

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY



Chicora Research Contribution 507

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This reports examines the development of Douglas Cemetery in northwestern Columbia, South Carolina, as well as its subsequent extensive damage.

This African American cemetery began in 1908 as the creation of the Metropolitan Development Company. The 9.2 acre cemetery was laid out to maximize the number of available lots and appears to have had little, if any, landscaping or other improvements. The property came under the ownership of Douglas Realty Company in 1915 and it was probably about this time that it became widely known as Douglas Cemetery. Throughout its history, Douglas was owned and operated by Columbia's white power structure - attorneys, bankers, and real estate developers.

Although plots cost more than in nearby Randolph Cemetery, it was widely used during the first quarter of the twentieth century. By 1929 and the Depression, use of the cemetery declined dramatically. The last several owners of the cemetery appear to have done little to improve or maintain the property and the final owner, Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery Company, was simply a holding company that oversaw the final fragmentation and collapse of the property.

This study also briefly explores those who were buried at Douglas. While nearby Randolph Cemetery attracted a broad range of Columbia's African American population - from laborers to ministers and physicians, Douglas was used by the city's working poor. In the studied sample we found no home owners, no mulattos, and only three tradesmen or professionals.

We also provide some brief observations concerning the portions of the cemetery that remain intact, providing complete transcriptions of the identified stones, as well as photographs of the current conditions.

Finally, this report poses a broad range of questions that still need attention. We also urge vigilance since within the last eight years the cemetery has been threatened by development and the construction of a cell tower. With a large portion of the best preserved portion of the cemetery recently coming into the ownership of the City of Columbia, we are especially fearful of its long-term preservation. The city has sadly demonstrated little concern with the preservation of Columbia's African American cemeteries.

Douglas Cemetery represents not only a rich and valuable historic and bioanthropological resource, it also represents the final resting place of upwards of over a thousand African American citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

We became interested in Douglas Cemetery in early 2001 as part of our broader efforts to identify and record at-risk cemeteries in the City of Columbia. That work was regrettably spurred by the city's failure to adequately protect graveyards, burial sites, and cemeteries within its boundaries – as evidenced by the destruction of the State Hospital's cemetery for African American patients at the hands of a city golf driving range (Trinkley and Hacker 2001).

phase Douglas was given the archaeological site number 38RD1194 and those stones that could be identified were transcribed. Efforts to gather historical documentation extended over several years, with many individuals contributing to the research.

This report is the culmination of that research, although it is certainly not intended to be the “last word” on Douglas Cemetery. In fact, the concluding section offers more questions than it does answers – clearly demonstrating that much additional work remains to be done.

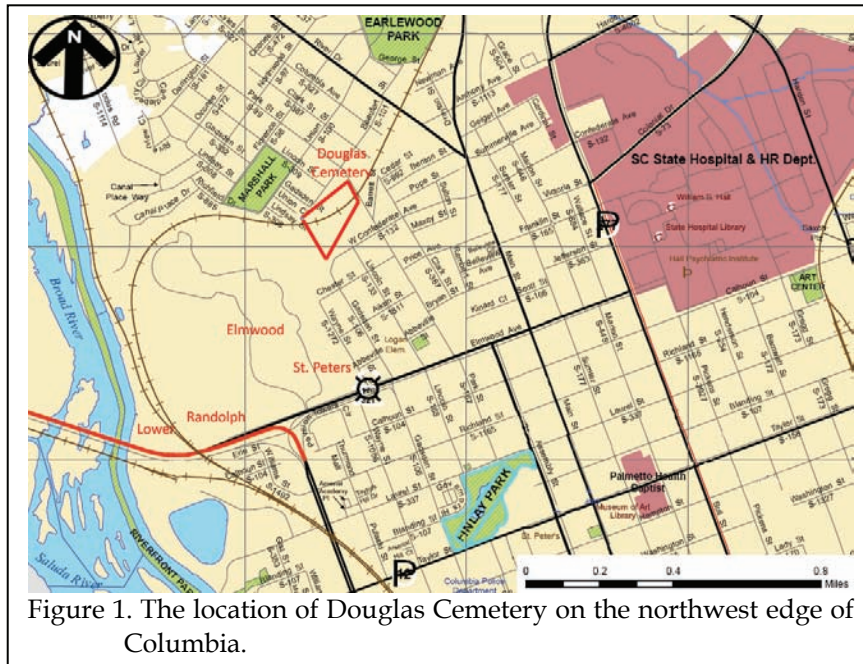


Figure 1. The location of Douglas Cemetery on the northwest edge of Columbia.

Since our work was unfunded (one city councilman observed that they wouldn't fund the research since if they knew where cemeteries were located they would have to deal with them), work was intermittent and the initial effort was to ensure that cemeteries such as Douglas were recorded with the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. During this

This report will, however, make more widely available what little information there is on Douglas Cemetery and perhaps even stir up interest in pursuing the work. This is especially important since we believe that Douglas remains one of those Columbia cemeteries that is at significant – and growing – risk of destruction. This became abundantly clear in 2005 when the then owner sought to sell what remains of the cemetery to a developer (see *The State*, July 10, 2005, for one account). It was only when Chicora pushed the

issue of relocating hundreds of burials that the development plans were abandoned. Now a sizeable portion of the cemetery is owned by the City of Columbia and, given its history dealing with burial grounds, it is virtually certain that there will be future efforts to destroy what remains of this African American burial ground.

An Overview

Douglas Cemetery is situated in northwestern Columbia, northeast of Elmwood, Columbia's 168 acre historic rural landscape cemetery that began in 1854. Nearby Randolph Cemetery, used by many of Columbia's wealthier African Americans (although also used by many far less wealthy), began in 1872. Lower cemetery, also known as the Pauper, City, and Negro cemetery, was apparently the public cemetery after the downtown cemetery (the block bounded by Senate, Wayne, Pendleton, and Pulaski streets) was closed in 1857 (although some suggest its use predates

even Elmwood).

In contrast, Douglas is far more recent, tracing its origin back to 1908. Therefore, the Douglas Cemetery is by all accounts a relatively modern cemetery and yet it has almost disappeared.

The property, as revealed in the following section, was originally part of the fairgrounds located north of Elmwood Street. While the fairgrounds along Elmwood were relatively level, the rear portion of the tract - which became Douglas, was lower with a drainage running through it westward to the Broad River.

Since its origin the cemetery has been mistreated and cut up into multiple tracts. The City of Columbia used it for a railroad relocation project, burying a sizeable portion of the cemetery under the railroad grade fill section. Houses were allowed to be built on the graves, as well as a church. Never does there appear to be any consideration given to the property being a burial ground of Columbia's African American citizens. South Carolina's Jim Crow mentality can certainly explain the early damage, although the actions of the past 30-40 years become more difficult to understand.

It is also difficult to understand the silence of family members who have loved ones buried in Douglas. We can find no evidence that anyone in the African American community spoke out against the desecration of the cemetery.

For those seeking a context for Douglas Cemetery, we recommend a review of our examination of Randolph Cemetery (Trinkley and Hacker 2007). That study includes a review of Columbia's African American community and is the only detailed overview of black history for the city.



Figure 2. A portion of Douglas Cemetery showing the massive wall of construction debris on an adjacent lot in the background. Photo taken in 2006.

HISTORIC SYNOPSIS

Today the Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association welcomes visitors with the boast that it “combines charm with the convenience and excitement of downtown living” (www.historicelmwoodpark.org). But the area was not always so charming or convenient. In fact, it is interesting to note that in 1936 Elmwood didn’t warrant even a mention in Helen Kohn Hennig’s history of Columbia (Hennig 1936).

It began on the site of the State Fair Grounds, operated by the South Carolina Mechanical and Agricultural Society, and was situated on the northern border of Columbia. Its neighbors were St. Peter’s, Elmwood, Randolph, and Lower Cemetery to the west, a race track to the east, and agricultural land to the north.

When the race track faded into history and the state fair moved its operations to its present location, the owners - including Washington A. Clark and Charles Logan - sold 24 acres to the Richland Real Estate Company on Sept. 28, 1903, for the subdivision and sale of

lots. The original subdivision, called “Elmwood,” ran from Park to Lincoln and included a piece of land between Lincoln and Gadsden from Chester to Confederate. The first lot was sold on January 2, 1904.

Logan is perhaps best remembered for his bequest to create the Logan School (on Elmwood Avenue) “for white children” (Hennig 1936:128). Prior to the Civil War, however, he was one of Columbia’s most prominent slave dealers (he was listed as a “speculator” in the 1860 City Directory) (Moore 1993: 119-120).

Clark was a prominent Columbia attorney, patron of the arts, one-time president of Carolina National Bank, and investor in a number of Columbia projects (Hennig 1936:165, 189, 343; Moore 1993:243, 299, 306).

The Earliest Cemetery - Metropolitan

The property transfer that began Douglas Cemetery occurred on May 22, 1908 (recorded July 22, 1908) when Clark sold a 9.2

