A Toponymic Approach to the Geography of American Cemeteries

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Abstract

The recent availability of the GNIS data base makes it practical to study the names of features throughout the United States, for example the names of cemeteries. One way of classification identifies ten categories: family, location, standard terms, hagiolatrous, biblical, nationalistic, "upbeat," religious denominations, ethnic communities, and fraternal organizations. The first seven of these provide an interesting look at a significant part of the name-cover in America.

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Anyone who has spent much time visiting and inspecting a respectable sample of cemeteries in this country, or any other for that matter, would have to agree that, acre for acre, no other category of humanized space is so densely packed with cultural information. We have here an archive of texts, a chronicle of social history, a museum of folk and fine art, an assemblage of symbols, an intensity of landscaping, and an arena for powerful, if sporadic, social encounters that is unmatched elsewhere within the human scene. Furthermore, the cemetery offers the student of onomastics a rich, virtually untapped set of challenges and rewards.

Despite the rich potential of the topic, the scholarly literature on cemeteries has been slow to materialize in the United States or other parts of the world. And if there has been a certain quickening of interest in death-related themes in recent years, coverage of cemeteries remains spotty and incomplete. Since this is not the appropriate occasion for a full-dress critical review of the literature, I shall simply note the existence of worthwhile contributions within a few sectors of the world of learning in what is still essentially a piecemeal approach to the total phenomenon.

The richest writings thus far are located within the fields of art history and folk studies and deal largely with motifs in gravestones. Historians of landscape architecture have written rather extensively on

certain early park cemeteries in Europe and America with special reference to their impact on the urban park movement. Unfortunately, work by sociologists and general historians has been extremely limited, with only three or four writers exploring the cemetery.

The picture is somewhat brighter within the field of geography, where several students have considered the cemetery as an urban-economic phenomenon and its place in the general evolution of our humanized landscapes. The few holistic cemetery studies by geographers have been restricted to particular localities or regions. The most outstanding of these is Terry Jordan's treatment of cemetery practices in Texas and the South in general. Within the field of toponymy, an earlier essay of mine ("Unearthly Delights") seems to be the first, and thus far only, effort to examine the significance of cemetery names. The business of the present paper is to continue and amplify that initial venture by considering a greater range of data and, for the first time, sketching the geography of American cemeteries at the national level — to blend the geographical and toponymic approaches to the benefit of both.

It is abundantly clear from the scattered evidence, including my own travels, that cemetery characteristics do differ significantly among the major and lesser culture regions of the world and among specific ethnic and religious groups, not to mention their evolution over time within such communities. More specifically, my unsystematic observations in the course of much wandering about North America suggest the existence of a set of macroscopic patterns over time and space in burial practices that still awaits methodical exploration, a historical geography at the continental scale that could shed much light on the nature of our regions and their social history.

Deterring me and perhaps others from a systematic attack on these regional patterns has been a discouraging data situation, at least until 1987. Previously, the only available compendia of cemetery information at the national level were two directories published by the American Cemetery Association, a trade organization, in 1957 and 1967. I squeezed as much cultural juice as possible from these documents in a 1975 study dealing with the terminology adopted in naming cemeteries, supplementing the twentieth century materials with items gleaned from a number of nineteenth century county atlases ("Unearthly Delights"). Unfortunately, only the feeblest gesture at any sort of regional generalizations was feasible in that article.

A way out of this data dilemma has been available, at least potential-
ly, for some time in the existence of that vast mother lode of cemetery
information imbedded in the thousands of large-scale topographic quad-
rangles published by the U. S. Geological Survey over the past hundred
years. But the difficulties dissuading the individual student from exploit-
ing this bonanza are quite formidable. Extracting and coding all usable
cemetery data in just a single map can be extremely time-consuming.
Doing so for an adequate sample of some hundreds of sheets would take
years or decades of dedicated drudgery. The only practical alternative
would have been rather more pleasant but equally laborious — field in-
spection of an adequate sample of cemeteries across the entire country.

Most fortunately, a remarkable new data source has recently become
available for students of cemeteries and every other namable cultural
and physical feature in the United States — the U.S. Geological Survey's
computerized Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), which is
bulging with hundreds of thousands of names. The development of this
file, which began in 1968 and whose initial phase has been completed,
will continue indefinitely as new topographic maps are published and
older ones revised. I can best characterize this resource by quoting from
a manual:

> The initial compilation (of GNIS), or Phase I, is now
> complete, and the system includes most named features on
> all of the maps in the USGS topographic map series except
> roads and highways. As maps of the largest scale available
> were used during the initial compilation, the majority of the
> names were compiled from the 1:24,000-scale, 7.5-minute
> topographic maps. Where there were not published 7.5-
> minute maps or advance copies with names available, 15-
> minute maps were used; when there was no coverage by
> either series of maps, 1:250,000-scale maps were used.
> (Payne 2)

Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Roger L. Payne, Manager of GNIS, I
have obtained a special printout of all cemetery names in the system as
well as the tape from which it was derived. The possibilities for the
computer mapping of reiterative individual names, classes of specific or
generic terms, and other attributes of these cemetery names are exciting,
but for the time being, I have limited myself to the manual production of
tables and maps through visual inspection of the printout.

The advantages of access to GNIS data are obvious enough, but this information base also has certain limitations. The file specifies only the name of the cemetery and its location (in terms of state, county, latitude, and longitude). It fails to note several other attributes that one can ascertain by examining the original map. These include: size, shape, compass orientation, topographic situation, and location with respect to cities or other settlements, roads, churches, nearby cemeteries, and other cultural features. In addition, GNIS does not record that great legion of *unnamed* cemeteries that show up on most topographic quadrangles, and, furthermore, the USGS mapping program has missed many small or abandoned burial grounds and isolated single graves that only the determined field investigator could detect. Other important facts are simply not usually grist for the cartographer's mill — such items as name changes, founding date, number of burials, status of upkeep, and proprietorship (i.e., whether commercial, private, or owned by church, county, township, municipality, or nonprofit association). One must also realize that even among the variables covered by GNIS and the topographic map there may be certain shortcomings or inconsistencies in the information because of different map scales, the considerable range in dates among the quadrangles, and, probably, differentials in the thoroughness or accuracy of name-gathering among various work crews.

