

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is an archaeological investigation of the burial vault complex (1820-1849) associated with the historical Spring Street Presbyterian Church, formerly located on the corner of Spring and Varick Streets in Lower Manhattan. Tacking between the realms of Life and Death, this project applies name and address data sourced from historical documents and the mortuary artifacts buried within the vaults to trace and place the lives of the interred individuals across the landscape of 19th century Manhattan. Using a geographical information system, this dissertation engages with theories of landscape, life and death course through such concepts as urbanization, scapes, and mortuary practice to address the movements of the population buried within the Spring Street vaults across space and time. By removing these individuals from their resting place within the Spring Street burial vaults and re-placing them within the landscape of Lower Manhattan, this dissertation is an inquiry into how large-scale contextual processes and local events were experienced at the level of the individual during their lives, tracing them until they once again arrive at the singular and shared location of the Spring Street vaults following their deaths.

LANDSCAPES OF LIFE AND DEATH:  
PLACING THE SPRING STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY NEW YORK

by

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Dissertation

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Research Objectives.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Dissertation Structure.....	20
Chapter 2: Contextualizing the Spring Street Presbyterian Church within the Physical, Economic, and Social Landscapes of Nineteenth Century New York City.....	22
Introduction.....	22
Economic Revolution and the Urban Landscape.....	23
Social and Spiritual Reform: Saving the Bodies and Souls of New Yorkers.....	33
Abolition and Evangelism; Slavery Reform in New York City.....	40
Health Reform in Nineteenth Century New York City.....	46
Transitions in Mortuary Ideology and Practice.....	51
The Spring Street Presbyterian Church.....	53
Chapter 3: Methods and Research Design.....	62
Introduction.....	62
2006 Excavations.....	63
Mortuary Artifacts: the Spring Street Artifact Assemblage.....	69
Geographical Information System.....	77
Historical Documents.....	79
Conclusion.....	85
Chapter 4: Using GIS to Trace and Place a Congregation.....	87
Introduction.....	87
GIS: Address-ing the Congregation.....	91
GIS and Burial Record Demography.....	95
Life Course: Tracing the Deceased Across Manhattan.....	97
Death Course: Placing the Deceased within the Vaults.....	111
Demographic Comparisons: the NYCDR, Coffin Plates, and Skeletal Remains.....	122
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 5: Landscape, Class, and the Market Economy.....	126
Introduction.....	126
Life Course: Defining and Locating Class Across the Lower Manhattan Landscape.....	126

Death Course: Economic Class within the Vaults .....	145
Conclusion .....	154
Chapter 6: “Bitter Abolitionists”: Landscapes of Race and Abolition .....	156
Introduction.....	156
Life Course: Abolition and the Urban Landscape .....	157
Death Course: Race and Abolition within the Vaults.....	175
Conclusion .....	187
Chapter 7: New York’s Nineteenth Century Healthscape .....	188
Introduction.....	188
Life Course: Landscapes of Disease .....	189
Water and Health .....	197
The Great Fire of 1835.....	202
Death Course: A Shifting Deathscape in Relation to Public Health.....	206
Conclusion .....	213
Chapter 8: Mortuary Ideology and Practice in a Changing Deathscape.....	216
Introduction.....	216
Nineteenth Century Mortuary Ideology and Practice .....	217
Garden Cemetery Movement.....	220
Spring Street and the Lower Manhattan Deathscape.....	224
Shifting Mortuary Ideology and Practice within the Vaults .....	232
Mortuary Ideology within the Vaults: Naming the Dead .....	241
Potter’s Fields and Resurrection Men.....	272
Conclusion .....	278
Chapter 9: Conclusion.....	280
Introduction.....	280
Discussion of Findings.....	281
Significance and Future Research.....	304
Conclusion .....	306
Appendix A: Manhattan Ward Boundaries Over Time .....	311
Appendix B: Coffin Plates .....	323
Works Cited .....	367
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	403

## Figures

Figure 2.1 Depiction of Spring Street extent in Lower Manhattan and 1832 Eighth Ward boundaries.....	54
Figure 2.2 Burial vault location adjacent to first (1811) and second (1836) SSPC buildings.....	55
Figure 2.3 <i>Map of Intersection of Spring Street and Varick Street</i> , Museum of the City of New York. [29.100.2984]. .....	59
Figure 3.1 Location of vaults, east of church building.....	65
Figure 3.2 Coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert.....	74
Figure 3.3 Location of Bogert coffin plate within Vault 3.....	75
Figure 3.4 Stamped metal letters and ampersand.....	76
Figure 3.5 Coffin plate of Alfred Roe Cox and Edward Dorr Griffin Cox.....	77
Figure 4.1 Depiction of Hudson Street over time.....	89
Figure 4.2 SSPC-associated addresses, 1820-1825.....	103
Figure 4.3 SSPC-associated addresses, 1826-1830.....	104
Figure 4.4 SSPC-associated addresses, 1831-1835.....	105
Figure 4.5 SSPC-associated addresses, 1836-1840.....	106
Figure 4.6 SSPC-associated addresses, 1841-1845.....	107
Figure 4.7 SSPC-associated addresses, 1846-1849.....	108
Figure 4.8 Coffin plate distribution within the SSPC burial vaults, n=58.....	114
Figure 5.1 Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1810-1846.....	138
Figure 5.2 Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1830s.....	141
Figure 5.3 Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1840s.....	142
Figure 5.4 Business and home addresses associated with the household of Johnathan Clark, d.1824, in relation to city market locations.....	144
Figure 5.5 Business and home addresses associated with the household of Emma Fitz Randolph, d.1822, in relation to city market locations.....	145
Figure 5.6 Distribution of residential addresses, Roe household.....	153
Figure 5.7 Coffin plate of Oswald Williams Roe.....	154
Figure 6.1 Map of locations associated with known and possible persons of color, recorded in the NYCDR.....	163
Figure 6.2 Map of 1834 Race Riot locations and SSPC address points.....	166

Figure 6.3 <i>Map of Intersection of Spring Street and Varick Street, Museum of the City of New York.</i> [29.100.2984].....	168
Figure 6.4 Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1835.....	171
Figure 6.5 Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1836.....	172
Figure 6.6 Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1837.....	173
Figure 6.7 Three almost-complete refined earthenware saucers recovered from the SSPC burial vaults.....	179
Figure 6.8 Burial vault distribution of almost-complete refined earthenware saucers.....	181
Figure 6.9 Burial vault distribution of leather artifact finds.....	183
Figure 6.10 Burial vault distribution of coin artifacts.....	185
Figure 6.11 Four coins found in the north and west parts of Vault 4.....	186
Figure 7.1 1832 cholera epidemic, adapted from Reese 1833.....	196
Figure 7.2 Well and pump locations mentioned in Common Council meeting minutes for sampled years.....	201
Figure 7.3 SSPC-associated addresses in 1835, with area impacted by fire and public nuisances.....	204
Figure 7.4 SSPC-associated addresses in 1836, with area impacted by fire and public nuisances.....	205
Figure 7.5 Lower Manhattan burial grounds operating contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults, 1820-1849.....	209
Figure 7.6 FS distribution of ceramic saucers recovered from the SSPC burial vaults in near-complete condition.....	212
Figure 8.1 Lower Manhattan burial grounds, in use contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults (1820-1849), as affected by the 1823, 1832, and 1851 burial bans.....	226
Figure 8.2 Distance between Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, and the SSPC, with ferry connections.....	231
Figure 8.3 Examples of butterfly and butt style hinges found at the SSPC vault site.....	237
Figure 8.4 Example of a ribbon with a picot edge, tied in a bow.....	240
Figure 8.5 Examples of straight pins recovered from the SSPC burial vaults.....	241
Figure 8.6 Examples of morphology found among the SSPC coffin plate assemblage.....	250
Figure 8.7 Coffin plate of Julia Radcliff, d.1823.....	257
Figure 8.8 Map of funeral location documented in Julia Radcliff's obituary.....	258
Figure 8.9 Coffin plate of Nicholas Ware, d.1824.....	260

Figure 8.10 Map of funeral location documented in Nicholas Ware’s obituary.....	261
Figure 8.11 Coffin plate of Louisa Hunter, d.1825.....	264
Figure 8.12 Map of funeral location documented in Louisa Hunter’s obituary.....	265
Figure 8.13 Coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert, d.1842.....	266
Figure 8.14 Map of funeral location documented in Rudolphus Bogert’s obituary.....	267
Figure 8.15 Funeral locations documented in obituaries.....	270
Figure 9.1 Heat map of address points associated with the SSPC.....	283
Figure 9.2 Addresses associated with the Root household in 1835 and 1836.....	288
Figure 9.3 Distribution of addresses recorded in the NYCDR.....	290
Figure 9.4 Distribution of funeral locations associated with the obituaries of the SSPC coffin plate population.....	292
Figure 9.5 Lower Manhattan burial grounds operating contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults, 1820-1849.....	294
Figure 9.6 Examples of morphology found among the SSPC coffin plate assemblage.....	299
Figure 9.7 Distribution of coffin plates within the SSPC burial vaults.....	301
Figure 9.8 Distribution of skeletal remains within the SSPC burial vaults.....	302
Figure 9.9 “Alleyway Archaeology: Slow Spaces Betwixt and Between.” An exhibition of art and archaeology, in collaboration with New York City artist, Cora Jane Glasser.....	306

## Tables

Table 4.1 Frequency of entries in the NYCDR by year and address type.....	93
Table 4.2 Demography of the NYCDR and 31 individuals identified by the coffin plates.....	96
Table 4.3 Demographic ratios among the NYCDR and named coffin plate populations.....	97
Table 4.4 Comparison of demographic data collected from the NYCDR, legible coffin plate assemblage, and the skeletal remains.....	123
Table 5.1 Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Miles Ray, sourced from city directories.....	130
Table 5.2 Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Johnathan Clark, sourced from city directories.....	131
Table 5.3 Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Edgar Howard Harriott, sourced from city directories.....	132
Table 5.4 Coffin plate assemblage by age, sex, and economic class, compared to total burials listed in the NYCDR.....	148
Table 5.5 List of burial prices, Spring Street Presbyterian Church.....	151
Table 6.1 Locations targeted by the mob during the 1834 Race Riots, depicted in figure 6.2....	165

Table 6.2 Changes in number of burials by year documented in the NYCDR with coffin plate totals and comments on months lacking burials.....	177
Table 7.1 Depiction of number of burials at SSPC (n=656) and cause of death in epidemic years, referencing epidemic diseases and 10 most frequent causes of death in NYCDR.....	193
Table 8.1 SSPC-associated entries in the NYCDR, by address type over time.....	229
Table 8.2 Details of coffin plate artifacts, listing names, demography, dates of death, and morphology.....	247
Table 8.3 List of individuals with obituaries.....	253
Table 8.4 Comparison of demography among skeletal remains, NYCDR entries, coffin plates, and obituaries.....	254
Table 8.5 Comparison of coffin plates and obituaries by age, sex, and economic class.....	255
Table 8.6 Distances over time between funeral locations documented in obituaries.....	269
Table 9.1 List of individuals with obituaries mapped in figure 9.4.....	291

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction**

Founded in 1810, the Spring Street Presbyterian Church (SSPC) opened its doors in April 1811 on the southeast corner of Spring Street and Varick Street in New York City. At the time of its founding the church was surrounded by a rural landscape, described as fields and orchards (Meade 2007, 2010; Meade and White 2013). Within 10 years the intersection of Spring and Varick would transform into an urban neighborhood in the heart of Manhattan's Eighth Ward, representing a cross-section of Jacksonian New York with a racially and economically diverse population of working and middle class residents (Ernst 1994:191; Homberger 2005:60; Meade 2010:9; Wall 1994:42-49).

By 1820 the first two of four burial vaults built adjacent to the church would open for use by the church's congregation and their relations. The second two vaults would open for interments in 1831. During this same period the church became politically active and participated in abolitionist and evangelical activities, including the admission of non-white church members, under the guidance of its pastors, Rev. Samuel H. Cox and Rev. Henry G. Ludlow (Meade 2007:II-3, 2010:11; Mooney et al. 2008:2.3). Three years later, in July of 1834, anti-abolitionists would sweep through the Eighth and surrounding wards in a series of riots targeting locations associated with abolitionists and Manhattan's Black population (Burrows and Wallace 1999:556-558; Meade 2007:II-4, 2010; Meade and White 2013:315-316). On July 11<sup>th</sup> the SSPC itself was a target of the mob, with the damage to the church building causing it to be rebuilt, opening again in 1836.

The rest of the century was a period of rapid and dramatic urban restructuring; New York City became more diverse, commercial, and urban, particularly in the southern wards. The city's commercial south grew, pushing residential neighborhoods northward (Blackmar 1989; Scherzer

1992:183-197). Like other southern Manhattan churches, the decline of the congregation and the hardships caused by a reduced membership eventually contributed to the SSPC's permanent closure in 1963, after which the property was sold and converted to a parking lot (Meade 2007:II-7; NYT 1898, 1966).

Half a century later, in December 2006, construction crews working on the corner of Spring and Varick in present-day SoHo uncovered skeletal remains while preparing the foundation of the hotel-condominium complex that now stands on the site.<sup>1</sup> What they had unearthed were the remains of the four burial vaults associated with the SSPC, fallen out of memory after their closure in the mid-19th century. Archaeological excavations over the following two months recovered artifacts across two stratigraphic contexts along with the skeletal remains of at least 197 individuals (Mooney et al. 2008; Novak 2017a).

The excavations of the SSPC burial vaults offer a unique opportunity to consider life and death in 19th century New York City, as viewed through the lens of a diverse, abolitionist congregation. While the skeletal remains have been, and continue to be, the focus of a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Even before the remains of the SSPC burial vaults were rediscovered, the planned construction at the corner of Spring and Varick was met with local opposition. Local residents, the SoHo Alliance, and the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation banded together and argued that the intended business, a hotel-condominium hybrid to be named "Trump SoHo" violated local zoning ordinances and was, "an apartment tower that merely masquerades as a hotel" (Lombardy 2006). In addition to opposing the 46-story glass tower that would loom over the nearby brick warehouses, disrupting the skyline and architectural character of the neighborhood, the arrival of residential zoning was also perceived as a threat to the manufacturers and businesses present in the area. Discovery of the SSPC burial vaults and skeletal remains in December 2006 added to concerns about the site and respect for those interred there. Despite these arguments and protests, the construction permit was approved in May 2007 (Engquist 2007).

The high rise was not free of conflict once construction was completed, however; shortly after opening, Trump SoHo owner Bayrock/Sapir was sued for fraud concerning the sale of the hotel's condo units (McIntire 2016; Stempel and Seetharaman 2010). Donald Trump was also named in the suit, as was Trump International Hotels Management LLC (Karmin 2010). The professional and financial relationship between Donald Trump, the Trump Organization, and Bayrock Group would also come into question – eventually contributing to investigations of, "possible ties between Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and Russian officials" (Zaroli and Selyukh 2017; see also Bagli 2007; Brown et al. 2017). Coinciding with the launch of the Mueller probe, in late 2017 Trump SoHo would be renamed "The Dominick" referencing the street that runs parallel to Spring Street, one block to the south (Fahrenheit and O'Connell 2017; Im 2018; Protess et al. 2017). Trump Organization's decision to sever its connection with the property was made following a drop in business related to opposition to Trump's presidential campaign as well as to deter ongoing use of the site for protests of Trump's presidency.



other inquiries (e.g. Ellis 2010, 2014, 2019, 2020; Hosek et al. 2020; Novak 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2022; Novak and Willoughby 2010; Werner and Novak 2010), this dissertation explores the influences of urbanization, economic revolution, and social reform on these people's movements and mortuary practices—in other words, how they dwelled in both life and death.

This dissertation study originates at the burial vaults, a location shared by the individuals interred there and the starting point for identifying them. Those buried within the vaults traveled through the Manhattan landscape on different paths, at different paces, and on different timelines, living diverse lives influenced by their varying social and economic identities. They came to rest in the vaults at different times, but were unified in that shared space and again in the 2006 rediscovery of the site. Beginning with the segment of the Church congregation and their relations identified by legible coffin plate artifacts,<sup>2</sup> this dissertation draws this burial population back out of the vaults, locating them throughout the changing 19th century Manhattan landscape, tracing them across scales of space and time, until they are once again placed back in the vaults at the ends of their lives. This is achieved through the co-application of identifying information derived from coffin plate inscriptions with documentary research in order to conduct a spatial and temporal investigation of the city using a geographical information system (GIS). This is an exploration of the realm of the Living, above street-level; additionally, this dissertation also explores the realm of the Dead, below street-level, within the vaults. The 19th century was a transformative period in mortuary practice and ideology, recorded in the style, manufacture, and use of the artifacts interred with the bodies inside the vaults.

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<sup>2</sup> Coffin plates are a class of mortuary artifact that was affixed to a coffin exterior to identify the remains of an individual. Used in the Spring Street vaults, the coffin plates were affixed to the coffin, usually over the head or chest, and recorded the name, age, and date of death of the individual. These artifacts will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 3.

The vaults, their physical structure, use, and meaning, were created by paths, relationships, and decisions within the realm of the Living. How these individuals became associated with the SSPC, the choices they, their families, and the larger congregation made influenced the placing of these individuals within the vaults and the burial context created there. And conversely, the realm of the Dead, how it was conceptualized, memorialized, and experienced via its smells or other experiences of decay, intruded upon and impacted the living, further influencing the choices that defined movements in health reform, the distribution and use of burial spaces, and ultimately the Spring Street vaults' closure in 1849.

### **Research Objectives**

This dissertation engages with a broad exploration of how urbanization, rapid economic growth, and other cultural elements influenced living and dying for a sample of the Spring Street burial population. Two conceptual components introduced at the beginning of this chapter divide this study into an exploration of landscapes of life and death, and draw connections between the two using data derived from artifacts and related documentary materials. The research objectives of this dissertation must therefore address both the realm of the Living and of the Dead in relation to the burial vault population, their movement throughout the Manhattan landscape, and their unification within the burial vaults at the ends of their lives.

#### *Research Objective #1*

*How are the influences of urbanization reflected in residential selection trends associated with the church congregation?*

Such influences that will be discussed include: a diversifying and growing city population, the changing market economy and its related social impacts, and the health and social reform movements that developed to improve or counteract the consequences of urbanization.

#### *Research Objective #2*

*How are the social and spiritual beliefs of the church congregation reflected in their mortuary practices, represented by the presence of various artifact types in the burial vaults?*

This objective will also explore how topics related to urbanization, such as the changing market economy of the early 19th century, and social identities, such as race and economic class, influenced the use and inclusion of artifacts within the Spring Street burial vaults.

This research is meaningful in many ways, not least of which is its ability to shed light on a diverse abolitionist congregation during a significant period of economic and social change in United States history. In addition to telling the story of the SSPC and preserving the names of those buried within the vaults, this dissertation offers insight into a period of New York City history<sup>3</sup> that is understudied due, primarily, to the constant rebuilding and restructuring of the city's physical landscape. The archaeology of the SSPC presents a previously unknown perspective of Jacksonian New York, offering insight into an especially dynamic period of economic and social change while exploring the lives of a specific urban population: an economically and racially diverse abolitionist church congregation.

This project also explores death in 19th century New York City. Comparative studies of burial vaults, likdou[(th[prac se a pvc)4(e)4(d the )-7(c)4(ongre6(n )-9(a)4(ti)-3)-9(aring5S)-3(pring S)-2(tre)5(e

extensive archaeological study. It is unknown just how many burial vaults were in-use in New York City throughout the colonial period and into the 19th century, or how many have been lost to urban development.<sup>4</sup> Currently, none have been excavated to the extent of the Spring Street vaults. This lack of comparative contexts lends additional archaeological significance to this site, as it offers a unique opportunity to explore death within the context of the 19th century city.

In addition to the significance of this site as an example of an understudied burial context, the SSPC represents a past of American activism that remains relevant today. The participation of this church in social reform movements, such as the fight for abolition, is especially poignant with regard to recent protests against social inequalities. Two hundred years later the corner of Spring and Varick remains a site of resistance; in protest of the policies and actions of the Trump presidential administration, activists staged demonstrations outside the Trump SoHo hotel-condominium complex that was built over the site.<sup>5</sup> In response to this and other controversies related to the Trump presidential administration the property was renamed The Dominick in December 2017 (Im 2018; Protes et al. 2017).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Landscape*

This dissertation seeks to situate members of the SSPC burial population within the landscape of 19th century Manhattan, scattered across the city during their lives and coming to rest in the burial vaults in death. To do this, it is necessary to understand what *landscape* is and

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Elizabeth Meade, as part of her doctoral work, has compiled a database of over 500 burial sites dating from New York City's colonial period to the present and located throughout the City (Meade 2020).

<sup>5</sup> On August 7, 2017, Bell Visuals, a social justice-oriented art company founded by Robin Bell, staged a protest of the Trump presidential administration outside Trump SoHo. This protest included video imagery projected on to the exterior façade of the building, while women dressed as Russian soldiers stood on the public sidewalk. This protest was intended to question the connection between the Trump presidential campaign to Russian political and business interests; the artist projected other media questioning President Trump and his administration's policies on immigration and race at other locations in New York and Washington D.C. (Choi 2017). Images and video of the August 7, 2017 Trump SoHo protest were shared via Twitter (@bellvisuals).

how it is studied by historical archaeologists. Landscape archaeology is the study of how past humans shaped their world through their activities, both intentionally and subconsciously, leaving evidence of human behaviors and their cultural impetus encoded within the environment. The archaeological study of the landscape is holistic and multiscalar, exploring the many economic, social, and cultural influences that formed the context in which a landscape was designed, used, or changed.

In archaeology, *landscape* has been applied to many types of studies since the 1980s, such that there is no single definition as it applies to this field (Heilen 2005:28-29; Hicks and McAtackney 2007:13-14). Despite a variety of definitions and applications, one definition that has been applied to archaeological studies in recent years is that *landscape* is a complex, heterogeneous collection of entities, consisting of the setting<sup>6</sup> for all human activity, the material culture left behind reflecting human activities within the landscape, and the cultural structures and meanings encoded in those remains (Droogan 2013:137; Finch 2012:143; Hu 2011:80-81; Ingold 2000:191).

Engaging with the landscape through everyday activities is a context-based social process that demands a familiar knowledge of the meanings encoded within the environment learned through habitus (Dobres and Robb 2005:163). The landscape is shaped, physically and conceptually, by human activity and in turn reinforces or challenges cultural beliefs and practices by directing behavior and movement within that space, imposing discipline and limits through built or natural features and available resources (Darvill 1999:105; Foucault 1977:200-202; Gandy 2006:503-508; Johnson 2007:120, 145; Matthews and Palus 2007:235-236). Social

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<sup>6</sup> Heilen (2005:35-39) suggests further differentiating between “archaeological landscapes”: the landscape of the archaeological site, including associations between artifacts and forces of disturbance; and “systemic landscapes”: the interactions between humans, objects, and the environment. Archaeologists infer the systemic landscape from the archaeological.

structures are constructed, reinforced, and altered through the agentic behaviors of individuals and their use or response to things within relational webs of interaction and influence (Hodder 2012:212-213). Such structures are encoded within the landscape in the symbolic meanings and practical applications of objects and architecture, and the human's ability to interpret and engage with those cues (Janowitz and Dallal 2013:xi; Szijártó 2013:75). The application of Bourdieu's (1977) practice theory,<sup>7</sup> which interprets human behavior as an agentic response to the encoded social structures present within an environment,<sup>8</sup> by archaeologists to the study of the landscape has been especially useful in its ability to bridge structures and agency, and move past solely descriptive or functional approaches to the study of past landscapes (Dietler and Herbich 1998:245; Ingold 2006:11; Johnson 2007:142; Rapoport 1990:60-62, 80-81; Turner 2012:135).

Though built features may seem permanent, the landscape is not static; it exists in a temporality that extends far past that of humans and is continually reconstructed through the interactions of people with and within the landscape as both agent and landscape reinterpret and negotiate the physical and cultural structures present (Cook and Tolia-Kelly 2010:106; Droogan 2013:135-137; Finch 2012:145; Hodder 2012; Ingold 2006; Munn 2013; Turner 2012:134; Zierden and Herman 1996:193). Humans construct but do not control the landscape and, via this

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<sup>7</sup> Practice, being "cultural traditions, routinized practices, traditions and styles," (Hodder 2012:123), may be presented as deterministic, with the cues directing behavior through cultural programming. In relation to the webs presented above in my discussion of microhistory, though, practice is a way of interacting that has found success and continues to be part of the web through repetitive action, relating agency with structure. Practice is part of the relationship between people, things, and landscape because these webs are both symbolic and practical, "seamlessly material and immaterial," (Hodder 2012:97, also 91, 213).

<sup>8</sup> Landscape archaeologists have adapted Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* to examine how abstract structures and cultural rules are not only encoded in the behaviors of others, but in the landscape via spatial and symbolic cues that guide how a population moves through a space, signals who is allowed to enter that space, and implies how one should behave while present in that space (Ingold 2006:11; Johnson 2007:142; Rapoport 1990:60-62, 80-81). Humans, with their agency and their culturally-defined interpretations of the semiotics of landscapes, take an active role in the construction of their landscape by choosing, consciously or not, how to interact with these cues (Barrett 2000:66; Dornan 2002:304, 307; Ingold 2000:193).

relationship, the landscape participates in constructing humans, too. In this, landscape is simultaneously setting, agent, and process (Dawdy 2016:33-34; Ingold 2000).

### *Urbanization and the Urban Landscape*

The landscape is not static, but always in the process of, “formation and re-formation” (Rothschild and Wall 2014:2; see also Dawdy 2016; Turner 2012:135). This is especially true of urban landscapes, where the pace of change appears more rapid and at the scale of human temporality than in other landscapes (Munn 2013). With roughly 80% of the world’s population inhabiting cities today, “cities contain most of human activities and practices” (Rothschild and Wall 2014:3). Archaeologists have always studied cities; where there are dense and diverse populations of people, there is evidence of their frequent and diverse interactions recorded within the landscape. As my dissertation is a study of a population within an urban landscape, it is necessary to define elements of urbanization and its landscape.

*Urban* centers are identified based on criteria that vary between regions and cultures; there is no set of absolute criteria to define what a *city* is, though we may recognize one based on our own experiences (Rothschild and Wall 2014:3, 6). Criteria used to define what a *city* is usually include population size and/or density, permanence, heterogeneity, in addition to the presence of economic and administrative resources, and a built environment that symbolizes the importance of these resources within the locale and the broader region while also guiding the population’s behaviors and interactions, enabling a large population to live cohesively (Rothschild and Rockman 1982:3-4; Rothschild and Wall 2014:3). In the United States today, urban areas are defined by total population as well as population density.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This official method of defining urban areas within the United State began at the end of the 19th century, when an urban area was defined as any densely populated incorporated place with a population over 8,000 (United States Census Bureau 2015). This definition changed during the 20th century to reflect the growth of urban populations and increasing number of urban areas in the United States. By using quantitative criteria to define cities, the United

In observing the process of *urbanization*, defined as the growth in population and size of urban centers, archaeologists can observe the relationship of temporal and spatial in urban change (Munn 2013; Rothschild and Wall 2014:2). Among American cities, which were founded relatively recently in human history and grew rapidly from the effects of the Industrial Revolution and associated immigration, archaeologists explore elements of planning and transformation associated with urbanization and its social and spatial components, within the landscape across scale and time (Mrozowski 2006). At the macroscale is the city itself, while the microscale includes the individuals and population groups who inhabit the city (de Certeau 1984:92-95; Rothschild and Wall 2014:1, 9, 38). Viewed together over time, they form the cityscape.

### *Scapes*

Beyond the growth of the city population and industrialization, urbanization must be considered for the interactions among people, things, and ideas, and how those interactions influence the perceptions of a population as they navigate an increasingly urban landscape. Understanding urbanization as a process by which such networks of people and things intersect and are redistributed among the landscape can be achieved with an exploration of Appadurai's (1996:33-48) five *scapes*: the ethnoscape, the technoscape, the financescape, mediascape, and ideoscape. Scapes, also referred to as, "global cultural flows" (Appadurai 1996:33), are not homogenous, static, or evenly distributed across the landscape; they change based on the perspective and experience of the actors engaging with them, and are always in motion across varying scales of space.

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States government is exerting control over the urban population through the control of resources (Rothschild and Wall 2014:5).



Importantly, referring to scapes as flows or flowscapes connotes movement, and movement is one thing they all share, though no scape moves at the same rate of speed or in the same direction as the others; scapes exist in relation to, but are not determined by, each other. Each scape is irregularly distributed and has its own constraints or incentives, while simultaneously acting as a constraint or parameter upon the others (Appadurai 1996:35, 41; Hodder 2012:213).<sup>10</sup> As such, it is perhaps better to conceptualize scapes as, “frictions,” rather than as, “flows” (Tsing 2005:4-6). The movement and distribution of people, things, and ideas are not homogenous, linear, or directional; metaphorically, scapes collide and those collisions enhance or restrain through contact, conflict, and change, producing, “new arrangements of culture and power” (Tsing 2005:5; see also Rockefeller 2011:566-568; Tsing 2005:21). These movements and their frictions are constructed across scales from the actions and histories of the people and things that compose each scape, and must be examined and considered across those scales to understand how small scale agency and practice contributes to and alters large scale process. Within an urban context, scapes and the interactions among them are concentrated spatially and in frequency; urban centers such as New York City were, and in many ways remain an entry point for the people, things, and ideas represented by the broader concept of Appadurai’s scapes to enter a new geographical region.

In addition, this dissertation explores two additional scapes which are themselves intersections of Appadurai’s five scapes; *healthscape* and *deathscape*. For this study I am defining *healthscape* as the interaction of ideology and action surrounding health reform and the

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<sup>10</sup> This description of scapes explores them in a way that is similar to Hodder’s (2013:33) discussion of entanglements – those messy, far-reaching webs in which people and things are relational, contextual, embedded, and actively engaged across time and space. The parameters of scapes, while not determining where the components of the other scapes can shift or coalesce, have similar influence on each other. This is not surprising, as scapes are composed of people and things (including physical artifacts, ideas, plants, buildings, etc.) who are interacting and entangled with each other.

transmission of disease during the 19th century. This scape includes beliefs on how diseases spread within the urban environment, as well as the physical movements of people through the landscape in response to outbreaks of disease. For example, the yellow fever outbreak of 1822 was partially responsible for the rapid urbanization of the area around the SSPC, as wealthy, “fever refugees,” fled the densely populated southern part of Manhattan north to the suburban refuge of Greenwich Village (Burrows and Wallace 1999:447-448; Cantwell and Wall 2001:203).

Closely related to healthscape, *deathscape* is defined here as the intersection of mortuary ideology and practice, and their expression in the physical and social landscapes. This includes the distribution of burial spaces throughout the city, beliefs concerning their design and use, their proximity to and interaction with the dwelling spaces of the living, and ultimately their closure and removal from the landscape. The locations of burial sites such as the SSPC burial vaults, the sensory and emotional experiences of these locations by the living, and changing mortuary practice and belief in response to the Romanticization and distancing of the realities of death, all contributed to the shifting Manhattan deathscape during the period of the vaults’ usage, 1820-1849, and after.

### *Life Course*

This dissertation employs a multiscale application of life course, drawing inspiration from microhistory and discussions of extended life course. Microhistory is the study of broad cultural contexts and historical questions through the experiences of individuals at the microscale (Walton et al. 2008:5). While it could be said that this is true of any postprocessual study of archaeology, microhistory differs in its almost biographical approach to the subjects of study. Microhistory, through this biographical approach, seeks to understand the experience and

meaning of the everyday lives of individuals who are often not the focus of historical analysis (Brown 2003:7-9, 12-13; Janowitz and Dallal 2013:x-xi; Magnússon 2013:127).

There are three necessary elements present in microhistorical analysis: the focus on the small scale, the exploration of broad historical questions or contexts as expressed through the behaviors or experiences at the smaller scale, and the agency associated with the individuals visible at the microscale (Beaudry 2008:177; Szi­jártó 2013:5, 30). Though some microhistorians seek to generalize or situate the individual within a grand narrative of culture, microhistories as they relate to context provide a focused method to understand the unique experiences of individuals, and their roles as active agents in shaping those contexts (Brown 2003:12-14; Pollock 2013:168-169; Robb and Pauketat 2013:10, 31; Szi­jártó 2013:5). Like microhistory, this dissertation tacks across scales, from the individual to the city-level, and beyond. This multiscale approach is used in conjunction with multiple data sources, including the documentary record and the archaeological record; exploring multiple sources at multiple scales presents the historical relations between people, places, and landscape (Heckenberger 2013:120; Robb 2013b:97).

Borrowing from the Annales school of theory and Braudel's approach to levels of time, microhistory seeks to reconcile the issue of temporal scales by examining the intersection of the individual (microscale), the *longue durée* (macroscale), and the social, which exists between them (Robb and Pauketat 2013:11). Microhistory's multiscale and multilayered perspective tacks between the micro- and macroscales, between the local and its broader cultural structures, situating the subject temporally and spatially within infinitely connected webs of involvement (DeCorse 2008:89-90; Ingold 2006:11-14, 2000:196-197; Pauketat 2013:51-52; Robb and Pauketat 2013:24-29). Ingold refers to these networks as, "meshworks," (2006:13) while Hodder

explores them as, “entanglements” (2012). Regardless of the term used, these webs are built across time and space, and include people, places, and things within an array of relationships in which they co-produce each other, much like the discussion of scapes or flows earlier in this chapter (Hodder 2012:33, 92-93, 97).

Applying a multiscalar and multilayered perspective similar to that employed in microhistorical studies, the study of life course enables the researcher to interpret the microhistorical experience of an individual within their broader macrohistorical context by tracking and reconstructing their life. In anthropology, life history is applied to cultural studies by interviewing and observing individuals to form an understanding of their experience within a specific cultural context, temporally and spatially. Bioarchaeologists use this methodology to examine life history as it is recorded within the body, such as through social and biological evidence of aging and its implications within a particular cultural context, or interpreting evidence of health via markers of disease and diet, or skeletal markers of activity (Gilchrist 2012:2-6; see also Agarwal 2016; Gowland 2016, 2019).<sup>11</sup> Life course also attempts to avoid making tenuous associations across a burial population by defining individuals according to their age cohort, dates of death or generational associations, and other temporal markers. In doing this, researchers begin to delineate elements of lived experience among a collective that would otherwise be grouped based solely on their spatial presence within a burial site (Novak 2017a:237-239).

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<sup>11</sup> Life history theory and methodology have already been applied to the SSPC skeletal collection through the research of Dr. Meredith Ellis in her analysis of subadult skeletal remains (Ellis 2014, 2019). In this research, Dr. Ellis constructed osteobiographies by interpreting the influences of health practice, spiritual belief, and the urban environment of 19th century Manhattan from signs of trauma, diet, and disease left on the subadult skeletons, which were divided into four life-stages from infancy to young adulthood. Dr. Shannon Novak (2017a) also addresses life course in her research of the site, exploring variation within and shared experience across these life-stages with regards to the rapidly changing context of 19th century New York.

Being a study of historical archaeology, this examination of the Spring Street burial vault mortuary artifacts and their associated documentary data applies a similar life course approach using address and occupational data gathered from city directories and government census reports to track the burial population across New York City over the course of their lives before they ultimately arrive within the burial vaults. Using such a perspective, changes in address among this population are interpreted against known elements of identity and the influence of larger contextual elements such as local events (e.g. epidemics and riots) and macroscale economic, social, and ideological shifts (e.g. the rise of the market economy during the early 19th century and the social reform movements that developed in part as a response). Though these individuals all have several things in common – specifically, some degree of affiliation with the SSPC, burial within the church vaults, and possession of a coffin name plate – even this small group of people did not share a singular experience of life in Manhattan. In reconstructing their life histories, differences that contributed to creating the identity of these individuals and their experiences of this urban context are interpreted alongside or in spite of general population trends.

#### *Death Course, or Extended Life Course*

Life course or life history can sometimes be equated with the life cycle, bounded by the biological events of an individual's life such as birth, death, and social transitions associated with ageing. Viewing life course this way conceptualizes the individual's identity and experiences as existing as a discrete entity, separate from the lives and events existing before and after their lifespan. Life course, however, extends beyond those boundaries, embedded across space, time, and generations through shared genetics and health, memories, and the deceased's sustained social identity (Gowland 2015, 2020; Hockey and Draper 2005).

Similar to limiting the definition and understanding of life course to that period between the moments of birth and death, the concept of death course can be restricted to the mortuary events of and immediately following death; the act or moment of dying, the preparation of the body, the funeral service and procession, and ultimately the interring of the body within its final resting place. But identities exist beyond the bounds of the physical body or individual timeline (Crossland 2009a; Gowland 2020; Sofaer 2011). “[...] the *demise* of the body is not necessarily a bar to the continued social participation of the individual” (Hockey and Draper 2005:45). Death course, like the understanding of life course presented above, extends beyond these events. It includes the acts of grief and memory performed by the living as the identity of the deceased transcends death, preserved in material objects and spaces, and the continuing bonds of social and familial relationships that persist to shape the identities of the living (Hockey and Draper 2005:41-45; Stroebe et al. 1996). Additionally, in dying the deceased achieves a new status unavailable to them in life, joining a new cohort through which they and their relationships to the living may be examined (Gilchrist 2012). This is the extended life course, as life course is extended beyond the biological moment of death via transformative ritual, conceptions of personhood, and the materiality of mortuary objects.

### *Mortuary Ideology and Practice*

Part of the consideration of extended life course in this dissertation is an examination of 19th century mortuary ideology and practice as transformative rituals, engaging with the materiality of mortuary artifacts and their use as tools of remembrance and biography. Nineteenth century Anglo-American mortuary ideology and ritual was in a period of transition while the Spring Street burial vaults were in use. This process, the role of the healthscape, and

the related economic and social landscapes that influenced this period of transition and its effect in Manhattan are especially salient to this discussion.

The performance of mortuary rituals is seemingly universal because humans cannot completely divorce the bodily remains from the person they once were; “personhood persists,” through death (Laqueur 2015:31, also 55-56). By identifying with the deceased through the shared trait of mortality, humans confront the knowledge of their own eventual death. As such, rituals are performed by and for the living as a response to *memento mori*, the knowledge that they too will one day die and be ritualized, attaining the elevated identity and new aspect of being that comes with a properly ritualized death<sup>12</sup> (Ekengren 2013:176; Fowler 2013b:518; Geller 2012:118; Laqueur 2015:4-5, 54).

The early 19th century was a period of transition in Anglo-American mortuary practice. An intimate association with the realities of death was replaced by a secularized and Romantic attitude, focused on the experience of the survivors, their memories of the deceased, and the act of mourning. Grief was meant to be preserved and nostalgic, but also socially productive by forging connections between memory and those who share their grief (Luciano 2007:2-5, 26-28; Stroebe et al. 1996:37-38). This was a shift away from what Laqueur refers to as the, “old regime,” of Anglo-American mortuary practice, characterized by, “communal and religious understandings of dying” (2015:14).<sup>13</sup> The changing deathscape of this period exemplifies this transition, as burial places were removed from crowded churchyards and growing population

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<sup>12</sup> For this reason, mortuary rituals cannot be assumed to represent the lived reality and identity of the deceased (Ekengren 2013:178). This is explored in relation to mortuary artifacts and their materiality in the following chapter section.

<sup>13</sup> This transition in ideology and the historical context of this shift are discussed in further depth with regard to historical context in Chapter 2 and Chapter 8 of this dissertation.

centers to their rural peripheries, redesigned as Romantic gardens inspired by nature (Laderman 1996:44; Laqueur 2015:274; Tarlow 2000:218).

### *Materiality and Mortuary Practice*

This period of ideological transition in Anglo-American funerary culture was also accompanied by an increase in the availability and use of specialized mortuary objects as a part of the ritual navigating the transition from living to deceased and being interred with the dead, due in large part to the industrialization of the funeral industry and the mass production of mortuary goods (Laqueur 2015:293). Mortuary artifacts are tools of transformation, selected by the living to represent the dead as both symbolic and practical tools.

Much like the discussion of the landscape and its participation in human-thing relationships above, *materiality* has developed within archaeological theory as an exploration of the agency of things and their active engagement in process, rather than as static conveyers of culturally defined meaning (Casella 2013:94; Hicks 2010:76; Hodder 2012:33, 59, 216; Hodder and Hutson 2003; Matthews 2010:3-4; Whatmore and Hinchcliffe 2010:448). When examined through a relational view, the interactions of people and things can influence action and structure in much the same way as the relationships and interactions between individuals or groups (Fowler 2010:359-361; Matthews 2011:69-70; Robb 2010:504-507). Material culture engages with social practices and structures in a reciprocal relationship: both are constructed and reproduced through performance and practice. The use of material culture, and the roles it plays in the creation and transformation of social relationships and rules, are negotiated by individual agents according to the perceived significance of the object and the meaning that significance conveys about their place within the large cultural context (Dietler and Herbich 1998:234-235; Rapoport 1990:59). Material culture is not only the physical evidence of human behavior but



also the material agent<sup>14</sup> of social relationships, power dynamics, and other ideologies and practices related to the contexts in which these materials are used. The diversity of mortuary objects, like the funerary rituals they accompany, is contextually embedded; but all mortuary artifacts are constitutive of the social relationship between the living and deceased, and the ritual transformations discussed above. Therefore, it must be questioned if those artifacts represent the lived reality of that individual and the meaning in and of death conferred upon the decedent through their new identity as deceased (Ekengren 2013:178; Geller 2012:115-117).

The artifacts recovered from the Spring Street burial vaults represent the transitional mortuary ideology of the early 19th century. The coffin plates in particular have provided a foundation for this dissertation project and demonstrate the early transformation of mass-produced funeral goods.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the presence of the coffin plates at Spring Street also signifies the importance of naming the dead; to name the dead is to convey personhood upon the decedent, associating their identity with their remains and with the memories of the living (Laqueur 2015:366-367). This act of naming and memorializing the dead also extends the biography, or life course, of that person. Aspects of the decedent's identity, such as the social position the deceased occupied in life and the relationships they maintained with those who mourned them, are coded into the practice of identifying and naming the deceased (Novak

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<sup>14</sup> This concept of materiality has further developed as an exploration of the agency of things and their active engagement in process, rather than as static conveyers of culturally defined meaning. While this material agency is not identical to human agency – things lack intentionality and choice, two elements that regularly appear in discussions of human agency – human agency cannot exist without the agency of things (Jones and Boivin 2010:341-342). That is to say, things direct and influence human action by requiring human activities, such as maintenance, to exist in a particular state; material agency is the guidance of human action, while human agency is the ability to choose that action. This embeds both the thing and human within a wider network of relation that provide materials, meaning, and context that reconfirm and facilitate their agencies (Crossland 2009b; Fowler 2010:370-371, 384-385).

<sup>15</sup> The morphology of the Spring Street coffin plates reflects a technological shift from handmade plates to plates manufactured with a metal stamp, resulting in a regular shape and size. These artifacts are discussed in more depth in Chapters 3 and 8.

2017b:88, 96-97; Sappol 2002:14, 34-43). The life course of an individual is thus extended beyond their death, preserved through engraving, memory, and the associated meaning of such mortuary customs.

### **Dissertation Structure**

This dissertation is organized thematically, with each of the discussion chapters centering on a specific topic and exploring it via the realms of Life and Death in relation to the Spring Street burial population. Preceding this discussion, the dissertation chapters present a foundation for this analysis. Chapter 2 presents the history of Manhattan in the 19th century, establishing the context in which the SSPC was founded and its burial vaults opened for use. Beginning with the broader context of the city, this chapter explores the history of Manhattan thematically, engaging with the specific topics that will structure and inform the discussion chapters later in this dissertation. The chapter then narrows its scope to the church itself, presenting a history of the SSPC from its founding in 1810 until its rediscovery in 2006.

Chapter 3 details the methods used in this dissertation study, beginning with an overview of the excavations and artifact record that informed and supplied data for this analysis. The chapter then expands on how that information was integrated in a GIS, a type of interactive mapping database, and how the artifactual evidence from the site was elaborated upon using documentary records in the construction of that GIS.

Chapter 4 further discusses the construction and use of the GIS as a tool for exploring both life and death course, and its specific application to the Spring Street burial vaults.

Chapter 5 then explores the Spring Street burial population and life and death course in relation to economic class and urbanization. Address changes among the burial population, specifically those individuals represented in the New York City Death Records (NYCDR) and by

coffin plates excavated at the vault site, will be examined against data such as occupational records.

Chapter 6 continues this organization of the dissertation discussion by theme with a discussion of race and abolition as they relate to the Spring Street Church, the church's role as a nexus of social agency within the surrounding neighborhood and Eighth Ward, and its influence on the life and death course of those in the named burial population.

Chapter 7 examines health reform and public health events within the urban context of 19th century Manhattan. This chapter discusses the impact of changing views on health and disease on neighborhood creation and movement, and their role in altering Manhattan's landscape/deathscape.

The changing deathscape of the 19th century in New York City is further discussed in Chapter 8. Focusing on shifting mortuary ideologies and customs, this chapter explores the use of the Spring Street burial vaults within a historical period that experienced the physical and symbolic removal of death from daily lived experience.

Chapter 9 concludes this dissertation by reviewing the conclusions and trends observed via the GIS in relation to the guiding topics of each discussion chapter, integrating their discussions of life and death course.

## **Chapter 2: Contextualizing the Spring Street Presbyterian Church within the Physical, Economic, and Social Landscapes of Nineteenth Century New York City**

### **Introduction**

New York is a city in a constant state of reinvention. The 19th century in particular was an especially dynamic period of transition. Economic revolution characterized by a growing market economy and industrialization contributed to the restructuring of social relationships, while the large-scale movement of people across North America and the globe brought new populations in contact. In response to these changes, transforming ideologies expressed through social reform movements in abolition, bodily and moral health, and education, sought to elicit social and personal improvement. In Manhattan, these economic, social, and ideological elements transformed the city from a compact colonial settlement into a sprawling and diverse metropolis.

This dissertation explores this period of rapid and dramatic change through the lens of a historical Presbyterian church that was located in the diverse Eighth Ward of New York City during the 19th century. To achieve this goal, the SSPC, its congregation, and the Eighth Ward of Manhattan must first be positioned within the broader context of 19th century New York City, so as to consider the city's role in a growing global economy and the subsequent impact on its population through the movement of people, goods, and ideas.

In this chapter I will examine how the social, economic, and ideological contexts of 19th century Manhattan shaped the experiences of this church congregation. I will begin at the scale of the city, with an examination of how historical events and interactions such as the economic dominance and rapid growth of New York City, and the ideological shifts fueling the Second Great Awakening and social reform movements of the early 19th century, shaped the landscape of the Eighth Ward and the experiences of the Spring Street congregation. This chapter will then

narrow its scope to present the history of the SSPC through its role in 19th century social reform and its changing influence within the Eighth Ward community as the local population formed and transformed in response to the growing urbanization and commercialization of the surrounding landscape.

### **Economic Revolution and the Urban Landscape**

The present-day identity of New York City as home to the world's most powerful market and eight million people is deeply rooted in the city's colonial past. New York City's early economic success was in large part due to its physical location, which was ideally situated for international and local shipping. Settled in 1625 as a factory settlement, the natural harbor was an attractive feature for New Amsterdam's original settlers, allowing easy access to ships that would carry goods and resources to the Dutch colonies in the Caribbean and South America, and return with slaves from Africa and settlers from Europe (Burrows and Wallace 1999:19-21; Cantwell and Wall 2001:150-153; Sellers 1991:40). Access to the New York harbor was not dependent on tides and was rarely blocked by ice during winter, while the Hudson River connected the city to the state capital at Albany, 145 river miles north. Innovations in transportation methods, shipping schedules, and transit routes throughout the early 19th century would result in 36% of all American trade passing through New York City by 1830; by 1850 this number would jump to 71% (Burrows and Wallace 1999:435; Domosh 1990:27).

This rapid growth in American trade during the early 19th century was a result of the market revolution, an economic transformation fueled by industrialization, European demand for American-produced goods, and shifting labor models. At its core, the market revolution was a change in how goods were made and sold. Agricultural labor models intensified, increasing production beyond subsistence levels and creating a demand for land that pushed the frontier

westward as entire generations left New England in search of farmland (Burrows and Wallace 1999:334-335; Sellers 1991:17). Those who did not inherit land or could not afford to move west instead migrated to growing urban centers, creating a class of unskilled wage laborers around which the new market economy and its methods of production were based. New industrialized technologies made it possible for unskilled laborers to manufacture products that previously would have required specialized knowledge and skills gained during an apprenticeship.

The new market economy, characterized by the intensified production of surplus goods in the agricultural hinterland and the urban core, created a demand for market access and innovations in shipping technologies and networks to transport those goods (Burrows and Wallace 1999:334-335). In 1825, New York City's position as the, "nation's premier port and marketplace," (Burrows and Wallace 1999:333) was solidified with the opening of the Erie Canal<sup>16</sup> (Janowitz and Dallal 2013:207). The success of the Erie Canal triggered a, "transportation revolution," throughout the United States (Sellers 1991:43). In an effort to connect and compete with New York City and the Erie Canal, local and state governments across the United States began subsidizing railways, canals, and turnpikes (Burrows and Wallace 1999:431; Sellers 1991:43-44). This bolstered the market economy by expanding the division of labor and specializing regional production of produce and goods. The network of canals connecting New York City's ports and markets to producers in New England, the Midwest, and Canada created, "a northeastern sectional economy [...] integrating the port/hinterland

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<sup>16</sup> When federal funding was denied under the Madison administration, New York Governor DeWitt Clinton convinced the New York state legislature to fund the Erie Canal as a, "state-owned, state-financed, state-run enterprise," (Burrows and Wallace 1999:430). Work on the immense project began in July 1817 and was completed in October 1825 for a cost of \$7 million. The 363-mile-long canal followed the southern shore of Lake Ontario, through a break in the Appalachian Mountains that had been utilized by the Iroquois during the early fur trade (Sellers 1991:42). Within the first year the Erie Canal had collected half-a-million dollars in tolls; within 15 years the tolls collected on the canal had repaid the cost of building, as well as subsidized another 600 miles of canals in New York State (Burrows and Wallace 1999:431). The value of freight shipped along the canal reached \$200 million by the mid-19th century (Burrows and Wallace 1999:431; Sellers 1991:43).

economies and reaching out to create a national market” (Sellers 1991:43). The people of New York City, such as the congregation at Spring Street, would have been eating grain and building with timber from the Midwest and using coal from Pennsylvania to heat their homes, shipped to the city along the canals in steam-powered vessels (Burrows and Wallace 1999:431-432).

### *New York City’s Urban Landscape*

Early structuring of New York’s urban landscape and northward expansion was achieved through the creation of wards, or local administrative divisions. Manhattan’s ward system was devised by the Dongan Charter of 1683, which incorporated New York City and organized its local government. The purpose of the ward system was primarily political, with each ward electing an alderman and assistant alderman as representatives to the Common Council (Jackson et al. 2010:1376-1377). Originally there were five wards representing the population of New York City: North, South, East, West, and Dock.<sup>17</sup> A sixth, referred to as the Out Ward, encompassed the rest of the island (Burrows and Wallace 1999:92; Homberger 2005:40; Gronowicz 1998:7). Ward boundaries were altered throughout the 18th century and additional wards were created as the city’s population spread north during the 19th century (Ernst 1994:191; Department of State 1865:223-225). By the end of the 19th century there were 24 wards representing Manhattan and part of Westchester County.

Like the ward system, Manhattan’s urban growth in the 19th century was further organized by the Commissioners’ Plan of 1811. This plan shaped northward expansion to reflect the republican values of the new United States and the economic interests of the growing city (Blackmar 1989:76-77, 94-100; Burrows and Wallace 1999:420-421). Following the Revolution, America sought to develop its identity as, “a country of virtuous individuals who maintained an

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<sup>17</sup> Please refer to Appendix A for maps of Manhattan’s changing ward boundaries.

equally virtuous government” (Abzug 1994:15). Unlike European cities, with their winding paths and street names memorializing the nobility, New York’s built landscape would reflect the republican values of order and balance, organizing the landscape to facilitate business and an egalitarian distribution of resources (Blackmar 1989:77; Burrows and Wallace 1999:421-422; Matthews 2010:89-91). North of Houston Street and the old city, the rest of Manhattan was to be leveled and laid in a grid of twelve avenues stretching north along the island’s axis, intersected by numbered streets; this transformation of the island into an efficient and standardized city was a display of, “technique over topography,” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:421) and man’s control of the natural landscape.

Despite the democratic nature of the numbered streets and ordered grid, however, the design of New York’s northward expansion was still arranged by a group of individuals seeking to impose their own world-view on the landscape; in this case, it was the dominant commercial class that controlled the city’s government. The construction of the grid was an act of class conflict, giving control over the physical environment and access to resources to the wealthy and middle classes while literally removing the poor and working classes from the landscape (Rothschild and Wall 2014:8). In constructing this uniform and structured landscape activity and cultural areas significant to peripheral populations and industries, such as the Collect Pond<sup>18</sup> and

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<sup>18</sup> The Collect Pond, also known as the Fresh Water, was a spring-fed, 70 acres wide, 60 feet deep fresh water pond located north of the city’s Commons (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359; Cantwell and Wall 2001:217). The Collect became the location of industries that were deemed too noxious to be housed near areas of dense settlement. Industries including tanneries, potteries, breweries, and slaughterhouses occupied the south and east banks of the Collect Pond, and the waste from these businesses soon polluted the area (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359; Cantwell and Wall 2001:217-218; LaRoche 2013:141; Milne 2000a:20, 22; Yamin 2000:1, 2001:6-7; Yamin et al. 1997:47). By 1815, all evidence of the Collect Pond had been removed from the landscape, replaced by housing and a growing commercial district (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359, 392).



the African Burial Ground,<sup>19</sup> were removed from the visual landscape, covered over as ground was leveled and new, profitable buildings were constructed.

Similar to the northward expansion of the city grid laid out by the Commissioners' Plan of 1811 and its focus on order over nature and the republican value of control, numbered addresses provide social control over a residential population by identifying spaces and the individuals associated with them. The use of numbered addresses grows in frequency among New York City directories during the mid-1820s (e.g. Longworth 1825, 1826, 1827). Addresses without street numbers were listed by their relation to landmarks, with a home or business being located near the river or at an intersection with another street (e.g. Longworth 1813). In adopting numbered addresses, the urban geography became more user-friendly for non-locals entering the area, as well as granting authorities more control over urban space and the people within it.

#### *The New Market Economy and Manhattan's Social Geography*

Much like the physical geography of the city, the market revolution and its related changes in production methods altered social relationships across multiple scales. Prior to the early 19th century and its shifting market economy, community cooperation through the trading of labor or sharing of tools was necessary to complete tasks and produce goods or foodstuffs for survival. This cooperation gave way to market-driven competition in the 19th century, as

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<sup>19</sup> Located in a natural ravine to the southwest of the Collect Pond, the African Burial Ground was used for burials by both the free and enslaved African-descended population of New York City. The cemetery was also used as a space for gatherings and celebrations (LaRoche 2013:139). The African Burial Ground was in use for approximately a century, from around 1697, when the Anglican Trinity Church segregated burials in its cemetery, until 1795, when urban sprawl had reached the Commons (Cantwell and Wall 2001:279, 281; LaRoche 2013:135; Rothschild et al. 2022:98). As the city spread towards the African Burial Ground, the land there became more valuable as the site of future housing. In response to the planned development of the ravine where the African Burial Ground was located a group of African Americans petitioned the New York City Common Council for a new cemetery in 1794 (Burrows and Wallace 1999:400). The city's new African American graveyard was established across four lots on Christie Street, north of the city, and burials ceased at the African Burial Ground. The site was rediscovered in 1991 during the construction of a new Federal office building and is now a National Monument (Rothschild et al. 2022:98-102; USGSA 2009:2-4).

communities once oriented around family farms and the transmission of specialized skills and knowledge through apprenticeships were instead driven by wage labor and the significance of the individual in the developing American market and identity (Cantwell and Wall 2001:206; Sellers 1991:13-15, 19, 153).

During the colonial period and into the early 19th century, city neighborhoods<sup>20</sup> were fairly heterogeneous with regards to the use of space; business owners and artisans lived with their families and employees in homes adjacent to or within the same structure as their places of work (Cantwell and Wall 2001:189). Neighborhoods were predominantly organized by ethnicity, with new immigrants and religious groups clustering around places that were significant to their culture or business, such as churches or places of work, like the city docks (Cantwell and Wall 2001:192-195). European settlers remained within the core of the settlement, protected by the 14-foot palisade for which Wall Street is named, while peripheral social groups, such as African slaves and freedmen, were given land on the outskirts of town to act as a buffer between the settlements and attacks by the local Native Americans (Burrows and Wallace 1999:32-33; Cantwell and Wall 2001:169; LaRoche 2013).

By the end of the 18th century, this social landscape was shifting as economic factors began to outweigh ethnicity for many households in deciding where to live<sup>21</sup> (Cantwell and Wall

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<sup>20</sup> In general, I am applying the term “neighborhood” in a mostly colloquial and geographical sense to refer to clusters of streets that would have provided fairly uniform access to resources to their inhabitants. The modern concept of the neighborhood is a relatively recent phenomenon, and in part stems from a need to conceptualize a growing and diversifying urban landscape with mutable units, in the case of city planning and design, or create a sense of community and identity at a scale smaller than the city itself, for social or political reasons (Kallus and Law-Yone 2000:816). Frequent household mobility (e.g. the annual event of “moving day”), along with a growing and diversifying urban population created a context where neighborhoods as we currently understand them could not fully develop (Scherzer 1992:6). Additionally, neighborhoods are a product of social relations, and the concept of a neighborhood is dependent on the inclusion or exclusion of certain individuals or households (Scherzer 1992:9, 12). As such, we are too distanced to truly define 19th century neighborhoods, if they existed.

<sup>21</sup> While this was true for many households consisting of Americans and western Europeans, immigrants frequently continued to settle in locations where they could access resources through their social and cultural connections. Scherzer’s (1992) discussion of the heterogeneity/homogeneity of New York’s residential landscape explores the

2001:189-200). Wealthy and upper-middle class households who could afford to do so moved north, away from their places of business and the population-dense southern wards (Baics 2020; Burrows and Wallace 1999:456-460; Cantwell and Wall 2001:200; Rothschild and Wall 2014:67-68, 96). What was previously a dangerous wilderness inhabited by subaltern populations, the city's northern periphery now provided an escape from the pollution and epidemics<sup>22</sup> associated with the growing population of the urban core (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359; Cantwell and Wall:217-218; LaRoche 2013:141; Milne 2000a:20-25; Yamin 2000:1, 2001:6-7; Yamin et al. 1997:47). This northward movement and creation of residential neighborhoods and suburbs inhabited by the wealthy contributed to widening socio-economic class divisions within the city (Burrows and Wallace 1999:456-460; Cantwell and Wall 2001:200; Homberger 2005:80-81; Rothschild and Wall 2014:67-68, 96).

New technologies, such as ferries, hackney cabs, and omnibuses, contributed to this separation of the home and work spheres by facilitating movement between these newly separate locations in neighborhoods that were becoming defined as either commercial or residential (Blackmar 1989; Cantwell and Wall 2001; Scherzer 1992). However, the use of such transportation was limited to those who could afford the cost of travel.

While the wealthier classes were moving north to escape the growing slums and commercial districts of southern Manhattan, many working and middle class households continued to live in economically and socially diverse neighborhoods within walking distance of their workplaces and resources, only moving north as transportation costs decreased (Blackmar

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interaction and insularity of different groups based on identifiers such as class, race, and occupation, and the relationship between the spatial and the social in the creation of neighborhoods. Scherzer concludes that while few groups created true enclaves, many neighborhoods first became specialized based on industry or job availability, and then later ethnicity, during the mid-19th century.

<sup>22</sup> The role of health in the growth of the city and creation of new neighborhoods will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

1989:104; Cantwell and Wall 2001:200-203, 206). Though this description makes it seem like the working classes were confined to the southern part of Manhattan and limited in residential selection, this was not the case. As neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan became more crowded and new streets were opened, members of the working and middle classes moved house more frequently to pursue new locales, maintain social networks, or escape rising rent prices (Blackmar 1989; Scherzer 1992). One example of such movement among the working classes includes unskilled laborers working as cartmen. Though this was unskilled labor, the necessity of their profession in the movement of goods around the city contributed to the social and political power they held (Burrows and Wallace 1999:356, 520-521). The cartmen of Manhattan selected their residences in part to access the resources of their collective; population data reflects residential shifts among cartmen during the early 19th century<sup>23</sup> as they moved northward, into the Eighth, Tenth, and Eleventh Wards (Hodges 2012:123, 131; Longworth 1815, 1826; Novak 2017b:96).

Working class neighborhoods were also home to much of New York City's population of European immigrants, who settled in working class enclaves regardless of economic class to access cultural and economic resources available there (Cantwell and Wall 2001:220; Pitts 2000:39). Prior to 1840, many of New York's working class were American-born, unskilled laborers (Cantwell and Wall 2001:216). The growth of international shipping during the 1810s and 1820s, and the new full-time passenger trade made it possible for large numbers of European immigrants to leave their native countries, attracted by the availability of wage labor and the possibility of improved living conditions (Burrows and Wallace 1999:433-434). The landscape

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<sup>23</sup> The recorded profession of "cartman" begins to disappear from city directories during the 1830s (Longworth 1815, 1826, 1835, 1839). As goods still needed moved around the city, possible explanations for this change include a shifting terminology for that profession among the directories, or the exclusion of those people or the spaces where they were residing by the directory makers. Such biases must be considered in a study of the historical record.

of New York grew more diverse with each decade as new groups of immigrants passed through the port or settled permanently. By 1855, Irish and German immigrants made up 45% of New York City's population, and more than half of the city's population was foreign-born (Burrows and Wallace 1999:736-737; Cantwell and Wall 2001:216-217). While records of Irish, Italian, and Chinese immigrants show these immigrant populations settling to the east of the Eighth Ward near the Five Points neighborhood and present-day Chinatown, census data shows that almost half of the population of the Eighth Ward was foreign born by 1855 (Ernst 1992:193-196). A memorial sermon given by Rev. Halsey on the 75th anniversary of the SSPC in 1886 celebrates the Irish heritage of the church congregation, though there is little evidence among the early church records to support if many Irish immigrants were participating in the (abolitionist and Presbyterian) church before the closure of the vaults in 1849.<sup>24</sup>

Much like the social geography of Manhattan neighborhoods, the social composition of city households changed in the 19th century as the integrated household labor system of the 18th century could no longer compete with the rising cost of living and wage labor (Blackmar 1989:61). The variety of people laboring within a household as apprentices, employees, family members, or slaves, often lived under the same roof during the 18th century and earlier. Divisions of labor within the household were also less rigid, as women and children worked together with their adult male counterparts to maintain the household and family business, which operated in the same location (Cantwell and Wall 2001:206-207).

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<sup>24</sup> Among the entries in the NYCDR, 1820-1849, only two adults among the 656 individuals buried at the SSPC were identified as Irish by their place of nativity: John Henry (d.1824, aged 41) and Maria Matilda Swan (d.1828, aged 20). While it is possible other entries belong to individuals of Irish descent, learning this would require extensive research into the genealogies and immigration histories of these individuals and their families. Even if Irish descent was confirmed for additional individuals among this burial population, it would be difficult to confirm if they actively identified as Irish during their lives.

During the early 19th century, the expanding market economy and related urban population growth contributed to the separation of home and work spaces. The wage economy attracted unskilled laborers, migrating from the rural interior or immigrating from abroad, while this rising population of laborers in turn bolstered the wage labor economy (Blackmar 1989:60). Those in the middle and wealthy classes who could afford to do so, privatized their households, no longer providing room and board for apprentices, tradesmen, or other business employees whose labor did not directly contribute to the domestic sphere<sup>25</sup> (Cantwell and Wall 2001:201). In turn, the working classes exercised, “greater personal freedom,” (Blackmar 1989:61) by selling their labor to the highest bidder and selecting their living spaces – as best they could in an economy where real estate was becoming an increasingly valued commodity.

While many middle class households no longer included apprentices or employees working under a craftsman, single-family households were still not the norm in many working and mixed-class neighborhoods. Evidence for diverse households of unrelated individuals can be found within census data. For example, a variety of household compositions, including either lodgers or servants, have been identified among the Spring Street congregation (Ellis 2014:40-41; Meade 2007:D-1 – D-8). Within the city directories there is an increase in the number of unrelated individuals sharing the same home address, sometimes designated in the directories with, “r,” to denote that the individual is renting or residing in the space. This, along with the new occupation of, “boardinghouse,” listed in the mid-century directories, reflects the continuing development of tenement housing in Lower Manhattan, its growth fueled by the influx of laborers arriving from the interior and abroad who required lodging (Blackmar 1989; Cantwell

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<sup>25</sup> Census data from the early half of the 19th century indicates that less than 20% of households in the northeastern United States employed live-in domestic help (Boydston 1990:79). This figure excludes much of the middle class, who might have instead hired-in a woman to regularly assist with tasks such as cooking and laundry (Boydston 1990:77-79).

and Wall 2001:200). By 1864, the Eighth Ward, where the SSPC was located, had 625 tenements<sup>26</sup> housing 15,630 people, roughly half the population of the entire ward (Ernst 1992:191, 197).

### **Social and Spiritual Reform: Saving the Bodies and Souls of New Yorkers**

As a response to the economic and social changes imparted by the rapid growth of the wage economy and resulting urbanization described above, social reform movements in education, abolition, and public and individual health developed during the early half of the 19th century. Like the modification and construction of the Manhattan landscape, the quest to create, “a country of virtuous individuals who maintained an equally virtuous government,” (Abzug 1994:15) was a driving force for American social and spiritual reform during the 19th century. Living within the growing urban environment of 19th century New York City, the congregation of the SSPC would have engaged with reform movements as part of daily life, either as active participants or by experiencing the effects of these movements on the social and physical landscapes of the city.

#### *Reformer Identities*

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<sup>26</sup> Though there is evidence for multifamily dwellings within the SSPC burial population’s records, the growth of Manhattan’s tenements generally post-dates the vault-use period. The definition and usage of the word *tenement* varied throughout the 19th century, though modern Americans most often associate it with the cramped, overcrowded, and often decrepit apartment blocks of the later part of that century (Blackmar 1989:8-9). This iteration of tenement housing arose in the mid-19th century in New York City, following the economic depression of 1837-1843 that halted speculative building and the flourishing construction industry. Prior to the mid-1830s, purpose-built multifamily dwellings were rare; shared homes were often the product of subdividing older houses, a method working class and lower-middle class households used to afford rent by taking in boarders or sharing with another family (Blackmar 1989:185, 194; Stansell 1986:9, 46-47). In 1833 an industrialist named James Allaire is credited “to have built Manhattan’s first ‘tenement,’ a ‘four story house designed for many tenants,’ on Water Street near his foundry” (Blackmar 1989:201; see also Burrows and Wallace 1999:587). This kind of building, three- to five-story houses divided into as many as 24 two-room apartments, began to appear erratically throughout the southern wards as the economy recovered in the mid-1840s; early tenements appeared throughout the Lower East Side, near Five Points in the Sixth Ward, and along the Fourth Ward waterfront (Burrows and Wallace 1999:746-747). Cheap construction costs and an influx of working class immigrants created demand for tenement housing as we often define it, eventually spreading into wards like the Eighth as New York’s elites pushed their own residential neighborhoods further north. For a visualization of tenement housing in mid-19th century Manhattan as a component of the city’s developing social geography, I refer the reader to Baics 2020.

It is common among histories of reform, particularly of American abolition, to focus on the white, middle class as the dominant force of reform (Sinha 2016:2-4). To center on white reformers, however, participates in the same paternalistic narrative those reformers constructed in their efforts to “save” impoverished and non-white communities. It also neglects the significant role Black activists played in defining American democratic radicalism and establishing a tradition of political activism that continues to the present (Sinha 2016). The broad population of American reformers was diverse and often disenfranchised; through participation in women’s activism and antislavery reform these groups were able to organize and challenge social norms.

The rise of the American middle class as advocates for social change has been viewed by historians as another influence of 19th century economic growth; participation in reform movements, including the temperance movement, education reform, and evangelical religion, was both the privilege of the middle class and a method by which they negotiated the changing market economy and its related social impact (Sellers 1991:237-239). The prosperity endowed upon white-collar workers, combined with the fervor of reform and economic class, became synonymous with moral categories. The wealthy were seen as gluttonous and idle, the impoverished were in their circumstances because they were prone to laziness and vice, but members of the new American middle class were virtuous, productive, disciplined; all attributes associated with the ideal citizen in the new American Republic (Burrows and Wallace 1999:494-495; Sellers 1991:237, 266; Scherzer 1992:142). The middle class, particularly white, middle class women who were charged with being the moral guardians of society as per republican



values and -- aspirational, but in practice, unobtainable -- notions of womanhood,<sup>27</sup> were enabled by their prosperity to advocate for reform while reform movements allowed them to shape society to their ideals and world view (Abzug 1994:21; Cantwell and Wall 2001:207; Sellers 1991:237-239, 245; Wall 2013:216). Essentially, their message through reform was that members of the impoverished class were impoverished because of vice, and if the impoverished could live virtuously then they too could rise to prosperity.

Some reformers drew a line between pauperism, which they defined as poverty due to sloth and vice, and the segment of the population impoverished due to illness, injury, or slavery. For the second group, reformers saw their economic circumstances as being beyond their control, while the first group had brought poverty upon themselves (Burrows and Wallace 1999:494). Working class and impoverished whites applied a similar rhetoric to justify their own socio-economic position, though they used racist ideology to distinguish between their circumstances of, “wage slavery,” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:553; Sinha 2016:347) and poor freedmen and enslaved Black people, who they argued were impoverished and enslaved due to inherent inferiority. These similar, though contrasting, definitions of who was worthy and capable of self improvement undermined the shared discourse of the labor and abolition movements (Sinha 2016:347).

Such definitions of who was impoverished and worthy of aid were also held by Black reformers and adopted into the work of mutual aid and other benevolence organizations. The New York African Society for Mutual Relief and the African Marine Fund, organizations founded by Black reformers in a move away from white-led institutions, were often ideologically

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<sup>27</sup> The “cult of domesticity” was an idealized notion that equated the care of the household, or a woman’s domestic responsibility, with her civic duty as the primary educator tasked with raising the next generation of American citizens (Cantwell and Wall 2001:207-209; Holloway 2013:100-101; Rothschild and Wall 2014:151).

aligned with white-led reform efforts, such as the New York Manumission Society and African Free Schools (Bulthuis 2014:108; Harris 2003:5-6, 48-50, 64, 86-87). Aid from groups such as these was often limited to orphans, women with absent or deceased husbands, and the infirm – all populations identified as innocent or incapable of improving their situations (Harris 2003:86-87).

This concept of worthiness – who was deserving of social welfare – was also used to define who was worthy of freedom and participating in the franchise (i.e. voting) as American citizens. African Americans were believed to be inherently degraded by slavery and seen as, “symbolically and literally the inverse of the ideal republican citizen” (Harris 2003:49). Educated middle class Black reformers promoted an agenda of racial uplift or moral improvement; through education, virtuous living, and proper moral conduct, free Black New Yorkers could demonstrate their worthiness and, “prove black equality,” with their intellect and character (Harris 2003:119; see also Bulthuis 2014:112-113). Because this goal of racial uplift was primarily shared by those who were themselves already uplifted, by the 1840s Black reformers would shift to focus on productive labor and the conditions of working class Black people as they sought racial equality (Harris 2003:218, 228-235).

### *The Second Great Awakening and Evangelical Reform*

Another facet of 19th century reformer identity is that of American evangelical Protestantism. During the first part of the 19th century, Protestant religious ideology was changing as a response to the scientific rationalism of the Enlightenment and the disruption of agrarian tradition by the market economy (Kruczek-Aaron 2015:44-45; Sellers 1991:30, 157-158). The Second Great Awakening, in particular, was a religious movement occurring between the 1790s and 1840s that characterizes those shifts in ideology. By applying religious

imagination to secular problems, evangelical Christian reformers embraced the enthusiasm and emotion of Romanticism and rejected the skepticism and rationalism of the Enlightenment, seeking self-improvement and the moral perfection of society as a way to combat the, “system of selfishness,” (Sellers 1991:377) and individual economic competition imposed by the new wage economy (Abzug 1994:3, 6, 164; Roberts 2016:4-5, 114). This movement was geographically concentrated in New England and spread westward as new religious groups emerged among the growing populations of the frontier regions, particularly in western and central New York (Abzug 1994:58; Kruczek-Aaron 2015:57). Tent meetings and revivals characterized the Second Great Awakening as Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and representatives of new religious sects<sup>28</sup> traveled through rural areas. Many of these evangelicals preached reform, in a quest for, “personal salvation [that] became inextricably linked to the spiritual well-being of those around them” (Kruczek-Aaron 2015:7; see also Roberts 2016). For these 19th century evangelicals, salvation of the individual was found through religious conversion, and the community through activism (Roberts 2016:4-7). Evangelical reformers of various denominations supported the temperance movement, bodily discipline, education, and abolition as part of their desire to improve society in preparation of the Millennium, or the return of Christ during a 1,000-year period of peace.

Within the Presbyterian Church, the Second Great Awakening coincided with the Schism of 1837, which was itself a response to the 1801 Plan of Union.<sup>29</sup> This event split the Presbyterian Church into two factions: the Old School, which advocated for conservative

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<sup>28</sup> Examples include the Campbellites and the Shakers.

<sup>29</sup> A plan of mutual support and cooperation between Congregationalist and Presbyterian Churches; “[...] a plan of cooperation whereby ministers of either faith [Presbyterian or Congregationalist] might serve in their churches regardless of the form of government adopted by each individual church” (Staiger 1949:393). The 1810 Plan of Union blended church structures, missionary work, and doctrines, eventually creating suspicion among traditionalist Presbyterians over Congregationalist influence.

Presbyterianism and a return to traditional Calvinist teachings, and the progressive New School, which encouraged participation in revivals and supported abolition (Staiger 1949:393). Despite the Old School affiliation of the New York Presbytery, the politics of the Spring Street Church aligned with the New School and, in 1831, the SSPC helped establish the Third Presbytery with other New School churches (Alexander 1887:48, 72).

### *Tools of Reform*

The tent meetings and revivals of the Second Great Awakening were one set of tools used by reformers in constructing a society that reflected middle class values and raised awareness of social issues. Within Manhattan, evangelical churches<sup>30</sup> hosted revival meetings featuring engaging speakers, some visiting the city on tours of the region. These churches experienced boosts in church membership and attendance during the early 19th century; among Manhattan's Presbyterian churches the period between 1816 and 1840 shows a fourfold increase in memberships (Roberts 2016:86). The popularity of these meetings and the sense of community and shared purpose they fostered was also a response to the alienation and individualism imparted by the growing market economy and its related changes to the social landscape (Bulthuis 2014:191; Roberts 2016:7, 9, 86-91).

As part of their discourse of self-improvement, American evangelical reformers believed that a proper Christian education was necessary for children to grow into productive and moral members of society (Burrows and Wallace 1999:498). In response, Sunday schools became prolific in the 1810s and 1820s throughout New York City; by the mid-1820s over 7,000 students attended Sunday schools regularly (Burrows and Wallace 1999:500). Modeled after the English Sunday school system, Sunday schools provided free access to education for children

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<sup>30</sup> For examples from the SSPC, please refer to Chapter 6.

and adults who could not afford to attend private schools. As participants in the abolition movement, the SSPC offered one of the first multi-racial Sunday Schools in New York, and there is documentary and skeletal evidence demonstrating the presence of a diverse congregation at that church (Meade 2007:II-2; NYCDR). Eventually the Sunday school system in Manhattan was superseded by a local public school system<sup>31</sup> run by the Public School Society and the Common Council removed aid to the city's Sunday schools.

Other tools of reform were the practices of pamphleteering and moral suasion, using argument or literature to change an opponent's mind. Pamphleteering was a common practice among reformers and this technique was used by evangelical reformers to spread their message of self-improvement and Christian education to the impoverished, immigrants, and African Americans (Burrows and Wallace 1999:559-560; Sinha 2016:195-196, 223). Coinciding with a period of technological innovations in printing during the first third of the 19th century, New York's evangelical societies experienced particular popularity as they distributed tracts, bibles, and magazines among regional markets in Philadelphia and New England, and further into the hinterland with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 (Roberts 2016:115-117, 122-126). The influence of these publications, however, was sometimes met with violence and censorship. In 1835, postmasters across southern states and Postmaster Samuel L. Gouverneur of New York State interfered with the delivery of literature sent by the American Anti-Slavery Society<sup>32</sup> as part of a moral suasion campaign, impounding or refusing delivery of materials; in Charleston

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<sup>31</sup> This new school system was free and open to all, with the intention of providing education "as a common right" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:500). Unfortunately, access to these schools was not always equal. Despite the intention of serving the working and impoverished classes, few of these schools were physically present within the wards and neighborhoods where those populations lived, such as Five Points.

<sup>32</sup> Founded in 1833 under management of the leaders from the New York Anti-Slavery Society, including Arthur and Lewis Tappan (Sinha 2016:224-226).

the impounded publications were burnt by a mob (Sinha 2016:250). President Andrew Jackson even went so far as to suggest a federal law allowing abolitionist mail to be censored.

Both the Reverends Samuel H. Cox and Henry G. Ludlow, prominent pastors at Spring Street during this time, distributed pamphlets as members of the American Tract Society (ATS). Their activities and leadership within that organization and its precursor, the New York Tract Society, are recorded within the annual reports and publications of the ATS (1833:62, 67, 96, 1837:151, 154). This practice likely included the efforts of some of the church congregation members; Luther P. Hubbard<sup>33</sup>, a member of the Laight Street and Spring Street churches, worked for the New York Marine Bible Society, another organization that participated in distributing bibles and tracts to New York's poor. In 1834, Rev. Ludlow was referenced by the American Tract Magazine celebrating the spiritual benevolence of tract distributors who participated in pamphlet distribution as an efficient method of spreading the church's message (Ellis 2014:47).

### **Abolition and Evangelism; Slavery Reform in New York City**

For northern New School evangelical Presbyterians like Spring Street's Rev. Samuel H. Cox, Rev. Henry G. Ludlow, and their congregations, abolition and evangelism were inextricably connected (Burrows and Wallace 1999:551; Roberts 2016). Christian abolitionists were concerned with the moral hypocrisy of slavery and the Second Great Awakening provided prime conditions to spread their anti-slavery message (Armstrong and Wurst 2003; Kruczek-Aaron 2015:17). As Sinha argues, "the Second Great Awakening fostered the moral argument against slavery as an eradicable sin and facilitated its spread," through tent revivals and the practice of moral suasion (2016:195-196, 223). Abolitionist evangelicals who sought

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<sup>33</sup> The husband of Sarah Ogden Hubbard. Sarah was interred in the burial vaults in 1840 and named among the coffin plates.

perfectionism, like the Tappan brothers,<sup>34</sup> believed that the world could not achieve a state of moral perfection until it was free from sin; as long as the sin of slavery was practiced in the United States, moral perfection was impossible (Harris 2003:175-176).

The evangelical virtue of self-improvement, and the belief that personal and financial success or failure is linked to individual character and virtuous living, was denied to enslaved peoples; thus abolitionists called for the rights of personal freedom over those of property (Burrows and Wallace 1999:553; Sinha 2016:81-82). By supporting the creation of Black congregations, such as the First Colored Presbyterian Church, and accepting freedmen into their own (often segregated<sup>35</sup>) churches, abolitionists in New York City participated in the marriage of, “the black struggle against slavery to progressive white evangelicalism” (Sinha 2016:2; see also Burrows and Wallace 1999:548; Sinha 2016:141).

In addition to the moral contradiction of slavery, slavery was a, “contradiction for capitalism” (Sellers 1991:125); capitalistic virtues of individualism and freedom, and the ability to sell one’s labor for a wage, contradicted the concept of owning another human and their labor (Gronowicz 1998:xiii, 5). While America’s early economic success was built on slave labor, wage labor proved more profitable in the industrial North. This led to the abolition of slavery in those states during the early 19th century.

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<sup>34</sup> Arthur and Lewis Tappan were silk merchants and New York City abolitionist leaders. Arthur Tappan, who also featured prominently in the founding and leadership of the American Anti-Slavery Society, was a member of Rev. Samuel Cox’s Laight Street Church.

<sup>35</sup> The practice of separating churchgoers by race using segregated pews was a highly visible form of social control that reflected the status quo and racial hierarchy based on white supremacy/Black inferiority present in the world beyond the church doors (Bulthuis 2014:42-44, 65). Even among churches that preached abolition, such as Spring Street, segregated pews were a symbolic representation of their hesitancy to disrupt that status quo; this is also seen in their support for gradualism.

Slavery was established in Manhattan under the Dutch,<sup>36</sup> but the association of slavery with race intensified during the British colonial period, reinforcing race as a way to identify and discriminate against that laborer class (Harris 2003:12). Eventually New York City would have the largest population of urban slaves outside the south, and households within the surrounding rural hinterland (present-day Queens, Kings, and Richmond Counties) would own slaves in ratios that rivaled southern states, such as Maryland and the Carolinas, though the number of slaves per household was lower (White 1991:16-18). Slaves in New York City worked a variety of occupations, from domestic labor to dock work, printing, and other artisan or skill-based labor (White 1991:10-15). This reliance on slave labor made New York reformers hesitant to adopt the cause of general or immediate abolition. Instead, New York abolitionists advocated for gradualism, or a gradual process of abolition common among northern states that would not disrupt economic or social norms while also preparing slaves for participation in free society (Harris 2003:49, 56-57, 64-71; White 1991:50). The belief that slavery in the North was mild, benevolent, and unlike the harsh and excessive practices of the American South or West Indies, supported this process of gradual emancipation in the North and allowed abolitionists to focus on improving the conditions of American slavery rather than ending it (White 1991:79-81).

In New York State, slavery was abolished beginning with the Gradual Manumission Act of 1799. Children born to enslaved mothers after July 4, 1799, were free, but were, “bound to the owner of their mother,” (White 1991:47) for a set number of years; until their 28th birthday for

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<sup>36</sup> Though New York lacked the large-scale plantations of the agro-industrialized capitalism model dependent on enslaved labor found throughout the Caribbean, the economic and social connections forged by colonialism facilitated the spread of slavery across the New World; merchants in Manhattan and throughout the American northeast operated in trade, transporting and profiting off of goods produced with slave labor, while some owned plantations throughout the Caribbean (Armstrong 2019:472-475). New York’s economy would remain inextricably connected to slavery into the 19th century, fostering opposition to the abolition movement (Burrows and Wallace 1999:860-861).



men, 25th birthday for women (White 1991:38). A state amendment in 1817 formally set Emancipation Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1827, when all slaves in New York would become free (Sellers 1991:126; Sinha 2016:82-83; White 1991:53-54). In spite of statewide abolition, the politics of New York City during the early half of the 19th century continued to be greatly influenced by economic concerns. Manhattan businessmen feared the loss of Southern trade if slavery was nationally abolished or the South seceded (Burrows and Wallace 1999:860-861; Homberger 2005:96; Matthews 2011:73; Matthews and McGovern 2015:14-15; Spann 2002:6).

Loss of economic and social power among artisans and other socio-economic groups as a result of the changing market economy also contributed to anti-abolitionist sentiments in the city (Gronowicz 1998:64-66; Roedigger 2007:110; White 1991:30-34). Opposition to the anti-slavery movement followed class and occupation lines, with poor, unskilled, white laborers seeking to distance themselves from African American slaves and freedmen. By using space (neighborhoods, church pews, taverns), language (slurs), white New Yorkers were able to distance themselves from what they perceived as Blackness, and in doing so constructed and reconstructed their own definitions and identities of whiteness (Burrows and Wallace 1999:554-555; Roedigger 2007).

Out of fear that an influx of newly freed southern slaves would compete with working class whites for jobs or contribute to miscegenation, Irish American laborers, nativists, licensed trades, and unions vigorously opposed abolition (Abzug 1994:133-134; Burrows and Wallace 1999:548-556; Gronowicz 1998:30, 57; Sinha 2016:359-361). Employing a similar ideology based on white supremacy and fear of disrupting the status quo, some abolitionists supported segregation and colonization societies that worked to settle freedmen in Africa rather than integrate. Though re-colonization programs were eventually abandoned by white abolitionists, a

belief in freedom without racial equality can be identified in the process of gradual emancipation adopted by Northern states and the related beneficial, through racially paternalistic, programs that offered education and economic resources to freedmen (Matthews 2011:77-78; Matthews and McGovern 2015:17; Sinha 2016:87-88, 97, 114-115). As discussed above, such programs were often a form of social control, demanding freedmen prove their worthiness while adhering to white, middle class standards of respectability. Contrasts in rhetoric such as these were often present throughout early white abolitionist arguments against slavery and contradict the persisting modern belief in the myth of the white Yankee North; that all abolitionist efforts were altruistic and based on a firm belief in racial equality (Matthews and McGovern 2015:6).

Despite this political and economic climate of opposition to abolition, New York abolitionists, “seized the mantle of national antislavery leadership from the Garrisonians in Boston,” during the 1830s (Burrows and Wallace 1999:552). Though William Lloyd Garrison retained his central position as an ideologue within the abolition movement, the 1830s saw New York abolitionists like Arthur Tappan rise to prominent positions in organizations such as the American Anti-Slavery Society, which was headquartered in New York after its 1833 founding in Philadelphia (Sinha 2016:224-226). This society focused much of its efforts on distributing abolitionist literature throughout the United States, efficiently disseminating its, “political gospel,” and drawing the ire of pro-slavery Southerners, as well as Manhattan merchants and politicians (Burrows and Wallace 1999:559-560).

In addition to pamphleteering, New York abolitionists spread their message and resisted slavery with a variety of methods: aiding fugitive slaves and advocating for anti-kidnapping laws, establishing organizations and schools to provide financial or educational resources to the freedmen of New York, and petitioning the government are just a few examples (Burrows and

Wallace 1999:551, 553, 557, 560-562; Sinha 2016:178, 277). In an effort to vote with their dollar, as it were, some abolitionists participated in the free produce movement and boycotted goods produced with slave labor (Faulkner 2007; Sinha 2016:171). Boycotted goods included anything produced with slave labor, such as coffee, sugar and its byproducts, and cotton. The free produce movement was viewed by participants both as a practical method to achieve an end to slavery through economic pressure, and as a test of one's personal morality and commitment to the abolitionist cause (Faulkner 2007:396). The free produce movement, however, generally had a small following and was supported primarily by only the most staunch reformers, such as Black abolitionists, white women, and Quakers (Faulkner 2007:380, 403). Urban areas like Manhattan struggled to access fresh produce and sugar was cheap; evidence for the participation of the Spring Street congregation in this movement has not been identified<sup>37</sup> (Ellis 2014:107, 133, 248-249, 2019:77, 103-104).

