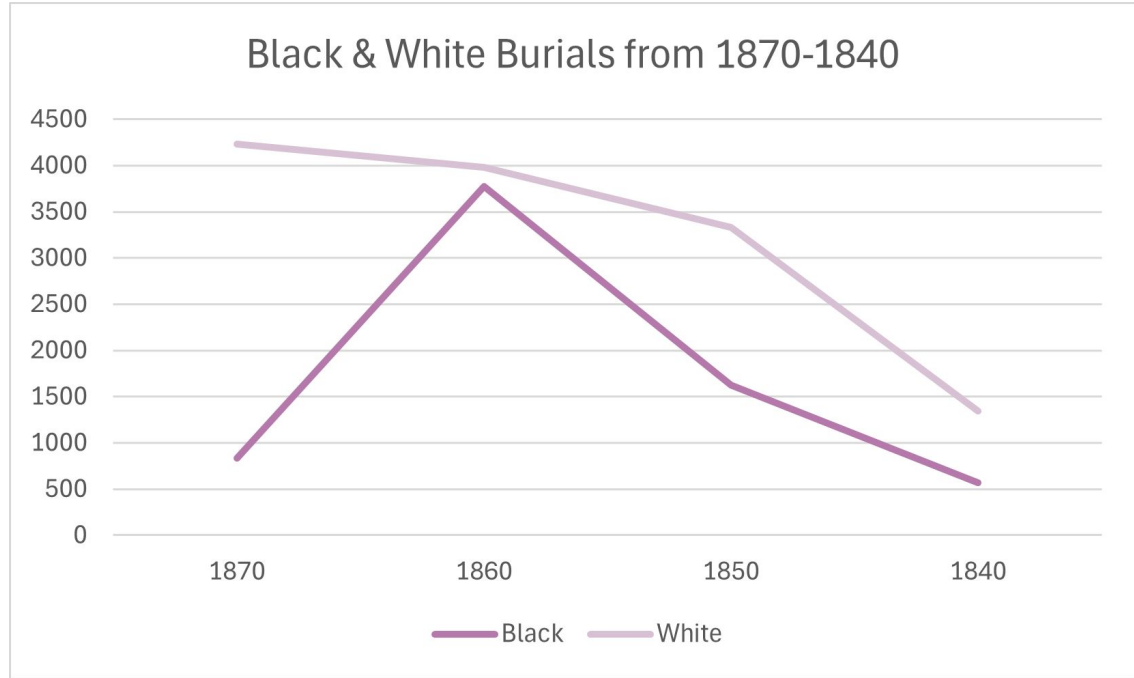NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

A study on Nashville's "Premier Outdoor History Museum"
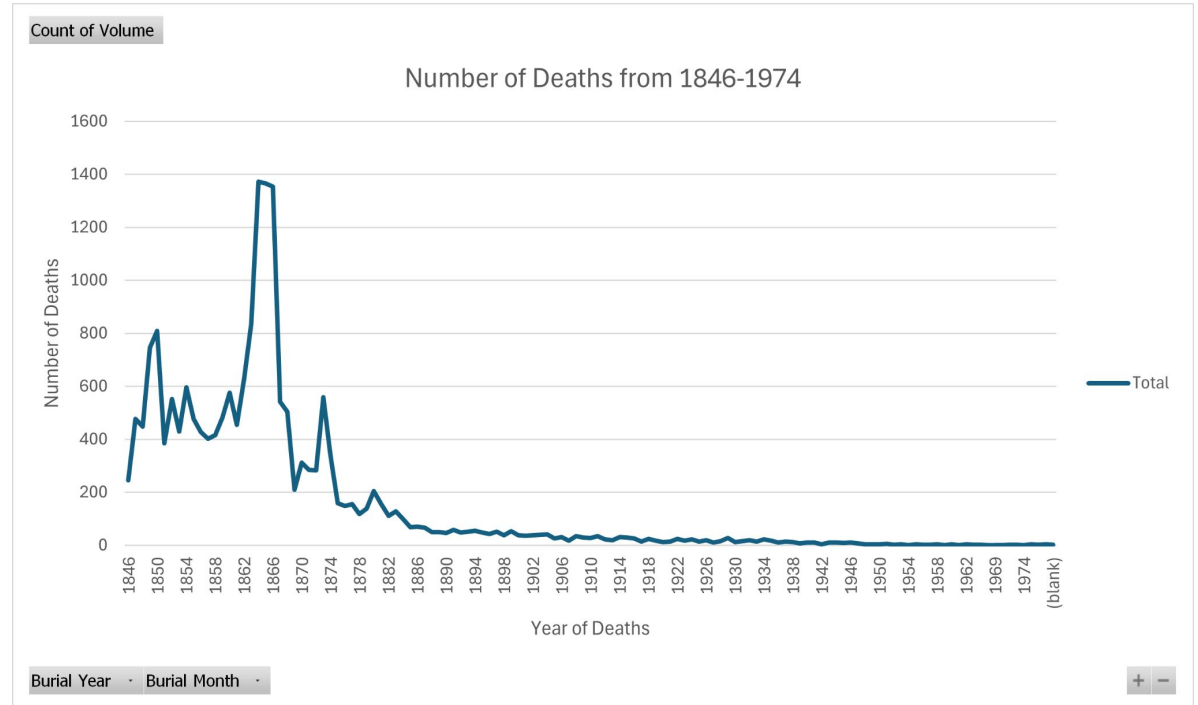
Presented by: Brenna Dugan