Because of some temporary problems in processing, the printout I received was seriously deficient in the names listed for Massachusetts and Rhode Island, so that these states are missing in the maps and tabulations reproduced here. Also excluded are Alaska, Hawaii, and the District of Columbia for a variety of reasons, but principally because these places contain so few cemeteries as to make mapping or statistical analysis a doubtful proposition.

After omitting the areas specified above, I scrutinized and analyzed some 84,102 cemetery names in the GNIS file. In doing so, I endeavored to answer two questions: What are the particular characteristics of these names? And, what can we infer concerning the geography of American cemeteries as a class through a study of these characteristics?

The initial chore was to devise a useful, meaningful typology into which to categorize a large mass of specific terms. After much thought, I have adopted a ten-fold classification for the classifiable items, as indicated in Table 1 by order of incidence. They are as follows:

— Family names: Cemeteries that appear to bear the surname of a local family or individual;

— Location: Names that refer to features in the immediate neighborhood, including streams, hills, valleys, churches, towns, townships, inter alia;

— Standard terms: These are formulaic items, e.g., *Fairview, Evergreen, Oak Grove, Riverside*, each of which tends to be adopted over much of the country and which, with only one conspicuous exception (*Prospect*) are compound in form;

— Hagiolatrous: Names of saints and references to the Trinity and members of the Holy Family;

— Biblical: Names that refer to places and other entities appearing in the Bible, e.g., *Zion, Calvary, Bethel*;

— Nationalistic: Names celebrating the heroes or ideals of Americanism, e.g., *Liberty, Washington, Lafayette, Lincoln*;

— Upbeat or inspirational: Emotionally positive items, e.g., *Hope, Harmony, Friendship*.

The final three categories of cemetery names — those derived from religious denominations, ethnic communities, and fraternal organizations — are self-explanatory as well as being the least important numerically.

In a number of instances, a particular name might conceivably fall into one of a pair or more of categories. For example, *Jackson Cemetery* might reflect the existence of a local family, Jackson Township, or Andrew Jackson; a *Hope Cemetery* could refer to a municipality, the concept, or, again, a nearby family. When the nature of the allusion was too ambiguous for any reasonable guess, I was obliged to omit the name from further consideration. All told, I was unable to classify some 11,422 names, or 13.6% of the total encountered. Other categories of items excluded from the GNIS list, aside from the numerous ambiguities, were

Table 1. Incidence by type, of specific terms in cemetery names listed in GNIS.

Family names	44,387	61.1%	Denominational terms	536	0.7%
Locational names	10,632	14.6	Ethnic terms	336	0.5
Standard terms	7,200	9.9	Fraternal groups	135	0.2
Hagiolatrous terms	4,253	5.9			
Nationalistic terms	1,033	1.4			
Biblical terms	3,389	4.7			
Upbeat terms	779	1.1	Total, classified names	72,680	100.0
			Unclassified names	11,422	(13.6)
			Grand total	84,102	

individual tombs, national and other military cemeteries, and pet cemeteries.

The categories of generic terms appearing in American cemetery names is more problematic than is the case for the specific variety. Of the 72,680 items included in this analysis, only 1,658 or 2.3%, carried any designation other than *cemetery*. But it is an interesting minority, one that needs no further specification other than a listing of the individual terms (Table 2). It is worth noting that the two items *memorial park* and *memorial garden(s)* account between them for no fewer than 66.0% of the total.

I believe that, taken in the aggregate, American cemetery names comprise a distinctive, and peculiarly American, vocabulary and one that provides valuable insights into the national character. But any such assertion may be little more than speculation in lieu of comparable studies in other parts of the world. However, I can place in evidence a pair of observations. First, there is the extraordinary frequency of family names, a practice, I am reasonably certain, not emulated to any remotely similar degree elsewhere. Then there is the occurrence of a significant sprinkling of names that I have labelled "remarkable." (Indeed, some

Table 2. Generic terms (other than cemetery) in cemetery names, by number of occurrences.

Memorial Park	634	Gardens of Rest	1
Memorial Garden(s)	460	Mausoleum Gardens	1
Memorial Cemetery	342	Memorial Acre	1
Memory Garden(s)	129	Memorial Chapel	1
Burying(ial) Grounds	26	Memorial Field	1
Gardens	16	Memorial Grounds	1
Burial Park	13	Memorial Homes	1
Memorial Estates	8	Memorial Park Gardens	1
Memorial Lawn	7	Memorial Terrace	1
Graveyard	2	Memory Hill Gardens	1
Burial Estates	1	Memory Lawn	1
Burial Gardens	1	Memory Park	1
Floral Gardens	1	Potters Field	1
Friedhof	1	Rest Park	1
Gardens Park	1	Restland Park	1
Gardens of Remembrance	1		
		TOTAL	1,658

are downright astonishing.) Table 3 lists representative specimens, items ranging from the macabre to the humorous to the lyrical. Indeed some, like *Loose Angel* or *Straw Floor*, defy rational explanation. Only in America? I detect here a kinship with a familiar strain in general American toponymy: a combination of pungent, good-natured earthiness with boosterism and a democratized piety. But this motif is a relatively thin undercurrent submerged beneath the bland euphemism

Table 3. Some remarkable cemetery names.

