

A MONUMENTAL UNDERTAKING: RESURRECTING A RURAL ILLINOIS COMMUNITY VIA A CEMETERY STUDY

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Anthropology Senior Project Presentation

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Historical Cemeteries

- Gravemarkers
 - Gender, socioeconomic status, kinship, religion, ethnicity, age, etc.
 - Communication
- Multidisciplinary research
- Publication of cemetery studies



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Historical Cemeteries (Continued)

- Research
 - Focus on design motifs and symbolism
 - Standardized designs
- Deetz & Dethlefsen (1965 & 1966)
 - Structuralist approach - oppositions in gravestone motifs
- Now: interpretive approach



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Rural Cemeteries in the American Midwest

- Mostly ignored
- Connection to land and sense of place for settlers
- Family plots & church graveyards

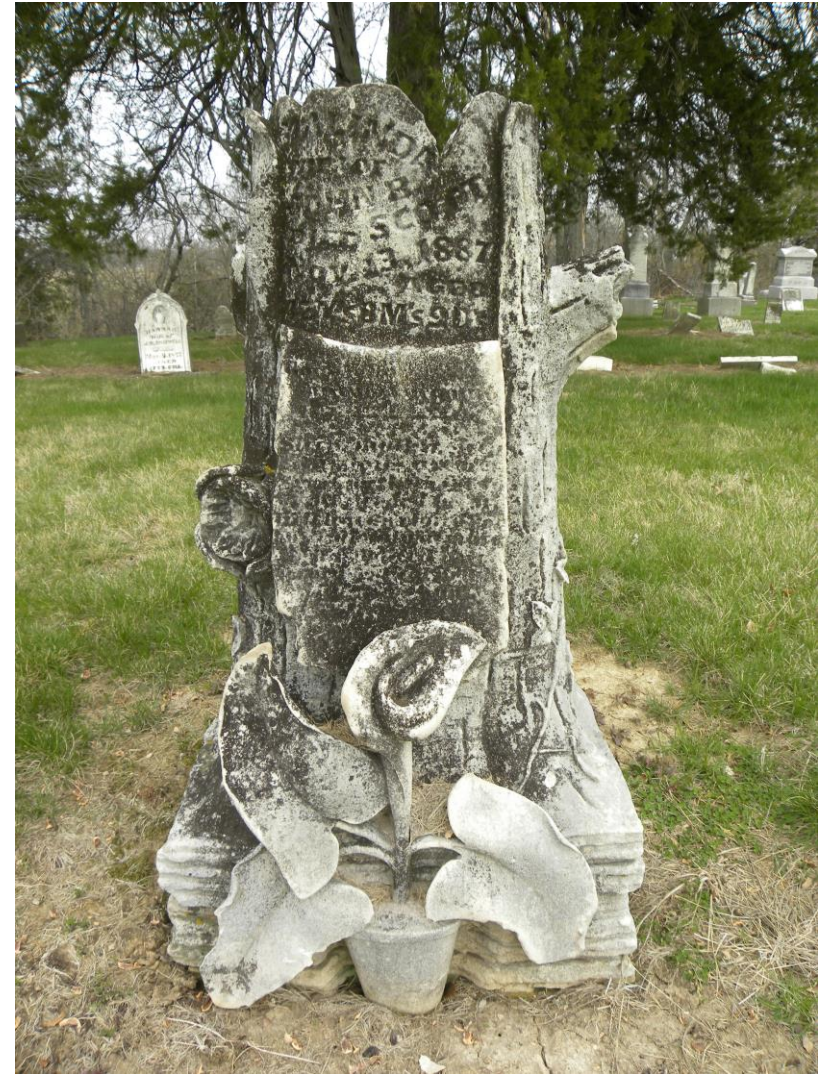
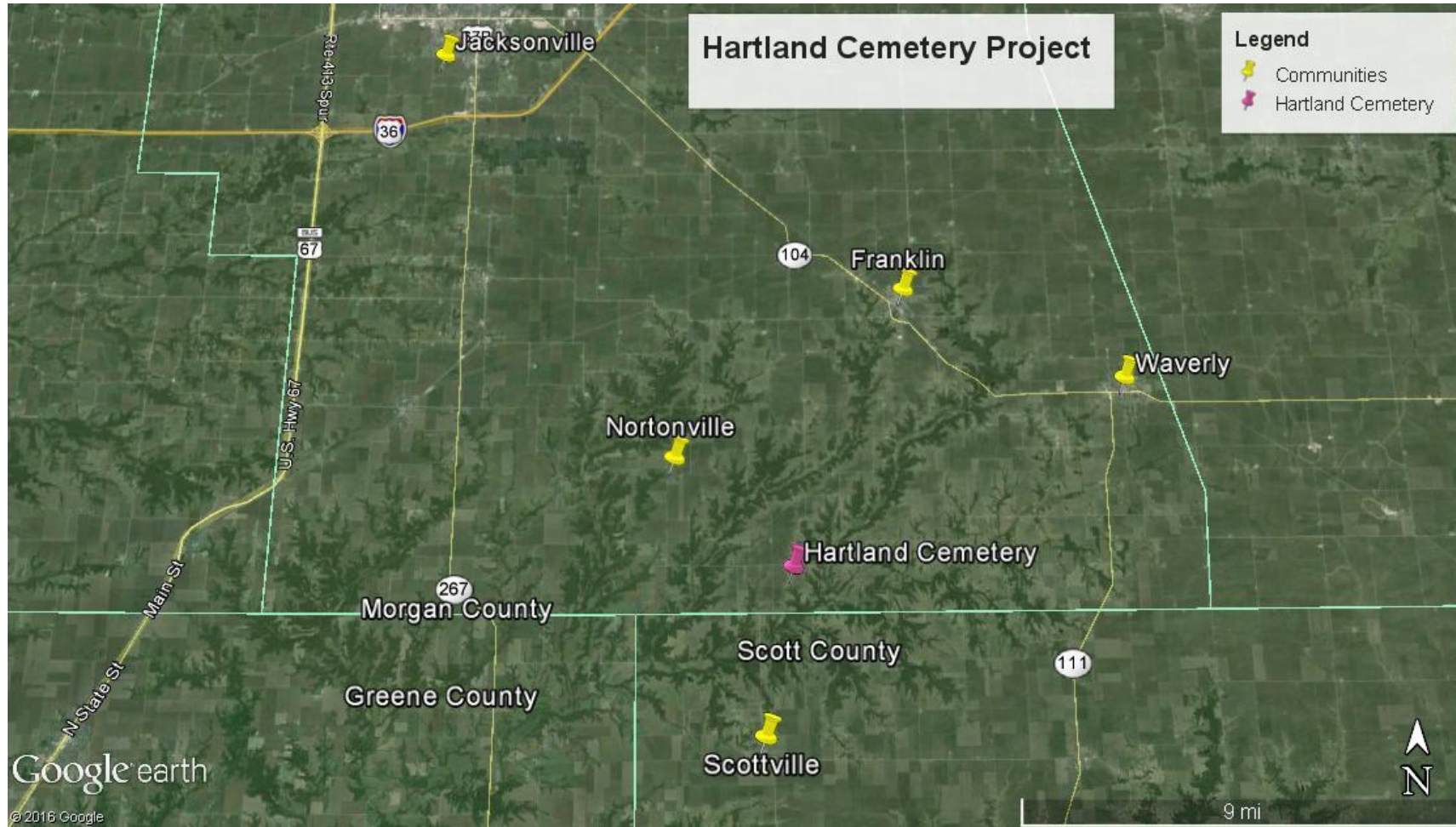


