

Historical Significance of the Baguio Public Cemetery: Tracing its Development, Spatial Configuration, and Heritage

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ABSTRACT

This study argues that more than simply a burial ground, the Baguio City Public Cemetery is a historical and cultural landscape that embodies the city's layered past. To explore the historical depth of the cemetery's establishment, location and spatial configuration, this study utilized archival research, walk surveys, photo documentation, and interviews to generate data. Findings indicate that while existing government records identify the 1930s to the 1950s as dates of the cemetery's establishment, archival documents, oral accounts and structural evidence suggest an earlier origin during the American colonial period when Baguio was being developed as a hill station. These data suggest that the cemetery developed in conjunction with the beginnings and growth of Baguio as a city. The cemetery therefore reflects the shared and layered histories and cultural influences that have intertwined within the single developmental landscape of Baguio through time. Examining the spatial layout of the cemetery, the study found that it exemplifies social segmentation and political hierarchies through distinct structures and sections for various personalities and communities. This segmentation, however, has been gradually modified over time through successive burials, cultural interactions, and spatial reappropriation. Because of the cemetery's historical significance, the study recommends that it is a potential heritage site that deserves to be protected and recognized.

Keywords: Cemetery, Baguio History, American Colonialism, Urban Planning, Cultural Heritage

Introduction

Cemeteries are far more than just final resting places for the dead. These spaces are not only for the deceased but also for the living, supporting psychological and spiritual needs while also functioning as social and cultural spaces (Francis et al. 2005; Barretto-Tesoro 2016). Ultimately, a cemetery is a valuable source of history, preserving a city's historical narratives and heritage (Mytum 2007; Ypil 2023).

In the case of Baguio City, the public cemetery offers a vibrant ground for historical inquiry. Its unique spatial layout and the notable figures buried within its grounds make it a repository of stories that connect the city's past to its present. The origins of the Baguio City Public Cemetery (also known as Baguio Cemetery), located along Naguilian Road, remain uncertain, although government directives between the 1930s to 1950s point to its phased establishment (Refuerzo 2023; Palangchao 2011; Caluza 2013). Yet its possible establishment during the onset of the American colonial period—parallel to the birth and development of the city itself—opens avenues for inquiry into how cemeteries were planned and organized in the early 20th century. Its layout suggests deliberate design, possibly influenced by colonial planning principles that sought to impose order and modernity on the developing city. Beyond its design, the cemetery has also witnessed pivotal historical events, including World War II.

This paper examines the Baguio City Public Cemetery not simply as a burial site but as a historically layered cultural landscape. It investigates the cemetery's establishment, suggesting an earlier origin during the American colonial period despite later government claims. It also analyzes its spatial layout, showing how distinct sections reflect socio-political segmentation. Finally, the study positions the cemetery as a historical narrative—both the resting place of notable individuals and a witness to colonialism and World War II.

Hence, the Baguio Cemetery's layout, situated in the Cordillera, may be read as both a reflection of post-colonial socio-political order. Scott (1974) provides that the entire Cordillera was a colonial product. Even after independence, many facets of Philippine social life reflect these colonial legacies, a phenomenon consistent with the broader patterns typically observed in post-colonial societies (Kapoor 2002). Thus, the cemetery embodies both remembrance and segmentation, revealing how colonial society organized not only the living but also the dead.

What further enriches the site is its role as a resting place for local historical figures and pioneers who contributed significantly to Baguio's history. These graves are not simply markers of death but testimonies to lives that shaped the city's development and identity. In this sense,

the cemetery can be seen as both an archive and a monument—an overlooked historical source that deserves systematic study.

Despite its importance, scholarly attention to the cemetery has been minimal. Historical accounts have focused on Baguio's colonial development, as the "Summer Capital of the Philippines," while neglecting the cemetery as part of its historical landscape. This paper, therefore, seeks to address that gap by investigating the origins, spatial design, notable figures interred, and historical narratives of the Baguio cemetery.

Cemeteries as Cultural Landscapes

This study is grounded in constructivism, which posits that reality is socially constructed through human interpretation, experience, and interaction (Schwandt 1994). Anchored on this perspective, it adopts a cultural-historical geography framework that views landscapes as products of historical processes and cultural values (Cosgrove 1984; Tuan 1977). Hence, cemeteries are understood not merely as physical sites but as cultural landscapes inscribed with social meanings, memory, and historical experience.

Moreover, the study draws from the insights of Lefebvre, Foucault, and Bourdieu, whose works on space, power, and cultural distinction provide key analytical anchors for situating cemeteries within broader social dynamics. Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is socially produced and reproduces social relations, embedding hierarchies and exclusions within the built environment. Foucault's (1967, 1986) concept of heterotopia frames cemeteries as "other spaces" that are materially separate from everyday life yet deeply intertwined with cultural notions of order, memory, and mortality; rather than mere counter-sites, they reflect ongoing social structures and struggles (Rugg 2000; Jedan et al. 2020). Meanwhile, Bourdieu's (1984) concept of distinction explains how burial practices, gravestones, and spatial organization function as markers of identity, hierarchy, and cultural capital, reproducing class divisions through material and symbolic forms (Vanderstraeten 2009).

Cemeteries have increasingly been examined as cultural landscapes that mediate relationships between the living and the dead while reflecting broader social, spatial, and historical processes. French (1975) conceptualized cemeteries as cultural institutions rather than mere burial grounds. French demonstrated how the "rural cemetery movement" of the early 19th century transformed burial spaces into landscaped, extra-urban environments shaped by emerging concerns over public health, urbanization, and aesthetics. This shift marked a transition from church-centered, overcrowded burial grounds to planned, park-like cemeteries that also functioned as spaces for social interaction and reflection.

Extending this view, Reimers (1999) highlights how cemeteries function as forms of cultural communication through which identities are expressed and negotiated, particularly in multicultural contexts. Reimers illustrates how burial practices both reinforce and reconfigure social boundaries, suggesting that cemeteries are dynamic spaces where cultural identities are continuously produced. Maddrell (2013) further emphasizes the affective dimension of cemeteries through the concept of “absence-presence,” framing them as lived spaces where memory, grief, and materiality intersect. Similarly, Klugh (2019) emphasizes the relevance of cemeteries as sites of historical recovery, community engagement, and social justice, particularly in relation to the preservation of marginalized histories.

Colonial Historical Background and Cemeteries

Cemeteries during the Spanish Period

In the Philippines, Spanish colonization radically reconfigured the spaces of both the living and the dead. As de Lempis (2021a) noted, the *reducción* policy not only centralized native populations into settlements but also extended to burial grounds. “[T]he resettlement of the dead was equally as important as the resettlement of the living for the Spanish missionaries” (162). In this way, colonial cemetery layouts became integral to the empire’s socio-political geography.

During the early phase of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines, burial practices reflected social hierarchy. The deceased were interred within church premises, with the arrangement determined by social class. Wealthier individuals were buried inside the church, while “commoners” were laid to rest in the adjoining graveyard (Dakudao 1992). Churchyard cemeteries (*campos santos*) symbolized communal Christian salvation, where burial was conceived not for individuals but for a Christian community awaiting collective resurrection. Yet spatial differentiation already reflected colonial hierarchies, as certain population groups were denied access to cemeteries, such as the non-Catholics (infidels, pagans, and heretics) (de Lempis 2021a).

By the late eighteenth century, Enlightenment-era notions of health and sanitation began to intervene. Secular authorities increasingly considered intramural burials hazardous, since “decomposing corpses generated morbid miasma” (de Lempis 2021a, 169). As a response, King Carlos III issued a *reales cédula* (royal decree) on April 3, 1787, mandating that cemeteries be constructed outside urban centers, banning burials within churches¹. This decree was reiterated in 1789 and 1804, insisting that cemeteries be situated at the town’s edges (de Viana 2004; Chu and See 2016; Ypil 2023)². These measures became urgent after repeated cholera epidemics (de Viana 2004).

As a result, a new extramural geography of the dead emerged³. In Manila, Paco Cemetery was the first major extramural cemetery and a prototype of Enlightenment cemetery design (Chu and See 2016; de Viana 2004). Circular in shape, the cemetery was defined by two concentric walls enclosing a walkway, and a central elliptical chapel (Rodell 2002). Social stratification was still evident, with Spanish officials entombed in the center, Spanish *insulares* and influential *mestizos* in the inner niches, Chinese in a separate section, and *indios* buried outside (Atkinson 1905; Chu and See 2016).

Furthermore, other cemeteries such as the *Cementerio de la Ciudad*, *Cementerio General de Dilao*, and *arrabales*⁴ cemeteries were established in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (de Viana 2004). However, they quickly became overcrowded and unsanitary. To address these conditions, the *Junta Superior de Sanidad* recommended the creation of a larger cemetery, establishing the *Cementerio General de la Loma* (de Viana 2004)⁵.

The shift to extramural cemeteries was not merely a sanitary reform but also reflected broader conflicts between church and state, as ecclesiastical authorities sought to maintain jurisdiction over burials while municipal officials increasingly asserted control on public health (de Lempis 2021a). Cemetery management thus remained a complex affair, not solely under civil authority, as the Catholic Church continued to exert significant influence even after the establishment of extramural cemeteries (de Lempis 2021b). This was most evident in the enforcement of religious segregation, with the Church ensuring that converts were kept separate from “infidels”. Over time, Chinese and Protestant groups established separate burial grounds, marking the emergence of religiously and socially segmented cemeteries (Chu and See 2016).

