

# WOODLAND CEMETERY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

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The newly-built Tiger Walk for Clemson football players to enter into Memorial Stadium and interact with fans on gamedays. Near the former site of "the Bottoms" neighborhood for Black employees and their families in the 1940-50s. 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 notify viewers of registration for the 2023 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium at Clemson University, the legacies of Clemson University presidents and their impact on Woodland Cemetery, and provide research, community engagement updates, and highlight some upcoming local events.

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### Registration is live for the 2023 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium at Clemson University

The Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project and the Legacy Council at Clemson University are pleased to invite you to participate in our third annual Research Symposium. This year's theme, "Commemoration and Memorialization of Historic Cemeteries," focuses on various rituals and practices that are associated with remembering and honoring the dead. Over two days, this symposium will bring together research concerning memorialization of historic burial grounds and cemeteries in America and globally, and the multifaceted efforts to commemorate such spaces. This event is sponsored by the Legacy Council, the Clemson University School of Architecture, the Clemson University Historic Preserva-

tion Graduate Program in Charleston, and Clemson University Historic Properties. For questions or more information, please email [afamburials@clemson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clemson.edu) or call 864-656-8855.

In-person registration is \$25 per person. Students can register for free (K-12, undergraduate, and graduate). Registration includes all panel presentations, the keynote lecture, selected field trips, lunch on Tuesday, October 10, and refreshments. Workshops cost an additional \$15 each. Virtual registration is \$10 per person (keynote and panel presentations only).

On Day 1 there will be field trips to local historic cemeteries in the morning, interactive workshops in the afternoon, and a keynote

lecture later in the evening. On Day 2 there will be panel presentations. Note that panel presentations will be scheduled during the morning and afternoon of Tuesday, October 10, 2023. Registration is required, even if professors would like to bring students to the panel presentations.

More information on local arrangements like hotel accommodations, transportation to Clemson, and food options near/on-campus is located [here](#) on the symposium section of the cemetery project website. The deadline to register for the 2023 Historic Cemeteries Research Symposium at Clemson University is October 4, 2023. Please click [here](#) to register.

## Cemetery History Series #9

### Clemson University Presidents' Legacies and their impact on Woodland Cemetery

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

Outside of the head coach for Clemson Football, the Clemson University President is one of the most identifiable campus leaders at the land grant institution in Upstate South Carolina. Only Clemson President Walter M. Riggs (1911-1924) served as both,<sup>1</sup> which I will address more on him soon. Dr. James Clements has served as the fifteen president of Clemson University since the Board of Trustees approved his hiring in December 2013.<sup>2</sup> Like the president of a nation, the university president's involvement with different constituents during their tenure is paramount to a school's growth in academics and athletics. Not only does one interact with students, faculty, and staff, but one has to engage with alumni, donors, partners, and other groups invested in the university. Even post-presidency, President Emeritus James Barker (1999-2013) is still active in engaging people in the college town with his expertise in architecture and artistry in watercolor drawings.<sup>3</sup>

Presiding over commencement ceremonies in their ornate regalia is not the only thing they are known for. The current Clemson president has an advisory board comprised of current and former businesspeople, a leadership institute for faculty and staff, and a president's house for their family to reside in during their term.<sup>4</sup> The latter is a Greek Revival-style private residence that mirrors the architecture of the nearby Fort Hill Plantation Mansion, where school founder Thomas Green Clemson and his

wife, Anna Calhoun Clemson, lived.<sup>5</sup> There are several other pots in which the president has his hand in that pertain to the university.

Following the South Carolina General Assembly's establishment of Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina in 1889, President H. Aubrey Strode (1890-1893) oversaw a college that had no students during his time as its first university president.<sup>6</sup> However, he did hire the first faculty and created the initial curriculum.<sup>7</sup> President Patrick H. Mell's (1902-1910) primary focus was shifting Clemson College's designation as an all-male military college to a top research institution in the South.<sup>8</sup> President Enoch W. Sikes (1925-1940) advanced Mell's vision further as Clemson College gained its first accreditation from the Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges of the Southern States.<sup>9</sup> The enrollment of students grew, faculty hiring increased, and the college offered more advanced degrees during his administration.

There are lasting parts of Clemson's campus where presidents are honored. Cox Plaza near Tillman Hall has a life-size statue of President Walter T. Cox (1985-1986) sitting on a bench, which documents his crucial role in student affairs.<sup>10</sup> Edwards Hall holds the College of Behavioral, Social, and Health Science. President Robert C. Edwards (1958-1979) is the namesake

for this campus building.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Edwards was the longest-serving president in Clemson's history.<sup>12</sup> He is notable for his strategic measures with the state legislature to uneventfully usher in Harvey Gantt as the school's first African American student in 1963.<sup>13</sup> A local middle school in neighboring Central, SC, also bears his name.<sup>14</sup>