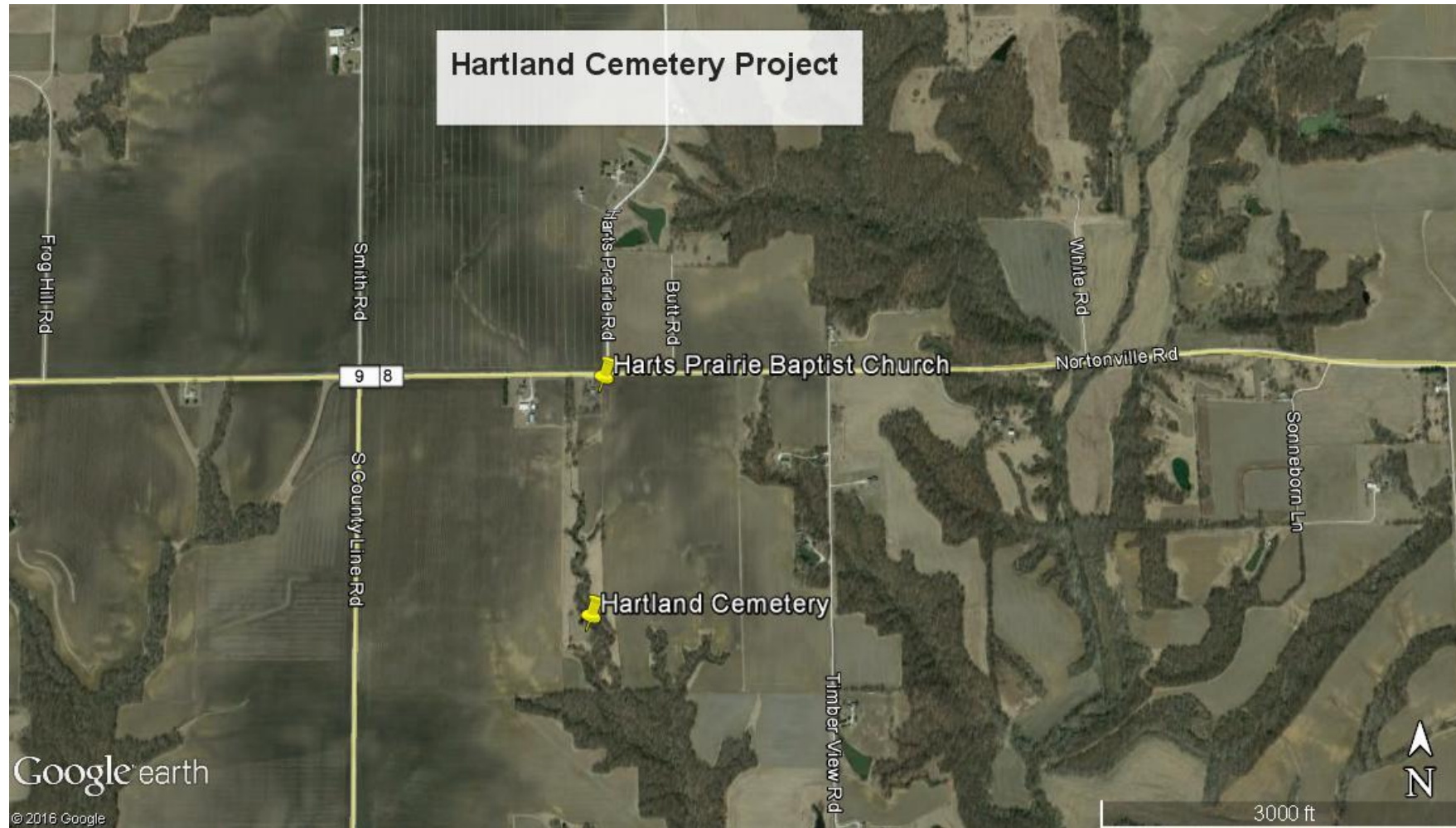
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Hartland in Morgan County, Illinois



Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016

Hartland Cemetery



Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016

Objectives & Hypotheses

- Understand the culture of the deceased
- Record/preserve data
- Compare with Foster & Hummel (1995)
 - Similar communities = similar cemeteries?
- Gender/Age
 - Men's gravestones more ornate/expensive than women's and children's?



