Cemeteries Gravemarkers

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store rakes, brooms, etc. in them. It may, in fact, be true that workers use them for this purpose today, but it was certainly not the intended reason for the removable plates or the hollow space.

So far as damage by weather and pollutants like acid rain is concerned, time has upheld the glowing testimonials by chemists about the durability and imperviousness of zinc. The details of letters and emblems are as sharp as ever and the blue-gray surface is unblemished. The white bronze memorials compare very well with granite and are in much better condition than the best of the marble, which corrodes so easily.

There is an exception to the unblemished appearance of zinc that chemists and geographers working together might be able to explain. The white bronze monuments that I observed in Detroit cemeteries were often defaced by a black stain. This was not a stain upon the surface coating, but it had eaten through the coating so that an exploring finger moved into a depression in the metal as it reached the edge of the black area. Why this should happen in Detroit and nowhere else must be due to a particular pollutant, and it must be a strong one and too heavy or too evanescent to be conveyed by winds to other localities. A trade secret of Monumental Bronze that apparently will remain a secret was the makeup of the “film” that they brushed over each of the monuments after the sandblasting. They told the reporter on the Detroit visit quoted in the White Bronze Advocate that they were simply hastening the formation of the coating that would develop naturally from the atmosphere. Whatever the chemical reaction caused by the brushing, it produced an excellent protective coating everywhere except in Detroit.

The most damaging weakness of zinc is its tendency to creep, a word that becomes clearer in meaning as we look at what actually occurs. Creeping causes the most problems in large monuments of vertical design. Since there are hundreds of zinc Civil War monuments standing around the United States in town squares and other conspicuous public locations, creeping represents the most serious preservation or restoration problem. Civil War soldier statues are the one product that Monumental Bronze produced in real competition with the Mullins Company of Salem, Ohio. As Stephen Davis has pointed out in an article on war memorials, Monumental Bronze supplied both Union and Confederate soldiers. One story I’ve heard that may be apocryphal concerns a southern town where the people waited breathlessly for their soldier monument to be lowered from its high column for repairs. Having learned the statue came from Connecticut, they were afraid it would have Union insignia. But everyone was happy; he was a true Confederate soldier. At any rate the weight of the zinc at the top of the monument or statue puts pressure on the metal lower down and causes it to move very, very slowly. This is creep. This pressure and resultant
movement means there is rarely a straight base line on a monument of any size. Sometimes the movement has also caused tiny cracks where the metal stretched too far and broke. The weight from above can cause any monument to creep, even those that are much smaller than the soldiers, who stand six feet, eleven inches tall in the shortest model. From all reports the only satisfactory way to prevent this creeping is an inner armature to support the weight. This preservation work, as is usually the case, costs many times the initial purchase. About 1882 the catalog offered the soldier for $450. (The substitution of a personal head sculpted from photographs would raise the cost to $600.) Recently, Bruce Holstrom, the dedicated president of Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, received an estimate of $10,000 for putting a framework inside a large white bronze monument that is nowhere near so complex a design as the standing soldiers. Sometimes in addition to a wavering baseline, the slow movement of the metal tips the figures forward. Their backs are still ramrod straight, but the whole body leans forward at an unnatural angle. The worst cause of creeping that I have seen involved more than tipping, for the upper part of the monument had sunk into the lower part, bending the lower section out of shape and causing irreparable damage. One point to make clear to people who hold responsibility for misshapen monuments is that the creeping is so slow that there is plenty of time to consult experts, seek contractors with experience, and debate endlessly in committee meetings.24

Why did people stop buying white bronze monuments? (Creeping seems to be more recent than the turn of the century, when white bronze fortunes started to decline rapidly.) Monumental Bronze advertisements feature three arguments favoring the choice of white bronze for cemetery memorials, and for various reasons each of these lost its effectiveness. The argument for durability, which a century and more of weathering has proved valid, was weakened by the Barre Granite Associations’ campaign for the Rock of Ages. That echo of the popular hymn and the reminder that stone had been the enduring material over the centuries overpowered the white bronze claims. Furthermore, the taste-setters never accepted zinc as an artistic material. Foundries that cast the work of artists in traditional bronze made fun of the presumption of calling zinc white bronze—though only tradition made bronze, an alloy of tin and copper, superior.25 Some of the leading cemeteries (such as Mount Auburn in Cambridge and Spring Grove in Cincinnati) passed regulations against metal markers, undoubtedly concerned about the many unsightly cast-iron fences around cemetery plots whose owners neglected the necessary frequent painting to prevent rust and collapse. But like the artists, they exempted bronze—and put white bronze in the prohibited group.
The second point that white bronze advertisements made to attract customers also had an unexpected reaction. In comparable size and shape, a white bronze monument would always be cheaper than one of granite. This would seem to be a strong selling point, but think what we do with the words “cheap” and “cheapen.” People who manage to buy something at well under the selling price are clever and receive congratulations, but people who accept an imitation or an alternate material to the “real thing” in order to save money are less likely to win social approval. If the taste-setters were not accepting white bronze, who was buying the many thousands of monuments that were sold? The answer seems to be that a cross section of Americans were in fact pleased with white bronze monuments, and buying one was a fashionable thing to do for about twenty years. The occupations listed in the city directories for men memorialized by white bronze ranged from laborer and baggageman through carpenter and clerk to men who owned businesses with a number of employees and surplus money to spend on full page advertisements annually for over twenty years.26

Progress was the third selling point urged on customers by Monumental Bronze. Americans in the 1880s and 1890s wanted to be progressive and like the idea of a manmade product that was more durable than what nature had fashioned. The advertisements appealed to all forward-looking citizens to take advantage of this technological advance. People in the nineteenth century believed fervently that all progress was good and that they really now had the power to shape a perfect world. There was nothing they couldn’t accomplish with their modern knowledge. Cast metal monuments that were durable, inexpensive, and endlessly adaptable because of the wide choice of shape, emblems, and epitaphs seemed for a while to fulfill this happy belief. But fashion is fickle and things were bound to change. Not only that, something more basic than superficial fashion was also changing. Through their own experiences and through reading the muckrakers, people gradually began to lose their faith in the perfectibility of the world. The promise of progress no longer evoked an automatic positive response. Ironically, the very motive of the man who originally sponsored zinc for cemetery monuments—to improve on the natural substances already available—helped to defeat the product when society came to suspect the validity of claims to improvement and progress.

Monumental Bronze went out of business not because of obsolescence such as the carriage-makers experienced, nor because of monopolistic competition such as forced many other small companies to close. Nor was it because of taxes and government interference as President Sperry believed. Rather, it was a change in the underlying beliefs and attitudes of a whole society which ultimately doomed this typically American product. But the
company left behind in cemeteries all over North America an attractive material representation of that nation-building belief that Americans could accomplish anything—even do better than Mother Nature herself.

