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100,000, the per capita cost of municipal services averages \$229 per year; in cities from 500,000 to 1 million the cost rises to \$426; and in cities over 1 million, to \$681.) Violent crime rates are 100 times greater in cities of 250,000 than in cities in the 50,000 to 100,000 range. Increasing congestion, water and air pollution, poor schools, and high taxes raise the cost of commerce, encouraging business firms to flee.

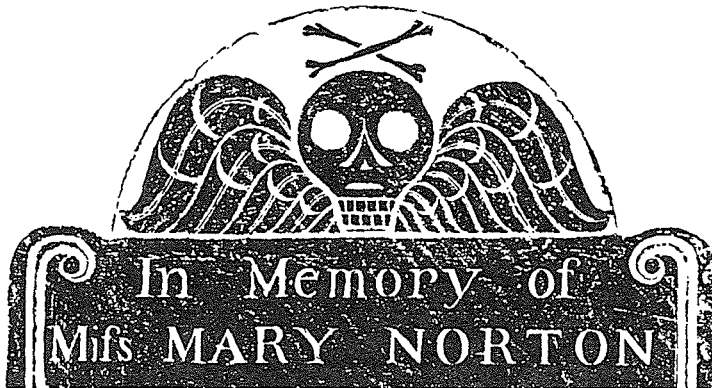
Surveys show that Americans *want* to live in smaller cities (32 percent prefer small towns and cities, 25 percent suburban cities, 26 percent rural areas, 17 percent large cities, according to Sale's compilation); populations of the large older cities have been declining for the last 20 years. Therefore, Sale says, U.S. lawmakers have an "unshirkable obligation" to encourage settlement in smaller cities; federal urban aid programs should favor smaller cities in the allocation of funds and in offering incentives for business investment.

*Is Death
Un-American?*

"American Attitudes to Death" by Charles O. Jackson, in *The Journal of American Studies* (Dec. 1977), Cambridge University Press, 32 E. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Twentieth-century custom enjoins Americans to repress grief and to deny any thought of death. But it has not always been so. Jackson, a University of Tennessee historian, reviews the scant literature and finds three distinct phases in the history of American attitudes and responses to dying.

In colonial times, when as many as one in four children died before the age of 10, death was a harsh and common occurrence that could not be



The death's-head on gravestones in colonial times conveyed a macabre view of mortality in an age when life was short and none too sweet.

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denied. The death of even a single individual was experienced as a community loss and the community rallied to help the bereaved family. Popular belief in an afterlife was reflected in the inscriptions on gravestones, which also stressed physical decay, the brevity of life, and the grim certainty of death.

From the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries, however, Americans became more attached to life and less certain of an existence after death. The dead were not so readily relinquished as before; spiritualism came into vogue. Death was sentimentalized and made less morbid: cemeteries were landscaped; cemetery art, formerly of skull-and-crossbones severity, became cherub-and-flowers poetic; embalming came into practice; and mourning jewelry was popular.

Since the end of the 19th century, which marked the beginning of the third phase, increasing attachment to life has been accompanied by urbanization, by rapid advances in medicine, and by an increasingly temporal outlook. Americans are less and less willing to involve themselves in death and dying. People are allowed to die in institutions and to be buried under unadorned, uninscribed tombstones. There is often no sense of community loss. Our secular society no longer believes in the certainty of afterlife, so natural death and physical decomposition have become too horrible to contemplate or discuss.

Jackson sees hints in recent months of a renewed willingness to discuss death in the United States. Whether or not this marks the start of a new era, he says, depends on our ability to recognize that death, even of a single individual, has significance and dignity.

Lingua Franca Spoken Here

"English Dethroned" by S. Frederick Starr, in *Change* (May 1978), NBW Tower, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801.

The remarkable predominance of English as a world language has seriously discouraged foreign language study in the United States. There are signs, however, that the use of English may be waning, says Starr, secretary of the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies.

Beyond its strength as a native language (of 350 million people), English is an official language in numerous countries where it is not commonly spoken by the population at large. It is the world's leading second language, promoted by school systems in many countries. In the non-English-speaking world—excluding China—71 million of the estimated 93 million secondary-school students are studying English.

As a lingua franca, English is used by Japanese airline pilots seeking landing instructions at Paris and by Chinese technicians working on projects in Tanzania. It is the premier language for research in the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities. More than 50 percent of world scientific research is published in English.

But Starr argues that this dominance is unlikely to endure. Not only is the birthrate of native English-speaking peoples declining, but