Alpha Omega (NC)	Laughter (TX)
At the End of the Trail (WV)	Lonely (KY)
Aunt Dilly (AR)	Loose Angel (KY)
Beauty Spot (SC)	Loving Care (FL)
Ben Hur (IN)	Luminary (TN)
Rest Bottom (MO)	Mammal (OH)
Breakneck (OH)	Maternity (IL)
Buzzard Roost (SC)	Memory Lane (IN)
Daniels Gift (GA)	Nameless (ND)
Dark Corner (TX)	No Bottom (AR)
Deadening (FL)	On-a-Tree (SD)
Death Age (GA)	Peewee (IN)
Dreamland (TX)	Plenty Faith (OK)
Eventide (MO and WV)	Poorspot (FL)
Faint Hope (TN)	Saw Dust (GA)
Foreverglades (FL)	Scratchunder (TN)
Garden of Everlasting Life (TN)	Second Home (WI)
Glass Window (LA)	Sheepfold (NY)
Gods Acre (GA)	Silent Land (KS)
Golden Link (MS)	Skull Lick (MO)
Golf (AR)	Sleepy Hollow (NE)
Guiding Star (IL)	Strangers Home (AR)
Happy Home (AR)	Strangers Rest (MS)
Hard Scramble (GA)	Straw Floor (AR)
Hard Up (GA)	Sweet Moments (AR)
Hearts Delight (VA)	Sweet Prospect (GA)
Helping Hands (LA)	True Love (LA)
Home Sweet Home (TN)	Welcome (NY)
Homeless (MS)	Weird (KY)
Hotwater (TN)	Welcome Home (LA)
Humble Hope (AR)	Willing Worker (MS)
In God We Trust (MI)	X-Ray (TX)
Kind Providence (MS)	Yawn (GA)
Kindling Altar (MS)	
Ladies Evergreen (NE)	
Last Home (WI)	

that dominates so much of the cemetery scene. There may be some kindred phenomena, a comparable folksy toponymy, in Canada and Australia, but hardly to the same extent. In addition, I harbor the suspicion, which again I cannot yet document, that the practice of formally naming burial grounds is much more prevalent in North America than anywhere else. Another unsubstantiated claim, but one that bears only indirectly on matters toponymic, is the possibility that the ratio between number of cemeteries and persons living and dead in this corner of the world exceeds the values for other countries.

If we set aside the family names and locational terms that account for some three-quarters of the classifiable names but would seem to reflect little more than local circumstances, we encounter those 7,200 cemeteries whose titles are drawn from a broad pool of standard terms, the most popular of which appear in Table 4. This particular vocabulary, I maintain, provides us with important revelations concerning our collective psyche—a sort of sketch map, in a manner of speaking, of the American vision of the afterworld. Although I am drawing here upon a considerably larger and rather more up-to-date stock of names than in the 1975 essay, the current findings simply reinforce the earlier ones; and I can do no better than quote the summary description of that subliminally perceived image of an afterworld written back then:

> It is an elliptical tract of rolling hills and indeterminate size, one that stretches far toward the west and east, but is quite narrow along its north-south axis, and is surrounded at some distance by water and high mountains. It is a monochromatic, evergreen, featuristic land of perpetual spring morning or evening lying under a cloudless, windless, sunny sky, but where brooks and fountains flow nonetheless, and trees, flowering shrubs, and grassy lawns thrive in a park-like ensemble, yet without any animal life. It is a rural place of intense tranquillity and silence, where nothing goes on except the enjoyment of the view and reposeful recollection. (Zelinsky, "Unearthly Delights" 191)

We turn next to a treatment of the state-level distribution of the various types of cemetery names and what such toponymic evidence can indicate about the regionalization of cemetery practices or some of the broader spatial lineaments of the American cultural system. But, before doing so, we must pause to ponder what factors determine the absolute number of cemeteries per state.

Table 4. Leading standard terms in cemetery names by number of occurrences.

Fairview	442	Oak Ridge	65	Fairfield	21
Evergreen	373	Cedar Hill	63	Pine Ridge	21
Greenwood	285	Shady Grove	63	Roseland	21
Oak Grove	229	Oaklawn	61	Restlawn	20
Riverside	222	Pleasant Ridge	59	Locust Grove	19
Pleasant Hill	217	Glenwood	58	Sunrise	19
Oak Hill	194	Woodland	58	Eastview	18
Woodlawn	180	Pine Hill	55	Forest Grove	18
Mount Pleasant	174	Forest Lawn	52	Restland	18
Highland	173	Hickory Grove	49	Elm Grove	17
Rose Hill	161	Sunnyside	48	Holly Grove	15
Hillside	155	Greenhill	47	Pine Crest	15
Oakwood	153	Graceland	46	Walnut Hill	15
Mount Hope	143	Valley View	46	Wildwood	15
Maple Grove	142	Roselawn	45	Hillsdale	14
Lakeview	133	Walnut Grove	43	Oak View	14
Riverview	132	Fairmount	41	Rosemont	14
Hillcrest	131	Oakdale	40	Chestnut Grove	13
Sunset	130	Laurel Hill	37	Maple Lawn	13
Pine Grove	128	Westview	37	Chestnut Hill	12
Oakland	118	Prospect	34	Poplar Grove	12
Pleasant View	110	Maple Hill	33	Prairie Grove	12
Pleasant Valley	107	East Lawn	32	Parklawn	11
Pleasant Grove	106	Glendale	32	Southlawn	11
Mountain View	104	Westlawn	32	Springdale	11
Elmwood	95	Prairie View	30	Forest Park	10
Hopewell	88	Brookside	28	Maple Ridge	10
Greenlawn	82	Hollywood	26	Pleasant Prairie	10
Spring Hill	79	Edgewood	24	Woodside	10
Grandview	75	Forest Home	23	Cedar Lawn	9
Cedar Grove	68	Plainview	23	Greenmount	9
Lakeside	68	Prospect Hill	23	Hillview	9
Resthaven	67	Spring Grove	23	Hazelwood	8
Forest Hill	66	Lakewood	22	Pleasant Green	8
Maplewood	66	Rosedale	22	South View	8

