

**The Archaeological  
Investigation of  
Walter C. Pierce  
Community Park and  
Vicinity, 2005-2012:  
Report to the Public,  
May 2013**

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## **DEDICATION**

*This report is dedicated to Mark Mack, the leader of the  
Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project from 2005 to 2012;  
to the men, women and children whose remains were buried  
in the cemeteries at Walter Pierce Park;  
to the descendants of those buried;  
and to others whose sense of kinship  
to those buried endures.*

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## **ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES USED IN THIS INVESTIGATION:**

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**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF WALTER C. PIERCE**  
**COMMUNITY PARK AND VICINITY, 2005-2012**

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, today's Walter C. Pierce Community Park in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C., was cemetery land. A small Quaker burial ground was established there in 1807, and a much larger African American cemetery was founded next to the Quaker cemetery in 1870. Both cemeteries were forced to close in 1890 due to development pressures. The site underwent a series of major disruptions in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In 2005, city and federal officials planned to conduct a major earth-moving project at Walter Pierce Park to mitigate soil erosion. Neighborhood residents, aware of the park's history as cemetery land, protested. The concerned community—including descendants and others who felt a sense of responsibility toward those buried in the cemeteries--sought help from Howard University. Mark Mack, a biological anthropologist and laboratory director of the landmark African Burial Ground project in lower Manhattan, stepped forward.

By 2006, the concerned community and Professor Mack had persuaded the District government to delay and downsize its planned project so that a Howard University archaeological team could investigate the site. The investigation's purpose was to: (1) determine the presence and location of exposed or vulnerable graves, artifacts and other cemetery-related features; (2) help city officials make informed decisions about park improvements and maintenance; and, (3) raise public awareness of the cemeteries.

A guiding principle was that no graves should be disturbed. Only non-invasive archaeological methods were used. No digging occurred.

Between 2006 and 2008, Professor Mack led the initial pedestrian survey with support from the nonprofit Kalorama Citizens Association, which obtained grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Washington, D.C., Humanities Council (National Endowment for the Humanities); Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia; and Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission. In fiscal year 2009, the District of Columbia City Council granted \$200,000 to the nonprofit organization Washington Parks & People to continue the archaeological survey by Mark Mack and his team, to conduct ground-penetrating radar (GPR) at the site, and to create a master plan for the park to honor and protect its heritage.

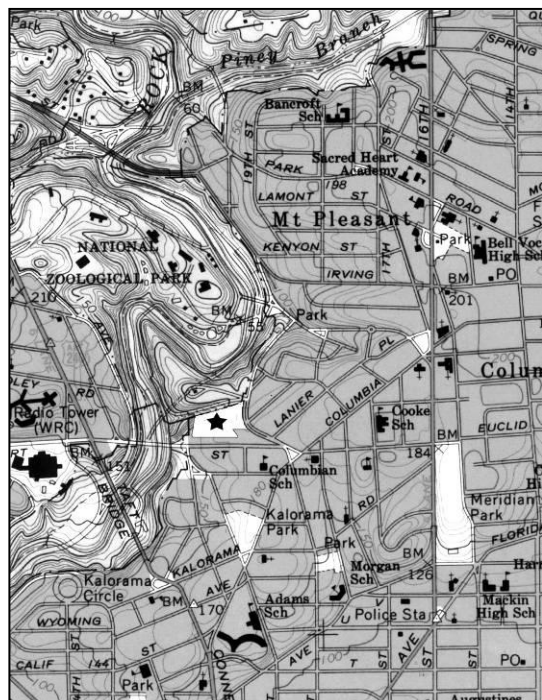
The Walter Pierce Park investigation resulted in the discovery of the exposed remains of at least nine individuals, an exposed coffin, coffin hardware, fragmented and intact gravestones, grave offerings, and possible cemetery-related land features. An initial ground-penetrating-radar survey of the site conducted in 2009 was deemed unreliable. A re-survey took place in April 2013, the results of which will be reported soon. The archaeological team established through historical research that at least 8,428 burials took place in the cemeteries. Conversely, the team documented fewer than 300 disinterments at the site, meaning that thousands of graves remain.

### **Location and Condition of the Walter Pierce Park Site**

Walter C. Pierce Community Park is a heavily used 3.9-acre city park located in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Northwest Washington, D.C. The park occupies part of City

Square 2547. It is bounded on the southwest by an alley and bus parking lot in the 1800-1900 block of Calvert Street, N.W; on the southeast corner by an apartment building in the 2700 block of Adams Mill Road; on the east by the 2700 block of Adams Mill Road; on the north by the National Zoo; and on the west by Rock Creek.

The pedestrian survey of 2006-2007 included the entirety of Walter Pierce Park, as well as National Park Service and National Zoo land that are within the cemeteries' historical boundaries. The city-funded Phase I Archaeological Survey of 2009-2012 included only land within Walter Pierce Park.



**Fig. 1:** Location of Walter Pierce Park in Washington, D.C., marked with star, just south of the National Zoo and southeast of a distinctive hairpin turn in Rock Creek. (*U.S. Geologic Survey, Washington West Quadrangle, 1965*)

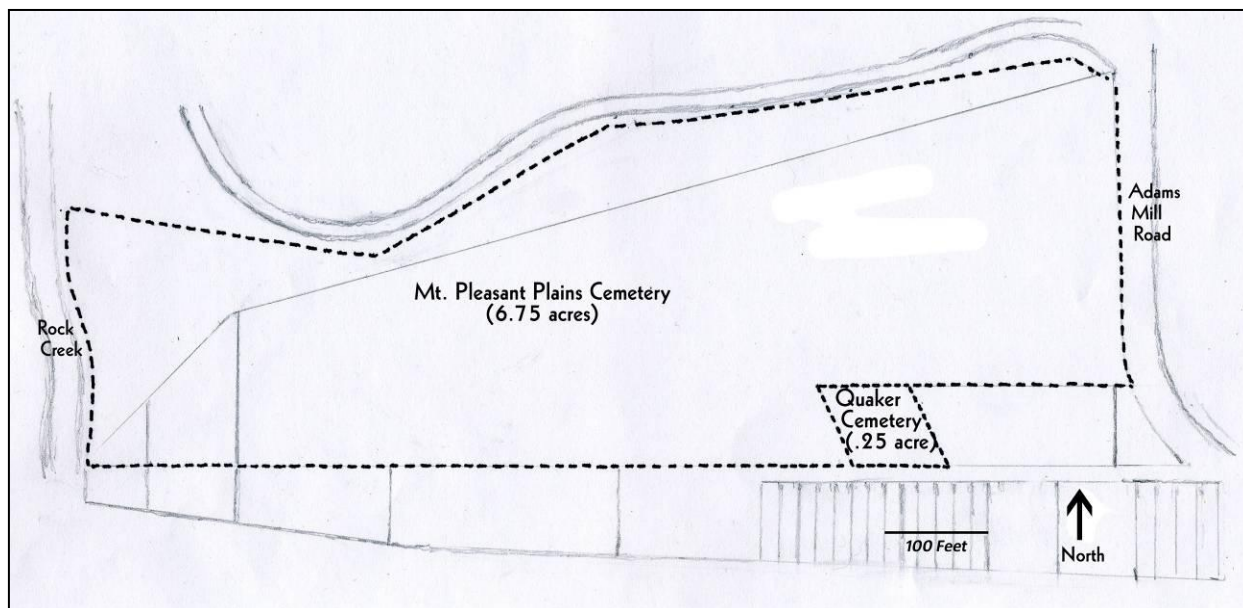
For the purposes of archaeological investigation, the original cemeteries site was surveyed in four sections: the Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park; the North Slope of Walter Pierce Park; the West Slope owned by the National Park Service; and National Zoo land.

The Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park includes a playing field and a variety of constructed park amenities. The North Slope of Walter Pierce Park descends gradually from a relatively level area at Adams Mill Road on the west, in a northwesterly direction toward Rock Creek. The Upper Plateau is separated from the North Slope by a large east-west-oriented gabion wall<sup>1</sup> built in 1982 when the park was created; the construction of the wall resulted in a steep cut-off between the two sections.

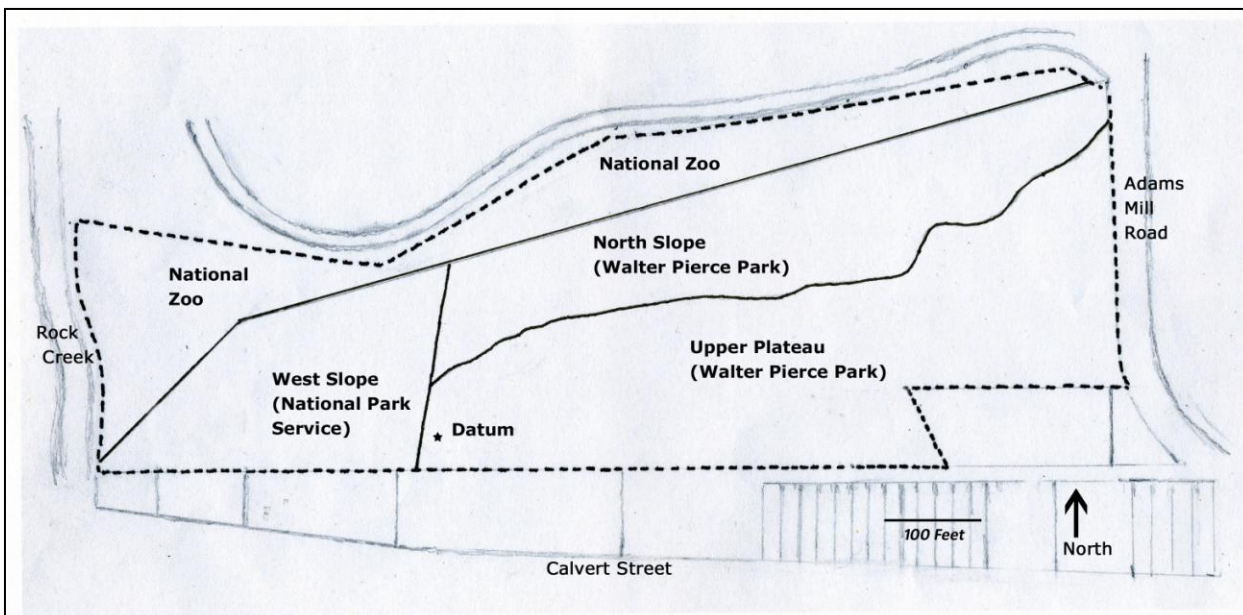
The West Slope, about 1.4 acres in size, is owned by the National Park Service (NPS). It is a wooded hillside leading down to Rock Creek. It is steep in some parts. It contains large quartzite outcroppings used as quarries by American Indians. The West Slope previously included a social trail connecting Walter Pierce Park to Rock Creek Park below. The hillside was closed to the public by NPS in 2009.

<sup>1</sup>Gabion walls are made of stacked “baskets” or parcels of materials, such as rocks or sand, to allow for drainage of water through the wall. At Walter Pierce Park, the gabion wall is made of rocks bundled in wire baskets.

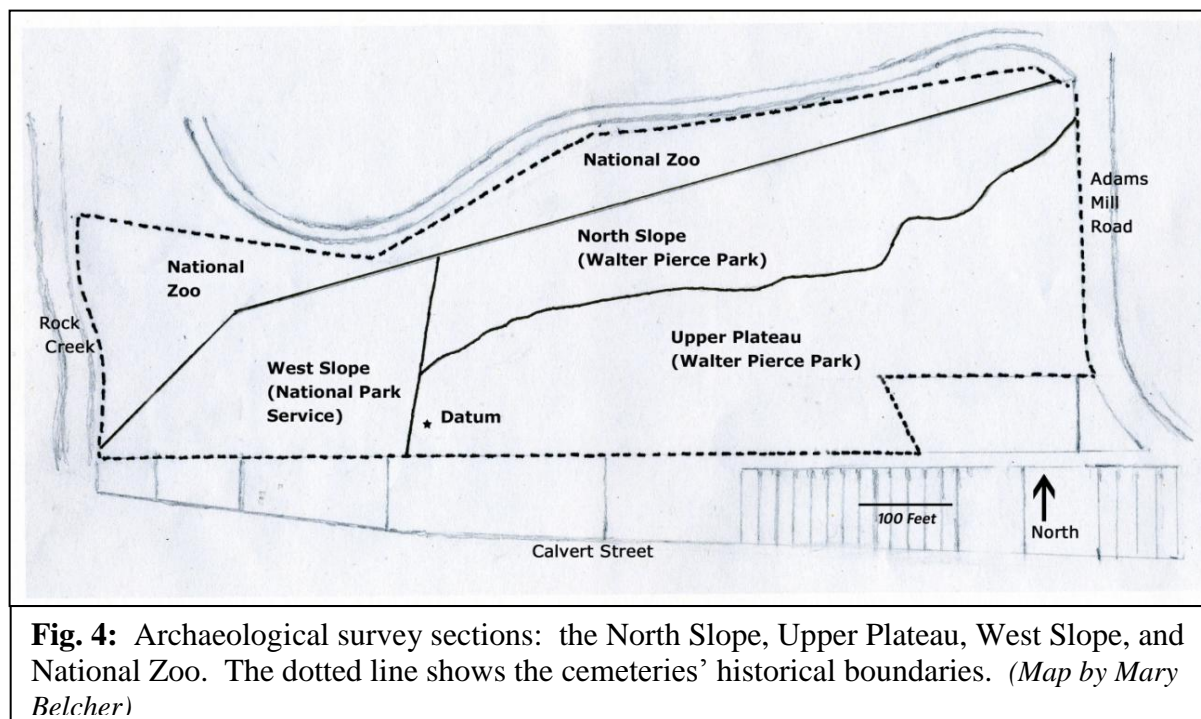
The National-Zoo-owned portion of the cemeteries site--1.7 acres--is separated from Walter Pierce and Rock Creek parks by a tall, barbwire-topped fence. Only Zoo personnel are allowed entry. A private Zoo road marks the northern edge of the original cemetery; historically, this road was a continuation of Adams Mill Road, leading to Rock Creek.



**Fig. 2:** Original cemeteries' boundaries. The dotted line shows the boundaries of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery and the Friends (Quaker) Burying Ground. (Map by Mary Belcher)



**Fig. 3:** Partitioning of the historical cemeteries site. The Mt. Pleasant Plains and Quaker cemeteries were closed in 1890. The National Zoo in 1890 acquired the northern section of the site. The National Park Service in 1928 acquired the West Slope. The District of Columbia in 1978 acquired the land that became Walter Pierce Park. (Map by Mary Belcher)



**Fig. 4:** Archaeological survey sections: the North Slope, Upper Plateau, West Slope, and National Zoo. The dotted line shows the cemeteries' historical boundaries. (Map by Mary Belcher)

Each of the site's survey sections has undergone distinct periods of disruption since the cemeteries' closure in 1890. Chronologically and by section, these disruptions include:

- National Zoo land. In 1890, an unknown number of graves were removed from this area by the Colored Union Benevolent Association and moved into the remaining cemetery area, because of the condemnation and purchase of the land for the newly created National Zoo.
- West Slope, National Park Service land. The 1891 construction and 1934-35 rebuilding of the Calvert Street Bridge across Rock Creek disrupted the area immediately adjacent to the site's southwest corner. There is no known account of grave disruption from these activities.
- Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park, including all park amenities. In 1940, 390 openings were made to find and clear graves from the site to prepare for its sale; only 129 full and partial sets of remains were found. The area was excavated in the 1940s and 1950s to prepare for the construction of four apartment buildings and an underground garage, which were never built; an unknown number of graves were removed. In 1982, the creation of Community Park West, later renamed Walter C. Pierce Community Park, disrupted the area with the lowering and leveling of the ball field and the construction of other amenities.
- The North Slope of Walter Pierce Park. Disruption occurred in this area in 1982 when a large gabion wall was constructed to separate the Upper Plateau of the park from the north hillside. Construction-related activities on the park's Upper Plateau also resulted in earth and other materials being pushed on to the North Slope. The North Slope was the location of community gardening from the 1970s until 2007, resulting in additional disruption.

## **Research Design**

The objective of the archaeological investigation of Walter C. Pierce Community Park and vicinity was to determine the presence and location of exposed skeletal remains, subsurface graves, artifacts, and other features related to the two 19<sup>th</sup> Century cemeteries at the site. It was conducted to help city officials make informed decisions about future park uses and improvements. The project also sought to raise public awareness of the cemeteries, in hopes of nurturing a sense of social responsibility toward those whose remains were buried at the site.

It was not the purpose of the investigation to unearth human remains for scientific study. Additionally, because it was known from the outset of the project that the site was used as cemetery land by Quakers and African Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was not the intent of the archaeological team to disturb graves in the field for the purpose of socio-cultural research.

The principal investigator was Mark Mack, a professor of biological anthropology at Howard University and laboratory director of the African Burial Ground Project in New York. The team was made up of a revolving group of five to 10 Howard University students. Independent historians worked with the Howard team to document the site's past.

Based on Professor Mack's experience with the African Burial Ground Project, the team regarded as its "first clients" those individuals whose remains were buried in the Walter Pierce cemeteries. This central concern guided the archaeological investigation in the following ways:

- There was no deliberate disturbance of graves and no removal of human skeletal remains from the site by the archaeological team. A pedestrian survey offered the least invasive way to determine where exposed remains, artifacts and cemetery-related features existed. This low-tech, labor-intensive work was performed by the Howard University team with funding first obtained by the nonprofit Kalorama Citizens Association. When city funding became available in 2009 through the nonprofit Washington Parks & People, ground-penetrating radar was used to investigate subsurface features.
- Historical research provided a way to learn about the people whose remains were buried in the cemeteries without disturbing their graves. Researchers reviewed District of Columbia death records to identify who were buried at the site, what caused their deaths, and other information. The data taken as a whole made clear the cemeteries' demographics.

In the 2006-2008 survey of Walter Pierce Park and vicinity, the site was marked off in 10-meter-by-10-meter grids, starting at a datum of 38.9236N/77.0473W. The datum was established using GPS; grid points were set using a total data station. Side-by-side, each team member walked one transect of a grid in a straight path, visually inspecting the surface of the ground, veering off only when confronted by something impassable. Small hand rakes were used to remove vegetation when the ground surface was obscured. Finds were mapped and photographed. Nearly all finds were left in place at the site. If Principal Investigator Mack directed a team member to remove an object for further research or safekeeping, it was taken to the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory at Howard University.

The pedestrian survey of 2006-2008 included the entire seven acres of land within the cemeteries' historical boundaries. The first stage took place on the "West Slope" of the site, which is owned by the National Park Service. The second stage took place on the "Upper Plateau" of Walter Pierce Park, which includes all park amenities and the small Quaker cemetery. The third stage focused on the "North Slope" of Walter Pierce Park, a rugged hillside covered with dense, fast-growing invasive vegetation. The pedestrian survey of the North Slope was interrupted by unauthorized gardening, and a re-survey was conducted in 2009. The fourth stage of the pedestrian survey focused on cemetery land that today is owned by the National Zoo.

In 2009, a contractor conducted a ground-penetrating-radar (GPR) survey of Walter Pierce Park to determine whether subsurface anomalies might indicate the presence of graves. The contractor, however, would not provide to Principal Investigator Mack the raw technical data to support the findings. Consequently, it was decided that the findings should be deemed unreliable and that a GPR re-survey should be conducted. A re-survey of the site was conducted by a second contractor in April 2013; his findings will be reported within a few months.

With no known book of interments, researchers turned to city records to identify who had been buried in the cemeteries. They hand-searched all city death certificates--totaling more than 75,000--from 1874, when certificates began being issued, through 1890, the year the cemeteries closed. For earlier burials, the city kept an interment register from 1855 to 1874. Researchers reviewed microfilms of the register to identify burials at the Walter Pierce cemeteries and at the Free Young Men's Cemetery (1849-1870) at 12<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, NW, from which graves were moved to the Walter Pierce site in 1873. A total of 8,428 burials were documented, and fewer than 300 disinterments from Walter Pierce were found in available city records.

Walter Pierce Park remained open to the public during the survey. By working in full



Fig. 5: The team lays grid lines in 2009 while a soccer game is in progress. (Photo by Mary Belcher)

public view and available to answer questions, the team built public awareness of the nearly forgotten cemeteries in the park. Principal Investigator Mack consulted frequently with members of the concerned community. He and archaeological team members participated in walking tours and other public "remembering" events at the park. Re-enactors from the African American Civil War Museum contributed greatly to

these events. African American and Quaker descendants--including descendants of the founding members of both cemeteries--told their family stories. As a result of these public efforts, other unknowing descendants discovered that their ancestors were buried at Walter Pierce Park.<sup>2</sup>

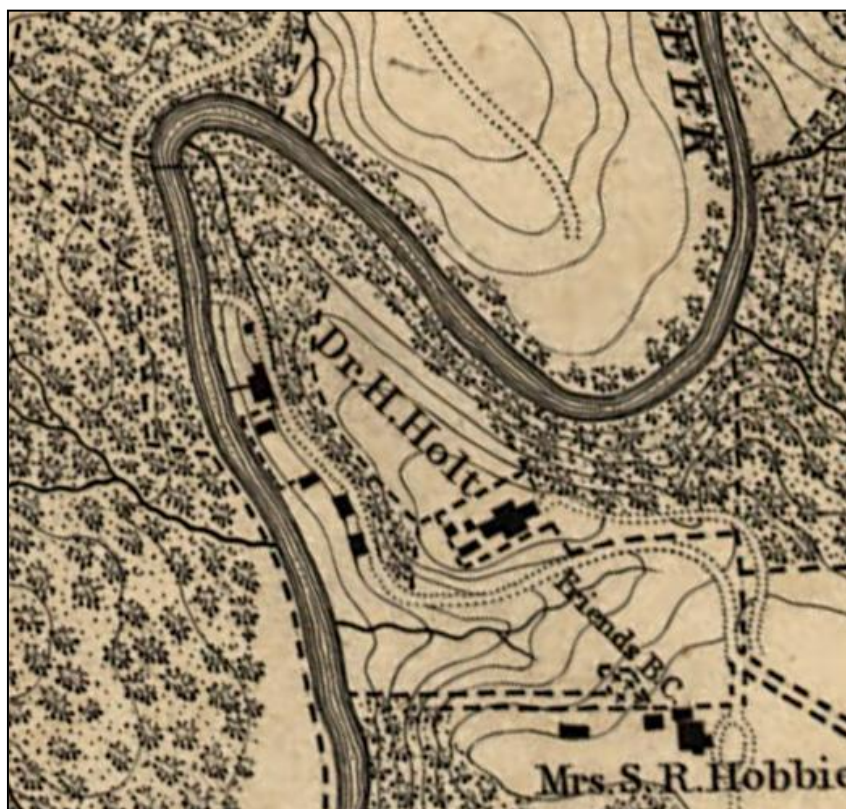
<sup>2</sup> For a description of public activities, see Appendix A.

## THE HISTORY OF THE WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

### THE QUAKER BURYING GROUND IS ESTABLISHED, 1807

In 1802, just two years after the District of Columbia was founded, a delegation of Quakers from the Indian Spring, Md., Meeting came to Washington to survey the needs of its members who had moved there. The delegation found “a few heads of families, some young persons of both sexes, and several children residing in that place ...” Within several years, the “remote situation” of Washington Quakers led them to establish a local Meeting in the District.<sup>3</sup>

One of the earliest Quaker families to settle in Washington was that of Jonathan Shoemaker, a miller from Cheltenham, Pennsylvania. Shoemaker in 1804 purchased 42.5 acres of land along Rock Creek, which included Columbia Mills, built in the late 1700s.<sup>4</sup> The land was part of a larger tract known as “Pretty Prospects.” Shoemaker, his wife Hannah, and their several children lived at the site, according to descendants.



**Fig. 6:** A map showing the archaeological site in the 1850s, with mill buildings along Rock Creek and the small Friends (Quaker) cemetery. (Boschke, A., “Topographical Map, District of Columbia surveyed in the years 1856, ’57, ’58;” published by D. McClelland. Blanchard & Mohun. Washington. D.C.. 1861)

In December 1807, Shoemaker donated to the Quaker meeting a quarter-acre of his property for a cemetery. The deed states that Shoemaker sold the land for \$1 to “Samuel Lukens, Samuel Snowden, Roger Brook[e], Joseph Schoolfield [Scholfield], William Thomas and Samuel Hutchinson of the Society of Friends commonly called Quakers ... for the purpose of [a] burying ground and occupied at all times, hereinafter, as common Burying Ground or Place of Interment for the Society of Friends or Quakers, their families and descendants.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1809, Shoemaker sold his Columbia Mills property, excluding the Quaker Cemetery, and moved to Albemarle County, VA., to

<sup>3</sup> Stone, Helen, “Pages From The Past,” Alexandria Monthly Meeting, Alexandria, Va., 1937.

<sup>4</sup> Deed of January 2, 1804, D.C. Land Records, Liber K10, folio 117-118.

<sup>5</sup> Deed of Dec. 9, 1807, D.C. Land Records, Liber T, folio 114-115.

run Thomas Jefferson's Shadwell Mills. Shoemaker later returned to Washington. Both he and his wife Hannah were buried in the Quaker Cemetery, according to descendants. Also buried there were members of Washington's first Quaker families, including, among others, Seavers, Scholfields, McPhersons and Janneys.<sup>6</sup> In 1845, Washington Quakers updated their deed to the land, naming new trustees. Original trustees Joseph L. Scholfield, Roger Brooke and William Thomas transferred the land to Jonathan Seaver, Henry Janney, George Shoemaker and William L. Shoemaker. George was the son and William the grandson of Jonathan Shoemaker.<sup>7</sup>

## **USE AND OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND SURROUNDING THE QUAKER CEMETERY, 1807-1870**

### **1809-1823: Roger and George Johnson and the Columbia Mills**

In 1809, Jonathan Shoemaker sold his 42.5 acre-property to prominent Maryland businessman Roger Johnson for \$7,500. He excluded the quarter-acre Quaker cemetery from the transaction, allowing for its continued use as a burial ground.<sup>8</sup> Roger's son George moved to the site and invested heavily in upgrading the mills. About 1810, he most likely built the residence known today as Holt House, which is still standing.

By 1821, George Johnson was deeply in debt to the Bank of Columbia in Georgetown. Columbia Mills was put up for auction. A newspaper advertisement described the property, which included a large four-story brick wheat mill, a brick plaster mill, a two-story framed building, two brick buildings for workers, and a stable for 12 horses. (An earlier newspaper ad stated that Johnson's mill also had two carding machines to produce wool, but those were not advertised for sale.) The property was sold June 19, 1822, to an agent for the Bank of Columbia, who bid \$19,990 at auction. As the scion of a wealthy family, George Johnson did not work in the mills himself; he leased them out to other operators and the profits were shared.<sup>9</sup>

### **1823-1870: John Quincy Adams and the Mills**

In July 1823, George Johnson asked then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams to buy Columbia Mills, apparently failing to inform Adams that the mills were held by the Bank of Columbia. George Johnson was the cousin of Adams' wife, Louisa Johnson Adams. In a series of diary entries, Adams mulled over George Johnson's proposition, which involved Adams buying the mills for \$20,000, investing another \$10,000-\$12,000 to get them working properly, and turning the mills' management back to George Johnson for a split of the profits. In the deal,

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<sup>6</sup>The Washington Post, October 24, 1903, "Meeting of Friends."

<sup>7</sup>Deed of December 6, 1845, D.C. Land Records, Liber WB 122, Folio 58-62.

<sup>8</sup>Deed of June 14, 1809, D.C. Land Records, Liber W22, folio 156-159.

<sup>9</sup>National Intelligencer, May 29, 1821. Federal Republican, April 28, 1813. Deed of Roger Johnson to James Dunlop, June 12, 1818, D.C. Land Records, Liber AT44, folio 65-71; James Dunlop to John Quincy Adams, July 25, 1823, D.C. Land Records, Liber WB9, folio 228.



Adams would acquire the mills and about 28 acres of surrounding land, including today's Walter Pierce Park, leaving about 14 acres and the house on the hill to George Johnson.<sup>10</sup>

Adams saw Columbia Mills as a potential source of income once he left the State Department. "This affair involves the comfort of my future life, and that of all my family—my personal independence, and a system of projected occupation for the remnant of my life, after my retirement from the public service," he wrote in his diary on July 12, 1823. Going into the milling business, he admitted, would be "a leap in the dark—but a man must trust." Over the next month, he sorted through a complicated set of issues. He found out that the Bank of Columbia held the title to the property, and that Roger Johnson, not George, Roger's son, was entitled to redeem the estate from the bank.

Adams visited the site on July 14, 1823, noting that "His [George Johnson's] wife and three small children were at the house." On July 17, Adams visited the mills with Mrs. Adams and other family members after dinner. On

July 18, Adams noted, "This affair of the mills now absorbs too much of my time. I have been preparing a draft of articles of agreement with George Johnson to be executed after the purchase shall be completed. This morning I examined all the Deeds received yesterday and found some links in the chain of evidence wanting ..." Adams visited the site again on July 21, 1823, so that George Johnson could show him where the buildings needed repairs and upgrades.

On July 26, 1823, Adams mortgaged his downtown house to secure a \$20,000 bank loan to buy the mill property.<sup>11</sup> On July 30, George Johnson presented Adams with an expanded list of needed repairs. "In the course of this month also I have made a disposal of a large portion of my private property which may have great influence upon the remainder of my days," Adams wrote on July 31. "This too cannot prosper, but with the blessing of Heaven..." On August 11, 1823, John Quincy Adams gave George Johnson a check for \$20,000 and became a mill owner.<sup>12</sup>

George Johnson operated the mills for Adams over the next year. But Johnson's business skills, as well as the international market for flour, were weak. Adams took his disappointment in stride, noting on June 9, 1824, "I shall continue the experiment for another year."



**Fig. 7:** An early photograph of the buildings at Columbia Mills, approached from the south along the old Adams Mill Road. (*Undated photo, Washington, D.C., Historical Society*)

<sup>10</sup> John Quincy Adams' diary, entries throughout the months of July and August, 1823; Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>11</sup> Deed of Trust, Adams to Richard Smith of the U.S. Bank, Liber WB9, August 14, 1823

<sup>12</sup> Deed of August 16, 1823, D.C. Land Records, Liber WB9, Folio 157-159.

On March 4, 1825, instead of retiring from public service, John Quincy Adams became the sixth president of the United States. By November 1825, however, George Johnson was out of the milling business. When he visited President Adams to seek a federal appointment, Adams



**Fig. 8:** An 1866 map showing Columbia Mills and the Quaker cemetery just below the word “Cliffburne,” before the larger Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery was established. (*Nathaniel Michler, Maj. of Engrs., BVT, Brig. Genl., U.S.A., “Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D.C.,” 1866*)

lashed out: “I asked him to account for the monies he received from me more than two years since, which he promised he would, but cannot—it being all wasted in the payment of his own debts,” the president wrote in his diary on November 28, 1825.

John Quincy Adams tapped his middle son, John Adams II, to run Columbia Mills after George Johnson’s departure. While continuing to complain in his diary about problems at the mill, John Quincy Adams often visited the site for exercise and pleasure. “I rode with John to Columbian Mills,” he wrote on June 6, 1828, noting that a thunderstorm the night before had caused the mill dam to partially collapse. “I plucked twigs from one of the Willow Oaks, and from a large Sweet Guntree at the site and brought them home for Abby S. Adams to paint.” Walks and rides to the mills were popular with the entire family.

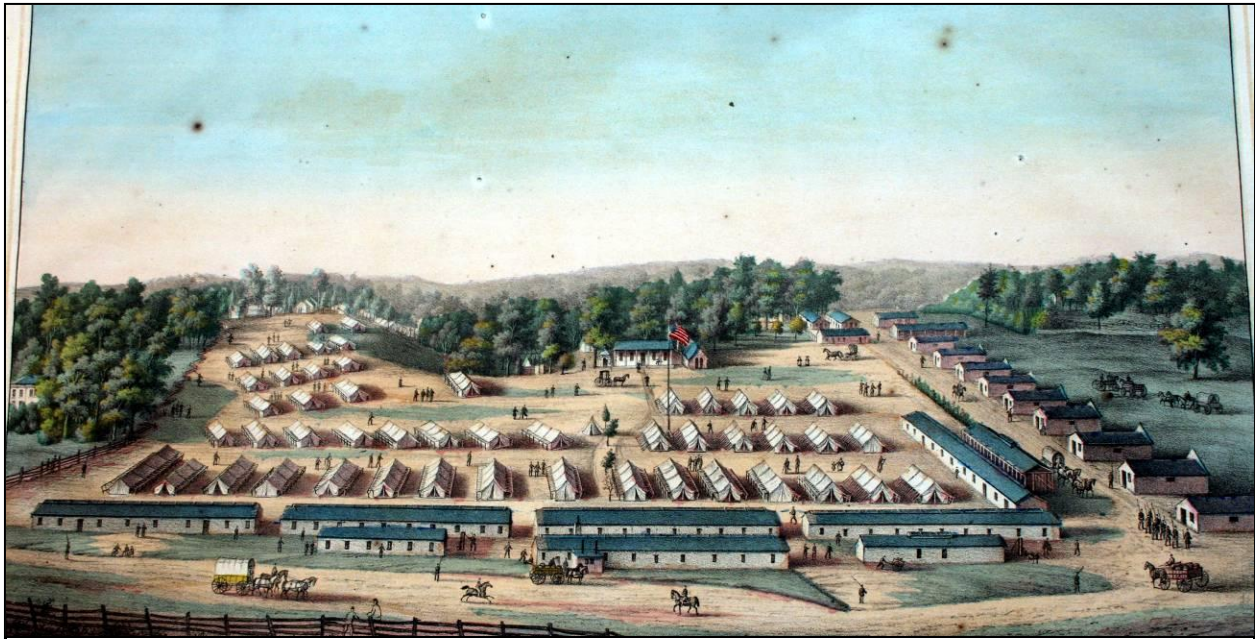
John Adams II died in 1834, after which John Quincy Adams leased out the mills to

a series of operators. On February 14, 1844, John Quincy Adams noted in his diary that people were living rent free in the two houses at the site in exchange for running the mills. After John Quincy Adams died in 1848, the property remained in the family’s possession.

### **1862-1865: Cliffburne Hospital**

The Columbia Mills property sat in the hills overlooking Washington City’s northern boundary, in the part of the District of Columbia called “Washington County.” By the start of the Civil War, the Adams family still owned the property. The adjoining 14 acres and house once owned by the Johnson family now belonged to Henry C. Holt, a farmer and physician from Oswego, New York.<sup>13</sup> Just south of the Adams family’s property was an estate known as Cliffburne, owned by Julieanna Hobbie, a congressman’s widow. When the war began in 1861, the hills surrounding the city became the site of Union encampments and hospitals. The land owned by the Adams’ heirs and by Mrs. Hobbie in 1862 became the site of Cliffburne Hospital.

<sup>13</sup> Roger Johnson died in 1831, and the property was sold to Ashton Alexander in 1835. It changed hands again in 1844, when it was sold to Holt.



