

WOODLAND CEMETERY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

NOVEMBER 2022 *Monthly Newsletter* VOLUME 2, ISSUE 11



Once grown by Judge Crawford, the Camellia Display Area is near 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, update the public on Woodland Cemetery, explain the contributions that Carrel Cowan-Ricks put toward to the African American Burial Ground, introduce new members of the cemetery team, provide research, community engagement updates, and highlight some upcoming local events.

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2022 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium Recap

On October 24-25, 2022, the second annual Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium was held here at Clemson University. Over the two days, the symposium brought 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. On Day 1, morning tours to local historic cemeteries were at Pendleton, Clemson Experimental Forest, and Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground. Following the field trips to historic cemeteries were interactive afternoon workshops focused on oral history, archival research, cemetery restorations, and genealogy.

Keynote Speaker Kamau Sadiki of [Diving With a Purpose](#) (DWP) addressed a crowd of about 75 people in Self Auditorium of the Strom Thurmond Institute on campus later that evening during the first day. He shared his expertise on documenting slave shipwrecks, memory, and the history of the Transoceanic Atlantic enslavement of African peoples. An opening reception in the lobby followed that keynote address. We would like to thank Clemson Libraries, Clemson Humanities Hub, Clemson Area African American Museum, and the City of Seneca Department of Arts, History, and Culture for co-sponsoring the keynote address

On Day 2, there were panel presentations on historic cemeteries from researchers who came nationwide. These



Kamau Sadiki's Keynote Address at the 2022 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium. Photograph by Patrick Wright (University Relations)

included representatives from the Girl Scout Troop 1967, the University of North Florida, Fort Bend ISD, Georgia Tech, the NC Department of Transportation, the University of North Carolina, the Mcleod Plantation Historic Site, DePaul University, the SC Department of Archives and History, Clemson University, and more.

Updated Policy: Woodland Cemetery

I. Background

A. The Clemson Board of Trustees established the Woodland Cemetery in 1924 for the purpose of recognizing university faculty, administrators, and staff for their dedication and service to Clemson University.

B. Since July 2020, a significant number of unmarked graves have been revealed in Woodland Cemetery with the assistance of advanced technologies, subject-matter experts, and review of historical records. The graves are believed to be those of African American enslaved persons (predating the university's founding), sharecroppers, domestic workers, tenant farmers, convicted laborers, as well as wage workers and their families. Many of those interred in the unmarked graves are believed to have helped build, maintain, and contribute to the success of the university.

C. The university has initiated steps to create a preservation plan that will document the history of the unmarked graves, the persons buried in them, and the contributions of those persons to the university.

II. Purpose:

A. The purpose of this Policy is to provide for the protection, honor, and respect of all those buried in areas of Woodland Cemetery.

B. This Policy also establishes the criteria for future interments at Woodland Cemetery.

C. It is anticipated that additional plans and policies will be needed to address the historic preservation of the graves located in the historic burial ground.

III. Authority:

A. The Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Will of Thomas Green Clemson, retains "full authority and power to regulate all matters pertaining to" Clemson University.

B. This policy affirms that the Board of Trustees retains full authority and power regarding all matters related to Woodland Cemetery, including the authority to make future modifications or exceptions to this policy, and is delegating certain duties to the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees ("Board Office") as provided for herein.

C. The Policy replaces the Woodland Cemetery Policy of October 18, 2013.

IV. Guiding Principles - Protection of Interments

A. Existing interments in Woodland Cemetery from all eras will be preserved and should not be disturbed.

B. All interments in Woodland Cemetery from all eras will be honored and respected.

V. Future Interments

A. Designation of Plots: The Board Office shall provide a designated plot location for the following persons, starting with Group 1 and proceeding through each group in order:

1. Group 1: Family members of individuals already interred at Woodland Cemetery

a. Companion Plots (2 person plots): When a spouse is already interred, the surviving spouse shall be provided a designated interment location immediately adjacent to, or as close as is reasonably possible to, the existing interment.

b. Family Plots: When family members are already interred in a family plot, the Board Office shall determine the available space for future interments and, to the extent contact information is known, shall notify the surviving family members. The family shall notify the Board Office of those persons that desire interment in the available space in the family plot. To be interred in the family plot, one should typically be within the third degree of consanguinity (blood or adoption) or affinity (marriage), with the Board Office having discretion with respect to eligibility based on familial relationship.

