

15 September 2011

Rebecca Martin, Executive Director
Kinston Land Trust
PO Box 2701
Kingston, NY 12402

Dear Ms. Martin,

Please find the enclosed report entitled "Rhinebeck's Lost and Found: Free Blacks and the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery, Dutchess County, New York". The findings in this report are based upon the research conducted by a group of Vassar College students enrolled in the course entitled "Race and Class in the Hudson Valley: Geophysical Investigations". In this course, the students research areas that are believed by the local community to be historical burial sites of its marginalized members. The goal is to use geophysical equipment to determine whether there are any possible graves on site and to learn about these members of the past community through historical research. The Rhinebeck project was incredibly fruitful, as we were able to extend our research in the cemetery to make conclusions about demographic changes in Dutchess County throughout the 19th century.

We began our research by looking through the lens of the Frazier family, whose remains were moved to the cemetery from their own land in Milan, New York sometime during the 20th century. Little was known about the Fraziers at the beginning of this project, but we were ultimately able to discover their relationships to each other as well as learn about their financial statuses and trace the property ownership of their farm in Milan to support our thesis. We also researched demographic changes in local community of Rhinebeck by focusing on graves of some of the first free blacks in Dutchess County, many who lived on Oak Street, which we learned to be a black neighborhood with a vibrant community of artisans during the 19th century.

We found the information we uprooted to be truly fascinating and we hope you do as well. What we have learned most of all is that there is much more to the history of Rhinebeck and the whole of Dutchess County yet to be discovered. Please enjoy the report. We anticipate the information gleaned from our research will help to enrich and spark further interest in the history of the local community.

We would like to express our appreciation to Lorraine Roberts from the Dutchess County Historical Society, Rhinebeck Town Historians Nancy and Arthur Kelly, Gary Slater from the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery, Assistant Professor of History Quincy Mills from Vassar College, the associates at Starr Library, and the local community of Rhinebeck, whose expertise each contributed a significant amount of knowledge throughout our endeavor.

Sincerely,



Brian G. McAdoo
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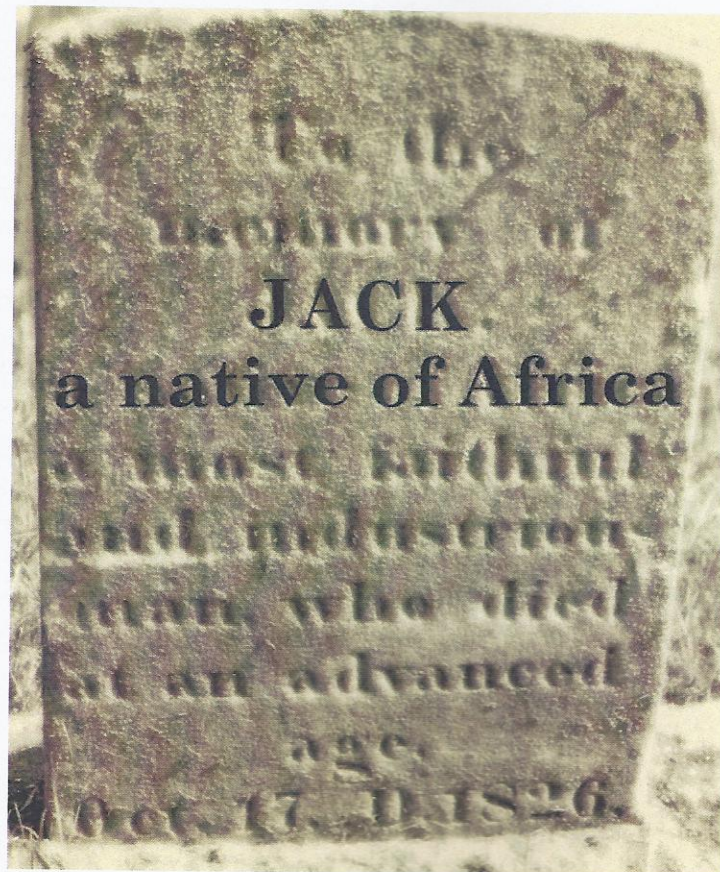
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Rhinebeck's Lost and Found:

*Free Blacks and the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery
Dutchess County, New York*



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Abstract

During the late 18th and through the 19th centuries, a vibrant African-American community existed in Rhinebeck, New York, where artisans, landowners and former slaves made significant contributions to the economic activity of the region. Although it is not clear what Rhinebeck's black population was during this time, according to the 2010 Census, African-Americans are rare in the Town of Rhinebeck, making up a mere 3.6% of the population. In an attempt to better understand these demographic changes, we undertook a geophysical and historical survey of Section E of the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery to determine the presence of unmarked African-American graves. We were drawn to this cemetery by the curious Frazier family plot, which is adjacent to Section E. Andrew Frazier, the family's patriarch, was a black Revolutionary War veteran that used his pension to purchase land in the town of Milan following the war. Subsequent generations of Fraziers were buried on his land until the family lost the land due to an inheritance dispute in the early 1900s. At some point during the late 1800's, a portion of the family's plot was moved to the Rhinebeck cemetery. Why were they moved at this time? Were all of the Fraziers interred in the cemetery? If so, when? Who were their neighbors? Can we gain insight into a larger community by examining it through the lens of one family? We use a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating geophysical surveys combined with historical research. Our results show evidence for 60 potential graves, 43 of which are unmarked, in Section E of the cemetery (also known as Potter's Field), and present the Frazier family story as a case study of the poorly understood life of rural blacks in the northeastern United States during this time of transition away from slavery, both in New York and the South.



Introduction

The narrative of the history of slavery in the United States is focused on the South. Large plantations that farmed rice, cotton and tobacco housed large numbers of enslaved Africans as capital. As the story goes, the Civil War was fought between these southern, slaveholding states, against the industrialized northern states that were anti-slavery. As we explore a little deeper, however, we find that the story is not so clear. New York was a slaveholding state until 1826, and a large portion of its economy was agrarian, especially in rural areas such as Dutchess County. Slaveholding in these smaller farms was decidedly different from the south- individual landowners might have only one or up to 10 slaves, but not nearly the numbers on the large southern plantations. As these slave were gradually freed beginning in 1799, the region evolved from a agricultural based economy into the upstate bedroom community that exists today, where small farms are being threatened by large-scale, Midwestern industrial agribusiness and the ever expanding market for suburban tract homes. These changes are also bringing about drastic changes in the region's demographics, where what would have been a racially diverse community of artisans and farmers to a wealthier population of a non-agriculture based population. The story of how the African-American population evolved, has been largely untold.

The Rhinebeck Association Cemetery is located in the town of Rhinebeck, NY, on the corner of US Route 9 (Mill Street) and Mill Road (Figures 1 and 2). Many of the region's black population was buried in "Section E", also known as Potter's Field. This section in the northwest corner of the cemetery is a half-acre lot with dozens of memorials, bounded by woods to the west and north, a bedrock knoll to the east, and a road to the south and east. It is interesting to note that a large area on the southwestern portion of Section E is sporadically dotted with a few headstones widely spaced apart, raising the issue of a possibility of unmarked graves in that portion of the lot. Local tales told by past generations of Rhinebeck residents describe wooden crosses that used to mark Section E. Those crosses are no longer present. Presumably, they have deteriorated over the years and all visible evidence of the graves they marked has been lost.



Figure 1. Dutchess County, New York. The Rhinebeck Association Cemetery is just south of the Village of Rhinebeck, NY in northern Dutchess County.

Section E came into existence through the efforts of Mary Garrettson, the daughter of prominent Methodist missionary and abolitionist, Freeborn Garrettson, who donated Section E to the United Methodist Church in 1853 (Morse, 1908). It was in turn was given to the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery later that same year, with the stipulation that the land be used for the burial of the black members of the community (Morse, 1908). Based on the graves present today, it remained the burial grounds for the black community until the mid-1900s.

Just across the road from Section E is a curious plot (within the Cemetery proper) that belongs to the Frazier family. A brief history of the family is outlined in the *History of the Little Nine Partners* (Hunting, 1897). The family's patriarch, Andrew Frazier, was a black Revolutionary War veteran that used his pension to purchase land in the town on Milan, some 15 km (10 miles) northeast of Rhinebeck. Deceased family members were buried on the Milan property throughout the 19th century. However, at some point, the headstones, and possibly the graves themselves, were moved to the Rhinebeck cemetery, where 19 neatly arranged and closely spaced headstones occupy three rows.

The goal of this project was to 1) Determine if the Fraziers were actually reinterred at the Rhinebeck cemetery, or if the headstones were merely moved, 2) to find out why the family's graves might have been reinterred, 3) to learn what we can about this unusual family, and 4) to use this family's experience as a window into the wider black community of northern Dutchess County, and into the lives of rural blacks in the Northeast. To address the last point, we decided to carefully map the whole of Section E using high-tech geophysical surveying equipment to



Figure 2. Rhinebeck Association Cemetery, on the south side of the Village of Rhinebeck. The road cutting diagonally through the upper-right (northeast) corner of the inset figure is US 9, and the circle encompasses Section E on the north side of the cemetery road with the Frazier plot on the south side.

determine the potential existence of any unmarked graves, as well as to learn what we could about the marked headstones. During our initial surveys of Section E, one headstone stood out as particularly interesting- that of the mysterious “Jack the African” (Figure 3). Surely, Jack would have interesting stories to tell about the history of this area.

Methods

Before the geophysical survey began, our team took a visual reconnaissance of Section E and the Frazier plot, noting depressions in the ground, names on headstones and the general layout of headstones. We decided to focus on a 20 by 44.5 meter portion of Section E, enclosing a bedrock outcropping, an area of regularly spaced marked graves and an area with fewer, sparsely arranged graves. We also completed a smaller survey in the Frazier family plot to determine if there was evidence of re-internment.