**Fig. 9:** Cliffburne Hospital Barracks, Washington, D.C., 1862. This lithograph by Charles Magnus shows the hospital installation looking west from Adams Mill Road. (Washington, D.C. Historical Society)

A young U.S. Army assistant surgeon named John Shaw Billings was charged with establishing the hospital. He reported on the site's initial condition and the subsequent installation of an extensive array of temporary facilities to create the medical facility:

“The barracks had been previously occupied by the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry. I found the buildings and grounds in an extremely filthy and dilapidated condition—no drainage whatsoever, no sinks, no water within half a mile. Five buildings, the old barracks, were first fitted up, additional doors and windows being inserted and the system of ridge ventilation adopted. Apertures were also cut in the sides of the buildings near the floor, and every part well whitewashed inside and out. A thorough system of drainage was instituted and three wells dug and fitted with large wooden pumps. These, however, are insufficient, and one team is in constant use bringing water from a distance. A new building for kitchen and mess-room was built, 200 feet in length and 15 in width, and Ball’s patent range placed therein, capable, as found by experience, of cooking easily for 1,000 persons. Wooden privies were constructed, eighteen in number, and so light as to be readily removed to new trenches when necessary. Fifteen hundred loads of offal were cleared from the grounds and vicinity of the buildings, and 800 loads of gravel advantageously disposed in various situations. One hundred and five hospital tents were pitched, framed and floored, and two additional buildings fitted up, making the number of beds in the hospital one thousand. A bath- and wash-room 50 feet in length was also built, and four tubs are in constant use. Three washing-machines are used in the wash-room—and both hot and cold water freely supplied. An apothecary shop, store-room, clothing-rooms, knapsack-room, dead-house, guard-house, stable, etc., were also fitted

up. Fifteen Sisters of Charity are employed as nurses; they prepare all extra articles of diet. Of their service and conduct I can speak only in terms of the highest praise.”<sup>14</sup>

Through the spring and summer of 1862, Cliffburne Hospital treated thousands of soldiers wounded in battle at Bull Run, Williamsburg, Richmond and elsewhere. As the weeks passed, the numbers escalated. During the week of May 23, 1862, the number of Cliffburne patients was 218: 44 Union soldiers and 174 Confederate. By June 20, 1862, the weekly report for Cliffburne showed 577 patients from New York, Pennsylvania, Maine, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Illinois, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida.<sup>15</sup> By the end of July, the Evening Star reported that the list of wounded soldiers in hospitals across the city had grown to 3,235, “including the rebel sick and wounded, most of whom are at Cliffburne Hospital ...”<sup>16</sup> Billings described the challenge of providing equal treatment to all patients:

“One of the difficulties at Cliffburne was that we had a large number of Confederate as well as of Union wounded. The old residents of Georgetown and Washington were mostly in sympathy with the Confederates, and came out bringing good things to eat and drink, with the desire that these things should be for the exclusive use of the Confederates. On the other hand, the ladies of the families of members of Congress and of officers in the departments were enthusiastic for the Northern side, and they also came with various good things, but with the specification that none should go to the rebels. We would not receive gifts from either party on these terms, but after a little explanation they were left to be used for those who needed them most.

“I remember a member of Congress from New York City who came up and said: "You have got a lot of my boys here; I would like to do something for them, something that the papers will notice you know. What do you think I had better give them?" I said: "They have all got more or less scurvy, and I think fresh strawberries would do them good. You might have a strawberry festival, and have a band here."

Billings staged a strawberry festival that was covered by the press. By the autumn of 1862, he had been transferred from Cliffburne to perform surgery on the front lines of battle. By 1863, Cliffburne Hospital's patients were moved to Lincoln Hospital near the Capitol.

**The Invalid Corps at Cliffburne:** Cliffburne continued as a military installation after it stopped being used as a hospital. In April 1863 it became the headquarters for the newly created Invalid Corps. The Invalid Corps were soldiers who were too wounded or ill to continue serving in battle but wanted to remain in the military. Corps members filled a variety of non-combat jobs, serving as cooks, nurses, ambulance drivers, prison guards, and musicians. In March 1864, the War Department changed the name of the Invalid Corps to the Veteran Reserve Corps. The names of those men who joined the Invalid Corps at Cliffburne Barracks were recorded in daily

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<sup>14</sup> Smart, Charles, Major and Surgeon, U.S. Army, The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion, Vol. 1, Pt. 3, GPO, Washington, D.C. 1888.

<sup>15</sup> Washington Evening Star, July 1, 1862.

<sup>16</sup> Washington Evening Star, July 31, 1862

muster lists, which are held today at the National Archives.<sup>17</sup> After the Civil War, the temporary hospital buildings were sold and moved elsewhere.<sup>18</sup>

### **John Quincy Adams' Heirs Sell to the Colored Union Benevolent Association, 1870**

The heirs of John Quincy Adams continued the family tradition of public service throughout the Civil War. Charles Francis Adams, the son of John Quincy Adams, was U.S. minister to Britain, helping prevent that country from officially aligning with the Confederacy. Charles Francis Adams II, John Quincy's grandson, enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Cavalry. In 1864, he was named a lieutenant colonel in the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Cavalry, an African American regiment.

Charles Francis Adams, acting on behalf of his father's estate, in 1870 sold 6.75 acres of the Columbia Mills property to the Colored Union Benevolent Association for the African American cemetery that would be named Mt. Pleasant Plains. It abutted the much smaller Quaker Cemetery on two sides.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> National Archives Record Group 393.

<sup>18</sup> Daily National Republican, August 14, 1865, "Sale of Government Buildings at Cliffburne Barracks"

<sup>19</sup> D.C. Land Records, Liber 630, folio 382,

## **MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY: BENEVOLENT BEGINNINGS**

*“Experience has proved that the association of individuals and the formation of societies for the express purpose of benevolence, have seldom if ever failed to meet the sanction of both God and man ...” From the Constitution of The Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association*

On October 3, 1838, a group of free young African American men raising families in the District of Columbia started a club: the Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association. They did so during a decade of race-driven violence in Washington. They did so in defiance of a repressive set of city laws known as the Black Code, which, among other things, imposed a 10 p.m. curfew and prohibited African Americans--free or enslaved--from meeting in groups at any time for anything other than religious purposes. Association members pooled their resources to assist one another in time of financial need, illness and death. Some were founders of the District’s earliest black churches and schools. Many were deeply involved in freeing enslaved people.

The Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association met monthly, probably in a church to skirt the city law barring African Americans from meeting.<sup>20</sup> As soon as nine members were present, the meeting would open with a hymn or prayer. They quickly got down to worldly business--tallying the night’s income from dues, reporting on sick members, discussing bank balances, and addressing other matters of mutual concern.

The first criterion for joining the Association was that one be free, not enslaved. Association records show that many members joined soon after attaining their freedom. The group was multi-denominational. Members Eli Nugent, John H. Brent, Charles H. Brown, and Gurden Snowden were members of Asbury Methodist Church, a powerful black breakaway church that had its roots in Foundry Methodist. John H. Brent and Charles Wilson later founded John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church. Hamilton Martin, Robert Wilkinson, and the Shorter family were early members of Union Bethel--later Metropolitan--A.M.E. Church. Henry Neale went to St. Augustine’s Catholic Church. Lindsay Muse was an elder at 19<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church. William Bush was a founding member of the First Negro Baptist and then Second Negro Baptist Church of Washington. Association trustee Sandy Alexander founded First Baptist Church in Georgetown and was regarded as the leading African American Baptist pastor of his time.<sup>21</sup>

Members paid a \$10 initiation fee to join and dues of \$.25 a month. When a member was ill, he was granted \$3 a week in sick pay. When a member--or a member’s wife or child--died, the Association paid funeral expenses and other benefits to the family: \$30 for a member’s death, \$15 for a wife, and \$5 for a child.<sup>22</sup> The Association made loans to its members, with strict interest and repayment terms. Members could be fined \$1 for using profane language or divulging information to outsiders about what took place in their meetings. Habitual intemperance or other bad behavior was grounds for expulsion.

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<sup>20</sup>Association records, in Record Group 21 at the National Archives, show that by 1868 the Association was meeting at Asbury Methodist Church at 11<sup>th</sup> & K streets, NW.

<sup>21</sup>Cromwell, John W., “The First Negro Churches in the District of Columbia,” *Journal of Negro History* 7, No. 1 (January 1922), Lancaster, Pa., and Washington, D.C.

<sup>22</sup>The Association raised its fees, dues and benefits after the Civil War, National Archives RG 21.



## **Table 1: Members of the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association and Colored Union Benevolent Association (1838-1923)**

*The Free Young Men's Benevolent Association was founded in Washington, D.C., in October 1838. In 1865, it changed its name to the Colored Union Benevolent Association. The group was dissolved in 1923. These names were compiled from documents in the National Archives, Record Group 21. Birth and death dates are based on information from death certificates, Free Negro Registries, federal Census records, and other sources.*

Sandy Alexander (ca. 1815-1902)	Charles G. Hawkins	Denis Orme (---- - 1871)
Henry Bell	Alexander Hays (ca. 1803-1870)	James H. Paynter
Hanson Bell (ca. 1812 - ----)	James F. Herbert (ca. 1827-1912)	Henry Pleasants (ca. 1818-1860)
Daniel Bond (---- - ca. 1851)	Anthony Hickman (ca. 1815-1895)	
Ignatius Bond (ca. 1805-1876)	William Hill	Charles H. Shorter (1844-1916)
Frederick Bonner (ca. 1839-1876)	Washington Ingram (ca. 1820- ----)	Charles W. Shorter
John H. Brent (ca. 1804-1885)		John Shorter (ca. 1814-1885)
John S. Brent (1843-1917)	George Jackson	Joseph Shorter (ca. 1823-1910)
Henry Brooks (ca. 1818-1896)	William Jasper (ca. 1815-1883)	Gurden Snowden (ca. 1809-1885)
Chas. H. Brown (ca. 1805-1868)	Alfred Jones (ca. 1816-1877)	Wm. H. Smallwood
Robert Brown	John B. Jones	Stephen Smith
Thomas Brown	Solomon Jones	
James Bush (---- - ca. 1868)		
William Bush	Gillis Key (ca. 1820-1917)	Alfred Taverns
		Henry Taylor
Andrew Carroll (ca. 1823-1900)	William Landrick (ca. 1829- ----)	William Taylor
John [A.R.?] Chase	James H. Lewis (ca. 1831-1905)	James Terrell
Isaac Clarke (ca. 1812-1892)	Benjamin Little	Alfred Thomas
	Henry Logan (ca. 1813-1899)	John C. Thomas (ca. 1819-1872)
Charles F. Datcher (ca. 1822-1871)	William Louden (ca. 1820- ----)	Samuel Thomas
Hilleary Davis (ca. 1832-1901)		John Thornton
James W. Day (ca. 1811-1878)	Hamilton Martin (ca. 1812-1897)	Charles Tinney (ca. 1813-1884)
Ephraim Dorsey	Aaron [John?] Mason	
John E. Dorsey (---- - 1900)	Benjamin Minor (ca. 1810-1868)	Robert Wilkinson (c. 1772-1872)
	Perry Mitchell	Charles Wilson (ca. 1823-1900)
Tilghman Ford	Lindsay Muse (ca. 1803-1888)	James H. Wright (c. 1820-1891)
Thomas H. Fox (ca, 1813 - ----)		
Benjamin C. Freeman (ca. 1814-1865)	Henry Neale (ca. 1825 - ----)	Edward O. Young (ca. 1846 1875)
	Benjamin H. Nugent	Forrester Young (ca. 1810 - ----)
George H. Garrison (ca. 1808-1881)	Eli E. Nugent Sr. (ca. --- 1861)	John Young
James Griffin	Eli E. Nugent Jr. (ca. 1832 - ----)	
	Richard H. Nugent (ca. 1818 - ----)	

**The Association and Slavery:** The men who joined the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association attained their freedom in different ways. Gurden Snowden, Hamilton Martin and Sandy Alexander were freed in their masters' wills. Alexander Hays and Isaac Clarke bought their freedom from their masters. Lindsay Muse and Henry Logan were freed as children. John and Joseph Shorter, and James F. Herbert were born free because their mothers were free. Although every member was free by the time he joined the Association, each had family and friends who remained enslaved. Association members worked to defeat the inhumanity of slavery.

A decade after the Association was founded, key members became involved in Washington's largest known Underground Railroad escape attempt: the *Pearl* affair. It began in April 1848, when 77 enslaved people secretly boarded the schooner *Pearl* near the Seventh Street wharf, setting sail for the Chesapeake Bay and points north to freedom. The *Pearl's* crew and passengers were captured a day into their journey, as the vessel neared the Chesapeake. Upon their forced return, they were marched in shackles to the District jail. The *Pearl* affair incited pro-slavery mobs in the city and enflamed anti-slavery sentiments around the world.

Abolitionists around the world were galvanized by the *Pearl* affair and by the stories of those who had boarded the ship, including six brothers and sisters of the Edmonson family. For members of the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association, the failed escape was deeply personal. John H. Brent, Forrester Young, and Denis Orme were married to Edmonson daughters who were already free by the time their siblings left on the *Pearl*. Washington Ingram's sister-in-law was also an Edmonson daughter.<sup>23</sup> William Bush and his wife Lucy shepherded passengers to the spot where the ship was docked. *Pearl* passengers Mary and Emily Edmonson had been pupils in the Methodist Sunday school taught by Eli Nugent. David A. Hall, the lawyer who aided the *Pearl* defendants, was well known to Association members.

The quest for civil rights during the time of slavery was personified in Association trustee Charles H. Brown, superintendent of Asbury Methodist Church's Sunday School and a coach driver for Secretary of State William H. Seward. Represented by attorney David A. Hall, Charles H. Brown in 1843 sued a District policeman for assault, battery and false imprisonment after being arrested for violating the city's 10 p.m. curfew for African Americans. Brown lost the case, but not his activist spirit. In 1855, he was arrested again for meeting secretly with others to raise money to free an enslaved woman. Among those providing funds to Brown's effort were prominent anti-slavery members of Congress and nationally known abolitionists.<sup>24</sup>

Legal bills, the cost of buying people out of slavery, and a boost in Underground Railroad activities in the 1840s and 1850s made clear the need for greater financial resources within Washington's anti-slavery community. A year after the failed *Pearl* escape, the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association found a new way to make money: It started a cemetery.

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<sup>23</sup>The married Edmonson daughters had bought their freedom from their masters. Member Benjamin Little might have been married to another Edmonson sister, Henrietta, but little is known about this couple.

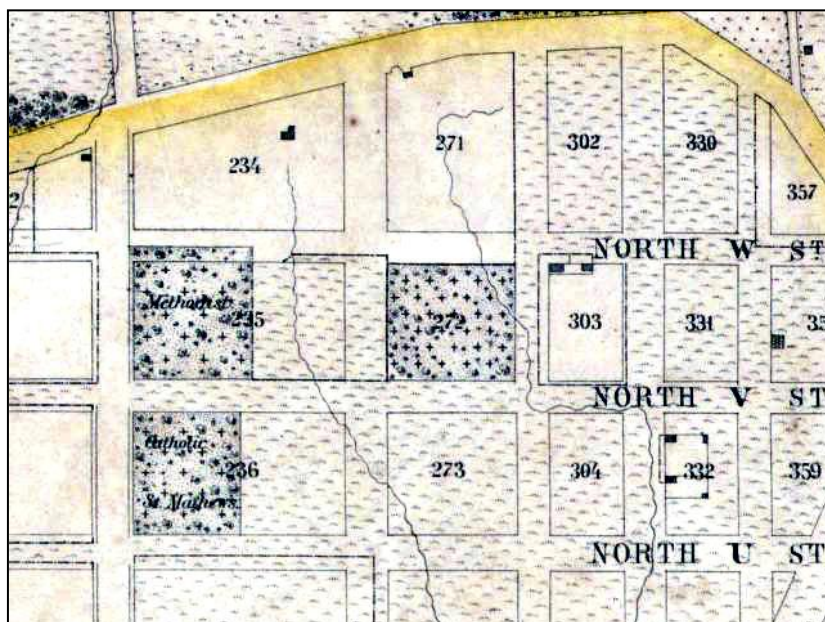
<sup>24</sup> *Charles H. Brown vs. Henry B. Robertson*, National Archives Record Group 21; and The Washington Evening Star, April 5, 1855, and Washington National Era, April 19, 1855



## The Free Young Men's Cemetery at 12<sup>th</sup> & V Streets, N.W., 1849-1870

The Free Young Men's Benevolent Association existed 11 years before acquiring land for its first burial ground. On November 17, 1849, the Association bought city Square 272 to establish a cemetery at 12<sup>th</sup> and V streets, N.W.

Five Association trustees—Gurden Snowden, Daniel Bond, Eli Nugent, Charles H. Brown and Washington Ingram—signed the deed, paying \$500 to the Farmers & Mechanics Bank of



**Fig. 10:** An 1850s map showing the Free Young Men's Cemetery at Square 272. Foundry Methodist and St. Matthew's Catholic cemeteries were located nearby. (A. Boschke)

Georgetown and Charles L. Coltman, a white brickmaker. The deed described the buyers as a "private association of free men of colour." It stated that the "Free Young Men's benevolent association of Washington City" would use the land "solely & exclusively as a cemetery & place of burial for the dead."<sup>25</sup>

The Free Young Men's Cemetery was in operation for five years before the District of Columbia began officially recording deaths and burials. From 1855 to 1870, a total of 771 burials in the cemetery were officially documented. The actual number is unknown because there were large gaps

in city death records during the Civil War, and because many deaths recorded by the city included no information on the place of burial.

In 1867, the National Intelligencer reported that the Free Young Men's Cemetery should move because it sat on marshy ground. "All the land in that vicinity will be speedily demanded for residences, and the grading and draining of that region of the city will inevitably, sooner or later, imperatively require such a transfer," the newspaper stated. In 1869, the Association began looking for new cemetery land, and in 1870 bought a new site, naming it Mt. Pleasant Plains. In 1873, the Association removed the bodies from the Free Young Men's Cemetery and reinterred them at Mt. Pleasant Plains. In 1875, the Association sold Square 272 to the board of the soon-to-be-constructed Children's Hospital for \$15,722.<sup>26</sup>

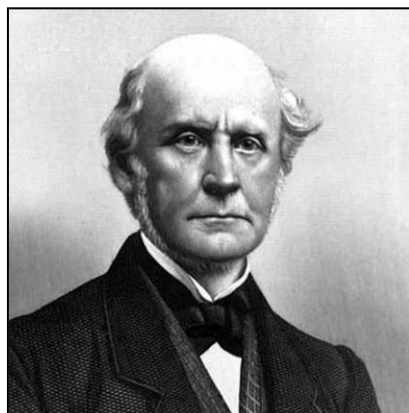
<sup>25</sup> Deed of November 17, 1849, D.C. Land Records, Liber JAS 10, Folio 109. The 1850 Federal Census of Free Inhabitants shows Coltman owning \$25,000 in real estate and living near Association members Charles H. Brown and Gillis Key.

<sup>26</sup> Deed of March 3, 1875, D.C. Land Records, Liber 797, Folio 406.

## **The Free Young Men Become the Colored Union Benevolent Association; a New Cemetery Is Established**

In January 1865, the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association changed its name to the Colored Union Benevolent Association.<sup>27</sup> On March 3, 1865, a month before the end of the Civil War, the Association successfully sought a congressional charter.<sup>28</sup>

The incorporating legislation named as members Gurden Snowden, Charles Brown, James Wright, Sandy Alexander, Henry Logan, Charles Wilson, Henry Brooks, John Shorter and Joseph Shorter and their associates. The law stated: "The objects of the Association are hereby declared to be to provide for the care and comfort of such members as shall be sick, disabled, or dependent, and of the families of such members, in cases where the proper officers of the association shall deem it expedient, and also to provide for the decent interment of such persons as may die in membership of the association or belonging to the families of such members."



**Fig. 11:** Charles Francis Adams, son of John Quincy Adams.

The congressional charter gave the Association the right to buy and sell real estate.

In July 1869, members asked Gurden Snowden to lead the search for a new cemetery site.<sup>29</sup> In October 1869, Snowden reported that the heirs of John Quincy Adams had suitable land for sale. On March 20, 1870, Snowden presented to the Association a letter from Charles Francis Adams, the son of John Quincy Adams, stating "that the piece of ground desired containing seven (7) acres could be purchased for the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars, five hundred to be paid cash and the balance in four equal installments—five hundred dollars every six months." The Association voted to buy it.

On April 1, 1870, in Suffolk County Courthouse in Boston, Mass., Charles Francis Adams sold 6.75 acres of land to Gurden Snowden, Henry Logan, Joseph Shorter, Anthony Hickman, and Hamilton Martin, trustees of the Colored Union Benevolent Association:

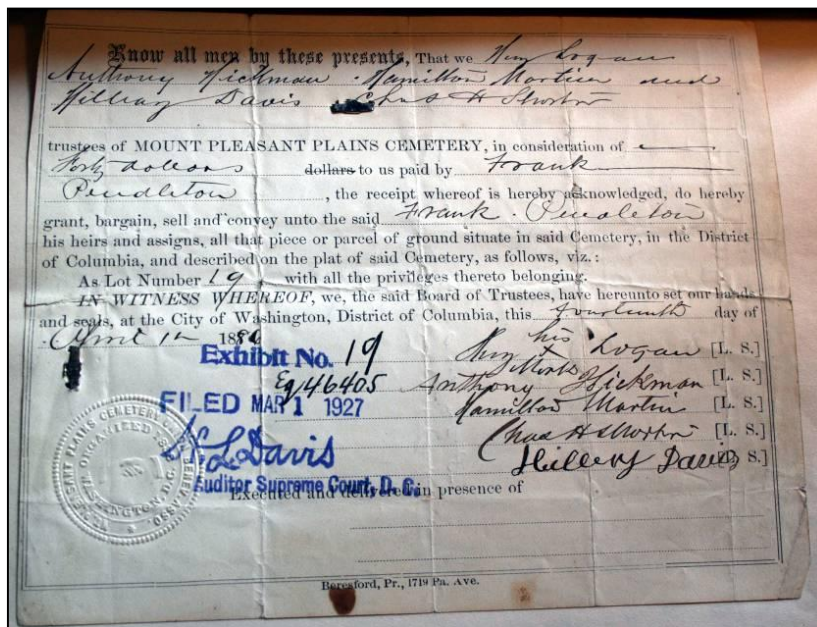
"Know all men by these presents that I Charles F. Adams of Quincy in the County of Suffolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts as one Trustee under the will of J.Q. Adams and also by authority of a decree of the Supreme Court of said Commonwealth in consideration of two thousand and five hundred dollars, paid by Gurden Snowden, Henry Logan, Joseph Shorter, Anthony Hickman and Hampleton [Hamilton] Martin, trustees to me as Trustee under the will of John Q. Adams as aforesaid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell & convey with the said Gurden Snowden, Henry Logan, Joseph Shorter, Anthony Hickman and Hampleton [Hamilton]

<sup>27</sup>Note in Association minutes book by Charles H. Shorter, dated March 3, 1906, National Archives Record Group 21.

<sup>28</sup>43<sup>rd</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, S. 451.

<sup>29</sup> Colored Union Benevolent Association meeting minutes, National Archives Record Group 21.

Martin of Washington in the District of Columbia and their survivors or survivor of them in trust for the benefit of the Union Benevolent Association of the District of Columbia, colored, all that land forming a part of the entire tract formerly called "Pleasant Plains" and more recently known as the Columbia Mills Property, which is bounded and described as follows viz: beginning at a stone bound at the North East corner of the Quaker Burying Ground then running south 89 [degrees] west above the northern line of said burying ground six perches, thence running north four degrees west fifteen perches 80/100 to a black tree now marked, thence running south 79-1/2 [degrees] East and running nine perches, thence running north 80-1/2 [degrees] East and running four perches then turning south 49 [degrees] East and running three perches, then south 86-1/2 [degrees] again and 1 [degree] west and running eighteen perches, thence north West thirteen perches and 88.00 to the north Eastern corner of the Quaker Burying Ground, being the point of departure, the same containing six and three quarters acres, as near as may be together with a right of way to said premises over the private road to the main leading road, running between lands of Julianne Hollie [Hobbie] and heretofore conveyed to and used by the occupants of the Columbia Mills Property. To have and to hold the granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said Snowden, Logan, Shorter, Hickman and Martin and their successor[s] and assign[s] forever in trust, and I do hereby as trustee aforesaid covenant with the said grantees and their successors and assigns that I am lawfully seized as trustee of the granted premises, that they are free from encumbrances, that I have good right to sell and convey the same as trustee aforesaid, and that as Trustee shall not in my private capacity and my successors shall warrant & defend the same to the said grantees and their successors and assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of the persons claiming through me but against no other.<sup>30</sup>



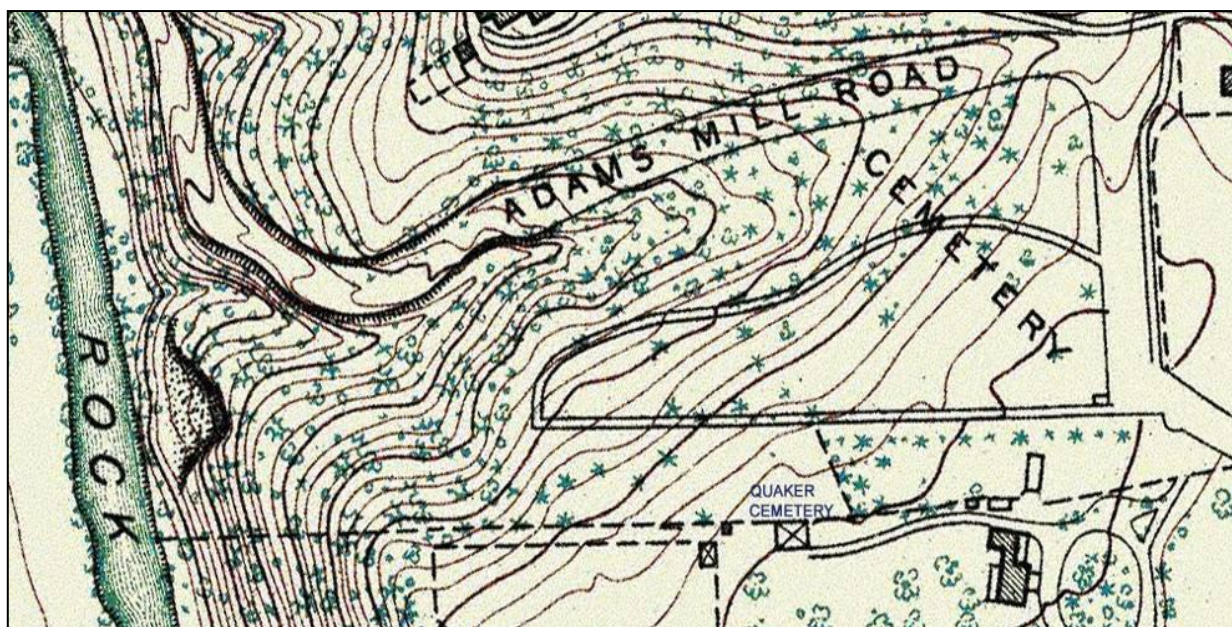
In 1871, the Association secured a deed of trust for \$5,000 on their old cemetery land on Square 272. It then paid Charles Francis Adams \$1,250 for the balance that remained on the new land. The Association readied Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery for use. Association trustees earned 10% of the profits on the plots they sold.

**Fig. 12:** A receipt dated April 1, 1886, for \$40 paid by Frank Pendleton for a lot at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. (National Archives, RG 21)

<sup>30</sup> Deed of April 1, 1870, in D.C. Land Records, Liber 630, folio 382-383. A "perch" is an antiquated unit of measurement equal to 16.5 feet.

## THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE QUAKER AND MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERIES IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY; BURIAL CUSTOMS

**Size and Topography:** The Quaker cemetery occupied a rhombus-shaped piece of land 99' by 99' in size, or slightly less than a quarter-acre. By 1870, the southern and eastern edges of the Quaker cemetery were abutted by the property of Julianna Hobbie (owner of the Cliffburne estate), and on the west and north by the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. The Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery covered 6.75 acres, bordered by Adams Mill Road on the east and north, the Quaker Cemetery and Cliffburne estate on the south, and Rock Creek on the west.



**Fig. 13:** Topographical map of the cemeteries in the late 1880s, showing 5-foot changes in elevation, with the highest point 180 feet above sea level at the site's southeast corner. The general location of the Quaker cemetery is superimposed in blue type. (*U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1892-94*)

The cemeteries site sloped in a northwesterly direction from an elevation of 180 feet above sea level at its southeast corner down to about 65 feet above sea level at Rock Creek. The site was part of a high plateau known, descriptively, as “Pleasant Plains” and “Pretty Prospects.” The original Adams Mill Road, today a private Zoo road, marked the site's northern boundary. The western end of the site was a hillside with quartzite outcroppings and several small plateaus.

**The Appearance of the Quaker Cemetery 1807-1890:** The Quaker Cemetery was established in December 1807 by the Society of Friends (Quakers). Jonathan Shoemaker, a Pennsylvania-born Quaker miller, owned 42.5 acres and a mill at the site. He donated the land for the cemetery. The number of Quakers living in the new Federal City at that time was small, with only about 43 members.<sup>31</sup> It is not known how many burials took place in the Quaker

<sup>31</sup>The Washington Post, Oct. 24, 1903, “Meeting of Friends.”

cemetery between 1807 and 1890, because the Quaker cemetery existed for a half-century before the District of Columbia began keeping death records in 1855.<sup>32</sup>

The Quaker cemetery was enclosed by a post-and-rail fence. The fence was maintained into the 1890s. At least one corner of the property—the northeast corner—was marked with a large stone.<sup>33</sup> It has been reported frequently that early Quakers didn't mark their graves with headstones, which might have been true when Washington's Quaker cemetery was founded in 1807. But by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, headstones and footstones were in use. Quaker rules (known as "disciplines") in 1844 advised against elaborate gravestones but allowed markers that adhered to the principles of simplicity and plainness.<sup>34</sup>

During a mass disinterment of the cemeteries in 1940, at least one Quaker headstone was found. It marked the grave of Mary G. Seaver, the wife of Quaker cemetery trustee Jonathan Seaver and a descendant of Jonathan Shoemaker. The headstone recorded her death at age 31 in 1837. Jonathan Seaver, a comptroller in the Treasury Department for many decades, lost several children to death who, presumably, were buried in the Quaker cemetery with their mother. They were Elizabeth Seaver, who died in 1853, Jonathan Mercer Seaver, who died in 1851, and Mary P. Seaver, who died in 1857.<sup>35</sup>

Edward Shoemaker, great-grandson of land donor Jonathan Shoemaker, wrote that among those buried in the Quaker cemetery were Jonathan Shoemaker, who died in 1837, and his wife Hannah. Hannah, according to Edward, died shortly after the cemetery was established. Members of the Seaver, Scholfield, McPherson and Janney families also were buried there.<sup>36</sup>

**Quaker Burial Customs:** Quaker burials were solemn affairs. Friends (Quakers) would gather in silent worship at their Meeting House, which was located at 18<sup>th</sup> and I Streets, N.W., for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. There was no sermon or presiding clergyperson. Individuals would speak when spiritually moved to do so. Quakers frowned on lavish funeral arrangements, although refreshments were made available to those who had traveled long distances to attend. The body of the deceased would rest in the Meeting House in a coffin before being transported to the burying ground. Friends were warned against buying costly caskets and advised not to wear expensive mourning clothes. Quakers sometimes allowed non-Quakers to be buried in their cemeteries, if meeting members approved.

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<sup>32</sup>Research efforts at Swarthmore College, where regional Quaker records are kept, so far have not yielded a list of earlier Washington Quaker burials.

<sup>33</sup>Original Shoemaker deed 1807 and CFA deed to CUBA 1870]. [cite Deed and 1930 Quaker correspondence]

<sup>34</sup>Burials at The Sandy Spring Friends Meeting Graveyard and at The Woodside Cemetery 1754 to 2003, Graveyard and Grounds Committee of Sandy Spring Friends Meeting, Sandy Spring, Md., published circa 2003.

<sup>35</sup>Hinshaw, William Wade, "Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy," Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc., 1960-1973. Seaver died in Brookline, Mass., on January 13, 1864 (National Intelligencer, January 19, 1864).

<sup>36</sup>Shoemaker, Edward, Some Account of the Life and Family of George Shoemaker, privately printed, 1901.

**The Appearance of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery 1870-1890:** At a meeting of the Colored Union Benevolent Association on March 2, 1890, James F. Herbert asked his fellow members for “the privilege of hauling through the ground a few stones he had collected” to mark the grave of his recently deceased wife.<sup>37</sup> The Association granted Herbert’s request, which reflected a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century African American practice of marking graves with objects other than formally worked gravestones.

By contrast, CUBA member Gurden Snowden’s grave was marked with a \$900 stone monument. The resting place of Lindsay Muse, who was Gurden Snowden’s father-in-law, was similarly marked and surrounded by a post-and-chain-fence.<sup>38</sup> During the 1940 disinterment of 129 graves in the cemeteries, District officials documented the removal of 13 headstones.<sup>39</sup>

There were at least 8,428 burials in the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery, according to city death records. It is likely that graves were oriented in an east-west direction, which would be consistent with African American burial customs. Instead of headstones, many graves were marked by wooden headboards bearing painted messages. Seashells, broken pottery, toys and other special objects were laid on top of the graves of departed loved ones. An 1890 essay in *The Washington Post* describes a part of the cemetery in which “there was no sod over the graves. The earth was simply piled up in careless brown ridges ...” The essay continued:

“The first grave was elaborately decorated with clam shells, and that style was not neglected in others, but it was the children’s graves that attracted the startled eye of the beholder by the remarkable collection of motley objects heaped upon them—toys of all descriptions, dolls of rubber, of wax, of porcelain, beaten and shattered by wind and weather; toy dishes in various stages of fragmentary separation, tin stoves, so dear to the childish heart, lying rust-eaten and unlighted; hobby-horses, locomotives, carts and wagons scattered about in strange array. On infants’ resting-places lay bottles with rubber nipples ... on one small mound stood a rusty fire-engine waiting for action. ... A youthful gamester was accompanied to his last resting place by a pile of dominoes and building blocks. ... Strapped tightly to the board at the head of the next grave was a small doll seated in a chair. ...”

The *Post* essay describes “shaky wooden head-boards painted in scrawling characters, with unique spelling and occasional attempts at original poetry: ‘ROCHESTER G. SCOTT. Born—Died—Asleep in Jeasus [sic] ...’<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Colored Union Benevolent Association meeting minutes, National Archives Record Group 21.

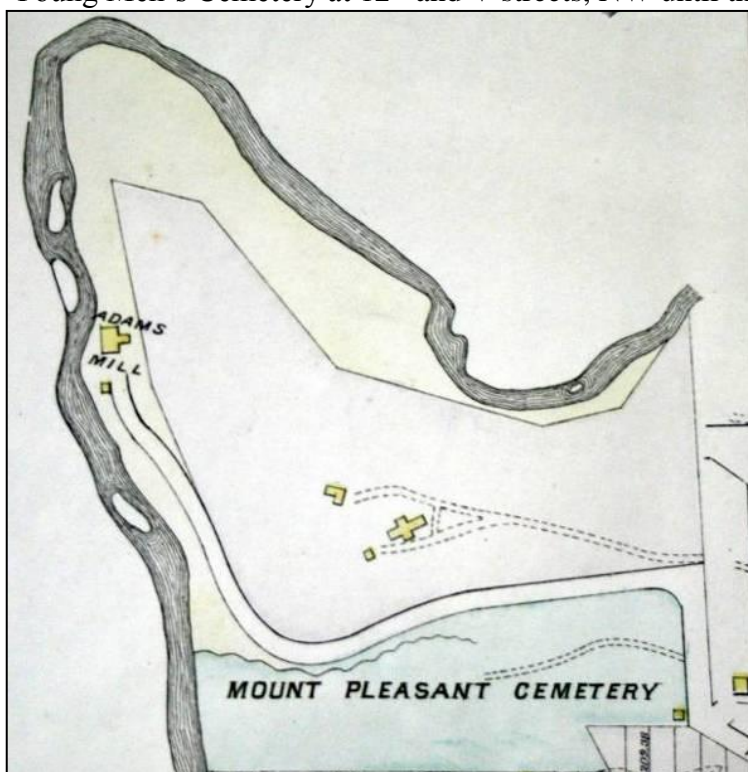
<sup>38</sup> Testimony of descendants in D.C. Equity Cause 24990, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>39</sup> T.M. Galloway memo, March 28, 1940, D.C. Equity Cause 46405, National Archives Record Group 21. The Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Team found at the site worked-stone fragments and two intact headstones, which were not inscribed. Former community gardeners reported finding at least one inscribed headstone in the northeastern section of the park.

<sup>40</sup>The *Washington Post*, February 2, 1890, “Ariadne and Erasmus;” see Appendix E for complete article. Rochester Scott’s death certificate was found by project researchers; it states that he was born in Virginia and worked as a hod carrier. He died at age 28 on August 10, 1888.