2. Group 2: Persons holding a designated plot location

a. Usable Plot: Persons eligible under prior Woodland Cemetery policies and previously provided a designated plot location by the Board Office shall be permitted to use that designated plot for interment of themselves and their spouse if the Board Office determines that the plot is usable (e.g. not already in use, no trees in plot, etc.)

b. Unusable Plot: Persons eligible under prior Woodland Cemetery policies and previously provided a designated plot location by the Board Office shall be provided a substitute plot designation for interment of themselves and their spouse if the Board Office determines that the original plot is not usable.

c. The Board Office will confirm for each holder of a designated plot number if the plot is usable for interment.

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- 3. Group 3: Persons holding a reservation
 - a. Persons eligible under prior Woodland Cemetery policies that have previously been given a reservation or have a pending reservation request will be provided a designated plot location for themselves and their spouse.
 - b. The location of the plot shall rest in the discretion of the Board Office.
 - 4. Persons that do not fall within Groups 1, 2, or 3 above are not eligible for interment in Woodland Cemetery.
 - 5. The Board Office will attempt to contact members of Groups 1, 2, and 3 to confirm their intent to be interred at Woodland Cemetery and their designated plot locations. If no contact or confirmation is possible after reasonable effort, the Board Office is authorized to cancel that person's plot designation or reservation.
- B. General**
- 1. No existing interments will be disturbed or moved to make space available for a future interment.
 - 2. Future interments should be done taking suitable precautions under the circumstances including, as appropriate, utilizing an archaeologist to monitor the opening of the gravesite and utilizing digging implements and techniques that allow for the opening to be monitored for possible disturbance of an existing burial.
 - 3. Clemson University makes no guarantee of eligibility, space, or location for interment at Woodland Cemetery.
 - 4. Clemson University reserves the right to alter eligibility requirements at any time, turn down a request for interment regardless of eligibility status, or revoke a reservation or unused plot designation, all in its sole discretion.
 - 5. No property interest in a plot location is conveyed and plots are not assignable or otherwise transferable.
 - 6. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, all interments are on an as-available basis; if space is not available for a person eligible for interment under this Policy, Clemson University shall be under no obligation to provide an alternative interment location.
 - 7. Some plots offered for interment may be cremation only plots.
 - 8. All interments shall comply with state and local laws.
 - 9. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in a No Trespass order and/or a requirement that improperly interred remains be removed at the expense of the funeral home or estate.
 - 10. Clemson University shall not be responsible for the cost of interment, additions, or adornments to the plots.
 - 11. A designated plot that is not used, as evidenced by interment at a location other than Woodland Cemetery, shall be forfeited.

VI. Delegation of Duties:

- A. The Board Office shall manage the administrative functions required for the implementation of this Policy.
- B. The Board Office is authorized to issue guidance and rules regarding:
 - 1. requests for and the conduct of interment at Woodland Cemetery;
 - 2. Woodland Cemetery operations, maintenance, and hours; and
 - 3. requirements and limitations for tombstones, markers, coping, vegetation, flowers, and other adornments associated with plots.
- C. The Board Office shall provide for the upkeep and maintenance of the grounds of Woodland Cemetery, seeking such approvals from the Board of Trustees as is required for capital projects.
- D. The Board Office shall prepare, and seek approval from the Board of Trustees, an annual budget for the maintenance and operations of Woodland Cemetery.
- E. The Board Office shall prepare an annual report for the Board of Trustees regarding cemetery operations, interments, maintenance, progress of capital projects, future needs, and anticipated budget needs.

