ill and, most importantly, a designated burial plot in a cemetery for a rate well below contemporary prices for similar plots elsewhere in the city.[69]

While many groups of Charlestonians maintained fraternal organizations for the benefit of their members during the 18th and 19th centuries, free African Americans faced

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68 See Figure 6.1. The appropriate nomenclature of race and color in this context is difficult and thorny and I have tried to use the terms which were in contemporary use, both internally and externally, by the groups discussed. The antebellum term "Free Person of Color" usually denoted an individual who was not enslaved and had a variable amount of white heritage. This designation allowed both white and Colored people to establish a new class elevated above mulatto slaves, with their stigma of enslavement, and free blacks, whose skin color associated them too readily with a purely African heritage. In cases where where laws, strictures, or contemporary observations were applied without regards to enslaved status or mixed racial heritage I have used the term African American to designate this universality.

69 Scholarly examinations of the cemeteries and burial practices of Charleston's Free People of Color perhaps exceed even those of Magnolia Cemetery. See Leila Potts-Campbell, "'To Promote Brotherly Union': Charleston's Unique Burial Societies," *Avery Messenger* 7, no.1 (Spring 2009): 10-11; Roberta Hughes Wright and Wilbur B. Hughes III, *Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries,* (Detroit, Michigan: Visible Ink Press, 1996), 120-124.

much more stringent restrictions in every aspect of their lives and therefore developed societies of a unique type. The benefit of burial is the root cause of the foundation of these societies. Although certain church denominations in Charleston did allow parishioners of various races to worship together in the same building – as long as the african-american members were not enslaved – non-whites were still subject to racially motivated restrictions. Specifically, whites assigned non-whites separate areas of worship within the church, usually the balcony, and restricted burial in the graveyard attached to the church to only white parishioners. This left Free People of Color without a legitimate place in which to be buried and prompted movements in church congregations in which the colored parishioners formed groups with the specific purpose of purchasing a burial ground for its members.

In Charleston these societies are often termed "Colored Burial Societies" due to the fact that the earliest were established in the antebellum period and were open only to Free Men of Color (mulatto) rather than men identified as "African" (enslaved). As a case in point, the Brown Fellowship Society, founded in 1790 by colored members of the St. Phillips Episcopal Church congregation, takes its name not from the name of a founder but from the fact that membership would only be granted to a man with a light complexion and straight hair. Thus, Brown Fellowship Society restricted membership to the elite of Charleston's Free People of Color, men of such a light complexion that they could enter business, educate themselves, and even own slaves without upsetting the strict racial hierarchy of the antebellum South.[70]

In order to establish the truest typology of Charleston's colored burial society cemeteries it is necessary to parse out their original antebellum design and

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70 Potts-Campbell, "To Promote Brotherly Union," 11.

monumentation, which reflect the imitation of white cultural mores and are parallel to the pervasive cultural assimilation by Charleston's Free People of Color, from the later postbellum additions as these societies began to relax their membership qualifications to include people without white ancestry. When this evidence is examined, these early Colored (rather than Black or African-American) cemeteries are nearly indistinguishable from Magnolia or any other the other white cemeteries within the District.

These cemeteries closely conform to the rural cemetery model in their design and layout, albeit one that is modified to fit spaces which are not nearly as expansive as the acreage of Magnolia, Bethany, or St. Lawrence cemeteries. The original plat maps of both Humane & Friendly Society Cemetery and Friendly Union Society Cemetery are both extant, and although both are so weathered as to be nearly indecipherable without the benefit of modern image-modifying software they clearly indicate an original design that emphasized the design elements favored by contemporary white Charlestonians. The Humane & Friendly Society laid out their cemetery in a series of purchasable plots, with an avenue running centrally north and south. Another avenue transected the cemetery on the east-west axis with a circular feature at the intersection, possibly with a statue or fountain at its center.[71] Friendly Union Cemetery is similarly composed of intersecting avenues and pre-designed sections available for purchase but is missing the ornate circular central feature.[72]

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71 Humane & Friendly Society cemetery plat map, Avery Research Institute, Charleston, SC. ACG30055, Box 1; also Kimberly Martin, "Community and Place: A Study of Four African American Benevolent Societies and their Cemeteries" (master's thesis, College of Charleston, 2010), 53 for a computer-rendered version of the original.

72 Friendly Union Society cemetery plat map, Avery Research Institute, Charleston, SC in Friendly Moralist Society Papers, Box 1009. Historian Dell Upton has posited that this type of cemetery is actually the antecessor of the rural cemetery, coining the term "reformed cemetery" to describe a typology which is more rigidly gridded and privatized by divided plots, in contrast to the meandering and naturalistic rural type. While this would seem to negate the argument that Colored cemeteries in the

Beyond being merely *designed* like rural cemeteries, the Colored Burial Society cemeteries of the Magnolia Umbra District originally *looked* very much like scaled-down rural cemeteries. All of these cemeteries included decorative walls and ironwork. At the Friendly Union Society, Humane & Friendly, and Unity & Friendship cemeteries these walls are low, purely decorative, and have brick pillars which indicate the entrance to the cemetery, while a higher wall surrounds the Brotherly Association cemetery, though it is now only extant in a few areas and has been replaced by modern chain link fencing where the walls have fallen.[73] There are also indications that a low brick wall once separated he antebellum portion of the Christian Benevolent Society cemetery from the church cemetery to the west. These cemeteries also exhibit a strong control of the natural growth within their grounds. The only trees within these cemeteries are very old and their growth allowed to continue because they are unobtrusive to the monuments. Similarly, all plantings are ornamental hedges and bushes which continue to be trimmed in a manner that prevents them from overwhelming nearby grave markers.

Within the cemetery grounds of the colored burial societies there is no greater indicator of the acceptance of the rural cemetery as the proper cemetery type than the monuments which they contain. The antebellum portions of all of these cemeteries are universally examples of high-style Victorian funerary architecture. Obelisks, some reaching over six feet in height, dot these cemeteries, as do the Classical Revival styles that were popular in affluent white society before the Civil War. The expressions of mourning and commemoration carved into these stones are also indistinguishable from

MUCD were imitative of rural Magnolia, Upton's "reformed" typology is applied to cemeteries founded in the 1820s and 1830s, and he acknowledges that by 1837 the two typologies had become so indistinguishable as to be synonymous. Upton, *Another City*, 203–241.

73 See Figures 6.2 – 6.5

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those found at Magnolia; Charleston's Free People of Color chose to use the same funerary motifs (lambs for deceased children, the laurel wreaths, crowns, and extinguished torches signifying the end of life and the eternal glory of heaven) as well as the extended mid-Victorian epitaphs which cover the whole marker in flowing script.[74]

In developing a typology for these cemeteries it is, finally, necessary to look outside of the District. The Magnolia-area cemetery of Brown Fellowship Society, the first Colored Burial Society of Charleston, is not their original burial ground and only contains a small remnant of the stones from the antebellum period.[75] The scant evidence about the layout and monumentation of the original, therefore, must be used to accurately develop a Colored cemetery typology. The cemetery layout was described as an "imposing" one by a contemporary observer – certainly indicative of a design rather than a mere scattering of unorganized graves – and the only extant picture of the Pitt Street cemetery would seem to bear this organization out, with the high-style obelisks and large vertical tablet markers arrayed along the north side of an avenue. A low brick wall and decorative iron fence and gate are visible bordering the whole of the cemetery . Decorative plantings can be seen within the grounds, along with a large oak tree in the northeast corner.[76] The design, decoration, and monumentation of the Brown Fellowship cemetery, along with the rest of the cemeteries of Charleston's Free People of Color, are an assertion that their community wished to be seen as a group which was assimilated to the cultural values and norms of the city's white population.

