

# WOODLAND CEMETERY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

APRIL 2023 *Monthly Newsletter* VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4



Conclusion of dinner with guest speaker Dr. Alexandra Jones (third left). 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 coverage of the 2023 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Day of Remembrance, inform about newly discovered pictures in color of Cemetery Hill's 1960 dirt removal, provide research, community engagement updates, and highlight some upcoming local events.

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## 2023 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Day at Clemson University

On March 29, 2023, the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project commemorated their second annual Carrel Cowan-Ricks Day of Remembrance at Clemson University. At noon, students got the chance to meet the guest speaker Dr. Alexandra Jones at a luncheon in Freeman Hall. Jones, Founder/Chief Executive Officer of Archaeology in the Community, focuses on community outreach and service. She completed her PhD in Historical Archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2010. Her work focuses on African diaspora archaeology, community archaeology, and archaeology outreach. Jones has been an archaeology educator for more than 16 years, focused on making archaeological knowledge accessible to all. Her current research projects are the Estate Little Princess Archaeological Project in St. Croix, USVI, and the Morningstar Tabernacle No.88 Moses Cemetery in Cabin John, MD. She spoke about the

latter project during her lecture at 6 PM in 260 Humanities Hall.

Jones's keynote address, "Sustainable Community Archaeology and Morningstar Tabernacle No #88 Cemetery," focused on the Black descendants' involvement and sustainable care process of Moses Hall (formerly Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion) Cemetery in Cabin Grove, Maryland that is under threat by highway expansion. Jones illustrates local communities' power in restorative justice by taking agency over upkeep, education, and historic preservation. A panel discussion with those who worked with Professor Carrel Cowan-Ricks and the current cemetery project concluded the evening.

We want to thank the Clemson History Department, Clemson Global Black Studies, and Clemson Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice Department for co-sponsoring this year's event with the Legacy Council.



Conclusion of the panel discussion at the 2023 Carrel Cowan-Ricks Day. Photograph by Dr. Sara Collini.

### Cemetery History Series #4

## The Removal of Dirt from Cemetery Hill in 1960 (In Color)

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

This past month Sue Hiott, curator of exhibits for Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections and Archives, recovered new evidence, in the form of four color photographs, which adds more context and evidence pointing to the destruction of the lower western half of Cemetery Hill and how it connects to the construction of the upper and lower dikes around Clemson's campus.

Previous editions of the history series have detailed the removal of the lower western half of Woodland Cemetery and its relation to the construction of Lake Hartwell and the protective dikes around Clemson University's campus.

For context, this removal occurred as a result of the construction of Lake Hartwell by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the 1960 Court Order, in which Clemson College petitioned Oconee County in August 1960 for the right to disinter the remains of Black laborers they came across while grading and clearing the western slope.<sup>1</sup> The judge granted Clemson permission to do this and together with the Nello Teer Construction Company, Clemson made plans in September 1960 to proceed with the grading and clearing of the western slope.<sup>2</sup>

While the lower western half was being graded and cleared the remains of at least five African American children were found and identified by their hair, teeth, coffin nails, and the size of their burial.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the evidence the project has collected thus far, the dirt taken from the lower western half of the cemetery was used to build the dikes that currently protect Clemson University's campus from being flooded by Lake Hartwell.

The photographs depict the lower western half of Woodland Cemetery during different stages of its destruction. Each image bears a small caption

detailing the context behind each specific image.

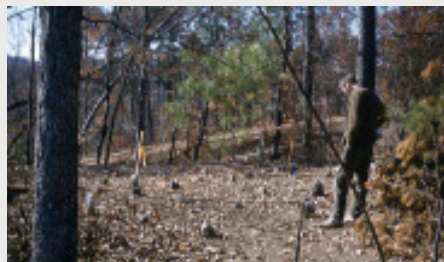


Image 1

The first image depicts a man staring at a number of field stones and bears the caption "Rotie looking at slave grave markers Cemetery Hill."<sup>4</sup> A black and white version of this photograph is also located in the Papers of Carrel Cowan-Ricks in Clemson's archives. The name Salley was previously known in relation to these images, but the name 'Rotie' was unknown to the project. The man is standing in an unknown location on Cemetery.