VII. Versions

- Date of Initial Board Approval: July 10, 1924
- Amended by the Board: September 22, 1989
- Amended by the Board: July 12, 1991
- Amended by the Board: April 22, 2005
- Amended by the Board: October 16, 2009
- Amended by the Board: October 18, 2013
- Amended by the Board: October 21, 2022

Cemetery History Series #12

Carrel Cowan-Ricks, Part II: Community Outreach at Cemetery Hill

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

Carrel Cowan-Ricks, the archaeologist entrusted with locating African American burials in the early 1990s at Cemetery Hill, was an indefatigable promoter of the project. In Fall of 1991, she gave several interviews to local and regional press, as well as to *The Tiger* staff, to inform the public about the parameters of the project and reassure them that no burials would be disturbed. As the work progressed, she was able to raise the profile of the project to national newspapers such as *USA Today*, and presented her findings in scholarly articles, and at academic conferences.¹

The heart of Cowan-Ricks' outreach program was to area Black communities, particularly African-American school children. She was involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Adopt-a-Cemetery program for Black Churches in the area, the Greenville, SC Urban League, seeking volunteers to dig at the site, and the Elderhostel Program, now known as Road Scholars, to educate senior citizens on topics like enslaved experiences in South Carolina. In 1992, Cowan-Ricks organized a Career Workshop for rising 12th graders from select SC and NC school districts to expose African American students to archeology as a career option. That year she recruited Black college students to participate in the summer dig at Cemetery Hill. These students came from around the country. In 1993, Cowan-Ricks had ten 8th graders from Southwood Middle School in Anderson, SC assist in two weeks of the summer dig. Her priority was to allow African American children and their parents to learn their

own history and how to study it using archeological methods. Cowan-Ricks was one of two Black archeologists in the US at the time and wanted younger generations to have opportunities to attain racial representation in careers and fields that dealt with Black history and culture.²

Carrel Cowan-Ricks also participated in Clemson's Black Faculty and Staff Association and worked with diversity and inclusion officers on campus to promote the work of the cemetery dig. She met with several retired Clemson faculty and staff, and area residents to discuss their recollections of events that happened at the cemetery and how that might affect her dig objectives. She had developed an Oral History component of her work and those informants helped give her a rough understanding of the evolution of the cemetery site in the 20th century. Some locals contacted Cowan-Ricks about area sites they knew were

connected with African American history in an effort to try to preserve these sites.³

Furthermore, she consulted with area communities like Pendleton and Keowee on historic revitalization such as the Keese Barn project, and historic African American burial sites at Keowee Key, the Clemson experimental forest, and in surrounding communities. Her consultation work made an impact by empowering community groups to preserve their histories and any structures that dated back to the antebellum era. In terms of representation, Cowan-Ricks encouraged Black communities to take back their history and advocate to raise awareness about the histories of race and erasure that have occurred in upstate South Carolina.⁴

Carrel Cowan-Ricks spent twenty-eight months at Clemson, and in that time was able to reorient the focus of Clemson University and the surrounding towns to African American history. As a passionate advocate for correct interpretation in cultural and heritage management, she pushed the Department of Historic Properties to grapple with the culpability of the Calhoun and Clemson families in enslavement in the 1990s. She did more than any other individual up to that date to recover the histories of the enslaved at Fort Hill, and to understand how Cemetery Hill was used as the likely burial site for generations of enslaved Africans and African Americans, and post-emancipation sharecroppers, tenant farmers, domestics, wage workers



Professor Carrel Cowan-Ricks with student researchers at the African American Burial Ground at Clemson University. Source: Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections & Archives.

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and convicted laborers who played an important role in the development of Clemson College.⁵ Her work informs our efforts to continue to meet with community stakeholders to aid in

re-centering the stories of African Americans and Indigenous persons in the upstate. In December 2022's newsletter, we will discuss the role of the Woodland Cemetery Stewardship

Committee in site maintenance and expansion of Woodland Cemetery to its current bounds.

CITATIONS

1 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1, Folder 16; Box 2, Folder 2, 11. Clemson Libraries and Special Collections.; 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 Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1, Folders 4, 6, 8, 13; Box 2, Folders 1, 4.

3 Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1, Folders 1, 2, 4, 9.