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74 See Figure 6.6
75 The extant stones which were moved to the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District are quality examples of high-style monumentation which would not be out of place in any of the white rural cemeteries of the District. See Figure 6.7.
76 Horace Fitchett, "The Traditions of the Free Negro in Charleston, South Carolina," *Journal of Negro History* 25, no. 2 (April 1940): 145; "The Colorline in Charleston", *Dallas Morning News*, September 13, 1907; and "View of Brown Fellowship Cemetery, Pitt Street, Charleston", Avery Research Institute, Charleston, in Holloway Family Scrapbook.

The inter-cemetery necrogeography of the cemeteries of Charleston's Free People of Color is a powerful physical vestige of the societal aspirations held by a group who occupied a marginal and tenuous place in Charleston's nineteenth-century society. The white values that they wished to reflect by the structure and style inside their cemeteries was first indicated by the geographic locations of their cemeteries. Barred, like other groups in Charleston, from establishing new burial grounds within the city, Colored burial societies gravitated towards the Magnolia Umbra area and Mary Price's newly available lands. In 1856 five Colored burial societies purchased cemetery lands in what was the greatest single yearly expansion of the District by number of cemeteries. These burial societies also represent the only typological group other than the large white cemeteries and the Orthodox Jews to purchase cemetery property in the era prior to the Civil War.[77]

Like the Orthodox Jews of Brith Shalom these Colored burial societies had their pick of 80 available plots for purchase located in a wide area around Magnolia Cemetery. Their choices are, once again, indicative of the place in Charleston society in which they desired to fit. Universally these burial societies chose plots nestled as close as possible into the crux of whiteness at Huguenin and Cunnington Streets.[78] This is the necrogeographic expression of what many historians have identified as a hallmark of the experience of Free People of Color as a liminal societal group: aspirational imitation.[79]

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77 The Colored burial societies in question were: Brotherly Association, Friendly Union Society, Christian Benevolent Society, Unity & Friendship Society, all of whom made their purchases in February of that year, and Humane & Friendly Society, whose deed specifies only that the purchase was made in 1856. Given the timing of the other purchases it seems likely that Humane & Friendly's was also made in February, and thus the Colored burial societies collectively represent an explosive growth in cemeteries in an extremely short period of time.

78 See Figure 6.1

79 Ira Berlin, "The Structure of the Free Negro Caste in the Antebellum United States," *Journal of Social History* 9, no. 3 (Spring, 1976): 308, 312-313 and Robert L. Harris Jr., "Charleston's Free Afro-

Free People of Color had fully absorbed the white conception that conflated Magnolia-area burial space with propriety and whiteness and thus aimed, in death as in life, to demonstrate how close they were to being white.

In the case of these Colored cemeteries the closeness was geographically literal. The 17 contiguous lots chosen by Friendly Union Society, Christian Benevolent Society, Unity & Friendship Society, and Humane & Friendly Society are clustered together at the northwest corner of Huguenin and Cunnington, with the gates of both Magnolia and Bethany only 50 feet away. No other cemeteries in the District are closer to the nexus of propriety formed by the white cemeteries. Brotherly Association's cemetery is located further away on the southeast corner of Lemon and Skurvin but this location is understandable as they evidently needed a larger amount of land than was available in the area contiguous with the other Colored cemeteries. The parcels on the northwest corner of Pershing and Huguenin were also available, and technically closer to Magnolia, but Brotherly Association might very well have decided against these lots because they are the only ones in the District with a distinct (and still very evident) drainage problem due to the slope of the ground from east to west.[80]

This significant expansion of cemeteries and the positive aspirations they

American Elite: The Brown Fellowship Society and the Humane Brotherhood," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82, no. 4 (October 1981): 289-310. Horace Fitchett is the most explicit in his identification of this trait, stating "the attitudes of this class... [was that] their behavior was a replica of that class in the white society which they aspired to be like." "The Traditions of the Free Negro in Charleston," particularly pp. 145-148.

80 Calhoun AME Church purchased these low-lying parcels in 1874 and continue to struggle against erosion and standing water in their cemetery. The possible practical consideration by Brotherly Association in deciding against these parcels in 1856 does beg the question as to what other concrete reasons entities had for choosing the parcels of District land that they did. While there are no maps which indicate the early topography of the area, an observation of the modern landscape confirms the universal mediocrity of all Mary Price's lands. No lots occupy a distinctly desirable high ground or access point and no extant source material for the cemeteries records any overt practicality in the purchase of lots. Ironically, Magnolia Cemetery itself is built upon the most swampy, ill-drained, and mosquito-ridden portion of the entire District, although these were certainly a small price for its founders to pay for the "picturesque".

expressed was met with the response typical of the dynamic between Charleston's white and Colored populations at the time. White Charlestonians gave tacit approval to the construction of these cemeteries while simultaneously ignoring their existence, giving further evidence for the idea that Charleston's Free People of Color occupied a world of shadow; they were allowed to perform many of the same actions as whites but could never gain *entree* into full acceptance.[81] It requires no suspension of belief to imagine that if the white power structure had decided that these Colored Burial Society cemeteries were undesirable neighbors, they could have easily denied them the ability to purchase cemetery lands, backed by legal statute as well as endemic racism. However, not only were the Colored men on the boards of these burial societies the most prominent in Charleston, the burial societies had an additional veneer of whiteness applied to them by universally having white Charlestonians as members of their boards.[82] Proper white society therefore had two fail-safes to ensure "good" neighbors: the first being the aspirations of the Colored populations themselves, and the second being direct white influence inside the societies.

Allowing the establishment of Colored cemeteries in the District was the extent of the positive (or at least non-negative) feelings expressed by Charleston's powerful white minority. Subsequent inter-cemetery relations between whites and Colored people were ones of marginalization and reinforcement of the latter group's liminal place in society. Despite the mass of burial society cemeteries, their placement in an area obviously visible

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81 Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973)

82 Lists of these board members, or "trustees", were required for the purchase of property in Charleston and are therefore listed on the deeds of the societies' cemetery purchases. These deeds are found at the Charleston Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston County Deed Book V12, p. 397, 411, 413, 415, and 417 for Brotherly Association, Friendly Union Society, Unity & Friendship Society, Christian Benevolent Society, and Humane & Friendly Society, respectively.

