

ABSTRACT

Recent excavations along the Delaware Route 1 Relief Corridor near Dover, Delaware have revealed an unmarked private cemetery containing the remains of approximately 120 individuals. The one-quarter acre burying ground was apparently in use between 1760 and 1840 and includes individuals from several related families. Previous analyses of cemeteries of this period have concentrated on osteological considerations and on headstone art as an expression of society's attitudes towards death. At the Lafferty Lane cemetery, no headstones of any type were found and none of the graves were excavated due to resource management considerations. Therefore, the analyses of the site have shifted to other directions. These include the cemetery as an expression of an extended family community in a rural setting, the layout of the cemetery as an architectural plan, the internal grave organization of this and other nearby rural family cemeteries, topographic considerations for cemetery placement on the individual farm, and a comparison of this cemetery with public and private records regarding death and dying during this period. Although no graves were excavated, the analysis of the Lafferty Lane cemetery is useful as a tool for the inclusion of rural family cemeteries in future resource management plans.