Physical improvements to Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery included fencing and a large entry gate at Adams Mill Road, roadways, a sexton's cottage, a tool shed, and a brick burial vault. Association member Gurden Snowden oversaw the improvements. In 1870, Snowden told fellow Association members he might be able to obtain fencing that was being removed from Franklin Square at 13<sup>th</sup> and I streets, N.W. He got permission from city officials to move a small watchman's house from Franklin Square for use as a cemetery sexton's cottage. In 1871, Snowden presented the Association with plans for a brick burial vault costing \$1,750.

It is unclear exactly when burials began taking place at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery once the Association purchased the site in 1870. Burials possibly continued at CUBA's Free Young Men's Cemetery at 12<sup>th</sup> and V streets, NW until the new site was prepared. The graves from the older cemetery at 12<sup>th</sup> & V streets were disinterred and moved to Mt. Pleasant Plains in 1873.



**Fig. 14:** An 1887 map shows entry into the cemetery from Adams Mill Road, as well as a small building at the southeast corner. The Quaker cemetery is not separately marked. (*Hopkins, G.M., real estate map, 1887*)

In 1872, Association members decided their own plots should be located to the left of the “center gate,” with space for eight graves for each member, according to Association minutes.

In 1876, the Association paved Adams Mill Road, which led from Columbia Road to the cemetery. In 1879, Snowden proposed enclosing the cemetery with 5,700 feet of yellow-pine fencing that would stand six feet high. In 1884, CUBA members discussed moving a tool house to the rear of the large gate and making improvements to the road leading to the vault.

An 1887 real estate map (Fig. 12) shows a single road leading into Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery from Adams Mill Road. A small

building—perhaps the tool shed or sexton's cottage—is located at the site's southeast corner. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey topographic map created in the late 1880s (Fig. 11), shows a cemetery road looping through the cemetery site from Adams Mill Road; it also shows the small building at the site's southeast corner. In 1890, The Washington Post reported: “At the gateway stood a tiny lodge, with a placard on the door, ‘Leave orders ---.’”<sup>41</sup> The small building

<sup>41</sup>The Washington Post, February 2, 1890, “Ariadne and Erasmus,” see Appendix E.

seen on the 1880s maps no longer appears on a 1907 map, three years after Adams Mill Road was widened and shaved off the cemetery's eastern edge.

The brick cemetery vault, according to one newspaper account, was located "down the hill" from the Adams Mill entry to the cemetery.<sup>42</sup> It might have been built into the hillside to take advantage of the cooling properties of the earth, similar to a vault that still exists today at Mt. Zion Cemetery in Georgetown.

In 1889, when the National Zoological Park Commission began eyeing for purchase the picturesque land along Rock Creek, staff member William Hornaday described the cemetery's appearance:

"Very few improvements and those of very little value. There is one brick vault. Enclosed by whitewashed board fence. Office building worth about \$200. Graves are principally marked by painted wooden head-boards. Marble headstones are few, comparatively. Roads and paths very rough. The lower end is not yet occupied, but is being opened up. ..."<sup>43</sup>

City Health Officer Smith Townshend in 1889 reported that "the ground is filled to overflowing, and the management has been driven to the extremity of manufacturing terraces on the ledges of rock in the extreme western portion."<sup>44</sup>

Hornaday's reference to the expansion of the cemetery into "lower end" of the site suggests that he might have been describing the site's western side, where the hillside drops to Rock Creek. This inference seems to be supported by Townshend's report that terraces were being built in the "extreme western portion" of the site to accommodate more burials.

**African American Funeral and Burial Customs:** African American funerals in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Washington could be elaborate affairs, according to news accounts. Members of social organizations would attend funerals dressed in special regalia and mourning gear.<sup>45</sup> Brass bands sometimes accompanied mourners on the march from the church to the cemetery. Hearses were horse-drawn carriages.<sup>46</sup>

On September, 3, 1884, The Washington Post reported on the funeral of John H. Brooks, the pastor of the Fifth Baptist Church at Vermont Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> St., NW, who was buried at

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<sup>42</sup> The Washington Post, September 3, 1884, "Brother Brooks Buried."

<sup>43</sup> Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 31, Box 78, folder 1, July 1, 1889, Hornaday notebook.

<sup>44</sup> Evening Star, Sept. 25, 1889, "Mount Pleasant Cemetery"

<sup>45</sup> Colored Union Benevolent Association members dressed in a subdued manor for funerals: Their rules required them to attend the funerals of fellow members in black suits and gloves, with crape on their left arms.

<sup>46</sup> "Carp's Washington" by Frank G. Carpenter, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1960.



Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery.<sup>47</sup> The article describes the event as the largest African American funeral ever witnessed in the District of Columbia. More than 5,000 people waited outside the church, which was “heavily draped in mourning,” while the funeral took place inside. The procession to the cemetery was led by 20 to 30 carriages filled with the members of “secret” African American societies, followed by hundreds of people on foot, by the hearse, and by 20 to 30 more carriages. Mounted police were on hand to control the crowds.

The news story describes the opening of large gates at the cemetery’s entrance, as the hearse and mourners “moved down the hill to the receiving vault.” Services were held in front of the vault. The remains then were placed in the vault, which was locked with a large key, before burial.<sup>48</sup>

Another burial at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery in 1884 was that of 28-year-old Isaac Tinney. “All of the colored societies of which the deceased or any of his family were members turned out in full regalia, accompanied by a brass band of considerable power,” The Post reported. “The hearse was surmounted by large plumes, and was drawn by four white horses. The attendance was very large and the procession attracted much attention from the colored population as it passed along the streets.”<sup>49</sup>

**PAUL REINLEIN'S**  
BRANCH PHARMACY,  
N. W. Cor. 9th & U Streets,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Dr. Paul,*  
*My Dear Dr*  
*If the Health Office*  
*can furnish a coffin*  
*for this case it will be*  
*a great kindness to the*  
*mother who is a widow*  
*Very truly yours*  
*George Henderson*  
*1916 9<sup>th</sup> St NW*  
*May 12 84*

MANIA, ACU  
MISCARRIAGE  
MALIGNANT  
MALFORMATI  
METRITIS—V  
NECROSIS—S  
OVARIAN T  
PARALYSIS—V  
PERITONITIS—  
PHLEBITIS—C  
PYEMIA—Ca  
REMATURE B  
REFERNATUR  
SYPHILIS—Va  
TETANUS—Na  
ULCER—Natu  
WOUNDS—Ca  
ABSCESS—Cau

GASTRITIS—Cause.  
\*HERNIA—Variety and Mode of Death.  
INSANITY—Variety and Mode of Death.  
JAUNDICE—Cause and Mode of Death.

Specify every Surgical Operation with fatal result.  
Mention INTemperance whenever recognized as having produced  
In Diseases marked thus \* state if operation has been performed.  
In cases of Deaths resulting from Violence, state whether Accidental,  
Legal Judgment.

Many burials at Mt. Pleasant Plains were far more modest events. Notations on death records show that the D.C. city government provided coffins and paid the burial costs for those who had no means to do so.

When 27-year-old laborer Andrew Whitley died in 1884, his neighbors and friends took up a collection to pay for his burial, according to notes on the back of his death certificate. “To help bury him” were H. Douglas, \$1.50; Mrs. Robinson, \$.50; cash contributions of \$.85; Alfred Curry, \$.15; Bridwell, \$.15; a Mr. or Miss Riley, \$.15; and S. Johns or Johnson, \$.50.<sup>50</sup>

**Figure 15:** At left, Dr. George Henderson on May 12, 1884, attached a note to the back of the death certificate of Charles Greenleaf, asking the city to provide a coffin for burial, “which will be a great kindness to the mother who is a widow.” Charles, age 10, died from scarlet fever. (D.C. Office of Records)

<sup>47</sup>Fifth Baptist Church is known today as Vermont Avenue Baptist Church.

<sup>48</sup>The Washington Post, September 3, 1884, “Brother Brooks Buried.”

<sup>49</sup>The Washington Post, June 2, 1884 “City News in Brief.” Isaac Tinney was the victim in a high-profile murder case. He was the son of Association member Charles Tinney.

<sup>50</sup>District of Columbia Death Certificate 41916, May 2, 1884, for Andrew Whitley, D.C. Office of Records.

## THE NAMES AND NUMBER OF THOSE BURIED IN THE CEMETERIES

By the 1880s, Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery had become the resting place for more than one in five of all African Americans who died in the District of Columbia during that decade. In

FORM No. 3. No. 36224

The Special Attention of Physicians is respectfully invited to the Remarks below, and to the List of Diseases on the back of this Certificate.

**CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.**

TO THE HEALTH OFFICER, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Permit No. 36224

Date of Death, February 19, 1883

Full name of Deceased, Charlotte Nugent

Sex, female

Age, about 80 Years, Months, Days.

Color, Colored

Married, Single, Widow, or Widower, [Cross out the words not] reported in this item.

Occupation

Birthplace, Prince George's Md

Nativity of Father, Md Nativity of Mother, Md (3)

Duration of Residence in the District of Columbia, 50 years

Place of Death, [Cross out] 1212 1/2 Maryland St. NW

First (Primary), Old age & Paralysis

Cause of Death, Duration, 14 1/2 days in bed

Second (Immediate), Paralysis

Duration of Last Sickness, 12 days in bed

All of the above information should be furnished by the Physician. In case of death by syncope disease, please state what, if any, local cause exists to produce same.

Place of Burial, Mt. Pleasant

Date of Burial, Feb 21 1883

Undertaker, Lem Williams

Place of Business, Pa Ave 1705

Address, 1212-1/2 NW

J. B. Bredemille, M. D.

Extract from Regulations of the Board of Health to secure a full and correct record of Vital Statistics in the District of Columbia.

Section 4. That whenever any person shall die within the District of Columbia it shall be the duty of the physician attending such person during his or her last sickness, or of the Coroner of the District, when the case comes under his official notice, to furnish and deliver to the undertaker, or other person superintending the burial of said deceased person, a certificate, duly signed, setting forth, as far as the same may be ascertained, the name, age, color, sex, nativity, (giving State or County), occupation, whether married or single, duration of residence in the District of Columbia, cause, date, and place of death, (giving street and number) and duration of last sickness of such deceased person. And it shall be the duty of the undertaker, or other person in charge of the burial of such deceased person, to sign in said certificate the date and place of burial, and, having signed the same, to forward it to the Registrar aforesaid within twenty-four hours after such death. Provided, That in case of death from any infectious or contagious disease, said certificate shall be so made and forwarded within eight hours. [encl.]

**Fig. 16:** Charlotte Norris Nugent, whose 1883 death certificate is shown above, was born enslaved in Prince George's County, Md. She was a co-founder of Asbury Methodist Church and an early educator in the District of Columbia. (D.C. Office of Records)

a review of available D.C. death records for the years 1855 to 1890, Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project researchers documented 8,428 burials at the site. The number of actual burials probably far exceeds the number of documented burials, because: (1) many burials in the Quaker cemetery (1807-1890) took place before the District began keeping death records in 1855; and (2) an unknown number of graves were reinterred at Mt. Pleasant Plains in 1873 from the earlier Free Young Men's Burial Ground (1849-1870) at 12<sup>th</sup> and V Streets, N.W. The number of burials in the Free Young Men's Cemetery is unknown because many occurred before D.C. death records were kept and because of large gaps in the records during the Civil War. According to contemporary news reports, some 400 to 1,900 more graves could have been reinterred at Mt. Pleasant Plains in 1873.<sup>51</sup>

Most of the documented burials in the cemeteries were those of children under age 5. Of the adult burials, most were born in Virginia and

Maryland. Most arrived in the District in the 1860s, among the thousands of African Americans who came to the District as refugees of the Civil War. For those adults whose birthplaces were

<sup>51</sup>The Washington Critic-Record on April 19, 1873, reported that 2,700 bodies had been moved from "Bethel Cemetery" to Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. Despite the reference to "Bethel Cemetery," the report coincides in time with the removal of graves from the Free Young Men's Cemetery and reburial in Mt. Pleasant Plains. The Washington Evening Star on April 9, 1873, reported that "contractors for the removal of dead bodies in the Young Men's burial ground ... have already carried to the new ground at Mount Pleasant about 900 bodies, and there remain probably 300 more to be removed ..." In 1890 court hearings, Cemetery Superintendent James F. Herbert said, "Over 2,000 were taken out of the old ground." Only 771 burials in the earlier cemetery could be documented from city death records available from 1855 to 1870.

**TABLE 2: WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT  
NUMBERS OF BURIALS AND AGES OF THOSE BURIED**

**OVERALL BURIALS**

Pre-death-certificate burials at Walter Pierce, January 1, 1871 - July 31, 1874:	251
Death certificate burials, August 1, 1874-June 15, 1890:	7,238
Documented reinterments (1873) from Young Men's Cemetery (1855-1870):	771
Documented reinterments (1881) from Holmead Cemetery:	<u>168</u>
<b>TOTAL DOCUMENTED BURIALS</b>	<b>8,428</b>

**BURIALS BY YEAR (NOT INCLUDING REINTERMENTS FROM ELSEWHERE)**

**Burials Recorded in the D.C. Register of Interments**

1/1/1871 – 12/31/1871: 67	1/1/1873 – 12/31/1873: 55
1/1/1872 – 12/31/1872: 54	1/1/1874 – 7/31/1874: 75

**Burials Recorded on D.C. Death Certificates**

8/1/1874-12/31/1874: 175	1/1/1880-12/31/1880: 421	1/1/1886-12/31/1886: 535
1/1/1875-12/31/1875: 485	1/1/1881-12/31/1881: 397	1/1/1887-12/31/1887: 494
1/1/1876-12/31/1876: 427	1/1/1882-12/31/1882: 412	1/1/1888-12/31/1888: 503
1/1/1877-12/31/1877: 335	1/1/1883-12/31/1883: 439	1/1/1889-12/31/1889: 424
1/1/1878-12/31/1878: 443	1/1/1884-12/31/1884: 559	1/1/1890-6/15/1890: 131
1/1/1879-12/31/1879: 423	1/1/1885-12/31/1885: 635	

**BURIALS BY AGE, DEATH-CERTIFICATE DATA ONLY (7,238 TOTAL)**

<b>Age 0-1:</b> 35.1% (2,543)	<b>Age 10-15:</b> 2.5% (183)
1-2: 12% (870)	15-20: 2.9% (210)
2-3: 4.8% (349)	<b>TOTAL age 10-20: 5.4% (393)</b>
3-4: 2.8% (203)	20-30: 7.6% (550)
4-5: 1.9% (136)	30-40: 6.2% (451)
<b>TOTAL under age 5: 56.7% (4,101)</b>	40-50: 5.5% (401)
5-6: 1.4% (103)	<b>TOTAL age 20-49: 19.4% (1,402)</b>
6-7: 1.4% (102)	50-60: 3.8% (276)
7-8: .9% (68)	60-70: 3.7% (265)
8-9: .8% (55)	70-80: 2.9% (211)
9-10: .6% (43)	80-90: 2% (148)
<b>TOTAL age 5 to 10: 5.1% (371)</b>	90-100: .6% (42)
<b>TOTAL age 0 to 10: 61.8% (4,472)</b>	100+: .3% (24)
	<b>TOTAL age 50-100+: 13.3% (966)</b>
	<b>TOTAL unknown age: .1% (5)</b>

*Source: Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project review of deaths and burials recorded in the D.C. Interment Register 1855-1874 and in D.C. Death Certificates 1874-1890.*

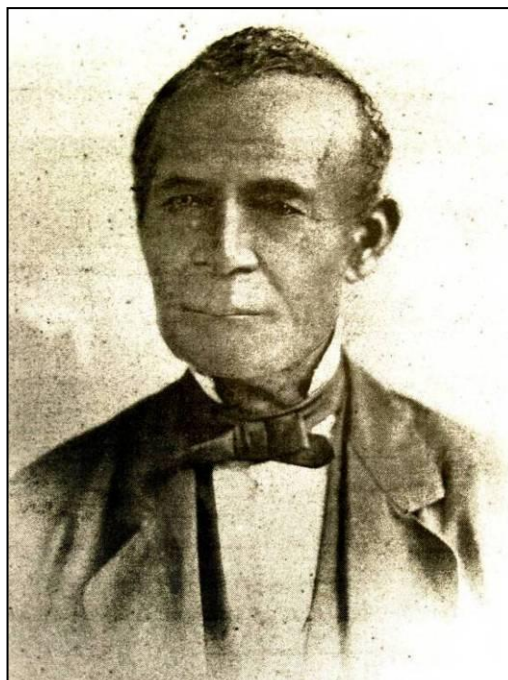
listed, the percentage born in the District were 12%; Maryland, 20%; Virginia, 60%; and other places, 8%. Other birthplaces included: Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

Although most of the adults buried in Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery came to the city during and immediately after the Civil War, many were long-time members of Washington's earliest African American community, including educators, church leaders and civic activists.

Charlotte Norris Nugent and Lindsay Muse, who were buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains, led one of Washington's first schools for African Americans in the racially charged decade of the 1830s. Muse, an elder in the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, was doorkeeper to the Secretary of the Navy for 60 years. Alexander and Matilda Hays were also founders of an early African American school in their home at Mt. Vernon Square.

John Shorter's family members were leaders in Union Bethel A.M.E. Church and its successor, Metropolitan A.M.E. Luke Carter (and his wife Sarah) were key allies of abolitionist William L. Chaplin.<sup>52</sup> The Carters, whose family struggles against the bonds of slavery were documented by Chaplin, are believed to have harbored fugitives seeking freedom in the 1848 *Pearl* escape attempt. At least 23 members of the extended Edmonson family were buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery, including matriarch Amelia Edmonson. Six of her enslaved children boarded the schooner *Pearl*. Two of them—Richard and Ephraim Edmonson—were buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains. Association member Charles H. Brown was an Asbury Methodist church leader and civil rights pioneer in the District, as mentioned earlier in this report.<sup>53</sup>

Curden Snowden, an Asbury Methodist Church trustee, helped raise the First Regiment of U.S. Colored Troops in 1863. To date, 35 U.S. Civil War soldier and sailors have been documented among those buried in the cemeteries (Table 3). It is probable that many more military veterans are buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains.



**Fig. 17:** Lindsay Muse, an elder in the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, was doorkeeper to 27 successive secretaries of the Navy. (*Moorland Spingarn Research Center, Howard University*)

<sup>52</sup>Harrold, Stanley, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2003.

<sup>53</sup>Archaeological team researchers could not find an official city record of Charles H. Brown's death, which occurred in 1868. His heirs testified in court that he was buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. National Archives Record Group 21.

**TABLE 3: CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS AND SAILORS  
BURIED IN MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY**  
(Names documented as of January 2012; research continues)

**1<sup>st</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Washington, D.C., May-June 1863**

**Crier, Thompson (or Thomas) M.**, private, Co. C; widow Martha. Thompson Crier enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment at the age of 13 and served as a drummer boy. Crier died on December 11, 1878, age 31, occupation painter, at 1613 12<sup>th</sup> St. NW.

**Edmonson, Richard Jr.**, private, Co. B; widow Sarah. Edmonson died on January 3, 1889, age 45, occupation waiter, at Baptist Alley between 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, E and F streets, N.W., behind Ford's Theatre.

**Ferguson, Louis (enlisted and served under the alias "William Henson")**, private, Co. E; widow Patsy. Ferguson died April 22, 1885, age 40, at 1343 S Street, N.W.

**Marks, Edward**, private, Co. B; widows Maria and Annie. Marks in 1863 ran away from enslavement near Petersburg, Va. He came to Washington and enlisted in the 1st Regiment. He died March 14, 1889, at age 55, occupation barber, at Freedmen's Hospital. Two widows vied for his pension: Maria, whom Marks married while enslaved; and Annie, whom Marks married later as a free man. The Pension Bureau upheld the legality of the slave marriage, awarding a widow's pension to Maria.

**Noble, Samuel**, private, Co. K; widow Fannie. Noble died July 3, 1888, age 48, occupation cook, at 1214 Blagden's Alley, N.W.

**Tolson, William E. (enlisted and served under the alias "John Gray")**, private, Co. B; widow Lettie. Tolson ran away from enslavement on the Prince George's County, Md., farm of Mrs. John Skinner, near the village of Nottingham. He came to Washington and enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment. He used an alias because he didn't want to be captured and returned to enslavement in Maryland. Tolson died July 2, 1886, age 39, occupation storekeeper, at 1758 T Street, N.W.

**White, Philip**, private, Co. I, widow Martha. White died May 2, 1884, age 48, occupation hod carrier, at 410 18<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**2<sup>nd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Arlington, Va., June-November 1863**

**Boyd, John**, Co. C. Boyd, who was emancipated April 16, 1862, died March 31, 1868, age 22, a laborer.

**Davis, Reuben**, private, Co. B; widow Jane. Davis died July 27, 1887, age 39, occupation laborer, at 1706 Glick's Alley between 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, S and T Streets, N.W.

**TABLE 3: SOLDIERS AND SAILORS, MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY (Cont.)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, (Cont.)**

**Fox, Charles**, private, Co. I; widow Lucinda. Fox died February 10, 1886, age 53, occupation plasterer, at 618 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW.

**Gray, Reuben**, private, Co. E; widow Lucy. Gray died June 18, 1886, age 46, occupation laborer, at 1736 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**Johnson, Joseph**, private, Co. H.; widow Maria Louisa. Johnson died June 10, 1889, age 56, occupation laborer, at Freedmen's Hospital.

**Smith, Adam**, private, Co. C; mother Fannie, father William. Smith died March 5, 1866, age 25, occupation "late soldier."

**Williams, Charles**, private, Company I; widow Carrie. Williams died October 7, 1885, age 40, occupation cook, 632 New York Avenue, N.W.

**4<sup>th</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Baltimore, Md., July-September 1863**

**Magruder, Enoch**, private, Co. F; widow Harriet. Magruder was enslaved near Piscataway, Prince George's County, Md., and was drafted. He died February 6, 1871; his widow reported to Pension officials that his death certificate incorrectly stated his age as 26; in fact, it should have been 46.

**Smith, Robert M.**, private, Co. D; widow Priscilla. Smith died December 15, 1882, age 55, occupation barber, at Foundry Place between 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, G and H Streets, N.W.

**11<sup>th</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, organized at Providence, R.I., Aug. 1863-Jan. 1864**

**Burley (Berley), Fletcher**, corporal, Co. M, enlisted at Providence in 1863 and mustered out in New Orleans in 1865. Burley died at age 27 on November 29, 1873.

**22<sup>nd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn, Pa., Feb.-March 1864**

**Weir (Ware), James**, private, Co. A; widow Amy. Ware died March 10, 1890, age 54, at Freedmen's Hospital.

**TABLE 3: SOLDIERS AND SAILORS, MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY (Cont.)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Camp Casey, Va., Nov. 1863-June 1864**

**Boon(e), John**, private, Co. H; widow Elizabeth. Boon died August 26, 1887, age 68, occupation laborer, at 713 Freeman's Alley.

**Churchwell, Benjamin**, corporal promoted to sergeant, Co. I; widow Maria. Born enslaved at Port Royal, Virginia, he was wounded during the siege of Petersburg, Virginia. He died April 16, 1883, age 45, occupation laborer, on I Street between Half and S. Capitol Streets.

**Holland, Sandy (Alexander)**, private, Co. G; widow Mary. Holland died August 30, 1888, age 52, occupation laborer, at 121 First Alley between K and L Streets.

**Johnson, Samuel**, private, Co. K; widow Louisa. Samuel died July 20, 1888, age 48, at Freedmen's Hospital.

**Triplett, Addison**, private, Co. A; widow Louisa. Triplett died January 15, 1887, age 48, occupation laborer, at 1817 Cedar Street, N.W.

**28<sup>th</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Indianapolis, Indiana, April 1864**

**Johnson, William**, private, Co. K or H. Johnson died July 3, 1884, age 45, at Freedmen's Hospital

**32<sup>nd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Camp William Penn, Pa., Feb.- March 1864**

**Bell, Louis (Lewis)**, private, Co. E; widow Mary. Bell died January 3, 1886, age 56, occupation laborer, at 1334 15<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**Lewis, John**, private, Co. B; widow Amy. Lewis died October 2, 1882, age 42, on Franklin Street between 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, P and Q Streets, N.W.

**Taylor, Andrew Jackson**, private, Co. D; widow Emma. Taylor died September 22, 1876, age 45, occupation waiter, at 210 Jackson Alley, N.W.

**38<sup>th</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized in Virginia, January 1864**

**Turner, Henry**, private, Co. K; widow Julia. Turner died December 7, 1884, age 55, occupation laborer, at 1510 10<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**TABLE 3: SOLDIERS AND SAILORS, MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY (Cont.)**

**43<sup>rd</sup> REGIMENT, U.S. Colored Infantry, organized at Philadelphia, March-June 1864**

**Johnson, Robert**, private, Co. K; widow Mary. Johnson died June 3, 1884, age 48, occupation whitewasher, at Union Alley between 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, L and M Streets, N.W.

**54th REGIMENT, Massachusetts Colored Vol. Infantry, organized at Readville, Mass., May 1863**

**Stevenson, Samuel**, corporal, Co. K. He was wounded in battle three times, including at Morris Island, S.C.; Honey Hill, S.C.; and Olustee, Fla. Stevenson died September 19, 1882, age 44, at 614 25<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**CAPT. BARNES' UNASSIGNED U.S. Colored Infantry**

**Walker, Washington**, private, Co. A.; widow Jane. Walker died April 15, 1886, age 62, occupation cooper, at 917 Hughes Alley between 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, I and K Streets, N.W.. He was buried at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. He was disinterred June 8, 1895, from Mt. Pleasant Plains and reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery

**U.S. NAVY**

**Ball, Griffin**, enlisted at New York in 1862. Ball died March, 4, 1875, age 70, occupation laborer, at 1710 K Street, N.W. Ball, born in Northumberland County, Va., was a longtime coach driver in Washington, D.C.

**Frazier, Hamilton**, enlisted at New York in 1864 and served until 1865 on the vessels *North Carolina*, *Horace Beals*, and *Wyandank*. His widow was Elizabeth. He died July, 30, 1876, age 45, occupation cook at Ebbitt House, at 1313 Alley behind New York Avenue.

**Gales, Eli**, enlisted at Washington in 1864 and served until 1865 on the vessels *Thomas Freeborn*, *Ella*, and *Resolute*. His widow was Laura. Gales died June 6, 1889, age 46, at 1533 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.

**Holmes, McKenzie**, enlisted off Cape Fear in 1862 and served until 1864 on the vessel *Maratanza*. He died November 4, 1877, age 40, occupation laborer, at 1817 T Street, N.W.

**Young, Edward Owen**, served on the U.S.S. *Bibb*, with the U.S. Coast Survey. Young died October 21, 1875, age 29, occupation waiter, at 1013 18<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.



## THE CLOSURE OF MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY, 1890

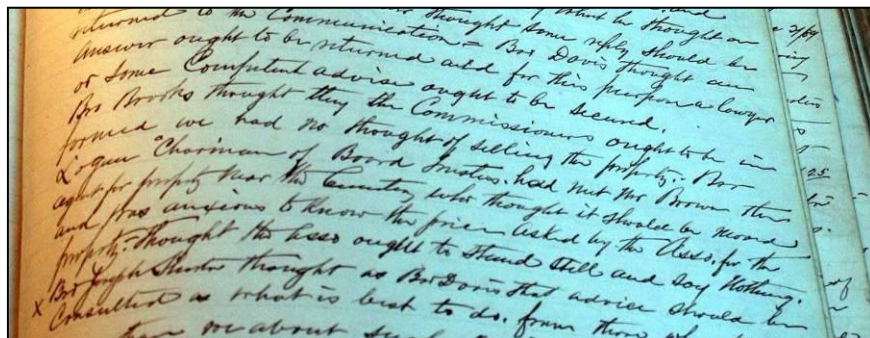
In the spring of 1889, Colored Union Benevolent Association members got a surprise inquiry from a man named William Hornaday, who was scouting locations for a new National Zoological Park: What was the best price at which they would sell their cemetery?

On April 24, 1889, a special meeting was held at the home of James H. Wright at 920 20<sup>th</sup> Street, NW. President Isaac Clarke called the meeting to order, and Pastor Sandy Alexander led a prayer. According to the minutes, “The president stated that the meeting had been called to consider a communication from the Zoological Park, asking that the association furnish them with a written statement of the lowest price at which they will agree to sell the Young Men’s Colored Baptist [sic] Cemetery situated on Rock Creek between Cliffbourne and the Columbia Mill property.”<sup>54</sup>

Member Charles H. Shorter moved that “no answer be returned.” Henry Brooks said the Zoo commissioners should be told “we had no thought of selling the property.” Henry Logan said the “Association ought to stand still and say nothing.” Hamilton Martin was concerned that “silence might hurt our cause or insult the commissioners.” James F. Herbert had spoken to Zoo

officials at the site earlier in the day; he said they wanted an answer in a week. After a long debate, Shorter’s motion not to respond to the Zoo query carried 10-3.

William Hornaday, a Smithsonian staffer, suggested to the Zoo Commission that the cemetery should cost about \$15,000. He said the “hillside would make a



**Fig. 18:** Page 333 of the Colored Union Benevolent Association Minutes Book contains members’ reactions to the Zoo Commission’s request to buy the cemetery, at a special meeting April 24, 1889. (National Archives Record Group 21)

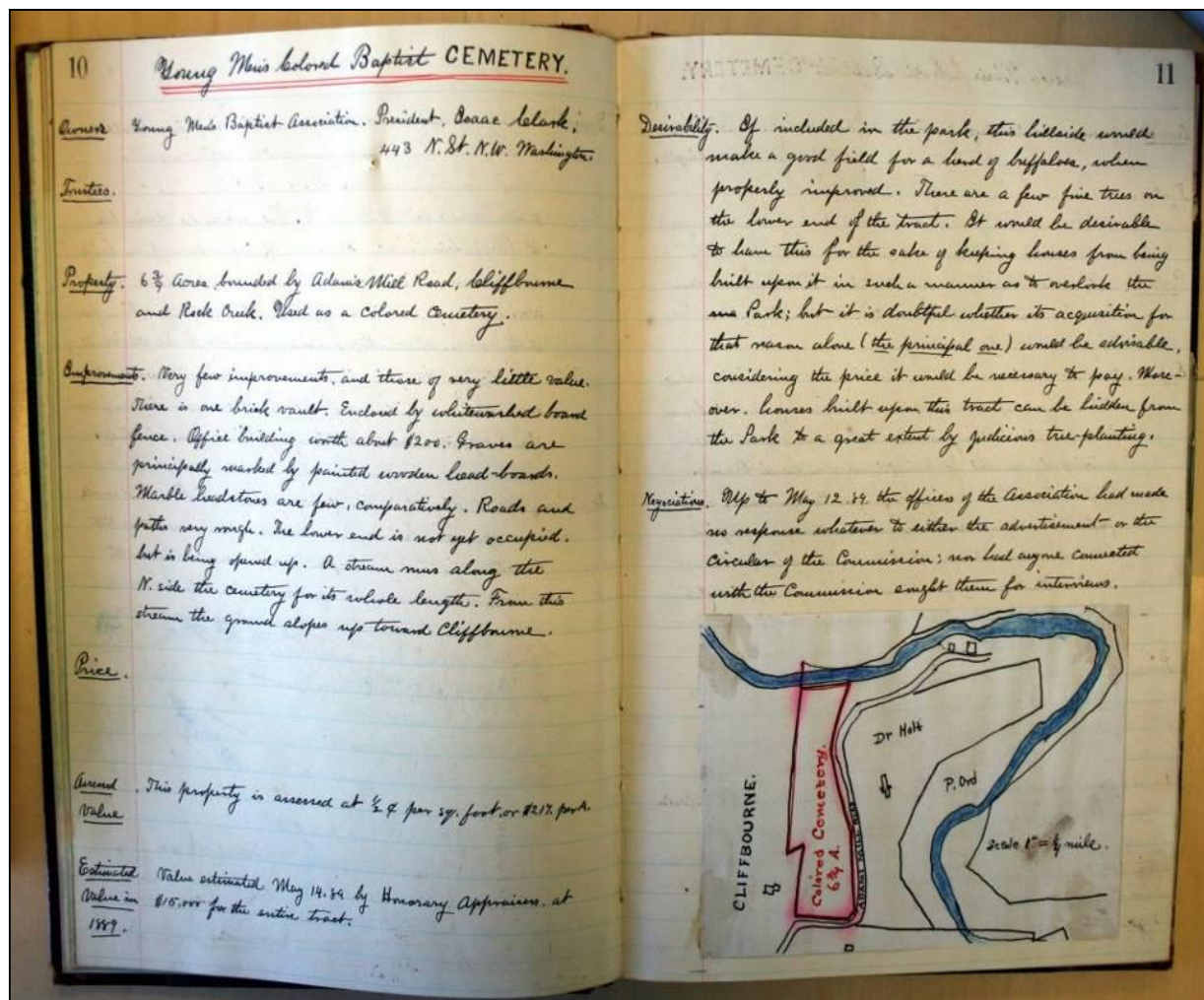
good field for a herd of buffaloes,” and the land could buffer the Zoo from neighborhood development.<sup>55</sup> Instead of the entire cemetery, the commissioners decided to buy 1.7 acres along its northern edge, providing that it cost no more than \$4,000 and that the Association would remove the graves.<sup>56</sup> Hornaday told the Zoo Commission in early July that the cemetery directors had promised to set a price “on the narrow strip of almost worthless land . . . and also to estimate the cost of moving the few bodies that would require removal (from 75 to 100).” He

<sup>54</sup>Colored Union Benevolent Association Minutes Book, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>55</sup> William Hornaday field notes, 1889, Smithsonian Institution Archives Record Unit 31

<sup>56</sup>Zoological Park Commission minutes, July 2, 1889; Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 31, Box 78

said the desired strip of land “is a wet hollow, wholly unused up to date, but admirably adapted for the growth of trees to form a thick screen between the park and cemetery.”<sup>57</sup>



**Fig. 19:** In his 1889 field notes, William Hornaday listed the pros and cons of purchasing the “Young Men’s Colored Baptist Cemetery”—his name for Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery—for the new National Zoo. (Smithsonian Institution Archives Record Unit 31)

The Colored Union Benevolent Association continued to resist setting a price. In the face of this stalemate, the Zoo Commission received a helpful boost from neighbors and developers who were anxious to force the entire Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery to close. On July 18, 1889, Hornaday wrote Smithsonian Secretary S.P. Langley:

“An important move is on foot in regard to the Cemetery—or rather the 4-1/2 acres not to be included in the Park. The Cliffbourn [sic] people sent a representative (Mr. Austin P. Brown) to see whether the Commissioners cannot be induced to include all the cemetery

<sup>57</sup>Zoo Park Commission minutes, July 1, 1889, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 31, Box 78.

in the Park, urging the fact that it is impossible for anyone but the government to acquire the place, and that only under the powers granted by our Act. I stated the views and the position of the Commissioners in the matter, and advised the Cliffbourne representative to have his people form a 'pool,' raise the money necessary to pay for the 4-1/2 acres remaining (about \$10,000) and turn it over to the Commission to enable them to take the balance of the Cemetery and make it a portion of the Park. This was treated lightly at first, but very soon the representative came down to business, and (informally) offered to raise half the money necessary if the Commission could pay the other half and take the ground. I declared that would not do, and that they must raise it all, which would even then leave the Commission trouble enough in the matter. ...

