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The Private Side of Victorian Mourning Practices in Nineteenth-Century New England: The Cole's Hill Memorial Cache

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The Private Side of Victorian Mourning Practices in Nineteenth-Century New England: The Cole's Hill Memorial Cache

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Excavated in downtown Plymouth, Massachusetts, a cache of 19th-century personal-adornment artifacts, daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and organic materials provides an alternative view of mourning and memorialization practices in Victorian-era New England. The associated artifacts possess characteristics indicative of Victorian mourning symbols and material types. However, no other current examples of this mourning practice exist in the historical and archaeological records. Thus, this article will attempt to understand this discovery as an aspect of the private side of the traditionally public mourning practices and women's efforts to create mourning customs that served in creating a feminine historical memory in the Victorian era.

Fouillée dans le centre-ville de Plymouth, dans le Massachusetts, une cache d'artefacts de parure personnelle, de daguerréotypes, d'ambrotypes et de matériaux organiques du XIXe siècle offre une vision alternative des pratiques de deuil et de commémoration dans la Nouvelle-Angleterre à l'époque victorienne. Les artefacts associés possèdent des caractéristiques indicatives des symboles de deuil victoriens et des types de matériaux. Cependant, aucun autre exemple actuel de cette pratique de deuil n'existe dans les archives historiques et archéologiques. Ainsi, cet article tentera de comprendre cette découverte comme un aspect du côté privé des pratiques de deuil traditionnellement publiques et des efforts des femmes pour créer des coutumes de deuil qui ont servi à créer une mémoire historique féminine à l'époque victorienne.

Introduction

During the 2016 field season of the University of Massachusetts Boston's Plymouth Project 400: Plymouth Colony Archaeological Survey, a team of archaeologists set out with intentions of pursuing evidence of the 17th-century English settlement in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The authors of this article were then students in the University of Massachusetts Boston historical archaeology graduate program. Instead of finding archaeological evidence of a 17th-century ground surface at Cole's Hill, they unearthed a collection of personal items dating to the second half of the 19th century. This puzzling group of artifacts includes intact daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, jewelry, fragments of fabric, clothing accessories, a sewing kit, and a lock of braided human hair. Analyzed individually, these artifacts are an exceptional discovery for the insight they offer into Victorian fashion and the emerging photographic technology of that era. When studied collectively and in the context of their deposition, these objects reveal something unique. Through our discussion of 19th-century mourning practices and the circumstances of the find, we argue this cache of artifacts serves as a rare and distinct instance of private mourning activities preserved in the archaeological record.

Nineteenth-Century Mourning Practices

The popularity of formal mourning practices derived from the death of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, in 1861. Queen Victoria's intense grieving for her husband heightened existing principles of etiquette surrounding mourning (Bedikian 2008: 40). In the United States, however, it was the devastation of the Civil War and its aftermath that ignited a change in American society's relationship with death and mourning.

Scholars of history, religion, and literature have explored this shift in mourning practices and deemed one major factor to be "dechristianization" within society. The overwhelming presence of death and dead bodies captured by the newest technology, photog-

raphy, led to a desensitization of the public and change in ideas regarding death and the afterlife (Godley 2018). Gary Laderman, historian and scholar of religion, states: "While the corpse was saturated with Christian symbolism in this cultural milieu, there is evidence of a gradual process of 'dechristianization' that led to the reconceptualization of the meaning of the corpse and of death in general" (Laderman 1996: 10). Godley expands on this idea with his discussion of the "Good Death," and how soldiers dying on distant battlefields during the Civil War upended an idyllic vision of death. During the antebellum period death typically occurred within the home, allowing loved ones to surround the deathbed. The practice of dying at home led to a 19th-century revival of the 12th- and 13th-century *artes moriendi* (the art of dying). The "Good Death," a collection of prayers, recollections, and deathbed reminiscences, was at the center of this and sought to prepare the dying person for the next life (Godley 2018). As Godley explains: "The Good Death, reinforced by centuries of Christian ritual, intertwined the emotional bonds of family and domesticity with matters of the soul and the hereafter"(Godley 2018: 6–7). By removing the act of dying from the home and transferring it to a remote battlefield, the Civil War broke those bonds and caused a cultural shift in beliefs around death and the afterlife. This led to a secularization of death practices and mourning.

New England was not exempt from these changes, despite the region's strong Puritan roots. The carnage of the Civil War forced many Americans to look to religion for answers. They found no consolation in the moral dogmas of 17th- and 18th-century Puritan and Calvinist doctrine, which presented heaven as a different state of existence with no relation to mortal life. Americans instead chose to view the afterlife as forever connected to mortal life, a continuation of physical existence. This resulted in an emphasis on mortal existence (Godley 2018). According to scholars, cemeteries and mourning costume reflect this secularization most acutely. The Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, founded in 1831, was the first "rural" cemetery in the United States. As Seeman (2019) describes it, the cemetery "was large, outside the city center, exquisitely landscaped, and nondenominational." This model inspired numerous cemeteries from New Hampshire to Georgia and west to St. Louis, Missouri (Seeman 2019).