Spanish Presence in Baguio-Benguet

It is also important to situate the early presence of Spaniards in the Baguio-Benguet area. Although Spanish expeditions penetrated the region, the colonial practices surrounding cemeteries were not fully imposed on the same extent as in the lowlands. The earliest recorded Spanish presence in Northern Luzon can be traced to the expedition of Juan de Salcedo in 1572, who explored the Ilocos and Cordillera regions (Keesing 1962). This was followed by Captain Garcia de Aldana and Antonio Carreño de Valdés, who explored Benguet (Scott 1974).

Around the same period, Captain Alonzo Martin Quirante made a similar push into Benguet, which met indigenous resistance (Keesing 1962). Augustinian friars, Fathers Francisco Romero and Pedro Vivar, attempted to convert Ibalays through *reducción*, but were resisted by chieftain Kidit and the Tonglo confederation. Governor Manuel de

Arza ordered a punitive campaign in 1859 that resulted in the burning of Tonglo (Scott 1974).

Between 1829 and 1839, Lieutenant Guillermo Galvey established a stronghold in Benguet, naming the valley “La Trinidad” (Keesing 1962). By the mid-nineteenth century, Spanish authorities appointed Ibaloy elites (*baknangs*) as intermediaries (Prill-Brett 2015). Yet, despite these changes, Spanish evangelization and urbanization efforts did not fully succeed in Baguio.

Ibaloy Funerary Practices

While there is no documented evidence of a formal, Spanish-led cemetery in Baguio, this absence does not mean that mortuary practices were absent in the region. On the contrary, the Benguet Ibaloy maintained their distinct funerary traditions, which contrasted with Catholic burial norms.

One of the most notable Ibaloy practices was mummification, which involved preserving the bodies of the deceased through fire, smoke, and herbal treatments (Carascal et al. 2003; Keith 1981). As early as 1885, Mayer documented this practice among the Ibaloy (Mayer 1885). Later studies reinforced its wider practice across Benguet, with evidence from Baguio, Buguias, Kabayan, La Trinidad, and Tuba (Datar et al. 2016). Henry Otley Beyer (1947) likewise reported the presence of more than twenty mummies in a cave at Mount Santo Tomas, of which at least half were well preserved (Prill-Brett and Ramos 1998).

These mummies were typically placed in wooden coffins known as *dungon* or *kalong* and interred in caves or rock shelters (Camte-Bahni 2010; Pelila 2020; Picpican 2003). Beyond its physical process, mummification held spiritual significance, ensuring that the deceased had continued presence within the community while the spirit journeyed to the afterlife (Picpican 2003). Ethnographic accounts further highlight its cultural importance, particularly in sustaining communal identity and ritual continuity (Afable 1975; Camte-Bahni 2010), suggesting that the practice persisted into the nineteenth century (Anacin 2015; Datar et al. 2016).

American Period

The American colonial administration’s takeover in 1898 introduced significant changes in cemeteries across the Philippines. In 1902, the Philippine Commission issued guidelines for cemetery management⁶. This led to a more systematic approach, culminating in Act No. 1458 of 1906, which not only regulated cemeteries but also mandated non-discrimination based on nationality or religion⁷. This legal shift away from the Spanish regime’s practice of reserving cemeteries for Catholics

laid the groundwork for new public cemeteries built on principles of modernity and sanitation (Dakudao 1992).

It was in Manila that health concerns, sanitation, and landscape architecture converged in the establishment of *Cementerio del Norte* (Manila North Cemetery), built in 1904 (Eusebio 2016; Barretto-Tesoro 2016). Recognized as Manila's first modern garden cemetery, it embodied the principles of the City Beautiful Movement during the American occupation (Eusebio 2016; Dakudao 1992). In Burnham's *Report on Proposed Improvements at Manila*⁸, he distinguished the circular cemetery on *Calle Nozaleda* as an exemplar of "good architecture for tropical service" (Vernon 2011, 17; Burnham and Anderson 1906, 635). According to Governor-General Cameron Forbes, the cemetery was laid out "along modern American lines" (Forbes 1928, 363), probably by William Parsons (Vernon 2011, 9). While it is uncertain whether the idea originated with Burnham, the creation of the *Cementerio del Norte* was designed as a park-like environment, reflecting similar principles of beautification, spatial order, and sanitation that informed American colonial urbanism (Elliott 1917; Vernon 2011). While Manila's cemeteries were consciously redesigned according to American colonial urbanism, similar documentation for Baguio seems absent.

Baguio's transformation as a city began with the American colonial project at the turn of the twentieth century. Believing the humid tropics unsuitable for white settlers, the Americans sought to establish a summer capital and sanitarium by developing Baguio as a hill station (Scott 1974; Keesing 1962; Reed 1999).

American rule in Baguio started in 1900 with a military government under General Order No. 43, soon replaced by a civil government under Commission Act No. 48. Baguio was then seen as a strategic site, endorsed by the Sherman and Taft Commissions, with Dean Worcester among its strongest advocates. The city's legal foundations were set through Executive Act No. 37 (1907), which reserved the townsite, and the 1909 charter presented by Justice George Malcolm, which established Baguio as a city⁹ (Reed 1999; Florendo 2010).

The Americans initiated the construction of roads, government, and civic infrastructure that transformed Baguio into both a summer capital and a symbol of colonial modernity (Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid 1985). The 1905 master plan by Daniel Burnham and Pierce Anderson provided the blueprint for Baguio's civic and residential centers (Burnham and Anderson 1905; Florendo 2010). In November 1905, William Parsons arrived in the Philippines and was tasked to interpret Burnham's preliminary plans for Baguio, a role that placed him at the center of translating Burnham's vision into built reality (Forbes 1928). Along with Warwick Green, George H. Hayward, and A.D. Williams, Parsons designed and constructed the streets, residences, and

public buildings of Baguio (Reed 1999). Yet, conspicuously absent from planning documents was any mention of a cemetery.

Burnham's map and subsequent city plans focused primarily on Baguio's civic centers. Yet, one noticeable absence in the plan was the cemetery. If the Americans intended to build a city, the question arises: where did they intend to bury their dead? While Burnham's surviving maps make no mention of a cemetery, the practical necessity of one suggests that its establishment was likely considered, even if not formally documented. Is it also possible that the Americans made use of a cemetery that was already available, adapting an existing burial ground to serve the needs of the growing colonial community? The present Baguio cemetery, raises the question of whether this site was deliberately chosen by early American planners or whether it had earlier significance as an earlier burial ground later adapted into a municipal cemetery.

Origins of the Baguio City Public Cemetery

The establishment of the Baguio Cemetery is generally traced by the city government to the 1930s to 1950s (Refuerzo 2023; Palangchao 2011). According to the former caretaker, Rogelio Cortez, records at the City Environment and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) provide that the cemetery's first recorded tenant was Joseph Douglas (Figure 1), who died on December 11, 1934 (Caluza 2013). Yet, this does not necessarily dismiss the existence of earlier records, since such documents may have been originally maintained by the City Health Services Office (CHSO) before jurisdiction over the cemetery was transferred to CEPMO; the only records available date back to 2012, but officials estimate that the cemetery has 11,000 tombs and earlier records have since been lost (Cabreza et al. 2019).



Figure 1. Tomb of Joseph Douglas. Photo by the author in 2025.

Historical records that could have clarified the cemetery's origins were lost in a fire and during World War II bombings in Baguio (Hayase 1983; 2022). After the war, city authorities assumed no Japanese cemetery existed and destroyed unattended tombstones, further obscuring when and how the cemetery was established (Hayase 2022). Unfortunately, the common Burnham-Anderson or Parsons plan makes no reference to a cemetery¹⁰.

In addition, many early burials were likely marked only by wooden crosses, which easily deteriorate over time. With the rise of overcrowding and continued use of the burial ground over the decades, some older, unattended tombs may also have been replaced by newer ones. These circumstances make it difficult to identify the oldest tenants of the Baguio Cemetery.

Amidst the uncertainty about the date of establishment, some evidence suggests that a burial ground was already in use in Baguio City by then. These include archival sources, cemetery structures and tombs, as well as testimonies from local informants, including Zenaida Brigida Hamada-Pawid, an Ibaloy elder and local historian, and long-serving and second to third generation cemetery workers¹¹.

Archival Clues and Oral Accounts: Early Reports of a Cemetery

A report from *The Cable News*, dated May 19, 1906, entitled "Weird Cemetery at Baguio", provides evidence that burial grounds existed in Baguio. It describes "the Igorot cemetery which lies hidden among the tall grass and tropical undergrowth at the foot of an immense pile of volcanic rock (limestones) on the summit of what is known as Cemetery Ridge, in full view of the Hotel Pines" (*The Cable News* 1906a, 6). It goes on to portray the striking landscape, noting that "the mountain rises perpendicularly from the ground to a height of probably four hundred feet. It is a wonderful pile of volcanic matter which takes on the most strange and fantastic forms, and is covered with many centuries' growth of vegetation" (*The Cable News* 1906a, 6). The article further observes that the site was "within easy reach of the Hotel Pines" and offered a "clear view of the China Sea" (*The Cable News* 1906a, 6). Equally significant information in the article is the documented burial practices in the "Cemetery Ridge" where bodies were placed in a sitting posture immediately after death, enclosed in hollowed logs, and left on exposed rock until dried. This description echoes ethnographic accounts of Ibaloy mortuary traditions.

