

# MEMORY & LANDMARKS

*Report of the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans*

Periwinkle Initiative



*Sacred to the Memory*

*“A nation reveals itself not only by the people it produces, but by those it remembers.”*

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA  
*Arlington Cemetery  
Memorial Day, 2016  
Arlington, Virginia*



East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA  
*Photo by Brian Palmer*

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*Report of the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans*

Periwinkle Initiative

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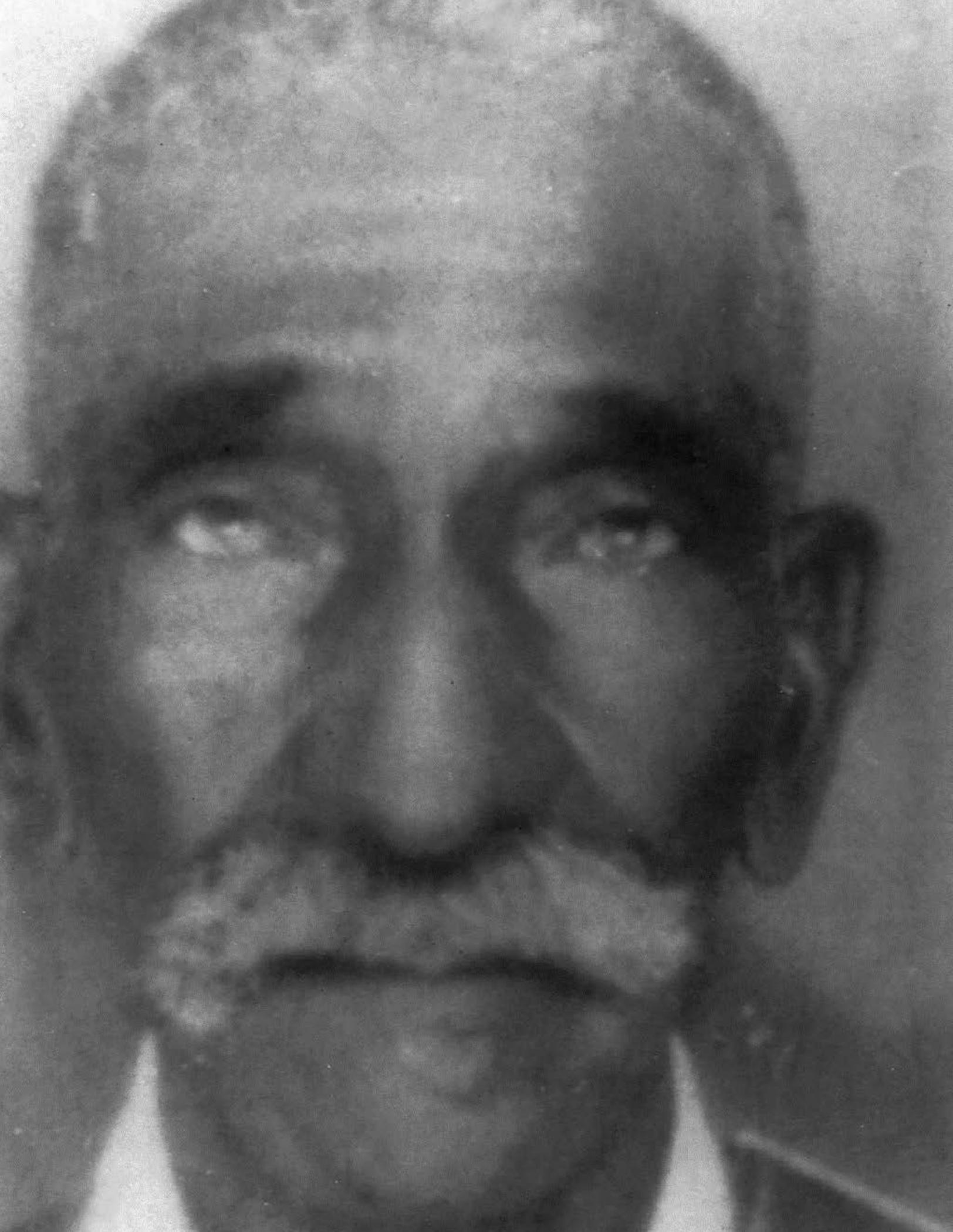
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*“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”*

PROVERBS: 15:22

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Jimmie Lewis Frye and Elcie Mae Frye  
*Photo courtesy of Sandra A. Arnold*

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Finally, to the formerly enslaved including my paternal great-grandfather Ben Harmon and my maternal great-grandparents James and Isabella Burton – we are privileged by your examples of resilience, humanity and faith. Your resting places stand as visual reminders of lives worthy of remembrance and imitation.

SANDRA A. ARNOLD  
*Project Founder & Director*



Ethel Harmon  
*Photo courtesy of Sandra A. Arnold*



# REPORT SUMMARY

In January 2013, the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans* (*Burial Project*) began at Fordham University. The project's goals focused on developing a process to collect and document information on burial grounds of individuals, who were enslaved in the United States between the 17th and 20th centuries. The documentation process would record the resting place of any enslaved or formerly enslaved person who died during enslavement or any time after Emancipation. Accordingly, the Burial Project would lay the foundation for the creation of a free publicly accessible national repository of the sites.

Having reached its goals of (1) creating a documentation process, (2) gauging the prospect of public engagement, and (3) creating a framework for a national repository, the Burial Project ended at Fordham University in May 2016 and became a project of the *Periwinkle Initiative* – a not-for-profit that was founded to continue the work of creating the national database. Therefore, the purpose of this brief report is to share the knowledge and results that came with the outcome of these initial goals, as well as outline the new direction of the work and its aim to engage communities in the protection and preservation of these sacred sites.

The report is organized in three sections followed by recommended resources.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Section One contextualizes the cultural and historical significance of burial practices and the value of memory among enslaved communities. The section also details the history of the Burial Project, which includes its impact and achievements, as well as challenges concerning preservation and protection policy for burial grounds of the formerly enslaved.

## PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

In this report, the term “Burial Ground” refers to a cemetery, graveyard or any site that is – or was – used for a burial or interments. Section Two includes selected information from each burial ground that was submitted to the Burial Project. A map, legend and charts help to arrange data to convey the scope of the project's results. This section also includes case studies representing what has been learned from the information thus far.

## MOVING FORWARD

Section Three describes the plans for establishing the national repository. Also included are details about the Periwinkle Initiative, and its plan to unfold the repository and address issues of preservation and memory related to the burial sites.

## RECOMMEND RESOURCES

The final section includes recommended texts, websites, organizations and related works for further research and study.

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OPPOSITE: Harriet Tubman (circa: 1911)  
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress



## CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Harriet Jacobs' visit to her parents' burial sites described in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) illustrates the sacred power burial grounds had for enslaved Americans. The cemetery where Harriet's parents lie was humble, but it was a refuge for her, a young black woman living under slavery in North Carolina. It was here in the woods with her parents' headstones, away from plantation oppression, that Harriet would find the comfort and peace necessary to reflect upon her identity and values, and ultimately, plan her escape from slavery. She describes the importance of the "black stump, at the head of my mother's grave, [which] was all that remained of a tree my father had planted." Jacobs' father's resting place was "marked by a small wooden board bearing his name, the letters of which were nearly obliterated."

Even in the course of the ten years between their burial and the visit that prompted this description, Harriet Jacobs' parents' grave markers were weather-worn and faded. Today, over a century and a half later, the wooden board and the tree stump have almost certainly receded into the North Carolina swampland. While few enslaved Americans could afford a conventional gravestone that would withstand time, they still found ways to celebrate the lives and commemorate the deaths of their loved ones. Indeed, the story of Harriet Jacobs's parents is the story of countless other enslaved and formerly enslaved individuals in the United States between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries. An unassuming stump, a rock, or a piece of wood might be a sacred monument for a long-passed loved one.

Funerals were one of the few times where groups of African Americans could come together and recover their common humanity under the slave system. Even though the possibility for a large funeral was often precluded by law, historian Erik R. Seeman writes that, "slaves had a great deal of autonomy in burying their dead" (213). Small ceremonies and small cemeteries, like the resting place of Harriet Jacobs' parents, allowed loved ones to mourn the dead with commemorative rituals and devote a sacred space to a life lived.

## BURIAL RITES: FROM AFRICAN TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN

Burial practices have varied widely since the first arrival of enslaved Africans on the American continent in 1619. The breadth and diversity of these funerals have a great deal to tell us about the experience of life and death for many African-Americans during slavery.

Many of the earliest burials of Africans on American soil blended customs from varying denominations of African religions, Islam, and Christianity. According to Albert J. Raboteau, “the gods of Africa were carried in the memories of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. To be sure, they underwent a sea change,” and yet these religious practices persisted, often shaping burial practices and beliefs about life after death. Enslaved people brought these religious practices with them, which often shaped burial practices and beliefs about life after death. Funeral ceremonies gave African-Americans the time, and gravesites offered the place – to assume control of the symbolism around their burials and create a world of dignified death that embraced their cultural values. For example, when their baby died in the United States, two African-born parents placed traditional grave goods in the earth with their son, including “a small bow and arrows; a little bag of parched meal; a miniature canoe and paddle (with which the father said his son would cross the ocean to his own country) and a piece of white muslin with several curious figures painted on it ... by which ... his countrymen would know the infant to be his son” (Jamieson 49).

Far from their homeland, these young parents likely took great comfort in the idea that their son would be reunited with their family in Africa after death.

Similarly drawing on African burial rites, Olaudah Equiano, once an enslaved African himself, observed a group of West African mourners place “pipes and tobacco” in the grave “with the corpse, which was always perfumed and ornamented” (33). Archaeologists have confirmed that the burial of traditional goods with the deceased was common practice in the Mandara Highlands in the West Coast of Africa. However, despite their shared African origins, Equiano, from the windward coast, was surprised by this unfamiliar ceremony, which speaks volumes to the cultural and religious diversity of the African diaspora. These examples and many others show that, when given the opportunity, many Africans and African-Americans adopted ancestral traditions when burying their loved ones.

By the end of the eighteenth century, fewer and fewer individuals of African descent had any living memory of Africa. Instead, through generations they passed down well-worn and distant stories in oral history. Even so, these funerals still held traces of various African traditions. Just a decade before the Civil War, a community of African-Americans in Georgia maintained the practice of placing “the last article used by the deceased on the grave” (Jamieson 50). Here, the use of what archaeologists call “surface materials” appears to be the most enduring material marker of African influences on burial rites in the United States, lasting well into the twentieth century. Often, family members and friends would place ceramics, glassware, food and drink and other items as memorials on the ground above the grave. William Faulkner’s *Go Down Moses*, published in 1942, describes an African-American cemetery with “shards of pottery and broken bottles and old brick and other objects



Harriet Ann Jacobs

insignificant to sight, but actually of a profound meaning and fatal to touch, which no white man could have read” (49). While this bric-a-brac might not seem sacred, shared communal practices of African and African-American tradition imbued them with love for and memories of the deceased.

However, surface materials are particularly susceptible to disturbance and don't have the same staying power of a stone marker. Today, sites once laden with pottery, glass bottles, marbles and stones have faded or disappeared from the landscape. The work of public historians, like the work of the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans, is to keep the lives and humanity of these enslaved individuals from fading from the national memory.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

While we can trace the legacy of African burial practices in the United States over these three centuries, there were major disparities in access to memorialization after death across various states.

As we might expect, African-Americans who lived north of the Mason-Dixon line were afforded more freedom to practice and promote their funerary practices publicly. By 1804, all Northern states had moved to abolish slavery at the state level (although certain states favored gradual emancipation, leaving some young African-Americans in Pennsylvania enslaved well into the 1850s). Freedom from slavery opened up the possibility for grassroots organizations to protect funeral rites and burial rites of African-Americans. Groups in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and other urban centers established cemeteries for people of color, many of whom were once enslaved. These same groups often facilitated funeral ceremonies for group members. For example, Newport's Free African Union Society, established in Rhode Island in 1780, guaranteed its members a proper Christian burial (among many other basic human rights like access to education and resources). When a Society member died, a group leader notified the members when and where the funeral would occur. All members then followed in procession behind the coffin throughout the city, before arriving at their own cemetery. The coffin sat atop a bier, beneath a pall; families who had the means would purchase a stone marker. These regulated society funerals adhered to Christian tradition and held few traces of African heritage. Nevertheless, in their practice of Christianity, African Americans emphasized biblical passages about equality and love, rather than those about obedience touted by advocates of slavery.