Yet one section of campus began as a consequence of the untimely death of a university president. The Clemson University Board of Trustees created Woodland Cemetery in July 1924, six months after President Walter M. Riggs died of a heart attack in January 1924.<sup>15</sup> Growing from the original Cemetery Hill where the Calhoun Family and African American enslaved persons, convicted laborers, and wage workers lie,<sup>16</sup> the burial ground beside Memorial Stadium remains an active cemetery today. Every university president since Dr. Riggs is buried in Woodland Cemetery.<sup>17</sup> The most recent president buried there was President Philip Prince (1994-1995), who passed away in February 2020.<sup>18</sup>

Woodland Cemetery was the brainchild of President Riggs in 1922 to honor white full-time employees at the land grant school.<sup>19</sup> He worked with a committee that included early Clemson mathematics professor Major Samuel Martin.<sup>20</sup> Later improvements were made with civil engineer H. E. Glenn to ensure the campus cemetery

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## Cemetery History Series #9

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allocated 202 family plots for those eligible.<sup>21</sup> Only the west side was empty at the time of the 1938 map.<sup>22</sup>

landscapes and objects that reflect the architectural and cultural heritage of Clemson University as a part of the living fabric of the campus.”<sup>23</sup>

In December 2000, President Barker appointed the Woodland Cemetery Stewardship Committee to “preserve and protect the

Under the Clements administration, the \$3.5 million Pathways Project enhanced the sacred space, tailgating in

the cemetery ended in 2020, and a history task force placed interpretative signage around campus in 2016, including Woodland Cemetery.<sup>24</sup>

By Marquise Drayton  
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Woodland Cemetery and African  
American Burial Ground

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## Research Update

Historian Dr. Mandi Barnard continues to compile documents that reference enslaved persons connected to the Fort Hill Plantation with the team, and is resuming the preparation of biographies for individuals connected to Woodland Cemetery and the African American Burial Ground.

Historian Dr. Sara Collini is working with the new and returning undergraduate students on the Cemetery Creative Inquiry Team for the fall semester. Students in the class are majoring in history, sociology, anthropology, biology, chemistry, criminal justice, and environmental and natural resources. This semester, the students will learn about the different interdisciplinary methods used to research the histories of the cemetery, including archival research, genealogy, digital history, and archaeology. The students will then complete a small research project on their own.

Genealogist Deborah Robinson continues to build a family tree for the enslaved family headed by Polydore and Menemin. Documents thus far show this couple as having been enslaved on a plantation in Santee, Charleston County, South Carolina, owned by Samuel Bonneau (1725-1788), the maternal grandfather of Floride Bonneau Colhoun (1792-1866). Floride was married to Senator John Caldwell Calhoun (1782-1850). Polydore, Menemin, and their eight children were brought from the low country to upstate South Carolina, where some family members were sent to work on different plantations. Polydore and his wife Menemin were born in Africa and now have many descendants. We chose them as our model for researching enslaved families upon which future endeavors can be based.

## Community Engagement Update

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

On Saturday, August 5, 2023, Marquise Drayton helped with parking and set up at the Tools 4 School Backpack Giveaway at the Clemson Area African American Museum. Many children from the local Clemson community came to pick up school supplies to prepare for the upcoming academic year and interact with Clemson Athletics legends like Horace Grant, Homer Jordan, and Craig Mobley. Drayton spoke to the latter (Clemson's first Black basketball student-athlete), who has a great interest in the cemetery project. Clemson Basketball's Wayne A. Buckingham held this event in conjunction with the 2023 Orange and White Gala, which benefits the W.A.B. Scholarship Endowment Gala.

On August 8, Drayton led a virtual tour of Woodland Cemetery to the Clemson University Emeritus College at their office in Pendleton, SC. With many online

and in-person, some recounted their memories of the divergent dams (the Dikes), Memorial Stadium's groundbreaking, and Harvey Gantt's desegregation of Clemson.

On August 24, Drayton, Dr. Collini, and Deborah Robinson represented the cemetery team at the Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center's 2023 Grill and Greet showcase at the Carillon Gardens on Clemson University's campus. Many students who stopped by the table were newcomers to Clemson and were unaware of Woodland Cemetery beside the football stadium. They distributed swag to those who



Dr. Sara Collini and Marquise Drayton representing the cemetery project at the 2023 Gantt Center's Grill and Greet event. Photograph by Jacob Dean (CU Marketing and Communications).

followed the cemetery project on its social media platforms.

Drayton still considers different requests for virtual cemetery tours. The Clemson Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice, Clemson Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management (PRTM), and Clemson Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) scheduled tours for September 2023. Also, he met with the Call Me MISTER Initiative to engage with educational techniques of conveying the work of the Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project to youth.

The cemetery team would like to welcome Alexis Thomas and Amanda Hartman to the project as the undergraduate research assistant and graduate research assistant respectively. Hartman is an incoming student in the digital history PhD program at Clemson University. Her background is in information/library science, Southern history, and museum studies. Thomas is a senior history major with a religious studies minor at Clemson University. Her background is in public history, digital mapping, and genealogy.