The description in the May 19, 1906, article is ambiguous regarding the exact location of the cemetery. While the article claimed the site was easily accessible from the Hotel Pines (situated at Luneta Hill), mentioning a vantage point with a direct view of the China Sea suggests a western-facing ridge. According to Zenaida Brigida Hamada-

Pawid, the mention of 'limestone' formation points more to the ridge between Baguio and Trinidad, which might be San Carlos, Quirino Hill, or Mirador Hill. She further suggests that there is an old Ibaloy cemetery near the Green Valley area toward the higher Mount Santo Tomas, but the area is not notably limestone and was definitely never a public cemetery. Moreover, the site might refer to the "Mummy Caves" in Mount Santo Tomas, which attracted tourists and scientists from the 1915s to 1930s (Tamayo 2004; Beyer 1947; Prill-Brett and Ramos 1998). But, Hamada-Pawid suggested that the "rise" described in the article may refer to the slope across the present cemetery along the Naguilian Road, situated to the right of the traffic going down and out of the city. Moreover, the western side of the present cemetery provides a clear view toward the West Philippine Sea.

Another report dated May 27, 1906, details the death of Luis Yim, a Chinese-born gold washer who was sent to the Baguio Hospital but later died and was buried in the Baguio municipal cemetery. The article notes that by that time, Yim was the tenth person to be buried there, and that the first recorded burial was of a "colored" man named George H. Clair (*The Cable News* 1906b, 8). Clair, also an employee on the Benguet Road, reportedly died on July 22, 1901. The report further describes the cemetery as located a short distance from the hotel, on a knoll in a quiet, secluded spot (*The Cable News* 1906b). The May 27, 1906 article implies that the cemetery may have been in use as early as July 1901, accommodating colonial burials. Although the cemetery in the report is described to be on a knoll, there are no further details on its exact location.

However, a June 2, 1907 article provides information which suggests the possible location to be within the vicinity of the current Baguio Cemetery. The article recounts how Dominican priests and the rector of the University of Santo Tomas visited Baguio to explore possible sites for a summer residence. During this visit, "Padre Donato wandered afoot over the neighboring hills, visiting the spots of interest in the immediate vicinity of the Igorot cemetery and Mount Mirador" (*The Cable News* 1907, 5). Following the Dominicans, various religious congregations subsequently acquired parcels of land in Baguio (Afaible 2004).

Another article, published on April 9, 1910, recounts a forest fire near Mirador Hill on April 8, 1910, in a valley adjacent to what was described as an "Igorot cemetery." The article indicates:

Baguio, April 8. An extensive forest fire started early this morning in the valley between Mirador and the hill tops leading to the Igorot cemetery, and burned over the cemetery as far as the summit of the mountain on which stands the Wright triangulation station. It burned down a considerable

distance into the Valley of the Shadow of Death at the foot of the cemetery... (*The Cable News* 1910, 1).

The 1915 *Annual Report of the Director of Forestry of the Philippine Islands* mentioned the cemetery and recorded another fire incident in the area, but did not specify a particular date. It notes that “a serious fire occurred over the city cemetery, killing about 130 good-sized saplings and trees” (*Bureau of Forestry* 1916, 29).

Another report in *The Cable News*, published on March 16, 1919, further reconfirms the cemetery’s location near Mirador Hill and its vulnerability to recurring forest fires. The article, *Fires Serious in Baguio District*, records: “Up to the present time over 63 hectares have been burned over in Baguio... The cemetery fire occurred about 1:00 p.m., February 11, below the city cemetery sweeping over the cemetery grounds and across the Mirador lot” (*The Cable News* 1919, 10).

Taken together, the articles indicate the location of Baguio’s cemetery. The proximity of Mirador to the hilltop (present-day San Luis Village) provides a compelling spatial clue. The distances described in the articles closely align with the location of the actual cemetery, which lies only a short distance downslope from Mirador Hill. The repeated references to an “Igorot Cemetery” in the May 27, 1906, June 2, 1907, and April 9, 1910 articles are particularly significant, as they may indicate that certain portions of the surrounding landscape were already associated with indigenous burial practices or identified as such by colonial observers. While the accounts suggest the possibility of indigenous funerary presence within the broader Mirador–Baguio landscape, they also highlight the importance of future archaeological and geospatial investigations to clarify the presence, extent, and spatial continuity of possible indigenous burial practices in the area.

Material Evidence: Maps and Memorial Structures

Although still fragmented and indeterminate, the information in *The Cable News* articles is significantly strengthened by a map of Baguio presented in the *Census of Philippine Islands 1918* (p. 141) (Figure 2)¹². The 1918 map clearly marks the cemetery’s location (16°24’40” N, 120°34’25” E) along Naguilian Road, in proximity to Mount Mirador (16°25’00” N, 120°34’59” E).

The 1918 Philippine Census maps were prepared under John Buck of the Bureau of Coast and Geodetic Survey, with interior boundaries plotted from the Bureau of Lands surveys and roads validated by the Bureaus of Lands and Public Works. Sixty eight blueprints of provinces across the Philippines were cross-checked with municipal presidents, while obscure areas in the Mountain Province were clarified through correspondence with local officials. Geographical sketches

and historical accounts accompanying each map were prepared by the census office's provincial section, including Percy R. Angel and University of the Philippines' Department of Geography and History, to ensure both accuracy and historical context¹³.

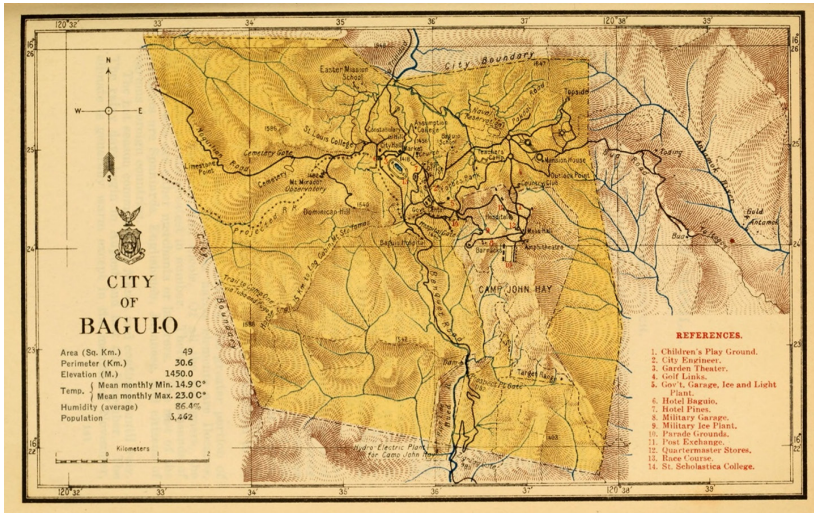


Figure 2. Map of Baguio 1918. *Census of the Philippine Island 1920*, 141.

While the 1918 Baguio map does not indicate the actual individuals or office responsible for its production, its date aligns with the period (1909–1917) when Parsons was actively engaged in implementing Burnham's city plan¹⁴. This temporal congruence suggests that the 1918 map may have been an offshoot of Parsons' proposed improvements, or at the very least, a cartographic product reflected by his planning interventions. This cartographic evidence provides one of the clearest indications that the cemetery was already documented as part of the city's landscape by 1918.

Placing cemeteries at the margins of towns was not unusual, as both Spanish and Americans enforced such policies for health and sanitation. The cemetery's peripheral location can thus be seen not merely as a colonial imposition but as part of a wider cultural intention rooted in extramural cemetery designs that spread during the Enlightenment period. In this sense, cemeteries are located in the periphery of towns based on principles of modernity and sanitation. This may also explain why Burnham and Parsons' plans did not highlight the cemetery, since their designs drew more attention to the city center.

More importantly, the cemetery contains a range of burial structures and markers that serve as tangible proof of its early use before the 1930s. Among these structures are the tombs of Ibaloy Chieftain

Mateo Cariño (d1908)¹⁵ (Figure 3) and a Baguio Japanese pioneer, Reukitze Hamada (d1912) (Figure 4). However, the actual presence of their graves remains uncertain. According to Hamada-Pawid (Personal interview, September 23, 2025), it is possible that the remains of both Mateo and Reukitze were only later transferred to the cemetery, suggesting they were not originally buried there. In Mateo's case, his bones may have been brought from Balacbac or Camp 7, Baguio City.

Hamada-Pawid (Facebook direct message to author, June 5, 2026) explains that over time, burial practices in Baguio were increasingly regulated through policies that prohibited interments outside the designated city cemetery as urban space expanded. The cemetery gradually became the city's centralized burial ground, replacing earlier practices of burial in homelots or ancestral lands. She further notes that during the administration of Dr. Jose Cariño as city mayor, these regulations were actively enforced even within kinship networks, including the application of burial rules to his own relatives. This enforcement provides a possible explanation for Mateo, Juan and Sioco Cariño, and Reukitze, whose remains were transferred to the cemetery in line with emerging city burial policies.



Figure 3. Bone boxes of Mateo Cariño along with other Cariño family members. Photo by the author in 2025.



Figure 4. Tombs of Reukitse Hamada and Josefa Cariño. Photo by the author in 2025.

Another, yet uncertain instance is the Battye family and the Dixon markers (Figure 5) located in the *Circle* section of the cemetery. The Battye *lapida* marker consists of the names of Samuel Battye (d1916); Samuel Battye, Jr. (d1918); Benjamin Battye (d1918); and Asuncion Belling (d1938). For the Dixon family, markers show Thomas Bradford Dixon (d1920), specified as a Captain of the British Army, and Mary Dixon (d1926).