The three other photographs in the series detail the lower western half of the cemetery in various stages of its destruction:



Image 2

The second color image includes the caption "Cemetery Hill being cut for use in upper dike Oct. '60" and shows construction equipment moving dirt from the lower western slope, which has been completely cleared of trees. This photograph appears to confirm that dirt from the lower western half of the cemetery was utilized in the construction of the upper dike near the Esso Station.<sup>5</sup>



Image 3

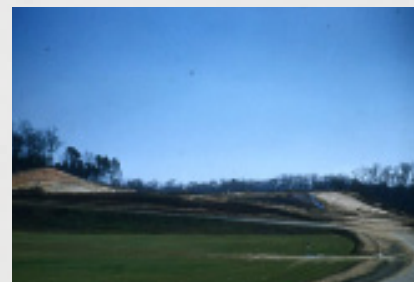


Image 4

The remaining third and fourth photographs found last month were both taken after October 1960. They bear the captions "Moving dirt from Cemetery Hill Nov '60"<sup>6</sup> and "Cutting down Cemetery Hill."<sup>7</sup> Both images portray how the lower western section of the cemetery was completely cleared and leveled, demonstrating how the lower western slope was destroyed over the course of two months. Prior to the destruction of this section, the cemetery sloped all the way to the Seneca River and Perimeter Road, with a much greater elevation. The second image showcases this change in elevation, as the lower, western half is almost parallel to Perimeter Road as opposed to sloping into it.

These photographs were likely taken around the time of the 1960 Clemson homecoming football game on November 5, where an aerial image of the stadium and cemetery was taken showcasing the removal of dirt from the western slope. Today, the cleared area serves as a parking lot for Clemson

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### Cemetery History Series #4

*Continued from previous page*  
University's students.

These primary source photographs are the best evidence that the cemetery team has received and analyzed that confirm that the dirt from the lower, western half of the cemetery was used in the construction of the dikes to protect Clemson from the flooding of Lake Hartwell.

Despite the fact that the construction of the dikes around Clemson's campus was ordered by the US Army Corps of Engineers and contracted by Clemson and the Nello Teer Construction Company, there is a scarcity of documentation, official or otherwise, pertaining to the use of the dirt from the lower western half of Woodland Cemetery to build the dikes.

It is important to remember that these

are not just photographs of dirt being moved or part of a hill being destroyed. They are images of the destruction of individuals' gravesites, some of them children's, whose names will likely never be known.

by Lucas DeBenedetti  
Undergraduate Research Assistant  
Woodland Cemetery & African American  
Burial Ground Project

#### CITATIONS:

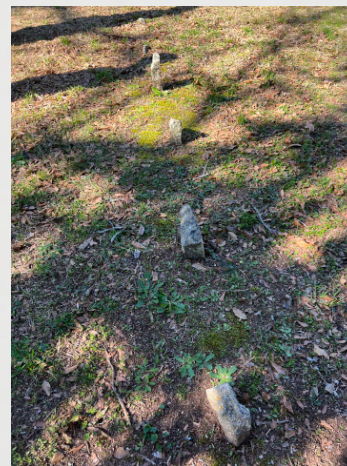
- 1 State of South Carolina, County of Oconee, Court of Common Pleas, Ex parte: The Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina, In Re: The Purported Cemetery of Unknown Deceased Persons, Petition, 22 August 1960, Mss 366, Box 2, Folder 17, Papers of Carrel Cowan-Ricks, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 2 Memorandum of Understanding between Clemson and Nello L. Teer Company, September 13, 1960, Mss 366, Papers of Carrel Cowan-Ricks, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 3 Carrel Cowan-Ricks, Interview with Robert Ware, July 17, 1992, Series 613, Site History, 1895-2008, The Woodland Cemetery Stewardship Committee Records, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 4 "Rotie looking at slave grave markers Cemetery Hill," 1960, Unaccessioned Collection of Rotie Salley, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 5 "Cemetery Hill being cut for use in upper dike Oct. '60", October 1960, Unaccessioned Collection of Rotie Salley, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 6 "Moving dirt from Cemetery Hill Nov '60," November 1960, Unaccessioned Collection of Rotie Salley, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.
- 7 "Cutting down Cemetery Hill," 1960, Unaccessioned Collection of Rotie Salley, Special Collections and Archives, Clemson University Libraries.