Just as the burial practices grew increasingly secular, so too did mourning costume. Karen Halttunen (1982) recognizes women's increased use of mourning dress and jewelry as representations of their sensibility and refinement. The mourning costume became a way of demonstrating middle-class gentility and less a part of religious rituals (Halttunen 1982). Nineteenth-century images of mourning dress and customs surrounding death illustrate public displays of grief. These displays consisted of black crepe clothing and black jewelry with occasional hints of white. To be socially acceptable, widows were restricted to wearing this ensemble for two years (Bedikian 2008: 38). As the months drew on, a woman would have to adapt her entire wardrobe to reflect the appropriate stage of mourning she had entered (Bedikian 2008: 39). Once the period of deep mourning ended, a woman went into "half-mourning," which lasted anywhere from six months to a lifetime (Taylor 1983: 108).

Beginning in the early 19th century, mourning wear became a regular part of a woman's wardrobe (Bedikian 2008: 39). As the availability of cheaper manufactured goods grew, mourning wear became readily accessible to the lower classes (Bedikian 2008: 40). Emporiums were specifically founded to sell this particular kind of dress and related paraphernalia (Taylor 1983: 190). Since the color black also became a fashionable color of choice for evening dress during this time, mourning costume had to differentiate itself, thereby becoming elaborate in nature (Hollander 1978: 385). Women decorated themselves with heavy trimmings, including

solemn fans, handkerchiefs, and plain crepe-lined bonnets with a long crepe veil; brooches and larger ornaments exhibited funerary-symbol motifs (Bedikian 2008: 39).

Mourning dress offered women an opportunity to display their respectability and domesticity publicly (Zielke 2003: 56). These outward displays were socially acceptable, as people were expected to mourn the loss of loved ones so that the departed might not be forgotten. As Joseph Greene (1905: 86) states in his funeral manual from 1905: "There is a degree of grief that is permissible in the eye of the public, and there is such a thing as grief that is manifested to a degree that is distasteful." For the Victorians, such "distasteful" behavior included open weeping and melancholy in the wake of a family member or friend's death. In the same manual, Greene (1905: 88) instructs the family members of the deceased: "[T]hough the grief be in the heart, let it be hidden there as a thing too sacred to be paraded openly to the embarrassment of friends." One could fully embrace one's sorrow, but only in private. In the presence of friends and broader society, feelings must be restrained. There was an immense amount of pressure to maintain composure following the death of a loved one. Historians, such as Pat Jalland (2000), have noted the structured traditions of mourning often aided the bereaved as they established socially acceptable ways to show grief for specified periods of time.

In addition, Melissa Zielke (2003) introduced the idea that women used mourning and its accoutrements as a mechanism to assert control over their identities (Zielke 2003: 53). She describes women as being active participants in the creation of memory for those family and friends who had died, creating mourning customs that served in creating a feminine historical memory during a period of a male-dominated historical discourse. Zielke hypothesizes that, for middle- and upper-class women during the Victorian era, sentimental objects and highly stylized garb associated with rituals of mourning were their greatest means of preserving and communicating a meaningful past (Zielke 2003: 52). Societal standards of the time held women to be the household's chief mourners. As a result, mourning etiquette upheld gendered roles of domesticity or adherence to middle-class codes of feminine behavior. It is possible women used the tradition of mourning to create a space in which they could assert a feminine historical record to preserve and interpret their stories (Zielke 2003: 54). For example, women established sites of feminine memory in their homes, i.e., a woman controlled the way a house was decorated in remembrance of a loved one. Samplers that honored the dead were placed in the most prominent room, as were portraits of the deceased and other decorative artifacts (Zielke 2003: 55). If a woman was the curator of these commemorative displays, her identity and memory was, as a result, infused into their creation.

These notions of 19th-century mourning practices and feminine-memory creation inform not just the way historians analyze material culture, but also how archaeologists can interpret and understand similar objects in the archaeological record. The work of historians like Halttunen and Zielke is integral to how archaeologists contextualize objects, such as those discovered in the Cole's Hill memorial cache.

Excavation of the Cole's Hill Memorial Cache

Excavations taking place on Cole's Hill in Plymouth, Massachusetts, during the summer of 2016, uncovered a buried cache of over 100 artifacts. Researchers did not expect to unearth this example of private mourning from the Victorian era. Previous excavations on the lot in the 1990s provided evidence for an early Native American occupation and yielded artifacts potentially dating to the 17th century (Donta et al. 1999). Subsequent deed research concluded that the property

Figure 1: Detail of the 1874 Beers map showing the Cole's Hill parcel and the surrounding area (Neumann 1874).

belonged to an English family as early as 1698 (Davis 1885: 78).

The lot, currently owned by the Pilgrim Society, appears on the 1874 Beers map, showing a two-family house constructed ca. 1802 (Beranek and Landon 2017: 11; Neumann 1874) (FIG. 1). Donta et. al. (1999) refers to this home as the 1802 Jackson/Dickson House, standing on the lot's corner and demolished in the 1920s as part of the Plymouth waterfront re-landscaping effort (Beranek and Landon 2017: 11). Data recovered from geophysical surveys were successful in mapping anomalies that proved to be features associated with the 19th- and 20th-century structures and utilities. The memorial cache was uncovered from a unit placed in the northwest corner of the lot. In Levels 2 and 3, archaeologists recovered a dense deposit of metal in the form of slag inclusions, which most likely caused the anomaly on an earlier geophysical survey. A concentration of cobbles running east–west was revealed beneath the slag. These cobbles divided the unit into separate contexts: a pit feature to the north and subsoil to the south. During screening of the context north of the cobbles, artifacts, such as straight pins and hook-and-eye fasteners, began to emerge.