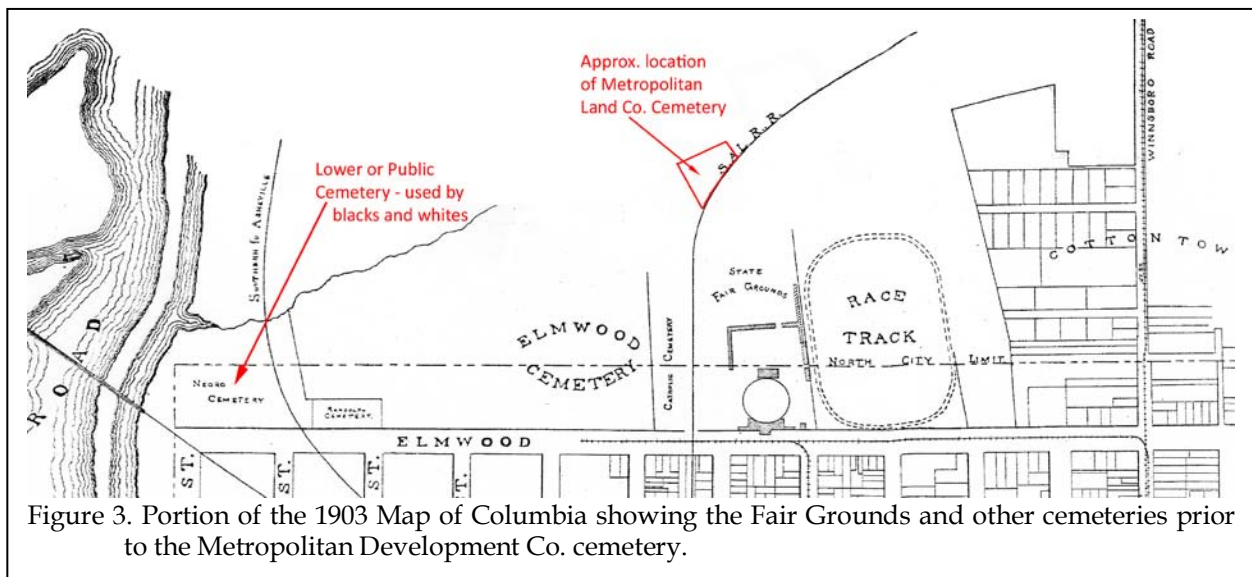
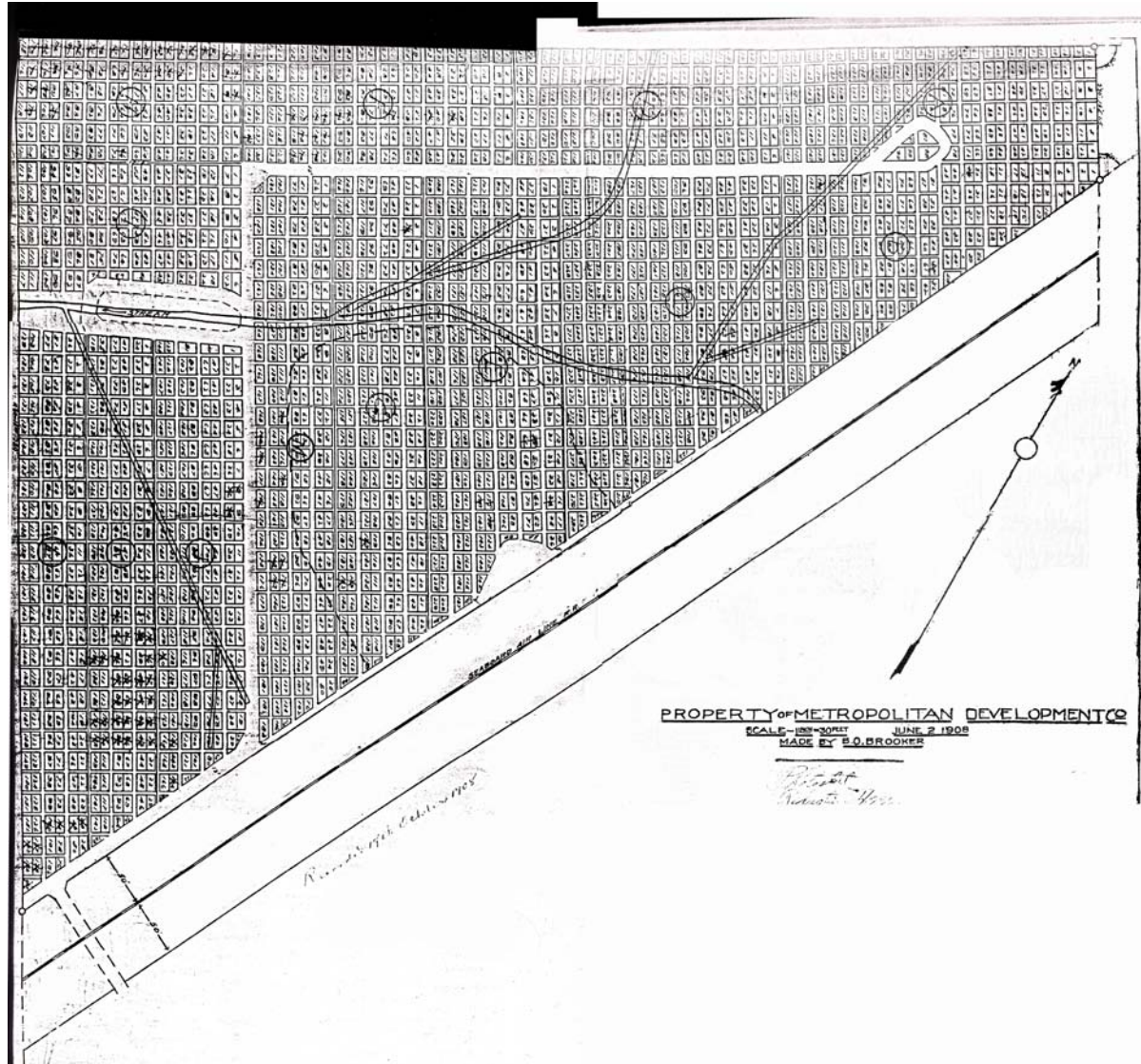


Figure 3. Portion of the 1903 Map of Columbia showing the Fair Grounds and other cemeteries prior to the Metropolitan Development Co. cemetery.

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Lots (2 graves each) per section:

Section A	161	Section B	161
Section C	280	Section D	144
Section E	230	Section F	144
Section G	188	Section H	120
Section I	117	Section J	167
Section K	143	Section L	155
Section M	183		

Figure 4. Metropolitan Development Company cemetery plat (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB A, pg. 164; best copy available).

HISTORIC SYNOPSIS

acre tract to the Metropolitan Development Company for \$4,500 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB AV, pg. 82). The tract's southern boundary was the pre-existing right-of-way for the Seaboard Coast Railroad.

The Metropolitan Development Company was chartered the day after the sale (May 23, 1908) with Clark as president, Howard

the property design (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB A, pg. 164).

Although not advertising in Columbia's City Directories under cemeteries, the Metropolitan Development Company sold a number of lots in the cemetery and burials were conducted over the following several years. Absent published advertising, lots may have been sold through Columbia's African American undertakers. Regardless, the cemetery almost immediately had financial problems, missing its tax payments for 1909 and 1910 and being offered in a Sheriff's sale beginning in 1909 and continuing in 1910 and 1911 (*The State*, November 23, 1909, December 18, 1910, and January 1, 1911). Apparently the taxes were eventually paid.

Table 1.
Cemetery Plots Sold by Metropolitan Prior to February 1914.

Section B	Section D	Section E	Section F	Section G	Section H	Section I	Section K	Section L	Section M		
35	55	34	34	25	93	91	8	16	64	24	172
55	101	49	46	133	73	38	27	84	65	74	121
126	107	67	64	151	49	56	28	85	87	100	122
	66	122	87	159	55	44	142	66	89	153	148
		123	88	183	37	25	144	90	113	154	149
		141	94		62	90	160	20	114	155	169
			100		80	61		43	138	127	117
			101		66	67		61	137	128	114
			106		2	32		17	86	49	170
			107		107	111		19	18		110
			108		105	97		19	134		
			112		100	103		40	15		
			113		3	31		41	38		
			114		9	98		42	88		
			118		1	79		63			
			120		13	50					
			143		7	109					
					86	43					
					92	112					
					104	74					
					110	8					
					85						

Caldwell as Vice President-Secretary, and H.N. Edmunds as treasurer.

Caldwell is remembered as the editor and publisher of Columbia's *Courant: A Southern Literary Journal*. This weekly was published for about a year (1858-1859) (Hennig 1936:220). Edmunds was a Columbia attorney.

By June 2, 1908 a plat of the property had been developed showing the 9.2 acres divided into 13 sections and 2,197 grave lots (Figure 4). Each lot was 8 by 16 feet - intended for two graves - for a total of 4,394 potential graves. The plan shows a layout that was designed to maximize the number of salable lots with virtually no effort at landscaping or beautification. The drive into the cemetery was 12 feet in width. Access to most plots, however, was provided by a series of walkways - 2 feet in width east-west and 3½ feet in width north-south. Even wet areas were incorporated into the layout, with only the major stream cut out of

By February 1914, Metropolitan had defaulted on its mortgage to Citizens Building and Loan Company and Citizens filed suit in Common Pleas. The court ordered the property to be auctioned and the Master advertised the tract on several occasions (*The State*, November 22, November 29, 1914; February 14, February 21, and February 28, 1915). Although the advertisement did not directly refer to the tract as a cemetery, it did list 131 lots excluded from the sale because they had already been sold. This indicates that only about 26 lots a year had been sold - perhaps explaining why the cemetery floundered.

The Beginning of Douglas Cemetery

The tract was sold on March 1, 1915. The high bid was \$3,000, offered by Edmunds, the company's Treasurer. His bid was accepted, but Edmunds immediately assigned the bid to Luther J. Frink, trustee (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB AP, pg. 409; *The State*, March 2, 1915).

Shortly afterward, on April 19, 1915, Frink sold the parcel to Douglas Realty Company (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB BP, pg. 229). The deed indicated that the property continued to be mortgaged to Citizens Building and Company for \$3,000 - the sale price; in addition, 3 acres were mortgaged to attorney John T. Seibels for \$485. This deed also excluded the 131 lots previously sold and was in anticipation of the Douglas Realty Company being organized.

By April 1, 1915 the company was commissioned by the Secretary of State with capital stock of \$10,000. The petitioners were listed as "Luther J. Finck [sic], Julia P. Finck [sic] and John T. Seibels," with purpose of the company being the conduct of "a general real estate business (*The State*, April 1, 1915). The charter listed Frink as President-Secretary, his wife as Vice President-Treasurer.

Douglas Cemetery first appeared in the Columbia City Directory in 1916. Its location was somewhat vaguely identified as "N[orth] end Lincoln [Street]. The three African American undertaking firms in Columbia during this period were David Cooper (rear 1217 Hampton Street), Hardy & Pinckney (1006 Washington Street), and Johnson, Bradley & Morris (1115 Washington Street).

Financial problems continued to plague the property and it was again advertised for sale on back taxes in late 1915 (*The State*, October 17, 1915). By January 1917 Citizens Building and Loan was again in court, foreclosing on Douglas Realty. The company's problems were likely related to those faced by its president.

Frink began as a merchant and manager of the Southern Railroad Telegraphic School, gradually moving into the sale of real estate, primarily in Cayce. By 1910 he had expanded into the Elmwood area and by 1912 was even offering lands in Camden (*The State*, May 30, 1907; April 4, 1907; September 4, 1907; December 8, 1910; October 3, 1912). Frink, however, never

advertised any cemetery lots for sale. In July 1916 Frink's son, Luther Frink, drowned in the Columbia Canal. This event seems to have hit Frink and his wife very hard (*The State*, July 7, 1916) and about a year later, in June 1917, Frink and his family left Columbia, moving to Hopewell, Virginia, where he took a job at an ammunition plant. He died on April 2, 1918 (*The State*, April 3, 1918).

The Court ordered the property sold by the Master and it was again advertised with the 131 previously sold lots excepted (*The State*, October 21, 1917). The failure to expand the excepted lots does not mean that no additional grave plots were sold - it is common for property descriptions to be copied from one deed to the next. So unfortunately we don't have good information regarding the success of Frink in selling additional lots in the cemetery.

Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company

The deed conveying the property to the purchaser, Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company, is dated May 9, 1918 and was filed May 13, 1918 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB BS, pg. 409). However, the property is divided into two tracts or lots, perhaps reflecting the two distinct mortgages held on the property.

Lot 1 consisted of 6.2 acres and included Sections E-M; Lot 2, to the north, consisted of Sections A-D and encompassed 3 acres. Lot 1 was sold for \$2,550 and Lot 2 was sold for \$560. Nowhere, however, was the function of the property (cemetery, graveyard, burial ground) - or the various excluded lots (graves) - identified in the deed.

Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company was chartered two days prior to the sale, on May 2, 1918 with \$4,000 capital stock. Their charter specified that they were "to buy, own, sell and convey real estate and personal property for the purpose of operating and maintaining a cemetery or burying Ground, and to own, sell

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and convey other real estate and personal property and to do any and all acts incident thereto," vaguely suggesting that there was already some consideration being given to other uses of the property (Dead Domestic Corporation File 10196, SC Department of Archives and History).

J.C. Townsend was listed as the president, secretary, and treasurer, while the vice president was shown as J.W. Crews. The 1918 Columbia City Directory reveals that J. Clarkson Townsend was an attorney associated with the firm of Clark, Clark & Thompson, as well as the Richland County Master - the individual who presided over forced land sales. John W. Crews was also an attorney, in the Clark Law Building. Crews served four terms in the South Carolina legislature representing Richland County (Edgar and Watson 1974).

A return dated May 6, 1918 lists the firm as Douglass Memorial Cemetery Company, but this appears to be the only time that a double "s" was used, suggesting a typographical error.

The company sought to ensure good title to the cemetery and obtained a quit claim from Melton Clark, Washington Clark, March C. Brockman, Lillie C. Wilkerson, and Susan Clark Lobenstine, all deeding their interests deriving from Washington A. Clark to Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB BS, pg. 506).

Little is known of the company's activities, but *The State* (November 11, 1918) does indicate that Melton and Washington Clark sold lot 23 near Camp Fornance to the company for \$10 (and other consideration). So the company was doing more than simply selling cemetery plots. This is but one area where additional research might prove informative.

On November 21, 1923 there was an Application for Amendment of Charter, with the firm requesting a name change to "The Douglas

Company" (Dead Domestic Corporation File 10196, SC Department of Archives and History).

During this period the cemetery was routinely advertising in the Columbia City Directory, always as "Douglas Cemetery," and always with its address as "N end Lincoln." The last ad, however, appeared in 1929.

