

Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project Monthly Newsletter

November 2021

Volume 1, Issue 2



Photograph by Brian Stack

The Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project seeks to tell the stories of the known and previously unknown burials located in Woodland Cemetery on the Clemson University campus. Through research and community engagement we intend to uncover as much as we can about this historic space and to properly commemorate all who are buried here.

In this issue you can read about our Blue Ridge Community Center service day, catch up on our symposium, review our new tour schedule, stay up-to-date on research and community engagement, and find out about upcoming events.

Blue Ridge Community Center Service Day

On Saturday, October 23rd, twenty Clemson University students and several members of the project's staff went to the Blue Ridge Community Center (BRCC) in Seneca, SC, to help **beautify the community garden and green space** as part of Clemson's Fall In Day of Service and the Legacy Council's community outreach initiative. We mulched, pulled weeds, put down soil, and planted seeds. Materials were donated by Clemson University Facilities and landscaping needs were defined in coordination with BRCC, Clemson Rural Health, and Clemson Cooperative Extension. The building in which the BRCC is housed was previously a segregated high school for African Americans, and it remains an



important place for the African American communities in Oconee County. This event was part of our ongoing efforts to engage in restorative justice with local descendant communities. We intend to continue to work to upkeep the Blue Ridge space and assist with activities benefiting other African American community institutions in the region.



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October Symposium in Review

Our first annual research symposium, “**Historic Cemeteries and the University: The Power of Place and Community**” was held Thursday, October 7, 2021. We had 340 people register for the panels and discussions about archaeological methods, community engagement, archival research, and storytelling and memorialization. Thank you to everyone who attended our symposium, presented on a panel, or facilitated a conversation. It was a remarkable experience that connected people throughout the country who are interested in these histories. We will soon put together a committee consisting of faculty, staff, students, and community members to organize our second symposium, which we hope to be a hybrid, in-person and virtual event. Recordings of panels and conversations can be found [on our website](#).



Creative Inquiry Class

Students in Dr. Sara Collini’s Creative Inquiry in History class are working on several research projects and creating social media posts about the cemetery project’s primary sources. Students are looking into the histories of sickness and death among the enslaved community at Fort Hill Plantation, using maps and images to visualize how the cemetery changed over time, researching African American families who lived on the Clemson campus, and helping with our biography series. Students have also analyzed primary sources and their work is now featured on our social media accounts. Some of the sources they have investigated include historical maps of the cemetery, a letter from Thomas Clemson to John C. Calhoun, documents supporting the founding and expansion of Woodland Cemetery, and research conducted by Carrel Cowan-Ricks, an African American anthropologist who worked at Clemson from 1990 to 1993 and studied the cemetery. Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to share your thoughts about these sources and learn about the work being done by these exceptional undergraduate students!



November Cemetery Tours

Join us on or before November 19th for a tour of Woodland Cemetery. Tours will be on hiatus during December and January. Thus far this fall, we have given tours to over 250 community members, faculty, staff, students, and administrators, and have received positive feedback and suggestions about the tour and our work to acknowledge the previously unknown burials in the cemetery. Tour dates are Fridays, November 12 and November 19 at 9am, 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm. No registration required.

Call For Tour Guides

We’re increasing the number of tour guides working on the cemetery project and will **offer free tour guide trainings** to anyone who is interested in giving cemetery tours. Use [this form](#) or email bestack@clemson.edu to sign up to complete a training.



Photograph by Clemson University Creative Operations



Photograph by Brian Stack

Research Update

Photographs by Brian Stack



We have recently published a [resources page on the cemetery website](#) for those wanting to learn about the sources available for a project like ours. Additionally, Dr. Mandi Barnard and Dr. Sara Collini have been undertaking archival research regarding the multilayered histories that led to the creation and maintenance of Woodland Cemetery, as well as previous research into the marked and previously unmarked burials. We are working on a biography series that will delve into the histories of individuals who made important contributions to Woodland Cemetery. Among the individuals we will profile is **Judge Crawford, an African American gardener who worked at Clemson for 57 years.** During his time at Clemson, Crawford witnessed significant changes at the cemetery, on campus, and throughout the surrounding communities. After Judge Crawford's death, faculty recommended that the new campus Camellia Test Garden, located on the Southeast side of the cemetery, which later became the basis for the South Carolina Botanical Garden, be named in his honor. The recommendation was never acted upon. Clemson later planted camellia as part of a landscaped park-like setting near the cemetery. During a walk through the cemetery in 2020, Dr. Jim Bostic, Jr. discovered several blooming camellias. The plants are a fitting tribute to Judge Crawford's life and work, and serve as a reminder of the permanence of African American's contributions to Clemson University and Woodland Cemetery. If you know anything about the recently recovered unmarked burials or Judge Crawford, please email afamburials@clemson.edu.