from Magnolia and the other white cemeteries, and the undoubtable presence of Colored citizens in the area burying and visiting their dead, no public mention was ever made to draw attention to them. Guidebooks to the area, like Mazyck's, which highlighted the beauty of the cemeteries in the area, make no mention of any cemeteries that were not associated with fully acceptable people. Similarly, the *Daily News* visit to Magnolia in 1866 contains no "observations" regarding the Colored cemeteries in what must have been intentional ignorance, as the route the author walked from the entrance to Bethany, through St. Lawrence and Magnolia, necessitated being less than ten yards away from the low entrance walls and gates of Friendly Union, Humane & Friendly, and Unity & Friendship cemeteries. To give these cemeteries any publicity at all would have been to imply, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the amount of publicity, that the people buried in them were equal to those who were buried in the cemeteries that did merit extensive description. Ignoring them reminded the Colored population of their proper place in society: tenuously tolerated but never accepted.
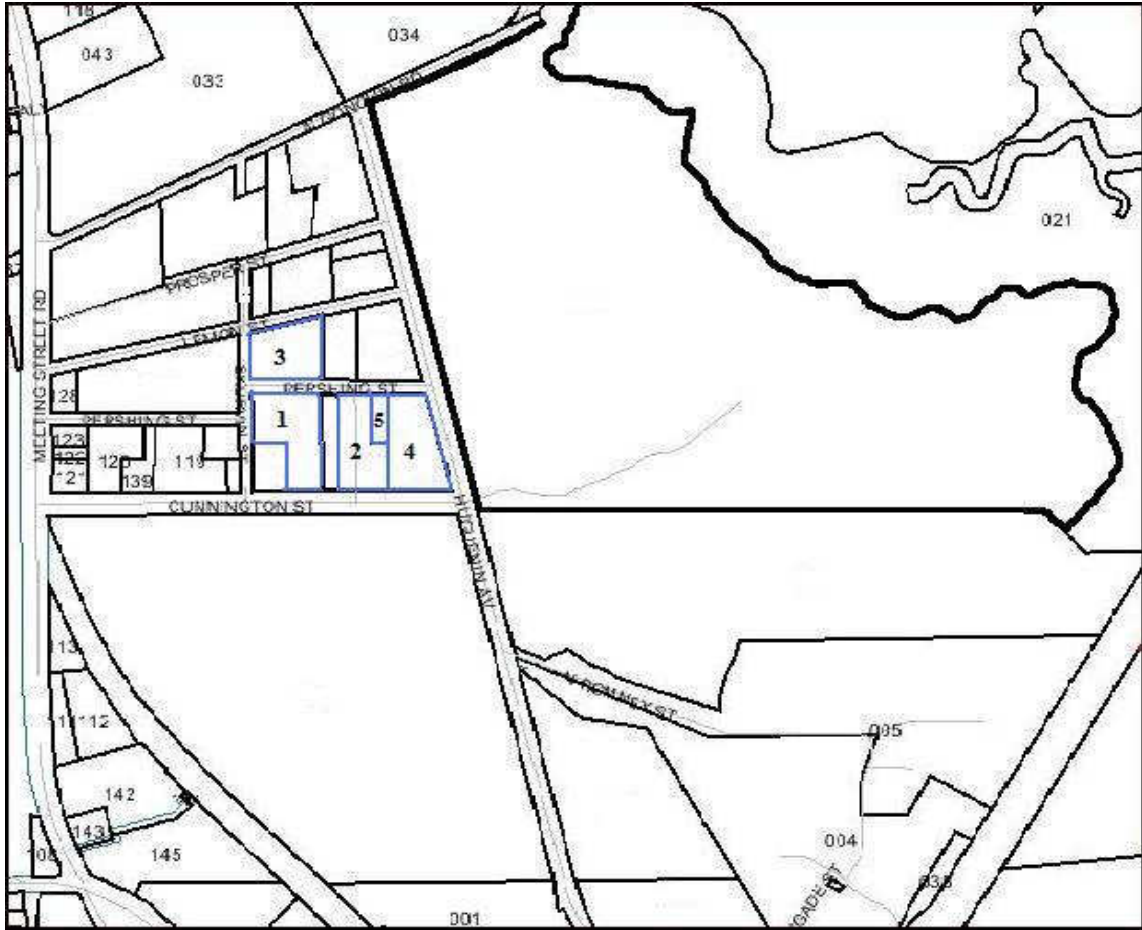
Figure 6.1 The Colored Burial Society Cemeteries of the MUCD, outlined in blue
1. Friendly Union Society Cemetery; 2. Humane and Friendly Society Cemetery; 3. Brotherly Association Cemetery; 4. Unity & Friendship Society Cemetery; 5. Christian Benevolent Society Cemetery. All five of these cemeteries were founded in 1856, representing the largest numeric expansion of the District in a single year.

Figure 6.2 View of the main entrance and gates of Unity & Friendship Society Cemetery

Figure 6.3 View of the south entrance and wall of the Friendly Union Society Cemetery

Figure 6.4 View of the south entrance and gate of Humane & Friendly Society Cemetery

Figure 6.5 View of the west entrance and gates of Brotherly Association Cemetery

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Figure 6.6 Victorian monumentation in Colored Burial Society cemeteries
Markers such as these found in Brotherly Association Cemetery (l) and Friendly Union Society
Cemetery (r) are stylistically identical to those found in contemporary white cemeteries. Contrast
these markers to the vernacular grave markers found in profusion in the District's African
American church cemeteries.

Figure 6.7 The extant gravemarkers from the original Brown Fellowship Society Cemetery.
Following the seizure of the original cemetery on Pitt Street, the Magnolia-area property was purchased and the remaining markers moved to the new location. These obelisks and ornate finials are typical of high-style Victorian funerary architecture.

Chapter 7

African-American Cemeteries in the MUCD:
Postbellum

The close of the Civil War had a devastating effect on the carefully ordered world of Charleston's white society. Hundreds of Charlestonians had given their lives for the losing cause of the Confederacy, continuous Federal shelling had reduced large swaths of the city to rubble, and, most disconcerting, emancipation had dismantled slavery, the South's most fiercely guarded social institution. While whites could mourn their dead at Magnolia and embark on the long process of physically rebuilding the Holy City, they could not take comfort from a new social structure that was perceptibly more disordered as regards race. Additionally, Southerners chafed under the Federal enforcement of constitutional equality and the perception that "Radical Reconstruction" was a cabal of avaricious blacks, Northern carpetbaggers, and Southern turncoats designed to eviscerate the Southern way of life. The combined effect was to harden Southern resistance to any area in which it appeared that African Americans were encroaching on white space. In Charleston this attitude would play out not only in the city of the living, but in the city of the dead.

This shift to an emancipated South also had a significant effect on the Colored population of Charleston, whose previous appellation as "Free" carried small but important concessions from whites but now meant nothing in a postbellum world. In order to sustain themselves as functional entities, with many members moving away from

the devastated South, the Colored burial societies began loosening their membership restrictions by discarding qualifications based on mixed-racial heritage or complexion, with at least one society voting to include women. As these burial societies began to relax their membership restrictions to allow participation by Charlestonians who were black, rather than mixed race, their cemeteries began to reflect a more African-American typology. The overlay of a middle-class African-American identity can be viewed both in the postbellum features of the aforementioned colored burial society cemeteries and in the cemeteries of the District which were founded during Reconstruction by burial societies for dark-skinned African Americans.[83] This new overlay was significantly less likely to aspire to whiteness, in society or in cemetery culture, as they were never even marginally accepted into white society on account of their complete lack of white heritage.