The company continued to sell plots in the cemetery. A typical deed is that from Douglas Company to J.W. Beachum (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB CY, pg. 18). For the sum of \$50, the company sold "lots Nos. Sixty one & sixty seven (61) and (67) in Section H." The January 31, 1927 sale of the property was in fee simple and the deed was signed by Evelyn D. Brasington, the company's president.

Beachum was listed, among a variety of other prominent African American citizens of Columbia, as campaigners for the "Negro War Fund Drive." The appeal's leader, Rev. A.C. White, exclaimed, "every colored man, women, and child is expected to respond in the fullest to the demands of our government" (*The State*, June 6, 1918). The 1920 census shows Beachum owning his own house on Walker Avenue and working as a brick mason.

Less is known about Evelyn Brasington. She appears to be the wife of William H. Brasington listed in the 1930 census as a railroad yard conductor. While not wealthy, they did own their home, valued at \$3,000.

There were also occasional funeral invitations placed in *The State* for African Americans (at this time the paper did not list obituaries for African Americans). One example is that of "a well known colored citizen of this town, James Davis." The announcement indicates that he was to be buried "at the Douglas Cemetery" (*The State*, January 17, 1919).

The 1929 stock market collapse and ensuing depression apparently forced the Douglas Company into receivership and in May



Figure 5. Douglas Cemetery in April 1938. Top illustrates an overview of northwestern Columbia, below is a close-up of the cemetery.

1935 the company's property was conveyed to William P. Donelan, receiver. J.C. Townsend was again listed as President of the company.

The deed identifies two tracts held by Douglas. The first, the cemetery, was described as 9.2 acres bordered,

On the North by lands formerly of camp Fornance Development Company and Carolina Bond and Investment Company, on the South and South East by the right of way of the seaboard rail way, on the East by the right of way of the seaboard railway and on the West by property of Seaboard railway and Carolina Bond and Investment Company (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB DX, pg. 145)

Again the various lots excluded in 1914 were mentioned (by reference), but they had not been updated in the intervening 24 years.

The second parcel was identified as an additional 4 acres acquired by the company in 1924 and it does not appear to be associated with the cemetery (although we have not conducted any research on this parcel).

Douglas Under Dreher

Three years later, Donelan put the 9.2 acre tract up for auction as a result of several court cases and the high bid for the parcel (\$595) was offered by Robinson & Robinson, Attorneys. They assigned their bid to James F. Dreher and the property was sold on November 1, 1938 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB EN, pg. 235). The second tract of 4 acres was also sold to Dreher (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB EN, pg. 236).

Dreher's ownership of Douglas is a significant historical gap since he held the parcel for a dozen years. We do, however, have an

aerial photograph of Douglas Cemetery, taken in April 1938, just a few months prior to the sale (Figure 5). This image clearly shows the relationship of Douglas to the other cemeteries in this section of Columbia, including St. Peter's, Elmwood, Randolph, and Lower (also called the Public, Pauper, and Negro Cemetery). Douglas was clearly a very large cemetery, dwarfing Randolph, St. Peters, and even the public burial grounds.

The image clearly shows the entrance into the cemetery that crossed the Seaboard Airline tracks at the lower edge of the cemetery, as well as a second entrance further north. Roads in the cemetery are also visible, although the planned road shown on the original plat (see Figure 4) is not clearly defined. This suggests that the cemetery received little (perhaps no) maintenance and roads were created by users of the cemetery - probably across forgotten plots.

Also clearly visible is the creek or drainage that bisected the property. There are several very broad, angular scars across the property. We assume these are artificial drainages, although this is not certain.

Plots are visible in several areas of the cemetery. It appears that much of the tract was still relatively clear of vegetation, although it appears that other areas were beginning to be overgrown.

Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery

On May 18, 1950 Dreher sold the 9.2 acre tract to Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery, Inc. for \$5 and other valuable consideration (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 54, pg. 90). In this deed Dreher excludes, "certain lots heretofore sold and those [lots] excepted in conveyance of A.D. McFadden, Master to Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company." This makes it clear that not only were the 131 lots from 1914 excluded, but also additional, unspecified lots that Dreher (or others) sold.

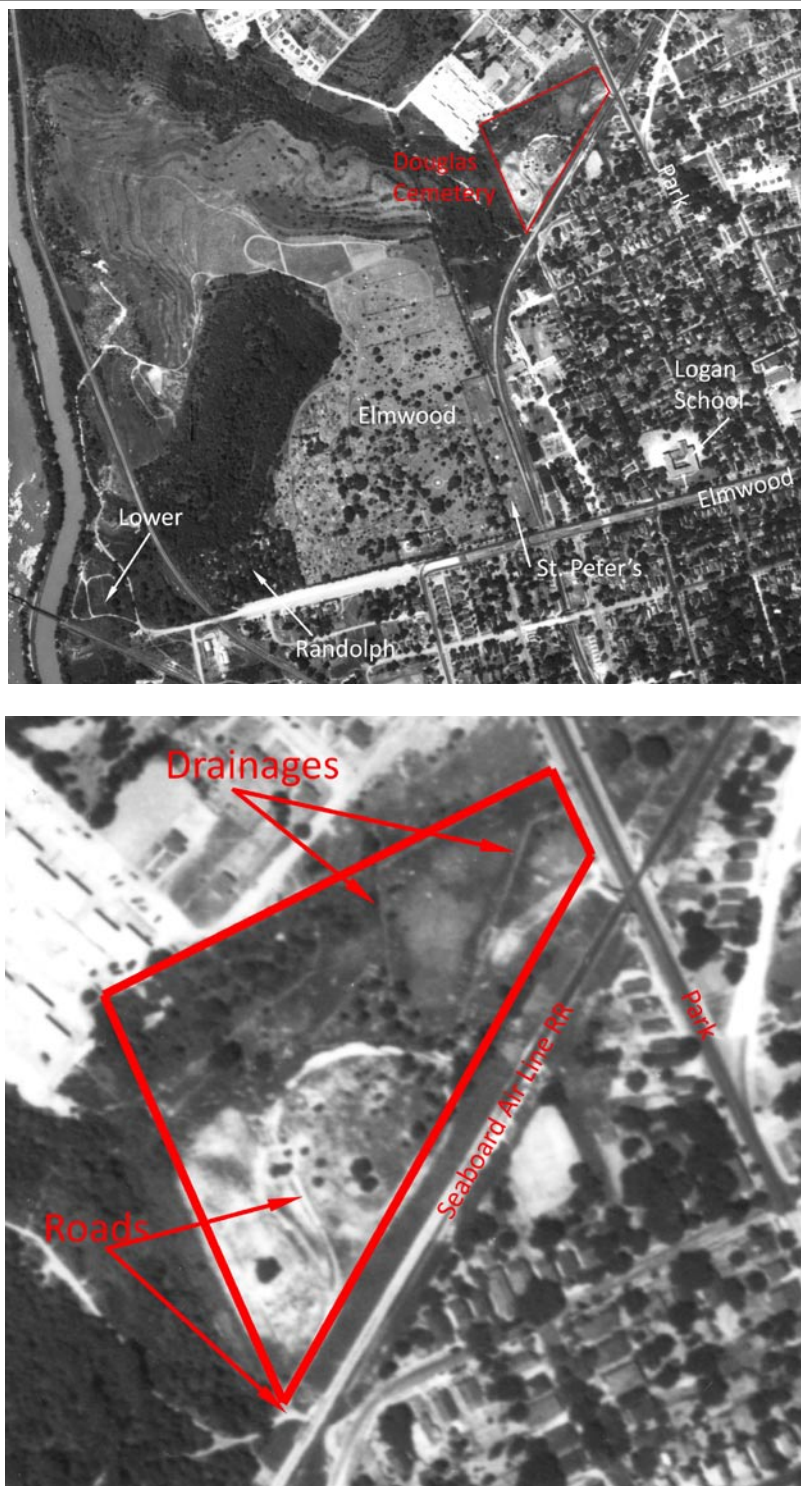


Figure 6. Douglas Cemetery in May 1951. Top illustrates an overview of northwestern Columbia, below is a close-up of the cemetery.

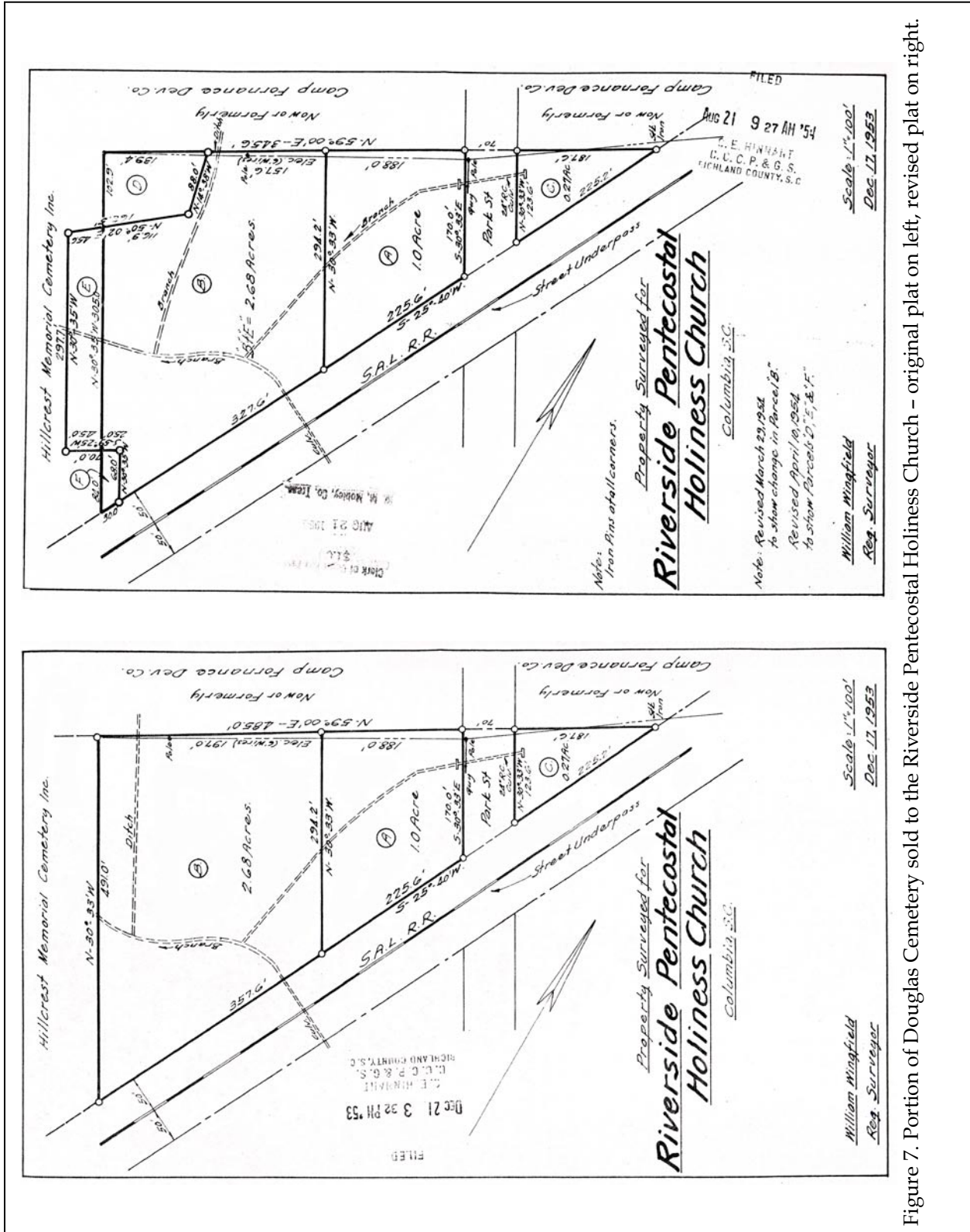


Figure 7. Portion of Douglas Cemetery sold to the Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church - original plat on left, revised plat on right.

Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery was chartered on May 18, 1950 for the purpose of "operating and maintaining modern cemeteries," with Henry F. Sherrill as president and John M. Gantt as vice president.