As many unmarked graves are not visible to the naked eye, we employed an array of geophysical tools to map the area, including a total station surveyor, an electrical resistivity meter, a cesium-vapor magnetometer, and a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) unit. These tools can detect very subtle changes in soil properties that may indicate burials. In addition to the geophysical tools, historical documents provided a critical context for the graves we were to discover. We reviewed



property deeds and court documents; historical maps of the area; federal and state census records and compilations of records and personal accounts. All these methods come together to paint a more complete picture of the lives of blacks in this area during the 19th century.



Figure 3. Jack's Memorial. "To the memory of JACK, a native of Africa a most faithful and industrious man, who died at an advanced age, Oct. 17, D 1826."

History and Demographics

The history of the Frazier family was documented by Hunting (1897). Andrew Frazier was an African American soldier who acquired land in Milan, New York after his service in the Revolutionary War, using his pension. In 1783 he began clearing the land for a farm where he raised his family (Figure 4). The Fraziers buried their deceased family members on a small plot on the property, marked with ornately carved headstones. According to local oral histories, at some point those graves were moved from their original location on the farm in Milan to the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery sometime in the mid- to late-1800s. Their headstones were placed directly across from the section of the cemetery that is called, "Potter's Field", where they remain today.

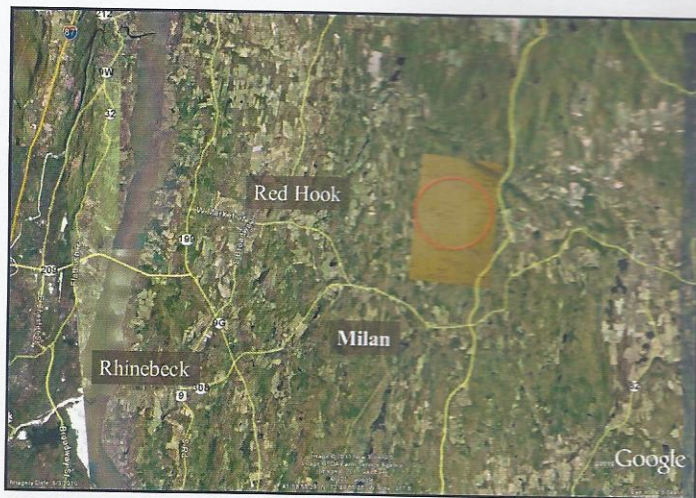


Figure 4: The Frazier farm on Willow Glen road in Milan, NY. An enlarged aerial view of the boxed portion on the map (Grey et al 1876) depicts the general location of the Frazier farm, enclosed in the circular area.

Potter's Field is a half-acre lot given to the cemetery by Mary Garrettson in 1853 via the United Methodist Church. The land was originally designated for the burial of black members of the community. The inscription on the oldest dated headstone in Potter's Field reads: "To the memory of Jack, A native of Africa, a most faithful and industrious man, who died at an advanced age, Oct. 17, D. 1826" (Figure 3). From the time it was given to the cemetery until fairly recently, the mid-1900s only the black members of the community of Rhinebeck were buried in Potter's Field. Local anecdotes tell that a number of these graves were marked with wooden crosses, which are no longer standing. Wood does not endure the elements like stone such as granite or marble, and if these crosses did exist they most likely decomposed over time, making for lost graves.



Figure 5. The Frazier plot. Family patriarch Andrew Frazier is the headstone on the far right. Note how tightly together the headstones are placed.



As we conducted our survey we became interested in why the Frazier family would have been moved to the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery. At first it seemed doubtful that the Fraziers had been reinterred at the cemetery because of the close spacing of the headstones. The headstones' positions seemed to corroborate the local stories that the headstones were moved, since the markers were placed closer together than the rest of the graves in the cemetery. However, the proximity of the stones to one another made it doubtful that the bodies had been moved as well, the assumption being that graves would have been dug farther apart than the spacing of the headstones indicated (Figure 5). Our investigation of this curious story has allowed us to contextualize the Frazier family's history within the history of Dutchess County's changing black population—with the realization that this is only a small part of the story to be told about the demographic shift in Dutchess County.

Andrew Frazier

According to a late 19th century history of the area (Hunting 1897), Andrew Frazier, referred to as “Andrew the ancestor,” was a “colored” man who hailed from a mixed African and Scotch background. Andrew settled in Milan after service in the Revolutionary War. It was here that he built a farm to raise his family upon and where he died twelve days prior to his 103rd birthday (Hunting 1897).

To determine the line of land ownership based on the marked headstones and property deeds held at the Dutchess County Clerk's office, we generated a family tree from the names of Andrew's children, listed in *History of the Little Nine Partners* (Hunting, 1897; Figure 8). Having eleven children in all, only the names of Andrew's sons were provided in Hunting's account, as well as a few of his grandsons. Census records and

headstone inscriptions helped us to fill in branches on the tree where Hunting (1897) left off. Along with these names, Hunting (1897) also listed some of the Frazier family who had been buried in the family burial ground on the Frazier's property; Hunting also listed the names of those who were still living after 1889. His research indicates that in 1897 Andrew's grandson owned the property. Hunting (1897) admits in the preface to his text that he was not able to corroborate all of his information with factual documents or eyewitness accounts. However, because he quoted directly from the inscription on Andrew's headstone: “...in the Rev War 1776, In memory of Andrew Frazier who died June 2d, 1846, aged 102 years, 11 mos. and 18 days,” we know that he is referencing the same Andrew Frazier we were interested in (Figure 6). We were standing at the monument of a black man who owned property in Dutchess County

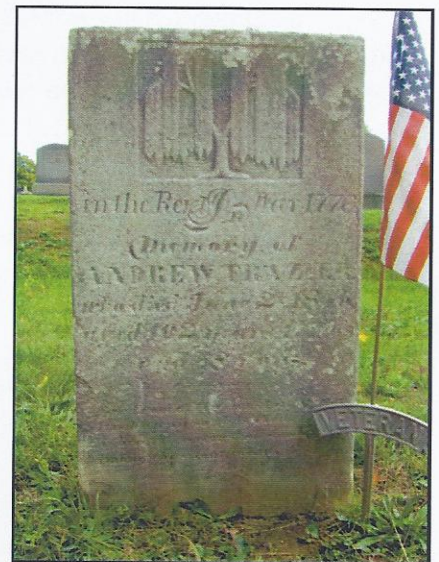


Figure 6: Andrew Frazier's headstone. The inscription reads: “In the Rev War 1776, In memory of Andrew Frazier who died June 2d, 1846, aged 102 years, 11 mos. and 18 days” quoted in Hunting (1897, p.336).



prior to the Civil War, and whose family left the land at the time when disenfranchisement was occurring in the South, though it is unclear as to how Andrew, a black man in slaveholding New York, originally acquired the property. We wondered what implications this might have about the financial security of the family during the time and about the changing demographics in Dutchess County over the last 200 years.

Land ownership in the 1800s would be suggestive of a free and established individual. Maintaining ownership of property during this time period, when 98% of the population was associated with the agriculture industry, would have been a priority for any American, and especially for blacks. This revelation motivated us to find out when and why the Fraziers left their farm.

Close inspection of historical land ownership maps of Dutchess County enabled us to determine that the Frazier family owned property in Milan. Bachman and Corey's 1858 map depicts an "E. Frazier" and "Mrs. Frazier" on their map of Milan; these Fraziers were most likely Egbert Frazier and Susan Frazier (Figure 6). Almost 20 years later, Gray's Atlas (1876) depicts a "Widow Frazier" along with a "J.T.F." and "A. Frazier," who we determined to be Hannah, Jacob T. Frazier and Alfred Frazier respectively (Figure 7). We based these conclusions on our constructed family tree and information gathered from property deeds (Figure 8). A cross-reference with current road maps and county parcel maps revealed two properties located adjacently on Willow Glen Road in Milan that correspond directly to two of the locations where Frazier names are found on the previously mentioned maps. We learned by reviewing the Milan, New York Tax Roll (2009) that, not surprisingly, neither of these properties is retained by the Frazier family today.

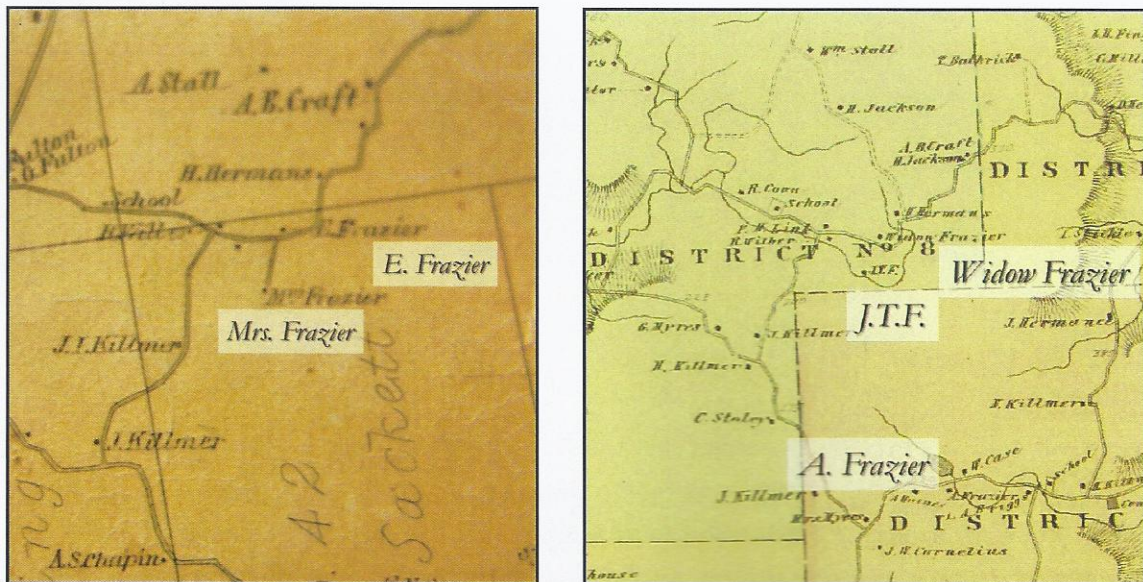


Figure 7. (Left) Two property maps depicting Mrs. Frazier and E. Frazier, 1858 (Bachman and Corey). **(Right)** J.T.F and Widow Frazier at respective locations and A. Frazier to the south, 1876 (Gray et al.).