For Colored cemeteries like Humane & Friendly and Friendly Union, whose original antebellum plats are available to compare with their current appearance, the end of the Civil War and the expansion of membership resulted in the disorganization of their carefully constructed rural-type pathways and plots. The broad avenues which transected the cemeteries were quickly narrowed as smaller burial lots were parceled off from them or completely removed in favor of utilizing all available land within the cemetery for burials, which increased the funds potentially available to the society. Humane & Friendly and Unity & Friendship cemeteries were able to maintain narrow versions of their central path, although the former's central circular feature was taken up with new burials, while Friendly Union parceled their central walk into purchasable burial lots.

The less-designed layouts of these cemeteries are also seen in the cemeteries of

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83 See Figure 7.1

black burial societies established purely after the Civil War. In the Reserved Fellowship Society cemetery there is only a narrow central path, perhaps only two feet wide, while in the Lewis Christian Union cemetery no grid of pathways is evident as burials cover the entire cemetery.[84] Additionally, although no decorative walls were removed in cemeteries which already had built them, the new black burial society cemeteries did not bother to build Magnolia-esque barriers

In monumentation, the postbellum burial society cemeteries began to move away from performative whiteness towards a typology more typically identified as African-American. While high-style Victorian cemetery architecture was still occasionally erected in these cemeteries, the vast majority of the new burials were simpler, perhaps due to the devastating economic toll the war had taken on both black and white Charlestonians, although they retained the popular granite and marble composition rather than the concrete and wood that many have posited as hallmarks of vernacular black monumentation.[85] New burials in Colored cemeteries also retained the rural-type plot dividers, but with a shift towards using concrete rather than stone. Plot dividers in the newly established black burial society cemeteries are nearly exclusively made of cast concrete rather than marble or granite. Truly vernacular gravemarkers are still evident during this period however; cast concrete markers with simple, hand-inscribed epitaphs can be seen in Lewis Christian Union but are outnumbered by stone markers by an average ratio of 6:1 throughout the burial society cemeteries of the District.[86]

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84 See Figures 7.2 and 7.3
85 Hughes and Wright, *Lay Down Body*, 11; David R. Roediger, "And Die In Dixie: Funerals, Death, & Heaven in the Slave Community 1700-1865," *The Massachusetts Review* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 163-165; Ross W. Jamieson, "Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices," *Historical Archaeology* 29, no. 4 (1995): 40-42. The use of concrete in African
86 Martin, "Community and Place," 20; See also Figure 7.4.

The locations of the two African-American burial society cemeteries established after the Civil War also reflect the changing racial dynamic in Charleston. Lewis Christian Union purchased its land directly from the Friendly Union Society, typifying the new level of cooperation between formerly exclusive Colored societies and the new burial societies established by Freedmen.[87] Both Lewis Christian Union and Reserved Fellowship Association also chose to situate their new cemeteries on parcels of land which were more proximally related to other burial societies, rather than with the white cemeteries of the area.[88] This can be attributed, necrogeographically, to the composition of the new burial societies. While they were composed of a combination of African Americans who had been both free and enslaved prior to the Civil War, they were still relatively exclusive as the fees levied for membership and burial plot purchase were substantial and probably prohibitive for newly freed slaves. Thus, they attracted the higher strata of Charleston's African-American population, who placed smaller value on direct assimilation with white cultural norms and more on positive interactions with increasingly marginalized people of "color", while not wholly viewing an association with whites as a negative. These additions added a second, albeit broken, ring of cemeteries to the District who occupied, in death as in life, a second tier of social status.

While the expansion of Charleston's burial societies to include members who were Black produced cemeteries, both new and previously established, which mitigated somewhat the antebellum cemetery features which adhered closely to white funerary norms, the resulting typology is so indistinct as to be nearly imperceptible to modern observers without intense scrutiny. As one analyst of the burial society cemeteries'

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87 Charleston Register of Mesne Conveyance, Charleston County Deed Book S17, p. 443
88 See Figure 7.1

typologies concluded after a detailed categorization of features and styles, "none of the enduring African American characteristics have a strong presence... [t]here is nothing physical in these cemeteries that make it obvious they were created by African Americans."[89] While this may overstate the case of absence, as these cemeteries certainly exhibit a few indications that they were not created by whites or in strict deference to white mores, it does reinforce the point that these burial society cemeteries are not strong assertions against the popular trends of cemeteries in the middle- and late-nineteenth century.

Incremental though this shift towards African-American identity in the Magnolia area may have been, it did provoke a commensurate grumbling in a white population whose sensitivity towards such changes was magnified in the wake of the Civil War and the specter of Radical Reconstruction. The addition of Confederate dead to Magnolia Cemetery heightened this sensitivity. The Confederate burials layered a quasi-religious sacredness onto the preexisting notions of Magnolia as a repository for white propriety. The cemetery was now elevated by these "martyred heroes" of the Southern cause, who would one day "burst their sandy cerements,... to see those principles of truth, righteousness, and justice for which they died, eternally triumphant!," noted one speaker during the observance of the first Confederate Memorial Day held in Magnolia Cemetery, before concluding that the duty of the living was now to "watch over and protect" these dead until that day came.[90] Those who gathered to lay wreaths on the graves of dead Confederates could not have missed the implication of the importance of preserving the values of those contained within the cemetery.

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89 Martin, "Community and Place," 18-19.
90 "Celebration of the Sixteenth of June, In Memory of the Confederate Dead," *Charleston* (SC) *Daily News* June 18, 1866.

It is no coincidence that the postbellum period in the Magnolia Umbra District marks the beginning of negative and hostile white attitudes to groups seen as others. While Charlestonians had previously simply ignored the non-white cemeteries in the area, the presence of African Americans within the District began to be noted in disapproving tones. A reporter visiting Magnolia Cemetery in late 1866 remarked on two "incidents" in the area which had given him pause; both concerned the intrusion of African Americans into his otherwise idyllic walk. In the first, "a squalid, ragged, dirty, emaciated negro girl... the very picture of misery, idleness, and perhaps, starvation," was seen loitering around the cemetery and prompted the author to contemplate "in the abstract" the connection between "the negro and misery." No doubt this abstraction was that it was the negro who had precipitated the "late unpleasantness" which had so devastated the South. Just outside Magnolia's gates the writer relayed that he was then accosted by a "ragged black", who begged money for bread but was given a piece of biscuit and the admonition that it was "more than any of his abolition friends would have given him" before the reporter shed these tainted surroundings for the sanctuary of the white cemeteries. To the contemporary reader, these descriptions were a warning about encroaching otherness. The African-American presence, both living and dead, in the area surrounding Magnolia Cemetery was not so great that it intruded itself inside the sacred confines of white burial space, but was large enough to merit a disdainful public notice that the area outside of these confines was increasingly the realm of the unacceptable.[91]

The trajectory of white concern and public discussion of black otherness in the Magnolia area accelerated as the amount of African Americans buried within the District rose. In 1866 the Black presence in the District was confined to a relatively few burials in

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91 *Charleston* (SC) *Daily News,* November 12, 1866.

the formerly exclusive Colored cemeteries. However, by the early 1870s, with membership levels in these societies back to antebellum levels thanks to an influx of Freedmen members, the amount of African Americans buried in the area increased in correlation to this demographic shift. Whites responded to the rising level of black otherness in the District by applying a more forceful public warning. While previous discussions concerning Blacks in the area around Magnolia painted their presence as annoying and bothersome but confined to the margins of the area, in 1871 the press relayed to Charlestonians that Magnolia Cemetery itself was under siege by "negroes and other persons" of "evil" intent. The report notified readers that these undesirables were "in the habit of frequenting the place [around Magnolia],... disturbing those who visit the graves of deceased relatives and friends," before concluding with an entreaty to the "proper authorities" to "see to it that the evil is promptly checked."[92] The quantity and quality of the otherness in the District, while relatively inconspicuous to modern observers, was significantly more disconcerting to a postbellum white society whose sensitivity to racial issues bordered on paranoid obsession.