If we had a complete count — and we don't because, again, the GNIS roster omits all those many unnamed and/or abandoned burial grounds — it goes without saying that sheer territorial size is a prime determinant, so that we can expect, and indeed do find, that the tally for Texas would automatically be quite large while that for Delaware would

fall toward the other end of the continuum. But after that point we plunge into muddier waters. What is the relationship between level of urbanization and number of cemeteries? Is a city likely to engender more because of the number and diversity of inhabitants, or fewer because of a propensity to have larger enterprises as well as problems of zoning and price of real estate? And does rural population density correlate positively or negatively with the cemetery count? What determines the radius of a "cadaver shed"? How important is the distance-decay effect (no pun intended)? How relevant are the principles of central-place theory? How do we take into account the effect of topography, or longevity of settlement? I have no answers, but do suggest that these are wonderful research questions for our quantitatively inclined brethren.

Pending further research, I tend to believe that cultural factors may outweigh considerations of space and population distribution, past or present, in determining the number of cemeteries within a given area. This is, we must accord much weight to strength of feeling for community — or the entrepreneurial impulse — as against family sentiment or individualism, or for maintaining connections after death as in life with church congregation, ethnic group, or fraternal organization. Although I refrain from offering either tables or maps showing the relationship between living (or deceased) populations and number of cemeteries, I must cite one striking example of the salience of culture and also, presumably, population history. The highest ratio of 1980 inhabitants to number of cemeteries is that in California, 44,657 per place; the lowest is in Tennessee, a mere 576, or a 77-fold disparity.

The most populous class of cemetery names presents us with the most sharply etched of our regional patterns (Fig. 1). The custom of using family surnames for cemeteries is extraordinarily well developed in the states of the Deep and Border South, whether we reckon incidence in absolute or relative terms. As a percentage of all classified names, the values range from a low of 13.8 in New Jersey to numbers well above 50 in every Southern state, except Florida, and to a maximum of 88.4 in Tennessee. The situation in the latter state is truly remarkable. Its total of 6,784 cemeteries in this category towers far above the runners-up: Kentucky - 2,996, Texas - 2,900, Missouri - 2,854, Virginia - 2,192, Alabama - 2,088, Ohio - 2,061, West Virginia - 2,052. (The southern portion of Ohio, I hasten to note, has much Upper Southern culture in its makeup.)

Family Names
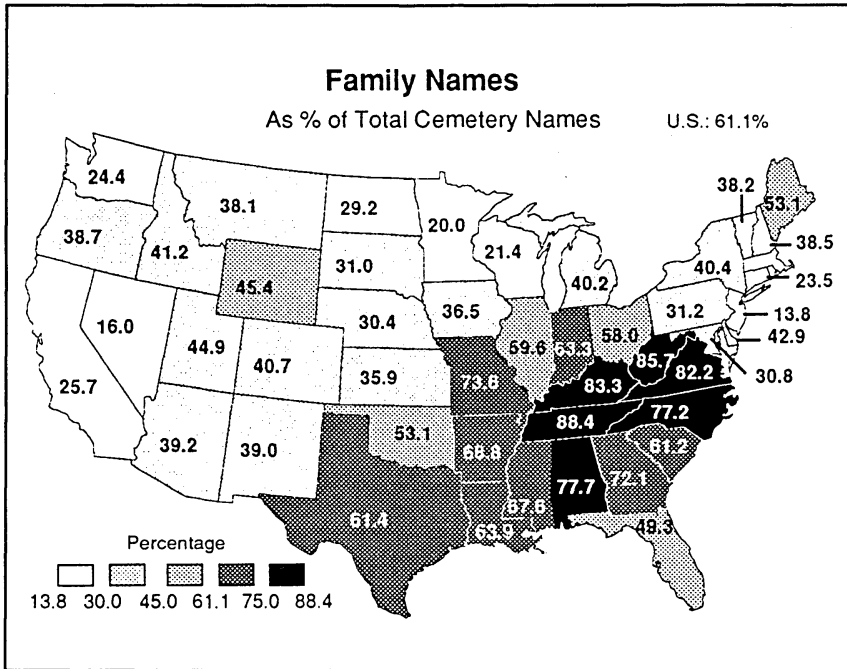### As % of Total Cemetery Names   U.S.: 61.1%

Figure 1.

We find considerable duplication of surnames, especially the more common ones. Thus, in Tennessee there are no fewer than 85 Smith cemeteries. Within the same state I have noted other impressive totals: *Jones* - 57, *Williams* - 56, *Brown* - 54, *Walker* - 46, *Davis* - 44. But multiplicity of occurrences also appears among many surnames that are rare or unknown outside Tennessee, e.g., *Pigg* - 4, *Jernegin* - 4, *Murrell* - 4, *Gonce* - 3, *Kesterson* - 3, *Pamplin* - 3, *Leuty* - 2, *Motlow* - 2, *Yokley* - 2. There are also uniquely occurring names in this state's cemeteries I do not recall ever seeing elsewhere; items such as *Bundren*, *Damesworth*, *Fauver*, *Fulgum*, *Gabbard*, and *Purselley*, among many others. Some of these family-based designations reveal an intimacy or gemütlichkeit I find charming, as in *Granny Hickerson* and *Granny Walker* cemeteries.