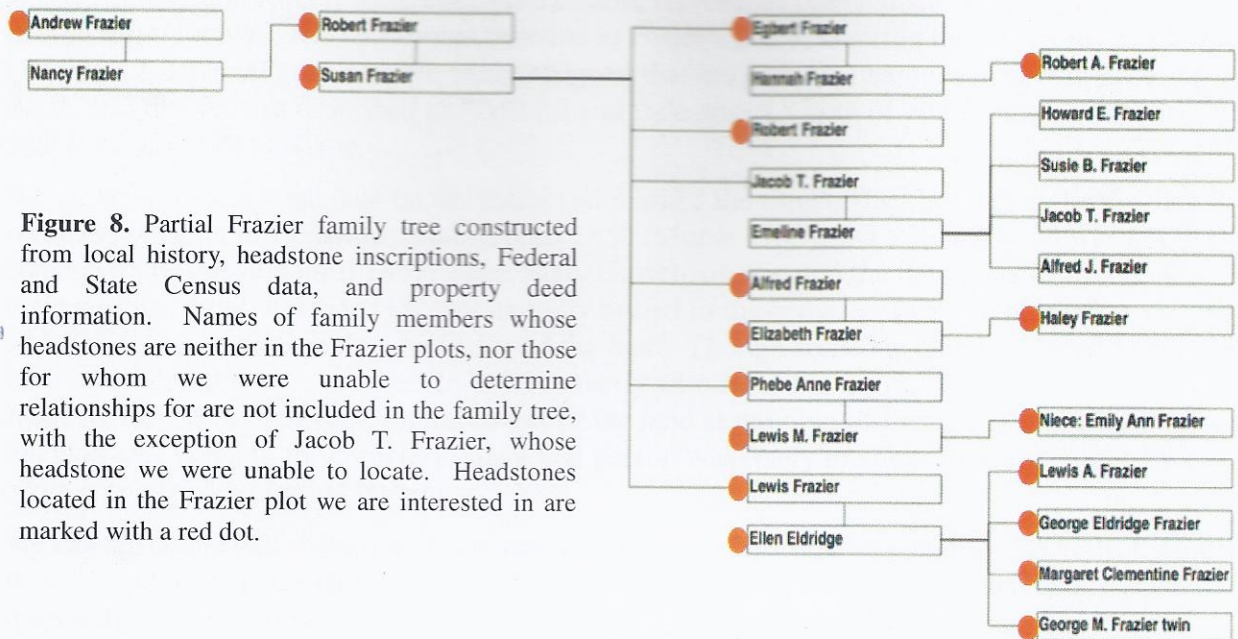


Figure 8. Partial Frazier family tree constructed from local history, headstone inscriptions, Federal and State Census data, and property deed information. Names of family members whose headstones are neither in the Frazier plots, nor those for whom we were unable to determine relationships for are not included in the family tree, with the exception of Jacob T. Frazier, whose headstone we were unable to locate. Headstones located in the Frazier plot we are interested in are marked with a red dot.

Although Andrew had 11 children, according to Huntting (1897), there is only one whose headstone is present in the Frazier plot at the Rhinebeck cemetery: that of his son Robert. Robert lived and worked on the farm in his father's footsteps (Groth 1994), raising six children of his own (Figure 8). It is interesting to note the abundance of information we were able to gather about Robert's line of the family from recorded property deeds and census records, even though we were unable to gather any information about Andrew's other children.



“Jack the African”

While Andrew and Robert were busy on the farm, an African man named Jack lived his last days in Dutchess County. His monument remains in Potter's Field, marking the day of his death as October 17, 1826 (Figure 3). We were intrigued that only his first name was inscribed on the stone, and that he was described as “faithful and industrious,” both of which suggest that he very well may have been a slave.

We were curious that the date on the memorial marked the time of Jack's death as 1826 when the cemetery was not *formally* established until 1850 (Morse 1908), and Potter's Field was not in the cemetery's possession until 1853, when Mary Garrettson donated the land (Morse 1908). We were curious about whether Jack was actually buried in the cemetery or if the headstone serves as a dedication to the people who had used the land. Though someone clearly wanted Jack to be remembered, there were no clues to tell us exactly who Jack was in life. To learn more about Jack, we turned our attention on the owner of the land at the time of Jack's death (1826), before the land was given to the cemetery, since that person was likely to know Jack and might have taken responsibility for his burial.

We can speculate that there may have been a connection between Jack and the Garrettson family. In 1826, the Reverend Freeborn Garrettson, Mary's father who was a celebrated abolitionist, owned the land that is now Section E (Smith 1877), but died the following year. The entire property was then called Wildercliff, which was inherited by Mary Garrettson after her mother died in 1849 (Wildercliff Mansion). In 1853 she donated half an acre of the land to the Methodist Church for the burial of “the people of color” (Morse 1908). The land has since been given to Rhinebeck Association Cemetery.

Our team questioned whether Jack had been a slave or whether he was free at the time of his death, considering that New York passed its first gradual emancipation law in 1799. Slavery, however, was not officially abolished in the state until July 4, 1827, the year following Jack's death. Bangs (1832) wrote that Freeborn Garrettson freed his slaves of his own volition in 1775. It is quite possible that Jack could have been one of his slaves, as he would have likely been in his prime prior to 1775 if he had died at, “an advanced age”. Perhaps Jack was a hard worker and had a good relationship with the Garrettsons, or maybe he even continued to work for Garrettson after being freed. Or he may never have been a slave, but rather came to work for the family at some time.

The nature of the wording on Jack's headstone, “industrious and faithful,” seems to imply he worked for the person who erected it. We investigated Freeborn Garrettson to see what we could determine about his slaveholding status and to see if Jack was included in a list of slaves. We also thought there may have been a record of people he held under his employ. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any conclusive evidence either way. Garrettson became a missionary after freeing his slaves, traveling about the country preaching the Methodist word. Since he is not listed as a slaveholder in the New York State census of 1775, it seems he chose to free his slaves and began his missionary work before the census was taken. He would have been 23 years old at this time. As a child he would not have listed as a slaveholder in previous census records of 1675 and 1655. Pre-Revolution census records for the time period in question were



reviewed but did not yield any results. A review of the Methodist Church archives was impossible, since the records were lost when the church burned in 1899 (The United Methodist Parish of Rhinebeck, New York).

It is unfortunate that Jack, who was so well memorialized, rests without an identity. We would still like to know who Jack was and if he was a free man when he died. We would also like to know who chose the words with which to memorialize him. Gathering this information will take a new approach. Perhaps private sales or employment records from the time around Jack's death could help shed some light on his mystery?

Robert Frazier

Following our study of Jack's memorial, we turned our attention back to the Frazier family, starting with Robert, Andrew's son. Andrew must have transferred ownership of the farm to his son Robert prior to 1845, though we were unable to confirm this as we were not able to find a deed showing that Andrew Frazier ever owned the farm in Milan.

We have record of Robert owning the farm based on an 1845 deed which documents Egburt Frazier's purchase of the land bordering that belonging to Robert Frazier. Egburt was one of Robert's sons, hence Andrew's grandson (Huntting 1897). Andrew died the following year, but Robert continued to live on the farm with his wife Susan and several of their children.

When Robert died in 1852, only six years after his father, his wife remained on the farm, illustrated by an 1858 property map of Milan, New York (Bachman and Corey, 1858) (Figure 7). This map shows "Mrs. Frazier" and "E. Frazier" at adjacent locations, which correspond to two adjoining lots on current parcel maps of Dutchess County (Parcel Access, http://geoaccess.co.dutchess.ny.us/parcelaccess/parcelaccess_map.htm). Based on the map's details, inscriptions on headstones, and information about the descendants of Andrew Frazier given by Huntting (1897), we made the determination that "Mrs. Frazier" was Robert's widow, Susan Frazier, and "E. Frazier" was their son Egburt.

Jacob T. Frazier

Sometime after both Robert and Susan had passed away, their son Jacob T. Frazier acquired the property, evidenced by the 1865 NY State Census and the 1876 Parcel map. In the 1876 Gray's map, his name replaces that of "Mrs. Frazier" (Figure 6), and curiously, Egburt's property lists "Widow Frazier" as the owner/resident. Egburt must have died between 1858 and 1876, and the "Widow Frazier" was his wife, Hannah. Jacob Frazier is also listed as the owner of the property where his mother formerly resided in the 1865 New York State Census.

Once we were able to find several Fraziers living at the same locations on a series of maps, we decided to do a title search to see if we could trace the ownership of the property back to the Fraziers and possibly determine factors that influenced their departure from the farm. We were able to determine an approximate perimeter of the property from an 1877 deed of the property. The property is described as a 60-acre plot, and the perimeter of the property is described by



names given as bordering neighbors to the land. By connecting the names of the surrounding property owners (Gray et al 1876), we were able to get an idea of the farm's general location. Property owners included "J.T.F.," "Widow Frazier," and "A. Frazier" well to the south (Figure 6). This is probably Alfred Frazier.

The property lineage began to fall apart in 1875 when Jacob Frazier died (Obituary for Jacob T. Frazier, Rhinebeck Gazette), and his brother Alfred was named administrator of his will. Two years after his death, Jacob's widow Emeline brought Alfred to court to settle a dispute over the property. According to a local New York State Supreme Court¹ record, Jacob had debts in excess of \$1000. To settle his debt, the court ordered the family's land to be put up for auction to obtain the greatest value. The court ordered the proceeds of the sale to be paid to Jacob's creditors, with any excess being divided between Emeline and their children. Several deed transactions document the title history of the property.