The changes made to the rules and regulations of Magnolia Cemetery during Reconstruction, designed to ensure *de jure* white control of the cemetery grounds, provide further evidence for the extent to which whites perceived otherness as a threat in the District after emancipation and theoretical equality. Racial segregation in Magnolia in the antebellum period relied exclusively on the *de facto* racial hegemony provided by white slaveholding. The assurances of this system were so profound that the founders of Magnolia, unlike their rural cemetery counterparts in the North, never codified racial

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92 "A Nuisance in Magnolia Cemetery", *The Charleston* (SC) *News*, March 21, 1871.

segregation and discrimination explicitly into their regulations.[93] Obviously this disparity was not due to a progressive racial view in Charleston and is instead a testament to how thoroughly effective the strictures of slavery were perceived to be. With this system dismantled, however, and the black presence around Magnolia mounting perceptibly, Magnolia's board became more forthright in their push to exclude the threat of the "other". The *Rules and Regulations* of 1875, copies of which were widely distributed, publicly stated for the first time that the board would "refuse to sell lots in the Cemetery to any person... whose connection with the Cemetery may be deemed objectionable to the lot-holders generally[.]"[94] As the most universally "objectionable" idea certainly was that of African Americans sharing burial space with whites, this bylaw both soothed white concerns that Reconstruction would erode the propriety of their rural cemetery and skirted any overly forthright racial statements that would fall afoul of Federal oversight.

Beyond burial, the mere presence of Blacks in any capacity other than the most circumscribed and controlled would no longer be tolerated in Magnolia. While slave labor, generally unsupervised, in the digging of graves and installation of monuments had been the rule in the antebellum Magnolia Cemetery the 1875 regulations warned lotholders that "no colored person or persons are allowed to work in the Cemetery unless they are accompanied by a responsible white person," who was wholly responsible for their actions and would remove them from the premises immediately after their work was

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93 There is no mention of race in Magnolia's foundational *Rules and Regulations* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Cogswell & Evans, 1851) accessed at Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. Contemporary rural cemeteries in the North barred the burial of African Americans and other non-white groups in their foundational documents. See Upton, *Another City*, 25 for a thorough discussion of these bylaws at Laurel Hill and elsewhere as a product of white concern that these "other" groups would negatively impact the propriety of the rural cemetery ideology.
94 *Magnolia Cemetery Rules and Regulations* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Cogswell, and Evans, 1875), 18.

done.[95] This encouraged whites to use white labor rather than black, as it entailed less supervision and potential financial repercussions, and reinforced the conception of Magnolia as a homogeneously proper white place in all functional aspects.

The Reconstruction-era transition to a racial conception which equated Blackness in the District with a threatening evil rather than an annoyance, and corresponded to the addition of the Black identity that was subsuming the old Colored cemeteries and forming burial societies for Black Charlestonians, begs the question as to why whites would then allow the next wave of cemeteries founded in the MUCD, those of African-American church cemeteries, even at the margins, if they found Black presence so onerous. Certainly whites had the desire, and the influence, to curtail the Black presence in the area, but their lack of direct action on this front (preventing property sales, etc.) was due to a strategic decision.

White space, as one historian of the intersection of race and place has identified, was the product of either social custom or legal enforcement; as the former was no longer sufficient to ensure the white space of Magnolia Cemetery post-Civil War, whites could only look to the latter for satisfaction.[96] Unfortunately for them, the Reconstruction-era Constitution of the state, in place between 1868 and 1895, forbid racial discrimination in the buying and selling of property – as well as in many other societal areas like voting and placed oversight in the hands of the Federal government. In order to ensure continued white domination of society in South Carolina these constitutional mandates would have

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95 Magnolia Rules and Regulations of 1905. The only extant copy of the 1875 rules and regulation is incomplete, with the last ten or so pages missing. However, the 1905 rules and regulations is complete and identical to the portions of 1875 available for comparison. I have, therefore, had to rely on the 1905 version for this citation in the (informed) belief that this final racial restriction was a product of Reconstruction-era thought rather than originating in the twentieth century.

96 Robert Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematical Past," *The Public Historian* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 13.

to be violated, but selectively, as doing so was certain to bring a strenuous legal challenge, or the heavy hand of the United States government. It was therefore better to assert domination in areas like disfranchisement where the risk of violation had a tangible reward – the end of "Negro domination" in politics in this case – rather than in areas like the prevention of black cemeteries in the Magnolia District, where the reward was symbolic and did not carry such significant repercussions.

This is not to say that white reactions to the growing perceptions of otherness intruding into the area reverted to the antebellum model of willful ignorance; the reactions instead hardened into physical form in response to the final phase of cemetery foundation in the District during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. These burial areas of Charleston's African-American churches are the largest type by number of cemeteries within the District and are sites of Black vernacular style and expression, much of it formed from the collective experience of the enslaved.[97] It is these physical expressions, wholly counter to the traditions of propriety expressed by white Charlestonians in Magnolia Cemetery, which caused the most vehement negative reactions within the District. Unable or unwilling to explicitly prevent the establishment of these cemeteries and their forceful pushes against white ideals of propriety and subservience, a new strategy of physical partitioning and segregation was developed by Magnolia Cemetery as a countermeasure to the rise of black identity in the District.

The churches themselves laid a firm foundation for a disinclination towards accepting white cultural supremacy as they have their origins in resistance to white confessional hegemony and its associated racial inequality. Three of these churches are African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) congregations and therefore share a mutual

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97 See Figure 7.5

history. The A.M.E. Movement was begun in 1787 in Philadelphia by Richard Allen who, citing restrictions placed on black members by the local Methodist church, withdrew from the congregation and began a new church for African Americans which he named Bethel. As this new movement spread throughout the mid-Atlantic states Allen called together a meeting of representatives from the various Bethel African churches and in 1816 formally organized the African Methodist Episcopal Church, becoming its first Bishop.[98]

In the year of the denomination's founding, black members of Charleston's Methodist Episcopal Church separated from the congregation due to the fact that they were not allowed to be buried in the same space as white congregants. Under the leadership of Morris Brown, who would become the first AME pastor in Charleston and the second Bishop of the denomination, three congregations of the denomination would be organized with the largest of these "Bethel Circuit" churches located on Reid and Hanover Streets. In 1822 the AME Church in Charleston was investigated for its connection to the abortive slave insurrection led by Denmark Vesey, who was one of the church's founders. It was suspected (though never proven) that Rev. Brown had knowledge of the plot, and he fled north to Philadelphia as white rioters burned the church building to the ground. Although the building was eventually rebuilt, all-black congregations were banned in the city in 1834 by whites paranoid about slave rebellions, forcing the A.M.E church to worship in secret.[99]

It was not until the end of the Civil War that the A.M.E church in Charleston could reemerge publicly, but when it did it experienced explosive growth which

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98 Bishop F.C. James, *African Methodism in South Carolina: A Bicentennial Focus* (Tappan, NY: Custombook, Inc.: 1987), 13-14.
99 James, *African Methodism in South Carolina*, 316.