Notes

Since the study of cemeteries has only in recent times entered the realm of academic writing, the dedication of amateurs in research and preservation work over past decades is an invaluable resource. The field reports of members of the Association for Gravestone Studies have enabled me to make general statements with real confidence because the evidence on which I base my conclusions is far greater than one person could gather. Space limitations prevent me from listing all the members of A.G.S. who have sent reports and pictures. To them I extend my thanks and acknowledge my indebtedness. In addition I want to express thanks to Margot Gayle, founder of the Friends of Cast-Iron Architecture, who gave me my first clues about published sources of information.


2. I have studied the catalogs owned by Winterthur Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Dr. Harvey Blanchet, Medina, New York. Those from Winterthur are now available on microfiche from Clearwater Publishers, New York City.

3. Monumental Bronze chose its zinc supplier very carefully and published letters from chemists attesting to the purity. Carol Grissom, Senior Objects Conservator at the Smithsonian and the leading authority on the historical uses of zinc, says that the monuments are indeed made from a purer zinc than other cast zinc objects.


5. A History Of the Old Town of Stratford and the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut (Fairfield County Historical Society, 1886), vol. II, pp. 813–14.


8. Bridgeport Post, March 9, 1939; Bridgeport Telegram, March 9, 1939; Boston Post, March 11, 1939. All three clippings are in the Ebenezer Sanborn Phillips Scrapbook, Bridgeport Public Library, and all are obviously based on the same press release.

9. Ernest Knight, of Raymond, Maine, shared with me his copy of a letter from C. A. Baldwin dated June 9, 1941 and headed Memorial Bronze Company, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

ments," *The Foundry* 35 (January 1910), pp. 191–95. Since there are no page numbers in the *Advocate* and the *Scientific American* article is all on one page, future references to those two will give just title in the text.

11. The cover of the November 14, 1885 issue of *Scientific American* has nine illustrations showing Monumental Bronze and its subsidiaries, including the artist's studio in Bridgeport.


13. There is no other reference to a New Orleans subsidiary, no listing in the city directory, and no signed monument. Since Monumental Bronze won medals in a New Orleans World's Fair, Orcutt may have been looking at that, or the company may have planned on a subsidiary that for some reason it never established.

14. My conclusions result from Ernest Knight's research at the Philadelphia Public Library. He should not be blamed for anything I have drawn from his findings so graciously shared.


16. George Thorman, a member of the St. Thomas Public Library Board and an authority on local history, has sent me xerox copies of several clippings from a local paper and his notes, all of which supplement what I could find in the incomplete series of city directories. He found a reference to the foundations begun for the “moulding shops” on June 30, 1883. That certainly suggests that the actual casting may have taken place in St. Thomas, despite the lack of eye-witness observations in the later account.

17. Loren Horton, Director of the Iowa Historical Society, generously shared his research with me and told me about this agent.

18. I checked the names on all the white bronze monuments in Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse, and then checked for the names of the three former agents in the burial records.

19. Despite studying the entries in several botanical reference books, I am unable to tell the difference between a yucca and a century plant, but I do know there's no cemetery symbolism in a yucca plant.


21. Local sandstones vary in their resistance to weather and pollutants, but they had already begun to lose their popularity when white bronze became an alternative.

22. Monumental Bronze claimed thousands of Civil War soldiers had been sold. After several years of living with their claims and their prose, I'll settle for hundreds.

24. Carol Grissom at the Smithsonian is willing to give advice, and her definitive book on historical uses of zinc should be published soon.

25. The Albany Institute of History and Art has a letter from the Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company to the sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward which does exactly this. The letter was brought to my attention by Mary Deal, Akron, Ohio.

26. I looked up only the names of men since nineteenth-century city directories very rarely gave an occupation for a woman. (Sometimes, of course, I could get the man’s name from a daughter or a wife’s marker—“wife of . . . ”) I checked Schenectady, Chicago, Syracuse, and Des Moines directories for the names I took from white bronzes in Vale Cemetery, Rose Hill, Oakwood, and Woodland respectively. Although approximately seventy-five names may not be a statistically valid sample, they gave a wide enough spread to prove the point.
Strange but Genteel Pleasure Grounds:  
Tourist and Leisure Uses  
of Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemeteries

Blanche Linden-Ward

When Cincinnatians opened their newspapers one early fall day in 1867, they must not have been surprised to read of "grave charges of conviviality in the cemetery." They knew that Spring Grove, like the other "rural" or garden cemeteries founded on the peripheries of American cities from 1831 into the 1860s, was more than a plain and simple burial place. These new institutions served as popular "resorts" or "asylums," frequently termed that by the genteel who favored their use for meditative promenades, considered acceptable and even desirable by the staunchest moralists or advocates of well-spent, edifying leisure time. In their mid-century heyday, before the creation of public parks, these green, pastoral places also functioned as "pleasure grounds" for the general public, often to the dismay of their founders. They became major tourist attractions, touted by guidebooks and travellers' accounts as musts to be seen by any stranger, American or foreign, visiting their vicinity.¹

The first American "rural" cemetery and prototype of the others was Boston's Mount Auburn, founded in 1831. Mount Auburn's picturesque landscape, so unlike any existing graveyard or churchyard, was a scenic composition of winding avenues, paths, and ponds on hilly, wooded terrain with dramatic panoramic views over the entire metropolitan area (fig. 12.1). Although meant to appear naturalistic, the landscape was carefully designed and constructed by General Henry A. S. Dearborn, aided by Dr. Jacob Bigelow and other members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, following principles developed in eighteenth-century English landscaped gardens and then applied at Père Lachaise, the Parisian cemetery
Figure 12.1. Plan of Mount Auburn Cemetery; Landscape Design by Henry A. S. Dearborn
Map engraved by Alexander Wadsworth, 1832.
(Courtesy Mount Auburn Cemetery)
that attracted international renown after its 1804 founding. Like these precedents, already notable tourist attractions, Mount Auburn presented visitors with a programmed sequence of sensory experiences, primarily visual, intended to elicit specific emotions, especially the so-called pleasures of melancholy that particularly appealed to contemporary romantic sensibilities (fig. 12.2).²

Prime publicists of the cemetery, therefore, were ministers and moralists like William Ellery Channing and John Pierpont, religious liberals who argued that pastoral cemeteries served as schools of moral philosophy and catalysts for civic virtue. They urged youths, in particular, to visit Mount Auburn to learn from the exemplary lives of notables interred there and to be sobered by thoughts of the shortness of life. The young were to return home with new resolve to work hard and to do good (fig. 12.3).³