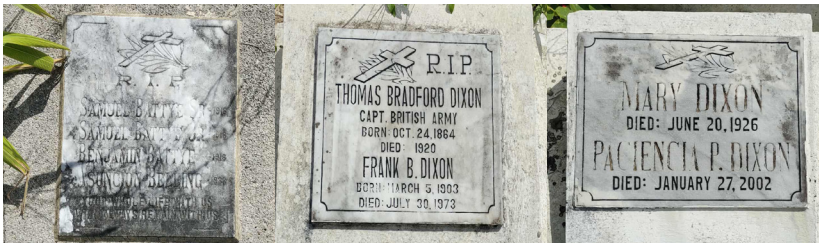


Figure 5. Left to right: Battye Burial Marker, Thomas Dixon, and Mary Dixon. Photo by the author in 2025.

One more significant burial is of Guy Franklin Haight (d1925), an American soldier of the US Engineering Corps (Figure 6). Haight, who was advised by doctors to remain in the Cordilleras due to tuberculosis, eventually settled in present-day Atok, Benguet, where he introduced vegetable farming (Fry 1983; Taculao 2020). His death was officially recorded on June 25, 1925, as indicated on his tomb marker at the Baguio Cemetery and confirmed at the burial site in the *Register of Deaths* issued on June 30, 1925¹⁶.



Figure 6. Guy Franklin Haight's Tomb. Photo by the author in 2025

The cemetery's history is further evidenced by the presence of Japanese tombs. Notably, this section includes structures suggesting the grounds were in use earlier than official claims of its establishment. Hayase (2022) noted that Japanese workers who died were interred in the Baguio Cemetery. According to Hayase (2022), the earliest recorded death of a Japanese worker was in 1908. Afable (2004; 2008) recorded that Naosaku Tsuji was buried in the cemetery in the 1910s. However, the location of the tombs remains uncertain.

On May 31, 1912, Fukushima natives Suda Kinsaku, Umezu Hanzo, and Suzuki Sakuemon were buried there (FJFANLI 1983). Notably, a memorial plaque was erected in their honor. A photograph (Figure 7) from Jominiana Guerrero, dated 1921, and reproduced in Afable's *Japanese Pioneers in the Northern Philippine Highlands* (2004), shows the Baguio Fukushima community commemorating them.

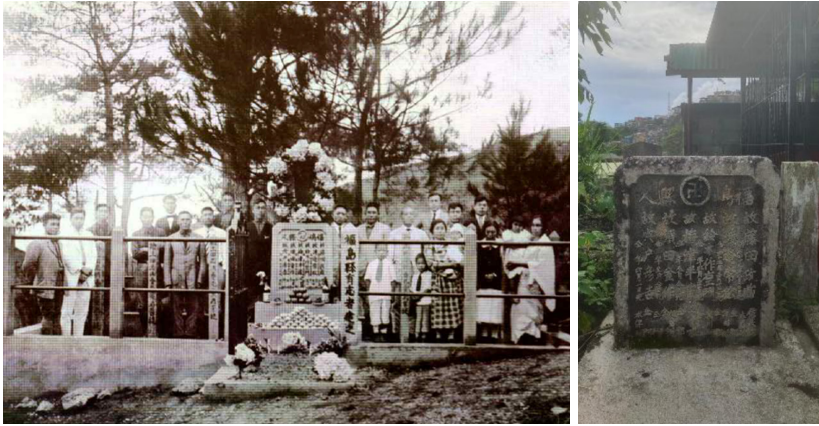


Figure 7. Left: Memorial plaque dedicated to the Baguio Fukushima people, 1921. From the Einosuke “Rudy” Furuya Collection, reproduced in Afable 2004. Right: Current state, photo by the author, 2025.

The cemetery’s layered significance was later marked by the construction of a memorial structure (Figure 8). An obelisk erected on 1 May 1922 by the Baguio Japanese Association stood as a tribute to the Japanese workers (*The Asahi Shimbun*, 8 January 1942, cited in Hayase 2022). Its inscriptions, combined with a biblical reference from Isaiah 26:19 and Japanese dedication state:

Tower of repose of departed souls and other spirits;
 Thy dead men shall live XXVI;
 Erected by the Baguio Japanese Association on 1 May of the
 year Taisho 11 (1922);
 Donated by the Prime Minister and Army General Tanaka
 Giichi.



Figure 8. Japanese Memorial Obelisk. Photo by the author in 2025.

Furthermore, the cemetery also has the Hayakawa Memorial, dedicated to Hideo Hayakawa, one of Baguio's most prominent Japanese pioneers (Figure 9). Hayakawa played a role in the Baguio Japanese community as the founding president of the Baguio Japanese Association (Baguio *Nihonjin-kai*). In accordance to his will, part of his remains was interred in the cemetery, as reflected in the construction of his memorial in 1934 (Furuya 2004).



Figure 9. Left: Hideo Hayakawa's Memorial and the Japanese Memorial Obelisk, 1934, from Einosuke "Rudy" Furuya Collection, reproduced in Afable 2004. Right: Current state, photo by the author, 2025.

These sets of evidence suggest that the cemetery was already in use well before the 1930s–1950s establishment dates cited in city records. The cemetery might have been operational as early as July 1901. In this case, the cemetery may have developed in parallel with the city's growth rather than being established only in the mid-twentieth-century.

Based on these accounts, the cemetery appears to have accommodated colonial, transnational, multiethnic, and possibly earlier indigenous burials from its outset, reflecting a culturally diverse character. Aside from Americans and Ibalays, Chinese, Japanese, Ilocanos, and Pangasinenses were also present, drawn by the economic opportunities in Baguio (Yeoh 2017; Afable 2004). This influx increased the demand for burial space, as mortality rates increased significantly across groups during this period, underscoring the growing need for a cemetery (Hayase 2022; 2014; 1989).

The Segmented Layout of the Baguio Cemetery and Burials of the City's Pioneers

Apart from its cultural diversity, Baguio Cemetery also illustrates segmentation, possibly influenced by colonial layout principles and the city's emerging transnational character. Oral accounts indicate that the cemetery was a direct product of American design. Its spatial layout—whether emerging from American planning or drawing from earlier

Spanish colonial precedents—suggests a segmented arrangement that reflects divisions of class and nationality.

The cemetery is structured around a road that branches into a circular road forming its core (Figure 10). While there is an absence of documentation explaining the rationale for this layout, its design suggests a symbolic ordering. The cemetery's circular layout seems to reflect an imported, possibly colonial model. The cemetery's shape corresponds with Vernon's (2011) hypothesis that Burnham distinguishes the circular cemetery on *Calle Nozaleda* as an exemplar of "good architecture for tropical service". Vernon also suggests that the similarly circular layout of *Cementerio del Norte* was probably designed by Parsons. Although there are no concrete documents to prove that the Baguio Cemetery's design was conceived by Burnham or Parsons, it nevertheless appears that the cemetery's circular design agrees with these American planners' idea of good architecture.

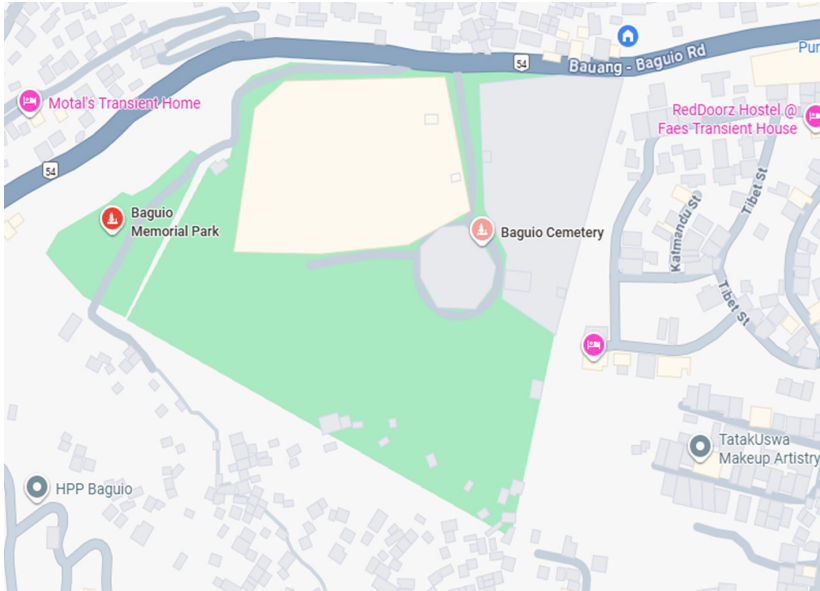


Figure 10. Baguio Cemetery Map (Google Map)

Furthermore, the Baguio Cemetery is a segmented space divided into sections (Figure 11). Oral accounts, together with my own interviews, walk surveys, and inspections of tombs and *lapida* markers, reveal patterns of segmentation. I also used Google Earth Pro, an open mapping software, to find out sections and notable burials in the cemetery.