In 1877, Rhinebeck resident Henry Esselstyn purchased the farm at auction for \$1000, and sold it just four days later to Alfred Frazier. Since Alfred was the Administrator of Jacob's estate, it would have likely been illegal for him to bid on the property, despite the court ruling that stated any of the family members could bid during the auction. It seems Alfred cooperated with Henry Esselstyn, who acted as a trustee, in order to purchase the Frazier homestead, thus keeping it in the family. Alfred clearly wanted to keep the land in the Frazier family since he disputed the sale of the auction and purchased the farm by proxy.

Jacob's widow Emeline, along with her children Alfred F., Susie B., Jacob T. and Howard E. Frazier, all have monuments in the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery, but in a plot adjacent to the Frazier plot our team was interested in. This plot with Jacob's family was most recently jointly owned by Susan E. and F. G. Frazier, but this would have been in the late 1800s, according to Gary Slater, present caretaker of the Cemetery. Susan E. Frazier singly owned the Andrew Frazier plot that we focused on. F. G. Frazier was found to be Frederick George, Susan E. Frazier's brother (Federal Census, 1880). We could not determine their relationships to the rest of the Frazier Family. It should be noted that Jacob T. Frazier's headstone is not located in either plot, even though Huntting (1897) reported him to be buried on the Frazier farm.

Alfred Frazier

Before purchasing the Frazier farm with the help of Henry Esselstyn in the auction, Robert's other son Alfred lived south of his brother Jacob, shown as "A. Frazier" on the 1876 property map (Gray et al, 1876). He did not live here in 1858, however (Bachman and Corey, 1858) (Figure 7). Alfred Frazier was born in 1830 and had married a young woman named Elizabeth. The two had a child, Haley, but sadly, the infant died. Elizabeth died shortly thereafter, aged 22 years. Elizabeth's headstone is in the Andrew Frazier plot, as is her daughter Haley's, which begins the lonely third row of the plot. A transcribed record of marriages revealed that Alfred remarried, this time to a woman named Jane Newitt (Kelly, 1971). Phebe Frazier, Alfred's sister, witnessed the marriage. When Jane died in 1881 her remains were sent to Massachusetts for interment (Obituary for Mrs. Frazier, Rhinebeck Gazette). It is not clear why her remains were transported, but this explains why her headstone is not located in the Frazier plot.

¹ At the time, each county had what was called a, "Supreme Court".



The Frazier Farm

After identifying the general area of the farm, we tried to define a more precise location by linking current parcel maps to historic maps where we see the Frazier name (Figure 9). In the 1876 Gray's map, "Widow Frazier" replaces "E. Frazier" (Figure 7). As previously mentioned, these were Egburt and Hannah Frazier. After Egburt died, Jacob inherited his property (according to Supreme Court records), combining the adjacent properties. The farm has since been re-divided into several parcels, as seen in the most recent parcel map from 2002, which shows separate properties associated with what were the "J.T.F." and "Widow Frazier" properties on the 1876 Gray's map (Figure 7).

Two parcels were recombined sometime between 1861 and 1990 since a 1990 deed describes these adjacent parcels as a single property. The acreage of the land described in this deed totals about 16 acres, though the Frazier farm was estimated to be about 60 acres in 1877. This is evidence the land was subdivided. It must have been divided a number of times, since none of the currently marked parcels total more than 25 acres (Parcel Access, http://geoaccess.co.dutchess.ny.us/parcelaccess/parcelaccess_map.htm). A more accurately defined perimeter can be estimated by outlining current parcels whose acreage is approximately 60 acres as estimated in the 1877 deed (Figure 8). Extensive deed research of all of the properties located in and around the area in question could define original Frazier property lines more precisely.

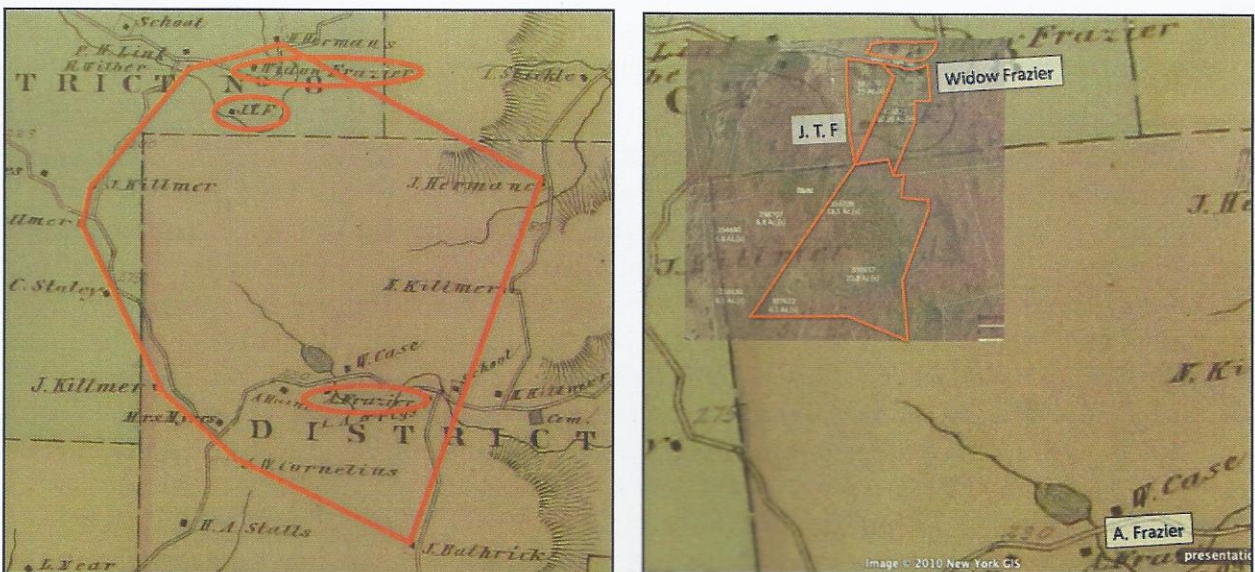


Figure 9: (Left) General location of Frazier farm on 1876 map outlined by connecting neighboring property owner names listed in 1877 deed. Frazier names located within this perimeter. (Right) One possible configuration for perimeter boundaries of the Frazier Farm based on current parcel map. The acreage enclosed totals 62 acres



Alfred lived on the farm established by his grandfather from 1877-1903, at which point he sold it to George Esselstyn² for just one dollar. It may have been a coincidence that Henry Esselstyn, presumably George Esselstyn's brother, assisted in the previous sale of the farm. Three weeks later, George Esselstyn resold the property for four hundred dollars. He may have purchased the land from Alfred with the intent to resell it on Alfred's behalf. If this is the case, it seems like Alfred was in a hurry to sell the farm and for much less than half of the amount he paid for it just two decades prior. This is curious because typically land value increases over time. The farm was appraised at \$600 when Jacob owned it, according to the 1865 State Census. Alfred must have been desperate to leave the property, but our team was not able to determine the reason.

Nevertheless, the Frazier's never owned the property again after 1903.

The Frazier Burial Plot

Prior to the final sale, Alfred instructed Esselstyn to add a clause to the sales deed that stated Alfred Frazier's entitlement to the use of the land for burial purposes. The clause in the 1903 deed was worded as follows:

"Subject to the rights of said Alfred Frazier to use for burial purposes only the burial plot of the Frazier family on said premises, as now (March 16th, 1903) enclosed, and when the bodies now buried are removed or the use of paid plot discontinued for burial purposes, this right is to cease and terminate."

This contingency confirmed the existence of a family cemetery located on the Frazier farm in 1903. It could also mean the Fraziers' graves were removed to the cemetery in order procure a sale of the property.

Some of the Frazier headstones were present in Rhinebeck Association Cemetery in the early 1900's. Between 1911 and 1916, *Old Gravestones of Dutchess County, New York* documented headstones located in the cemetery (Poacher and Reynolds, 1924). Their account lists several of the Frazier stones, which can be found in the cemetery today. These are limited, however, to Andrew Frazier, his sons Egburt and Robert, Robert's wife Susan and their son Robert Jr. From left to right in the first row, the additional headstones were of Lewis M. Frazier, Maria Stober (who's relation we were unable to determine), Phebe Ann, Emily Allen, Margaret Clementine, Charles M., Ellen E. Eldridge, and Lewis Frazier. In the second row are, Elizabeth, Alfred, Robert A., George Eldridge Frazier and Lewis A. Frazier. In the last row, Haley Frazier was possibly added after 1916. The stones were not oriented in a single row, but separated by one row and offset from each other (Figure 9). In retrospect, it seems like room had been left at the time for the planned placement of other stones. Since then, fourteen more headstones have been moved to the Rhinebeck Cemetery, thereby filling in the two rows of the Frazier plot.

Unfortunately, our team was unable to determine exactly when the remaining headstones were transferred. Interestingly, the headstones documented in the publication are buried much deeper into the ground whereas the other stones were hardly buried at all.

² We are not sure if/how George and Henry Esselstyn are related, but it is very curious that both had property exchanges with the Fraziers.