Community Engagement Update

The rainbow that followed the rainy start to our second **in-person community update event** this fall in Seneca, SC, marked the continuation of wonderful conversations where community members provided us feedback regarding next steps for accessibility in the cemetery and the creation of a local Black Heritage Trail that will include both the cities of Clemson and Seneca, and Clemson University. In November we will launch a **Writing and Performance Group** that will meet monthly to draw creative inspiration from experiences in the cemetery. If you'd like to join that group you [can sign up here](#). Our first **Researching Your Family History Event** was held via Zoom on October 18. Dr. Shelley Murphy provided amazing insights about the kinds of sources families can use to find out about enslaved and free relatives who lived in the nineteenth or early twentieth century. She also discussed tips for how to interrogate various sources for new information and keep track of your research. Check our upcoming events article for details on our next session on November 15. We also gave a **cemetery tour to a group of local artists and songwriters** who will create mixed media art or a song for our Spring Exhibition in collaboration with the Arts Center of Clemson and the Clemson Area African American Museum. Please keep an eye out for that announcement in the Spring. If you have suggestions or want to get involved with research efforts, please contact our Community Engagement Assistant at bestack@clemson.edu.

Finding Descendants of the Enslaved Laborers who built the University of Virginia, 1817-1870

Dr. Shelley Viola Murphy
(familytreegirl @2021 copyright)



Photograph by Marjorie Campbell



Photographs by Brian Stack

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www.clemson.edu/cemetery


Upcoming Events

More detailed information and registration for Zoom events can be found on the [cemetery webpage](#) and our social media.

- Wednesday, November 10, Black History at Clemson, 12:30pm, OLLI
- Monday, November 15, Researching Your Family History Zoom workshop with Dr. Susanna Ashton, 7pm, Zoom
- [Register to join](#) our Writing and Performance Group, which meets monthly.

Free walk-up cemetery tours at 9am, 10am, 11am, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm

- Fridays: November 12, and November 19.
- No registration required.
- Tours begin at entrance on Williamson Road.
- Wear comfortable walking shoes. Masks recommended.



Stories from the
Census: Case Studies
with Tips for Your
Own Ancestry.com
Research into Black
History
Dr. Susanna Ashton
November 15
@ 7 PM

**Researching Your Family History
Zoom Workshops**
Click below to join the workshop
<https://clemson.zoom.us/j/96376477680>

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Woodland Cemetery Introductory Video

The 17-minute introductory video to Woodland Cemetery which we released during the 2021 symposium can be found embedded in the symposium video. The introductory video features historical documents and members of the Research Team, along with Dr. La'Neice Littleton, discussing the history of the cemetery and their research into this historic site.



Photograph by Clemson University Creative Operations

Meet the Research and Community Engagement Team

- **Dr. Rhondda Thomas**, Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature, Call My Name Faculty Director, and Coordinator of Research and Community Engagement for the African American Burial Ground and Woodland Cemetery Historic Preservation Project.
- **Dr. Mandi Barnard**, Research Historian.
- **Dr. Sara Collini**, Postdoctoral Fellow in University History.
- **Marissa Davis**, Graduate Research Assistant.
- **Dr. Brian Stack**, Community Engagement Assistant.
- **15 Undergraduate Student Researchers**, Creative Inquiry in History: The Woodland Cemetery Preservation and Memorial Project, HIST 3890.003, Fall 2021.

And Meet Our Community Engagement Council

- **From Anderson:** J. T. Boseman, Jack Henderson, Nekaun Swinger, Dr. Beatrice Thompson
- **From Clemson-Central:** Rosa Grayden; Dalphene Jameson; Pastor Dr. Zackary Johnson
- **From Pendleton:** Terence Hassan
- **From Oconee County:** Shelby Henderson; Kathy Jenkins; Helen Rosemond-Saunders

Questions about the cemetery project? Email afamburials@clemson.edu or call (864) 656-8855

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