With these public and highly formalized ceremonies, African-Americans could exercise their claims to citizenship, by publicly celebrating the life and mourning the death, of a loved one. These societies recorded the births, deaths and burials of many who would otherwise be lost to history. The records of these societies reflect a long-standing celebration of life and death within African-American communities in spite of limited resources.

Despite having more freedom for funeral and burial rites, African-Americans in the North still faced a great deal of racism and oppression throughout this period. Most notably, segregated cemeteries (like segregated schools) often left African-Americans with fewer resources for burials. What is more, even multicultural urban centers fostered their own kind of racism. For example, the New York City municipal



Grave of Harriet Jacobs,  
Mount Auburn Cemetery, Watertown, MA  
*Photo courtesy of Elise Kirk*



Betty Simmons  
 Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

government forbade the use of palls (the ceremonial cloth that covered a coffin) by African-Americans because they were seen as too extravagant for people of color. Even in the face of institutional and everyday racism, African Americans in the North found ways to secure cemetery space, provide ceremonial burials and honor their dead.

In the South, funerals and proper burials were not guaranteed. Enslaved Americans suffered higher mortality rates, according to Richard Steckel, from the regular violence, poor nutrition, and the excruciating labor of plantation life. Compounding the oppressive weight of slavery, Southern states often imposed legislation prohibiting groups of African-Americans from meeting in public for any reason. In 1680, for example, the Virginia state legislature determined “the frequent meetings of considerable numbers of Negro slaves under pretense of feasts and burials is judged of dangerous consequences.” This law effectively prevented attendance at funerals, without the direct supervision of a white person. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, many other states established or reaffirmed similar “slave codes” that restricted education, property ownership, group meetings and imposed curfews. These slave codes abridged the already limited burial rights and rites of African-Americans living in the South..

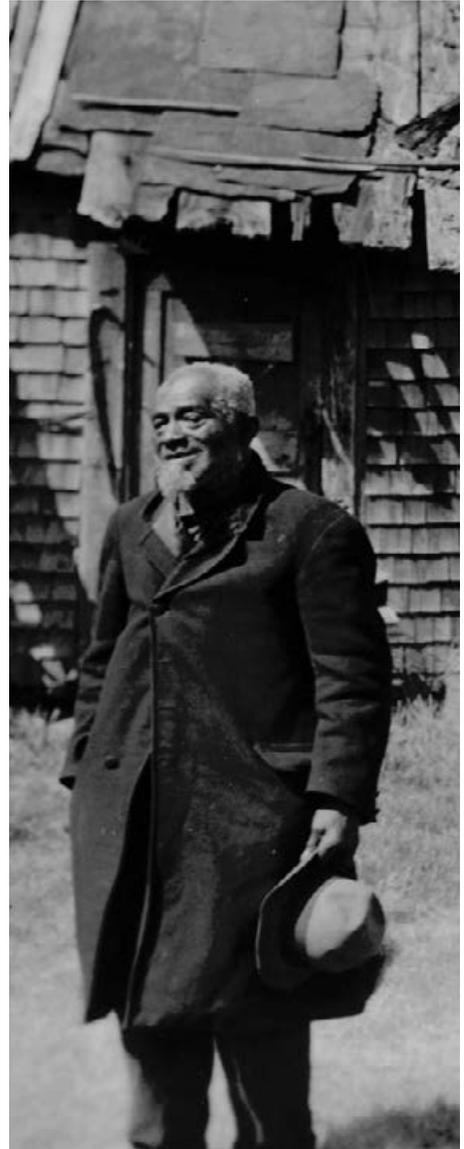
#### CONCLUSION – WHY DOCUMENT BURIAL GROUNDS OF THE ENSLAVED?

Standard measures for tracing family histories and life in the United States do not account for the lived experience of people of color. Unlike even the poorest whites, enslaved Americans were not guaranteed marriage licenses, or birth and death certificates by the state. Therefore, their gravesites stand as material testaments to the hundreds of thousands of individuals who lived and died during and after slavery. There is beauty in an infant adorned for a sea voyage home, the last glass that touched a woman’s lips gently placed on the soil, and the proud display of a funeral pall among a group of friends and family. These rituals and personal mementos charted out sacred spaces for enslaved Americans, despite all odds. By returning to these places, lingering in the hallowed grounds, and recognizing our shared humanity, we celebrate those whose stories have often receded from memory. Fostering this public memory was the motivating impulse of the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans.

*“Burial grounds demonstrate not only the existence of slaves but of communities – of families and shared experiences, of suffering and struggle, and of dignifying rites of humanity across generations. The roots of these communities run deep, and bind families and communities to the land and this nation then and now.”*

DAVID W. BLIGHT

*Director, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study  
of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition  
Yale University*



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Henry Robinson  
*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*



# PROJECT HISTORY

## BACKGROUND

In 2013, the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans (Burial Project)* began at Fordham University with the intent of developing a repository to record burials and burial grounds of the formerly enslaved in the United States. It was founded by Sandra A. Arnold, a history student in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies, and a staff member in the Department of African and African American Studies and the Latin American and Latino Studies Institute. The project grew from independent research Sandra Arnold had initiated years earlier on a West Tennessee plantation-cemetery where members of her family were formerly enslaved and are currently buried. Her fieldwork on the cemetery led to the exploration of other such burial sites in Tennessee and various states. The outcome was the discovery of a widespread documentation and preservation problem that exceeded the lack of grave markers; cemeteries and graves of the formerly enslaved were devalued and forgotten by the communities in which they were located. Consequently, the sites were abandoned, paved over, covered by buildings and infrastructure, and void of any type of preservation or protection efforts.

The Burial Project was created with the core belief that burial grounds, cemeteries and graveyards contain a wealth of genealogical and historical information. Moreover, those belonging to the formerly enslaved speak to much more. Their graves serve as landmarks to pivotal segments of our nation's history and as monuments to lives that are poorly documented. The inability for many communities to embrace the humanity and cultural significance that these sites represent is a key factor for the neglect and scarcity of preservation efforts. Nevertheless, prior to the Burial Project, attempts to document the grounds had been initiated, though usually limited in direction and scope. For instance, the database Find a Grave lists thousands of plots, including those belonging to the formerly enslaved, but the database does not address the unique issues faced by these specific gravesites. Private and regional initiatives, such as the *Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites*; the *African-American Cemeteries in Albemarle & Amherst Counties*

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OPPOSITE: Family at the Hermitage  
Plantation, Savannah, GA  
*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*



Bill and Ellen Thomas  
 Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

*Database* (Virginia); and the cemetery-registry created by *Knox Heritage* and *African-American Heritage Alliance* (Tennessee); are focused on sites of the enslaved, but do not have a national scope or a preservation emphasis. Although these local and regional works are important and beneficial, the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved African Americans* (*Burial Project*) was founded with a broader vision and scope. The project aimed to develop a process of cataloging burials and burial grounds located in any state, as well as record names of the deceased.

During its existence at Fordham, the Burial Project was guided by an advisory committee of scholars and experts in American history, slavery, genealogy, digital humanities and historic preservation. These early advisors represent institutions including JewishGen (an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage); Emory, Yale, Harvard and Brown Universities; the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Fordham School of Law. They included Africana and humanities scholar Dr. Anthony Bogues; historians Dr. David W. Blight, Dr. David Eltis, and Annette Gordon-Reed; anthropologists Dr.

#### WHY A NATIONAL DATABASE?

Due to certain fundamental components of chattel slavery, such as little regard for the humanity of the enslaved, and the separation of families through sales, auctions, etc., cultural heritage associated with enslaved Americans has unique inherent challenges that has made it difficult to establish identity or an historical record of an individual. These factors explain why many from this period lack official birth and/or death records, and why many of their burial sites are unidentified and lost.

Local and regional documentation efforts notwithstanding, there are crucial reasons why establishing a national repository is necessary. Such a resource can:

- Create a permanent archive and official burial record for the deceased.
- Serve as the central burial database for researchers and family.
- Provide an opportunity to collect oral history from living descendants of the deceased who have documented the burial sites by memory.
- Give identity and dignity to the life and death of the deceased.
- Inspire local and community preservation initiatives for a burial ground.
- Help reconnect families.

#### OUTREACH

Understanding from the onset that public engagement was crucial to the Burial Project's success, a plan was developed to garner information from the general public regarding burial grounds in their communities. Anyone with details about a burial or burial ground of a formerly enslaved person(s), could submit information to the Burial Project's then website, [www.vanishinghistory.org](http://www.vanishinghistory.org). Even so, recognizing that slavery remains a sensitive and divisive subject for many, the level of public response was a great concern prior to the project's launch.

Limited resources to create and promote outreach was also a concern. Yet, stories and articles on the project in *The New York Times*, NPR and other media outlets, helped to prompt an effective grassroots outreach that touched almost every region of the United States. Shortly after its launch, the Burial Project received its first burial ground submission from Mahwah, New Jersey. As communities across the country became aware of the project, burial submissions increased steadily.

## WHAT WAS LEARNED

As burial information streamed into the project, it became clear that documentation alone could not address all the pressing issues affecting the sites. Concerned citizens indicated many additional challenges facing burial grounds in their communities. They often inquired about:

- Assistance in saving a site from desecration by a development or construction project.
- Instruction on how to preserve or properly memorialize a burial ground.
- How to prevent the unwanted removal of remains.
- How to properly reinter remains.

These issues were not anticipated, but were quickly embraced into the project's mission, which evolved to include preservation and education.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- By May 2016, the Burial Project was consistent in receiving burial submissions from many communities across the nation, documenting over 300 burial grounds and over 12,000 individual graves of formerly enslaved Americans (more on the public submissions in the following section). This encouraging response, accomplished without the benefit of a formal public-outreach component, was an affirmation of the historical and social value of the project – and most crucial, that the public recognized the importance of the work and was a guaranteed partner in making the national repository a reality.
- In April 2013, the Burial Project was awarded a Chairman's Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The award was used to secure the pioneering interactive studio *Second Story* to design the future *National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans*.
- *Second Story* began collaborating with the Burial Project in 2014, designing the framework and interface for the national database, and assisting with developing the documentation process for the burials. More about *Second Story* and the *National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans* is detailed in section three of this report.



Patsy Moses  
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

JOSEPH W.  
JOHNSON  
Died  
April 3, 1867  
April 18, 1870

A photograph of a dense forest with a large, light-colored tree trunk lying horizontally across the foreground. The background is filled with many vertical tree trunks and lush green foliage. The text "PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS" is overlaid in white, uppercase letters in the center of the image.

PUBLIC  
SUBMISSIONS



*“The sites of where enslaved people were buried will provide visual reminders of the history of slavery in the United States, serving as a form of monument to people whose names and stories are, for the most part, lost to history.”*

ANNETTE GORDON-REED

*Charles Warren Professor of American Legal History  
Professor of History, Faculty of Arts & Sciences  
Harvard University*

This section outlines selected information about all burial grounds submitted to the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans* (*Burial Project*). Detailed in this section are case studies, burial grounds locations by state, as well as a map and charts to convey the scope of the results.

The burial grounds listed are not an indication of an entry in the national database – it has not been fully established. Instead, it is a concise list of all burial grounds that have been submitted to the project thus far.

The case studies chosen reflect significant issues gleaned from the information submitted. Certain cases vividly illustrate the need for documentation and preservation intervention, while others are inspiring and give hope to the societal impact of community preservation efforts.

The case studies represent:

**Abandoned, Covered & Neglected Burial Grounds** – sites that are in danger of being lost and are in need of preservation interventions.

**Native American Burials** – burials of enslaved people other than African or African-American.

**Burial Grounds in the Territories** – burial grounds of enslaved people in regions other than the Northern or Southern United States.

**Rediscovered Burial Grounds** – those that have been documented mostly by oral history and memory.

**Community Preservation Initiatives** – the impact of local preservation work and its potential to both transform and preserve history.

**Presidential Estates and Plantations** – burial grounds of enslaved communities on properties owned by former U.S. presidents.

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PRECEDING PAGE AND OPPOSITE:  
East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA  
Photo by Brian Palmer

# CASE STUDIES



East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA

*Photo by Brian Palmer*

## ABANDONED, COVERED AND NEGLECTED BURIAL GROUNDS

*East End Cemetery,*  
Richmond, Virginia

Among the sites submitted to the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans (Burial Project)* are those that have been abandoned, neglected and covered over by development. These spaces have no obvious indications of being sacred places. Finding and recognizing these sites was the impetus for the Burial Project and the compass of the project's mission.

