

LITHONIA ONE CEMETERY:

REVIVING A DEATH SCAPE

By

YI CUI

(Under the Direction of Shelley Cannady)

ABSTRACT

Lithonia One Cemetery is an important historical African American cemetery in Lithonia, Georgia. Surrounding demographic changes, a lack of maintenance, and lack of attention from the public have resulted in a disconnection from the community and a loss of its historic value. This thesis seeks to discover appropriate restoration practices to improve the appearance of the cemetery which currently looks neglected. In order to do this, the thesis explores African American traditional burial culture, current visitor experience and attitudes toward the cemetery, and current conditions, features, and issues within the cemetery. Finally, it provides restoration guidelines for a future managing board and recommendations for two master plans to revive the cemetery within a historic context and rebuild the bonds between the cemetery and community.

Keywords: Lithonia One Cemetery, African American Cemeteries, Historic Cemetery
Restoration, Community Engagement, Public Promotion, Master Plan
Recommendations

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YI CUI

B.A., Tongji University (Shanghai, China) 2007

M.S, DePaul University (Chicago, IL) 2009

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By

YI CUI

Major Professor:

Shelley Cannady

Committee:

Marianne Cramer
Chana Kai Lee
Pratt Cassity

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2016

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Awareness of the Lithonia One Cemetery is fading from the memory of the African American community because of the following factors: first, lack of records or maps of Lithonia One at any government organization or public libraries. Second, a dramatic demographic increase is projected in Lithonia in the next 25 years (Committee 2010), which may result in disconnections between new residents and local historic resources to some extent. Besides, existing landscape factors hide its cultural and natural identity as a historic cemetery with covering vegetation on burial plots and headstones, dispersed dead tree stumps, and lack of appealing entrances or visible way-finding signs. At the same time, lack of an active managing board presents the biggest challenge for all maintenance plans and appropriate restoration practices.

Research Questions

Modern communities need a site for efficiently conveying the story of the past and contributing to the community's identity. The main research question is: how can better bonds be built between communities and historic cemeteries through rehabilitation practices revitalizing the cemetery. To explore this question, this thesis will

examine the Lithonia One Cemetery¹ in Lithonia, GA, and propose design and management suggestions based on research findings.

Demographic Context

Lithonia, a city located in DeKalb County, Georgia, was incorporated in 1856 with 2,187 residents in 2000. By 2025, the population of the City of Lithonia is projected to increase by 285% over the 2000 U.S. census data figures of 2,187 to 6,233². It is also projected that the number of households in the city will increase from 799 to over 2,300 (Jackson, 2010). The largest age groups are 0-13 years old and 35-54 years old, representing 30% and 23% of the population, respectively. The median age is 30 years. This trend will continue and presents a challenge as to the quality and level of community services the city will need to provide. Compared to the rest of the state, Lithonia has a much higher proportion of African Americans and a lower proportion of other ethnic groups. The racial composition is the following: 79.61% African American, 16.64% White, 0.09% Native American, 0.14% Asian, and 3.54% others.

¹ Lithonia One Cemetery has no official name registered or recorded in the public archives. The author currently uses “Lithonia One Cemetery” in this thesis to refer the historic African American cemetery located on Bruce Street and Walker Street. Other names that may have been used among the local community to refer this cemetery include Lithonia Historic African American Cemetery, or Bruce Street Number One Cemetery.

² The population projections were prepared for the City of Lithonia by Robert Charles Lesser & Co., LLC as part of the 2003 Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study. It should be noted that U.S. Census projections at the Georgia Planning & Quality Growth website shows a continuing decline in the population through 2030.

Racial Composition	Lithonia	Georgia	United States
White	16.64%	65.07%	75.14%
Black or African American	79.61%	28.70%	12.32%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.09%	0.27%	0.885
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.14%	2.12%	3.64%
Other	3.52%	3.84%	8.03%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1

Figure 1.1: Lithonia Racial Composition Comparison

Racial Composition

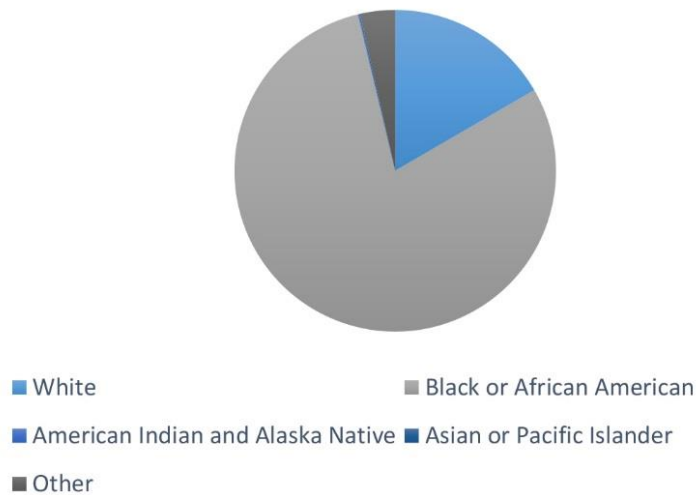


Figure1.2: Lithonia Racial Composition Chart

Historic Context

Lithonia means “City of Stone” and was a granite producer in the late 19th century (Neal and Cloues 2007). In 1895, the Bruce Street Corridor was settled as an African American community by former slaves, farmers, and quarry workers. And the Lithonia One Cemetery was established to serve the community needs; the earliest known burial in the cemetery dates to 1911.

From 1843 to 1929 the Lithonia One Cemetery property was part of a large parcel owned by the Jacob Chupp family who operated a mill on Yellow River and farmed cotton. As the records showed at the Decatur courthouse, because the boll weevil destroyed crops throughout the South, all of Chupp’s land had been sold to Davison Mineral. In 1979, Davidson Mineral deeded the cemetery ownership to the Lithonia Civic League, an African American organization begun by Lucious Sanders, founded to promote civic pride, and to fight discrimination (Neal and Cloues 2007). And today, the Lithonia Civic League still owns Lithonia One Cemetery.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore efficient approaches to connect the Lithonia One Cemetery to the public. By addressing the issues presented in this paper, I will propose efficient approaches to connect the Lithonia One Cemetery to the public so that visiting Lithonia One Cemetery may become a reverent, appealing, and informative experience.

Definitions

To understand the historic value of a site such as a cemetery and to propose relevant plans in preserving and restoring it, the definitions regarding the related items will be specified.

According to Charles Birnbaum (1996), the term “Historic Landscape” refers to a number of character-defining features which individually or collectively contribute to the landscape’s physical appearance as they have evolved over time. Although the measurements for evaluating a historic cemetery may vary, according to the different professions or objectives of observers, there have been few records regarding the definition of a “historic cemetery.” However, National Register Bulletin 41 (Potter and Boland 1992) has provided five criteria to evaluate the historical significance of a cemetery. Historic cemeteries can be included in the National Register of Historic Places as individual sites, or as historic sites contributing to the sense of time, place, and significance of historic districts. As an individual historic site, a cemetery must be old enough to be considered historic (generally at 50 years old) and it must retain its identity (“integrity”) as a historic cemetery. Historic cemeteries may also qualify for the National Register under Nation Register Criterion D if they have yielded or have the potential to yield important historical information through professional archaeological investigation that is unavailable in other documentary forms (Potter and Boland 1992).

Historic Cemeteries usually employ different treatment strategies depending on the sites’ current physical conditions, ownership, funding budgets and sources, initial management plans and stakeholders. There are four primary approaches identified in

the publication issued by U.S Department of the Interior National Park Service for protecting cultural landscape (Birnbaum 1996, 13):

1. Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. However, some limited and sensitive upgrading to make properties functional is considered as appropriate within a preservation project.
2. Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.
3. Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
4. Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Georgia's Abandoned Cemeteries and Buried Grounds law, listed in the Official Code of Georgia (Ga.Code), addresses ownership and responsibility for upkeep of abandoned cemeteries. It provides a definition of what an abandoned cemetery is under the law and then how a county or municipality is authorized but not required to preserve it:

Ga.Code § 36-72-2. *Definition. As used in this chapter, the term:*

“Abandoned cemetery” means a cemetery which shows signs of neglect including, without limitation, the unchecked growth of vegetation, repeated and unchecked acts of vandalism, or the disintegration of grave markers or boundaries and for which no person can be found who is legally responsible and financially capable of the upkeep of such cemetery.

Ga. Code § 36-72-3. *Authority of counties and municipalities to preserve abandoned cemeteries.*

Counties...and municipalities... are authorized, jointly and severally, to preserve and protect any abandoned cemetery or any burial ground which the county or municipality determines has been abandoned or is not being maintained by the person who is legally responsible for its upkeep... to expend public money in connection therewith... and to exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire any interest in land necessary for that purpose.

Methodology

This research employs descriptive strategies: observations were made to obtain a comprehensive site condition record for evaluating the following strategies; complex description was applied to gain a rich understanding of restoration practices utilized in four selected case studies (Chapter 3). A descriptive social survey was conducted to

record/collect data from questionnaires about how visitors use and value the cemetery and their perceptions and suggestions regarding the current physical conditions, features, and expectations for potential improvements. All the survey responses are summarized into different formats of results including forms, charts, and diagrams for illustrating related facts, and shared or common types of users' experiences (Chapter 4).

Evaluation strategies were employed and based on *A Guide to Visiting Georgia's Historic Cemeteries* (C. Neal 2007), and National Register Bulletin 41 (Potter and Boland 1992) as parameters for diagnosis and valuation of the factors in Lithonia One Cemetery, such as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, perceptions, associations, and landscape and to determine whether the site retains historic integrity, significance and values for the local community (Chapter 5).

Interpretive ethnography was employed in interviewing people who live, use, or work for the cemetery in order to draw out informed insights about the Lithonia African American Cemetery (Chapter 4). Interviewees included Deborah Jackson, the mayor of Lithonia, Shameka Reynolds, the funeral director of Tri-Cities Funeral Home Inc. (Lithonia, GA), Melody L. Harclerode, the program coordinator of Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, and Johnny Waits, the director of Flat Rock Archives (Lithonia, GA). Mayor Jackson, as the city official who has the most comprehensive understanding regarding the city's redevelopment in the next decades, showed great interest and support for restoring local historic sites. Miss Shameka Reynolds has operated funeral services for the local community for more than ten years. The Reynolds family has funded their family business since the 1960's; hence, Shameka

has most of the practical experience and knowledge about Lithonia One situations. Ms. Harclerode has the experience of heritage preservation and promotion, and she is the decision-maker for providing grants to local non-profit associations. Mr. Waits has funded a non-profit organization for preserving Flat Rock Cemetery (Lithonia, GA) since 2006. He has valuable insights in historic cemetery preservation and experience in non-profit group operating. Therefore in Chapter 4, in addition to the summary of the respondents from the survey, all the perceptions, reflections, and suggestions from the interviews with these key community members were documented as a part of the findings of community perceptions regarding Lithonia One.

Finally, research findings will be applied to a projective management strategy with general design suggestions to propose a well-organized cemetery with effective way-finding systems and community-engaged open spaces to revive the Lithonia One African American Cemetery and to encourage citizens to take an active involvement in the site.

Literature Review

Literature relevant to this thesis's topic mainly includes three different subject areas: (1) materials related to the Lithonia community development goals in the next decades; (2) materials related to current research and practices for the preservation and restoration of historical African American cemeteries; (3) federal and state acts and laws related to the historic cemetery restoration. The following brief literature review sets the

context of the thesis by describing some of the relevant materials and the stances the authors take.

(1) Lithonia City Commission Planning and Development Goal

To sustainably revive a historic cemetery as a valuable cultural heritage site, the proposed design concept (chapter 6) is based on meeting the community's realistic development needs and serving local neighborhoods as a long term approach, while obeying related Georgia State Law codes.

In the Lithonia Comprehensive Plan of 2010-2026 established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), several essential current issues and opportunities have been identified and evaluated based on the DCA's local planning requirements, such as natural and cultural recourse, community facilities and services, transportation, as well as quality of life.

Current issues regarding natural and cultural resources in the city of Lithonia mainly are the loss of many historic resources, lack of an inventory of the resources affecting the city's ability to develop appropriate measures to preserve and protect them, lack of specific ordinances in place to preserve the historic structures, limited community involvement and lack of youth programs related to historic preservation.

The present issues of transportation in Lithonia include disconnections between community facilities and natural/ cultural resources, limited directional signage from and to the Main Street retail area, and limited pedestrian accessibility of sidewalk and crosswalks. Related to this, appropriate way finding signage is expected to be

improved, the use of alternative means of transportation is encouraged, and sidewalks and crosswalks at key areas should be enhanced to meet the needs of the aging city.

In the Comprehensive Plan for the next fifteen years of redevelopment in Lithonia, quality of life is identified as the key focus area to promote the city's image. Existing issues which are essentially related to historic heritage areas include lack of connectivity of sidewalks from neighborhoods to community facilities and alternative education choices.

As a historic site located on an important corridor that links to the downtown development core, Lithonia One Cemetery is identified as a natural open space and conservation area. The city officials and key stakeholders describe open space initiatives in the report as the following:

- (1) Support the development of informal trail heads into adjacent natural areas.
- (2) Preserve existing undeveloped area for natural open space.
- (3) Promote informal walking trails/natural areas.
- (4) Develop connections to the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Preserve area.
- (5) Enhance visibility of the existing identity markers by raising their level.

In the fourth section of the Comprehensive Plan, the Office of Planning and Quality Growth created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist the local government in evaluating its progress for sustainable and livable communities. The assessment was to provide an overall view of the community's policies based on continuing discussions regarding future development patterns as the city undergoes the

comprehensive planning process. Several comments related to the historic heritage area are listed:

- (1) The community is interested in taking a more active role in regional tourism to promote its historic characteristics and structures.
- (2) The city has received assistance from Georgia State University to develop a preliminary application for designation as a historic district on the National Historic Register.
- (3) It was suggested to explore participation in the History Channel's "Save Our History" program to promote awareness of Lithonia's cultural heritage.
- (4) Consideration needs to be given to the development of green jobs in the community.
- (5) Educational programs for the community to help promote the protection and preservation of the city's valuable heritage resources need to be established.

Additionally, the comprehensive plan specifically involves a statement regarding the cemetery as the one landmark of "Significant Cultural Resources" in Lithonia.

(2) Current Research Regarding Preserving and Restoring Historical Cemeteries

Cemeteries are an expression of a community, including the varied cultural beliefs that make the community unique. Respecting the dead means extending that respect to their descendants (Texas Historic Commission, 2000). There are at least 40,000 cemeteries in Georgia. They embody the most important historic information and need the greatest

attention from all sections of the state. To respond to this concern, Christine Van Voorhies, a member of the Historic Preservation Division, authored *Grave Intentions: A Comprehensive Guide to Preserving Historic Cemeteries in Georgia* in 2003. This document addresses historic and prehistoric burials and provides resources and technical assistance designed as a starting point, and it has become the basic text on how to record, restore and protect a cemetery (Von Voorhies 2003).

In this guide, Voorhies has drawn out specific step-by-step plans for preserving cemeteries: evaluating, recording, mapping and documenting, restoring via physical and financial methods, and maintaining plans that respond to social concerns and law codes. Relevant Georgia state laws are quoted at the end of the document for definitions and for references.

Compared to the guide by Voorhies, in 2007, Christine Neal with five other co-authors wrote *Preserving Georgia's Historic Cemeteries*, a well-designed booklet regarding a similar subject. Funded by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior, through the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, this booklet presents several featured case studies relevant to preserving historic cemeteries in Georgia, as well as seven informative articles compiled to give readers historic and archeologic contexts about discovering and restoring a historic cemetery in Georgia. Specific subjects include the development history of cemeteries in the U.S., the National Register of Historic Places, a guide to visiting Georgia's historic cemeteries, and gravestone symbols and their meanings. The booklet which shares some common ideas with the Voorhies's Guide, also introduces a preservation plan and tells readers how to find funds for cemeteries. The booklet,

furthermore, indicates more specific and doable suggestions, such as raising funds through hosting a “fun-run” or a bird watching event in the cemetery, selling note cards or calendars with photographs from the cemetery, or even hosting a bake sale by cemetery “friends” in conjunction with other community events to raise awareness of the needs of the cemetery and to raise funds for its upkeep. (C. Neal 2007).

Previous research conducted by Georgia State University with the help of the Friends of Lithonia’s African American Cemetery (FLAAC) on April 26th, 2004, was a milestone in preserving Lithonia One Cemetery. This manual introduced a brief history of the city, the cemetery, and the surrounding community context. It was written by Sharman Southall who is the student majoring in Historic Preservation; they described some shared features in African American cemeteries, and included their perceptions of Lithonia One observed in 2004. In addition to the plot map with limited burial information provided in the manual, two records of interviews with Barbara Lester and Ammer Reynolds were also attached to indicate the contributions made over time by local non-profit associations (Southall 2004). Lester was the founder of FLAAC and had volunteered to clean the cemetery and organize community events in preserving Lithonia One Cemetery from 2004 until 2012, when her health prevented her from continuing this work. Ammer Reynolds was the previous funeral director of Tri-Cities Funeral Home Inc. (Lithonia, GA), and also the mother of Shameka Reynolds, the current director. At the end of the manual, the authors attached relevant aerial photographs and maps of Lithonia One in 1968, 2001, and the cemetery photographs of community events taken in 2004.

Emmeline E. Morris, a previous graduate student from the University of Georgia researched Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery (Athens, GA) as her master's thesis topic in 2007, her thesis discussed how to rehabilitate a historic African American cemetery and provided recommendations for preserving a cemetery for public use.

Research Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Firstly, the visitors' using patterns/memorial practices observed are likely more common during months with more temperate weather; however, the studies were carried out during the winter season 2015-2016 (December, January, and February). Secondly, the public users present at other memorial events hosted in the cemetery on national holidays, such as Memorial Day, Independent Day, etc. were not observed, interviewed, recorded for the thesis questionnaire survey results. Thirdly, the age of the survey respondents was mainly over 65, while the total number of Lithonians who are over 65 is 259 out of 2187 or 11.84% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Although the total population of Lithonia is projected to increase by 285% by the year 2025, the population of the seniors who will be over 65 was not projected in the Census 2000 Summary File. Therefore, the study survey results may meet the direct needs of those who showed the greatest interest; however, they do not reflect the behaviors, perceptions, and suggestions of users of all ages. Fourthly, the design solutions proposed in Chapter 6 may not broadly benefit all users and meet all needs from the public. Fifthly, according to official code 36-72-2 of Georgia, the author has

limited archeological knowledge on identifying the significance of Lithonia One Cemetery, and is neither a member nor meets the criteria for membership in the Society of Professional Archaeologists. Therefore, certain observation records and interpretations of the graves of Lithonia One Cemetery cannot be qualified as part of the legal documentation process for preservation. To restore a historic cemetery, experts in archeology who meet relevant state law codes should get involved to do the investigation and documentation.

Delimitations

In this thesis, current research on rehabilitation practices for historic cemeteries was limited to the African American communities of the southeastern United States. Rehabilitation practices stated in the research question will be discussed as the main treatment applied for revealing their significant historic value to the public. I chose to also consider restoration practices that could be applied as a secondary supported treatment to proceed. Additionally, I choose to consider relocating graves from beyond the cemetery's boundaries under a set of appropriate protection laws and agreements from the relatives of the deceased; with intent to preserve their appearance and their original cultural meanings.

Thesis Structure

Starting with the primary research question, Chapter 1 delivers a general statement regarding the research significance, research methodology, historic context

of the research objective, limitations and delimitations, literature review, definitions, and law codes.

Chapter 2 starts with a general description of traditional African burial culture and funeral customs, followed by a comprehensive look at the material culture applied in African American cemeteries. This chapter focuses on distinguishing African American burial preferences among general features and characters which have a shared or common value(s) with other cemeteries.

Chapter 3 details four case studies of historic African-American cemeteries which share similar opportunities and challenges to some degree, and have been well restored by successful methods to some extent. Each case includes a site history, current issues, and successful and functional practices. A summary of a comparison chart included at the end of the chapter provides clear clues regarding the relationships of the four historic cemeteries with Lithonia One Cemetery.

Chapter 4 introduces and analyzes a survey on use patterns, visitors' perceptions and suggestions regarding Lithonia One. The survey targeted Lithonia residents, and the interviewees are a city official, stakeholders, or experts in historic cemetery preservation. The data and feedback collected from the respondents of all sections provide guidelines for the design phase (Chapter 6).

Chapter 5 introduces the ownership of Lithonia One, and the relevant associations and their main contributions to preserve the cemetery. Also, the author uses *A Guide to Visiting Georgia's Historic Cemeteries* (Neal and Cloues 2007) as the main reference to evaluate the current issues of Lithonia One Cemetery, including the

cemetery location, approaches, entrances, boundaries, layout, landscapes, materials and structures, biographical and historical information, and patterns. The goal of the chapter aims to reveal the special historical features and significance to the local community and to present the cultural and social contexts of Lithonia One Cemetery.

Starting with a set of geographic contexts, inventory and analysis, Chapter 6 provides a two-phased proposal, associated with the data and feedback, assessment, summaries, and studies from previous chapters. A step-by-step preservation plan is introduced as a short term solution. Later, a well rendered design masterplan, illustrated with some supportive drawings is delivered to present a more comprehensive picture of the future Lithonia One Cemetery as a reverent, informative and appealing historic site to experience.