Soon after these distinctive artifacts were found, more were revealed. The first section of organic material consisted of a rectangular brown object of wood and leather surrounded by a lone, small box hinge and six glass jewels of assorted colors (clear, light blue, orange, and light green) dating from ca. 1861–1880 (Romero 2013: 48). The associated artifacts suggested the brown mass could be a jewelry box. Once back at the conservation lab in the care of conservator Dennis Piechota, the true nature of this object emerged; a stack of four leather cases layered two by two with a braid of a woman's hair secured on top with a silk ribbon. Of these individual leather cases, two contained daguerreotypes and two held ambrotypes. Around and beneath this group of photographs a number of personal-adornment artifacts emerged, particularly women's jewelry, along with two other distinct areas of organic material. The artifacts comprising these additional two areas included more artifacts of personal adornment, textile and clothing items, and sewing-related objects. In total, the

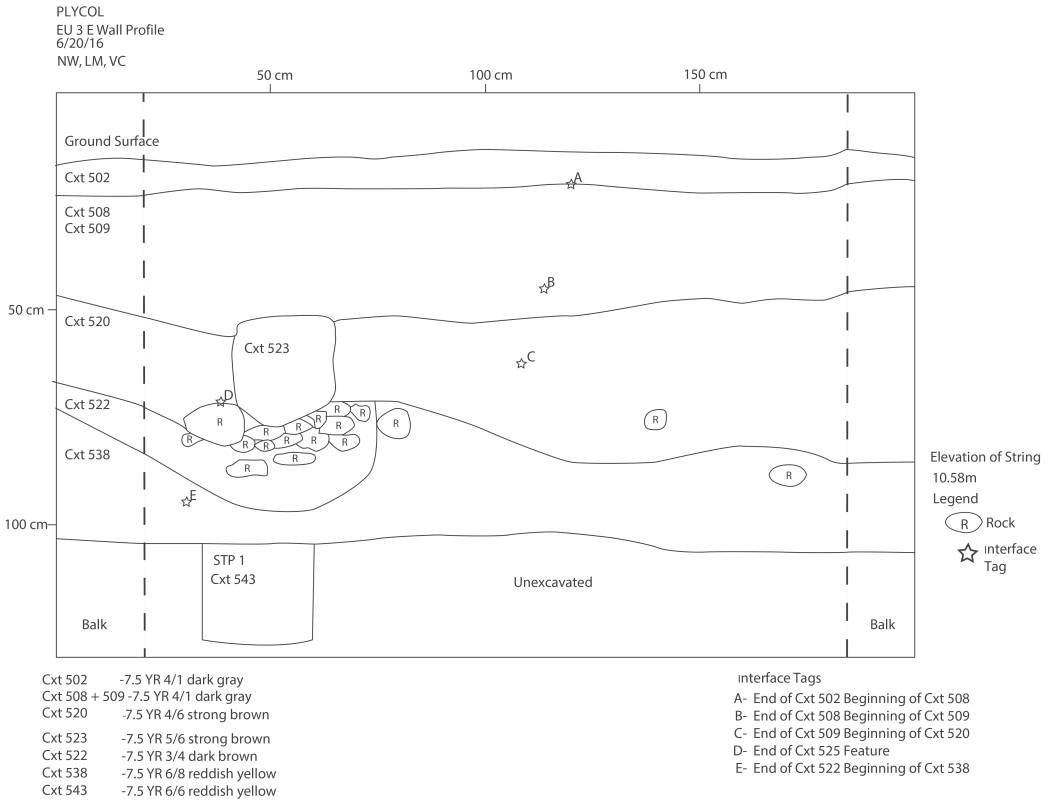

Figure 2. Eastern wall profile of EU3, showing the intentionally dug pit containing the cache of objects (CXT 522) (Figure by Nadia E. Waski, 2016.)

collection from the memorial cache contains 110 artifacts.

The cache was recovered from a distinct cut filled with dark soil that marked the presence of decomposing organic material (FIG. 2). Two out of the three clusters of artifacts, those interpreted as a sewing kit and those found in the northern wall of the unit, were discovered resting on separate pieces of fabric on the subsoil. Analysis in the lab proved these textiles to be a silk cloth underlying the majority of the unit and a bast-fiber textile that concealed the contents of the sewing kit. The artifacts enclosed in textile were preserved to varying degrees. This supports the notion that these items survived over the years due to a microenvironment created by the presence of textiles encapsulating the cache (Dennis Piechota 2020, pers. comm.). The deterioration of the silk cloth on top of the objects and the additional presence of textiles wrapped around artifacts allowed the core of the cache to remain preserved.

Of the diagnostic artifacts uncovered, the most revealing were the daguerreotypes and ambrotypes. These fragile objects required immediate care and conservation after being block lifted with the surrounding soil matrix. The Fiske Center's conservator, Dennis Piechota, conducted exploratory cleaning of the photograph cases. Following initial cleaning and stabilization, both the daguerreotypes and ambrotypes were sent to the Northeast Document Conservation Center (Piechota 2017). The group of photographs contained four images clear enough to identify the type of photographic technology used as well as to infer the gender and approximate age of the individuals (FIG. 3). Daguerreotypes were introduced in 1839 and

remained popular into the 1860s (Bridgeman and Drury 1975: 89). Ambrotypes reached their peak of popularity in the mid-1850s, lasting until 1865 (Bridgeman and Drury 1975: 89; Lillie and Mack 2015: 99).