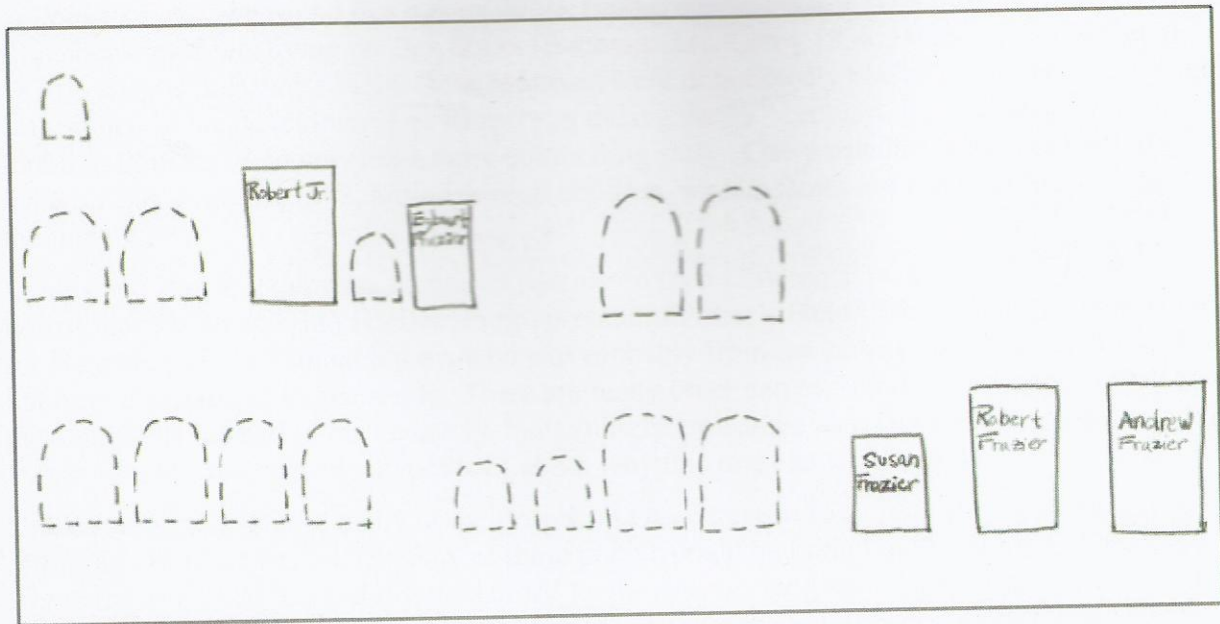


Figure 9: Sketch of the Frazier Plot showing the placement of the headstones that were documented in *Old Gravestones of Dutchess County* between 1911 and 1916. Dotted lines represent headstones that have been added or moved since. The placement would have seemed strange at the time, but in retrospect we see there was a plan for placement of stones that would continue to be moved in the future.

We also found it interesting that while the Fraziers were documented in the *Old Gravestones* account of headstones in Rhinebeck cemetery, *none* of the headstones across the road in Section E, the Potter's Field, were recorded. These headstones would have been impossible to overlook, as there are a few prominent stones, one in particular being a 3 m (10 ft) tall obelisk dating from 1861 that stands out among the others to this day. We questioned the authors' reasoning for the exclusion of these names, which seems deliberate. Although, the book does contain logs of slave burial grounds, so it is possible that World War I diverted the authors' attention from recording the names of headstones and they simply never got around to documenting Section E.

The burial ground clause remained in the deed record until 1983, when it simply disappeared. In accordance with the contingency, the bodies had to be moved prior to the date of transaction of the 1983 deed. It was becoming more likely that the Fraziers were removed to the cemetery, along with their headstones

Oak Street

While attempting to determine George Esselstyn's role in the sale of the Frazier farm, we discovered that he was a prominent attorney in Rhinebeck at the turn of the 20th century and that he owned property on Oak Street in Rhinebeck. In an interview with Rhinebeck Town Historian Nancy Kelly, we learned that Oak Street was home to many of Rhinebeck's black artisans and skilled laborers who made up a significant part of the community. As we conducted our survey



of Potter's Field, we found that names on the headstones correlated with three decades worth of Rhinebeck residents living on Oak Street (Bachman and Corey 1858, Beers 1867, Gray et al 1876). Buried in Potter's Field, these residents were undoubtedly blacks in the community, and contributed to the development of Rhinebeck during the 19th century. But the names that are not found in Potter's Field may tell a more compelling story. One particular family, the Savoy, who lived on Oak Street in 1858, buried several children, whose names are inscribed on a single monument.

Dennis and Harriet Savoy are named as parents on their children's memorial; however, headstones for Dennis and Harriet are not present in Potter's Field. We did locate a headstone for Hannah, wife of Samuel Savoy, who was probably from the same family, though Samuel did not have a headstone in Section E. There are many other names found on the maps of Oak Street that cannot be located in the cemetery, but similarly are named as relations of other deceased in Potter's Field. We formed a hypothesis about why this must have occurred.

Unlike the Savoy family, many of the people on Oak Street were so poor they were unable to afford an inscribed headstone. Any of these people could be buried in Potter's Field in a grave where the cross that marked it was claimed by the seasons long ago. Geophysical evidence did reveal the possibility of a number of unmarked graves in the vicinity, graves that could be occupied by these very same Oak Street residents. But the Savoy family was able to afford a substantial monument for their children. Hannah Savoy, who was probably their relative, also had a headstone. If Dennis and Harriet are buried in the cemetery we should see headstones for them as well, so they must have moved away. The Savoy family is just one example of this possible scenario.

In 1845 and beyond, churchyard burials in Rhinebeck were prohibited. Local residents would either have had to have been buried in the cemetery in Rhinebeck or on their own property. Since we have also learned that many of the residents on the historic property maps were not actually property owners, but rather rented their homes, they would not have been buried on the property where they lived. This further suggests the beginnings of a demographic shift in Rhinebeck. Just before the completion of this report, we were told by a resident of Oak Street that the last black property owners on the street sold their homes and moved away in the 1960's. This is clearly a trend that took place over many decades and could be illustrative of a broader picture.

Lewis M. Frazier

We also found that in 1876, George Esselstyn, who assisted Alfred Frazier in the final sale of his property, practiced law just down the road in the Village of Rhinebeck from a home owned by Lewis M. Frazier, Robert Frazier's son-in-law (Figure 10). Lewis M. was married to Phebe Frazier, which we learned from a property division record illustrating how Robert divided his land among his children. As indicated in the 1865 New York State Census, Lewis M. and Phebe, housed their niece Emily Allen Frazier in their home right in the heart of Rhinebeck (Figure 11).

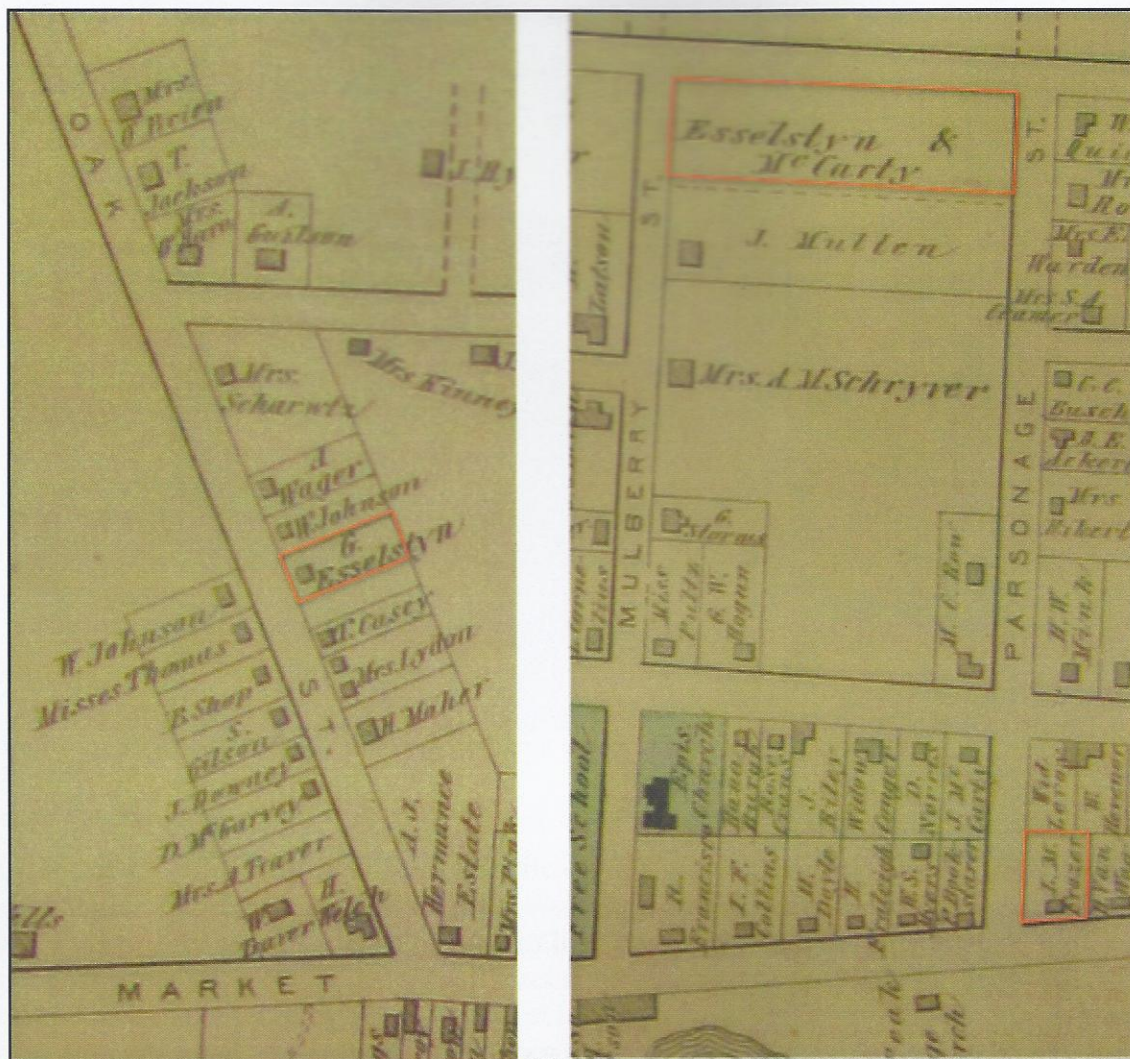
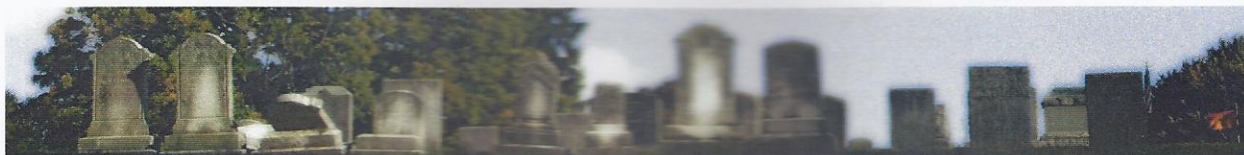


Figure 10. (Left) 1876 map of Oak Street showing G. Esselstyn, outlined in red, demonstrating that he owned property on Oak Street (Gray et al, 1876). (Right) 1876 map of Parsonage Street showing law office of G. Esselstyn North of L. M. Frazier, outlined in red (Gray et al, 1876).