As discussed above, such tactics of engaging the public and gaining supporters through education, rallies, and pamphleteering were not unique to the anti-slavery movement. Nineteenth century reformers recognized that the, "oppression of slaves was linked to other wrongs in their world," (Sinha 2016:3), and evangelical reformers supported a variety of movements in addition to abolition. These included women's and workers' rights, temperance, and body reform, to name a few. The ideology of social improvement through individual improvement, that the moral health of the new American republic could only be preserved through educating its population in moral and bodily discipline, connected these movements (Abzug 1994; Sellers 1991:266, 377).

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<sup>37</sup> In her 2014 doctoral dissertation, Dr. Meredith Ellis found evidence for increased sugar consumption among the Spring Street congregation through an examination of subadult dental remains across all childhood stages (Ellis 2014:187, 193, 249, 257-258). This demonstrates that while the Spring Street congregation was supportive of the abolition movement, they were still participating in the widespread use of slave-produced goods. This behavior is likely a result of limited purchasing ability due to cost or access to alternative goods.

## Health Reform in Nineteenth Century New York City

Like the movements in social and spiritual reform discussed above, health-centered reforms developed as a response to New York's rapid urbanization and socio-economic change. Such health reforms focused on improving the urban landscape and public access to resources, and were undertaken to combat epidemics and other consequences of rapid economic and urban growth. Unsanitary street conditions, dense populations associated with overcrowded housing, and a lack of clean water and sewers presented New York as a city inviting, "pigs, disease, and ridicule" (McNeur 2014:96).

Reformer concern with producing moral citizens was echoed in their focus on bodily health and discipline. In this, both moral reform and health reform movements were acts in a fight against corruption; corruption of the soul, corruption of the body. Prescriptive behaviors of bodily reform were often personal and private, compared to reforms that sought to challenge and improve the public sphere. Bodily reform movements centered around diet and activity, and promoted the belief that practicing discipline by avoiding corrupting influences, such as hot foods or alcohol, would create healthy, virtuous, and productive bodies to serve the republic and its ideals (Abzug 1994:21; Kruczek-Aaron 2015:19-31). In New York City, these reform movements were intended to counteract the adverse health effects of urban living, including exposure to overpopulation, pollution, and, "improper eating habits spawned by big-city life" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:533). There is documentary evidence of individuals associated with the SSPC, specifically the Tappan brothers, participating in bodily reform movements and engaging in Sylvester Graham's restrictive health regime.<sup>38</sup> There is also evidence that these

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<sup>38</sup> Sylvester Graham's dietary and health regime prescribed a vegetarian diet, abstinence from stimulants and intoxicating substances such as caffeine and alcohol, routine exercise, and cold baths (Abzug 1994:163, 166; Burrows and Wallace 1999:533).

bodily reforms were incorporated in the teachings of the SSPC and the activities of its congregation. Skeletal markers associated with health, diet, and activity have been examined among the remains recovered from the Spring Street excavation by researchers at Syracuse University; examples of possible participation in health reform movements that influenced the lives of the Spring Street children are seen in evidence of malnutrition from vitamin D deficiency, the causes of which could have included restrictive reform diets (Ellis 2014:131-132, 231-233, 2019:100).

In addition to the human body, health-centered reforms focused on improving the urban landscape and public access to resources were undertaken to combat epidemics and other consequences of rapid economic and urban growth, such as overcrowding and sanitation. As discussed above, New York's social geography and the distribution of the city's population was altered during the early 19th century with the creation of northern residential suburbs, connected to the economic and southern parts of Manhattan via public and private transportation options. But the ability of the wealthy and middle classes to access transportation and remove their households from the increasingly crowded south were not the only reasons for this northward movement. Health concerns related to over-population and epidemics prompted those who could afford to do so to move north, away from the commercial and crowded residential districts inhabited by the working classes, such as the notorious Five Points<sup>39</sup> on the site of the former Collect Pond. The yellow fever and cholera epidemics that struck the city's population between

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<sup>39</sup> The Five Points neighborhood was named for the intersection of three streets northeast of City Hall Park; Orange (now Baxter), Cross (now Park), and Anthony (now Worth). This name was in use by 1810, in association with an area that was quickly becoming known as the city's worst slum (Burrows and Wallace 1999:392; Cantwell and Wall 2001:218; Milne 2000a:28). In 1991 archaeological excavations were conducted in the Five Points neighborhood in preparation for the construction of a new federal courthouse, now located in Foley Square (Yamin 2000:1).

the 1790s until the 1830s<sup>40</sup> spurred the creation of entire neighborhoods, such as Greenwich Village and Bowery Village in the area that would become the Ninth and Fifteenth Wards. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Greenwich Village was established and inhabited by wealthy, “fever refugees,” who would, “flee during the hot, pestilential months of summer,” to their rural manor houses (Burrows and Wallace 1999:178, 388). Following the widespread yellow fever epidemic of 1822, Greenwich grew as a permanent residential suburb, one of the first stops on the continuous suburban creep northward (Burrows and Wallace 1999:447-448; Cantwell and Wall 2001:199).

Along with its impact on the city’s social geography, concerns over public health and urban sources of disease altered the physical landscape of Manhattan. As part of the reaction to the rigidity and rationalism of the Enlightenment, Romanticism influenced public health reform with an emphasis on the beneficial qualities of light and air, which were perverted by the urban environment (Burrows and Wallace 1999:420-421; Holloway 2013:146; McNeur 2014:196). Criticism of the city grid implemented by the Commissioners’ Plan of 1811<sup>41</sup> urged the development of open public spaces and parks so that the city’s population, especially those who could not afford to travel upstate to rural retreats, could benefit from engaging with nature (Burrows and Wallace 1999:790; Holloway 2013:147; Homberger 2005:71). Exposure to nature - to vistas, air, and sunlight – was, “essential to the health of the human spirit” (Holloway 2013:256; see also McNeur 2014:181-182, 196, 199-200). Prior to 1849 and closure of the SSPC burial vaults, small public parks dotted the city’s landscape; Richmond Hill Gardens, at the

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<sup>40</sup> Notable epidemics leading up to and during the period when the Spring Street burial vaults were in use include yellow fever epidemics in 1798 and 1822, and cholera in 1832 and 1849.

<sup>41</sup> Creating the level topography required to facilitate the construction of the idealized and egalitarian landscape envisioned by the Commissioners’ Plan was also an act of health reform as it removed areas associated with noxious industries and sunken lots, which were believed to be sources of disease-causing miasmas (Burrows and Wallace 1999:358).

corner of Charlton and Varick near the SSPC, was a pleasure garden that also boasted a small theater<sup>42</sup> (Homberger 2005:65). The application<sup>42</sup> of Romantic ideology to public health concerns ultimately resulted in changes to the distribution and scale of greenspace throughout the city, such as in the construction of Central Park,<sup>43</sup> a large-scale change to the urban landscape that post-dated the closure of the Spring Street burial vaults (McNeur 2014:199-200).

The public health reform movements of the early 19th century also focused on combating sources of disease. At the time diseases were believed to be spread by miasmas, or bad airs associated with unsanitary conditions (Rothschild and Wall 2014:161, 165). Though the germ theory of disease and the association of yellow fever and cholera with water were not yet understood, the health reform movement rightly sought to correct the public health concerns of overcrowding, limited access to clean water, and urban trash removal. Access to fresh drinking water was notoriously poor<sup>44</sup> in Manhattan, in part due to the actions of corrupt companies and ineffective public officials<sup>45</sup> (Koeppel 2000). This situation would not be adequately remedied until the second half of the 19th century, when the Croton Aqueduct was opened. Until then, New Yorkers would rely on expensive water carted in from suburban springs or free, but

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<sup>42</sup> The proximity of this park to the church entertains the possibility that it was visited by members of the Spring Street congregation.

<sup>43</sup> Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn served as an inspiration for Central Park. The shifting context of mortuary practice and ideology that contributed to the garden cemetery movement of the 19th century and the creation of cemeteries like Green-Wood is discussed in Chapter 8.

<sup>44</sup> Access to fresh, potable water was so rare within the city that pumps gained reputations for their good quality; the Tea Water Pump was one notable source of fresh water (Burrows and Wallace 1999:360; Koeppel 2000:31-32). Beginning in the 1740s it was lauded as one of the only sources of drinkable water in the city, likely due to its location northeast of the Collect Pond, which helped protect its underground spring from pollution. Unfortunately, by the end of the 18th century even that pump was described as foul due to its proximity to the Collect (Koeppel 2000:52).

<sup>45</sup> Aaron Burr's Manhattan Company, through his contacts and influence as a lawyer and politician, was granted a perpetual charter over water and sanitation rights within the city at the turn of the 19th century (Koeppel 2000:72-82). Unfortunately the company's interests lay in banking and an initial proposal to source water via canals and pipes from the Bronx River was abandoned. Instead, the Manhattan Company dug new wells throughout the city to access the same swampy groundwater and polluted Collect Pond (Koeppel 2000:72-73, 86-87; Rothschild et al. 2022). Additional proposals to source the Bronx River were obstructed by the Company.

polluted, public wells. The Common Council meeting minutes of the early 19th century record numerous petitions by inhabitants of the Eighth Ward requesting access to new wells during the early decades of the 19th century (NYCC 1917[10]). In September 1818, a water well located at the intersection of Spring and Varick near the location of the church, was described as, “bad,” in a petition for a new well located at the intersection of Spring and Wooster, five blocks to the east (NYCC 1917[10]:2).

In 1837 construction on the Croton Aqueduct<sup>46</sup> began, and the city installed new sewers for waste removal as a result of the aqueduct’s impact on the city’s water table (Hombberger 2005:82; Koepfel 2000). Efforts to clean up the city streets, which were often piled with trash due to the, “city government’s hands-off approach,” to waste removal (Burrows and Wallace 1999:588), were sporadic and usually focused on main thoroughfares. This left the working classes and tenement dwellers to deal with the growing amount of waste associated with the booming working class population and its associated industries. Throughout the 19th century, the clearing of trash from city streets was left to individual homeowners, private contractors, and various city commissions, which hired sweepers and cartmen to inconsistently clean the streets of, “dirt, manure, and offal” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:360).

The smell and sight of open sewers and trash-filled streets gave New York a reputation as, “the filthiest urban center in the United States” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:588; see also

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<sup>46</sup> The Croton Aqueduct was completed in 1842 and began providing fresh drinking water to the city on October 14<sup>th</sup> of that year (Koepfel 2000:281). After the 1832 cholera epidemic, when 3,500 New Yorkers died, a new source of water was necessary for the health of the growing city (Koepfel 2000:145-147). The city was able “to skirt the [Manhattan] company’s claimed water monopoly,” (Koepfel 2000:148) by focusing on the Croton River in Westchester County as a possible source instead of the Bronx River, proposed by the Manhattan Company over 30 years before (Koepfel 2000:147-148). Once in operation, the Aqueduct connected the Croton River over 41 miles to Manhattan, providing water to a 180-million gallon receiving reservoir at the southeast corner of 86<sup>th</sup> and Seventh, now in present-day Central Park (Burrows and Wallace 1999:625). In the 1890s and 20th century new aqueducts were constructed to meet demand, though “Old Croton” continued to provide fresh water to Manhattan until 1955 (Koepfel 2000:288-289).



McNeur 2014:96-98). The Spring Street congregation could not have avoided this part of their landscape as they moved around the city, going about their daily business in streets where loose animals, uncollected waste, and nuisance industries impacted the landscape through both sight and smell (McNeur 2014:28-39, 96-98, 135). Though mid-century environmental reformers protested the corruption of the city government that contributed to such a failure of municipal services and sanitary laws, they did so to little effect (Burrows and Wallace 1999:828). These unsanitary conditions contributed to the growing mortality rate, and the flight to residential districts uptown.

### **Transitions in Mortuary Ideology and Practice**

Such urban health and sanitation measures were developing at odds with traditional methods of corpse disposal, resulting in an altered necrogeography that physically removed the dead from the landscape of the living (Brown 2009:128; Fowler 1981:64; Laderman 1996:33, 48; Meade 2020; Mytum 1989:286, 294; Tarlow 2000:225-226). Urban burial sites were increasingly viewed as sources of disease due to the miasmas emitted by decaying corpses<sup>47</sup> (Cherryson et al. 2012:16; LeeDecker 2009:148; Mooney et al. 2008:5.34; Tarlow 2000:225-226). In 1823, burials were banned south of Canal Street<sup>48</sup> by the Common Council of New York City. This boundary was moved north to 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1832, then to 86<sup>th</sup> Street in 1851 (Meade 2010:10-11, 2020:59, 252; Meade and White 2013:317). Though 14<sup>th</sup> Street is roughly twelve blocks north of Spring Street, the SSPC congregation continued to use their burial vaults in spite

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<sup>47</sup> Though there is no evidence that proximity to decaying bodies causes adverse health in the living, this belief was readily adopted as part of the 19th century urban health reform movement and is still believed today (Laqueur 2015:231-232).

<sup>48</sup> Canal Street is the southern boundary of New York's Eighth Ward, where the SSPC was located.

of the threat of fines.<sup>49</sup> By 1852 all new burials were banned in Manhattan, with exceptions for private cemeteries and vaults.

Though the Spring Street burial vaults were not closed in response to the 1832 burial ban, the closure of the vaults in 1849 was likely influenced by changing attitudes to health and mortuary ideology. References to vault regulation and maintenance in the SSPC trustee meeting minutes reflect a concern with the vaults' limited space and their impact on public health. Among the artifacts recovered from the burial context is possible evidence of fumigation to combat miasmas with muriatic acid (Mooney et al. 2008:5.34-5.35; White and Mooney 2010:58-60).

Urban populations in the 19th century required a new way to bury their dead that would alleviate concerns for public health, while honoring the memory of the deceased and shifting cultural attitudes shaped by a new sentimentality towards death. Like other New Yorkers, the Spring Street congregation probably began burying their dead at one of the garden cemeteries servicing Manhattan, located in the city's rural boroughs.<sup>50</sup> Rural garden cemeteries, like Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery<sup>51</sup>, were the product of mid-19th century shifts in Anglo-American mortuary ideology and practice; the garden cemetery movement expressed transcendentalist thought through mortuary practice, emphasizing the individual and a return to nature while contrasting with the crowds and pollution of the industrialized cities they serviced (Tarlow 2000:218).

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<sup>49</sup> The Duane Street M.E. church was fined in 1829 (NYCC 1917 [17]:679; Meade 2007:II-9).

<sup>50</sup> In her 2020 doctoral dissertation, Elizabeth Meade examined and mapped the shifting necrogeography of New York City, including Manhattan and its outer boroughs, from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

<sup>51</sup> Founded in 1838, Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn was the burial site of Rev. Samuel H. Cox, former pastor of the SSPC, and several of his family members (Meade and White 2013:322-324).

While the rise of the funeral industry and growth of the garden cemetery movement found their momentum in the decades following the closure of the Spring Street burial vaults, the transition to these new burial practices was occurring while the vaults were in use; it is therefore necessary to consider this mortuary transition and its results in this dissertation's interpretation of the vaults and their material culture. The burial artifacts and their evidence for participation in and resistance to the new mortuary ideology and its social and economic components will be discussed further in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8.

### **The Spring Street Presbyterian Church**

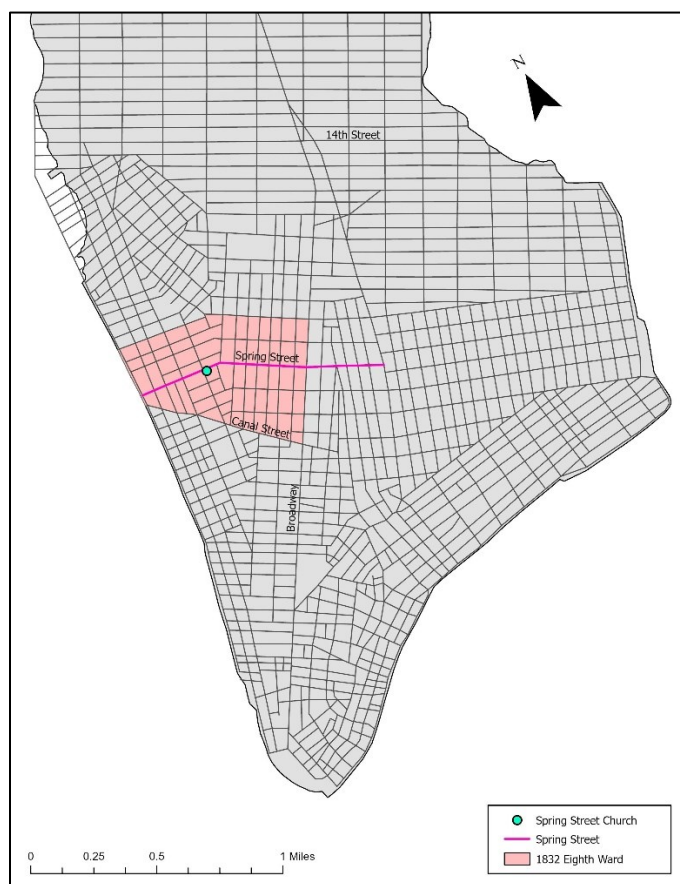
Having described the historical context of 19th century Manhattan, this chapter will now present the history of the SSPC. The church was opened in April 1811 on the outskirts of the city in what would later become the heart of New York City's Eighth Ward. A deed dating from 1807 shows that the church land was purchased by Samuel Osgood, John Mills, JRB Rutgers, and Henry Rutgers, who were congregants of the Wall Street Presbyterian Church (Meade 2007:II-1, 2010:9). The church founders sought to establish a church in the hinterlands of New York City, where, "those of the inhabitants who desired religious privileges [were] forced to walk a long distance to the eastward" (NYT 1874). Surrounded by fields and orchards, this part of Manhattan was largely rural; in 1803 the only street recorded in this area was Brannon Street, which would later be renamed Spring Street (Meade and White 2013:314; NYCC 1917 [4]:677).

By 1830, the area surrounding the church would be described as an urban neighborhood with 20,729 inhabitants (Ernst 1994:191; Homburger 2005:60; Meade 2010:9; Wall 1994:42-49). The Eighth Ward was bounded by Houston Street to the north, Canal Street to the south, Broadway to the east, and the Hudson River to the west.<sup>52</sup> Part of present-day SoHo, the Eighth

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<sup>52</sup> On the 1817 Longworth map, the Eighth Ward extended as far north as Christopher and Sixth Streets, and as far east as the Bowery (Longworth 1817b). By the late 1820s the Ward had been resized to the boundaries detailed

Ward was immediately to the south of Greenwich Village, which was settled in response to the growing urban population as a suburban refuge for the wealthy during yellow fever epidemics (Cantwell and Wall 2001:203), and to the north of the Fifth Ward's working class neighborhoods (Homburger 2005:85). The length of Spring Street was almost entirely confined to the Eighth Ward, beginning at the Bowery, six blocks east of the Eighth Ward, and ending at the western edge of Manhattan, along the Hudson River (figure 2.1).



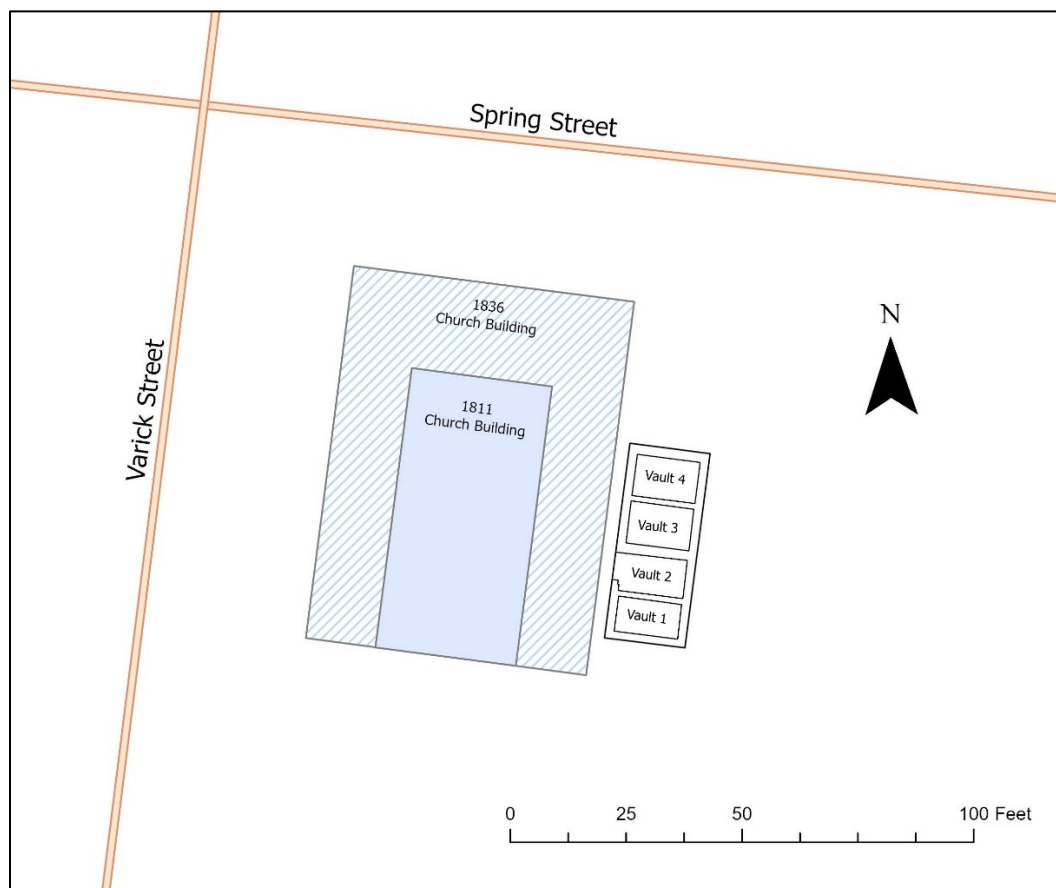
**Figure 2.1:** Depiction of Spring Street extent in Lower Manhattan and 1832 Eighth Ward boundaries.

In response to the growing urban environment and the needs of its congregation, the church trustees approved the construction of a series of burial vaults adjacent to the church

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above, when the Fourteenth Ward was created in 1827 (Ernst 1994:191; Hooker 1831). Please refer to Appendix A for depictions of changing Ward boundaries.

building (figure 2.2). The first two,<sup>53</sup> made of stone, were in use by 1820, and the second two vaults, constructed of brick and located to the south of the original vaults, were completed in 1831. Though burials within the city were banned in neighborhoods south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1832, use of the burial vaults at Spring Street continued until 1849 according to the NYCDR.



**Figure 2.2:** Burial vault location adjacent to first (1811) and second (1836) SSPC buildings. Adapted from Mooney et al. 2008, Figure 4.5.

The burial vaults appear infrequently within the historical records of the church, though references to their construction and use<sup>54</sup> have been found within the archives of the Presbyterian

<sup>53</sup> Please note that the numbering of the burial vaults, Vault 1, 2, etc., reflect the order they were rediscovered in during the 2006 excavations; Vaults 3 and 4 are the oldest, dating to 1820, while Vaults 1 and 2 were opened in 1831.

<sup>54</sup> References to the maintenance of the vaults were recorded in 1830, when a committee was formed to “regulate” the vaults, possibly by rearranging the coffins and making room for new interments, a practice seen among comparative burial vaults in England (Cox 1996; Meade 2007:II-8).

Church Historical Society, in the Trustees' and Treasurer meeting minutes associated with the SSPC (Meade 2010:10). There do not appear to have been limits on which church members were allowed to purchase burial space within the vaults, as suggested by the diversity found among the 197 individual burials identified at the site<sup>55,56</sup> (Ellis 2019; Novak 2017b). Historical records have long confirmed that the congregation of the SSPC was integrated, and African-Americans were allowed to join the church with full communion by 1820<sup>57</sup> (Meade 2007:II-2, 2010:11; NYCDR). The Laight Street church manuals extend the inclusion of Black church members back to the earliest years of the SSPC; within these documents detailing the membership of that church, Francis Schuyler<sup>58</sup> and his wife Hannah are present in the list of, "Coloured Persons," as joining the church in 1813 when the congregation was still located at Spring Street (LSM 1825).

This lack of restrictions on who in the congregation was allowed to purchase space within the vaults reflects the broader abolitionist work of the church. In 1820 Samuel H. Cox succeeded the first permanent pastor at Spring Street, Matthew LaRue Perrine, who was pastor at the church from 1811 to 1820 (Meade 2010:11). With Cox's guidance the church became politically active and participated in abolitionist and evangelical activities, including the admission of non-white

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<sup>55</sup> Skeletal analysis (Ellis 2014, 2019), as well as early DNA analysis (Gladyck, pers. comm), suggest that men, women, children, and individuals who possibly identified as different races were likely interred together, without spatial segregation within the vaults.

<sup>56</sup> Fifty-three of the burials have been identified as adult females, with 66 burials identified as adult males. At least 70 of the burials were those of subadults under the age of 15 years, based on the number of left femorae recovered (Ellis 2019:5). Early DNA analysis revealed several individuals were of East Asian descent (Gladyck, pers. comm), while New York City burial records list two of the 656 recorded burials at Spring Street as, "a Black," (NYCDR). Though the two individuals, Sarah Packson (age 28) and Francis Schuyler (age 85), both died in 1828 and were recorded under the same sexton, J.H. Day, it is unknown why they are the only two NYCDR entries identifying African American burials within the Spring Street vaults. Additional names listed in the Laight Street Manuals (LSM 1825, 1828) and SSPC church records were not identified among the NYCDR entries.

<sup>57</sup> In his master's thesis, David Pultz details, "the mix of class, race, and gender joining by either certificate of transfer or confession," in the period between 1811 and 1825, when Rev. Cox moved with much of the congregation to Laight Street (2018:27-29).

<sup>58</sup> Francis Schuyler was one of the two entries labeled as, "a Black," in the NYCDR.

church members. A multi-racial Sunday school at the SSPC was in operation by 1823,<sup>59</sup> influenced by the doctrine taught under Cox and his successors (ASSTM 1824:29-32).

Despite these attempts at inclusion, church records do indicate that the pews at Spring Street were racially segregated as of 1831 (Meade 2007:II-4; Pultz 2018:33; Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841). Used as a form of spatial and social control throughout the colonial period and into the 19th century, it is unknown when pew segregation was implemented or abandoned within the Spring Street Church (Roberts 2016:36-38, 225). Abolitionists such as Rev. Samuel H. Cox, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, and members of the American Anti-Slavery Society began to call for an end to pew segregation in the late 1830s (Sinha 2015:257, 315). This supposes that the operation of a multiracial Sunday School and unsegregated burial vaults at Spring Street may be better indicators of the Spring Street Church's politics and abolitionist ideology than the presence of segregated pews prior to the late 1830s.

Cox left the SSPC in 1825 to establish the Laight Street Church five blocks to the south of Spring Street, and was succeeded by Rev. Henry G. Ludlow, who came on as permanent pastor on Christmas of 1828. Like Cox, Ludlow was an advocate for abolition and other New School tenets. Under Ludlow's leadership the Church flourished, growing from the 43 members left behind after Cox's move to Laight Street to over 330 congregants (Meade 2007:II-3; Mooney et al. 2008:2.3). However, it was during Ludlow's tenure as pastor of the SSPC that one of the most notable events in the Church's history took place: the Race Riots of 1834.

Occurring between July 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, the riots were incited by abolitionist activities surrounding the Laight Street Church and the planned celebration of New York's Emancipation

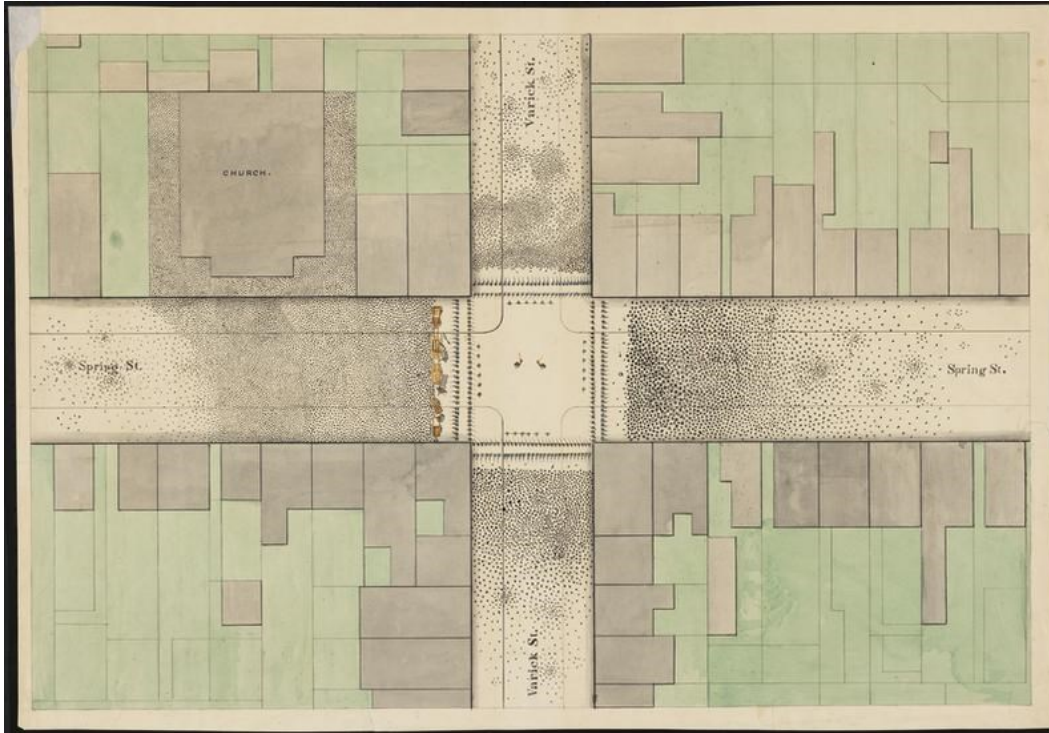
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<sup>59</sup> The exact date of the Sunday School is disputed across sources (Meade 2007:II-2); Rev. Alfred Moment cites 1828 as the date in his 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary sermon (Moment 1877:19). However, an earlier date of 1823 is presented in the American Sunday School Teachers' Magazine in an account of a ceremony celebrating the establishment of the Spring Street Sunday school (ASSTM 1824:29-32).

Day (Burrows and Wallace 1999; Meade and White 2013:315-316; Roberts 2016:159-160; Smith and Mitchell 2018:66-68). In June 1834 two events occurred at the Laight Street Church that fueled the 1834 anti-abolition riots; Arthur Tappan shared his pew with Reverend Samuel Cornish, a Black Presbyterian minister. And in an effort to further feelings of integration among his congregation, Rev. Samuel H. Cox questioned, “how white Jesus was,” (Hodges 1999:227) and stated that Jesus was, “probably of a dark Syrian hue” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:556; Meade 2010:13). A month later, the Black population of New York City planned to celebrate Emancipation Day and the law that had granted freedom to all New York slaves on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1827 (Burrows and Wallace 1999). These events stirred anti-abolitionist sentiments throughout the city until an angry mob formed to attack locations associated with New York’s Black population and abolitionists, including the Laight Street Church and the home of its pastor, Samuel Cox (Roberts 2016:159-160; Smith and Mitchell 2018:66-68).

The SSPC was also targeted by the mob for the abolitionist preaching of its pastor and its association with the Laight Street Church. Rumors that Rev. Henry G. Ludlow had performed interracial marriage ceremonies at the Spring Street Church contributed to the mob’s fury and led to his own home becoming a target for the mob (Burrows and Wallace 1999:558; Meade 2007:II-4; Roberts 2016:159). On July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1834, the SSPC was attacked. An account of the riots appeared in the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1834, *Journal of Commerce*, describing how the mob, “broke in the doors, shattered the windows to atoms, and entered the Church. In a short time they broke up the interior of it, destroying whatever they could.” Using wreckage from the church, the mob built a barricade in the street to hold off the Twenty-seventh National Guard Regiment, who had been called in to disperse the mob. A depiction of these events created c. 1850 can be seen in figure 2.3.





**Figure 2.3:** *Map of Intersection of Spring Street and Varick Street*, Museum of the City of New York. [29.100.2984].

This attack on the Spring Street Church did not discourage<sup>60</sup> the congregation from its abolitionist stance. Rev. Henry G. Ludlow left the SSPC soon after in 1837, citing failing health,<sup>61</sup> and his successor, Rev. William Patton, continued in the reform tradition of his predecessors, espousing abolition, temperance, and health reform (Halsey 1886:17; Moment 1877:15). With a new, larger church building and the growing tension over slavery in the period leading up to the Civil War possibly attracting members to the abolitionist church, the Spring

<sup>60</sup> Despite the success of the Spring Street Church in the post-riot period, the, “1834 riots cooled the radicalism of New York’s abolitionists,” (Harris 2003:172) and a divide occurred between New York’s white and Black abolitionists. Shaken by the unexpected violence of the riots, New York’s white abolitionist reformers distanced themselves from the fight for racial equality by focusing on the abolition of Southern slavery, a system they could condemn for its violence and immorality while at the same time employing the rhetoric of racial stereotypes that reinforced, rather than challenged, the status quo of white supremacy in the North (Harris 2003:198-199). New York’s Black abolitionists in turn sought the, “reform of the black community,” (Harris 2003:200), using education, moral reform, and notions of middle-class respectability as a way to combat Northern racism and improve local conditions. This concept of community improvement and racial uplift was discussed earlier in this chapter (Bulthuis 2014:112-113; Harris 2003:119, 199-203).

<sup>61</sup> Halsey denies this, instead claiming Ludlow left due to “financial embarrassments” (1886:16-17).

Street congregation continued to grow under Patton, reaching 800 members in the mid-1840s (Halsey 1886; Mooney et al. 2008:2.3).

Unfortunately, after Patton left Spring Street in 1848, the church began a cycle of decline and debt. It is possible that Patton's tenure initiated this cycle; "pecuniary embarrassments" are given as a reason for his resignation (Alexander 1887:103). In the 1860s the church could not afford a permanent pastor and the congregation relied on its members to host prayer meetings while they raised money to hire a new pastor and pay off the church's debt<sup>62</sup> (Meade 2007:II-5-II-6, 2010:15-16; NYT 1956).

The latter half of the 19th century saw SoHo become, "the warehouse district [...] with expanded sweatshops above the stores in cast-iron buildings" (Blackmar 1989:253). At the same time, the congregation of the SSPC decreased in population, "owing to the change in population and the constant growth of business," (NYT 1898; see also Scherzer 1992:183-197). By the end of the 19th century, SSPC was one of the few remaining downtown churches;<sup>63</sup> many others had closed or moved north with their congregations. Over the rest of the 19th century and into the 20th century attendance at the church waned until it was closed in 1963.<sup>64</sup> Three years later a fire in the church destroyed the building shortly after the property was sold to the Salvation Army (Meade 2007:II-7; NYT 1966). During the late 1960s the western portion of the block was consolidated and transformed into a parking lot. There is no evidence that the presence of the

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<sup>62</sup> Debt incurred from the cost of building the new \$22,000 church building and a declining congregation. In 1862 the SSPC was mortgaged to the 13<sup>th</sup> Street Church for \$11,000.

<sup>63</sup> Despite the decrease in the church congregation, SSPC remained active in the Eighth Ward, and the late 19th century community service activities of the church reflected the changing population within the neighborhood. For example, there are records of the church teaching Sunday School classes for Italian and Chinese immigrants during the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (NYT 1956).

<sup>64</sup> The decline in church membership during the late 19th century might also be associated with the formal abolition of slavery in the United States and the end of the Civil War in 1865; the church congregation was at its height during the first half of the 19th century, when the issue of abolition was a defining part of the church's identity.

burial vaults was acknowledged during the construction of the parking lot; the rediscovery and excavation of the vaults in the winter of 2006-2007 will be detailed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methods and Research Design**

### **Introduction**

Over the course of the 19th century New York City became more diverse, commercial, and urban, particularly in the southern wards. During the first half of the century, coinciding with the use of the Spring Street burial vaults, life and death in this growing urban center were dramatically and rapidly restructured, both physically and culturally. But how do we take the individuals interred within the burial vaults and locate them within the landscape of the living? This chapter presents the archaeological, historical, and geographical methods used in this dissertation by originating at the burial vaults, a location shared by the individuals who came to rest there and the starting point for identifying them. Drawing them out of the vaults, this study then proceeds to trace them across scales of space and time throughout the Manhattan landscape, before placing them back within the vaults.

This chapter will begin with a summary of the 2006 excavations that occurred under the direction of United Research Services Corporation (URS) and Allee, King, Rosen and Fleming, Inc. (AKRF), with details gathered from the site report, articles published by the archaeologists in the years following the excavation, and discussion of the project with the project's principle investigator (Meade 2010, 2020; Mooney 2010; Mooney pers. comm.; Mooney et al. 2008; Morin 2010). Conditions for the excavations, like so many salvage archaeology projects, were less than ideal; winter weather and time constraints imposed by the ongoing construction activities pressured the archaeologists to work quickly. These conditions and the degree of preservation at the site contributed to a scenario that limited the recording of spatial associations among the burials and artifacts.

To address the limitations of the spatial record and explore those individuals interred at Spring Street beyond their presence within the vaults, the rest of this chapter will discuss the

archaeological materials recovered from the site, the documentary record, and their use in the construction of a GIS. This will begin with a presentation of the mortuary artifacts recovered from the site and how those objects contribute to this dissertation's exploration of extended life course in relation to the SSPC burial population. Following this artifact discussion is a brief introduction to the GIS and why it was selected as a tool for this research project; though Chapter 4 of this dissertation will provide the in-depth discussion of its construction, the GIS is introduced here for its role in connecting the site data, artifacts, and historical records. The chapter will finish with the documentary records accessed for this study, how these sources expand on the archaeological data to trace the SSPC burial population across time and space before their arrivals in the burial vaults, and the limitations of these records.

### **2006 Excavations**

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006, construction crews with Bovis Land Lease-LMB were conducting mechanized excavations in preparation for the construction of the foundation of Trump SoHo,<sup>65</sup> the 46-story hotel-condominium complex that now occupies the corner of Spring and Varick, when they uncovered human skeletal remains at the site (Mooney et al. 2008:1.1). In accordance with the guidelines detailed in the State Historic Preservation Office/New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Human Remains Discovery Protocol, and echoed in the Landmarks Preservation Commission Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City, Section 7.6, and the New York Archaeological Council Standards Committee's Cultural Resource Standards Handbook, Section 5.0, construction at the site halted while the New York Police Department and Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) determined

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<sup>65</sup> Trump Soho was renamed The Dominick in December 2017, in part to remove the business's association with the controversial then-President of the United States (Im 2018; Protesse et al. 2017). The Trump Organization previously managed, but did not own, the hotel.

the origin of the skeletal remains as either forensic or archaeological. A forensic anthropologist working with the OCME, Christian Crowder, Ph.D., determined the remains were associated with a historical burial context (Mooney 2010:21-22; Mooney et al. 2008:1.1). In response to this conclusion, the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) recommended that construction work at the site cease until a qualified archaeologist could investigate the source and extent of the human skeletal remains.

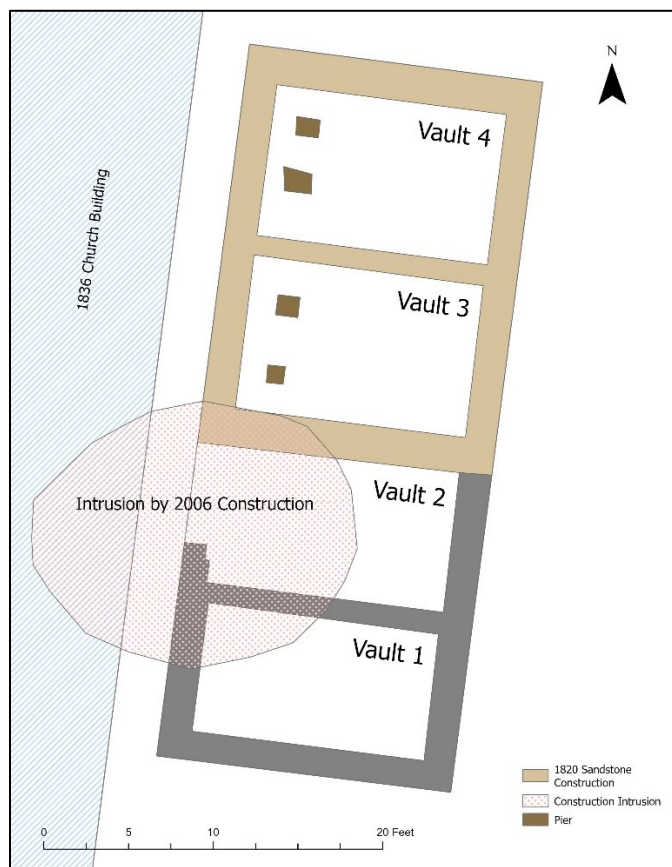
Following the halt on construction, archaeological crews with URS and AKRF were brought in to assess the site. The archaeological survey and excavations of the SSPC site began on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and continued into January. The archaeological work plan was accepted by the DOB on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and detailed how the archaeological investigation and excavation of the site would proceed (Mooney et al. 2008:1.5). This plan included performing detailed background research of the site, monitoring construction activities in areas surrounding the find spot, the collection and documentation of skeletal remains and funerary artifacts, the identification of existing descendant populations, and the ultimate reburial of the skeletal and artifact remains in consultation with the descendant population (Mooney et al. 2008:1.5). When individuals directly descended from the congregation of the SSPC could not be located, the Presbytery of New York City formed a board, headed by David Pultz, to act as custodian of the remains and consult on the analysis and reburial of the skeletal remains, which was completed in July 2014.

Four burial vaults were uncovered during the Spring Street excavations and numbered in the order they were found.<sup>66</sup> Vault 1 is the southernmost vault and was found on December 11, 2006, when the construction crews uncovered the first skeletal remains, while Vault 4 is the

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<sup>66</sup> This is reverse to the order in which the vaults were built.

northernmost vault. Vaults 1 and 2 were built during the second phase of vault construction concluding in 1831, post-dating the original two vaults that were in-use by 1820, Vaults 3 and 4 (Meade 2007:II-8). The vaults were located east of the main church building (figure 3.1).



**Figure 3.1:** Location of vaults, east of church building. Area of intrusion by 2006 construction approximated based on site report maps (Mooney et al. 2008).

Evaluation of the site began with the monitoring of construction activities by the archaeology crew. After the overlying construction rubble had been removed from the site, excavations and collection of the skeletal remains and associated artifacts proceeded by hand (Mooney et al. 2008:4.1). Generally, excavations began at the southern side of the vaults and proceeded northward, with excavation methods varying according to the degree of disturbance and preservation of the skeletal remains in each vault.

The stratigraphy of the vaults consisted of a cinder/ash/rubble layer, hereafter referred to as the fill layer, approximately 6-inches to 1-foot thick and containing the majority of intrusive artifacts. The human skeletal remains were located immediately below the fill layer, at a depth of approximately 8-feet below street level. There was some intermixing between the fill layer and the burial context, but these layers were generally considered to be stratigraphically separate (Mooney et al. 2008:4.5). The foundations of the vault walls were uncovered 6 to 10-feet below street level. Initially, several feet of earth and rubble had been removed by mechanized excavation to a depth of 10-feet below surface level in preparation for the development of the site by construction crews. This soil had been removed from the site or to a fill pile, located on the north-central part of the site. It was determined this fill was culturally sterile and devoid of skeletal remains, and probably introduced to the site during the construction of the parking lot in 1966 to level the ground (Mooney et al. 2008:3.1).

The vaults were built during two phases of construction, with the first two vaults completed by 1820, when the earliest burials were interred. Vault 3 and Vault 4 were built of local sandstone with sandy earthen floors, and a 1-foot-thick brick wall dividing the two vaults (Meade 2007:III-2; Mooney et al 2008:4.5). Vaults 1 and 2 were constructed of brick with brick floors, and were finished by 1831 according to church documents (Mooney 2010:24-26; Mooney et al. 2008:4.12; Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841). There is evidence that the crypts had vaulted ceilings; vaulted ceilings are found among contemporary burial vaults and fragments of mortared and curved brick were recovered at the site (Mooney et al. 2008:4.12). It is thought that the vault roof was covered with a mounded earthen cap, and the entrance to each of the vaults led through the ceiling (Mooney 2010:26-28). It is also possible that the entrances to the vaults were incorporated into the construction of a separate lecture room that stood adjacent to



the church's eastern side after 1818, or that the original vaults, Vaults 3 and 4, originated as the basement of that structure (Meade 2010:10; Mooney et al. 2008:2.5). A family history recounted by Samuel Hutchings (1894:9), a member of the church congregation in the 1820s and 1830s, supports the interpretation of the vaults location beneath the lecture room in his description of his parents' burials within the vaults.

Each vault was treated by the archaeological team as a separate research unit and excavations proceeded according to the unique conditions of each vault. Vault 1 exhibited the most disturbance, due to the nature of how it was found during construction and earlier depositional events associated with the demolition of the church and the construction of the 1960s parking lot. The excavation of Vault 1 proceeded from the northernmost wall of the vault and radiating outward in order to locate the other vault walls and determine the boundary of the space (Mooney et al. 2008:4.3). Few skeletal remains were recovered from this area, due to the initial disturbance by mechanized construction equipment and the collection of skeletal remains by the OCME during its assessment of the site.

Vault 2 was only minimally intruded upon by the 2006 construction activities at the site. Once the fill layer was removed in this vault and the topmost skeletal remains revealed, excavations continued by removing the soil surrounding each burial cluster. The skeletal remains were clustered, probably due to coffin collapse; as stacked coffins decayed and collapsed into each other the skeletal remains inside would have intermingled (Mooney et al. 2008:4.16, 4.24-4.28). Remains were clustered on the north, east, and southern sides of the vault interiors, possibly suggesting a western entrance to the individual vaults (Mooney 2010:31).

Like Vault 2, Vault 3 was excavated by removing the soil surrounding the burials down to the vault floor, then collecting and documenting the individual burials and disarticulated

remains. Of the four vaults, Vault 3 (MNI=31) and Vault 4 (MNI=134) were found to be the best preserved and contained the most burials compared to Vault 1 (MNI=18) and Vault 2 (MNI=14) (Novak 2017b:92).

Vault 4 contained the largest number of disarticulated remains of the four vaults (Mooney et al. 2008:4.16). The excavation of this vault proceeded in a manner similar to the technique used in Vaults 2 and 3, though the lack of articulated and discrete burials and abundance of disarticulated remains throughout the vault negated the ability to remove the soil surrounding the skeletal remains down to the vault floor level. Instead, the archaeology crew proceeded by excavating the vault in a series of 2-foot wide trenches, beginning at the southern wall and stretching east-west across the vault (Mooney et al. 2008:4.1-4.3). These trenches aligned with the burials in Vault 4, which were oriented in the common Judeo-Christian east-west direction (Mooney et al. 2008:4.24).

Had the Trump SoHo construction project required the use of federal funding or land, or the approval of special permits, a historical survey would have been mandated by the New York State or federal governments before construction on the corner of Spring and Varick began. As a private building project, it is unclear what historical research was done in preparation for work on the property, since the Trump SoHo project was not subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act<sup>67</sup> (NHPA) or surveys mandated by New York State environmental and historical preservation laws prior to construction activities beginning<sup>68</sup> (Meade 2020:1; Mooney

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<sup>67</sup> The NHPA, passed in 1966, defines processes for historic preservation, and the councils and institutions that oversee and implement them. Section 106 of the NHPA requires federal projects and projects receiving federal funding to undertake a preliminary survey assessing the impact of the project and its activities on historical and cultural resources, such as, “any district, site, building, structure or object that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register” (King 2008:110) of Historic Places, prior to receiving funding or licenses.

<sup>68</sup> Personal communication with the site archaeologists indicates that a historical survey was most likely done on the site before construction began, but references to the SSPC burial vaults are infrequent in the documentary record and could have been missed. This might explain the intrusion onto the site by construction crews if the presence of a

pers. comm.). Like other salvage archaeology projects conducted in response to the discovery of human remains at a site, the excavation of the SSPC vaults was limited by resources and time (Morin 2010:1-2). Rather than completely halt construction to allow the archaeologists access to the site, work on the hotel continued in areas adjacent to the archaeological excavation area (Mooney et al. 2008:4.1). The excavation area was confined to the area of the vaults, and the archaeologists were given enough time to complete the excavation of the skeletal remains and observe the construction activities conducted on the western part of the lot, to ensure no additional burials were uncovered to the west of the church.

Unfortunately, the limited time and access granted to the team of archaeologists and general disturbance of the site resulted in a lack of spatial records, including detailed maps and stratigraphic profiles of the archaeological site. This is partially the result of conditions at the site; the lack of depositional integrity at the site led to the abandonment of mapping disarticulated remains beyond their general find spot, and the large Field Specimen (FS) locations fail to offer the specificity needed to examine the contextual associations of the artifacts within the vaults post-excavation.

### **Mortuary Artifacts: the Spring Street Artifact Assemblage**

The excavation of the SSPC burial vaults summarized above and subsequent laboratory analysis by the cultural resource management (CRM) firms did not explore the artifacts in depth; the focus of the excavations was on removing the skeletal remains from the site before construction could continue, not on the artifacts beyond their representation of the mortuary and intrusive contexts present at the site (Mooney et al. 2008:4.1-4.5; Mooney pers. comm.). Many of the mortuary artifacts found at the site were collected and cataloged, though some classes of

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burial site associated with the church was not considered, intentionally or accidentally, or if it was believed the burial ground had already been intruded upon by prior construction activities.

mortuary artifacts, such as coffin wood, were sampled due to their abundance at the site and state of preservation. Samples of intrusive artifacts from the fill layer were also collected to illustrate the post-vault period at the site. Processing of the artifacts at the URS lab in Burlington, New Jersey, following the excavations included cleaning and recording the artifacts; Appendix E in the site report contains a 91-page spreadsheet detailing the artifacts that were collected during excavations and processed at the URS lab. Coffin and metal artifacts were cleaned using manual methods with tools such as knives and craft blades to remove oxidation and debris. All artifacts were stored in plastic specimen bags, individually labeled with the FS number and artifact number. In autumn of 2011 the artifacts were shipped to the Physical Anthropology Laboratory at Syracuse University where the skeletal remains were being analyzed prior to their reburial in 2014.

The artifact database represents over 5,000 individual artifacts recovered during the excavation of the Spring Street site, most of which post-date the burial vaults and are beyond the scope of this dissertation project. Artifacts such as coffin plates were definitively identified as mortuary remains through their association with the burial context; other artifacts that are possibly associated with the burial vaults include buttons and other personal artifacts.<sup>69</sup> Many of the mortuary artifacts are nails and wood fragments. The remaining artifacts are identified as intrusive materials with varying levels of certainty; while some of these artifacts date to the period when the vaults were in-use, it is impossible to state that they were associated with the vaults themselves. Few grave goods have been recovered from comparative contexts in

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<sup>69</sup> I am referring to these entries as “possible mortuary artifacts” because many of the artifacts were disarticulated from the individual burials due to disturbance at the site throughout the 20th century, both during the 1966 demolition of the church and construction of the Salvation Army parking lot, as well as during the initial phase of construction in 2006 when the vaults were rediscovered. Based on artifact type, it is unlikely many of these items were associated with the vaults, but the disturbance at the site and lack of detailed excavation records makes it difficult to definitively exclude these artifacts from the mortuary context.

England,<sup>70</sup> and the quantities of ceramics and other artifacts associated with household or other non-burial contexts lead to the conclusion that these items were most likely not included intentionally within the vaults. This presents a temporal and spatial boundary, confining my analysis to those artifacts that can be definitively associated with the burial context of the Spring Street vault site; as such, the intrusive artifacts have been excluded from my dissertation analysis.<sup>71</sup>

In 1966 the church was purchased by the Salvation Army; shortly after, the building burned in a fire. After the church was demolished the western end of the block was consolidated and a parking lot covered the site, sealing it under a layer of fill and asphalt for 40 years. The majority of the intrusive artifacts were recovered from this fill layer of cinder and building rubble that overlay the site. While there was some mixing of the two strata, the intrusive material was, for the most part, stratigraphically separate from the burial context (Mooney et al. 2008:4.1). It is likely that the intrusive artifacts originated in the alleyway adjacent to the burial vaults and church site and were pushed into the burial context by a bulldozer or other equipment during the process of constructing the parking lot.

The total Spring Street artifact assemblage is diverse, spanning over 100 years of technological innovation and urban development. The mortuary artifacts recovered from the site were identified based on artifact type and their associations with the skeletal remains. Artifact types that are associated with the burial context include coffin hardware and wood, textiles, and

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<sup>70</sup> See sources on St George's Church, Bloomsbury (Boston 2009; Loe and Boston 2018), Christ Church Spitalfields (Cox 1996; Reeve and Adams 1993), and St Martin-in-the-Bull-Ring, Birmingham (Brickley et al. 2006) for comparative work on English burials (Cherryson 2018).

<sup>71</sup> Though I have tried to incorporate these materials into my analysis, the intrusive materials extend beyond the scope of this dissertation. I hope to one day complete my study of these artifacts and use them to recreate the corner of Spring and Varick in the Eighth Ward as I initially intended, exploring how the immediate landscape of the Church changed throughout the 19th century.

personal artifacts like shroud pins. The artifacts identified as intrusive were classified based on known manufacturing dates of the artifact type, the find location of these artifacts in the fill layer, and the typical use of such artifact types within household or commercial contexts. The intrusive artifacts include a wide variety of artifact types, including glass bottles, electrical wiring, and toilet seat fragments, with many dating between the closure of the vaults c.1849 and the construction of the parking lot after 1966.

For some of the recovered artifacts an association with the burial vault context was not so easily disproven using known dates of manufacture or use; this is true for as much as 40% of the assemblage. The site report suggests that some of the earlier artifacts, those contemporary with the use of the vaults, were deposited as fill during the 19th century, “possibly as a means of controlling the odor of decay from the remains” (Mooney et al. 2008:4.5). There were 336 individual fragments of ceramic artifacts recovered that date to the period when the vaults were in use, but it is extremely unlikely that many, if any, of these artifacts were present within the vaults before the second half of the 19th century. This is true for the majority of these potentially intrusive artifacts, which include domestic ceramics, window glass, personal items, and architectural artifacts (Mooney et al. 2008:Appendix E). There are also a variety of personal artifacts, such as tortoiseshell hair combs<sup>72, 73</sup> and pipe fragments,<sup>74</sup> that may have an association with the burials, but post-vault disturbance and commingled remains makes it impossible to

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<sup>72</sup> All shell hair comb artifacts were recovered from a single find location: FS 66, Vault 4, West ½, level 1. This is another large FS location, and includes intrusive artifacts such as an electrical insulator and oyster shells, as well as mortuary artifacts, such as 10 of the coffin plates. It is not possible to know if there was any stratigraphic distinction among these artifacts, or how deep level 1 reached, since that information was not recorded during excavations. Hair attached to the combs does indicate, however, that those specific artifacts were likely included within the vault mortuary context.

<sup>73</sup> A braided hair piece, known as a hair switch, was also found associated with the burials. X-ray analysis show a comb present within its mass, holding the styled hair in place.

<sup>74</sup> The majority of pipe fragments, including stems and bowls, were recovered from FS locations associated with the fill layer.

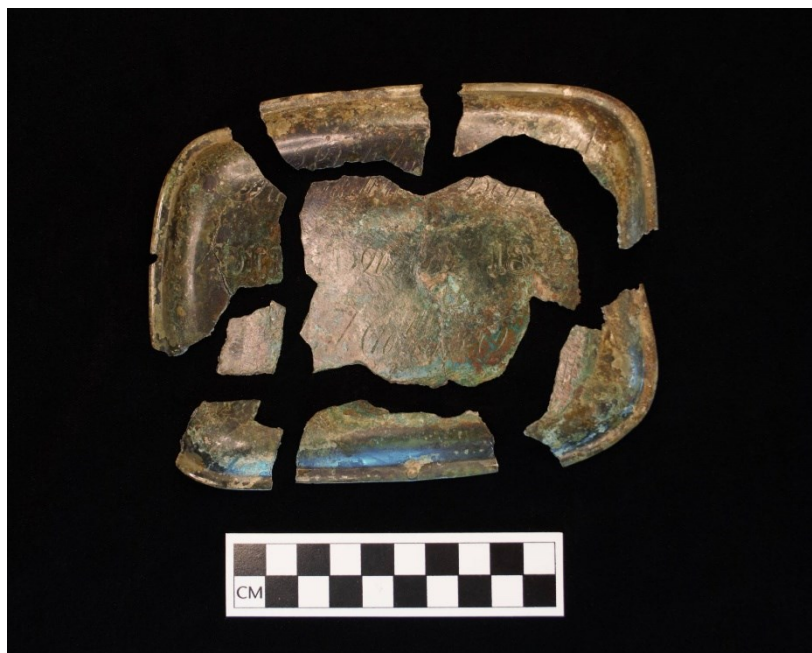
determine how intentional the placement of these items was within the vaults. In light of this, these items were excluded from my analysis of the mortuary artifacts, since they cannot be definitively associated with the church congregation.

Significant mortuary artifact types presented in the discussion chapters of this dissertation include coffin name plates and hardware, and personal items associated with burials at the SSPC, such as shroud pins and textile fragments. These items demonstrate how the social and spiritual beliefs of this church congregation intersected among their mortuary practices. The congregation at Spring Street was participating in a variety of burial customs, both contradicting and accepting elements of the changing ideology fueling the growth of the new funeral industry. Among these artifacts broad mortuary practices, such as the use of various textiles and pins to decorate the coffin and dress the body of the deceased, are represented as well as individual customs that might have been part of the deceased's cultural identity, as seen through the presence of copper coins and white ceramic plates. Changing concerns with public health, influenced by the rapidly growing population numbers of urban centers like New York City, are also reflected in the presence of these artifacts within the vaults.

#### *Mortuary Artifacts: Coffin Plates*

With regard to this dissertation's focus on landscape and extended life course, one of the most useful classes of artifacts found among the Spring Street assemblage has been the coffin name plates. This class of artifacts will be highlighted here, for their use as a tool in drawing the individuals they name out of the burial vaults and back into the landscape of Manhattan. Before research was conducted on the NYCDR in 2015 by Dr. Shannon Novak and Cristina Watson, these coffin plates were one of the only sources identifying specific individuals associated with the burial vaults.

Coffin plates recording the name, age, dates of birth and death, and other information about a deceased individual, are commonly found among burial vault assemblages dating to the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These items were often decorative and attached to the coffin lid over the head or chest area. Some sites, such as Christ Church Spitalfields in England, record incidences of coffin plates attached to the sides of coffins; these sideplates or endplates would have been visible when the coffins were stacked<sup>75</sup> (Reeve and Adams 1992). No evidence for such a practice has been found at Spring Street, though the possibility of sideplates cannot be ruled out. In situ, the coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert, the only Spring Street coffin plate to be associated with a burial in the field, was found near his cranium (figures 3.2 and 3.3) (Mooney et al. 2008:5.8-5.9).

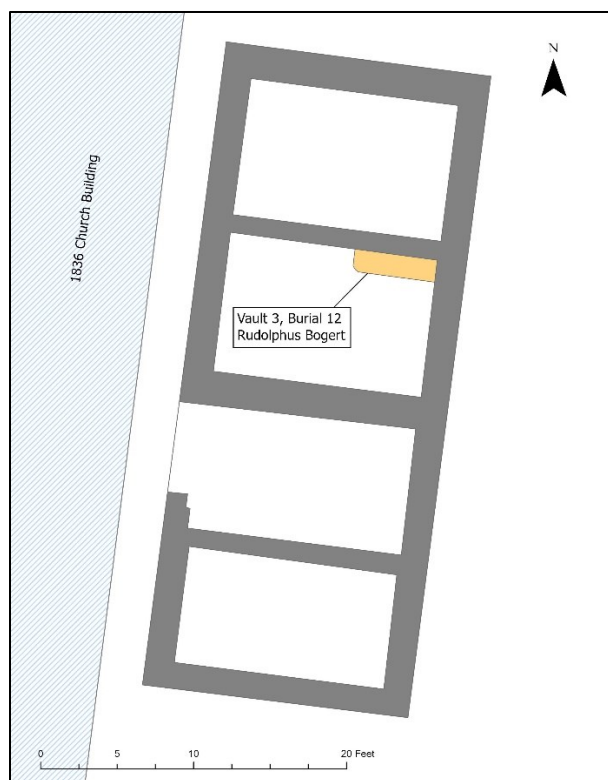


**Figure 3.2:** Coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert, deceased November 16, 1842, aged 76 years. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

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<sup>75</sup> Coffin plates, being interred in closed burial vaults, would not have been visible to the public after the funeral of the deceased unlike a gravestone or large memorial.





**Figure 3.3:** Location of Bogert coffin plate within Vault 3, associated with Burial 12, identified as an adult male.

At Spring Street 58 coffin plates were recovered, representing 29% of the minimum 200 burials recovered at the site and only 8.84% of the 656 burials identified in the NYCDR. Of these, 28 coffin plates have legible inscriptions recording the names and dates of death of the individuals buried in the vaults; 18 identify adult burials, 10 identify the burials of children. Six additional plates do not yield enough identifying information to discern a full name, sex, age, or year of death without consulting historical documents. The remaining 21 coffin plates are illegible, due to corrosion or breakage (Mooney et al. 2008:E.1-E.92). Along with the coffin plates four stamped letters were found, one of which, an ampersand, may indicate a possible joint burial<sup>76</sup> (figure 3.4) (White and Mooney 2010:52-53). Joint interments were not unusual in

<sup>76</sup> Two stamped letter Bs (FS 10 #156, FS 26 #36), an F (FS 26 #37), and an ampersand (FS 26 #38) were all recovered in Vault 4.

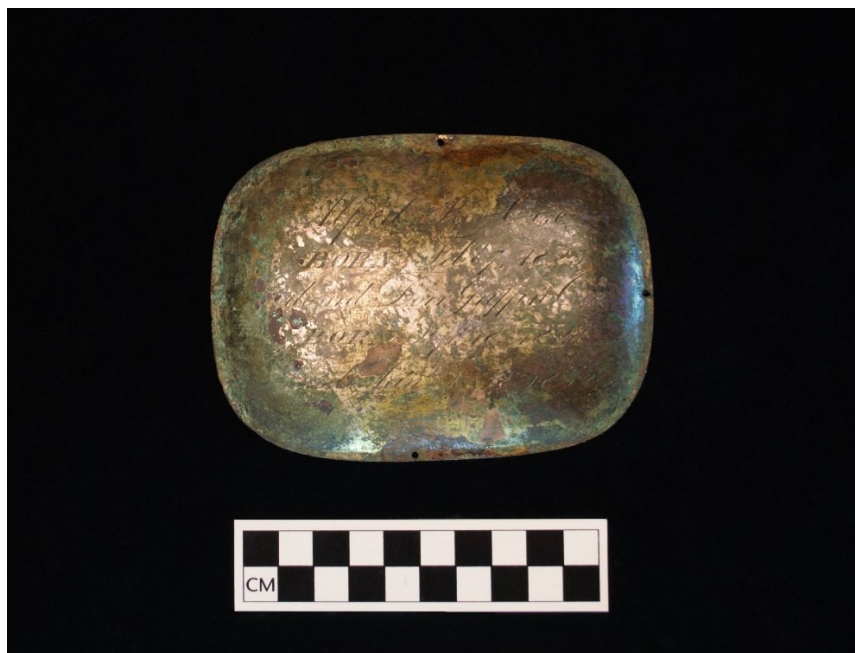
contemporary burial vaults and one coffin plate, that of brothers Alfred Roe Cox and Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, demonstrates that such interments took place at Spring Street<sup>77</sup> (figure 3.5).



**Figure 3.4:** Stamped metal letters and ampersand. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

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<sup>77</sup> Identified as artifact FS 66 #60, this coffin plate was recovered in the western half of Vault 4.



**Figure 3.5:** Coffin plate of Alfred Roe Cox and Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, brothers and sons of Rev. Samuel H. Cox. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

The interpretive value of the coffin plates, however, is not limited simply to their legible text. While the inscribed demographic information present on the coffin plates is extremely valuable to understanding the burial population at Spring Street and, in the cases of Louisa Hunter and Rudolphus Bogert, identifying the remains of specific individuals by name, the morphology and materials used in the production of the coffin plates also reveals information about the church congregation, including the congregation's access to mortuary goods and possible ideological influences on the selection of those items. This will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

### **Geographical Information System**

As has been mentioned several times in this chapter, no comprehensive site maps recording FS locations or the associations between skeletal and artifact finds were created during site excavations. To address this omission, I constructed a GIS using Environmental Systems Research Institute's (ESRI) ArcGIS software suite.

GIS software is used for the, “storage, analysis, and manipulation of spatially referenced data” (Rennell 2012:510; see also DeMers 2009). GIS provides a more interactive and customizable interface than regular static maps, which is why it has been selected as a method for this study. It enables users to analyze and interpret relationships, patterns, and trends found within that data (DeMers 2009:19-20). Using GIS, different data sets and variables can be selected, hidden, or compared against each other over space and time. The user can change scales quickly and easily to explore associations and distributions across single sites or different regions. These manipulations of existing data enable the researcher to do more than just creating a static visual representation of the data; a GIS creates new data and associations, depicting, “space, time and form simultaneously” (Green 1990:5; see also Cowen 1988).

For these reasons, construction of a GIS has been a primary component of this dissertation project. The purposes of this GIS are twofold; the first, to locate and observe the burial population of the Spring Street vaults within the 19th century Manhattan landscape by plotting the locations of residential addresses associated with the burial population, tracking this burial population within the realm of the Living before they arrive at the common location of the burial vaults, which becomes part of their shared deathscape. The second goal of this GIS was to develop a site map locating the skeletal remains and artifacts recovered within the Spring Street excavation site. Associations between these groups of data can be identified within a GIS in ways that are not obvious by comparing existing, static site report maps to textual descriptions of artifact provenience recorded in the site report appendix. The construction of the SSPC GIS and its use in my analysis of landscape and extended life course will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

## Historical Documents

To construct the GIS for this research project my dissertation has extensively used historical documents to expand upon the information interpreted from the 19th century Spring Street artifacts, specifically the coffin plates introduced above. Historical documents are used in conjunction with other types of material culture to form a more complete interpretation of the archaeological record. Archaeology does not merely serve to support or fill in holes of the written record, nor does the written record only serve to confirm the conclusions drawn from the archaeological record. Used together, documents and material culture provide a unique perspective of the past, allowing, “the historical archaeologist greater access to meaning and belief” (McGuire 2000:282).

In applying historical accounts to archaeological materials, it is imperative for historical archaeologists to consider the identity of a document’s author and audience, and the context in which the document was written. Like artifacts, documents and their creators were all influenced by the social, economic, and ideological contexts in which they were written (Hodder 1994:393-394; Moreland 2001:26). Documents convey a message, communicating the opinions and beliefs of the author, and demonstrating how they conceptualize the world and their place in it. In this way, documents reinforce cultural practices and beliefs. Historical documents are usually the product of the elite or dominant class<sup>78</sup> and can be used to maintain power or remove information – or people – from the historical record; in 19th century America the dominant social group were upper-class white males, and the omission of the poor or people of color from the documentary record is something that can be observed among the documents consulted for this dissertation.

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<sup>78</sup> During the 19th century, when the SSPC vaults were in use, printing technology was advancing and becoming cheaper, allowing a more diverse group of printers and authors to reach a growing audience. This printing boom was discussed earlier in Chapter 2 of this dissertation in relation to the practice of “suasion” and the growth of abolitionist and Black newspapers and pamphlets.

But documents are also interpreted by those who engage with them, impacting the reader, their knowledge and how they apply that to other areas of their experience, in a dialectic process (Stoler 2009). By approaching historical documents critically, questioning the agenda of the author and the cultural mechanisms that shaped it, historical archaeologists are better able to distinguish between an ideal presented in a historical document and the behaviors and practices of everyday life, and how they shaped and influenced each other (Hodder 1994:395).

Several types of historical documents have been particularly useful in locating the Spring Street congregation throughout Manhattan with regard to the research objectives of this dissertation project presented in Chapter 1. Of the documents referenced in this research, historical maps depicting Manhattan during the 19th century and address records, particularly city directories, proved extremely useful in placing the SSPC burial population within the urban landscape. These documents and others are detailed below.

#### *New York City Directories and Address Records*

In addition to historical maps, my dissertation research has referenced a variety of records containing address data for the SSPC congregation. This address data records how the congregation was moving throughout the city, over time and space. Distances between congregant residences, places of work, and the church changed over time in relation to broader population changes, such as the northward movement of the suburbs and residential neighborhoods throughout the 19th century. Localized events, such as the 1834 Race Riots that damaged the SSPC and targeted its pastorate, also coincided with changes among this address assemblage. The application of this address data to the GIS and how it addresses the research objectives of this dissertation will be discussed in the following chapter.

Data recorded within New York City directories have helped identify addresses associated with the Spring Street population and where they chose to make their homes. These directories, published by various companies throughout the 19th century, recorded the names of the household head, the address where they resided, their occupation, and the address of their place of work if it was separate from their home. However, these directories were not sold to share this address information among the population, but to sell ad space to local businesses. As a result, the address data contained within the yearly directories cannot be assumed to record every household residing within the city in a given year; due to recorder error or bias, entire households may have been excluded.

These directories also do not record every family member residing in the household, introducing another source of bias within these documents. Like many historical documents from the 19th century, address entries often focused on the male household head. Except in rare entries female family members are excluded from the directories by name, along with any information about their own occupations; though rare, such directory entries were not entirely unique to households with female heads or widows when they do appear. For example the household of Joseph Murden, who died in 1841 and was interred in Vault 3, appears in the directories under listings for both his name and/or his wife's name, Kezia<sup>79</sup> Murden, along with both of their occupations as teachers (Doggett 1842:238, 1843:248, 1844:254, 1845:264; Groot and Elston 1845:302; Longworth 1810:279, 1820:321, 1825:314, 1826:352, 1827:361, 1828:437, 1829:419, 1830:450, 1831:480, 1832:503, 1833:451, 1834:509, 1835:483, 1836:475, 1837:455, 1838:466, 1839:482, 1840:465). Surprisingly there are some years with listings for *only* Kezia, recorded as, "Murden Mrs. teacher," along with their home address (Longworth 1821:322,

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<sup>79</sup> Sometimes spelled, "Keziah."

1822:333, 1823:331, 1824:320). In the directory for 1841-42 Kezia again appears, recorded as, "Murden Kezia widow of Joseph R. teacher 176 Hudson" (Longworth 1841:519, 1842:453). This home address at 176 Hudson along with Joseph's coffin plate information is further confirmed in the NYCDR.

While this recording bias similarly affects children living within the household, male adult children working outside the household sometimes received their own address entries within the directories. An example from the Spring Street burial population of the directories listing an adult son separately from his father, despite residing at the same home address, is Rudolphus Bogert Jr. His father, Rudolphus Bogert, died in 1842 and was interred in Vault 3. Both men were recorded in directories for 1842 (Doggett 1842:38; Longworth 1842:100).<sup>80</sup> After 1842 there is only one Rudolphus Bogert recorded at 20 Charlton, dropping the use of, "Jr." to distinguish the two men (Doggett 1843:41, 1844:42, 1845:43, 1846:46).

Address data is also found within the NYCDR, which provides a record of the deceased, their date and cause of death, their age and place of birth, and the address associated with their death. The address data found within these records is just as valuable as that located within the city directories, but by the nature of these documents they cannot record detailed changes in residential addresses year-by-year. In 19th century Manhattan it was not unusual for a household to move every year or two. Leases expired on May 1<sup>st</sup> and on this city-wide moving day many

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<sup>80</sup> In 1840 and 1841 Rudolphus Jr. is listed at a different address than his father; at "102 Broad" in 1840 and "108 Broad" in 1841 (Longworth 1840:103, 1841:109). As this is the only address recorded for Rudolphus Jr. in those years it is likely that it represents his workplace; in 1842 Rudolphus Jr. is listed as working at the Broad Street location and residing at his father's address at 20 Charlton, where he continued to live there after (Doggett 1842:38). It is unknown what connection Rudolphus Jr. may have had with the Spring Street Presbyterian Church; Rudolphus Sr. was affiliated with the church via his wife, Ann, who joined the SSPC in 1824 and followed the congregation to Laight Street.



families would pack up and move their homes in search of a location with cheaper rent or better access to resources (Blackmar 1989:213-214).

Federal and state census records were also consulted for household address information, however these documents lack sufficient detail to associate census entries with the SSPC burial population. During the early 19th century federal censuses only recorded the name of the household head, some demographic information about the household in the form of a tally chart, and general location information such as the city ward or street name where the household lived. This information, such as the age, gender, and race of the household members or where they lived, was not always consistent across census years but did grow in detail as the century progressed. Due to the number of female and subadult burials in the Spring Street vaults it was not possible to consistently or definitively associate census entries with the burial records.

### *Historical Maps*

Historical maps present an idealized view of the landscape and, when used alongside the archaeological record, offer a particularly fascinating insight to the past. As tools, maps isolate information, segregate places and populations, and convey the agenda of the mapmakers (Fowles 2016:195). Land is designed and recorded on maps with activity areas marked; the actual use of that land, however, can greatly vary from this ideal design as populations move through, use, and reinterpret space (Kryder-Reid 1996:228). Maps can also omit information, such as excluding areas inhabited by the poor and people of color.

With regards to the research goals of this dissertation and the GIS introduced above and detailed in the following chapter, historical maps provide both a visual depiction of the changing Manhattan landscape and a canvas on which to locate the SSPC burial population. These historical maps are a foundation on which to add locations, features, and people unknown or

unacknowledged by past mapmakers. Viewing the maps over time, one can see how quickly the city grew up around the SSPC, changing the physical landscape from rural farmland to an urban neighborhood within the span of 20 years and continuing to spread north. The Commissioner's Plan of 1811 controlled northward spread in an orderly grid, in contrast to the southern point of Manhattan, where the organic growth of the original settlement oriented the streets. Ward boundaries carved up the island and were altered with the city's growing population.

Maps depicting Manhattan throughout the 19th century were selected for their depictions of city streets, ward boundaries, local resources such as markets, and other landscape features and landmarks. These maps were sourced from collections available through the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, and the David Rumsey Map Collection. Much of these collections have been digitized and are available online. A complete list of the maps used in constructing the GIS for this dissertation has been included with the bibliography.

#### *Additional Documentary Sources*

Though much information can be interpreted from the address and cartographic sources described above, maps and directory sources do not present first-person accounts of ideology or its influence on the SSPC congregation. Fortunately there are surviving sermons and other accounts related to the operations and beliefs of this church congregation available for reference. From the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, records include surviving church sermons by the pastors of the SSPC, such as Rev. Samuel H. Cox (1829) and Rev. A.W. Halsey (1886). The meeting minutes of the Spring Street Presbyterian Church board of trustees (1826-1841) and Treasurer's Records (1818-1828) are also available for the period when the vaults were in use. These resources shed light on the religious teachings of

the Spring Street Church and the history of the congregation, documenting the congregation's perspective on death, the participation of the Spring Street Church in the abolition movement, and the changing neighborhood. The burial vaults are mentioned infrequently in these records, but records of their construction and changes in the cost of interment are present in the Trustees meeting minutes (Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841).

In addition to the Spring Street Church records, documentary resources referenced for this dissertation include newspaper articles written throughout the 19th century; the minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York (1917); papers and personal recollections associated with the families who attended the SSPC, such as the Hutchings (1894) and Roe families (Beam 2018). These documents record events that occurred and impacted the lives of the Spring Street congregation, such as the Race Riots of 1834, and provide genealogical information. The Common Council meeting minutes also record the locations of water resources and markets throughout the city, along with improvements in city infrastructure and local safety through the construction of watchtowers and gas lamps, or the implementation of additional patrols (NYCC 1917). These sources offer insight on daily life in Lower Manhattan and its landscape.

## **Conclusion**

This project was developed to include a variety of available data sources and define the methods required to interpret each. In doing so, I have considered the limitations imposed by the condition of the archaeological site, the excavation procedures, and the documentary record. The methods presented here were selected because they enable this research to move past those limitations and address the diverse and complex questions guiding this dissertation project. By applying this methodology within the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 1, the discussion

presented in the following chapters will address how the urban landscape of 19th century New York City, characterized by such diverse elements as that urban center's rapid economic and population growth, the religious, social, and health reform movements of that period, and shifting mortuary ideologies and practices, influenced the lives and deaths of the SSPC congregation. The following chapter will detail the construction of the GIS and its application to the research objectives of this dissertation project.

## Chapter 4: Using GIS to Trace and Place a Congregation

### Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the GIS constructed for this dissertation study was built using the ArcGIS Pro software suite by ESRI. The base map for this GIS was designed by overlaying historical maps of New York City and georeferencing them to correspond with a current street map. Two historical map sources were the primary reference for this project: the 1832 map of New York City by David H. Burr (1829), and the 1836 topographical map of New York by J.H. Colton. Both maps have been digitized and are available in the David Rumsey Map Collection ([davidrumsey.com](http://davidrumsey.com)). These maps were selected due to their general accuracy, inclusion of legible street names, and reflection of the landscape as it was conceptualized in the middle of the vault-use period, 1820-1849.

Once the basemap was constructed, addresses collected from the NYCDR and city directories were plotted onto the landscape. Due to a lack of maps depicting building footprints during the vault-use period, locations of address points were approximated using contemporary street descriptions from the city directories. Referred to in the Longworth publications as the, “List of Streets,” until 1827 and the, “Runner’s Vade Mecum,” (RVM)<sup>81</sup> after, and, “The Street Directory of the City of New York,” in directories by Doggett, this section of the directory usually included a list of city streets alphabetized by name with additional details on street locations or orientation. Described by the publisher as, “correctly exhibiting their situation and extent” (Longworth 1826:43), this tool offered readers a record of cross-streets and, in later years, the address numbers found at those intersections. For this study, these street descriptions

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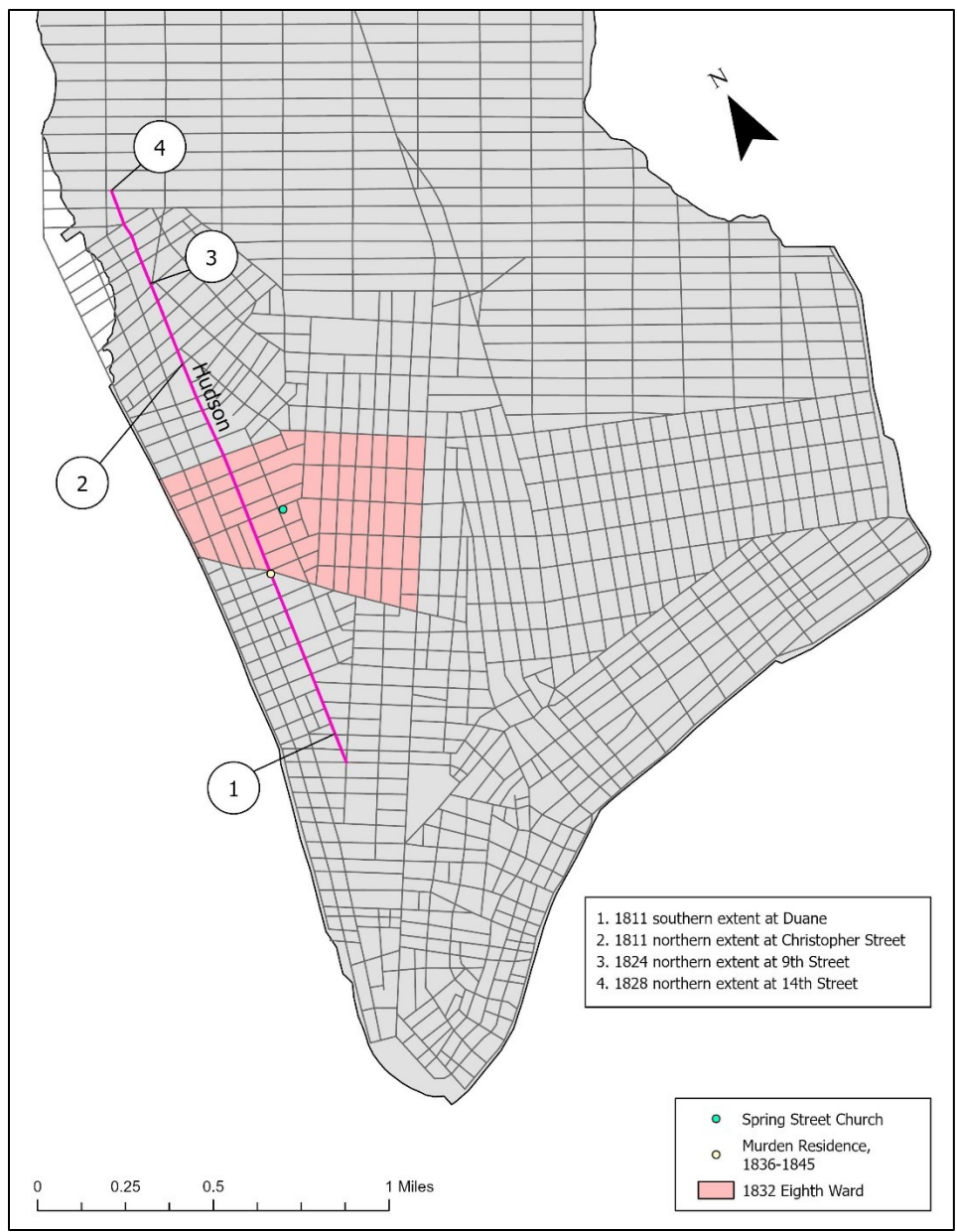
<sup>81</sup> “Vade Mecum,” translated from Latin as “go with me,” is defined as a handbook or guide.

were consulted to verify street names, which sometimes changed or were subsumed into adjacent streets, and to understand if and when numbering changes occurred.

Take, for example, Hudson Street on the western side of Manhattan. This road underwent several changes through the early half of the 19th century as the city spread northward (figure 4.1). According to the, “Alphabetical List of Streets in the City New York,” provided by Elliot and Crissy’s 1811 directory, Hudson originated at Duane Street in the Fifth Ward and terminated at Christopher Street<sup>82</sup> in the present-day West Village. By 1824 the Longworth, “List of Streets,” describes Hudson as, “leads from Chambers, to which it was recently opened from Duane,” extending one-and-a-half miles north to 9<sup>th</sup> Street. And by 1828 Hudson is recorded as extending to 14<sup>th</sup> Street, though numbered addresses cease about two blocks north of Christopher Street in that year (Longworth 1828).

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<sup>82</sup> In 1811, this street was located in the Eighth Ward. Please refer to Appendix A for changes in ward boundaries over time.



**Figure 4.1:** Depiction of Hudson Street over time. Residence of Joseph and Kezia Murden at 176 Hudson, 1836-1845, and location of SSPC marked.

Address numbering along this path continues to creep irregularly northward until 1844, when Hudson Street was completely renumbered along its entire extent, between Chambers and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Observed within this dissertation data set, there are few examples where such renumbering impacts the documentation of addresses associated with the SSPC burial vault population, since most streets underwent fewer changes to their numbering during the study

period. Addresses recorded between 1836 and 1845 for Joseph R. Murden, a school teacher whose 1841 death was commemorated with a surviving coffin plate, and his widow, Keziah, do reflect this particular example of Hudson Street. Among the city directories and recorded in the NYCDR in 1841, Murden and his wife resided at 176 Hudson from 1836 until 1843, in the northernmost part of the Fifth Ward near the intersection with Canal and north of the fashionable Hudson Square. This location appears to have been a multifamily home, as the directories also record a doctor named John Bernhisel residing at this address into the 1840s. Bernhisel (spelled Bernhizel) is recorded as a separate household in the 1840 Federal Census.

Beginning in 1841 the directory listings are attributed to Keziah, “widow of Joseph R.,” who also worked as a teacher (Doggett 1842:238, 1843:248; Longworth 1841:519, 1842:453). In 1844 Hudson was renumbered and the address listing for Keziah Murden changes to 200 Hudson (Doggett 1844:254, 1845:264; Groot and Elston 1845:302). Street descriptions from directories beginning in 1844 continue to place this property at the intersection of Hudson and Canal, near the eastern terminus of Desbrosses Street in the Fifth Ward. While a lack of documentation -- such as insurance maps dating before the 1850s -- prohibits confirmation if 176 Hudson and 200 Hudson reference the same property, it seems highly likely that this change in address for Keziah is the result of the Hudson Street numbering shift, though a move to an adjacent building is also possible. Bernhisel disappears from the directories in 1844, but a clerk named Charles H. Rusher begins to reside in the same building.

In addition to the street descriptions gathered from the city directories, the Perris Fire Insurance Map collection, dating from 1852-1854 and available from the New York Public Library’s map collection, was also consulted to compare property lots and their locations and distribution along the city’s streets. Because these maps post-date the closure of the Spring Street



burial vaults, they present a depiction of property distribution and address numbering in Manhattan that is fairly consistent with the years leading to the vaults' closure, though the street numbering included on these maps is inconsistent with data representing earlier address distributions.

### **GIS: Address-ing the Congregation**

Using a series of geoprocessing tools built into the ArcGIS Pro software, data on the burial vault population was attached to each mapped address point. This allowed for each point to be selected based on varying attributes, depicting temporal and spatial changes in address location or changes in the distribution of the population based on information such as cause of death. The results of examining this distribution will be discussed further in the following topic-specific chapters of this dissertation.