About the Nashville City Cemetery

The Nashville City Cemetery opened in 1822 but did not begin to bury people until 1846 out of fear of spreading disease. By 1870, the cemetery had become the place where over 15,000 people of every race, religion and economic status had been buried. This itself makes the Nashville Cemetery stand out since most Black people (especially in confederate states) were primarily buried in segregated cemeteries called "Contraband and Freedmen's Cemeteries" during this time.

Black & White Burials from 1870-1840

Legend: — Black — White
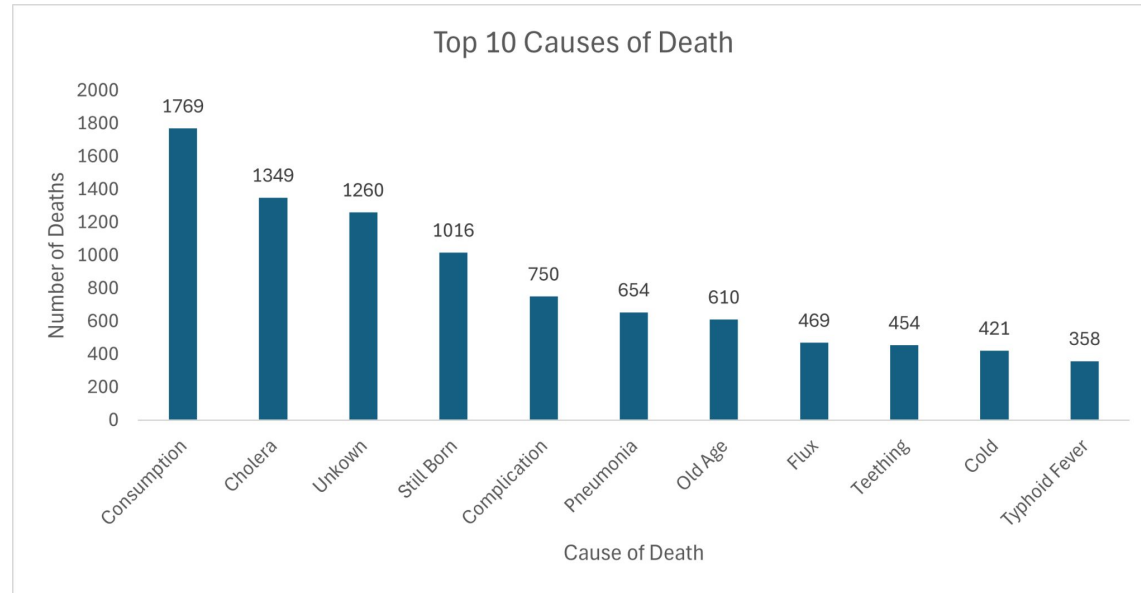
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The Total Number of Deaths

From 1846-1974, 19,745 people were buried at the Nashville Cemetery with an increase of burials during the American Civil War and a slow decline afterwards.

Count of Volume

Number of Deaths from 1846-1974

Year of Deaths

Burial Year · Burial Month ·

The Top Causes of Death

The top cause of death during this time was consumption which was a wasting away of the body that was caused by pulmonary tuberculosis. The second leading cause was Cholera which was an infectious disease that is spread by feces-contaminated water and food.

Top 10 Causes of Death

Cause of Death	Number of Deaths
Consumption	1769
Cholera	1349
Unkown	1260
Still Born	1016
Complication	750
Pneumonia	654
Old Age	610
Flux	469
Teething	454
Cold	421
Typhoid Fever	358

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What We Can Use

What Already Exists

- Nashville City Cemetery Association Event Calendar
- Nashville City Cemetery Facebook Page
- Research
- Historical Information
- Tours

What We Can Add

- Updated events with bookable links
- Black History Tour
- Update research with accurate data

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Updating Events with Bookable Links

We already have a list of events (Second Saturday Tours, Outdoor Scavenger Hunt, Women of the Nashville City Cemetery, Civil War Tour, Annual Weed Wrangle, Living History Tour). We need to add them to the website and be able to get them booked by visitors!