"I had an interview with [Interior] Secretary [John W.] Noble in regard to the matter, knowing his aversion to doing anything with the cemetery, and he declared his willingness to meet the Cliffbourne people half way ..."<sup>58</sup>

In September 1889, Assistant Smithsonian Secretary G. Browne Goode, who had bought land near the planned Zoo, led a group of men petitioning the city to close the cemetery due to unsanitary conditions. On September 25, 1889, The Washington Star reported:

**MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY  
THE HEALTH OFFICER RECOMMENDS THAT NO MORE  
INTERMENTS BE MADE THERE**

Health Officer [Smith] Townshend yesterday transmitted to the Commissioners [of the District of Columbia] his report, on the complaint of Mr. G. Browne Goode and sixty-eight other residents of Mount Pleasant, asking that further interments in what is known as the "Young Men's Baptist" or "Mount Pleasant" cemetery be forbidden. 'As will be seen by the plat,' says the report, 'this cemetery is located on Adams' Mill road, adjoining Lanier Heights, and contains about six and three-quarters acre of land. I find, upon examination, that the ground is filled to overflowing, and the management have been driven to the extremity of manufacturing terraces on the ledges of rock in the extreme western portion. The records show that 4,757 interments have been made in this piece of land within the past ten years. The character and formation of the ground now being used, together with its crowded condition, render it advisable and necessary to this fast growing section that further interments be discontinued at once. I would recommend that further permits in this cemetery be refused.'<sup>59</sup>

On October 2, 1889, the District Commissioners informed the Colored Union Benevolent Association that an application had been made "for an order discontinuing the interment of the dead in the Young Men's Baptist Cemetery [sic], on the ground that the health of the neighborhood is imperiled by reason of its use for such purposes." The Commissioners said they were "disposed to issue the order required, unless good reason is shown why this course should

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<sup>58</sup> Smithsonian Archives, Record Unit 31, Box 78.]

<sup>59</sup>Neither the petition nor the report to which this article refers could be located among the records of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia at the National Archives.

not be taken.”<sup>60</sup> On October 12, 1889, the Evening Star reported that the Association trustees told the Commissioners “it was not true that the cemetery was over-crowded, but thought the whole fuss the result of the efforts of real estate men who want the cemetery removed to enhance the vale of their property.” Asked about the depth of the graves, the trustees replied they were of “regulation” depth.<sup>61</sup>

In March 1890, the District Commissioners directed the City Health Officer “to refuse to issue, after May 1, 1890, any permits for interment in The Young Men’s Baptist Cemetery [sic] on the Adams Mill road.”<sup>62</sup> The final burial at the cemetery took place June 17, 1890.

In May 1890, the Association’s 16 members voted to suspend members’ benefits. They hired a lawyer to negotiate the sale of 1.7 acres of the cemetery’s northern edge to the Zoo. They would not sell the land voluntarily, stating that a court would have to set a price and condemn the land. Another sticking point: The Zoo wanted bodies removed from the land they wanted to purchase, but the Association would not provide a firm number on how many graves were on the property. In condemnation proceedings, Association Secretary Charles H. Shorter said the Association had “studiously avoided” making an estimate of the number of graves.

The appraisers asked cemetery superintendent James F. Herbert whether 250 bodies might lie in the land desired by the Zoo. “More than that,” Herbert testified, while providing contradictory figures on the number of reburials from the Association’s first cemetery. “There were seven hundred and fifty brought from the old ground [the earlier Free Young Men’s Cemetery]. Over two thousand were taken out of the old ground and put in the new ground, but not all on that side [of the proposed Zoo fence line].” Asked whether there were more than 500 graves within the proposed Zoo fence line, Herbert said, “I think there are over nine hundred altogether.” He affirmed that many were children. He estimated the cost of moving bodies to be \$5 per body, or slightly less per removal if many had to be moved.<sup>63</sup>

In August 1890, the National Zoological Park Commission agreed to pay the Association \$3,000 for the 1.7-acre strip of land, including \$1,000 to remove an unspecified number of bodies from the property. The Commissioners of the District of Columbia gave the Association permission to re-bury the bodies in the remaining cemetery land. By December 1890, the removal of the bodies from Zoo ground had been completed, but the number of removals was never specified.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Letter from W. Tindall, secretary to the D.C. Board of Commissioners, October 2, 1889, to the Colored Union Benevolent Association, National Archives Record Group 21.

<sup>61</sup> Evening Star, October 12, 1889, “The Young Mens Baptist Cemetery”

<sup>62</sup> Minutes of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, Vol. 4, Oct. 1890 to July 1891, p. 159, National Archives Record Group 351.

<sup>63</sup> Condemnation proceedings, U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia, Case 358,, National Archives Record Group 21.

<sup>64</sup> Memorandum of agreement, August 15, 1890, cite National Archives Record Group for condemnation proceedings; Association minutes of August 20, 1890; William B. Webb to Frank Baker, December 8, 1890, Smithsonian Archives Record Unit 74, Box 110

## **THE CLOSURE OF THE QUAKER CEMETERY, 1890**

There is no mention of the quarter-acre Quaker Cemetery in documents pertaining to the closure of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. The men who petitioned the City Health Office to close the African American Cemetery did not refer to the Quaker land. It is unknown whether this was an oversight, whether burials had ceased taking place in the Quaker Cemetery, or whether the cemeteries were perceived as a single burial ground.

In 1890, Edward Shoemaker, a descendant of cemetery founder Jonathan Shoemaker, asked the Alexandria Monthly Meeting (which oversaw the Washington Meeting) to cede to the Shoemaker heirs any claim it had on the burial ground, effectively closing it to further burials. The Alexandria Meeting on October 8, 1890, assented. Questions would arise decades later whether the Alexandria Meeting had authority to bequeath the property to the Shoemaker heirs.

## **THE CEMETERIES AFTER 1890: DISSOLUTION, DISRUPTION, DISAPPEARANCE**

The 1890 closure of the cemeteries began a series of physical disruptions to the site that would continue over the next hundred years. As the neighborhood developed, cemetery heirs mounted legal efforts to allow the sale of the cemeteries. At least seven major physical disruptions occurred at the site, including:

- (1) the 1890 sale of 1.7 acres of the cemetery to the National Zoological Commission;
- (2) the 1904 widening of Adams Mill Road, requiring the removal of 37 bodies along the cemetery's eastern boundary;
- (3) the 1929 sale of the western hillside of the cemetery to the federal government for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway;
- (4) the 1890 and 1934-35 construction and reconstruction of the Calvert Street Bridge adjacent to the cemetery's southwestern corner;
- (5) the 1940 mass disinterment, in which 390 exploratory openings were made and 129 full and partial sets of remains were removed in preparation for sale of the site;
- (6) the 1959 excavations by Shapiro Brothers developers for four large apartment buildings; and
- (7) the 1982 construction of Walter C. Pierce Community Park.

### **The Widening of Adams Mill Road, 1904**

In its early years, the Zoo's main entrance was from the east. Many patrons walked from the new trolley stop on Calvert Street, through the cemeteries, and down old Adams Mill Road to Rock Creek and the Zoo. In 1899, Zoo officials notified the Colored Union Benevolent Association about their desire to widen Adams Mill Road. Zoo officials said that "about 3,510 square feet of the cemetery would be required" to widen the road. They asked the Association to put a price on the land. Association members voted not to respond to the Zoo's request.<sup>65</sup> Zoo officials and local developers persisted. After federal funding became available in 1900 for the

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<sup>65</sup> Colored Union Benevolent Association minutes, October 4, 1899, National Archives Record Group 21

project, The Washington Post boasted: “This new road will be one of the most delightful drives in the city, and will be the real approach to the Zoo.”<sup>66</sup>

In 1902, the federal government began condemnation proceedings to buy 6,067 square feet at the eastern edge of the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery so that Adams Mill Road could be widened. The Colored Union Benevolent Association was awarded \$3,033.50 for the land, or \$.50 per square foot, and \$555 for the removal of 37 bodies.<sup>67</sup> The road was widened in 1904.

### **The Heirs’ Legal Efforts to Sell the Land 1903-1941**

As land values climbed in the rapidly developing northern section of the city, several heirs of Colored Union Benevolent Association members mounted a legal attack on the group’s surviving trustees to sell the property. Quaker heirs soon followed on a similar path.

In 1903 and 1904, Gurden Snowden (Jr.), son of deceased Association member Gurden Snowden, and Dennis Tinney, son of deceased member Charles Tinney, asked the District Supreme Court to wind up the affairs of the Colored Union Benevolent Association.<sup>68</sup> Snowden, Tinney, and 23 other plaintiffs told the court: “The said burial ground is in a neglected and uncared for condition and is situated at the entrance of the Zoological Park much above the grade of Adams Mill Road and in the immediate neighborhood of a closely built up and valuable portion of the City of Washington.” The cemetery, they said, was “an injury to the property in its immediate neighborhood and an obstacle in the way of improvement of an extension of the City.” In 1908, the court dismissed the lawsuit and awarded costs to the defendants, who were the several surviving trustees of the Association.

Also in 1904, Edward Shoemaker, the grandson of Quaker cemetery founder Jonathan Shoemaker, asked the District Supreme Court to order a sale of the Quaker cemetery, with the proceeds to be shared by the Shoemaker heirs.<sup>69</sup> Edward Shoemaker, claiming that the Alexandria Monthly Meeting of Quakers had relinquished all interest in the property in 1890, told the court that sale proceeds should go to the heirs “after paying the costs attending the removal of bodies interred therein.” From 1904 to 1906, a parade of Shoemaker heirs consented to the sale of the land. The case was dismissed following the death of Edward Shoemaker in June 1906.

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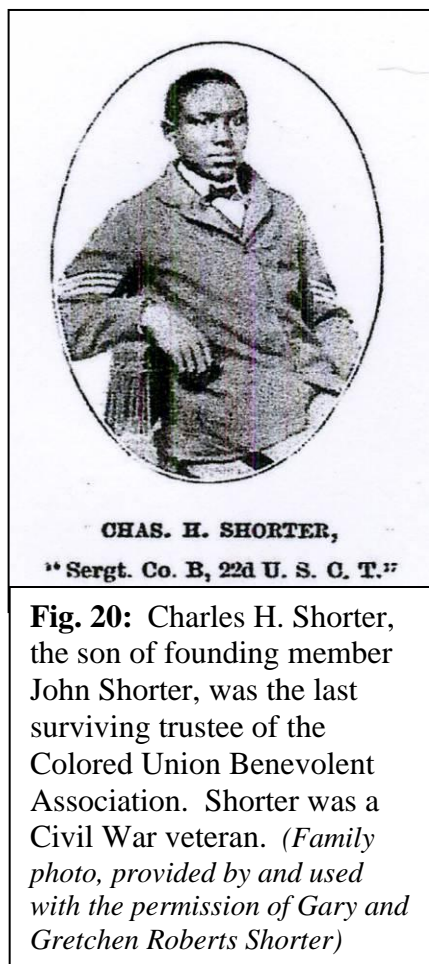
<sup>66</sup> The Washington Post, February 25, 1900, “Real Estate Market”

<sup>67</sup> U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia, case 589, National Archives Record Group 21. Association records suggest that the 37 bodies removed from the eastern edge of the cemetery were reinterred at Payne’s Cemetery on Benning Road in southeast Washington, although no permit for the removal and reburial of remains could be located in the D.C. Office of Records.

<sup>68</sup> D.C. Equity Cause 24866, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>69</sup> D.C. Equity Cause 24990, National Archives Record Group 21

### **Charles H. Shorter Seeks to Dissolve the Association, 1913**



**Fig. 20:** Charles H. Shorter, the son of founding member John Shorter, was the last surviving trustee of the Colored Union Benevolent Association. Shorter was a Civil War veteran. (*Family photo, provided by and used with the permission of Gary and Gretchen Roberts Shorter*)

On January 6, 1913, sole surviving Association trustee Charles H. Shorter asked the D.C. Supreme Court to dissolve the Colored Union Benevolent Association, which had been congressionally chartered. He asked that the graves in the cemetery be exhumed and reinterred elsewhere. He asked the court to appoint trustees to sell the land and distribute the assets. Shorter's court filing was explicit about the removal of remains: "That by reason of the absence of any monuments or other marks on any of the graves and of any records of the place or interment of any persons and of the fact that a large number of the remains there interred have been taken up and removed from the portions of said cemetery which have been sold, he [plaintiff Shorter] has no means of identifying the persons who were interred in the remaining graves, but he is advised that it is the duty of the defendant corporation [the Colored Union Benevolent Association] to provide a suitable place for the removal to and reinterment of said remains, and that because it can no longer maintain the said cemetery, the removal of said remains should be directed by the decree of the Court, and the said land decreed to be sold, and the proceeds disposed of under the direction and decrees of this Court."<sup>70</sup>

Charles H. Shorter died at the age of 72 in 1916, before the case was resolved. The proceedings continued, however, and his requests were granted by an act of Congress in 1923.<sup>71</sup>

Congress named three trustees to oversee the Association's assets: George E. Emmons, Harry A. Clarke,<sup>72</sup> and Whitefield McKinlay. Congress directed them to provide "a suitable place" to reinter those buried in Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. The new trustees returned to the D.C. Supreme Court so that the Congressional directives could be carried out. The court would decide who was entitled to claim the Association's assets, and how graves would be removed from the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. The case lasted from 1926 to 1941.

### **Western Hillside Sold for Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, 1929; the Jackson Hill Tunnel Is Built, 1966**

In 1929, the trustees overseeing the Colored Union Benevolent Association's assets sold approximately 1.4 acres of the cemetery to the U.S. government for \$25,064.<sup>73</sup> The land was the

<sup>70</sup>D.C. Equity Cause 31527, Shorter v. CUBA, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>71</sup>Public Law 526, 67<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.R. 13617

<sup>72</sup>Harry A. Clarke, an attorney, was the grandson of the late Association trustee Isaac Clarke.

<sup>73</sup>D.C. Land Records, Liber 6351, folio 171, June 21, 1929

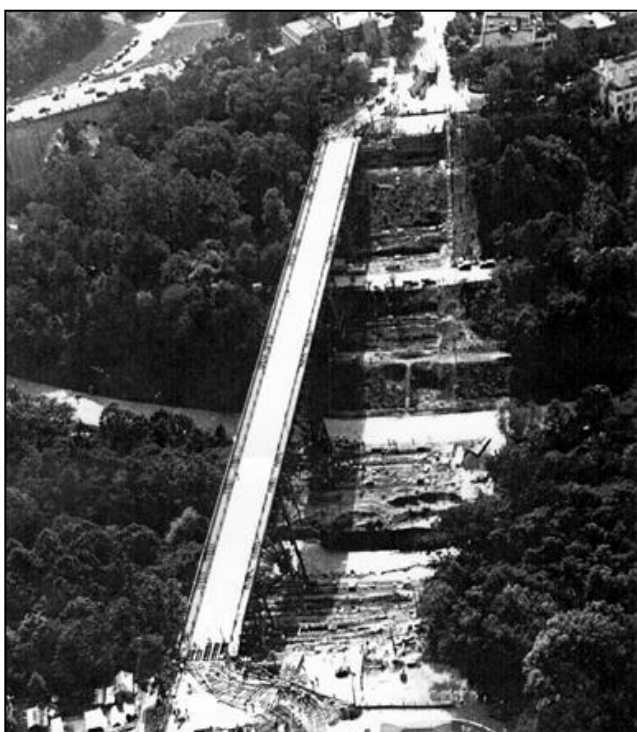
cemetery's western hillside, leading down to Rock Creek. It became part of the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway, which was being built to connect the southern end of the Zoo with the Potomac River. There is no indication in court records that any bodies had to be moved to allow the sale of the cemetery's western hillside to the federal government.

In 1966, the final connection between the southern tip of Rock Creek Park, which ended just north of the Zoo, and the Potomac River was made with the construction of a tunnel under Jackson Hill on the Zoo's southern border. Before the tunnel was built, cars had to ford the creek near the old Columbia Mills and drive through the Zoo to reach points north and east of it. Part of the Jackson Hill land had been cemetery land purchased by the Zoo in 1890. Although all graves were reportedly removed from the Zoo land in 1890, it is unknown whether any graves were disturbed in the construction of the tunnel.

### **Calvert Street Bridge Construction, 1891 and 1934-35**

The Rock Creek Railway Company in 1891 constructed an iron bridge over Rock Creek, abutting the southwest corner of the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. It is unknown whether the construction of this 750-foot long iron viaduct bridge had an impact on the cemetery, but it is likely. The bridge, which extended Calvert Street to meet Connecticut Avenue, underwent several alterations before it was replaced in 1934. It is likely that the newer, much more substantial bridge, with massive concrete footings, had an impact on the abutting cemetery land, but that impact is unknown. The greatest potential impact would have been on graves on the west hillside of the cemetery, which was acquired by the federal government in 1929 for the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway.

During the 1934-35 construction of the bridge—now the Duke Ellington Bridge--the older Calvert Street Bridge was moved 80 feet downstream to allow traffic to continue to cross the creek. When the new span opened, the old bridge was removed.<sup>74</sup>



**Fig. 21:** Aerial view of the Calvert Street bridge during construction in 1934-35, showing the earlier bridge moved temporarily downstream. (*Washington, D.C., Historical Society*)

<sup>74</sup>Proctor, John, *The Evening Star*, January 28, 1934, "Rock Creek Bridges Tell Story of City's Growth"



### **The 1930s: The Physical Appearance of the Cemeteries Site**

After the last burial at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery in June 1890, it was kept tended for a number of years, according to Colored Union Benevolent Association heirs, describing visits to the graves of family members in court testimony. A post-and-rail fence surrounded the Quaker Cemetery until at least 1904, according to Edward Shoemaker. Two photographs of the site in the 1920s and 1930s show the property covered with trees, but cemetery details are indiscernible in these photos. Quakers in the early 1930s found parts of a fence and one headstone still standing in their burial ground, as well as a rough stone marking one corner of the cemetery.<sup>75</sup>

By the early 1930s, what had once been the site of one of Washington's busiest burying grounds had become a forlorn-looking place:

“North of Calvert Street, behind the row of buildings, are two abandoned cemeteries—ghostly relics of early days. One was the Quaker Burying Ground, and the other a colored cemetery, the Colored Union Beneficial [sic] Association, CUBA for short. Not all of the graves have been removed from the last-named burying ground, and a few fallen tombstones and an empty and crumbling vault are still to be seen.”<sup>76</sup>

In 1940, the attorney for the Colored Union Benevolent Association heirs told the D.C. Supreme Court, “I have been on this property many times for the purpose of trying to find out the location of their graves. There were very few tombstones. There was only one roadway or walkway left to identify anything. The receiving vault had been destroyed, but there were remains of it.”<sup>77</sup>

### **Developers Eye the Land; Quakers Resist; Mass Disinterment of Remains: 1932-1940**

In 1932, real estate developers approached the Friends Meeting of Washington (Quakers), seeking to buy the quarter-acre Quaker Cemetery. Harold Stabler, a member of the Friends Meeting's Property Committee, reported that a developer named Eugene Taggart “had an ambitious scheme for an apartment house at this location, and states that he has already acquired the larger burying ground (for colored people) ... and wants the little Quaker cemetery for private tennis courts for the apartments.”<sup>78</sup>

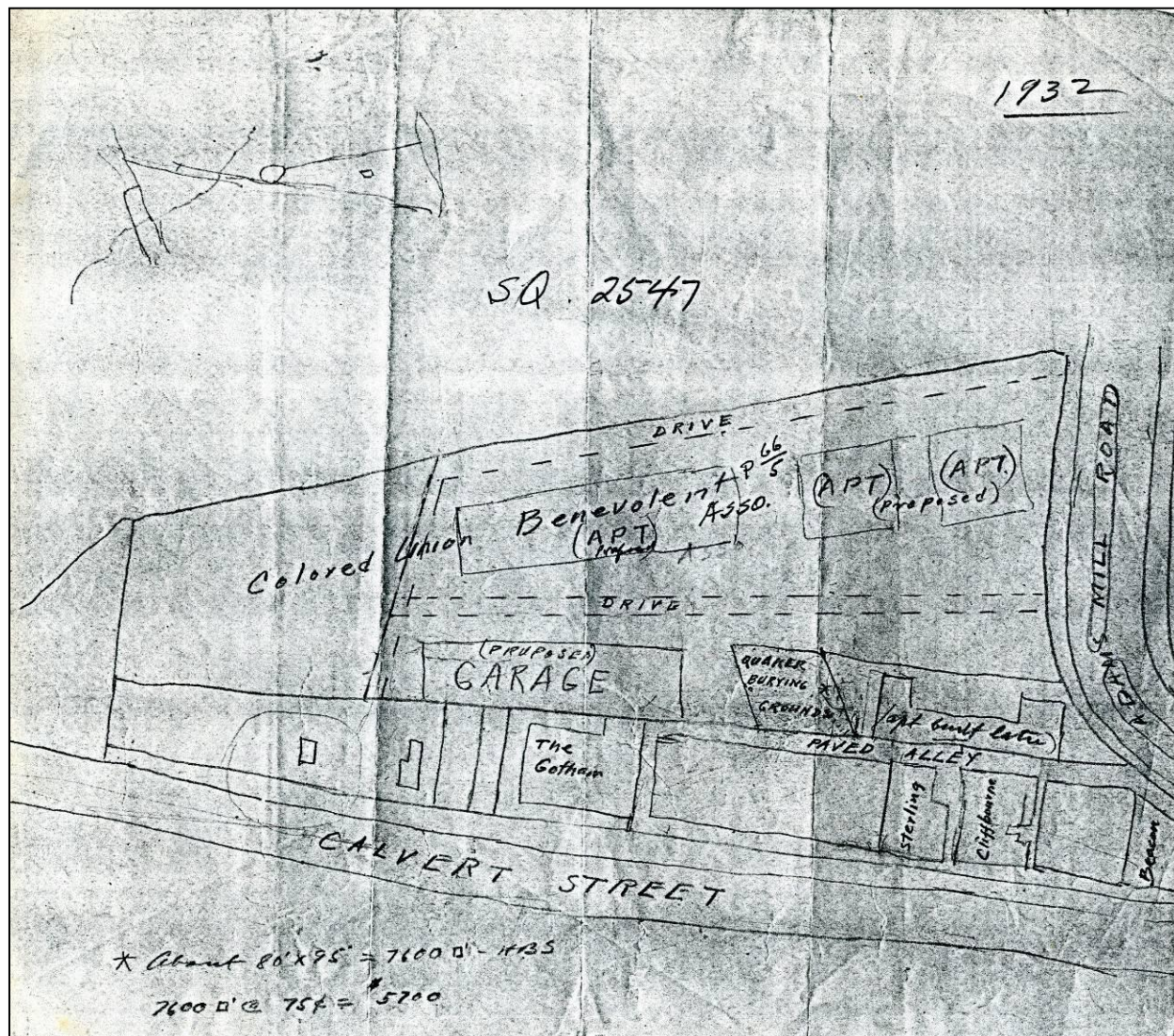
<sup>75</sup> Letter from Harold Stabler to Herbert S. Lewis, May 20, 1932, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>76</sup> Gatchel, Theodore Dodge, “Rambling Through Washington: An Account of Old and New Landmarks in Our Capital City, Washington, D.C.,” Washington Journal, 1932. According to another published account, the cemeteries in the early 1930s were a “general wreck,” R.S. Bassler wrote in “Washington Past and Present: A History,” (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., New York, 1932) that the African American and Quaker cemeteries appeared to be abandoned, “but there are evidently remains still in the colored cemetery, although many open pits show that bodies have been removed, and several overthrown headstones would suggest that the bodies they were intended to identify are still with their markers.”

<sup>77</sup> Testimony by George Gertman, D.C. Equity Cause 46405, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>78</sup> Stabler to Lewis, May 20, 1932, Friends Meeting of Washington files.

In fact, the congressionally appointed trustees of the Colored Union Benevolent Association property had not yet sold their land. But Taggart's plans to develop the property were similar to those that would surface several years later. A rough sketch dated 1932, probably made by Quaker Harold Stabler, shows a plan for three apartment buildings on the northern side of the site and a large garage on the southern edge, near the Quaker Cemetery.



**Fig. 22:** This 1932 sketch, probably done by Quaker Harold Stabler, shows early development plans for the cemeteries site. (*Friends Meeting of Washington files*)

Taggart offered to buy the small Quaker cemetery for 75-cents-a-square-foot, but the Quakers refused. The trustees for the Colored Union Benevolent Association property, however, continued to seek buyers for their land. By 1939, their search was nearing an end.

On May 19, 1939, a D.C. city health officer named Dr. Ruhland wrote a memo to a colleague named Mr. Irvine, about a planned real estate deal that might require the removal of 1,500 remains from an abandoned African American cemetery on Adams Mill Road:

“An old abandoned colored cemetery on Adams Mill Road, N.W. is the subject of a real estate deal of considerable proportions. It may become necessary to disinter and move all bodies buried here to another cemetery. The number of bodies has been estimated as high as 1,500. The people interested in the deal desire to know the particulars as regards the Health Department’s concern in the matter. I have informed them of what occurred in moving a number of bodies to extend a street about three years ago; namely notice to relatives of decedents, advertising to cover cases where no relatives were known, request for a blanket permit signed by the commissioners, the issuance of a blanket permit by this office, the presence of an inspector to represent the Health Department and the providing of proper containers to hold the remains disinterred.

“An Act of Congress specifically authorizes the removal of all bodies from this cemetery.

“Two of the representatives of the companies involved are coming to the office this afternoon. Have you any suggestions, such as to what extent they must go in order to get a clearance stating that all bodies have been removed? Some of the graves may not show any surface markings due to the elapse of time since they had any care.

“I have talked to some of these interested parties before and one of the points that remains unsettled is ‘Can the contractor who removes the bodies get a statement from the Health Department to the effect that no more bodies remain buried there?’

“If you could see these men for a few minutes I am inclined to think they would feel better satisfied. They are to be here at 1:30 today.”

A note on the back of the Ruhland memo states: “Quaker Cemetery owned part of this land previously. “Mary Severe” [sic] tomb stone was found. J. Quincy Adams owned an interest in this cemetery.”<sup>79</sup>

On October 10, 1939, the trustees of the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery property applied for a city permit to remove “500 unknown bodies, more or less” from the site, for reinterment at Woodlawn Cemetery in southeast Washington.<sup>80</sup> The permit was granted, clearing the way for sale of the land. Eventually, only 139 full and partial sets of remains would be located and moved to Woodlawn.

In November 1939, the trustees asked the court to allow them to sell the 3.86 acres of land that remained of the original 6.75-acre cemetery. They stated: “There is no record of the location of the bodies buried in the Cemetery of the Colored Union Benevolent Association known ... consequently, it will be necessary to excavate to locate the bodies” so that the land could be sold in compliance with the 1923 Congressional act that dissolved the Association. In January 1940, the court ordered the trustees to sign a contract with undertaker W. Ernest Jarvis to locate and remove remains from the cemetery. City Health Inspector T.M. Galloway oversaw the excavations and removal of the remains by the undertaker.

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<sup>79</sup>Application for Disinterment No. 17636, D.C. Office of Records

<sup>80</sup>D.C. Disinterment Permit No. 17636

Galloway on March 28, 1940, reported that workers made 390 exploratory openings, each six feet deep, to determine where graves were present. He stated that “129 graves were found to contain part of human remains, which were removed and placed in boxes preparatory to reinterment” at Woodlawn Cemetery in southeast Washington.<sup>81</sup>

Galloway explained his methods: “No records or plat showing the location of the graves were available, so the cemetery was divided into 14 sections, each section being roped off while being worked and a diligent search made therein.” He recorded on a chart what was found in each of the 14 sections, noting those openings that had headstones with remains; skulls only; bones only; skulls and bones together; headstones only; and casket parts. Although Galloway’s chart is among the Colored Union Benevolent Association court records at the National Archives, there is no accompanying site map showing the location of each of the 14 sections he delineated. It is likely that neither he nor the undertaker W. Ernest Jarvis made a distinction between the African American and Quaker cemeteries in their excavation of the site, because they found and removed at least one known Quaker headstone during their work--that of Mary Seaver. Thirteen headstones were recorded by Galloway. He noted their inscriptions:

**Francis F. Brown** (no further information on stone)  
**Mary Ann Keyes**, died January 26, 1878, aged 50 years, by her mother.  
**Eli James**, Born 1815, died June 30, 1873, age 58  
**Robert Newman**, died January 5, 1866, aged 35 years  
**Mary E. Brown**, age 48 years (stone broken, no further information)  
**Wife of William Rutherford** (stone broken in three parts; no further information)  
**Mary G. Sever**, died 8 Month-30-1837 in her 31 year  
**Eliza Arnold** 1861  
**Churchill H. Hewitt**, born Oct. 9 1848, died Feb. 3, 1885  
**John Henry Catlett**, died June 24, 1876, aged 26 years  
**Mary Cossott**, died Nov. 28, 1854, aged 20 yrs. 3 mos.  
**James Lewis**, died March 1899 [1889], aged 68 years, and wife **Maria L. Peyton** (stone broken, no further information)  
A headstone with no inscription<sup>82</sup>

Galloway stated: “The remains were placed in boxes and where a headstone and remains were found in the same grave, the name on the headstone was marked on the box, and they will be taken together to Woodlawn Cemetery where a mass burial will be held on or about April 1<sup>st</sup>,

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<sup>81</sup> T.M. Galloway memo March 28, 1940, D.C. Equity Cause 46405, National Archives Record Group 21

<sup>82</sup> Several of these headstones correspond to D.C. death certificates reviewed by the Walter Pierce Archaeology Team: Francis F. Brown, 49, born Alexandria, Va., died December 23, 1880; Mary Ann Key, wife of Association member Gillis Key, 50, born D.C., a ladies nurse, died June 7, 1878; three Mary E. Browns are buried in the cemetery; James Lewis, 73, born Virginia, a retired fruit dealer, died March 9, 1889; Mary G. Seaver, 31, wife of Quaker cemetery trustee Jonathan Seaver, died August, 30, 1837; Churchill Hewitt, 36, born Virginia, a fireman, died February 3, 1885; and John H. Catlett, 25, born Virginia, a waiter, died May 24, 1876.

1940. In the meantime, the boxes are stored in a suitable place in Woodlawn Cemetery. There was no nuisance of any kind at any time. Lids on boxes were nailed down as soon as any remains were placed therein, and all boxes were removed each night to the undertaker's establishment [at 1432 U Street, NW], thence, at intervals, to Woodlawn Cemetery and stored."

Galloway reported that additional graves might be uncovered later at the site by developers who planned to build there:

"Mr. Jarvis informed me that his contract calls only for him to make a diligent search, which has been concluded. However, Mr. Jarvis has voluntarily agreed to have as many men and boxes as may be necessary on the ground when the contractor starts grading and excavating with the steam shovel, in case any remains may be uncovered, so that they will be taken care of at once. Should any remains be recovered, they also will be reinterred at Woodlawn Cemetery in the plot purchased by Mr. Jarvis for this purpose. All reinterments will be made under the personal supervision of Mr. Jarvis. Mr. Jarvis will notify this office when the work is to be started with the steam shovel, so that this can be followed until the final disposition of the remains."

### **Shapiro Brothers Buy the Land in 1940; Quakers Continue to Resist Sale**

In June 1940, the Colored Union Benevolent Association trustees sold the remaining 3.8 acres of their land to developers. More than 80 heirs, their attorneys and the trustees shared in the proceeds of \$78,000.<sup>83</sup>

The land then changed hands on paper at least four times over the ensuing year. All buyers and sellers were tied to the development company Shapiro Brothers, Inc. On June 12, 1940, the trustees sold the land to V.M. Brooks for \$78,000. Within the same deed, V.M. Brooks transferred the land to Bradmoor Corporation, a Maryland development company. The deed makes oblique reference to the Quaker Cemetery, granting "the possessory rights if any of the Colored Union Benevolent Association in and to the 99 feet of land on public alley ..." On November 9, 1940, Kathryn H. Magdeburger sold the land for \$10 to Maurice C. Shapiro, "any and all right, title, and interest ... in and to the abutting strip of land front ninety-nine (99) feet of public alley (and known as Quaker burial ground) ..." On July 15, 1941, Helen Wells sold the land for \$10 to Shapiro Inc., incorporating the same language regarding the Quaker cemetery.<sup>84</sup>

The Shapiro Brothers appeared to be trying to obscure the ownership of the abutting Quaker Cemetery. Quakers in 1949 learned "that someone who has no real claim on this property is trying to secure title to it."<sup>85</sup> In response, Quaker Harold Stabler, who had dealt with an earlier developer's query about the land in 1932, explored whether the Friends Meeting of Washington needed to clear its title to the land. He consulted attorney Thomas H. Patterson. Patterson rendered an opinion that the Quakers still held title to the land. Patterson stated that

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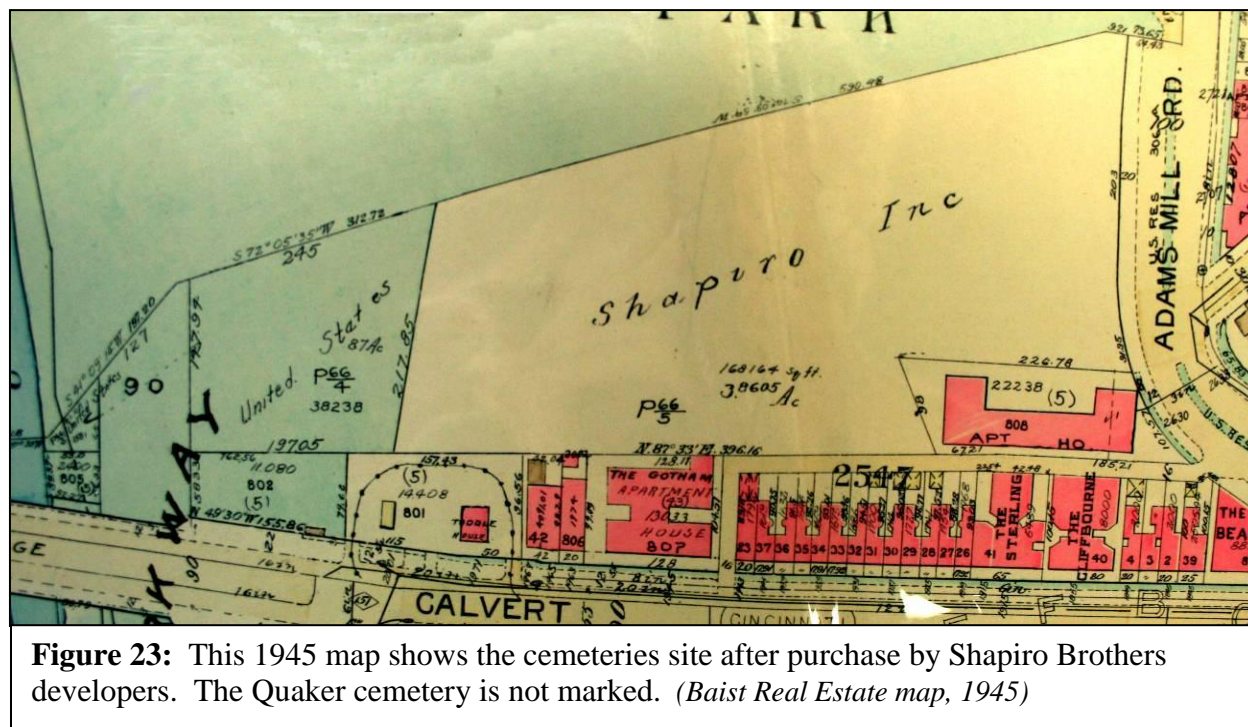
<sup>83</sup> Washington Tribune, August 24, 1940

<sup>84</sup> These transactions are reflected in D.C. Land Records, Liber 7483, p. 591; D.C. Land Records, Liber 7571, folio 125; and D.C. Land Records, Liber 7561, folio 421

<sup>85</sup> Alexandria Monthly Meeting minutes Nov.13, 1949, Friends Meeting of Washington file

the title was not impaired by recent land transfers of the adjoining property owned by Shapiro Brothers.<sup>86</sup>

Apparently little or no construction took place at the cemeteries site during the 1940s, although there might have been some leveling of the land. In 1951, the Shapiro Brothers won permission from the city to erect at the site four eight-story buildings for 1,600 apartments, as well as a four-story underground parking garage for 2,000 cars.<sup>87</sup>



**Figure 23:** This 1945 map shows the cemeteries site after purchase by Shapiro Brothers developers. The Quaker cemetery is not marked. (*Baist Real Estate map, 1945*)

Quaker Harold Stabler continued trying to protect the cemetery from development. He had it surveyed and marked. He told the Quaker Meeting he would post a “No Trespassing” sign and “clean up the place.”<sup>88</sup> In July 1951, he wrote the District of Columbia Commissioners: “This is to call to your attention that the large parcel of land which we understand Mr. Shapiro owns or controls in this Square [2547] does not include the small ‘Quaker Cemetery’ ...”