The following photos are of the East End Cemetery in Henrico County and Richmond, Virginia. It is a historic sixteen-acre African-American burying ground founded in 1897 that contains the resting places of formerly enslaved and free African-Americans. Much of what is now East End was originally chartered as Greenwood Cemetery by an association of prominent African-Americans. Today, East End Cemetery is overgrown, neglected and desecrated – it is an illegal trash dump. Sadly, the condition of this historic cemetery is representative of many of the burial grounds submitted to the Burial Project, and a reality for countless sites across the county.

To restore the East End Cemetery, John Shuck, a local resident, recently spearheaded the *East End Cemetery Clean-Up & Restoration Project*. Shuck and other volunteers have discarded an estimated 1,500 tires along with other trash and debris in their ongoing work. Among their many discoveries are: burials with professionally engraved and “homemade” headstones (mostly shattered), a children's section of the cemetery, and many burials without markers or identification. To date, the *East End Cemetery Clean-Up & Restoration Project* continues to involve the local community in cleaning and restoring the cemetery as a sacred space.

More on the East End Cemetery Clean-Up & Restoration:  
[www.eastendcemetery.wordpress.com](http://www.eastendcemetery.wordpress.com)



ALL: East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA  
Photos by Brian Palmer

## REDISCOVERED BURIAL GROUNDS

### *African Burying Ground Memorial Park* Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Like many other old New England towns, Portsmouth, New Hampshire's earliest development was underwritten by the institution of slavery. As a port city, Portsmouth was an entry-point for slave ships in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There, after enduring the horrors of the Middle Passage, enslaved Africans would first set foot on American soil. During the eighteenth century, especially, these people had no small hand in the city's transformation from a hamlet on the sea to a dominant Atlantic seaport. Displaced and overburdened, Portsmouth's earliest African and African-American residents faced some of life's meanest trials. At the end of their days, they were put to rest in a segregated cemetery on Chestnut Street near the outskirts of town. From as early as 1705 to as late as 1803, this cemetery saw a range of burial practices: from traditional African funerary song and dance to somber Christian practices; perhaps some were buried there with little ceremony. Nevertheless, this space was once a cemetery revered by Portsmouth's earliest African and African-American residents, free and enslaved.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the practice of slaveholding in New Hampshire was in sharp decline: between 1773 and 1786,

the reported number of enslaved people in the state fell from 674 to 46. Without daily reminders of their culpability in American slavery, Portsmouth's city leaders and residents worked to consciously forget it. Portsmouth's future was bright, and this past was difficult to bear. Such conscious forgetting was no small matter for those buried at Chestnut Street. As early as 1803, the city began to encroach upon the sacred burial site and eventually the cemetery was paved over and mostly forgotten. The bodies buried there were divided by city streets and crossed through with underground pipelines for new houses. Although a few local history buffs and city officials were always aware of the burial ground (public records account for the burials at Chestnut Street well into the twentieth century), progress took precedence over memory. For two hundred years, this seemed to be the final fate of Portsmouth's earliest African and African American people.

In 1995, the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail included the area known as the "Negro Burying Ground", among its twenty-four historic sites reflecting the presence of African people in New Hampshire since 1645. The Trail described the burial site in its first publications, a walking tour guidebook and a teacher resource book, both widely distributed throughout the region. Then, in 2000, the Trail installed one of its many distinctive cast bronze plaques on what is believed to be the first house built over part of the African Burying Ground – a distinguishing landmark for passersby on what appeared to be just



Portsmouth African Burying Ground: Reburial Ceremony, Portsmouth, NH  
*Photo courtesy of African Burying Ground Trust*

another city street lined with cars at parking meters. Still, this burying ground remained largely ignored.

That is, until things on Chestnut Street changed. In 2003, city construction workers revealed thirteen deteriorating wooden coffins during routine infrastructure upgrades. Further excavations and recovery of skeletal remains confirmed the street to be part of the site of the long forgotten “Negro Burying Ground”. The city brought in a team of experts – archaeologists, geneticists and forensic scientists who estimated, based on available census records, that the site could hold as many as two hundred people of African descent.

No longer at the periphery, Chestnut Street, as fate would have it, now runs through the heart of downtown Portsmouth. Those forgotten lives were now crucially important to Portsmouth’s present and future. Twenty-first century citizens found themselves grappling with the heavy question: how can we do right by those who faced such enduring abuse in the past? From the beginning, the people of Portsmouth understood the importance of this reparation. They committed to return the Chestnut Street site to sacred ground. A team of neighbors, churches and state officials headed up by the mayor-appointed African Burying Ground Committee worked to devise a respectable way to honor those buried. The diverse group recognized the task at hand not as a question of Black history or White history alone; this, they said, is Portsmouth’s history. The group worked together to plan and raise money and ushered in a multi-year process for reinterment.

First, residents of Portsmouth voted to close Chestnut Street to vehicular traffic. During the following years, the African Burying Ground Committee worked with city officials and employed artisans, archaeologists and architects to imagine a public space that would celebrate the humanity of those buried there. A memorial park named “We Stand in Honor of Those Forgotten” was the result of long and often difficult discussions. The park, which runs the length of Chestnut Street, includes sculptural pieces, historical information, granite seating walls, a community plaza, decorative tiles, landscaping, and pedestrian scale lighting.

Designed by sculptor and artist Jerome Meadows and local landscape architect Roberta Woodburn, the intent of the African Burying Ground Memorial Park is to connect the people of Portsmouth today with those buried here long ago. A sculpture of two life-sized figures – one male and one female – with each figure reaching around the edge of the slab towards the other, speaks to the various levels of separation, uncertainty, individuality and perseverance experienced by the people brought to this country as captives. At the opposite end of the site is a series of stylized figures who represent the collective community of Portsmouth coming together to acknowledge, protect and pay homage to this Burying Ground and partly encircle the burial vault containing the re-interred remains. The burial vault is marked with a West African Sankofa symbol which means *Return and get It – Learn from the past*.

The park is a memorial, as well as a permanent resting place for those buried beneath, marked with the same appropriate scale and solemnity as other city cemeteries. It is a public place of respect and perpetual care. Once the design process was almost complete, the local Black community guided preparations for reburial in traditions

of African and African American funerals. Chair of the African Burying Ground Committee Vernis Jackson said “these events are about remembering the dead and returning the remains to the earth, as well as acknowledging the site’s history and celebrating the community-wide effort that has made this project possible.” The hands of twenty African-American women elders were the last to touch and shroud the ancestral bones for the return to their final resting place. The ceremony that followed was a communal act of love and honor for Portsmouth’s oldest African and African American citizens. Members of the community, all ages and colors and faiths, held an all-night vigil, never leaving the bodies alone. Some people of Portsmouth sat quietly with the caskets, others recited a poem for these ancestors or said a prayer, sang, danced, and played music for them. By sunlight and into the depths of the night, people celebrated the humanity of those still buried at Chestnut Street. On the morning of May 23, 2015, pallbearers carried the caskets into the memorial park. A reburial ceremony was held, including African customs that would have likely been familiar to those being interred.

Although many questions remain about the burial site and the lives of those at rest there, Portsmouth, New Hampshire offers a model of reconciliation through communal preservation and the re-dedication of sacred space. We have to do more than simply recognize the existence of slavery in this country to ease its wounds. Willful ignorance of the past is not a way to move toward a better future. We owe the once enslaved more than that. Portsmouth, New Hampshire teaches us how to honor our ancestors, how to love those who were unloved for far too long. By walking with people from the past and recognizing the injustice they faced, by building community across race and over time, we create a better present and future world. Portsmouth, New Hampshire shows us that the only way to move past cruelty and violence is to love.

More on the African Burying Ground Memorial Park:  
[www.africanburyinggroundnh.org](http://www.africanburyinggroundnh.org)

View Video (YouTube): “*Reburial Ceremony at African Burying Ground, Portsmouth, NH*”

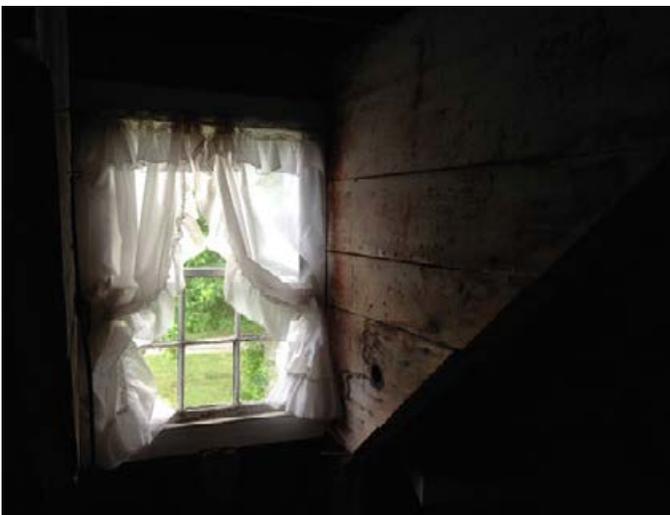


African Burying Ground Memorial Park, Portsmouth, NH  
Photo courtesy of African Burying Ground Trust



Burial Ground of the Colored People  
Shelter Island, NY

*Photos courtesy of Sylvester Manor Educational Farm*



The house attic at Sylvester Manor where Isaac Pharo slept.

*Photos courtesy of Sylvester Manor Educational Farm*

## NATIVE AMERICAN BURIALS

*The Burying Ground of the Colored People of the Manor from 1651, Sylvester Manor  
Shelter Island, NY*

In the late 1990s, Dr. Katherine Hayes joined a team of archaeologists to investigate the presence of slavery at Sylvester Manor, a three hundred-year-old plantation on Shelter Island, New York. Per conventional wisdom, the team expected to find evidence of the enslaved African and African-American people who lived and died on the plantation. Soon after they began, however, Dr. Hayes and her colleagues were surprised to encounter the presence of another population in the archaeological record. Native Americans – specifically from the Montaukett and Manhansett tribes – labored alongside African and African-American people at Sylvester Manor.

For Dr. Hayes, this discovery was remarkable: “the case of Sylvester Manor’s plantation is significant because it pushes back at two prevalent and popular misconceptions of American history: first, slavery was never a true institution of the Northern colonies; and second, American Indians had no connection to the history of plantation slavery” (3–4). Racially and culturally-marginalized groups were, in fact, often forced into servitude by the same social and legal structures that ensured African-American slavery in the colonies. Escalating the devastation of disease and displacement by contact with European colonists, some Native American tribes were coerced into labor.

Centuries before Sylvester Manor was built, Shelter Island was populated by many different people from eastern Algonquian tribes (including the Montaukett and Manhansett). The Island’s combination of interlacing tidal creeks, woodlands, fields, and coastline made it the perfect seasonal hunting and fishing ground for indigenous people. At times, certain tribes would cultivate maize, beans, squash, and tobacco there. Although no particular group claimed ownership of the Island itself (because of their beliefs about the land many tribes did not consider such ownership), Shelter Island was fundamental to the lives and cultures of many people. By the 1620s, however, the same tribes who would fish and tell stories by the creeks of Shelter Island were decimated by European diseases, which killed an estimated 80–90% of these tribes. In the wake of this devastation, Nathaniel Sylvester, an Anglo-Dutch sugar merchant settled on Shelter Island in 1651. Before coming to New York, he was a financial investor in two sugar plantations in Barbados that enslaved many African and Afro-Caribbean people.

Prior to Sylvester’s arrival, Native tribes on Long Island had been aggressively encroached upon by both the English and the Dutch, possibly giving the Montaukett and Manhansett people little choice but to labor on his plantation as a means of survival. Material artifacts from the Sylvester Manor site present clear connections to the skills, technologies and culture of Native Americans. For example, evidence of the production of wampum (the traditional, sacred shell beads used as currency among many Northeastern tribes) suggests that the Montaukett Indians were, quite literally, making money for the Sylvesters. Though they worked on the Sylvester plantation as indentured laborers, it is well documented that this was not the reality for

many Native peoples in the region. According to historian Margaret Newell, “although some Indians received wages for their work on the estates of landowners such as Nathaniel Sylvester of Shelter Island, others formed part of the enslaved population. Manissean, Shinnecock, Montaukett and Manhasset Indians all faced enslavement – the Dutch and English even exported some to the Caribbean. English colonists also sold Wampanoag, Pequot, Narragansett and Pocasset Indians captured during the Pequot War (1637) and King Philip’s War (1675–76) to buyers on Long Island. The English colonists reduced other local Indians to involuntary servitude through court action and debt servitude. Indians worked alongside English and Africans in households and farms, on whaleboats and sailing ships, in building trades and livestock drives.”

