

Cemetery Siting in the Bluestone Reservation Area, Summers  
County, West Virginia: 1750 - 1997

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This thesis examines the effects of transportation network changes, settlement pattern changes, population density and terrain characteristics upon cemetery siting. Due to the practically inviolate legal status of cemeteries, they provide a window to the past. Geographic Information Systems technology was used to analyze geophysical attributes of the cemetery sites. As transportation modes changed and improved, the distances from decedent's residences to burial sites increased. Also, cemetery upkeep is somewhat related to ease of accessibility, but other factors enter into this relationship. Personal interviews suggest that family "ties to the land" have an effect upon cemetery utilization and maintenance in rural southern West Virginia. Early cemeteries were sited in river and creek bottoms. More recently sited cemeteries are located at higher elevations.

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