The exceptional importance of this mode of cemetery nomenclature throughout the South (including, presumably, northern Florida) is consonant with everything we know about Southern society and its settlement patterns. Specifically, we seem to have here further evidence for the unusual strength, by national standards, of attachment to kinfolk and

locality within communities that have been so intensely rural, at least until recently. We may also surmise that this toponymic tradition applies mostly to relatively small graveyards and probably dates back to the era of pioneer settlement. In any case, the research potentialities for the student of social history and geography that could be realized by plotting the locations and likely clusterings of various selected surnames in cemetery names dazzles the imagination.

Like surnames, locational terms are universal throughout America's cemetery name-cover, but without anything like the same sharp regional differentials in relative frequency of the former (Fig. 2). The fact that relatively high values are achieved in the West (32.7% in Utah, 30.0% in Nevada) and some of the Northeastern states (with a maximum of 41.6% in Connecticut) may alert us to the conspicuousness of landmarks and thinness of population in some of these areas or perhaps the lack of strong competition from the surname tradition. The repertory of usages in the locational category is so varied that there is little point in citing examples. Because reference to environs or landmarks is a device applicable to any variety of cemetery, such names afford few hints as to the history, nature, or social implications of this group of places.
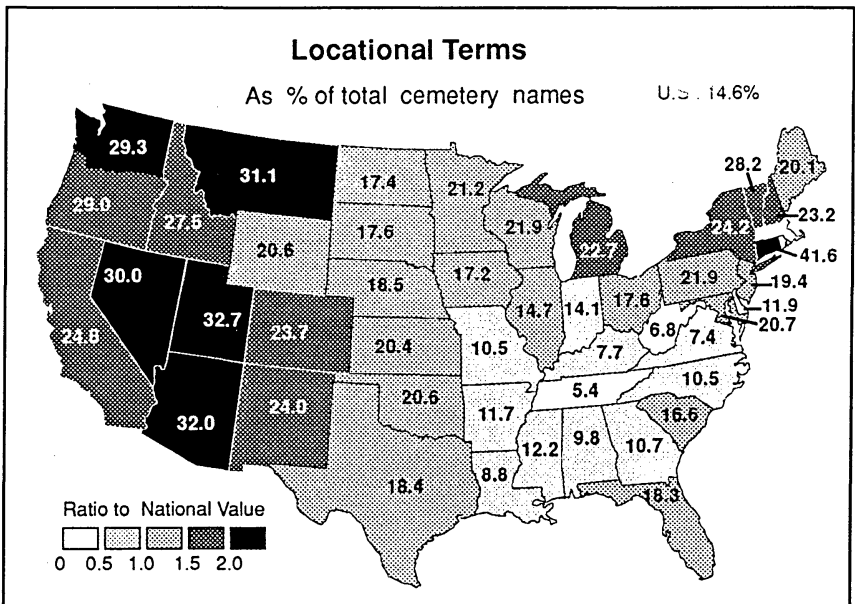

Figure 2.

In contrast, the spatial array of cemeteries associated with standard terms (Fig. 3) leads us toward some interesting questions concerning the historical geography of funerary fashions or complexes. My casual field observations suggest that the places in question are relatively large and are usually located in or near cities or towns of respectable size, and that many are commercial enterprises or are maintained by municipalities or other nonprofit organizations employing paid workers. We can also be fairly sure that they are relatively recent in vintage, i.e., post-Mount Auburn and mostly twentieth century. If these statements are valid, such cemeteries, along with a sizeable fraction of those in the locational category, contrast markedly with the family-surname variety, for the modal example of the latter would tend to be small, rural, do-it- yourself, and lacking any formal corporate governance.

In terms of absolute numbers, the standard-term species of cemetery has flourished most successfully in the states of the Northeast and
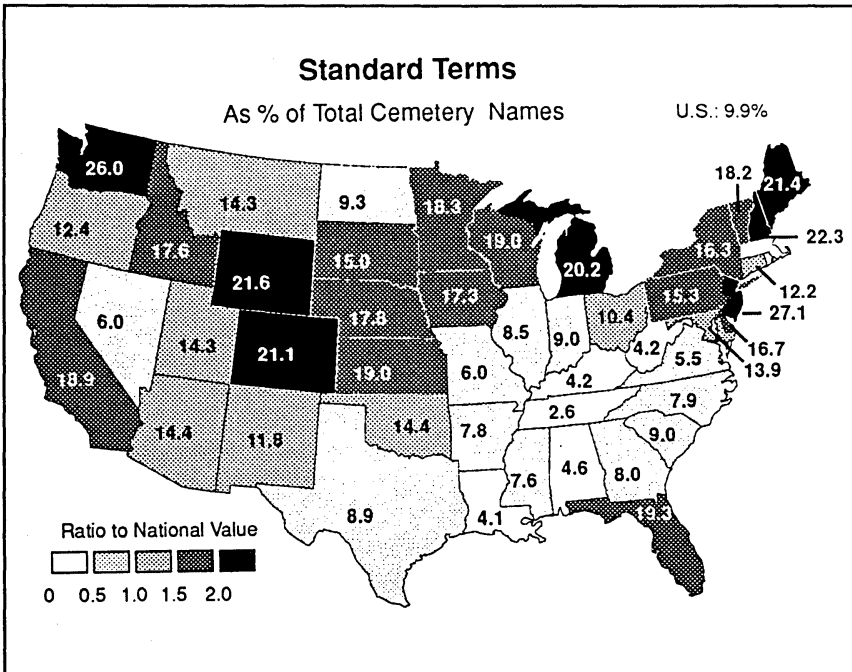

Figure 3.

Middle West. With the predictable anomaly of oversize Texas (421 items), the leaders are: New York - 405, Ohio - 369, Iowa - 358, Michigan - 323, Wisconsin - 320, Kansas - 318, and Pennsylvania - 310. In relative terms, however, this toponymic practice scores highest in the Western states, notably Washington, Wyoming, Colorado and three of the states — New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Maine — that fall, wholly or partially, into that super-conurbation known as Megalopolis. Whatever qualifications one might enter, there appears to be a correlation between this usage and places that were settled at a relatively late date and/or rank high on the socioeconomic scale. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Florida (presumably Peninsular Florida) is again the odd man out within the South.