4 Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 3, Folders 5-7.; Carrel Cowan-Ricks, Presentation on Pre-Emancipation African American burial customs, 1992, Clemson University, DVD. Clemson Libraries and Special Collections.

5 Cowan-Ricks Papers, MSS 366, Box 1, Folder 9; Box 2, Folders 14-18; Box 3, Folders, 1-4.; Office of Historic Houses, Series 360, Box 12, Folder 12-15. Clemson Libraries and Special Collections Archive.

Research Update

Dr. Mandi Barnard has been conducting preliminary research on early faculty who served on the Woodland Cemetery Committee between 1922 and 1938, and is working through President Patrick Mell's papers and the John C. Calhoun letters at Clemson Special Collections. She participated as a workshop contributor and panelist at the Second Annual Woodland Cemetery Research Symposium on October 24-25th.

Dr. Sara Collini has been working with the undergraduate students in the Creative Inquiry (CI) in History class for the cemetery project. Recently, the students learned more about community engagement. Marquise Drayton, the Community Engagement Assistant for the project, visited the class and talked about community partners involved with the project and all the different types of events and engagement initiatives. The students then visited the Clemson Area African American Museum and enjoyed an informative tour led by Executive Director Angela Agard. The students in the CI class then visited an English class on campus to discuss the best ways to spread awareness about the project to other students at Clemson. The CI team is now starting to conduct research for the Cemetery Virtual Tour project, which will be made accessible online next spring.

Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas spoke on Day 2 of the Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium on Woodland Cemetery and the preservation project's African American Burial Ground origins. There she emphasized the multifaceted layers that the campus cemetery brings in constituents from Clemson University and the local community. She also chronicled the various memorialization attempts from students, faculty/staff, and community members to honor the African Americans buried in the campus cemetery. Her talk complemented the Girl Scout Troop 1967 presentation, where they explained their efforts to commemorate the marginalized buried within Bethel Historic Cemetery in Simpsonville, SC.



Photograph by Deborah Robinson

The Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project would like to welcome Deborah M. Robinson to the cemetery team as our new genealogist. She has been a genealogist for more than 25 years. Born in Harlem and raised in the Bronx, her specialty is African American research in the southeastern United States, particularly the Gullah/Geechee culture of the South Carolina Lowcountry. She has certificates from the Boston University Center for Professional Education in Genealogical Research and the Professional Genealogy (ProGen) Study Program. She holds a bachelor's degree in Speech Communications from Syracuse University. Robinson has worked as a Research Manager/Genealogist at Ancestry.com's ProGenealogists division and is former President, 2nd Vice President, and current Webmaster for the Jean Sampson Scott Greater New York Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society. She currently chairs the Cemetery Ministry at the New First Missionary Baptist Church on Edisto Island, SC in Charleston County.

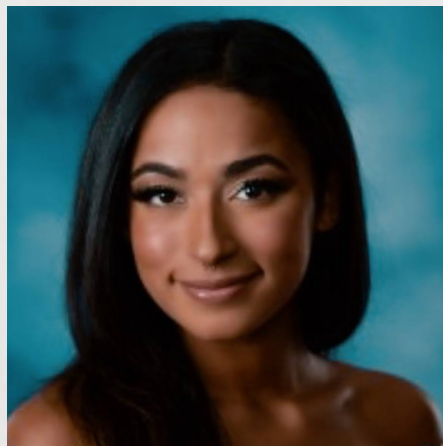
Community Engagement Update

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On October 11, 2022, Marquise Drayton attended the South Carolina Historical Society's "What's In Your Attic?" archival workshop at the Clemson Area African American Museum (CAAAM). After the event, he spoke about the 2022 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium. On October 15, 2022, Drayton represented the Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project at the Oconee County NAACP Freedom Fund Celebration dinner in Seneca, SC. There he advertised the free weekly tours of the campus cemetery and the keynote address by Kamau Sadiki of Diving With a Purpose (DWP) for the research symposium.

The following week, October 20, 2022, Drayton spoke to Sarah Richardson's Service Learning English class about community engagement. Throughout October, he helped to facilitate 17 cemetery tours of 257 people.