Sherrill, an attorney, is still alive and is the senior partner of Sherrill Roof Millender law firm in Columbia. He is today also the director of First Citizens Bancorporation, a holding company for various banks. He served in the Second World War and upon returning obtained his law degree from Duke University in 1947 - just a few years before creating Hillcrest.

Just shortly after Hillcrest took ownership of Douglas we again have an aerial image of the property (Figure 6). The 13 years between images roughly equate to the cemetery's ownership by Dreher. One of the most obvious changes is in the road system. A clearly defined looped road existed by 1951, seemingly defining the edges of that portion of the cemetery that was most clear. Beyond this road to the north and west it appears there was more secondary growth, although there are still areas where plots can be defined. The two large drainages seen in the earlier aerial are still visible, although their scars are less noticeable. Access to the cemetery is still via a road crossing the Seaboard Air Line at the southern tip of the cemetery.

By 1953 Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery appears to have been actively seeking to dispose of cemetery tracts. A December 17, 1953 plat shows the northeastern portion of the cemetery divided into two plots identified as A and B and together accounting for 3.68 acres, or about 40% of the cemetery (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB 4, p.217; Figure 7). These two plots appear to roughly represent Sections A, B, C, and D according to the original 1914 plat (Figure 4).

These two portions of the cemetery, along with parcel C (outside the cemetery boundaries) were sold to Julian Sharpe, Elzie

Chavis, and Edward Chavis, trustees of Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church for \$5 and other valuable consideration on December 15, 1953 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 125, pg. 498). The deed fails to mention the cemetery or any of the previously excluded plots.

For reasons that will shortly become clear, the plat was revised on March 29, 1954 (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB 5, pg. 113; Figure 7) creating parcels D and F out of parcel B, slightly changing the run of several ditches, and changing the shape of parcel B. Parcel E was then deeded to the same Julian Sharpe, Elzie Chavis, and Edward Chavis, as trustees of Park Street (formerly Riverside) Pentecostal Holiness Church on July 6, 1953 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 140, pg. 265).

Parcels D and F were deeded back to Hillcrest by the Park Street Pentecostal Holiness Church on the same day (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 140, pg. 242). This allowed the acreage deeded to the church to remain unchanged.

Riverside relocated, building a new church (and parking lot) on parcel A, while tracts B and E were developed into a small housing complex shown on a June 1954 plat (Richland County Register of Deed, PB P, pg. 107; Figure 8). This plat reveals why the shape of the property and associated land exchanges were made - the church required an extension on the property to allow for lots 2, 3, and 4 to be fitted into the development.

The plat shows a number of pathways across the cemetery - consistent with earlier observations that families, in the absence of any defined or maintained drives or paths, were creating their own as needed.

The construction of the church and the development, as far as we can tell, took place without following the provisions of South

HISTORIC SYNOPSIS

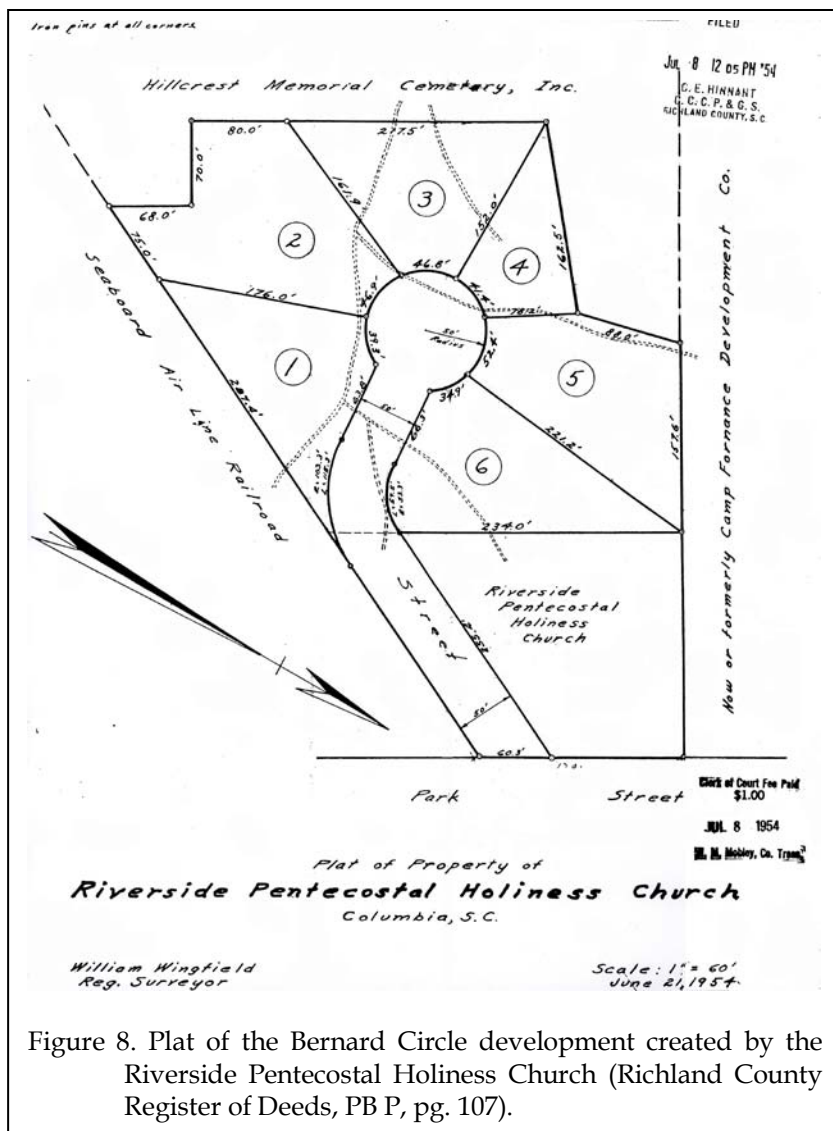


Figure 8. Plat of the Bernard Circle development created by the Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB P, pg. 107).

Carolina Code of Laws, Section 27-43-10 et seq. regarding the removal of the burials. We have been unable to identify any permission by the City of Columbia or Richland County, any advertising for next of kin, or any effort to remove the burials. The deed to the church also failed to mention that certain plots had been excluded from the conveyance to Hillcrest.

On September 30, 1954, Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery Company sold the remaining 5.5 acres of Douglas Cemetery to Julian Sharpe, Elzie Chavis, and Edward Chavis, trustees of the Park Street (formerly Riverside) Pentecostal Holiness Church for \$5 and other

valuable consideration (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 144, pg. 593).

It is uncertain what this “valuable consideration” was, but this conveyance succeeded in allowing Hillcrest to dispose of Douglas Cemetery. However, unlike the previous deeds to the church, this one includes the clause, “saving and excepting certain lots heretofore sold and those excepted in any previous conveyances of the said tract” – meaning those plots that had been sold to families and that were either already used for burials or intended to be used for interments.

With all portions of the Douglas Cemetery now disposed of, Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery Co. filed dissolution papers on March 3, 1955.

Sections D and F shown in Figure 7 and deeded back to Hillcrest by Riverside in 1954 were seized for nonpayment of taxes and subsequently sold to the Forfeited Land Commission (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 289, pg. 273). Figure 9, however, clearly reveals that these two parcels were included in the 5.5 acres sold by Hillcrest to Riverside in 1954. We have not further explored this issue.

Modern Losses

Regardless, in August 1955 Riverside sold the 5.1 acres (reflecting the loss of the two parcels sold for taxes), to J. Willis Cantey for \$5 and other valuable consideration. While certainly not releasing Cantey from his own due diligence, the deed from the church neglects to

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY

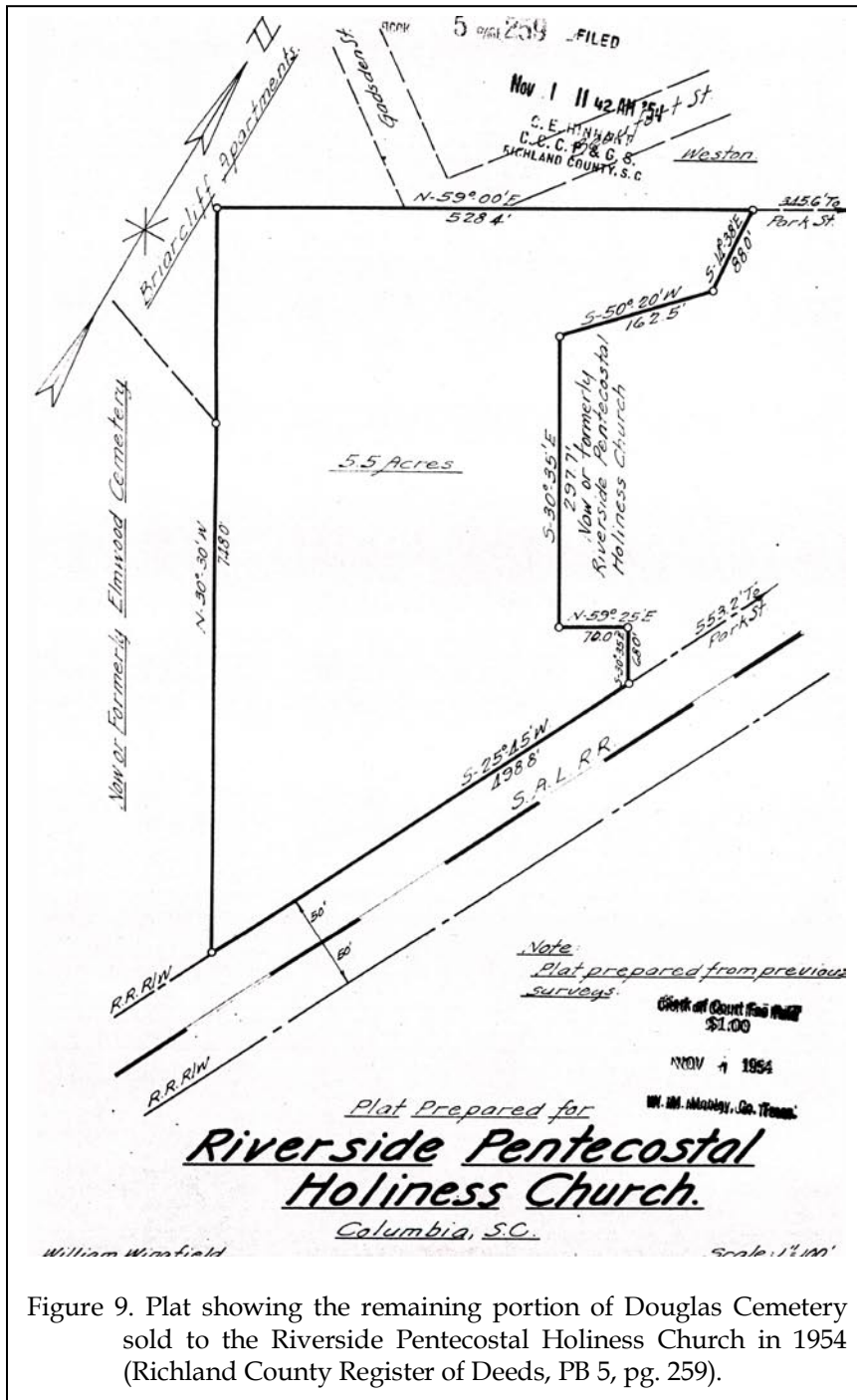


Figure 9. Plat showing the remaining portion of Douglas Cemetery sold to the Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1954 (Richland County Register of Deeds, PB 5, pg. 259).

mention that the property they owned was “saving and excepting certain lots heretofore sold and those excepted in any previous conveyances of the said tract.”

Cantey was a South Carolina businessman, joining Columbia Outdoor Advertising in 1945 and later becoming president and then chairman of its board of directors. By 1960 he was president of the Citizens and Southern bank, becoming its CEO in 1968 and chairman of the board in 1971.