The individuals in the cache's daguerreotypes are a young female in a gingham dress about age 6–12, and an adolescent boy of about 12–15 resting his left hand on a table. The young female's image appears additionally as an ambrotype along with an ambrotype of a woman aged approximately 35–40 years old. The overlap in technologies with the presence of the young girl's image as both a daguerreotype and ambrotype within the cache suggests these photographs were taken in the mid- to late 1850s.

These and the other objects uncovered throughout the deposit appeared to be arranged in three distinct areas yet all buried simultaneously. In addition to the stack of daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, the first section contained a belt, an Etruscan-revival brooch-and-earring set, a cameo of the figure "Venus," an anchor pin/charm, two ebony rings, a black glass, or French-jet, tie or scarf pin, a carved ivory brooch, a gold-plated locket, and a large swatch of torn textile resting on top of the subsoil (FIGS. 4–8).

The second grouping of artifacts, on the eastern side of the context adjacent to the line of cobbles dividing the unit, consisted of objects presumably kept on a dresser or side table. These included: a pair of eyeglasses broken in half, a perfume bottle, two coils of small, tightly wound metal rings interpreted as leg garters, a brass pansy pin painted violet and black with gold embellishments, and two pierced oyster shells. The third cluster of artifacts, interpreted as a sewing kit, included a variety of material types among the objects: a thimble, a bone needle case, an A. W. Faber graphite pencil, a broken key still attached to its ring, three broken pieces of what once comprised a châtelaine, several collar studs, assorted buttons, a crown charm, and another swatch of textile that did not match the one found under the first cluster.

Diagnostic items of personal adornment solidified the cache's date range. The objects from this collection were deposited as a single event between the years 1885 and 1920, potentially on the earlier end of this spectrum. The various artifact types represent a wide range of dates, indicating that they were pieces acquired over time, likely between 1850 and the 1880s.

The *terminus post quem* for the cache was provided by a leather belt with a metal buckle displaying a patent date of 15 December 1885 (FIG. 4). The town of Plymouth demolished the house in 1920 under eminent domain, thereby supplementing the *terminus ante quem* of the deposit. These dates allowed us to narrow our search for the potential owners of these objects. They also assisted us in establishing a date range for when the singular deposit occurred.

Other artifacts aided in determining a timeline for their acquisition and deposition. The earliest datable piece of jewelry in the collection is the anchor charm/pin. With a date range of post-1847–1901, this artifact also has the longest production and popularity time frame. Next are the locket; the French jet tie or scarf pin; and ebony rings with a date range of 1861–1901. The mid-Victorian, Etruscan-revival brooch-and-earring set dates exclusively to 1861–1880. This pair was discovered in the north wall behind the stack of daguerreotypes and ambrotypes. This set possesses characteristics of Etruscan-revival jewelry popular during the mid-Victorian era, ca. 1861–1880 (Romero 2013: 48). The colored glass jewels, due to the popularity of color in jewelry at the time, potentially date to the mid-Victorian period. The cameo of Venus dates ca. 1870s–1880s, with evidence of having been repaired while in use indicative of a time lag before depositon. Additional late Victorian-era jewelry present includes the pansy brooch (ca. 1880–1901). These dates support the idea that the objects were obtained ca. 1850–1901. These date ranges, in conjunction with those of the

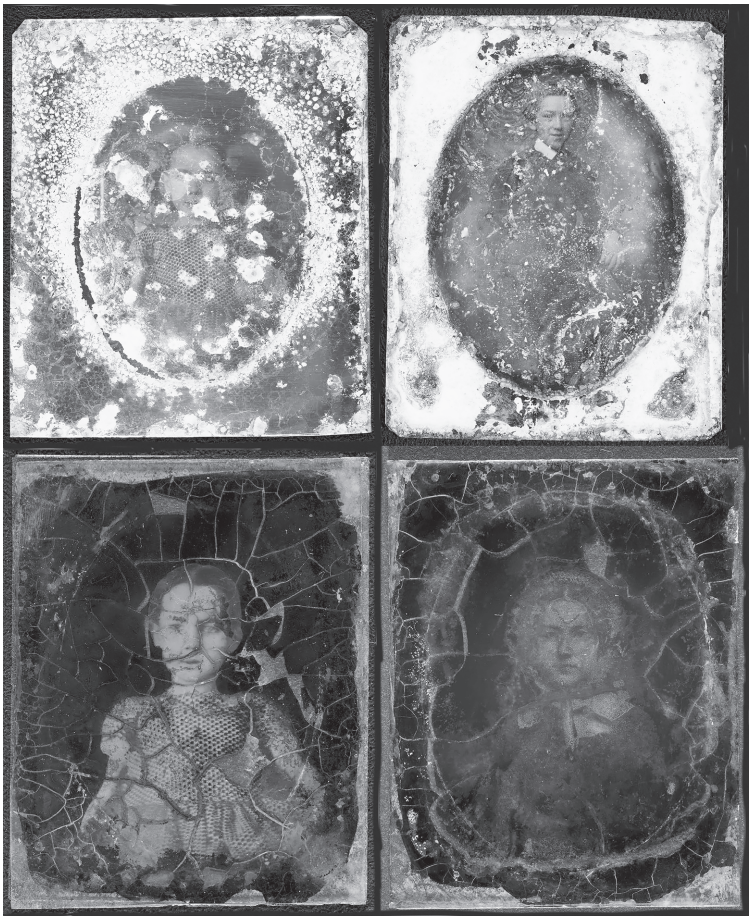

Figure 3. Images from the excavated daguerreotypes and ambrotypes. Each image was under glass in a gilt and embossed leather case. Top: Daguerreotypes, popular in the 1840s–1860s. Bottom: On the left is the same young girl from the daguerreotype in a gingham dress, to the right is a woman. (Photos by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, 2017.)