It is quite coincidental that Lewis and Phebe carry the same last name. There is a slight possibility they could have been cousins, given the probable size of the Frazier family. Recall, Andrew had eleven children so the family was presumably quite large. "L. M. Frazier" is found on a property map of Rhinebeck in 1867 (Beers) and is noted to be the owner of a property in Rhinebeck on the New York State Census in 1865. Several deeds serve as evidence that Lewis M. must have been a real estate entrepreneur.



Figure 11. Lewis M. Frazier's house in Rhinebeck as it appears today.

More to Learn

There is a much richer history of black Americans in Dutchess County than our team was able to uncover during our survey in the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery. We were able to follow the Frazier family through more than a century of land ownership and can only imagine the desperation that must have forced Alfred to relinquish his great-grandfather's farm. We wondered how many families from Oak Street left Rhinebeck and what prompted them to go. And we thought about those buried loved-ones in the cemetery whose graves are lost to sight, but that our equipment might help to reveal. A closer look at what we found combined with additional research may help to shed some light on the demographic changes in Rhinebeck over the last century.



Geophysical Survey

We had discovered much about the history of the people whose headstones are located in the Frazier plot and in Potter's Field through our historical research, but we still needed to know whether we could find any unmarked graves. We also wanted to determine if the Fraziers were moved to the cemetery along with their headstones. In order to do this, we defined and laid out a 20 m by 44.5 m survey grid in Section E, enclosing known graves as well as areas where unmarked graves were thought most likely to be. We subdivided this grid into transects of 0.5 m (± 0.05 m) so that multiple types of data taken from the same transect could be correlated during data analysis.

Visual Reconnaissance

Some of the best tools are sometimes our eyes and our common sense. We looked over the site, which was a well-kept grass field, with a north-facing downward slope, dotted with weathered headstones. The Frazier family headstones were arranged on the edge of the south side of the road. They were tightly packed in two parallel rows, which gave us the impression they might not have been moved to the cemetery. This is because headstones are usually spaced more widely apart than the stones in the Frazier plot.

In Section E we noticed several scattered depressions that could indicate an area where the soil was disturbed and settled over time, such as a grave. In late autumn, fallen leaves collected in these hollows (Figure 12). These could be indicative of a burial.





Figure 12. Hollows in the cemetery, filled with fallen leaves. While the upper depression has an associated headstone, the lower depression likely represents an unmarked grave.

Surveying

In order to correlate all different types of data, we needed a way to line them all up. We used a total station to survey the area for this purpose. The total station consists of two parts including the total station apparatus, which is leveled on a tripod, and a portable target mirror. The apparatus directs a laser beam to the mirror, which reflects the beam back to the total station (Figure 13). The total station is able to measure the distance, elevation and direction of the target based on the time it takes for the laser beam to make a round trip to the apparatus as well as the angle up, down, left or right with which it is directed toward the mirror.

The total station enabled us to map the Frazier headstones and the depressions we noted that could be unmarked graves. We also measured areas where the soil had been disturbed by local wildlife and places where we found metallic objects protruding from the soil in order to rule these areas out for potential graves.

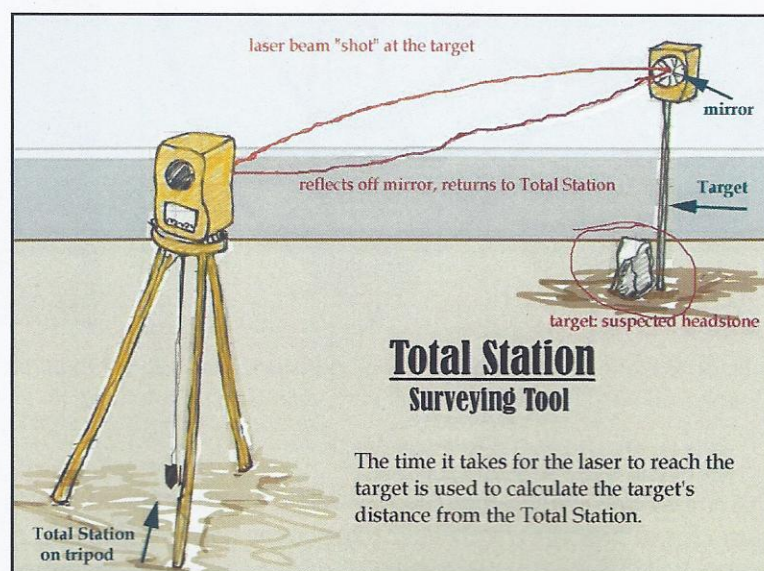


Figure 13: Conceptual diagram of the Total Station Surveying Tool.

Electrical Resistivity Meter

We used an electrical resistivity meter to test for soil disturbances. This device has a pair of electrodes and a pair of probes that are pushed into the ground. Minerals and water present in the soil close the circuit between the electrodes and an electric current passes between them while the meter measures the voltage between the probes (Figure 14). Soil porosity can either decrease or increase soil electrical resistivity, depending upon the contents of the pores. Water containing dissolved ions conducts electricity better than air, thereby decreasing resistivity, while air increases it. Anomalies of relatively higher or lower resistivity than the surrounding area



indicate the soil has been disturbed, allowing more water to seep into the pores during wet seasons and more water to evaporate out during dry seasons. Since these effects change little over time, resistivity data should indicate soil that has been disrupted for burials centuries ago, meaning that the resistivity meter should detect graves existing in the Frazier plot, since most of their headstones were moved to the cemetery after 1911 (Poacher and Reynolds, 1924) as well as any unmarked graves existing in Section E since at least that time.

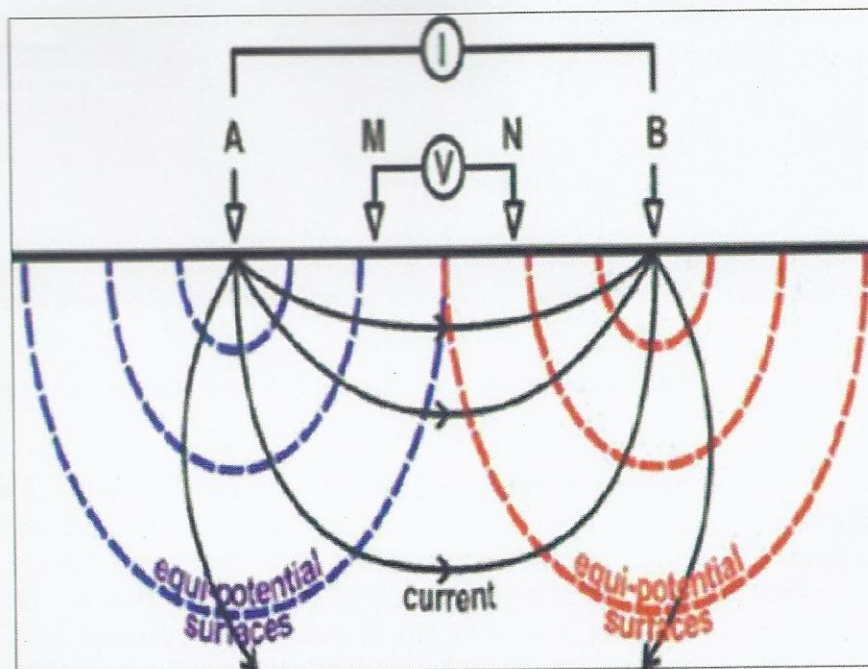
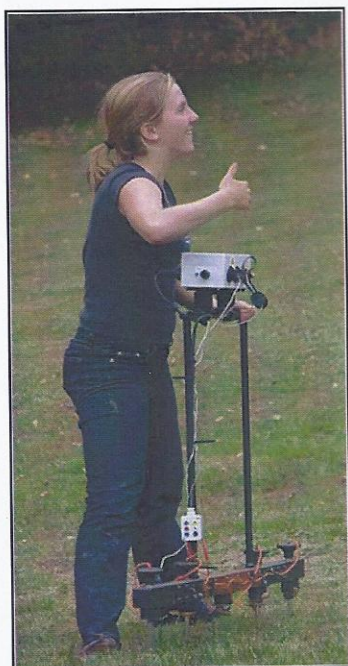


Figure 14. (Left) Operation of the electrical resistivity meter. **(Right)** Diagram of electrical resistivity meter current flow. Currents (I) flow in the path of least resistance from the outer probes (A and B) to inner probes (M and N), which measure voltage (V).

We sampled the electrical resistivity of the soil at 0.5 meter intervals along transect lines and converted the data into a color-coded image that was superimposed onto a map of the surrounding area for data correlation.

Magnetometer

We utilized a cesium-vapor magnetometer to measure the induced magnetic field of soil particles along transect lines spaced 1 meter apart. As soil forms over millions of years, charged, bar-magnet-like soil particles align with the Earth's own magnetic field. When the soil is disturbed, such as when digging a hole for a grave, those particles are rearranged, weakening the cumulative induced magnetic field (Figure 15).

