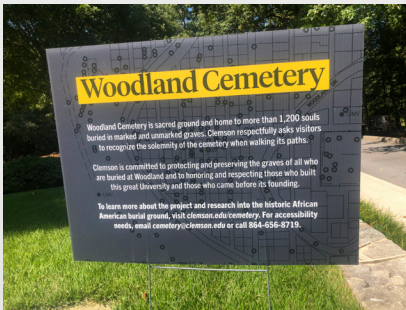


# WOODLAND CEMETERY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

OCTOBER 2022 *Monthly Newsletter* VOLUME 2, ISSUE 10



One of the new recently installed signs in Woodland Cemetery. Photograph by Marquise Drayton

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 we will provide information about the research symposium keynote speaker in Kamau Sadiki of Diving with a Purpose, update the public on Woodland Cemetery, explain the contributions that Carrel Cowan-Ricks put toward to the African American Burial Ground, provide research, community engagement updates, and highlight some upcoming local events.

## *In This Issue*

Page 1: 2022 Research Symposium Keynote Address-Kamau Sadiki, DWP

Page 2: Woodland Cemetery Fall Update

Page 3: History Series #11

Page 4: History Series #11 Continued; Research Update

Page 5: Community Engagement Update; Upcoming Events

Page 6: Upcoming Events; Meet the Team

## 2022 Research Symposium Keynote Address-Kamau Sadiki, DWP

Kamau Sadiki will be the keynote speaker for the Historic Cemeteries in Cultural Contexts, Local to Global research symposium on Monday, October 24, 2022, at 6:30 PM in Self Auditorium (lower level of Strom Thurmond Institute Building). The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required.

Sadiki is a member of the Board of Directors and Lead Instructor of Diving With A Purpose (DWP), an international organization committed to resurrecting the stories of slave shipwrecks from the bottom of the sea through underwater archaeology documentation. DWP and Sadiki were featured in the March 2022 cover story of *National Geographic* entitled "Into the Depths." He is also featured in the NatGeo podcast "Into the Depths," which explores the work of DWP and the exceptional journey of NatGeo Explorer Tara Roberts as she followed Black SCUBA divers across the globe in search of slave shipwrecks.

DWP is a Global Partner with the Slave Wrecks Project, a research initiative of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC, dedicated to the archaeological documentation of shipwrecks involved in the transoceanic slave trade of the 16th to 19th centuries. Sadiki has actively worked on the search and underwater documentation of five slave shipwrecks, including the pirated slave ship Guerrero in southern Florida. He was a member of the field team that confirmed the location of the slave ship Clotilda in the Mobile River in Alabama, the last slave ship to bring captured Africans into America. He is only one of two African Americans who have entered an actual cargo hold of a slave ship, the space in which captured Africans experienced the horror and trauma of the Atlantic Ocean crossing. He was a member of the dive team that documented the slave shipwreck São José Paquete de Africa in Cape Town,



Photograph by Kamau Sadiki

South Africa, the first recovered slave ship in which captured Africans were aboard during the wrecking event. Artifacts of the São José Paquete de Africa are on exhibition in the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

To register only for the keynote by Kamau Sadiki of Diving with a Purpose, please click [here](#).

# WOODLAND CEMETERY PRESERVATION PROJECT

## Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER 2022  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 10

### Woodland Cemetery Fall Update

Dear All,

We hope that you are having a good week. It's hard to believe that fall has arrived. I wanted to provide you an update on Woodland Cemetery operations.

We have had a good start to the semester with refreshed signage at the cemetery in time for football season to request reverence, no littering or tailgating, and to provide website information for visitors interested in learning more. The response for the first two home games has been very positive in honoring all who are buried in the cemetery.

In July, as you may know, the Clemson University Board of Trustees approved a \$3.5 million project at Woodland Cemetery. The project will relocate existing walkways and service drives and add lighting and cameras to enhance security and accessibility in and around the area.

The current schedule calls for work to begin late this year or early next year and is expected to take several months. We will provide regular updates over the coming months throughout the construction to this email list intended for families, descendants, and interested members of the public, on the [Woodland Cemetery website](#), and in the monthly newsletter. If you would like to add someone to the recipient list, then feel free to email me at [afamburials@clemson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu).

This project will be carried out under guiding principles previously adopted by the Board:

- Existing burials in Woodland Cemetery will not be disturbed;
- We will honor and respect all graves through an appropriate preservation plan; and
- All burials must be consistent with the Guiding Principles, including archeological oversight and utilizing appropriate methods.

