The Silent Island: New York City's Resting Place

Hart Island is a tiny island in the Long Island Sound. It is a quiet place, and a former hospital, asylum, civil war prison, and drug rehabilitation facility. All of these institutions have since closed down. But it is now home to thousands of New Yorkers that are no longer with us.

Accessible only by a lonely, rusty ferry from her sister City Island, the island houses the city's Potter's Field, a series of mass graves dug deep into the earth.

There are only two ways to access the island: be a forlorn prisoner sent to dig graves, or die and have a "city burial". Many families agree to this, not knowing what the term "city burial" means.

In 2013, over 200 New Yorkers were sent from local hospitals to the dark island and are lost, but never forgotten. Their paths and the numbers in which they left us, are mapped here.

Data provided by Department of Corrections via NYC Open Data, 2014. Borough Shapefile provided by NYC Department of City Planning. Hospital data provided by NYS GIS.