Photo by Susannah Oettle

Methods

- Fieldwork
 - Photos
 - Inscriptions
- Spreadsheet
 - Ages, year of birth, names, etc.
- Demographic analyses
 - Foster and Hummel (1995)
- Gender/Age
 - Relationship status inscriptions ("Daughter of...", etc.)
 - Qualitative data categories



Photo by Susannah Oettle

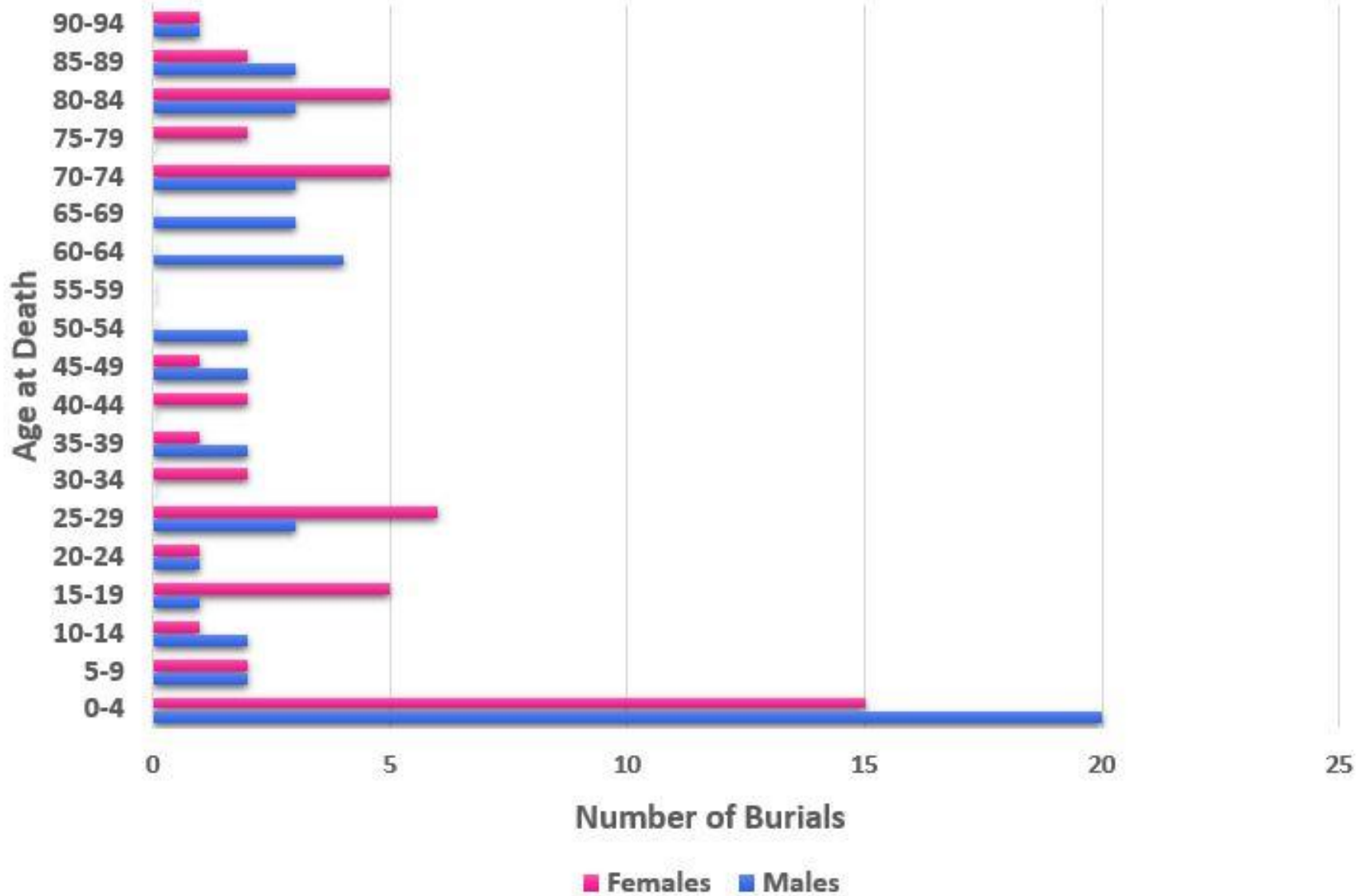
Results

- N = 115
- For comparison to Foster & Hummel (1995):
 - Created 4 tables & 6 graphs
- Gender/Age
 - 2 tables