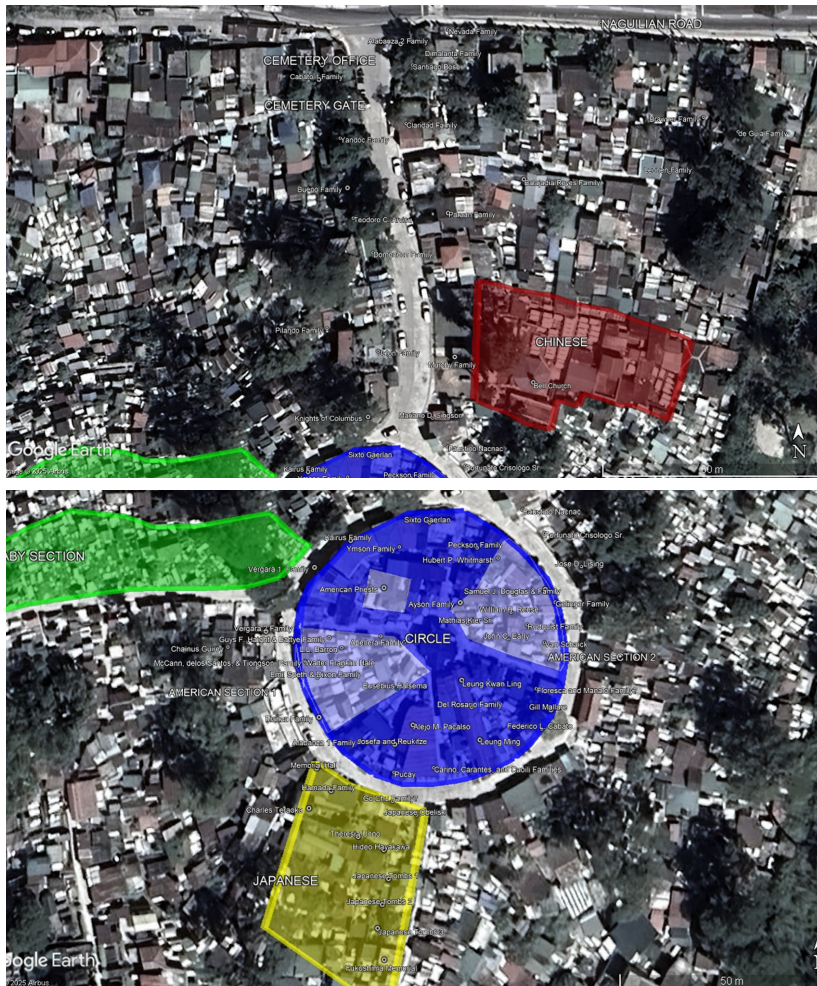


Figure 11. Baguio Cemetery Map indicating sections and notable burials (Top – main road; Bottom – Circle and segmented sections) (Google Earth Pro)

Cemetery "Circle" and Main Road

From Naguilian Road, the cemetery opens with a main gate that leads to a central road directing visitors toward its circular core, known as *Circle*. Based on interviews with Hamada-Pawid (2025) and various cemetery workers, several notable individuals known for their pioneering contributions to Baguio's development (Appendix 1¹⁷), including American officials, city government officials, and prominent Baguio families with Ibaloy, Ilocano, Chinese, and Japanese roots are buried in the *Circle* and near the cemetery's main road (Figure 11).

This spatial configuration not only organizes movement within the cemetery but also reflects the historical social geography of Baguio as a multi-ethnic colonial and postcolonial city, where different cultural groups occupied intersecting roles in its development (Prill-Brett 2015). Collectively, their placement in this section symbolizes socio-political importance, reflecting not random spatial arrangement but a recognized area of prestige where burial grounds mirror the legacy and influence these individuals have left on the city's development.

According to accounts of the cemetery workers, the *Circle* section was also characterized by more materially and aesthetically developed burial structures compared to peripheral sections, particularly during the mid-twentieth century (Figure 12). Tombs in this area were commonly constructed using reinforced concrete, granite, and granolithic finishes, which were considered more permanent and relatively more elaborate during the 1960s period of the cemetery. Cemetery workers further note that many prominent families are likewise located within the *Circle* and along adjacent main roads, due to practical considerations of accessibility, allowing easier visit due to proximity to the main road of the cemetery.



Figure 12. Early Cemetery Workers resting on the *Circle* section: From left to right: Danilo Babli-ing, "Pidring", and an unidentified worker, "Amping", and Benjamin R. Dizon, the City Cemetery Caretaker, ca. 1960s. Dizon Family Photo Collection



Figure 13. Burial/Memorial Sites of (left to right, then top to bottom): (A) Mateo Cariño and Sioco Cariño, (B) Jose Cariño, (C) Eusebius Julius Halsema, (D) John C. Early, (E) Sinai Hamada, and (F) Hubert P. Whitmarsh. Photo by the author in 2025.

Within two quadrants, the *Circle* includes what cemetery workers referred to as the “American Section” (Figure 12). Buried here are Americans who significantly contributed to the transformation of Baguio into a health resort, administrative center, and military retreat, making the city a prominent example of colonial urban planning and social engineering in the Philippines (Florendo 2010).

The American Section contains the graves of several American pioneers associated with the early development of Baguio, including government officials, former military personnel, and expatriate

residents (Figure 13). These include Baguio officials: Eusebius Julius Halsema (d1945), John C. Early (d1932), Hubert P. Whitmarsh (d1935), and Walter Franklin Hale (d1952) (Appendix 1). Although its marker is now almost eroded, the tomb of Emil Speth (d1946), a former US Major and Baguio vice mayor, and his wife, Maria Speth (Gutierrez 1960; Halsema 1991) was identified (Figure 14). Also located in this section are the tombs of Guy F. Haight (d1925) and Arthur McCann (d1949), custodian of Teacher's Camp (Halsema 1991). Other burials, including surnames such as Stevens, Dixon, Brennan, and Kairuz (Appendix 1) are documented.



Figure 14. Burial Marker of Mary and Emil Speth. Photo by the author in 2025.

On the eastern quadrant, along the tomb of Joseph Douglas (d1934), who was recognized by the city government as the oldest tenant, also lie the tombs of Samuel Jefferson Douglas (d1946?), Robert Dick Douglas (d1991), Mary Douglas (d1991), William H. Reese (d1943), Mathias Kier, Sr (d1943), and Alvin Rudquist and his family, who were American expatriates and Benguet mining pioneers (Gutierrez 1960). Also present is a mausoleum housing the Geringer family, particularly that of George Thomas Geringer (d1953), a Superintendent of the Baguio Gold Mining Company (American Chamber of Commerce Journal 1936). Nearby are the remains of Olga Van Schaick (d1937), who was the daughter of Col. Louis Joseph Van Schaick, a Philippine–American War Medal of Honor recipient, and Nellie Kellogg, the niece of Will Keith Kellogg, the founder of the Kellogg Company (Halsema 1991). After retiring from the US Army, Col. Van Schaick remained

in Baguio and later served as a mining company executive (National Sojourners 2017; FamilySearch n.d.).

The *Circle* also includes, on its inner north-eastern side, a portion once designated for the burial of American priests and nuns (Figure 15). Unfortunately, many tomb markers in the American section are missing, while some are overgrown with weeds, or dumped with soil. Located near the identified tombs are ones most likely to belong to other American pioneers who once settled in the city. Over time, the section has been overlaid with newer tombs. As of 2012, cemetery policy stipulates that unattended graves, after the lapse of five years, will be reclaimed by the cemetery and subsequently allocated for new burials¹⁸.



Figure 15. Former burial site for American priests and religious sisters, now replaced by newer tombs. Photo taken by the author in 2025.

The southern quadrant of the *Circle* houses the tombs of Cariño, Carantes, Caoili, and Hamada families, whose members are known pioneers who have contributed significantly to Baguio's history (Figure 13). Some of their details are further elaborated in Appendix 1. Moreover, the *Circle* and main road also host the resting places of other pioneering families whose names are prominent in the development of Baguio. Among those interred are Murphy, Bueno, Pucay, Del Rosario, Fianza, Ayson, Dimalanta, Cabato, Paraan, Alabanza, Vergara, Ymson, Floresca, Abellera, Manalo, Go Chu, and Balajadia family members (Appendix 1, Figures 11 and 16).



Figure 16. Family Burial/Memorial areas of the (left to right, then top to bottom): (A) Cariño, Carantes, and Caoli, (B) Hamada, (C) Murphy, (D) Alabanza, (E) Del Rosario, and (F) Dimalanta families. Photo by the author in 2025.

Japanese Section

As discussed earlier, a distinct area of the cemetery was allotted for Japanese workers, many of whom contributed to the construction of Kennon Road and early Baguio infrastructures. Cemetery workers termed the section *Hapon*. This designation arose from the visible presence of Japanese tombs located in the area.

The highlight of the Japanese section is the memorial obelisk, erected on May 1, 1922, by the Baguio Japanese Association, located beside the circular road on the southern side. Also present is a memorial chapel (Figure 17) with a triangular roof built in 1983. It is engraved with approximately 150 names including each person's date of birth and death (Hayase 2022). Notable individuals interred near the memorial chapel are Charles M. Teraoka (d1941), Theresia Unno (d1989), Hideo Hayakawa (d1933), Sinai Cariño Hamada (d1991), Oseo Cariño Hamada (d1993), and Charles Hamada (d2016).



Figure 17. Japanese Memorial chapel. Photo by the author in 2025.

Down the obelisk and memorial chapel, on the southern side of the Circle, in a downward slope, lie more Japanese tombs in the section (Figure 18). This area still contains several tombs, including

monuments with Japanese or Shinto-inspired designs that bear Japanese inscriptions. However, many of these inscriptions have become eroded, and some of the tombs have already been damaged by natural or human causes. Over time, modern tombs have also been erected within the same spaces to maximize the use of burial grounds. As a result, the section is no longer exclusively Japanese.



Figure 18. Japanese tombs. Photo by the author in 2025.