“May we ask that you call to the attention of the Building Inspector and Surveyor, and to any other District of Columbia officials that it will be appropriate to advise, that, though this cemetery has been neglected, it has not been abandoned, and will not be abandoned by the Society of Friends, for whose use it was established by deed 146 years ago, and that therefore no permit should be issued that will allow any encroachment upon it.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas H. Patterson letter to Stabler, April 19, 1950, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>87</sup> The Washington Post, June 20, 1951; July 7, 1951; October 7, 1951; October 13, 1951; October 14, 1951; October 28, 1951; October 31, 1951; November 1, 1951; November 2, 1951; November 20, 1951; November 29, 1951

<sup>88</sup> Stabler note, March 27, 1951, Friends Meeting of Washington files

“We seek this request because we note that in recent years Mr. Shapiro had had several deeds placed on record conveying land in Square 2547 which refer to ‘possessory rights’ to this cemetery; because we observe that Baist’s plan book no longer shows the outlines of the cemetery as a separately-owned parcel, as was the case some years ago; and because, in discussions we had within the past year individuals in the office of the Recorder of Deeds and of the Surveyor we found that they were under distinct impression that ‘Shapiro now owns that land.’ But the facts are that no rights to this parcel of land have been conveyed to him, and it is still a cemetery of the Society of Friends.

“We recently had the surveyor locate the four corners of this cemetery for us. We have placed substantial concrete markers at the Northwest and Southwest corners, and the Southeast [and Northeast] corners are marked by pipes driven in the ground by the Surveyor. We will soon erect a sign on the land, indicating that it is a cemetery of the Society of Friends.”<sup>89</sup>

Stabler wrote similar letters to four title companies and to the mapmaker G. William Baist in Philadelphia, asking the company to revise the D.C. plats book “to show that this plot of ground is still a ‘Quaker Cemetery.’” Then he wrote the Shapiro Brothers’ attorneys, stating that the Friends Meeting of Washington “does not concede” that a minute approved by the Alexandria Monthly Meeting of Friends in 1890 relinquished Quaker rights to the cemetery.

“We understand that in recent years the bodies were removed from the Negro cemetery adjoining the Quaker cemetery, but it is our understanding and conviction that the bodies have never been removed from the latter,” Stabler wrote on August 21, 1951. “If the land should be used by Mr. Shapiro in connection with his apartment house project, the primary concern of our group is that the bodies therein should not be desecrated, but that he should have them removed and re-interred in some suitable cemetery at his own expense; such cemetery to be either designated by our group, or approved by our group.” Stabler added that “we placed a substantial sign on the property, visible from the alley, indicating ownership by the Society of Friends.”<sup>90</sup> Stabler learned the following day that “boys had cut down trees and damaged the sign at the Calvert Street Cemetery [sic] ... the sign had been sawed about 1/3 through.” He quickly replaced the sign.<sup>91</sup>

In 1952 and 1953, District officials wrote to the Washington Friends Meeting, expressing concern that the Quaker Cemetery was not being maintained. The health officer then referred the matter to D.C.’s Corporation Counsel.<sup>92</sup>

On May 25, 1953, Maurice and J.B. Shapiro of Shapiro Brothers developers wrote Quaker Harold Stabler: “We want to assure you and your group that no graves will be desecrated and, further, that we will proceed carefully with the improvements so as not to destroy the human remains that are still in the cemetery [sic]. At our own expense we will

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<sup>89</sup>Stabler to the D.C. Commissioners, July 17, 1951, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>90</sup>Stabler to John J. Wilson, August 21, 1951, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>91</sup>Stabler note, August 22, 1951, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>92</sup>Raymond S. Wilson to Friends Meeting of Washington, Feb. 26, 1953, Friends Meeting files

secure the necessary permits to disinter the remains, and all remains, will be carefully removed and suitably reinterred in another cemetery [sic].”<sup>93</sup>

Within the D.C. government, Corporation Counsel Vernon E. West in November 1953 wrote an opinion that failed to resolve the question of the Quaker Cemetery’s ownership. The written opinion noted the Shapiro Brothers’ strong interest in the land. West stated that the land was not on District tax rolls. He advised that the tax assessor be notified “for such action as he may deem appropriate.” West also stated that no bodies remained in the cemeteries.<sup>94</sup>

In March 1956, Quakers discovered that their cemetery was being taxed, back to 1951. Quaker Charles F. Preston wrote the District Commissioners that Quakers “were concerned to see that this property is maintained as a burial ground, as intended by the original donors, and requests that the property be removed from the tax rolls, as is appropriate for cemeteries.”<sup>95</sup>

In November 1956, Quakers learned through unofficial channels that the cemetery was at risk of becoming a “no-man’s-land” on District records. Charles Preston wrote the Shapiro Brothers. Once again, the “Friends Cemetery” sign had been torn down “so we have replaced it with a new one,” he informed the Shapiros. “While this sign by no means concludes the clarification of the title, it does take a step in the right direction.” He sought the Shapiros’ “cooperation in trying to keep this sign up,” and asked them to notify the Quaker Meeting if they should find it had been taken down again.<sup>96</sup>

Despite Quaker objections, the city continued to tax the cemetery. The Shapiros noted that the land was being taxed when they executed yet another series of deeds in 1956, in which they sold the site for \$10 to John W. Truver. The deed conveyed to Truver “all right, title, interest in and to the abutting strip of land ... known as the Quaker Burial Ground,” stating that the property was now known for taxation purposes as Parcel 66/5. The same day, Truver sold the land back to the Shapiros for \$10. The same day, the Shapiros sold the land to Walker Dunlop III and Joseph D. Keenan, as trustees, for \$250,000 and 5% interest.<sup>97</sup>

Washington Quakers were no match for the Shapiro Brothers. On March 25, 1959, the Shapiros bought the Quaker Cemetery from the District in a tax sale. They paid \$831.31 for the land, covering the unpaid taxes and interest for the years 1951 through 1958.<sup>98</sup>

### **May and June 1959: Shapiro Brothers Developers Desecrate the Cemeteries**

In May 1959, Shapiro Brothers broke ground for their four apartment buildings. With steam shovels and work crews, they began the desecration of the African American and Quaker

<sup>93</sup> Shapiro Brothers to Harold Stabler, May 25, 1953, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>94</sup> West to the D.C. Commissioners, Nov. 9, 1953, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>95</sup> Preston to the D.C. Commissioners, March 6, 1956, Friends Meeting of Washington files

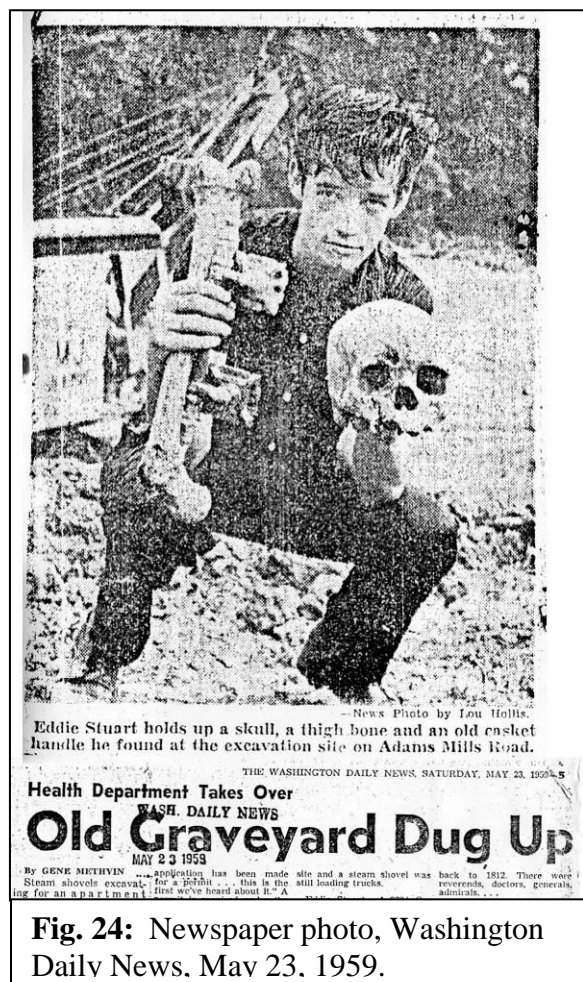
<sup>96</sup> Preston to the Shapiro Brothers, November 14, 1956, Friends Meeting of Washington files

<sup>97</sup> On December 5 and 6, 1956; see D.C. Land Records, Liber 10773, folio 253; Liber 10773, folio 257; and Liber 10773, folio 261

<sup>98</sup> D.C. Land Records, Liber 11016, folio 279



cemeteries. City health officials stood by, witnessing the unearthing of unmarked graves for four weeks, while an unknown number of unidentified remains were taken to the morgue for disposal. On Saturday, May 23, 1959, the Washington Daily News reported:



**Fig. 24:** Newspaper photo, Washington Daily News, May 23, 1959.

## OLD GRAVEYARD DUG UP

By Gene Methvin

Steam shovels excavating for an apartment building at Adams Mills Road and Calvert st nw, have upturned scores of human skulls and bones—which have been passed around among neighborhood children as curiosities. The Washington Daily News, investigating after complaints by neighbors, found that the site area contained two cemeteries at different times during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The excavating of the Bones has apparently been continuing for a month, although the District Health Department was not aware of it until it received inquiries from The News.

### NO PERMIT

Department Director Dr. Daniel L. Finucane said “no application has been made for a permit ... this is the first we’ve heard about it.” A permit is required under the District Code to disinter bodies.

Dayton Young of 1921 Calvert st nw, said he was watching when the first grave was uncovered several weeks ago.

“I saw a skull, and ribs, and the old metal casket

handles. I pointed it out to the bulldozer operation, at quitting time and he looked and said ‘Sure as the dickens.’ But next day, they went right on.”

Mr. Young said since then the kids in the neighborhood have started collecting skulls.

“My kid wanted one and I wouldn’t let him have it,” he said.

### SCATTERED

Yesterday skull caps, hip and thigh bones, bits of broken tombstone and vaults, were scattered around the sit and a steam shovel was still loading trucks.

Eddie Stuart, of 2724 Ontario Road nw, who was standing nearby, said he had a skull stashed away over in a pile of lumber. He went over and pulled it out.

A short while later a No. 10 precinct police cruiser came up. A citizen had complained about kids with bones, one office said.

The other said they’d seen a skull with red hair on it some time ago. They didn’t say anything to Eddie. Eddie gave his skull to one of the colored workmen.

“I don’t need it,” he said. “I’ve got four more at home.”

R.C. Turner, who has lived across the street at 2721 Adams Mill road for “about 35 years,” said he and his terrier dog used to walk up through the cemetery—with the dog leashed to keep him from digging.

“We used to see lots of tombstones dating 1687 [1867], 1850, back to 1812. There were reverends, doctors, generals, admirals. ...”

Mrs. Mary Lynch, a spokesman for the Shapiro, Inc., the company building the apartment house, said that it was known that the site had contained cemeteries but that the understanding was that the graves had been removed “in the 20s under another company.”

An old deed indicates a Quaker cemetery was founded there about 1809. After the Civil War, the Colored Union Benevolent Association took it over. It dissolved in 1923 and sold the land, and an undertaker was hired to transfer the bodies.

“We’ve had unmarked graves uncovered on such projects before, but then everything’s supposed to stop,” Dr. Finucane said.

He said he would have men there Monday to keep youngsters away and remove any further remains to the Morgue until proper burial can be arranged.<sup>99</sup>

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Later the same day, May 23, 1959, The Washington Evening Star reported:

#### **EXCAVATION IS HALTED AT OLD CEMETERY SITE**

Policemen and District health officers will be on hand Monday at an excavation site near Adams Mill Road and Calvert Street N.W. to prevent a contractor from digging further into an abandoned cemetery, pending an investigation.

Health Officer Daniel L. Finucane said his men and police visited the site last night and determined that some human bones and fragments of tombstones had been uncovered by Shapiro, Inc. The company has a permit to excavate for an apartment house.

However, Dr. Finucane pointed out, a special permit is necessary to excavate on cemetery sites. He said his men will probably take a surveyor to the site Monday to make sure the excavators do not dig more deeply into the cemetery area.

Neighbors said they used to find tombstones dated 1812, 1850, and other years in the area. Dr. Theodore Reed, director of the nearby Washington Zoo, said he understood the cemetery had been one for slaves about the time of the Civil War.

Dr. Finucane said the excavators apparently had come to the edge of the old graveyard. He said the disinterred bones must have been buried outside the old cemetery boundary.

Once the outlines of the graveyard are established Monday, he said, his men and police will confer with the Shapiro company about where they can dig.

The old bones were taken to the Morgue for reburial.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Washington Daily News, “Graveyard Dug Up,” May 23, 1959.

<sup>100</sup> Washington Evening Star, “Excavation Is Halted at Old Cemetery Site,” May 23, 1959

On May 24, 1959, the Washington Post and Times Herald reported that all work would be stopped until a special permit was granted. Health Officer Finucane again stated, erroneously, to reporters that the excavators had uncovered the bones outside the old cemetery boundaries.

The digging resumed on Monday, May 25, “with a health inspector standing by to see if any more bones are turned up,” according to The Washington Post and Times Herald of May 26, 1959. The newspaper said the amount of bones found the week before was about a “hatboxfull.” The story disappeared from the newspapers until July 13, 1959, when the Evening Star reported:

### **SKULL UNEARTHED IN WORK AT ZOO**

A human skull found in the Zoo grounds today by two boys proved to be from an old cemetery nearby where excavations are in progress.

Dr. Theodore Reed said Zoo police turned the skull over to Washington officers, who in turn planned to give it to the District Health Department for reburial.

The skull turned up in some fill dirt dumped in the Zoo park by men excavating near the site of the old cemetery near the Adams Mill Road entrance to the park.<sup>101</sup>

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City health officials were on site as Shapiro Brothers workers continued unearthing remains from May 22 to June 18, 1959, according to a memorandum written by George O. Pierce, acting chief of the Bureau of Food and Public Health Engineering. Pierce did not state the number of remains removed from the site, but he wrote that the District coroner was unable to identify any of them. He stated also that the coroner would “dispose” of all remains. Pierce wrote that ornate casket hardware had been found, indicating that “the cemetery had not always been used as a burying ground for slaves, as had been reported at one time.” The coroner, Pierce said, confirmed that infant remains were unearthed. On June 30, 1959, Pierce wrote a memo describing how city officials observed the excavations:

Quaker Burying Grounds and the Young Men’s Benevolent Association Cemetery.

During the course of excavations by Shapiro, Inc., at Adams Mill Road and Calvert Street, N.W., there were uncovered some unidentifiable remains. Some of these may have been on the location of the Young Men’s Benevolent Association Cemetery and some definitely were found at the location of the Quaker Burying Grounds. Our first information relating to this was received when one of the newspapers published a story concerning the matter, indicating that the children of the neighborhood had found the bones and carried them home and even to school. The newspaper published a photograph showing one of the boys of the neighborhood holding some of the bones.

We immediately, on May 22, 1959, notified Captain Clark of Precinct #10 and asked him to have one of his officers go to the excavation site, take custody of any remains and stop any further excavation until we could investigate the situation. At 4:00 p.m. on May 22, 1959, I went to the excavation site and met Mr. Franklin from our Columbia office, which I had notified of the situation, and also met Lieutenant Breasale

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<sup>101</sup> Washington Evening Star, “Skull Unearthed in Work at Zoo,” July 13, 1959.

from Precinct #10, who had already taken custody of the remains that were on the site in the possession of one of the many boys present. He also sent one of the boys home to get some additional human remains (bones and skulls) that had been taken home or to school. Officer Wynn J. Straub and Officer Veal later returned to the site and maintained the watch of the situation from then on.

Instructions were given to our Area office to maintain a constant watch of the excavation operation which could be permitted to resume under the watch of our inspector and the precinct officer. All remains that were taken into custody were turned over by the police representative to the coroner at the D.C. Morgue. The coroner made further attempts to identify the remains, but without success.

From May 22, 1959, until approximately June 18, 1959, the excavation continued and further remains as they were uncovered were taken into custody by our inspector, turned over to the policy and by the police turned over to the coroner at the morgue. The current phase of the excavation having been completed, our surveillance of the operation ceased until such time as the excavation resumes. Our Area office is to be notified by the contractor when this is about to take place so that we can again assign an inspector to the excavation operation. It is expected that the excavation along the bank above Rock Creek Park and the zoo will probably expose some additional remains.

On May 28, 1959, Mr. Paul Keen and the undersigned [George O. Pierce] talked with Mr. Clark King of the Corporation Counsel's office concerning the District of Columbia Department of Public Health responsibility in connection with the remains. Mr. King confirmed our opinion that our action was correct in letting the coroner dispose of the remains that were unidentifiable.

On May 25, 1959, I phoned Mr. Jim Carberry of the "Washington Post" at the request of Dr. Finucane and gave him information on the current situation at the excavation site. This was the basis for the attached newspaper report which appeared in the "Post" on the morning of May 26, 1959. On June 26, 1959, I phoned Dr. MacDonald, the District Coroner, at the morgue and ascertained that he was disposing of all remains which had been turned over to him, none of which were identifiable in any way. He stated that some rather ornate hinges had been recovered, which would indicate that the cemetery had not always been used as a burying ground for slaves, as had been reported at one time. He also verified the information previously received from our Public Health Inspector on the site that remains of some infants were found in the excavation.

George O. Pierce, Acting Chief  
Bureau of Food and Public Health Engineering<sup>102</sup>

Fourteen partial sets of remains removed during the Shapiro excavations were accessioned by the Smithsonian Institution and are believed to be still in its possession. The

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<sup>102</sup>A copy of this memo was in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, attached to a 1963 memorandum from James Bradley to Zoo director T.H. Reed.

remains, identified as having been those of 13 African American and 1 Caucasian adults, were the subject of scientific investigation by Robert W. Mann and James J. Krakker.<sup>103</sup>

No apartment buildings were ever constructed at the site. In 1960, the Shapiro Brothers prevailed in a lawsuit for adverse possession of the Quaker Cemetery. On January 17, 1978, the Shapiros filed a declaration of abandonment of the site, now referred to square 2547, lot 809. They planned to sell the property to Holliday Corp. of Virginia, which planned to build a large townhouse complex on the land.<sup>104</sup> Adams Morgan neighbors had other ideas.



**Fig. 25:** The upper plateau of the cemeteries' site looking south and west in 1963, four years after Shapiro Brothers excavated and unearthed an unknown number of graves. The backs of Calvert Street row houses are visible; the large apartment building pictured here was replaced with new row houses in the 1970s. The Quaker Cemetery was located at the left in the photo, near the row houses, where trees remain standing. (From *The Washington Evening Star Photo Collection* printed with permission of the Martin Luther King Library, Washingtoniana Room.)

<sup>103</sup>Mann and Krakker, *Tennessee Anthropologist*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Spring 1989

<sup>104</sup>Rock Creek Monitor, February 16, 1978

## **ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY PARK WEST/WALTER PIERCE PARK: 1964-1982**

In 1965, a group of Adams Morgan residents formed the Ontario Lakers Sports Club. They laid out a baseball diamond and began playing softball at the site of the former cemeteries. They borrowed lawn mowers from the National Zoo to maintain the field. They built stadium seating and brought tables and playground equipment to the site. The teams that played at the “Ontario Lakers Ghetto Stadium” reflected Adams Morgan neighborhood’s diverse make-up: black, white, and Latino. Neighbors christened the site “Community Park West.”<sup>105</sup>

In 1974, community activist Walter C. Pierce testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations, asking Congress to provide money to buy the 4.06 acre site from the Shapiro Brothers, who had set an asking price of \$2 million. Pierce told the subcommittee that the neighborhood

had less recreational space than any other area of the city. He cited statistics and recommendations for more green space by the National Capital Planning Commission. “Adams Morgan is probably the most unique neighborhood in the District of Columbia,” Pierce testified. “While we are the most densely populated area of the city—32,000 people—we are not all rich or poor, but are both; we are black, Latin and white.

“And if the 10-year history of the Community Park West indicates anything, it indicates that despite our diversity, we work together in building, improving, and sometimes defending our neighborhood,” Pierce said. “Private interests have for some time looked at the Shapiro tract with the notion of building highly profitable luxury housing that would have highly destructive effects. Our community is willing to accept proposals to fill our recreation deficiency but city officials, like ourselves, readily acknowledge that the Shapiro tract is the only feasible area.”

Pierce added, “The Shapiro tract was once a graveyard: A resting place for American Indians and slaves. We respectfully request that our park remain and that our land be returned to us for use by all of us in Adams Morgan.”<sup>106</sup>



**Fig. 26:** Walter C. Pierce at City Hall in the 1970s.  
(Photo by Nancy Shia, used with her permission)

<sup>105</sup>Rock Creek Monitor, February 16, 1978, “Community Parks Funds Stalled by Congress”

<sup>106</sup>District of Columbia Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1975, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, Ninety-Third Congress, Second Session on H.R. 15581, May 2, 1974. Despite Pierce’s statement that American Indians were among those buried in the cemeteries, archaeological team researchers found no documentary evidence to support that assertion.



**Fig. 27:** Families in 1978 enjoying Community Park West. (Photo by Nancy Shia, used with her permission)

Congress would remain noncommittal for another four years, while Walter C. Pierce, City Council member David A. Clarke, Frank Smith of the Adams Morgan Organization, and others lobbied for a park. In 1978, news reports stated that the Shapiro Brothers, who had bought the land in 1940, were going to sell the property to Holliday Corporation of Virginia, which wanted to build 156 luxury townhouse condominiums at the site. Finally, in 1978, Congress appropriated \$1 million for the land's purchase, to be matched by another \$1 million from the city.<sup>107</sup>

In 1980, D.C. Recreation Director William H. Rumsey contacted Housing and Community Development Director Robert L. Moore, the state historic preservation officer, about the plans for Community Park West. Rumsey told Moore that “there is an indication of the possible presence of Indian burial grounds” at the site.<sup>108</sup>

On November 26, 1980, Moore stated that research would be necessary before any park construction could take place. “Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century maps indicate that the area was the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Young Men’s Baptist Cemetery, and the Colored Union Benevolent Association and Quaker Burying Grounds,” Moore wrote Rumsey. “Background research is needed to determine if the graves were removed. Visual field inspection is needed to try to determine if graves, unmarked and not removed, survived when the surface of the area was lowered. If background research and surface inspection are inconclusive, subsurface testing may be needed. While the possibility that the area is an Indian cemetery should not be overlooked, the exposure of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century burials during previous work in the area may have led some to believe that the area is an Indian cemetery. Regardless of who may be buried there, a cemetery site is frequently archeologically important and politically sensitive.”

### **The Lackey Archaeological Survey, 1981**

In 1981, Louana M. Lackey of the Potomac River Archeology Survey at American University conducted a survey of the site for the District government. Lackey reported in June 1981 that, “Unlike many urban archaeological sites, the site of Community Park West ... appears never to have been built upon, and would probably very closely approximate the original surface

<sup>107</sup> The Washington Post, Thursday, March 23, 1978, “Hill Approves D.C. Buying Land for Park in Adams-Morgan.”

<sup>108</sup> Lackey, Louana M., “An Archeological Survey of Community Park West in Washington, D.C.,” prepared for the D.C. Department of General Services, Potomac River Archeology Survey, American University, June 1981

of the land, except for the severe excavating and grading that took place in 1940 and later.” She noted disturbances, including the disinterment of 129 graves in 1940 and the construction excavations of 1959: “These operations effectively removed an unknown amount of land from the crown of the hill, leaving a dish-shaped depression some 6 to 8 feet below street level to the east, some 10 to 12 feet below the top of a still extant retaining wall . . . that bounds the northwest corner of the apartment building property and the south edge of the park, and some 6 or 8 feet below the level of the alley.”<sup>109</sup>

Lackey’s archaeological team discovered little at the site. No human remains were found. The team concluded that the site was not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places because it had lost its archaeological integrity and contained nothing of “outstanding” historic significance. “Fortunately, since no reason exists for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, no further reason exists to prevent the construction of the playing fields, picnic grounds, and other park facilities so long awaited by residents of the neighborhood,” the report stated.

In 1982, Meade Palmer landscape architects drew up plans for Community Park West. According to the plans, significant earth-disturbing work took place on the ball field. Several feet of land were removed from near the Quaker Cemetery and pushed in a northwest direction, lowering the elevation of the field about five feet at its southeast corner. In addition, almost every built feature of the park required deep footings. The biggest constructed feature of the park is the gabion wall—a steep retaining wall that stretches about 400 feet along the northern edge of the park’s upper plateau. The construction of the wall substantially changed the once-gradual slope of the side’s northern side; the wall created a sharp drop-off that separates the park’s upper plateau from its northern hillside that borders the National Zoo.<sup>110</sup>

Any remains that rested near the surface of the earth, particularly in the ball field area,



**Fig. 28:** Pick-up game at Walter Pierce Park.

would have been vulnerable in the construction of Community Park West. No records have been found, however, that document whether any graves were discovered in the building of the park.

Walter Pierce died in 1991. On July 26, 1995, the park he worked so long to create was renamed Walter C. Pierce Community Park in his honor.

<sup>110</sup>Plans for Community Park West construction prepared by Meade Palmer Landscape Architects for the D.C. Department of General Services, 1982.



## **THE WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT BEGINS, 2005**

Most parts of a thriving urban environment undergo constant change. City parks are no exception. In late 2004, federal and local officials began planning a major soil-erosion-mitigation project for Walter C. Pierce Community Park. The project as planned would have caused the displacement of large amounts of earth on the northern side of the park, where community gardening had taken place for decades. Several large, walled plateaus were to be constructed to enlarge and level the community-gardening area. Heavy trucks and equipment were to be brought on to the site for construction.

The project was a collaboration of the U.S. Agriculture Department's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS), the D.C. Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR), and the D.C. Department of Health. Straughan Environmental Services of Maryland was the private contractor involved in the planning. NCRS officials initially stated they would observe the federal law known as the National Historic Preservation Act, which aims to protect historic resources when planned federal construction projects might damage or destroy them. They later reversed themselves on this matter, stating the NCRS was not a central player in the project.<sup>111</sup>

In July 2005, Adams Morgan historians Eddie Becker and Mary Belcher were surprised to find several large, freshly dug pits in the community garden area in the northeast corner of Walter Pierce Park. A Bobcat backhoe was parked at the site. Becker and Belcher were familiar with the site's history as a 19<sup>th</sup> Century burial ground. They looked under large plastic tarps covering the pits, which were three- to four-feet deep, and saw signs of archaeological investigation. Large heaps of earth sat next to the pits, uncovered and full of oyster shells, which are often associated with African American cemeteries. In one pile of dirt was an old lead flower frog, possibly used at one time to hold flowers upright next to a grave.

Belcher and Becker contacted city officials to ask why a backhoe was used to dig in a known cemetery area. Ward One City Councilmember Jim Graham contacted then-Parks Director Kimberley Flowers, who agreed to stop the work temporarily. City Archaeologist Nancy Kassner said the excavated pits were part of an archaeological survey taking place before the planned soil-erosion-mitigation project went forward. An archaeological firm, A.D. Marble, had dug the pits under contract to the NCRS to determine the presence of graves.

On August 10, 2005, more than 50 concerned citizens gathered at Walter Pierce Park to ask city and federal officials to explain what was taking place. The officials stated that the upper part of the park would collapse unless soil-erosion mitigation took place. Officials expressed the belief that there no graves were left in the park, even though they were told that volunteers working for the non-profit Washington Parks & People had found exposed skeletal remains at the site. Community gardeners also had found cemetery artifacts over the years.

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<sup>111</sup> Notes of Walter Pierce soil-erosion-mitigation project meetings, December 9, 2004; October 12, 2005; November 10, 2005.

**Figs. 29,30, 31, 32:** Clockwise from below left: In July 2005, the pits in Walter Pierce Park; the backhoe used to dig the pits; a lead flower frog found in a pile of dirt next to the pits; oyster shells in the dirt piles next to the pits. (Photos by Eddie Becker, 2005)



In August 2005, Belcher and Becker contacted Howard University's Anthropology Department for help. Professor Mark Mack immediately agreed to work with the community so that graves could be identified and protected. Mack was a biological anthropologist who served as laboratory director of the landmark African Burial Ground Project in New York City. Community groups lined up to push for a Howard University-led archaeological survey of Walter Pierce Park. On October 5, 2005, Professor Mack told the Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission that a non-invasive survey could help locate vulnerable graves. The Neighborhood Commission unanimously approved a resolution calling for archaeological investigation of the park by a Howard University archaeological team.

On November 10, 2005, the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation and NRCS held a public meeting at the First Church of Christ Scientist in Adams Morgan to present a timeline for the soil-erosion-mitigation project. Neither city nor federal officials expressed a willingness to work with Howard University archaeologists to determine the presence of graves at the site.

Community pressure for an archaeological survey continued through the winter of 2005-2006. During that time, neighborhood historians had established from historical records that at least 7,000 burials had taken place in the Quaker and African American cemeteries. In spring 2006, DPR officials announced that they would allow Professor Mack to lead an archaeological survey of Walter C. Pierce Community Park. They also announced that they would significantly scale back the scope of their planned erosion-mitigation work in the park.

In September 2006, Professor Mark Mack and a team of students were given permission by the D.C. government to conduct a “pedestrian survey” of Walter Pierce Park. For the survey, students would visually inspect the surface of the site in 10-meter-by-10-meter sections, carefully documenting, photographing and mapping their finds.

Professor Mack volunteered his time to lead the pedestrian survey. Members of the student team were paid stipends. The project was supported by private donations and grants obtained by the nonprofit Kalorama Citizens Association. Funding came from individuals, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., Humanities Council, Association of Oldest Inhabitants of DC, and Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission,

In early spring 2007, as the pedestrian survey was nearly complete, unauthorized gardening resumed on the north hillside of the park, interrupting the completion of the archaeological work. City officials failed to intervene, despite numerous pleas to do so from Mary Belcher of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project. In November 2007, the gardening was stopped by then-Parks Director Clark Ray, after the growing season had ended.

### **The City Council Approves \$200,000 for the Pierce Park Archaeological Project, 2008**

Numerous physical and political challenges were encountered during the initial pedestrian survey of Walter Pierce Park. The archaeological team believed that the District of Columbia government would need to assume a more active role if the city-owned site were to be protected in the long term. In April 2008, Walter Pierce archaeological team members testified before the D.C. City Council Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation. They asked the city to take steps to ensure that the cemeteries would be protected and commemorated.

Committee Chair Harry Thomas Jr. and Ward 1 City Councilmember Jim Graham co-sponsored a \$200,000 grant for the project for Fiscal Year 2009. The legislation called for completion of the pedestrian survey, a ground-penetrating radar survey of the site, historical research, and the creation of a park master plan by the nonprofit group Washington Parks & People, which also would administer the project’s city funding. Following the passage of the legislation, a more detailed project work plan was developed by Professor Mack in coordination with City Archaeologist Ruth Troccoli.

The results of the initial, privately funded archaeological survey of Walter Pierce Park, which took place from 2006 to 2008, and the city-funded survey of 2009-2012, are described in the next section of this report.

**TABLE 4: CHRONOLOGY OF THE WALTER PIERCE CEMETERIES SITE  
OWNERSHIP AND USE**

**1793:** Revolutionary War veteran Benjamin Stoddert purchases 863.5 acres known as “Pretty Prospects” from the Beall family of Maryland and builds Columbia Mills on Rock Creek.

**1800:** The District of Columbia is founded. Stoddert sells Columbia Mills and 42.5 acres of land to Walter Mackall of Maryland.

**1804:** Mackall sells the Columbia Mills property to Jonathan Shoemaker, a Pennsylvania miller and Quaker. Shoemaker lives and operates the mills at the site.

**1807:** Shoemaker donates a ¼-acre of land to the Society of Friends (Quakers) for a cemetery.

**1809:** Shoemaker sells Columbia Mills and the surrounding property, excluding the Quaker cemetery, to Maryland businessman Roger Johnson. Roger’s son George Johnson runs the mills and lives at the site, probably building the house known today as Holt House about 1810.

**1818:** The Bank of Columbia forecloses on Columbia Mills and 28 acres of the 42.5 acre property, leaving about 14 acres and the house to Roger Johnson.

**1823:** Then-Secretary of State John Quincy Adams buys Columbia Mills and the 28-acre surrounding property. The site over time becomes known as “Adams Mill.”

**1838:** The Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association is founded by a group of African American men in the District of Columbia.

**1841:** John Quincy Adams, chief advocate in Congress for anti-slavery petitioners, in the Supreme Court wins the freedom of 35 African captives from the slave ship *La Amistad*.

**1848:** John Quincy Adams dies, leaving the Columbia Mills property to his heirs. Seventy-seven enslaved Washingtonians attempt but fail to escape slavery on board the schooner *Pearl*. Many of the enslaved have family members in the Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association.

**1849:** The Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association buys city square 272 to establish a cemetery, the Free Young Men’s Burying Ground, at 12<sup>th</sup> and V streets, N.W.

**1861-1865:** The Columbia Mills property, still owned by the Adams family, becomes a Union Civil War encampment. Army Assistant Surgeon John S. Billings in 1862 establishes Cliffburne Hospital, which later becomes headquarters for the U.S. Invalid Corps.

**1865:** The Free Young Men’s Benevolent Association changes its name and is chartered by Congress as the Colored Union Benevolent Association.

**1870:** The heirs of John Quincy Adam sell 6.75 acres of the Columbia Mills property to the Colored Union Benevolent Association for \$2,500 to establish Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery.

**TABLE 4: CHRONOLOGY OF THE WALTER PIERCE CEMETERIES SITE (Cont.)**

**1873:** As many as 2,000 graves are removed from the Free Young Men's Burying Ground at 12<sup>th</sup> and V streets, N.W., and reburied at Mt. Pleasant Plains. The Colored Union Benevolent Association in 1875 sells their old cemetery site, Square 272, to Children's Hospital.

**1870-1890:** At least 8,428 men, women and children are buried in Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery.

**1889:** The National Zoological Commission seeks to buy 1.7 acres of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery; the Colored Union Benevolent Association refuses to set a sales price.

**1890:** Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery is closed by the District government, citing health concerns. The last burial occurs in June. The National Zoo acquires 1.7 acres of Mt. Pleasant Plains for \$3,000. The Association removes an unspecified number of bodies from the Zoo property and reburies them in the remaining cemetery land.

**1890:** The Alexandria Monthly Meeting of Quakers, as overseer of the Washington Friends Meeting, approves a minute ceding any claim to the Quaker Cemetery at the request of Edward Shoemaker, a descendant of cemetery founder Jonathan Shoemaker,

**1891:** The Calvert Street bridge is constructed across Rock Creek, abutting the southwest corner of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. A new bridge is constructed at the same spot in 1934-1935.

**1904:** The city condemns the eastern edge of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery to widen Adams Mill Road, requiring the removal of 37 bodies.

**1903-1941:** Heirs of the Friends (Quaker) Burying Ground and Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery mount legal efforts to sell the land, providing all bodies are removed before sale.

**1923:** Congress dissolves the Colored Union Benevolent Association and appoints trustees, authorizing them to oversee the removal of bodies and sale of the cemetery land.

**1929:** The federal government acquires from the Association trustees eight-tenths of an acre on the western hillside of the cemetery land to include in Rock Creek Parkway.

**1939-1940:** The D.C. Supreme Court allows trustees for the Colored Union Benevolent Association to remove bodies from the cemetery so that the remaining 3.86 acres of land can be sold. An undertaker makes 390 openings and locates 129 full and partial sets of remains. They are removed and reburied in a mass grave at Woodlawn Cemetery; 13 headstones are found.

**1940:** Shapiro Brothers, a development company, buys the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery site. More than 80 heirs, attorneys and the trustees share in the proceeds of \$78,000.

**1951:** The city gives Shapiro Brothers permission to erect four eight-story buildings and an underground parking garage for 2,000 cars on the Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery site.

**TABLE 4: CHRONOLOGY OF THE WALTER PIERCE CEMETERIES SITE (Cont.)**

**1959:** Shapiro Brothers buy the Quaker Cemetery for \$831.31 from the District in a tax sale. The developers unearth an unknown number of graves at the site before neighbors notify police. Officials oversee grave removals for several more weeks. None of the remains can be identified.

