

AFRICAN AMERICAN BURIAL GROUND, ANDREW P. CALHOUN FAMILY PLOT, AND WOODLAND CEMETERY HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT

DECEMBER 2023 *Monthly Newsletter* VOLUME 3, ISSUE 12



A weathering beautyberry limb sticking out near the entrance of the campus cemetery as the season changes. Photograph by Marquise Drayton.

The Cemetery Preservation Project seeks to tell the stories of the known and previously unknown burials located in the 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 thank those involved with the 2023 Pathways Project for the cemetery at Clemson University, explain the meanings behind different cemetery traditions, provide research and community engagement updates, and highlight some upcoming local events.

In This Issue

Page 1: 2023 Pathway Project Thank You's

Page 2: History Series #12

Page 3: History Series #12 Continued; Research Update

Page 4: Community Engagement Update; Upcoming Events

Page 5: Upcoming Events; Meet the Team

Thank You to Those Involved with the 2023 Pathway Project for the Campus Cemetery

As the campus cemetery reopens to the public soon, the African American Burial Ground, Andrew Pickens Calhoun Family Plot, and Woodland Cemetery Historic Preservation Project would like to thank the many different constituents involved with the 2023 Pathway Project. These improvements began in February 2023 and concluded in December 2023. Among them are new accessible pathways that do not obstruct unmarked burials, new benches for reflection and rest, a paved service road for emergency vehicles, and a gateway on Press Road to reinforce the reverence of the sacred space on campus.

We thank Clemson University Facilities Senior Project Manager Rick Owens and Clemson University Planning and Design Landscape Architect Barry Anderson

for supervising and directing the project. In addition, we want to thank Anthony Herrera, the Woodland Cemetery Superintendent, for the day-to-day upkeep of the cemetery grounds.

We thank New South Associates, Inc. of Stone Mountain, Georgia, for their archeological work on the 17 acres. It is a woman-owned firm providing cultural resource management services, like archeological surveys, historic preservation planning, and public interpretation.

Land Planning Associates, Inc. of Easley, SC, led by Patrick Rivers, was responsible for civil engineering. In the past, they were involved with other campus projects, such as the William and Ann Powers Business School and South Campus Storm Water Management Program. Mencken Engineering of Piedmont, SC,

worked on electrical engineering advances. Founder Eric Mencken has over 30 years of experience in electrical engineering design and consulting. We thank them both for their technical efforts in the cemetery development.

The general contractor for the Pathway Project was NE Construction of Seneca, SC. Scott English and Bradley Nolan led them. They focus on Pickens, Oconee, Anderson, and Greenville Counties. We thank Sally Mauldin for her constant communication with family and descendants who have loved ones in the cemetery and Dr. Rhondda Thomas for keeping the Community Engagement Council updated on the progress being made in the Pathways Project. Lastly, we thank the Legacy Council for their support of the project and the Clemson University Board of Trustees for providing the funding for the project.

Cemetery History Series #12

Meanings, Memorials and Honored Traditions in Cemeteries

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

Woodland Cemetery at Clemson University will be approaching its centennial year in 2024. Catalyzed by the death of a university president in 1924, "Cemetery Hill" was its original name for the Andrew Pickens Calhoun Family plot.¹ So why is it called "Woodland?" By definition, a woodland cemetery is a burial ground built more by its natural aesthetic in woods, trees, and forests than mausoleums, tombstones, and other monuments.² Long-leaf pine and oak trees dominate the landscape of the campus cemetery. If these trees could talk, they would tell a story of how the football stadium, parking lots, and burial ground came to be. It is still an active cemetery, with many notable names throughout Clemson history buried there.

Upon entering, visitors can see beautyberry bushes behind the granite wall entrance. The purple plant suits Clemson University colors³ and what the color represents as royalty in many cultures.⁴ Greenery grinds the ground of the granite signage as "WOODLAND CEMETERY" stands out as one around the cul de sac loop at the Williamson Road entrance. Within the cemetery are white flags with colorful ribbons that mark the sites of the unmarked burials of Black people from different generations, orange and purple flowers that adorn the graves of white Clemson employees, and a gated area that is the Andrew Pickens Calhoun Family Plot.

To the left of the campus cemetery entrance lies the remnants of the Camellia Test Garden. During the 1953 Clemson faculty senate meeting, there were attempts to rename the camellia garden after Judge Crawford, an African American who was the primary gardener for Clemson College in the early 1900s.⁵ The flower became an early basis for the South Carolina Botanical Garden (SCBG) in Clemson, South Carolina.⁶

As we invite guests back into the campus burial ground, we want to clarify that there are three cemeteries: the African American Burial Ground, Andrew Pickens Calhoun Family Plot, and Woodland Cemetery. With this in mind, I would like to review a few honorific traditions in other cultures similar to this intergenerational and interracial sacred space.



Stones on top of a tombstone at Oconee Hill Cemetery dedicated to African American remains found underneath Baldwin Hall at the University of Georgia. Photograph by Marquise Drayton.