Isaac Pharaoh of the Montaukett tribe became an indentured worker at Sylvester Manor in 1829 at the age of five. Isaac spent most days working as a servant in the Sylvester’s home. After his day’s work, he slept in the manor house attic. In this space, Isaac carved dozens of pictures of fully-rigged ships into the walls, forever leaving his mark on Sylvester Manor. When Isaac died, he was buried alongside an estimated two hundred Native and African-Americans in The Burying Ground of the Colored People of the Manor. On Shelter Island,

Native Americans from the Manhasset tribe and enslaved Africans forged an extraordinary community. Even at Sylvester Manor, there are traces of cross-cultural collaboration: some of the unearthed pottery has both indigenous and African characteristics.

Today, Sylvester Manor is an educational farm that cultivates, preserves and shares the stories of the Manor. Thanks to historians and educators, visitors learn about the indentured and enslaved community on the plantation, as well as the Sylvester family. In February 2014, members of the Montaukett tribe including Chief Robert Pharaoh, came together with the local community for a remembrance ceremony for those buried in The Burying Ground of the Colored People of the Manor. The ceremony, like the sacred ground itself, acknowledged the memory of everyone who labored and died at Sylvester Manor.

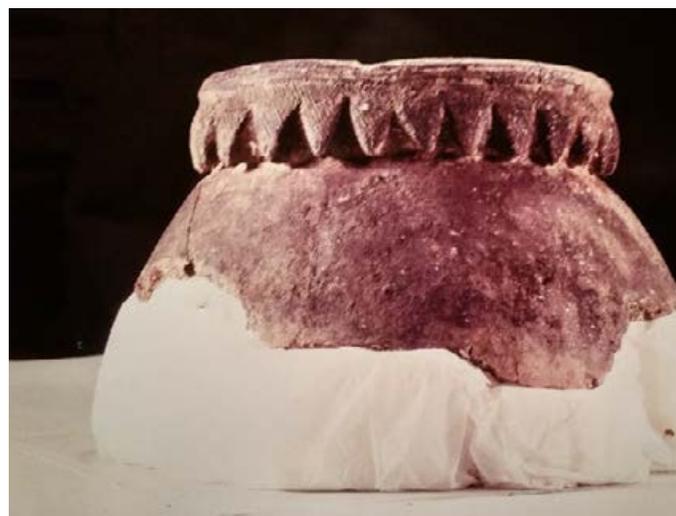
More on Sylvester Manor & the Burying Ground of the Colored People of the Manor:

[www.sylvestermanor.org](http://www.sylvestermanor.org)



One of various carvings by Isaac Pharo in the manor house attic.

*Photo courtesy of Sylvester Educational Farm*



Pot unearthed by archaeologists at Sylvester Manor. The pot has elements of three cultures: Native design, European handles and African firing technique.

*Photo: Courtesy of Sylvester Manor Educational Farm*

## BURIAL GROUNDS IN THE TERRITORIES

*Spanish Fork City Cemetery*  
Spanish Fork, Utah

*Mormon Pioneer (Winter Quarters) Cemetery*  
Douglas County, Nebraska

In 1850, Marinda Redd Bankhead packed up her belongings, bid friends and family farewell and moved out West. She was uprooted from farm life in Tennessee to settle in a mountain valley of Utah Territory. In many ways, this sounds like a familiar story of American history: a brave pioneer went West in search of open space and a better life. Marinda Redd Bankhead's story, however, is not so familiar. Marinda was an enslaved African-American who was brought West by a group of Mormons (who were themselves fleeing religious persecution). Marinda had no choice but to accompany the Redd family who laid claim to her. She was not setting out for a better life – her legal condition was the same in Utah as it was in Tennessee.

The geography of slavery was strange and uneven in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Marinda recalled travelling with the Redd family and other enslaved Americans through territories and states that allowed slavery and others that didn't. While travelling through Kansas Territory, which forbade slavery, Marinda recalls, "during the dark hours of the night, the majority of [the enslaved] made good their escape." Unfortunately, Marinda was not successful in her flight from slavery in Kansas, and, before long, ended up in Spanish Fork, Utah, where slavery was supported by law. When she arrived there, Marinda, like many other enslaved Americans, realized that her life in the new wilderness "was far from being happy" for she was "subjected to the same treatment that was accorded the plantation negroes of the South."

Marinda lived a long life in Utah. Shortly after her arrival in Spanish Fork, she was baptized as a member of the Mormon Church and was active in her local congregation until her death in 1907. In 1865, news of the end of the Civil War reached Utah and Marinda

was granted freedom from slavery. Marinda and her husband, Alex, had "a very distinct recollection of the joyful expressions which were upon the faces of all the slaves, when they ascertained that they had acquired their freedom through the fortunes of war." With their newfound freedom, Marinda and Alex remained in Spanish Fork to raise their family and build their own farm (where they grew asparagus rumored to grow as tall as their roof!).

In Spanish Fork, they became pillars of the African-American community within the Mormon Church. When they died in the early decades of the twentieth century, both Marinda and Alex were buried in Spanish Fork, Utah. Their graves were maintained by family, friends and church members who "kept the lettering on the headboards bright and readable" on their early wooden markers. Later, thanks to the work of historians of the Mormon Church in the 1990s, a stone marker was put in place to preserve the memory of these early pioneers.

Marinda's experience of Western slavery was not an isolated case. There were other enslaved African-Americans brought to Utah in bondage with white Mormon families. Some, like Jacob Bankhead, died in route to Zion and were buried in the Mormon Winter Quarters in Douglas County, Nebraska and other places along the way. Others, like Hark Wales, were central figures to the early good fortunes of the Mormon community in the Salt Lake Valley. Hark was part of the very first company of Mormons to cross the plains under the direction of Brigham Young, the church's leader. During the journey, Hark provided game, stood guard and was part of an advance party that forged ahead to find the best route into the Valley. Accordingly, Hark, an enslaved African-American, with no legal standing in the country, entered Zion several days before Brigham Young, the territorial governor.

Later, Hark gained his freedom when his owners moved to California – a move that separated Hark from his wife. After this forcible separation, upon his arrival in California – a free territory, he likely had no qualms about declaring his freedom. In the following years, Hark made his living as a miner in California and later, as a farmer



Spanish Fork City Cemetery  
Photo: Findagrave.com



Mormon Pioneer Cemetery  
 Photo: Findagrave.com

in Utah. Today, he is buried in an unmarked grave in Union Cemetery near Salt Lake City, Utah. The lives and deaths of Marinda and Alex Bankhead, Jacob Bankhead, Hark Wales and others complicate an easy geographical understanding of slavery in the United States. As the country expanded Westward and continued encroached on Native American land, some settlers brought slavery with them. The very existence of slavery in these territories sometimes prompted laws that then institutionalized it. In Utah, for example, the presence of enslaved Americans like Hark Wales prompted Brigham Young to pass “An Act in Relation to Service,” which explicitly legalized slavery of African American and Native American people. These cases of slavery in the West illustrate historian Quintard Taylor’s articulation of slavery’s geography: “No region of the nation was innocent of the ‘peculiar institution’ because it simply was not that peculiar. Slavery was never the Southern institution. It was the American institution.”

To be sure, relatively few Mormons were slaveholders. Some church members were quite vocal in their abolitionist views. One major reason we can tell the stories of Marinda Redd Bankhead and her compatriots, however, is that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a scriptural mandate “to preserve records of historical significance for future generations.” Even though these stories speak to a complicated and turbulent racial history in the nineteenth century, Church historians work to preserve both the stories of these enslaved Americans and their final resting places. Amy Tanner Thiriot, who contributed the entries about Marinda, Hark, Jacob, and others to the Burial Project, has scoured church members’ diaries, census records, and other historical documents to recover the names and histories of the enslaved Americans who were bound to the Mormon Church. By finding these records in their archives, Amy is helping contemporary Americans understand the legacy of slavery in the United States.

The graves of Marinda, Alex, Jacob and Hark stand as material reminders of slavery’s pervasive reach in the United States. Their stories show us that the West was not only haunted by the specter of slavery, but the land itself was populated by the enslaved. Moving beyond the simple geographical delineation of “southern slavery and



Headstone of Marinda Redd Bankhead  
 Photo: Findagrave.com

northern freedom” brings the forces that ensured the existence of slavery in the United States into sharper focus. Just because a place was understood to be “free”, certainly did not mean there was no slavery. For example, there was a tangle of local and interpersonal forces that bound Marinda Bankhead to the Redd family on the journey through Kansas. Western settlers, black and white, found themselves struggling to understand the parameters of freedom and slavery in land that had no legislation. The lives and deaths of these African-American westerners speak to a complex, varied and paradoxical history: for them, the West was not a land of opportunity. Far from it, the West brought slavery into a new landscape.

More about the Spanish Fork Cemetery:  
[www.spanishfork.org](http://www.spanishfork.org)

Mormon Pioneer (Winter Quarters) Cemetery:  
[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION INITIATIVES

### *The African American Cemetery, Wessyngton Plantation Cedar Hill, TN*

John F. Baker Jr. has submitted the names of over 600 individuals to the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans. Baker's staggering contribution is a testament of his lifelong pursuit to document the lives of enslaved African-Americans in Tennessee. On October 3, 2015, Baker's commitment to our nation's past was expressed in another way. That day, despite rain and threatening skies, more than two hundred individuals gathered at the historic Washington family plantation, Wessyngton, in Robertson County, Tennessee, which has been privately owned outside the family since 1983. The crowd was a mix of descendants from both Wessyngton's slaveholding and enslaved families from all over the United States. They had come together for the dedication ceremony of a memorial two decades in the making: a fourteen foot by six-foot granite monument with the names, birth and death dates of 446 enslaved African Americans. One hundred of them are known to be buried at the cemetery, and eleven who served in the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War.

Following the opening prayer and spiritual hymnal, Baker addressed them directly: "When I call your ancestor's name I would like you to stand up or raise your hand to give acknowledgement to them." As he read the names, the audience responded with applause, laughter, and tears. Then rough grave markers were held aloft in remembrance

of those known – or believed to be – buried there. The service, created and led by descendants of the enslaved and the Washington family, was the realization of local work and community healing, stimulated a turning point in the history of the Washington family plantation.

In 1796, Joseph Washington, a very distant cousin of George Washington, moved his family from Virginia to Tennessee and established Wessyngton Plantation. The plantation was built and maintained by the labor of enslaved Africans and African Americans. Of the 274 whose labor made the 15,000 acre farm the largest tobacco producer in antebellum America, only two were ever sold off the plantation. This helped keep Wessyngton's African American families intact for generations. Moreover, many of the formerly enslaved remained connected to the plantation after their emancipation.

The outbreak of the Civil War enabled a number of enslaved people to escape and flee to Nashville where some joined the United States Colored Troops. Following Emancipation, more African Americans left Wessyngton to settle in Northern cities or the West. Still, many remained in the area and even returned to the plantation to work for Joseph Washington's son, George, as sharecroppers and employees. As Baker explains, George Washington emerged from the 1860s as one of the region's most powerful planters. Therefore, his plantation was one of the few places where African Americans could secure a reliable paycheck in the depressed Southern economy. Baker's great-great grandparents, Emanuel Washington and Henny Washington, for example, returned to work on the plantation as the cook and head laundress.



The African American Cemetery Memorial Monument at Wessyngton  
Photo courtesy of John F. Baker, Jr.

The childhood recollections of Stanley Frazer Rose, Joseph Washington's 3rd great grandson, suggest that close relationships between the "white Washingtons" and "black Washingtons" also contributed to Wessyngton's multi-generational legacy. Rose reminisces of Baker's ancestors, "Emanuel Washington's ghost stories were legendary," and his portrait hung in the main house. Indeed, Wessyngton slave descendants were deeply tied to Wessyngton Plantation and over the decades visited the cemetery during family reunions. The African American Cemetery was a site of exceptional historical, social and spiritual importance.

For the past two centuries, the African-American Cemetery at Wessyngton looked to outsiders like an ordinary field. But knowledge about this sacred place and those buried there was preserved by oral history and family traditions. The graves were marked with rough field stones, roses and wildflowers, and as late as 1928, families laid their deceased to rest at the cemetery in community services that blended African and Christian rituals. In subsequent decades, the unmarked graves were unattended in the open field, but in 1976, Baker made a discovery that would lead to positive changes.

As a thirteen year-old, Baker was drawn to a photograph of four formerly enslaved Americans in his social studies textbook. He showed the portrait to his grandmother. "My grandmother was very excited about seeing the photograph," Baker recalls. She recognized two of its subjects: her grandparents! This incredible coincidence was a revelation for Baker. It illuminated his family's history and he wanted to know more. Baker discovered that his family had been enslaved on the nearby Wessyngton Plantation. With encouragement from his great uncle, Baker contacted Anne Kinsolving Talbott, a sixth-generation descendant of Joseph Washington, who was living on the plantation at the time. Talbott invited the curious young man out for a tour the following Sunday.