**1960:** Shapiro Brothers prevail in a lawsuit for adverse possession of the Quaker Cemetery.

**1965-1978:** Adams Morgan activists led by Walter C. Pierce turn the lot owned by Shapiro Brothers into a ball field and park. Pierce lobbies City Hall and Congress to purchase the land.

**1978:** Shapiro Brothers plan to sell the site to Holliday Corporation of Virginia for a townhouse complex. Quakers mount an unsuccessful legal effort to regain their land. Congress approves \$1 million to buy the site for a park, to be matched by \$1 million from the city.

**1981:** An archaeological survey of the prospective park site finds no evidence of graves.

**1982:** “Community Park West” is created. Soil is moved and leveled on the site’s upper plateau; a large gabion wall is installed, separating the plateau from the northern slope; park amenities are built. In 1995, the park is renamed “Walter C. Pierce Community Park” in honor of neighborhood activist Walter Pierce, who died in 1991.

**1997-2003:** Community activists successfully object to the National Zoo’s placement of dumpsters on historic cemetery land within its boundaries. The Kalorama Citizens Association renews efforts to preserve Holt House at the Columbia Mills site.

**2004-2005:** City and federal officials plan a large earth-moving project at Walter Pierce Park. Concerned citizens object, citing the possibility that graves will be destroyed. They enlist the help of biological anthropologist Mark Mack of Howard University, laboratory director of the African Burial Ground Project in New York. Officials reject a proposal that Howard University conduct a non-invasive archaeological survey of the park. The Kalorama Citizens Association and Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission pass resolutions supporting a survey.

**2006:** City officials allow Mark Mack and a Howard University student team to conduct a non-invasive archaeological survey of Walter Pierce Park. The Kalorama Citizens Association obtains grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., Humanities Council, and Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission to pay students on the team.

**2008:** Members of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project testify before the D.C. City Council. The Council appropriates \$200,000 for Fiscal Year 2009 to identify, protect and commemorate the cemeteries. Washington Parks & People administers the grant. Additional funding is obtained from the Washington, D.C., Humanities Council.

**2009-2012:** The city-funded archaeological investigation of Walter Pierce Park takes place. Exposed human skeletal remains, headstones, coffin hardware and other artifacts are found. Research into city death records yields the names of 8,428 people buried in the cemeteries.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF WALTER C. PIERCE COMMUNITY PARK AND VICINITY, ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE 51NW216

The archaeological investigation of Walter C. Pierce Community Park and vicinity took place from 2006 to 2012. Its purpose was to identify exposed human skeletal remains, vulnerable graves, artifacts and features related to two unmarked cemeteries: the 1/4-acre Quaker Burying Ground, in use from 1807 to 1890; and the 6.75-acre Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery, an African American cemetery in use from 1870 to 1890. Biological anthropologist Mark Mack of Howard University was the Principal Investigator. He directed a team made up of a revolving group of Howard University anthropology students and independent historians.

The investigation took place in two phases: (1) A 2006-2008 pedestrian survey of city-owned Walter Pierce Park, and of National Park Service and National Zoo land that fell within the cemeteries' historical boundaries; and (2) a 2009-2012 Phase 1 Survey of Walter Pierce Park, including a pedestrian re-survey of the park's North Slope, ground-penetrating-radar (GPR), and historical research. The first phase of the survey was funded with grants obtained by the Kalorama Citizens Association, a nonprofit neighborhood group. The second phase was funded with a \$200,000 city grant administered by the nonprofit group Washington Parks & People.<sup>112</sup>

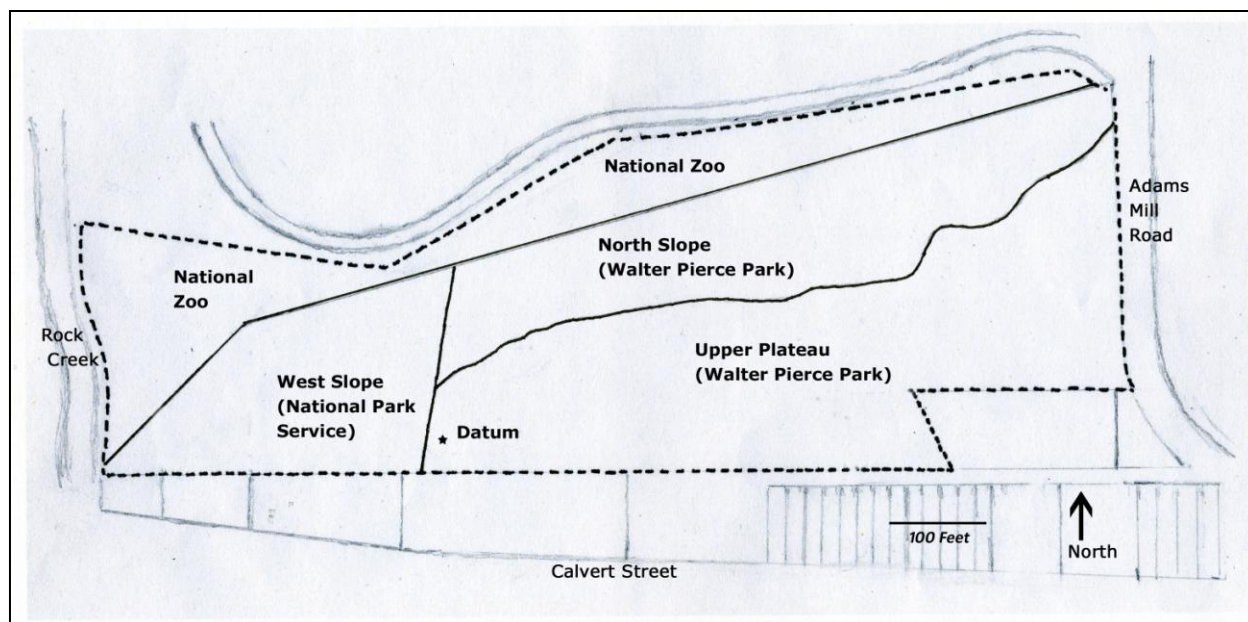
For this investigation, the Walter Pierce site was surveyed in four geographic sections. (Fig. 34) Each section has distinct topographic qualities. Each has undergone different types of ground-disturbing events since the cemeteries were closed in 1890. As a consequence of these differences, the archaeological discoveries—or the lack thereof—varied from section to section. The geographic sections of the pedestrian survey were:

- **North Slope** of city-owned Walter C. Pierce Community Park. This hillside runs east-west, with a relatively level area at its upper eastern end near Adams Mill Road. It slopes downward westerly to the fenced-off National Park Service-owned West Slope. It is bordered on the north by fenced-off National Zoo land and on the south by a fence and a large gabion<sup>113</sup> wall, which separates it from the Upper Plateau of the park. The North Slope was used for community gardening from the 1970s through 2005 and for part of 2007. It is subject to erosive run-off from the Upper Plateau, which is channeled through the permeable gabion wall. In addition, gardeners placed large containers at the base of the wall to collect water for their crops, resulting in at least one deep north-south gully on the North Slope. (A second, smaller gully has arisen from either a breach in the wall or garden-related activity.) The North Slope is covered with dense, fast-growing, invasive vegetation. The North Slope's terrain was disrupted and in 1982 by the construction of the gabion wall. It was altered also from earth pushed over the hillside from the Upper Plateau during construction-related activities in the 1940s and 1950s. The archaeological team found scattered across the North Slope fragmented and intact gravestones, grave goods, coffin hardware, and the exposed skeletal remains of at least one individual.

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<sup>112</sup> The results of the initial GPR survey of the site were deemed unreliable. A GPR re-survey was conducted in April 2013, and the results will be reported as a supplement to this report.

<sup>113</sup> Gabion walls are made of stacked "baskets" or parcels of materials such as rocks or sand to allow for drainage. At Walter Pierce, the gabion wall is made of wire-parceled rocks.



**Fig. 33:** Archaeological Survey Sections. The cemeteries' historical boundaries are shown by the dotted line. The site was surveyed in four sections: The Upper Plateau; North Slope; West Slope (National Park Service); and National Zoo land. (Map by Mary Belcher)

- **West Slope**, owned by the National Park Service. This wooded hillside borders Walter Pierce Park on the west and slopes down to Rock Creek. Exposed human skeletal remains from at least four individuals were found by the team on the West Slope, located in gullies caused by erosion from run-off from the upper walkway of Walter Pierce Park and a paved bus turnaround. At least one set of multiple remains was associated with a wood coffin that had become exposed under tree roots washed out by erosion, suggesting evidence of a direct burial on the slope. Cemetery-related artifacts, including coffin hardware and grave goods, were found on the hillside. In addition to direct burials, it is possible that some skeletal materials and artifacts were pushed on to and down the West Slope during construction-related activities on the Walter Pierce site's Upper Plateau.
- **Upper Plateau** of city-owned Walter C. Pierce Community Park. It includes a ball field, basketball court, dog park, children's playground, and other amenities. The Upper Plateau has undergone significant disruption including: excavations in the 1940s and 1950s for several apartment buildings that were never built; the lowering and leveling of the ball field in 1982; and other disruptions caused by park construction and later improvements. Nothing of archaeological interest was found on the Upper Plateau.
- **National Zoo Land**, running parallel to and north of the North Slope, from Adams Mill Road on the east to Rock Creek on the west, and bordered on the north by a private Zoo road. . When the Zoo acquired the cemetery land in 1890, it required the Colored Union Benevolent Association to remove bodies from the land. Those bodies were reburied in the remaining portion of the cemetery, south of the Zoo. Nothing of archaeological interest was found on the Zoo land.

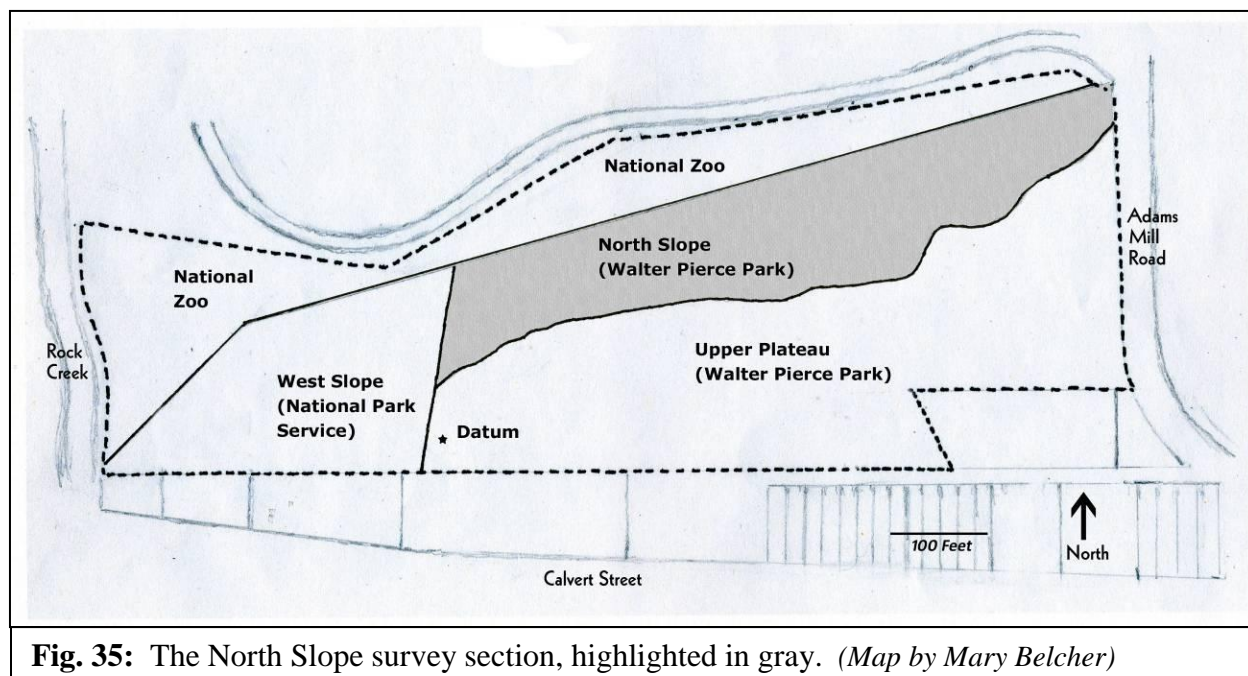


**Figure 34, Map of All Finds at the Walter Pierce Cemeteries, is not available to the public.**

**FIG. 34: Map of All Finds at the Walter Pierce cemeteries site. (Map by Justin Dunnavant)**

## PEDESTRIAN SURVEY OF THE NORTH SLOPE, JUNE-JULY 2009

The northern section of Walter Pierce Park--the North Slope--is bounded by Adams Mill Road on the east; a fence separating it from National Zoo land on the north; Rock Creek Park on the west; and a fence and gabion stone wall separating it from the Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park on the south. The degree of hillside slope varies from minimal at the eastern end to steep on the western end. There are two gullies on the North Slope created by water run-off from the Upper Plateau through the gabion wall. The North Slope, which previously was used for community gardening, is covered with very dense, invasive vegetation.



**Fig. 35:** The North Slope survey section, highlighted in gray. (Map by Mary Belcher)

In 2005, the city closed the North Slope area to gardening in anticipation of soil-erosion-mitigation work. Unauthorized gardening took place on the North Slope for most of 2007, however, after the initial pedestrian survey had begun. This necessitated a re-survey of the North Slope in June and July 2009.

### North Slope Terrain and Challenges

The entirety of the North Slope is within the historical boundaries of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. The North Slope was altered in the 1940s and 1950s by construction-related activities on the site's Upper Plateau, when dirt and other materials were pushed from the plateau on to the hillside.<sup>114</sup> The terrain of the North Slope was altered again in 1982 when Walter Pierce Park was created. A large gabion wall was inserted into the land in 1982 to shore up a newly leveled

<sup>114</sup> Lackey, Dr. Louana M., "An Archaeological Survey of Community Park West in Washington, D.C.," prepared for the D.C. Department of General Services by Dr. Lackey of the Potomac River Archaeology Survey, American University, June 1981.

Upper Plateau and playing field. In order to sink the gabion's wall's footings, substantial amounts of earth were disturbed on the North Slope during construction. The wall created a sharp drop-off between the Upper Plateau and the North Slope, radically altering terrain that had previously sloped gradually in a northwesterly direction toward a small ravine emptying into Rock Creek.

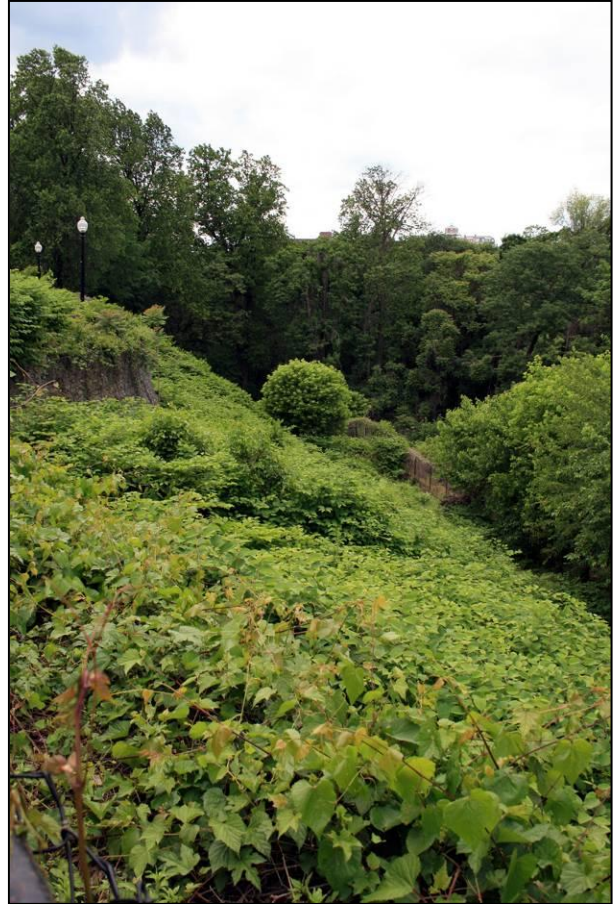
Erosion and community gardening on the North Slope also has had an impact on the terrain of the North Slope. (Figs. 40-42) According to elevation maps created in the late 1880s, when Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery was still in operation, the North Slope was 175' above sea level at its highest point on its northeast corner. Today, the North Slope's highest point is approximately 165' above sea level. The lowest point of the slope in the 1880s was approximately 115' above sea level at its northwest corner; today it is about 108' above sea level.

The North Slope pedestrian survey was non-invasive--no digging was conducted. The datum point was established at 38.9236N/77.0473W, using GPS. The slope was sectioned off in 10-meter-by-10-meter grids; grid points were set using a total data station. Each grid, in turn, was crossed by straight lines or transects, so that information about the location of each artifact or other archaeological feature that was discovered could be transferred to a corresponding transect on a map, documenting the three-dimensional provenience.

For the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Team, the greatest challenge posed by the North Slope was its dense, fast-growing ground cover. Volunteers working in advance of the team removed invasive vegetation from the site several times, only to see it grow over again within weeks. As the archaeological team moved across the site systematically, team members spent substantial amounts of time cutting brush and vines with sickles, machetes and trimmers. This was necessary so that the surface of the earth could be inspected visually for items of archaeological significance in the pedestrian survey.



**Fig. 36:** Mark Mack of Howard University, Principal Investigator of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Project, clears vines on the North Slope in 2009.



**Figs. 37 and 38:** Fast-growing North Slope vegetation, looking west. At left, the hillside in March 2008, after a clean-up by volunteers. At right, the hillside only two months later, in May 2008, showing the dense, invasive vegetation grown back.

**Fig. 39:** Walter Pierce Archaeological Team members clear the North Slope of brambles and vines in June 2009 in preparation for the survey.





**Figs. 40, 41:** Two views of the gabion wall that separates the Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park from the North Slope. The construction of the wall in 1982 required deep footings, causing major disruption of the land on the North Slope. Water that seeps through the gabion wall from the Upper Plateau has contributed to erosion on the North Slope.

**Fig. 42:** A Catholic University student at a March 2009 clean-up stands in the larger of two North Slope gullies, which were created by gardeners diverting water from the gabion wall to irrigate their crops.



### **Earlier North Slope Finds; the 2005 A.D. Marble Archaeological Preliminary Survey**

It is useful to note that before the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Project began, evidence of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery was found on the North Slope by community gardeners. Katie Davis, founder of the Friends of Walter Piece Park, in 2006 gave the team a coffin handle found years earlier on the North Slope. (Figs. 55, 56) Other gardeners told the team they had found other cemetery-related artifacts in years past, including a gravestone inscribed with the name “Angelina MacFarlane.”<sup>115</sup>

A preliminary archaeological assessment of a limited section of the North Slope was conducted in 2005, when the D.C. Department of Parks & Recreation and the National Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture were planning a large soil-erosion-mitigation project for the park. Project planners hired A.D. Marble, a Delaware-based archaeological firm, to investigate a limited portion of the upper eastern portion of the North Slope where community gardeners had reported finding grave-related artifacts.

In May 2005, A.D. Marble archaeologists conducted ground-penetrating radar in a 200’x75’ area on the upper eastern portion of the North Slope.<sup>116</sup> They identified three areas of subsurface anomalies indicating the possible presence of grave shafts. In July 2005, A.D. Marble excavated the three areas of anomalies with the intention of locating evidence of human burials. Using a backhoe and bladed bucket, the archaeologists dug four trenches to remove topsoil and fill-soil before using hand tools to excavate the subsoil. Most of the artifacts noted were modern glass, plastic and garden markers, and they were not retained. A small, flat white marble fragment believed to be associated with the base of a gravestone also was uncovered but not retained. The excavations revealed five potential grave-shaft stains ranging from 2-to-2.6-foot wide and 2.3-to-5.6-foot long, oriented along an east-west axis. A square post hole stain approximately 1.5-foot in diameter also was identified. Archaeologists profiled two of the five potential grave-shaft features: The vertical walls of the two features were said to be consistent with grave shafts but one feature extended only 15.2 centimeters (6 inches) into the subsoil, while the second feature extended approximately 50 centimeters (19.7 inches) below the subsoil surface. Among the artifacts documented were a white coffin tack and an “iron flared-neck ‘urn,’” which was only partially exposed in the excavation. The trenches were backfilled.

None of the grave-shaft features was excavated further. A.D. Marble archaeologists concluded that the shafts were probably empty. The total depth of excavations was not clearly stated in the report, but photographs reveal rather shallow excavations less than a meter below the surface. It is the opinion of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Project team that additional grave-shaft features, including human remains, could be located a meter or two beneath the area exposed by A.D. Marble’s excavations.

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<sup>115</sup>The gardener, who asked for confidentiality, told a team member in 2006 that the gravestone had disappeared and he had no knowledge of its whereabouts. Death certificates for three individuals with the surname “McFarland” were found by team researchers documenting burials in the cemetery. One was an infant named Lena McFarland, who was buried there in 1883.

<sup>116</sup>“Walter Pierce Park Project, Washington, D.C., Preliminary Subsurface Grave Reconnaissance,” A.D. Marble & Co. Inc., July 18, 2005.

## North Slope Finds, 2009

On the North Slope, the Walter Pierce Park archaeology team discovered and documented several types of cemetery-related finds, including:

- Human skeletal material and metallic coffin hardware fragments, found in close proximity to each other (Figs. 45-52). The skeletal material was identified in situ by Principal Investigator Mark Mack as an adult left temporal bone and a third cervical vertebra. The coffin hardware fragments were identified as an escutcheon, a coffin stud, a possible stud or tack; one fragment could not be identified. In addition, a community member gave the team a coffin handle found at an unspecified location on the North Slope before the archaeological survey began.
- Two intact headstones, found lying flat and partially obscured by dirt and vegetation (Figs. 74-81). To determine whether the stones might be headstones, they were compared to headstones at Mt. Zion Cemetery, an historic African American cemetery in Georgetown. (Figs. 82-87) The headstones found at Walter Pierce Park and the Mt. Zion headstones were nearly identical in height, width and thickness of stone. When the Walter Pierce stones were lifted up for further inspection at the site, they contained no discernible inscriptions or carvings. A stone block believed to be a footstone or plot marker also was found. Fragments of worked stones believed to be parts of grave markers were found across the North Slope.
- Artifacts, including ceramic and glass sherds, an axe head and seashells. (Figs. 94-116) When Mt. Pleasant Plains cemetery was in use between 1870 and 1890, many graves were marked by toys, broken ceramics, and seashells. Many of the ceramic and glass sherds and seashells found scattered across the North Slope, therefore, are presumed to have been placed on graves by families and friends of the deceased. The source of the axe head, which was left at the site, is not known.
- Ground features consisting mainly of groups of stones arranged in lines, which were built either during gardening activities or as features of the historic cemetery. Some of the more deeply embedded stones appear to form terraces. (Figs. 118-124)

In summary, human remains, grave-related artifacts and ground features possibly related to Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery were found scattered across the North Slope. Some finds might be associated with intact graves that became exposed over the past century from natural and human-induced disturbances and erosion. Other finds may have come to rest on the North Slope when earth and other materials were pushed over the hillside during construction projects on the Upper Plateau, or in the construction of the gabion wall. The artifacts and skeletal remains found throughout the North Slope provide ample evidence of the site's use as a cemetery. They offer evidence also of the site's desecration and neglect.

**TABLE 5: NORTH SLOPE FINDS**

<b>FIND</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FIG.</b>	<b>DISPOSITION</b>
Human cervical vertebra C3/C4		Found near other human skeletal remains (temporal bone fragment) and coffin hardware	45, 46	Identified at site; left in situ
Human left temporal bone fragment		Found near other human skeletal remains (cervical vertebra) and coffin hardware	47, 48	Identified at site; left in situ
Coffin hardware, metallic, unidentified part		Found near human skeletal remains (cervical vertebra, temporal bone fragment)	49, 50	Very fragile; identified at site; left in situ
Coffin hardware, metallic, including escutcheon, decorative studs, and tack		Found near human skeletal remains (cervical vertebra, temporal bone fragment)	51, 52	Very fragile; identified at site; left in situ
Axe head			114	Identified at site; left in situ
Piece of plaster		Possibly related to gravestone	115	Identified at site; left in situ
Section of marble		Possibly related to gravestone	116	Identified at site; left in situ
Coffin handle, metallic		Ornate, swing-bail-type handle; found by community gardener Katie Davis at unknown date prior to survey	55- 57	Given to archaeological team in 2006; stored at Cobb Laboratory, Howard University
Stone A, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	61, 62	Left in situ
Stone B, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	63	Left in situ
Stone C, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	64	Left in situ
Stone D, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	65, 66	Left in situ
Stone E, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	66, 67	Left in situ
Stone F, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	68	Left in situ



<u>FIND</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>FIG.</u>	<u>DISPOSITION</u>
Stone G, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	69	Left in situ
Stone H, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	70	Left in situ
Stone I, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	71	Left in situ
Stone J, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment	72	Left in situ
Stone K, appears to be a worked stone, broken		Probable gravestone fragment; part of ground feature 1	73	Left in situ
Stone L, headstone		Stone is 1' wide x 27.5" long x 2-1/10" thick; no visible inscription on either side; found lying flat on hillside, in close proximity to Stone M	74, 75, 78-81, 86	Left in situ
Stone M, headstone		Stone is 1' wide x 32-1/4" long x 1-1/16" thick; no visible inscription on either side; found lying flat on hillside, in close proximity to Stone L	76-81, 87	Left in situ
Stone N, worked stone fragment		Probable gravestone fragment with concrete or cement on one side	88, 89	Left in situ
Stone Block No. 1, worked stone block		Possible footstone or grave-plot cornerstone	90	Left in situ
Cluster of ceramic sherds & hand-blown glass fragment		Possible grave goods	94, 95	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 1		Possible grave good	96, 97	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 2		Possible grave good	98, 99	Left in situ
Ceramic sherds 3		Possible grave goods	100	Left in situ
Ceramic sherds & glass 4		Possible grave goods	101	Left in situ

<b><u>FIND</u></b>	<b><u>LOCATION</u></b>	<b><u>DESCRIPTION</u></b>	<b><u>FIG.</u></b>	<b><u>DISPOSITION</u></b>
Ceramic sherd 5		Possible grave good	102	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 6		Possible grave good	103	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 7		Possible grave good	104	Left in situ
Ceramic & glass sherds 8		Possible grave goods	105	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 9		Possible grave good	106	Left in situ
Ceramic sherd 10		Possible grave good	107	Left in situ
Ceramic sherds 11		Possible grave goods	108	Left in situ
Glass sections 1		Possible grave goods	109	Left in situ
Glass sections 2		Possible grave goods	110	Left in situ
Shell A		Possible grave good	111	Left in situ
Shell B		Possible grave good	112	Left in situ
Shell C		Possible grave good	113	Left in situ
Ground feature 1		Group of stones, including worked stones I and J	118	Left in situ
Ground feature 2		Group of stones	119	Left in situ
Ground feature 3		Group of stones, some deeply embedded	120- 122	Left in situ
Ground feature 4		Group of stones, possibly forming terrace	123	Left in situ
Ground feature 5		Group of stones, possibly forming terrace	124	Left in situ

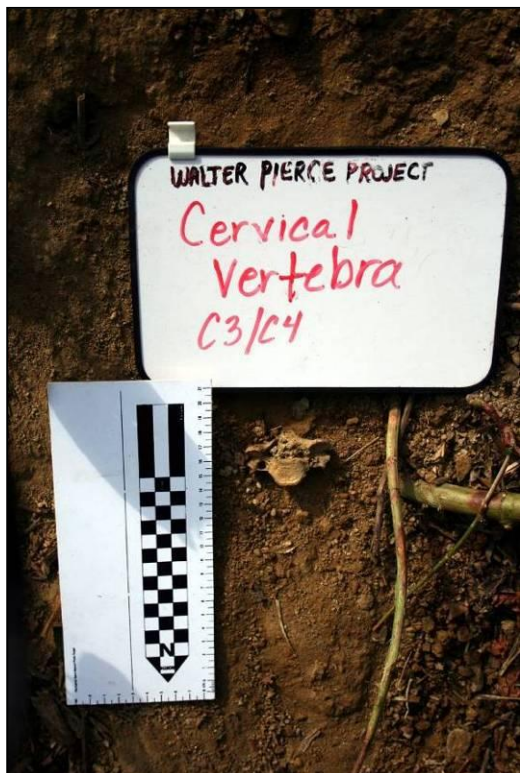
**Figure 43, Map of All North Slope Finds, is not available to the public**

**Fig. 43:** Map of North Slope, All Finds. (*Map by Justin Dunnivant*)

**Figure 44, Map of North Slope Finds of Skeletal Remains, Coffin Hardware, and Miscellaneous is not available to the public.**

**Fig. 44:** North Slope Finds: Skeletal Remains, Coffin Hardware, and Miscellaneous. (*Map by Justin Dunnavant*)

### North Slope Finds: Human Skeletal Remains; Coffin Artifacts



A human cervical vertebra C3/C4 of an adult and a left temporal bone were found in close proximity to each other and to several pieces of coffin hardware on the western end of the North Slope. (Figs. 45-48) The exposed remains did not appear to be part of an intact grave, although no digging was conducted to determine whether a subsurface grave existed at the same location. The remains and coffin artifacts might have become exposed or come to rest on the hillside due to erosive run-off, the movement of earth and other materials from the Upper Plateau, the churning of earth by gardeners, or other disturbances.

Principal investigator Mark Mack identified the skeletal materials in situ. The archaeological team marked the location with a pin flag and temporarily covered the remains, which were left at the site.

**Figs. 45, 46:** Cervical vertebra C3/C4; close-up



**Figs. 47, 48:** Left temporal bone; close-up



The several fragments of metallic coffin hardware found exposed near the human skeletal remains were very fragile. They were photographed but were not removed from the site.

The coffin hardware fragment shown in Figs. 49 and 50 appears to be a decorative finial. Neither its function nor the type of hardware it was has been identified.



**Figs. 49, 50:** Coffin hardware; close-up





The metallic coffin hardware fragments shown in Figs. 51 and 52 also were found on the North Slope in close proximity to the human skeletal remains. These pieces also were very fragile and were left at the site.

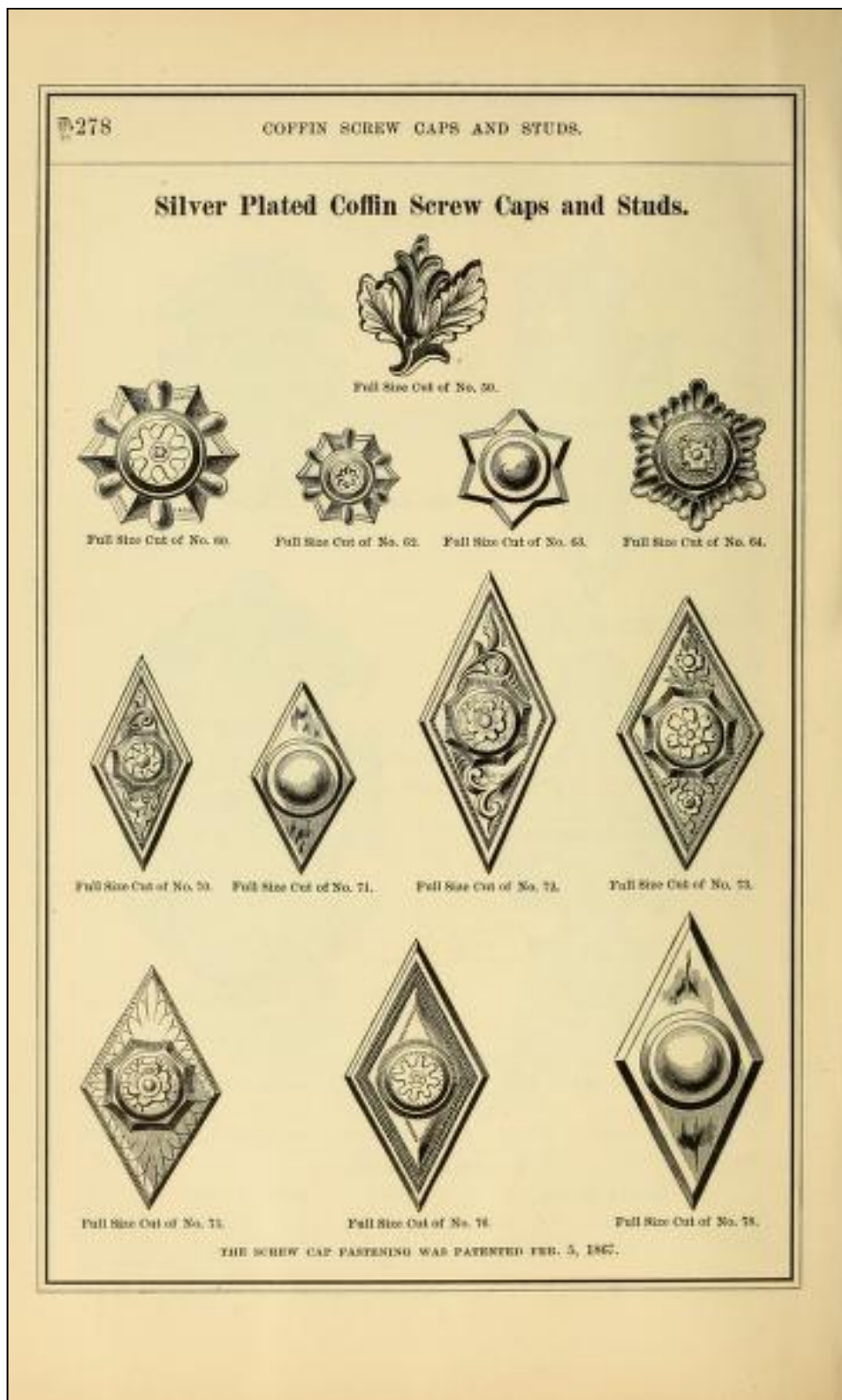
The pieces were identified as fragments of a coffin escutcheon, a coffin stud, and possibly a coffin tack. The stud appears identical to silver-plated coffin hardware pictured in an 1871 catalog of manufacturer Sargent & Company of New York. (Fig. 53) Identification of the escutcheon was made based on its similarity to coffin hardware pictured in a publication by the Chicora Foundation of South Carolina. (Fig. 54)

**Fig. 51, 52:** Metallic coffin hardware; the close-up below shows, at top, a coffin escutcheon; at center right a coffin stud; and at bottom part of a coffin stud or tack.