CHAPTER 2
HISTORIC CONTEXT:
TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND CEMETERIES IDENTITIES
IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURES

African Cultures and their evolution in America

Africa is a vast, multi-ethnic continent, and has rich cultural heritages expressed in a variety of arts, religions, architecture, agriculture and plantations. From 1550 until 1860 during the largest forced labor migration from Africa to America, the trans-Atlantic slave trade had imported about 12 million Africans as slaves from their homes in various parts of the continent to other parts of world.

Although most slaves in the United States were originally from the western area of Africa and had some common traditions (Figure 2.1.), the new environment they faced forced them to adapt and improvise. Most of the slave owners forced their traditions on the slaves as well; therefore, most of slaves were not free to behave according to the traditions and symbols of their own African cultures. Also, few description records about slaves' former traditions can be traced, especially in the field of slave gardens and their features. Marcyliena H. Morgan, a professor in the Department of African American Studies at Harvard University, wrote:

Individuals lost their connection to families and clans. Added to the earlier colonists combining slaves from different tribes, many ethnic Africans lost their knowledge of varying tribal origins in Africa. Most

were descended from families in the United States for many generations (citation).

The Origins of Slavery in U.S.



Figure 2.1. The origins of slavery in the U.S. Source from wiki.

After the Congressional ban on slave importation in 1808, as the cotton culture intensified up-country (inland; or the interior land of a country away from coast area), most slaves came to Georgia and the black belt of Alabama from neighboring states,

such as Virginia and South Carolina, resulting in more widespread survival of Africanism than up-country. Also, In the low country of South Carolina, slave owners usually assigned slaves specific tasks, giving them some amount of free time on Saturday afternoons and Sundays to cultivate their own gardens; in contrast to the task system, most up-country plantations drove their slaves in gangs, often working them from sunup to sundown. Additionally, most plantations owned large amounts of slaves in the lower south, while plantation owners in the up-country usually never owned more than 12 slaves. Such isolation and small plantations are other factors not favoring the survival of African traditions. In summary, compared to the slaves owned by the up-country plantations, the lower South slaveholders created more proximity with their slaves and encouraged their cross-cultural exchange, making homesteads and the gardens more important to slave communities. Hence, the low-country slaves may have had more common traditions even though they were from different areas of West Africa.

According to the book *African-American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South* by Richard Westmacott, such common African American traditions reflect many practices in the material culture, landscape, religious culture and spiritual world (such as the afterlife) in the southern land. Individuals of these traditions infiltrated and influenced others, resulting in some common identities in current African American cemeteries.

African Materials Culture and African American Cemeteries

Cemeteries and burial grounds manifest historical and cultural characteristics of the dead and those who bury them. As Clow observed (Clow, Green and Owens 2000),

“Simply the presence or absence of contained materials is often symbolic about what activities or beliefs might have been important to an individual or community.” Common African American cemeteries use various materials to feature burial sites as African Americanism, such like broken objects (pots, vase, ceramics, furniture etc.), animal offerings, coins, seashells and white objects(usually little gravel). Each of these material traditions reflects some common beliefs about African spiritual world.

The custom of intentionally breaking objects left as grave decorations is interpreted as a symbol of keeping destruction from affecting the living family members. John Michael Vlach notes that often the base of a vessel was broken, but the shape of the object was retained. Breaking the object would prevent the spirit of the dead from returning in search of the object and then influencing the lives of the living (Genovese 1974:200; Wright and Hughes 1996:20).

A similar practice was observed in Gabon in 1904 by Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, who observed graves adorned with ceramics, eating utensils, and pieces of furniture. E.J.Glave wrote in 1891 of graves covered with “crockery, old cooking pots, etc. which articles are rendered useless by being cracked or perforated with holes.” Examining the history of cultures in West Central Africa, Thompson (Thomson 1983) explained the purpose of grave offerings as “decorative objects that, both in Kongo and the Americas, cryptically honor the spirit in the earth, guide it to the other world, and prevent it from wandering or returning to haunt survivors.”

Cultural groups of Africa’s Ivory Coast left food and other provisions on graves for the deceaseds’ use in the spirit world. The Mende people of West Africa also left food at the grave site (Creel 1998). A number of West African burial rites also included

animal offerings; these practices were carried out in some African American cemeteries. According to some African traditions, this sacrifice, food, and water served to satisfy the spirits and encourage them to remain in repose (Creel 1998).

A free cemetery of the First African Baptist Church established in Philadelphia, PA in 1809 was exposed through archeological investigation. In some burials, a single coin was found inside the coffin near the individual's head. Parrington and Wideman speculated that the coins represented payment to return the spirit of the deceased to Africa. And single shoes were found on the coffin lids of six individuals. Enclosing a shoe within the burial may signify the journey to the spirit world or an attempt to impede the spirit's return.

The tradition of decorating with seashells "create[s] an image of a river bottom, the environment in African belief under which the realm of the dead is located," according to Vlach (Vlach 1990). Some gravesites found in North Carolina's Big Rockfish Presbyterian Churchyard and the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Washington, D.C. (Joyner 1984) were outlined with seashells, while others were entirely covered. African American graves decorated with ceramics and shells were also noted in cemeteries in southern states (Joyner 1984), such as the Bethlehem African Methodist Episcopal Church cemetery (Tallahassee, FL), Bonaventure Cemetery (Savannah, GA), and Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery (Athens, GA).

The Bakongo people believed that dead people guided by mortuary practices joined the spirit domain metaphorically located beneath bodies of water. White was the favored color of grave decoration, for its association with the world of spirits and the dead. White seashells were considered symbols of immortality and were often left on

burial sites along with a variety of other white objects and water (Vlach 1990) (Creel 1998).

All of these beliefs relevant to the spiritual world might not be embodied in all African American cemeteries. Certain features, however, such as broken objects, piled materials, or clustered “trash” by burial plots, should remind visitors or managing board members that these things need to be regarded with attention or be relocated in an appropriate way without breaking the historic integrity.

African American Religious Cultures and Burial Practices

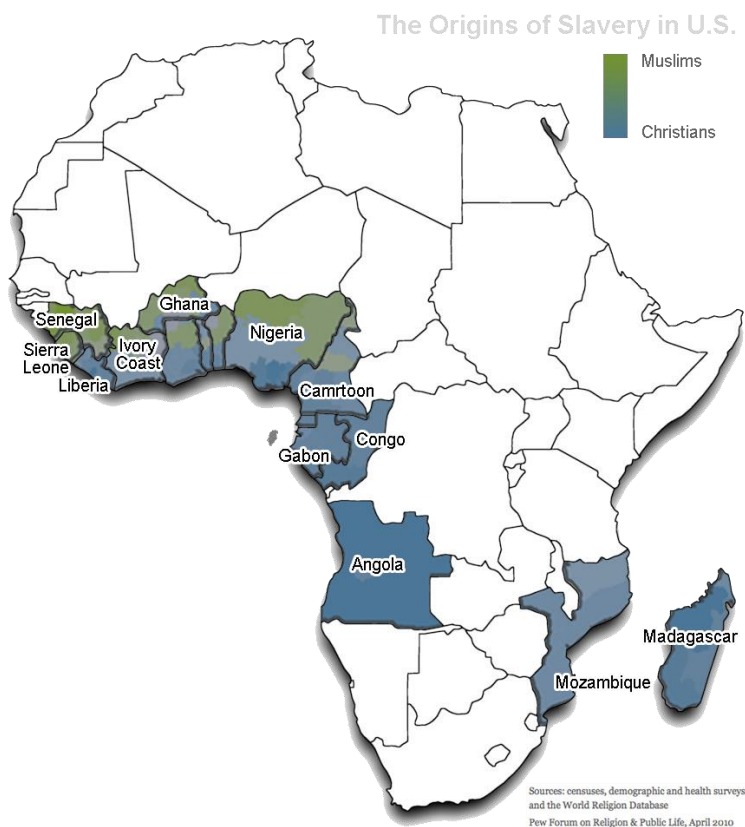


Figure 2.2 West African's Religions distribution map.

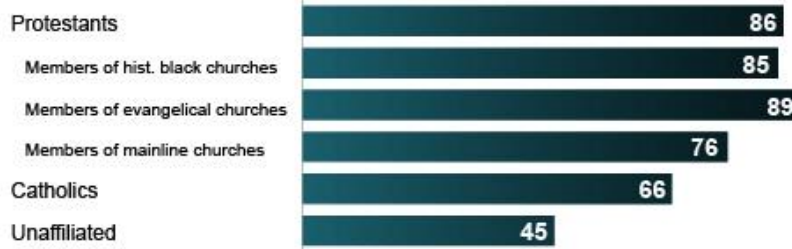
The various populations and individuals of Africa are mostly adherents of Christianity, Islam, and to a lesser extent Traditional African Religion (wiki, Religion in Africa n.d.). According to Figure 2.2., the north part of West Africa in green indicates the loyalty degree of Muslims, and the south part of West Africa in blue indicates the loyalty degree of Christians. Because of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, people who were sold to unfamiliar places as cheap labor have been supporting themselves and each other by their religious beliefs and practices.

The Pew Research Center conducted surveys and wrote “A Religious Portrait of African Americans” (Sahgal and Smith 2009). The surveys’ results (Figure 2.3) suggested high levels of religious beliefs in God, angels, demons, afterlife, and miracles. No matter how different each religious affiliation is demonstrated in Figure 2.4, African Americans attend religious services and pray more frequently than the general population. Additionally, unaffiliated African Americans attend religious services and pray in much higher numbers than the unaffiliated population overall. According to the survey responses, nearly half of unaffiliated African-Americans said they pray daily (48%), more than twice the level seen among the unaffiliated population overall (22%) (Sahgal and Smith 2009).

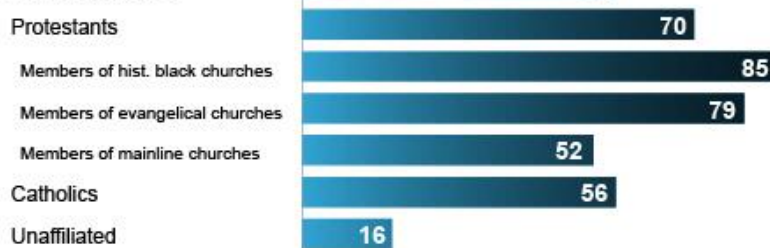
Importance of Religion

% saying "very important"

African-Americans



Total population



Source: Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007, released in 2008
Question wording: How important is religion in your life – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

Figure 2.3. Importance of religions among African Americans (Sahgal and Smith 2009).

Regional Differences in Religious Affiliation						
Among...	Evangelical Prot. churches	Mainline Prot. churches	Hist. black Prot. churches	Catholic	Unaffiliated	Other/Don't know/Ref
	%	%	%	%	%	%
African-Americans	15	4	59	5	12	5=100
Total population	26	18	7	24	16	9=100
<i>Northeast</i>						
African-Americans	14	6	52	6	14	8=100
Total population	13	19	5	37	16	10=100
<i>Midwest</i>						
African-Americans	14	3	55	4	17	6=100
Total population	26	22	6	24	16	6=100
<i>South</i>						
African-Americans	16	3	64	4	9	4=100
Total population	37	17	11	16	13	6=100
<i>West</i>						
African-Americans	11	5	51	11	15	7=100
Total population	20	15	3	25	21	15=100

Source: Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007, released in 2008

Figure 2.4 Regional differences in religious affiliation (Sahgal and Smith 2009)

Worship Service Attendance and Frequency of Prayer				
<i>Among...</i>	<i>Attend worship services...</i>		<i>Pray...</i>	
	<u>At least weekly</u>	<u>All others</u>	<u>At least daily</u>	<u>All others</u>
	%	%	%	%
African-Americans	53	47=100	76	24=100
Protestants	59	41=100	80	20=100
Members of hist. black churches	58	42=100	81	19=100
Members of evangelical churches	66	34=100	82	18=100
Members of mainline churches	48	52=100	62	38=100
Catholics	36	64=100	69	31=100
Unaffiliated	15	85=100	48	52=100
Total population	39	61=100	58	42=100
Protestants	50	50=100	69	31=100
Members of hist. black churches	59	41=100	80	20=100
Members of evangelical churches	58	42=100	78	22=100
Members of mainline churches	35	66=100	53	47=100
Catholics	42	58=100	58	42=100
Unaffiliated	5	95=100	22	78=100

Source: Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, conducted in 2007, released in 2008

Question wording: *Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services – more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, seldom, or never?*

People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, do you pray several times a day, once a day, a few times a week, once a week, a few times a month, seldom, or never?

Figure 2.5 Worship attendance and praying frequency (Sahgal and Smith 2009)

Burial ceremonies were opportunities for enslaved laborers to express their cultural bonds to African cultures (Genovese, 1974; Goldfield, 1991). Some slave owners attempted to control burial ceremonies to limit the potential for coordinated actions against plantation owners. While other slave owners recognized the importance of cultivating the loyalty of their enslaved laborers, they therefore took a more permissive approach to such burial practices. Additionally, A few slaveholders accepted

such practices as fulfilling a basic humanitarian responsibility (Genovese 1974; Heuman and Walvin, 2003).

Although most slave owners, especially in up-country, prohibited slaves gathering together to mourn for the death of their related or friends, the belief in an afterlife still encouraged the living to adhere to the shared tenet that the dead must be interred through proper burial rituals and customs, and to the conviction that offended spirits could harm the living. Historian Robert Farris Thompson (Thomson 1983) refers to this ever-present element as the “flash of the departed spirit.” It was believed that failure to satisfy the needs of the spirits would result in neglect, and that the spirits were aware of events occurring in the material world and could exert influence over the living (Creel 1998) (Herskovits 1931).

Slaves’ burials usually took place at night because that was the only time available for them to attend. People from community attending the funeral held torches for light, and sang songs till dawn of the following day. These spiritual events are often referred to as “home-going” celebrations, an African American Christian funeral tradition marking the going home of the deceased to the Lord or to heaven. Such a celebration service usually is prepared by an African American Christian church (wiki, Homegoing 2015), followed by digging, burial, and the headstone setting process prepared by the funeral home (Reynolds 2016).

African American Gardens and Cemetery Landscape

Formal landscaping was not typical of 19th and 20th century African American graveyards due to the social and economic class of the deceased. Except that black churches usually assigned back yard for burying black slaves' remains, only favored enslaved laborers were occasionally buried with the white family they served and most grave grounds on plantations of the enslaved were confined to segregated areas or on separate plots (Kruger-Kahloula 1994). Also, they are randomly placed in the margin land over time, to maintain tranquility and to avoid disturbing the spirits. Limited attempts were made to control the growth of vegetation and graves were often unmarked.

Some Africans also believe that west-east burial orientation are embodied important meaning: "...being buried with the feet facing the east to allow rising at judgment day, otherwise the person is crossways of the world." (Wright and Hughes 1996). However, some archeological studies of West African burial practices documented that burial orientation varies greatly between groups—some corpses are buried in a "seated position", others in a "sleeping position", and east-west orientation is not always observed. (Jamieson, 1995)

Trees have been usually regarded as a symbol of the continuance of life and included spiritual meaning in African American cemeteries; one belief held that tree roots anchored the spiritual world beneath the earth to the material world above ground. According to Bakongo beliefs, trees were planted on graves as a tribute to shelter the final resting place of the dead, as well as a symbol of immortality (Thomson 1983). Typical plants seen in the African American cemeteries include yucca, dogwood, crepe

myrtle, forsythia, cedar trees, and periwinkle (Westmacott 1992). Evergreen trees such as pine and some species of oak symbolized eternity; the weeping willow represented grief (Farber 2007).

In contrast with the park-like setting of the rural cemetery movement or the rigid layout of the memorial parks associated with Anglo American cemeteries, highly designed landscapes are not often observed in the African American cemeteries. The extent of burial sites are often difficult to surmise due to unmarked graves. Therefore, African American cemeteries are often overgrown with vegetation, and/or were developed on marginal land with an irregular layout in undesirable areas with a neglected look. Vegetation overgrowth may also be a result of the intentional planting of common “pass-along” plants that are often not considered ornamental.

Summary

Each place can tell stories with its own identity, no matter how many years it has gone through, no matter what look it presents to the world, and no matter whether it can be noticed or identified. It is what it has been, like African American cemeteries.

Although preserved documentation of African and African American traditions are insufficient and parts of the original African traditions may have been forgotten and adapted over time, limiting the understanding of many African American traditional cultures and ignoring lots of historic African American cemeteries. However, some clues related to their religious beliefs and practices, landscape settings and material culture can still be noticed, identified, preserved and receive the respect that the cemeteries

deserve. The following diagram reveals the relationships between the African American cemetery identities, African American cultures, and African traditional beliefs in the spiritual world.

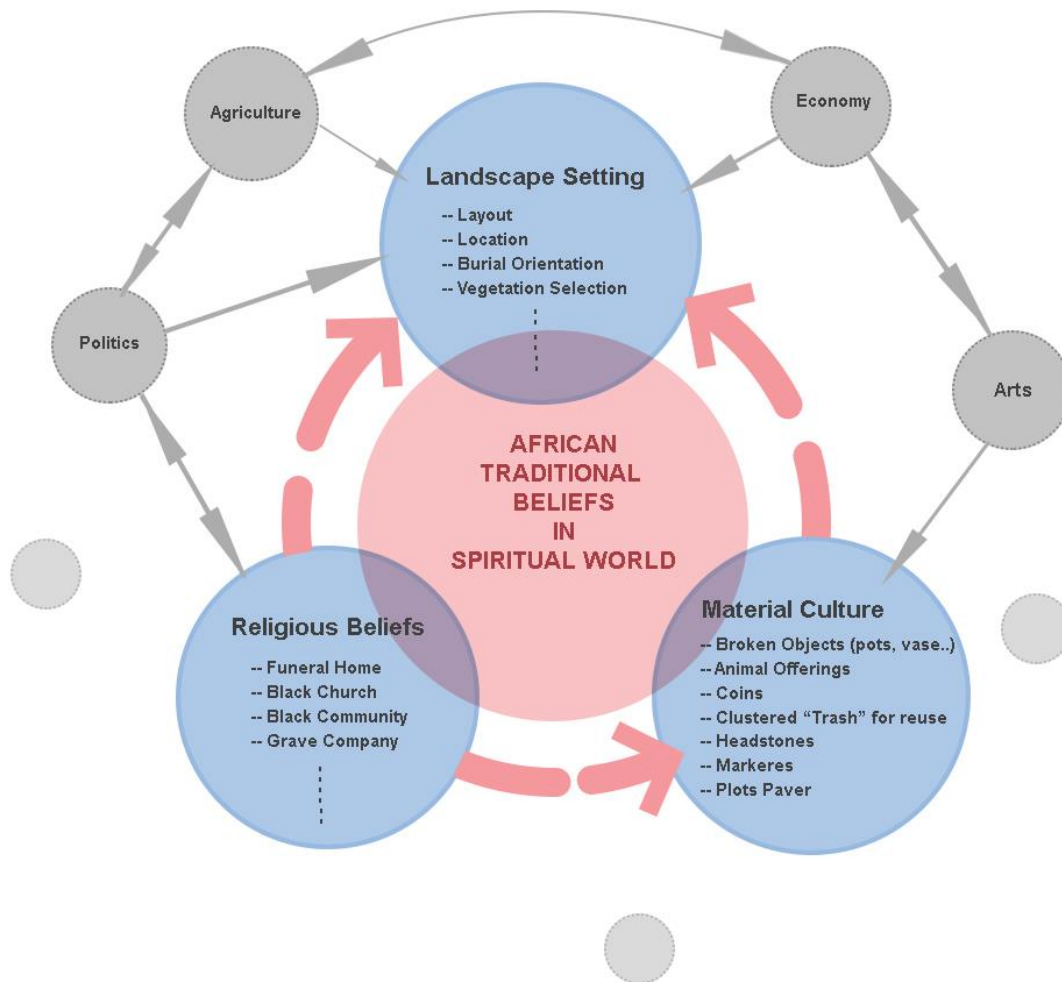


Figure 2.6. The identities and relationships of African American cemeteries

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES:

RESTORATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERIES

Introduction

The cemeteries spread over United States present different landscape patterns and deliver various cultural heritages with their own genius loci because they experienced exterior factors over time such as wars, environmental changes, civic rights movements, and human aesthetic preferences. The three case studies in this chapter present successful restoration practices, and they allow us to examine the most efficient solution(s) for rehabilitating Lithonia One Cemetery,

The four cases are the Randolph Cemetery located in Columbia, South Carolina, the Locust Grove Cemetery located in Shippensburg, Philadelphia, the Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery located in Athens, Georgia, and Flat Rock Cemetery located in Lithonia, Georgia. The criteria for selecting the four sites are mainly based on their locations to the city center, burial natures, surrounding neighborhoods, major challenges encountered, and landscape patterns. The four cases are located in or near downtown, have over 50 years of history (meet the criteria for national historic registration), belong to private owners, were founded for slaves' burials, encountered demographic change around the surrounding neighborhoods, and lacked records, care and maintenance for decades during the past century. The chart following the case study at the end of this

chapter lists all the cemetery conditions in terms of the criteria, and parallels the conditions and issues of Lithonia One Cemetery, an African American Cemetery disconnected from the surrounding community because of limited attention and care.