A total number of 858 addresses were collected, representing 649 individuals and 1314 recorded entries across the NYCDR and city directories dating between 1810 and 1849. Among these, 382 unique locations were represented by street numbers or cross-street descriptions, allowing those locations to be plotted on the map as a single point. The remaining entries were described by street-name only; these entries often could not be pinpointed to a single location along the identified street. In some cases verifying an individual's surname or other information against the city directories did lead to a confirmation of a specific address location when only a street name was recorded in the NYCDR. For example, in 1834 Mary Elyea<sup>83</sup> was interred in the SSPC burial vaults, with a recorded residence of, "Laurence," Street. Using the directory for that year it was confirmed that a carpenter named Calie Elyea resided at 122 Laurens (Longworth 1834:271). Due to the large population of individuals recorded in the NYCDR -- 656 entries

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<sup>83</sup> Mary Elyea was a 26 year old woman who died of unknown causes on October 4, 1834. Her cause of death was recorded as "Not known" in the NYCDR.

identified for the Spring Street burial vaults, 644 of which provided useable address data for this dissertation -- many of whom were women and children who would not be recorded by name in a city directory, sourcing such specific location data for each street-only address was not possible.<sup>84</sup>

Among the total number of 858 addresses recorded, 355 were represented by a specific street number, 27 were represented by a cross-street listing, and 447 were described only by street name. Of the 644 address entries recorded in the NYCDR, 196 were numbered locations, 7 cross-street addresses, and 441 street-only records (Table 4.1). Some of the numbered and cross-street addresses were repeated in the NYCDR, representing living situations such as family associations and multifamily residences. A dramatic increase in numbered addresses was observed among the NYCDR records starting in 1837; prior to this year, less than 3% of all address entries recorded in the NYCDR were represented with such specific information, with the majority of deaths recorded by only a street name. From 1837 onward a minimum of 55% of addresses each year were recorded with a street number.

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<sup>84</sup> The NYCDR was recently made available digitally on Ancestry.com, facilitating the continued verification of some of the more difficult-to-read entries. Future work with this data collection will include reviewing the NYCDR information gathered by Syracuse University researchers in 2015 for accuracy and locating these individuals in the NYC directories where possible or necessary.

NYCDR Address Entries, n=644					
Year	Total Entries	Street Only	Cross-Street	Numbered	Numbered Percentage
1822	10	7	3	0	0.0%
1823	20	18	1	1	5.0%
1824	18	16	1	1	5.6%
1825	20	20	0	0	0.0%
1826	37	37	0	0	0.0%
1827	26	26	0	0	0.0%
1828	29	29	0	0	0.0%
1829	32	32	0	0	0.0%
1830	41	40	0	1	2.4%
1831	35	34	0	1	2.9%
1832	<b>54</b>	53	0	1	1.9%
1833	39	37	0	2	5.1%
1834	37	36	0	1	2.7%
1835	22	21	0	1	4.5%
1836	22	19	0	3	13.6%
<b>1837</b>	22	9	1	12	<b>54.5%</b>
1838	27	2	1	24	88.9%
1839	35	1	0	34	97.1%
1840	27	0	0	27	100.0%
1841	25	0	0	25	100.0%
1842	28	2	0	26	92.9%
1843	19	0	0	19	100.0%
1844	2	0	0	2	100.0%
1845	1	0	0	1	100.0%
1846	7	0	0	7	100.0%
1847	2	0	0	2	100.0%
1848	5	1	0	4	80.0%
1849	1	0	0	1	100.0%
Unknown	1	1	0	0	0.0%
Total	644	441	7	196	

**Table 4.1:** Frequency of entries in the NYCDR by year and address type.

In comparison with the city directory listings for the population of individuals associated with the coffin plate assemblage, 205 of the total 238 (86.1%) unique address listings found among the directories were recorded with a street number or building address, 26 (10.9%) were

recorded by cross-street, and only 4 (1.7%) were listed by street name only.<sup>85</sup> Numbered addresses were common throughout the entire period surveyed, 1810-1849. This stark difference in how addresses were recorded, and with such specificity as a street number or building, likely represents a difference in practice among the directory publishers and those individuals who recorded NYCDR reflecting the different purposes of those two document types.

An obvious difference in these two address collections should be noted here: while the addresses gathered from the city directories depict the movements and locations of the coffin plate-associated population throughout the vault period, the NYCDR address collection only depicts the locations where the deceased were located prior to being interred in the vaults. While it was likely the address recorded in that document served as the home of the deceased individual and is labeled within that document under the heading, "Residence," it is also possible the recorded location was the home of a relative used for funerary purposes or the address of a medical professional.

For example, two November 1841 Spring Street burials recorded in the NYCDR originated at 95 Hudson, an address associated with the home of James H. Hart, a medical physician and son-in-law of Thomas Crawford.<sup>86</sup> This address in the heart of the Fifth Ward was listed as the Hart household from 1833 until 1843, with his business recorded separately at 278 Broadway. Thomas Crawford never appears within the directories himself, instead recorded in Montgomery, NY, in the US census years 1810, 1820, and 1830 (USCB). He presumably moved to the city to live with his daughter, Ann, and her husband sometime between 1830 and his death

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<sup>85</sup> Three additional address locations outside the bounds of Manhattan were also represented in the 238 total, representing moves to or away from the city by the deceased individual or their family.

<sup>86</sup> A marriage announcement for Ann Crawford and Dr. James H. Hart was published in the *Columbian Centinel* on January 31, 1824.

on November 7, 1841, when the NYCDR records his residence as 95 Hudson.<sup>87</sup> This is further supported by his death announcement in the *New York Evening Post*, where Thomas is noted as residing with Dr. Hart (1841). Whether this move preceded Crawford's daughter's death in 1834 is uncertain; while Ann Hart also appears in the NYCDR, her residence was only recorded as, "Hudson St," and likely referenced their home at 95 Hudson.

A day earlier, on November 6, 1841, another entry appears in the NYCDR for the Spring Street burial vaults; John Romain, also recorded as residing at 95 Hudson. Suspiciously, other than his name and date of death, his entry is identical to that of Thomas Crawford: 67 years old, born in Orange County, NY, and died of bronchitis. Was this a relative or family acquaintance? A patient of Dr. Hart's? Or a clerical error in the NYCDR? The Longworth directories for 1840-41 and 1841-42 record, "Romaine, John 62 Hudson" (Longworth 1840:542; see also Longworth 1841:605). Unfortunately the documentary record has not provided an answer for this shared address listing in the NYCDR, but for the purposes of this study it will be trusted that the address recorded in the NYCDR represents the immediate residence of the deceased upon their death.

### **GIS and Burial Record Demography**

Among the 644 address entries sourced from the NYCDR, the following Table 4.2 depicts the demographic breakdown by age and gender of those individuals represented by the NYCDR and interred within the Spring Street burial vaults. This table also depicts the demography of the 31 individuals associated with the coffin plate assemblage who form the focus of this address study. In truth, this group identified among the coffin plate artifacts should be considered a small sample of the NYCDR burial population; of the 31 individuals named by

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<sup>87</sup> Census records include one James H. Hart residing in the Fifth Ward in 1840 (USCB). The inclusion of one white male, aged 60-69 recorded in that census entry lends evidence for Crawford's presence in Hart's household by that year.

coffin plates with identifiable address entries, 26 were recorded in the NYCDR. Only five did not appear in that document.

	NYCDR, n=644	Coffin Plate Group, n=31
<b>Total Adult</b>	217	21
<b>Total Subadult</b>	424	10
<b>Total Male</b>	329	20
<b>Total Female</b>	279	11
<b>Unknown Age</b>	3	0
<b>Unknown Sex</b>	36	0
<b>Adult Male</b>	96	13
<b>Adult Female</b>	108	8
<b>Subadult Male</b>	232	7
<b>Subadult Female</b>	169	3
<b>Unknown Male</b>	1	0
<b>Unknown Female</b>	2	0
<b>Adult Unknown</b>	13	0
<b>Subadult Unknown</b>	23	0

**Table 4.2:** Demography of the NYCDR and 31 individuals identified by the coffin plates.

Notably, the ratio of adults and subadults switches between the two groups. Among the 644 individuals documented in the NYCDR and traced in this study, two-thirds are classed as subadults (65.8%). But among the 31 tracked coffin plate individuals, two-thirds are adults (67.7%) with the largest representation among adult males (41.9%). These percentages can be observed in Table 4.3.

	Adult Males	Adult Females	Subadult Males	Subadult Females
<b>NYCDR</b>	14.9%	16.8%	36.0%	26.2%
<b>Coffin Plate Group</b>	41.9%	25.8%	22.6%	9.7%

**Table 4.3:** Demographic ratios among the NYCDR and named coffin plate populations.

Among the larger NYCDR population, the ratio of children to adults interred in the vaults reflects the high child mortality rate of that era. Of the 644 NYCDR records, 192 or 29.8% of the recorded burials documented children under one year of age. For those that reached their first birthday, that number dropped to 91 burials (14.1%). At two years of age the number drops to 40 burials (6.2%). This trend of subadult interments decreasing by roughly half with each year of age achieved continues until age eight, when the rate seems to level off and remain around 1% or less through adulthood.

It was decided that examining the distribution of the burial population across the landscape based on age or sex would not yield any significant trends. Clusters of male, female, young, old, across the landscape could be caused or disrupted by any number of variables; for example, the limited timeframe of the vaults' operation, household diversity, or possible movement between addresses across years. Data such as prevalence of disease or other causes of death, particularly when examined with regard for the date of death, was deemed to be much more representative of the experience of healthscape or deathscape for this burial population. That analysis will be discussed in Chapter 7.

### **Life Course: Tracing the Deceased Across Manhattan**

In general, address points recorded in the NYCDR for interments within the Spring Street vaults were found to be distributed closest to the church and the corner of Spring and Varick. Of the 644 burials recorded for the Spring Street vaults and used in this study, 218 entries were

associated with mappable address points represented by numbered or cross-street locations; 196 numbered address entries, 7 cross-street locations, and 15 street-only entries that were associated with an individual represented among the coffin plates whose residence could be cross-referenced with known address data from the directories. Of these address points, the vast majority (137 address points, 62.84%) fell north of Canal Street and south of Houston; uncoincidentally, these are the southern and northern boundaries of the Eighth Ward as they were set in 1827 until the end of the ward system.

Using the buffer tool in ArcGIS Pro, address points recorded in the NYCDR were examined for their proximity to the Spring Street Church using radiuses of one-quarter mile, one-half mile, and one mile. Of the 218 NYCDR address points, 122 or 55.96% were found to fall within the quarter mile buffer, with another 51 (23.39%) within a half mile, and 31 (14.22%) more within a mile of the church. This proximity places 204 of the 218 address points in the Eighth and adjacent wards.

Determining ward location was done using both the ward boundaries from the years in which each address was recorded and using the 1832 boundaries found on the Burr map. The boundaries of the Eighth Ward, where the SSPC was located, were finalized in 1827 and did not change again until the dissolution of the ward system in the 20th century. After 1837 the boundaries of all wards south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street were effectively set and ongoing changes to the ward system did not affect the address points examined here. For the purposes of this dissertation and the discussion herein, I will be referring to the 1832 ward boundaries unless otherwise specified; this decision was made to facilitate the reader's understanding of specific locations within a changing landscape and for my own use when discussing distance or location relative to the



SSPC. Depictions of the city wards and their changing boundaries over time can be found in Appendix A.

The 204 address points located within the Eighth and adjacent wards represent 213 individuals recorded in the NYCDR. Of these entries, 119 were located within the Eighth Ward, 110 of which date to 1827 or later. The Ninth Ward was the next most populous ward (26 NYCDR entries), followed by the Fifth Ward (17 NYCDR entries). This proximity to the street corner where the Spring Street Church stood is also reflected in the entries collected from the city directories for the coffin plate-associated individuals. Among the 693 address entries representing the home and work locations of the coffin plate group, gathered from the directories and other documentary sources, 221 represented unique, mappable address points, many of which were repeated across years. Of these, 82 address points were located within the Eighth Ward, with 70 falling within a quarter-mile radius of the church. Such proximity to the church could reflect its significance in the lives of those who would ultimately be buried within the church vaults, or it could reflect the general practice by humans of residing close to their resources, in this case the social and spiritual resource of the church.

As the addresses recorded only by street name could not be identified by a specific point within the GIS, a heat map was constructed to highlight individual streets, symbolizing them based on the number of addresses recorded there both among the total number of addresses and in each burial year. Using the addresses recorded in the NYCDR, the most frequently recorded street was Spring Street (88 address records), followed by Greenwich (32 addresses), and Hudson (29 addresses). All of these streets are contained within or pass through the Eighth Ward and the quarter mile buffer of the church location, again reflecting access and proximity to the church by the burial population or their families.

*Life Course and Movement Across the Lower Manhattan Landscape*

As the city grew in population its boundaries pushed northward into less-habited areas; descriptions of the Eighth Ward location where the Spring Street Church was located were described as rural upon its 1810 founding, but this streetcorner was part of a populous downtown neighborhood by the next decade. This spread northward was also in part a reaction by those who could afford to move away from the increasingly industrialized and commercial southern wards, as they sought to escape the growing number of working class and immigrant neighborhoods and related concerns for sanitation and safety that accompanied such densely populated urban areas.

When viewing all address points, including residential addresses recorded in the NYCDR (n=644 individuals), and home and work addresses gathered from a variety of sources for the legible names recorded on the coffin plates found at the site (n=32 individuals), a general northward shift in address location is observed over time. Beginning in 1810, address points are scattered across Manhattan, with the majority located south of Canal Street and extending all the way into the southernmost First Ward. This distribution reflects the landscape of Lower Manhattan in the earliest decades of the 19th century, when the population was still concentrated to the south. Over the following decade the addresses largely remain south of Spring Street, with only one or two points appearing on the blocks immediately north of that boundary. After 1815 home addresses stop appearing in the First Ward and eastern wards and begin to appear most frequently in the western part of Manhattan, concentrating in the Third and Fifth Wards while creeping north of Canal Street and into the Eighth.

Beginning in 1820, when the burial vaults opened and the NYCDR can be included in the data set, a majority of address points appear in the Eighth Ward, with that ward remaining the

most populated by the Spring Street burial population through the following decades. In 1825 residential address points begin to appear north of the Eighth Ward, extending into the Ninth Ward and north of Houston Street.<sup>88</sup> Addresses still occurred most frequently in the Fifth and Eighth Wards; with Rev. Cox's Laight Street Church opening in 1825 it is unsurprising that the burial data provided by the NYCDR would show addresses clustering around the two church locations. In comparing name data from the Laight Street Manuals (1825, 1828) with the NYCDR burial records, 40 individuals interred in the vaults between 1822 and 1848 had a connection to the membership of Cox's Laight Street Church,<sup>89</sup> of these, 7 names were present in the legible coffin plate population.

After 1830 home addresses continue to cluster in the Fifth, Eighth, and Ninth Wards, appearing along the corridor created by Greenwich and Hudson Streets and concentrating within the half-mile radius of the SSPC. After 1835 addresses extending south of the Fifth Ward were work addresses, identified via their association with names from the legible coffin plates. Residential addresses rarely appear in the southern wards rarely after the mid 1830s, while addresses in the Ninth Ward above Houston Street extended further and further north as the 1840s progressed.

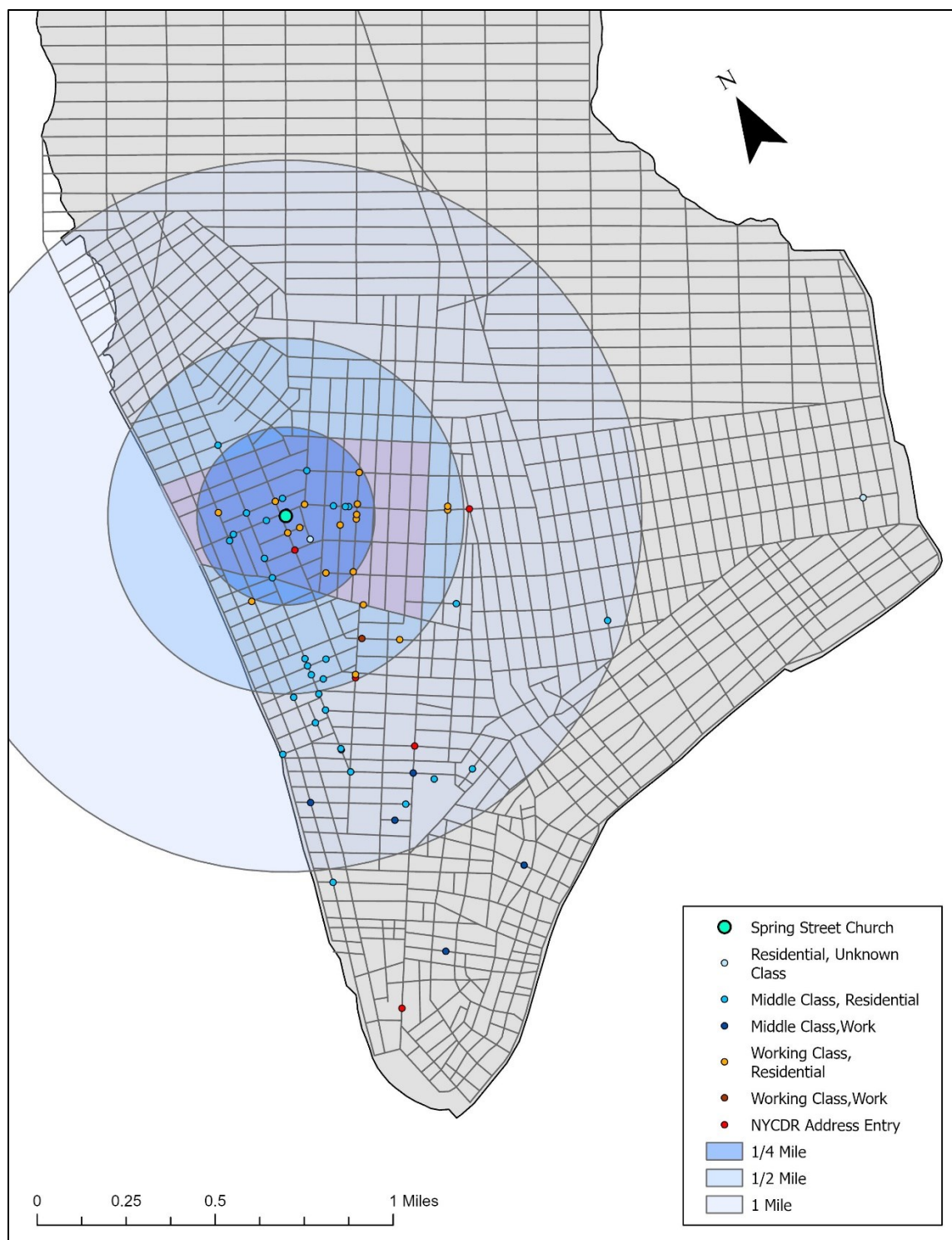
While a northward shift is visible among the SSPC burial population, reflecting general movement of residential areas in Manhattan throughout the 19th century, addresses primarily cluster around the Eighth Ward and do so throughout the period of study (figures 4.2-4.7). From this it is concluded that this burial population followed the general movement of residential neighborhoods northward as the 19th century progressed, away from the commercialized and

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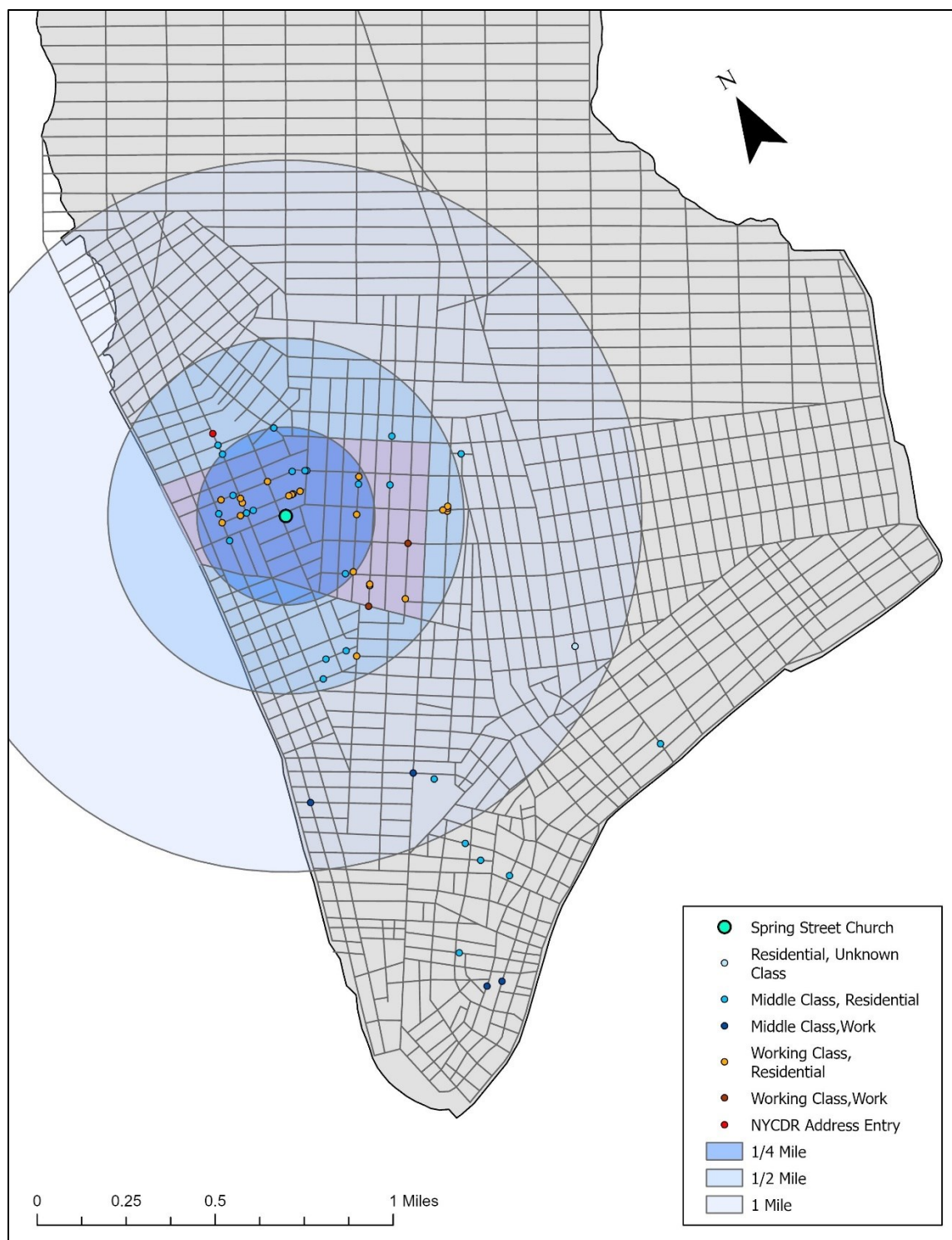
<sup>88</sup> Houston Street as it is known today includes the former Hammersley Street; falling west of Macdougal, Hammersley was not incorporated into and renamed West Houston until after the SSPC burial vaults closed.

<sup>89</sup> The Laight Street Church was active from 1825 until 1843, when a Baptist Church took over the site at the corner of Laight and Varick.

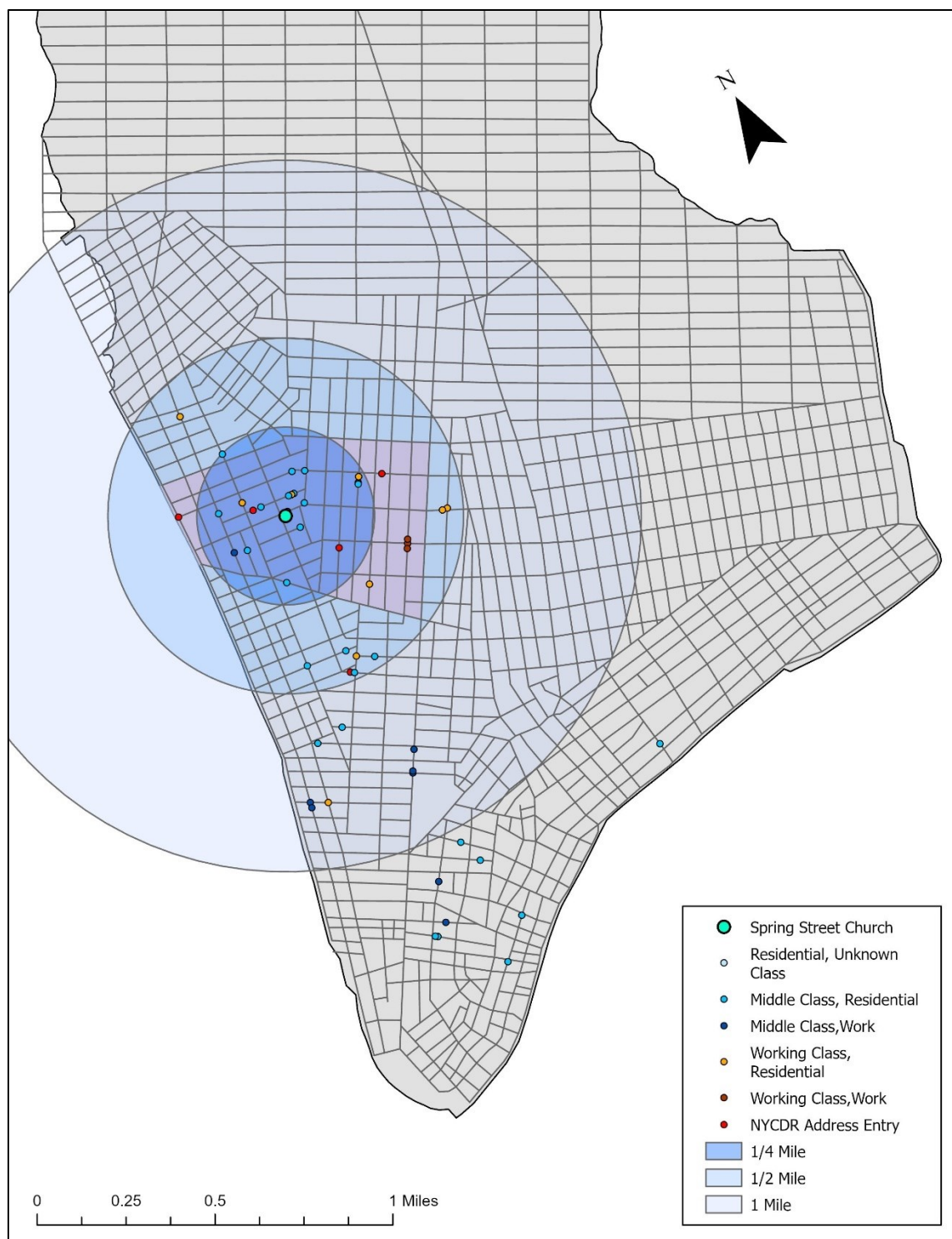
overpopulated southern wards, but overall access to the Eighth Ward influenced their choice of residence. We cannot definitively say that it was access to the church itself that directed these decisions, but the clustering of residential addresses in the Eighth and adjacent wards does indicate that church affiliation and the local convenience and proximity of the burial site may have played a role, along with other social and economic resources available to those households within this part of Manhattan.



**Figure 4.2:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1820-1825.

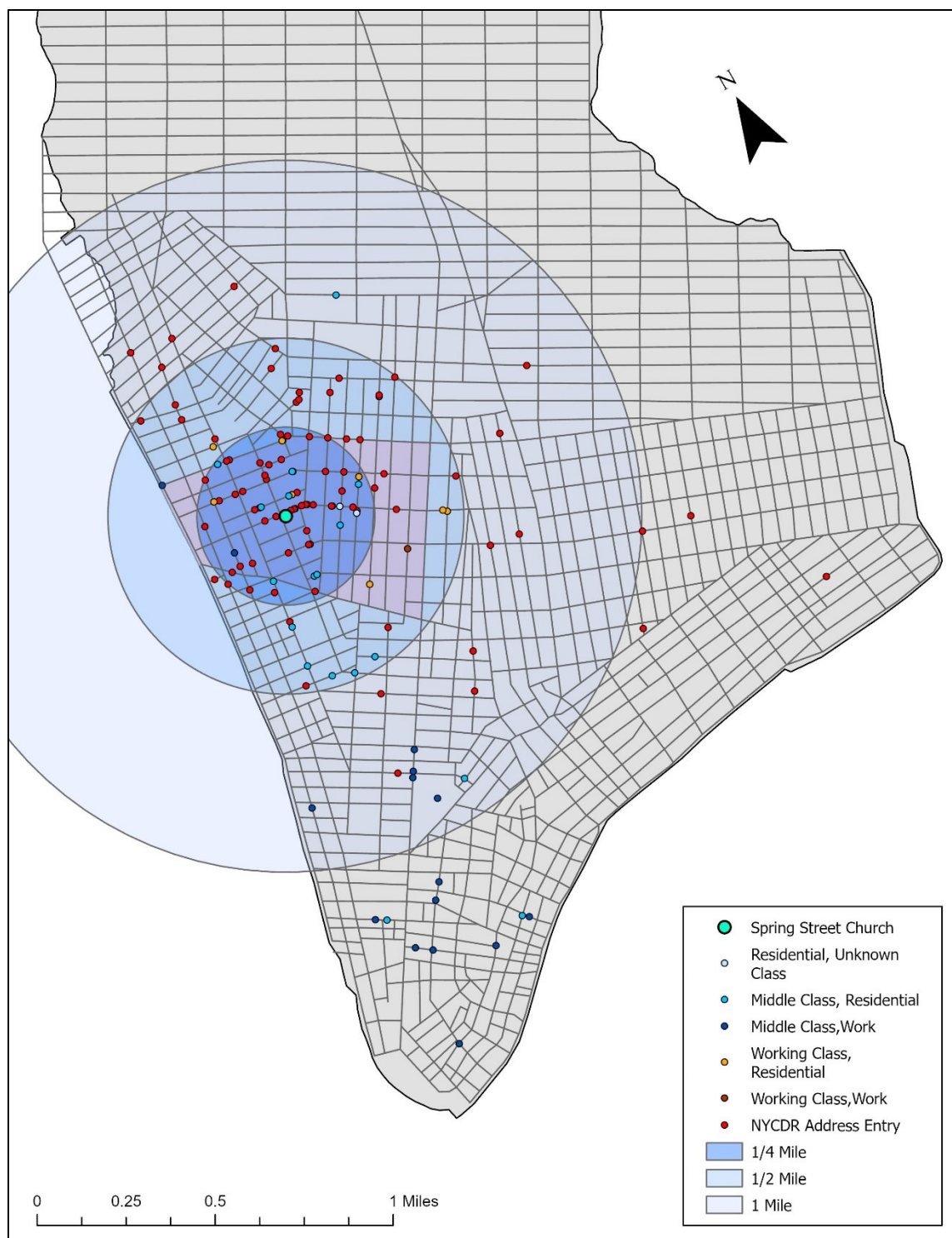


**Figure 4.3:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1826-1830.



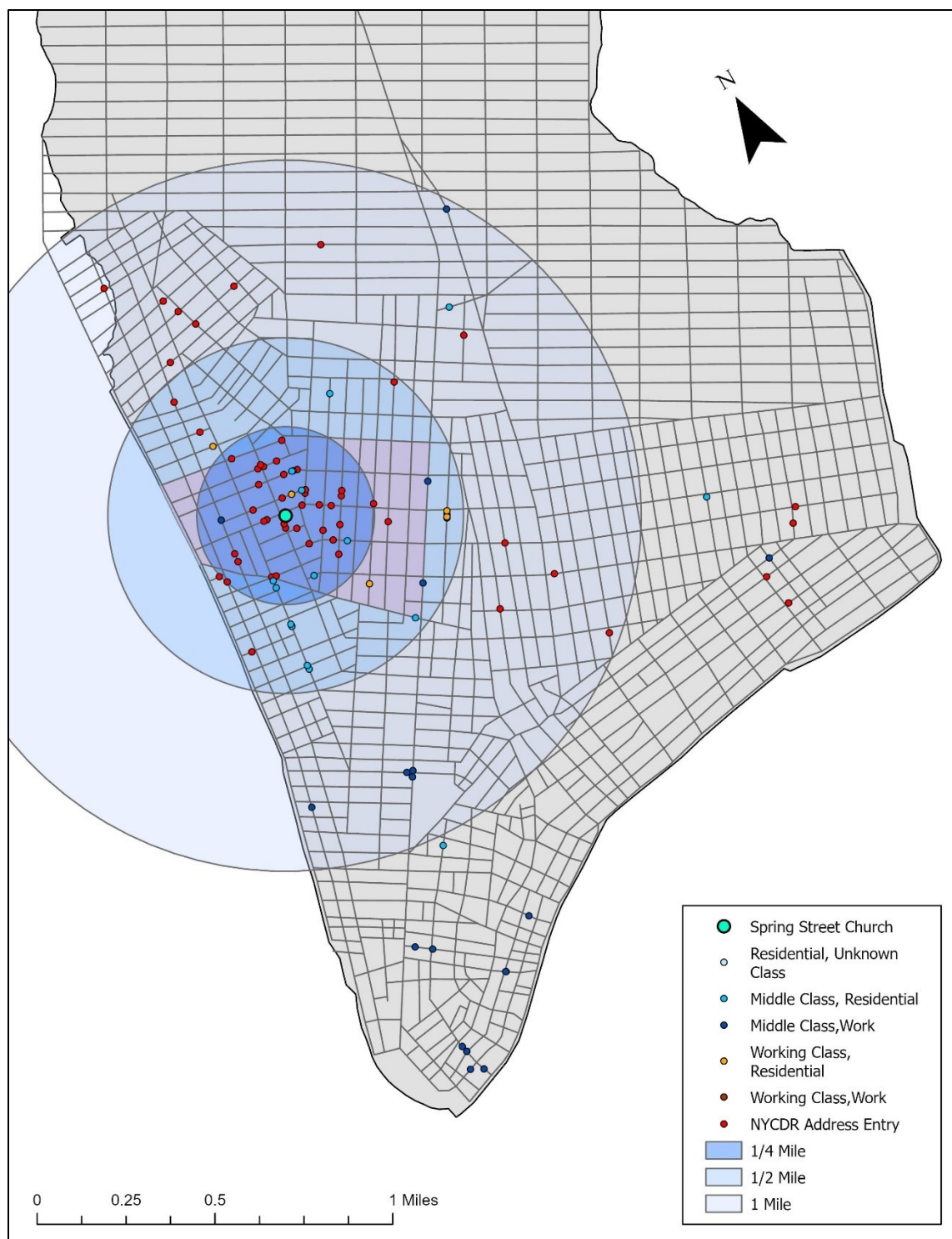
**Figure 4.4:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1831-1835.



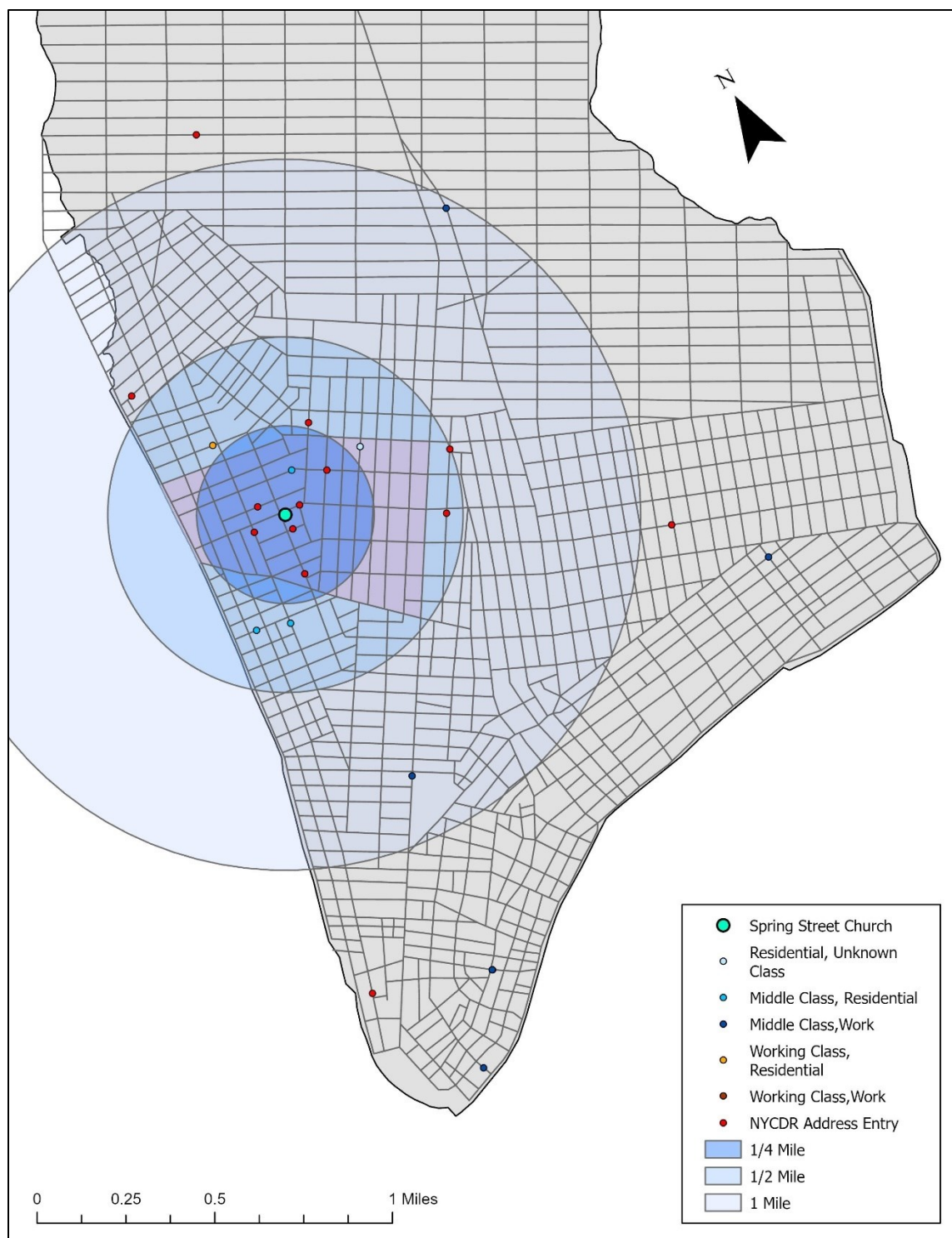


**Figure 4.5:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1836-1840.





**Figure 4.6:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1841-1845.



**Figure 4.7:** SSPC-associated addresses, 1846-1849.

### *Northward Shift among the Coffin Plate Population*

When viewing only the address locations associated with the names gathered from the legible coffin plates (32 individuals, 667 address entries representing residential and work locations identified in sources like city directories), the same northward shift, focusing on the Eighth and surrounding wards, is still observed. In 1810, the first year I gathered addresses for the coffin plate population and the same year the SSPC was founded, there are nine address points representing the homes and businesses of the coffin plate individuals; only four of those points fall within a one-mile radius of the Spring Street Church. Within just a couple of years, though, the majority of addresses occur within that buffer and continue to creep closer to the church and the Eighth Ward. By 1820, when the burial vaults opened for use, half of the 15 address points fall within the boundaries of the Eighth Ward and a quarter-mile radius of the church; another four fall within a half-mile.

After the vaults opened in 1820 home addresses rarely appear in the southernmost wards; when addresses do extend that far south they tend to be work addresses. The occupations these addresses are associated with include merchants and individuals working in city government. By 1835 home addresses almost never appear south of the Fifth Ward. Residential addresses frequently appear in the Fifth and Eighth Wards, but rarely extend north into the Ninth, like was seen with the NYCDR population included.

### *Northward Shift among the NYCDR*

Records in the NYCDR were identified for burials in the SSPC vaults between 1822 and 1849. When the coffin plate addresses sourced from the city directories and other sources are excluded, we are left with a data set of addresses that only reflect the recorded residence of the interred when they died, and not a series of addresses that reflect the movement of a household

over time. Of the 656 entries identified in the NYCDR by Syracuse University researchers, 644 provided useable residential listings. This number includes 27 of the individuals named by the legible coffin plates, referencing only the address where they were residing<sup>90</sup> when they died.

Prior to the mid-1830s addresses recorded in the NYCDR were often only listed by street name. With only a few addresses each year, they seem to jump all over the map, trending towards the locus of the church but less visibly than when the coffin plate directory addresses are included. By the beginning of the 1830s, the focus on the Eighth Ward becomes more visible, as the addresses populate within the half-mile radius of the church each year.

In 1837 there is a sudden increase in the quantity of addresses recorded in the NYCDR that include specific street number information, allowing them to be plotted on the GIS map. In this year the addresses stretch from the northern part of the Fifth Ward into the Ninth, a marked difference from the spread-out and southernly addresses of the previous decade. Through the remaining years until the vaults closed and the final NYCDR entry was recorded in 1849, the addresses cluster around the street corner where the church was located, often falling within the quarter-mile radius of the church and the Eighth Ward. As the mid-1840s approached the number of interments fell, with only a handful of individuals and their residences recorded each year. Despite the decreasing burial numbers, these address points continued to cluster around the church and the Eighth Ward or extend north into the Ninth.

When the heat map of streets is consulted, the focus on the Eighth Ward and the corner of Spring and Varick is generally supported. Though this map cannot show the proximity of the residences to the church and its vaults, it does highlight which streets were most populous year to

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<sup>90</sup> In some examples the address recorded in the NYCDR varied with other sources identifying the individual. Many NYCDR entries only recorded residence by street name until 1837, despite there existing specific address information among the city directories. Where a more specific and correct address was available, it was used in the GIS.

year. These streets are often ones that extend into the Eighth Ward, with Spring Street frequently the most recorded address among the NYCDR burial entries.

### **Death Course: Placing the Deceased within the Vaults**

As the distribution of address points and the street-based heat map depict the life course of the interred population, it also reflects Death Course; the proximity of the NYCDR address records to the burial vaults depicts the distance between the funeral location and the final resting place, between the final resting place of the deceased and their survivors, and the final journey by the deceased through the streets of Manhattan. The personal relationship between the church and everyone interred in the burial vaults cannot be confirmed, but such proximity allowed convenience, for the deceased in need of a burial place and the living who would commemorate them.

Narrowing the scope from the Lower Manhattan landscape to focus on the corner of Spring and Varick Streets, the GIS also explores the church burial vaults and the deposition of the artifacts and skeletal remains as they were uncovered and recorded during the 2006 excavations discussed in Chapter 3. Detailed spatial records or diagrams of the site were not created during the excavations according to site archaeologists (Mooney, pers. comm.). Details of the skeletal remains and artifacts were recorded separately, making their comparison difficult when limited to FS numbers and spreadsheets. The vaults were recreated in the GIS, allowing burial and artifact data and their distributions to be presented alongside each other and facilitating our understanding of their associations and distributions within the vaults. Each FS was plotted in the GIS based on the description in the site report of its location, recorded in site report Appendix E in the column labeled, “Provenience” (Mooney et al. 2008). Artifacts and burial data were then associated with each FS polygon using similar techniques to the address

points constructed and discussed above, allowing FS locations to be selected for and compared based on the presence of artifact classes, burial demographics, and frequencies.

### *Mortuary Artifacts among the Vaults*

Mortuary artifacts were most often associated with the earlier vaults, Vaults 3 and 4, the two original burial vaults opened for use in 1820. Artifact classes that will be discussed in the following topic-specific chapters include culturally-identifying artifacts associated with mortuary rituals and beliefs, such as coins, white ceramics, and shoe leather, as well as practical mortuary artifacts, such as fabric and pins used in the preparation and dressing of the deceased body. It is unclear exactly why the majority of these artifacts were recovered from these vaults; explanations include varying preservation conditions across the site, intrusion on the site by construction activities resulting in destruction of the artifacts and skeletal remains in the later vaults, or improved identification of remains and alterations in methodology practiced by the archaeologists as they moved into those earlier vaults and grew more familiar with the site, its conditions, and the materials they would encounter, resulting in the increased collection of those materials (Mooney, pers. comm.). The reality is likely a combination of the three.

### *Coffin Plates among the Vaults*

Coffin plates, which feature heavily throughout this dissertation study due to the identifying information they provided about the burial population, were found across the vault site. In total, the remnants of 58 coffin plates were found among the vaults, with 34 of those plates being legible enough to identify 35 individuals interred between 1820 and 1846. Among those 34 coffin plates, 14 identify adult males (25.45% of all plates, 41.18% of 34 identified), 9 plates identify adult females (16.36%, 26.47%), while 8 plates identify subadult males

(representing 9 individuals, due to the coffin plate shared by the Cox brothers, d.1832) (14.55% 23.53%), and only 3 plates identify subadult females (5.45%, 8.82%).

Subadult plates were only found in Vaults 4 and 2 and came from FS locations associated with large areas and commingled remains. Along the eastern and southern walls of several vaults was evidence of coffin collapse, as seemingly discrete burials were commingled and overlaying each other, retaining their east-west orientation. These burials were associated with adult coffin plates. No trends were observed concerning the distribution of coffin plates within the vaults based on gender other than plates attributed to the burials of males outnumber those of females by almost double (12:22).

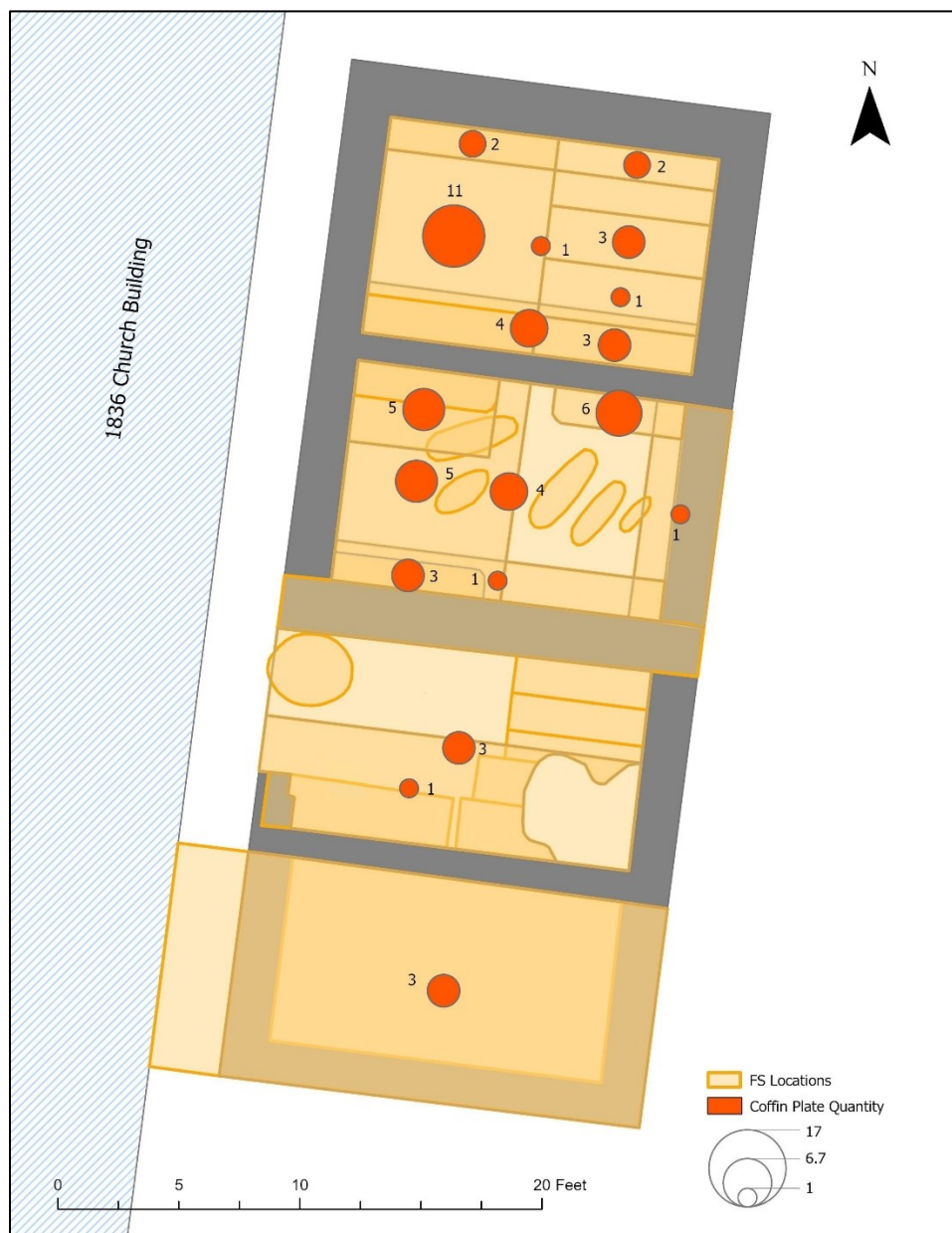
Much like the observation made above concerning the distribution and collection of mortuary artifacts, coffin plates were found most often in the earlier vaults, Vaults 3 and 4, in the northern part of the site. Of the 58 plates, 51 (87.93%) were recovered from the two older vaults, with many of those plates found in the western halves of those vaults and around the wall dividing them (figure 4.8). It is unknown how significantly construction events intruding on the southern vaults and activities by the archaeological team influenced the number of coffin plate artifacts identified and recovered. Comparing the number of coffin plates over time, it also seems possible that coffin plates were used more commonly at Spring Street during the earlier part of the vault-use period. Of the 34 identified coffin plates, 21 plates (61.76%) were found dating between 1820 and 1831, when only Vaults 3 and 4 were open to interments, with 15 (44.12%) of those plates dating from 1820 to 1825.<sup>91</sup> Only 13 (38.24%) plates were recovered that date to the post-1831 period, when Vaults 1 and 2 were opened for use; 9 of those plates, however, were

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<sup>91</sup> These ratios differ when the 656 burials recorded in the NYCDR are considered. Burials dating to the pre-1831 period of vault use, when only Vaults 3 and 4 were operating, number 235 (35.82%), while the period following the opening of Vaults 1 and 2 recorded 420 burials (64.02%). There was one burial with an illegible date.



found in Vaults 3 and 4. Seven coffin plates, including those that were illegible, were found in Vaults 1 and 2, and should therefore all date to the post-1831 burial period. This is a possible indication that more plates might have been found among the southern vaults had they not been disturbed by multiple construction events following their closure.



**Figure 4.8:** Coffin plate distribution within the SSPC burial vaults, n=58.



Within Vault 4, which opened for use in 1820, 26 coffin plates were recovered and date between 1820 and 1843. The plates from this vault represent 44.83% of all coffin plates found across the site. Of those plates 21 were identified and represent 6 adult males (28.57% of identified plates from the vault, 17.65% of all 34 identified plates), 5 plates were identified as belonging to adult females (23.8%, 14.71%), 7 plates to subadult males (33.33%, 20.59%) -- representing 8 individuals, as this vault included the 1832 double plate identifying the burial of the Cox brothers -- and 3 plates to subadult females (14.29%, 8.8%).

Subadult plates in Vault 4 were found among FS locations in the western half of the vault, in the general provenience of the southernmost 2' trench, and in an unspecified FS attributed to the fill over the burials. Twelve of the 25 plates recovered from this vault were found in the western half. Along the southern wall another six plates were recovered. The only coffin plates recovered from the collapsed burials in the eastern trenches were identified as belonging to adults. The majority of identified coffin plates from Vault 4 dated to the use-period prior to the opening of the second pair of vaults, between 1820 and 1831 (18 plates), while only three dated to the post-1831 period.

Similar to Vault 4, 25 coffin plates (43.1% of all coffin plates) were found among the remains of Vault 3 and dated between 1823 and 1846. Of these plates only nine were legible enough to identify the individual they represented; seven coffin plates were attributed to the burials of adult males and two plates were identified as belonging to adult females. None of the legible plates represented the burials of subadults within this vault.

Again like its neighbor to the north, coffin plates most frequently yielded from the western half of Vault 3. Twelve coffin plates were recovered from that side of the vault, with five coming from a cluster of burials in the northwest corner. An additional three plates were

found among the burials in the northeast corner of the vault, clustering around the wall dividing Vault 3 with Vault 4. Discrete burials along the southern 2' trench of Vault 3 were associated with another four coffin plates, but the burials throughout the center of the vault did not have coffin plates associated with those remains. Of the nine identified coffin plates from this vault, only three date to the pre-1831 period, while six date to the phase after the second vaults were opened.

Coffin plates are much rarer among the second pair of vaults, as discussed above. In Vault 2, four coffin plates were recovered, representing 7.2% of all coffin plates. All of the coffin plates from Vault 2 were associated with FS locations encompassing the general vault area; more specific locational information was not provided and no conclusions can be made about the distribution of plates within this vault based on age or sex. Only one plate was identified, that belonging to Edgar Howard Harriott, a subadult male who died from croup in 1840 at the age of 3 years and 8 months (NYCDR).

In Vault 1, the southernmost vault, three plates were recovered from early FS locations associated with disturbance by construction activities. These plates dated between 1832 and 1840, and represent 5.45% of all the plates found at the site. All three plates were identified and represent one adult male and two adult females. Like Vault 2, no distributions or trends could be observed based on age or sex, particularly as Vault 1 was the most disturbed by the excavations of the construction team.

#### *Skeletal Remains among the Vaults*

Like the artifacts, data from the analysis of the skeletal remains was mapped into the GIS to better identify and understand spatial associations between the remains, their distributions across the vaults, and proximity with the artifacts. Using left femurs, a minimum number of

individuals (MNI) of 197 was identified among the skeletal remains. When the analysis of the skeletal remains is explored by vault and FS association, as in the GIS, the skeletal data documents 228 burials. It cannot be known just how many individuals were represented among the skeletal remains, since so many of the burials were heavily disturbed and the remains commingled. Of the 228 burials, 129 burials were identified as adults (56.58%) and 99 were identified as subadults (43.42%). Sex was uncertain for many of the remains, particularly the subadults who had not yet grown and developed the skeletal morphology used to identify sex. Among these burials, 65 were identified as adult males (28.5%), while 9 were decided to probably be male. Another 30 burials were identified as adult females (13.16%), with 18 additional probable females. Four adults were classed as indeterminate sex. Among the subadults, eight were deemed to be probably male, while one subadult was identified as female and another two as probably female. Subadults were more frequently classed as indeterminate sex, with 88 burials (38.6%).

Among Vaults 2, 3, and 4, the orientation of discrete burials along the northwest, southwest, and eastern walls of the vaults, where remains presented as collapsed coffins, likely reflects the architecture of the vaults and the presence of their entrances in the western side, closest to the church building. This is further supported by the description of the vaults from the Hutchings memoir, describing the entrance to the vaults in relation to the schoolroom (1849:9). In those vaults, the skeletal remains recovered from the western half of each vault were mainly represented by commingled remains recovered without specific locational information such as an FS number or description. It is possible these remains were pushed into the area of the vault entrances during their destruction in the 1960s when the parking lot was built or otherwise collapsed into that area after the vaults were closed to use.

One hundred and fifty (n=150) burials<sup>92</sup> were identified among the remains from Vault 4. Of these, 73 were classed as adults, with 77 subadults. Sixty-five of the burials were identified from the commingled remains, without a specific FS or described location within the vault. The majority of remains recovered from this context were subadults, with 57 subadults of indeterminate sex identified.

Along the southern edge of the vault, 52 burials were identified in the area of the 2' trench; this was also an area that yielded 6 of the 25 coffin plates found in Vault 4. Among these burials, 18 were adult male, 9 adult female, and 15 subadults of indeterminate sex. Of the four identified plates from that area of Vault 4, one identified an adult male, one identified an adult female, and two recorded the burials of subadult males.

In the western half of the vault, where many coffin plates and particularly those associated with the burials of children were recovered, 35 burials were identified among the skeletal remains, representing 33 adults and 2 subadults. This ratio vastly differs from the concentration of subadult coffin plates found in that area of the vault, where 7 of the 12 plates recovered from FS locations in that part of the vault were identified as subadults. Conversely, the eastern part of the vault does share a concentration of adult skeletal remains, reflecting the presence of adult coffin plates found there; of the nine plates found, eight were identified and all belonged to adults.

Several legible coffin plates were found in areas associated with specific burials in Vault 4. These locations include Burial 13 in the northeast corner of the vault (adult female coffin plate, FS 145 #1 – Louisa Hunter, d.1825, 16 years). Among the skeletal data Burial 13 was

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<sup>92</sup> The number of burials, identified by FS location, differs from the MNI tallied for the site and based on the number of left femurs (MNI=197). Among the burial vaults, the MNI for each was: Vault 4 MNI=134, Vault 3 MNI=31, Vault 2 MNI=14, and Vault 1 MNI=18 (Novak 2017b).

identified as an adult female, aged 20-24; however, a different skeleton was identified by researchers as being Louisa's remains: Burial 16 in the northwest corner of Vault 4 was identified as an adolescent female, aged 14.5-15.5 years. Louisa Hunter was one of two burials whose skeletal remains were associated with a legible coffin plate in the lab; the other was Rudolphus Bogert, discussed below and throughout this dissertation.

The area of Burial 6, located in the southeast corner of Vault 4, was another area associated with legible coffin plates. This part of Vault 4 included Burials 5, 7, and 8 (adult male coffin plate, FS 26 #43/FS 57 #2 (mended) – David Sherwood, d.1843, and adult female coffin plate, FS 57 #1 – Sarah Sherwood, d.1827). According to Sarah Sherwood's coffin plate, she was 18 years old at the time of her death; among the burials in the southeast corner of Vault 4, one was identified as female, aged 20-29 (Burial 7). Another burial was identified as a male, aged 60+ (Burial 8); David Sherwood was 71 years old when he died. The proximity of these two coffin plates both bearing the surname Sherwood may indicate a family connection; Sarah does not appear in the documentary record such that she could be included in the address study for this dissertation, with the NYCDR only listing her residence as, "Spring Street," though David's address at the intersection of Spring and Crosby was over time attributed to both streets, often with additional Sherwood households in the immediate area. If there was a familial connection between these two, it may be intentional or simply coincidence that they were interred in the same area of Vault 4 upon their deaths roughly 15 years apart. If it was intentional then that implies there was some method of recording or remembering which vaults were used for each burial, something that hasn't been supported by the surviving documents associated with the Spring Street Church.

Moving southward, 36 burials were identified among the skeletal remains from Vault 3; 32 adults and 4 subadults. Among these burials, adult males were the most frequently identified, with 16 classed as adult male and another 2 as probably male. Among the remaining adults, seven were identified as female, with four probable females, and all four subadults were indeterminate sex.

Like Vault 4, the commingled remains from an unspecified location returned roughly a third of the vault's burials and most of the subadult remains; 12 burials were identified among the commingled remains, 9 adults and 3 of the 4 subadults. The rest of the burials were distributed throughout Vault 3 in clusters where coffins had collapsed, in the northeast and northwest corners of the vault and along the southern edge. Vault 3 also had several discrete burials throughout the center area of the vault. Identified as Burials 1-5 and 7, they yielded the remains of eight burials, all adults; these burials were mentioned above as not being associated with any coffin plates. The skeletal remains in Vault 3 do reflect the distribution of the coffin plates, notably in the burial clusters in the northeast and northwest corners of the vault. Burials 11, 12, 13, and 15 are recorded in the FS descriptions for coffin plates within this vault; two identified coffin plates found in the area of Burial 13 in the northwest corner of the vault (adult male, FS 129 #27 – James Rea Jr. d.1823, and adult female, FS 129 #26 – Julia Radcliff d.1823). Burial 13 was identified as an adult female, aged 50-54. Julia Radcliff was 59 years when she died of cholera morbus.<sup>93</sup> In the northeast corner of the vault Burial 12 was identified as the remains of an older adult male; these remains were identified as Rudolphus Bogert, d.1842, whose coffin plate was found associated with the burial.

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<sup>93</sup> Cholera morbus is gastroenteritis and not the form of cholera associated with infection by the *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria.

In addition to these burial clusters, a comparison between the skeletal remains and the coffin plates can be made in the frequency of subadults represented; there are no subadult coffin plates recovered from this vault and only four burials were identified as subadults. It is unclear why subadults are so underrepresented within Vault 3 and whether this distribution across the vaults was a reflection of how interments were organized during the use of the vaults, or the result of vault maintenance, preservation conditions, or construction intrusion at the site.

In Vault 2, 31 burials were identified among the skeletal remains, identified as 17 adults and 14 subadults. Adult males (n=7) and subadults of indeterminate sex (n=7) were again the most frequently represented demographics; the remaining adult burials were classed as three probably male, four female, and three probably female, with six male subadults and one probably female.

Like the other vaults at the site, many burials within Vault 2 were identified among the commingled remains that were recovered but not recorded with a specific location. In Vault 2, these commingled remains accounted for 61.29% of the burials identified, representing 19 burials. Nine of these burials were identified as adults and 10 as subadults. Much like the other vaults, the majority of subadult remains from this vault were recovered from these commingled remains. The western half of Vault 2 contained evidence of collapsed coffins and commingled remains, with the southernmost 2' trench and northwest corner of the vault presenting burial clusters. Discrete burial areas where coffins had been stacked and collapsed were also identified along the eastern wall, where excavations progressed northward from the south wall in 2' wide trenches. These trenches represented five burials, four adults and one subadult, and were identified as Burials 5-8 and 12. Unfortunately the coffin plate remains from Vault 2, as detailed

above, were not associated with any particular burials and cannot be discussed in relation to the distribution of these burials like in the previous two vaults.

Much like the coffin plates, the skeletal remains found in the area of Vault 1 were recovered from the fill. No discrete burials were identified in situ due to disturbance from construction activities. Within the fill, 11 burials were identified; 7 adults and 4 subadults. Among these, two were identified as adult males, two as adult females, three adult were identified as probably female, and the four subadults were all indeterminate sex. Due to their presence in the fill and the degree of disturbance in Vault 1, no conclusions can be drawn about the distribution of the skeletal remains within this vault.

#### **Demographic Comparisons: the NYCDR, Coffin Plates, and Skeletal Remains**

When considering total populations and ratios by age and sex, the two archaeological assemblages more closely represent each other than they do the NYCDR (Table 4.4). Much like the differing ratios of adults to subadults observed in a comparison of the NYCDR and coffin plate population mentioned above, the ratio of adults to subadults is opposite when comparisons are made between the NYCDR and the skeletal remains; among the NYCDR entries, adults only represent 33.84% of the 656 total names, while among the coffin plates adult represent 65.71% of the 35 named individuals represented among the plates and among the skeletal remains adults make up 56.58% of the 228 total. In contrast, subadults among the NYCDR account for 65.7% of the 656 names, while they are only 34.29% of the coffin plate names and 43.42% of the skeletal remains.



Demographic	NYCDR	Coffin Plates	Skeletal Remains
Total	656	35	228
Adult	222	23	129
Adult Male	99	14	71 63 identified 8 probable
Adult Female	110	9	48 30 identified 18 probable
Adult Indeterminate	13		4
Subadult	431	12	99
Subadult Male	236	9	8 0 identified 8 probable
Subadult Female	171	3	3 1 identified 2 probable
Subadult Indeterminate	24		88

**Table 4.4:** Comparison of demographic data collected from the NYCDR, legible coffin plate assemblage (n=35 individuals, represented among 34 coffin plates), and the skeletal remains. The figures representing the skeletal remains includes numbers for total and probable identification of sex.

## Conclusion

Throughout the 19th century, Manhattan experienced a population shift as its residential neighborhoods pressed northward into less-habited areas. This movement uptown was led by elite and middle class households who sought to distance themselves from the increasingly commercial and densely populated southern wards. In addition to the industrialization of those areas, the growing population of immigrants and the working classes who resided in those wards were increasingly associated with disease, with their living conditions, intemperance, and other vices blamed for periods of epidemic within the city. These elements of class identity, social reform and morality, and public health as they related to the uptown movement of Manhattan's residential population will be discussed in further detail in the following topic specific chapters.

This northward shift in residences was observed among the SSPC burial population, as a whole and when the addresses are selected for their association with the coffin plate assemblage

or presence in the NYCDR. By observing the addresses associated with those individuals named by the legible coffin plate artifacts movement over time and across Manhattan shows that these households were moving north, particularly into the Eighth and adjacent wards. This is also observed among the addresses recorded in the NYCDR, though those records only document where the individual was residing at their time of death. In particular, the SSPC burial population concentrated in the Eighth and Fifth Wards, where the SSPC and Laight Street Church were located, respectively. These concentrations persisted through the end of the study period and the vaults' closure in 1849, though address points further north in the Ninth and Fifteenth Wards do appear in later years, again demonstrating the pressing north by the city's residential neighborhoods.

Within the vaults, both skeletal remains and artifacts increased in frequency as excavations progressed northward from the initial find site. This is likely due in part to the disturbance of the southernmost vaults by the 2006 construction activities, and to the increasing familiarity of the archaeologists with the site improving their methods and identification of materials. Distribution of skeletal remains and coffin plates within the vaults did not reveal any distribution trends associated with sex, though subadults were surprisingly absent from Vault 3. Among Vaults 2 and 4 subadults were recovered most frequently from the western side of each vault, with adult skeletal remains often being recovered from the areas of the northern, eastern, and southern walls. This distribution may be a reflection of how the vaults were organized, possibly due to the size of the various remains and their coffins and the likely architecture of the vaults, with their entrances suspected to have been located in the western side nearest to the church building.

While relying on the GIS to understand these associations without supporting on-site documentation is imperfect, it is interesting to observe these associations and distributions, both within the vaults and across the Lower Manhattan landscape. By building on the above discussion of how artifacts and people were distributed across the landscape and within the vaults, the following chapters will continue to explore how the Spring Street burial population lived and moved throughout the Manhattan landscape before coming to rest in the shared location of the vaults. This will be done by focusing each chapter on a specific topic, to guide the examination and discussion of the data as it relates to life and death course.

## **Chapter 5: Landscape, Class, and the Market Economy**

### **Introduction**

As detailed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the first half of the 19th century was a period of dramatic and rapid economic change that altered the physical, social, and ideological landscapes of Manhattan. In this chapter I will discuss how this changing economy interacted with the distribution of the address data across the Lower Manhattan landscape as observed via the GIS, before refocusing on the corner of Spring and Varick to examine how economic class was expressed within the SSPC burial vaults.

### **Life Course: Defining and Locating Class Across the Lower Manhattan Landscape**

New York City's spatial distribution of people and resources differed in the centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the residences of New York City's elites were located nearer to their economic resources along the East River and southern tip of Manhattan, to maintain control over these industries through spatial proximity. Lower class populations were located near the city's northern boundary, the palisade located along present-day Wall Street (Burrows and Wallace 1999:32-33; Cantwell and Wall 2001:169; LaRoche 2013). Marginalized and minority populations such as Black freedmen and slaves were located outside this boundary, limiting their access to the settlement's resources. These peripheral populations were also vulnerable, having received the land on the outskirts of town to act as a buffer between the settlement and attacks by local Native Americans. During the 19th century, however, this social geography would be flipped when the wealthy classes moved away from the commercial core and the downtown residential population was replaced by immigrants and the working class (Rothschild and Wall 2014:9; Soja 2000).

The urban landscape of 19th century New York City featured a high population density of diverse individuals inhabiting a settlement with both commercial and residential locations, as

well as economic and political resources. In the commercial core, located on the southern portion of the island where the initial settlement had been founded, neighborhoods<sup>94</sup> were ethnically and socio-economically diverse, being inhabited by working and middle class populations who remained within walking distance of their economic and social resources (Baics 2020; Cantwell and Wall 2001:200-203, 206). Over the course of the 19th century this commercial core spread northward, and the southernmost neighborhoods and wards became less residential as they became increasingly commercial and urban.

On the periphery during the 19th century sat the suburban context, a collection of primarily residential neighborhoods defined by relatively homogeneous class distribution, who maintained access to the resources of the urban center through the availability of public and private transportation resources while remaining spatially separate (Cantwell and Wall 2001:200). As the urban core spread over time these formerly suburban areas would grow more diverse culturally and economically, resulting in a further shift north by the suburban context. These various contexts and the socio-economic distributions of people, things, and activities across them, informed the ideologies and lifestyles shared by their inhabitants. For those both residing in and observing from outside, New York wards and the neighborhoods within them were often identified and characterized by 19th century contemporaries through associations with the economic classes, ethnicities, or industries found there, as well as population density.

The city wards most frequently inhabited by individuals interred in the SSPC burial vaults were the Eighth Ward, the Ninth Ward, and the Fifth Ward.<sup>95</sup> The Eighth Ward where the

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<sup>94</sup> As stated in Chapter 2, the term “neighborhood” is being applied in this dissertation in a mostly colloquial and geographical sense. This term is being used as a reference to clusters of streets that would have provided fairly uniform resource access to their inhabitants, rather than to evoke a sense of community that may or may not have existed for the individuals residing there.

<sup>95</sup> Among the addresses found in the NYCDR the Eighth Ward was the most frequently inhabited, followed by the Ninth and the Fifth. When the coffin plate population is considered the number of addresses located in the Fifth

SSPC was located has often been described as a cross-section of early 19th century New York, being a ward with a historically racially and economically diverse population. Bounded by Houston to the north, Broadway to the east, the Hudson River to the west, and Canal Street to the south, these boundaries were finalized in 1827. The eastern part of the Eighth Ward had notable areas of concern, such as blocks in the area of Spring Street between Laurens and Greene which were associated with noxious industries and prostitution (Dietz and Dietz 1914:44; Homberger 2005:85; NYCC 1917 [14]:93; Scherzer 1992:146-147). The western part of the ward, near the Hudson River, featured the Spring Street docks and businesses reflecting the importation of useful goods to the city, such as coal yards and lumberyards.

Created in 1803 to encompass the entirety of Manhattan north of present-day 21<sup>st</sup> Street, in 1832 the Ninth Ward was bounded by 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Sixth Avenue to the East, the Hudson River to the West, and Houston Street to the south. Prior to that year the Ninth Ward had also included the area east to the Bowery, including Greenwich Village, before being split to create the Fifteenth Ward. This part of the island was originally an affluent, seasonal escape for those New Yorkers who could afford to keep a rural home, but the separation of this area from the densely populated southern wards made Greenwich Village a haven during the yellow fever epidemics of the early 19th century. So-called fever refugees fled to the rural suburbs to escape to disease and not everyone left once the threat was past; this area experienced significant growth following the 1822 yellow fever epidemic, in particular. Despite this sudden influx of residents, the area that would become the Fifteenth Ward in 1832 retained its affluent and exclusive character (Wall 1999:106). As the century progressed the area to the west of Sixth Avenue

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Ward increases dramatically, due to repeated entries across years in the city directories and movement within the ward, such that it follows the Eighth Ward as the most populated.

represented by the bounds of the Ninth Ward in 1832 would be characterized as less affluent but still middle class, populated by artisans, shopkeepers, and clerks.

Much like the preceding wards, the Fifth Ward featured affluent and attractive squares mere blocks from less desirable areas. Hudson Square, also known as St. John's Park<sup>96</sup> in reference to the chapel located there, was one such enclave for Manhattan's affluent families in the late 1820s (Burrows and Wallace 1999:457-458). The Laight Street Church opened by Rev. Cox in 1825 was located opposite the northeast corner of the Square, at the intersection of Laight and Varick Streets; the proximity to both the Laight Street and Spring Street churches likely influenced the distribution of address locations among the SSPC burial vault population.

#### *Distribution and Movement among Economic Classes*

Of the 34 legible and identified coffin plates, 28 were associated with occupational data gathered from city directories. Twenty-one (75%) of those plates represented someone living in a middle class household, while the remaining seven plates represented the working class. There are problems with identifying these households according to socio-economic class, not least of which is that this identity, especially when based on an occupation, can vary across one's lifespan. Some households showed movement across the working and middle classes as they were defined for this dissertation, with working class occupations being defined based on jobs that required manual labor or little skill, and middle class occupations identified as merchants, artisans, educators, or individuals who owned their own business (Wall 1999; White and Mooney 2010). For example, the occupations associated with the households of Miles Ray (subadult male, d.1835), Johnathan B. Clark (subadult male, d.1824), and Edgar Howard Harriott (subadult male, d.1840) changed over time, moving between occupations associated with the

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<sup>96</sup> Also known as St. John's Square, on the block between Hudson, Varick, Laight, and Beech Streets.

working class to those identified as middle class (Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3). When a change in occupation is observed among these directories it can create some doubt that the individual named in the directory is the same individual found among previous years; there is a possibility that multiple generations or even households are being represented. For the listed individuals and their household heads, this progression across economic class was tracked by comparing the residential addresses of the household for consistency over time.

<b>Miles Ray</b>		1y 8m 17d Subadult Male Died: Apr. 19, 1835 Stillborn		
		Household Head: Joseph H. Ray, father		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Work Address</b>	<b>Class</b>
1827	Printer	142 Chapel St.		Working
1828				
1829				
1830				
1831				
1832	Physician	42 Thomas St.		
1833				
1834		126 Franklin St.		
1835				
1836				
1837				

**Table 5.1:** Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Miles Ray, sourced from city directories.



<b>Johnathan Clark</b>		12y	Subadult Male	Died: Sept. 21, 1824	Fever, bilious remittent
		Household Head: Joseph Clark, father			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Work Address</b>	<b>Class</b>	
1810	Mason	72 Chapel St.		Working	
1811					
1812		70 Chapel St.			
1813					
1814	14 Thomas St.				
1816	Grocer	Church c. Thomas			
1817	Mason				
1818		6 Thomas St.			
1819					
1820					
1821					
1822		Laurens n. Prince			
1823					
1824					
1825		32 Laurens n. Prince			
1826					
1827					
1828					
1829					
1830					
1831					
1832	112 Laurens St.				
1833					
1834					
1835	Drygoods		497 Greenwich St.	Middle	
1836					
1837					
1838		497 Greenwich St.			
1839					
1840					
1841		541 Greenwich St.			

**Table 5.2:** Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Johnathan Clark, sourced from city directories.

<b>Edgar Howard Harriott</b>				
3y 8m      Subadult Male      Died: Feb. 15, 1840      Croup Household Head: Edgar Howard Harriott, father				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Work Address</b>	<b>Class</b>
1825	Mason	24 Desbrosses St.		Working
1826		539 Greenwich c. Vandam		
1827		17 Vandam St.		
1828		19 Vandam St.		
1829				
1830				
1831				
1832	Baker	Greenwich c. Murray		
1833				
1834				
1835	Tailor	21 Vandam St.	301 Broadway	Middle
1836		143 Franklin St.		
1837		21 Vandam St.		
1838		143 Franklin St.	271 Broadway	
1839				
1840				
1841				
1842		5 Vandam St.	74 Chambers St.	
1843				
1844				
1845		Plainfield, N.J.	271 Broadway	
1846				

**Table 5.3:** Occupational, residential, and economic class data for the household of Edgar Howard Harriott, sourced from city directories.

Another problem with designating socio-economic class based on only an occupational title is that it generalizes the experience of the individuals sharing that occupation. Not much detail can be gathered from a single word recorded in a directory listing. It does not offer insight to the reality of an individual's lived experience or nuance and specificity as to what their working life was really like (Baics 2020:518). In conceptualizing economic class we consider many things, including but not limited to an individual's occupation (Scherzer 1992:81-86). The

diversity within these occupations and within each economic class is lost through the simplicity of the directory listings.

The distribution of middle class households trended much like the greater data set of address points, clustering in the Eighth and Fifth Wards, though several extend into southern wards, such as the Second Ward. These southern residential addresses tend to date earlier in the studied time period, and belong to merchants with nearby business interests (e.g., Bogert, Root), or belong to Julia Radcliff's widower, Jacob, who worked as a counselor (lawyer) and in city government. Among this population southern residential addresses were likely chosen due to two factors: residing within the extent of the city rather than pressing into the suburbs, especially among the earliest address listings, or maintaining proximity to and control of business resources and interests, such as storefronts, wharves, or government buildings located in the southern and riverside commercial districts. As time progressed the addresses in the southern wards were more often identified as business addresses, also associated with middle class identities.

The Eighth and Fifth Wards were the most populated by middle class households, though this is also true of the larger address data set. In both of these wards middle class residences trended towards the western side of each ward. In the Eighth Ward these addresses almost all fell west of Laurens Street, while in the Fifth Ward middle class residences were located relatively near to Rev. Cox's Laight Street Church at the corner of Laight and Varick Streets, and around the affluent and well-regarded area of Hudson Square. However, when the names associated with these locations were compared against the Laight Street Catalog, a list of church members, all directory entries for households identified as middle class either pre-dated the opening of Laight Street in 1825, or post-dated Rev. Cox's move to Auburn after the 1834 riots, or the closure of

Laight Street Church in 1843. The surnames associated with these Fifth Ward homes are those of Bogert, Randolph, and Hubbard.

Like the homes of the middle class and the larger data set, working class households also frequently appeared in the Eighth and Fifth Wards. The largest number of residential working class addresses was found in the Eighth Ward, followed by the Fifth Ward. Within the Eighth Ward households of differing occupations and economic classes were frequently neighbors, clustering on streets such as Vandam and Spring, near the SSPC. In comparison to the distribution of middle class addresses in the Fifth Ward, however, the working class trended towards the eastern half of that ward, appearing often along Chapel and Church Streets. Working class residential addresses rarely appear outside the Eighth and adjacent wards, though there were several points recorded in the eastern side of Lower Manhattan. These addresses, such as those found in the Seventh and Tenth Wards, were almost all associated with James McGregor, a carpenter (d.1832).

Since this examination of occupation and class is limited to the population associated with the coffin plate artifacts, it is possible to observe movement over time with a consideration for economic class and occupational data. Among the middle class, movement over time trended as expected and observed among the larger burial population, with households shifting northward over time. Addresses concentrated in the Eighth and Fifth Wards, with a few address points appearing north in the Ninth and Fifteenth Wards. In particular, addresses begin to noticeably shift towards the Eighth Ward in 1820.

This movement is also observed among the working class addresses, but is far more pronounced, moving towards the location of the SSPC in the Eighth Ward and remaining concentrated there. In the period between 1820 and 1825 all of the working class address points

fall within a half-mile radius of the SSPC, and it is not until 1834 that a working class residence is again location outside this radius, in the Third Ward.<sup>97</sup> This residence is the only working class data point outside the half mile radius between 1820 and the closure of the vaults in 1849. In contrast, the middle class regularly had address listings that fell outside the half-mile radius of the church, sometimes extending beyond a mile from the church and far to the south. Regardless of distance and class identity, it seems that two streets in particular provided a corridor through the Eighth Ward and access to the SSPC: Greenwich and Hudson. These long streets extend from the southern wards into the Ninth Ward, presenting a way for members of the burial population and their households to travel between their homes, businesses, and the locations of the SSPC and Laight Street Church.

#### *Separation of Home and Work*

For those individuals with separate business addresses recorded among the city directories, these listings begin to appear as early as 1812. For some individuals, these separate address locations are fairly consistent, with names like Rudolphus Bogert, Jacob Radcliff, and Stuart F. Randolph appearing frequently throughout these records across all decades. And though these three specific individuals represent the only coffin plate-associated households with separate business locations recorded in the 1810s, that number increased over time, growing to five in the 1820s, twelve in the 1830s and nine in the 1840s. To understand who had separate home and business addresses listed in the city directories, it is necessary to consider economic class and the history of public transportation in Manhattan.

Separate business listings were rare for members of the working class; among the coffin plate population only one household associated with this economic class had separate business

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<sup>97</sup> The residence of Edgar Harriott, father of Edgar Howard Harriot (b.1836, d.1840), identified as “Greenwich c. Murray” (Longworth 1834:340). Harriott was working as a baker according to the directory listing.

locations recorded in the city directories. These listings for Ebenezer Smith, father of Joseph C. Smith (d.1825), show that despite semi-frequent moves his business location maintained a close proximity to his home address. Working as a builder,<sup>98</sup> the city directories recorded separate business and home addresses for Smith through the 1820s and into the mid-1830s, first documenting locations in the Fifth Ward and then moving north into the southeast part of the Eighth Ward in 1827. Regardless of where and how frequently these address listings changed, Ebenezer Smith's place of work remained within a 0.1-0.2 mile radius of his home.

This is in contrast to the documented business addresses associated with the middle class, which were rarely within a quarter-mile radius, and usually much farther, from their homes. Merchants often traveling the farthest distances between their home and place of work. Three individuals identified as merchants across the directories had separate business addresses. The city directories included separate business locations for Rudolphus Bogert (d.1842) from 1812 to 1820, with an average distance of 0.96 mile, and again between 1837 and 1841, when his home and workplace were separated by 1.4 miles.<sup>99</sup> Similar distances are also observed among the address listings for Thomas Bush, a lace merchant and widower of Elizabeth Bush, who died shortly after immigrating to New York in 1832 and was interred in the SSPC vaults.<sup>100</sup> Addresses

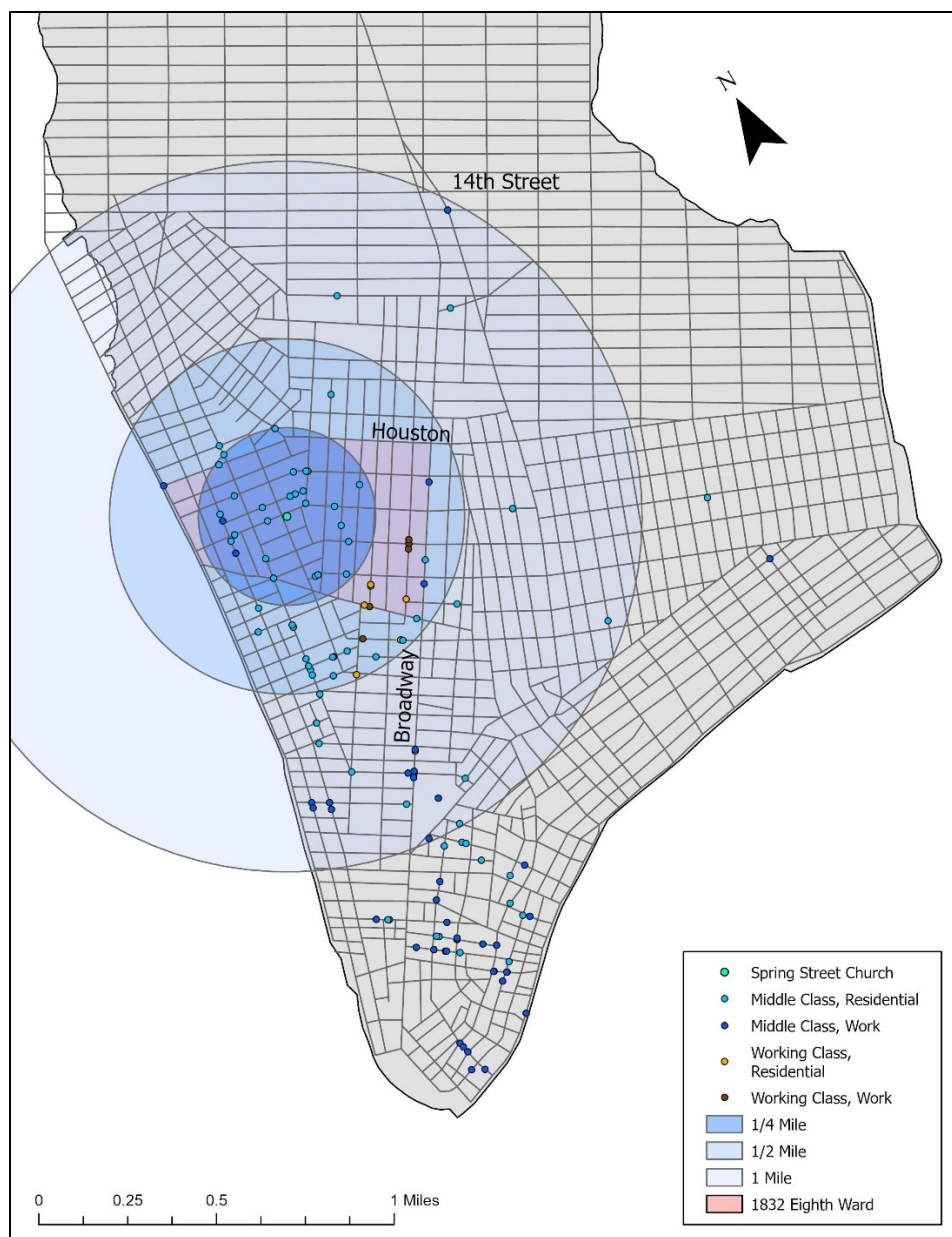
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<sup>98</sup> Listed only as "builder" it is unclear what Smith's role was; separate address listings among this occupation were highly variable in the directories. Some individuals listed as a "builder" had separate workplaces, some did not, and examples of second, separate business listings referencing the same address as those recorded for an individual were exceedingly rare. In the Longworth 1835 directory only four such examples could be identified, such as "Russell J. & R. builders 69 Charlton & 60 King" (Longworth 1835:570) following the listings for the two individuals, James and Robert Russell, who both resided at 60 King. So while this dissertation is placing Ebenezer Smith in the working class for this discussion, without more information it is unclear exactly how he and his family experienced that and whether this assessment based on his occupational listing is accurate.

<sup>99</sup> Distances offered here are "as the crow flies" since it is impossible to know how each individual traveled between the home and place of work. Depending on access to transportation the distance actually traveled may have been greater.

<sup>100</sup> The NYCDR also includes an entry for a male subadult, aged 3y 9m, named Thomas L. Bush, presumably the son of Thomas and Elizabeth. Both Elizabeth and young Thomas died within a week of each other of scarlatina, also known as scarlet fever.

recorded for Bush in the following decade include residences in the Eighth Ward along Grand Street, with business locations in the First and Second Wards at an average distance of one mile to the south. A third merchant, Jame Root, father of James W. Root (d.1830) continues this trend, with residential addresses recorded in the 1830s and 1840s separate from business locations in the First and Second Wards. Though the Root household moves between the Ninth, Fifth, Fifteenth, and Thirteenth Wards, the distance between home and work was always greater than 0.75 mile, with an average distance of 1.3 miles. As seen in these examples, middle class business addresses were also located further south than other types of addresses, particularly for those locations associated with merchants, the New York Marine Bible Society, and for those individuals with government and public service jobs, such as Jacob Radcliff (husband of Julia Radcliff, d.1823) (figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.1:** Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1810-1846.

The distances between home and work addresses among these middle class households is further clarified when they are considered over time and in relation to the history of public transportation in Manhattan. In the earliest decade examined there are only a few separate listings of work addresses for three individuals: Rudolphus Bogert, who resided in the Fifth Ward and had a business address in the First Ward almost a mile away; Jacob Radcliff, who



resided in what was at the time the Eighth Ward while working in the city government in the lower Sixth, over 0.6 mile away, or practicing law in the First Ward; and Stuart F. Randolph, whose home was in the northern Fifth Ward at the early in the decade, roughly a half mile from his business at the corner of Greenwich and Murray in the Third Ward, before moving south and only one block away in 1816. Though all of these examples document a northern residence and a workplace in the southern wards, there is variety in their distances, ranging from a mile to a single city block. Transportation options in the city during the 1810s for those who could not or would not walk were limited to private options or hired carriages. For those who could not regularly hire a stage or hackney to travel to their workplace, Manhattan remained a walkable city.