A 1959 aerial of the area shows that while the eastern 40% of the cemetery had been effectively destroyed by the church, its parking lot, and the associated Bernard Circle development, the remaining 5.5 acres of Douglas were still very much as it had been 8 years earlier (Figure 10). The western corner appears to be heavily overgrown, although much of the remaining 5.5 acres is open and plots are still visible. The roadway, however, appears far less used. In addition, the drainages appear to be reverting to their original courses, perhaps because of the work done in the eastern half of the property.

What seems clear, however, is that the cemetery was still clearly visible in the landscape for anyone who sought to look.

Cantey kept the cemetery for only nine months before selling it to Herbert W. Hoefler in April 1956 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB 183, pg. 529). This deed, however, reinserted an exclusionary clause, “excepting lots which have heretofore

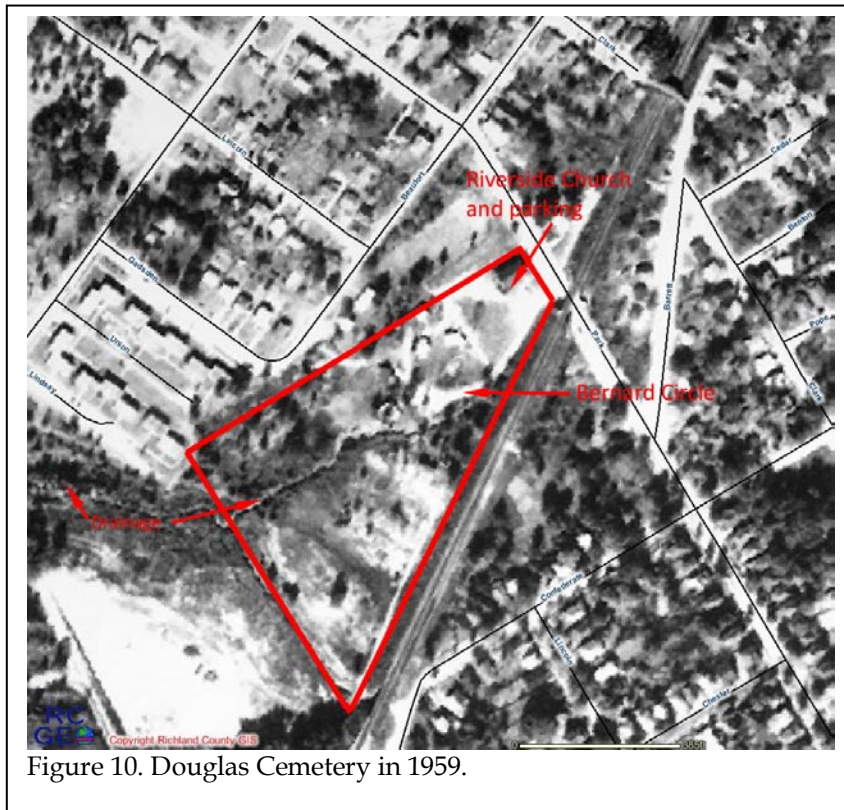


Figure 10. Douglas Cemetery in 1959.

been conveyed or contracted to be conveyed to various parties. “ This suggests that Cantey was well aware of the cemetery and the property was again sold for “\$5 and other valuable considerations.”

Hoefler eventually donated the eastern half the property to the Catholic Archdiocese of Charleston in 1969 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB D164, pg. 303). The remaining half (2.55 acres) was held until Hoefler sold it to the City of Columbia in August 1988 for \$24,350 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB D902, pg. 113). The deed to the city fails to exclude any of the plots previously sold.

In 1988 the City of Columbia traded the bulk of its property - 2.048 acres - with Carolina Wrecking, Inc. (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB D929, pg. 56). Again, this deed fails to exclude any of the plots previously sold. The city acquired - and demolished - the structures on Bernard Circle, and eventually the remainder of Douglas Cemetery was used by the City of

Columbia for the relocation of the old Seaboard Rail Line, by this time owned by CSX. In 1985 the Park Street Pentecostal Holiness Church and its property was sold to the Church of Christ (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB D759, pg. 707).

In June 2005 an effort was made to develop the portion of Douglas Cemetery owned by Carolina Wrecking (The State, July 10, 2005). Those plans fell through after Chicora Foundation alerted the proposed developer of the very large number of graves on the property.

Douglas Today

In November 2008 Carolina Wrecking Co. released its ownership of the 2.048 acres of Douglas Cemetery to the City of Columbia for \$5 and other valuable consideration (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB R1463, pg. 2573). In exchange for the cemetery, the City sold Carolina Wrecking the abandoned Seaboard Air Line easement running along the southeastern boundary of Douglas for \$131,754 (Richland County Register of Deeds, DB R1463, pg. 2588).

Figure 11, showing the owners of Douglas Cemetery as of December 2008, reveals that the property is divided between six owners.

The southern 2.05 acres (22% of the cemetery) is owned by the City of Columbia. The central 4.5 acres (49% of the cemetery) is owned by CSX. The northern 2.5 acres (27% of the cemetery) is owned by the Church of Christ. The remainder is divided between the Archdiocese of Charleston, Kenneth E. Ormand, Jr., and Frederick W. Davis.

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY

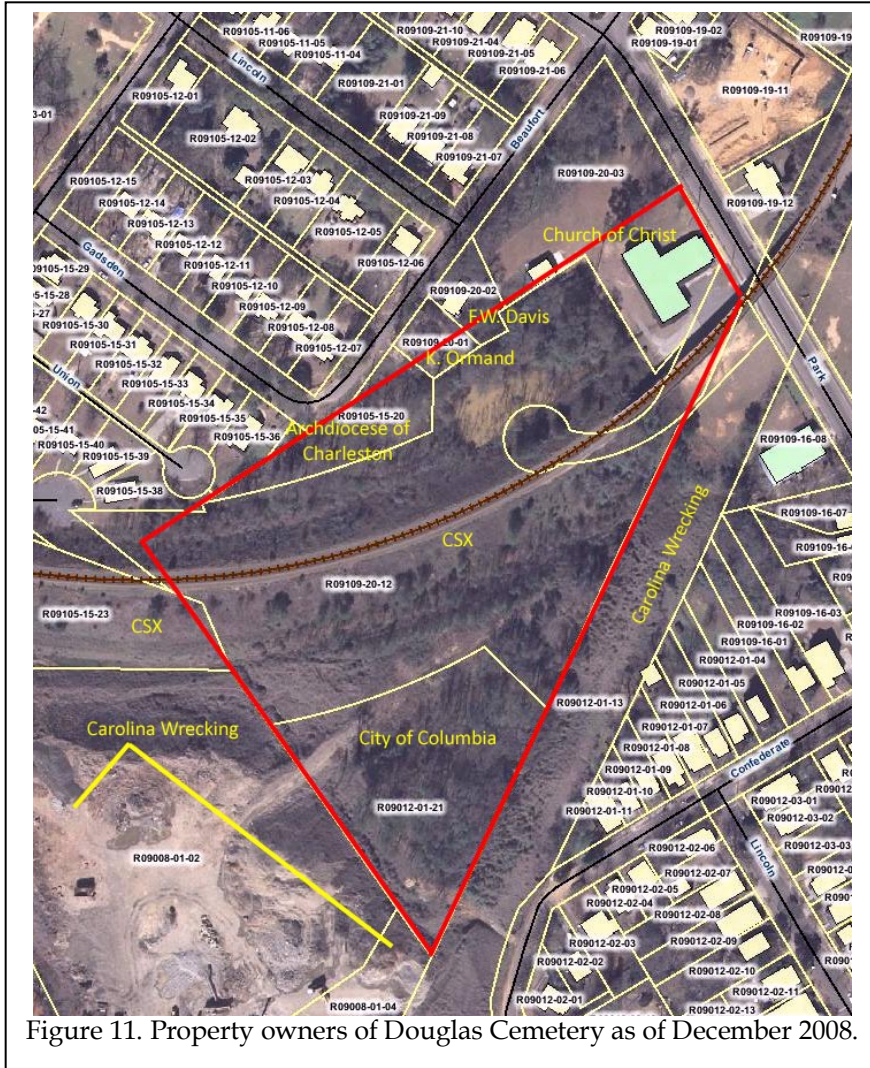


Figure 11. Property owners of Douglas Cemetery as of December 2008.

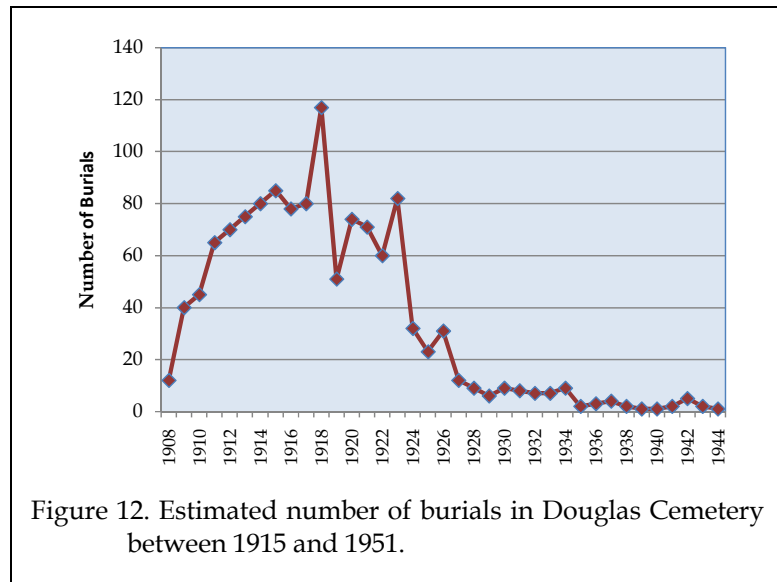
The most intact portions of the cemetery are the tracts owned by the City of Columbia (2.05 acres) and the Archdiocese (0.59 acre) – accounting for about 29% of the original cemetery. This, however, does not mean the remaining sections of the cemetery are entirely lost. For example, CSX owns more property than is actually occupied by its elevated tracks. There are also portions of the Church of Christ, Ormand, and Davis lots that have not been heavily disturbed. These may contribute an additional 10-15% of the cemetery area – or a total of about 44% (or 4 acres). The remainder of the cemetery has likely been heavily damaged and recovery of intact burials is unlikely – although not impossible.

THE PEOPLE

Periods of Use

We are fortunate that the Columbia Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society (Anonymous 2002) compiled a list of 881 individuals reported to be buried in Douglas based on South Carolina Death Certificates (available from 1915 through 1951 at the time of their study). Although certainly not comprehensive, it does provide a basis for analysis.

Figure 12 reveals that while the cemetery was heavily used during the period from 1915 through 1926, after 1928 the number



of burials declines precipitously. By 1939, with the exception of only one year - 1942 - the cemetery saw no more than one or two burials a year.

This spread of burial dates is of special interest since it seems to very closely parallel the historic activities. The 1915 beginning corresponds to the cemetery being taken over

from Metropolitan by Douglas Realty. Although we have no data from the Metropolitan period, the relatively high beginning numbers suggest that Metropolitan was relatively successful at selling lots and the cemetery was being heavily used during their tenure. The 85 burials in 1915 indicates about seven burials a month or close to two a week. In contrast, over this same period Randolph Cemetery saw only about 10 burials a year - or less than one a month. Clearly Douglas was far busier, but was this because the plots were less expensive than Randolph? Certainly one might assume that Randolph, given its prestige and reputation for use by Columbia's most wealthy African Americans (see, however, Trinkley and Hacker 2007), charged more for its real estate than Douglas.

This, however, does not seem to be the case - although admittedly we have only very limited data. We know that 200 square foot plots at Randolph in 1910 were being sold for \$18, or about 9¢ per square foot.

In contrast, the one deed we have for Douglas, dating from 1927, reveals that a 128 square foot plot cost \$25, or 19½¢ per square foot - twice as much as Randolph.