Around the holidays, visitors can see wreaths placed upon tombstones at many cemeteries, mainly where veterans lie. Every mid-December, Wreaths Across America (WAA) honors those who died in the armed forces.⁷ Their tradition began in December 1992 at Arlington National Cemetery.⁸ A wreath-making family-owned business donated leftover decorations to the notable cemetery.

Stones placed on markers at graveyards began from many Jewish communities for religious reasons.⁹ However, it also symbolizes a stone's unchanging state instead of flowers when visited by a loved one.¹⁰ In addition, items associated with a person's life may also be there in place of a stone.

Leaving coins on a headstone has ties to ancient times in Rome, metaphorically meaning payment to pass over into the afterlife properly.¹¹ It is more known now for military burials, with different coins to communicate its connotation.¹²

A grave blanket is typically a flower bed on a person's tomb above ground.¹³ They usually are in cemeteries with colder climates, thus connotatively keeping the deceased warm.¹⁴ In my visits to various cemeteries, I have seen some decorated with colorful flora. But in some cases, I have witnessed elaborate mural illustrations of the deceased person's casket.

Continued on next page

Cemetery History Series #12

Continued from previous page

We are delighted that the public will be able to see the different architectural improvements, accessibility upgrades, and interpretative programming coming to the campus cemetery in 2024.

By Marquise Drayton
Community Engagement
Assistant
African American Burial Ground,
Andrew Pickens Calhoun Family
Plot, and Woodland Cemetery
Historic Preservation Project at
Clemson University

CITATIONS: 1) Clemson Board of Trustees, Trustees Minutes, July 4-5, 1922, https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1389&context=trustees_minutes; Clemson Board of Trustees, Trustee Minutes, July 10, 1924, https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1388&context=trustees_minutes.
2) Morgan, Matt. "Everything You Need to Know about Woodland Burials." Farewill. Farewill Ltd, n.d. <https://farewill.com/articles/everything-you-need-to-know-about-woodland-burials>.
3) Clemson University. "Web Style Guide: Colors." <https://www.clemson.edu/web-style-guide/colors.html>.
4) Miranda, Carolina. "In the Wake of Prince's Death, a Very Short History of the Color Purple." Los Angeles Times. California Times, April 23, 2016. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-prince-death-very-short-history-of-the-color-purple-20160423-column.html>.
5) Buildings and Grounds Report, February 3, 1953, Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes, 1952-1953, https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=faculty_senate.
6) Brian Scott, "The Camellia Garden Historical Marker," June 16, 2016, Historical Marker Database, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=19538>.
7) Wreaths Across America. "Our Mission." <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/About/OurMission>.
8) Ibid.
9) Milano, Alicia. "Why Do People Put Stones On Graves? Here Are 5 Reasons." Milano Monuments. Milano Monuments, LLC., June 21, 2022. <https://www.milanomonuments.com/blog/why-do-people-put-stones-on-graves>.
10) Ibid.
11) Wounded Warrior Project. "The Meaning Behind Coins on Military Graves." <https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/The-Meaning-Behind-Coins-on-Military-Graves>.
12) Ibid.
13) Kirk, Julie. "All About Grave Blankets and Where to Find Them." Love To Know. LoveToKnow Media, January 4, 2019. <https://www.lovetoknow.com/life/grief-loss/grave-blankets#:~:text=Grave%20blankets%20are%20customary%20headstone,holiday%2Dthemed%20ribbons%20or%20flowers>.
14) Ibid.

Research Update

Historian Dr. Mandi Barnard has continued to work on recovering names of enslaved persons connected to the Calhoun family, and is working with Dr. Collini and Deborah Robinson to input data into our relational database. Dr. Barnard has been researching enslaved persons who are connected to the Washington, DC residences of the Calhouns with Mari Noorai of Historic Properties. She is also finalizing research on Andrew Pickens Calhoun.

Historian Dr. Sara Collini is continuing to work with the undergraduate students on the CI Team. They are working on their final projects: researching the family history of Ben Collier who is one of the convicted laborers buried in the cemetery, researching the impact of Professor Carrel Cowan-Ricks's archaeology work on Cemetery Hill in the 1990s, writing a biography of Anna Stern who was one of the first burials in Woodland Cemetery, and putting together a proposal for a history podcast. Dr. Collini has also been working with Deborah Robinson and Dr. Mandi Barnard on expanding the Airtable database to include records of enslaved families related to Fort Hill Plantation.

Genealogist Deborah Robinson continues advising students in our Creative Inquiry Class who have chosen genealogy research as their term project as well as training our project undergraduate assistant, Kathryn Ann Batson in genealogical research and AirTable relational database entry. Deborah is working with Drs. Collini and Barnard on future-proofing our database in preparation for the next phase of our project. She also continues her work on various projects researching those interred in the cemetery as well as their community descendants.