It is important to also point out that:

- Any disturbance of the ground at Woodland will be done under archeological oversight;
- Construction will be suspended to accommodate interments that occur during the project; and
- Access to the cemetery or portions of the cemetery will be limited during certain periods.
- We will make every effort to communicate advance notice of those restrictions in email and on the [Woodland Cemetery website](#).

If you have any questions about the project or need to inquire about cemetery access at any point, please do not hesitate to call (864) 656-8855 or email me at [afamburials@clemson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu).

We look forward to improved accessibility and safety at Woodland Cemetery once the work is complete and will continue to keep you informed.

Rhondda Robinson Thomas, PhD  
Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature  
Coordinator of Research and Community Engagement  
Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground  
Historic Preservation Project  
Clemson University  
Clemson, SC 29634  
864-656-8855

## Cemetery History Series #11

### Contributions of Carrel Cowan-Ricks Part I

This is part of an ongoing series highlighting various aspects of Woodland Cemetery history.

The work of the Woodland Cemetery Project would not be possible without the research of archeologist Carrel Cowan-Ricks who conducted the only dig to locate possible burials of enslaved individuals on Cemetery Hill. Cowan-Ricks was hired by Clemson and the Board of Trustees in 1991 to carry out an archeological evaluation of the west side of Woodland Cemetery.<sup>1</sup> After completing her graduate degree at Wayne State University in 1989, she was one of three Black women archaeologists in the US at that time, and her area of expertise was funerary practices of enslaved communities of coastal Carolina and Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

Cowan-Ricks began by talking to local community members and former Clemson faculty who had knowledge of the history of the site and of the African American burial ground.<sup>3</sup> Using this information, Cowan-Ricks established an excavation area 100 feet west of the Calhoun Family plot, and laid out trenches in a grid pattern 3' by 10' in size oriented North/South. She employed this technique because burial practices of enslaved communities laid out graves facing the East. Her intention was to dig only deep enough to find evidence of burial shafts of graves and to map their locations.<sup>4</sup>

During her time at Clemson, Cowan-Ricks also conducted summer field schools and one fall dig. Clemson did not have an anthropology program at this time, so she worked with the Department of Historic Houses and Architecture. She relied on undergraduate students, as well

as regional middle and high school students and local archeology enthusiasts to volunteer to assist on these digs. Among the artifacts they recovered were two indigenous stone points, early 20th century ceramics, rifle cartridges, and tailgating trash such as glass bottles.<sup>5</sup>

As the digs were conducted, Cowan-Ricks requested the use of ground penetrating radar to speed the work from Dr. Roy Dodd of the Agriculture department, but that was not approved. As she undertook intensive historical research on the Calhoun family, the enslaved community at Fort Hill, and the early history of Woodland Cemetery, she recovered the court order that Clemson requested in 1960 to move burials from the west side of Cemetery Hill. Her archival work led her to conclude that the size of the African American burial ground was far larger than thought, and that

some burials were likely located under the pavement in the Cemetery. She thought the dig would take six seasons, but that the work would fill a lifetime.<sup>6</sup>

By 1993, when the dig had reached a depth of 27-30" in most trenches, Clemson let Carrel Cowan-Ricks go, as no definitive evidence of burials was recovered. The Board of Trustees had hired her with the intent to expand Woodland Cemetery if no unmarked burials were located. A reduction in the workforce in Historic Houses meant no funding for Cowan-Ricks' work was available. Though she had released areas to the north of the dig for cemetery expansion, her work was incomplete. She left her field notes and research behind and left Clemson.<sup>7</sup>

We now know that Cowan-Rick's assessment of the African American burial ground at Woodland Cemetery was correct through recent GPR surveys. Time, health, and inadequate numbers of volunteers and students prevented Cowan-Ricks from locating the burial shafts. Further, changes in topography of the contour of Cemetery Hill from years of infill from burials on the eastern side of Woodland meant that she didn't dig deep enough to find the burial shafts. However, she may have been within inches of critical discoveries in Fall 1993.<sup>8</sup>

Carrel Cowan-Ricks died in 1997 from Lupus, and never got to see this project through. However, because she left detailed field notes, archival research, and the artifacts that were recovered



Professor Carrel Cowan-Ricks standing beside the African American Burial Ground Site Signage in Woodland Cemetery. Source: Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections & Archives.

*Continued on next page*

### Cemetery History Series #11

*Continued from previous page*

at Clemson, our team is learning from her findings. Her work accelerated our own and has given our researchers a tremendous head-start in piecing together the key events in the history

of that land and the changes to it over time. The work we carry on today is only possible because of Cowan-Ricks' insights and professionalism. We are indebted to her.