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necessitated the founding of at least two other A.M.E church congregations in the city. The Rev. Harvey Cain officially reorganized the original Hampstead-area church in 1865 and gave it the name Emanuel, which it carries today. Cain also purchased the building at 13 Morris Street from a Lutheran congregation in 1867 and established the Morris Brown AME Church in order to provide services for a congregation which had swelled to two thousand members at the time. Greater Trinity AME Church was founded in 1870 for a similar purpose, demonstrating just how large a presence the AME Church had developed in Charleston just half a decade after the end of the Civil War.[100] The three A.M.E congregations of Emanuel, Trinity, and Morris Brown also needed to provide for the needs for parishioners after death, which they did by purchasing parcels of land in the District in 1874, 1886, and 1887, respectively.

Bethel Methodist Church was founded in 1797 as an integrated congregation where both black and white Charlestonians were instrumental in founding and funding the church. The original congregation met at 57 Pitt Street, as they had purchased the land there to use as a burial area, until 1834 when black congregants' outrage over a new rule that restricted them to sitting and worshiping in the upstairs gallery of the church building led to an irreparable schism. Unable to resolve these issues the black congregation seceded in 1840, meeting in various buildings around the church. In 1852 the original Bethel church building was moved across the lot and given to the black congregation to use. In 1882 the building was once again moved, this time to its present location at 222 Calhoun Street, while the white congregation used the old Pitt Street lot to construct a new church building. This has given rise to the current terminology for the two

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100   Wilbert L. Jenkins, *Seizing the New Day: African Americans in Post-Civil War Charleston*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 113-116.

congregations with the black church taking the name Old Bethel United Methodist Church (as they use the old building), and the white church simply called Bethel United Methodist.[101] In 1874 Old Bethel became the first African-American church to establish a cemetery in the MUCD with their purchase of two small lots on the northeast corner of Lemon and Skurvin.

In design, the African-American church cemeteries of the District could not be further from the manicured and structured grounds of Magnolia or other rural cemeteries. Their typology is marked by the lack of formal design found in the old churchyards of Charleston and beyond, whose associations with disease and impropriety had prompted the establishment of Magnolia Cemetery. There are no grand avenues running through these cemeteries and only the New Emanuel A.M.E cemetery is enclosed (and even this is with a very modern chain link fence that is falling down in most places and is not original to the cemetery).[102] The flora of these cemeteries is also allowed to run freer than in the other types of cemeteries, giving them the look of being overgrown. As one set of historians who study African-American cemeteries have explained, this is not always an indicator of neglect but is indicative of a deeply-held African-American belief that a burial place should not be disturbed, even by horticultural maintenance.[103] The graves within these cemeteries are organized like those in the churchyards of early America; there are no pre-planned and pre-purchased plots like in burial society cemeteries, the deceased are simply buried in the order that they died.[104] Consequent to both the lack of

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101   Theresa M. Hicks, *South Carolina: A Guide to Churches, Vol. II* (Columbia, SC: Peppercorn Publications Inc., 2003), 341-342; and United States Department of the Interior, "Old Bethel United Methodist Church," http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/obm.htm, accessed 11/15/13.
102   See Figure 7.6
103   Wright and Hughes, *Lay Down* Body, 42-43. See Figure 7.7
104   Sloane, *The Last Great* Necessity, 19-20.

formal design or a plotted system of burials these cemeteries are tightly packed with graves which orient in all different directions and occasionally overlap each other. For the members of these African-American churches, many of whom had only recently been freed from slavery, the ability to bury their dead as they saw fit was intentionally counter to the regimented and ordered styles which had been enforced by white plantation masters.[105]

The funerary monumentation within the African-American church cemeteries also displays a sharp divergence from popular white styles towards a vernacular African-American type, which numerous scholars have identified as having cultural roots in the African origins of the enslaved. There are virtually none of the vertical obelisks and upright tablets; instead, the monuments emphasize horizontal orientation.[106] Many are in-ground concrete slabs with small metal name plates impressed in them or patterns traced in the slab while it was still wet. Anthropologist D. Gregory Jeane has postulated that these types of markers, found in numerous other cemeteries similar to the ones in Charleston, are the vestiges of the African practice of scraping the ground above a grave bare.[107]

The composition of the markers themselves are also evidence of African and enslaved roots.[108] For the Charlestonians who formed the congregations of Old Bethel Church, Trinity A.M.E. Church, and Emanuel A.M.E. Church the elaborate granite and marble monuments popular at the time were either financially prohibitive or undesirable

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105 Wrght and Hughes, *Lay Down* Body, xxv- 2.
106 See Figures 7.7 – 7.9
107 D. Gregory Jeane, "The Upland South Folk Cemetery Complex: Some Suggestions of Origin," in *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, ed. Richard E. Meyer (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Research Press, 1989), 124-125. See Figure 7.9
108 Elaine Nichols, ed., *Last Miles of the Way: African-American Homegoing Traditions 1890-Present* (Columbia, SC: South Carolina State Museum, 1989), *51 -55.*

expressions of white culture. Instead, they chose materials which they could more easily form into unique funerary monuments. There are a preponderance of concrete markers, both cast and poured, in African-American church cemeteries while concrete is nearly absent from white cemeteries. Often these concrete markers are stamped with a variety of geometrical motifs and have the epitaph either stamped or hand scraped into it rather than carved as one would in marble. Historians have interpreted this use of non-traditional materials as both an expression of the formerly enslaved asserting a unique, more African, identity and their rejection of the white styles forced upon them.[109] Grave cradles are similarly composed of lengths of bent iron sewer or gas piping in order to provide "beds" for the deceased to rest upon on their journey to Heaven, a practice ironically rooted in the non-Christian religions of Africa.[110]

Perhaps the most widely acknowledged – and studied – aspect of African-American vernacular burial practices is the use of specific types of grave goods, placed within a cemetery.[111] In multiple visits to the Magnolia Umbra Cemetery District over the course of several years the only cemeteries in which these grave goods have ever been observed by myself are those belonging to African-American churches. Broken bottles and pottery shards are often seen placed on graves in as the physical embodiment of the end of life and the release of the spirit from the mortal "vessel." I have also observed

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109 Nichols, *The Last Miles of the Way, 51-55*. See Figure 7.10

110 Wright and Hughes, *Lay Down Body*, 18-20. See Figure 7.11

111 Numerous scholars have identified the placing of grave goods within a cemetery as a vestige of the African religious practices which accompanied slaves across the Atlantic and were not completely extinguished by white masters. The earliest of these is H. Carrington Bolton, "Decoration of Graves of Negroes of South Carolina," *The Journal of American Folklore* 4, no.14 (September 1891): 214. Bolton's description smacks of the racist curiosity of his era but it provided the foundations for later scholarly examinations of these practices. See Roediger, "And Die In Dixie," 163-183 and Grey Gundaker, "At Home on the Other Side: African American Burials as Commemorative Landscapes," in *Places of Commemoration: Search for Identity and Landscape Design*, ed. Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 25-54.

empty pill containers and small personal mementos lying on headstones in a practice that scholars root in fetishistic practices that enslaved peoples brought across the ocean from Africa and which the watchful eye (and forcible Christian conversion) of the white slavemaster were not able to curtail. These are the material cultural and funerary practices of people who embraced their "otherness" and asserted in their burial grounds within the Magnolia Umbra District that they were not interested in further acquiescence to white cultural norms.