Randolph Cemetery (Columbia, SC)

History

Randolph Cemetery was the first cemetery formally established for the city's African American community in the late 19th century. Later in 1971, local black legislators and businessmen formed an association to establish a burial place for blacks in Columbia and purchased three acres of land from a pre-existing white cemetery, which was located in the downtown area of the city.

Although all of the planned plots in Randolph Cemetery were sold by 1911, the decline of the cemetery could not be avoided because of the millions of African Americans who escaped the oppressions of Jim Crow laws from the southern states for freedom to the northern cities. Gravesites were left untended and cemetery vegetation became overgrown. Additionally, there was another black cemetery established in the early 20th century in the city giving black citizens more options for interment. Randolph Cemetery became a deserted wilderness by the mid-20th century.

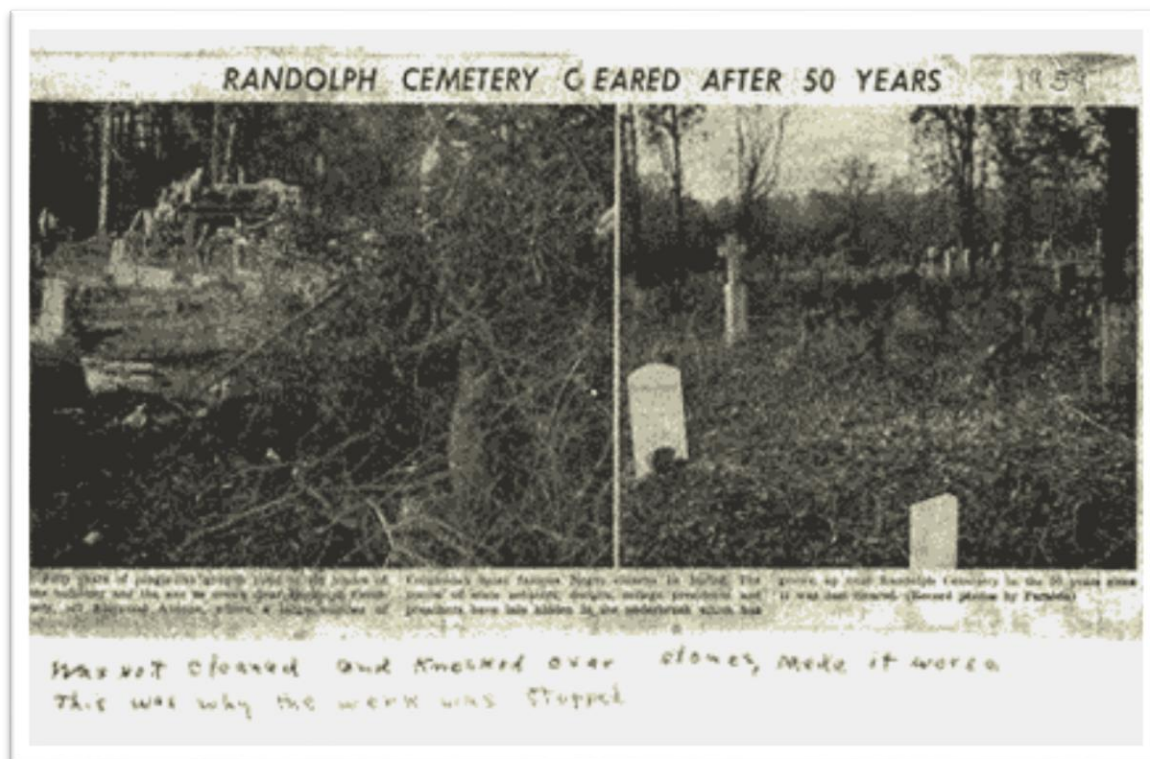


Figure 3.1 Overgrown vegetation

In 1959, the city of Columbia developed an urban renewal plan to include Randolph Cemetery and arranged for the cemetery to be “cleared-out” (Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery, 2010). A local chain-gang started to clear out the cemetery and destroyed many of the grave sites. At the same time, a local African American woman, Minnie Simons Williams, saw the destruction, alerted the city to the historical significance of the cemetery and stopped the clearing progress.

Mrs. Williams worked to preserve the cemetery for 32 years and reformed the Randolph Cemetery Association with several other descendants of the original founders of the cemetery. The group focused on promoting the historical significance of the

cemetery and on improving the maintenance of the overgrown landscape. During the years after that, the local court established the group as a public charity with trusteeship over the cemetery, and ruled that any person descended from those buried at the cemetery would be considered as members by right. After being awarded custody of the cemetery, the association continued efforts to raise funds for the preservation of Randolph Cemetery as its time and resources permitted.

In 1989, the curator for the South Carolina State Museum, Ms. Elaine Nichols, assisted Mrs. Williams in setting up an exhibit on African American funeral traditions with Randolph Cemetery and in soliciting funding to preserve the cemetery. Also, they promoted the historical awareness of the cemetery up until Mrs. Williams' death in 1992. In 1995, Randolph Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, ensuring its protection as a landmark. In 2005, individuals representing several important organizations including the South Carolina State Museum, the South Carolina State Department of Archives and History, and the Historic Columbia Foundation founded the Downtown Columbia Cemetery Task Force (DCCTF) to preserve the historic cemeteries in the greater Columbia area with Randolph Cemetery as their initial focus. Since the year the Task Force was founded, it has made dynamic progress restoring the material fabric of the Randolph Cemetery and ensuring its continued maintenance. The Task Force embarked on a new vision, *"to see Randolph Cemetery as a beautifully restored and secure cultural heritage site; to encourage the community to visit and enjoy it; to insure its continued maintenance; and to educate the public about its importance."* (Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery, 2010)

The DCCTF planned four phases and has consistently focused on three main areas of restoration: the broken material fabric, the cemetery's landscape, and the preservation of cultural customs. In the initial phase, DCCTF hired contractors to clear the cemetery's boundaries and remove overgrowth throughout the cemetery in 2006. In the second phase, the Task Force completed the survey map for the entire area of the cemetery and compiled a database of all known burials at the cemetery. The Task Force also contracted a consulting firm to assist with obtaining non-profit status and organizational development issues. With the help of a historic preservationist that the Task Force hired, Keilah Michal Spann, the DCCTF continued in 2011 with the third and fourth phase of materials restorations, landscape preservation efforts, and public events aimed at community engagement and educating the public about the historical significance of the cemetery (Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery, 2010).

Materials Preservation and Landscape Restoration

The restoration of damaged materials was also divided into phases with priority accorded by factors such as the extent of damage, age, and historical significance, and the first phase targeted the most extensively damaged markers, which are located within the oldest area of the cemetery that contains many of the most important historically relevant burials. Because most of the markers in phase one were composed of marble which is less durable over time compared to other common stone used in cemeteries such as granite and slate, they were broken into fragments or knocked off from their bases. In this case, reattaching broken fragments and securing markers back

onto their bases was accomplished with a process called “blind pinning.” All of the markers were cleaned prior to restoration by using biocide and a standard masonry cleaning solution. In phase two, those markers left from phase one continued to be cleaned (Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery, 2010).

Prior to 2009, lawn care service was provided only a few times a year with very little oversight by contractors, resulting from a shortage of funding. After that year, the cemetery began to have professional landscaping services on a routine monthly basis and a maintenance plan has been developed to ensure the landscapes aesthetic quality in the cemetery.

Community Engagement

To encourage the participation from the public and the neighborhood community in the preservation of this historical landmark, the DCCTF invites the descendants of those interred at the Randolph Cemetery, as well as the public and members of the local business community to join the ranks of its membership. In the past years, Eagle Scout Candidate Xavier Goodwin led Boy Scouts from local Troop 330 and high school students to participate in the cemetery marker cleaning in April, 2010. On May 23rd of the same



Figure 3.2. On April 9, 2010 Boy Scouts from local Troop 330 and High School students led by Eagle Scout Candidate Xavier Goodwin participated in cemetery marker cleaning, Photo provided by www.historicrandolphcemetery.org/activities.php

year, Keilah Spann led a group of local historic preservationists, historians, and community members in a grave marker cleaning activity.

Locust Grove Cemetery (Shippensburg, PA)

History

Starting in the 1730s, Scotch-Irish settlers arrived in the Shippensburg area. They adopted the practice of slavery and some continued to hold black slaves into the mid-19th century, making Shippensburg one of the oldest African American communities in central Pennsylvania (S. B. Burg 2008).



Figure 3.3. Locust Grove Cemetery Gate. Photo by David Maher, 2007

Shippensburg grew slowly in the 1740s and 1750s, and turned into a crossroads town on one of the major thoroughfares. The Burd-Forbes Road, constructed during the French-Indian War, connected Carlisle, Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh, and passed through Shippensburg. As the city grew, so did its population of African American slaves (Buckhart 1970).

Several local histories state that Shippensburg's original proprietor, Edward Shippen, deeded land to the black community for a cemetery before his death in 1781 although there are no extant written records to confirm that (Buckhart 1970). The Shippen-Burd family eventually designated a lot on their plot map as the "Negro Graveyard." The lot that would become the African-American cemetery was larger, less

regular, and oriented differently than the other 403 Shippensburg lots plotted by Burd in 1749. Also, the lot could only be accessed via an alley, making it the sole lot in the original town plan that lacked frontage along a main street.

The land that would become the cemetery was marked by its physical isolation and its sloping, rocky terrain, with limestone bedrock running just below the thin soil and often emerging from the surface. A soil analysis suggested that the land was farmed for several years before the site was used



Figure 3.4. Outcrops in the Locust Grove Cemetery

as a cemetery, and plowing likely accelerated the topsoil's erosion, rendering the land even rockier and less suitable for farming, and making it more than adequate for a burial ground (S. B. Burg 2008). Additionally, although the site was only three blocks from the original town center, it was removed from the core of development. The Shippens-Burd family failed to find any buyers for any of the neighboring lots by 1800 (Barner 1987). To avoid having to designate a specific individual or organization as the property's owner, Burd transferred legal title to all the African-American residents of Shippensburg. The cemetery, and a church adjoined by it, thus became the community's first public space owned and controlled by African Americans.

During and after the Civil War, the relocation of former slaves from the upper South contributed to the African American population's rapid growth in Shippensburg. The Locust Grove Cemetery offered a natural venue for emancipated men and woman

after death. The cemetery also offered a space to recognize the military service of African American men who served their country during the Civil War and Spanish American War. Both the United States government and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established programs to ensure that former soldiers received suitable burials regardless of their insufficient economic conditions, and official military headstones could be obtained via application to the Cemetery Branch of the Quartermaster General's office by veterans and their families. However, none of the Shippensburg African American Civil War veterans who would have qualified for the program chose to utilize this benefit (S. B. Burg 2008)³. The headstones in the Locust Grove Cemetery do not bear the sunken shield typical of federal issued tombstones according to the records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (Record Group 92 at the National Archives).

According to historian William Burkhart, the cemetery committee closed the cemetery in the early 1920s because the large number of unmarked graves had made it difficult to identify vacant space on the grounds (Burkhart 1970). At that time, the Locust Grove Association initiated the process of acquiring a new piece of land to serve the needs of the African American community. Additionally, a new public cemetery was purchased by a group of local businessmen to address the shortage of land, but they allowed burial to white people only. This new cemetery, called Spring Hill Cemetery, significantly transformed Shippensburg's system of voluntary racial segregation into a

³ The headstones in the Locust Grove Cemetery do not bear the sunken shield typical of federal-issued tombstones. Also, David Maher, an Applied History student of History professor Steven Burg, found that no requests had been submitted to the Office of the Quartermaster General by reviewing the Card Records of Headstones Provided for Deceased Union Civil War Veterans, ca. 1879-ca. 1903, Microfilm Publication M1845, which are part of the Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Record Group (RG) 92 at the National Archives.

formal system of racial segregation. Moreover, several of the community's downtown churches closed their cemeteries and limited the potential for churches to offer burials to African Americans (S. B. Burg 2008). By default, the Locust Grove Cemetery then became the only ground in town where African Americans could be buried, while the Spring Hill Cemetery remained a white-only institution for more than 100 years.

However, the neighborhood surrounding the cemetery changed dramatically in the 20th century. Many African American residents died or moved (Burkkhart 1976), and many of the African American organizations that helped to watch over the cemetery were gone. Students and renters largely filled the void. In the years after World War II, nearby Shippensburg State Teachers College grew and expanded into Shippensburg University, increasing from 1,260 students in 1958 to over 7,500 in 2005. An intense demand for affordable housing and services close to campus encouraged the transformation of single family homes into multi-unit rental properties and the construction of high density apartment buildings.

The changes to the neighborhood meant that some of its new neighbors did not fully appreciate the significance or fragile nature of the historic grounds. Meanwhile, a narrow public alley running through the center of the cemetery provided a shortcut to Shippensburg's main street, King Street, increasing the amount of automobile traffic. Also, improperly bagged garbage and littering resulted in an accumulation of papers, plastic bags, soda bottles, and fast food wrappers on the cemetery grounds. Even worse, trespassers would topple tombstones or break into the cemetery's storage shed (Heberlig 2003).

William H. Burkhart, a white local historian, newspaper editor, and World War II veteran, visited the cemetery in May 1949, and was shocked by his experience. He devoted hundreds of hours to researching and restoring the Locust Grove Cemetery, removing trash from the cemetery grounds, repairing broken tombstones, and building a fence along the cemetery's north boundary in 1960s. He also gathered oral histories from elderly African Americans and wrote brief histories of local churches. By the decade's end, the desultory former landscape of the cemetery had been replaced with a neatly trimmed lawn and carefully aligned monuments (Burkhart 1970).

Restoration Practices

In addition to individual caretakers of the Locust Grove Cemetery, there were four volunteer officers who cooperated together and formed a committee. This committee met around kitchen tables to discuss cemetery business, to make arrangements for new burials, to plan programs for Memorial Day family reunions, to reset toppled tombstones in concrete, and to build an impressive limestone gate at the cemetery's entrance. Although the committee worked hard to address the ongoing deterioration and vandalism and to keep the cemetery well maintained, lack of funding made its prospects for addressing the cemetery's needs particularly grim.

First, the cemetery had run out of plots to sell, meaning that the committee lost its main revenue source. Second, the committee as an unincorporated organization lacking 501©3 nonprofit status could not apply for most government or foundation grants. Third, many of the local African American organizations that had supported the

cemetery in the past had either become inactive or were struggling financially. Fourth, the officers of the Locust Grove Cemetery Committee felt uncomfortable asking volunteers for money. The amount of over \$3000 that they raised through church dinners and yard sales was still only a tiny fraction of what was needed.

Burkhart discussed this situation via newspaper and his own book “Shippensburg in the Civil War” published by the Shippensburg Historical Society in 1964. His words galvanized young local African Americans to take control of the cemetery’s upkeep and to show the world their commitment to their heritage.

For more than thirty years, the Locust Grove Cemetery committee worked hard on addressing its ongoing deterioration and vandalism, and on keeping the cemetery grounds neat and well maintained.

Community Engagement

Steven B. Burg, who was teaching Public History at Shippensburg University in 1999 and had lived in town for two years, started a service learning and community engagement program in 2003 (S. B. Burg 2008). In the fall of 2002, a retired history department colleague invited Burg to a meeting with the Locust Grove Cemetery Committee officers. He failed to attend it but later made a call to a committee member to offer his help after reading a newspaper article regarding the cemetery’s existing problems. After meeting with the officer, Burg integrated cemetery research into his class through a variety of student projects that would contribute to the cemetery’s rehabilitation. In the project statement for preserving Locust Grove Cemetery, Burg

wrote that he hoped to engage students “to raise public awareness of the cemetery, to provide additional information about the men and women buried there, and to aid efforts to preserve this important local historical site” (S. B. Burg 2003)

In the final assignment submitted by students, some students created an interpretative walking tour based on the cultural material of the grave markers and the history of African American military service. Some students designed websites to include the cemetery into a larger 18th century Shippensburg history. A dual history/geography student created a GIS map of the cemetery, including the location of each individual headstone. Another student transcribed the tombstones and created a database charting the family connections of individuals buried in the cemetery. And one student who had a background in public relations drew up a comprehensive media and fundraising plan for the cemetery committee, providing step-by-step instructions on how to organize and execute a fundraising campaign (S. B. Burg 2008).

Later in the summer of 2004, Richard Gibbs, a communication-journalism professor at Shippensburg University and president of the Shippensburg University Press, who also taught the university’s Book and Magazine Publishing course, met with Burg and decided to integrate this project into his class to allow his students to get real world experience shepherding a full-length book manuscript from Burg. Considering the cost of producing such a book and a marketing process with a very limited audience, they co-authored a University Human Understanding Grant, noting the project’s potential to expose both students and the local community to a greater understanding of the region’s African American history. Finally, they received \$800 which covered the cost of a two hundred volume print run (S. B. Burg 2008).

On May 1, 2004, Gibb's students held a book signing to celebrate the publication of *Black History of Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, 1860-1936*. Nearly one hundred people attended. Burg's applied history students presented their research to the crowd, and all of the books were sold out at the event, with some families purchasing six or eight copies to share with their relatives. The book's popularity and excitement suggested a wellspring of enthusiasm for preserving and promoting Shippensburg's African American history.

On October 1, 2005, a local business group hosted a contest to design a new Shippensburg flag. The winning entry contained notable local landmarks, including the Locust Grove Cemetery. The cemetery was becoming a symbol of community history to be celebrated rather than a problem to be hidden (S. B. Burg 2008). Because of Burg and his students' work, the Shippensburg community can now more fully appreciate the achievements of its African American residents while also remembering the area's history of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination.

Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery (Athens, GA)

History

The Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery was founded to furnish respectable funerals and burials for African Americans in Athens, Georgia, in 1882 by the Gospel Pilgrim Society. The 8.25 acres of cemetery land were originally purchased from a well-off blacksmith, William Talmadge, and a 0.75 acre parcel was added later in 1902. The earliest burials date back to 1885 and the latest record was in 2003. About 3500 people are interred

there, including state legislators Alfred Richardson and Madison Davis, a number of local educators such as Annie Smith and Samuel F. Harris, and nationally recognized folk artist Harriet Powers.

Prior to 1882, African Americans in Athens were buried in various black church cemeteries surrounding Athens. To meet the burial needs of the local African American community in the late 19th century, the Gospel Pilgrim Society was founded to offer the community members burial insurance, as well as medical and disability benefits. Members paid fees to ensure a funeral and proper burial in the cemetery; families assumed the responsibility for maintaining the grave site. The society had no formal preservation program for the Gospel Pilgrim cemetery, but kept maintaining the site continuously until the 1970s.

In 1973, a tornado hit the Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery, toppling large trees and creating damage to some graves and walls. At this time, a few other cemeteries emerged in Athens, GA, which offered more burial options for African Americans. As a result, the cemetery presented a much more neglected look with dense overgrown vegetation on the gravestones (Morris 1992).

In 2002, the year that the cemetery was almost determined to be abandoned because of the untraceable property ownership (Von Voorhies 2003), the East Athens Development Corporation (EADC), a nonprofit organization, recognized its historical significance and began to seek solutions to revitalize it.

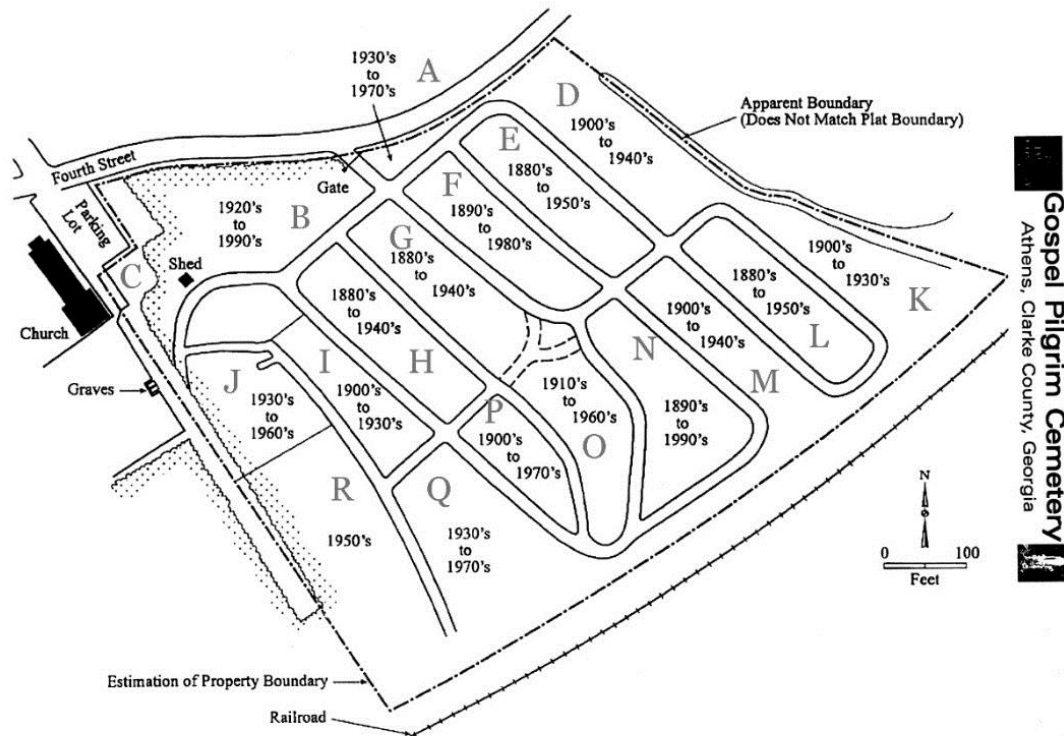


Figure 3.5. Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery Zone Maps. Provided by www.gospelpilgrimcemetery.com

Preservation Practices

To begin the revitalization progress of the Gospel Pilgrim cemetery, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center technically assisted with drafting the National Register Nomination for the site. During the same period, the East Athens Development Corporation (EADC) collected funding from the Georgia Department of Labor to provide jobs for residents, and hired Southeastern Archeological Services and the Jaeger Company to conduct surveys and field studies in the summer of 2003. Through a continuous series of assessments and examinations to determine the extent of gravestones, quantity, associated dates, and general conditions, EADC developed a masterplan that identified issues of access, security, maintenance, organization,

administration, interpretation, and heritage tourism. In 2007, EADC submitted the masterplan to the Athens-Clarke County Commission and obtained approval to proceed restoration from the government. The restoration project included the establishment of specific vehicular and pedestrian paths, kiosks with educational and informational signage, benches, other amenities to enhance the public areas within the cemetery, and improvements to the public sidewalks adjacent to the cemetery for better visitor access (Government 2012). Construction was completed on October 13rd, 2008, at an expense of \$306,476 for the entire project. On May 15, 2009, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County was presented an Excellence in Rehabilitation Award for the project by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation; and on June 8th, 2009, the Unified Government was presented an Outstanding Achievement award for the project by the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation.