If these costs are accurate, then Columbia's black population did not select Douglas for its low cost - there must have been other reasons. Given the proximity of Randolph and Douglas it seems unlikely that location (a factor even in burial real estate) was the overriding reason. Perhaps during the Metropolitan and Douglas Realty tenures the cemetery was being better cared for than Randolph. Perhaps the commercial venture was doing a better job at attracting clientele.

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY

Douglas Cemetery routinely advertised in the Columbia City Directory between 1916 and 1929; in contrast Randolph Cemetery was not. While the period of greatest use corresponds to the period of early advertising, burials at Douglas dropped off before advertising stopped and before the stock market crash. This suggests that something else was affecting the decision on burial location in Columbia's black community. We believe the origin of Palmetto (at least by 1959 and probably earlier) and Lincoln (1921) cemeteries, both today operated by African American mortuary firms, siphoned off clientele, making both Randolph and Douglas less desirable.

By the time the cemetery was acquired by Dreher and later by Hillcrest, use of the property was at a near standstill. While occasional burials still took place, these likely reflected individuals who had purchased plots earlier (although this is certainly worth additional study).

Who Was Buried At Douglas?

We have previously examined a sample of burials from Randolph Cemetery, using the federal census, local histories, and other records in order to create a profile of those buried in that African American cemetery (Trinkley and Hacker 2007). Our desire there was to broaden interest in the community using the cemetery and dispel the growing myth that Randolph was exclusively populated by the richest, wealthiest, and lightest skinned of Columbia's black population. The research did, in fact, reveal that Randolph was used by a broad cross section of Columbia's African American community.

Our goal here is similar - an effort to discover who used Douglas Cemetery. But there is a secondary goal - to give the cemetery the face of real human beings. Too often "abandoned" cemeteries become viewed only as "problems," archaeological or historical "resources," or simply as "overgrown eyesores." There is a tendency to forget that these

Table 2.
Sample of Burials from Douglas Cemetery

Name	Census	Address	Ward/ Location	Relationship	Personal Description				Occupation	Own/Rent Home/Farm
					Sex	Race	Age	Marital Status		
Brown, James	1910		Eau Claire	Head	M	B	25	M1/5	railroad laborer	R/H
Burton, Lela	1920	rear 1115 College	1	Wife	F	B	29	M	none - husband railroad laborer	R/H
Clyborn, William	1910		4	Head	M	B	28	M1/0	shop plumber	R/H
Davis, Jim	1910	704 Washington	2	Boarder	M	B	38	S	railroad laborer	R/H
Davis, Nancy	1910		Lower	Daughter	F	B	18	S	farm laborer	R/F
Gausney, Susan	1910	1506 Wayne	3	Mother	F	B	50	Wd	private family cook	R/H
Gibbs, Euginia	1910	207 Bull	5	Wife	F	B	39	M1/24	none - husband cotton mill worker	R/H
Gibson, Willie	1910	Garners Ferry		Head	M	B	35	M1/3	farm laborer	R/F
Gilmore, David	1910	2118 Sumter	4	Head	M	B	46	M1/27	college janitor	R/H
Gray, Joseph	1910	716 Washington	2	Son	M	B	24	M1/2	private family laborer	R/H
Greenwood, Charlotte	1910	1015 Washington	2	Wife	F	B	45	M1	laundress at home	R/H
Hall, Hattie	1910		1	Boarder	F	B	65	Wd	none	R/H
Hall, John	1910	15 Railroad	2	Son	M	B	16	S	cotton mill laborer	R/H
Hill, Catherine	1900	1122 Blossom		Wife	F	B	60	M/40	none - husband day laborer	R/H
Jackson, Joseph	1920	714 Lincoln	1	Son-in-law	M	B	30	M	cotton mill laborer	R/H
Kershaw, Charles	1920		Edgewood	Son	M	B	20	S	teacher	R/H
King, Turner	1910			Head	M	B	86	M1/44	house carpenter	R/H
Love, Maggie	1910	Harden		Wife	F	B	48	M1/25	private family cook	R/H
Myers, Edwin	1910		Lower	Head	M	B	30	S	railroad laborer	R/H
Northop, Solomon	1920	1631 Laurel	4	Head	M	B	55	M	school janitor	R/H
Williams, Celia	1910	1809 Washington	2	Head	F	B	29	Wd	private family cook	R/H
Williams, Ethel	1910	1702 Washington	2	Partner	F	B	23	S	private family cook	R/H
Williams, Pearl	1910	1103 Huger	1	Granddaughter	F	B	6	S	none - grandmother laundress	R/H
Woodley, James	1910	1203 Blossom	1	Head	M	B	30	M1/6	phosphate company laborer	R/H

Marital Status: M - married, M1 - married once, M1/1 - married once, married for one year; S - single; Wd - widowed

cemeteries were used by people for the burial of their loved ones; that those buried in the cemetery had lives of hope, loss, joy, and sorrow.

Our research is not as thorough as that conducted for Randolph, but we hope that it will serve to not only provide a cross section of those buried at Douglas, but to also remind us of the humanity involved.

We use the collection of Douglas Cemetery burials based on death certificates from 1915 through 1951 compiled by the Columbia Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society (Anonymous 2002), in conjunction with the 1910 and 1920 census records for Richland County. The study reflects a 3% sample of the 881 records from the cemetery.

The results are shown in Table 2 and perhaps the most noticeable result is that no one in the sample owned their own home - all were renters. Equally obvious is that all (with two exceptions) were laborers. Perhaps less obvious, but still of interest is that unlike Randolph, none of those identified from Douglas were mulatto - all were classified as "black."

In sum, it appears that Douglas was attracting a very solid working class - individuals with limited incomes and limited education. It would be interesting to determine the number of related family members buried in Douglas. This might provide some indication of the population's stability, as well as the extent to which "pre-need" purchasing occurred.

While not quantified, we also notice a seemingly large proportion of infants and children in the list for Douglas Cemetery. This reflects the limited healthcare opportunities for Columbia's African American population and the resulting high mortality rates.

We also briefly examined African American burial choices. Our sample years were 1915, 1920, and 1930, with the first 100 death certificates in each year being examined. This resulted in 8.8%, 11.1%, and 10.1% samples, respectively. Only those burials within the city were included (i.e., burials outside the city were ignored).

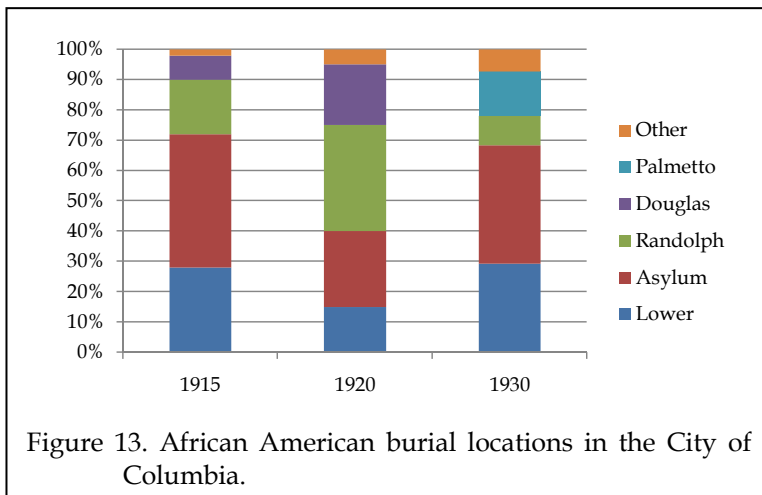


Figure 13. African American burial locations in the City of Columbia.

The results are shown in Figure 13 and reveal that Lower Cemetery and the Asylum (i.e., State Hospital) Cemetery were the burial locations for a surprisingly large proportion of Columbia's blacks. In 1915 and 1920 Randolph and Douglas received relatively consistent proportions of the burials. By 1920 Palmetto Cemetery had begun taking a large amount of business from both Randolph and Douglas.

THE CEMETERY

What's Left

As indicated in the previous discussions, Douglas Cemetery has been horribly abused – owners sold it off piecemeal for development (such as Bernard Circle and the construction of the Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church) and the City of Columbia found it convenient for their railroad relocation

project. As a result, of the original 9.2 acres, there are today about 4 acres – 44% – that are still relatively intact.

An archaeological site form (38RD1194) for the cemetery was completed in 2001, although this study significantly updates the history and site details.

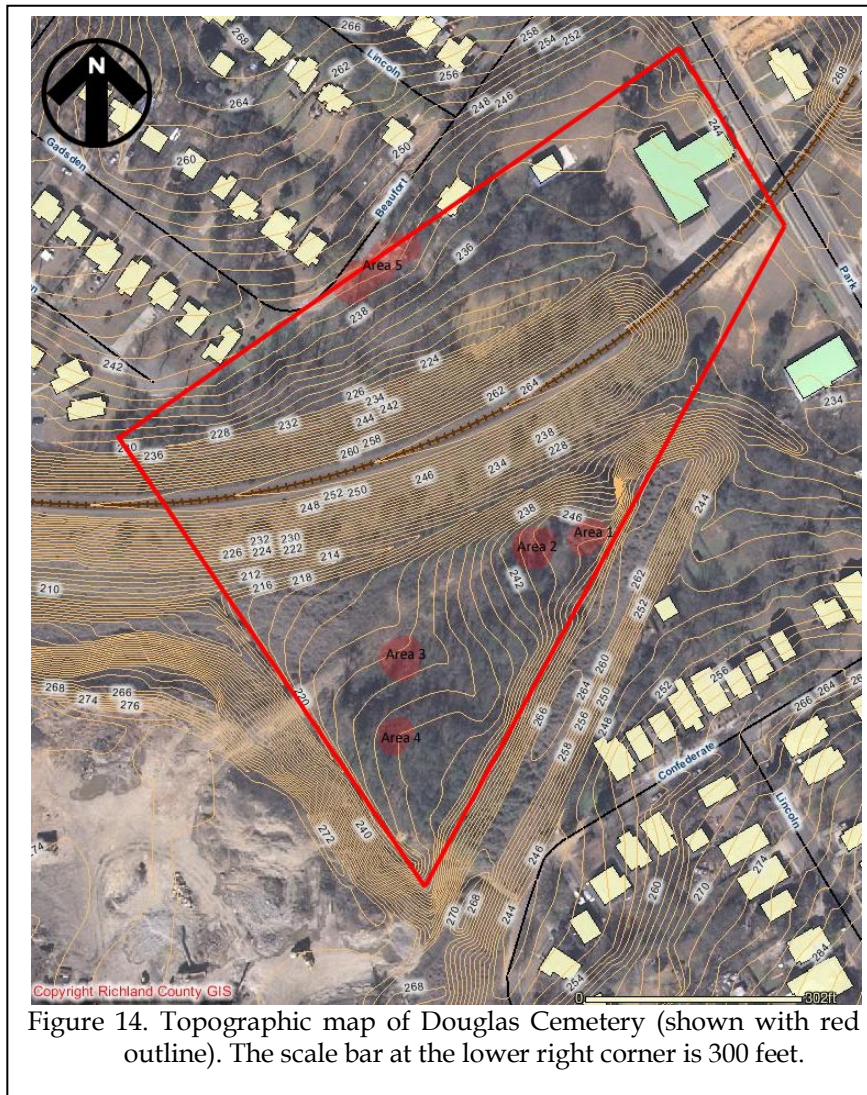


Figure 14. Topographic map of Douglas Cemetery (shown with red outline). The scale bar at the lower right corner is 300 feet.

Figure 14 provides a topographic map of the cemetery, with the boundaries approximately identified. The figure shows areas of fill, as well as still existing structures (the Barnard Circle structures were removed for the railroad relocation project). This figure provides a relatively clear view of those areas where intact, or relatively intact, human remains might still be expected.

Vegetation across the site varies from relatively open pine and mixed hardwood to areas of very dense herbaceous vines and brambles. Virtually all of the trees on the property are young – representing second growth forest that has developed since about 1950. Mixed among the vegetation it is possible to identify a variety of intentional plantings such as iris, daffodils, nandina, and English ivy.