I can bolster the foregoing suppositions by inviting inspection of the distribution of "Other Generic Terms," i.e., terms other than *cemetery* (Fig. 4). All the available evidence, fragmentary though it be, indicates that this toponymic fashion is mid- to late-twentieth-century phenomenon and is still increasing in popularity. Thus, we have here a vogue even more diagnostic of trendiness and advanced developmental
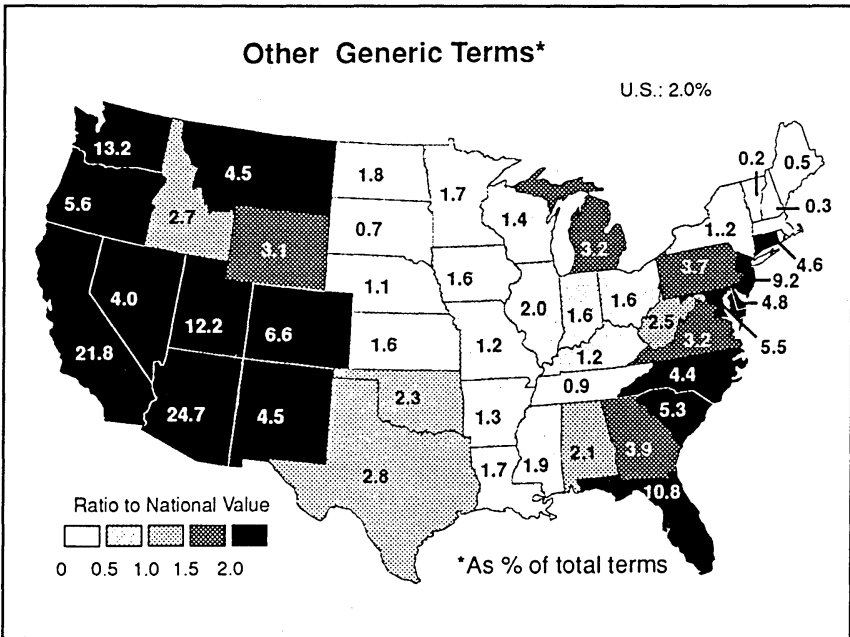

Figure 4.

status than the widespread adoption of standard specific terms. It is reassuring to find that such generics as *Memorial Park* and *Memory Garden* have attained strong acceptance in California and Arizona, those bellwethers of postmodernity (the other-generic group claiming 21.8% and 24.7% of total classified names, respectively), and that Florida, with 10.8%, is the highest ranking state in the East. Notable also is the relatively high standing of the Carolinas within the Deep South, for portions of these states have been undergoing a rapid spurt of development in recent times.

At this juncture I cannot resist introducing Figure 5, a map displaying the incidence of cremation among forty-three states as of 1986, even though the connection with toponymy is so tenuous. (Crematories and columbaria are rarely identified in the GNIS list.) The spatial correlation with the pattern for other generics in Figure 4 is all that one could hope for. And not only do we observe a clear relationship between these two death-related phenomena on the one hand and level of
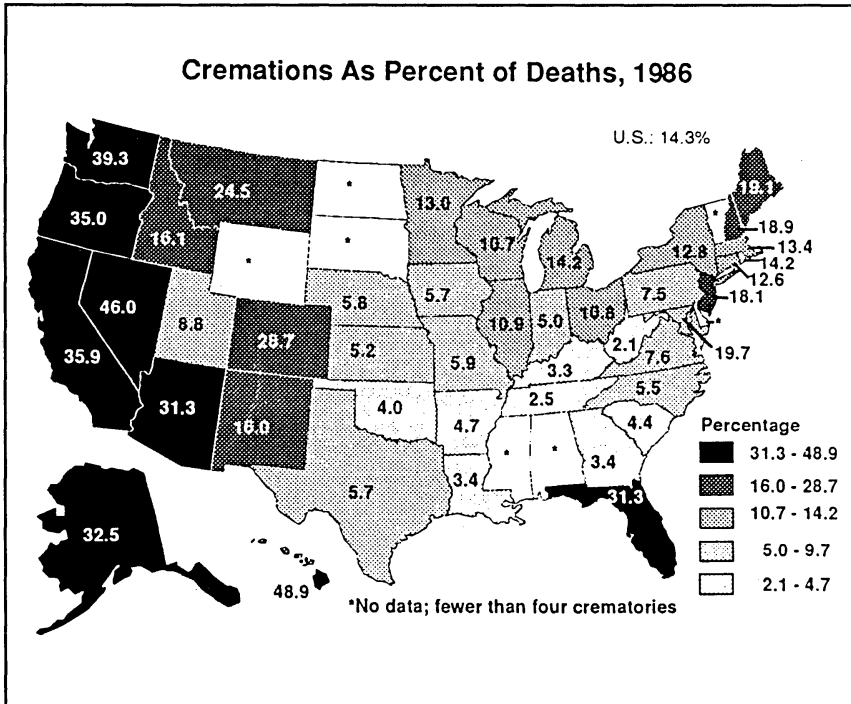

Figure 5.

socioeconomic attainment on the other, but it also appears that crema-
tion and the euphemistic evasion of the rather chilling term *cemetery* is
most prevalent in those states with the greatest volume of recent in-
migration, places, consequently, where residents tend to be less place-
and earth-bound.