Figure 4. Coiled leather belt with patent date of 15 December 1885. (Photo by Melody Henkel 2018.)

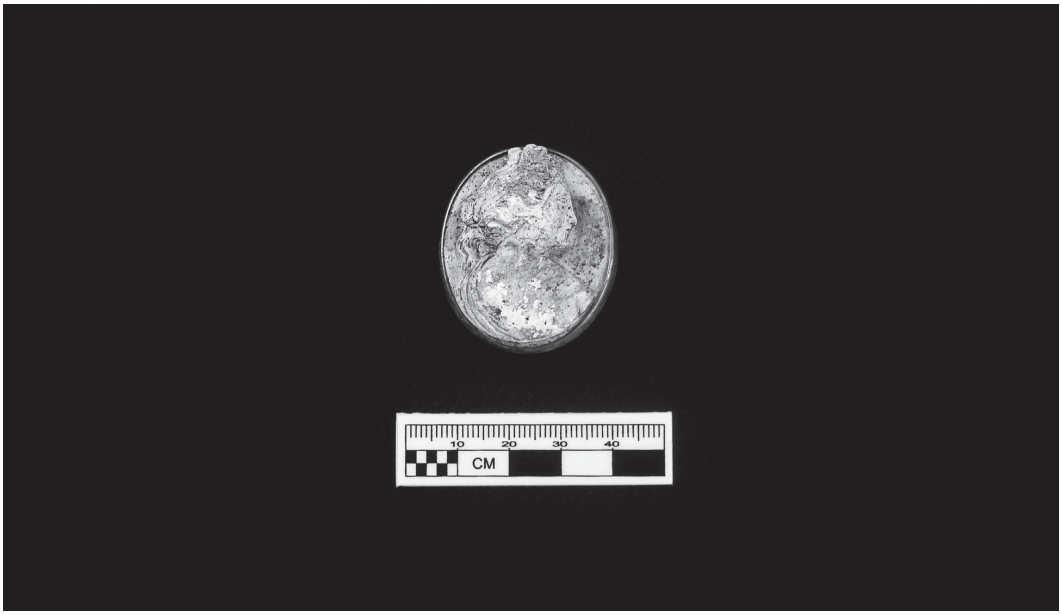

Figure 5. Shell cameo of Venus, ca. 1870s–1880s. As shell cameos were quick and inexpensive to produce, they served as popular souvenirs from the Victorians' travels to Italy. The clasp, the degree of ornamentation, and the female subject's nose in profile all aid in determining the date of production (Gere and Rudoe 2010; Romero 2013). (Photo by Melody Henkel, 2018.)

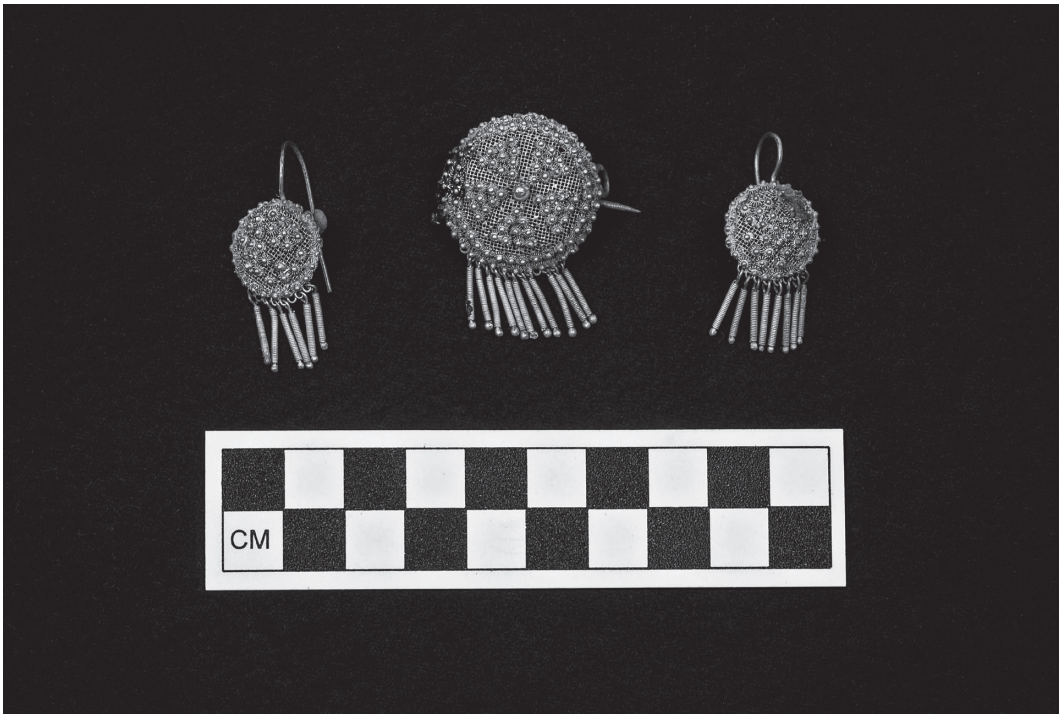

Figure 6. This complete set of a brooch and earrings date during the mid-Victorian period (1861–1880), based on the tassel-and-fringe ("Etruscan-style") decoration (Romero 2013: 48). (Photo by Melody Henkel, 2018.)