Talbott took Baker through the centuries-old Wessyngton mansion and tobacco barns, past the smoke houses and slave quarters, and eventually led him down a steep hill and over worn fences and up another hill to the slave cemetery. She explained that his great-great grandparents as well as a number of his earlier ancestors were buried there. The visit marked the first of many, and it inspired Baker to research his family's genealogy. He began collecting census records and thousands of death certificates as well as studying the Washington's detailed family records donated to the Tennessee State Library and Archives by the Washington family, including slave birth registers from 1795-1860, slave bills of sale, letters, and diaries. Before long, he was copying documents for people he recognized "in case at some point in the future people asked me about their ancestors." Fast forward thirty years: Baker had compiled a groundbreaking genealogy of nearly every African-American family from the plantation, culminating in a book, *The Washingtons of Wessyngton Plantation: Stories of My Family's Journey to Freedom* (Simon & Schuster, 2009).

Baker then spearheaded an effort to memorialize Wessyngton's enslaved population and their final resting place. Descendants of the enslaved and the plantation owner of Wessyngton were enthusiastic about the work. Stanley Frazer Rose met with Baker in 2006 at Wessyngton. Rose listened to Baker's plan: "John said that his two goals were to get a fence around the cemetery so that the cows could



Seated left: Emanuel Washington 1824-1907, the cook; seated right: Henny Washington 1837-1913, the head laundress, wife of Emanuel. Standing left: Allen Washington 1825-1890s, the head dairyman. Standing right: Granville Washington 1831-1898, the valet of George A. Washington, owner of Wessyngton Plantation.

*Photo courtesy of John F. Baker, Jr.*

not trod on the graves, and to get a new monument erected that would list all the African-Americans who had been enslaved on the plantation ... I realized then that a neglected 'sacred space' is a tragedy that must be corrected." Rose was moved to pay for the wrought iron fence, a decision that evolved from the larger experience of working with John and "knowing the importance of the African American cemetery to him, to other descendants, and to our shared history." Thirty-six Washington "Northern" and "Southern" cousins made financial donations to a special Wessyngton Fund set up by the Tennessee Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Similarly, the descendants of Wessyngton's enslaved community were active supporters. They participated in oral history interviews and local educational initiatives.

The African-American Cemetery at Wessyngton is an invaluable model of community work. Coming together around the site has inspired healing, reconciliation, knowledge, and unexpected connections. It was an emotional occasion when all descendants of Wessyngton Plantation gathered in October of 2015 for the memorial dedication. After the ceremony, people exchanged information, took pictures, shared stories, reconnected, and forged new friendships.

More about the Wessyngton Plantation and the African American Cemetery:  
[www.wessyngton.com](http://www.wessyngton.com)

View the Memorial Monument Dedication Ceremony and other Documentaries (YouTube):  
"Memorial Monument Dedication Ceremony, African American Cemetery"  
"Wessyngton Plantation: A Family's Road to Freedom"

## PRESIDENTIAL ESTATES AND PLANTATIONS

### *The Slave Cemetery*

#### *George Washington's Mount Vernon*

Mount Vernon, Virginia

George Washington's Mount Vernon is one of four presidential estates to contribute information to the Burial Project. At the time of his death, George Washington's estate enslaved a population of 317 people. Washington himself had been a slave owner for fifty-six years, beginning at eleven years of age when he inherited ten slaves from his deceased father. In his own will, Washington mandated the freeing of his slaves upon his wife's death, making him the only slaveholding Founder to put provisions for manumission in his will.

Very little information exists about the enslaved community at Mount Vernon or the interment of their remains on the plantation. In fact, despite the volumes of papers and letters that Washington kept, little is known about the history of the sacred wooded area thought to be the resting place for dozens of African Americans who were enslaved at Mount Vernon. During Washington's lifetime, the cemetery is never mentioned, leaving a question as to when the woods started to be used as a cemetery.

In 2014, Mount Vernon's archaeologists led by Luke Pecoraro, began a multi-year project to learn more about the Slave Cemetery

at Mount Vernon. They began conducting an ongoing archaeological survey of the Slave Cemetery on the estate. From an archaeological standpoint, the best way to commemorate the lives of those free and enslaved individuals who lived and died at Mount Vernon is to thoroughly document the locations of individual burials on the landscape. Therefore, the primary goal of the survey is to create a map that shows exactly where individuals are interred on the ridge just southwest of Washington's tomb. During 2015, the project's second year, archaeologists excavated an area of 1,825 square feet in the wooded area, and recorded a total of 21 burial features. This brings the total number of burials found in the cemetery, to date, to 46. To ensure the utmost respect to the people interred in the African American cemetery, their remains will not be excavated during the survey. Mount Vernon's archaeologists have included community engagement in the project by welcoming volunteers ages 16 and older to participate in the survey. *(Content courtesy of [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org) and Luke J. Pecoraro, PhD, Director of Archaeology at Mount Vernon)*

More around the Slave Cemetery Survey:

[www.arcg.is/21HxYII](http://www.arcg.is/21HxYII)

More about the Slave Cemetery at Mount Vernon:

[www.mountvernon.org/preservation/archaeology](http://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/archaeology)



Memorial to the enslaved at Mount Vernon Slave Cemetery

*Photo courtesy of George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate*

# BURIAL GROUNDS

The burial grounds are listed as they were provided to the Burial Project, although some content has been minimally revised for editorial clarity. Selected information about each site has been withheld from this report for the purposes of privacy. The Burial Project relied on the provider (submitter of the burial ground) for the integrity of the content submitted.



East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA

*Photo by Brian Palmer*

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
AL	Coalburg	Enslaved Community	Local History	Abandoned/Poor	N/S	No
AL	Toxey	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
AL	N/S	Plantation/Church	Oral History/Historical Documents	Excellent	Unknown	Yes
AL	Toxey	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	3	No
AL	Northport	Plantation	Oral History/Headstones	N/S	Unknown	Yes
AL	N/S	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Oral History/Historical Documents	Excellent	100	No
AL	Tuscaloosca	Municipal	Local History	Excellent	Unknown	Yes
AL	Huntsville	N/S	N/S	Terrible	N/S	Yes
AL	Vernon	Freedman	Oral History	Good	20	No
AR	Monticello	Church	Historical Documents/Local History	Excellent	33	Yes
AR	Mongolia	Enslaved Community	Epitaph	Poor	300	Yes
AR	Biscoe	Family/Enslaved Community	Family History/Local History	Good	20	Yes
AR	Hamburg	Plantation	Oral History	Poor	1000	Yes
AR	Hamburg	N/S	N/S	Active	1	Yes
AR	Biscoe	Family/Enslaved Community	Family History/Local History	Good	20	Yes
AR	Scott	Plantation/Enslaved Community	Family History	Poor	N/S	Yes
AR	Helena	Municipal	Family History	N/S	N/S	Yes
AR	Dewitt	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S	No
AR	Lunenburg	Municipal	Oral History	Restored	Unknown	Yes
AR	N/S	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Oral History/Local and Church History	N/S	N/S	Yes
AR	Warren	Church	Family and Local History	N/S	50	Yes
AR	Appleton	Church/Municipal	Epitaphs	Excellent	1	Yes
CT	Greenwich	Enslaved Community/Family	Local History	Abandoned/Poor	Unknown	No
CT	Wethersfield	Municipal	Historical Documents	Good	2	Yes
CT	North Stonington	Freedman	Epitaphs	Good	1	Yes
CT	Shellton	Family	Oral History/Epitaphs	Excellent	6	Yes
CT	East Haddam	Church	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Excellent	4	Yes
DC	Washington	Church	Local History	Fair	N/S	Yes
DC	Washington	Church/Freedman	Historical Documents	N/S	Unknown	No
DC	Washington	Church	Oral History	Poor	1000	Yes
FL	Lulu	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs/Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
FL	Ft. Myers	Church	Oral History	Poor	1	Yes
FL	Casselberry	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Fair	75	Yes
GA	Leslie	Family/Church	Epitaphs	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
GA	Thomasville	Plantation	Family History	Abandoned	Unknown	N/S
GA	Lafayette	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Abandoned	35	Yes
GA	Atlanta	Family	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Poor	Unknown	No
GA	Atlanta	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs	Fair	50	Yes
GA	Tyrone	Church	Epitaphs/Historical Documents	Poor	2	Yes
GA	Hamilton	Family	Family History/Epitaphs	Good	Unknown	Yes
GA	East Dublin	Church	Oral History/Local History	Fair	30	N/S
GA	Sapelo Island	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Fair	50	Yes
GA	Luthersville	Family	Oral History	Good	Unknown	No
GA	Mansfield	N/S	Family History	Abandoned	Unknown	N/S
GA	Locust Grove	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs/Historical Documents	Abandoned	184	Yes
GA	Lawrenceville	Municipal	Oral History/Epitaphs	Reclaimed	100	No
GA	Ranger	Family	Oral History/Epitaphs	Good	40	No
GA	Watkinsville	Family/Confederate	Local History/Epitaphs	Good	15	Yes
GA	Mansfield	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Historical Documents/Family History	Good	35	Yes
IL	Carbondale	Municipal	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Excellent	30	Yes
IL	Chicago	Municipal	Local History	Abandoned	10	Yes
IA	Moorhead	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Oral History	Good	N/S	Yes
IA	Marion	Municipal	Local History	Excellent	1	Yes
IA	Milton	Family	Family History	N/S	1	Yes
KS	Junction City	Enslaved Community	Family Records	Excellent	Unknown	No
KY	Nazareth	Church	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Very Good	30	Yes
KY	Lexington	Enslaved Community	Oral History/Local History/Epitaphs	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
KY	Utica	Church	Historical Documents	Abandoned/Poor	N/S	Yes
KY	Lowell	Family/Enslaved Community	Oral History	Poor	Unknown	Yes
KY	N/S	Church	Family History/Oral History	Good	100	No
KY	Lexington	N/S	N/S	N/S	4	Yes
KY	Bloomfield	Colored	Oral History/Local History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
KY	Adairville	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Auburn	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Guthrie	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Elkton	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Hopkinsville	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Logan County	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
KY	Todd County	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Simpson County	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Smith Grove	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	N/S	N/S
KY	Brooklyn	Family	Family History/Oral History	N/S	120	Yes
LA	Keithville	Church	N/S	Poor	300	Yes
LA	Waterproff	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned/ Obstructed	Unknown	Yes
LA	Rayville	Church	Family History	Abandoned	40	Yes
MD	Annapolis	Plantation/Enslaved Community	Historical Documents/Family History	Good	1	Yes
MD	Owings	N/S	Oral History/Historical Documents	N/S	N/S	No
MA	Stockbridge	Municipal	N/S	Good	1	Yes
MA	Winchendon	Municipal	Epitaphs	N/S	1	Yes
MA	Boston	Colonial	Epitaphs/Historical Documents	N/S	3	Yes
MI	Brighton	Municipal	Oral History/Epitaphs	Excellent	1	Yes
MS	Magnolia	Family	Oral History	Fair	N/S	No
MS	Terry	Church	N/S	Poor	N/S	Yes
MS	Ocean Springs	Municipal	Family History	Poor/Good	Unknown	Yes
MS	N/S	Church	Local History	Good	12	Yes
MS	Greenville	N/S	Historical Documents	Poor	N/S	N/S
MS	Rich	Plantation	Epitaphs	Abandoned	100	Yes
MS	Hernando	Municipal	Local History	Good	200	Yes
MS	Swan Lake	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Abandoned	N/S	N/S
MS	Pascagoula	Mormon	Oral History	N/S	Unknown	No
MS	Corinth	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Oral History	Fair	N/S	Yes
MS	West Point	Enslaved Community	Oral History/Local History	Poor/Sunken	Unknown	No
MS	Shannon	Church	Local History	Abandoned	60	Yes
MS	Crystal Springs	Enslaved Community/Church	Oral History/Local History	Abandoned	150	Yes
MS	Greenville	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	N/S	No
MO	Clarksville	Municipal	Oral History	Good	35	No
MO	Springfield	Plantation	N/S	Poor	Unknown	No
MO	Moberly	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Poor	Unknown	No
MO	St. Louis	Church	Cemetery Records	Excellent	Unknown	Yes
MO	Independence	N/S	Historical Documents	Poor	N/S	No
MO	Gallatin	Freedman	Oral History	Good	Unknown	Yes