Community Engagement

The Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation sponsored a series of guided walking tours, called Athens Heritage Walks starting in 2009. The foundation provides research assistance for the walking tour guides, and allows the guides to begin the process with their own script based on their personal knowledge and expertise on the Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery. People who are interested must book the tour online and pay \$12-\$15 for the tour ticket (Nelson 2011). There is also a video post on youtube.com of a walking tour of the Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery guided by Al Hester (Hester, Athens Heritage Foundation Walking Tours 2012) who wrote *Enduring Legacy: The Story of Clarke County, Georgia's Two Ex-Slaves Legislators-Madison Davis and Alfred Richardson* and was

awarded for the Outstanding Foundation for Historic Preservation in 2011, by the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation (Hester, *Introducing Enduring Legacy: How Two Ex-Slaves Fought to Represent Clarke County, Georgia, in 1868- 2013*).

In fall of 2014, the exhibit called “Landscapes of the Hereafter” was on view at the University of Georgia in the College of Environment and Design’s Circle Gallery. Three graduate students assisted with creating panels that powerfully evoked the beauty of three historic cemeteries in Athens, GA, especially Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery. They spent four weeks exploring, photographing, and documenting three of Athens burial grounds. In addition to Gospel Pilgrim, the students studied Oconee Hill and Old Athens Cemetery. According to Melissa Tufts, Director of Owens Library and Circle Gallery, about six hundreds of UGA students, faculty and staff viewed the gallery and saw the exhibition. One student commented, “...I see now how important it is to appreciate the ones that exist. This show has made me think a lot about my family’s cemetery in Mississippi and made me realize how beautiful these sites can be.” (Board 2014)

Flat Rock Cemetery (Lithonia, GA)

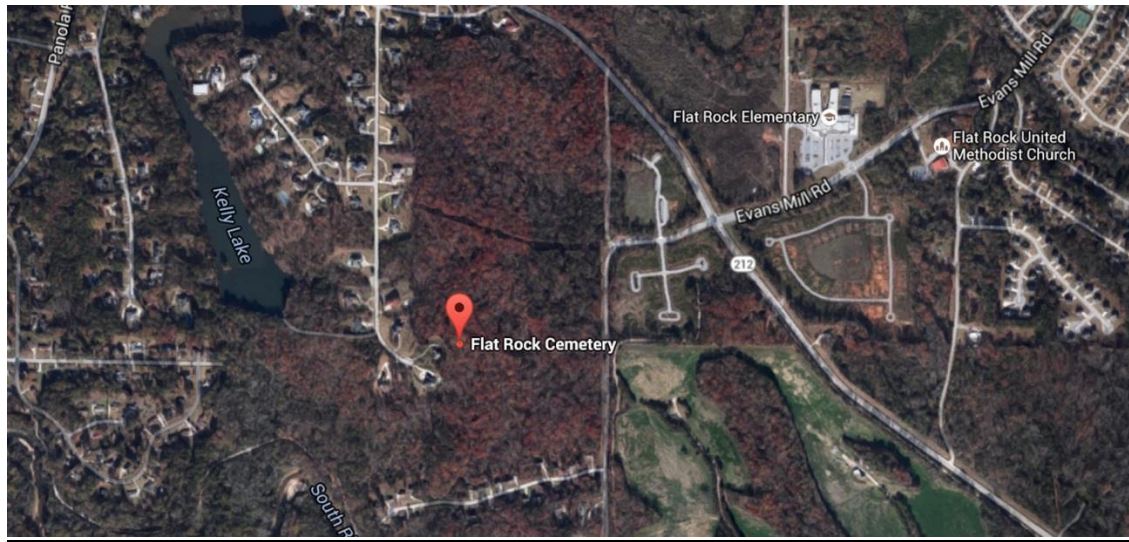


Figure 3.6. Flat Rock Cemetery Aerial Map. Source from Google Map.

History

This historic cemetery located in the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, a district that encompasses the rich and dynamic history of African Americans, is the final resting place for slaves, former slaves, Native Americans, African-American Veterans & Soldiers of the Civil War, WWI, and WWII, as well as other community members.

Flat Rock was established by some of the earliest settlers of DeKalb County, Georgia (Charles and William Latimer Jr.) in the early 1820s (Garrett 1954). A store and tavern were opened on the Covington-Decatur Road which, at the time, was a popular stagecoach route from Nashville to Augusta. On April 26, 1831, William Latimer became the first postmaster of the Flat Rock post office located in the general store (Garrett 1954). Although the post office was closed in August, 1845, and relocated three miles down Main Road and reestablished as Lythonia, now spelled Lithonia, the Flat Rock

name continued to exist (Garrett 1954). Flat Rock Cemetery contains burials dating from possibly as early as 1834 to February 17, 1960, shortly after the community built a new church and cemetery.

Current Observation and Preservation Practices



Figure 3.7. Flat Rock Cemetery location map with surrounding zones. Sources from Esri.com

The site has approximately 0.51 acres (J. Waits 2016) with a six foot high iron gate as the entrance of the cemetery. A concrete driveway and about ten parking spaces guide visitors to the entrance. A one story brick building, named Pentecostal Church, stands by the side of the cemetery entrance. A small white building functioning as the maintenance office is attached (J. Waits 2016). Also, there is a 200 square ft. open pavilion standing by the peripheral woods to provide shade and temporary seating

and dining tables. The whole burial site has no man-made boundaries with nearby residential neighborhoods, and it is surrounded with pine woods as a natural buffer. An interesting event occurred on the day of the field investigation with Mr. Johnny Waits on Feb 16, 2016. A large mature Labrador Retriever walked through the woods from the residential area to the cemetery, but was expelled eventually by Mr. Waits. According to Mr. Waits, the director of Flat Rock Archives, the fences will be the next restoration step to consider for the Board of Flat Rock Archives.

Flat Rock Archives, established by Mr. Waits in 1996, functions as a research center containing records, artifacts, and historical information about the African-American former slaves and their descendants who still live in the Flat Rock community. The archives are open to the public and located within the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. In the same year, Flat Rock Archives provided an archeological research opportunity to Georgia State University, and the mapping and documenting project aiming to reconnect the cemetery with local community through Geographic Information System (GIS) spatial analysis provided the Flat Rock Archives managing board a base map to help them analyze, preserve and restore the cemetery. The figure attached below is the map created by the students of Georgia State University, Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society, and Johnny Waits.

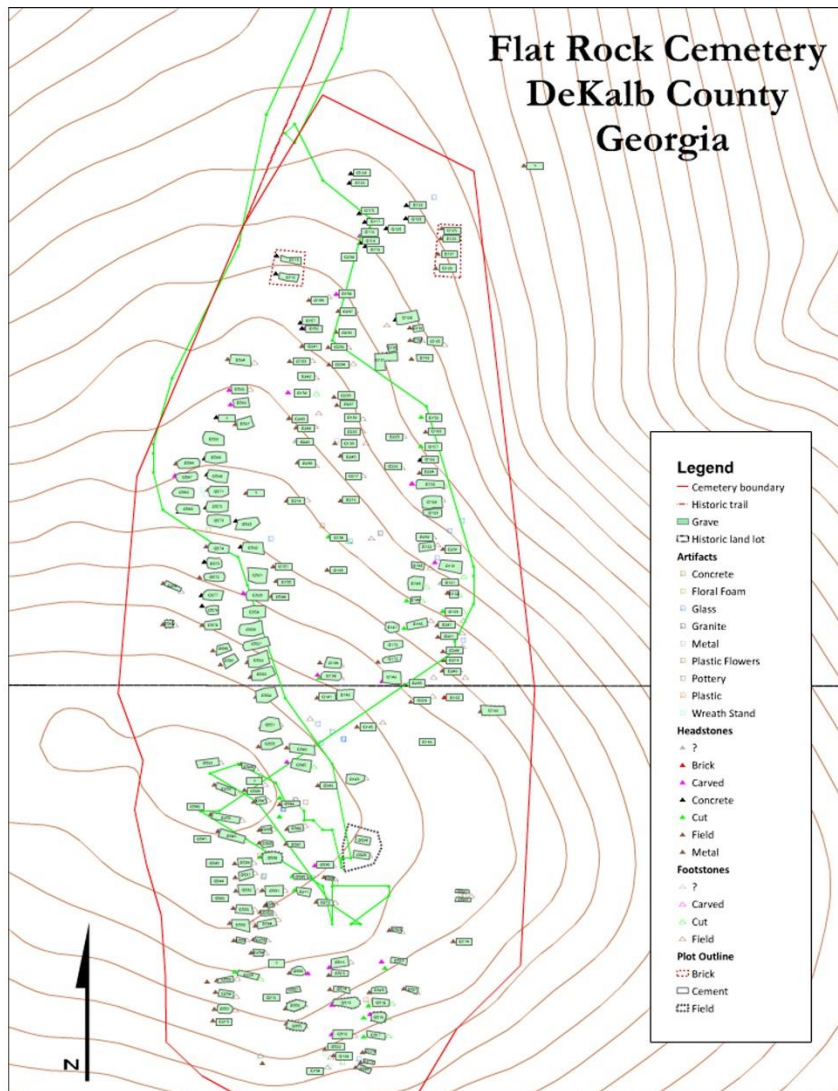


Figure 3.8. Flat Rock Cemetery burial information. Prepared by Georgia State University, Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society, and Flat Rock Archives

According to Mr. Waits, cemetery cleanings are organized by the board annually to preserve its solemn appearance. Basic maintenance is conducted to clean the overgrowth approximately four times in the summer; the maintenance in fall focuses on cleaning the heavy oak leaves covering the headstones within the cemetery. Sometimes, the dead tree stumps have to be removed by professionals with heavy machines (J. Waits 2016).

Community Engagement

Flat Rock Archives has organized several community groups to keep the history of Flat Rock Cemetery alive, such as promoting walking tours, mapping and archeological documenting with Georgia State University, and volunteering to clean up the cemetery. Ongoing projects include a lecture series and public speaking engagements, reenactments of historical lifestyles, community fairs and events. On the official website of Flat Rock Archives, the public can make a donations to the archives or the cemetery via accessing the online system or directly mailing a check to the address provided (ARCHIVES n.d.).

Conclusion

To glean the essential relationships between the four case studies with Lithonia One Cemetery, the following chart summarizes findings from the four African American cemeteries. The conditions at Lithonia One Cemetery are presented here also for the sake of comparison and will be presented in greater depth in Chapter 5.

In the chart below, a few common essentials are evident. All of the cemeteries are located in or near downtown areas surrounded by neighborhoods; all were founded to serve African American communities and most of the graves were for black slaves; and all declined mainly because of a lack of funding. In addition, Locust Grove Cemetery and Lithonia One Cemetery have similar geographic conditions in that both of them have exposed bedrock and similar soil types on the sites.

The four cemeteries have had different challenges over time; however, most of the problems that occurred in the case study are also embodied in the Lithonia Cemetery One. And the following successful practices utilized in the four case study cemeteries may also be applied to the Lithonia Cemetery One:

- Organize and maintain a cemetery committee;
- Co-operate with a university research project on community service learning;
- Create campaigns or obtain funding from neighborhood and local community businesses;
- Raise public awareness and civic pride for its historical heritage;
- Hire professionals from various fields to assist with planning, materials cleanup, and restoration; and
- Build online social media for more convenient access to burial records and historical resources.

	Randolph Cemetery	Locust Grove Cemetery	Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery	Flat Rock Cemetery	Lithonia One Cemetery
Location	Downtown Columbia, SC	Downtown Shippensburg, PA	About 1.8 miles away from downtown Athens, GA	About 6.7 miles away from downtown Lithonia, GA	About 0.65 miles away from downtown Lithonia, GA
The year of being founded	In the later 19 th century	1830's	1882	1820	1860
Ownership	Private	Public until the late 20 th century	Private	Non-profit Inc.	Private
Burial demographic	Former slaves	Slaves, black veterans	Former slaves	Slaves, veterans	Former slaves, veterans
Size	3 acres	1.5 acres	9 acres	0.51 acres	6.7 acres
Current Surrounding context	Commercial, historical community facilities, and institutions	Student and renter housing	Residential housing	Residential House (R-100) Natural resources and creek area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Service facilities Public Housing
Management party	The descendants of the original founders	Informal group consisting of neighborhood volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gospel Pilgrim Society originating from a lodge style organization The East Athens Development Cooperation 	Flat Rock Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends of Lithonia African American Cemetery (FLAAC)
Major reasons for the decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old urban plan African American migration in the mid-19th century because of Jim Crow Laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic changes Vandalism Neglect Racial segregation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untraceable ownership with no claims to any living person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic changes Lack of burial records Overgrowth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic changes Untraceable ownership with no claims to any living person

Figure 3.9. Case studies' Summary and Comparison.

Major challenge(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Overgrown vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official records could be found • Vandalism • Criminal activities • Alley circulation • Racial segregation • Lack of infrastructure, funding, or manpower to restore and preserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of the burial records of former slaves • Limited funding from the public • Overgrowth vegetation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of the burial records and maps of former slaves • Limited funding from the public • Vegetation covering headstones, markers, and most plots • Limited community engagement and public attention
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up exhibit to collect funding • Founded management group • Made preservation plans • Hired contractors and professionals • Encouraged participation of community and schools, such as Boy Scouts and high school students • Created website with burial records, data access, and search engine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaned, repaired, and reinstalled tombstones • installed interpretative signage • Fixed the alley circulation issue to limit the vandalism potential • Installed protective fence • Conducted school research project and book project • Conducted school research project and book project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafted the National Register Nomination • Conducted archeology research and field studies • Developed a master plan • Funded design and construction cost by county for public access improvements • Engaged individual volunteers and interested groups • Co-operated with UGA student research program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafted the National Register Nomination • Engaged individual volunteers and small community groups • Cleaned some vegetation covering on partial walking path • Installed marble memorial board
Current major function(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial site • Public park for recreation and historic education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial site • Archeological and historic resources • Walking tours for education and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial site • Community gathering place • Historical and cultural resources(heritage tourism) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial site • Community gathering place • Historical and cultural resources(heritage tourism)

Figure 3.9. Case studies' Summary and Comparison. (Continued.)

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF LITHONIA ONE CEMETERY

Introduction

This chapter explores how people hear about Lithonia One, how they use and feel about the cemetery, and what changes they expect to see in the near future in Lithonia One. There are mainly two parts contributing to the findings: questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was conducted to answer certain questions, in order to provide guidelines for rehabilitating the cemetery. The participants were people 18 years and older, living or working in the city of Lithonia, and visitors who were observed within Lithonia One Cemetery. The survey did not request the respondents' name, telephone number, home address, or other private information. Also, the surveys' responses will be kept confidential and only employed for this study's purpose. There were no direct benefits offered to the participants, other than offering an opportunity for them to deliver their feedback and concerns to city officials, stakeholders, or other people who care. In the end, there were a total of 84 respondents who completed the survey. The complete questionnaire is included in this thesis as "Appendix A".

The interviews explored more insights and comprehensive knowledge from the city official, stakeholders, and people who have experience and expertise in restoring and managing historic African American cemeteries. The interviewees included Melody

L. Harclerode, program coordinator of Arabia Mountain Heritage Alliance, Shameka Reynolds, funeral director of Tri-Cities Funeral Home, Inc. (Lithonia, GA), Deborah Jackson, mayor of Lithonia, and Johnny Waits, director of Flat Rock Archives.

By gathering and analyzing such information from the survey and interviews, this chapter provided the guidance for proposed future restoration decisions of Lithonia One Cemetery based on the findings and summaries to follow.

Analysis of the Survey

Age and Residency

The largest number of survey respondents was in the age group of 55 years and over, 69.04% (Figure 4.1). Twenty-four respondents, or 28.57%, were above age 70. All of them were able to read, write, and respond clearly. The difference in the 18-34 year old group between respondents and Lithonia citizens was only 0.79 (Figure 4.2), meaning that the survey results could be representative of this age group in Lithonia to some degree. There was a smaller sample (seven) from the 35-54 year old group.

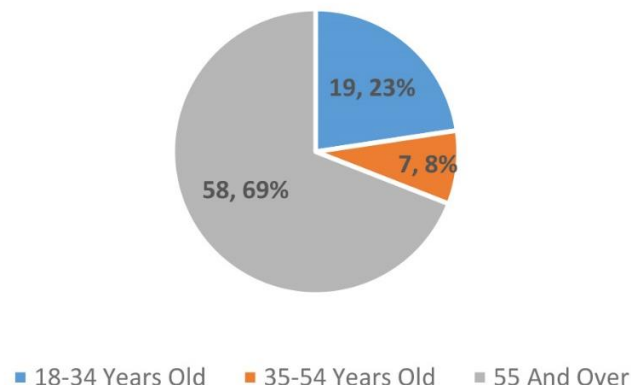


Figure 4.1 Age Distribution (n=84)

	18-34 Years Old	35-54 Years Old	55 And Over
Survey Respondents	22.62%	8.33%	69.04%
Lithonian	23.41%	23.28%	18.93%
Difference	-0.79%	-14.95%	50.11%

Source: Georgia Planning & Quality Growth database and based on the 2000 U.S. Census

Figure 4 2. Age Distribution Comparison between survey respondents and current Lithonia population

Except for two respondents who did not give their residency, there were 15, or 17.86% not from Lithonia, and 42 respondents have lived in Lithonia for more than 11 years. In the group of people who have more than 51 years of Lithonia residency, there were three people who had never heard about the cemetery, no matter what the name of the cemetery was. There were 23, or 27.38% that had never heard about the cemetery. This surprising fact revealed the lack of connections to some degree between the cemetery and local communities although the 23 people still presented their interests and expectations in questions 13 to 16. Related statistical analysis will explain this later in the chapter.

Subtracting 23 respondents from the total of 84, there were 61 samples reflecting frequency use, commuting pattern, use pattern, perceptions and expectations.

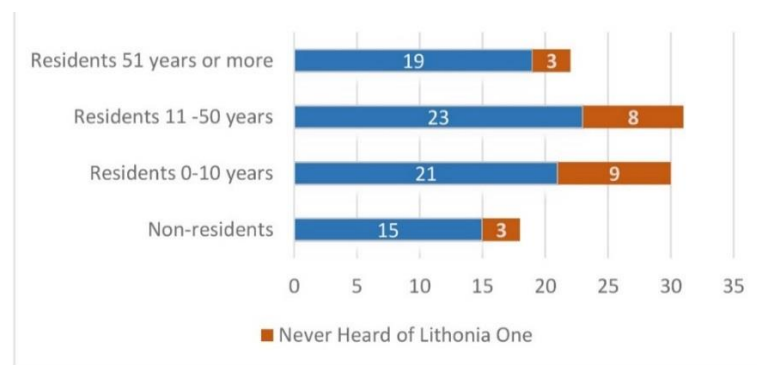


Figure 4.3 Respondents Residency. (n=84)

Visiting Frequency

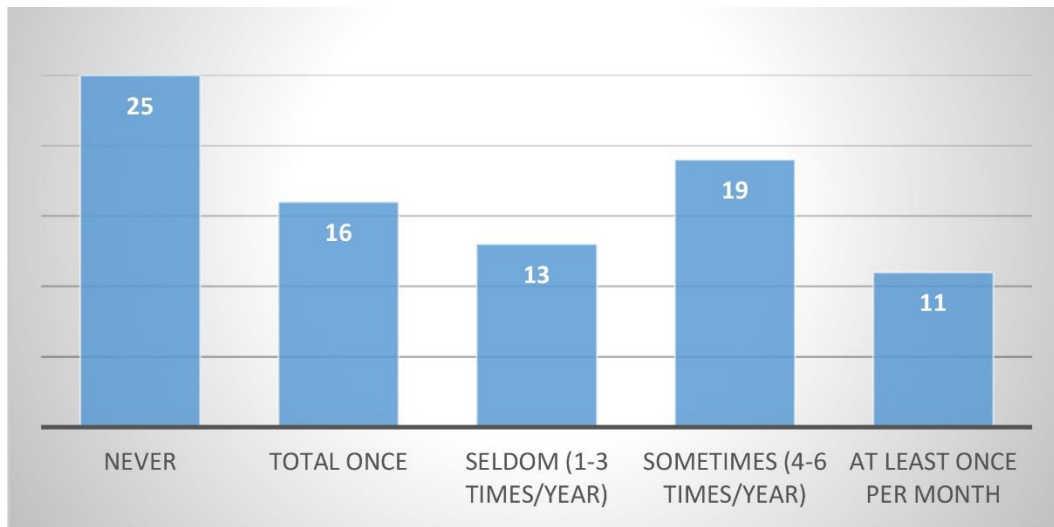


Figure 4. 4. Visiting Frequency. (n=84)

The third question asked how often respondents used the cemetery. Besides the 23 people who had never heard of Lithonia One, there were two people who knew about Lithonia One Cemetery but had never visited it. There were 43 people who had visited the cemetery at least once, more than 50% of the total respondents. Among this group, 19 (22%) had visited the cemetery four to six times per year, and 11 people visited the cemetery at least once per month. These data suggest justification for revitalizing Lithonia One and rebuilding the connections between the cemetery and the public (Figure 4.4).