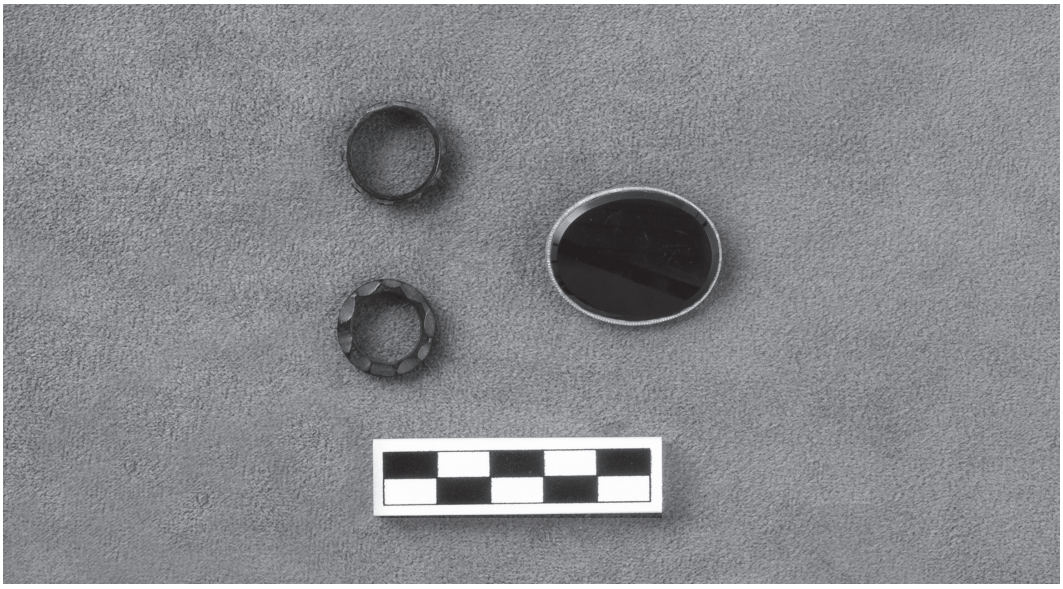

Figure 7. Jewelry that may be associated with mourning. Right side top and bottom: Rings made of ebony, a popular material for mourning wear, suggesting they were possibly worn during a period of mourning (Hesse 2007). Right side: French jet, or black glass, is an imitation jet found in jewelry of the middle and working classes. Wearing black jewelry in and out of mourning became popular during the mid-Victorian period (1861–1880). (Photo by Melody Henkel, 2018.)

Figure 8. Assorted small finds. Far left: Small glass bottle, center top row: a conglomerate of buttons and possible pieces of a chatelaine, center middle row: button and anchor charm, center bottom row: top of a crown charm and button, and far right: pieces of a gold locket with inside contents unknown. (Photo by Melody Henkel, 2018.)

daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, the belt, and the demolition of the house, provided indisputable evidence that the items in this cache belonged to an individual or family occupying the property in the last 15 years of the 19th century.

Discussion

The artifacts indicate at least one period of mourning, as several of the artifacts mentioned are traditionally associated with Victorian mourning practices. The popularity of mourning jewelry increased in the middle of the 19th century with the outbreak of the Civil War and the death of the United Kingdom's Prince Albert (Romero 2013: 48). Several artifacts recovered from the Cole's Hill memorial cache reflect the Victorian mourning practice of wearing hair jewelry, black jewelry, and sentimental jewelry. Many of the mourning practices that incorporated hair work and black materials, such as jet, French jet, and onyx, served as extensions of 18th-century mourning practices that are also mainly associated with women (Stabile 2004: 223).

Hairwork, jewelry or decorative elements consisting of a loved one's woven hair with the addition of gold or gold-filled fittings and decorative elements, is not exclusive to rituals of mourning (Romero 2013: 35). The adoption of this practice for mourning emerged strongly in the mid-19th century; however, hair-jewelry items were also given as mementos of the living for sentimental reasons other than mourning (Pike 1980: 649; Zielke 2003: 58). The braid of blonde hair placed on top of the daguerreotypes and ambrotypes serves as a symbolic extension of hair jewelry. The braid of hair in the cache and the well-established art of hair jewelry share the practice of cutting off some of the deceased's hair as a memento. As Rachel Harmeyer (2013: 34) states: "In the context of mourning jewelry, hair was seen as a living extension of the departed individual." The braiding of hair also holds meaning, as it signified the mourner's responsibility to remember the dead and one's own mortality (Stabile 2004: 224).

In addition to the lock of hair, the deposit contained black jewelry made of material often associated with mourning: a French-jet brooch and two ebony rings. The ebony rings found in this cache are two different sizes, indicating they either belonged to two separate people or that an individual wore them on different fingers. As ebony was a popular material for mourning wear, it can be inferred they were possibly worn during a period of mourning (Hesse 2007). Interpreting black clothing or jewelry from the 19th century must be done cautiously, as the items could also have been worn as adornment in normal contexts outside periods of grieving (Gere and Rudoe 2010: 121). It is possible that the two ebony rings and French-jet scarf pin could simply have been purchased and worn because the owner(s) preferred the aesthetic.