Use this chance to get visitors directly from Facebook by using a Facebook Banner Ad!

Adding a Black History Tour

With thousands of Black people buried here, an opportunity is created to share more about what Black people experienced during this time, how they were buried here, the inequality that they were facing and the historical impact they had.

Note: Elias and Matilda Polk who were enslaved by President James K. Polk had their tombstones replaced in 2017. This is an opportunity to highlight more Black people who were buried here and share their stories of enslavement to "freedom."

Sample Facebook Banner Ad for the Black History Tour.

Updating Research with Accurate Data

The Nashville City Cemetery, located at **1001 4th Avenue South**, is the oldest continuously operated public cemetery in Nashville. On March 9, 1820, the mayor and aldermen of Nashville purchased four acres of land located "on the plains, south of town, for its burying ground." The cemetery opened on January 1, 1822. By 1850 the cemetery was the final resting place for more than 11,000 people of every race, religion and economic status.
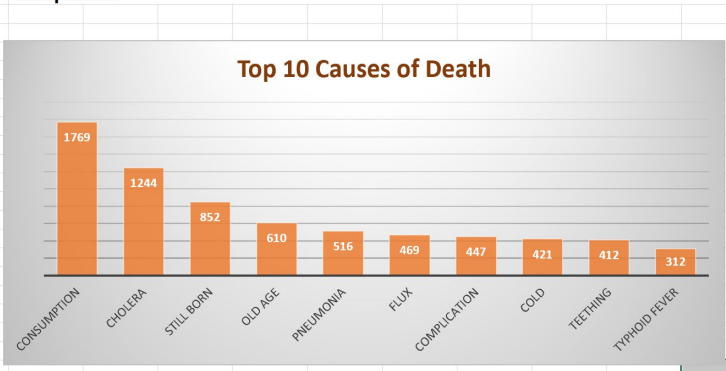
Source: https://thenashvillecitycemetery.org/

This is not accurate, only 2,723 people were buried by 1850. Lets update this to the numbers used in the beginning of the presentation which were " By 1870, the cemetery had become the place where over 15,000 people of every race, religion and economic status had been buried."
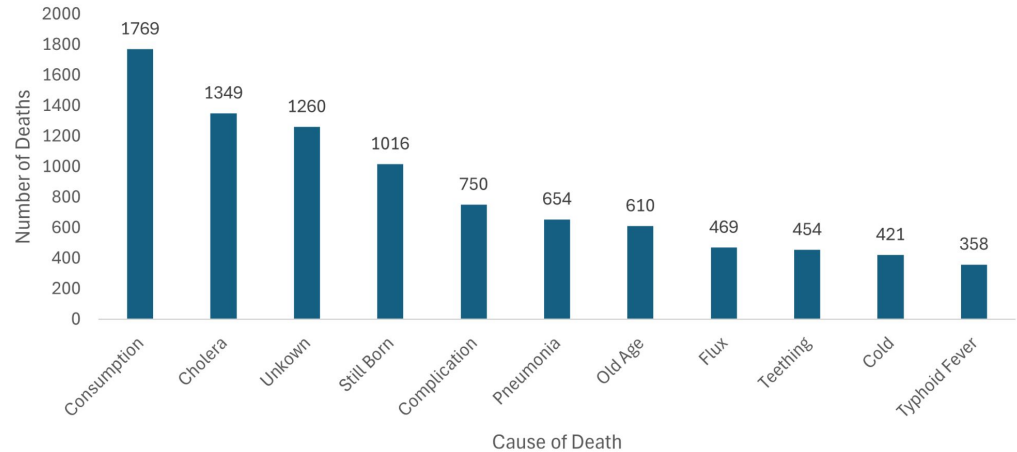
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Updating Research with Accurate Data

The 9th most prevalent cause of death in city cemeteries listed is *teething* This might have been due more to the treatment than to the cause! Old remedies for teething include "blistering, bleeding, placing leeches on the gums, and applying cautery to the back of the head," according to Wikipedia.

Top 10 Causes of Death

Top 10 Causes of Death

What We Can Still Find

If we analyze the data further…

- Are we able to determine why there were more deaths during the Civil War but the causes of death did not fluctuate?

- Are we able to find information surrounding mass burials in the area at the time to compare the numbers to individuals that were buried here during the Civil War?

- Are we able to determine if the final cause of death was related to a war injury?