Figure 15. Views of Douglas Cemetery from 2006. Top left shows general topography of Area 2; top right is a close-up of a sunken grave. Middle left shows three unusual concrete markers; middle right a range of more commercial markers including a military stone. Bottom photographs show two areas where plantings were used as living memorials – marking graves without a “permanent” monument.

THE CEMETERY

Figure 14 also identifies the approximate (since no detailed mapping of the cemetery has been accomplished) locations of five areas that have produced clear evidence of burials - monuments, plantings, and depressions (for examples, see Figure 15). It is likely that there are others, but the property is heavily overgrown and only the more accessible areas have been examined up to this point.

Area 1

Situated close to the old Seaboard Airline Railroad grade, Area 1 evidences at least 25 monuments, listed below. A central UTM coordinate for this area is 49550E 3763866N (NAD 27 datum).

1. polished granite

ADA BURNS DUREN
WIFE OF
ALBERT DUREN
APR. 10, 1905
NOV. 13, 1952

2. molded concrete plot marker

BURNS

3. molded concrete, lamb at top, clasped hands at bottom

A.D. BOYD
DIED
APRIL 10, 1920,
AGE 55. YRS.
ONLY
SLEEPING

4. carved marble

LIZZIE H.
CALLAWAY
DIED NOV. 20, 1916

5. carved marble

ELLEN SULTON
Born
May 15, 1877,
Died
Mar. 10, 1924

Asleep in Jesus

6. carved marble

FLT (in three connected chain links)

JAMES A.
BRIGMAN
JUNE 9, 1874
JUNE 9, 1919

[more below grade, not readable]

7. marble government stone, cross at top

JOHN
MCKINNIE
SOUTH CAROLINA
PVT. 16 DEPOT
LABOR CO. ASC
MAY 21, 1919

8. molded concrete

[AND]REW. M.
CHEVIS.
BORN
AUG9, 1919
DIED
JUNE2, 1920
GONE TO REST

9. molded concrete, lamb at top, flower bud at bottom

THEODORE. A.
CHAVIS.
BORN
JULY 4 1904.
DIED
MAR 30 1919
GONE BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN

10. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at bottom

ANDERSON BROWN
DIED
OCT. 11. 1922.
AGE. 73. YRS.
GONE BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN

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11. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at bottom

JOSEPHINE
RICHERSON
DIED
MAY 25, 1923
AGE 32 YRS.
GONEBUTNOT
FORGOTTON.

12. whitewashed concrete

ELLEN
BLAIR
JUNE 1918
AGE 69

13. carved marble, generic floral design at top

HATTIE LOGAN
CORLEY
Dec 19 1896
Feb 12 1919
Rest in peace
THOU FAITHFUL
LITTLE FRIEND

14. polished granite

HENRY
HARRINGTON JR
AUG. 16, 1913
JAN. 28, 1922
BELOVED SON

15. polished granite

HENRY
HARRINGTON SR
FEB. 22, 1885
JAN. 11, 1931
A DEVOTED HUSBAND

16. molded concrete, lamb at top, clasped hands at base; broken above the date

DAVID [COUNTS]
DIED
MAY 23, 1920
GONE NOT
FORGOTTON.
SLEEP ON TAKE THY
REST.

17. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at bottom, broken

HATTIE MCKAN
REESE
BORN
AUGUST 17 []

18. carved marble

EARNEST
WATSON
BORN
Oct. 25, 1890
Died Mar. 23, 1922

19. marble government stone, cross at top

LAWRENCE
ROBINSON
SOUTH CAROLINA
CORP. 156 DEPT BRIG
MARCH 11, 1932

20. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at base

ESTONIA
WA[D]JE
DIED
NOV 11 1923
AGE. 16. YRS.
DARLING WE
MISS THEE

21. molded concrete, lamb at top, clasped and cross at base

MAMIE J.
BARBER
DIED
AUG 8 1911
AGE 68 YRS
ASLEEP IN
JESUS

22. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at base

ADAM DAVIS.
DIED
MAY 22, 1923
AGE 51 YEARS.
SAFE IN THE ARMS OF

THE CEMETERY

JESUS

23. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, hands at base

SIGLEY
GORDON.
DIED
NOV. 19. 1918
AGE 75 YRS
MOTHER GONE
NOT FORGOTTEN

24. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, cross at bottom

JOSEPHINE
SIMON.
DIED
OCT. 9. 1919.
AGE 32 YRS
GONE NOT
FORGOTTEN

25. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at base

DAVID
SULTON.
DIED
JULY 17. 1921.
AGE 32 YRS.
SAFE IN THE
ARMS OF JESUS.

Area 2

This area is found at UTM 495533E 3763866N (NAD27 datum) and consists of a variety of plantings used to mark graves.

Area 3

While not as large as Area 1, this area was marked by two clusters of monuments spreading east west. It is found at UTM 495515E 3763861N (NAD27 datum). Also present here are several patches of iris and probably additional plantings.

1. molded concrete, two fragments

BENJAMIN
PATRICK

born May [] [18]39
Died Feb 23, 1909

2. carved marble, size of footstone

MARY
DORA
Wife of
H.E. BATTLE
DIED
feb. 6, 1909
In the 50th year
of her age

3. marble government stone

ARTHUR E.
WILLIAMS
SOUTH CAROLINA CPL
7 PROV. GP MTD
WORLD WAR I
JUNE 19, 1892
NOVEMBER 18, 1957

4. carved marble with footstone

FRANCES WILLIAMS
DIED
MARCH. 23, 1928
WITHOUT THEE WHAT IS ALL
THE MORNINGS WEALTH

5. molded concrete

F.W. WILLIAMS
DIED
DEC. 13. 1913
AGE. 45. YRS.
GONE BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN.

6. molded concrete, broken, dove in flight at top, lamb at base, footstone (disassociated)

FRANK BROWN
DIED
NOV 16, 1912
AGE 17 YRS
SAFE IN THE
ARMS OF
JESUS.

THE ORIGIN AND LOSS OF COLUMBIA'S DOUGLAS CEMETERY

7. molded concrete with footstone
AT REST

DEC. 12, 1916
Suffer little children
to come unto me.

8. molded concrete with footstone
AT REST

4. molded concrete die on base, dove in flight at
top, hands at bottom

9. molded concrete with footstone
AT REST

EASTER
CAMMON
DIED
OCT. 7, 1923.
AGED 33 YRS.
ASLEEP IN
JESUS

Area 4

This final area is situated toward the southern edge of the cemetery, at UTM 495488E 3763806N (NAD 27 datum).

1. unmarked granite stone

5. molded concrete die on base, dove in flight at
top, hands at bottom

2. unmarked granite stone

DAPHNEY
SIMMONS
DIED

3. molded concrete, hand pointing up at top,
unidentified design at base.

JUNE 25, 1916
AGE 65 YRS.
ASLEEP IN
JESUS

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIE CRAFT.
-DIED-
Sept. 26, 1921
AGE 88 YRS.
GONE BUT NOT
FORGOTTEN

6. repaired marble headstone

JANNIE
Wife of
George Jackson
Born in Newberry 1845
DIED
Jan. 22, 1910
Asleep in the arms of Jesus

Area 5

This section of the cemetery is found along Beaufort Street. While portions are relatively open, there are a number of stones in what is today dense undergrowth. This area has a central UTM of 495474E 3763982N (NAD28 datum). There are at least 25 monuments identified along the road and into the undergrowth.

1. concrete die on base, broken, no name

7. granite plaque marker, granite coping

FRANK J. CALWY
AUG. 5, 1900
JUNE 4, 1934

2. concrete die on base, broken, no name

8. molded concrete, dove in flight at top, lamb at
base; inside bricked family plot

3. marble tab in socket

WILLIAM
GREEN
JULY 2, 1904

MAGGIE E.
McGRAW
DIED
JAN 2, 1921
AGED 4 YRS
LILLIE BELL
McGRAW
DIED FEB 2, 1921

THE CEMETERY

- AGE 7 MOS
9. concrete footstone; inside bricked family plot
MILLIE
1 BT
10. concrete die on base, flag at top, lamb at base; inside bricked family plot
ALEX McGRAW
DIED
AUG 29, 1922
AGED 27 YRS
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
ERECTED BY HIS
WIFE MELBA
11. marble headstone with marble footstone
LILLIE MAY
SUMMER
SEPT. 17, 1910
MAR. 7, 1917
Forever with the
Lord
12. concrete block family plot measuring ca. 12 by 16 feet, no markers
13. molded concrete lawn marker with decorative inset hexagonal tiles
NANCY SUBER
ISAIH SUBER
14. marble government stone, buried
CLARENCE
SUBER
15. marble pedestal tomb with footstone, concrete coping
ANNA VINSON
FEB. 13, 1875
MAR. 2, 1948

C.H. VINSON
MAY 25, 1874
MAR. 27, 1935
16. marble government stone, cross at top
ROBERT F.
- VINSON
SGT
US ARMY
WORLD WAR II
OCT. 7 1908
DEC 30 1978
17. granite die on base with mounted brass plaque, cross at top, concrete coping, damaged by heavy equipment
HENRY E. BEACHUM
SOUTH CAROLINA
PFC CO B 83 SIG VD CONST BN
WORLD WAR II
SEPT 21 1922 DEC 29 1952
18. concrete with inlay
AUG 7 1921 FEB 1 1926
JAMES A
SON OF
[] [] BESSIE BEACHUM
19. concrete plaque marker
ANNIE MAE
PERRY
BORN
APRIL 23 1909
DIED MARCH 3 1930
20. brick coping on family plot with room for three graves, unmarked
21. molded concrete, cross at bottom with footstone
AT REST
WITH CHRIST

hand scratched on reverse:
Our Mother
Died AD 1925
22. molded concrete, cross at bottom with footstone
AT REST
WITH CHRIST

hand scratched on reverse:

Died AD 1907
Our Father

23. broken government stone
JOHN []
SOUTH CAROLINA
PVT
US ARMY
MAY 22, 1920

Comparison with Previous Research

Our recordation of stones, admittedly incomplete, reveals 60 monuments or marked graves. In addition, we identified a great many more unmarked graves, identified as sunken depressions in the landscape. It is of considerable concern that in 2001 we identified a number of grave depressions a mere 30 feet from the wall of debris associated with Carolina Wrecking (a UTM for this area is 495468E 3763764N - NAD27 datum).

When the Columbia Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society recorded the stones in the cemetery, they combined our Areas 1, 2, and 3, designating the entire cemetery south of the recent railroad grade Area 1. They identified 26 stones in this area, providing abbreviated transcriptions.

The area north of the modern railroad grade, along Beaufort Street and what we have called Area 5, they identified as Area 2. There they identified 10 graves; we have identified 20, although we were unable to relocate their markers for Willie Perry and Eddie B. Northrup (although they may still be present or may be represented by the two broken stones).

Estimated Number of Burials at Douglas

We have also compared the identified stones with death certificates. Eliminating incomplete stones, and stones with death dates before 1919 and after 1951, we were left with 34 (out of 60). Of these, death certificates could be identified for all but seven (Cammon; Calwy; Callaway; McKinnie; Harrington, Sr.; Robinson; and Simon).

This suggests that up to 21% of those buried at Douglas between 1915



Figure 16. Area 5 at Douglas Cemetery. The top photo provides an overview; the lower shows recent push piles with stones just beyond.

THE CEMETERY

Form No. 10

1. PLACE OF DEATH
 County of Richland
 Township of
 or
 Inc. Type of
 City of Columbia
 (No. Edmore Ave)

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
 STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
 Bureau of Vital Statistics
 State Board of Health

Registration District No. 36a
 Registered No. 1614

File No.—For State Registrar Only.
14732

2. FULL NAME Willie Craft
 Residence: In City Trm Mon Days

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

1 SEX Male
 2 COLOR OR RACE Colored
 3 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED Married
 (Write the word)

4 DATE OF BIRTH 1881
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

5 AGE 40
 (Year) (Month) (Day)

6 OCCUPATION Labourer
 (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work.
 (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer).