In the November edition of the newsletter, our examination of Carrel-Cowan Ricks will continue with a look at her community engagement efforts in the Clemson area.

#### CITATIONS

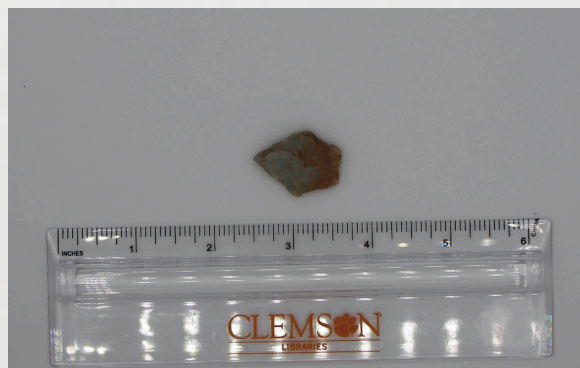
- 1 Carrel Cowan-Ricks, "Cemetery Hill Archaeological Project: In Search of John C. Calhoun's Pre-Emancipation African Americans," *South Carolina Antiquities* vol. 24, no. 1 and 2; 1992..
- 2 Press Releases, Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 2 Folder 11. Clemson Libraries and Special Collections.
- 3 Carrel Cowan-Ricks, "Project Director's Field Notes, July 17, 1992, Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1, Folder 18, 31-32.
- 4 Drawing, 1991, Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Oversize Folder 2.; Cowan-Ricks, "Cemetery Hill Archaeological Project."
- 5 Mark Farris, "Cemetery Digging may Lead to respect for 'forgotten slaves' of the Upstate," *The Tiger* Oct 11, 1991, 9. In Carrel-Cowan Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1 Folder 16. Artifacts, Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers MSS 366 Box 4.
- 6 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1 Folder 18, 31, 32.; Box 1 Folder 16, 47.; Box 1 Folder 18, 31.; Box 2 Folder 1, 172.
- 7 James A. Barker, "Letter to Carrel Cowan-Ricks," August 23, 1993., Deborah B. DuBose "Letter to Carrel Cowan-Ricks, re: Employment Status," September 22, 1993. In Office of Institutional Advancement, Series 320, Box 15, Folder 12.
- 8 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 2 Folder 1, 172.

### Research Update

Dr. Mandi Barnard has been organizing the fall research agenda with Clemson Special Collections and assisting our new student assistants. Dr. Barnard has taken Alleyia Bailey to the library archives to show her the basics. There they had the Cowan-Ricks collection pulled for her to look at artifacts. She has found archival evidence that confirms that the soil from the Western bounds of Cemetery Hill was used in the construction of the dikes in 1960-61. She also presented aspects of her research on September 29, 2022, at the University of Virginia for the Universities Studying Slavery Conference.

Dr. Sara Collini has identified collections to research outside of the Clemson archives, including records at the Oconee County Court House in Walhalla, the South Caroliniana Library at USC, the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston, and records of the Army Corps of Engineers in Atlanta. The team will be working together to explore these sources. Dr. Collini has also been working with Jess Foster, Graduate Research Assistant for the cemetery project and PhD candidate in the new Digital History Doctoral program at Clemson, on the database project for the African American Burial Ground. Census records from the 1870s, 1880s, and the new 1950 census for the Clemson area will be added to the database this fall semester.

This semester nine students are enrolled in the Creative Inquiry in History class for the cemetery project, including a few continuing students. The students' majors are History, Architecture, Global Black Studies, and Anthropology. They have taken a tour of the cemetery and explored several primary sources in the campus archives, such as an atlas of campus from 1945, photographs of the cemetery, Fort Hill plantation documents that listed enslaved families, and



Indigenous projectile point (arrowhead) artifact from Cowan-Ricks' dig in the African American Burial Ground. Source: Artifacts-Carrel Cowan-Ricks. Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections & Archives.



Broken Chinese porcelain glass artifact from Cowan-Ricks' dig in the African American Burial Ground. Source: Artifacts-Carrel Cowan-Ricks. Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections & Archives.

artifacts like Indigenous projectile points and porcelain that Professor Carrel Cowan-Ricks and her team excavated from the cemetery in the 1990s.

## Community Engagement Update

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Marquise Drayton has been consistent with facilitating ten cemetery tours of 109 total people during September. The groups that participated include undergraduate classes in the English and Architecture departments, graduate students from Charleston, South Carolina, in the Historic Preservation program, coed business fraternity Delta Sigma Pi, Clemson Admissions representatives, and Clemson parents/families. In addition, he has helped Dr. Sara Collini train her Creative Inquiry students to be tour guides for Woodland Cemetery this semester.