Transportation options remained much the same in Manhattan into the 1820s, with the city's population largely relying on walking between destinations. The population of separate home and business listings found among the households of the named coffin plates during the 1820s remains limited to: Radcliff, whose home and business locations remain separated by 0.6-1 mile, and Randolph, whose home had returned to the Eighth Ward and a mile from his Third Ward workplace. To this list are added: James Hart, a medical physician and son-in-law of Thomas Crawford (d.1841), who practiced medicine along Broadway between the Third and Sixth Wards while moving residences across the Tenth, Third, and Eighth Wards before settling in the Fifth in 1828, and Ebenezer Smith, the working class builder referenced above who worked and resided in the Fifth Ward during the first part of the decade before moving into the Eight, always traveling less than 0.2 mile to his workplace.

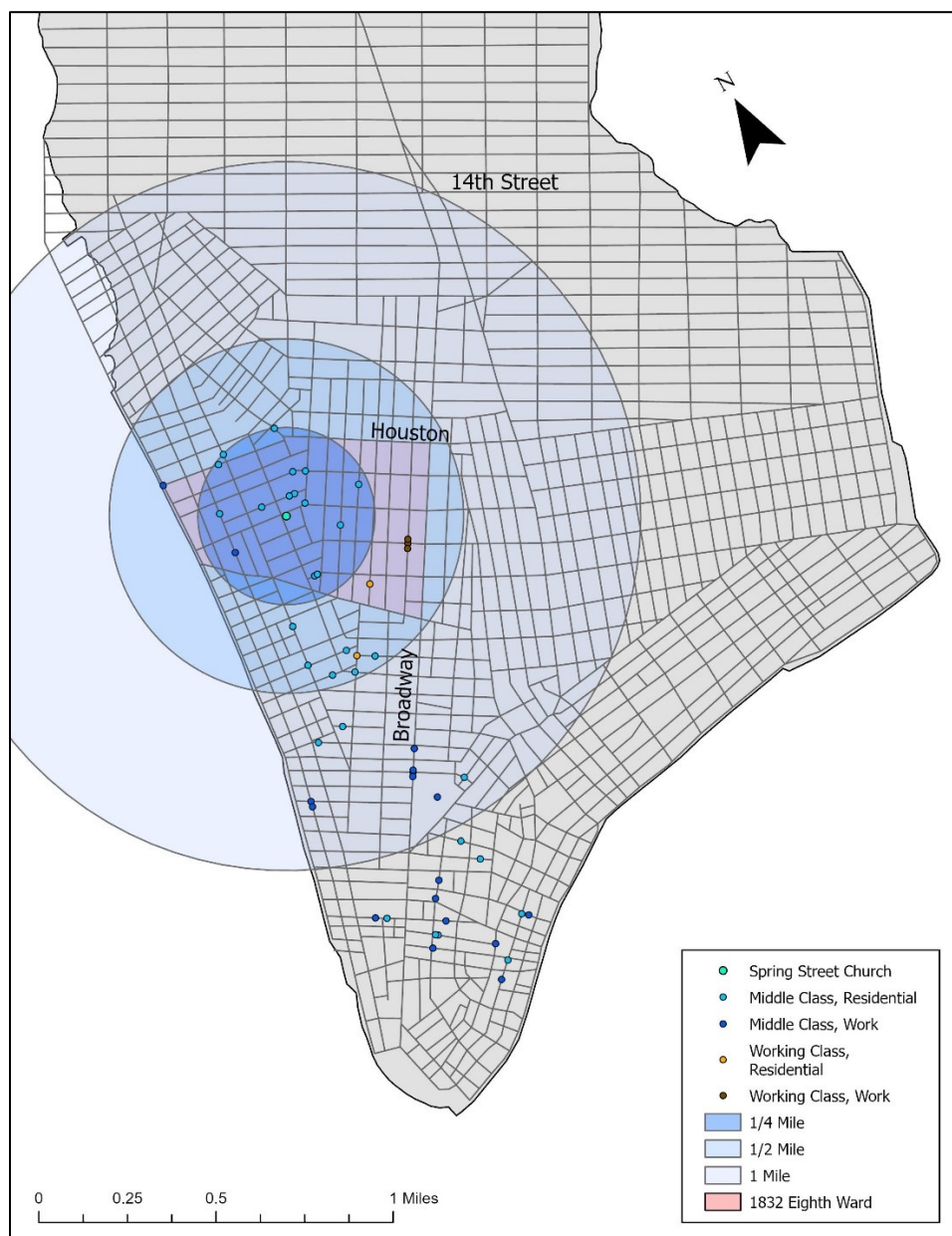
The Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York during the 1820s make references to stages operating throughout the city via complaints about licensing and coaches

waiting at undesignated areas outside private properties, incensing the owners, and the resulting fines for operators who violating city laws (NYCC 1917 [12]:526; [17]:620-621). To these options of hackneys and stagecoaches was added the omnibus, a large stagecoach that could seat as many as twelve and operated on a fixed schedule and route (Burrows and Wallace 1999:460; McShane and Tarr 2007:57-59). Abraham Brower's omnibus route along Broadway was one of the earliest, beginning operation around 1827; references to his, "stage," in the Common Council minutes include a successful petition to avoid a fine for operating an unlicensed stage (NYCC 1917 [16]:431, 611). By 1833 80 licensed omnibuses were operating within the city; 15 years later, that number would increase to 327 (McShane and Tarr 2007:59).

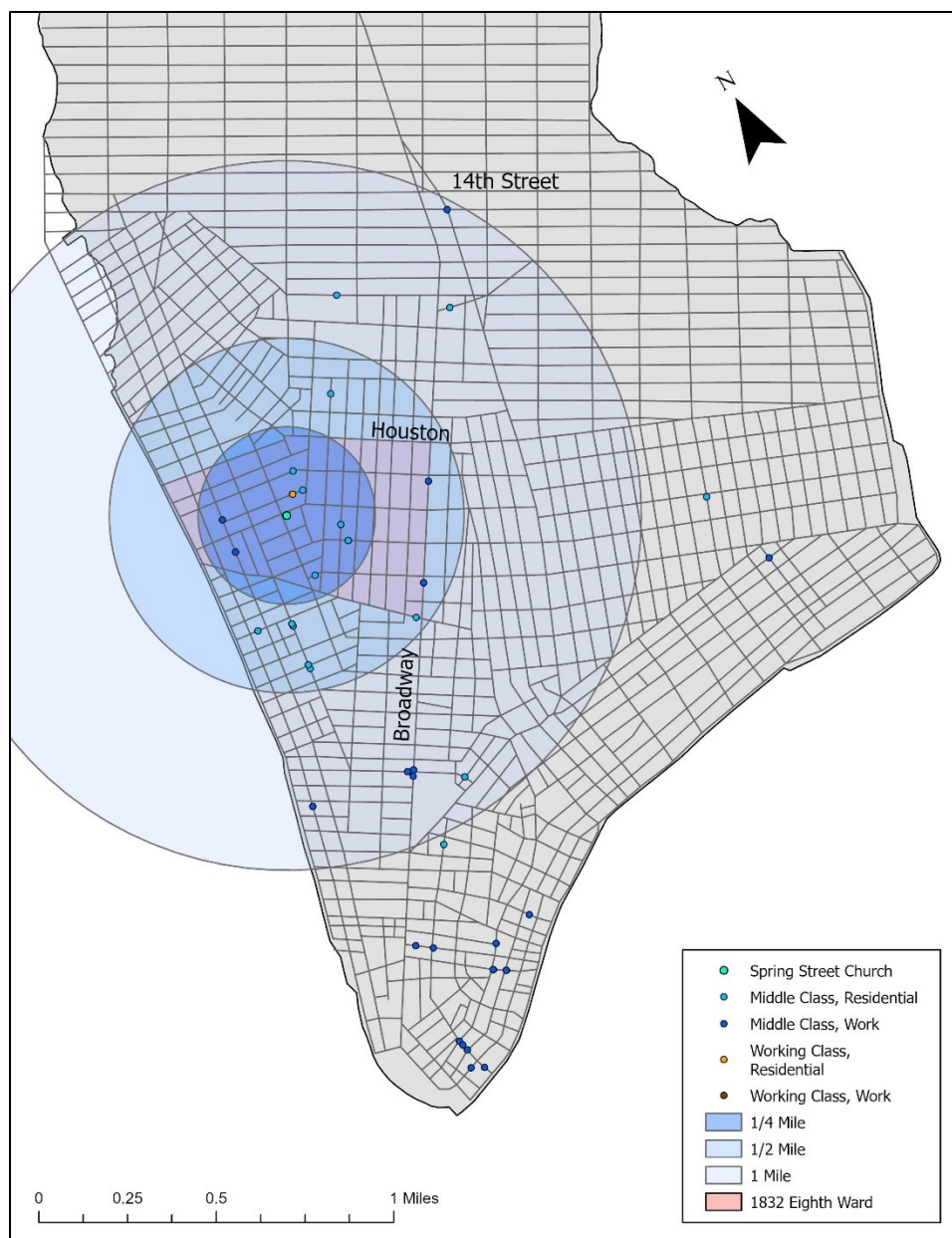
In addition to the introduction of the omnibuses, the 1830s saw the first streetcars introduced to the city. Operated by the New York & Harlem Railroad, these horse-drawn railcars offered transportation along the Bowery between Prince and 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1832 and eventually expanded service south near City Hall (McShane and Tarr 2007:63). Routes were limited, due to the reliance on laid track, but quickly expanded throughout the city during the 1840s and 1850s further increasing access to public transportation for those who could afford the fares.

Among the households represented by named coffin plates, there was an observable increase in the number of household heads working outside their residences during the 1830s. Twelve households are represented in this decade, including Bogert, Bush, Clark, Crawford, Harriott, Hubbard, Radcliff, Randolph, Root, Smith, Sturges, and Whelpley. The boom in public transportation options experienced in Lower Manhattan during this decade likely contributed to this; distances observed between home and work locations during the 1830s regularly fall between 0.5 and 1.5 miles traveled (figure 5.2). And by the 1840s distance traveled between

home and work for these individuals would increase, with the majority of locations requiring a trip of one mile or more (figure 5.3).



**Figure 5.2:** Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1830s.



**Figure 5.3:** Map of business and home address locations associated with the population named among the coffin plate artifact assemblage, designated by economic class, 1840s.

Though we do observe an increase in the number of individuals traveling to workplaces farther from their homes during the 1830s, it should again be noted that these individuals continue to fall within the middle class. That is because, though the omnibus was cheaper than the previous option of individual stages and hackneys, it still remained financially prohibitive to the working class. Laborers during this period are cited as earning a dollar a day, while a fare on

the omnibus began at twelve cents per trip (Burrows and Wallace 1999:460; McShane and Tarr 2007:62). In short, omnibuses were a resource for that, “segment of the public that could afford the fare but couldn’t afford carriages” (McShane and Tarr 2007:62). This changed through the 1840s and 1850s with the expansion of the horse-drawn streetcars, though their impact on the households of the named coffin plates was not directly observed.

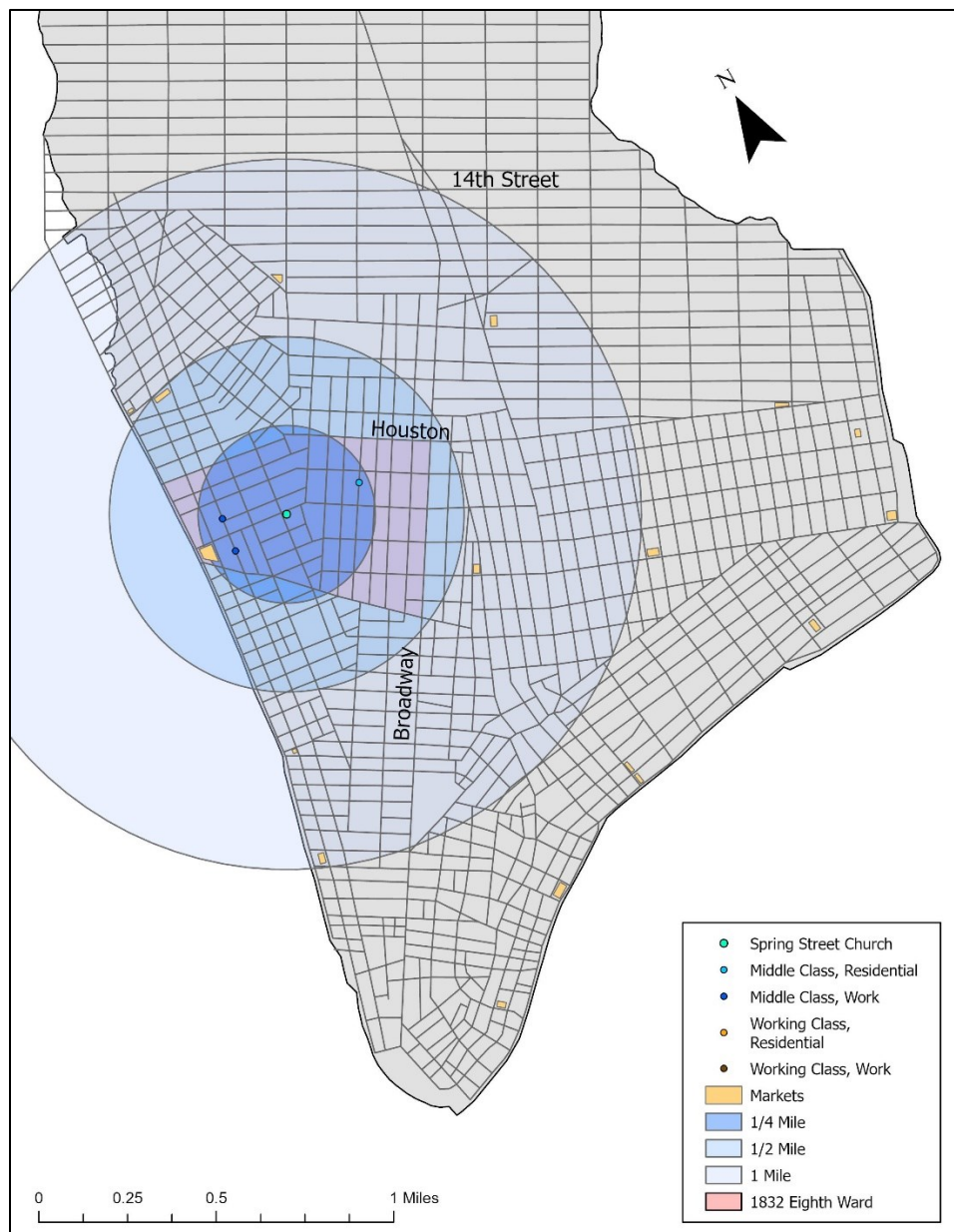
#### *Residence Location and Resource Access*

While the addresses did appear to distribute in a way that concentrated on the location of the SSPC or reflected access to business locations and ease of travel between, they did not appear to cluster or reflect selection with regard to access to other resources or landscape features, such as markets. Market locations were identified from the city directories and mapped into the GIS using those locations and descriptions. Among the address data, only addresses associated with the households of Johnathan Clark (d.1824) and Emma Fitz Randolph (d.1822) appear to present a loose association with those locations (figures 5.4 and 5.5). After 1835, Johnathan Clark’s (d.1824) father, Joseph M. Clark, is recorded as selling dry-goods; addresses for this household in that and following years show a presence at 497 Greenwich, near the location of the Spring Street Market near the intersection of West Street with Spring and Canal. Prior to 1833 Stuart F. Randolph, father to Emma Fitz Randolph (d.1822), owned a grocery with a partner named Martin and located near the corner<sup>101</sup> of Washington and Murray; this location was only three blocks north of the Washington market, located near the corner of Washington and Vesey. An address listing for Randolph in 1821 also mentions a workplace on Vesey, but does not offer enough detail to identify if this was associated with the market. Additionally, the

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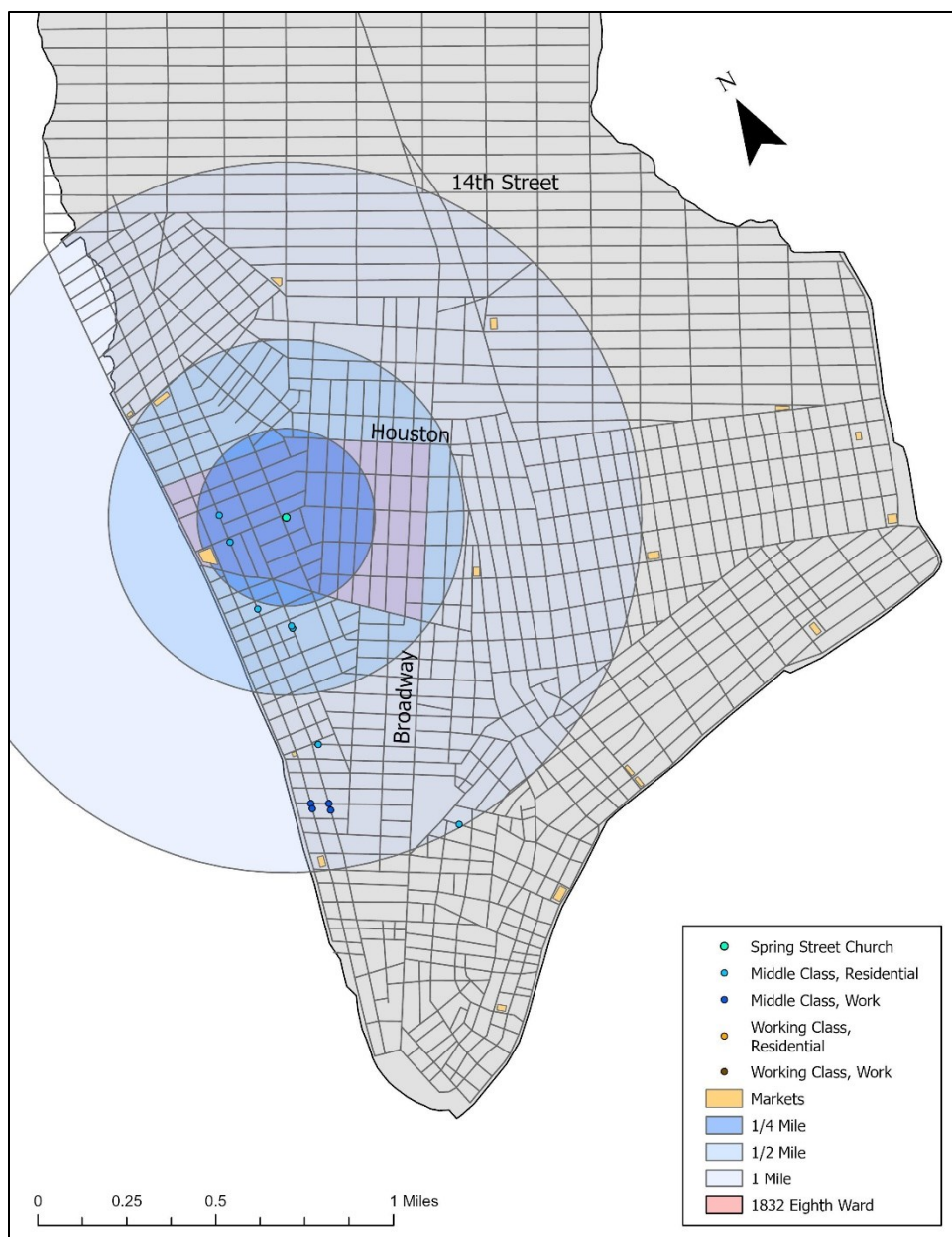
<sup>101</sup> The documentation of this business changes from a cross-street identification to a numbered address, for example the identification of the Randolph & Martin grocery at “256 Washington c. Murray” in the 1830 Longworth directory. The clusters of addresses near the intersections of Murray Street with Greenwich and Washington in figure 5.5 reflect these changes.

Randolph household was located along Greenwich near the Spring Street market from 1817 until 1834. Population patterns associated with the presence of economic resources, such as clusters of butchers and grocers near markets like the one along Spring Street, can be viewed throughout the general directory data and with these examples it appears that pattern holds true among the SSPC population.



**Figure 5.4:** Business and home addresses associated with the household of Johnathan Clark, d.1824, in relation to city market locations.





**Figure 5.5:** Business and home addresses associated with the household of Emma Fitz Randolph, d.1822, in relation to city market locations.

### Death Course: Economic Class within the Vaults

As already discussed in relation to the distribution of addresses across Lower Manhattan, 28 of the legible coffin plates recovered at the Spring Street vaults were associated with individuals who had occupational information documented in the city directories and other historical documents. Among these 28 plates 21 (75%) were identified as being associated with

occupations that fell in the new middle class, and the remaining 7 plates (25%) were identified as working class. When viewed among the individual vaults this proportion holds in Vaults 3 and 4, and is similar among the few plates recovered from Vaults 1 and 2.

Within Vault 4 there are 16 plates associated with occupational data and economic class. These 16 plates identify 17 individuals, as one of the plates is the Cox brothers'. Among these plates there are five adult males represented, with three identified as middle class and two as working class. Four plates were identified as those of adult females, three of whom fell in the middle class and one in the working class. The subadults showed even less class variety; among the five subadult male plates only one was identified as working class. The remaining subadult male plates and both subadult female plates were identified as middle class. This results in 12 of the 16 plates (75%) identifying households whose head worked in a middle class occupation, reflecting the ratio seen among the total number of identified coffin plates. The four plates identified as working class in Vault 4 were found from locations throughout the vault; no trends or patterns in their distribution, beyond the age-related trends observed in Chapter 4, were identified.<sup>102</sup>

These observations hold when considering the coffin plates found in Vault 3; eight plates were associated with individuals who had occupations recorded, belonging to seven men and one woman. Among these plates only two of the adult male plate fell in the working class (25%). There was no observable pattern to their distribution within the vault, when considered for class.

Only four coffin plates were recovered from the remaining two vaults; one plate from Vault 2 and three plates from Vault 1. All of these plates were identified and associated with

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<sup>102</sup> Subadult remains and coffin plates were both found most frequently among the commingled remains located in the western part of each vault, while the discrete and collapsed burials along the eastern walls of the vaults were more often identified as adults.



occupational data. Of these plates, the subadult male plate from Vault 2 and two adult female plates from Vault 1 were all identified as middle class, while the adult male plate from Vault 1 was identified as working class. When considered together, this reflects the same ratio observed among the total group of 28 plates and the previous two vaults, 75% middle class to 25% working class plates.

As this distribution holds across the vaults, it appears that individuals from a household in the middle class were three times as likely to have a coffin plate as someone living in a working class household. When burial dates are considered, the chances of an individual with a coffin plate living in a middle class home holds over time; of the 7 plates identified as representing someone living in a working class household, 4 (57.14%) document burials between 1820 and 1825, with the remaining 3 scattered across the following 24 years of vault use. Within Vault 4, three of the four working class plates date to burials within the first five years the vaults were open and operating. The last plate, David Sherwood's, dates to 1843 and the final decade of the vaults' use. In Vault 3, of the two working class plates, one dates to the first decade of vault use (Joseph C. Smith, d.1825) and the other, the last decade (Benjamin N. Abel, d.1841). And in Vault 1, the only working class plate dates to 1832, representing the burial of James McGregor.

In addition to class identity, the age and sex of an individual influenced the likelihood of having a coffin plate. Among the total assemblage of identified coffin plates, adult males are the most represented group, comprising 41.18% of the assemblage with 14 plates, 13 of which were associated with an occupation and economic class (Table 5.4). They are followed by the adult females, represented by nine coffin plates (26.47%) of which seven were associated with occupational data. Among the subadults, coffin plates were identified as belonging to eight males (23.53%) with six plates associated with an occupation, and three plates were found to represent

subadult females (8.82%), two of which had occupations identified for the head of the household.

Age/Sex	Total Coffin Plates	Middle Class	Working Class	NYCDR Entries
Adult Male	14	8	5	99
Adult Female	9	6	1	110
Subadult Male	8	5	1	236
Subadult Female	3	2	0	171

**Table 5.4:** Coffin plate assemblage by age, sex, and economic class, compared to total burials listed in the NYCDR.

Coffin plates associated with the burials of women and girls were much less likely to represent someone from a working class home; among the plates identifying women, six were middle class and one was working class. None of the plates identifying subadult female burials were associated with a working class household. Adult males, however, were not only represented among the entire coffin plate population more frequently, but they were more likely to have a coffin plate if they were working class. Among the 13 adult male coffin plates associated with occupational data, 8 were identified as middle class and 5 as working class.

To understand the discrepancy across ages and genders noted above, life course and the financial and cultural value of the coffin plates – and the lives they represent – must be considered. This discussion will be continued in Chapter 8 as it relates to significance of naming the dead during the shift in 19th century funerary customs and ideologies, but here I will consider the financial elements contributing to the purchase of a coffin plate as they relate to identity. This trend of adult male interments presenting the largest or most elaborate memorials and funerary displays is consistent with other studies of 19th century burial grounds (Davidson 2004; Kleinberg 1977). Kleinberg concludes that, particularly among the working class, the death of an adult male was a significant event within a family when they relied on that individual for their survival, and therefore worth the investment in memorializing that individual.

Comparatively the deaths of children were, while tragic, far more commonplace due to high childhood mortality rates. Children were also not seen as true individuals with their own social identities and were instead identified as extensions of, or in relation to, their fathers or other male household head<sup>103</sup> (Ellis 2019:12, 2020:193-194). Among the NYCDR entries for the youngest burials at Spring Street, many infants are only recorded as, “child of,” and attributed to their fathers, such as, “Joe Young’s Boy,” who died of convulsions at 17 days old in 1838. The perceived social standing of the adult male identity, as a fully developed individual, produced the observed discrepancy observed among commemorated burials at Spring Street and the lack of coffin plates documenting the interments of adult women and children of both sexes.

Interestingly, the lone coffin plate representing a woman from a working class household belonged to Eleanor Moore (d.1823), whose husband, Henry Moore, worked as a cartman. Though this was considered “unskilled” labor, the necessity<sup>104</sup> of this profession in the movement of goods around the city contributed to the social and political power<sup>105</sup> cartmen held

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<sup>103</sup> This is also true of women throughout the documentary record and was discussed in Chapter 3 with regard to the difficulty in identifying and studying several named individuals among the coffin plate population.

<sup>104</sup> Much like the immigrant enclaves discussed in Chapter 2, the cartmen of Manhattan selected their residences in part to access the resources of their collective; population data reflects residential shifts among cartmen during the early 19th century as they moved northward, into the Eighth, Tenth, and Eleventh Wards (Hodges 2012:123, 131; Longworth 1815, 1826; Novak 2017b:96). In observing the presence and distribution of cartmen within the city directories, it was noted that the recorded profession of “cartman” begins to disappear during the 1830s (Longworth 1815, 1825, 1835, 1840). As goods still needed moved around the city, this was explained by an observed shift in terminology, with the occupation instead being designated by the label “carter.” Even accounting for roughly 30 or so entries where Carter was recorded as a surname, over 1000 entries for the occupation appeared in each of the directories for 1835 and 1845, demonstrating the ongoing significance of their work.

<sup>105</sup> The representation of cartmen within the SSPC vaults is especially interesting, in that the cartmen were an insular group who sought to exclude immigrants and freedmen from their ranks through politically supporting municipal laws requiring licenses to work as a cartman (Burrows and Wallace 1999:356, 451, 520-521; Novak 2017b:96). If Lewis Evans (d.1822) was an active member of the SSPC, it would be fascinating to understand how or if he reconciled the politics of his profession with those promoted by that abolitionist church. It is known from the Laight Street Church records that Lewis’s wife, Esther, joined the SSPC in 1820 and followed Rev. Cox to Laight Street, possibly reflecting her own views on abolition (LSM 1825, 1828). Though a date wasn’t given, she later returned to the SSPC congregation; her “dismissal” (a transfer of membership between churches) from Laight Street to the SSPC was documented in the Laight Street records and may have occurred after Rev. Cox left for Auburn, NY, following the 1834 Race Riots (RLSC).

within Manhattan (Burrows and Wallace 1999:356, 520-521). And Eleanor was not the only member of a cartman's household represented by a coffin plate; Lewis Evans also worked as a cartman and was interred in the SSPC vaults in 1822 after his death from convulsions, as evidenced by the NYCDR and the presence of his own legible coffin plate (spelled, "Evens").<sup>106</sup> As the only woman coming from a working class household and represented by a coffin plate, perhaps the social resources available to cartmen through their collective identity or other networks of influence may have provided Eleanor with additional access to this form of mortuary memorial (Hodges 2012:123, 131; Novak 2017:96).

Prices of coffins and coffin fittings can be difficult to locate, since these were not always included in advertisements and catalogs. As Springate (2015:58) observes, this was likely due to the practice and cost of printing at that time. Though the 19th century saw a decrease in the cost to print thanks to stereotyping, which contributed to the publishing boom, it was not feasible to rewrite and print a catalog every time prices changed, or lock the price of an item to its printed advertisement. This practice of presenting prices on a separate, easily changed list offered flexibility, allowing the craftsmen or merchants to change prices as the cost and demands for products and materials changed. Comparative prices dating to the end of the vault use period and in the decades after show coffin plate *wholesale* prices in the range of \$0.13 to \$0.21 for Britannia metal plates and \$0.31 to \$0.92 for silver-plated, though the mass manufacture, size and decoration of those plates differentiates them from those found among the Spring Street burials (Sargent and Co. 1871:282-283; Springate 2011:5-6). The resale and engraving of these nameplates would have further increased the cost to the consumer, doubling or tripling the price

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<sup>106</sup> This alternate spelling of "Evens" appears on Lewis's coffin plate and in the transcribed LSM (1825, 1828); the surname is presented as "Evans" among the city directories and in the RLSC.

(Davidson 2004:431). For a laborer earning a dollar a day, this expense was likely prohibitive, particularly when intended for a child.

Records of interments within the Spring Street vaults and burial price lists established in 1831 and 1835 show the cost of burial was \$10.00 for adults over the age of 15 years, and between \$2.00 and \$7.00 for children until 1835, when the age categories and prices for child burials were revised (Table 5.5) (Meade 2007:II-9). Comparatively, a coffin plate priced in the range mentioned above could have increased the cost of burial by 50% before additional needs like a shroud, coffin, and transportation to the burial vaults were considered.

Original age categories	Original price (May 25, 1831)	Revised priced (June 15, 1831)	Revised age categories (March 16, 1835)	Revised price (March 16, 1835)
Adults	\$10.00	Possibly \$7.50	Adults	\$10.00
Children under 1yr	\$2.00	\$2.00	Children under 1yr	\$2.00
Children ages 1-2	\$3.00	\$2.50	Children ages 1-3	\$3.00
Children ages 2-5	\$3.50	\$3.00	Children ages 3-6	\$4.00
Children ages 5-10	\$5.00	\$4.50	Children ages 6-12	\$6.00
Children ages 10-15	\$7.00	\$6.00	Children ages 12-15	\$8.00

**Table 5.5:** List of burial prices, Spring Street Presbyterian Church. Adapted from Table II-1 in Meade 2007.

Despite these differences in how men, women, and children were memorialized within the Spring Street vaults there is one unique example found within the coffin plate assemblage that contradict this trend even among the middle class coffin plates. Documenting the burial of an infant boy, the coffin plate of Oswald Williams Roe demonstrates how family resources influenced the selection and expression of mortuary memorial.

Oswald Williams Roe died of inflammation of the bowels on November 27, 1822. He was 10 months and 5 days old. His father, Peter Roe, was a merchant and their middle class household was documented in the Third and Fifth Wards between 1812 and 1823 in the city directories, before Peter moved away to New Windsor in Orange County, New York (figure 5.6) (Beam 2018). Peter's brothers, James and William Roe, were silver smiths in Kingston, New

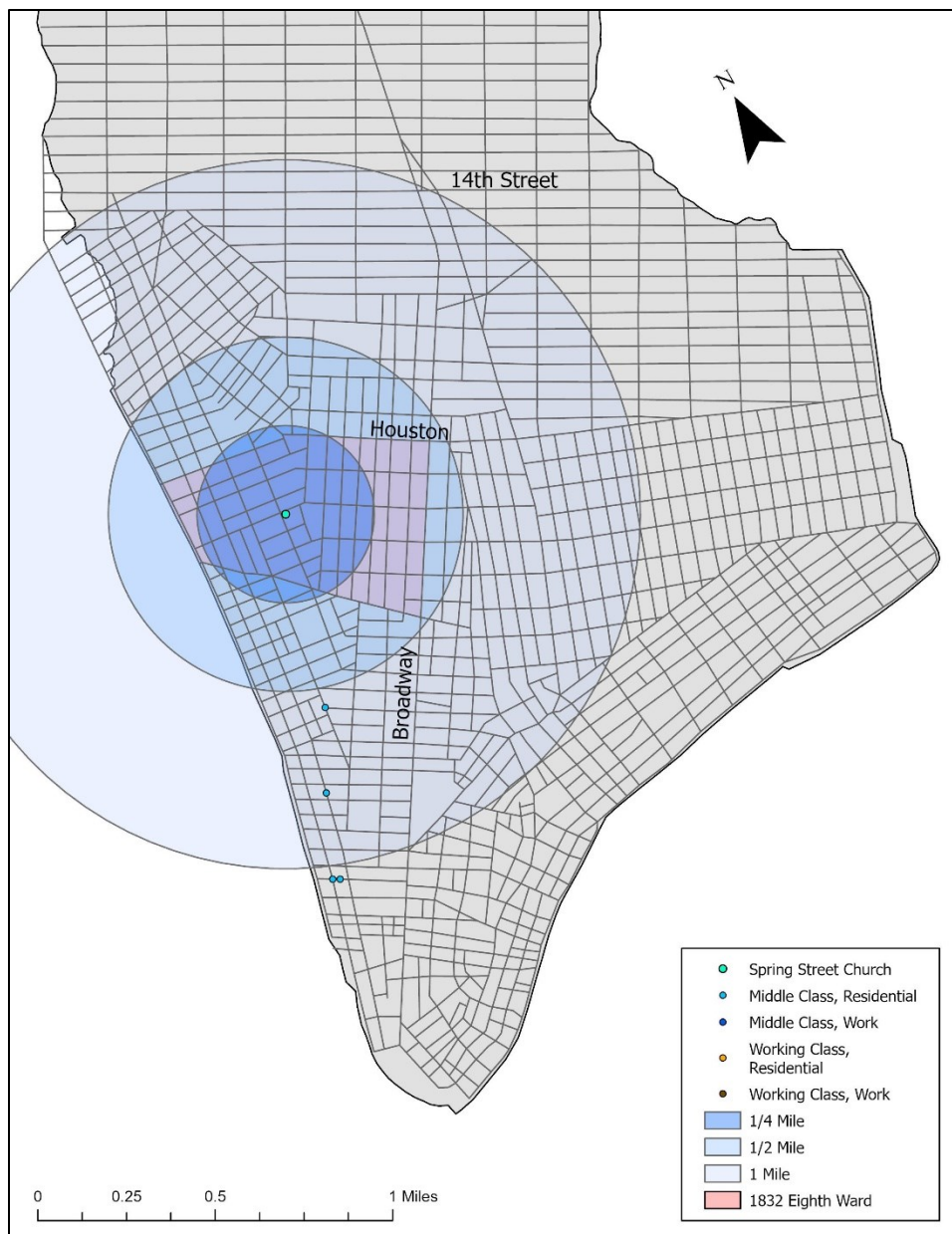
York, offering the Roe family a unique resource to commemorate their infant son (figure 5.7). X-ray fluorescence analysis<sup>107</sup> was conducted on these artifacts using a Bruker Tracer III portable unit provided by Dr. Janet Hunting's chemistry lab at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. This analysis was performed to identify the metal used in the production of the coffin plates. Data provided by the portable x-ray fluorescence unit revealed that Oswald's coffin plate was manufactured from almost pure silver, while 45 other plates were made from copper or copper-alloy and four were made from tin-based white metal.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> X-ray fluorescence identifies inorganic elements by sending a stream of high-energy, short-wave radiation into the material being analyzed. This radiation excites the atoms present, causing them to undergo ionization and eject electrons from the lower energy levels. As the remaining electrons shift from the outer energy levels to the inner level, energy is released by the atom in the form of X-rays. These X-rays, or photons, are indicative of and unique to the types of elements present. The X-ray fluorescence spectrometer reads these X-rays as they are reflected back to the machine (LearnXRF.com 2004; Wirth and Barth 2012). The relative amount of an element present within a sample can also be detected based on the number of photons per-unit-time read by the spectrometer. By this, it was possible to qualitatively establish the elemental composition of the Spring Street coffin plates.

A portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometer was selected for this analysis because it could identify the chemical composition of metal artifacts without their destruction. Conventional X-ray fluorescence machines require samples of the artifacts to be prepared by pulverizing a portion of the metal into a powder. Portable units can perform the same analysis by scanning the intact artifact, and are useful when an artifact or feature must be scanned in situ or is too small to provide a sample.

<sup>108</sup> Also referred to as Britannia metal.



**Figure 5.6:** Distribution of residential addresses, Roe household.



**Figure 5.7:** Coffin plate of Oswald Williams Roe, deceased November 7, 1822, aged 10 months, 5 days. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

### Conclusion

While economic class was not so easily identified, particularly due to a reliance on occupations recorded among the city directories, when analyzed via the GIS it can be seen that this address data does present trends across the landscape in residential selection/ward presence and home-work separation. The northward shift documented across Manhattan through the 19th century and observed among the entire named burial population, detailed in Chapter 4, is also present when class is considered. Both the middle and working class populations feature movement northward, away from the increasingly commercial and overpopulated southern wards. And both class groups present movement towards the Eighth Ward, clustering there over time. This Eighth Ward presence is particularly pronounced among the working class households; this is likely due to the ability of the middle class to access transportation methods other than walking. This access to transportation is also observed among the records of separate home and work locations, a practice that appears with greater frequency throughout the century.



Among those households whose records document a separate work location, they were almost all identified as middle class; only one working class household, that of Johnathan Clark whose father worked as a builder, was documented as having a separate work address. This work location, though separate, was also always within close proximity to their home address, suggesting that Joseph Clark walked between his home and work.

Trends associated with economic class were also identified within the SSPC burial vaults. These trends were not observed among the spatial distribution of the coffin plates, but did reflect the likelihood of a person having a coffin plate. Based on their class identity, individuals residing in middle class homes were more likely to have a coffin plate. The chances of an individual's name being recorded on a coffin plate also increased if they were among the working class, but an adult male, suggesting that this identity had some significance as head of or a contributor to the household that required memorialization.

## Chapter 6: “Bitter Abolitionists”: Landscapes of Race and Abolition

### Introduction

We can only speculate on the experience of race in the Spring Street congregation and for those individuals buried inside its vaults. This is especially true at the individual level.<sup>109</sup> During the first half of the 19th century definitions of race and their application and impact on the lives of New Yorkers reflected the shifting ideologies and conversations of the larger abolition movement, its opposition, and concerns surrounding immigration and the changing socio-economic context of the time period.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation presented a history of how race was defined in colonial and early 19th century New York City, and how definitions and identities of race interacted with and influenced the city’s abolitionists. The gradual abolition practiced in New York State between 1799 and 1827 coincided with a period of increasing anxieties over economic and social identities. Changing labor patterns, urban migration, increasing immigration, and the abolition of slavery across the northern United States produced a city that was entering the 1830s in a context of changing identities and rising racism (Burrows and Wallace 1999:554-555; Roediger 2007:96, 103-104). White working class men in particular were described as, “consumed by the struggle for success and by fears of cultural inferiority,” (Roediger 2007:97), relying on constructing and reinforcing their whiteness through the use of tools and practices like racial slurs, minstrel entertainment, and segregated spaces.

In constructing their whiteness and white superiority, these New Yorkers in turn constructed definitions of Blackness, which they viewed as a threat. Racist ideologies

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<sup>109</sup> DNA analysis was conducted on the skeletal remains from the SSPC burial vaults (Gladyck et al. 2022). While evidence for ancestral diversity was found among the population, for example haplogroups identified with South Asian ancestry, it would be unethical to make conclusions about how these individuals’ phenotypes expressed, were experienced, or read as “racial” during their lives.

surrounding the notion of, “wage slavery,” fueled beliefs that free Black New Yorkers threatened white employment and thus their survival (Burrows and Wallace 1999:553; Sinha 2016:347). Rumors of amalgamation,<sup>110</sup> or racial mixing, were commonly used among partisan journalists and anti-abolitionists to fuel rumors and spark, “racial anxieties,” over racial purity and protecting white women (Burrows and Wallace 1999:554-556; Roberts 2016:159). Eventually these normalized acts and ideologies of racism would boil over into physical violence, resulting in events like the Race Riots of 1834.

This chapter will explore how that event, along with definitions of race and the SSPC’s identity as an abolitionist church, influenced the lives and deaths of those buried within its vaults. Beginning with life course and the presence of the burial population across Lower Manhattan, then refocusing on the vaults and those interred within, this chapter will inquire as to how and whether identities of race and the impacts of those riots can be seen among those landscapes.

### **Life Course: Abolition and the Urban Landscape**

The legacy of the SSPC is tied to abolition. Celebrations of the SSPC’s 65<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries recalled the legacies of Reverends Cox and Ludlow, the integrated Sunday School associated with the church, and the 1834 riots that destroyed the original building; with these details, Rev. Halsey commented, “The attitude of the Spring Street Church on the slavery question was well known” (1886:15). Such sentiments were echoed 138 years later, when the

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<sup>110</sup> This rhetoric, too unsubtle to accurately be called a dog whistle, was present in the lead-up to the Race Riots of 1834 when Spring Street’s Rev. Henry G. Ludlow was accused of performing interracial marriage ceremonies, something he denied in print shortly after the attacks on his church and home. In a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Journal of Commerce*, Ludlow professed that he, “no longer ago than on the Sabbath evening previous to the late excitement in New York, openly, and in the presence of a large congregation of our fellow citizens, oppose the doctrine of Amalgamation” (*Connecticut Courant* 1834b). Ludlow’s compulsion to publish this denial demonstrates how such rumors were successful in stoking tensions between white and Black New Yorkers, and how many of New York’s abolitionists were compelled to step back from participating in integrated activism following the riots.

2014 memorial service commemorating the reburial of the skeletal remains again highlighted this era of the church's history and its association with the abolition movement.

It is easy to become narrowly focused on the abolition work of the SSPC and the narrative that has been created, painting the SSPC and its congregation as a uniform group who fervently supported racial equality along with the end of racialized slavery, and thus perpetuating the myth of the white Yankee north (Matthews 2015:255; Matthews and McGovern 2015; Orser 2015). It is also easy to denigrate the work of the church towards abolition, highlighting the “what-abouts” of segregated pews and other aspects of the church that reflect the context in which its congregants were living. As with most things, the truth is somewhere between these two extremes. For the time period, the SSPC was progressive and it is necessary to understand it within those terms.

What we do know about the experience of race at Spring Street includes activities led by the abolitionist pastorate, specifically Reverends Cox and Ludlow, and comments on the structure and operations of the church from such sources as the Trustees Minutes. As presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the pastorate of the SSPC participated in a variety of activities furthering the cause of abolition. Both Rev. Cox and Rev. Ludlow participated in the New York Tract Society and later the American Tract Society, distributing pamphlets and acting as leaders within those organizations to spread their church's message (ATS 1833:62, 67, 96, 1837:151, 154; Ellis 2019:27-28). They and their congregants, such as Arthur and Lewis Tappan, were also among the members of the American Anti-Slavery Society, another organization that focused on the distribution of literature to further its cause (AASS 1834; Foster 1953:63; Sinha 2016). As Rev. Halsey noted in his 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary sermon, “[Ludlow] gathered about him a band of

earnest workers, who did valiant service for the Lord. Spring Street then furnished more tract distributors than any church in New York” (1886:13).

In addition to distributing literature and participating in pro-abolition organizations, the pastorate of the SSPC participated in revivals and meetings, giving lectures and sermons. The Spring Street Church also hosted guest speakers, such as the Grimke Sisters; in the winter of 1836-1837 these noted abolitionist sisters held a series of lectures in the session room of the SSPC at the invitation of Rev. Ludlow (Lerner 2004:107-108; Meade 2010:15).

Throughout the documentary record there is evidence of the SSPC’s integrated congregation. References are made in the SSPC Trustees Minutes to Black churchgoers such as Phebe, a free Black woman who was admitted to the church membership in 1820, and Candence Myers, who was restored to communion in 1833 (Ellis 2019:96; Meade 2007:II-2, 2010:11). The Laight Street Manuals, documents detailing the names of church members with the year joined, also list members of color. Among the Church Manuals for the years 1825 and 1828 17 individuals are recorded under the, “List of Persons of Colour” (LSM 1828). Of these people, 13 are recorded as joining the SSPC prior to the split with Laight Street in 1825 and three appear in the NYCDR.

It should be noted, however, that these documents separate and other these Black church members; for those church members not recorded under the, “List of Persons of Colour,” it is assumed they are white. This defaulting to whiteness is part of a historical context with effects that persist to this day and can be viewed existing across other practices of the SSPC, such as the continued segregation of church pews as late as 1831 (Meade 2007:II-4; Pultz 2018:33; Spring Street Presbyterian Church 1826-1841). As I argue in Chapter 2, though, it should be concluded that the operation of a multiracial Sunday School and unsegregated burial vaults are better

indicators of the Spring Street Church's politics and abolitionist ideology than the persistence of segregated pews.

*Race and the Residential Landscape*

In addition to the 17 individuals named among the, "List of Persons of Colour," recorded in the Laight Street Manuals for 1825 and 1828, I was able to locate the names of another 20 church members identified by race within the Records of the Laight Street Church (RLSC), a document recording church membership and baptisms through the 1830s until its closure in 1843.<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately identifying those church members labeled by race in the Laight Street records did not produce additional connections to the NYCDR; none of those additional named individuals were present in the NYCDR and it is therefore not possible to investigate how race influenced or interacted with the residential addresses recorded in that document.

A few entries did have similar surnames to those recorded in the NYCDR, but without additional information those individuals could not be located further or connected to those NYCDR entries, due to many of the entries being women. As such the only entries in the NYCDR confirmed as Black are Francis Schuyler (d.1828) and Sarah Packson (d.1828). Connections to the Laight Street Manuals leads to the conclusion that Hannah Schuyler (d.1826) and Sarah Jackson (d.1839) in the NYCDR are also Black, due to the presence of their names in the Laight Street Manual's Lists of Persons of Colour in 1825.

Of these four individuals, only Sarah Jackson, the one I am least confident in identifying by race based on the records I have, has a numbered address in the NYCDR and can be identified on the map by more than a street name. Francis Schuyler, the only male, does not appear in the directories in the years leading up to his death, and the surname Packson does not appear in the

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<sup>111</sup> One church member, Flora Banson, joined the SSPC in 1820, followed Rev. Cox to Laight Street, then returned to the SSPC in January of 1843 (LSM 1824; RLSC).

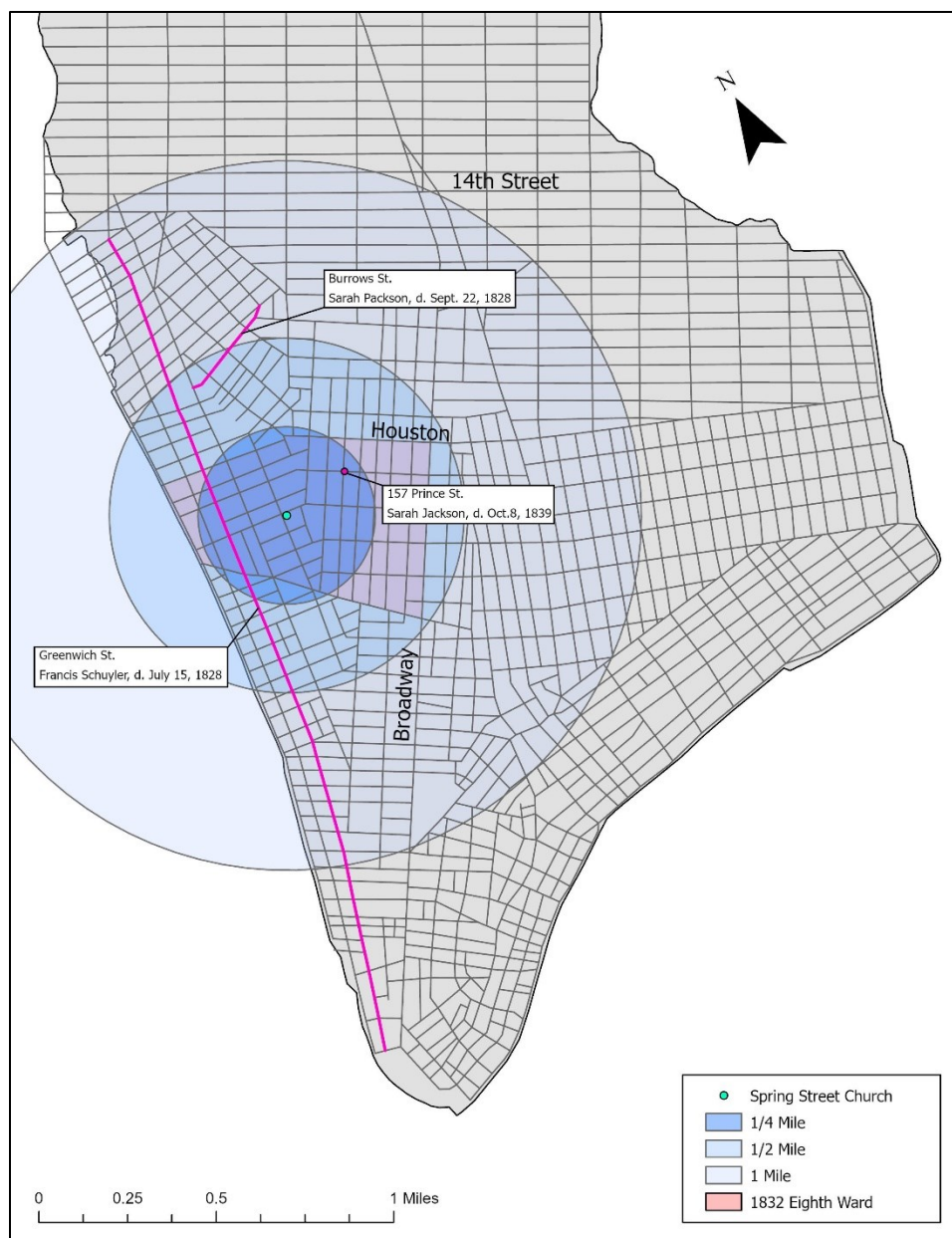
directories. I have confirmed that the NYCDR entry for Sarah Packson does, in fact, read Packson and not Jackson in an illegible hand, though this could still be an error in the NYCDR. Given that Sarah Jackson does not appear in the Laight Street records after 1825, I am left asking if Sarah Packson was actually her.

Sarah Jackson joined the SSPC in 1822 and, if the NYCDR entry documents the same woman, was aged 58 years when she died of typhoid fever on October 8, 1839. Her address as it was recorded in the NYCDR was located at 157 Prince, in the Eighth Ward. The city directory for that year records a William Jackson residing at 157 Prince (Longworth 1839:359). William was a mason, so his household was likely working class and took advantage of the walkable distances to and from the Spring Street and Laight Street Church locations. The directory listing for William does not include a reference to his race. 157 Prince Street was located four blocks from the SSPC, to the northeast and near the intersection of Prince and Thompson. As a recorded member of the Laight Street Church, Sarah could have accessed that church by walking south along Thompson and west on Laight, a distance of about 0.4 mile (LSM 1825). The Spring Street market, located near the intersection of Spring and West Streets, was also about a half mile distance from her home. Unfortunately this tells us a little of what her landscape was like when she died, but not much about her life or what it was like to be a Black woman in New York attending an abolitionist church.

The remaining three NYCDR entries are only recorded by street name; Sarah Packson on Burrows Street, renamed to Grove and located in the Ninth Ward, and the Schuylers on Greenwich. Both of these streets offer access to the Fifth and Eighth Wards and the churches located there. The length of Burrows was confined to the Ninth Ward and located roughly a half mile from the Spring Street Church and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the Laight Street Church.

The Laight Street Manual records the Schuylers as joining the church in 1813, referencing the early years of the SSPC before Cox established his church at Laight Street (LSM 1825, 1828). Requiring access to both church locations during their lives, the Schuylers may have resided anywhere along the length of Greenwich on the western side of Lower Manhattan. And while Greenwich ran the length of Manhattan between the First and Ninth Wards, it presented a thoroughfare that offered access to the Fifth and Eighth Wards, intersecting with both Spring and Laight Streets only two blocks from each church.





**Figure 6.1:** Map of locations associated with known and possible persons of color, recorded in the NYCDR.

*“[...] a scene of great riot and disturbance”: the Race Riots of 1834*

The title for this chapter section is quoted from an article that originally appeared in the *New York Daily Advertiser* on July 12, 1834: “This was a scene of great riot and disturbance; the vengeance of the mob appeared to be directed entirely against the blacks,” (*Connecticut Courant* 1834a). This particular line was describing the violence taking place in the infamous

neighborhood of the Five Points. The events leading up to and inciting the Race Riots of 1834 and their impact on the SSPC were presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Here I will discuss how the riotous mob moved across Lower Manhattan, where they targeted their violence, and whether or how this week in July 1834 had a lasting impact on those individuals connected to the SSPC.

On July 7 a celebration of New York State's Emancipation Day was planned to be held at Chatham Street Chapel, in the Sixth Ward. That was where the riot began, as a small group of whites confronted the largely Black assembly, attempting to eject them from the hall. This violence was in part fueled by earlier events in the late spring of 1834, when Arthur Tappan had invited Rev. Samuel Cornish, a Black Presbyterian minister, to join him in his pew at Rev. Cox's Laight Street Church. Objections by the congregation to this act were met with remarks by Cox that they would as soon eject their Savior along with Cornish, as Christ himself was, "probably of a dark Syrian hue" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:556; Meade 2010:13).

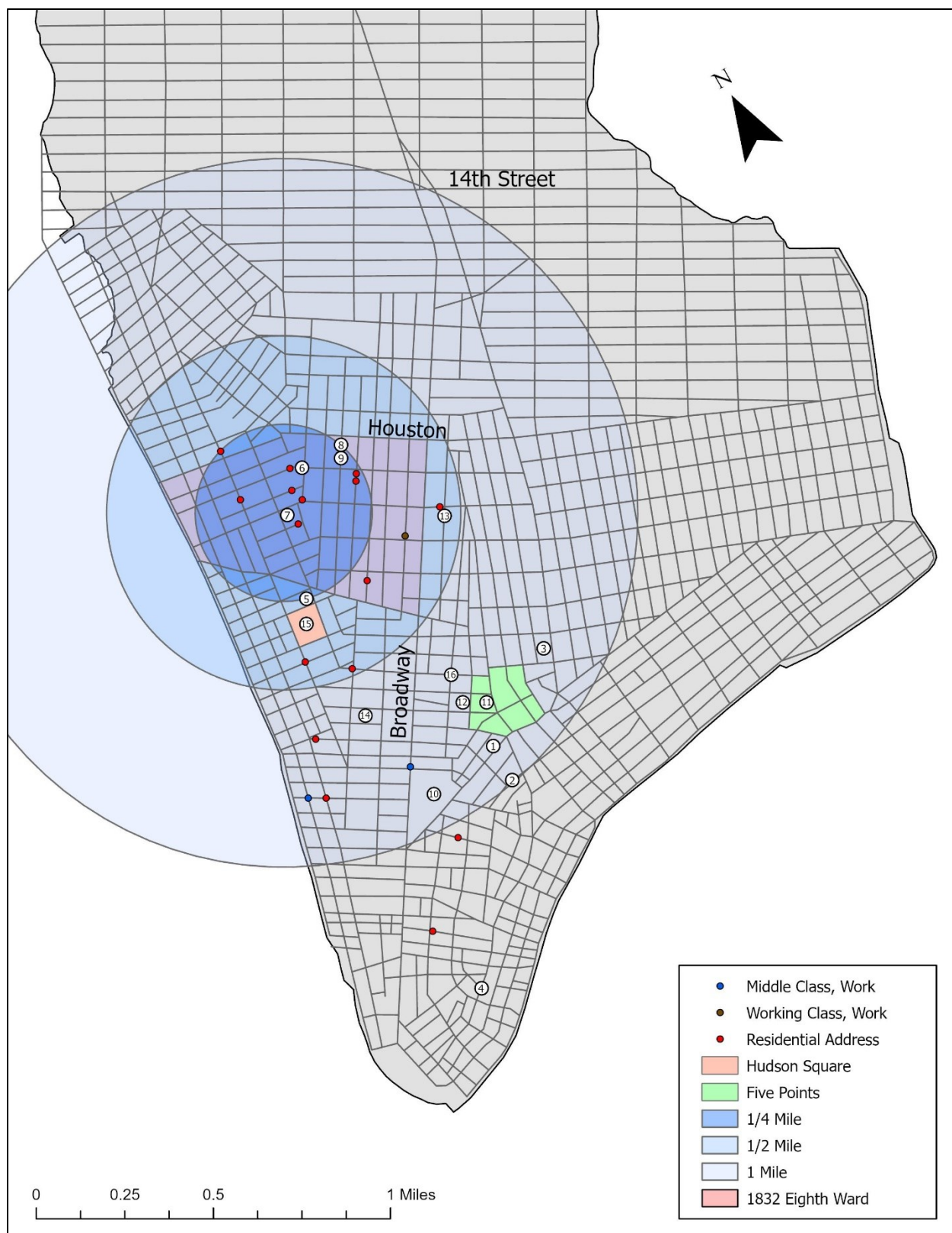
Though the instigators at Chatham Street Chapel were outnumbered and overwhelmed, the event attracted the attention of a crowd, who, "forced the remaining blacks to flee" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:557). Over the next day rumors of the event and intended violence by Black New Yorkers would spread, until riots broke out on the evening of July 9. Three locations were targets of the mob that night (Table 6.1, figure 6.2). The first was the Chatham Street Chapel once again, where an abolitionist group intended to hold a meeting. The second was the home of Lewis Tappan, located at 40 Rose Street in the Fourth Ward; "Mr. Tappan in Rose Street, saw a bonfire made of all he had in the world that could make a home or ornament it" (Ludlow 1865:505). Neither mob found their intended targets – the abolitionists were tipped off and did not hold their meeting as planned, and the Tappans had already left the city (Burrows and

Wallace 1999:557). Continuing to engage in violence and property destruction as they moved through the lower wards, the two mobs eventually merged and made their way north towards a third target: the Bowery Theater,<sup>112</sup> located at 46 Bowery on the block between Bayard and Walker Streets in the Sixth Ward.

Map Location (figure 6.2)	Location	Location Type
1	Chatham Street Chapel	Church
2	Home of Lewis Tappan, 40 Rose Street	Private residence
3	Bowery Theater	Business
4	“Tappan & Co. Arthur, silk goods 122 Pearl”	Business
5	Laight Street Church	Church
6	Home of Rev. Samuel H. Cox, 3 Charlton Street	Pastor residence
7	Spring Street Presbyterian Church	Church
8	Home of Rev. Henry G. Ludlow, 148 Thompson Street	Pastor residence
9	Home of Rev. Joshua Leavitt, 146 Thompson Street	Pastor residence
10	Watch House, City Hall Park	Public infrastructure
11	African Society for Mutual Relief, 44 Orange Street	Mutual aid society
12	St. Philip’s Episcopal Church	Church
13	Home of Rev. Peter Williams, Jr., 68 Crosby Street	Pastor residence
14	African Baptist Church	Church
15	Watch House, Hudson Square	Public infrastructure
16	State Arsenal, Elm c. Franklin Street	Public infrastructure

**Table 6.1:** Locations targeted by the mob during the 1834 Race Riots, depicted in figure 6.2. Address details sourced from Longworth 1834.

<sup>112</sup> Referred to as the Bowery Theater in news articles documenting the riots, likely due to its location. It is recorded as the American Theater in the city directories (Longworth 1834:772).



**Figure 6.2:** Map of 1834 Race Riot locations and SSPC address points.

Violence continued to escalate, spreading across Lower Manhattan and targeting locations associated with New York's abolitionists and Black population. These included Arthur Tappan's store at 122 Pearl in the First Ward, the Laight Street Church in the Fifth Ward, and Rev. Samuel H. Cox's home at 3 Charlton in the Eighth Ward. The mob arrived at Cox's home during the morning of July 11<sup>th</sup> and, "as soon as he came out [the mob] assaulted him with hisses, groans, and abusive epithets; until to escape their resentment, he sought shelter in a neighboring domicile," (*Connecticut Courant* 1834a). The account continues, stating that police were able to break up the attack on Cox's home.

Later that same day the SSPC was attacked, targeted for its association with the Laight Street Church and rumors that Rev. Henry G. Ludlow had performed interracial marriage ceremonies. An account of the riots appeared in the July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1834 *Journal of Commerce*, describing how the mob, "broke in the doors, shattered the windows to atoms, and entered the Church. In a short time they broke up the interior of it, destroying whatever they could," (*Journal of Commerce* 1834). Using wreckage from the church, the mob built a barricade in the street to hold off the Twenty-seventh National Guard Regiment, who had been called in to disperse the mob (figure 6.3). As Rev. Alfred H. Moment recounted in his sermon celebrating the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church (1876:15):

Spring Street, from Varick to Macdougall, was barricaded with carts, barrels, boxes, ladders, etc. The greatest excitement prevailed. Brick-bats, stones, and missiles of various kinds, were flying from all quarters; the church door was wrung from its hinges, many of the pews flung into the street, while prominent politicians were haranguing the maddened rabble to go on with their work of destruction and demolish the obnoxious building to the ground...



**Figure 6.3:** *Map of Intersection of Spring Street and Varick Street, Museum of the City of New York.* [29.100.2984].

Though the National Guard was successful in breaking through the barricade, the mob reassembled. Fueled by rumors of miscegenation<sup>113</sup>, the mob took their fury north to the home of Rev. Ludlow at 148 Thompson, near the northern boundary of the Eighth Ward (Burrows and Wallace 1999:558; Meade 2007:II-4). An account of the damage done to the Ludlow home was shared by Rev. Ludlow’s son, Fitz Hugh Ludlow (1865:504-505):

A few months<sup>114</sup> before I saw the light, my father, mother, and sister were driven from their house in New York by a furious mob. When they came cautiously back, their home was quiet as a fortress the day after it has been blown up. The front-parlor was full of paving-stones; the carpets were cut to pieces; the pictures, the furniture, and the chandelier lay in one common wreck; and the walls were covered with inscriptions of mingled insult and glory. Over the mantel-piece had

<sup>113</sup> As mentioned earlier, Rev. Ludlow vehemently denied both the accusations that he had ever performed interracial marriage ceremonies or that he supported “the doctrine of Amalgamation” in a lengthy letter written to the editors of the *Journal of Commerce* (*Connecticut Courant* 1834b).

<sup>114</sup> F.H. Ludlow was born September 11, 1836, two years after the riots.



been charcoaled “Rascal”; over the pier-table, “Abolitionist.” We did not fare as badly as several others who rejoiced in the spoiling of their goods.

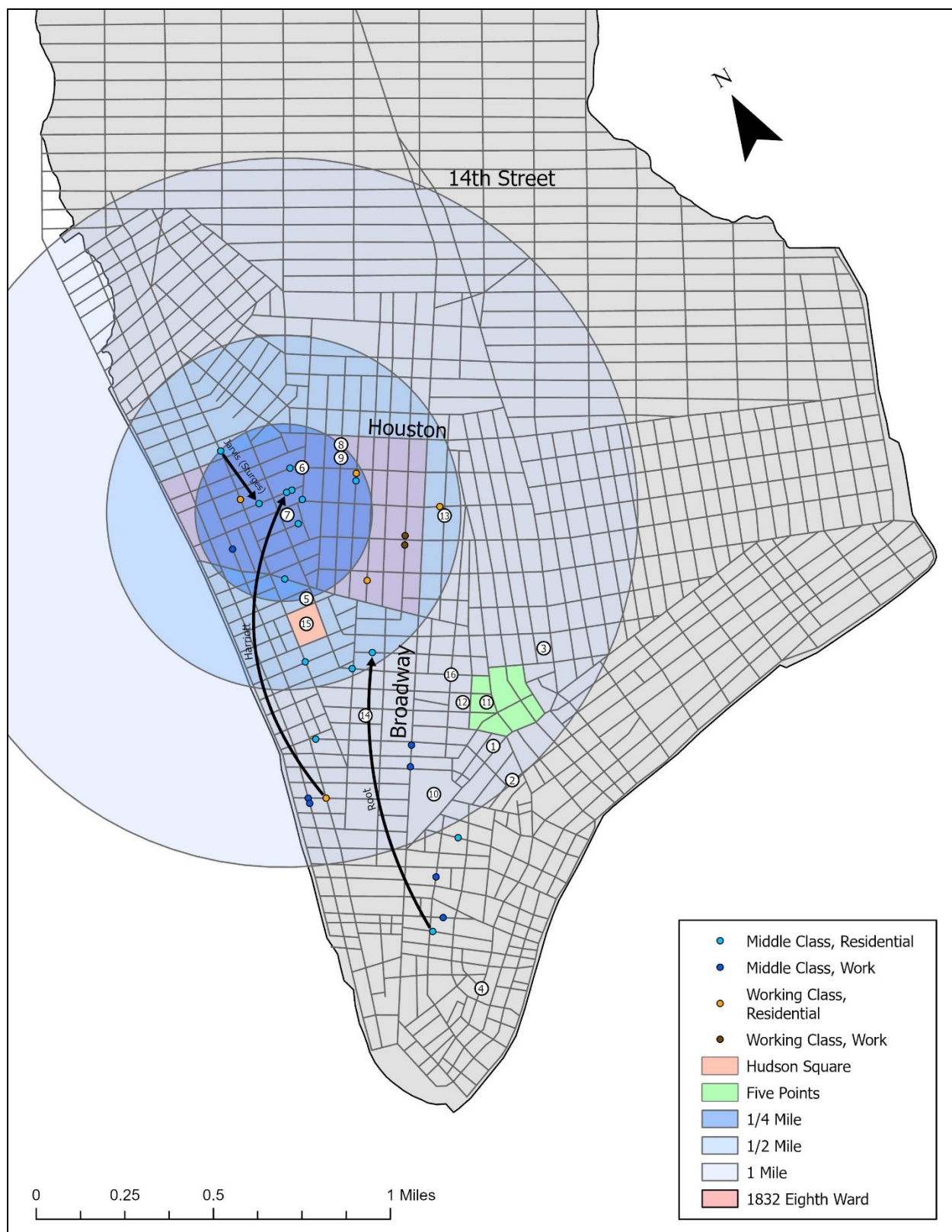
In addition to these locations associated with white abolitionists, the mob targeted the homes, churches, and neighborhoods of New York’s Black community with the, “greatest ferocity” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:558). The Five Points neighborhood was particularly hard hit, with an estimated 500 individuals fleeing to the watch house located at City Hall and the Twenty-seventh Regiment refusing to intervene. In addition to Black homes, the mob targeted the African Society for Mutual Relief and schoolhouse at 44 Orange Street in the Five Points, along with St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, a Black church located at 31 Centre Street on the neighborhood’s western edge. Reverend Peter Williams of that church was also targeted, with the mob attacking his home at 68 Crosby Street in the Fourteenth Ward. Other locations targeted for violence by the mob and mapped in figure 6.2 include the home of Rev. Joshua Leavitt, neighbor to Rev. Ludlow at 146 Thompson in the Eighth Ward, and the African Baptist Church at 44 Anthony Street in the Fifth Ward. This targeting of Black individuals and institutions is particularly indicative of the intentions of the mob (Gilje 1987:162-167; Roediger 2007:108-111).

The riots finally ended on Tuesday, July 15, 1834. The preceding weekend, as violence continued to escalate, the pro-colonization mayor of New York swore in 1,000 volunteers as special constables to join the Twenty-seventh Regiment and the New York First Division to quell the riots (Burrows and Wallace 1999:558-559). These forces took up presence in the Fifth Ward’s Hudson Square and at the arsenal in the Sixth Ward, near the hardest affected areas and discouraging further action by the nativist mobs.

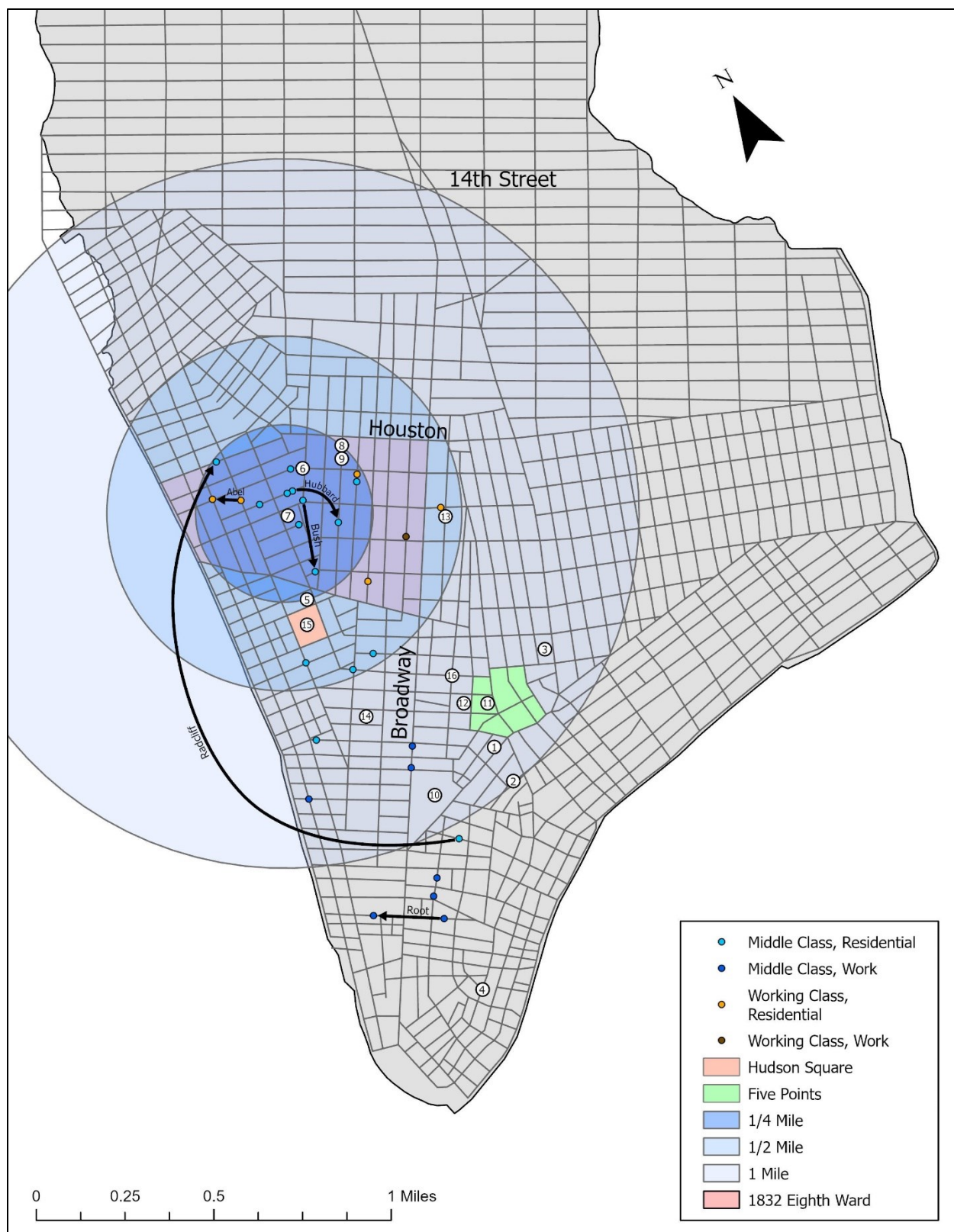
*Residential Selection after the Riots*

With the ability to examine residence location over time via the coffin plate population, it is possible to explore the question of whether the 1834 Race Riots impacted or influenced those households. Seventeen coffin plate-associated households were present among the directories in 1834, with 16 continuing to appear in the following years (Longworth 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837). Of those, half moved to a new address within the following three years (figure 6.4). These eight households included those of Benjamin N. Abel, Elizabeth Bush (d.1832), Edgar Howard Harriott, Sarah Ogden Hubbard, Julia Radcliff (d.1823), Emma Fitz Randolph (d.1822), James W. Root (d.1830), and Mary Sturges (d.1824). Two of the households, those of Abel and Harriott, moved a second time within the observed years. Among these households, I observed their address records preceding the riots to identify if there was a pre-existing pattern of movement, such as changing homes frequently, or if such a move was rare and might reflect concern over proximity to those areas of the city associated with the violence of the riots.

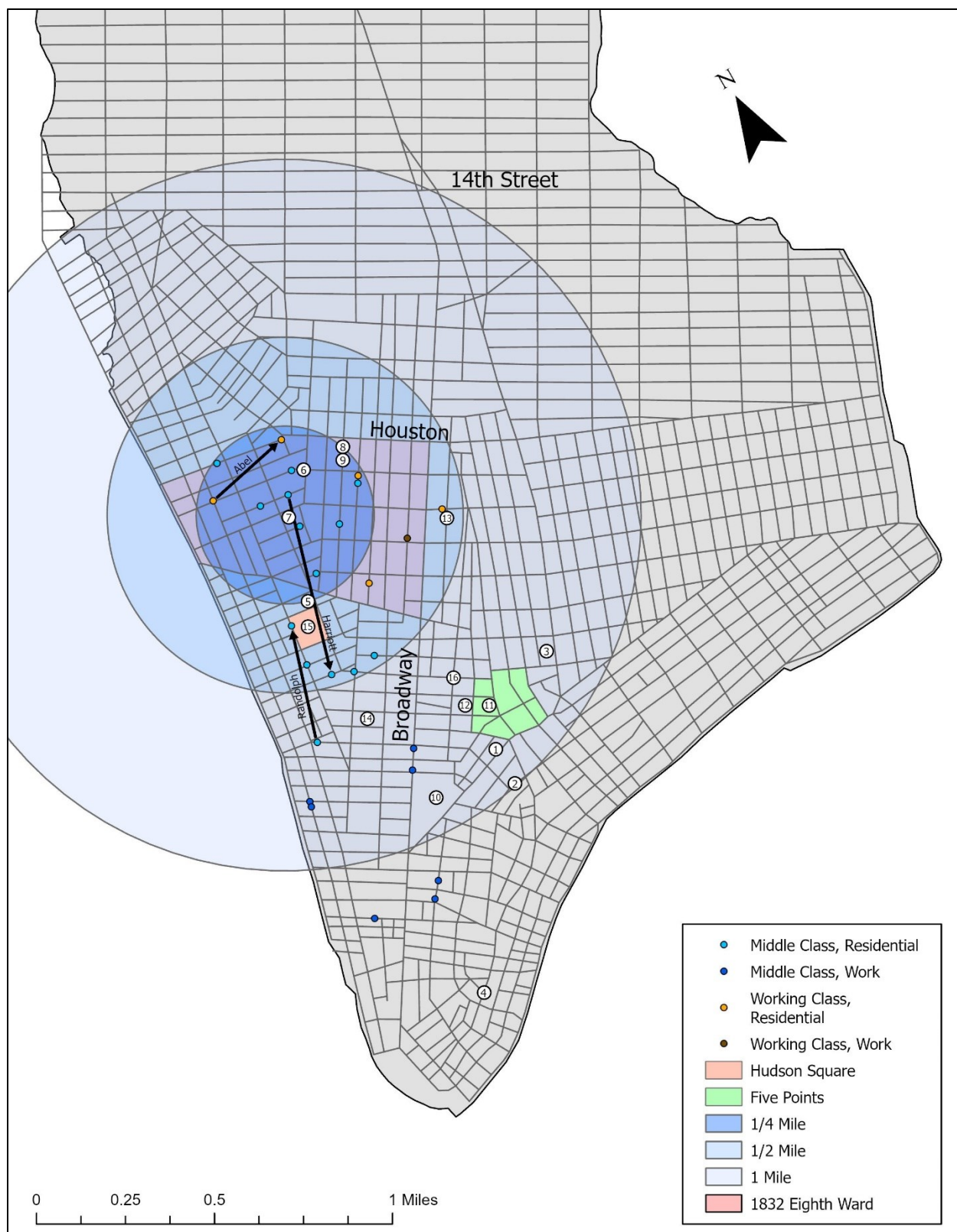




**Figure 6.4:** Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1835. Depicting moves by the Harriott, Jarvis (Sturges), and Root households.



**Figure 6.5:** Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1836. Depicting moves by the Abel, Bush, Hubbard, Radcliff, and Root households.



**Figure 6.6:** Post-1834 Race Riot changes in address locations among the SSPC coffin plate population, 1837. Depicting moves by the Abel, Harriott, and Randolph households.



The addresses recorded in 1834 and in the years following continue to cluster in the area of the SSPC and frequently appear throughout the Eighth Ward. It has been concluded that the violence of the riots and the mob targeting the Spring Street Church did not have a visible influence on residential selection among the coffin plate-associated households. If such a move was a reaction to the 1834 riots, it seems likely that the household would have moved soon after and farther away from the SSPC, possibly north to the suburbs and away from the Eighth Ward locations targeted by the mobs. Instead, 4 of the 10 recorded moves were of only a quarter mile distance or less, and took place entirely within the Eighth Ward. Another three households, those of Harriott, Radcliff, and Sturges, moved into the Eighth Ward from homes outside its boundaries; the household of Nathaniel and Sarah Jarvis, son-in-law and daughter to Mary Sturges, moved from the Ninth Ward south to the Eighth in 1835. Sarah Jarvis had a documented ongoing presence in the Laight Street Church at the time and would have been affected by the riots by her association with that church and Rev. Cox.

Of all of the moves, only three took place in the year immediately following the riots. In addition to the move documented for the family of Mary Sturges, the household of Edgar Howard Harriott moved from their home in the Third Ward on Greenwich Street to 21 Vandam Street in the Eighth Ward and one block north of the SSPC. Also in that year, the household of James W. Root moved from their home at 62 Cedar in the First Ward to 20 White Street in the Fifth Ward, a move of 0.8 mile. These moves towards the church locations and areas affected by the riots imply that those events in July 1834 were not a consideration when the households were selecting a new residence; access to workplaces, movement away from the populated southern wards, or other factors likely had stronger influence.

There was one exception to this conclusion that the riots had little impact on the residential selections of those associated with the targeted churches; the Cox household at 3 Charlton in the Eighth Ward (Longworth 1834:218). Overall, the 1834 riots did not appear to have a major impact on the locations of targeted abolitionist households. Like the household of Reverend Ludlow on Thompson Street, several named targets remained at their 1834 addresses in the years following the riots.<sup>115</sup> Lewis Tappan's household did change addresses by 1836, from the Fourth Ward to the northern corner of the Sixth Ward near the border with the Fifth (Longworth 1834:660, 1835:635, 1836:644). The Tappan business address at 122 Pearl, a target of the mob itself, remained the same. The Cox household, however, completely left the city in the aftermath of the riots; first to Auburn, New York, where Rev. Cox taught at the seminary until 1837, then to Brooklyn, where Cox accepted the pastorship of the First Presbyterian Church and remained until the mid-1850s (auburnseminary.org; Mounger 1977:348).

### **Death Course: Race and Abolition within the Vaults**

Following the 1834 Race Riots the Spring Street Church was sufficiently damaged as to require construction, and a new church was opened at the site on June 19, 1836 (NYT 1956). In their 2010 article White and Mooney posit that a lack of coffin plate artifacts dating to the years immediately following the riot may indicate a decrease in the number of burials occurring at Spring Street in those years, possibly due to an inability to access the vaults related to construction on the new church. It is believed that the vaults entrances were in some way connected to the church building via its schoolhouse (Hutchings 1894:9) and the pillars at the

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<sup>115</sup> In addition to Rev. Ludlow remaining at 148 Thompson in the years following the 1834 riots, Rev. Peter Williams of St. Philip's Episcopal Church remained at his residence at 68 Crosby Street in the Fourteenth Ward and Rev. Joshua Leavitt, editor of the *New York Evangelist*, continued to reside at 146 Thompson in the Eighth Ward (Burrows and Wallace 1999:551, 558; Longworth 1834, 1835).

western side of each vault and distribution of burials along the other walls helps support that conclusion.

Based on the coffin plate dates, it does appear the 1834 riots did impact the use of the burial vaults. Between the vaults opening in 1820 and that event, almost every year is represented among the coffin plates with an occasional 1-2 year gap, as White and Mooney noted (2010:41). But there were no plates recovered from the vaults dating to between 1836 and 1839, before returning to its previous pattern of at least 1-2 surviving plates documenting each year between 1840 and 1846 (no plates were recovered dating to 1844). While it cannot be determined if any of the broken and illegible coffin plates date to these later 1830s years, this gap appears significant when compared to the preceding and following decades of vault use and warranted additional investigation to learn if the riots and the SSPC's abolitionist identity impacted the use of the burial vaults.

Using the number of entries recorded in the NYCDR there is an observable decrease in the number of burials between 1834 and 1839 (Table 6.2). It appears there was no immediate effect on access to and use of the burial vaults; in 1834 there were 37 total burials documented, with 18 occurring after the riot in July. Then in 1835 the number of burials dropped to 22, the lowest total since 1825 when there were only 20 burials. Additionally there were no recorded burials in June, August, or September of 1835. While a lone month without any burials does not seem strange, the stretch between August and September seems noteworthy and may indicate that the vaults were inaccessible during those months as construction on the church continued. This impact on the use of the burial vaults is another, though unexpected, way the riots and the abolitionist identity of the church and its pastors impacted the burial population, regardless of what the deceased believed and advocated for in life.

Year	No. of Coffin Plates	No. of Burials	Difference	Notes
1832	3	54		Highest burial total of any year, all months represented
1833	0	39	-15	No burials in July
1834	0	38	-1	18 burials after July riots
1835	1	23	-14	No burials in June, August, September
1836	0	22	0	No burials in April, October
1837	0	23	+1	No burials in March, September
1838	0	27	+5	No burials in May
1839	0	36	+9	All months represented
1840	2	29	-7	No burials in August

**Table 6.2:** Changes in number of burials by year documented in the NYCDR with coffin plate totals and comments on months lacking burials.

As race and the participation of the Spring Street Church in the abolition movement pertains to mortuary practices and beliefs among the congregation, it has been mentioned above that the Spring Street burial vaults were not restricted or segregated by race. Along with the integration of the burials themselves, artifacts were recovered from the vaults that may be interpreted as reflective of mortuary beliefs associated with cultural practices closely associated with the ethnic or racial identities of the individuals buried there. Specifically, there were three classes of artifacts that could be linked to ethnic and racial mortuary practices: white ceramics, shoe leather, and coins.

#### *Ceramics in the Mortuary Context*

Historical ceramics are a valuable source of data for archaeologists. Even when these artifacts lack specific identifying features such as makers' marks, recorded knowledge about ceramic production, vessel decorations, and forms can inform archaeologists about who used

these artifacts, how they were used, possible trade connections, economic or social status, and when a site was occupied.

Unfortunately during the SSPC burial vault excavations, stratification and artifact association data were not rigorously recorded, losing the context that would have helped answer some of those questions.<sup>116</sup> The majority of the ceramic artifacts recovered at Spring Street were from the fill layer overlaying the burial vaults, suggesting that these artifacts were pushed into the burial site during the construction of the 1960s parking lot (Mooney 2010:35). The alleyway was a midden site and could have collected trash from any of the surrounding residences or businesses throughout the 19th century. Intrusive ceramic types found at the Spring Street site include Rockingham ware, yellow ware, and ironstone,<sup>117</sup> suggesting a mix of residential and commercial sources contributed to the assemblage.

The remaining ceramic artifacts are numerous and contemporary with the period of vault use, but the majority were recovered from the intrusive layer. Due to this and their common associations with uses and contexts other than mortuary practice it is unlikely that many were interred in the vaults or associated with the burials. As such, only four<sup>118</sup> of the contemporary ceramic artifacts from the assemblage have been associated with the burial context; two whiteware plates and one pearlware plate, all decorated with blue transfer print designs common among English-made ceramics from this period (figure 6.7), were recovered from Vaults 2, 3,

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<sup>116</sup> The context of the site is not the only element limiting analysis of the intrusive artifacts. During excavation, only a sample of artifacts was retained for analysis (Mooney et al. 2008:4.5). As such, any type of quantitative analysis that requires the use of artifact frequency or comparative values within an assemblage would not provide an accurate examination of the site.

<sup>117</sup> Also referred to as white granite.

<sup>118</sup> One vase neck made from coarse red earthenware (FS 1 #1) was recovered from the fill removed from Vault 1 and is labeled as a mortuary artifact in the site report, Appendix E (Mooney et al. 2008). It is possible that this artifact was not associated with the mortuary context, as it was recovered from the mixed fill and burial remains after construction crews intruded on Vault 1. No other redware artifacts were identified as mortuary related by the site archaeologists.



and 4. All three plates are small in diameter, with varying depths, and are referred to as, “cup plates,” and, “saucers,” within the site report artifact inventory (Mooney et al. 2008:Appendix E).



**Figure 6.7:** Three almost-complete refined earthenware saucers recovered from the SSPC burial vaults. Vault associations, clockwise from top left: Vault 2, Vault 3, Vault 4. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

In addition to the three white ceramic saucers, 14 of the 27 FS locations associated with coffin plates also produced pieces of white ceramic, making it possible some of these artifacts actually did originate in the burial context. There are a variety of possible reasons for the inclusion of these artifacts in the burial vaults. Their presence in the vaults may have been

intentional or accidental, left as part of contemporary health practices to combat disease,<sup>119</sup> or included with the burials as part of a mortuary ritual associated with the ethnic or racial identity of the deceased.

Burial traditions practiced in Great Britain at this time included placing a plate of salt or earth upon the body of the deceased. This act was intended to prevent the swelling of the body, combat foul odors or miasmas that could threaten the health of the living, or offer protection against demons (McCarthy 1998; Sikes 2013:326-328 [1880]). The ceramic saucers were found across Vaults 2, 3, and 4, one in each vault (figure 6.8). In Vault 2 a whiteware plate (FS 99 #1), decorated with a transfer print design of a young woman,<sup>120</sup> was associated with Burial 7, located in the eastern half of the vault in the 6-8' trench.<sup>121</sup> Another whiteware plate (FS 109 #1), decorated with a transfer print of a woman and child in a garden, was found associated with Burial 7 in the northwest area of Vault 3.<sup>122</sup> And in Vault 4 a pearlware plate (FS 154 #1) was recovered, decorated with a transfer print landscape scene referred to as, "Armitage Park, Staffordshire, England." This saucer was found among commingled remains in the western half of the vault. The association of these ceramic plates with specific burials indicates that their inclusion in the vault may have been related to the practice of a mortuary ritual such as this, with the plate either left with the body intentionally or accidentally after the funeral.