The remaining types of cemetery toponymy account for only 13.5%
of the classified names and stimulate fewer geographical or historical
questions than the items treated above. The incidence of hagiolatrous
terms (Table 5) faithfully reflects the distribution of church-related
cemeteries, especially those associated with the Roman Catholic,
Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Eastern Orthodox denominations (Fig. 6).
Conversely, areas in which Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Con-
gregationalists, and the more fundamentalist of the Protestant groups

Table 5. Leading hagiolatrous terms in cemetery names.

St. Mary	561	Our Lady of ...	29
St. John	502	St. Nicholas	29
St. Joseph	391	St. George	24
St. Paul	267	St. Augustine	23
St. Peter	162	St. Agnes	21
St. Patrick	158	St. Catherine	21
Trinity	142	St. Vincent	21
Sacred Heart	139	St. Charles	20
Holy Cross	113	Holy Family	19
St. Michael	113	St. Rose	19
St. James	87	St. Stanislaus	18
St. Ann(e)	72	Holy Rosary	17
St. Anthony	62	St. Elizabeth	17
St. Francis	61	San Jose	17
St. Luke	50	St. Aloysius	16
Sts. Peter and Paul	41	Holy Sepulchre	15
St. Andrew	40	St. Bridget	14
St. Mark	38	Holy Name	13
St. Mathew	36	Our Savior	13
St. Thomas	36	St. Clair	11
Holy Trinity	33	Christ	10
St. Bernard	33	Holy Ghost	10
St. Boniface	33	San Pedro	10
Immaculate Conception	30	Other Saints	522
St. Stephen	30		

predominate are those where hagiolatry is weakest.

The spatial array of biblical terms (Table 6) lends some support to the foregoing explanation, even though the pattern (a badly smudged mirror image of Figure 6) is not a simple one (Fig. 7). The relationship
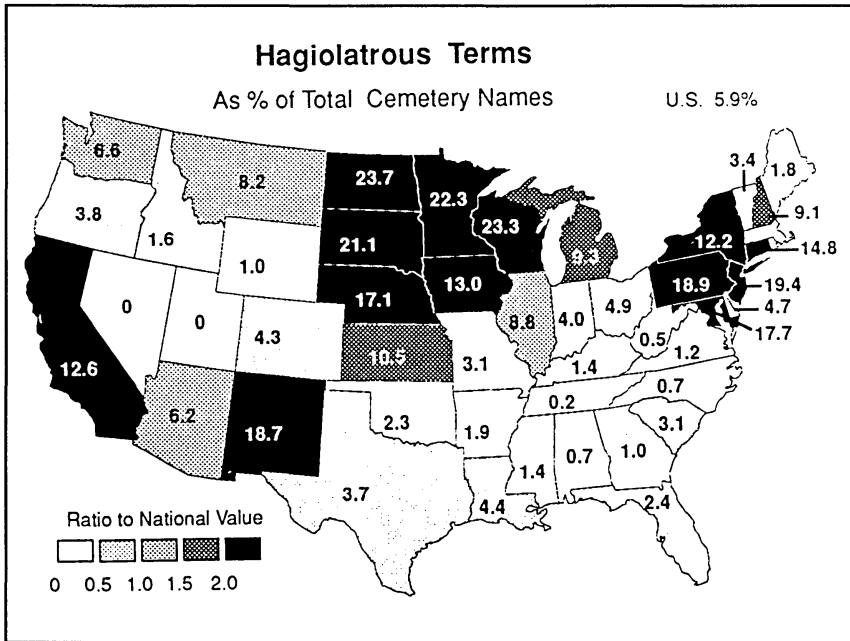

Figure 6.

is with that varied cluster of Protestant and Jewish groups who turn to the Bible for both church and cemetery names. Although the practice is partially masked by the enormous prevalence of family names, such nomenclature shows up strongly in the Deep South. Thus, Mississippi, with 201 cases, is second only to Texas with its 227, while Arkansas, Tennessee, border state Missouri, and Georgia are not far behind in absolute count.

The number of cemeteries bearing the names of religious denominations is too small to merit mapping. Suffice it to say that the practice is most common in the Middle West (Kansas and Ohio are the leaders with 55 and 46 instances, respectively), that it is less common in the South, and seldom seen in the West with the exception of Oregon - 23, a state with early linkages to the Middle West. The use of ethnic terms to

Table 6. Leading biblical terms in cemetery names, by number of occurrences.

|			
(Mount) Zion	496	Beulah	34
Calvary	439	Eden	33
Bethel	325	Jordan	32
Salem	217	Corinth	30
Shiloh	145	Jerusalem	23
Mount Olive	137	Sardis	23
Antioch	121	Bethesda	21
Bethlehem	118	Sharon	20
Mount Carmel	108	Gethsemane	17
Ebenezer	108	Goshen	17
Bethany	101	Elam	16
Macedonia	91	Gilead	16
Mount Olivet	85	Zoar	15
Immanuel	72	Rehobeth	14
Pisgah	70	Canaan	12
Moriah	57	Ararat	9
Lebanon	54	Mount Horeb	8
Mount Tabor	49	Jericho	8
Hebron	43	Damascus	7
Emanuel	42	Berea	6
Mount Nebo	39	Mizpah	5
Mount Sinai	39	Sodom	4
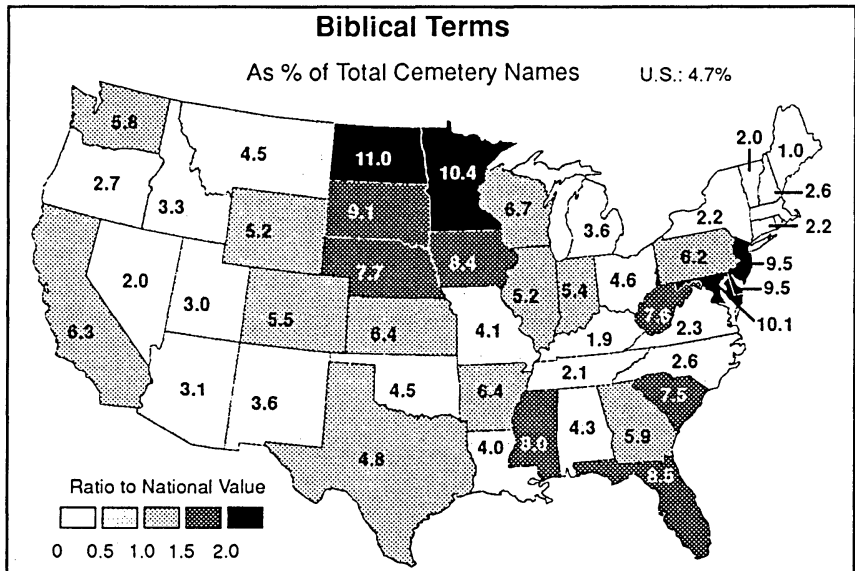
Figure 7.