### Research Update

Dr. Mandi Barnard has been researching the antebellum history of Fort Hill and tracing the enslaved who lived and worked here.

Dr. Sara Collini, the undergraduate students, and several members of the cemetery team have continued to visit nearby cemeteries to learn more about local history. Rick Owens led a tour of Old Stone Church and Cemetery near campus. General Andrew Pickens is buried there, along with Rev. James McElhenny who owned Clergy Hall (the original structure of the Fort Hill Plantation house) and was pastor at Old Stone in the early 1800s. Enslaved and free Black people worshipped at the church, including an enslaved woman named Rose from Fort Hill Plantation. There are several unmarked graves at Old Stone Church Cemetery, as well as a grave for a Cherokee man named Osenappa. In March, the group went on two tours in Pendleton. Rev. Cornell Richardson led a tour of King's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery. Judge Crawford, who worked at Clemson from around 1890 to 1947, is believed to be buried there although the exact location of his grave is unknown. The following week Mtr. Suz Cate, Rector, gave a tour of Historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Cemetery in Pendleton. Thomas and Anna Clemson are buried there, along with several members of the Calhoun family. There are also unmarked graves at St. Paul's, and church records document burials for enslaved and free Black people at surrounding plantations and churches in the 1800s.

Deborah Robinson attended the Universities Studying Slavery (USS) Conference at the University of North



Unmarked graves at Historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church Cemetery in Pendleton, South Carolina. Photo by Dr. Sara Collini.

Carolina at Chapel Hill. She attended such sessions as The Genealogy of Slavery regarding the history of slavery at Roanoke College in Roanoke, VA and Tools for Descendant Engagement – A Rubric for Harnessing the Power of Co-Stewardship, to name a few. She continues to make site visits to surrounding area churches and cemeteries such as Kings Chapel AME and St. Paul's Episcopal in an on-going effort to recover documentation connecting ancestors, both enslaved and enslavers, to places and times, with particularly focus on their interconnectivity. She also continues to work on the development of the project's genealogy webpage underway as well as plans for workshops.

## Community Engagement Update

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

Clemson Home hosted Marquise Drayton at Calhoun Courts Apartment Complex for virtual cemetery tours during the first two weeks in March. Thirty-one students in residence attended the four sessions as part of a cultural experience opportunity for on-campus housing. Drayton led other virtual tours during March in the Department of English, Department of Anthropology, and Department of Rhetoric, Communication, and Information Design.

On March 1, Drayton helped the Clemson Area African American Museum with a tour visit from Calhoun Falls Charter School. He presented a mini-lecture on former Clemson Professor Carrel Cowan-Rick's 1990s Archeological Dig of Woodland Cemetery and how it connects with the eighty middle schoolers there. On March 17, 2023, Drayton helped Clemson University Historian Dr. Otis Pickett with a historical campus bus tour for the Kappa Instructional Leadership League (Houston Chapter) for Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

During the tour, he informed them about Woodland Cemetery, Memorial Stadium, and Clemson's history of convict labor leasing among the group of African American 10th-12th graders from Texas. Drayton also spoke to the prospective students about University President Walter Riggs by Riggs Hall and Harvey Gantt by Old Main Building and Bowman Field.

On March 25, Dupree and Manella Calhoun graciously invited Drayton to see their Calhoun Family Cemetery Property in Abbeville, SC. There, they visited the site where the remnants of US Vice President John C Calhoun's birth home are located and the Patrick Calhoun Family Cemetery nearby, and saw the related historical markers on the highway. Later in the afternoon, they all toured



Auditorium set up for Drayton's mini-lecture on Carrel Cowan-Ricks for Calhoun Falls Charter School on March 1. Photograph by Marquise Drayton.

the Willington History Center and Bookstore in neighboring Willington, SC, for their town's day of recognition. They almost met another Calhoun named Andrew Calhoun, who was there for a book signing earlier in the day.