There was a distinct resonance between the landscape design of the "rural" cemetery and recurring themes in much of the literary and material culture of the era. The new cemetery epitomized the Whiggish sentimental- ity, melancholy, romanticism, and didactic moralism that characterized the poetry and prose of gift books, religious tracts, and even widely circulated newspapers and magazines like Godey's Lady's Book. Pierpont's popular inspirational verse, often referring to such a pastoral funerary setting, frequently occurred on those pages. The cemetery landscape also duplicated the allegorical funerary scenes of mourning pictures—stilized painted and embroidered compositions that became fixtures in many American parlors, often placed over hearths. The popular taste for the new cemetery echoed cultural trends and tastes shared by many Americans.⁴

Mount Auburn's founders intended to draw upon such sources for forms to make their new institution an attractive place with multiple cultural functions. In his consecration address, Judge Joseph Story anticipated that the cemetery would become a place where visitors might "indulge in the dreams of hope and ambition or solace their hearts by melancholy meditation." Dearborn, then President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, predicted that Mount Auburn would become "a holy and pleasant resort for the living ... one of the most instructive, magnificent, and pleasant promenades in our country. From its immediate proximity to the Capitol of the State, it will attract universal interest, and become a place of healthful, refreshing, and agreeable resort." Certainly, to that date, no other American cemetery had been designed to provide such diverse services and to fill such multiple functions.⁵

Mount Auburn was also meant to be an attractive place of history, an assemblage from the past of exemplary individuals, the accounts of whose virtues and accomplishments might be read inscribed on neoclassical stones. One writer in the Christian Examiner in 1836 believed cemeteries
Figure 12.2. Forest Pond, Mount Auburn Cemetery
Engraving by W. H. Bartlett, ca. 1845.
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
like Mount Auburn would stir “the sentiment of retrospection and reverence” for a common national past grounded in moralistic principles to be emulated by future generations. The place would provide antidotes for the disagreeable effects of the modern age, “the busy competition ... the hurried, ambitious spirit” rampant in the most prosperous, burgeoning cities of the time, such as Boston.6

The didactic values of carefully designed, naturalistic landscapes were recognized and discussed extensively on both sides of the Atlantic in the decades preceding Mount Auburn’s founding. When British moralist Henry Tuckerman visited America, therefore, he approved of the way in which “rural” cemeteries fostered “that association with the past essential to intellectual dignity” that seemed to him to be fast disappearing in his age of rampant change. Tuckerman looked to pleasant, pastoral cemeteries as landscapes of the future, not just places of the past. Their attractiveness would bring in precisely those members of the public who might be responsive to their moralistic influence. Such places, theorists argued, would foster social stability and civility—what French philosophers had been describing as a “cult of ancestors.” Alexander Everett, Bostonian and early advocate of Mount Auburn, exclaimed, “How salutary the effect which a visit to its calm and sacred shades will produce on souls too much agitated by the storms of the world? It was surely fitting that Art and Nature should combine their beauties to grace a scene devoted to purposes so high and holy.” Through the next four decades, other popular moralists echoed these views, hoping to shape for the better “the moral taste and general sentiments of all classes” through the influence of the cemetery.7

Boston newspaperman Joseph Buckingham, advocate of the local “mechanics” class, agreed, offering Mount Auburn to the public as spiritual medicine to assuage the ills of his age: “Reader! if you would have the sympathies of your nature awakened, your earthly affections purified, your anxieties chastened and subdued, go to Mount Auburn! Go not for the gratification of idle curiosity, to comment with the eye of a critic upon the forms of the monuments or the taste of those who placed them there.... Go not there with cold indifference to shock the sensibility of the bereaved with your antic and unseemly behavior.... But go to read and to learn the lesson which you must transmit to those who come after you (fig. 12.4).8

Other writers prescribed the cemetery for acculturation of youth. In her Advice to Mothers, Lydia Maria Child urged women to take their children on Sunday walks through the cemetery: “So important do I consider cheerful association with death, that I wish to see our graveyards laid out with walks and trees and beautiful shrubs as places of promenade.” Mount Auburn filled the bill; and, according to Child, deserved extensive emula-
Figure 12.4. Visitors to Gossler's Monument on Yarrow Path, Mount Auburn Cemetery
Engraving by James Smillie, 1847.
tion across the nation. Indeed, illustrations of the cemetery from the mid-
1840s show parents introducing toddlers to the place (fig. 12.5).9

Mount Auburn was meant to be a didactic, soothing, restorative place
for all ages, all religions, and all classes—points emphasized by founders as
well as by a host of publicists. Cornelia Walter, author of Mount Auburn
Illustrated, published in 1847 with dozens of detailed engraved views of the
wooded landscape, advocated "meditative wanderings" through the land­scape on which one might "gain a lesson from nature." At the cemetery,
visitors would "learn to conform [their] lives to the order of her [Nature's]
works in view of both the present and future." Walter promised that "those
periods of meditation derived from the enticements of Mount Auburn
would remain constantly fixed in the recollection as bright oasises in the
pilgrimage of life." The place appealed particularly to the pantheism and
transcendentalism rising in vogue among the educated in that era.10

For instance, an impressionable schoolgirl like Mary Tyler Peabody
gloried in the romantic melancholy she experienced at Mount Auburn. She
wrote to her friend Miss Rawlins Pickman of Salem, Massachusetts in the
fall of 1835 of wonderful emotions stirred by a Friday evening visit to the
new cemetery: "How can I describe the feeling with which I looked again
upon our gorgeous woods and heard the song of the wind in the pine
groves? I should like to sleep there, with that beautiful soul sighing my
requiem. Nothing that the hand of man has done is so interesting to me as
the grave of a young wife, whose simple monument is surrounded by a
railing and decked with beautiful flowers." Mary concluded, "I always feel
as if I want to stay when I get there," echoing sentiments inspired by Keats
and often repeated in popular, sentimental poems of the era.11

Similarly, a mill girl from Lowell exclaimed in print in 1840: "Mount
Auburn! How soothing and tranquilizing is the remembrance of thy deep
dand quiet beauty! ... As we stray through thy pleasant woods, we go back
in imagination to our own homes and stand by the graves of our loved ones;
and we remember the crushing weight of utter loneliness which preseed
upon us as the green turf hid them from our view." The young woman,
probably in her late teens or early twenties, valued the cathartic emotion
stirred by a visit to Mount Auburn—a quintessentially romantic experience.
The place served as an aid to mourning—not only for loved ones deceased
but for a lost way of life missed nostalgically, particularly by Yankees in
that era of immense social, cultural, political, demographic, and technologi­
cal change. The mill girl, like many contemporaries, found at Mount Auburn
an "asylum" from the industrialized workplace into which she was thrust,
albeit willingly, but suffering cultural shock, confronting dramatic contrasts
to the old places and way of life in rural New England towns and farms from
which she and her coworkers came. Those yearning for a sense of family
or community lost or for the timeless rhythms of preindustrial, rural life found gratification at Mount Auburn, which, after all, drew its name from “Sweet Auburn,” the fictitious but representative Irish village destroyed by estate building and enclosure acts in the eighteenth century and bemoaned by Oliver Goldsmith in his popular poem, “The Deserted Village.”