Subtracting 25 from the total of 84, 59 visitors revealed the essence of why they used the cemetery. The largest group was going there for the historic information of Lithonia One Cemetery, which covered 57% of total visitors (n=59), revealing the large number of people who showed their interest in its history and suggesting the

significance of preserving the historic features and keeping the historic “integrity” of Lithonia One.

The second largest group of visitors, or one third of the total, visited because their loved ones are buried in Lithonia One, which provided some context for re-designing a more user-friendly cemetery environment in Chapter 6. Among all the respondents, there was only one response to *A Pleasant Setting for Walking*. Two visitors indicated they visited for community events (Figure 4.5)

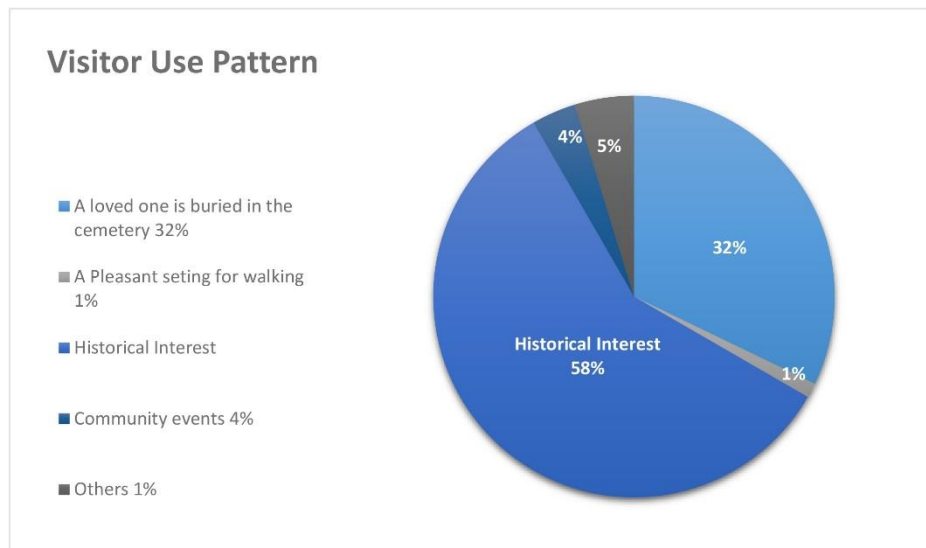


Figure 4.5. Visiting Use Pattern (n=84).

Information Learning Sources

As part of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how they heard about Lithonia One Cemetery by marking one or more of a number of pre-formulated selections, including (1) family members; (2) friends; (3) co-workers; (4) social media (newspaper/internet/radio/television/others); (5) community advertising brochures from

schools/senior center/churches etc.;(6) wayfinding signage; (7) other formats. Six respondents marked multiple selections, 68 respondents indicated only one from the selections, indicating a lack of information sources.

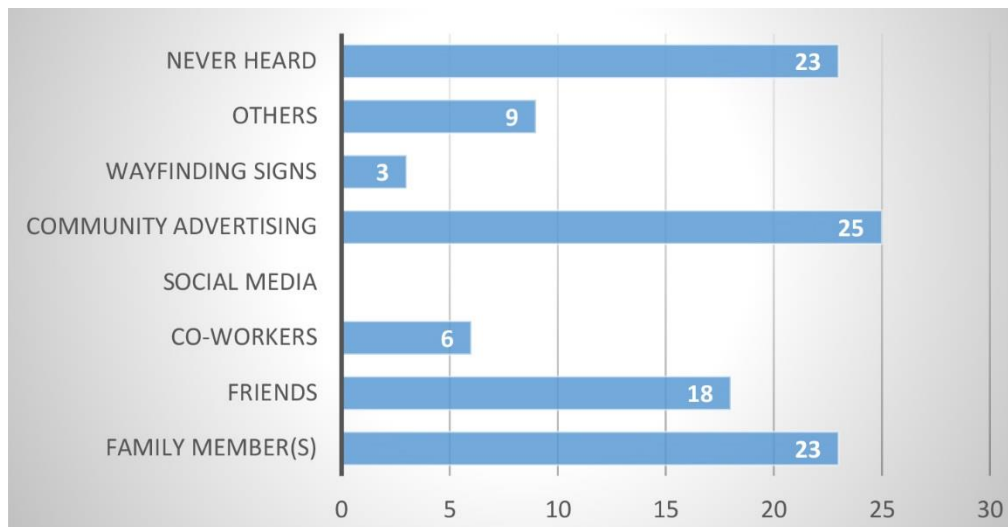


Figure 4.6 Learning Sources of Lithonia One Cemetery.

From the data above, only three visitors heard about the cemetery via wayfinding signs and none of them heard about it via social media. Most respondents know about Lithonia One from community advertising, or 29.76% of the total. These findings suggested the importance of its promotion via community events, social media, and wayfinding signage. Also, the results provide the future managing board data for formulating restoration strategies in the future.

Use Patterns of Lithonia One Cemetery

In addition to understanding what brings visitors into the cemetery, it is important to know how they arrive there. The survey provided five options to the respondents,

including: automobile, bike, walking, public transportation, and others. There were only two people using a bicycle to approach the cemetery and one person combined a Marta bus and a bike. The largest group of 43 (51%) of the respondents walked into the cemetery, which suggested a trend that is consistent with current issues of the walkability and connectivity of sidewalk and green walking paths. Additionally, thirty (38%) of the visitors operated an automobile to get there, suggesting a formal parking lot may be considered helpful with the cemetery restoration. Although only three people took public transportation combined with walking or biking, the future managing board of the cemetery may consider advocating for infrastructure to match the alternative transportation needs, adhering to the Lithonia redevelopment plan for the next 15 years.

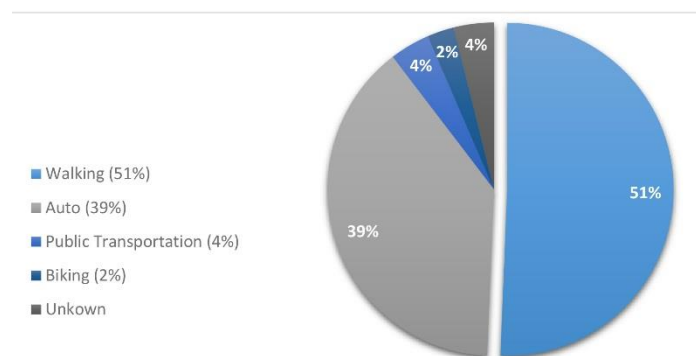


Figure 4.7 Visitors Commuting Pattern. (n=59)

Level of Visibility and Welcoming

To supplement information gathered regarding how to approach the cemetery and exploring the connectivity between visitors and Lithonia One, the survey also prompted participants to identify how easy/difficult it is to find the cemetery by ranking their earliest visiting experience on a scale of 1 -10, with 1 being “difficulty” /”Limited

Visibility” and 10 being “easy”/ “Most visibility.” The chart below (Figure 4.8) shows that 36 (42.86%) of the total respondents had some difficulty finding the cemetery; twelve participants were not able to give an answer and eleven people stated that it was very difficult to find Lithonia One in terms of their first visiting experience. Although eight visitors indicated that it was easy to find the cemetery, the information collected still revealed the cemetery’s lack of visibility for most of the visitors or those who ever attempted to visit.

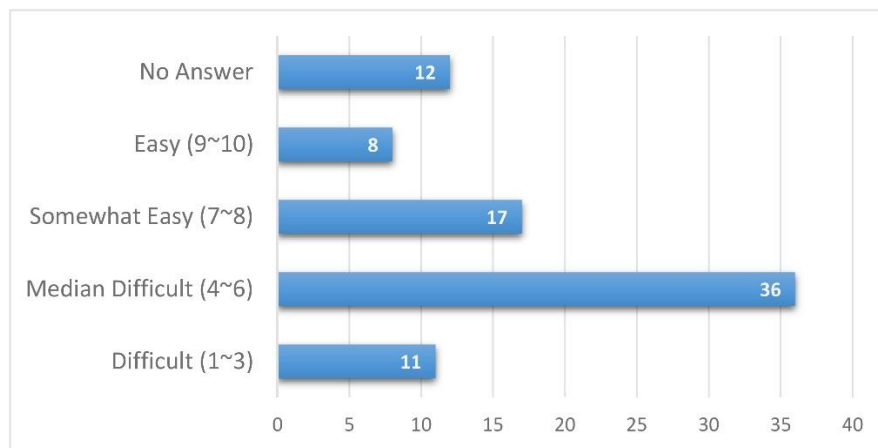


Figure 4.8. The Visibility of Lithonia One Cemetery. (n=84)

To give a further comprehensive response regarding what visitors to the cemetery felt about respect, the survey asked them to rank how welcoming they thought Lithonia One was toward visitors on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being “least welcoming” and 10 being “very welcoming.” In addition to the 23 participants who were not able to answer due to their lack of an actual visiting experience, 42 (50%) of the total participants indicated that a large majority of visitors thought of the cemetery at least “somewhat welcoming” (Figure 4.9). At the same time, 19 (31.15%) of visitors felt the

cemetery displayed limited welcoming features suggesting that the future managing board should enhance the cemetery landscape in the community.

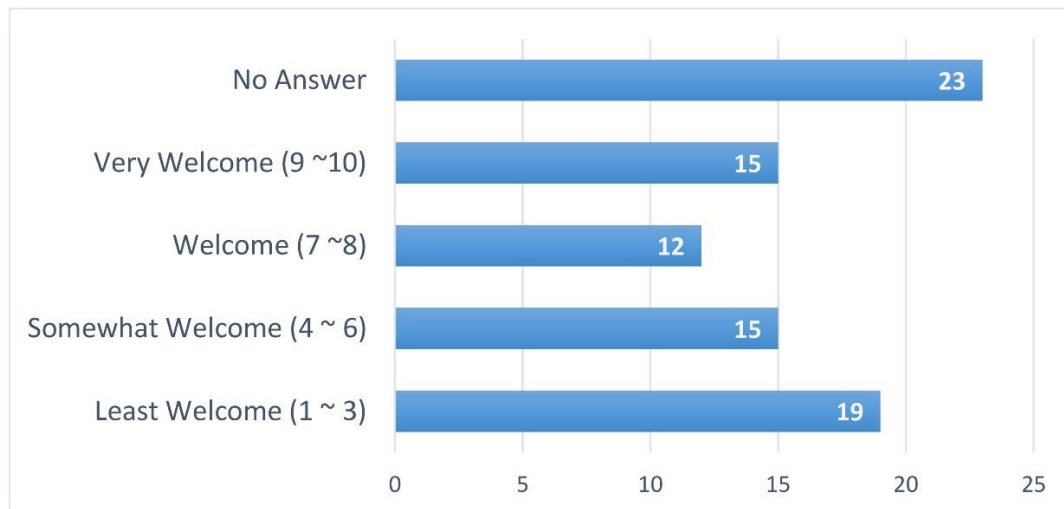


Figure 4.9. How welcoming is Lithonia One Cemetery? (n=84)

User Expectations and Suggestions

In order to obtain deeper insights regarding what visitors liked about Lithonia One, the survey also encouraged participants to indicate, in their own words, any improvements they would like to see in cemetery restoration practices. A surprisingly large majority of participants, 38 (62.3%) of the total 61, hoped to see the cemetery well cleaned in the future (Figure 4.10). This number suggested that this might be the primary responsibility for the future cemetery managing board. Also, five visitors wanted more maintenance conducted by the city or local government. Two visitors expected more burial plots to be added. At the same time, ten individuals indicated no extra maintenance was needed in the cemetery.

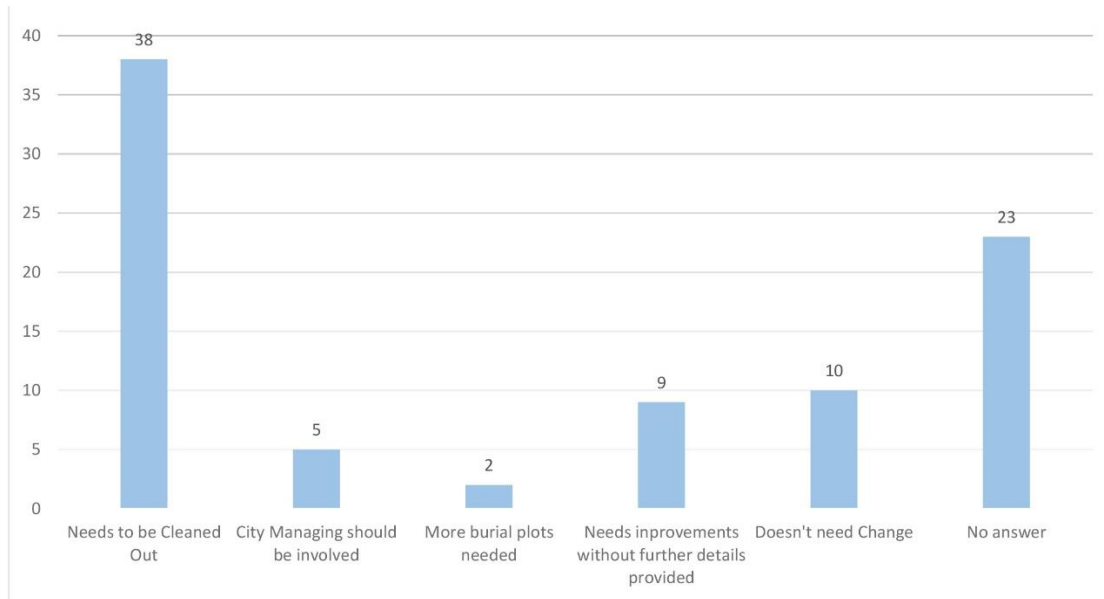


Figure 4.10. What changes would visitors like to see in Lithonia One Cemetery?

Public Attitudes about Cemetery Access and Restoration

In order to obtain a more refined understanding of visitors' attitudes about Lithonia One, the survey sought to gauge visitors' views regarding the importance of cemetery restoration, openness to the public, wayfinding signs implementation, and desired community activities. For a better analysis and comprehensive comparison, questions 13 to 16 asked participants to rank their responses on scales of 1 – 10, with 1 being "least important" and 10 being "very important".

Regarding the cemetery restoration, 46 (54.76%) of the total considered cemetery restoration as "very important." Thirteen people indicated restoration as the least important (Figure 4.11), while nine out of the thirteen stated that they had never visited the cemetery before, the responses of these nine could not be taken into account in the final findings.

Regarding public promotion, 34 (40.47%) of respondents assigned it the highest score, and 63.09% confirmed its importance, assigning it a score of 7 or higher. These numbers suggest the fact that most visitors have the desire to make the cemetery better known to the public, whether or not they actually understand its importance.

Regarding the cemetery openness to the public, 39.29% of respondents assigned a score of 10, 71.43% assigned a score of 7 or higher, and 8.3% indicated that making the cemetery more open to the public was not important, assigning a score of 3 or lower. Two out of five of the respondents who were in this lowest range selected “never heard about the cemetery” in the previous question.

Compared to the cemetery openness, restoration value, and public promotion, the significance of the wayfinding signs had slightly lower support from the respondents, with 35.71% assigning the score of 10 and 17.86% assigning the lowest range. Also, one fourth of the respondents did not give an answer. These numbers did not indicate the unimportance of wayfinding signage implementation; however, they suggest that cemetery openness, public promotion and cemetery restoration are more important than wayfinding signage. In addition, twelve out of fifteen of the respondents who selected the lowest range had never heard about Lithonia One or had never visited the cemetery.

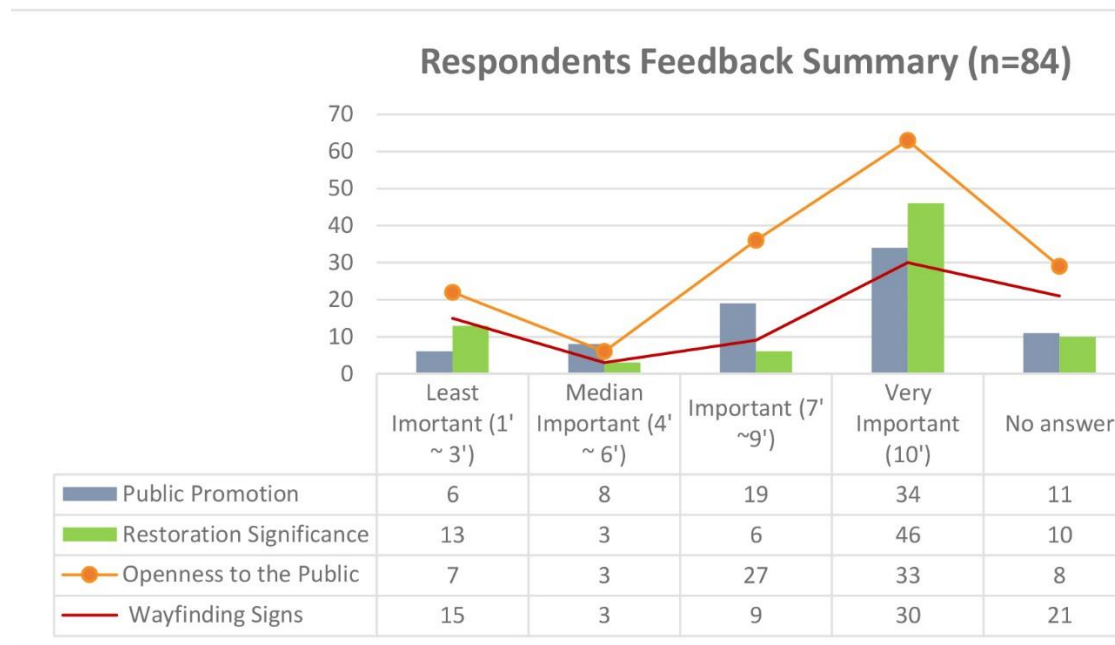


Figure 4.11. Public attitudes regarding the importance of Lithonia One Cemetery restoration, public promotion, openness to the public and wayfinding signs.

Levels of Appropriateness for Future Community Events

To measure participant attitudes toward the cemetery landscape in more concrete terms, the survey asked respondents what level of appropriateness they would assign to four different types of community events taking place on cemetery grounds on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being “least desirable” and 10 being “very desirable.” Borrowing ideas from events held in other historic cemeteries around the United States, the four activities included in the survey were: (1) walking tours; (2) memorial events; (3) Halloween Tour; and (4) community festivals. Results (Figure 4.12) may reveal a clear trend in establishing guidelines for determining the success of future community events in Lithonia One Cemetery.

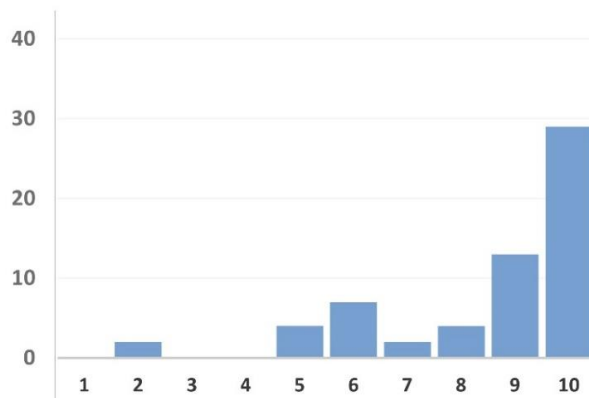


Figure 4.12 Level of appropriateness of walking tours.

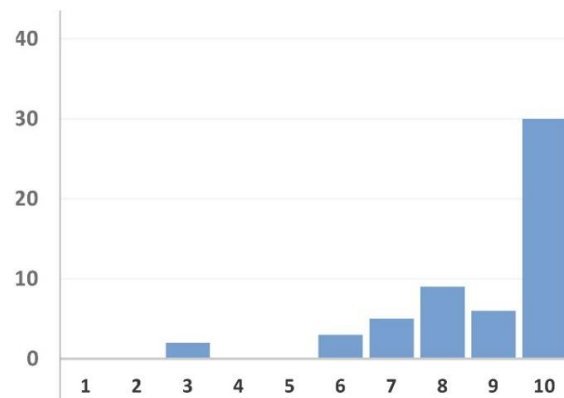


Figure 4.13 Level of appropriateness of Memorial Events.