Cemetery Project Coordinator Dr. Rhondda Thomas has focused on tracing the forced movement of Polydore and Menimeah (also Monemi) from the lowcountry plantations of the Bonneaus and Colhouns to the upcountry plantations of the Bonneaus, Calhouns, and Clemsons in an effort to document how they were brought into colonial America, where they were forced to labor, and when and where they died.

Community Engagement Update

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

On November 6, 2023, Marquise Drayton began drafting the scripts for the special tours offered in the cemetery, with the reviewing of Clemson presidents' tour. This tour will share stories about Clemson College/University presidents' buried in Woodland Cemetery, their impact on the land grant institution, and events in the cemetery during each president's tenure. Woodland Cemetery is the burial site for every president who died after Walter Riggs. Most of their plots are located near the Williamson Road entrance. To help with the storytelling, Drayton has enlisted the assistance of President Emeritus James Barker and former Clemson Trustee Dr. James Bostic to assist with this tour at different stops.

On November 21, Drayton visited Cedar Grove Cemetery and Biddleville Cemetery in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina, to compare it with Woodland Cemetery's history and other cemeteries nationwide. Both historic African American

cemeteries are in West Charlotte, where there is a predominantly Black community. The abandoned 1-acre Cedar Grove Cemetery began in the early 1900s with 67 acres as a segregated cemetery on Beatties Ford Road for African Americans. Now, there is an elementary school and homes on most of the land. Since John S. Davidson, owner and caretaker of the Black burial ground, passed in 1972, there has been an ongoing debate about whether the city of Charlotte or Mecklenburg County is responsible for upkeep. Volunteers have now cleared the overgrown bushes, and there is a visible sign of the cemetery at its entrance. Biddleville Cemetery began in the late 1800s as a Black burial ground for the Biddleville, an African American neighborhood that became prominent because of the Biddle Institute. The institute was the predecessor of the current-day Johnson C. Smith University, a private Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in West Charlotte. The cemetery at Five Points Park has various tombstones with ornate inscriptions and military memorials for Black veterans from the Spanish-American War, World War I, and

World War II buried there. It is one of the oldest cemeteries for Black citizens with no church affiliation in Mecklenburg County. In these cemetery visits close to home, Drayton understood how local community members maintain these historic Black cemeteries, how the environment grows around rather than through these sacred grounds, and the importance of ownership in historic preservation.

The cemetery project team will begin offering in-person tour dates in February for the university body and local community. We will also participate in Black History Month 2024 programming at Pickens County Library System's Easley location. Lastly, Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management (PRTM) and the cemetery project team are building momentum for more tour guides involved in their Engaging in Diverse, Guided Experiences (EDGE) program centered on event planning.



To find out more about the EDGE program in Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, please click [here](#).

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.

A Lunney Christmas. Saturday, December 2, 2023, from 2PM to 8PM. The Lunney Museum. 211 W. South 1st Street, Seneca, South Carolina 29678.

Celebrate the season at the Lunney Museum. The event begins at 2 PM with events for children until 4 PM. At 5 PM, the evening festivities begin! With music,

food, and drinks until 8 PM. Free event. An adult guardian must accompany their children.

Candlelight Tours @ The Lunney Museum. December 12, 13, 14, & 15, 2023, from 6:30PM to 7:30PM. The Lunney Museum. 211 W. South 1st Street, Seneca, South Carolina 29678.

Experience the beauty of the Lunney Museum fully decorated for the holiday season by candlelight on December 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th, beginning at 6:30 pm. Free event. Must be pre-registered to attend. [Get your seats!](#)

Continued on next page

Upcoming Events

Continued from previous page

Once registered, please meet at the Lunney Museum at 6:30 PM for your Candlelight Tour experience. Park on the street in front of the museum and use the front door upon arrival.

The Blue Ridge Community Center's Third Annual Youth Christmas Extravaganza. Sunday, December 10, 2023, from 3PM to 5PM. Blue Ridge Community Center. 315 Holland Ave, Seneca, South Carolina 29678.

The Blue Ridge Community Center (BRCC) presents its third annual Youth Christmas Extravaganza. Join them as the youth display their various talents, like singing, dancing and more. The event will be on Sunday, December 10, 2023, from 3PM to 5PM and is free and open to the public. There will be raffle drawings, Omari and Macari Mayfield will be performing, and donations for BRCC will be accepted. Contact Dr. Curtis White at (864)-650-8427 if you are interested in participating on the program.



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
- Candy Boatwright, Graduate Research Assistant
- Amanda Hartman, Graduate Research Assistant
- Alexis Thomas, Undergraduate Research Assistant
- Kathryn Batson, Undergraduate Assistant

And Meet Our Community Engagement Council

- From Anderson: J. T. Boseman; Jack Henderson; Nekaun Swinger; Dr. Beatrice Thompson; Dr. L. Kaifa Roland
- From Clemson-Central: Rosa Grayden; Dalphine Jameson
- From Pendleton: Terence Hassan; Deveraux Williams
- 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