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
MO	N/S	Church/Municipal	Historical Documents/Local History	Excellent	Unknown	No
MO	Coffman	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
MO	Kansas City	N/S	Historical Documents	Excellent	Unknown	Yes
MO	Troy	Family	Oral History	N/S	20	Yes
MO	Brookfield	N/S	Oral History/Epitaphs	N/S	1	Yes
NE	Omaha	Church	Church	Excellent	1	No
NH	Kensington	N/S	Local History	Abandoned	7	Yes
NH	Portsmouth	Municipal	Oral History/Historical Documents	N/S	Unknown	No
NH	Portsmouth	Family	Oral History/Historical Documents	N/S	12	No
NH	Greenland	Family	Oral History/Local History	Abandoned	6	No
NJ	Swedesboro	Family	Historical Documents/Oral History	Poor	10	Yes
NJ	Hazen	Municipal	Epitaphs	Maintained	1	Yes
NJ	Hillside Ave	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Historical Documents	Abandoned	Unknown	No
NJ	Hazen	Municipal	Epitaphs	Maintained	1	Yes
NJ	Leonia	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs	N/S	N/S	N/S
NJ	Hopewell	African American	Local History	N/S	N/S	No
NJ	Mahwa	N/S	N/S	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
NJ	Bedminster	N/S	Local History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
NJ	Basking Bridge	Church	Epitaphs	Excellent	6	Yes
NJ	Kendall Park	Family	Historical Documents	N/S	1	No
NJ	Monmouth	Family	Epitaphs	Abandoned	10	No
NY	Wantagh	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents/Oral History	Neglected	50	No
NY	Brooklyn	Church	Local History	Obstructed	N/S	No
NY	Orient	Family	Local History	N/S	Unknown	Yes
NY	Queens	Church	Oral History	Poor	Unknown	No
NY	Hudson Falls	Family	Family/Oral History	Fair-Poor	Unknown	No
NY	Shelter Island	Plantation	Historical Documents/Oral History	Good	Unknown	Yes
NY	Menands	N/S	Local History	Good	12	Yes
NY	Orient	Enslaved Community	Local History	Excellent	18	Yes
NY	Orient	Plantation	Epitaphs	Fair	100	No
NY	Lloyd Neck	Family	Local History	Good	N/S	Yes
NY	Hunts Point, Bronx	Enslaved Community	Local History	Obstructed	N/S	No
NC	Durham	Freedman	Historical Documents	Abandoned	700	Yes

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
NC	Lewiston-Woodville	Municipal	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
NC	Bethania	Church	Historical Documents	Excellent	1000	No
NC	Creswell	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Poor/Abandoned	400	Yes
NC	Como	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Poor	20	No
NC	Kinston	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Epitaphs	Abandoned	Unknown	No
NC	Matthews	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
NC	Fairview	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	28	Yes
NC	Richlands	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
NC	Turkey	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
NC	Bellarthur	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	15	Yes
NC	Burgaw	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	70	Yes
NC	Roxboro	Family	Family History	Poor/Abandoned	100	No
NC	Durham	N/S	N/S	Poor	Unknown	Yes
NC	Lenoir	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Oral History/Epitaphs	N/S	Unknown	No
NC	Ramcat	Church	Oral History	Poor	N/S	No
NC	Murphy	Plantation	Family History	Poor	200	N/S
NC	N/S	Family	Oral History/Epitaphs	Poor	N/S	Yes
NC	Grays Creeks	Church	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Good	150	No
NC	Scotland Neck	Freedman	N/S	Poor/Flooded	Unknown	Yes
NC	N/S	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Family History/Oral History	Poor	Unknown	No
NC	Charlotte	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Poor	N/S	No
NC	Godwin	N/S	Local History	Poor	20	Yes
NC	Carrboro	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	Excellent	18	Yes
NC	Creston	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs/Oral History	Abandoned	16	Yes
NC	Hayesville	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Fair	20	Yes
NC	Smithfield	Freedman	Oral History	Poor	10	No
NC	N/S	Plantation	Oral History	Overgrown	100	Yes
NC	Salisbury	Municipal/Church	Historical Documents	Good	N/S	No
NC	Chapel Hill	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Fair	35	Yes
NC	Star	Plantation	Oral History	Abandoned	25	Yes
NC	Kinston	Family/Church	Local History	Poor	100	Yes
NC	Shannon	Church	Family History	N/S	N/S	No
OH	Bedford	Municipal	Local History	Maintained	N/S	Yes

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
OH	Marietta	Municipal	Historical Documents	Maintained	Unknown	Yes
PA	N/S	Enslaved Community/Veteran	Historical Documents	Maintained	N/S	No
PA	Philadelphia	Church	Historical Documents	Obstructed/ Playground	Unknown	No
PA	Philadelphia	Family	Oral History	Poor	50	No
PA	Wayne	African American	Local History/Oral History	N/S	70	Yes
PA	Gettysburg	Freedman	Historical Documents	Good	4	No
PA	Straban Township	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
PA	Buckingham	Church	Oral History/Local History	N/S	Unknown	No
PA	Middleton Township	Church	Oral History/Local History	Fair	Unknown	Yes
PA	Solebury Township	Church	Local History/Epitaphs	Excellent	1	Yes
PA	Buckingham Township	Church	Local History	N/S	12	No
PA	Philadelphia	Church	Local History	Abandoned	1	Yes
PA	New Britain Borough	Church	Local History/Epitaphs	Good	1	No
PA	Maple Glen	Church	Local History	Unknown	N/S	No
PA	Doylestown Township	N/S	Local History	Abandoned	N/S	Yes
RI	Newport	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Historical Documents	Good	200	Yes
RI	Newport	African American	Local History	N/S	N/S	Yes
SC	Bethel	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Poor	N/S	No
SC	Camden	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	N/S	50	Yes
SC	Estill	Plantation	Oral History	N/S	N/S	Yes
SC	Pinewood	N/S	Oral History	Good	N/S	Yes
SC	Pumpkintown	Church	Oral History/Historical Documents	Excellent	Unknown	Yes
SC	Clemson	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Historical Documents	Good	Unknown	No
SC	Awendaw	Freedman	Local History	Poor	N/S	Yes
SC	Eutawville	Plantation	Local History/Historical Documents	Fair	Unknown	N/S
SC	Yemassee	Plantation	Local History	Abandoned	5	Yes
SC	Belton	Church	Oral History	Good	Unknown	No
SC	Edgefield	Enslaved Community	N/S	N/S	Unknown	No
SC	Surfside Beach	Enslaved Community	Local History	Obstructed/Lot	10	Yes
SC	Andrews	Church	Epitaphs/Historical Documents	N/S	10	No

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
SC	St. Helena	Plantation/Freedman	Oral History/Historical Documents	N/S	20	No
SC	Georgetown	Enslaved Community/Plantation	Oral History/Historical Documents	Abandoned	50	N/S
TN	Memphis	Family	Oral History	Obstructed/ Apartment Building	Unknown	No
TN	Clarksville	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
TN	Beans Creek	Family	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
TN	New Tazewel	Family	Epitaphs	Excellent	Unknown	No
TN	Bartlett	Church	Oral History/Local History	Abandoned	Unknown	No
TN	Sewanee	N/S	Historical Documents	Poor/Abandoned	2	Yes
TN	Chattanooga	African American	N/S	Abandoned	N/S	No
TN	Gravel Hill	Family	Oral History	Unknown	Unknown	No
TN	Brentwood	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs	Excellent	N/S	Yes
TN	Sparta	Family	Historical Records	Good	25	No
TN	New Tazewell	Family	Oral History	N/S	N/S	N/S
TN	Lenoir City	Family/Plantation	Oral History/Family History	N/S	Unknown	No
TN	Chattanooga	Plantation	Historical Documents	Abandoned	10	Yes
TN	Nashville	Freedman	N/S	Poor/Underwater	N/S	N/S
TN	N/S	Plantation	Epitaphs	Excellent	5	N/S
TN	Guys	Enslaved Community/Freedman	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
TN	Gravel Hill	Family	Oral History	Unknown	Unknown	No
TN	Cedar Hill	Plantation/Enslaved Community	Oral History/Plantation Documents	Excellent	200	No
TN	Roberston County* (91 Burial Grounds)	African American	Mostly Death Certificates	N/S	Unknown	N/S
TN	Hermitage	Reburial Site	Epitaphs	N/S	60	No
TN	Oak Ridge	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	N/S	90	Yes
TN	Seymour	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
TN	Jefferson City	Enslaved Community	Site Marker	Excellent	Unknown	No
TN	Butler	Family	Local History/Oral History	Fair	8	Yes
TN	Oak Ridge	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents	Excellent	N/S	Yes
TN	Franklin	Family	Historical Documents/Epitaphs	N/S	20	Yes
TN	Rachel's Lane	Presidential Estate	Oral History/Archaeological Investigation	Good	60	No
TX	Gonzales	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents/Oral History	Unknown	Unknown	Yes
TX	Waskom	Enslaved Community	Oral History/Epitaphs	N/S	50	Yes
TX	N/S	Church	Family History	Fair	N/S	No

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
TX	N/S	Church	Local History	Good	Unknown	Yes
TX	Leona	Church	Oral History	Good	Unknown	N/S
TX	Stafford	N/S	Historical Documents	Good	2	Yes
TX	Waskom	Church	Epitaphs	Fair	Unknown	Yes
TX	Dallas	Freedman	Local History	Grim	2000	Yes
TX	N/S	Church	Family History	Unknown	N/S	Yes
TX	Pilot Point	Freedman	Epitaphs	Poor	N/S	Yes
UT	Sandy	Municipal	Historical Documents	Good	6	No
UT	Parowan	Municipal	Historical Documents	Excellent	1	No
UT	N/S	Family	Oral History	Rural	1	Yes
UT	Spanish Fork	Municipal	Historical Documents	Excellent	3	No
UT	Parowan	Municipal	Local History/Family History	Excellent	1	No
VA	Charlottesville	Presidential Estate	Oral History/Archaeological Investigation	Good	42+	5 graves marked
VA	Danville	Plantation/Enslaved Community	Epitaphs/Oral History	Endangered	N/S	No
VA	Crtiz	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs	Good	50	Yes
VA	Buchanan	Church	Local History/Oral History	Excellent	2	No
VA	N/S	Enslaved Community	Oral History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
VA	Nathalie	Family	Epitaphs	Abandoned	2	Yes
VA	Danville	Plantation	Historical Documents	N/S	100	Yes
VA	N/S	Freedman/Family	Historical Documents	Good	Unknown	Yes
VA	Seatack	Freedman	Oral History/Local History	Abandoned/Poor	Unknown	No
VA	N/S	N/S	Local History	Abandoned	Unknown	Yes
VA	Buchanan	Church	Oral History/Local History	Excellent	2	Yes
VA	Mount Vernon	Presidential Estate	Oral History/Archaeological Investigation	Good	51	No
VA	Sweet Briar	Plantation	Epitaphs/Oral History	Maintained	Unknown	Yes
VA	Boones Mill	Family	Local History	Excellent	20	Yes
VA	Unincorporated	N/S	N/S	Abandoned	60	Yes
VA	Halifax	Family	N/S	Fair	N/S	Yes
VA	Richmond	African American	Historical Documentation	Poor	Unknown	Yes
VA	N/S	Enslaved Community	Oral History/Epitaphs	N/S	100	Yes
VA	Beech Grove	Enslaved Community	Oral History/Local History	Poor/Obstructed	125	Yes
VA	Quicksburg	Enslaved Community	Historical Documents/Oral History	N/S	25	Yes
VA	N/S	Enslaved Community	Epitaphs	Good	67	Yes

## BURIAL GROUNDS

STATE	CITY	BURIAL GROUND TYPE*	EVIDENCE	CONDITION	INDIVIDUAL GRAVES*	MARKED?
VA	Manassas	Private	Oral History/Family History	Good	4	Yes
VA	Mineral	Family	Oral History/Historical Documents	Fair	2	No
VA	Claudeville	Family	Epitaphs	Good	20	Yes
VA	Stratford	Plantation	Oral History	Good	9	Yes
VA	Montpelier Station	Presidential Estate	Oral History/Archaeological Investigation	Good	200	100 graves marked
WV	Friendly	Municipal	Local History	N/S	7	N/S
WV	Glen Hayes	Family	Oral History	Good	10	N/S



Red Clay Negro Cemetery, Person County, North Carolina

*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*

## TERMS USED IN SUBMISSIONS

**N/S:** Information was not submitted to project

**Obstructed:** Burial ground exists but is covered by a building or other infrastructure

**Enslaved Community:** A burial ground or grave site that was created by an enslaved community (“slave cemetery”, “slave graveyard”)