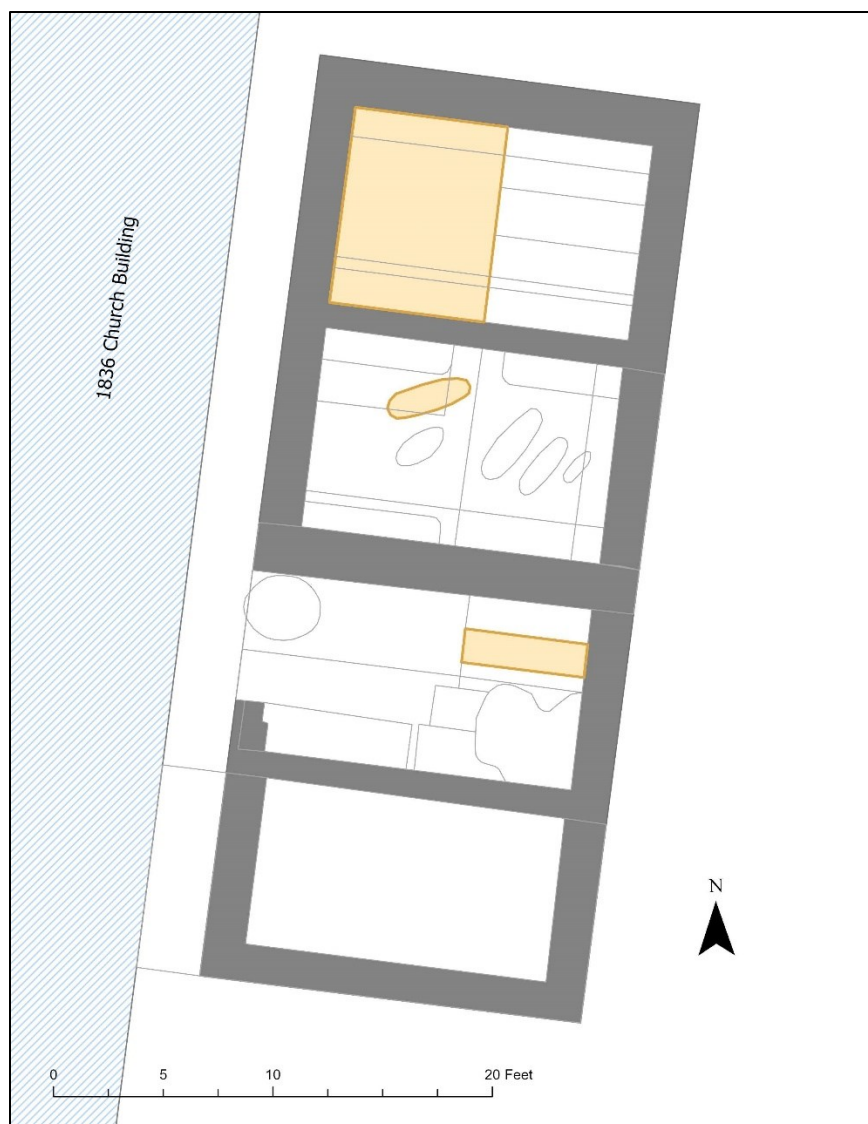
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<sup>119</sup> Another possible explanation for the presence of the ceramic plates among the burials is associated with the health reform movements of the early and mid-19th century. These practices and their use in the SSPC vaults will be discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>120</sup> This design is referred to as "European Scene."

<sup>121</sup> Identified as an adult female, aged 20-29.

<sup>122</sup> Identified as three burials; Burial 7a was an adult female, aged 50-59. Burial 7b was identified as adult female, aged 20-34. And Burial 7c was identified as an adult female, aged 60+.



**Figure 6.8:** Burial vault distribution of almost-complete refined earthenware saucers.

A similar tradition practiced by African Americans throughout North America involved placing white ceramics, shells, or other white objects within or near to a burial, “to satisfy the spirit and keep it from wandering” (Jamieson 1995:50-51; see also Baugher and Veit 2014:168-170). White ceramics and shells associated with such customs were recovered at comparative sites in the United States, such as the First African Baptist Church cemetery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Crist et al. 1996:247; McCarthy 1998). At the African Burial Ground in New York cowry shells were found associated with burials, though ceramics often originated in the

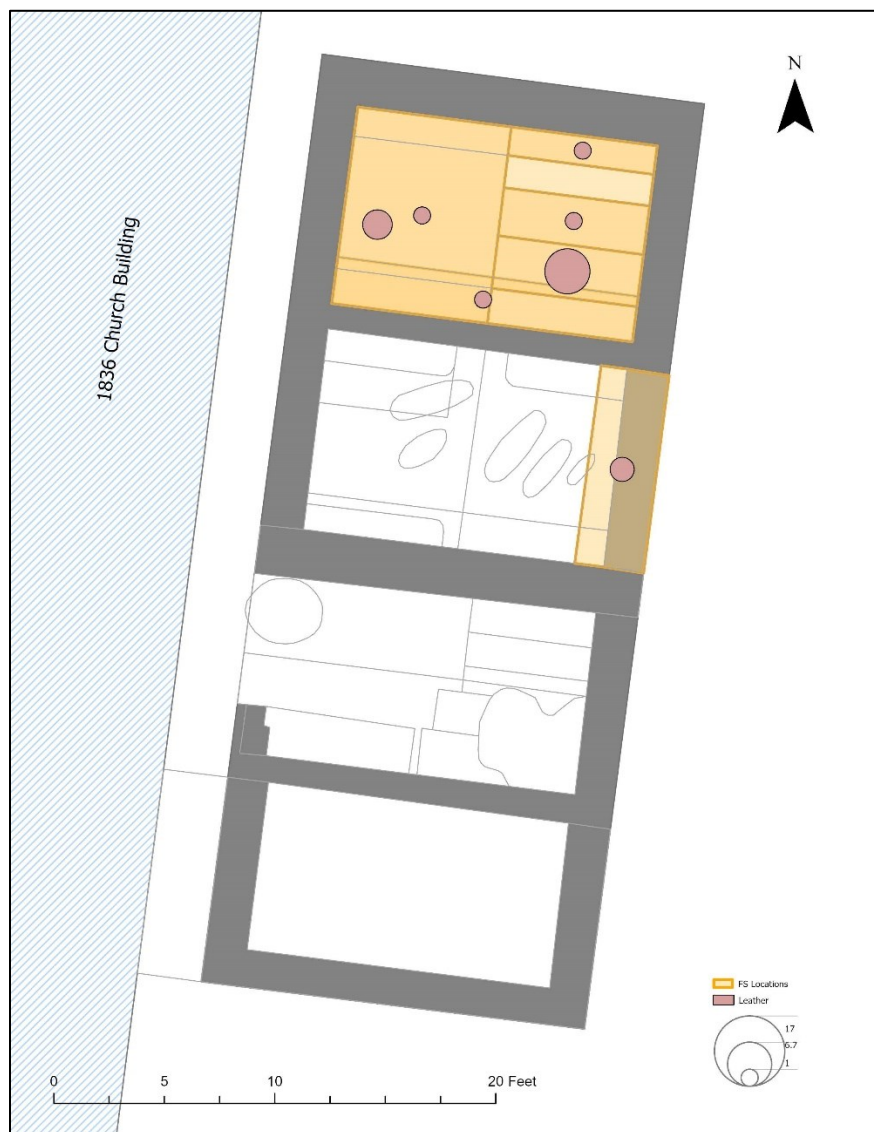
grave in-fill and should not be considered reflective of African burial customs (LaRoche 2013:136; Perry et al. 2006; see also McCarthy 1998; Singleton 2015). At Spring Street a fragment of a measled cowry was located in the western half of Vault 4, in the same FS location as 10 coffin plates. The significance of cowry shells and its presence within an FS associated with the burial context suggest this shell was purposefully included in the vaults, while the oyster and snail shells found in other areas of the vaults are likely indicative of the Fill context. There is demographic evidence among the Spring Street burials and within historical records showing that individuals of British and African descent were members of the Spring Street congregation and interred in the vaults, supporting the possibility that a cultural practice is the reason these plates and other pieces of white ceramic were present in the vaults.

### *Leather*

Several pieces of leather, some identified as parts of shoes, were recovered at Spring Street. It was unusual for burials to include shoes during this period due to the swelling of the body or the practice of passing usable property to someone else (Davidson 2010:630). Possible reasons for the presence of these shoes in the vaults include the inability of those preparing the body to remove the shoes or the shoes were too worn to pass on to someone else.

All of the leather pieces identified as shoes were recovered from FS locations in Vaults 3 and 4 (figure 6.9). These artifacts were frequently identified as pieces of a shoe heel or sole, which would have been manufactured from thicker leather and probably accounts for their preservation. The only leather shoe recovered from Vault 3 was associated with the intrusive context, though that FS did produce one illegible coffin plate from the fill over the eastern wall of the vault. In Vault 4 all five FS locations where the remains of leather shoes were identified also included coffin plates and were associated with burials or commingled remains. Almost all

of the burials found in the same areas of the vaults as the leather shoes were identified as adults; one fetal subadult was identified among the burials found in the 4-6' trench area in the eastern part of Vault 4.



**Figure 6.9:** Burial vault distribution of leather artifact finds.

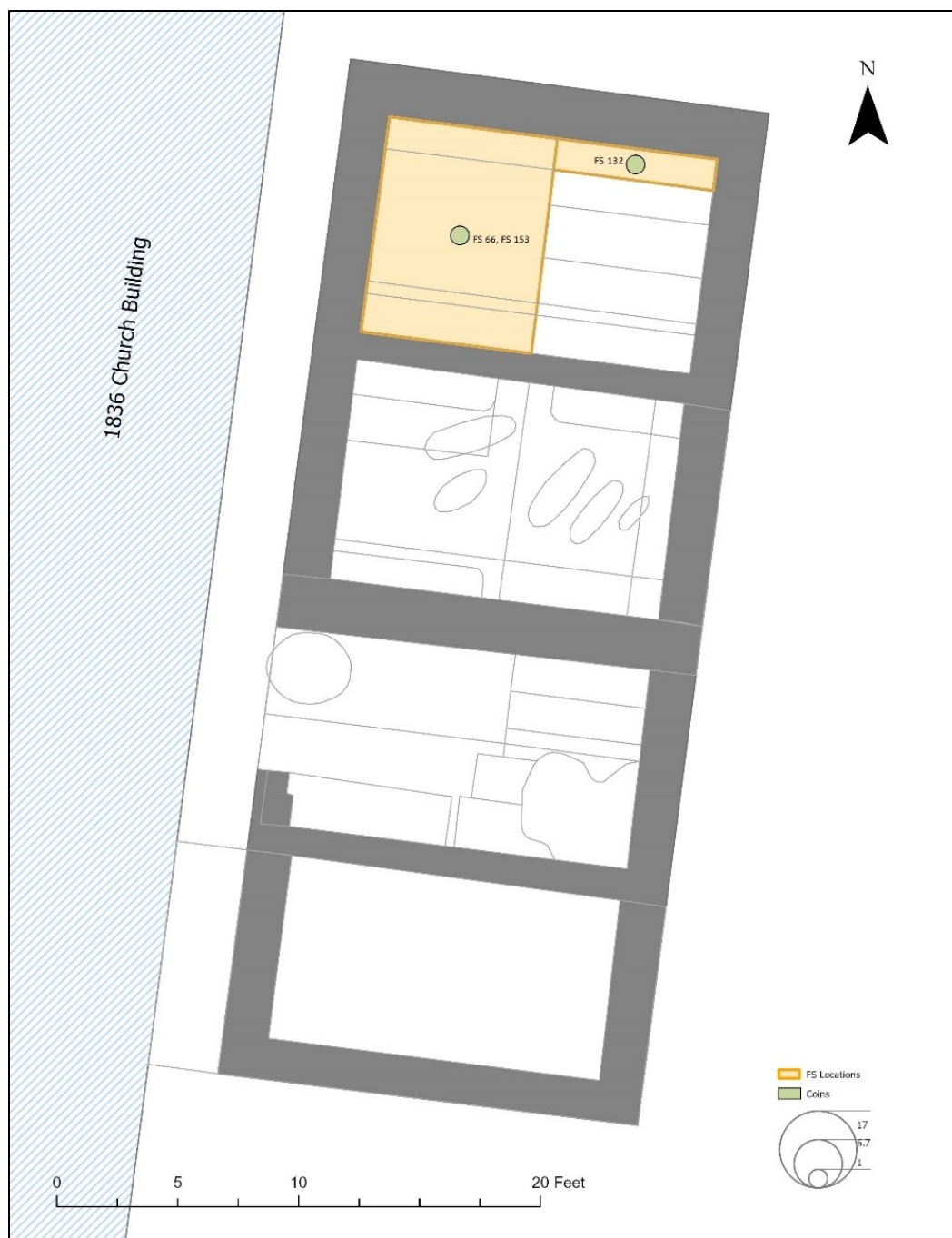
Similar to the cultural practice of interring ceramics as a means to quell a wandering soul or drive away malicious spirits, contemporary burial sites in the United States have produced examples of leather shoes included with burials as a mortuary tool (Crist et al. 1996:248; Davidson 2010). In these examples of a creolized burial custom, leather shoes were placed on the

lids of coffins prior to burial with the intention of distracting spirits away from the corpse by representing the body of the deceased (Davidson 2010:633). Leather shoes, as they are worn, mold to the foot of the wearer; in this way, they can be an intimate representation of the body (Smith 2023:224-228). By that logic, this custom employs a shoe as a proxy for the bodily remains of the deceased.

### *Coins*

Four copper coins, dating between 1806 and 1839, were recovered from Vault 4 (figures 6.10 and 6.11). These coins include one Draped Bust Large Cent (1806) and three Coronet Large Cent coins, nicknamed the matron head (1816-1839). Two of the Coronet Large Cent coins are too corroded to read the year, while the last dates to 1819. Two of the Coronet Large Cent coins were recovered from FS locations relating to the western half of Vault 4, which included many intrusive artifacts. Eleven of the coffin plates were also recovered from the same FS are one of those coins, FS 66. On the eastern side of the same vault, in the northeast corner, the remaining two coins were found in FS 132, which correlated with several burials; two adult males and one adult female. The coffin plate of Lewis Evans, a cartman who died of convulsions in 1822, was also found in this FS, while the coffin plate of Louisa Hunter was found nearby.





**Figure 6.10:** Burial vault distribution of coin artifacts.



**Figure 6.11:** Four coins found in the north and west parts of Vault 4. Left to right: two coins from FS 132, one coin from FS 66, and one coin from FS 153. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

Though these coins may have been intrusive, particularly those from the western half of the vault, their proximity to mortuary artifacts such as coffin plates and to burials lends itself to their intentional inclusion within the burial context. Possible reasons for the presence of coins in a burial site such as the Spring Street vaults include practical reasons, such as weighing the eyelids closed while the body of the deceased was on view (Crist et al. 1996:246-247). Ritual purposes for the presence of these coins within the burial vaults could be associated with the burial custom of providing the deceased with items to use in the afterlife;<sup>123</sup> coins among burial contexts are frequently associated with the notion of paying for transportation to the afterlife. While the concentration of these artifacts in Vault 4 and their limited quantity might indicate that this practice was not common among the Spring Street congregation, such a practice is not

<sup>123</sup> Copper pennies were also found associated with burial 2420 at Christ Church Spitalfields (Cox 1996:116; Janaway 1996:105) and among four adult burials from the First African Baptist Church burial ground in Philadelphia (Crist et al. 1996:246-247).



unique to any one culture or racial group and has been observed among burials in Africa and Europe throughout history (Davidson 2010).

### **Conclusion**

Though records like the Laight Street Manuals survive, it has been difficult to identify which individuals among the population buried within the Spring Street Vaults were identified as Black or white during their lives. As such, conclusions cannot be drawn as to how race influenced the presence of those individuals across the Lower Manhattan landscape.

Observations of race within the burial vaults are likewise vague; though skeletal analysis does reflect a diverse burial population, the identities of individual burials and association with cultural grave goods was disrupted by intrusions into the vaults during periods of construction activity.

The presence of the 1834 Race Riots on the lived landscape and how that event impacted the use of the vaults is much more visible. Surprisingly the only household incited to move away from their home following the riots was that of Rev. Cox, who left to Auburn, NY; the households of the other individuals named by the coffin plates remained in, or on occasion moved into, the Eighth Ward, where much of the violence occurred. As was seen in figure 6.2, the events of the riot occurred in close proximity to several of the homes of those named among the coffin plates. And though there appear to have been no fatalities during the riots, they did appear to have an impact on the Spring Street burial vaults, which exhibit a pause in burials in the late summer of 1835, when the new church building was under construction.

## **Chapter 7: New York's Nineteenth Century Healthscape**

### **Introduction**

As presented in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, health reform movements in New York City during the early 19th century focused on preserving and promoting public health through control of the body and the urban landscape. Contemporary accounts detailing the epidemics that ravaged the city often identified the environmental causes of disease, such as overcrowded housing, lack of access to greenspace, and polluted air and water supplies. However, this was often done in conjunction with the authors' perceptions of morality and the populations who resided in the neighborhoods most impacted by these conditions. Intemperance, licentious behaviors, or simply living in poverty were all conditions believed to increase susceptibility to disease, and not merely due to associated physical or environmental circumstances (Werner and Novak 2010). Epidemics, such as the cholera outbreak of 1832, were seen to serve as both a reminder to New York's population of the power and justice of God, and to enact punishment on those who would live in contradiction with the laws of God and nature (Rosenberg 1959:42-43). As the century progressed, though beliefs associating vice with disease persisted, improved understanding of how diseases were transmitted and treated led to concerns and reform efforts that physically shaped the urban landscape, including the adoption of an improved water and sewage system within the city and the creation of recreational greenspaces.

In addition to controlling the bodies and landscapes of the living in an effort to promote health, the bodies and landscapes of the dead were also subject to health reforms during this period. Outbreaks of diseases such as yellow fever in 1822 were traced to burial grounds, resulting in the first widespread ban on burials within Manhattan. This ban and its expansions over the following decades would drastically alter the urban deathscape and burial grounds were removed from memory and view.

This chapter will begin with an exploration of early 19th century epidemic events and other public health concerns in relation to the address distribution of the SSPC burial population, and the construction of landscapes of disease and public health and safety. This discussion will then progress across the Manhattan deathscape and into the SSPC burial vaults, inquiring how these concerns for public health influenced the use and perception of the burial vaults as part of the urban landscape.

### **Life Course: Landscapes of Disease**

It was only natural that the city's population, once confined to its original mile at the southern tip of Manhattan, would eventually creep north and transform previously rural landscapes into neighborhoods dense with buildings and people. The development and growth of Greenwich Village in the early 19th century is particularly associated with public health concerns: "Those marvellously [sic] healthy qualities as to location and air, that fine, sandy soil, made it a haven, indeed, to people who were afraid of sickness" (Chapin 1917:47). The general boundaries of Greenwich Village fall between 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Houston to the south, Broadway to the east, and the Hudson River on its west. Within this area, further distinctions are made, such as referring to the area west of Sixth Avenue as the West Village; such locational distinctions were also associated with character and economic class differences during the 19th century, with the West Village housing lower middle class artisans, shopkeepers, and clerks while the eastern part delineated by the Fifteenth Ward after 1832 contained the neighborhood surrounding Washington Park, known as an affluent and desirable area post-1820 (Wall 1999:106). It was during that decade that Greenwich Village saw rapid development, as a population of fever refugees, who had fled north during the 1822 yellow fever epidemic, remained in that part of the city. This was urban sprawl, punctuated by disease. In addition to the

construction and improvement of buildings constructed to house the fever refugees, this period of development included the 1826 removal of the Potter's Field burial ground located at Washington Park, when that site was converted to a greenspace and parade ground (Burrows and Wallace 1999:447-448, 579-580; Chapin 1917:10, 20-22; Rothschild et al. 2022:163; Wall 1999).

A northern shift was observed among the addresses associated with the households of those individuals interred within the Spring Street burial vaults. General patterns and causes for this movement have been discussed in previous chapters of this dissertation (see Chapter 4). The general northward shift observed among the Spring Street household addresses is inextricably tied to public health and the opening of northern suburbs such as Greenwich Village, as new streets opened and people moved into those areas to get away from the dense populations and diseases of the southern wards. Sudden bursts in population among these suburbs occurred in response to public health events like epidemics; this was documented among contemporaries who described the flight of the city's population north and the shanty town erected to house the displaced (Hardie 1822:42):

On the same day Saturday, the 24<sup>th</sup> August, our city presented the appearance of a town besieged. From day break till night, one line of carts, containing boxes, merchandize and effects, were seen moving towards Greenwich Village and the upper parts of the city. Carriages and hacks, waggons [sic] and horsemen were scouring the streets and filling the roads [...]. Temporary stores and offices were erecting and even on the ensuing day (Sunday) carts were in motion and the saw and hammer busily at Work.

Though many fever refugees intended to only stay a short while, enough took up permanent residence that Greenwich Village was described as, "a town fairly exploded" (Macatamney 1909:84, see also Chapin 1917:48).

Address locations associated with the individuals interred in the Spring Street vaults begin to appear north of Houston and the Eighth Ward in 1822, beginning with the addresses from the NYCDR: Horatio Fisk Whitmore, a subadult who died of dysentery in September of that year, was documented as residing on Burrows Street. Addresses identifying the coffin plate-associated households begin to appear north of Houston in 1825. This movement reflects the ongoing development of that area, with the frequency of addresses north of Houston increasing over time.

The northward shift observed among the Spring Street address data, however, did not occur in response to periods of disease. Movement among these households shows a regular pattern over time, concentrating in the Eighth Ward and within the quarter- and half-mile radii of the Spring Street Church. Though this address distribution does not present an observable reaction to these public health events, the Spring Street burial population would not have been immune to their impact on the city. Epidemics that would have affected the Spring Street congregation and influenced the number and cause of deaths for those interred in the church vaults would have included yellow fever (1822), cholera (1832, 1834, 1849), smallpox (1824, 1834, 1835, 1848), and typhus (1847, 1848) (Condran 1995:31). Outbreaks of these diseases occurred frequently in the first half of the 19th century, sweeping through the city every few years to varying severity. The first health department in New York City was created in 1793<sup>124</sup> to combat yellow fever outbreaks that plagued the metropolis throughout the turn of the 19th century. The presence and efficacy of the city's Board of Health and other organized efforts to combat disease would fluctuate throughout the 19th century, falling dormant and complacent

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<sup>124</sup> A "Health Committee" was established in 1793 to patrol the city and identify sources of disease (Burrows and Wallace 1999:356-359). This Committee was created in reaction to the yellow fever epidemic sweeping through Philadelphia; a formal Board of Health established by New York City's Common Council followed in the early years of the 19th century.

until the next epidemic ravaged the city (Burrows and Wallace 1999). With each new public health event, though, the Board and the city's physicians learned which techniques were most effective in curtailing the disease and applied them to following outbreaks (Condran 1995:36).

Landscape modifications through the early half of the 19th century did much to combat the source of that disease, including draining the Collect Pond and other swampy areas of Lower Manhattan in the development of the grid system. Though they were still considered a threat, the mortality of yellow fever epidemics was greatly diminished after 1800 (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359, 392; Condran 1995:30). According to the NYCDR there were no recorded cases of yellow fever listed as a cause of death among the SSPC burials; other epidemic diseases are also rare. Table 7.1 shows the number of burials and causes of death among the SSPC burial vaults for the years associated with epidemic events in Manhattan. It is observed that an increase in these diseases listed as a cause of death did not occur among this SSPC-associated population during epidemic years. Endemic diseases, such as consumption (tuberculosis), were recorded in the NYCDR at a far greater rate; evidence for these diseases is present among the skeletal remains (Ellis 2019; Werner and Novak 2010).

Disease/Cause of Death	1822 Yellow Fever	1824 Smallpox	1832 Cholera	1834 Cholera	1834 Smallpox	1835 Smallpox	1847 Typhus	1848 Smallpox	1848 Typhus	1849 Cholera	Total NYCDR Entries
Cholera	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Yellow Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smallpox	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Typhus/Typhoid	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	14
1. Consumption	0	2	10	7	7	6	0	0	0	0	80
2. Scarlet Fever (inc. Scarlatina)	0	0	8	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	40
3. Convulsions	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	37
4. Inflammation of the lungs	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	34
5. Stillborn	0	1	4	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	32
6. Dropsy in the head	1	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	28
7. Dysentery	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	20
8. Measles	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	19
9. Whooping Cough	0	1	0	5	5	0	1	0	0	0	18
10. Dropsy	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	16
Total Burials at SSPC	11	19	54	38	38	23	2	6	6	1	656
NYC Deaths from Epidemic	166	394	3513	971	233	351	1396	585	953	5071	
Excess deaths perc. by disease	5.8%	10.7%	54.5%	12.7%	2.8%	5.7%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	28.9%	

**Table 7.1:** depiction of number of burials at SSPC (n=656) and cause of death in epidemic years, referencing epidemic diseases and 10 most frequent causes of death in NYCDR. City-wide epidemic deaths and percentage of excess deaths by disease adapted from Condran 1995:31, Table 1.

Of the epidemics between 1820 and 1849 that could have possibly affected the Spring Street burial population, surprisingly there were only two entries in the NYCDR that listed a cause of death that coincided with a specific epidemic: Silenus Schermerhorn,<sup>125</sup> who lived somewhere along West Street and died of cholera on August 25, 1832, and Clara E. Mesler, a resident of Charlton Street, deceased of smallpox on November 4, 1834. Using the city directories, it was found that Schermerhorn, a cooper, was residing near the corner of West and Charlton, in the Eighth Ward (Longworth 1832:589). And though her household did not appear in the city directory,<sup>126</sup> Mesler's address also placed her home in the Eighth Ward, as the length of Charlton was confined to that ward between Macdougall and West Streets (Longworth 1834:9).

### *Cholera*

The first cases of cholera appeared in the city in late June of 1832 and the disease would persist until the autumn of that year, ultimately killing over 3500 New Yorkers, or roughly 14% of the population (Condran 1995:31; McNeur 2014:109-116; Rosenberg 1972). By July 1<sup>st</sup> outbreaks had been documented in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, and Twelfth Wards, across the length of the city (Atkins 1832:9-12; Reese 1833). On July 6<sup>th</sup> of that year the Greenwich Cholera Hospital opened at the corner of Jane and Asylum Streets in northern part of the Ninth Ward; this was the same day the first Cholera Bulletin was published (CB 1972

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<sup>125</sup> Directory entries for this individual recorded his name as "Sylvanus" (Longworth 1832:589). While it is possible these documents reference two different individuals, it is also possible the NYCDR recorded his name wrong; research into additional documents did not produce any records for a "Silenus" while "Sylvanus" was documented living on Charlton Street in the 1830 Federal Census.

<sup>126</sup> The Longworth directories in and before 1834 do record a "Mesler William, coalyard 71 h. 43 King" along with a separate business listing "Mesler & Westervelt, coalyard 71 King" (Longworth 1834:485). It is possible that the NYCDR entry is an error and this directory listing refers to the household of Clara Mesler. King Street runs parallel to Charlton, one block to the north in the Eighth Ward, and a residence at 43 King would have been located on the block between Smith and Varick Streets, three blocks north of the SSPC. Like Charlton Street, King is confined to the Eighth Ward between Macdougall and West Streets.



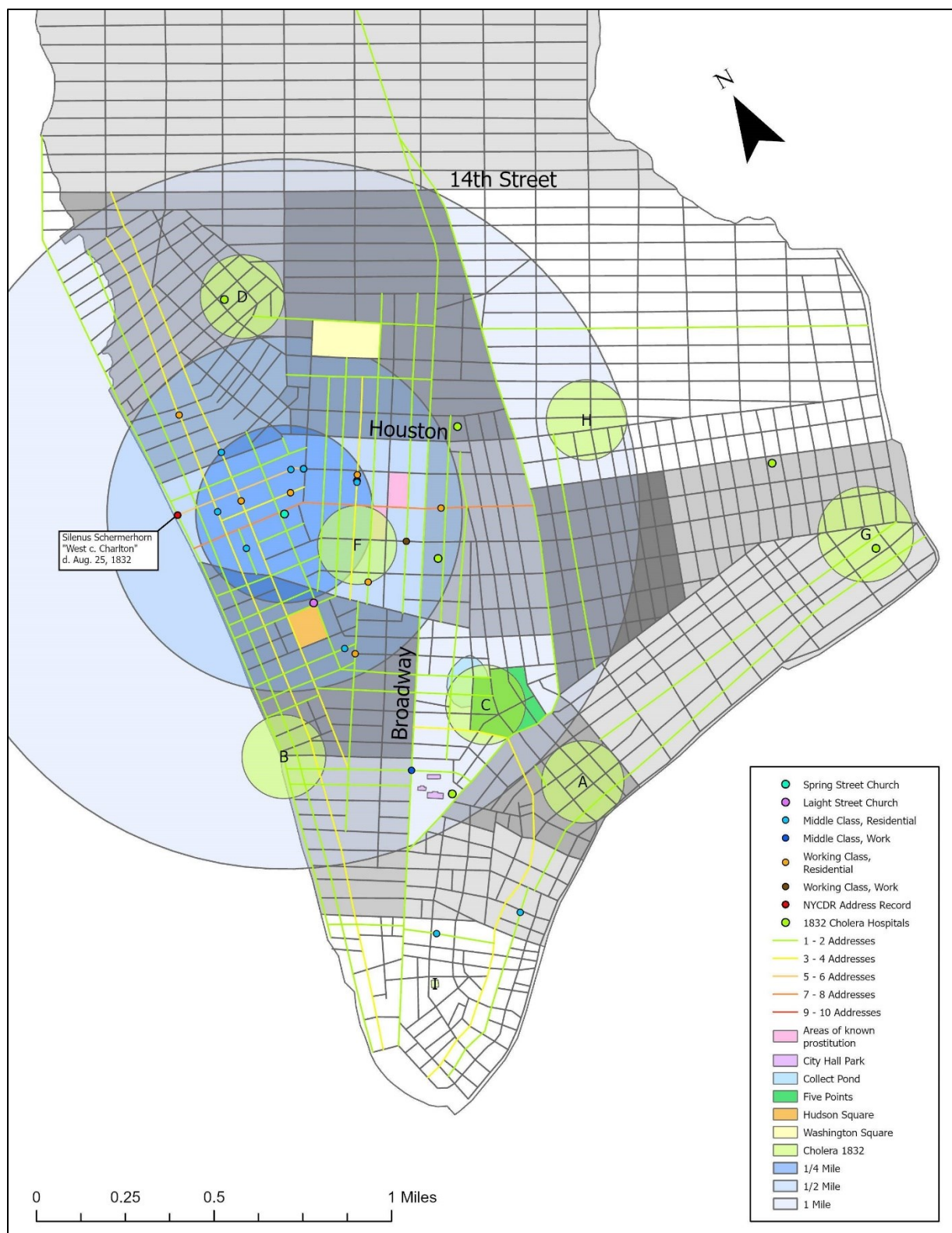
[1832]:3, 11). Meant to be a triweekly publication detailing the cases and deaths by cholera throughout the city, it also provided letters from physicians debating causes and treatments for the disease and updates on other regions affected by cholera.

Beyond the death of Schermerhorn, it appears the SSPC congregation was mostly spared by the 1832 cholera epidemic. Rev. Henry Ludlow, pastor of the SSPC at that time, wrote to his mother in October 1832 stating that, “I have lost but two of my members, as far as I can learn and my congregation hardly shows one missing” (Ludlow 1832; Werner and Novak 2010:102-103). Ludlow goes on to claim that this is true of the church at large, associating the piety and morality of his and other congregations with their survival.

It is unknown how many of the SSPC congregation fled the city<sup>127</sup> or took additional precautions to avoid the disease; Rev. Ludlow took his own family to Brooklyn Heights to wait out the disease (Ellis 2019:92). A map of the city highlighting areas associated with cholera outbreaks was published in 1833 (Reese). This map depicts an outbreak in the Eighth Ward, labeled “F” on the original map and centered on the intersection of Broome and Laurens (figure 7.1). This area was located roughly a half mile from Schermerhorn’s residence. Another SSPC associated address is also found near this site, the residence of Ebenezer Smith, the builder whose son, Joseph, was interred in the vaults in 1825. Unlike previous yellow fever epidemics, where areas of contagion primarily concentrated in the southern wards, cholera outbreaks in 1832 occurred across the city. In addition to the Eighth Ward outbreak depicted on this map, another four were located within a mile radius of the SSPC.

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<sup>127</sup> The memoir of N.T. Hubbard (1875:74) states, “The cholera, which broke out here in 1832, raged fearfully, and a large proportion of the citizens left for different parts of the country.” Though the author and his family remained at their home in Cortlandt Street in the southern Third Ward during this epidemic, his account details that many who could left the city, likely to far uptown and into the outer boroughs; Greenwich Village was properly part of the city by that time.



**Figure 7.1:** 1832 cholera epidemic, adapted from Reese 1833 and including areas of public nuisance and SSPC associated addresses.

### *Smallpox*

Smallpox first arrived in Manhattan during the Dutch colonial period; “smallpox seemed endemic,” through the 18th century, but as the 19th century progressed it appeared less frequently and with higher death tolls (Leavitt 1995:102-103). Though variolation had been available in the city since 1721, with vaccination following in 1801, adoption was infrequent -- not in small part due to the efforts of the city’s antivaccinationist movement (Leavitt 1995:104-105; Spiegel et al. 2005:397-398). Relative to the other epidemics of the early 19th century, the smallpox epidemic of 1834 by itself had minimal impact on Manhattan and resulted in only 288 deaths (Condran 1995:31). As such, this epidemic is not referenced in histories of the city in the same way as the cholera epidemic of two years previous or other, more severe public health events. Lacking additional details on the landscape of this epidemic, it appears Clara Mesler’s death from smallpox in November 1834 was just another in an eventful year that saw dual epidemics of cholera and smallpox, in addition to the mob violence of the election riots in the spring and the summer Race Riots (Burrows and Wallace 1999).

### **Water and Health**

At the time of the 1832 cholera epidemic the cause of the disease was unknown to New York’s physicians. Few physicians believed it was contagious; though they did not yet have the germ theory of disease to explain this, they believed that contagion meant, “‘emanations’ from the sick induced the disease directly in those living in the same squalid quarters” (Rosenberg 1972). Instead they believed the disease to be atmospheric, spreading disease via miasmas, heat, humidity, or pollution, and those individuals whose lifestyles predisposed them through crowded or filthy living conditions, drinking alcohol,<sup>128</sup> or other moral transgressions counter to the

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<sup>128</sup> One record in the NYCDR lists a cause of death as “delirium tremens.” John S. Sherwood, aged 51, died on December 17, 1846 from this severe form of alcohol withdrawal (NYCDR; Rodriguez-Porcel and Schutta 2015).

immutable laws of god and nature were most susceptible to the disease (CB 1972; McNeur 2014:110-111; Rosenberg 1987:74-75). In the letter from Rev. Ludlow to his mother referenced above he also claims, “Very few useful lives have been taken,” (Ludlow 1832; Werner and Novak 2010:102-103), denigrating the victims of the epidemic and evoking the general sentiment as to the character and social value of those afflicted with the disease. Physicians during the outbreak expressed surprise when the identity or living conditions of an infected individual did not align with these beliefs (Atkins 1832:9).

It was not until 1854 that Jon Snow’s investigation of London’s drinking water documented the source and spread of cholera, at a time when the germ theory of disease was slowly being accepted among western physicians (Rosenberg 1987; Rothschild and Wall 2014:161, 165). Prior to that, New Yorkers understood that their water supply was unfit for consumption and those who could afford the expense purchased clean water carted into the city<sup>129</sup> (Koeppel 2000). Though the Collect Pond was filled in before the opening of the SSPC in 1811, the polluted Collect was a reflection of the persisting problems that plagued Manhattan’s drinking water throughout the vault-use period. And in the Sixth Ward, the legacy of the Collect

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<sup>129</sup> Even after the Croton Aqueduct brought safe and clean drinking water to the city in 1842 (discussed later in this chapter) access to potable water was not uniform across neighborhoods, races, or economic classes (Rothschild et al. 2022:142-143; Milne 2000b:348-350). In the mid-19th century New Yorkers continued to import water to the city, now in the form of sodas and mineral waters (Rothschild et al. 2022:174-177). New York’s Irish immigrant population, which exploded in the mid-century decades as entire families fled the devastating famine, brought with them a cultural belief in the curative effects of water. Whether sourced from a spring, a holy well, or a baby’s first bath, certain waters were believed to cure anything from illness to fairy mischief if consumed or anointed (Linn 2008, 2010). This was not entirely unique to the Irish, as participating in “taking the waters” or identifying mineral springs as holy or healing sites has been present across cultures and throughout history; the 19th century saw a resurging interest in the consumption of pure water as a component of health throughout Europe and North America, aligning with broader beliefs concerning bodily reform (Abzug 1994; Linn 2008:544-547). Archaeological contexts associated with New York’s Irish population do however show a higher concentration of soda bottles than non-Irish contexts, a trend that is replicated in other American cities (Bartlett 1999:122; Bonasera 2000:387; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2009:310; Rothschild et al. 2022:174). Reasons for this include the use of soda as a medicine or restorative elixir rooted in the nostalgic use of natural spring waters in health and well-being back in Ireland, as well as the socio-economic advantages to participating in the production of soda water locally (Linn 2008:558-562, 568-569). In this way, soda water was a tool for the construction of Irish-American identities (Linn 2008:562-564, 567, 569-571, 2010:91-92, 100-101).

remained in other ways; the area was swampy, often identified as a site of disease in the epidemics of the early 19th century. Buildings sank on the unstable ground, causing the formerly affluent residents to leave. Eventually the area became a site associated with densely populated immigrant and impoverished neighborhoods, such as the infamous Five Points.

Manhattan's ground water was polluted by sources such as the Collect Pond, the brackish water surrounding the island, and the trash and sewage generated by the increasingly dense urban population (McNeur 2014:116-117). Mentions of drinking wells collected from the New York Common Council meeting minutes include petitions by private citizens for new wells, complaints about the quality of existing wells, requests by citizens and within the council for well maintenance, and records of payment to the individuals hired to sink, maintain, or remove the wells and pumps at the listed locations (NYCC 1917). Well locations were sampled across three years, 1820, 1825, and 1830, for the GIS analysis; it was found that specificity in well location increased over time. References to a well or pump by the street name alone was more frequent in 1820 than in the following years. Over the decade, locational descriptions progressed from references to cross streets and descriptions of wells, "near," an intersection, to describing the well locations by a specific blocks. Some wells were referenced several times within the year, beginning with a petition and progressing to payment for its construction or maintenance. It is unclear, though, how close in proximity these drinking wells were located to each other and which entries reference a single location or project, versus adjacent wells. Across the three years 166 possible unique wells were identified using cross-street locations, with duplicates removed based on notes recording labor and payment.

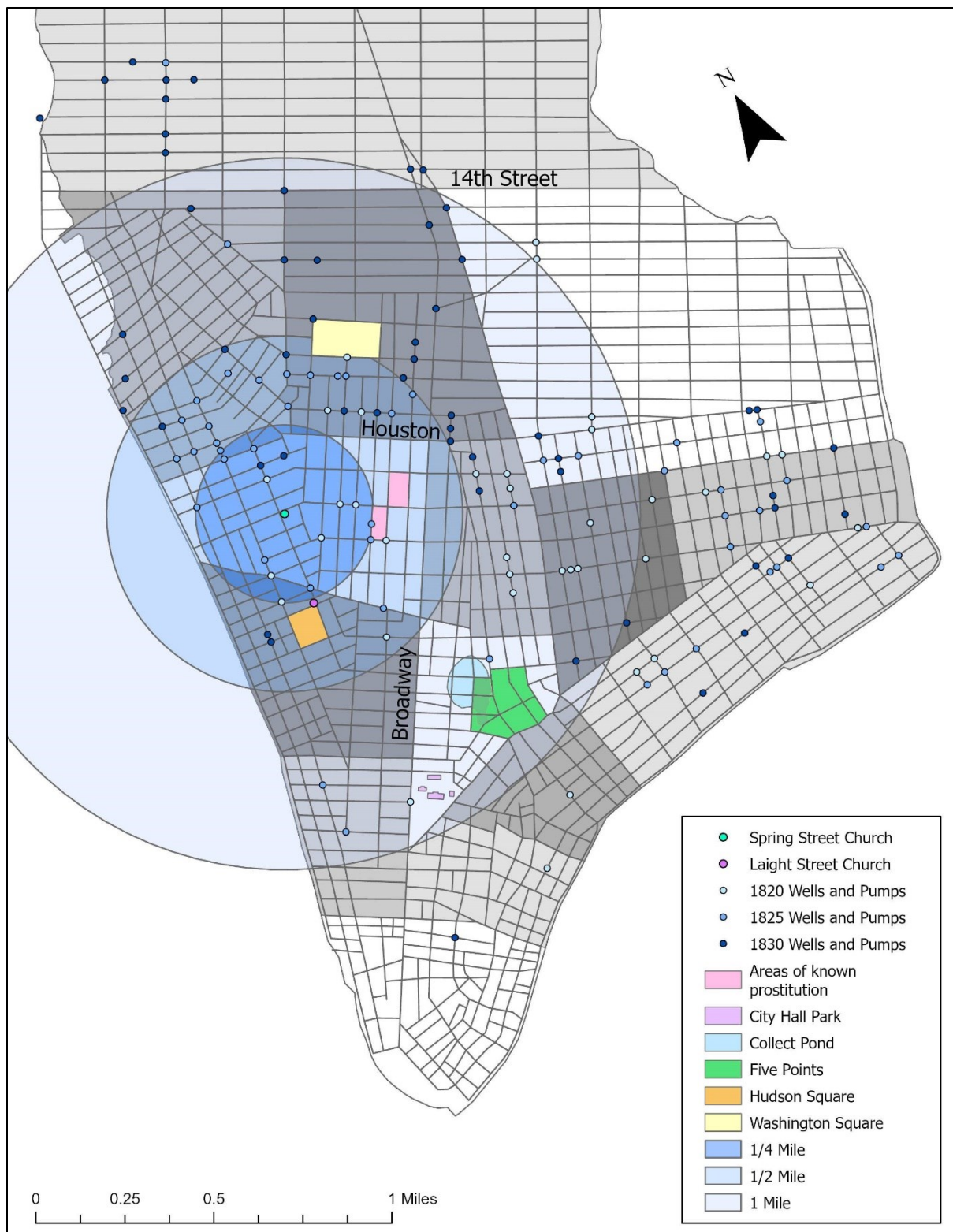
When mapped in the GIS, these well locations were distributed largely north of Canal and Grand Streets (figure 7.2). Wells and pumps referenced in the 1820 NYCC meeting minutes

fell across what were at the time the Eighth and Tenth Wards,<sup>130</sup> between Canal and Grand Streets to the south and Houston and Hammersley to the north (NYCC 1917 [10], 1917 [11]). In 1825, referenced locations had moved north of Houston Street into what was then the Ninth Ward,<sup>131</sup> though well locations stretched as far north as 27<sup>th</sup> Street (NYCC 1917 [14], 1917 [15]). Wells referenced in this year also appeared along the eastern side of Manhattan, within the boundaries of the Seventh, Eleventh, and Tenth Wards as they were drawn in 1825. And in 1830, the majority of wells mentioned in the Common Council minutes would fall north of Houston (NYCC 1917 [18], 1917 [20]). Throughout all of these years the addresses associated with the SSPC burial vault population would occur within the Eighth Ward and to the south, within the one-mile radius of the church.

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<sup>130</sup> By 1832 these would be divided into the Eighth, Fourteenth, Tenth, and Thirteenth Wards.

<sup>131</sup> Later divided into the Ninth and Fifteenth Wards. For a comparison of Ward boundaries over time, please refer to Appendix A.



**Figure 7.2:** Well and pump locations mentioned in Common Council meeting minutes for sampled years.

As seen within this sample, wells mentioned in the Common Council meeting minutes, like the address data, tend to move north over time. This is a reflection of the city's population spreading uptown and the opening of new neighborhoods, and documents how widespread the problem of unpotable water was in 19th century Manhattan. "There were wells available in each neighborhood, but their contents left much to be desired" (Rothschild et al. 2022:139). The well locations mapped in figure 7.2 are not representative of the extent or frequency of drinking wells throughout the city and should not be interpreted as the only access to drinking water; only wells in need of maintenance or construction were brought before the Common Council for petition.

### **The Great Fire of 1835**

The potability of its drinking water was not the only problem concerning Manhattan's water supply; in 1835 the First Ward from Wall Street south to Coenties Slip was destroyed by fire. Beginning in the evening of December 16, the fire began in a warehouse at the intersection of Exchange and Pearl Streets, in the eastern side of the First Ward. "Within fifteen minutes, fully fifty of the area's tightly packed buildings were ablaze" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:596). The number of firemen in the city had been depleted by the recent cholera epidemics and fire department growth had not kept pace with the city's population or its spread. Winds fed the flames, while water sources needed to combat them froze; "all the wells, cisterns, and hydrants were frozen solid" (Burrows and Wallace 1999:596). Desperate, the firemen sought to pump water from the East River, but that too was frozen. When they were able to chop through the ice the water froze in their hoses. The fire finally extinguished itself on December 18, though it would smoke and smolder for another two weeks. The destruction included 674 buildings over 13 acres (Burrows and Wallace 1999:598).

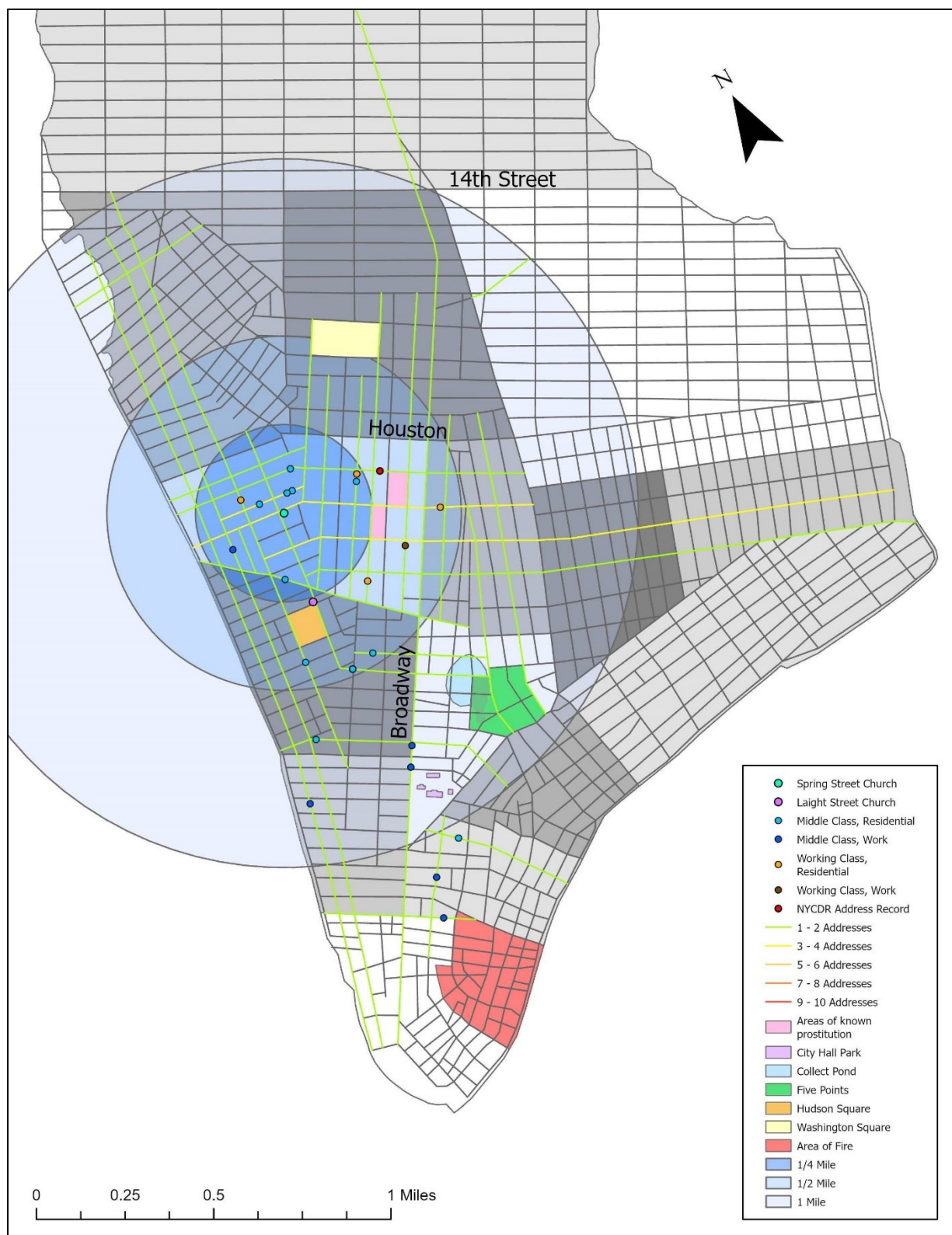


The impact of the Great Fire on the Spring Street burial population appears to have been minimal; most of the documented addresses dating to the mid and late 1830s were located in the Eighth and Fifth Wards. In 1835, though, “Root & Leonard, fur merchants,” was located at 49 Liberty Street, a mere 0.03 miles away from William Street and the area destroyed by the fire (figure 7.3) (Longworth 1835:565). The following year, 1836, James Root<sup>132</sup> moved his business 0.2 mile west to 105 Liberty Street (Longworth 1836:575). “Almost every structure south of Wall and east of Broad was to some degree a casualty” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:598). As the footprint of the destruction was so close to Root’s business, it seems likely that this move was influenced by the Great Fire and the resulting construction in the area as it was rebuilt. However, moves for Root’s business address were not infrequent in the years preceding the Great Fire, often occurring every 1-2 years; the merchant stayed at the new location at 105 Liberty for only three years. No other Spring Street-related addresses appear in the area of the fire again until 1842 when the New York Marine Bible Society, the employer of Luther P. Hubbard,<sup>133</sup> began operating out of 71 Wall Street (Doggett 1842:165; Longworth 1842:323).

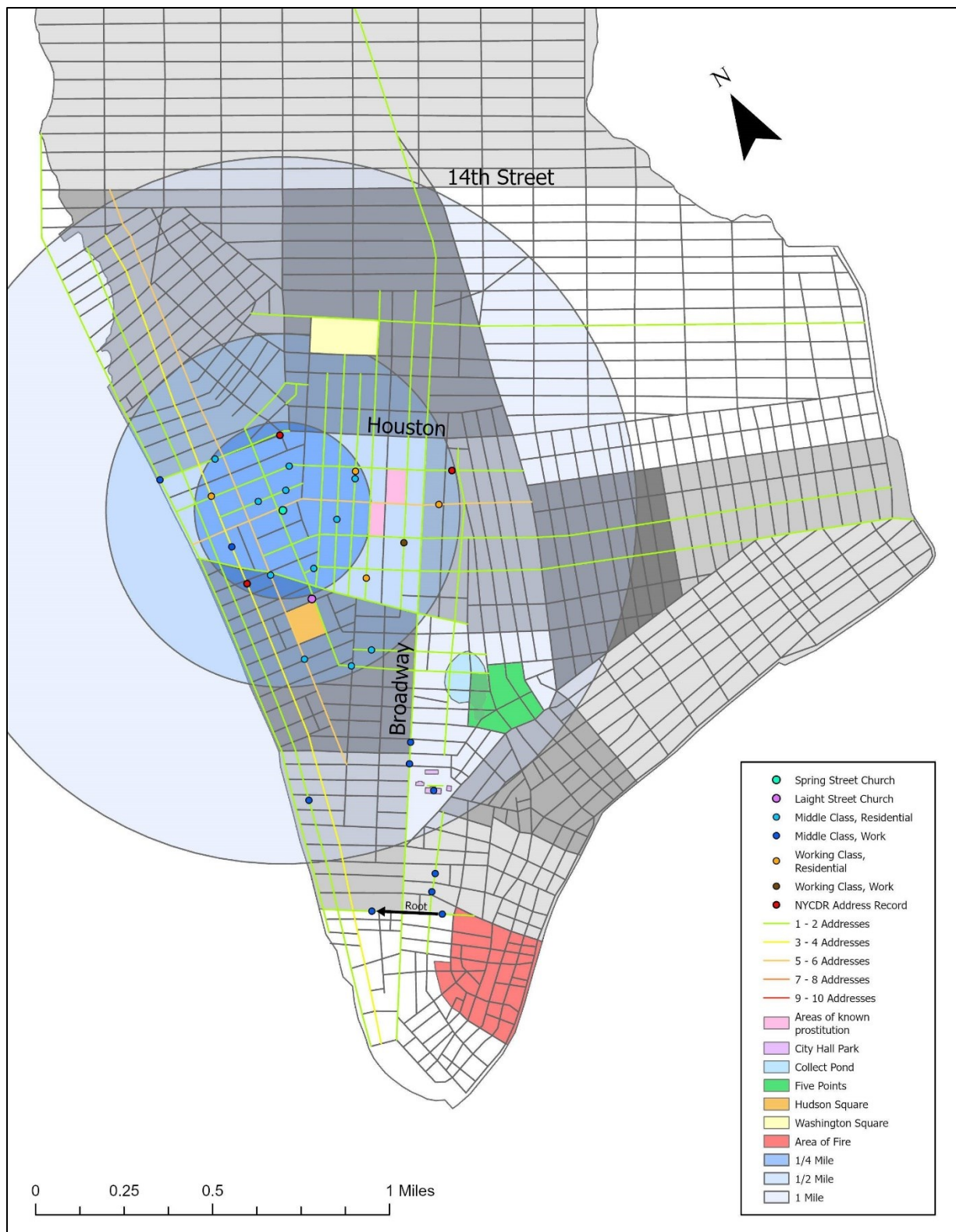
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<sup>132</sup> Father of James W. Root, who was interred with a coffin plate in the burial vaults in 1830 at the age of 4 months and 5 days. His cause of death was recorded as inflammation of the lungs.

<sup>133</sup> Luther Hubbard was a member of the Laight Street and Spring Street Churches and husband of Sarah Ogden Hubbard; she was interred in the vaults and named among the coffin plates.



**Figure 7.3:** SSPC-associated addresses in 1835, with area impacted by fire and public nuisances.



**Figure 7.4:** SSPC-associated addresses in 1836, with area impacted by fire and public nuisances. The change in business location for James Root, fur merchant, is mapped and labeled.

When the Croton Aqueduct was opened in October of 1842, both of the city's needs for potable drinking water and fire suppression were alleviated<sup>134</sup> (McNeur 2014:116-119). The infrastructure of Manhattan's new water source included two reservoirs; a receiving reservoir located between 79<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Streets along the block between Sixth and Seventh Avenue,<sup>135</sup> and a distributing reservoir on Fifth Avenue, between 40<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets (Koeppel 2000). The address points associated with the Spring Street burial vaults<sup>136</sup> were located south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and not immediately affected by the construction of these reservoirs, though access to the clean water they provided after 1842 cannot be overstated in the health of Manhattan's population and the decrease in epidemic disease through the second half of the 19th century (Condran 1995:35-37).

### **Death Course: A Shifting Deathscape in Relation to Public Health**

Health reforms and their influences were not limited to the realm of the Living. The 1825 meeting minutes of the New York Common Council records an account of the 1823 ban that prohibited burials south of Canal Street in the city. In these records it is revealed that the primary reason for the ban was concern for public health (NYCC 1917 [14]:577):

[...] this ordinance was passed after the melancholy and deplorable effects experienced by our Citizens from a visitation of Yellow fever in the Summer and fall of the year 1822 – that this dreadful disease originated in the immediate vicinity of one of the oldest and largest burial places in our City, the Trinity Church Yard – and that much apprehension was felt by the inhabitants of danger

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<sup>134</sup> This is generally true for many parts of the city; poorer neighborhoods, like Five Points in the Sixth Ward, were not serviced by the Croton infrastructure, however, and service did not arrive in those parts of the city for years after (Rothschild et al. 2022:142-143). Fearing that the cost of Croton water would be prohibitive, these parts of the city initially opposed construction of the aqueduct system and reservoirs.

<sup>135</sup> Now Central Park, this reservoir was formerly located in the area of the Delacorte Theater, Belvedere Castle, and Turtle Pond.

<sup>136</sup> One NYCDR entry does record an individual residing at the Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell's Island, now known as Roosevelt Island, in the East River: a 27 year old adult male named John T. Brown, who died of chronic diarrhea in October of 1843. It is unknown what relationship he had with the Spring Street Church or how he came to be buried in its vaults. Blackwell's was also the location of a penitentiary, a workhouse, a hospital, and an almshouse, associating the location with the impoverished and the infirm (Burrows and Wallace 1999; NPS 2021).

from a like visitation from the same neighbourhood on account of the saturated state of the ground by human remains.

Originally the ban was to allow for the continued use of private vaults by their owners, but this exception was removed after it was challenged that allowing the continued operation of private vaults would not address the health concerns that prompted the ban in the first place or meet, “the necessity of guarding against the cause of disease and death arising from Interments” (NYCC 1917 [14]:578). Petitions by private vault owners appear in the Common Council minutes in the years following the ban, making the argument that the ban was prohibiting them from their right to property and including supporting statements from physicians who claimed that vaults pose no threat to public health; none of these petitions seem to have found success (e.g. NYCC 1917 [19]:683-685). In contrast, the language of the 1823 ban included statements from Manhattan residents whose homes were in close proximity to burial vaults, describing their offensive condition and the impact their use had on the surrounding neighborhood (NYCC 1917 [14]:627-628):

[...] when the vaults in it [the Dutch Church Yard] have been opened, they have emitted very disagreeable effluvia, so much so that the family occupying the house adjoined it on the Cedar Street side, complained and occasionally [sic] Closed [sic] the windows opening into the yard, to exclude the disagreeable effluvia arising from an open vault. That it was said also, that persons who had been about the entrance of open vaults in that yard, were sensibly affected (366) by the stench, which produced a disordered stomach.

Such a powerful influence of the dead on the living, through possible contagion, unpleasant sights, and offensive smells, gave cause for these prohibitions on burials throughout Manhattan.<sup>137</sup> With the passage and expansion of those bans, these actions by the living in turn impacted the dead, through changing the deathscape and how it was experienced in the

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<sup>137</sup> In addition to the health concerns, real estate booms in the 1830s drove up the value of land in Lower Manhattan and contributed to the expansion of these burial bans (Burrows and Wallace 1999:582-583).

developing urban environment. Related changes in mortuary ideology and practice will be discussed in the following chapter; here, the alteration of Manhattan's deathscape will be discussed with regards to the movement and closure or removal of burial spaces.

Among the 164 Manhattan burial grounds identified by Dr. Elizabeth Meade in her 2020 doctoral dissertation,<sup>138</sup> 120 were operating during all or part of the period when the Spring Street vaults were in use (1820-1849). Of those, 75 were located within the same general Lower Manhattan area<sup>139</sup> as the SSPC vaults and shared a role in the construction and experience of deathscape during the early 19th century in Lower Manhattan. As it pertains to public health reforms, the movement and closure of burial sites across Manhattan in response to the residential shift uptown and burial bans downtown altered the urban deathscape by shuttering these highly sensorial reminders of mortality, removing them from sight, smell, and memory in an effort to combat disease.

When burial sites contemporary to the use of the SSPC vaults were selected for by dates of operation, it was observed that burial grounds within the city did generally move northward and away from the southern wards with the uptown spread of the residential population and as burial bans were enacted and extended north (figure 7.5). Of the 26 burial sites located south of Canal Street, 12 closed in or before 1823 when burials were banned in that part of the city (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). By 1832 the boundary was extended to 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and another 12

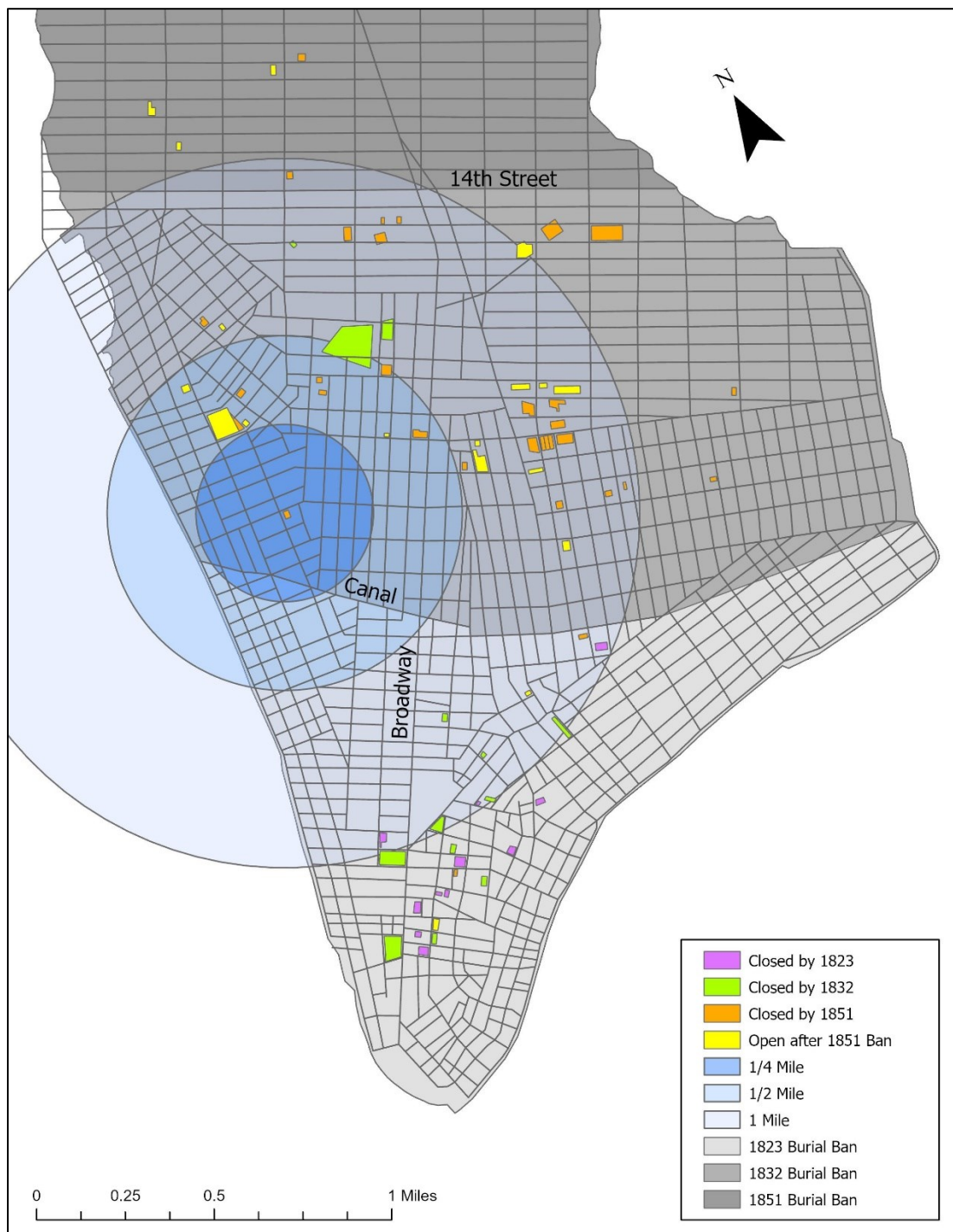
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<sup>138</sup> Mapping over 500 burial grounds across New York five boroughs, this ambitious project is a valuable resource that will help future archaeological projects identify sensitive sites before they are intruded upon by construction activities, protecting the human remains interred there (Meade 2020; Meade and Mooney 2023).

<sup>139</sup> Some burial grounds, such as the Almshouse Nursery on Randalls Island, were opened and operating within the timeframe of the SSPC vaults (1820-1849) but existed outside the geographic area populated by the SSPC vault population and were not considered in this discussion, though their presence and dates of operation contribute to the observation of a general northward shifting of the physical deathscape through the 19th century and eventual removal of the deceased from Manhattan (Meade 2020).



burial sites had closed. Among those, seven closed in 1831, the same year the second pair of SSPC burial vaults opened for use.



**Figure 7.5:** Lower Manhattan burial grounds operating contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults, 1820-1849. Adapted from Meade 2020.

Despite the increase in closures observed in the years surrounding the bans, there is a general trend of noncompliance among the burial sites south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street in the years after 1832. Between 1832 and 1851, when all burials would be banned south of 86<sup>th</sup> Street, a few more burial grounds south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street would close every few years. Surprisingly, six new burial sites south of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street boundary would open after 1832, in the area where burials were banned, though most would close shortly after.<sup>140</sup> In 1851 the burial ban was moved north to 86<sup>th</sup> Street and 19 additional burial grounds contemporaneous with the SSPC vaults were closed, the majority of which fell within a mile radius of the SSPC and south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Eighteen burial grounds remained operational after the 1851 burial ban. Many of these sites were located throughout the part of Manhattan where burials had been banned since 1832, in the Ninth, Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Wards (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). As no language within the 1823 ban allowed permissions to use the spaces, it seems likely that burial sites continued to operate across all areas and years for three reasons: proximity and access to the burial sites, continued availability within those sites, and a general disregard for the law or risk for a fine. Though the Spring Street Church never seemed to receive a fine for the continued use of their vaults, the first two reasons applied to the second pair of burial vaults opened in 1831, just before the ban prohibiting burials south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street and explain their continued use until 1849.

### *Health Reform within the Vaults*

In addition to the changing deathscape, evidence of shifting attitudes towards public health and the proximity of the dead to the living is present within the Spring Street burial vaults.

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<sup>140</sup> These burial sites included the East Eleventh Street/Old Calvary Roman Catholic Cemetery (1833-1848), the Sullivan Street Church Cemetery (1837-1849), the First Moravian Church Cemetery (1845-1867), First Presbyterian Church Fifth Avenue (1846-1851), First German Methodist Episcopal Church Vaults (1842-1845), and the Second Avenue Presbyterian Church/Church of the Nativity Vaults (1832-1833) (Meade 2020: Appendix 1.3).



Among the ceramics recovered from the vaults, mortuary customs associated with ethnicity or race were discussed in Chapter 6 of this dissertation. While the white ceramic fragments and whole dishes associated with the burial context at the site may reflect beliefs concerning wandering spirits, demons, or comfort in the afterlife, another explanation for the presence of ceramic artifacts in the vaults is possible: as a method of preserving public health and combatting a source of disease. Such practices were linked to the understanding of health and disease transmission common to the period, before the adoption of germ theory, and focused on controlling the burial environment to reduce the spread of disease.

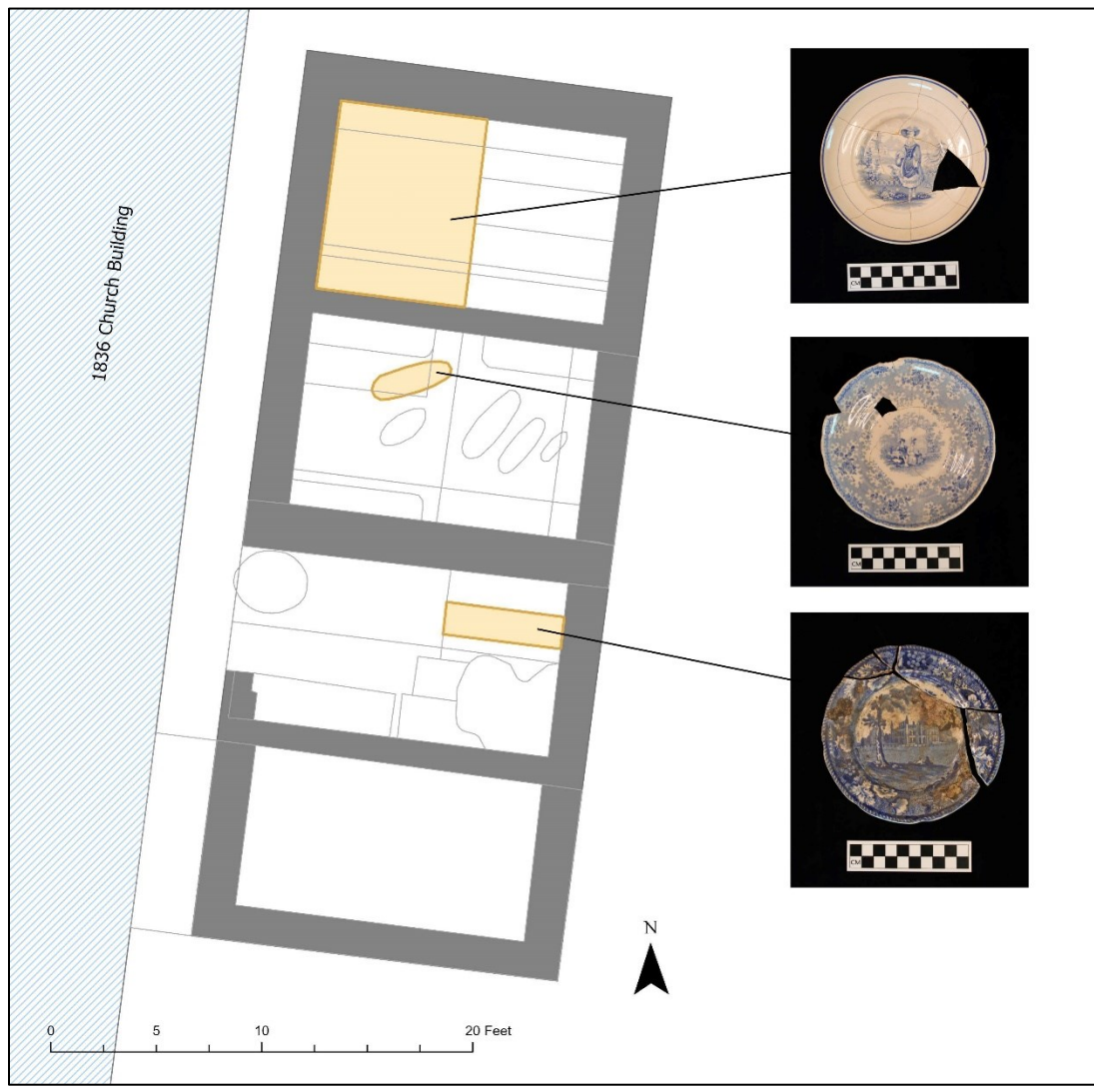
Though it was concluded that the majority of contemporary ceramic fragments located among the burial vault assemblage were introduced during construction events after the vaults closed in 1849, some may have been associated with the burial vault context and introduced to the vaults during a period of maintenance, either during the vault-use period or after. Dirt and trash may have been placed within the vaults to mitigate smells of decay, but it is unknown if or when this practice might have occurred (Mooney et al. 2008:4.5).

In addition to the large array of ceramic fragments recovered from the vaults, three complete or nearly complete white ceramic plates were found at the site, all decorated in blue transfer print designs and originating in FS locations associated with the burial context (figure 7.6). Throughout the period of vault use and following their closure, the vaults were maintained by a caretaker who would have regulated, or rearranged, the coffins to make room for new interments.<sup>141</sup> Additional duties would have included making or arranging for structural repairs

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<sup>141</sup> This caretaker was the church sexton, a church officer responsible for the interments and maintenance of the church building and vaults. Several sextons were documented in the NYCDR for Spring Street: Albert J. Spear (1822-1824), E.S. Davis (1824-1825), J.H. Day (1825-1829), J. Carpenter (1829-1831), Thomas Thompson (1831-1849). The Laight Street membership catalog records church members Ebenezer Sylvanus Davis and Albert I. Spear, as well as names the church sexton, John Henry Day (LSM 1825).

to the vaults, and possibly fumigating the vaults to counteract the miasmas emanating from the decaying bodies (Cherryson et al. 2012:16; Mooney et al 2008:5.34; Tarlow 2000:225-226). The proximity of the burial vaults to the church building, particularly the lecture room where the vault entrance was located, made this of particular concern. Miasmas were foul smells, believed to transmit disease, and burial grounds were seen as threats to public health; as explained above, by 1832 burials south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street were banned in New York City.



**Figure 7.6:** FS distribution of ceramic saucers recovered from the SSPC burial vaults in near-complete condition.

Evidence from England shows that contemporary vaults were fumigated using muriatic acid gas, or hydrochloric acid gas, to ward off miasmas and combat the smell of decay within the vaults (Mooney et al. 2008:5.34-5.35; White and Mooney 2010:58-60). Instructions for disinfecting rooms using muriatic acid gas suggested placing the ingredients in an earthenware dish, much like the ceramic plates found within the burial vaults (Webster 1845:138). Based on a quote from the New York Common Council meeting minutes detailing the language of the 1823 burial ban, it seems this practice was as much to preserve the environment of the surrounding street as it was to guard the health of the caretaker (NYCC 1917 [14]:627):

In the Hot months when any of the vaults was opened on the side of the yard next to my residence, a very offensive stench was emitted from the vault, to such a degree, that we were compelled to shut the door and windows looking into the yard. Being frequently annoyed with this nuisance, I remonstrated with the sexton against his opening the vaults in the morning, and permitting them ‘to remain open during the day to the annoyance of the neighbourhood. His reply was ‘that it would be as much as his life was worth to go into the vault, until it had stood open some time to air.’

The use of the ceramic saucers as a tool in combatting disease is further supported by their distribution within the burial vaults. Across Vaults 2, 3, and 4, one saucer was recovered from the burial context in each vault and located in a similar section of the vaults, near the burials along the eastern wall. If these plates were used to contain a fumigating agent, it makes sense that their placement within the vaults would have been fairly consistent and supports this possible explanation for their presence and complete condition.

## **Conclusion**

Expressions of concern for public health events and infrastructure, such as residential selection in response to epidemics and proximity to water sources, are not observed with any significance among the SSPC burial population and the addresses associated with their households. Instead, a reaction to a sudden and destructive event – the Great Fire of 1835 -- was

identified, with the movement of James Root's fur merchant away from the impacted area. Among the SSPC address set, movement north into the suburbs and away from the crowded southern wards was gradual, increasing over time and focusing on the Eighth Ward and proximity to the Spring Street Church location.

Across Manhattan's deathscape, the influence of burial bans in 1823, 1832, and 1851 all show a sudden impact on the prevalence and location of burial grounds throughout Lower Manhattan, with a higher number of burial sites closing in the years of or just preceding the bans. These observed increases among the number of burial grounds closing in conjunction with the dates of burial bans do not present a general adherence to these laws, however, as many burial locations present within the banned area remained operation for sometimes decades following the ban. This was in spite of literature detailing the threat burial grounds posed to public health and threatened fines, sometimes as high as \$100 (Hardie 1822:37; NYCC 1917 [14]:600-601). Reasons for the continued use of these burial sites with a disregard for any fines that might be incurred included possible proximity and availability within the burial sites, making them attractive options over newer burial spaces outside Manhattan.

Despite continued use of burial sites throughout Lower Manhattan in contradiction to the burial bans, within those burial sites other measures may have been taken to preserve public and personal health by the caretakers employed to maintain them. Within the SSPC burial vaults three ceramic saucers, one found among each of the three northern vaults, may present evidence of fumigation techniques used to counteract miasmas, or the foul smells and vapors believed at the time to transmit disease. Though there are other possible reasons<sup>142</sup> for the presence of these

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<sup>142</sup> Please refer to Chapter 6.

complete or almost complete ceramic plates among the mortuary assemblage, the location and condition of these artifacts might instead reflect health concerns of the period.

## Chapter 8: Mortuary Ideology and Practice in a Changing Deathscape

### Introduction

Unlike the organization of previous chapters, life course and death course are intertwined in this final topic-specific discussion, as so much of one influences the other. Death course is in many ways constructed by the living, who are in turn constructing and reconstructing their beliefs and practices surrounding the dead based on their interaction with and experience of death. Beliefs surrounding the dead, how to properly commemorate and treat the bodily remains and memories of the deceased, are determined and practiced by the living as a series of responses to the realities and presence of the dead; one cannot be divorced from the other, and so it must be questioned to what extent mortuary artifacts or other evidence of funerary rituals represent the lived reality of the decedent or their *death history*, and the meaning in and of death conferred upon that individual through their new identity as deceased<sup>143</sup> (Ekengren 2013:178; Fowler 2013a:76-82, 2013b:516-521; Geller 2012:115-117; Robb 2013a).

Even biological processes of decay are not beyond the influence of mortuary ideology and practice, despite being a natural process of death. The cessation of life and resulting changes in the physical body prompt a culturally determined response – rituals to transition the spirit to the afterlife, to preserve the memory of the individual, but ultimately to deal with the biological realities of decay, further transforming identity as well as body (Robb 2013a:446-449, 450-453). In the preceding chapter fear of disease stemming from effluvia and overfilled burial grounds was cause for the closure and banning of burial grounds within Manhattan. This fear of disease

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<sup>143</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, humans confront *memento mori*, the knowledge of their own mortality and eventual death, by performing rituals constructed by and for the living. By participating in mortuary ritual and constructing a new identity for the deceased, the living are assured that, upon their death, they too will be properly ritualized and attain the elevated identity and new aspect of being that comes with a good death (Ekengren 2013:176; Fowler 2013b:518; Geller 2012:118; Laqueur 2015:4-5, 31, 54-56). In this way, the answer to whether mortuary artifacts and burial elements represent a lived experience or an idealized identity applied after death could in truth be either, both, or neither (Fowler 2013a; Novak and Warner-Smith 2020:73, 86-88; Robb 2013a: 450-452).

was only one way death was reconceptualized in the 19th century that widened the distance, physically and metaphorically, between the realms of the Dead and the Living, ultimately resulting in the almost total removal of the realities of death and its biological processes from daily life in America. These shifts in mortuary ideology and practice will be the focus of this chapter, and they will be examined in relation to the burial and funerary experience of the SSPC burial population and Manhattan's changing deathscape.

### **Nineteenth Century Mortuary Ideology and Practice**

The burial context at the SSPC dates to a period when Anglo-American mortuary customs and beliefs were in transition. Influences from the economic and technological revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, the rise of the individual, and changing notions of health and disease all contributed to these shifts in ideology and custom. The burial vaults were opened for use by 1820 and were closed to new interments after 1849, according to the latest date recorded in the NYCDR. During that time, the decedents, the family and friends who mourned them, and the congregation at large were participating in new burial customs shaped by the changing economy and ideologies of Jacksonian America.

Before the 19th century, death was very much in the public eye. Constant reminders of one's own mortality were everywhere: in religious practices, household-based mortuary customs, infant survival rates, and in the monuments constructed to memorialize the dead within churches and their associated burial yards (Laderman 1996:22). Epitaphs used among grave markers in Massachusetts during the 17th and 18th centuries remind the reader of the inevitability of death (Deetz 1996:98; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Laderman 1996:23). References to moldering bodies and the death's-head symbol would eventually fall out of favor, as a softening of religious

beliefs associated with the First Great Awakening<sup>144</sup> led to a new emphasis on the soul of the deceased, resurrection, and heavenly rewards (Deetz 1996:98-99; Tarlow 1999:185-189). This growing emphasis on memory and the removal of the decaying body from public view, literally and symbolically, would continue into the 19th century.

Familiarity with death shaped the customs surrounding burials. Funerary rituals and the preparation of the body for burial took place within the home, and were similarly practiced in rural and urban areas (Laderman 1996:39). Though the biological element, the moment of death, may be very brief, the social element, the act of dying and its associated period of ritual and mourning, is culturally-defined in both the ritual practices involved and their length in time (Laqueur 2015:10; Robb 2013a). This act of social death involves the performance of rituals by the living for the deceased, in memory of the person they were. These rituals are used to navigate the transformation of an individual from the status of the living to the status of deceased, and confer upon the deceased a new and idealized state of personhood (Ekengren 2013:176-178; Fowler 2013b:516-521; Robb 2013a:445, 447-448). Through these practices, the average American would have had an intimate relationship with the realities of death.

Upon death, the body of the deceased would be washed and wrapped in a shroud in preparation for burial. These tasks were usually performed by the deceased's female family members or neighbors, and were done out of respect for the individual who had died, not necessarily out of concern for cleanliness (Brown 2009:21, 140-147; Cherryson et al. 2012:22-23; Laderman 1996:9, 27, 29-30). The body would remain in the home until it was time to remove it to the burial yard, usually adjacent to the village church though non-Christians and

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<sup>144</sup> The First Great Awakening was a religious movement that revitalized spiritualism in American and Europe during the 1730s-1750s. Its emphasis on passionate emotion and repentant sinners can be characterized in the sermons of preachers such as Jonathan Edwards.



dissenters had their own burial grounds (Francis et al. 2005:30). The transportation and burial of the body was sometimes overseen and completed by undertakers and liverymen, though pallbearers were usually family, friends, or neighbors (Laderman 1996:9, 33-34).

The performance of such rituals, by-and-large, was part of what Laqueur refers to as the, “old regime,” of Anglo-American mortuary practice, characterized by, “communal and religious understandings of dying,” (2015:14). This, “old regime,” replaced earlier pagan beliefs and rituals and persisted in Europe from late antiquity until the 19th century, creating a local necrogeography that placed the realities of death and the experience of them, through their visibility and smells, at the physical center of the community. The proximity of the Spring Street burial vaults to the church, and thus the realm of the Living and their daily activities, along with its quality of communal burials within a shared vault aligns with the practices of the old regime. Even the orientation of the burials facing east, to welcome the Resurrection, identified among the skeletal remains follows this old regime practice (Laqueur 2015:126; Mooney et al. 2008:4.24).

Though the form and use of the Spring Street burial vaults align with the ideology and practice of the old regime, the vaults were in use during a period of transition. The early 19th century saw an ideological distancing with the realities of death, one that would eventually lead to a literal, physical separation of the dead and the living within the landscape. This transition began in the late 17th century and continued until the mid-19th in the United States, replacing the old regime with new mortuary ideologies and practices characterized by a secularized and Romantic attitude towards death, incorporating a new focus on the sentimentality of mourners, their memories of the deceased, and the act of mourning itself (Deetz 1996:89-124; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Luciano 2007:30).

The adoption of a Romanticized perspective of death was prolific during the 19th century, present within the language used to memorialize death and encoded within the objects used to commemorate the deceased (Deetz 1996:89-124; Tarlow 1999:189, 194). This ideological shift sought to divorce death from its biological realities, from decay, disease, and violence. The material culture of death focused on natural or classical iconography to evoke memory. Grief was meant to be preserved and nostalgic, but also socially productive by forging connections between memory and those who share their grief (Luciano 2007:2-5, 26-28). This ideal of peaceful, lingering, Romantic grief was similarly evoked by the use of sleep as a metaphor for death, wherein the act of dying was reconceptualized as slipping into a state of deserved rest. The use of sleep as a metaphor for death was not unique to the 19th century, having already been employed by early Christians as a method to navigate the changing relationship between death and religion; as recently as the Protestant Reformation, it had been used to replace the concept of Purgatory while awaiting the Resurrection (Laqueur 2015:59, 120). The use of this metaphor by the Romantics, much like the abandonment of iconography and language that evoked the biological realities of decay, was a way to mitigate the secularization of death following the Enlightenment and the resulting removal of the superstition or mysticism surrounding the afterlife (Laqueur 2015:236-237). Rather than sleeping in wait of the Resurrection the 19th century dead slept, awaiting a reunion with their loved ones. This beautification of death did not negate its inevitability, but it did enable the living to reconceptualize their mortality in a period of rapid change.

### **Garden Cemetery Movement**

The changing urban deathscape of the 19th century was in many ways a product of shifting economic and labor models, technological advances, and the religious and health reform

movements of the period. As people relocated to cities in search of wage labor jobs, rapid urbanization resulted in populations that outgrew the capacity of local burial grounds (Francis et al. 2005:30-31; Tarlow 2000:226). Common burial practices further contributed to the overcrowding of public burial spaces; newer graves were cut into older ones as needed, with the bones of earlier burials either buried along with the backfill or reinterred in charnel pits (Cherryson et al. 2012:93; Tarlow 2000:227, 1999:191). The reuse of grave shafts was common among comparative burial sites in England, and such practices were also recorded among New York City burial grounds; for example, at Trinity Church cemetery in Lower Manhattan<sup>145</sup> (LeeDecker 2009:148; NYSL 1904:1564). As churchyards became overcrowded with burials, effluvia permeated the soil and inhibited decomposition. This led to city churchyards in London, New York, and other Anglo-American urban centers being described as, “atrocious,” with the stink and sight of, “partially decayed bodies,” (Cherryson et al. 2012:97; see also LeeDecker 2009:148). Advocates for public health also warned against the practice of burying bodies beneath urban church structures (Laderman 1996:70); complaints concerning the vaults at the Dutch Church and their impact on the Lower Manhattan healthscape were detailed in the preceding chapter (NYCC 1917 [14]:627-628).

In addition to the offensive sites and smells of the city’s overcrowded cemeteries -- and the related concerns for public health -- the physical limitations of the urban landscape and rising real estate costs further contributed to the changing necrogeography of 19th century New York. Support for the 1823 ban on burials south of Canal Street was generated by businessmen who

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<sup>145</sup> Funding for the construction of a charnel house associated with New York’s Trinity Church is referenced in New York State legislature records from 1704 (NYSL 1904:1564). In this same cemetery, an estimated 120,000 burials contributed to the conclusion by New York City doctors that this burial space, and others like it, was a cause of the 1822 yellow fever epidemic (Linden 2007:121). This epidemic and the belief that the disease was caused by the city’s burial grounds were discussed in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

saw the potential for profit among secular, privately-owned burial grounds (Sloane 1991:40-41). New York Marble Cemetery, “the city’s first nonsectarian cemetery,” (Burrows and Wallace 1999:582) was opened in 1830 between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets along Second Avenue in the Eleventh Ward. This business venture was expanded to a second site in 1832, located one block east, however that same year the burial ban was extended north to 14<sup>th</sup> Street; the businessmen who financed and made use of the cemetery had fallen afoul of the very ban they had previously supported. Fueled by investments from New York’s old-money families, such as the Stuyvesants, Roosevelts, and Astors, and the city’s financial institutions Manhattan land values skyrocketed in the decade between 1826 and 1836 as land was snatched up by private interests and construction boomed (Burrows and Wallace 1999:576-579). The city government also supported this boom in private building projects due to the tax revenue generated, presenting it as a public good and providing necessary housing for a surging population.