Such was the nostalgia shared by Caroline Orne, whose book-length poem, *Sweet Auburn and Mount Auburn* (1844), described how the “forest deep” two hundred years before had been transformed into the arcadic, rural landscape she recalled from her childhood on that western border of Cambridge, site of the cemetery, becoming a “City of the Silent . . . sacred to the deepest affections.” Orne’s poem was meant to attract visitors to the cemetery, but she felt it necessary to add poetic, cautionary advice for good behavior:

'Tis holy ground—this City of the Dead  
Let no rude accents of untimely mirth  
Break the calm stillness of this sacred earth.

Proper behavior was expected at the cemetery by its chief advocates, those already confirmed to gentility and strongly self-disciplined. Textile industrialist Amos Lawrence, who renounced drink, smoke, and theater as recreational pursuits in his youth, told his diary of many adult days of pleasant leisure spent at Mount Auburn. Charles Sumner, peace activist, abolitionist, and senator, used Mount Auburn as a retreat from the heat of national politics on the eve of the Civil War; and lore holds that a messenger found Franklin Pierce sitting under a tree in the cemetery when he came to notify the future President that the 1852 Democratic convention had nominated him compromise candidate. Bostonian George Ticknor Curtis had correctly observed in 1854 that Mount Auburn permitted people “to rid themselves of TIME among the final homes of those who have exchanged it for eternity.”

The author of Mount Auburn’s first guidebook, *The Picturesque Pocket Companion and Visitor’s Guide through Mount Auburn* (1839), aimed to promote such uses of the place, proclaiming rhetorically, “What object in or near Boston will be equally attractive?” That book was the first of many guides, some reissued annually in numerous editions, which furthered the fame of Mount Auburn and helped to program the visitor’s experience there. Similarly, *Dearborn’s Guide through Mount Auburn . . . for the Benefit of Strangers* was a slim, portable fifty-page booklet sold for twenty cents through the 1850s and 1860s (fig. 12.6). It contains a map, over sixty engravings of monuments and landscape, and a good deal of the secularized moral philosophy so popular at that time. The guide led visitors through the
DEARBORN'S
GUIDE THROUGH MOUNT AUBURN,
WITH
SEVENTY-SIX ENGRAVINGS,
FOR THE
BENEFIT OF STRANGERS,
ENGLISH OF SEEING THE CLUSTERS OF MONUMENTS WITH THE
LEAST TROUBLE,
WITH THE EMBLEMATIC RULES FOR THE NAVIGATION OF THE CEMETERY,
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, AND OTHER OCCURRENCE.

WITH AN
ENGRAVED PLAN OF THE CEMETERY.

TENTH EDITION.

PUBLISHED BY NATHANIEL B. DEARBORN,
No. 44 School Street,
BOSTON,
1856.

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

Figure 12.6. Cover of Nathaniel Dearborn's *Guide through Mount Auburn*, 1856
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
cemetery along a prescribed route, pointing out notable interments and monuments and providing short pieces of sentimental verse or pithy wisdom to set one's proper melancholy or sober frame of mind. Many of the moralistic poems have practical, hortatory messages reminiscent of Poor Richard's aphorisms, such as:

Be wise to-day; tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time.

Or:

At thirty man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves and re-solves; then dies the same.

Poems in *Dearborn's Guide* urged wisdom, diligence, work, moderation, humility, stewardship of wealth, and other civic virtues. The *Guide* also provided an early example of the site-specific, self-guided, programmed tour.16

Dearborn's competitor, Levi Merriam Stevens, claimed his *Guide*, subtitled *A Handbook for Passengers over the Cambridge Railroad*, aimed "not to describe Mount Auburn as anyone thinks it should be, but to lead the visitor through the most interesting portions of the Cemetery, to call attention to EVERYTHING on the route worthy of observation, and thus enable him to view Mount Auburn as it IS—as Nature, Art, and Affection have made it." Stevens's seventy-five-page *Guide*, first published in 1856, provided detailed descriptions and engravings of major monuments and also emphasized moral lessons. Stevens asked, "To what better place can we go ... to cool the burning brow of ambition, or to relieve the swelling heart of disappointment? We can find no better spot for the rambles of curiosity, health, or pleasure; none sweeter for the whispers of affection among the living." Stevens urged people to visit Mount Auburn to "renew our failing resolutions for the dark and boundless future."17

Indeed, after only three years, according to Joseph Story, Mount Auburn became "a place of general resort and interest, as well to strangers as to citizens; and its avenues and paths, ornamented with monumental structures of various beauty and elegance, have already given solace and tranquilizing reflections to many an afflicted heart, and awakened a deep
and moral sensibility in many a pious bosom." The 1857 *Boston Almanac* proclaimed it "one of the indispensables to a stranger sojourning in or near Boston, and few places present, within an equal space, either to citizens or strangers, a more varied combination of elements to attract attention and awaken thought." Strangers to Boston, in particular, proved anxious to see the remarkable place and to experience the emotions and associations it promised to arouse.18

The famous actress Fanny Kemble toured Mount Auburn in April of 1833 and described it as "a pleasure garden instead of a place of graves." The following summer, Swedish visitor Carl David Arfwedson saw the grounds and paraphrased Keats—"a glance at this beautiful cemetery almost excites a wish to die." That year, the Englishman Edward Abdy remarked that "parties of pleasure come hither from the city in great number," at a rate estimated to be over 600 a day. Others observed that "Daily, hourly, a line of carriages stands at its lofty gate, and countless guests pause at the solemn inscription ... then enter to meditate among the unrivalled varieties of Mount Auburn." The young Englishman Henry Arthur Bright, close friend of Nathaniel Hawthorne, was surprised to find on his visit led by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that "Cemeteries here are all the ‘rage'; people lounge in them and use them (as their tastes are inclined) for walking, making love, weeping, sentimentalizing, and every thing in short." Such accounts of Mount Auburn functioned as publicity when published in national newspapers, travel accounts, and guide books; and they quickly won international acclaim for the cemetery.19