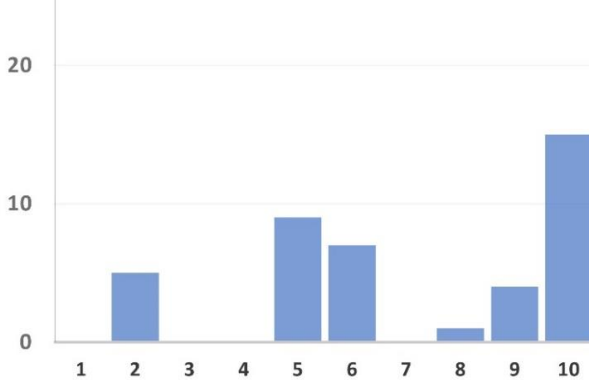


Figure 4.14 Level of appropriateness of Halloween Tours.

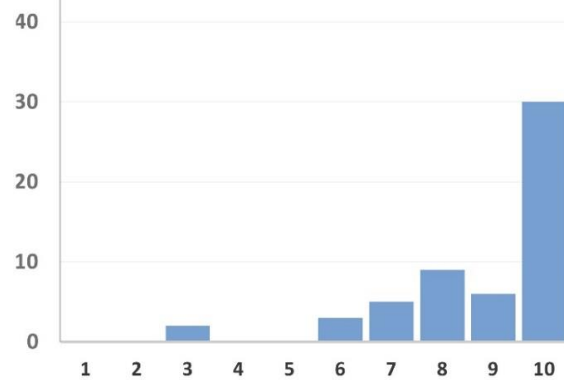


Figure 4.15 Level of appropriateness of Community Festivals.

According to the survey results, respondents largely indicated that walking tours can be a great medium for visitors who want historic information about Lithonia One Cemetery. Out of the total 61 visitors, 29 (47.54%) assigned a score of 10 (75%) assigned a score of 7 or higher on this option. All visitors voted on this option.

A total of 55 participants voted for memorial events. Thirty (54.54%) assigned a score of 10 (Figure 4.13). Meanwhile, 33 (54.1%) participants also expressed their desire for community festivals, assigning a score of 10. Most respondents selected multiple items, suggesting more potential for community activities in the cemetery for

the future managing board to plan. Also, only twelve participants voted for walking tours as their most favored activity. Unfortunately, 21 participants did not express their ideas.

A more interesting phenomenon was that only 41 participants voted for the Halloween theme tour. Fifteen (36.59%) assigned a score of 10; however, 16 (39%) were neutral about the Halloween theme tour. Also five out of forty-one participants indicated little interest for this type of community activity.

	Low Level of Appropriateness (score of 1-4)	Medium Level of Appropriateness (score of 5-6)	High Level of Appropriateness (score of 7-10)
Walking Tours	3.28%	18.03%	78.69%
Memorial Events	3.64%	5.45%	90.90%
Halloween Theme Tours	12.20%	39.02%	48.78%
Community Festivals	4.92%	24.60%	70.49%

Figure 4. 16 Response ranges for questions regarding community activity appropriateness. (n=61)

Interviews

The interview summaries provide perceptions and insights of the stakeholders and the city official from local communities, and constructive suggestions from an expert in historic African American cemetery restoration.

Melody L. Harclerode (Program Coordinator of Arabia Alliance), interviewed on January 26th, 2016

Ms. Harclerode failed to recognize the cemetery name when I mentioned “Lithonia One Cemetery,” and later she confused it with Flat Rock Cemetery, the African

American cemetery in the adjacent community. Eventually she recognized it when I explained that the cemetery's location is on Bruce Street. However, she had never visited the Lithonia One Cemetery.

Regarding the walking tour mentioned in the Arabia Alliance website, Ms. Harclerode indicated that she never had a chance to host such a walking tour to promote historical cultural heritage on Bruce Street in Lithonia, except for some special events. Although she mentioned her interest in having a walking tour for the cemetery and would definitely love to see this happen as a long term goal, she believed that "it would be great to move the school ruins and the cemetery to downtown Lithonia so that all valuable sites would be so close and walkable." And in terms of the current condition of the Arabia Alliance, such a walking tour approaching the cemetery does not seem affordable or walkable. However, special events could be a great opportunity for the local community to get involved, especially after cleaning the cemetery or when it is ready to be opened to the public.

Shameka Reynolds (Funeral Director of Tri-Cities Funeral Home, Inc.) interviewed on February 5th, 2016

According to Ms. Reynolds, Lithonia One Cemetery was called Bruce Street Number One. The black people paid for their own burial section. And all plots within the Lithonia One Cemetery had been sold to black people before the 1960's. No white people are buried in Lithonia One Cemetery. Ms. Reynolds gave a scenario: if Reynold's grandmother bought nine plots in the 1960's, it was called the Reynolds

section. If later the Smith family bought the adjacent six plots, it was called the Smith section. When a Reynolds's family member passed away, the plot within the section would have been ready for the remains to be buried. Any funeral house can host the funeral as long as the family knows the actual burial plot location.

Because there is no burial map of Lithonia One Cemetery, the deceased's family needs to show the funeral director where their burial plots are. Once they arrive at the plots, the funeral director uses a long metal pole to put into the ground in order to check whether it has been filled up. If it has not been filled up, the spot is claimed as clear and ready for burial.

On the day of the burial, the funeral home prepares tents, tables and chairs for the family to assemble by the grave site, and all these tents, tables and chairs come from the gravestone company. The whole ritual usually takes 15-20 minutes, depending on various religious traditions, such as singing, praying, or placing flowers on the casket. Usually the funeral home parks its vans in the open space beside the monument (Figure 5.5) or in the parking space in back of the DeKalb County Police Department.

According to Ms. Reynolds's personal perception, although the community has done a lot of work and the current condition has been better than how it previously appeared, she did not think the cemetery was a welcoming place and still needs more work. It is usually the funeral home staff that comes over to the cemetery and cleans the place before hosting a funeral. People may not realize the reason why the plots were so inexpensive when they purchased them. It was because the price they paid was only for the plot. And few purchasers realized that it was their responsibility to clean, mow and maintain their own section.

Regarding the suggestions for improving the user experience, Ms. Reynolds would love to see some open pavilions built on site for people to gather and host community events. Regarding the potential parking space, she suggested that it would be better to hold at least 75 visitors' vehicles and its minimum width must be larger than the length of a 12 person van. As for the blue building standing on Bruce Street which was built by the Lithonia Mayor in 2003, it could be used for another function or removed.

Deborah Jackson (Mayor of Lithonia), interviewed on February 16th, 2016

According to Mayor Jackson, the property owner of Lithonia One Cemetery, Lithonia Civic League is currently not active and neither is the Friends of Lithonia African American Cemetery. Regarding the National Register Nomination, Lithonia One Cemetery was not individually nominated to the Register, but the whole Lithonia City historic district was nominated for National Register listing. The nomination has been approved by Georgia National Register Review in 2014, but it is still waiting for final confirmation from the National Park Service. Also, Mayor Jackson has talked with the Georgia Transportation Commission to have signage on Highway I-20 to indicate Lithonia as a historic district.

The current city council keeps an eye on Lithonia One Cemetery. There was a city employee who organized volunteers to clean the cemetery in October, 2015. The currently inactive organizations had community members working in the cemetery about 13 years ago, but those original members aged and gradually lacked physical abilities to

keep maintaining it. Therefore, it is important to educate young people in the historic meaning of the cemetery, and to get them involved in maintaining this resource to keep “history alive.”

Although Bruce Street Community Park is private property, it was maintained by the civic league as it is so close to the cemetery. Mayor Jackson has talked with the owner of the community park to get an agreement regarding access to the cemetery.

Regarding the potential entrance of Lithonia One Cemetery on Bruce Street, Mayor Jackson would love to see a distinct formal open plaza to welcome people and have events there. And the occupied public houses on Bruce Street which are adjacent to the cemetery are being considered for removal in the near.

According to Mayor Jackson, the Bruce Street School Ruins and the community park have more potential. More activities could take place in these historic sites; therefore, it would be better for the cemetery to have appealing landscape settings to match the surrounding’s future community needs.

Johnny Waits (Director of Flat Rock Archives), interviewed on February 16th, 2016

Flat Rock Archives started in 2006 and has had 28,000 visitors so far. Mr. Waits just celebrated the 10th anniversary this year with his board. During the interview, he talked about his experience in maintaining the historic African American cemetery. The first important thing for the managing board is to have an official name for the cemetery. Once a cemetery gets an official name it, is incorporated to get non-profit status and becomes a legal institution, it can get grants from Arabia Mountain Alliance, Coco Cola

or any company as long as the organization is interested in the site history, know the board is doing well, or moving forward with an application letter. At the same time, the non-profit organization can apply to the IRS office to get tax exempt status.

The board usually needs at least five members and at least two of them should be ministers coming from local churches. Staff and volunteers are also the important parts to hire or recruit. Therefore, the second important duty for the managing board is to have a step by step maintenance schedule and timeline for recording burial information, cleaning, mowing, planning community events, and walking tours.

Georgia State University was helping with recording the burial information of the Flat Rock Cemetery and made a burial map which recorded every grave's location and condition by their archeology students. The map is presented in digital format and is accessible online for people to click and search the location of graves and genealogical information. The whole mapping process took two and a half years.

Regarding the maintenance, Mr. Waits highlighted the cleaning as the most important part of all the work. He said, "Cleaning would never be too much. Those tree stumps have to get out because they will always grow back in spring and become more than you can expect. In summer, there are usually about twice the volunteering activities organized to clean the overgrowth per month. And in winter, there are usually three cleanings of the fallen leaves in Flat Rock Cemetery."

Chapter Summary

The overall goal of this chapter was to determine what cemetery landscape improvements and community engagements might enhance the historic reputation of Lithonia One Cemetery and match the needs of its local communities, making the cemetery revitalized and sustainable for future generations. That is why this chapter explored the views, attitudes, and values of current visitors and potential visitors toward Lithonia One. Any future restoration strategies should include a consideration of the responses from those who have never visited the cemetery but have lived close to it.

In summary, the survey revealed a number of key findings: (1) senior citizens of 55 and over make up around two thirds of the visitors; (2) around one third of Lithonia residents had never heard about Lithonia One; (3) over half of the participants visited the cemetery at least once per year; (4) around two thirds of the respondents expressed their interests in the historic information of Lithonia One; (5) over 50% of the visitors walked to the cemetery and approximately 33% drive; (6) 50% of the visitors find the cemetery somewhat difficult to find; (7) around two thirds of the visitors expressed the idea that the cemetery was unwelcoming; (8) around 60% of the visitors indicated the cemetery needs to be cleaned out; (9) over 70% of the respondents expressed the importance of the cemetery's restoration and openness to the public; (10) 50% of the respondents indicated the importance of wayfinding signage; (11) over 70% of the respondents confirmed their interest in walking tours, memorial events, and community festival's to be considered as future restoration strategies.

Interviews also revealed several key suggestions: (1) setting up a managing board; (2) having an official name; (3) having a burial map (4) having regular

maintaining plans and schedules; (5) clearing; (6) fund raising; (7) getting community's engagement and attention.

These findings have been important for determining the perceptions and attitudes of Lithonia One visitors, representing some valuable restoration practices for the future managing board to take into account. However, other strategies should also include the consideration of the views of Lithonia One Cemetery's managing board and other stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF LITHONIA ONE CEMETERY

Administration, Management, and Promotion

Ownership of the Cemetery

The Lithonia One Cemetery property has been in private ownership from 1843, the year that a farm owner purchased the parcel to cultivate cotton. The records at the Decatur Courthouse show that the property was sold to Davidson Mineral piece by piece. And by 1929 all the land of Lithonia One Cemetery had been sold to Davidson Mineral because of the declining cotton industry. Later in the 1970's, Davidson deeded the property to the Lithonia Civic League, an African American Organization founded by Lucious Sanders (1895-1993) to promote civic awareness and fight racial discrimination (Southall 2004). This organization still owns the property, but it is inactive now because of a lack of income in the earlier years. Ms. Shameka Reynolds, the funeral director of Tri-Cities Funeral Home, Inc., related that the Lithonia Civic League probably has no one in charge or taking care of the cemetery because most of its members are elderly.

The Friends of Lithonia African American Cemetery

A non-profit corporation led by Barbara Lester was founded on August 10, 2004 to preserve the Lithonia One and it was called the Friends of Lithonia African American Cemetery (FLAAC). Mrs. Lester, a member of the Lithonia City Council, worked on weekends to remove debris and fallen trees for ten years and was responsible for recruiting local community members to clean the cemetery. In 2004, the Georgia State University Heritage Preservation Program was asked to help with organizing students from the Historical American Landscapes and Garden class to provide research and a National Register nomination draft to document the cemetery's significance. FLAAC also nurtured a partnership with the Arabia Alliance to highlight the Lithonia One Cemetery in the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area. A maintenance plan had been initiated and conducted by Mrs. Lester until 2010 when her health declined. According to Shameka Reynolds, FLAAC is not active now.

The Arabia Alliance

As a partner of the city of Lithonia, the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance (Arabia Alliance) is a non-profit group aiming to promote and preserve the unique history, rich culture, and engaging landscape of the Arabia Mountain area in Lithonia (Area 2016). Its board is comprised of representatives of the local neighborhoods, and coordinates activities, maintains the parks, builds trails, and conducts tours within the heritage areas including Arabia Mountain, Davidson-Arabia Nature Preserve (Lithonia, GA), Panola Mountain State Park, and the city of Lithonia. Connecting the Arabia

Mountain walking trail, the Lithonia walking tour shown in figure 5.2 below was designed to highlight crucial historic sites such as city hall, churches, an old school ruin, Lithonia City Park, the community center, and the Lithonia One Cemetery. Visitors have free access to obtain the heritage area information via the Arabia Alliance official website and the maintenance office located in the city of Lithonia. However, according to Ms. Melody L. Harcklerode, the Program Coordinator of Arabia Alliance, the Lithonia walking tour has never been conducted due to its poor connections with the heritage area, lack of neighbourhood awareness, and transportation problems. Harcklerode also pointed out during the interview that she can see the potential of the cultural resources and historical significance and looks forward to seeing further developing progress from the local government. According to Johnny Waits, the Director of Flat Rock Archives (Lithonia, GA), Arabia Alliance not only provides grants for supporting the Flat Rock

Archive, but also assign a navigation tab on their website homepage to access more information about the archive.

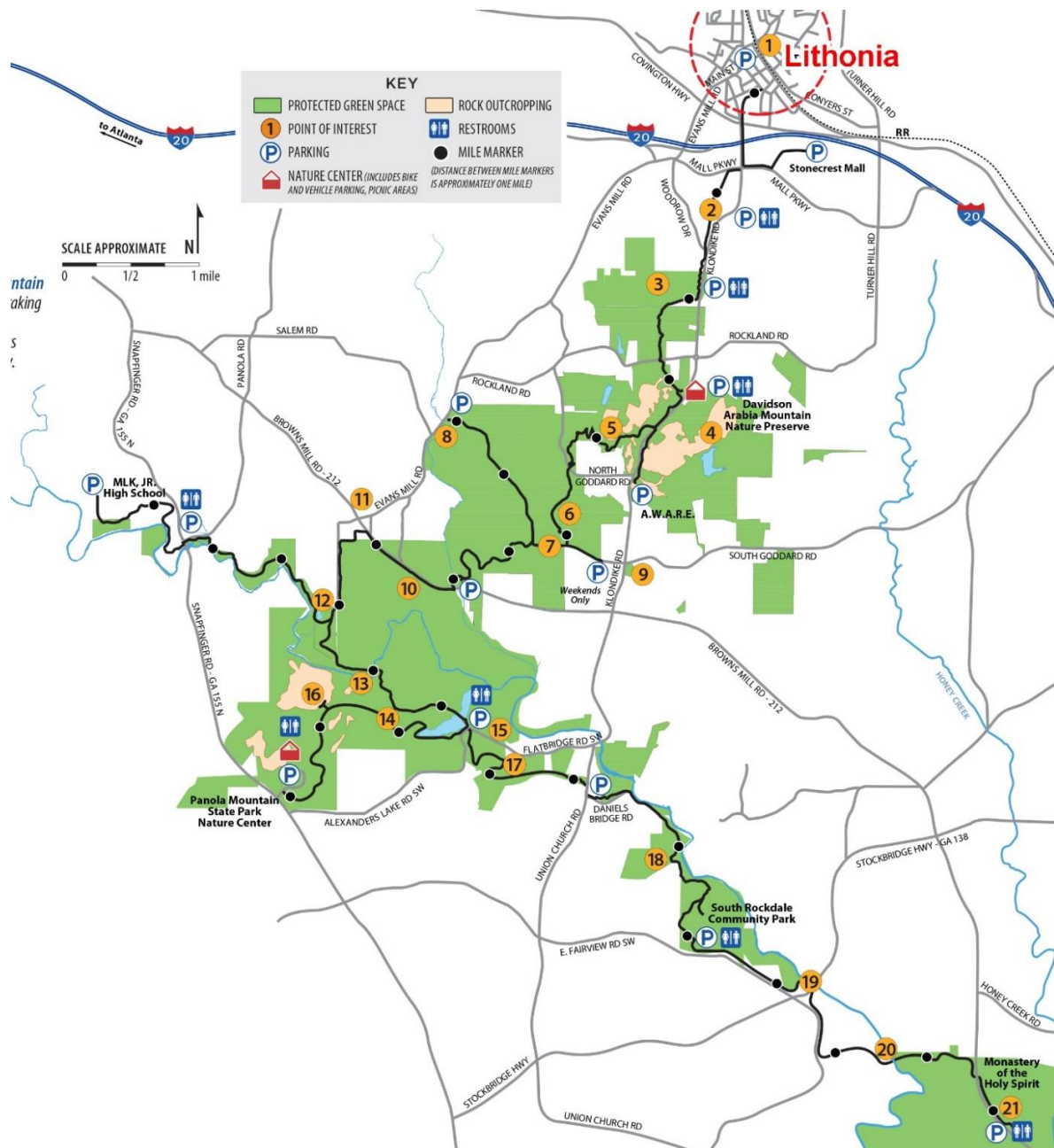


Figure 5.1: Arabia Mountain recreation trail map. <http://arabiaalliance.org/maps/arabia-mountain-path/>

Summary

The main activities for restoring the Lithonia One in the recent past have been cleaning overgrown vegetation, researching site history, and drafting the National Registration Nomination. Family members of the deceased take responsibility of cleaning their own plots. In recent years, a couple of volunteer groups were organized to clean overgrown plants in the Lithonia One Cemetery. Charlene D. Edwards, a licensed marriage and family therapist, founded a company on January 05, 2015, called the Action Not Words Project, Inc., with 139 members aiming to serve under-financed communities in Atlanta. Ms. Edwards organized and promoted a clean-up project in August 2015 and there were two people including herself involved in the workday, as she wrote on her website (Edwards n.d.).

There is no known record of there ever being any professional ground maintenance group to care for the property, other than the contributions of individuals such as Barbara Lester or volunteers from the local community.

Currently, Lithonia One lacks burial maps, burial documents, an official website, an active board, or funding and promotion, which are the most important issues in the way of preservation and restoration.

Location and Approaches

The city of Lithonia, Greek for town of stone, is located in eastern DeKalb County, in the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, approximately 18 miles east of the city of Atlanta. Visitors could take exit 74 or 75 from I-20 to Evans Mill Rd, Main

Street, and drive across the railroad and go south to reach the Bruce Street Corridor. Lithonia One Cemetery is located on Bruce Street, 1.2 miles from downtown Lithonia and its central plaza. It is surrounded by community service facilities such as the DeKalb County Police Department, churches, community parks, and schools. The ruins of the Bruce Street School built in the 1860's are across Bruce Street from Lithonia One Cemetery and have historic value to the local community. There is no current public transportation on Bruce Street going directly to the cemetery. However, visitors could take the #155 Marta bus and then walk to the cemetery, operate their own vehicles, or walk/bike to the cemetery.



Figure 5.2 Lithonia Transit Map

There is neither paved parking inside of the cemetery property which satisfies ADA requirements nor any visible way-finding signage present on site for visitors' parking. People who visit the site via motor vehicle usually park their cars in the police department parking lot across Walker Street (Figure 5.3). There is also a large concrete parking lot located in the central plaza of downtown Lithonia although it usually takes more than 20 minutes of walking to get to the cemetery. The third option, sometimes used by the funeral home, is to park in the open space in front of the marble monument by cutting through the light woods on Bruce Street.



Figure 5.3. Lithonia One Entrance, Access Points and Parking

Entrances

There is one main entrance on Bruce Street approaching the largest signage with limited visibility of the monument for the pedestrians or drivers who walk or drive on Bruce Street. About five miniature U.S national flags on each side of the dirt road indicate the identity of the entrance, although these are temporary (Figure 5.4). The monument is a marble burial information board set up in the open space over 500 feet away from Bruce Street (Figure 5.5). According to Mayor Jackson, this monument was funded by FLAAC and installed in 2006. The title on it reads “Lithonia African American Cemetery” with five columns below the title, referring to five burial sections. Currently, there are only three family names recorded on the board. According to Ms. Reynolds, funeral vans usually take this entrance and park in the front of the monument (Reynolds 2016).