With growing populations and rising real estate costs, urban populations in Europe and North America needed a new way to bury their dead. The growing ideological separation with the realities of death eventually led to a literal, physical separation of the dead and the living within the 19th century landscape. The garden cemetery movement as it is usually recognized began in Britain during the 1820s (Tarlow 2000). Modeled after 18th century memorial gardens, the first large garden cemetery in the United States soon followed with the construction of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831 (Laderman 1996:44; Sloane 1991:44-49). The arrival of the garden cemetery movement in America coincided with the 1832 Canal Street burial ban and later that same decade the first large garden cemetery servicing Manhattan would open in Brooklyn: Green-Wood Cemetery in 1838 (Meade 2020:58; Rothschild et al. 2022:205; Sloane 1991:58-59).

The garden cemetery movement expressed transcendentalist thought through mortuary practice, emphasizing the individual and a return to nature while contrasting with the crowds and pollution of the industrialized cities they serviced (Tarlow 2000:218). This emphasis on the individual, which grew out of the Georgian worldview and was fueled by the ideology and identity of the new American republic, was built into the design of the 19th garden cemeteries. Churchyard graves were often impermanent and did not belong to a single person or their descendants; the demand for a, “private property of death” (Mytum 1989:295) was satisfied by the garden cemetery movement. Individuals could purchase lots, “representative of their economic status” (Laderman 1996:44) in preparation for their final rest and were assured that their grave would remain theirs in perpetuity (Tarlow 2000:227, 1999:191).

These garden cemeteries were also used as public spaces and recreational parks, allowing urban populations an escape from the pollution, crowding, and noise of the city (Tarlow 2000:218). Described as the inspiration for Central Park, Green-Wood Cemetery was popular with Manhattanites and visitors from abroad, who arrived in droves during the second half of the 19th century to enjoy a tour of its landscape and monuments (Burrows and Wallace 1999:719); [green-wood.org](http://green-wood.org); Rothschild et al. 2022:205). In an example of mortuary ideology expressed through landscape, the large cemeteries of the garden cemetery movement were designed with winding pathways, green spaces, and attractive vistas meant to evoke tranquility. These wide-open spaces, full of light, air, and carefully curated vegetation, contrasted with the crowded churchyards and city cemeteries of the earlier era (Laderman 1996:44; Laqueur 2015:272-274; Tarlow 2000:218). The visible and elaborate memorials present throughout garden cemeteries also contrasted with the small, enclosed burial vaults at Spring Street, further engaging with the new emphasis on mourners and their performances of grief.

## Spring Street and the Lower Manhattan Deathscape

In addition to the concerns for public health presented in the previous chapter, these shifts in mortuary ideology and practice altered Manhattan's 19th century deathscape. The application of Romanticism to mortuary ideology conflicted with present, highly visible reminders of death and decay, making physical as well as metaphorical distance necessary between the realms of the Dead and the Living. Much like the health concerns that pushed burials beyond the boundaries of Manhattan with ever-widening burial bans, the new focus on the experience and memories of the living meant there was no place for the dead within the urban landscape.

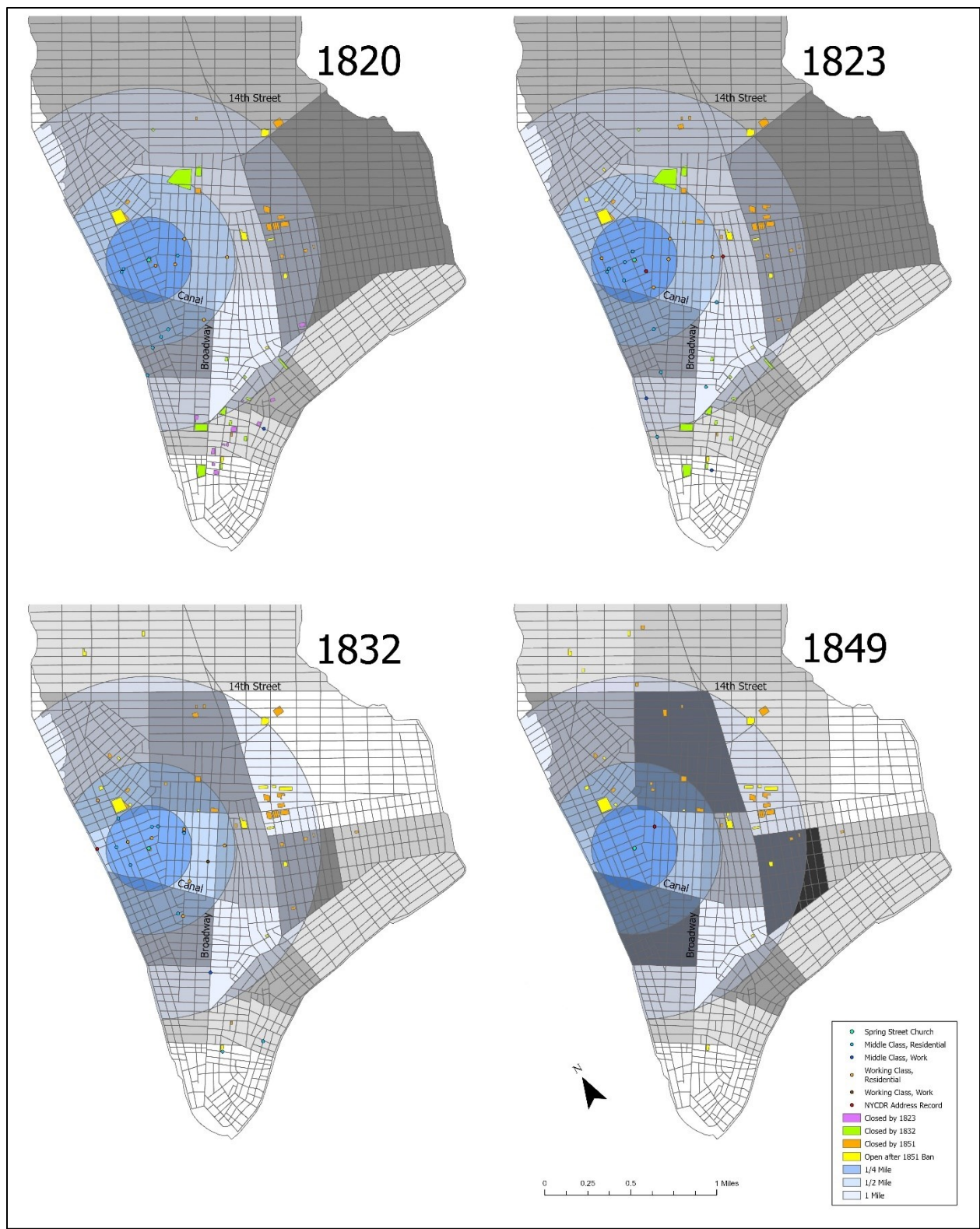
And though death is inevitable, with the rise of the rural garden cemetery and the growth of the funeral industry burials became a commodity; professional undertakers rendered services, private cemetery corporations sold plots, and the grave belonged to the deceased in perpetuity. The economic elements influencing how burials were procured and conceptualized were discussed earlier in this chapter, but it bears repeating that with this construction of a funeral and burial *industry*, mortuary practices changed in tandem with access to burial sites.

In 1820, the year the SSPC burial vaults opened for interments, there were 49 burial grounds operating in Lower Manhattan, south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>146</sup> (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). Of these, five were located within a half mile radius of the SSPC, with another 27 within a mile radius. By 1831, the year the second pair of vaults opened at SSPC, these numbers would increase to 9 and 30, and would not drastically change again until the burial ban of 1851 prohibited the use of burial grounds south of 86<sup>th</sup> Street, two years after the final NYCDR entry

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<sup>146</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation only burial grounds in-use during the same period the SSPC burial vaults were open for interments were considered; 1820 through 1849. Those burial grounds that opened and closed prior to the use of the SSPC vaults and those that opened after their closure have not been included in this analysis. This discussion has also been spatially limited to those burial grounds present within the wards south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street, where the SSPC burial population resided.

for the SSPC vaults. Following this ban, of the 18 burials sites still operating in Lower Manhattan there would only be four burial sites located within a half-mile of the SSPC, with an additional 10 in the broader mile radius (figure 8.1).



**Figure 8.1:** Lower Manhattan burial grounds, in use contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults (1820-1849), as affected by the 1823, 1832, and 1851 burial bans.



As a part of the Lower Manhattan deathscape, the SSPC vaults are not unusual in their continued use following the burial bans, as seen in the above collection of maps. Despite the concerns for health and shifting attitudes towards death and burials, continued use of burial grounds within Manhattan in spite of the bans was likely encouraged by ease of access, such as availability and proximity, and familiarity with the burial sites through church or familial associations. Only 4 of the 18 burial grounds with continued use following the 1851 burial ban offered inhumation-only, while the rest also or only offered entombment (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). Meade suggests in her dissertation that the continued use of some Manhattan burial grounds was likely due to the ability to surreptitiously inter the deceased within vaults (2020:193). Among the sample of 75 Lower Manhattan burial grounds operating contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults, 36 (48%) offered inhumation-only while the rest offered inhumation and entombment or only entombment (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). Of those 36 burials grounds, all but two would be closed by 1855, lending further support to Meade's conclusion and offering an explanation for how the SSPC vaults were able to operate for an additional 17 years after the 1832 burial ban without incurring any fines.

Within this sample of Lower Manhattan burial grounds, the SSPC burial vaults presents as a unique case study through the ability to observe how its populations of interred individuals were distributed across the urban landscape and their physical access to the burial vaults. As has been stated throughout this dissertation, the northward shift observed among the SSPC associated addresses presents as a concentration within the Eighth and adjacent wards, with the population seemingly focusing on the location of the church over time.<sup>147</sup> Distance traveled

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<sup>147</sup> Prior to 1837, few entries in the NYCDR included a specific address location identified by cross-streets or a numbered address. This generally makes it difficult to identify just how far some of these individuals were traveling on their final journey to the corner of Spring and Varick, where they would be interred in the church vaults. Methods used to accommodate for this have been discussed throughout this dissertation; for example, in Chapter 4, the

between the deceased's residence and the burial vaults appears to decrease over time for those SSPC addresses identified within the NYCDR. Specific locations identified by a numbered street-address associated with the NYCDR population occur more frequently within a quarter-mile radius of the church location at the corner of Spring and Varick Streets; this is especially true following 1837, when numbered addresses become the dominant address form recorded in the NYCDR over the previously used street-only entry (Table 8.1). When the locations of NYCDR identified streets are observed, those paths that run through the Eighth Ward and the half-mile radius of the SSPC are frequently the most populated, with Spring Street the most common address location among the NYCDR entries. Interestingly, as this population was converging on a locus representative of Manhattan's deathscape, the city's deathscape was changing in a way that ideologically and physically distanced death from their everyday experience and public view.

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frequency of addresses by street were coded in the style of a heat map, to highlight where concentrations of street-only addresses fell within the landscape.

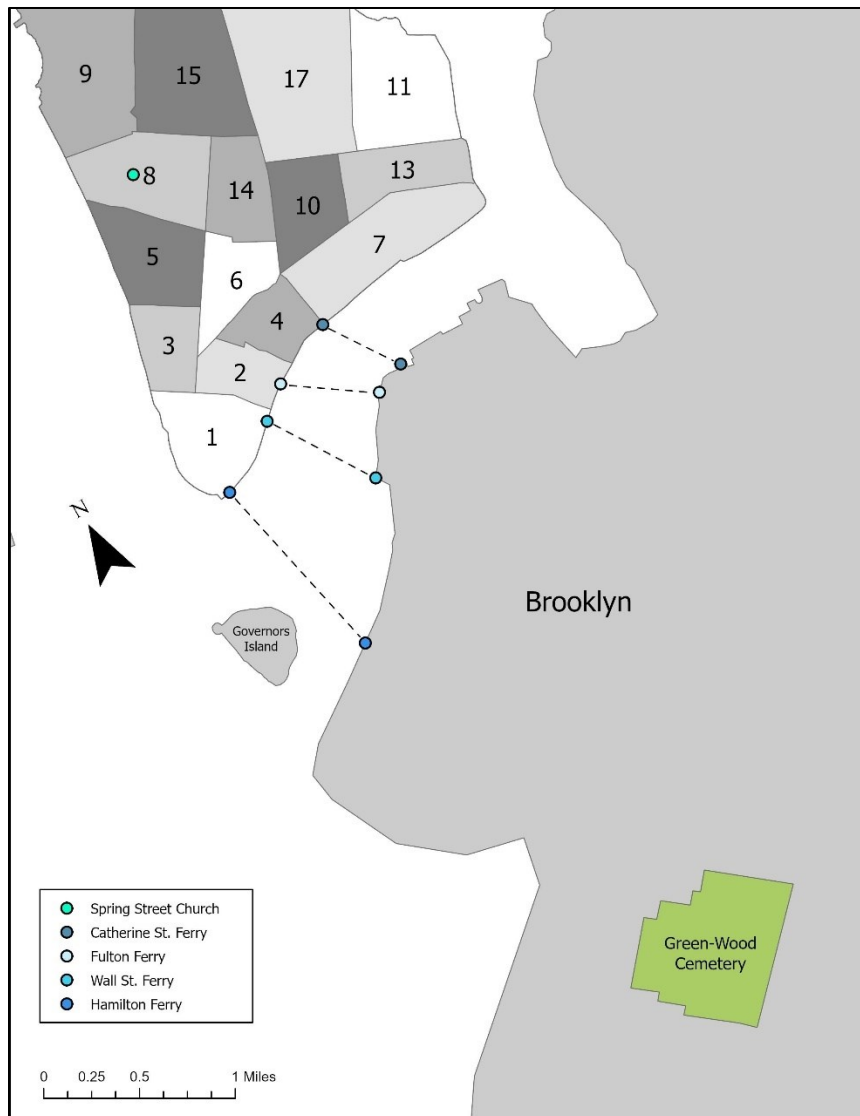
Year	Addresses in NYCDR	Street-only	Cross-Street					Numbered				
		Total	Total	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile	Outside 1 mile	Total	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile	Outside 1 mile
1822	10	7	3	2			1					
1823	20	18	1			1		1	1			
1824	18	16	1			1		1				1
1825	20	20										
1826	37	37										
1827	26	26										
1828	29	29										
1829	32	32										
1830	41	40						1		1		
1831	35	34						1	1			
1832	54	53						1	1			
1833	39	37						2	2			
1834	37	36						1	1			
1835	22	21						1		1		
1836	22	19						3	2	1		
1837	22	9	1			1		12	5	6	1	
1838	27	2	1	1				24	15	4	3	2
1839	35	1						34	19	11	3	1
1840	27							27	18	4	4	1
1841	25							25	15	5	4	1
1842	28	2						26	15	4	5	2
1843	19							19	8	5	4	2
1844	2							2	2			
1845	1							1		1		
1846	7							7	2	2	1	2
1847	2							2	2			
1848	5	1						4	1	2		1
1849	1							1	1			
Total	643	440	7	3	0	3	1	196	111	47	25	13

**Table 8.1:** SSPC-associated entries in the NYCDR, by address type over time.

Following the closure of the vaults by 1849, the congregation of the SSPC and family members of those already interred within its vaults would be required to make use of other burial locations. For those who could afford it this meant accessing one of the new private-owned cemeteries, such as the rural garden cemeteries found in the outer boroughs. It is known from the historical record that some families associated with the SSPC vaults began interring their dead in Green-Wood Cemetery, located in Brooklyn (figure 8.2). While serving as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, Rev. Samuel H. Cox purchased a large plot in Green-Wood; Cox and his wife, Abiah, would be buried there along with the transplanted remains of their daughter, Henrietta, who died in 1838 and was initially buried in the pastor's vault at First Presbyterian (Meade and White 2013:322-323). This practice of transplanting family remains demonstrates a desire to inter deceased family members together, a desire also reflected in Cox's use of the Spring Street vaults, where his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Cleveland, and at least three of his children<sup>148</sup> were interred during and following his tenure at that church. Meade and White (2013:324) conclude that the closure of the Spring Street vaults in 1849 likely prevented Cox from removing his other family members to Green-Wood. This would ultimately be accomplished in 2014, when the Spring Street burial vault remains were reburied at Green-Wood following their analysis.

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<sup>148</sup> Six subadults interred in the SSPC vaults between 1823 and 1832 were identified in the NYCDR bearing the surname "Cox." All of these children were recorded with address locations associated with the Cox family homes, at 247 Spring Street and on Charlton Street, both in the Eighth Ward. Tragically, none of these children lived to see their 5th birthday. Two of the children, Alfred Roe Cox and Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, were represented together on a single coffin plate recovered from the western half of Vault 4.



**Figure 8.2:** Distance between Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, and the SSPC, with ferry connections.

The proximity of First Presbyterian Brooklyn to Green-Wood Cemetery likely also facilitated the transplanting of Henrietta Cox's remains. For those individuals still residing in Manhattan, traveling the 4.5 miles between the corner of Spring and Varick Streets to Green-Wood required use of carriages<sup>149</sup> and the numerous ferries that connected Manhattan with the

<sup>149</sup> The diary of George Templeton Strong records his attendance as a pallbearer at the funeral of his friend, George F. Allen, in 1863 (nyhistory.org). The funeral service was held at Grace Church, near the intersection of Broadway and 10<sup>th</sup> Street in the Fifteenth Ward and northeast of Washington Square. From there, the procession traveled to Green-Wood Cemetery via carriage, with only the pallbearers and family in attendance.

surrounding area, such as the Fulton or Hamilton Avenue ferries; the Brooklyn Bridge would not be constructed until 1883 (Burrows and Wallace 1999:719, 1055).

### **Shifting Mortuary Ideology and Practice within the Vaults**

The separation of the dead from the realm of the Living was not limited to how death was conceptualized and physical burial spaces; the 19th century also saw the rise of the funeral industry in America. While the funeral industry as we recognize it today was largely the creation of the post-Civil War era and the changing beliefs surrounding death in the wake of that conflict,<sup>150</sup> the industrialization of death through the mass production of goods and the standardization of funeral practices overseen by undertakers removed death from the public eye began during the early 19th century (Laderman 1996:9, 25, 45, 96-102, 103). This physical and material separation from the realities of death was a continuation of the increasingly secularized and Romantic attitude toward mortality already discussed in relation to the landscape and the rise of the garden cemetery movement.

As mentioned above, funeral rituals prior to the mid-19th century involved the labor and care of the deceased's loved ones, who would wash and prepare the body for its final rest. These actions took place in the home, where family and friends would gather to observe the body before carrying it to the churchyard or local cemetery. As the 19th century progressed undertakers took on these tasks, creating a professional service from what had once been a personal and intimate ritual. Advertisements in the *New York Evening Post* suggest that some of

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<sup>150</sup> Faust (2008) explores the influence of the American Civil War on mortuary belief and practice in the United States during the latter half of the 19th century. The massive scale of the conflict and numerous casualties both on and off the battlefield challenged Americans' notions of what practices were necessary to achieve a Good Death (discussed below in relation to paupers' burials). The funeral industry in part developed out of the wartime need for efficiency in preparing and disposing of the numerous dead, as well as the desire to preserve elements of the mortuary ritual believed necessary to memorialize and respect the deceased while separated from their family, who would traditionally care for their body and soul (Faust 2008:85).

these early undertakers came into the profession through their existing associations with church burial grounds; in 1840 Thomas Dugan, sexton of St. George's Chapel and Trinity Church, advertised the availability of coffin hardware and, "every article necessary for Funerals, at the shortest notice" (NYEP 1840d). The following advertisement offers the sale of, "Coffins of all sizes and quality; also Shrouds, Caps Scarfs. Gloves, Carriages, Hearses, &c." from a James G. Dugan, the sexton of St. Thomas' Church and, "General Furnishing Undertaker for Funerals" (NYEP 1840c). By the mid-1850s, Thomas Dugan is listed as a, "General Furnishing Undertaker," with his advertisement appearing directly below the death announcements (NYEP 1856).

As the 19th century progressed and goods became cheaper and mass-produced, the individual was becoming the, "heart of the American market," (Sellers 1991:19). Mortuary practices and beliefs adapted to reflect this shift and emphasis on the individual, transforming the body of the deceased into, "the focus of a developing economic regime that was determined by consumerism, class differentiation, and mass-produced goods" (Laderman 1996:45). Seen in this sample of advertisements shared above, the growing funeral industry provided specialized goods and services to ensure the dignity of the corpse and the comfort of the mourners; through this, the corpse itself was commodified<sup>151</sup> and turned into a prop, part of a growing array of consumer goods deemed necessary and proper to complete the funerary ritual.

Mortuary artifacts are tools of transformation, selected by the living to represent the dead (Ekengren 2013:178; Fowler 2010:359; Geller 2012:115-117). The transition from communal and religious mortuary ideology to secular and sentimental was accompanied by an increased use

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<sup>151</sup> In the very literal sense of the body as a commodity, the deceased were also exposed to the risk of resurrection men stealing corpses to sell to medical colleges and doctors for use as teaching specimens. This topic is discussed later in this chapter.

of mortuary artifacts as a part of ritual, navigating the transition from living to deceased. The rise of the industrialized funeral industry and mass-produced funeral goods, such as coffin hardware, would further standardize Anglo-American death practices during the 19th century while altering how individuals represented themselves and their deceased relatives through material culture. Increased access to affordable funeral goods via this, “market for memory,” (Laqueur 2015:293) enabled those who could not previously afford decorative coffin elements or elaborate grave memorials to participate in the, “pageantry of woe,” (Fisher 1967:164-165; Laderman 1996:43, 47).

Ideological changes are encoded in the symbols and significance of the material culture of death, both in the landscapes associated with death and mourning and in the objects used to commemorate the deceased. The Romanticized perspective of death that employed sleep as a metaphor and focused on natural or classical iconography to evoke memory was encoded within the objects used to commemorate death (Deetz 1996:89-124; Tarlow 1999:189, 194). Funerary objects also record social divisions, such as the class and racial differences that influence access to the resources that help ensure the deceased is properly ritualized in a “good death”: in 19th century America, this was often characterized by the peaceful submission of one’s soul, witnessed and memorialized by the deceased’s loved ones (Faust 2008:6-7).

### *Coffin Fittings*

The class of artifacts referred to as coffin fittings or coffin hardware includes the functional and decorative elements of the coffin, such as handles, escutcheons, decorative tacks, and other embellishments. During the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, coffins were made by family, friends, or local artisans who had the required knowledge and skill, usually furniture and cabinetmakers (Laderman 1996:46). During the period the vaults were in use, coffins were often



made from pine<sup>152</sup> or mahogany in the single-break style, a hexagonal shape commonly associated with coffins (Mooney 2010:33). Generalized hardware often used in the manufacture of furniture and household items, such as hinges, handles, and tacks, was used to decorate coffins (Bell 1990:57). It was not until the 1850s that specialized hardware began to be widely-available with the rise of the funeral industry and the mass production of coffins and coffin hardware (Bell 1990:54-55).

The industrialization of the American funeral was itself a reaction to the new market economy and the social changes brought about by the industrialization and urbanization of the early and mid-19th century<sup>153</sup> (Bell 1990). Functional and decorative coffin fittings were only starting to be mass-produced during the period when the SSPC burial vaults were in use. Improvements in metal-working technology and the use of affordable alloys such as white or Britannia metal made the mass production of these goods possible (Bell 1990:57). While several coffin plate fragments were identified as Britannia metal in the site report, mass-produced coffin fittings were unsurprisingly not found in the Spring Street assemblage (Mooney et al. 2008).

What was surprising about the Spring Street assemblage was the almost total lack of decorative coffin fittings. Comparative sites in England include elaborate handles and

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<sup>152</sup> Wood boards and fragments were found in varying conditions within the mortuary context of the Spring Street site and identified as coffin wood from their association with the skeletal remains and artifacts such as nails, screws, and other coffin hardware. Archaeologists at the site collected samples of the coffin wood, noting the presence of paints or varnishes (Mooney et al. 2008:5.13). Taxonomic identification of the wood samples was not conducted during the initial examination of the artifacts by the CRM firms. At comparative sites in England, such as Christ Church Spitalfields<sup>152</sup> elm was frequently used as a plentiful and affordable wood source during a time when the demand for timber was rising (Boston 2009:150; Gale 2006:163; Reeve and Adams 1992:80). Due to regional differences influencing the availability of timber resources, any future taxonomic analysis of the Spring Street wood samples will likely differ from those species frequently used among comparative English burial vault sites. Pine and cedar were the two most commonly used woods among the coffins buried at the African Burial Ground in New York City (LaRoche 2009:60). Pine has always been plentiful in New York State and white pine in particular was valued for its size and quality throughout the history of the New York lumber industry (Fox 1902); as such, any future taxonomic examination of the SSPC coffin wood samples are expected to include pine and other local species.

<sup>153</sup> For more on the changing market economy in the early 19th century, please refer to Chapter 2.

escutcheons, or patterns made in tacks on the coffin lids and panels (Reeve and Adams 1992:83-88). Similarly decorated coffin handle lug plates were found at the First African Baptist Church cemetery in Philadelphia (Crist et al. 1996:244-246), while a variety of decorative grip plates and handles were found among the burials at the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia (Leader et al. 2022:79). While it is possible that decorative coffin fittings were used by the Spring Street congregation and corroded or were missed during the excavations due to breakage, the lack of decorative artifacts coupled with the simple style of the Spring Street coffin plates leads to the conclusion that the Spring Street coffins were also simple and mostly undecorated. This choice may have been related to socio-economic status, limited access to hardware, or a conscious choice by the deceased or their relatives; coffins at Spring Street were also fairly simple in design, suggesting their use was influenced by church ideology, economic availability, or both. The coffins at Spring Street were hexagonal single break coffins, made of wood with little adornment, with flat lids to facilitate stacking (Mooney et al. 2008:4.24; White and Mooney 2010:53).

The few artifacts categorized as coffin fittings that were found on the site were primarily functional. Though one handle was recovered, it is not possible to say it was definitively associated with the burial vaults.<sup>154</sup> The most abundant type of coffin fitting were hinges, used to open the coffin lid and provide a view of the deceased. Two styles of hinges were found at Spring Street: butterfly hinges and butt hinges (figure 8.3). Like the coffin plates, pXRF analysis was done on the Spring Street coffin hinges. All of the hinges are made of a copper alloy, much like the coffin plates. The hinges were recovered from burial contexts in Vaults 2, 3, and 4.

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<sup>154</sup> Of the two artifacts identified as handles, one was found in the fill associated with Vault 1 and is possibly mortuary associated. The other was found in FS 10 in Vault 4 and has been identified as a handle associated with a tool, not a coffin; FS 10 is one of the large FS locations that encompassed the western half of the vault and included many intrusive materials.



**Figure 8.3:** Examples of butterfly (left) and butt (right) style hinges found at the SSPC vault site. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

### *Textiles and Sleep Imagery*

Funerary objects were also used to create imagery that evoked sleep and a restful death. This was just another way the sleep metaphor was applied in an attempt to beautify, sanitize, and otherwise soften the realities of death during this period; by memorializing the dead without reference to their literal body and instead engaging with the concept of an eternal soul waiting for its loved ones to join it in heaven. To achieve this, coffins were decorated to resemble a bed, lined with pillows or sheets, while the corpse was dressed in a shroud styled like a nightgown and presented with its eyes closed, as if in slumber (Cherryson 2018:40-41, 46, 48; Luciano 2007; Tarlow 1999:189, 194). We see such slumber imagery present in a funeral sermon given at the Laight Street Church by Rev. Samuel H. Cox, former pastor at SSPC (1829:10):

What is death? Faith can console it with an appropriate answer. It is not annihilation, not a syncope of being; it is merely a change in the condition of existence, in which body and soul are temporarily sundered; the former, losing all consciousness and dissolving into its original dust, where it sleeps in hope till the resurrection morning; while the latter immediately passes to its eternal condition of holiness and happiness, or sin and misery.

Within the SSPC burial vaults, a particularly telling artifact demonstrating the presence of the sleep metaphor was also identified. A mass of feathers was recovered from the eastern half of Vault IV (White and Mooney 2010:55). Funerary textiles during the early 19th century had three practical purposes: to clothe, cover, or secure the body of the deceased, to finish or cover the interior of the coffin, and to finish or cover the exterior of the coffin (Cherryson 2018; Janaway 1992:94). These feathers were presumably from a coffin pillow or mattress, which would have been used to pad the coffin and reduce movement by the corpse – and any associated noise from their jostled limbs – during transportation, in addition to decorating the coffin and soaking up effluvia.

Burials during this period might have included a variety of textiles such as the backless shroud<sup>155</sup> to cover the body and typically representing a nightdress with a ruffle or other decoration down the front; a cap covering the head of the deceased; a winding or lining sheet that lay beneath the body, the edges of which hung over the sides of the coffin while the body was on display and were folded over the body and pinned before the coffin was closed; additional textiles to cover the sides of the coffin's interior, such as a ruffle to decorate and hide the edge where the coffin sealed; a mattress or pillows to pad the coffin, soak up effluvia, and contribute to the imagery of death as an eternal sleep; ties, frequently made of undyed silk ribbons, to secure the limbs of the deceased during transport or tie the jaw closed; and textiles covering the wooden exterior of the coffin, usually dyed black or scarlet when made of wool, or brighter colors when made of silk (Boston 2009:170; Cherryson 2018:45-46; Janaway 1992:94-111;

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<sup>155</sup> Occasionally individuals were buried with their own personal garments, with or without the backless shroud. It was unusual for individuals to be buried in their own garments during the first half of the 19th century and one possible reason for the presence of clothing fragments and fasteners is if those preparing the body did not want to remove the garments, such as in the case of illness (Boston 2009:170; Cherryson 2018:42-45). Buttons made of shell, porcelain, and bone were found among the Spring Street assemblage, though many were recovered from FS locations associated with the fill layer in Vault 2 or containing a mix of intrusive and burial-associated artifacts.

Rogers 2006:163-173). Other items, such as woolen stockings or silk gloves have also been found with burials at comparative sites in England.

In addition to the feathers, 26 samples of textile artifacts were recovered at Spring Street, including ribbons, shroud fragments, and possible coffin linings. Textiles in close proximity to a decomposing body will decay faster than those used to cover the coffin exterior and may result in sample bias. The lack of textile artifacts in the SSPC vaults could indicate use of cotton or other plant-based textiles, which would have decayed rapidly relative to proteinic fibers like silk and wool.<sup>156</sup> The use of silk for large winding sheets or shrouds by this congregation is especially unlikely, due to the cost of the material.<sup>157</sup> The preservation of the ribbons in this assemblage likely indicates they are made of silk; silk ribbons were commonly used among undertakers in England at the time to secure the limbs of the deceased (Janaway 1992:105). Several ribbons from the Spring Street assemblage are tied in bows, possible remnants of securing a body or a shroud, or evidence of coffin decoration (figure 8.4). A lack of tacks and other exterior coffin decorations among the assemblage might indicate that many coffins at Spring Street were not covered in fabric and were instead plain wood or decorated with paint; this is supported by

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<sup>156</sup> Differences in textile preservation rates and their use among the burials have been observed at the comparative burial vaults sites in England. The raw materials used to produce funerary textiles also influence their preservation; proteinic fibers, such as silk or wool, survive better than cellulose-based fibers, such as linen or cotton (Janaway 1992:96). Burials from the comparative sites in England found without textiles likely had coffin linings and shrouds made of cotton, which decomposes faster than the other textile types found at Spitalfields and St Martin's (Rogers 2006:172-173).

<sup>157</sup> Silk's status as a luxury item was long established by barriers of communication and transportation, barriers that persisted during the 19th century. Though there was a growing cottage industry of silkworm and mulberry tree cultivation in the United States during the early half of the 19th century most American-produced silk was manufactured into thread or locally-sold heirloom pieces and decorations (Marsh 2012:220). Silk would not become truly accessible across American class lines until the 20th century, when U.S.-based factories' mechanized manufacturing process resulted in mass-produced silk garments and other items for public consumption (Ma 1999:60-63).

samples of varnished wood<sup>158</sup> noted among the artifact assemblage and mentions of red and gold paint<sup>159</sup> included in the site report (Mooney et al. 2008).



**Figure 8.4:** Example of a ribbon with a picot edge, tied in a bow. Recovered from FS 113 in the 4-6' eastern trench of Vault 4. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

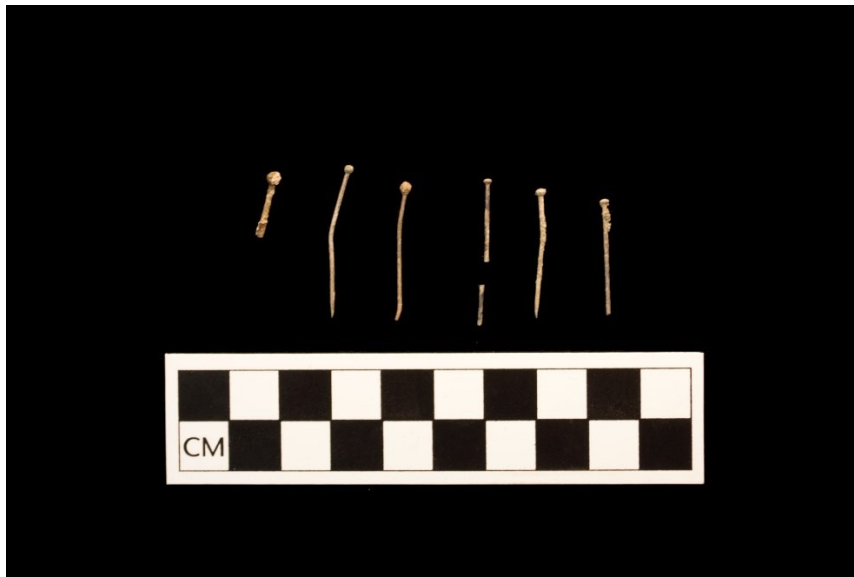
#### *Shroud Pins*

Related to the presence of textiles, straight pins are a frequent find on historical sites. Within a burial context, straight pins were most likely used to fasten shrouds or winding sheets around the body of the deceased in lieu of sewing or tying the shroud to secure it (Cherryson 2018:40). Ninety-eight straight pins, both in fragmentary and complete states, were recovered at Spring Street. The pins are made from copper alloy; some are plated with a white metal, probably tin. The pinheads found at Spring Street are predominantly wire-wrapped or stamped, representing the most common manufacturing techniques used during the early and mid-19th century (Noel Hume 1969:254-255). Many of the pins are broken and bent, their shapes referencing their use in the action of pinning the shrouds around the bodies of the deceased, and

<sup>158</sup> Varnish was recorded on wood samples FS 11 #123, FS 73 #2, both from Vault 3, and FS 161 #41, from Vault 2.

<sup>159</sup> Artifacts from Vault 3, FS 11 #121 and FS 129 #22, were recorded as having evidence of red paint.

the subsequent impact of decay and demolition on these objects during their time as part of the vault assemblage (figure 8.5).



**Figure 8.5:** Examples of straight pins recovered from the SSPC burial vaults.

### **Mortuary Ideology within the Vaults: Naming the Dead**

The presence of artifacts within the Spring Street vaults, specifically the coffin plates, also demonstrate the significance of the named dead and the practice of memorializing the identity of the deceased in life through association with their bodily remains. To name the dead is to associate their identity with their remains and with the memories of the living (Laqueur 2015:366-367). The act of naming conveys personhood upon an individual, and is essential to memorializing the dead as individuals. It also extends the biography of that person; the social position the deceased occupied in life, the relationships they maintained with those who mourned them, and other aspects of their identity are coded into the practice of identifying and naming the deceased, both through the information recorded on a grave marker or coffin plate, and through the practice of being identified with such an object and the meaning that practice held for that individual and their community (Novak 2017b:88, 96-97; Sappol 2002:14, 34-43).

Identifying graves with the names of the buried was not a new practice in the 19th century, but the increased significance of memory and mourning, and the desire for a private property of death, placed a new emphasis on the names of the deceased and their symbolic representation in the forms of grave markers and memorials. This transition is seen in the grave markers found among garden cemeteries established during this period, marking each individual in what was intended to be perpetuity.

In addition to the coffin plates within the vaults, the proliferation of cheap and accessible printing during the early 19th century, with the rise of the penny press, offered another way to name the dead and honor their memory; through the publication of obituaries, identifying the deceased and inviting mourners to attend their funerals. The following discussion will explore both of these types of memorials as they relate to the SSPC burial vaults and the named dead interred within them.

#### *Naming the Dead: Coffin Plates*

Unlike the large and detailed memorials that were growing in popularity over the 19th century, coffin plates served the purpose of naming the dead in a different way than a headstone in a churchyard or garden cemetery. Though coffin plates recorded some of the same information as a graveyard memorial, such as the named of the deceased and their date of death, these artifacts would not have been visible to living mourners following the interment of the coffin within the grave or vault. Despite the intended use of these objects hiding them from view, some coffin plates found among comparative contexts are quite decorative and elaborate, selected to convey an idealized identity for the decedent and convey them to their grave in a properly ritualized funeral (Cox 1996; Mytum 2018; Springate and Maclean 2018).



Coffin plates also served the practical purpose of identifying the remains of an individual during periods of vault maintenance, facilitating their removal to other burial sites or allowing families to be grouped together in their eternal rest. Some comparative sites, such as Christ Church Spitalfields, London, offered multi-room vault complexes that allowed families to purchase their own alcove or private vault (Cox 1996:5-6; Molleson and Cox 1993:189, 192-197). The simple architecture of the SSPC vaults, four rooms built over two phases, would have lent additional significance to the coffin plates if a family had requested to inter their remains together. One such family grouping may have been present in the southeast corner of Vault 4, where the coffin plates of two individuals named Sherwood were recovered. Sarah Sherwood was an 18-year-old woman who was interred in the vaults in 1827; in the same FS location were the remains of a coffin plate identifying a 71-year-old male, David Sherwood, who died 15 years later. If they were in fact family, then the name plates adorning their coffins may have assisted the sexton in placing their remains together, perhaps with other, unidentified family members.

Few burials at Spring Street were represented by a coffin plate. While it is sure that not every coffin plate that went into the vaults was recovered during the archaeological excavation of the site, due to disturbance from construction and preservation conditions, or the possibility of remains being removed for reinterment elsewhere during vault maintenance, the diversity of the burial population and large discrepancy between the number of burials identified in the documentary record and at the site indicates that these memorials were not universally used there. Fifty eight coffin plates were found among the assemblage of artifacts collected from the burial vaults. Skeletal analysis of the recovered burials produced an MNI of 197;<sup>160</sup> the coffin

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<sup>160</sup> The MNI for the site was calculated based on the total number of a discrete element, in this case right femurs. Underrepresented were infant and juvenile remains, likely due to general preservation in the vaults, excavation techniques, and post-excavations storage. The latter resulted in mold growth within sealed plastic bags of unscreened soils, with the smallest skeletal elements being subject to the greatest destruction (Novak, pers. comm.).

plates only represent 29.44% of this population. Within the NYCDR 656 entries were identified, over three times as many burials as the skeletal MNI, with only 8.84% being represented by coffin plates. Economic reasons for the lack of coffin plates at Spring Street were discussed in Chapter 5 and show that the majority of individuals represented by this class of artifact were associated with households that likely fell in the new middle class, based on the documented occupation of the household head.

In addition to the economic explanations for the low number of coffin plates found in the SSPC burial vaults, church ideology and participation in social reform movements may have influenced the use and design of these memorials. A preference for simpler designs among coffin hardware has been identified across American burial sites, prior to and with the introduction of domestic mass-production in the mid-19th century (Springate and Maclean 2018:172-173). Such a preference may be the result of changing death ideology, changes in secular stylistic trends, or differences in cost or availability between locally produced items and the more intricate, imported, British-made coffin hardware.

The SSPC coffin plate assemblage is fairly uniform and simple in design, without much deviation. This suggests an application of middle class reform ideology surrounding class identity and the practice of equating social class with morality and success; the new middle class saw themselves as the moral compass of the new American republic. The ability to purchase a coffin plate would distance the buyer from the working classes, while the simple design might have been selected to avoid ostentatious displays associated with the wealthy and reflect the Christian morality of the user (Burrows and Wallace 1999:494-495; Sellers 1991:237, 266; Scherzer 1992:142). As part of a movement to eschew the indulgence of the wealthy class, shared elements of thought across reform movements -- such as abolition, evangelism, and

transcendentalism -- associated with middle class and moral identity included a shift towards simple and natural living. Though this interpretation assumes a lot about middle class identity, its generalizations and application within this congregation, 75% of the legible coffin plates identify individuals who were members of middle class households, based on the occupation of the household head<sup>161</sup> (White and Mooney 2010:50; also see Chapter 5).

The general sizes and shapes of the coffin plate assemblage are fairly uniform across the collection, with a shift in shape and production method occurring around 1825. Thirteen plates with recorded death dates prior to the mid-1820s are handmade and oval in shape, while 19 plates created after 1824 are shaped as rounded rectangles and bear evidence of machine stamping in their uniformity and the fine lip surrounding their edges; no other shapes were recovered from the Spring Street vaults and the two shapes do not correspond with the age or sex of the deceased like they do at the English comparative sites (Mooney et al. 2008:5.4). Though mass-produced coffin hardware is largely absent from the SSPC vaults this shift in coffin plate shape reflects changing manufacturing techniques and foreshadows the continued industrialization of the American funeral during the 19th century.

Though coffin plate shape was not found to represent age or gender, the sizes of the coffin plates recovered at Spring Street do correlate with the ages of the deceased. Children's coffin plates are smaller than plates representing adults, likely in part due to their use on smaller coffins. Size variation among the coffin plate assemblage is presented in Table 8.2. Adult coffin plates had an average size of 5.3 inches by 3.8 inches; when the plates were selected for manufacturing technique, the handwrought plates were slightly larger than the machine stamped

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<sup>161</sup> Of the 34 legible coffin plates in the Spring Street artifact assemblage, 28 were associated with occupational data gathered from the city directories and other documentary sources; of these, 21 decedents or their household head were participating in occupations associated with the new middle class. The remaining seven were working class.

(5.5x3.6 inches compared to 5.1x4.0 inches). Children's coffin plates were on average 4.3 inches by 3.0 inches, and the inverse was observed when selected by manufacturing technique; among the subadult coffin plates, the stamped plates were slightly larger on average than the handwrought (4.0x2.6 inches handwrought compared to 4.4x3.3 inches stamped). Gender did not have a significant influence on coffin plate size, except among male subadults. The coffin plate of Charles Morgan, who died in 1820 at age one year and one month, is likely the reason for this, as his tiny, silver plated coffin plate measures only 2.9x2.1 inches. Though the children's plates differ in size, they are stylistically similar in decoration and shape to the adult plates. This difference in size but not decor suggests a significance associated with childhood that may be related to the role of children as potential future citizens of the American republic, though ones without fully developed identities as social individuals<sup>162</sup> (Ellis 2019:12, 2020:193-194). It could also be associated with the cost of purchasing a coffin plate in a time when childhood mortality rates were still high.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> As was introduced in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, children depended on their parents for not only survival and nurturing, but as their representatives and guides in society. This is explored in Ellis 2019 and 2020 with regard to the co-emergence of childhood as an identity alongside the developing middle class and growing urban context of Manhattan during the 19th century.

<sup>163</sup> The frequency of coffin plates representing subadults was discussed in relation to the price of coffin plates in Chapter 5; with a price of as much as a day's wages for the laboring class, adding a coffin plate to the cost of a funeral may have been prohibitive for some families.

Name	Age at Death	Age Group	Sex	Date of Death	Vault	Coffin Plate Shape	Coffin Plate Size (inches)	Coffin Plate Manufacture	
Morgan, Charles	1y 1m 12d	Subadult	Male	Jan. 16, 1820	Vault 4	Oval, Slightly Domed	2.9 x 2.1	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Curtis, Samuel	34y	Adult	Male	Jan. 22, 1822	Vault 4	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.3 x 3.6	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Evans, Lewis	46y 5m	Adult	Male	Jul. 24, 1822	Vault 4	Oval, Flat	5.4 x 3.4	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Randolph, Emma Fitz	5y 8m 12d	Subadult	Female	Aug. 16, 1822	Vault 4	Oval	4.5 x 3	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Roe, Oswald Williams	10m 5d	Subadult	Male	Nov. 27, 1822	Vault 4	Oval, Domed	3.8 x 2.3	Handwrought	Silver
Rea, James Jr.	19y 18m 12d	Adult	Male	Apr. 28, 1823	Vault 3	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.3 x 3.4	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Wadsworth, James	47y 4m 11d	Adult	Male	May 23, 1823	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Edge not flanged	5.7 x 4	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Radcliff, Julia	59y 4m 13d	Adult	Female	Jun. 25, 1823	Vault 3	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.4 x 3.5	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Moore, Ellinor	48y 2m 24d	Adult	Female	Nov. 4, 1823	Vault 4	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.5 x 3.4	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Ware, Nicholas	48y	Adult	Male	Sept. 7, 1824	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.3 x 4	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Sturges, Mary	76y	Adult	Female	Sept. 15, 1824	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Edge not flanged	5.4 x 3.6	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Clark, John R. (B.)	11y 19d	Subadult	Male	Sept. 21, 1824	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Edge not flanged	4.8 x 3	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Hunter, Louisa	16y 7m	Adult	Female	Feb. 1, 1825	Vault 4	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.7 x 3.9	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Whelpley, Ann Semantha	14y	Subadult	Female	Feb. 19, 1825	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.2 x 3.8	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Smith, Joseph C.	21y	Adult	Male	Apr. 18, 1825	Vault 3	Oval, Slightly Domed	5.8 x 4	Handwrought	Copper Alloy
Cleveland, Elizabeth	70y 5m 13d	Adult	Female	Nov. 23, 1826	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.8 x 3.5	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Sherwood, Sarah	18y 1m 3d	Adult	Female	Dec. 31, 1827	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.7 x 3.8	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Morgan, Gerrit	40y	Adult	Male	Jun. 24, 1829	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5 x 4	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Kauck, James	11m 13d	Subadult	Male	Sept. 24, 1829	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	3.9 x 3	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Root, James W.	4m 5d	Subadult	Male	Nov. 26, 1830	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.1 x 3.1	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Dunham, Josephine	2y 10m	Subadult	Female	Dec. 23, 1830	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.2 x 3	Stamped	Copper Alloy

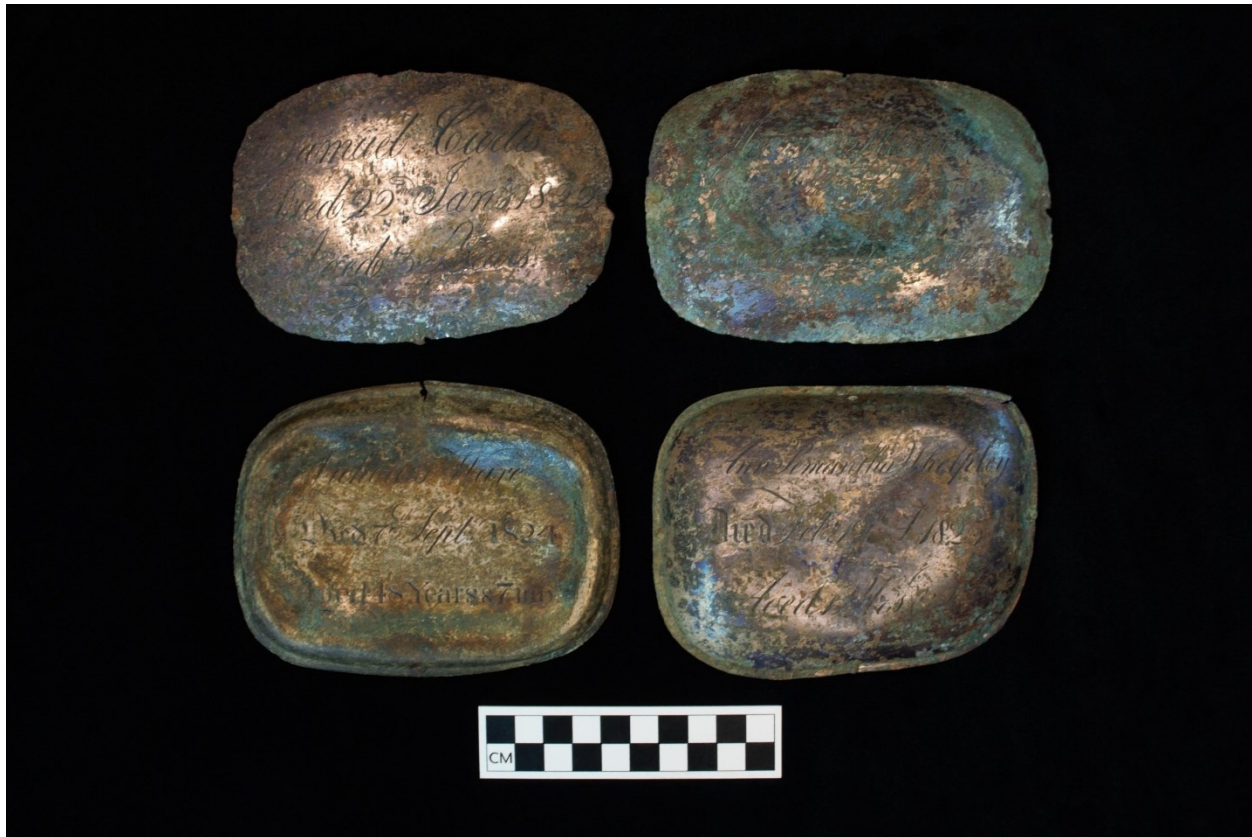
Name	Age at Death	Age Group	Sex	Date of Death	Vault	Coffin Plate Shape	Coffin Plate Size (inches)	Coffin Plate Manufacture	
Cox, Alfred Roe	4y 11m	Subadult	Male	Jan. 1, 1832	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.9 x 3.6	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Cox, Edward Dorr Griffin	3y 3m	Subadult	Male	Jan. 2, 1832					
Bush, Elizabeth	37y	Adult	Female	Mar. 27, 1832	Fill (Vault 1)	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.6 x 4.6	Stamped	Copper Alloy
McGregor, James	45y	Adult	Male	Apr. 5, 1832	Fill (Vault 1)	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.8 x 4.5	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Ray, Miles	1y 8m 17d	Subadult	Male	Apr. 19, 1835	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	4.2 x 3.5	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Harriott, Edgar Howard	3y 8m	Subadult	Male	Feb. 15, 1840	Vault 2	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	<i>Fragments</i>	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Hubbard, Sarah Ogden	28y	Adult	Female	Dec. 29, 1840	Fill (Vault 1)	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.5 x 3.9	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Murden, Joseph R.	75y	Adult	Male	Apr. 20, 1841	Vault 3	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.2 x 3.9	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Crawford, Thomas	67y	Adult	Male	Nov. 7, 1841	Vault 3	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	<i>Fragments</i>	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Abel, Benjamin N.	20y 3m 91d	Adult	Male	Oct. 3, 1842	Vault 3	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	3.8 x ? ( <i>partial</i> )	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Bogert, Rudolphus	76y	Adult	Male	Nov. 16, 1842	Vault 3	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.4 x 4	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Sherwood, David	71y 2d	Adult	Male	Mar. 2, 1843	Vault 4	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	5.2 x 3.6	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Wadleigh, Jessee W.	Unknown	Adult	Male	1845	Vault 3	Rounded Rectangle, Domed, Flanged Type Edge	<i>Fragments</i>	Stamped	Copper Alloy
Conger, Sarah	76y	Adult	Female	May 27, 1846	Vault 3	Domed, No edge remaining	<i>Fragments</i>	Stamped	White Metal

**Table 8.2:** Details of coffin plate artifacts, listing names, demography, dates of death, and morphology.

In addition to the uniform design and shape of the coffin plates, the Spring Street coffin plate assemblage is uniform in their simple decoration. None of the intact and legible coffin plates from Spring Street include decorative engravings, while one coffin plate fragment from Vault 2 shows some delicate and faint scrollwork. The script used to inscribe each plate presents similarities over time, progressing from a flowing script to a serif font as the manufacture of the plates shifted from hand wrought to machine stamped (figure 8.6). Without decorative engravings or shapes, the primary decoration of each plate was their silver plating. In the site report, many coffin plates are listed as being made from copper with silver plating (Mooney et al. 2008); the presence of green oxidation on the artifacts supported that conclusion, which was later confirmed by pXRF analysis.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Portable x-ray fluorescence was discussed in relation to the manufacture of Oswald Williams Roe's silver coffin plate. Please refer to Chapter 5.



**Figure 8.6:** Examples of morphology found among the SSPC coffin plate assemblage. Top left: coffin plate of Samuel Curtis, d.1822, silver-plated copper, smooth-edged oval, hand wrought. Top right: coffin plate of Mary Sturges, d.1824, silver-plated copper, smooth-edged rectangle, hand wrought. Bottom left: coffin plate of Nicholas Ware, d.1824, silver-plated copper, flanged-edge rectangle, stamped. Bottom right: coffin plate of Ann Sementa Whelpley, d.1825, silver-plated copper, flanged-edge rectangle, stamped. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

This contrasts with contemporary comparative sites found in England, such as Christ Church Spitalfields, London, and St. Martin’s-in-the-Bull-Ring, Birmingham. Coffin plates recovered from those burial vaults present a wide variety of designs and iconography, much of which was selected for based on the age, gender, and other identities of the deceased.<sup>165</sup> These designs employed shapes that loosely followed heraldic tradition and often included elaborate

<sup>165</sup> Examples of heraldic conventions identified among the Christ Church Spitalfields coffin plates include shields to represent men, ovals representing married women, and lozenge shapes representing unmarried women (Cox 1996:105). These associations between shape and identity were not rigorously adhered to, however, and the authors lament what, “valuable social and gender information” (Molleson and Cox 1993:200) they might have yielded had this practice been the standard.



engravings (Cox 1996:105; Hancox 2006:156, 158; Molleson and Cox 1993:200). Other than the difference in coffin plate size across age groups, the design of the plates at Spring Street do not reflect personal identity or cohort membership like those found at other sites.

Like the decorative elements of the SSPC coffin plates, the materials used to produce them are highly uniform, suggesting that the church congregation sourced their coffin plates from a small population of local artisans. No engraver marks exist identifying the manufacturers of the coffin plates and without documentary evidence associated with the burials it is impossible to know who manufactured the plates used in the Spring Street vaults. Possible sources of the coffin plates, such as coppersmiths<sup>166</sup> residing and working near the corner of Spring and Varick, have been identified among directory entries and, while not a coppersmith, an engraver named Samuel Stiles was linked to an entry in the NYCDR via his home address; “Stiles Samuel, engraver 89 Nassau h. 171 ½ Spring” was found to share a home address with 7-month old Arthur C. Stiles, who was interred in the vaults on January 8, 1838 (Longworth 1837:586).

#### *Naming the Dead: Obituaries*

Death announcements and obituaries were identified for 18 of the individuals named among the coffin plate assemblage (Table 8.3); of those, 17 had detailed information inviting friends and family to a funeral, with a specific time and address given. All of the address locations identified among the obituaries were confirmed by the city directories, though there were a few discrepancies with the residence locations recorded in the NYCDR. This could be

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<sup>166</sup> Some examples of coppersmiths residing and working near the Spring Street Presbyterian Church include Robert Dodge, whose address in 1823 was listed as “Laurens n. Grande,” and located in the Eighth Ward four blocks south and three blocks east of the Church (Longworth 1823:155). Nearby, at “Sullivan n. Watts” was Soloman Smith, only three blocks south of the Church and also located in the Eighth Ward (Longworth 1823:408). Ten years later, coppersmith William V. Eckert is recorded at 135 Varick, near the intersection with Spring Street (Longworth 1832:276) while two blocks west, at 490 Greenwich Street, lived coppersmith Jeremiah Jessop (Longworth 1832:392). None of these individuals have separate business addresses listed.

due to recorded error or the legibility of the record. Only the death notice for Sarah Conger (spelled Congor) omits this level of detail and does not include details of her funeral.<sup>167</sup> All of these obituaries were sourced from the *New York Evening Post* and found online via [nyshistoricnewspapers.org](http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org), a collaboration by the Northern New York Library Network with the Empire State Library Network to digitize historical newspapers for research access.

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<sup>167</sup> Sarah Conger's address data implies that she was residing in a multi-family residence in the years preceding her death and it is unclear if or where she had a funeral, or who would have hosted. The address associated with her NYCDR entry at 156 Laurens was also shared by other directory listings, seemingly among unrelated individuals.

Name	Year of Death	Date of Death	Cause of Death	Presence in NYCDR	Known association with Laight Street Church	Age/Sex	Obituary Address
Samuel Curtis	1822	Jan. 22, 1822	Unrecorded	No		Adult Male	154 Spring-st.
James Rea, Jr.	1823	Apr. 28, 1823	Dropsy in the head	Yes		Adult Male	31 Vandam-street
Julia Radcliff	1823	Jun. 25, 1823	Cholera Morbus	Yes		Adult Female	13 Howard st.
Eleanor Moore	1823	Nov. 4, 1823	Consumption	Yes		Adult Female	83 Laurens st.
Nicholas Ware	1824	Sept. 7, 1824	Dropsy in the chest	Yes	Yes (via D.H. Wickham)	Adult Male	36 Broadway
Mary Sturges	1824	Sept. 15, 1824	Unrecorded	No	Yes (via daughter, Sarah Jarvis)	Adult Female	284 Spring st.
Louisa Hunter	1825	Feb. 1, 1825	Dropsy in the chest	Yes	Possibly	Adult Female	"from the east end of the New-York Institution in Chamber-street"
Joseph C. Smith	1825	Apr. 18, 1825	Consumption	Yes		Adult Male	127 Chapel-street
Gerrit Morgan	1829	Jun. 24, 1829	Rupture of a blood vessel	Yes		Adult Male	32 North Moore st.
James W. Root	1830	Nov. 26, 1830	Inflammation of the lungs	Yes		Subadult Male	20 Bedford st.
Miles Ray	1835	Apr. 19, 1835	Stillborn	Yes		Subadult Male	126 Franklin st.
Edgar Howard Harriott	1840	Feb. 15, 1840	Croup	Yes		Subadult Male	21 Vondam st
Sarah Ogden Hubbard	1840	Dec. 29, 1840	Unrecorded	No	Yes	Adult Female	65 Thompson st.
Joseph R. Murden	1841	Apr. 20, 1841	Consumption	Yes		Adult Male	176 Hudson street
Thomas Crawford	1841	Nov. 7, 1841	Bronchitis	Yes		Adult Male	95 Hudson street
Rudolphus Bogert	1842	Nov. 16, 1842	Ulceration of Bladder	Yes	Yes (via wife, Ann)	Adult Male	20 Charlton street
David Sherwood	1843	Mar. 2, 1843	Palsy hemiplexia	Yes	Yes (via wife, Elizabeth)	Adult Male	72 Crosby St.
Sarah Conger	1846	May 27, 1846	Inflammation of the lungs	Yes		Adult Female	n/a

**Table 8.3:** List of individuals with obituaries, all typos are sic. Information sourced from relevant NYCDR, NYEP.

Within this group of 17 individuals were 9 adult males, 5 adult females, and 3 subadult males. There were no subadult<sup>168</sup> female individuals included among the obituaries associated with the SSPC, though obituaries for young girls with no affiliation to the SSPC were observed in the publications. This demographic distribution is reflective of that seen among the coffin plate assemblage and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

	Skeletal Remains	NYCDR	Coffin Plates	Obituaries
Adult	129	222	23	14
- Male	65	99	14	9
- Female	30	110	9	5
- Indeterminate	4	13	n/a	n/a
Subadult	99	431	12	3
- Male	0	236	9	3
- Female	1	171	3	0
- Indeterminate	88	24	n/a	n/a
Total	n = 228	n = 656	n = 35	n = 17

**Table 8.4:** Comparison of demography among skeletal remains, NYCDR entries, coffin plates, and obituaries.

Such a demographic comparison further suggests that the identities of adult and male were significant and worthy of the cost and effort to secure both a coffin plate and obituary; this is similar to the distribution observed among the coffin plates and discussed in Chapter 5 with regard to the cost of coffin plates and economic class. This is further emphasized when the obituaries are compared to those economic class identifications made in Chapter 5 (Table 8.5). Among these obituaries, only three belonged to individuals identified as working class: two adult males (Joseph C. Smith and David Sherwood) and one adult female (Eleanor Moore, whose husband Henry was a cartman).

<sup>168</sup> Similar to the work conducted by Dr. Meredith Ellis (2019:9-10) on the subadult remains, I am applying age cutoffs relative to the categories introduced in the SSPC's vault price list; for interments within the SSPC vaults, adult prices and presumably adulthood began at age 16 (see Table 5.5).

	Coffin Plates		Obituaries	
	Middle Class	Working Class	Middle Class	Working Class
Adult	14	6	11	3
- Male	8	5	7	2
- Female	6	1	4	1
Subadult	7	1	3	0
- Male	5	1	3	0
- Female	2	0	0	0
Total	21	7	14	3

**Table 8.5:** Comparison of coffin plates and obituaries by age, sex, and economic class.

Most surprising among these death notices were the three subadult obituaries; all three young boys were under the age of four years when they died. Despite their young ages, the significance of these children to their families and their families' financial resources likely explains why they have obituaries as well as coffin plates; all of the boys were associated with middle class households. Two of the boys were even named after their fathers, implying their significance and value to their families. James W. Root's father, James Root, was a fur merchant. The father of Miles Ray, Joseph H. Ray, was a physician. And Edgar Howard Harriott was the son of Edgar Harriott, a tailor.

Among the adult obituaries, a variety of individuals are represented, though their death announcements are quite formulaic and often limit the information shared to their name, their date of death, and an invitation to their funeral. Some of the individuals who appear among the sample of obituaries include:

*Julia Radcliff*

One obituary among this collection stood out among the rest, due to its length and focus on the memory of the deceased. Julia Radcliff, wife of Jacob Radcliff, died from cholera

morbus<sup>169</sup> on June 25, 1823 (NYCDR). Unlike the rest of the obituaries identifying the SSPC burial population, Julia's elaborated on her religious faith as a legacy (NYEP 1823b):

The loss so irreparably severe to her family and an extended circle of friends, is mitigated by the many fruits of an unfeigned piety, which through thirty five years of her life indicated her sincerity as a professor of Jesus, and by that increase of faith and tranquility which characterized the closing scene of her life.

The text of Julia's obituary seems to follow a trend observed by Kleinberg among death notices published in Pittsburgh during the 19th century, where those identifying women tended to focus on, "their motherly qualities, wifely virtues, neighborliness, and Christian charity" (1977:199).

In addition to presenting an example of the significance of naming the dead during this period of changing mortuary ideology, Julia's lengthy obituary is also a reflection of her socio-economic status; she was a granddaughter of the infamous Rev. Cotton Mather, further explaining the emphasis on piety, and her husband, Jacob, was a lawyer and twice the former Mayor of New York (White and Mooney 2010:49). While it appears Jacob Radcliff could easily afford the additional cost to print a memorial of this length, Julia's death was also likely of interest to a variety of people. The Radcliff residence at 13 Howard Street<sup>170</sup> fell just outside the half-mile radius of the SSPC and might have presented a travel distance of around 0.7 mile for her funeral procession (figure 8.8). While we cannot know what her procession was like, perhaps her death notice is an indication it was well-attended.

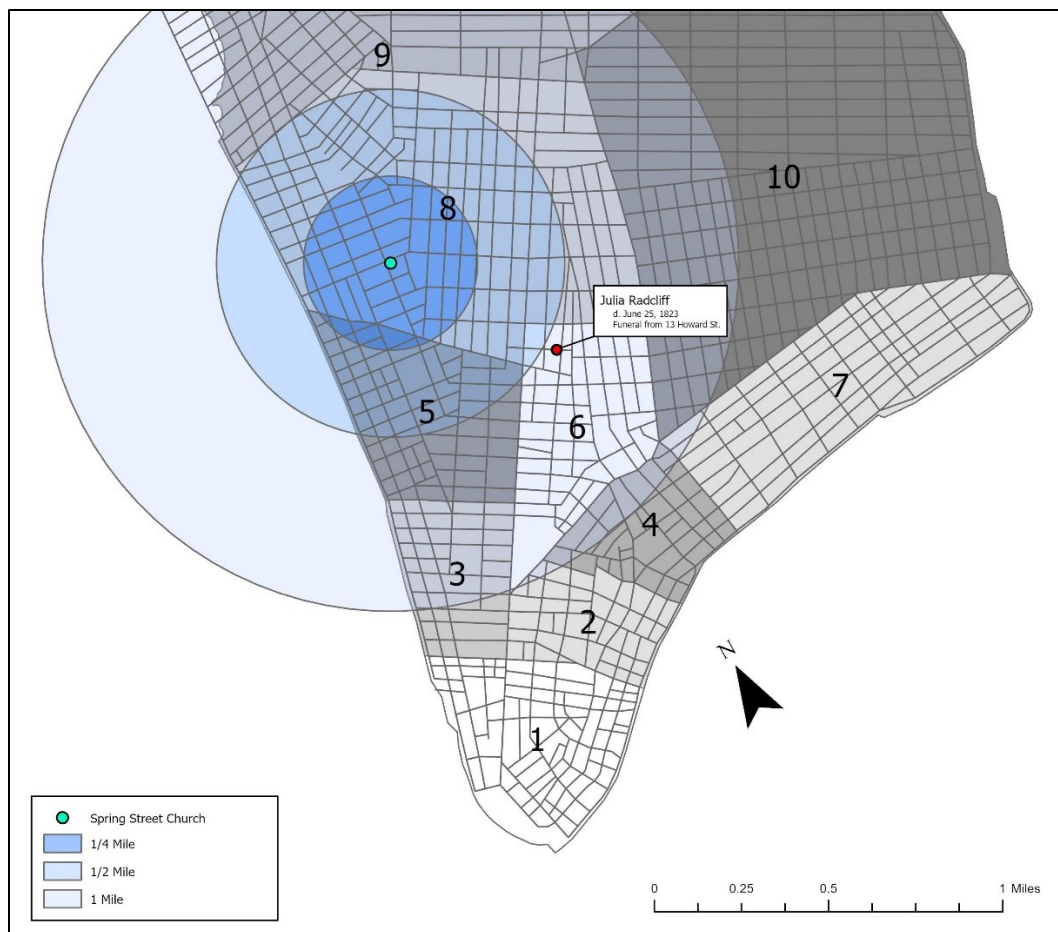
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<sup>169</sup> Cholera morbus refers to acute gastroenteritis, and not the disease caused by the *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria that would arrive in Manhattan in 1832 (Rosenberg 1987:74; Rousseau and Haycock 2003).

<sup>170</sup> Located in the Sixth Ward at the time of Julia Radcliff's death, Howard Street would eventually cross between the Eighth and Fourteenth Wards, according to 1832 boundaries.



**Figure 8.7:** Coffin plate of Julia Radcliff, d.1823. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure 8.8:** Map of funeral location documented in Julia Radcliff’s obituary.

### *Nicholas Ware*

Nicholas Ware, a federal senator from Georgia, was visiting New York in September 1824 when he was taken ill with, “dropsy in the chest,” and died on September 7<sup>th</sup> (NYCDR). His purpose for visiting the city was to celebrate a tour of the United States by the American Revolutionary hero, the Marquis de Lafayette (Burrows and Wallace 1999:465-466; White 2010:47). While his NYCDR entry records a vague location of, “Greenwich,” referencing the street that runs the length of Lower Manhattan between the Battery and the Ninth Ward, a death announcement was published on September 7<sup>th</sup> identifying a specific address as the location of



his funeral, which was to be held that same afternoon (NYEP 1824a). This address, 36 Broadway, was identified in the city directories as a boarding house run by Caleb Street (Longworth 1823:420, 1824:410, 1825:404). This location may have been where Ware was staying during his visit to the city, and was located roughly 1.5 miles from the SSPC vaults (figure 8.10). It is not quite clear why this slave-owning senator from Georgia ended up in the SSPC burial vaults,<sup>171</sup> though the SSPC Treasurer's Minutes record that his burial was paid for by a D.H. Wickham (Meade 2008:B.II-5; White and Mooney 2010:48). It is unclear what relationship Ware did or did not have with Wickham, and why Wickham would pay the \$10.00 burial fee,<sup>172</sup> but the historical record does document Wickham's association with the Spring Street vaults; Daniel Hull Wickham was listed in the Laight Street catalogues for both 1825 and 1828 and served as a church elder (LSM). Having joined the church in 1816, Wickham attended the SSPC before following Rev. Cox to Laight Street in 1825. Wickham's own home address in 1824 was located north of the SSPC in the Ninth Ward, at the corner of Burton and Bedford and far from Ware's possible boarding location (Longworth 1824:463, 1825:456).

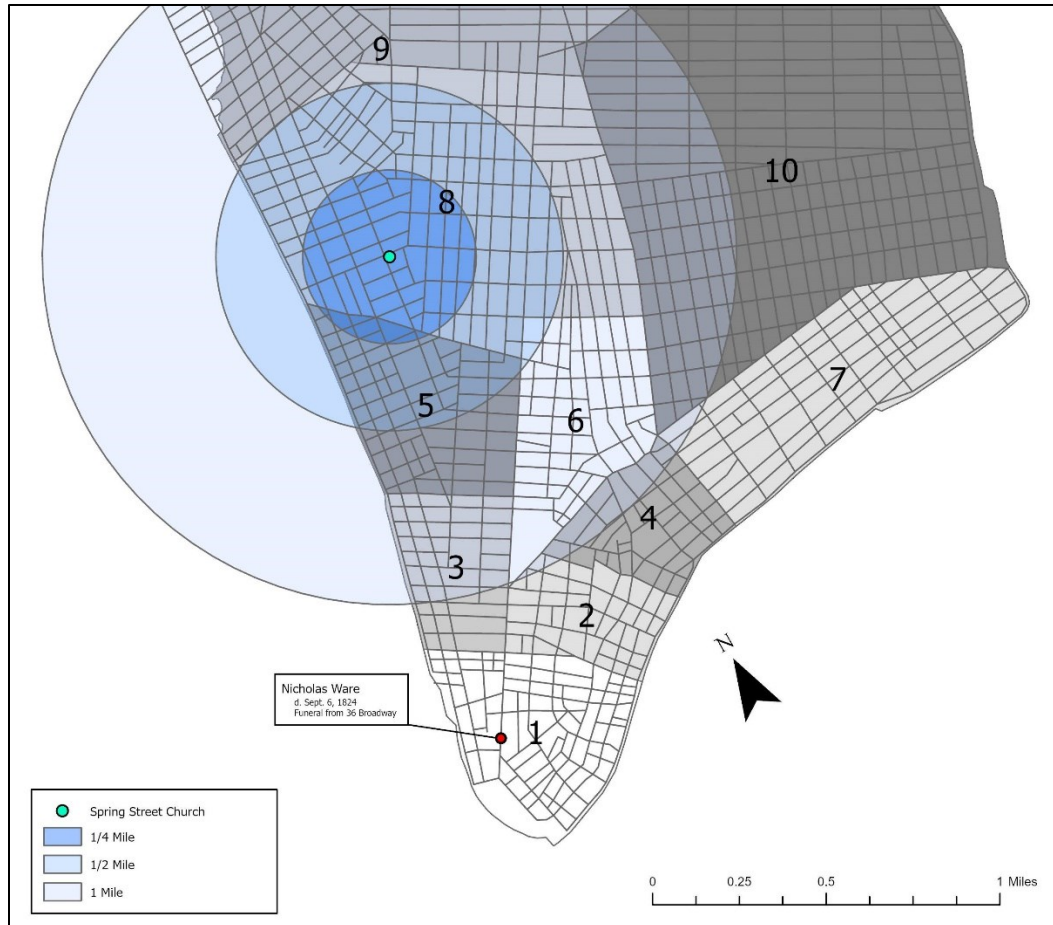
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<sup>171</sup> A connection to the colonization movement through his wife's family may help explain this connection (Novak 2017b:96). Both Reverends Samuel H. Cox and Henry G. Ludlow were initially supporters of the colonization movement and active with the American Colonization Society.

<sup>172</sup> For comparison, the daily wage of a laborer in the 1830s was around a dollar a day (Burrows and Wallace 1999:460; McShane and Tarr 2007:62).



**Figure 8.9:** Coffin plate of Nicholas Ware, d.1824. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure 8.10:** Map of funeral location documented in Nicholas Ware’s obituary.

### *Louisa Hunter*

The following year, 1825, provides another obituary and funeral announcement: that of 16 year old Louisa Hunter, who died on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1825, “after a long and painful illness” (NYEP 1825a). In the NYCDR her cause of death was recorded as, “dropsy in the chest.” Louisa was the daughter of John Hunter, who is named in her obituary and documented as an Almshouse agent and assistant superintendent of, “the New York Institution for the promotion of arts and sciences” (NYCC 1917 [7]:270). Located in the former building of the Second

Almshouse<sup>173</sup> in the same Sixth Ward park as the new City Hall, this Institution was proposed to the Common Council in October 1812 by a committee on, “behalf of the New York Society Library, The Academy of Arts, The New York Historical Society and also by several highly respectable Citizens,” seeking to, “exalt the intellectual character of its Members by diffusing among them the blessings of useful knowledge” (NYCC 1917 [7]:269). As an assistant superintendent and Almshouse agent, John Hunter and his family resided in the former Second Almshouse, which also housed the New York Historical Society, lecture rooms, and libraries. It was this location that was recorded in Louisa’s death announcement, which appeared on the day she died in the *New York Evening Post*. A second announcement the following day was also shared in the *New York Daily Advertiser* with many of the same details; one significant difference in the language of the funeral invitation specifies, “Also the male members of the Spring street Church,” in addition to the friends and acquaintances of her father (NYDA 1825). While it is typical in these obituaries to invite the friends and family of a named living male relative,<sup>174</sup> Louisa’s death notice is unusual in that it also mentions the SSPC (White and Mooney 2010:48).

The New York Institution, where the Hunter family resided between 1821 and 1830,<sup>175</sup> was located 0.85 mile from the SSPC and its vaults (figure 8.12) (Longworth 1821:237,

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<sup>173</sup> The first city Almshouse was built in City Hall Park in 1735; it was demolished in 1797 and the new City Hall was built on the site with a Second Almshouse constructed in the Park along Chambers Street (Baugher and Lenik 1997). By the time the New York Institution was proposed the poor who relied on the services of the Almshouse were already being relocated to Bellevue, in the area of 26<sup>th</sup> Street along the river. That new complex, constructed in 1812, eventually housed the new Almshouse, a workhouse, a hospital, and a penitentiary (NYCC 1917 [7]:703). Though the Second Almshouse, sometimes referred to as the Old Almshouse, was transformed into a center for public education and enlightenment, the building was still occasionally used for public aid. As an example, in the winter of 1831 the site was used to distribute food and firewood to the city’s poor during a period of severe cold (NYCC 1917 [19]:638).

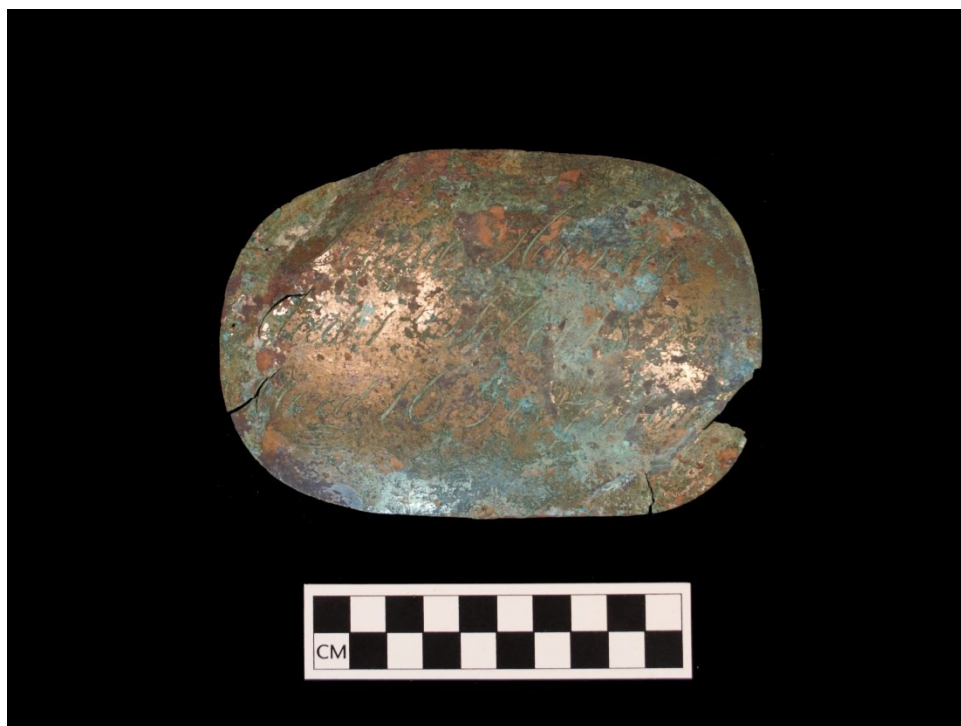
<sup>174</sup> Julia Radcliff’s obituary discussed above deviates from the typical emphasis on a living male relative to invite “friends of the family” to her funeral (NYEP 1823b).

<sup>175</sup> In May 1830 a proposal to the Common Council sought to annex the former Second Almshouse and home of the New York Institution for use by an assortment of “Public Offices” (NYCC 1917 [19]:76). These included: the Police

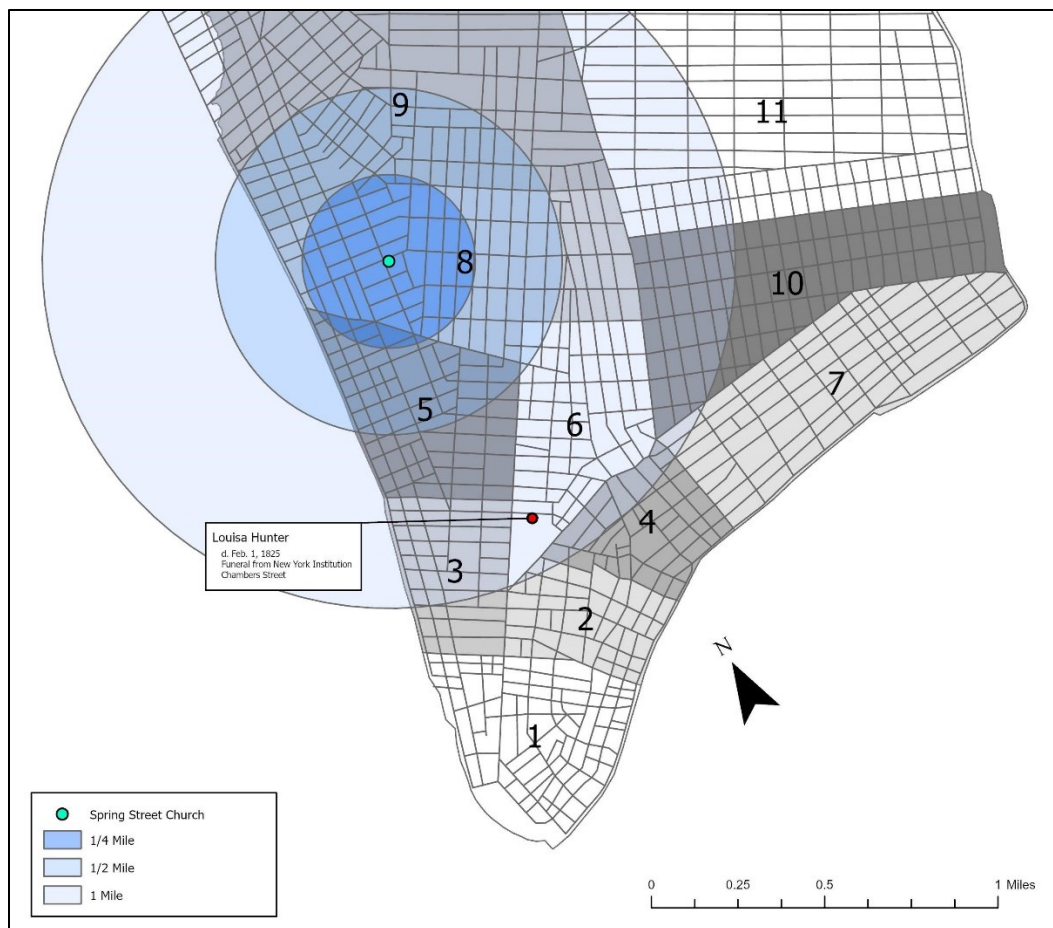
1822:248, 1823:250, 1824:237, 1825:234, 1826:260, 1827:266, 1828:329, 1829:307, 1830:341). Though Louisa died just as the Laight Street congregation was forming, her family may be present in the Laight Street Manuals (1825). A woman named Hannah Hunter appears among the membership records, joining the church in 1818 when the congregation was still located at Spring Street. Her spouse is recorded as John Hunter, possibly referencing the same individual as Louisa's father and documenting their affiliation with that church and the SSPC. Among the skeletal remains, Louisa was one of two individuals identified and associated with a coffin plate (Novak 2017a). When the skeletal remains were reburied in Green-wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, a reproduction coffin plate was made and buried with her remains, while the original remains in the SSPC Collection at Syracuse University.

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Office, the House of Detention, the Grand Jury, the First District Watch, the Commissioners of the Alms House, and various courts. And in the spring of 1831 the outbuildings of City Hall Park, including the Second Almshouse, were formally designated as part of City Hall (NYCC 1917 [19]:583). Strangely, at a time when it appears the New York Institution was being dissolved, the meeting minutes discussing these improvements and alterations to the use of the former Almshouse include references to the Hunter family. The same proposal includes a suggestion to extend an iron fence along Chambers Street and construct an ornamental garden, to, "be reserved exclusively for Mr Hunters family and the Keeper of the House of Detention," (NYCC 1917 [19]:76-77. It also suggests that the Hunter family be reaccommodated in another part of the building (NYCC 1917 [19]:77-78); John Hunter stopped appearing in the city directories after 1830, though an article in an 1831 issue of the *Spectator* documents his removal from the Almshouse commissioners (White and Mooney 2010:48).



**Figure 8.11:** Coffin plate of Louisa Hunter, d.1825. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



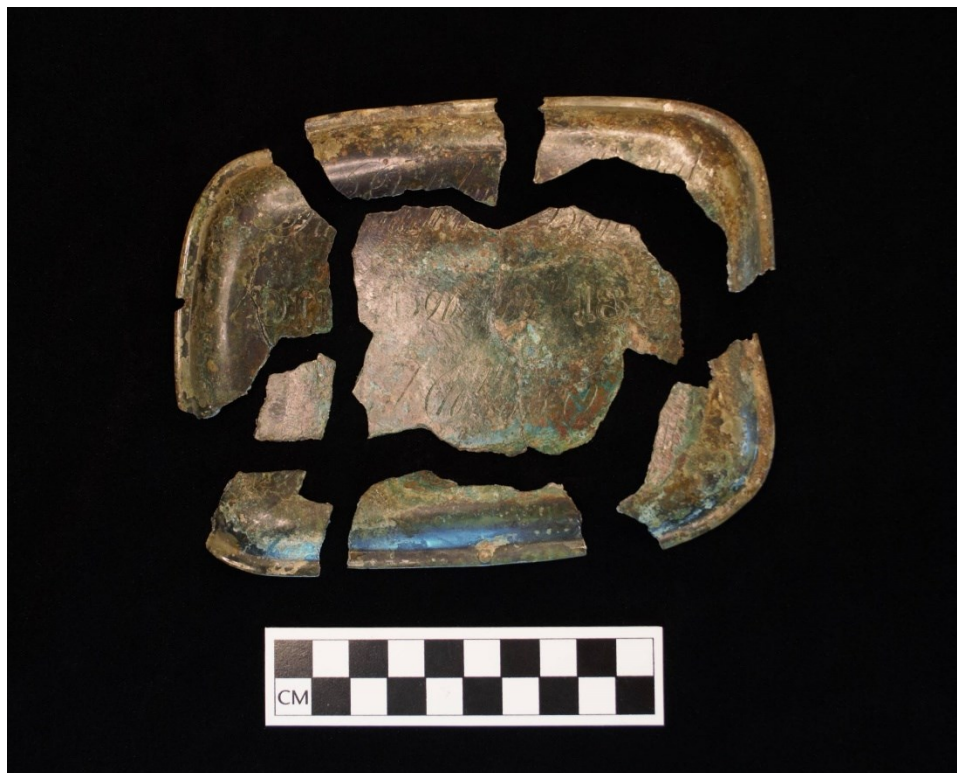
**Figure 8.12:** Map of funeral location documented in Louisa Hunter’s obituary.