**Oral History:** Location and details of burial ground are documented by memory of family or local residents

**Epitath:** Physical grave markers, monuments, historical markers present at the submitted site

**Local History:** Historical documents or lore unique to region or area of the submitted site; county records, town documents, newspapers

**Individual Burials:** Number of formerly enslaved people buried at this site

**Robertson County, TN:** This entry is from a single submission documenting multiple burial grounds – 91 in total

**Historical Documents:** Broader historical indicators; census records, published documents, etc.

**Municipal:** State, county, town led cemeteries that are managed or were managed by such a body

**Family Documents:** Documents related to family: property/land deeds, death certificates, birth certificates

## \*BURIAL GROUND TYPES

**Enslaved Community:** A burial ground or grave site that was created by an enslaved community (“slave cemetery”, “slave graveyard”)

**Church:** Burial ground founded by a church or located on a church property

**Plantation:** Burial ground located on a former plantation property

**Municipal/Community:** Cemetery or burial ground founded by a city or town

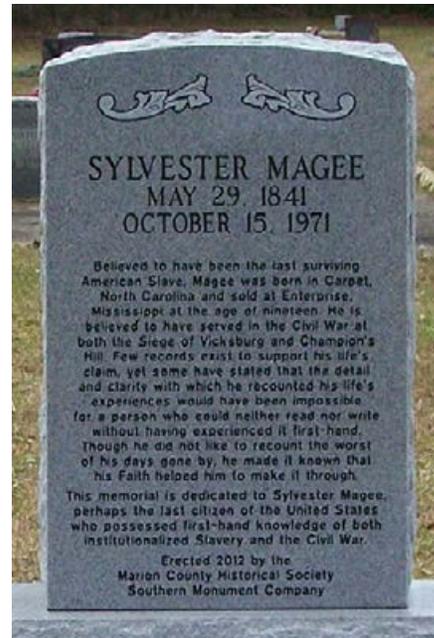
**Freedman/African American:** Burial ground founded by formerly enslaved or free Americans after Emancipation

**Reburial:** Not an original burial site. Remains of the deceased have been reinterred at this site.

**Mormon:** Cemetery founded by Mormon community

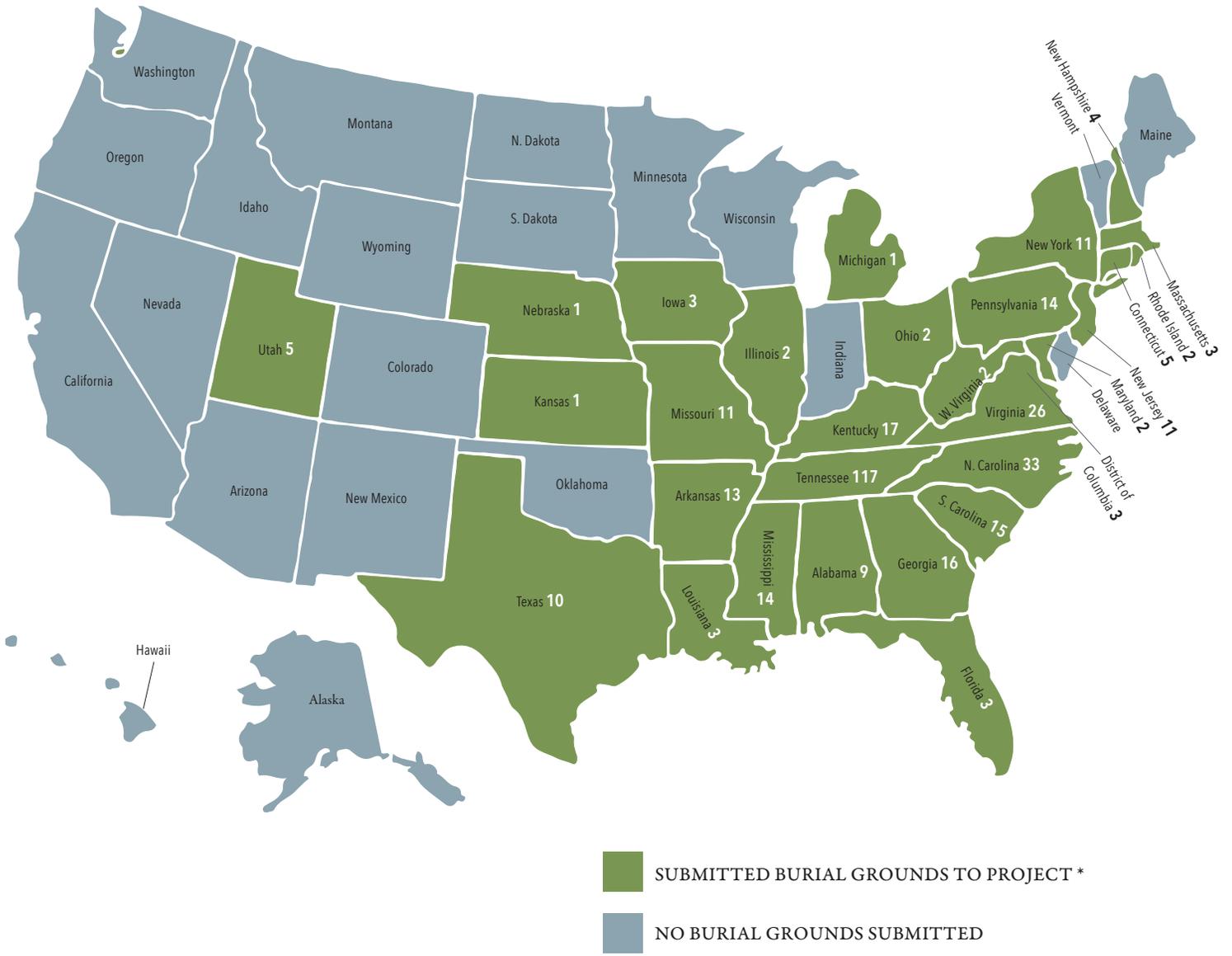


Sylvester Magee  
*Courtesy of Bret B. Bradley Collection,  
 Marion County Historical Society*

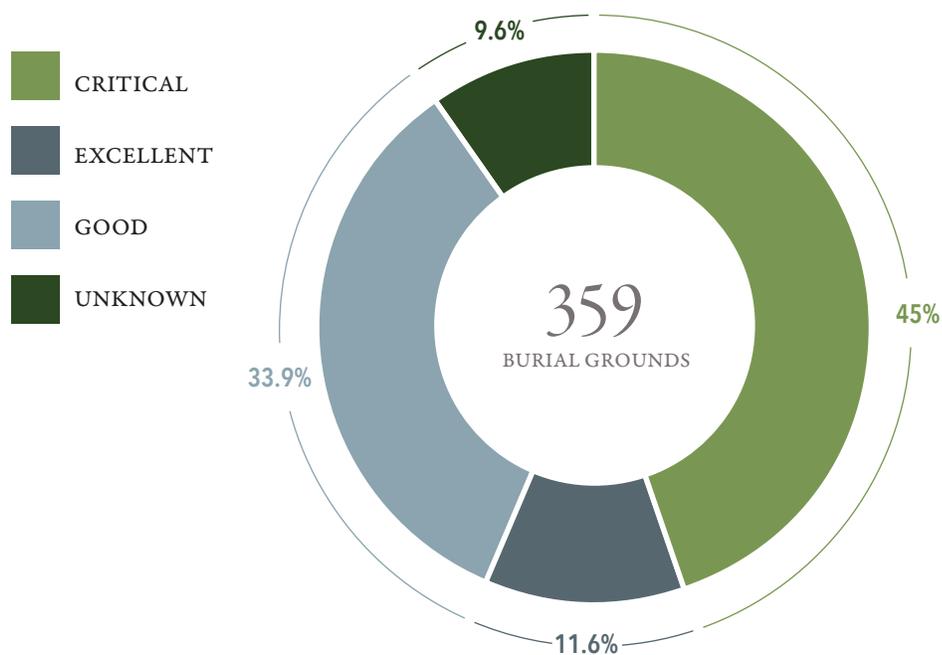


Grave of Sylvester Magee  
*Courtesy of Bret B. Bradley Collection,  
 Marion County Historical Society*

# SUBMISSIONS BY STATE



CONDITION OF BURIAL GROUNDS SUBMITTED TO PROJECT



TOTAL BURIAL GROUNDS SUBMITTED TO PROJECT\*

359

BURIAL GROUNDS

11,587

INDIVIDUAL GRAVES

31

BURIAL GROUNDS ON  
A HISTORICAL REGISTER

\*Approximate totals as of October 2016.  
Total for "Individual Graves" does not reflect sites with "Unknown" or "N/S" individual burials.



*“One of the most important things a nation can do is to remember. This important National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans brings to light the names, the places, and the stories of people whose lives shaped this nation but are often forgotten.”*

LONNIE G. BUNCH III

*Founding Director*

*Smithsonian National Museum of*

*African Museum History and Culture*

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OPPOSITE: Burial of Harriet Tubman, March 1913

Fort Hill Cemetery, Auburn, New York

*Photo courtesy of The Washington Post*



## MOVING FORWARD

The burials and stories submitted to the *Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans (Burial Project)*, are stirring. They are an inspiration, and are why the work to establish a national repository continues. The task before us is to not only build a resource that holds the location of gravesites and identities of the deceased, but to also address issues of protection. To this end, Sandra Arnold founded the Periwinkle Initiative, a public humanities nonprofit dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of enslaved Americans. Working closely with institutional advisors including the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University and the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition at Yale University, the Periwinkle Initiative's core project will be the National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans (NBDEA) – the first national repository to document individual burials and burial grounds of enslaved Americans. The repository will be free and publicly-accessible, and will be designed to scale with time as burials are discovered and research about the sites evolve.

In addition, the Periwinkle Initiative will advocate for better historic preservation policies for the sites, and explore ways to foster and protect the public memory of enslaved Americans. Furthermore, prior to the NBDEA's public launch, the nonprofit will focus on issues that are crucial to populating the repository and ensuring a secure experience for public searches. They included a strong sustainability plan for the database, verification process for burial entries, and privacy policies.

Generated by the information submitted to the Burial Project, the NBDEA will further allow users to contribute burial sites to the database for documentation, as well as conduct searches for grounds held within the database. The new website will also provide resources for individuals who want to preserve a burial ground in their community by directing them to local, state and federal agencies that will further help in their protection efforts. Beyond documentation and preservation, the NBDEA will remedy a profound absence in the historical record. By drawing on support and resources from across the country, the NBDEA will repopulate our national memory with the names, stories and final resting places of enslaved Americans. The future website

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Attendants at "Old Slave Day"  
Southern Pines, NC  
*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*



National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans  
Photos courtesy of Periwinkle Initiative

will bring this rich history to life, by serving as a link between the present and the past and a heritage resource for families still searching for those separated by the institution of slavery. It is our hope that the NBDEA can show descendants of enslaved Americans their family's history in a new way. Moreover, by collecting individual stories, the NBDEA will offer historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and other scholars a multi-perspective understanding of slavery. By attending to the lives of individuals rather than broad national trends, we can, for example, understand patterns of post-emancipation migration with new precision.

## THE WEBSITE – NATIONAL BURIAL DATABASE OF ENSLAVED AMERICANS

The National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans (NBDEA) will unfold in phases that allow the project team to roll out features of the database as they are completed. Together, the Periwinkle Initiative, and the Second Story design agency will create a destination site for those who want to learn, as well as engage in establishing the NBDEA. The new website will foster a community of researchers, historians and the general public, who are devoted to honoring these individuals and their final resting places by contributing to this ongoing work.

## THREE PHASES OF THE BURIAL DATABASE LAUNCH

### PHASE 1: Contribution and Stories

Through an extensive public-outreach, this phase will support burial submissions and will display interpretive stories which will educate visitors about the importance of the NBDEA. This phase will also provide context around the project and provide a foundation for features to come.

### PHASE 2: Burial Database

The site will go live with information from Phase 1. The focus of the project team will shift to implementing the database, including the content management tools.

### PHASE 3: Accounts and Database Integration

With the database complete, it will become integrated and accessible through the site. This phase will include the establishment of an account-creation platform that will provide access for registered users to search and engage with burial site entries.

## About Second Story

*secondstory.com*

Second Story is a network of design studios focusing on responsive environments, and story-driven experiences. For more than 20 years, they have conceptualized, designed, and developed projects that educate, immerse, and activate users around stories of public value. Second Story has designed interactive sites and installations for the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the National Baseball Hall of Fame, National Geographic, Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Civil Rights Museum and the Smithsonian Institute.