Mapping the District by typology gives evidence for the inter-cemetery rejection of white cemeteries on the part of Charleston's African-American churches. The typologies of cemeteries extending outward from the corner of Cunnington and Huguenin are arranged in bands. The distance of these bands from the nexus of whiteness at the gates of Magnolia Cemetery correlates distinctly with the level of mutual acceptance between the living groups represented by their dead. The dynamic between the type of living Charlestonians associated with African-American churches, on one hand, and white cemeteries, on the other, was one of mutual rejection, and the placement of church cemeteries within (and for that matter, without) the District bears this dynamic out when mapped necrogeographically.[112]

African-American church cemeteries, tied to a distinct Black identity by both internal members and external observers, occupy the furthest band of distance from Magnolia, when they chose to bury within the District at all. With the exception of the cemeteries of Calhoun AME, lying on the previously mentioned poor ground, and the single lot of Bethel United Methodist Church, which lies adjacent to Lewis Christian Union Cemetery, all other African-American church cemeteries placed their cemeteries

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112 See Figure 7.5

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on the outside of Lemon and Skuvin streets. Their lots are the outer boundaries of the District and are the furthest geographically from Magnolia, Bethany, and St. Lawrence. While the seven church cemeteries represent the largest group by type within the District, it is instructive to note that at least an equal amount of African-American churches, contemporaneous with those within the District, chose to establish burial grounds in concentrated areas outside the area of Magnolia, rejecting the white idea that Magnolia was the sole location of burial propriety during the latter half of the nineteenth century.[113]

Just as the growth and expansion of African-American identity in the District, physically represented by Black burial society cemeteries and the postbellum inclusiveness of the Colored cemeteries, generated an equivalent counter-reaction among whites, so too did the introduction of African-American church cemeteries, with their forthright assertions of separate African-American identity. It appears that who, and what, these cemeteries represented added a critical mass of Black otherness to the area outside of Magnolia and was the tipping point that pushed white reactions from the (comparatively) subtle philosophical and psychic reinforcements provided by changing bylaws and issuing media warnings, to the more explicit segregation and rejection provided by physical barriers.

As the otherness of the District irreparably intruded, both proximally and visually, into its space, Magnolia defended itself with proto-Jim Crow insularity. This was

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113 This collection of cemeteries, now referred to as the Adverse, or Monrovia, Cemeteries, are located across Meeting Street around Monrovia Street. These cemeteries include the burial grounds for Union Baptist Church, Citadel Square Baptist Church, Francis Brown Methodist Church, and Memorial Baptist Church, among others. I can find no evidence that the choice between Magnolia and Monrovia areas is expressive of a church's acceptability to white society, or vice versa. Rather, it appears to me that the choice of areas was made simply without regard to what the area chosen "said" about the church, an indicator of how little the members of these churches cared for white evaluations of cemetery propriety. By establishing burial areas in both locations these churches asserted that the land surrounding Magnolia was just as "good" to them as the low swampy areas of Monrovia, a further rejection of contemporary white feelings.

accomplished in the last few decades of the nineteenth century by erecting a ten foot tall brick wall to enclose the entire cemetery, physically creating a white sphere which separated Magnolia from the outside world.[114] It is not an attractive feature; there is no artful brick work, decorative iron filigree, or any attempt to integrate its mass into the natural environment in a way that would reflect the careful artifice of the cemetery it surrounds. Instead, it is a partition in the truest sense of the word, meant to separate, segregate, and delineate the margins of white space. The wall served both an inter- and intra- cemetery purpose. In the latter necrogeographical function, it provided a screen of protection for white sensibilities inside Magnolia; it mitigated the perception of blackness in any sensory capacity by whites while they were inside their sacred space. In the former, it served as an architectural tool of segregation by physically partitioning white space from black space and was a stolid reminder to blacks that their presence, even visually, was unwelcome and unequal.[115]

Another segregating function of enclosure was a near total control of ingress and egress to Magnolia Cemetery. The proprietors of Magnolia had always insisted that all visitors to the cemetery enter the grounds from the entrance gates at Cunnington and Huguenin in order to facilitate the checking of their tickets by the caretaker whose house lay just within the gates. No doubt the vast majority of visitors did just that, demonstrating their acceptance of the rules and asserting that their visit was of a proper variety. Functionally, however, if one wanted to bypass this process (perhaps for the "evil

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114 See Figure 7.12. No records indicate the exact date that the construction of this barrier was begun. I have based my date on both the architecture of the wall itself, which appears contemporaneous with other walls of nineteenth century construction, as well as several pictures showing Magnolia without a wall that can be dated to circa 1880. Also note that the full enclosure did not include the border with St. Lawrence Cemetery.
115 Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation," 19-20.

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intent" which so concerned Charlestonians) before the surrounding wall was built, entrance could be gained anywhere along the length of Huguenin, albeit with the knowledge that being caught while doing so guaranteed expulsion and probably a permanent ban from the grounds. The new wall produced a bottleneck towards the cemetery's gates and allayed the fear of surreptitious entrance.. Visitors could now only enter the grounds through two access points: the prescribed main entrance gates, allowing the caretakers to thoroughly vet all comers and ascertain the purposes of their visits, or through the open boundary with St. Lawrence, the entirety of which lay within 50 yards of the caretaker's home and was therefore under continual scrutiny. There is a finality to the wall around Magnolia Cemetery and what it expresses to the outsider; it is the last full measure which could be taken to seal in an antiquated worldview, bluntly emphasizing the separate inside the walls and asserting the unequality of the outside.
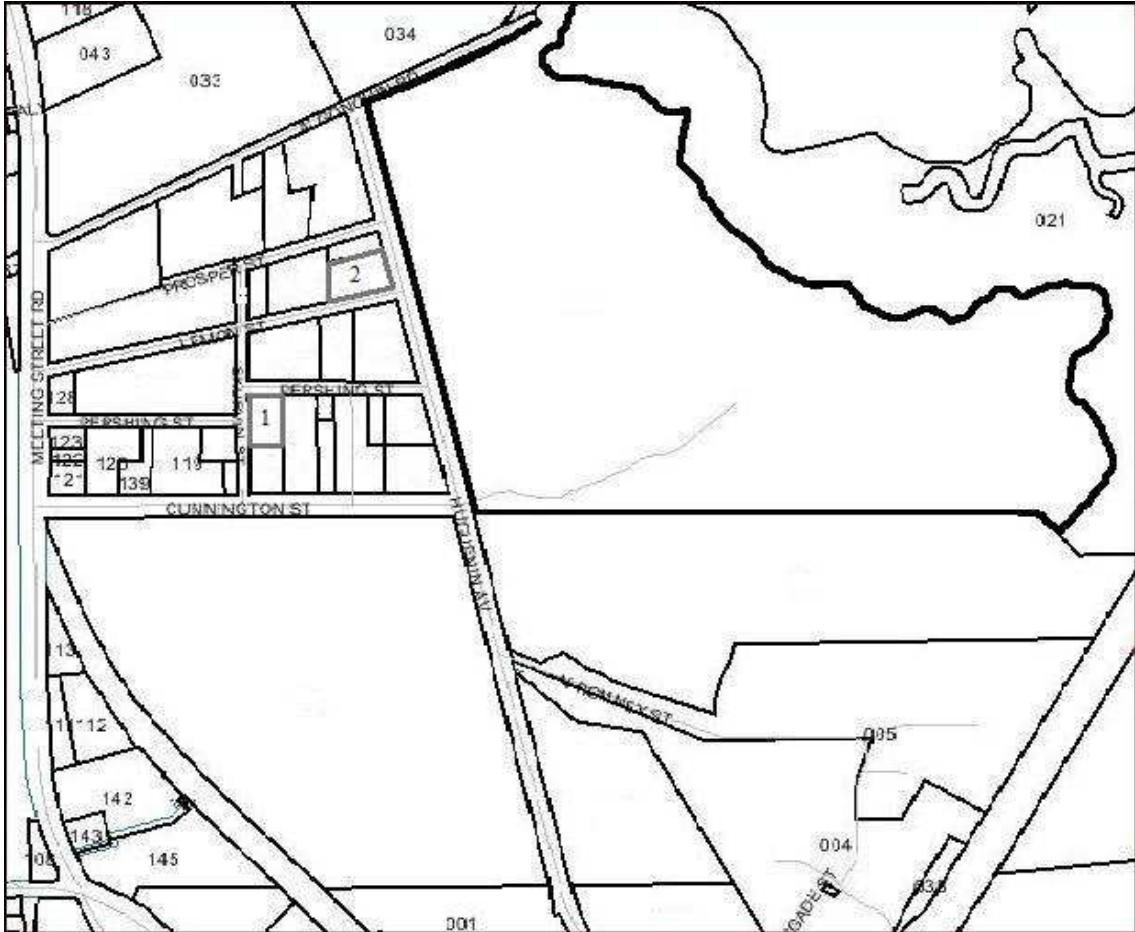
Figure 7.1 The African American Burial Society Cemeteries of the MUCD, outlined in grey