On September 20, 2022, Drayton represented the Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project at the STEP AFRiKA! preview event at the Clemson Area African American Museum (CAAAM).

There he relayed information about the 2022 Research Symposium at Clemson University in late October to CAAAM Director Angela Agard, who announced it to the audience before the evening program kicked off.

Then on September 22, 2022, Drayton attended Clemson



"Wouldn't You Wanna Know About Woodland Cemetery"  
Kahoot Trivia Game in Memorial Stadium.  
Photograph by Dr. Mandi Barnard

University's Brooks Performing Arts Center for the STEP AFRiKA! premiere event. With the help of Agard, informational flyers for the research symposium and keynote address circulated to the audience during the intermission break.

On September 21, 2022, Drayton emceed the back-to-school event for the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project in Death Valley. It was a decent turnout of twenty-five people, which included Clemson undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni. There were a few teachable moments from the trivia game about Clemson history, the campus cemetery, and Calhouns/Clemsons.

Lastly, on September 29, 2022, he attended the Preserving Historic Cemeteries Workshop at the South Carolina Archives and History Center in Columbia, South Carolina.

## Upcoming Events

More detailed information and registration for Zoom events can be found on the cemetery web page and our social media. Email [mdrayto@clemson.edu](mailto:mdrayto@clemson.edu) to suggest an event or get involved. Please also visit the websites for the [Clemson Area African American Museum](#) and [Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum](#) to find other events going on in the community.

### **2022 Research Symposium Historic Cemeteries in Cultural Contexts, Local to Global, October 24-25, 2022, Clemson University, Clemson, SC**

The Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project and the Legacy Council are pleased to

invite you to participate in our second annual Research Symposium. This year's theme, "Historic Cemeteries in Cultural Contexts, Local to Global," encompasses the broadest conception of burial grounds, from local cemeteries to shipwrecks on the seafloor. Burial grounds in diverse places require recognition

and memorialization. Over two days, this symposium will bring together research concerning historic burial grounds and cemeteries; the local, national, global, and cultural contexts of cemetery research and community engagement; and the multifaceted efforts to commemorate such spaces.

*Continued on next page*

# WOODLAND CEMETERY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

## Monthly Newsletter

OCTOBER 2022  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 10

### Upcoming Events

#### *Continued from previous page*

On Day 1 there will be field trips to local historic cemeteries in the morning, interactive workshops in the afternoon, and a keynote lecture and opening reception early evening. On Day 2 there will be panel presentations and a closing reception.

The symposium is free and open to everyone, but registration is required for each participant. Please RSVP [here](#).

#### South Carolina Historical Society's "What's In Your Attic?" October 11, 2022, 6:30 PM, Clemson Area African American Museum

Virginia Ellison, VP of Collections & COO of the SC Historical Society, will discuss: the benefits and procedures of donating materials to an archives or museum, how to navigate the donation process, which questions to ask & what factors to consider when giving your family's treasures to an institution and basic preservation you can do at home. **Something in your possession may fill a gap in South Carolina's historic record!**



**SOUTH CAROLINA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

**WHEN:**  
OCTOBER 11, 2022  
6:30 PM

**WHERE:**  
CLEMSON AREA AFRICAN  
AMERICAN MUSEUM  
214 BUTLER STREET  
CLEMSON, SC 29631

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

VIRGINIA ELLISON, VP OF COLLECTIONS & COO OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WILL DISCUSS:

- THE BENEFITS AND PROCEDURES OF DONATING MATERIALS TO AN ARCHIVES OR MUSEUM
- HOW TO NAVIGATE THE DONATION PROCESS, WHICH QUESTIONS TO ASK, & WHAT FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN GIVING YOUR FAMILY'S TREASURES TO AN INSTITUTION
- AND BASIC PRESERVATION YOU CAN DO AT HOME!

**SOMETHING IN YOUR POSSESSION MAY FILL A GAP IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S HISTORIC RECORD!**

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

### Meet the Research and Community Engagement

- Dr. Rhonda 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
- Harolynn Williams, Graduate Research Intern
- Marquise Drayton, Community Engagement Assistant
- Jessica Foster, Graduate Research Assistant
- Alleyia Bailey, Undergraduate Research Assistant
- Lucas DeBenedetti, Undergraduate Research Assistant

### And Meet Our Community Engagement Council

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

## Questions?

Questions about the cemetery project?

Email [afamburials@clemson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu) or call (864) 656-8855