## 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.

**BookEnds with Seneca City Museums. Saturday, September 16, 2023, from 11AM-12:15PM. Lunney Museum. 211 W. South 1st Street, Seneca, SC 29678.**

Bookends is a part of the Seneca City Museums Interactive Multicultural Education (I.M.E.) program. This storytelling and education event includes a reading, discussion, and activity led by the Teacher/Librarian/Media Specialist

at Seneca Middle School, Cassie Owens Moore. This event is focused on children from grades K-6, but anyone of any age is welcome! [Registration](#) is required. Adults must accompany a child attending the event.

Saturday, September 16th, will focus on *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales!

**The Goodwill Mission Mobile Vehicle with Goodwill Career Services. Wednesday, September 6, 2023,**

**from 10AM-12:30PM. Blue Ridge Community Center. 315 Holland Ave, Seneca, SC 29678.**

The Goodwill Mission Mobile Vehicle is coming to your community. Join Goodwill Career Services on September 6, from 10AM-12:30PM, at the Blue Ridge Community Center in Seneca, SC, for Mission Mobile. They offer employment leads and referrals, internet-connectivity & document upload

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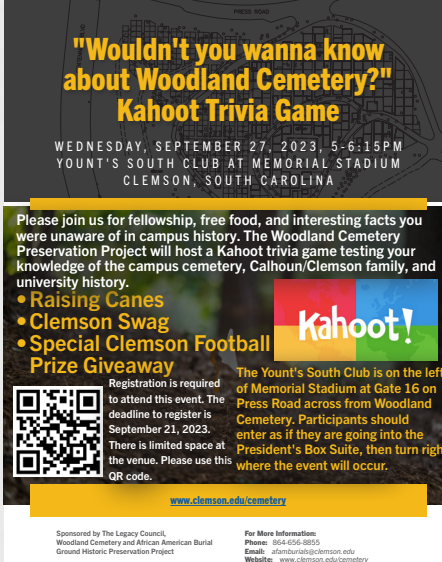


## Upcoming Events

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assistance, job search guidance & tips, resume and cover letter writing support, one-on-one job coaching, and referrals to community resources. For more information about Goodwill's Mission Mobile service, visit [www.goodwillsc.org/missionmobile](http://www.goodwillsc.org/missionmobile) and contact Melissa Cheek [mcheek@goodwillsc.org](mailto:mcheek@goodwillsc.org).

**"Wouldn't you wanna know about Woodland Cemetery?" Kahoot Trivia Game, Wednesday, September 27, 2023, from 5-6:15PM, Yount's South Club, Memorial Stadium, Clemson, SC.** Please join us for fellowship, free food, and interesting facts you were unaware of in campus history. On Wednesday, September 27, 2023, from 5-6:15PM in the Yount's South Club of Memorial Stadium, the Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project will host a Kahoot trivia game testing your knowledge of the campus cemetery, Calhoun/Clemson Family, and university history. We will have Raising Canes catered for the event, distribute Clemson swag at the end of the game and giveaway a special Clemson Football prize. Please RSVP [here](#). The deadline to register is September 21, 2023. There is limited space at the venue. The Yount's South Club is on the left of Memorial Stadium at Gate 16 on Press Road across from Woodland Cemetery. Students, faculty, and staff should enter as if they are going into the President's Box Suite, then turn right where the event will occur.



**"Wouldn't you wanna know about Woodland Cemetery?" Kahoot Trivia Game**  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023, 5-6:15PM  
YOUNT'S SOUTH CLUB AT MEMORIAL STADIUM  
CLEMSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Please join us for fellowship, free food, and interesting facts you were unaware of in campus history. The Woodland Cemetery Preservation Project will host a Kahoot trivia game testing your knowledge of the campus cemetery, Calhoun/Clemson family, and university history.

- Raising Canes
- Clemson Swag
- Special Clemson Football Prize Giveaway

Registration is required to attend this event. The deadline to register is September 21, 2023. There is limited space at the venue. Please use this QR code.

The Yount's South Club is on the left of Memorial Stadium at Gate 16 on Press Road across from Woodland Cemetery. Participants should enter as if they are going into the President's Box Suite, then turn right where the event will occur.

[www.clemson.edu/cemetery](http://www.clemson.edu/cemetery)

Sponsored by The Legacy Council, Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground Historic Preservation Project

For More Information:  
Phone: 864-656-8855  
Email: [afamburials@clermson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clermson.edu)  
Website: [www.clemson.edu/cemetery](http://www.clemson.edu/cemetery)

## 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, Strategic Operations Director
- Anthony Herrera, Woodland Cemetery Superintendent
- 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
- Amanda Hartman, Graduate Research Assistant
- Alexis Thomas, Undergraduate Research Assistant
- Ka'tia Reyes, Undergraduate Communications Assistant

## 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?

Questions about the cemetery project?  
Email [afamburials@clermson.edu](mailto:afamburials@clermson.edu) or call (864) 656-8855