Foreign visitors proved the best publicists through example as well as testimonial. Sir Charles Lyell, a friend of Judge Joseph Story, first President of Mount Auburn, made sure to visit the cemetery on both of his trips to Boston from England in 1842 and 1849, and he published praise of the place in his travel narrative. Lady Emmeline Wortley also described the wonders of the landscape in her widely read book on the United States. Through mid-century, a host of notables made Mount Auburn as major an attraction as the Erie Canal or Niagara Falls on their Grand Tours of America. Charles Dickens and the Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil acclaimed the importance of Mount Auburn. In October of 1860, cemetery trustees escorted Lord Renfrew, Prince of Wales and future King Edward VI, to the cemetery, followed by a throng of celebrity-seeking Bostonians who watched the heir-apparent plant a yellowwood and purple beech in front of the chapel. Newspapers across the nation reported that Napoleon III "gave the palm to Mount Auburn for its natural beauty of position" and for the designed landscape he discovered there on his 1861 visit. One Boston newspaper justly bragged, "Every visitor goes to Mount Auburn as a matter of course."20
The English writer Harriet Martineau, who received a personally guided tour by Judge Story in August of 1847, judged Mount Auburn a particularly American phenomenon, indicative of New England’s dominance in the national culture: “As might have been predicted, one of the first directions in which the Americans have indulged their taste and indicated their refinement is in the preparation and care of their burial places.” Martineau attributed this tendency to “the pilgrim origin of the New England population, whose fathers seemed to think that they lived only in order to die.” Hence, in America, thoughts of death filled “a large space in the peoples’ mind,” Martineau explained, having observed the resonance of ideas about death in the cemetery as well as in the rapidly developing mass culture.21

Despite the centrality of death in the culture of the era, Martineau saw evidence at Mount Auburn of a nascent trend in American mentality which social observers would later label the “denial of death.” She wrote, “A visitor from a strange planet, ignorant of mortality, would take this place to be the sanctum of creation. Every step teems with the promise of life. Beauty is about to ‘spring out of the ashes,’ and life out of dust; Humanity seems to be waiting with acclamations ready on its lips, for the new birth. That there has been any past is little more than a matter of inference.” Ironically, despite Mount Auburn’s founders’ attempt to create a usable, civilizing display of the past at the cemetery, they seemed, to Martineau, to have denied it.22

Martineau moderated her criticism of American culture precisely because she considered Mount Auburn representative of it and also “the most beautiful cemetery in the world” with an “air of finish and taste, especially in contrast to Père Lachaise,” a major tourist attraction in Paris. Mount Auburn epitomized hope; the French cemetery, mourning. At Père Lachaise, Martineau observed, “there is no light from the future shining over the place. In Mount Auburn, on the contrary, there is nothing else.” Mount Auburn appealed “to us, in whom education, reason, the prophecies of natural religion, and the promises of the gospel unite their influence to generate a perfect belief in a life beyond the grave.” The place must, she speculated, appear much different to the doubtful, the agnostic, the atheist. Still, based only on the beauty of its naturalistic landscape, it was an appealing “mazy paradise, where every forest tree of the western continent grows and every bird to which the climate is congenial builds its nest.” (Indeed, Mount Auburn continues in the late twentieth century to be both an arboretum and a sanctuary for birds in the Boston metropolitan region.) Martineau considered the cemetery as metaphor for both travel and life, presenting lessons of transience with which she, appropriately, chose to end her two-volume travel narrative of the United States.23
Americans from other cities and regions recognized the importance of Mount Auburn as prototype and inspiration for cemeteries which they would create as local amenities for themselves when they returned home from visits to Boston. Time and time again, cultural and commercial leaders from other cities visited Mount Auburn and went away determined to found their own voluntary associations, acquire charters, and lay out landscapes for their own garden cemeteries to serve both as showplaces of urbane taste and local accomplishments and as retreats for salutary recreation of their fellow citizens. Their own civic pride and localistic ambitions were roused on hearing that "neither care nor expense had been spared in efforts to enhance [Mount Auburn's] great natural advantages." They read in the *American Cyclopedia of Useful Knowledge* in 1835, as in travellers' accounts, that Mount Auburn was "justly celebrated as the most interesting object of the kind in our country," a place that attracted visitors from far and near, a place representative of local sophistication, an amenity that although technically private served many public functions. Other Atlantic seaboard civic leaders took such words as a challenge to create their own cemeteries in the attempt to rival Mount Auburn.24

The Philadelphia writer and horticulturist John Jay Smith provided the second example of America's "rural" cemetery movement when he created a joint-stock company to purchase a thirty-two-acre estate near his city, high atop the eastern bank of the Schuylkill River. Although the design by local architect John Notman was slightly more constrained and geometric than the freely flowing naturalism of Mount Auburn and although the site was half the size of the original, Laurel Hill opened in 1836 to vie with Mount Auburn for public recognition and popular acclaim. Smith acknowledged that "both are calculated to strike the imagination and make it in love with nature," although the landscape styles were markedly different from the start—Mount Auburn reflecting the more woodsy, irregular, naturalistic qualities defined as "picturesque" and Laurel Hill modeled after the newer taste for the more constrained parterres, terraces, and plantings of the "gardenesque" (fig. 12.7).25

Within a year of its founding, one local guidebook proclaimed Laurel Hill "one of the lions" of Philadelphia, and a number of subsequent publications featured it as being of major interest to tourists as well as to local urbanites desirous of finding a green place for well-spent leisure in easy access from the city. A commanding view up and down the river from the cemetery site and the ever-increasing number of finely sculpted monuments attracted Philadelphians like Sidney George Fisher, who enjoyed carriage rides through Laurel Hill. Nationally prominent landscape theorist Andrew Jackson Downing deemed it "a charming pleasure-ground" that
Figure 12.7. Ground Plan of Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia
Drawn by John Notman, 1836.
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
attracted at least 30,000 visitors between April and December of 1848 alone (fig. 12.8).26

In order to bring even more visitors to his cemetery, Smith purchased a sculptural group from the Scotsman James Thom for display under a Norman Gothic shelter just inside the gates. The theatrical scene depicts Sir Walter Scott's story of "Old Mortality," a man who traveled Scotland, recutting fading funerary inscriptions. Scott himself is present in the tableau. Smith anticipated that the display would prove "a great attraction," adding to "the novelty of a rural cemetery" to increase public demand for Laurel Hill lots (fig. 12.9).27