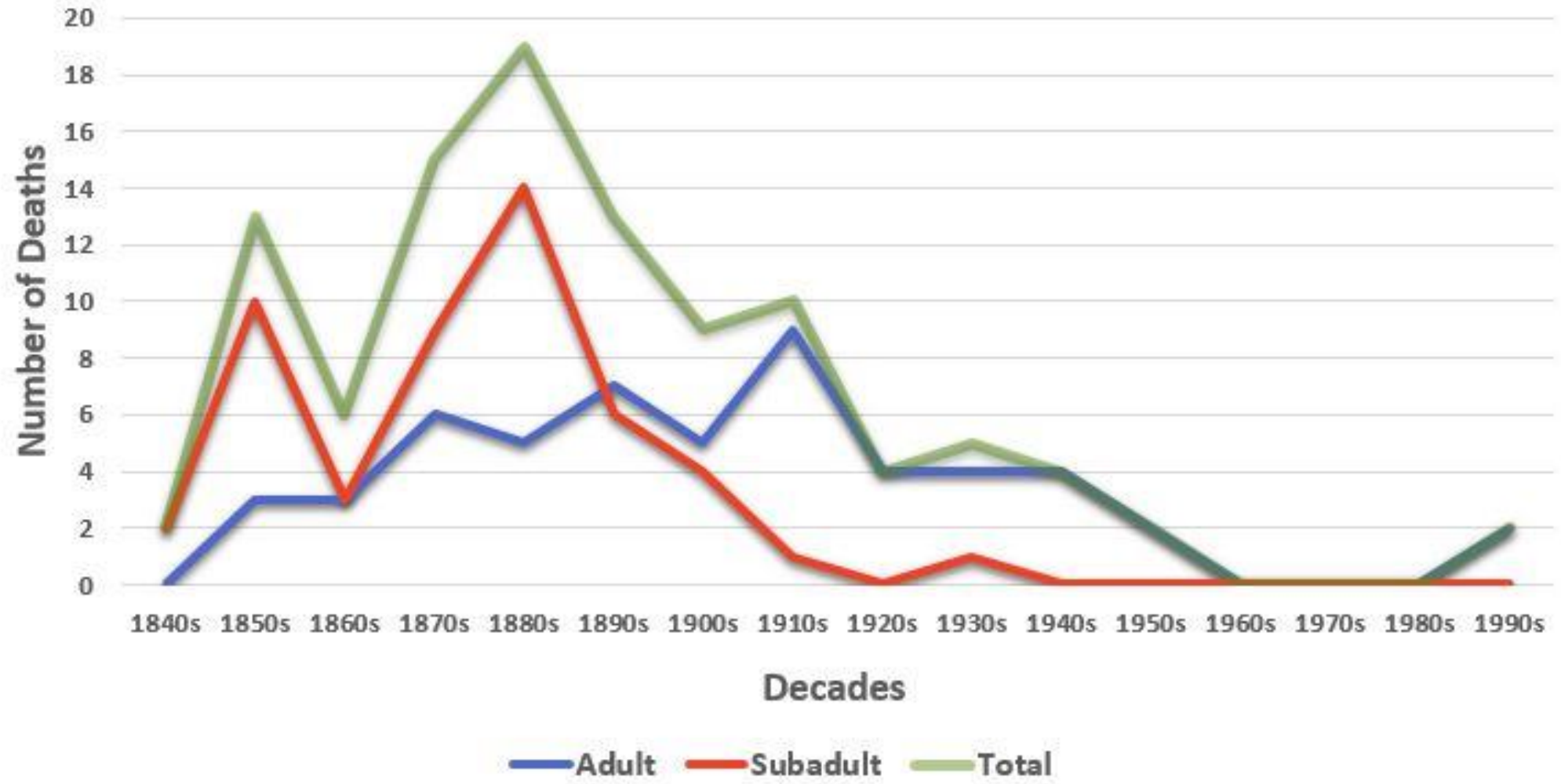


Map Data: Google Earth Pro, Landsat Image, 2016

Age/Sex Distribution of Burials



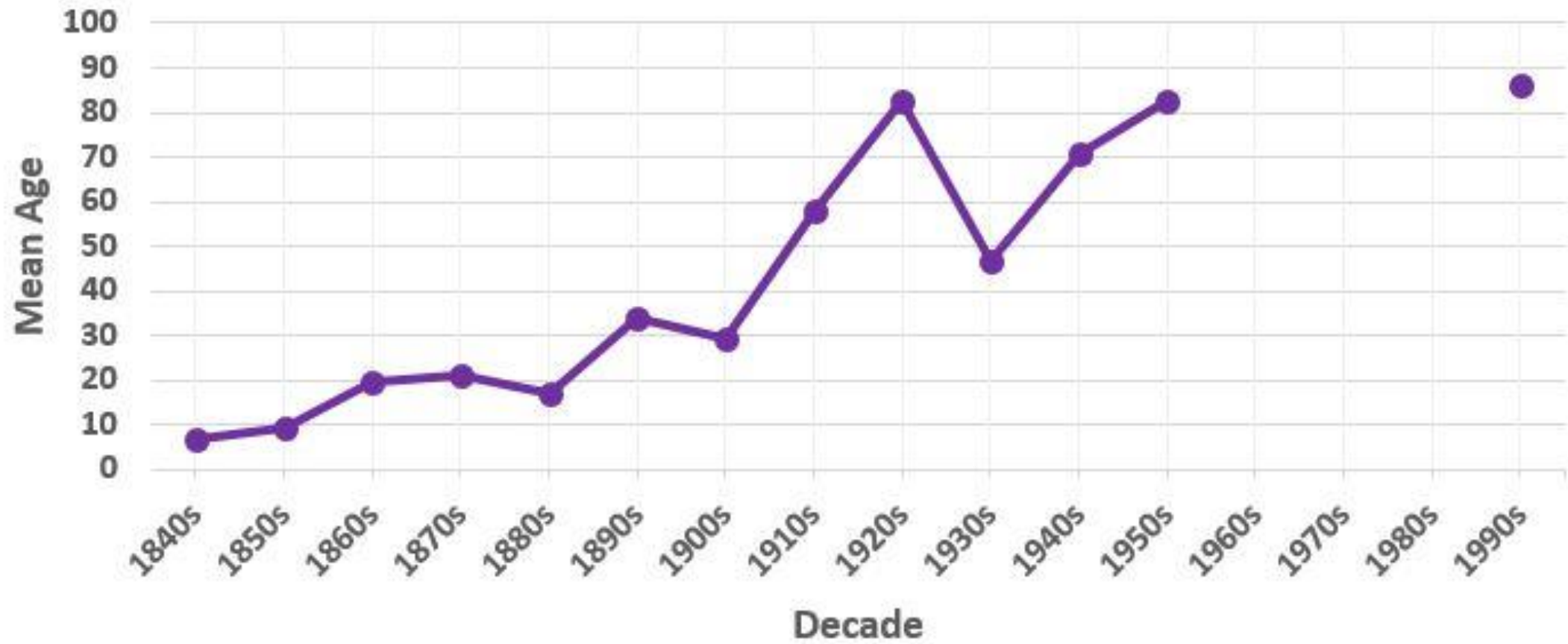
Deaths by Decade



Deaths by Season

Age Status	Winter (Nov-Dec-Jan)	Spring (Feb-Mar-Apr)	Summer (May-Jun-Jul)	Autumn (Aug-Sep-Oct)	Total
Subadult (Birth-19)	12 26.09%	15 32.61%	7 15.21%	12 26.09%	46 100.00%
Adult (20+)	10 30.30%	11 33.33%	9 27.28%	3 9.09%	33 100.00%
Total	22 27.85%	26 32.91%	16 20.25%	15 18.99%	79 100.00%

Mean Age at Death by Decade



Spousal Gravestone Comparison

Status	Number	%
Identical	4	20
Maiden Name; Otherwise Identical	2	10
"Wife"; Otherwise Identical	5	25
Maiden Name + "Wife"	2	10
Wife's Marker Less Expensive + "Wife"	2	10
Husband's Marker Less Expensive + "Wife"	5	25
Total	20	100

Conclusion

- Cemeteries = rich sources of data
- Future research:
 - Design motifs
 - Government documents
 - Collect data from neighboring cemeteries



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