identify cemeteries occurs most frequently in the Middle West again (the leaders being Minnesota - 49, Nebraska - 29, and Wisconsin - 25), and is unknown in most sections of the South and West.

Cemeteries named after, and presumably managed by, fraternal groups make up the smallest toponymic categories with only 135 examples reported by GNIS, and most of those associated with the Odd Fellows and Masons. Only two states contain more than five occurrences: Indiana - 37, and Oregon - 29.

The 1,033 nationalistically named cemeteries fall into a relatively coherent pattern (Fig. 8), one that resembles the regionalization discerned in a previous study dealing with nationalism in the names of political jurisdictions (Zelinsky, "Nationalism"). Here again we find a marked concentration in the Middle Western states (the leaders being Iowa - 74 and Ohio - 70) and a relative dearth in all the Western states. But there is some departure from the configuration of the political universe of nationalistic names in the relatively strong showing in the Middle Atlantic and Southern states.

In summary, incomplete and areally coarse though the map patterns may be, they do yield some general findings. Our toponymic evidence confirms an earlier impression gained from unsystematic field observation: that there is a definite regionalization of cemetery practices in the
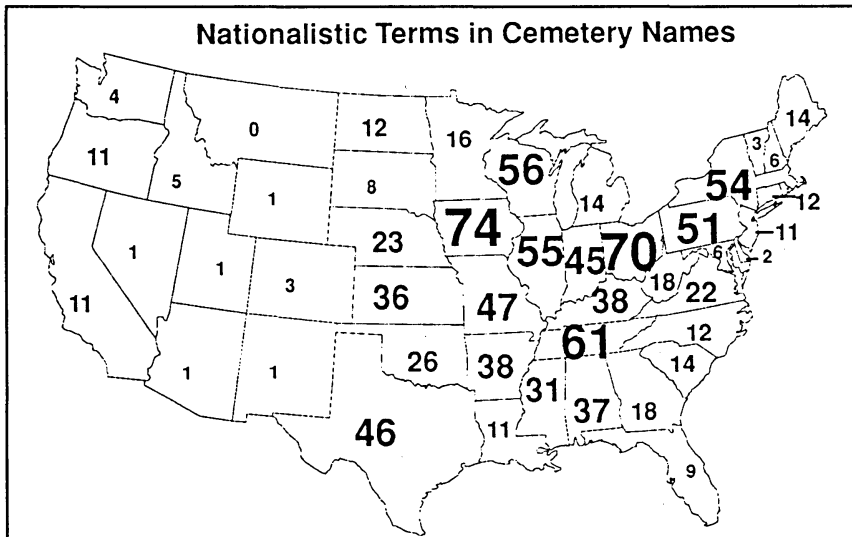

Figure 8.

Table 7. Leading "upbeat" terms in cemetery names, by number of occurrences.

Concord	86	Eureka	14
Hope	70	Fellowship	10
Friendship	68	Resurrection	9
Harmony	48	Welcome	7
Good Hope	41	Faith	6
Providence	41	Prosperity	5
Peace	30	Joy	3

United States. Moreover, these place-to-place differences represent, in part, a set of overlapping historical layers, with some places further advanced along an evolutionary path than others, but these differences also tend to reflect persistent regional cultures, including their religious, ethnic, attitudinal, and other components.

A final category—that of upbeat, or cheerful, terms—is almost as peculiarly American as the nationalistic (Table 7). It is rather difficult to generalize about the locational pattern of these 779 items except to note that they tend to cluster within the more westerly of the Southern states (Texas - 54, Arkansas - 41, Mississippi - 32) and, similarly, within the western section of the Middle West (Minnesota - 36, Wisconsin - 30, Iowa - 28, Kansas - 27). What does this tell us about the geography of the American temperament?

There is no eloquent or convenient way to conclude what is so obviously an introductory sketch—a first attempt to set forth the spatiotemporal patterns of American funerary practice at the national, and gross regional, scale. This essay is, in essence, a plea for further work. As already suggested, much remains to be done even if we confine ourselves to the GNIS data set. With some clever manipulation of this material, by means of the computer, I am confident we can tease out many additional spatial and social patterns and generate new research questions that remain totally invisible for the time being. For optimum results, however, exploitation of GNIS and other documentary items must be combined with the analysis of nonlinguistic attributes of cemeteries as they appear on large-scale maps and field study of an adequate sample of places. Such quests for "ground truth" should involve, inter alia, the collection of names for the various sections, lanes, and paths to be found within our more elaborate cemeteries.

What justification is there for such a study program for the student of American toponymy? Simply this: Cemetery names represent a substantial portion of the total name-cover in this land. Consequently, we cannot fully master the latter either descriptively or as a means toward the formulation of general onomastic theory until we have completed an adequate exploration of cemetery names. And we cannot understand such names if we do not grasp the physical, historical, and social contexts of cemeteries. There is much to be done.

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