### *Rudolphus Bogert*

Born to a family established in New York during the end of Dutch colonial rule, Rudolphus Bogert was interred in the vaults following his death from an, “ulceration of bladder,” on November 16, 1842, at the age of 76 years (NYCDR; Novak 2017a). His obituary was published that same day, inviting friends and family to his funeral on the following day at his family home, 20 Charlton Street in the Eighth Ward (NYEP 1842). With such close proximity to the corner of Spring and Varick Streets, Rudolphus’s funeral procession likely traveled less than a quarter-mile to inter him within the vaults (figure 8.14). Of the skeletal remains recovered from

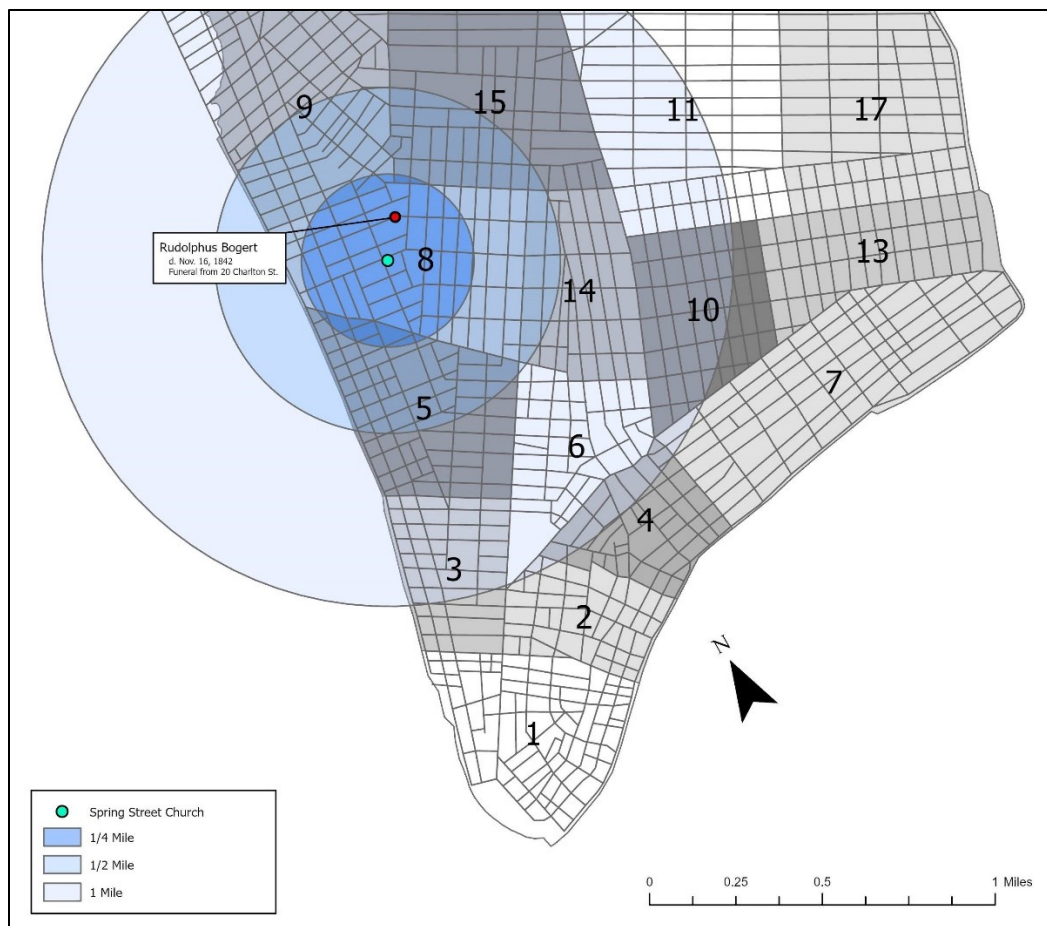


the burial vaults, Rudolphus's were best associated with a coffin plate, which was recovered near the cranium of Burial 12 (Crist 2010:86). Like Louisa Hunter, a reproduction plate was made to accompany his remains when they were reburied in Green-wood Cemetery in 2014.



**Figure 8.13:** Coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert, d.1842. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.





**Figure 8.14:** Map of funeral location documented in Rudolphus Bogert's obituary.

A merchant, the distribution of Rudolphus's home and work locations in relation to his economic class and resources was discussed in Chapter 5. His cousin, Peter Bogert,<sup>176</sup> established a merchant business with Henry Kneeland in the early 1800s (Crist 2010:86; Riker 1904:452, 457; Truxes 2008:75). Records documenting shipments of cotton, rice, and other slave-produced goods arriving from Savannah, New Orleans, and other locations across the American south are present throughout the New York Event Post. Fascinatingly, the business location of Bogert and Kneeland narrowly avoided destruction in the Great Fire of 1835; between 1810 and May 1833 (Longworth), the business address of Bogert and Kneeland was

<sup>176</sup> Son of John Bogert, who was the older brother of Rudolphus's father, Nicholas (Riker 1904; Truxes 2008). Together, the brothers smuggled goods from the French West Indies into the American colonies.

recorded on South Street at the intersection with Depeyster. This location was on the riverfront in the northern First Ward – right in the area affected by the fire. In the 1833 Longworth Directory the business moved north, into the Second Ward, to a location at 107 South Street, where it remained until 1839.

It is unclear how closely Rudolphus worked with his cousin's firm, as his directory entries frequently record a separate business address from that used by Bogert and Kneeland, or how involved he was with the SSPC and its abolitionist cause. Rudolphus's presence in Vault 3 is established through his family's connection with the Laight Street Church; his wife, Ann, is recorded among the Laight Street catalogs as joining the SSPC in 1824 and moving with the congregation to Laight Street. Their daughters, Alida Ann and Helen Maria, are also recorded as Laight Street Church members and would have been peers of Louisa Hunter, based on their ages (LSM 1825, 1828). In June 1837 both Ann and Alida are recorded as transferring back to the Spring Street congregation (RLSC). The association of a family with a church was often established through the adult female family members; across the city, women formed a majority of church-goers, participating in benevolent societies and church causes, and engaging with the contemporary notions of womanhood wherein they served as a conduit for the spiritual health of their families<sup>177</sup> (Bulthuis 2014:77-84, 95-96).

### *Obituaries in the Landscape*

The spatial distribution of the addresses recorded in the obituary notices is reflective of that observed in the NYCDR, with the greatest frequency of addresses falling within the boundaries of the Eighth Ward (7 obituaries), followed by the Fifth (5 obituaries). And like the NYCDR addresses converging on the Eighth Ward over time, the average distance between

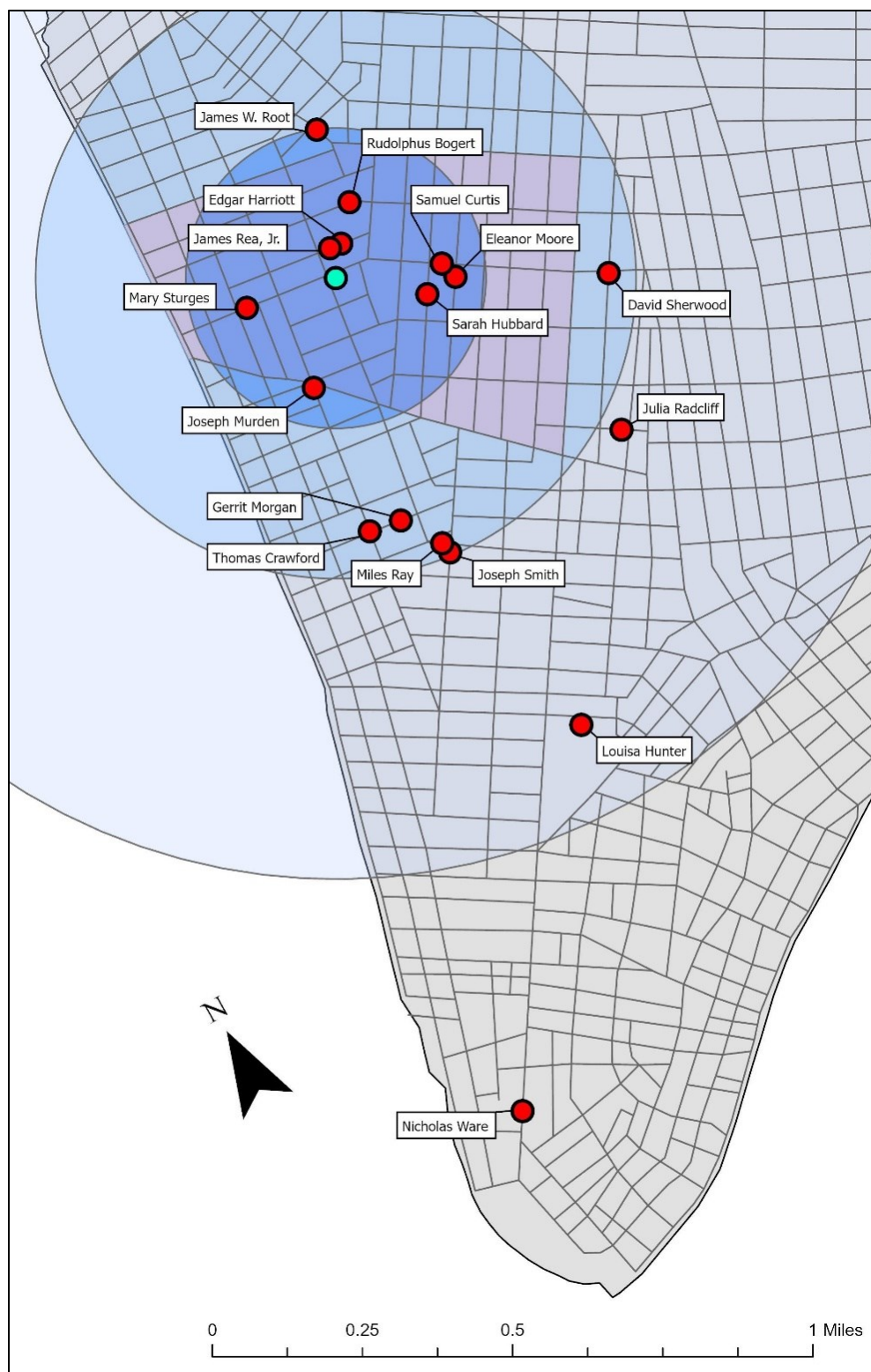
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<sup>177</sup> This is also true of Black congregations, where women took active roles in worship and social movements, “though they were absent in the church leadership” (Sinha 2016:138).

funeral location and final resting place also appeared to decrease when compared by decade (Table 8.6). Fourteen of the funeral addresses were located within a half-mile radius of the SSPC, with an average distance of only 0.38 mile (figure 8.15). Looking at possible travel routes, the average traveling distance between the funeral locations and the burial vaults was around 0.46 mile, with 11 funeral processions likely traveling a half mile or less to access the vaults. The longest distance documented among the obituaries is that of Nicholas Ware’s funeral, who traveled around 1.5 miles to arrive in the vaults from his funeral at 36 Broadway, while the shortest distance was likely the funeral of James Rea, Jr., whose home on Vandam Street was located less than a tenth of a mile from the church.

Decade	Distance Traveled				Average Distance Traveled	Average Radius to Church	Total Obituaries
	Furthest		Shortest				
1820s	Ware	1.5 mile	Rea	<0.1 mile	0.57 mile	0.48 mile	n = 9
1830s	Ray	0.5 mile	Root	0.3 mile	0.43 mile	0.37 mile	n = 2
1840s	Sherwood	0.5 mile	Harriott	<0.1 mile	0.3 mile	0.24 mile	n = 6

**Table 8.6:** Distances over time between funeral locations documented in obituaries.



**Figure 8.15:** Funeral locations documented in obituaries. Address locations, dates and causes of death are listed in Table 8.3.

*“They shall look upon me” : Coffin Glass and Viewing the Dead*

Though it does not directly name the dead like an engraved coffin plate or printed obituary, another artifact identified during excavations of the burial vaults engages with the developing importance of identity and memory in 19th century mortuary ideology. Only one glass artifact recovered from the SSPC burial vaults was interpreted as part of the mortuary context during excavations and analysis by the CRM firms.<sup>178</sup> This artifact was a piece of window glass recovered from the fill layer above Vault 3 and has been identified as a possible fragment of a coffin window. This was concluded based on its association with a fragment of coffin wood exhibiting a beveled edge where a viewing window might have been.

Hinged panels, removable lids, and coffin windows all serve the same purpose within the funerary ritual by allowing mourners to view the body of the deceased, either to watch for signs of life or to honor the memory of the dead by viewing the face of a loved one (Aries 1981:397-404; Bell 1990:58; Laderman 1996:46; Springate 2016:29). Such practices were commonplace among funeral rituals during the early 19th century, but glass coffin windows were unusual when the SSPC vaults were in use. Plate glass artifacts associated with coffin viewing panes, “are commonly found at cemeteries dating after the mid-19th century,” according to Bell (1990:58). The date Bell (1990) cites from Habenstein and Lamers (1955) shows an early use of this coffin style in 1848, coinciding with the last known interments in the Spring Street burial vaults, which closed by 1849.

An additional 587 individual pieces of window glass in varying thicknesses were recovered from the Spring Street site, but it is extremely unlikely that many, if any, were

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<sup>178</sup> Along with intrusive window glass, fragments of glass vessels, many of them bottles and stemware with evidence of several manufacturing methods post-dating the burial vaults, were found at the Spring Street burial vault site; these were associated with the midden context from the adjacent alleyway and post-date the vault-use period.

associated with the burial vaults besides the sample discussed above. There is also no mention of windows existing as part of the vault architecture, and due to the fear of miasmas it is unlikely there would have been. The abundance of window glass was most likely deposited as architectural rubbish in the alleyway, from nearby building projects. Some of the window glass may have originated from the church, deposited during the 1966 demolition or even earlier during the 1834 Race Riots when the original church building was attacked by an angry, anti-abolitionist mob. Though the majority of window glass must be excluded from this analysis, the presence of this single artifact does offer yet another example of the Spring Street congregation participating in changing funerary practices.

### **Potter's Fields and Resurrection Men**

*That the sleepers in the Potter's Field very often had not even that shelter of tombstones makes their stories the more elusive and the more melancholy* (Chapin 1917:14).

While much of the academic literature discussing this transformational period in burial ideology and practice focuses on those who could afford to participate in what were defined as polite and socially proper burial practices, they were not the only segment of society affected by the changing mortuary context. For those Americans who could not afford the materials and rituals of a proper burial, as necessitated by the concept of a good death, the use of pauper's graves and Potter's Fields increased during the 19th century due to growing wealth disparity and class divisions (Laqueur 2015:324-326). These mass burial spaces acquired a new stigma during this period in response to the new commercialization of the funeral industry and the market economy, with the contrast between increasingly elaborate proper burials and minimalistic pauper's graves (Laqueur 2015:291-293, 313-317). The desire for a decent burial was not new, but the fear that it would not happen due to personal poverty was.

Though this dissertation has focused its discussion on the study population of those individuals interred within the SSPC burial vaults, the literal and social proximity of Potter's Field burials cannot be ignored. While the burial vaults were available for use by both the Spring Street and Laight Street congregations, for some the cost of interment – documented in 1835 at 10 dollars for an adult<sup>179</sup> – may have been prohibitively expensive (Novak 2017b). For others, the circumstances of their deaths may have necessitated the use of mass, public graves regardless of social status and financial access to the trappings of a good death; “During one very bad time, the rich as well as the poor were brought there, and there were nearly two thousand bodies sleeping in the Potter's Field” (Chapin 1917:13). This quote from Anna Alice Chapin's history of Greenwich Village describes the Potter's Field burying ground once located in Washington Square and its use during large-scale health events. For example, to preserve public health, in 1799 the city government issued a directive that anyone deceased of yellow fever must be interred in the Potter's Field burying ground (Geismar 2012:22; Rothschild et al. 2022:163). In doing so, such a burial both negates the lived experience of the deceased, who might have been interred elsewhere, due to finances or religious beliefs, and the rituals performed to construct an elevated or idealized identity in death. Note Chapin's use of the sleep metaphor in her description. In addition to the loss of individual identity and memorialization that came with a burial in Potter's Field, this burial ground was later obliterated and transformed into a parade ground and park.

Also contributing to the fear of an improper or inadequate burial was the growing threat of medical grave robbery and dissection; scientific interest in anatomy and the growth of the medical profession during the early 19th century led to an increased demand for cadavers on

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<sup>179</sup> For a table of Spring Street burial vault prices, please refer to Table 5.5, presented in Chapter 5.

which medical students could practice dissection. While no social class was immune to the threat of grave robbery, those who could afford to protect the remains of their deceased employed additional tactics to prohibit access to the coffin. Such methods included double encasing the wooden coffin in a lead exterior, wrapping the coffin in chains or metal bands, or interring the coffin in a deeper grave or closed structure, such as a vault or mausoleum (Cherryson et al. 2012:149-150; Sappol 2002:14). Dissection was, “an assault upon the dead and an affront to the family and community honor” (Sappol 2002:3) because it thwarted the notion of a properly ritualized death; these objects and burial practices intended to inhibit the theft and dissection of the deceased reflect the mortuary belief that to disrespect the physical remains of the deceased is to disrespect the memory and identity of the person who once lived (Cherryson et al. 2012:18, 98, 134-135, 149; Laderman 1996:82). This continued emphasis on the memory of the deceased demonstrates the real fear of resurrection men and cadaver theft; that this activity, which commodifies and objectifies the body, also erases the individual and their identity (Novak 2017b:103).

Those who could not afford protective measures remained under threat of the resurrection men, who stole and sold cadavers to medical schools. Moral associations with socioeconomic class also contributed to the social agenda of legislation<sup>180</sup> that sought to protect the “respectable” classes by permitting medical schools to fulfill their need for cadavers from the unclaimed bodies of those who would otherwise receive a publicly funded burial in a Potter’s Field, further stigmatizing those who would rely on social welfare (Novak 2017b:103-104;

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<sup>180</sup> In New York City the 1788 Doctor’s Riots initiated state legislation banning the act of grave robbing for the purpose of dissection or anatomical study (Burrows and Wallace 1999:386-387). Prior to the riot a group of Black New Yorkers had petitioned City Council to demand that the city’s medical students stop stealing cadavers from the African Burial Ground, which remained in use until 1795 (Cantwell and Wall 2001:279, 281). Their petition fell on deaf ears and it wasn’t until white burial grounds – specifically Trinity Church graveyard – became the target of the resurrection men that the city’s fury was sparked.



Sappol 2002:4, 117-118, 131). Access to burial vaults such as those at Spring Street presumably offered an added element of protection from the stigma of both pauper burials and possible dissection for those interred within, navigating 19th century changes in ideology that shaped mortuary belief and practice while normalizing the scientific study of human anatomy.

*Resurrection and Dissection: Evidence from the Spring Street Vaults*

Within the SSPC burial vaults there was no evidence of any preventative measures meant to deter the actions of resurrection men. Unlike other burial vault contexts, like Christ Church Spitalfields, interments in the Spring Street vaults made use of a single wood coffin and did not include an additional lead outer shell (Molleson and Cox 1993:195, 197, 203-205). The location of the vault entrance may have been enough to satisfy concerned congregants; it is believed that the burial vaults were accessed through the church building itself, through the school or lecture room described in the memoir of church member Samuel Hutchings (1849:9). And the nature of the burial site being a vault, as opposed to an open burial yard, offered an obvious layer of protection that made burial within the vaults an attractive final resting place, though other contexts do show that not all vaults were impervious to body snatchers (Molleson and Cox 1993:203-205; Reeve and Adams 1987:66).

A lack of artifacts demonstrating fear of resurrection men and cadaver theft does not mean such activities were completely absent from the Spring Street vaults, though. Three crania recovered from the SSPC burial vaults presented evidence of post-mortem interventions; skulls belonging to, “an adult male, an adolescent, and an infant were opened for postmortem inspection prior to their interment in the church vaults” (Novak 2017b:88). Of the three skulls, only the adolescent, possibly male and around 14-years of age, was a likely case of dissection

and possible victim to resurrectionists<sup>181</sup> (Novak and Willoughby 2010:141-143). The other two, the adult male and infant aged about one year, were concluded to have undergone autopsies prior to their funerals.<sup>182</sup> This difference in post-mortem interventions emphasizes possible differences in social status between these individuals during their lifespans; autopsies were performed on a particular class of people, to understand physical health and its role in death, and to extend to biography or identity of the individual through that understanding. Dissections were performed on the disenfranchised, the poor and institutionalized, not to understand health and disease as it influenced the life and death of the individual but as a tool, an object, from which to gain broader medical knowledge (Crossland 2009a; Novak 2017b; Sappol 2002).

The disarticulated cranium of the adolescent, sifted from the commingled remains in Vault 2, was concluded to have been the subject of a dissection based on the quality of cut marks used to divide the cranium. Unlike the two autopsies, the dissection of this cranium was perceived as, “amateurish,” with asymmetrical cuts, false starts, and other hallmarks of an unfamiliar practitioner (Novak 2017b:104). The use of this cranium as an anatomical teaching tool did not end with his dissection; cut marks reveal this skull was defleshed and metal pins were, “embedded in the frontal and occipital bones” (Novak 2017b:105), allowing the skull to be opened and displayed. It is unknown where this individual originated or their dissection took place, or how they came to be in the Spring Street vaults; with the modifications and use of his skull as a teaching or display piece, it is not improbable that this individual was added to the vaults after their 1849 closure to new interments (Novak and Willoughby 2010:146-148).

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<sup>181</sup> Lab designation Vault 2 – Individual J, recovered from commingled fill in that vault.

<sup>182</sup> The adult male cranium was recovered from screened fill in the southern trench of the western half of Vault 4, and was designated Vault 4 – Individual HHHH. The infant was designated Vault 4 – Individual A and cranial fragments were screened from commingled fill. For additional details on these burials and the socio-economic and ideological contexts of their autopsies, see Novak 2017b.

A possible explanation for the curious presence of this adolescent skull within the SSPC vaults may be related to the rise of popular anatomy as a topic of fascination and public education during the mid-19th century (Sappol 2002). Though none of the named burials have been identified as physicians by occupation,<sup>183</sup> two of the coffin plate-associated individuals were related to medical professionals: Thomas Crawford (d.1841, aged 67 years) was the father-in-law of James H. Hart,<sup>184</sup> and Miles Ray (d.1835, aged 1 year, 8 months, 17 days) was the son of Joseph H. Ray. Both men were physicians, while Hart also operated a drugstore on Broadway. At the time these men were practicing medicine the subject of anatomy was rapidly growing in popularity beyond the medical profession, particularly in the decades after 1830. This was in part due to the rise of affordable printing, allowing the distribution of anatomical pamphlets and magazines in much the same way abolitionists distributed their message of anti-slavery<sup>185</sup> (Sappol 2002:173).

Physicians and anatomists also presented lectures to medical classes and the general public, with multiple purposes: to benefit their own professional success through financial gain and prestigious connections; to further the anatomical field via acceptance by the laity and support for legislation permitting dissections; and to foster an agenda rooted in bodily reform ideologies of control and the association of health with morality, conquering nature with science and reason, and discouraging overindulgences (Abzug 1994:21; Kruczek-Aaron 2015:19-31; Sappol 2022:168-172, 189-190). Such lectures may have taken place in the schoolroom at the Spring Street Church, in close proximity to the vaults' entrance (Hutchings 1849:9). Anatomical

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<sup>183</sup> It is also likely that, with the diversity of social and economic classes and occupations observed among the congregation and burial population, there may be more physicians represented among the 656 burials recorded in the NYCDR.

<sup>184</sup> Ann Hart, daughter of Thomas and wife of James, died of consumption on December 30, 1834, and was also interred in the Spring Street vaults.

<sup>185</sup> See Chapter 2 and 6.

education became incorporated into the pedagogy of the time period, from the belief that introducing children to, “the moral value of anatomical knowledge,” would instill, “an appreciation of the divine creation” (Sappol 2002:170) and impart mental as well as bodily discipline, “and a rationale for productive behavior” (Sappol 2002:190). Perhaps the dissected skull of the unidentified adolescent was used as a teaching tool in the Spring Street classroom, presented by a visiting lecturer or member of the church as part of a lecture on anatomy and introduced to the vaults sometime after. However the unknown adolescent’s remains came to be interred, though, they eventually rested alongside those of people who may have professionally performed or popularly consumed dissections during their lives (Sappol 2002:168, 170-171, 208-210).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the transitional context of death in 19th century Manhattan, and evidence for the expression and engagement with these mortuary ideologies and practices by the SSPC burial population and their survivors and mourners, who would have arranged for and attended their funerals. As the 19th century progressed and the funeral industry developed, the mass-production of funerary goods and common practice of burying the dead outside population centers would standardize the American funeral; as the Spring Street burial vaults were active during the early years of this transformative period, evidence of these shifts in ideology and practice only just appear among the remains of the vaults. The artifact assemblage from the burial vaults does not present the variety or quantity of mass-produced coffin hardware or other mortuary goods growing in use during the mid-19th century, but for a percentage of the burial population the act of naming the dead was a significant element in memorializing the individual they had been during life, receiving a coffin plate and possibly a printed obituary in the

newspaper. The evangelical and reformer identities of the church congregation also influenced the degree to which they participated in or adopted new perspectives and mortuary customs, possibly discouraging them from acquiring elaborate or highly decorative coffin fittings or prompting them to select simple designs when they did.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

### Introduction

This dissertation tacks between the realms of Life and Death, seeking to trace and place the group of people buried within the SSPC vaults back across the landscape of 19th century Manhattan. Originating in the burial vaults, a location that united this diverse population through a shared space of death, this study began by drawing these individuals out of the vaults and back into the 19th century Manhattan landscape. They traveled through the realm of the Living along different paths, timelines, and lifespans, shaped by their identities and experiences as well as the physical and social landscapes of the city itself, before ultimately arriving back at the shared space of the burial vaults. And as a burial population, their eventual placement within the vaults and the realm of the Dead, below the city streets they walked in life, was constructed by the paths, relationships, decisions, and beliefs shaped and shared by people and things in the realm of the Living.

In exploring the links and pathways across these two realms, this dissertation was guided by two research objectives that focused on understanding how 19th century urbanization and its resulting changes to economic, social, and spiritual landscapes were influenced and expressed by this SSPC burial population, constructing an inquiry into how they dwelled in both life and death:

#### *Research Objective #1*

*How are the influences of urbanization reflected in residential selection trends associated with the church congregation?*

#### *Research Objective #2*

*How are the social and spiritual beliefs of the church congregation reflected in their mortuary practices, represented by the presence of various artifact types in the burial vaults?*

To answer these questions, a theoretical approach including applications of life course and extended life course; landscape, with a focus on urbanization and scapes; and mortuary ideology and practice was applied. This theoretical framework allowed movement between scales, across space and time, and the two realms of Life and Death.

Placing this burial population back within the realm of the Living and the New York City landscape, tracing them across scales of space and time, was achieved through the co-application of identifying information gathered from the coffin name plate artifacts recovered from the burial vaults, the names and details recorded in the NYCDR and other historical documents, and a spatial and temporal investigation of Manhattan through the construction of a GIS. As each individual joined the realm of the Dead, they were re-placed within the burial vaults, a mortuary context that was simultaneously in the process of being created by the thoughts and activities of the living, and recreating the identifies of those interred within, now deceased but persisting and present in memories of those who mourned them. In addition to exploring this burial population within the realm of the Living, the documentary information and GIS were applied to the burial vaults to better understand the expression of changing 19th century mortuary ideology and practice preserved within.

### **Discussion of Findings**

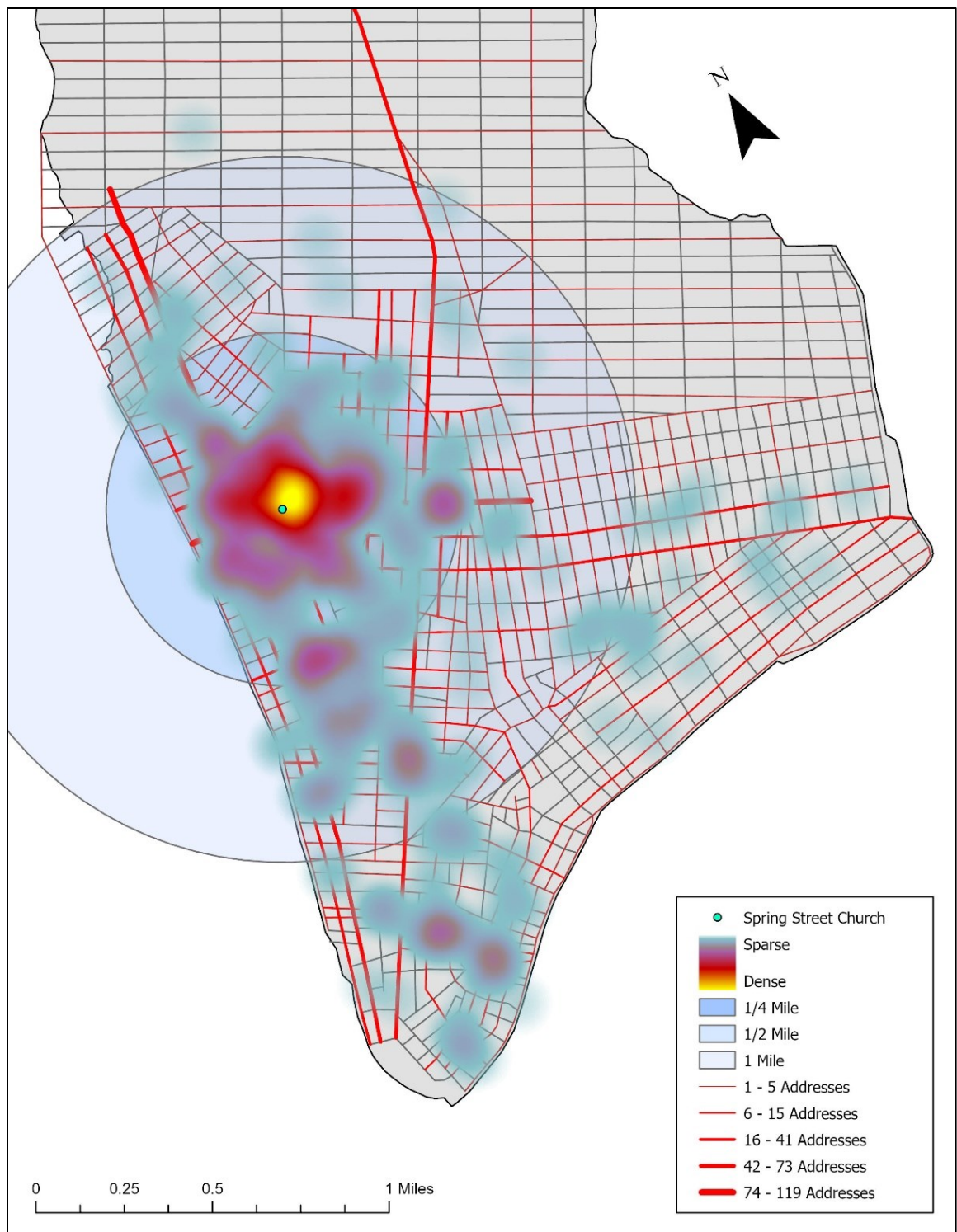
#### *Among the Streets: Life Course*

Though this group of individuals was united in death through the shared space of the SSPC burial vaults, in life they followed very different paths along differing timelines, arriving at the vaults over the span of almost 30 years. And though it is easy to think of this burial population as a collective, the individuals who came to rest in the SSPC vaults represented a variety of identities and experiences, distinguished by age, gender, socio-economic class, and

race, all of which contributed to each unique life history (Ellis 2019; Novak 2017a). By removing these individuals from their resting place within the vaults and placing them back in the Lower Manhattan landscape, this dissertation has sought to identify and explore trends and shared experiences of 19th century New York City, while also highlighting unique details and stories where they could be found among the historical and archaeological records. The construction of the GIS was integral to this repopulating of the Lower Manhattan landscape.

Address data was collected from city directories for years between 1810, when the SSPC was founded, and 1849, when the last recorded interment occurred, for individuals named by the coffin plates (n=31). For years the vaults were in operation, 1820-1849, addresses were collected from the NYCDR beginning in 1822 until the vaults' closure (n=644). In the earliest years (1810-1815), when most of Manhattan's population was still concentrated in the southernmost tip of the island, address points are scattered around the southern wards; the majority of addresses at this time were located south of Canal Street/Grand Street. Over the following decade, addresses fall primarily south of Spring Street, while residential addresses largely stop appearing in the First and easternmost wards after 1815. Residential addresses at this time begin to cluster in the western wards, those that would eventually become the Third, Fifth, and Eighth Wards. This trend would continue into the 1840s even as residential addresses continued to shift further north, following the general trend of uptown residential neighborhoods opening up (figure 9.1).





**Figure 9.1:** Heat map of address points associated with the SSPC.

By the 1820s, the Eighth Ward would be home to a majority of those interred in the burial vaults, followed by the Fifth Ward and the Ninth Ward as addresses shifted north of Houston Street. This is emphasized when buffers of radii quarter-, half-, and one-mile distance are placed around the church location at the corner of Spring and Varick Streets. Among the residential addresses associated with the individuals named by the coffin plates, in 1810 only four of the nine address points fall within the mile-radius of the church. By 1820, half of the 15 address points recorded in that year fall within the quarter-mile radius, with another 4 within the half-mile.

As the residential population shifted uptown, the remaining addresses in the southern wards were almost always associated with business locations, following the general trend of workplaces existing separately from places of residence. This division of home and work spheres was a product of the developing market economy and the shift away from combined home-work spaces occupied by artisans, apprentices, servants and slaves, and families, who often shared in various professional and domestic labor activities (Blackmar 1989; Cantwell and Wall 2001; Scherzer 1992). Among the city directories, evidence of separate home and work locations was documented for the coffin plate-named individuals buried within the Spring Street vaults. This was first observed in 1812, with three households documented by separate home and work locations in that decade. By the 1830s the number of households among this population had grown to 12. For these individuals and their households, the distance between home and work was sometimes longer than a mile. Transportation across the city was first limited to those who could afford private carriages; by the 1830s horse-drawn trolleys and omnibuses ran routes throughout the city (Burrows and Wallace 1999:460; McShane and Tarr 2007:57-59, 63). But at

12 cents for a single trip, public transportation remained prohibitively expensive for many in the working and lower middle classes.

Separate work addresses identified among the coffin plate-associated individuals were almost entirely represented by middle class occupations, defined as requiring additional skills, education, or evidence of business ownership; working class occupations were identified based on skill level and physical labor, including jobs often labeled, “unskilled” (Wall 1999; White and Mooney 2010). Workplaces were generally located in the southernmost wards, offering access to other businesses, warehouses and shipping docks, and other professional resources associated with the merchants and government offices there. Only the father of Joseph C. Smith, a builder named Ebenezer, was identified as working class, though it is possible this household was also part of the developing middle class; rising property values, land speculation, and a building boom made the early 1830s a productive time for Manhattan’s builders (Burrows and Wallace 1999:576-579). Interestingly, at a quarter-mile or less, the distance between Ebenezer Smith’s home and work was consistently shorter than the other households studied, possibly reflecting a reliance on walking between those locations.

Home addresses among both middle and working class households associated with the Spring Street vaults fell primarily in the Fifth and Eighth Wards, frequently along the same streets. A trend of middle class households being located in the western parts of these wards was observed, while working class households were often located further east, closer to the boundary with Broadway and the Sixth and Fourteenth Wards (1832 ward boundaries), which were themselves associated with the city’s working class. Though home addresses trend north and into the Eighth Ward over time for both economic classes, addresses associated with the working class almost entirely fell within the half-mile radius of the SSPC during the entire period the

burial vaults were in operation (1820-1849). This proximity reflects how many in New York's working and lower middle classes continued to rely on walking as a primary mode of transportation (Baics 2020; Cantwell and Wall 2001:200-203, 206).

In addition to economic class it was thought that other aspects of identity, such as race, might be reflected in residential location and movement among the SSPC burial population. Despite accepting Black New Yorkers into the congregation throughout its history, entries designating people of color were infrequent among the named burial population associated with the SSPC (Meade 2007:II-2, 2010:11). Only two entries in the NYCDR were identified as, "a Black," and comparisons between the Laight Street membership records and the NYCDR did not produce additional burials identified by race (LSM 1825, 1828). It is possible that the Black members of the SSPC and Laight Street Church made use of other city burial grounds, such as the Second African Burial Ground located in the southwest Eleventh Ward. It is also possible that some had to bury their dead in public burying grounds, such as the Potter's Field, due to epidemic disease<sup>186</sup> or the cost of interment in the SSPC vaults.<sup>187</sup>

Events impacting public safety and health did not appear to have much effect on the distribution or movement of residential addresses among the SSPC coffin plate individuals. Such events included epidemics, the Race Riot of 1834, and the Great Fire of 1835, the details and influences of which were discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Health and safety were driving influences of the general uptown shift in residential neighborhoods throughout the century, as those who could afford to moved away from the increasingly populated and industrialized southern wards (Burrows and Wallace 1999:359; Cantwell and Wall:217-218; LaRoche

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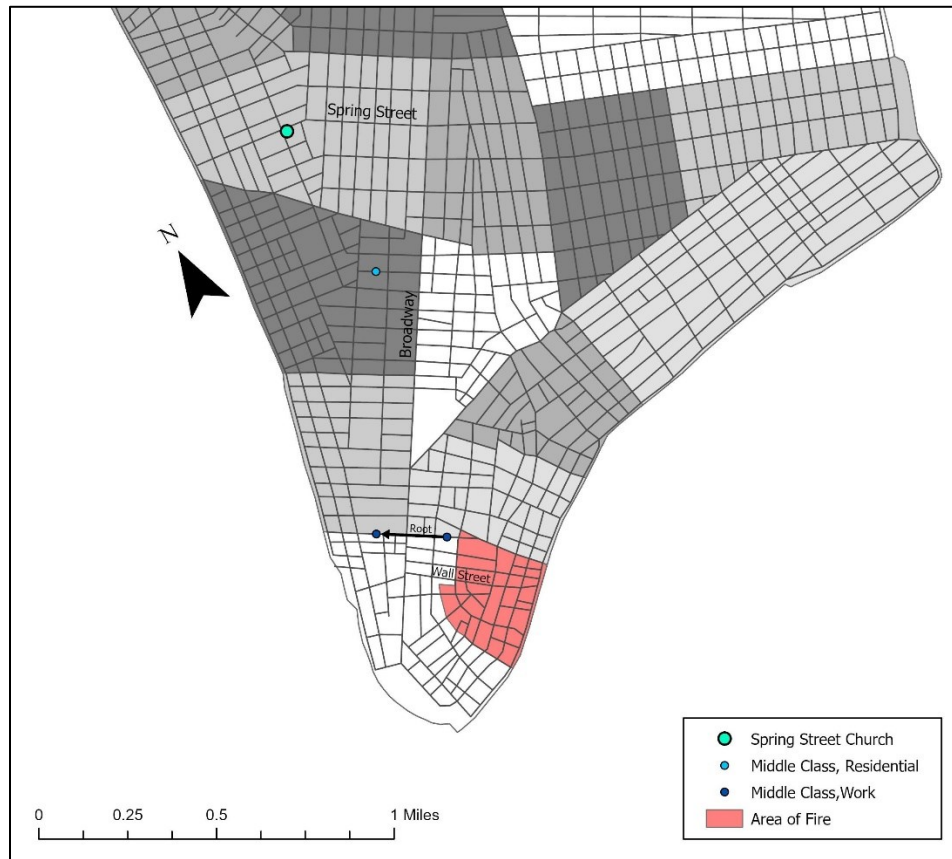
<sup>186</sup> In response to some epidemics, such as yellow fever in the late 18th century, mandates were issued requiring all those dead from the illness be buried in the Potter's Field (Chapin 1917:13; Geismar 2012:22; Rothschild et al. 2022:163).

<sup>187</sup> See Table 5.5 in Chapter 5 for a list of prices found in the SSPC Treasurer's Minutes.

2013:141; Milne 2000a:20-25; Yamin 2000:1, 2001:6-7; Yamin et al. 1997:47). Overpopulation, poverty, and the squalor and vices associated with those areas of the city, such as the notorious Five Points neighborhood in the Sixth Ward, came to be associated with disease and threats to public health. Health reformers, doctors, and city leaders of the time did not attribute such health risk to overcrowding and lack of clean water or other health-promoting resources that made these populations more vulnerable to infectious disease. Rather, they were viewed as living lives of sloth, sin, and intemperance, and were rightly punished by God and nature for it (CB 1972; McNeur 2014:110-111; Rosenberg 1959:42-43, 1972, 1987:74-75; Werner and Novak 2010). During the yellow fever epidemics of the 18th century and continuing into the 1820s, “fever refugees” fled outbreaks of disease in the southern wards where the city’s population was concentrated. Areas of the city such as Greenwich Village originated as rural retreats for the wealthy during the summer months, and eventually grew into urban neighborhoods as the fever refugees first set up temporary homes to escape epidemics before establishing permanent residences as part of the city’s residential shift uptown (Burrows and Wallace 1999:447-448, 579-580; Chapin 1917:10, 20-22; Rothschild et al. 2022:163; Wall 1999).

The northward shift in residential addresses observed among the SSPC population follows this general trend, but not as a direct response to any periods of epidemic disease. One address change was identified as a response to the Great Fire of 1835, taking place between December 16-18, 1835. By the following May the business address of James Root, a fur merchant whose son James W. Root was interred in the SSPC vaults in 1830, had moved 0.2 mile west from 49 Liberty Street to 105 Liberty Street (figure 9.2) (Burrows and Wallace 1999:596-598; Longworth 1835:565, 1836:575). The former location of, “Root & Leonard, fur merchants,” had been located a mere 0.03 mile from the area destroyed by the fire, in the First

Ward. Though address changes were not unusual for this particular business, the proximity of 49 Liberty to the fire and the move in the year immediately following do suggest that this specific move was in part a response to that event.



**Figure 9.2:** Addresses associated with the Root household in 1835 and 1836, detailing the move along Liberty Street of the fur merchant business in 1836, following the events of the December 1835 Great Fire.

While the residential shifts of the Spring Street burial population reflect these broad trends of northward movement and separation between home and workplaces previously observed across the city (Blackmar 1989; Scherzer 1992:183-197), another trend was observed within the GIS; the Spring Street burial population also appeared to converge on the location of the church over time, concentrating in and around the Eighth Ward. This can be observed in figure 9.1. It cannot be known how many households attended the church because it was local, or

moved locally to access this specific church, but this concentration in and around the Eighth Ward does reflect a localized population creating and accessing their own personal geographies centered on the location of the SSPC.

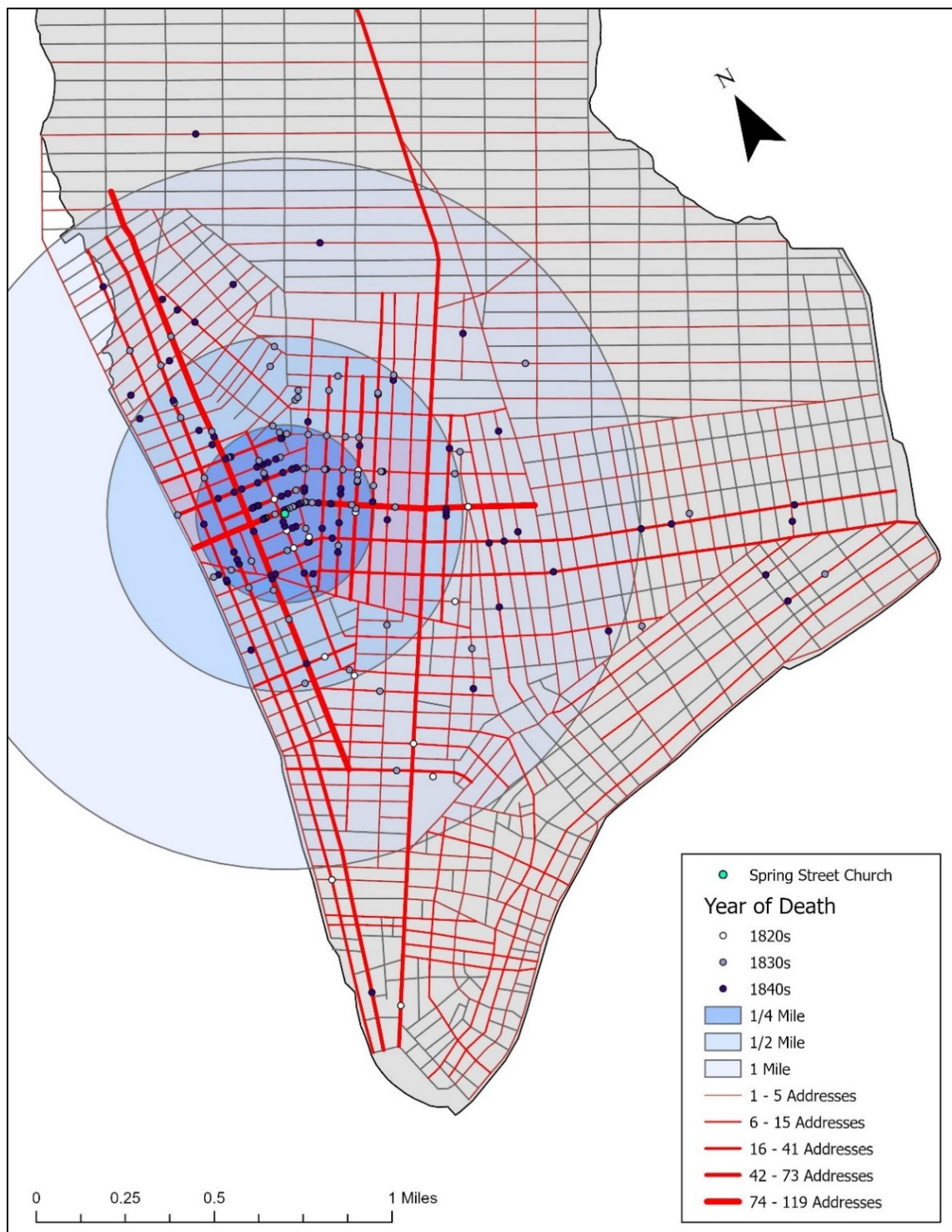
*Along the Streets: Death Course and Deathscape*

The NYCDR documented residential addresses associated with the deceased individual's death and interment in the vaults, representing not only where they dwelled in life but their transition into death and movement along the city streets into the burial vaults. The observed shift in address distribution associated with this population not only reflects access to the church and other social and economic resources throughout the Eighth and adjacent wards, but the distance traveled by funeral processions on the deceased's final journey to the corner of Spring and Varick.

The NYCDR address data reveals that many of the interred traveled a half-mile or less on their final trip into the SSPC burial vaults. A majority of addresses documented in the NYCDR fell within the half-mile radius of the church vaults and concentrated within the Eighth Ward, particularly after 1837 when numbered address locations became the dominant address type recorded in that document (figure 9.3). Previously, documenting residence by street name-only was the most common entry format in this record, a practice not shared by the city directories, which favored cross-streets and landmarks when numbered addresses were unavailable. These observations are also reflected in the address data gathered from obituaries associated with the named coffin plate population; 18 obituaries were identified, with 17 providing specific funeral locations (Table 9.1) (NYEP 1822, 1823a, 1823b, 1823c, 1824a, 1824b, 1825a, 1825b, 1829, 1830, 1835, 1840a, 1840b, 1841a, 1841b, 1842, 1843, 1846). Among these addresses, 7 fell



within the boundaries of the Eighth Ward, while 5 were found in the Fifth, and 14 occurred within the half-mile radius of the SSPC with an average distance of 0.38 mile (figure 9.4).

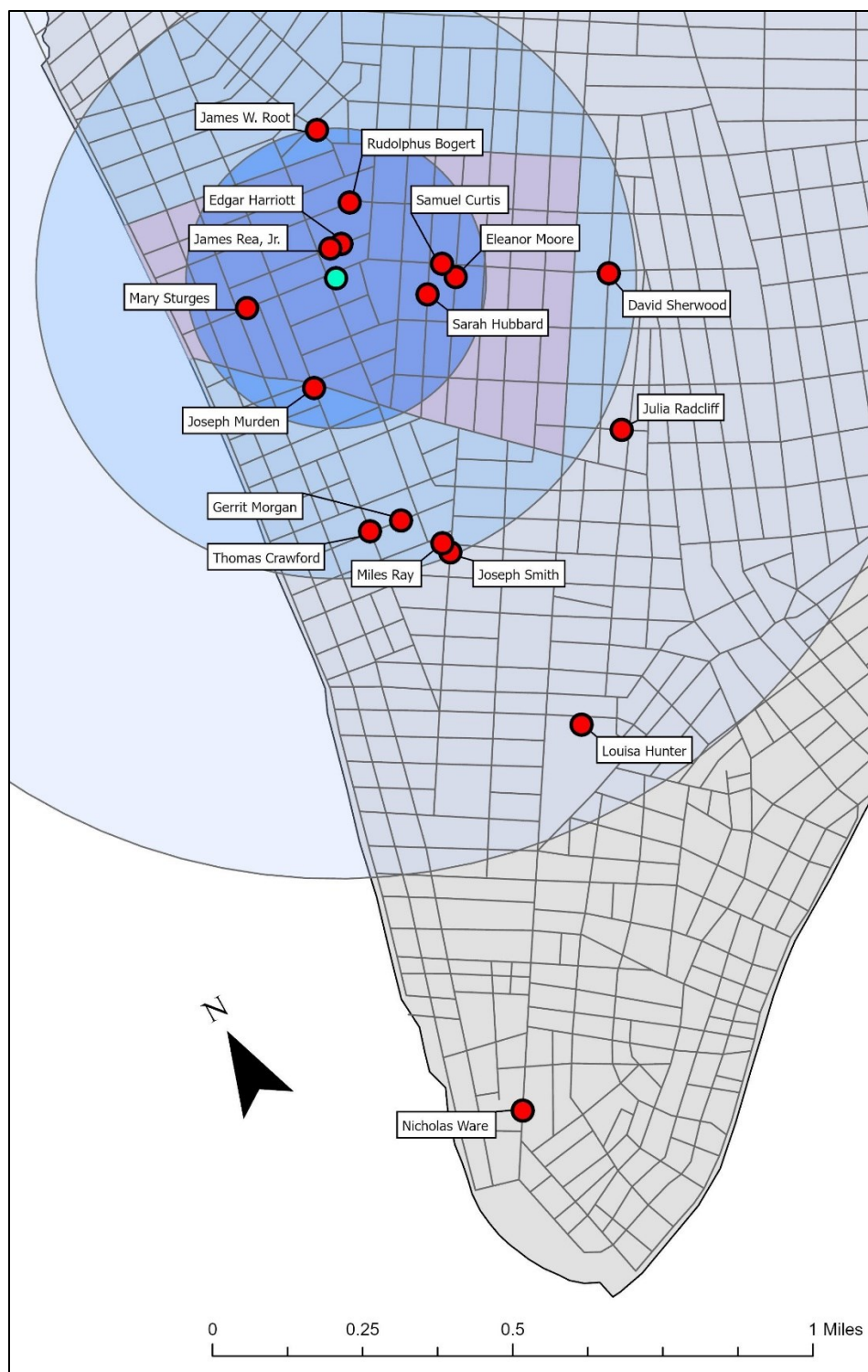


**Figure 9.3:** Distribution of addresses recorded in the NYCDR.



Name	Year of Death	Date of Death	Cause of Death	Presence in NYCDR	Known association with Laight Street Church	Age/Sex	Obituary Address
Samuel Curtis	1822	Jan. 22, 1822	Unrecorded	No		Adult Male	154 Spring-st.
James Rea, Jr.	1823	Apr. 28, 1823	Dropsy in the head	Yes		Adult Male	31 Vandam-street
Julia Radcliff	1823	Jun. 25, 1823	Cholera Morbus	Yes		Adult Female	13 Howard st.
Eleanor Moore	1823	Nov. 4, 1823	Consumption	Yes		Adult Female	83 Laurens st.
Nicholas Ware	1824	Sept. 7, 1824	Dropsy in the chest	Yes	Yes (via D.H. Wickham)	Adult Male	36 Broadway
Mary Sturges	1824	Sept. 15, 1824	Unrecorded	No	Yes (via daughter, Sarah Jarvis)	Adult Female	284 Spring st.
Louisa Hunter	1825	Feb. 1, 1825	Dropsy in the chest	Yes	Possibly	Adult Female	"from the east end of the New-York Institution in Chamber-street"
Joseph C. Smith	1825	Apr. 18, 1825	Consumption	Yes		Adult Male	127 Chapel-street
Gerrit Morgan	1829	Jun. 24, 1829	Rupture of a blood vessel	Yes		Adult Male	32 North Moore st.
James W. Root	1830	Nov. 26, 1830	Inflammation of the lungs	Yes		Subadult Male	20 Bedford st.
Miles Ray	1835	Apr. 19, 1835	Stillborn	Yes		Subadult Male	126 Franklin st.
Edgar Howard Harriott	1840	Feb. 15, 1840	Croup	Yes		Subadult Male	21 Vondam st
Sarah Ogden Hubbard	1840	Dec. 29, 1840	Unrecorded	No	Yes	Adult Female	65 Thompson st.
Joseph R. Murden	1841	Apr. 20, 1841	Consumption	Yes		Adult Male	176 Hudson street
Thomas Crawford	1841	Nov. 7, 1841	Bronchitis	Yes		Adult Male	95 Hudson street
Rudolphus Bogert	1842	Nov. 16, 1842	Ulceration of Bladder	Yes	Yes (via wife, Ann)	Adult Male	20 Charlton street
David Sherwood	1843	Mar. 2, 1843	Palsy hemiplexia	Yes	Yes (via wife, Elizabeth)	Adult Male	72 Crosby St.
Sarah Conger	1846	May 27, 1846	Inflammation of the lungs	Yes		Adult Female	n/a

**Table 9.1:** List of individuals with obituaries mapped in figure 9.4. All typos are sic, information sourced from relevant NYCDR, NYEP.



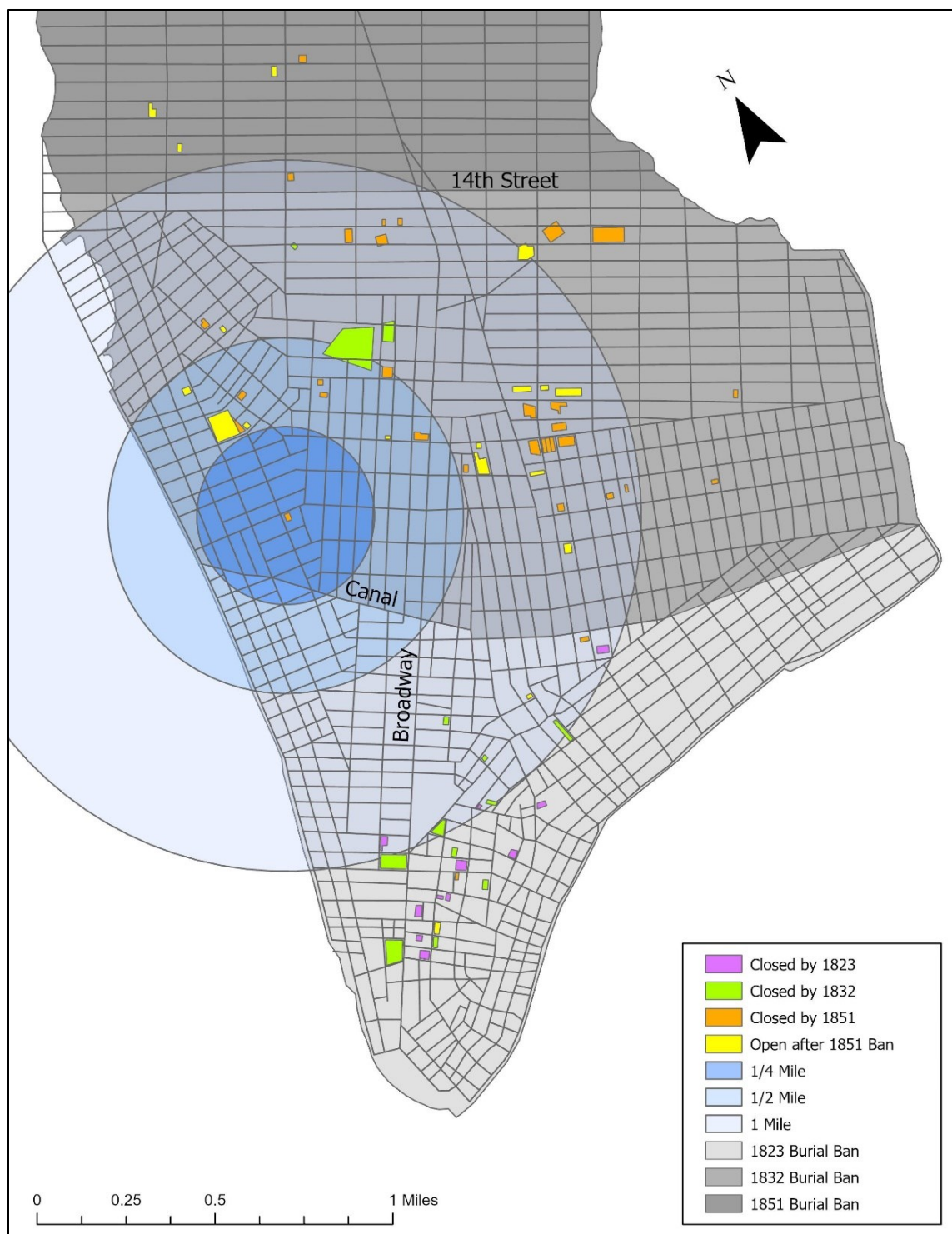
**Figure 9.4:** Distribution of funeral locations associated with the obituaries of the SSPC coffin plate population.

And like the general movement of residential neighborhoods uptown, away from the increasingly populated and commercial southern wards, the distribution of Manhattan's early 19th century burial grounds gradually shifted northward as new locations were opened to serve the growing uptown population – and city bans prohibited the use of downtown burial sites. The SSPC burial vaults and 74 other contemporary burial grounds formed Manhattan's early 19<sup>th</sup> century deathscape south of 24<sup>th</sup> Street (figure 9.5) (Meade 2020:Appendix 1.3). While some burial sites in prohibited areas continued to see new interments following these bans,<sup>188</sup> 57 of these burial grounds would close between 1820 and 1852.

Concerns for public health lay behind the city's burial bans, most notably in 1823, when the yellow fever epidemic of 1822 was cited by the New York Common Council as originating in the burial vaults of Trinity Church Yard located along Broadway in the city's First Ward (NYCC 1917 [14]:577). Burials south of Canal Street were banned in that year, with the boundary being moved north to 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1832, one year after the second pair of Spring Street burial vaults opened for use. Rising land values, limitations on available land to receive new burials, and a growing urban population fueled by mid-century immigration also contributed to the closure of Manhattan's burial grounds, pressured by economic interests and increased demand for burial space (Burrows and Wallace 1999:582-583; Meade 2020).

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<sup>188</sup> Despite being in the area south of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, where burials were prohibited after 1832, the SSPC vaults continued to receive interments until 1849.



**Figure 9.5:** Lower Manhattan burial grounds operating contemporaneously with the SSPC burial vaults, 1820-1849. Adapted from Meade 2020.

*Beneath the Streets: Death Course and the Spring Street Vaults*

This changing deathscape was a reflection and result of changing mortuary ideologies during the 19th century, emphasizing both a metaphorical and literal separation between the realms of the Living and Deceased. Prior to that century, Anglo-American funerary customs engaged with the biological realities of death and decay, reminding the living that they too would one day join the dead. This message was present in the iconography displayed on graveyard memorials and in the activities surrounding the care and preparation of the deceased's bodily remains, as their identity was transformed into that of the dead (Deetz 1996:98; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Laderman 1996:23; Robb 2013a:446-449, 450-453). Attending to the body, washing and wrapping it in a shroud, would occur at home by the deceased's own relatives, usually women (Brown 2009:21, 140-147; Cherryson et al. 2012:22-23; Laderman 1996:9, 27, 29-30). The body would then be transported to the churchyard, a central location for the community, where it would be interred in a grave shaft opened and reused for the purpose. The continued use of churchyard graves, with older remains sometimes removed to a charnel house or pit to make room for newer burials, caused great concern for public health by the 19th century (Cherryson et al. 2012:93; Tarlow 2000:227, 1999:191). The burial grounds of major cities were described as, "atrocious," with the stink and sight of, "partially decayed bodies," (Cherryson et al. 2012:97; see also LeeDecker 2009:148).

In addition to the concern and disgust surrounding overfilled churchyards, often located in the midst of population centers where the living would experience the effluvia and smells of decay as a part of daily life, a growing emphasis on memory and the soul of the deceased coincided with a softening of religious beliefs associated with the First Great Awakening, a religious movement that revitalized spiritualism in America and emphasized emotion (Deetz

1996:98-99; Tarlow 1999:185-189). Rather than focus on the realities and inevitability of death and its biological processes, 19th century mortuary ideology adopted Romanticized and transcendentalist notions of memory and nostalgia, emphasizing the role of the mourner and their grief (Deetz 1996:89-124; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Fisher 1967:164-165; Laderman 1996:43, 47; Luciano 2007:2-5, 26-28; Tarlow 1999:189, 194). Instead of moldering in the ground awaiting the Resurrection, the deceased was now conceived to be sleeping, waiting patiently for a reunion with their loved ones (Laqueur 2015:59, 120, 236-237). The design of garden cemeteries provided a backdrop of natural beauty where mourners could perform their grief or take their leisure.

This transition in mortuary ideology required and was expressed through a similar transformation of mortuary practice, to separate the dead from the living and thus preserve the health and sensibilities of the latter. This was achieved most visibly by the removal of active burial sites from population centers to their rural peripheries, and the rise of garden cemeteries as the dominant and desirable burial location. The garden cemetery movement, which expressed transcendentalist thought through mortuary practice, aligned with urban health reforms and shifting class lines, moving burial grounds outside urban areas while providing the upper and middle classes with recreational sites where they could display their wealth and memorialize their dead through visible monuments in a natural and idealized setting (Francis et al. 2005; Laderman 1996; Mytum 1989; Tarlow 2000). For Manhattan, once such cemetery was located in Brooklyn, across the river and roughly 4.5 miles away from the SSPC: Green-Wood Cemetery,<sup>189</sup> opened in 1838 (Meade 2020:58; Rothschild et al. 2022:205; Sloane 1991:58-59).

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<sup>189</sup> The skeletal remains from the SSPC burial vaults were reburied at Green-Wood Cemetery in summer 2014, following their analysis at Syracuse University.

A change in material culture used to commemorate and ritualize death also occurred, as the funeral was industrialized and developing technologies enabled the production and sale of mass produced funerary goods. Mortuary objects are tools of transformation, necessary to the ritual and fully transition the deceased into their new identity as separate from the living (Ekengren 2013:178; Fowler 2010:359; Geller 2012:115-117). Use of items such as coffin decorations and elaborate graveyard memorials were vital in assuring the deceased received a, “good death” (Faust 2008:6-7).

Mass-produced and decorative coffin hardware are rare among the mortuary artifacts recovered from the SSPC vaults; the most common item used in coffin decoration were the coffin name plates, made from silver-plated copper or white metal and engraved with the name, date of death, and age of the deceased. Decorative butterfly hinges, made from copper, were also found at the site. Escutcheons, handles, and decorative motifs were not found among the vault remains (Mooney et al. 2008). This lack of mass-produced, decorative coffin hardware is in part due to the vaults being in use prior to the large scale availability and adoption of these items within the United States; while these items could be ordered and imported from England, domestic production of these objects began in the mid-19th century (Bell 1990:54-55; Laqueur 2015:293). Thus, increased availability and affordability of such items largely coincided with the closure of the SSPC vaults.

The religious and socio-economic identities and beliefs of this particular congregation likely also contributed to the lack of decorative elements found within the burial vaults. The design of the coffin plate assemblage is very simplistic, especially when compared to

contemporary sites in England<sup>190</sup> and other American burial sites.<sup>191</sup> This is true of the SSPC coffin plates even after a shift in manufacturing technique occurred around 1825; prior, handwrought coffin plates were common among the SSPC assemblage. After the mid-1820s plates are machine-stamped, manufactured using newer technology to produce uniform blanks that could then be engraved on demand (Mooney et al. 2008). Hallmarks of these differing production methods include plate shape and flanged edges; handwrought plates were oval in shape while machine stamped coffin plates were rectangular with rounded corners and flanged edges (figure 9.6). Engraving among the plates was primarily done in a flowing script, with a few plates showing evidence of gothic lettering. Besides the engraved name, age, and date of death, the only other decoration among the plates was often silver-plating.<sup>192</sup> Though size was generally found to correspond with age, with the coffin plates of adults usually being larger than those representing children, other elements of identity were not depicted in the plates' design<sup>193</sup> (Mooney et al. 2008:5.4). Ideological reasons for the simple coffin plates used at Spring Street include an application of middle class reform ideology and Christian identity, distancing the individual named by the coffin plate from the poverty of those who could not afford such an item and the ostentatious displays and elaborate coffin décor employed by the wealthy (Burrows and Wallace 1999:494-495; Sellers 1991:237, 266; Scherzer 1992:142).

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<sup>190</sup> For comparative sites in England, please see Christ Church Spitalfields (Cox 1996; Molleson and Cox 1993; Reeve and Adams 1992), St. Martin's-in-the-Bull-Ring, Birmingham (Hancox 2006), and St. George's Church, Bloomsbury (Boston 2009).

<sup>191</sup> Examples include the First African Baptist Church in Philadelphia (Crist et al. 1996) and the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia (Leader et al. 2022).

<sup>192</sup> One plate fragment does exhibit evidence of decorative engraved scrollwork (Vault 2, FS 161 #1).

<sup>193</sup> At contemporary burial sites in England, coffin plates exhibited heraldic iconography and shapes that were found to correlate with the age, gender, and marital status of some of the interred (Cox 1996:105; Hancox 2006:156, 158; Molleson and Cox 1993:200). Employing such designs was not rigidly adhered to at these sites, though.





**Figure 9.6:** Examples of morphology found among the SSPC coffin plate assemblage. Top left: coffin plate of Samuel Curtis, d.1822, silver-plated copper, smooth-edged oval, hand wrought. Top right: coffin plate of Mary Sturges, d.1824, silver-plated copper, smooth-edged rectangle, hand wrought. Bottom left: coffin plate of Nicholas Ware, d.1824, silver-plated copper, flanged-edge rectangle, stamped. Bottom right: coffin plate of Ann Semantha Whelpley, d.1825, silver-plated copper, flanged-edge rectangle, stamped. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

In addition to the design of the coffin plates, their distribution within the vaults is reflective of the site's use during this transitional period in mortuary custom. Applying data gathered from the skeletal analyses, artifacts, site report, and historical record, the GIS sought to expand on previous analyses while composing a spatial representation of the vault data (Mooney et al. 2008). Within the GIS it was observed that burials associated with coffin collapse were often recovered from the areas adjacent to the vault walls. This is suggestive of how burials were organized within the vaults, following a Judeo-Christian east-west orientation and stacked against the walls (Laqueur 2015:126; Mooney et al. 2008:4.24). Coffin plates were similarly

distributed. Both skeletal remains and artifacts were more numerous in the earlier vaults, Vaults 3 and 4, opened for use in 1820. Reasons for this have been discussed throughout this dissertation and include their longer use period, the removal or rearrangement of remains as a component of 19th century vault maintenance, or destruction and disturbance associated with the 20th century construction events that converted the site first to a parking lot and then a hotel. A conversation with the site archaeologists also suggested that familiarity with the site and an evolving methodology improved identification and altered collection practices as the excavation progressed into those vaults (Mooney, pers. comm.).

Twenty-six coffin plates were recovered from the remains of Vault 4. Of these, 21 were identified by name.<sup>194</sup> Within this vault, coffin plates were most frequently recovered in the southern and western sections of the vaults, with 11 originating in a large FS location associated with commingled remains and fill (figure 9.7). Subadult coffin plates were found in these sections of the vault, while only adult coffin plates were identified among the burials located through the eastern half of the vault. Along the eastern wall, working in 2-foot trenches approximating the position and size of the coffins once stacked there, the archaeologists recovered nine coffin plates. Only one was unidentified; the rest identified adult burials. The skeletal remains within this vault produced 150 burials (figure 9.8). Of the 77 subadults, 59 were recovered from the commingled remains without specific spatial information. Adults (n=73) were more numerous in the other sections of the vaults, particularly along the southern wall and boundary with Vault 3.

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<sup>194</sup> Representing 22 individuals; the coffin plate of the Cox brothers, Alfred Roe and Edward Dorr Griffin, was a shared plate, documenting both of their deaths in January 1832.



**Figure 9.7:** Distribution of coffin plates within the SSPC burial vaults.



**Figure 9.8:** Distribution of skeletal remains within the SSPC burial vaults.

Of the 25 coffin plates found in Vault 3, 9 were identified by name, all representing adults. This is reflected in the skeletal remains, where adults (n=32) were more frequently identified than subadults (n=4). Within this vault a similar spatial distribution to Vault 4 was observed, with remains occurring frequently along the northern and southern walls separating Vault 3 with the neighboring vaults. The lack of subadult coffin plates and skeletal remains is curious, but it is unknown if this vault was not often used for interring subadults during the 19th century, or if this is a result of poor preservation or disturbance from 20th century construction activities at the site.

Within Vault 2 the fragmentary remains of four coffin plates were recovered, with only one identified. This plate, belonging to the subadult male Edgar Howard Harriott (d.1840, aged 3 years, 8 months), was recovered from a sort of the commingled remains in that vault. Of the total 31 burials recovered from this vault, a majority (9 adults and 10 subadults) were found among the commingled remains. Evidence of discrete and collapsed burials were again found along the walls of the vault.

Vault 1 was the most disturbed by the 2006 construction activities that led to the rediscovery of the burial site. Three coffin plates, all identifying adult burials, were found in large and unspecific FS locations associated with, "Fill," and, "Find Spot 1," referencing early analysis of construction-disturbed remains. Eleven burials, 7 adults and 4 subadults, were identified within this vault, though no discrete burials were identified in situ and all skeletal remains were collected from the disturbed fill. No distributional trends can be examined in this vault due to construction activity and disturbance associated with rediscovering the site.



## Significance and Future Research

This dissertation engages with an existing and ongoing body of research into the skeletal remains from the Spring Street burial vaults (e.g. Ellis 2010, 2014, 2019, 2020; Hosek et al. 2020; Novak 2014, 2017a, 2017b, 2022; Novak and Willoughby 2010; Werner and Novak 2010), while contributing further analysis into the identities of the burial population and situating them and their burials within the larger context of early 19th century Manhattan. Along with recent studies like the Seneca Village project (Linn et al. 2023; Rothschild et al. 2022; Wall et al. 2019; Watson 2019), this investigation into the SSPC offers insight into a period of New York history that is understudied due to, primarily, the constant rebuilding and restructuring of the city's physical landscape. It also presents an especially dynamic period of economic and social change through the lens of a unique population – that of a racially and economically diverse abolitionist church congregation.

In the summer of 2014, the skeletal remains excavated from the SSPC burial vaults were transported south, across New York State, and reburied in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn. The following October a memorial service was held at First Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue<sup>195</sup> (Dunlap 2014). At that memorial service a modern audience connected across centuries with the story of a 19th century abolitionist church congregation; sermons drew comparisons to their own present, one shaped by the recent protests in Ferguson, Missouri, and the fatal shooting of Michael Brown that summer.

Through those memorial events and ongoing study of the burial vaults, visits with descendants and sharing their names, the life courses of these individuals are further extended beyond the memories of those who first memorialized them. In the process, a new Spring Street

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<sup>195</sup> Formerly in the Fifteenth Ward, as its boundaries stood in 1832.

community is emerging. This is a challenge to the notion of death as a static state of eternal rest, where once a body is buried it ceases to change or influence the realm of the Living; biological decay, ongoing changes to burial sites as new interments are added, the experiences of sight and smell and memory already disprove that notion. By sharing the names and stories of those individuals who were buried within the SSPC vaults, they remain agentive and active in our present, impacting, influencing, inspiring those who learn their stories and study them (Crossland 2009b; Lucas 2015; Novak 2022; Sofaer 2011).

Future directions of study include pursuing potential research avenues with the intrusive artifacts and conducting additional research into the names from the NYCDR burial population and the Laight Street membership records, particularly among the list of Black church members (LSM 1825, 1828). These potential projects, like this dissertation, begin at the vaults and expand beyond to the surrounding street corner and into the Eight Ward, reconstructing that space and seeking to understand the role and experience of the SSPC within it into the post-vault period of the late 19th century. But these projects will continue to have their own difficulties, not dissimilar from what was encountered in this dissertation study. Women and children identified within the NYCDR and Laight Street records will remain invisible without a father or husband to trace through the documentary record. And the alleyway that ran alongside the burial vaults prior to construction of the 1960s parking lot was an interstitial space, collecting lost items and refuse from the surrounding street. It is believed that the intrusive artifacts originated in that alleyway. At the 2019 Theoretical Archeology Group (TAG) meeting hosted at Syracuse University, the alleyway as a space of transformation was explored through an installation of artwork and artifacts, in collaboration with New York City artist, Cora Jane Glasser (figure 9.9) (Hicks et al. 2019).



**Figure 9.9:** “Alleyway Archaeology: Slow Spaces Betwixt and Between.” An exhibition of art and archaeology, in collaboration with New York City artist, Cora Jane Glasser. Presented at the 2019 TAG meeting, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.

The SSPC and its congregation represent a history of American activism that remains relevant to today. Spring Street’s participation in the abolition movement and other social reform movements were part of a conversation on racial and class disparities that continues to the present. Though membership began to decline in the late 19th century, the SSPC adapted to the post-abolition period by providing social resources for the changing Eighth Ward and its growing immigrant population (NYT 1956). Any future studies into this congregation and the SSPC must consider the church’s history of activism and role as a nexus of social agency within the surrounding community.

## **Conclusion**

In December, 2006, a series of events and decisions, culminating in the planned construction of a glass hotel-condominium tower, led to the rediscovery of a series of burial



vaults associated with the Spring Street Presbyterian Church, formerly located at the corner of Spring and Varick Streets in what is now SoHo, Manhattan. This dissertation study originated at these burial vaults, a location shared by the roughly 656 individuals interred there and the starting point for identifying them. But how did they get there? To understand that, they were drawn out of the vaults and relocated throughout the 19th century Lower Manhattan landscape using 1,314 address records sourced from the NYCDR and city address directories (e.g. Longworth). Using these addresses, identifying homes and businesses where these individuals and their households lived and worked, this burial population was brought back into the realm of Life and tracked across scales of space and time, traced until they were once again placed back in the burial vaults upon their deaths.

As such, this project has been an exploration of those two realms: the realm of the Living, above and along the streets of Manhattan, and the realm of the Dead, buried below those same streets. But not all of these individuals moved in the same directions or at the same pace. They came to rest in the vaults at different times, spread across roughly 30 years that the vaults were open and receiving burials. Larger events, such as wars, epidemics, riots, and disasters, intersected their individual lifespans at different points, resulting in a variety of experiences this study only began to scratch the surface of, and based on varying social and economic identifies such as age, gender, race, and economic class.

By nature of their shared identity as the Spring Street, “burial population,” certain comparisons and collectives were a necessary component in this analysis. This was especially true of the discussion of the burial vaults, their shared space, and its role as an archaeological context. But this group of individuals should not be solely conceptualized as a singular community of shared experiences and homogenous affiliations with the church where they were

interred, or as equal and enthusiastic proponents of abolition. Their identities were diverse, their personal associations with and attendance at the SSPC largely unknown, and they followed a variety of physical and metaphorical paths along their own personal timelines, lifespans, and landscapes (Novak 2017a).

And yet, in spite of these different identities, paths, and paces, these individuals came together, choosing to worship at this specific church in the heart of Manhattan's diverse Eighth Ward – and in doing so, choosing to associate with difference and create a shared space among the pews and within the vaults. In constructing this community<sup>196</sup> they did not erase those differences, nor were their experiences of the church and burial within its vaults necessarily equal or equitable, as demonstrated by the practice of segregated pews within the church building prior to 1831 and the discussion of the anatomized craniums in Chapter 8 of this dissertation. But by choosing the SSPC, these people chose to participate in an integrated and abolitionist congregation while maintaining their own individuality, recognizing that in each other, and crafting new identities based in those associations and their shared context of the church (Novak 2017b:107-108; Young 1990:230-231, 237-239). As seen in Chapter 7's discussion of the 1834 Race Riots, choosing to attend the SSPC and participate in that community was not without risk and perhaps serves to emphasize, at least for some, the significance and choice of attending and associating with this specific church over others<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> In engaging with the notion of scapes (also conceptualized as flows or frictions) as they were presented in Chapter 1, and drawing from Young (1990:237-238), *community* as it exists within the urban landscape is not an idealized expression of unity, but instead the sharing of a common environment or context through which one navigates, coming in and out of contact with difference such that identities are constructed and reconstructed by the individual and the others that perceive them.

<sup>197</sup> When Rev. Cox established the church at Laight Street 43 congregants remained at Spring Street (Meade 2007:II-3; Mooney et al. 2008:2.3). Though the distance was only five blocks south and the church was left without a permanent pastor until 1828, these individuals made the choice to remain at the SSPC. This event and the presence of at least eight other Presbyterian churches operating in and adjacent to the Eighth Ward in 1825 demonstrates the role of choice in attendance at the SSPC, something I would like to continue to explore (Longworth 1825:472-477).

located in the Eighth and surrounding wards. And the Riots, along with the education programs and other acts of service offered by the church to the surrounding community throughout its history, serve as examples of how this congregation of individuals, their shared beliefs and actions for social reform, reverberated outwards from the corner of Spring and Varick and shaped the landscape of the Eighth Ward.

This is what it means to dwell, as Ingold explored the concept (2000:185-186, 189-190); the presence of these individuals in the SSPC's pews and vaults was not merely or necessarily a product of proximity to the corner of Spring and Varick, but a result of intentional and agentic choices within that particular landscape and their experience of it. This dissertation, as an exploration of their lives and movements across the Lower Manhattan landscape, has sought to preserve the individuality of those buried within the vaults by illustrating their different paths and paces, while asking how the context of a rapidly urbanizing city shaped those experiences. The addresses locating these individuals throughout the urban landscape followed trends observed among the city's general population, such as movement northward, away from the growing commercial core in the city's southern wards and increasing frequency among households with home separated from their workplaces (Blackmar 1989; Scherzer 1992). But these movements also demonstrate the localized and personal geographies of this congregation, centered on the location of the church in the racially and economically diverse Eighth Ward.

The influence of the SSPC shaped the burial context within its vaults, which were active during a period of transition in Anglo-American mortuary ideology and practice (Deetz 1996; Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Fisher 1967; Laderman 1996; Laqueur 2015; Luciano 2007; Tarlow 1999, 2000). The mortuary artifacts and orientation of burials recovered at the site reflect this period of transition, both symbolizing new ideologies surrounding the identities of the dead and

those who mourn them, and reflecting older burial traditions and beliefs surrounding resurrection and the spirit. But coffin hardware and items evoking the new mortuary ideology are few and simple in design, leading to the conclusion that the SSPC might have played a role in their acquisition and use, either through church ideology eschewing elaborate designs or the church sexton offering a limited selection for purchase.

Though these individuals were living, moving, working, and dying in a rapidly changing urban context, their lives – and ultimately their deaths – were influenced by their associations with the SSPC. As such, this dissertation has been an exploration of how both Manhattan and the SSPC shaped and structured the lives and deaths of that church's early 19th century congregation.