Lewis Christian Union Cemetery (1879); 2. Reserved Fellowship Society Cemetery (1884). In addition to these two postbellum burial societies, the antebellum cemeteries of Charleston's Colored population began to reflect African American cultural expressions as membership requirements were relaxed to include Freemen.

Figure 7.2 View of Reserved Fellowship Society Cemetery looking northeast
The original narrow center walkway, running north and south, is now overgrown and impinged upon by markers, such as the two upright tablets at the center-right of the picture.

Figure 7.3 View of Lewis Christian Union Cemetery facing south
Lewis Christian Union cemetery suffered from extreme neglect for many years and was the subject of an extensive campaign to restore and record the cemetery beginning in 2012. The lack of organization of burials is evident in this photograph.

Figure 7.4 Hand-incised concrete marker in Lewis Christian Union Cemetery
Vernacular markers such as this one can be found sparingly in the African American burial society cemeteries of the District, though not nearly in the same prevalence as in African American church cemeteries.

Figure 7.5 The African American Church cemeteries of the MUCD, outlined in yellow.
1. Trinity AME Church Cemetery #2 (1905); 2. New Morris Brown AME Cemetery (1945); 3. Old Morris
Brown AME Cemetery (1887); 4. Jenkins (Trinity AME Church #1) Cemetery (1886); 5. New Emanuel
AME Church Cemetery (1926); 6. Calhoun AME (Old Emanuel Church) Cemetery (1874); 7. Bethel UMC
Cemetery (1873)

Figure 7.6 View of New Emanuel AME Church Cemetery facing west
New Emanuel is the only African American Church cemetery which is enclosed by fencing but, as is evident in this photograph, the fencing is modern chain link.

Figure 7.7 View of Jenkins (Trinity AME Church #1) Cemetery, looking west.
African American funerary tradition displays a truly naturalistic view of the cemetery, rather than the artificial naturalism of the rural cemetery movement. Here plantings are allowed to engulf markers or intrude upon burial plots.

Figure 7.8 View of Old Emanuel AME Church Cemetery looking northwest
The vernacular emphasis on horizontal gravemarker orientation is most evident in Old Emanuel. The lack of upright markers belies the fact that the cemetery contains the remains of hundreds of individuals.

Figure 7.9 View of Old Morris Brown AME Church Cemetery facing north
Note the unrestrained plant growth, low markers, and horizontal slabs marking the grave plots in the foreground, all expressions of a unique African American burial culture.

Figure 7.10 View of Old Bethel UMC Cemetery facing north
Note the profusion of horizontal poured-concrete slabs, as well as the vernacular brickwork in the foreground.

Figure 7.11 Grave cradle constructed out of iron piping in Jenkins Cemetery

The use of a grave cradle, often made out of unusual materials, has been identified as a hallmark of African American burial practices. Note also that the marker itself, while appearing to be of stone, is actually made of cast concrete, as is the marker to the left of it.

Figure 7.12 View of Magnolia Cemetery's wall, looking north along Huguenin Avenue
The six-foot high wall runs north from Magnolia's entry gate and completely screens the cemetery from those around it.

Conclusion

The wall that partitions Magnolia Cemetery from the surrounding continues to exist today, both literally and metaphorically. A visit to Magnolia is still a highly-touted tourist attraction, emphasizing its picturesque setting and ornate Victorian styling, while the cemeteries around it are left off the tourism brochures (with the occasional exceptions of Bethany or St. Lawrence, which share the same desirable traits). The concept of Magnolia Cemetery as only one component of "The City of the Silent", as opposed to the only component, is lost in this presentation. Accordingly, the full utility of the District as a tool for understanding and presenting Charleston's fascinating and complicated history to visitors is also lost. Visitation and appreciation breed sustainability; tourism and public interaction generate revenue for a cemetery which can then be used to ensure perpetual preservation.

The practical consequence of focusing solely on Magnolia Cemetery, at the expense of a District-wide conception, can be readily observed. Magnolia, as well as the other cemeteries whose occupants have always been "acceptable," has a retinue of groundskeepers and caretakers to ensure that gravestones do not topple and the unrelenting plant growth of the Low Country does not swallow the cemetery. The African-American cemeteries are not so lucky. As membership in burial societies has waned in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries the substantial upkeep costs of their cemeteries has been provided, out of pocket, by the remaining few members.[116]

Similarly, the African-American church cemeteries, many of which are approaching capacity, are dependent on the tithes of parishioners which are often insufficient for the task. Overgrowth and disrepair is steadily advancing in these cemeteries, with at least one (Harleston-Boags Cemetery) already functionally abandoned and left to be engulfed by overgrowth. This is not simply a racial issue; the Orthodox Jewish cemeteries of the District can receive no new burials and are taxing the financial resources of BSBI Synagogue, which cares for them.

If the realms of the dead are truly to inform the actions of the living then it is important to frame the MUCD as a integral whole, to present them in a necrogeographic context which stresses these cemeteries' inextricable linkages to each other and the broader themes of Charleston's heritage, rather than as individual cemeteries existing in a vacuum of history, space, or place. By embracing both inter- and intra-cemetery necrogeography as tools to understand and express the complex relationships between Charlestonians on either side of this mortal coil, we are better able to comprehend the cities of both the living and the dead and successfully avoid William Gilmore Simms's myopic view of the Holy City.

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