Both Laurel Hill and Mount Auburn provided models and impetus to spawn other similar cemeteries in short order. Baltimoreans observed that Mount Auburn and Laurel Hill by 1837 "already constitute the most attractive objects to the visitor" to their cities; and there was "scarce an inhabitant" of either area "who does not testify to the pride with which he regards the public cemetery in his neighborhood. No traveller with the necessary leisure on his hands is content to quit those cities without an excursion to Mount Auburn or Laurel Hill."28

Baltimoreans, proud of their recent ability to compete commercially with older cities to the north, determined to follow suit. Stephen Duncan Walker returned home from a New England trip to praise publicly the many civic functions of Mount Auburn. He appealed to local pride to produce a similar institution: "Maryland has not been without her great men, names that would have adorned a Roman age, in her proudest era; but under our present [burial] system, where are they? ... They are scattered to the four winds ... here and there in obscure, isolated tombs, undistinguished and almost forgotten." Walker invoked the civic pride of the people of Baltimore to "collect their ashes ... prepare them a sanctuary ... study their virtues, [and] ... write anew upon our hearts and on their tombs a nation's epitaph!" But Baltimoreans, who had already pioneered in the civic venture of historic monument building, were motivated by more than a simple commemorative impulse or desire to create a museum of local history; they wanted to emulate the multifunctional example of the cemetery in Boston, "always in the lead in taste, literature, and refinement." They aimed to duplicate for themselves a Mount Auburn, "one of the most solemn, classic, and interesting scenes in the United States" at the same time as they created an open space for healthful recreation within a half-hour's walking distance from their city center, the market. Thus in 1838, they received a charter and laid out Green Mount as combined "rural cemetery and public walk," to be touted in local guidebooks as a "beautiful and romantic spot," a certain attraction for any stranger in town as well as for local residents.29

New Yorkers did not lag far behind in performing the newly perceived
Figure 12.8. Visitors to Laurel Hill Cemetery with View of the Schuylkill River
Engraving by A. W. Graham after W. Croome for Godey's Lady's Book, ca. 1844.
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
Figure 12.9. "Old Mortality, Sir Walter Scott, and His Poney"
Statuary grouping by James Thom, just inside the entrance to Laurel Hill Cemetery. Engraving from R. A. Smith's *Illustrated Guide*, 1852
*(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)*
civic duty of founding a “rural” cemetery as “pleasure ground” as well as exemplar of moral values. In 1839, the real estate entrepreneur Henry E. Pierrepont organized a voluntary association of civic leaders in New York City and Brooklyn to acquire a charter for a “rural” cemetery to be laid out on Brooklyn’s Gowanus Heights, site of a Revolutionary War battle. The place commanded a stunning panoramic view over Manhattan Island, the harbor, and even the ocean. Major David B. Douglas, an engineer, laid out a landscape of rambling roads and ponds through the large and varied terrain in a fashion that more closely approximated that of Mount Auburn than of Laurel Hill or Green Mount (fig. 12.10).

Almost immediately, according to a local newspaper, visitors “began to be attracted from the city in considerable numbers daily.” The press predicted that Green-Wood was destined to “become a popular and elegant place of resort, where some of the wild and lovely features of nature might be retained near the city.” One New Yorker wrote in 1842, “We love to dally on the road, to pluck a flower here and plant one there, and while away a little of our time in the pursuit of pleasure among sanctified creations of nature”; and, after all, at that time, preserves of nature in the immediate vicinity of the burgeoning metropolis, in easy access of urban dwellers, were becoming increasingly hard to find. Green-Wood offered a convenient retreat or “asylum,” a preserve of nature in a new suburb where a tight grid of streets had recently been laid to obliterate any of the remaining pastoralism of the area. As one journalist asked, “What merchant in New York—What professional man—What mechanic, but would feel better, physically and morally, to forget the season, the cares and toils incident to his pursuits, amidst the beauties of Green-Wood Cemetery?” Indeed, unless he was prosperous enough to own a country estate, there were few other ways in which even the urban merchant or professional—to say nothing of the mechanic or the unskilled worker—could have leisure access to the salubrity of nature in the vicinity of the city.30

Andrew Jackson Downing, who lived on a “rural” estate further up the Hudson River but who frequently worked in New York City, was tactful in comparing major cemeteries. He concluded, “We place Mount Auburn first, because to the inhabitants of Boston belongs the credit of first showing this country how beautiful and consoling a spot ‘God’s acre’ may be made . . . how soothing and benign the influence upon the living, rural beauty may exert even in the last resting place of the dead.” Downing found Green-Wood in 1847, “not yet equal to Mount Auburn in monuments” or “in its interior of leafy woods and dells,” although his criticism left New Yorkers with a goal towards which to strive. Downing considered Mount Auburn’s salutary influence on taste to be national in scope.31

Green-Wood was one of the first of many American rural cemeteries
Figure 12.10. Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York
Map and views engraved by James Smillie, 1847.
to be compared with Mount Auburn. National periodicals from the 1840s through the 1870s often contained articles by a new breed of American landscape connoisseur intent on weighing the merits of various cemeteries. A piece in the mass-circulating *Ballou's* in 1855 described Mount Hope, founded near Rochester, New York in 1839, as having such "wild and picturesque scenery" that it vied with Mount Auburn "in natural beauty." John McConnell, a Rochester architect, looked to Mount Auburn for inspiration in designing the Egyptian gateway for that cemetery in 1838. Indeed, all of Mount Hope's founders consciously referred to Boston's cemetery, rather than to Green-Wood, as a model.\(^{32}\)

Such was also the case in Cincinnati in 1844 when Robert Buchanan, a successful merchant and leading force in forming the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, convened a meeting at his home to instigate a "movement for the procuring of grounds for a Rural or Public Cemetery." Buchanan admitted that "to our Eastern brethren we look for such instruction in the adornment of cemetery grounds" as was requisite for creating a picturesque, parklike institution in the new suburbs of his city, "a necessary distance from the annoyances which the smoke and turbulence and noises of the city industry and commerce might occasion." Cemetery founders sent the local architect, Howard Daniels, on a four-month excursion to study the design and organization of the best eastern cemeteries, and he returned to lay out the core of Spring Grove Cemetery so as to attract immediate acclaim by Cincinnatians as well as visitors (fig. 12.11).\(^{33}\)

Spring Grove's development as a parklike space accessible to the city continued beyond the initial landscape design following the example of eastern models. In 1855, the Prussian landscape gardener Adolph Strauch became Superintendent and Landscape Gardener with the mandate from the Board to make the cemetery "the most interesting of all places for contemplative recreation" with everything in it being "tasteful, classical, and poetical." Following the design principles of his mentor, Prince Herman von Pückler-Muskau, the "great European park reformer," Strauch converted unused wetlands on the grounds into five acres of picturesque ponds, drawing inspiration form those designed by the English gardener Joseph Paxton in 1843 for Liverpool's Birkenhead Park, one of the first truly urban and public recreational areas in the world (fig. 12.12).\(^{34}\)