## Appendix A: Manhattan Ward Boundaries Over Time

Figure A.1: Ward Boundaries, Street Reference

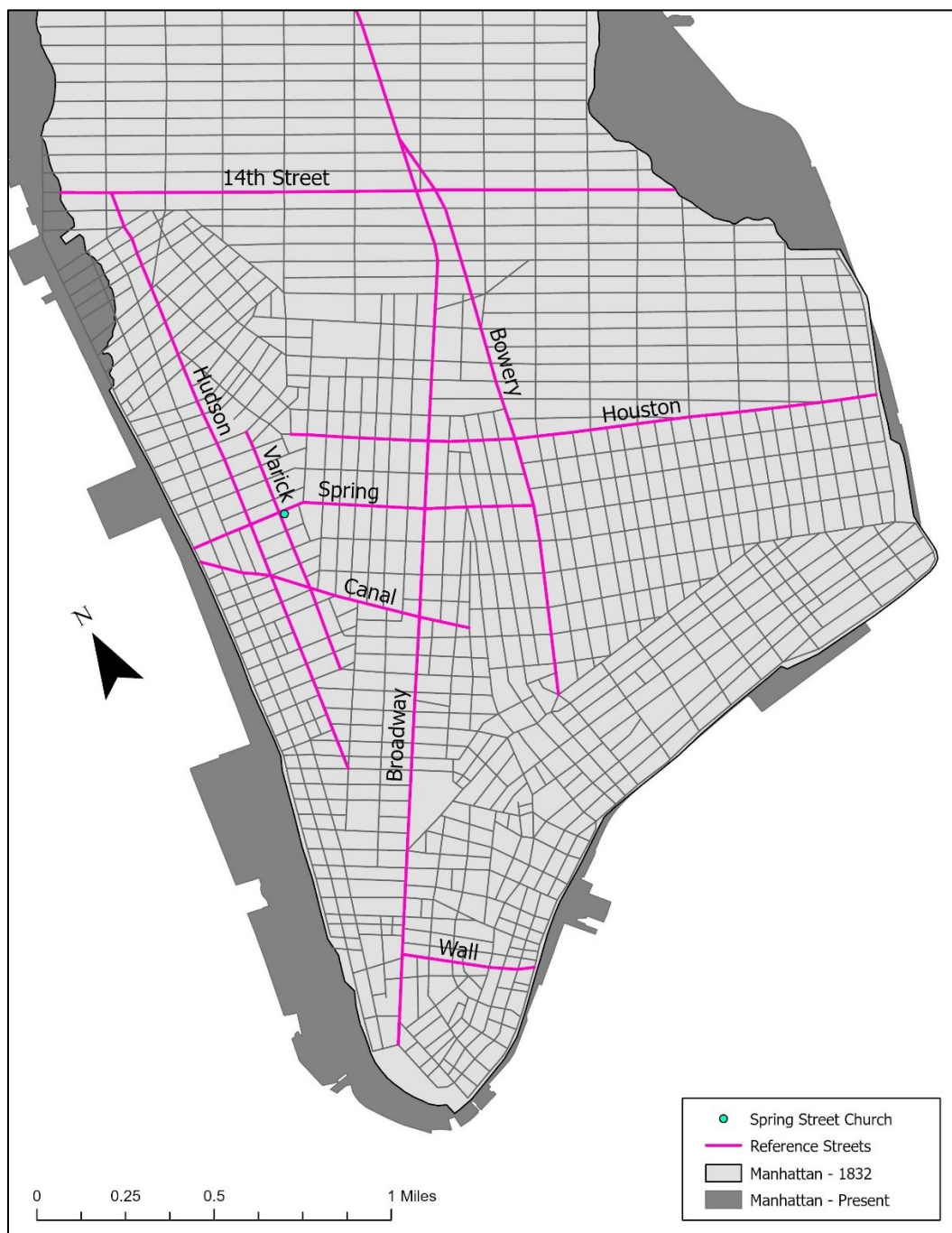


Figure A.2: Ward Boundaries, pre-1791

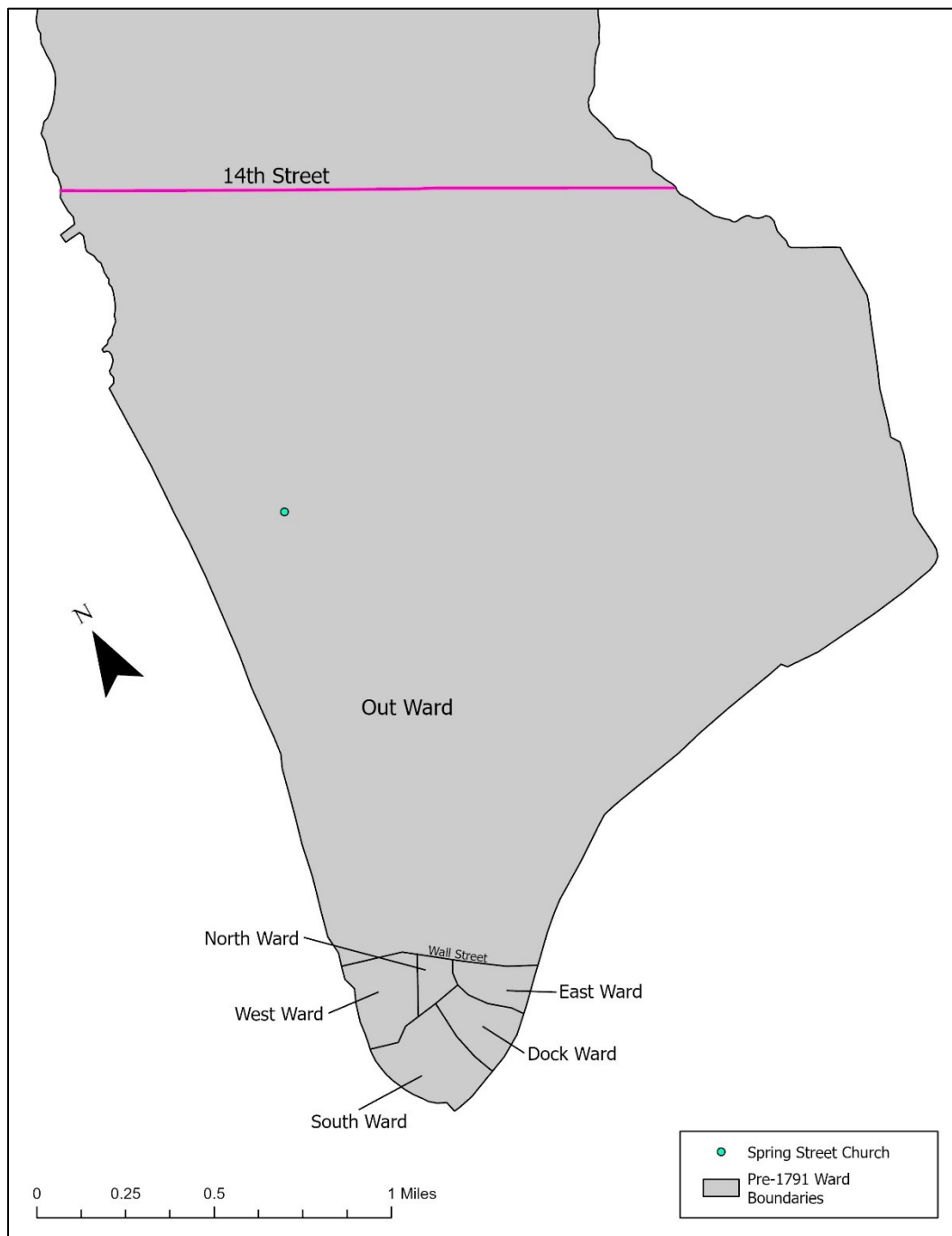


Figure A.3: Ward Boundaries, 1791

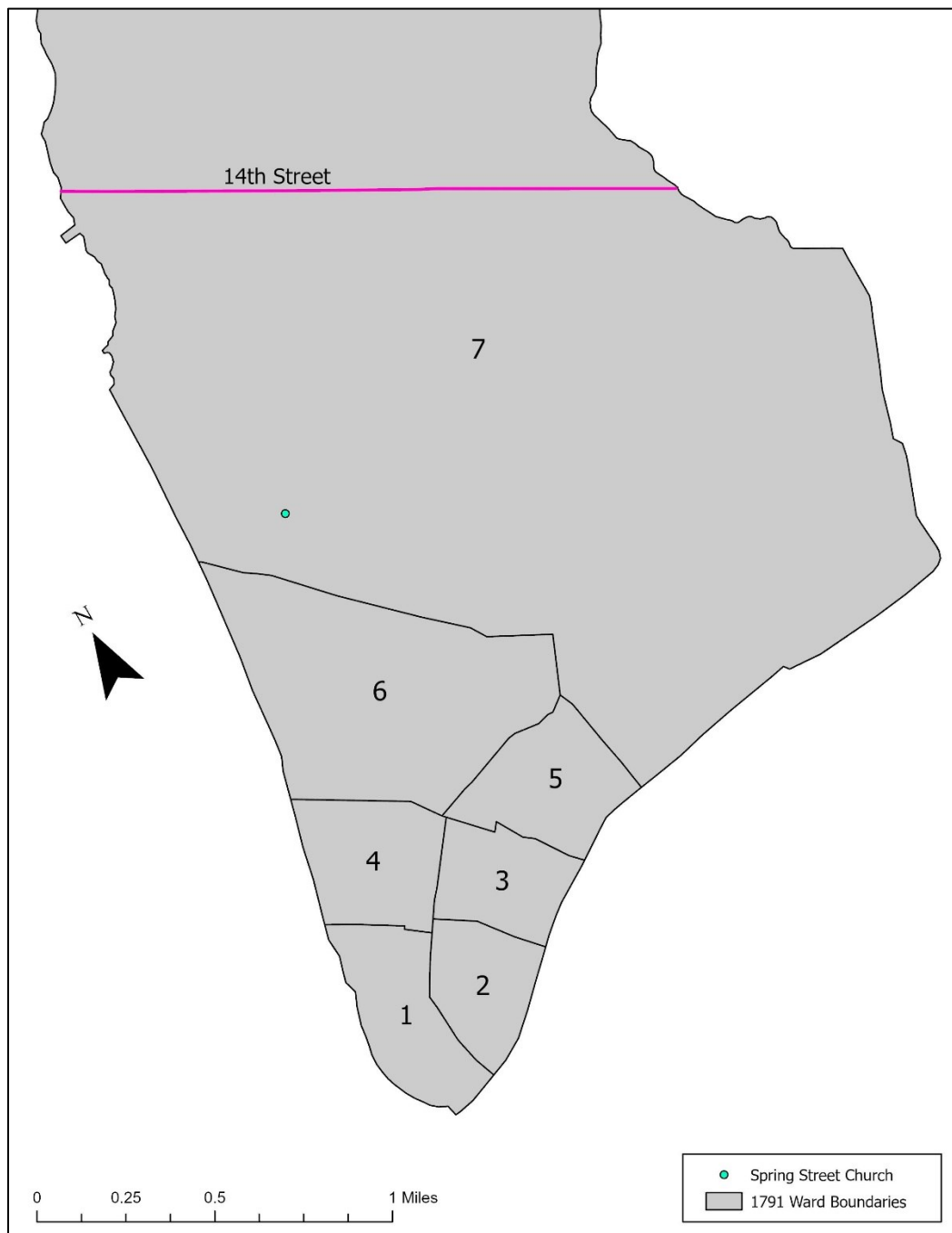


Figure A.4: Ward Boundaries, 1803

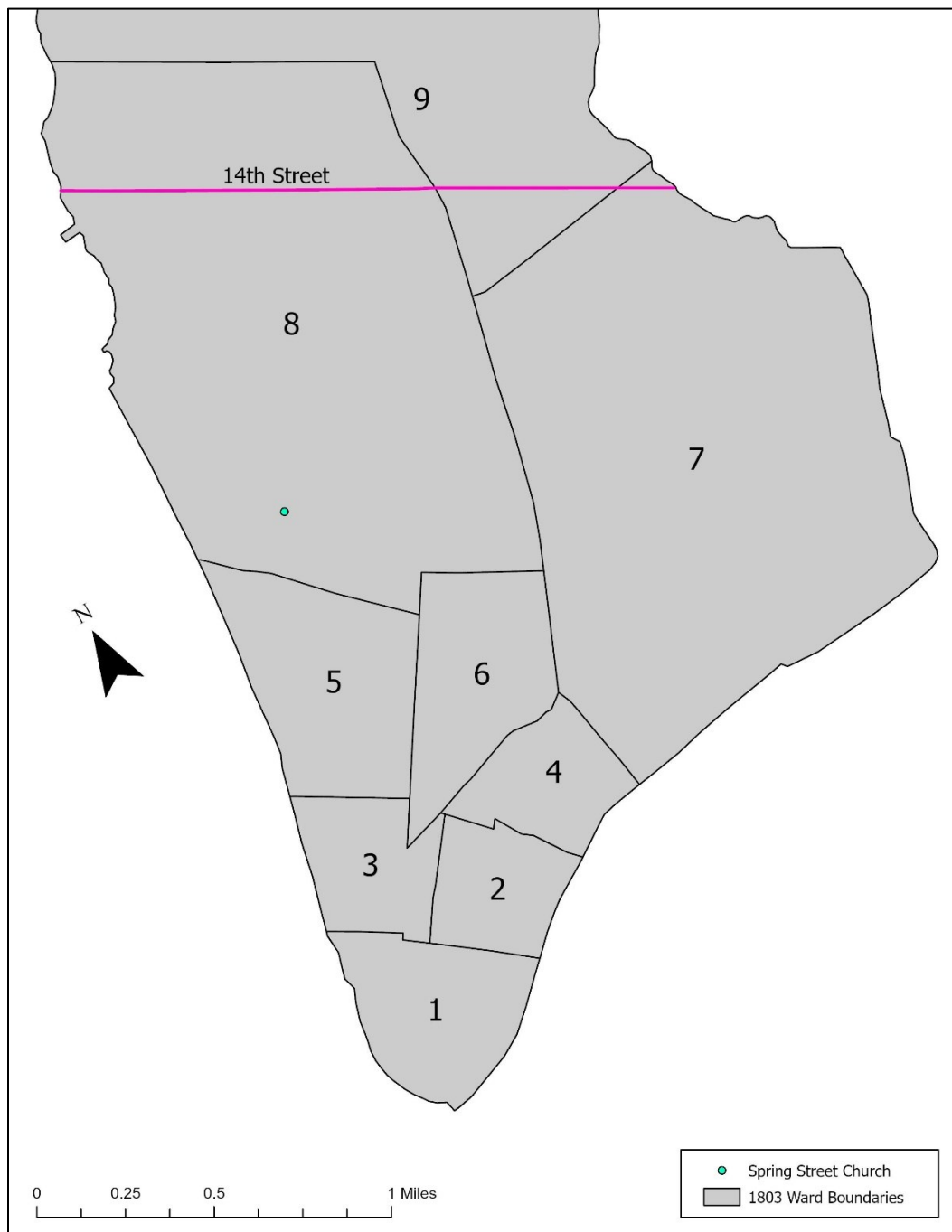




Figure A.5: Ward Boundaries, 1808

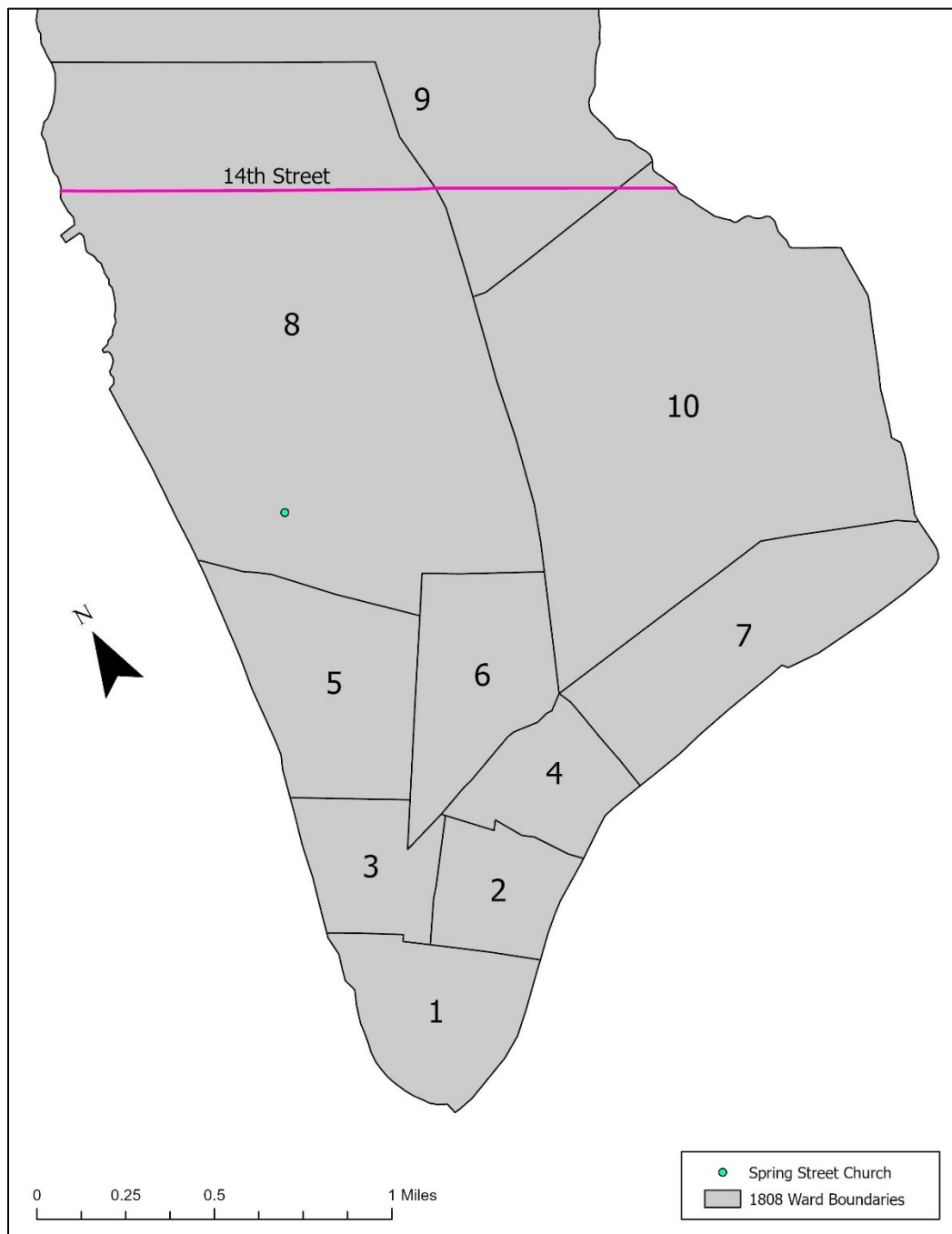


Figure A.6: Ward Boundaries, 1817

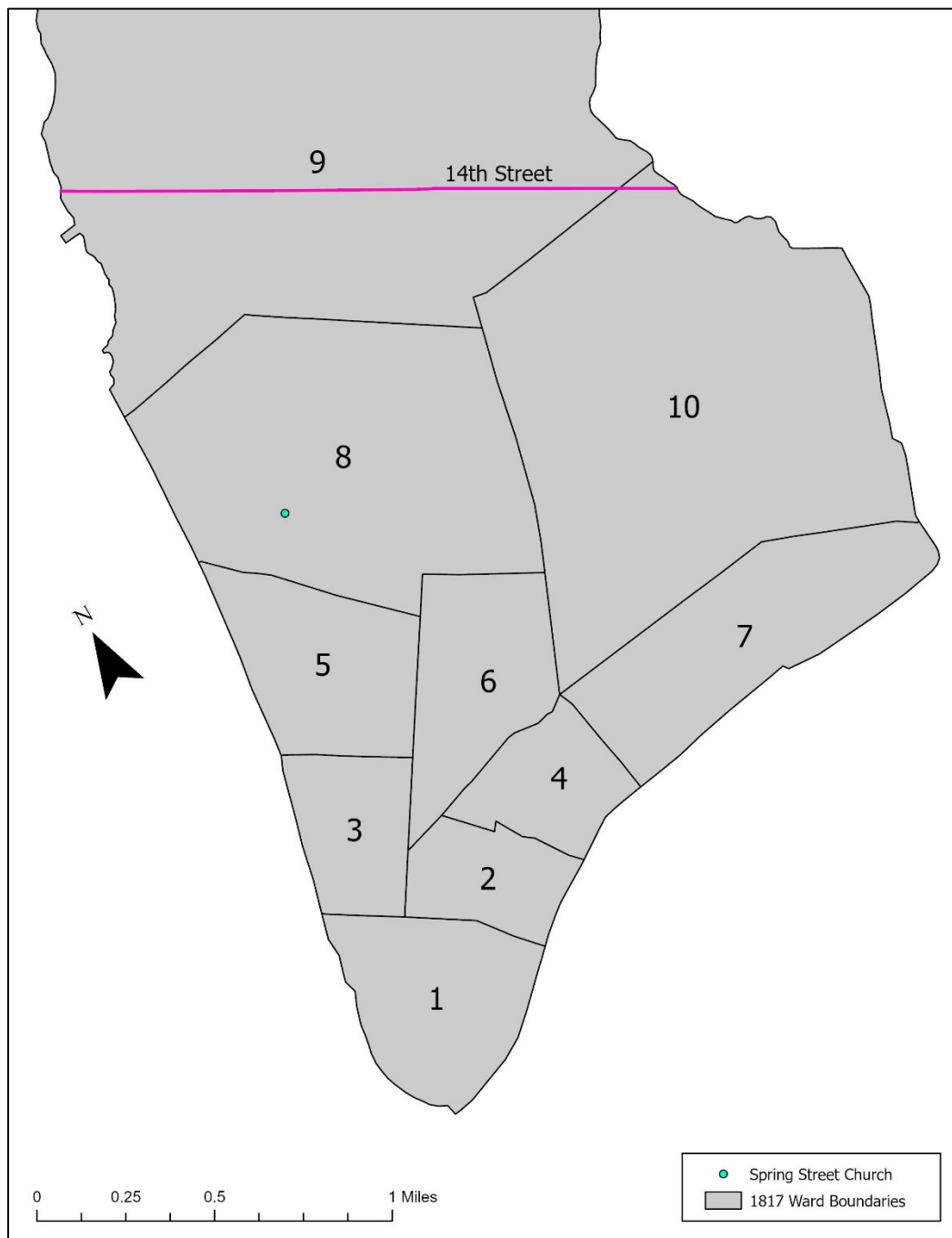


Figure A.7: Ward Boundaries, 1825

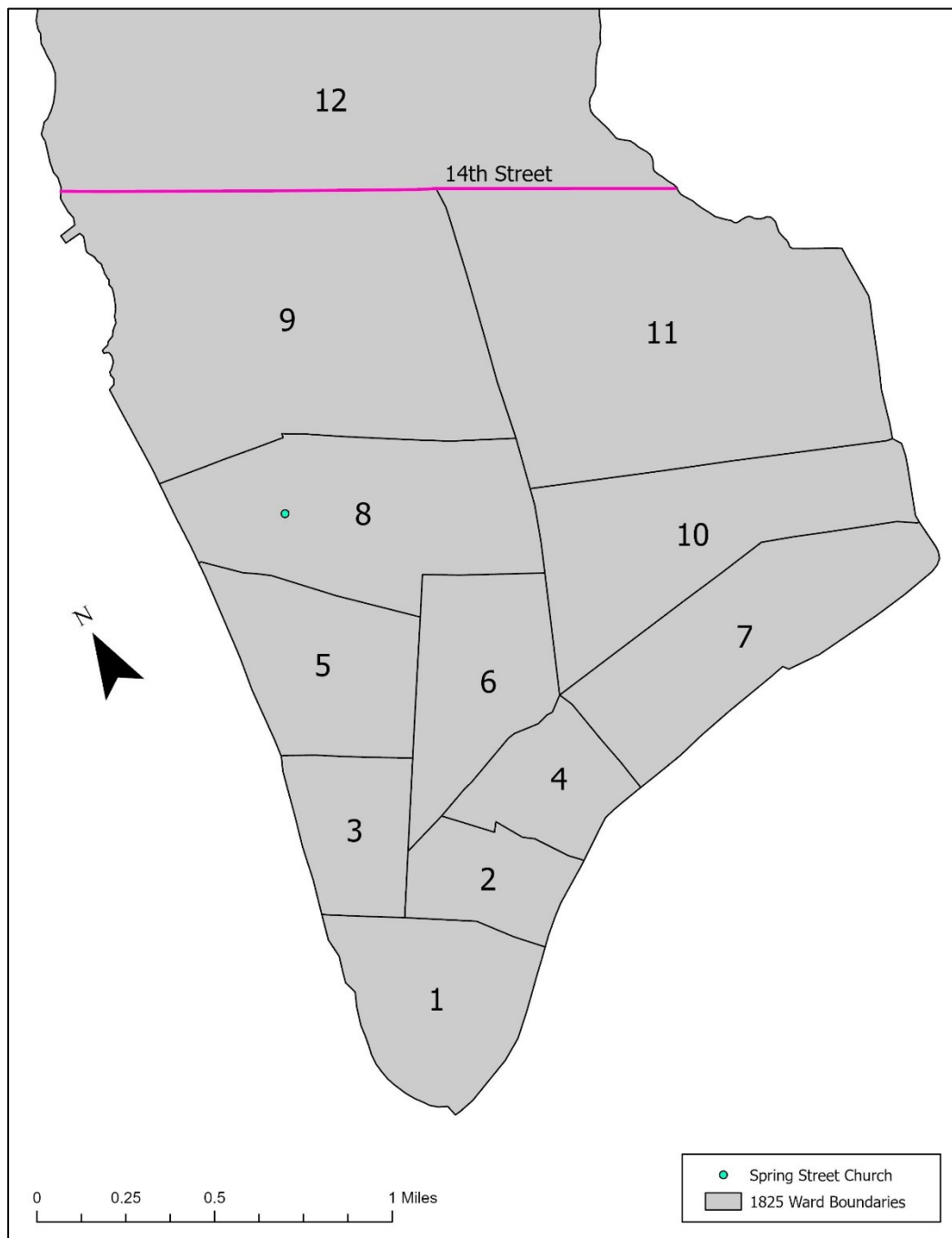


Figure A.8: Ward Boundaries, 1827

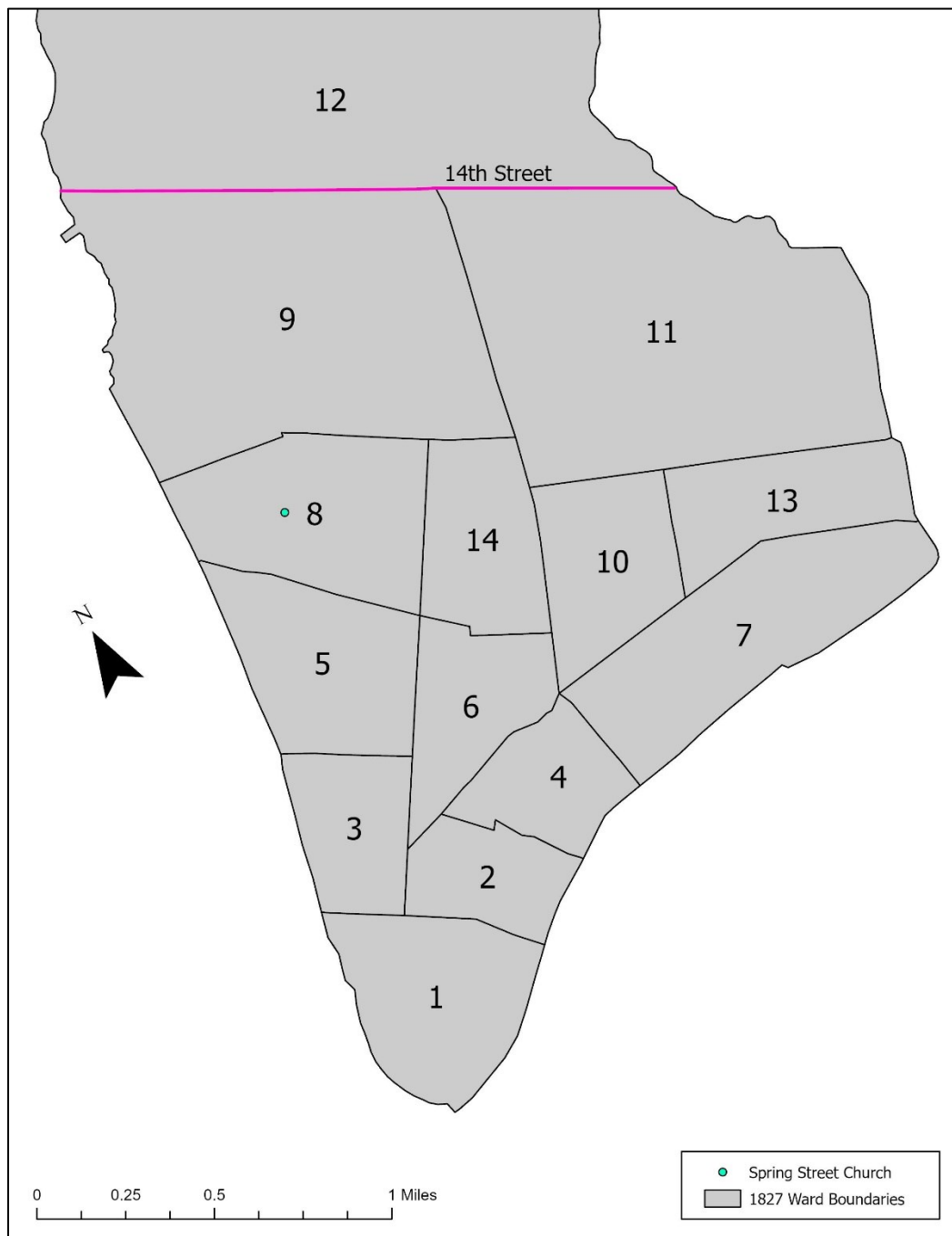


Figure A.9: Ward Boundaries, 1832

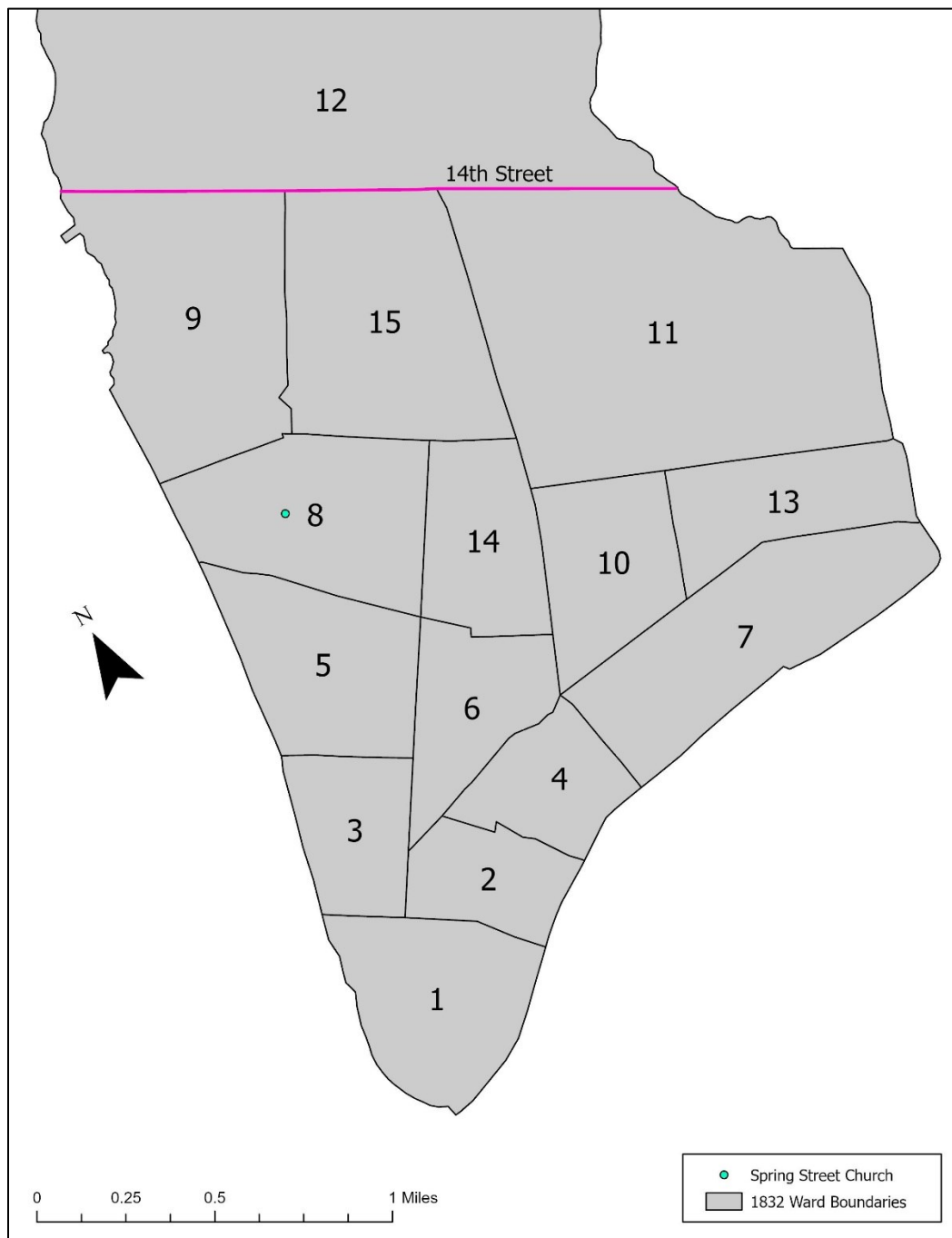


Figure A.10: Ward Boundaries, 1836

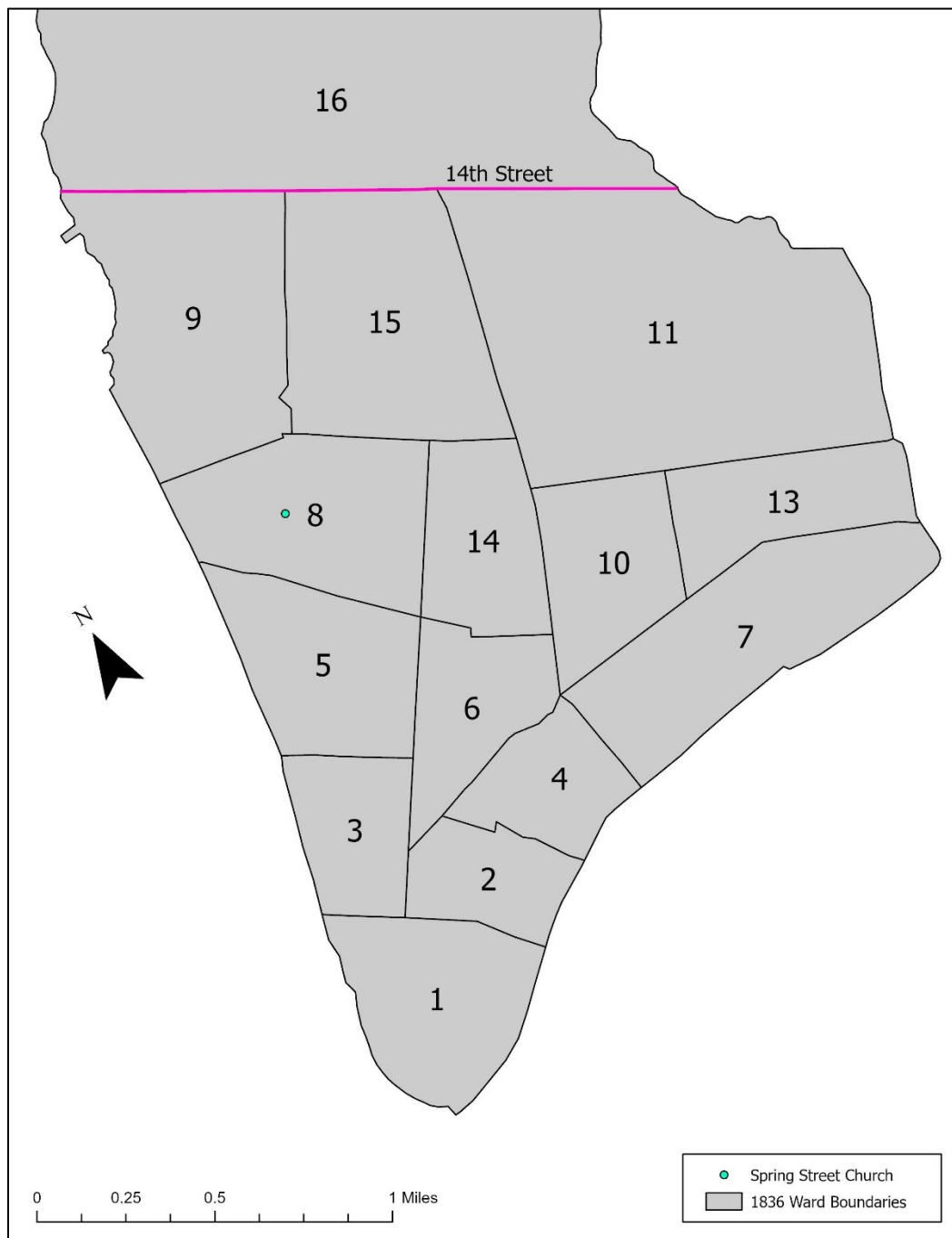


Figure A.11: Ward Boundaries, 1837

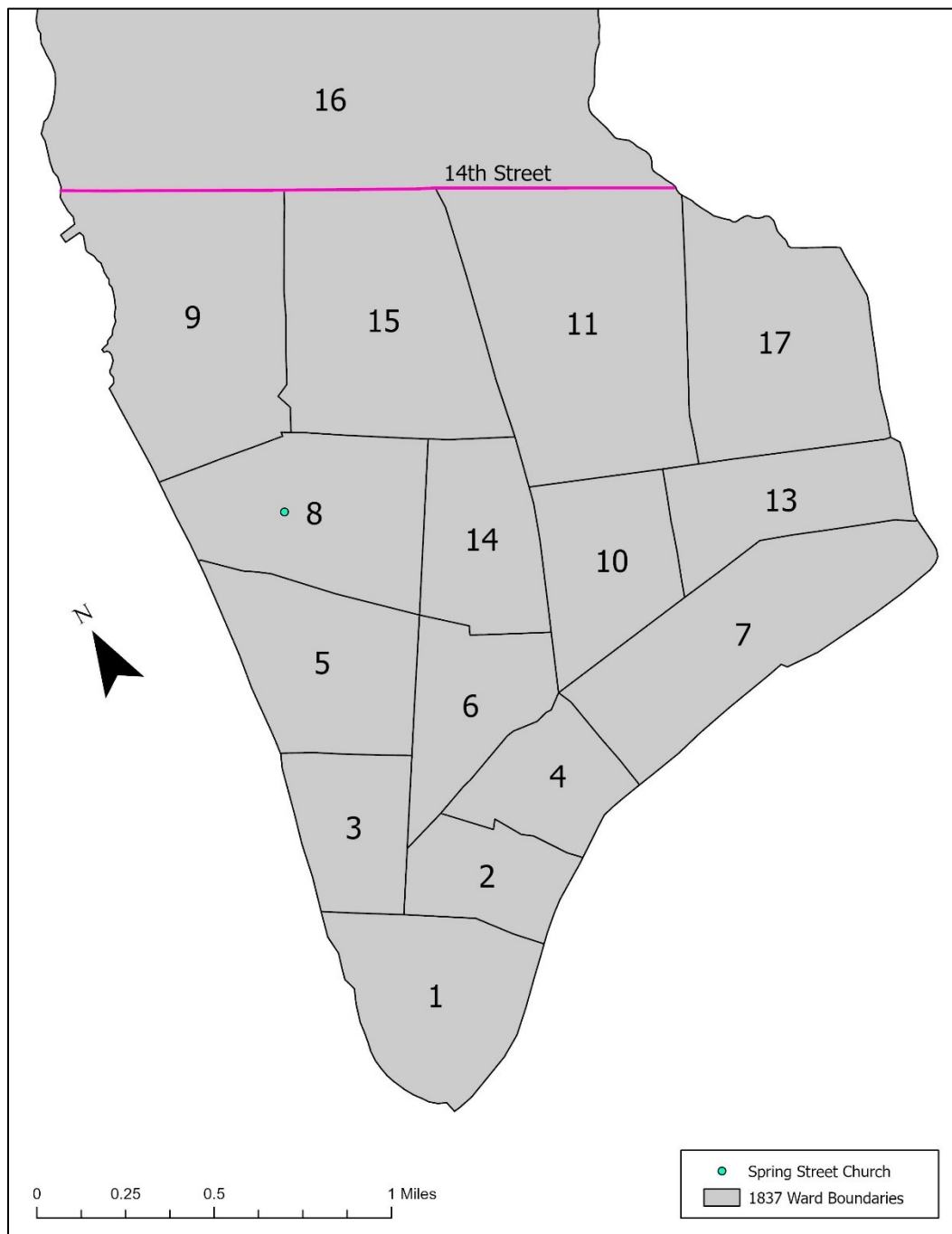
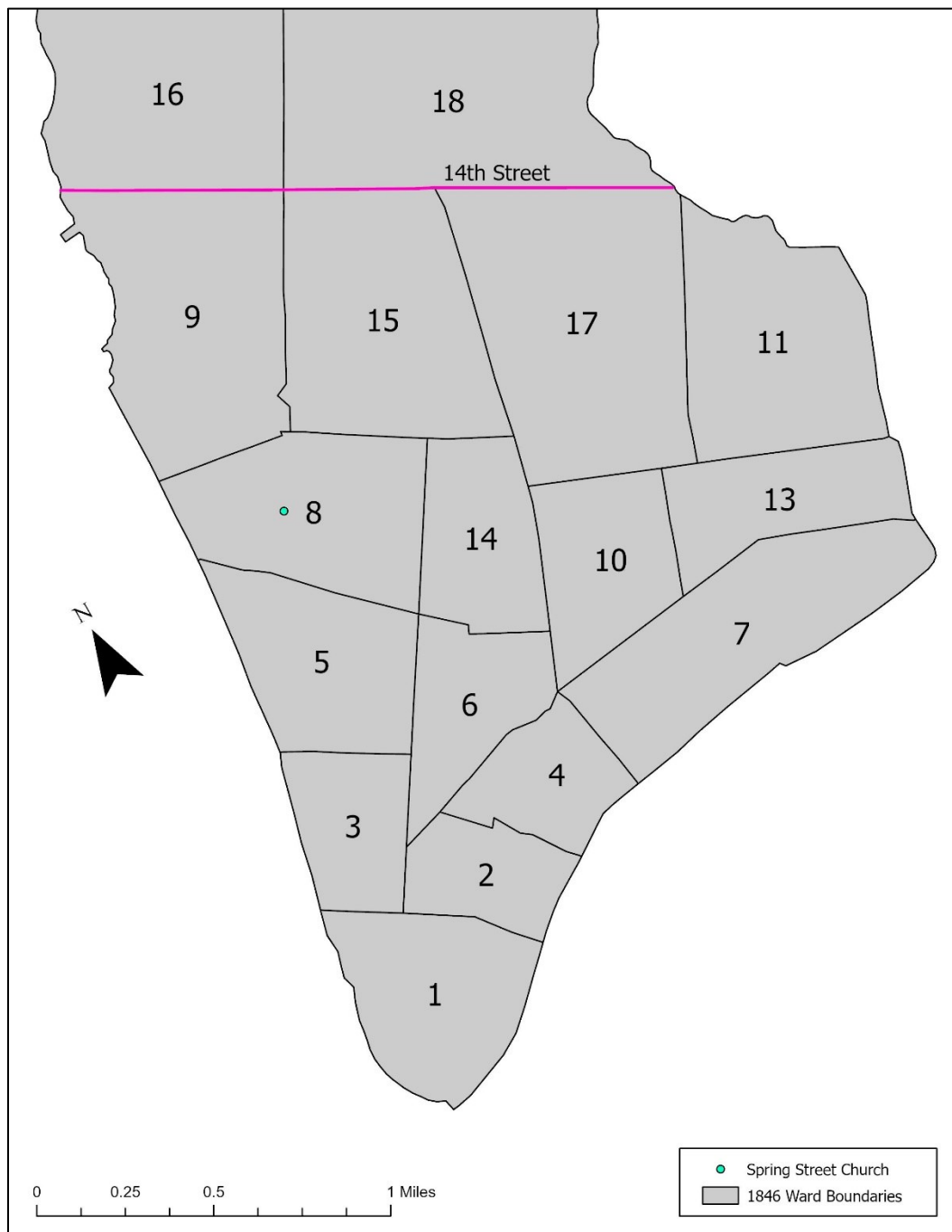


Figure A.12: Ward Boundaries, 1846





## Appendix B: Coffin Plates

**Figure B.1:** Coffin plate of Benjamin N. Abel, d.1842. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Benjamin N. [Abel]  
[Died] 3<sup>rd</sup> Oc[t] 1842  
[Aged 21 years]

Coffin plate recovered from FS 70 in the southwest corner of Vault 3.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Typhus fever  
Recorded address: 32 Clarkson

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.2:** Coffin plate of Rudolphus Bogert, d.1842. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



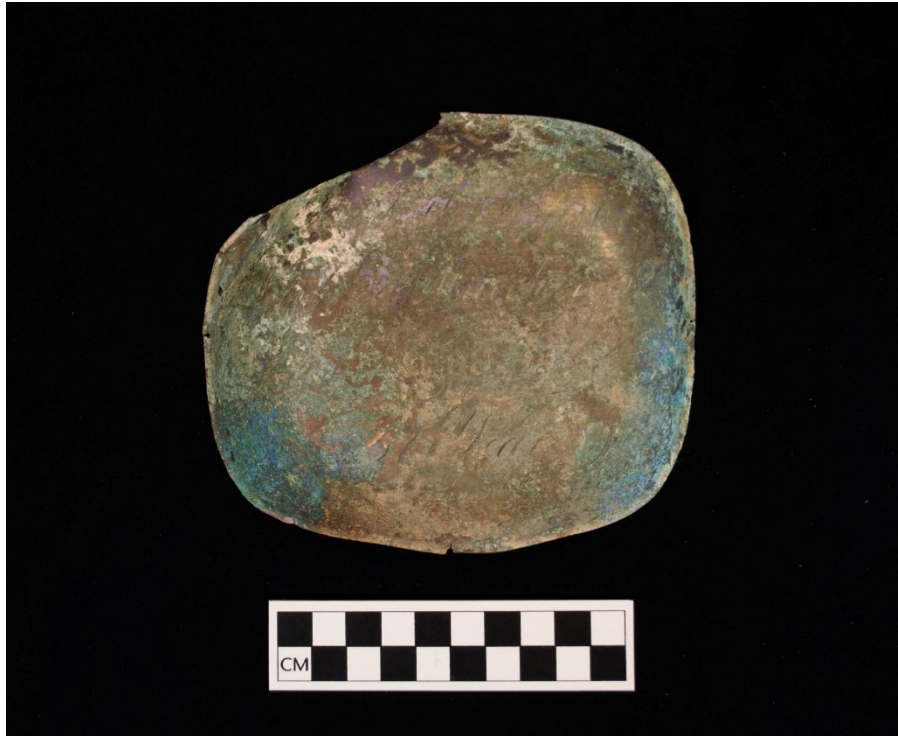
Rudolphus Bogert  
Died 16th Nov 1842  
Aged 76 Yrs

Coffin plate recovered from FS 119 in association with Burial 12, northwest corner of Vault 3.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Ulceration of bladder  
Recorded address: 18 Charlton

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 16 November, 1842.  
Funeral address: 20 Charlton Street

**Figure B.3:** Coffin plate of Elizabeth Bush, d.1832. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



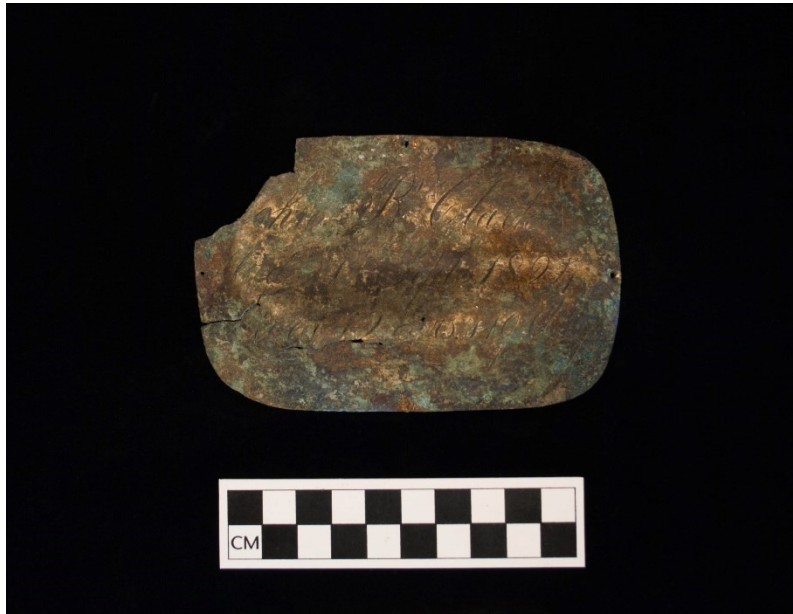
Elizabeth Bush  
Died 27<sup>th</sup> March 1832  
Aged 37 Yrs

Coffin plate recovered from FS 3, associated with the construction-disturbed Fill.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Scarlatina  
Recorded address: Spring Street

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.4:** Coffin plate of John. R. Clark, d.1824. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



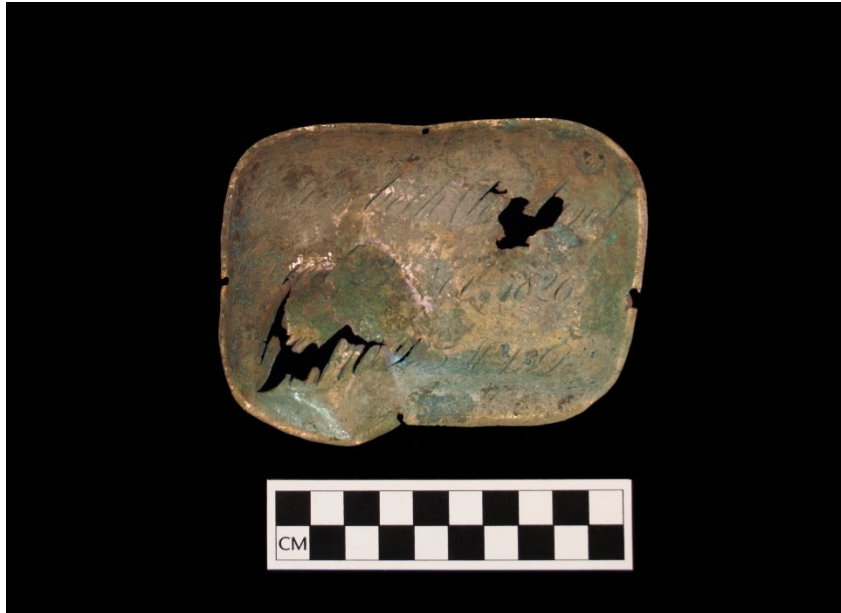
John R. Clark  
Died 21<sup>st</sup> Sepr 1824  
Aged 12 Yr & 10 days

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Handwrought, rounded rectangle, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Fever, bilious remittent  
Recorded address: Lawrens Street (Laurens)

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.5:** Coffin plate of Elizabeth Cleveland, d.1826. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Elizabeth Cleveland  
Died 23 Nov 1826  
Aged 70 Yrs 5 Mos 13 D

Coffin plate recovered from FS 159 in the northwest corner of Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Palsy  
Recorded address: Charlton Street

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.6:** Coffin plate of Sarah Conger, d.1846. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



[Sarah] Conger  
Died [27] May 1846  
[Aged 76 years]

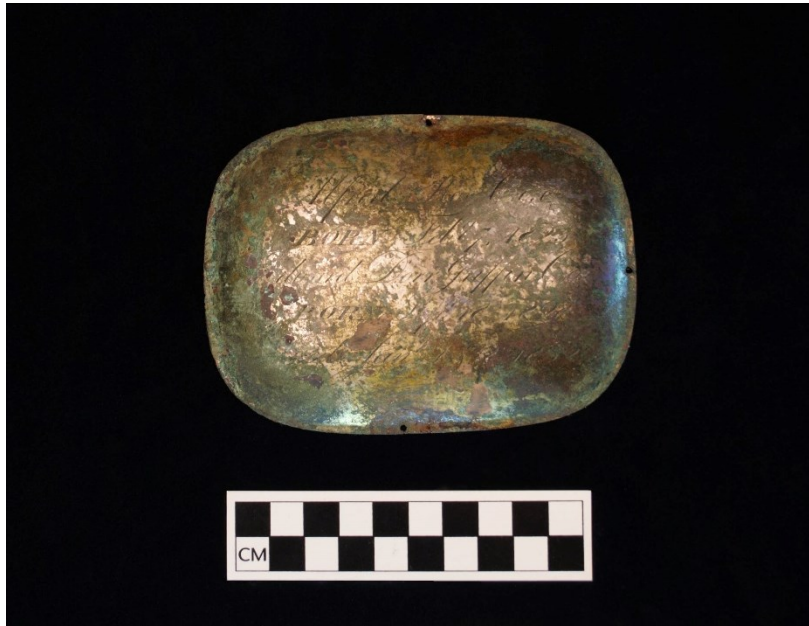
Coffin plate recovered from FS 121 in the northwest corner of Vault 3.  
Britannia metal, edges missing.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Inflammation of lungs  
Recorded address: 156 Laurens

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 29 May, 1846.  
Funeral address: n/a



**Figure B.7:** Coffin plate of Alfred Roe and Edward Dorr Griffin Cox, d.1832. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



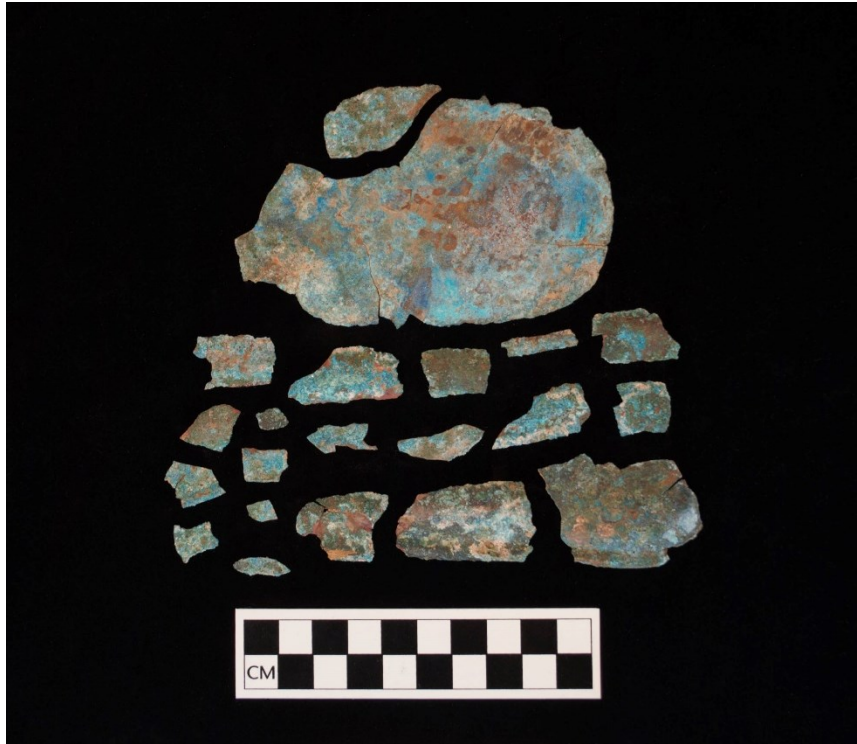
Alfred Roe Cox  
Born Feby 7, 1825  
Edward Dorr Griffin Cox  
Born Sepr 18, 1828  
Died Jan 1, 2 1832

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Scarlatina  
Recorded address: Charlton Street

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.8:** Coffin plate of Thomas Crawford, d.1841. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



[Thomas] Crawford  
 Nov 7 1841  
 [Aged 67] Y

Coffin plate recovered from FS 73 in the southern 2' trench of Vault 3.  
 Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Bronchitis  
 Recorded address: 95 Hudson

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 9 November, 1841.  
 Funeral address: 95 Hudson Street



**Figure B.9:** Coffin plate of Samuel Curtis, d.1822. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Samuel Curtis  
 Died 22<sup>nd</sup> Jany 1822  
 Aged 34 Years

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
 Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
 Cause of death: Unknown  
 Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 23 January, 1822.  
 Funeral address: 154 Spring Street

**Figure B.10:** Coffin plate of Josephine Dunham, d.1830. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Josephine Dunham  
Died 23 Dec 1830  
Aged 2 Yrs 10 Mos 22 D

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Burnt  
Recorded address: Jersey Street

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.11:** Coffin plate of Lewis Evans, d.1822. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Lewis Evens  
Died 24<sup>th</sup> July 1822  
Aged 46 Years & 5 Months

Coffin plate recovered from FS 132 in the eastern half of the 6-9' trench, Vault 4.  
Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Convulsions  
Recorded address: Varick & Dominick

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.12:** Coffin plate of Edgar Howard Harriott, d.1840. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



[Edgar] Howard Harriott  
[Died 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 1840]

Coffin plate recovered from FS 161, sorted from commingled remains in Vault 2.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Croup  
Recorded address: 21 Vandam

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 17 February, 1840.  
Funeral address: 21 Vandam Street

**Figure B.13:** Coffin plate of Sarah Ogden Hubbard, d.1840. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



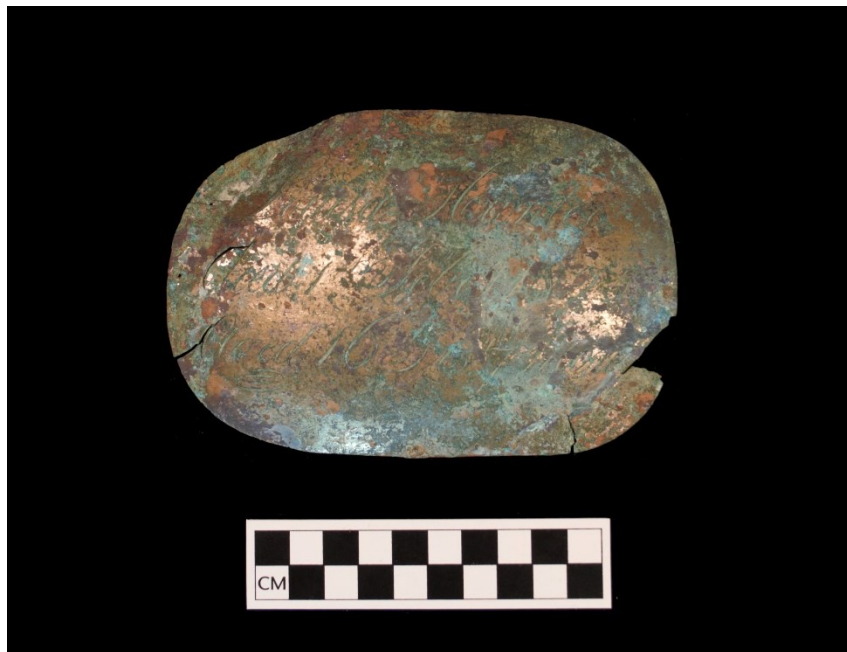
Sarah Ogden Hubbard  
Died 29 Dec 1840  
Aged 28 Yrs

Coffin plate recovered from FS 3, associated with the construction-disturbed Fill.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? No, though her children are.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: 65 Thompson

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 30 December, 1840.  
Funeral address: 65 Thompson Street

**Figure B.14:** Coffin plate of Louisa Hunter, d.1825. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



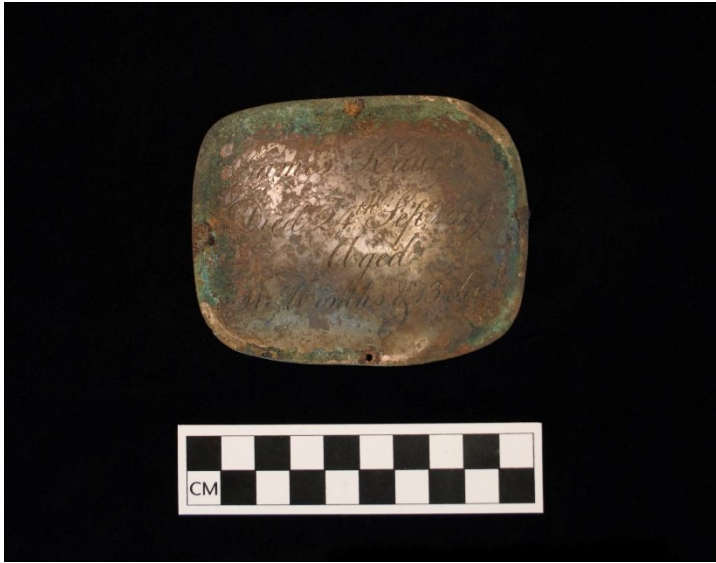
Louisa Hunter  
 Died 1<sup>st</sup> Febry 1825  
 Aged 16 Yrs 7 Months

Coffin plate recovered from FS 145, Burial 13 in the eastern half of the 6-9' trench, Vault 4.  
 Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Dropsy in the chest  
 Recorded address: Chambers Street

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 1 February, 1825.  
 Funeral address: "from the east end of the New-York Institution in Chamber-street"

**Figure B.15:** Coffin plate of James Kauck, d.1829. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



James Kauck  
Died 24<sup>th</sup> Sepr 1829  
Aged 11 Months & 13 Das

Coffin plate recovered from FS 26 in the southern 2' trench extending across Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.16:** Coffin plate of James McGregor, d.1832. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



James McGregor  
Died 5<sup>th</sup> April 1832  
Aged 45 Yrs

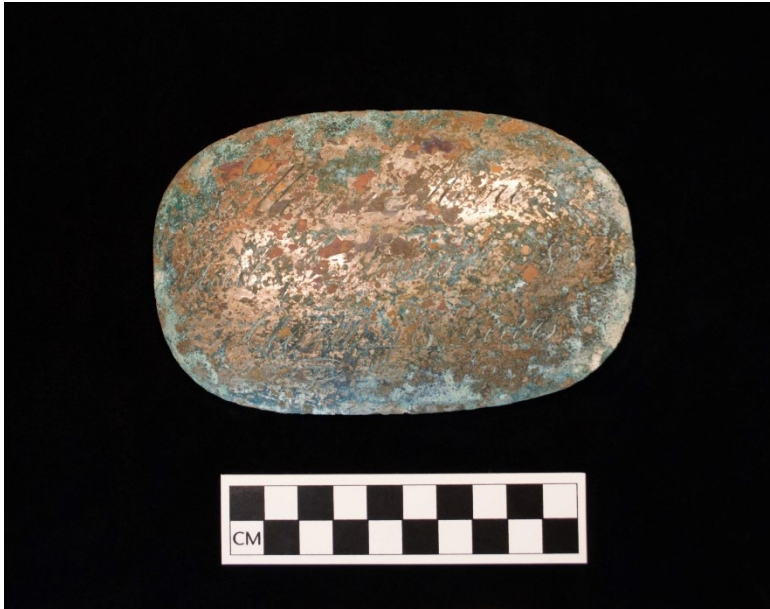
Coffin plate recovered from FS 3, associated with the construction-disturbed Fill.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Consumption  
Recorded address: Pearl Street

Obituary? No.



**Figure B.17:** Coffin plate of Elleanor Moore, d.1823. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Ellinor Moore  
 Died 4<sup>th</sup> November 1823  
 Aged 48 Years

Coffin plate recovered from FS 106 in the eastern half of the 2-4' trench, Vault 4.  
 Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Consumption  
 Recorded address: Lawrens Street (Laurens)

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 5 November, 1823.  
 Funeral address: 83 Laurens Street

**Figure B.18:** Coffin plate of Charles Morgan, d.. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



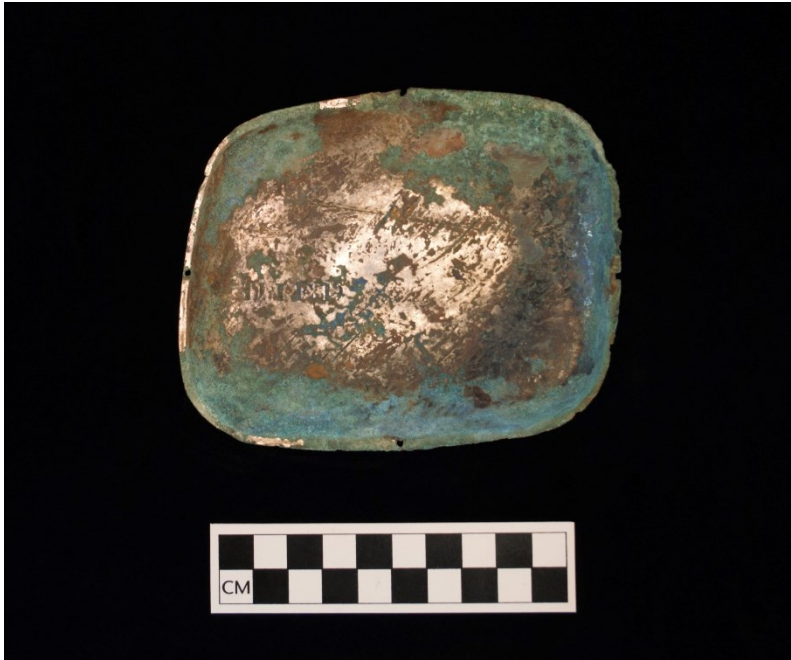
Charles Morgan  
Died 1[6]th Jany 1820  
1 Yr 1 Month 12 Days

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.19:** Coffin plate of Gerrit Morgan, d.1829. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



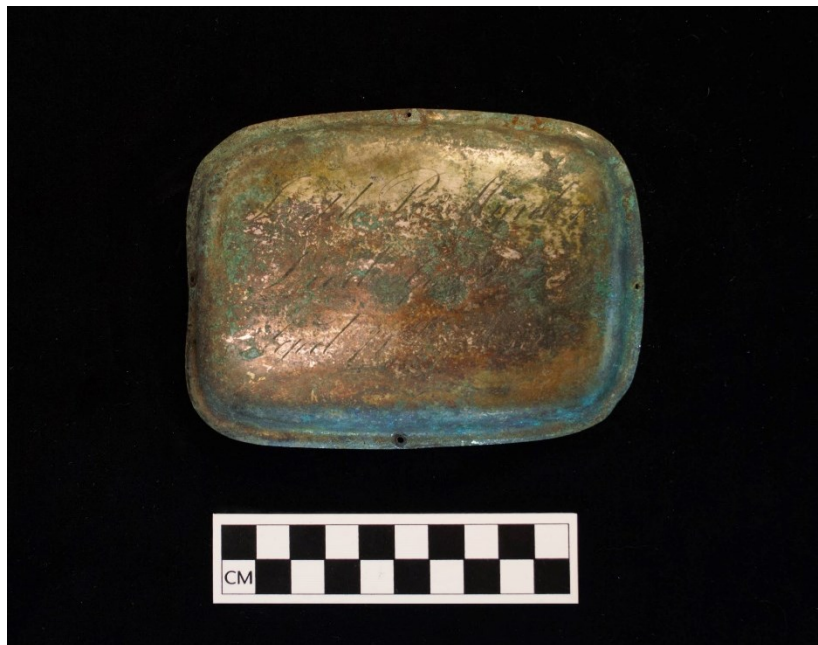
G. Morgan  
Died June 24 1829  
Aged 40 Yrs

Coffin plate recovered from FS 113 in the eastern half of the 4-6' trench, Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Rupture of a blood vessel  
Recorded address: North Moore Street

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 25 June, 1829.  
Funeral address: 32 North Moore Street

**Figure B.20:** Coffin plate of Joseph R. Murden, d.1841. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



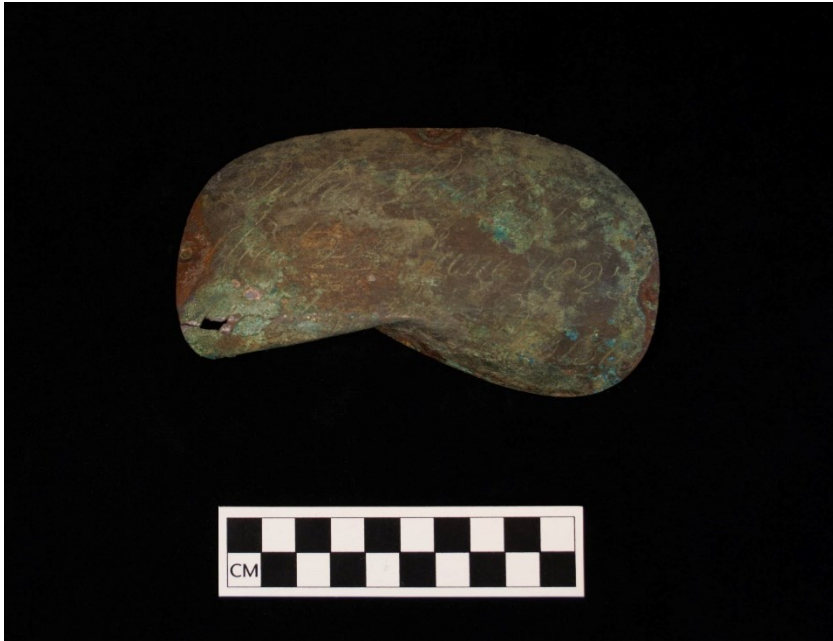
Joseph R. Murden  
Died April 20 1841  
Aged 74 Yrs 7 M 12 D

Coffin plate recovered from FS 70 in the southwest corner of Vault 3.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Consumption  
Recorded address: 176 Hudson

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 22 April, 1841.  
Funeral address: 176 Hudson Street

**Figure B.21:** Coffin plate of Julia Radcliff, d.1823. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Julia Radcliff  
 Died 25<sup>th</sup> June 1823  
 Aged 60 Yrs 4 Mons 13 Dys

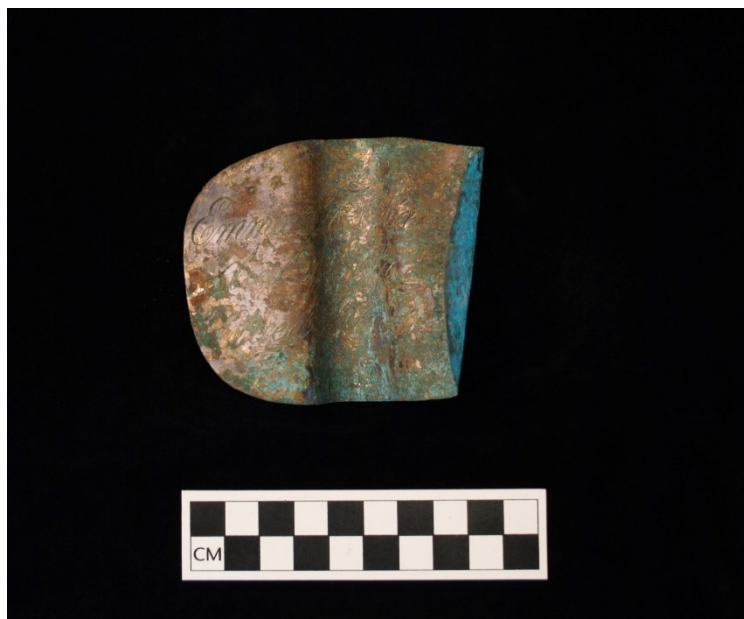
Coffin plate recovered from FS 129 between the piers in the eastern half of Vault 3 and beneath Burial 13.

Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Cholera Morbus  
 Recorded address: Howard Street

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 26 June, 1823.  
 Funeral address: 13 Howard Street

**Figure B.22:** Coffin plate of Emma Fitz Randolph, d.1822. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



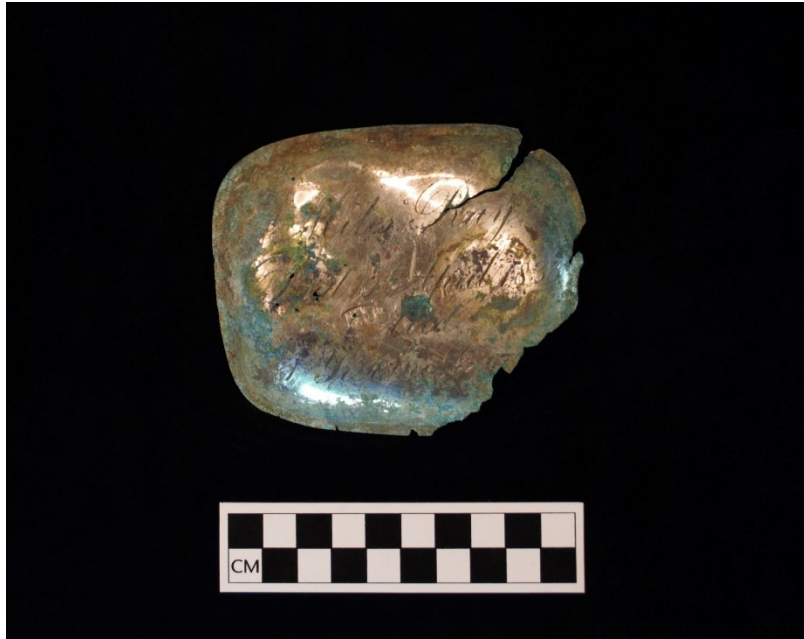
Emma Fitz Randolph  
Died 16<sup>th</sup> Aug 1822  
Aged 5 Yrs 8 Mo 12 Da

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.23:** Coffin plate of Miles Ray, d.1835. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Miles Ray  
Died 19<sup>th</sup> April 1835  
Aged 1 Yr 8 Mos 17 D

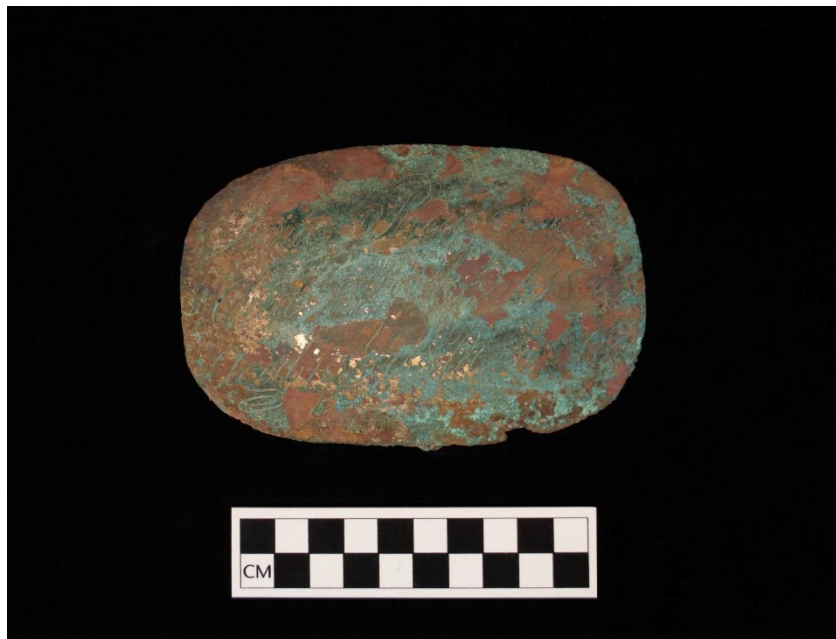
Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Stillborn  
Recorded address: 126 Franklin

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 20 April, 1835.  
Funeral address: 126 Franklin Street



**Figure B.24:** Coffin plate of James Rea, Junr., d.1823. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



James Rea Junr  
Died 28<sup>th</sup> April 1823  
Aged 19 Yrs 8 Mos 12 Da

Coffin plate recovered from FS 129 between the piers in the eastern half of Vault 3 and beneath Burial 13.

Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Dropsy in the head  
Recorded address: Vandam Street

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 29 April, 1823.  
Funeral address: 31 Vandam Street



**Figure B.25:** Coffin plate of Oswald Williams Roe, d.1822. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Oswald Williams Roe  
Died 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 1822  
Aged 10 Mon 5 Days

Coffin plate recovered from FS 137, associated with the fill in Vault 4.  
Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Inflammation of the bowels  
Recorded address: Dye (Dey) & Washington

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.26:** Coffin plate of James W. Root, d.1830. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



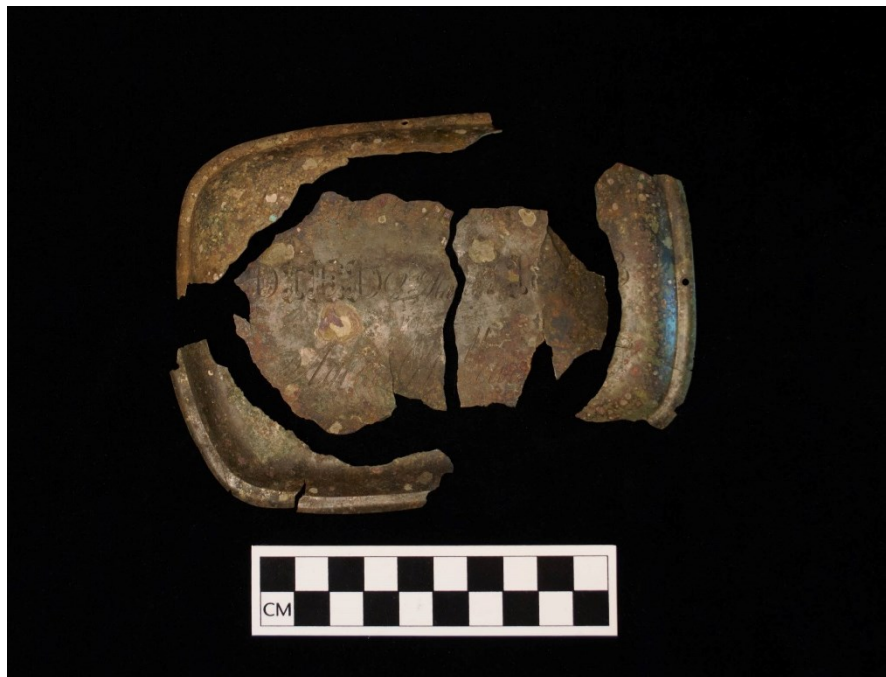
J W Root  
 Died Nov 26<sup>th</sup> 1830  
 Aged 4 Mos 5 D

Coffin plate recovered from FS 26 in the southern 2' trench extending across Vault 4.  
 Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Inflammation of the lungs  
 Recorded address: Bedford Street

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 27 November, 1830.  
 Funeral address: 20 Bedford Street

**Figure B.27:** Coffin plate of David Sherwood, d.1843. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



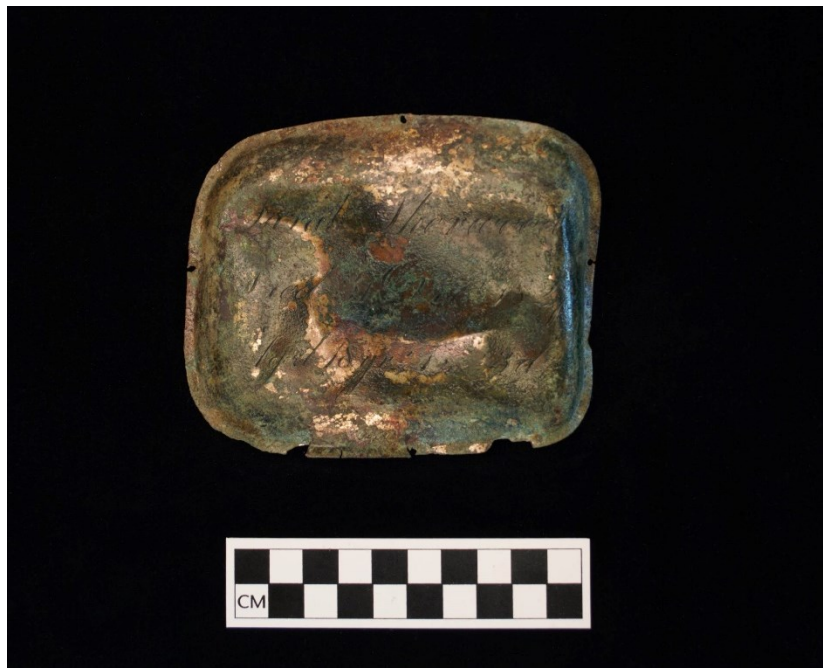
David [Sherwood]  
 Died 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1843  
 Aged 71 Years

Coffin plate partially recovered from FS 26 in the southern 2' trench extending across Vault 4, and from FS 57 in the eastern half of that trench, below Burial 6.  
 Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Palsy hemiplexia [sic]  
 Recorded address: 72 Crosby

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 4 March, 1843.  
 Funeral address: 72 Crosby Street

**Figure B.28:** Coffin plate of Sarah Sherwood, d.1827. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Sarah Sherwood  
Died 31 Dec 1827  
Aged 18 Yrs 1 M 23 D

Coffin plate recovered from FS 57 in the eastern half of the southern 2' trench extending across Vault 4, below Burial 6.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.29:** Coffin plate of Joseph C. Smith, d.1825. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



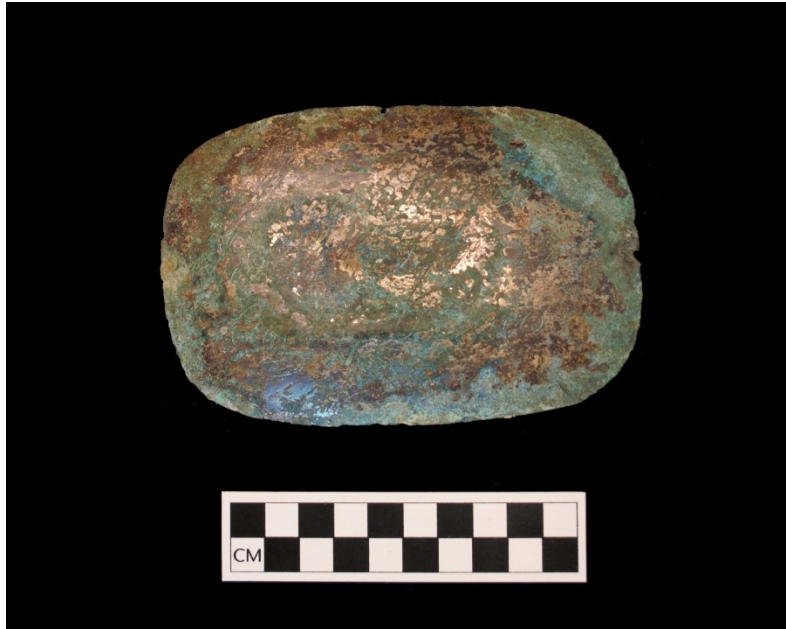
Joseph C Smith  
 Died 18<sup>th</sup> April 1825  
 Aged 20 Yrs 4 Mos 3 Days

Coffin plate recovered from FS 82 in the western half of Vault 3.  
 Handwrought, oval, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Consumption  
 Recorded address: Chapel Street

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 18 April, 1825.  
 Funeral address: 127 Chapel Street

**Figure B.30:** Coffin plate of Mary Sturges, d.1824. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Mary Sturges  
Died 15<sup>th</sup> Sept 1824  
Aged 76 Years

Coffin plate recovered from FS 113 in the eastern half of the 4-6' trench, Vault 4.  
Handwrought, rounded rectangle, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? Yes.  
Source: *New York Evening Post*, 15 September, 1824.  
Funeral address: 284 Spring Street

**Figure B.31:** Coffin plate of Jesse Wadleigh, d.1845. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



[Jessee] W. Wadleigh  
Died [ ] 1845

Coffin plate recovered from FS 127 associated with burial cluster (Burials 11, 12, 13, 15) in the northeast corner of Vault 3.

Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? No.  
Cause of death: Unknown  
Recorded address: n/a

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.32:** Coffin plate of James Wadsworth, d.1823. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Jas Wadsworth  
Died 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1823  
Aged 47 Ys 4 Ms 12 Ds

Coffin plate recovered from FS 113 in the eastern half of the 4-6' trench, Vault 4.  
Handwrought, rounded rectangle, smooth edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Apoplexy  
Recorded address: Clark Street

Obituary? No.



**Figure B.33:** Coffin plate of Nicholas Ware, d.1824. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



Nicholas Ware  
 Died 7<sup>th</sup> Septr 1824  
 Aged 48 Years & 7 mos

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
 Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
 Cause of death: Dropsy in the chest  
 Recorded address: Greenwich

Obituary? Yes.  
 Source: *New York Evening Post*, 7 September, 1824.  
 Funeral address: 36 Broadway

**Figure B.34:** Coffin plate of Ann Semantha Whelpley, d.1825. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



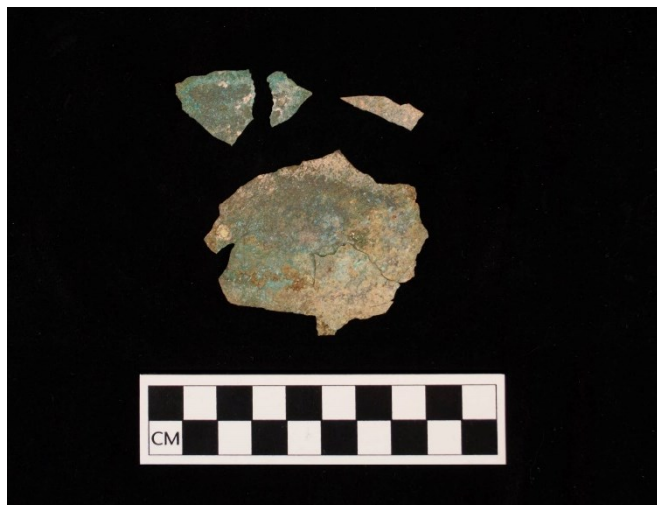
Ann Semantha Whelpley  
Died Febr 19<sup>th</sup> A 1825  
Aged 14 Yrs & 2 Dys

Coffin plate recovered from FS 66 in the western half of Vault 4.  
Machine stamped, rounded rectangle, flanged edge.

Present in NYCDR? Yes.  
Cause of death: Consumption  
Recorded address: Hudson Street

Obituary? No.

**Figure B.35:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 2, FS 14 #44. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.36:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 2, FS 85 #4. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.37:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 9 #4. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.38:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 11 #110. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.39:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 64 #5. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.40:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 64 #6. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



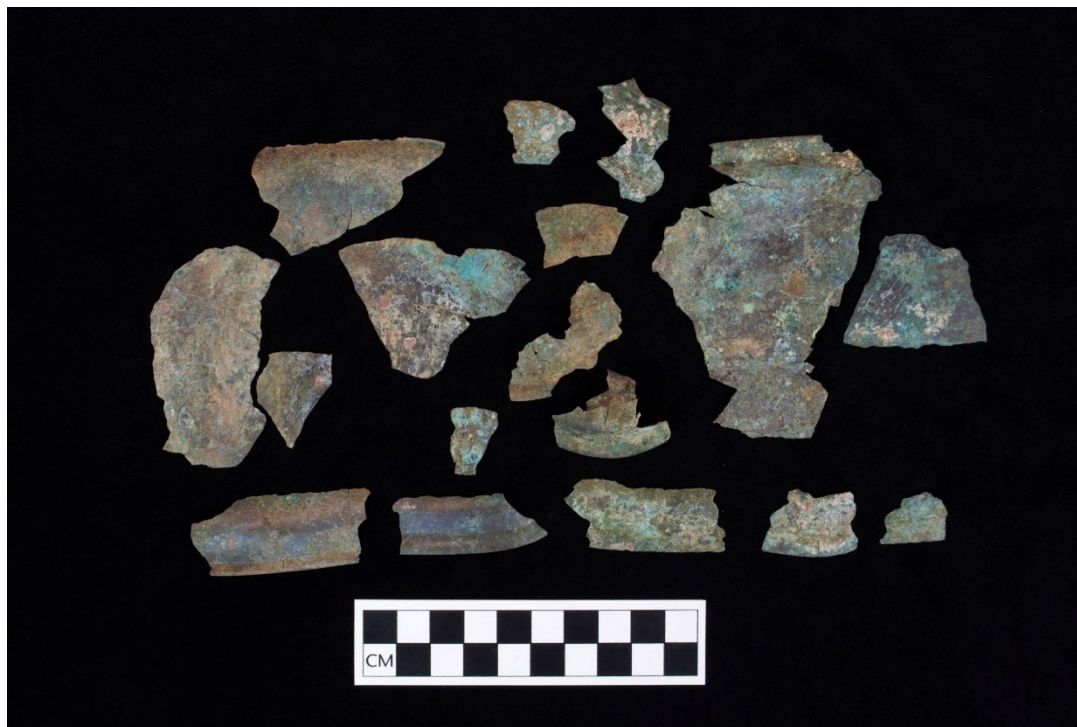
**Figure B.41:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 71 #12. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.42:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 82 #89. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.43:** Fragments of two coffin plates recovered from Vault 3, FS 82 #91. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.44:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 82 #95. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.





**Figure B.45:** Fragments of two coffin plates recovered from Vault 3, FS 96 #1. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.46:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 96 #2. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.





**Figure B.47:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 115 #1. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.48:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 127 #2. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.49:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 129 #24. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.50:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 3, FS 129 #25. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.51:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 4, FS 26 #44. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



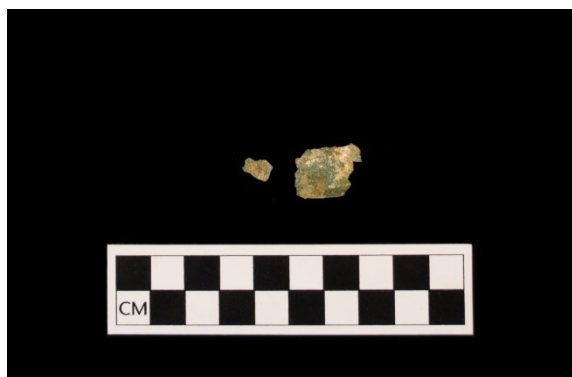
**Figure B.52:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 4, FS 47 #9. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.53:** Fragments of two coffin plates recovered from Vault 4, FS 66 #66. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



**Figure B.54:** Fragments of a coffin plate recovered from Vault 4, FS 155 #3. Photograph by Katherine E. Hicks.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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**EDUCATION**

ABD, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, 2018

M.A., Department of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati, 2009

B.Sc., with Honors, Department of Anthropology, Kent State University, 2007

**FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

- 2014- The Spring Street Archaeology Project, project archaeologist. Analysis of the Spring Street Presbyterian Church burial vaults.
- 2012- Ongoing Doctoral Dissertation Project, "Landscapes of Life and Death: Placing the Spring Street Presbyterian Church in Nineteenth Century New York." Shannon A. Novak, advisor.
- 2012 Portable X-ray fluorescence analysis of metal mortuary artifacts from the Spring Street Presbyterian Church burial vaults, Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY.
- 2011 Syracuse University archaeological field school at the Harriet Tubman Home, Auburn, NY. Teaching assistant.
- 2011 Archaeological survey, preliminary excavations, and archival research, Barbados and Caribbean Landscapes Project.
- 2010-11 Construction of GIS, basemaps of Barbados. Barbados and Caribbean Landscapes Project.
- 2010 Syracuse University archaeological field school at the Harriet Tubman Home, Auburn, NY. Teaching assistant.

- 2008-09 Master's Thesis Project, "An Examination of Landscape Analysis in Bahamas Plantation Archaeology." Kenneth L. Tankersley, advisor.
- 2008-09 Graduate assistant, Department of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati.
- 2008 Summer field season, excavation and analysis of historical artifacts, Habitation Crève Coeur, Martinique.
- 2008 Historical artifact processing workshop, Gaines Tavern Public Archaeology Project, Northern Kentucky University.
- 2006-07 Senior Honors Thesis Project, "An Analysis of Debitage Size Attributes and Their Bearing on the Curation of Simple Stone Tools." Mark F. Seeman, advisor.
- 2006 Abbey Park Field School, University of Leicester, Leicester, England.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University**  
Field Methods in Archaeology (Summer 2010, Summer 2011)

Introduction to Archaeology (Fall 2009)

Introduction to Biological Anthropology (Spring 2011, Spring 2020)

Introduction to Historical Archaeology (Spring 2010, Spring 2016)

Peoples and Cultures of the World (Fall 2010, Spring 2012, Spring 2018, Fall 2019)

**Teaching Assistant, Department of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati**  
Theory of Anthropology (Fall 2008)

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

- 2016 Dean's Summer Fellowship, Maxwell School, Syracuse University. Funding for archival research and taxonomic identification of textile artifacts from the Spring Street Presbyterian Church burial vaults. \$2,665
- 2012 Pre-ABD Fieldwork Award, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University. Funding for X-ray fluorescence of metal mortuary artifacts and archival research on the historic Spring Street Presbyterian Church. \$2,600

- 2011 Pre-ABD Fieldwork Award, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University. Funding for dissertation research and preliminary excavations at Trents Plantation, Barbados. \$3,500
- 2011 Roscoe Martin Grant, Maxwell School, Syracuse University. Funding for dissertation research and preliminary excavations at Trents Plantation, Barbados. \$1,250

## CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- Hicks, Katherine E., Melissa Darroch, and Shannon A. Novak  
2019 “Alleyway Archaeology: Slow Spaces Betwixt and Between.” Collaborative art exhibit with Cora Jane Glasser. Presented at Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) North American Meeting, Syracuse, New York.
- Hicks, Katherine E.  
2016 “Using GIS to investigate mortuary practice and identity at the historic Spring Street Presbyterian Church, Manhattan.” Presented at the Society for American Archaeology’s 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida.
- Hicks, Katherine E.  
2013 “An Archaeology of Aesthetics: the Socio-Economic and Ideological Elements of Coffin Plate Selection at the Spring Street Presbyterian Church.” Presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology’s 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology, Leicester, England.

## SERVICE

- 2014- Webmaster, The Spring Street Archaeology Project
- 2011-12 Secretary, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
- 2010-11 Treasurer, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
- 2010-11 Elected representative to the Graduate Student Organization, Anthropology Graduate Student Organization, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University
- 2010-11 Senator and member of the GSO Financial Committee, Graduate Student Organization, Syracuse University

- 2006-7 Vice President, Anthropology Student Organization, Department of Anthropology, Kent State University
- 2006 Student Member, Dean's Student Advisory Council, College of Arts and Sciences, Kent State University

### **OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE**

- 2015 Academic tutor, Syracuse University Athletics Department, Syracuse University
- 2015 Instructional assistant, Syracuse University Athletics Department, Syracuse University
- 2007-08 Graduate Student Worker, Department of Anthropology, University of Cincinnati

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Anthropological Association  
Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology  
Society for American Archaeology  
Society for Historical Archaeology