Chinese Section

Much like in the Spanish colonial period, when Chinese were assigned their own separate burial grounds (Chu and See 2016), the cemetery in Baguio also came to include a distinct “Chinese section.” Chinese

migrants and their descendants played a significant role in shaping Baguio's socio-cultural and economic landscape. By the second generation, particularly those born or raised in Baguio between the 1920s and 1940s, many had become deeply integrated into local society through participation in commerce, agriculture, business enterprises, intermarriages between Chinese and indigenous populations, as well as through religious and civic institutions such as the Baguio Chinese Baptist Church and the Bell Church (Bagamaspad 2025).

While Chinese tombs and mausoleums are dispersed throughout the cemetery, there is a primary section that cemetery workers identify as *kaintsikan*, centered around what is locally known as the “Bell Church” (Figure 19). Architecturally, the building is hexagonal with a bell at the front and an altar inside. Also in front of the Bell Church are two chimneys, which may have been used in religious practices such as burning paper offerings. These features indicate Taoist elements. Adjacent to the Bell Church is a large mausoleum exhibiting Chinese architectural features and on the other side is a series of organized tombs marked with Chinese inscriptions in markers. Beyond the center of the Chinese section are additional mausoleums and tombs of Chinese individuals.

Among those buried in the section are Ng Siong, one of the pioneer members involved in the establishment of the Bell Church; Leung Kwan Ling and his wife, who organized the Baguio Grocery and Baguio Bakery, later known as Sunshine Bakery; and Pang Hoi and Yip She, founders of the Pang Hoi Store (Bagamaspad 2025). While the Bell Church area functions as the primary Chinese section, Chinese family mausoleums and tombs are not confined to this designated space. Scattered throughout the cemetery are mausoleums belonging to well-known Chinese families, including the Tiong San, Del Rosario, and Wong families (Bagamaspad 2025).



Figure 19. Bell Church and the Chinese Section. Photo by the author in 2025.

Baby (Infant) Section

The cemetery also includes areas historically designated for infants, though these sections are somewhat obscured due to subsequent development and the construction of larger tombs. The baby section is located at the northeastern side outside the *Circle* (Figure 20). Despite the construction of tombs for adults, long-time caretakers affirm that these areas were originally intended for infants. As of now, when infants are to be buried, caretakers typically refer to this section.



Figure 20. Baby Section. Photo by the author in 2025.

The presence of separate infant sections in the cemetery can be explained through both religious and cultural frameworks. As Crow et al. (2020) and de Lempis (2021a) noted, infants who died unbaptized were historically treated differently from baptized individuals, often being placed in distinct areas of cemeteries. Also, Obladen (2021) mentioned that many societies have questioned whether newborns were to be regarded as “full persons.” When infants are seen as liminal, communities sometimes segregate their burial places. In the Philippines, Barretto-Tesoro (2016) confirms that infants were indeed provided with designated areas, reinforcing the idea that the spatial separation of infants is grounded in religious and cultural beliefs.

Spatial Hierarchy and Cultural Layering in the Baguio Cemetery

The segmented layout of the Baguio Cemetery reveals more than just an organizational scheme for burials; it reflects the socio-political structure of Baguio during its formative years. Hamada-Pawid (2025) and long-serving cemetery workers affirm that burial spaces were historically differentiated according to nationality, social status, religion, and age. Such segmentation suggests that the cemetery functioned as a spatial representation of the social order that characterized colonial and early postcolonial Baguio. This segmentation corresponds to Foucault’s (1986) notion of heterotopia. As a heterotopic space, the cemetery simultaneously separates and organizes individuals according to socially meaningful categories. The existence of designated American, Japanese, Chinese, religious, and infant sections suggests that the cemetery historically functioned as a space where society classified its dead according to nationality, faith, social position, and age.

This finding supports Lefebvre’s (1991) concept of the production of space, which argues that spatial arrangements are socially produced and serve to reproduce existing social relations. This pattern is particularly evident in the *Circle* and the areas immediately adjacent to the cemetery’s main road. The concentration of graves belonging to American administrators, government officials, religious personnel, Japanese pioneers, Chinese entrepreneurs and influential and prominent local families indicates that these locations occupied a privileged position within the cemetery landscape. Their placement near and within the *Circle* ensured greater visibility and accessibility, while simultaneously distinguishing them from burials located in more peripheral areas. In this regard, the *Circle* functioned as a symbolic center of memory and prestige, where the city’s most socially recognized individuals were commemorated.

Differences in burial architecture and material composition further corroborate Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of distinction. According to cemetery workers, particularly during the mid-twentieth century,

tombs located within the *Circle* and along major roads were historically more elaborate than those in peripheral sections. Constructed from reinforced concrete, granite, granolithic finishes, and other durable materials, these structures projected permanence, prestige, and family status. In contrast, ordinary burials located farther from the *Circle* were marked by simpler lapidas, earthen graves, or modest concrete structures.

The cemetery therefore serves simultaneously as a repository of elite memory and marginalized histories. While prominent individuals are commemorated through durable monuments, family mausoleums, and identifiable markers, many ordinary residents are represented by modest graves whose identities have become partially or entirely obscured through time. Their graves nonetheless testify to the presence of ordinary residents and workers who participated in the everyday construction of Baguio society. This supports Klugh's (2019) argument that cemeteries provide opportunities for recovering marginalized histories. The contrast between monumental and ordinary burials illustrates how social distinctions visible in life continued to be expressed in death through the spatial organization of the cemetery.

However, while the Baguio Cemetery exhibits a clearly segmented spatial arrangement shaped by colonial planning and social differentiation, its present condition also reveals significant cultural layering that developed through time. These developments support Maddrell's (2013) observation that cemeteries are dynamic landscapes where memory, materiality, and social relationships continually interact. The original sections based on nationality, class, religion, and age have gradually been modified by recent burial practices, intermarriage, cemetery expansion, and the re-use of burial plots, resulting in a more complex and overlapping spatial configuration.

Religious hybridity is evident in several burial markers that combine iconographic elements from different traditions. Christian crosses frequently appear alongside Japanese and Chinese memorial forms, reflecting processes of adaptation and religious accommodation. Likewise, the descendants of Chinese, Japanese, indigenous, and migrant families increasingly adopted shared funerary practices, reducing the visibility of earlier distinctions.

Intermarriage further contributed to the weakening of rigid spatial boundaries. Marriages of American, Chinese, Japanese between local, and other forms of cross-cultural union produced family burial plots that no longer conformed strictly to earlier ethnic designations¹⁹.

Physical changes within the cemetery have also diminished the exclusivity of designated sections. New burials have encroached upon older plots, abandoned graves have been reclaimed, and redevelopment policies have altered the original configuration of burial areas. Consequently, sections that were once associated with particular

nationalities or religious communities are no longer exclusively occupied by those groups. The cemetery today therefore represents both a colonial landscape of spatial hierarchy and a dynamic cultural landscape shaped by interaction, adaptation, and historical change

World War II and the Baguio Cemetery

During the liberation of Baguio, the cemetery became a significant part of World War II history in the Philippines. The US Army's I Corps, 33rd and 37th Infantry Division liberated the city from Japanese forces (Guterrez 1960). Both divisions advanced into Baguio, concentrating on Route 9 (Naguilian Road). Before advancing further, on April 22, 1945, the 37th Division was tasked to secure the high ground for at least a mile north of Route 9, between Sablan and Irisan, and to establish blocking positions along the trail to Trinidad. Meanwhile, the 33rd Division, also ordered to halt, was directed to complete mopping-up operations in the Asin area and to patrol eastward to determine whether there were threats to the 37th Division's southern flank. Both divisions were then instructed to prepare for an assault on Mount Mirador. Japanese forces occupying Mount Mirador could not be bypassed, as they could dominate the junction of the Galiano Road and Route 9 and cover much of Baguio proper with fire (Smith 1993).

While Japanese forces attempted to reorganize their defenses on the outskirts of Baguio, their positions quickly collapsed. By April 22, the Irisan and Asin Japanese defenses had fallen, and the 123rd Infantry troops were gaining ground. Recognizing the futility of further resistance, General Utsunomiya ordered a withdrawal north and northeast of Baguio, leaving behind only small delaying forces in the city to cover the retreat. A patrol from the 129th Infantry of the 37th Division entered Baguio on April 24, and within two days the regiment had secured most of the city. At the same time, elements of the 123rd and 130th Infantry Regiments, 33rd Division, virtually wiped out the Japanese forces holding Mount Mirador between April 24 and 26 (Smith 1993).

The cemetery, situated nearby Mirador Hill, became a battleground. The 37th Division was assigned to clear out and station in the Cemetery. The Combat Bulletin No. 56, the US Army Signal Corps newsreel, was able to video document portions of the battle. As recorded:

Elements of the 37th Division advancing along Highway 9 northwest of Baguio, former summer capital of the Philippines. Japs atop Mount Mirador hold up the advance from a monastery overlooking the city. Troops of the 129th Infantry move up the hill. Firing on Japs attempting to infiltrate the valley just below the highway. A strong point is knocked out. A Jap gives himself up. Near our men he suddenly lowers his

hands. A warning shot stops him from using a grenade hidden in his belt. The troops advance through a shell-torn cemetery to clean out a Jap pillbox located under a once fashionable summer residence. Now a machine gun nest. Digging out the dead Japs (US Army Signal Corps 1945a, 00:46–1:52).

Moreover, photographs from the 37th Division show how American soldiers positioned themselves in the cemetery (Figures 21–22).



Figure 21. Left: Lieutenant R.J. Well Edmonds, commanding officer of Company E, 129th Infantry, 37th Division, transmitting orders by means of radio in Baguio Cemetery, Baguio, April 24, 1945. US Army Signal Corps, 1945b. Right: Current spot. Photo by the author in 2025.