Similarly, sentimental jewelry such as hair jewelry could be worn and presented in and outside times of mourning, but the associated artifacts found in the cache suggest they could be connected to an individual's period of grieving. The examples of sentimental jewelry from the Cole's Hill memorial cache include an anchor pin/charm, which represented hope and was often associated with a heart and a cross symbolizing charity and faith, respectively, and a pansy brooch, which indicated remembrance (Bury 1991; Cooper and Battershill 1972; Hinks 1991; Peters 2005; Phillips 2008; Romero 2013). Many often assume the anchor motif to be associated with a sailor or a maritime family, although Cooper and Battershill (1972: 86) state that the motif is often found on mourning jewelry. While the context in which these artifacts were worn remains unclear, their inclusion in this deposit suggests they held great meaning for their owner in life. Therefore, the inclusion of the anchor pin in the cache of jewelry signifies that those mourning their deceased family

member maintained the objects' sentimental value.

Compared to other historical references and archaeological finds that include daguerreotypes/ambrotypes, the stack of photographs found in this cache provides evidence of an isolated instance associated with mourning practices. One of the popular uses of daguerreotypes in the 19th century was postmortem photography, which emerged as a common phenomenon resulting from changing attitudes toward death (Bowser 1983: 2). With ideas of sentimentality and romanticism of death at the forefront during this period, photography made possible the desire to procure images of loved ones (Bowser 1983: 9). The photographs from the memorial cache collection are not examples of postmortem photography. They are indicative of the technology of the time, while conveying similar sentimental value within the common practice of memorialization.

As for the three swatches of textile underlying these artifacts, conservator Dennis Piechota oversaw the cleaning and application of archival consolidates, such as Paraloid B-72, to strengthen artifacts too fragile and embrittled for normal handling. The most intriguing textile was excavated from the north wall just on top of the subsoil. After using conservation cleaning methods on what was a muddy, fibrous lump in the field, a woven double cloth was revealed. Use of a microscope made visible a silk composition that forms a tan-and-blue checkered pattern on one side and solid blue on the other. This particular piece of textile most likely originated as a piece of clothing, either a dress or trousers. However, from the limited amount that remains it is not possible to determine its original form definitively. The edges, though, reveal that the original full item of textile was likely ripped apart prior to deposition within the cache.

Overall, the discovery of the artifacts and the three associated organic materials underlying them in distinct locations within the context indicates that these items were purposefully placed in a pit in the rear yard of a house. Analysis of the leather exteriors of the daguerreotype and ambrotype cases revealed they were stacked, wrapped in paper, and topped with the braid of blonde hair prior to deposition. In addition, the coiled belt in the corner of the north wall also supports this interpretation of careful, intentional placement. The deposit does not appear to have been disturbed postdeposition, as the artifacts maintained their original positions.

Before concluding that this collection of artifacts constituted a memorial cache, we considered the possibilities of a time capsule or an isolated event, such as a house clean out. The historical record does not support these interpretations, as no written documentation exists for the placement of the deposit, nor do the objects refer to a specific date or historical event. A key element of this cache that highlights its careful and purposeful curation is the lack of particular artifact categories that could be associated with a house clean-out event, such as ceramics, glassware, and other domestic trash. Additionally, the images of the daguerrotypes and ambrotypes can be considered well-preserved, while the photographs' cases were found to be in varying states of deterioration. This facilitates the notion that a microenvironment created by enclosure in the leather cases aided in the image's preservation adding to the unique nature of the cache (Dennis Piechota 2020, pers. comm.). The artifacts, on the whole, were too carefully placed and neatly arranged. The evidence indicates that whoever buried these objects did so thoughtfully and did not intend to reclaim them.

When analyzed collectively, the artifacts and their depositional context indicate they form a memorial cache containing items belonging to an individual or family that were gathered between the 1850s and the 1880s and then collected and buried in a single event sometime after 1885 but before 1920. The date range for the cache takes into account a time lag for the jewelry, with the

majority dating from the mid- to late 19th century. The two ebony rings and French-jet pin indicate that a person or persons mourned the loss of a loved one prior to the deposition of the items. These objects were placed in the ground with care.

Many of the artifacts that form the cache include objects, such as the pansy pin, anchor charm, two ebony rings, and the jet pin, that could have been part of traditional, public 19th-century mourning practices during a mourner's lifetime. It appears that, after use, these artifacts were gathered with the other personal objects that do (the braid of hair) and do not (the sewing kit, perfume bottle, and glasses) reference a period of mourning. They then were buried together producing this deposit, which could mark a previously unknown kind of private mourning ritual.

The Jackson Family

In order to try to identify the owner of the items comprising the cache and the person who assembled it for deposition, we turned to documentary research. This consisted of a title search for the parcel, completed by Beranek (Beranek and Landon 2017), paired with documentary research on the primary family occupying the two-family house. Around 1800, the Cole's Hill lot consisted of four smaller lots: the Cashwell parcel, the Samuel Robbins barn lot, the corner lot along Middle Street and Cole's Hill, and the old Henry Jackson homestead (Beranek and Landon 2017: 15, 16). The cache was identified in what would have been the yard space of the Henry Jackson homestead. Both the corner lot and Henry Jackson homestead were owned by the Jackson family ca. 1800. According to deed records, between 1800 and 1869, members of the Jackson family transferred the land they owned amongst themselves, sold land north and west of the homestead, and gradually acquired pieces of the four lots they did not own (Beranek and Landon 2017: 17). In 1843, Henry Jackson, Sr.'s two sons, Henry F. Jackson and Edwin Jackson, jointly purchased the Cashwell parcel, which extended their property into the current western boundary of the Cole's Hill lot (Beranek and Landon 2017: 23). Edwin Jackson married Judith Stetson and in 1869 sold the northern half of the house and land around it to Abbie and Arad Perkins (Plymouth County Registry of Deeds 1869a, 1869b). The Perkins's three children––Albert, George, and Annie––inherited the property after their parents passed. Annie, who became Annie Whitney, sold the property in 1897 to William Drew. Drew quickly resold the property to Anthony Atwood. The Atwood family were the last residents of the northern portion of the home (Beranek and Landon 2017: 25). For the duration of these transactions, ownership of the southern half of the property and the strip of land behind both halves of the building remained in the Jackson family until Judith Jackson's death on 16 November 1905 (Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records [MRVR] 1905).