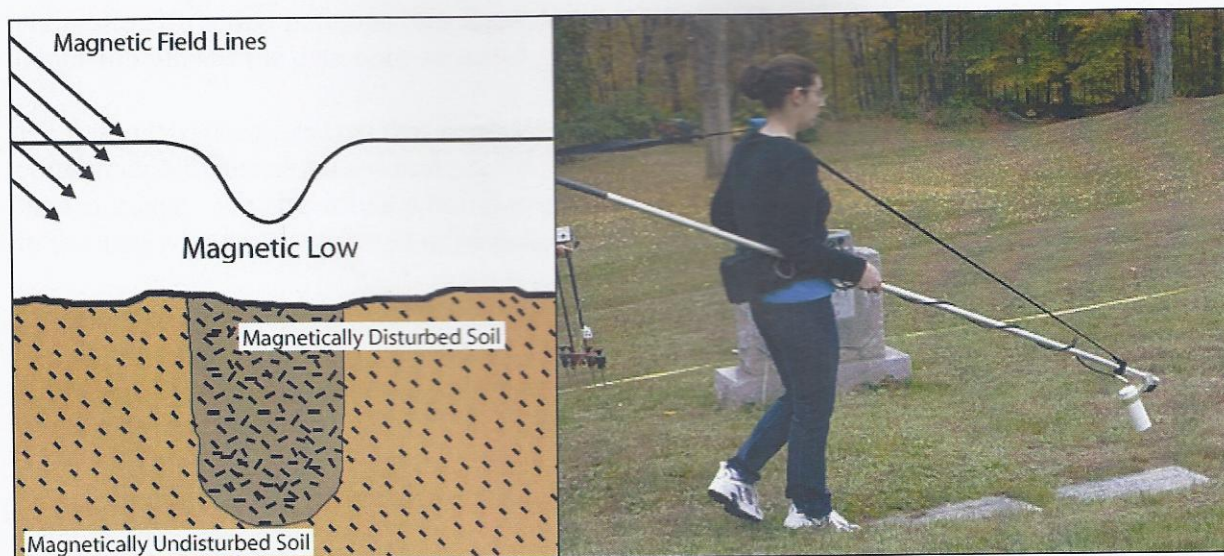


Figure 15. (Left) Diagram of hypothetical magnetometer data and soil magnetic properties. (Right) Operation of the Cesium-vapor magnetometer.

This change in magnetic field is detected as a canister filled with cesium vapor moves over the soil surface. The field excites electrons in cesium atoms in the canister, causing them to emit light as they return to their ground (quantum) states. The strength of this light is related to the strength of the magnetic field. A drop in intensity of the light would occur when passing the magnetometer over a grave shaft because the minerals inside have been jumbled up (Figure 15). A photomultiplier in the canister measures the brightness of the light and records the data as magnetic highs and lows. The magnetometer data is less reliable in instances where metal rods are used to stabilize headstones. This is the case with the headstones in the Frazier plot. However, in Section E, we concentrated on an area where very few headstones were present, looking for unmarked graves. We expected this data to be more reliable. We interpolated our data into a color-coded image of the surrounding area, displaying relative strength of the induced magnetic field.

Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR)

We used a ground-penetrating radar unit (GPR) to search for indicators of grave shaft floors and potential burial vaults at 1-meter intervals along transects. If the Frazier family were moved to the cemetery, we would expect to find evidence of the bottoms of several graves corresponding with each of the 19 headstones. The GPR unit works by emitting radio at 250MHz into the soil. The radio waves transfer energy to electrically conductive particles, and are re-radiated back to the detector when the electrical conductivity of the soil changes, such as occurs at the bottom of a grave shaft. The unit generates sub-surface profiles displaying diffraction patterns generated by the waves as they return to the GPR. The differences in the round trip travel time of these waves indicate the depths of buried objects. In the profile, these buried objects are displayed as



parabolic diffraction patterns. We separated these anomalies into four categories by increasing depth and plotted the data onto an aerial map of the surrounding area.

We found two deep patterns that suggested an underlying mass of bedrock (Figure 15). This is consistent with anecdotal evidence from the cemetery's current caretaker and with the shape of the landscape. We also found a number of anomalies consistent with the bottom of a grave shaft in the area where we suspected unmarked graves to occur.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

We superimposed all of the data interpolations in layers onto a satellite image of Section E of the Rhinebeck Association Cemetery, along with a diagram of this section of the cemetery showing the layout of burial plots using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software package, Esri's *ArcGIS*. Overlaps in these data sets were evaluated for correlations in order to determine the existence of potential graves as well as to confirm the existence of known graves in the area (Figure 16).

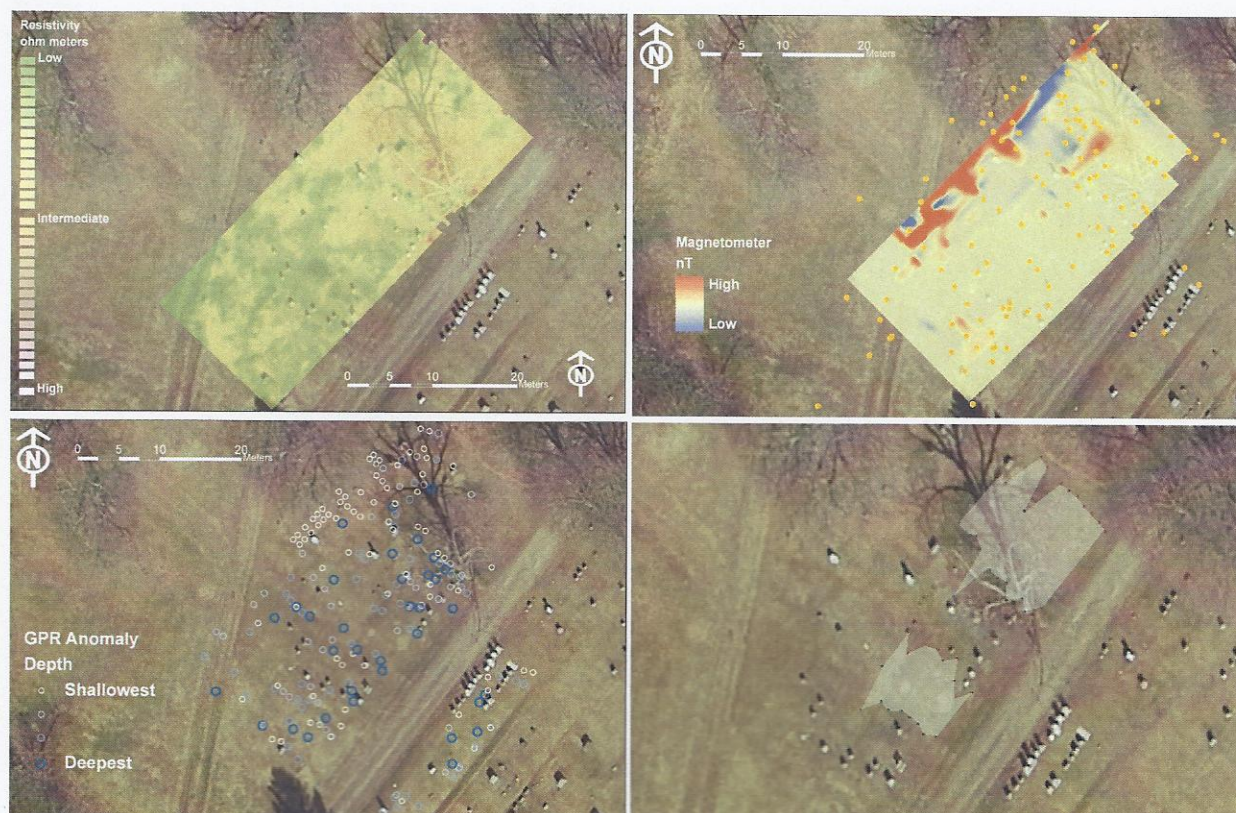


Figure 16: (Top left) Resistivity interpolation. (Top right) Magnetometer interpolation. (Bottom left) GPR data anomalies. (Bottom right) GPR data consistent with underlying bedrock.



Discussion

Determining Potential Grave Locations

We compiled all of our geophysical data into ArcGIS and we began to determine the locations of potential graves. The resistivity interpolation was used to create profiles of different transects to compare relative resistivity values over smaller areas

We created a rectangular shape on GIS, measuring approximately 1 meter by 2 meters, the approximate size of an average grave and matched this shape to areas that displayed a difference in relative resistivity (Figure 17). Each shape indicated a possible grave. The presence of a survey point or burial plot at or near the resistivity anomaly, in addition to the distinction of the anomaly itself, increased our level of confidence in potential grave locations. We also increased confidence level if an anomaly lined up with the interposed map of Section E from the caretaker's collection.



Figure 17. Potential graves based on electrical resistivity data alone. The changes of shades in the image correspond to different levels of resistivity that may correspond to disturbed soil caused by digging graves.

We examined the magnetometer data for areas of weaker induced magnetic field, matching the same rectangular shape to these areas; those points that did not coincide with a shape matched to the resistivity data decreased our level of confidence. We increased the confidence level if



shapes corresponded to anomalies in the resistivity data. During this step we created a fourth, highest confidence rating.

Lastly, we considered the GPR data. Shallow anomalies were interpreted as the burial of the base of the headstone or other small rocks just under the surface. Deep anomalies indicated the base of grave shafts. Using this system, a shallow anomaly directly above a deep anomaly was indicative of the base of a headstone overlying a deeper grave shaft floor. When GPR anomalies, especially deep anomalies as well as deep anomalies combined with shallow ones, coincided with the rectangles created from the other data sets, we once again increased our confidence rating. If these anomalies did not match, but were nonetheless convincing (shallow anomaly above deep anomaly), we placed a lower confidence rectangular plot on the location. We constructed a data correlation plot (Figure 18) and made our final interpretation based on the data (Figure 19).