We want to welcome Ka'tia Reyes as the new undergraduate communications assistant to the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project. She is a sophomore undergraduate student majoring in psychology with a concentration in pre-med studies. Reyes has previous experience in marketing and communications. She has joined our team to aid in growing the cemetery's student outreach.



Photograph by Ka'tia Reyes

Reyes is originally from Cranston, Rhode Island, but has joined us in the South to pursue her goals of becoming an obstetrics and gynecology physician. She is always yearning to learn more about her ancestors and their impact on the world. That is why Reyes accepted her role on our team with great appreciation. The Woodland Cemetery is grateful for Ka'tia's contribution to the team and looks forward to the progress she will make toward the project.

To further extend the project's reach to younger audiences, the Girl Scout Troop 1967 presented at the second annual Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium. Their presentation focused on their community work in Simpsonville, SC, to help Bethel United Methodist Church honor their unmarked burials of Black descent. Through their grassroots mobilization efforts of a GoFundMe campaign, they've been able to raise monies for ground-penetrating radar technology to speed up advances in documenting where the unmarked burials are at Bethel Historic Cemetery.

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 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 Winter Nights, November 3rd, 10th, 17th, 2022, 5-8 PM, Seneca City Museums Back Lawn, 208 West South 2nd Street (Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum), 211 West South 1st Street (Lunney Museum), Seneca, SC 29678

Got the Jazz blues? Join the Seneca City Museums for an evening under

the stars with live music. Enjoy food and cash bar provided by 313 Cafe of Seneca, SC. Space is limited. Reserve your seats now.

November 3rd, 2022 from 5-8 PM will be free with reservation. November 10th, 2022 from 5-8 PM will be \$15 per person. Also, November 17th, 2022 from 5-8 PM

will be \$15 per person.

Tickets are required for the event and can be purchased online. To learn more, visit senecacitymuseums.org. Tickets must be purchased in advance. No tickets will be available at the event.

[Here](#) is a registration link to the local weekly event.

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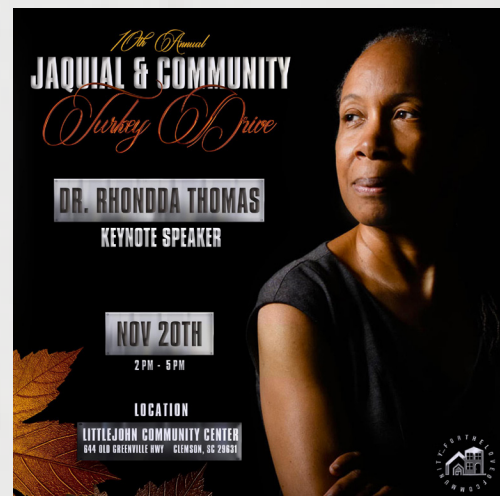
Upcoming Events

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10th Annual Jaquial & Community Turkey Drive hosted by For the Love of the Community, November 20th, 2022, 2-5 PM, Littlejohn Community Center, 644 Old Greenville Highway, Clemson, SC 29631

This year “Jaquial & Community Turkey Drive” will be done differently. To celebrate ten years of service to the City of Clemson, For the Love of the Community wants to provide a thanksgiving dinner (banquet style) and give away 100 thanksgiving meals. Therefore, come ready to eat a fantastic catered Thanksgiving meal, hear good music, and fellowship with your family and friends.

Additionally, guests will get the opportunity to get a few words from some outstanding speakers. One will be our very own Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas as the event's keynote speaker. Dr. Thomas is an associate professor of English at Clemson University, specializing in early African American literature, culture, and history. Also, she's the Faculty Director of Call My Name, Clemson: Documenting the Black Experience in an American University Community.



Meet the Research and Community Engagement

- 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
- Sally Mauldin, Board of Trustees Office Staff
- Dr. Mandi Barnard, Research Historian
- Dr. Sara Collini, Postdoctoral Fellow in University History
- Deborah Robinson, Genealogist
- Harolynn Williams, Graduate Research Intern
- Marquise Drayton, Community Engagement Assistant
- Ka'tia Reyes, Undergraduate Communications 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 or call (864) 656-8855