While the parcel on Cole's Hill was home to a number of families, the Jackson family lived on the property for multiple generations. Their prominence in the property's history led to a focus on their genealogy. The inferred ages of the individuals in the photographs and the memorial cache's deposition date align with the Edwin Jackson family's occupation. Additional research was completed on the family histories of the Atwoods and those individuals residing on the properties. The presence of both daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, and our interpretations of the other artifacts indicate that it is less likely the cache is associated with these families.

We hypothesize that this unique collection of artifacts is the result of the losses the family's matriarch, Judith Stetson Jackson, experienced. Judith outlived her husband and children and remained in the house until her death at 89 years of age (MRVR

1905). We believe the seated woman in dark clothing shows Judith in her mid- to late 30s. Tragically, Edwin and Judith's three children all died relatively young. Mary E. Jackson (21 July 1849–19 July 1853), the youngest, passed away from scarlet fever as a small child (MRVR 1853). Henry H. Jackson (18 December 1845–26 May 1877), was 31 years old when he died of "inflammation of the brain" (MRVR 1877). We believe the image of the boy standing next to a table to be a young Henry around the age of 12–15. The eldest, Elizabeth "Lizzie" A. Jackson (15 August 1842–1 September 1897), died unmarried at the age of 55 from "paralysis agitans," an historical name for Parkinson's disease (MRVR 1897). We speculate that the young girl in a gingham dress who looks to be between the ages of 6 and 12, appearing in both daguerreotype and ambrotype images, could be Elizabeth as a young girl. The inferred ages and genders of the individuals in the daguerreotypes and ambrotypes also closely align with those of Lizzie, Henry, and Judith.

The belt-manufacture date of 1885 provided a timeframe to aid our search for the collection's creator. Additionally, the death date for a female on the property closest to 1885 is Lizzie Jackson, who passed in 1897. Upon Lizzie's death, the only surviving member of the Jackson family still living on Cole's Hill was her mother. The cache's location in the backyard of the southern half of the building occupied by the Jackson family supports the inference that Judith was the possible creator of the memorial cache between the years 1885 and 1905.

Conclusion

The 19th century produced a highly developed set of public mourning rituals, particularly for women, that have been extensively outlined and documented (Bury 1991; Gere and Rudoe 2010; Hallam and Hockey 2001; Pike 1980; Romero 2013; Vookles and Levine 1986). Etiquette books and ladies' magazines of the 19th century provide information about the rigid guidelines of mourning rituals and proper behavior for widows (Pike 1980: 656; Taylor 1983: 91). The public display of acceptable mourning practices is widely discussed in literature relating to the Victorian period; this cache, however, highlights a private and individualized experience, differentiated from common practice. Authors Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey (2001: 299) discuss "relic objects"—objects that were connected to the body and thus possessed a connection evoking qualities of their owners. Hallam and Hockey (2001: 3) present the idea that, as part of the memory process, material forms can be fashioned into memory objects that retain traces of the previous experiences of those who possessed them. The context from which the cache was excavated and the types of artifacts recovered can be described as a representation of memory practice. Whoever created this cache did so through commemoration of their loved ones by associating material objects with memories of the deceased. They chose neither to disclose nor display their memories to others, but rather to preserve personal belongings in a concealed and private manner. Artifacts from the cache also appear to have a gendered dimension, with the majority being associated with a woman or women. If the creator of this collection was indeed Judith Jackson, this aspect of the collection highlights 19th-century mourning practices through a feminine historical memory. While the deposit of this cache was likely completed as a private moment, its recovery speaks to the memory and identity of those being memorialized and those memorializing them.

As with the artifacts in the cache's collection, the use of memorabilia served as therapeutic aids in the process of grieving (Hallam and Hockey 2001). These mementos of love and friendship were also associated with private sites and spaces considered to be conducive to inner contemplation: a memorial or quiet area, such as a garden. This cache confirms what is described in the popular literature and etiquette books of the Victorian era,

where one was required to acknowledge the loss of a loved one publicly while not openly expressing emotions of bereavement. Comparably, the context in which the cache was recovered would have been an area of the residence's backyard. The intentional burial of this collection indicates an act of purposeful placement by an individual who did not intend for these objects to be removed. The material markers held memories and meanings for whomever owned them, and a space was created to carefully conceal and bury them. While in use, some of the artifacts were potentially worn to signify an outward expression of mourning. The purposeful placement of the objects together in a family's yard space demonstrates an alternative and private method of expressing grief and creating a site of memory.

The presence of this collection archaeologically suggests there may be other individualized forms of mourning similar to this deposit. Since this cache has no known comparative examples, the researchers' initial interpretations pose future questions that can only be explored through further analysis of the collection itself. Questions surrounding the intersections of class, status, and gender during the 19th and early 20th centuries can be studied. Forthcoming research will enhance a narrative that has continued to remain private due to its exclusion from the documentary record.

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