Remnants of the battles fought in Baguio are still evident within the cemetery. Some tombs that bore witness to the war remain standing, and to complement these wartime traces, more recent photographs of the same locations in their present state were also taken, allowing direct comparison with their historical condition (Figure 22). According to narratives shared by cemetery workers, the southern portion of the grounds—near the boundary of San Luis—was the site of a Japanese pillbox and a tunnel entrance (Figure 23). This pillbox, they recall, once contained a cave/tunnel, though it has long since been buried under soil and garbage. Workers further recall that, in earlier years, Japanese helmets, weapons, and ammunition boxes were found in the area. Local lore even associates the site with Yamashita treasure hunters who scoured it for hidden treasures. Moreover, after the war, cemetery workers have dug up mortar shells, bullets, and shrapnel, believed to be traces of the war.



Figure 22. Left: 37th Division soldiers positioning themselves in the cemetery, *US Army Signal Corps, 1945b*. Right: Current spot. Photo by the author in 2025.



Figure 23. Left: *Filipino laborers removing Japanese .31 caliber heavy machine gun ammunition from caves in Baguio Cemetery, April 29, 1945. US Army Signal Corps, 1945b.* Right: *Pillbox/Tunnel Area in the Baguio Cemetery, overgrown with grass. Photo by the author in 2025.*

Other traces of the war, however, have not survived. For instance, the old cemetery gate and its concrete posts once stood as silent witnesses to the encounter. Workers pointed out shrapnel scars and bullet holes in the cemetery gate and concrete posts which, according to them, dated back to World War II. Unfortunately, these marks were erased during the rehabilitation of the cemetery between 2020 and 2021, when the gate was replaced.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study of the Baguio Cemetery reveals that its origins extend earlier than the official city records, which often cite the 1930s to 1950s as date of its establishment. Archival and other material evidence, however, indicates that the cemetery may have developed alongside the creation of the city itself. As Baguio grew, the cemetery also expanded, reflecting the city's historical, social, and cultural transformations. Thus, the cemetery is not simply a resting place for the dead, but a mirror of the city's own growth and identity.

Archival and material history also suggest that the cemetery has a shared developmental pathway including indigenous, colonial, multi-ethnic, and transnational elements. Early articles referencing an "Igorot cemetery" in the vicinity of the present site point to the possibility that portions of the surrounding landscape were historically associated with indigenous burial practices. Further archaeological investigation would be necessary to verify such continuity.

With the coming of the Americans, the cemetery took on new forms, serving not only as a burial site but also as an imprint of colonial

urban planning. The cemetery also reflects a transnational character, as it accommodated migrants and foreign nationals who contributed to Baguio's development, including the Japanese, Chinese, and Americans.

At the same time, the spatial organization of the cemetery embodies the colonial logic of segmentation. Distinct sections were designated for different groups: Baguio pioneers and Americans were placed prominently in the circular zone; the Japanese, Chinese, and infants were given their own sections. This spatial arrangement reflects the broader segmentation of colonial and post-colonial society, inscribed into the very landscape of death. However, these arrangements have gradually been modified throughout time, resulting in significant cultural layering and overlap among communities. Consequently, the cemetery today reflects not only a segmented colonial order but also an evolving cultural landscape.

Moreover, the cemetery is a silent witness to World War II. It became a backdrop and battleground where American and Japanese soldiers clashed. In this sense, the cemetery is not only a site of burial but also a repository of collective memory, entwined with the wartime history of the city.

Baguio Cemetery as Heritage

These insights point to the cemetery's profound historical significance. It is more than a burial site—it is a living archive of the city's layered past. Given its historical depth and layered significance, the cemetery should be considered for heritage recognition and preservation. The Baguio Cemetery is not just a burial ground but also a historical and cultural landscape that embodies the city's journey through colonialism, transnationalism, and war.

Several key features within the cemetery illustrate this layered significance. These include the Japanese memorial site and obelisks, as well as the graves of American pioneers and prominent Ibaloy figures, all of which reflect intersecting historical periods and cultural influences. The cemetery also serves as a silent witness to World War II, situated within a broader wartime landscape where American and Japanese forces contested control of Baguio City. These elements collectively form a cultural landscape that is not only historically significant but also representative of broader social and political transformations.

Beyond these formally recognizable structures, the cemetery also preserves the histories of local communities whose contributions are essential to the formation of Baguio City. Burial sites associated with Ilocano settlers, Chinese migrants, Japanese residents, and indigenous Ibaloy individuals represent vernacular and community-based histories of labor, migration, and urban development. These less formalized but equally significant elements highlight the importance

of recognizing heritage as a multi-layered construct that includes both officially marked sites and everyday historical landscapes shaped by diverse social groups.

In this regard, the cemetery may be situated within the framework of the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (Republic Act No. 10066), which provides legal protection for Important Cultural Properties and Built Heritage. The law recognizes structures and sites that are at least 50 years old, possess historical, cultural, or architectural significance, or are associated with important historical events, persons, or periods. It also protects heritage properties from alteration, demolition, and destruction, and mandates conservation through relevant cultural agencies, particularly the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) for historically significant sites and structures²⁰.

Complementing this, NCHP classification guidelines emphasize significance based on (a) association with historically important events or persons, (b) evidence of foreign and cross-cultural historical influence, (c) representation of early or foundational settlements, and (d) the integrity of cultural landscapes as unified spatial systems rather than isolated monuments²¹. Applying these criteria, the Baguio pioneer's graves and Japanese section demonstrate clear eligibility for heritage consideration, as they collectively embody Baguio's colonial history, wartime memory, and multicultural formation.

However, heritage significance should not be understood solely as a matter of formal designation. The cemetery may also be interpreted as an evolving cultural landscape sustained through community memory, continued burial practices, and local stewardship. This dual framing—formal protection under national heritage law and lived heritage through community engagement—highlights the need for inclusive conservation approaches that recognize both institutional and vernacular dimensions of heritage. Strengthening such approaches is essential to safeguarding historically significant sections and preventing the gradual loss or alteration of the cemetery's cultural and historical integrity.

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Notes

1. *Superior Decreto de Gobernador General Caveria, Manila, 19 de Enero de 1848, Cementerios, Part 2, SDS 2807, Philippine National Archives (PNA).*
2. *Erección de cementerios, Copiador de Oficios, Ayuntamiento de Manila (1856–1898), PNA; Junta Superior de Sanidad, Dictamen; Martínez Alcubilla, Diccionario de la Administración Española, vol. 2 (1892), 424–25.*
3. Outside the walls or boundaries of a town.
4. Districts located outside the walled city of Intramuros during the Spanish colonial period.
5. *Dictamen de la Comisión (24 March 1882), Cementerios, Part 2, SDS 2805, PNA; Royal Order (24 October 1882), cited in de Viana, “Public Sanitation and Cemeteries,” 112–15.*
6. *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President, Rules and Regulations for the Government of Cemeteries, 1902, vol. 1, 331.*
7. *Servicio de Sanidad de Filipinas, Reglamentos y Disposiciones sobre Cementerios en Filipinas. Manila 1921*
8. Burnham, Daniel H., and Pierce Anderson. Report on the Improvement of Manila. In *Sixth Annual Report of the Philippine Commission, 1905, vol. 3, 633–682.*
9. Act No. 1963 of 1909.
10. Daniel H. Burnham and Pierce Anderson’s *1905 Report on the Proposed Plan of the City of Baguio*, Province of Benguet, P.I.; William Parsons, *Plan of Baguio*, 1909 and 1913 Plan. See Robert R. Reed, *City of Pines: The Origins of Baguio as a Colonial Hill Station* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 104–106.
11. Interviews with Baguio Cemetery contractors and workers residing in the area for approximately 30 to 50 years, particularly second- and third-generation personnel whose families have been associated with cemetery maintenance since the mid-twentieth century: D. Babli-ing (II), J. Locquiao, O. Locquiao, J. Sagun II, C. Fuentes, J. Tamsi, and E.P. Dizon (14–17 September 2025).
12. *Census of the Philippine Islands, 1918. Vol. 1, Geography, History, and Climatology.* Bureau of Printing, 1920.
13. *Ibid.*, 34–35.
14. See Reed (1999), *City of Pines*, 103–109 (re: Burnham and Parsons Maps)
15. The letter “d” preceding a year indicates the year of death of the individual. This convention will be used throughout the paper.
16. *Register of Deaths*, Division of Archives, Philippine Library and Museum, June 30, 1925. <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/KZJ5-63Q/guy-fay-haight-1875-1925>

17. Most information in this table is drawn from Baguio Centennial Commission's *Builders of Baguio* (2010), and some based on Gutierrez's *Memoirs of Baguio* (1960).
18. Baguio City Administrative Order No. 111 series of 2012.
19. The Hamada-Cariño, del Rosario, and McCann-delos Santos families (Appendix 1) provide one example of how intermarriages crossed ethnic boundaries and became reflected in burial space.
20. National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), Guidelines on the Identification, Classification, and Recognition of Historic Sites and Structures in the Philippines (2011), <https://nhcp.gov.ph/downloadables/>
21. NHCP, Guidelines, 2011, <https://nhcp.gov.ph/>

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Appendix 1. Identified Notable Individuals and their Relatives buried in the cemetery