Through the 1860s, the Cincinnati press acclaimed Spring Grove, "Our Beautiful Cemetery," for being "haunted at all seasons by hundreds of persons daily, by the sight-seer, and those who yearn for green fields, no less than by those who have a mournful reason to frequent and lingering visits." After two decades, it continued to be "steadily gaining in favor of the public." One journalist waxed poetic: "Words can not convey an adequate idea of the charms of Spring Grove in spring and summer. A broad expanse
Figure 12.12. Geyser Lake at Spring Grove Cemetery, Designed by Adolph Strauch in 1855
Engraving of 1869.
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
Figure 12.11. Spring Grove Cemetery, Designed by Howard Daniels, 1845
Map from the Annual Report of 1852.
(From the collection of Blanche Linden-Ward)
of undulating greensward, diversified by graveled walks, delights the eye. The placid waters of the lake, reflecting heaven's own blue, and bearing upon its bosom the snowy form of the graceful swan, is highly suggestive of peace and repose. All the bounties of nature and the works of art can not be comprehended in a glance." The tourist or urbanite would find much at Spring Grove to fill more than one day's visit and to bring him back again and again.³⁵

Indeed, the pleasant, unprecedented parklike landscapes of these cemeteries more than the praise of urban boosters in the local press attracted throngs of visitors. Spring Grove's gatekeeper counted annually through the 1860s and 1870s attendance ranging from 86,000 to 160,000 coming in carriages, buggies, and on foot (presumably via public transportation), not counting mourners in funeral processions. John Jay Smith estimated 140,000 visitors to Laurel Hill in 1860 alone; and that year, a Bostonian remarked that "quiet, home-keeping citizens, even in Cambridge, may not be aware of the great number of persons who daily visit Mount Auburn." Throngs flocked to these cemeteries on holidays like the Fourth of July, New Year's Day, and, after the Civil War, the newly declared Decoration Day. Spring Grove's management followed the lead of the Boards of Mount Auburn and other eastern cemeteries in passing stringent regulations against picnicking or drinking or other "frivolous" behavior, precisely because members of the public insisted on trying to use these places as "pleasure grounds."³⁶

Ironically, contrary to the moralists' predictions, visiting "rural" cemeteries had not calmed the souls of those whose behavior did nothing but bring the "storms of the world" into the pastoral "asylum." These places were meant for those already confirmed to gentility; but through midcentury, they attracted many others. After all, the young read of the "magic wilderness of [Mount Auburn's] beautiful and almost endless variety," in which "you are not only lost in astonishment at what you see, but are in danger of losing yourself among its mazes, through which you might wander for hours without finding a clue to an escape." The fantasy landscape, unequaled until the development of amusement parks, appealed to a sense of mystical excitement and even adventure, so much a part of romanticism. The attraction had special significance for proponents of transcendentalism and spiritualism. Yet recreation there had to remain quiet and passive, according to regulations. Still cemeteries could serve as favored trysting places for the young, as noted by Fanny Kemble.³⁷

Many visitors to "rural" cemeteries, however, sought only present pleasures rather than the "pleasures of melancholy," lessons of moral philosophy, or simple transcendental appreciation of nature. Cemetery founders and lot owners complained after only two years that Mount Auburn
was used “in a manner very different from what had been expected, destroying the solemnity and quiet” intended for the place. Visitors mutilated trees (especially given the propensity for whittling in that era), broke fences, gathered flowers, and trampled lots. In response, hand-lettered signs posted by management politely urged: “Visitors are desired to confine their walks to the avenues and paths and to avoid treading on borders.” Or, “Pause—this is hallowed ground, sacred to the dead and the living. Pluck not a shrub—touch not a flower. Leave every thing in its beauty.” Other notices commanded more forcefully: “Walk your Horse!”; or, as at Spring Grove, “No Fast Driving,” but to no avail. Visitors on horseback were most disruptive and damaging, riding down narrow paths intended for contemplative strollers and tethering their mounts to trees and shrubs, damaging the plants. Such behavior could not be and was not tolerated.38

Eventually, the Massachusetts General Court gave cemetery regulations the force of law, with a $20 reward given for information leading to conviction of whittlers and those firing guns in the cemetery, offenses deemed misdemeanors with fines ranging from $5 to $50. Mount Auburn’s President Bigelow concluded, “There is a class of persons . . . by no means a small one, who can be made to respect the rights of their fellow citizens only by the enactment of a strict code of laws and the rigid enforcement of them.” Directors of other cemeteries agreed and added additional prohibitions to curtail undesirable activities as the years progressed. By the 1850s, Laurel Hill forebade picnicking or bringing dogs to run through the grounds.39

Mount Auburn provided a model by obtaining such legislation and also by exerting internal control by requiring tickets for carriage entrance into the cemetery. Each lot owner received a “ticket” which functioned as a pass or membership card and permitted him to drive into the cemetery in a carriage containing as many family members or friends as desired. Out-of-town visitors of “respectable” appearance could easily obtain temporary tickets free of charge from trustees, from the cemetery office in the city, or from local hotels. Horseback riders were banned entirely from Mount Auburn until the 1860s, when special passes were issued to a limited number of well-known and well-behaved individuals upon payment of a “bonus” or annual fee for the privilege. Pedestrians had access at all times, although in the early years, trustees attempted unsuccessfully to ban their access on Sundays, the sole day of rest for the working classes—the day that had seen the greatest numbers of people at the cemetery.40

Again, other cemeteries followed suit. Free tickets to Green-Wood could be obtained from any undertaker in New York City, and those intending to tour Laurel Hill could obtain theirs without cost from Smith at the Philadelphia Library or from any other cemetery directors. Because Laurel
Hill was "so popular," Smith also employed two men who made a handsome income "by watching the numerous horses hitched outside" the gates by those who did not own lots and therefore could not ride into the cemetery. "Two other stalwart men were required to take tickets and keep out those not fortunate in getting admissions in the city." The practice of issuing tickets impeded loiterers or mere passers-by from entering on a whim, thus eliminating the sort of persons who tended to create disturbances.  