Figure 5.4. The current entrance of Lithonia One Cemetery on Bruce Street. Photo by Yi Cui.



Figure 5. 5. Lithonia One Cemetery Monument, founded by the City of Lithonia in 2006. . Photo by Yi Cui.

Viewed from Bruce Street, a blue structure (Figure 5.6) is partially hidden in the pine woods and appears abandoned. It joins a closed space and an open pavilion on the side. The walls of the wooden structure are coated in a sky blue paint. There is a little window opening on the pavilion side, which hints at its former identity as a ticket office. Ammer Reynolds, the owner of Tri-Cities Funeral Home, mentioned that this empty building was newly built a couple of years ago to sell baseball tickets for the Bruce Street Community Park. There is limited information to indicate when the building had stopped being used.



Figure 5.6. Bruce Street Baseball Ticket Office Ruins. Photo by Yi Cui.



Figure 5.7. Walking Path toward the side entrance on Walker Street and DeKalb County Police Department.



Figure 5.8. The other side entrance on Walker Street. Photo by Yi Cui.

In addition to the entrance on Bruce Street, there are two minor entrances on Walker Street (Figure 5.3), which are adjacent to the DeKalb County Police Department and its parking spaces. Neither of them has any signs to indicate the name or ownership of the cemetery. There is not any sign or notification marker for welcoming visitors or discouraging trespassers (Figure 5.8).

Circulation and Layout

Drivers usually take Walker Street and park behind the DeKalb County Police Department because the concrete driveway stops at the end of Walker Street. Two buses owned by the DeKalb County Police Department have been parked there every

time the author visited there. Visitors also access the cemetery via the dirt driveway on Bruce Street (Figure 5.10). There is no connection between the two driveways and visitors need to drive back to Bruce Street to access the other side of Lithonia One. According to the monument (Figure 5.5), there should have been five burial sections within Lithonia One Cemetery, and in each column of the monument, the family name of the deceased should refer to the relevant headstones' markers. However, more families' headstones could be found on site than the ones engraved on the monuments. There are three small wooden signs with the numbers 2, 3 and 5 to indicate the burial sections of different families (Figure 5.10.a & b). In the author's personal experience, the #1 and #4 signs have never been discovered within the cemetery. The first and fourth column on the monument has been left black as well.

The overall layout of the cemetery seems mostly grouped by families in terms of the purchase date of burial plots (Reynolds 2016). Because the order of the five section numbers is not indicated chronologically or another logical relationship, it is difficult for visitors to discover the burial plots they seek. In addition, there are no visible boundaries between each burial section, but they are mostly filled with overgrown grass and thorns (Figure 5.10.b). Some metal markers with unknown information are dispersed in the east woods of the cemetery. Moreover, the headstones of the burial plots are randomly placed with different orientations. The east-west orientation is not always observed in Lithonia One.

The burial map below created by the author presents the locations of the entrances, existing accessible driveway, parking spaces, and walking paths in poor

condition. Existing structures within and surrounding the cemetery are also presented in the map, such as the monument and ticket office ruins (Figure 5.9).

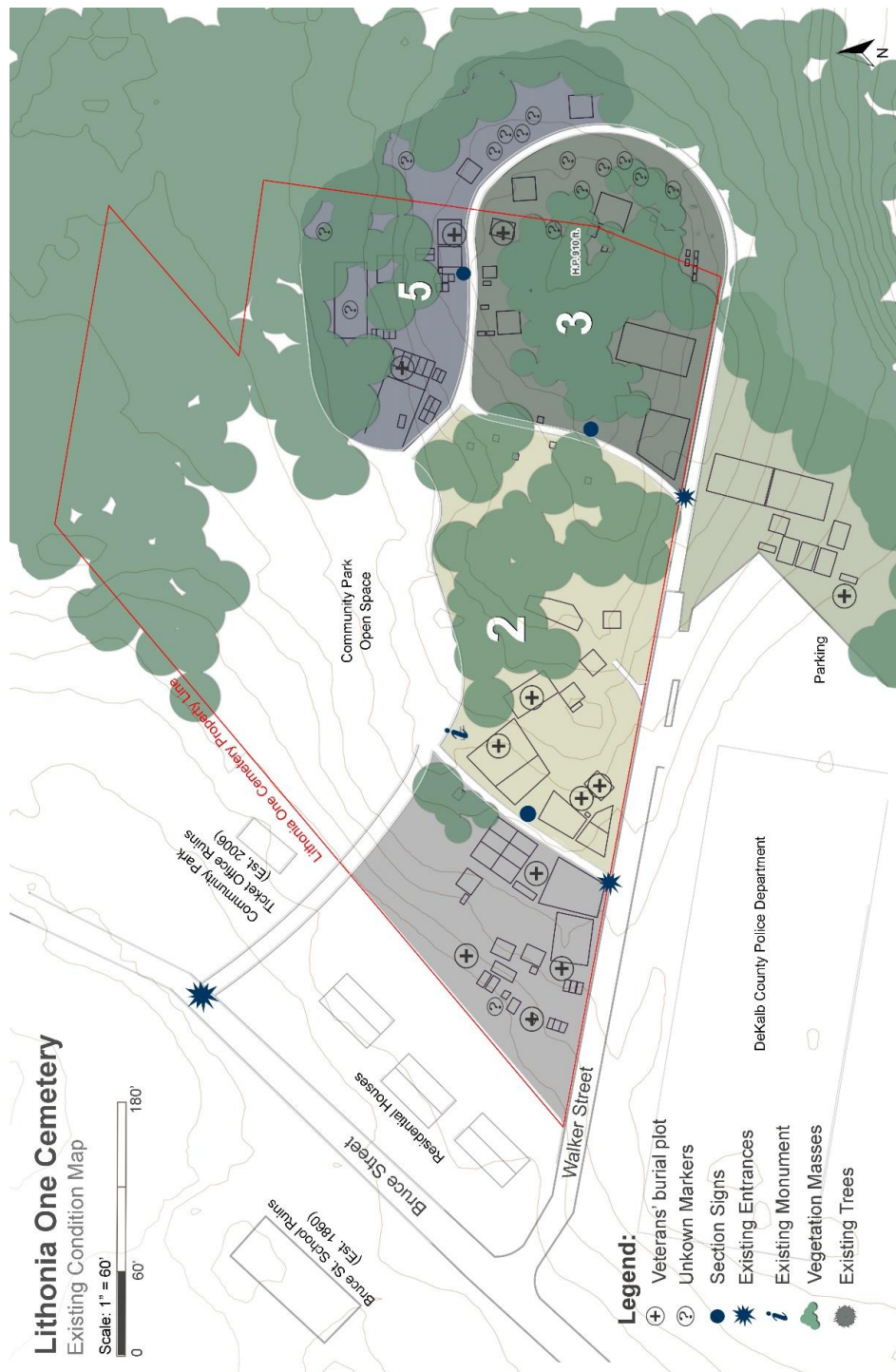


Figure 5.9. Lithonia One Cemetery Burial Sections Map and Circulation Routes. Created by Yi Cui.



Figure 5.10. A & B. Lithonia One Cemetery Section Signs. Photo by Yi Cui.

Landscape

The driveway within the property is crushed granite mixed with dirt (Figure 5.11). On rainy days, puddles form on the dirt portions of the road. There is no continuous curb to separate vegetation and the driveway so that invasive species thrive there. The walking path in the woods (Figure 5.12) is mostly uneven and covered by fallen pine needles.



Figure 5.11. The driveway within Lithonia One Cemetery. Photo by Yi Cui.



Figure 5.12. The walking path in the woods. Photo by Yi Cui.

The main tree canopy in the cemetery is pine woods growing on the edges of the cemetery. The majority is *Pinus palustris* (Longleaf pine) and there is a less number of *Pinus virginiana* (Virginia pine) as well. Longleaf pine is extremely adaptable and common in the sandy or clay-sand ridges of Georgia. It grows 60-70 feet high and the brown cones open and abscise over winter. Virginia pine is a fast-growing tree useful in screens, groupings, or for soil protection. Its abilities of withstanding heat and adverse soil conditions make it a great cover for heavy clay soil.

The oldest trees are the two southern red oaks (*Quercus falcata*) standing on the side entrance of Walker Street, with broken wooden frames to protect the root balls; however, a large part of the soil around the roots has eroded, leaving a visible root ball extending past wooden frame. Southern red oak can grow in the most infertile, worn-out soil. The leaves turn russet-red in fall. According to Dirr (2011), "Its massive large, muscular branches lend credence to its tough-guy persona. Worthy tree for difficult (impossible) sites; drought and heat tolerances are legendary." By the side of the oaks, Shore Junipers were planted as ground cover to convey an evergreen look and the idea of eternity. As a low maintenance ground cover, Shore Juniper is one of the best plants to stop soil erosion and keep soil moist. In the fall, the major ground cover are the fallen leaves from the old oaks within the cemetery. Lack of maintenance over the years has resulted in many of the tombstones being covered underneath a thick layer of leaves (Figure 5.13). Besides the thick fallen leaves, there are several dead stumps throughout the whole cemetery, which has increased the difficulties of walking and maintenance (Figure 5.14)



Figure 5.13. Fallen Oak Leaves Laying on a burial plot



Figure 5.14. Dead Tree Stumps within Lithonia One Cemetery. Photo by Yi Cui.

Gravesite Materials

Grave markers are for remembrance of the deceased. Some special markers honor a person's contributions; some epitaphs or decorations are engraved to show who they were or to display love and affection from their friends or family. There are also some small metal signs marked as unknown dispersed in the woods or hidden in the overgrowth (Figure 5.15.a), and some rectangle granite tombstones with no burial information engraved on them (Figure 5.15.b), giving a hint that the buried bodies probably were slaves, according to Ms. Reynolds (Reynolds 2016).



Figure 5.15.a & b. Headstones with no burial information

In Lithonia One Cemetery, the material used for headstones varied from all sorts of granite and also included metal, bronze, bricks, and cast concrete. Year of burial can

be ascertained somewhat by the erosion degree (Figure 5.16.a), the depth of the markers engraved, and varied granite applications and conditions (Figure 5.16.b).



Figure 5.16.a. Mossed Headstone with eroded text.



Figure 5.16.b. Headstone in great condition.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), veteran's headstones can be furnished upon request, at no charge to the applicant, with marble and cross markers in order to honor a deceased's contributions to the United States (Affairs 2015). According to the author's observations, most of the veterans buried within Lithonia One had fought in the US Army and US Navy in WWI, WWII, Korean War, Pacific, Vietnam and the Civil War. (Figure 5.17).



Figure 5.17. Veterans' tombstone's furnished by VA. Photo by Yi Cui.

To mark an individual family site, a large granite tombstone was usually set in the center of the plot engraved with the family name in large letters (Figure 5.18). A vase with some artificial flowers is usually placed in the center of the plot and between their tombstones. Often, the family burial plot is paved with crushed granite (Figure 5.19), flat stones, artificial lawn cloth (Figure 5.20), or a thick layer of hay (Figure 5.21). Some

family burial plots have small white gravel dispersed within the burial plot, symbolizing immortality and following African American traditional burial culture (Figure 5.22).



Figure 5.18. Standard layout of a family burial plot within Lithonia One



Figure 5.19. Burial Plot paved with white crushed granite



Figure 5.20. Family burial plots paved with artificial lawn cloth



Figure 5.21. Veteran's burial plot paved with hay



Figure 5.22. Family burial plot decorated with white gravel and brick in a basket waved pattern

In addition to the materials used for tombstones and plot pavement, decorations also help with “identification” of a historic cemetery. Within Lithonia One Cemetery, broken pots or vases can be observed in many burial plots (Figure 5.23), symbolizing the belief that this will prevent the spirit of the dead from returning in search of the object and then influencing the lives of the living (Genovese 1974).



Figure 5.23. Broken pot was placed in a burial plot

Summary of Findings

In order to establish guidelines for preserving and restoring Lithonia One, this chapter has focused on reading and analyzing the existing conditions of the cemetery to evaluate its integrity and historic significance. The chart below (Figure 5.24) is a summary of the findings from all the observations and investigations conducted by the author, and is modelled on the Sample Cemetery Recording Form of “*A Comprehensive Guide to Preserving Historic Cemeteries in Georgia*” (Von Voorhies 2003).

Cemetery Name(s):	Lithonia African American Cemetery/ Lithonia One Cemetery
Location:	Community: Bruce Street City: Lithonia County: DeKalb State: Georgia Country: the United States
Address:	7134 Walkker Street. Lithonia, GA 30058
Acreage:	6.7
Ownership:	Lithonia Civic League Inc.
Total Value	\$116,700
Classification:	Private Currently being used African American slave family Veteran Other unknown
Accessibility To Public:	Unrestricted
Cemetery Enclosure:	The cemetery is not enclosed by a wall, fence, or other physical format; There is no formal entrance.
Tombstones or Markers:	Date of most recent burial: March 22nd, 2015 Date of earliest burial: 1919 (no damages) Types of marker stones present: granite, marble, slate, bronze, brick, metal, and other unknown Headstone styles present: die on base, tablet, bedstead, pillow, and monument
Historical Significances:	Over 50 years; African American trandition burial features present on site; More than 16 veteran burial plots present on site;
Vegetation:	Evergreen Tree canopy: Pinus palustris (>30yr), Pinus virginiana (>30yr) Deciduous Tree: 2*Quercus nigra (>50yr), 11*Quercus falcata (>50yr) Shrubs &Herbs: 4* Juniperus conferta Parl, 2* Yucca, 1* Nandina domestica

Current Issues:	Overgrown grass, thorns, and sedges covering headstones, markers and spaces between most plots
	Dead tree stumps and branches are dispersed throughout
	Lack of formal Entrance
	Discontinuous driveway and walking path through the cemetery
	Limited parking spaces
	Limited visibility from Bruce Street
	Limited walkability for the disabled
	Lots of rock and other materials piling on/by plots
	Limited wayfinding signs
	Limited notification signs
	Lack of burial maps
	Lack of archeologic documents
	Lack of managing board
	Lack of National Historic Register
	Lack of supportive funding
	Limited community engagement
	Limited public attention

Figure 5.24. Lithonia One Cemetery Condition Analysis Chart summarized by Yi Cui.

CHAPTER 6

REHABILITATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

In the previous chapters, this thesis has explored the historic significance of Lithonia One Cemetery, successful rehabilitation practices in the case studies, findings and feedback from the survey and interviews, and assessment results through observations and measurement. Based on all the findings and the current cemetery conditions and issues described in Chapter 5, this chapter aims to reveal strategies that may be appropriately applied to rehabilitating and managing Lithonia One Cemetery. Highlights include: (1) establishment of a Lithonia One Cemetery managing board; (2) enhancements in community engagement and outreach efforts, and (3) adoption of a phased cemetery plan.

Restoration Recommendations

Grouping and Identification

In order to conduct the following rehabilitation practices more comprehensively, establishing a managing board should probably be the first step. The main responsibilities of the managing board should include but are not limited to:

- (1) Registering as a non-profit group and apply for non-profit tax exemption

- (2) Making board meeting schedules and short and long term agendas
- (3) identifying the significance of Lithonia One
- (4) officially naming the cemetery and making it known to the public
- (5) completing the National Historic Register nomination
- (6) proposing, approving, and executing management plans
- (7) Meeting volunteers and stakeholders who are willing to work for the cemetery restoration
- (8) establishing outreach programs and organizing community events
- (9) seeking funding sources
- (10) building an official website for visitors' access, donations, and promotion

The total number of board members should include at least five people; two of them should be ministers from local churches, as recommended by Mr. Waits. Consideration should also be given to a faculty member from a local college or university who will commit to using the cemetery as a long-term service-learning opportunity. After collecting signatures of all board members, an application for establishing a non-profit group could be submitted. No further preservation practices may be conducted, nor any funding application be tax-exemptible until the non-profit association receives final approval by the state.

Recording, Mapping and Documentation

Because there are no existing burial maps for the Lithonia One Cemetery (Reynolds 2016), the author explored the cemetery, recorded all the locations and family name and burial year of the visible family graves with boundary, veteran's plots and most unknown markers. Based on the observation, the author initiated a burial map

as below for offering the future managing board a basic idea what the context of Lithonia One Cemetery is (Figure 6.1). Because there are other graves covered by overgrowth or eroded over time, hiring archeological professionals, historians, or professional land surveyors will be the most essential step that the author suggests for the future managing board to conduct. Such experts could be found by contacting the Historic Preservation Division for the list of archeological consulting firms in Georgia and a copy of the Professional Qualifications Standard (Von Voorhies 2003). Names of who is buried there, when they were buried, and the location of where they are buried, all readable headstone markers, decorative motifs, headstone materials, plots features, plot sizes, and other existing landscape features should be recorded. Such archeological investigation and mapping activities could also be in cooperation with an institution and conducted by archeological or history major students under the direction of a professor. The author also recommends that the following specific steps be considered as part of the restoration plans.

1. Document the exact location of the cemetery. If possible, calculate the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates or the latitude and longitude coordinates, using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.
2. Determine its boundaries. The existing cleared or marked (landscaped) area corresponding to the actual boundary cannot be assumed to include all the graves. Some graves lack headstones or markers, and some graves have multiple headstones marked in different times. The boundaries between plots may change according to the expansion of certain plots. A professional archaeologist or other expert should be involved to accurately determine the

locations of all graves, and then adjustments should be made to the cemetery's boundaries.

3. Record all observable information about the graves and inscriptions.
4. Record the cemetery in the cemetery recorded in the public record. This is one of the most important restoration plans because, firstly, other interested researchers or the public can access the data once the cemetery has been noted on a U.S.G.S topographic map or other appropriate base map.

Secondly, by recording the cemetery in public records, such as tax maps, deed records, plats, and Department of Transportation maps, the managing board will establish public knowledge of the cemetery for legal purposes, bringing it under the protection of Georgia Law (Von Voorhies 2003).
5. Create a burial plot sale map: The board should be able to determine how many additional burial plots could be created in the cemetery for future sales.

This funding source could contribute to a maintenance endowment. This will need professional input.

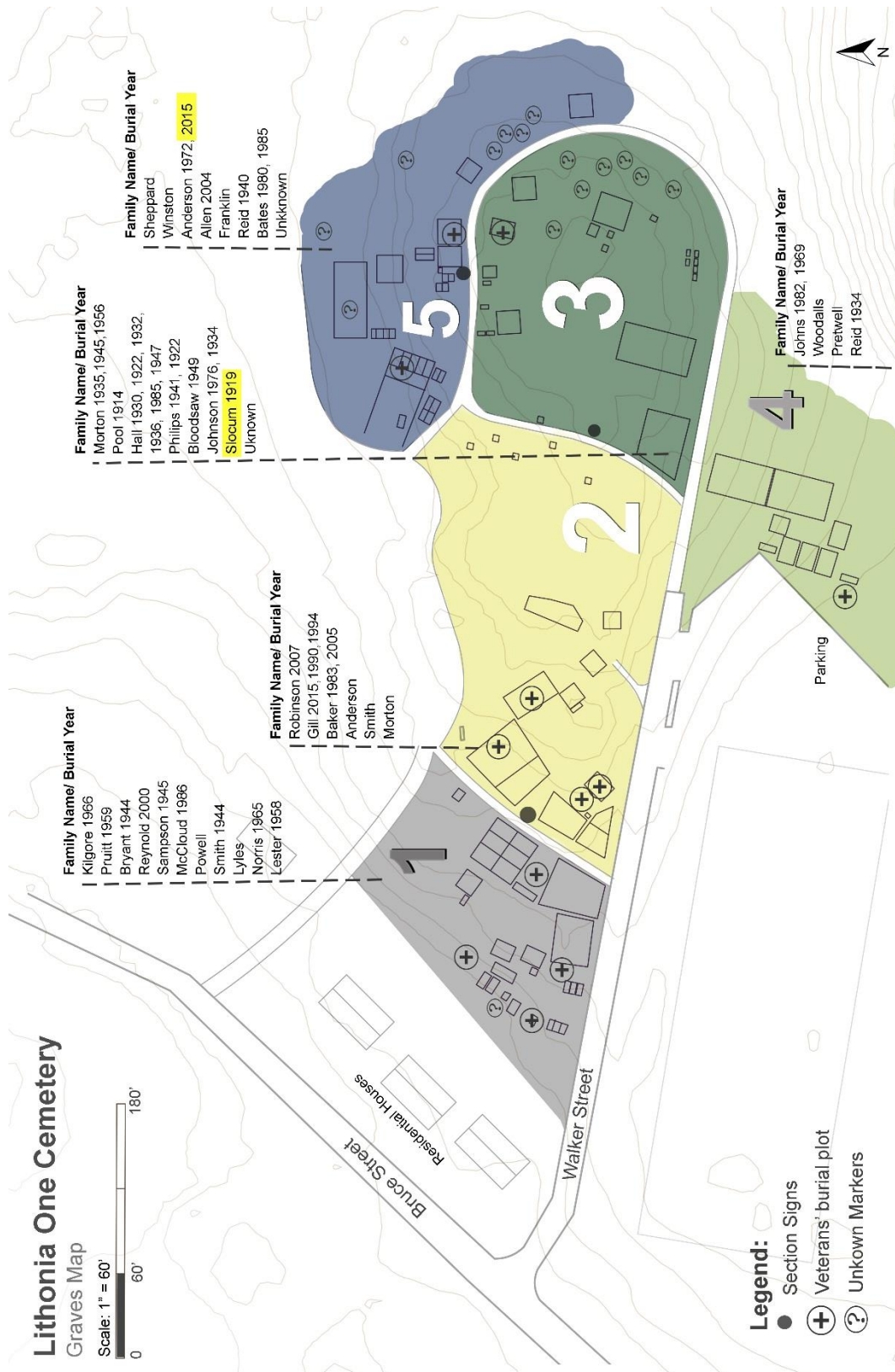


Figure 6.1 Lithonia One Cemetery graves map

Planning, Treatment and Management

After successfully establishing a managing board, the director can start to plan a series of restoration practices, including:

- (1) Remove overgrowth, dead tree stumps, and fallen branches and leaves;
- (2) Repair and stabilize headstones, grave markers, and mark existing plot boundaries under the direction of a professional archeologist or other expert;
- (3) Seek funding for specific management goals and write the applications;
- (4) Organize community activities (walking tours, memorial events, and community events)
- (5) Reach out to the public for recommendations of organizations, institutions of higher learning or individuals to help initiate various programming opportunities.
- (6) Create wayfinding system of Lithonia One Cemetery system to connect Lithonia One Cemetery with local community and to improve users' experience, by:
 - Designing discrete directional markers, entrances markers, and burial section markers in the cemetery, and on the major corridors. Figure 6.3 and 6.4 provide phase-by-phase location suggestions for wayfinding signs installation.
 - Design official website to provide information for people who want to research the cemetery without visiting in person. Information available on the website could include historic background, burial information, community events, and a donation platform.