7 BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) S.C.

8 NAME OF FATHER Robert Balder
 (State or Country) S.C.

9 MARRIAGE NAME OF MOTHER Minnie Craft
 (State or Country) S.C.

10 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE
 Informant's Name James Douglas
 Address 1914 Park St. Edmore Ave.

11 LOCAL REGISTRAR J. H. ...

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

12 DATE OF DEATH Sept 26, 1921
 (Month) (Day) (Year)

13 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from
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19 Place of Burial or Disposal Douglas Cemetery
 DATE OF BURIAL 10-2-21
 20 LOCAL REGISTRAR J. H. ...

Figure 17. Example of a death certificate showing burial at Douglas Cemetery.

this suggests that the bioanthropological sample at Douglas – even with this low occupancy – is approximately 726.

and 1951 may lack death certificates. Using the 881 burials identified through death certificates by the Columbia Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society, this may increase that number to around 1129 burials between 1915 and 1951.

There are still those burials prior to 1915 (i.e., 1908-1914 or six years) that must be considered. Considering that by 1915 there were already 85 documented burials in Douglas, it seems reasonable to speculate that there may have been around 390 additional burials during these early years (this number produces a reasonable beginning curve for the yearly burials). This would bring the total number of burials at Douglas to around 1,500. With a planned 2,197 plots and 4,394 graves, this would represent a capacity of about 34%. Even if we increase the number by 10% to allow for an even larger number of undocumented burials and a slightly larger number of burials during the earliest years, we are still looking at 1,650 burials, or only about 38% occupancy.

Using the previous estimate that about 44% of the cemetery (inclusive of all parcels) may produce relatively intact burial remains,

THE CONTINUING THREAT AND QUESTIONS

What We Know

This research has been successful in reconstructing the land ownership of Douglas Cemetery, tracing the origins of the cemetery to the 1908 creation of the Metropolitan Development Company. At that time a plat was prepared showing the 9.2 acre cemetery with 2,197 plots, each plot holding two graves (for a total of 4,394 or about 477 graves per acre). The cemetery appears designed to maximize useable space. There was only one access road. Pathways were narrow. There is no indication of plantings or any effort to soften the landscape. Douglas appears, based on this plat, to have been designed to warehouse Columbia's African American community. And yet, the cemetery appears to have been successful.

We trace its development from Metropolitan to Douglas Realty Company. The cemetery began advertising in City Directories by 1916 and in 1918 the cemetery hit a high of 117 burials - over two a week. It was also in 1918 that the organization controlling the cemetery became known as the Douglas Memorial Cemetery Company.

Although burials began to decline by 1923, it wasn't until the stock market crash of 1929 that the cemetery hit its lowest point in yearly burials, with only six taking place.

The cemetery's next owner, James F. Dreher, appears to have done little beyond hold the cemetery. Aerial photography, however, indicates the cemetery continued to be maintained at some modest level - although it is unknown if this was by families or by Dreher. In 1950 the cemetery was purchased by Hillcrest Memorial Cemetery Company - an odd name for an organization whose function appears to have been designed to close the cemetery. This

was achieved by selling off the property to a nearby church - Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church. They used the property for a church building, parking lot, and a small development - all without any effort to remove burials or notify families. Eventually the church sold a large portion of the cemetery to an individual - J. Willis Cantey. Cantey, in turn, sold the property to Herbert W. Hoefler. Hoefler donated part of the property to the Catholic Church and eventually sold the remainder to the City of Columbia.

The city disposed of its property by trading some to Carolina Wrecking and using some for the relocation of railroad tracks - again with no effort that we could detect to identify or remove graves.

Recently, the City of Columbia again acquired a portion of the cemetery for reasons that have not been made clear to the public. As a result, the southern 2.05 acres (22% of the cemetery) is owned by the City of Columbia; the central 4.5 acres (49% of the cemetery) is owned by CSX; and the northern 2.5 acres (27% of the cemetery) is owned by the Church of Christ (who acquired it from Riverside Pentecostal). The remainder is divided between the Archdiocese of Charleston, Kenneth E. Ormand, Jr., and Frederick W. Davis.

Of the original 9.2 acre cemetery, the most intact portions today are the tracts owned by the City and the Archdiocese - accounting for about 29% of the original cemetery. The rest has been damaged through construction of the church and its parking lot, as well as the fill brought in for the construction of the CSX railroad grade. At most we estimate that 44% (or 4 acres) of the cemetery may still contain recoverable human remains.

The Columbia Chapter of the SC Genealogical Society undertook the task of abstracting the death certificates listing Douglas Cemetery, finding a total of 881 individuals reported to be buried in this cemetery between 1915 and 1951.

Estimating burials prior to 1915, as well as some undocumented burials, we suggest that there were between 1,500 and 1,650 burials at Douglas. Yet this represents, at most, an occupancy rate of only 38%.

We examined a sample of death certificates from 1915, 1920, and 1930, looking at where Columbia's black population was buried. It was surprising to discover that the State Hospital and Lower cemeteries received the bulk of Columbia's African Americans. In 1915 and 1920 for every one burial in Douglas there were 1.6 to 2 burials in Randolph. By 1930, however, newly created Palmetto Cemetery was siphoning business from Douglas and Randolph, although most blacks continued to be buried in public cemeteries.

Looking at those who chose burial at Douglas Cemetery we found they represented a solid working class population. Unlike Randolph, where we found mixed owners and renters, black and mulatto, and laborers, tradesmen and professionals, at Douglas the population consisted of working men and women who rented their homes, and who were consistently classified as black.

The Questions Remaining

In spite of what we know, there remain a very large number of questions for which there has not yet been adequate research to address.

We do not have, for example, a scale map of Douglas Cemetery showing the locations of identifiable burials, monuments, plantings, and obvious disturbing features (such as parking lots and railroad grades).

We do not have a clear view of what the cemetery looked like over its history. For example, we have no photographs of burials taking place there or landscape views.

We have no oral history – from either the black or white communities – that might help explain why the cemetery was created, why it was chosen for burial (over less expensive options), how families sought to maintain the property, or why it was eventually deserted by the black community.

We have little sound understanding of why the cemetery was created and operated by Columbia's white community. It is also difficult to determine what level of business success the cemetery achieved.

It is unfortunate that those identifying death certificates from Douglas did not record the cause of death. Nevertheless, the small sample that we have examined provides a broad range as shown in Figure 17. Heart failure was the leading cause of death, followed by pneumonia. Tuberculosis and accidental death

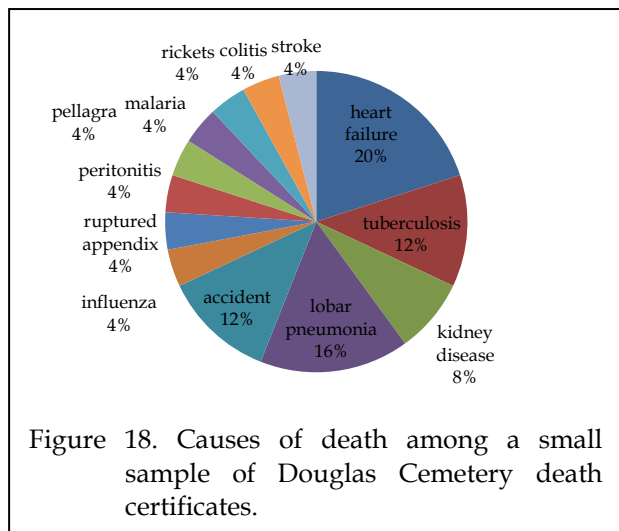


Figure 18. Causes of death among a small sample of Douglas Cemetery death certificates.

(often through a vehicle accident) are tied for third place.

We have no good idea why the African American community in Columbia so rapidly

forgot the cemetery. It stands in contrast to Randolph, where at least a few families continue efforts to maintain their individual plots.

There is no good information to explain how the Riverside Pentecostal Holiness Church was allowed to bulldoze and develop sections with no effort to identify family members, identify burial plots, and remove the burials prior to development.

Nor is there any explanation for the City of Columbia's actions turning over the cemetery to the CSX railroad and allowing the cemetery to be buried under 25 feet of fill.

There are also the legal questions surrounding a title in which, for years, previously plots were clearly excluded from the deed - seemingly clouding the title of future owners.

It is distressing - if not surprising - to discover that many of the African American burials in Columbia have been destroyed through actions involving the City of Columbia. Through highway construction, railroad construction, and the construction of a golf driving range, the city has consistently failed to act as a good steward of historic resources - or the last resting place of its citizens. This leaves open the question of what motivates city leaders to acquire cemeteries such as Asylum, State (also called Tickleberry), and Douglas.

The Continuing Threat and Importance of Bioanthropological Study

This, of course, forms the perfect transition into the issue of future threats. With the City of Columbia demonstrating so little past respect for burials, their ownership of a large portion of Douglas provides little comfort.

We have estimated that there are upwards of 726 burials on the remaining portions of Douglas.

These burials represent the loved ones of Columbia's early to mid-twentieth century working class blacks. This alone is an adequate reason to treat the cemetery with respect and dignity.

However, if ultimately the cemetery must be moved (as opposed to the past approach of simply destroying the graves), then it is crucial that those responsible for the move recognize the extraordinary value of the cemetery. The cemetery offers an unparalleled study of the health, nutrition and demographics of Columbia's working class African Americans at the turn of the century. There has been no similar bioanthropological study in South Carolina, North Carolina, or Georgia (see Rathbun 1987 for the only vaguely comparable study and Rathbun and Steckel 2002 for an overview).

One need only examine the exceptional contributions made by the study of the African American remains uncovered in New York (Blakey and Rankin-Hill 2004) to obtain a glimpse of this potential.

The Douglas Cemetery population would offer the opportunity to examine biological evidence and population affiliation using genetics, craniometrics, and dental morphology. The teeth alone would offer the opportunity to examine places of birth, migration patterns, and even pollution through isotopic and elemental chemistry. The teeth would also provide indicators of disease, diet, and nutritional inadequacy.

There are no meaningful African genetic databanks at present; but the study of a large South Carolina population could provide a significant comparative base for the future. Even without such databanks, the data from Douglas would offer the potential to study biological lineage relationships among co-interred and closely interred individuals.

Other skeletal material offers the potential to study infectious disease and nutritional inadequacy. Of perhaps even greater interest is the potential to explore skeletal indicators of work through musculoskeletal deterioration, arthritis, and evidence of trauma. This study is of special interest when it compares the level of muscle hypertrophy in limbs and degenerative joint disease across genders.

Given the range in population suggested by the death certificates, it would be possible to compare levels of infection, anemia, and other indicators of poor nutrition such as growth retardation and stunting among the newborn and weaning age children. This might be able to reveal the level of acute disease or nutritional stress without indications of extended morbidity and recovery.

For at least the small population where known identities are available, it will also be possible to compare and contrast death certificate, kinship, and census documentation with the bioanthropological analysis. This can serve as an exceptional check, allowing common historical explanations (often vague and potentially racially motivated) to be compared with scientific data.

There is also the opportunity to conduct archaeological investigations, examining burial and mortuary practices among working class African Americans in a relatively small Southern community with tight dating between 1908 and ca. 1930.

The investigation would allow dress to be examined, comparing the frequency of burial gowns, everyday clothing, and shrouds. The careful excavation of the remains would also provide the opportunity to assemble and study a collection of coffin hardware from a single South Carolina site - something that is currently lacking.

Douglas Cemetery may also provide an interesting opportunity to study mortuary behaviors that might be preserved only among Columbia's poorer African American community. These observations may reveal substantial class or economic variability.

Of course, none of these studies are possible if the remains are simply shoveled out and deposited in pasteboard containers - the typical approach of low-bid "grave removal" firms.

This, then, is yet another threat facing Douglas. Not only has the cemetery been systematically cut apart and developed, but ultimately, those buried there may be denied the opportunity to help teach the living. That would be the final insult.

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