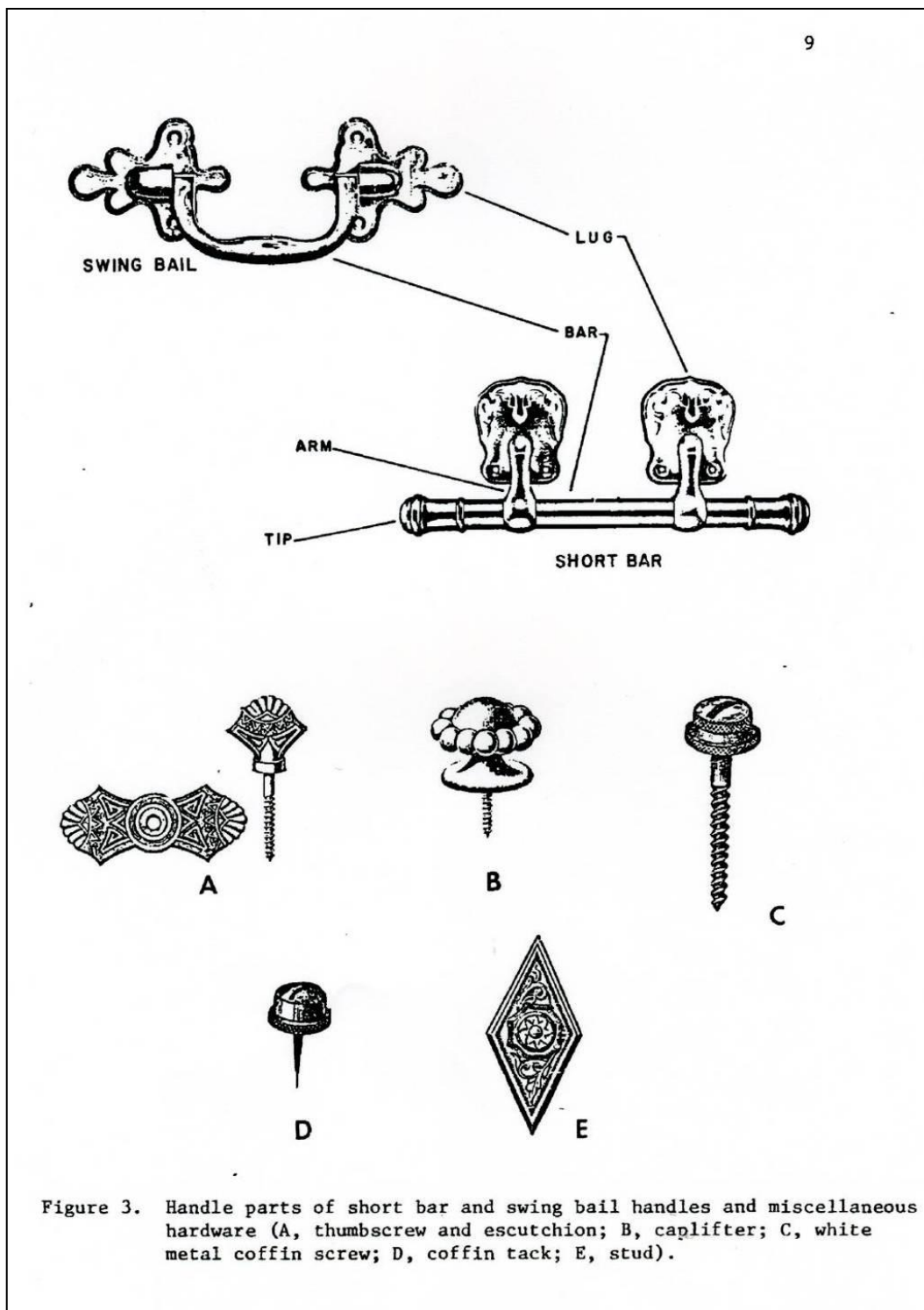




**Fig. 53:** Coffin studs shown in the “Price List and Illustrated Catalog of Hardware, Manufactured and For Sale by Sargent & Co., New York ... 1871” (On-line at [openlibrary.org](http://openlibrary.org), from the Library of Congress.)



**Fig. 54:** Illustration of coffin hardware. Figures A and E below show hardware similar to that found on the North Slope of Walter Pierce Park. (Illustration from "Remember Man Thou Art Dust: Coffin Hardware of the Early Twentieth Century," by Debi Hacker-Norton and Michael Trinkley, Chicora Foundation Research Series 2, Chicora Foundation, Columbia, South Carolina; undated; available on line; hard copy out of print).



As previously noted, gardeners had found cemetery-related artifacts on the North Slope prior to the start of the archaeological survey. Community member Katie Davis in 2006 gave the archaeological team a coffin handle she had found years earlier at an unspecified location on the North Slope. (Figs. 55, 56) The coffin handle was taken to the Cobb Laboratory at Howard University for cleaning and safe-keeping.

In size, shape and ornamentation, the Katie Davis coffin handle found on the North Slope is identical to a coffin handle found by the archaeological team on the West Slope. (Fig. 57) The same type of coffin handle, called a “swing bail” handle, is pictured in a coffin-hardware study published by the Chicora Foundation. (Fig. 58) This type of coffin handle is identified as silver-plated on white metal in a catalog published in 1871 by manufacturer Sargent & Company of New York. (Fig. 59)

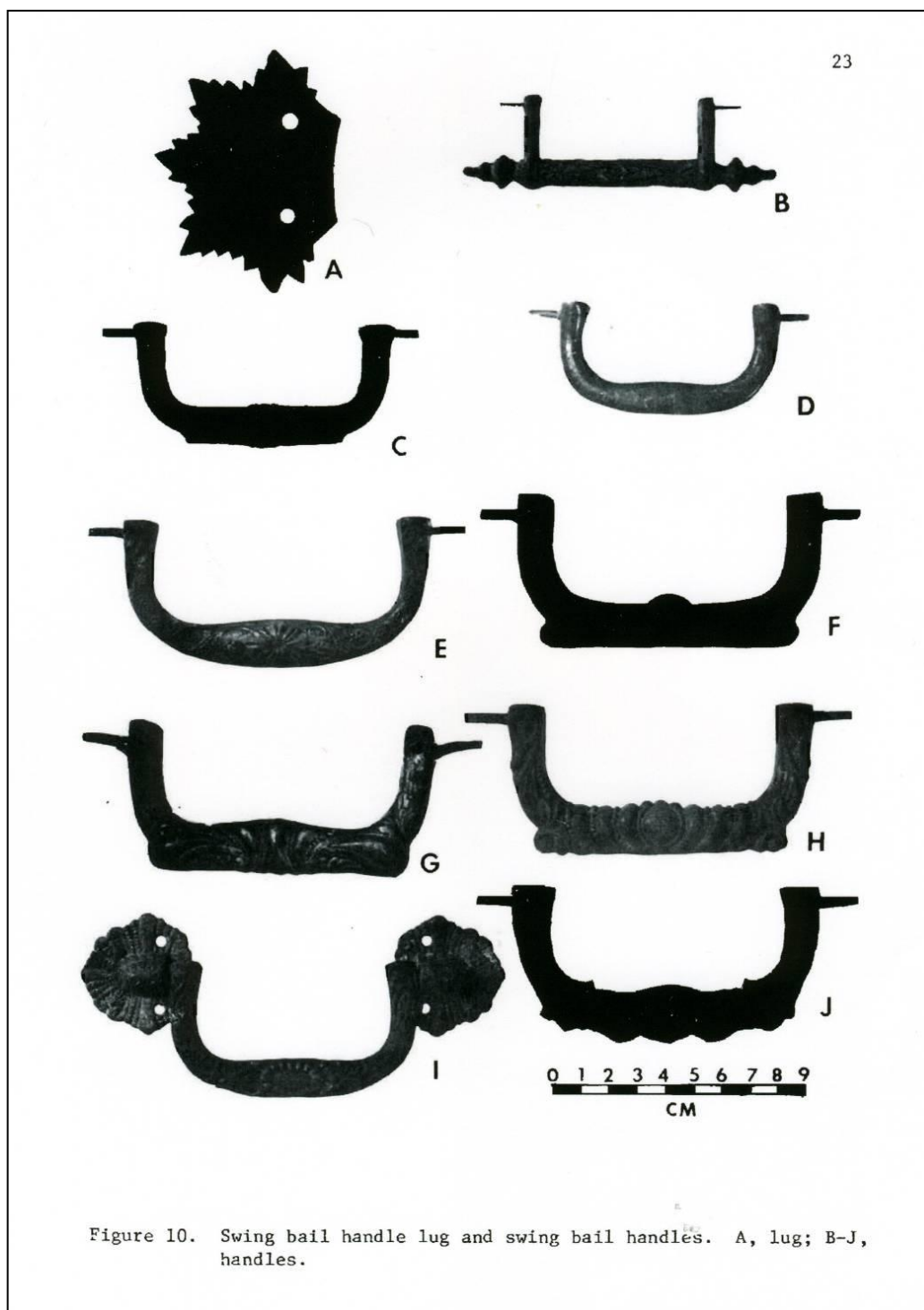
**Figs. 55, 56:** Front and back of coffin handle found by Katie Davis on the North Slope.



**Fig. 57:** North Slope and West Slope coffin handles compared. The top handle is a swing-bail-type coffin handle found by a community gardener on the North Slope before the archaeological survey began; the bottom is a swing-bail coffin handle found on West Slope by the Walter Pierce Archaeological Team.



**Fig. 58:** Illustration of swing-bail-type coffin handles; Figure I appears similar to those found on the North and West Slopes at the Walter Pierce site. (*Illustration of swing-bail coffin handles from "Remember Man Thou Art Dust: Coffin Hardware of the Early Twentieth Century," by Debi Hacker-Norton and Michael Trinkley, Chicora Foundation Research Series 2, Chicora Foundation, Columbia, South Carolina; undated; out of print*)

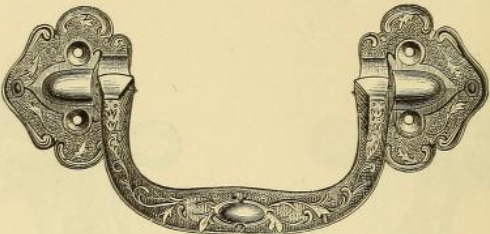


**Fig. 59:** The North and West Slope coffin handles appear identical to the silver-plate-on- white metal handle pictured at the top of page 274 in the “Price List and Illustrated Catalog of Hardware, Manufactured and For Sale by Sargent & Co., New York .... 1871. (On-line at openlibrary.org, from the Library of Congress.)

274 COFFIN HANDLES.

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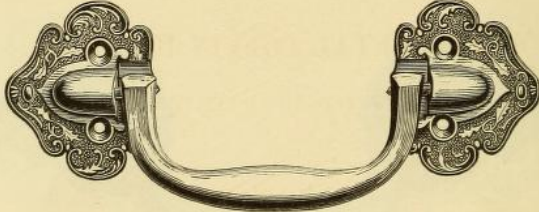
**Coffin Handles.**



Nos. 1140, 1160 and 1200. Half Size Cut of No. 1160.

**Silver Plated on White Metal.**

No. 1140, Small,	- - - - -	per dozen pairs, \$3 75
No. 1160, Medium,	- - - - -	“ “ 4 75
No. 1200, Large,	- - - - -	“ “ 6 00



Nos. 1411, 1412, 1413 and 1414. Half Size Cut of No. 1412.

**Silver Plated on White Metal.**

No. 1411,	- - - - -	per dozen pairs, \$7 00
No. 1412,	- - - - -	“ “ 6 00
No. 1413,	- - - - -	“ “ 4 50
No. 1414,	- - - - -	“ “ 3 60

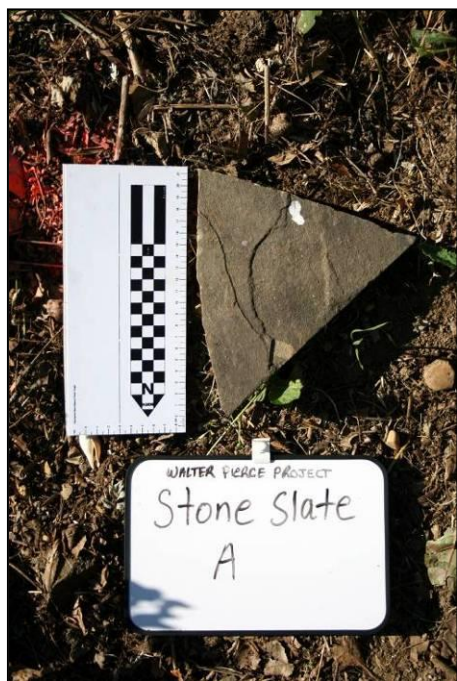
**Figure 60, Map of North Slope Finds, Worked Stones, is not available to the public.**

**Fig. 60:** Map of North Slope Finds: Worked Stones (*Map by Justin Dunnavant*)

### North Slope Finds: Worked Stones; Headstones

Worked stone fragments of various shapes and sizes were found scattered across the surface of the North Slope. They are presumed to be parts of headstones or other cemetery markers. All were left at the site. Two rectangular stones—identified in the survey as Stones L and M—appeared to be intact headstones. (Figs. 74-86) They were found lying flat and partially obscured by earth and vegetation near the western end of the North Slope, on the upper part of the hill, at 135N/109E. Both sides of the stones were examined, but no inscriptions were visible. They were determined to be headstones after comparing their dimensions to headstones at Mt. Zion Cemetery in Georgetown, an historic African American cemetery about a mile away from the Walter Pierce site. It is not known whether the Walter Pierce headstones had fallen near the graves they marked, or whether they had been pushed on to the North Slope from the Upper Plateau.

**Fig. 61:** Stone A



**Fig. 62:** Stone A with Shell Visible



**Fig. 63:** Stone B





**Fig. 64:** Stone C, with cement or concrete attached.



**Fig. 65:** Below, Stone D; **Fig. 66:** Below right, Stones D and E, showing their proximity.



**Fig. 67:** Stone E



**Fig. 68:** Stone F



**Fig. 69:** Stone G



**Fig. 70:** Stone H



**Fig. 71:** Stone I (part of Ground Feature 1)



**Fig. 72:** Stone J (part of Ground Feature 1)



**Fig. 73:** Stone K, which appears to be a worked stone, is only partially visible because it is deeply embedded in the ground.



**Fig. 74:** Stone L, probably an intact headstone



**Fig. 75:** Stone L, from side



**Fig. 76:** Stone M, probably an intact headstone



**Fig. 77:** Stone M, from side



**Fig. 78:** Below, stones L (top, right of center) and M (bottom foreground), showing the proximity of the two stones



**Fig. 79:** Stones L (upper left) and M (slightly lower, on right), as positioned on hillside



**Figs. 80, 81:** Stones L (left) and M (right), lifted to inspect side facing ground; no visible inscriptions





**COMPARISON OF STONES AT WALTER PIERCE AND AT MT. ZION CEMETERY**

**Figs. 82, 83, 84, 85:** Stones at Mt. Zion Cemetery, Georgetown, with dimensions



Mt. Zion 14"x21"x3"



Mt. Zion 1'x36"x1-1/2"



Mt. Zion (inscribed) 14"x31"x2"



Mt. Zion 1'x30"x2"

**Figs. 86, 87:** Walter Pierce Stones L and M, with dimensions



Stone L, 1'x27.5"x2-1/10"



Stone M, 1'x32-1/4"x1-1/16"

**Figs. 88, 89:** Worked stone, front and back sides, with cement or concrete on back



**Fig. 90:** Stone Block No. 1, possibly a footstone or grave-plot cornerstone



**Figure 91, Map of North Slope Finds, Ceramic Sherds, is not available to the public.**

**Fig. 91:** Map of North Slope Finds: Ceramic sherds (*Map by Justin Dunnavant*)

**Figure 92, Map of North Slope Finds, Glass Sherds, is not available to the public.**

**Fig. 92:** Map of North Slope Finds: Glass sherds (*Map by Justin Dunnavant*)

**Figure 93, Map of North Slope Finds: Seashells, is not available to the public**

**Fig. 93:** Map of North Slope Finds: Seashells (*Map by Justin Dunnivant*)

**North Slope Finds: Ceramic and Glass Sherds; Seashells; Miscellaneous**

Mourners in early African American cemeteries in the mid-Atlantic region and elsewhere traditionally placed an array of objects on the graves of departed loved ones.<sup>117</sup> Grave offerings included broken ceramics, glass, seashells, bottles, iron pots, toys and other items. This was also the practice at Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. In an essay published in February 1890, The Washington Post reported that many of the cemetery's graves were "elaborately decorated with clam shells." On children's graves, there were "toys of all descriptions, dolls of rubber, of wax, of porcelain, beaten and shattered by wind and weather; toy dishes in various stages of fragmentary separation ..."<sup>118</sup> Ceramic and glass sherds were found scattered across the North Slope, along with seashells and a few miscellaneous artifacts, including an axe head. It is presumed that many, if not most, of these items were placed deliberately on graves.

<sup>117</sup>This tradition continues in modern-day cemeteries, as well.

<sup>118</sup> See Appendix F for the complete essay.



**Figs. 94, 95:** Cluster of ceramic sherds and hand-blown glass fragment. In the close-up at right, the printing on the ceramic sherd reads “NTERBURY BELLS JAPAN”>

**Figs. 96, 97:** At left, Ceramic Sherd 1, and, at right, a close-up, The printing on the sherd reads “NTON COMPANY” and a partial number that appears to read “1903”.



**Figs. 98, 99:** Ceramic Sherd 2 (showing top and bottom sides of Sherd 2)



**Fig. 100:** Ceramic Sherds 3



**Fig. 101:** Ceramic Sherds and Glass 4



Fig. 102: Ceramic Sherd 5

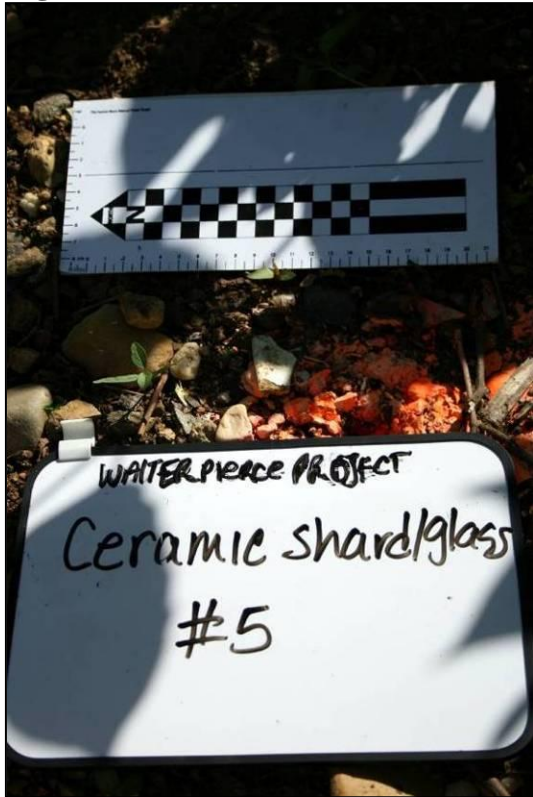


Fig. 103: Ceramic Sherd 6



Fig. 104: Ceramic Sherd 7





**Fig. 105:** Ceramic and Glass Sherds 8



**Fig. 106:** Ceramic Sherd 9



**Fig. 107:** Ceramic Sherd 10



**Fig. 108:** Ceramic Sherds 11**Fig. 109:** Glass Sections 1**Fig. 110:** Glass Sections 2

**Fig. 111: Shell A****Fig. 112: Shell B****Fig. 113: Shell C**

**Fig. 114:** Axe head**Fig. 115:** Piece of plaster**Fig. 116:** Section of marble

**Figure 117, Map of North Slope Finds, Ground Features, is not available to the public**

**Fig. 117:** Map of North Slope Finds, Ground features (*Map by Justin Dunnivant*)

### North Slope Finds: Ground Features

Five ground features consisting of groups of stones were documented on the North Slope. Some of the groups of stones are arranged in lines, and some appear to form terraces. Some of the stones are deeply embedded. It is unknown whether these ground features are cemetery-related or whether they were stones collected and put in place more recently by gardeners. Some of the more deeply embedded stones appear to form terraces. No digging was undertaken to investigate the ground features.



**Fig. 118:** Ground feature 1, group of stones including fragments of worked stones. Because some of the stones are not deeply embedded in the ground, this feature might have been created by gardeners to mark a garden plot.

**Fig. 119:** Ground feature 2, group of stones, some deeply embedded.



**Figs. 120, 121, 122:** Ground feature 3, group of stones, some deeply embedded



**Fig. 123:** Ground feature 4, group of stones, possibly forming a terrace

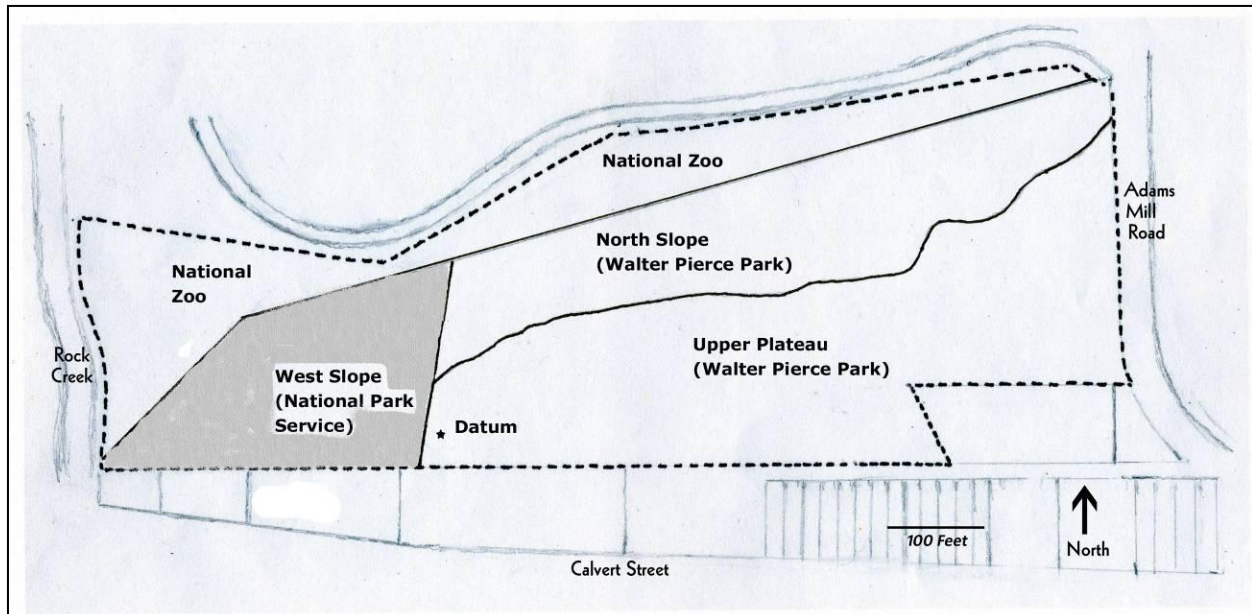


**Fig. 124:** Ground feature 5 (left), group of stones, possibly forming a terrace



## PEDESTRIAN SURVEY OF THE WEST SLOPE, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2006

The pedestrian survey of the West Slope of the Walter Pierce Park site took place in September and October 2006. The West Slope lies within the historical boundaries of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery. It has been owned since 1929 by the National Park Service as part of the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway. It is bordered by Walter Pierce Park on the east, Duke Ellington Bridge on the south, the National Zoo on the north, and Rock Creek on the west.



**Fig. 125:** The West Slope of the Walter Pierce site, highlighted in gray. (Map by Mary Belcher)

The West Slope ranges in elevation from approximately 150' above sea level on the east, where it abuts the Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park, to approximately 30' above sea level at Rock Creek. There are several steep drop-offs on the hillside. There also are several small plateaus, including some with quartzite outcroppings where American Indians quarried stone in prehistoric times. Most parts of the West Slope are navigable by foot. The hillside is wooded; the ground surface is largely free of other vegetation because it is shaded by the mature tree canopy.

The West Slope had been eroding for many years at the time of the 2006 pedestrian survey. Much of the erosion was caused by run-off from paved surfaces at the top of the slope,

**Fig. 126:** At the Calvert Street entrance to Walter Pierce Park, run-off from paved surfaces caused gullies on the West Slope.



including a bus turnaround and a bricked pathway at the Calvert Street entrance to Walter Pierce Park (Fig. 126). Run-off from the paved surfaces created a steep gully that dropped almost vertically from the brick path on the upper plateau on to the West Slope, in a slightly southeast to northwest direction. Run-off that channeled down this vertical gully contributed to two gullies running laterally across the West Slope in a roughly southeast to northwest direction.

The West Slope at the time of the survey was also a place for drug use and other illicit activity. It is hidden from the view of the hundreds of people who walk through Walter Pierce Park each day. Just as the city park is unattended by any on-site employee, the National Park Service traditionally paid little attention to its land on the West Slope. The hillside, consequently, was littered with drug needles and vials, broken bottles, cans, paper trash, and pieces of underwear.

At the time of the West Slope survey, an informal social trail known as the “Snake Trail” connected the Upper Plateau of Walter Pierce Park to the formal trails of Rock Creek Park below. Volunteers from the nonprofit organization Washington Parks & People maintained the Snake Trail. Before the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Survey began, clean-up volunteers working on the West Slope found human bones scattered in the hillside’s lateral gullies. Volunteers removed some of the bones from the site and took them to the office of Washington Parks & People. After the archaeological survey began, Washington Parks & People took the bones for safekeeping to the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory at Howard University. Shortly before the survey began, volunteers also discovered an exposed grave with multiple skeletal remains and a partially visible wood coffin at the base of a tree, the roots of which had become exposed from erosion. The grave was not disturbed by volunteers.



**Fig. 127:** The archaeological team surveys the West Slope in

The Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Team surveyed the West Slope to determine the amount and location of skeletal remains and cemetery-related artifacts on the surface of the ground. The survey was non-invasive; no digging was conducted. A datum point was established at 38.9236N/77.0473W, using GPS. The area was sectioned off in 10-meter-by-10-meter grids; grid points were set using a total data station. Each grid, in turn, was crossed by straight lines or transects, so that information about the location of each artifact or other archaeological feature that was discovered could be transferred to a corresponding transect on a map, documenting the three-dimensional provenience.

The surface of the earth was examined visually. Small, flexible hand rakes were used to clear away vegetative ground cover. Skeletal remains and most artifacts were left at the site. If team members were directed by Principal Investigator Mark Mack to remove an artifact from the site, the artifact’s location was

marked and recorded, and the artifact was bagged and transported for storage and curation at the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory at Howard University.

The exposed, fragmentary remains of at least four adult individuals were found during the pedestrian survey of the West Slope. The human skeletal material included four right femora, three right tibiae, one fragmentary ulna and a frontal bone fragment. Part of a wooden casket was discovered in association with the remains of at least one of the individuals, who, based on bone size, was probably female. Part of a coffin handle was found. Three other artifacts found on the West Slope were removed from the site and taken to Cobb Laboratory at Howard University for further analysis: a coffin handle, a metallic king-like figure that appeared to be a candle or incense holder, and a carved stone bird. Finally, the team found a stone wall on the northern side of the West Slope, which was possibly cemetery-related.

**Fig. 128, Map of West Slope Finds, is not available to the public.**

**Fig. 128:** Map of West Slope Finds, National Park Service land. The star marks the datum at 38.9236N/77.0473W, from which all gridlines were measured. The preponderance of finds was made in two north-south gullies caused by erosion on the hillside. This map does not show the location of all West Slope finds documented in Table 6 because a complete set of field notes could not be retrieved from the files of Principal Investigator Mack, following his death in 2012. (Map by Mark Mack and Justin Dunnavant)

<b>FINDS</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FIG.</b>	<b>DISPOSITION</b>
Tibia			129	Left in situ
Possible tibia fragment			130	Left in situ
Coffin wood		Associated with multiple skeletal remains; exposed under tree root	131	Temporarily covered with remains in 2010
Femoral head and multiple skeletal remains		Probably adult female; exposed under tree root	132, 133, 134	Temporarily covered in 2010
Cranium with puncture			135	Left in situ
Possible animal bone			136	Left in situ
Animal bone			137	Left in situ
Oyster and other seashells		Possibly used as grave decorations	138, 139	Left in situ
Three left femora			127	Removed from site by volunteers; at Cobb Laboratory, Howard
Three right femora			128	Removed from site by volunteers; at Cobb Laboratory,
Five femoral fragments			129	Removed from site by volunteers; at Cobb Laboratory
Two left tibiae			130	Removed from site by volunteers; at Cobb Laboratory
Coffin handle		Swing-bail type handle	131, 132	Removed from site; at Cobb Laboratory
Coffin handle fragment		Fragment of short-bail type handle	133, 134	Found by volunteer; left in situ
Statue of a king-like figure		Possible candle or incense holder; metallic; Approx. 21 cm high; 14 cm at top; 8 cm at base	136-142	Removed from site; at Cobb Laboratory
Carved stone bird		Approx. 16 cm high; possibly prehistoric	143-148	Removed from site; at Cobb Laboratory
Stone wall			149, 150	Photo-documented; left undisturbed

**Fig. 129:** Tibia



**Fig. 130:** Possible tibia fragment



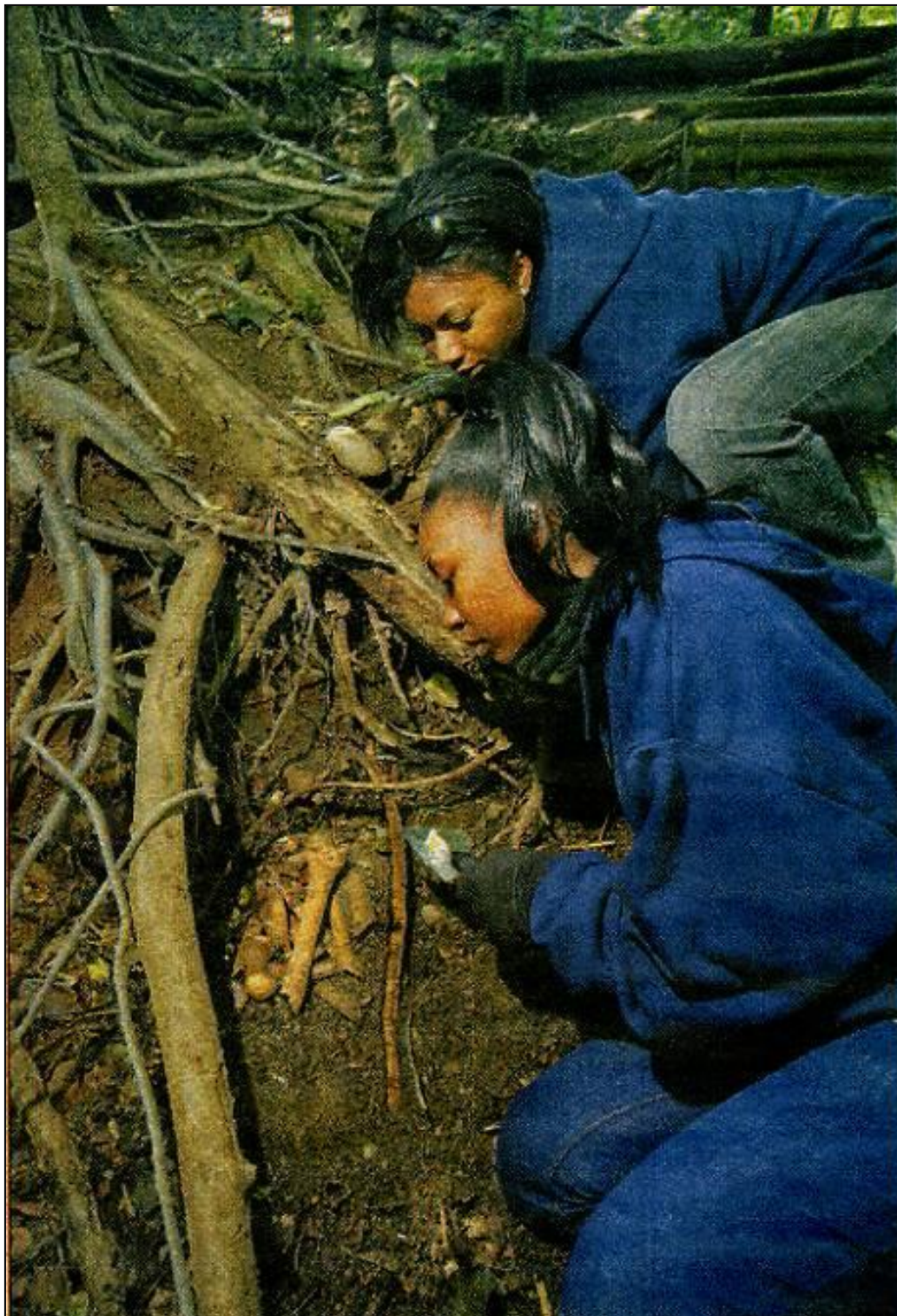
**Fig. 131:** Coffin wood (exposed under tree root, with associated multiple human remains)



**Fig. 132:** Femoral head, center left; multiple skeletal remains exposed under tree root



**Fig. 133:** Exposed grave, probably that of a female based on bone size, with multiple skeletal remains under a tree root washed out by erosion Howard University students Kristin Baker and Miesha Hegwood of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Team examine the grave. (Photo by Robert Reeder, The Washington Post, October 26, 2006.)



**Fig. 134:** Multiple skeletal remains exposed under tree root.



**Fig. 135:** Cranium with puncture.





**Fig. 136:** Unidentified bone fragment, possibly an animal bone.



**Fig. 137:** Animal bone.

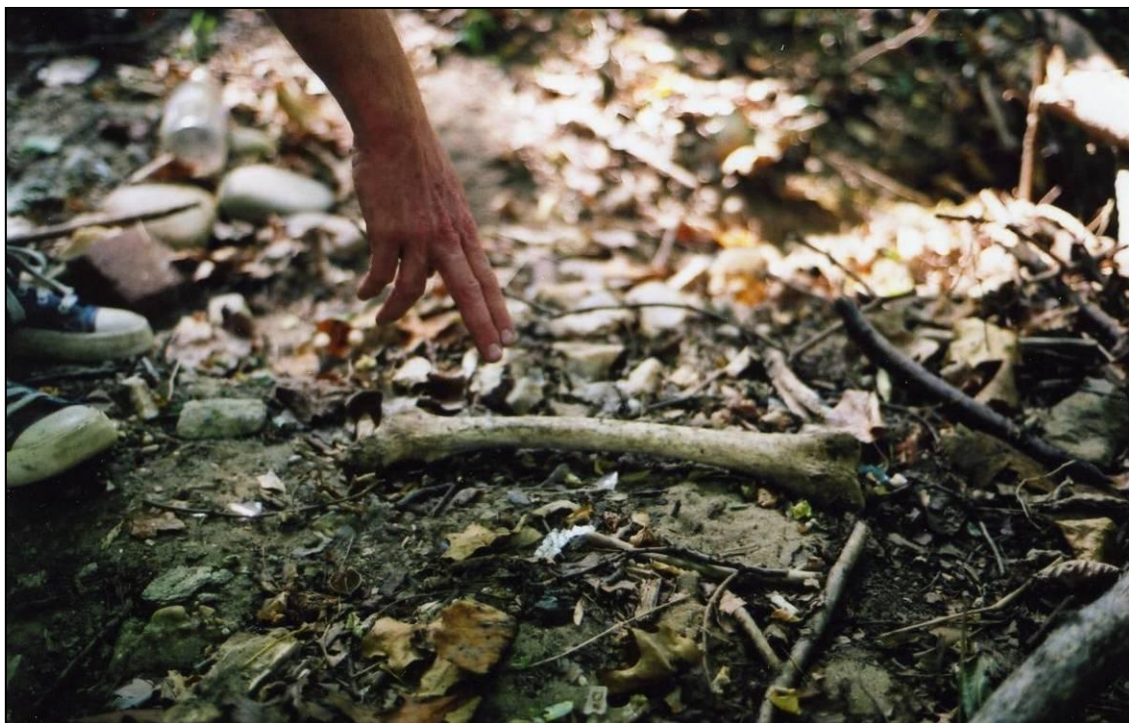


**Figs. 138, 139:** Shells, possibly once placed on graves



**Figures 125-130: WEST SLOPE FINDS BY VOLUNTEERS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY**

**Figures 125, 126, below:** Human skeletal remains, shells, and brick fragments.



**Fig. 127:** Three (3) Left Femora



**Fig. 128:** Three (3) Right Femora



**Fig. 129:** Five (5) Femoral Fragments



**Fig. 130:** Two (2) Left Tibiae



**Fig. 131:** Coffin handle, metallic swing-bail type, found by the archaeological team on the West Slope during the pedestrian survey.



**Fig. 132 (below, same as Fig. 57):** West and North Slope coffin handles compared. The top handle is a swing-bail-type coffin handle found by a community gardener on the North Slope before the archaeological survey began; the bottom is a swing-bail-type coffin handle found on West Slope by the Walter Pierce Archaeological Team.





**Figs. 133, 134:** Fragment of a metallic short-bar-type coffin handle found on the West Slope in 2006 by a volunteer before the start of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Pedestrian Survey; and close-up.