Name and Year of Death	Historical Contribution
Mateo Cariño (1908)	Prominent Ibaloy Chieftain; <i>Teniente Absoluto</i> during the Spanish Period and <i>Capitan Municipal</i> during the Philippine Revolution of the Baguio Rancheria; native title upheld in 1909 <i>Cariño v. Insular Government</i>
Maria Bayosa Ortega Cariño (1936)	Wife of Mateo Cariño; mother of the Cariño children
Sioco Cariño (1945)	Eldest son of Mateo and Bayosa; first <i>Presidente</i> of Baguio under American rule; advised Benguet governor
Jose Cariño (1968)	Son of Mateo and Bayosa; post-WWII mayor who led Baguio's recovery; drafter of the 1935 Philippine Constitution
Juan Cariño (no date)	First Filipino Governor of Benguet Sub-Province (1913-1918)
Sinai Cariño Hamada (1991)	Filipino writer, journalist, and lawyer; founded Baguio Midland Courier (1947); defense counsel in <i>People v. Cayat</i> (1939); author of <i>Tabanata's Wife</i>
Oseo Cariño Hamada (1993)	Press and business manager of Baguio Printing and Publishing Co.; produced <i>Baguio Midland Courier</i>
Reukitze Hamada (1912) and Josefa Cariño (1947)	Married Josefa Cariño (eldest daughter of Mateo Cariño); worked as first foreman of Heald Lumber Company; established the first Japanese general store in Baguio
Dr. Charles Monroe Hamada (2016)	Publisher and general manager of <i>Baguio Midland Courier</i> for 23 years
Cecile C. Afable (2012)	Co-founder and editor of the <i>Baguio Midland Courier</i> ; social advocate; and environmentalist

Eusebius Julius Halsema (1945)	American civil engineer; developed Baguio's infrastructure; built Halsema Highway; City Engineer (1920); longest-serving mayor (1926–1945)
John C. Early (1932)	Governor and educator of Mountain Province (1923–1930); known for advocating indigenous rights (Woods 2023)
Hubert P. Whitmarsh (1935)	First Civil Governor of Benguet Province; Established the First Sawmill, Irisan; Constructed the Easter School, 1906
Walter Franklin Hale (1952)	American Kalinga Lt. Governor (Woods 2023, 235)
Guy Franklin Haight (1925)	American Soldier; introduced vegetables in Atok, Benguet (Woods 2023, 204; Taculao 2020)
Emil Speth (1946)	US Major; Baguio vice-mayor (1925–1943) (Gutierrez 1960, 170–171)
John Joseph Murphy (1951)	American Pioneer; Involved in building Kennon Road; built Alhamar-Chainus Theatre; managed Heald's Sawmill; co-organizer of Baguio Chamber of Commerce (Gutierrez 1960, 133; Halsema 1991, 174)
William B. Murphy (1970)	American Pioneer; Established first direct Baguio–Manila bus line (later sold to Dangwa Transportation); supervised Baguio Bus Taxi operations (Gutierrez 1960, 219)
George Thomas Geringer (1953)	American Superintendent of Baguio Gold Mining Company (<i>American Chamber of Commerce Journal</i> 1936, 22)
Samuel J. Douglas (1946?)	American; Pioneers of mining industry in Benguet (Gutierrez 1960, 126)

William H. Reese (1943?)	American; Former Overseer, Baguio Construction Works (Gutierrez 1960, 160)
Mathias Kier Sr. (1943)	American Veteran; Expatriate (Gutierrez 1960, 143)
Arthur McCann (1949)	American Veteran; Expatriate; Baguio Pioneer; Custodian of Teacher's Camp (Gutierrez 1960, 143,161; Halsema 1991, 174)
Louis L. Barron (1985)	American; Early mining prospect (Gutierrez 1960, 128)
Olga Van Schaick (d1937)	Daughter of Col. Louis Joseph Van Schaick, a Medal of Honor recipient for his actions during the Philippine–American War and later served as an executive in a mining company. Her mother, Nellie Kellogg, a high school teacher assigned in Baguio and the niece of Will Keith Kellogg, the founder of the Kellogg Company (Halsema 1991, 200; <i>National Sojourners</i> 2017; <i>FamilySearch</i> n.d.).
Eduardo de los Santos (1985)	Dubbed as Fighting Engineer of Baguio; married Clara McCann, daughter of Arthur McCann
Chainus Guirey (1920)	Known as Baguio Queen in the 1923 Baguio Carnival (Gutierrez 1960, 122; Halsema 1991, 181)
Charles M. Teraoka (1941)	Japanese pioneer; credited with early Baguio infrastructures (Afable 2004)
Theresia Unno (1989)	Founder of the Filipino-Japanese Friendship Association of Northern Luzon
Hideo Hayakawa (1933)	Well-known Japanese builder; contributed to Kennon Road and early Baguio infrastructure; owner of Japanese Bazaar, Pine Studio, and a pharmacy

Leung Kwan Ling (1944)	One of Baguio's first Chinese businessmen; opened Baguio Grocery and Baguio Bakery (later "Sunshine Bakery") (Osis 2018)
Leung Ming (1935)	Established Baguio Bakery; co-founded the Baguio Chinese Association
Rodolfo "Sunny" Del Rosario, Sr. (2000) & Betty Del Rosario (2011)	Owners of Sunshine Supermart (formerly Sunshine Bakery and Grocery); their children later owned Hotel Veniz and two McDonald's branches in Baguio (Osis 2018).
Rufino S. Bueno (1986)	Opened the first pharmacy on Session Road; former Baguio City Councilor
Ernesto H. Bueno (1997)	Retired AFP Brigadier General; Appointed Mayor of Baguio during Martial Law (1980 – 1986)
Gil R. Mallare (1983)	Baguio Mayor from February 16, 1951 to January 10, 1954
Federico L. Cabato (1996)	City Judge of the City Court of Baguio from November 2, 1968 to March 1981
Guillermo G. Paraan (1945)	Baguio pioneer tailoring; father of Francisco A. Paraan
Francisco A. Paraan	19th Baguio Chief of Police; Baguio Mayor (1986–1988)
Sixto A. Gaerlan (1956, body relocated)	Baguio City Councilor (1929 - 1931); 1934 Philippine Constitutional Convention delegate
Virginia de Guia (2015)	First woman Mayor of Baguio City; social advocate
Roman Ayson (1953)	One of the first two elective city councilors
Braulio Yaranon (2017)	Former judge in San Fernando, La Union, city councilor, vice-mayor, and mayor of Baguio
Bienvenido Yandoc (1939)	Last Baguio mayor to serve Baguio under its Old Charter
Alejo M. Pacalso (1981)	Itogon Mayor (1972-1981)

Emily L. Fianza (1981)	A member of a prominent Baguio family known for donating portions of their property to the city; holds native title claims to the Busol Watershed, regarded as the most documented ancestral land claim in Baguio.
Charles Pucay (1968)	Probably the first Igorot to become an Adventist (Cadalog, 2020)
Sixto A. Domondon (2008)	Baguio Councilor (1946-1948); Justice - Court of First Instance (Martial Law period) (Gutierrez 1960, 257)
Johnnie Dimalanta (2012)	Pioneer Baguio entrepreneur; Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Dimalanta Corporation
Joseph M. Alabanza (2025)	First Baguio-born Architect; first city architect of Baguio; first Regional Director of National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) of Ilocos Region, and later Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR); and Presidential Assistant for Urban and Regional Planning and Cordillera Affairs.
Leon A. Alabanza and Antonio Alabanza (no year)	Prominent Baguio Businessmen and Baguio Boosters (Gutierrez 1960, 236, 312)
Fortunato L. Crisologo, Sr. (1984)	Old Mountain Province High School Educator; World War II veteran; public servant
Jose D. Lising (date unclear)	General construction foreman of the Bureau of Public Works; among those who built the Halsema Road (Gutierrez 1960, 152)
Joseph M.K. Kairus (no date – cannot fully access mausoleum)	A philanthropist and businessman of Lebanese descent; founded the Baguio City Lions Club; established Kairus Lumber to supply Philex Mining Corporation, and served as a World War II veteran.

Mariano D. Singson (1954)	Known Baguio Public Land Surveyor; member of Baguio Lion's Club, Baguio Chamber of Commerce, and YMCA (Gutierrez 1960, 275)
Faustino P. Nacnac (197?)	Joined in the ranks of Baguio Police, becoming its Assistant Baguio Chief of Police (1910 to 1943) (Gutierrez 1960, 150)
Teodoro C. Arvisu (1987)	Pioneer in Government Medical Service; Father of Baguio School of Nursing
Children of Baldomero M. Nevada (Estrella, Edmun, Emma)	Halsema's Accountant (Halsema 1991, 181); Mining Prospect of the Philex Mining Corporation; his wife Trinidad Monces put up Nevada Hotel which was damaged during the 1990 Earthquake
Dionisio Claridad (no date – cannot fully access mausoleum)	Founded the Baguio Medical Center
Francisco B. Jalon (1956)	Pioneer Business known for the building the Plaza Theatre; Constructed a hat factory (1916), silversmithing shop (1913-1915), dancing hall in Campo Filipino (1916), and acquired a lumber concession in Irisan until 1929) (Gutierrez 1960, 152)
Romeo A. Brawner (2008)	Commissioner of the Commission on Elections; Court of Appeals Chief Justice; father of General Romeo Saturnino Brawner Jr (60th Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines).
Mauro M. Leonen (1970)	Human Rights Lawyer; Manager, Baguio Branch, Malayan Insurance Co., Inc.; father of Supreme Court Associate Justice Mario Victor "Marvic" Leonen
Santiago Bose (2002)	Co-founded the Baguio Arts Guild (Silverlens Galleries n.d.)