- In lieu of constructed irrational markers create a brochure that included a map of the cemetery with labels on the side and a history of the cemetery on the other. The brochures could be distributed to churches, funeral homes and community service facilities in addition to creating simple rain proof housing for the brochures at every entrance of the cemetery.

Design and Management

Introduction

The existing condition chart (Figure 6.2) includes the information of elevation, storm water runoff direction, high/low point, surrounding buildings uses, main grave locations, existing structures (ruins, signs, and monument), existing vegetation, and circulation paths. The paths was drawn based on the aerial map.

Based on the current major issues of Lithonia One Cemetery concluded from Chapter 5, recommendations for restoring the cemetery will be provided in two phased master plan.

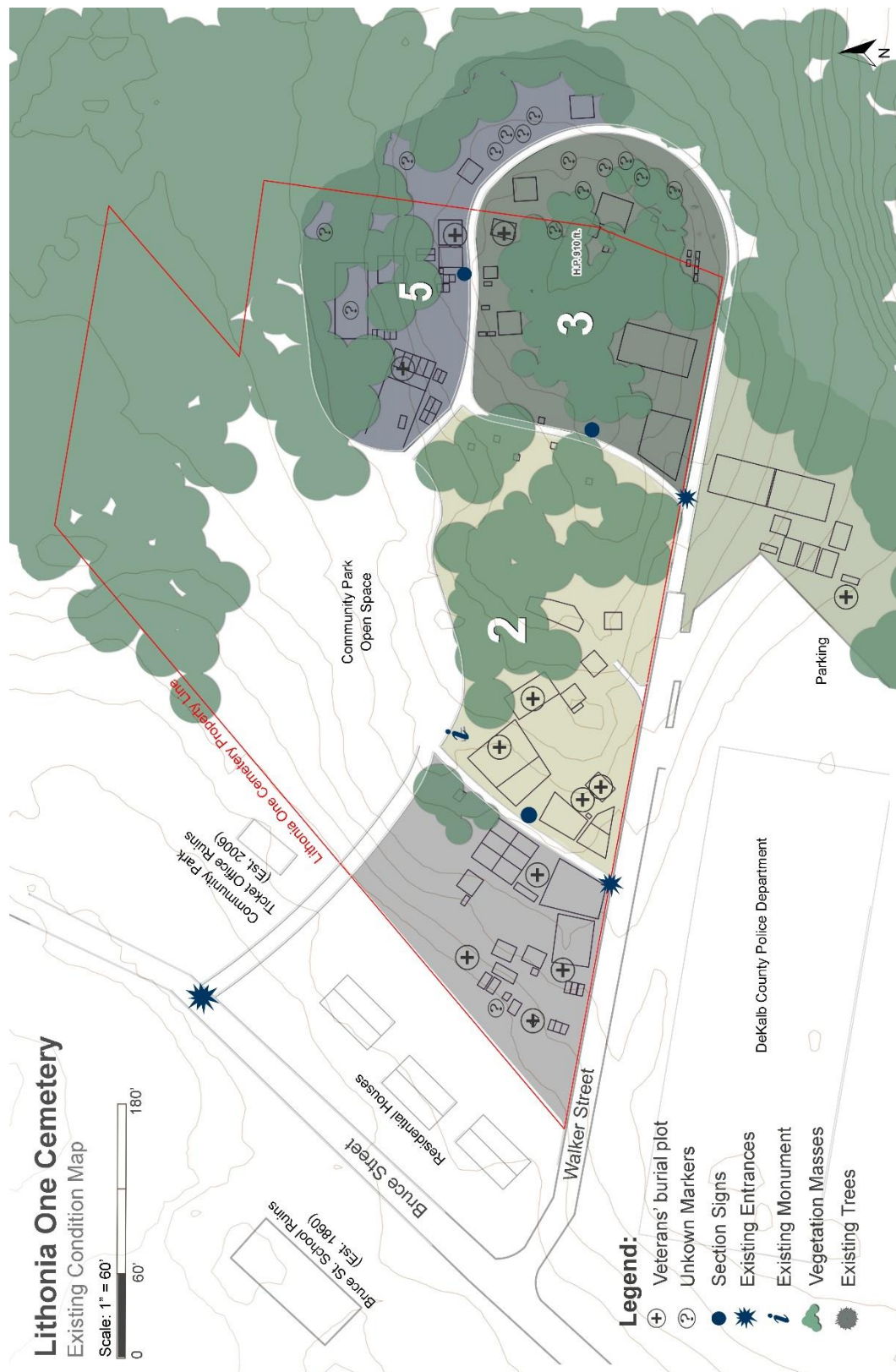


Figure 6.2 Lithonia One Cemetery current condition's map

Phase 1 Concept

In order to establish its reputation and reconnect the cemetery with the local community in a timely way, the masterplan for the first phase mainly suggests walking paths, temporary parking spaces, and establishing an appealing entrance. Intensive construction is not proposed for the first phase, as it would require significant funding. In the first phase, the only construction will include tree removal and paving the walking path with crushed granite, guided by ADA requirements. Materials for paving could be obtained from the local quarry or salvage yards, which would be affordable. Also, volunteer activities organized by the managing board with community residents could cut labor costs for this phase.

In summary, the first phase plan for restoring Lithonia One aims to enhance the current users' experience through an executable, efficient, and affordable plan.

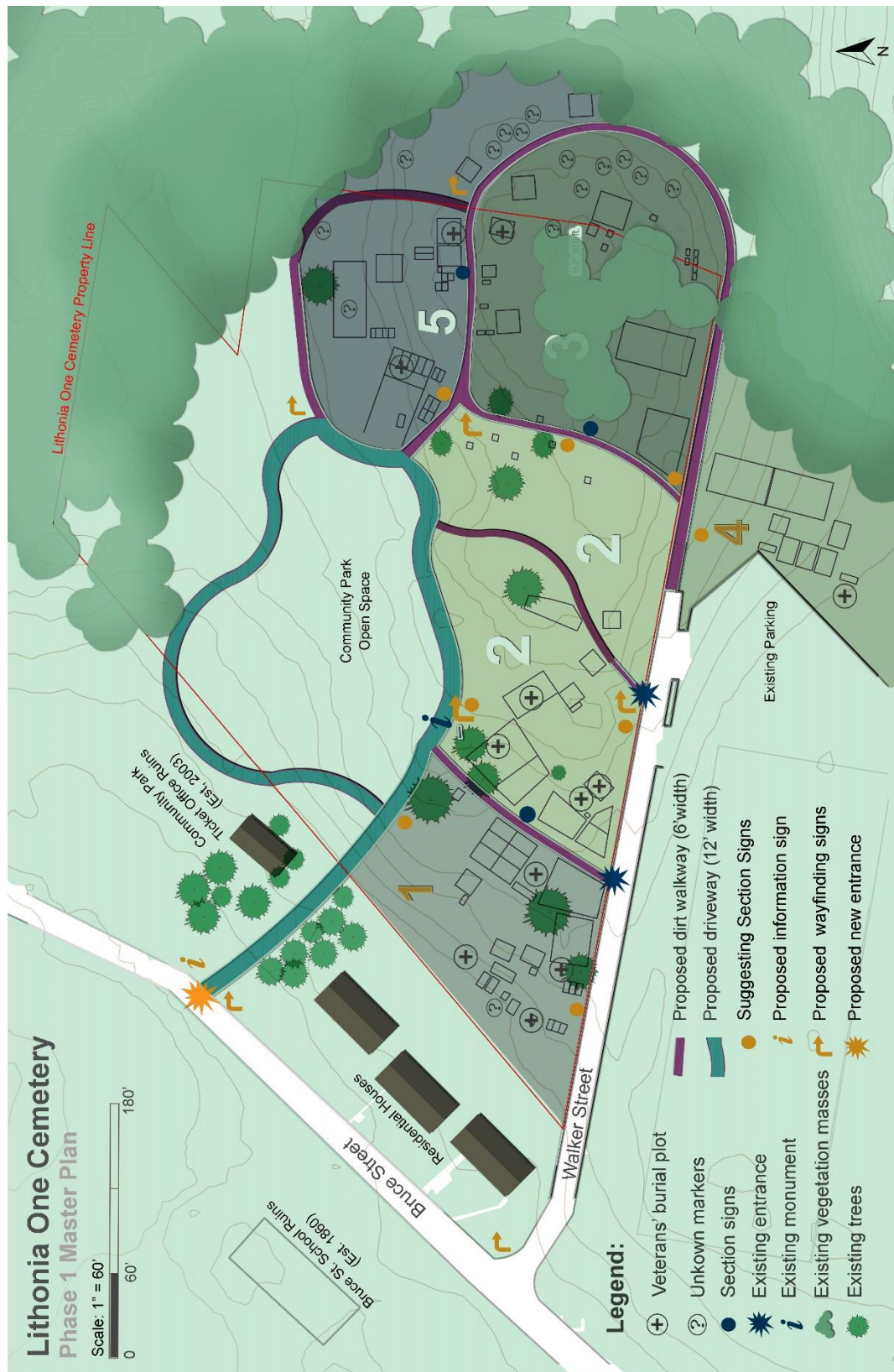


Figure 6.3 Phase 1 Master Plan.

Phase 2 Concept

In addition to satisfying the current cemetery users, it is important to build historic integrity, emphasize historic information, and establish its reputation among the community. Enhancing the overall cemetery landscape is the main goal of the second phase of the rehabilitation proposal. This master plan would require receiving the approvals from city officials, stakeholders, the Lithonia development commission, and the cemetery board members. Seeking funding sources will also take time. Nevertheless, these suggestions provide an optimal proposal to enhance the experience of cemetery visitors and community residents, and provides options for the managing board to consider in the long term. Main recommendations for the second phase of master plan include:

1. Remove existing ticket office ruins and public residential houses on Bruce Street, according to the suggestion proposed by Mayor Jackson (Jackson 2016);
2. Remove the woods on Bruce street to create a more open entrance for to the public;
3. Establish a managing office/museum in a nearby community-owned building;
4. If more shade trees were planted in Phase II, particularly in the public park area—there would be lots of more shady spots in the future for family gathering and celebration. Building an open pavilion can provide shade as well and protect conform rain for community events;
5. Upgrade driveway and walking path to concrete or asphalt, replacing the crushed granite;
6. Install information and map board;

7. Plant regionally appropriate and traditional African vegetation with low maintenance required, such as dogwood and yucca to enhance the appearance;
8. Clean all overgrowth within the property line of Lithonia One Cemetery particularly where it covers headstones.

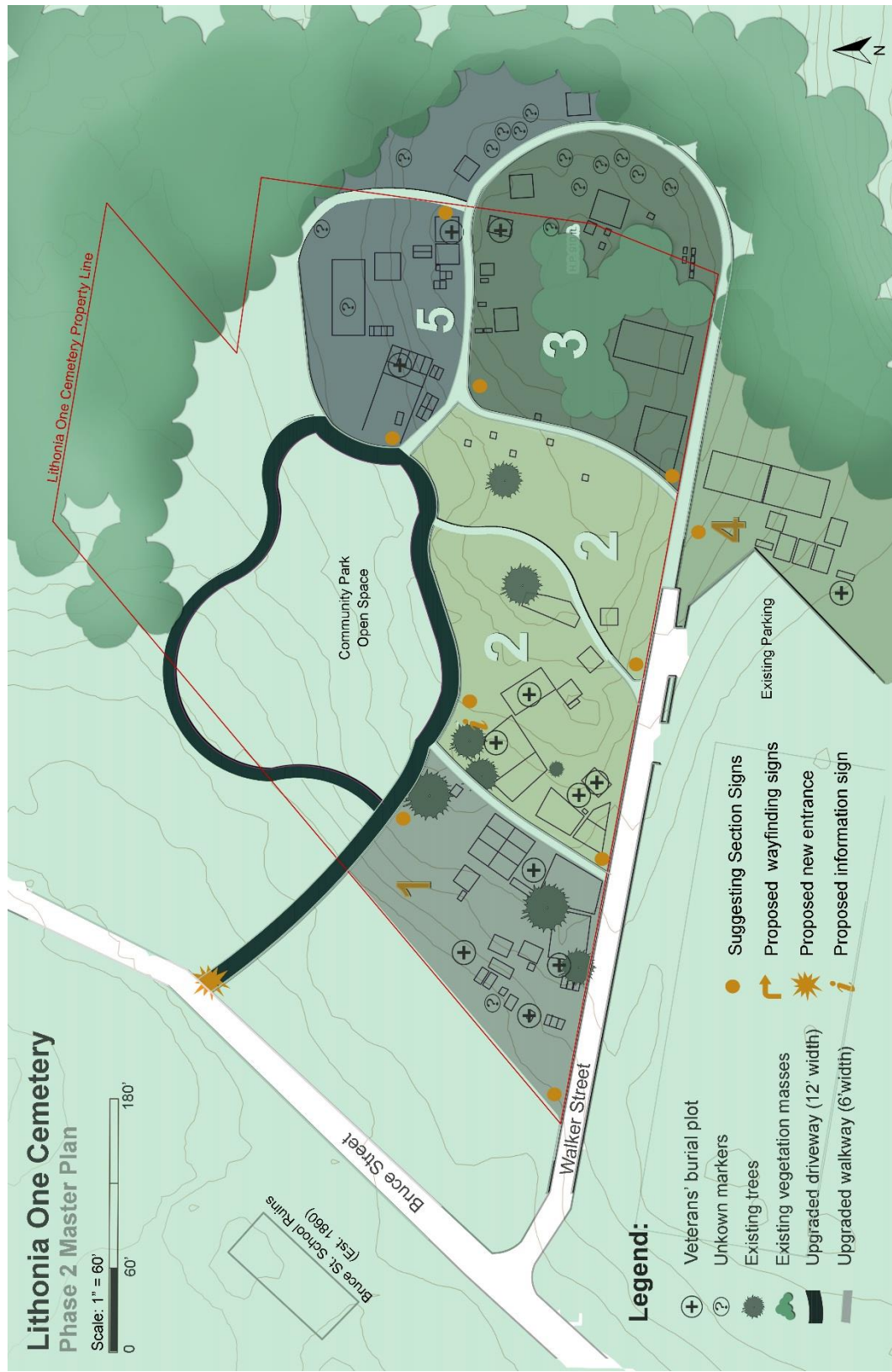


Figure 6.4 Phase II Master Plan

According to the frequency analyses of the garden plants in the appendix of *African American Gardens and Yards in the Rural South* (Westmacott 1992), the author has selected the species most used in Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama. Most of them have colorful flowers and beautiful foliage, and display a vibrant spring color. The specific number, species color or placements for each vegetation category are not limited but may be constrained by the conditions of the soil type, sun aspects and climate, or be influenced by the preference of the managing board members, or the total funding that the board would raise in the future.

Overstory trees⁴

- Tulip Polar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- Ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) (male only)
- Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*)

Ornamental Annuals

- Petunia (*Petunia spp.*)
- Marigold (*Tagetes spp.*)
- Sultana (*Impatiens sultani*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*)

⁴ Overstory trees in Georgia, according to the *City of Atlanta Tree Planting List*, typically reach a diameter-atbreast-height (DBH) in excess of 25 inches and a height in excess of 60 feet at maturity. Per the tree ordinance, to receive recompense credit, the spacing requirement for planting is a minimum of 35 feet on center between both existing and replacement trees.

- Elephant's ear (*Colocasia antiquorum*)

Foliage Shrubs

- Red-tip (*Photinia glabra*)
- Euonymus (*Euonymus kiautschovicus*)
- Rose (*Rosa spp.*)
- Rose of Sharon, althea (*Hibiscus syriacus*)
- Azalea (*Azalea spp.*)
- Forsythia (*Forsythia intermedia*)
- Crape myrtle (*Lagerstrœmia indica*)

Flowering Perennials

- Day lily (*Hemerocallis spp.*)
- Canna (*Canna spp.*)
- Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum spp.*)
- Iris (*Iris spp.*)

Bulbs and Corms

- Tiger lily (*Lilium tigrinum*)
- Milk and honey (*Crinum spp.*)
- Gladiolus (*Gladiolus spp.*)
- Amaryllis lily (*Amaryllis spp.*)
- Snowflake (*Leucojum spp.*)

Chapter Summary

Existing Issues	Phase 1 Proposals	Phase 2 Proposals
Overgrown grass and sedges thrive	Remove all the overgrowth where it hides headstones	Keep clean
Dead tree stumps and branches are dispersed		Remove the dead tree stumps beside the plots
Lack of formal Entrance	Add information board and direction signs	Add new appealing granite entrance and landscapes
Discontinuous driveway and walking path through the cemetery	Pave crushed granite to make drive way continuous	Upgrade pavement to concrete or asphalt
Lack of formal parking spaces	n/a: visitors still can use the parking lots behind the Dekalb County Police Department.	Create concrete permanent parking space behind the managing office
Limited visibility from Bruce Street	Remove part of the existing trees on Bruce Street driveway entrance	Clear all the existing pine trees on Bruce Street entrance
Limited walkability for the disabled	Pave crushed granite to make drive way continuous and meet ADA requirements	Upgrade pavement to concrete or asphalt
Limited wayfinding signs	Add information board and direction markers	Add granite entrance marker and plant appealing dog woods to strengthen the cemetery identity
Abandoned structure ruins	keep structure ruins	Remove the ruins to open the view of entrance
Lack of burial maps	The author created a basic burial map for users' temporary reference, waiting for initiating the managing board for planning professional burial maps as official records.	Need professional archeologist's research and investigation involved
Lack of managing board	First step for stakeholders to take	n/a
Lack of National Historic Register	Waiting for initiating managing board and related following promotion plans	n/a
Lack of supportive funding		
Limited community engagement		
Limited public attention		

Note: highlighted rows are regarded as major issues and related solutions provided.

Figure 6.5 Summary chart of conditions and solutions

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APPENDIX A:
QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF
VISITORS TO LITHONIA ONE CEMETERY

1) What is your age range?

2) How long have you lived in Lithonia?

3) How often do you visit the cemetery?

Daily / Once a Week / Once a Month / Once a Year / Other

4) How do you hear about the cemetery? (Circle all that apply)

- Family member
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Social media (newspaper/internet/radio/TV/Others)
- Community advertising brochures/flyers from schools/senior center/church
etc.
- Wayfinding signs/ signals/other formats on roads/community
facilities/other places.
- Others

5) How do you commute from the place you live to the cemetery?

Auto / Bike / Walking / Other

6) How easy/difficult to find the cemetery as your first experience to visit? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is very difficult and 10 is very easy)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7) How welcoming you think Lithonia African American Cemetery as being for visitors? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is very unwelcoming and 10 is very welcoming)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8) What is the nature of your interest in Lithonia African American Cemetery?

(Circle all that apply)

- A loved one is buried in the cemetery
- A pleasant setting for walks or passive recreation
- Historical or genealogical interest
- Community or party events for memorials
- Others

9) How do you use the cemetery when you are here?

10) What do you like about the Lithonia African American Cemetery?

11) Has your perception of the cemetery' openness towards visitors changed during the time you have been visiting? (circle one) Yes / No

- If yes, how has it changed?

12) Would you like to see any changes made in the future? If so, what changes?

13) How important you think restoring the cemetery's landscape and features to be?

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is not important at all and 10 is very important)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14) How important you think promoting the cemetery to be well-found in the public?

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is not important at all and 10 is very important)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15) How important you think making the cemetery more physically open to the public

to be? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is not important at all and 10 is very important)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16) How important you think wayfinding system to be for the public users? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is not important at all and 10 is very important)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17) How desirable you think each of the following activities would be in Lithonia African American Cemetery? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 is undesirable at all and 10 is very desirable)

- Walking Tours

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Memorial Events

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Annual Halloween Theme Tour (& Decoration Competition)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Community festivals

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10