The intention was not to keep out those who did not own lots but to regulate their number and behavior. Mount Auburn banned omnibuses, charabans, and excursion wagons early on, but Spring Grove did not. By one account, wagons full of new German immigrants readily won access to the grounds. Mount Auburn's Board considered but rejected the idea of stationing carriages-for-hire at the gates to provide tours through the grounds for those arriving by foot or public transportation; trustees discovered early on that exclusivity of admission for carriages, most of which were driven into the grounds for recreation, provided an incentive to those who were able to purchase a family lot in order to get a ticket for the privilege. The leisure time promenade in the slow horse-drawn carriage, to see and to be seen traversing a particularly picturesque route, served as a major social and recreational activity through mid-century.  

Control of visitors on foot, however, became increasingly more difficult as improvements in public transportation brought more and more visitors to the cemeteries. Typically, because the cemeteries were major destinations on the urban fringe, new mass transit routes of horse-drawn street railways usually laid out their first routes to those destinations. In Boston, in 1834, 1838, 1856, and 1863, new omnibus, street railway, and then railroad lines were established to bring passengers—members of the general public who could not afford their own carriages or rental of one—to the very gates of Mount Auburn. There, trustees worried that "the grounds [would] be overrun by crowds of persons who [would] make it a resort of pleasure and amusement and thus disturb the sacred quiet of the place"; but they were powerless to stop the urban transportation revolution that made Mount Auburn, in particular, of all Boston sites of the times, accessible to the masses. The pattern was repeated in other cities as well. Steamboats plied the Schuylkill River between Philadelphia and the Laurel Hill Landing three and a half miles away, providing easy public access from the founding of the cemetery well through the 1860s, but by the 1850s, those without their own horses and carriages could also choose to take a "very airy and comfortable" passenger car along the Ridge Road to Laurel Hill. Access to Green-Wood in Brooklyn could be had from Manhattan by the South, Wall Street, and Fulton Ferries and then by public horsecar. A horse railway charging a fifteen-cent fare linked Cincinnatians to Spring
Grove in 1857; and the line was electrified in 1880 with the lowering of the fare to a nickel.43

Mount Auburn's trustees reacted to the public onslaught by hiring a watchman to supplement the gatekeeper's surveillance and to prevent "unseemly noises" not directly prohibited by the posted regulations; but incidents of vandalism and graffiti only increased through the 1840s and 1850s, despite the offering of cash rewards for identification of offenders and even state legislation deeming malicious damage of cemetery plantings or structures a misdemeanor. Finally, in 1857, the adjacent municipalities of Cambridge and Watertown agreed to deputize a number of Mount Auburn employees, authorizing them to wear badges on "suitable occasions" like holidays in order to assert their authority and to enforce the new laws.44

Yet, at the same time, trustees began to provide new amenities "for the benefit of outsiders" visiting Mount Auburn—for example, a pump house with fresh drinking water in a shady Victorian gingerbread gazebo just inside the cemetery entrance. In 1860, they reconstructed the interior of the Egyptian gate in order to provide a porch to shelter visitors waiting for rides. In 1861, privies or water closets were built near the front of the cemetery for ladies and children, despite opposition from some of the oldest trustees; and in 1869, a Reception House, selling refreshments and providing "respectable quarters" for those awaiting public transportation was constructed with costs shared by the cemetery and the Cambridge Horse Railroad. Following these examples, provisions for public comfort were installed in other cemeteries. In 1865, Spring Grove added several "summer houses" where "weary visitors may rest in the shade" as well as provisions for dispensing water and refreshments in the basement of the new chapel near the entrance.45

The vicinity of each "rural" cemetery took on leisure functions as well, and attempts by the Boards at Mount Auburn and Spring Grove to provide amenities for visitors may have stemmed from a desire to provide public services before, and to stem the rise of, competing businesses which themselves might have served as leisure-time attractions for the pleasure-seekers of the cities. After all, decades before development of the adjacent Fairmount Park in the 1870s, Laurel Hill became the focus of a recreational area enjoyed by Philadelphians, with taverns and social clubs dotting nearby hills for the enjoyment of visitors. The Lemon Hill "beer garden," for instance, served lager to thirsty visitors at tables on a lawn surrounding a rambling Victorian house.

In Cincinnati, Spring Grove Avenue, the boulevardlike toll road lined with silver-leaved poplars, built by cemetery founders to provide easy carriage access to the city, attracted crowds of those who liked to view the long, formal funeral processions, virtual parades sometimes a mile long,
including marching bands and the ostentation of Victorian mourning trappings. By 1877, however, Spring Grove's Directors asked for state legislation to stop the most disruptive recreational use of the approach to the cemetery, the amateur and professional horse races held on the "speedways" or rolled dirt lanes flanking the 100-foot-wide avenue. The resulting law levied a $25 fine or ten days in jail for conviction of driving any animal past cemetery gates faster than six miles per hour.46

The immense popularity of "rural" cemeteries, however, eventually led to the breakdown of the restrictive ticket system for admission rather than passage of more comprehensively restrictive laws on a state or municipal level. At Mount Auburn, liberalized admissions for those in carriages began to appear in the 1850s. A younger generation of trustees determined to maintain only "a mild and reasonable enforcement of the rules," to provide public access, and yet to impede in an unobtrusive way the promiscuous use of the grounds as "a pleasure drive for all pleasure seekers who may chance to pass that way," perhaps en route to the recreational facilities at the nearby Fresh Pond Hotel. Conscious that Mount Auburn was "the pioneer of ornamental cemeteries—the delight and pride of our citizens and the admiration of strangers," trustees felt responsibility to make the place as accessible as possible to visitors of evidently proper intention since "its fame extends wherever Boston is known" and "all strangers visiting this part of the country should be desirous of seeing it."47

The fame of all of these garden cemeteries was so great by the late 1850s that a new sort of photographic entrepreneur began to provide means for the armchair traveller to have visual accessibility to these places from the comfort of his or her own parlor. Production of stereopticon cards—hundreds of different views mass-produced in thousands of copies each—satisfied the demand of the nontravelling public to see the landscape and monuments of Mount Auburn, Green-Wood, Spring Grove, and even many of their smaller imitators, to compare their attractions, and to make the sort of good use of leisure time advocated by moralists. The quantity of stereo cards of garden cemeteries produced through the last half of the century attests to the continuing popularity of these places among those who could not visit them personally or those who wanted souvenirs of visits made.

Andrew Jackson Downing wrote frequently of the great public appeal of garden cemeteries and "the gala-day of recreation they present. People seem to go there to enjoy themselves, and not to indulge in any serious recollections or regrets." Even the most genteel, moralistic, and exclusive of Mount Auburn's founders captured the spirit of urban boosterism sweeping the nation on the subject of garden cemeteries. They were proud to read reviews of their institution as "a becoming appendage, an interesting