**Fig. 135:** Illustration of short-bar-type coffin handles. Figure C shows a handle that is identical to a handle fragment found by a volunteer on the West Slope of Walter Pierce Park. (*Illustration of short-bar coffin handles from "Remember Man Thou Art Dust: Coffin Hardware of the Early Twentieth Century," by Debi Hacker-Norton and Michael Trinkley, Chicora Foundation Research Series 2, Chicora Foundation, Columbia, South Carolina; undated; out of print*)

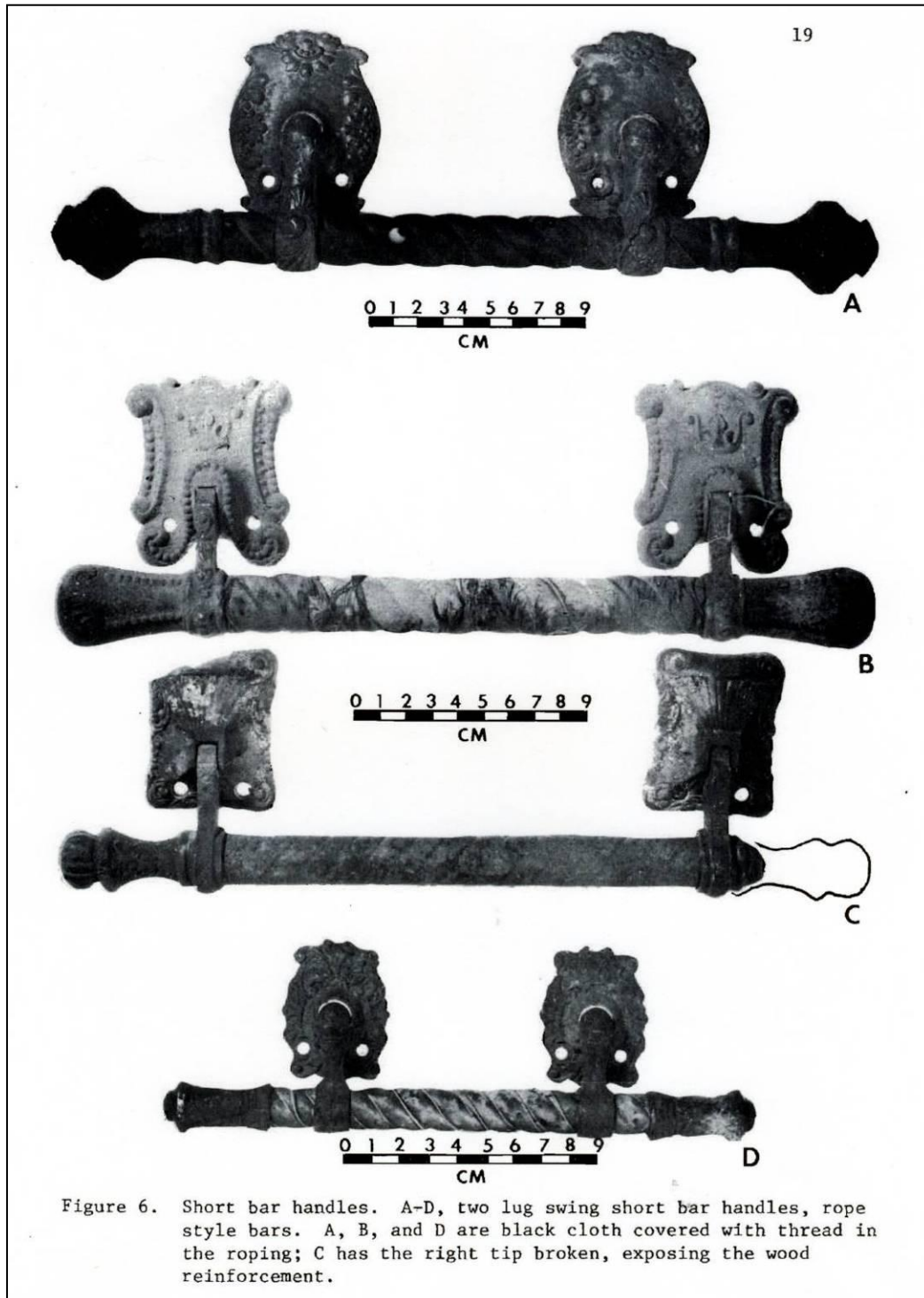


Figure 6. Short bar handles. A-D, two lug swing short bar handles, rope style bars. A, B, and D are black cloth covered with thread in the roping; C has the right tip broken, exposing the wood reinforcement.



**Figs. 136-139:** Statue of a king-like figure, found on the West Slope during the 2006 pedestrian survey. The vessels supported by the figure's arms are hollow, suggesting that it might be a candle holder or incense holder. It is possibly an altar piece from the cemetery's burial vault, an item used at graveside services or an item left on a grave. The statue is metallic, approximately 19 centimeters (7.5 inches) tall, and 15.5 centimeters (6.2 inches) wide (at its widest point at the base of the vessels).



**Figure 149:** Statue of king-like figure viewed from front.



**Fig. 141:** Statue of king-like figure viewed from back.



**Figure 142:** Statue of king-like figure, view of base.



**Figs. 143-146:** Carved stone bird found on West Slope, approximately 16 centimeters (6.3 inches) tall. This is possibly an altar piece from the burial vault, or an item left on a grave. It is also possible that this is a prehistoric American Indian artifact. (Type of stone not identified.)



**Figs. 147, 148:** Carved stone bird found on West Slope, view of base and close-up.



### Stone Wall, West Slope

On the northeast corner of the West Slope, where the National Park Service land abuts the North Slope of Walter Pierce Park, the archaeology team photo-documented a stone wall built into the hillside. It is approximately 12- to 15-feet long by 2- to-4 feet high. Parts of the wall include modern brick and concrete fragments, but most of the structure appears to be made of old stones. The origin of the wall is unknown. It is possibly a remnant of a cemetery structure. It might be a structure intended to expand burial opportunities on the hillside: In 1889, the city health inspector observed that cemetery managers were building “plateaus” on the site’s western end to accommodate additional graves.<sup>119</sup>



**Figs. 149, 150:** The stone wall on the West Slope.



<sup>119</sup> Evening Star, Sept. 25, 1889, “Mount Pleasant Cemetery”

### **West Slope Soil-Erosion Mitigation, 2009-2010**

Three years after the archaeological survey of the West Slope took place, Rock Creek Park officials in October 2009 issued a draft Environmental Assessment describing a National Park Service (NPS) plan to mitigate soil erosion on the West Slope. The report was prepared for the park service by a contractor, The Louis Berger Group Inc. of Washington, D.C. Rock Creek Park officials issued the draft report to solicit public comment.

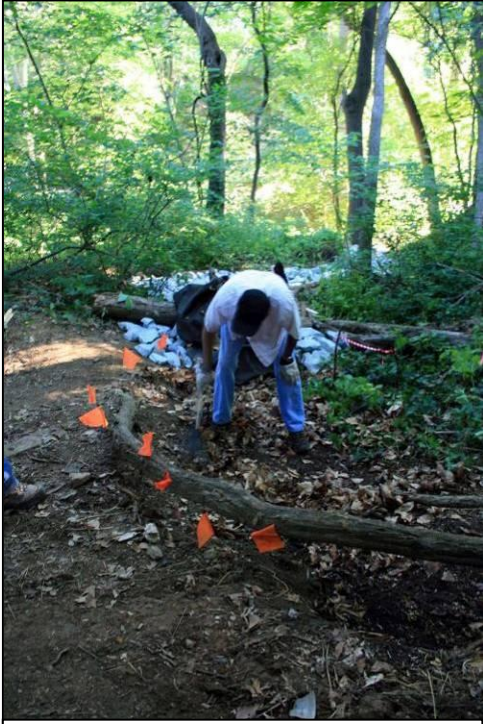
Members of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project strongly objected to the draft report on several grounds: (1) It failed to acknowledge the presence of already exposed skeletal remains on the site, referring only to “below ground resources” and to the “potential” for the exposure of graves; (2) it inaccurately overstated the degree to which the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Team and other concerned community members had been consulted in planning the soil-erosion project; and (3) it ignored the sacred nature of the cemetery land generally and the importance it had to descendants and others associated with burials there. Based on the erroneous assessment of the grave-related remains and artifacts present on the West Slope, the draft report concluded that the planned soil-erosion-mitigation project would have no impact on cultural resources present on the West Slope. It further stated that any ground disturbance caused by adding fill materials (predominantly rocks) and plantings on the West Slope would be mitigated by the presence of an archaeologist to monitor the work when it took place.

Members of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project asked permission to monitor the work when it began. That request was rejected by Rock Creek Park officials. Similar requests to allow the Walter Pierce Team to monitor the work were made by Ward 1 City Councilmember Jim Graham, the Kalorama Citizens Association, Washington Parks & People, and the Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission, ANC-1-C. All of these requests were rejected by Rock Creek Park officials.

During the week of May 26, 2010, work crews arrived at the site to begin soil-erosion-mitigation work on the West Slope. Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project team member Mary Belcher was present to witness and protest the work. Belcher warned the work crews that graves were being desecrated as a result of their work. She confronted an archaeologist from The Louis Berger Group, who was sent to the site to monitor the project, questioning his experience working in African American cemeteries. Over the next two days, Belcher witnessed and photographed heavy boulders being tossed down the West Slope to fill the gullies where exposed human skeletal remains had been documented by the Walter Pierce Archaeological Team during the 2006 pedestrian survey. Large stakes were driven into the burial ground to keep plantings in place. Trucks and cars were driven on to the site.

Washington Parks & People, the Kalorama Citizens Association, Ward 1 Council member Jim Graham, the Friends Meeting of Washington (Quakers), and other concerned community members tried to have the work halted, pleading with National Park Service officials at the regional NPS office to intervene. On June 5, 2010, the work on the West Slope of Walter Pierce Park was temporarily halted so that a meeting could take place between concerned community members and National Park Service officials.





**Fig. 151:** Mark Mack inspects one of two West Slope gullies, in search of previously documented human remains.

Deputy Regional Director Lisa A. Mendelson-Ielmini convened the meeting at NPS regional headquarters at Hains Point. As a result of the meeting, Rock Creek Park officials agreed to allow the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Team to monitor the completion of the soil-erosion-mitigation work at the site. NPS archaeologist Bob Sonderman and Walter Pierce Principal Investigator Mark Mack worked at the site for the duration of the project; Mary Belcher was present to photo-document the work.

In his first day at the project site, Mark Mack surveyed the two lateral gullies where skeletal material previously had been found and documented. Most of the two gullies—and the human remains that had been found there--were now covered over with boulders as a result of the erosion-mitigation project. The grave that had become exposed under a tree at the top of one of the gullies, however, had not yet been covered by boulders.

NPS archaeologist Bob Sonderman directed the workers at the site to construct wooden slides for rocks and other fill materials to be gently moved down the West Slope to the eroded areas. He warned the work

crews that he would stop the project immediately if any materials were thrown down the hill or if any other careless activities occurred at the site.

Mark Mack, Bob Sonderman, and archaeologist Jason Shellenhammer of The Louis Berger Group temporarily covered the grave under the uprooted tree, so that a more permanent protective cover could be

constructed later. The soil-erosion-mitigation project on the West Slope was completed over the next several days. Although some skeletal remains were most likely damaged by the early phase of the work, the grave with skeletal remains and visible coffin parts was protected.



**Fig. 152:** The West Slope grave is covered.

## **THE WALTER PIERCE PARK ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

When does a cemetery stop being a cemetery? When the bodies are removed? When headstones disappear? When the land is sold for other uses? When people forget?

Through archaeological fieldwork, the pedestrian survey of Walter C. Pierce Community Park and vicinity yielded evidence of the site's two historic cemeteries, and of their eventual dissolution and neglect. Intact and fragmented gravestones, coffin hardware, grave-related artifacts, and other cemetery-related features were found. The exposed skeletal remains of at least five individuals were found in varying states of disarray on the West and North Slopes of the park.<sup>120</sup> Only one group of exposed skeletal remains appeared to be associated with a partially visible wood coffin. The grave, believed to be that of a woman, had become uplifted by tree roots, and the tree roots had washed out from erosion. In the other areas where skeletal remains were found, it appeared they came to rest in gullies as a result of erosion, or were pushed on to the hillsides by construction-related activities on the upper plateau of the site.

Through historical research, the archaeological investigation of Walter C. Pierce Community Park and vicinity established that at least 8,428 burials took place in the African American and Quaker cemeteries at the site between 1870 and 1890.<sup>121</sup> Conversely, the number of documented disinterments was fewer than 300, according to available city records. The cemeteries at Walter Pierce Park, therefore, probably still contain thousands of graves.

More is likely to become known about the subsurface features of the site when data from the ground-penetrating-radar re-survey are analyzed. Based on the archaeological evidence gathered to date, it is safe to say that Walter Pierce Park is still cemetery land.

The site has undergone a series of disruptions since the Quaker and African American cemeteries were forced to close 123 years ago. The heirs of the founders of the cemeteries helped cause their dissolution, taking legal steps so that they could sell the increasingly valuable land. But according to the heirs' court pleadings and a subsequent Congressional directive, the bodies in the cemetery were to be respectfully removed and reinterred elsewhere before any sale of the land took place. For the thousands of people who buried loved ones in the cemeteries during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the expectation was clear: This was to be a final resting place.

In many ways, the cemeteries at Walter Pierce Park have fared better than other cemeteries—particularly African American cemeteries--that have disappeared from the city of Washington, D.C.: The vast, important Columbian Harmony cemetery was dug up for the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station; some of its headstones, mysteriously, have turned up on the Potomac shoreline of Virginia's Northern Neck. Hillsdale and Rosemont cemeteries in southeast

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<sup>120</sup> In addition, before the archaeological survey began, park volunteers had collected from the west hillside the exposed bones of at least four other individuals, which were later turned over to the survey team.

<sup>121</sup> Hundreds more burials probably occurred that were not recorded in city death records, due to the fact that the Quaker burying ground was established 48 years before the city began keeping death records and due to uncertainties in the number of reinterments in Mt. Pleasant Plains from earlier cemeteries.

Washington were paved over for a school and apartment-building parking lot, respectively. There is no record of what happened to many of the city's smallest African American cemeteries, where enslaved people were buried on their masters' estates.

Thanks to the community activism of Walter C. Pierce and his neighbors, the cemeteries site in 1982 became a public park, protected from large-scale construction. The graves that still exist in the park, however, are vulnerable.

As the location of Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery, the history of the Walter Pierce site speaks to the issue of race, to the struggles surrounding slavery, to African American self-determination in the face of entrenched racism, and to the enfranchisement of Black men through military service in the Civil War and participation in Reconstruction-Era politics. As the location of the city's only Quaker burying ground, the site speaks to the anti-slavery tenets of the Religious Society of Friends, and to their roles in establishing the city's earliest schools and businesses.

The men and women of the Walter Pierce cemeteries lived through the greatest social change in U.S. history. Many helped bring it about. Their efforts were significant enough to be recorded in the newspapers and other documents of their time. Some took legal steps to fight inequity. Some worked openly, others covertly, to free enslaved people. Some fought in the Civil War. Thousands arrived in Washington as self-emancipated refugees, with only the clothes on their backs, to begin free lives. Having a place of burial of their choosing was among their hard-won rights.

In the 1970s, Walter C. Pierce, a young African American activist and Adams Morgan resident, worked with other neighbors to create a park at the site. They lobbied on Capitol Hill and at City Hall, convincing officials in 1978 to buy the land so the neighborhood could have a much-needed place to play. Today, Walter Pierce is a popular park with a children's playground, soccer field, basketball court, picnic tables and a dog park.

Despite its popularity, the park is unattended by any permanent city employee stationed at the site. There are no restroom facilities. Trash cans fill to overflowing between pick-ups, and litter abounds throughout the park. Parts of the park have become places where drug use and other illicit activities occur. The park requires a higher degree of city attention.

The Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Team recommends the following measures to protect the site's historic cemeteries:

- (1) All future archaeological investigation at the site should be non-invasive so that graves are not disturbed. "Ground-truthing," or digging into the ground to prove the presence of graves, serves no purpose. The documented number of burials—at least 8,428 in seven acres of land—indicates a very high density of graves. Some may rest atop others. The graves of small children, who make up nearly 60% of the known burials, are smaller and might be more difficult to detect amid larger graves.
- (2) Concerned community members—including descendants of those buried in the African American and Quaker cemeteries at Walter Pierce Park, those who feel cultural ties to the site;

and Howard University faculty and other academics—should lead future decision-making about the treatment of the cemeteries. Since 2005, members of the concerned community have led the effort to preserve the cemeteries. They enlisted the help and guidance of biological anthropologist Mark Mack of Howard University. They obtained private funding for the archaeological project, and then they approached the City Council to obtain city funding. They raised public awareness through seven years of scholarly presentations and special events at the park. The concerned community intends to continue working with Howard University scientists and other veterans of the African Burial Ground Project to ensure that the cemeteries are protected and commemorated. We invite local and federal officials to work with us.

(3) All graves, including partial skeletal remains, should be left and protected at the site with minimal disturbance. Protection protocols should be developed in consultation with descendants, theologians, and other members of the concerned community.

(4) Skeletal remains that were removed from the site by park volunteers and are now stored at the W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropology Laboratory should be repatriated to the site. Fourteen partial sets of remains that were removed during construction-related excavations at the site in 1959 and acquired by the Smithsonian Institution should be repatriated to the site.

(5) Future park construction should be minimized. Heavy vehicles should be banned from driving on to the site, especially in areas where historical land elevations have decreased and subsurface graves could be vulnerable. Weathered and fragmented skeletal remains and artifacts are difficult to recognize. All land crews—including city and federal workers—should be trained in recognizing such items in order to protect them, and in case further exposures occur.

(6) The North Slope should be preserved as a natural commemorative space because of the presence of grave-related items on the hillside. Eroded areas of the North Slope should be addressed with care so that graves and artifacts are not disturbed. Invasive vegetation should be carefully removed and replaced with native plants that will take root without disturbing graves.

(7) A permanent place of remembrance should be created at the site where the names, ages and stories of those buried in the cemeteries can be made available to the public, and where descendants can find their ancestors. This could be done as simply as providing an accessible register of interments for the public to browse.

(8) The site should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places based on its association to Washington's African American community from the time of slavery through Reconstruction; based on its association to Washington's earliest Quaker community; and based on its association to John Quincy Adams, Quakers, Civil War veterans, self-emancipated Civil War refugees, Underground Railroad operatives and other noteworthy individuals.

(9) New District laws and policies should be established to identify and protect historic African American cemetery sites, even after public memories of them have vanished. The city should establish a law to protect African American cemeteries based on the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. In so doing, the District could lead the way for other states and municipalities that are seeking to protect historically significant cemeteries.

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## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC OUTREACH

Citizen involvement has been essential to the success of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project since its inception in 2005. Public awareness is essential for the cemeteries' protection.

Before city funding became available, the project was based almost entirely on volunteer effort, although students were paid for their work. The nonprofit Kalorama Citizens Association obtained private donations and grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation; the Washington, D.C., Humanities Council; the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of Washington, D.C.; and the Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission.

Free walking tours of the site have been held twice yearly since 2005. Updates are sent to an e-mail list of more than 200 descendants, scholars, religious leaders, officials and others. Announcements are carried also on the Washington, D.C. H-Net (History-Net) listserv. In April 2008, a special "Remembering" event was held at Walter Pierce Park for descendants of those buried in the cemeteries and to mark the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Pearl* Underground Railroad escape attempt. Members of the Edmonson family were in attendance to honor their ancestors, as was author Mary Kay Ricks.

After city funding was received in 2009, the following public events took place:

October 2008: A tour of the site was held during Cultural Tourism DC's WalkingTown Weekend.

January 19, 2009: Inauguration Eve walking tour, attended by more than 250 people from across the country, including Illinois, Texas, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, Kentucky, Ohio, Colorado, Washington state, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Alabama.

April 4, 2009: Potomac Watershed Clean-Up at Walter Pierce Park, with more than 60 volunteers from across the region helping clear the site for the ground-penetrating radar survey.

April 15, 2009: Lunchtime presentation by Mary Belcher, genealogist Alice Bailey, and city archives specialist Bill Branch at Chatman's Bakery, during District Emancipation Day events.

April 25, 2009: Archaeology Day at Walter Pierce Park, with a ground-penetrating-radar demonstration and a performance by FREED (Female Re-enactors of Distinction) portraying prominent Civil-War-era African American women



Mark Mack speaks at a chilly public walking tour on the eve of President Obama's inauguration, January 19, 2009.

## **APPENDIX A: PUBLIC OUTREACH (Cont.)**



Team member Shayla Monroe and FREED re-enactor Judy Williams, April 2009

May 30, 2009: Walking tour of the site as part of Cultural Tourism DC's WalkingTown Weekend.

September 25, 2009: Presentation by Mary Belcher at the D.C. Preservation League Annual Conference, "Insuring Preservation for Publically Owned Properties."

September 2009: Walking tour of the site as part of Cultural Tourism DC's WalkingTown Weekend.

October 10 and 17, 2009: Three walking tours of the site for Smithsonian Associates

October 24, 2009: Special presentation by Mark Mack and Mary Belcher to Asbury United Methodist Church.

October and November 2009: Kalorama Citizens Association and Adams Morgan Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC-1-C) pass resolutions supporting the involvement of the Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Team in

soil-erosion-mitigation work planned by the National Park Service at the site.

November 14, 2009: Washington History Conference presentation by Mark Mack, Mary Belcher, neighborhood historian Eddie Becker, and scholar Carroll Gibbs.

March 20, 2010: Walking tour of the site for members and attenders of the Friends Meeting of Washington (Quakers).

April 17, 2010: Walking tour of the site for National Geographic/National Association of Geographers Conference



June 19, 2010: "Saying Their Names at Walter Pierce Park," 45 descendants, Quakers, and members of the concerned community read the names of 8,428 people buried in the cemeteries, marking the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cemeteries' last burial on June 17, 1890. (Photo at left.)

Additional public events were held in the park through 2012.



## **APPENDIX B: THE NATIONWIDE STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERIES: AN OVERVIEW**

By Shayla Monroe, member, Walter Pierce Park Archaeological Team  
Graduate student, Anthropology, University of California at Santa Barbara

From New York to Florida to Texas and beyond, African American communities have struggled to preserve the cemeteries of their ancestors. Historically, African American cemeteries are vulnerable to a host of issues: land acquisition by developers; disrepair, as economically strapped neighborhoods cannot maintain the grounds; abandonment, as elders pass away and their descendants migrate; and obscurity arising from a lack of permanent grave markers and formal boundaries.

The Locust Grove cemetery in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, by the early 2000s was badly in need of repair. Unlike the Walter Pierce Park cemeteries, Locust Grove had never been completely forgotten or abandoned. A small but aging and financially strapped group of elders did their best to care for the cemetery. They could not stop the vandalizing that occurred on the cemetery grounds, as well as the damage done when an adjacent land owner paved over some of the existing graves with concrete to build a driveway. Steven B. Burg, an applied history professor at Shippensburg University, took up the cause. He turned the study, restoration and preservation of the cemetery into a service-learning opportunity for his students. The university played the role of matchmaker, bringing together the small group of elders who cared for the cemetery with the wider community that had collectively forgotten it. Burg was able to instill in the public an understanding that Locust Grove was not only a part of black history, but public history. That seemed to be the key to community support, and the local historical society (whose members were mostly white) came to believe that this project was not just about “other people.” In this way, Locust Grove Cemetery became something that belonged to the entire town--a shared heritage as well as a shared responsibility.

Recognizing that several Pennsylvania cemeteries containing the remains of black Civil War veterans had fallen into disrepair, the Pennsylvania Grand Review--a coalition of state agencies and non-profits honoring African American Civil War participants--called for volunteers in November 2010 to help preserve those cemeteries. The Pennsylvania Grand Review emphasized that these cemeteries are sometimes all that remains to represent communities and neighborhoods no longer standing. The campaign call for volunteers was well-organized with a clear message that the poor conditions of these cemeteries could only be remedied with neighborhoods across the state working in harmony. Rather than just sending out information, by calling loudly for “all hands on deck,” the Pennsylvania Grad Review made people believe that they could be a part of fixing the wrongs of the past.

In her book *The Love Cemetery: Unburying the Secret History of Slaves*, China Galland writes about an African American cemetery in East Texas usurped by a timber company and chained to keep the descendants of the deceased locked out. Headstones were mowed over and cattle grazed freely on the cemetery despite descendant protest. One has a hard time imagining that the landowner would have ignored the same cries from a wealthy white family. The struggle to gain access to Love Cemetery culminated in a legal battle that has had repercussions for

cemeteries across the state. Coleman's Law, introduced by Texas Rep. Garnet Coleman and enacted in 2009, enforces reasonable access to cemeteries for descendant communities and makes it illegal for landowners to lock them out of ancestral burial grounds. Galland says that during their fight, they learned of at least 35 other cemeteries in Texas going through similar struggles, including one housing Buffalo Soldiers burials that was partially paved over to create an interstate highway outside of Houston.

On the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, lies the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery which contains a segregated section for African American burials. Like the Walter Pierce cemeteries, the fact that this section lay forgotten made it vulnerable to damage (football fans even parked automobiles on top of the graves while going to games). The Preservation Society of Chapel Hill is in the process of poring through the town's historical records to figure out who was buried in the damaged part of the cemetery. They plan to replace damaged and lost headstones, but this story highlights the unfortunate fact that African American cemeteries often undergo dramatic desecration before action is taken to restore and preserve them. Once again, the preservationists face the challenge of convincing people of all ethnic backgrounds to see that all burials deserve dignity, and that the history of the African Americans buried in Old Chapel Hill Cemetery is intermingled with, not separate from, their own.

The value of preserving African American cemeteries is not only ethical, moral, and historically important, it is educational as well. Archaeologist Christina Brooks explains in a recent journal article that even surveying African-American cemeteries in a non-invasive manner can provide insight into communities overlooked by the historical record. As she illustrates in her work concerning two cemeteries in Georgetown, South Carolina, burial grounds yield artifacts and spatial arrangements that can sometimes tell us more about the spirituality and ideology of non-literate communities misunderstood by historians.

Cemeteries give us the opportunity to understand the role African Americans had in American history. Many historic African American cemeteries also contain the burials of European and Native Americans as well as other nationalities. In order to save endangered African American cemeteries, activists have proven again and again that the modern public must get beyond the false notion of ethnic histories being absolutely and wholly separate. Instead, as China Galland so eloquently illustrates in *The Love Cemetery*, we must embrace a shared past in order to better embrace a shared future.

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**APPENDIX C: AN ESSAY DESCRIBING MT. PLEASANT PLAINS CEMETERY,  
THE WASHINGTON, POST, FEBRUARY 2, 1890**

This newspaper essay was published five months before Mt. Pleasant Plains Cemetery—also called the Young Men’s Burying Ground—was closed. It tells the story of a Sunday stroll by a girl, Ariadne, and a boy, Erasmus. Although the essay is fictional, it provides a contemporary account of the cemetery’s physical appearance. It also reflects factual details, describing the grave of Rochester G. Scott, whose 1888 death certificate was found by the archaeological team. *(Be advised: This article contains characterizations that are racist in language and nature.)*

**ARIADNE AND ERASMUS.**

“I am tired of this road, Erasmus. It is a thoroughfare. I didn’t come for a Sunday walk, to be sprinkled with dust. What is this road to the right? Do you know where it goes?”

“No.”

“Good. Let’s find out.”

Erasmus looked ruefully at the dark spots and suggestions of mud along the stretch of road ahead and then at the tips of his polished boots. He even cast a half wistful glance “across lots” at a group of Shantytown citizens (of color) gathered in awe-struck admiration around a gigantic ebony female, who was pouring forth alternate thunder peals of invective and the glories of salvation. Her voice reverberated from the hills—it would be worth a fortune to an orator. I saw in his eye a flash of wild desire for religious instruction, but Erasmus generally does as I tell him in the end, so we started soberly along.

“Oh! It goes past a cemetery. I don’t believe it’s a nice road, Erasmus. Let’s turn back.”

“No, I shan’t turn back yet, Ariadne. Here comes a pretty girl.”

Erasmus scorns the sentimental, but he is fond of pretty girls, and this one was fair as Aurora’s self, fair as the sunset that sifted gold through the air about her. She blushed saucily under his admiring eyes, so he felt happier after that, and began to discover how lovely the afternoon was. As the corner of the cemetery, opposite a stable yard, the road apparently came to an end.

“Pshaw! It doesn’t go anywhere at all.” But the cows in the barnyard were interesting, and taking great delight in the family reunion after milking time. This little outskirts of Mount Pleasant seemed far in the country. We hung over the fence and watched the beauty of the woods in the distance, the mists rising over them, covering the bare trees with a gray veil, and shadowy greens peeping through. The fence swayed back and forth—it was almost as much fun as swinging on a gate.

“Ah! Here is a road!” and we plunged down a long lane since abandoned by vehicles, but presenting wonderful possibilities of picturesqueness. (Nor were we disappointed.) It still skirted the cemetery.

“I wonder what cemetery it is?”

**APPENDIX C: AN 1890 ESSAY (Cont.)**

“I don’t know, Ariadne. I never saw it before.”

“Look! Can it be the sunset?” No, it was not the sunset, though rivaling it in gorgeousness. It was Black Nancy out for a Sunday stroll among the graves. She was dressed in red plush, profusely trimmed with bright yellow. The color standing out against the somber hillside was unspeakably dazzling.

“Hum!” said Erasmus, “must be a darkey cemetery.”

Here we met a good natured country man, gaily swinging a stick as he walked. Him we hailed with our conundrum.

“Why, it’s a colored cemetery. They call it the ‘Young Men’s Buryin’ Ground.’”

“Oh!” somewhat indifferently. “colored, is it?”

“Waal, I guess you’d think so if you see’d some of them graves; dominoes and all sorts of things on ‘em.”

“It must be worth seeing. Could we get in?”

“Waal, y’oughter’ve gone in on the other side, but if you go down the road a piece you’ll find a board off the fence where you kin git through.”

\*\*\*

A little later--“Ariadne, here’s a place in the fence we can squeeze through.”

“That isn’t the place he meant, and, besides, we can’t leave this road yet, it is too pretty. We can go around the ravine down there.”

As the road turned over the hill, we both drew a breath of delight. Below us lay Rock Creek—a winding dark band streaked with silver lights. It was a summer evening in January. No breath of winter stirred among the leafless trees, and all of the air was full of a mysterious something that seemed like the last echo of a bugle-call. On the hill beyond the creek, the stately towers of “Clifton” rose among the mists, the windows all ablaze with the last gleams of the dying sun.

“How can we turn away from this? But we must go if we are to see that cemetery. It will soon be dark—how are we to get across the ravine with all these bushes?”

“You wait here, Ariadne, and I’ll see.”

Erasmus started on an exploring expedition, and I waited restlessly awhile. He’ll never get through there: “I’ll try this way.” And I scrambled recklessly down the slope, finding, to my dismay, that the bushes were mostly briars, and that the rough ground sadly injured new shoes.

“This is the way, Erasmus!” I shouted as I reached the gap in the fence, “but my new shoes are frightfully muddy.”

Erasmus came panting up behind me. “You’ve a fine gown in the back, Ariadne, it’s torn in rags.”

**APPENDIX C: AN 1890 ESSAY (Cont.)**

I held up mournfully my tattered draperies. The briers had been vicious. "I wonder what possessed me to go 'way round there. Why didn't we go through the first gap?"

"O, you were so in love with that road you wouldn't have it."

"Ah, so I was; and it was worth a torn gown. I am glad I didn't."

\* \* \*

Erasmus exulted over my disaster because he was jealous at my getting there first. But his is amiable, after all, and, having had his revenge, helped me gallantly over the treacherous-looking logs and stumps that bridged a ravine inside the fence.

In this part of the enclosure there was no sod over the graves. The earth was simply piled up in careless brown ridges, and exclusive attention had been devoted to ornamentation of an entirely different character. The first grave was elaborately decorated with clam shells, and that style was not neglected in others, but it was the children's graves that attracted the startled eye of the beholder by the remarkable collection of motley objects heaped upon them--toys of all descriptions, dolls of rubber, of wax, of porcelain, beaten and shattered by wind and weather; toy dishes in various stages of fragmentary separation, tin stoves, so dear to the childish heart, lying rust-eaten and unlighted; hobby-horses, locomotives, carts and wagons scattered about in strange array. On infants' resting-places lay bottles with rubber nipples (perhaps for preservation from hunger in the feeding grounds above). On one small mound stood a rusty fire-engine waiting for action. "Ha!" said Erasmus, "good idea! They thought the little fellow would need that." A youthful gamester was accompanied to his last resting place by a pile of dominoes and building blocks.

\* \* \*

Could this be a waking hour? Surely we were wandering through the wilds of the West, and had found an Indian burial place. Was it possible that Rock Creek wound along the base of that steep slant; that Washington lay over the hill, a city with marble walls and paved streets, the pride of the highest civilization? See, looming out of the fast gathering shadows of twilight. Was it not a pagan idol crouching there? No; as we peered closely at it we found it to be part of a toy bank; but in that spot it seemed to be an uncanny sleeper figure set to guard the sleeper. Strapped tightly to the board at the head of the next grave was a small doll seated in a chair.

The whole thing was half ludicrous, half weird, and the laugh that rose to our lips at each fresh pile of relics was checked by the solemn stillness of the air, even by the shaky wooden head-boards painted in scrawling characters, with unique spelling and occasional attempts at original poetry:

ROCHESTER  
G. SCOTT.  
Born ----  
Died ----  
ASLEEP IN  
JEASUS  
\* \* \*

**APPENDIX C: AN 1890 ESSAY (Cont.)**

When the inscriptions faded and were lost in the gloom, we passed out into the high road again. At the gateway stood a tiny lodge, with a placard on the door, "Leave orders ---." It was too dark for the rest.

\* \* \*

Coming down Sixteenth-street hill the warm south breeze fanned our faces, and the lights ahead shone out in ghostly fashion under the stars. It seemed like entering an enchanted city, and the major structure on our right might well have been Aladdin's Palace.

"Erasmus, who do you suppose the people are that buried their children there?"

"Well, it is a 'Voodoo' burial ground, Ariadne. I'll tell you about it."

But I am not going to say what Erasmus told, because I believe he made it up.

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## APPENDIX D: ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Mark Mack**, Principal Investigator, Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project, 2006-2012; Master Teacher, Biological Anthropology, Howard University, 1993-2012; Curator, W. Montague Cobb Biological Anthropological Laboratory, Howard University, 2003-2012; Laboratory Director, New York African Burial Ground Project, Howard University, 1993-2012; Intern, Department of Physical Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Nature History, Washington, D.C., skeletal analysis of childhood health indicators in the Terry Skeletal Collection, 1984-1986; participation at Fort Mose Archaeological Site Excavations, St. Augustine, Florida, 1987; Assessment of the health status of Jamaican sugar workers, research conducted at the New Yarmouth and Monymusk Sugar Estates, 1988; Dental analysis of a Bronze Age Omani skeletal population, University of Rome, “La Sapienza” Department of Human Biology, 1989; Principal Investigator, skeletal analysis of a Lucayan Taino skeletal population excavated at Sanctuary Blue Hole, South Andros, Bahamas (research conducted at the University of Florida, Gainesville, Department of Anthropology, 1991-1992; Zooarchaeological analysis of fauna remains excavated from the Paleo-Indian Lake Jessup Site, Florida, 1991-1992; Osteological Supervisor, Foley Square-African Burial Ground Project, New York City, employer John Milner & Associates, West Chester, Pa.; B.A. (cum laude), Anthropology, Howard University, 1986; M.A. (cum laude), Biological Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, 1990; Doctoral Degree candidate, Biological Anthropology, University of Florida, Gainesville (not completed). Research interests: Skeletal biology; human adaptation to coastal environments; dental anthropology, paleo-pathological analysis; Near Eastern biological anthropology; the effects of social processes on biological health status; biocultural adaptation of members of the African Diaspora; biological history of New World slavery and racism; human variation and the concept of biological race.

**Mary Belcher**, independent historian, Walter Pierce Park Archaeology Project, 2005-2013; chairwoman, Holt House Preservation Task Force, Kalorama Citizens Association, 1998-2013; self-employed visual artist, 1994-2013; spokesperson, U.S. Office of Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters, 1989-1994; Editor, “Final Report of the Independent Counsel for Iran/Contra Matters,” 1993; Reporter covering national beats, including the White House, Justice Department and Congress, The Washington Times, 1984-1989; Reporter for Education Daily/Higher Education Daily, Editor of Education of the Disadvantaged, 1982-1984; B.S. (cum laude), Journalism, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1981.