## MISSION OF THE NBDEA :

### Inspire

Our goal is for the NBDEA site to feel alive and active. This sense of “work in progress” will inspire site visitors to play an active role in the project by submitting data on burial grounds in their own communities. There will be an emphasis that any contribution, no matter how small or incomplete, will make a difference in this important endeavor.

### Interpret

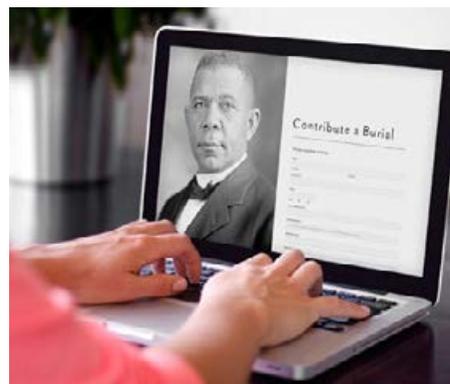
The website will humanize history and breathe life into the burial entries. Interpretive content drawing links and parallels between the past and present will help site visitors feel a personal connection to history.

### Inform

The website’s extensive data on gravesites of the enslaved will allow scholars and researchers to see the complex history and geography of slavery reflected in the burial submissions. By contributing “missing” information on certain gravesites, users can help identify the deceased and locate lost burial grounds.

The potential impact of the National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans (NBDEA) is immeasurable. The work to record the sacred spaces of enslaved Americans started as one of documentation. Today, however, it is much more. It is a work of public history and memory. As the NBDEA develops, the intention is to not only encourage communities to record these grounds in the national repository, but also to preserve them as public sites of remembrance.

While a grave may seem like a bleak reminder of a life lived, these spaces are, by nature, saturated with humanity that can educate and heal. Therefore, the fact that far too many enslaved Americans rest in unmarked and desecrated graves, should make us all indignant and proactive. We can redress the years of neglect by making the preservation and protection of their sacred sites a priority.



National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans  
*Photos courtesy of Periwinkle Initiative*



## *A Letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation*

As the nation's leader in preserving African American historic places, and the diverse stories of all underrepresented communities, the National Trust is committed to telling a truer, more authentic narrative about our collective experiences. We are also committed to a more inclusive preservation movement, and to advocate for the good work of our valued community partners across the country.

The National Trust is delighted to write this letter of support for the worthy National Burial Database of Enslaved Americans project. In our experience, documentation is the first critical step to retrieve much useful information about cultural landscapes and historic places. It can often lead to historic designation for eligible properties, and to our collective appreciation and recognition of the contributions made by enslaved Americans.

Your work to document, protect, and memorialize these sacred spaces with the creation of the database is needed, and it fills a significant gap in the field. It also provides the public the opportunity to share their family's story, and to honor those memories. This exchange with the public can help to build greater appreciation for historic preservation, and to engage new audiences in our work.

The National Trust enthusiastically supports and fully endorses this national database project!

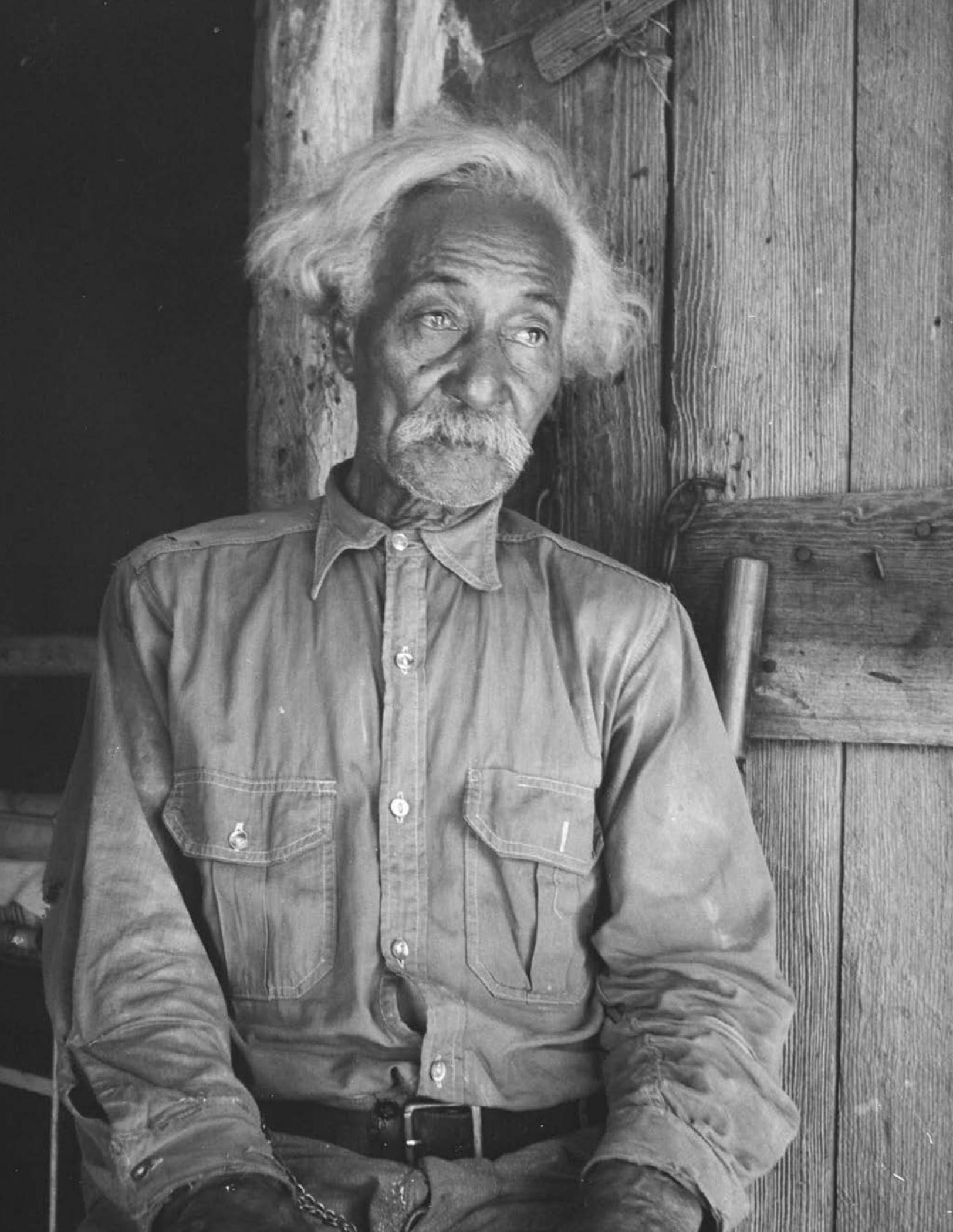
BRENT LEGGS

*Senior Field Officer, Preservation Division*

*National Trust of Historic Preservation*

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OPPOSITE: Burial of Booker T. Washington,  
November 1915, Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL  
*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*



# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

## BOOKS

*Families and Freedom: A Documentary History of African-American Kinship in the Civil War Era* Editors: Ira Berlin and Leslie S. Rowland, New Press. 1998

*Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery* Heather Andrea Williams, University of North Carolina Press. 2014

*Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* Lynn Rainville, University of Virginia Press. 2014

*Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries* Roberta Hughes Wright and Wilbur B. Huges, Visual Ink Press. 1996

*Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom* Editors: Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau and Steven F. Miller, New Press. 2000

*In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* Quintard Taylor. W. W. Norton & Company. 1999

*Slavery Before Race: Europeans, Africans, and Indians at Long Island's Sylvester Manor Plantation 1651–1884* Katherine Howlett Hayes, NYU Press. 2013

## DIGITAL/ONLINE

### Digital Library of American Slavery

[library.uncg.edu/slavery](http://library.uncg.edu/slavery)

The Digital Library on American Slavery is an expanding resource compiling various independent online collections focused upon race and slavery in the American South, made searchable through a single, simple interface. Although the current focus of DLAS is sources associated with North Carolina, there is considerable data contained herein relating to all 15 slave states and Washington, D.C., including detailed personal information about slaves, slaveholders, and free people of color.

### Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS)

[daacs.org](http://daacs.org)

Learn more about enslaved Africans and their descendants living in the Chesapeake, Carolinas, and Caribbean during the Colonial and

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Bob Lemmons

*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*



Georgia Flournoy  
 Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

Antebellum Periods. Analyze and compare archaeological assemblages and architectural plans from different sites at unprecedented levels of detail. DAACS is a community resource, conceived and maintained in the Department of Archaeology at Monticello, in collaboration with the research institutions and archaeologists working throughout the Atlantic world.

#### The African Burial Ground – Final Reports

[gsa.gov/africanburialground](http://gsa.gov/africanburialground)

The African Burial Ground in Manhattan, New York is of unparalleled significance to America's heritage. In recognition of the need to provide for in-depth research and analysis of the site not only in response to the requirements of federal law, but because of the great public, community, and scholarly interest in the site and its history, GSA contracted Howard University to conduct intense research and analysis into the history, bioanthropology, and archaeology of the African Burial Ground.

#### Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database

[slavevoyages.org](http://slavevoyages.org)

The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database has information on almost 36,000 slaving voyages that forcibly embarked over 10 million Africans for transport to the Americas between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The database and the separate estimates interface offer researchers, students and the general public a chance to rediscover the reality of one of the largest forced movements of peoples in world history.

#### Behind the Veil: African American Life in the Jim Crow South

[library.duke.edu/digitalcollections](http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections)

The Behind the Veil Oral History Project was undertaken by Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies from 1993 to 1995. The primary purpose of this documentary project was to record and preserve the living memory of African American life during the age of legal segregation in the American South, from the 1890s to the 1950s.

## EDUCATION & PUBLIC HISTORY

Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice

Brown University [brown.edu/initiatives/slavery-and-justice](http://brown.edu/initiatives/slavery-and-justice)

Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery,  
 Resistance and Abolition

Yale University [yale.edu/glc](http://yale.edu/glc)

The Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery  
 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

[lapiduscenter.org](http://lapiduscenter.org)

Slavery and Remembrance Initiative

UNESCO Slave Route Project

[slaveryandremembrance.org](http://slaveryandremembrance.org)

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture  
 Washington, D.C.

[www.nmaahc.si.edu](http://www.nmaahc.si.edu)

## PRESERVATION

National Trust for Historic Preservation

*savingplaces.org*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation protects significant places representing diverse cultural experiences by taking direct action and inspiring broad public support.

**Selected Online Articles:**

*Preserving African American Historical Places*

Authors: Brent Leggs, Kerri Rubman, and Byrd Wood

*How to Preserve Historic Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*

Author: Sarah Heffern

*Tips for Researching Historic Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*

Author: Sarah Heffern

## RELATED WORKS & INITIATIVES

**African Origins**

*african-origins.org*

African Origins contains information about the migration histories of Africans forcibly carried on slave ships into the Atlantic. Using the personal details of 91,491 Africans liberated by International Courts of Mixed Commission and British Vice Admiralty Courts, this resource makes possible new geographic, ethnic, and linguistic data on peoples captured in Africa and pulled into the slave trade. Through contributions to this website by Africans, members of the African Diaspora, and others, we hope to set in motion the rediscovery of the backgrounds of the millions of Africans captured and sold into slavery during suppression of transatlantic slave trading in the 19th century.

**Freedom on the Move**

*freedomonthemove.org*

The Freedom on the Move project at Cornell University is creating a database that digitizes, preserves, organizes, and enables analysis of all surviving ads of runaway slaves from the historical period of North American slavery. This database will be flexible enough not only to permit multiple kinds of analysis – biographical, textual, statistical, and geographical – but even to allow types of analysis that we cannot yet imagine. Most importantly, both its creation and its use will be accessible to the general public.

**The Freedmen's Bureau Project**

The Freedmen's Bureau Project is a volunteer initiative to make the records of more than 4 million post-Civil War era African-Americans searchable online. To help bring thousands of records to light, the Freedmen's Bureau Project was created as a set of partnerships between FamilySearch International and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS), and the California African American Museum.



Zek Brown

*Photo courtesy of Library of Congress*

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# MEMORY & LANDMARKS

## *Report of the Burial Database Project of Enslaved Americans*

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Vintage portraits in this report are of formerly enslaved Americans.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

*Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938*

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All inquiries regarding this report should be directed to the *Periwinkle Initiative*.

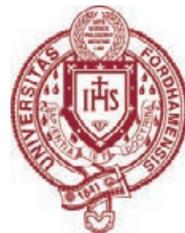
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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**



East End Cemetery, Richmond, VA  
*Photo courtesy of Brian Palmer*





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