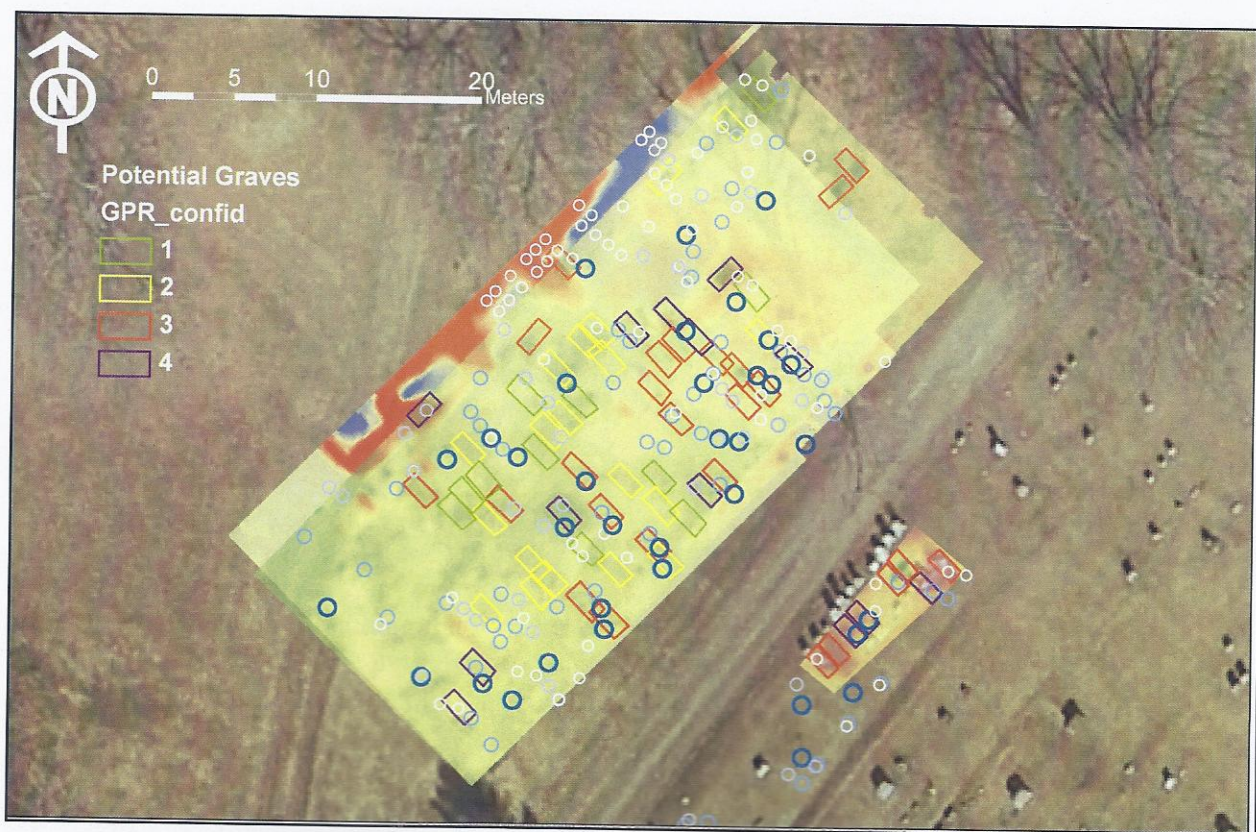


Figure 18. Potential graves based on multiple data set correlations. The colored rectangles suggest varying degrees of confidence based on overlapping geophysical anomalies- green is the lowest confidence, corresponding to a lone anomaly, and it grades to purple, with the highest confidence that suggests two or three overlapping anomalies with or without an associated headstone.

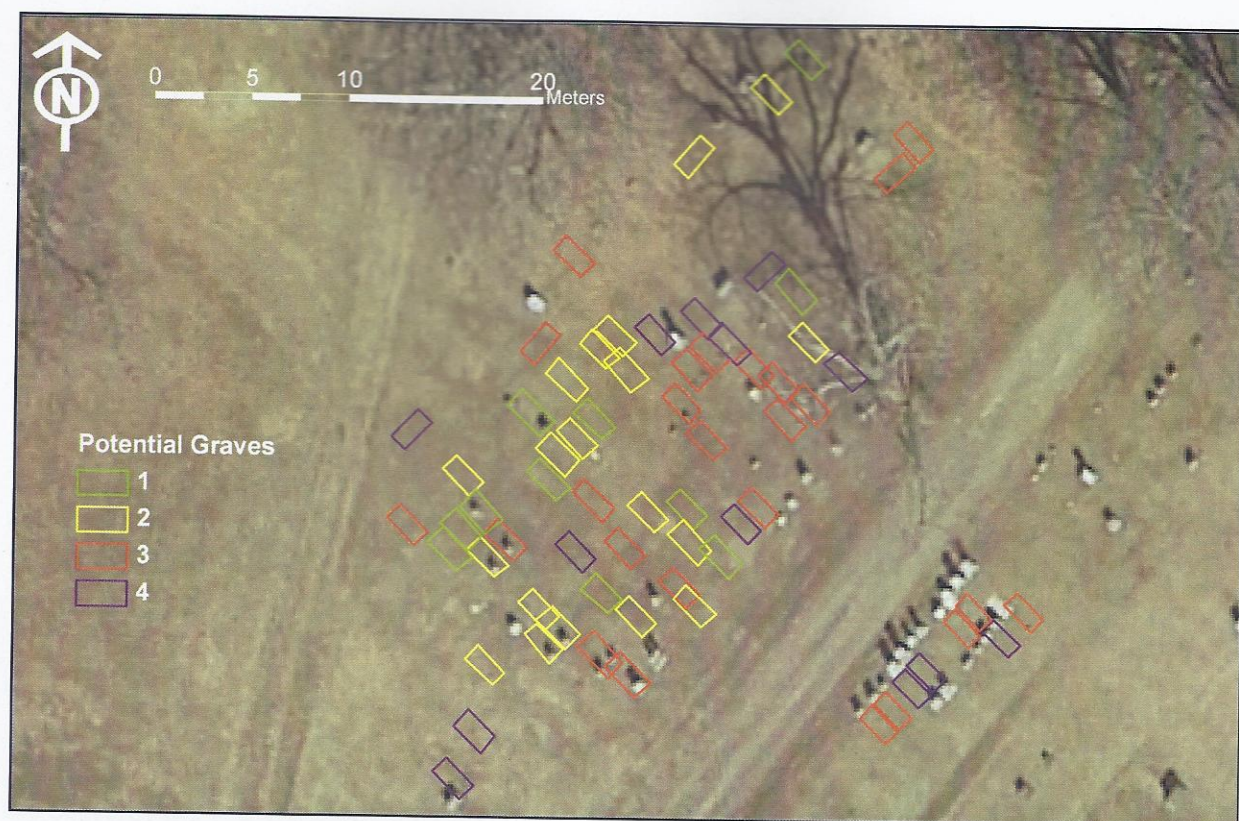


Figure 19. Potential graves based on all data sets. Data sets have been removed so the potential sites can be viewed over the landscape. This images shows 60 potential burials in Section E and the adjacent Frazier plot, with varying degrees of confidence. Of this 60, 43 are marked by headstones.

Conclusion

Geophysical uncertainties

We created a total of 60 rectangular plots in Potter's Field, each representing a possible grave (Figure 18). Although we cannot be absolutely certain about the existence of the graves, our data strongly suggests the presence of 43 graves that are marked by headstones. However, due to the non-invasive nature of our work, we are unable to confirm the existence of graves in these locations. The earliest marked grave that we determined to be present in our data was that of Margaret Mansfield, who died in 1858. Our data did not suggest a grave for Jack, but since no other graves earlier than 1858 presented in our data, we were unable to determine whether Jack is buried in the cemetery. The potential graves which are unmarked are presumed to have been dug after 1858.

Of the 19 headstones in the Frazier plot, only 8 were determined to correspond with a grave. It is possible the Fraziers were not all moved to the cemetery and that only the headstones of some members of the family were moved from the family burial plot. It is also possible that all of the



Fraziers were moved, but in order to conserve time and resources, some of them were buried together. For instance, our data suggests one or two graves for each branch of the family in the plot. It is possible that these family members were buried together. For instance, Robert and his wife Susan may have been reinterred into one grave beneath Robert's headstone. Other family members may have been buried in this way as well. Lewis and Ellen might have been buried along with their children in the parents' graves, Alfred with his wife and children, and Lewis M. with his wife Phoebe and their niece Emily.

Historical uncertainties

Despite our efforts, there are still some inconsistencies in our constructed Frazier heritage line. We were unable to learn how Andrew initially obtained the farm. It is unlikely, but possible that he was granted the land after his service in the Revolutionary War. It was more likely he purchased the farm with money he received from his pension after his service. Though our goal was to learn about the entire Frazier family, we were only able to confidently trace along Robert's line and were unable to locate any information pertaining to the rest of Andrew's children.

We learned that Jacob Frazier had been in debt when he died and it appears that Alfred may have suffered the same fate. Financial woes have clearly contributed to demographic shifts, such as in the South during the time of disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, we were not able to discover the cause of the Frazier's financial plight and therefore could not make further connections to other residents of Rhinebeck.

Today the black population in and around Rhinebeck is exceptionally small compared to the population of black landowners, artisans and craftsman of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We located headstones with names in Section E that correlated with residents documented on historical maps of Oak Street so we were able to conclude that these residents were black. But the absence of many of these names in the cemetery suggests part of their community moved away. If this is so, we were unable to determine the cause of this shift, which is most likely the beginning of the demographic change noted to have taken place.

Jack also remains a mystery. We never determined his identity or the identity of the person who memorialized him. And though we briefly discussed the residents of Oak Street, we still do not know their complete stories. Although we have exposed a portion of Rhinebeck's rich history, much continues to be buried in the past.



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