Drayton is working with the cemetery team on a holistic handbook for tour guides for the fall semester, when the campus cemetery is scheduled to be reopened for tours. In addition, he's contacted with the Clemson Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management Department to solicit help for student docents and tour guides for when Woodland Cemetery reopens.

Drayton joined Dr. Collini's Creative Inquiry class in historical site visits to Kings Chapel AME Church Cemetery, St. Paul Episcopal Church Cemetery, and Old Stone Church Cemetery. Lastly, he's been in contact with the City of Seneca and the Clemson Region of the SC Small Business Development Center with planning for the 2023 Black Business Expo on April 28.

## 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.

**"The Photograph." Sunday, April 30, 2023. 12-7PM. Littlejohn Community Center. 644 Old Greenville Highway, Clemson, SC 29631.**

We would like to cordially invite you to "The Photograph" event on April 30, 2023, from 12-7 PM at the Littlejohn Community Center in Clemson, SC. Please bring a family photo and share the story it tells. There will be a live DJ, food trucks, storytelling, poetry, and an Abel Baptist Church Cemetery walk-through. You can also have your family

photos and documents digitized on site (no charge) and record oral history. This event will be in conjunction with the Littlejohn Community Center's celebration of its history on April 29, 2023.

The idea for this event happened after Adrienne Jackson-Garner, director of the Littlejohn Community Center, asked Genealogist Deborah Robinson if the Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project could plan another digitizing day for the community that the Call

My Name Project had sponsored a few years ago.

Then Dr. Rhondda Thomas reached out to *for the love of community* founder and Clemson PhD student Jaquial Durham to ask if he would collaborate with the cemetery team to co-sponsor the event with the cemetery project, Call My Name, and Clemson University Libraries.

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## Monthly Newsletter

APRIL 2023  
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

### Upcoming Events

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**2023 Black Business Expo. Friday, April 28, 2023. 10AM-2PM. Blue Ridge Community Center. 315 Holland Avenue, Seneca, SC 29678.**

We would like to cordially invite you to the 2023 Black Business Expo. The event will be on April 28, 2023, at the Blue Ridge Community Center in Seneca, South Carolina. If you want to be a vendor at the BBE this year, [here](#) is a link to register your Black business. Run of show will be as followed:

7:30 - 9AM Vendor Setup

10AM - 2PM EXPO

2 - 4PM Vendor Best Practice Sharing and Networking

Anderson, Oconee and Pickens County Black-Owned Small Businesses are invited to apply for no-cost vendor space to showcase their products and services at the Black Business Expo 2023.

Black Business Expo 2023 is co-sponsored by The Legacy Council for the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Preservation Project at Clemson University, The Clemson Region of the South Carolina SBDC, The City of Seneca, and The Blue Ridge Community Center in Seneca, SC.



**BLACK BUSINESS EXPO** APRIL 28, 2023  
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Blue Ridge Community Center  
315 Holland Ave  
Seneca, SC 29678  
Let's see how many black-owned businesses you can find!  
Anderson, Oconee & Pickens Counties

**Now Accepting Vendor Applications!**

- Showcase your black-owned small business
- Generate leads
- Meet with the community
- Empower others to succeed

**IT'S FREE**



Vendor space is limited!  
April 16, 2023

**SUPPORTING & CELEBRATING BLACK ENTREPRENEURS**

7:30 - 9:00 am Vendor Setup  
10 - 2 pm EXPO  
2 - 4 pm Vendor Best Practice Sharing, Networking and Doorprize

Sponsored by:  
Legacy Council for the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Preservation Project at Clemson University  
Clemson Region of the South Carolina SBDC  
City of Seneca, Black Ridge Community Center, Seneca, SC

For More Expo Information  
(864) 656-8855  
[afamburials@clemson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu)

### 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
- Sally Mauldin, Board of Trustees Office Staff
- Dr. Mandi Barnard, Research Historian
- Dr. Sara Collini, Postdoctoral Fellow in University History
- Deborah Robinson, Genealogist
- Dr. David Markus, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, Registered Professional Archaeologist 5174
- 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](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu) or call (864) 656-8855